Going in Circles: Changing Perceptions of the Arctic Through Literary and Visual Representations in the Long-Nineteenth-Century

by

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CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Chapter One – 1796 to 1839 21

Chapter Two – 1840 to 1854 64

Chapter Three – 1855 to 1865 109

Chapter Four– 1870 to 1889 160

Chapter Five – 1890 to 1909 194

Conclusion 224

Bibliography 231

Going in Circles: Changing Perceptions of the Arctic Through Literary and Visual Representations in the Long-Nineteenth-Century

Introduction

In which the structure of this thesis dissertation is delineated, and we begin to explore the Arctic through its myriad representations in the literature, art and popular culture of the long-nineteenth-century.

Scope and Purpose

With a temporal span beginning in 1796 and ending in 1909, this thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach to investigating the abundance of ways in which people of all social classes in the long-nineteenth-century were able to engage with the Arctic. Encompassing a range of primary and secondary sources, it demonstrates the region's immersive influence on Victorian Society and argues that representations and perceptions of the Arctic traversed a circular path from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, reaching their zenith in the 'sensation era' of the 1860s to 1880s.

As Francis Spufford argues, by the end of the nineteenth century:

> the accepted influence of polar material on the collective imagination [meant] … that the means existed to make the data of polar discovery a stuff of conventional imagination (Spufford, 2003, p. 7)

This suggests that the profusion of Arctic representation, in its multiple forms, had created a common cultural awareness of the region; a sense of familiarity and knowledge that was reliant on a shared understanding and collective memory formed almost subliminally by prolonged emotional and intellectual, rather than physical or geographical, exposure to the region.

The main focus of this thesis is on representations of the Arctic region itself in the art and literature – both fictional and non-fictional – of the era. However, representations in popular culture and entertainment also necessarily inform the debate, as do representations of the people who inhabited the region and those

who travelled there – whether for reasons of exploration, commerce, art or leisure – such as the infamous 1845 expedition led by Sir John Franklin at the behest of the Admiralty's Sir John Barrow.

By exploring the ways in which representations of the Arctic changed in the course of the long-nineteenth-century, and investigating the possibilities of interaction between different modes of representation, this thesis contributes to the fields of Victorian and Arctic enquiry by seeking to determine what underlying factors motivated and influenced such representation and considering how they might have resonated with political, cultural and aesthetic philosophies of the age.

Background

For British subjects in the early years of Queen Victoria's reign, the Arctic was as fascinating and ubiquitous as outer-space was to a mid-twentieth century audience; a 'final frontier' just waiting for mankind to chart, plunder and exploit it. Perceived variously as a symbol of Empire, a place of adventure and opportunity, and a naval training ground, but also as a place of sacred mystery, the Arctic captured the public imagination in the same way that space travel was to do a century later – and just as film and television brought space travel closer to the mid-twentieth-century audience, so the burgeoning media and entertainment industries of the Victorian era brought the Arctic within the reach of that generation.

Unlike space travel, however, voyages to the Arctic had historical precedents, the most famous, for the British, being Martin Frobisher's "three expeditions to the North between 1576 and 1578 … [which were] a prospecting exercise and a means for his advancement in the Elizabethan court" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 63). A succession of voyages followed in his wake from 1580 to 1789, pausing only for the years of the English Civil War, Republic, Restoration and Glorious Revolution, and resuming in 1707 under Queen Anne (Mirsky, 1970, pp. 324-325), but none aroused the public interest to the extent that Frobisher had, or that Victorian expeditions would enjoy.

Interest suppressed by successive decades of wars and naval battles, was reinvigorated following the British navy's defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815, and newspapers that had previously been practically devoid of reference to the region began from 1818 to carry regular reports, stories, poems, articles and advertisements relating to it. In fiction, too, the Arctic began to feature, with references to its icy climes acting as a touchstone not only for both physical and emotional coldness, isolation and loneliness, but also, by the 1850s at least, for forgiveness, redemption and resurrection.

