

Cold Comforts: Women Making Inuit and Qallunaat Homes in the Eastern Arctic and
North American Cultures of Exploration, 1890-1940

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the experiences of white and Inuit women who were involved with American expeditions in North America's Eastern Arctic between 1890 and 1940. In studying the intersecting histories of women who were participant in and affected by Arctic exploration, it considers how their movements prompted them to think about the different meanings of "home." A concept encompassing familial, racial, gender, and age relations, "home" functioned as a primary discursive field through which women experienced Inuit and *Qallunaat* spaces and cultures. At a public level, within Britain, America, and Canada's transatlantic cultures of Arctic exploration, prevalent ideologies of domesticity provided an impetus for settler women's social and geographical mobility, as they revised understandings of home through their popular Arctic narratives. Efforts to transform Arctic environments imaginatively into plausible homescapes shaped dominant perspectives of the Arctic in Canada, Britain, and the United States. This thesis also brings needed complexity to historical understandings of home relative to Arctic space by examining the lives of two Inuit women who entered the period's exploratory culture by making well-publicized trips to the United States. Looking at white and Inuit women's entangled experiences of home in America as well as in the Arctic demonstrates that *Qallunaat* spaces were no more "natural homes" than were Inuit birthplaces in the Eastern Arctic.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Josephine Peary's large Brooklyn apartment boasted two parlours. In Victorian domestic culture, parlour arrangement constituted a form of semi-public self-expression for middle-class women, who were viewed as the moral and emotional centres of home and family life.¹ Josephine Peary's parlours communicated to her guests that she was a woman of cosmopolitan tastes, a discerning consumer of rare and valuable household objects, but they were also expressive of other, less conventional, ideas about home and women's place within it. At the time that Josephine and her husband Robert were renting this apartment in the mid-1890s, Josephine had overwintered in the Arctic twice, and her parlours reflected these experiences. She decorated the smaller of the two rooms in a simple colour scheme; while the walls were painted blue, all of the furnishings were covered with white furs, with "white skins on the floor, including two white wolfskins," and "a mass of white bearskins" piled up on the large couch that formed the principal piece of furniture in the room.² Paintings and photographs of Arctic landscapes filled the larger parlour; ivory carvings bedecked the mantle, and walrus tusks framed the fireplace grate.

The furnishings on either side of the fireplace presented an interesting juxtaposition of different elements of Josephine Peary's domestic identity. To the left sat a piano, an

¹ Katherine C. Grier, *Culture and Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850-1930* [1988] (Washington: DC: Smithsonian Books, 2010), esp ch. 2. Patricia Pierce Erikson explores this issue with particular reference to Josephine Peary in "Homemaking, Snowbabies, and the Search for the North Pole: Josephine Diebitsch Peary and the Making of National History," in *North by Degree: New Perspectives on Arctic Exploration* eds. Susan A. Kaplan and Robert McCracken Peck (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2013), 257-288.

² "Mrs. Peary and her Furs," *The New York Times* 14 March 1897, 11, *New York TimesMachine*.



Figure 1.1: Josephine Peary at her Piano, Brooklyn, 1890s
(Image 13, *Josephine Diebitsch Peary Images* (2017) , https://dune.une.edu/jpeary_images/13)

instrument deeply imbricated in Victorian ideologies of domesticity (**Fig. 1**). Pianos testified to the level of genteel cultural accomplishment attained by middle-class women;

at another level, music was believed to have moral value as well as artistic qualities, and the image of Josephine Peary playing her piano for family and guests was suggestive of the range of moral and physical comforts that she was capable of providing within the confines of her home.³ To the right of the fireplace, atop a small but ornately carved table, sat the bust of an Inuk man, based on a plaster cast of “Nupsah,” “the first person to have a plaster cast taken in the arctic regions.”⁴ “Nupsah,” whose proper Inuktun name was Nuktaq, was father to Eqariusaq, a young woman from Avanersuaq (Northwestern Greenland) who had lived with the Pearys the year prior. The bust was framed by narwhal tusks, tied together with red ribbon, which had been arranged in the style of a *tupic*, the tent-style summer home used by Inuit across the Eastern Arctic. At the foot of the table sat a stuffed white seal pup which reportedly looked “as if it might speak” at any moment.⁵ (Fig. 2) The effect, as a *New York Times* reporter put it, was the feeling of being “transported to the Arctic regions” upon entering the Pearys’ home.⁶ While the reporter acknowledged that the home’s “atmosphere, which is that of every comfortable Brooklyn home, spoils to some extent the delusion of arctic regions,” objects and images bespeaking an Arctic environment existed alongside the domestic comforts of home, all embodied in Josephine Peary’s “warmth and brightness and enthusiasm.”⁷ In the context of Mrs. Peary’s parlours, Arctic landscapes, animal furs and bones, Inuit art and architecture, as well as a

³ Craig H. Roell, *The Piano in America, 1890-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), xxviii-xxxii.

⁴ “Mrs. Peary and Her Furs,” 11.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ “In Frozen Clime: How Mrs. Peary Lived in the Far North and What She Told About It in Her Fur Lined Brooklyn Home,” *New York Sun* 1895-1896, Scrapbooks, box 23, folder 22, Josephine Diebitsch Peary Papers (JDPP), Maine Women Writers Collection, University of New England, Portland, Maine.

plaster representation of the Inuit themselves, were reframed simultaneously as exotic household objects *and* visual and material representations of white subjectivity: namely,



Figure 1.2: Bust of Nuktaq in Josephine Peary's Parlour, 1890s
(Image 4, *Josephine Diebitsch Peary Images* (2017),
https://dune.unc.edu/jpeary_images/4)

Josephine Peary's identity as an Arctic explorer. This presentation of the domestic interior ran counter to prevailing nineteenth-century understandings of the Arctic and the ideal middle-class home, two imagined spaces that Karen Routledge argues were increasingly defined over the course of the century against one another in antithetical terms.⁸ And yet, Josephine Peary's parlours suggested that the Arctic could be readily absorbed into the spatial and cultural ambits of Victorian domesticity. One of the implications of her vision of a domesticated Arctic was the suggestion that Northern environments could be used as powerful backdrops for the performance of middle-class white femininity.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, North America's Eastern Arctic became, despite its perceived geographical remoteness, ideologically central to popular cultures in Britain, Canada, and particularly the United States. In the fifty years preceding the Second World War, the well-publicized involvement of a handful of white women in exploring this area of the Arctic provoked trans-Atlantic white publics, not to mention the women themselves, to think about a number of issues that were at the very heart of their domestic cultures and the racial and gendered bases of their national identities. In particular, the idea of white women in the Arctic called into question what had previously been an uninterrupted sequence of mutually constitutive identifications between the Arctic explorer and the normatively masculine white male: this white man was, in turn, imagined politically to be the model national citizen and, imagined physically, to be the most reliable knowing body and empirical observer within Western sciences, including geographical exploration. Female explorers and contributors to Arctic cultures of exploration therefore

⁸ Karen Routledge, *Do You See Ice? Inuit and Americans at Home and Away* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2018), xiv-xv.

tapped into urgent public debates concerning the natural roles and rights of white women within British and settler national and scientific communities, and to what extent the moral imperatives and geographical borders of feminine domesticity extended outside of the confines of the household. This constellation of debates had the potential to reorganize conventional understandings of “home” and the related ideology of domesticity at both familial and national scales.

In bringing to light the intersecting histories and travels of five women involved in Arctic exploration in this period, this study considers how their movements prompted them to think personally about the meanings of “home,” as concepts encompassing familial, racial, gender, and age relations, place, and domestic ideology, functioned as one of the primary discursive fields through which women incorporated their encounters with Arctic peoples and environments into their shifting worldviews. It also addresses how these individuals publicly framed their explorations in terms of their familial relations and expected roles within the home, thereby inviting their audiences to think about home and domesticity in new ways. Yet, while this thesis is concerned with the tremendous material, cultural, and psychological effort white women expended in order to imaginatively transform the Arctic into a homescape for themselves and for their audiences, their narratives and experiences do not offer a complete picture of how people thought about home relative to Arctic environments during this period. I am keen to acknowledge that different regions of the Arctic have represented natural homelands to Indigenous peoples from time immemorial.⁹ For this reason, I have chosen to include in my five-person study

⁹ *Ibid.*, xiv. Routledge has rightly encouraged settler scholars of the Arctic to resist “enduring assumptions about the Arctic as a grim and inferior region” and to consider Inuit perspectives in our approach to Arctic history.

two Indigenous women for whom the Arctic was home, who nevertheless entered the period's trans-Atlantic culture of Arctic exploration by making well-publicized trips to the United States. Their travels outside of the Eastern Arctic mirrored the journeys of white explorers, albeit in a directionally inverted form. They, too, compared Arctic and American environments against one another relative to their own ideas of home, but their understandings of home and family life were shaped by different Indigenous worldviews, formed through their engagements with and participation in Arctic life. Incorporating their perspectives into my study of women making home in the Arctic helps to demonstrate that British and settler nations were no more "natural homes" than the birthplaces of these women in the Eastern Arctic.¹⁰

The earliest Arctic sojourner was American Josephine Peary (1863-1955), who made her first trip to the Arctic in 1891. Peary's articulated reasons for Arctic travel were derived from her role as a middle-class wife, and particularly her desire to act as a helpmeet to her husband, explorer Robert E. Peary, in his quest for the North Pole. Between 1891 and 1902, Josephine Peary sailed North five times as an adjunct to the Peary expeditions, visiting Inughuit territories along the coast of Northwestern Greenland, as well as overwintering on Ellesmere Island. Canadian nurse Mina Hubbard (1870-1956) made headlines across North America and Britain in 1905 when she set off on a canoe journey with four Indigenous guides through the Labrador peninsula, exiting the interior at Ungava Bay (part of the Inuit territory of Nunatsiavut), which faces across the Hudson Strait toward Baffin Island. Like Peary, Hubbard described her Labrador expedition as an expression of wifely devotion: she sought to complete the journey begun by her husband, American

¹⁰ Ibid., 36.

journalist Leonidas Hubbard Jr., who had died in the attempt two years prior. While in Nunatsiavut, Hubbard's life intersected briefly with that of Elizabeth Ford (1885-1965), the third subject of this study. Born in Labrador, Ford was the daughter of a Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) agent, and was of Labrador Inuit and English descent. Like the other women in this study, Ford also travelled through the Arctic, relocating to numerous HBC posts along both shores of the Hudson Strait with her first husband, William Ford. After William Ford's death in 1913, Elizabeth made a final relocation to the midwestern United States, where she wrote and lectured about her life in the Arctic.

This study also addresses the ways in which young women and girls grappled with the issues that characterized the female experience of Arctic exploration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The fourth subject of this study is Marie Peary (1893-1978), daughter of Josephine and Robert Peary, who was born on Josephine's second trip to Greenland in 1893. The first ten years of Marie's life were spent moving between the Pearys' homes in Greenland, on Ellesmere Island, and in the United States, constituting a unique experience of white, middle-class American childhood set against the backdrop of Arctic exploration. The Inughuit woman Eqariusaq (~1881-?) is the fifth and final subject. Comparably with Marie Peary, her childhood was spent reckoning with the geographical and cultural divides between life in the Arctic and the United States, as she was taken from her home in Avanersuaq to spend a year living with Josephine and Marie Peary in Washington, D.C. from 1894 to 1895. While these five women moved along a range of geographical trajectories in the Eastern Arctic, propelled by different cultural currents and historical circumstances, the stories they told about their travels, as well as the stories that were told about them, represent significant contributions to a turn of the

century, trans-Atlantic culture of Arctic exploration that centered on the circulation of people, objects, and ideas between the Canadian Arctic and the United States.

While this study attempts to link Arctic, Inuit, and exploration histories with relevant cultural trends, economic flows, human movements, and historical phenomena in the United States, Britain, and Southern Canada, the primary geographical setting under consideration is the Eastern portion of the North American Arctic. Scholars' definitions of the threshold marking the beginning of Arctic space vary, ranging from the Arctic Circle to the 10°C isotherm as measured in July.¹¹ Like historians Shelagh Grant and Adriana Craciun, I address these definitional inconsistencies – in addition to the considerable range of historical understandings of Arctic geography – by defining the Arctic as those territories positioned above the treeline, a demarcation roughly corresponding to the boundary between Inuit homelands and the territories of Northern Indigenous groups, such as the Innu and the Dene.¹² Working with this understanding of the Arctic as a unique ecological zone that was simultaneously regarded by outsiders as forbidding and unhomely, and by the Inuit as a homeland (Inuit Nunangat), North America's Eastern Arctic region can be said to encompass Northern Labrador (Nunatsiavut), Baffin and Ellesmere Islands (now belonging to Nunavut), as well as Inughuit territory in Greenland (Avanersuaq).¹³ From an oceanic perspective, these lands border the Davis Strait and Baffin Bay region, an area with a history of Inuit settlement and European presence that is distinct from the central

¹¹ Adriana Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster: Authorship and Exploration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 12.

¹² Shelagh D. Grant, *Polar Imperative: A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010), 6.

¹³ *Ibid.*

and Western Arctic.¹⁴ This portion of the North Atlantic and Arctic Oceans also occupied a particular place of prominence in the trans-Atlantic polar imaginary of the early twentieth century as the location of several well-publicized American exploratory expeditions, including, most notably, those conducted by the Pearys and the Hubbards. Indeed, Robert Peary went so far as to identify this oceanic zone as the “pre-eminently the American route” to the North Pole.¹⁵

1.1 Historiographical Contexts

This thesis contributes to four historiographical fields: gender and women’s history, Arctic history, imperial and colonial history, and critical biography. Specifically, the thesis will

¹⁴ While archeologists believe all modern Inuit to be descended from the same culture of Thule Inuit, the Thule moved through and settled in different parts of the Arctic at different times, originating as an ancient Alaskan whaling culture. Between AD 1000 and 1200, the Thule left northern Alaska and made their way across the North American Arctic, eventually reaching as far East as Greenland. John C. Kennedy, introduction to *History and Renewal of Labrador’s Inuit-Métis* (St. John’s, Newfoundland: ISER Books, 2014), 19. Lyle Dick, *Muskox Land: Ellesmere Island in the Age of Contact* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2001), 61. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Western Arctic saw the development of complex gold rush and American and Canadian settler societies that deserve their own distinct scholarly treatment. For more on the Western Arctic, see Kerry Abel, “The Northwest and the North,” in *Canadian History: A Reader’s Guide Volume 1: Beginnings to Confederation*, ed. M. Brook Taylor (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 325-355; Adam Arenson, “Anglo-Saxonism in the Yukon: The *Klondike Nugget* and American-British Relations in the ‘Two Wests,’ 1898-1901,” *Pacific Historical Review* 76:3 (2007): 373-404, doi: 10.1525/phr.2007.76.3.373; Kenneth Coates, *Canada’s Colonies: A History of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1985); Ken S. Coates and William R. Morrison, *Land of the Midnight Sun: A History of the Yukon* [1988] 2nd ed. (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2017); Ken S. Coates and William R. Morrison, *Strange Things Done: Murder in Yukon History* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s, 2004); John Herd Thompson, “The West and the North,” in *Canadian History: A Readers Guide Volume 2: Confederation to the Present*, ed. Doug Owram (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 341-374; Julie Cruikshank, *Life Lived like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 1990).

¹⁵ Peary quoted in Dick, *Muskox Land*, 223.

contribute to ongoing efforts in gender and women's history to address the role played by race in women's experiences and identifications in the past by highlighting how homes America and the Arctic functioned as colonial contact zones; the project refines our historical understanding of the Arctic as a particular and unique region that was nevertheless fully connected to global processes and cultural imaginaries by examining the ways in which individual women participated in both local and global registers of Arctic history; methodological insights from imperial and colonial histories are also deployed, while addressing the fact that the material conditions of imperialism or settler colonialism did not necessarily characterize and cannot fully capture the nature of intercultural relations in the Eastern Arctic; finally, this project applies the methods of critical biography to the study of a region not typically incorporated into biographical studies of geographically mobile individuals: the Arctic.

1.1.1 Gender and Women's History

Existing studies of Elizabeth Ford, Mina Hubbard, Marie and Josephine Peary, and Eqariusaq are more readily situated within the linked fields of gender and women's history than within Arctic and exploration historiographies. While the amount of scholarly attention devoted to the biographies and Arctic activities of these women has ranged widely – Mina Hubbard is perhaps the best studied female Arctic traveller of this period, while Eqariusaq's life has been given only cursory consideration – they share some general themes and methodological preoccupations. Scholars interested in members of this female cohort of Arctic travellers have been chiefly concerned not with the Arctic environments in which they operated, but with ways in which their subjects reconciled their identities as

women with their roles as Arctic agents. These questions of identity have usually been explored through a close reading of the texts the women authored, including diaries, published travelogues and memoirs, and fiction.¹⁶ Both Sherrill Grace and Lisa LaFramboise have, for example, analysed Mina Hubbard's field diary and publications in order to evaluate how Hubbard constructed herself as an authorial and gendered subject in the male-dominated fields of exploration and publishing.¹⁷ Elizabeth Ford, credited by Robin McGrath as the author of the first full-length Inuit autobiography, *Land of the Good Shadows* (1940), has been studied in similarly literary terms.¹⁸ In their emphasis on

¹⁶ Lena Aarekol, "The *Snow Baby* Books: Mediating Arctic Experiences to Children," in *The Arctic in Literature for Children and Young Adults*, eds. Heidi Hansson, Maria Lindgren Leavenworth and Anka Ryall (New York and London: Routledge, 2020), 57-69. Lisa Bloom, *Gender on Ice: American Ideologies of Polar Explorations* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 39-42. Heidi Hansson, "Feminine Poles: Josephine Diebitsch-Peary's and Jennie Darlington's Polar Narratives," in *Cold Matters: Cultural Perceptions of Snow, Ice and Cold*, eds. Heidi Hansson and Catherine Norberg (Umeå: Umeå University and the Royal Skyttean Society, 2009), 105-123, <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:umu:diva-25471>. Patricia Pierce Erikson's cogent study of Josephine Peary's contributions to America's culture of Arctic exploration at the turn of the century is unusual for using non-textual pieces of evidence, including photography, textiles, and objects of material culture in her analysis of Peary's performance of her identity as an appropriately feminine explorer. See Erikson, "Homemaking, Snowbabies, and the Search for the North Pole," 257-288.

¹⁷ Sherrill Grace, "'Hidden Country': Discovering Mina Benson Hubbard," *Biography* 24:1 (Winter 2001): 273-287, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/docview/215617078?accountid=10406>. Sherrill Grace, "A Woman's Way: From Expedition to Autobiography," in *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* by Mina Benson Hubbard, ed. Sherrill Grace (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), xvii-lxxv. Sherrill Grace, "Inventing Mina Benson Hubbard: From Her 1905 Expedition Across Labrador to Her 2005 Centennial (And Beyond)," *Nordlit* 22 (August 2007): 49-69, doi: <https://doi.org/10.7557/13.1499>. Lisa LaFramboise, "'Just a Little Like an Explorer': Mina Hubbard and the Making of *A Woman's Way*," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 39:1 (2001): 7-44, doi: <https://doi.org/10.33137/pbsc.v39i1.18198>.

¹⁸ Robin McGrath, *Canadian Inuit Literature: The Development of a Tradition* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1984), 85. Dale S. Blake, *Inuit Autobiography: Challenging Stereotypes* (PhD diss., University of Alberta, 2000), 65-93, <https://www.nlc-bnc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/ftp02/NQ59938.pdf>. Elizabeth Ford's

textuality, discourse, and female subject formation, these studies speak less to historians of Arctic exploration than they do to the large body of historical scholarship on female travellers and travel writers.¹⁹

While female-authored travel narratives of the British tradition have their generic origins in the eighteenth-century, a particularly rich cluster of relevant scholarship comes from work done in cultural history since the 1990s on nineteenth-century British women's travel in the colonies.²⁰ Benefitting from the insights of postcolonial theory and the

collaborations with missionary and linguist Edmund James Peck are studied in Sylvia Brown, "Edmund Peck and the Making of the *Eskimo-English Dictionary*: Myths of the Missionary Lexicographer," in *Adventuring in Dictionaries: New Studies in the History of Lexicography*, ed. John Considine (Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 282-284.

¹⁹ There is also a growing body of literature from the past ten years on Indigenous travellers that is relevant to this thesis. Scholarship on Indigenous mobility resists historic representations of Indigenous peoples as culturally and geographically static, and resituates the geographical location of the contact zone to metropolitan cores. In this literature, Indigenous mobility has been analysed as evidence of Indigenous peoples' capacity for "tenacious adaptation" in the face of settler colonial incursions. Alan Lester and Zoe Laidlaw, introduction to *Indigenous Communities and Settler Colonialism: Land Holding, Loss and Survival in an Interconnected World*, eds. Zoe Laidlaw and Alan Lester (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 11. See also Jane Carey and Jane Lydon, eds., *Indigenous Networks: Mobility, Connections and Exchange* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014); Kate Flint, *The Transatlantic Indian, 1776-1930* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009); Cecilia Morgan, "'A Wigwam to Westminster': Mohawk Identity in Imperial Britain, 1890s-1990s," *Gender & History* 15:2 (2003): 319-341, <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/doi/abs/10.1111/1468-0424.00305>; Cecilia Morgan, *Travellers through Empire: Indigenous Voyages from Early Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017); Coll Thrush, *Indigenous London: Native Travellers at the Heart of Empire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016).

²⁰ Linda Colley, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007). Carl Thompson, "Journeys to Authority: Reassessing Women's Early Travel Writing, 1763-1862," *Women's Writing* 24:2 (2017): 131-150, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1080/09699082.2016.1207915>. Ingrid Horrocks, *Women Wanderers and the Writing of Mobility, 1784-1814* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Katrina O'Loughlin, *Women, Writing, and Travel in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

methods of colonial discourse analysis, critical biography and feminist geography, scholars such as Sara Mills and Alison Blunt have argued that female travellers and the texts they produced helped to carve out a space for white women's participation in imperial enterprise, and to solidify fundamentally colonial relationships between race, gender, and space in the cultural realm.²¹ These histories emphasize that while the experiences of Victorian women travellers and authors were shaped by different contexts and constraints than their white male counterparts, they nevertheless navigated positions of privilege over the colonized peoples they encountered.²²

Histories of colonial women travellers from the 1990s and early 2000s responded to a preceding, recuperative strain of women's history that tended to celebrate historic women travellers as early feminist icons, without acknowledging that the spaces in which they travelled, those colonial sites that offered them greater scope for social and geographical mobility, were predicated upon the oppression of the colonized, particularly non-white women.²³ As with other feminist historians of the era, these newer studies were concerned, as Blunt and Gillian Rose put it, with "not only the politics of difference

²¹ Mona Domosh, "Toward a Feminist Historiography of Geography," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 16 (1991): 95-104, doi: 10.2307/622908. Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991). Sara Mills, "Knowledge, Gender, and Empire," in *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies*, eds. Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose (New York and London: The Guilford Press, 1994), 29-50. Alison Blunt, *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa* (New York and London: The Guilford Press, 1994). While not dealing exclusively with women travel writers, Mary Louise Pratt's analysis of travel writing as a form of colonial discourse has been foundational to not only future studies of travel writing, but to postcolonial studies writ large. See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York; Routledge, 1992).

²² Wendy Roy, *Maps of Difference: Canada, Women, and Travel* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 9.

²³ Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 2-3.

between genders, but also the politics of diversity among women,” and can be treated as part of a larger transition from women’s history to gender history.²⁴ Beginning in the 1980s, criticisms of Western feminism’s investment in the sex/gender binary emerged. For postcolonial and Third World feminists, the historical category of “woman,” defined according to the experiences of relatively privileged white women working within the Western academy, did not speak to the experiences of women of colour and in the former colonies, who experienced oppression not only because of their gender, but also because of their race and economic position.²⁵ From within the Western feminist academy itself, scholars of a more culturalist bent also called the sex/gender binary into question. Prominent feminists like Judith Butler emphasized the public and performative elements of gender identity.²⁶ Joan Scott also called for feminists to move beyond the study of women and to take up gender as a category of historical analysis, as one of the primary metaphors for power that governed relationships not only between men and women, but the entire fabric of social relations.²⁷ These analyses of gender as a metaphor for power, a

²⁴ Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose, introduction to *Writing Women and Space*, 7.

²⁵ Calls from scholars like Chandra Mohanty and Ratna Kapur for a feminism that acknowledged people’s intersectional identities and multiple experiences of oppression undermined second-wave feminist investments in championing and studying the historical experiences of women, narrowly defined. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” *Boundary* 12:3 (Spring-Autumn 1994): 333-358, doi:10.1086/342914

and *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003). Ratna Kapur, *Erotic Justice: Law and the New Politics of Postcolonialism* (London and Sydney: Glasshouse Press, 2005).

²⁶ Butler’s Foucauldian reading of gender inverted the conventional causal connection between sex and gender: rather than gender flowing from sex as the cultural construction of the meaning of sexed bodies, Butler argued that our ideas about sex as biological fact actually originate in our conceptions of gender difference. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 117.

²⁷ Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review* 91:5 (1986): 1053-1075, doi: 10.2307/1864376.

signifier of unequal social relations, draws upon a Foucauldian understanding of power as diffuse and yet pervasive, cultural as well as institutional.²⁸

Emergent gender historians of the 1990s and 2000s began to historicize the concepts of masculinity and femininity, and to trace their change over time.²⁹ They also considered how gendered metaphors, such as the parent-child relationship, were used in order to describe all kinds of human relationships in the past, including relationships between colonizer and colonized. Today, historians of gender are very attentive to the role played by racial ideology in the construction of gendered identities in the past, as well as the potency of gendered imagery, particularly images of women, in articulating and normalising racial differences in colonial and settler colonial contexts.³⁰ One of the colonial

²⁸ As Geoff Eley has observed, the transition from women's history to gender history both reflected and inspired the more general "cultural turn" of Western historical scholarship in the 1980s away from materialist analyses to studies of the subjective and the symbolic. Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 126-127.

²⁹ See, for example, Thomas Walter Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Harvard University Press, 1992). Philippa Levine, ed., *Gender and Empire* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). Tony Ballantyne, *Entanglements of Empire: Missionaries, Maori, and the Question of the Body* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014). Bradley Deane, *Masculinity and the New Imperialism: Rewriting Manhood in British Popular Literature, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

³⁰ Some classic examples of this approach to colonial gender history include Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002). Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1997). Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Lata Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1998). Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2001). Alys Eve Weinbaum, ed., *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity and Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

sites in which the “elaborate analogy *between* race and gender,” as Anne McClintock has put it, has been particularly visible to historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been the domestic sphere, where home and family life have been conceptualized as one of the “‘intimate frontiers’” of colonial contact and identity formation.³¹ Particularly helpful has been their understanding of home as not only the primary sphere of women’s activity, but also a space and discursive field in which white and Indigenous women interfaced with one another on unequal terms, and formed their identities in relation to one another.³² While colonial gender historians have recognized the ways in which home functioned as a site of colonial engagement in a variety of locations and cultural registers, this thesis brings something new to the field by bring this analysis to bear on engagements between white and Indigenous women in less obviously or traditionally colonial contexts like the Arctic.

Angela Woollacott, “White Colonialism and Sexual Modernity: Australian Women in the Early Twentieth Century Metropolis,” in *Gender, Sexuality, and Colonial Modernities*, ed. Antoinette Burton (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 49-62.

³¹ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 7. Ann Laura Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies,” *Journal of American History* 88:3 (2001): 830, doi: 10.2307/2700385.

³² Esme Cleall, “Far-Flung Families and Transient Domesticity: Missionary Households in Metropole and Colony,” *Victorian Review* 39:2 (2013): 163-179, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/24497076>. Victoria Haskins, “Domesticating Colonizers: Domesticity, Indigenous Domestic Labor, and the Modern Settler Colonial Nation,” *American Historical Review* 124:4 (2019): 1290-1301, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/rhz647>. Victoria Haskins, “On the Doorstep: Aboriginal Domestic Service as a ‘Contact Zone,’” *Australian Feminist Studies* 16:34 (2001): 13-25, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1080/08164640120038881>. Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln, NB and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2009). Kathryn Kish Sklar, “Reconsidering Domesticity through the Lens of Empire and Settler Society in North America,” *American Historical Review* 124:4 (2019): 1249-1266, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/rhz646>. McClintock, *Imperial Leather*.

1.1.2 Arctic History

The field of Arctic history has its origins in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century autobiographies and histories of exploration written by actual Arctic explorers, such as Robert Peary, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and Fridtjof Nansen.³³ As Michael Bravo and Adriana Craciun have argued, narratives of Arctic exploration took on a “historically minded” dimension in the nineteenth century, as explorers sought to situate their travels in time as well as space, emplacing themselves within a noble lineage of European Arctic adventurers dating back to Martin Frobisher’s voyage of 1576.³⁴ Subsequent histories of Arctic exploration from the middle of the twentieth century hewed closely to the model set by the explorer-historians, presenting teleological narratives of exploration as a signifier of scientific progress and the inevitable unfolding of European and American expansionism through the territorial claims made by Arctic explorers.³⁵ As Barbara Kelcey notes, these

³³ Michael Bravo, *North Pole* (London: Reaktion Books, 2019), 15, 132-133.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 170. Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 4, 14. See, for example, Fridtjof Nansen, *In Northern Mists: Arctic Exploration in Early Times*, trans. Arthur G. Chater, 2 vols., (London: William Heinemann, 1911); Robert Peary, *The North Pole: Its Discovery in 1909 under the Auspices of the Peary Arctic Club* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1910); Vilhjalmur Stefansson, *Ultima Thule: Further Mysteries of the Arctic* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1940).

³⁵ This literature is vast and varied, and was rarely produced by academic historians. Some examples include Pierre Berton, *The Mysterious North* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1956); John Edward Caswell, *Arctic Frontiers: United States Exploring Expeditions in the Far North* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956); D. M. LeBourdais, *Stefansson: Ambassador of the North* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1963); Jeannette Mirsky, *To the Arctic! The Story of Northern Exploration from Earliest Times to the Present* [1934] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Farley Mowat, *Ordeal by Ice* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1960); Farley Mowat, *The Polar Passion* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967); John Edward Weems, *Robert Peary: The Explorer and the Man, Based on His Personal Papers* [1967] (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher Inc., 1988);

Arctic histories, centering the “impressive feats of explorers and Company men,” were primarily based on readings of HBC Post journals, exploration diaries and memoirs, and Mounted Police patrol reports, forms of documentation that frequently failed to acknowledge the presence and experiences of Indigenous peoples and white women in Arctic contexts.³⁶

By the 1990s, however, historians of exploration in a variety of global contexts were fully participant in the larger critical turn in the history of science. Scholars began to view scientific fields as being subject to larger cultural trends, and to emphasize the roles of social networks, communities, and collectives in the production of scientific knowledge.³⁷ Historical geographer Felix Driver’s particularly influential concept of nineteenth-century “cultures of exploration” has encouraged historians to think about geographical exploration as a process responsive to and influential on broader social practices and cultural norms. Driver defines exploration as a form of knowledge production associated with a particular set of embodied and cultural practices, including “practices of travelling, seeing, collecting, recording,” observations in the field, followed by “narrating” one’s experiences in the appropriate generic and literary forms.³⁸ Following from Driver

³⁶ Barbara E. Kelcey, *Alone in the Silence: European Women in the Canadian North before 1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 5.

³⁷ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 4. Some early examples of this critical turn in the history of science include Donna Haraway, “Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936,” *Social Text* 11 (1984-5): 20-64, doi:10.2307/466593; Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

³⁸ Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 6-12. Felix Driver, “Scientific Exploration and the Construction of Geographical Knowledge: *Hints to Travellers*,” *Finisterra* 33:65 (1998): 21, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/26873456.pdf>.

and other historians of science, the history of Arctic exploration has been consistently approached through the lenses of social and cultural history in the last twenty years.

In resituating Arctic exploration within mainstream social, cultural, and political contexts, historians have tended to view exploration as a historical process defined by one or a combination of the following characteristics: (1) as a process of knowledge production, at popular as well as scientific levels; (2) as a process of colonial encounter; (3) as a process of identity formation, at a variety of scales, ranging from the individual to the national. Histories of Arctic exploration as a form of knowledge production by scholars such as Tina Adcock, Janice Cavell and Craciun have shed light on the various scientific, literary, racial, gendered, class-based, and moral rubrics used to evaluate the credibility of an explorer's Arctic testimony.³⁹ Histories of exploration with an emphasis on uncovering interactions between Inuit and *Qallunaat* (the Inuktitut term for non-Indigenous Arctic outsiders) from Heather Davis-Fisch, Gísli Pálsson, and Genevieve LeMoine have been invaluable in highlighting Indigenous contributions to the work of Arctic exploration, as well as in illuminating the complex performances and relations of power between different cultural

³⁹ Tina Adcock, "Toward an Early Twentieth-Century Culture of Northern Canadian Exploration," in *North by Degree*, 109-141. Janice Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative: Arctic Exploration in British Print Culture, 1818-1860* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2008). Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*. Other histories that treat exploration as a process of knowledge production include Emilie Cameron, "Copper Stories: Imaginative Geographies and Material Orderings of the Central Canadian Arctic," in *Rethinking the Great White North: Race, Nature, and the Historical Geography of Whiteness in Canada*, eds. Andrew Baldwin, Laura Campbell, and Audrey Kobayashi (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2011), 169-191; Peter Geller, *Northern Exposures: Photographing and Filming the Canadian North, 1920-45* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2004); Jen Hill, *White Horizon: The Arctic in the Nineteenth-Century British Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008); Morgon Mills, "Stephen and Florence Tasker in Unromantic Labrador," *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 32:1 (2017): 151-182, <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/NFLDS/article/view/26101/30328>.

groups that came out of exploratory work.⁴⁰ Finally, historians including Lyle Dick and Michael F. Robinson have also been attentive to the ways in which individual explorers, Northern institutions, such as the HBC or missionary societies, and expansionist nations like Britain and the United States, regarded Arctic exploration as an expression of personal, institutional, and national identities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁴¹ Each of

⁴⁰ Heather Davis-Fisch, "Girls in 'White' Dresses, Pretend Fathers: Interracial Sexuality and Intercultural Community in the Canadian Arctic," *Theatre Research in Canada* 32:1 (2011): 1-29, <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/TRIC/article/view/18574>. Heather Davis-Fisch, *Loss and Cultural Remains in Performance: The Ghosts of the Franklin Expedition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). Dick, *Muskox Land*. Genevieve LeMoine and Nicole Giguère, "Elatu's Funeral: A Glimpse of Inughuit-American Relations on Robert E. Peary's 1898-1902 Expedition," *Arctic* 67:3 (2014): 340-346, <http://pubs.aina.ucalgary.ca/arctic/Arctic67-3-340.pdf>; Genevieve M. LeMoine and Christyann M. Darwent, "Furs and Satin: Understanding Inughuit Women's Roles in Culture Contact Through Clothing," in *North by Degree*, 211-236; Genevieve M. LeMoine, Susan A. Kaplan and Christyann M. Darwent, "Living on the Edge: Inughuit Women and Geography of Contact," *Arctic* 69:1 (2016): 1-12, doi: <https://doi.org/10.14430/arctic4624>. Gísli Pálsson, "The Intimate Arctic: An Early Anthropologist's Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term," *Ethnos* 63:3-4 (1998): 413-440, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.1998.9981582>. Gísli Pálsson, "Race and the Intimate in Arctic Exploration," *Ethnos* 69:3 (2004): 363-386, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0014184042000260053>. Karen Routledge, *Do You See Ice?*.

⁴¹ Individual: Tina Adcock, "Many Tiny Traces: Antimodernism and Northern Exploration Between the Wars," in *Ice Blink: Navigating Northern Environmental History*, eds. Stephen Bocking and Brad Martin (Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press, 2017), 131-177, https://prism.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/handle/1880/51791/9781552388556_frontmatter.pdf?sequence=2; Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), chapter 2; Gísli Pálsson, *Travelling Passions: The Hidden Life of Vilhjalmur Stefansson*, trans. Keneva Kunz (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2005). Institutional: Joan Sangster, "The Beaver as Ideology: Constructing Images of Inuit and Native Life in Post-World War II Canada," *Anthropologica* 49:2 (2007): 191-209, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/25605358>; Christopher G. Trott, "The Dialectics of 'Us' and 'Other': Anglican Missionary Photographs of the Inuit," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 31:1-2 (2001): 171-290, doi: 10.1080/02722010109481589. National: Lisa Bloom, *Gender on Ice*; P. J. Capelotti, *The Greatest Show in the Arctic: The American Exploration of Franz Josef Land, 1898-1905* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016); Lyle Dick, "The Men of Prominence are 'Among Those Present' for Him': How and Why America's Elites Made

these interpretations of exploration history brings valuable dimensions of Arctic exploration to the fore, and they can be found braided together, with varying degrees of emphasis, in each chapter.

Exploration has been a predominant theme within the larger field of Arctic history. The history of the Eastern Arctic from the sixteenth century onwards encompasses the activities of Inuit societies and those of the *Qallunaat*, and the interactions between these groups.⁴² Broadly speaking, Arctic historiography has been characterized by two seemingly conflictual impulses. Historians have tended to either use the Arctic as a lens through which to view large-scale historical processes taking place primarily in other parts of the globe, or to view the Arctic as an exceptional space, cut off from the social, cultural, political and economic forces shaping history in other parts of the world. The first impulse is particularly visible within Canadian historiography. With the exception of Greenland, the Eastern Arctic is now considered Canadian territory.⁴³ The history of the region has

Robert Peary a National Icon,” in *North by Degree*, 3-47; Lyle Dick, “Robert Peary’s North Polar Narratives and the Making of an American Icon,” *American Studies* 45:2 (2004): 5-34, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/40643711>; Erikson, “Homemaking, Snowbabies, and the Search for the North Pole,” 257-288; Michael F. Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible: Arctic Exploration and American Culture* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

⁴² Routledge, *Do You See Ice?*, xv.

⁴³ In 1880, the British government transferred its claim to the Arctic Archipelago to Canada. It was not until the 1890s, prompted by international land claims controversies like the Alaskan Boundary Dispute, that the federal government began to make their sovereignty manifest through the establishment of formal institutions of governance in the north. Grant, *Polar Imperative*, 95. Between 1763 and 1949, when Labrador joined the Canadian Confederation, Labrador was part of the British colony of Newfoundland. Olaf Janzen, “A Reader’s Guide to the History of Newfoundland and Labrador to 1869,” Memorial University, http://www2.grenfell.mun.ca/nfld_history/index.htm. For more on the governance relationship between Newfoundland and Labrador, see Kurt Korneski, *Conflicted Colony: Critical Episodes in Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland and Labrador* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2016).

typically been encompassed within broader narratives of Canadian nation-building and identity, and therefore as a subset of Canadian national history.⁴⁴ These nation-focused studies place particular emphasis on matters of Arctic sovereignty, including international relations, Canada's Arctic defense policy, and the federal government's relationship with Inuit groups, as well as cultural analyses of Anglo-Canadians' historical investment in the idea of belonging to a Northern nation.⁴⁵ Many of these studies are also concerned with

⁴⁴ The history of the Arctic as a unique and specific region was slow to develop within Canadian historiography. William Morton was one of the first Canadianists to make space for a history of the Canadian north in the 1960s. Against those historians like Harold Innis and Donald Creighton who had privileged the central Canadian experience, Morton argued that Canadian history was shaped both culturally and economically by what he refers to as Canada's "northern frontier." While Morton's work emphasizes the importance of Arctic history, he positions studies of the Arctic as a subfield of Canadian national history, as another means of understanding the country's fundamentally "northern character." Morton, *The Canadian Identity*, 89, quoted in Sherrill E. Grace, *Canada and the Idea of the North* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 62. His work inspired a form of Canadian history that deals with Arctic history as part of larger national narratives, rather than as a specific or primary object of study. Liza Piper, "Coming in from the Cold," in "Historical Perspectives: The Landscape of Canadian Environmental History," *Canadian Historical Review* 95:4 (December 2014): 567-573, muse.jhu.edu/article/563430.

⁴⁵ Literature on sovereignty: Jim Burant, "Using Photography to Assert Canadian Sovereignty in the Arctic: The A. P. Low Expedition of 1903-4 aboard the CGS *Neptune*," in *Imaging the Arctic*, eds. J.C.H. King and Henrietta Lidchi (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 76-87; Janice Cavell, "The Second Frontier: The North in English-Canadian Historical Writing," *Canadian Historical Review* 83:3 (2002): 364-389, doi: <https://doi.org/10.3138/CHR.83.3.364>; Janice Cavell and Jeff Noakes, *Acts of Occupation: Canada and Arctic Sovereignty, 1918-25* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2010); Shelagh Grant, *Polar Imperative*; Shelagh D. Grant, *Arctic Justice: On Trial for Murder, Pond Inlet, 1923* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); Shelagh D. Grant, *Sovereignty or Security? Government Policy in the Canadian North, 1936-1950* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988); Philip Goldring, "Historians and Inuit: Learning from the Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 2007-2010," *Canadian Journal of History* 50:3 (2015): 492-593, doi: <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjh.ach.50.3.005>; William R. Morrison, *Showing the Flag: The Mounted Police and Canadian Sovereignty in the North, 1894-1925* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1985); Pamela Stern, "The History of Canadian Arctic Photography: Issues of Territorial and Cultural Sovereignty," in *Imaging the Arctic*, 46-52; Cultural histories of the Canadian North and Arctic: Grace, *Canada and the Idea of the North*; Renée Hulan,

what Canadian presence in the Arctic can tell us about the country's unique brand of internal colonialism, a term that is unpacked in greater detail later in this chapter.⁴⁶

More geographically focused studies of particular areas within the Eastern Arctic are less concerned with the workings of colonialism and imaginative imperialism of the North at a macroscopic scale, tending towards more fine-grained studies of the lived experiences and legacies of intercultural contact from European as well as, more recently, Inuit perspectives. Many of these regional studies share an exceptionalist impulse that has its origins in nineteenth-century perceptions of the Arctic as a forbidding, hostile, and unhomely place that have continued to inform twentieth- and twenty-first-century historiographies. Viewed as an ecologically exceptional environment, relative to the more temperate zones of the globe where Western countries tend to be clustered, non-Indigenous histories typically treat Arctic history in the tradition of social-scientific area studies, as a unique and separate region, situated largely outside of the global cultural, economic, and migratory flows of the past.⁴⁷ These localized histories suggest that Inuit-European relations unfolded differently in each location, depending upon environmental conditions, the moment in which contacts occurred, as well the interests of both parties, and have required separate historical treatment. By the end of the nineteenth century, for example, contact between Inuit and British and American whalers, missionaries, explorers and

Northern Experience and the Myths of Canadian Culture (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); Joan Sangster, *The Iconic North: Cultural Constructions of Aboriginal Life in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2016).

⁴⁶ Sangster, *The Iconic North*, 14-15. A more recent study commissioned by the federal government is Sarah Bonesteel, *Canada's Relationship with Inuit: A History of Policy and Program Development*, ed. Erik Anderson (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2006), <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100016900/1100100016908>.

⁴⁷ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 9-10.

traders had taken place over the course of decades on Baffin Island and over centuries along the Labrador coast. Historians of these areas have therefore had the opportunity to study the complex, culturally hybrid communities of Arctic peoples, visitors, and settlers that grew up around local missions and resource industries, particularly whaling and the fur trade.⁴⁸ The availability of conventional forms of historical records produced through these processes of resource extraction and intercultural interaction has also produced a rich vein of ethnohistorical research on Inuit life, politics, and culture in these regions, a strain of scholarship that increasingly acknowledges Inuit roles as co-producers of the distinct Arctic societies that emerged after contact.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Baffin Island: Dorothy Eber, *When the Whalers Were Up North: Inuit Memories from the Eastern Arctic* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989); Philip Goldring, "Inuit Economic Responses to Euro-American Contacts: Southeast Baffin Island, 1824-1940," *Historical Papers/Communications historiques* 21:1 (1986): 146-172, doi: <https://doi.org/10.7202/030951ar>; Frédéric Laugrand, Jarich Oosten and Francois Trudel, eds., *Apostle to the Inuit: The Journals and Ethnographic Notes of Edmund James Peck, The Baffin Years, 1894-1905* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); W. Gillies Ross, *Arctic Whalers Icy Seas: Narratives of the Davis Strait Whale Fishery* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1985); Routledge, *Do You See Ice?. Labrador*: Stephen Hay, "How to Win Friends and Trade with People: Southern Inuit, George Cartwright, and Labrador Households, 1763 to 1809," *Acadiensis* 46:2 (2017): 35-58, <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/Acadiensis/article/view/25947>; John C. Kennedy, "The Changing Significance of Labrador Settler Ethnicity," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 20:3 (1998): 94-111, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/docview/215644027?accountid=10406>; Kurt Korneski, "Planters, Eskimos, and Indians: Race and the Organization of Trade under the Hudson's Bay Company in Labrador, 1830-50," *Journal of Social History* 50:2 (2016): 307-335, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1093/jsh/shw057>; David W. Zimmerly, *Cain's Land Revisited: Culture Change in Central Labrador, 1775-1972* (St John's, Newfoundland: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1975).

⁴⁹ Eber, *When the Whalers Were Up North*. Susan A. Kaplan, "Labrador Inuit Ingenuity and Resourcefulness: Adapting to Complex Environmental Social, and Spiritual Environment," in *The Nunatsiavummiut Experience: Settlement, Subsistence, and Change Among the Labrador Inuit*, eds. David C. Natcher, Lawrence Felt and Andrea Procter (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012), 15-42; John C. Kennedy, ed., *History and Renewal of Labrador's Inuit-Métis*; John C. Kennedy, "Being and becoming

Ellesmere Island, on the other hand, located in the High Arctic, and comprised of the most rugged landscape of North America's Arctic Archipelago, has only been episodically populated, primarily by Inughuit communities who crossed the Nares Strait from Greenland on hunting expeditions.⁵⁰ Inuit-European and Inuit-American encounters on Ellesmere Island have accordingly been confined to brief episodes of exploration involving Inuit and Americans, episodes which have been treated by historians as characteristic of intercultural relations and hierarchies of power between explorers and Inuit in other, more consistently populated parts of the Arctic.⁵¹

Inuit in Labrador," *Études/Inuit/Studies* 39:1 (2015): 225-242, doi: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1036085ar>. Studies of Avanersuaq (Northwestern Greenland) are similarly preoccupied of ethnohistorical research on the Inughuit, the northernmost Inuit community on the globe, who have been subjects of considerable interest to anthropologists and ethnographic researchers, by virtue of their relative geographical isolation from other human societies, from the time that they came into contact with Europeans in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Dick, *Muskox Land*; Bjarne Grønnow, "Living at a High Arctic Polynya: Inughuit Settlement and Subsistence around the North Water during the Thule Station Period, 1910-53," *Arctic* 69:1 (2016): 1-15, doi: <https://doi.org/10.14430/arctic4573>; Lemoine, "Elatu's Funeral," 340-346; LeMoine and Darwent, "Furs and Satin," 211-236; Lemoine, Kaplan and Darwent, "Living on the Edge," 1-12; Knud Rasmussen, *Eskimo Folk-Tales*, trans. W. Worster (London and Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1921); Knud Rasmussen, *The People of the Polar North: A Record*, trans. G. Herring, illus. Count Harald Moltke (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1908).

⁵⁰ Dick, *Muskox Land*, 61. This practice continued into the twentieth century, provoking concerns among Canadian diplomats that Denmark regarded Ellesmere Island as *terra nullius*, and not a part of Canada's sovereign territory. Cavell and Noakes, *Acts of Occupation*, 5-6.

⁵¹ These episodes include Lieutenant Adolphus W. Greely's disastrous expedition of 1881 to 1884 to Lady Franklin Bay, which brought together American military personnel and Kalaallit (West Greenlandic Inuit) in a joint venture of exploration, and, of course, Robert Peary's North Pole excursions between 1899 and 1909, which involved the transport of Inughuit families to Peary's camps on Ellesmere Island in order to furnish his expeditions with food and clothing. Routledge, *Do You See Ice?*, 77-109. Dick, *Muskox Land*, 365-385. Lemoine, Kaplan and Darwent, "Living on the Edge," 1-12. Ellesmere Island also figures prominently in postwar Canadian and Inuit histories of the High Arctic relocations that took place in the 1950s. As part of the Canadian government's efforts to consolidate its sovereignty claims in the High Arctic, Inuit from Northern Quebec and

While I am cognisant of the diversity existing among Inuit communities across the Eastern Arctic, both historically and in the present day, general trends are apparent in the historical literature concerned with Canadian Inuit and Greenland's Inughuit.⁵² While a few Inughuit, such as Eqariusaq, who attracted public attention for their visits to the United States in the 1890s, have risen above the threshold of invisibility in the historical record, most histories deal with the Inuit collectively.⁵³ Since the middle of the twentieth century, studies of the Inuit have been particularly concerned with considering the immediate and long-term effects of exposure to Western cultures on Inuit societies, working within the paradigms of cultural attenuation, adaptation, or acculturation.⁵⁴ Over the past twenty years, however, historians and ethnohistorians have begun what Lyle Dick calls "re-framing many of the issues of contact" beyond European ideas about and effects upon Inuit groups.⁵⁵ This reframing has given greater attention to Inuit perspectives, grounded in their

Northern Baffin Island were relocated to permanent settlements on Ellesmere Island, a policy which has significantly affected and disrupted Inuit lives and cultures. For more on the High Arctic relocations, see Alan R. Marcus, *Out in the Cold: The Legacy of Canada's Inuit Relocation Experiment in the High Arctic* (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 1992); Alan R. Marcus, *Relocating Eden: The Image and Politics of Inuit Exile in the Canadian Arctic* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1995); Frank J. Tester and Peter Keith Kulchyski, *Tammarniit (Mistakes): Inuit Relocation in the Eastern Arctic* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994). Tina Loo has recently explored Inuit relocations in Canada's Central Arctic in *Moved by the State: Forced Relocation and Making a Good Life in Postwar Canada* (Toronto and Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019).

⁵² The Eastern portion of the Arctic alone is home to five distinct Inuit ethnic groups: the Inughuit, Labradormiut, Nunavimmiut, Baffin Island Inuit, and the Iglulingmiut.

⁵³ Eqariusaq's story is mentioned in Susan A. Kaplan and Genevieve M. LeMoine, *Peary's Arctic Quest: Untold Stories from Robert E. Peary's North Pole Expeditions* (Lanham, MD: Down East Books, 2019). A fictionalized depiction of Eqariusaq appears in Katherine Kirkpatrick's novel for young adults, *Between Two Worlds* (New York: Wendy Lamb Books, 2014).

⁵⁴ Louis-Jacques Dorais, "Comparing Academic and Aboriginal Definitions of Arctic Identities," *Polar Record* 41:1 (2005): 1, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247404003857>.

⁵⁵ Dick, *Muskox Land*, xxi.

own worldviews and epistemologies, on historical events and interactions with *Qallunaat*.⁵⁶ Historians such as Coll Thrush, Stephen Hay and Shelagh Grant have, for example, challenged colonial perceptions of the Inuit as passive and subservient in their interactions with Europeans by taking seriously the Inuit's fearful emotional response to outsiders known in Inuktitut as *ilira*.⁵⁷ This literature presents Inuit communities as dynamic and adaptive in their engagements with European explorers, missionaries, and whalers.⁵⁸ It therefore joins other Indigenous and settler colonial histories that challenge the "fatal impact thesis," referring to the colonial belief that Indigenous cultures would inevitably wither and fade in the shadow of superior European civilizations.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Hay, "How to Win Friends," 35-58; Barnett Richling, "'Very Serious Reflections': Inuit Dreams about Salvation and Loss in Eighteenth-Century Labrador," *Ethnohistory* 36:2 (1989): 148-169, doi: 10.2307/482276; Routledge, *Do You See Ice?*, xv; Coll Thrush, "The Iceberg and the Cathedral: Encounter, Entanglement, and Isuma in Inuit London," *Journal of British Studies* 53:1 (2014): 65, 69-70, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/24700956>.

⁵⁷ Hay, "How to Win Friends," 51-52. Frank James Tester and Paule McNicoll, "A Voice of Presence: Inuit Contributions toward the Public Provision of Health Care in Canada," *Social History* 41:82 (2008): 538, doi: [10.1353/his.0.0034](https://doi.org/10.1353/his.0.0034); Thrush, "The Iceberg and the Cathedral," 65-70. Grant, *Arctic Justice*, 16.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Eber, *When the Whalers Were Up North*; Richling, "'Very Serious Reflections,'" 148-169. Marc G. Stevenson, *Inuit, Whalers, and Cultural Persistence: Structure in Cumberland Sound and Central Inuit Social Organization* (Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁵⁹ Robbie Shilliam, *The Black Pacific: Anti-Colonial Struggles and Oceanic Connections* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 7-9. Michelle A. Hamilton, *Collections and Objections: Aboriginal Material Culture in Southern Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 70. Northern Indigenous histories have also broadened our understanding of the Indigenous experience of settler colonialism beyond the confrontations with the Indian Act, the reserve system, and the agriculturalism that characterized Indigenous policy in southern Canada. Abel and Coates, introduction, 13. Mary-Ellen Kelm, "Change, Continuity, Renewal: Lessons from a Decade of Historiography on the First Nations of the Territorial North," in *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, eds. Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2001), 79-80.

At their best, histories of exploration have been able to bridge the divide between these two opposing tendencies in Arctic historiography, while benefitting from the methodological insights of both schools. Historians such as Lyle Dick, Karen Routledge, and Heather Davis-Fisch have been able to tease out the significant impact that Arctic exploration had on domestic cultures in Britain and the United States in the nineteenth century, particularly relative to the prevalent ideologies of nationalism and imperial expansionism, while still attending to the unique natural and human ecologies associated with particular sites of exploration and Inuit life in the vast territorial expanses of the Eastern Arctic.⁶⁰ This thesis makes a similar attempt to address the particularities of place associated with different Arctic locations, while always remaining cognisant of more global phenomena and ideologies that gave meaning to women's Arctic experiences. Taking a biographical approach is helpful in this regard, as individual lives, lived at the level of the local and the everyday, are simultaneously influenced by and participate in larger social phenomena and cultural contexts.

1.1.3 Imperial/Colonial Historiographies

While challenging ideas of Arctic exceptionalism, Adriana Craciun has acknowledged “the Arctic’s uniqueness in terms of colonial history, economic development, indigenous

⁶⁰ Lyle Dick considers Inuit-*Qallunaat* encounters on Ellesmere Island, with particular attention to how American and Inughuit worldviews shaped the terms of contact. Dick, *Muskox Land*. Karen Routledge focuses on Cumberland Sound, Baffin Island in her analysis of the ways in which American whalers and Baffin Island Inuit thought about home in Routledge, *Do You See Ice?*. Heather Davis-Fisch’s innovative analysis of Arctic exploration uses insights from performance studies to make sense of interactions between Britons, Americans, and Inuit in the Arctic. Davis-Fisch, *Loss and Cultural Remains in Performance*.

histories and governance, missionary intrusion, and environmental history.”⁶¹ Arctic scholars have accordingly struggled to situate their research within existing theoretical paradigms for understanding relations of power between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups, which have typically been classified as imperial, colonial, or settler colonial relations.⁶² While some Canadian historians like Ken Coates and Kerry Abel have described the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut as “colonies of the federal state” in a deliberate effort to highlight Canada’s history of internal colonialism in the Arctic, other historians have described “colonial relations” between Inuit and *Qallunaat* in much less precise terms.⁶³

Imperial and colonial historiographies for their part, have had little to say about the Arctic, as the history of Inuit-*Qallunaat* relations, land use, and settlement resists their interpretive frameworks.⁶⁴ In the 1990s, the combined insights of gender history and postcolonial history converged to inspire a “new” form of imperial history. In contrast to older British imperial histories that debated the relative significance of the metropolitan core and colonial periphery, new imperial historians promote a decentered view of imperial

⁶¹ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 11.

⁶² Davis-Fisch, *Loss and Cultural Remains in Performance*, 23. Sangster, *The Iconic North*, 13-17.

⁶³ Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates, introduction to *Northern Visions*, 10. Coates famously referred to the Yukon and the Northwest Territories as “Canada’s Colonies” in order to highlight the coercive nature of the administrative power held by Ottawa over its Arctic territories, despite being “physically thousands of kilometers distant, and psychologically even further removed.” Coates, *Canada’s Colonies*, 9. Studies of British and American explorers’ activities, for instance, often characterize the Arctic as a staging ground for colonial and imperial “fantasies” that were enacted in other *actually* colonized locations, in India, Africa, or the Philippines, without addressing the unique nature of colonial relations in Arctic contexts. See Bloom, *Gender on Ice*, 2-4; Hill, *White Horizon*; Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible*, 11-12.

⁶⁴ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 11.

geography as a diverse constellation of connected spaces (often described as a web or network), and are interested in considering how national, community, and personal identities were formed through the circulation of peoples, objects, and ideas between imperial spaces.⁶⁵ Proponents of new imperial history, as Cole Harris observes, “identify culture and associated procedures of knowledge generation as the dominant power relations associated with colonialism.”⁶⁶ Scholars including Catherine Hall, Mary Louise Pratt, and Kathleen Wilson argue that colonial power was imagined into being, enacted, and maintained through cultural productions that reinforced the fundamental difference and inferiority of colonized peoples.⁶⁷

While the relations between Inuit and Arctic explorers cannot be readily situated within the British model of metropole-colony relations characteristic of new imperial history, the field’s emphasis on mobility, identity formation, and cultural discourse as critical technologies of imperial rule has insights to offer the study of Arctic exploration. Postcolonial and new imperial historians have, for example, productively reconceptualized the colonial frontier as an intercultural “contact zone,” a term coined by Mary Louise Pratt

⁶⁵ Alan Lester and David Lambert, introduction to *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century*, eds. Alan Lester and David Lambert (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-31.

⁶⁶ Cole Harris, “How Did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments from an Edge of Empire,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94:1 (2004): 165, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/3694073>.

⁶⁷ Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Philippa Levine, introduction to *Gender and Empire*, 1-13. Philippa Levine, “Venereal Disease, Prostitution, and the Politics of Empire: The Case of British India,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4:4 (1994): 579-602, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/4617154>. McClintock, *Imperial Leather*.

in 1991 and further addressed by Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale in 2005.⁶⁸ The idea of the contact zone rejects the notion of the frontier as a geographical location at the fringes of colonial territory and resituates “frontier relations” at the very heart of colonial societies and metropolitan spaces, including private homes.⁶⁹ I draw upon these insights from new imperial history in arguing that Josephine’s parlours in her Brooklyn apartment were as much of a contact zone as Inughuit homes in Avanersuaq were.

As Joan Sangster argues, settler colonialism “accurately describes the dominant Canadian experience” since the early nineteenth century.⁷⁰ Settler colonialism emerged as an object of study in the 1990s, as historians like Patrick Wolfe came to recognize, at the instance of Indigenous activists and intellectuals, the important distinction, particularly from the perspective of Indigenous peoples, between the “colonies of settlement” like Canada or Australia and the “colonies of exploitation” like India or the British West Indies.⁷¹ For theorists of settler colonialism like Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, settler

⁶⁸ Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” *Profession* (1991): 33-40, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/25595469>. Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale, introduction to *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada’s Colonial Past*, eds. Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2005), 1-15.

⁶⁹ Flint, *The Transatlantic Indian*, 273. Pickles and Rutherdale, introduction, 4.

⁷⁰ Sangster, *The Iconic North*, 13. I take my periodization of settler colonialism in Canada from John G. Reid and Thomas Peace, “Colonies of Settlement and Settler Colonialism in Northeastern North America, 1450-1850,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, eds. Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 90. See also John G. Reid with contributions by Emerson W. Baker, *Essays on Northeastern North America, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 10.

⁷¹ Lorenzo Veracini, “‘Settler Colonialism’: Career of a Concept,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41:2 (2013): 317, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1080/03086534.2013.768099>. Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London and New York: Cassel, 1999).

colonialism is defined by its unique relationships to land and labour. Unlike in other colonial contexts, where the labour of colonized populations has been used for exploitative resource extraction, settler colonial states seek to permanently displace and replace Indigenous populations, placing an exogenous population, known as settlers, on Indigenous lands.⁷² John Reid and Thomas Peace have offered a refinement of this understanding by arguing for “a definition of settler colonialism based not only upon the permanent arrival of settling peoples but rather with the ability of those settlers to ‘carry their sovereignty with them’ and, as a society, exert that sovereignty over Indigenous peoples or settlers of other origins.”⁷³ Following Reid and Peace then, settler colonialism did not exist in many parts of North America prior to the nineteenth century, and it is certainly debatable whether Canada’s Inuit experienced a significant or sustained imposition of settler authority over their territory until after the Second World War.⁷⁴

Britons, Americans and Canadians did not imaginatively or materially engage with the Eastern Arctic as a settler frontier as they did in the agrarian regions of Western North

⁷² Lorenzo Veracini, introduction to *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, 3.

⁷³ Reid and Peace, “Colonies of Settlement and Settler Colonialism,” 80.

⁷⁴ Barbara Kelcey identifies the Second World War as a critical hinge point in Canadian Arctic history, as “the juncture at which technology changed transportation and communications enough to ensure that the Canadian north emerged from its isolation, and the war brought an influx of military and engineering specialists into the region.” Kelcey, *Alone in the Silence*, 13-14. Similar arguments are made in Stephen Bocking, “Indigenous Knowledge and the History of Science, Race, and Colonial Authority in Northern Canada,” in *Rethinking the Great White North*, 41; and Sangster, *The Iconic North*, 6. Although Greenland had a different colonial relationship to Denmark, the Avanersuaq region also saw unprecedented *Qallunaat* incursions, particularly in the form of American naval and military occupation, during and after the war. See Matthias Heymann et al., “Small State versus Superpower: Science and Geopolitics in Greenland in the Early Cold War,” in *Cold War Science and the Transatlantic Circulation of Knowledge*, ed. Jeroen van Dongen (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 243-272.

America.⁷⁵ Evidence shows, however, that women like Mina Hubbard and Josephine and Marie Peary forged their ideas of home in colonial contexts in Canada and the United States, and imported their settler mindsets to the Arctic. Their ideas about First Nations groups colored, for example, their impressions of and interactions with the Inuit. Furthermore, the ways in which these women viewed their occupation, even if only temporarily, of Inuit lands, people and resources as natural and unproblematic was linked to the recent histories of Western continental expansionism in Canada and the United States, a process that ultimately culminated in the “closing” of the Western frontier in the 1890s.⁷⁶ Finally, a settler colonial framework is necessary to understand the experiences of Eqariusaq and Elizabeth Ford in America, whether or not they were able to find home there, and how their travels were viewed by white publics in Canada, Britain, and the United States.

1.1.4 Critical Biography

At the time that journeys of exploration were incorporated into the burgeoning field of geography in the nineteenth century, embodied by prestigious institutions such as Britain’s Royal Geographical Society and America’s National Geographic Society, biography was

⁷⁵ Cavell, “The Second Frontier,” 364-368.

⁷⁶ American historian Frederick Jackson Turner declared the frontier “closed” in 1893, based on observations made by the Superintendent of the National Census that the American West was now fully settled. Frederick J. Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894), 199-227, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015004673375>.

established as the “primary medium” for communicating explorer’s findings.⁷⁷ As Michael Robinson and Elizabeth Baigent observe, popular and even scientific assessments an explorer’s credibility as a producer of geographical and ethnographic knowledge were inextricably linked to assessments of their personal character.⁷⁸ Character was frequently exhibited narratively in discussions of individual explorer’s physical and mental struggles in the field, and in moments of subjective introspection and even transformation. These narratives of exploration, in their emphasis on the heroic individual, deliberately occluded the complex social networks that explorers were imbricated in both in the field, with their Inuit collaborators and other expedition members, and at home, where Arctic, as Susan Kaplan notes, explorers “had to circulate in social, political, military and commercial orbits to secure backing.”⁷⁹ Biography of the “great man” style of history, exhibited by nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century explorers, was eschewed by professional historians for much of the twentieth century. Compared with the kind of social history popular in the 1960s and 1970s, with its emphasis on large-scale demographic studies, statistical and structural analysis, biography seemed limited in scope, too subjective, even

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Baigent, “‘Deeds not Words’? Life Writing and Early Twentieth-Century British Polar Exploration,” in *New Spaces of Exploration: Geographies of Discovery in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Simon Naylor and James R. Ryan (London and New York: I. B. Taurius, 2010), 25. The biographical dimensions of exploration narratives has also been highlighted by Robert M. Burroughs, *Travel Writing and Atrocities: Eyewitness Accounts of Colonialism in the Congo, Angola, and the Putumayo* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), 27-32; Stephen Daniels and Catherine Nash, “Lifepaths: Geography and Biography,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 30 (2004): 449-458, doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-7488\(03\)00043-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-7488(03)00043-4).

⁷⁸ Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible*, 5-6, 134-136. Baigent, “Life Writing,” 30-33.

⁷⁹ Susan Kaplan, introduction to *North by Degree*, xii. See also Bloom, *Gender on Ice*, 2-3.

hagiographical.⁸⁰ Biographies have often been compared unfavorably with their close cousin, the microhistory: as Jill Lepore notes,

[i]f biography is largely founded on a belief in the singularity and significance of an individual's life and his contribution to history, microhistory is founded upon almost the opposite assumption: however singular a person's life may be, the value of examining it lies in ... how that individual's life serves as an allegory for broader issues affecting the culture as a whole.⁸¹

It is this "culture as a whole" that historians have tended to view as the more valuable subject of inquiry. With history's cultural turn in the 1980s, however, scholars began to unpack the Eurocentric and androcentric assumptions underlying many of the generalisations that social historians made about the nature of social structures and cultural norms in the past, such as "individualism" and "objectivity."⁸² Historians also became attentive to the shifting experiences of subjectivity, what Judith Butler refers to as the "performativity" of identity, that biographical study has the potential to uncover.⁸³

By the 1990s, "new" or critical biography had emerged, distinguished from older style biographies by its resistance to assumptions about the individual as a unified subject readily available for historical analysis.⁸⁴ New biographers embraced the fragmentary and subjective nature of biographical records, arguing that fragmentation, multivocality, and

⁸⁰ Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *The Journal of American History* 88:1 (2001): 131, doi: 10.2307/2674921. Lois W. Banner, "Biography as History," *The American Historical Review* 114:3 (2009): 580,

<https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/30223919>.

⁸¹ Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much," 133.

⁸² Susan N. G. Geiger, "Women's Life Histories: Method and Content," *Signs* 11:2 (1986): 337-338,

<https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/3174056>.

⁸³ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 5. Banner, "Biography as History," 580-581.

⁸⁴ Banner, "Biography as History," 580-581. Lambert and Lester, introduction to *Colonial Lives*, 19.

narrative discontinuity reflect the instability of historical subjects.⁸⁵ Groups previously imagined to be unavailable for study because of a paucity of documentation, including the illiterate, the enslaved, and the lower classes, have recently been treated to analysis by new biographers. Scholars like Clare Anderson, Harvey Amani Whitefield, Clifton Crais, Pamela Scully and Marisa Fuentes have engaged in creative and experimental readings of historical records in order to sketch the biographies of “subaltern” subjects.⁸⁶ Critical biographical methods have been attractive, for example, to scholars of Indigenous and colonial history who wish to highlight the “intensely local” and personal experiences of Indigenous men and women living through broader processes of colonial change.⁸⁷ Biographers of Indigenous subjects have also resisted static and collectivising definitions of “authentic” Indigenous cultures by highlighting the histories of individuals, such as

⁸⁵ Lambert and Lester, introduction to *Colonial Lives*, 20. Penny Russell, “Life’s Illusions: The ‘Art’ of Critical Biography,” *Journal of Women’s History* 21:4 (2009): 153, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/docview/203249781?accountid=10406>.

⁸⁶ Clare Anderson, *Subaltern Lives: Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean World, 1790-1920* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). Harvey Amani Whitfield, “White Archives, Black Fragments: Problems and Possibilities in Telling the Lives of Enslaved Black People in the Maritimes,” *Canadian Historical Review*, advance online publication, June 2020, doi: 10.3138/chr-2019-0050. Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009). Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

⁸⁷ Sabina Trimble, “A Different Kind of Listening: Recent Work on Indigenous Life History in British Columbia,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 97:3 (2016): 429, doi:10.3138/chr.Trimble. Examples include Sarah Carter and Patricia McCormack, eds., *Recollecting: Lives of Aboriginal Women of the Canadian Northwest and Borderlands* (Edmonton: AU Press, 2011); Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* [1987] (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

Mohawk performers Pauline Johnson and John Ojijatekha Brant-Sero, who exhibited changeable and deliberately theatrical identities.⁸⁸

The methods of new biography have also proved to be attractive to those working in the new imperial and postcolonial history. The study of colonialism as a primarily cultural or discursive phenomenon suggests how empire inhabits private lives, including intimate, domestic, and sexual relationships.⁸⁹ Biographical methods give new imperial historians access to the intimacies of colonial relations where, as Adele Perry has pointed out, “the personal is political and the political personal.”⁹⁰ New imperial history’s conception of empire as a constellation of webs or networks has been illuminated by the study of multiple or connected biographies that can be used to map the social connections between imperial spaces.⁹¹ Historians like Perry are increasingly recognising the utility of biographical methods to trace the movements and multiple subject formations and racial

⁸⁸ Morgan, “Mohawk Identity in Imperial Britain,” 319-341; Morgan, “Performing for ‘Imperial Eyes’: Bernice Loft and Ethel Brant Monture, Ontario, 1930s-60s,” in *Contact Zones*, 67-89; Morgan, *Travellers through Empire*. Ruth B. Phillips, “Performing the Native Woman: Primitivism and Mimicry in Early Twentieth-Century Visual Culture,” in *Antimodernism and Artistic Experience: Policing the Boundaries of Modernity*, ed. Lynda Jessup (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 26-49; Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson, *Paddling Her Own Canoe: The Times and Texts of E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake)* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

⁸⁹ Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties,” 71-73.

⁹⁰ Adele Perry, *Colonial Relations: The Douglas-Connolly Family and the Nineteenth-Century Imperial World* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 260.

⁹¹ Historians like Zoe Laidlaw, Alan Lester and Cecilia Morgan have studied the movements of colonial administrators, settlers and subjects in order to map and give human expression to these imperial networks. Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001). Carey and Lydon, *Indigenous Networks*.

and colonial orders experienced by individuals whose lives cannot be captured or contained within the boundaries of national, imperial, or oceanic frames of analysis.⁹²

1.2 Sources

Many records used for this project are held in archival collections donated by relations of the women under study. In working through these records, I am interested in exploring how “private” or unofficial records that have been preserved to tell personal and family stories can also be used to construct colonial histories. I explore the large-scale historical processes of colonialism, globalisation and nation-building in which these women were implicated while using deeply personal records and forms of documentation. The use of private documents and family archives keeps at the forefront of my analysis the complex and contradictory experiences these women shared as individuals situated within families and domestic spaces, experiences that often complicate our understanding of larger historical phenomena.

These family records are held in archives across North America. The expedition diaries of Mina Hubbard, her husband Leonidas Hubbard, and their Scottish-Cree guide, George Elson, are held in the Mina Hubbard fonds at Memorial University. The Hubbard fonds also include clippings of Mina’s press interviews and reviews of her Labrador travelogue, *A Woman’s Way Through Unknown Labrador* (1908), from British, Canadian and American newspapers. Consistent with scholarly readings of Josephine and Marie

⁹² Perry’s recent study of the connected biographies of colonial administrator James Douglas and his wife Amelia Connolly reconstructs familial and professional connections at the “margins” of the British Empire. Perry, *Colonial Relations*, 255.

Peary as primarily Arctic authors, rather than explorers, the papers of the Peary women form part of the Maine Women Writer's Collection at the University of New England. Of primary interest to my research were the scrapbooks kept by both women with photographs and newspaper clippings pertaining to their lives in the Arctic, their field diaries, drafts and manuscripts, as well as the large body of correspondence among members of the Peary family. Particularly unusual and interesting are Marie Peary's childhood Arctic diaries recorded during her stays in Greenland and Ellesmere Island while she was under ten years old. These archival sources have been supplemented with a plethora of published materials pertaining to the Hubbards and the Pearys, including books and articles written by the women or other Arctic travellers, as well as the extensive press coverage of their activities. As Penny Russell observes, this *mélange* of archival and published records pertaining to women's lives can be read as "direct evidence neither of the world nor the self, but a product of continual engagement between the two, representing multiple ways of being."⁹³ Following from Russell, I do not read "private" documents, such as diaries or correspondence, as being necessarily more revelatory of these women's "true" or "inner" selves than records pertaining to their more public-facing identities. Rather, I treat these women's public and private constructions of identity within the same analytic frame, as representing the range of possible and shifting ideations of self that became available to them as they moved "across and within different cultural and political systems" and varied "racial and gendered orders... ."⁹⁴

⁹³ Russell, "Life's Illusions," 153.

⁹⁴ Scully, "Peripheral Visions: Heterography and Writing the Transnational Life of Sara Baartman," in *Transnational Lives: Biographies of Global Modernity, 1700-Present*, eds. Desley Deacon, Penny Russell, and Angela Woollacott (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 34, 35.

One is not surprised to discover that records pertaining to Elizabeth Ford and Eqariusaq's lives, because they have been less visible in histories of Arctic exploration than the other three white subjects of this study, have to be pieced together from a variety of sources. Traces of Elizabeth Ford's life in the Arctic can be found in HBC records pertaining to her father's and husband's terms of employment with the Company, as well as a number of evocative photographs appearing in a family photo album appended to a Ford family genealogy privately published by Ford's daughter.⁹⁵ More public records are available after Ford's move to the United States, including press coverage and publicity materials pertaining to her Arctic lectures between 1929 and 1965, as well as her published autobiography.⁹⁶ Eqariusaq's biographical "archive" must be excavated from a range of published and archival locations, including press coverage on Eqariusaq's journey to the United States, as well as photographs of Eqariusaq taken in the Arctic, America, and on the ship that carried her between the two locations. The children's stories written by Josephine and Marie Peary relating incidents from Marie's Arctic childhood also deal extensively with Eqariusaq's childhood years, and are used, with a critical eye, as the principal lens through which I attempt to catch glimpses of Eqariusaq's experiences in the Arctic and the United States.⁹⁷ Here insights from critical biography, where potential

⁹⁵ Mary B. Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford, Kingsbridge, Devon* (Indianapolis: National Library Bindery Company, 1991).

⁹⁶ Heluiz Chandler Washburne and Anauta, *Land of the Good Shadows: The Life Story of Anauta, an Eskimo Woman* (New York: The John Day Company, 1940).

⁹⁷ Josephine Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby: A True Story with True Pictures* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1901). Marie Ahnighito Peary, *The Snowbaby's Own Story* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1934). Marie Ahnighito Peary and Josephine Diebitsch Peary, *Children of the Arctic by The Snow Baby and Her Mother* (London: Isbister &Co., 1903).

evidentiary gaps and “weaknesses” are reframed as opportunities to interrogate the presumption of a unitary, knowable historical self, are particularly valuable.

1.3 Thesis Outline

This thesis is organized thematically, rather than chronologically, for several reasons. First, the women’s travels into and outside of Arctic space were clustered, with the exception of Marie Peary’s 1932 Memorial Expedition, within the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. When they spoke and wrote about their time in the Arctic in the 1920s and 1930s, they drew upon their memories of experiences from the same period around the turn of the century. Additionally, the thesis demonstrates that perceptions of the Arctic produced through America, Britain and Canada’s shared culture of Arctic exploration were largely static between 1890 and 1940, when Arctic imagery was consistently shaped by the region’s perceived geographical remoteness, the small number of *Qallunaat* visitors who brought back new information to Southern audiences, and the notable absence of Indigenous and Inuit voices. It would not be until the Second World War that transportation technologies such as the plane and the radio, and wartime and Cold War geopolitics would converge to reshape Southern perceptions of the Arctic as a more geographically and epistemologically accessible region.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Bocking, “Indigenous Knowledge,” 41. Bonesteel, *Canada’s Relationship with Inuit*, 13-14. Matthew P. Farrish and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, “High Modernism in the Arctic: Planning Frobisher Bay and Inuvik,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 35 (2009): 517-544, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2009.02.002>. For more context on the Cold War from a circumpolar perspective, see Ronald E. Doel et al, “Strategic Arctic Science: National Interests in Building Natural Knowledge – Interwar Era through the Cold War,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 44 (2014): 60-80, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2013.12.004>.

Each chapter is focused on the experiences of an individual woman in America or the Eastern Arctic, or two individuals whose lives were somehow intertwined, but who approached their common experiences from very different perspectives, based on their different subject positions. Each chapter sheds light on a particular topic that represented a critical issue for the women who were involved in Arctic exploration, such as questions of epistemological authority, ideas of home, racial authenticity, or childhood. The ultimate goal of this thesis is not to come to definitive conclusion about what life in the Eastern Arctic or “at home” in the United States looked like in this period, but to offer impressions of how five women “saw many of the same things from different perspectives,” a phenomenon that, as Theodore Catton argues, enables us to understand the contact zone kaleidoscopically, as a constellation of “various colliding vantage points.”⁹⁹

In order to enter the discourse of this period’s trans-Atlantic culture of Arctic exploration in any serious or significant way, explorers had to establish their credentials as trustworthy geographical witnesses, capable of transmitting new and accurate knowledge about the Arctic to their audiences in Britain, Canada, and the United States. Chapter Two therefore addresses the unique epistemological challenges faced by women in contributing to the scientific discourse around Arctic exploration by considering Mina Hubbard’s efforts to establish herself as an Arctic authority both in the field in Labrador and for her reading publics in Britain and America. The chapter focuses on writing and other forms of inscription as vital material practices of exploration deployed by expedition leaders at home and in the field.

⁹⁹ Theodore Catton, *Rainy Lake House: Twilight of Empire on the Northern Frontier* (Baltimore, MD: John’s Hopkins University Press, 2017), 5, 6.

Chapter Three takes as its starting point a chance encounter between Mina Hubbard and Elizabeth Ford at the Ford family home in Labrador at the end of Hubbard's journey in 1905. This chapter interrogates how Hubbard and Ford thought about home while in the Arctic in order to compare the perspective of a *Qallunaat* woman, culturally conditioned to view the Arctic as profoundly unhomey, with the point of view of a woman for whom the Arctic was home from birth. While Ford and Hubbard's different geographical and subject positions conditioned their encounters with Arctic peoples and environments, one is surprised to discover a remarkable degree of commonality between the two women's understandings of home, and their roles within it.

Chapter Four continues where Chapter Three leaves off, considering Elizabeth Ford's life in America as an Arctic lecturer and performer. Like Hubbard, Ford must negotiate different elements of her subject position in order to carve out a niche for herself in America's Arctic knowledge economy, but her chosen pathway to epistemic authority differs significantly from Hubbard's. Under her stage name, "Anauta," Ford performs as an Inuk woman from Baffin Island, simplifying for her American audiences the complexities of the hybrid society, known as "Settlers," that emerged in her Labrador home through sustained trade engagements between Inuit and British communities. This chapter expands my analysis of rubrics of authority within cultures of exploration by considering how questions surrounding the "authenticity" of Ford's performances as an Inuk woman – a concept used to circumscribe and delimit Indigenous identities during this period – figured into evaluations of her credibility as an Arctic knowledge-producer.

