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Narratives, 1875-1940*

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**“Semi-Professional Polar Explorers”:
Empire, Modernity, and Temporality in British Arctic Travel Narratives, 1875-1940**

Christian James Drury

Abstract

This thesis considers how the Arctic was represented in British travel writing from the region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It pays particular attention to travellers’ depictions and discussions of empire, modernity, and temporality in the region. Beginning with the 1875-76 British Arctic Expedition, this thesis argues that there were considerable similarities in how the region was depicted, particularly in these areas of interest, until around 1940, despite differences in the type of travel being written about and the types of travellers making these journeys. However, it also notes important differences and regional specificities, as well as the significant influence of local and Indigenous people on these discourses of Arctic travel.

As well as the British Arctic Expedition, this thesis considers the writings produced from tourist travel to Norway and Sápmi in the period, as well as interwar British expeditions to Svalbard and East Greenland. These locations highlight the interaction between British travellers and Scandinavian colonialism, as well as British reflections on their own empire. Moreover, concurrent readings allow for the consideration of Inuit and Sámi agency, involvement, and resistance.

Colonial discourses often depicted travel to the Arctic as travel back in time, in descriptions of people and places and in connections made to imagined pasts. Moreover, this temporality connected to the travellers’ own understandings of modernity. Rather than being a place far from metropolitan modernity, the Arctic instead was co-constructed as a modern space by travellers and travelleses. However, tourism, the construction of infrastructure, and wider ideas of being followed created tensions in places regarded as wild and remote. Depictions of the Arctic, therefore, were crucial spaces for thinking about empire, place, and time in British travel writing between 1875 and 1940, but travellers did not make their journeys there alone, practically or metaphorically.

**“Semi-Professional Polar Explorers”:
Empire, Modernity, and Temporality in British Arctic
Travel Narratives, 1875-1940**

Christian James Drury

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History, Durham University

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Statement of Copyright

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Introduction

For the British in the nineteenth century, the Arctic was both strange and familiar. It was a region frequently depicted in books, newspapers, panoramas, and paintings, but also a place seen as remote, desolate, and empty. It existed as a space of beauty and imperial achievement and of loss and disaster. It was perceived as a hostile space, which challenged the body and the mind of the traveller, but also as a pure space, free of the corruption of the urban and the industrial. In this way, the Arctic was often imagined as empty, a blank canvas for the British traveller to put to use. This was a space that the British wanted to know through mapping, surveying, and gathering biological and geological specimens, but it was also an imaginary, forbidding, inviting and haunted.¹ However, the intersections and contacts between Indigenous people in the Arctic, and the presence of other Europeans, complicated these notions of emptiness, leading to encounters that reveal important aspects of British imperial identity and a richer history of the Arctic. It was a place that highlighted aspects of British public discourse, particularly ideas around empire and modernity. Whilst the British became increasingly familiar with representations of Arctic places, the strangeness of them – and of British travellers in them – raised questions around what this travel meant and what it could reveal.²

Arctic exploration became a more serious undertaking, backed by the state, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars and soon developed a significant place in the public imagination. This culminated in the Franklin Expedition, which was launched in 1845. The Expedition's two ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*, disappeared along with their full crews – 129 men – searching for the Northwest Passage and, although numerous search expeditions were launched, only a small amount of material remains were found. The loss of the Franklin Expedition elevated the Arctic in the Victorian imagination as a hostile place of loss and danger, but also ensured its centrality in British culture.³ The 1875 British Arctic Expedition (BAE), led by Captain George Strong Nares, attempted to relaunch British Arctic exploration, but the Expedition was not a success and was in many ways overshadowed by the legacies of Franklin's disappearance. To explore the Arctic after Franklin was to travel aware of a changed public discourse around heroism and sacrifice.⁴ The BAE was the last of the grand expeditions of the nineteenth century, backed by the state in its goals of reaching the North Pole and also making significant scientific observations. Exploration, however, was not the only form of British travel in the

¹ See, for example, Robert David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination, 1818-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) and Jen Hill, *White Horizon: The Arctic in the Nineteenth-Century British Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

² Shane McCorristine, *The Spectral Arctic: A History of Dreams and Ghosts in Polar Exploration* (London: UCL Press, 2018).

³ Hill, *White Horizon*, 1-2.

⁴ John Edwards Caswell, "The RGS and the British Arctic Expedition, 1875-76", *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 143, no. 2 (July 1977), 201.

Arctic post-Franklin, although it can be a useful starting point for considering the range of forms Arctic travel took. The members of the BAE were interested in the idea of the Arctic as a blank space for testing themselves as men and heroic subjects of the British Empire, but this was not the only Arctic they encountered. They were determined to map and catalogue what they found – an essential part of imperial discourse – but they also encountered a human, populated Arctic. They were reliant on Inuit support and help, and one Inuk, Suersaq, published an account of his travel with the Expedition. Although the BAE was the end of a certain style of exploration, interest in the Arctic and in Arctic travel did not disappear. One place where it was particularly evident was in tourism to Norway. Although not strictly an Arctic space, Norway provided some of the features of Arctic travel in a far more accessible way. In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, Norway was an extremely popular destination for British travellers, many of whom published accounts of their travel there.⁵ Like the High Arctic, Norway was a space where travellers could consider their own relationships to modernity, time, and empire. Whilst Norway became a less popular destination for travellers after the First World War, the interwar period saw travel to other Arctic regions, notably Spitsbergen and Greenland. Small-scale expeditions from elite British institutions such as Oxford and Cambridge universities attempted to define the future of Arctic exploration, producing expedition travelogues, as well as embracing the tradition of British polar exploration as imperial training. This tension between innovation and tradition, as well as their use of equipment from aeroplanes to kayaks, showed how questions of modernity and empire were still contested in Arctic space in the interwar period, and also influenced by the people of the Arctic themselves. Local knowledge was essential. The Arctic then, whilst imagined as blank and hostile, was a complex space and the written accounts of British travellers in the Arctic between around 1875 and 1940, as well as showing both commonalities and differences, consistently focussed on questions of modernity, temporality, and empire. The Arctic was seen as a space of escape, but also depicted as a destination for future travellers, eager to (co)construct the region.

Adriana Craciun has challenged scholars to move beyond the nineteenth-century idea of the empty Arctic, writing that:

Rather than recirculating more examples of such imperial bad faith in order to unmask them, I think a more pressing need now is to dismantle the critical mechanisms that allow this

⁵ Peter Fjågesund and Ruth A. Symes, *The Northern Utopia: British Receptions of Norway in the Nineteenth Century* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003) and Kathryn Walchester, *Gamle Norge and Nineteenth-Century British Women Travellers in Norway* (London: Anthem Press, 2014).

temporally, spatially, and discipline-specific discourse to continue to stand in for British perceptions and experiences of the Arctic as a whole.⁶

Rising to this important challenge means thinking about the Arctic as a varied space and travel to the region as a diverse activity. British travellers moved in different ways across large and varying parts of the Arctic, and the region itself can be defined in several ways. These include the Arctic Circle, measuring by daylight; the July isotherm, by average temperature; and several biogeographical indicators, such as tree lines.⁷ Moreover, there are cultural and geopolitical markers and associations of belonging. Thinking about local specifics is important, acknowledging that the Arctic is not monolithic. This thesis will particularly consider travel to Scandinavia, especially, Norway, and two Arctic areas that can be considered adjacent: Spitsbergen or Svalbard, Norwegian territory from 1920, and Greenland/Kalaallit Nunaat, a Danish colony from the early eighteenth century. Whilst Greenland can also be considered pan-Inuit territory, aligned far more with the North American Arctic than the Nordic region, considering it alongside Norway and Spitsbergen in this period allows us to consider how British travellers interacted with Scandinavian colonialism in the Arctic.⁸ This also included travel to Sápmi, the Sámi homeland which covers northern Norway, Sweden, Finland, and part of north-western Russia.⁹ Understanding the transnational nature of travel in this period and in these places is also crucial.¹⁰ Both the experiences and discourses of exploration relied on international co-operation,

⁶ Adriana Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster: Authorship and Exploration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 9.

⁷ Klaus Dodds and Mark Nuttall, *The Arctic: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 30-4.

⁸ Magdalena Naum, and Jonas M. Nordin, (eds.), *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity: Small Time Agents in a Global Arena* (New York: Springer, 2013).

⁹ A note on terminology: expedition texts almost uniformly use the word “Eskimo” to describe local Indigenous people in Greenland. Whilst “Inuit” is not a direct equivalent to this term, widely regarded as derogatory, the vagueness of the descriptions given by the British travellers make more precision difficult. As such, I have chosen to refer to the local Indigenous population as Inuit, although they doubtless had a more precise local name for themselves, such as Tunumiit. I have chosen to use Greenland throughout, over Kalaallit Nunaat, as this is the name used throughout the travel texts and still the most familiar to a British audience.

I use Sámi and Sápmi when most travellers in Sápmi in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries used “Lapp” and “Lapland”, also now widely regarded as derogatory. Again, their choice of language flattens regional differences in the region, but, as with “Eskimo”, I have chosen to use “Lapp” only in direct quotation. I have also used the Sámi name for places in Sápmi second on their first mention in this text, although I revert to just the (mainly) Norwegian name for latter references, again for reasons of familiarity.

I use Spitsbergen as the name for the Svalbard archipelago when referring to the periods when travellers visited and Svalbard when referring to it today. See Chapter Three, footnote 1 for full details on the naming of Spitsbergen/Svalbard.

¹⁰ Whilst this thesis has mainly drawn on English-language material, there are large literatures on many of the topics discussed in other languages, particularly Norwegian. Norwegian-language material on the Arctic and exploration is particularly extensive. One area of discussion in Norwegian academic and public discourse is the place and history of outdoor recreation – “friluftsliv” in the more expansive Norwegian phrase – and this thesis makes the most active intervention in this particular Norwegian discussion. Examples of recent work in Norwegian on this topic include: Peder Anker, *Livet er best ute: friluftslivets historie og filosofi* (Oslo: Kagge

from scientific research to notions of heroism. Exploration and Arctic travel more generally relied on imperial networks of labour and control, although Indigenous Arctic peoples both aided and resisted expeditions. The texts of travellers also exist in transnational contexts and should be regarded as co-constructed across national borders. They cannot be read simply through a British lens as Victorian, for example. Considering British travel across the whole of the Arctic in the period from 1875 to 1940 is beyond the scope of this project, which focusses on travel writing from what might be called the Nordic Arctic, if only by dint of colonialism. This framing also allows us to consider what might be thought of as “northern” in the British imagination, even if not strictly “Arctic”, particularly when considering aspects of British travel in Norway such as the interest in the Old Norse past, as Chapter Two will address. Whilst Iceland saw similar travel in search of shared pasts by figures such as William Morris, this thesis will focus on Norway as closer to more “Arctic” travel, due to its greater extremes of, for example, seasonal light, its polar connections through figures like Fridtjof Nansen, and British encounters with Sámi and what this tells us about empire in the region.¹¹ The North American Arctic has been widely considered in the literature on British travel in the region (see below), whilst Russia generated another set of imaginaries equally beyond the scope of this thesis.¹² The Antarctic also figured in the British *polar* imagination, especially with the turn to the Antarctic as the major destination of large-scale British polar exploration after the failure of the BAE. Some studies, like Francis Spufford’s *I May Be Some Time*, have considered British polar exploration as a whole;¹³ however, given my focus on transnational connections in imperial space and the co-construction of the Arctic as a region, I have chosen to also exclude the Antarctic from this study. Themes such as heroism, mapping, and the blank do, however, feature prominently in travel writing from the south as well, and transnational connections to Norway in particular, through exploration, whaling, and other Antarctic activities, could be made.

Considering the Arctic as part of a wider north is the subject of work by several scholars, such as Peter Fjågesund, Bernd Brunner and Peter Davidson. Davidson takes the most expansive view,

Forlag, 2022); Helen Jøsok Gansmo, Thomas Berker and Finn Arne Jørgensen (eds.), *Norske hytter i endring: om bærekraft og behag* (Trondheim: Tapir Academic Press, 2011); André Horgen, “Friluftsliv, idrett eller sport? Mening og begrepsbruk i Den Norske Turistforenings årbøker, 1868–1979”, *Historisk tidsskrift*, vol. 101, issue 3 (October 2022): 213-28; Marianne E. Lien and Simone Abram, *Hytta: fire vegger rundt en drøm* (Oslo: Kagge Forlag, 2019); and Rune Slagstad, *Da fjellet ble dannet* (Oslo: Dreyer Forlag, 2018), among others.

¹¹ For British travellers in Iceland, see several chapters in Marie Wells (ed.), *The Discovery of Nineteenth-Century Scandinavia* (London: Norvik Press, 2008) and Karen Oslund, *Iceland Imagined: Nature, Culture, and Storytelling in the North Atlantic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011).

¹² See, for example, Ben Phillips, “A Nihilist Kurort’: Siberian Exile in the Victorian Imagination, c.1830–1890”, *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 97, no. 3 (July 2019): 471-500. Finland held an ambiguous position between the Russian Empire and the Nordic region. See, for example, Tony Lurcock, “From Travel to Tourism: British Travellers to Finland 1830-1900” in Wells, *The Discovery of Nineteenth-Century Scandinavia*: 115-27.

¹³ Francis Spufford, *I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996).

including the north of England and Japan in his study,¹⁴ whilst Fjågesund and Brunner both bring together historic interests in Scandinavia in its own right and as part of the Arctic.¹⁵ Fjågesund and Brunner are unusual for largely overlooking the North American Arctic, but both take longer historical spans than this thesis. This project is also different in its use of travel writing as its main historical source. As Tim Youngs has noted, travel writing is important because it “records our temporal and spatial progress”.¹⁶ As a genre, travel writing is broad, taking in a range of styles and types of writing. Whilst it usually refers to journeys made by the author and written in the first person, as Youngs and Glenn Hooper suggest, the “traveller, author and protagonist are all different, if related, entities”.¹⁷ Jan Borm has suggested that, rather than being called a genre, travel writing should be seen as a loose collection of texts, both fictional and non-fictional, which share a main theme of travel.¹⁸ He emphasises the imaginative possibilities of reading fiction as travel writing, where examining theme and form are more important than the factual accuracy of the text. He also notes that a reader will come to a text with a “horizon of expectations” – an assumption that the journey *was made*.¹⁹ Mary Louise Pratt’s hugely influential *Imperial Eyes* has also discussed the role of the genre in creating imperial order and giving “European reading publics a sense of ownership, entitlement and familiarity” with the Other.²⁰ Developing this idea, Kate Hill has periodised the notion of travel as ordering the world in colonial discourse, writing that “under the influence of technological and colonial change, spaces, narratives themselves, and cultural encounters all took on a greater measure of flux as the nineteenth century progressed. The provisional nature of the modern categories of home and away were forged in the nineteenth century”.²¹ David Spurr’s *The Rhetoric of Empire* also underlines the relationships between travel writing and empire.²² This has been developed by the work of Felix Driver and others, investigating “hidden histories” of travel and exploration, particularly the labour and influence of Indigenous intermediaries.²³ Reading travel writing and other archives “against the grain”

¹⁴ Peter Davidson, *The Idea of North* (London: Reaktion, 2016).

¹⁵ Peter Fjågesund, *The Dream of the North: A Cultural History to 1920* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014) and Bernd Brunner, *Extreme North: A Cultural History* (New York: WW Norton, 2022).

¹⁶ Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1. Also quoted in Janicke S. Kaasa, Jakob Lothe, and Ulrike Spring (eds.), *Nordic Travels* (Oslo: Novus Press, 2021), 9.

¹⁷ Glenn Hooper and Youngs, “Introduction” in Hooper and Youngs (eds.), *Perspectives on Travel Writing* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004), 9.

¹⁸ Jan Borm, “Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology” in Hooper and Youngs, *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1992, 2nd ed., 2008), 3.

²¹ Kate Hill, “Introduction: Narratives of Travel, Narratives that Travel” in Hill (ed.), *Britain and the Narration of Travel in the Nineteenth Century: Texts, Images, Objects* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 8.

²² David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

²³ Felix Driver, “Hidden histories made visible? Reflections on a geographical exhibition”, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 38, issue 3 (July 2013): 420-35. See also, for example, Simon Schaffer, Lissa

or “concurrently” offers an opportunity to consider travel writing in its wider historical context and consider some of the challenges of researching the colonial history of the Arctic.²⁴

One feature of the travel writing produced by British travellers to the Arctic in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the focus on the region as a place of escape. This was remarkably consistent across modes of transport, destination, and type of text itself. James Buzard has emphasised the importance of leaving the “beaten track” for establishing oneself as an authentic traveller, as opposed to the “tourist”.²⁵ Whilst many Arctic travellers drew on the trope of the tourist to show what they were not, many also seemed content to accept their status, particularly in Norway. Arctic hardship was important for explorers, but others were happy to accept it in a limited form before retreating to the comforts of a cruise ship or cabin. As the British mountaineer William Cecil Slingsby wrote of British tourists in Norway in 1904, “the luxurious tripper of to-day can see from his deck-chair on the tourist steamer crags rounded and polished hundreds of feet above the water”.²⁶ When the North and the Arctic served as a space of escape, it could be a self-consciously comfortable one. Escape in the North took different forms: it could be an ice cap or a Norwegian village, but for the British travellers who visited these places, both served as an alternative to home in specific ways. They offered extremes of difference, but also models for how home could be. Arctic difference allowed for reflections on home from afar. Alterity highlighted what was present and missing. Arctic escape also served different roles for different travellers. For some, it was brief respite. Paul Readman writes about mountaineering in Norway as providing “a means of coping with the challenges of contemporary modernity, of replenishing what the sedentary quotidian depleted, for the benefit of the workaday world”.²⁷ For others, such as interwar university expeditions, it was a form of self-improvement, preparing them for military or imperial service (see Chapter Three).

Crucial to this sense of escape, as the quotation from Readman suggests, was the idea of modernity and escaping from the modern. Many travellers saw the region as free of the pressures and

Roberts, Kapil Raj, and James Delbourgo (eds.), *The Brokered World: Go-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770-1820* (Sagamore Beach, MA: Science History Publications, 2009) and Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent, and Tiffany Shellam (eds.), *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on Exploration Archives* (Acton: Australian National University Press, 2015). In a Nordic context, see Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin (eds.), *Narrating the Arctic: The Cultural History of Nordic Scientific Practices* (Canton, MA: Science History Publications/USA, 2002). Another recent Arctic example is Peter R. Martin, “Indigenous tales of the Beaufort Sea: Arctic exploration and the circulation of geographical knowledge”, *Journal of Historical Geography*, vol. 67 (January 2020): 24-35.

²⁴ Diana Brydon, Peter Forsgren and Gunlög Fur, *Concurrent Imaginaries, Postcolonial Worlds: Toward Revised Histories* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

²⁵ James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6-7.

²⁶ William Cecil Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground. Sketches of Climbing and Mountain Exploration in Norway between 1872 and 1903* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1904), 3.

²⁷ Paul Readman, “William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914”, *English Historical Review*, vol. CXXIX, no. 540 (October 2014), 1128.

problems of modern life. For them, the Arctic was seen as prelapsarian, a place away from the urban and industrial. Despite this, travellers relied on modern ways of getting around and were keen to prove their own modernity. Peter H. Hansen has noted the “performative” nature of modernity in various forms – travellers, for example, escape from industrial modernity at home but are also self-appointed agents of modernity when abroad.²⁸ It is important to emphasise that the Arctic was part of the modern world.²⁹ Modern technologies, ideologies, attitudes, and behaviours could be seen there, from industrial technology and infrastructure to communication networks and new forms of media. Tourism brought modern mass leisure to the Arctic, but the tourists were not the only agents of modernity (see Chapter Two). Modern practices were not simply imposed from outside. As Heidi Hansson and Anka Ryall have put it, Arctic modernity was a “multifarious phenomenon constituted by different transnational variants with strong local roots and geographical specificity”³⁰. These multiple modernities³¹ included Indigenous modernities, where Arctic Indigenous peoples participated in coeval practices.³² The Arctic was not a place in the past, or out of time, and modernity, embraced and imposed, was very much present in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Moreover, the very idea of the Arctic as beyond modernity helped to discursively tie it to the idea of the modern; as Thomas Simpson has written about mountains, they “are quintessential products of modernity even as, and precisely because, they figure as its limit and its other”.³³ The travellers could invoke modernity in their discourses of conquering the unknown, but could also be oblivious to its presence when, for example, using tourist infrastructure to visit places they perceived as wild.

²⁸ Peter H. Hansen, “Modern Mountains: The Performative Consciousness of Modernity in Britain, 1870-1940” in Martin Daunt and Bernhard Rieger (eds.), *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford: Berg, 2001): 185-202. See also Hansen, *The Summits of Modern Man: Mountaineering After the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). As Hansen’s work on modernity and mountaineering suggests, there is a significant overlap with other material on cold places, particularly mountains. This is its own subject, but there will be some cross-over throughout this thesis, given that many travellers were also mountaineers. For mountaineering and modernity, see also, amongst others, Ben Anderson, *Cities, Mountains and Being Modern in Fin-De-siècle England and Germany* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); Alan McNee, *The New Mountaineer in Late Victorian Britain : Materiality, Modernity, and the Haptic Sublime* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); and Thomas Simpson, “Modern mountains from the Enlightenment to the Anthropocene”, *The Historical Journal*, vol. 62, issue 2 (2019): 553-81. On skiing and modernity, see Andrew Denning, *Skiing into Modernity: A Cultural and Environmental History* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015) and Denning, “Alpine Modern: Central European Skiing and the Vernacularization of Cultural Modernism, 1900-1939”, *Central European History*, vol. 46, no. 4 (December 2013): 850-90.

²⁹ For Arctic modernities, see Heidi Hansson and Anka Ryall (eds.), *Arctic Modernities: The Environmental, the Exotic and the Everyday* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017).

³⁰ Hansson and Ryall, “Introduction: Environmental, Exotic, Everyday Arctic” in Hansson and Ryall, *Arctic Modernities*, 9.

³¹ S.N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities”, *Daedalus*, vol. 129, no. 1, Multiple Modernities (2000): 1-29.

³² See, for example, Marianne Cronin, “Dog Sleds, Parkas, and Airplanes: Material Histories of Polar Exploration”, *Moving Worlds*, vol. 15, no. 2: The Postcolonial Arctic (2015): 70-80.

³³ Simpson, “Modern mountains”, 554.

Moreover, to be modern was for travellers to occupy multiple places and multiple ways of being, even if this was rejected in their texts. They often perceived their travel as temporal, where the traveller was moving back through time to a previous age. As Anne McClintock has shown, this sense of travel through space also being travel back in time was a crucial part of wider colonial discourse, setting modernity at home against a “backward” periphery.³⁴ The Arctic was depicted as home to a number of regimes of temporality, from the deep past to the hypermodern. Whilst travel to the Arctic was often seen as a journey to the past, the Arctic also had a sense of “lateness” by the twentieth century. It was one of a diminishing number of unexplored places, but also threatened by the encroachment of modernity and a sense that it would become like the rest of the world, particularly with, for example, the allocation of Spitsbergen to Norway at the Paris Peace Conference in 1920. Its status as a place of exception was threatened. Arctic temporalities could also take different forms in different places. In Norway, travellers believed they were visiting a pastoral medieval past, particularly linked to ideas of common Norse culture between Britain and Norway. The exception was when travellers encountered Sámi, who were figured as unacceptably “backward”, unlike Norwegians who were thought of as appealingly uncorrupted by modernity. The idea of backwardness was also evident in British discourses about Inuit, often presented as “stone age” people, a phrase used by Clements Markham, the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) at the time of the BAE, among others.³⁵ This made Inuit objects of study, disgust, and envy, depending on the traveller writing about them. These supposed meetings with the human past show how encounter was an important part of constructing discourses about the Arctic. The region was always a co-creation, whether travellers realised it or not. In Norway, for example, British mountaineers made institutional links with Norwegian organisations but also had their travel and experiences shaped by Norwegians and Sámi at particular sites such as camps and tourist attractions. These travelleses offer alternative perspectives on the histories of regions like the Arctic, which were not simply explored as travellers found them.³⁶ Thinking about the agency of travelleses enriches our understandings of histories of the region, as well as challenging limited versions of the region produced by travellers who depicted the Arctic through colonial discourses.

³⁴ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995), 40. Bathsheba Demuth has shown how Arctic economic development is often figured as bringing the Arctic into historical time. Demuth, *Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2019), 139.

³⁵ Clements R. Markham, “Papers on the Greenland Eskimos” in *A Selection of Papers on Arctic Geography and Ethnology. Reprinted, and Presented to the Arctic Expedition of 1875: by the President, Council, and Follows of the Royal Geographical Society* (London: John Murray, 1875).

³⁶ “Travelleses” being the people “that [the travel writer] travelled among and wrote about”. See Wendy Bracewell, “Arguing from Experience: Travelleses versus Travelers in Early Modern Exchanges”, *Renaissance Studies*, vol. 33, no. 4 (September 2019), 549.

Considering this range of different types of travel and travellers means managing similarity and difference – what stayed the same and what changed? Acknowledging the difference between manhauling across an ice pack and taking a cruise ship up a Norwegian fjord is important for this project. Whilst these experiences were not necessarily similar, the ways in which their travelogues draw on shared ideas and discourses of Northern space is of note and can be brought together. It is also important to examine differences between similar travellers – Slingsby and Elizabeth Le Blond, another British mountaineer, both visited Norway to walk and to climb at the end of the nineteenth century but wrote about the country and people quite differently. Slingsby took a keen interest in Norwegian language and culture, particularly their supposed connections to an Old Norse culture shared with Britain, whilst Le Blond enjoyed Norway for its quietness in contrast to the Alps, taking little interest in the place itself. Yet they also share commonalities with Nares or Alexander Glen, who led Oxford University expeditions to Spitsbergen in the 1930s in how they write about the Arctic. The shared concerns of modernity, temporality and empire come through in their texts.³⁷ Transport, for example, varied enormously across these journeys, but was a crucial means for considering and experiencing modernity in the Arctic, from the steamship and the aeroplane to the kayak and the sledge. One of the reasons for this was the flattening format of the travelogue. For all the formal potential of travel writing, most accounts focussed on transport and logistics at the beginning, considered the journey or a series of journeys and the places visited or travelled through, and ended with the return. This was even the case for texts from larger expedition, as significant scientific appendices tended to keep research material separate from the body of the narrative. Additional types of texts did depict travel and considering genres such as guidebooks also offer valuable perspectives on constructions of the North. These tended to cluster around more visited locations – so Norway rather than Greenland – but many Norwegian travel guides contained sections on Spitsbergen, particularly after 1900, when existing Norwegian travel infrastructure such as cruise routes were extended.³⁸ The type of traveller also changed over this period and this is reflected in the

³⁷ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*; Elizabeth Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1908); George Strong Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea During 1975-6 in H.M. Ships 'Alert' and 'Discovery', Volumes I and II* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1878); A.R. Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic: The Oxford University Arctic Expedition to Spitsbergen, 1933* (London: Faber and Faber, 1935); A.R. Glen and N.A.C. Croft, *Under the Pole Star: The Oxford University Arctic Expedition, 1935-6* (London: Methuen, 1937).

³⁸ See, for example, W.A. Dutt, *Sunlit Norway: Nature's Wonderland* (London and Tunbridge Wells: B&N Steamship Line and Norwegian State Railways, 1916). Rudy Koshar has written about guidebooks as a historical source and James Koranyi has recently considered them as a useful source for spatial history. Rudy Koshar, "What Ought to be Seen: Tourists' Guidebooks and National Identities in Germany and Modern Europe", *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 33, no. 3 (1998): 323-40 and James Koranyi, "Travel guides" in Riccardo Bavaj, Konrad Lawson, and Bernhard Struck (eds.), *Doing Spatial History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022): 56-72.

tone of the travelogues. The interwar texts are much lighter in tone than Nares' account of the BAE, but it is still striking how consistent their concerns remain.

The quotation in my title – “semi-professional polar explorers” – comes from one of these accounts of a cruise to Spitsbergen, written by an American traveller, Sigel Roush, and published in a guidebook for British travellers to Norway, *Sunlit Norway: Nature's Wonderland*, in 1916.³⁹ For Roush, this status had benefits and drawbacks. Whilst he was unable to travel north of Spitsbergen to the Pole, he also “envied not the glory of him who had braved its dangers and still lived to tell the tale”.⁴⁰ Being able to safely retreat meant avoiding the worst of Arctic conditions and a return, in Roush's words, “to civilization and to life”.⁴¹ However, the phrase “semi-professional polar explorers” seems to capture specific features of the travel described in this thesis and how this project brings together a range of Arctic travel writing. It shows the ambiguous status of many of the travellers themselves and their own self-description or approach to their travel. They were often eager to enjoy the experience of the Arctic, whilst also recognising that their activities were not always exploration per se. However, the quotation also shows the degree to which Arctic travel was defined by exploration and explorers. Although it may not seem as appropriate a title for writing about Nares and the British Arctic Exploration, the idea of semi-professionalism also raised questions about the purpose of travel. Nares and other explorers were not simply professionals – even if many of their crew members may have been. The focus of the expeditions was often on proving personal, national, and imperial worth, as well as reaching symbolic points such as the Pole. Whilst professionalism does not preclude these, it is important to remember that the justifications for exploration went far beyond travel for financial gain. These questions of purpose are important to remember and recurred in the interwar period, where the students and other young men who visited the region validated their travel as scientific research, whilst still considering their travel – and work – as exploration. The line between work and leisure was not always apparent. Travellers to Norway are perhaps the clearest example of “semi-professional polar explorers”, seeking many of the attractions of the Arctic without the commitment of a lengthy expedition. For the mountaineers among them, the discourse of amateurism and professionalism that was found in British sport in the late nineteenth century was also important.⁴² Martin Conway was perhaps the clearest example of the “semi-professional polar explorer”, visiting Spitsbergen in the 1890s and publishing a number of books about the islands. He wrote about

³⁹ Dutt, *Sunlit Norway*, 208.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 209.

⁴² See, for example, Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) and Duncan Stone, “Deconstructing the Gentleman Amateur”, *Cultural and Social History*, vol. 18, no. 3 (2021): 315–36.

Spitsbergen as an expert, but travelled as a tourist, gathering and sharing information whilst enjoying an escape into the aesthetics of the landscape.

Sources

By using published travel writing as its main source base, this thesis takes a cultural historical approach to the history of Arctic travel, with a further emphasis on transnational and colonial histories of the region. I also position the Arctic as a part of wider trends of modernity in the late nineteenth century, as well as producing its own. I approach and analyse a range of travel texts through close reading, to draw out particular representations and discussions of the Arctic by British travellers, with a particular focus on the key themes of empire, modernity, and temporality. Most of the travelogues are single author texts, which give an account of a journey or journeys in a particular place, as indicated in the definition above. In Chapter One, I draw on the main published account of Captain Nares, which follows the conventions of travel writing, as well as his official report to the Admiralty. I complement and challenge these texts with the published account of Suersaq, an Inuk guide who travelled with several British and American expeditions, considering the two accounts concurrently. This multivocal approach offers a fuller and richer approach to a history of the British Arctic Expedition, and Arctic travel more generally, applying the approaches of postcolonial history and theory to challenge imperial narratives. I also use on the unpublished diaries of expedition members, which offer an alternative perspective to that of Nares or Suersaq, and I consider material about the Arctic presented to the BAE by the RGS and how it framed the Expedition's approach to knowledge gathering.

In Chapter Two, I consider a range of travelogues by British travellers to Norway between 1875 and 1914. Some of these describe wider journeys across the Nordic region, but I have chosen to focus solely on depictions of Norway and Sápmi. I have discussed Olive Murray Chapman's 1930s travelogue, *Across Lapland*, as well, as this is a rarer example of a later account which addresses similar issues to those in the late nineteenth century. I also examine the work of Paul Du Chaillu, a French-American traveller, as his travel writing was significant in Anglophone discourse about Norway at the time. Alongside these, I also use travel guides and the yearbook of *Den Norske Turistforening* [The Norwegian Trekking Association] (DNT). These alternative travel texts allow for the consideration of the development of infrastructure around travel and tourism, as well as developing transnational histories of institutions like DNT. This thesis therefore intervenes in the historiography of leisure, in Norway and beyond, as well as more formal exploration. It also considers the position of Sápmi within these fields, as well as wider histories of Scandinavia and its colonial past.

In Chapter Three, I use the accounts of interwar expeditions published in book form, particularly from travel to Spitsbergen and East Greenland, as well as Martin Conway's earlier accounts

of travel in Spitsbergen. This is supplemented with material drawn from the intellectual milieu of the travellers, particularly academic journals such as *Polar Record*. Reading this range of travel writing critically and, at times, against the grain, offers a rich insight into British understandings of the Arctic in the interwar period, as well as the experiences of exploration and the influence of those encountered. I also consider wider themes of colonialism and development, as well as histories of science, through these texts, offering new ways to think about more international and global histories of Arctic travel.

The focus on published material allows a comparison between a range of travel texts, particularly highlighting the different types of texts that can be approached as such. Nares' account, for example, is rarely considered alongside other travelogues as travel writing, but doing so refocuses attention on the similarities between Nares' text and the travel writing of travellers to Norway in the late nineteenth century. Particular attention can be paid to their awareness of audience reception and genre conventions, as well as intertextual references to other similar texts. The published nature of these texts raises questions of authorial authority – at times, clearly claimed, but at others, challenged by Indigenous voices or a willing embrace of ignorance for narrative reasons. However, as is particularly clear in the gaps between published text and diary in Nares' writing, published accounts could be partial. Weakness, discomfort, and confusion could be elided – or selectively deployed. Published accounts do, however, offer an important source for historians interested in both representation and the practical details of travel. These public texts could serve as guides for future travellers, a function authors were often keenly aware of, as well as contributing to the idea of the Arctic in the British imagination. Whilst Nares, and formal Arctic exploration more generally, has been widely studied, it has rarely been placed alongside other travel writing from the wider region as this thesis does. Moreover, the inclusion of interwar material allows for the study of discourses of British Arctic travel across a longer period, considering similarities and differences from the nineteenth century. This is particularly apparent in how expedition texts from the interwar period place themselves within longer lineages of British Arctic exploration, as well as noting their differences to their predecessors.

Overall, this thesis makes interventions into a number of areas of historical and interdisciplinary fields. As well as offering a history of exploration in the Arctic, it also considers modern leisure cultures in the region, as well as tensions between the two. I consider the infrastructural history of these leisure cultures, as well as their transnational nature and their relationships to landscapes and the environment. This is also necessarily a history of empire and colonialism in multiple forms, from representation to governance. Connected to this is an examination of the relationships between the region and modernity, from modern forms to travel to the temporal

lenses applied to the region and its inhabitants. Travel writing brings together these strands of enquiry, providing a literary and cultural historical discourse which demonstrates the significance of the Arctic in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Literature summary

The literature on travel in the Arctic is large and a brief overview of that which has not been mentioned already is necessary. Writing on British Arctic exploration is particularly significant. A notable example is Robert David's 2000 text, *The Arctic in the British Imagination, 1818-1914*.⁴³ David uses Bernard Smith's division between "images" – representations created by eyewitnesses - and "imaginings" – derivative representations based on the "images" – to consider a range of ways in which the Arctic was presented, developed from Smith's work on Australasia.⁴⁴ Notable "images" are the textual depictions of the Arctic by travellers, but visual imagery is also crucial to the percolation of the Arctic into the public imagination.⁴⁵ Jen Hill has considered the representation of the Arctic in fiction, particularly how the Arctic is important as a "geography that is not geography... [and] as an imperial space that is not part of empire", at least in British conceptions of the region.⁴⁶ Moreover, in Hill's words, "that its "blankness" lent itself to such an erasure of complexity made the Arctic a useful geographical space for articulating a racialized, gendered subjectivity" in British public discourse.⁴⁷ Nanna Kaalund has recently contributed a transnational approach to considering travel writing as a source for Arctic exploration. Drawing on British, Canadian, American, Danish and Greenlandic accounts of Arctic travel in the nineteenth century, Kaalund's account considers how travel writing was used to establish expertise and make knowledge claims that could bolster control of the Arctic in the region and in the colonial metropole.⁴⁸ Other interesting recent histories of nineteenth-century Arctic travel include Hester Blum's work on the print culture of polar expeditions, *The News at the Ends of the Earth*, which considers "polar ecomedia", particularly shipboard newspapers, as useful for understandings of polar space and temporality,⁴⁹ and Shane McCorristine's work on the place of the supernatural – "dreaming, clairvoyante travel, reverie, spiritualism and ghost-seeing"⁵⁰ – in Arctic

⁴³ David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination*.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, xviii.

⁴⁵ Visual culture is also covered extensively in Russell Potter, *Arctic Spectacles: The Frozen North in Visual Culture, 1818-1875* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).

⁴⁶ Hill, *White Horizon*, 16.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴⁸ Nanna Katrine Lüders Kaalund, *Explorations in the Icy North: How Travel Narratives Shaped Arctic Science in the Nineteenth Century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021).

⁴⁹ Hester Blum, *The News at the Ends of the Earth: The Print Culture of Polar Exploration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

⁵⁰ McCorristine, *The Spectral Arctic*, 3.

travel narratives, particularly considering the Franklin Expedition and the significance of its disappearance as a cultural event. McCorristine offers a useful corrective to narratives which simply assume European knowledge about the Arctic to be the product of rational and planned collection and construction. Edward Armston-Sheret has written about the medical history of British polar exploration,⁵¹ whilst Eavan O'Dochartaigh has considered the visual and material culture of the Franklin Expedition and its search parties.⁵² Looking specifically at the American context, Michael Robinson has considered cultures of Arctic exploration in the USA, particularly the tension between heroic achievement and the desire for escape to the past.⁵³

There is also a large literature on exploration more generally. Prominent recent texts include Dane Kennedy's monograph, *The Last Blank Spaces*, which discusses the ways in which local knowledge of a space is erased by Western travellers eager to claim exploration firsts.⁵⁴ Felix Driver has also considered British cultures of exploration in *Geography Militant*, particularly the importance of institutions like the Royal Geographical Society for imperial knowledge construction.⁵⁵ Vanessa Heggie has written on the importance of exploration in extreme environments, particularly the polar regions and mountainous areas, for the study of the human body in the twentieth century. Hostile spaces and bodily reactions to them shaped ideas about race, gender, and technology throughout the period.⁵⁶ Specific studies of interwar exploration to Spitsbergen include Peder Anker's history of the relationship between the development of ecology as an academic field and imperialism, *Imperial Ecology*, and the recent work of Johanne Bruun.⁵⁷

Tourism as practice and discourse has also been covered in academic literature, with two crucial texts being John Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* and Dean MacCannell's *The Tourist*, as well as Buzard's

⁵¹ Edward Armston-Sheret, "Tainted bodies: Scurvy, Bad Food and the Reputation of the British National Antarctic Expedition, 1901-1904", *Journal of Historical Geography*, vol. 65 (July 2019): 19-28 and Edward Armston-Sheret, "'A Good Advertisement for Teetotalers': Polar Explorers and Debates over the Health Effects of Alcohol, 1875-1904", *The Social History of Alcohol and Drugs*, no. 33, no. 2 (Fall 2019): 257-85.

⁵² Eavan O'Dochartaigh, *Visual Culture and Arctic Voyages: Personal and Public Art and Literature of the Franklin Search Expeditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022). Other notable work includes Beau Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensationalism and Geographical Discovery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) and Huw Lewis-Jones, *Imagining the Arctic: Heroism, Spectacle and Polar Exploration* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

⁵³ Michael F. Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible: Arctic Exploration and American Culture* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006).

⁵⁴ Dane Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces: Exploring Africa and Australia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 6.

⁵⁵ Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

⁵⁶ Vanessa Heggie, *Higher and Colder: A History of Extreme Physiology and Exploration* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2019).

⁵⁷ Anker, *Imperial Ecology: Environmental Order in the British Empire, 1895-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Johanne M. Bruun, "'Aircraft and pencraft': Between tradition and modernity in arctic varsity exploration", *Journal of Historical Geography*, vol. 78 (2022): 182-92 and Bruun, "The field and its prosthesis: Archiving Arctic ecologies in the 1920s", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 47, issue 4 (December 2022): 1058-74.

idea of the “beaten track”.⁵⁸ However, these have been developed in recent edited collections such as Kate Hill’s *Britain and the Narration of Travel in the Nineteenth Century* and Benjamin Colbert and Lucy Morrison’s *Continental Tourism, Travel Writing, and the Consumption of Culture, 1814-1900*.⁵⁹ Specific works on British travel in Scandinavia include Peter Fjågesund and Ruth A. Symes’ *The Northern Utopia*, a thorough account of the appeal of Norway to British travellers in the nineteenth century, and Kathryn Walchester’s *Gamle Norge and Nineteenth-Century British Women Travellers in Norway*.⁶⁰ Both texts outline the increasing popularity of Norway for British travellers in the nineteenth century, considering both the attractions of the country and how it was included in a range of British discourses of travel. Walchester’s account is particularly significant in considering how an idea of “Old Norway” appealed specifically to female travellers in the nineteenth century as an alternative to life in Britain. Andrew Wawn’s *The Vikings and the Victorians* is a key text in highlighting the connections between Britain and Scandinavia in the nineteenth century, as he traces the cultural and literary revival of Norse literature.⁶¹ As Wawn discusses, a coherent idea of the Viking North was largely constructed in nineteenth-century Britain, as what were regarded as old Northern values, based on literary antecedents, could be matched up with contemporary British equivalents.

The edited collections, *Arctic Discourses* and *Arctic Modernities*, have also made important contributions to recent historical and literary studies of the Arctic, considering the region’s diversity and travel through literary, art and cultural historical approaches.⁶² Other recent work on Arctic and Nordic travel writing includes *Nordic Travels*, edited by Janicke S. Kaasa, Jakob Lothe and Ulrike Spring, which considers a wide range of forms of travel texts both from and to the Nordic region.⁶³ Research for other disciplines, such as that of the geographer Jen Rose Smith and the art historian Bart Pushaw is also offering important perspectives on the history of the region.⁶⁴ Their research, among others, is

⁵⁸ John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (London: SAGE, 2011) and Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken, 1989).

⁵⁹ Hill, *Britain and the Narration of Travel in the Nineteenth Century* and Benjamin Colbert and Lucy Morrison (eds.), *Continental Tourism, Travel Writing, and the Consumption of Culture, 1814-1900* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

⁶⁰ Fjågesund and Symes, *The Northern Utopia* and Walchester, *Gamle Norge...*

⁶¹ Andrew Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians: Inventing the Old North in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000).

⁶² Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp (eds.), *Arctic Discourses* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010) and Hansson and Ryall, *Arctic Modernities*.

⁶³ Kaasa, Lothe, and Spring (eds.), *Nordic Travels*. Elisabeth Oxfeldt has also written on Scandinavian travel writing. Oxfeldt, *Journeys from Scandinavia: Travelogues of Africa, Asia, and South America, 1840-2000* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

⁶⁴ Jen Rose Smith, ““Exceeding Beringia”: Upending Universal Human Events and Wayward Transits in Arctic Spaces”, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, (September 2020): 1-18; Bart Pushaw, “Poq’s Temporal Sovereignty and the Inuit Printing of Colonial History”, *Journal18*, issue 12 The ‘Long’ 18th Century? (Fall 2021) and Pushaw, “Blackness at the Edge of the World. Making Race in the Colonial Arctic: Blackness at the Edge of the World. Making Race in the Colonial Arctic”, *Periskop – Forum for Kunsthistorisk Debat*, no. 25 (2021): 60–75, among others.

particularly valuable in embracing and foregrounding a range of Arctic identities and raising important questions around race, gender and sexuality in Arctic histories.

This thesis seeks to contribute to wider work on the Arctic by developing an idea of Arctic travel as a multifaceted, transnational endeavour and Arctic travel writing as the product of numerous discourses about the region beyond the perceptions of the single traveller. Moreover, this thesis makes a significant contribution to this literature on Arctic travel. By emphasising the longer and wider histories of Arctic travel, especially with a focus on tourism and the interwar period, this thesis brings material which is often seen as separate, as well as understudied. By including the interwar period, this thesis presents the period of British Arctic exploration as stretching beyond the nineteenth century, particularly highlighting changing ideas of modernity around Arctic exploration. This novel approach, particularly around the periodisation, also allows for tourism and exploration to be discussed together, considering travel as a wider framework that highlights features of its different forms. This frame also emphasises the transnational elements of this travel and this research, taking it beyond the familiar framing of British exploration in purely national or British-imperial terms. This thesis also moves beyond the consideration of representations of the Arctic, which much scholarship on travel writing does, to also analyse the historical experiences of travel, particularly the importance of transport, infrastructure, and transnational contact.

Chapter Overview

In this thesis, Chapter One, “‘Diligently searched for relics’: Empire and Temporality in Writing from the British Arctic Expedition, 1875-76”, addresses the British Arctic Expedition of 1875, based on the published account of Nares, unpublished diary material from Expedition members and the published account of Suersaq, an Inuk member of the Expedition. The chapter considers the limitations of seeing and knowing the Arctic in Nares’ account, as well as his relationships to wider networks of scientific access and communication. It also shows how the Arctic was a space to negotiate ideas of masculinity and national and imperial identities, particularly given the legacy of the failure of the Franklin Expedition and the ideals it set. Moreover, the chapter also uses Suersaq’s account of the Expedition to consider the erased labour and value of Inuit to the Expedition, as well as how travel to the Arctic – along the west coast of Greenland and on towards the Pole in this case – was temporal travel. For Nares, encounters with the Inuit enabled the study of the human past. Yet the self-proclaimed modern Expedition found itself struggling with Arctic temporalities, cut off and considering the meaning of their suffering. The BAE was the last of a certain style of British Arctic expeditions, but also significant for thinking about British ideas of modernity and empire in the Arctic in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Chapter Two, “‘Smoother for the adventurer’: Infrastructure and Modernity in British Travel Writing from Norway in the Late Nineteenth Century”, considers British travel writing about Norway from 1875 to around 1914, particularly travel to mountain regions and the north of the country. Norway’s appeal was as an “accessible Arctic”, where visitors could experience Arctic sensations and phenomena without the time, cost, and hardship of an Arctic expedition. Using the published accounts of mountaineers like Slingsby and Le Blond, as well as more traditional tourist accounts, the chapter considers the appeal of Norwegian landscapes, the temporalities of travel in Norway, and the changing role of infrastructure. Spectacular Norwegian landscapes were seen as a particularly appealing place in which to escape the urban and industrial, as well as a place back in time. This “backwardness” was appealing in specific ways: as a remnant of a pre-industrial past and because of supposed British racial connections to Norway. Both were appealing to travellers; however, in the north of Norway and Sápmi more generally, Sámi were seen as unappealingly outside of modernity. Travellers, despite the appeal of escaping the modern, also participated in the construction of travel infrastructure, in material and textual ways, through involvement with Norwegian organisations like *Den Norske Turistforening*. These British ideas of Norway, like the infrastructure they used, were transnational co-constructions, influenced by encounters with Norwegian and Sámi.

Chapter Three, “‘Such skill that they still thought he was a native’: Defining Modern Exploration in Spitsbergen and East Greenland”, considers the expansion of Norwegian travel networks north to Spitsbergen and particularly the writings of Martin Conway from the islands. Conway enjoyed exploring the archipelago as a supposed blank and worried about its corruption by tourists, whilst also encouraging others to follow him to Spitsbergen. Similar tensions of purpose can be seen in the travelogues of the interwar expeditions from Oxford University. Whilst these were ostensibly scientific, they were also providing training for young men, particularly preparing them for imperial service. In Spitsbergen, and in similar expeditions to East Greenland, the parties experimented with flight and saw themselves as establishing new modern forms of Arctic exploration. However, in Greenland, encounters with Inuit, particularly during the 1930-31 British Arctic Air-Route Expedition (BAARE) and the 1932-33 East Greenland or Pan Am Expedition, both led by Gino Watkins, resulted in experiments with Indigenous technologies such as kayaks. Ideas of the modern again were refracted through experiences and ideas of travel and transport. The travellers were also acutely aware of their position within lineages of British polar exploration as both a heritage to embrace and a legacy to surpass. Modernity, empire, and ideas of escape to the Arctic appear once again in their travelogues.