This revival of interest in the Arctic, and to a lesser extent the Antarctic, regions was intense for most of the nineteenth century, and was largely driven in its earliest years by two crucial situations at the British Admiralty – as Fergus Fleming (1999), Robert G. David (2000), Russell Potter (2007), Ingeborg Høvik (2013), Adriana Craciun (2016), and Huw Lewis-Jones (2020), among others, have established. The first of these situations was the long tenure, from 1804 to 1845, of Arctic enthusiast Sir John Barrow in the influential post of Second Secretary to the Admiralty, and the second was a superfluity of naval officers following the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, in consequence of which:

> The sounds of war and strife were heard no more,
> The ships lay rotting idly by the shore,
> The cannon rusted on the fertile plain,
> And warriors raised their warning voice in vain, … (Vidal, 1860, p. 7)

This end to 'war and strife' brought a welcome but inconvenient peace for a navy accustomed to regular sorties into battle. This is reflected in Jane Austen's novel, *Persuasion,* written in 1815-16 and published posthumously in January 1818 (Austen Society, 2020), as the lawyer Mr. Shepherd observes that "this peace will be turning all our rich Navy Officers ashore", (Austen, 2007, p. 13) - and so it did, in great numbers.

While ordinary and able seamen could be, and were, dismissed summarily from the ranks, officers were employed on a contract and had to be either deployed on active service or furloughed on half-pay; an unsatisfactory financial situation for both the Admiralty and its officers.

As Fergus Fleming (Fleming, 1999) comprehensively documents, Barrow (1764-1848) remained in post for forty-one years and was an ardent proponent of the quests for two polar goals in particular: the geographically significant discovery of the North Pole and the commercially desirable discovery of a Northwest Passage. To these ends he zealously planned and promoted numerous exploratory expeditions and also developed a close business relationship with the publisher John Murray, whose publishing house thus became the nineteenth century's foremost publisher of all naval and expeditionary texts, which in turn became an influential means by which the Arctic was represented in literature.

Inevitably, with full-pay (rather than the alternative, half-pay), and guaranteed publication of their narrative on their return – not to mention the status of National Hero thus ensured – officers were eager to be engaged on one of Barrow's expeditions. After all, as Austen's Admiral Croft exclaims, "[w]hat should a young fellow … do ashore for half a year together?" (Austen, 2007, p. 49). Like Captain Wentworth, the 'young fellow' to whom he is speaking, the officers invariably "wanted to be doing something" (Austen, 2007, p. 49), so that:

> Now, when no foe remains to fight or fly,
> They long the stormy northern seas to try,
> And win their way, through straits beset with ice,
> Unto the western isles of paradise. (Vidal, 1860, p. 7)

Vidal was reflecting on these times with the benefit of half a century's hindsight, but he captures the same early enthusiasm for Arctic exploration that Austen had observed first-hand in the 1810s.

The first of Barrow's expeditions had sailed in 1818, the year that also saw the publication not only of Austen's *Persuasion* but, a month later, of Mary Shelley's first novel *Frankenstein* (Shelley, 1992), with its chilling Arctic allusions, and, in August, of Eleanor Porden's epic poem *The Arctic Expeditions*.

While Austen gently nudged her readers in the direction of supporting Arctic expeditions, Porden overtly encouraged it, urging explorers to:

> Go forth, brave Seamen, reach the fated shore,
> Go! doomed to honours never reaped before, … (Porden, 1818, p. 14)

Porden's juxtaposition of 'doom' and 'honours' tragically foreshadows the destiny of her future husband, Sir John Franklin, while the ambiguity of her 'fated shore' denotes the variety of destinies awaiting other 'brave Seamen'.