Josephine Peary achieved celebrity status in the 1890s for her journeys to Avanersuaq as the "first" and "only" female participant in the Peary expeditions. Chapter

Five therefore interrogates the mythology of the solitary white woman explorer, set against a backdrop of Arctic landscapes that were coded as exclusively masculine and Indigenous spaces. The theme of home is once again significant, as I deconstruct the ways in which Josephine Peary deployed middle-class American ideologies of domesticity to hold herself apart from the other women, white and Inuit, who worked with the Peary expeditions, and effaced their presence from the era's culture of Arctic exploration.

Chapter Six considers the legacies of exploratory activities in the Eastern Arctic around the turn of the century by focusing on two young women whose childhoods were shaped by the Peary expeditions in Avanersuaq and on Ellesmere Island in different ways. I compare the Arctic girlhoods of Marie Peary, born in Avanersuaq on her mother's second expedition, and of Eqariusaq, who lived and worked with the Peary family in the Arctic and in America. By teasing out each girl's shifting senses of home as they travelled between the Arctic and America, I attempt to decolonize the very idea of home as a sphere claimed and defined exclusively by white women in the past. While I cannot claim to know everything about how Eqariusaq thought about home and her place within it, I point to a number of suggestive pieces of evidence indicating that home, as defined in Indigenous terms and grounded in Arctic epistemologies, was also a central site of experience and subject formation for Inuit girls and women.

Together, these chapters consider the life histories of five women who have not been the conventional biographical subjects of Arctic and exploration histories. In so doing, this thesis ultimately opens up new perspectives on the entanglement of Arctic, Inuit and *Qallunaat* histories, based around the distinct vantage points and subject positions of each woman. Women's histories of exploration enable us to perceive how Arctic exploration

and middle-class domesticity were mutually enforcing practices, based around the same imagined geographies of home, and the same beliefs in the correlation between differences and race and differences of gender. Both spheres of activity – the exploratory and the domestic, that is – justified colonial relations inside and outside of the Arctic as natural and inevitable. Alongside these larger social structures and cultural processes, these women’s stories also point to the highly personal and individualized ways in which different women made home in the context of this particular constellation of cultural and material practices we call Arctic exploration.

**Chapter 2: Writing in the Production of Explorers as Arctic Witnesses:
The Hubbard Expeditions of 1903 and 1905**

For much of the twentieth century, those who lived outside the Arctic defined the region in terms of its inaccessibility. Until developments in technologies of communication and transportation such as radio and the airplane converged in the 1930s and 1940s to bring the region into more sustained contact with the rest of the continent, very few North Americans had access to direct, first-hand experience with Arctic peoples and environments.¹⁰⁰ Popular perceptions of the Arctic's physical remoteness were therefore frequently entangled with the sense of epistemological remoteness. Arctic environments and peoples were seen as existing outside of the boundaries of the known world. Polar explorer Robert Peary captured his American audiences' view of the Arctic as fundamentally detached from their realm of experience when he described the Arctic explorer as a modern-day Herakles, bridging the geographical and imaginative gaps between "this world ... and the interstellar space which we call the Arctic Regions."¹⁰¹ The Arctic's perceived inaccessibility, which, according to Peary, amounted to a kind of otherworldliness, was particularly acute for *Qallunaat* women, who were not believed to possess the physical or mental fortitude to cross the physical and conceptual threshold between "civilized" and Arctic space.

As a result of the Arctic's inaccessibility, knowledge about the region was developed, in scientific as well as popular circles, through the accumulation of second-hand testimony. Testimony was provided by those privileged individuals who passed

¹⁰⁰ Kelcey, *Alone in the Silence*, 5.

¹⁰¹ Peary quoted in Bravo, *North Pole*, 178.

through and told stories about this “region of maximum inaccessibility,” as Vilhjalmur Stefansson described it in 1920.¹⁰² Many of these individuals, by virtue of the relative novelty of their experiences for Europeans and North Americans, were heralded as Arctic explorers. Two practices were therefore essential to defining Arctic exploration, and the associated practices of knowledge production: the embodied act of witnessing, or sensory observation, followed by the narrativization of the witnesses’ experiences for consumption by a wider audience. As Mary Louise Pratt has argued, travellers’ credibility as explorers was derived from their ability to establish a “rhetoric of presence,” or to “construct an image of themselves as witnesses” through their stories.¹⁰³ Questions of embodiment and subjectivity were therefore central issues in Arctic exploration and knowledge production. This chapter considers how four individuals – two white American men, a Cree man, and a white Canadian woman -- involved with three expeditions to Labrador between 1903 and 1905 related to exploration’s practices of observation and authorship based on their different subject positions, and how ideologies of race, class and gender conditioned their differing abilities to take on the explorer’s roles as writer and witness.

The critical roles played by witnesses and their testimony in the process of Arctic knowledge production has prompted Emilie Cameron to observe that, “perhaps more than any other region in Canada, the North is constituted and ordered by stories... .”¹⁰⁴ Like

¹⁰² This phrase comes from the title of Stefansson’s paper, “The Region of Maximum Inaccessibility in the Arctic,” *Geographical Review* 10:3 (1920): 167-172, doi: 10.2307/207749.

¹⁰³ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 209. Pratt’s concept of the “rhetoric of presence” is developed in Robert Burroughs, “The Travelling Apologist: May French Sheldon in The Congo Free State (1903-04),” *Studies in Travel Writing* 14:2 (2010): 142, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1080/13645141003747231>.

¹⁰⁴ Cameron, “Copper Stories,” 169.

travellers from other geographical contexts, Arctic explorers communicated their stories through a variety of media, including paintings and photographs, public lectures, newspaper interviews, the display of ethnographic objects, or even through the exhibition of Indigenous persons or human remains.¹⁰⁵ By the nineteenth century, however, European and North American publics were coming to view print as the most authentic format for sharing Arctic observations. The relationship between exploration and publication became so entrenched over the course of the century that authorship became an essential element of the work of the successful explorer. As Felix Driver has observed, an individual's transition from observer in the field to published author became as essential to the identity formation of the explorer as their actual journeys into the "unknown" regions of the world.¹⁰⁶

From the late eighteenth century, the experiences of explorer-authors were presented, more specifically, in a very particular form of publication: the first-hand, single-authored travel monograph, designed give readers access to Arctic experience through the eyes of those who had actually been there.¹⁰⁷ Adriana Craciun has challenged historians'

¹⁰⁵ Huhndorf, *Going Native*, 82. For an analysis of this practice from a material culture perspective, see Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner, "Art, Authenticity, and the Baggage of Cultural Encounter," in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, eds. Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 3-19.

¹⁰⁶ Driver, *Geography Militant*, 8.

¹⁰⁷ Louise C. Henderson, "David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels* in Britain and America: Exploring the Wider Circulation of a Victorian Travel Narrative," *Scottish Geographical Review* 129:3-4 (2013): 180, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1080/14702541.2013.826375>. Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative*, 16-19. Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* has been a foundational study in the connections between travel, print, and colonialism, arguing that European travelers and explorers came to know Europe as a colonial power through the generic form of travel writing.

assumptions of an inevitable relationship between Arctic exploration, authorship, and book culture by drawing our attention to “the illustrated, printed, authorized book” as a “special class of object.”¹⁰⁸ Through this specialized medium, Innes Keighren, Charles Withers and Bill Bell argue, explorers’ books became “tangible proxies of observations made ‘out there’... .”¹⁰⁹ In the Arctic travel narrative, writing and witnessing were mutually constitutive, with both activities undergirding the explorer’s credibility as a producer of knowledge. This chapter shows that these exercises were particularly fraught for those, including white women and Indigenous men, who could not embody the intersecting characteristics of whiteness and masculinity that defined the orthodox authorial subject as well as the model scientific witness in this period.¹¹⁰

In recent years, a growing body of literature has drawn upon the combined the insights of book history, literary criticism, and the history of science in order to show the extent to which exploration, in its material practices as well as in its representation in writing, has been entwined with the histories of authorship and print culture. Print, these scholars argue, functioned as a critical authorising mechanism for establishing the reputations of individual explorers and solidifying territorial claims to “new” lands.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 27.

¹⁰⁹ Innes M. Keighren, Charles W. J. Withers and Bill Bell, *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing, and Publishing with John Murray, 1773-1859* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 73.

¹¹⁰ As Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer have argued, the notion of the eye witness that was so foundational to the credibility of European empirical and experimental sciences was not an abstract concept but was actually premised on a particular kind of male and learned individual. Witnesses’ credibility and legitimacy “involved their moral constitution as well as their knowledgeability. ... Thus the giving of witness in experimental philosophy traversed the social and moral accounting systems of Restoration England.” Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*, 58.

¹¹¹ Driver, *Geography Militant*. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*. Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*. Henderson, “David Livingstone’s *Missionary Travels*.” Cavell, *Tracing the Connected*

Specific to the Arctic context, historians including Craciun and Janice Cavell have observed that the increasing textuality of Arctic knowledge production over the course of the nineteenth century meant that explorers' credibility, and the truthfulness of their Arctic testimony, became inextricably linked to the perceived authenticity of their published texts. Cavell has observed, for example, that Victorians perceived a direct correlation between the clarity and simplicity of Arctic explorers' prose and the truthfulness of their stories.¹¹² In light of these linkages among authorship, textual authenticity and the evaluation of exploratory knowledge, Craciun has argued that "key features of exploration history can also be characterized as features of the history of print and authorship."¹¹³ This chapter brings questions and insights from this scholarship to bear on an analysis of three expeditions to Labrador in the first decade of the twentieth century. These expeditions highlight the critical links encompassing the explorer's corporeal witnessing and observation of Arctic peoples and environments, textual authorship, with its associated practices in the field and in metropolitan centres of publication, and the epistemology of Arctic exploration in early-twentieth-century North America.

The first expedition took place during the summer and autumn of 1903, and consisted of three men on a canoe journey through the interior of the Labrador-Ungava peninsula, the site of the contested boundary between Newfoundland and Quebec, and

Narrative. Keighren, Withers and Bell, *Travels into Print*. Daniel W. Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2000).

¹¹² Henderson, "David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels*," 180. Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative*, 19.

¹¹³ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 5.

homeland of the Innu nation.¹¹⁴ The expedition was organized by American journalist Leonidas Hubbard, who invited his friend, New York lawyer Dillon Wallace, and a hired guide, George Elson, a HBC man of Scottish-Cree descent from the James Bay region of Ontario.¹¹⁵ While Leonidas' wife, Mina Hubbard, sailed with the men from New York to Labrador's southern coast, Leonidas felt that the canoeing portion of the trip would be "too hard for [her] to share," and the couple parted ways at Battle Harbour.¹¹⁶ This First Hubbard Expedition, and particularly the tragic demise of Leonidas Hubbard while he was in the field, prompted two subsequent expeditions, both taking place in 1905. One group, self-identified as the Second Hubbard Expedition, was organized by Hubbard's widow, Canadian teacher and nurse turned American homemaker, Mina, who retained George Elson as her chief guide, along with three other Indigenous men hired by Elson.¹¹⁷ The other expedition was led by Dillon Wallace, who hired a crew of young men and university students to assist him with his scientific observations, in addition to an Ojibwe woodsman to act as guide and "general camp servant" for the expedition.¹¹⁸ Both of the 1905

¹¹⁴ Roberta Buchanan, "'Our Wilderness Friends': The Innu," in *The Woman Who Mapped Labrador: The Life and Expedition Diary of Mina Hubbard*, eds. Roberta Buchanan, Anne Hart and Bryan Greene (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 18-26.

¹¹⁵ Roberta Buchanan and Bryan Greene, introduction to *The Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 1. Roberta Buchanan, "The Men: 'Such a Jolly Happy Crew,'" in *The Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 12-13.

¹¹⁶ Anne Hart, "The Life of Mina Benson Hubbard: Finding Her Way, 15 April 1870-16 June 1905," in *The Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 79. Leonidas Hubbard Jr., "Diary of Leonidas Hubbard Jr. Kept During His Expedition into Labrador," 18 September 1903, in *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 179.

¹¹⁷ Mina Benson Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 43. Buchanan, "The Men," 12-15.

¹¹⁸ Dillon Wallace, *The Long Labrador Trail* (New York: The Outing Publishing Company, 1907), 4-5.

expeditions, which were explicit rivals to one another, set out with the objective of completing the work of exploration begun by Leonidas Hubbard two years prior.

The articulated objectives of all three expeditions were the following, as described by Mina Hubbard: (1) to map the region's "two large unknown rivers," the Nascaupée and the George, (2) "to witness the annual caribou migration," and (3) "to visit in their home camp the Nascaupée Indians," a community of northern Innu who were regarded at the time as North America's most "primitive" racial group by virtue of their perceived geographical isolation.¹¹⁹ Each of these objectives was centered on exploratory practices of witnessing and visual observation. Furthermore, in the case of each expedition, acts of witnessing and observation were inextricably linked to their inevitable inscription in writing. This chapter approaches exploration as storytelling, and as an activity that begat stories that not only helped *Qallunaat* understand the Arctic, but their own personal, national, and familial identities. It also highlights how the practices and paradigms of early-twentieth-century exploration simultaneously functioned as gatekeepers of Arctic narrative and knowledge production, silencing particular kinds of stories and their authors. It attends to the hierarchies of race, class and gender that inflated the value and truth status of some Arctic observers' stories over others. The testimony of wealthy white outsiders such as Leonidas Hubbard, Dillon Wallace, and even white women like Mina Hubbard, was elevated over those who considered Arctic environments their home, like the Innu and the Inuit, or those, like guide George Elson, whose motives were suspect because they earned their livings through Arctic travel.

¹¹⁹ Mina B. Hubbard, "My Explorations in Unknown Labrador," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 112:672 (May 1906): 813. Buchanan, "'Our Wilderness Friends,'" 18.

2.1 Sentimental and Scientific Viewpoints: The Hubbard Expeditions as Stories

Craciun has emphasized the “gravitational pull” of the story of British Admiralty’s Franklin expedition as a cultural touchstone for British and North American perceptions of the Arctic. She argues that narratives of the Franklin disaster have been told since the middle of the nineteenth century in ways that link Arctic exploration with the expectation, or at the very least continual threat, of disaster and loss of life.¹²⁰ Outside the Franklin disaster, few stories could be said to better encapsulate the “pathetic romance of exploration” in the Arctic, as one reviewer described it, better than the Hubbard and Wallace expeditions through Labrador.¹²¹

In the face of public speculation back in the United States that Hubbard had been ill-prepared and poorly equipped for the expedition, Mina Hubbard, like her predecessor Lady Jane Franklin, became the staunchest defender of her husband’s reputation as a competent outdoorsman and explorer. It was in this context that she herself undertook the second Hubbard Expedition in the summer of 1905, so that, in her words, her “husband’s name should reap the fruits of service which had cost him so much.”¹²² Upon her return to New England in November 1905, Mina was able to boast that she had “secure[d] to the name” of Hubbard the honor of successfully meeting each of the three objectives of the

¹²⁰ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 2.

¹²¹ Review of *Lure of the Labrador Wild*, *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 37:3 (1905): 190, DOI: [10.2307/198643](https://doi.org/10.2307/198643). This review was published while Robert Peary was president of the *American Geographical Society*.

¹²² Hubbard, *A Woman’s Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 34

initial Labrador expedition.¹²³ While Mina Hubbard's contributions to Arctic knowledge were undeniable, American and British newspapers were interested in the stories surrounding the Hubbard expeditions as much as their geographical results, or, as one reporter put it, the "sentimental and scientific viewpoints."¹²⁴ The fate of Leonidas Hubbard in the field, coupled with Mina Hubbard's remarkable initiative to undertake his "work," which she explicitly framed as an act of veneration, rather than a usurpation, of "the higher purpose" of her husband's life, appealed to the universal literary themes of love and death.¹²⁵

Given the heightened emotional stakes associated with the Hubbards' Arctic expeditions, it is perhaps not surprising that stories, appearing in different media and with a range of different agendas, have circulated around Mina Hubbard's exploratory activities. Once again appealing to the theme of love, one of the earliest stories told about Mina Hubbard's expedition, and one of the longest-lasting in present-day retellings, was the rumor of a romantic relationship between Mina and George Elson.¹²⁶ This story, which

¹²³ Hubbard, "My Explorations in Unknown Labrador," 813. Buchanan, "'Our Wilderness Friends,'" 18.

¹²⁴ "'Come Bid Me Farewell in My Lonely Grave!' How an English Girl's Response to the Dream-Call of her Murdered Explorer-Lover Took her 4,000 Miles Through Savage Africa and Won Her the Applause of Scientific Societies." *El Paso Herald* 19 October 1913, n.p., Library of Congress, *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*.

¹²⁵ Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard Jr., "Labrador from Lake Melville to Ungava Bay," *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 38:9 (1906): 530. Mills, "Stephen and Florence Tasker and Unromantic Labrador," 158.

¹²⁶ This interpretation of the relationship between Mina Hubbard and George Elson was popularized by Pierre Berton, one of Canada's most famous Arctic writers. See Pierre Berton, "The Revenge of Mina Hubbard," in *The Wild Frontier: More Tales from the Remarkable Past* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), 175-208. It also appears in one of the best-known narratives of the Hubbard Expeditions, produced by popular historians James West Davidson and John Ruge. Alongside their other Hubbard-related publications, McGill-Queen's University Press released their own edition of Davidson and Ruge's work: James West Davidson and John Ruge, *Great Heart: The History of a*

appears to have originated with Mina Hubbard's opponents in the Wallace family, may have been intended to call her moral character into question, one of the essential qualities of the reliable explorer.¹²⁷ Other narrativizations include two films, literary productions by Canadian writers Margaret Atwood and Pierre Berton, re-enactments of Mina's journey through Labrador by feminist canoeists, and a play, "Mina's Song," that debuted in 2005 as part of the ceremonies commemorating the centenary of Mina Hubbard's Labrador trip.¹²⁸ In many of these narratives, Mina Hubbard's travels have been treated as part of a uniquely Canadian national history, obscuring the fact that Mina and Leonidas Hubbards' expeditions were, in reality, multinational and multicultural enterprises, conducted in British imperial space. These stories, as Sherill Grace argues, have accumulated over time and become "sedimented in layers of interpretation," such that the Hubbard expeditions have contributed to the "discursive formation" of the Canadian Arctic.¹²⁹ This constellation of "national" exploration stories associates the Arctic with adventure, hardship and disaster at the same time that it gives historical heft to Canada's cultural and geopolitical claims to the Eastern Arctic.

Stories inspired by the Hubbard expeditions helped Canadians, Americans, and Britons make sense of Arctic environments and peoples that were seen to exist outside of the realm of direct experience. More importantly, however, storytelling and acts of textual inscription were central to, and, indeed, an organizing principle for, the exploratory

Labrador Adventure [1988] (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006).

¹²⁷ Anne Hart, "The Life of Mina Benson Hubbard Ellis: Finding Her Way, 1906-1956," in *The Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 406-407.

¹²⁸ Grace, "Inventing Mina Benson Hubbard," 49-69.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 54-55. Grace, *Canada and the Idea of North*, xiii.

practices of Mina and Leonidas Hubbard, as well as their crews. From their inception, both of the Hubbard expeditions were entwined with contemporary practices of publishing, writing and negotiating multi-valent forms of authority as both authors and explorers.

2.2 “Go to Labrador”: Publishing as an Impetus for Arctic Travel

Leonidas Hubbard went to Labrador in 1903 with the explicit goal of using his exploratory experiences as fodder for publication. The expedition was funded by the offices of *Outing* magazine, a New York sporting and outdoorsman’s journal, where Hubbard worked as assistant editor. He pitched the trip to chief editor Caspar Whitney as an opportunity to produce a “bully story” for the magazine.¹³⁰ With the transatlantic emergence of New Journalism in the 1880s, exploratory expeditions were frequently sponsored by daily newspapers and other periodicals in Britain and the United States as a means of manufacturing the kinds of sensational news stories that sold papers.¹³¹ By the first decade of the twentieth century, periodical publication and Arctic exploration were mutually beneficial enterprises. In his work at *Outing*, Hubbard acted as a promoter of North American wilderness tourism for his readership of elite New Englanders with a fondness for outdoor living and recreation. He wrote of his experiences hunting, fishing, and camping in various “out of the way” places in Canada and the United States, including fishing on Lake Superior, visiting HBC posts in northern Ontario, and moose hunting in

¹³⁰ Hubbard, “Diary of Leonidas Hubbard Jr.,” 16 September 1905, 179.

¹³¹ Beau Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensationalism, and Geographical Discovery* (London and New York: Belhaven Press for the Scott Polar Research Institute, 1993), 119-120.

Quebec.¹³² Readers would then be able to enjoy a vicarious wilderness experience through reading Hubbard, or choose, based on Hubbard's recommendations, to undertake a trip of their own. While she had not shown any previous inclinations toward sport or outdoor recreation, Mina accompanied Leonidas on many of his wilderness assignments after their marriage in 1901. She came to enjoy the physical activities associating with outdoor life, including snowshoeing, canoeing, hiking, and camping.¹³³ Leonidas occasionally acknowledged his wife's presence in his *Outing* articles, referring to her only as "Madam," and she was never treated as one of the "protagonists" in his wilderness narratives.¹³⁴

Readers of elite sporting magazines like *Outing* and *Field and Stream* belonged to what Elizabeth Baigent has called the "'gentleman amateur'" school of wilderness enthusiasts who viewed exploration as a particularly noble form of recreation, not as a career or a commercial pursuit.¹³⁵ This hobbyist stance enabled outdoorsmen like Leonidas Hubbard to distinguish their excursions as a different and superior order of activity from those of their hired guides.¹³⁶ While recreational, the wilderness activities of amateur

¹³² Leonidas Hubbard Jr., "Off Days on Superior's North Shore," *Outing* 42:6 (September 1903): 717-724, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951000925576w?urlappend=%3Bseq=722>. Leonidas Hubbard Jr., "Where Romance Lingers," *Outing* 43:6 (March 1904): 649-659, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015070320935?urlappend=%3Bseq=675>. Leonidas Hubbard Jr., "Catching Moose on Spring Crusts," *Outing* 44:1 (April 1904): 77-86, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015039592749?urlappend=%3Bseq=87>.

¹³³ Hart, "Finding Her Way," 72.

¹³⁴ Hubbard, "Off Days," 716.

¹³⁵ Baigent, "Life Writing and Early Twentieth-Century British Polar Exploration," 30-31.

¹³⁶ "The Sportsman's Code" was another cultural script deployed by elite hunters, explorers, and outdoorsmen to reinforce the racial and classed boundaries between themselves and their guides. See Tina Loo, "Of Moose and Men: Hunting for Masculinities in British Columbia, 1880-1939," *Western Historical Quarterly* 32 (2001): 296-319, doi: 10.2307/3650737; Melissa Otis, "Disentangling the 'Native' Guide: Indigenous and Euroamerican Guides of the Adirondacks, 1840-1920," *Cultural and*

explorers had their roots in cultural imperatives and anxieties that were at the very heart of elite American masculine culture. *Outing* readers' impulses toward wilderness recreation were connected to three overlapping ideologies that prevalent among wealthy Anglo-Americans of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Social Darwinism, antimodernism, and the cult of strenuous masculinity.¹³⁷ In the minds of these men, as well as in the scientific institutions they supported, such as New York's American Museum of Natural History, Darwinian theory demonstrated that the Anglo-Saxon "race" represented the pinnacle of human evolution.¹³⁸ Beneath Anglo-Americans' feelings of racial supremacy, however, lay an undercurrent of anxiety that their economic and cultural dominance in American society were no longer secure. The term "race suicide" was first coined in 1901 by sociologist Edward A. Ross; Ross's theory of racial degeneration articulated Anglo-American concerns that the easy and mechanical nature of urban industrial life had made modern men complacent and effeminate. It was felt that this racial decay left them ill-equipped to withstand the onslaught of arriving immigrant groups, the majority of whom were drawn from "lesser" racial stock.¹³⁹

Social History 11:4 (2014): 555-574, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.2752/147800414X14056862572104>; Bill Parenteau, "'Care, Control and Supervision,': Native People and the Atlantic Salmon Fishery, 1867-1900," *Canadian Historical Review* 79:1 (1998): 1-35, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/docview/224278694?accountid=10406>.

¹³⁷ Dick, "The Men of Prominence," 6. Tina Adcock has considered antimodernist strains in Northern exploration in the early twentieth century Canadian context, which lacked the emphasis on American exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny that characterized Anglo-American ideology at this time. Her treatment of the ideologies of antimodernism, the back to nature movement, primitivism, and strenuous masculinity were nevertheless helpful in understanding this particular culture of early twentieth century masculinity. Adcock, "Many Tiny Traces," 131-177.

¹³⁸ Dick, "The Men of Prominence," 9.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

Such racially inflected concerns about the enervating effects of urban industrial life were linked to antimodernist thinking. Like the Romantic movement of the early nineteenth century, antimodernism was characterized by a rejection of rationalism, a regard for history and a romanticization of premodern life, and a focus on the sensory perception of beauty, which was found almost exclusively in natural contexts.¹⁴⁰ Environmental historians have observed that the antimodernist movement signified a sea change in American thinking about the natural world and the wilderness, in particular. By the late nineteenth century, much of the United States, particularly in the East, had been transformed by settler colonialists into a domesticated landscape of urban and pastoral spaces; the wilderness, which had been considered such a hindrance to survival for early American settlers, along with the Indigenous groups who were associated with these “untamed” environments, were no longer considered threatening.¹⁴¹ During this period, popular perceptions of the wilderness shifted away from viewing the natural world as a barrier to civilization, to being a positive influence, and even an antidote to the evils of modern life. Likewise, Indigenous peoples, as “wild men,” were no longer solely considered to be “savages,” but icons of nobility, vitality, and an authentic mode of living.¹⁴²

The solutions to mitigate the enervating effects of modern life identified the white male body, as the “paradigmatic citizen and future national leader,” as the source of social

¹⁴⁰ Terence Young, *Heading Out: A History of American Camping* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2017), 4.

¹⁴¹ Richard William Judd, *Second Nature: An Environmental History of New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 153-155. Carolyn Merchant, *The Columbia Guide to American Environmental History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 35-6.

¹⁴² Parenteau, “Care, Control and Supervision,” 28.

and racial regeneration.¹⁴³ Advocates of “strenuous” masculinity, a term first used by American president Theodore Roosevelt, promoted the recuperative effects of a “physically active, vigorous, even martial” lifestyle for men who might otherwise be negatively affected by modern urban living.¹⁴⁴ Much of the writing in *Outing* affirmed this hegemonic vision of masculinity, and it is clear that the journal’s content reflected Caspar Whitney’s own beliefs. In an editorial on the role of sport in American life, Whitney wrote in 1905 that

Wholesome sport has much to do with developing the strong, fearless, honest fiber which is needed in the national life of our growing, pulsing country – perhaps more than in any other country. ... Anglo-Saxon power and progress is due perhaps as much to their play as to any other single factor.¹⁴⁵

Leonidas Hubbard’s contributions to *Outing* echoed Whitney’s sentiments. His own writing advocated for “the virtue of manly sport” in its ability to cultivate “something new and strong in men that makes them better able to cope with the greater problems of real life.”¹⁴⁶

Wilderness environments had a special role to play in the cult of strenuous masculinity. Wild spaces represented the ultimate venue for engaging in acts of extreme physicality through confrontation with the natural world. Historians of antimodernism have argued that those who sought recourse to the wilderness hoped to re-enact the historical frontier experience that many, including American historian Frederick Jackson Turner, saw

¹⁴³ Adcock, “Many Tiny Traces,” 139.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁴⁵ Caspar Whitney, “The Sportsman’s View-Point,” *Outing* 46:6 (September 1905): 758-9, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015030048337?urlappend=%3Bseq=669>.

¹⁴⁶ Leonidas Hubbard Jr., “On a Road Coach,” *Outing* 42:3 (June 1903): 364, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951000925576w?urlappend=%3Bseq=362>.

as foundational to the development of the American national character.¹⁴⁷ Turner developed his theorization of the frontier as a driving force in American history at what he believed to be the moment of the frontier's demise, based on his reading of national census data pertaining to the comprehensiveness of white settlement in the Western United States.¹⁴⁸ For Turner, up to the 1890s, America owed its character of democratic individualism to its perpetual Westward expansion, as settlers were brought in "continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society" and given the recurrent opportunity to transform "the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life."¹⁴⁹ In engaging in such re-enactments of the frontier experience, defined by Turner primarily as a confrontation between "civilized" settlers and "primitive" Indigenous peoples and wilderness environments, antimodernists and proponents of the cult of strenuous masculinity hoped that the physical and moral character of the pioneers could be re-captured.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." 199-227.

¹⁴⁸ Erik Altenbernd and Alex Trimble Young, "Introduction: The Significance of the Frontier in an Age of Transnational History," *Settler Colonial Studies* 4:2 (2014): 130, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1080/2201473X.2013.846385>.

¹⁴⁹ Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," 201, 199.

¹⁵⁰ Young, *Heading Out*, 10. See also Adcock, "Many Tiny Traces," 143-149; Rob Lukens, "Samuel J. Entrikin and the Peary Greenland Expedition of 1893-1895: Gender, Race, and Society at the New American Frontier," *Pennsylvania History* 75:4 (2008) 505-526,

<https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/27778861>; Jason L. Newton, "'These French Canadians of the Woods are Half-Wild Folk': Wilderness, Whiteness, and Work in North America, 1840-1955," *Labour/Le Travail* 77 (2016): 121-150, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/docview/1789065905?accountid=10406>; Michael Robinson, "Manliness and Exploration: The Discovery of the North Pole," *Osiris* 30:1 (2015): 89, doi: 10.1086/682968.

Published in *Outing* in August 1903, while he was on his own expedition in Labrador, Hubbard's article, "Going to the Woods," wove together the different threads of scientific thinking, racial theory, and physical culture that informed his readers' worldviews and propelled his own wilderness travels. Using a fictive paleontologist as his foil, Hubbard suggested that lessons about racial degeneration could be drawn from evolutionary theory and the natural history of fossils:

According to the professor, the study of fossils proves that the disappearance of a type from the earth has always been preceded by a highly specialized state. Now the professor is inclined to draw dark conclusions from this data. The human race, he argues, is in a highly specialized condition, and according to a law which has come down through the ages may be expected to pass out of existence.¹⁵¹

"The best corrective for this tendency to specialization," Hubbard argues, is a regular "pilgrimage [to] the country."¹⁵² Among Hubbard's contemporaries, highly ritualized nature experiences assumed tremendous significance in maintaining the moral and racial health of the nation. Critical to the transformative effects of these wilderness rituals were the opportunities they offered for men to exercise their powers of sensory observation, which scientists, psychologists, and cultural critics feared had atrophied as part of the mental degeneration of modern Americans.¹⁵³

Labrador's potential appeal to "gentleman amateurs" like Leonidas Hubbard lay in the peninsula's simultaneous remoteness and proximity at the levels of epistemology and geography. While still meeting the conditions for being unknown, unfamiliar, and alien,

¹⁵¹ Leonidas Hubbard Jr., "Going to the Woods," *Outing* 42:5 (August 1903): 529, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.31951000925576w?urlappend=%3Bseq=531>.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Victoria E. M. Cain, "'The Direct Medium of the Vision': Visual Education, Virtual Witnessing and the Prehistoric Past at the American Museum of Natural History, 1890-1923," *Journal of Visual Culture* 9:3 (2010): 287-288, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1177/1470412910380334>.

Labrador was relatively close to home for Hubbard. Dillon Wallace described Labrador as “a sort of Arctic wilderness,” that offered the opportunity to explore “a great unknown land ... as wild and primitive today as it has always been” that was still “right near home” in New York State.¹⁵⁴ William Brooks Cabot, the American civil engineer and noted Labrador expert, described the “polar currents” surrounding the Labrador coast as “a long narrowing tongue of the Arctic, projected into regions which otherwise would be mild of climate and occupied by a fixed population.”¹⁵⁵ In terms of climate, and therefore satisfactorily hostile wilderness conditions, Labrador represented an Arctic outcropping South of the Arctic circle, making it the most southerly and accessible part of Arctic North America, particularly to those living on the Eastern seaboard of the United States.

Labrador also met the conditions of unknowability expected of venues for Arctic exploration. As Mina Hubbard observed, by virtue of the perceived hostility and barrenness of its environment, the Labrador peninsula was notable for being “of all the regions of North America the last and least explored.”¹⁵⁶ And yet, an ambitious amateur explorer like Leonidas Hubbard would not be totally bereft of intelligence regarding the topography, natural history, and Indigenous inhabitants of Labrador. In 1897, the Geological Survey of Canada published a report compiling the results of surveyor A. P. Low’s ten years of cartographic and geological work in the Labrador interior. Low’s report represented “the status of knowledge” on the region among non-residents at the time of the first Hubbard

¹⁵⁴ Dillon Wallace, *The Lure of the Labrador Wild: The Story of the Exploring Expedition Conducted by Leonidas Hubbard, Jr.* (New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1905), 14.

¹⁵⁵ William Brooks Cabot, introduction to *A Woman’s Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 13.

¹⁵⁶ Hubbard, “Labrador from Lake Melville to Ungava Bay,” 529.

expedition in 1903.¹⁵⁷ As Keighren, Withers and Bell have observed, the collation and circulation of witness narratives like the report of the Geological Survey facilitated the development of the kind of “long distance collective empiricism” that enabled Hubbard to conceive of Labrador as a site for geographical inquiry and exploration.¹⁵⁸

Low’s report was the perfect document for the would-be explorer: it provided a foundation of knowledge on matters of climate, topography, and wildlife that helped to plan a route of travel, while also identifying the features of the region that remained unknown, and which could then be transformed into a list of objectives for exploration. First, the report mentioned that caribou occupied the peninsula, and made mention of their spring and fall migrations, heretofore witnessed only by Labrador natives. Second, Low noted that the herd provided the primary food supply for “the Naskapi, the only Indians in the whole peninsula who did not spend a considerable part of the year in the vicinity of the trading posts.”¹⁵⁹ Most compelling were the blank spaces that remained on Low’s map of the peninsula. Many of the waterways were plotted with dotted lines, indicating that they represented only the inferred watercourses, based on conjecture and local intelligence, rather than the surveyor’s direct observation.¹⁶⁰ The dotted lines therefore signified the lesser truth value credited to the witness testimony provided by Low’s Innu, Inuit, and Settler informants. In reference to the story of the failed Hubbard expedition and Leonidas Hubbard’s death, the London *Times* observed that in Labrador, “the investigations of modern travellers leave large blanks on the map or, *worse still*, lakes and rivers of which

¹⁵⁷ Bryan Greene, “The Historical Context: Travel on the Naskaupi and George Rivers Prior to 1905,” in *The Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 6.

¹⁵⁸ Daniela Bleichmar quoted in Keighren, Withers and Bell, *Travels into Print*, 73.

¹⁵⁹ Greene, “The Historical Context,” 8-9.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

the conjectural positions, based on Indian reports, are far from correct.”¹⁶¹ Bizarrely, *The Times* appears to suggest that the total absence of geographical information would be preferable to relying on Indigenous intelligence, a comment that ignores the extent to which explorers depended upon Indigenous aid and knowledge to conduct their surveys of “new” lands.

A Labrador expedition would therefore give Hubbard an opportunity to engage in the exploratory practice described by Keighren, Withers and Bell as “textual triangulation,” a term that captures text-based strategies for “terrestrial surveying” and finding one’s place in an alien environment.¹⁶² This practice of reading tested the veracity of other explorers’ published testimony against the evidence of one’s own observations in the field. Leonidas Hubbard brought Low’s report with him to Labrador, and his field diary shows him, as well as Wallace and Elson to a lesser extent, continually reading the landscape against the evidence provided in Low’s written and cartographic representations.¹⁶³ These sensory and textual sources of information were also triangulated against the “data” solicited by the “White men and Eskimo[s]” Hubbard spoke with at the HBC post at Northwest River at the beginning of the expedition.¹⁶⁴ In calculating the relative veracity of each source,

¹⁶¹ “Through Unknown Labrador,” *The Times* [London] 21 May 1908, n.p., newspaper reviews, 1908, for *A Woman’s Way Through Unknown Labrador*, Mina Hubbard fonds (MHF), Coll. 241, 5.01.001, Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives (CNSA), Memorial University Library, St. John’s, Newfoundland. Emphasis added.

¹⁶² Keighren, Withers and Bell, *Travels into Print*, 78.

¹⁶³ See, for example Hubbard, “Diary of Leonidas Hubbard Jr.,” 19 July 1903, 161; 31 July 1903, 163-164; 14 August 1903, 167; 4 September 1903, 174. Shortly after their departure from Northwest River, Hubbard tore the hardcover binding off of Low’s report in order to lighten the burden of his camping outfit: “Tore leaves from Low’s book and cover from his diary. These and similar economies lightened my bag... .” *Ibid.*, 23 July 1903, 162.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 11 July 1903, 158-159.

Hubbard's diary shows his hope that both Low's report and local knowledge were inaccurate: "Hard to get definite data; but that makes the work bigger."¹⁶⁵ In revising and building upon these data points, Hubbard could establish his reputation as an explorer by producing new, more accurate, information.

These acts of textual triangulation displayed an explorer's facility with "scholarship, navigational aptitude, cartographical competence, [and] orthographical knowledge," and were essential to establishing the credibility of one's testimony in Arctic knowledge production.¹⁶⁶ On only the second day of the First Hubbard Expedition, however, Leonidas mistook the mouth of the small waterway known locally as the Susan Brook for the beginning of the George River.¹⁶⁷ As a result of this fatal misreading, Hubbard, Wallace and Elson spent the better part of the next three months enduring grueling portages, navigating rapids, and eking out an inadequate sustenance by hunting and fishing. Leonidas Hubbard finally succumbed to starvation in October 1903, while Wallace and Elson barely survived, returning to New York in March 1904.¹⁶⁸ Far from having proven himself as a worthy explorer, Hubbard was criticized for his failure. In a letter to the editor published in *Forest and Stream*, a rival publication to *Outing*, it was declared that Hubbard's expedition was among "the thoughtless undertakings of inexperienced and unequipped explorers in a wilderness country."¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 11 July 1903, 159 and 19 July 1903, 161.

¹⁶⁶ Keighren, Withers and Bell, *Travels into Print*, 78.

¹⁶⁷ Hubbard, "Diary of Leonidas Hubbard Jr.," 16 July 1903, 160. Also Greene, "The Historical Context," 9.

¹⁶⁸ "Arrival of Hubbard's Body," *New York Sun* 28 May 1904, 8, *Chronicling America*.

¹⁶⁹ Charles Hallock, "Tough and Tender," *Forest and Stream* 62:15 (9 April 1904): 292, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015006947678?urlappend=%3Bseq=302>.

2.3 *The Lure of the Labrador Wild: Hubbard and Wallace's War of Words*

Perhaps in response to this criticism, it was one of Mina Hubbard's first impulses after her husband's death to produce a memorial volume in tribute to the erstwhile explorer, narrating the story of the failed expedition on the basis of Hubbard's photographs and writings from the field. Leonidas having died before he could produce his own Arctic narrative, this volume would be the closest approximation of the first-person travel monograph associated with successful explorers that Leonidas Hubbard could posthumously achieve. The resulting text, written by Dillon Wallace at Mina's behest and with her financial support, was published by *Outing* in serial and monograph forms under the title *Lure of the Labrador Wild* (1905).¹⁷⁰

Further entwining questions of authorship and authority in exploration, Wallace used the last lines of the book to announce his intention to return to Labrador on an expedition of his own, ostensibly to continue the work begun by his friend:

Only men who have camped together in a lonely, uninhabited country can in any degree comprehend the bond of affection and love that drew Hubbard and me ever closer to each other, as the Labrador Wild lured us on and on into the depths of its desolate waste. 'The work must be done,' he used to say, 'and if one of us falls before it is completed, the other must finish it.' His words ring in my ear as a call to duty. ... Perhaps it is God's will that I finish the work of exploration that Hubbard began.¹⁷¹

Later, Wallace reiterated that his return to Labrador was inspired by Hubbard's "exhortation," which "appealed to [him] as a command from my leader – a call to duty."¹⁷²

In his allusions to the intense homosocial bonds forged in wilderness contexts, as well as

¹⁷⁰ Hart "Finding Her Way," 89-92.

¹⁷¹ Wallace, *Lure of the Labrador Wild*, 339.

¹⁷² Wallace, *The Long Labrador Trail*, 2.

his use of the militaristic language of geographical conquest and leadership, Wallace invoked the ideologies of social Darwinism, antimodernism and strenuous masculinity that lent a moral authority to the actions of amateur explorers like Hubbard and himself. As Tiffany Johnstone has argued, Wallace's use of faith-based language also suggested that Hubbard's death had a greater moral purpose, one that readers would have recognized as belonging to the tradition of "Muscular Christianity."¹⁷³ A popular model of masculinity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that Leonidas Hubbard personally subscribed to, Muscular Christianity was predicated upon a belief in the value of regularly testing one's physical and mental strength through sport or outdoor activity in order to cultivate the appropriately rugged and virile form of Christian manhood that many Americans believed was required for a physically and morally healthful citizenry.¹⁷⁴ In framing his and Hubbard's wilderness experiences as a "spiritual ordeal," Wallace situates *Lure of the Labrador Wild* within an American Protestant literary tradition, beginning with Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), of spiritual and physical challenge resulting in collective moral renewal for the nation as a whole.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Tiffany Johnstone, "The Language of Faith and American Exceptionalism in *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*," *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 21:2 (2006): 299, <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/NFLDS/article/view/10154>.

¹⁷⁴ Donald E. Hall, "Muscular Christianity: Reading and Writing the Male Body," in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. Donald E. Hall (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 7-8. For discussions of Muscular Christianity in the North American Context, see Bruce Kidd, "Muscular Christianity and Value-Centered Sport: The Legacy of Tom Brown in Canada," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 23:5 (2006): 701-713, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523360600673096>. Rachel Lindsey McBride, "'The Mirror of All Perfection': Jesus and the Strongman in America, 1893-1920," *American Quarterly* 68:1 (2016): 23-47, doi: [10.1353/aq.2016.0005](https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2016.0005); Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

¹⁷⁵ Johnstone, "The Language of Faith," 305, 294.

In addition to writing George Elson, the racialized third member of the First Hubbard Expedition, out of the moral centre of the story, Wallace's deft negotiation of these numerous cultural and literary traditions through text imbued him with the moral authority to continue in Hubbard's stead. As Johnstone has argued, Wallace inscribed his role in the story of the First Hubbard Expedition as that of "the 'intrepid chronicler' of a spiritual ordeal. The alignment of text and a sense of religious authority establishes his role of raising their story within the American consciousness as a spiritual duty."¹⁷⁶ Caspar Whitney, who provided the financial support for Wallace's 1905 Labrador venture, lent his own authority to Wallace's efforts to spread Hubbard's message through further acts of writing and exploration, describing them as the fulfilment of "a practical compact between these two companions."¹⁷⁷

Mina had intended the memorial volume to place her husband's exploratory work and his personal (*qua* national) sacrifice at the center of the story of Labrador exploration. In giving Wallace rights of authorship, however, she lost control of the public narrative surrounding the First Hubbard Expedition. Wallace used the book's publication as an opportunity to sanctify his transition from crew member to expedition leader and to articulate a moral *raison d'être* for his own emergent identity as an Arctic explorer. In addition to eclipsing Leonidas Hubbard's heroism, Mina felt that Wallace's narrative did not present Hubbard in a flattering light, confirming critics' suspicions that he was psychologically "overtrained for the work," and that the "strain" of exploratory travel

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 305.

¹⁷⁷ Caspar Whitney, "The Sportsman's View-Point," *Outing* 46:5 (August 1905): 619, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/coo.31924066344841?urlappend=%3Bseq=629>.

“made him stale” from the outset, as Wallace put it in an early interview.¹⁷⁸ In a cultural environment where a man’s physical and mental strength were directly correlated to evaluations of his moral and even racial purity, Mina had just cause to be deeply troubled by Wallace’s comments.

In an effort to rehabilitate her husband’s memory and publicize her own vision of the Hubbard expedition, Mina Hubbard sought recourse to print. To refute Wallace’s published version of events, it was essential that she respond in kind, with print operating as the principal mechanism for “constructing, communicating, and contesting claims to knowledge associated with travel and exploration... .”¹⁷⁹ Her biographers suggest that she was so incensed by Wallace’s manuscript that she immediately set about compiling her own book of her husband’s expedition at the end of 1904.¹⁸⁰ At that time she also summoned George Elson to visit her home in Massachusetts, so that he could provide her with a map of the route taken by the Hubbard expedition, and write up his own testimonial, describing the activities of the three men in the last days before Leonidas Hubbard’s death. Elson’s narrative also recounted his own experiences after he left Wallace and Hubbard behind in a last-ditch effort to reach outside help.¹⁸¹ In January 1905, Mina Hubbard disclosed her literary ambitions to Cyrus Adams, president of New York’s American Geographical Society: “I am trying in fear and trembling to prepare my work for publication and hope to incorporate in the book the true account of Mr. Hubbard’s

¹⁷⁸ Hart, “Finding Her Way,” 92. “Hubbard’s Body Back,” *New York Tribune* 28 May 1904, 7, *Chronicling America*.

¹⁷⁹ Henderson, “David Livingstone’s *Missionary Travels*,” 280.

¹⁸⁰ Hart, “Finding Her Way,” 93.

¹⁸¹ George Elson, “Last Days Together,” in *A Woman’s Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 189-222.

expedition of 1903.”¹⁸² Her motivation in literally rewriting the story of the expedition was to preserve a “true account” of her husband’s work for posterity: “If I have assured for my husband’s name a lasting place among the names of those who have served worthily then I have done what I desired to do.”¹⁸³

In taking up her pen to provide her own “authorized” account of the expedition, and in undermining Dillon Wallace’s narrative in the process, Mina Hubbard’s actions might be considered atypical, even transgressive, for a Canadian woman of the early twentieth century. The fact that her actions were not without precedent, however, suggests that she did not necessarily see herself as departing from a conventionally feminine role. As Michael Robinson has observed, a tradition of explorers’ wives and widows acting as patrons of Arctic exploration and advocating for their husband’s public legacies existed in Britain as well as the United States. Most famously, Lady Jane Franklin, wife of missing explorer John Franklin, refused to abandon hope that her husband might yet be found and “used her moral authority as Franklin’s widow” to push for numerous rescue expeditions around the middle of the nineteenth century.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, Robinson challenges historians’ presumption that women were, by definition, excluded from cultures of Arctic exploration.

¹⁸² Mina Hubbard to Cyrus Adams, 7 January 1905, General Correspondence, 1889-1912, Cyrus C. Adams, American Geographical Society of New York Records Online (AGSRO) with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, <https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/agsny/id/70624>.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Other examples include Josephine Peary and, in the Antarctic context, Kathleen Scott. Robinson, “Manliness and Exploration,” 105. Penny Russell argues that through her advocacy for her husband, Jane Franklin became “a sentimental heroine,” known “not for her travels or her learning, but as the wife, and widow, of the notable Arctic explorer... .” Penny Russell, “Wife Stories: Narrating Marriage and Self in the Life of Jane Franklin,” *Victorian Studies* 48:1 (2005): 38, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/3829879>.

While the “muscular ethos of exploration” was “exclusionary of women as a matter of course,” he argues that it “remained highly dependent upon women as a matter of practice.”¹⁸⁵ Robinson rightly draws our attention to women’s involvement and collaboration at every level of exploratory enterprise, not only as explorers, but also as supporters of masculine narratives of exploration, as ghostwriters, editors, readers and fans. Outside of the rhetoric of Muscular Christianity, Mina Hubbard’s contemporaries were accustomed to women playing supporting roles to the work and ideologies of exploration, particularly if it was their husbands’ status as explorers – and as men – being called into question.

Nevertheless, it would be difficult for any book that Mina Hubbard produced to carry the same truth status enjoyed by Wallace’s *Lure of the Labrador Wild*. In addition to being released first, and being the version of events authorized by *Outing*, Wallace’s book met readers’ expectations that authentic exploration narratives were those written by individuals who actually participated in expeditions; the writer’s credibility was rooted in the science of empiricism, and specifically the presumption that the text was based on privileged first-hand experience and observation.¹⁸⁶ Not being a member of the First Hubbard Expedition, Mina had only her “moral authority” as Hubbard’s widow to justify and legitimize her writing.

Mina’s explanations of her personal motivations for conducting her own Labrador expedition betray her awareness of the necessity of first-hand experience to becoming an

¹⁸⁵ Robinson, “Manliness and Exploration,” 108.

¹⁸⁶ As Daniel Clayton has put it, “exploration was a resolutely empirical science, and European thinkers put a premium on first-hand observation... .” Clayton, *Islands of Truth*, 19.

informed commentator on matters of exploration. According to Mina, the impetus for her trip came from her early forays into writing in the first months of 1905. In a 1908 article in the *Englishwoman's Review*, she describes herself sitting at her writing desk when she resolved to go to Labrador:

I was sitting at my writing-table that day I suppose no one will ever quite know with what a sickening sense of limitation I longed to be a man, so that I could go away and do the work to which my husband had given his life. . . . But I was a woman, and it did not occur to me that I could do anything until that January day, when, as I sat looking out the window, aching with a sense of my own littleness and impotence, suddenly something thrilled through my whole being. I could not tell you what it was. I could not in any definite way describe it to you; but it came like a sudden illumination of darkness, and it meant 'Go to Labrador.'¹⁸⁷

Mina's book, published by British firm John Murray in as *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador* (1908), was even more explicit that her own explorations of Labrador were intended to acquire the expertise required of authors writing on topics of exploration. The introduction to *A Woman's Way* was written by another Labrador explorer and personal friend, William Brooks Cabot. Here, Cabot argued that Mina Hubbard's assessment of her husband's abilities as an explorer would only be taken seriously if she re-enacted his activities and became an Arctic witness in her own right:

it became evident to Mrs. Hubbard that only by *actual performance* of the original undertaking could her husband's name be cleared from the reproach of having entered lightly upon an ill-advised and dangerous project. In the absence of information about the country she could not otherwise qualify herself to impart to others her conviction of the reasonable good conception and management of the venture.¹⁸⁸

The phrasing of Cabot's commentary speaks to the performative, even theatrical dimensions of Arctic knowledge production, wherein explorers were obligated to

¹⁸⁷ Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard, "Through Lonely Labrador," *Englishwoman's Review* 278 (15 April 1908): 82.

¹⁸⁸ Cabot, introduction, 28. Emphasis added.

dramatize their experiences for audiences who, by definition, could never be present to original moments of “discovery.” Heather Davis-Fisch makes a similar point in her analysis of the Franklin expedition, using the insights of theatre and performance history. Davis-Fisch argues that the methods of theatre history can help us understand how Britons and Americans grappled with the legacies of the Franklin disaster, an event that, like many theatrical performances, left few tangible remains to document its occurrence.¹⁸⁹ As a performance piece, *A Woman’s Way Through Unknown Labrador* presented to readers a narrative re-enactment of Mina Hubbard’s own surrogate performance of her husband’s ill-fated expedition.

When Mina set out for Labrador in June 1905, she left behind a half-finished manuscript. In order to complete an authorized and authentic narrative of Leonidas Hubbard’s 1903 expedition, she would have to append her own Labrador travel narrative. As she explained in the preface to *A Woman’s Way*, her intention in writing about her Labrador experiences was “to set before the public a plain statement, not only of my own journey, but of his as well.”¹⁹⁰ In putting together their memorial volumes dedicated to the memory of Leonidas Hubbard, both Mina Hubbard and Dillon Wallace wrote themselves into the role of the Arctic explorer, a tactic that Mina deplored when used by Wallace, but that she felt was personally necessary to do justice to her husband’s legacy. From the beginning, then, the roles of explorer, author, and witness were as interdependent for Mina Hubbard as they had been for her journalist husband.

¹⁸⁹ Davis-Fisch, *Loss and Cultural Remains*, 3-4.

¹⁹⁰ Hubbard, preface to *A Woman’s Way Through Unknown Labrador*, n.p.

2.4 Defining the Arctic Witness: A Physical and Moral Concept

Taking up these titles, however, posed different challenges for Mina, as a woman and as a widow, than they had posed for her husband. Critics in the American press argued that her recent bereavement had clouded her ability to make accurate, objective observations of reality. They viewed her undertaking of an expedition in explicit competition with Wallace to be morally suspect, calling her ability to act as a reliable witness into question. Finally, like other women of her era, Mina Hubbard was viewed as being unable to undertake the physical labour associated with Arctic exploration. These physical practices and difficulties performed crucial epistemological work. Nevertheless, Mina was required to deputize the physical dimensions of travel, including the associated skills in woodcraft and general wilderness expertise, to George Elson and her other guides. The necessity of sharing the work with her crew meant that her privileged epistemological status as explorer, relative to her Indigenous companions, could be called into question.

Becoming a published author was likely to be the easiest transformation for Mina to undergo. Having been married to an outdoors and sporting journalist, Mina was well acquainted with the tradition of travel and exploration literature in which she would be expected to write.¹⁹¹ Perhaps even more significantly, her marriage had put her in contact with several important figures in the New York publishing world. Because these publishers primarily belonged to the city's Anglo-Saxon elite, they also often belonged to clubs and social networks that provided cultural and financial support for Arctic explorers like Robert Peary, as avatars of strenuous masculinity. Herbert Bridgman, for example, was business

¹⁹¹ Grace, "A Woman's Way," xxxviii.

manager of the *Brooklyn Standard Union* newspaper, and secretary-treasurer of the Peary Arctic Club, an association of New York millionaires who formed in 1899 to finance and support Peary's North Pole expeditions.¹⁹² Bridgman not only helped Mina with the logistical preparations for her Labrador expedition, including the procurement of much of her expedition's outfit, he also advised her on matters of publication, suggesting that she defer the release of her book until after her return from Labrador, so that an account of her own expedition could be included in the memorial Hubbard volume.¹⁹³

Beyond Mina's unique connections with New York's publishing community, the world of print in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries presented new opportunities for British and Anglo-North American women travellers. Sigrid Anderson Cordell has argued that the growing popularity of colonial travel narratives in this period "offered broad scope for women both to share their experiences and find a ready publishing outlet."¹⁹⁴ Women who had the opportunity to travel through "exotic" colonial environments, particularly those seen as being fraught with peril like the Arctic, could construct themselves as professional writers for an eager audience of consumers, many of whom were also women.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Dick, "The Men of Prominence," 14.

¹⁹³ Hart, "Finding Her Way," 96-97, 99. Speaking of Bridgman, Hubbard wrote: "he, though at first rather stunned by my proposition, is delightfully enthusiastic over it after learning my plans and is proving the most helpful kind of friend." Mina Hubbard to John Gillis, 29 April 1905, MHF, Personal Correspondence – John Gillis, 2.01.001, CNSA.

¹⁹⁴ Sigrid Anderson Cordell, "Edith Maturin and the *Wide World Magazine*: New Woman Rewritings of Imperial Adventure," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 42 (2014): 459, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1017/S1060150314000096>.

¹⁹⁵ As Michael Robinson observes, the growing number of female writers and reporters in America from the 1880s onwards, including figures like Nellie Bly, spoke to publishers' increasing awareness of the number and importance of female readers, who consumed narratives of travel and exploration in book and periodical formats. Robinson, "Manliness and Exploration," 102. Mina Hubbard's publication in the *Englishwoman's Review* and

However, many female-authored travel narratives were not seen as meeting the standards of truthfulness and authenticity required of the kind of testimony that led to the production of new geographical knowledge.¹⁹⁶ Views of Mina's ability to act as an accurate observer in the Arctic, and to provide the requisite kind of witness testimony upon her return, were more fraught. Between the departure of the Wallace and Hubbard expeditions from Halifax in June 1905 and Mina Hubbard's return to the United States in early December, press coverage drew upon the tradition of sensation journalism to describe Hubbard's expedition in the language of spectacle, suspicion and rivalry.¹⁹⁷ Mina was said to have made "public utterances" against Wallace to local reporters in Halifax, "charging Mr. Wallace with practically causing the death of her husband," an accusation that Caspar Whitney described as "outrageously cruel and false...".¹⁹⁸ While Hubbard and Wallace were undertaking very similar journeys through Labrador, Pennsylvania's *Columbian* newspaper observed that Mina's was made "not in the cause of science, but to substantiate her own theory of her husband's death."¹⁹⁹ Even Leonidas Hubbard's own sister, Daisy

Harper's Monthly Magazine also testify to the appetite for stories of Arctic exploration among female readers and in popular family periodicals. See Hubbard, "Through Lonely Labrador," 82-88; Hubbard, "My Explorations in Unknown Labrador," 813-23.

¹⁹⁶ "Many of the contemporary male critics ... accused women's accounts of falsehood or exaggeration. Far more women's texts are accused of falsehood than men's, although it must be recognized that these types of claims were made about travel writing in general form from its very beginning." Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 30. Beyond the genre of travel writing, women's writing of all styles and genres was typically evaluated in this era in terms of the gender identity of the author, rather than by its message or artistic standards. Maria DiBattista and Deborah Epstein Nord, *At Home in the World: Women Writers and Public Life, From Austen to Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 39, <https://hdl-handle-net.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/2027/heh.34131>.

¹⁹⁷ Hart, "Finding Her Way," 100-101.

¹⁹⁸ Whitney, "The Sportsman's View-Point," (August 1905): 619.

¹⁹⁹ "Mrs. Hubbard in Labrador," *The Columbian* 7 December 1905, 7. Other examples: "Will Follow Husband's Work: Is Not by Any Means Satisfied of the Way of Her Husband's Death," *The Evening Statesman* [Walla Walla, WA] 20 June 1905, 2.

Williams, felt the need to speak out in defense of Wallace in the *New York Sun*, writing in a letter to the editor that it was “unwarranted to publish ‘suppositions’ when the reputation of as well known and respected a man as Dillon Wallace is at stake... .”²⁰⁰ Mina Hubbard never publicly accused Wallace of having done anything untoward on the First Hubbard Expedition, but American papers’ characterisation of her views of her husband’s comrade were roughly accurate. Her Labrador diary reveals that she conducted several interviews with Labrador locals and HBC representatives, with a view to discovering anything discreditable about Wallace’s behaviour in 1903 – particularly whether he had abandoned Leonidas to die alone in his tent – but she was unable to make a conclusive determination.²⁰¹

In addition to treating Mina’s exploratory motives with the deepest suspicion, other editorials suggested that bereavement had clouded her objectivity. A colleague of Wallace observed in the *New York World* that Mina’s trip was borne of “her grief at the tragic death of her husband,” which meant that she “could not reconcile the apparent discrepancy between the dairy [sic] of her husband and that of Wallace.” Wallace’s version of the events of the First Hubbard Expedition, he noted, had been “vouched for by Caspar Whitney and others.”²⁰² Editors at the *New York Tribune* reported that friends of both parties viewed “Mrs. Hubbard’s trip as a result of a mind that knew only Mr. Hubbard as a great genius,

“Woman Explored Labrador,” *New York Sun*, 21 November 1905, 4. All from *Chronicling America*.

²⁰⁰ Williams quoted in Whitney, “The Sportsman’s View-Point,” *Outing* (September 1905): 759.

²⁰¹ Roberta Buchanan, “Dillon Wallace: The ‘Repulsive’ Rival,” in *The Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 16.

²⁰² “Explorer’s Widow Follows His Trail,” *New York World* in Hart, “Finding Her Way,” 102.

who could not possibly make a mistake.”²⁰³ While this adulation of a wife for her husband was admirable, the early press coverage of Mina Hubbard’s expedition did not position her well to assume the roles of reliable Arctic observer and explorer.

Hubbard would have to work hard to prove herself capable of performing the observational and intellectual tasks associated with leading an Arctic expedition. The physical practices of exploratory travel, which were inextricably linked to exploration as an epistemological project, were another difficulty. In a context where geographical and epistemological remoteness were viewed as inseparable, the value of knowledge produced by explorers was directly correlated to its degree of physical inaccessibility to the general population.²⁰⁴ Developing the insights of Bruce Heyly regarding the ““authority of adventurous observation,”” Tina Adcock argues that the embodied experience of the observer was central to evaluating the credibility of observational knowledge from the Arctic, with “heroic bodily challenge” acting as “a marker of observational veracity.”²⁰⁵ This correlation between embodiment and knowledge was not unique to Arctic contexts. Speaking of travel writing relating to the Congo, Robert Burroughs has observed that “authentic” exploratory travel was defined against its superficial, effeminate, and commercial counterpart – tourism – as being “off the beaten track, independent of technological aid, and in close contact with ‘the people.’”²⁰⁶ While Burroughs’ research refers specifically to travel in the Congo during this period, his articulation of a threshold of physical difficulty for defining authenticity in travel helps to explain why few women

²⁰³ “Mrs. Hubbard Suspicious, Seeks Husband’s Trail,” *New York Tribune* in Hart, “Finding Her Way,” 101.

²⁰⁴ LaFramboise, “Just A Little Like an Explorer,” 27.

²⁰⁵ Adcock, “Toward an Early Twentieth-Century Culture,” 128.

²⁰⁶ Burroughs, “The Travelling Apologist,” 142.

were in the vanguard of exploration, conducting preliminary surveys of those regions that still existed outside of the boundaries of the known world.²⁰⁷

In the case of the Labrador interior, Mina Hubbard's route along the George and Nascaupi rivers was quite literally "off the beaten track": when rapids made it impossible to travel over water by canoe, Hubbard and her crew had to portage their outfits from one point on the river to another, a task that involved cutting trails through the bush with axes, and walking long distances carrying heavy equipment. For her readers who were unfamiliar with the realities of travel in the bush, Mina described the work of trail cutting and portaging in her book:

If anyone supposes that cutting a trail means making a nice, smooth little path through the woods, let him revise his ideas. The hill-side was a network of new growth and windfalls. Now and again I made the mistake of calling them deadfalls. Certainly all women, and perhaps a few men, would think the mistake pardonable could they see the trail which led strait over these tangled heaps of fallen tree-trunks. I watched the men carrying the canoes and their heavy loads over these with wonder...²⁰⁸

In print, Mina acknowledged that her guides performed most of the physical labour of exploration, while deftly managing to maintain her status as an Arctic witness – and authorship over the expedition as its leader. She begins by highlighting her epistemic authority as explorer-observer by correcting her readers' imagined misconceptions about the nature of trail cutting; implicit in the first sentence is that Mina, having the advantage of this privileged Arctic experience, *knows* better. The final sentence is also significant: by referring to George Elson, Job Chapies, Joseph Iserhoff and Gilbert Blake as "the men," Mina emphasizes their lesser status as a collective of employees; any labour they perform

²⁰⁷ LaFramboise, "Just A Little Like an Explorer," 9. Roy, *Maps of Difference*, 88.

²⁰⁸ Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 56.

is under her direction and watchful eye.²⁰⁹ Hubbard’s masterful visual perspective is documented and dramatized for her readers in *A Woman’s Way* in a Mina’s photograph of two of the guides portaging along one of these trails (**Fig. 1**) Furthermore, Hubbard frames their labour as an extension of natural instinct, rather than a conscious effort, based on learned skills and expertise, directed toward the extension of knowledge. She observed, for example, that Job Chapies “loved to pole up a rapid or hunt out a trail just as an artist loves to paint.”²¹⁰ As Lisa LaFramboise has noted, Mina’s writing emphasized “the instinctive skills of the crew as ‘Children of the Bush,’ and the indigenous soul’s essential link” with the wilderness.²¹¹ Such depictions of Elson, Chapies, Iserhoff and Blake reframed

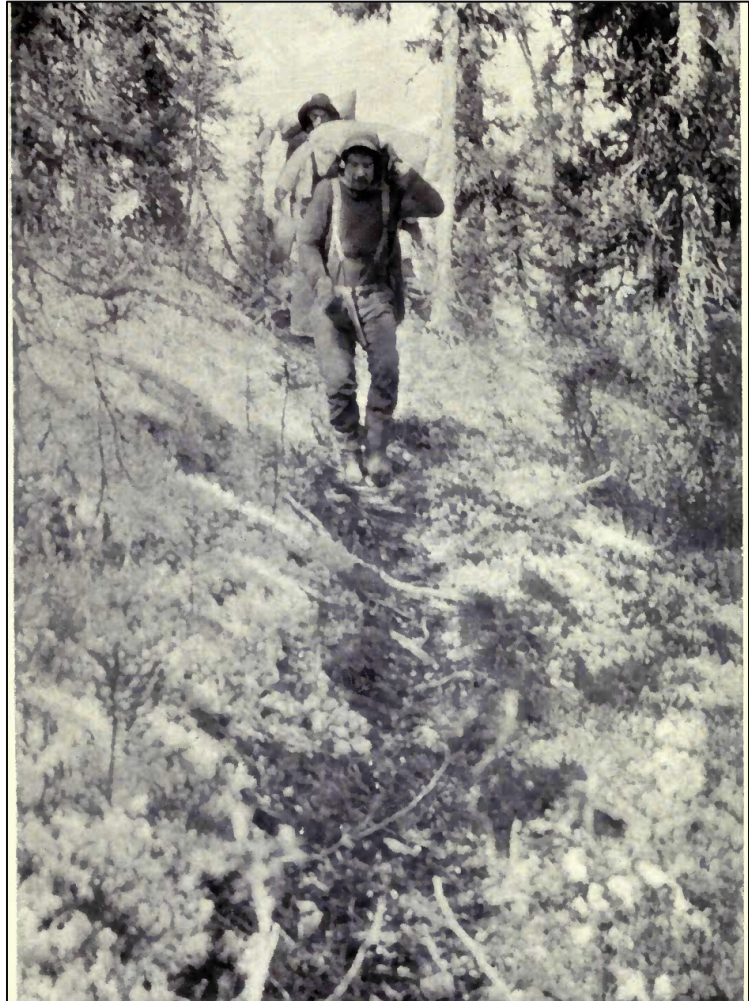


Figure 2.1: "Coming down the trail with packs," photograph, Mina Hubbard, 1905 (Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 65)

²⁰⁹ LaFramboise, “Just A Little Like an Explorer,” 29.

²¹⁰ Hubbard, *A Woman’s Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 57.

²¹¹ LaFramboise, “Just A Little Like an Explorer,” 25. This was typical of sportsmen’s representations of Indigenous guides. See Parenteau, “Care, Control and Supervision,” 31.

their efforts as manifestations of their naturalness and being at home in the Northern landscape, rather than their skills in exploratory work.

If any of “the men” had the potential to undermine Mina’s authority over the expedition, both in the field and in the public eye, however, it was George Elson. After the death of Leonidas Hubbard, Elson emerged in the American consciousness as a fully individuated figure of Arctic heroism. While Wallace may have minimized Elson’s visibility on the 1903 trip in *Lure of the Labrador Wild*, many hailed him and his concerted efforts to save Hubbard by walking back toward Northwest River, despite his own state of physical deterioration, as singularly admirable. Indeed, his actions, rather than those of Leonidas Hubbard, seemed to embody the ideals of strenuous masculinity. As one observer put it, Elson’s “superior physique and knowledge of wood-craft brought him out first,” from the interior while Wallace and Leonidas Hubbard fell behind.²¹² Furthermore, in the tradition of Muscular Christianity, his physical capacity was linked to his upstanding moral character. James E. C. Sawyer, family friend of Mina Hubbard, described Elson in an editorial in Maine’s *Republican Journal* as “a real hero. His solitary and arduous journey to secure help for the perishing explorer was the splendid and thrilling culmination of the great fortitude and marvellous fertility of resources which he constantly displayed from the beginning of the adversities of the expedition.”²¹³ Sawyer’s editorial was published late in the summer of 1905; one imagines that he intended to lend authenticity and moral authority to his friend Mina Hubbard’s expedition by associating her work with George Elson.

²¹² Stephen P.M. Tasker, *Steve Patrols More Territory* (Philadelphia: Franklin Printing Company, 1936), 46,

<http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/compoundobject/collection/cns2/id/66402/rec/1>.

²¹³ James E. C. Sawyer, “George Elson, Hero of the Wild,” *The Republican Journal* [ME] 3 August 1905, 7, *Chronicling America*.

However, Sawyer's article had the perhaps unintended effect of elevating Elson to the status of Mina Hubbard's competitor.

Elson, unlike Mina, was able to engage in the physically taxing labour demanded by exploratory travel *and* the writing practices associated Arctic knowledge production. Elson's writing in the field was also critical to the successful narrativization of Mina Hubbard's trip: like Mina, Elson kept a field diary, recording the distances they travelled each day, as well as their observations of significant landmarks and other experiences.²¹⁴ As part of the process of writing up her expedition narrative for publication, Hubbard corroborated her own field notes by reading them against Elson's diary.²¹⁵ These acts of collaboration and textual triangulation between Hubbard and Elson were unacknowledged in the public narrative of the expedition.

The remainder of this chapter considers how Mina Hubbard managed these myriad challenges to her authority and credibility as an Arctic explorer, which included the public questioning of her motives and capacities for objective observation, her perceived inability to perform the "heroic bodily challenges" that would authenticate her observations, and the competition with George Elson over physical and narrative mastery of the Second Hubbard Expedition. These challenges had to be faced down on two sites: through her material

²¹⁴ Diary of George Elson, 1905, MHF 3.03.001, CNSA, <http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/compoundobject/collection/archives/id/9581/rec/13>.

²¹⁵ Entries from Elson's field diary noting the travel times between significant geographical landmarks and distances covered each day indicate that his record-keeping was intended as a memory aid for Hubbard when writing up her travel narrative. Hubbard's field diary also refers to several occasions toward the end of the trip when she conferred with Elson about the accuracy of her map and particular dates and landmarks. See Diary of George Elson, n.d., 3; 5 July 1905, 10; 17 July 1905, 22; 2 August 1905, 61. Mina Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary 16 June – 27 December 1905," in *The Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 16 September 1905, 289-290; 20 September 1905, 294; 7 October 1905, 303-304.

practices in the field in Labrador, and through her subsequent representations of the expedition in writing. The following section will examine how Hubbard attempted to assert her authority while on site in Labrador, negotiating the provisional and continually shifting relationships of power between herself, Elson, and the other guides.

2.5 Observation in the Formation of Mina Hubbard's Exploratory Identity

Mina Hubbard's field diary provides remarkable insights into her thoughts and feelings over the course of the Labrador trip. I have found Adcock's conceptualization of "private exploratory identities" helpful in reading Hubbard's diary as a record of how she thought about what it meant to be an explorer, and how she positioned herself relative to this imagined ideal. Emphasizing the influence of popular representations of Arctic exploration on the self-conceptualization of explorers, Adcock looks to private acts of inscription, including diaries and correspondence, for evidence of how Arctic travellers "clarified and performed what might be termed their exploratory identities."²¹⁶ Reading Hubbard's field notes, it becomes apparent that she regarded two practices as central to her identity as an explorer: (1) observation, and particularly visual witnessing of the Arctic environment from elevated vantage points, and (2) writing, a term which I use broadly to capture all of her acts of inscription, including her notes on observations of longitude, latitude, and altitude, and her mapping work. Both of these actions are depicted in **Figure 2**, a

²¹⁶ Adcock, "Toward an Early Twentieth-Century Culture," 119.

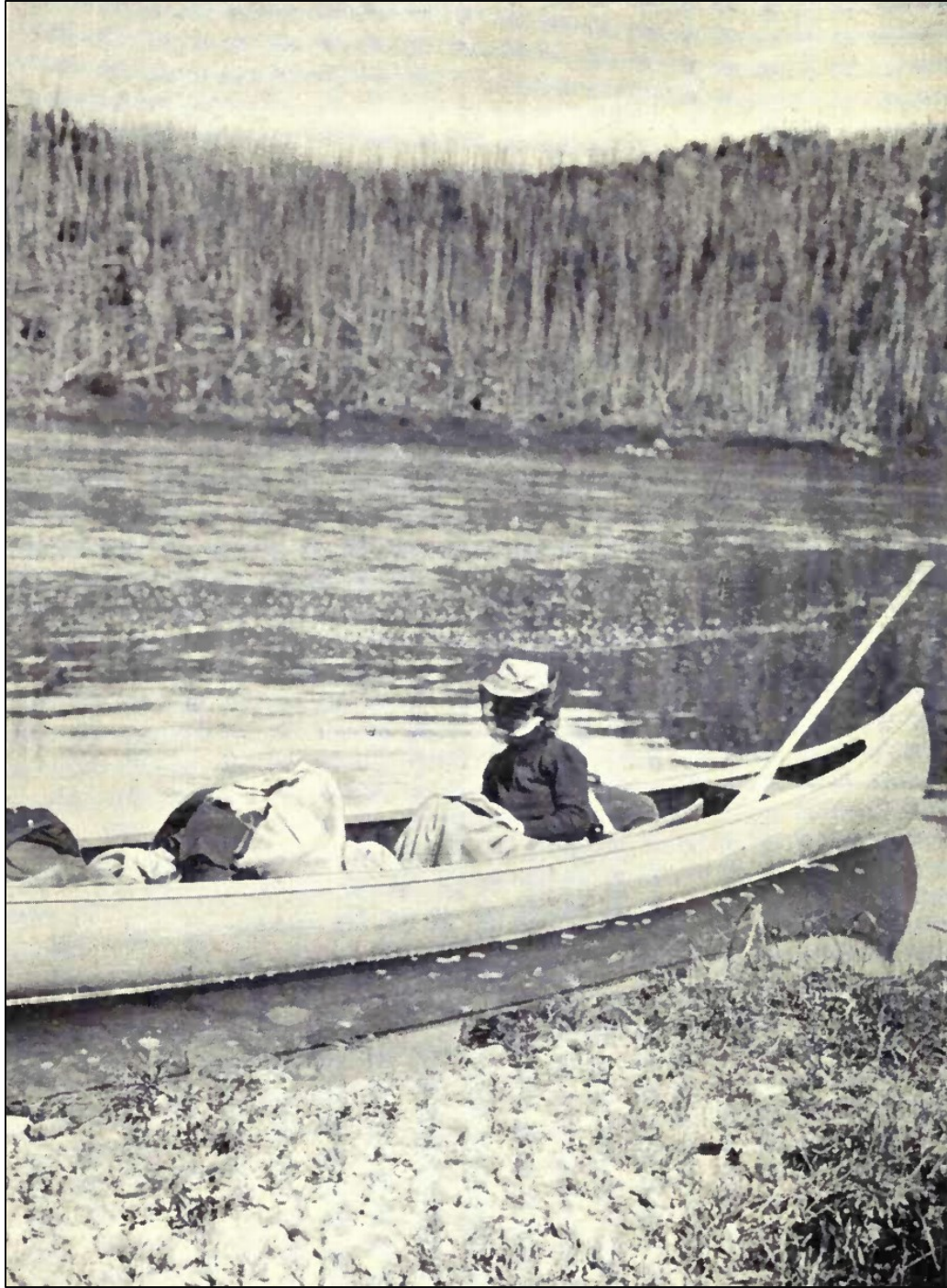


Figure 2.2: Photograph of Mina Hubbard, George Elson, 1905
(Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 75)

photograph of Mina, presumably taken by George Elson, sitting in one of the expedition canoes with a notebook in her lap. While Hubbard's positioning as a passenger might be suggestive of a degree of passivity that was not typical of the male explorer, her exemption

from much of the physical labour of the expedition, including paddling, enabled her to make notes and sketches of the topography as they moved through the landscape in real time. While unable to meet the conditions of physical toil demanded for most explorers to be deemed credible knowledge producers, Hubbard's persona as an Arctic witness emphasized her commitment to accuracy in visual observation.

While in Labrador, Mina's practices of observation and inscription became the most significant sources of friction between her guides and herself. These moments of heightened tension also laid bare the power struggle taking place among the crew over who had ultimate authority over the expedition. Most of the time, these tensions were not apparent on the trip. The relationship between Hubbard, Elson, Chapies, Iserhoff and Blake was often amicable and collaborative. Throughout the trip, the men provided small courtly acts of service for Mina, from cooking bannocks just the way she liked them to swinging a dunnage bag around her head to keep the flies away while she ate.²¹⁷ Once, Gilbert Blake brought Hubbard a dandelion he had picked for her.²¹⁸ On July 10, Mina wrote that she liked the men "better all the time. They are gentle, considerate and polite always not only of me either but of each other as well and have such good times together."²¹⁹ The feeling appears to have been mutual. In his own expedition diary, Iserhoff described Hubbard as being "in all ways bright and chearfull [sic]" and praised her for her efforts to "make her self [sic] useful making bannaks [sic]."²²⁰ One finds even greater admiration for Hubbard

²¹⁷ Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," 6 August 1905, 222-223; 9 July 1905, 149.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 13 July 1905, 157.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 10 July 1905, 151.

²²⁰ 24 July, page 11b and 27 July, page 12b, Joseph Iserhoff Diary, June to August 1905, Labrador, Joseph Iserhoff Diaries, Coll. 498, 1.01.003, CNSA, <http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/singleitem/collection/ead/id/661/rec/1>.

in Elson's diary. After they reached the end point of their canoe journey at the HBC post at George River on Ungava Bay, he wrote: "I must say she has done very well in her travelling and was very good to me. She has done what no other lady could do I am sure."²²¹

Elson and the other men also deferred to and supported Hubbard's efforts to measure their coordinates and elevation regularly throughout their journey, a necessary part of the process of orienteering, and of developing her map of the George and Nascaupé rivers.²²² To take observation, Hubbard worked with a number of instruments, including a barometer, a thermometer, a surveyor's compass, a sextant, and an artificial horizon.²²³ Among the scientific community, these instruments were intended to enhance and extend the human capacities for sensory observation, and vision in particular. The artificial horizon, for example, was used in combination with a sextant to determine altitude when it was not possible to see the actual horizon line on land.²²⁴ While no photograph of Mina Hubbard using her cartographic instruments appears in her published writings, the representation of Leonidas Hubbard at work in **Figure 3** suggests how the artificial horizon operated as a technology of vision, being held to the eye of the observer. The artificial

²²¹ Diary of George Elson, 27 August 1905, 96.

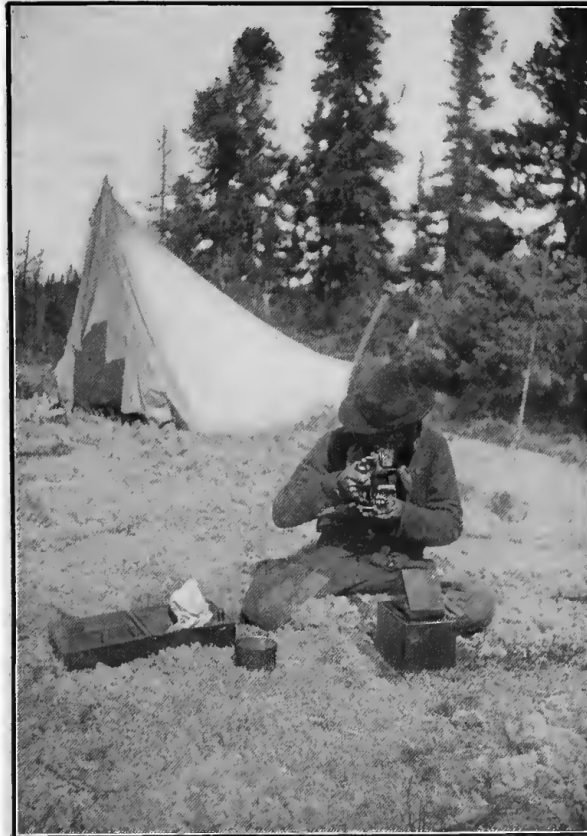
²²² Elson mentions, for example, one occasion when the guides waited to break up camp until the sky cleared so that Hubbard could take her observations at Seal Lake with her artificial horizon. Diary of George Elson, 18 July 1905, 24.