By considering travel writing from the Arctic, particularly the Nordic region and Greenland, across the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this thesis will highlight these key themes as

constants. Moreover, this project has relevance for the present and future. The Arctic is currently a crucial space affected by anthropogenic climate change and is therefore much discussed in public discourse. Given this attention, it is important to remain mindful that many of the ways in which the Arctic is presented today have roots in the colonial discourses of the nineteenth century. Critically examining the histories and meanings of these ideas is crucial for pushing back against harmful misrepresentations. Whilst unique discourses appeared in each time and place discussed in this project, the consistent appearance of certain ideas in Arctic space allow the texts produced by travellers from these places at this time to be approached together. The Arctic was a crucial space in which British travellers could think about their own – multiple – identities. This often started with national identity and how the Arctic revealed certain “British” traits through its challenging conditions. Britishness was also a key concept for British travellers in Norway, who sought connections between the histories of the two nations. This investment in national identity was often linked to a British imperial identity, visible in understandings of service and supremacy. Scientific research and exploration could serve imperial purposes, as well as providing training for future work in the Empire itself. Moreover, British travellers wrote about the Arctic in language steeped in imperial discourse. They saw themselves as ordering the world for empire and empire ordered how they saw the world. Arctic travel also allowed the traveller to reflect on gender. The High Arctic tundra and sea ice was seen as an ideal testing ground for proving masculinity, whilst the social structures of rural Norway were embraced by female travellers as an alternative that could be applied at home. Anxieties about modernity were closely linked to contested or unstable identities and the Arctic was also a space to consider a changing world. Travel writing about the Arctic contained discourses about modernity at home and the Arctic. Questions of Arctic modernities allowed for discussions of technology and infrastructure, as travellers attempted to deal with the contradictions of escaping modernity by modern means, as well as the prospect of other travellers accompanying or following them. Modernity was another a way of reflecting on race and empire and Arctic encounters confirmed or challenged British understandings of how the world was ordered. However, it is crucial to emphasise the transnational aspect of this travel. This was not just that the travel was made beyond Britain. Discourses which appear in travelogues written by British travellers were influenced by Inuit, Sámi, Danes, and Norwegians. At times, these influences were apparent to the travellers and even embraced, but the travelogues must sometimes be read against the grain to reveal these co-constructions. The Arctic presented in the texts, as well as the experience of travel, was dependent on others. On practical and discursive levels, journeys in the Arctic were not made alone.

Chapter One:
“Diligently searched for relics”:
Empire and Temporality in Writing from the British Arctic Expedition, 1875-76

The British Arctic Expedition (BAE) left Portsmouth on 29th May 1875 watched by “closely packed multitudes”, whose “deafening cheers” demonstrated the “interest taken by the country at large”¹ in a voyage intending to reach the North Pole. Two ships, the *Alert* and the *Discovery*, headed north along the west coast of Greenland, and the Expedition, led by Captain George Strong Nares, was the culmination of a campaign to relaunch British exploration and research in the Arctic. The British Arctic Expedition was the first major British scientific expedition to the Arctic since the disappearance of the Franklin Expedition in 1846, but it operated in its shadow. Although substantial knowledge about the region had been gathered by the numerous search parties who attempted to locate Franklin and his crew, the loss of the Franklin Expedition had significantly influenced British ideas about the risks and rewards of Arctic exploration.² Moreover, British confidence in their ability to explore the region and face its challenges, whilst still returning home, had been shaken. Nevertheless, Nares’ Expedition set out to gather and record significant geographic and ethnographic information about the Arctic and its inhabitants, as well as seeking to reach the North Pole and settle the debate over the existence of an “Open Polar Sea”. Its objectives were both scientific and imperial, developing existing knowledge about the Arctic regions for metropolitan institutions that were crucial for the discourses and practices of empire, but also providing a symbol of British might, power, and ingenuity. Success would help the British public re-evaluate the loss of Franklin.

The Expedition reached a new northernmost point, but it failed to reach the Pole and serious outbreaks of scurvy tarnished its legacy. As the *Navy* journal wrote on Nares’ return, the Expedition “went out like a rocket, and has come back like the stick”.³ However, the Expedition’s depiction and reception offer useful insight into broader British conceptions of the Arctic in the nineteenth century. The Arctic was a space where British imperial ambitions were projected and performed: reaching the Pole offered a potent symbol of geographical might and the extensive collecting and measuring contributed to new imperial knowledge formations. The struggle faced and fortitude shown by an expeditionary party could also be co-opted as proof of, as Jen Hill puts it, “the resilience, ingenuity, and staunchness associated with British national character”.⁴ When scurvy afflicted the Nares party,

¹ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 2.

² Caswell, “The RGS and the British Arctic Expedition”, 201.

³ Quoted in G. Hattersley-Smith, “The British Arctic Expedition, 1875-76”, *Polar Record*, vol. 18, no. 113 (1976), 118.

⁴ Hill, *White Horizon*, 6.

it destabilised notions of heroic British male bodies struggling against a harsh environment and showed that the concerns around the loss of the Franklin Expedition were still relevant for British explorers in the Arctic. Little seemed to have been learnt about Arctic survival. The appeal of the Arctic as “blank space” was crucial to British imperial imaginings, but this discourse was difficult to maintain when expeditions made significant contact with Inuit living in the area. Some of this was deliberately sought out, both for the purpose of ethnographic research and to elicit practical support. The textual presence of this shows an ethnographic gaze on Inuit settlements, treating the people encountered as another object of study. However, the texts of British travellers such as Nares also chose to elide British reliance on Inuit support. Inuit aid and agency amplified existing British concerns around who could map, record, and communicate in Arctic space, as well as who could claim the status of an Arctic expert. British authority and knowledge could be unsettled. The published accounts of Nares attempted to position him as an expert, but this was not always as clear as intended. This chapter considers the ways in which the visual ordering of the Arctic which the texts produced by Nares intended to impose was interrupted and complicated by Inuit presence. The text of Suersaq, an Inuk hunter, complicates our understanding of the Expedition, although the imperial underpinnings of British and Danish discourse about Greenland and Inuit structured many encounters. Moreover, Nares’ texts considered wider themes of the Arctic as a space to contest ideas of empire and temporality, establishing and continuing ideas of the Arctic in the British imaginary that would persist into the twentieth century. These were ideas that would be taken up by a range of travellers in the North across the next seventy years.

Cultures of British Exploration

The BAE also took place within a certain British culture of exploration, both in the Arctic and beyond. The functions and meanings of exploration in public discourse were central to how expeditions were understood. Exploration was, in Felix Driver’s phrase, a “set of cultural practices which involve the mobilization of people and resources” – and this mobilization required justification.⁵ This depended in part on the varied audiences who explorers wrote for and presented to, both popular and scientific. Moreover, key sites of knowledge production could serve narrow audiences, like members of the Royal Geographical Society, or broader ones, like those who came to see popular exhibitions in museums and other public spaces.⁶ Exploration also served as an instrument of empire, entangled as it was with military, scientific and political interests and objectives.⁷ This was a tool for bringing order

⁵ Driver, *Geography Militant*, 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

and control to people and landscapes.⁸ Yet it could also function emotionally – the deaths of figures like Franklin and David Livingstone were used to suggest service to a higher cause, as well as redeem the worse features of imperial expansion.⁹ Death also highlighted the times when exploration failed, something highlighted by Dane Kennedy. As Kennedy notes, historians should emphasise the failure, ambivalence, and need for local assistance central to exploration.¹⁰ Exploration had a central paradox: it was almost always trying to discover the known anew.¹¹ As such, the purpose of exploration needed again to be established.

Key to this was the idea of exploration as science. Vanessa Heggie has argued that it is essential for historians to consider exploration, and the texts produced by explorers, as a way to understand science in the twentieth century, as it has been for the eighteenth and nineteenth.¹² She writes of Antarctic exploration that “it was not unreasonable for Robert Falcon Scott and his teams to expect that their stories, published as popular exploratory accounts, would be as valid and perhaps more valuable as sources of facts, including scientific facts, as a paper in a scientific or medical journal”.¹³ As this suggests, explorers could see themselves as scientists, sharing their findings with wide audiences, and Nares’ texts functioned in this way in their nineteenth-century context. However, this was an understanding of research and exploration that rooted knowledge in travel and experience, a discourse which was not always uncontested. Theoretical understandings of geography also claimed to make sense of the world.¹⁴ Moreover, the geographical achievements of exploration, particularly poles and summits, were not always significant for their role in knowledge production. They were often symbolic achievements for empire, which the collecting of specimens and measurements could impede and hinder, whilst also themselves being colonising practices. Driver’s work on “hidden histories” has also tried to recentre the labour of Indigenous intermediaries, asking “what was made visible and what was obscured in standard narratives of exploration”.¹⁵ As Peter Martin and Edward Armston-Sheret have noted, “such dependence on local knowledge, transport, and labour was by no means unusual yet was downplayed consistently in the Western travellers’ expeditionary accounts”.¹⁶ However, it is also worth thinking critically about the idea of the intermediary, a way of framing

⁸ Ibid., 82.

⁹ Ibid., 87,

¹⁰ Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces*, 5.

¹¹ Ibid., 6.

¹² Heggie, “Why Isn’t Exploration a Science?”, *Isis*, vol. 105, no. 2 (June 2014): 318-34.

¹³ Ibid., 324.

¹⁴ Driver, *Geography Militant*, 14.

¹⁵ Driver, “Hidden histories made visible? Reflections on a geographical exhibition”, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 38, issue 3 (July 2013), 421.

¹⁶ Martin and Armston-Sheret, “Off the beaten track? Critical approaches to exploration studies”, *Geography Compass*, vol. 14, issue 1 (January 2020), 8.

Indigenous lives that still relies upon the framework of the expedition and the explorer. This is still a history of a place and people framed around their exploration and supposed discovery.

Whilst this context for exploration influenced its practice in the Arctic significantly, there were also important local specifics. Chauncey Loomis famously discussed the significance of the sublime to British Arctic exploration and the power of Arctic landscapes is important to consider.¹⁷ As this chapter will show, central to the idea of Arctic hardship was the powerful landscape, one Loomis describes as “somehow vaster, more mysterious, and more terrible than elsewhere on the globe”, one which failure only made ominous.¹⁸ Valuable critiques of Loomis have focussed on his idea of rational explorers having their portrayals of the Arctic turned into sublime depictions and have emphasised how this causality underestimates the influence of the Arctic sublime on the explorers themselves, as this chapter will also address.¹⁹ Loomis emphasises the significance of Franklin for showing the power of the Arctic, but also for undermining the image of the sublime with his painful death – “bleeding gums, running sores, and constricted bowels are not sublime”.²⁰ This particular physical suffering was antithetical to the detached fear of the sublime, as well as a banal return to bodily functions from the transcendental Arctic. Whilst Franklin was undoubtedly significant for discourses of British exploration, later expeditions such as the British Arctic Expedition were less “late” than might be thought. Moreover, the legacy of these ideas can be seen in different forms of Arctic travel into the twentieth century.²¹ It is also worth considering, as Benjamin Morgan and Shane McCorristine do, the strange and weird in Arctic exploration as a more productive way of thinking about Arctic aesthetics, over the sublime.²²

The idea of heroism also took specific forms in the Arctic. As Huw Lewis-Jones has shown, Arctic exploration created a vision of Britain as “energetic, self-confident, and patriotic” – and, it could be added, modern – whilst also connected the heroic present to a mythic past.²³ As Hill discusses, this was a heroism concerned with national character and national bodies, representing the power and

¹⁷ Chauncey C. Loomis, “The Arctic Sublime” in U.C. Knoepfelmacher, and G.B. Tennyson, *Nature and the Victorian Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977): 95-112.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁹ McCorristine, *The Spectral Arctic*, 234.

²⁰ Loomis, “The Arctic Sublime”, 110.

²¹ Fjågesund and Symes, for example, connect Loomis’s idea of the Arctic sublime to nineteenth-century travel in Norway. Fjågesund and Symes, *The Northern Utopia*, 335.

²² Benjamin Morgan, “After the Arctic Sublime”, *New Literary History*, vol. 47, no. 1 (Winter 2016), 10. Morgan calls for scholars to move beyond the Arctic sublime and search for new literary modes suitable for considering the Arctic in the age of climate change. In Morgan’s words, “apprehending what climate change might mean for historicist interpretive practices will require expanded and renewed engagements with technical dimensions of texts that a historicism oriented toward ideology critique has habitually read not as transparent expressions of themselves, but as symptoms of something hidden”. This might mean, for example, a focus on the weather data in Arctic travel narratives as a recognition of “political dimensions that are only now beginning to come into view.” *Ibid.*, 22.

²³ Lewis-Jones, *Imagining the Arctic*, 34.

fortitude of Britain and its empire.²⁴ Yet it is also important to stress the transnational components of British expeditionary culture. As Nanna Kaalund has put it, “nineteenth-century Arctic science was inherently transnational”.²⁵ Shortly after the BAE, the First International Polar Year (IPY) took place in 1882-83, with Britain a reluctant participant. This was an exercise which focussed far more on cooperation than competition, and on science over exploration.²⁶ However, the British model, which Nares still followed, saw collaboration with Danish colonial authorities and drew on information collected by American expeditions. It also required support from Inuit who joined the crew and whose knowledge was invaluable. Explorers from other nations, such as the Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen, were also well-known and celebrated in Britain.²⁷ These perspectives provide useful context for thinking about the purpose of the Nares Expedition and its attempts to make national and transnational contributions to empire and science. The two were somewhat in tension; both goals aimed to support the imperial project, but the practices of imperial science and of symbolic geographical achievement were not always reconcilable, as this chapter will show. However, thinking about questions of purpose allows for the British Arctic Expedition to be situated within this wider project, reflecting on why travellers went to the Arctic and what they sought to get out of it. For tourists, amateur scientists, and students, the region allowed them to reflect on their ideas of home and contribute to projects of knowledge.

“Ice formed on our eye-lashes”: Visual Regimes of the Arctic

The works of Nares in particular are crucial for considering the BAE and its influence on ideas about the Arctic. Two key texts are the official report which was published for the Admiralty in 1876, which outlined the achievements of the Expedition,²⁸ and the two-volume popular account of the Expedition which followed in 1878, written for a broader audience.²⁹ Considering these texts as travel writing, active in the discursive construction of the Arctic, offers insight into the position of the region in the British imagination. Moreover, Nares’ role as a key participant in British Arctic travel played an important role in this imaginative work. Nares was born in Monmouthshire in 1831 and joined the Navy in 1845, serving around the globe. He was captain of the HMS *Challenger* from 1872, before being recalled to lead the BAE. The *Challenger* Expedition was responsible for making significant scientific recordings,

²⁴ Hill, *White Horizon*, 6.

²⁵ Kaalund, *Explorations in the Icy North*, 131.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 159-62.

²⁷ Max Jones, “Exploration, Celebrity, and the Making of a Transnational Hero: Fridtjof Nansen and the *Fram* Expedition”, *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 93, no. 1 (March 2021): 68–108.

²⁸ Nares, *The Official Report of the Recent Arctic Expedition* (London: John Murray, 1876, republished Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

²⁹ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vols. I and II.

particularly in oceanography, and Nares' experience, including in the Antarctic, made him a suitable commander for another expedition that combined navigation and exploration with extensive scientific research.³⁰ Nares' experiences and depictions of Arctic travel made his contributions to popular ideas of the Arctic particularly significant. Both of Nares' published texts discuss Arctic landscapes as central to defining and describing the region. The scenery could be "perfectly barren"³¹, "gloomy" and "desolate"³² or "superb... magnificent [and] rich",³³ depending on season, weather, and location. As a region often defined by its natural phenomena, visual descriptions of Arctic landscapes were central to Nares' texts. The variety of landscapes depicted challenged frequent assumptions that the Arctic was homogeneous, despite simplified depictions of the region in visual reproductions.³⁴ Nares' depictions of the Arctic carried weight, as they were based on personal experience, not simply the repetition of tropes found in art, the press, and other media. However, Nares demonstrated an awareness of his audience's expectation that certain landscapes would appear in his texts. He was familiar with the visual language of the Arctic which was usually deployed. For example, he mentioned how icebergs "assume the fantastic shape so frequently depicted in views of Arctic scenery"³⁵ and that "Arctic scenery is naturally expected to be somewhat desolate in appearance".³⁶ Nares' noting of convention may suggest an unwillingness to perpetuate the expected, preferring to focus on scientific observation and the veracity of his own experience. Nares diversified Arctic landscapes in his descriptions, comparing one headland to the Rock of Gibraltar³⁷ and calling a plentiful region the "Elysium of the Arctic regions".³⁸ Yet he still returned to the pre-existing visual vocabulary of the Arctic. In these descriptions, the idea of the Arctic sublime came to the fore. The region was an empty and awesome space, where powerful nature overshadowed human life. His description of an ice flow is striking for its active and dramatic description. The ice pack was "danger... forcibly represented ... as the pack, with irresistible force, swept past... rising slowly and majestically out of the water".³⁹ This active Arctic landscape was powerful and dangerous, threatening the travellers' safety, but also impassive, challenging their access. Whilst this would seem to block scientific endeavour, it also provided a space for proving the travellers' fortitude and therefore gendered and national character. To be able to survive and progress in this challenging landscape was evidence of the strength of British

³⁰ R. N. Rudmose Brown, revised by Margaret Deacon, "Nares, Sir George Strong", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 September 2004).

³¹ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 89.

³² *Ibid.*, 102.

³³ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁴ David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination...*, 36.

³⁵ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 72.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁸ Nares, *The Official Report of the Recent Arctic Expedition*, 24.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

men, although the presence of Indigenous people who were similarly or more equipped to survive complicated simple notions of British superiority. This landscape was presented to accentuate the later struggles of the Expedition. By showing the difficult nature of the region for travel, Nares' depictions emphasised the skill and strength, both physical and mental, of the Expedition members when faced by its challenges.

Nares' use of the vocabulary of the sublime and empty was connected to the intensely visual perception of Arctic space underpinning his descriptions. Seeing was crucial for taking in and categorising the landscape. Moreover, navigation relied on it.⁴⁰ However, the sight of Nares and the other men was limited by conditions and, at times, the landscape itself. Fog was repeatedly a major impediment to the Expedition. On the first page of Nares' *Report*, he wrote that "the fog, stealing in from the sea, gradually obtained the mastery, and completely enveloped us".⁴¹ Fog "which would rival the densest specimen ever experienced in London on a November day"⁴² also enveloped the ships on the return voyage, hindering navigation and slowing down the journey. A similar visual barrier was caused by a snowstorm, weather "so thick that no one on board the ships... could see" a cape they approached.⁴³ Arctic visual impediments could be more bodily. For one sledging party, "ice formed on our eye-lashes thick enough to impede our sight considerably".⁴⁴ Snow blindness was another example of visual loss caused by Arctic conditions. The Expedition's relationship to light, in particular the extremities of seasonal Arctic daylight, reflected the alterity of the Arctic as a place. As with travellers to Northern Norway seeking the midnight sun (see Chapter Two), the light of the polar summer was central to their experience of Arctic space and temporality. The sun was undoubtedly appreciated by Nares on its return after the polar night, "the more as we have been so long deprived of its presence",⁴⁵ but the threat of snow blindness and the unevenness of the light also inconvenienced the travellers. Onboard the ships, "the lower-deck is perfectly dark... while the sun is so bright during the whole twenty-four hours that when on deck we are obliged to wear coloured spectacles".⁴⁶ Unlike tourist travellers in the Arctic, the need for the Expedition members to work in challenging conditions made visually spectacular and intriguing phenomena a problem rather than an attraction of the region. The prolonged daylight was also uncanny. Early in the Expedition, Nares noted that "although the sun was still above the horizon at midnight, its altitude at noon was too low to affect the temperature much".⁴⁷ This uncanniness also took bodily forms. As Nares wrote, "owing to the

⁴⁰ See, for example, O'Dochartaigh, *Visual Culture and Arctic Voyages*, 4-7.

⁴¹ Nares, *The Official Report of the Recent Arctic Expedition*, 1.

⁴² Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. II, 25.

⁴³ Nares, *The Official Report of the Recent Arctic Expedition*, 8.

⁴⁴ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 273.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 387.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 311.

⁴⁷ Nares, *The Official Report of the Recent Arctic Expedition*, 24.

constant sunlight and intense glare, we are as brown as if we had been exposed to a tropical sun”.⁴⁸ Here, Arctic light was no longer simply Arctic – its unusual nature led to Nares categorising it with “tropical” nature. It added to the visual confusion, but also aligned the Arctic with the physical hardship of different imperial territories as another condition of being far from the metropole. The challenges faced by white bodies in imperial space, particularly in challenging climates, was an imperial preoccupation. Biomedical approaches to solving these problems were an important part of attempting reinforce imperial control through settlement and survival, as well as developing theories of race.⁴⁹ The notion of the Arctic as tropical brought together two hostile spaces which tested the body of the white explorer.

When the Arctic was clearly visible, its environmental conditions continued to challenge the observer. The expanses of snow and ice were regarded as “desolate” by Nares,⁵⁰ the absence of visual markers striking. The idea of the Arctic “blank” was ideological in its erasure of existing knowledge but was also experienced as a fundamental challenge to navigation and mood. Nares wrote that “few are prepared for the utter dreariness... [with] no shadows or skyline being visible, no measure of height or distance can be formed”.⁵¹ This monotony, where “everything [is] of the same uniform colour; nothing to relieve the eye”⁵², was notably broken when colour did appear. As Nares put it, in their desperation for colour, “to our eyes, wearied with everpresent whiteness, these sad-coloured rocks and dingy precipices seemed to reflect hues of extraordinary beauty”.⁵³ Robert David has noted that popular representations of the Arctic were often monochrome, for reasons of technology and convention, but that this made rare instances of colour in the “Arctic blank” more valuable to the viewer at home, as well as in the Arctic itself.⁵⁴ Nares’ accounts fit this pattern of monochrome landscapes punctuated with colourful scenery, with particular emphasis on visual phenomena such as moon dogs,⁵⁵ the aurora borealis, and mirages. At one point, he quotes directly from the sledging journal of Albert Hastings Markham, a naval commander who participated in the Expedition, to include a description of how the ice “sparkles and glitters with the most beautiful iridescent colours... as if

⁴⁸ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. II, 67.

⁴⁹ Heggie, *Higher and Colder*, 8-11. As Heggie has noted, techniques of survival from tropical environments were also applied in the twentieth century in polar and mountain environments, particularly to deal with problems of sweating and dehydration, where technologies could be applied across non-temperate climates. *Ibid.*, 152-3.

⁵⁰ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 113.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 371

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁵⁴ David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination...*, 37-8. For more on the representations of snow and ice and printing technology, see Abbie Garrington, “Black, White, and Read All Over: Mines, Mountains, and the *Paysage Moralisé* of the British Press” in James Purdon (ed.), *British Literature in Transition, 1900–1920: A New Age?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022): 158-76.

⁵⁵ Moon and sun dogs are bright spots which appear around the moon or sun, caused by the refraction of light through ice crystals.

strewn with bright and lustrous gems; diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and sapphires being the most prominent”.⁵⁶ However, as Shane McCorrstine has put it, “fantastic atmospheric phenomena in the Arctic put into question the reliability of human perception, especially that of commanders”⁵⁷. Visual doubt and distortion showed that colour, as well as its absence, could be unsettling, undermining claims to objective and reliable observation. As McCorrstine notes, this was a particular concern for commanders, whose authority could be undermined by faltering perception.

This doubt was significant for its disruption of the programme of scientific observation that was a crucial aim of the Expedition. In McCorrstine’s phrase, the visual and atmospheric presence of the inexplicable “questions the standard narrative of polar exploration, which recounts how a rational male hero either conquers or is conquered by an inanimate and alien nature” – a valuable alternative way of thinking for polar historians.⁵⁸ Uncertainty had the threat of undermining the very purpose of the Expedition and this doubt could spread to instruments and maps. The Expedition’s thermometers struggled in the cold and Nares “very much regret[ted] the long glacier thermometer having been broken through the freezing of the mercury during the cold season, otherwise an important series of observations might have been obtained”.⁵⁹ This environmental resistance to measurement also affected the bodies which formed an important part of Arctic science, when the cold prevented measurements from being taken. Nares noted that whilst “taking bearings with a theodolite, we became so intensely cold that we were obliged to desist... with great reluctance, for I would gladly have obtained a fuller series of observations”.⁶⁰ Conditions challenged the ability of the Expedition to gather the results they wished to, and, by extension, their ability to fully know the Arctic through measurement and observation. Not only instruments failed: the existing maps which the Expedition used did not match the landscapes they travelled through. A gap between map and territory appeared where the latter was “very incorrectly delineated”.⁶¹ The “great difficulty in recognizing the land by the chart”⁶² added an additional layer of complexity to the visual, whereby, even when the landscape was visible, it failed to meet expectation. The notion of discovery was complicated by this necessary improvement of existing knowledge, where the Expedition had to both draw on and develop the work of previous expeditions. David has noted the tension between scientific research and geographical achievement, where the speed of travel required to reach the Pole necessarily overshadowed detailed observation.⁶³ Here, the two imperial ambitions of symbolic and scientific achievement were in

⁵⁶ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 356.

⁵⁷ McCorrstine, *The Spectral Arctic*, 13.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁹ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 320.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 326-7.

⁶¹ Nares, *The Official Report of the Recent Arctic Expedition*, 20.

⁶² Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 101.

⁶³ David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination...*, 16.

tension. As later travellers in the Arctic, particularly explorers in Spitsbergen and East Greenland in the 1920s and 1930s, found (see Chapter Three), both the experience and achievements of exploration were often hindered by the necessity of collecting specimens and making observations and readings. The tension itself raised questions about the importance and purpose of exploration, at a time in the 1870s when British Arctic expeditions were being relaunched. Expeditions had to reckon with what was necessary, and what was worth the financial and potentially human cost of a lengthy expedition, particularly if faced with a choice between records like reaching the Pole and collecting further observations of Arctic conditions. Both activities required a justification that could not always be made.

Another point where Nares' texts link the visual and the imperial was at altitude, bringing together a sense of possession and the scientific gaze. The Expedition were always looking for high points on land from which to survey the landscape, orient themselves and take measurements. Nares listed what he could see "at my feet"⁶⁴, taking in both "the grandeur of the view"⁶⁵ and the order of the landscape. From a "lofty station", visual orientation was possible in the "the range of our vision, which embraced an arc of a hundred and sixty degrees".⁶⁶ Nares was not alone in this; the sledging journals of Albert Markham and Pelham Aldrich both feature numerous descriptions of surveying the landscape from height.⁶⁷ Mary Louise Pratt has referred to these "promontory descriptions" as the "monarch-of-all-I-survey scene", which functions "to produce for the home audience the peak moment at which geographical "discoveries" were "won" for England".⁶⁸ As for mountaineers, the summit provided a moment of control and a powerful site for observation. As Edward Said notes in a different imperial context, "the Orientalist surveys the Orient from above, with the aim of getting hold of the whole sprawling panorama before him",⁶⁹ an idea Derek Gregory linked to Foucault's idea of "panoptic power" being transferred into an imperial gaze.⁷⁰ Nares' Arctic gaze, however, did not quite meet this expectation of panoptic vision. He was again hampered by visual impediments and phenomena. He was frustrated by the landscape for not fitting his gaze, writing that "the view was magnificent, elevation 3,700 feet, but I did not see what I wanted".⁷¹ Even the lie of the land frustrated attempts to know the Arctic. Whilst visuality was crucial to understanding the Arctic, and central to its

⁶⁴ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 111.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 324-5.

⁶⁷ See Albert Hastings Markham, Notebook and sledging diary (MS 396/2; BJ) and Pelham Aldrich, Sledging Journal (MS 286/1; BJ), Thomas H. Manning Polar Archives, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge.

⁶⁸ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 197-8.

⁶⁹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003, first published 1978), 239.

⁷⁰ Derek Gregory, "Imaginative Geographies", *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 19, no. 4 (1995), 458-9.

⁷¹ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. II, 105.

textual depiction in Nares' work, it also frustrated the projections of knowledge and expertise that Nares and others used their texts to present.

“Not engaged for sailor's work”: Concurrent Readings and the Temporality of Anthropology

The colonial gaze was not simply applied to the landscapes of the region; it also fell on the inhabitants. The British interest in and relationship to the Indigenous Inuit population in Greenland was complex, but Nares' support for Danish colonialism was clearly stated. Nares wrote that:

the Danes have consistently endeavoured to improve and ameliorate the condition of the Eskimo inhabitants of Greenland... [and] we find the native population scattered along the coasts of that inhospitable land enjoying the blessings of religion, law, order, and a considerable degree of civilization.⁷²

Greenland's status as a Danish colony also informed research undertaken there. For example, a guide to the sea ice patterns provided for the Expedition was based on observations from the shipping routes of the Royal Greenland Trading Department (*Den Kongelige Grønlandske Handel*) between Copenhagen and Greenlandic settlements.⁷³ The Royal Greenland Trading Department controlled all trade with Greenland, as well as taking an active and significant role in administering the colony.⁷⁴ A colonial mindset and approach to Inuit runs through Nares' texts, but alternative readings are possible. As the work of Gunlög Fur and others argues, “concurrent examination of the truth claims to be found in assorted archives, performances, and artistic texts proves useful for shifting the terms of negotiation on which contemporary scholarship is built”, something valuable for postcolonial scholarship.⁷⁵ Perhaps the clearest opportunity for a concurrent reading of Nares' texts is the presence on board of two Kalaallit members of crew, Suersaq, also known as Hans Hendrik, and Frederick. Both are textually present, as are other Greenlandic communities the Expedition had contact with. Suersaq also wrote an account of his travels with three American expeditions, Elisha Kent Kane's second

⁷² Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. 1, 33. As David notes, Inuit could also be categorised as part of the landscape, as well as increasingly removed from visual depictions of the Arctic as the nineteenth century progressed. David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination...*, 55.

⁷³ E. Irminger, “The Arctic Current around Greenland” in *A Selection of Papers on Arctic Geography and Ethnology. Reprinted, and Presented to the Arctic Expedition of 1875: by the President, Council, and Follows of the Royal Geographical Society* (London: John Murray, 1875), 97-8.

⁷⁴ Søren Rud, *Colonialism in Greenland: Tradition, Governance and Legacy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 36.

⁷⁵ Brydon, Forsgren and Fur, “What Reading for Concurrences Offers Postcolonial Studies” in Brydon, Forsgren and Fur, *Concurrent Imaginaries, Postcolonial Worlds*, 5.

Grinnell Expedition from 1853 to 1855, Isaac Israel Hayes' Expedition of 1860 to 1861 and Charles Francis Hall's *Polaris* Expedition of 1871 to 1873, as well as the BAE.⁷⁶ Suersaq's account appeared in English translated by Hinrich Rink, a prominent Danish colonial administrator, who was regarded by one British observer as the "greatest of all authorities on Greenland".⁷⁷ Rink's ethnographic research in Greenland was applied in his governance, particularly his preservationist approach to an essentialised Kalaallit culture.⁷⁸ Rink's translation adds a layer of cultural mediation that must be carefully considered, given his position in Greenland. Rink's introduction noted that he felt that the account "gives an idea of how a native Greenlander feels and thinks, and how he is able to express his sentiments".⁷⁹ He clearly regarded Suersaq's account as evidence of wider Inuit sentiment, and as an opportunity for study. His fellow translator, George Stephens, wrote that he "thought it best to let Hans Hendrik write in the naive way to be expected from such a child of nature".⁸⁰ The notion of the Inuk as a "child of nature" – perceived as innocent and in touch with their surroundings – was a persistent stereotype at the time, whilst also linking to ideas of temporal distancing and a need for colonial guidance.⁸¹ Suersaq's voice was therefore rendered in the way in which Stephens and Rink expected it to sound on the page, given his status as an Inuk.

Despite this ventriloquism, Suersaq's perspective is valuable and revealing. Even if Suersaq was an "intermediary", he also made his own observations of expedition life. His description of the British "surveying the country and climbing the hills"⁸² was astute and his account notably voiced the other Inuit who he encountered, something absent from Nares' texts. Kaalund has discussed how Suersaq's text provided an alternative model of Arctic expertise, rejecting the straightforward travel narrative of Nares and its extensive appendix of scientific results. Suersaq's authority was also problematic for traditional British notions of studying the Arctic. Whilst his text demonstrated his Arctic knowledge and practical capabilities, the narrative was a "highly political piece as it challenged the accounts of previous explorers from other nations and problematized past and present imperial policies in Greenland", in Kaalund's phrase.⁸³ Suersaq offered an uncomfortable perspective on the Euro-American exploration, highlighting questions around their ability to travel and survive in the Arctic, as well as their knowledge claims about the place. Suersaq's agency within the Expedition

⁷⁶ George Stephens (ed.) and Henry [sic] Rink (trans.), *Memoirs of Hans Hendrik, the Arctic Traveller, Serving under Kane, Hayes, Hall and Nares, 1853–1876: Translated from the Eskimo Language* (London: Trübner and Co., 1878; reprinted Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁷⁷ Robert Brown, "On the Physical Structure of Greenland" in *A Selection of Papers on Arctic Geography and Ethnology*, 73.

⁷⁸ Rud, *Colonialism in Greenland*, 17-9.

⁷⁹ Stephens, *Memoirs of Hans Hendrik...*, 20.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination...*, 17-8.

⁸² Stephens, *Memoirs of Hans Hendrik...*, 89.

⁸³ Kaalund, *Explorations in the Icy North*, 144.

varied. He was requested by the party, given his previous experience and reputation, and “reluctantly agreed”⁸⁴ to join, but was free to choose a companion and was able to travel to another settlement to find the person he wanted. Suersaq also emphasised his Otherness, noting that he “was not engaged for sailor's work, but only as hunter, sledge-driver and dog feeder”.⁸⁵ He feared the other men and only Nares’ protection seemed to keep him safe from violence on board, to the extent that Suersaq referred to him as a “comrade”.⁸⁶ Perhaps Nares recognised Suersaq’s value; as Suersaq put it, the fresh meat from his hunting “was a sort of medicine for the invalids” suffering from scurvy.⁸⁷ Suersaq’s ability to hunt was extremely valuable for the crew, preventing more serious outbreaks of scurvy and providing treatment for those with the disease. Despite this, his status as an Inuk still led to him being mistreated and his expertise overlooked by many members of the Expedition. Nares’ comradeship could only extend so far.

Suersaq may have felt valued by Nares, but the texts produced by the captain reveal a wider ambiguity towards Inuit. On the outward voyage, the crew handed out biscuits in one community, thinking them “no doubt a very welcome addition to their usual meat and fish diet”.⁸⁸ Given the Expedition’s later struggles with scurvy, this presumption around Inuit diet was ironic. This encounter also provides an opportunity for a direct concurrent reading. Suersaq commented that another community “did not care very much” for the biscuits they were given,⁸⁹ even as Nares thought that it “appeared to please them greatly”.⁹⁰ In other cases, Nares seemed more aware of the advantages of Inuit help. The unpractised British struggled with the dog sledging they had planned to undertake, finding that “the popular supposition that sledge travelling with dogs in the Arctic regions is a comfortable, expeditious, and exciting method of locomotion is very far from the truth”.⁹¹ Nares quoted Albert Markham as saying, “the patience and judgment of the Eskimo, with their dexterity in handling the longlashed whip, places them far beyond the European in the art of dog-driving”.⁹² Later expeditions would also attempt to draw on Inuit skill in Arctic travel and survival (see Chapter Three), particularly in sledging and kayaking. Alongside hunting and sledging, navigation was also supported by local knowledge. Clements Markham, cousin of Albert and the honorary secretary of the RGS from 1863 to 1888 and, later, president from 1893 to 1905, had praised the “wonderful talent for

⁸⁴ Stephens, *Memoirs of Hans Hendrik...*, 83.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁸⁸ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 25.

⁸⁹ Stephens, *Memoirs of Hans Hendrik...*, 85.

⁹⁰ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 42.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 297.

topography”⁹³ amongst the Inuit. Markham particularly admired the “wonderfully accurate chart” made by Qalasirssuaq, also known as Erasmus York or Kallihirua, a young Inughuit man recruited at Cape York to guide the HMS *Assistance* in 1850.⁹⁴ The BAE similarly drew on local guides. Leaving Upernavik on the Greenlandic coast, the *Alert* and the *Discovery* were guided out of the port along a rocky coastline by an unnamed Inuk pilot. However, when the pilot became uncomfortable further from the settlement, Nares convinced him to stay by informing him that “might was on our side”.⁹⁵ Indigenous knowledge and labour were still subject to discipline, even when British explorers and Inuit attempted to negotiate ways of seeing the Arctic together.

This use of Inuit skill was accompanied by an interest in the ethnographic, which viewed the people and communities which the Expedition had contact with as additional objects of scientific research. Before departure, Clements Markham compiled a “selection of papers on Arctic geography and ethnology” for the Expedition, preparing them for what they would encounter and aiming to guide their collecting.⁹⁶ As this material demonstrates, the Expedition, as well as travelling with popular conceptions of the Arctic in mind, was also expected to follow existing lines of investigation in Arctic science, building on existing knowledge and preconceptions. Featuring papers from figures with Arctic experience such as Rink, the notes constructed the discursive framework in which the Inuit were encountered. For Markham, considering how different Indigenous groups had moved through space and time allowed the British geographer insight into how landscapes had changed, the possibility for survival in a range of Arctic places, and the idea of a “polar population up to the very threshold of the *Terra Incognita*”.⁹⁷ As the Arctic Committee of the Anthropological Institute, which included Markham, wrote, further Arctic exploration was “of great importance to the advancement of the science of man... [leading to] the elucidation of deeply interesting questions connected with anthropology”.⁹⁸ The Institute requested thorough physical and social assessments of any communities the Expedition encountered which had not previously been in contact with Europeans, from observations of religious rites and linguistic differences to cranial measurements and timed races against Europeans. Undiscovered Arctic peoples seemed to offer the opportunity for further reconstruction of Arctic geographical pasts, within which unknown Arctic space could be imagined. The human past was a crucial part of these temporal reconstructions. In the phrase of the Committee, “the migrations of man within the Arctic zone give rise to questions which are closely connected with the geography of

⁹³ Clements R. Markham, “Papers on the Greenland Eskimos” in *A Selection of Papers on Arctic Geography and Ethnology*, 184.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 174.

⁹⁵ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 35.

⁹⁶ Markham, “Papers on the Greenland Eskimos”.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁹⁸ “Report of the Anthropological Institute” in *A Selection of Papers on Arctic Geography and Ethnology*, 281.

the undiscovered portions of the Arctic Regions”.⁹⁹ Kaalund has also noted how the Expedition used photography to produce images of the Arctic and of Inuit.¹⁰⁰ This was partly to experiment with photography in cold conditions. However, as part of the wider project of collecting and recording the region, the two photographers on the Expedition, Thomas Mitchell and George White, were also required to document it as thoroughly as possible. The images were submitted to “aesthetic manipulation” on return, ensuring they met public expectations of the region.¹⁰¹ As well as highlighting the hostility of the Arctic in this editing process, one photograph of the crew mixing with local Inuit was altered significantly. The British crew were removed from the photograph when it was reproduced as a woodcut for Nares’ official account, rendering a photograph of encounter into an ethnographic one, depicting Arctic people as a British audience might expect to see them and as an object in the colonial gaze.¹⁰² As Kaalund puts it, “the erasure and revisionist accounts of encounters were reinforced through the visuality of the expedition. While the photograph speaks to a central feature of European and Euro-American expedition, namely the centrality of knowledge co-production and shared labour of British and Inuit explorers, the use of the illustration reinforced narratives of detached scientific observation, and of discovery”.¹⁰³ The altered images served to underline expedition objectives and confirm what was thought to be known about the Arctic. Depicting encounters as they had actually occurred was of secondary importance on return to Britain.

Particularly notable in Markham’s text is the observation that studying Inuit life could offer insight into early periods of human history. This act of temporal distancing is clear in how Inuit were regarded as “living under exactly the same conditions, in a glacial country, and in a stone age”.¹⁰⁴ This conception of Inuit as “stone age” meant that, for Markham, “a close and careful study of this race... and more especially any part of it which may be discovered in hitherto unexplored regions, assumes great importance, and becomes a subject of universal interest”.¹⁰⁵ Science, particularly access to supposed subjects for the study of human evolution, therefore justified exploration. As it would later become in the interwar period, the scientific value of Arctic exploration was a way of defending its significant costs. It was necessary to travel to “unexplored” regions to check for evidence that would be significant beyond the Arctic. As the Anthropological Institute put it, “the Arctic races would furnish valuable illustrations of the South of France, &c., during the cave period”.¹⁰⁶ By, in Johannes Fabian’s

⁹⁹ Ibid., 278.

¹⁰⁰ Kaalund, “‘The Admiralty has been keeping its pictures’: photography and the British Arctic Expedition, 1875–1876”, *Early Popular Visual Culture* (2022): 1-28.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 8.

¹⁰² Ibid., 22-24.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 24.

¹⁰⁴ Markham, “Papers on the Greenland Eskimos”, 173.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ “Report of the Anthropological Institute”, 289.

phrase, denying the coevalness of the Inuit, Markham instead made the study of their present stand in for the European past.¹⁰⁷ Whilst this indicated a temporal and geographical fluidity to Markham's thinking, one deeply rooted in empire, the Arctic and Inuit could only stand in for another place's past, specifically prehistoric Europe. Inuit life became of interest for the modern European as a way to think about how European life used to be.¹⁰⁸ As Anne McClintock has discussed, "archaic" time was "symbolically evoked to identify what was historically new about industrial modernity".¹⁰⁹ Marking other regions of the work, and other peoples, as temporally different helped to construct this, with the voyage away from Europe to, for example, the Arctic, "figured as a journey backward in time".¹¹⁰ As well as allowing the European traveller to consider European pasts through ethnographic study, "archaic" time in itself helped to construct European modernity in opposition to a colonial Other. Jen Rose Smith has considered this in the specific case of the Arctic, where "temperate-normativity" is assumed and casts "spaces of ice and those who move through them as aberrant and pathological".¹¹¹ To be still living on ice, particularly in continued transit, is imagined in colonial discourses as a marker of racial inferiority, as well as a failure to become a "proper" civilisation.¹¹² Smith reconfigures this to think about the Arctic as a "space of consistent historical, ongoing, and distinct socio-political relations",¹¹³ home to rich Indigenous lives, whilst outlining the ways in which Arctic temporality and distinctiveness were used in European thought to define the region as distant and aberrant. Markham's text both shows how this temporal distancing worked, relegating Inuit to a "primitive" past. Nares' accounts also show the British unwillingness to engage deeply with Inuit knowledge and skill, despite the presence of Suersaq, whose own account of the voyage offers a valuable alternative perspective on expedition life.

"Seeing evidences of our former journey": Temporality and Communication in Arctic Travel

This process of temporal distancing was also visible in Nares' search for Inuit presence in the places the Expedition travelled through. He repeatedly referred to the "traces" they encounter, especially if they are of "great antiquity",¹¹⁴ tracking who "frequented the neighbourhood" and surmising that

¹⁰⁷ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014, first published 1983), 31.

¹⁰⁸ For a discussion of Fabian in the context of Greenland, see Rud, *Colonialism in Greenland*, 14-7.

¹⁰⁹ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 40.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Smith, "Exceeding Beringia", 6.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 14.

¹¹⁴ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 63.

they “travelled from the southward”.¹¹⁵ This search seemed to fulfil Markham’s request for an ethnography usable in wider questions about the human past and, in later absence of traces, served to confirm the discovery of “new” land by the Expedition. Clements Markham discussed the “abundant traces of former inhabitants where now all is a silent solitude”, hoping that Inuit material culture could inform geographical and historical speculation,¹¹⁶ whilst Albert Markham noted in his sledging journal that “ruins of Eskimo encampments [are] to be diligently searched for relics”.¹¹⁷ As Adriana Craciun has noted, the collection of the remnants of the Franklin Expedition were often referred to as relics, with the accompanying religious connotations.¹¹⁸ However, the Franklin traces found in Inuit settlements and ethnographic objects from Inuit were kept separate; as with field science, the collection of specimens was clearly demarcated from tracing Franklin. Markham’s reference to Inuit “relics” perhaps indicates a slippage, where the value of Inuit archaeology for histories of European pasts elevates them to the status of remnants of the Franklin Expedition. Alternatively, Markham saw an Inuit settlement as a likely location for traces of Franklin and chose to search the area particularly carefully. Whilst the Expedition aimed to find space unmarked by Inuit, the relationship to previous European and American travellers was not based on surpassing them in the same way. The Expedition existed in relation to the Franklin Expedition, which, as George Richards, a noted naval captain and hydrographer, wrote in his introduction to Nares’ *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea*, “has so direct a bearing” on British exploration.¹¹⁹ British success was desirable, but it was also important to emphasise “the uncertainties of Arctic navigation”¹²⁰ to protect Franklin’s reputation. His failure could not be seen as incompetence if his heroic status was to be maintained. This can also be seen in the attitude of the crew of the Nares Expedition, who “fear... their work will not bear comparison with that performed by the other sledges and former Arctic travellers”.¹²¹ Here, safe return was the failure to enact the requisite sacrifice for the nation and for the cause of exploration. As Arctic travel and suffering were bound together through Franklin in the public imagination, a retreat from danger was a refusal to engage with the meaning of his death and risk the same for oneself.

Communication took place across the physical and temporal distances between expeditions, both in the discourses of legacy and expectation and in the material traces of debris and the written word. Communication across time and space often took the form of what Hester Blum has called “Arctic dead letters” – “the blanks, forms, notices, and other official documents that circulate in the

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 74.

¹¹⁶ Markham, “Papers on the Greenland Eskimos”, 163.

¹¹⁷ Albert Hastings Markham, Notebook and sledging diary (MS 396/2; BJ).

¹¹⁸ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 36.

¹¹⁹ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, xxvii.

¹²⁰ Ibid., xxix.

¹²¹ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. II, 26.

Arctic region”.¹²² The Nares Expedition built cairns and secured caches of documents that “contain full information of our doings” that should “last for ages”.¹²³ Yet the future discovery of these records was unclear. As Blum puts it, communication through the Arctic dead letter operated on an oceanic scale, embodying “drift, contingency, dispersal, and annihilation”.¹²⁴ This potential failure of message passing was also seen on the Expedition’s return to the Greenlandic coast, where a letter drop had been arranged. The post intended for the ship was overlooked due to heavy snow disguising the location; this “oversight on our part”¹²⁵ cost the men communication with home. Some was later recovered, but the men without post had to be “to some extent consoled” with newspapers.¹²⁶ The newspapers themselves operated on an interesting Arctic temporality, where they lost their value as “news”, but retained an interest for those with a different sense of time to the metropolitan audience. Later expeditions found similar value in newspapers, even as new technologies like radio changed their sense of distance from and relationship to home (see Chapter Three). As Blum notes, the newspaper was adopted and produced by expeditions to “structure their meditations on polar temporality, community, and circulation”.¹²⁷ The Expedition also sought the “relics” of previous expeditions and, notably, the grave of Charles Francis Hall, captain of the *Polaris*, who had died on his expedition to the Pole in 1871, and who Suersaq had travelled with. The Nares Expedition had brought a plaque for the grave from Britain, which noted that they, “following in his footsteps, have profited by his experience”.¹²⁸ Whilst the Expedition members were keen to travel in unexplored space, they also wanted to establish themselves as part of a lineage of Arctic heroism. As with later travellers (see Chapters Two and Three), Nares was concerned with those who had travelled before him and with those who could come after him. He both sought to establish a continuity with the existing heroes of Arctic exploration and provide a guide for those who might follow. Craciun has written that the material and textual traces of previous expeditions made the “Arctic legible, visible and archivable to the British”,¹²⁹ where the region’s “powers of temporal and material preservation... could serve the British as a vast archive through which they could not only record their contacts with the past, but speak to future voyagers across years, decades, perhaps centuries”.¹³⁰ As with the textual forms of communication highlighted by Blum, communication across temporal distances was a central objective and structuring feature of Arctic exploration. The Arctic “archive” offered the hope of finding

¹²² Blum, *The News at the Ends of the Earth*, 182.

¹²³ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. II, 76.

¹²⁴ Blum, *The News at the Ends of the Earth*, 182.

¹²⁵ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. II, 174.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹²⁷ Blum, *The News at the Ends of the Earth*, 44.

¹²⁸ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 336.

¹²⁹ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 38.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.

the redeeming truth about the Franklin Expedition, but also created a material legacy for later expeditions to position their achievements within. As Craciun suggests, the material and discursive traces of exploration created and naturalised a British presence in the Arctic, as well as making the Arctic itself legible and knowable. As with collecting specimens and taking scientific measurements, regimes of knowledge attempted to order and understand the region for empire.

Moreover, material traces were not always so temporally distant. In the spring of 1876, Albert Markham and Pelham Aldrich set out north with sledging parties from the overwintering ships to gather further information about the region, as well as see how far they could travel. Aldrich was more successful than Markham in surveying and had a far smoother journey, whereas Markham suffered from an outbreak of scurvy amongst his men and was forced to travel across rough pack ice.¹³¹ The suffering on their journey complicated the group's relationship to time. In his sledging journal, Markham noted that "time is passing remarkably quickly, too quick for me; I only wish our days would be prolonged and yet it would be no good, for the men can do no more than they are doing".¹³² Despite this, they reached a new record for the northernmost point reached, surpassing the spot reached by William Edward Parry in 1827. On return, Markham's sledging group were able to follow their route out back to the ship "by seeing evidences of our former journey, such as bits of tobacco, tin pots, &c".¹³³ Here, unwitting material remnants guided the party, the detritus of their presence offering security when their "old track is completely obliterated"¹³⁴ by snow. Even as the group struggled to visually orient itself or record its location, material that could only have come from them inscribed the landscape. It is worth noting the nature of the "evidences" as products that must have originated outside the Arctic. The description of these products hints at a performative modernity, where bringing tobacco and pots into the supposed Arctic "blank" affirmed the modern nature of the traveller.¹³⁵ Ellen Boucher has discussed the tin can as part of a wider discourse of survival, in which the can is symbolic of modernity as a "liberating technology that would provide for a person's physical needs wherever in the world they chose to travel".¹³⁶ Yet their failure to provide when needed the most, as on the Franklin Expedition, "disrupted the conventional vision of European cultural supremacy", especially when local Indigenous people were able to successfully hunt for food.¹³⁷ Craciun notes how the spread of "commodities and technology" to imperial peripheries demonstrated the power of empire, yet their return, altered by Inuit or broken and useless, revealed a dangerous

¹³¹ Hattersley-Smith, "The British Arctic Expedition, 1875-76", 120-1.