Jen Hill thus proposes that:

> having defeated male attempts at mastery, the Arctic might have seemed equally available to [Shelley and Porden] as an imagined space on which to map a response to the gendered narrative that saturated polar exploration accounts (Hill, 2008, p. 55)

As Austen, Shelley and Porden were all writing in or before 1818, these 'male attempts' and 'gendered narrative[s]' must relate to accounts from the explorers of previous centuries, rekindled independently of their historic context to excite in a new post-war era, the imaginations of the British population in preparation for Barrow's proposed expeditions. In recognition of this, Chauncey Loomis explains that:

> sixteenth- and seventeenth-century explorers and chroniclers provided images that would impress later writers with a sense that in the Arctic Nature was somehow vaster, more mysterious, and more terrible than elsewhere on the globe – a region in which natural phenomena could take strange, almost supernatural, forms, sometimes stunningly beautiful, sometimes terrifying, often both. (Loomis, 1977, p. 96)

Romanticism and the Sublime

Those 'later writers' to whom Loomis refers were the poets and philosophers of the era of Romanticism – circa 1785 to 1825 (Curran, 2013, p. xi) – of which Austen, Porden and, particularly, Shelley and her husband Percy Bysshe Shelley were a part. As Stuart Curran observes, this era "saw a crucial transition between an Enlightenment world view and the values of modern, industrial society" (Curran, 2013, p. xi). Eighteenth century constructs of the 'sublime' decreed that it had its source and its power in the "immensity of objects in the natural world, of the stars, of mountains and volcanoes and of the ocean" (Drabble (ed), 2000, p. 980). Developed by philosophers and writers such as David Hume, Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant from ancient Greek works attributed to Longinus, 'the

sublime' experience was deemed to be that which simultaneously thrilled and appalled its audience. To be effective, the sublime experience requires its audience to be somewhat removed, and therefore safe from, the scene being portrayed. Only at a distance can the full horror of a situation becoming appealing.

Loomis argues that the protagonist of Coleridge's 1798 poem *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere* "is a voyager in the sublime, privileged or doomed briefly to experience its power, mystery, and terror" (Loomis, 1977, p. 98). For Coleridge, then, as for later Romantic poets, the polar regions epitomised the extremes of geographical and emotional contrast, presenting a region at once repellent and alluring. Thus, Loomis asserts, it is Byron who "expresses the ambivalence of emotions created by the Sublime" (Loomis, 1977, p. 98) in the one line "[a]ll that expands the spirit, yet appals" (Byron, 1996), written in 1816.

1816, of course, was famously 'the year without a summer' as Mount Tambora had erupted the previous year and engulfed the globe in volcanic dust. Byron and his physician John Polidori experienced this in the company of Mary and Percy Bysshe Shelley as they sheltered together in "a modest house in the mountains near Geneva" (Hunter, 2012), and Byron's words express as clearly as the novel, *Frankenstein*, which Mary Shelley would go on to write, the conflicting emotions of fear and wonder that expanded their Romantic sensitivities to apocalyptic proportions at that time.

Barrow's Expeditions

As Chapter One discusses, the expeditions that sailed in 1818 brought disappointment that only served to increase Barrow's determination to pursue his goals. More expeditions were dispatched in the course of the ensuing decades, and in 1845 great hopes – as well as a great deal of technological expertise and money – were invested in an expedition led by an officer already established as a national hero by virtue of his previous exploits. That officer was Sir John Franklin.

Franklin's consequent disappearance was the catalyst for all manner of speculation in literature, art and in popular culture, demonstrating the clear

correlation between these three media throughout the nineteenth century. As they formed together the circular trajectory proposed by this thesis, each was affected equally by a pivotal moment in 1859; a moment that “shattered any existing image of British invincibility in the Arctic” (David, 2000, p. 239) and marked the point at which the formerly upward arc of the circle began its descent. That moment was the discovery of incontrovertible proof that Franklin and all his men had perished in the Arctic wastes.