²²³ Hubbard, "Labrador from Lake Melville to Ungava Bay," 31. Hubbard, "My Explorations in Unknown Labrador," 814-5.

²²⁴ E. A. Reeves, *Maps and Map-Making: Three Lectures Delivered under the Auspices of the Royal Geographical Society* (London: The Royal Geographical Society, 1910), 23, <https://archive.org/details/mapsmappingthr00reev/page/n7/mode/2up>.

horizon was often necessary when taking measurements in the mountainous terrain along the George and Nascapee rivers.

In the nineteenth century, surveying instruments became important tools for the explorer who wished to make themselves appear as a credible witness, capable of using the scientific method of empirical observation with the greatest possible accuracy and objectivity.²²⁵ As Felix Driver has argued, the mechanical nature of measurement with instruments could help ensure the



HUBBARD TOOK OBSERVATIONS FOR LATITUDE

Figure 2.3: Leonidas Hubbard pictured using an artificial horizon, 1903
(Wallace, *Lure of the Labrador Wild*, opposite 76)

credibility of explorers' testimony by being seen to "minimise the intrusion of subjectivity into the reporting of information... ." ²²⁶ Mina Hubbard's ability to derive accurate observations from her instruments was a continual source of anxiety, and she confessed in her diary that she "felt [her] lack of training and preparation very deeply and keenly and not until we reached [Lake] Michikamats could I feel that my observations for latitude were

²²⁵ In Britain, at least, from the 1820s onward, travelers felt compelled to "supplement and extend" their "individual testimony with instrumentally derived data" in response to "associated changes in the status of natural philosophical inquiry." Keighren, Withers and Bell, *Travels into Print*, 96.

²²⁶ Driver, "Scientific Exploration," 24.

correct.”²²⁷ Nevertheless, Keighren, Withers and Bell point out that explorers’ struggles with conducting research in the field, were “central to their self-positioning as credible, scientifically minded observers.”²²⁸ The fact that the accuracy of the instruments was her worry alone, out of all of the expedition members, must have signalled to herself and to the others that she was the true knowledge producer of the group.

Elson, Chapies, Iserhoff and Blake facilitated Hubbard’s work with these instruments of observation by carrying her scientific equipment over lengthy portages and stopping along their route for Hubbard to get out of the canoe and take measurements.²²⁹ Points of friction emerged, however, when Mina’s desire to observe and take in various views of the landscape, essential activities for the explorer and cartographer, conflicted with the guides’ assessment of her physical capabilities. Specifically, these conflicts centered on Hubbard’s ambitions to scale nearby hills in order to get a more expansive perspective of the terrain. As a result of their choice to canoe through the Labrador interior, the group travelled for much of the time through river valleys surrounded by hills of significant elevation, making their vision of the landscape limited. Describing the experience of moving through these river valleys in her book, Hubbard emphasizes how the hilly terrain limited her capacity to see and to know what lay ahead of them:

the hills seemed to close round us and were covered with tall, pointed evergreens, so dark in colour as sometimes to seem almost black. Always these have been beautiful to me, with a mysterious kind of beauty... I wondered what might be in store for us beyond that narrow [river] gateway. When we passed it would the

²²⁷ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 10 August 1905, 232-233.

²²⁸ Keighren, Withers and Bell, *Travels into Print*, 97.

²²⁹ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 29 June 1905, 130; 10 July 1905, 150; 12 July 1905, 156; 1 August 1905, 208. Diary of George Elson, 5 July 1905, 10; 24 July 1905, 34; 24 August 1905, 89; 26 August 1905, 91.

beyond prove as much like Hades as this was suggestive of it? It seemed as if we must find ourselves within the mysteries.²³⁰

In order to get their bearings, and to make determinations about their route, it was often necessary to climb out of the valley and onto the summit of one of the hills to get access to a view of the landscape from a distance.

These moments of climbing and elevated observation were essential to the formation of Mina Hubbard's private exploratory identity. Entries from her field diary suggest that it was primarily in these contexts of heightened vision that she grappled with what it meant to be an explorer. Frequently, she compared herself to the model of exploration set by her husband, Leonidas. Early on in the trip, for example, Mina summarized her thoughts while standing on the edge of a bank looking down on the river at dusk:

Clouds lay like delicate veils along the hillsides sometimes dipping down almost to their feet. It is all so wild and grand and mysterious and how his [Leonidas'] heart would have beat hard with pride and joy in it all if he could be here. Along the edge of the bank I watched it for some time thinking, thinking. So very, very beautiful yet lacking that which completes and perfects. I have not his spirit, not that of the true explorer. I have to keep reminding myself all the time that I am the first of my kind to see it and I don't get any thrill out of it at all except only as I can make it honor him.²³¹

This passage suggests that Mina defined the explorer, like other proponents of Muscular Christianity, in terms of a spiritual sensibility. Throughout her life, Hubbard was exposed and attracted to several different nonconformist faiths: in rural Ontario, young Mina was raised in a devoutly Methodist household; at the time of her second marriage to Harold Ellis, she married into a family of pacifist English Quakers, subscribing to many of their

²³⁰ Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 58-59.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 152.

socially progressive beliefs; in her middle age, Mina became involved in anthroposophy, a spiritual movement strongly influenced by Eastern philosophies of karma and reincarnation that was popular among transatlantic progressives in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²³² While the above quotation suggests that Mina may have felt she lacked the particular spiritual sensibilities of the explorer, subsequent diary entries indicate that she was capable of entering into this elevated state of being while on the top of a hill or mountain. Later in July, she wrote that she felt “what I think must be an approach to the right thrill as we came up to the hilltops” near one of their early objective points at Seal Lake. She concluded: “now begin to feel just a little like an explorer.”²³³

The effect of taking in expansive and elevated views of the Labrador landscape in consolidating Mina’s status as an explorer was developed further in print in *A Woman’s Way*. Reaching the Height of Land, the site of transition between the Nascaupsee and George rivers, where the water begins to flow northward toward Ungava Bay, is highlighted in the text as a significant moment: “It was just 5 p.m. when, three hundred miles of my journey into the great, silent wilderness passed, I stepped out of the canoe to stand at last on the summit of the Divide – the first of the white race to trace the Nascaupsee River to its source.” What made the moment particularly triumphal for Hubbard was the unique prospect she encountered from her vantage point at the summit:

I had a strange feeling of being at the summit of the world. The country was flat and very sparsely wooded, but I could not see far. It seemed to fall away on every hand, but especially north and south. The line of the horizon was unnaturally near, and there was more than the usual realising sense of the great space between the earth and sky.²³⁴

²³² Hart, “Finding Her Way,” 395

²³³ Hubbard, *A Woman’s Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 158.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 117. Hubbard made a similar comment in her diary earlier in the trip: “Think I am getting some good pictures and am really enjoying the thought of the fact that I am

She captured the moment with her Kodak, “taking one picture looking out over the waters flowing south to Lake Melville and the Atlantic, and facing about, without otherwise changing my position, one over the waters which I felt sure we should find flowing north to Ungava Bay.”²³⁵ Mary Louise Pratt has suggested that this kind of totalizing, “Monarch-of-all-I-survey,” view of the landscape documented in Hubbard’s photographs taken from these elevated prospects, such as **Figure 4**, was central to European travellers’ sense of dominion over and knowledge of alien or unfamiliar locales.²³⁶



Figure 2.4: Mina Hubbard, photograph, "Mountain Top View of the Plateau" (Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard, "A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador," *Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society* 23:4 (1907): opp. 178)

Mina’s access to such prospects of conquest was hindered, however, by her perceived physical weakness. For much of the trip, Elson insisted that she only go climbing with an escort, for fear that she would fall or encounter a bear while on her own.²³⁷ In her diary she recorded her frustration on those occasions when she wished to go climbing,

the first to photograph the points of interest along this river as well as the first white woman to see it... ." Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," 25 July 1905, 184.

²³⁵ Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 118.

²³⁶ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 206, 64-66.

²³⁷ Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," 13 July 1905, 157; 15 July 1905, 159.

whether to get a view of the landscape or to “take some characteristic pictures,” but was unable to do so because the men were resting or otherwise occupied.²³⁸ Her guides also prohibited her from climbing hills that they deemed to be too dangerous or taxing for her. When Chapies told her that she could not accompany him on a scouting trip because the hill was too steep, she vented in her diary: “Such an ignominious sort of feeling to be an explorer and have one of your party tell you you can’t do something that he has done and is just going to do again for the mere pleasure of it.”²³⁹ By way of compensation, Mina had Elson take her further up river by canoe to an area where they hoped they could detect evidence of whether Wallace’s party was ahead of them.²⁴⁰

In order to counter the guides’ preoccupation with her physical limitations, Hubbard emphasized the important nature of her work and her epistemological responsibility to at least “see the part[s] of the river we are missing” when they left the water to portage.²⁴¹ On 27 July, Hubbard used the necessity of vision to her role as Arctic witness in order to compel Elson to accompany her on a climb, despite his obvious reluctance. Remarking on the view, Hubbard wrote in her diary: “How splendid some of the hills looked back along our course and how I wished I might have climbed some of them. Right there I made up my mind that in the future I should not travel so far without climbing some of the important hills.”²⁴² The next day, tensions over hill climbing came to a head. In the afternoon, Mina secured permission from Elson to climb a hill on her own so that she could take some “characteristic pictures” of the landscape, including **Figure 4**,

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 136.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 21 July 1905, 175.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 27 July 1905, 190.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 27 July 1905, 191.

while the guides portaged their outfit.²⁴³ Enthused by the experience of “spending an hour or two on top of that mountain alone with a glorious sky above and beautiful hills lakes and streams in all directions,” Hubbard walked further and took longer than the two hours she had been allotted.²⁴⁴ In diverging from Elson’s plan with hopes to “Get a better *view* of the falls and perhaps *see* something of the river below,” Hubbard wrote that she felt “a good deal as I used to when a child and started out to do something I knew I ought not to do.”²⁴⁵ Hubbard’s identification with her younger, juvenile self gives her the language of childhood to describe the ways in which Victorian women, even those who considered themselves explorers, internalized feelings of infantilization as their sphere of action was restricted by those around them.

Also significant is Mina’s emphasis in her diary on the opportunities for visual observation that this small act of rebellion afforded her. She describes herself as going “on and on” along the top of the mountain ridge, all in an effort to “see what [she] could.”²⁴⁶ Scaling the top of another ridge, Hubbard wrote that she “sat down to enjoy [her]self and get in my head what [she] was seeing.”²⁴⁷ She chose not to wear her “helmet,” a veil of netting that she used to keep flies from biting her face and neck, even after her neck and ears became “wet and sticky” with blood, because she was “seeing things [she] wanted to very much.”²⁴⁸ Meanwhile, Chapies, Elson, Iserhoff and Blake spent hours frantically searching for Hubbard, worried that they had lost her. While the guides all needed a nip

²⁴³ Ibid, 193-4.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 194.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 195.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

of brandy to “steady their nerves,” after their fright, Mina wrote that she “needed no bracer, for I was very very hungry and I had had ‘one good time.’”²⁴⁹ Despite the confrontation with Elson that ensued upon their reunion, Hubbard came away energized from the experience of rebelliousness and exploratory observation.

This episode of “Scaring the Guides,” as Mina Hubbard titles this chapter in her book, highlights how race and gender figured into calculations of authoritative witnessing. As a woman, Mina was expected to abide by the interests and agendas of the men in her expedition, at the cost of her ability to accumulate the observational experience required for her to be considered a credible Arctic explorer. According to her field diary, the guides were shocked that Mina had not deferred to their authority and mandate to ensure her safety while travelling. Describing the sentiments of Chapies, Iserhoff and Blake, Elson told Hubbard that “they never saw anything like the way you do. They have been on lots of trips before and where there were women too and they said to me they never were on a trip before where the women didn’t do as they were told.”²⁵⁰ Mina’s new role as an explorer and observer of Arctic environments had emancipatory potential. Hubbard was able counter the guides’ assumption of authority on the basis of gender using the language of observation. As a resolution to the episode, Mina made a bargain with Elson: “if I could have some one go with me when I wanted to climb a mountain or do anything else that I think is necessary for *my work* and no kick about it I would not go away alone again.”²⁵¹ While Hubbard does not question the necessity of a male escort for her wilderness

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 200.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 28 July 1905, 197.

²⁵¹ Ibid. Emphasis added.

activities, she reiterates her status as expedition leader, whose orders should be followed without objection, and her role as an explorer with important “work” to do.

Mina was not the only one, however, who felt that her identity undermined her capacity to perform as an authoritative witness. Mina’s diary records George’s remonstrations with her, disclosing that much of the guides’ upset over losing her had to do with their reputations: ““And what would we do if you got lost and fell in the rapid. Just think what could we do. Why I could never go back again. How could any of us go back without you.””²⁵² Here Elson reveals an acute awareness that his testimony would not be believed, as a guide of Indigenous descent, should some accidental harm befall one of his white employers. He experienced similar concerns around the death of Leonidas Hubbard in 1903, fearing that his word would not be enough to prevent others from blaming him for Hubbard’s death. In Elson’s personal narrative of the 1903 trip, published in *A Woman’s Way*, he described his “troubles”: ““should Mr Hubbard and Wallace starve in there, the people may not believe me in what I say, and will think that I run away from them, and haven’t done fair whatever,’ and when I got home I would get in trouble... .””²⁵³ Leonidas must have shared Elson’s concerns. One of his last acts before his death was to write a letter to Elson’s employer at the HBC, “telling him how hard [Elson] had tried to help him.”²⁵⁴ When Elson discovered this letter with Leonidas’ body in the spring of 1904, he was much relieved with the knowledge that “his letter would help if people would not believe me in what I said.”²⁵⁵ As a man of Cree descent and as a paid employee of the First

²⁵² Ibid., 200.

²⁵³ Elson, “Last Days Together,” 208.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 209.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

Hubbard Expedition, Elson would not have been counted as a trustworthy witness of the events of 1903 without Leonidas Hubbard's letter to authenticate his testimony.

In 1909, the story of Leonidas Hubbard's death in Labrador was invoked by the *New York Times* as a cautionary tale of the dangers for white men travelling through exotic locales with native retinues. The "cruel and totally unfounded gossip to which Dillon Wallace was subjected," the article argued, was a typical experience for those who travelled beyond the boundaries of the known world without a sufficient number of white witnesses to attest to their character.²⁵⁶ The *Times* developed a likely scenario for those "who engage in hunting expeditions and geographical explorations, unless the party numbers at least three, and preferably four, five, and even more, exclusive of the native porters and attendants:"

If the leader of the party has had with him but one companion of his own race, and the latter has had the misfortune to succumb to the climate, to some accident, or to fall a prey to wild beasts, venomous reptiles, or even still more deadly poisonous insects, he can never be quite sure that the lack of European witnesses will not tempt his native followers to circulate stories imputing to him the responsibility for his comrade's death.²⁵⁷

The traveller was "almost equally exposed to slander if he travels with none but native companions."²⁵⁸ The difference between the *Times*' perception of "European witnesses," who are automatically viewed as trustworthy, and the "mendacity" of the natives, is stark.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ "Unsolved Mysteries: Tragedies in the Wake of the World Explorers," *New York Times* 2 May 1909, 2, *New York TimesMachine*.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

These acts of witnessing and observation were central to early twentieth century definitions of the Arctic exploration, and to Mina Hubbard's self-conceptualization as an explorer. This section has shown the importance of visual observation in particular to Mina's exploratory work, and as a site of contention and negotiation between Mina and her guides. By running away from Elson, Chapies, Iserhoff and Blake on the afternoon of 28 July, Hubbard laid bare the difference between her capacity to act as an authoritative witness (and, by extension, an Arctic explorer) through vision and instrumental observation, and the incapacity of the men, by virtue of their racialization, to act as witnesses. Ultimately, despite the experiences they shared on the expedition, it was Mina's individual subjectivity, as a white woman, that defined the trip as exploration. Mina's book makes this clear when she writes about the epistemological significance of her viewing the Labrador landscape: "I had, too, not only seen Seal Lake, I had seen the Nascauppee River flowing out of it ... best of all, there came the full realisation that *I* was the first in the field, and the honour of exploring the Nascauppee and George Rivers was to fall to me."²⁶⁰ In this passage, the presence of the guides and their collective witnessing is effaced. It is her witnessing, by virtue of its novelty and her epistemic authority, that marks their trip as exploration.

2.6 Cartographic Witnessing in Establishing a Public Exploratory Identity

Mina Hubbard's diary shows the importance of hill climbing and visual observation in her self-conceptualization as an explorer. Writing, as a material practice in the field, as well as

²⁶⁰ Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 78.

a medium for representations of the expedition, was also central for Mina in developing her private sense of herself in the explorer role, and in shoring up the credibility of her Arctic testimony in the public sphere. Once again, Hubbard's field diary provides us with insights into the significance of the writing process as part of the work of exploration. Arriving at the HBC post on the George River in the northernmost part of the Labrador peninsula on Ungava Bay on 27 August 1905, Hubbard, Elson, Chapies, Iserhoff and Blake spent the next two months living at the post waiting for the Company ship that would carry them back to Southern Labrador. During this waiting period, Mina once again took up work on her manuscript, completing a brief sketch of the expedition for the publication *New York World*, as well as several thousand words of her narrative of the Second Hubbard Expedition. Her account would appear alongside Leonidas' 1903 field diary and Elson's testimonial in the memorial volume that would become *A Woman's Way*. Mina's anxieties over her competency as a writer, as recorded in her field diary during this period, register the importance of storytelling and the process of narration as part of the work of exploration. The deterioration of her relationship with Elson during this early writing period is also suggestive of a rivalry among the crew over who would secure narrative control of the expedition.

Despite these fraught months of writing Mina spent in northernmost Labrador, the expedition narrative in *A Woman's Way* concludes with the crew's arrival at the George River post. Hubbard's meeting with the post's chief trader, John Ford, and his wife, is made to signify the completion of her journey through her re-entry into civilization. Civilization, in Hubbard's book, is synonymous with the presence of white society. A comment attributed by Mina to Mrs. Ford signals the entwined discourses of whiteness and

civilization to her readers: “At the foot of the hill below the house, Mrs Ford stood waiting. Her eyes shone like stars as she took my hand and said, ‘You are very welcome, Mrs Hubbard. Yours is the first white woman’s face I have seen for two years.’”²⁶¹ This moment of mutual recognition between these two white women is made to represent a sort of racial homecoming for Hubbard, after spending months in the company of only her guides.

The racial distance between Mina and the rest of the crew is also reinstated at the conclusion of the narrative. Upon stepping out of the canoe at the post, Hubbard recognizes that their “positions had reversed” and that her crew “were my charges now.”²⁶² Here Mina invokes a longstanding trope in sportsmen’s and explorers’ depictions of Indigenous guides as becoming helpless and childlike in civilized contexts. Regardless of their skill and expertise in the bush, guides’ undeniable authority over their employers was mitigated and contained by being confined solely to wilderness contexts.²⁶³

Furthermore, it was important for Hubbard’s public record of the expedition to register her elevated status over her guides as *the* authoritative witness. In areas of knowledge production requiring fieldwork, like geographical exploration, the authority of the explorer was based on their ability to exit “the field” and communicate their findings upon their return to civilization. Those individuals they encountered while in the field, on the other hand, were defined as static, and unable to move between these two spaces. This is a point made by critical geographers like Gillian Rose and Matthew Sparke, who argues that “the double movement of going *There* only to go back *Here* constitutes the elemental

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 153.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ Parenteau, “‘Care, Control and Supervision,’” 31-32.

spatial practice ... at the very core of masculinist fieldwork authority.”²⁶⁴ Despite her femininity, Hubbard was able to wield this masculinist authority on the basis of her privileged Arctic experiences and observations. Her guides, who, like the Innu communities they encountered, could not practice the double movement demanded by fieldwork research, were not credited by Mina with a similar capacity for witnessing or observation. Their work in the expedition, which she praised emphatically, was to facilitate her movement, as the Arctic observer, “safely, triumphantly,” on her “long journey” without “a hair of [her] head being harmed.”²⁶⁵

Despite this confident conclusion to *A Woman's Way*, Mina's arrival at the George River post did not definitively consolidate her status as an explorer, nor her authority over the expedition. The weeks she spent there working up the first draft of her travel narrative represented for Hubbard a prolonged confrontation with her feelings of inadequacy as a writer and as an explorer. Mina's primary concerns were whether her narrative would be interesting and accurate. She expressed her frustration that she did not take more detailed notes of her experiences in the field, a failing which she attributes to her lack of experience as a writer:

Awfully hard to write. Worried about my Nascauppee River map. Have almost decided to chop my story off short. I mean to make it short. Can't make an interesting story out of each day. Find I can't describe things accurately. Did not take as many notes as I should. Comes of not having ideas as to how to write stories. Don't know before hand what I am going to need. Don't recognize as I go along the things that would fit well into a story.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ Matthew Sparke, “Displacing the Field in Fieldwork: Masculinity, Metaphor and Space,” in *Bodyspace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*, ed. Nancy Duncan (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 213.

²⁶⁵ Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 153.

²⁶⁶ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 18 September 1905, 291-292.

Hubbard was right to worry; comprehensive field notes were an essential tool for the explorer in narrativizing their testimony in ways that would be read as truthful and authentic. As Burroughs has observed, authors frequently stated that their narratives adhered closely their field notes, in order to emphasize “the rawness of their evidence,” produced in the field.²⁶⁷ Furthermore, like other Arctic travellers turned authors, Hubbard’s field diary reflected her struggle to accurately describe her experiences, which occurred cumulatively and in real time, while writing from a retrospective perspective, where she could view the expedition in its entirety as a *fait accompli*.

Hubbard’s diary also reveals her concerns about the threat posed by George Elson to her status as author – in both literal and metaphorical senses – of the expedition. Like Mina, Elson also had ambitions to write about his Northern experiences. Both Elson’s and Hubbard’s field diaries refer to discussions they had about his writing. As a child growing up at the HBC post at Rupert’s House, Elson kept diaries in order to help him learn how to write. On 20 July Mina recorded in her diary that he “had never seen anyone [keep a diary] and did not even know the name of such a daily record of events but wanted to learn to write. Made little books out of pieces of paper at first Then his father got him books.”²⁶⁸ She advised him to collect these books from Rupert’s House upon the completion of their trip so that “He could write a capital boy’s story from them and if he could bring it out soon after our return it would be a great thing for him.”²⁶⁹ Hubbard also agreed to help him with preparing the manuscript. By September, however, far from wanting to facilitate

²⁶⁷ Burroughs, “The Travelling Apologist,” 147.

²⁶⁸ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 20 July 1905, 174. Diary of George Elson, 20 July 1905, 28.

²⁶⁹ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 20 July 1905, 174-175.

Elson's writing career, Hubbard was privately entertaining the idea of asking him to sign an agreement "not to write anything about the trip without [her] written consent and approval."²⁷⁰ The idea was prompted by a conversation she had with Gilbert Blake, who informed her that he had, at Elson's request, drawn up a map of Grand Lake, at the beginning of the Nascaupsee River north of Northwest River.²⁷¹ One imagines that Hubbard feared that the men were planning to usurp the primacy of *her* map and story by publishing narratives of their own. Mina seems to have viewed the possibility as deeply threatening; while she recognized that the travelling component of her work had been a success, she was also aware that she would need to "follow it up" in writing "and make it tell to his [Leonidas Hubbard's] honor" in order to make a meaningful contribution to Arctic exploration as a process of knowledge production.²⁷² Perhaps because of these experiences at the end of the Labrador trip, Hubbard's published writings about the expedition continually emphasize her status as *the* primary and epistemologically authoritative witness among the expedition crew.

Over the course of her career as an author-explorer between 1905 and 1909, Hubbard produced four journal articles and one monograph.²⁷³ Most scholarly readings of Hubbard's corpus have been from feminist literary perspectives.²⁷⁴ The central interest of this scholarship has been in the narrative framings and the textual devices deployed by

²⁷⁰ Ibid, 21 September 1905, 295.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid., 13 October 1905, 308.

²⁷³ Grace, "A Woman's Way," xxxviii.

²⁷⁴ Grace, "A Woman's Way;" Grace, "Hidden Country;" LaFramboise, "Just a Little Like an Explorer;" Jonathan Parsons, "The Naming Compulsion in Dillon Wallace's *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* and Mina Hubbard's *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*," *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 26:1 (2011): 37 pars, <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/nflds/article/view/18747/20537>.

Hubbard to overcome her readers' prejudices against the idea of a female explorer in an era when Arctic environments were regarded as a proving ground for white masculinity. The preponderance of scholarly attention has been paid to her narrative of her 1905 expedition as it appears in her book. This is not surprising, given that the monograph format of *A Woman's Way* lends itself to comparisons with other travel narratives that, as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, tended to be published as in book form. There is also a tendency, as Janice Cavell and Louise Henderson have pointed out, to regard books produced by explorers, based on their unique first-hand experiences, as the most authoritative text on a particular expedition, in comparison with any shorter pieces written by the author, or accounts that had not been authorized by the explorer.²⁷⁵ These existing analyses of Mina Hubbard's work are invaluable to understanding Hubbard's deft textual "negotiations of the twin imperatives of femininity and of authority" in order to carve out space for herself as a female Arctic explorer in the British and North American public spheres.²⁷⁶

Rather than recapitulating these excellent interpretations, the remainder of this chapter will focus on Hubbard's article written in closest relation to her Labrador map, which appeared in the *Bulletin* of New York's American Geographical Society (AGS) in 1906. Produced by the technicians at the AGS, Hubbard's map has been credited with single-handedly consolidating her status among the ranks of Canada's Northern explorers.²⁷⁷ Reviewers of *A Woman's Way*, which included a fold-out version of her map,

²⁷⁵ Henderson, "David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels*," 181. Cavell, *Tracing the Connected Narrative*, 16-19.

²⁷⁶ LaFramboise, "'Just a Little Like an Explorer,'" 9.

²⁷⁷ Greene, "The Historical Context," 44.

frequently praised it as her most significant contribution to Arctic knowledge.²⁷⁸ While reviews of the narrative portion of *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador* indicate that Hubbard's book was received, like other women's writing, primarily as a "woman's story," rather than a piece of exploratory research, her map was unassailable.²⁷⁹ The AGS *Bulletin* described it as "an excellent piece of pioneer research, which has been recognized as worthy by the geographical authorities of America and Europe."²⁸⁰ The London *Times* concurred, reporting that Hubbard having "brought back the first account of the sources of two rivers speaks for itself of the place which will be hers in the geographical history of Labrador."²⁸¹ The credibility of Hubbard's Arctic testimony was further validated when her map was taken up by the Canadian government to form the basis for official maps of the region until the introduction of aerial mapping in the 1930s.²⁸² While much has been written about the function of maps as tools and products of geographical exploration, I want to focus on the status of maps as "tangible proxies of observations made 'out there'" that could shore up any potential uncertainties surrounding the personal testimonies of explorers.²⁸³ With this in mind, Hubbard's map can be read alongside her AGS *Bulletin*

²⁷⁸ Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard Jr., *Map of Eastern Labrador: Showing Grand Lake and the courses of the Nascaupe and George Rivers as surveyed and mapped, June 27 to August 27, 1905*, scale 1:11,584,000, in Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, n.p.

²⁷⁹ As Sherrill Grace observes, "Whether the reviewers praised or damned, however, they all fixed on one thing: gender. Taking their cue from her title, they tended to displace the book to talk about its author. They used the author to upstage the book." Grace, "A Woman's Way," lx.

²⁸⁰ Review of *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 41:1 (1909): 57, doi: 10.2307/199683.

²⁸¹ "Through Unknown Labrador," n.p.

²⁸² Greene, "The Historical Context," 44.

²⁸³ Keighren, Withers and Bell, *Travels Into Print*, 73.

article as part of her successful narrative efforts to construct herself as an authoritative Arctic witness.

Beyond the actual contents of Hubbard's map or article, the affiliation of both documents with the AGS helped to establish her scientific credibility. Established in 1851, the AGS had a long-standing reputation for insisting that any Arctic expeditions sponsored by the Society produce "tangible scientific results."²⁸⁴ Mina acknowledged the significance of the Society's endorsement in a letter to Cyrus Adams in his capacity as AGS president. She told Adams that she was "deeply grateful that what I have been able to bring out of my trip should, by you who know, be thought to merit the praise you have bestowed on it and the recognition which its publication in the Bulletin indicates."²⁸⁵ While Mina's expedition was not financially supported by the AGS, the Society's retrospective endorsement of Hubbard through producing and publishing her map imbued her Arctic testimony not only with the aura of truthfulness, but also with scientific heft.

²⁸⁴ Frederick E. Nelson, "'The Advancement of Exploration Along Scientific Lines': The American Geographical Society and the Arctic, 1851-1950," in *North by Degree*, 64.

²⁸⁵ Mina Hubbard to Cyrus Adams, 6 April 1906, General Correspondence, 1889-1912, Cyrus C. Adams, AGSRO.

Hubbard’s map and article, entitled “Labrador, from Lake Melville to Ungava Bay,” appeared in the same number of the *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* in 1906. Reading map and article against one another, both documents demonstrate Hubbard’s capacity for what might be “cartographic witnessing.” The textual elements of Hubbard’s map add credibility to her testimony by inscribing the narrative of her journey

onto the Labrador landscape. A symbolic schema, for example, denotes those sites along the George and Nascaupée Rivers “as surveyed and mapped, June 27 to August 27, 1905, by Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard, Jr.” where she encountered rapids, where she camped, and where she portaged (Figure 5). This legend effectively effaces the work of Elson and her other guides in poling



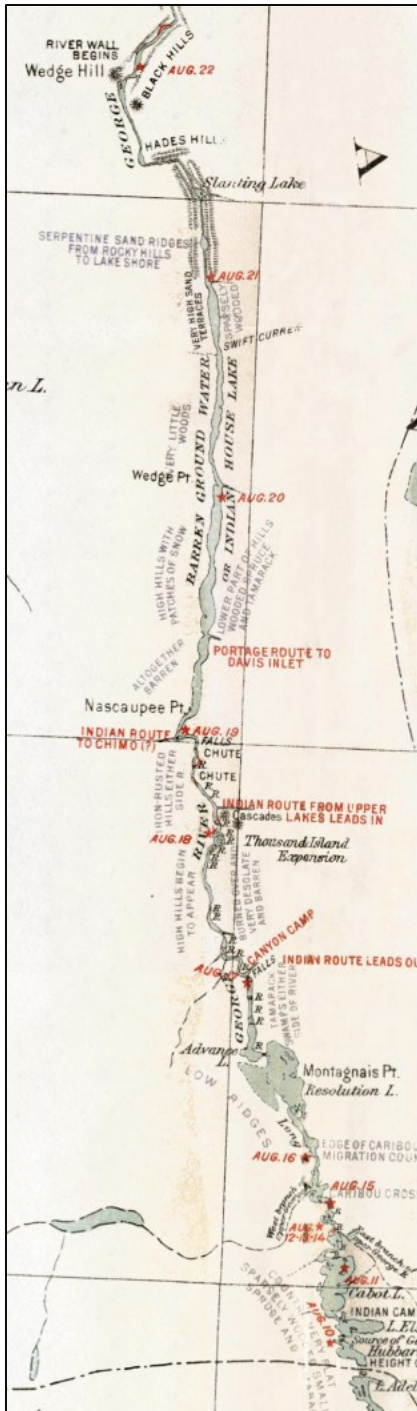


Figure 2.6: Section from Hubbard, *Map of Eastern Labrador* (1906) (Hubbard, “Labrador From Lake Melville to Ungava Bay,” opp. 529)

through these rapids, setting up their camp sites, and cutting these newly plotted portage trails (**Figure 6**). Blue text was also inscribed episodically along Hubbard’s expedition route, indicating her observations of the topography and landscape of different areas of terrain as observed by her “as they appeared from the canoe or from the top of a hill.”²⁸⁶ Through these strategies, Hubbard makes it clear that the map was produced on the strength of her (and only her) careful – and now cartographically corroborated -- observations.

The sketch of the expedition written by Hubbard for the *Bulletin* reflects and reinforces the omniscient, “bird’s eye view” perspective on the landscape that is presented in her map. While *A Woman’s Way* tells the story of Hubbard’s encounter with the Labrador environment as she experienced it incrementally over time, “Labrador, From Lake Melville to Ungava Bay” is written as though it were possible to view the entirety of the George and Nascaupee rivers simultaneously, in microscopic and macroscopic detail:

From the foot of the lake the George runs a swift descent to Ungava, flowing more than one hundred and thirty miles in almost continuous rapids. The slope of the river-beds is in many places like that of a steep grade;

²⁸⁶ Hubbard, “Labrador, From Lake Melville to Ungava Bay,” 531.

and as the water swings past the long points of loose rocks which reach out on either shore, there is not only the slope down the course of the river, but a distinct tilt from one side to the other, as when an engine rounds a bend.²⁸⁷

Hubbard's description of her experience of observation in the *Bulletin* differs significantly from how it is presented in *A Woman's Way*, where narrative suspense is built for the reader by emphasizing the "mysteries" of the Labrador environment and the crew's anxious anticipation to see what was coming around the next riverbend. The rivers routes, rather than being viewed simultaneously and as part of a larger system, are characterized in *A Woman's Way* by "narrow gateway[s]" and feelings of enclosure.²⁸⁸ The differences between these two narratives in their representations of time and space, and the associated experiences of exploratory witnessing, represent the different narrative conventions associated with professional versus popular scientific writing.

George Myers has described a typology for twentieth-century science writing in which scientific narratives are divided into two categories: narratives of science, and narratives of nature. Narratives of science are "designed to establish the credibility of a scientist within the scientific community. ... The argument is embodied in a present tense narrative describing a parallel series of simultaneously events all supporting the claims of the author(s)."²⁸⁹ Narratives of nature, on the other hand, are written for popular scientific audiences:

Here the unmediated encounter with nature is detailed, rather than the expertise of the observer. ... The chronological, past-tense narrative allows an exciting story to be told to the reader as they follow the activities of plants or animals. The purpose

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 535.

²⁸⁸ Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 44-45.

²⁸⁹ Myers summarized by Bernard Lightman, *Victorian Popularizers of Science: Designing Nature for New Audiences* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 35.

of the story is to make the reader feel as though they are walking beside the naturalist on an adventurous quest for knowledge.²⁹⁰

Within this typology, *A Woman's Way*, written for a popular audience, can be characterized as a narrative of nature. Like other narratives of science, Hubbard's work in the *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* was intended to establish her credentials within the professional community of geographical practitioners. The demonstration of observational omnipotence in both map and article, which mirrored the kind of hilltop prospects that were so important to the development of Hubbard's self-conceptualisation as an explorer while in Labrador, is critical to her scientific credibility.

Historical geographer Mona Domosh argues that Victorian women's exploratory activities, almost always lacking institutional backing, were treated as distinct from the fieldwork of "professional" geographers and explorers, which was "codified and regulated in order to advance scientific learning."²⁹¹ Mina Hubbard's AGS article and map did, however, manage to pass this threshold for contributing to the advancement of scientifically legitimate Arctic knowledge. Within the pages of the *Bulletin* itself, Hubbard's map and article were cited twice by other Labrador scientists and explorers. In 1922, for example, E. M. Kindle, who did not travel as far up the Nascaupee as Mina Hubbard did, used her more comprehensive description of the Nascaupee riverscape to supplement his own personal observations.²⁹² Returning to the concept of textual

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 35-36.

²⁹¹ Domosh, "Toward a Feminist Historiography," 96-7

²⁹² E. M. Kindle, "Notes on the Forests of Southeastern Labrador," *Geographical Review* [previously *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*] 12:1 (January 1922): 64, doi: 10.2307/208656. Hubbard's map was also cited, along with a map of Labrador produced by William Brooks Cabot in 1912, in a discussion of Innu portage routes by E. P. Wheeler of Cornell University in a *Bulletin* article on his own Labrador journey in 1938.

triangulation, subsequent Arctic travelers like Kindle used and cited Hubbard's work in order to shore up their own credibility as textually and observationally sensitive explorers. Hubbard's *Bulletin* article was also cited by the British Privy Council in 1927 in the documents of arbitration surrounding the Labrador Boundary Dispute.²⁹³ At the logical conclusion of this process of exploratory knowledge production, Hubbard's writings and observations became part of edifice of imperial testimony, viewed as inherently more authoritative and truthful than the testimony of the Innu and Inuit who had lived on these lands since time immemorial, that was used to superimpose the boundaries of Canada, as a settler colonial nation, onto Indigenous lands.

2.7 Conclusion

The First and Second Hubbard expeditions began and ended in the world of print. The centrality of writing and publication to public and private definitions of Arctic exploration prompts us to reconceptualize exploration as a two-part process, one that is not completed at the end of an expedition, but rather, once its narrative incarnation has been read by the general public. This process requires (1) the accumulation of observations in "unknown" parts of the world and (2) the subsequent translation of privilege these witness experiences into written testimony, with the ultimate goal of bringing these spaces within the ambit of

E. P. Wheeler, "Topographical Notes on a Journey Across Labrador," *Geographical Review* 28:3 (July 1938): 475, doi: 10.2307/209742.

²⁹³ E. M. Kindle, "Extracts from Report on 'Geography and Geology of Lake Melville District, Labrador Peninsula,'" in *Report of the Privy Council on the Labrador Boundary Dispute Vol. 5*, "Reports and Documents Relating to the Location of the Seacoast Line with Relation to the Estuary of the Hamilton River System," (Robinson & Co. Ltd., 1927), 2384. <https://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/politics/pdf/labrador-boundary-dispute-documents.pdf>

European knowability. At the core of both of these processes is the idea of the authoritative witness. The challenges encountered by Mina Hubbard in establishing her credentials as an Arctic authority highlight the physical, moral, and gendered dimensions of exploratory witnessing that typically converged to exclude women from exploration. Hubbard's successful negotiation of these challenges over her Indigenous guides, despite their wilderness skills, embodiment of the ideals of strenuous masculinity, and, in Elson's case, writing ambitions, also demonstrates the racialized definitions of authority and truth within the epistemology of Arctic exploration in the early twentieth century.

In February and March of 1906 and 1907, George Elson performed at two sportsman's shows in New York and Pittsburgh, respectively.²⁹⁴ By way of conclusion, I aim to unpack the ethos of early twentieth-century sportsman's shows. The relationship between sportsman (or explorer) and guide in these contexts highlights, I argue, the status of Indigenous guides like Elson within the hierarchy of knowledge and knowledge producers associated with Arctic exploration.

In this era, sportsmen's shows were organized according to the priorities and mandates of the "code of the sportsman," an informal set of practices and sensibilities observed by elite outdoorsmen to distinguish their ways of being in nature from those of their wilderness guides, who were either Indigenous or of lower social status.²⁹⁵ This code defined the moral sportsman as a naturalist, a conservationist, and a conspicuous consumer, with the ability to purchase the services of guides and all of the paraphernalia associated

²⁹⁴ "Show Still Popular," *New York Tribune* 1 March 1906, 5, *Chronicling America*.

²⁹⁵ Loo, "Of Moose and Men," 307.

with elite wilderness excursions.²⁹⁶ As the outdoor magazine *Forest and Stream* observed in 1907,

Sportsman's shows have been organized for the purpose of co-operating in the protection and propagating of North American animals, birds and fish, to preserve and exhibit these to the public, to give the sportsmen a chance to exhibit their trophies and compete with others for prizes, [and] to illustrate the outdoor life.²⁹⁷

They were also venues for consumerism, with “displays of guns and camp outfits, with all of the novelties and conveniences for making sport a luxury” available for sale.²⁹⁸

Sportsman's shows also dramatized, by way of taxidermy, dioramas, and re-enactments, “authentic” wilderness experiences for attendees. In Pittsburgh, for example, the exhibition space was “converted into a veritable forest, several carloads of trees being used in decoration.” Indigenous performers and other Northern types were included in these wilderness displays to lend them an aura of verisimilitude. The Pittsburgh show advertised that there would be “Indians, guides and hunters in their teepees, long cabins and hunting shacks. Wanka, the Eskimo from Alaska with his famous team of Eskimo dogs,” would also be in attendance.²⁹⁹ In New York, at the Canadian display, “large teepees have been set up, and crouching over realistic fires of brushwood in the tents were trappers and hunters from the frozen North. Electric lights clearly arranged with red bulbs give the campfire effect.”³⁰⁰ The presence of guides and Indigenous men like Elson helped to lend an authenticity to these faux wilderness contexts, in the same way that they were expected to create “authentic” encounters with the wilderness for elite sportsmen and explorers in the

²⁹⁶ Parenteau, “Care, Control and Supervision,” 3.

²⁹⁷ “Pittsburgh Sportsman's Show,” *Forest and Stream* 68:9 (2 March 1907): 336.

²⁹⁸ “Sportsman's Show Open, Camps, Lake and Forest,” *New York Times* 21 February 1906, 10, *New York Times Machine*.

²⁹⁹ “Pittsburgh Sportsman's Show,” 336.

³⁰⁰ “Sportsman's Show Open,” 10.

field. In both cases, Bill Parenteau argues that Indigenous men were treated as “cultural commodities,” as icons and guarantors of authentic wilderness experience.³⁰¹

Mina Hubbard was also involved with a sportsmen’s show in Pittsburgh, where she lectured, along with other explorers and sportsmen (all otherwise male), on “animals and outdoor life.”³⁰² *Forest and Stream* reported that George Elson was also in attendance, in his capacity as Mina Hubbard’s guide, and as the man who “brought [Leonidas] Hubbard’s body out of Labrador.”³⁰³ Rather than being treated as an authoritative Arctic witness in his own right, Elson is used to lend credibility to Hubbard’s testimony. Within the economy of the sportsman and the epistemology of the explorer, Indigenous peoples, because of their associations with consumerism and wilderness contexts, can only ever act as authenticators of Arctic knowledge produced by others.

³⁰¹ Parenteau, ““Care, Control and Supervision,”” 2.

³⁰² “Pittsburgh Sportsman’s Show,” 336.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

Chapter 3

“I Did Not Feel Far From Home”: Centering the Home in Geographies of Arctic Exploration

Mina Hubbard and her guides stayed with the Fords at George’s River for two months, waiting for the arrival of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s ship which would carry the expedition crew part of their way home. They were to join the *Pelican* on its annual supply run southward from George’s River, stopping at HBC posts along the Labrador coast before returning to England.³⁰⁴ Finally, the vessel made its appearance on October 19, 1905, and Mina Hubbard was able to begin her homeward journey. While George Elson was keen to return to his home in James Bay after a sustained period of monotonous immobility at the Labrador trading post, Hubbard’s field diary registered a more ambivalent response to the prospect of homecoming.³⁰⁵ She recorded her sense of dread at the idea of returning to her temporary residence in Williamstown, Massachusetts, where she anticipated having “to face the crowd”: an oblique reference, one imagines, to the anticipated public scrutiny she would be subjected to as a newly minted Arctic explorer.³⁰⁶ Hubbard expressed her desire to remain in Labrador, confessing that “it makes me feel really lonely going away from here. As far as personal feelings go I should like to stay all winter.”³⁰⁷ While in Labrador, a place that was ostensibly very far – in both geographical and cultural terms – from any home she had ever known, Hubbard recorded her surprise

³⁰⁴ Roberta Buchanan and Bryan Greene, annotation to Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 149, fn. 88.

³⁰⁵ Upon their departure on the *Pelican*, Elson wrote, “All feeling very happy to think we are on our way home again.” Diary of George Elson, 22 September 1905, 115.

³⁰⁶ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 302. Expressions of dread about homecoming also appear on 25 August 1905, 265, 267 and 26 September, 297.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 21 October 1905, 314.

that she actually “never felt ... far from home. I suppose because no place can ever seem like home to me here. I have felt more at home here in this Labrador wilderness than I have ever done since I was in [the] home” that she shared with Leonidas Hubbard in Congers, New York.³⁰⁸ Hubbard’s expedition diary suggests that the death of her husband profoundly disrupted her sense of home, and that her ideas of domestic stability had become unmoored from her place of residence in the United States. Her capacity to feel more at home in Labrador than she did in urban “civilisation” in this context represented a significant departure from the mode through which most explorers related to those natural environments that they defined as “wild,” which typically connoted the absence of non-Indigenous habitation.

After departing from George’s River, the *Pelican* stopped on October 27 at its next destination: Nachvak, the HBC’s northernmost trading depot on the Labrador coast.³⁰⁹ According to outsiders’ reports, Nachvak was not an inviting port of call to visitors. Dillon Wallace, for example, described the locale as “the most God-forsaken place for a trading post that I have ever seen. Wherever you look bare rocks and towering mountains stare you in the face; nowhere is there a tree or shrub of any kind to relieve the rock-bound desolation.”³¹⁰ While some parts of Labrador traversed by Mina Hubbard’s expedition were covered by the boreal forests typical of other parts of North America, the rugged coastline of northern Labrador was more akin to other Inuit territories positioned within the Arctic Circle that white outsiders like Wallace typically viewed as wilderness spaces,

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 25 August 1905, 267.

³⁰⁹ The spelling of “Nachvak,” is inconsistent in historical records, sometimes appearing as “Nakvak” or “Nachvack,” but I have chosen to use the HBC’s spelling, as I am primarily referring to the trading post.

³¹⁰ Wallace, *The Long Labrador Trail*, 251.

and therefore hostile to human habitation.³¹¹ And yet, the Nachvak post was home to some: George Ford, the half-brother of John Ford Jr. of George's River, had resided at Nachvak as an HBC employee since 1877.³¹² George and his wife Harriet raised three children at the post: Henry, Solomon, and Elizabeth.³¹³

During her brief visit with the Fords of Nachvak in October 1905, Mina Hubbard was particularly endeared to the twenty-year-old Elizabeth Ford (1885-1965), known as "Lizzie" to her family.³¹⁴ Hubbard described "Miss F" as "small, pretty and a very sweet girl," and she noted that she was doted upon by her father in particular.³¹⁵ At the time of their meeting, both women's sense of home and family life were in flux. That autumn, Elizabeth was anticipating her spring wedding to William R. Ford, the son of John Ford Jr., with whom Mina Hubbard had become acquainted during her stay at George's River. Elizabeth showed Hubbard her wedding dress, which had been made by William's sister in St. John's, Newfoundland.³¹⁶ William had already spoken to Hubbard of his marriage plans. On 15 September Hubbard recorded that William was "to marry his cousin," adding

³¹¹ Kaplan, "Labrador Inuit Ingenuity," 16.

³¹² RG 3/40 B/1, Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA), Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg. George Ford's employment file is available online: https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/docs/hbca/biographical/f/ford_george.pdf (accessed 10 July 2019).

³¹³ Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford, Kingsbridge*, 95.

³¹⁴ In the Nachvak post journal, George Ford regularly refers to his daughter as "Lizzie." Nachvak Post Journals, B.138/a/4, 1898-1900, HBCA.

³¹⁵ Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," 27 October 1905, 319.

³¹⁶ William's sister Elizabeth married Alexander Watson of Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 21. The address for "Mrs. Alex Watson" of British Square, St. John's, Newfoundland, appears at the back of Mina Hubbard's expedition diary. Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," 345. Elizabeth Ford stayed with Elizabeth Watson's family in St. John's for a time after her husband's death in 1913. See Washburne and Anauta, *Land of the Good Shadows*, 252-259.

that the couple would “probably settle down here as [William’s] father did for the next 20-30 years.”³¹⁷

This future imagined by Mina for the young couple was not to be, however; between their marriage in 1906 and 1913, the Fords would relocate to different areas of the Eastern Arctic a minimum of four times, living and working at HBC posts on Ungava Bay, the Hudson Strait, and Baffin Island. After William’s premature death by drowning in 1913, Elizabeth Ford’s familial link with the HBC was severed and she and their children left the Arctic, settling with extended family in Newfoundland for several years. As with Mina Hubbard, the death of Elizabeth Ford’s husband profoundly disrupted her sense of home in both familial and geographical terms. Cast adrift and in need of financial security, both women were pulled into the gravitational orbits of urban spaces where they could parlay their Arctic experiences into incomes by catering to the public’s fascination with the Arctic. In 1907, Mina Hubbard moved to London, England in order to promote her Labrador travelogue. Here she met her second husband and retained her primary residence in England until the end of her life in 1956. In 1921, Elizabeth Ford relocated permanently to Indianapolis, where she made a career for herself as an Arctic lecturer until her death in 1965. While Hubbard’s fame centered upon the novelty of her identity as a white woman explorer, however, Ford drew upon her partly Inuit ancestry to position herself as an Indigenous insider, for whom the Arctic was home. After their husbands’ deaths, both women gravitated toward cities with an audience and appetite for Arctic stories, perhaps indicating that their choice of locales was influenced by the geography of the Arctic knowledge economy.

³¹⁷ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 15 September 1905, 287.

This chapter considers how Mina Hubbard and Elizabeth Ford, as well as others involved in the northern knowledge economy, made and remade their homes inside and outside the Arctic. Looking at Elizabeth Ford's southward journey to the United States alongside Mina Hubbard's northward travels through Labrador enables us to see that their directionally inverse journeys constituted two halves of the same cultural and geographical cycle that defined Arctic exploration in this period. As discussed in Chapter Two, the promise of cultural and commercial capital offered by the acquisition of privileged northern experiences prompted explorers like Leonidas and then Mina Hubbard to go the Arctic and return home with stories to share. Conversely, this same economic incentive caused Arctic residents like Elizabeth Ford and other Inuit to leave their homes and travel south to perform for white audiences across America in particular, but also Canada, Britain and Europe to lesser extents.³¹⁸ Individuals who travelled along this north-south axis were

³¹⁸ In Labrador alone, Inuit travelled, with varying degrees of autonomy and coercion, to perform at numerous popular and international exhibitions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, appearing in America, Canada, Germany, Italy, and Britain. Like Elizabeth Ford, a number of these Labrador Inuit performers, including Esther Eneutseak and her daughter, Nancy Columbia, achieved celebrity status for their performances and commentary on Arctic life. There is more research to be done on Inuit performers as a group who responded to the *Qallunaat* fascination with the Arctic during this period. I have chosen for the purposes of this thesis to focus on one such individual, Elizabeth Ford, and to situate her life in the context of the diverse cast of her female contemporaries, including Mina Hubbard, whose time in the Arctic was experienced and represented relative to concepts of home and domesticity. For more about the history of Inuit travellers and performers, see Gerhard Bassler, *Vikings to U-Boats: The German Experience in Newfoundland and Labrador* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 81-82; David R. Beck, *Unfair Labour? American Indians and the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 137-146; Roberta Buchanan, "The Aboriginal Writes Back: Representations of Inuit in Wayne Johnston's *The Navigator of New York* and in Abraham Ulrikab's *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*," in *Pathways of Creativity in Contemporary Newfoundland and Labrador*, ed. María Jesús Hernández Lerena (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 123-148; William Forbush, *Pomiuk: The Waif of Labrador* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1903); Kenn Harper and Russell Potter, "Early Arctic Films

forced, in the process, to confront and revise their ideas of home. Ultimately, I hope to expand our understanding of Arctic exploration beyond the stereotypical journey between the binarized spaces of “home” and “wilderness” by considering how a variety of individuals moved between northern and southern spaces, and found home along the way. Comparing the Arctic narratives produced by Ford and Hubbard for public and private consumption, it becomes apparent that, despite their different racial positionings, ideas of home and family life constituted one of the primary discursive fields in which white and Indigenous individuals defined the Arctic and its inhabitants.³¹⁹

3.1 Leonidas Hubbard and The Home/Wilderness Dichotomy in Arctic Exploration, 1903

Before the nineteenth century, travel writing invoked the “glorifying romance model of the quest” as the traveller, almost always male, oriented his journey spatially as a move away from, followed by a return to, the “domestic home.”³²⁰ In the nineteenth century,

of Nancy Columbia and Esther Eneutseak,” *NIMROD: The Journal of the Ernest Shackleton Autumn School* 4 (2010): 48-105, http://www.ric.edu/faculty/rpotter/temp/Harper_Potter_Nimrod.pdf; John Adrien Jacobsen, *Voyage With the Labrador Eskimos 1880-1881*, trans. Harmut Lutz (Gatineau, QC: Polar Horizons, 2014); Penny Petrone, ed., *Northern Voices: Inuit Writing in English* [1988] (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2017); Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 39-40.

³¹⁹ Here I am influenced by Christopher G. Trott’s discussion of the family as one of the primary “signifying fields” through which Anglican missionaries photographically represented their Inuit converts in the twentieth century Arctic. See Trott, “The dialectics of ‘Us’ and ‘Other,’” 186.

³²⁰ Horrocks, *Women Wanderers and the Writing of Mobility*, 2. Scholars such as Justin Stagl, Christopher Pinney, and Daniel Carey have argued that travel, like anthropology, has historically been predicated on the traveller’s experience of cultural *and* geographical alterity, followed by their return home with the goal of communicating their experiences in a manner that will be legible to that home society. Justin Stagl and Christopher Pinney,

exploration came to signify a special kind of travel, conducted in the interests of nation and empire, taking on the character of a profession in Britain and the United States.³²¹ Once again, exploratory travel related always to its point of origin in the home society of the explorer. Adriana Craciun contends that nineteenth-century Arctic exploration, using Bruno Latour's model of knowledge production, moved in "'cycles of accumulation': voyages set out to collect specimens, data, and Indigenous knowledge and brought them back to accumulate at their points of origin in Europe which she describes as "'centers of calculation.'"³²² As a spatial practice, then, exploration identified the Arctic, by definition, as a space existing outside of "home," as conceptualized by British and American publics. Furthermore, the Arctic took on an enlarged significance in the collective consciousness of Britons and Americans relative to their sense of home after the disappearance of the Franklin expedition.³²³ By 1860, Routledge argues, in the wake of the Franklin disaster, the Arctic was increasingly "written, painted, and imagined as a bleak, harsh, monolithic expanse covered in snow," environmentally hostile to human habitation.³²⁴

Gendered definitions of home that took hold in Britain and America during the nineteenth century heightened the contrast between the Anglo-American depictions of the Arctic and their ideas of home. Nineteenth-century Britons and Americans increasingly

"Introduction: From Travel Writing to Ethnography," *History and Anthropology* 9:2-3 (1996): 121, doi: 10.1080/02757206.1996.9960874. Daniel Carey, "Anthropology's Inheritance: Renaissance Travel, Romanticism and the Discourse of Identity," *History and Anthropology* 14:2 (2003): 107-126, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1080/0275720032000119173>.

³²¹ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 3. For a discussion of the formation of the professional Arctic explorer in the American context, see Bloom, *Gender on Ice*; Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible*; Capelotti, *The Greatest Show in the Arctic*.

³²² Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 18.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

³²⁴ Routledge, *Do You See Ice?*, xiv.

derived their sense of home from their physical dwellings and immediate families over more publicly-minded ideas of land and community.³²⁵ The home was exalted as a private sanctuary to which the family could escape from the dislocations of urban industrial modernity.³²⁶ Referred to by gender historians as “the cult of domesticity,” these ideals of home concealed, as Anne McClintock puts it, “dimensions of male as well as female identities.”³²⁷ While the place of Anglo-American men was on the front lines of the capitalist marketplace, transatlantic middle classes “celebrated true women as pious,

³²⁵ Ibid., xxii.

³²⁶ This argument is taken up in Christopher Lasch’s classic study of what he interprets as the consistent erosion of the family as a critical social institution between the nineteenth century and the present day. Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged* (New York: Basic Books, 1977). For a classic analysis of the “cult of domesticity,” see Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1988). Historians have used domesticity as an analytic to study a range of historical and geographical contexts and issues. For treatments of domesticity as a moral prophylactic, see Joan Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960* [2001] (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2014) and Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity: The Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002). For studies of domesticity in colonial contexts, see Alison Blunt, “Imperial Geographies of Home: British Domesticity in India, 1886-1925,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24 (1999): 421-440, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/623233> and chapter 2 of Vincente L. Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000). Studies of male relationships to domesticity include Paul R. Deslandes, “Curing Mind and Body in the Heart of the Canadian Rockies: Empire, Sexual Scandal and the Reclamation of Masculinity, 1880s-1920s,” *Gender & History* 21:2 (August 2009): 358-379, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1111/j.1468-0424.2009.01553.x>; Jane Hamlett, “‘Rotten Effeminate Stuff’: Patriarchy, Domesticity and the Home in Victorian and Edwardian English Public Schools,” *Journal of British Studies* 58 (2019): 79-108, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1017/jbr.2018.171>. John Tosh, “Home and Away: The Flight from Domesticity in Late-Nineteenth-Century England Re-Visited,” *Gender & History* 27:3 (2015): 561-575, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1111/1468-0424.12150>.

³²⁷ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 5.

maternal guardians of virtue and domesticity.”³²⁸ Those women who, whether by inclination or necessity, neglected their domestic duties by working outside of the home were regarded as “un-Christian and morally deficient,” as Gail Bederman argues.³²⁹ In North America, gendered ideas of the home converged with settler colonial projects. Colonial policy makers encouraged white women to settle in Western Canada, for example, because they imagined that the domesticating influence of non-Indigenous women would help consolidate state power on this contested frontier.³³⁰ The increased presence of white women in Canada West that accompanied the settlement of Rupert’s Land, for example, contributed to the fundamental reordering of fur trade society and family life in the middle of the nineteenth century, a transition which came primarily at the cost of women of Indigenous and mixed descent.³³¹

The outward-looking orientation of the middle-class home, defined, as it was, against Arctic geographies and Indigenous lifeways, extended to the culture of strenuous masculinity addressed in Chapter Two. While home life, and the wife, mother, or sister who managed it, offered middle-class men a spiritual escape and physical haven from the

³²⁸ Gail Bederman, “Civilization, The Decline of Middle-Class Manliness, and Ida. B. Well’s Anti-Lynching Campaign (1892-4),” in *Gender and American History Since 1890*, ed. Barbara Melosh (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 209.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ See Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), chapters 8 and 9. Sarah Carter’s study of white captivity narratives in Western Canada after the Northwest Rebellion has been foundational to historians’ understanding of racial constructions of the imperilled “white woman,” and their relationship to the consolidation of the settler colonial state of Canada. See Carter, *Capturing Women*. For a more recent treatment of the role of gender in state-formation in Western Canada, see Lesley Erickson, *Westward Bound: Sex, Violence, the Law, and the Making of a Settler Society* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2011).

³³¹ Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, esp. ch. 9.

demands of public life, feminine spaces were supposed conversely to have the potential to undermine one's masculinity. As discussed in Chapter Two, social policy makers and commentators expressed fears that spending too much time at home, and in the rarefied atmosphere of mechanized industrial society, made modern men complacent, effeminate, and even sexually impotent, a matter of grave concern in an era preoccupied with the prospect of racial degeneration.³³² Spending time in the "wilderness," as an environment in which men might engage in acts of extreme physicality and re-enact the pre-modern struggle for survival, was identified as a potential antidote to the enervating effects of modern home and family life.

The perceived need to episodically enter undomesticated spaces in order to maintain one's masculine virility provided much of the impetus and moral justification for Arctic exploration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³³³ In America, polar explorers such as Robert Peary and Frederick Cook were portrayed as role models for middle-class men in their much-publicized – and supposedly rejuvenating – exploration of spectacularly wild and undomesticated Arctic landscapes.³³⁴ Polar explorers of the British tradition, including those who went to Antarctica, saw their travels as an escape from a civilized life they coded as feminine. Brigid Hains observes that, in the first decade of the twentieth century, polar explorers' "retreat from civilisation was frequently a retreat from the domesticating influence of women Many of the exponents of imperial masculinity

³³² Dick, "The Men of Prominence," 7. See also Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy," 20-64, and Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible*, esp. chs. 1 and 6.

³³³ Bloom, *Gender on Ice*, 32. Dick, "The Men of Prominence," 3-47.

³³⁴ Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible*, 134.

and vitality found women puzzling, alarming, or irrelevant.”³³⁵ She argues that the prevalence of “boyish camaraderie” among Antarctic crews was reminiscent – and celebratory -- of the homosocial worlds of boy’s schools and regimental life in the British imperial army.³³⁶

American explorers such as Leonidas Hubbard, Dillon Wallace, and William Brooks Cabot filtered their nature experiences through this Anglo-American wilderness paradigm, inflected, as it was, with ideologies of home and domesticity. These men portrayed Labrador as an inherently un-home-like space, and a hostile Arctic environment.³³⁷ In his introduction to *A Woman’s Way Through Unknown Labrador*, Cabot described the perceived extremities of the Labrador environment as being inhospitable to modern settlement and industrial development. Aside from a handful of pulp and lumber mills, Cabot wrote that “even now, in the world-wide pressure of modern exploitation, it probably contains not one settled resident of the pure white race.”³³⁸ Comparing Labrador to other large, arid peninsulas in Arabia and Alaska, Cabot concluded that Labrador “is least habitable, all three wanting in the elements which invite permanent occupation.”³³⁹ He also named “the rockborne graves and huge desolation of Nachvack fiord,” near Elizabeth Ford’s home, “the final anthesis” to “the smiling shores of old-world civilization.”³⁴⁰

³³⁵ Brigid Hains, *The Ice and the Inland: Mawson, Flynn, and the Myth of the Frontier* (Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 13-14. See also Baigent, “Life Writing and Early Twentieth-Century British Polar Exploration,” 23-51.

³³⁶ Hains, *The Ice and the Inland*, 12.

³³⁷ Hart, “Finding Her Way,” 367, 369.

³³⁸ Cabot, introduction, 13.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

The language used by Leonidas Hubbard in his diary from his ill-fated Labrador expedition of 1903 is illustrative of how Arctic explorers privately constructed imaginative geographies of “home” and “wilderness” spaces that were influenced by these prevailing gender ideologies. In describing his motivations for going to Labrador, Hubbard deployed the language of strenuous masculinity when he wrote that, “heretofore I have revelled in strenuous trips, trying to make them the real thing – getting down to the essentials.”³⁴¹ As provisions began to run low in September, for example, Hubbard wrote that the food shortage was “depressing and exhilarating by turns. Former to be hungry; latter to rely on self and country for grub.”³⁴² For Hubbard, a true wilderness experience was, in his own words, “a man’s game,” defined by its physical extremity, and a testing of one’s ability to survive in elemental nature.³⁴³ Another related quality of the Arctic as wilderness for Hubbard was its inaccessibility to women. As the lack of food, physical exhaustion, and failure to find Labrador’s Nascauppee River increasingly took their toll on Hubbard, he reflected that he had gotten “a good taste of essentials.”³⁴⁴ From now on, Hubbard wrote on two occasions, he would only take “pleasant, easy trips” that would, significantly, not be “too hard for Mina to share.”³⁴⁵ Hubbard articulated the fundamental incommensurability of his life at home with Mina and his present circumstances in another way when he opined on 24 September: “How I do wish I could see her again at home. Thinking too much maybe, about home now. Makes too big contrast.”³⁴⁶

³⁴¹ Diary of Leonidas Hubbard Jr., 14 September 1903, MHF, 3.01.001, CNSA, <http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/compoundobject/collection/archives/id/9782/rec/2>.

³⁴² Ibid., 10 September 1903.

³⁴³ Ibid., 20 September 1903.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 14 September 1903.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 18 September 1903.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 24 September 1903.

Nevertheless, because explorers oriented their journeys relative to their homes, home – as a physical place and a set of social relations – was omnipresent in the field. Despite the fact that Arctic exploration was popularly considered an opportunity for men to separate themselves from the domestic sphere, much of Leonidas Hubbard’s expedition diary was given over to his thoughts of home. Between the commencement of the Hubbard Expedition’s canoe journey on 15 July, 1903, and Hubbard’s death on 18 October, 36 of his daily diary entries make mention of home. These entries became more frequent in September and October, as Hubbard increasingly felt the physical strains of insufficient nutrition and overwork, and began to confront the reality that he might never make it home.³⁴⁷ Hubbard’s written reflections communicated his ideas of home, in a moment of extremis, as a constellation of places, memories, sensations, and people.³⁴⁸

Home, for Hubbard, was a decidedly feminine sphere. While he wrote of missing home in terms of his relationships with male friends and family, including his father, a handful of times, almost every recorded thought of home centered on a woman in his life, particularly his wife and mother. Memories from childhood on the Hubbard family farm in Illinois, for example, featured prominently in Hubbard’s homesick musings, and his mother frequently accompanied these childhood recollections, particularly those that were attached to food. Hubbard recorded that when he dreamt of home, for example, he saw his mother

³⁴⁷ 4 mentions of home in July, 5 mentions in August, 20 mentions in September, 12 in the first 17 days of October. Ibid.

³⁴⁸ This capacious and multi-scalar sensibility of home comes from the tradition of critical feminist geography, where home is understood “as a *relation* between material and imaginative realms and processes” where “[t]he physical location and psychological or emotional feeling are tied rather than separate and distinct.” Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling, *Home* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 22.

“mixing honey and maple syrup to feed on tea biscuits to her cherished.”³⁴⁹ Indeed, both Elson and Wallace spoke to Hubbard of “the things [their] mothers used to make for [them]” as children on one of the many evenings the men sat around the campfire talking about food.³⁵⁰

Mina Hubbard, however, assumed center stage in Leonidas Hubbard’s thoughts of home, appearing in 24 of the 36 diary entries in which he wrote about home.³⁵¹ Hubbard not only conflated femininity and domesticity, but he also conformed to the ideology of separate spheres when he romanticized how Mina used to have dinner waiting for him in their home in Congers in the evenings when he got home from work. His entry of 8 September, for example, reminisced about “how I used to get off the train at Congers and walk home and find Mina and dinner waiting and all – oh my, it’s not a good thought for it makes me want home and Mina so badly.”³⁵² This passage places Mina in the role of the “Angel in the House,” managing the private space of the home and tending to Leonidas’ domestic needs, while he ventured out into the world of work and public life in New York City. In another entry, Hubbard communicated how his sense that home and work life related to each other antithetically, when he resolved “to give more time to home” and less to his work-related “ambitions.”³⁵³ In this moment of regret and revelation, Hubbard appears to conflate his work in Arctic exploration with his work in the *Outing* publishing offices in New York, as masculine, public endeavours that took him away from the feminine space of the home.

³⁴⁹ Diary of Leonidas Hubbard Jr., 6 October 1903.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 17 October 1903.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 8 September 1903.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 19 September 1903.

That a starving man would become “obsessive” about food, as Sherrill Grace puts it, is not surprising.³⁵⁴ What is interesting, however, is the extent to which Hubbard’s thoughts of food were attached to his longing for home. The memoranda section of Hubbard’s diary, for example, featured a list of New York restaurants, “where Wallace and I agree to eat when we get out.”³⁵⁵ The men’s talk of home and their plans of homecoming also nearly always bled into minute discussions of the “grub and restaurants” they would enjoy once out of the wilderness.³⁵⁶ Several discussions of home in Hubbard’s diary simply devolve into lengthy lists of specific items of food he planned to consume upon his return home.³⁵⁷

If home and food were conflated in Leonidas Hubbard’s mind, his thoughts of Mina Hubbard were inextricably bound up with both concepts. When conversation turned to food among the expedition company, Hubbard wrote that he “liked to think best of those dinners at Congers when Mina sat opposite and poured my coffee.”³⁵⁸ Hubbard’s diary indicates that Elson and Wallace had also experienced Mina Hubbard’s cooking, presumably while they stayed at the Hubbard home in Congers, planning their Labrador trip, and that they spoke of Mina’s dinners often: “Talked long by fire of home. George says he ate at our house till he was ashamed and wanted to eat a whole lot more of everything. ... Wallace says he never ate a poor meal at our house.”³⁵⁹ This passage indicates that Mina Hubbard was a vital contributor to Hubbard’s Arctic expedition in the planning phase, which was

³⁵⁴ Grace, “A Woman’s Way,” 1.

³⁵⁵ This memorandum is dated 14 September, 1903. *Diary of Leonidas Hubbard Jr.*

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 10 October 1903.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 31 August, 26 September, 28 September, 10 October, 11 October, 1903.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 30 August 1903.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 23 September 1903.

staged in their shared home. Her meal preparations, for example, provided a context for the homosocial bonding between her husband, Elson, and Wallace that was important to their social solidarity as an expedition team. Ultimately, in creating a congenial home atmosphere, Mina Hubbard ironically created the conditions in which her husband could plan his escape from home: unburdened by the physical and psychological strains of house work, such as food preparation, Leonidas had the mental space to plan his wilderness experience, part of the essential early work of exploration. Whether he was conscious of this or not, when Hubbard wrote about Mina, her cooking and her homemaking, he was also writing about her contributions to his expedition.

In his own words, much of Leonidas Hubbard's mental energy while struggling for survival in Labrador was devoted to "thinking all the time of home and Mina, and parents, Congers, and Wurtsboro and childhood and country."³⁶⁰ In the same way that Labrador came alive for him as a site for masculine adventure while he was at home in the United States, explorers like Leonidas Hubbard carried ideas of home and memories of the women they associated with the domestic sphere with them to the Arctic that formed a lens through which their experiences were filtered in the field. Home, for Hubbard, was made up of a densely related network of times, including his childhood and the early years of his marriage; places, such as the farm he grew up on in Illinois, and the two residences he occupied as a married man in Wurtsboro and Congers, New York; and people, most particularly his wife. According to the imaginative geography of British and American men from the turn of the century, including Leonidas Hubbard, the concept of home, and the women who populated it, existed far outside the field of exploration. On the surface, it

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 13 October 1903.

appears that Mina was very much present to Leonidas Hubbard in the Arctic, but only insofar as she reminded him of the creaturely comforts of home. Viewing Leonidas' references to his wife and home as a kind of shorthand for Mina's role in the 1903 expedition, however, opens up alternative interpretations.

Mina Hubbard's own published writing emphasized more explicitly how imagined geographies of exploration were encapsulated within larger ideologies and geographies of domesticity. In *A Woman's Way*, Mina located the point of origin of her husband's exploratory work within the confines of their home. The first scene of the book takes place at the Hubbard's dinner table in Congers, where Leonidas first unfolds his plans for a Labrador trip.³⁶¹ Here, Mina gave herself more credit than Leonidas did for her contributions to planning the First Hubbard Expedition. Another early passage in *A Woman's Way* further entangled the imaginative geographies of home and wilderness, when she wrote of the

big map of Labrador [that] looked back from the wall of the little study in Congers. We stood before it a long time discussing plans and possibilities. Then an eager, happy face turned to me as he told me how he would write the story and how he would have grown when he came home again.³⁶²

Her description of the Arctic explorer's canonical journey as a cyclical movement away from home and back again, rather than a flight from the feminine and from domesticity, re-frames Arctic exploration as a profoundly domestic act, one that prepared the explorer to re-enter the home in a heightened moral state. Mina Hubbard's portrayal of the field of Arctic exploration as an extension of the domestic sphere in this way ultimately enabled

³⁶¹ Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 33.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 41.

her to perceive her own Labrador journey as an expression of her role as a middle-class wife, and to cultivate a sense of home in the midst of the Labrador wilderness.

3.2 At Home in the Field: Mina Hubbard's Labrador Expedition, 1905

Leonidas Hubbard's 1903 expedition diary articulated the physical and symbolic distance between "home" and Arctic "wilderness" in gendered terms, despite the moments when the distinction between these concepts appeared unstable. The Arctic was coded as a hostile environment, a testing ground for virile masculinity, and an extension of the masculine public sphere. Home, on the other hand, took on meaning for Hubbard in relation to women and the creaturely comforts they provided him as a child and as an adult. His homesick writings adhered to the popular belief, as one newspaper reviewer of *A Woman's Way* put it, that "'woman's place (immovable!) is in the home.'"³⁶³ By undertaking her own Labrador expedition in 1905, then, Mina Hubbard's venture was inherently disruptive of the gendered geography of Arctic exploration at the turn of the century. Mina Hubbard's own expedition diary obliquely acknowledged the transgressive potential of her expedition. When departing the HBC's post at Northwest River for the Labrador interior, Hubbard wrote that she "felt glad to be at last off on our trip" and expressed surprise that she did not feel "uneasy or unnatural" about it.³⁶⁴ The question of whether leave-taking should feel natural or not did not occur to Leonidas Hubbard; Mina's language implied that there might have been something potentially "unnatural" about her taking up the work of exploration.

³⁶³ "New Books," *The Guardian* 10 July 1908, 5, *Newspapers.com*.

³⁶⁴ Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," 27 June 1905, 122. On 7 July, she wrote that the "strange part" of her wilderness experience was how "it seems so perfectly natural." *Ibid.*, 7 July 1905, 145.

The naturalness of a woman explorer aside, Mina Hubbard's Labrador trip subverted the archetypical explorer's journey in another critical respect: after Leonidas Hubbard's death in 1903, Mina lost that strong sense of home from which she, as the explorer, was expected to take her leave. Mina's Labrador expedition diary suggests that the death of her husband two year's prior precipitated a profound rupture in her sense of home as place. Indeed, she wrote on 23 July, 1905, at roughly the midpoint of her canoe journey through Labrador, that she felt "more at home than I have done since I knew my Laddie [her nickname for Leonidas] was never coming back to me."³⁶⁵ She reiterated this point in a similar passage in *A Woman's Way*, reflecting that, while in Labrador "I did not feel far from home, but in reality less homeless than I had every felt anywhere, since I knew my husband was never to come back to me."³⁶⁶ In the months after Leonidas Hubbard's death was confirmed in 1904, Mina left their Congers home and took up a temporary residence in Williamstown, Massachusetts, suggesting that her sense of home had become unmoored from the particularity of place and the dwelling that she had shared with her husband. As a Canadian immigrant, one imagines that much of her attachment to the United States had to do with her American husband, and that this sense of America as home was diminished upon his death. What remained important to Mina's sense of home, even in the midst of her geographical "homelessness," was her relationship to her husband. When Leonidas felt homesick in 1903, his diary suggests that he longed for an array of people, places, and past moments that collectively made up his sense of home. Mina,

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 23 July 1905, 178.

³⁶⁶ Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 82.

however, wrote of feeling “homesick” for her “sweetheart,” thereby privileging her marital relationship as central to her sense of feeling at home.³⁶⁷

While Mina Hubbard’s field diary was not so preoccupied with thoughts of home as her husband’s, a remarkably different sensibility of home life emerges in her expedition records. Setting out for Labrador in a period of familial upheaval and homelessness, Mina Hubbard encountered the Arctic wilderness at a moment when her sense of home, untethered from place, was primarily relational, and therefore mobile. The close personal relationships she developed with her guides, coupled with the opportunities her exploratory work offered to reconnect with and pay tribute to the memory of her beloved husband, provoked in her a feeling of being at home in the Arctic wilderness in a way that was notably different from her husband’s Arctic encounter.

Male explorers adhered to the conventions of imperial adventure fiction by depicting the Labrador wilderness as their antagonist. Nature, untamed, offered a series of “strange settings and new worlds ... to conquer,” as Dillon Wallace put it.³⁶⁸ Mina Hubbard’s book and expedition diary engaged with nature, which she still referred to as a “deserted wilderness,” in a different way.³⁶⁹ Hubbard wrote that she was struck and “constant[ly] surprised” by Labrador’s gentle beauty.³⁷⁰ One entry from 9 July is exemplary of her larger experience of the Labrador wilderness:

Another very beautiful Sunday in a beautiful camp. Sun shining, big heavy fleecy silver clouds, sky – deep beautiful blue, water 20-30 feet below our camp, almost purple hills deep rich green and blue and purple. So glad there is something so really

³⁶⁷ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 30 July 1905, 204.

³⁶⁸ Wallace, *The Long Labrador Trail*, 28.

³⁶⁹ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 25 August 1905, 267.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 23 July, 178.

comforting to me as color. It is strange too, I don't understand its having such an effect.³⁷¹

Far from perceiving a threat to her survival and success, Hubbard viewed her natural surroundings as a source of emotional and spiritual succor. As Sherrill Grace points out, women travellers and explorers of Hubbard's era, including the British explorer Mary Kingsley, frequently characterized the wilderness "in sensuous, romantic, personal terms rather than in the impersonal, objective and imperialist terms of their male counterparts."³⁷²

While Hubbard may have been influenced by long-standing cultural expectations of women travellers by relating to the wilderness in this way, two characteristics of her Labrador trip suggest that she was genuinely able to perceive Labrador in these benevolent, even homely terms: the mental linkages she had formed between the Labrador wilderness and the memory of her husband, and her conditions of physical comfort and security.

In an important sense, Mina Hubbard's journey was intended to re-trace and even re-enact, this time successfully, her husband's expedition. Upon her arrival in Labrador, Mina was therefore surrounded by natural reminders of her husband's presence two years prior.³⁷³ Throughout the canoe trip, George Elson was also able to point out landmarks from the First Hubbard Expedition of 1903, including the spot, Mina recorded, "where my husband had stood weak and worn and hungry looking out across the little hill on which we stood to look out, as we were doing, to [Lake] Mich[ikamau]."³⁷⁴ She named the spot

³⁷¹ Ibid., 9 July, 148.

³⁷² Grace, "A Woman's Way," lxvii-lxviii.

³⁷³ When sailing past St. John's Island on her way to Northwest River, for example, Hubbard recollected that Leonidas' ship had moored there for the night two years prior. Grief-stricken, she added that she would "try to make memories breathe inspiration, not discouragement." Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," 22 June 1905, 114-115.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 2 August 1905, 213. Elson also pointed out scenes from the First Hubbard Expedition the day before. See Ibid., 1 August 1905, 209.

in question “Mt. Hubbard” on her Labrador map.³⁷⁵ In a very real and material sense, then, Mina was able to emplace the memory of her husband, arguably the most critical of her links to the idea of home, in the Labrador landscape.³⁷⁶

Conceptual linkages of place and memory were further consolidated as Mina found that her encounters with natural beauty in the wilderness prompted her to think continually of Leonidas’s explorer spirit, and how “he would revel in it all.”³⁷⁷ Hubbard registered her own awareness of the convergence of her husband with natural beauty in her mind when she wrote in her diary that a particular view of river and mountains “was very beautiful and grand and as always my longing for my Laddie was in proportion to the beauty.”³⁷⁸ Mina recorded that in such moments it often seemed “as if [Leonidas] must be standing just near and that if I turn I must see him.”³⁷⁹ Hubbard’s experience of Labrador as the site most expressive of her husband’s spirit and memory became so tangible that she almost physically felt his presence. Given how Mina’s sense of home was intimately bound up with her relationship with her husband, one could say that Labrador, despite its depiction as a forbidding landscape in narratives of Arctic exploration, became a “homescape” for Mina, as the place where she felt Leonidas’ presence most strongly.

³⁷⁵ Hubbard, *Map of Eastern Labrador*, n.p.

³⁷⁶ Mina Hubbard’s diary makes mention of her deceased husband in relation to the Labrador landscape at least 11 times in her diary. Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary.”

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 20 July 1905, 152.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 25 August 1905, 268. On another occasion, Hubbard expressed that the wilderness’ association with Leonidas, whom she viewed in almost saint-like terms, imbued the environment with a nearly sacred character, writing that “the grander and more beautiful it grows the more I hunger for the one who made all things beautiful so much more beautiful by the spirit which he breathed into them.” *Ibid.*, 15 July 1905, 161.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 7 July 1905, 145.