¹³² Albert Hastings Markham, Notebook and sledging diary (MS 396/2; BJ).

¹³³ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 388.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Hansen, "Modern Mountains".

¹³⁶ Ellen Boucher, "Arctic Mysteries and Imperial Ambitions: The Hunt for Sir John Franklin and the Victorian Culture of Survival", *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 90, no. 1 (March 2018), 59.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 64.

fragility.¹³⁸ The necessity of Suersaq's hunting for fresh meat when men suffering with scurvy on the Nares Expedition similarly underlined the limitations of modern technologies in the Arctic. Nares still emphasised modern technology in his texts. The power of the steam used by the ships to break through the ice was mentioned, as were the instruments used for recording and experiments – even if they sometimes failed. Nares wrote that “large and substantial magnetic and astronomical observatories were constructed on the land, and were at once named by the men Kew and Greenwich”.¹³⁹ This was a striking extension of science into the field – the instruments of knowledge literally adopted the names of their metropolitan equivalents, reducing the space from London to the Arctic and reinforcing the credibility of the observations.¹⁴⁰ Here Arctic knowledge could be accurately assembled, providing the instruments did not fail, building on the work of predecessors, but also correcting their errors, as with the faulty maps. The Expedition also drew on wider networks, using data from, for example, Danish meteorological stations on the coast of Greenland to corroborate observations.¹⁴¹ It is, however, worth complicating the image of European modernity performed in the Arctic. Hints slipped into Nares' text that suggest they are not its only agents in the region. On both the outward and return voyages, the Expedition pass mining operations in Greenland – a “homeward-bound vessel returning to Scotland with a cargo of cryolite from the mine at Evigtok [Ivittuut]”¹⁴² on the way out and an “ice grotto, with a trifling expense of labour, could be readily formed into a convenient Arctic residence”¹⁴³ near a coal seam on the way back. These mentions show existing British connections to Greenland, as well as the attention paid by Nares to the industrial potential of the region. Moreover, they usefully challenge to the notion of the Expedition as uniquely modern for its place and time, whilst suggesting a more complicated history of Arctic access and extraction.

“Happy English homes on the Arctic flow”: Nation, Empire, and Heroism

Danish colonial administration and assistance, as well as the participation and knowledge of Suersaq and other Inuit, were not the only forms of transnational contact that the British Arctic Expedition made, from their varying positions of agency and credit. Nares drew heavily on the previous American expeditions to the region, particularly for mapping, despite his reservations about their accuracy. Some aspects of the Expedition, however, took national and imperial forms linked closely to Britain

¹³⁸ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 43.

¹³⁹ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 177.

¹⁴⁰ See Driver, *Geography Militant*, 17.

¹⁴¹ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 207.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁴³ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. II, 142.

and its empire, particularly those focussed on symbolic achievements and morale. As Hill has written, Arctic exploration was closely tied to British narratives of nation and empire and the Arctic was “a place to reify, stabilize, and naturalize a definition of Britishness that could provide an antidote to increasingly unstable and multiple versions of Britishness that existed at home and in the colonies”.¹⁴⁴ Key to this was the notion of the “empty” Arctic. This was visible textually in Nares’ description of the landscape as looking like “the end of all things”, with “an apparently impassable sea of hummocks extending north, east, and west as far as the eye could range”.¹⁴⁵ The Nares Expedition was presented with descriptions of the interior of Greenland – where they were not going – as “solitary, mysterious, and unknown”, in the hope that they would discover information that could reveal it, but also to attract their attention to the task.¹⁴⁶ Again, the Expedition was informed and influenced by preconceptions and expectations from home. Recent scholarship has tied the construction of emptiness to “a wider set of historical ideas about nation, empire, community and self: the thought processes, self-perceptions and world-views of those who form and sustain the idea”, and this is clear in the Arctic example.¹⁴⁷ Emptiness fostered extremity – the sense of being at “the end of all things” – and therefore provided a proving ground for British masculinity.¹⁴⁸ It was a suitably challenging space for British Arctic explorers to show their resilience, courage and strength – all of which could be emphasised in texts on their return. Other references to the national context are also present in Nares’ texts. The chaplain recited a poem which speaks of “happy English homes on the Arctic flow” to mark New Year, celebrated early to coincide with midnight in England,¹⁴⁹ and on 24th May, Queen Victoria’s birthday was celebrated by her “her most northern, though not the less loyal subjects”.¹⁵⁰ Both examples here show how Arctic temporalities, as well as being projected by those travelling to the region, could also be bent to fit with the calendars and clocks of home, as the observatories named Kew and Greenwich had similarly sought to order Arctic space and time to metropolitan standards.

The Expedition’s relationship to the nation was also clearly seen in relation to the morale of the men, something Nares was keen to emphasise. The “social barometer”¹⁵¹ was monitored and the crew’s fortitude in the face of hardship was frequently praised. Men could be disfigured by frostbite but “all cheerful and happy enough”.¹⁵² Whilst Nares quoted extensively from the sledging journals of

¹⁴⁴ Hill, *White Horizon*, 15.

¹⁴⁵ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 365.

¹⁴⁶ Brown, “On the Physical Structure of Greenland”, 5.

¹⁴⁷ Courtney J. Campbell, Allegra Giovine, and Jennifer Keating, “Introduction: Confronting emptiness in history” in Campbell, Giovine and Keating, *Empty Spaces: Perspectives on Emptiness in Modern History* (London: University of London Press, 2019), 4.

¹⁴⁸ Hill, *White Horizon*, 8.

¹⁴⁹ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 214-5.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 384.

¹⁵¹ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. II, 15.

¹⁵² Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 364.

Albert Markham and Aldrich in his published account, it is interesting to note what is not included. The suffering of Markham's sledging party with scurvy led to some gloomy passages in his journal, many of which do not end up in Nares' published account. One sledging compatriot of Markham's is quoted in the journal as saying he "had only been in one worse place and that was the gutter", whilst by early May, Markham writes that his tent was "a regular hospital". The group was forced into "inactivity" and Markham wrote that the men's health did "everything but improve".¹⁵³ The frostbite, for example, is included by Nares; Markham's gloom when faced with the men's poor condition is not. Moreover, there are occasions when the order and morale was disrupted. During the Arctic winter, Nares noted that it had become impossible to "distinguish officers from men, except from some peculiarity in height or gait",¹⁵⁴ an infringement of classed norms. When scurvy broke out, it caused a "depression of spirits"¹⁵⁵ which lifted with the return of a sledging party but was nonetheless concerning to Nares. These bodily irregularities, be it of class elision or of scurvy-induced suffering, challenged notions of appropriate tests of the male British body in the Arctic, one where physical hardship did not bring distress but "hardens" masculinity.¹⁵⁶ Armston-Sheret has written about the shame attached to scurvy, as the disease was seen as largely avoidable and associated with poor living conditions. Whilst Nares and others attempted to attribute the Expedition's outbreak to the hard labour they were performing, the disease was linked to bodily neglect and excessive alcohol consumption.¹⁵⁷ It was commonly assumed that these were the reasons for the outbreak, casting wider aspersions on the hygiene and moral qualities of the Expedition members. In response, Nares sought to emphasise the appropriate suffering of Expedition members textually, including in narrative form, quoting extensively from both his journal and those of crew members. At one stage, he quoted a part of a journal belonging to Lewis Beaumont, a senior lieutenant on *Discovery*, where he chose to use the words Beaumont wrote directly on the day in question. The immediacy is striking:

In my journal I find this entry for the day: 'Nobody will ever believe what hard work this becomes on the fourth day; but this may give them some idea of it. When halted for lunch, two of the men crawled for 200 yards on their hands and knees, rather than walk unnecessarily through this awful snow; but although tired, stiff, and sore, there is not a word of complaint; they are cheerful, hopeful, and determined.'¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ All quotes from Albert Hastings Markham, Notebook and sledging diary (MS 396/2; BJ).

¹⁵⁴ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 201-2.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 345.

¹⁵⁶ Hill, *White Horizon*, 6.

¹⁵⁷ Armston-Sheret, "'A Good Advertisement for Teetotalers'", 268-9. See also, Armston-Sheret, "Tainted bodies".

¹⁵⁸ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. II, 101.

Here, Nares reaffirmed a sense of struggle, where the body was challenged physically by the environment, but where through hard work, the British explorer could continue both to travel and to maintain his spirits. This set up a discourse of sacrifice: Nares wrote that the four men who died on the Expedition “sacrificed their lives in the performance of their duties”.¹⁵⁹ Death was not wasteful or failure, but a contribution to a wider cause of knowledge and empire. Nares had previously written of a sledging party that “their manful and determined struggle along the roughest road imaginable, is far beyond all praise. After seeing their condition there is no difficulty in realizing the statement concerning Sir John Franklin's men, as made by the Eskimo to Sir Leopold M'Clintock, ‘They fell down and died as they walked along’”.¹⁶⁰ In this case, the explicit link to the presumed death of the members of the Franklin Expedition was made, as their willingness to continue despite their condition was presented as the peak of struggle and sacrifice. It was in this context that the withdrawal of the British Arctic Expedition from the Arctic a year early was received. Given the scurvy outbreak, it was a justifiable decision by Nares, but the extent of the illness, as well as the failure to reach the Pole, overshadowed the scientific information gathered.¹⁶¹ As Beau Riffenburgh has emphasised, the popular press was crucial to the reception of an expedition and the muted reaction to the British Arctic Expedition set its legacy as a failure.¹⁶² Nares’ texts may well have been intended as a rebuttal to accusations of cowardice and a failure to suffer for a national cause, particularly when the outbreaks of scurvy were perceived as a result of moral weakness. His direct textual depictions of suffering and sacrifice were attempts to reject this narrative.

For all that the BAE was regarded as a failure, its depictions and ways of thinking about the Arctic persisted. The writing of Nares shows an awareness of existing ideas of the Arctic and that the Expedition was influenced by the guidance they were given by the RGS as to the type of work expected of them. This guidance shaped how Nares saw the Arctic, but he also challenged some of the conventions of depicting the Arctic in his own descriptions of landscape. Moreover, the visual regimes of his text show the ordering gaze of the imperial explorer attempting to know the landscape, but Nares was often thwarted by the same landscapes he sought to control. The imperial gaze also fell on people, particularly Inuit, but a concurrent reading of the account of Suersaq helps complicate questions of authority and expertise in the Arctic. Nares also came to the Arctic prepared for his encounters with Inuit and the writings of Clements Markham framed ethnographic research in temporal terms. To travel to the Arctic was to travel back in time, and research on Inuit could inform

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁶⁰ Nares, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea...*, Vol. I, 347.

¹⁶¹ Hattersley-Smith, “The British Arctic Expedition, 1875-76”, 124.

¹⁶² Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, 82-3.

the study of the European past. This is not the only temporality visible in the writings of Expedition members; Nares and Albert Markham showed an awareness of the modernity of the Expedition, with its scientific instruments, steam power, and tin cans. However, this modernity was complicated by failure, causing British expertise to be questioned. Nares was required to defend the courage and fortitude of his men in his texts, as well as emphasising their sacrifices for nation and empire. Whilst the focus of the institutions of British exploration shifted south to Antarctica, British travel to the Arctic, particularly Greenland and Spitsbergen, as well as Norway, continued. Many travellers wrote about their experiences and the many of the aspects of Arctic travel which Nares discussed appeared in their texts as well. These travellers travelled in different ways and wrote for different audiences, but preoccupations with British national and imperial identity, modernity, and the temporality of travel remained, as well as the question of how to convey Arctic experiences to audiences at home remained. Interest from other nations in the Arctic also continued. The achievements of the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen, travelling extensively in the Arctic, attracted attention in Britain, and the Arctic, widely defined, continued to be an attractive destination for British travellers. Areas such as Northern Norway offered an accessible experience of the Arctic for the private traveller, complete with the same visual sublime and sense of escape from modernity.

Chapter Two:
“Smoother for the adventurer”:
Infrastructure and Modernity in British Travel Writing from Norway
in the Late Nineteenth Century

Official British forays into Arctic exploration in the late nineteenth century may have ended with the perceived failure of the British Arctic Expedition in 1876, but the cultural fascination with the Arctic endured in Britain. This was not least due to the achievements of explorers from other nations, with their attempts to reach the Pole frequently covered in the British press and aligning with other cultural preoccupations. Perhaps the clearest example of this is the reception of the Norwegian scientist and explorer Fridtjof Nansen in Britain, as well as across Europe and North America, after his return to Norway in 1896. Nansen’s drift across the Arctic in a specially engineered ship, the *Fram*, was seen as a triumph of Arctic exploration and his safe return after overwintering on Franz Josef Land was read as confirming both his skill and his fortitude.¹ Nansen was received as a celebrity across Europe, with newspapers proclaiming his success,² and his popularity in Britain showed a continuing interest in the polar. Moreover, Nansen’s reception aligned with a British fixation on Norway as both vogue destination and cultural touchstone, a place with which Britain had deep underlying ties. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, Norway became an increasingly popular and accessible place to visit, with a range of British travellers choosing to go for sport, cruises, sightseeing and adventure. Moreover, around two hundred travelogues by British travellers about Norway were published between the late eighteenth century and the end of the nineteenth century.³ The popularity of the country only increased with improved infrastructure and ease of travel through the nineteenth century, whilst the types of travellers also changed, from mainly upper-class sportsmen to a wider social range of tourists, newly able to visit for shorter periods of time.⁴ It was not just the British who visited Norway in increasing numbers: Germans and Austrians also began to make more frequent journeys north, drawn for similar reasons.⁵ Norwegians, too, began to travel for leisure within their own country, alongside other Scandinavians. This was enabled by transnational cooperation and the active participation of British travellers in the construction of networks by institutions such as *Den*

¹ Roland Huntford, *Nansen: The Explorer as Hero* (London: Abacus, 1997). Huntford’s is the most comprehensive recent English-language biography of Nansen.

² Jones, “Exploration, Celebrity, and the Making of a Transnational Hero”.

³ Fjågesund and Symes, *The Northern Utopia*, 14.

⁴ Walchester, “Beyond the Grand Tour: Norway and the Nineteenth-century British Traveller” in Colbert and Morrison (eds.), *Continental Tourism, Travel Writing, and the Consumption of Culture*, 202.

⁵ See, for example, Spring, “Arctic and European In-Betweens: The Production of Tourist Spaces in Late Nineteenth-Century Northern Norway” in Hill, *Britain and the Narration of Travel...: 13-36*, on German tourists in Tromsø.

Norske Turistforening.⁶ Focusing on British travellers to Norway, this chapter uses their accounts of their journeys to uncover cultural preoccupations with temporality, history, and place relating to different understandings of Norway and the wider Arctic.

A number of key themes can be observed in the depiction of Norway by British travellers, which the figure of Nansen seemed to embody. Nansen stood as an Arctic figure, his reception and celebrity rooted in the nineteenth-century fascination with Arctic exploration. What Norway offered alongside this was an opportunity for the ordinary traveller to experience what might be considered Arctic experiences without the expense, time, or hardship of a formal expedition. Rather, visiting Northern Norway, or Norway in winter, allowed the traveller to experience Arctic light, cold, and icy landscapes – the harshness and the sublimity of the Arctic as it existed in the nineteenth-century British imagination. Mountaineering became popular in Northern Norway, but improving infrastructure, as well as a willingness to attract visitors, saw mass travel head above the Arctic Circle. Travel into Sápmi meant that many travelogues compared Norwegians and Sámi, particularly what were seen as acceptable and unacceptable forms of “backwardness”, and racialised these accordingly. Northern Norway/Sápmi was a key site for the realisation of Arctic imaginaries and the development of Arctic discourses through travel. Travelogues about Norway considered similar themes of modernity, emptiness, and landscape to accounts of High Arctic travel, and, as in the High Arctic, travellers encountered Indigenous Arctic peoples who complicated their understandings of the region.

Moreover, rather than undermining British claims to pre-eminence in the Arctic, Nansen’s Norwegian identity was aligned with British national achievement, through an emphasis on the “common Viking ancestry” of the British and Norwegians.⁷ However, this racialisation took a specific medievalised form, with an emphasis on shared heritage, in broader discussions about Norwegian history in these travelogues. These forms of inheritance were also cultural. Imperial Britain saw itself as the successor to certain Viking values. In Andrew Wawn’s description, it was “the old Northern values... that, in the eyes of many Victorians, underpinned the best of Britain at home and abroad – imperial power, mercantile prosperity, technological progress, social stability and justice”⁸. This interest in a British Norse inheritance is visible in travelogues, both in descriptions of places and of people. The fascination with Norwegian pasts also manifested itself in discussions of Norway’s preindustrial society by British travellers, both imagined and seemingly experienced. In what Kathryn Walchester has termed “Gamle Norge” [Old Norway], a version of the Norwegian past, separate from the Viking age, was emphasised by travellers, one which “idealised a bucolic, medieval and historically

⁶ See, for example, Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 293.

⁷ David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination...*, 43.

⁸ Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, 40.

fixed version of the nation”.⁹ Somewhat different to the British identification with Viking expansionism and naval power, “Gamle Norge” invoked the pastoral and rural, particularly notions of a simple, democratic society.¹⁰ As Walchester discusses, this proved particularly appealing for female travellers, who saw alternative possibilities for how society could be organised around gender. Texts which highlighted and constructed “Gamle Norge” set up an opposition between a “rural, natural and traditional Norway and an increasingly urban and morally unhealthy Britain”.¹¹ The appeal of a prelapsarian Norway combined with an interest in and support for the Norwegian independence movement, which drew on similar imagery of an imagined Norwegian past. Nansen harnessed the success of the *Fram* Expedition to nationalist ends, using his profile to gather support for Norway from across Europe.¹² He was also seen as encapsulating a moment in Norwegian history, and, partially, the appeal of Norway as a nation. In Ethel Tweedie’s *A Winter Jaunt to Norway*, published in 1894, Nansen appeared as, in Anka Ryall’s description, a “kind of boundary figure, a character who mediates between primitive national traditions and an advanced intellectual culture, rural and urban, margin and centre”.¹³ Norway also acted as a model through the figure of Nansen, where the imagined pastoral past suggested a better British future.

The temporalities of travel to Norway, particularly as an escape from modernity and a repository of shared pasts, were central to the appeal of the country to British travellers. As with travel writing to other Arctic regions, travelogues by those who visited Norway reflected on what the alterity – and similarity – of the country meant for modernity at home and through the imperial world. Engagements with infrastructure allowed travellers to reflect on notions of escape and wilderness, whilst also themselves raising questions of development and accessibility. Moreover, as in the High Arctic, local people, Indigenous and otherwise, influenced travellers’ understandings of the places they travelled through. Co-construction, conscious or otherwise, was central to travel writing. Thinking about late nineteenth-century travel to Norway therefore develops our understanding of the Arctic in the British imagination, as well as allowing us to consider British – and Norwegian – understandings of space, place, and time in the period.

⁹ Walchester, *Gamle Norge...*, 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Jones, “Exploration, Celebrity, and the Making of a Transnational Hero”, 77.

¹³ Ryall, “Literary Culture on the Margins: Ethel Tweedie’s Travels in Norway” in Inga-Stina Ewbank, Olav Lausund and Bjørn Tysdahl (eds.), *Anglo-Scandinavian Cross-Currents* (London: Norvik Press, 1999), 327.

“Nothing between us and the North Pole”: Norway as Accessible Arctic

The nature of place, however, was malleable and meant different things to different travellers. Was Norway a social model or an unpopulated playground? Moreover, where did it sit, temporally but also geographically, in the British imagination? One way to understand the popularity of Norway as a destination is to think of it in relation to the Arctic, to which it had an ambiguous relationship. Norway can be thought of as an “accessible Arctic”, a place where Arctic environments, sensations and experiences could be found, but without the hardship and commitment of a full expedition. Norway offered sublime landscapes and northern lights, snow and ice, midnight sun and polar night, all accessible from a cruise ship or through the networks of accommodation. Whilst winter travel was rare, even later in the century – *Bennett’s Handbook* advised that after mid-September, “the weather becomes unsettled, the days short, and the evenings chilly”¹⁴ – it was not unknown and Murray’s *Handbook* suggested that “too little attention has been paid to the health-giving properties of a winter in the S[outh] or W[est] of Norway”.¹⁵ Arriving in Christiania (now Oslo) in the winter of 1892-93, Ethel Tweedie wrote “verily, we might have been in the Arctic regions”.¹⁶ Moreover, this interest in Arctic travel among visitors can be connected to the wider interest in the Arctic as a region in Britain throughout the nineteenth century (see Chapter One). Some of the Arctic interest can be traced directly in travelogues about Norway, such as admiration for Nansen, whilst some of the connections can be made by considering similarities in the discourses of travel, escape, and alterity.

At times, the presence of the polar is unavoidable. The mountaineer Elizabeth Le Blond wrote that she found Tromsø/Romsa, a major departure point for voyages heading further north, “in a somewhat excited condition by the return of an Arctic expedition”.¹⁷ Le Blond noted that she “had sometimes thought that a Polar expedition might have its attractions”, even if “after seeing that ship I had no further desire ever to attempt such a thing”.¹⁸ She also felt that “mountaineers may claim kinship with Arctic navigators” in their embrace of adventure and struggle: the polar was clearly on her mind.¹⁹ Her description of visiting Northern Norway was influenced by this, as well as the appeal

¹⁴ *Bennett’s Handbook for Travellers in Norway. Twenty Seventh Revised and Enlarged Edition. With 16 Maps* (Christiania: T. Bennett; London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, and Co., 1893), 27.

¹⁵ *Handbook for Travellers in Norway. Ninth Edition, Revised. With Maps and Plans* (London: John Murray; Christiania: T. Bennett and Alb. Cammermeyer, 1897), 83.

¹⁶ Mrs. Alec Tweedie, *A Winter Jaunt to Norway: With Accounts of Nansen, Ibsen, Björnson, Brandes, and Many Others* (London: Bliss, Sands and Foster, 1894), 16. Oslo was known as Christiania from 1624 until the official name change to Oslo in 1924. Depending on spelling reforms and use, both Christiania and Kristiania were used as the name, but I have used Christiania throughout for consistency, as all travel there discussed was made before 1924.

¹⁷ Elizabeth Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1908), 254.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 255.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

of a place less busy with tourists. The framing of travel is interesting for thinking about the relationship between Norway and the Arctic. Even fellow mountaineers like William Cecil Slingsby who travelled further north in the country framed their travel as visiting Norway specifically. Slingsby felt a strong cultural attachment with Norway, but for other travellers, especially those on steamships travelling along the Norwegian coast, Norway was the frame of reference for their journey and their travelogue. Marion Wyllie, for example, described her journey from the south to the north of the country and built the travelogue around this geographical structure.²⁰ Many travellers, like James A. Lees and Walter J. Clutterbuck, all but removed the parts of the journey which took place outside Norway from their travelogues, but others framed their travel differently.²¹ Paul Du Chaillu and Henrietta Kent both travelled across Scandinavia and their travelogues reflect that fact, whilst Cutcliffe Hyne and, later, Olive Murray Chapman both specifically travelled through Sápmi, across the national borders of Norway, Finland and Sweden.²² The titles of travelogues show this: Hyne's book is called *Through Arctic Lapland*, explicitly centring the Arctic aspects, whereas Wyllie's *Norway and its Fjords* and Slingsby's *Norway: The Northern Playground* take a national approach. Both Du Chaillu and Le Blond refer to the midnight sun in their titles, aligning their travel with the alterity and novelty of Arctic atmospherics.

The alignment of Norwegian travel with Arctic travel is perhaps clearest when travellers discuss their mobility. Travelling in the winter, Du Chaillu achieved the sort of speed normally associated with new modern modes of transport. He wrote of his journey in a reindeer-drawn sledge that "the speed was so great that everything passed before my eyes as quickly as if I were going by railway".²³ He described a later downhill reindeer sledge ride as "the most thrilling ride I had ever taken", although this was part of what he referred to as "the hardest day's travelling I had ever experienced".²⁴ By contrast, Hyne found his summer travel in Sápmi almost impossible and also unheard of by locals. The boggy interior was challenging and insect-ridden in summer, unlike "in winter, when the snow crust hardened, and the rivers and lakes were roofed with massive ice, then movement about the country was a comparatively easy thing".²⁵ This would seem to align with Du

²⁰ M.A. Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords* (London: Methuen and Co., 1907).

²¹ [James A. Lees and Walter J. Clutterbuck], *Three in Norway, by Two of Them* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1882), 175

²² Paul Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun: Summer and Winter Journeys Through Sweden, Norway, Lapland and Northern Finland, with descriptions of the people, their manners and customs, the primitive antiquities, etc. Volumes I and II* (London: John Murray, 1881); S.H. Kent, *Within the Arctic Circle. Experiences of Travel Through Norway to the North Cape, Sweden and Lapland. Volume I* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1877); Cutcliffe Hyne, *Through Arctic Lapland* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1898); Olive Murray Chapman, *Across Lapland with Sledge and Reindeer* (London: The Bodley Head, 1948; first published 1932).

²³ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun. Vol. II*, 93.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁵ Hyne, *Through Arctic Lapland*, 12.

Chaillu's speed across the snow, where winter enabled travel, despite its seeming hostility and marginality for British travellers. Ironically, Hyne's summer travel resembled the grim manhauling of Arctic expeditions like the BAE, struggling across difficult terrain. Moreover, Hyne frequently mentioned the "long grim frozen night of winter", preferring to think of the Arctic as a winter place, even as he struggled with heat and damp.²⁶ At one point, he wrote that it was "hard to realise we were still deep within the cold, black Arctic Circle".²⁷ The Arctic carried expectations, even as it confounded them. As Ryall has noted, "the conflation of the North with ice and snow, winter and cold was ubiquitous in narratives of northern journeys, even when contradicted in the texts themselves by the actual experience or observations that the author relates".²⁸ Wyllie, for example, quoted the Norwegian writer Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson extensively on the beauty of Norway in winter, despite being a summer traveller herself.²⁹ Sápmi, and Scandinavia as a whole, was coloured by preconception, the Arctic imaginary guiding the eye of the traveller.

One location where the British Arctic imaginary and the practicalities of travel in Norway met was Nordkapp/Davvenjárga or the North Cape. Usually regarded as the symbolic, if not geographical, northernmost point of mainland Europe, Nordkapp was a popular tourist destination by the end of the nineteenth century, with accounts of visits appearing in several travelogues. Thomas Cook organised trips to Nordkapp from 1875, whilst by 1900, it was a stopping point for many luxurious and modern cruises.³⁰ These often offered a sharp contrast to the landscape around Nordkapp – a barren clifftop facing into the Arctic Ocean. This contrast was often precisely what travellers sought, a northernmost point of the trip with appropriate Arctic hostility.³¹ However, Nordkapp as a tourist site was part of modern networks of communication, transport, and behaviour. There were monuments to the visits of Oscar II of Sweden and Norway in 1873 and to Wilhelm II's visit in 1891 and, in 1891, a champagne pavilion called Stoppenbrink's opened there. Bourgeois culture was present at Nordkapp, connecting Central European travellers to home through reminders of royal visits, and allowing tourists to participate in commercial behaviour as they would in less seemingly peripheral places.³² As Ulrike Spring writes, "the top of the Cape... functioned as a symbol of both Arctic sublimity and exoticism and of European modernity".³³ Postcards of Nordkapp were also popular, circulating as

²⁶ Ibid., 13.

²⁷ Ibid., 218.

²⁸ Ryall, "In Love with a Cold Climate: Representations of the North in Nineteenth-Century Travel Writing from Scandinavia", *Journal of Northern Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2 (2014), 123.

²⁹ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 35.

³⁰ Spring, "Early Mass Tourism at the North Cape: Infrastructure, Environment and Social Practices" in Hansson and Ryall, *Arctic Modernities*, 136.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 143.

³³ Ibid.

collectible objects and forms of textual communication across wide areas.³⁴ The texts of British travellers reflected these multiple meanings of Nordkapp. For Wyllie, the midnight sun left her and her fellow travellers “silenced by its wonder”,³⁵ whilst she also imagined Nordkapp “in the winter awful, with the storms that circle round the headland, the lightning, the thunder, the powerful sea, and the dark”.³⁶ Du Chaillu positioned himself globally as he looked north, writing “far beyond was that unknown region, guarded by a wall of ice... behind me were Europe with its sunny climes and Africa... on my right was Asia—on my left was America”.³⁷ Nordkapp’s Arcticality made it a place for thinking at scale. He also emphasised the sublime: Nordkapp, viewed from the sea, looked like a “black mass” when he returned in winter.³⁸ Violet Crompton-Roberts, another British traveller who published an account of her journey, had a more contrasting experience. Despite the visually spectacular sun and extreme cold that she noted, there was a “great contrast of the sublime and the ridiculous”, as they drank champagne supplied by an “enterprising peasant” and sang the respective national anthems of their tour group.³⁹ They even met some London friends and Crompton-Roberts wrote of her surprise at doing so “at one of the most out-of-the-way places in Europe”.⁴⁰ Their trip to Nordkapp ended up having “something that reminded one of Hampstead Heath or Margate Sands in it”,⁴¹ despite there being “something wonderful in the feeling that we now had nothing between us and the North Pole but that great Arctic Ocean”.⁴² Crompton-Roberts experienced the Arctic sublime and bourgeois mass leisure simultaneously. Kent had a similarly contrasting experience of Nordkapp. After crossing a snow field to reach the cliff top, she attempted to shelter behind the Oscar monument, but “its bulk afforded no shelter from the piercing north-east blast which penetrated our very souls”.⁴³ She wished to write some letters from Nordkapp, to reach out from the periphery, but the “intense cold” prevented her from doing so.⁴⁴ Just as the Arctic conditions seemed to have thwarted her attempts to communicate, she was able to use her Etna stove to brew tea, “its heat and strength

³⁴ Bjarne Rogan, “An Entangled Object: The Picture Postcard as Souvenir and Collectible, Exchange and Ritual Communication”, *Cultural Analysis*, vol. 4 (2005), 17.

³⁵ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 256.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 255.

³⁷ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. I*, 104.

³⁸ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. II*, 155.

³⁹ [Violet Crompton-Roberts], *A Jubilee Jaunt to Norway by Three Girls* (London: Griffith, Farran, Okeden and Welsh, 1888), 73-4. On the internationalism of tourism at Nordkapp, see Spring, “Early Mass Tourism at the North Cape”, 146-47.

⁴⁰ Crompton-Roberts, *A Jubilee Jaunt to Norway*, 78.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 73.

⁴³ Kent, *Within the Arctic Circle*, 110.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 111.

infusing fresh life and warmth into us".⁴⁵ Modern technology allowed her to restore domesticity and order when faced with the Arctic elements, her taste of the Arctic powerful but helpfully limited.

Key discursive concerns of British travellers in Norway – Norway's past and future, Arctic space and celebrity, and the complex temporalities of travel in Norway and the Arctic – cohered around the figure of Fridtjof Nansen. Nansen, hailed as a Viking and a modern Norwegian hero, was a major celebrity in Europe and North America after the *Fram* Expedition and, perhaps unsurprisingly, featured prominently in the turn of the century travelogues.⁴⁶ Travellers read, met, and engaged with the figure of Nansen. They had material entanglements with him: Hyne travelled to Vardø/Várggát on the *Windward*, which, after dropping Hyne off, continued to Franz Josef Land with supplies for the Jackson-Harmsworth Expedition. It then returned with the Expedition members and Nansen himself, following his overwintering on Franz Josef Land after leaving *Fram*.⁴⁷ Wyllie wrote about the *Fram* Expedition when visiting Larvik, where *Fram* was built.⁴⁸ When her cruise reached the ice edge near Spitsbergen, its northernmost point, she wrote "only fancy if the *Fram* could have been coming out of the pack at that moment" and noted that she was reading Nansen's account of the journey, *Farthest North*.⁴⁹ Sailing round the north of Norway in 1894, Helen Peel wrote "now that I can in a modest way number myself among arctic voyagers, I am able in some small degree to picture to myself the numerous and perilous obstacles to be overcome. May the Norwegian Dr. Nansen, in his endeavour to solve the greatest problem in the world meet with every success".⁵⁰ Peel aligned her travel with Arctic exploration, and Nansen in particular.⁵¹ Whilst her travel may not have taken the exact form of Nares and others, she saw it as similar in her mind and in her text. Exploration became the discourse through which Arctic space was viewed and experienced. For Tweedie, Nansen was a model of the new Norwegian, marrying Norwegian heritage, traditional skills, and participation in modern intellectual culture.⁵² Nansen brought together British interest in the Norse past, shared racial heritage, and the fascination with the Arctic and exploration, as well as the multiple temporalities present in the discourses around travel in Norway. The relationship of British travellers to the Arctic was developed in spaces like Norway, which allowed access to phenomena and experiences associated with the Arctic in the nineteenth-century British imagination for travellers who would not otherwise be able reach them.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Jones, "Exploration, Celebrity, and the Making of a Transnational Hero", 86.

⁴⁷ Hyne, *Through Arctic Lapland*, 2.

⁴⁸ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 49-50.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 301.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Walchester, "'My Petticoat Encumbrances': The 'Female Adventurer' and the North", *Nordlit*, vol. 32 (2014), 166.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ryall, "Literary Culture on the Margins: Ethel Tweedie's Travels in Norway", 327-8.

“Desecration by the hobnail boot”: Tourism and Escape in Norwegian Mountain Landscapes

Even as tourism to Norway increased through the nineteenth century, it remained a place associated with the past in the British imagination. Norway was linked to the preindustrial and the pastoral through depictions of it as a place defined by its rural economy, society, and landscape, as well as its Viking history. As with the High Arctic, travel to Norway was also a temporal journey – travel back in time, as well as through space. Moreover, not only were Norway’s landscapes preindustrial: they were also spectacular. The mountains and fjords were significant part of the travel experience and feature prominently in the written and visual accounts of travellers. A typical example might be Du Chaillu’s description of Lofoten in his 1877 travelogue, *The Land of the Midnight Sun*, where he describes the approach to the islands as “grand in the extreme”, a landscape both “extremely beautiful” and “bleak [and] barren” in its mountains.⁵³ Further south and a few decades later, Wyllie noted in her 1907 travelogue, *Norway and its Fjords*, that in the Geirangerfjord, “the scenery was so stupendous that a hush fell over us all, as though we were in church”⁵⁴ – a not uncommon association of the mountainous with the holy.⁵⁵ Norway made an emotional impression on travellers and combined landscapes regarded weird and sublime with pastoral idylls, the supposed “soft luxury and the flesh-pots of the valleys” in Slingsby’s phrase.⁵⁶

Leisure travel to Norway from Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century was largely undertaken by gentlemen eager to hunt and fish, the so-called “salmon lords” who established routes and accommodation in more remote areas suitable for their sport.⁵⁷ These gentleman sportsmen of the 1830s and 1840s played an important role in continuing to define Norway as a place notable for supposedly unspoilt wilderness.⁵⁸ However, this perception was reinforced from the 1870s by British mountaineers. Two particularly notable figures in this were Slingsby and Le Blond.⁵⁹ Their main publications - Slingsby’s *Norway: The Northern Playground* (1904) and Le Blond’s *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun* (1908) – described their mountaineering exploits in Norway in the latter decades of the nineteenth century and both present interesting versions of Norway, its landscapes,

⁵³ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun*, Vol. II, 116.

⁵⁴ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 178.

⁵⁵ Veronica della Dora, *Mountain: Nature and Culture* (London: Reaktion, 2016), 27.

⁵⁶ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 11.

⁵⁷ Pia Sillanpää, ““Turning Their Steps to Some Fresh and Less-Frequented Field”: Victorian and Edwardian Sporting Gentlemen in Mid-Scandinavia”, *Studies in Travel Writing*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1999), 172.

⁵⁸ Walchester, “Beyond the Grand Tour...”, 205.

⁵⁹ Le Blond (née Hawkins-Whitshed) was also known as Elizabeth Main and Elizabeth Burnaby, but I will use Le Blond as this is the name she published *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun* under.

and its people.⁶⁰ Slingsby was born in 1849 into a mill-owning Yorkshire family and, whilst fitting the middle-class profile of a British alpinist, he became best known for his mountaineering in Norway. He made numerous first ascents in Norway from the 1870s onwards, including the ascent of the “iconic” Store Skagastølstind in 1876, and his achievements led to him being described as the “father of Norwegian mountaineering” in his obituary in the *Alpine Journal*.⁶¹ Le Blond was one of the most prominent female mountaineers of the late nineteenth century, climbing widely in the Alps, as well as travelling in Russia and East Asia. She also founded the Ladies' Alpine Club; by the time she climbed in Norway, she was a significant figure in the British mountaineering community.⁶² The mountaineering described in the respective texts took place in different areas of Norway, although there are commonalities. Slingsby's ascents were mainly in the Jotunheimen, Sunnmøre and Romsdal regions of central Norway, whereas Le Blond climbed in the Lyngen Alps of Northern Norway, near Tromsø. Slingsby climbed in Northern Norway in the 1890s, where his visits overlapping with Le Blond's there. *The Northern Playground* focussed on his activity further south, however, whilst Le Blond's text was concerned only with her time in Lyngen. They also narrate visits from different times, with the twenty-year period between some of Slingsby's climbs and Le Blond's account revealing some interesting differences in British approaches to and understandings of travel in Norway. Slingsby's travel was pioneering, and he regarded himself as “opening up” Norway for other visitors. By the time Le Blond visited, Norway was a far more popular and consequently busier destination and Le Blond travelled further north to search for spaces free from mass tourism. The two mountaineers also had personal differences in their relationships to the country. Le Blond made several visits to Lyngen, but only after the death of the son of her usual guide in the Alps, Joseph Imboden, which changed both Imboden and Le Blond's relationship to the region. Norway was an alternative with the “charm of the unknown”,⁶³ a space where the pleasure of the Alps could be rediscovered, albeit with some notable differences.

Slingsby's relationship to Norway ran far deeper. As well as making frequent visits across three decades, he made friends and built networks, useful both for mountaineering and his interest in cultural connections between Britain and Norway.⁶⁴ Slingsby mentioned his Norwegian climbing companions, like his friend and fellow climber – his “fjell kammerat” – Emanuel Mohn, in *The Northern Playground*.⁶⁵ He also named his Norwegian guide, Knut Lykken, who accompanied Slingsby and

⁶⁰ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground* and Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*.

⁶¹ Readman, “William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914”, 1102.

⁶² Hansen, “Le Blond [née Hawkins-Whitshed], Elizabeth Alice Frances (1860–1934), mountaineer and photographer”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 September 2004).

⁶³ Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 5-6.

⁶⁴ Readman, “William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914”, 1117.

⁶⁵ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 124.

Mohn.⁶⁶ Lykken had useful local knowledge for climbs, but “had never seen an ice axe before”,⁶⁷ meaning Slingsby had to train him up. This willingness to engage with and employ local people contrasted to Le Blond’s approach and speaks to the wider difference in their attitudes. Le Blond, who travelled to Norway with Imboden, writes that “any fool may have local knowledge coupled with sound muscles, but it takes skilled labour to lead a party unharmed”.⁶⁸ Imboden had climbed in the Himalayas, as well as extensively in the Alps, and Le Blond trusted him to guide her over unfamiliar Norwegian terrain.⁶⁹ Slingsby, with a relationship to Norwegian mountaineering more fully established, felt comfortable leading, whilst locals could provide their knowledge of place and “sound muscles”. He found Norwegians who “took to glaciers as a duck takes to water”.⁷⁰ This contrast, between Slingsby’s interest in Norway and Norwegians and Le Blond’s more disconnected approach, is also seen in their use of languages in their texts. Slingsby’s position as an authority in Norway is reinforced by his use of Norwegian words in his text, as terminology and as lengthy conversations with Norwegians in Norwegian quoted verbatim.⁷¹ Le Blond, on the other hand, conversed with locals in a “villainous mixture of Norwegian, German and English”,⁷² and phonetically recorded the odd phrases she has learned in their English equivalents. A phrase like “hva står du til” – roughly “what are you doing” – becomes “who stole the till”.⁷³

Le Blond’s somewhat dismissive attitude to the Norwegian language and Slingsby’s interest in Norwegian people, language and landscape did converge in certain ways of understanding the places and spaces they travel through. Both were involved, as with explorers in the High Arctic and mountaineers in other places, in naming places they believe themselves to be the first to discover. Their colonial gaze, and its cartographic tendencies, ordered the landscape as they saw fit.⁷⁴ Le Blond’s gaze and Slingsby’s knowledge combined in her description of the process. Le Blond writes that “before, however, finally deciding that they should bear them [the names] to all eternity, I discussed them at home with Mr Cecil Slingsby, whose previous visit to the district and knowledge of the language of the country enabled him to correct or confirm the designations I suggested”.⁷⁵ Slingsby is once again shown as an authority on Norway; however, he is far less collaborative with Norwegians here than elsewhere. This possessive approach to Norway, both through inscribing the landscape and

⁶⁶ Ibid., 126.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 128.

⁶⁸ Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 19-20.

⁶⁹ For Le Blond’s relationship to guides, see Walchester, “‘A fisherman landing an unwieldy salmon’: The Alpine Guide and Female Mountaineer”, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, vol. 40, issue 2 (2018): 183-98.

⁷⁰ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 419.

⁷¹ See, for example, *ibid.*, 231.

⁷² Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 184.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Walchester, *Gamle Norge...*, 131.

⁷⁵ Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 78.

the textual production of the travel narrative, are reminiscent of the role of Arctic explorers in constructing the High Arctic as a space, from the narratives of Nares to the texts of interwar British explorers in Spitsbergen and East Greenland. Northern Norway was depicted as a space similar to the High Arctic, suitable for being seen with a certain gaze, as well as being shaped by the climber or traveller.

Moreover, Le Blond commented on shared characteristics of both Northern Norway and other Arctic spaces. As she visited in the summer, the midnight sun was a crucial part of her experience of Lyngen. The midnight sun was not only “cheering”,⁷⁶ but also a luxury, meaning “halts may be prolonged to any desired extent without inconvenience”.⁷⁷ As with a skilled guide, the midnight sun provided additional safety on the mountain, reducing time pressure and allowing for greater rest. Moreover, whilst this Arctic experience was not one of hardship, it was still one of exception. The Arctic allowed for new possibilities. As Le Blond wrote, “a real holiday should not be intruded on by the necessity for rising at any special hour, eating at any particular time, or going to bed except when inclined. But only in a land where for a couple of months day and night differ but little from each other is such a holiday possible”.⁷⁸ This was a uniquely Arctic temporality, where “it is difficult to conceive of a country where an alarm clock would ordinarily be of less use”.⁷⁹ Norway was again invoked as a temporally different space, liberating the British traveller. Part of this was the mountaineers’ relationships to their own sense of modernity and being modern. Peter H. Hansen has written about the “performative modernity” of mountaineering and this would seem to apply here.⁸⁰ Whilst Le Blond was liberated from the constraints of modern time, symbolised by her alarm clock, she also showed herself to be modern in relation to Norway. She was a keen photographer, who used her own photographs to illustrate *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, and noted that the local Sámi had a “horror” of her camera.⁸¹ Mountaineering itself was “emblematic of the multiplicity of modernity”, in Hansen’s words, aligned with discourses of knowledge and conquest. The naming and photography undertaken by Le Blond can be seen as a clear example of this, along with her management of risk through choosing to climb under the midnight sun. This was not just an escape from the pressures of modern time restrictions, but a modern awareness of and control over time.⁸²

It is, however, worth further complicating the idea of British travellers travelling from a modern metropole to a pre-modern Norwegian periphery. There was a difference between the

⁷⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 220-1.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 298.

⁸⁰ Hansen, “Modern Mountains”.

⁸¹ Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 49.

⁸² Ben Anderson, *Cities, Mountains and Being Modern...*, 142.

Norway of the British imagination – pre-industrial, pastoral, and free – and the Norway in which they actually travelled. Moreover, the travellers themselves contributed to this Norwegian modernity in a number of ways. It is worth first noting the infrastructure of the places they travelled to and through, something that will be developed later in this chapter. Le Blond notes the “post and telephone office”⁸³ in Lyngseidet/Ivgumotki, the main settlement near the Lyngen Alps, as well as the mail steamers along the coast through the winter.⁸⁴ Steamships were available for both private hire and on a regular route from Tromsø and one point Le Blond saw a “huge German tourist boat”.⁸⁵ Le Blond was also visited by friends from Britain who were keen to climb in Lyngen and they were able to arrive from Tromsø by steamship, the “thud! thud! thud!” of which disturbed Le Blond’s sleep.⁸⁶ For all that Northern Norway’s remoteness appealed, it was a place linked to the rest of Europe and the world, through infrastructure, communication, and travel. Moreover, Le Blond’s temporal escape was not complete. She also imagined a future for Lyngen, noting that a “large new hotel had already risen... and I do not doubt that in future Lyngseidet will be a popular resort”.⁸⁷ A tourist future was imagined for the region by Le Blond.

This was a tourist future that was already being built in some areas of Norway and one to which Slingsby was an active contributor. Slingsby worked closely with *Den Norske Turistforening* (DNT), a Norwegian organisation founded in 1868 to encourage and aid travel to rural areas of the country. Tied into Norwegian nationalism and the National Romantic movement in Norway, it aimed to develop a national consciousness among the population which centred on a conception of Norway as a rural nation. Rural areas and people seemed to offer access to an authentic version of national identity, away from urban areas where Danish and Swedish influence were stronger after centuries of unions. DNT also sought to construct the infrastructure to make this rural turn possible, especially for urban Norwegians.⁸⁸ Slingsby wrote frequently for their yearbook, *Den Norske Turistforenings Årbog*,⁸⁹ and, through climbing with Norwegian friends and guides like Mohn and Lykken, became closely linked to the Norwegian mountaineering community. He climbed with the pioneering Norwegian female mountaineer, Therese Bertheau, among others.⁹⁰ Moreover, Slingsby’s transnational co-operation with DNT has a significant textual trace in *The Northern Playground*. He describes the paths built by

⁸³ Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 26.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 257.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 218.

⁸⁸ Gro Ween and Abram, “The Norwegian Trekking Association: Trekking as Constituting the Nation”, *Landscape Research*, vol. 37, no. 2 (April 2012), 157-8.

⁸⁹ Now *Den Norske Turistforenings Årbok*. Some early editions also spelt *Årbog* as *Aarbog*.

⁹⁰ Readman, “William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914”, 1108. See also, Anne-Mette Vibe, *Therese Bertheau – Tindestigerske og Lærerinde* (Oslo: Universitetsbiblioteket i Oslo, 2012).

DNT as “excellent and useful”⁹¹ when visiting the Vettisfoss waterfall in Jotunheimen and notes the *Årbog* for 1871 contained a “most useful map” of the area.⁹² He was also impressed by the Skagastølshytte (now Skagastølsbu), the cabin built below Store Skagastølstind, the peak of which Slingsby made the first ascent in 1876, with two thousand kroner contributed by DNT.⁹³ Slingsby also appreciated the reach of DNT. When climbing in Sunnmøre, he noted that “many of the natives of Søndmøre [Sunnmøre] are devoted admirers of its grand scenery. They have a *Turist Forening*, whose headquarters are in Aalesund, and this club has already done much to open up the wildest glens and to cut paths through otherwise almost impenetrable brushwood to lead to some useful mountain pass... which are a great boon to mountaineers”.⁹⁴ Here we see the active work of DNT present again: they were opening up and cutting paths, making the landscape accessible and available to themselves, other Norwegians wishing to connect with their national landscape, and visitors from abroad like Slingsby.

Slingsby’s approval of this increased accessibility is in itself interesting. There would seem to be a tension between this opening up of the landscape to visitors and the vision of Norway as a space of escape, be it from modernity at home or, for mountaineers, from the increasingly busy Alps. Tourism is present in both *The Northern Playground* and *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, but Slingsby and Le Blond’s respective approaches to it reveal their differing attitudes towards Norway as a place, as well as broader questions about tourism at the end of the nineteenth century. Was tourism appealing or corrupting, and in what quantity was it sustainable? Slingsby’s discussion of DNT in Sunnmøre showed his attitude: the mountains should be opened up. As Paul Readman puts it, “Slingsby wanted to see more people on the fells, not fewer”.⁹⁵ Slingsby wrote that his climbing in Jotunheimen “broke new ground from the tourists’ point of view, and I am glad to have learned that a good number of them have already followed our example”.⁹⁶ Slingsby was clearly happy to be followed and his text contains recommendations of routes and mentions “mountaineers who have applied to me for suggestions”.⁹⁷ He also acknowledged his position as a pioneer, and, as with Le Blond, made predictions about the future popularity of certain locations, noting places that would “some day [be] a favourite spot with tourists”.⁹⁸ In this way, Slingsby acted as a vanguard for a future movement of British tourists that would follow him into the remoter areas of Norway. Le Blond’s attitude towards tourism was quite different, influenced by her experiences in the Alps. For her,

⁹¹ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 56.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 58

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 357.

⁹⁵ Readman, “William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914”, 1124.

⁹⁶ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 233.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 346.