1859 was also a significant year in many other areas of Victorian culture and society, as Gail Marshall’s work has highlighted (Marshall, 2018). Drawing personal and professional links between authors such as George Eliot, Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens, Charles Darwin, Florence Nightingale and Mrs Beeton, Marshall charts the publication of several seminal texts in 1859, including Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*. This latter work is particularly pertinent to this thesis in relation to common misconceptions in the representation and perception of the Arctic’s indigenous populations; generally referred to at the time by the westerners’ epithet of ‘Esquimaux’ – which, translated, means ‘eaters of raw flesh’ – but more accurately and appropriately identified as Inuit – which translates as ‘the people’.

In the popular press too, 1859 was a significant year, as Walter Graham reveals in observing that "[d]uring 1859, 115 new journals began publication in London alone" (Graham, 1966, p. 301). Moreover, despite the auspicious publications of John Murray, alluded to above, Richard Altick asserts that "the most talked-of aspect of the publishing scene [in 1859] ... was the tremendous increase in the number and variety of periodicals" (Altick, 1998, p. 163). These figures evidence exponential growth in the demand for literature at this time; a growth surely not unconnected with the repeal of stamp duty on newspapers four years earlier, but also influenced by educational reforms and increasing literacy rates among a burgeoning population. With more periodicals, naturally, came more opportunities for writers to publish their articles, poems and stories, many of which fed on the public’s hunger for tales of, or representative of, the Arctic. The “seismic shift in the relationship of exploration to publication located at the turn of the nineteenth century” (Craciun, 2016, p. 6), which Craciun contends was crucial in driving

forward the public's appetite and euphoria for Arctic exploration, was, therefore, escalated still further in 1859.

In wider culture, 1859 saw the opening of the National Portrait Gallery, with all the implications that has for the representation of national identity, culture and spirit. Today, its Victorian Gallery houses portraits – including several by Stephen Pearce (1819-1904) – of many of the nineteenth century's major Arctic explorers as well as plaster medallions, sculpted by Bernard Smith (1820-1885), that carry head-and-shoulder reliefs of their peers Sir John Richardson R.N. (1787-1865) and Sir James Clark Ross R.N. (1800-1862). For historical context, 1859 also saw Queen Victoria celebrate her fortieth birthday, the first Post Office pillar boxes appear on the streets of London, and Lord Palmerston begin his second term as Prime Minister, albeit his first as head of a Liberal Party government. All of these monumental changes in national life could have influenced the changes in attitudes towards the Arctic, but most momentous of all was the seeping realisation that Franklin's men were never returning, and the numerous search parties sent to look for them had sailed in vain.

Fifty years later, in 1909, the American explorer Robert Peary was widely acknowledged to have become the first person to reach the North Pole as he and his five companions "stood at last at that magical point at which east and west and north disappear and only one direction remains – south" (Mirsky, 1970, p. 298). With this claim, Peary brought closure to one of Barrow's key Arctic ambitions – his other, the Northwest Passage, having been successfully traversed on foot by Captain Robert McClure and his men in 1852, and by sea in 1905 by the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen. Peary's achievement – although hotly disputed ever since – finally proved that another of Barrow's Arctic dreams, that of an Open Polar Sea around the North Pole, "was not only not worth finding but not even there to be found" (Fleming, 1999, p. 423). It equally disproved popular theories of fertile lands within the globe, accessed via openings at the poles; theories that were based on Greek legend and Norse folklore but were expanded upon and proposed as fact by John Cleves Symmes and his followers (Beaver, 1987, pp. 10-12) for a great part of the nineteenth century.

Also in 1909, but across the globe in Antarctica, Britain's Ernest Shackleton and Professor Edgeworth David, separately and within days of each other, "reached the main position of the [southern] Magnetic Pole … [and] took possession of the whole region in the name of the British Crown" (Kirwan, 1959, p. 282). This indicates that by 1909, the Antarctic rather than the Arctic was becoming the focus of British imperialism, and indeed, it was in the following year that Robert Falcon Scott led his famous Terra Nova expedition across the Antarctic ice to the South Pole, with catastrophic results similar in cause and effect to those of Franklin's Arctic forays. Photography and cinematography, transcendent in the later decades of the nineteenth century, had by this time almost completely supplanted other art-forms in Arctic representation. Therefore, the visual representations of this expedition – in the form of Hugh Ponting's photographs[1] showing the grim immensity of conditions amid the ice but also depicting some scenes of relative normality in the lives of the men – eternally eclipsed those of the previous century's Arctic expeditions in the public imagination. Similarly, Scott's journals (Scott, 2008), relating more frankly than before the feelings and observations of explorers, replaced those of Franklin, Parry, Ross et al on the reading lists of British schoolboys.