Mina Hubbard's emotional connection to Labrador as a site of connectivity to her dead husband helped her conceptualize the wilderness as a homescape, a place where she felt at home. Nevertheless, the material conditions of her expedition, particularly when compared with her husband's experience two year's prior, cannot be dismissed as an important factor in Mina's feelings of being at ease and at home in the field. Leonidas Hubbard, Wallace and Elson experienced extreme physical hardship and starvation on their trip; that they would view the natural environment in which they suffered in antagonistic terms is in many respects not surprising. Mina's trip was more successful, and she did not encounter the privations of the First Hubbard Expedition. Mina herself acknowledged that part of the reason she did "not feel far from home" on the trip had to do with the fact that she had "felt none of the real stress of wilderness life. Everything is made easy for me."³⁸⁰ The work of her guides, in other words, was essential to her physical and emotional sense of comfort in the wilderness. While Elson, Iserhoff, Chapies and Blake cut trails, portaged heavy equipment across uneven terrain, navigated river rapids by canoe and scouted for routes by foot, Mina was, like other women of her race and class, exempted from this kind of demanding physical work.³⁸¹ While portaging, for example, she was required to carry only her own camera and notebooks.³⁸²

As a white, middle-class woman, Mina Hubbard enjoyed a degree of physical comfort while on expedition that was not typical for many male explorers or their guides. She was the only one of her party, for example, to bring her own air mattress and hot water

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 23 July 1905, 178.

³⁸¹ LaFramboise, "Just a Little Like an Explorer," 27-28.

³⁸² Roberta Buchanan, "Such a Dear Little Lady": Gender, Race and Class," in *The Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 28.

bottle. Furthermore, as the only woman on the expedition, she had her own tent, giving her access to a modicum of privacy. After their first night camping, Hubbard wrote that, with her mattress and hot water bottle, she “slept as comfortably as if in [a] house.”³⁸³ So dependent did she become upon these creaturely comforts that she acknowledged in her diary that she “should just be worn out and miserable and nervous and bad tempered if I did not have that bed and the hot water btl... .”³⁸⁴ It was in the context of physical comfort that she was able to liken camping conditions to a being in a house or home.

The special consideration given to Mina by her guides also cultivated familial feelings among the expedition company. In describing the shared intimacy of the expedition, she likened her relationship with her guides to that of siblings, writing “how easy I feel in the midst of them all. Could not feel more so if they were brothers.”³⁸⁵ George Elson also characterized his relationship with Mina in familial terms, writing in his field diary that “I don’t want to say that she is only a friend to me but that she is my sister.”³⁸⁶ In another familial metaphor, Hubbard compared her guides’ special consideration of her to her husband’s acts of care, observing that “no one, except Laddie, was ever more thoughtful and kind to me than they have been.”³⁸⁷ It is likely that the expedition company’s collective participation in camp activities, including cooking, cleaning dishes, making beds, mending shoes, and doing laundry, formed an important backdrop of shared domestic practice in which familial feelings were allowed to grow. Mina’s written reflections on the

³⁸³ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 29 June 1905, 127.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 8 July 1905, 146.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 10 July 1905, 152.

³⁸⁶ Diary of George Elson, 28 July 1905, 50. Elson referred to Hubbard as a sister again on 23 August 1905, 88.

³⁸⁷ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 10 July 1905, 152.

role that her relationship with her guides played in feeling at home in the wilderness suggest that interpersonal connections, more so than the particularities of place, shaped her sense of home in the wake of her husband's death:

We are now north of 55° and yet it has never seemed to me, and the men say the same, as if we were far from the world. Just far enough to be nice. I wish I need never go back. I suppose I shall never again be taken care of in the gentle careful way I have been since we left [Northwest River].³⁸⁸

In referring to her latitudinal positioning, Hubbard showed her awareness that her northern location should prompt her to feel that she was “far from home.”³⁸⁹ By developing close relationships with her guides, and with Elson in particular, Mina Hubbard was nevertheless able to recapture some of her sense of home as a constellation of proximate, caring relationships, even in the Arctic context.

3.3 At Home with the HBC: Mina Hubbard Encounters Elizabeth Ford's Homescape

When Mina Hubbard's expedition company arrived at the HBC post at George's River on 27 August, 1905, she and her crew entered a very different social and spatial landscape than the one they had co-created over the course of their two-month canoe journey, alone in the interior. As placeholders for HBC interests in the Eastern Arctic, the Company posts that thinly populated the coasts of Labrador and the Hudson Strait lived on the razors edge between “home” and “wilderness” spaces, according to the imaginative geography of Arctic exploration. As Dillon Wallace put it, these coastal posts represented “the farthest limit of white man's habitation in all of Labrador.”³⁹⁰ Wilfred Grenfell described Elizabeth

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 10 August 1905, 232.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 23 July 1905, 178.

³⁹⁰ Wallace, *Long Labrador Trail* 199.

Ford's home at Nachvak in similar terms. In his 1919 memoir, Grenfell identified the Fords of Nachvak as "the farthest white family" in Labrador.³⁹¹ Upon reaching the HBC settlements on the northern Labrador coast, Mina Hubbard entered the social and physical landscape in which Elizabeth Ford first developed her ideas of home in childhood and early adulthood. This section considers how each woman responded to life around the HBC's Labrador posts, where Company employees endeavoured to replicate British definitions of home at the threshold of the Arctic wilderness.

In popular narratives of exploration in the Eastern Arctic, HBC posts were regarded as bastions of Britishness at the very outmost reaches of civilisation, and the families who inhabited them as being very far from home. One British reviewer of *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador* framed Hubbard's arrival at George's River as a welcome respite for the Ford family, described as "English people, who so bravely hold this outpost of our country. Can we realize how long-suffering they are when we think that once a year they get their mail bags and newspapers?"³⁹² The Fords were particularly delighted, according to this reviewer, when Hubbard shared her remaining rations of tea with them, as a homely comfort they usually had to do without.³⁹³ Dillon Wallace similarly emphasized the geographical boundaries between the Arctic wilderness and the civilized world when he described John Ford in his travelogue, *The Long Labrador Trail*, as a man who "had been buried at George River Post," who longed "for the time when he could

³⁹¹ Sir Wilfred Grenfell, *A Labrador Doctor: The Autobiography of Wilfred Thomason Grenfell* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919), 155.

³⁹² Mrs. Hugh Walker, "The Lady Explorer of Labrador," *The Queen* 16 May 1908, 827, *The British Newspaper Archive*.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

leave it and enjoy the comforts of civilization.”³⁹⁴ A 1913 obituary for Elizabeth’s husband William R. Ford, published the *Daily News* of St. John’s, Newfoundland, reported his death by drowning in relation to his perceived distance from home: “He has passed away far from his kith and kin, but it is by such men as William R. Ford that the empire has been built. They man the outposts, and quietly extend those influences which make for the Empire’s greatness and prosperity.”³⁹⁵ The Newfoundland paper’s depiction of Ford likened HBC agents to other heroes of Empire like Britain’s imperial soldiers, who were often stationed far from home.³⁹⁶ In reality, at the time of William Ford’s death he was not at all far from home and family, given that his wife and children lived with him at the Cape Wolstenholme post.

Within British and particularly American colonial imaginaries, these threshold spaces were known as frontiers, where would-be settlers proved their mettle in combat with the twin forces of “wildness” in colonized spaces: untamed nature and unassimilated Indigenous peoples. In practice, however, frontiers functioned as contact zones, as sites of intercultural contact, exchange, and intermarriage between settler and Indigenous groups.³⁹⁷ The effect of the HBC presence in Labrador was that the family became one of

³⁹⁴ Wallace, *The Long Labrador Trail*, 167.

³⁹⁵ Obituary of William R. Ford, *Daily News* [St. John’s, Newfoundland] 9 October 1913, 4, in Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 45.

³⁹⁶ For more on masculinity in Britain’s imperial armies, see Heather Streets-Salter, *Martial Races: The Military, Race, and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004).

³⁹⁷ Beginning with Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes*, the idea of the contact zone has been deployed and developed by numerous historians and postcolonial theorists. Some notable examples include Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press and Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998); Pickles and Rutherford, eds., *Contact Zones*; Carol J. Williams, *Framing the West: Race,*

the most important sites of intercultural contact and identity formation of the Arctic contact zone. At the trading posts, Inuit, British, American, and Canadian ideas of home and family converged and confronted one another.

As Sylvia Van Kirk has observed, North American trade interactions were “based on a commodity exchange between two divergent groups of people.”³⁹⁸ In Labrador, these commodity exchanges produced “a distinctive regional way of life” centered around the emergence of a third ethnic group that fundamentally changed the relationship between native and newcomer.³⁹⁹ Engagement between European and Indigenous communities was of sufficient duration and scope that by the nineteenth century, a third distinct ethnic group had emerged. Comprised of European men, their Indigenous (primarily Inuit) spouses, and the descendants of these unions, they were known locally as “Settlers.” Today Settler communities are divided geographically into the *Kablunângajuit* in northern Labrador and the Inuit-Métis of the South.⁴⁰⁰

The “famous Ford family,” a title given to them by Wilfred Grenfell, were Settlers.⁴⁰¹ The blending of British and Inuit traditions in Elizabeth and William’s childhood homes is reflected in the fact that both husband and wife grew up speaking Inuktitut as well as English.⁴⁰² Elizabeth also learned the written form of Inuktitut devised

Gender and the Photographic Frontier in the Pacific Northwest (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

³⁹⁸ VanKirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 3.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁰⁰ Kennedy, “The Changing Significance of Labrador Settler Ethnicity,” 225. Kennedy, introduction to *History and Renewal of Labrador’s Inuit-Métis*.

⁴⁰¹ Wilfred T. Grenfell, *Labrador: The Country and the People* (New York: MacMillan and Company, 1910), 183.

⁴⁰² According to Hudson’s Bay Company administrator Ralph Parsons, Elizabeth “could speak the Eskimo language fluently.” Ralph Parsons to Richard Finnie, 8 May 1940, HB2005/002 File 47, “Correspondence – D-F,” William Ralph Parsons Fonds, HBCA.

by the Baffin Island missionary Edmund Peck, based on the previously-devised syllabics system used for written Cree dialects.⁴⁰³ While at George's River, Mina Hubbard received a letter of thanks from an Inuk woman camped nearby the post, to whom she had given some of her warm clothing. This letter was "interpreted" for Hubbard, presumably by a member of the Ford family, perhaps William R. Ford.⁴⁰⁴ This cultural dualism made Settler families like the Fords the ideal facilitators of intercultural exchange between a range of North American and British institutions operating in the Eastern Arctic and the Inuit of the region. Elizabeth's brother, Henry T. Ford, for example, was hired as interpreter on a number of exploratory ventures, including the famous A.P. Low expedition of 1903-4, commissioned by the Canadian federal government to promote Canada's sovereign interests in the Eastern Arctic.⁴⁰⁵ Like his cousin Henry, William R. Ford travelled throughout the Hudson Strait region as an interpreter for the HBC.⁴⁰⁶ This included work at the Company's first trading post on Baffin Island at Lake Harbour in 1911.⁴⁰⁷ It was here

⁴⁰³ Frederic Laugrand, Jarich Oosten and Francois Trudel, "The Founding of an Anglican Mission on Baffin Island, 1894-1905," in *Apostle to the Inuit: The Journals and Ethnographic Notes of Edmund James Peck, The Baffin Years, 1894-1905*, 5-9.

⁴⁰⁴ Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," 19 September 1905, 293.

⁴⁰⁵ A. P. Low, *Report on the Dominion Government Expedition to Hudson Bay and the Arctic Islands On Board the D.G.S. Neptune 1903-04* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1906), xvii. This was the same A. P. Low who produced the map of Labrador used by Mina and Leonidas Hubbard to guide their expeditions. Low was a surveyor with the Canadian Geological Survey. Max Finkelstein and James Stone, *Paddling the Boreal Forest: Rediscovering A. P. Low* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2004), 2.

⁴⁰⁶ William R. Ford, Biographical Sheet, HBCA Online, https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/docs/hbca/biographical/f/ford_william.pdf.

⁴⁰⁷ George Ford took over the HBC at Cape Wolstenholme in 1911 so that William R. Ford could go to Baffin Island to establish a new post at Lake Harbor. In 1912, William R. Ford was moved to establish a new post at Cape Dorset. Wolstenholme Correspondence, B.368/b/1, 1911, HBCA. William's brother Sam Ford also worked as an interpreter for the HBC and Revillon Frères at various Arctic posts, including Wolstenholme, in Quebec, Coats Island and Southampton Island. RG 3/40 B/1, Samuel

that Ford encountered Inuk photographer Peter Pitseolak, who later recalled that, “For a white man, Willie Ford spoke the Eskimo language really well. ... He spoke truly the Eskimo way.”⁴⁰⁸ As cultural mediators, Elizabeth Ford’s family was integral to the processes and institutions by which outsiders in Britain and North America made the Arctic legible and extracted material and cultural resources from the region and its peoples.

The role ascribed to women and girls within some Settler family economies also drew upon both Inuit and European traditions. In the autumn of 1905, Mina Hubbard spent two months living at the George River post, waiting for the *Pelican*’s arrival. Over this extended period, Hubbard shared domestic space with the Ford family, including John’s wife, Lavinia (*née* Learning), and three of their children. Hubbard’s expedition diary depicts a household organized, in part, around gendered divisions of labour typical of white patriarchal households. While “Mrs. F” was engaged in laundry, baking bread and moss berry pudding, sewing woolen socks, and making poultices, the other men employed at the post, including her son, William R. Ford, saw to the trapping, hunting, and fishing.⁴⁰⁹

The division of labour at Elizabeth’s childhood home at Nachvak, however, paints a more complex picture of Settler ideas about gender and domesticity. The HBC post journal, kept by Elizabeth’s father, George Ford, shows that “Lizzie” and her mother, Harriet (*née* Merryfield) participated, like many Inuit women and girls, in various resource

George Ford, Biographical Sheet, HBCA Online, https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/docs/hbca/biographical/f/ford_samuel-george.pdf.

⁴⁰⁸ Peter Pitseolak and Dorothy Harley Eber, *People from Our Side: A life story with photographs by Peter Pitseolak and oral biography by Dorothy Harley Eber* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 83.

⁴⁰⁹ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 28 August 1905, 275; 16 September 1905, 289; 17 September 1905, 290; 19 September 1905, 293.

procurement responsibilities, including trapping foxes and fishing for cod.⁴¹⁰ Even Mina Hubbard makes note in her diary of the fact that Elizabeth had reportedly shot as many as eighty ptarmigan (a gamebird in the grouse family) in a single day.⁴¹¹ As Sylvia Van Kirk has observed in the Western Canadian context, it was typical for North American trading companies to rely on an informal basis upon the contributions of Indigenous and mixed-race women as “an integral if unofficial part of the labour force.”⁴¹²

Despite being conversant in Inuit language and culture, Elizabeth Ford came of age at a time when race-based stereotypes about what it meant to be Inuit, Innu, European, or Settler, were becoming increasingly rigid. As Kurt Korneski has argued, a uniquely regional racial hierarchy emerged in Labrador around the interests of the Hudson’s Bay Company which, from the 1830s onward, was the dominant economic force in the region. In contrast to Métis communities in Northwestern North America, Company agents discovered that it was easier to cultivate trade and employment relationships with mixed-race Settler families than local Indigenous groups. While the Innu and Inuit were concerned with preserving their autonomy and way of life as self-sufficient communities, Settlers tended to identify strongly with their European ancestry, and were eager to replicate European economic forms and social relations, with the patriarchal family forming the nucleus of their socioeconomic order.⁴¹³ Settlers were, as a result, often more sympathetic

⁴¹⁰ Nachvak Post Journals, B.138/a/4, 28 September 1898, 29 September 1898, 10 October 1898, 14 October 1898, 31 July 1899, 25 August 1899, 15 September 1899, 24 September 1900. Nachvak Post Journals, B. 138/a7, 1902-1903, HBCA, 26 December 1902. Nachvak Post Journals, B. 138/a8-10, 1902-1906, HBCA, 11 March 1903.

⁴¹¹ Mina Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 27 October 1905, 319.

⁴¹² Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 53.

⁴¹³ Korneski, “Planters, Eskimos, and Indians,” 318-319.

to the HBC's commercial and colonial objectives in the region than the Innu and Inuit.⁴¹⁴ The tenor of the HBC's relations with each group formed the basis for racist stereotypes that, over time, became an organizing principle in Labrador society, with Inuit and Innu communities occupying the bottom rungs of the local racial hierarchy. In this context, Settlers increasingly cleaved to their European heritage as an indicator of their racial supremacy.

The organisation of home and family life became one of the critical areas where Labrador Settlers attempted to distinguish themselves from the local Indigenous communities, despite their shared lineage. As the mixed-race population increased over the course of the nineteenth century, the racial divide between Settler and Indigenous communities widened, with Settler men choosing increasingly to marry other Settler or European women, rather than Indigenous wives.⁴¹⁵ While George and John Ford Jr. both married local Labrador women, neither woman was of exclusively Inuit descent – indeed, John's wife, Lavinia Learning, appears to have had little or no Indigenous ancestry.⁴¹⁶ George's wife, Harriet Merryfield, identified as at least partly Inuit, according to her

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 308.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 323-324. Work by Marianne Stopp and Dale Blake traces the gradual, generational embrace of European patriarchal models of family organization among Labrador Settlers using the life writings of three generations of Settler women. See Marianne P. Stopp, "'I, Old Lydia Campbell': A Labrador Woman of National Historic Significance," in *History and Renewal of Labrador's Inuit-Métis*, 155-179 and Blake, *Inuit Autobiography*.

⁴¹⁶ According to the Ford family genealogy, Lavinia Learning Ford's father was from England, her mother from Carbonear, Newfoundland. Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 8. Lavinia Ford is characterized as a "white woman" like Mina Hubbard herself in Hubbard's expedition diary and in *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*. Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 153.

daughter Elizabeth.⁴¹⁷ In the semi-public forum of family portraiture, however, Harriet Ford's attire and bodily comportment code her as the typical British lady, at ease in the photographic backdrops of the sitting room and the wooden wall of the Company house (Figs. 1 and 2). Settlers' Christian, monogamous unions and patriarchal family structures



Figure 3.1: Ford Family Portrait. Left to right: Solomon Ford, Harriet Merryfield Ford, Henry T. Ford, George Ford, Elizabeth Ford. Taken in the portrait studio of James Vey of St. John's, Newfoundland, likely sometime in 1897 or 1898, when George Ford was on furlough from his position at Nachvak. Buckner, *The Descendants of John Ford*, 95.

⁴¹⁷ Anauta to Vilhjalmur Stefansson, 30 August 1940, Mss-196, box 49, fo. 5, Vilhjalmur Stefansson Correspondence (VSC), 1895-1962, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth University, Hanover, New Hampshire.

were held up as indicators of their racial superiority, compared to the Innu and Inuit practices of polygyny.⁴¹⁸

Heather Davis-Fisch argues that these kinds of “intercultural performances” were a common feature of the Arctic contact zone as Britons, Americans, and Inuit worked through their own understandings of “the differences between civilization and savagery, cultural adaptation and social transgression” in Arctic contexts.⁴¹⁹ For Settlers like Elizabeth Ford, then, the home

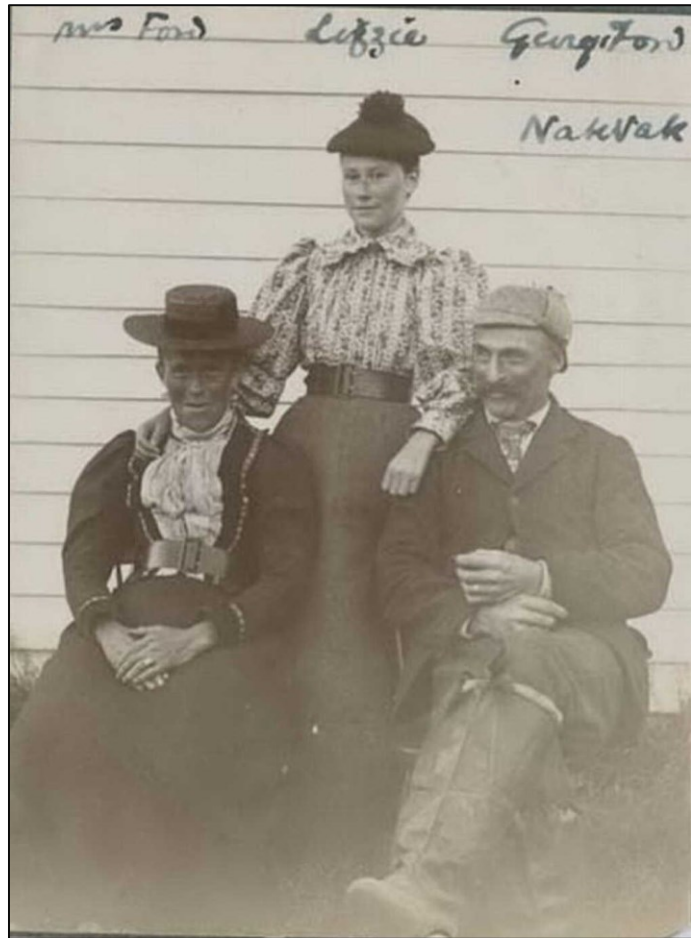


Figure 3.2: Elizabeth Ford (center) and her parents, Harriett and George, at Nachvak [before 1909] International Grenfell Association photograph collection, Series VA 118, Item VA 118-103.4, The Rooms Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador, St. John’s Newfoundland

became a site of racial theatre. The trappings of her wedding to William R. Ford, officiated by a clergyman of the Church of England on 22 April 1906, complete with her specially made, European-style wedding dress, emphasized the Fords’ sense of home and family life

⁴¹⁸ Korneski, “Planters, Eskimos, and Indians,” 32.

⁴¹⁹ Davis-Fisch, *Loss and Cultural Remains in Performance*, 5.

as rooted in Anglo-Saxon religious tradition and patriarchal culture.⁴²⁰ This domestic performativity, however, was not unique to the Labrador context; it was as much a part of Mina Hubbard's home life as it was Elizabeth Ford's. Gender historians and colonial discourse analysts have shown that in imperial and settler colonial contexts, home and family life functioned as indices of racial hierarchy.⁴²¹ According to Gail Bederman, the fact that white Britons, Canadians, and Americans had "evolved the pronounced sexual differences celebrated in the middle-class doctrine of 'separate spheres,'" provided tangible, biological evidence of the fact that the Anglo-Saxons race had achieved a higher position on the evolutionary ladder of human civilisation than other, colonized races.⁴²² In America, Mina Hubbard was under very similar pressures to those experienced by Elizabeth Ford to uphold the racial status and identity of their respective communities by performing their domestic femininity within the context of the patriarchal home. These shared pressures help explain Mina Hubbard's reversion the role of the domesticated housewife upon her encounter with the built environment of white domesticity at George's River.

⁴²⁰ The Reverend Samuel M. Stewart was a missionary of the Church Mission Society of England. Wallace, *The Long Labrador Trail*, 204. Later in life, Elizabeth Ford wrote that, at the time of her wedding to William, she was struck by how the Anglican wedding rites portrayed marriage as an exchange between men – the groom and the father of the bride. Her memories of her wedding, for example, were characterized by the feeling of William's "warm hand grasping hers, and her father holding her other arm." Anauta and Washburne, *Land of the Good Shadows*, 154.

⁴²¹ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 209-231; Ann Laura Stoler, "Cultivating Bourgeois Bodies and Racial Selves," in *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, A Reader*, ed. Catherine Hall (New York: Routledge for Manchester University Press, 2000), 87-119.

⁴²² Bederman, "The Decline of Middle-Class Manliness," 209.

Efforts to replicate British homes by HBC employees in geographically ambiguous frontier spaces contributed to larger processes of imperial domestic mobility in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Historian Janet C. Myers has argued that, in the context of Victorian settler migrations, white women were viewed as agents and embodiments of what she calls “portable domesticity”: “since they both carry out the work of making the home and are themselves carriers of it... .”⁴²³ As homemakers, women like Mina Hubbard had what Myers refers to a “radical” potential for “a uniquely feminine capacity for mobility... .”⁴²⁴ Women’s perceived capacity to recreate white homes in a variety of geographical contexts, Myers argues, became a critical mechanism for the consolidation of settler colonial states like Australia, a topic that will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Five. As Myers’ analysis suggests, the potential for domestic mobility was available to those who considered themselves as members of the “British World,” who could relocate to a range of imperial spaces and still find themselves at home amid recognisably British institutions, values, and forms of domesticity.⁴²⁵ Hubbard believed Labrador to be “British territory” and personally identified as “a red hot Britisher.”⁴²⁶ Labrador’s simultaneous positioning as not only a wilderness space for wealthy New Englanders, but also as a British imperial space, may, therefore, have helped Mina feel at home there.

⁴²³ Janet C. Myers, *Antipodal England: Emigration and Portable Domesticity in the Victorian Imagination* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009), 10.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁵ On the concept of the British World, see Kurt Korneski, “Britishness, Canadianness, Class and Race: Winnipeg and the British World, 1880s-1910s,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 41:2 (2007): 161-184, doi: 10.3138/jcs.41.2.161. For an analysis of the ways in which settler societies attempted to replicate “‘British’ values and institutions,” see Cecilia Morgan, *Building Better Britains? Settler Societies Within the British Empire 1783-1920* (Toronto and New York: University of Toronto Press, 2017), xxii.

⁴²⁶ Mina Hubbard to Cyrus Adams, 6 April 1906, General Correspondence, 1889-1912, Cyrus C. Adams, AGSRO.

The organisation of space and the gendered division of labour in the homes of Company families prompted visitors like Dillon Wallace and Mina Hubbard to recognize these sites as spaces of white domesticity and home life. Dillon Wallace felt immediately at home, for example, at the posts at George's River and Nachvak during his travels across Labrador in 1905 and 1906. In *Lure of the Labrador Wild*, Wallace wrote of his arrival at George's River as an experience of Northern hospitality at the "agent's residence," where

Mrs. Ford received us in the hospitable manner of the North, and in a little while spread before us a delicious supper of fresh trout, white bread such as we had not seen since leaving Tom Blake's mossberry jam and tea. It was an event in our life to sit down again to a table covered with white linen and eat real bread.⁴²⁷

Likewise, at Nachvak, Wallace wrote that Harriet Ford "did everything possible for our comfort."⁴²⁸ In particular, "the comfort and luxury of the Post sitting room, with the hot supper of arctic hare that came in due course, were appreciated."⁴²⁹ In both cases, Wallace identified the arrangement of space in the HBC homes and the actions of Lavinia and Harriet Ford, as company wives, as significant markers of domesticity.

As Wallace's comments suggest, a big part of Labrador traders' ability to replicate the conditions of the "white man's habitation" in the Arctic was their maritime connection to larger transatlantic commercial circuits.⁴³⁰ Through the annual visits of the HBC supply ships, bringing news and goods from Great Britain, these trading posts were seen as

⁴²⁷ Wallace, *Lure of the Labrador Wild*, 165.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁰ For a discussion of the HBC's maritime circuits, Norma Hall, "Ocean Crossings: Hudson's Bay Company Seafaring in a Northern North Atlantic World," *Manitoba History* 71 (2013): 16-20, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/docview/1325584531?accountid=10406> and "Northern Arc: The Significance of Shipping and Seafarers of Hudson Bay, 1508-1920," PhD. Diss., St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2009, <https://research.library.mun.ca/8871/>.

maintaining the thinnest possible thread of contact with the “civilized” world. The ships brought the lumber, for example, that enabled Company men, who hailed primarily from Britain, to build wooden structures that spoke to them of home. These post houses became the locus for a series of race- and class-based exclusions that enabled Settlers to spatially define the boundaries of their home life and family membership. The house in which Elizabeth Ford lived at Nachvak when she met Mina Hubbard was built in 1900, when she was about 15. Her father George Ford marked the occasion of moving into the new house in the company journal by recording the following note: “Mr Ford and family made a change of quarters from the old to the new house. Oh how good to have a home apart from the Esquimo servants gaping.”⁴³¹ The new house enabled the Ford family to live apart from the Inuit hunters and their families who often stayed overnight in Company buildings when they came to trade. Later, Ford had a second structure made of “turf & wood” built “for Esquimo to lodge in when they come along.”⁴³²

The function of wooden house as a space of retreat and an outpost of British home life for traders’ families, who held themselves as socially and racially distinct from their Innu and Inuit collaborators, was much the same at George’s River. Upon the expedition’s arrival at the post, John Ford asked Mina Hubbard alone “to come out of the canoe and up to the house.”⁴³³ Her exit from the canoe and return to the conventional social and built structures of white domesticity fundamentally reordered her relationship with her guides. While Mina Hubbard was invited to stay in the Ford home, her Indigenous guides were

⁴³¹ Nachvak Post Journals, B.138/a/4, 3 July 1900. He also expressed his relief that life in the new house meant he was now “free from babies yelling,” presumably referring to the children of his Inuit hunters. *Ibid.*, 5 July 1900.

⁴³² Nachvak Post Journal, B. 138/a7, 16 September 1903.

⁴³³ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 27 August 1905, 272.

expected to camp nearby.⁴³⁴ This was also expected of the Inuit families who congregated around the post every autumn to await the arrival of the *Pelican*. Hubbard's diary entry from the day of their arrival shows her awareness that this change in sleeping arrangements signalled the dissolution of the domestic community she had created with Elson, Chapies, Iserhoff and Blake:

Up at the house I looked back. ... It seemed strange to be in a house again and yet when I had gone down again and thanked the men for what they had done and it was arranged that they should camp up on the hill among the willows, the sight of the two tents made the thought that I was no more to be a member of the little company... .⁴³⁵

In *A Woman's Way*, Hubbard places herself at a window of the Ford home when she looks

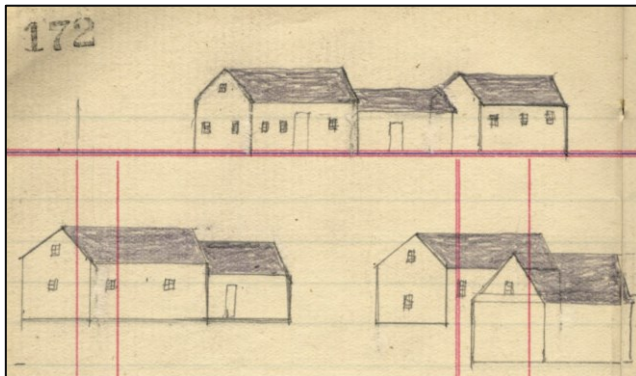


Figure 3.3: A sketch of houses appearing near the back of George Elson's 1905 field diary, perhaps drawn from life during his idle time at George's River

at the tents of "the little party" she no longer belonged to.⁴³⁶ The built environment of the Ford's home at George's River therefore seems a significant factor in physically and emotionally separating Hubbard from her guides. In addition to working on

her manuscript, Mina Hubbard spent much of her time at the George's River post with Lavinia Ford, engaging in the home-based activities, such as sewing and mending clothes, baking, and reading fiction, viewed by people of Anglo-Saxon descent as women's

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 273.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁶ Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 154.

domain.⁴³⁷ No longer brought together in the shared domestic space of the expedition camp, the relationship between Hubbard and her guides, as discussed in Chapter Two, became increasingly distant, and even competitive. Even before her departure from the Arctic, Mina Hubbard had, in several critical respects, returned home.

3.4 Arctic Domesticity: Elizabeth Ford and Making Home with the HBC, 1906-1913

Hubbard's field diary provides a wealth of insight into explorer's shifting ideas and experiences of home over the course of her Arctic expedition. No equivalent records, written by Elizabeth Ford before she left the Arctic for good in 1913, have survived to offer the same kind of immediate, personal access to how she thought about home and family life in the Arctic context. It is possible, however, to reconstruct, at least to a certain extent, the geographical, material, and emotional conditions under which Elizabeth Ford made and remade her sense of home after her marriage to William R. Ford. The broad contours of her married life are sketched out in the HBC records produced through her husband's employment with the company. We also have access to Elizabeth Ford's retrospective thoughts about her life in the Arctic as they appear in her autobiography, *The Land of the Good Shadows*, published by John Day in New York in 1940. The book, however, was co-authored with American children's fiction writer Heluiz Chandler Washburne, and the extent of this second author's creative influence on the narrative is difficult to determine. Additionally, fictional elements were incorporated into Elizabeth Ford's published life

⁴³⁷ Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," 28 August 1905, 275; 17 September 1905, 290; 24 September 1905, 296; 4 October 1905, 302; 8 October 1905, 304; 20 October 1905, 313.

story. In the book, Ford's unique upbringing in a culturally hybrid Settler family was erased; as the Inuk character Anauta, Elizabeth Ford was described as having been born on Baffin Island and raised by an adoptive Inuk mother. These realities limit my reading of the text to indications of Ford's general feelings and state of mind at different points of her life, rather than a wholly factual accounting of biographical events. Finally, a family photo album belonging to Elizabeth Ford appears in photocopied form at the back of a Ford family genealogy produced and privately published by her daughter, Mary Buckner.⁴³⁸ Only some of the images and hand-written captions in this album are legible, and the identity of the individual or individuals who took the photos is unknown. Nevertheless, reading these materials against one another, a picture of Elizabeth Ford's movements and what home would have looked like for her between her marriage in 1906 and her departure from the Arctic after William's death in 1913 emerges.

Immediately after their marriage, Elizabeth and William lived with William's family at George's River, where William continued to work for the HBC.⁴³⁹ Elizabeth's departure from her parents' home at Nachvak is presented as a traumatic transition in *Land of the Good Shadows*. Here Ford described herself as being forced to "start a new life ... in a strange land," uncertain whether she would ever see her parents again.⁴⁴⁰ The painful experience of living apart from loved ones, however, was not unique to the Arctic context. In Britain and North America, the nineteenth-century processes of urbanisation and industrialisation led many people to uproot their lives, moving from rural to urban contexts, from one part of the country to another, or even out of the country, in pursuit of economic

⁴³⁸ Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 151-168.

⁴³⁹ D.33/4, HBCA William F. Ford, Biographical Sheet.

⁴⁴⁰ Anauta and Washburne, *Land of the Good Shadows*, 153, 155.

opportunity.⁴⁴¹ Mina Hubbard's life prior to her marriage to Leonidas is a paradigm example of this phenomenon: in her late twenties, she gave up her teaching career in her hometown of Bewdley, Ontario, and moved to New York to pursue a career in nursing.⁴⁴² For the rest of her life, she maintained her connections with her birth family through remote communications, such as letters and eventually telephone calls, as well as occasional in-person reunions.⁴⁴³

For societies on the move, inside and outside the Arctic, transport and communications systems were vitally important for families to sustain relationships across distance. What marked the Arctic as distinct in this regard was its existence outside of the dense grid of communications systems, from the train to the telegraph, that criss-crossed Britain and North America by the end of the nineteenth century. Ford's autobiography exaggerated the geographical and cultural difference between her childhood home on Labrador's coast and the one that she shared with William on Ungava Bay, but communications between the two posts were primarily limited to semi-annual visitations: each winter, one or two sled teams from George's River would visit Nachvak for several days as part of the circulation of the Company mail; then, in the late summer or early autumn, the Company supply ship, such as the one Mina Hubbard sailed on in 1905, carried news, supplies, and personnel between the two HBC posts.⁴⁴⁴ It was such conditions of Arctic life that made explorers' exploits so remarkable and newsworthy: their inability to communicate for lengthy periods of time, even years, with their families and with the

⁴⁴¹ Routledge, *Do You See Ice?*, xxii.

⁴⁴² Hart, "Finding Her Way," 62-63.

⁴⁴³ Hart, "Finding Her Way," 377-400.

⁴⁴⁴ Nachvak Post Journal, B. 138/a7, 11 February 1904, 28 April 1904, 4 January 1905, 23 February 1905, 21 December 1905, 9 April 1906.

outside world, only heightened their heroic sacrifice. Indeed, this communications disconnect was an important element in the imaginative geography of Arctic exploration as a departure from “home,” spaces which Britons and North Americans defined as sites of interpersonal connectivity.

A poignant illustration of Elizabeth Ford’s struggle to maintain connectivity with her childhood home and family appears in yet another woman’s published travel narrative. In 1906, Philadelphian debutante and newlywed Florence Tasker, almost certainly following the trail blazed by Mina Hubbard the year prior, attracted much public interest in the United States when she accompanied her engineer husband on a summer journey across the Labrador Peninsula.⁴⁴⁵ Like Hubbard, the Taskers depended upon the *Pelican*, in Tasker’s words, “to carry [them] back to civilization and [their] own United States” at the conclusion of their trip.⁴⁴⁶ Departing from the Company post at Fort Chimo on Ungava Bay, the Taskers were aboard the *Pelican* for its stop at George’s River. Here Florence encountered Elizabeth Ford whom she characterized, like Mina Hubbard had, as “a fresh, pretty young girl, who had been married only a short time.”⁴⁴⁷ Ford “tearfully” asked Florence Tasker to bring letters to her parents at Nachvak, the ship’s next port of call. Tasker expressed her sympathy for the young bride, noting that the HBC had decided to

⁴⁴⁵ See, for example, “Woman Will be Lionized,” *Detroit Free Press* 15 October 1906, 3 and “American Woman Explorers Have Made Wonderful Records,” *The Washington Post* 6 January 1907, 7, *Newspapers.com*. Also “Woman Conquers Labrador Wilds,” *The Washington Times* 5 October 1906, 9, *Chronicling America*.

⁴⁴⁶ Florence Tasker, “A Woman Through Husky-Land II,” *Field and Stream* (February 1908): 941.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 942.

close the Nachvak post that autumn, and Elizabeth “knew not where” her parents were to be transferred.⁴⁴⁸

Elizabeth’s parents joined the *Pelican* at Nachvak, planning to travel to St. John’s and begin their home anew in Newfoundland. Tragically Harriet Ford contracted “a serious cold” and died on ship. Born and raised in late-nineteenth-century America, Tasker came from a context in which a variety of transportation and communications systems kept middle-class Americans in sustained contact with their geographically distant relations. Tasker was struck, therefore, by the ways in which the rhythms of family life were shaped by the environmental and infrastructural constraints on maintaining relationships across Arctic space. Of Elizabeth Ford, Tasker wrote that her thoughts were filled with “the little bride who cannot even know of her mother’s death until the *Pelican* stops there next September, when ... her father’s letters must tell her of her great loss.”⁴⁴⁹ *Land of the Good Shadows* dramatizes this scene imagined by Florence Tasker, where Elizabeth Ford finally receives written word from her father that her mother had died “a long time ago,” during the “last ship season.”⁴⁵⁰ In this part of the narrative, Ford and her co-author Washburne emphasize the impact Ford’s relationship to her mother had on her sense of home, writing how “Anauta” felt that “slowly and surely the ties with all that meant home were being severed.”⁴⁵¹ Despite the dramatic characterisations of family life in the Arctic offered by Tasker and even by Ford, the differences between an American woman like Florence Tasker and an Arctic resident like Elizabeth Ford in their ability and inclination to maintain

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid, 942-3.

⁴⁵⁰ Anauta and Washburne, *Land of the Good Shadows*, 176.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

family connections across geographical distances appear to have been a matter of degree rather than kind. Like others on the move in Britain and North America, Ford's attachments to far-away relatives meant that her sense of home, in part defined by her close relationships, encompassed multiple places and geographic contexts.

The Fords' home and family life were also shaped by the demands of the Northern resource economy. The early twentieth century saw significant changes in the HBC's Arctic policy, as the company began to extend its influence northward, establishing its first trading posts above the tree line on the northern shores of Hudson's Bay, the Hudson Strait, and Baffin Island in the years preceding World War One.⁴⁵² As an interpreter and intermediary between white and Inuit cultures, Settlers like William Ford were essential to establishing new Arctic trading relationships.⁴⁵³ After spending several years at George's River, William was moved to three different locales in the Eastern Arctic to either establish or take charge of HBC trading posts. The exact timing of these postings is unclear, due to inconsistencies in the Company records, but it is possible to rough out a general sense of the couple's movements.⁴⁵⁴ Around 1910, William was moved to Cape Wolstenholme on Ungava Bay. The post had been established in 1909 by Newfoundland-born district

⁴⁵² Tester and McNicoll, "A Voice of Presence," 540.

⁴⁵³ William's brother Samuel, Elizabeth's brother Solomon, and her father George, all worked in these new Arctic postings in the early twentieth century, where their skills in linguistic and cultural translation were so valued. See Samuel George Ford, Biographical Sheet; Solomon Richard Ford, Biographical Sheet, HBCA Online, https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/docs/hbca/biographical/f/ford_solomon.pdf; George Ford, Biographical Sheet, HBCA Online.

⁴⁵⁴ William Ford's employment records indicate that he worked as a labourer at George's River until 1912. See HBCA D.33/4 William R. Ford, Biographical Sheet. A 1911 letter written by HBC district manager Ralph Parsons, however, indicates that Ford had been posted to Cape Wolstenholme for the year 1910-1911. The letter goes on to communicate Parsons' intention to move William Ford to Baffin Island, to establish a new HBC post at Lake Harbour. Wolstenholme Correspondence B/368/b/1.

manager Ralph Parsons, in order to cultivate relationships with Inuit communities residing on both sides of the Hudson Strait and to encourage them to hunt fox, as fox pelts were becoming an extremely lucrative segment of the North American fur trade.⁴⁵⁵ Naturally, fostering good relations with the local Inuit was critical to this enterprise, and William was sent there in order to act as an interpreter between Inuit and HBC officials. In 1911, the couple relocated across the Hudson Strait to Baffin Island, where William helped to establish the first HBC post on the island at Lake Harbour.⁴⁵⁶ From there, William was involved in establishing a second trading post at Cape Dorset (Kinngait).⁴⁵⁷ Finally, the couple left Baffin Island and returned to Cape Wolstenholme, where William drowned in the summer of 1913. By that time, Elizabeth had given birth to two daughters, and she was pregnant with their third.⁴⁵⁸

While outsiders regarded the Arctic as a homogenous environment, universally unhomely in nature, Elizabeth Ford's reflections on this period of constant relocation suggest that some of the Ford's Arctic postings were more conducive to creating a sense of home than others. In *Land of the Good Shadows*, she characterized her time at the first HBC post on Baffin Island in decidedly unhomelike terms, describing how her "little

⁴⁵⁵ Bonesteel, *Canada's Relationship with Inuit*, v.

⁴⁵⁶ Ralph Parsons to R. Graham, 2 October 19[11?], Wolstenholme Correspondence B.368/b/1. Peter Pitseolak described William Ford as "the first boss of the Bay store in Lake Harbour." He also recalled that it was Ford who told his people "Kingnait – Cape Dorset – would have white people." Pitseolak and Eber, *People From Our Side*, 79 and 83.

⁴⁵⁷ Ralph Parsons to [?], 27 April 1912, Wolstenholme Correspondence B.368/b/1. Elizabeth's brother, Henry, worked at the Cape Dorset Post in 1913-1914. See Ralph Parsons to Henry T. Ford, 8 August 1913, Wolstenholme Correspondence – Outward B.368/b/2 August 1912- September 1913, HBCA.

⁴⁵⁸ Bucker, *Descendants of John Ford*, 39. Ford recounts her experience of giving birth to her third child after her husband's death in *Land of the Good Shadows*. See Anauta and Washburne, *Land of the Good Shadows*, 255.

family” was left by the Company ship “alone in the great wind-swept wilderness, where as far as the eye could see there was only rock and sea and sky.”⁴⁵⁹ Given that her life story was written in an American context, with an American collaborator, it is likely that this passage characterized Baffin Island as a “wilderness” in order to signal to American readers that the island existed outside of the readers’ home environment. Cape Wolstenholme is described in similar terms in *Land of the Good Shadows*. Gaining her first “glimpse of her new home” from the decks of the Company ship, Ford wrote that “the sight was not encouraging – a shallow cove with a high bare cliff on either side jutting boldly into the strait, a rocky hill stretching away behind. Snow already whitened the ground.”⁴⁶⁰ This – albeit highly mediated – recollection suggests that Ford viewed the Arctic landscape, with an eye culturally conditioned by her British ancestry, as a forbidding, unhomelike environment. Once again revealing her tendency to privilege European understandings of home, she added that “the only friendly thing in all that bleak expanse was a wisp of smoke drifting up from a stovepipe stuck through the sloping roof of a small wooden shack.”⁴⁶¹ Likewise, *Land of the Good Shadows* characterizes the establishment of the HBC post at Lake Harbour, as the Company’s first symbolic claim upon the island, as a process of building “a cabin” with imported “lumber brought for that purpose” in which the Fords

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 199.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 227.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.



Figure 3.4: The HBC post at Lake Harbour in Elizabeth Ford’s family photo album, n.d.
(Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 151)

would live and trade with the Inuit of Baffin Island.⁴⁶²

A picture of the cabin at Lake Harbour (**Fig. 4**) appears in Elizabeth Ford’s family photo

album with a handwritten caption that the significance of the structure as “the first wood house on the whole island.”⁴⁶³ Her comments reiterate the importance of the built environment around HBC posts, and the wooden house in particular, in making Settler and European families feel at home in the Eastern Arctic.

As Karen Routledge elegantly observes, “the making and remaking of homes ... is the beating heart of settler colonialism.”⁴⁶⁴ The homes attached to HBC trading posts constituted physical and symbolic claims on Indigenous space that would ultimately support Canadian colonial ventures in the Eastern Arctic. While the photograph in Ford’s album makes meaning out of the HBC venture at Lake Harbour as the site of the first wooden house on the island, the Company’s intrusion on Inuit space had far-reaching social, political, and economic implications for the local Inuit. Beginning at Lake Harbour in 1911, the HBC and other trading interests steadily increased their presence in the form

⁴⁶² Ibid., 199.

⁴⁶³ In Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 151.

⁴⁶⁴ Routledge, *Do You See Ice?*, xv.

of trading posts on Baffin Island and across the Eastern Arctic throughout the 1910s and 1920s.⁴⁶⁵ This glut of trading interests encouraged Indigenous communities across the Arctic to transition from subsistence hunting to trapping Arctic fox, resulting in their growing dependence upon HBC posts for rations and the necessities of life.⁴⁶⁶ Inuk Peter Pitseolak, who grew to adulthood in the first two decades of the twentieth century, recollected such alterations to Inuit labour patterns and material culture as being culturally transformative:

It was a big change when people began to work. When the kadluna things came here, that's when people thought they were rich. That's when they changed. When they thought they were rich in the white man's way they started to ignore the riches of Eskimo life. So much was available to them from the white man. Later on it turned out we were not as wealthy as we thought.⁴⁶⁷

As Frank James Tester and Paule McNicoll argue, the social and economic disruptions to Inuit life prompted by the HBC and other trading ventures ultimately carved out a space for more systematic government interventions in the Arctic in the form of medical and material relief provisions, actions that ultimately bolstered Canadian sovereignty claims on Baffin Island.⁴⁶⁸ Elizabeth Ford's photograph album is suggestive of the ways in which intimate histories of home and family life could be braided together with larger structural histories of colonial violence and incursion.

Despite Ford's descriptions of the Arctic environment as bleak and forbidding, the presence of Arctic snapshots in her family photo album suggests that she was able to

⁴⁶⁵ This changing context of trade and social relations in the Eastern Arctic is described from the Inuit perspective in Pitseolak and Eber, *People from Our Side*, esp. 53-133.

⁴⁶⁶ Tester and McNicoll, "A Voice of Presence," 540-543. Bonesteel, *Canada's Relationship with Inuit*, v.

⁴⁶⁷ Pitseolak and Eber, *People from Our Side*, 133.

⁴⁶⁸ Tester and McNicoll, "A Voice of Presence," 558.

incorporate places like Lake Harbour, Cape Dorset, and Cape Wolstenholme into her sense of home. The images depict scenes of life from around the HBC posts, including landscape images, fox trapping, and moving Company vessels in and out of the water on a seasonal basis. Some of these photos document the process by which many Arctic residents of European descent worked to create a sense of home in new environments. The celebration of Christmas was an important opportunity, for example, to connect with memories of childhood, home, and family life.⁴⁶⁹ Ford's album features a photo captioned "Baffinland Christmas," in which a group of people, likely Inuit hunters, are gathered for a sack race competition (Fig. 5).⁴⁷⁰ Another picture on the same album page, perhaps taken during the



Figure 3.5: Photograph, "Baffinland Christmas, having sack race," n.d.
(Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 152)

same day of yuletide recreation, shows an "Eskimo with frozen molasses on a stick."⁴⁷¹

Another important factor shaping Elizabeth Ford's sense of home was her role as a Company wife. Within early-twentieth-century British and North American societies,

⁴⁶⁹ Phyllis J. Johnson and Peter Suedfeld, "Coping with Stress Through the Microcosms of Home and Family Among Arctic Whalers and Explorers," *The History of the Family* 1:1 (1996): 54, doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1081-602X\(96\)90019-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1081-602X(96)90019-6).

⁴⁷⁰ Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 152.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*

much of the work of homemaking fell to women.⁴⁷² Recall, for instance, the importance of Mina Hubbard's domestic labour, including meal preparation and the hosting of her husband's friends and colleagues, in holding together Leonidas Hubbard's sense of home. Coming out of the British cultural tradition, the HBC had similar expectations for Company wives, who were expected to sustain the trading posts as homes for their families and for visitors.⁴⁷³ Mina Hubbard's diary from her time at George's River gives us some insight into the invaluable domestic labour performed by Company wives like Lavinia Ford. Over the course of two months, Hubbard describes Lavinia Ford providing food and emotional succor to her family, and to Hubbard, as her guest, making clothing, and brewing a poultice for the ailing wife of an Inuk hunter employed by the HBC.⁴⁷⁴

Elizabeth Ford would have been expected to perform the same tasks as her mother-in-law and likely more, as she and William worked to establish several posts around the Hudson Strait. In these newly established Company contact zones, it was up to Elizabeth to transform the newly built HBC buildings into homes. Certainly, her domestic

⁴⁷² As Sarah A. Leavitt argues, while white middle-class Victorian women were written about in a variety of genres and from a range of conservative as well as feminist perspectives, virtually all writers "chose the middle-class female subject's connection to the home as one of the most important subjects, no matter what their other interests." Sarah A. Leavitt, *From Catharine Beecher to Martha Stewart: A Cultural History of Domestic Advice* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 11.

⁴⁷³ As Barbara Kelcey notes, non-Indigenous "women bore the responsibility of introducing 'civilization' into the north...," a task that they pursued within the context of daily domestic life. Kelcey, *Alone in the Silence*, 34-35. Krista Barclay considers the role that Indigenous and mixed-descent women also played in this regard as the wives of Company agents in "From Rupert's Land to Canada West: Hudson's Bay Company Families and Representations of Indigeneity in Small-Town Ontario, 1840-1980," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 26:1 (2015): 67-97, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.7202/1037198ar>.

⁴⁷⁴ Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," 16 September 1905, 289; 28 August – 21 October 1905, 274-314.

responsibilities increased at Cape Wolstenholme, where she and William were tasked with providing general support for the Scottish manager, C.C.F. Shepherd, and his pregnant Settler wife, Sarah, who were struggling to adapt to life in a primarily Inuit community.⁴⁷⁵ Shortly after giving birth, Sarah Shepherd died, leaving Elizabeth to care for the Shepherd family as well as her own.⁴⁷⁶ In *Land of the Good Shadows*, Ford described herself as being very “occupied at home” during this time, preparing, cutting, and sewing skin clothing for both families.⁴⁷⁷ A glancing acknowledgement of the importance of women’s work at the HBC posts was made by district manager Ralph Parsons after Sarah Shepherd’s death. Hoping to establish C.C.F. Shepherd at a new post on Baffin Island, Parsons wrote to another HBC official that Shepherd would require “a cook or a housemaid” to be hired, presumably to manage the workload previously shouldered by his wife, and then by Elizabeth.⁴⁷⁸ Like other wives across Britain and North America, Elizabeth Ford’s sense of home, developed across a variety of Arctic landscapes, was inextricably bound up with her domestic labour.

⁴⁷⁵ Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 38 and Anauta and Washburne, *Land of the Good Shadows*, 227.

⁴⁷⁶ Ralph Parsons to J. C. Ingrams, 20 August 1913, Wolstenholme Correspondence – Outward, B/368.b.2, HBCA.

⁴⁷⁷ Anauta and Washburne, *Land of the Good Shadows*, 228.

⁴⁷⁸ Ralph Parsons to W. E. Swaffield, 6 September 1912, Wolstenholme Correspondence – Outward, B/368/b.2, HBCA.

3.5 Conclusion

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the imaginative geography of Arctic exploration was oriented around the two poles of “home” and wilderness.” This spatial dichotomy was formed by contemporary ideologies of gender, race, and colonialism. For Britons and North Americans in this period, the home, as the woman’s domain, was one of the most important sites in which the gender binary, characterized geographically through the concept of “separate spheres,” was articulated and consolidated. British and North American homes were also profoundly colonial spaces, as one of the most important sites in which the highly “evolved” separation between the Anglo-American sexes was displayed. The gendered organisation of the home therefore became an important index of racial hierarchy, demonstrative of natural and biological bases of ideologies of white supremacy. The 1903 Labrador expedition diary of Leonidas Hubbard illuminates how one Arctic explorer conceived as his wilderness travels (an importantly masculine form of mobility) in relation to his imagined distance from home. As a geographical point of origin, home, for Hubbard, was a static, stable entity, tied to a particular place in the United States. In Leonidas’ diary, Mina Hubbard, as the feminine figure most powerfully evocative of home feelings for Leonidas, is imagined in similarly static, place-bound terms.

By the time she set out on her own Labrador expedition, Mina Hubbard had gone through two important ruptures and revisions in her sense of home. In starting a new home with her husband in New York, Hubbard had to expand her geographical and relational sensibilities of home, as she was now remote to her childhood home and family in Ontario. Receiving confirmation of her husband’s death in 1904, Mina Hubbard discovered that she no longer felt a connection to their shared home in the United States, and she came to

recognize the importance of relationships, particularly her marital bond with Leonidas, over the particularities of place, in shaping her sense of being at home. During this period of geographical homelessness, which coincided with her Labrador trip, Hubbard demonstrated a remarkable capacity to cultivate a homelike sensibility on the move, inspired by memories of her husband, the close and caring relationships that existed among the members of the expedition company, and encounters with the Arctic “wilderness” in Labrador that she experienced as spiritually recuperative.

Upon arriving at the HBC post at George’s River, Hubbard once again demonstrated her ability to adapt her homelike sensibility to different social, geographical, and architectural contexts. The built environment of the Company post, centered as it was around the wooden house of the Company agent, produced racial hierarchies that were partly articulated in spatial terms. The racial division between the Ford family and the Company’s Inuit servants, as well as the division between Mina Hubbard and her guides, were made manifest in the sharp demarcations of who was and was not permitted residence within the Company house. At the threshold of the “wilderness,” HBC families along the Labrador coast produced simulacra of Anglo-American homes that non-Indigenous visitors like Mina Hubbard could readily identify with as recognisable homescapes. In this new context, Hubbard found a place for herself in the Ford’s house and home at George’s River in a way that her Indigenous guides could not.

The realities and relocations of life in the HBC’s Eastern Arctic posts also required HBC families, such as the one that Elizabeth Ford belonged to, to develop a mobile and readily transplantable sense of home. For Settlers employed by the HBC, like their contemporaries in Britain and North America of Anglo-Saxon descent, the physical

structure of the nuclear family dwelling had tremendous significance in the capacity of families and individuals to feel at home. Ford's family album and writings show that the construction and reproduction of wooden dwellings was one of the first and most important actions taken by the Company in establishing new posts on Baffin Island. The ready reproduction of these built home spaces, coupled with the domestic labours of Company wives like Elizabeth Ford, enabled Arctic traders to regain a sense of home across diverse Arctic geographies. Transport and communications systems, such as the Company supply ship and the annual mail run, while minimal, provided a vital service in sustaining relationships at a distance. Like other white Britons and North Americans, Elizabeth Ford used these vectors for connection and communication to cultivate a homelike sensibility that encompassed a range of times and places.

This chapter has compared the diverse ways that Elizabeth Ford, Mina Hubbard, and her husband, Leonidas, thought about and experienced home during their time in roughly the same region of the Arctic in the early years of the twentieth century, before the beginning of the First World War. The primary determinative factor shaping these three individuals' ideas of home in this context was not, as one might expect, the Arctic environment, which was popularly viewed as inhospitable to Anglo-American forms of habitation and domesticity. Contrary to popular visions of environmental determinism, it appears that the diversity of their subject positions, along the axes of race, class, gender, and place of origin, had the most profound influence on Ford and the Hubbard's conceptions of home. As an Anglo-American male and would-be explorer, Leonidas Hubbard adhered to the gendered geographical imaginary of Arctic exploration that relegated "home," and the women who populated it, to a static position existing outside of

the wilderness. In resisting these male/female and wilderness/home binaries by taking up the mantle of female explorer, Mina Hubbard had a much more complex and dynamic sensibility of home, shaped by her previous experiences of dislocation as an immigrant and a widow, that enabled her to experience the Arctic in homelike terms. For Elizabeth Ford, as a woman of Inuit-British descent, the Arctic was, in one sense, unproblematically home. And yet, the racial hierarchies developed around the HBC posts in Labrador meant that Settlers like Ford had to continually reiterate their superior status through acts of racial theatre staged in their homes.

Comparative analysis shows, therefore, that ideas and experiences of home and family life varied widely among individuals in Arctic contexts. Ideas of home were nevertheless one of the most important discursive fields through which Arctic residents like Elizabeth Ford and visiting explorers like the Hubbards made sense of their time in Northern environments. Contrary to popular narratives of Arctic exceptionalism that historically framed the Northern wilderness as a fundamentally unhomelike environment, this chapter shows just how integral home was, as both a mental construct and a lived experience, to Ford and the Hubbard's Arctic encounters. Having analysed how individuals thought about the Arctic in relation to ideas of home in the midst of the Arctic "wilderness," Chapter Four shifts the site of our analysis to consider these spatialized concerns around masculine wildness and feminine domesticity played out "at home" in the United States. Following Elizabeth Ford on her southward migration to Midwestern America, Chapter Three considers how Americans worked through their own ideas about childhood, gender roles, and white supremacy through their engagement with Inuit who performed and re-

created ostensibly “authentic” replicas of their Arctic homes in the midst of urban America around the turn of the century.

Chapter 4: “Lizzie” of the Labrador, “Anauta” in America: Authenticity in Arctic Exploratory Culture, 1905-1940

Elizabeth Ford’s fateful meeting with Mina Hubbard at Nachvak in 1905 featured a host of misreadings and misapprehensions that historian Theodore Catton argues defined episodes of colonial contact and intercultural exchange in North America.⁴⁷⁹ That autumn, Ford was anticipating her spring wedding to William R. Ford, the son of her father’s half-brother. Elizabeth showed Hubbard her wedding dress, which had been specially made for her by William’s sister and shipped from St. John’s, Newfoundland (**Fig. 1**).⁴⁸⁰ It appears that, from Hubbard’s perspective, the wedding dress signified Elizabeth Ford’s status as a white woman, like herself. Later that same evening, Hubbard wrote of Ford briefly in her expedition diary, describing her as a “small pretty and a very sweet girl.” She further editorialized: “[c]an hardly think of her going to live the life she will.”⁴⁸¹ As is so often the case in her field notes, Hubbard betrays an ambivalence regarding her own unconventional lifestyle, and an awareness of the popular wisdom white women (like herself) were fundamentally unfit to “live the life” demanded by the perceived extremities of Arctic environments. While Hubbard expressed concern over Elizabeth Ford’s suitability for life at a remote northern trading post, her diary does not dwell on the difficult conditions that

⁴⁷⁹ Catton, *Rainy Lake House*, 6.

⁴⁸⁰ William’s sister Elizabeth married Alexander Watson of Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 21. The address for “Mrs. Alex Watson” of British Square, St. John’s, Newfoundland, appears at the back of Mina Hubbard’s expedition diary. Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 345. Elizabeth Ford stayed with Elizabeth Watson’s family in St. John’s for a time after her husband’s death in 1913. See Washburne and Anauta, *Land of the Good Shadows*, 252-259.

⁴⁸¹ Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 27 October 1905, 319.

the Innu and Inuit women she encountered might face, although some of these women were hungry and sick, and were likely in far more vulnerable positions than Ford.⁴⁸² Nor, for that matter, did the fact that her own husband died of starvation in Labrador prompt her to reflect on the unfitness of the white male for Arctic life. It seems, then, that it was Hubbard's reading of Ford's race and gender – her identity as white and female, in other words – that inspired her misgivings.

Perhaps Mina Hubbard

saw a younger, more conventional version of herself in Elizabeth Ford, an embodiment of those feminine qualities that made Hubbard herself an unlikely candidate to fill the masculine shoes of the explorer, previously occupied by her husband. Likewise, it is



Figure 4.1: Photograph, William R. and Elizabeth Ford, n.d. The caption for this photograph, written by Mary Buckner, suggests that it was taken on their wedding day in 1906.
(Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 43)

⁴⁸² At the time that they encountered Hubbard in August 1905, one Innu community was suffering from lack of ammunition and other supplies, due to the late arrival of the *Pelican* at Davis Inlet. Hubbard noted that many of the mothers at this encampment looked “very miserable and unhappy.” Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 20 August 1905, 255. Hubbard later recorded her sympathy for “Betsy,” one of the “Esks” at the George River Post, a Labrador Inuit woman dying of consumption. Hubbard, “Labrador Expedition Diary,” 17 September 1905, 291.

possible that Ford felt a similar kinship with the young widow Mina Hubbard when she was widowed herself, after her husband William's drowning in Ungava Bay in 1913.⁴⁸³ In the same way that Leonidas Hubbard's death propelled Mina's unusual northward journey, the recently widowed Elizabeth Ford was inspired to move southward into territories that could be no less alien than the "Labrador Wild" likely seemed to the Hubbards and to Dillon Wallace.⁴⁸⁴ By 1920, Ford had remarried and she and her children had relocated permanently to Indiana, in the heartland of the rapidly industrialising American Midwest. In her pursuit of work and opportunities in America, Ford may also have drawn inspiration from Mina Hubbard's success as a public authority on the Canadian Arctic. Between 1929 and 1965, Ford capitalized upon American audiences' fascination with stories of what Barbara Kelcey has called the "romantic and distant" North by lecturing on and writing about life in the region of her birth.⁴⁸⁵

Despite the parallels in the private lives of these two women, their public lives were remarkably different. Hubbard self-identified, in her diary and in her travel writings, as an explorer. In her public appearances in this role, in text as well as in person, Hubbard emphasized her status as a racial outsider to the Arctic, offering commentary upon the Labrador Peninsula's Indigenous inhabitants, particularly the northern Innu group known as the "Naskapi Indians," in the authoritative ethnographic grammar characteristic of the more conventional male explorer.⁴⁸⁶ The fact that Mina Hubbard was invited to publish in periodicals and speak at events sponsored by some of Britain and America's leading

⁴⁸³ D.33/12, William R. Ford, Biographical Sheet, HBCA Online.

⁴⁸⁴ Wallace, *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*.

⁴⁸⁵ Kelcey, *Alone in the Silence*, 77.

⁴⁸⁶ Grace, "A Woman's Way," lvii.

geographical and scientific societies suggests that this designation was recognized by her contemporaries, albeit ambivalently: it would not be until 1927 that Hubbard, then a resident in England, was allowed to join the Royal Geographical Society (RGS). The RGS did not allow women to join their ranks at all, for that matter, until 1913.⁴⁸⁷

Around the same time that Hubbard joined the RGS, Elizabeth Ford embarked upon her own career as a public authority on the Eastern Arctic. In contrast to Hubbard's assumption of the explorer persona, Ford presented herself as a very different type of authority figure: that of the Indigenous insider. Despite her ability to "pass" for white, as her 1905 encounter with Hubbard demonstrates, Ford was part of the Labrador Settler community, a distinct ethnic group of Inuit-European descent. During her remarkable tenure as a lecturer, author, and performer across America between the 1930s and the 1960s, Ford submerged her British ancestry and emphasized her Inuit heritage under her Inuk name, "Anauta." Her lecture brochures, which featured studio portraits of Ford as Anauta dressed in furs, promoted her as "The Only Eskimo Woman on the American Platform" (**Figure 2**).⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁷ LaFramboise, "'Just a Little Like an Explorer,'" 13, fn. 12.

⁴⁸⁸ "Anauta, The Only Eskimo Woman on the American Platform," Publicity Brochure, 1940-1949, Redpath Chautauqua Collection (RCC), University of Iowa Libraries Online, https://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3Auc_15441_15439 (accessed 7 July 2019).

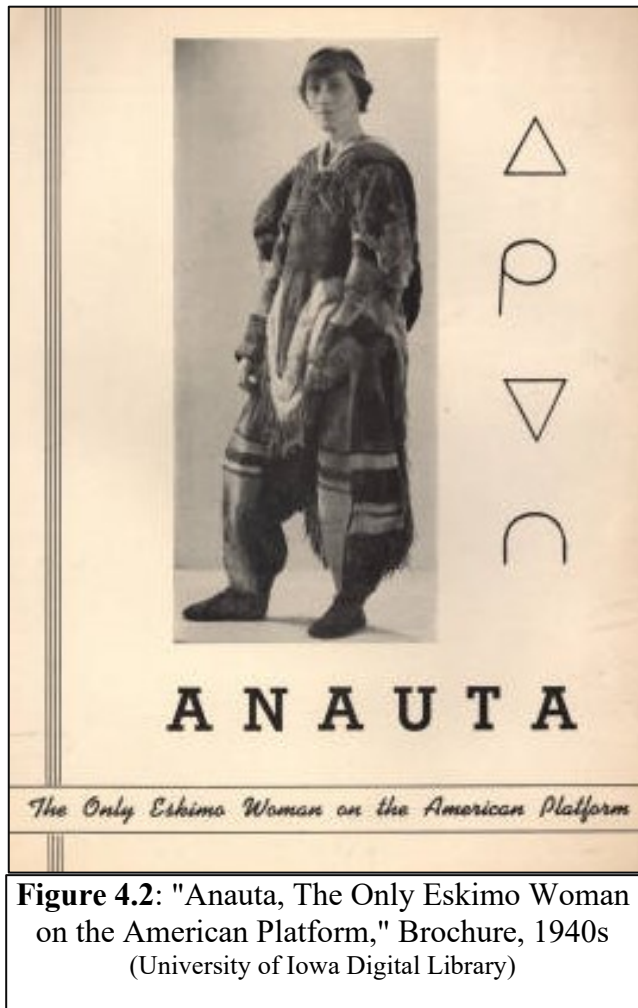


Figure 4.2: "Anauta, The Only Eskimo Woman on the American Platform," Brochure, 1940s (University of Iowa Digital Library)

Scholars have more or less taken Elizabeth Ford and Mina Hubbard's public performances at face value, recognizing only Hubbard's contributions to early-twentieth-century Arctic exploratory culture. As discussed in Chapter Three, the human tragedy surrounding Leonidas Hubbard's death in 1903 and Mina's subsequent journey to complete her husband's work has, in the words of Roberta Buchanan and Bryan Greene, "become part of the tapestry of hardship and adventure associated

with the exploration of the Canadian north."⁴⁸⁹ In 2018, Mina Hubbard was, along with other historical figures like Viola Desmond, designated by Parks Canada as a person of significance who has "helped define Canada's history."⁴⁹⁰ Ford's lectures and writings have, on the other hand, received little attention from scholars of the Canadian Arctic, and no one, to my knowledge, has looked at her life and works in the context of Arctic

⁴⁸⁹ Buchanan and Greene, introduction to *The Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 3.

⁴⁹⁰ Parks Canada, "Government Announces New National Historic Designations," The Official Website of the Government of Canada, 12 January 2018. https://www.canada.ca/en/parks-canada/news/2018/01/government_of_canadaannouncesnewnationalhistoricdesignations.html.

exploration.⁴⁹¹ This chapter opens with a brief moment of encounter between Mina Hubbard and Elizabeth Ford in order to highlight the extent to which their paths subsequently diverged, in posterity as well as in life. While Hubbard was able to make space for herself within the exalted ranks of Arctic explorers, despite her gender, Ford took another path to publicity.

Many of the critical frameworks deployed by scholars to understand exploration as a historical phenomenon have been developed with an understanding of exploratory travel as a fundamentally masculine enterprise.⁴⁹² In 2004, McGill-Queen's University Press reissued Hubbard's travelogue, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador* (1908), and published her expedition diary two years later.⁴⁹³ These publications have prompted Canadian scholars to reconsider Mina Hubbard's travels as part of Canada's national history of exploration. As Tina Adcock observes, individuals have typically been accorded the title of "explorer" by their contemporaries, and by historians, on the basis two critical criteria: first, that they engage in purposeful travel through some northern region little-known to people residing further South; second, that this travel led to the production of some sort of new knowledge that can then be communicated to southern audiences.⁴⁹⁴ Hubbard's Labrador trip meets both of these criteria: in addition to coordinating her own expedition, her map of Labrador's Naskaupi and George Rivers, drafted by cartographers

⁴⁹¹ Only three scholars have dealt with Elizabeth Ford's life and works in any significant way: Blake, "Inuit Autobiography," Brown, "Edmund Peck and the Making of the *Eskimo-English Dictionary*," 269-289, and McGrath, *Canadian Inuit Literature*, 85.

⁴⁹² Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 2-3.

⁴⁹³ Grace, ed., *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, by Mina Benson Hubbard. Roberta Buchanan, Anne Hart and Bryan Greene, eds., *The Woman Who Mapped Labrador*.

⁴⁹⁴ Adcock, "Toward an Early Twentieth-Century Culture," 113-115.

of the American Geographical Society and published in her book in 1908, supplanted the Geological Survey of Canada's report as the basis for official maps of the region until aerial surveys were conducted in the 1930s.⁴⁹⁵ The resurrection of Hubbard as an explorer of note, therefore, likely has much to do with the fact that her actions are easily reconciled with orthodox definitions of exploratory practice as a white and individualist activity.

This understanding of exploration typically highlights the activities of those privileged few individuals, including a very few women, such as Mina Hubbard, of elevated social status and European descent, who had the social and commercial capital necessary to undertake formal and self-consciously research-oriented exploratory travel. In recent years, historians have begun to understand the limitations of such a narrow definition of exploration for acknowledging the roles played by other historical actors, including Indigenous communities, in particular. Historical geographer Felix Driver and Canadian historian Tina Adcock have argued for an expanded definition of exploratory activity. Like others interested in attending to the cultural dimensions of various scientific fields, Driver and Adcock work with the concept of "cultures of exploration," in order to capture the broad range of "cultural practices which involve the mobilization of people and resources" around travel and associated knowledge production.⁴⁹⁶ According to Adcock, individuals involved in cultures of exploration include not only those who were recognized as explorers by their contemporaries, but also a diverse group of "governmental, institutional, and private actors" involved in "the construction, circulation, and adjudication of the

⁴⁹⁵ Bryan Greene, "Scientific Results of the Hubbard Expedition," in *The Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 44.

⁴⁹⁶ Driver, *Geography Militant*, 8.

knowledge formed on the basis” of Arctic travel.⁴⁹⁷ Examining Elizabeth Ford’s biography as part of a transatlantic, twentieth-century culture of Arctic exploration sheds light on some of these complex and transnational processes of knowledge production and adjudication that took place during Ford and Hubbard’s lifetimes.

In order to make a living for her children as an Inuit performer in the United States, Elizabeth Ford had to find ways to make her Arctic home legible to and consumable by middle-class white audiences – to invent, in other words, a personal biography that felt more authentic to Americans than the actual realities of her Arctic life would have been. Focusing on the early years of her performance career from 1929 until the publication of her autobiography *Land of the Good Shadows* in 1940, this chapter considers Ford’s efforts to navigate and capitalize upon the popular and scientific “knowledge” about Inuit life that circulated within the period’s exploratory culture. As Anauta, Ford successfully performed Inuit and Arctic stereotypes for white audiences; at the same time, her transformation of *Qallunaat* knowledge about the Arctic into a form of theatre for white consumption had the subversive potential to expose the performative, inauthentic, and Eurocentric dimensions of exploratory knowledge production.

While Inuit performers like Ford were able to manipulate and capitalize upon popular perceptions of the “authentic” Arctic, Paige Raibmon aptly observes that the concept of authenticity could also be weaponized against Indigenous peoples in order to define and delimit their sphere of action.⁴⁹⁸ This chapter also addresses Ford’s ambivalent acceptance as an expert on Arctic topics, in order to gain insight into how claims to

⁴⁹⁷ Adcock, “Toward an Early Twentieth-Century Culture,” 111.

⁴⁹⁸ Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, 3.

knowledge and expertise were negotiated and policed in this culture of Arctic exploration. Men who considered themselves arbiters of authentic knowledge about the Arctic – including anthropologist Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Canadian videographer Richard Finnie, and HBC bureaucrat Ralph Parsons – questioned the authenticity of Ford’s “Inuitness” in ways that jeopardized her career as an Arctic performer. The perceived illegibility of Ford’s racial background, coupled with her claims to expertise on the basis of her personal – and racially embodied – knowledge of the Arctic, threatened to destabilize the credibility of these other self-styled experts, who assumed the mantle of authority on the same embodied and experiential bases. The final section of this chapter looks at the behind-the-scenes controversy between Ford, Stefansson, Finnie, and Parsons surrounding the publication of *Land of the Good Shadows* in order to highlight the fragile and deeply subjective foundations on which supposedly expert and scientific knowledge about the Arctic was built.

4.1 Lizzie of the Labrador: The Optics of Settler Ethnicity in the Eastern Arctic

Even prior to her arrival on the American lecture platform in 1929, Elizabeth Ford had a history of experiences with racial performance. As discussed in Chapter Three, Labrador Settlers sought to distinguish themselves from their Innu and Inuit neighbours through performances of white domesticity. Additionally, the appetite of white travellers and explorers like Wallace and the Hubbards for exposure to “authentic” modes of living typically associated with rural and Indigenous peoples (in contrast to the conditions of urban modernity discussed in Chapter Three) imposed “conditions of performance,” as Raibmon puts it, on people encountered in contexts of perceived authenticity, such as the

Arctic.⁴⁹⁹ Analysis of the field diaries and published writings produced by members of the Hubbard and Wallace expeditions shows that the cohort of explorers scrutinized, weighed and measured the Ford family's exhibitions of racial identity, analyzing individuals' physical appearance as well as behaviour in order to situate these Arctic residents within *Qallunaat* racial categories. Despite Settlers' efforts to manifest their whiteness through domestic ritual, travellers who were not accustomed to Labrador's complex racial milieu often struggled to distinguish between Indigenous, European, and Settler populations, and the various gradations of status associated with each.⁵⁰⁰ Visitors' recorded assumptions about the ethnic background of various branches of the Ford family show that Settlers could be assigned any number of racial identities.

Mina Hubbard and George Elson both understood the Fords living at George River to be, if not of wholly European descent, then at least non-Inuit. In his expedition diary, Elson drew a distinction between "Mr & Mrs Ford[,] William Ford & sister," and "the rest" of the George River post residents, who were, in his estimation, "all Esquimaux."⁵⁰¹ Hubbard's published travel narrative attributes a telling comment to Lavinia Ford. Upon the Hubbard crew's arrival at George River, Hubbard writes that Mrs. Ford's "eyes shone like stars as she took my hand and said, 'You are very welcome, Mrs. Hubbard. Yours is the first white woman's face I have seen for two years.'"⁵⁰² Given that Lavinia Ford's

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 35. While Raibmon's work focuses on concepts of Indigenous authenticity, Ian McKay argues that antimodernists also commodified and romanticized rural "folk" cultures due to the perceived authenticity of the lifeways of poor rural whites. See Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

⁵⁰⁰ Korneski, "Planters, Eskimos, and Indians," 320.

⁵⁰¹ Diary of George Elson, 27 August 1905, 96.

⁵⁰² Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 153.

comments do not appear in Hubbard's expedition diary, it is possible that Hubbard fabricated this interaction in order to signal to readers that her expedition was complete upon her re-entry into white society at George River, which a racial kinship between Hubbard and Lavinia Ford would suggest. Likewise, Labrador medical missionary Wilfred Grenfell identified John Ford as a "hearty Englishman" in *A Labrador Doctor* (1932).⁵⁰³

In his travelogue *The Long Labrador Trail* (1907), however, Dillon Wallace paints a more complex picture of Settler hybridity, writing that John Ford Jr. had "a tinge of Eskimo blood in his veins, and is as familiar with the Eskimo language as with English."⁵⁰⁴ *The Long Labrador Trail* also includes a comment Wallace attributes to Elizabeth's mother, Harriet Ford, when speaking about the possible closure of the HBC's Nachvak post: "'God knows how lonely it is sometimes,' Mrs. Ford said to me, 'and how glad I'll be if we go where there's some one besides just greasy heathen Eskimos to see.'"⁵⁰⁵ There are several possible readings of Harriet Ford's comment. On the one hand, it might suggest that, like other Labrador Settlers, Ford chose not to identify with her Inuit heritage. On the other hand, Ford's observation might be read as performative and at least partly disingenuous, strategically made for Dillon Wallace's benefit so that she might signal her membership in Wallace's racial community. Finally, it is possible that this scene, and Ford's comments, were of Wallace's own literary invention. While it is impossible to determine which interpretation is correct, the variety of possible readings speaks to the complexity and opacity of Labrador Settler identity to outside observers.

⁵⁰³ Grenfell, *A Labrador Doctor*, 241.

⁵⁰⁴ Wallace, *The Long Labrador Trail*, 167.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 251.

Qallunaat commentators also varied their assessments of Settlers' racial backgrounds depending upon the intended audience of their commentary. One particularly rich recorded example comes from Pangnirtung, on Southern Baffin Island, in 1931, one year after the establishment of Pangnirtung's first hospital, operated by the Anglican Church.⁵⁰⁶ The episode suggests that some assessments of race could be situational, depending on whether they were meant for public or private audiences. At that time, the nurse-in-charge at St. Luke's Hospital was E. Prudence Hockin, born in Manitoba to British immigrant parents.⁵⁰⁷ Here she encountered Elizabeth Ford's sister-in-law, Mary (*née* Edmunds), married to William's brother Samuel Ford, who worked at Pangnirtung as an interpreter for the local HBC post (**Figure 3**). Like the Fords, Mary came from a Labrador Settler family, and her racial identity presented a quandary to Hockin.⁵⁰⁸ In a letter to her parents, Hockin describes "Mrs. F" as "a Labrador lady," which, in her estimation, meant "Indian, Esky and white in



Figure 4.3: Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Ford, Southampton Island, photograph, D. L. McKeand, 1932

(Library and Archives Canada R216-2979-8-E. Volume/box number: 14949)

⁵⁰⁶ Tester and McNicoll, "A Voice of Presence," 552.

⁵⁰⁷ Myra Rutherdale, "She Was a Ragged Little Thing': Missionaries, Embodiment, and Refashioning Aboriginal Womanhood in Northern Canada," in *Contact Zones*, 239.

⁵⁰⁸ Wallace, *The Long Labrador Trail*, 194.

doubtful proportions.”⁵⁰⁹ In a follow-up letter, Hockin puzzled over Mary’s physical appearance: “although she looks white (is dark), she is of the squatty Eskimo build and has a flat face.”⁵¹⁰ Publicly, however, Hockin did not acknowledge her own uncertainty regarding Mary Ford’s racial background. In a letter published in *The Living Message*, a monthly periodical produced by the Women’s Auxiliary to the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, Hockin wrote about the Ford’s imminent departure from Pangnirtung: “We are a little disappointed that Mrs. Ford, the only white woman here, is going out on the Ungava.”⁵¹¹ Hockin’s designation of Mary Ford as white on this occasion might suggest an awareness that doing otherwise would publicly designate Ford as belonging to a group with lesser social status.