Northern Norway's distance "serve[d] to protect it from invasion by tourists"⁹⁹ and it promised "all the repose of a land where no travellers are seen", even if this was not true.¹⁰⁰ She was able to experience "real comfort",¹⁰¹ because "many of the most trying features of Alpine climbing were absent".¹⁰² In Northern Norway, "no crowded huts and uncongenial parties spoil one's enjoyment of the scenery, no curious tourists lounging round the door of a hotel watched us return after a trying expedition".¹⁰³ As Ann C. Colley has noted, there was a sense of "class pollution" in the Alps, with large numbers of lower-middle-class tourists visiting from the 1860s through Thomas Cook's travel company and supposedly disrupting the landscapes and travel experiences of higher class mountaineers.¹⁰⁴ This was another pressure of modern time, where the package tourists' tight schedules rushed them through the mountains. Le Blond could escape this with a longer trip to Norway, a relatively less accessible region, free from the commercialism of Alpine mountaineering. She was able to rediscover a sense of difference and newness that was, for her, no longer possible to find under the surveillance of tourists. She was pleased that "at no time is our northern playground likely to be overrun".¹⁰⁵ Whilst she climbed with friends, she did not establish routes or collaborate with local mountaineers – in fact, much of the appeal of Lyngen was that "hardly any climbers have visited it".¹⁰⁶ With less of an investment in Norway or its culture, Lyngen was, for Le Blond, appealingly blank.

Slingsby's interest in Norwegian language, landscape and culture perhaps explains some of his eagerness to be followed to Norway. He wanted others to see the place to which he felt a strong connection. Tourism and the accompanying business and commercialism, however, seemed antithetical to his vision of what Norway was as a country. He feared "desecration by the hobnail boot", particularly in Lyngen and other areas in Northern Norway, and could be as concerned about the pressures of tourism as Le Blond.¹⁰⁷ As tourism to Norway increased from the 1870s to the end of the nineteenth century, Slingsby noted the shift from the "poetry and hunger" of his early Norwegian mountaineering to the "prose and plenty" at the turn of the century.¹⁰⁸ The same tourism which he encouraged had changed Norway. The Norwegians themselves, exposed to tourism, had become, in Slingsby's words, "prosaic and prosperous".¹⁰⁹ The identity of the tourists themselves also troubled

⁹⁹ Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 8.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Ann C. Colley, "Class Pollution in the Alps", *Victorian Review*, vol. 36, no. 2 (Fall 2010), 36-9.

¹⁰⁵ Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 7-8.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁰⁷ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 12.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 62.

Slingsby. The building of the Mundal Hotel in Fjærland on the Sognefjord attracted “steamboats full of tourists”, including “some awful specimens of the English ‘Bounder’”, who Slingsby referred to as “‘Arry and ‘Arriett”, after the Cockney tourists depicted in *Punch*.¹¹⁰ Beyond class anxiety, Slingsby was also concerned about the impact of tourism on Norwegian society. In Fjærland, he noted that “good-natured but misguided British tourists” affected the local economy.¹¹¹ Their generous tipping made locals neglect their farms in favour of the tourist economy, doing, in Slingsby’s opinion, “much more harm to the country than [the tourist] is aware of”.¹¹² We can see Slingsby’s concerns about tourism in Norway as rooted in his interest in the country, as well as his interest in making Norway *as it existed* visible to more people. Readman notes Slingsby’s involvement with preservationist organisations such as the Commons Preservation Society in Britain; his desire to get more people to the mountains, be it in Britain or Norway, was not due to an interest in changing them.¹¹³ Rather, infrastructure built by DNT or other organisations allowed more people to experience the escape that Norway offered. Le Blond’s “real holiday” was an ideal and Norway a seemingly perfect destination, if travel, access, and engagement with the landscape could be controlled.

Crucial to this sense of escape was a discourse of health and refreshment, seen in the texts of Slingsby and Le Blond, but also other travellers. Norway, associated with outdoors activities and rural life, was seen as free from the pressures of modernity.¹¹⁴ Tourism brochures at the end of the nineteenth century recommended Norway as a place for the sick to convalesce. This could be in sanatoria such as Holmenkollen, just outside Christiania, but also in the Norwegian landscape more generally.¹¹⁵ A 1916 travel guide even referred to the country as the “health resort of Europe”, where travellers could find “the clearest, driest, and most bracing atmosphere imaginable”.¹¹⁶ As noted in the Introduction, Readman writes that, for Slingsby and other mountaineers, “mountaineering was a means of coping with the challenges of contemporary modernity, of replenishing what the sedentary quotidian depleted, for the benefit of the workaday world”.¹¹⁷ Norway, even in small doses, was good for you. There is also ample textual evidence for this, in *The Northern Playground* and *Mountaineering*

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 282. Alan McNee notes that some tourists chose to adopt this identity as ‘Arry and ‘Arriet whilst travelling as a way of resisting the social exclusion of some establishments and the prevalent discourse in elite travel narratives such as Slingsby’s. See McNee, “‘Arry and ‘Arriet ‘out on a spree’: trippers, tourists and travellers writing in late-Victorian visitors’ books”, *Studies in Travel Writing*, vol. 24, no. 2: 142-156.

¹¹¹ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 293.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Readman, “William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914”, 1126.

¹¹⁴ Fjågesund and Symes, *The Northern Utopia*, 77.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 77-8. Mountain spaces, health, and temporality were often connected in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most notably in Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*. Like the Arctic, mountain space offered an alternative perspective on modernity, as well as a sense of escape, itself often linked to performing the modern. See, for example, della Dora, *Mountain*, 162-3.

¹¹⁶ Dutt, *Sunlit Norway*, 9.

¹¹⁷ Readman, “William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914”, 1128.

in *the Land of the Midnight Sun*, as well as other travel narratives of the period. Le Blond found travel in Norway easier, noting that the mountaineer “need fear fatigue and strain far less than in the Alps”, as the midnight sun allowed for longer periods of rest on trips.¹¹⁸ Slingsby extended his praise to the landscape, describing Sunnmøre as a “very healthy and bracing place”.¹¹⁹ These experiences, moreover, were not limited to those exerting themselves on the hills. Wyllie opened *Norway and its Fjords* with a description of how “the stress and hurry of everyday life, like the ship’s wake, receded in the distance” on the journey across the North Sea.¹²⁰ On arrival, Christiania has a “undoubtedly healthy look, and a sweet clean smell”,¹²¹ and she goes on to quote Bjørnson, who did “not understand why people who travel for the sake of their health do not choose the winter in which to visit Norway. And the air! There is no bacteria in that air”.¹²² Kent, travelling a few decades earlier, noted that “all discomforts are forgotten... after breathing for a few minutes the clean, fresh air”¹²³ and when travelling in Finnmark, Du Chaillu “felt as light as a cork, as full of life and spirit as if I had been exhilarated with champagne; the rarefied air acted upon me like a stimulant”.¹²⁴ Norway’s fresh air revived the sick and tired and refreshed those suffering from the pressures of modernity. The landscape played a crucial role in creating a space of difference, unlike anything the traveller would experience at home, but also in providing a space of the supposedly purely natural, where the traveller could appreciate nature and escape the civilisation of home.

This sense of escape into a healthy, natural landscape is rarely stated more explicitly than in James A. Lees and Walter J. Clutterbuck’s comic fishing and shooting travelogue, *Three in Norway, by Two of Them* (1882), where, in a rare moment of earnestness, they describe their experienced freedom in Norway:

It is very pleasant to be alone once in a way in this overcrowded world. Not alone as it is possible to be in England, but absolutely alone, with no living thing near except the trout, the insects, and one’s image in the water. Oh, blessed Norway! when we get back to the turmoils, troubles, and pleasures of a London season how we shall long for you! There is only one word to express this existence, and that is Freedom – freedom from care, freedom from resistance, and from the struggle for life. What a country! where civilised man can relapse as much as seems good for him into his natural state, and retrograde a hundred generations to his primeval condition.¹²⁵

¹¹⁸ Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 291.

¹¹⁹ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 364.

¹²⁰ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 2.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 37.

¹²³ Kent, *Within the Arctic Circle*, 58.

¹²⁴ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. I*, 91.

¹²⁵ Lees and Clutterbuck, *Three in Norway*, 175.

Lees and Clutterbuck emphasised the escapism of Norway that Le Blond discovered a decade later, whilst similarly emptying the landscape.¹²⁶ Their description of how alone they were is perhaps slightly ironic, given the numerous descriptions in their text of encounters with both guides and local tourists, but it emphasised the attitude of the upper-class British traveller to Norway as a space of freedom, particularly in contrast to the “London season”. Norway was liberating, as Le Blond found with her “real holiday”. Moreover, this travel, as with other journeys made to Norway and the Arctic more generally, was temporal. The traveller could “relapse” and “retrograde” through time to a “primeval” state, one which was “natural” and “seems good for him”. Quite where Norwegians were left in this was unclear – although this was something other travellers addressed, particularly when writing about Sámi. However, Lees and Clutterbuck presented this escape from modernity – the “London season” – as deeply freeing for the traveller, even if it could only be temporary. Their “relapse” only went so far; they travelled by train, received British newspapers, and the text contains a number of carefully presented menus from their meals. The escape from civilisation was partial and particular.

Encounters with the truly urban were rare for the British traveller, given that most deliberately sought out rural areas. Moreover, Norway was overwhelmingly rural at the time – 80 per cent of the population lived in rural areas, out of a population of 1.82 million in 1882. Christiania was the largest city with a population which had only just exceeded 100,000 and the population of Bergen, the second largest, was around 43,000.¹²⁷ For most travellers, towns were both what they were seeking to escape and pale imitations of the urban areas they knew at home.¹²⁸ Positive descriptions often emphasised the setting. Wyllie described Bergen as “as one of the most beautiful little capitals in Europe”, but this is largely due to its position as “the jewel set in its seven mountains”.¹²⁹ When she arrived, “everyone possessed of a telescope, opera - glass, or binocular was the centre of a small crowd, all looking upwards at the mountain.”¹³⁰ The centre of attention was the landscape, even from the city centre. The modern urban spectacle, viewed through technology, was the mountain in Bergen.¹³¹ Her travelogue contains some explicitly anti-urban descriptions of Norwegian cities, as examples of

¹²⁶ Walchester, *Gamle Norge...*, 133.

¹²⁷ Fjågesund and Symes, *The Northern Utopia*, 179.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 278.

¹²⁹ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 102.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ This sense of watching the mountain – in Bergen, because two young English women had climbed up and needed to be rescued – connects to the sense of surveillance Le Blond grew frustrated with in the Alps, where tourists came to see mountaineers climb. Mountaineering was increasingly a spectator sport in the Alps from the mid-nineteenth century. Colley, *Victorians in the Mountains: Sinking the Sublime* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 57. See also, Michael Wedekind, “Mountain Grand Hotels at the Fin de Siècle: Sites, Gazes, and Environments”, *JAAAS: Journal of the Austrian Association for American Studies* 2, no. 2 (2021), 172.

disappointment at discovering Norway was not always as pristine as hoped. In one section, she wrote that she had:

thought that Bergen had no poor, but this idea was put to flight on passing the great grey blocks of tenements. Broken windows, and dirty babies played in the dust, and the ever-familiar figure predominated of a little girl carrying a baby nearly as big as herself. At the fish-market, too, poverty was apparent. Pale-faced children, shoeless, hatless, and ragged, waited to grab and quarrel over any small fish or morsel that might fall perchance on the paving-stones.¹³²

The imagery of urban poverty was clear – the “great grey blocks of tenements”, the broken and dirty, the poverty and the violence. It seemed to be the antithesis of the imagined Norway: clean, pure, natural, and calm. Any fear that Norway evoked should, for the traveller, come from the sublime landscape, rather than hostility or criminality. Wyllie’s depiction of the Bergen tenement is perhaps the clearest example of the anti-urban, although there are hints in other texts. Le Blond disliked the public drinking and “mixed population” in Tromsø,¹³³ even if its population was only around 7,500 in 1900, albeit steadily increasing and acting as a major centre for trade in Northern Norway.¹³⁴ Travellers like Wyllie, and British tourists in Norway more generally, knew what they came for: a place which offered temporal escape, manageable hardship in spectacular places, and a healthy environment for rest and recuperation. They wished to maintain their modernity whilst escaping its external trappings and to follow established routes and safe paths, but also avoid the worst of mass tourism. Their relationship to and depiction of the Norwegian landscape was central to managing these paradoxes. Whilst Slingsby and Le Blond made first ascents, they too sought to manage risk and establish routes others might follow. Yet they remained concerned about the impact of tourism on Norwegian landscapes and society, at least as they imagined them.

“Could we not have seen the same in England had we lived a few centuries ago?”: Norway and the Temporal Encounter

For all that travellers thought they were somewhere unpopulated, they had numerous encounters with Norwegians themselves, even in the most remote areas, and it was through these meetings that ideas around shared heritage, race, and national and imperial pre-eminence were established. Contact was not usually on the level of Slingsby’s collaboration with DNT; rather, Norwegians were present in

¹³² Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 109.

¹³³ Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 25.

¹³⁴ Spring, “Arctic and European In-Betweens”, 13.

and for accommodation, transport, entertainment and simply in the places visited by travellers. As such, most travellers described the Norwegian people they met or saw, often generalising about certain national traits as they did so. Whilst descriptions of Norwegians, as individuals or as a national group, could be superficial, they were usually, in broad terms, complimentary. The discourse of healthiness, for example, carried over into descriptions of people. Norwegians were healthy people from a healthy country.¹³⁵ This, moreover, was not the only positive generalisation. Du Chaillu opened his travelogue by describing the people of Scandinavia as “brave, simple, honest, and good”.¹³⁶ These supposed regional characteristics were rooted in imaginings of Norwegian history which drew a direct line from the medieval past to the modern present and in which the Norwegian people retained certain traits throughout. Moreover, this sense of heritage and lineage was seen as shared by the British through a common Viking heritage. As Du Chaillu put it, “England is indebted for the freedom she possesses, and the manly qualities of her people—their roving disposition, their love of the sea, and of conquest in distant lands—to this admixture of Scandinavian blood, which, through hereditary transmission, makes her prominent as chiefly from Anglo-Scandinavians and not Anglo-Saxon”.¹³⁷ Although Du Chaillu was French-American, not British, he was clearly familiar with the British discourse of shared Viking heritage.¹³⁸ It is worth repeating Wawn’s link between the “Vikings and the Victorians” here, where he asserts it was “the old Northern values... that, in the eyes of many Victorians, underpinned the best of Britain at home and abroad – imperial power, mercantile prosperity, technological progress, social stability and justice”.¹³⁹ Whilst Wawn makes the link to empire explicit, this was a connection based on more than values and it is important to emphasise how racialised these comparisons often were. Du Chaillu notes the “hereditary transmission” from the “flaxen-haired and blue-eyed race” of Scandinavians;¹⁴⁰ Wyllie describes that “our old Norse ancestors... sowed the leaven of their freebooting love of adventure and danger in the blood of the Anglo-Saxon race” [my emphasis].¹⁴¹ Wyllie also included lengthy retellings of Old Norse Sagas and medieval Norwegian history in her text, but her metaphors were often biological. Slingsby describes Emanuel Mohn’s mountaineering as “fearless and sure-footed... and [he] was quite as much at his ease on the top of this treacherous mountain-wall as he would have been behind the battlements of a Norman tower”,¹⁴² making the embodied connection between Viking past and Norwegian present

¹³⁵ Fjågesund and Symes, *The Northern Utopia*, 115.

¹³⁶ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. I*, 3.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Fjågesund and Symes, *The Northern Utopia*, 20. I have chosen to include Du Chaillu as a “British” traveller due to his significance in Anglophone discourse about Norway at the end of the nineteenth century. Ibid.

¹³⁹ Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, 40.

¹⁴⁰ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. I*, 3.

¹⁴¹ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 5.

¹⁴² Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 138.

visible in the movement of Mohn. He later describes a friend and guide named Torgeir Sulheim as having “the blood of the Vikings coursing in his veins”.¹⁴³ Slingsby also believed mountaineering had “reawaken[ed] the ancient adventurous spirit of the Vikings, which, though sometimes dormant, always exists in their descendants”.¹⁴⁴ Readman writes that “for Slingsby, far from being inferior to the vigorous Britons who had showed them the way in the arts of mountaineering, modern-day Norwegians were living embodiments of the various wellsprings of British greatness”.¹⁴⁵ For travellers such as Slingsby, eager to establish connections and with interests in the particularities of place, travel to Norway offered more than escape into difference. It also offered connections with imagined British pasts and presents. Norway was a well-spring and model, both culturally and racially, of British pre-eminence.

One reason for this was a fear of decline. The very pastness of the Vikings was a reminder of the potential of imperial collapse.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, more specific concerns are present in the texts of travellers, particularly related to contemporary ideas of degeneration as a product of urban modernity. The fear of the urban seen in Wyllie’s description of Bergen, for example, came out of a discourse present in British society at the time. This was just not the liberating “relapse” of Lees and Clutterbuck, or an attempt to get closer to an idealised past, but a fear of biological degeneration manifesting itself in urban poverty, illness, and crime in the late nineteenth century.¹⁴⁷ The Norwegian people may have been presented as rural and unsophisticated at times, but the healthiness of the environment and the population was presented as part of a wider discourse of Norwegian innocence and freedom from corruption. This took explicitly racialised forms when adopted by eugenicists like Francis Galton for whom Norway offered a model of an alternative society, one as yet untouched by supposed degeneration, as well as a population with which the British could claim a shared descent, supposedly full of appealing essential traits.¹⁴⁸ As A.F. Mockler-Ferryman writes in his 1896 travelogue, “the land is inhabited by people whom it is impossible for Englishmen to regard as foreigners; they come of the same good old stock as ourselves; their ways are ours, or what ours were before excessive civilisation deprived us of many of our good qualities”.¹⁴⁹ Mockler-Ferryman makes the connections, both cultural and racial, explicit and whilst his description of British loss is closer to Lees and

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 178.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 170.

¹⁴⁵ Readman, “William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914”, 1118.

¹⁴⁶ Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, 331.

¹⁴⁷ Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 5.

¹⁴⁸ Fjågesund and Symes, *The Northern Utopia*, 128-9.

¹⁴⁹ A.F. Mockler-Ferryman, *In the Northman’s Land: Travel, Sport, and Folk-lore in the Hardanger Fjord and Fjeld* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1896), 6.

Clutterbuck's "relapse" than the degeneration of the urban poor, he clearly states the sense in which Norway maintains something that Britain has lost.

These temporalities and shared pasts and presents, however, are complex. As Wawn demonstrates, the idea that the Viking past had contributed to the success of the British present is clear in these discourses.¹⁵⁰ This idea clarified around certain objects, particularly the newly discovered Gokstad ship, which was excavated in 1880 near the whaling town of Sandefjord in Vestfold.¹⁵¹ Alongside the Tune ship, discovered in 1867, and the Oseberg ship, discovered in 1903, the Gokstad ship helped to develop the idea of a useable Viking past in multiple ways. The Viking inheritance of martial masculinity was sometimes concerningly crude for the British, but the discovery of the ships allowed for the development of the notion of the Vikings as more than just the common image of a "barbaric pirate".¹⁵² The scale and craft of the discovered ships allowed the Vikings to be more easily placed as a skilled and technologically advanced naval predecessor of the British Empire – the "perfect bridgehead between past and present greatness" in Peter Fjågesund and Ruth Symes' phrase.¹⁵³ The Gokstad ship was displayed at the University in Christiania after its discovery and was a popular sight for tourists at the end of the nineteenth century. *Bennett's Handbook*, the guidebook produced by Thomas Bennett's longstanding travel company in Christiania, described it as "the most interesting archaeological discovery of the age" in their 1893 edition.¹⁵⁴ Wyllie was struck by its similarity to modern ships, writing that "one cannot help thinking how little the art of shipbuilding has advanced since that distant day".¹⁵⁵ Lees and Clutterbuck were impressed by the Gokstad ship, noting that its form "left no room for doubt as to her seagoing qualities".¹⁵⁶ Whilst the ships were not on display to the public when they visited, the two men managed to persuade a local professor of archaeology to show them around.¹⁵⁷ A lengthy description of a visit to see the Gokstad ship comes from Olivia Stone, who visited Norway in 1881. Stone was also impressed by the contemporaneity of the ship, writing that "instead of an antiquated, rudely constructed, and roughly finished vessel, with primitively drawn lines, we found, to our astonishment, a smart, trim-looking craft".¹⁵⁸ Whilst she was clearly impressed, this did not just suggest that the ship seemed modern; rather, she believed that in ship-building, "retrogression rather than progression may actually have taken place".¹⁵⁹ Her

¹⁵⁰ Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, 40.

¹⁵¹ Fjågesund and Symes, *The Northern Utopia*, 137-9.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 137.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁵⁴ *Bennett's Handbook for Travellers in Norway. Twenty Seventh Revised and Enlarged Edition*, 55.

¹⁵⁵ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 10.

¹⁵⁶ Lees and Clutterbuck, *Three in Norway*, 335.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 334.

¹⁵⁸ Olivia Stone, *Norway in June (Third and Revised Edition)* (London: Marcus Ward and Co., 1889), 4.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

connection to the ship, and the Vikings, was apparent, as she wrote that “England would not now be at the head of the nations had not her sons inherited the blood of these Vikings”.¹⁶⁰ However, as Walchester notes, Stone was broadly ambivalent about the Vikings as models, something not uncommon in the travel narratives from Norway written by women.¹⁶¹ Whilst these texts constructed discourses of connection between Britain and Norway through shared pasts, they embraced less fully the martial masculinity often invoked around the Vikings.

Imperial ideologies, however, were not only manifested in Norway through claims to shared Viking heritage. Discourses of travel and exploration in the late nineteenth century were closely bound up with empire. Travel writing itself functioned as a way of understanding and ordering the world for readers in the imperial metropole, even when the writing was about European peripheries.¹⁶² Certain forms of travel were particularly associated with, and particularly productive for, imperial discourse. Exploration, including in the Arctic, was notable in this regard, but so was mountaineering, with a significant overlap of individuals organising, travelling, and writing, as well as shared associations and practices in both Britain and the USA.¹⁶³ The British Royal Geographical Society, for example, was a key institution in sponsoring exploration around the world, including both Arctic exploration and mountaineering.¹⁶⁴ Mountaineering had a particular role in British imperial discourse, particularly on the frontiers of Europe and Asia. Hansen has written that “as a broader cultural practice of British imperialism, mountaineering on the edge of the empire staked out the symbolic as well as the geographic limits of British imperial authority”.¹⁶⁵ As with High Arctic exploration, mountaineering in the late nineteenth century combined the scientific and the sublime, raised questions around masculinity and sacrifice (as well as wider issues of gender), involved travel in uninhabited or rhetorically depopulated places whilst guided by local people whose status oscillated between subaltern and expert, and generated a large number of textual accounts by those who had travelled. Masculinity, a focus of significant amounts of the more recent literature on mountaineering and empire, is, however, perhaps a reductive category for considering climbing in Norway. Given the prominence of Le Blond, as well as female Norwegian mountaineers like Bertheau, mountaineering was not simply a man’s game in Norway.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Walchester, *Gamle Norge...*, 101.

¹⁶² Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 12.

¹⁶³ Peter L. Bayers, *Imperial Ascent: Mountaineering, Masculinity, and Empire* (Denver: University Press of Colorado, 2003), 21.

¹⁶⁴ Reuben Ellis, *Vertical Margins: Mountaineering and the Landscapes of Neoimperialism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 25.

¹⁶⁵ Hansen, “Vertical Boundaries, National Identities: British Mountaineering on the Frontiers of Europe and the Empire, 1868-1914”, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 24, no. 1 (Jan. 1996), 50.

However, it is worth considering how the discursive connections between empire and mountaineering were rooted in gender. As Walchester notes when writing about Le Blond and Slingsby, “both texts use images of the region which recall imperial discourse, such as depictions of a conquered sexualised landscape, showing the foreign land as a playground for the British, and presenting the British as leaders or teachers to less competent natives”.¹⁶⁶ Norway was a complex space in the colonial imaginary. Both Slingsby and Le Blond named locations, admired the supposed emptiness of the landscape for its freedom, and underwent, through their narratives, the temporal dislocation often seen in travel writing about colonised space and peoples. However, their varying degrees of engagement with Norway as a place complicate an understanding of them as colonial figures in Norway. Le Blond’s sense of possession was a detached one, whilst Slingsby’s connection with the Norwegian people is one of respect. In many ways, his discussion of shared racial heritage presented the Norwegians alongside the British in an imperial hierarchy. Readman writes that for Slingsby “imperialistic motivations, by the late nineteenth century... were of less importance even to those mountaineers who—as in Slingsby’s case—were ardent supporters of empire” and notes Slingsby’s imperialist politics did not extend to his attitude to mountaineering, given his willingness to look beyond first ascents and support local mountaineers.¹⁶⁷ These are important points to consider, but perhaps overlooks the way in which Slingsby and other travellers folded Norwegian pasts into British imperial presents, an understanding of race and whiteness which situated Britain and Norway together in the imperial world. Slingsby also noted, for example, Norwegian support for Britain in the Second Boer War. Kristofer Randers, a Norwegian poet who also wrote a guidebook to Sunnmøre which Slingsby used, had, according to Slingsby, “generous feelings towards our nation... at a time when most continental Europeans and their friends, the ‘Little Englanders’ at home, were, apparently, not over anxious for our success in South Africa”.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, Slingsby knew “a good many Norsemen whose opinions on this matter coincide with Herr Randers”.¹⁶⁹ Empire structured thought and affinity between British travellers and Norwegians. A shared sense of common descent was crucial for this, but sympathies extended into the future. British and Norwegian alignment was also geopolitical, ways of being in the world connected by a supposed racial unity produced by the past and a common future as allies and powers in the world.

Two further points can clarify the relationship between empire and travel in Norway, beyond just mountaineering. Firstly, the travel itself could rely on the labour of colonised peoples. Descriptions of this are rare in the narratives of travellers, but Marion Wyllie mentions the “lascars” who work

¹⁶⁶ Walchester, *Gamle Norge...*, 129.

¹⁶⁷ Readman, “William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914”, 1111.

¹⁶⁸ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 357.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

aboard the ship on which she travels up the Norwegian coast. Lascars, South Asian workers on merchant ships, were both vital labour for European ships, especially British ones, and part of a “maritime labour market of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries... structured into a rigidly racist hierarchy with South Asians at its bottom”.¹⁷⁰ Wyllie writes that the lascars are “dimly seen, like phantoms”¹⁷¹ and contrasts the labour of the Black and South Asian crew with the “knot of people sat in comfortable attitudes on their deck chairs”, presumably European tourists, on a unexpectedly hot day whilst sailing north from Lofoten to Tromsø.¹⁷² These fleeting glimpses complicate our understanding of tourism to Norway, moving it beyond a simple exchange of travellers from one country visiting another. Even given the internationalism of tourist voyages to Northern Norway in the late nineteenth century,¹⁷³ considering the colonial and global entanglements of tourism demonstrates the complexity of travel and exchange.

Secondly, Norway itself was not simply the recipient of colonial projections and discourses from outside. Kristofer Randers’ discussion of the Boer War is not an isolated example of Norwegian engagement with the colonial world; indeed, the Cape Colony saw hundreds of Norwegians settle from the 1880s onwards¹⁷⁴ and play a significant role in the economic sphere of the region.¹⁷⁵ Norway, through its relationships with Denmark and Sweden, had connections to a range of colonial settlements around the world, from Indian trading stations to Caribbean plantations.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, it was also the third-largest shipping nation globally in terms of tonnage in 1878, behind only by the United States and the United Kingdom.¹⁷⁷ These global connections enabled Norwegian entrepreneurship, creating strong connections with more formal colonial powers and the circulations of people and goods through the colonial world. As Bjørn Enge Bertelsen puts it, Norwegian entrepreneurship was “afforded possibilities for navigation – literally and metaphorically” through these connections.¹⁷⁸ Norway was not simply a space imprinted by the British colonial gaze; rather, Norwegians were actively involved in colonial trade and settlement and the construction of colonial

¹⁷⁰ Ravi Ahuja, “Mobility and Containment: The Voyages of South Asian Seamen, c. 1900-1960”, *International Review of Social History*, vol. 51, supplement 14: Coolies, Capital, and Colonialism: Studies in Indian Labour History (2006), 112.

¹⁷¹ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 146.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 230.

¹⁷³ Spring, “Early Mass Tourism at the North Cape”, 146-47.

¹⁷⁴ Kirsten Alsaker Kjerland, “Preface” in Kjerland and Bjørn Enge Bertelsen (eds.), *Navigating Colonial Orders: Norwegian Entrepreneurship in Africa and Oceania* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), xiv-xv.

¹⁷⁵ Erlend Eidsvik, “Liminal but Omnipotent: Thesen & Co. – Norwegian Migrants in the Cape Colony” in *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁷⁶ Naum and Nordin, “Introduction: Situating Scandinavian Colonialism” in Naum and Nordin (eds.), *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity*, 6.

¹⁷⁷ Bertelsen, “Introduction: Norwegians Navigating Colonial Orders in Africa and Oceania” in Kjerland and Bertelsen (eds.), *Navigating Colonial Orders*, 2.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

discourses.¹⁷⁹ Norwegian emigration to the USA is also frequently mentioned in travel texts – Du Chaillu, as an American, was often told about family members who had left for his homeland and descriptions of emigrants at the docks of Christiania, Bergen and Christiansand (now Kristiansand) were also common in travelogues. The issue of Norwegian colonisation in Sápmi will be discussed later in the chapter but is also important to consider when thinking about empire in the Arctic.¹⁸⁰ Norway's whalers and polar exploration, including the acquisition of Svalbard and several Antarctic territories, as well as the use of African labour on whaling stations, further complicate the picture of a British Arctic-imperial gaze in Northern Norway.¹⁸¹ Norwegian polar exploration at the end of the nineteenth century was epitomised by Nansen and Nansen was an extremely popular figure, both as a celebrity in Britain and in the writing of British travellers. Nansen was also, as Max Jones puts it, the “idealization of a white European man as the embodiment of Western civilization, a supreme combination of intellectual and physical prowess”.¹⁸² Jones emphasises the transnational nature of Nansen's success beyond his Norwegian context, but it is worth noting the British reception of Nansen as a “Viking” in the British press.¹⁸³ Nansen was a figure around whom several interconnected discourses converged. He embodied the shared Viking and imperial values which were seen as most obviously manifested in British imperial power, whilst also having inherited supposedly even more obvious Viking heritage through his Norwegian identity. Nansen, through his Norwegian expression of the Viking heritage so praised in Britain, both showed the possibility for a new, powerful Norway and complicated the supposed British inheritance of the best features of the Old Norse world.

These inheritances, however, did not just take global forms. Traces of Norway and Norwegians were also visible in Britain itself, down to the local level. Slingsby, a Yorkshireman, noted that the Norse inheritance was particularly strong in the North of England, particularly Cumberland, and that he could “recognise Norse in our rich dialects”.¹⁸⁴ Slingsby's interest in Viking legacies and Norwegian folklore and language come together here – he was also a life member and founding vice-president of the Yorkshire Dialect Society.¹⁸⁵ When travelling in Jotunheimen, he noted a local dance in which was “not many years ago... known in our own village in Yorkshire”.¹⁸⁶ Here the overlap is geographically specific, but also fading. As Readman has outlined, the Lake District also featured heavily in these

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 13.

¹⁸⁰ See, for example, Henry Minde, “Assimilation of the Sami – Implementation and Consequences”, *Acta Borealia*, vol. 20, no. 2 (2003): 121-146.

¹⁸¹ Dag Ingemar Børresen, “‘Three Black Labourers did the Job of Two Whites’: African Labourers in Modern Norwegian Whaling” in Kjerland and Bertelsen, *Navigating Colonial Orders*, 127.

¹⁸² Jones, “Exploration, Celebrity, and the Making of a Transnational Hero”, 108.

¹⁸³ David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination...*, 43.

¹⁸⁴ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 14.

¹⁸⁵ Readman, “William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914”, 1117.

¹⁸⁶ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 128.

imaginings of a transnational localism. The strength of Viking heritage, mixed with others, was seen to provide a particularly notable local temperament, comparable to Norwegians.¹⁸⁷ This was rooted in hospitality and honesty, as well as a healthy simplicity of life, albeit one which was vanishing in England.¹⁸⁸ The Lake District also contained similar rural and mountainous landscapes to Norway, where these values could linger for longer than in urban environments. Slingsby saw Norwegian life as retaining more of these characteristics. Writing of the food, accommodation, and lifestyle that he received, he observed “could we not have seen the same in England had we lived a few centuries ago?”¹⁸⁹ Once again, this is temporally complex in its interplay of imagined shared pasts, travel, and belatedness. The Lake District, and the North of England more generally, here also represented both the wellspring of British greatness, via the Viking legacy, and a faded version of what was still available in Norway. The role of travel here becomes clearer: both replenishing the traveller who is fatigued from modern life and the inhabitant of modern Britain who has become disconnected from their supposedly authentic way of life.

Norwegian social organisation held an interest for British travellers beyond Slingsby, albeit for similar reasons. Norway offered both a glimpse of a past and a model for the future. Crucial to this was the British perception of Norway as a place of freedom, itself tied to a certain understanding of Norwegian history. Du Chaillu, writing about Scandinavia in general, put it straightforwardly: “there are no freer people in Europe than the Scandinavians”.¹⁹⁰ Du Chaillu saw this a product of Viking history, as with the Viking inheritance in Britain.¹⁹¹ Other travellers extended the sense of Norway as being a well-organised state as a product of its democratic nature, even when this involved a less martial past. For Kent, the sight of portraits of the Swedish-Norwegian King, Oscar II, when in Henningsvær in Lofoten suggested that “loyalty to the reigning dynasty seemed to be innate in that quiet, industrious, well-governed, and well-organized people”.¹⁹² Less than thirty years after Kent’s account was published, Oscar II would be removed as king of Norway at Norwegian independence in 1905, yet Kent’s account was perhaps more influential in the British understanding of Norway as peaceful and pastoral. This perception was particularly prevalent amongst female travellers and was one of the reasons why Norway became popular as a destination for female travellers in the latter half of the nineteenth century. As Walchester has outlined in her book, *Gamle Norge and Nineteenth-Century British Women Travellers in Norway*, a certain vision of Norway predominated in writing by

¹⁸⁷ Readman, “William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914”, 1118. See also Readman, *Storied Ground: Landscape and the Shaping of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 135-43.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 15.

¹⁹⁰ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. I*, 17.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁹² Kent, *Within the Arctic Circle*, 186-7.

women about the country in the nineteenth century. This was “Gamle Norge” or Old Norway: representations of the country which “centre on domestic life in rural landscapes and encapsulate a nostalgic sense of the nation as a medieval, pastoral democracy”.¹⁹³ In nineteenth-century women’s travel writing, this was combined with the sense of Norway as a “place of possibility for the woman traveller, in contrast to her stilted and restricted life in Britain”.¹⁹⁴ The “bucolic, medieval and historically fixed version of the nation” was favourable for the British female traveller not just as a destination, but as a model for how British society might be improved.¹⁹⁵ Again, the image of Norway presented was as of belonging to the past – and possibly disappearing in the present, as the equivalent social structures and communities had in Britain. These representations took specifically gendered forms, in terms of who produced them and what they focussed on, and both female British travellers and Norwegian women are significant here. As tourist travel to Norway increased through the nineteenth century, perceptions of the country changed and whilst the wildness of landscapes were still emphasised, Norway was increasingly seen as a “safe” destination, especially for female travellers.¹⁹⁶ Increasingly reliable transport and accommodation were a key part of this imaginary, as was the political security emphasised in texts like Kent’s. Moreover, gender played a role in the appeal of Norwegian society; Norway was a place where “relationships between men and women are simplified and achieve an honesty”, in Walchester’s phrase.¹⁹⁷ The bucolic vision of “Gamle Norge” also reinforced the notion of Norwegian travel that enabled access to the domestic, especially for female travellers. Female travellers had particular access to female, or female-coded, spaces such as the interior of rural homes, and the emphasis on these in their narratives helped develop the notion of Norway as safe for women, but also a social model.¹⁹⁸

This discussion of female spaces and Norway’s suitability for female travellers in the writing of both male and female travellers necessarily also involved a discussion of Norwegian women. British travellers often overlooked the material and legal changes in the position of women in Norwegian society, preferring a discourse which presented the female Norwegian experience as static.¹⁹⁹ The focus of male travel writers – although this was not an exclusively male preoccupation – was on the “natural” beauty of young Norwegian women.²⁰⁰ This interest was clearly tied to the wider discourse of Norway as more natural and uncorrupted than urbanising Europe in the nineteenth century, a discourse in which the idea of “Gamle Norge” as a social ideal also belonged. The way in which Le

¹⁹³ Walchester, *Gamle Norge...*, 6.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁹⁹ Fjågesund and Symes, *The Northern Utopia*, 208.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 210.

Blond mentioned Norwegian women is illustrative of the relationship between travel to Norway and notions of modernity, including the fear of the corruption in Norway. Le Blond wrote approvingly of Norwegian women, as “singularly independent and capable”.²⁰¹ She also noted the capabilities of Norwegian “servant girls”, in her term, and their capacity for labour, as well as their practical abilities and, in the case of her maid Hildur, her ability to quickly pick up English and her interest in Le Blond’s photographs. Le Blond writes that Hildur’s comments on the photographs “would not have discredited many a young woman at home in a very different walk of life”.²⁰² Le Blond also praised the female public servants who ran post and telegraph offices, but concern appeared when discussing the interaction of Norwegian women and tourists. When praising Norwegian “servant-girls”, she specifies those who had “not been spoiled by service in cosmopolitan hotels or on steamers, but who are still in every sense true natives of their country”.²⁰³ For Le Blond, travelling in the 1890s, the very infrastructure that encouraged and enabled female travel in Norway was also corrupting the women of Norway who worked in it. “Gamle Norge” was visible to the female traveller only as it disappeared. Le Blond’s interest in the lives of Norwegian women was also evident in her praise of “Norwegian girls [who] think nothing of making long walking tours in the mountain district of their country, unescorted by mere males”.²⁰⁴ She admired their “brisk, independent way” and notes that they “feel perfectly safe – as well they might in that country”.²⁰⁵ As with the Norwegian postmistress, whose sitting room contained “its books, its plants, its piano and its profusion of articles”,²⁰⁶ Le Blond seemed to be suggesting a modern future for Norwegian women, even if, at the intersection with class, service work was detaching them from their country. Heidi Hansson has noted that, in some depictions of Scandinavia, “the region emerges as a social and cultural counter-space, a modern alternative characterized by social reform and a new gender order”.²⁰⁷ Whilst nostalgic images of a pastoral region predominated, they were interwoven with these imaginings of a Norwegian alternative modernity, a vision of “Gamle Norge” that was not just backwards-looking. The temporal location of Norway in the nineteenth century British imagination was further complicated.

²⁰¹ Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 63.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 271.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 272.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 272-3.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 270.

²⁰⁷ Heidi Hansson, “Between Nostalgia and Modernity: Competing Discourses in Travel Writing about the Nordic North” in Sumarliði Isleifsson with the collaboration of Daniel Chartier (eds.), *Iceland and Images of the North* (Quebec City: Presses de l’Université du Québec, 2011), 272.

“Our appearance seemed to offer uncontrollable amusement”: Tourist Travel and Sámi Agency

One extra dimension of this temporal imaginary was the relationship to and representation of the Sámi. Travellers to Northern Norway entered a place that was not simply the pastoral Norway imagined elsewhere, perfect for escape and “relapse”, but a contested space and an Indigenous homeland. The geographical extent of Sápmi, stretching from central Norway and central Sweden, across northern Finland and the Kola Peninsula in Russia, meant that it was travelled through by a number of British travellers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and Sámi relationship to place was often commented upon.²⁰⁸ Some travellers chose to travel to Sápmi specifically for encounters with Sámi; for others, it was part of a Norwegian tour. The travellers’ engagement with Sápmi and Sámi, however, are crucial for fully understanding the imperial and temporal discourses around Norway and the Arctic more generally. There was often a striking contrast in the depictions of Norwegians and Sámi in travel narratives, with Sámi often explicitly racialised as non-European and compared to the inhabitants of the colonial world. Moreover, Sámi were part of the appeal of Norway as a place where the traveller could seem to travel back in time.²⁰⁹ This, however, was not simply an extension of the pastoral vision of rural Norwegian society or a connection to a Viking past. Representations like “Gamle Norge” showed idealised and acceptable “backwardness”, an escape from the pressure and unhealthiness of modern life in Britain to a prelapsarian landscape and society. Representations of the Sámi instead tended to focus on *unacceptable* “backwardness”, with Sámi and their societies presented as primitive in a pejorative sense. This was a civilisational Other, from which no lessons for British society could be learnt and where few practical skills were held that would be useful outside of Sápmi itself. The Sámi were even seen as having little future – as Mockler-Ferryman wrote, “like the Red Indians, they have slowly retired north, and are gradually dying out”.²¹⁰ Here the Sámi were not only apart from modernity but unable to attain it. Moreover, Mockler-Ferryman drew on a discourse of extinction, where Sámi will cease to exist as a result of what he regarded as inevitable historical processes.²¹¹ The difference between Norwegians and Sámi also took specific textual forms – the tone and style of travel writing about Sámi and Sápmi was often very different to the parts of the texts covering the rest of Norway. As Ali Behdad has written about the denial of coevalness in colonial discourse, writing about a colonised Other took the form of “whole series of methods and

²⁰⁸ Saara Tervaniemi and Päivi Magga, “Belonging to Sápmi – Sámi conceptions of home and home region” in Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Sanna Valkonen, and Jarno Valkonen (eds.), *Knowing from the Indigenous North: Sámi Approaches to History, Politics and Belonging* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 75.

²⁰⁹ Fjågesund and Symes, *The Northern Utopia*, 200.

²¹⁰ Mockler-Ferryman, *In the Northman’s Land*, 292.

²¹¹ As Mockler-Ferryman’s words suggest, this was a discourse of human extinction heavily influenced by settler thinking about Native Americans in the USA. On these ideas, see Miles A. Powell, *Vanishing America: Species Extinction, Racial Peril, and the Origins of Conservation* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2016).

techniques such as unilateral observation of the "natives"; classification of their habits and practices; taxonomic descriptions; uses of maps, charts, and tables to visualize the Other's culture; and so on".²¹² An example is Le Blond's switch in her discussion of language in *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*. Le Blond goes from having little interest in Norwegian beyond her phonetic renderings, such as "who stole the till?" for "hva står du til?",²¹³ to noting that the Sámi language is "very like Finnish, which itself is closely allied to the Túrki and other members of the Mongolo-Tartar group" and that the Sámi themselves are "an offshoot of the great Finno-Tartaric (Uralo-Altai) family".²¹⁴ This shift to an anthropological register is typical of British descriptions of the Sámi, although not universal or unchallenged. It also aligns with wider British – and European – descriptions of Arctic Indigenous peoples more generally. The denial of coevalness and anthropological tone was also used for descriptions of Inuit from British travel writing from the High Arctic, as well as in the writings of geographers such as Clements Markham. These were also journeys seen as travel back in time as well as across space, as Chapter One shows. An example of this temporal discourse from Sápmi is the writer and novelist Cutcliffe Hyne's *Through Arctic Lapland*, an account of his journey south on foot across Sápmi from Vardø to the Gulf of Bothnia in 1896.²¹⁵ Hyne wrote that Sámi life had "endured down so many countless years with scarcely a trace of change"²¹⁶ and that areas of Sápmi looked "much the same as the Thames Valley must have appeared to those hairy, naked savages who first looked out upon the levels where London now stands".²¹⁷ He had travelled to a place he saw as both unchanging and prehistoric.

Whilst temporal discourses tended to present the place and people as static, a history of nineteenth-century colonialism can also be read in the travel texts. Land disputes between Norwegian farmers and reindeer-herding Sámi appear in the texts. Mockler-Ferryman noted that on the Hardangervidda plateau in western Norway, Sámi were increasingly bringing their reindeer herds further south for summer grazing. His tone was outraged as he wrote that "the pigmy aliens [i.e., the Sámi] were feeding their herds over the best pastures of Norway, and thus ousting the rightful owners".²¹⁸ Mockler-Ferryman sided with the Norwegian farmers and with property rights, as did Hyne further north. As Hyne described the land rights tensions:

²¹² Ali Behdad, *Belated Travellers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 7.

²¹³ Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 184.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 279.

²¹⁵ Hyne, *Through Arctic Lapland*. See also, Ian R. Stone, "Gentlemen travellers in the north: Cutcliffe Hyne's *Through Arctic Lapland*, 1898", *Polar Record*, vol. 40, no. 3 (July 2004): 213-20.

²¹⁶ Hyne, *Through Arctic Lapland*, 141.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 205.

²¹⁸ Mockler-Ferryman, *In the Northman's Land*, 243.

The Scandinavian farmer, however, who has the Lapp reindeer-herder for an occasional neighbour, does not agree with the enthusiastic theorists who in Stockholm and Christiania make the laws for his preservation. Socially he regards the Lapp as though he were some kind of noxious ape, the which is quite understandable, because the spirit that fosters Aborigines' Protection Societies can only exist at a considerable distance from the aboriginal. He sees the Lapp and his doings personally, and (being somewhat unread) does not regard him from the point of an interesting relic of the past. He merely looks upon him in the light of the present, and finds him a thorn in the flesh.²¹⁹

Aside from the racism in Hyne's text, it is clear that this account draws, as Mockler-Ferryman's does, on a discourse which renders the Sámi redundant. The Norwegian farmer – who Hyne sympathised with over those from distant capitals and the Sámi themselves – had to deal with Sámi in the present. This very coevalness, which travellers and those with paternalistic notions of protecting the Sámi sought to deny, was inescapably present, creating the conflict which Hyne observed. Hyne's understanding rested on assumptions around land rights which aligned him with the Scandinavian farmer and his description of the violence inflicted by farmers on Sámi assumed Sámi theft of land and resources, rather than settler colonial violence. The period of increased British travel to Sápmi was also one which saw a programme of "Norwegianization" (*fornorsking*) towards the Sámi population.²²⁰ From 1880, all Sámi and Kven²²¹ children in the diocese of Troms were required to learn Norwegian in school and the teaching of their native languages was discontinued.²²² The same processes of racial definition and construction that linked the British and Norwegians together also shaped a notion of Norwegian racial identity which explicitly excluded the Sámi and Kven and presented them as inferior, whilst also imposing the Norwegian language and culture on Sámi.²²³ British discussions of the Sámi should be considered within this local context of racial construction and settler colonialism, as well as a factor contributing to it. By the 1930s, when the British traveller Olive Murray Chapman visited, Norwegian- and Swedish-language education was well entrenched in Sápmi. Chapman wrote that "both the Norwegian and Swedish governments have made as good provision as possible for the

²¹⁹ Hyne, *Through Arctic Lapland*, 173.

²²⁰ Minde, "Assimilation of the Sami...", 127.

²²¹ The Kven are the descendants of Finns who moved into Northern Norway in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and are now a recognised minority in Norway, whilst their language, Kven, is also recognised.

²²² Minde, "Assimilation of the Sami...", 127.

²²³ Patricia G. Berman, "From Folk to a Folk Race: Carl Arbo and National Romantic Anthropology in Norway" in Marsha Morton and Barbara Larson (eds.), *Constructing Race on the Borders of Europe: Ethnography, Anthropology, and Visual Culture, 1850-1930* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 36-7. See also, Jon Røyne Kyllingstad, *Measuring the Master Race: Physical Anthropology in Norway, 1890-1945* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2014).

education of the Lapps”, with boarding schools being a “great advantage”.²²⁴ Education in colonial discourse attempted to enforce both a new identity and a temporal model, where its purported civilising mission brought children into a modern present. However, the children “on leaving school immediately revert to their own tongue”,²²⁵ an indication of the unwillingness to accept the terms of colonial education and an act of resistance.

The British travellers of the late nineteenth century had several forms of encounter with Sámi. A crucial site of encounter for tourist travellers was the Sámi camp in Tromsdalen/Romssavággi, just outside Tromsø. As Spring has shown in her work on the production of Tromsø as a tourist space in German-language travel writing, the Sámi camp was a key attraction to visitors, providing desirable alterity from the bourgeois town and an emblematic symbol of travel in the North.²²⁶ Its popularity was due to, not despite, its constructed nature – a staged authenticity created in collaboration with the Sámi.²²⁷ The camp was prominently featured in travel books, with *Bennett’s Handbook* of 1893 describing the Sámi reindeer driving as “perfectly genuine and very interesting”, as well as noting how the Sámi were “accustomed to tourist visitors”.²²⁸ *Murray’s Handbook* from 1897 stated that “tourists are always recommended to visit the Lapp encampment in the *Tromsdal*... A family (or rather tribe) of Swedish Lapps from *Karesuayido* [Karesuando] is encamped here during the tourist season, with reindeer and all the other accessories of nomadic life”.²²⁹ Kent stopped here, as did Crompton-Roberts, and reading their accounts of the camp is interesting for both their representations of the Sámi there and what can be read against the grain. Kent was as interested in the reindeer as the Sámi themselves, although she made some generalised descriptions of Sámi appearances and clothing. She noted the Otherness of the Sámi, who she described as a “strange people”²³⁰, as well as offering a summary of their character, noting that the Sámi seem to have the characteristics of “honesty, equanimity of temper, and many other virtues”, although not hospitality.²³¹ Kent noted, as Crompton-Roberts did, that there was an expectation of payment for visiting and seeing the reindeer.²³² Crompton-Roberts wrote that the Sámi requested payment to sit for photographs, something she attributed to the Sámi having been “quite spoilt by the number of tourists coming to see them” and referring to them as “dreadfully mercenary”.²³³ What Crompton-Roberts read as the corruption of

²²⁴ Chapman, *Across Lapland with Sledge and Reindeer*, 71.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

²²⁶ Spring, “Arctic and European In-Betweens”, 25.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

²²⁸ *Bennett’s Handbook for Travellers in Norway. Twenty Seventh Revised and Enlarged Edition*, 235.