Nonetheless, the influence that Barrow and Murray between them had had on the ways in which the Arctic was represented through the expeditionary lens cannot be underestimated. By the time Barrow retired in 1845, the Admiralty's Arctic enthusiasm and finances were dwindling, and the fateful Franklin expedition was on its way to its doom. Nevertheless, through their immersion in the ongoing story of Arctic exploration as it was portrayed and evinced in all aspects of literature, art and popular culture, the public was so galvanised behind his projects that privately sponsored expeditions continued what he had started, sailing not only in search of the Northwest Passage and the North Pole, but also, latterly, of Franklin's lost ships and men. This transition initiated one of several shifts in the tone and style of Arctic representations at crucial points throughout the long-nineteenth-century, each of which contributed to the circular nature of the region's

[1] Reproduced, for example, in (Ponting, 2004)

representation in art, literature and popular culture and punctuated the era that forms the focus of this thesis.

Sources

Transition points, such as that identified above, have provided different writers with different timeframes for their studies of the Arctic. Robert G. David (2000), Russell Potter (2007), Janice Cavell (2008), and Ingeborg Høvik (2013), for example, all begin their examinations of the nineteenth century Arctic in the "pivotal … [and] watershed year" (Craciun, 2016, pp. 5-7) of 1818. This was the year in which Barrow's first expeditions set sail and literature began to embrace the Arctic as a topic of popular interest. These four authors diverge, however in the years at which they curtail their accounts.

David chooses 1915, concluding that Arctic history was generally "written as a chronological narrative … in which geographical discovery has been seen as an end in itself" (David, 2000, p. 236). He clearly intimates, however, the circular path of representation proposed by this thesis, observing that in the late nineteenth century the Arctic became again "a more frightening and inhospitable place, as was reflected in the increasing number of representations based on the eighteenth century idea of the sublime" (David, 2000, p. 239). This 'eighteenth century idea', which permeated the thoughts of writers and artists of the Romantic era, elicits juxtapositions of impact and emotion that serve to accentuate the tantalising ambiguity of the Arctic's enduring allure.

Potter ends his examination in 1875, arguing that in the 1880s a "significant shift in mass media history" (Potter, 2007, p. 203) was underway, with the advent of motion pictures and radio supplanting older forms of entertainment in both private and public venues.

Cavell restricts her timeframe even further, ending in 1860, and suggests that:

> the Victorians understood Arctic exploration not merely as a series of intensely interesting events, but as a story which had naturally and of its own accord taken on a literary form … a story that had so far appeared in instalments." (Cavell, 2008, p. 26)

Similarly, Shane McCorristine argues that "[i]n western imaginations the Arctic was something constructed over time, [by] an assembly of myths and testimonies" (McCorristine, 2018, p. 40). Thus, Victorian audiences followed stories of Arctic exploration in the same way that they followed serialised fiction: a story told 'over time', often over many years, in which they could trace a "Connected Narrative", to quote Cavell's book title. This "long-term commitment and sympathy, expanding structures of thought [and] ability to connect distant pieces of a whole" (Hughes & Lund, 1991, p. 75) enabled readers to follow the characters and plots of serialised fiction over a period of months and to transfer those skills to a longer timeframe in regard to the real-life serialisation of Arctic exploration and discovery unfolding throughout their lives.