Comments made by Elizabeth Ford in later life about her Arctic years suggest that her own sense of racial identity could be context-dependent. In one letter from 1940, for example, Ford wrote that she had experienced a heightened awareness of her Inuit ancestry in the Arctic when surrounded by *Qallunaat*. Written in response to those who questioned whether or not Ford was really Inuit, a matter discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, Ford wrote that, while she “could pass anywhere for a European[,] [i]f there is no Eskimo blood in me what a lot of needless shame I’ve suffered.” She went on to describe how acutely self-conscious she became in the Arctic around the annual arrival of the HBC

⁵⁰⁹ E. P. Hockin to parents, 31 August 1931, E. Prudence Hockin Papers, M-4745-24 and M-4745-25, Frontier Nursing Project fonds, Glenbow Library and Archives, University of Calgary, Alberta. A transcription of some of Hockin’s letters is available online: <http://www.cshassociates.com/letters-from-pangnirtung>.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6 September 1931.

⁵¹¹ Prudence Hockin, “At Home and Abroad: The Arctic,” *The Living Message: Published Monthly by the Woman's Auxiliary to the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada* 43:2 (February 1932): 44, Anglican Church of Canada / General Synod Archives, Toronto.

supply ship, which would inevitably be carrying *Qallunaat* HBC officials: “I used to be so ashamed when the ship came. I felt inferior & stupid... .”⁵¹² She also confided to her *Land of the Good Shadows* coauthor, American writer Heluiz Chandler Washburne, that her mother, also of Inuit descent, experienced similar racial anxieties around the annual appearance of HBC representatives. According to Washburne, Ford confided to her that “when the ship came in, her father was always glad to see it and talk with the sailors and the captain. But her mother always seemed to shrink into a shell. Looking back on it, Anauta thinks her mother must have felt inferior to her husband, not being one of his people.”⁵¹³ It is important to note that Mina Hubbard’s visit at Nachvak in 1905 occurred during this time of the year when Ford felt insecure about her Inuit heritage. It is possible that Hubbard’s perception of Ford as a white woman was the result of deliberate choices made by Elizabeth regarding her personal presentation during a time of increased racial evaluation and surveillance.

The Hubbard and Wallace expeditions occurred during a period of intense surveillance for Elizabeth Ford and for other members of the Ford family. Adhering to the generic conventions of travel writing, the explorers and their retinues made assessments of the customs and physical traits of the various social groups they encountered, and came to a number of widely divergent conclusions regarding the Fords’ racial origins. These assessments appeared in texts intended for private as well as public consumption. From the historians’ perspective, the expedition journals and published travel narratives produced around these early-twentieth-century expeditions offer insight into how race could be

⁵¹² Anauta to Vilhjalmur Stefansson 30 August 1940, Mss-196 box 49, folder 5, VSC.

⁵¹³ Heluiz Chandler Washburne to Vilhjalmur Stefansson 30 August 1940, Stefansson Mss-196 Box 51, Folder 32, VSC.

performed and variously perceived, as well as how travellers' blunt, *a priori* instruments of racial categorization failed to capture the complex cultural ecology of Settler life on the Labrador and Ungava coasts at this time. Their writings also illuminate how Elizabeth Ford came of age learning that ethnicity, or membership in a particular racial group, was something that could be performed and evaluated in different ways in different social and geographical situations. In her next phase of life, Ford would import this sensibility to the United States, and she would use it to her advantage.

4.2 “Mrs. Ford” of Twillingate, “Mrs. Blackmore” of Indianapolis, 1906-1920

The death of Elizabeth Ford's first husband propelled her relocation to *Qallunaat* space and her confrontation with regimes of racial difference that were distinct from those she had grown up with in the Eastern Arctic. On August 18, 1913, while out duck hunting near the HBC's Cape Wolstenholme trading post, William R. Ford's boat capsized and he drowned.⁵¹⁴ Searches were conducted, his body was never recovered.⁵¹⁵ In her semi-fictionalized autobiography, *Land of the Good Shadows* (1940), Ford describes the dreamlike surrealism of her husband's death as a waking “nightmare.”⁵¹⁶ She also recalls her anxieties over her children's future and security without their father's income.⁵¹⁷

HBC records show that Elizabeth Ford was indeed in a precarious financial position after William's death. HBC district manager Ralph Parsons arrived at Wolstenholme early in September, just days after the drowning. He wrote to company authorities in London,

⁵¹⁴ Wolstenholme Post Journals, B. 368/a/3, 18 August 1913, HBCA.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21 August 1913.

⁵¹⁶ Anauta and Washburne, *Land of the Good Shadows*, 233.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 234.

requesting an allowance for Elizabeth, who, he observed, was “left in rather unfortunate circumstances.”⁵¹⁸ He also requested, on Elizabeth’s behalf, that William’s savings, amounting to roughly £315, be transferred to the Bank of Montreal in St. John’s for her to collect. In order to communicate the urgency of the situation, Parsons made it clear that these funds were “the only means of support the widow has.”⁵¹⁹ At Parsons’ behest, the company also paid for Elizabeth Ford’s passage, along with her children, to Cartwright via the company supply ship, the *Pelican*, and then by mail boat to St. John’s, where she arrived late in the autumn of 1913.⁵²⁰

Land of the Good Shadows suggests that Ford considered her passage from Labrador to Newfoundland to be a threshold moment in her life: her arrival in Newfoundland marks the beginning of the third section of the book, entitled, “Anauta Looks At Our World.”⁵²¹ The fact that she marked her departure from the Hudson Strait region as a movement into another world, and as the moment in which one segment of her life concluded (section two is entitled “Wife and Widow”) and another began, is indicative of the extent to which her new life in Newfoundland represented a break with her past.⁵²² Ford’s narrated experience of Newfoundland, where “food and clothes were bought in stores; [and] houses were already built,” with running water and electricity, anticipates on a smaller scale her forthcoming confrontation with the height of modern industrial consumer society upon her final relocation to the United States.⁵²³ “Our World” is clearly

⁵¹⁸ Ralph Parsons, 8 September 1913, Wolstenholme Correspondence – Outward, B.368/b/2, HBCA.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵²¹ Anauta and Washburne, *Land of the Good Shadows*, 236.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, 114.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, 261.

intended to signify the social and material context inhabited by Ford's imagined audience of American readers. In *Land of the Good Shadows*, Newfoundland functions as a synecdoche for North American modernity writ large, and the differences between life on the island and life in the Eastern Arctic are likely heightened for dramatic effect. In one of the first scenes set in St. John's, for example, her sister-in-law instructs her to begin using her English name, "Mrs. Ford," instead of "Anauta," as people would not understand that "where she came from people had only one name ... and did not use Mr., or Mrs., or Miss."⁵²⁴ We know, however, that Elizabeth did not begin to refer to herself as Anauta, in public, at least, until she was living in Indianapolis.⁵²⁵

Ford lived in St. John's for some time with her sisters-in-law Elizabeth Anne Watson and Susan Decker, and gave birth to her third daughter with William shortly after her arrival. The Ford family genealogy, written by Elizabeth Ford's daughter, Mary Buckner, contends that Elizabeth supported her family by running a hotel for HBC agents and sailing masters in Twillingate, Newfoundland.⁵²⁶ Today, the building identified by Buckner as the "Ford Hotel" is registered with the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador as having been built sometime between 1850 and 1880. The Foundation reports that the building was purchased by Elizabeth's eldest brother, Henry Thomas Ford,

⁵²⁴ Ibid., 254.

⁵²⁵ Her father George refers to her "Lizzie," in the George River post journals, while Mina Hubbard identifies her as "Miss F." in her diary. Wilfred Grenfell recalls that she used to be called "Betty." Wilfred Grenfell to Elizabeth Ford (Blackmore), 2 February 1940, in Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 121.

⁵²⁶ Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 47. Today the property that Buckner designates the "Ford Hotel," known as Loveridge House, is recognized as one of the oldest private dwellings in Twillingate.

in 1915, and that he ran a photography studio there as well as operating an inn, which Elizabeth managed.⁵²⁷

In a remarkable echo of Mina Hubbard's biography, who met her future mother-in-law at a hotel in England in 1907, the Ford Hotel was situated next door to the home of Isabella Blackmore, mother of Henry Blackmore, the man who would eventually become Elizabeth Ford's second husband.⁵²⁸ Aside from the presumed interventions of Isabella Blackmore, it is unclear how the relationship between Henry and Elizabeth developed. Henry "Harry" Blackmore was born into a Twillingate fishing family in 1880.⁵²⁹ His work in the sheet metal industry took him away from Newfoundland as a young adult, and by 1916 he had opened his own sheet metal and roofing business in Indianapolis. In 1919, Isabella moved to Indiana to live with her son. Elizabeth Ford and her children followed shortly thereafter, and Harry and Elizabeth were married there on 27 April 1920.⁵³⁰

At this moment in her life, Ford opted to identify, for official purposes, at least, as white. Upon her arrival in the United States at Detroit, Ford applied for entry to the country as the English Canadian "Sarah Ford," boarding house keeper.⁵³¹ After her marriage to

⁵²⁷ "Loveridge House Registered Heritage Structure," Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, <https://heritagefoundation.ca/heritage-property/loveridge-house-registered-heritage-structure/>.

⁵²⁸ Hart, "Finding Her Way," 359. Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 135.

⁵²⁹ Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 143, 135.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, 135-136. Indiana, Marriage Index, 1800-1941, *Ancestry.com* <https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=5059&h=973352&ssrc=pt&tid=4314195&pid=132021569435&usePUB=true>.

⁵³¹ US Department of Labor, *Manifest of Alien Passengers Applying for Admission*, 1920, port of Detroit, sheet no. 12, *Ancestry.com*. Ford's full name was Sarah Elizabeth Ford, but she went by Elizabeth or Lizzie. Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 8.

Blackmore, Ford registered as “W” for white on her children’s birth certificates.⁵³² These documents signify that Ford’s relocation to the United States meant her immersion in a new racial regime that made little room, at popular or administrative levels, for the kind of complex, hybrid Indigenous and European identities that had developed around North America’s northern fur trade. Indiana’s miscegenation laws, prohibiting interracial marriages between white and non-white citizens, were not finally repealed until 1965.⁵³³ The application of these laws required that family documents, including marriage licenses and birth certificates, included sections where applicants were to indicate their “Color or Race.”⁵³⁴ As Peggy Pascoe observes, the pervasiveness of miscegenation legislation across the United States meant that the state administration of people’s intimate lives represented one of the primary sites for the development of legal and common sense definitions of race between the American Civil War and the civil rights movement of the 1960s.⁵³⁵ In official contexts, citizens’ racial identities were defined in binarized terms, as they were forced to register themselves as either white or non-white.

As a white-passing woman newly arrived in the United States, Ford was able, for a time, to avail herself of the “wages of whiteness” afforded to white working-class Americans through her marriage to Harry Blackmore.⁵³⁶ As a construction contractor and

⁵³² US Vital Statistics, Certificate of Birth for Mary Ford Blackmore, 3 February 1921, Indianapolis, Indiana Board of Health, *Ancestry.com*. US Vital Statistics, Certificate of Birth for Betty Eileen Blackmore, 21 February 1925, Indianapolis, Indiana Board of Health, *Ancestry.com*.

⁵³³ Thomas P. Monahan, “Marriage across Racial Lines in Indiana,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 35:4 (1973): 633, doi: 10.2307/350876.

⁵³⁴ US Vital Statistics, Certificate of Birth for Betty Eileen Blackmore.

⁵³⁵ Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 2.

⁵³⁶ David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* [1991] (London and New York: Verso, 1999).

small business owner, Harry Blackmore straddled the line between working- and middle-class income and lifestyle. The marriage likely afforded Elizabeth and her children a degree of stability and financial security that they had not enjoyed in Twillingate. In *Land of the Good Shadows*, Elizabeth suggests that her decision to marry was motivated by exactly these practical concerns. Speaking of Blackmore, Ford writes: “He needed her, and she needed him. Would it not be better for both of them if they were married?”⁵³⁷ In this regard, their marriage was typical of many relationships in America during the interwar period, which often were based in social and economic partnerships, rather than romance and sexual attraction.⁵³⁸

Harry and Elizabeth had three daughters, two of whom died in infancy. Buckner speculates that the stress associated with their children’s deaths ultimately led the couple to divorce.⁵³⁹ Although the date of their separation is not specified, census data suggests that it occurred sometime between 1930 and 1937. The national census for 1930 shows that, as of April 1 of that year, the couple were still married, living in a rented home in Indianapolis.⁵⁴⁰ By 1937, an Indianapolis city directory shows Elizabeth with a new husband, Ward Adams, a blue-collar worker from Missouri.⁵⁴¹ While the 1930 census

⁵³⁷ Washburne and Anauta, *Land of the Good Shadows*, 279.

⁵³⁸ Susan Porter Benson, *Household Accounts: Working-Class Family Economies in the Interwar United States* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2007), 17.

⁵³⁹ Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 136.

⁵⁴⁰ United States Census Bureau, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Population Schedule*, Indianapolis City, Marion, Indiana, district no. 49-438, sheet no. 5A, *Ancestry.com*.

⁵⁴¹. *United States City Directories, 1822-1995*, Indianapolis, Indiana, City Directory, 1937, page 109, *Ancestry.com*.
[https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/2469/11592234?pid=639445307&backurl=https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?viewrecord%3D1%26r%3dan%26db%3DUSDirectories%26indiv%3Dtry%2](https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/2469/11592234?pid=639445307&backurl=https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?viewrecord%3D1%26r%3Dan%26db%3DUSDirectories%26indiv%3Dtry%2)

showed Elizabeth as having no occupation, by 1940 she is identified as an “educational lecturer.”⁵⁴²

The 1930s therefore represented another critical juncture in Elizabeth Ford’s life: as a sometimes-single mother, Ford worked to earn an income in Depression-era Indianapolis, a city that required tactics of survival from its inhabitants no less than had Ford’s previous Arctic home. As a former Arctic resident now residing in the United States, Ford was able to capitalize upon two popular forms of performance in order to earn a living. On the one hand, middle-class audiences’ appetite for demonstrations of “authentic Indian” modes of life offered Indigenous women in North America and Britain in the early twentieth century, like E. Pauline Johnson, Ethel Brant Monture, Bernice Loft, and Esther Deer, the opportunity to work by theatricalizing their ethnic identities.⁵⁴³ These acts featured elaborate “tribal” costumes, dances, recitals, and historical re-enactments that typically conformed to white stereotypes locating authentic “Indianness” in a primitive, albeit simpler and romantic, premodern past.⁵⁴⁴ On the other hand, Ford also had recourse to the popular market for hired lectures regarding Arctic life and geography, a commodified form of Arctic knowledge production typically performed by white male (and occasionally

[6h%3D639445307&treeid=&personid=&hintid=&usePUB=true&usePUBJs=true&_ga=2.200961710.102566843.1563382538-1529729092.1563382538](https://www.ancestry.com/indianapolis-marion-indiana-district-no-96-54-sheet-no-6b).

⁵⁴² United States Census Bureau, *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Population Schedule*, Indianapolis, Marion, Indiana, district no. 96-54, sheet no. 6B, *Ancestry.com*.

⁵⁴³ On Johnson, see Morgan, “A Wigwam to Westminster,” 319-341; Morgan, *Travellers Through Empire*, 206-234; Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson, “Championing the Native: E. Pauline Johnson Rejects the Squaw,” in *Contact Zones*, 47-66; Strong-Boag and Gerson, *Paddling Her Own Canoe*; Elissa Zellinger, “E. Pauline Johnson’s Poetic Acts,” *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture* 65:2 (2019): 331-380, doi: [10.1353/esq.2019.0008](https://doi.org/10.1353/esq.2019.0008). On Bernice Loft and Ethel Brant Monture, see Morgan, “Performing for ‘Imperial Eyes,’” 67-89. On Esther Deer and Molly Nelson, see Phillips, “Performing the Native Woman,” 26-49.

⁵⁴⁴ Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, 35-36.

female) explorers.⁵⁴⁵ In performing Arctic knowledgeability as an Indigenous woman Ford's public persona disrupted orthodox understandings of expertise in the period's culture of Arctic exploration that arrogated to white explorers the virtually exclusive privilege of "knowing" and defining Inuit and Arctic life.

Elizabeth Ford's Anauta persona did not emerge fully formed at the time of her first recorded public appearance, however. Like other contributors to the exploratory culture of the era, Ford struggled to determine which presentation of herself, coupled with what kinds of stories she told about her Arctic experiences, would appear most authentic and credible to her popular and scientific audiences. Tina Adcock has developed a framework for evaluating the epistemological weight accorded to the findings and beliefs of the wide range of actors involved in cultures of Arctic exploration. According to Adcock, different communities of interest – from state agencies to popular audiences – evaluated the authenticity of Arctic actors' testimony, which I take to include public appearances and performances, on the basis of "differently weighted combinations of *experience*, *expertise*, and *embodiment*."⁵⁴⁶ Experience, in Adcock's framework, refers specifically to "the perceptual action of witnessing or observation, acclaimed on epistemological grounds of empiricism."⁵⁴⁷ According to the shifting metrics of various interest groups, "expertise" could be equated with formal academic training, employment with a government agency, or simply prolonged and varied first-hand experiences with Arctic contexts. Embodiment, for Adcock, refers to the different ways that a "knowing body" could be physically present

⁵⁴⁵ Arctic lectures could be lucrative. Robert Peary, for example, paid for the expenses associated with his Arctic expeditions using, at least in part, the proceeds from his American lecture tours. Dick, *Muskox Land*, 298.

⁵⁴⁶ Adcock, "Toward an Early Twentieth-Century Culture," 128.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

in Northern spaces.⁵⁴⁸ Physical proximity, as well as the dangers or hardships inflicted on the body, were important variables in embodied knowledge of the North. Adcock's framework can be productively used to interpret the various permutations of Elizabeth's Ford's public appearances before her persona stabilized around the publication of her autobiography in 1940. Throughout the 1930s, Ford experimented with differently weighted combinations of expertise, experience, and embodiment until she ultimately developed her winning formula as "Anauta, the only Eskimo Woman on the American Lecture Platform."⁵⁴⁹

4.3 Making Anauta of America, 1929-1940

The first documented instance of Elizabeth Ford appearing in public that I have been able to uncover comes from May 1929, when she provided an "accordion musical program" at Indianapolis' Baptist Christian Center. *The Indianapolis Star* described her as "a returned missionary from the land of the Eskimos ... who has translated several passages of the Bible into the language of the Eskimos."⁵⁵⁰ Later that year, Ford was invited back to perform at the Center as part of Indianapolis' Chautauqua week.⁵⁵¹ In so doing, Ford followed in the footsteps of popular Mohawk performer and poet E. Pauline Johnson, who participated in a Chautauqua tour across America in 1907.⁵⁵² Travelling lecture circuits

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁵⁴⁹ "Anauta, The Only Eskimo Woman on the American Platform," University of Iowa Libraries Online.

⁵⁵⁰ "Missionary Entertains at Christian Center," *The Indianapolis Star* 20 May 1929, 3. *Newspapers.com*

⁵⁵¹ "Chautauqua Presents Interesting Programs," *The Indianapolis Star* 29 August 1929, 9. *Newspapers.com*.

⁵⁵² Zellinger, "E. Pauline Johnson's Poetic Acts," 331.

known as “chautauquas” were part of a popular self-improvement and adult education movement of early-twentieth-century North America. Audiences payed a small admission price to attend lectures on pressing secular as well as theological topics of the day.⁵⁵³ The Christian content of Ford’s presentation, which included a recitation the Lord’s Prayer in Inuktitut, likely appealed to Chautauqua audiences, as the popular movement had its origins in the Chautauqua Institute, a Methodist educational summit established in New York State in 1874.⁵⁵⁴ The Christian and middle-class orientation of this Chautauqua audience would remain a constant throughout Ford’s career, as she was hired primarily to entertain women’s associations, church groups, school boards, and parent-teacher associations.⁵⁵⁵

Press coverage of these early performances suggests that her presentation as an Inuk woman developed over time, perhaps through experimentation with her early audiences. Throughout the early 1930s, she performed under the name “Mrs. Elizabeth Blackmore,” not Anauta, and, far from highlighting her Inuit ancestry, she appears to have actively concealed it: in an undated newspaper clipping, Ford is described as claiming “the

⁵⁵³ John C. Scott, “The Chautauqua Movement: Revolution in Popular Higher Education,” *The Journal of Higher Education* 70:4 (1999): 390, 395, doi: 10.2307/2649308. See also Andrew C. Riesler, *The Chautauqua Movement: Protestants, Progressives, and the Culture of Modern Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

⁵⁵⁴ Scott, “The Chautauqua Movement,” 390.

⁵⁵⁵ For example, Ford was hired to perform for the Women’s Business Club of the Friend’s Church in Indianapolis, the Indianapolis Business and Professional Women’s Club, the convocation ceremonies for an Indiana high school, South Bend’s Masonic temple, and even the annual dinner for an association of livestock breeders. *The Indianapolis Star* 20 March 1930, 4; “To Give Costume Talk on Baffin Land Life,” *The Indianapolis News* 9 January 1932, 3; “School Program Given at Flora,” *Lafayette Journal and Courier* [IN] 28 February 1934, 5; “Woman Will Tell of Arctic,” *South Bend Tribune* [IN] 8 February 1936, 12; “Farm Trophies are Awarded,” *Muncie Evening Press* [IN] 16 November 1940, 7, respectively. All articles from *Newspapers.com*.

distinction of having been further north than any other living white woman,” and is quoted as saying: ““I was the first white woman that the Eskimos had ever seen in some fur regions... .””⁵⁵⁶ She is continually described during these years as being “of English parentage,” the daughter of either missionaries or fur traders, who was born and grew to adulthood in the Far North.⁵⁵⁷ Ford presented herself as “a native of the Arctic regions,” if not Inuit, with a unique and prolonged experience of Northern environments and Northern societies.⁵⁵⁸ In performing as a white woman, the basis for her expertise on Northern topics therefore relied upon two factors other than racial identity: first, an atavistic connection to her Northern birthplace and, second, her prolonged exposure to and engagement with Inuit lifeways.

Ford’s narrative presented a feminized and family-oriented model of experience that nevertheless paralleled emergent practices of participant observation in anthropological fieldwork.⁵⁵⁹ Icelandic-Canadian explorer and anthropologist Vilhjalmur

⁵⁵⁶ “Lady of the Snows: Story of a Dream and Romance,” newspaper clipping in Buckner, *Descendants of John Ford*, 120.

⁵⁵⁷ “Fascinating Address Before P.E.O. Meeting.” *Kokomo Tribune* 13 June 1934, 3. *Newspapers.com* (accessed 16 July 2019). Articles where she appears as Mrs. Elizabeth Blackmore: “Baffin Land Native Gives Eskimo Talk,” *Greencastle Daily Banner*, 4 November 1931, 1. *Greencastle Daily Banner* 26 November 1931, 1. “Will Tell of Eskimos,” *Terre Haute Saturday Spectator* 28 November 1931, 9. “Psi Iota Xi,” *Hammond Times* 30 October 1934, 30. *NewspaperArchive*.

⁵⁵⁸ “Fascinating Address Before P.E.O. Meeting,” 3.

⁵⁵⁹ According to Henrika Kuklick, participant observers ““interact personally and socially with informants,’ ... and cannot maintain distinct private and work lives while doing research.” Henrika Kuklick, “Personal Equations: Reflections on the History of Fieldwork, With Special Reference to Sociocultural Anthropology,” *Isis* 102:1 (2011): 15, doi: 10.1086/658655. Vilhjalmur Stefansson’s Arctic fieldwork was roughly contemporaneous with the work of another anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski, who has been credited as a pioneer in the practice of participant observation in his research in the South Pacific. Pálsson, “The Intimate Arctic,” 416.

Stefansson also worked the Chautauqua circuits in the 1920s.⁵⁶⁰ He famously conducted his own research in Alaska and the Canadian Arctic between 1906 and 1918 by immersing himself in Inuit language, life and culture in order to understand the Arctic “‘from the inside,’ with the eyes of the Inuit themselves.” In his own words, the explorer-researcher must become “‘fur-clad from head to heel, an Eskimo to the skin.’”⁵⁶¹ If outsiders learned to adapt themselves to Inuit ways of being in and moving through Arctic environments, Stefansson argued, they would soon discover what he termed “the ‘friendly Arctic,’” where non-Indigenous persons could not only survive, but actually thrive.⁵⁶²

Stefansson’s immersion in Inuit life extended to the establishment of his own family in the Western Arctic: in 1910, Stefansson’s Inuit partner, Pannigabluk, gave birth to their son, Alex.⁵⁶³ Stefansson never acknowledged his spouse and son outside of the Arctic, and the secret of their existence was zealously guarded even after Stefansson’s death by his fellow Arctic veterans, including Canadian photographer Richard Finnie.⁵⁶⁴ While Stefansson advocated for explorers to become “an Eskimo to the skin,” the transformation was to be temporary and superficial: the permanent fusion of white and Inuit cultures, embodied by children of mixed descent like Alex Stefansson and Elizabeth Ford, blurred the racial boundaries between the knowing outsider and the native subject that the cultural and epistemic authority of white explorers rested upon.

As a researcher with training from an elite American institution like Harvard’s Peabody Museum, Stefansson’s persona as an Arctic authority enjoyed a patina of expertise

⁵⁶⁰ Pálsson, *Travelling Passions*, 184.

⁵⁶¹ Stefansson quoted in *Ibid.*, 82-83.

⁵⁶² Pálsson, “The Intimate Arctic,” 415.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, 428.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 416, 424-425.

to which Elizabeth Ford did not have access. It is possible that in order to compensate for her lack of official credentials, Ford began to claim a degree of experiential knowledge of Inuit life that *Qallunaat* like Stefansson could never hope to achieve. Beginning around 1934, Ford went beyond simply claiming that she was born in Inuit territory; newspapers began to report that she had in fact been raised in an Inuit community as virtually one of their own. She claimed that, despite her English ancestry, she had been adopted by an Inuit family as an infant and absorbed into Inuit society, becoming “more a member of [their] family than of her own. She lived the life of the Eskimos, spoke only their language... .”⁵⁶⁵ Ford’s Inuit adoption narrative emphasized the influence upbringing, environment and education in the formation of racial identity. As Martha Hodes and Tracy Teslow have observed, America’s “common sense” understandings of race encompassed culturalist as well as biological paradigms, making them nimble and malleable enough to adapt to a variety of settings.⁵⁶⁶

Winking at the idea of “going native” was not an unprecedented strategy of legitimation for non-Indigenous actors in describing their Arctic experiences. Chapter Six considers Marie Peary Stafford, daughter of polar explorers Robert and Josephine Peary, who was born in 1893 in Inughuit territory in Northwestern Greenland. Nicknamed “The Snowbaby” by the American press, Marie Peary published books, articles, and children’s

⁵⁶⁵ “Lecturer Tells of Her Life in Land of Baffin Eskimos,” *The Kokomo Tribune* 16 October 1934, 3, *Newspapers.com*.

⁵⁶⁶ Tracy Teslow, *Constructing Race: The Science of Bodies and Cultures in American Anthropology* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 10-12. Martha Hodes, “The Mercurial Nature and Abiding Power of Race: A Transnational Family Story,” *American Historical Review* 108:1 (2003): 84-85, doi: 10.1086/533046. On “common sense and community understandings” of race in America, see Ariela J. Gross, *What Blood Won’t Tell: A History of Race on Trial in America* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2008), 10.

stories throughout the 1930s and 1940s that described her Arctic childhood. While her writing was mostly regarded as semi-fictional, and was primarily intended for juvenile audiences, Peary's credibility as an authority on Greenland was such that, during the Second World War, she was invited to join the American Danish Greenland Commission, which managed America's military presence in Greenland during the German occupation of Denmark.⁵⁶⁷

In taking up a narrative of Inuit adoption, Elizabeth Ford began to reposition the locus of her authority on the Arctic from that of the experienced outside observer to the racial insider, a process that accelerated after 1934. By 1936, she still publicly identified as "Elizabeth Blackmore." Nevertheless, she declared Anauta to be her "real name," and started performing as Anauta with some frequency.⁵⁶⁸ In 1937, "Anauta" appeared on the radio programme *We the People*, featuring human interest stories from across America. Her segment was promoted as "the story of an Eskimo woman ... who was born and raised in an ice hut in the frozen north."⁵⁶⁹ While newspaper headlines from the early 1930s advertized Ford as a speaker *on* Arctic topics and Inuit life, by the end of the decade distinctions between speaker and subject were collapsed. As an Inuk performer, the content

⁵⁶⁷ Heymann et al., "Small State versus Superpower," 250.

⁵⁶⁸ Stanley A. Niles, "Woman Used to Igloo Life Finds It Monotonous Here," *South Bend Tribune* 11 February 1936, 10, *Newspapers.com*.

⁵⁶⁹ *Santa Ana Daily Evening Register* 18 November 1937, 4; program also advertised in *Racine Journal Times* 18 November 1937, 23, *NewspaperArchive*.



Figure 4.4: Photograph, Elizabeth Ford as Anauta, Decorah, Iowa, 1951
(Vilhjalmur Stefansson Correspondence, Box 74, Folder 6)

of Ford's lectures was no longer the sole attraction; American newspapers were intrigued by the simple fact that, as many editors put it, an "Eskimo Native Speaks."⁵⁷⁰ Standing on the lecture podium in furs as Anauta, Ford's racialized embodiment became part of the spectacle of her performances, and an important locus for her authority as a person with knowledge of the Arctic.

⁵⁷⁰ "Eskimo Native Speaks Sunday in Church Here," *Rushville Republican* 11 September 1946, 8. *Newspapers.com*.

The full title of Ford's autobiography, published as Anauta in 1940, is *Land of the Good Shadows: The Life Story of Anauta, an Eskimo Woman*.⁵⁷¹ By the time that *Land of the Good Shadows* was released, the narrative details surrounding Ford's Inuk persona were ironed out: Anauta had born to an English father and Inuk mother on the northern tip of Baffin Island; the precise date of her birth was unknown, according to her coauthor Heluiz Chandler Washburne, "because in her country the people kept no track of time."⁵⁷² Washburne reported that, at the time, the Baffin Island Inuit "were much less touched by white man's culture than were the Eskimos of Alaska, Labrador, and Greenland."⁵⁷³ In lectures, Ford elaborated that "while no missionaries have visited Baffinland," "the Eskimo inhabitants lead 'devout' lives" centered in a proto-Christian morality.⁵⁷⁴ She was born in the midst of an "Arctic blizzard" that claimed the life of one of the community's most esteemed hunters.⁵⁷⁵ According to "Eskimo custom," Anauta was named after the deceased man and raised by his mother, Oomiálik.⁵⁷⁶ Promotional material for Ford's lectures stated

⁵⁷¹ The publisher, the New York-based John Day Company, commissioned American artist Rockwell Kent to illustrate the book, which features a particularly striking cover image of a fur-clad Inuk woman standing on the shores of an iceberg-choked sea. Kent was himself a Northern traveller, and he was well known for his stylized renderings of Inughuit men and women that appeared in his own Greenland travel narrative, *Salamina* (1935). R. L. Duffus, "Love in Greenland's Icy Mountains," *The New York Times Book Review* 27 October 1935, 5, 18, *New York TimesMachine*.

⁵⁷² Washburne, introduction to *Land of the Good Shadows*, xiv.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁴ "Sycamore Woman's Club Meets: Enjoy Eskimo Woman's Talk," *The De Kalb Daily Chronicle* 9 February 1950, 6. Paul Dearing, "Native of Baffinland Believes Isolated Eskimos Eager to Receive Missionaries," *The Wichita Catholic Advance* 22 May 1942, 1. *Newspapers.com*.

⁵⁷⁵ Washburne and Anauta, *Land of the Good Shadows*, 3.

⁵⁷⁶ Joseph F. Dineen, "Anauta, Eskimo Author," *The Boston Daily Globe* 18 November 1941, 17; Jean Dietrich, "Baffin Island, Land of Igloos and Eskimos, Paradise for Women, Especially Brunettes," *The Dayton Journal Herald* 6 April 1951, 25. Articles from *Newspapers.com*.

that, under Oomiálik's guidance, Anauta "was raised as a nomadic Eskimo, hunting, trapping, singing, laughing, chewing skins for boot-making..."⁵⁷⁷ After Oomiálik's death, Anauta joined her birth parents, Yorgke and Alea, at their trading post in northern Labrador. There they arranged her marriage to a white trader named Uille. While Anauta was pregnant with their third child, Uille was killed by sharks after his canoe capsized in Ungava Bay.⁵⁷⁸ After the death of her husband, Anauta returned to the "nomadic way" of her people, traveling with her children by boat and by train to Newfoundland, Canada, Britain, and the United States, until she landed, quite by accident, in Indianapolis.⁵⁷⁹ If, as Adcock contends, the authenticity of one's Northern testimony rested upon differently weighted combinations of experience, expertise, and embodiment, then Ford apparently found a winning combination in the story of Anauta, the Baffin Island Inuk, because her public persona remained virtually unchanged in her public appearances for the next twenty-five years.⁵⁸⁰ Indeed, by 1951, Ford's correspondence with her publisher indicates that she

⁵⁷⁷ "Eskimo Woman, Anauta, is to be Guest Speaker for Dixon Clubwomen, Saturday," *Dixon Evening Telegraph* 21 January 1942, 3, *Newspapers.com*.

⁵⁷⁸ Washburne and Anauta, *Land of the Good Shadows*, 268.

⁵⁷⁹ Chesta Fulmer, "Eskimo Woman Defends Cleanliness of Race," *The Dayton Herald* 15 October 1941, 18, *Newspapers.com*.

⁵⁸⁰ Ford performed in venues outside of Indiana with increasing frequency after 1940. See, for example, "Eskimo Doesn't Court or Kiss Woman He Seeks, Teachers Meeting Told," *The Connellsville Daily Courier* [PA] 18 January 1946, 7; "Woman From Baffinland to Speak Tonight on Mission Chain Program," *Fort Myers News Press* [FL] 23 February 1951, 8; "Eskimo Woman to Give Talk to Eau Claire Women's Club," *Eau Claire Daily Telegram* [WI] 14 October 1955, n.p.; "Eskimo Woman Will Be Guest Speaker Here," *The Baytown Sun* [TX] 29 September 1963, 6; "Christian Eskimo to Conduct Services at Pine Grove Church," *Traverse City Record-Eagle* [MI] 23 October 1963, 13; *Newspapers.com*.

had legally changed her name to reflect her new professional identity: she requested that all future royalty cheques be made out to Anauta, rather than Elizabeth Blackmore.⁵⁸¹

In displacing the theatre of her Arctic experiences from Labrador to a fictionalized Baffin Island, Ford carved out a niche for herself within period's culture of exploration. Ford's writing and performances portrayed Baffin Island as a place untouched by the outside world, claiming that "no explorers, historians, archaeologists, adventurers, picture men, or missionaries had ever visited this land of the far, far North."⁵⁸² Of course, by the middle of the twentieth century, Baffin Islanders had been in sustained contact with non-Indigenous visitors, including whalers, fur traders, missionaries, and representatives of the Canadian state for well over one hundred years.⁵⁸³ What is particularly ironic is that Ford was herself participant in yet another *Qallunaat* incursion on the island in the form of the trading posts of the HBC. Having lived on Baffin Island with William, Ford herself was well acquainted with Baffin Island's connections to other parts of the globe and to global

⁵⁸¹ Richard Walsh Jr. to Anne Smith, 21 August 1951, box 285, folder 6, Editorial Correspondence, C0123 Archives of John Day Company, Princeton University Library, New Jersey.

⁵⁸² "Eskimo Woman to Speak at Oakland City and Mackey," *Princeton Daily Clarion* [IN] 28 April 1953, 2, *Newspapers.com*.

⁵⁸³ Goldring, "Inuit Economic Responses to Euro-American Contacts," 146-172. For histories of the period of intensive whaling on Baffin Island in the second half of the nineteenth century, see Eber, *When the Whalers Were Up North*; Ross, *Arctic Whalers Icy Seas*; Routledge, *Do You See Ice?*; Nicholas Whitman, "Technology and Vision: Factors Shaping Nineteenth-Century Arctic Photography," in *Imaging the Arctic*, 29-35. For discussion of missionary activities on the island, see Frédéric B. Laugrand, Jarich G. Oosten, "Inuit Women in the Process of the Conversion to Christianity in the Canadian Eastern Arctic, 1894-1945," *Polar Record* 51:260 (2015): 513-529, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1017/S003224741400062X>; Laugrand, Oosten and Trudel, eds., *Apostle to the Inuit*. The history of official Canadian presence on Baffin Island, in the form of federally-sponsored excursions and police detachments, can be found in Burant, "Using Photography to Assert Canadian Sovereignty in the Arctic," in *Imaging the Arctic*, 76-87; Grant, *Arctic Justice*; Stern, "The History of Canadian Arctic Photography," in *Imaging the Arctic*, 46-52.

economies. It also seems likely that Elizabeth Ford had some degree of familiarity with Baffin Inuit culture. The fact that she was aware, for example, of the differences between Inuit dialects in Baffin Island and Labrador is shown in her correspondence with the Anglican missionary and lexicographer Edmund James Peck in 1915. She provided Peck, who established the first Anglican Mission on Baffin Island at Umanarjuaq (Blackhead Island) in 1894, with a list of Inuit vocabulary with “the Labrador word on one side & the Baffin Land opposite.”⁵⁸⁴

Ford’s fictionalized Baffin Island, unseen (and therefore unstudied) by the typical Arctic knowledge-bearers, functioned as an epistemological no-man’s land, ripe for her interpretation. An Indiana paper’s summary of one of Ford’s lectures from 1935 shows that she had been thinking for some time about the strategic implications of situating herself on Baffin Island, a geographical context relatively unknown to her American audiences. She told her Indiana audience that “Baffin Land has never been mentioned in all the stories written about the Eskimos. Much has been told of Greenland and Alaska, but Baffin Land is not known, as no white man ever settled there.”⁵⁸⁵ In representing herself as not just

⁵⁸⁴ Ford quoted in Brown, “Edmund Peck,” 282. See also Laugrand, Oosten and Trudel, “The Founding of an Anglican Mission on Baffin Island,” 3.

⁵⁸⁵ Mildred Nottingham, “Federate Clubs of Delaware County,” *The Muncie Sunday Star* [IN] 14 February 1935, 6. Other lectures where Ford described Baffin Island in similar terms: “Baffin Land is as far north as people live. Beyond that is waste, and these are the natural Eskimos and have not been changed by the whites, like the Eskimos of Greenland and Alaska.” Dineen, “Anauta, Eskimo Author,” 17. In a Kansas paper from 1942, Ford is described as “the first of her tribe ever to leave Baffinland.” Dearing, “Native of Baffinland Believes Isolated Eskimos Eager to Receive Missionaries,” 1. Ford did occasionally acknowledge that the island was visited by an English supply ship once per year, but declared that “Her people thought the sailors were ... the only people outside of themselves living on the earth.” Walter Bentz, “Life of Eskimo Told,” *Fort Lauderdale News* 7 February 1945, 3. For other examples see “Tells of Travels,” *Chicago Tribune* 19 April 1947, 4. All articles from *Newspapers.com*.

any Inuk woman, but an Inuk from an unknown Baffin Island, Ford was able to claim possession of a body experiential knowledge that, by definition, no other Arctic actor could claim.

In addition to claiming privileged knowledge of Baffin Island, Ford's Anauta persona embodied a racialized expertise that *Qallunaat* authorities like Mina Hubbard and Vilhjalmur Stefansson could not. Ford's indigenized performance of Arctic knowledgability therefore benefitted from the privileged status allotted to embodied experience in exploratory hierarchies of knowledge, while also disrupting the raced and gendered assumptions underpinning these ideas of embodiment. Adcock rightly argues that the white male body represents "the oldest locus of authority" within empirical sciences and knowledge systems.⁵⁸⁶ Explorers like Stefansson, who transported their bodies to Arctic environments in order to participate in corporeal witnessing, even attempted to appropriate Inuit knowledge and experience by becoming "an Eskimo to the skin" for a time. As Anauta, Ford's stage presence instantiated a form of insider knowledge of the Arctic that she was able to transport southward and actually perform for *Qallunaat* audiences. Elizabeth Ford's performance of expertise, centered around in her on-stage embodiment as an Inuk woman, represented an Indigenous knowledge of the Arctic that non-Indigenous travellers could only temporarily inhabit.

The bases on which Ford justified her claims to knowledge could not be readily reconciled with those forms of expertise recognized by Eurocentric institutions like universities, churches and scientific associations, and centered around the embodied experiences of the white male explorer. Nevertheless, Ford was subject to the social

⁵⁸⁶ Adcock, "Towards a Twentieth-Century Culture," 129.

dimensions of exploratory science and knowledge production as much as any other Arctic actor. Her ability to produce knowledge about the North depended upon her acceptance by her audience, which in turn depended upon her public affiliations with and endorsements from other established Arctic authorities and institutions. The final section of this chapter examines Ford's efforts to coax Vilhjalmur Stefansson to write an introduction for her autobiography in the months leading up to *Land of the Good Shadows*' publication in order to illuminate the complex social dimensions and negotiations surrounding the production of knowledge about the Canadian North. Stefansson's reluctance to publicly affiliate himself with Ford because he believed her performance of race to be inauthentic, also illuminates the fundamental fragility of Arctic knowledge and authority.

4.4 The Friendly Arctic: The Social Dimensions of Authorship and Northern Authority

Arctic exploration emerged in Britain and North America in the second half of the nineteenth century as a field of knowledge and a profession deeply rooted in masculine associative culture.⁵⁸⁷ Titanic figures of Northern exploration like Robert Peary depended upon public endorsements from professional and scientific societies, such as Britain's RGS, and New York's Peary Arctic Club in order to legitimize their undertakings as properly scientific. Polar historians have identified the controversy surrounding the "discovery" of the North Pole as a paradigm example of the importance of social endorsement in the production of exploratory knowledge. In 1909, both Robert Peary and Frederick Cook claimed to have been the first reach the North Pole. The "objective"

⁵⁸⁷ Craciun, *Writing Arctic Disaster*, 3.

evidence both men provided to support their claims, including field notebooks, photographs, maps, and latitudinal measurements, all of which were produced by Cook and Peary in the field, absent any other authenticating (white) witnesses, was not sufficient to determine who held the rights of discovery on any kind of empirical or scientific basis.⁵⁸⁸ Lisa Bloom, Michael Robinson, and Lyle Dick have all persuasively argued that it was actually public support for Peary offered by powerful individuals like President Theodore Roosevelt and institutions like the National Geographic Society and the American Museum of Natural History that led to Peary's lionization as the rightful discoverer of the Pole.⁵⁸⁹

The production of knowledge "in the field" itself was also, as Bloom and Susan Kaplan have noted, profoundly social, as outsiders who styled themselves as Northern experts depended upon the expertise and material contributions of Inuit expedition members.⁵⁹⁰ And yet, Bloom observes that the complexities of relations between Inuit and explorers were continually erased from popular narratives of Northern exploration in the name of maintaining a veneer of scientific objectivity:

Polar explorers and their established network of publications and clubs identified polar exploration as an intrinsically pure field of knowledge, effacing effectively the political dealings with entire Eskimo villages, and the gender and race relations that informed the writings of their texts.⁵⁹¹

While exploratory associations and scientific institutions functioned as mutually authorizing social networks for Northern actors, they also colluded in minimizing the visibility of precisely these associational mechanisms for scientific knowledge production. The tension between the ideal of scientific objectivity and the realities of social

⁵⁸⁸ Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible*, 134. Dick, "The Men of Prominence," 5.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid. See also Bloom, *Gender on Ice*, 17-32.

⁵⁹⁰ Kaplan, introduction to *North by Degree*, xii.

⁵⁹¹ Bloom, *Gender on Ice*, 3.

authorisation embedded in exploratory science and the production of knowledge about the North played out in the flurry of correspondence produced around the publication of Elizabeth Ford's autobiography, and particularly in the documented interactions between Ford, her co-author Heluiz Chandler Washburne, and Vilhjalmur Stefansson.

According to the introduction to *Land of the Good Shadows*, Ford met her future co-author through Heluiz's husband, Carleton Washburne, while lecturing in their hometown in Illinois. Heluiz felt that "Anauta's" story, as told in her lectures, should be written down and, as the friendship between the two women progressed, they began to collaborate on a manuscript.⁵⁹² It was during this period of collaboration that Elizabeth Ford met Stefansson at the Washburne home in 1938.⁵⁹³ Ford and Stefansson struck up a friendly correspondence, centered around the exchange of information from their respective domains of expertise. Stefansson sent Ford and Washburne copies of his books, presumably to help with their own Arctic writing.⁵⁹⁴ In return, Ford assisted with Stefansson's efforts to correct the English translations of Inuktitut words and phrases collected by Martin Frobisher on Baffin Island in 1576.⁵⁹⁵ As Stefansson's personal Arctic experience was centered in areas West of the Hudson Bay, Ford was also able to provide him with valuable insights into the dialect and beliefs of Inuit communities in the Eastern Arctic.⁵⁹⁶ Their private collaborations between 1938 and early 1940 challenge popular

⁵⁹² Washburne, introduction to *Land of the Good Shadows*, xii-xiv.

⁵⁹³ Heluiz Chandler Washburne to Vilhjalmur Stefansson 26 November 1938[?], Mss-196, box 45 folder 9, VSC.

⁵⁹⁴ Anauta (Elizabeth Blackmore) to Vilhjalmur Stefansson 23 November 1938, Mss-196, box 42, folder 25, VSC.

⁵⁹⁵ Vilhjalmur Stefansson to Elizabeth Blackmore, 5 December 1938, Mss-196, box 42, folder 25, VSC.

⁵⁹⁶ Elizabeth Blackmore (Anauta) to Vilhjalmur Stefansson 21 December 1938, Mss-196, box 42, folder 25, VSC. Elizabeth Blackmore to Vilhjalmur Stefansson 8 February 1939,

visions of Northern knowledge production as an enterprise conducted by explorers operating in splendid isolation on Arctic ice-fields. The friendly tenor of their correspondence also demonstrates how science and socialisation were mutually reinforcing, as exchanges of information helped to consolidate relationships between Arctic actors.

Stefansson offered to read the manuscript of *Land of the Good Shadows*. As an explorer and anthropologist with established credentials as an authority on Northern topics, Washburne gave him editorial *carte blanche*, writing “I shall be most grateful for any suggestions you may give me, as I want to make this book authentic – both ‘inside true and outside true.’”⁵⁹⁷ Ford, for her part, told Stefansson that she was “more anxious for your approval than anyone else.”⁵⁹⁸ Washburne also approached Stefansson about the possibility of his writing the introduction to the book, asking if he would provide “at least a brief forward to indicate that you know and respect Anauta, and that you have read the manuscript and found the descriptions of the Eskimo customs concordant with your own studies and observations.”⁵⁹⁹ The wording of Washburne’s request shows her awareness that Stefansson’s public endorsement of the text would help to situate *Land of the Good Shadows* within the literary and scientific canon of “authentic” Arctic writing.

From Ford and Washburne’s perspective, the book’s association with virtually any publicly recognized Arctic expert would help to imbue their work with an aura of legitimacy. Among the famous Northern travellers of their acquaintance, who included

17 October 1939, and 28 December 1939, Mss-196, box 45 folder 21, VSC. Anauta to Vilhjalmur Stefansson 9 January 1940 and 4 April 1940, Mss-196, box 49, folder 5, VSC.

⁵⁹⁷ Washburne to Stefansson 26 November 1938[?], VSC.

⁵⁹⁸ Anauta to Stefansson 30 August 1940, VSC.

⁵⁹⁹ Washburne to Stefansson, 30 August 1940, VSC.

Wilfred Grenfell and the Reverend Edmund Peck, Stefansson was a particularly ideal candidate to write the introduction. Stefansson's credentials as an Arctic explorer had been established around his purported "discovery" of an Inuit community on Victoria Island in 1910 who "looked 'like sunburned, but naturally fair Scandinavians.'"⁶⁰⁰ Stefansson himself acknowledged this fact, writing, "in so far as I am known at all, I am known as the discoverer of the 'Blond' Eskimos."⁶⁰¹ Ford likely benefitted from the possibilities opened up by Stefansson in the public consciousness of Inuit who could pass as white in order to explain her own apparently Caucasian appearance. Reporters and editors who described Ford as being one of these "white Eskimos" likely took their cue from Ford herself.⁶⁰² In her lectures and promotional materials, Ford reported that the Inuit of Baffin Island were "white and do not at all resemble Alaskan Eskimos."⁶⁰³ An article describing one of Ford's addresses in Miami in 1951 shows that she even went so far as to suggest that these fairer Baffin Islanders represented the racially pure, and therefore most authentic, Inuit type: "To meet Anauta is an education. First one learns that Baffinlanders are pure Eskimos, with fair

⁶⁰⁰ Stefansson quoted in Michael F. Robinson, *The Lost White Tribe: Explorers, Scientists, and the Theory that Changed a Continent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 162.

⁶⁰¹ Vilhjalmur Stefansson, *Adventures in Error* (New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1936), 76.

⁶⁰² Joyce Thompson, "Eskimo Tells Adventures," *The Decatur Daily Review* 9 January 1946, 16; "White Eskimo J.M.U. Speaker," *Decatur Saturday Herald and Review* 22 July 1951, 10. Articles from *Newspapers.com*.

⁶⁰³ Lee Johnson, "Hear Eskimo Speaker," *The Munster Times* 12 March 1948, n.p., *Newspapers.com*. Will J. McEwan, "The Story of Anauta," 1942, n.p., RCC, University of Iowa Digital Library, https://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/islandora/object/ui%3Atc_15326_15324. According to McEwan, "[t]he Eskimos of Baffin-Land are just about as different from the Alaskan Eskimo as the average American is different from the Eskimo of Alaska. (ANAUTA is white, and there is considerable discussion among anthropologists as to the real origin of the Eskimos of Baffin-Land. ANAUTA has a strain of English in her blood.) Baffin-Land is as far from Alaska as we are."

skin and not a trace of slanted eyes. In Alaska, she says, the Eskimos have some Mongolian characteristics; not in Baffinland.”⁶⁰⁴ Echoing Ford’s assessment, newspaper reviews of Anauta’s performances described the Baffin Island Inuit as “pure Eskimos.”⁶⁰⁵ Ford was likely aware that having the introduction to her book written by Stefansson, discoverer of the “Blond Eskimo,” would finally put to rest any lingering doubts as to the authenticity of her Inuit identity on the basis of her physical appearance.

While securing Stefansson’s endorsement would have represented a significant coup for Ford’s career, publicizing their relationship may have damaged Stefansson’s own public image. By 1940, Stefansson had cultivated a reputation as an arbiter of authenticity – with a nose for fraud and humbugger – when it came to Arctic topics. His lectures and writings strove, in the words of his biographer, Gísli Pálsson, to “correct simple clichés concerning [Inuit] life, eradicate Western prejudices about them, and respond to all sorts of misconceptions concerning the hazards of the Arctic.”⁶⁰⁶ It appears that Washburne was well aware of Stefansson’s reputation for, in her own words, his “completely objective approach and well-known scholarship,” at the time that she asked him to write the introduction.⁶⁰⁷ In 1936, Stefansson published *Adventures in Error*, a brief treatise on the empirical basis of Arctic knowledge production that offered a scathing critique of the “large body of false testimony” propagated by explorers, such as Knud Rasmussen, and the social scientists, particularly Franz Boas, who based their research on explorers’ reports.⁶⁰⁸ He

⁶⁰⁴ Connie Gee, “Eskimo Woman Says Many People Forget to be Kind,” *The Miami News* 5 February 1951, 7A, *Newspapers.com*.

⁶⁰⁵ Dineen, “Anauta, Eskimo Author,” 17. “Eskimo Woman Author Tells Teachers of Arctic Home,” *The Greenville Record Argus*, 16 October 1953, 6, *Newspapers.com*.

⁶⁰⁶ Pálsson, *Travelling Passions*, 204.

⁶⁰⁷ Washburne to Stefansson, 30 August 1940, VSC.

⁶⁰⁸ Stefansson, *Adventures in Error*, 93.

also criticized the credulity of those who consumed Arctic popular culture, and their willingness to believe falsehoods and inaccuracies so long as they “supported the fashion of the time or even the moral system of the community.”⁶⁰⁹ Speaking of North American schools, Stefansson stated that false depictions of the Inuit as a simple, happy people served a “moral purpose. The gruesome view of their land and life makes us better contented with ours; we see from their happiness under conditions of misery that really it isn’t so bad, in comparison, to be poor a jobless down here.”⁶¹⁰

Stefansson’s efforts to position himself as a kind of divining rod for Arctic frauds is best illustrated in his chapter on Ólöf Krarer, an Icelandic woman who immigrated to the United States and made a living on the Chautauqua circuit in the late nineteenth century by “exhibiting as an Eskimo.”⁶¹¹ Warming to his theme on the gullibility of popular audiences, Stefansson wrote: “Thus through half a century, nearly forty years of which were active, did Ólöf Krarer, blond Nordic dwarf who may never have seen an Eskimo in her life, continue to entertain and impress those who saw her and those who read about her.”⁶¹² Out of his own sense of obligation to “that small minority who seek the facts,” Stefansson’s *Adventures in Error* marshals the “testimonies, documents, and explanatory theories” that offered definitive proof of Krarer’s true ethnic origins.⁶¹³ While the American public could be easily duped, Stefansson implied that he, who had lived in “intimate” contact with the Inuit over a period of years, could discern the difference between an “authentic” and a false

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., 244.

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 245. Pálsson, *Travelling Passions*, 204-205.

⁶¹² Stefansson, *Adventures in Error*, 275-276.

⁶¹³ Ibid., 253.

Inuk.⁶¹⁴ As an Arctic explorer, Stefansson arrogated to himself the authority to define Inuitness, and to determine who had the right to claim this identity. In this context, writing the introduction to *Land of the Good Shadows* would communicate to readers that Stefansson was willing to stake his own personal reputation as a truth-teller on the legitimacy of Ford's claims to Inuit ancestry.

It is therefore not surprising that, before Stefansson would publicly attach his name to *Land of the Good Shadows*, he attempted to “verify” the facts of Ford's story, much as he had done in the case of Ólöf Krarér.⁶¹⁵ In April 1940, Stefansson's good friend and colleague, Richard Finnie, wrote to Ralph Parsons for further information about Ford at Stefansson's behest. In the years after meeting Elizabeth Ford at Cape Wolstenholme in 1913, Parsons had ascended the ranks of the HBC to become Fur Trade Commissioner. Finnie wrote to inquire of Parsons, “as the logical authority” on the subject, whether Ford's “claims to be herself an Eskimo, or part Eskimo, using the name of Anauta,” were authentic.⁶¹⁶ Parsons' reply was definitive:

Neither her former husband nor herself have, as far as one can judge, any Eskimo blood in them. Mrs. Blackmore's mother was a Newfoundlander and, while her father was born in Labrador, his parents or grandparents came from England. Looking at Mrs. Blackmore one would never think that she had any Eskimo blood in her veins, and I am sure that if her father and mother were alive they would be shocked to think that she

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., 88.

⁶¹⁵ Washburne to Stefansson 30 August 1940. This is how Washburne described Stefansson's actions.

⁶¹⁶ Richard Finnie to Ralph Parsons, 29 April 1940, HB2005/02 file 47, “Correspondence, D-F,” William Ralph Parsons fonds, HBCA.

claimed any Eskimo relationship”⁶¹⁷ Like many other outsiders who encountered Labrador Settlers, Parsons could not detect, through an assessment of the Fords’ physical appearance, the nuances of the Ford family’s complex, multi-ethnic identity.

It appears that Finnie forwarded Parsons’ letter to Stefansson, who then brought his concerns to Ford and Washburne. In August 1940 there was a flurry of correspondence between Stefansson, Ford, and both the Washburnes concerning the issues raised in “Parson’s letter to Richard Finnie.”⁶¹⁸ In an effort to win Stefansson over, Ford set out to, with the help of the Washburnes, provide him with proof of her Inuit identity. When Ford conceded that her father was likely of English descent, her mother’s ancestry became the critical evidentiary foundation for her claims to Inuit identity. She wrote of her mother to Stefansson:

I cannot say just positively where my mother was born. But know absolutely she was from the Labrador, her hair was very black, very dark eyes, swarthy skin, knew Eskimo life & habits as only a native could. This is what I know of my mother. Her parents lived by themselves in a Bay on the Labrador coast trapping, fishing & hunting for a living. Every summer they traded their furs for winter supplies.⁶¹⁹

Ford’s reference to the phenotypical attributes of race, including hair, eye, and skin colour, resonated with biological or “blood quantum” based definitions of race that pervaded North American legal discourse and public policy. Ford’s description of her mother also drew upon cultural signifiers of race, such as environment and subsistence practices, as proof of her being Inuit. Canada’s *Indian Act* (1876), the state’s most significant mechanism for

⁶¹⁷ Ralph Parsons to Richard Finnie, 8 May 1940, HB2005/02 file 47, “Correspondence, D-F,” William Ralph Parsons fonds, HBCA.

⁶¹⁸ Washburne to Stefansson, 30 August 1940, VSC.

⁶¹⁹ Anauta to Stefansson, 30 August 1940, VSC.

managing Indigenous identity, defined Indian through patrilineal descent.⁶²⁰ While, as Bonita Lawrence points out, Canada and the United States conceptualized Indigenous identity differently, Americans also understood the difference between white and non-white citizens in biological terms.⁶²¹ In many states miscegenation laws operated according to the “one-drop” standard, marking any person with even a fractional amount of Black or Indigenous ancestry outside the legal bounds of whiteness.⁶²² Nevertheless, as Canadian historians Constance Backhouse and Paige Raibmon observe, legal arbitrations over an individual’s racial identity show that questions of reputation, behaviour, and environment figured prominently in determinations of race.⁶²³ Ariela J. Gross makes a similar point regarding American race trials in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, arguing, “[e]ven in the heyday of scientific racism, in the mid-nineteenth century, courts never relied on racial science alone to determine an individual’s racial identity, but always invoked some combination of reputation, performance, and association as well.”⁶²⁴

One particularly salient example of the entangled cultural and biological underpinnings of race in public and legal discourse deals explicitly with the Inuit. In 1937, the Supreme Court of Canada was called to define Inuit racial identity, particularly whether “‘Eskimos’ should be considered ‘Indian,’” in order to resolve a dispute between the governments of Quebec and Canada over which of them was obligated to provide financial

⁶²⁰ Constance Backhouse, *Colour Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950* [1999] (Toronto, Buffalo and London: The Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History by the University of Toronto Press, 2007), 21-23.

⁶²¹ Bonita Lawrence, *‘Real’ Indians and Others: Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 7-8.

⁶²² Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally*, 134-140.

⁶²³ Backhouse, *Colour-Coded*, 21. Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*, 187-190.

⁶²⁴ Gross, *What Blood Won’t Tell*, 296.

support for the Inuit of the Ungava region, the area that Elizabeth Ford once called home.⁶²⁵ At issue in the case was whether the physical appearance, as well as the language, customs, and religion of the Inuit were sufficiently distinct from other First Nations to warrant placing the Inuit within a separate racial category that could not be dealt with under the Indian Act.⁶²⁶ Like Ford, the anthropologists, ethnologists, and social scientists who testified struggled to provide “precise empirical data to bear on the question” of racial classification.⁶²⁷ While Canadian anthropologist Diamond Jenness testified that both Inuit and Indigenous peoples had ““a very strong infusion or percentage of Mongoloid blood,”” other experts’ testimonies spoke to cultural and behavioural commonalities among the two groups, including hunting and fishing practices, political and economic systems.⁶²⁸

In their correspondence with Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Elizabeth Ford and Heluiz Washburne worked with both of these cultural and biological racial sensibilities. They wrote to Wilfred Grenfell as well as Elizabeth’s sister-in-law, Susan Decker, “to get more accurate information on the matter of her Eskimo ancestry,” as Washburne explained to Stefansson, particularly concerning the origins of Elizabeth’s mother. Their testimony, Washburne wrote, should be considered “circumstantial and definite.” While Grenfell informed Elizabeth that he “always understood your mother to be at least partly Eskimo,” Decker provided a more detailed genealogical summary:

I knew your mother, Harriett Marryfield, to be a quarterbreed Eskimo. Her mother, nee Elizabeth Lane, halfbreed. Thomas Marryfield, your grandfather, belonged

⁶²⁵ Backhouse, *Colour-Coded*, 18. See also Bonesteel, *Canada’s Relationship with Inuit*.

⁶²⁶ Backhouse, *Colour-Coded*, 19, 40.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*, 43. Rather than wading in to the thorny and largely unresolved issues concerning the evidentiary basis for racial classifications, the Supreme Court judges ultimately based their decision in their reading of Canadian constitutional law. *Ibid.*, 52-55.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, 19, 41.

Devonshire, England. Settled near Davis Inlet. Married Elizabeth Lane at Soar [sic]. Elizabeth Lane's mother was Eskimo, her father an Englishman.⁶²⁹

In order to explain this new information to Stefansson, and to ameliorate the implications of this discovery for Ford's credibility as an Arctic expert, Washburne continued: "Anauta was surprised to find that her mother had so much English blood" because "her mother seemed so completely Eskimo, speaking and living entirely like the others." She also stressed to Stefansson the importance of environmental and experiential definitions of race over the biological, writing that

Anauta's mother was presumably born and reared in the full Eskimo tradition, and accepted by the Eskimos as one of themselves. Anauta's own upbringing was similar – only her father, having been born on the Labrador among the Eskimos, and speaking the language from childhood, probably fell into the pattern more fully.

Capitalising on the uncertainties surrounding the relative weight to allocate to cultural and biological variables in determining racial classifications in this period, Washburne concluded: "Thus Anauta, even though genetically more European than Eskimo, was, for the first twenty years of her life, sociologically all Eskimo."⁶³⁰

In addition to going to great lengths to prove to Stefansson that Elizabeth Ford was not misrepresenting herself as Anauta, Washburne and Ford also agreed, in light of the recent revelations concerning Ford's ancestry, to insert the following paragraph into the manuscript, which appears unchanged in the introduction to *Land of the Good Shadows*:

We also sought additional confirmation from other sources – from ... a Hudson Bay trader who had known her father; from her brother, still trapping in the north; from Uille's sister, now living in Newfoundland; from Dr. Grenfell, who knew her father and mother and Anauta herself. It was in this search that we also discovered, to Anauta's surprise, that Anauta's mother, was not pure Eskimo – Englishmen had come over to the Labrador, and married Anauta's Eskimo great-grandmother and

⁶²⁹ Heluiz Washburne to Vilhjalmur Stefansson, 1 September 1940, Mss-196, box 51, folder 32, VSC.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

her grandmother, and apparently settled into the Eskimo way of life, so that the children were brought up speaking only Eskimo, following Eskimo customs, living as Eskimos live.⁶³¹

Thus the addendum negotiates the discovery of Ford's mixed-race ancestry by echoing Washburne's emphasis on cultural and sociological definitions of race over the biological. It appears that readers also agreed with Washburne's interpretation of racial identity, or were not interested in the complex picture painted by the addendum of intermarriage and racial hybridity in the Arctic: reviews published in the months after the book's release in November 1940 were perfectly willing to accept *Land of the Good Shadows* as an "Eskimo Odyssey," and an authentic narrative of the "Life of an Eskimo Woman."⁶³²

Stefansson seemed satisfied with this amendment to the manuscript, writing to the publishers at the John Day Company that "if the manuscript is modified to fit our present understanding of the case the book will not be deceptive and should be valuable."⁶³³ He would not, however, agree to write the foreword, suggesting instead that someone like Wilfred Grenfell would have a greater experiential basis on which to write something

⁶³¹ Ibid. Washburne, introduction to *Land of the Good Shadows*, xv.

⁶³² "Eskimo Odyssey," *The Democrat and Chronicle Sunday Magazine* 1 December 1940, 1. Mildred Barish, "Eskimo Girl Reared as Boy Has Look at 'Civilization,'" *Los Angeles Times* 8 December 1940, n.p. "Life of an Eskimo Woman," *The Akron Beacon Journal* 8 December 1940, 8C. Maude F. Juillerat, "Eskimo Woman; Eskimo Myth," *The Cincinnati Enquirer* 28 December 1940, 8. Charles Burnes, "Story of an Eskimo Woman Who Lives in Indianapolis," *Des Moines Sunday Register* 5 January 1941, 7. Roberta C. Gilman, "They Met in Dowagiac," *Detroit Free Press* 19 January 1941, 7. "The Public Library Suggests: Books Women Will Like," *The Cincinnati Enquirer* 17 May 1941, 7. Articles from *Newspapers.com*. Ralph Thompson, "Books of the Times," *New York Times* 20 November 1940, 19. Katherine Woods, "Two Civilizations Through an Eskimo's Eyes," *New York Times* 1 December 1940, 4. Articles from *New York TimesMachine*.

⁶³³ Vilhjalmur Stefansson to Richard J. Walsh, 20 September 1940, Mss-196, box 49, folder 5, VSC.

meaningful about Anauta's experiences.⁶³⁴ Ford and Washburne had already identified Grenfell as a potential writer should their agreement with Stefansson fall through, and they did ultimately revert to their second choice.⁶³⁵ Grenfell's foreword to *Land of the Good Shadows* would, in fact, be the last piece of writing he completed before his death on 9 October 1940.⁶³⁶

Stefansson was circumspect in the months leading up to the publication of *Land of the Good Shadows*, distancing himself from the project without overtly disclosing his view that Ford lacked credibility as an Inuit authority. Ten years after the 1940 incident, however, Stefansson was more forthcoming with Ford's talent manager, when he wrote to ask if Stefansson would promote Anauta among his Arctic colleagues and associations in an effort to secure more lecture bookings.⁶³⁷ Stefansson's response to this query reveals his narrow, biologically-based understanding of Inuitness in particular and of race as a whole. He wrote to Ford's manager that it was "obvious, both from what the Ford family testify and from Anauta's appearance, that she either has no Eskimo blood, or a tiny fraction," concluding "that she is about as much Eskimo as Will Rogers was Cherokee."⁶³⁸ Will Rogers was a popular Cherokee performer of mixed descent who achieved fame in the early 1900s for his appearances, as a cowboy, in vaudeville and Wild West shows across the United States: Stefansson comparing the authenticity of Ford's indigenous

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ Heluiz disclosed to Stefansson that Grenfell was their second choice if he would not agree to write an introduction. Washburne to Stefansson, 30 August 1940, VSC.

⁶³⁶ "Books and Authors," *New York Times Book Review* 10 November 1940, 14, *New York Times Machine*.

⁶³⁷ Will J. McEwen to Vilhjalmur Stefansson, 22 March 1950, Mss-196, box 72, folder 37, VSC.

⁶³⁸ Vilhjalmur Stefansson to Will J. McEwan, 2 May 1950, Mss-196, box 72, folder 37, VSC.

performance to that of Rogers is therefore particularly revealing. In her study of Rogers's career, Amy M. Ware argues that those who refused to recognize Rogers as Cherokee on the basis of a diluted bloodline, despite his strong familial and cultural ties to the Cherokee, subscribed to "biological essentialism related to race."⁶³⁹ Stefansson's refusal to accept Ford's Anauta persona, like Rogers's cowboy character, as authentic, illuminates how narrow, biological understandings of the "authentic Indian," to borrow Raibmon's term, could invalidate and circumscribe the experiences of Indigenous men and women in this period.

Following from this perspective, Stefansson described his feelings toward Elizabeth Ford as "most friendly but a little embarrassed."⁶⁴⁰ While he conceded that "much of what Anauta tells, both in writings and speech, is in agreement with what I believe to be the facts," he took issue with Ford's emphasis on her embodied experiences of life as an Inuit woman.⁶⁴¹ He identified what he deemed to be Ford's fraudulent racial presentation as the source of his reluctance to publicly associate with her: "If Anauta would put herself forward as a woman, essentially European, who happened to be born and brought up among Eskimos, there would be a lot of people who could get behind her and promote her who do not now feel they can do so."⁶⁴² Being connected with Elizabeth Ford as Anauta was a liability, not because of the content of her writings and lectures, which Stefansson deemed to be mostly truthful, but because the foundation on which she claimed

⁶³⁹ Amy M. Ware, "Unexpected Cowboy, Unexpected Indian: The Case of Will Rogers," *Ethnohistory* 56:1 (2009): 5, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1215/00141801-2008-034>.

⁶⁴⁰ Stefansson to McEwan, 2 May 1950, VSC.

⁶⁴¹ Vilhjalmur Stefansson to Will J. McEwan 8 May 1950, Mss-196, box 72, folder 37, VSC.

⁶⁴² Stefansson to McEwan, 2 May 1950, VSC.

access to this knowledge, through her unique embodiment as an Inuk woman, was inauthentic. While explorers and Arctic actors frequently used their social networks and social authorisation as a tool for shoring up their status as Northern experts, Stefansson's relationship with Ford suggests that public affiliations with the "wrong" kinds of people could damage one's credibility and claims to knowledge.

4.5 Conclusion:

While cultural authorities like the Canadian Supreme Court grappled with whether or not Inuit could be considered First Nations, Elizabeth Ford's career as Anauta can be situated within a larger tradition of Indigenous women performers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Like her predecessors and her contemporaries, the most famous being E. Pauline Johnson, Ford's performances conformed to "white fantasies" about Indigenous lands and peoples.⁶⁴³ As Anauta, Ford painted a picture of the Arctic as alien and exotic, and characterized the Inuit as childlike, guileless, and good-natured. In attaching these messages to deliberately theatrical elements of performance, including costumes, musical programs, and recitals, Ford also joined with performers like Johnson who simultaneously subverted these messages by exposing the fictiveness and artificiality of their audiences' expectations of Indigenous authenticity. For other Arctic authorities like Stefansson, "Anauta" illuminated the performative elements of Arctic knowledgeability in potentially compromising ways, just as she threatened to expose the entire edifice of exploratory knowledge about the Arctic just another white fantasy. Drawing upon settler colonial

⁶⁴³ Zellinger, "E. Pauline Johnson's Poetic Acts," 345.

notions of racial authenticity, Elizabeth Ford found another pathway to authority within her era's culture of Arctic exploration that did not require her to claim the identity of explorer. Her significant, destabilising role within America's culture of exploration makes a strong case for including such individuals, who did not claim to be explorers and have not been treated as part of the history of exploration, in future studies of exploratory culture. In Chapter Five, we turn our attention to other Arctic theatres by considering Josephine Peary's performances of white domesticity at home in the United States and in the Eastern Arctic.

Chapter 5:

“Never Have Seen One Like You”: Josephine Peary and the Women Behind the Myth of the “First White Woman” in the Arctic


Josephine Diebitsch Peary (1863-1955), the wife of American Arctic explorer Robert Peary (1856-1920), “discoverer” of the North Pole in 1909, achieved fame and admiration in her own right in the 1890s as the “First Lady” of the Arctic.⁶⁴⁴ She did so on the basis of three achievements that defined her image within America’s culture of exploration in the early twentieth century. First, she was credited with being the “first white woman” to join an Arctic expedition.⁶⁴⁵ Josephine’s second claim to fame was that from the time of her first trip to far Northern Greenland in 1891 to her sixth and final venture in 1902, she was the only white woman present on her husband’s polar expeditions. Finally, Josephine Peary consolidated her status as a fully-fledged Arctic celebrity when she gave birth to her daughter, Marie, along the shores of Whale Sound, in 1893. Marie became famous in her own right for, as the newspapers put it, having “the distinction of being born at a higher degree of northern latitude than any other white child living or dead,” earning her the nickname of “The Snow Baby.”⁶⁴⁶ Beginning with Josephine Peary’s first Arctic narrative, *My Arctic Journal*, published in the same year that she gave birth to her first daughter,

⁶⁴⁴ Term borrowed from Patricia Pierce Erikson, “Josephine Diebitsch Peary (1863-1955),” *Arctic* 62:1 (2009): 103, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/docview/197733798?accountid=10406>.

⁶⁴⁵ “Cheers for Mrs. Peary,” *The Morning News* [GA] 10 June 1891, 5, *Chronicling America*.

⁶⁴⁶ “Little Miss Peary: How the Baby Took an Airing Near the North Pole,” *Portland Daily Press* [ME] 20 July 1895, 12, *Chronicling America*. See also *Washington Post* 16 December 1913, n.p., box 2, folder 236, Scrapbook clippings, 1900-1918, Marie Ahnighito Peary Papers (MAPP), Maine Women Writers Collection, University of New England, Portland, Maine.

Mrs. Peary's My Arctic Journal



JOSEPHINE DIEBITSCH-PEARY.
From the December Number of *American Woman*.

A Most Fascinating Book of Travels

The return of Mrs. Peary to civilized shores awakens new interest in that remarkable expedition, of which she was so conspicuous a member.

"It would be difficult to exaggerate the charm and the interest of Mrs. Peary's work. Mrs. Peary adds to every page the charm of a refined and delicate personality, and one reading is conscious of a finer spirit and a nobler purpose than ever animated any of the former discoverers who have sought the mysteries of the North."—*Brooklyn Standard-Union*.

"We do not know which to admire the most, Mrs. Peary's delightfully entertaining story or the wonderful pictures which are reproduced from her camera."—*Boston Herald*.

"Mrs. Peary's 'My Arctic Journal,' with her husband's account of their great white journey across Greenland, makes a book which will delight all lovers of Arctic adventure."—*The Critic*.

Price, Cloth, \$2.00; Autograph Edition, with the Signature of Mrs. Peary on the Frontispiece, \$5.00.

The Contemporary Publishing Company,
5 BEEKMAN STREET, NEW YORK.

Figure 5.1: Advertisement for Josephine Peary's *My Arctic Journal* (1893)
Angelo Heilprin, ed., *Around the World: Contributions to a Knowledge of the Earth and its Inhabitants* Vol. 1 (New York and Philadelphia: The Contemporary Publishing Company, 1894), 213.

Peary's framing of her experiences as the *first* and *only* white mother of Arctic exploration was publicized and reiterated in various media of American popular culture, including newspapers, women's periodicals, travel books, and children's literature, throughout the early twentieth century. Between the 1890s and the 1930s, Peary's status as a publicly recognized Arctic heroine – even if she was not always acknowledged as an explorer – became inextricably linked with the spectacle of solitary womanhood, set against the backdrop of the conventionally masculine and homosocial spaces of the Arctic

environment and the exploratory expedition.

In highlighting her exceptionalism as the only female member of several Arctic expeditions, Josephine's public image normalized, rather than undermined, the exclusion of women from exploratory culture in this period. Furthermore, Josephine's popularly appealing account of "the trials of solitary womanhood" in the Arctic, as promoted by herself and other contributors to America's culture of Arctic exploration, relied upon a range of exclusions along axes of identity other than gender that complicate our

understanding of women's roles in projects of exploration.⁶⁴⁷ Contrary to public perception, Josephine was surrounded by other women in the Arctic: the success of the Peary expeditions depended upon the labour and expertise provided by the Inughuit women of Avanersuaq (Northwestern Greenland), and the two other white women who travelled North as Josephine's domestic servants. This chapter addresses the intersecting hierarchies of race, class and gender that came together in the phenomenon of American domesticity making it possible for Josephine Peary alone to claim "the" female experience of Arctic exploration, despite the undeniable presence of other women who co-laboured with the Peary expedition parties, and who had their own experiences of life in the Arctic that almost certainly did not match with Josephine's.

The provisional, unequal, and geographically specific female society that grew up around the Peary expeditions has yet to be studied by historians. Genevieve LeMoine and Susan Kaplan have provided a crucial intellectual foundation for this work in their studies of Inughuit women's roles in and reactions to the intercultural contacts that took place around the Peary expeditions, particularly with male explorers, making a strong case for the importance of women's work and Inughuit perspectives in histories of polar exploration.⁶⁴⁸ Building on this important scholarship, this chapter considers the status and experiences of Inughuit women affiliated with Peary exploration parties relative to

⁶⁴⁷ "Josephine Diebitsch-Peary," *Around the World* 1:4 (December 1893): 14, <https://books.google.ca/books?id=pzA6AQAIAAJ&pg=PP9&lpg=PP9&dq=%22A+sle+dge+journey+and+an+experience%22+Around+the+World+Dec.+1893;&source=bl&ots=7p0z-PwdSb&sig=ACfU3U3DVi5PTvg75bonXrwC8KsNFtcQK&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEWiSmK2norDhAhVLJt8KHYNhDIgQ6AEwAHoECAIQAQ#v=onepage&q&f=true>.

⁶⁴⁸ LeMoine and Darwent, "Furs and Satin," 211-236. LeMoine and Giguère, "Elatu's Funeral," 340-346. LeMoine, Kaplan, and Darwent, "Living on the Edge," 1-12.

Josephine Peary, and alongside the white other women on the expeditions, in order to chart the contours of this female society as a whole, and to reveal the raced, classed, and gendered ideologies that structured hierarchical relations within this group.

Felix Driver and Tina Adcock's term "cultures of exploration" is once more helpful in highlighting the importance of the less visible and rarely acknowledged roles that women other than Josephine Peary played in the Peary expeditions. According to Driver, exploration must be broadly defined to capture the range of "embodied" and "cultural practices," as well as people and resources, that were mobilized in support of "the production and consumption of voyages and travels."⁶⁴⁹ For Adcock, this sense of exploration as a broad cultural project enables historians to study the "heterogenous network of ... actors" involved in the work of exploration, "as well as the construction, circulation, and adjudication of the knowledge formed on the basis of that activity."⁶⁵⁰ Inspired by Adcock, this chapter endeavors to make visible the identities and labours of the wide range of female actors involved with the Peary expeditions, while also attending to the reasons why Josephine Peary alone rose above the threshold of visibility within America's culture of exploration to become the sole narrator of "the" female Arctic experience. Reading popular renderings of Josephine's biography against the grain (i.e. not as factual accounts of historical events, but as cultural artefacts) enables us to give substance and subjectivity to the women who have inhabited the negative space around Josephine's selectively rendered life history, and to explore the potential for uncovering other, less privileged experiences of Arctic exploration. Adcock's emphasis on the

⁶⁴⁹ Driver, *Geography Militant*, 8.

⁶⁵⁰ Adcock, "Toward an Early Twentieth-Century Culture," 111-112.

embodied cultural dimensions of exploration also inspires my treatment of middle-class domesticity, a cultural paradigm that worked to affirm white supremacy, including the supremacy of white women, through quotidian performances of household practices, as an important component of the history of Arctic exploration in this period. In particular, I argue that middle-class American ideologies surrounding home and family life, including domesticity, maternalism, and the valuation of women's work, converged to shape the status of each woman within the Peary expeditions, as well as their relative visibility to the American public as actors within the national saga of Arctic exploration.