²²⁹ *Handbook for Travellers in Norway. Ninth Edition, Revised*, 178.

²³⁰ Kent, *Within the Arctic Circle*, 152.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 163.

²³² *Ibid.*, 149.

²³³ Crompton-Roberts, *A Jubilee Jaunt to Norway...*, 52.

modernity might be more fruitfully seen as a Sámi understanding and co-option of modern tourism. The Sámi camp in Tromsdalen can be read as a site of Sámi agency, rather than a passive tourist location or simple tourist spectacle. Whilst necessarily constrained by the conditions of colonial Sápmi and asymmetries of power,²³⁴ the camp was a place where the Sámi had a degree of control over encounters. Kent wrote of “settling accounts”²³⁵ – a transactional phrase which perhaps hints at a mutual understanding missing in her more anthropological descriptions and one which suggests a negotiation less asymmetric than the colonial gaze. Crompton-Roberts’ account shows how the Sámi at Tromsdalen were unwilling to pose for photographs without pay, similarly rejecting the one-sided ethnographic gaze – even if this would not necessarily be known as the photographs circulated and returned to Britain.

Tromsø was not the only site of encounter between British travellers and Sámi. Henrietta Kent had a notable meeting in Hammerfest/Hámmerfeasta, further northwest along the coast. Her description of the Sámi she encounters there is fairly typical of the racialised language around Sámi at the time, but she was challenged by the fact that the Sámi found her appearance amusing, and not, as is typical in the texts of travellers, the other way round. Kent wrote that:

from some cause or other, *what*, we could not fix upon, as we were one and all quietly dressed and unremarkable in appearance from any other traveller or Norwegian lady of the place, our appearance seemed to offer uncontrollable amusement, and so genuine was their merriment, that though far from flattering, we almost found it infectious. [original emphasis]²³⁶

Here, as Heidi Hansson puts it, “Kent realises that she does not only consume the North but is also herself an object of consumption”.²³⁷ Moreover, Sámi laughter reminded the traveller – and the reader – of the strangeness of this travel. It denaturalises the idea of unchallenged middle class British travel and reinscribes the human diversity and richness of Sápmi, challenging the idea of Arctic space as a “blank playground” for tourism. It also reverses the ethnographic gaze of the traveller, rejecting the way of seeing that presents only the Sámi as exotic and the European traveller as “unremarkable”.

Another main site of encounter was the Sámi camp at Lyngseidet, accessible from Tromsø and near the Lyngen Alps where Le Blond, Slingsby and others climbed in the 1890s. Lyngseidet was the

²³⁴ Spring, “Arctic and European In-Betweens”, 30.

²³⁵ Kent, *Within the Arctic Circle*, 166.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 86. The Sámi amusement is a striking feature in the text and has been noted in recent articles on Kent’s travel writing. See Hansson, “Henrietta Kent and the Feminised North”, *Nordlit*, no. 22 (April 2007), 88-9 and Maria Lindgren Leavenworth, “Destinations and descriptions: acts of seeing in S.H. Kent’s *Gath to the Cedars* and *Within the Arctic Circle*”, *Studies in Travel Writing*, vol. 15, no. 3 (September 2011), 307.

²³⁷ Hansson, “Henrietta Kent and the Feminised North”, 89.

village Le Blond had identified as a future resort and it was where she met the Sámi described in her book. Le Blond's ethnographic chapter has less space for concurrent readings, but she noted that she felt that the Sámi had "little liking for modern ways of thought, and preserve their own language amongst themselves".²³⁸ The note of language preservation is striking, given the campaign of Norwegianization at the time, as is the fact that Le Blond clearly fitted the pattern of British travellers denying Sámi coevalness and the possibility of a Sámi modernity. Wyllie also visited a Sámi camp at Lyngseidet and her account offers the most explicitly racialised depiction of the Sámi, at least in terms of categorising them alongside colonised peoples outside of Europe. She describes the Sámi she meets as "such funny little men with red-gold beards, and hair that grew like our friend the Golliewog's", before going on to discuss skull measurements and racial types.²³⁹ At one point she sees a child "quite as pale and clean as any English baby" and she bonds with it, before returning to her ethnographic discussions of descent and language, inscribing race and Otherness as she does so.²⁴⁰ The ethnographic gaze of the British traveller, and the textual forms it takes in the travelogue, can also be seen clearly in Hyne's *Through Arctic Lapland*. Hyne, like Wyllie, used contemporary race science to discuss the skull shapes of the Sámi.²⁴¹ Du Chaillu also wrote about Sámi skulls whilst discussing Scandinavian prehistory and human descent in the region,²⁴² as well as explicitly contrasting Sámi to Inuit in terms of supposed racial descent and classification.²⁴³ Du Chaillu also mentioned the blue eyes and "very white" skin of a group of Sámi who he meets in Finland²⁴⁴ – the Sámi are generally Othered less by Du Chaillu than other travellers of the time, despite his interest in racial descent. Hyne, on the other hand, policed indigeneity in his text, wondering "which are genuine Lapps and which belong to a mixed race".²⁴⁵ Additionally, Hyne presented Sápmi itself as a space of alterity, writing that "take away the Lapps, take away our sure knowledge that we were still far within the Arctic Circle, and we might have been tramping across some primæval land at the back of the Gold Coast or the Congo".²⁴⁶ Again, the Arctic was represented as a place in the deep past, even if Hyne did not recognise it as such, and whilst the Sámi do not initially seem to be included in Hyne's vision of a place both in the past and the colonial world, their depiction in the texts of British travellers often discursively placed them there.

²³⁸ Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 287.

²³⁹ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 235.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 237.

²⁴¹ Hyne, *Through Arctic Lapland*, 71.

²⁴² Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. I*, 332.

²⁴³ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. II*, 166.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁴⁵ Hyne, *Through Arctic Lapland*, 175.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 198.

Representations of Sámi, however, were not only textual. Images of Sámi were widespread in the Victorian popular culture and had a significant place in the cultural imagination.²⁴⁷ Hyne even noted the difference between the depictions of Sámi and reindeer on Christmas cards and what he observed.²⁴⁸ Photographs were also important and, in the case of Le Blond, appeared in her published travelogue. As Crompton-Roberts discovered, Sámi in popular tourist spots like Tromsdalen would charge for photographs – a small way, perhaps, of gaining something from their popularity as symbolic and observed. What control they had over the photography process, however, was limited. In recent years, Sámi historians and scholars like Veli-Pekka Lehtola have engaged with historical photographs of Sámi as a way for create an alternative archive of Sámi history and reclaim depictions of ancestors,²⁴⁹ and Cathrine Baglo has produced similar work with the plentiful tourist postcards of the early twentieth century.²⁵⁰ Another depiction of Sámi was simply display: there were a significant number of Sámi who featured in displays of “exotic” peoples in Britain and elsewhere. These focussed on discourses of the body and Sámi Otherness and contributed to colonial and imperial notions of both racial and civilisational hierarchies.²⁵¹ It is also important to note that the degree of consent in these varied from case to case, with some Sámi themselves organising trips around Europe in “Lapp caravans”.²⁵² The Sámi here, although often exploited, were also European travellers, not simply travellers. Display, however, also featured in Hyne’s *Through Arctic Lapland* in the form of violent colonial fantasy. Hyne wrote that he “pictured the result of taking Johann [his Sámi guide] back to our native Islands and launching him upon Society”, citing a West African sailor who passed himself off as a prince as an example of what was possible.²⁵³ Hyne fixated on Johann as a “curiosity”, imagining how “people would scuffle with one another for the honour of getting him to their homes”.²⁵⁴ This was partly a satire of the appeal of “curiosities” and gullibility of British society, but clearly connects to the discourse of display that was prominent around colonised peoples at the time. Moreover, Hyne

²⁴⁷ Linda Andersson Burnett, “The ‘Lapland Giantess’ in Britain: Reading Concurrences in a Victorian Ethnographic Exhibition” in Brydon, Forsgren and Fur, *Concurrent Imaginaries, Postcolonial Worlds*, 124.

²⁴⁸ Hyne, *Through Arctic Lapland*, 156.

²⁴⁹ Veli-Pekka Lehtola, “Our Histories in the Photographs of the Others”, *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, vol. 10, no. 4 (2018): 1-13.

²⁵⁰ Cathrine Baglo, “Puncturing Parts of History’s Blindness: South Saami and South Saami Culture in Early Picture Postcards” in Håkon Hermanstrand, Asbjørn Kolberg, Trond Risto Nilssen and Leiv Sem (eds.), *The Indigenous Identity of the South Saami: Historical and Political Perspectives on a Minority within a Minority* (New York: Springer, 2019), 116.

²⁵¹ Burnett, “The ‘Lapland Giantess’ in Britain”, 138.

²⁵² Lehtola, “Sami on the Stages and in the Zoos of Europe” in Kajsa Andersson (ed.), *L’Image du Sápmi. Études comparées, Vol. 2*, (Örebro: Örebro University, 2013), 325. See Baglo, “På ville veger? Levende utstillinger av samer i Europa og Amerika” (PhD thesis, Universitetet i Tromsø, 2011) for a full description of displayed Sámi and Sadiya Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011) for a full history of displayed peoples in nineteenth-century Britain.

²⁵³ Hyne, *Through Arctic Lapland*, 201.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 203.

imagined “we shall ship him across to Boston and New York” to target the American market.²⁵⁵ Hyne’s account may be satirical, but this was never presented as a scheme he would hatch together with Johann; rather, Sámi agency was denied and Johann is simply a malleable trace of the Other, to be paraded as a curiosity in the metropole. Moreover, Hyne’s plan for Johann reflected his discomfort with his reliance on local guides. As with Slingsby’s comments about “a pernicious system of trades-unionism” in the Alps,²⁵⁶ payment was an issue for Hyne and he was reluctant to pay the rates requested by his guides.²⁵⁷ Hyne set out across Sápmi having chosen to do no research into the region; he “knew remarkably little about the country and so were quite unfettered in making some very appetising plans”.²⁵⁸ The resulting struggle with travelling through landscapes unsuitable to the methods and speed of travel Hyne desired added to the tension with guides, both Sámi and Finnish, perhaps explaining Hyne’s intentions towards Johann, serious or not. The British frustration at the challenges of travel in Sápmi, and the colonial discourses they brought with them, were channelled towards violent fantasies and discomfort with local knowledge.

“Ought to be supported by every traveller in Norway”: *Den Norske Turistforening* and the Infrastructure of Escape

Whilst British encounters in Sápmi contribute to the complexity of the discourses of temporality and travel in Norway, this travel itself was not itself a static or stable phenomenon. The questions of who travelled to Norway, how they travelled and where exactly they went have answers which depend on when the travel occurred. Locations and activities went in and out of fashion, but the increasing popularity of Norway as a destination through the nineteenth century had consequences for infrastructure and mobility. Although travel began as largely undertaken by individual travellers at the beginning of the nineteenth century, followed by elite sporting travellers towards the middle of the century, from around the 1860s, Norway became an increasingly popular destination for shorter journeys and larger scale tourist travel, facilitated by organisations such as Thomas Bennett’s travel agency in Christiania. By the end of the century, Norway was a well-known and -frequented destination for middle class travellers, including women, as this chapter has shown.²⁵⁹ As well as changing fashions attracting travellers to Norway, such as the increasing Victorian interest in the Old Norse past and the appeal of Norway’s landscapes and society as an alternative to industrial Britain,

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 204.

²⁵⁶ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 420.

²⁵⁷ Hyne, *Through Arctic Lapland*, 73.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 4.

²⁵⁹ Walchester, *Gamle Norge...*, 6.

changes to infrastructure enabled easier and faster travel. Bennett's agency provided maps and guidebooks to different areas of the country, which are mentioned in the texts of travellers. Travel to Norway itself was enabled by more regular steamship crossings of the North Sea to Christiansand and Christiania, as well as regular sailing routes up the coast of Norway.²⁶⁰ This was supported by the development of inland infrastructure such as improved roads and the opening of Norway's first railway from Christiania to Eidsvoll in 1851.²⁶¹ These in turn were accompanied by new hotels designed and built for international tourists, providing far more comfortable accommodation for travellers than existing hotels, cabins and private homes.²⁶² Hotel Mundal in Fjærland, where Slingsby encountered the "English Bounder", was an example of this, opening in 1891. These changes to travel in Norway were reflected in the travel writing about the country and, in turn, raised questions about the nature of the travel itself. Even for travellers like the mountaineers who sought the more remote areas of Norway in the late nineteenth century, travel was easier, the areas they visited were more accessible, and facilities were improved. Whilst Slingsby may have bemoaned this "prose and plenty" in contrast to his early visits, his mountaineering was enabled by new forms of transport and new infrastructure such as mountain huts. Similarly, Elizabeth Le Blond's "escape" was possible due to the steamships and communication networks that took her to Lyngen and supported her there. If this was Arctic travel, it must be reemphasised that this was an accessible Arctic, one established as a space of tourism over exploration.

This infrastructure was also crucial in constructing the notion of travel as modern, challenging notions of Norway as outside of modernity for British travellers and relating to the modern forms that British tourism took. Changing forms of transport were central to this relationship between travel and modernity. In Norway, the construction of trains was noted by travellers, with Kent writing that the train "glided through a pretty undulating country".²⁶³ Lees and Clutterbuck wrote that "a railway journey is not interesting anywhere and less so in Norway than other countries, as there is not even the sensation of speed to divert your mind".²⁶⁴ Here, Norwegian terrain made for slow travel, even by train, although the very banality and safety of the journey were perhaps as modern as dramatic speed. Kent also noted the landscape she observed from the train, a new take on the traditional travel narrative's focus on Norwegian landscapes, and one typical of what Wolfgang Schivelbusch has termed a "panoramic" way of seeing in relation to railway travel.²⁶⁵ Railway travel was limited to

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 12.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Kent, *Within the Arctic Circle*, 14.

²⁶⁴ Lees and Clutterbuck, *Three in Norway*, 16.

²⁶⁵ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1977, 2014), 61. It is interesting to consider Du Chaillu's account

southern Norway, given the logistical challenges to expansion through mountainous terrain, but was still impactful and part of a modern experience of travel. Expansion was hotly debated in Norwegian public discourse in the latter half of the nineteenth century, particularly a potential Christiania to Bergen line, and the parliamentary debates tapped into questions of uniting the Norwegian nation.²⁶⁶ Other forms of transport, however, were equally tied to speed and modernity and had national and transnational spans. Lees and Clutterbuck noted that the steamer across Lake Mjøsa “goes fast, so there is a sensation of getting on and not losing time”.²⁶⁷ Particularly when it came to travel to Northern Norway and the rest of Sápmi, the speed, frequency, and regularity of steamships made tourism to the region increasingly popular. Sites like Nordkapp became key stopping points on tourist voyages and night travel with services like *Hurtigruten* [the Coastal Express] reduced the time it took to travel large distances. The journey between Trondheim and Tromsø, for example, was cut from 84 to 52 hours after 1893.²⁶⁸ For travellers less able to take long holidays, given financial constraints and the resulting limited time away from home, these changes made travel to Norway far more possible. Many of the travelogues published in the latter decades of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth describe coastal journeys, with Wyllie’s account a particularly notable example. As well as speed, larger steamships offered comfort. Slingsby wrote that “for people who need rest, nothing is much easier or more pleasant in its way than a journey up to the North Cape, along the romantic west coast of Norway, on the well-ordered, clean, and comfortable mail steamboats of today”.²⁶⁹ The nature of the travel was changed further away from expeditionary hardship to more leisurely travel.

Another crucial development in the accessibility of Norway was the development of communications technology. Travellers discussed this in their texts, such as Le Blond’s mention of the “post and telephone office” in Lyngseidet noted above.²⁷⁰ In Hammerfest, Wyllie was “surprised at the quantity of telegraph cables that left this small town, to all parts of the globe”,²⁷¹ noting the global connectedness of what seemed a European periphery, as well as the contrast between a goat grazing on a house roof and the wires of the telegraph – “the newest thing in telegraphy, and the oldest form of roof, stood exemplified”.²⁷² Du Chaillu also discussed Hammerfest’s connectedness, writing that “it

of a sledge ride (quoted on p. 53) alongside this, as he referred to how the speed changed his ways of seeing, as if he was travelling by railway.

²⁶⁶ Marie-Theres Fojuth, “Mapped railway dreams, geographical knowledge and the Norwegian Parliament, 1845–1908”, *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift – Norwegian Journal of Geography*, vol. 75, no. 1 (2021): 36–50.

²⁶⁷ Lees and Clutterbuck, *Three in Norway*, 17.

²⁶⁸ Spring, “Early Mass Infrastructure at the North Cape”, 135.

²⁶⁹ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 28.

²⁷⁰ Le Blond, *Mountaineering in the Land of the Midnight Sun*, 26.

²⁷¹ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 250.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 251.

is in direct telegraphic communication with Christiania, and thence with the rest of the world".²⁷³ Du Chaillu noted the frequency of steamers visiting, including the tourist line from Hamburg, as well as "coffee, tea, spices and other luxuries".²⁷⁴ He described Hammerfest as deeply modern and connected, rather than as part of a land of escape and emptiness. Post was also an important part of this, with mail boats providing many of the connecting services in the region, as well as contributing to the global connectedness of Northern Norway. Crompton-Roberts described being offered postage stamps for letters at the Sámi camp in Tromsdalen, indicating the awareness in local communities of the available communications and tourist interest in them.²⁷⁵ What this accumulation of technologies, connections and infrastructure suggests is that Sápmi, Northern Norway and Norway in general were far more connected to European modernity than the writings of the travellers initially suggest, even as they used this infrastructure themselves. Technologies like steamships, electrical telegraphy, and railways were all part of the experience of travel in Norway, as well as Norwegian urban life, and contributed to a changing sense of time and space for those experiencing them at the turn of the century.²⁷⁶ Moreover, the dichotomy between a pastoral and primitive Norway and an overcivilised and urban Britain was always partial or false. The "performative modernity" of the travellers, both escaping and enacting the modern, itself relied itself on the Norwegian or Sámi modern, in the various forms it took.

One practical change that was often remarked upon was the improved quality of accommodation. Before the 1860s, private homes and vicarages were often used by travellers.²⁷⁷ However, with increasing numbers of tourists arriving, new hotels were built to accommodate and meet the expectations of visitors. As Mockler-Ferryman wrote in 1896, "the craze for hotel-building in Norway is extraordinary; if a dozen Englishmen pass through a place in a year, some ambitious Norwegian immediately imagines that a hotel will make his fortune, and forthwith sets the carpenters to work".²⁷⁸ However, given the tendency of British travellers to frequent rural areas, they also often stayed in huts and cabins. These were often referred to as *seter* when used to support transhumance and *hytter* more generally,²⁷⁹ with the dairymaids who often stayed in them called *seter jenter* [*seter*

²⁷³ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. I*, 98.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

²⁷⁵ Crompton-Roberts, *A Jubilee Jaunt to Norway...*, 51.

²⁷⁶ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983), 110. In the Norwegian context, see Anders Skare Malvik, "Newspapers, Telegraphs, and Railroads: Infrastructuralistic Approaches to Bjørnson's Critical Realism", *Scandinavian Studies*, vol. 93, no. 2 (Summer 2021): 241-65.

²⁷⁷ Rogan, "From a Haven for Travellers to a Boarding House for Tourists: The Vicarage in the History of Travelling and Hospitality in Norway" in Wells, *The Discovery of Nineteenth-Century Scandinavia*: 83-96.

²⁷⁸ Mockler-Ferryman, *In the Northman's Land*, 280.

²⁷⁹ Ellen Rees suggests "shieling" as the closest English translation of *seter*, with "cabin" the usual English translation of *hytte*.

girls] and playing an important part in the romanticisation of the place and lifestyle.²⁸⁰ *Seter* were an important part of the trope of “Gamle Norge”,²⁸¹ even if the reality had “little in common with poetry, pastoral or Arcadian”, as Mockler-Ferryman writes.²⁸² In the latter half of the nineteenth century, with the changing nature of tourism and the Norwegian economy, especially urbanisation and emigration, cabins were increasingly used for leisure rather than agriculture and DNT was central in converting many of them to support rural tourism, especially in mountain areas. Guides like Sulheim, Lykken, and Ola Berge tended to be local men and were central to constructing infrastructure in the region as well, as helping visiting mountaineers climb. Several *hytter* were built by Sulheim or adapted from existing *seter* used by local herders. This was part of a wider shift in Jotunheimen in particular, as the region moved from being a predominantly agricultural region to one which was part of a wider tourist economy. In 1888, Berge opened the Turtagrø Hotel, which became a notable meeting place for mountaineers at the end of the nineteenth century, along with other hotels in the region like Røisheim.²⁸³ DNT also drew on the masculine heroism of Norwegian national figures like Nansen at the end of the century to create mountain spaces coded as masculine, unlike the previously feminine connotations of the *seter* with its *jente*.²⁸⁴ There was also a sense that Norwegian national identity was to be found in rural spaces and embodied by rural people, and regaining touch with this through journeys and time spent in rural areas would strengthen national identity.²⁸⁵ Norwegian landscapes and Norwegian technology were captured together by Carl Abraham Pihl, Norway’s first railway director, a landscape photographer, and founding member of DNT. Pihl’s photographs attempted to capture what he saw as an ideal balance of nature, nation, and technology, with a focus on landscapes that the railways had made accessible.²⁸⁶ Infrastructure, from railways to cabins, became crucial in enabling urban Norwegians to build a sense of national belonging by visiting and viewing certain landscapes and places.

Whilst the establishment and expansion of DNT, and rural tourism in Norway more generally, drew on the ideas Norwegian National Romanticism, the organisation and the infrastructure it supported were not only developed and used by Norwegians. Tourists from abroad stayed in the huts,

²⁸⁰ Ellen Rees, *Cabins in Modern Norwegian Literature: Negotiating Place and Identity* (Madison: Farleigh University Press, 2014), 14.

²⁸¹ Walchester, *Gamle Norge...*, 43.

²⁸² Mockler-Ferryman, *In the Northman’s Land*, 223.

²⁸³ Slagstad, *Da fjellet ble dannet*, 134-5.

²⁸⁴ Rees, *Cabins in Modern Norwegian Literature*, 15. André Horgen has recently written on the significance of Nansen in debates over the purpose of DNT, particularly the distinction between *friluftsliv* [“outdoor recreation”] and sport. See Horgen, “Friluftsliv, idrett eller sport?”.

²⁸⁵ Ween and Abram, “The Norwegian Trekking Association”, 158-9.

²⁸⁶ Mari Hvattum, “The Man Who Loved Views: C.A. Pihl and the Making of the Modern Landscape” in Hvattum, Janike Kampevold Larsen, Brita Benna and Beate Elvebakk, *Routes, Roads and Landscapes* (London: Ashgate, 2011), 113-5. For more on DNT and photography, see Slagstad, *Da fjellet ble dannet*, 161-74.

walked the paths, and read the guides provided by DNT, with some going further. Slingsby was respected for his mountaineering achievements and wrote for DNT's yearbook alongside the Norwegian members. Slingsby first wrote for the *Årbog* in 1875, providing an account of an ascent of Glittertind with his younger sister, Edith.²⁸⁷ In the 1890 edition, Slingsby included an article entitled "The Justedalsbræ revisited" in English, alongside the articles in Norwegian by other contributors, including the Danish mountaineer Carl Hall.²⁸⁸ The following edition, for 1891-92, included an essay by Benjamin Goodfellow, a British tourist, as well as an obituary of Slingsby's friend and climbing partner Emanuel Mohn, another frequent *Årbog* contributor.²⁸⁹ Moreover, Slingsby wrote elsewhere about the benefits of how DNT had made Norwegian mountains more accessible. Impressed by the Skagastølshytte, he praised how:

within a stone's-throw of some of the most uninviting sæters where, years ago, we were glad enough to crave the boon of a night's hospitality, luxurious log-built and boarded-floored Tourist Club [DNT] huts, to all intents and purposes small inns, have been erected, and the climber of to-day who – this is between ourselves – does not show any startling originality in making his very numerous ascents, can climb every peak and cross every fine glacier-pass in Jotunheim without either sleeping in a sæter, a tent, or at a bivouac.²⁹⁰

Whilst Slingsby was far from complimentary about the mountaineers who followed him, he clearly approved of the quality of DNT accommodation. He also continued to recommend Norway as a destination for British mountaineers. For example, he wrote a chapter on mountaineering in Norway for a guide to mountaineering edited by his son-in-law, Geoffrey Winthrop Young. Published in 1920, Slingsby's chapter in *Mountain Craft* outlined the practicalities of travel to Norway, as well as the best places to visit. Slingsby was still complimentary of Norway, a country that "has still much of the romance of exploration, and, for them [Englishmen], the sympathetic interest of an historical connection with their racial consciousness".²⁹¹ Slingsby's interest in the opportunity of escape in Norway was again combined with his theories on a British Norse inheritance on a racial level. He also continued to note the development of infrastructure in the mountains: by 1920, "comfortable inns and mountain huts are to be found here, there and everywhere" in Jotunheimen.²⁹²

²⁸⁷ Slingsby, "An English Lady in Jotunheimen, with an ascent of Glitretind" in *Den Norske Turistforenings Årbog for 1875* (Christiania: A.W. Brøgger, 1875): 102-18.

²⁸⁸ *Den Norske Turistforenings Årbog for 1890* (Christiania: Grøndahl & Sønns Bogtrykkeri, 1891).

²⁸⁹ *Den Norske Turistforenings Årbog for 1891-92* (Christiania: Grøndahl & Sønns Bogtrykkeri, 1892).

²⁹⁰ Slingsby, "The Northern Playground of Europe", *The Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1899), 19.

²⁹¹ Slingsby, "The Mountains of Norway" in Geoffrey Winthrop Young, *Mountain Craft* (New York: Charles Scriber's Sons, 1920), 547.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 540.

In the 1890s, Mockler-Ferryman had also written of DNT that “this excellent institution every traveller in Norway who leaves the beaten track must at one time or another be indebted, and it is not too much to say that without the Norske Turistforening more than half Norway would be a sealed book”.²⁹³ He wrote that “in every inaccessible place where anyone is ever likely to travel it has erected snug little huts” and recommended membership of DNT to readers.²⁹⁴ Mockler-Ferryman also noted the popularity of mountaineering amongst urban Norwegians, for whom it was “one of the most popular forms of recreation”.²⁹⁵ DNT had made life “smoother for the adventurer” with its huts and paths, for Norwegians and foreigners.²⁹⁶ Moreover, Mockler-Ferryman noted the gendered aspects of these improvements. One of the ways in which Norway was becoming more suitable for female travellers was the accessibility of mountains. In Mockler-Ferryman’s words, there was “no great hardship in fjeld travelling” for women, “[so] by all means let her taste the delights of mountain travel”.²⁹⁷ Whilst his tone was patronising and presumed a male reader, this was an extension of the discourse of safety around both mountaineering and Norway, where Norway, and sport done there, was safer than other potential destinations. Du Chaillu was also a DNT member and used the huts in Jotunheimen when travelling there in the winter,²⁹⁸ as well as writing in *The Land of the Midnight Sun* about meeting Thomas Johannessen Heftye, one of the founders of DNT.²⁹⁹ Another British mountaineer E.C. Oppenheim regarded DNT membership as “very important” and took advantage of the “very useful privileges” for access and accommodation.³⁰⁰ The British artist Alfred Heaton Cooper noted in his guide to Norway that Jotunheimen had “been considerably opened out to travellers in recent years by the efforts of the Norwegian Tourist Club”, praising the accommodation, paths, bridges and guides provided by DNT.³⁰¹ He also recommended membership, which could “ensures them certain privileges, and preference of accommodation over all other travellers who are not members”.³⁰² The infrastructure built by DNT, both accommodation and paths, enabled visitors from outside mountainous areas, be they urban Norwegians or from elsewhere in Europe, to enact complicated relationships with place, identity, and modernity. The work of DNT and its members allowed travellers to experience the escape from the urban and industrial that British travellers in particular craved, but this escape was itself only possible through the development, change and

²⁹³ Mockler-Ferryman, *In the Northman’s Land*, 64.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 278.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 217.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 279.

²⁹⁸ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. II*, 305.

²⁹⁹ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. I*, 298.

³⁰⁰ E.C. Oppenheim, *New Climbs in Norway: An Account of Some Ascents in the Sondmore District* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), 11-2.

³⁰¹ Alfred Heaton Cooper, *The Norwegian Fjords, Painted and Described* (London: A. & C. Black, 1907), 111.

³⁰² Ibid., 112.

technology introduced by DNT. As with travel in the High Arctic, imagining places to be pristine required rationalising and making invisible development and labour. In the case of Norway and the work of DNT, these processes were transnational, even as the British contributors imagined Norway as a playground for adventure and the Norwegians felt themselves to be contributing to a national project. DNT was also part of a wider international movement of Alpine clubs, engaging in similar questions around building and defining national identities in mountain space,³⁰³ as well as questions around preservation and modern life.³⁰⁴ Moreover, these institutional connections between British and Norwegian mountaineers also show that the travelogues produced by travellers were more than unmediated reflections on place. Whilst British writers may have presented themselves as objective guides to an unchanging and essentialised Norway, in practice the understandings of the place and people they described were shaped by interaction and participation, even if these productions were complicated by questions of power, language, and preconception.

Infrastructure, however, also took textual forms. A crucial object in shaping discourses about Norway and about travel was the guidebook. Human guides themselves had a complicated relationship to travellers, as the examples of Slingsby, Le Blond, and Hyne, among others, show, but texts offered travellers both more control and independence in their travel, as well as directing travel in their own way. Guidebooks were seen as typical of mass tourism and increased travel to Norway, allowing greater self-reliance than a hired guide, whilst still providing support.³⁰⁵ They also contained enough information to prevent the reader from the difficulties faced by Hyne, with his desire to travel with little sense of what the country was like and his challenging relationship with his hired guides.³⁰⁶ Guidebooks simplified travel, ensuring the traveller was exposed to what “ought to be seen”, maximising the value a short journey or holiday.³⁰⁷ The main guidebooks were the Europewide series published by John Murray, Thomas Cook and Baedeker, but specifically Norwegian guides were also published by Bennett and other organisations.³⁰⁸ Travelogues themselves made reference to guidebooks, with Lees and Clutterbuck referring to their use of Bennett’s Norwegian phrase book to communicate – unsuccessfully – when shopping in Christiania.³⁰⁹ Henrietta Kent, for example, had an interview with Bennett on her arrival in Christiania, in order to structure and guide her travel.³¹⁰ She

³⁰³ See, for example, Tait Keller, *Apostles of the Alps: Mountaineering and Nation Building in Germany and Austria, 1860-1939* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

³⁰⁴ See, for example, Anderson, *Cities, Mountains and Being Modern...* and, on skiing specifically, Denning, *Skiing into Modernity*.

³⁰⁵ Walchester, *Gamle Norge...*, 107.

³⁰⁶ Rudy Koshar, “What Ought to be Seen”, 330. See also, Koranyi, “Travel guides”.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 327.

³⁰⁸ Walchester, *Gamle Norge...*, 108.

³⁰⁹ Lees and Clutterbuck, *Three in Norway*, 10.

³¹⁰ Kent, *Within the Arctic Circle*, 11.

also mentioned her Murray's Handbook in her travel account, if only because she was forced to use it as a pillow in particularly sparse accommodation!³¹¹ By the 1890s, the contents of guidebooks followed a fairly standard structure, beginning with an outline of Norway and its history, a list of timetables and prices for travel both to and within Norway, an overview of practical details like currency and a number of "skeleton tours", before the majority of the text was dedicated to specific places, structured around common routes of travel.³¹² They also contained maps and advertisements for other guides by the same publisher – in Bennett's case, a local guidebook for Christiania, phrasebooks, Norwegian railway timetables, and a separate map.³¹³ Bennett's also advertised membership of DNT, which it suggested "ought to be supported by every traveller in Norway", noting that "subscriptions are laid out in making paths to waterfalls, views &c., which would otherwise be inaccessible, and in building mountain hostelries".³¹⁴ Like DNT, the guidebooks made Norway more accessible, whilst the DNT *Årbog* itself also served as a structuring device for mountaineers searching for routes and contacts.

Wyllie gives several examples of the practical use of a Baedeker guide in *Norway and its Fjords*, as well as the way in which the guidebook structured travel and ways of seeing. Sailing into the Nærøfjord, Wyllie wrote that "looking at Baedeker, I see he marks this fjord with two stars. I approve of his taste; nothing could be more splendid".³¹⁵ Here Baedeker both marked a worthwhile site for Wyllie to consider and shaped her reception. Wyllie was not always as full of praise; arriving in Bergen, she wrote "in this case Bergen is the jewel set in its seven mountains. Prosaic Baedeker tries to make out that there are but four, but the citizens count seven, and the armorial bearings of the town contain seven hills, so this, I think, should be conclusive. The town should know best".³¹⁶ Here again, she questioned Baedeker's judgement and here, unlike in the Nærøfjord, Baedeker was found lacking, specifically when contrasted to local knowledge and custom. Baedeker, however, was undoubtedly useful. Wyllie could give lengthy and detailed advice to a fellow passenger by using her Baedeker to outline distances, the availability and prices of guides and hotels, terrain and paths on a mountain route and the views from the summit.³¹⁷ The text allowed Wyllie to perform expertise, both in conversation and in her own writing. As Jan Palmowski has noted, "the guidebook was a great leveller

³¹¹ Ibid., 219

³¹² See, for example, *Bennett's Handbook for Travellers in Norway. Twenty Seventh Revised and Enlarged Edition and Handbook for Travellers in Norway. Ninth Edition, Revised.*

³¹³ *Bennett's Handbook for Travellers in Norway. Twenty Seventh Revised and Enlarged Edition*, 11-2.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 10.

³¹⁵ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 145.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 102.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 66-9.

of knowledge and of culture” and, particularly for female travellers, “a great emancipatory tool”.³¹⁸ Wyllie even lapsed into the prose style of a guidebook, writing “you revel in the grand and awe-inspiring spaciousness, in the peculiar, solemn silence, which holds the air when the winds are at rest”.³¹⁹ The guidebook allowed for fantasies of travel, where the traveller could go from the deck of the ship to the top of the mountain, visiting the Norway of the imagination whether in the country itself or reading from home.

Guidebooks, moreover, were not the only texts that guided travellers. There were frequent intertextual references in travelogues, showing how knowledge about Norway was formed through reading about the travel of others. Crompton-Roberts opened *A Jubilee Jaunt to Norway* with a preface detailing her pre-trip reading, including *Three in Norway, by Two of Them*, as well as Baedeker and Bennett’s guides.³²⁰ Wyllie mentioned reading Du Chaillu,³²¹ Du Chaillu notes the work the Arctic explorers Isaac Israel Hayes and Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld.³²² Some writers also seemed conscious that they are writing as guides. Mockler-Ferryman’s *In the Northman’s Land: Travel, Sport, and Folk-lore in the Hardanger Fjord and Fjeld* was clearly published as a guide to Hardanger, combining his own travel experiences with plentiful advice for those who wished to follow. Slingsby used DNT’s yearbook as a guide at times, noting a “most useful map” in a copy of the 1871 edition he came across in Vetti, a village on the edge of Jotunheimen near his planned ascents.³²³ Slingsby was not an uncritical user of the *Årbog*, noting occasional errors, but it is significant that this Norwegian-produced text had a place in the textual networks formed by British travellers. As with DNT itself, the networks formed by British and Norwegian travellers overlapped and were interconnected. Their transnationalism is striking and considering it is important for the significance of this travel. Moreover, travellers were not just guided by travelogues and guidebooks. Mockler-Ferryman mentions reading Marie Corelli’s *Thelma*, a novel set in Northern Norway and published in 1887.³²⁴ *Thelma* sat alongside Edna Lyall’s *A Hardy Norseman* (1890) as an Anglo-Norse love story inspired by travel to Norway and the connections to Old Norse heritage.³²⁵ Travel to Norway was established as part of British literary and popular culture, with its places and discourses familiar for readers. As with the guidebook, fictionalised travel to Norway inspired and enabled readers to imagine travel to Norway, as well as reinforcing its popularity as a

³¹⁸ Jan Palmowski, “Travels with Baedeker – The Guidebook and the Middle Classes in Victorian and Edwardian Britain” in Koshar (ed.), *Histories of Leisure* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 116. Palmowski describes Baedeker as a “European cultural middle-class institution”. *Ibid.*, 122.

³¹⁹ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 68.

³²⁰ Crompton-Roberts, *A Jubilee Jaunt to Norway...*, v-vi.

³²¹ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 138.

³²² Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. II*, 178.

³²³ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 58.

³²⁴ Mockler-Ferryman, *In the Northman’s Land*, 84.

³²⁵ Peter Fjågesund, *The Dream of the North*, 482.

destination. Moreover, as with other types of Arctic travel (see Chapter One), the preconceptions and ideas about a place which circulated and were formed at home were central to how the travellers saw and understood their travel sites and destinations.

This engagement with cultural productions beyond travel writing was also visible in the place of Norwegian culture in the writings of British travellers. The flourishing of Norwegian art and culture at the end of the nineteenth century was noted by British travellers and the Scandinavian “modern breakthrough” in some ways epitomised the sense of alternative modernity that Norway, and Scandinavia more generally, represented.³²⁶ This reception, particularly of the “great men” of Norwegian art, was not, however, universally positive. Some figures were praised, whilst others seemed less representative of Norway and its supposed values and culture. Wyllie was married to the noted naval artist William Lionel Wyllie, who illustrated *Norway and its Fjords*, and her interest in art is apparent from her lengthy description of the Museum of Art in Christiania. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Wyllie was most impressed by the National Romantic art of artists like J.C. Dahl and Adolph Tidemand, whose paintings of Norwegian landscapes “never ceased to glorify its picturesque beauty”.³²⁷ Wyllie also met with Edvard Grieg whilst in Bergen and praised his music for its “strongly national character” and connection to the people and landscapes of Norway.³²⁸ Slingsby also met Grieg and wrote that he was “sure that much of the delightful music with which he has charmed the civilised world has been inspired by the weird grandeur of the mountains and fjords of his native land”.³²⁹ The work of the British composer Frederick Delius, particularly his 1911 work for chorus and orchestra, *The Song of the High Hills*, was also inspired by both meeting Grieg and time spent in the Norwegian landscape.³³⁰ However, British travellers did not find all Norwegian artists as inspiring as Grieg. Henrik Ibsen, despite his prominent and controversial reputation in Britain,³³¹ rarely featured in turn of the century travelogues. When visiting his hometown of Skien, Wyllie noted his significance, but writes that “I have read through his works with sympathy for the man, but with little love for the characters he portrays”.³³² Mockler-Ferryman was damning of Ibsen, writing that “the constant sneers and taunts at the homely simplicity of his countrymen showered upon them by their hero, Ibsen, is doing more harm than most people imagine”.³³³ He felt that “political agitators with radical views” were disrupting the

³²⁶ Hansson, “Between Nostalgia and Modernity”, 272.

³²⁷ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 19.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

³²⁹ Slingsby, *Norway. The Northern Playground*, 58.

³³⁰ Daniel M. Grimley, “Music, Landscape, and the Sound of Place: On Hearing Delius’s *Song of the High Hills*”, *The Journal of Musicology*, vol. 33, issue 1, Winter 2016), 20.

³³¹ Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, “‘Too Far from Piccadilly’: Ibsen in England and France in the 1890s” in Ewbank, Lausund and Tysdahl, *Anglo-Scandinavian Cross-Currents*, 188.

³³² Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 52.

³³³ Mockler-Ferryman, *In the Northman’s Land*, 122.

social harmony of the countryside,³³⁴ a point that aligns with Fjågesund and Symes' view that the class composition of British travellers to Norway made them far less likely to be interested in social reform and more radical ideas.³³⁵ This may also explain the absence of prominent Norwegian modernists such as Knut Hamsun and Edvard Munch from travelogues. The degree to which Norwegian cultural figures met the expectations of travellers was also important. Tweedie contrasted Ibsen – who is “really of German descent” – with Bjørnson, a writer whose writing about Norway and rootedness in the country was approvingly described by Tweedie.³³⁶ Bjørnson, who was also quoted favourably and extensively by Wyllie, embodied the best of modern Norway for British travellers: reassuringly in touch with the rural and Viking pasts which they sought, but also capable of meeting bourgeois European literary standards of behaviour and conduct.

These forms of modernity that were both reassuring and still suitably unfamiliar occur in multiple locations in travel texts. When Du Chaillu visited Bossekop/Bossugoppi, a suburb of Alta/Áltá in Finnmark, he remarked on the “culture and refinement”, demonstrated by “books and a piano”, a sofa and tasteful decorations.³³⁷ Du Chaillu had “expected to meet only rude people in these parts, and here I was brought face to face with education and good-manners, and three foreign languages had been spoken in my hearing”.³³⁸ He noted that “the friendly manners of all made me forget that I was a stranger”.³³⁹ Modernity here was comforting, reducing the sense of distance and remoteness in Northern Norway. As Spring has written about German tourists in Tromsø visiting local bourgeois homes, “Tromsø as a European periphery, on the threshold between the familiar and unfamiliar, collapses here into familiar European space, challenging ideas of what constitutes centre and periphery, as the narratives about the encounters between Central European travellers and Tromsø bourgeois culture illustrate”.³⁴⁰ Part of the amazement of Du Chaillu and other travellers at the similarity of Northern Norwegian life to metropolitan Europe was the accompanying contrast. For many travellers in Tromsø, it was the Sámi camp, despite its own modern features; for Du Chaillu, it is leaving a local home at eleven p.m. with “the sun shining brightly”.³⁴¹ Another dialectic was that between tourism as enabling and destructive, particularly in relationship to infrastructure such as mountain paths and huts, as the texts produced by mountaineers show. As Wyllie wrote of Norwegian children, “I hope the tourist will not spoil them and turn them into beggars”.³⁴² As Slingsby's writings

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Fjågesund and Symes, *The Northern Utopia*, 76.

³³⁶ Ryall, “Literary Culture on the Margins: Ethel Tweedie's Travels in Norway”, 325-6.

³³⁷ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. 1*, 93.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid., 94.

³⁴⁰ Spring, “Arctic and European In-Betweens”, 24.

³⁴¹ Du Chaillu, *The Land of the Midnight Sun, Vol. 1*, 95.

³⁴² Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 150.

also show, travellers were caught between the desire to be followed, allowing other British travellers to experience Norway for themselves, and preservationist tendencies, particularly a fear that Norway would be corrupted by modernity in the same way as Britain.

These tensions between expectations of remoteness, comfort in travel and concern for Norwegian society are all visible in Chapman's *Across Lapland with Sledge and Reindeer*. First published in 1932, Chapman's account detailed her winter journey up the coast of Norway and then down through Sápmi to return to Narvik/Áhkanjárga on the Norwegian coast. Whilst in Karasjok/Kárášjohka, a settlement known for its mainly Sámi community (and now home to the Sámi Parliament), Chapman visited a local Norwegian family, the Hegges. She wrote:

On leaving the post office, I called on the Hegges. Their comfortable home was built and furnished in Norwegian style, with electric light from their own plant, a telephone and a wireless set. Seated by their cosy fire, drinking coffee from a dainty china cup, I quite forgot I was in Lapland, and was lost in admiration for the pluck and initiative of these hardy Norwegians who, in so wild and remote a part of the Arctic, can manage to live so comfortably.³⁴³

Chapman here was clearly drawing on the contrast between the comfy 1930s domesticity inside the Hegges' house and the winter outside, but it is curious that she emphasised the remoteness of the Norwegians whilst also describing the post office, telephone, and wireless set, all clearly allowing Karasjok to remain connected with the world outside. Chapman also describes how the safe arrival of the postman is celebrated with by hoisting the Norwegian flag "triumphantly" and the excitement in the town about a planned road.³⁴⁴ As Jan Borm has noted, Chapman celebrated the way in which Norwegians and the Norwegian state have established modernity in Sápmi.³⁴⁵ She noted the "Norwegian style" of the comfortable home, as well as feeling distant from Sápmi when inside, to the degree that she "quite forgot" she was there. However, she was also concerned that the Sámi might become "spoilt" by modernity, echoing Crompton-Roberts' concern in Tromsø.³⁴⁶ Chapman's relationship to the Sámi, on a personal and ethnographic level, was a product of her understanding of place and modernity, and her writing is of particular interest as it returned to the themes of the travel writing about Norway from the latter decades of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth.

³⁴³ Chapman, *Across Lapland with Sledge and Reindeer*, 68.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Jan Borm, "Lavish Lapland": Gender, Primitivism and the Pictorial in Olive Murray Chapman's Travelogue *Across Lapland*" in Hansson and Ryall, *Arctic Modernities*, 167.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

The increasing accessibility and connectedness of Norway, particularly the North and Sápmi, complicated travellers' feelings towards the place.

Norway was a space of escape, but travellers were also dependent on technologies of infrastructure that changed the country as they brought travellers to it. Institutions like *Den Norske Turistforening* enabled travel whilst also altering the nature, or perceived nature, of destinations themselves. Wilderness, and the idea of escape, was necessarily constructed. Norway was a space where British concerns about modernity, empire, and identity were explored, not least in collaboration with Norwegians and Norwegian institutions like DNT. Norway's potential for modernity was aligned with its supposedly pristine social and natural condition, whilst these questions of backwardness and evolution were racialised when travellers encountered Sámi, despite the ways in which Sámi resistance challenged this. Moreover, the modern infrastructure travellers used to access Norway and Sápmi was in itself constructed and contested by Norwegians – organisations and journeys that look simply national were often constructed through transnational networks, cooperation, and imaginings. Space, place, and time in the British imagination were co-constructions, whether the travellers knew it or not. Moreover, Norway appealed as an Arctic space, where travellers could experience some of the conditions that they had read about or seen displayed at home, in a more accessible and limited form. As with other Arctic spaces, Norway allowed travellers to consider their relationships to empire, modernity, and temporality, in the region and at home.

Chapter Three:

“Such skill that they still thought he was a native”:

Defining Modern Exploration in Spitsbergen and East Greenland in the 1920s and 1930s

When Marion Wyllie and others headed north from the Norwegian coast on their cruises, they were taking the next step in the British search for Arctic experiences. Beyond Nordkapp, across the Barents Sea, was the archipelago of Spitsbergen,¹ a place where the extremes of polar night and midnight sun and the presence of ice and snow were even more pronounced than on the mainland. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, whilst Spitsbergen still offered these Arctic experiences, it was also brought into European networks of travel and tourism. This was part of the *accessible* Arctic, and increasingly so. However, this accessibility, made possible through infrastructural changes and the extension of similar developments in Norway, was often elided in travelogues written by those who had visited. Spitsbergen was presented as possessing suitably Arctic hostility for travellers seeking hardship but the existence of more straightforward ways to get there had to be disguised. A history of British representations of the Arctic insisted on certain barriers and details of travail. A good example are the mountaineering accounts written by Sir Martin Conway after his visits to Spitsbergen in 1896 and 1897.² Conway depicts the archipelago as an unexplored space allowing for heroic deeds. This, however, is a depiction which is interwoven with human activity and presence. Conway was caught between ideals of Arctic exploration and the practical realities of travel in the region. Conway also navigated the tensions between expectations of the Arctic as a natural place, defined by its timeless nature, and geopolitical events on Spitsbergen. Increasing mining and territorial claims were changing how the islands were seen and how life there operated. Conway’s ideals of British exploration were at times out of place in a place entering an era of industrial development and commercial exploitation. His texts attempted to reconcile his convenient access and his desire for escape.

Spitsbergen was not remote from the impact of the First World War on international relations and European needs for resources and, in the years after 1918, these pressures were increasingly felt. However, the archipelago also became seen as a useful field site for Arctic science. Several British

¹ The whole archipelago was known as Spitsbergen until 1925, when Norway implemented the 1920 Spitsbergen Treaty and took control of the islands, renaming them Svalbard. Thereafter, only the largest island retained the name Spitsbergen. However, as Anglophone accounts tended to keep using the name Spitsbergen for the whole archipelago for the duration of the period in question here, I will use Spitsbergen in that way throughout this chapter. I will only use the term Svalbard when talking about the archipelago today. See Roald Berg, “From “Spitsbergen” to “Svalbard”. Norwegianization in Norway and in the “Norwegian Sea”, 1820–1925”, *Acta Borealia*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2013): 154-73.

² Sir William Martin Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen* (London: J.M. Dent and Co., 1897) and Sir Martin Conway, *With Ski and Sledge Over Arctic Glaciers* (London: J.M. Dent and Co., 1898).

expeditions, mostly from Oxford University, travelled to Spitsbergen for research. This chapter will consider how tensions between historic depictions of the Arctic and modern ways of exploring and doing scientific research were raised and resolved – or not – in the published travelogues of expedition members in Spitsbergen and East Greenland in the interwar period. In the 1920s and 1930s, Spitsbergen became a field site of interest for undergraduate expeditions from British universities. Expeditions led by George Binney in 1924 and Alexander Glen in 1935-36 were among several trips which combined a range of scientific research with exploration of little-known areas.³ These post-First World War expeditions combined new ways of doing Arctic science with a certain reverence for traditions of British polar exploration. They brought together new technologies of surveying and experimentation with a continued interest in Arctic travel as character forming. Traditional narratives of masculinity were invoked and subverted, and Spitsbergen was seen as a place in which young men could train for lives of science and service.⁴ Whilst Binney used an aeroplane and all parties experimented with wireless technology, the Arctic retained its cultural meanings as a space of escape from modernity. Moreover, the texts produced about the expeditions had to meet a certain understanding of the Arctic which an audience at home expected.