Høvik ends her post-1818 timeframe in 1859, viewing the period predominantly from an Art-History perspective and embracing the discourse theories of Michel Foucault and Edward Said to consider representations of the Arctic in British, French and American paintings as a mirror to western perceptions of itself in relation to the 'other' – a theme that Jen Hill also explores with her opening chapter "Heart of Whiteness" (Hill, 2008, pp. 1-28), and one that highlights a perception of Arctic snows as a blank canvas onto which any picture could be painted and any story told.

My own timeframe of 1796 to 1909 corresponds to those chosen by authors such as Francis Spufford (2003), Jen Hill (2008), and Adriana Craciun (2016) and reflects the circular transition in polar awareness encompassed by those years. Among the primary sources to inform this thesis are several extant letters, articles and other documents from the period. Some have been accessed in archives or contemporary newspapers, while others are referenced from secondary sources. Included among them are the letters and reports of diverse individuals, some of whom had sailed to the Arctic and some of whom had not. Represented are, for example, the writings of naval officers such as Sir John Ross, Captain F. Leopold McClintock, and Senior Officer James Fitzjames; independent explorers such as Dr John Rae; whalers such as William Scoresby; ships' surgeons such as

Reginald Koetlitz and Alexander McDonald; and professional writers such as Charles Dickens.

From the documents of seafarers, readers are able to deduce information not only about their travels and destinations but about their daily lives and relationships on board ship and out on the ice. The intended audience of these texts is, however, an important factor in interpreting their representation of the Arctic and Arctic life as various influences and concerns affected the writers and the information they were willing to divulge. It is likely, for example, that men writing letters home from the Arctic would underplay the difficulties they encountered in order to reassure their loved ones that they were contented, safe and well. It is equally likely that men who knew they would have to submit their written accounts to the Admiralty for publication as a narrative on their return might, firstly, exaggerate the difficulties they encountered, and their own part in resolving or overcoming them, and, secondly, if they valued their position and reputation, be very careful in their choice of language to comment on their conditions and relationships with other members of the crew. Such caution is evident in the letters of James Fitzjames, discussed in Chapter Three.

Also significant in interpreting these documents are the:

> two kinds of awareness of the past (retention and recollection) and two kinds of expectation of the future (protention and secondary expectation) … [and both] awareness of the past and expectation of the future are essential to human consciousness rather than arbitrary cultural constructs (Hughes & Lund, 1991, p. 281 n16)

Identified by David Carr[2] and based on the work of German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)[3], these skills of 'retention and recollection' and 'protention and secondary expectation' explain not only the readers' ability to follow both fictional and non-fictional serialisation but also the writers' ability to create such narratives. Those who went to the Arctic, and were fortunate enough to return, retained and recollected often conflicting stories, which were then modified by

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[2] Carr, David, *Time, Narrative and History,* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1986 – quoted in (Hughes & Lund, 1991)

[3] See https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/ accessed 01/04/2020 and https;//www.researchgate.net/publication/319300947_Husserl_Protention_and_the_Phenomenology_of_the_Unexpected accessed 01?04/2020

those who had not been there to meet the expectations and perceptions of the public, awaiting their next ‘instalment’. Moreover, the officers’ capacity for the retention and recollection of information was manipulated in the editing of their texts to meet the “protention and secondary expectation” (Hughes & Lund, 1991, p. 281n.16) of the waiting readership, as evidenced by documents discussed in Chapter Five.

That waiting readership comprised not only the families and friends of the correspondents but also a significant band of readers best identified as ‘armchair travellers’. Not necessarily confined to their titular armchairs, such ‘travellers’ acquired a knowledge and understanding of distant places through “the practice of exploring by wandering around a room, going through material collections, or ruminating over memories” (McCorristine, 2018, p. 39), and also, of course, by reading the published articles, stories, narratives and reports on their chosen ‘destination’. This created a “dreamlike perception … tied up with people’s Arctic encounters” (McCorristine, 2018, p. 40), which is the focus of McCorristine’s *The Spectral Arctic* and which is reflected in many of the sources discussed in this thesis.