5.1 Arctic Maternalism: Making Space for Women in American Exploration

In order to consider how Josephine Peary understood and publicly represented her Arctic experiences through the lenses of women's work and domesticity, one must acknowledge the centrality of these concepts in structuring the American society in which she came of age. Born in 1863, Josephine Diebitsch was raised by German immigrant parents in Washington, D.C. As a young woman, she attended Washington's Spencerian Business College, which offered practical professional training for women seeking positions as office workers. She worked in clerical capacities at the National Census Bureau as well as the Smithsonian Museum before she met Robert Peary, a lieutenant of the Navy's Civil Engineer Corps, in the early 1880s. When they married in 1888, in the words of the *Portland Press Herald*, the new "Mrs. Peary embarked on a life of adventure," centered

around the exploits of her husband.⁶⁵¹ After a summer trip to Greenland in 1886, Robert Peary developed an “obsession with the Arctic,” and the possibility of claiming the North Pole for the United States.⁶⁵² Reportedly filled with the belief that “a wife’s place is with her husband,” Josephine joined his next trip North as the expedition’s cook and housekeeper.⁶⁵³

Travelling to Avanersuaq, the Inughuit territory of Northwestern Greenland in the summer of 1891, Josephine Peary became the first white woman to receive public notice for accompanying an Arctic expedition.⁶⁵⁴ She therefore had an uphill battle in justifying her actions as appropriate behaviour for any American woman, let alone a woman of middle-class status, whose proper sphere of power and influence was believed to be in the home. For much of the nineteenth century, Europeans and Euro-Americans had deliberately constructed Northern environments as exclusively male preserves. As Jennifer Hill observes, within the British imperial imaginary of the nineteenth century, “the Arctic

⁶⁵¹ “Adm. Robert Peary’s Widow Dies at 92 At Home Here,” *Portland Press Herald* 20 December 1955 in Scrapbooks, 1863-1966, box 7, folder 213, Newspaper clippings re: Mrs. Peary’s death, 1955, JDPP.

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ Josephine was quoted as saying as much in a press interview: “Mrs. Robt. E. Peary Declares Arctic Travels No Worse than Train Journeys Today,” in Scrapbooks, box 6, folder 137, Newspaper articles, 1944, JDPP.

⁶⁵⁴ As Britain’s *Spectator* put it, “hitherto the Arctic explorer has been unaccompanied by his better half. Mrs. Peary has, however, broken the record... .” “A Lady Among the Eskimos,” *The Spectator* 29 September 1894, 412, <https://books.google.ca/books?id=yTnzhaLhPmkC&pg=PA389&lpg=PA389&dq=%E2%80%9CA+Lady+Among+the+Eskimos,%E2%80%9D&source=bl&ots=IKz9jVWZqV&sig=ACfU3U10h4ZUphOIGbhYkdVImXoZWUR95Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjatI2pp-PpAhVnm-AKHSFPAI8Q6AEwAXoECAMQAQ#v=onepage&q=%E2%80%9CA%20Lady%20Among%20the%20Eskimos%2C%E2%80%9D&f=false>. Descriptions of Josephine Peary’s actions as “record breaking” also appeared in the American press. See, for example, “Some Women Explorers,” *The Indianapolis Journal* 23 October 1892, 3, *Chronicling America*.

was understood to be an arid and cold space that stood in masculine opposition to the torrid humidity of the tropics,” and therefore represented an appropriately ascetic and physically demanding environment in which the explorer could cultivate and exhibit desirable masculine qualities, particularly the interlocking attributes of moral and physical hardihood.⁶⁵⁵ This perspective was reflected in public criticisms of the Pearys in the early 1890s, when journalists and even other members of the Peary exploring parties called Robert to account for bringing Josephine along on Arctic expeditions, on the grounds that, as 1893-94 expedition member James Davidson put it, ““the region up there is no place for a woman.””⁶⁵⁶ By the time that Josephine had begun to establish her name as an Arctic traveller, American society and its cultural brokers had imported Britain’s masculinist vision of the Arctic, but had imbued it with their own national meanings.

Ironically, Robert Peary had a significant role to play in consolidating popular perceptions of Arctic exploration as a vehicle for the display and cultivation of a hypermasculine ethos, and in placing both of these phenomena at the heart of the national consciousness of early-twentieth-century America. Spanning a period of nearly twenty-five years, his career as an active explorer in Greenland and on Ellesmere Island between

⁶⁵⁵ Hill, *White Horizon*, 6.

⁶⁵⁶ “Brave and Capable: James W. Davidson Gives His Opinion of Arctic Explorer Peary,” *St. Paul Daily Globe* [MN] 12 October 1894, 1, *Chronicling America*. Other similar criticisms were made in “The Gossip of Gotham: Mrs. Peary’s Unique Message from the Arctic Regions,” *Wheeling Sunday Register* [WV] 8 October 1893, 9. “Mrs. Peary is Boss: Why the Explorer Took His Wife to the Frozen North,” *The Indianapolis Journal* 12 October 1893, 4; “Dissatisfied Explorers,” *The Evening Star* [DC] 28 September 1894, 9; “Peary’s Great Mistake,” *The Indianapolis Journal* 12 October 1894, 4; “The Arctic Scandals,” *The Indianapolis Journal* 30 September 1894, 12. All articles *Chronicling America*. “Peary’s Party at Home,” *New York Times* 24 September 1892, 1, and “Indignant Mrs. Peary,” *New York Times* 28 September 1894, 5, *New York TimesMachine*.

1886 and 1909 has loomed large in cultural histories of science and exploration of the period.⁶⁵⁷ As one of the first works to consider Arctic explorers as highly influential on popular constructions of masculinity, Lisa Bloom's *Gender On Ice* (1993) has been an essential text for scholars interested in approaching modern exploration history from gendered and cultural perspectives. Robert Peary figures prominently in Bloom's work as an exemplar of the kind of modern, progress-oriented, scientifically-minded masculinity that she argues was a touchstone of America's national identity in this era.⁶⁵⁸ More recently, Michael Robinson has developed Bloom's central argument that popular representations of Arctic exploration were formative in shaping norms of masculinity and nationalism in the Peary era.⁶⁵⁹ Robinson argues that Peary's conquest of the North Pole transformed the Arctic into a "national landscape" for Americans, with Peary's explorer persona serving as an avatar for a new, more aggressive and physically robust masculinity which in turn supported a new, revitalized nationalism and national identity.⁶⁶⁰ Both scholars appear to share Benedict Anderson's understanding of nationhood as a "cultural artefact," with the meanings attached to it evolving over time in response to shifting social

⁶⁵⁷ Bloom, *Gender on Ice*. Dick, "Robert Peary's North Polar Narratives," 5-34. Dick, *Muskox Land*. Dick, "The men of prominence," 3-47. Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible*. Robinson, "Manliness and Exploration," 89-109. Kelly Lankford, "Arctic Explorer Robert E. Peary's Other Quest: Money, Science, and the Year 1897," *American Nineteenth-Century History* 9:1 (2008): 37-60, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1080/14664650701800559>.

⁶⁵⁸ Bloom, *Gender on Ice*, 4-6.

⁶⁵⁹ As Bloom puts it, "As modern nationalism became defined through polar exploration in the early twentieth century, important norms emerged that demarcated ideals of manliness." Bloom, *Gender on Ice*, 11.

⁶⁶⁰ Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible*, 3. For a similar argument, see Dick, "The men of prominence," 3-47.

values.⁶⁶¹ A product of the late eighteenth century, Anderson defines the modern nation-state as a form of social organisation characterized by “imagined communities,” sustained through standardized “print-languages” and print media, that cultivate a sense of connectivity and community among individuals residing within the boundaries of the same sovereign territory who are otherwise unknown to one another.⁶⁶² As William E. Lenz argues, from the time of the American nation-state’s inception, narratives of exploration have had a role to play in consolidating their consumers’ sense of an American national community, linked by the shared values of individual industry, scientific empiricism, and national progressivism that were embodied in the narrated actions of individual explorers.⁶⁶³

Bloom and Robinson also appear to share the assumption that, in much the same way that women were largely excluded from popular visions of Arctic exploration, they were also excluded from male-oriented visions of national community. Indeed, Bloom believes the two fields of exclusion are correlated. Bloom argues that polar exploration narratives actually helped to define a “social construction of masculinity” that “legitimized the exclusion of women from many public domains of discourse. As all-male activities, the explorations symbolically enacted men’s own battle to become men.”⁶⁶⁴ It is important to remember, however, that the social structures of male privilege scripted roles for women

⁶⁶¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* [1983] (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 4.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, 5-7, 24-26, 44.

⁶⁶³ William E. Lenz, “Narratives of Exploration, Sea Fiction, Mariners’ Chronicles, and the Rise of American Nationalism: ‘To Cast Anchor on that Point where All Meridians Terminate,’” *American Studies* 32:2 (1991): 41-43, 46, <https://journals.ku.edu/amsj/article/view/2883>.

⁶⁶⁴ Bloom, *Gender on Ice*, 6.

as well as men. Patriarchy, as Jane Hamlett notes, “was often perceived as a double act,” with a female counterpart to the figure of the male head of household that exemplified the legitimate and natural basis of male political authority.⁶⁶⁵

What is often forgotten in studies of Robert Peary as an icon of primitivist, strenuous masculinity is that his status as an exemplary specimen of manhood depended upon his ability to secure and maintain an equally exemplary wife and family. In an era of anxiety swirling around the potential decline or “mongrelisation” of America’s Anglo-Saxon race, the ultimate goal of those who promoted a revitalized and hypermasculine vision of manhood was the cultural and racial reproduction of white America.⁶⁶⁶ This reproduction was to take place within the morally sanctioned confines of the patriarchal family, with women having a significant part to play in perpetuating this racialized vision of the national community through their roles as mothers.⁶⁶⁷ As Adele Perry has put it, “white women’s reproduction was a buttress to the nation and non-white women’s reproduction a threat to it... .”⁶⁶⁸ It was on the basis of this family-oriented vision of patriarchal authority and women’s work that Josephine Peary was able to carve out a new

⁶⁶⁵ Hamlett, “‘Rotten Effeminate Stuff,’” 84.

⁶⁶⁶ Dick, “‘The Men of Prominence,’” 7-8.

⁶⁶⁷ As Cecily Devereaux argues, “the condition of ‘the race’ was becoming an article of anxiety” for Britons by the end of the nineteenth century, and remained a matter of concern until well into the 1920s. The same could be said for America, as well as Britain’s settler colonies, where “the immediate contest between the Anglo-Saxon race and its colonized ‘others’” was more apparent. In this context, Devereaux argues, “the analogy between white colony and white woman as sites for racial renewal was extremely pervasive and suggestive.” Cecily Devereaux, “New Woman New World: Maternal Feminism and the New Imperialism in the White Settler Colonies,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 22:2 (1999): 176, 179, doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395\(99\)00005-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395(99)00005-9).

⁶⁶⁸ Adele Perry, “Women, Gender, and Empire,” in *Canada and the British Empire*, ed. Phillip Buckner (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 225.

space for middle-class white women as legitimate, if not commonplace, participants in America's culture of exploration. Reckoning with Josephine Peary's position within America's culture of exploration means that we must acknowledge Arctic exploration as a project that exalted not only white manhood, but also white domesticity, including women and children.

In connecting her forays into Arctic space, as well as into the public culture of exploration in America, to her "natural" role as a wife and future mother, Josephine borrowed from the playbooks of the politically diverse but primarily middle-class cast of maternal feminists, moral reformers and suffragists who advocated across Britain and North America for expanded social, philanthropic, and even political roles for white women in the public sphere.⁶⁶⁹ While these groups had radically different visions for women's position within society, virtually all of them couched their visions in the language of motherhood and domesticity. They did so in part in response to antifeminist critics who decried the "New Woman," the symbol of female sexual and economic independence at the turn of the century, for abandoning her obligations to the race by choosing careers and other public pursuits over motherhood and family life.⁶⁷⁰ Indeed, Margaret D. Jacobs goes so far as to describe this period in America and other settler colonial states as the era of the "Great White Mother," a term she uses to capture the rhetoric of domesticity deployed by white women and their supporters to justify "their increased public role, often condemned

⁶⁶⁹ Allison L. Sneider, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age: U.S. Expansion and the Woman Question, 1870-1929* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity*. Patricia Grimshaw, "Settler Anxieties, Indigenous Peoples, and Women's Suffrage in the Colonies of Australia, New Zealand, and Hawai'i, 1888-1902," *Pacific Historical Review* (2000): 553-572, doi: 10.2307/3641224.

⁶⁷⁰ Devereaux, "New Woman New World," 176.

as outside their proper sphere, by identifying their activism with motherhood, women's traditional domain."⁶⁷¹ Prior to meeting Robert Peary and embarking on her own Arctic career, it appears that Josephine Peary personally identified with the belief that expanding women's sphere of experience and engagement in public life was entirely commensurate with, and indeed beneficial to, the fulfillment of their domestic duties.

In a commencement speech delivered upon her graduation from business school in 1880, Josephine Diebitsch criticized earlier models of the gendered division of labour associated with the ideology of "separate spheres." She argued that, historically, women's scope of experience had been far too narrow, declaring that "our sphere even within [living] memory has been circumscribed within very modest dimensions," and that "to cook, wash, iron [and] sew ... have been considered a round of duties and pleasures that ought to suffice to occupy the time the mind and the heart of a woman."⁶⁷² The effect, she argued, had been disastrous for the children under the care of such "ignorant and incompetent" mothers who "quieted and benumbed only too effectually the busy brains and restless bodies of the little immortals who need the highest wisdom for their guidance and care."⁶⁷³ Her address concluded by calling for the opening up of a more expansive sphere of influence and education for women of her own generation: "let this woman's horizon be broadened her mind and soul cultured to the limit of their capacity that every one, old and young who

⁶⁷¹ Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 87. For another transnational, but exclusively North American study of how maternalist rhetoric was deployed to make space for women in white national communities, see Rachel A. Snell, "'God, Home and Country': Women, Historical Memory, and National Identity in English Canada and the United States," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 48:2 (2018): 244-255, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1080/02722011.2018.1472946>.

⁶⁷² Josephine Diebitsch, Graduation Essay, Spencerian Business College, May 1880, Scrapbooks, box 4, folder 59, JDPP.

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

comes within the sphere of her influence may be safer and happier and nobler therefor.”⁶⁷⁴ The discourse of maternalism and domesticity was expansive enough, however, that, Josephine was able to advocate for an enlargement of women’s social and intellectual lives without identifying as a suffragist.⁶⁷⁵ Like other women of her era, Josephine Peary drew upon the symbolic power of white womanhood as a cultural and biological bulwark of white family life in order to justify her entrée into political and geographical spheres that were traditionally viewed as exclusively male preserves.

5.2 Wife Stories: Making the First Family of the Arctic

Looking at Josephine’s press interviews, lectures, and published writings throughout the 1890s and early 1900s, it becomes apparent that she deployed the rhetoric of domesticity and maternalism in order to characterize her Arctic activities as not merely an *expression*, but indeed a moral *elevation* of middle-class women’s duties as wives and mothers of white American households. This conventionally feminine reading of Josephine’s undeniably unconventional behaviour was echoed and reiterated by other voices throughout this period, until the narrative, through repetition, assumed the status of truth, eventually putting an end to mainstream criticisms of Josephine’s public position within America’s culture of Arctic exploration. In addition to studying Josephine’s own self-presentation, this section also addresses the larger press coverage of the Peary expeditions, as well as the

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁵ In response to a reporter’s comment that her Arctic “experiences had been used as an additional argument in favor of granting her sex equal rights with men,” Josephine exclaimed, “they certainly do not regard me as a woman’s right’s woman, do they?” “A Plucky Woman,” *The Evening Star* [DC] 26 September 1894, 1, *Chronicling America*.

public statements of her husband, Robert, and eventually their daughter, Marie, to gain a sense of how Josephine's view of herself as an Arctic wife and mother were braided into the Peary family lore and national histories that came to dominate public perception.

The textual analysis begins with Josephine's early articulations of her Arctic persona in the wake of her first trip North in 1891. Josephine's book-length Arctic travel narrative, *My Arctic Journal* (1893), is the only publication in which she deals directly with her experience as the sole white woman on an Arctic expedition, in this case the Peary Expedition to Greenland in 1891-1892. Her other books, *The Snow Baby* (1901) and *Children of the Arctic* (1903) center around Marie's childhood trips North, and were intended for juvenile audiences. Her self-presentation in *My Arctic Journal* is, therefore, significant in setting the tone for subsequent biographical renderings of her experiences. The analysis concludes in 1934, the year that Josephine's adult daughter, Marie Peary Stafford, added a final layer of interpretation to Josephine's Arctic narrative by offering an account of her childhood experiences with her mother in the North in *The Snowbaby's Own Story*.

Before delving into the Peary family's strategic motivations for presenting Josephine as a wife and mother first, and an Arctic explorer second, it is important to acknowledge that Josephine likely also privately viewed herself in these terms. In her biographical study of Jane Franklin, arguably one of the most famous wives in British history, Penny Russell has productively interrogated wifedom as a discourse, one she refers to as "wife stories," that Franklin used to open up "a terrain of infinite and varied scope for her endeavors," particularly her very public advocacy for her missing husband,

Sir John Franklin.⁶⁷⁶ While those lives represented and, to varying degrees, actually lived through the experience of devoted wifhood have found little favor among feminist biographers, Russell insists that we must consider “the rhetoric of wifeliness” as “a calculated rhetorical tool.”⁶⁷⁷ Like Franklin, her predecessor and fellow Arctic wife, Josephine Peary framed her Arctic travels as an opportunity to perform, as Patricia Erikson has put it, of “her own sense of self as a faithful wife, a patriotic American citizen, and eventually, a well-educated mother.”⁶⁷⁸ At the same time, Russell argues that it is possible “to seek the consistencies, rather than the jarring disjunctures, between the stories [Franklin] lived and the stories she told.”⁶⁷⁹ For Josephine Peary, as for Jane Franklin, the wife stories she told in public reflected a sense of self that she “could comfortably inhabit” and personally identify with.⁶⁸⁰

Josephine began her own wife story long before she departed for the Arctic. In a letter to Robert, written just before their marriage, Josephine offered herself up as the ideal wife of the peripatetic explorer, writing that she would “be just as happy with [him] in Nicaragua,” where he was stationed at the time in his capacity of a civil engineer with the United States Navy, “as [she] would be in Greenland & just as happy in either of these places as [she] would be in N.Y. Therefore my darling do not let us be separated any longer unless you have some good reason.”⁶⁸¹ On their second Arctic expedition in 1894,

⁶⁷⁶ Russell, “Wife Stories,” 38.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁶⁷⁸ Patricia Pierce Erikson, “Homemaking, Snow Babies, and the Search for the North Pole,” 266.

⁶⁷⁹ Russell, “Wife Stories,” 41.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁶⁸¹ Josephine Diebitsch Peary to Robert E. Peary, 8 April 1888, Robert E. and Josephine Peary letters, box 2, folder 20, Josephine Diebitsch Peary Files (JDPP), JDPP.

Josephine proved herself again when she returned to the United States with their baby daughter, while Robert remained in Greenland for another year in order to continue his explorations. Once back in America, Josephine was obliged to raise the funds for a relief ship to be sent the following summer to retrieve Peary and his crew. To do so, Josephine personally solicited several prestigious scientific and geographical societies to help with the fundraising; she also gave two public lectures on her Arctic experiences, under the auspices of the National Geographical Society and the Brooklyn Institute, with the proceeds going towards the relief trip.⁶⁸² These actions required Josephine to enter into public and scientific circles that were not typically feminine domains. As Bloom observes, “exposing oneself in public was not only considered a liability for women in the Arctic; it was equally dangerous at home in the world of geographical societies, clubs, and publishing houses that was also defined as exclusive to men.”⁶⁸³ In another letter to her husband, Josephine described her highly public and perhaps even crassly commercial fundraising efforts as being fundamentally against her nature, but motivated by her earnest desire to serve him. She confided that the work had “been the most difficult task I ever undertook & I have done things that a year ago I thought an impossibility, but the consciousness that I was working for the dearest one, to me, in all the universe gave me strength & courage.”⁶⁸⁴ In carving out a new space for white women on expeditions in

⁶⁸² Marie Peary Stafford, Article about Josephine’s life, box 8, folder 257, Scrapbooks, JDPP.

⁶⁸³ Bloom, *Gender on Ice*, 40.

⁶⁸⁴ Josephine Diebitsch Peary to Robert E. Peary, 17 March 1895, Robert E. and Josephine Peary letters, box 2, folder 27, JDPP. Josephine characterized her actions in similar, although more negative, terms in a letter from later that year: “All this I have borne & kept to myself & not only continue to love you but love you my darling husband more & more every day. I think I have given you proof. I have gone away from you because you wished it. I have worked for you & I have humiliated myself for you, not in

America's culture of Arctic exploration, it appears that Josephine drew upon the rhetoric of feminine domesticity not only because it suited her strategically, but also because it resonated with her personally, as it did with many women of her time.

Josephine Peary was nevertheless extremely effective in utilising a variety of American media to narrate her wife story for the public. Her first intervention on the subject appeared in an article she wrote for the *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, published in 1892, several months after her return from her first trip to Greenland. Josephine's chosen subject was "Housekeeping in the Arctics," and was directly framed as a response to those critics of her who "based their views of the subject on the fact that no woman had ever before ventured into the Arctic regions... ." ⁶⁸⁵ Rather than listening to such critics, Josephine wrote that she preferred to be guided by the desires of her husband, the "one to whom I was everything." ⁶⁸⁶ Like many of Peary's subsequent writings, she characterized her role on the expedition as extending the middle-class American home into Arctic space by giving the expedition headquarters a "homelike appearance," in its physical arrangements and material comforts, complete with linen curtains, special menus for birthday dinner parties, and an "At Home" reception on New Year's Eve. ⁶⁸⁷

These early articulations of Josephine's wife story were fleshed out in *My Arctic Journal: A Year Among the Ice-Fields and Eskimos*, published just months after her

the sense of a sacrifice but because I love you & will endure anything that will go to make you happy." Josephine Diebitsch Peary to Robert E. Peary, 2-21 June 1895, Robert E. and Josephine Peary letters, box 2, folder 27, JDPF, JDPP.

⁶⁸⁵ Josephine Diebitsch Peary, "Keeping House in the Arctics," *Pittsburgh Dispatch* 13 November 1892, 9, *Chronicling America*.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid. See also Erikson, "Homemaking, Snow Babies, and the Search for the North Pole," 267. In an interview from 1892, Josephine described the "reception" she hosted in her room on New Year's Eve. "Some Women Explorers," 3.

departure for her second trip to Greenland. This narrative emphasized the extent to which the spaces and social structures of middle-class domesticity could be transplanted to the Arctic, through her careful management of the expedition party's sense of time and space. Access to privacy, for instance, was important, and members of the expedition party entered the Pearys' bedroom only at Josephine's invitation.⁶⁸⁸ Josephine also hung two American flags across the front of their bed "à la portière" so that they "could be drawn in such a manner as to completely hide the bed and its occupant."⁶⁸⁹ The issue of privacy was in turn emphasized by the American press, who reported that "Mrs. Peary's boudoir was petitioned off from the rest of the establishment."⁶⁹⁰ She also populated her bedroom with the display pieces and "bric-a-brac" typical of Victorian parlours, that would have communicated hominess to herself and her readers (**Fig. 2**). The observance of national and Christian holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, as well as, on a



Figure 5.2: An illustrated section of the Peary's private apartment at Redcliffe House, 1891-1892 (Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 158.)

⁶⁸⁸ Josephine Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal: A Year Among Ice-Fields and Eskimos* (New York and Philadelphia: Contemporary Publishing Company, 1893), 99.

⁶⁸⁹ Peary, "Keeping House in the Arctics," 9. This bedroom design feature is also recorded in Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 79.

⁶⁹⁰ "Lieut. Peary is Safe," *The Portland Daily Press* [ME] 13 September 1892, 6, *Chronicling America*.

more quotidian level, the institution of a weekly cleaning routine, drew the entire party into the regular rhythms and chronologies of American domestic life.⁶⁹¹ Cumulatively, her published diary describes, in Peary's own words, the "many months of ... real solid comfort and happiness enjoyed by the woman who, when she left home and friends, was told over and over again that she must expect all kinds of hardships."⁶⁹² As one reviewer commented, Josephine Peary's writings offered "a more homelike view of the region than any other writer," giving her readers "a delightful glimpse into the home life of the party, [showing] how comfortable such a life can be made by forethought and intelligent provision."⁶⁹³

Josephine's written accounts of the sophisticated domestic life and material comforts to be found in expedition headquarters did not, as one might imagine, seriously hamper Robert's ability to publicly perform his rugged masculinity through, in his own words, pitting his strength and intellect "against the blind, brute forces of the elements of primeval matter."⁶⁹⁴ The Pearys and the American public drew a distinction between life at the Pearys' two primary headquarters along the Greenland coast, known as Redcliffe House and Anniversary Lodge, and travels over Greenland's interior ice cap, where the "real work" of heroic exploration was supposedly conducted.⁶⁹⁵ In 1891 reporters were

⁶⁹¹ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 83 (Thanksgiving), 93-94 (Christmas), 81 (cleaning).

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, 204.

⁶⁹³ Marjorie Johnson, "Mrs. Peary and the Snow Baby," *Modern Women* 1903, n.p., Scrapbooks, box 4, folder 40, JDPP.

⁶⁹⁴ Peary, *The North Pole*, 2.

⁶⁹⁵ According to Lisa Bloom, in Josephine's writings "the unmapped spaces of the Arctic are seen as officially the realm of and for men; for her to enter the space outside of Redcliffe without being accompanied by her husband entailed unforeseen risks." Bloom, *Gender on Ice*, 40.

assured, presumably by either Robert or Josephine, that while “Mrs. Robert E. Peary is the first white woman member of an Arctic exploring party,” she would “remain at Lieut. Peary’s headquarters at Whale Sound” while the men would “share the real burdens of the far north expedition” on the “Great Ice.”⁶⁹⁶ In remaining in their Arctic home, Josephine stayed on the feminine side of the “threshold of the field of effort” as Robert put it, “in which pure brute physical fitness and strength are *sine qua non*... .”⁶⁹⁷ While Josephine Peary was reported to have enjoyed taking vigorous winter walks with her husband during the early years of their marriage in Philadelphia, Josephine Peary’s Arctic persona did not include a natural inclination toward the vigorous but feminine physical culture increasingly associated with the New Woman in the Victorian era.⁶⁹⁸

Through this fine-grained distinction of the activities of the expedition, Josephine was able to assume the classical, Penelope-like role of the homebound waiting woman, anxiously anticipating Robert’s return from his three-month overland ice journey.⁶⁹⁹ Furthermore, Josephine’s experience of easy domesticity as narrated in *My Arctic Journal*

⁶⁹⁶ “Cheers for Mrs. Peary,” 5.

⁶⁹⁷ Peary, *Northward Over the ‘Great Ice’: A Narrative of Life and Work along the Shores and upon the Interior Ice-Cap of Northern Greenland in the Years 1886 and 1891-1897, Vol 1* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1898), 47.

⁶⁹⁸ Louise Hall Littlefield, “The Conqueror of the North Pole: Colorful Life Story of Rugged Man Who Startled World 25 Years Ago,” *Portland Sunday Telegram* 18 March 1934, 10, box 1, folder 10a, JDPF, JDPP.

⁶⁹⁹ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 151. Robert wrote of his homecoming in a letter appended to *My Arctic Journal*, written on the Pearys’ second time in Greenland: “In the ship lying at anchor at the very head of the bay I found the woman who had been waiting for me for three months, and two days later we were back again in the little house which had sheltered us through a year of Arctic vicissitudes.” Robert E. Peary, “The Great White Journey,” in *My Arctic Journal*, 230. As Marie DiBattista and Deborah Epstein Nord observe, in Western mythological and literary traditions, “woman is habitually associated with the subject of home, man with the enterprise of travel and adventure; woman perennially imagined as Penelope, man as Ulysses... .” DiBattista and Nord, *At Home in the World*, 34.

only reflected positively on Robert's masculine capacity to provide and care for his family. Robert himself emphasized this fact when he noted, in the preface to Josephine's journal, that his wife, a "tenderly-nurtured woman [had] lived for a year in safety and comfort" in an Arctic environment where earlier American explorers had suffered and starved.⁷⁰⁰ Marie Peary's own accounting of the Peary family's Arctic life in *The Snowbaby's Own Story* is even more explicit in her praise of Robert as the consummate family man and provider. Here she recalled how Josephine made it clear to her that any admiration she received for having been born in the Arctic rightfully belonged to her father, and that she should be "very proud of having a father who could make us so comfortable in a frozen land that even a small baby could live and be well and strong."⁷⁰¹

Set in this suitably domestic context, Peary was able to credibly characterize her own work on the expedition in the conventionally feminine terms of "cook," "nurse," and "housekeeper."⁷⁰² As one reporter put it, her time in the Arctic was spent "cooking, sewing, doing all the thousand and one other things that a woman does in her own home."⁷⁰³ The paratextual materials associated with Josephine's narrative echoed her account of a feminine, domesticated Arctic. Robert Peary's preface to *My Arctic Journal*, for instance, invoked the idea of devoted wifeness, as he wrote that "the feeling that led Mrs. Peary through these experiences was first and foremost a desire to be by my side."⁷⁰⁴ This was reiterated in the publicity materials that were produced by her publisher, New York's

⁷⁰⁰ Robert E. Peary, preface to *My Arctic Journal*, 5.

⁷⁰¹ Marie Ahnighito Peary, *The Snowbaby's Own Story* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1934), 49.

⁷⁰² Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 35.

⁷⁰³ Greta Kerr, "Mrs. Robert E. Peary," in JDPF box 1, folder 10, News articles, 1939-1968, 1999, JDPP.

⁷⁰⁴ Peary, preface to *My Arctic Journal*, 3.

Contemporary Publishing Company, around the book's release. In December of 1893, a biography of Josephine Peary appeared in the publishers' promotional periodical *Around the World*. The publication characterized their new author as a "courageous woman," about to accompany "her husband for a second time, believing it to be her duty to render such assistance as she may be capable of, both materially and in the way of companionship."⁷⁰⁵ Another advertisement for the book quoted a review from the *Brooklyn Standard Union* that alluded to Josephine's "nobler purpose" for going North, namely, to provide moral and material care for her husband. The reviewer observed: "Mrs. Peary adds to every page the charm of a refined and delicate personality, and a nobler purpose than ever animated any of the former discoverers who have sought the mysteries of the North."⁷⁰⁶ Finally, Marie Peary's retelling of the Peary family's Arctic history echoed virtually verbatim her father's comments from 1893. Here Marie characterized her mother's motivations for Arctic travel "not from any idea of being a heroine or of making herself famous, but simply because she felt that her place was with my father."⁷⁰⁷

Part of the popularity and success of Josephine Peary's Arctic narrative was that her image as "a brave little wife," as *The Washington Times* put it, provided an exemplar of American womanhood that celebrated the idealized characteristics of feminine domesticity, set starkly against the backdrop of the Arctic environment, as part of the

⁷⁰⁵ Erikson, "Josephine Diebitsch-Peary." 14.

⁷⁰⁶ Review included on publicity sheet from *Brooklyn Standard Union*, quoted in *Around the World* 1:11 (January 1894): n.p., <https://books.google.ca/books?id=pzA6AQAAIAAJ&pg=PP9&lpg=PP9&dq=%22A+sledge+journey+and+an+experience%22+Around+the+World+Dec.+1893;&source=bl&ots=7p0z-PwdSb&sig=ACfU3U3DVi5PTvg75bonXrwC8KsNFtcQKg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiSmK2norDhAhVLJt8KHYNhDIgQ6AEwAHoECAIQAQ#v=onepage&q&f=true>.

⁷⁰⁷ Peary, *The Snowbaby's Own Story*, 9.

gendered national character.⁷⁰⁸ Peary herself described her actions as a devoted wife as a positive reflection on American womanhood through a clever act of ventriloquism. In her article on “Housekeeping in the Arctics,” Peary placed these sentiments in the mouth of the Governor of Greenland, whom the party visited at Upernavik, who offered a toast to “the American woman; for only to an American woman would we look for such a sacrifice – who follows her husband even into the dreary Arctic regions.”⁷⁰⁹ This interpretation of Josephine’s actions was also picked up by a contributor to New York’s *Munsey Magazine*, in an article on “The Heroes of the Icy North.” Speaking of the Pearys, the contributor observed:

It is safe to say that none of the earlier explorers dreamed of family life amid the polar ice. It was reserved for a lady of our own day to accompany her husband into the far north to share with him the sunless days of the arctic winter, and to return to civilization with a child born close to the pole. What more supreme test could be given than this, that Mrs. Peary voluntarily underwent, of the courage and endurance of the modern American woman?⁷¹⁰

In this way, Josephine’s role as an Arctic wife provided the perfect supportive counterpart to Robert Peary’s public image as paragon of American masculinity; together, the Arctic couple celebrated and naturalized the patriarchal family unit, proving that domestic life could be cultivated even in the most inhospitable of terrains.

Josephine was well aware, however, of the pressure upon white women of her status to achieve the exalted state of biological motherhood.⁷¹¹ Giving birth to Marie “under the

⁷⁰⁸ “From the Frozen North,” *The Washington Times* 26 September 1894, 1, *Chronicling America*.

⁷⁰⁹ Peary, “Keeping House in the Arctics,” 9.

⁷¹⁰ “The Heroes of the Icy North,” *Christmas Munsey* 1895, n.p., in Scrapbooks, box 3, folder 20, JDPP.

⁷¹¹ Writing to her mother-in-law in 1890, while living in an apartment building in Philadelphia, Josephine related how her tenant neighbours related that they thought it would be “nice,” if she and Robert had a baby, and that “evidently they are anxious

shadow of the pole” represented the culmination of Josephine’s Arctic career as a model American woman, whose energies were devoted to the perpetuation of the race.⁷¹² In 1901, Josephine capitalized upon her new maternal status by publishing *The Snow Baby*, a children’s book telling the story of Marie’s birth and early infancy in the Arctic. The book emphasized Marie’s racial perfection, describing her as “a little snow-white baby girl with big blue eyes.”⁷¹³ The origin story for her daughter’s nickname, “The Snow Baby,” taken up by the American press and used for Marie’s entire life, is also significant. According to Josephine, the name was given to her by the Inughuit, who “wanted to touch her to see if she was warm and not made of snow, she was so white.”⁷¹⁴ Josephine’s characterisation of the Inughuit response to meeting the “perfectly white” baby as a kind of awe that bordered on worship asserts her sense of her family’s racial superiority and the naturalness of colonial relations.⁷¹⁵ This theme is taken up in Marie’s own narrative of her birth, when she describes the “series of solemn Eskimo visitors [who] came to pay their respects and to see for themselves the new wonder which the white man had to show them.”⁷¹⁶ Marie’s snowy skin was also put on display for readers in photographs in *The Snow Baby*, particularly those that showed her, “white and naked,” taking one of her regular sun baths (**Fig. 3**).⁷¹⁷ *The Snow Baby*, like earlier American juvenile literature, according to Robin Bernstein, made “a spectacle of phenotypical and chromatic whiteness” as a central

that we should have care.” Josephine Peary to Mary Peary 21 March 1890, quoted in Weems, *Peary: The Explorer and the Man*, 100.

⁷¹² Phrase appears in “Peary’s Daughter Writes New Book, Story of Her Life,” in Book Reviews, 1930s, series 1, box 1, folder 17, MAPP.

⁷¹³ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 14.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷¹⁶ Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 1.

⁷¹⁷ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 24.



Figure 5.3: Photograph, by Josephine or Robert Peary, of Marie Peary sunbathing, 1893 or 1894 (Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 35.)

characteristic of the childhood innocence that was denied, by definition, to non-white children.⁷¹⁸ Deploying natural metaphors for whiteness and purity by likening Marie's skin to snow and sunlight, Josephine presented her daughter's birth as the culmination of middle-class American family life – the moral and biological perpetuation of the white race.

Through photography, the Pearys simultaneously framed Marie's birth as a personal and a national achievement. Two images in *The Snow Baby* feature an infant Marie in close association with the American flag, one of the most important elements of what Benedict Anderson calls the secular regalia of the state.⁷¹⁹ In one photograph, the flag

⁷¹⁸ Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2011), 4.

⁷¹⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 182. Anderson quoted in Erikson, "Homemaking, Snowbabies, and the Search for the North Pole," 258.



Figure 5.4: Photograph of Marie Peary by Josephine or Robert Peary, 1893 or 1894.
(Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 21.)

(Fig. 4) In the second photograph, Josephine stands outdoors, holding Marie in her arms, who is, according to the caption, “Wrapped in the Stars and Stripes.” The image commemorates Marie’s first time being out of doors, as well as the last day of sunlight before the 24-hour darkness descended for the winter (Fig. 5). This symbolically potent image appeared in multiple Peary family Arctic narratives, including Robert Peary’s *Northward Over the Great Ice* (1898) and Marie Peary’s *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*.⁷²¹ In using the flag for Marie’s baby blanket, the national

functions as a backdrop for Marie’s portrait as she sits in a highchair, making literal Robinson’s observation that explorers engaged with the Arctic as a “national landscape.”⁷²⁰



Figure 5.5: Photograph, Josephine and Marie Peary, by Robert Peary, 1893
(Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 18.)

⁷²⁰ Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible*, 3.

⁷²¹ Robert E. Peary, *Northward Over the ‘Great Ice’: A Narrative of Life and Work along the Shores and upon the Interior Ice-Cap of Northern Greenland in the Years 1886 and 1891-1897* [1898] (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1914), 75. Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 10.

icon also became a Peary family heirloom, with the images suggesting that Marie's birth was significant not only to the Pearys, but to the nation. If, as Bloom and Robinson suggest, Robert Peary's discovery of the North Pole represented a national victory of symbolic conquest for an expansionist United States, the same might be said about Josephine Peary giving birth to the first white child "born within 400 odd miles of the North Pole."⁷²²

The American flag proved to be an important symbolic element of Peary family lore that continued to link Arctic exploration, as a masculine project of American nationalism embodied by Robert Peary, with the ideas of family life, women's work, and domesticity suggested by Josephine Peary's Arctic presence. Two American flags quite literally provided the frame for the Pearys' marital bed at Redcliffe House in 1891-2.⁷²³ In 1898, Robert Peary set out for a four-year Arctic sojourn, to make a prolonged, multi-stage attempt at reaching the North Pole. Josephine, who was pregnant with their second child at the time, was not to accompany him North for the first time since their marriage. As a parting gift, Josephine hand-stitched a large silk American flag for Robert to use as his expedition banner.⁷²⁴ Once again conforming to the role of the devoted wife, Josephine deployed sewing, a conventionally feminine occupation, and used her flag to provide her husband with "inspiration and moral force," necessary to reach the North Pole, as their daughter Marie put it, despite her physical absence.⁷²⁵ Until his final attainment of the Pole, Robert would clip fragments from this flag to cache, along with other forms of

⁷²² *Newark Coll.* 3 October 1915, n.p., in scrapbook clippings, 1900-1918, MAPP.

⁷²³ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 79.

⁷²⁴ Marie Peary Stafford, "The Peary Flag Comes to Rest," *National Geographic* (1955[?]): n.p. series 1, box 1, folder 48, MAPP.

⁷²⁵ "His Wife Was Real Inspiration of Admiral Peary, Daughter Reveals," *Portland Press Herald*, 17 September 1931, n.p. Scrapbooks, box 5, folder 103, JDPP.

documentation, at various Arctic locations as proof of his geographical achievements, such as reaching Greenland's most northerly point in 1900.⁷²⁶ Finally, in 1909, it was Josephine's flag that Robert raised at what he believed to be the site of the North Pole (**Fig.**



Figure 5.6: Photograph of Robert E. Peary at the North Pole, 1909 (Peary Stafford, "The Peary Flag Comes to Rest," *National Geographic*, 1)

6). In the wake of the ensuing controversy over the veracity of Peary's claims to have reached the Pole, Josephine's flag became, as "the stained emblem of a man's patriotism and a woman's love," one of the most significant and emotionally potent pieces of evidence in Robert's accounting of events.⁷²⁷ By 1909, then, Josephine's flag, as an object and an icon, was overdetermined by nationalistic and domestic symbolism. As a totem of Robert Peary's Arctic achievements and

rugged masculinity, Peary reportedly carried "the tattered silken flag" on sledging

⁷²⁶ "Admiral Peary's Widow Receives 4th Fragment of Flag Left in Arctic," *The Portland Daily Examiner* 5 October 1953, n.p, JDPP box 1, folder 10, JDPP.

⁷²⁷ "Peary's Flag is Enshrined by National Geographic," n.d., n.p, Scrapbooks, box 7, folders 202-208, JDPP. Erikson, "Homemaking, Snowbabies, and the Search for the North Pole," 278.

expeditions wrapped around his embattled body to protect it from the elements.⁷²⁸ As a piece of America’s imperialist national history, the Peary flag was displayed, for a time, at Washington’s Smithsonian Museum.⁷²⁹ As a family heirloom, the flag was also displayed on the wall of the Peary family home in Washington and then, after Robert’s death, in Marie’s home (**Fig. 7**), in what she jokingly referred to as her own personal “Arctic museum.”⁷³⁰ Finally, as a piece of women’s needlework, Josephine’s flag claimed the North Pole as a proving ground for feminine domesticity as much as for Robert’s brand of American masculinity. In highlighting the role that women’s work played in producing the flag, and, by extension, the national community it represented, Josephine Peary made a place for white women in the nation’s history of polar exploration.



Figure 5.7: Photograph, Marie with Flag, 1923 (MAPP series 4, box 2, folder 199)

That the Arctic could prove a suitable context for the cultivation of the desirable qualities of white womanhood, as well as white manhood, and, cumulatively, the exaltation of white family life, suggests something significant about the identity formation of white, middle-class American families in this period. Confrontations with antithetical “Others,” in particular, seem to have been important in sustaining these identities. Studies of men

⁷²⁸ “Peary’s Years in North Anxious Ones for Wife,” *Kansas City Times* 24 April 1929, n.p. Scrapbooks, box 5, folders 83-84, JDPP.

⁷²⁹ “Admiral Peary’s Widow Receives 4th Fragment of Flag Left in Arctic.”

⁷³⁰ *Washington Herald* 30 November 1934, n.p, series 1, box 2, folder 222, MAPP.

from this class, including Leonidas Hubbard and Robert Peary, have identified the pervasive contemporary belief that elite white manhood was most effectively purified through confrontations with its cultural and racial “others,” including wilderness settings and “primitive” Indigenous men. Josephine Peary’s narrative depiction of her Arctic experiences suggests that the same could be said about the affirmation of white womanhood and family life: in the eyes of her American audience, white domesticity and femininity, as embodied by Josephine, were nourished and strengthened through their exposure to, and triumph over, the unhomely Arctic environment. In the next section, I consider how Josephine Peary was also able to affirm and consolidate her white womanhood through her domestic encounters with Inughuit and working-class women.

5.3 “Never Have Seen One Like You”: Peary’s Exceptionalism Among Inughuit Women

Prevailing American ideals of home and family life, and women’s roles within these spheres, provided Josephine Peary with crucial interpretive scaffolding for making her Arctic experiences culturally legible and morally legitimate to audiences at home. The preceding section dealt with Josephine’s articulated sense of self as an Arctic wife and mother in relative isolation. This was, in fact, how she presented herself to the public: her Arctic life was an experience, as her publishers put it, of “solitary womanhood.”⁷³¹ In reality, Josephine’s diaries, correspondence, and even her published writings, to a certain degree, reveal the extent to which her social sphere in the Arctic was, in fact, predominantly female. On each occasion that Josephine overwintered in the Arctic in 1891-1892, 1893-

⁷³¹ “Josephine Diebitsch-Peary,” *Around the World*, 14.

1894, and 1900-1901, she lived and worked closely with Inughuit women, as they collaborated on the design and production of fur clothing for the expedition crews. On every trip except her first, Josephine was also accompanied by a female servant hired at home in America. In 1893, Susanna Cross, an obstetrical nurse from New York, went North in order to assist Josephine in childbirth and in caring for the Pearys' newborn daughter. In 1900-1901 and again on Josephine's last trip North in 1902, a Newfoundland woman, Martha Percy, travelled with Josephine and Marie to work as their maid and nurse, respectively. And yet, Josephine was able to hold herself apart from these women, narratively and socially, and to claim the privilege of having the only female experience of Arctic exploration worth telling. Once again, domestic ideology structured her relations with these women, both in-person and in terms of how she represented them (or failed to) in her family *qua* national narratives of polar exploration. By treating all of the women around her, irrespective of their nationality or economic status, like household workers, Josephine managed their interactions according to the cultural script of mistress-servant relations typical of middle-class American homes.

The ways in which Josephine Peary related to these women, as well as how she represented them in public discourse, were not, however, uniform, and require separate treatment. The presence and contributions of white female domestic servants on expeditions figured almost not at all in Josephine's published Arctic narratives, and, consequently, in the national history of polar exploration. Her interactions with Inughuit women, however, feature prominently in her personal and public reflections on her time in the Arctic. Despite these differing representations, I still want to suggest that Josephine's relationships with both groups of women were shaped by the same logic of colonial

domesticity. Indeed, the differing ways in which Josephine thought and wrote about the women around her in the Arctic were entirely consistent with the discourse of domesticity at the turn of the century: the labour of white household servants was frequently hidden from public view in middle-class American homes, in order to perpetuate the fiction that the domestic sphere was an “inherently unlaborious,” space, in deliberate contrast to the masculine world of work; bourgeois white women simultaneously scrutinized and pathologized the intimate lives of Indigenous women in America in an effort to transform “indigenous homes and bodies” according to the gendered standards of civility and domesticity.⁷³² Both practices had the function of elevating the status of elite white women by emphasizing their function as the cultural and moral centres of family life and as guardians of the intimate domains of the national community. In attempting to draw women into relation with her via the structures of household domesticity, Josephine endeavored to recreate those geographical and cultural contexts from home that justified and naturalized the power of middle-class women over working-class and non-white women. The remainder of this chapter considers how domestic practices, at home as well as in the Arctic, blurred the lines of race and class difference among those domestic servants who came under the jurisdiction of household employers like Josephine Peary.

As Heather Davis-Fisch notes, historians have struggled to fit polar exploration within existing historical and contemporary models of intercultural interaction and exploitation, colonialism particularly.⁷³³ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth

⁷³² Karen Sayer, “‘A Sufficiency of Clothing’: Dress and Domesticity in Victorian Britain,” *Textile History* 33:1 (2002): 119, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1179/004049602793710099>.

Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 10.

⁷³³ Davis-Fisch, *Loss and Cultural Remains in Performance*, 23.

centuries, the Arctic was not viewed as a potential resource frontier, so it could not be considered as one of the kinds of colonial formations that were established, according to Patrick Wolfe, “to extract surplus value from indigenous labour.”⁷³⁴ For much of the twentieth century, arguably until after the Second World War, Euro-American presence in the Arctic was, as Davis-Fisch puts it, “neither pervasive nor permanent.”⁷³⁵ Nor was it the objective of explorers to displace or supplant the Arctic’s Indigenous peoples. A settler colonial framework cannot, therefore, fully capture the nature of the interactions between Inuit and non-Inuit visitors like Josephine Peary.⁷³⁶ Absent the material conditions of colonialism “on the ground,” some scholars like Michael Robinson, Jen Hill and Lisa Bloom have attended to the Arctic’s imaginative function as a theatre for imperial states like Britain and the United States to enact dramas related to their domestic and expansionist aspirations.⁷³⁷ Inspired by this scholarship, I am interested in the extent to which colonial relations could operate outside of the material structures of colonialism through the mental and material structures of white domesticity, forged in the crucible of American settler colonialism. Recognising that the domestic sphere, both as a physical space and a set of social relations, represented the primary interface through which Josephine related to the

⁷³⁴ Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology*, 1.

⁷³⁵ Davis-Fisch, *Loss and Cultural Remains in Performance*, 23.

⁷³⁶ According to Wolfe, in settler colonies, “The colonizers come to stay – invasion is a structure not an event.” Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology*, 2. My understanding of settler colonialism is also informed by Patrick Wolfe, “Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race,” *The American Historical Review* 1067:3 (2001): 866-905, doi: 10.2307/2692330; Veracini, ““Settler Colonialism,””313-333, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1080/03086534.2013.768099>; Veracini, introduction, *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism* 1-8; Reid and Peace, “Colonies of Settlement and Settler Colonialism,” 79-94.

⁷³⁷ Hill, *White Horizon*, 4-18. Bloom, *Gender on Ice*, 2-4. Robinson, *The Coldest Crucible* and Robinson, *The Lost White Tribe*, 162-169.

Arctic environment and those around her, it is useful to think about the extent to which the cult of domesticity developed in Britain and North America in the nineteenth century alongside and in response to imperial strains of racial thought that placed white mistresses in positions of moral and economic authority over their domestic servants.

After building their “cottage by the sea” in Whale Sound in 1891, Josephine Peary’s diary notes that it was one of the first objectives of the expedition to find an Inughuit couple and to secure their services for the winter. Men were sent, according to Josephine,

to search Herbert and Northumberland Islands for an Eskimo settlement, and if possible to induce a family to move over and settle down near Redcliffe House. The man could show us the best hunting-grounds, and assist in bagging all kinds of game, while the woman could attend to making our skin boots, or kamiks, and keeping them in order.⁷³⁸

The first couple to arrive were Ikwa and Mané, with their daughters, Anadore and Nowyahrtlik.⁷³⁹ While Ikwa came and went on hunting trips, Mané remained near Redcliffe House, sewing fur clothing for the expedition party. The second Inughuit family to work closely with the Peary expedition over the winter and spring of 1891-1892 were Annokah and M’gipsu, who, Josephine noted, always worked at her sewing with her baby on her back.⁷⁴⁰ In popular Arctic narrative, Mané and M’gipsu became, as Robert Peary put it, Josephine’s “eager and faithful servant[s],” conducting their work as seamstresses under her careful supervision.⁷⁴¹

Josephine’s published descriptions of her initial encounters with the two families characterized the Inughuit as racial others and registered her own feelings of racial

⁷³⁸ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 40.

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁷⁴¹ Peary, *Northward Over the ‘Great Ice,’ Vol. I*, 93.

superiority. In *My Arctic Journal*, Josephine wrote: “[t]hese Eskimos were the queerest, dirtiest-looking individuals I had ever seen. Clad entirely in furs, they reminded me more of monkeys than of human beings.”⁷⁴² In a later piece written for a ladies’ journal, appropriately called *The Home Queen*, Josephine invoked Darwinian theory to capture the wide evolutionary gulf that she believed existed between these people and herself:

I shall never forget the impression which these strange-looking creatures made upon me. ... short, squatty figures, entirely clad in furs, stood looking back at me with small, keen, animal eyes that glistened behind the matted strands of long, black hair which straggled over their dirty, yellow faces. ... Surely if these were human beings, Mr. Darwin’s theory would need no more convincing illustration of its correctness.⁷⁴³

Josephine explicated her encounters with Inughuit men and women through dominant strains in Western racial thinking, drawn from the new science of anthropology that positioned cultural and national groups at different points on the timeline of human evolution. On one end of the spectrum were the lowest, quasi-animalistic, orders of human life, and Josephine appears to place the Inughuit within this category. In an interview with the *New York Sun*, Josephine declared that “they are little, if any, above the lower animals... .”⁷⁴⁴ At the other end of the spectrum of human evolution was the state of civilization, defined in accordance with the values of white Western societies.

As Anne McClintock and Gail Bederman have noted, gender norms were viewed as an important index of a particular group’s racial status and evolutionary state. Extreme sexual specialisation, idealized in the cult of domesticity and the doctrine of “separate

⁷⁴² Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 41.

⁷⁴³ Josephine Diebitsch-Peary, “Among the Arctic Highlanders,” *The Home Queen: A Monthly Journal for Ladies* 15:2 (February 1896): n.p., Scrapbooks, box 3, folder 23, JDPP.

⁷⁴⁴ *New York Sun* Article, 1895-1896, Scrapbooks, box 23, folder 22, JDPP.

spheres” for men and women, was valued, for example, as a defining element of civilization.⁷⁴⁵ Thanks to this “analogy between race and gender,” McClintock argues, middle-class domestic practice took on tremendous significance as a proving ground for white racial supremacy.⁷⁴⁶ In making the observation that she was unable to distinguish “which was the woman” in her initial encounter with the Inughuit, Josephine Peary showed the extent to which her cultural background primed her to define her experience with radical racial alterity in gendered terms. In addition to the perceived physical similarities between Inughuit men and women, Josephine argued, part of her difficulty in distinguishing between the sexes was their clothing: “Both figures were clad in bifurcated garments, and if there were a woman before me she [was] advanced of her civilized sisters and was wearing that article of apparel which has heretofore distinguished the lords of creation.”⁷⁴⁷ She was quick to assure the American public in her writings and interviews that “she personally did not discard female dress for male attire” in the Arctic, but “wore heavy blanket skirts beneath skin dresses.”⁷⁴⁸ Such comments suggest that, for Josephine, to dress the Inughuit way would also have meant dressing like a man. Even when she

⁷⁴⁵ Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization*, 25.

⁷⁴⁶ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 42.

⁷⁴⁷ Diebitsch-Peary, “Among the Arctic Highlanders,” n.p.

⁷⁴⁸ “Some Women Explorers,” 3.

“dressed as the native dress when out on sledge trips,” therefore, she declared that she “always wore civilized clothing next to [her] body.”⁷⁴⁹

Several Arctic historians have considered how explorers utilized photography not only as a documentary technology, but as a means of negotiating relations of power between white and Indigenous subjects.⁷⁵⁰ Josephine’s understanding of dress as an articulation of race and gender identity also appears to have informed how she positioned herself in the images accompanying *My Arctic Journal*. In **Fig. 8**, Josephine stands to the



Figure 5.8: Photograph, Ikwa, Mané, their child, and Josephine Peary, 1891 or 1892 (Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, opp. 44)

left of Ikwa, Mané, in their “unisex” fur clothing, and their children. Josephine stands apart not only in her posture and stature, but also her dress, which invokes an urban middle-class femininity that appears at odds with the other

subjects’ attire and the extremities of the Arctic environment on display. Interestingly,

⁷⁴⁹ *New York Sun* Article, 1895-1896, JDPP.

⁷⁵⁰ Burant, “Using Photography to Assert Canadian Sovereignty in the Arctic,” 76-87. Susan Close, *Framing Identity: Social Practices of Photography in Canada, 1880-1920* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2007). Geller, *Northern Exposures*. Trott, “The Dialectics of ‘Us’ and ‘Other,’” 171-190. Shari M. Huhndorf considers the work of Canadian photographer and videographer Robert Flaherty in *Going Native*, 91-100.

Josephine’s dress in this picture would have marked out to contemporary viewers her racial superiority, but also her elevated class status, relative to the Inughuit family. In the Victorian era, upper-class women were distinguished from their working-class counterparts by their ability to dress for aesthetics over functionality. According to Karen Sayer, “though all classes had to wear dress appropriate to their constitution and geographic location, and though it was better to avoid harming the body if possible, only the ‘civilized,’ well-to-do managed to ‘rise above’ its needs to considerations of toilet, elegance and taste.”⁷⁵¹ Her use of a parasol, for example, intended to shield the white woman’s skin from sun exposure, is jarring against the wintry environment presented in the photograph. Josephine’s refusal to accommodate her wardrobe to the exigencies of the Arctic



Figure 5.9: Photograph, Josephine Peary in McCormick Bay, 1891 or 1892 (Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, opp. 32)

environment is also illustrated in **Fig. 9**, taken after the expedition returned to Redcliffe House from a hunt with a female walrus and her (still live) offspring.⁷⁵² Indeed, the unsuitability of Peary’s dress for the environment in both

⁷⁵¹ Sayer, “‘A Sufficiency of Clothing.’” 121.

⁷⁵² Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 40-41.

photographs verges on the theatrical, and invites comparisons with Elizabeth Ford's fur-clad performances as Anauta, a practice she maintained even in the heat of American springs and summers.

Interestingly, Josephine's own published writings and private diaries rarely use the language of whiteness to describe her experience, except on those occasions when a racial identity is projected onto her body by an outside observer. Her writing describes several uncomfortably objectifying incidences, for example, when she became a spectacle for Inuit audiences, who were said to be seeing a white woman for the first time.⁷⁵³ According to Josephine, Inughuit women expressed admiration for her height, the whiteness of her skin, the narrowness of her waist, and even the speed with which she moved.⁷⁵⁴ As the following example suggests, these moments of encounter, as dramatized by Josephine, further emphasized her exceptionalism within the Arctic context: "one of them, putting her face close to mine – much closer than I relished – scrutinized me carefully, from head to foot...".⁷⁵⁵ According to Josephine, Inughuit men and women in particular displayed an awed reaction to her whiteness that was very similar to their interactions with the infant Marie. These scenes served not only to characterize the differences between white and Inughuit women in the biological terms of race, but to hint at Josephine's belief in the superior physiology of the white female.

The foregoing sheds light on the evolutionary gulf that Josephine Peary perceived between the Inughuit and herself, a category of intercultural difference which she articulated in terms of race, class, *and* gender. Given her views, it may appear

⁷⁵³ Ibid., 44, 72-73.

⁷⁵⁴ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 134-135. Peary, *The Snowbaby's Own Story*, 155.

⁷⁵⁵ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 130.

counterintuitive that Josephine should have incorporated Inughuit women – Mané and M’gipsu in particular – into her household, the most private and intimate domain of life for middle-class Americans, by treating them as domestic servants. Taking Josephine Peary’s cultural upbringing into account, however, I want to suggest that the domestic sphere would have appeared as a natural site for white women to interface with racial “others” like the Inughuit.

As discussed previously, the maternalist thinking of Josephine’s day framed women’s activities in public life and politics as an extension of their domestic roles and moral obligations as wives and mothers. As an example of what this action might look like, many maternalist advocates argued that privileged white homemakers had an obligation to “mother” and “uplift” working-class and non-white women by bringing them out of their “backward” modes of family life and inducting them into the civilized routines of middle-class domesticity.⁷⁵⁶ This was the logic underlying national policies in several settler colonial states, including America, of removing Indigenous women and children from their homes and placing them in the care of middle-class white families, for whom they worked as domestic servants, for their “social and moral improvement.”⁷⁵⁷ Through these policies, Margaret Jacobs observes, middle-class homemakers “claimed a place for themselves as surrogate mothers who would raise indigenous children properly in more wholesome environments.”⁷⁵⁸ As Victoria Haskins points, out, having an Indigenous servant placed in one’s home by the state actually became a source of prestige in this context, as it was seen

⁷⁵⁶ Haskins, “Domesticating Colonizers,” 1295-1298. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 87-88.

⁷⁵⁷ Haskins, “Domesticating Colonizers,” 1297.

⁷⁵⁸ Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 88.

to indicate a white employer's privileged social status and "domestic virtue."⁷⁵⁹ Wealthy white homemakers' identities were affirmed and sustained, in other words, through their encounters with Indigenous women, who were treated as embodiments of the traits of primitiveness, slovenliness, and promiscuity that they regarded as anathema to their own sense of self.

Domesticity was therefore one of the primary mechanisms through which middle-class Americans managed and systematized difference, while, conversely, typologies of racial difference and white supremacy became central to American understandings of domesticity. As McClintock observes, conscripting women and people of colour into domestic life as servants bound them to the patriarchal order that positioned them as naturally inferior to the men and women who employed them.⁷⁶⁰ Responding to a question from a *New York Sun* reporter on the subject of her "Eskimo" servants, Josephine Peary opined: "No, the Esquimaux do not make particularly good servants. They appear stupid because of their inability to understand our language. I had to learn theirs to a limited extent."⁷⁶¹ While she acknowledged that they were "strong and hardy and well fitted for rough work," the problem lay in their total ignorance of "the niceties of civilization."⁷⁶² The same might have been said – and it often was – about domestic servants working in

⁷⁵⁹ Haskins, "Domesticating Colonizers," 1296.

⁷⁶⁰ Speaking of the British colonial context, McClintock argues that colonized women and children were also incorporated into white homes in ways that brought about their "civilization," which meant their socialisation into their proper places as colonial subjects: "Through the rituals of domesticity ... animals, women, and colonized peoples were wrested from their putatively 'natural' yet, ironically, 'unreasonable' state of 'savagery' and inducted through the domestic progress narrative into a hierarchical relation to white men." McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 34.

⁷⁶¹ "A Very Remarkable Baby," *The New York Times* 7 November 1894, 18, *New York TimesMachine*.

⁷⁶² *Ibid.*

middle-class homes in Britain or the United States, where serving women belonging to a variety of racial groups, particularly women of Irish and African American descent, were described by their employers as “immoral, unintelligent, uncouth, dirty, lazy, and hostile.”⁷⁶³

Managing her Inughuit servants’ access to the private spaces of the Peary family home on Arctic expeditions was another issue that Josephine had in common with women of her class in America. Josephine would not allow, for instance, Inughuit workers to be in the living room at Redcliffe House at meal times, on the grounds that “their odor was too offensive.”⁷⁶⁴ Inughuit were also not allowed to sleep indoors, except when given special permission by the Pearys. On these occasions, Robert and Josephine retained their privacy in their bedroom while Inughuit families and other men of the party slept in the common room.⁷⁶⁵ *My Arctic Journal* documents the several occasions on which M’gipsu and Mané were invited to perform their sewing in the Pearys’ bedroom at Redcliffe House, but Josephine was loathe to allow them the “unusual honor” of sitting on the floor in her room.⁷⁶⁶ Her fear was biological contamination: “I dislike very much to have the natives in my room, on account of their dirty condition, and especially as they are alive with

⁷⁶³ Danielle Taylor Phillips, “Moving with the Women: Tracing Racialization, Migration, and Domestic Workers in the Archive,” *Signs* 38:2 (2013): 383, doi: 10.1086/667449. In the British context, Anne McClintock argues that “[f]emale domestic servants were frequently depicted in the iconography of degeneration – as ... ‘black races,’ ‘slaves,’ and ‘primitives.’ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 42.

⁷⁶⁴ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 81. This comment also appears in the unpublished version of her diary on 20 November. While Josephine’s private diary shows that she personally “insisted” on instituting this rule, in *My Arctic Journal*, she presents it as the unanimous decision of the entire expedition party. Josephine Peary Diary, 20 November 1891, JDPF, box 2, folder 44, in JDPP.

⁷⁶⁵ For example, on 25 October, 1891, Josephine writes that “Bert allowed all hands to sleep on the floor in the boys room.” Josephine Peary Diary, 25 October 1891, JDPF.

⁷⁶⁶ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 87-88.

parasites, of which I am in deadly fear.”⁷⁶⁷ On the other hand, she noted that “we cannot let [Mané] take the furs to her igloo to sew as they will be filled with humickshooy [parasites] & someone must stay in the room with her here to see she does not steal anything.”⁷⁶⁸ It was therefore her task to “superintend” the seamstresses’ work, and make sure that they did not go too near the bed.⁷⁶⁹ At the end of the work day, Josephine executed a rigorous cleaning regimen involving sweeping the floors, and covering them with “a solution of corrosive sublimate, given to me by the doctor.” Finally, she rubbed herself and Robert down with alcohol every evening to keep the “pests” away.⁷⁷⁰ Josephine’s fears that her seamstresses might contaminate her bedroom were typical of contemporary representations of all domestic servants among middle-class householders. As Patricia Erikson points out, the domestic advice manuals of Josephine’s era “warned homemakers of their duty to ‘deal with’ a presumed biological contamination that domestic servants would bring into the home.”⁷⁷¹

Managing the work and presence of her Inughuit servants was a significant component of Josephine Peary’s domestic duties on expeditions, and women like Mané and M’gipsu feature prominently in her Arctic narratives. She scrutinized and carefully recorded their bodily practices, the ways in which they cared for their children, as well as the nature of relations between men and women. In so doing, Josephine was not only demonstrating her diligence as a housekeeper; she was also doing the work of the explorer. Scientific societies and popular audiences alike expected Arctic travellers to collect

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid., 90.

⁷⁶⁸ Josephine Peary Diary, 23 October 1891, JDPF.

⁷⁶⁹ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 72.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁷¹ Erikson, “Homemaking, Snow Babies, and the Search for the North Pole,” 267.

ethnographic data as part of their larger expedition research agendas.⁷⁷² The publisher's preface to *My Arctic Journal* recognized the interest of Josephine's Arctic narrative from this ethnographic point of view, noting that the Inughuit "had never seen a white woman, and some of them had never beheld a civilized being. The opportunities which Mrs. Peary had of observing their manners and mode of life had enabled her to make a valuable contribution to ethnological learning."⁷⁷³ The phrasing of the publisher's comment implies that Josephine Peary's observations about Inughuit life had a particular ethnographic value because she was a woman. Peary's publishers invoked the contemporary belief that, as a result of their association with the intimate domains of Western societies, white women were in a privileged position to evaluate the family rituals and childrearing practices of other races.⁷⁷⁴ Almost universally, the intimate lives of those subjected to ethnographic study were found wanting in comparison with normative models of middle-class domesticity. In condemning the behaviour of her Inughuit servants, then, Josephine Peary was also writing about herself, and asserting her moral and racial authority over the women around her as a white woman and an explorer.

Josephine frequently described, for example, the bodily practices of her Inughuit servants in evaluative terms, condemning their failure to bathe and their lack of personal

⁷⁷² Renée Hulan has argued that ethnographic writing represents one of the dominant mediums through which the North has been represented by outsiders. Hulan, *Northern Experience and the Myths of Canadian Culture*, 25.

⁷⁷³ Introduction to *My Arctic Journal*, 2.

⁷⁷⁴ Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 89. Robert Burroughs makes a similar argument about the way that American explorer May French Sheldon's used her femininity as a source of ethnographic and observational authority in her African travelogues. French Sheldon's writings suggest that "female travelers might be naturally more sensitive to the wants of the peoples that they encounter in Africa than their male counterparts." Burroughs, "The Travelling Apologist," 138.

modesty when it came to undressing in front of others.⁷⁷⁵ She suggested in one interview that these practices were reflective of the Inughuit's primitive racial state: "I do not think there is in the whole of Greenland a person who has ever indulged in the luxury of a bath, and you cannot imagine a more filthy people or a nation in more absolute blind, impenetrable ignorance."⁷⁷⁶ The the slippages between physical, moral, and racial hygiene evident in Peary's comments were characteristic of transatlantic Victorian attitudes toward personal and domestic cleanliness, where privileged white bodies were defined not only by their skin tone but by their cleanliness.⁷⁷⁷ The racialized discourse of hygiene, cleanliness, and purity helped to distinguish the middle and upper classes from impoverished communities, who were imagined to be dirty and therefore less white.⁷⁷⁸ Cakes of soap, which Josephine handed out to Inughuit women as gifts and as payment for services rendered, functioned, McClintock argues, as "fetishistic" objects that signified the white bodily and domestic cleaning rituals that managed "the demarcation of body boundaries and the policing of social hierarchies."⁷⁷⁹ The domestic rituals practiced by *Qallunaat* women like Peary, at home and in the Arctic, can be viewed as intimate "intercultural

⁷⁷⁵ "A Very Remarkable Baby," 18. *New York Sun* Article, 1895-1896, JDPP. Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 91,108; see also pages 126, 162, 165. "The Romance of Admiral Peary's 'Snow Baby,'" 1917, press clipping, series 4, box 2, folder 221, MAPP.

⁷⁷⁶ Stuart Mosby Coleman, "Lieut. Peary's Wife Will Send Him Relief," *The Washington Times* 12 May 1895, 6, *Chronicling America*.

⁷⁷⁷ Sarah Amato, "The White Elephant in London: An Episode of Trickery, Racism, and Advertising," *Journal of Social History* 43:1 (2009): 31-32, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/20685347>.

⁷⁷⁸ McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 211.

⁷⁷⁹ Josephine Peary Diary, 25 October 1891, JDPF. McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 33.

performances,” intended to affirm whiteness and difference in ways that were similar to the household practices of Labrador Settlers discussed in Chapter Three.

One of the most important indicators of white women’s moral and racial superiority over their Indigenous servants was found, however, in childrearing practices. This is not surprising, given how American maternalists mobilized an idealized, domestically-centered motherhood as the locus of the white woman’s moral and political authority, and supremacy over Indigenous and working-class women. The ways in which Mané and M’gipsu cared for and related to their children therefore received the majority of Josephine’s ethnographic attention, as well as the most public interest and commentary back in the United States.

For Josephine, one of the most striking features of the relationship between Inughuit mother and child was their skin-to-skin contact. She frequently noted how Mané and M’gipsu carried their babies, who “don’t have anything on from the time they are born until they can walk, except caps of seal or foxskin, and little short foxskin shirts that do not come to the waist,” on their backs inside their *amautis*.⁷⁸⁰ When nursing, she observed that both mother and child, being unclothed, “are exposed to the cold.”⁷⁸¹ In reviewing one of Josephine Peary’s 1895 fundraising lectures, which presumably featured a discussion of Inughuit childrearing habits, Washington’s *Evening Star* newspaper likened the Inughuit infant to a “marsupial, living in a hood on the back of the mother... .”⁷⁸² These mothering

⁷⁸⁰ *New York Sun* Article, 1895-1896, JDPP. See also Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 105-106.

⁷⁸¹ *New York Sun* Article, 1895-1896, JDPP. These comments also appear virtually verbatim in Josephine’s private expedition diary on January 22. See Josephine Peary Diary, 22 January 1892, JDPF.

⁷⁸² “Mrs. Peary’s Lecture,” *The Evening Star* [DC] 24 May 1895, 10, *Chronicling America*.

practices, which Josephine undoubtedly viewed as primitive, were contrasted with the level of care Josephine showed herself providing for her own child, Marie. Once again demonstrating that the niceties of civilized domesticity could be not only transplanted, but *elevated*, in the Arctic, Josephine described her “polar nursery” to a *New York Times* reporter. Although the expedition doctor

considered it a physical impossibility for a white child to live and grow without light ... a baby never had better care than mine had, for I attended to her myself, and gave her much more time than I should have been able to here. She had perfectly regular hours for eating, sleeping, and exercise, and never ate between meals.⁷⁸³

In consulting a medical professional, and implementing a systematic regimen of eating, sleeping, and exercise for Marie, Josephine Peary adhered to modern childrearing methods, which became increasingly medicalized and scientific toward the end of the nineteenth century.⁷⁸⁴ Josephine also obliquely emphasized the extent of her labour in warming the room and heating the water in which she bathed Marie in their Arctic home.⁷⁸⁵ This is contrasted with the Inughuit woman’s practice of bathing her child by licking their baby “from the back of the neck to the heel.”⁷⁸⁶

Josephine’s Arctic narratives also suggest that the differences between Inughuit and white childrearing practices had implications for childhood physical and psychological development. Under Josephine’s rigorous care, Marie “grew bigger and whiter every day” in her Arctic infancy.⁷⁸⁷ It was reported that after 11 months in the Arctic, when Marie “left

⁷⁸³ “A Very Remarkable Bay,” 18.

⁷⁸⁴ Steven Mintz, *Huck’s Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 190-191, <https://hdl-handle-net.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/2027/heb.06195>.

⁷⁸⁵ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 19.

⁷⁸⁶ “The Romance of Admiral Peary’s ‘Snow Baby,’” n.p.

⁷⁸⁷ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 19

her native land, she was physically and mentally at least a year in advance of her actual age.”⁷⁸⁸ While giving one of Mané’s daughters, nicknamed Noyah, her first bath, Josephine observed how “backward” the two-year-old was, looking and acting “like a child at home of ten months or a year.” M’gipsu’s one year old, she noted, compared “in size and mental development ... with a five-months-old white baby.”⁷⁸⁹ The supposed backwardness of Inughuit children was an element of Peary’s narrative that reviewers also picked up on.⁷⁹⁰ On a summer trip in 1897, Josephine explicitly compared her own child with the Inughuit children her age. She reported that Marie’s “light hair & rosy cheeks were commented on



"It is no Wonder the Snow Baby is so Tall"

Figure 5.10: Marie Peary and Inughuit children, 1897
(Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 53)

⁷⁸⁸ Henry Collins Walsh, “Ahnighito Peary and her Eskimo Friends,” *The Ledger Monthly* (December 1900): n.p. in series 4, box 2, folders 236-8, MAPP.

⁷⁸⁹ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 165.

⁷⁹⁰ “New Publications: A Woman Near the North Pole,” *The New York Times* 27 November 1893, 3, *New York TimesMachine*.

& her size was the chief subject of conversation.”⁷⁹¹ Photographs of Marie among Inughuit boys and girls around her age that appeared in the *The Snow Baby* also encouraged comparisons of the children’s relative degrees of development (**Fig. 10**). These comparisons of childhood development along racial lines had the effect of recapitulating, at the scale of the individual child, the evolutionary theory of racial difference that positioned white civilisation at the pinnacle of human development. This issue will be taken up in greater detail in my analysis of Marie Peary’s Arctic childhood in Chapter 6.

The practice of infanticide as a strategy of survival among widowed Inughuit women also came to Josephine Peary’s attention. *My Arctic Journal* tells the story of Josephine’s encounter with Klayuh, known at Redcliffe House as “the Widow.”⁷⁹² According to Josephine, M’gipsu informed her that

Klayuh had just killed her youngest child, about two years of age, by strangling it. She went on to explain that it was perfectly right for Klayuh to do this, as the father of the child had been killed, and she could not support the children herself, and no man would take her as a wife as long as she had a child small enough to be carried in the hood.⁷⁹³

While Josephine offered no further comment on the matter, Klayuh’s story caught the attention of a *New York Times* reviewer, who described the practice as a common among those in the primitive stages of human development. According to the reviewer, “Where

⁷⁹¹ “Marie’s Sayings and doings on her voyage to Greenland in 1897,” series 5, box 4, folder 1, MAPP.

⁷⁹² Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 86.

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*, 87-88.

the struggle for existence was so keen, in the time of primitive man, as anthropologists tell us, the killing of the very young and very old must have been common.”⁷⁹⁴

The story of how Josephine Peary saved one child from death became apocryphal in Peary family lore. While the incident does not appear in any of Josephine’s own published Arctic narratives, it features in Marie Peary’s writings about her mother, including *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*. The story apparently carried meaning for the Peary family through multiple generations, as it also appears in a story about Josephine written by Marie’s son, Edward Stafford Jr., published in *Reader’s Digest* in 1964.⁷⁹⁵ When an Inughuit man working for one of the Peary expedition teams died on a hunting trip, a young Marie was told that his wife Inaloo, one of the seamstresses for the expedition, would be expected to kill her youngest child for the same reasons that Klayuh had.⁷⁹⁶ When Marie looked to her father to intervene on Inaloo’s behalf, Robert Peary assumed the role of the objective anthropological observer, telling her that “[t]he Eskimos are an independent people. ... They govern themselves according to laws and traditions that have been in force in the tribe for centuries. I have no right to interfere with them in any way and I have never tried to do so.”⁷⁹⁷ It appears, however, that Josephine Peary, as a white mother empowered to protect and “mother” women of other races, possessed the moral authority that her husband did not in interceding on Inaloo’s behalf. She reportedly made a personal “plea” to the community and single-handedly saved the baby.⁷⁹⁸ Writing from a retrospective

⁷⁹⁴ “New Publications: A Woman Near the North Pole,” 3.

⁷⁹⁵ Edward P. Stafford, “My Most Unforgettable Character.” *Readers Digest* April 1964, 64-69, Scrapbooks, box 8, folder 247, JDPP.

⁷⁹⁶ Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 158.

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁸ Marie Peary Stafford, “My Mother Lived Three Lives,” 16, Scrapbooks, box 8, folder 261, JDPP.

vantage point, Marie Peary noted that the Inughuit practice had been abolished when Denmark assumed control of Northern Greenland later in the twentieth century, “just as the British abolished suttee in India.”⁷⁹⁹ In likening Denmark’s intervention to imperial Britain’s formal prohibition against *sati*, or widow burning, earlier in the nineteenth century, Marie Peary made sense of her mother’s actions through the justificatory rhetoric of the “civilising mission,” where colonial powers like Britain denied colonized peoples the rights to self-government based on the primitivism of their gender relations, particularly how they oppressed their women.⁸⁰⁰

Josephine Peary’s ethnographic observations of Inughuit bodily habits and childrearing practices placed her in a position of authority, articulated in terms of race as well as class or social status, over the women working and circulating around her Arctic household. By emphasizing the incommensurability of her own Arctic experiences with those of the Inughuit, despite their common gender, Josephine was able to identify as the “only” woman on the Peary expeditions while living and working closely with women like Mané and M’gipsu, a characteristic of her explorer persona that was taken up and reiterated in the national press. As Francis Spufford has argued, if Arctic exploration was to be viewed in explorer’s home countries as a heroic activity, worthy of national attention, the explorer’s ways of being in Northern environments had to be perceived as “wholly separate – in mood and technique, aims and expertise – from the Inuit experience of living in the

⁷⁹⁹ Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 162.

⁸⁰⁰ Much has been written by postcolonial scholars about the British discourse around *sati* as a strategy for imperial rule. One of the most foundational texts in the field is Mani, *Contentious Traditions*.

Arctic.”⁸⁰¹ Otherwise, according to Spufford, “the spectacle of the Inuit, living their domestic lives in a place Europeans considered heroic for reaching, aroused a degree of tension.”⁸⁰² The reality of just how much Arctic travellers’ daily routines overlapped to a significant extent with those of the Inuit and other Northern Indigenous groups was often effaced from popular and scientific exploration records.

The same tension is evident in Josephine Peary’s narrative construction as the first female Arctic explorer. While Josephine presented herself -- and was received as -- having had wholly unique Arctic experiences on this basis, her 1891 diary reveals how her own expedition duties and daily life mirrored Mané and M’gipsu’s. All three women, for example, spent much of their time at needlework, preparing for the non-Indigenous members of the expedition fur clothing similar to that worn by Inughuit families. Through sewing the expedition clothing – Josephine Peary’s diary refers to their activity as “our sewing,” indicating an undeniably appropriative and exploitative, but also shared experience among the women – Josephine was drawn, in a way, into Inughuit intimate life, where the preparation and maintenance of fur clothing was one of the essential tasks of care Inughuit women performed for their families.⁸⁰³ Mitigating this potentially problematic experiential overlap between Josephine and her Inughuit servants were the differing representations of sewing, an important aspect of women’s work in both white and Inuit societies, in the narratives produced around Josephine Peary’s Arctic experiences.

⁸⁰¹ Francis Spufford, *I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination* [1996] (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 189.

⁸⁰² Ibid.

⁸⁰³ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 80. For more on the importance of clothing preparation in Inughuit family life, gender relations, and society, see LeMoine and Darwent, “Furs and Satin,” 212.

While Josephine characterized Inughuit women’s sewing as laborious and a sign of women’s oppression within Inughuit society, she and her daughter Marie presented Josephine’s needlework as a decorative art, an extension of her participation in domestic consumerism, and, overall, an altogether different order of activity.

In her writing, interviews and lectures, Josephine Peary described Inughuit women’s sewing practices and modes of clothing preparation at length (**Fig. 11**). She did so on the assumption that “our ladies” in civilization would naturally take an interest in just

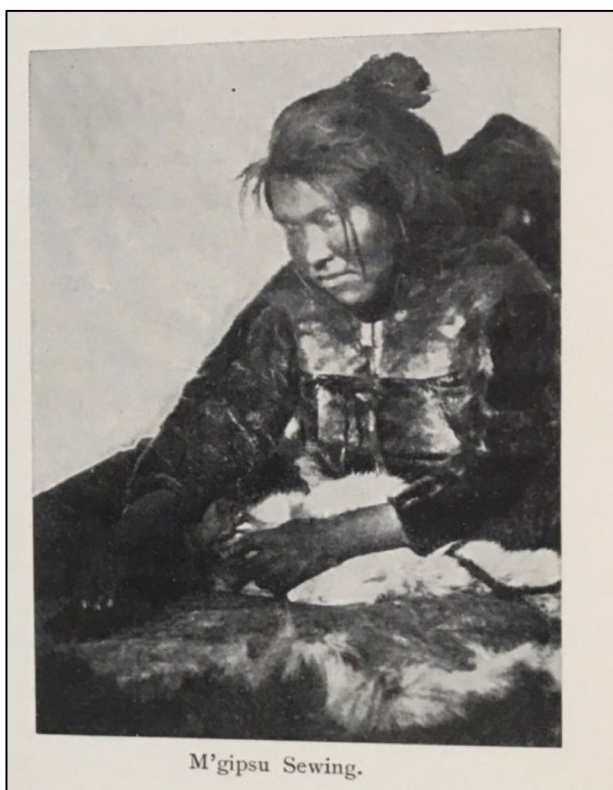


Figure 5.11: M’gipsu Sewing, 1891 or 1892
(Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 87)

how different women’s work could look primitive societies.⁸⁰⁴ While the act of sewing seemed simple enough “here in the land of sewing machines and spool cotton,” Josephine wrote, “the labor involved in the manufacturing of ... garments” was onerous for Inughuit women, living “in a country where an ordinary needle is an heirloom to be carefully treasured and guarded.”⁸⁰⁵ She described the typical “arduous toil” demanded of Inughuit women in

⁸⁰⁴ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 104.