The wider backdrop of these expeditions, however, was one of transnational exchanges of research information between Norway and Britain, internationally contested resources in Spitsbergen and imperial claims across the region. In East Greenland, where some Norwegians were eager to seize more polar territory, other British research parties launched similar expeditions and met similar challenges of working between modern techniques and traditional discourses, as well as between science and exploration. Expeditions such as the British Arctic Air Route Expedition (BAARE) in 1930-31 and the East Greenland Expedition of 1932-33 shared expertise and members with some of the Spitsbergen expeditions and also received financial backing from British institutions. The latter expedition received support from Pan American Airlines, who were eager to establish a trans-Atlantic flight route.⁵ Similar questions about relying on new technologies of exploration, and how they compared to traditional methods, were also raised in Greenland, particularly given the proximity of explorers to an Inuit population whose expertise in Arctic travel they drew on. The explorers' travelogues reveal these tensions in purpose and method and how they thought about the people they encountered, in terms of their utility to the expeditions but also more philosophically about living in the Arctic. Their expeditions also relied on Danish colonial control of Greenland and the transnational and transimperial connections between British and Danish scientists and explorers

³ George Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge in the Arctic* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1925) and Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*.

⁴ See Bruun, "Aircraft and pencraft".

⁵ F. Spencer Chapman, *Watkins' Last Expedition* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1934), 5.

raised further questions about the construction of knowledge about the Arctic. The Scottish traveller and botanist Isobel Wylie Hutchison also visited Greenland in the 1930s and her writings about her travel offer another perspective on British travel in Greenland at the time.⁶ Hutchison's writing provides a poetic alternative style to that of the varsity explorers, yet she was also another scientist dealing with the tensions of modernity at home and in the Arctic.

These questions of modernity and exploration are crucial to understanding the purpose of interwar British travel in the Arctic, as well as the discourses producing and produced by the published writing of travellers. Spitsbergen and Greenland seemed to continue to offer the fantasy of the blank Arctic space, travel to a place back in or outside of time, as both nineteenth-century expeditions and excursions to Norway also had. However, the travellers were acutely aware of their own lateness in Arctic exploration. A figure like Binney saw Arctic exploration as a way to make up for missing out on fighting in the First World War.⁷ However, he was also too late to make new discoveries in the Arctic; instead, his attempts at pioneering new ways of travel were caught between a heroic tradition and an alternative future.⁸ These tensions run through many of the travelogues, but rhetorical attempts were also made to try to manage them and reassert a place for these expeditions in the polar lineage. From Conway to Chapman, questions of purpose in a modern age appeared in the travel writing, as they tried to position themselves in the British tradition of exploration whilst also managing a changing Arctic where encounters with other people further complicated their sense of place and self.

“Assuredly the vulgarisation of Spitsbergen has begun”: Martin Conway Between Tourism and Exploration

Spitsbergen was established as a tourist destination at the end of the nineteenth century, but also had a lengthy human history. From the early seventeenth century, English and Dutch whalers began to hunt whales around the islands, setting up permanent settlements from the 1620s.⁹ By the early nineteenth century, there was little whaling around Spitsbergen and most long-term settlement by the end of the nineteenth century was by Norwegian hunters and trappers.¹⁰ For some *fin de siècle* travellers, the traces of earlier human habitation on the archipelago were appealing, but, for most,

⁶ Isobel Wylie Hutchison, *On Greenland's Closed Shores. The Fairyland of the Arctic* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons Ltd., 1930).

⁷ Bruun, “Aircraft and pencraft”, 184. Wade Davis has discussed the similar relationship between interwar mountaineers and the legacy of the First World War. Davis, *Into the Silence: The Great War, Mallory and the Conquest of Everest* (London: Vintage, 2012).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Dagomar Degroot, “Blood and Bone, Tears and Oil: Climate Change, Whaling, and Conflict in the Seventeenth-Century Arctic”, *The American Historical Review*, vol. 127, issue 1 (March 2022), 65.

¹⁰ Ryall, “Svalbard in and beyond European Modernity” in Hansson and Ryall, *Arctic Modernities*, 234.

the reason for visiting was the sense of Arctic extremity. In one British guidebook, published in 1916, it was sold as the place “where the Gulf Stream dies”.¹¹ The significance of Spitsbergen was its proximity to the Arctic – “lying but a few degrees from the very Pole itself”¹² – and its existence as a “frozen desert” and a “vast northern wilderness”.¹³ Whilst the experience of visiting on a cruise turned out to be less hostile than expected for Sigel Roush, the American writer reporting back, it was still one defined by the sublime and the extreme. Roush described the scale and power of the glaciers, the strangeness of the midnight sun and the disorienting psychological effects of being in Arctic space.¹⁴ It is here that Roush referred to himself and his fellow passengers as “semi-professional polar explorers”, aligning their Arctic travel with more formal polar exploration.¹⁵ Roush’s experience and account seems to fit with the expectations of travel to Spitsbergen as an extension of the Norwegian “accessible Arctic”, north to a place that met the traveller’s expectations to a greater extent. Tellingly, Roush’s account featured in a travel guide to Norway, showing the logic and infrastructure of including Spitsbergen on a journey to Norway. Cruises to Spitsbergen were formally established in the 1890s and often run by companies with existing links to Norwegian Arctic travel.¹⁶ In the case of Roush’s journey, this was the Bergen Steamship Company (*Bergenske Dampskibsselskab*), who helped to publish the book which includes Roush’s account. The first major British company to launch a cruise to Spitsbergen was the British Orient Steam Navigation Company or Orient Line in the summer of 1894 and major German companies soon sent similar voyages.¹⁷ Norwegian companies continued to offer similar if smaller services, through the Bergen Steamship Company and the popular Vesteraalen Steamship Company (*Vesteraalens Dampskibsselskab*), which established a weekly sailing for tourists between Hammerfest in Northern Norway and Advent Bay on Spitsbergen in 1897.¹⁸ Smaller-scale tourist trips had been made to Spitsbergen before, such as the yachting trip made by Lord Dufferin, whose 1857 travelogue, *Letters from High Latitudes*, was frequently cited as inspiration by later travellers, including Conway.¹⁹

¹¹ Dutt, *Sunlit Norway*, 195.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 200-5.

¹⁵ Ibid., 208.

¹⁶ Spring, “Cruise Tourists in Spitsbergen Around 1900”, *Nordlit*, no. 45 (February 2020), 39. See also, Spring, “Tidlig cruiseturisme til Spitsbergen: dannelse, oppdagelse og fornøyelse” in Wiebke Kolbe and Anders Gustavsson (eds.), *Turismhistoria i Norden* (Acta Academiae Regiae Gustavi Adolphi, vol. 150) (Uppsala: Kungliga Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur, 2018): 85-96.

¹⁷ Bård Kolltveit, ““Deckchair Explorers:” The Origin and Development of Organised Tourist Voyages to Northern and Southern Polar Regions”, *International Journal of Maritime History*, vol. 18, no. 2 (December 2006), 356-7.

¹⁸ Ibid., 357.

¹⁹ Hansson, “The gentleman’s north: Lord Dufferin and the beginnings of Arctic tourism”, *Studies in Travel Writing*, vol. 13, no. 1 (February 2009): 61–73.

However, cruise tourism changed the way in which Spitsbergen was experienced as an Arctic space. Bård Kolltveit has referred to “deckchair explorers” – travellers who wanted to experience the Arctic for themselves, but in comfort.²⁰ Travellers undertook a number of different activities when they visited Spitsbergen, including walking, collecting souvenirs and research objects, and hunting.²¹ However, observation was usually central to this and a sense of detachment was common, making this travel more akin to “armchair exploration”.²² Crucial to this was an expectation of how the Arctic would be, so that the sights seen were suitable for the experience. Yet there were certain tensions in this desire to be in a potentially dangerous place but remain detached. Foremost for this was the perception of the Arctic as a dangerous and hostile space and the comfort and security of the steamship. As Ulrike Spring has put it, travelling to Spitsbergen “involved entering a liminal space, criss-crossed by the familiar and the unknown, by reliable modern technology and the overpowering Arctic environment. These tensions shaped tourist experiences and created an image of the North that oscillated between the wish to control it and the desire to be controlled by it”.²³ The ship itself was crucial to this, often featuring a high level of comfort, as well as the latest technology and metropolitan European fashions. Travellers could wear their clothes from home even as they entered a polar environment.²⁴ Whilst Spring writes about German tourists, certain travelogues written by British travellers to Spitsbergen depicted the experience of a cruise. Marion Wyllie, for example, extended her Norwegian cruise to Spitsbergen and finished her 1907 travelogue, *Norway and its Fjords*, with an account of her visit to the archipelago.²⁵ Wyllie noted a French steamer, *Ile de France*, visited Spitsbergen and offered a service where “the ladies were specially invited to take this cruise, for only on board this *Ile de France* would it be possible to make a voyage to Spitzbergen and the ice-pack with the amount of comfort that they very legitimately claimed”.²⁶ The claims to luxury whilst visiting the Arctic were clear and Wyllie herself gave an account of a concert aboard her own ship, the *Vectis*, with a backdrop of mountains and glaciers, enhancing the sublimity of the music and the landscape.²⁷ As mentioned in Chapter Two, Wyllie mentioned reading Nansen’s *Farthest North* in her text and imagined seeing Nansen’s ship, *Fram*, appearing from the pack ice.²⁸ As well as showing how

²⁰ Kolltveit, ““Deckchair Explorers:””, 351. The Spitsbergen cruise ships could be compared to Alpine hotels in how they enabled a comfortable and luxurious environment for taking in sublime and hostile surroundings. Wedekind, “Mountain Grand Hotels at the Fin de Siècle”, 172.

²¹ Spring, “Cruise Tourists in Spitsbergen Around 1900”, 40.

²² *Ibid.*, 45.

²³ *Ibid.*, 42.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁵ Wyllie, *Norway and its Fjords*, 286.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 289.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 302.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 301.

interested Wyllie was in Nansen as a polar celebrity, these references show how the Arctic was to be consumed. It was a backdrop and space of imagination, activated through travel, reading, and fantasy.

A British traveller who did engage with Spitsbergen as a place for active exploration was Conway. Born in 1856, Conway was elected to the Alpine Club as a Cambridge undergraduate in 1877 based on substantial climbing in the Alps. By the time of his expeditions to Spitsbergen in the 1890s, as well as being a well-known art historian, Conway had climbed extensively in the Himalaya, including a large-scale surveying expedition to the Karakorum in 1892.²⁹ He had also walked the length of the Alps in 1894, publishing books on both expeditions. In the summer of 1896, Conway visited Spitsbergen, aiming to make the first crossing of the interior of the main island. Conway wrote that “the main object of our journey was to cross Spitsbergen and reveal the character of its interior” and planned to gather significant collections of specimens of natural history and geology from the interior, as well as photographing and mapping it.³⁰ Conway considered the expedition a success and the expedition party “almost circumnavigated” the main island of Spitsbergen, as well as making a map of 600 square miles of the interior, taking 600 photographs and bringing back substantial collections for the National Museums at Kew and South Kensington.³¹ Conway returned to Spitsbergen in the following summer with Edmund Garwood, a geologist, mountaineer and fellow member of the 1896 party, to continue their previous research on a smaller scale. Conway published accounts of both expeditions, covering the 1896 trip in *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen* (1897) and the 1897 return in *With Ski and Sledge Over Arctic Glaciers* (1898). Conway’s expeditions were certainly adventurous and spent significant time in Spitsbergen – in 1896, the party made thirteen mountain ascents.³² However, it is worth considering the connections between the growth of the tourism industry in Spitsbergen and Conway’s expeditions. Whilst Conway presented himself in his written accounts of his travel as exploring uncharted territory and travelling where few had gone before, the logistics of these journeys were enmeshed with the burgeoning tourist infrastructure. Moreover, even Conway’s own texts hinted that the places visited were not as untouched as Conway’s rhetoric suggested.

Conway’s two travel texts depicted Spitsbergen as a place where both an Arctic blank and a human history of the Arctic could be found. Like the texts of William Cecil Slingsby and other travellers in Norway (see Chapter Two), he also reflected on tourism as both a threat and an opportunity for travellers and the place itself. The structure of the travelogues, particularly *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, provided a way into considering these themes in the texts. Like most travelogues from

²⁹ Hansen, "Conway, (William) Martin, Baron Conway of Allington (1856–1937), art historian and mountaineer", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 September 2004).

³⁰ Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 8-9.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 11-2.

³² *Ibid.*, 11.

Norway, the journey recounted is one made northwards. For Conway, once the expedition reached Northern Norway, there were signs of Arctic Otherness. These were often temporal. Having crossed the Arctic Circle, the party started to experience the midnight sun, as well as spectacular landscapes. The harmony of the mountain landscapes of Lofoten had a striking effect on Conway, who wrote that “the Arctic fever seized me at that moment and thrilled through every fibre”.³³ The expedition sorted many of its practical requirements in Tromsø, where they purchased supplies, recruited local men to support them and put in place networks of communication for the duration of the expedition. Moreover, Conway depicts Tromsø as place of encounter with the Arctic Other. For Conway, this was a Sámi man he met in a Tromsø shop. Conway described him as “wearing leather clothes and turned-up shoes like a Hittite” and Conway “felt as though I had tumbled into the presence of a neolithic man, so broad seemed the tide of centuries audibly murmuring between us.”³⁴ Here, as for other British travellers in Sápmi at the time, the sense of difference presented in the text is temporal. The colonial discourse of travelling back in time in the periphery is present in the text; moreover, for Conway, this sense of temporal distance reinforced his sense of being in the Arctic as a space of alterity.

This uncanny Arctic temporality was also found on Spitsbergen itself. Conway wrote that “by this time our occupations no longer bore any relation to the indications of the clock. All twenty-four hours round there was the same effect of full daylight”.³⁵ The sense of being out for time was to some degree liberating, as Elizabeth Le Blond had found, but Conway also found the “lack of stimulus to hurry” a disadvantage to the party’s work.³⁶ There were also other reminders of the Arctic nature of their travel. In his text, Conway aligned himself with other Arctic explorers, in a similar way to Wyllie. However, Conway’s affinity to Nansen took more direct forms. Whilst he “thought of Nansen, that gallant Norseman, who, sailing northwards now three years ago, had drifted into the silence of that frozen waste” as his ship approached Spitsbergen,³⁷ Conway also had a direct meeting with him. Returning from Spitsbergen, Conway’s expedition party stayed in Hammerfest and met Nansen as he returned a hero from the *Fram* Expedition. This was a striking encounter for Conway, who wrote that “no more joyous conclusion to our own enterprise could have been desired than this encounter with the greatest modern hero of Arctic enterprise”.³⁸ As Anka Ryall has pointed out, the title of Conway’s travelogue, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, echoed that of Nansen’s *The First Crossing of Greenland*, published in 1890,³⁹ and Conway clearly admired Nansen’s work and endeavour in making Arctic

³³ Ibid., 33.

³⁴ Ibid., 36.

³⁵ Ibid., 81.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 48.

³⁸ Ibid., 322.

³⁹ Ryall, “The Arctic Playground of Europe: Sir Martin Conway’s Svalbard”, *Nordlit*, no. 35 (April 2015), 33.

spaces known. The Arcticness of Spitsbergen was reinforced through the proximity to unimpeachably Arctic figures like Nansen, but also in comparison with what was left behind. Nordkapp, the northernmost point visited by travellers to Norway who did not head on to Spitsbergen, was presented by Conway as comfortable and mild on his return to mainland Europe. He wrote that “for the air to us was full of southern warmth, and felt like the air of hot Italian valleys to a man descending into them from the Alps”.⁴⁰ Whilst this comfort was relative, the sense of returning to Europe was also emphasised by the diverse group of tourists at Nordkapp – “Belgians, Poles, Hungarians, Swedes, English, Norwegians, men of science, seamen, travellers” were present, drinking champagne and racing each other.⁴¹ Nordkapp was a point where the Arctic sublime met modern tourist practices (see Chapter Two), but Conway’s description on his comfort there further emphasised the peripheral and harsh nature of Spitsbergen, as well as Conway’s own Otherness as a figure who had made a truly Arctic journey.

Comparison to Norway was not the only way in which the Otherness of Spitsbergen was established. As well as being strikingly Arctic, it was also a place where behaviour was strange. Faced with increasingly cold weather on the voyage north, Conway and the crew resorted to extra layers of clothing. As a result, “passing strange were the costumes adopted”, particularly as they hinted at the exotic.⁴² As Conway wrote, “the greatest variety was in caps, which ranged from a thick Kashmiri turban through every grade of fur head-dress to the ordinary sou'-wester”.⁴³ This sense of the exotic and foreign can also be seen later in the text. Conway described the ponies they have taken as “like my old Balti coolies down the Baltoro Glacier, or Gregory's Zanzibaris when they had set foot on the Uganda road” in their supposed lack of fatigue.⁴⁴ Besides the dehumanising racism of the description, Conway also seemed to align Spitsbergen travel with the exploration of expedition members in other parts of the world, specifically the Himalayas and Africa. Spitsbergen was positioned here as further beyond Europe and as the sort of place where exploration happens, as part of a colonial project and as part of the “unknown” world to the British in the late nineteenth century. However, in other ways, Spitsbergen was brought closer to home. The weather in June was like “a cloudy English afternoon in December”⁴⁵ – unseasonal but familiar. Later in the summer, the weather “might have been an English May Day”⁴⁶ or a “moist English spring”.⁴⁷ Conway even wrote that “in future I shall always think of England as belonging in a climatic sense to the polar regions. The Arctic Circle ought to be drawn

⁴⁰ Conway, *With Ski and Sledge...*, 192.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 40.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 190

⁴⁵ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 122.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 192.

through the Straits of Dover” and that “one has to come to these islands of the north to understand not merely the geological history, but the present atmospheric conditions of the British Isles”.⁴⁸ Ryall reads this as naturalising an English presence on Spitsbergen, making it seem an extension of British territory.⁴⁹ Spitsbergen’s place seems more uncertain here in Conway’s travelogue, both a space of alterity and a familiar one – a tension that perhaps reflects further anxieties about the appeal and the damage of tourism.

One climactic feature which was reassuringly Arctic is the gloom. At times, Conway described the landscape as sterile, where stillness and fog combined to make the places visited particularly uninspiring. Even flowers had “no novelty amongst them”.⁵⁰ He even noted that Spitsbergen had “an air that depresses rather than stimulates, and is wholly different from the bright quickening atmosphere elsewhere associated with snow-mountain regions”.⁵¹ The depressing air of the region fitted with wider discourses in the British imagination at the time, which saw the Arctic as a Gothic space of danger, haunting, and death.⁵² For example, at one point in *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, Conway offered a lengthy anecdote which he heard from two trappers about their forced overwintering on Spitsbergen. This was a “horrible tale to tell of privation, sickness, and death. Thue [one of the trappers] himself was just recovering from scurvy, and looked very ill and weak”.⁵³ This encounter would seem to meet a domestic audience’s expectation of an Arctic travel narrative, featuring scurvy, deprivation, and death, as well as the effects of the harsh climate. Ryall sees an echo of the Franklin Expedition in Conway’s representations of a hostile Arctic, something that would be familiar to his audiences,⁵⁴ as well as resonating with readers expecting an Arctic account to include extreme cold and accompanying human struggle.⁵⁵ However, the Arctic of suffering and death was not always as it seemed. At one point, looking over Advent Bay, where “everywhere the eye rested on barrenness and desolation” and Conway noted the “the silence of this abandoned place”, the party came across “what seemed to be the grave of a sailor, a mound framed in a ring of stones bearing a board”.⁵⁶ The inscription read “KAPT. VOGELGESANG / S.S. Columbia / Hamburg. / D. 29. 7 . 1893”⁵⁷ but the reality of the grave and Conway’s response is striking:

⁴⁸ Ibid., 214.

⁴⁹ Ryall, “In Love with a Cold Climate: Representations of the North in Nineteenth-Century Travel Writing from Scandinavia”, *Journal of Northern Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2 (2014), 127.

⁵⁰ Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 142.

⁵¹ Ibid., 163.

⁵² McCorristine, *The Spectral Arctic*, 43.

⁵³ Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 55. Conway names Klaus Thue “of Tromsö” but not his fellow survivor, who is Sámi.

⁵⁴ Ryall, “The Arctic Playground of Europe”, 35.

⁵⁵ Ryall, “In Love with a Cold Climate”, 127-8.

⁵⁶ Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 69.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

We wasted much valuable sentiment on this supposed unfortunate, and only some weeks later learned that the monument was raised to commemorate a gigantic beer-drinking bout or *Kneipe* enjoyed by the tourists who came up in the great Hamburg-American liner on the date mentioned. Other Kneipe-monuments were erected beside this one during the course of the summer—gaily painted and inscribed beer-barrels, iron flags, and so forth. Assuredly the vulgarisation of Spitsbergen has begun.⁵⁸

The bathos is clear, from Conway's wasted sentiment to the vulgarisation of Spitsbergen. However, it is interesting that Conway had expectations of Arctic hostility and suffering – a gravestone was not an unexpected find. Moreover, he was clearly critical of the cluttering of the landscape by tourists, which he regarded as a “vulgarisation”. At a later point on the 1896 expedition, Conway was ill and believed his cold must have come from a group “in frequent communication with Europe”.⁵⁹ Not only is Spitsbergen vulgarised by tourists, but their presence is literally unhealthy. Travellers who sought escape from the modern in Norway often described the Arctic as a healthy space, which the corruption and degeneration of modern, particularly urban, life had not yet reached. Conway further aligned the tourist with the influences of modernity on pristine spaces, here in the literal transferral of the ill health of the metropole.

For Conway, Spitsbergen “may be said to have been formally annexed by the ubiquitous tripper”,⁶⁰ and whilst it was not “overrun”, the traveller seeking authentic Arctic experiences had to head inland away from the coastline.⁶¹ It was inland where the expedition – as opposed to the “trip” – planned to explore uncharted territory and this was something Conway wrote about with relish. For him, surveying “possesses great fascinations. It is delightful to behold the blank paper slowly covered with the semblance, however vague, of a portion of the earth's surface before unmapped... Every march solves a problem and leaves in the heart of the surveyor a delightful sense of something accomplished”.⁶² This pleasure is striking and aligns with ideas of the surveyor as a heroic figure, solving problems and opening up new space for science and empire. At times, Conway was overwhelmed by the unknown, but felt “the attempt, however, must be made, for these scenes have never before been described, and the chance of beholding them, as we did, is so rare that it may be long before the opportunity occurs again”.⁶³ As a mountaineer, Conway was able to make certain

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 312.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 338.

⁶¹ Conway, *With Ski and Sledge...*, 155-6.

⁶² Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 72.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 286-7.

ascents that enabled cartographic surveys to be made. As he put it, however, “the mountain explorer... that person most unpopular with geographers, is faced by topographical problems of a far more complicated character”.⁶⁴ Lines of sight were often blocked and numerous ascents had to be made in dense mountainous areas, which “thus involves an amount of travel within it beyond all comparison greater than that entailed by the exploration of open country”.⁶⁵ Despite these struggles, the summit view was often advantageous. Adopting the “monarch-of-all-I-survey scene” enabled these conquests of space. As for Nares, the imperial gaze functioned at height. Moreover, the sheer drops from ridges and peaks made “as to seem everywhere vertical, so that we had the sensation of looking from a balloon rather than of standing upon the solid earth”.⁶⁶ This aeriality was sought in other ways by later expeditions, but Spitsbergen was a space where mapping could be almost transcendental. Conway had received financial support from the Royal Geographical Society and Royal Society and took his responsibilities to exploration seriously.⁶⁷ The expedition contained Garwood, a geologist, Aubyn Trevor-Battye, a zoologist, and John Walter Gregory, another geologist based at the British Museum. Conway gives an example of the seriousness with which he took the scientific side of the expedition, writing that “for five hours I stood at the head of the companion taking observations with fingers deadly cold. The scenery was as lovely as before, but I had eyes only for topographical facts and must be blind to effects of beauty, collecting materials for science instead of art”.⁶⁸ Conway resisted both the conditions and his own inclination towards the aesthetic. He was not always successful in his restraint. Ryall notes how “accounts of views that are meant to serve topographical purposes often merge into Ruskinian word paintings obviously aimed at suggesting a more subjective, poetic or pictorial vision of the Arctic landscape”.⁶⁹ This is perhaps unsurprising given Conway’s work as an art historian, but Ryall also links this to his performance of class and gender: he was able to bring more than labour to exploration, but without compromising the athletic prowess and physical determination he showed through mountaineering.⁷⁰ Conway was particularly attuned to colour, offering a different perspective on the Arctic to the monochrome and gloomy vistas common in representations of the region, as well as his own depictions of Spitsbergen gloom.⁷¹

⁶⁴ Conway, *With Ski and Sledge...*, 95.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁶⁷ Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 9. Ryall notes that the expedition received a grant of £300 from the RGS. Ryall, “The Arctic Playground of Europe”, 32.

⁶⁸ Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 298-9.

⁶⁹ Ryall, “The Arctic Playground of Europe”, 37.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 41. See also, Michael S. Reidy, “Mountaineering, Masculinity, and the Male Body in Mid-Victorian Britain”, *Osiris*, vol. 30, no. 1, *Scientific Masculinities* (January 2015): 158-81.

⁷¹ Ryall, “The Arctic Playground of Europe”, 37-8. Conway was far from the only British mountaineer with a strong interest in how the aesthetics and purpose of mountaineering were intertwined. See, for example, George Mallory’s essay, “The Mountaineer as Artist”. Reproduced in *Climbing Everest: The Complete Writings of George Mallory* (London: Gibson Square, 2012). Originally published in *Climber’s Club Journal*, March 1914.

Occasionally the tourist banal reappeared, as with the “grave” of Captain Vogelgesang. Conway’s own interest in Spitsbergen began with an encounter which shows the dependence on and interconnectedness of the expedition with tourism. Climbing a mountain named Mount Lusitania was one of the expedition’s goals, as it offered excellent views for surveying, but also a personal connection for Conway. He wrote that the mountain:

became an enviable point of vantage; moreover, I had sentimental reasons for wishing to make the ascent. In the year 1894 the Orient Company's steamship *Lusitania* took a party for a cruise in Spitsbergen waters. After reaching latitude 80° 30' north, they spent three days in Sassen Bay, during which a passenger, Mr. Victor H. Gatty, climbed and named this peak. He wrote an account of it and sent it to me, as Editor of the *Alpine Journal*, for publication. I was thus led to look up the history of mountain exploration in Spitsbergen, and this was how my attention came to be directed to the region.⁷²

This tourist presence in the landscape was striking and certainly went against Conway’s representations of an untouched interior. As with the “grave”, it undermined expectations of the Arctic. It also shows the degree to which Conway’s expedition was tied to the tourist industry – a cruise passenger inspired Conway’s interest in the archipelago! Moreover, Conway’s accounts show the degree to which his journeys were dependent on the infrastructure of the tourist travel which he tried to position himself as separate from. Infrastructure comes to the fore in several places. Firstly, it was purely practical: the sledges used by the expedition were transported north from the mainland on a tourist steamer otherwise “run by the Vesteraalen Company for the convenience of tourists”.⁷³ Secondly, there is an additional layer of convenience. Conway mentioned friends visiting the party at Advent Bay, although they missed their brief visit.⁷⁴ Garwood even mentioned getting lunches at the tourist hut there rather than using emergency rations!⁷⁵ Thirdly, the texts give a sense of the scale of tourism development. Conway met Wilhelm Bade, a key figure in establishing German cruise tourism to Spitsbergen, and in Conway’s words, the “inventor of Spitsbergen as a tourist resort”.⁷⁶ He noted the “relative accessibility” of the archipelago and detailed some of the numerous cruises that were arriving in the 1890s.⁷⁷ Little had changed by 1897 and *With Ski and Sledge Over Arctic Glaciers* opens with the line “In the morning of July 9, 1897, Mr. E. J. Garwood and I, along with a small cargo of

⁷² Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 133.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 253-5.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 265.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 323. This part of the text is written by Garwood.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 261. See also, Spring, “Cruise Tourists in Spitsbergen Around 1900”, 41.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 337-8.

tourists, were delivered by the steamship *Lofoten* on the shore of Advent Bay, Spitsbergen, just ten days after leaving London”.⁷⁸ The proximity of Spitsbergen is again apparent, as is Conway’s reliance on tourist infrastructure for his exploration. Later that summer, Conway and Garwood spent time at the tourist hut at Advent Bay and received post from the returning *Lofoten*.⁷⁹ This dependence on tourist infrastructure was not without problems. As Conway noted in the appendix of *With Ski and Sledge Over Arctic Glaciers*, “unfortunately it is not till the end of June that, under present steamship arrangements, the island is cheaply accessible”.⁸⁰ Relying on the popular had its limits for explorers, although the established infrastructure also made their travel more financially possible.

At times, Conway was relieved by the ability to escape into what he called one of the “great clean places of the earth”, enjoying “a sense of boundless space, a feeling of freedom, a joy as in the ownership of the whole universe”.⁸¹ For him, “the Arctic glory is a thing apart, wilder, rarer, and no less superb than the glory of any other region of this beautiful world”.⁸² As with his adoption of the summit view for surveying, a sense of control and ownership is clear here. However, as with the “grave” that signals the “vulgarisation” of Spitsbergen by tourists, this sense of the Arctic blank was punctured in other ways. At one point, it was an old tin can – Conway noted that it was “made in Germany”⁸³ – and at another, it was a pineapple, “not brought by the Gulf-stream from warmer climes, but by the great Hamburg steamer *Columbia*, which had recently visited Advent Bay with a cargo of tourists”!⁸⁴ The tin can and pineapple, redolent of the modern, exotic, and luxurious, undercut Conway’s vision of the Arctic as clearly as the fake grave stone. Conway’s relationship to tourism was complex, using its infrastructure whilst bemoaning some of its effects. Moreover, Conway’s relationship to the found items that indicate a tourist presence also influence ideas of temporality around Spitsbergen. Whilst the recent relics left by tourists were seen as inauthentic and spoiling, older human traces were seen to contribute to the sense of Spitsbergen as an Arctic place. When Conway came across the abandoned huts of Russian trappers, he wrote that “the savage regions of the earth are always impressive to a spectator’s imagination, but they become infinitely more impressive when they can be regarded as a theatre of human suffering or endurance”.⁸⁵ The poor state of the huts, as well as the fact that there were graves nearby, meant that they offered Conway what he had expected from Captain Vogelgesang’s grave. Here the human past of Spitsbergen made it all more Arctic in highlighting human suffering in a “savage region”. This was a human history which

⁷⁸ Conway, *With Ski and Sledge...*, 1.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁸² Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 175.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁸⁵ Conway, *With Ski and Sledge...*, 159.

Conway aligned himself with, especially when discussing the history of Arctic exploration in the nineteenth century. After visiting the camp of Salomon August Andrée, the ill-fated Swedish balloonist, Conway wrote of the view northwards that “it was their historic interest that affected me. How many Arctic explorers have sighted them—Phipps (with young Nelson), Scoresby, Franklin, Parry, Nordenskjöld, Leigh Smith, Lamont—oftener outposts of disappointment than of surprise!”⁸⁶ Conway here claimed to be part of a lineage of exploration, one which was not always successful, but which offered a link to their heroism. He even wrote at one point that part of the appeal of Spitsbergen was that “every point is the scene of some tragic event, some shipwreck or disastrous wintering”.⁸⁷ Not all human presence on Spitsbergen was corrupting; the haunted Arctic also appealed.

Temporality in Conway’s texts does not only appear when he looked backwards. His travelogues were also written for future visitors. As Ryall puts it, “they may also be read as guidebooks in which Conway and his travel companions laid out a path that other undaunted tourists might follow”.⁸⁸ Conway anticipated being followed and, like mountaineers in Norway and other places (see Chapter Two), was keen to support this, provided he was followed by the right sort of traveller. At times this was hinted at; after a spell of good weather, Conway wrote that “if a month of such weather could always be foretold, Spitsbergen would become a favourite summer resort, and its shores would produce a crop of hotels”.⁸⁹ Similarly, on a remote part of the west coast of Spitsbergen, he suggested that “a mountaineer, with the existing facilities, might be landed here with a sledge and the requisite appliances, and left for a month. In that time, he could do most valuable work, besides having delightful and novel experiences. Let the Alpine Club look to it; the novelty will not last long”.⁹⁰ Whilst this ends on an ambiguous note – it is unclear if the novelty should be mourned – the aesthetic appeal for Alpine Club members was clear. It is also apparent that Conway felt certain types of travel in particular would be useful and productive, particularly the kind of scientific work his party was conducting. He offered recommendations on equipment – “ordinary warm winter clothes are all you need in Spitsbergen”⁹¹ – and cautionary advice, such as “no agent or mercantile firm can be trusted with this work [of careful packing]. The traveller must do it himself”.⁹² At times this advice is aimed at the ordinary tourist and Conway here claimed an expert status. For example, he wrote:

⁸⁶ Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 275.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 341.

⁸⁸ Ryall, “The Arctic Playground of Europe”, 29.

⁸⁹ Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 230.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 304.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 263.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 264.

Farther than this to east or north it is not likely that tourist steamers will often go, nor is it advisable that persons with home engagements should risk the adventure of a region in which it is always possible to be entrapped by the ice. All the bays and fjords of the west coast, however, may be visited in safety by a traveller having an extra week or two at his command, if the company should make needful provision of small excursion steamers, as, I am informed, they intend to do. A fair specimen of the Arctic world is thus thrown open to every intelligent person, and the horizon of every one's experience is thereby potentially widened.⁹³

Conway both suggested his expertise and connection to reliable sources of information on the region and showed an understanding for the time constraints of a tourist trip. As Mary Katherine Jones has pointed out, he was “on the boundary between amateur and professional”.⁹⁴ Moreover, he showed the benefits of Arctic travel, in widening horizons – and Spitsbergen was Arctic enough to do this. He also offered a vision of a future which combined tourism and scientific research, seeming to predict Roush’s “semi-professional polar explorers”. Conway noted that the success of the Vesteraalen Company was crucial for future research and that, as in the Alps, tourists themselves could ensure that Spitsbergen was “minutely studied and exactly surveyed, its changes watched and recorded from year to year, its phenomena patiently investigated, and its record maintained”.⁹⁵ The “trippers” here can serve a purpose. Moreover, this fantasy of detailed knowledge transferred back to the colonial metropole by amateur scientists was sold as an adventure.⁹⁶ Conway wrote “come, then, all ye ‘who live in houses and go to offices,’ and taste the delights of the unknown!”.⁹⁷ Conway’s call to arms was explored further in *With Ski and Sledge Over Arctic Glaciers*, where he wrote that “the opening up of Spitsbergen to ordinary summer travellers would enable such simple but illuminating researches to be undertaken by holiday-making men of science”.⁹⁸ Moreover, Conway ended *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen* on the prospect of future travel, writing “here, then, is a chance for competent men to enjoy holidays of an active, health-giving, and novel sort, and at the same time to perform good and fruitful service to science”.⁹⁹ The status of Conway himself here is ambiguous. He was Spitsbergen expert, man of science, and holidaymaker. His expertise was lightly worn and he wrote texts which could be followed. However, he aimed to be followed by a select few who could appreciate the place fully or produce useful knowledge, particularly fellow explorers. Moreover, this was a question of

⁹³ Ibid., 342.

⁹⁴ Mary Katherine Jones, “From explorer to expert: Sir William Martin Conway’s ‘delightful sense of something accomplished’”, *Polar Record*, vol. 50, issue 3 (2013), 319.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 343.

⁹⁶ Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993), 12.

⁹⁷ Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 343.

⁹⁸ Conway, *With Ski and Sledge...*, 143.

⁹⁹ Conway, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*, 349.

spatial and temporal escape. Conway's travelogues engaged with whether this was possible or desirable in Spitsbergen.

However, these tourist spaces and empty Arctic landscapes were also populated in other ways. The late nineteenth century saw the legal status of Spitsbergen increasingly contested, as well as the development of extractive industries on the archipelago. Tourism was not the only industry increasingly present on Spitsbergen, although Conway's travelogues do not reflect extensively on these changes and tourism to Spitsbergen itself engaged extensively with modern practices. The alternative temporalities of new technologies, however, fit broadly with his sense of a changing Spitsbergen. Mining was the main form of industrial development on Spitsbergen, with British, American, Swedish, and Norwegian corporations establishing operations there. Prospecting for coal and other minerals began in 1898 and the first mining settlements were built from 1905.¹⁰⁰ As Dag Avango notes, crucial to this was the use of technology and discourse to redefine Spitsbergen as a friendly and accessible place.¹⁰¹ This was visible in the materials produced by prospective mining corporations such as the Scottish Spitsbergen Syndicate, founded in 1909 and particularly active in establishing mining infrastructure on Spitsbergen in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. A memorandum for shareholders produced in April 1919, for example, emphasised the proximity and accessibility of Spitsbergen, using the popularity of the archipelago with tourists as evidence.¹⁰² Like Conway's travel texts, the Syndicate emphasised the future potential of Spitsbergen and the usefulness of existing infrastructure; unlike Conway, however, the Syndicate were keen to stress the similarity, not the alterity, of the place to known areas of Europe. Discourses of difference and similarity connected industry and travel on Spitsbergen. Moreover, mining interests were not simply financial. The unsettled geopolitical status of Spitsbergen meant that mining claims were also about securing and legitimising territorial control. Norway rooted its claim for governance of the archipelago in terms of energy security, after labour disputes in 1907, and claiming Spitsbergen was a way of demonstrating its influence, post-independence.¹⁰³ One of the reasons for the failure of the Scottish Spitsbergen Syndicate was the need for complex diplomatic negotiations in the aftermath of the Spitsbergen Treaty of 1920.¹⁰⁴ Spitsbergen was granted to Norway at the Paris Peace Conference, bringing the archipelago into the post-war settlement of national territories. Whilst most of the travelogues from the period reflect on the future for Spitsbergen, a sense of lateness – of Spitsbergen

¹⁰⁰ Dag Avango, "Extracting the Future in Svalbard" in Nina Wormbs (ed.), *Competing Arctic Futures: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 50.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁰² Memorandum to shareholders 11th April 1919. The Cadell of Grange Papers (Acc. 5381, Box 47), National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

¹⁰³ Avango, "Extracting the Future in Svalbard", 55.

¹⁰⁴ The Cadell of Grange Papers (Acc. 5381, Box 47), National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

losing its status as special and unknown – may also have been engendered by its changing jurisdiction. The archipelago was Norwegianized, particularly through linguistic changes which projected back a Norwegian claim to their new territory through its contested past.¹⁰⁵ This Norwegianization as formal policy was largely the result of pressure from a small but significant group of proponents of *ishavsimperialisme* [Arctic imperialism],¹⁰⁶ including a number of scientists whose research on Spitsbergen was significant for naturalising a Norwegian presence.¹⁰⁷ The linguistic shifts were often aimed at a domestic audience, but the politics of naming remained a live issue.¹⁰⁸ This “politics of naming” can be seen in both the Norwegianization of place names, but also in acts of naming such as Gatty’s application of the name Lusitania from steamship to mountain. In this instance, the use of the steamship’s name further emphasised the influence of commercial travel in the shaping of Spitsbergen as a destination, particularly how infrastructures of tourism were crucial to understanding and parsing place and landscape. Naming acted as a territorial claim beyond the outline of the Spitsbergen Treaty; it also imposed landscapes of tourism on the archipelago. Naming and cartography also intersected, shaping and contesting territories regarded as unacceptably unknown.¹⁰⁹

“School for explorers”: Varsity Expeditions to Spitsbergen

Arctic cartography was of particular interest to one group of British travellers in the 1920s and 1930s. Young men from prominent British universities made a number of trips to Spitsbergen in the interwar period, often to survey and establish knowledge about the islands, and these expeditions operated between the geopolitics of the time and older British ideas about travel and exploration. Moreover, they shared concerns with Conway and other British travellers in the North about escaping modernity and constructing knowledge about place. Centred around elite universities like Oxford and Cambridge, and backed by major corporations and institutions like the Royal Geographical Society, these expeditions became frequent throughout the interwar period, with almost annual trips made to a part of the Arctic by an Oxford or Cambridge expedition. University organisations, such as the Oxford University Exploration Club, founded in 1927, were crucial for facilitating expeditions, as were

¹⁰⁵ Berg, “From “Spitsbergen” to “Svalbard”, 169.

¹⁰⁶ Simen Eriksen Hustoft, “Constructing an ‘Old Norwegian Land’: Spitsbergen and the early history of Norwegian Arctic Imperialism, 1896-1925” (MA thesis, University of Oslo, 2022).

¹⁰⁷ Einar-Arne Drivenes, “Svalbardforskning og svalbardpolitikk 1870-1925: Forskere som politiske aktører”, *Nordlit*, no. 29 (May 2012): 47-57.

¹⁰⁸ Thor Bjørn Arlov, “Maps and Geographical Names As Tokens of National Interests: The Spitsbergen Vs. Svalbard Case”, *Nordlit*, no. 45 (February 2020), 15

¹⁰⁹ Urban Wråkberg, “The Politics of Naming: Contested Observations and the Shaping of Geographical Knowledge” in Bravo and Sörlin, *Narrating the Arctic*, 156.

important university figures.¹¹⁰ These included James Mann Wordie, a Cambridge geologist and member of Shackleton's 1914 Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, and Charles Elton, an Oxford ecologist who visited Spitsbergen as an undergraduate in the early 1920s and continued to support Arctic exploration once employed by the University.¹¹¹ Expeditions were even organised at a college level, such as the 1923 Merton College [Oxford] Expedition to Spitsbergen.¹¹² Expedition organisers like Binney and Glen emphasised the significance of the Arctic to both scientific research and human development. Glen opened his account of the 1933 Oxford Expedition to Spitsbergen by stating that "the countries in the Arctic circle promise to become increasingly important, as methods of overcoming the obstacles set up by natural conditions and devised and bought into play".¹¹³ Glen, with an eye to Soviet development in Siberia, recognised a changing relationship to the Arctic, also evident in the mining on Spitsbergen. For undergraduate explorers, the Arctic seemed significant and Spitsbergen was a suitable place to study it from.

The purpose of the exploration, however, was not always clear. Scientific study was one stated objective. In the preface to Binney's account of the 1924 Oxford Arctic Expedition to Spitsbergen, the Oxford geologist W.J. Sollas wrote that whilst the book "reads like a story of adventure... it was not for adventure that the Oxford Expedition set out. Its object was to advance our knowledge of a practically unknown land and to penetrate the secrets of an unknown region".¹¹⁴ The language may have reflected nineteenth-century polar exploration, but Binney was clear that this was more than just a "gesture of polar conquest".¹¹⁵ A flight to the North Pole, for example, "could add little of value either to the science of aviation or to the geography of the polar regions".¹¹⁶ In the mid-1930s, Glen concurred with this imperative. University expeditions could offer detailed data collection on scientific conditions in the Arctic through an extensive period in the field.¹¹⁷ Writing in 1937, he was clear: scientific research was "alone justified" as a reason for exploration.¹¹⁸ For Glen, "planned research, whether medical, social, or geographical, required no defence, for its sole purpose is the increase of knowledge for the use of man".¹¹⁹ Despite these claims to purity of motive, however, other purposes were almost as explicit. Sollas noted that the 1924 Expedition served as a "school for explorers – and a hard school it proved".¹²⁰ This was also training, both in research and life. Glen wrote that "although

¹¹⁰ Anker, *Imperial Ecology*, 108-9.

¹¹¹ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 18.

¹¹² Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 28.

¹¹³ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 15.

¹¹⁴ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 13.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 144.

¹¹⁷ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 15.

¹¹⁸ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 2.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 17.

their final purpose is scientific, the underlying reason of [the expeditions] is that their undergraduate members want to go for the experience they offer".¹²¹ Long vacations gave an opportunity for "the training of men for future work in the Arctic and Antarctic", especially when they could learn from Norwegians and Danes with significant polar experience.¹²² As well as learning polar skills, the expeditions could also benefit in other ways from being in the Arctic. As Glen wrote, "the arctic teaches patience" – this was training for life.¹²³ Moreover, it imbued certain values in those who had been there. Resilience, stoicism, and a practical approach to life were central to the expeditions and to the men they were supposed to build, fluent in the language and behaviours of empire and imperial rule.

With training, and academic affiliation, came expectations. The expeditions were not only expected to produce academic knowledge, and knowledge production was itself dependent on the mediation of experiences and collections to a wider public. As Johanne Bruun puts it, "the exploring subject is made and unmade on the page as much as in the field".¹²⁴ Binney was candid about how to manage the press, devoting a lengthy appendix to it in *With Seaplane and Sledge in the Arctic*. He recognised the significance of press and publicity for attracting attention – something useful when covering the significant costs of Arctic travel and logistics. He wrote a column for the *Times* about the Expedition, but cautioned would-be explorers that the press was often keen to boost "sensation" over objective reporting.¹²⁵ Similarly, he warned that film rights, although a prospective "goldmine" for an expedition, often favoured "melodrama and cheap sentiment" over a scientific film.¹²⁶ When it came to funding, however, press rights were only a partial source. For the 1935-36 Expedition, they brought in only £620 out of the almost £4,000 the Expedition received from grants, private contributions, lectures and the resale of equipment, amongst other sources of income.¹²⁷ As well-connected young men at prestigious universities, however, they were also able to make the most of what Glen called the "generosity beyond belief" of mainly British firms such as British Aluminium, Imperial Chemical Industries, Bovril, Tate & Lyle, and Singer Sewing Machines. The 1935-36 Expedition received £3,000 worth of free food and equipment from companies "so willing to fall victims to one's demands".¹²⁸ The list of companies thanked in the acknowledgements of *Under the Pole Star*, the Expedition travelogue, ran to three pages!¹²⁹ These connections went beyond the commercial. Binney and Glen acknowledged the support of the Royal Geographical Society in their texts, whilst Glen also thanked

¹²¹ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 22,

¹²² *Ibid.*, 223.

¹²³ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 62.

¹²⁴ Bruun, "Aircraft and pencraft", 183.

¹²⁵ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 271.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 352.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-5.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 355-7.

the Royal Society and the armed forces for loans of equipment.¹³⁰ Training and equipment were provided by these organisations, as well as the opportunity for the expedition members to lecture at the institutions after expeditions and the prestige and formality of association with them. The Prince of Wales, the future Edward VIII, was expedition patron for Binney in 1924, adding to the kudos of the Expedition.¹³¹ Organising the expeditions still required significant work, not least in liaising between interested parties. Binney wrote of the “ceaseless clack of the typewriter, with an obligato from the telephone” in the office where he planned the Expedition.¹³² However, it was not just firms such as Cadbury’s and Nestle who benefitted from supporting expeditions.¹³³ The 1924 Oxford Expedition received fuel, equipment and technical support from the British Petroleum Company, a significant financial help to the Expedition.¹³⁴ Whilst the involvement of the Prince of Wales gave “the impression of a scientific impartiality above private interest groups”, as Peder Anker notes, “the expedition was closely linked to industrial exploration and British colonization, all carried out under the general aim of surveying as yet unclaimed or disputed land”.¹³⁵ For expedition backers, Spitsbergen was both still disputed and potentially extremely valuable. Anker also notes the connections between the ecologists like Elton involved in expeditions to Spitsbergen and imperial ideas of scientific management of colonial territories.¹³⁶ Spitsbergen could become a testing ground for ideas of imperial control, as well as the training ground for those who would implement this.¹³⁷

Part of the attempts to finance the expeditions post hoc, no matter the support from outside, was publishing expedition accounts. Glen was aware of a problem here, opening *Under the Pole Star* by noting that “a reason is indeed required for yet another travel book. Tales of low temperature and howling blizzards have been written before of arctic lands, and doubtless they will be written again. In these there is little novelty”.¹³⁸ Accounts of university expeditions were not usually published for a large audience, but Binney’s *With Seaplane and Sledge...* and Glen’s *Young Men in the Arctic* and *Under the Pole Star* suggest there was some appetite for expedition narratives. Offering depictions of expeditions from departure to return, these texts also offered insights into expedition life for a reading public. The texts were frequently colourful and irreverent, as well as using moral language to depict places and people. A single page from Binney’s account describes the “monotony” and “misery” of the

¹³⁰ Ibid., 19.

¹³¹ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 31.

¹³² Ibid., 34-5.

¹³³ Both are thanked in Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 29.

¹³⁴ Anker, *Imperial Ecology*, 94.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 77.

¹³⁷ Bruun, “The field and its prosthesis”, 1061.