⁸⁰⁵ Diebitsch-Peary, “Among the Arctic Highlanders.”

preparing clothing for her family as follows:⁸⁰⁶

They ... usually take off their kamiks and stockings while in the house, so that almost the entire leg is bare, their trousers being mere trunks. They sit flat on the floor, using their feet and legs to hold the work, and their mouths to make it pliable; the thimble is worn on the forefinger, and they sew from right to left. The thread is made as they need it by splitting the deer or narwhal sinews and moistening them with the mouth. While at this work the babies are continually rocked or shifted on their backs without the aid of the hands.⁸⁰⁷

Inuit women's work is presented as a kind of demanding physical labour, with aspects of bodily display that would have had no place in the drawing-rooms of middle-class American homes.

Josephine Peary also made much of the “queer hardship” Inughuit women endured by chewing skins to make them pliable, an activity that was, according to Peary, “very hard on the women, and all of it is done by them.”⁸⁰⁸ One newspaper suggested that the tradition had actually changed Inughuit women's physiognomy over time. The *New York Times* reported that “generations of such complaisance on the part of these little brown women have developed the recognized ‘iron jaw’ of the feminine Esquimau.”⁸⁰⁹ Here “complaisance” referred to Peary's characterisation of Inughuit women in her interview with the *New York Times* as meekly ceding to the unreasonable demands of the male members of their family that they mend their clothes and kamiks on demand. According to Peary, when an Inughuit hunter expected her to perform the same service, tossing his skins “down with a grunt at her feet,” she refused, relating that “[h]e was greatly astonished to find that this ‘white woman from the south’ did not intend to follow the example of her

⁸⁰⁶ “Mrs. Peary's Lecture,” 10.

⁸⁰⁷ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Diary*, 104-5.

⁸⁰⁸ “Mrs. Peary's Lecture,” 10. Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 86.

⁸⁰⁹ “Her Point of View,” *The New York Times* 29 January 1893, 12, *New York TimesMachine*.

Esquimau sister”⁸¹⁰ In refusing to engage in such supposedly demeaning labour, Peary emphasized how Inughuit women were oppressed while white women were not, an important indicator of civilization and racial difference.

In another interview with the *New York Sun*, which took place in her Brooklyn apartment between Northern trips, Josephine demonstrated how elite white women related to furs as consumers, rather than as beleaguered producers. Sitting in her home, with Arctic furs covering the walls, ceiling, and furniture, Peary explained to the interviewer how Inughuit women “chew and chew and chew” to make auk and eider duck shirts. Turning to the eiderdown quilt hanging decoratively on the wall behind her, she “bur[ie]d her face in its soft depths,” informing the reporter that *her* quilt, produced by Inuit seamstresses, was ““a work of art.””⁸¹¹ Viewing her furs as objects of luxury and domestic ornamentation, Josephine Peary related to the raw materials of Inughuit women’s labour as an elite consumer. In her study of advertisements for fur clothing and luxury products, Joan Sangster argues that such “dichotomous presentations of fur as work and fur as consumption revealed a stark racial contrast” between Inuit women who were “portrayed chewing skins, cutting, scraping curs across branch frames, or sewing fur by hand,” and their elite white purchasers who treated the furs as signifiers of wealth and domestic comfort.⁸¹²

We know from Josephine Peary’s 1891-1892 diary that she did spend a significant amount of time on her first Arctic expedition sewing. Much of this sewing was, like Inughuit women’s clothing preparation, for utilitarian purposes. Josephine worked, for

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹¹ *New York Sun* Article, 1895-1896, JDPP.

⁸¹² Sangster, “*The Beaver as Ideology*,” 202.

example, on preparing sleeping bag covers, “dogskin trowsers,” repairing her husband’s mittens and her own fur clothing.⁸¹³ Nevertheless, the pieces of Josephine’s needlework that became iconic in the Peary family Arctic narrative were purely ornamental. Her famous North Pole flag, for example, was described by her daughter Marie as being “so exquisitely embroidered that it was impossible to tell the right side from the wrong.”⁸¹⁴ While some of the stitching on the flag was done with a sewing machine, to give it greater strength, each star was “painstakingly embroidered by hand.”⁸¹⁵ The use of a sewing machine marked Josephine Peary as a modern homemaker and consumer, as the sewing machine was deliberately marketed as a luxury item for the middle class home.⁸¹⁶ The sewing machine also signified the evolutionary gulf that was supposed to exist between white women and women of the Arctic. When the *New York Times* learned that Josephine Peary was taking a sewing machine to Greenland in 1893, editors speculated about how the technological wonder would be received: “What the sharp eyed little creatures will say to the sewing machine when they see it reeling off the seams of the skins, which they so laboriously accomplish, will be interesting to hear about.”⁸¹⁷

Another treasured family heirloom was a red Hudson’s Bay Company blanket used to insulate the walls of Redcliffe House and Anniversary Lodge, that Josephine embroidered with the coordinates of Marie Peary’s birth (**Fig. 12**). This kind of ornamental

⁸¹³ Josephine Peary Diary, 20 January and 9 February 1892, JDPP.

⁸¹⁴ Peary Stafford, “My Mother Lived Three Lives,” 22.

⁸¹⁵ Paul Sampson, “Peary’s North Pole Flag to be Enshrined Here,” *The Washington Post* 24 April 1955, 3, Scrapbooks, box 7, folder 197, JDPP.

⁸¹⁶ Paula A. De La Cruz Fernández, “Marketing the Hearth: Ornamental Embroidery and the Building of the Multinational Singer Sewing Machine Company,” *Enterprise & Society* 15:3 (2014): 444, <https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/article/554715>.

⁸¹⁷ *New York Times* quoted in “Mrs. Peary’s Sewing Machine,” *The Portland Daily Press* [ME] 8 September 1893, 2, *Chronicling America*.

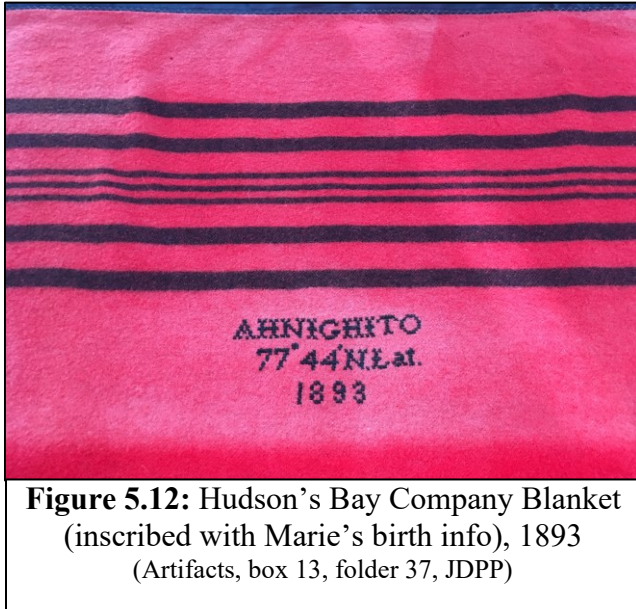


Figure 5.12: Hudson’s Bay Company Blanket
 (inscribed with Marie’s birth info), 1893
 (Artifacts, box 13, folder 37, JDPP)

sewing, as Paula De La Cruz Fernández points out, testified to a woman’s “industriousness and care for her family.”⁸¹⁸ Embroidered textiles nevertheless contributed to the categorization of homemakers’ sewing as a private, leisurely activity, wholly distinct from the public world of work inhabited by white men, or the menial

labour associated with working-class white women, who produced textiles in factory settings, and, in this case, the physically demanding labour of Inughuit seamstresses. Decorative textiles like quilts and embroideries were, as Ann Romines puts it, “both a product and an emblem of domestic ritual.”⁸¹⁹ In the case of Josephine Peary’s work, her Arctic embroideries testified to her privileged access, as a middle-class white woman, to the private leisure time in which this kind of stitching was performed, even while on expedition. Her 1891-1892 expedition diary shows, for example, that Josephine was committed to upholding this tradition: she did her sewing in the privacy of her apartment,

⁸¹⁸ De La Cruz Fernández, “Marketing the Hearth,” 448.

⁸¹⁹ Ann Romines, *The Home Plot: Women, Writing and Domestic Ritual* (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 15. Karen Sayer makes a similar claim about items of clothing as “women’s texts emblematic of domestic ritual, visible signs of the rhythms and complexities of domestic life... .” Sayer, ““A Sufficiency of Clothing,”” 114.

even as she complained repeatedly about how cold her room became with the door closed to the warmth of the stove that occupied the common room at Redcliffe House.⁸²⁰

Another Peary family heirloom is one of Josephine's handkerchiefs. In addition to embroidering her own initials, she also stitched the following phrase onto the fabric: "Uwanga sukinuts amissaure, koonn immartu ibly takoo nahme" (**Fig. 13**), the same statement as had been said to her on her first Arctic trip by the elderly Inughuit woman, who had declared, according to Josephine's translation: "I have lived a great many suns, but never have I seen anything like you."⁸²¹ As a literal and symbolic text, Josephine's handkerchief documents her exceptional status on Arctic expeditions, as a different order of being altogether from the Inuit women around her. The effect, as Jacobs points out, of contrasting elite white women's leisure- and consumption- centered domestic activities with "depictions of indigenous women as 'chattel,' and 'burden bearers,' was to present the "nineteenth-century model of middle-class, Christian, white gender norms, a model in which 'true women' oversaw domestic duties and guided affective relationships in the

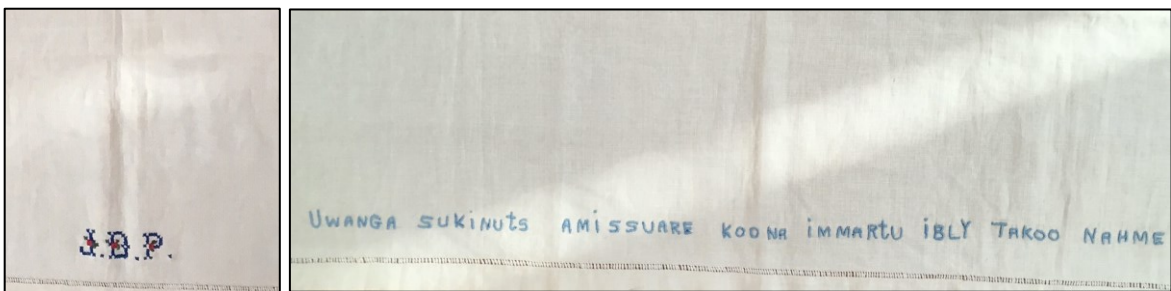


Figure 5.13: Linen square embroidered with Josephine's initials and Inuit words, n.d.
(Artifacts, box 13, folder 37, JDPP)

home while their husbands worked outside of the home for pay," as a characteristic of civilisation and racial superiority.⁸²² Viewing Inughuit women like Mané and M'gipsu

⁸²⁰ Josephine Peary Diary, 18 January, 4 February, 6 February and 9 February, 1892, JDPP.

⁸²¹ Diebitsch-Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 130.

⁸²² Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, xxxi.

through the classed, raced, and gendered lenses of domesticity, Josephine Peary was able to see herself as a fundamentally distinct order of being, enabling her to claim “the” female Arctic experience in the midst of other women. Of course, the idealized vision of the domestic sphere as an inherently “un-laborious space,” as Sayer puts it, demanded the obfuscation of white women’s actual work in the home.⁸²³ In middle-class homes, much of this labour was performed by female domestic servants. In the Arctic, as in privileged American homes, these women, and their work, existed beneath the threshold of public visibility.

5.4 Not the “Only” White Woman in the Arctic: Josephine Peary’s Domestic Servants

References to Josephine’s racial exceptionalism as “the first white woman” and the mother of the most northerly born white child in the world are made frequently in the newspaper clippings in Josephine’s scrapbooks.⁸²⁴ In celebrating Josephine Peary as a solitary Arctic heroine, reporters and biographers alike appear to have once again taken their cues from Josephine herself. In *My Arctic Journal*, Josephine emphasizes her sense of being the only one of her kind in the Arctic. When considering spending a second summer in Greenland, she mused that, though her mother and siblings would surely miss her, her suffering would be greater, as a result of her isolation: ‘It will go hard to remain – harder for me than for them, for ... they have friends and acquaintances and intelligent and interesting

⁸²³ Sayer, “‘A Sufficiency of Clothing,’” 119. See also Jacobs, *Mother to a Dark Race*, xxxi.

⁸²⁴ Mary Cowles, “Widow of Famous Explorer, Here to Visit Grandson, Recalls Trying Days in Far North,” *Corpus Christi Caller* 31 December 1942, n.p., Scrapbooks, box 6, folder 130a, JDPP.

employments and amusements with which to occupy their minds and time, while I have only a few white men and some uncivilized people.”⁸²⁵ This comment suggests that Josephine’s sense of self in the Arctic was tied to the intersection of her raced and gendered identities as a white woman. While white men, including her husband, were present on the expedition, Josephine retained her sense of exceptionalism and solitude because there were no “civilized,” which we can take here to mean white, women present.

In reality, Susanna Cross, an Irish immigrant to America and a trained obstetrical nurse, spent almost a year in Greenland with the Peary expedition team in 1893-1894.⁸²⁶ Martha Percy, a Newfoundland woman who was married to Robert Peary’s steward, Charles Percy, went to the Arctic twice between 1900 and 1902 as maid to Josephine and nurse to Marie.⁸²⁷ Of the 99 newspaper articles preserved in Josephine’s archived scrapbooks that deal with her time as an explorer, only seven reports make mention of these women. In one of these cases, Susanna Cross is identified not by name, but inaccurately as Josephine’s ‘Scotch nurse.’⁸²⁸ Similarly, Cross and Percy do not feature as protagonists in Josephine’s autobiographical writings; when Josephine did acknowledge their existence, it is mostly by their employment status, as ‘nurse’ or ‘maid.’⁸²⁹

In her study of white women’s experiences in the Canadian North, Barbara Kelcey contends that “white women were primarily identifiable by their race, and not as a particular group or class.”⁸³⁰ Kelcey’s analysis therefore privileges racial difference as a

⁸²⁵ Peary, *My Arctic Journal*, 177.

⁸²⁶ Peary, *Northward Over the Great Ice*, 65-6.

⁸²⁷ “Brunswick Woman Recalls 50 Years with Peary Family,” 18 June 1961, n.p., Scrapbooks, box 8, folder 242, JDPP.

⁸²⁸ Hall, “The Conqueror of the North Pole,” 10.

⁸²⁹ Peary and Diebitsch Peary, *Children of the Arctic*, 50.

⁸³⁰ Kelcey, *Alone in the Silence*, 9.

form of identification experienced by and projected onto non-Inuit women in Northern contexts. Joan Sangster challenges this supposition by calling attention to the fact that many female Arctic travelers “came from similar backgrounds: most were high-school or university educated, Anglo-Saxon Protestants, from farm or middle-class families.”⁸³¹ Josephine Peary can certainly be characterized as an early example of the typical class profile of female Arctic travellers. When Josephine met Robert Peary, she was an educated woman, well-connected in Washington’s intellectual circles, as a result of her father’s work at the Smithsonian. The Pearys’ Arctic work only elevated their social status further, putting them in touch with political elite figures such as Theodore Roosevelt and a network of wealthy investors including Morris K. Jesup of the American Museum of Natural History.⁸³² Excerpts from Josephine’s private Greenland diary from 1891 indicate that whiteness was not the unifying group identity that Kelcey imagines it to be in Arctic contexts. In an undated memorandum that did not make it into *My Arctic Journal*, Josephine kept a running record of the transgressions committed by the white and Inughuit members of the expedition party:

Note absence of any delicacy on the part of the eskimos when attending to nature’s calls. Note [John] Verhoeff talking of king’s disease at the table in my presence. Note boys running about without clothing or in their drawers. [Eivind] Astrup

⁸³¹ Joan Sangster, “Constructing the ‘Eskimo’ Wife: White Women’s Travel Writing, Colonialism and the Canadian North, 1940-1960,” in *Through Feminist Eyes: Essays on Canadian Women’s History* by Joan Sangster (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2011), 331-332.

⁸³² Marie Peary Stafford, Article about Josephine’s Life, JDPP.

speaking of Mané's bleeding children on his bunk. Verhoeff scratching under the arms at the table.⁸³³

In failing to meet Peary's standards of hygiene, decorum, and circumspection, it appears that, in her eyes, the men of the party had descended to Inughuit status. In another diary entry, Josephine lamented the "coarse" and "[un]gentlemanly" behavior of each of the five men on the expedition team, the only white people at McCormick Bay other than Robert Peary and herself. In an uncharacteristically confessional tone, she concluded: "These along with the colored boy [Matthew Henson] are the civilized men with whom I am brought into daily contact. Bert thinks I ought to treat them as my equals & see only their good points ... he has no idea what it costs me even to treat them with ordinary politeness."⁸³⁴ These comments indicate that Josephine was acutely aware of her own elevated class status relative to these men despite their shared racial identity, and that she struggled to treat them as her social equals despite her husband's remonstrations.

Josephine's textual memorialisation (or, more appropriately, forgetting) of Susanna Cross, who accompanied her to Greenland in 1893, suggests that Josephine also considered herself to be a class apart from her nurse. Josephine's published writings on this second Arctic trip made no acknowledgement of Cross's involvement in the expedition, let alone that she was, supposedly, the second white woman to go so far beyond the Arctic Circle.⁸³⁵

⁸³³ Josephine Peary Diary 6 June – 7 July 1891, JDPP.

⁸³⁴ Ibid.

⁸³⁵ Josephine's writing on her second Arctic trip includes one monograph, *The Snow Baby* (1901) and an article that appeared in *St. Nicholas* magazine that same year. See Josephine Diebitsch Peary, "Ahnighito," *St. Nicholas* 28:52-53 (March 1901), Scrapbooks, box 4, folder 34, JDPP. She also gave a handful of interviews to American papers about the time of Marie Peary's birth. See "A Plucky Woman," 1; "A Very Remarkable Baby," 18; Johnson, "Mrs. Peary and the Snow Baby," 149-162; "Well-Known American Women Tell of Yuletide Experiences," *Newark N.J. Coll.* 24

Even Peary's private diary from 1893 makes mention of a "Mrs C" only twice, in the days immediately after Marie's birth in September.⁸³⁶ Other expedition members Matthew Henson, Hugh Lee, and even Robert Peary named Susanna Cross as a member of the party in their published memoirs, though her role, actions, or experiences were given no further examination.⁸³⁷ Cross died shortly after her return from Greenland, and while her 1894 obituary credits her with being "the second woman who ever went north of Melville Bay," her role on the Peary expeditions appears little in the public record and not at all in popular memories of American exploration.⁸³⁸

It is actually Marie who, in two unpublished biographies of her mother, written decades after the 1893-1894 Greenland trip, gives some further insight into Cross's marginal status on the expedition itself, and into Josephine Peary's recollections of her own Arctic experiences. Marie was a newborn at the time of the 1893-1894 Greenland expedition, and would consequently have no memories of her own of Susanna Cross. It is therefore likely that Marie's written remembrances were related to her by her parents, and particularly by Josephine, who interacted with her obstetrical nurse most extensively and most intimately. I therefore read Marie's textual representation of Susanna Cross as an

December 1913, 4,6, Scrapbooks, box 4, folder 57, JDPP; "Mrs. Peary in Washington," 1909, n.p., Scrapbooks, box 4, folder 46, JDPP.

⁸³⁶ Josephine Peary Diary, 16 and 19 September 1893, Scrapbooks, box 3, folder 18, JDPP.

⁸³⁷ Matthew A. Henson, *A Negro Explorer at the North Pole* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1912), 7, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/20923/20923-h/20923-h.htm>. Hugh J. Lee, "Peary's Transections of North Greenland, 1892-1895," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 82:5 (1940): 1928, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/984899>. Peary, *Northward Over the Great Ice*, 65-66.

⁸³⁸ "Mrs. Peary's Nurse Dead," *New York Times* 30 November 1894, 8, *New York TimesMachine*.

artefact of the Peary family lore, collaboratively produced through the blending of Josephine, Robert and Marie's selective memories.

In Marie's biography of her mother, she declares that Susanna Cross was brought North as a concession to Josephine's mother, who would only allow her to go north while pregnant if a doctor and an obstetrical nurse accompanied her. According to Marie, Robert Peary duly placed an advertisement in the papers, making it clear that the interested party would be expected to work as cook and maid for the expedition when her nursing duties were not required.⁸³⁹ Cross's place in the Peary family history was not, therefore, as another remarkable adventuress. Cross was instead treated as a servant and facilitator of Josephine's Arctic explorations. Indeed, the presence of a nurse on the expedition team only highlighted Josephine's exceptional status as a modern American woman out of place in the Arctic context: while Inuit and Indigenous women gave birth regularly in Northern environments without formal medical assistance, Josephine's mother insisted that the 'tenderly nurtured' Josephine must import her own medical team.⁸⁴⁰

Marie describes Cross as 'a stout, middle-aged Irish woman,' and 'an important member' of the expedition team.⁸⁴¹ Her status as first and foremost a domestic servant was nevertheless communicated in Josephine's memory of her, as she recalled to Marie "that Cross never called [Marie] anything but 'Miss Peary' from the moment that [she] was born!"⁸⁴² Furthermore, Marie's portrait of Cross is couched in the stereotypical imagery

⁸³⁹ Peary Stafford, "My Mother Lived Three Lives," 17.

⁸⁴⁰ Peary, preface to *My Arctic Journal*, 5.

⁸⁴¹ Peary Stafford, "My Mother Lived Three Lives," 18.

⁸⁴² Marie Peary Stafford, "Mother," unpublished manuscript written for *The Ladies Home Journal*, 5, Scrapbooks, box 8, folder 278, JDPP.

used by Americans to describe and denigrate the Irish.⁸⁴³ According to Marie, Cross's motivation for Arctic travel was not any idea of the noble motivations that animated Josephine's biographical narrative, but alcoholism:

She said that she had always been an excellent nurse and stood high in her profession. Lately, however she had begun to drink and try as she might, she could not break herself of the habit and it was getting more and more of a hold of her every day. She thought that if, for eighteen months, she could be somewhere where it would be impossible to get liquor she would be cured.⁸⁴⁴

Marie reported that Cross immediately took up drinking again on the return journey to America in 1894, and remained in a "drunken stupor" until she died of delirium tremens shortly after their arrival in Philadelphia.⁸⁴⁵ Marie's attribution of a drinking problem to Susanna Cross invoked an American discourse popular in the late nineteenth century that centered on the unreliability, moral dissolution, and, ultimately, the biological inferiority of Irish domestic servants.⁸⁴⁶

Danielle Taylor Phillips' work on the shared experiences of Irish and African American women in Progressive Era America is helpful here in its exploration of the intersection of raced and classed identities in domestic service. Phillips argues that the attribution of racial difference to Irish as well as African American domestic servants confirmed their employers' sense of cultural superiority, and that "specific racial parallels drawn between Irish and African American domestic workers marked the social distance

⁸⁴³ Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy, Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 23.

⁸⁴⁴ Peary Stafford, "My Mother Lived Three Lives," 18.

⁸⁴⁵ The obituary published in the *New York Times* in November 1894 corroborates Marie Peary's story as to the time of Susanna Cross's death, but makes no mention of alcoholism or delirium tremens as the cause of death. "Mrs. Peary's Nurse Dead," 8.

⁸⁴⁶ Phillips, "Moving with the Women," 379-404.

between them and their employers.”⁸⁴⁷ A particularly telling example of the ways in which Irish women were viewed as a race apart from their female employers was the popular use of the term “white nigger” to refer to people of Irish descent.⁸⁴⁸ Josephine’s immersion in this discourse of domesticity, where race and class statuses intersected, is displayed in her use of this term in a letter to Robert Peary from February 1905, updating him on the state of their household in Washington while he was away drumming up financial support for his next Arctic expedition: in complaining about the disorder of their household, she wrote that “there is a ‘white nigger’ officiating in the kitchen.”⁸⁴⁹ Glimpses of the nature of the relationship between Susanna Cross and Josephine Peary, in text and in reality, therefore suggest that, in the American discourse around polar exploration, ideas about class privilege infused both personal and popular definitions of whiteness and white womanhood in the North.

Martha Percy replaced Susanna Cross as Josephine’s domestic servant on subsequent Arctic expeditions. Charles Percy, along with many other Newfoundland sailors, served as a member of crew on the ships that carried the Peary expeditions north of the Arctic Circle, including in 1909, when Robert Peary finally reached the North Pole.⁸⁵⁰ As a result of the prevalence of the sealing industry off the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador in the nineteenth century, Newfoundlanders acquired a reputation as expert navigators and workers in Arctic waters. Many Newfoundland men were therefore hired to

⁸⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 384.

⁸⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 385.

⁸⁴⁹ Josephine Peary to Robert Peary, 8 February 1905, Robert E. and Josephine Peary letters, box 2, folder 37, JDPF.

⁸⁵⁰ “Picked Men Sailed on the Roosevelt,” *New York Times* 9 September 1909, 4, *New York TimesMachine*.

crew the sealing vessels chartered for private American and federal Canadian Arctic expeditions.⁸⁵¹ With the exception of Brigus native Bob Bartlett, the role of Peary's Newfoundland crews was largely ignored in America's culture of Arctic exploration. Like Josephine, Charles's wife Martha suffered long periods of separation from her husband while he went North with Peary. Perhaps as a means of staying close to her husband, Martha Percy agreed to serve as maid to Josephine and Marie on two trips to the Arctic in 1900-1901 and 1902, to Ellesmere Island and Greenland, respectively.⁸⁵² The Percys also served the Pearys outside of the Arctic for decades, operating the family cottage at Eagle Island in Casco Bay, Maine.⁸⁵³

Unlike Susanna Cross, Martha Percy does feature as a character in Josephine's Arctic publications, and her photograph appears in *Children of the Arctic* (1903),

⁸⁵¹ Shannon Ryan, *The Ice Hunters: A History of Sealing to 1914* (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1994), 393-394.

⁸⁵² Martha Percy's involvement in these two expeditions is documented in Marie Peary's diaries. See Marie Peary Diary 1897 and 1900, series 5, box 4, folder 1, MAPP; Marie Peary Diary "My Trip Abroad," 1900 July 11-August 30 and 1902 July 22-September 15, series 5, box 4, folder 2, MAPP.

⁸⁵³ "Brunswick Woman Recalls 50 Years With Peary Family," n.p.

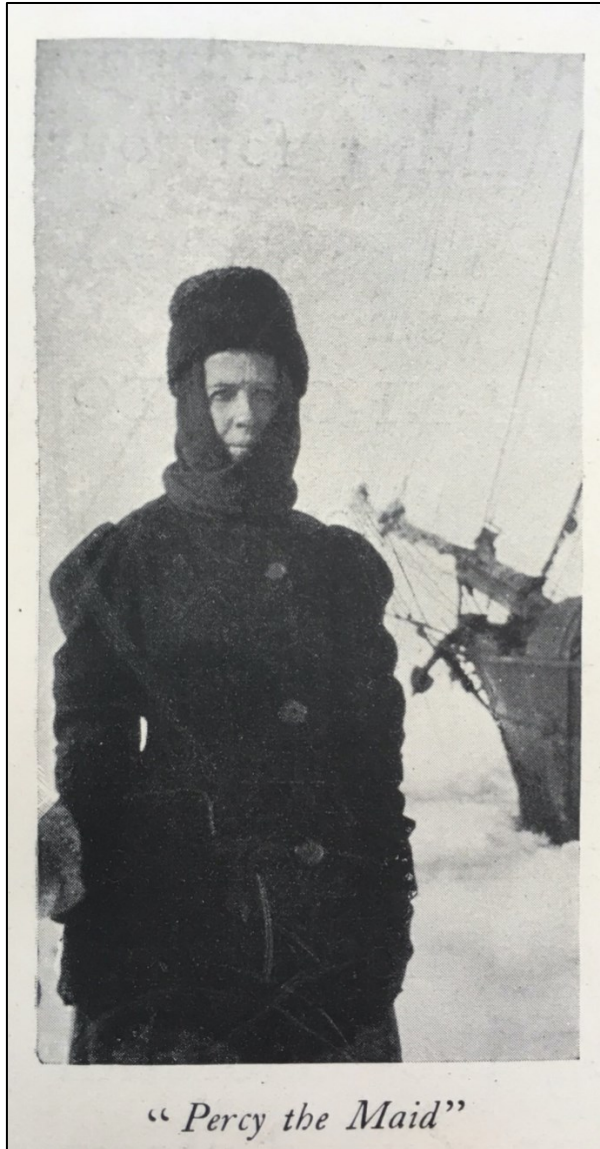


Figure 5.14: Martha Percy on the ice in the Nares Strait, 1900 or 1901 (Diebitsch-Peary and Peary, *Children of the Arctic*, 19)

coauthored by Josephine and Marie (Fig. 14). Nevertheless, Josephine fails to acknowledge the fact that, as another white woman like herself, Martha’s participation in an Arctic expedition might be worthy of note on the basis of her race and gender. Perhaps taking their cues from Josephine, the American press virtually ignored Martha Percy’s existence, and certainly never positioned her as a history-making icon of white womanhood like they did for Josephine. A feature piece on Martha published in a Maine newspaper in 1961 is revealing in this regard: while the article acknowledges that “among Mrs. Martha Percy’s exploits were two trips beyond the Arctic circle,” the reporter’s focus is

on her 50 years of service to the famous Peary family, not Martha’s travels.⁸⁵⁴ The power

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid.

dynamics of the triangular relationship between Martha, Josephine, and Marie are revealed in Marie's childhood diaries and Josephine's published writings.

According to the popular mythology surrounding Josephine's time in the Arctic, she and Marie spent the winter of 1900-1901 frozen in the ice at Cape Sabine on Ellesmere Island while Robert Peary, unaware of their arrival in the Arctic, overwintered further north at Fort Conger. Josephine was reported to be virtually "alone" on board the *Windward* that winter, with the ship's captain, another Newfoundlander, being the only other literate individual on board.⁸⁵⁵ The truth is that Martha Percy also spent the winter on board the *Windward* with Josephine and Marie. In fact, it was Martha who brought the Pearys meals to their private cabin, creating the impression, as described by Marie, that "Mother and I lived alone on the ship."⁸⁵⁶ While Josephine cultivated the illusion of privileged isolation in her private cabin, Martha, as servant, was expected to insulate her and Marie from the lower-class crewmen by venturing into the public space of the ship's galley herself.

Martha's status as a Newfoundlander was another marker of the social distance between Josephine, Marie, and herself, a social gulf so gaping that it verged on racial difference. Excerpts from Marie Peary's 1900-1901 expedition diary appear in an article by Josephine published in *Holiday Magazine* in 1903. Here Martha is described as belonging to what Americans would have understood as the typical Newfoundland cod-fishing family, eking out a precarious existence on the island's rocky coasts: "She has never been away from her home in Newfoundland before, except to go on the fishing boats to

⁸⁵⁵ Camillus Phillips, "A Faithful Wife's Heroism," *Success* (May 1902): n.p., Scrapbooks, box 4, folder 38, JDPP.

⁸⁵⁶ Josephine Diebitsch-Peary and Marie Ahnighito Peary, "Children of the Arctic," *Holiday Magazine* 1:3 (October 1903): 67, Scrapbooks, box 4, folder 41, JDPP.

Labrador. They spend the summer there catching codfish, and live on it through the winter.”⁸⁵⁷ This patronising picture of Martha Percy as a sheltered seasonal worker, attached to the local fishing industry, would have resonated with Josephine’s readers, whose understanding of life in Newfoundland and Labrador came from the sensational and moralising rhetoric published by British and American missionaries, philanthropists, and travellers.

Martha Percy likely belonged to the population of annual migrants who, according to Ronald Rompkey, sailed for Labrador every July, living in temporary huts alongside the coastal fishery, and “surviv[ing] there until October with no administration, no means of preserving law and order, no relief, and no medical care.”⁸⁵⁸ By the early twentieth century, British and American perceptions of Newfoundlanders were synonymous with this impoverished population. In the early 1890s, after export prices for cod dropped dramatically, the English evangelical organisation, the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen, published a report on poverty in Newfoundland that garnered attention from the British press.⁸⁵⁹ Newspapers like the *Daily Chronicle* reported that ““hunger and want cause, at certain times, not a migration, but an exodus of Newfoundland fishing families to Labrador, where they live in a state of squalid promiscuity ... which is sickening to hear about.””⁸⁶⁰ Similar depictions of Newfoundlanders like the Percys as poor and primitive circulated extensively in the United States after 1893, when Wilfred Grenfell, the founder of the Grenfell Mission attached to the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen, began annual American

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁸ Ronald Rompkey, *Grenfell of Labrador: A Biography* [1991] (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), 40.

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid., 39.

⁸⁶⁰ Quoted in Ibid., 42.

lecture tours to raise funds and support for his own medical mission to Northern Newfoundland and Labrador.⁸⁶¹ In his books and lectures, Grenfell emphasized that cases of “the most abject poverty and hunger” existing among Newfoundland fishing communities.⁸⁶² Through Grenfell’s ceaseless fundraising, Newfoundlanders became known to Americans as a group of people in need of economic assistance from wealthy American donors, as well as moral uplift from the middle-class British and American doctors and nurses who worked with the Grenfell Mission.⁸⁶³ While Grenfell was careful to emphasize that the Mission catered primarily to white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants – the same group he looked to for financial support in America – American perceptions of the racial character of settler populations in Newfoundland and Labrador, as Elizabeth Ford’s experience makes clear, were ambivalent.⁸⁶⁴ While selling Labrador handicrafts around New England resorts in the summer of 1930, for example, Grenfell volunteer Bess Armstrong was mistaken for a Labrador resident by American vacationers, who assumed that she was ““pure Eskimo.””⁸⁶⁵

Josephine’s writing drew upon the patronising and fundamentally colonial tropes of this philanthropic literature that illustrated “the cultural distance between affluent,

⁸⁶¹ Ibid., 107, 111.

⁸⁶² Ibid., 52.

⁸⁶³ Heidi Coombs-Thorne, “Mrs. Tilley had a *very* hasty wedding!’: The Class-Based Response to Marriages in the Grenfell Mission of Newfoundland and Labrador,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 27:1 (2010): 126, doi: <https://doi.org/10.3138/cbmh.27.1.123>. Jennifer J. Connor and Katherine Side, “Untainted by American Ways? Newfoundland, the United States, and the Grenfell Mission,” in *The Grenfell Mission and American Support in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1890s-1940s*, eds. Jennifer J. Connor and Katherine Side (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2019), 17-20.

⁸⁶⁴ Jennifer J. Connor, “‘We Are Anglo-Saxons’: Grenfell, Race, and Mission Movements,” in *The Grenfell Mission and American Support*, 49.

⁸⁶⁵ Ibid., 51.

educated” Americans and impoverished Newfoundlanders. In an appeal to her juvenile audiences, Josephine included an excerpt from Marie’s diary in *Children of the Arctic* where Marie is shocked to discover that her maid “Percy” had never seen “children play, where she comes from they only sit with their hands in their laps and keep quiet.” An editorial comment from Marie followed: “I am glad I don’t live in that place. I am teaching her to play with my paper dolls and to play tea-party... .”⁸⁶⁶ Similar comments about the lack of play among Newfoundland fishers appeared in the memoirs of Grenfell Mission nurses, who expressed their shock at an absence of leisure time that would have been alien to those raised within middle-class American households.⁸⁶⁷ The Peary women’s depiction of Martha as sheltered, illiterate and impoverished resonated with contemporary stereotypes about Newfoundland fishing families as primitive, uneducated, and in need of a push toward modernisation.⁸⁶⁸ These were the same terms which missionary groups used to describe groups of colonized peoples. While Grenfell viewed Newfoundlanders as fellow Anglo-Saxons, there was little disputing that the impoverished fishers had, like their Indigenous counterparts, failed to achieve the pinnacle of civilized racial development. Like Susanna Cross, Martha Percy’s identity as a servant and as Newfoundlander meant

⁸⁶⁶ Peary and Diebitsch Peary, *Children of the Arctic*,

⁸⁶⁷ John C. Kennedy, “The impact of the Grenfell Mission on southeastern Labrador communities,” *Polar Record* 24 (1988): 203, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247400009153>.

⁸⁶⁸ Rompkey, *Grenfell of Labrador*, 111. Leona M. English, “Teaching the ‘Morally and Economically Destitute’: 19th-Century Adult Education Efforts in Newfoundland,” *Acadiensis* 41:2 (2012): 69, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/41803351>.

that she posed no threat to Josephine's supremacy as the first and *only* "white woman" on the Peary expeditions.

5.5 Conclusion

Around the turn of the century, Josephine Peary was highly effective at circulating textual narratives, visual culture, and material objects within American popular culture in order to re-frame the Arctic as an appropriate venue for white domestic life. Drawing upon maternalist discourse and middle-class notions of domesticity, Peary's Arctic narratives publicized women's roles within those nationalist projects, Arctic exploration among them, that were aimed at regenerating and rejuvenating white America. Interestingly, Josephine Peary's performance of a feminine strain of middle-class, white national identity was shown to best effect, and was most celebrated, in the context of her involvement in Arctic exploration, at the very moment when she appeared to reach the outermost limits of acceptable behaviour for an American woman. In considering Peary's status as an Arctic wife *and* an exemplar of American womanhood, it might be helpful to think about middle-class American whiteness as a frontier identity, though in slightly different sense than the term is traditionally used. Many historians have noted the centrality of the Western colonial frontier to American national identity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I want to suggest that the importance of Arctic exploration for Americans of the Pearys' class in this period is indicative of the fact that national identity could be best identified and exemplified when it was situated at the definitional, as well as geographical, frontiers of what it meant to be white, middle class, and American. This characteristic is borne out in Chapter Five's analysis of Marie Peary's Arctic childhood. Consideration of Marie's

celebrity as “The Snow Baby” in the early twentieth century shows that her identity as a recognisably middle-class American girl depended upon her ability to confidently inhabit the geographical and definitional borderlands between white and Indigenous childhoods.

While making visible white women’s cultural and biological labour for the nation as symbolic and actual mothers, Josephine’s persona as Arctic heroine necessarily obscured and devalued the labour of white and Inughuit women that was so essential to the success of the Peary expeditions, as well as the domain of Arctic domesticity that she presided over. Ultimately, however, Josephine Peary’s obfuscation of this female social network cannot conceal that critical experiences held in common by all of the women associated with the Peary expeditions. One of women’s primary occupations in the Arctic, regardless of their reason for being there, was in sustaining, nurturing, and caring for life, particularly for children. In Chapter Five, we turn our analysis to Eqariusaq and Marie Peary, two children who came under the care of this group of women, in order to interrogate childhood as a racial category within America’s culture of Arctic exploration during the early twentieth century.

Chapter 6:

Making Home at “The Outermost Limit of the World”: Marie Peary and Eqariusaq Experience Arctic Childhood

This chapter considers the enmeshed lives of two girls born in the Arctic at the end of the nineteenth century. The first girl, Marie Peary, was the daughter of Josephine and Robert Peary. Born in the Avanersuaq (Thule) region of Greenland in 1893 to explorer parents, Marie Peary was destined to have an unusual childhood, compared to her American contemporaries. Until she was 16, she was primarily under her mother Josephine’s care: the twosome split their time between living at Josephine’s mother’s home in Washington, D.C., and visiting Robert Peary at his various expedition headquarters along the shorelines of Northwestern Greenland and Eastern Ellesmere Island.⁸⁶⁹ As a white American child, the location and circumstances of her birth also meant that Marie Peary had been “born to a greatness she [could] never escape,” according to the *New York Times*, being “the first of her kind to begin existence among the glaciers and icecaps of Northern Greenland.”⁸⁷⁰ The public narrative surrounding Marie’s fame as a child of the Arctic was carefully managed by Josephine, who introduced her daughter to the American public in 1894 and 1895 through a series of press interviews and fundraising lectures.⁸⁷¹ Josephine Peary also wrote two popular children’s books about Marie’s experiences in the Arctic as an infant and a young girl, *The Snow Baby* (1901) and *Children of the Arctic* (1903), that

⁸⁶⁹A photograph of Josephine’s mother’s Washington home appears in her scrapbook. The caption, written in Marie’s hand, says “Grossy’s (short for ‘Gross mutter’) home, 2014 12th street, N.E., Washington, D.C., where mother was married; Francine & Robert [her younger siblings] were born & which was our headquarters until 1908.” Scrapbooks box 4, folder 39, JDPP.

⁸⁷⁰ “A Very Remarkable Baby,” 18.

⁸⁷¹ Robert Peary was on expedition in Greenland during this period.

consolidated Marie Peary's image as "The Snow Baby," the first snow-white American girl born on an Arctic expedition (**Fig. 1**).

As the title by which she was known publicly all her life, Marie's identity as "The Snow Baby" forever associated her with her Arctic childhood. After her father reached the



Figure 6.1: Marie Peary as "The Snow Baby," at 16 months, 1895
(Photo album with handwritten comments by Robert Peary, series 4, box 2, folder 239, MAPP)

North Pole in 1909, Marie Peary's private life began to assume a more traditional character. Her parents never travelled to the Arctic again, and put down more permanent roots in Washington, where Marie attended school, and the family established itself within the city's political and social elite. In 1917, she married another member of "the Washington set," attorney Edward Stafford, and went on to have two boys of her own over the next three years.⁸⁷²

Even as an adult, however, Arctic girlhood remained an important element of Marie Peary's public life. Capitalising upon the popular appetite for Arctic stories for and about children

in the early twentieth century, Marie published and lectured on topics and stories drawn from her childhood experiences in the Arctic throughout the 1930s and 1940s, presenting

⁸⁷² Edward Stafford was the son of Justice Wendell P. Stafford, a judge on the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. "Miss Marie Peary Soon to Be Bride," *Washington Times* 9 May 1917, n.p., Scrapbook [clippings] 1900-1918, series 4, box 2, folder 238, MAPP.

herself as “an authority on the subject.”⁸⁷³ In 1934, Marie published *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, offering a retelling of her Arctic experiences from her adult perspective. The book brings her biography up to date, provides an overview of her return journey to Avanersuaq with her own sons in 1932, and, overall, provides a narrative conclusion to the story of “The Snow Baby” begun by her mother 30 years earlier.

The second young woman considered in this chapter is Eqariusaq, an Inuk girl born around 1881, along the shores of Smith Sound in Inughuit territory in Greenland, between Cape York and Etah.⁸⁷⁴ Eqariusaq’s father, Nuktaq, was a skilled hunter who supplied the Peary expeditions with game and animal skins. As a young girl, Eqariusaq lived with Nuktaq, her stepmother Atangana, reputed to be a powerful shaman, and her sisters.⁸⁷⁵ Like other Inuit girls, Eqariusaq learned to sew at an early age. The ability to prepare and maintain animal skin clothing was viewed as an essential skill for Inuit women, and represented an important element of women’s gendered identities, as well as being an important strategy of family survival.⁸⁷⁶ Eqariusaq acquired a reputation within her

⁸⁷³ Jean Lyon, “Have Women No Place in Explorations? But, Mr. Andrews, There They Are...” *New York Sun*, n.d., n.p., scrapbook clippings, series 4, box 2, folder 222, MAPP.

⁸⁷⁴ Dick, *Muskox Land*, 61.

⁸⁷⁵ It is unclear how many sisters Eqariusaq had. According to Kenn Harper, Nuktaq had three daughters with his first wife. At some point, the family adopted another daughter, Aviaq. Kenn Harper, *Minik, The New York Eskimo: An Arctic Explorer, A Museum, and the Betrayal of the Inuit People* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Steerforth Press, 2017), 29. Kenn Harper, *Give Me My Father’s Body: The Life of Minik the New York Eskimo* [1986] (South Royalton, Vermont: Steerforth Press, 2000), 19.

⁸⁷⁶ LeMoine and Darwent, “Furs and Satin,” 212.

community as a highly skilled seamstress, a quality that made her desirable as a potential spouse (**Fig. 2**). Sometime between 1895 and 1897, Eqariusaq married her first husband, Angutdluk.⁸⁷⁷ While the couple were initially happy together, they separated after nearly ten years, reportedly because of Eqariusaq’s inability to conceive any children.⁸⁷⁸ While she subsequently entered into spousal partnerships with at least two other men, Alattaq and

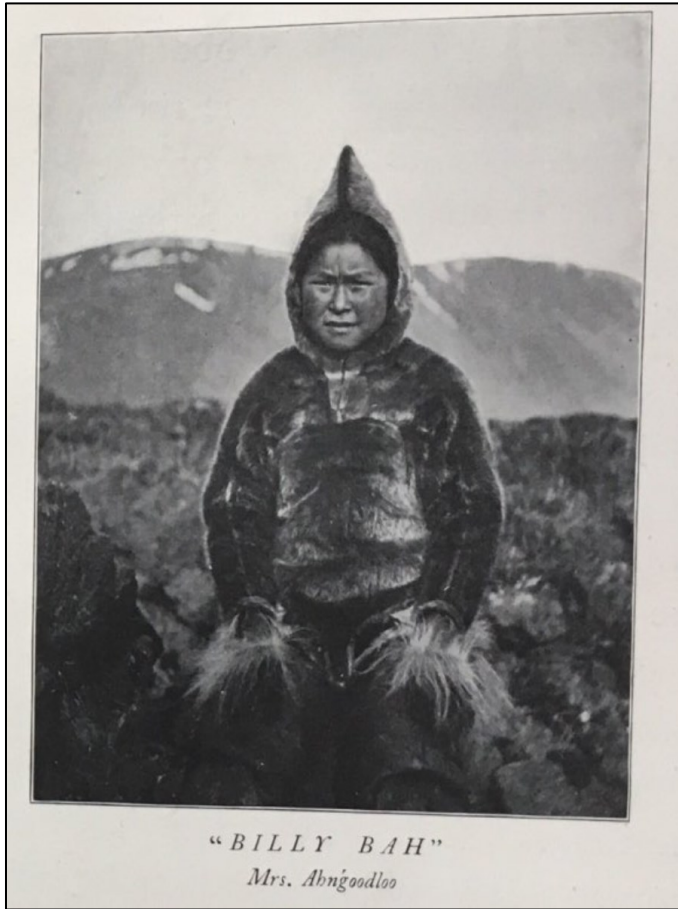


Figure 6.2: Photo of Eqariusaq, n.d. (Diebitsch Peary and Peary, *Children of the Arctic*, 59)

Sâmik, these marriages were also fraught with conflict and unhappiness, due to Eqariusaq’s “barrenness.”⁸⁷⁹ Eqariusaq died some time before Marie’s last Arctic voyage in 1932.⁸⁸⁰

At first glance, Marie and Eqariusaq appear to have had little in common; even their shared birthplace undoubtedly meant different things to Marie, who spent most of her adult life in America, and Eqariusaq, who lived almost the entirety of her life in

⁸⁷⁷ While the Pearys referred to him as “Ahngoodloo,” the correct spelling of his name is Angutdluk. Dick, *Muskox Land*, 374.

⁸⁷⁸ Robert E. Peary to Josephine D. Peary, 22 July 1908, Robert E. and Josephine Peary letters, box 2, folder 40, JDPF.

⁸⁷⁹ George Borup, *A Tenderfoot with Peary* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1911), 123. Rasmussen, *The People of the Polar North*, 65-68.

⁸⁸⁰ Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 296.

Avanersuaq. Looking at their Arctic experiences together, however, reveals sites of common experience and commensurability as much as difference, particularly during their childhood years.⁸⁸¹ As children, Marie and Eqariusaq were drawn into the orbit of the Peary polar expeditions, and shared several formative experiences as a result. During Marie's first year, spent at the Pearys' Anniversary Lodge on Inglefield Bay in Smith Sound, Eqariusaq's family lived and worked with the Peary party.⁸⁸² While Nuktaq supplied the expedition with meat and furs, it appears that the young Eqariusaq, 11 or 12 at the time, helped Josephine to care for the infant Marie. When Josephine and Marie sailed back to the United States in the autumn of 1894, Eqariusaq travelled with them, ostensibly to continue her role as "nurse" to the young American girl. Eqariusaq spent a year living at the Pearys' home in Washington, returning to her family in Greenland in 1895 on the ship that sailed North to bring Robert Peary back to the United States.⁸⁸³ While this would be Eqariusaq's first and only trip to Marie's home in America, the two young women would come together on at least two other occasions. They were reunited in 1897, when Marie, now a toddler, accompanied her parents on a summer sojourn to Avanersuaq. The girls reportedly reconnected in Marie's cabin aboard the expedition's ship, *The Windward*,

⁸⁸¹ Here I borrow from Allan Greer's argument that historians and biographers must be attentive to the "commensurable ground" that may exist between Indigenous and European subjects, as much as "the great cultural gulf separating natives and newcomers." Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, xi, x. More recently, Karen Routledge has made a similar argument regarding the necessity of addressing the entangled histories of Inuit and *Qallunaat* in the nineteenth century Arctic. Routledge contends that bringing our studies of Inuit and *Qallunaat* lives together enables historians to better understand the complex ways in which the histories of the two groups overlap, but also are not fully connected: "Even when Inuit and Qallunaat worked side-by-side, their lives had meanings and joys and crises unknown to others." Routledge, *Do You See Ice?*, xxiv.

⁸⁸² Harper, *Minik*, 30.

⁸⁸³ "Mrs. Peary Departs," *New York Evening World* 22 June 1895, 5. "Going to Bring Peary Back," *New York Tribune* 22 June 1895, 13. Articles from *Chronicling America*.

where they shared tea and biscuits.⁸⁸⁴ At that time Equariusaq was 15, and married to her first husband. They also met in the spring of 1901 on Ellesmere Island. Eqariusaq had spent the preceding winter in the far northern portion of the island with Angutdluk, working for one of the Peary expedition teams. When she came south with Robert Peary in the spring, she found Marie and her mother at a camp at Payer Harbor. The mother and daughter had spent the winter locked in the ice on board *The Windward*. On this occasion, Eqariusaq reportedly asked Marie many questions about how the people she had met in the United States had fared.⁸⁸⁵

Each girl lived, for a time, in the other's homeland. During their youth, Marie and Eqariusaq experienced family life together to a certain extent, sharing households, and being present and a part of one another's family partings and reunions. They were also important in each other's lives in different ways. Eqariusaq became an important character in Marie Peary's "Snow Baby" stories and persona as the first white child of the Arctic. When Marie was introduced to the American public in 1894, it was in the company of her "Eskimo nurse," whom Josephine referred to as "Bill" or "Miss Bill," the nickname given

⁸⁸⁴ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 55. Peary, *The Snowbaby's Own Story*, 32-33.

⁸⁸⁵ Peary, *The Snowbaby's Own Story*, 198.

to Eqariusaq by the white members of the Peary expedition crew.⁸⁸⁶ Accompanying this interview with Josephine Peary in the *New York Times* was a sketch of the infant Marie, and the newspaper proudly claimed “its privilege to present the first picture of this distinguished young woman to her countrymen.”⁸⁸⁷ The newspaper engraving shows Marie in the arms of Eqariusaq, who is depicted in European dress (Fig. 3). This simple engraving prefigures many of the racial



Figure 6.3: Engraving of Marie Peary and Eqariusaq
(*New York Times* 7 November 1894, 18)

dynamics that would come to characterize “The Snow Baby,” as an Arctic narrative and a figure of American girlhood for popular consumption, as well Eqariusaq’s role within these stories as “Bill,” “Billy-Bah,” or “Miss Bill.” While the image chromatically juxtaposes the snow-white Marie with “Miss Bill” the “little dusky maiden,” nodding at the racial difference between the two girls, Eqariusaq is also shown enfolding Marie in a caring embrace.⁸⁸⁸

The embrace between Marie and Eqariusaq suggests that some kind of bond or kinship existed between the two girls, despite their racial differences. This possibility is

⁸⁸⁶ “Tidings from Peary,” *The Sun* [New York] 16 September 1894, 1, *Chronicling America*. “A Very Remarkable Baby,” 18.

⁸⁸⁷ “A Very Remarkable Baby,” 18.

⁸⁸⁸ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 40.

developed further in the “Snow Baby” stories, which explore the extent to which each girl could “go native” within the other’s culture. Representations of Marie Peary’s Arctic childhood show her dressed in furs, “exactly like the Eskimo children,” speaking Inuktun, answering to her Inuit middle name, “Ahnighito,” and surrounded by Inughuit playmates, all of which wink at the possibility that a white child, born in the Arctic, could take on, as Josephine Peary put it, a “husky nature” – “husky” being a pejorative term for an Inuk.⁸⁸⁹ In narrations of Eqariusaq’s time in America, which appeared in all of the “Snow Baby” books, “Miss Bill’s” experiences are shown as mirror images of Marie’s, showing Eqariusaq conforming to the standards of modern American girlhood: she is made to bathe, wear her hair and dress in the manner of an American girl, to learn English, and to live in a white urban household.⁸⁹⁰ Depictions of both girls in Arctic stories for children in the early twentieth century responded to contemporary interest in North America in the potential moral and developmental benefits for white and Indigenous girls in assuming, at least for a time, elements of the other’s racial identity. This chapter, therefore, highlights the extent to which Marie Peary’s identity as a white girl took on substance and meaning only through comparisons with Indigenous children and adults like Eqariusaq. It shows that the entanglement of theories of childhood development with racist theories of human

⁸⁸⁹ Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 112. Josephine kept a record of Marie’s comments and activities on their 1897 Arctic trip. Here she observed that Marie “showed her husky nature by not being surprised at anything.” From “Marie’s Sayings and doings on her voyage to Greenland in 1897.” According to the press, “Ahnighito” was the name of Marie Peary’s first Inuk nurse who would become her godmother, giving the child her middle name: “The proud nurse assumed the mother that, protected by that name, which has special powers within the arctic circle, it would be safe for the baby” to go outside. “Little Miss Peary: How the Baby Took an Airing Near the North Pole,” 12.

⁸⁹⁰ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 38-40.

evolution at the turn of the twentieth century created the conditions for a popular fascination with the relationship between Marie Peary and Eqariusaq.

Consideration of the girls' movements between one another's homelands in America and Greenland also brings to the fore one of the central questions of this book: how did Arctic residents, explorers, and members from each group who moved between northern and southern spaces, define "home"?⁸⁹¹ Also, crucially, did they feel "at home" in one another's homelands? While these issues have been addressed up to this point by looking at the ways in which adult women related to the idea of home in their travels inside and outside of the Arctic, this chapter brings children's unique experiences of home and family life into focus. Looking at the ways in which Marie Peary was made to feel at home on her parents' Arctic expeditions, and how she integrated her Arctic experiences into her adult home life back in America, helps to challenge ideas of Arctic exceptionalism where northern environments are presented as inhospitable and antithetical to home life.⁸⁹² Conversely, the fact that Eqariusaq almost certainly did not view the Pearys' house in Washington as home illuminates how white concepts of home helped, like other mechanisms of imperial exclusion, to reproduce and naturalize "differentiation and inequality among people it incorporates," as Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose have

⁸⁹¹ Inspired by critical and feminist geography, I work with a *spatialized* understanding of home, to borrow from Blunt and Dowling, meaning "one that appreciates home as a place and also as a spatial imaginary that travels across space and is connected to particular sites," as well as a politicized understanding, "one alert to the processes of oppression and resistance embedded in ideas and processes of home." Blunt and Dowling, *Home*, 21-22.

⁸⁹² Routledge, *Do You See Ice?*, xii-xiii.

observed.⁸⁹³ It also challenges the idea, as Karen Routledge notes, that the United States was any more or any less a “natural home” than Arctic locations like Equariusaq’s birthplace in Avanersuaq.⁸⁹⁴

6.1 Approaching Arctic Girlhood with an Ethnographic Imagination

Writing as an adult, Marie Peary, full of admiration, characterized her mother Josephine’s decision to give birth in the Arctic in the following way: “It was she who unhesitatingly went to Greenland, knowing her first baby would be born away from home and friends at *the outermost limit of the world...*”⁸⁹⁵ Peary’s description of the Arctic as an environment situated at the absolute limit of white America’s geographical grasp and cultural understanding seems an apt metaphor to describe the tenuous physical, epistemological, and ontological spaces where Marie and Eqariusaq were able to meet one another. Born into two radically different epistemological and ontological traditions, both girls could feel, in those spaces of overlap in the Arctic and America where they interacted and held experiences in common, that “they were at the outer edge of their respective worlds.”⁸⁹⁶ While this chapter is interested in Eqariusaq and Marie’s shared childhood experiences and their reckonings with the idea of home, it is important to approach their dual biography with an awareness of their inevitably different understandings of one another, the

⁸⁹³ Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, introduction to *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5.

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁸⁹⁵ Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 9.

⁸⁹⁶ Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, 89.

relationship that existed between them, as well as notions of selfhood and subjectivity, the very objects of biographical study.⁸⁹⁷

Attempting to reconstruct the childhood histories of two individuals coming from different traditions of storytelling, knowledge transmission, and historical record-keeping, poses a unique methodological challenge. The realities of archival documentation mean that the kinds of stories that can be told about Marie and Eqariusaq, despite both of them spending some portion of their childhood years in the same territories, are very different. Biographers of Marie Peary have access to over seven linear feet of archival material, including her scrapbooks, with photographs and press clippings related to her family's Arctic life, as well as her diaries, correspondence, and manuscripts.⁸⁹⁸ There is also an extensive and varied array of published writings by Josephine, Robert, and Marie Peary. What little we know of Eqariusaq, on the other hand, comes second hand from Arctic narratives written by members of the Peary family, or other explorers in the Avanersuaq region, including the Americans Matthew Henson and George Borup, and Danes Knud Rasmussen, and Peter Freuchen.⁸⁹⁹ One must read these sources against the grain in an

⁸⁹⁷ One approach taken by Pamela Scully is to replace the term “biography,” which presumes a unified, coherent individual subject, with “heterography,” a concept that “explicitly places the notion of subjectivities, rather than one individual subject, at the forefront” of analysis. Scully, “Peripheral Visions.” 32.

⁸⁹⁸ *Marie Ahnighito Peary Papers, 1862-1995* [finding aid], Portland, Maine: Abplanalp Library, University of New England, August 2019. <https://library.une.edu/mwwc/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/08/MarieAhnighitoPearyPapers.pdf>.

⁸⁹⁹ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 30-43, 55-6; Peary and Diebitsch Peary *Children of the Arctic*, 118-119; Peary, *The Snowbaby's Own Story*, 15-33, 125-126, 198, 211. Peary, *Northward Over the Great Ice, Vol. 1*, 487. Borup, *A Tenderfoot with Peary*, 123. Henson, *A Negro Explorer at the North Pole*, 9. Dr. Nicholas Senn, *In the Heart of the Arctics* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey Company, 1907), 182, 204, <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/detail.jsp?Entt=RDMDC-37131055337935D&R=DC-37131055337935D>. Peter Freuchen, *Arctic Adventure: My*

effort to excavate what fragments of Eqariusaq's story might lie beneath these representations of "Miss Bill," the character from the "Snow Baby" stories. However, it is precisely the perceived paucity of biographical material dealing with Eqariusaq that has prompted me to approach an analysis of Marie Peary with a productive kind of methodological humility about the possibilities of resurrecting any woman's "real" or authentic subjectivity beneath the layers of historical representation.

Among Marie Peary's American contemporaries, childhood was recognized as an ontologically unstable moment in the human life cycle, characterized by emotional and psychological volatility, physical growth, and perpetual evolutions within "the self." Childhood experts and concerned middle-class parents devoted a significant amount of time and energy to planning for and controlling the stages of childhood development, but the instability and uncertainty of childhood subjectivity was viewed as incontrovertible by the end of the nineteenth century.⁹⁰⁰ As Steven Mintz argues, the modern, Western understanding of childhood that was consolidated in this period viewed this stage of life as "a period of peril and freedom; an odyssey of psychological self-discovery and growth; and a world apart, with its own values, culture, and psychology."⁹⁰¹ Studying Marie Peary in her childhood years, in other words, makes particularly visible what feminist historians have long argued: that biographies too often begin with the assumption of an unchanging, "unique and autonomous," historical "self," as well as the primacy of individual identity

Life in the Frozen North (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart Incorporated, 1935), 234-236. Rasmussen, *The People of the Polar North*, 65-68.

⁹⁰⁰ Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 185-196.

⁹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

over group or collective identities.⁹⁰² Particularly as a child, it is readily apparent that Marie's subjectivity is no more easily graspable to the historian than Eqariusaq's is.

Nevertheless, as Allan Greer has observed, historians of colonial relations tend to assume that the subjectivities and motivations of Europeans are more readily deciphered than those of their Indigenous interlocutors, perhaps revealing scholars' implicit identification with historical subjects belonging to their own national or ethnic group. In his own biographical study of a seventeenth-century Jesuit missionary, however, Greer confessed that he "was increasingly struck by what a strange and mysterious creature this man was. His motives were rarely obvious or even fully coherent; his sense of missionary purpose could be quite uncertain; his attitude toward Indians was variable and contradictory."⁹⁰³ Greer's discovery suggests to him "a need to approach missionaries with the kind of sympathetic ethnographic imagination that ethnohistorians try to bring to their studies of Native American cultures in the past."⁹⁰⁴ Likewise, looking comparatively at the stories told about Marie Peary and Eqariusaq, or perhaps, more accurately, "Miss Bill" and "The Snow Baby," that have found their way into published books and archives, both subjects appear, equally and alternately, accessible and opaque.

Marie Peary's diaries and letters are precisely the kind of sources, as Pamela Scully points out, that women's biographers believe will give them the most direct access to those

⁹⁰² Quotation from Paula R. Backsheider, *Reflections on Biography* [1999] (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 156. As Pamela Scully argues, biography typically presumes a unified, typically male subject, "a coherent psychological identity rooted in a stable and linear world in which time passes... ." Scully, "Peripheral Visions," 31-32. For more on feminist approaches to biography, see Banner, "Biography as History," 579-586; and Crais and Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus*, esp. 5-6.

⁹⁰³ Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, x.

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

private domains of family and domestic life where women lived most authentically in the past.⁹⁰⁵ At times, however, the texts dealing with Peary's childhood, even those authored by Marie herself, "seem to be all surface," as Sara Mills has said about women's travel writing in general.⁹⁰⁶ In the same way that it would be much easier to tell the story of "Miss Bill" than that of Eqariusaq, the sources available in Peary's biographical archive lend themselves to the study of "The Snow Baby" over Marie. While the historical record is replete with depictions of the two Arctic girls as their public-facing, storybook characters, these images cannot be conflated with the people they purport to represent.⁹⁰⁷

It is important to remember that, while Josephine Peary had some agency in constructing her own public image as a white woman in the Arctic, Marie Peary grew up consuming the narrative of Arctic girlhood that Josephine manufactured for her. As an adult, Marie deliberately identified as "The Snow Baby," at least in public. Recognising these facts makes it difficult to define the boundaries between the "real person" of Marie Peary and her "image" as "The Snow Baby," even in her own private diaries and correspondence. Any sense that a greater volume of documentation might enable me to gain a deeper or more accurate insight into Marie Peary's subjectivity than that of Eqariusaq would be false; both lives and their intersections must be approached, as Greer points out, with the same kind of ethnographic imagination. What is analytically possible and, perhaps, more interesting, is to consider the early-twentieth-century ideologies of racial and human development that posited that a special kinship existed between white

⁹⁰⁵ Scully, "Peripheral Visions," 31.

⁹⁰⁶ Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 11.

⁹⁰⁷ Pamela Scully has made a similar comment about the early-nineteenth-century South African performer Sara Baartman, known pejoratively and publicly in England as the "Hottentot Venus." Scully, "Peripheral Visions," 30.

children and non-white racial groups. The next section will consider the kaleidoscope of images of white and Indigenous childhood through which Marie and Eqariusaq's experiences in the Arctic and the United States were refracted.

6.2 Making Home for Snow Baby: Marie Peary's Arctic Childhood

During her time in Greenland and on Ellesmere Island between 1893 and 1902, Marie Peary experienced the Arctic as a homelike space. Marie's ability to feel at home in the Arctic was rooted in two seemingly contradictory phenomena: (1) her selective adoption of the characteristics and experiences of Inughuit childhood, particularly their forms of play and juvenile socialisation, as well as their relationship with the natural environment, and (2) Josephine Peary's efforts to manufacture the home life of the typical white, middle-class American child in the Arctic context. It is important to remember that, as I argued in the previous chapter, Josephine was working with an idea of home which was deliberately constructed as different from the Inuit model.

In exploring how Marie Peary navigated between these two models of childhood in ways that made the Arctic feel like home, it is often difficult to separate "the facts" of her experiences from their narrative representations in the Snow Baby stories. If some of the events in the "Snow Baby" stories have been fictionalized or exaggerated, they at least serve to demonstrate how a white American child *might* have been made to feel at home in the Arctic, in ways that felt plausible to an American readership. This readership is important to bear in mind. Josephine Peary's "Snow Baby" books were avidly consumed

by juvenile readers and their parents in the first decades of the twentieth century.⁹⁰⁸ *The Snow Baby*, for instance, turned out to be so popular upon its release in 1901 that by October publishers were required to release a fourth edition of the book, and a British imprint was published that same year.⁹⁰⁹ The Snow Baby stories retained their popularity and cultural relevance throughout the early twentieth century, into the 1930s, when Marie Peary published her own Snow Baby sequel. As *The Blue Book of World Celebrities* put it in 1931, “The Snow Baby” was a

magic word to countless thousands now grown up, and magic word to countless thousands now children. The ‘Snow Baby,’ authentic, vivid, captivating, not only

⁹⁰⁸ Arctic narratives, ranging from works of fiction to abridged versions of explorers’ biographies, were a staple among the books, comics, and periodical series produced specifically for trans-Atlantic juvenile audiences in this period. Arctic narratives have often been situated within the larger tradition of imperial adventure fiction written primarily for boys and men, featuring male protagonists operating in colonial spaces that were typically coded as sites for the cultivation of masculine virtue. While Arctic children’s narratives shared the plot devices and action sequences associated with colonial adventure fiction, Heidi Hansson, Lena Aarekol, and Ingeborg Høvik have nevertheless discerned a feminine strand of Arctic children’s literature dating back to the middle of the nineteenth century. Josephine and Marie Peary therefore joined a cohort of other authors, including R. M. Ballantyne, Lucy Fitch Perkins, and Mary E. Smith, who populated their Arctic narratives with female protagonists, as well as men and boys. For analyses of Arctic narratives as imperial adventure fiction, see Renée Hulan, “‘A Brave Boy’s Story for Brave Boys’: Adventure Narrative Engendering,” in *Echoing Silence: Essays on Arctic Narrative*, ed. John Moss (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1997), 183-190; Hill, *White Horizon*, ch. 6; Silje Gaupseth, “An Arctic Tom Sawyer: Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Violet Irwin’s *Kak*,” in *The Arctic in Literature for Children and Adults*, 44-56; Robert G. David, *The Arctic in the British Imagination, 1818-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 185-228. For more on girls in Arctic narratives see Heidi Hansson, introduction to *The Arctic in Literature for Children and Young Adults*, 10-11; Lena Aarekol, “The *Snow Baby* Books,” 57-69; Ingeborg Høvik, “Girlhood in the Arctic: Word-Image Relations in R. M. Ballantyne’s Canadian Adventures,” in *The Arctic in Literature for Children and Young Adults*, 88-105.

⁹⁰⁹ Aarekol, “The *Snow Baby* Books,” 58. Josephine D. Peary, *The Snow Baby: A True Story with True Pictures* (London: Isbister & Co. Ltd., 1901). All other citations for *The Snow Baby* come from the American edition.

to the children now reading the ‘Snow Baby,’ but also to the mothers who read this classic in their time.⁹¹⁰

The potential multi-generational impact, therefore, of the “Snow Baby” stories on American perceptions of the Arctic and of Inuit life in the first half of the twentieth century was substantial. Understanding the ways in which Marie Peary’s Arctic childhood was publicly presented is of interest to me as much as attempting to decipher her “real” experiences. To that end, in what follows I point out, wherever possible, the divergences between Marie’s Arctic life as it appears in her childhood diaries and its depiction in texts subsequently written by her mother or by herself as an adult.

When Josephine Peary set out, several months pregnant, for her second Arctic expedition in 1893, *Qallunaat* did not regard the Arctic as a natural or even safe setting in which to give birth to a white child. In an era when women’s bodies were regarded as “eternally wounded,” white women and their doctors viewed childbirth as a medical ordeal, to be treated with bedrest and confinement.⁹¹¹ Childbirth, like childrearing, was viewed as one of the most telling areas of racial difference between white women and women of “primitive” societies, despite being a critical experience held in common by all mothers. The reported ease with which Inuit women gave birth, without any formalized medical interventions, was regarded as indicative of their proximity to humanity’s evolutionary origins in animal life. According to Robert Peary, for instance, with Inughuit

⁹¹⁰ *Blue Book of World Celebrities: Noted Speakers for 1931-1932*, n.p., series 4, box 2, folder 223, MAPP.

⁹¹¹ Alison Enever, “‘How the Modern Girl Attains Strength and Grace’: *The Girl’s Own Paper*, Sport, and the Discipline of the Female Body, 1914-1956,” *Women’s History Review* 24:5 (2015): 667, doi: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.1080/09612025.2015.1028208>. Kelcey, *Alone in the Silence*, 147.

women, “[m]otherhood, and the various female functions cause them hardly if any more inconvenience than is the case with animals.”⁹¹² Not surprisingly, then, many of the early stories about Marie’s childhood, dealing with her birth and first year of life in Greenland, centered around answering the question that was undoubtedly in the forefront of Americans’ minds: how could a white baby be raised and properly nurtured, in a harsh, “primitive,” and fundamentally unhomelike environment like the Arctic?

Josephine Peary’s *The Snow Baby* describes in detail her own efforts to recreate the experience of the middle-class American home, including its physical spaces, its social and familial relationships, and its embodied practices, for her child. Here the reader learns that this snow-white American baby was born not in an Inughuit *iglu* or *tupic*, but a wooden house, in a room “lined with soft warm blankets ... a bright carpet on the floor, and lots of books, and a sewing machine, and pictures on the walls.”⁹¹³ The irony is that, as I mention in Chapter One, the Peary’s Brooklyn apartment, where Marie spent some of her infancy and toddler years, had a *tupic* on display in their parlour. The artificiality of this “hot-house” environment, as Josephine termed it, was emphasized when she noted that all of the household objects surrounding the infant Marie “had been brought in the big ship which had brought the baby’s father and mother to this strange country.”⁹¹⁴ Some of these imported items, reported the *New York Ledger*, included “a baby’s wardrobe and cradle,” some of the specialized artifacts of American childhood.⁹¹⁵ The effort that went into preparing Marie’s daily baths, which required Josephine to melt snow, warm the water,

⁹¹² Peary, *Northward Over the ‘Great Ice,’ Vol. 1*, 497.

⁹¹³ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 14.

⁹¹⁴ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 14-15.

⁹¹⁵ “A Baby at the North Pole,” *New York Ledger* in the *Indianapolis Journal* 20 August 1893, 4, *Chronicling America*.

and to carefully heat the baby's room, further emphasized the level of care and thought required to raise a white child in the Arctic.⁹¹⁶

Josephine Peary's efforts to replicate the experiences and conditions of an American childhood continued on subsequent Arctic trips. Marie Peary's diary from the winter of 1900-1901 that she spent aboard *The Windward*, locked in the ice off of Ellesmere Island with her mother shows that, despite their unexpected circumstances, Josephine constructed daily and weekly schedules for Marie. Every Saturday evening, for example, Marie was given a bath, and on Sundays the mother and daughter attended "prayers" in the captain's cabin.⁹¹⁷ Perhaps most importantly, each morning Marie had "school," where Josephine taught arithmetic, and helped her daughter refine her reading comprehension and writing skills.⁹¹⁸ In fact, Marie's diary from this period was part of this educational effort.⁹¹⁹ According to Marie, the effect of her Greenland homeschooling was that when she returned to the United States, she was able to rejoin her kindergarten classmates without having fallen behind in the curriculum.⁹²⁰ This undoubtedly created a sense of continuity for Marie between her life at home in the United States and her life in the Arctic.

In Marie's retellings of the "Snow Baby" stories, she regards the fact that she received her education through formalized schooling, while Inuit children did not, as indicative of fundamental differences between white and Indigenous childhoods. In an interesting echo of Josephine Peary's depiction of Inughuit women's sewing as demanding

⁹¹⁶ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 19.

⁹¹⁷ 3 September, 7 October and 14 October 1900, Marie Peary Diary (1897 and 1900), MAPP.

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1 October 1900, MAPP.

⁹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6 October 1900, MAPP.

⁹²⁰ Peary, *The Snowbaby's Own Story*, 165.

physical labour, Marie characterizes the ways in which Inughuit children were socialized into their future, adult gender roles primarily as work, rather than an education, aimed at meeting the necessities of survival in the Arctic environment. Writing as an adult, Marie observed that

Eskimo children have to make their playtime pay dividends, that is, they play at the things they will be required to do later in their struggle for existence in such a forbidding climate. The little girls learn how to chew skins and make mittens and gather moss to use as wicks in the family stove.⁹²¹

As in the United States, Marie's childhood privilege and familial status was marked by her protection from the world of work, in favor of school and leisure time.⁹²²

⁹²¹ Marie Peary Stafford, "Childhood Experiences in Greenland," series 1, box 1, folder 54, MAPP.

⁹²² Mintz, *Huck's Raft*, 135.

Another important source of continuity between Marie's two homes was the observance of Christian and national holidays, such as Christmas. The story of the



Figure 6.4: Photograph, Marie Peary, Christmas on *The Windward*, 1900. Her doll appears behind her, under the Christmas tree.
(Scrapbooks, box 4, folder 32, JDPS)

Christmas Josephine and Marie spent on board the *Windward* in 1900 appears in Josephine Peary's *Children of the Arctic* (1903), and was frequently retold by Marie in books, magazine articles, and lectures, including a piece written for *American Girl*, the official periodical of the Girl Scouts.⁹²³

One of the first of Marie's retellings appears in a letter she wrote to her maternal grandmother, "Grossy," in February 1901, while she was still

on Ellesmere Island. Here Marie recounts how she and her mother prepared for the holiday, baking cakes and making stockings for the ship's crew. When Marie awoke on Christmas day, she found her own stocking filled with gifts, including "several pieces of money, 2 pieces of pink ribbon, a book, a paper doll and her dresses, and a box of chock [sic]."⁹²⁴

⁹²³ Marie Peary, "Making Christmas in the Far North," *The American Girl* (December 1928): 10-11, 43, series 1, box 1, folder 21, MAPP. See also "My Wonderful Christmas Tree," *Holiday* (December 1953): n.p., series 1, box 1, folder 44, MAPP.

⁹²⁴ Marie Peary to Magdalene Diebitsch, 21 February 1901, series 5, Marie Peary Diary, "My Trip Abroad," MAPP.

The celebration of Christmas, which included a Christmas tree made of a broom handle and melted candle wax that looked, to Marie, “as if it had just been cut in the woods,” enabled her to imaginatively connect with holiday rituals and family members back in the United States (**Fig. 4**). Her only wish that Christmas, she wrote to her grandmother, was that “Father & Grossy & Tante [her aunt] & Uncle were here to see how happy I am.”⁹²⁵ This letter was reproduced in *Children of the Arctic*, but it was revised in order to emphasize further the success of Josephine’s project to reproduce American home life in the Arctic context. In the revised version of the letter, Marie writes that, in the midst of the Christmas festivities, she “quite forgot that [she] was thousands of miles away from home and hundreds of miles from any other white people.”⁹²⁶ Not surprisingly, many Arctic explorers, whalers, and travellers attempted to create “a microcosm of home” through observing Christmas celebrations.⁹²⁷

As the Christmas episode and the doll in the background of **Fig. 4** indicate, Marie also had access while in the Arctic to the kinds of manufactured toys and consumer goods that were specifically marketed to wealthy American children with leisure time for play. Marie Peary’s Arctic diaries reveal that she spent much of her time with her dolls, porcelain as well as paper, reading books like Agnes Carr Sage’s *A Little Colonial Dame* (1898) and *A Little Daughter of the Revolution* (1899), and playing board games like dominos and

⁹²⁵ Ibid.

⁹²⁶ Peary and Diebitsch Peary, *Children of the Arctic*, 78.

⁹²⁷ Shane McCorristine and Jane S. P. Mocellin, “Christmas at the Poles: Emotions, Food, and Festivities on Polar Expeditions, 1818-1912,” *Polar Record* 52: 226 (2016): 563, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247416000437>. Johnson and Suedfeld, “Coping with Stress Through Microcosms of Home and Family,” 54.

parcheesi with her mother, her nurse, Martha Percy, and members of the sailing crews.⁹²⁸ On the Pearys' 1902 summer trip to Greenland, Marie was gifted with a new toy or novelty virtually once a week, presumably to help keep her entertained while confined on ship.⁹²⁹ Thanks to Josephine's interventions, then, even in the Arctic, Marie was surrounded by the material cultural milieu of middle-class American childhood. Furthermore, Marie's playthings acted as what Robin Bernstein calls "scriptive things." According to Bernstein, "[a] scriptive thing, like a playscript, broadly structures a performance while allowing for agency and unleashing original, live variations" ⁹³⁰ As props, Marie's playthings invited culturally prescribed forms of play-performance that linked her playtime with the activities and socialisation of children back in the United States. Like other American girls, much of Marie's play in the Arctic involved her working through ideas of home and domesticity, and her future role within these spheres as a wife and mother.

Marie Peary related to her dolls, for example, as though they were her children. This was the intention behind giving baby-dolls to young children. According to *Babyhood: The Mother's Journal of Nursery Health*, "[e]very little girl should have her doll. Without doubt the mother-instinct should be satisfied."⁹³¹ Following this cultural script, Marie performed acts of maternal care for her dolls, such as washing their clothes, taking them out on deck "to get the fresh air," and hosting tea parties for them, as part of

⁹²⁸ 5 August and 4 October 1900, Marie Peary Diary (1897 and 1900), MAPP. 25 July, 13 August and 20 August 1902, Marie Peary Diary, series 5, "My Trip Abroad," MAPP.

⁹²⁹ 30 July and 5 August 1902, Marie Peary Diary, "My Trip Abroad," MAPP.

⁹³⁰ Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 12.