¹³⁸ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, vii.

sea voyage to Spitsbergen, but also a comic tomato ketchup accident on board the ship.¹³⁹ They also varied tonally. Binney, despite comic and aesthetic interludes, tended towards a suitably serious tone throughout. Glen was more varied, leaning on the sublime, but also the ridiculous. The closing chapters of *Young Men in the Arctic* give an account of a short visit Glen made to Spitsbergen in the summer of 1934 with his friends Evelyn Waugh and Hugh Lygon. They took the steamer from Tromsø, run by Troms County Steamship Company (*Troms Fylkes Dampskibsselskab*), and this section of the text resembles the Victorian travelogue from Norway, like *Three in Norway, by Two of Them*, more closely than an Arctic exploration narrative. This was “travelling for pleasure”, an “absurd” trip with Glen accompanied by two men who had never seen a glacier before.¹⁴⁰ This section stands out from the majority of the other texts in its rejection of scientific purpose. Most expedition accounts were also often compiled from the diaries of expedition members, with the authenticity of experiences often highlighted. Binney wrote that “these diaries bear on them the honourable scars of the history. Donkey-eared, splashed with pemmican, and sodden with the wet, which permeated everything, they were scrawled by grimy men huddled together in damp sleeping-bags in a tent six feet by six”.¹⁴¹ The diaries – both in their contents and their physical traces – bore witness to hardship and discomfort, part of the Arctic hostility which made the region an effective proving ground for promising young men. Unlike Glen’s account of light-hearted travel with Waugh and Lygon, this is a depiction rooted in the histories of British polar exploration. The technique of using extensive direct quotation from the diaries and journals of other expedition members was one used by Nares, giving a direct sense of the strain on the party, as well as their fortitude in the face of these Arctic challenges. Moreover, the accounts of day-to-day activities show the men’s focus on taking measurements, collecting specimens, and surveying the landscape.

These activities are equally present throughout in the expedition books, not only in the sections which draw directly from diaries. The travelogues, however, highlight further some of the tensions around the purpose of the expedition. The question of balancing exploration and science – and to what degree the two overlapped – was central to all the texts, as it had been for Nares and other explorers (see Chapter One). Glen considered the example of Mount Everest as another place where the same questions were raised.¹⁴² He wrote in *Under the Pole Star* that, when faced with the cost and reasoning behind an Arctic expedition in a period of economic depression, “it is equally

¹³⁹ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 31.

¹⁴⁰ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 234, 248, 232.

¹⁴¹ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 153.

¹⁴² The 1923 Merton College Expedition to Spitsbergen included Sandy Irvine and Noel Odell, two members of the 1924 British Mount Everest Expedition. Irvine and Odell chose the Everest Expedition over the 1924 Oxford Arctic Expedition led by Binney, who was informed of Irvine’s disappearance on Everest with Mallory when the Arctic Expedition arrived in Tromsø on their way to Spitsbergen. Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 47.

difficult to be serious about the necessity for Himalayan maps in an overcrowded tenement in a South Wales town".¹⁴³ Glen, however, defended exploration from the accusation of luxury and waste – in his eyes, “scientific exploration needs no excuse”.¹⁴⁴ Science was crucial and the only real justification. Whilst for Glen, “romance still hovers around the old epics” of exploration, “only Mount Everest remains of the romantic points of the earth”.¹⁴⁵ To explore anywhere else, “science alone can offer a genuine reason”.¹⁴⁶ As such, in 1933, the expedition members lugged around a photo theodolite for surveying. This was “an exasperatingly beautiful instrument of devilish weight which demanded unlimited time. The same difficulty was always to crab our work, for either we had not time to wait for ideal weather or, if the weather was suitable, the weight of the instrument prevented us from reaching our objective before the mist reappeared”.¹⁴⁷ The labour of scientific research, to justify the purpose of the expedition and to satisfy supporters and funders, limited the ability of the expedition to engage in more relaxed exploration or to cover more ground. This tension around purpose is clearly at the heart of the texts, as the expeditions brought together different aspects of British imperial attitudes towards the Arctic. Here the Arctic was a blank space to enjoy and explore, revelling in the unknown and untouched, but also a space that had to be recorded and catalogued for metropolitan institutions as part of an imperial project of knowledge. The heavy theodolite captured the tension between exploration and science in the British imperial context, whereby blank space had to be known and made legible, but also impeded the heroic – and modern – pleasures of travelling at speed and conquering space through travel and adventure.

A form of engagement with the landscape which partially reconciled these two strands of British imperial discourse in the Arctic was the naming of places. The map here was marked in a way which could only have come from the milieu of the university exploration parties. As with the use of the *Lusitania*, names inscribed the nature of the journey on the landscape, as they had for mountaineers in Norway. Some of the names are straightforward markers of affinity for the institutions that had shaped the men – the Eton glacier, for example.¹⁴⁸ Unsurprisingly, Oxford featured prominently. The 1924 party named one promontory Isis Point – “an Oxford name” for the Thames as it flows through Oxford – and a prominent hill was named Carfax Hill, after the central crossroads in Oxford.¹⁴⁹ A yellow and black fly was named after Brasenose College, as it shared the college colours.¹⁵⁰ Glen continued the tradition and also added Cambridge college names to

¹⁴³ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 236.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 81.

¹⁴⁸ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 204.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 190, 241.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 197

geographical features.¹⁵¹ The 1933 party also named a valley after Martin Conway¹⁵² and, in another discursive move redolent of empire, named one glacier the Limpopo, because it appeared “green [and] greasy”, taking the phrasing from Rudyard Kipling’s description of the southern African river in *Just So Stories*.¹⁵³ Naming allowed the expeditions to leave their mark on the map and the landscape, inscribing it in a language deeply familiar to them and placing institutional and imperial control over the places named. Naming could render challenging landscapes familiar and even comic, partially reconciling the labour of surveying and the desire to explore unencumbered.

Another tension which the expeditions had to manage was between traditional and modern ways of exploring. This included the purpose of the expeditions, the equipment and techniques used, and attitudes towards expedition as a practice. Binney felt that the issues could be resolved. He wrote in *With Seaplane and Sledge...* that “this book will have fulfilled its purpose if it fosters the old spirit, and points at the same time beyond the old methods of arctic exploration”.¹⁵⁴ The published travel texts were key sites of negotiation of the tensions in attitude and method. Binney seemed to suggest that the older methods had an admirable spirit but were technically lacking. Binney’s frustrations at some of the older attitudes was clear in his relationship with Helmer Hanssen, the Norwegian explorer and sailor who had been to the South Pole with Roald Amundsen in 1911 and was employed as the 1924 Expedition’s dog handler. Hanssen refused to rope together with the other men when crossing a crevassed glacier, as he had not done so with Amundsen. Binney’s exasperation was clear, writing “it was useless to argue with the Victorian standpoint, either at home or on a God-forsaken ice-cap, so we held our peace”, but his stance was clearly for modern approaches to technique and equipment.¹⁵⁵ Binney’s insistence that Hanssen was a “Victorian” is striking, not simply because he was Norwegian. In reaching the South Pole with Amundsen, Hanssen was part of the group that had beaten Scott and raised numerous doubts about British expeditionary culture. Binney’s eagerness to move away from traditional forms of exploration could plausibly have embraced Hanssen as an alternative model. Transnational cooperation here seemed to be replaced with a projection of British conservatism onto Hanssen and the depiction of the Expedition as explicitly post-Victorian in approach and outlook. Binney also supported a hypothetical future women’s Arctic expedition – “provided they are carefully chosen” – and argued with expedition members about it, although this limited approach was the only hint of support for female exploration.¹⁵⁶ Binney’s focus on the future of exploration, however, was clear and in one appendix, a Mr. G. Summers, a mechanic with experience of Arctic

¹⁵¹ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 90.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 160.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁵⁴ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 21.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 202.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 101.

travel, outlines an ideal future expedition ship, replete with electricity and hot water. This would be a great boon for scientific research, but, Summers notes, “perhaps my ship would make arctic travelling too comfortable, and so undermine the *moral* of the expedition?”¹⁵⁷ This fear of comfort would seem to be rooted in the question of the purpose of the expedition and the notion of exploration as training. This idea of the Arctic proving ground was specifically seen in the undergraduate expeditions, as suitable experience for the right young men, but was also an older trope in imperial discourse, where struggle was a sacrifice for national glory (see Chapter One). As Jen Hill puts it, polar exploration was supposed to demonstrate “the resilience, ingenuity, and staunchness associated with British national character”.¹⁵⁸ These Victorian ideals were still praised in their post-Victorian forms in the Antarctic expeditions of Scott and others, with Glen writing that the “gallantry of [Scott’s] failure is for the whole world”.¹⁵⁹ Victorian values, if not techniques, were still seen as part of exploration into the 1930s. Glen’s expeditions, even by the middle of the decade, framed success in the language of conquest and solving a problem. After the 1935-36 Expedition’s successful overwintering, Glen wrote that “the problem of living in the ice had been fully solved”.¹⁶⁰ This success, however, was also far from the world of nineteenth-century exploration. Whilst Victorian exploration also traded in the modern, Glen’s party experienced “the cold robot impression given by scientific equipment, with its rows of dials and meters, its bewildering intricacy of wires, and the inhuman accuracy of its glowing values”.¹⁶¹ This was scientific exploration at its most scientific. Moreover, Glen feared that “much of the romance must depart from arctic travel”.¹⁶² If tractors replaced sledges, with “dog-traction... given place to mechanised power... much of the romance of the Polar wastes will be no more”.¹⁶³ Again, the need for scientific study seemed to interfere with the emotional appeal of polar exploration, even whilst justifying its existence.

The height of the scientific modern when it came to polar exploration was the aeroplane, which both highlighted and reconciled some of the tensions between science and exploration. Exploration from the air could be both comfortable and conquering. For Binney’s 1924 Expedition, the use of a seaplane was central. It was quite literally the symbol of the Expedition, inscribed on the expedition china alongside the University of Oxford crest.¹⁶⁴ The plane was able to put the landscape

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 269.

¹⁵⁸ Hill, *White Horizon*, 6.

¹⁵⁹ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 237.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 167.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 170.

¹⁶² Ibid., 210.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 229.

¹⁶⁴ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 45. The china was a gift from Summers, who was also the Expedition’s agent.

“under observation”, recording and classifying the environment.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, the landscape appeared differently from the air, easily read and traversed. Binney’s account of his first flight is striking:

But there we were, looking down on the whole mighty range of Spitsbergen peaks, soaring above glaciers, spying down on a vast country whose secrets are laid bare to the skies alone. The rocks and shallows in the bays are an open book. All ways are the same. Glacier and fjord and cliff lose their significance when they are no longer bound and hinder the journeys of men. To fly in the polar regions is to feel the triumph of science over nature. There below are nature’s weapons against the progress of man. Pack-ice blocks the way of the ship ; rocks lie in wait for her in uncharted seas ; cliffs, crevasses, and glacier torrents bar the way of the explorer ; and only with infinite labour and hazard can he circumvent them. Above it is *carte blanche*.¹⁶⁶

Once the plane is in the Arctic and in the air, “flying presents no more obstacles than it does in England”.¹⁶⁷ Whilst Binney dismissed the symbolic gesture of flying to the Pole, flight was clearly a way to establish dominance and human control over the region. The unknown was both observed – open for being photographed and surveyed – and defeated through aerial conquest. Knowledge was gathered here, but the expedition also provided an account of triumph.¹⁶⁸

Polar flight was not without its problems. Frequent fog prevented the plane taking off¹⁶⁹ and the plane crashed on one flight, leaving it, in Binney’s words, “powerless and disabled, at the mercy of the elements over which we fondly dreamed we were triumphing”.¹⁷⁰ The Arctic conditions were still challenging for even the most advanced technology. Hubris aside, Binney considered the purpose and practicality of using flight for polar exploration. Accurate collection of scientific data still required groundwork and the vagaries of the Arctic weather made landing and take-off one of the most challenging parts of using the plane. Natural runways were scarce and so planes could only be used in limited locations. As such, Binney recognised the necessity of aerial work only as an accompaniment to more traditional sledging.¹⁷¹ He also noted the risk of flying in “mechanical, unreasoning, and

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 14.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 74

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ It is worth noting that Binney himself did not fly the plane. The Expedition relied on A.G.B. Ellis, a former RAF pilot. In an interwar period where the pilot featured prominently as a popular hero, Ellis notably does not in *With Seaplane and Sledge*. On the pilot as modern hero, see Bernhard Rieger, *Technology and the Culture of Modernity in Britain and Germany, 1890-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 116-57.

¹⁶⁹ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 77. One of the experiments undertaken on the 1933 Expedition was using infra-red photography to try to limit the impact of fog on surveying. Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 113.

¹⁷⁰ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 81.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 144.

unreasonable” planes and the danger it posed to expedition members – a modernity that seemed inhuman and uncanny.¹⁷² Despite this, the value was clear. A plane “enables the explorer to place himself anywhere in the polar basin, and to start on his sledging journey at a point of vantage which other sledgers in the past have only reached with their vigour impaired and their rations halved”.¹⁷³ The plane’s great advantage was to cut time and distance, imposing modern temporalities of travel in Arctic space. Aerial photography also made surveying simpler. Whilst it was not possible to make detailed maps from the photographs, they helped orient surveying parties on the ground, providing an idea of key landmarks. The speed of this was also a great benefit for a party working in a short summer season and the aerial photographer could “penetrate into regions where neither ship nor sledge can follow”.¹⁷⁴ Aerial photography appeared in a number of interwar discourses in Britain. Modernist artists took inspiration from the altered perspectives,¹⁷⁵ and the pilot appeared as a modernist hero.¹⁷⁶ It also appeared as a technique of war and of governance, particularly in the Middle East, where both aerial surveillance and bombing raids were an important part of the British imperial project.¹⁷⁷ As Anker notes, this aerial perspective was also favoured by the ecologists who participated in the Spitsbergen expeditions, allowing the “grand overview of natural resources that the patrons of ecology desired as an administrative management tool for the environment”.¹⁷⁸ Ecologists and colonial administrators admired the speed and ease of surveillance which the plane offered. These interconnected groups both benefitted from the type of work done on Spitsbergen and, as Anker puts it, “this aerial view on nature, society, and knowledge—the *master perspective from above*—was at the very core of British ecological reasoning” [original emphasis].¹⁷⁹ The aerial view changed the explorer’s perspective on life, allowing for the reimagining of space and systems. If the plane was unavailable, a summit view, the classic means of surveillance and rhetorically claiming ownership of land, could be a substitute. Glen, who did not take a plane on either of the expeditions he led, wrote of one particular summit view that the coast was “arranged below us in such a way as it seemed that we were looking down from an aeroplane” – an upgrade from Conway’s imagined balloon!¹⁸⁰ The aerial view was desirable and infectious. It was, however, not necessarily a solution to the tensions

¹⁷² Ibid., 147.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 230.

¹⁷⁵ Alexandra Harris, *Romantic Moderns: English Writers, Artists and the Imagination from Virginia Woolf to John Piper* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 25-6.

¹⁷⁶ See, for example, W.H. Auden, *The Orators: An English Study* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966, first published 1934). See Davidson, *The Idea of North*, 91-109 on Auden as a “northern” writer. For Auden’s work on exploration and mountaineering in particular, see Garrington, “What does a modernist mountain mean? Auden and Isherwood’s *The Ascent of F6*”, *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 55, issue 2: Modernism Reloaded (July 2013): 26-49.

¹⁷⁷ Priya Satia, *Time’s Monster: History, Conscience and Britain’s Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 2020), 147-87.

¹⁷⁸ Anker, *Imperial Ecology*, 77.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 116.

¹⁸⁰ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 129.

around the purpose of the expeditions. As Bruun has discussed, the aeroplane was not a popular solution to the problems of exploration for all.¹⁸¹ Whilst Binney was able to prove his heroism as part of a line of British polar explorers, for some, flying precisely broke with this lineage. Like Summer's idealised ship, there was insufficient suffering. In Bruun's phrase, "the authority to speak about the polar environment remained linked to the hardships endured in encounters between man and nature".¹⁸² Binney's rejection of the spectacle of a flight to the North Pole was part of this desire to remain, quite literally, grounded. Flight was part of a new age of polar exploration but was necessarily partial and Binney's text negotiated these questions of heroism in a new age.¹⁸³

Binney's sense of the new style of polar exploration, however, was not the only temporal discourse attached to the aerial view. In Britain, aerial photography revealed a new archaeological landscape, the remnants of vanished buildings and settlements visible only from the air.¹⁸⁴ Whilst aerial photography was not used to expose a human history on Spitsbergen, the expeditions did consider the human traces they came across, as Conway did. These were various, from beer bottles likely left by a Swedish party at the turn of the century¹⁸⁵ to a grand piano found in a hut – "the last thing you might expect to find in a blizzard in Spitsbergen", despite the history of music there described by Wyllie.¹⁸⁶ Alongside these modern finds were something suitably Arctic: the graves of trappers and members of the Nobile expedition of 1928.¹⁸⁷ These more gruesome remnants were a reminder for the expedition of the hostility of the place, but also positioned them in a lineage of heroic polar travellers, something reinforced by Glen's potted histories of exploration on Spitsbergen.¹⁸⁸ As with naming, the alignment of the expeditions with these human traces allowed for the inscription of Arctic space – Craciun's "Arctic archive".¹⁸⁹ These remnants allowed explorers to "travel in the language of their predecessors".¹⁹⁰ These relics found on Spitsbergen reinforced the heroic aspects of the narratives, where texts built on conventions and implicit and explicit comparison to heroes of the

¹⁸¹ Bruun, "Aircraft and pencraft", 184. Marianne Cronin has also written about this tension in numerous places. See Cronin, "Technological Heroes: Images of the Arctic in the Age of Polar Aviation" in Dolly Jørgensen and Sörlin, *Northscapes: History, Technology, and the Making of Northern Environments* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013): 57-81; Cronin, "Polar Horizons: Images of the Arctic in Accounts of Amundsen's Polar Aviation Expeditions", *Scientia Canadensis*, vol. 33, no. 2 (2010): 99-120; Cronin, "Richard Byrd, Technological Explorer: Polar Exploration, the Machine, and Heroic Masculinity in Interwar America", *Technology and Culture*, vol. 57, no. 2 (April 2016): 322-52. For a Canadian perspective on Arctic antimodernism, see Tina Adcock, "Many Tiny Traces: Antimodernism and Northern Exploration Between the Wars" in Stephen Bocking and Brad Martin (eds.), *Ice Blink: Navigating Northern Environmental History* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2017): 131-77.

¹⁸² Bruun, "Aircraft and pencraft", 190.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹⁸⁴ Harris, *Romantic Moderns*, 26-8.

¹⁸⁵ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 152.

¹⁸⁶ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 194.

¹⁸⁷ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 70.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹⁸⁹ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 38.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

polar past. Flight may have allowed the expeditions to explore “better”, but the values of the nineteenth century still influenced discourses of exploration, even if explorers were keen to move beyond them.

The aeroplane, however, was not the only technology that revealed the past. Whilst experimenting with dynamite, members of the 1933 Expedition created a crater which “showed clearly marked alternate layers of névé-ice-névé. The history of ice and snow conditions for at any rate recent years could have been easily studied from this phenomenon”.¹⁹¹ This work – and reading of the ice – prefigured discussions today about ice cores and the broader climatic knowledge that can be gathered from them, as well as their value as a marker and measure of time.¹⁹² The association of travel to the Arctic with temporal travel was as strong in the university explorers’ texts as in many other British travelogues about the Arctic. Sollas’s introduction to *With Seaplane and Sledge...* noted that “Spitsbergen represents at the present day the state of England in the past”, providing an opportunity to researching the English past as if one was there.¹⁹³ As Anker notes, this travel could also allow a perspective on human history, a “visit to a prehistoric past”.¹⁹⁴ From this a vision of human populations which supported eugenic theories could be set out, as it was by Alexander Morris Carr-Saunders, the Oxford zoologist who accompanied the 1921 Oxford Expedition to Spitsbergen and later became Director of the London School of Economics.¹⁹⁵ The potential of the Arctic and its human populations to reveal truths about human deep pasts was as central as it had been for Clements Markham. As Bruun points out, the simplicity of ecosystems on Spitsbergen also represented a “geography yet untainted” in which to test a number of ecological theories.¹⁹⁶ Glen and Croft’s *Under the Pole Star* was the university exploration text which emphasised most clearly this temporal journey as one of “escape from the responsibilities of civilized life”¹⁹⁷ at home to an Arctic which was “the unknown”.¹⁹⁸ Even in Tromsø, ringing telephones were derided by Glen as “barbaric civilisation”; the ice of Northeast Land, the least known island of the Spitsbergen archipelago, provided freedom in its supposed distance from civilisation.¹⁹⁹ Whilst an alarm clock was the “most important” piece of equipment during the rush of autumn preparations for overwintering, it was also the “vilest” and real

¹⁹¹ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 115.

¹⁹² Alessandro Antonello and Mark Carey, “Ice Cores and the Temporalities of the Global Environment”, *Environmental Humanities*, no. 9, issue 2 (2017): 181–203.

¹⁹³ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 15.

¹⁹⁴ Anker, *Imperial Ecology*, 93.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁹⁶ Bruun, “The field and its prosthesis”, 1062.

¹⁹⁷ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 1.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 34, 87.

peace came with winter.²⁰⁰ This was the Arctic in its truest form and it offered “complete peace, transcending the worries of normal life”.²⁰¹ This embrace of the winter was accompanied by a depiction of it as “like a boyish dream of an arctic land, mysterious and magical”.²⁰² Arctic escape was imagined as an innocent return to childhood, temporal travel within one’s own life to a simpler time. Glen combined two traditional visions of the Arctic in his depictions of Spitsbergen: one, the sublime space of escape and the Other, a hostile and haunted space, “a land which had claimed as its sacrifice half of those who had set foot there”.²⁰³

Yet an alternative imagery is also used in Glen’s texts which represents the specific interwar context of his visits there. This is a visual language of the modern, not just in depictions of the expedition’s conquest and technology, but at the level of metaphor and comparison. The mining work at Longyear City is an “attack on the white inviolability” of Spitsbergen²⁰⁴ for Glen, whilst the Soviet settlement at Barentsburg is impeccably modern on the surface level, from its fire engines to the photograph of Lenin in the office of the meteorological station.²⁰⁵ The serenity of the ice pack further north is itself a “challenge to the efforts of human enterprise”,²⁰⁶ but the larger camp here is imagined as a city – “in our minds... one of the great cities ” – and the intrusion of the urban is even more apparent in *Under the Pole Star*. The ice which the expedition have dug into to overwinter sometimes makes sounds like “an express train rushing through an underground railway”.²⁰⁷ Digging the overwintering shelter was strenuous and “at times it was to seem as if we were excavating something of the order of the Piccadilly tube station”.²⁰⁸ These Metro metaphors follow a depiction of a mountain range as “absurdly like a cubist landscape in a yellow-grey *motif*”.²⁰⁹ Even when grounded and outside of aeroplanes, the interwar expeditions saw through modern(ist) eyes. Escape from the modern meant bringing its mentalities and discourses with them, part of their wider turn away from the Victorian ways of exploring and being.

Escape was both emphasised and challenged by connections to home. Most prominent of these was wireless communication. Radios were used by Norwegian trappers on Spitsbergen from the mid-1930s and helped to build a sense of connection between mainland Norway and the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 92. As Elizabeth Le Blond’s escape from her alarm clock shows, it was a recurring piece of modern technology in travel writing about the Arctic, and one which shows how preoccupations with temporality and modern time travelled with those who visited the region.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 159.

²⁰² Ibid., 281.

²⁰³ Ibid., 6.

²⁰⁴ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 39.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 41-2.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 61.

²⁰⁷ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 131.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 117.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 68.

archipelago.²¹⁰ Improved wireless communication was a priority of the 1935-36 Expedition, which aimed to discover more about the behaviour of radio waves at higher latitudes. Glen noted the potential of this research, writing that “the success of this part of the programme would thus bring results not only of theoretical interest but also of the greatest and most immediate practical value”.²¹¹ Binney’s expedition in 1924 found wireless communication useful but challenging. Binney wrote that “wireless experiments conducted under favourable conditions in England or any civilised part of the world are of very little practical value” in the Arctic.²¹² However, despite practical difficulties, the usefulness of radio communication was clear and all interwar expeditions tried to use it. Not only did it allow for findings to be relayed and for communication between different branches of expeditions, but it provided a connection to the events and experiences of home. As Ryall has noted, Spitsbergen’s status at this time was an ambiguous one, where “no longer a pristine Arctic wilderness nor yet a location that has been thoroughly subsumed into European modernity, it must be located between these two categories”.²¹³ In the travelogues of university explorers, the wireless mediates these feelings of distance and proximity, depending on what can be heard. Glen was clear: radio destroyed distance and its absence highlighted it. He wrote that “from the mine [at Advent Bay] it was only a few days back to civilisation, with red angry buses, bowler hats, and umbrellas. Yet, without a wireless, they are completely out of touch”.²¹⁴ All the expeditions were desperate for news at times. The delivery of newspapers and letters was a highlight of Binney’s expedition, who had been reduced to reading the copies of the *Times* which had been brought to wrap geological specimens.²¹⁵ Newspapers sent from Tromsø for the 1933 expedition were “probably the most appreciated of all that was brought up in the mail bag”.²¹⁶ As on the Nares Expedition (see Chapter One), newspapers took on a meaning outside of “news”, existing as temporally distant from home, as well as providing an important connection. The radio, however, meant that the parties were never as cut off as previous expeditions to remoter areas. Whilst Hester Blum notes that, for polar explorers, newspapers “structure their meditations on polar temporality, community, and circulation”,²¹⁷ by the interwar period, this role was instead fulfilled by radio. Often the connection to home was contrasted to their surroundings in the travelogues. Binney wrote that, listening to music on the BBC, “little did the perspiring bandsmen know that almost 2,000 miles north of them listeners were catching every note

²¹⁰ Ryall, “Svalbard in and beyond European Modernity”, 243.

²¹¹ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 8.

²¹² Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 119.

²¹³ Ryall, “Svalbard in and beyond European Modernity”, 233.

²¹⁴ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 298.

²¹⁵ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 169.

²¹⁶ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 199-200.

²¹⁷ Blum, *The News at the Ends of the Earth*, 44.

they played, fog-bound off the unknown east coast of this remote island”.²¹⁸ By 1933, the radio was “invaluable and ubiquitous”.²¹⁹ Yet in the winter of 1935-36, overwintering made home seem even more remote. Dug into the ice cap, “the British broadcasts were weird and almost unreal”.²²⁰ The places the music came from “could not possibly exist at all”.²²¹ Whilst the Expedition received a “special message of greeting” from the BBC on the Christmas Day of 1935,²²² “news was merely events, interesting, but unconnected with our own existence”.²²³ Only the death of George V registered as significant and the Expedition felt as if they were “standing still” whilst “time passed”.²²⁴ Arctic temporality – especially the sense of the Arctic as a place outside of time – could be more significant than wireless connection to home. Even after hearing broadcasts from Britain, Germany, the USSR, and the USA,²²⁵ Robert Moss, an undergraduate physicist taking measurements on the ice, felt “like one of the only two survivors of the human race on an ice-bound planet, watching the last baleful gleam of the dying sun”.²²⁶ Glen later described the landscape as a “fossil planet” – another apocalyptic vision, where Arctic winter is overwhelming. Glen had his desired escape, but it was overwhelming. The wireless tied them to home, but, as with the aeroplane, conquest of space and time could only ever be partial.

By 1935, one topic of conversation, amongst the men and on the radio, was the prospect of war. This was discussed with Norwegian sailors and some men began to plan for if they were called up to fight.²²⁷ Spitsbergen seemed like a “safe escape from a troubled world”, even if they imagined the Arctic as post-apocalyptic at times.²²⁸ Indeed, Glen wrote, “where was there peace but in the arctic?”²²⁹ It is worth emphasising, however, that there were links to a wider world and not simply over the airwaves. As previously outlined, Spitsbergen was a centre of extractive industry and a tourist destination. Its contested political status also meant that the expeditions had to work closely with Norwegians. This transnational cooperation was productive. A key figure was Carl Sæther, the British consul in Tromsø. Sæther helped most of the Oxford expeditions with the logistics of their expeditions, securing ships, crew and guides, and Binney was complimentary, noting that “with his unrivalled

²¹⁸ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 188-9.

²¹⁹ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 175. Dance music and sports results were favourites, although the 1933 Expedition members did have “the horror of hearing dance music, interpolated with Grape-nut advertisements, coming from some American station”. *Ibid.*, 143.

²²⁰ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 136.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

²²² *Ibid.*, 141.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 165.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 166.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 176.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 142.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 151.

knowledge and experience of arctic shipping and custom, our interests could not have been placed in safer hands".²³⁰ The research conducted on Spitsbergen was valuable for the Norwegian authorities, eager to know their new territory better, and they were keen to both monitor and aid the expeditions. The names which the 1933 Expedition gave to geographical locations and features had to be approved by the Norwegian government,²³¹ and the 1935-36 Expedition wired their meteorological recordings to the Norwegian weather station on Bear Island (*Bjørnøya*), between Spitsbergen and the Norwegian mainland.²³² Whilst the expeditions felt that they could have been better supported by Norwegian authorities, there was clearly collaboration with Norwegians, both informal and formal, which made the expeditions themselves possible. Moreover, commonalities could be found. When Binney and his pilot, A.G.B. Ellis, crashed the aeroplane, they were rescued by a trapper and two Norwegian students from the University of Oslo, the brothers Finn and Hallvard Devold.²³³ The Devolds were taking meteorological measurements for the Norwegian government and also spending a summer on Spitsbergen and Binney felt an immediate affinity with them. When they returned to the Devolds' hut, Binney felt it was "like walking into a friend's room in Oxford".²³⁴ The Devolds "spoke our language and shared our interests".²³⁵ This solidarity suggests a transnational recognition of shared class and education across national boundaries and, as well as a shared interest in Arctic research, a common experience as young men with a certain outlook on the world and means to pursue it.

The wider world of the British Empire was also connected to the expeditions and the texts produced by them. Spitsbergen was an "Arctic Batavia" for the Dutch, in Binney's phrase, and the expeditions themselves were seen as training for empire.²³⁶ After leading the 1924 Expedition, Binney was employed by the Hudson's Bay Company from 1926 to 1931.²³⁷ Whilst working for the Company, he wrote a dual-language book, in English and the local dialect of Inuktitut in Nunatsiavut (Labrador) where he was based. Entitled *The Eskimo Book of Knowledge*, this intensely colonial text aimed to "educate" the Inuit population in areas where the Company worked in how the British Empire functioned, as well as explaining – and imposing – colonial ideas of good hygiene and working habits.²³⁸ Painfully patronising, the text aimed to manage Inuit transition to the modern world, as

²³⁰ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 33.

²³¹ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 186fn.

²³² Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 172.

²³³ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 93. The Devolds later became notorious for their involvement in an attempt to establish a Norwegian colony of the east coast of Greenland in the mid-1930s. See Frode Skarstein, "Erik the Red's Land: the land that never was", *Polar Research*, vol. 25, no. 2 (2006): 173–79.

²³⁴ Binney, *With Seaplane and Sledge...*, 93.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.

²³⁷ Peter Tennant, "Binney, Sir (Frederick) George", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 September 2010).

²³⁸ George Binney, *The Eskimo Book of Knowledge* (London: Hudson's Bay Company, 1931).

Binney framed it, which “if skilfully applied... can be of greatest benefit”.²³⁹ The instructions for Inuit were usually clear, as in the example of medical help: “the first rule then in curing sickness or injury is TO OBEY THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE WHITE MAN”.²⁴⁰ Binney’s Arctic experience and training on Spitsbergen was here used in another region of the Arctic, where his authority was turned more directly towards the management of empire and the discourses and practices of settler colonialism in Canada. Elton also worked for the Company after Spitsbergen expeditions, thanks to a recommendation from Binney, and his ecological work for them helped to, in Anker’s phrase, “naturalize and legitimize” colonial orders and practices in Arctic Canada.²⁴¹ The idea of exploration as training was here directly applied in imperial practice and rule. The spread of the expedition members on their return indicates their comfort with and expectations for imperial travel – after the 1933 Expedition, members were in South Africa, Egypt, Antarctica, Canada, and back on Spitsbergen within months.²⁴² Almost all members of the Oxford expeditions of the early 1920s in particular ended up with military or academic careers or working for major British institutions.²⁴³ This is perhaps unsurprising given their class backgrounds, but the texts produced by the expeditions show a certain confidence that exploration had been good for the participants. Glen wrote on his return from the 1935-36 Expedition that “we had discovered that the arctic could teach us the simple art of living”.²⁴⁴ Whilst expedition members published academic research based on their trips,²⁴⁵ and the scientific motivation was emphasised even in the popular travelogues, the question of purpose remained contested. The motivation of scientific research was itself challenged by the problem of how to combine it with exploration. Exploration was itself caught between old values and new technologies, debates the interwar expeditions to Spitsbergen found themselves enacting. Moreover, exploration served as training, both in moral terms and in practical ways, building the intellectual and practical experience required for imperial service. As it was for Conway and Norwegian individuals and institutions, Spitsbergen was a contested space, caught between the need to know and categorise it and serving as a place for escape and improvement.

²³⁹ Ibid., 4.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 144. Capitalisation in original.

²⁴¹ Anker, *Imperial Ecology*, 99.

²⁴² Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 221.

²⁴³ Caroline M. Pond, “Charles Elton’s Accounts of Expeditions from Oxford to the Arctic in the 1920s”, *Arctic*, vol. 68, no. 2 (June 2015), 275-6.

²⁴⁴ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 350.

²⁴⁵ See, for example, the summarising articles for each expedition. Examples include Binney, “The Oxford University Arctic Expedition, 1924”, *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 66, no. 1 (July 1925): 9-40; Glen, “The Oxford University Arctic Expedition, North East Land, 1935-36”, *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 90, no. 3 (Sept. 1937): 193-222; and Glen and D.B. Keith, “The Oxford University Arctic Expedition, 1935-36”, *Nature*, vol. 135 (1935): 604-6.

“Almost any Polar problem can be solved”: Modernity and Exploration in East Greenland

The east coast of Greenland was another Arctic space which illuminated questions of modernity and the nature of exploration. As with Spitsbergen, this was a place with multiple territorial claims, as well as somewhere often associated with empty space, and both these discourses required support from mapping and surveying which could secure Greenland for the scientific knowledge of empire. This work, as in Spitsbergen, was done by scientists from the nations making the claims – on the Greenland coast, Denmark and Norway – but also by keen young British men, eager to both undertake scientific research and experience the Arctic. Their written works can be contrasted interestingly with those produced by Binney and Glen from Spitsbergen, offering similar and alternative engagements with questions of modernity, technology, and temporality. One of these young men, Frederick Spencer Chapman, noted in 1934 that the coast was “comparatively populous” as Danes and Norwegians in particular attempted to settle the dispute over ownership of parts of the coast of East Greenland.²⁴⁶ An expansionist independent Norway, having already claimed Spitsbergen, was eager to stake a claim to the region in the 1930s, based on the medieval Norse settlement of parts of the island.²⁴⁷ As another British explorer, Martin Lindsay, colourfully put it, Danish control was “never disputed” (in international law, at least) until “Norway dug up the mouldy corpse of Eric the Red”.²⁴⁸ However, there was also a wider international context. Greenland was seen as a convenient refuelling point for transatlantic flights and more needed to be known about the meteorological conditions of the east coast region to ensure that air travel infrastructure could be put in place. As with Binney’s expedition to Spitsbergen, flight and the aeroplane became central to organising expeditions. The two main expeditions investigating conditions on the east coast of Greenland were the 1930-31 British Arctic Air-Route Expedition (BAARE) and the 1932-33 East Greenland or Pan Am Expedition, so-called for the financial support it received from Pan American Airways. Both were led by Henry “Gino” Watkins, until his untimely death in a kayaking accident in August 1932 whilst on the latter expedition. Watkins was only 23 when the BAARE began but had been part of an environment at Cambridge as an undergraduate that was fruitful for potential Arctic explorers. As with the networks formed at Oxford to support exploration, Watkins received support from older men at the University, such as Wordie, who J.M. Scott, a member of the BAARE and Watkins’ biographer, called Watkins’ “constant advisor”.²⁴⁹ The Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI), founded in 1920, provided further support.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ Chapman, *Watkins’ Last Expedition*, 8.

²⁴⁷ Janice Cavell, “Historical Evidence and the Eastern Greenland Case”, *Arctic*, vol. 61, no. 4 (2008): 433-41.

²⁴⁸ Martin Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days: The British Arctic Air-Route Expedition, 1930-31* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1939, first published 1932), 33.

²⁴⁹ J.M. Scott, *Gino Watkins* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), 57.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 186.

Personnel from Spitsbergen also visited East Greenland, such as Andrew Croft, who was Glen's co-author for *Under the Pole Star* and joined Lindsay on the British Trans-Greenland Expedition of 1934.²⁵¹ Glen wrote approvingly of the BAARE as "technically, one of the most successful British expeditions" and praised Watkins' leadership.²⁵² This shared background of institutional connections, membership, and approach can explain some of the similarities between the Spitsbergen and East Greenland expeditions of the 1920s and 1930s, as well as their interest in similar questions of exploration in a new age of travel.

As with the Spitsbergen expeditions, members of the East Greenland expeditions wrote travelogues for popular audiences to supplement incomes, as well as adding to the scientific and newspaper reports written by members. The official BAARE account was Chapman's *Northern Lights*, although Lindsay also published *Those Greenland Days* about the Expedition in 1932 and Scott published an account, *Portrait of an Ice Cap, with Human Figures* in 1953, as well as his 1935 biography of Watkins.²⁵³ Chapman published an account of the Pan Am Expedition, *Watkins' Last Expedition*, in 1934 and Lindsay published an account of the Trans-Greenland Expedition, *Sledge*, in 1935.²⁵⁴ These texts were written for a public audience and seem to fit with a longer tradition of polar travel narratives. Lindsay in particular was keen to establish these expeditions as part of a lineage of polar exploration, taking time to establish how the expedition fitted into previous British travel in Greenland and beyond, as well as reflecting on the values and techniques of previous polar expeditions.²⁵⁵ This also meant highlighting certain features of this tradition and the expectations of audiences. Watkins' introduction to *Northern Lights* highlighted the benefit of Chapman as official expedition chronicler: as it was his first visit to the Arctic, he would highlight "the things which would interest everyone". Arctic discomfort was commonplace for more experienced explorers, but this meant they would fail to meet audience expectations when describing their expeditions in print.²⁵⁶ The expedition narrative had other purposes. It allowed a formal and official account of an expedition to be produced that could challenge misleading information in public discourse. Lindsay described listening to the BBC whilst in East Greenland on the BAARE and hearing information about the Expedition which they knew to be false.²⁵⁷ Unlike in the nineteenth century, information about ongoing expeditions was not

²⁵¹ Lindsay, *Sledge: The British Trans-Greenland Expedition, 1934* (Harmondsworth: 1939, first published 1935), 20.

²⁵² Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 19.

²⁵³ Chapman, *Northern Lights: The Official Account of the British Arctic Air-Route Expedition* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1932); Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*; Scott, *Portrait of an Ice Cap, with Human Figures* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1953); Scott, *Gino Watkins*.

²⁵⁴ Chapman, *Watkins' Last Expedition*; Lindsay, *Sledge*.

²⁵⁵ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 36-41.

²⁵⁶ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 5.

²⁵⁷ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 152.

necessarily limited; speed, however, did not increase the accuracy of the information. For all that communication was faster, discourses and messages produced by expeditions in the Arctic still faced what Blum refers to as “circumpolar annihilation”, the potential for scale to alter the information transferred.²⁵⁸ Expedition accounts were therefore attempts to provide definitive versions once home. They were also useful for funding expeditions, both retrospectively and in the future. As Lindsay wrote in *Sledge*, he was partly “writing a book to pay for the fun that was finished”.²⁵⁹ Some of the financial pressures were greater than for the university expeditions, but the texts served similar purposes, providing an official account which contributed to existing British public discourses about the Arctic, not least as a way of ensuring the book was successful.

However, the books, as with those of Glen and Binney, engaged with questions about the meaning and purpose of Arctic exploration in the interwar period. In particular, they discussed similar questions of modernity, technology, and escape, both implicitly and explicitly. The prominence of these discussions, particularly on the BAARE and Pan Am Expedition, was partially due to the centrality of flight to the purpose and practice of the expeditions. The main aims of both expeditions led by Watkins were based on the needs of commercial flight over Greenland, taking meteorological readings, testing flying conditions with the two planes taken on the BAARE, and mapping the coastline and areas of the interior in greater detail.²⁶⁰ The directness of an Arctic air route for transatlantic flights was increasingly appealing and understanding more about the Greenland ice cap was central to this. As Lindsay noted, Greenland was more proximate than its hostile reputation suggested. Rather than simply being remote and frozen, its location made it an important part of global networks of infrastructure and connection.²⁶¹ The expeditions largely concluded, along similar lines to Binney, that aircraft alone could not conduct polar exploration, but the ability to cover greater distances in less time could provide invaluable support for sledging parties.²⁶² The funding from Pan American Airlines (Pan Am) was explicit and part of a wider Arctic strategy. The Pan Am Expedition received £500 from the company, organised by their “Arctic advisor”, the Canadian explorer and anthropologist Vilhjalmur Stefansson.²⁶³ After Watkins’ death, the remaining Expedition members contacted Stefansson and their “American employers” to see if the Expedition should continue in a limited form, despite their initial shock and grief.²⁶⁴ It did, demonstrating the influence of the funders over the shape and purpose of the Expedition, something the university expeditions to Spitsbergen rarely had to deal with.

²⁵⁸ Blum, *The News at the Ends of the Earth*, 195.

²⁵⁹ Lindsay, *Sledge*, viii.

²⁶⁰ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 2.

²⁶¹ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 11.

²⁶² Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 274-5.

²⁶³ Chapman, *Watkins’ Last Expedition*, 5.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 60, 65.

However, the focus on flight was more than just a sponsor's demand. As with Binney's Spitsbergen expedition, the use of the plane had the potential to change how exploration was done and how the Arctic was seen. Flying and particularly aerial photography immediately highlighted errors in existing maps,²⁶⁵ as well as allowing "new islands and unmapped ranges of mountains" to be seen.²⁶⁶ Chapman's description of seeing the landscape from above is similar to Binney's. He writes that "from above, the whole fjord was transformed and elucidated. Stumbling about among the floes I had seen through a glass darkly, but up here all its secrets were revealed".²⁶⁷ Tracks and traces that were invisible or confusing on the ground were suddenly clear. The landscape was ordered from above, questions were answered and knowledge – and power – could be gained. Mapping on foot on his return to Greenland in 1932 only reinforced the importance of flight for Chapman. He noted that "this country is impossible to map without aeroplanes. We feel like a couple of spiders dropped away out on the pack-ice and told to make a map of it".²⁶⁸ The power of flight and the aerial view was reinforced in its absence.

Flight was not infallible. The aerial view was not always clearer, as when the BAARE party were unable to locate their ice cap station from above to rescue Augustine Courtauld, who had overwintered there.²⁶⁹ Whilst surveying was largely successful, the BAARE were also unable to make a planned flight to Canada due to damage to the planes.²⁷⁰ As on Spitsbergen, poor weather limited flying time. The use of aeroplanes also raised the same questions around exploration in the modern world. Lindsay was clear when describing the development of polar flight in the 1920s and '30s. He wrote that "it may be fun, but it is not exploration. The polar regions will never be mastered except by dog, sledge and man".²⁷¹ For Lindsay, flight could only support surveyors on the ground and flights to the ice pack only served to capture sensational headlines.²⁷² Lindsay also placed "man" in opposition to the aeroplane; unlike for Binney, flight was not a conquest of the Arctic on behalf of humanity. For Lindsay, the plane was a useful but limited tool. As Marianne Cronin has noted, the aeroplane itself is more than just a modern object inserted into a hostile wilderness.²⁷³ Arctic Indigenous peoples, often depicted as primitive and in opposition to technology like planes, were essential for modern exploration, with Iñupiat women, for example, sewing traditional fur clothing for

²⁶⁵ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 23.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 150.

²⁶⁸ Chapman, *Watkins' Last Expedition*, 207.

²⁶⁹ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 173.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 269.

²⁷¹ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 42.

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ Cronin, "Dog Sleds, Parkas, and Airplanes", 71.

pilots and passengers to wear.²⁷⁴ Rather than modern technology bringing modernity and the outside world to Arctic Indigenous people, they were themselves constitutive parts of forming Arctic modernities.²⁷⁵ The sort of skill which Suersaq provided to the British Arctic Expedition (see Chapter One) could also be deeply modern. Similar cooperation occurred on the BAARE, where, in Chapman's words, "the native women helped to sew the fabric of the new wings, and when the fabric ran out they were forced to use the cloth of which the Eskimos make their shirts".²⁷⁶ This reliance on both Inuit labour and materials to fix the Expedition's aeroplanes shows that the Arctic modern was not simply an imposition of European technologies. This is not to say that Inuit contributions made the planes less modern. Rather this example points towards ways of thinking about Arctic modernities which are inclusive of Indigenous perspectives and contributions, as well as thinking about the Arctic which is not simply a place outside of modern time and space. The plane, fixed in the Arctic by Arctic people, was not simply an imposition, its role as a tool of imperial surveillance and control complicated by this syncretism.

Other national traditions also debated these shifting meanings of aerial technology. The Danish geologist and explorer, Lauge Koch, used aircraft to map the coast of East Greenland and his research was crucial in settling the legal dispute over ownership between Denmark and Norway.²⁷⁷ Despite this, he was a controversial figure, particularly for his extensive use of aircraft.²⁷⁸ Many Danish scientists felt his focus on field science and aerial surveying detracted from the usual practices of Danish Arctic research.²⁷⁹ One striking feature relating to the aerial on Watkins' expeditions was the presence of other aeroplanes. During the BAARE, a Swedish pilot called Ahrenberg attempted to help rescue Courtauld and his "great silver monoplane... swooped low over the sledges".²⁸⁰ Ahrenberg's plane "broke the silence of the Ice Cap", giving the expedition the experience of the sight of an unexpected plane from the ground.²⁸¹ On the Pan Am Expedition, the party had to rescue the "Flying Family", an American family flying to Europe from the USA, who had crashed whilst making an unauthorised crossing of Greenland.²⁸² Later in the Expedition, a mysterious plane is spotted and Chapman "came to the conclusion that it was either one of Lauge Koch's machines that had lost its

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 76-7.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 74.

²⁷⁶ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 152.

²⁷⁷ Christopher Ries, "Lauge Koch and the Mapping of North East Greenland: Tradition and Modernity in Danish Arctic Research, 1920-1940" in Bravo and Sörlin, *Narrating the Arctic*, 207. See also Suzanne Zeller and Ries, "Wild men in and out of science: finding a place in the disciplinary borderlands of Arctic Canada and Greenland", *Journal of Historical Geography*, vol. 44 (2014): 31-43.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 213.

²⁸⁰ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 177.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Chapman, *Watkins' Last Expedition*, 83.

way, or else the beginning of a Russian or Japanese invasion of Greenland".²⁸³ Here the plane is presented as suspiciously martial, an intrusion of an unsafe world, but the plane belonged to Charles Lindbergh, the famous American aviator, who was making test flights for Pan Am.²⁸⁴ When Chapman spoke to Lindbergh, the pilot remarked that "Greenland was a wonderful country to fly in during the summer", but expressed reservations that "as far as the Air-Route was concerned the trouble would be to compete with the liners who could cross from Southampton to New York, whatever the weather, in five days"!²⁸⁵ Even those at the forefront of Arctic modernity were unsure of its future – Arctic weather seemed too challenging for regular flights.

As with the travelogues from Spitsbergen, modernity also appeared in the text at the level of metaphor. Chapman describes how the northern lights "looked just as if a number of cars with green headlights were coming up on the other side of the hills",²⁸⁶ whilst Lindsay thought sledging was like "driving a car without a windscreen".²⁸⁷ The imperial discourse of mapping and settling blank space is also present in the texts. Sailing into one fjord, Chapman "could imagine what the first settler in American must have felt as their ships passed silently up the rives through that entrancing new country in which they were going to make their homes".²⁸⁸ Lindsay took a summit view at one point, writing that he could see "one of the very few stretches of country outside the Antarctic Continent which is still entirely unknown and untrodden... None of this country had ever before been seen by the eye of man".²⁸⁹ Greenland's appeal in its lateness – a supposedly unknown space in a known world – was central to the expeditions, as was the satisfaction of knowing it. This was a place with an "eternal blank white horizon", where a map was "of no assistance", but the expeditions believed they had the power to change this. As with many British Arctic travellers, they also saw their travel through space as travel through time. Travel to and in Greenland was temporal. Chapman noted the "fun" in "travelling in a country which is still in its glacial period and with people just emerging from the stone age".²⁹⁰ Lindsay saw Greenland as not just back in time, but also outside of time. He wrote that "this forlorn region of dreary space has to all appearance gone on since the beginning of time, the same to-night as last night and the night before, and before and before".²⁹¹ Lindsay reemphasised the sense of Greenland as temporally static in *Sledge*, writing that the ice cap was "unchanging for a hundred thousand years,

²⁸³ Ibid., 258.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 259.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 47.

²⁸⁷ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 56.

²⁸⁸ Chapman, *Watkins' Last Expedition*, 32.

²⁸⁹ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 175.

²⁹⁰ Chapman, *Watkins' Last Expedition*, 266.

²⁹¹ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 33.

for in Greenland a millennium is a period of time and not a political programme".²⁹² Not only was Greenland timeless, it was also outside of history.