⁹³¹ Elizabeth Eggleston Seelve, "Suggestions Concerning Toys and Amusements," *Babyhood: The Mother's Journal of Nursery Health* 7 (1891): 18, <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=4rgtAQAAIAAJ&rdid=book-4rgtAQAAIAAJ&rdot=1>.

her Arctic play.⁹³² Another paper doll set that Marie received on her 1902 trip was a paper kitchen with two dolls representing “the lady of the house” and her cook, preparing her for her future role as a middle-class homemaker with servants of her own.⁹³³ The ways in which dolls invited performances of motherhood from American girls like Marie was also explored in *The Snow Baby*. Referring to the dolls she left behind when she set out for the Arctic in 1897, Marie is quoted as saying that ““they must miss a mother’s care, poor things, and I am homesick for them too.”⁹³⁴ Interestingly, as Bernstein has pointed out, the cultural scripts attached to dolls could also be used to socialize American children into viewing white supremacy as natural. One of the dolls that Marie brought with her to the Arctic in 1902 was her “Topsy” doll.⁹³⁵ Inspired by the character of Topsy from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Topsy dolls typically represented African American children in the style of the “pickaninny,” whose characteristics included “dark or sometimes jet-black skin, exaggerated eyes and mouth,” and was often depicted wearing ragged clothes or as completely naked.⁹³⁶ These dehumanising “pickaninny” dolls invited white children to view the children of other races, and African Americans in particular, as lesser. When gifted by Danish children in Upernavik with two rag dolls made to look like Inuit children, Marie is shown integrating them into her “doll family” in these racialized, hierarchical terms (**Fig. 5**). Marie treats these “very odd” dolls as inferior to her own snow-white porcelain dolls, with “real hair” and eyes that could open and shut.⁹³⁷ Speaking of her “doll

⁹³² 31 July and 5 September 1902, Marie Peary Diary, “My Trip Abroad,” MAPP.

⁹³³ *Ibid.*, 26 August 1902, MAPP.

⁹³⁴ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 82.

⁹³⁵ 9 August 1902, Marie Peary Diary, “My Trip Abroad,” MAPP.

⁹³⁶ Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 34.

⁹³⁷ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 77.



Figure 6.5: Marie holding one of her "Eskimo dolls," 1897 (Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 54)

family” back at home, Marie opines in *The Snow Baby*: “I wonder what they will say to the new Eskimo sister and brother that I am bringing to them. I hope they will be pleased, even if the new children are not beauties.”⁹³⁸ Even in the Arctic, Marie was socialized into the racial hierarchies that were foundational to social and domestic relations at home in America.

Given this, one is not surprised to find that the American home spaces recreated by Marie Peary and her mother in the Arctic often had no place for an Inuit presence. The scenes in the “Snow Baby” stories in which Marie Peary is shown “playing house” with her Inughuit playmates suggest that

Inuit have lesser status, or perhaps even no place at all, within the American home. In *Children of the Arctic*, Marie sets up “one of her father’s tents” – importantly, not a *tupic* – on the shores of Ellesmere Island to host a tea party for members of the expedition.⁹³⁹ This enabled her to perform the domestic rituals familiar within middle-class American homes, providing her guests with hot chocolate, “cake, cookies, and sandwiches.”⁹⁴⁰ While her Inughuit friends were invited, they were said to have behaved badly, licking their cups

⁹³⁸ Ibid., 82.

⁹³⁹ Peary and Diebitsch Peary, *Children of the Arctic*, 63.

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid., 64.

and plates clean.⁹⁴¹ Interestingly, the description of the party in Marie's diary seems to suggest that none of the Inughuit residing with the expedition party were invited to attend, which is, of course, a more overt form of exclusion.⁹⁴² Their inclusion in this episode in *Children of the Arctic* seems to be a deliberate rhetorical strategy used to emphasize how out of place Inughuit were in even simulated American homes.

Thus, the ways in which Marie Peary was enabled to experience an American homescape in the Arctic as a child suggest that, as much as possible, the Pearys defined home by creating an *Qallunaat* "hothouse" environment in the Arctic, excluding, minimizing and denigrating Inuit ways of living there. Additionally, Inughuit childrearing practices, particularly around work, hygiene, and education, were presented as inappropriate for application in the rearing of a white child. Paradoxically, however, one of the most important ways Marie Peary was seen by American audiences to be at home in the Arctic, and likely one of the most important ways in which she felt at home in reality, was through the appropriation of certain aspects of Inughuit life. Unlike her mother, for instance, Marie's clothing was adapted to Inughuit styles of fur clothing while in the Arctic (**Fig. 6**). As an infant, as well as when she was an older child, Inughuit women made suits

⁹⁴¹ Ibid.

⁹⁴² 26 October 1900, Marie Peary Diary (1897 and 1900), MAPP.

of fur clothing for Marie, along the lines of those they made for their own children, at Josephine's behest.⁹⁴³ According to Josephine, this meant that, when Marie's back was turned in a group of Inughuit, "it was not an easy matter to know the little white girl among the fur-clad children."⁹⁴⁴ As Heather Davis-Fisch has pointed out, on Arctic expeditions, as in other contexts of intercultural contact, Inuit and *Qallunaat* promoted "intercultural sociability" by taking on the other group's manner of dress and modes of bodily performance.⁹⁴⁵ In so doing,



Figure 6.6: Marie in her Inughuit *kapetah* and *kamiks*, made for her by Aleqasina on Ellesmere Island in 1900 (frontispiece for Diebitsch Peary and Peary, *Children of the Arctic*)

Davis-Fisch argues, white and Inuit members of expedition parties were able to "enact membership in the same social group," characterized by sharing a "specific, embodied form of knowledge."⁹⁴⁶ Dressed "exactly like the Eskimo children," as Marie put it, her physical experience of the environment was similar to that of her Inughuit peers, and far more comfortable, one imagines, than that of Josephine and Martha Percy, who continued

⁹⁴³ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 21-23. Marie's *kapetah* and *kamiks* were made by Aleqasina in 1900. 24 October 1900, Marie Peary Diary (1897 and 1900), MAPP.

⁹⁴⁴ Peary and Diebitsch Peary, *Children of the Arctic*, 72-3.

⁹⁴⁵ Davis-Fisch, "Girls in 'White' Dresses," 88.

⁹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.



Figure 6.7: Marie in Inughuit kayak, 1901

(Diebitsch Peary and Peary, *Children of the Arctic*, 106)

to wear their American dresses.⁹⁴⁷ Marie also had more freedom to interact with the Arctic landscape than Josephine, as she coasted down snow-covered hills, kayaked, and played out of doors with Inughuit children (**Figs. 7 and 8**).⁹⁴⁸

One of Marie's companions over the winter of 1900-1901, for example, was Achatingwah, a girl of about her own age. Achatingwah taught Marie how to build a snow house, "with furniture made of blocks of ice."⁹⁴⁹ In Marie's retelling of this episode in *The Snowbaby's Own Story*, Achatingwah also teaches Marie how to build a stone house in the spring.⁹⁵⁰ While their housebuilding was done in play, Achatingwah's teachings replicated, to a



Figure 6.8: Marie, with Martha Percy, coasting on the pack ice of Smith Sound, 1900. Photograph likely taken by Josephine Peary (Diebitsch Peary and Peary, *Children of the Arctic*, 44)

⁹⁴⁷ Peary, *The Snowbaby's Own Story*, 15.

⁹⁴⁸ Peary and Diebitsch Peary, *Children of the Arctic*, 51.

⁹⁴⁹ 12 October 1900, Marie Peary Diary (1897 and 1900), MAPP. This scene appears in Marie Peary's *The Snowbaby's Own Story*, but it is Achatingwah's father who shows her how a snow house is built. Peary, *The Snowbaby's Own Story*, 81-82.

⁹⁵⁰ Peary, *The Snowbaby's Own Story*, 131.

certain extent, the ways in which Inughuit children were taught by their parents how to make the most of the resources offered by the environment in order to survive and build their own homes in the Arctic landscape, both literally and figuratively.

In the “Snow Baby stories,” Marie’s engagements with elements of Inughuit childhood are presented in more exaggerated terms. She is shown as having mastered Inuit identity, with a complete understanding of the experiences of Inughuit childhood. In *The Snow Baby* and *Children of the Arctic*, Marie is referred to exclusively by her middle name, “Ahnighito,” reportedly the name of the Inuk woman who made her first fur suit as a newborn.⁹⁵¹ Her first words, according to Marie, “were Eskimo words, simple ones like ‘takoo’ (look) and ‘atoodoo’ (more)”⁹⁵² By the time she was six, according to the “Snow Baby” narrative, “Ahnighito” could speak “the Eskimo language perfectly, and every native was her friend.”⁹⁵³ In dress, in speech, and in social relatedness, then, Marie Peary was narratively presented as easily and simultaneously inhabiting Inughuit and white American modes of childhood.

In a 1904 interview with the *Washington Times*, an 11-year old Marie informed the reporter that she had spent so much of her childhood in the Arctic “that she is only just now

⁹⁵¹ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 23.

⁹⁵² Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 15.

⁹⁵³ Peary and Diebitsch Peary, *Children of the Arctic*, 72.

beginning to become civilized.”⁹⁵⁴ And yet, the photograph of Marie that accompanies the article presents her as being very much at home in American civilisation, standing in front of her Washington residence (**Fig. 9**). Representations of Marie as “The Snow Baby” toyed with the racial implications of what it meant for a white American girl to be, because of her birthplace, a “real child of the Arctic” in ways that appear at odds with Josephine Peary’s insistence that Marie grow up in a typical *Qallunaat* home, even in Greenland.⁹⁵⁵ While Marie Peary’s dialogical movement between her dual identities as a well-heeled American girl and an



Figure 6.9: Photograph, Marie Peary, by Waldon Fawcett
(*The Washington Times* 6 September 1904)

“uncivilized” child of the Arctic may appear jarring, it would not likely have appeared this way to consumers of Arctic narratives in the first half of the twentieth century. In this period, middle-class American parents regarded their children’s appropriation of racialized

⁹⁵⁴ “May Make Trip to the Arctic,” *The Washington Times* 6 September 1904, 4, *Chronicling America*.

⁹⁵⁵ “Peary Blights the Pretty Story of Romance Between Daughter and MacMillan, an Explorer,” *Springfield News* [IL] 23 September 1913, n.p., scrapbook clippings, series 4, box 2, folder 236, MAPP. Marie Peary was also referred to as a “child of the Arctic” in the *London Daily News* in 1905: “A Child of the Arctic,” *London Daily News* 5 July 1905, n.p., scrapbook clippings, series 4, box 2, folder 236, MAPP.

“primitive” identities, through dress and bodily performance, as a normal and temporary stage of juvenile development, as well as an expression of their racial and class privilege.

Between the 1880s and the beginning of the Second World War, American parents of the Pearys’ class encouraged their children to partake in what Leslie Paris has referred to as “productive leisure” activities, yet another signifier of their family class status, particularly their children’s freedom from the world of productive labour.⁹⁵⁶ Summer camps and children’s groups like the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, and the Camp Fire Girls, were believed to be beneficial for boys’ and girls’ physical and moral development: they encouraged wilderness-based play and activities where children could, using Native American images, such as the “Indian Brave” and the “Indian Maiden,” give vent to the more “primitive” and unruly sides of their natures.⁹⁵⁷ Recreational programming borrowed extensively from the latest insights in childhood development studies, particularly the work of American psychologist G. Stanley Hall. Marrying child psychology with physical anthropology, Hall posited that the white child’s development from infancy to adulthood could be mapped on to the stages of humanity’s development from primitivism (the state supposedly still occupied by many non-white racial groups) to civilisation.⁹⁵⁸ According

⁹⁵⁶ Leslie Paris, “The Adventures of Peanut and Bo: Summer Camps and Twentieth-Century American Girlhood,” *Journal of Women’s History* 12:4 (2001): 52, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/docview/1300153091?accountid=10406>.

⁹⁵⁷ Jennifer Helgren, “Native American and White Camp Fire Girls Enact Modern Girlhood, 1910-1939,” *American Quarterly* 66:2 (2014): 334-335, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/43823443>. For a recent analysis of the Boy Scouts of America’s relationship to popular ideals of modern manhood during this period, see Benjamin René Jordan, *Modern Manhood and the Boy Scouts of America: Citizenship, Race, and the Environment, 1910-1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

⁹⁵⁸ Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization*, 92-93.

to this school of thought, “children were not merely metaphoric savages; their somatic makeup made children physically recapitulate primitive evolutionary stages.”⁹⁵⁹ The flip side to this theory was that non-white groups, such as Native Americans and African Americans, were viewed as roughly equivalent, in intellectual, moral, psychological, and developmental terms, to white children.⁹⁶⁰

The promotion of “Indian symbols and vigorous outdoor activities” for girls was not, therefore, about a collective desire to return to a “primitive” stage of human society; it was about preparing them for their roles as wives and mothers within a rapidly changing modern world.⁹⁶¹ As Jennifer Helgren points out, “[a]s women’s roles expanded in education, the professions, and politics, critics warned that this new woman would lack the physical and emotional capacity for motherhood.”⁹⁶² An “authentic connection to nature,” mediated through Indigenous imagery, would prepare girls’ bodies and minds to “fulfil their ‘eugenic responsibility.’”⁹⁶³ The prevalent phenomenon of American girls playing with “Oriental” or “primitive” clothing and cosmetics facilitated and amplified their “robust possession of whiteness, national belonging, and the status of ‘modern.’”⁹⁶⁴

⁹⁵⁹ Ibid., 93.

⁹⁶⁰ As Gail Bederman puts it, “Black adults were believed to be roughly as intelligent as Anglo-Saxon children... .” Ibid.

⁹⁶¹ Helgren, “Native American and White Camp Fire Girls Enact Modern Girlhood,” 340.

⁹⁶² Ibid.

⁹⁶³ Ibid. As Alison Enever argues, early-twentieth-century changes in thinking about physical activity as conducive, rather than harmful, to girl’s future fertility, “continued to define women in terms of their biological reproductive function.” Enever, “How the Modern Girl Attains Strength and Grace,” 667.

⁹⁶⁴ Alys Eve Weinbaum et al, “The Modern Girl as Heuristic Device: Collaboration, Connective Comparison, Multidirectional Citation,” in *The Modern Girl Around the World*, 11.

Depictions of Marie Peary in the popular press focused on how her Arctic childhood, where “the strange people who live out of our world ... are her people,” had



Figure 6.10: “Miss Marie Peary, The Grown-up ‘Snow Baby’” (“The Snow Baby of the Arctic,” 25 September 1913)

given her a “healthy and rugged” constitution of the type typically associated with the perceived natural health of the “racialized primitive body.”⁹⁶⁵ This emphasis on Marie’s healthful physicality, as a result of her time in the Arctic and “native” childhood, only increased during her debutante years, as she approached marriageable age (**Fig. 10**). Described as a “wholesome sort of American girl of the best type,” Marie Peary was lauded as “adept in all kinds of sport on land and water and is always ready for an adventure,” and being “as versatile as an American outdoor girl should be.”⁹⁶⁶ As **Figure 10** suggests, these articles drew causal linkages between Peary’s

⁹⁶⁵ “Snow Baby Sings Glories of Southern Spring: But the Heart of Marie A. Peary Remains Loyal to Her Arctic Birthplace,” *New York Herald* 19 April 1908, 7, scrapbook clippings, series 4, box 2, folder 217, MAPP. “R. E. Peary’s Daughter,” *Frostburg Mining Journal* [MD] 12 November 1904, 4, *Chronicling America*. Helgren, “Native American and White Camp Fire Girls Enact Modern Girlhood,” 339.

⁹⁶⁶ “Explorer Peary’s Pretty Daughter,” 1909, scrapbook clippings, series 4, box 2, folder 236, MAPP. “Miss Marie Peary, the Arctic Explorer’s ‘Snow Baby,’ Justifies Horoscope Which Was Cast for the Herald,” *New York Herald* 11 January 1914, 7, and “First Debutante of 1914, ‘The Snow Baby,’” *New York Times* 28 December 1913, n.p., scrapbook clippings, series 4, box 2, folder 217, MAPP.

Arctic childhood as “The Snow Baby” and her current status as an “up-to-date, intelligent American girl.”⁹⁶⁷ Far from undermining her identity as a modern girl, Marie Peary’s embrace of certain elements of Inughuit life and childhood was seen as a desirable, physically and racially invigorating dimension of white childhood development.

Those who produced narratives for children with Arctic content and Inuit characters, such as the Pearys, drew upon linked notions of childhood and Indigenous primitivism in order to promote their products as not only educational, but also beneficial to childhood development. As Vilhjalmur Stefansson put it in a satirical piece on misinformation about the Arctic in America, stories about Inuit life had a significant role “in our scheme of child training”: “From their simplicity you can get a parallel to the simplicity of our own remote ancestors and also a contrast to the multiplicities of civilization.”⁹⁶⁸ Mary E. E. Smith’s book, *Eskimo Stories* (1902), for example, written for use in American classrooms, was based on her reading of Josephine Peary’s *My Arctic Journal* and information collected from Ólöf Krarér, the Icelandic Inuit impersonator discussed in Chapter Four.⁹⁶⁹ Designed to educate American children about Inuit life, Smith’s narrative focused on the activities of husband and wife “Ikwa,” “Mane,” and their children. According to Smith, a special psychological kinship existed between Inuit and white children, that could be deployed, through stories, for the benefit of *Qallunaat* youths:

[a]n acquaintance with the life and environment of primitive man seems particularly useful to the child during his early school years. Between him and the child of the

⁹⁶⁷ “‘The Snow Baby of the Arctic’ Will Wed Man Who Followed Her Father to Regions of Ice and Snow,” 25 September 1913, scrapbook clippings, series 4, box 2, folder 236, MAPP.

⁹⁶⁸ Stefansson, *Adventures in Error*, 244, 243.

⁹⁶⁹ Mary E. E. Smith, *Eskimo Stories*, illus. Howard Brown (Chicago, New York, and London: Rand McNally Company, 1902), 3, <https://archive.org/details/eskimostories01smit>.

race there is much in common. The necessity for food, shelter, and clothing forces man into the struggle for existence, and primarily occupies his thoughts and controls his actions. The child recognizes this necessity, his own most conscious desires arising from nature's first demands.⁹⁷⁰

As an adult, Marie Peary framed her own Arctic children's narratives in similar terms, arguing that "the writing of books for children is one of the most important things in the world and one which should not be undertaken unless the writer is willing to spare neither time nor effort to see that all his statements are unfailingly accurate."⁹⁷¹ This emphasis on intellectual honesty and factual accuracy was tied, for Peary, to the didactic function of Arctic narratives written for children. In a published review of William Hurd Hillyer's *The Box of Daylight* (1931), an anthology of Tsimshian legends, Marie critiqued the collection's morally ambiguous portrayal of the Tsimshian figure of The Raven, as it appeared to "hold ... up wrong standards to those whose ideas and principles are not yet formed."⁹⁷² She continued:

It is important that the children of America should become as familiar with the history and legends of the brown people to the North of us as Hiawatha and Leather Stocking tales have made them with the almost vanished redskin race... we do well to read and study them and give them a special place in the 'balanced ration' of reading for our children.⁹⁷³

Framed correctly, stripped of their spiritual significance within Northern cosmologies, Marie Peary believed that Indigenous stories could be redeployed for the moral education of white American children.

⁹⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁷¹ Marie Ahnighito Peary, "Writing the Animal Story for Children," *Writer*, December 1931, n.p., series 1, box 1, folder 28, MAPP.

⁹⁷² Marie Peary Stafford, untitled review, series 1, box 1, folder 58, MAPP.

⁹⁷³ Ibid.

Silje Gaupseth has suggested that the “educational Arctic” that appeared in twentieth-century American children’s literature represented “another way of domesticating a foreign land and people,” and therefore can be classified as strand of colonial discourse.⁹⁷⁴ Through the “Snow Baby” stories and publicity, which showed an American girl “at home” above the Arctic Circle, the Arctic became a landscape in which normal – and, indeed, optimal and desirable – white childhood development could occur. The Arctic and its residents, by extension, were narratively redefined as belonging to those American homespaces where children like Marie Peary were raised and nurtured. The Inughuit and their homelands, in other words, were valuable only as handmaidens to the vaunted process of cultivating, improving, and perpetuating white American society. The messaging behind the “Snow Baby” narratives was all the more insidious for its claims to childhood innocence.⁹⁷⁵ Mary Louise Pratt defines “anti-conquest” rhetoric as “the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment they assert European hegemony.”⁹⁷⁶ Under the guise of Marie Peary’s childhood innocence, “The Snow Baby’s” Arctic companions and surroundings were imaginatively colonized as technologies of Euro-American subject formation, a move that implicitly denied the Inughuit the dignity of having their own, autonomous subjectivities. The messaging surrounding Marie Peary’s childhood must be

⁹⁷⁴ Gaupseth, “An Arctic Tom Sawyer,” 44.

⁹⁷⁵ As Robin Bernstein observes, in the context of nineteenth century American white supremacy, “[c]hildhood innocence provided a perfect alibi: not only the ability to remember while appearing to forget, but even more powerfully, the production of racial memory through the performance of forgetting. What childhood innocence helped Americans assert by forgetting, to think about by performing obliviousness, was not only whiteness but also racial difference constructed against whiteness.” Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 8.

⁹⁷⁶ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 7.

borne in mind as we move to consider how Eqariusaq might have felt about her time in America, and how her experiences and relationship with Marie were popularly understood.

6.3 “When You Go Down to the White Man’s Country”: Eqariusaq in America

As “Miss Bill,” Eqariusaq was an important figure in the narrative of Marie Peary’s life; her presence formed part of the racial backdrop for Marie’s performance of a specifically white version of American girlhood as “The Snow Baby.” According to Josephine Peary, quoted in an early interview with the *New York Times*, Eqariusaq came to America in 1894 of her own free will. She reportedly “‘begged’” to remain with Marie, as the Inuk girl had become, in Josephine’s words, “‘very fond of baby – a sentiment that Marie fully reciprocate[d].’”⁹⁷⁷ Marie’s introduction to the American public with her “Eskimo nurse” by her side drew upon middle-class perceptions of white children’s primitive or underdeveloped mental and emotional states, compared to white adults, as well as perceptions of the Inuit, as “primitive” peoples, and perpetual children, that became staples of the “Snow Baby” narrative.⁹⁷⁸ Depictions of Eqariusaq’s time in America were presented in the “Snow Baby” stories as mirror images of Marie Peary’s time in the Arctic, exploring the extent to which an Arctic girl could take on the characteristics of American childhood while living in a middle-class Washington home. “Miss Bill’s” ultimate failure to be “at home” in America shows the condition of girlhood in the Pearys’ Arctic narratives, understood by Americans as a specialized but temporary state of being prior to the onset of maturation into womanhood, to be a privileged identity reserved for middle-class, white

⁹⁷⁷ “A Very Remarkable Baby,” 18.

⁹⁷⁸ Reference to Eqariusaq as Marie’s “Eskimo nurse” from “Tidings from Peary,” 1.

children. Eqariusaq's narrative treatment also suggests that *Qallunaat* beliefs regarding who – and particularly which types of children -- did and did not properly belong in white homes contributed to larger imperial processes of racial exclusion and the reproduction of colonial difference.⁹⁷⁹

The experiential linkages between Eqariusaq and Marie Peary's travels are reflected in the structure of *The Snow Baby*. While the first half of *The Snow Baby* focuses on Marie's Arctic infancy, and her first encounters and reckonings with the environment, its flora and fauna, and the Inughuit, Eqariusaq's trip to America represents a focal point for the second half of the book. As with earlier popular narratives of Inuit confrontations with Europe's "urban spectacle," as Coll Thrush puts it, Eqariusaq's arrival in America is framed as an encounter between "civilized" and "primitive" worlds, with representatives of the latter being awed into submission.⁹⁸⁰ Arriving in Philadelphia and making their way to the train station, where they would depart for Washington, Josephine reported that "Billy-Bah's' eyes nearly danced out of her head, at the sight of what she called the big dogs (horses) which pulled the carriage, and the high igloos (Eskimo houses) that lined the streets. The station, she said, was the largest and finest igloo she had ever seen, and she was loath to leave it."⁹⁸¹ Once on the train, Eqariusaq's wonderment supposedly increased: "Long after the train which was taking the little party to Ahnighito's grandmother and aunt had started, 'Billy-Bah' sat with both hands clutching the seat in front of her, and gazed in amazement at the trees and fences which seemed to fly past."⁹⁸² As one of the most potent

⁹⁷⁹ Hall and Rose, introduction, 5.

⁹⁸⁰ Thrush, "The Iceberg and the Cathedral," 60-61.

⁹⁸¹ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 39-40.

⁹⁸² *Ibid.*, 40.

symbols of urban industrial modernity, the train episode can be viewed as a metaphor for Eqariusaq's imagined confrontation with the rapid pace of historical and technological progress and change in the civilized world.

In the face of urban industrial modernity, Eqariusaq is narratively placed in a position of psychological and developmental equivalency with the infant Marie in her first encounters with Arctic life, as Josephine notes that the "little dusky maiden, who was the youngest of her people to reach the land of sunshine and plenty, had everything to learn, just the same as Ahnighito."⁹⁸³ Like a much younger white child, "Miss Bill's" educational programme included "learn[ing] to talk, for of course she could not speak English; then she must learn to eat, for in the Snowland her people eat nothing but meat."⁹⁸⁴ Furthermore, "[s]he must learn that meals were served at regular times, that we bathed daily, and retired and arose at given times."⁹⁸⁵ She was also taught to "mother" in the manner of white children through play with surrogate children: Josephine reported that each time a new set of clothing was made for the infant Marie, Eqariusaq would sew a replica of Marie's outfit for her own doll.⁹⁸⁶ The Pearys' Washington household was not, therefore, presented as a natural home for Eqariusaq in the same way that the Arctic was for Marie: training and discipline of the mind and body were required. Eqariusaq's experience in America likely shared similarities with the experiences of Native American women and children who entered white households as domestic labourers in this period. Through the state-sponsored "outing" system, First Nations girls and young women were placed in white middle-class

⁹⁸³ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁵ Ibid., 41.

⁹⁸⁶ Ibid., 43.

homes so that they might become more “civilized” by learning and internalising the practices of white domesticity.⁹⁸⁷ White employers’ households were not meant to feel like homes for Indigenous girls; they functioned, as Victoria Haskins points out, “not so much as a gateway for Indigenous women to the white world, but rather as a site of containment and surveillance.”⁹⁸⁸

Like Marie donning her fur suit, one of the first things Eqariusaq experienced in moving from one side of the Arctic Circle to another was a physical transformation. After



Figure 6.11: “Before” photograph of Eqariusaq by Henry G. Bryant, 1894
(Henry G. Bryant, Robert E. Peary Auxiliary Expedition, photographs of Henry G. Bryant, incl. list of photographs, 1894, American Geographical Society of New York Records, AC 1 Box 311, Vol. 1, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries Online)

⁹⁸⁷ See Jacobs, *White Mothers to a Dark Race*.

⁹⁸⁸ Haskins, “Domesticating Colonizers,” 1297-1298.

parting from her family and setting sail for America aboard *The Falcon* in 1894, Josephine Peary required Eqariusaq to be bathed, to change from her *kapetah* and *kamiks* into a dress and leather boots, and to have her hair shorn, likely for fear that she might have lice.⁹⁸⁹ As narrated in the “Snow Baby” stories, the change of dress and bodily habits imposed on Eqariusaq on her way to America was part of her domestic education, an essential component of her induction into American modernity. According to Marie, “Miss Bill” “had never had a bath until Mother had her taken down into the engine room and scrubbed from head to foot. She could not understand why she must wash herself and comb her hair



Figure 6.12: “After” Photograph of Eqariusaq, Henry G. Bryant, 1894
(Robert E. Peary Auxiliary Expedition, photographs of Henry G. Bryant, incl. list of photographs, 1894)

⁹⁸⁹ Kaplan and LeMoine, *Peary’s Arctic Quest*, 70.

every day. It seemed such a useless waste of time.”⁹⁹⁰ After her bath, Eqariusaq’s “fur clothing [was] replaced by underwear, a woolen dress and shoes and stockings and in a surprisingly short time, Bill’s own father and mother would scarcely have recognized her.”⁹⁹¹ The process was documented by Henry G. Bryant, a member of the Geographical Society of Philadelphia, who acted as second-in-command on that year’s Peary Relief Expedition, and Eqariusaq’s “before” and “after” photographs appear opposite one another in Bryant’s expedition album, suggesting that a significant transformation had occurred between the two images (Figs. 11 and 12). Other visual depictions of Eqariusaq from her time in America published in the press and the Pearys’ Arctic texts also show her in European dress (Fig. 13).



Figure 6.13: Eqariusaq, studio portrait, 1894 or 1895 (Peary, *Northward Over the Great Ice*, Vol. 1, 487)

The meanings that might have been attached to Eqariusaq’s manner of dress in America are ambivalent. The presence of fur clothing was important to American definitions of “Inuitness” in this period. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Inuit performers in the United States were forced to wear their furs, even in the heat of

⁹⁹⁰ Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 18.

⁹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

summer, by their handlers so that their audiences would believe them to be “authentic” (meaning culturally static) Arctic peoples.⁹⁹² Josephine Peary’s decision to clothe Eqariusaq like any other American girl while in her care might, therefore, be indicative of Josephine’s belief in Eqariusaq’s adaptability and her capacity to set her Inughuit identity aside (symbolized by her fur clothing) and become an American child, in the same manner that Marie took on the characteristics of Inughuit childhood by donning her fur clothing.

In her analysis of Inuit women who wore “white” dresses during social occasions with whalers in the early-twentieth-century Canadian Arctic, Davis-Fisch offers an alternative interpretation. “While it is plausible that wearing ‘white’ dresses allowed Inuit women to ‘go white,’” Davis-Fisch argues that Inuit women in European dress were likely simultaneously viewed as inferior substitutes for white women, evoking their “absence by filling the vacancy created by the absence of an original.”⁹⁹³ A similar point is made about another one of Marie Peary’s Inughuit playmates, known as Koodlooktoo. In *The Snow Baby*, Koodlooktoo is described as having a great fondness for dressing up in European clothes and “mak[ing] believe he was a white boy.”⁹⁹⁴ Including a photograph of

⁹⁹² When Hannah and Ipiirvik, an Inuit couple from Cumberland Sound on Baffin Island, appeared as part of a live human “exhibit” at P.T. Barnum’s American Museum in 1862, their “[f]ur clothing marked [them] as anachronistic curiosities, out of time and place, and certainly not at home in the United States.” Routledge, *Do You See Ice?*, 42. Decades later, in 1893, a controversy erupted at the Chicago World’s Fair when Labrador Inuit participants in the Fair’s “Eskimo Village” refused to wear their sealskin suits in the heat of the American spring, undermining their attractive value as authentic ethnographic “curiosities.” David R. Beck, *Unfair Labor? American Indians at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 142-143. See also Melissa Rinehart, “To Hell with the Wigs! Native American Representation and Resistance at the World’s Columbian Exposition,” *American Indian Quarterly* 36:4 (Fall 2012): 416, doi: 10.5250/amerindiquar.36.4.0403.

⁹⁹³ Davis-Fisch, “Girls in ‘White’ Dresses,” 97.

⁹⁹⁴ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 30.



*“Made believe he was a
White Boy”*

Figure 6.14: Koodlooktoo,
photograph by Josephine or
Robert Peary, n.d.
(Diebitsch-Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 30)

Koodlooktoo in his white boy’s clothing, Josephine observed: “Whether he succeeded or not you can see for yourself in the picture” (Fig.14).⁹⁹⁵ While Marie Peary’s fur clothing enabled her to feel more at home in the Arctic, the same was not necessarily the case for Eqariusaq. From the Pearys’ point of view, an Inughuit child dressed in “white” clothing did not necessarily signify a successful transition into whiteness; in fact, transcultural dressing could be used to emphasize perceived irreconcilable differences between white and Inughuit children.

The idea that children like Eqariusaq might be unable meaningfully or permanently to take on the characteristics of white childhood is suggested in the way that “Miss Bill’s” return to her Arctic homeland is portrayed in the “Snow Baby” stories. For

Josephine, Eqariusaq’s “regression” back to her “primitive” ways upon her arrival in Greenland is signified in her abandonment of bathing, as she once more became “just as dirty as her companions.”⁹⁹⁶ In Marie’s “Snow Baby” narrative, Eqariusaq did more than forget “all that Mother had taught her about keeping herself clean and tidy” after her departure from the United States.⁹⁹⁷ Within hours of landing in Greenland, Marie reported

⁹⁹⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁹⁹⁶ Ibid., 56.

⁹⁹⁷ Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 32.

that Eqariusaq could be found “attacking a huge lump of raw meat almost as large as herself, and very evidently enjoying the first real meal since her departure from Greenland.”⁹⁹⁸ For Marie, Eqariusaq’s preference for Inughuit food, because it was uncooked, signified her reversion to a quasi-animalistic state, suggested by the language used to describe her manner of eating. Eqariusaq’s trip to America was characterized by another Peary expedition member, Dr. Nicholas Senn, as a failed experiment in Inuit education. Three years after her time in the Pearys’ Washington home, Senn reported that he came upon Eqariusaq in North Star Bay

living with her second husband, and the mother of three children. She was the dirtiest and wildest-looking woman of the tribe, but happy among her own people. Although she had some knowledge of the English language, she obstinately refused to speak except in the native tongue.⁹⁹⁹

Given that Eqariusaq did not have children of her own, we know that Senn’s characterisation of her life is inaccurate in at least one regard. However fictitious Senn’s observations might be, they reinforced Josephine and Marie Peary’s depiction of Eqariusaq after her time in America as living in a regressed mode of existence.

Having demonstrated her inability to become a true American girl, who experienced primitivism as only a *temporary* stage of childhood development, “Miss Bill” became, ironically, a perpetual child. In the “Snow Baby” stories, Eqariusaq is described as being “as much a child as ever,” even after her marriage to Angutdluk.¹⁰⁰⁰ “Miss Bill’s” character arc was consistent with Marie and her parents’ belief that the Inughuit were one

⁹⁹⁸ Ibid., 20.

⁹⁹⁹ Senn, *In the Heart of the Arctics*, 204.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 125. On Marie’s 1897 Greenland visit, she observed that “Miss Bill,” “[a]lthough married ... was as eager as ever to see my new dolls and picture books... .” Ibid., 33.

of the “childlike” or “adolescent” races, whose moral and mental development could be mapped on to their primitive position on the spectrum of human development.¹⁰⁰¹ Marie Peary’s lectures, for example, described how even “Eskimo adults” were known for their “childlike simplicity and goodness.”¹⁰⁰² She argued that one of the primary reasons that Inuit were such popular figures “in our earliest childhood books,” was that they exhibited the “joyous disposition of children” despite “the long continued and oppressive gloom of the Arctic winter... .”¹⁰⁰³ In failing to reach the racial pinnacle of American childhood, the mechanism through which white children grappled with, then developed beyond, their primitive natures, non-white groups like the Inughuit were seen as being locked in a childlike state in perpetuity. American perceptions of the Inuit as childlike peoples were continually reinforced by the content and format of the “Snow Baby” stories, which portrayed the Inughuit as objects of interest and education for American children.

6.4 Caught Between Two Worlds: Eqariusaq’s Dislocation

As “The Snow Baby,” Marie Peary was able to shift easily between her Arctic and American homes, and to inhabit the Inughuit and white forms of childhood appropriate to each location, in ways that only invigorated her whiteness and encouraged her development

¹⁰⁰¹ Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization*, 110. Robert Peary described the Inughuit as “a community of children in their simplicity, honesty, and happy lack of all care; of animals in their surroundings, their food and habits; of iron men in their utter disregard of cold, hunger, and fatigue; of beings of high intelligence in the construction and use of the implements of the chase, and the ingenious concertation of every one of the few possibilities of the barren country which is their home, upon the two great problems of their existence – something to eat, and something to wear.” Peary, *Northward Over the Great Ice, Vol. 1*, 483.

¹⁰⁰² “Notes for Brief Talks,” series 1, box 1, folder 73, MAPP.

¹⁰⁰³ Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 3, 5.

into a modern, American woman. As the foregoing has shown, the “Snow Baby” stories suggest that Eqariusaq was never able to truly inhabit American childhood and make herself at home in America. At the same time, evidence suggests that, after her trip to America, Eqariusaq’s relationships to her Arctic homeland and community were never the same. Far from being “at home” in multiple disparate locales like Marie, it seems as though Eqariusaq’s travels produced conditions of homelessness and dislocation.

To begin with, Robert and Josephine Peary’s polar expeditions radically altered Inughuit social formations, modes of economic life, and patterns of migration and resource use. Occurring at intervals between 1891 and 1909, the Peary expeditions put Inughuit life into a state of flux during those years when Eqariusaq transitioned from childhood to young womanhood, potentially destabilising the young Inuk’s sense of home before she even left for the United States. Prior to the Peary expeditions, sea ice conditions in Smith Sound and Baffin Bay meant that contact between Inughuit and Europeans only began in the early nineteenth century.¹⁰⁰⁴ Even after 1818, contact was intermittent throughout much of the century, and had little cultural impact on either group. The Peary expeditions inaugurated an unprecedented period of intensive Inughuit-American contacts over nearly two decades that were organized around a range of sexual, cultural, and economic exchanges.¹⁰⁰⁵

As discussed in the previous chapter, numerous Inughuit families were hired on to the Peary expeditions. Eqariusaq, for example worked for the Pearys as a youth, providing

¹⁰⁰⁴ From the time of the Little Ice Age, Baffin Bay had been packed with heavy sea ice. This meant that *Qallunaat* whalers could not follow their quarry, the bowhead whale, to their summer habitats in northern Baffin Bay. In 1818, however, the ice jam finally broke. That year two British ships were able to gain access to the bowhead’s summer feeding grounds, and to visit Inughuit territory. Dick, *Muskox Land*, 29. Gillies, *Arctic Whalers Icy Seas*, xiii.

¹⁰⁰⁵ LeMoine and Darwent, “Furs and Satin,” 214-215.

childcare for Marie. As an adult, she worked as an expedition seamstress beginning in 1898 up until 1909, and was described as one of Robert Peary's most valuable seamstresses.¹⁰⁰⁶ In exchange for their services in hunting and sewing, Inughuit men and women were paid in Western goods, including rifles, ammunition, and metal sewing needles.¹⁰⁰⁷ Inughuit material culture, as a result, transformed from what Lyle Dick calls "an ingenious maximization of use of the limited range of materials in this region of sparse resources," including animal products and driftwood, to one that also incorporated imported, mass-manufactured goods.¹⁰⁰⁸ The Pearys' long-term presence created a demand for mass-manufactured goods that was sustained after Robert Peary's departure from the region in 1909 by the Thule trading station, a Danish operation owned by explorer Knud Rasmussen.¹⁰⁰⁹ Eqariusaq was exposed to American consumer and material culture more than most members of her community: according to Josephine, the trunk with which Eqariusaq travelled back to Greenland from the United States was a veritable "Noah's Ark," filled with "[a] bit of everything that was given to her during her stay ... to be carried back home and explained to her friends."¹⁰¹⁰

Contact initiated by the Pearys also disrupted Inughuit gender relations and individual spousal partnerships. As Robert Peary hired Inughuit women to produce fur clothing for his expedition members, as well as for buyers back in the United States, Dick

¹⁰⁰⁶ Henson, *A Negro Explorer at the North Pole*, 50.

¹⁰⁰⁷ LeMoine and Darwent, "Furs and Satin," 214.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Dick, *Muskox Land*, 80.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Lemoine and Darwent, "Furs and Satin," 214. For more on Knud Rasmussen's relationship with the Inughuit, see Rolf Gilberg, "Inughuit, Knud Rasmussen, and Thule: The Work of Knud Rasmussen among the Polar-Eskimos in North Greenland,"

Études/Inuit/Studies 12:1-2 (1988): 45-55,

<https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/42869624>.

¹⁰¹⁰ Diebitsch Peary, *The Snow Baby*, 43.

notes that seamstresses “began to shift their productive labor from and exclusively family-oriented focus” to producing for an outside market.¹⁰¹¹ This represented a significant departure from the traditional gendered division of labour within Inuit spousal partnerships, where man and woman, in “the union of hunter and seamstress,” co-laboured for their mutual survival and the protection of their children.¹⁰¹² Intimate and sexual relationships established between Inughuit women and *Qallunaat* men, which ranged along the spectrum of consent and coercion, also produced conflict between Inughuit spouses.¹⁰¹³ Social disruptions and emotional distress were exacerbated further by months-long relocations initiated by Robert Peary from Greenland to northern Ellesmere Island, a High Arctic location from which Peary felt he had the best possible chance of reaching the North Pole, that was nonetheless an unfamiliar environment for Inughuit expedition members.¹⁰¹⁴ These relocations separated families and undermined the social stability and material security of Inughuit communities remaining in Avanersuaq.¹⁰¹⁵ As one of Peary’s seamstresses, Eqariusaq took part in each of these relocations to the High Arctic.

¹⁰¹¹ Dick, *Muskox Land*, 380.

¹⁰¹² Janet Mancini Billson and Krya Mancini, *Inuit Women: Their Powerful Spirit in a Century of Change* (Lanham, MD. and Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 35-37.

¹⁰¹³ Dick, *Muskox Land*, 382-383.

¹⁰¹⁴ Lemoine, Kaplan and Darwent, “Living on the Edge,” 1.

¹⁰¹⁵ *Ibid.*

The Pearys' Arctic activities disrupted Eqariusaq's family life in more direct and tragic ways (**Fig. 15**). In 1897, after Eqariusaq's trip to America had proved to be successful for promoting the Peary family's Arctic narrative, Robert Peary invited other members of Eqariusaq's family, Nuktaq, Atangana, and her adopted sister, Aviaq, to spend a year in the United States, along with the hunter Qisuk and his young son, Minik, and Aviaq's intended spouse, Uisakassak. According to Minik, Peary promised the Inughuit in return "a great stock of guns and ammunition, and wood and metal and presents for the women and children."¹⁰¹⁶ Robert Peary used Eqariusaq's family as a lucrative public attraction once in the United States, charging thousands of curious onlookers an entrance fee to view the "fine species of the Arctic man."¹⁰¹⁷ Not surprisingly, all but two of the American party,



Figure 6.15: Photograph of (left to right) Eqariusaq, her father, Nuktaq, and her sister, Aviaq, with two unknown individuals, taken after Eqariusaq's return from the United States in 1895

(Peary, *Northward Over the Great Ice*, Vol. 2, opp. 535)

¹⁰¹⁶ Harper, *Give me My Father's Body*, 19-20.

¹⁰¹⁷ "A Colony For Eskimos," *Kansas City Journal* [MO] 5 December 1897, 18, *Newspapers.com*.

Minik and Uisakassak, died of communicable diseases shortly after their arrival in New York City.¹⁰¹⁸ When Robert Peary returned to Cape York the following year, he reported in a letter to Josephine that “Nuktah’s [sic] lame daughter & other relatives wept a bit” at the news of the deaths of their loved ones, but he assured her that “that was the end of it, & it has made no difference in our relations.”¹⁰¹⁹ Filtered through Robert Peary’s perspective, it is difficult to know what Eqariusaq’s emotional state would have been when she learned of her family’s death. What we can say for certain is that Eqariusaq’s contact with the Peary family, Marie included, represents in microcosm the disruptive and at times tragic Inughuit experience of intercultural collaboration and exchange with the Peary expedition parties.

Eqariusaq’s connections to the land and community that formed her home were undermined by the Pearys in other ways. In departing Greenland, Eqariusaq left behind the people, namely her family and community members, who called her by her true name, instead of “Bill,” “Billy-Bah,” or “Miss Bill.” The Pearys’ refusal to acknowledge Eqariusaq’s Inughuit name had the potential not only to destabilise her sense of identity and personhood, but her future social embeddedness within her community and her relationship to the land upon her return to the Arctic. Among the Inughuit, as in other Inuit communities, *atiit* (names) carried a “soul-substance,” and they were given to children to bestow “an Inuit ethnic identity, a family or community identity, and a personal

¹⁰¹⁸ Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt, *Franz Boas: The Emergence of an Anthropologist* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 225-226.

¹⁰¹⁹ Robert E. Peary to Josephine Diebitsch Peary 11 August 1898, Robert E. and Josephine Peary letters, box 2, folder 30, JDPF, JDPP. It is unclear whether “the lame girl” refers to Eqariusaq or one of her sisters.

identity.”¹⁰²⁰ Newborns generally received their names from someone who had recently died, and it was believed that the *tarneq* (soul) of the deceased lived on and resumed its corporeal form in this way.¹⁰²¹ Names also had implications for Inuit ideas of home. As Karen Routledge has observed, one of the uses for the root of the word for home, *angiraaq*, in Inuktitut, “relates to names.”¹⁰²² Traditional names, carrying the souls and genealogies of generations of Inughuit people, constituted, according to Routledge,

a permanent grid over a homeland, which people pass through in their lifetimes. The association between names, land, and home is strong. ... Passing on names not only ensures the name will continue to live on the land; it also builds networks of home and belonging that extend far beyond the nuclear family or biological relatives.¹⁰²³

Like Routledge, I do not claim to fully understand Inughuit ideas of home at the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁰²⁴ It is safe to say, however, that for Inughuit, as for Americans, ideas of home were profoundly connected to ideas of selfhood and subjectivity, and how this self relates to others. In being stripped of her name at the same time that she was parted from her homeland, Eqariusaq lost touch with the socio-geographic networks that constituted her Inughuit identity and her sense of home. It is difficult to imagine the impact Eqariusaq’s trip to America, coupled with the loss of her name, had on her. Evidence suggests, however, that Eqariusaq continued to grapple with this sense of personal destabilisation and social and geographical dislocation even after her return to the Arctic.

¹⁰²⁰ Edmund Searles, “Inuit Identity in the Canadian Arctic,” *Ethnology* 47:4 (2008): 239, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/docview/205167224?accountid=10406>.

¹⁰²¹ Mark Nuttall, “The Name Never Dies: Greenland Inuit Ideas of the Person,” in *Amerindian Rebirth: Reincarnation Belief Among North American Indians and Inuit*, eds. Antonia Mills and Richard Slobodin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 127.

¹⁰²² Routledge, *Do You See Ice?*, xx

¹⁰²³ *Ibid.*, xxi.

¹⁰²⁴ *Ibid.*

Shortly after her return to Greenland, Eqariusaq, like many other Inughuit women her age, entered into a spousal partnership with Angutdluk, who worked for Robert Peary as one of his most accomplished hunters.¹⁰²⁵ Her marital life, however, turned out to be less than stable. In 1908, Robert Peary recorded in a memo sent South to Josephine in the United States that “Ahngoodloo [sic] has traded Bill with Ahletta, because she has had no children.”¹⁰²⁶ According to Knud Rasmussen, “Alattaq” was a skilled shaman who intended to “exercise his magic over Eqariussaq” so that she would be able to bear children.¹⁰²⁷ In Rasmussen’s version of Eqariusaq’s story, it was Eqariusaq’s husband Sâmik who gave Eqariusaq to the shaman, in exchange for the loan of one of Alattaq’s rifles.¹⁰²⁸ While Inughuit sanctioned spousal exchanges and separations, they did not take place as frequently as they were reported by *Qallunaat*, who regarded these practices as indicative of the marginalized status of women within Inughuit society.¹⁰²⁹

It is possible to read too much into these documented instances of spousal exchange and separation involving Eqariusaq. One should not unthinkingly import *Qallunaat* notions of sociability, wherein divorce or spousal separations represent significant ruptures in individuals’ familial and social lives, to interpret the meaning of such events in other cultures. Nevertheless, it is possible that the frequency with which Eqariusaq experienced spousal separation was indicative of an unusual amount of friction between herself and her

¹⁰²⁵ Robert E. Peary, *Snowland Folk* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1904), 47-50.

¹⁰²⁶ Robert E. Peary to Josephine D. Peary, 22 July 1908, Robert E. and Josephine Peary letters, box 2, folder 20, JDPF, JDPP.

¹⁰²⁷ Rasmussen, *The People of the Polar North*, 66-67.

¹⁰²⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁰²⁹ Josephine Peary points to spousal exchange as an example of the Inughuit’s “queer ideas about women.” *New York Sun* Article, 1895-1896, JDPP.

partners, as well as the community at large. Rasmussen noted, for example, that Sâmik “conceived an extreme contempt for his young wife,” ostensibly because she could not conceive, and that he beat her regularly.¹⁰³⁰ Another comment, made by Matthew Henson, one of the expedition members who reached the North Pole with Robert Peary, is also suggestive. Speaking of Eqariusaq, Henson write: “Miss Bill is now grown up, and has been married three times and widowed, not by death but by desertion. She is known as a ‘Holy Terror.’ I do not know the reason why, but I have my suspicions.”¹⁰³¹ While it is impossible to decipher the precise meaning of Henson’s observations, it does appear to indicate that Eqariusaq’s position within her community was ambivalent, perhaps including a degree of ostracism.

This conjecture is supported by the documented experiences of other Inughuit who visited the United States in their youth and struggled to reintegrate into their home societies. Upon Uisakassak’s return from America in 1898, his community struggled to reconcile his descriptions of his experiences in America, which included seeing “people living in big houses on top of each other, like auks in the bird cliffs,” and talking “into a little handle that carried his voice through a tiny thread to Peary who was, at the time, several sleeps away,” with their own worldviews and cosmology.¹⁰³² As a result, according to Peter Freuchen, who worked with Rasmussen at the Thule trading station, Uisakassak was viewed as an untrustworthy and “undependable man.”¹⁰³³ Minik’s return to the region of his birth in 1909 was documented by Gustav Olsen, the first Danish missionary sent to

¹⁰³⁰ Rasmussen, *The People of the Polar North*, 66-8.

¹⁰³¹ Henson, *A Negro Explorer at the North Pole*, 9.

¹⁰³² Freuchen, *Arctic Adventure*, 50.

¹⁰³³ *Ibid.*

convert the Inughuit.¹⁰³⁴ Olsen reported that, since his return, the community around North Star Bay had seen little of Minik, and that he had lost much of his facility in speaking and understanding Inuktun after spending much of his childhood in the United States.¹⁰³⁵ Minik was employed as handyman for a time at the Thule station, where he worked for Freuchen. According to Freuchen, Minik seemed caught between two worlds: “[i]n America he had longed for Greenland, and now that he was in Greenland he wanted to be back in America.”¹⁰³⁶ Having experienced life in both America and the Arctic, it appears that Minik felt he belonged to neither place.

The last documented reference to Eqariusaq’s whereabouts comes from some time after 1911, when Freuchen married the young Inuk Navarana Mequpaluk.¹⁰³⁷ Freuchen and Navarana encountered Eqariuisaq while visiting Navarana’s uncle, Mitseq, to whom, according to Freuchen, Eqariusaq was married at the time.¹⁰³⁸ It appears that Eqariusaq reconciled her childhood experiences in America with her adult life in Inughuit territory by not speaking about her travels at all, at least in front of *Qallunaat* audiences. Freuchen reported that “[a]fter she returned to Greenland [Eqariusaq] refused to reveal anything about her trip. When asked, she either said that she could not remember or was not inclined to tell.”¹⁰³⁹ In a private moment with Navarana, however, Eqariusaq offered a glimpse of what her experiences in the United States had meant to her. According to Freuchen,

“Navarana told me that she had been walking with Eqariussaq down on the ice, and suddenly the woman had turned to her and said: ‘When you go down to the white

¹⁰³⁴ Lévy Zumwalt, *Franz Boas*, 227.

¹⁰³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰³⁶ Freuchen quoted in Lévy Zumwalt, *Franz Boas*, 227.

¹⁰³⁷ Harper, *Give Me My Father’s Body*, 171.

¹⁰³⁸ Freuchen, *Arctic Adventure*, 234.

¹⁰³⁹ *Ibid.*

man's country, be careful not to absorb too much of their spirit. If you do, it will cause you many tears, for you can never rid yourself of it.”¹⁰⁴⁰

While Freuchen interpreted Eqariusaq's comments as expressive of her “hopeless longing” for her life in the United States, other readings are possible, and perhaps more likely.¹⁰⁴¹ This passage suggests that Eqariusaq's experiences of life in the United States had changed her in ways that put her out of step with Arctic life. Marie Peary's childhood experiences in the Arctic enabled her, in the Pearys' eyes, to make a claim upon the Arctic as a second home in ways that only bolstered her “at-homeness” in America as a modern white girl and woman. Eqariusaq's journey to America, on the other hand, was narrated in the “Snow Baby” stories in far less empowering terms. Far from being able to call the Arctic *and* America home, the evidence suggests that Eqariusaq's travels, coupled with the Pearys' interventions with the Inughuit, precipitated profound homelessness and dislocation.

6.5 Going Home Again: The Peary Memorial Expedition, 1932

Marie Peary's “Snow Baby” persona and the mythology surrounding her Arctic childhood were vital to her credibility as a self-styled expert on Inuit life within America's culture of Arctic exploration throughout the 1930s and 1940s. In her own promotional materials for her lectures, Marie described herself in these terms, pointing out that she had

been made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of London, a much coveted honor bestowed upon her in recognition of her work familiarizing the general public with living conditions in the Arctic, the customs and legends of the Eskimos and the splendid deeds of the explorers of those regions.¹⁰⁴²

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid., 234-236.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ibid., 236.

¹⁰⁴² Lecture Notes, series 1, box 1, folder 74, MAPP.

By grounding her Arctic stories and lectures in her “native” childhood experiences, which connoted a prolonged, unmediated exposure to the Inughuit, and Inughuit children in particular, Marie was able to embody an epistemic stance and authority on Arctic matters that had previously been reserved for male explorers. White women like Josephine Peary and Mina Hubbard struggled to negotiate and sustain their appropriately feminine identities in the Arctic by distancing themselves from Indigenous life and ways of being. “Going native” in the Arctic, therefore, was typically viewed as a prerogative of male explorers like Vilhjalmur Stefansson. As I argue in Chapter Three, explorers who dressed, ate, and behaved like their Inuit companions did so in order to master Arctic environments “the Eskimo way” and to bolster their claims to an embodied, authoritative knowledge of northern life. This pathway to authority within *Qallunaat* cultures of Arctic exploration was taken by Marie Peary’s own father. According to Bob Bartlett, the Newfoundland ice master who captained Robert Peary’s expedition ship, *The Roosevelt*, “Peary was pretty much an Eskimo He could dress and eat and travel like a native. He used to disappear with a few sledges and stay away for many weeks. He didn’t mind the meat or low temperatures. And he could outwalk the best hunter in the tribe.”¹⁰⁴³ Marie also publicly attributed her father’s success in reaching the North Pole to his wise adoption of Inuit methods of dressing, hunting, and travelling.¹⁰⁴⁴

As a child, and therefore possessing a naturally underdeveloped civilized sensibility, Marie Peary had more freedom to interact with the Inuit, and to take on their

¹⁰⁴³ Robert A. Bartlett, *The Log of Bob Bartlett: The True Story of Forty Years of Seafaring and Exploration* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1928), 148-149.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Peary Stafford, “Childhood Experiences in Greenland,” MAPP. Marie Peary Stafford, “The Pearys in the Arctic,” series 1, box 1, folder 61, MAPP.

characteristics, than white females who went north as adults, without it reflecting poorly on her feminine character. Marie therefore took a similar route to performing Arctic expertise as her father, and explicitly styled her Arctic epistemology in his image, writing that “Dad always said I could learn more by playing and talking with the Eskimo children than I could by studying volumes of natural history, and it was certainly true.”¹⁰⁴⁵ Learning about the Inughuit *as a child directly from* Inughuit children, Marie seems to suggest, gave her the advantage of obtaining a more direct, unmediated, almost naturalistic form of knowledge, compared to other explorers: “Born among them as I was, and known to them to this day as ‘The Snowbaby,’ they were the constant companions of my childhood and I absorbed their songs without any feeling of learning a lesson.”¹⁰⁴⁶ As one reviewer of *The Snowbaby’s Own Story* suggested, Marie Peary’s stories about her childhood experiences, written and told from her adult point of view, offered a unique and privileged perspective on Arctic life, speaking “with the combined authority of her earliest and of her mature years... .”¹⁰⁴⁷

Marie was a frequent contributor in the 1930s of reviews of books with Arctic content to periodicals like *The Saturday Review*, a weekly literary magazine. Through these reviews, Peary positioned herself as an arbiter and gatekeeper of Arctic knowledge, and was particularly concerned with evaluating the kind and quality of the particular author’s

¹⁰⁴⁵ Marie Ahnighito Peary, “My Arctic Pets: The Baby Seal, Last of a Series of True Stories,” *Good Housekeeping* (August 1931): 75, series 1, box 1, folder 27, MAPP.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Marie Peary Stafford, “The Poetry of Frozen Spaces,” series 1, box 1, folder 65, MAPP. An almost identical sentiment is expressed in Peary’s untitled review of *The Box of Daylight*: “through my friendship with the Eskimo children, I became fairly fluent in the Eskimo language and conversant with their mythology.” Marie Peary Stafford, untitled, series 1, box 1, folder 58, MAPP.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Book Reviews, circa 1930-1939, series 1, box 1, folder 17, MAPP.

knowledge of the Arctic. In these instances, she ranked authors with direct, prolonged, and embodied experiential knowledge of the Arctic above writers with a more scholastic or research-based orientation. She was full of admiration, for example, for Peter Freuchen, who subscribed to the “going native” model of Arctic knowledge production. In her review of Freuchen’s 1936 *Arctic Adventure*, which included references to Eqariusaq and Minik, Peary observed that Freuchen

lived as the Eskimos, really with them and not in the usual condescending and slightly superior manner of the white man. He became one of them in every respect, even marrying an Eskimo woman... . Through his natural sympathy with the natives ... Freuchen grew to know the natives as no one ... has ever been able to know them before.¹⁰⁴⁸

In her review of Olive Murray Chapman’s northern travelogue, on the other hand, Marie observed that

it would be impossible for one making such a hurried trip through a country, and particularly one who was not familiar with the language, to obtain any first hand knowledge of the customs and life of the people or to study them. Mrs. Murray includes in her book some extremely interesting material on the myths and legends of the people ... but this is all quoted, material which could have been gathered at a good reference library at home without such an expenditure of physical strength and fortitude.¹⁰⁴⁹

In these reviews, Marie Peary consistently described authors whose base of knowledge derived from sources and practices similar to her own as being more informed about Arctic matters than others.

As “The Snow Baby,” Marie did more than suggest that she had “gone native” and learned from the Inuit, like many male explorers: her Arctic birthplace also enabled her to

¹⁰⁴⁸ Marie Ahnighito Peary, “Fifteen Years an Eskimo,” *The Saturday Review* 4 April 1936, Saturday Review clippings, series 1, box 1, folder 30, MAPP.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Review of Olive Murray Chapman, *Across Lapland With Sledge and Reindeer*, series 1, box 1, folder 58, MAPP.

claim what she characterized as an atavistic connection to the land and its peoples, and to approach experience of being “native” to the Arctic far more closely than her male peers could ever hope to. As she put it in her lectures,

[m]y only claim to fame, of course, is that I am the Snowbaby, so called by the Eskimos because they had never before seen a white baby and could not believe until they touched me that anything so white was not made of snow. My birth in Greenland at 77° 4’ North Latitude makes me the most northerly born white child in the world.¹⁰⁵⁰

As “The Snow Baby,” Marie was able to emphasize her privileged access to knowledge while simply making the modest claim that she owed her public “Arctic career” only to the accident of her birth.¹⁰⁵¹ The fact that the Arctic was her natural and authentic home, in other words, was a critical foundation to Marie Peary’s credibility as an Arctic expert.

Until the 1930s, however, her last trip North had been in 1902, when she was nearly ten years old.¹⁰⁵² While Marie Peary sustained her special connection to the Arctic by publicly expressing her “longing” to return some day, this desire went unfulfilled for 30 years.¹⁰⁵³ In 1932, Marie and her mother orchestrated a summer-long Peary Memorial Expedition, which had as its objective the building of a monument in honor of Robert Peary, his quest for the North Pole, and his relationship with the Inughuit. Marie accompanied the expedition, along with her two young sons, Edward and Peary, as a

¹⁰⁵⁰ “Notes for Brief Talks,” MAPP.

¹⁰⁵¹ Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 10.

¹⁰⁵² Peary Stafford, “Childhood Experiences in Greenland,” MAPP.

¹⁰⁵³ Marie Peary Stafford, “The Peary Memorial Expedition,” series 1, box 1, folder 32, MAPP. Marie also expressed her desire to return in a 1914 interview with Washington’s *Morning Telegraph*. “Marie ‘Ah-Ni-Ghi-To’ Peary Fair Washington Debutante,” *The Morning Telegraph* 11 January 1914, n.p, scrapbook clippings, series 4, box 2, folder 218, MAPP.

representative of the Peary family, in order to oversee construction.¹⁰⁵⁴ In addition to honoring her father, Marie envisioned the trip as a kind of homecoming for the Peary family, including a “pilgrimage to places that had been Mother and Dad’s own old stomping grounds.”¹⁰⁵⁵

“The Snow Baby’s” Arctic homecoming also had potential benefits for her career as an Arctic expert, as she hoped that the trip would afford her with new material for lectures and articles on Arctic life.¹⁰⁵⁶ Narratively, the trip also provided something of a conclusion to the “Snow Baby” story, with Marie returning to the Arctic as an adult, with her own children in tow, while still reiterating her attachment to the region. *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, which was published two years after the Peary Memorial Expedition, follows this structure, opening with Marie’s birth, and ending with her revisiting many of the important places of her Arctic childhood as an adult, including Anniversary Lodge, where she was born. Marie’s concluding message at the end of the “Snow Baby” saga is one of continuity, centered on the Inughuit’s love and admiration for the Peary family. In describing what she personally got out of her last Greenland trip, Marie wrote:

I found that in spite of the cheap wise-cracks and cynicisms which one hears about one all the time, there do still exist such things as loyalty and devotion. Not one of the Eskimos who had known her, had forgotten my mother Not one of the men but had passed on to his sons and grandsons the story of Pearyoksoah, ‘great Peary’ of the iron will, who never made a promise that he did not keep.¹⁰⁵⁷

¹⁰⁵⁴ “History of Expedition deposited in Cornerstone at Cape York, Greenland,” Series 5, box 5, folder 26c, MAPP. Peary Stafford, “The Peary Memorial Expedition.” Marie Ahnighito Peary, “The ‘Snow Baby’ Returns to Greenland’s Icy Mountains,” *Good Housekeeping* (April 1933): 195, series 1, box 1, folder 37, MAPP.

¹⁰⁵⁵ 17 August 1932, “Marie Peary Stafford’s Journal,” Schooner Ernestina, http://www.archive.ernestina.org/history/MPStafford_Greenland-1932.html.

¹⁰⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 7 August 1932.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Peary, *The Snowbaby’s Own Story*, 304.

Reading her 1932 expedition diary, however, it becomes apparent that Marie was frequently confronted with just how much Inughuit society and life in Greenland had changed from her childhood memories. These confrontations with change had the potential to destabilize her sense of the Arctic as a second home, and her now-outdated authority on Arctic matters.

While Denmark had administered colonies in southern Greenland since the early eighteenth century, Inughuit territory in the northwestern portions of the island existed outside of Danish rule at the time of the Peary expeditions.¹⁰⁵⁸ By 1932, however, Denmark had established a jurisdictional presence among the Inughuit, primarily through Rasmussen's Thule trading station, and Danish missionary groups.¹⁰⁵⁹ Unlike her father, Marie Peary's interactions with the Inughuit had to be mediated with the Danish Government, as she had to secure permission from the Governor before she was able to hire Inughuit families to perform the "unskilled labor" associated with the monument's construction.¹⁰⁶⁰ While she had imagined that Inughuit who remembered or had worked with her father would "want to work for us because of him," she was shocked to find that they expected to be paid 40 cents a day for their efforts.¹⁰⁶¹ Marie had come prepared to compensate Inughuit workers the same way her father had, sailing north with "guns and ammunition and clothing and things which we thought they would be glad to have."¹⁰⁶²

¹⁰⁵⁸ Janice Cavell, "Historical Evidence and the Eastern Greenland Case," *Arctic* 51:4 (2008): 434, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/docview/197734605?accountid=10406>.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Gilberg, "Inughuit, Knud Rasmussen, and Thule," 47-48.

¹⁰⁶⁰ L. H. Robbins, "A Peary Monument to Inspire the Bold," *The New York Times Magazine* 24 April 1932, 4, scrapbook clippings, series 4, box 2, folder 224, MAPP.

¹⁰⁶¹ 15 July 1932, "Marie Peary Stafford's Journal."

¹⁰⁶² *Ibid.*

She confessed in her diary that “[t]he thought of an Eskimo caring for money is a new one.”¹⁰⁶³ The idea that the people of Avanersuaq might be full participants in the modern capitalist economy was difficult for her to reconcile with her prior knowledge and experience of the region, and her expectation that the Inughuit would remain a static, “childlike” society. Ironically, as was discussed earlier in this chapter, many of these changes were inaugurated or accelerated by the Pearys themselves.

During her travels through Avanersuaq on the Peary Memorial Expedition, Marie Peary struggled to reconcile many of her childhood perceptions of the Arctic and its peoples as primitive and unchanging with Danish administrators’ vision for a modern, profitable Greenland, in touch with European cultures and economic systems.¹⁰⁶⁴ Her diary repeatedly registers surprise at the changes in Inughuit material culture, religious traditions, and economic life that had taken place in the preceding 30 years. Many Inughuit now traded their fur clothing in summertime for cloth *kapetahs*, made with fabrics available for purchase through Rasmussen’s trading establishment.¹⁰⁶⁵ Marie twice noted that she could not get used to the sight of Inughuit men and women in their new styles of dress.¹⁰⁶⁶ She was also surprised to find Western manufactured objects, including china dishes, stoves,

¹⁰⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Janina Priebe, “From Siam to Greenland: Danish Economic Imperialism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *Journal of World History* 27:4 (2016): 624-625, <https://login.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://www.jstor.org/stable/44631489>. K. G. Hansen, “Modernisation of Greenland,” in *A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Literatures: Continental Europe and its Empires*, eds. Prem Poddar and Rajeev Patke (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?qurl=https://search.proquest.com/docview/237438417?pq-origsite=scholarlink&openfulltext=true>.

¹⁰⁶⁵ LeMoine and Darwent, “Furs and Satin,” 224.

¹⁰⁶⁶ “Marie Peary Stafford’s Journal,” 15 July and 15 August 1932.

and gramophones, as commonplace goods in Inughuit homes. She was particularly struck by the sight of an *ikkimer*, or woman's lamp, made of tin, rather than the traditional soapstone.¹⁰⁶⁷

Marie Peary also expressed dismay at how the dynamic between herself, as a representative of the Peary family, and the Inughuit had changed, writing that “[t]he Eskimos, with whom I have been such good friends ... even they are a source of disappointment to me.”¹⁰⁶⁸ In particular, the men and women whom she encountered were resistant to re-enacting the paternalistic and exploitative relationship that had existed between Robert Peary and his Inughuit employees. They stopped carving the ivory figures she had commissioned, for example, when another member of the expedition offered them a better price for their work. Part of this payment came in the form of alcohol, which Marie decried as “one of Dad’s pet aversions” and a source of moral degeneration for the Inughuit.¹⁰⁶⁹ Marie also gave voice and vent to her perceptions of change among the Inughuit in racialized terms, by pointing out on several occasions how “nearly white” members of the community now looked, suggesting that much of their racial identity had been lost with their increased integration with global economies and cultures.¹⁰⁷⁰ Peary’s perceptions of the Inughuit “more white” than their culturally “pure” predecessors echoes discussions of Indigenous authenticity covered in Chapter Four.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Ibid., 14 July 1932.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ibid., 24 August 1932.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Ibid., 23 August 1932.

Even though she privately confessed that she felt “cheated and defrauded” of the experience she had hoped to have on her return to the Arctic, her response to these signs of change was to minimize their visibility for audiences back at home.¹⁰⁷¹ She asked the Inughuit workers involved with the construction of the monument, for example, to don their furs for the dedication ceremonies, where film and photographs were taken, so that “they looked much more like the old time Eskimos of Dad’s than they did in cloth anoraks and wool caps.”¹⁰⁷² (Fig. 16) Marie also wrote, falsely, that the Inughuit workers refused to be paid for their services, insisting that their work was performed out of love for Robert



Figure 6.16: Photograph taken at the dedication ceremonies at Cape York, 1932
(Greenland Expedition Photographs, 1932, Scrapbooks, box 12, MAPP)

¹⁰⁷¹ Ibid., 17 August 1932.

¹⁰⁷² Ibid., 21 August 1932.

Peary.¹⁰⁷³ Over the next twenty years, as long as Marie Peary remained an Arctic commentator and expert, she continued to perpetuate a static vision of Inughuit and Arctic life that she had seen through her child's eyes.

6.6 Conclusion

Looking at children's experiences of Arctic exploration enables us to think about the legacies of exploratory practice in Avanersuaq and in America. One of the ways in which Marie Peary deployed her Arctic expertise after her 1932 trip was as a member of the American Danish Greenland Commission during the Second World War, an organisation that helped to manage America's temporary assumption of control over Greenland after Denmark was invaded by German forces.¹⁰⁷⁴ In this capacity, Marie Peary advocated for the United States' sovereign rights to Greenland, on the legal basis of the discovery claims made by earlier American explorers, including Robert Peary. She was a strong proponent of the permanent establishment of "powerful naval and air bases" on Greenlandic soil as part of the United States' international defense arsenal.¹⁰⁷⁵ Her vision came to fruition with the establishment of the Thule Air Base in Avanersuaq in 1943.¹⁰⁷⁶ In the case of Marie Peary, then, she used her "Snow Baby" persona and her privileged experience of Arctic girlhood in order to continue her parents' efforts at colonising the Arctic, both imaginatively and in reality. Eqariusaq's biography bears out some of the more tragic legacies of American explorations in Inughuit territory. Beginning in Eqariusaq's

¹⁰⁷³ Peary, *The Snowbaby's Own Story*, 304.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Heymann et al, "Small State versus Superpower," 250.

¹⁰⁷⁵ "Guard Greenland Closely, Peary's Daughter Warns: Cites Importance to Defense Setup of United States," scrapbook clippings, series 4, box 2, folder 222, MAPP.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Heymann et al, "Small State versus Superpower," 257.

childhood, the Peary Expeditions precipitated economic upheaval, and social and geographical dislocations that could fundamentally disrupt an Inuk like Eqariusaq's sense of home, and make her, in a certain sense, a stranger to her own land. It must be born in mind that Arctic exploration not only had implications for explorers' geographical imaginary relative to the idea of home; exploratory practice also precipitated disruptions, adaptations, and retrenchments in Arctic residents' sense of home in critical ways.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

In his famous microhistory, *The Cheese and the Worms*, Carlo Ginzburg asserted that “if the sources offer us the possibility of reconstructing not only indistinct masses but also individual personalities, it would be absurd to ignore it.”¹⁰⁷⁷ Critical biography has taught us, however, that determining which historical subjects meet the conditions of “individualism,” and what kinds of subjectivities can be excavated from the “indistinct masses” of historical evidence, are not neutral exercises of interpretation. Narratives of Arctic exploration have been replete, from the nineteenth century to the present day, with the larger-than-life personalities of a handful of white male explorers, seen to embody the qualities of autonomous and consciously masculine selfhood that defined European ideas of the individual at the time that biography emerged as a historical genre in the eighteenth century. Through an excessive emphasis on these kinds of individuals in Arctic history, the field has been overburdened with biographies of a particular and narrowly defined kind of historical subject, transforming the complex social groups associated with exploration into “indistinct masses,” including women and Inuit, who have been hidden in the shadows of the figure of the white male explorer. This thesis looks to alternative life histories of five women who are not prototypical biographical subjects, and whose contributions to histories of the Eastern Arctic and its exploration have been heretofore little recognized. Their previously marginalized biographies open up different vantage points, based on each

¹⁰⁷⁷ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), xxvii. This quotation was drawn to my attention in Whitfield, “White Archives, Black Fragments,” 4.

woman's unique subject position, from which to reconsider projects of exploration as they unfolded inside and outside of the Arctic around the turn of the century.

These vantage points enable this thesis to complicate our understanding of projects of Arctic travel and research as unproblematic expressions of personal agency and choice on the part of those individuals we identify as explorers. Many people who made substantial contributions to cultures of Arctic exploration in this period, particularly, but not exclusively, women, children, and Inuit, were simply caught up in its processes. Josephine Peary and Mina Hubbard both credibly asserted that they would never have pursued Arctic careers had their familial and domestic lives not become linked to projects of exploration via their explorer husbands. Marie Peary was born into the family business of fame and exploration; from infancy, her identity as a daughter and then as a woman was formed around these contexts. Eqariusaq and Elizabeth Ford's families' involvement in industries adjacent to Arctic exploration such as the fur trade formed the context in which they engaged with projects of exploration and the forms of knowledge production associated with them.

For all of these women, it was their embeddedness in familial relationships, rather than a sense of individualism, that precipitated their involvement in exploration. Yet their life stories demonstrate that those who did not directly choose to be involved in cultures of exploration were nevertheless far from lacking in agency and influence within them. Elizabeth Ford, for example, took up her Anauta persona as a strategy of family survival in the Depression-era United States, showing a remarkable ability to put aside her lived experiences of Arctic life as a Settler woman and successfully to dramatize popular "knowledge" about Inuit peoples and Northern environments for American audiences.

Josephine Peary and Mina Hubbard used their Arctic narratives to publicize their visions of exploration as an expression of, rather than being antithetical to, middle-class domestic culture. Both women deftly situated their husbands' and their own exploratory activities in recognisably middle-class home spaces – in Mina's case, the Hubbards' house in Congers, New York, where a map of Labrador hung on the wall; in Josephine's case, the Peary expedition headquarters in Avanersuaq, where an American child could be raised in a “hothouse” environment of American domesticity. Marie Peary's narrations of her Arctic childhood brought her mother's message to juvenile audiences, who were made to understand that Arctic environments, and even children's stories about the Arctic and Inuit characters, could contribute to white childhood development, providing moral lessons and experiences of Indigenous life that would help transform American youths into modern citizens and subjects.

In entangling the supposedly oppositional geographies of home and Arctic wilderness, this thesis argues that Peary and Hubbard's explorer personas highlighted what was already true, albeit implicit, about white male exploratory practice: imagined geographies of Arctic exploration, even in their most hypermasculine forms, always, by definition, incorporated domestic space, and were shaped by ideas of home. In framing wilderness and Arctic trips as an escape from home, and its potentially corrosive and effeminizing effects, while also preparing men to better master and lead their households, male explorers oriented their circular journeys relative to their points of origin and return in the domestic sphere and in white family life. By drawing attention to this element of the gendered and geographical logics of Arctic exploration, female explorers and contributors

to exploratory culture encouraged their popular, familial, and even scientific audiences to understand practices of exploration as simultaneously domestic practices.

The manner in which these women managed to stay “close to home” in their Arctic travels also invites women’s historians to think about “home,” a concept used to capture a complex bundle of material and imagined connections to place, of structures for interpersonal relations, and of processes of ordering the world around us, in different terms. Like other late-Victorian and Edwardian women, Mina Hubbard and the Pearys revised traditional understandings of the middle-class home as a site for female containment and interiority, using their Arctic narratives to transform domesticity into an impetus and a vector for women’s social and geographical mobility. In framing Arctic travel as an expression of their familial roles as wives, widows, mothers, and daughters, domesticity provided the roadmaps and the cultural blueprints for movements into and outside of Arctic space. Domesticity, as we saw in Chapters Five and Six, also provided useful imported frameworks for the Peary women in crafting their “natural” superiority over other white and Inughuit women in expedition contexts.

Eqariusaq and Elizabeth Ford, women of Inuit descent born in the Eastern Arctic, possessed different sensibilities of home – which I would not claim to fully understand – from those of Josephine and Marie Peary and Mina Hubbard. Both women, however, grew up around *Qallunaat* models of domesticity. For Ford, British domestic traditions formed an important part of her life at home in the post houses of the HBC; cleaving to British traditions also helped the Fords, like other Labrador Settler families, understand and articulate their racial status within an Arctic contact zone. Undoubtedly, Ford’s encounters with Victorian domesticity in Labrador and other areas of the Eastern Arctic helped her to

forge a new home in the United States, and to understand and manipulate the *Qallunaat* paradigms of race and gender that shaped the production of knowledge within the culture of Arctic exploration in which she lectured, wrote, and worked. As a Settler, Ford's early immersion in *Qallunaat* and Inuit traditions enabled her to travel deftly in the cultural and epistemological borderlands between Arctic and American homescapes. Like the other women in this study, Ford's experiences of home life opened up pathways to mobility that encompassed, for her, a mobility of racial and personal identity as well as geographical movement.

Encounters with *Qallunaat* homes and domestic ideologies could also precipitate dislocation, alongside mobility. While remaining cognisant of Inuit adaptability and resiliency, this thesis has argued that the creation of *Qallunaat* homes in the Arctic, through expeditions or the often related expansion of resource industries, could bring about significant ruptures in Inuit home life. The arrival of HBC families like the Fords on Baffin Island in the early twentieth century, for example, disrupted Inuit traditions of hunting, living on, and relating to the land. Eqariusaq's biography offers historians a glimpse, albeit fleeting, of the personal costs of these incursions into Inuit homelands, such as the Peary expeditions in Avanersuaq. As a character in the Peary's Snow Baby stories, I argue that Eqariusaq's inability, as "Miss Bill," to be at home in the United States and to embody the characteristics of American childhood had a didactic function for juvenile readers, showing "primitivism" to be a temporary stage of development for white children like Marie Peary, but a permanent state of being for Indigenous peoples. While little is known about Eqariusaq's time in the United States beyond these storybook representations, we do know that a similar trip, made by her father, stepmother, and stepsister two years later, had tragic

consequences, leaving Eqariusaq bereft of the family members who populated her childhood understandings of home. Eqariusaq's bereavement represents, at the scale of a single family, the broader social disruptions Inughuit experienced during the time of the Peary expeditions, as Avanersuaq was remade into a space with more intensive connections to global capitalist economies and geopolitics. In much the same way that transatlantic female contributors to exploratory culture defamiliarized the white, middle-class home as a critical point of contact with the "unhomely Arctic," practices of Arctic exploration contributed to the defamiliarisation of Eastern Arctic homes for Inuit and Inughuit. For Inuit women, as for *Qallunaat* women, intercultural contacts and relationships forged through exploration provoked and necessitated reconceptualisations of home, and their places within it.

Like Carlo Ginzburg, I argue that personal histories should be told whenever possible; within the discipline of history, biographies offer important perspectives on historical processes and issues, bringing to light experiences and cultural paradigms that might not be as readily apparent at larger scales of analysis. In order to deploy biography effectively as a historical methodology, however, researchers should endeavour to capture a wide range of subject positions, rather than focusing our attention on the most readily identifiable or easily accessible types of historical subjects. This thesis has brought together the life histories of five different women, from different points of geographical origin and social and racial status, in order to shed light on female experiences with, and contributions to, a transatlantic culture of Arctic exploration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Far from attempting to capture "the" women's history of this topic, this thesis has pointed to the highly personal and individualized ways in which different women

responded to this particular constellation of cultural and material practices we call Arctic exploration. Within this welter of women's actions, and responses, however, certain themes emerge that help to give us the vocabulary to understand the experiences of women who, around the turn of the century, became embroiled in *Qallunaat* incursions, both literally and imaginatively, into the Eastern Arctic. Perhaps most prominently, concepts of home, family, and domesticity functioned as the mechanisms through which these women related Arctic and non-Arctic spaces to one another, and made sense of their place within each. It is my hope that developing more biographies of Arctic exploration, broadly conceived, will help us sketch this picture of how women related to Arctic spaces and home spaces in ever finer detail.

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