Unlike in Spitsbergen, the explorers' ideas about temporality were mediated by contact with people who they similarly regarded as belonging to the past. The expeditions to East Greenland lived amongst local Inuit at their main bases on the coast, in settlements such as Tasiilaq (then Angmagssalik). Chapman immediately framed their initial contact with the local Inuit as one of Indigenous shock at modernity, where they "gape in astonishment at our equipment and dogs"²⁹³ and were "enraptured, involuntarily emitting a drawn-out chorus of wonder" at the sight of the planes.²⁹⁴ This depiction of Inuit as outside of modernity supported and accompanied discourses of Danish colonial benevolence in the travelogues, similar to the ones seen in Nares' texts. For Chapman, the colonial authorities were seen to provide "admirable Danish supervision at Angmagssalik",²⁹⁵ whilst Lindsay noted the supposed benefits of "disinterested" trusteeship.²⁹⁶ There were odd occasions where Expedition members were able to see Inuit outside of these temporal and colonial frameworks. Lindsay, for example, noted the presence of tin cooking pots and rifles as evidence that it was a "lie" that Inuit were "primitive", but these moments of recognised coevalness are fleeting.²⁹⁷ This was not for a lack of exposure to local people. Beyond mending the plane, Inuit provided extensive labour to the BAARE. The main base at Tasiilaq had Inuit "staff" who did most of the domestic chores of cleaning, washing and sewing.²⁹⁸ Chapman describes the three women who did most of this work, Arpika, Gertrude, and Tina, in unflattering terms and notes that they were happy to undertake monotonous work to "satisfy their childlike curiosity".²⁹⁹ Lindsay wrote that the women worked "long after Trades Union hours" and, although they needed some supervision, did a huge amount of work for the Expedition.³⁰⁰ They were only paid in cigarettes, but it is clear that Indigenous labour was central to the success of the Expedition.³⁰¹ This work was often depicted for comic effect in the texts,

²⁹² Lindsay, *Sledge*, 147.

²⁹³ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 18.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁹⁵ Chapman, *Watkins' Last Expedition*, 15.

²⁹⁶ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 34.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 116.

²⁹⁸ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 80.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

³⁰⁰ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 99.

³⁰¹ Recent accounts of the BAARE mention sexual relationships between Expedition members and Inuit women. There is, perhaps unsurprisingly, no mention of this in the texts themselves beyond faint hints at the local pastor's disapproval (Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 104). As Sara Wheeler writes in her account of the Expedition in her own Arctic travelogue, "this kind of behaviour did not suit the public image, and so the public never knew of it" (Wheeler, *The Magnetic North: Travels in the Arctic* (London: Vintage, 2009), 181). Wheeler's account is based on that of Nicholas Wollaston in his biography of Courtauld (Wollaston, *The Man on the Ice Cap: The Life of August Courtauld* (London: Constable, 1980), 111-2). Two other recent accounts of the Expedition, Simon Courtauld's *The Watkins Boys* (Wilby: Michael Russell, 2010) and Jeremy Scott's *Dancing on Ice: A Stirring Tale of Adventure, Risk and Reckless Folly* (London: Old Street Publishing, 2008) are written by

emphasising Inuit unfamiliarity with basic hygiene and domesticity. The Expedition members viewed themselves as outsiders – they were looked at “as if we were objects in a zoo”³⁰² – but they also had rare insights and access to Inuit communities. For example, when the Pan Am Expedition returned to Tasiilaq, they were able to show footage filmed on the BAARE to fascinated local people who had never seen themselves on film before.³⁰³ The expeditions’ members were keen to engage with and learn from the Indigenous people they met.

A key reason for this was a desire to think about different ways in which exploration could be done. Watkins and others saw learning from Inuit as the key to mastering polar travel and survival. As the *Polar Record* put it in January 1933, the Pan Am Expedition’s “plan was to adopt the Eskimo manner of life, as far as possible, as regards both food and accommodation during the year’s work”.³⁰⁴ Courtauld’s introduction to *Watkins’ Last Expedition* stated that the BAARE and Pan Am Expedition had gone “not as a great white man to teach, but as an inferior to learn from these people something of their way of life”.³⁰⁵ Whilst Courtauld’s view of the party as inferior is perhaps not reflected in the texts by expedition members, their willingness to learn is striking. Vanessa Heggie has referred to this practice of taking Indigenous knowledge and survival techniques and turning them into imperial science as “bioprospecting” and sees it as a frequent feature of mid-twentieth century science in extreme environments.³⁰⁶ Value could be rooted in the origins of techniques and equipment; in Heggie’s phrase, ““authenticity [was] sometimes serving as a proxy for “effectiveness””.³⁰⁷ Ellen Boucher has noted that the Franklin Expedition also relied on Inuit technologies of survival, whilst reframing them as or overlooking them for supposedly new and modern western technology.³⁰⁸ By the time of the Watkins’ expeditions, this oversight had been replaced by an explicit desire to learn from Indigenous peoples, even if this led to a “duality of attitude”, in Heggie’s phrase, in the discourses produced by European travellers, whereby people considered inferior and backward held the answer to the future of modern exploration.³⁰⁹ The expedition accounts were effusive in their praise for Inuit techniques. Chapman, for example, thought that Inuit “hunting methods have reached

descendants of Expedition members and also suggest that Watkins and Chapman had relationships with local women. However, none of these accounts provide sources for this information and none take seriously the possible questions of asymmetries of power and issues of consent, given these relationships were between European men and the Indigenous women who also undertook large amounts of work for them. Given the lack of evidence within the texts themselves, I have chosen not to develop this line further, although it deserves careful consideration in future histories of the BAARE.

³⁰² Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 137.

³⁰³ Chapman, *Watkins’ Last Expedition*, 29.

³⁰⁴ “Mr Watkins’ Expedition to East Greenland, 1932–33”, *Polar Record*, vol. 1, issue 5 (January 1933), 28.

³⁰⁵ Chapman, *Watkins’ Last Expedition*, xv.

³⁰⁶ Heggie, *Higher and Colder*, 93.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁸ Boucher, “Arctic Mysteries and Imperial Ambitions”, 61.

³⁰⁹ Heggie, *Higher and Colder*, 98.

perfection after generations of evolution”³¹⁰ and “almost any Polar problem can be solved if one approaches it with unbiased mind and is willing to learn from the Eskimos”.³¹¹ This was a question of mindset as well: Chapman wrote that “we have to adapt to the Eskimo attitude of not worrying about delays and making the best of everything that turns up”.³¹² For Lindsay, it was “extraordinary how slowly the early explorers realised that the Eskimo in the course of generations had evolved the only possible methods of travelling under polar conditions”, a failure which had “lost us both the Poles within three years”.³¹³ Not only were expeditions suffering needlessly, so was national pride. Moreover, Lindsay invoked a temporal discourse of Inuit “evolution”, albeit one limited to Arctic conditions. This learning went beyond copying local techniques; “expert local knowledge” in the form of guides was also useful.³¹⁴

Watkins’ interest in learning from Inuit was recognised by his contemporaries. Glen wrote that the “adaptation of native methods to the techniques of civilisation... have probably been most fully recognised by Cambridge expeditions, and especially by those directed by Watkins”.³¹⁵ Croft described Watkins’ success as “the beginning of a new era in British Arctic exploration”, which made “great advances... in the general technique of polar travel”.³¹⁶ Placing Watkins in a lineage of British polar exploration, Croft also emphasised Watkins’ novelty. The 1935-36 Oxford Expedition to Spitsbergen used Sámi-made *finnesko*, traditional Sámi footwear,³¹⁷ and Croft noted that English aptitude for sledging depended on having the “necessary keenness to learn all he can from the Eskimo”.³¹⁸ Glen, however, felt that Inuit were unsuited to scientific work, particularly the “slow progress of detailed work”.³¹⁹ As well as carrying Indigenous knowledge – and imperial prejudice – to other parts of the Arctic, imperial attitudes towards colonised people travelled to the Arctic. At one point, a BAARE member, struggling with the local language, switched into Swahili.³²⁰ Lindsay himself had come from an imperial background. Prior to the BAARE, he had “just returned from an expedition to Central Africa, made with the object of collecting specimens of pygmies for the British Museum” and he managed to leave India, where he was serving in the British Army, for the BAARE just before he would have been needed to tackle “trouble on the Frontier”.³²¹ Lindsay entered the Arctic from two

³¹⁰ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 140.

³¹¹ Chapman, *Watkins’ Last Expedition*, 109.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 205.

³¹³ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 38-9.

³¹⁴ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 89.

³¹⁵ Glen, *Young Men in the Arctic*, 20.

³¹⁶ Croft, *Polar Exploration: Epics of the XXth Century* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1939), 102.

³¹⁷ Glen and Croft, *Under the Pole Star*, 215.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 230.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 208

³²⁰ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 101.

³²¹ Lindsay, *Sledge*, 10.

archetypal late-imperial contexts, collecting anthropological specimens for a metropolitan institution of science and military service in India, guarding the borders and legitimacy of empire. Many of the expeditions' relationships with Inuit need to be seen as part of an imperial mindset of optimising the opportunity for British success and survival. Part of this was adopting Stefansson's idea of the "friendly Arctic". Outlined in his 1921 book, *The Friendly Arctic*, Stefansson, as well as being the Pan Am Expedition's point of contact, regarded the Arctic as a simple place to survive in without bringing much from outside, provided you are able to see what is there and available to you.³²² This was explicitly opposed to the traditional nineteenth-century approaches of particularly British expeditions, which were organised along military lines and tended to bring enough supplies to support an entire expedition for its duration.³²³ Scott noted that Watkins had embraced the new approach, seeing the Arctic as an "exciting, cheerful land"³²⁴ and Chapman found building igloos "as easy as Stefansson suggested".³²⁵ Lindsay noted that the BAARE abandoned Stefansson's principles of living off the land at one stage, but the influence of his ideas on reframing how to approach Arctic exploration was clear.³²⁶ Another appeal of subsistence hunting was its closeness to a kind of "primitive communism", what Chapman saw as the "state of ideal communism" amongst Inuit.³²⁷ Again, this suggested a temporal difference between the explorers and locals, but Lindsay at one point emphasised the common humanity of the expedition members and Inuit, albeit when visiting an Inuit house and living on their terms for a night.³²⁸ More often, despite the appeal of Inuit "communism", local naivety was emphasised for comic effect. Seeing a photograph showing the crowds at a cup final, the Inuit were curious how they are fed, assuming, in Lindsay's opinion, that they required hunting for.³²⁹ Whilst less formally presented, at times the texts took the tone and perspective of Binney's *The Eskimo Book of Knowledge*, patronising and claiming to educate.

One Inuit skill which the British explorers were particularly keen to learn, however, was kayaking. Kayaking was crucial for supplying food, as it gave access to hunting seals, as well as mobility around the coast. The Inuit of East Greenland had, for Chapman, created "the perfect canoe... a thing of infinite beauty" and they were "probably the most accomplished kayakers in the world".³³⁰ Watkins realised the importance of learning to kayak, despite it being "generally thought impossible that a

³²² Gisli Pálsson, "Arcticity: Gender, Race and Geography in the Writings of Vilhjalmur Stefansson" in Bravo and Sörlin, *Narrating the Arctic*, 277.

³²³ Oslund, *Iceland Imagined*, 100.

³²⁴ Scott, *Gino Watkins*, 283.

³²⁵ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 66.

³²⁶ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 126.

³²⁷ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 135.

³²⁸ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 118.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 178.

³³⁰ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 198-9.

European could learn to hunt seals from a kayak, or roll it in the Eskimo fashion”.³³¹ Watkins was determined to “learn how to live the Eskimo life as well as or better than the Eskimos; for then his future Arctic journeys would no longer be governed by the amount of food he could carry”.³³² As Lindsay noted, the East Greenland Inuit were the “best possible instructors”.³³³ For Croft, these developments “marked the beginning of a new era in British Arctic exploration”.³³⁴ It was the kayak, not the plane, that was the key to the future. One of the reasons that the east coast of Greenland was such a good location was that the explorers felt that the Inuit of the west coast had been too corrupted by modernity. Chapman wrote that an “atmosphere of degeneration” could be felt there.³³⁵ In Sisimiut (then Holsteinsborg), Lindsay noted the “sophisticated” locals, with modern jobs in a canning factory.³³⁶ Whilst locals there still hunted, they were too “sophisticated” to be true kayak experts.³³⁷ The relationship between kayaking and development was a complex one, as Søren Rud has shown. Danish colonial discourse was rooted in a paternalistic approach to Greenlandic culture, which aimed to maintain traditional ways of life as a technology of governance.³³⁸ Hunting was crucial to this, both as a fundamental social structure and as an economic benefit of colonial rule.³³⁹ Non-hunters were seen as untraditional by definition and modernisation had to be applied carefully – and on Danish terms – to maintain Greenlandic society.³⁴⁰ Concerns about the corrupting effects of modernity, similar to those raised by British explorers on the west coast, were central to this and the east coast was seen as more pristine than the west. A particular concern was “kayak dizziness” (*nangiarneq* in Kalaallisut), a type of panic attack that affected kayakers in calm water and could lead to drowning.³⁴¹ Danish medical professionals in the late nineteenth century linked this to consumption of coffee and tobacco, modern substances that supposedly affected the natural equilibrium of Inuit.³⁴² This was linked to neurasthenia, the psychological condition believed to be brought on by the pressures of modernity and the experience of war in Europe and America. In Greenland, the population were seen

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 199.

³³² Scott, *Gino Watkins*, 220.

³³³ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 180.

³³⁴ Croft, *Polar Exploration*, 102.

³³⁵ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 244.

³³⁶ Lindsay, *Sledge*, 37.

³³⁷ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 180.

³³⁸ Rud, *Colonialism in Greenland*, 35.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 79.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 80. Chapman gave an example in *Watkins' Last Expedition*, writing that “the other day one of the old hunters got an attack of kayak-giddiness: this apparently only comes on in very still water and is possibly caused by overmuch smoking”. Chapman, *Watkins' Last Expedition*, 271.

to be susceptible to an equivalent, where the effects of modernity, in smaller doses for more vulnerable people, unsettle both individual psychologies and cultural practices.³⁴³

Whilst escape from modernity was a common theme in Arctic travel writing throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the interwar British explorers also presented an alternative formulation of the modern and traditional. Watkins in particular was depicted in expedition accounts as bringing together the modern and traditional. Far from being too modern to kayak, as Danish doctors and administrators feared Inuit would become, he “explode[d] the myth” that kayaking was a “racial gift of the Eskimo”, as Lindsay put it.³⁴⁴ Lindsay was unequivocal: “there are probably few native accomplishments that an intelligent white man cannot master in time”.³⁴⁵ For the British explorers in Greenland, whilst kayaking was a technique to be learnt from Inuit, once it was mastered, white Europeans could take it forward without fearing they would lose the skill due to mixing it with their modern lives. An example of this thinking, as well as the influence of Watkins, is an article in the *Polar Record*, which outlines the history of kayaking and its usefulness to explorers.³⁴⁶ It also provides an anecdote about a Cambridge student, J.I. Moore, who built a kayak, based on the one given to SPRI by Courtauld after the BAARE, and used it on the Cam. As the article puts it, “constant practice in the Cam, in the arctic weather of Lent Term, assisted by B. B. Roberts and C. Bertram, enabled him to devise a means of rolling”.³⁴⁷ On the return of the Pan Am Expedition, the surviving members practiced kayaking on the Cam together with Moore. Kayaking here was even more transferrable – an Indigenous technology transplanted without negative effects. An example of Watkins’ skill and cultural synthesis was given by Chapman. When a French expedition also visited Tasiilaq, they, “taking Watkins in his seal-skin kayak coat for an Eskimo, made signs for him to roll his kayak, which he did with such skill that they still thought he was a native and were more than surprised when he hailed them in French.”³⁴⁸ Watkins was able to combine his British bourgeois education with Inuit dress – and skills seen as solely mastered by Inuit. Watkins here has something of what Peter Mitchell has called the “Imperial Wonder Boy”, a “madcap cultural intercessor and inveterate dresser-up who nonetheless embodies the natural supremacy of his race and class”.³⁴⁹ Chapman’s own ability to speak to the local people in Greenlandic produced “open-mouthed amazement, as if I had been a

³⁴³ Rud, *Colonialism in Greenland*, 83.

³⁴⁴ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 181.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ “The Eskimo Kayak”, *Polar Record*, vol. 1, issue 7 (January 1934): 52-62. The article is anonymous, but Heggie suggests that it was likely written by Frank Debenham, the journal’s editor and director of SPRI at the time. Heggie, *Higher and Colder*, 121.

³⁴⁷ “The Eskimo Kayak”, 57.

³⁴⁸ Chapman, *Watkins’ Last Expedition*, 26.

³⁴⁹ Peter Mitchell, *Imperial Nostalgia: How the British Conquered Themselves* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), 141.

visitor from another world”.³⁵⁰ The Expedition members may have been keen to learn as inferiors, in Courtauld’s phrase, but their self-proclaimed mastery of Indigenous skills and techniques was instead marshalled to bolster and proclaim their own supremacy.

A figure who attempted combined cultures was the Danish explorer, Knud Rasmussen. Born in Ilulissat (then Jakobshavn) in Greenland, Rasmussen’s father was a Danish vicar who spoke Kalaallisut fluently and he also had an Inuk great-grandmother.³⁵¹ Rasmussen positioned himself as a “cultural translator”, between Europeans and Inuit, albeit one deeply enmeshed with Danish colonialism.³⁵² Whilst he opposed the maintenance of Greenlandic culture in an imagined past, he also contributed to this, centring the need for his own cultural translation to develop Greenland and Inuit.³⁵³ The BAARE and Pan Am Expedition members met Rasmussen, who Chapman referred to as the “hero of all the Eskimos”.³⁵⁴ Rasmussen’s exploration relied on Inuit techniques and travelling across the ice – something Lauge Koch’s flight was regarded as potentially destroying³⁵⁵ – but he was also a filmmaker. His filming was depicted by Chapman as strangely artificial – when he wanted to film some polar bears, “when the cameras were ready they had to wake the bears up by shooting at them with revolvers”.³⁵⁶ Rasmussen similarly explored between the modern and traditional, bringing them together and challenging some of the distinctions between what was modern and what was “authentic” and out of time. The British explorers, for all their adoption of Indigenous techniques and clothing, struggled with the syncretic. Chapman tended to associate cultural mixing with “degeneration”, whilst also bemoaning that Inuit “won’t do anything untraditional”.³⁵⁷ Tradition, however, took an ambiguous place. Chapman noted that the explorers persuaded the locals to perform a tradition *angakok* [shaman] séance, which “started as a joke”, but culminated in Chapman realising “the power of mass emotion”.³⁵⁸ This was in some ways inauthentic – a remembered tradition no longer practised – but was one of the most powerful experiences of the expeditions for Chapman. This realisation that the explorers’ presence influencing communities was echoed by Lindsay in *Sledge*. Arriving at the old BAARE base, he noticed locals wearing jumpers and waistcoats which had belonged to Expedition members, as well as mending boats with timbers from the Expedition hut.³⁵⁹ Cultural mixing here seemed different to the west coast, where European customs and items were seen as

³⁵⁰ Chapman, *Watkins’ Last Expedition*, 20.

³⁵¹ Kirsten Thisted, “Voicing the Arctic: Knud Rasmussen and the Ambivalence of Cultural Translation” in Ryall, Schimanski and Wærp, *Arctic Discourses*, 61.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 74.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 72.

³⁵⁴ Chapman, *Watkins’ Last Expedition*, 255.

³⁵⁵ Ries, “Lauge Koch and the Mapping of North East Greenland”, 213.

³⁵⁶ Chapman, *Watkins’ Last Expedition*, 284.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 159.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 178-9.

³⁵⁹ Lindsay, *Sledge*, 229.

corrupting. However, the attitude of the expeditions remained broadly preservationist. European culture and modernity were seen as threatening traditional ways of life, including ways of living in the Arctic, whilst they largely overlooked the degree to which cultural loss was a product of colonialism. Inuit drawing from European culture were seen as corrupted, but Europeans could find in Inuit life many objects and skills which could be used by Europeans in the Arctic and beyond to survive and thrive. It is important to note that, as the example of the mended aeroplane shows, there is not a clear distinction between traditional and modern when discussing technology and skills here. Avoiding a binary allows for further thinking about how different groups engaged with different ideas of Arctic living, as well as how the texts of interwar British explorers negotiated ideas of modernity, tradition, and cultural adoption.

Inuit were also objects of study beyond learning to travel and survive in the Arctic. The expedition members also cast an ethnographic gaze upon them, considering culture and lifestyle, as well as physiology, as members of the British Arctic Expedition had elsewhere. The Pan Am Expedition collected Inuit grave goods and other specimens of material culture for the Ethnological Museum in Cambridge³⁶⁰ and Chapman read books about Inuit life and wrote that he “wished [he] was an anthropologist”.³⁶¹ Despite this studying, the expeditions in Greenland were less broadly scientific than trips to Spitsbergen. The aims were more closely dictated by the needs of sponsors and less focussed on developing young men. Whilst opportunities for ethnography and other additional scientific work did come up, more than in Spitsbergen, the travel narratives emphasised the legacy of Arctic exploration that the expeditions were following. Lindsay regarded only Nansen and Douglas Mawson, the Australian Antarctic explorer and geologist, as “primarily men of science” – all other polar explorers were “professional explorers”, after the unknown or a specific goal.³⁶² Watkins’ death meant he was particularly valorised as an example of the best of polar exploration. A letter to the *Times* from the meteorologist Hugh Robert Mill was reproduced in *Northern Lights* and Mill wrote that “I have known, I may say, all the Polar explorers of the last half-century, and no one can stand beside young Watkins, save the young Fridtjof Nansen”.³⁶³ Nansen was again highlighted as an example for British travellers and the comparison shows the posthumous esteem in which Watkins was held. Watkins’ expedition companions were equally flattering. Chapman called him a “very great man”, and Lindsay thought “a new genius had entered the polar arena” in him.³⁶⁴ Scott’s 1935 biography referred to the scale of his achievements at a young age and the trust he had won from his backers in Britain.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁰ Chapman, *Watkins’ Last Expedition*, 242.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 207.

³⁶² Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 35.

³⁶³ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, viii.

³⁶⁴ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 41.

³⁶⁵ Scott, *Gino Watkins*, 3.

This respect was international: he was feted in Copenhagen alongside Rasmussen, Koch, and Ejnar Mikkelsen, another Danish polar explorer.³⁶⁶ The reception of Watkins' achievements shows how the expeditions he led to East Greenland went beyond the expeditions to Spitsbergen in direct influence on networks of Arctic explorers and administrators at the time. Whilst the Spitsbergen expeditions had strong transnational connections with Norway, Watkins was compared directly to Denmark's most esteemed explorers, known particularly for their exploits and influence in Greenland.

The East Greenland expeditions, for all their focus on aerial research, offered more than just scientific experience. As with the Spitsbergen expeditions, they also offered insights into the explorers themselves as people. Scott framed his account of the BAARE, published in 1953, as "a study of young men of an ordinary standard of education, tradition, and imagination against the background of the Ice Cap. It is, I think, interesting to examine how much or how little one's standards and interests are affected by living the dog's life of an ice-age existence as rough as that which our prehistoric ancestors survived".³⁶⁷ For Scott, the BAARE was an experiment in human psychology, both that of contemporary and prehistoric humanity, with the temporal wormhole of the Arctic providing an opportunity to study the latter. For others, however, the expeditions were less pedagogical. Chapman noted the different reasons different men gave for joining the BAARE: "for some it was a career; for some a holiday, and for others, the realization of an ideal".³⁶⁸ Courtauld noted that Watkins went simply because "it was the life he loved".³⁶⁹ Chapman found the thought of Greenland particularly appealing after he returned for the Pan Am Expedition. He had found it difficult to adjust to life at home after the BAARE, where "life suddenly becomes so terribly complicated".³⁷⁰ This idea of Arctic escape and simplicity is clear in *Watkins' Last Journey*. Returning to Greenland was "like the beginning of a marvellous summer holiday: the ideal sort of existence one dreamed of in childhood".³⁷¹ Like Clutterbuck and Lees in Norway, a relapse to childhood or an earlier time allowed temporal travel within one's own lifetime which echoed the journey through space away from the modern metropole. Moreover, Greenland was quiet – Chapman could read all day with a "clear conscience".³⁷² Exploration, for him, was a "good life".³⁷³ The supposed primitive communism of local life also appealed. Chapman wrote "what a marvellous life! How very much better than spending all one's life making money".³⁷⁴ Like many British travellers to the Arctic, Chapman saw life there as simpler, a place

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 265.

³⁶⁷ Scott, *Portrait of an Ice Cap*, 16.

³⁶⁸ Chapman, *Northern Lights*, 130.

³⁶⁹ Chapman, *Watkins' Last Expedition*, xiii.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 154.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 163.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 273.

to escape from the pressures of modernity, even if he worked to open up very modern air routes whilst there.

Lindsay's approach was somewhat different. Unlike Chapman and Watkins, he went to Sandhurst rather than Cambridge and served in various regiments across the British Empire before joining the BAARE.³⁷⁵ Lindsay rejected the scientific approach, writing "polar exploration is not a science. Rather it is something between an art and a sport".³⁷⁶ Lindsay seemed to echo the thoughts of the mountaineer George Mallory, who wrote in 1914 that "the sportsman is a recognisably kind of artist".³⁷⁷ Lindsay's interest in the art and sport of exploration suggests a willingness to embrace travel as an experience and he was open about the extent to which science was a cover for travel to places he found interesting. He thought it was possible to enjoy polar exploration with the right philosophy, "the philosophy of the man who continually hit his head with a hammer because, he said, it was so nice when you stopped".³⁷⁸ Moreover, it was "good for the character".³⁷⁹ As with the Spitsbergen expeditions, personal improvement was a goal, but Lindsay had little interest in research. He had signed up to the Royal Geographical Society thinking that he could get free tickets to the zoo, but travelled to Greenland "for Adventure, and that was all I asked for".³⁸⁰ By the time he returned in 1934, however, he "dreaded nothing so much as Adventure which, on a modern expedition, is a sign of incompetency".³⁸¹ Faced with financial concerns and now with a young family, Greenland no longer offered escape. The previous thrill was now threatening. Despite this, he made the 1934 British Trans-Greenland Expedition, using scientific research as an excuse for travelling, not least because of the restrictive entry policies of the Danish administration. He found research dull, calling it "the tiresome business of snatching data from the Ice-Cap to thicken up the map or fatten problematic Appendices".³⁸² Unlike Glen, he was not keen to emphasise the importance of the research conducted or justify exploration solely through research. His pleasure at Arctic travel, however, was genuine. He could "conceive of no greater sport than exploration. Elephants and Aintree, foxes and fish – I have tried them all and they are ten a penny by comparison".³⁸³ Lindsay also found escape, but it was a sporting one, rooted in pleasure and personal improvement. Science for Lindsay was simply a means to this end.

³⁷⁵ W.P. Grieve, "Lindsay, Sir Martin Alexander, of Dowhill, first baronet", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 September 2004).

³⁷⁶ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 35.

³⁷⁷ Mallory, *Climbing Everest*, 27.

³⁷⁸ Lindsay, *Those Greenland Days*, 142.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 143.

³⁸⁰ Lindsay, *Sledge*, 11.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 211.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 168.

“The unmistakable taint of modern civilisation”: Isobel Wylie Hutchison and Escape

Another British traveller who found escape in Greenland in the interwar period was Isobel Wylie Hutchison and considering her travel writing alongside that of the Watkins’ expeditions highlights similarities and differences in their perceptions of place. A Scottish poet and botanist, Hutchison received permission from the Danish government to conduct botanical research in Greenland, with a trip to Tasiilaq and the east coast in the summer of 1927 and an overwintering at Uummannaq on the west coast from the summer of 1928 to the summer of 1929. She published an account of these journeys in 1930, entitled *On Greenland’s Closed Shore: The Fairyland of the Arctic*.³⁸⁴ As a lone traveller, as well as a woman, her experiences of Greenland and the people she met, both Danes and Inuit, differed from those of the expedition parties. As Silke Reeploeg has noted, Hutchison’s travel was shaped by her gender. She was “never an explorer, but someone who utilize[d] existing colonial infrastructures” in her travel in Greenland.³⁸⁵ Unlike the expedition parties, she was often the only British traveller in the settlements she visited, although she had a similar reliance on Inuit labour, both to travel and in domestic settings. For Reeploeg, Hutchison’s travelogue works to reaffirm Danish colonialism in Greenland, her filmmaking “staging and curating the Danish colony as a naturalized scenario”.³⁸⁶ The colonial is undoubtedly a significant part of Hutchison’s work and she also addressed similar questions around modernity and development in Greenland to the air route expeditions. Whilst she travelled as a botanist and took many botanical samples, *On Greenland’s Closed Shore* is a very poetic account of her travel, and she later published a collection of poetry about her time in Greenland.³⁸⁷ Like many interwar expeditions, scientific research was to some degree a cover for travel more concerned with the aesthetics of place. Hutchison’s text has a particularly strong focus on Greenland as a traditional society, uncorrupted by modernity. For her, it is “Fairyland”, the “last stronghold of the Peaceful Folk”.³⁸⁸ She ate meals which she had “seldom tasted better... in London, Paris, Vienna, or Rome” and where only the coffee and marmalade were imported.³⁸⁹ She wrote that it is “up here, if anywhere in the world, that rest is surely to be found”.³⁹⁰ The timelessness of the Arctic is here reflected in a slower pace of life and an opportunity for recuperation. However, she also

³⁸⁴ Hutchison, *On Greenland’s Closed Shore*.

³⁸⁵ Silke Reeploeg, “Women in the Arctic: Gendering Coloniality in Travel Narratives from the Far North, 1907–1930”, *Scandinavian Studies*, vol. 91, no. 1-2 (Spring/Summer 2019), 198.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 196.

³⁸⁷ Hutchison, *Lyrics from Greenland* (London: Blackie and Son, 1935).

³⁸⁸ Hutchison, *On Greenland’s Closed Shore*, 3, 5.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 169.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 196.

noted the relationship between Greenland and the modern. On the boat to Greenland from Copenhagen, she described a striking scene where:

we stood clustered about the window of the wireless cabin, where, amid the blue flash and crackle of electricity, the dark figure of the wireless operator sits bowed beneath his ear-phones, oblivious the surrounding matters, listening intently to the scream of unearthly voices, a veritable Greenland 'angakok' in his wizard's den, who had just called up for us out of the void the spirit of Scotland.³⁹¹

Here the weirdness of the modern technology is emphasised, its strangeness aligning it with Indigenous faith in Hutchison's text. Wireless featured in more prosaic but significant ways once Hutchison arrived in Greenland. She noted the wireless station at Tasiilaq, "catching the voice of far-off Daventry"³⁹² and the radio mast at Qaqortoq (then Julianehåb) "links this far corner of the world with the concerts of Europe every day of the year", much as expeditions to Spitsbergen could connect with music from Europe.³⁹³ Motor boats particularly perturbed her; one motor boat "broke the immense silence of the wild cliffs, whose trails of blue petrol smoke left upon the crystal air the unmistakable taint of modern civilisation".³⁹⁴ She then travelled round the coast on the diesel ship *Disko*, which was "all too modern; she was of the type of 'tourist ship' whose coming presages the beginning of the end of Fairyland".³⁹⁵ As on Spitsbergen, tourists suggested the loss of a place's innocence, but also of the appeal for a certain type of traveller who travelled there for the challenge and for the escape. This was a product of infrastructure and technology, as this thesis has highlighted, but the presence of other travellers was also seen as bringing the corrupting effects of modernity. The tension between guiding and preserving was as active in Greenland as it was in Spitsbergen or Norway. Like many travellers to Greenland, Hutchison hoped the country and its peoples remained static. She praised Danish colonial policy, writing in the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society* that "it is in order to protect this extraordinarily simple, friendly race from too sudden contact with the dangers of civilization that the land must remain closed and I think it is a very wise provision. I hope the Danish flag will long keep guard over these beautiful crystal shores".³⁹⁶ Hutchison was also aware of wider Arctic connections, visiting the grave of a Scottish harpooner north of Upernavik.³⁹⁷ She was

³⁹¹ Ibid., 16.

³⁹² Ibid., 30.

³⁹³ Ibid., 46.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 53.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 112.

³⁹⁶ Hutchison, "Greenland's Flowery Valleys", *The Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, vol. 57, part 1 (January 1932), 21-2.

³⁹⁷ Hutchison, *On Greenland's Closed Shore*, 377.

particularly interested in previous Scottish travellers to the Arctic, engaging in an alternative version of the kind of lineage building which expeditions also used to legitimise their claims to Arctic belonging. This was also a suitable Arctic history, one which preserved the timeless aspects of place and Indigenous people, whilst also hinting at British – or Scottish – achievement and exploration in the past. Hutchison was also in contact with Rasmussen, who wrote the preface to *On Greenland's Closed Shores*. He praised Hutchison for choosing to travel to Greenland, as well as the BAARE, placing them within a similar lineage of British Arctic explorers.³⁹⁸

Rasmussen may have realised that Hutchison, like himself and British explorers on Spitsbergen and Greenland, wrote about travel to Greenland as a way of discussing questions of modernity, technology, and escape. Martin Conway's questions about the development of tourism on Spitsbergen were part of a tradition of British travellers keen for Arctic experiences, as well as undertaking scientific research in the Arctic. After the First World War, for ecologists and others, the Arctic was a useful space for thinking about life on Earth, as well as an imperial training ground. Flight changed how the Arctic was seen – in literal ways – but questions of modern methods of exploration also engaged with methods that were seen as traditional or even “backward”. Drawing on Inuit techniques, especially kayaking, offered alternative futures of Arctic travel. The temporal complexity of this – of escape to a simpler past, of wireless proximity and aerial travel, and of models of development for Greenland and Inuit – show the challenges of thinking about Arctic time and space. The texts of Arctic travellers also show the multiple ways in which these issues were contested, by explorers and Indigenous intermediaries. By publishing travelogues about their expeditions, Arctic travellers could place themselves within lineages of polar exploration, claiming feats of discovery, survival, and hardship by aligning themselves with past expeditions. These texts also mediated the tensions around ideas of modernity and escape in the Arctic, writing for an audience at home familiar with certain ideas of the region. The Arctic was a space in which to negotiate imperial practice and ideology but also a space where the past seemed both close and very far away.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., x

Conclusion

There is a dark irony in the fact Pan Am, an airline, sponsored Arctic exploration. Whilst the Watkins' expeditions took pleasure in escape to a place they felt was free from the corrupting influence of modernity, they were developing the possibility for technologies that would change the Arctic irrevocably. Although environmental destruction and extraction was always central to colonialism in the Arctic, Arctic travel in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries relied on the paradoxical – or dialectical – use of modern transport, technology, and ideas to try to escape from these very things. Either way, in the twenty-first century, the Arctic has become associated primarily with the frontline of anthropogenic climate change, warming nearly four times as fast as the rest of the planet since the 1970s.¹ Whilst the issue of the Anthropocene Arctic is an urgent one, it is also one shaped, not unproblematically, by older discourses about the region. Material like the travel writing discussed in this thesis has shaped a vision of the Arctic as empty, hostile, and outside of history. As Jen Rose Smith has noted, contemporary discourse about the melting Arctic relies on simple images of the “ice melt of everywhere”, often over considering local particularities and voices.² This focus on an Arctic defined by climate also means a focus on the area as a “natural region”, one defined by outsiders and a discourse that draws directly on the colonial idea of the Arctic “blank”.³ A persistent rhetoric in much coverage of the climate emergency in the Arctic is the idea that change is coming to the Arctic for the first time and that climate change is bringing the Arctic into history. The connection to colonial travel writing that positions the Arctic either in the past or outside of time completely is clear, yet this trope appears in an attempt to persuade publics of the seriousness of climate change. An article in the *Guardian* from 2020, for example, described the Arctic as “unravelling” and warned that “the Arctic as we know it – a vast icy landscape where reindeer roam, polar bears feast, and waters teem with cod and seals – will soon be frozen only in memory”.⁴ Not only is the Arctic seen as changing from a previously static state, but the depiction of it as a natural place might come from the nineteenth century. Perhaps the only difference is the abundance of wildlife.

¹ Mika Rantanen, Alexey Karpechko, Antti Lipponen et al., “The Arctic has warmed nearly four times faster than the globe since 1979”, *Communications, Earth and Environment*, 3, 168 (2022).

² Smith, Racialization and Resistance in the Ice Geographies of the Arctic and Colonized Alaska”, *The Funambulist* (February 2022), <https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/the-land/racialization-and-resistance-in-the-ice-geographies-of-the-arctic-and-colonized-alaska> (accessed 17 December 2022).

³ Dodds and Smith, “Against decline? The geographies and temporalities of the Arctic cryosphere”, *The Geographical Journal*, 00 (2022): 1– 11.

⁴ Gloria Dickie, “The Arctic is in a death spiral. How much longer will it exist?”, *The Guardian*, 13 October 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2020/oct/13/arctic-ice-melting-climate-change-global-warming> (accessed 17 December 2022).

This is not to downplay the impact of climate change in the Arctic, nor deny that action should be taken. Our understanding of the Arctic, outside the Arctic, must not, however, be shaped by stereotypes with deep roots. As Andrew Stuhl has written, “we [as historians] must also challenge the pervasive misconceptions about the Arctic held in the communities we call home, misconceptions that, despite their deconstruction in the scholarly literature, continue to produce troubling political and material effects in the north”.⁵ Whilst the literature has not consistently deconstructed harmful ideas about the Arctic, one particular discourse with a longer history which Stuhl has usefully highlighted is the idea of the “New North”. This is the notion that the Arctic has changed – usually for the first time – and the relationship to it of governments and institutions must fundamentally change.⁶ Stuhl is writing in a North American context, but his work shows the danger of ahistorical approaches to Arctic regions. As Stuhl directly puts it, “while changes are apparent, the New North is not new. Since the early 1900s, discourses and practices that appraised unfamiliar situations in the Arctic have accompanied attempts to cajole, conquer, civilize, consume, conserve and capitalize upon the far north”.⁷ Once again, we see colonial attempts to categorise the Arctic as ways of staking claims to it and demonstrating power. Alternative Indigenous temporalities and political and social framings are ignored. Temporal discourses around the Arctic retain a power and thinking critically about them is essentially for an equitable Arctic future. Graham Huggan has noted another powerful Arctic discourse born from ideas of the Arctic as coming into history. This is the “scramble”, a term redolent of other colonial seizures of land, and an increasingly common way to refer to the opportunities for resource extraction in a changing Arctic.⁸ The idea of “unscrambling” – in the sense of both rejecting the seizure of land and resources and of making communication clear – means moving beyond “frontier logics”, a securitised Arctic, and flattening, essentialised assumptions.⁹ Postcolonial debates continue in the Arctic – often not even “post-”. In Greenland, independence from Denmark is an ongoing issue and objective, and during 2020 protests linked to the wider Black Lives Matter movement, statues of Hans Egede, the Danish missionary who led the colonisation of Greenland, were graffitied in Nuuk and Copenhagen.¹⁰ In Sápmi, projects such as wind farms are often seen as “green colonialism”, disrupting Sámi life, especially reindeer herding, and making Sámi pay for problems which they contributed little

⁵ Andrew Stuhl, *Unfreezing the Arctic: Science, Colonialism, and the Transformation of Inuit Lands* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 12.

⁶ Stuhl, “The politics of the “New North”: putting history and geography at stake in Arctic futures”, *The Polar Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2013): 94-119.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁸ Graham Huggan, “Introduction: Unscrambling the Arctic” in Huggan and Lars Jensen, *Postcolonial Perspectives on the European High North: Unscrambling the Arctic* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016): 1-29.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

¹⁰ “Hans Egede: Greenland votes on colonial Danish statue”, *BBC News*, 16 July 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-53429950> (accessed 18 December 2022).

to.¹¹ In February 2023, Sámi protestors occupied the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy building in Oslo to protest against the Norwegian government's failure to act on a Supreme Court ruling which found a wind farm in Fosen in Trøndelag contravened Sámi rights to reindeer-grazing land under international law.¹² Land use in Sápmi is as contested as when British travellers visited in the late nineteenth century. Organisations like the Saami Council and the Inuit Circumpolar Council provide formal structures for Indigenous voices to contribute to debates on Arctic policy, yet Arctic Indigenous people are still underrepresented in decisions on the future of the region. Indigenous scholars like Smith and Victoria Qutuuq Buschman emphasise the importance of consulting Indigenous peoples in the future of the Arctic and their work offers hope for alternative Arctic futures.¹³

Tourism is also an important feature of the contemporary Arctic and one which still reflects many of the ideas which earlier tourists expressed and reflected on. As Simone Abram has discussed, tourist events can be "multiple".¹⁴ Reflecting on the Sámi market in Jokkmokk in Sweden as a tourist show and area of Sámi cultural meeting and preservation, Abram raises many of the same questions around agency and cultural meaning seen in tourist encounters with Sámi in Chapter Two.¹⁵ Tourism remains a key way in which many outside the Arctic experience it, as well as shaping Arctic societies itself.¹⁶ Tourism, particularly in its promotion, however, also perpetuates the harmful colonial discourses of the empty, hostile Arctic as a space of escape from modernity. Additionally, the idea of "last chance tourism" makes presenting an Arctic which shows these features, but may not for long, particularly appealing.¹⁷ The Arctic also remains a popular destination and subject for travel writers, as well as a range of other travel narratives.¹⁸ Even – or perhaps especially – when attached to concerns about climate change and human impact on the polar regions, these texts often draw heavily

¹¹ Bård Kårtveit, "Green colonialism: The story of wind power in Sápmi" in Rita Sørly, Tony Ghaye and Kårtveit (eds.), *Stories of Change and Sustainability in the Arctic Regions: The Interdependence of Local and Global* (London: Routledge, 2021): 157-77.

¹² "Norway wind farms at heart of Sami protest violate human rights, minister says", *Reuters*, 2 March 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/norway-wind-farms-heart-sami-protest-violate-human-rights-minister-says-2023-03-02/> (accessed 17 March 2023).

¹³ Victoria Qutuuq Buschman, "Framing co-productive conservation in partnership with Arctic Indigenous peoples", *Conservation Biology*, vol. 36, issue 6 (December 2022): 1-10.

¹⁴ Abram, "Jokkmokk: Rapacity and Resistance in Sápmi" in Huggan and Jensen, *Postcolonial Perspectives on the European High North*, 86.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 67-92.

¹⁶ Abram and Katrín Anna Lund, *Green Ice: Tourism Ecologies in the European High North* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

¹⁷ Margaret Johnston, Arvid Viken and Jackie Dawson, "Firsts and lasts in Arctic tourism: last chance tourism and the dialectic of change" in Raynald Harvey Lemelin, Dawson and Emma J. Stewart, *Last Chance Tourism: Adapting tourism opportunities in a changing world* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012): 10-24.

¹⁸ Some recent examples by British authors include Sara Wheeler, *The Magnetic North: Travels in the Arctic* (London: Vintage, 2009); Gavin Francis, *True North: Travels in Arctic Europe* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008); Joanna Kavenna, *The Ice Museum: In search of the lost land of Thule* (London, Penguin, 2006) and Nancy Campbell, *The Library of Ice: Readings from a Cold Climate* (London: Scribner, 2018). Not all of these repeat colonial tropes, with Campbell's text in particular meditating sensitively on pasts and futures of ice.

on the same tropes as tourism, particularly the idea of the polar “blank” and the heroic explorer facing a hostile landscape. As with earlier travel literature, the polar is Other and when it is not, there is a problem. Moreover, the idea of the polar regions as a space for heroic activities in particular also remains, especially in the Antarctic. The explorer still stands as a heroic figure in the popular imagination.¹⁹ Whilst the Anthropocene discourse of the Arctic as a vulnerable and threatened space challenges ideas of heroism in the region, these tropes are recycled. This is partly due to a continuing interest in popular polar history. This is invariably the history of exploration, rather than trying to give the polar regions a deeper human or environmental history, as a steady stream of trade biographies of Franklin, Scott, and Shackleton continue to be published. The discoveries of the two ships lost on the Franklin Expedition, *Erebus* and *Terror*, in 2014 and 2016 respectively contributed to this interest in the history of exploration. Moreover, the discoveries were used for political ends in Canada, particularly by then Prime Minister John Harper to underpin Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.²⁰ Adriana Craciun has referred to how this rediscovery “resembles a celebration, indeed a fetishization, of exploration history, but is in fact hostile to questions of history”, focussing on narratives of discovery and reinscribing a pre-Franklin Arctic blank over Inuit claims to land and history.²¹ The focus on exploration and discovery, as Craciun notes, overshadows more complex and diverse histories of the Arctic, as well as reinforcing limited understandings of the region from the south.

The appeal of Arctic exploration history is also the appeal of the Arctic before climate change, a reassuringly cold and frozen region. As Bathsheba Demuth has written about two recent television dramas set in the Arctic in the nineteenth century, “*The Terror* and *The North Water* conjure an Arctic in which cold, bearded, scurvy-addled men commit grisly acts far beyond the reach of the Bechdel test or upward-creeping levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide. In this new colonial noir, Arctic terrors stay in the Arctic, the movement of sea ice threatens men rather than the other way around, and absolution is always an Inuit-guided seal hunt away”.²² As Demuth notes, these are fundamentally depictions of an Arctic which is reassuringly far-away and Othered – a product of colonial nostalgia.²³ Again, falling back onto familiar narratives of the Arctic is a way of managing the discomfort of a changing region. Despite this, however, interest in polar exploration is increasingly strong, from online subcultures of fans to articles in major media publications, not least due to the popularity of these

¹⁹ See, for example, David Grann, “The White Darkness: A solitary journey across Antarctica”, *The New Yorker*, February 12 and 19 2018, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/02/12/the-white-darkness> (accessed 18 December 2022).

²⁰ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 224.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 228.

²² Demuth, “Arctic Horror Is Having a Comeback”, *The Atlantic*, September 22 2021, <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2021/09/the-terror-north-water-arctic-history/620153/> (accessed 18 December 2022).

²³ *Ibid.*

media productions.²⁴ Given this attention, it is important to examine the historical roots of the visions of the Arctic which many contemporary representations of the Arctic draw heavily on. The Arctic does not simply exist to be represented, particularly outside of the region, in neutral ways. Rather, we must be aware of the histories of these representations as emerging from particular moments and types of representation. Artistic and photographic depictions of the region have emphasised particular features and in the Euro-American tradition, these usually use a visual language of the Arctic as empty, hostile, and frozen – in time, as well as substance. Textual depictions have similarly shown a region defined by certain features, flattening the diversity of the region and erasing human presence, especially Indigenous peoples. As a result, it is important to both be aware of the roots of these depictions and also produce histories of the region which engage with the particularity of place, consider specificities of location and time, and seek to foreground Indigenous presence.

This thesis has attempted to track historical change through the travel writing produced by a subsection of travellers in Greenland and Scandinavia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By tracing changes and continuities in depictions of the region, it has shown how Arctic discourses have formed, particularly when they were transnational co-constructions, whether the travellers were aware of this or not. The influence and presence of Suersaq, for example, is clear in Nares' texts. Moreover, the Arctic became associated with certain ideas, as well as being a place where they could be thought through. For example, the travelogues mentioned consistently discuss the Arctic as a place outside of modern life. Travel to the Arctic was an escape from modernity, a journey back in time, but also a place where travellers thought about their own experiences of modern life. Interwar expeditions, for example, used aeroplanes and kayaks whilst exploring, performing their ideas about modern Arctic exploration through their movement through space. In Norway, infrastructure was another way to think about modernity and escape. Organisations like *Den Norske Turistforening* were crucial to the transnational construction of northern space but also provoked questions about access to certain areas. If the Arctic was remote and pristine, what did tourism at scale do to that sense of escape? Travellers like Slingsby negotiated these questions, caught between a desire to be followed and wanting to have the North for themselves. The texts are ambivalent, but there was no doubt about the scale of travel to Norway in particular, or that travellers relied on modern methods of travel and infrastructure. Sites like Nordkapp became crucial for constructing modern identities in the North. Moreover, organisations like DNT are still involved today in debates

²⁴ See, for example, Imogen West-Knights, "At the ends of the Earth – why are we so obsessed with the tragedy of polar exploration?", *The Guardian*, 26 March 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/mar/26/polar-exploration-ernest-shackleton-ship-found-sea> (accessed 18 December 2022).

over identity and the meaning of remote areas.²⁵ Considering these sites and organisations from a transnational perspective adds important historical depth to how these meanings are constructed.

Possible Arctic futures also depend on this past.²⁶ As this conclusion has shown, many ideas about the Arctic today are connected to historical events and ideas of the region shaped through travel. British travellers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, travelling in Scandinavia and Scandinavian Arctic colonies, contributed to ideas of the North with their published travel accounts and these ideas persist. Travel writing also tells us about the region in the period and about the British travellers who visited – how they moved through space and time, practically and discursively, how they perceived the places they visited, and how those perceptions were shaped. The influence of local people in building these ideas and experiences of travel cannot be understated and this thesis has attempted to show how travel and its productions are collaborative processes, even in unconscious ways. Tracing the key considerations of the travellers in their books, primarily their ideas of empire in the Arctic and beyond, their understandings of travel and place in temporal terms, and their conceptions of and negotiations with modernity, demonstrates how the Arctic was never outside of history. Moving beyond the Arctic blank requires understanding this Arctic history in its range and its specificity.

²⁵ Ween and Abram, “The Norwegian Trekking Association” and Hege Westskog, Tor H. Aase and Iris Leikanger, “The Norwegian trekking association: conditions for its continued existence with new tourism patterns”, *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, vol. 21, no. 3 (2021): 341-59.

²⁶ For a history of Arctic futures, see Wormbs, *Competing Arctic Futures*.

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