As they awaited the next instalment, armchair travellers and other readers alike not only retained and recalled, albeit imperfectly through the filters of their own imaginations and experience, the information put before them, they also engaged in the intellectual and imaginative process of ‘protention and secondary expectation’ as they actively thought about and debated the possible outcomes. Thus, the recollection and anticipation that they experienced, like those experienced by narrative writers, combined to re-represent, embellish, and interpret the Arctic over the course of the nineteenth century. In tracing the resultant inconsistencies and anomalies in artistic, literary and cultural representations of the region, as well as concomitant inconsistencies in perception, this thesis shows how the relationships between Carr’s ‘two kinds of awareness’ developed over the century to create the circular trajectory proposed.

Other primary sources considered in this thesis comprise official reports written by or for the Admiralty and other government departments, as well as newspaper

reports and articles written, usually by land-based journalists, for publications such as *The Times*, *Household Words*, and the *Illustrated London News*. Bridging the gap between the two is a famous report written for the Admiralty in 1854 by the renowned Arctic explorer and surveyor Dr John Rae and concerning his discovery of some remains of the long-lost Franklin expedition. Released unedited in *The Times*, his report "violated a taboo" (Craciun, 2016, p. 39) and caused outrage among the British public with its suggestion that British seamen might have resorted to cannibalism in their attempts to survive the Arctic climes. Further findings made in 1859 on an expedition led by Captain F. Leopold McClintock, confirmed all of Rae's conclusions apart from this latter one. Thus, a nation that had for more than a decade been awaiting the glorious return of one of its greatest national heroes, Sir John Franklin, and his crew of 129 men[4] finally had to face the fact that every one of those men had perished; their ships and their bodies destroyed by ice, never to return, gloriously or otherwise.

The content of other official reports is interesting in identifying the judgements and prevarications of the official channels, while articles and reports in the press can be illuminating in understanding public support for continued Arctic expeditions in the face of their constant failure to achieve their overt goals of discovering the North Pole and a Northwest Passage. In an article published in 1853, for example, Henry Morley emphasises the historical and serial aspects of Arctic interests as he asserts that:

> there are no tales of risk and enterprise in which we English, men, women, and children, old and young, rich and poor, become interested so completely, as in the tales that come from the North Pole … [and] men who are elsewhere enemies and rivals hold Arctic ground – which has been consecrated by three centuries of heroism – to be sacred to the noblest spirit of humanity (Morley, 1853, p. 241),

Morley's quasi-canonisation of Arctic heroes reflects the sanctity afforded to the expedition remnants recovered by the search expeditions of the 1850s and 1860s; remnants commonly referred to as 'relics', a term redolent with spiritual connotations. Such representations of the Arctic imbue the region with a

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[4] Of the 134 men who sailed from Greenhithe aboard Franklin's ships, The Erebus and The Terror, on 19th May 1845, five disembarked at Stromness before the ships entered Arctic waters.

sacredness previously reserved for the Heavens and Valhallas of religious faith, and is reflected in fictional texts such as the 1857 play *The Frozen Deep* (Collins & Dickens, 1966) and the later novel *God and the Man* (Buchanan, 1881), among other examples.

As this demonstrates, the style and tone of non-fictional representations of the Arctic had a clear influence on fictional representations. Letters written by Charles Dickens, and discussed in Chapter Three, for example, show that the above mentioned play, which he devised, co-wrote, produced and starred in with Wilkie Collins in 1857, was inspired by his reading of Sir John Richardson's memoir of Franklin, published the previous year in the eighth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Volume X, February 1856*. Richardson had accompanied Franklin on several voyages and his account of the close friendship they had formed was, Dickens wrote, "one of the noblest things I ever knew" (Dickens Vol 8, 1993, p. 66). It undoubtedly inspired the relationship between Aldersley and Wardour in the play, and this ultimately led, of course, to the creation of the character Sydney Carton and his own vehicle to martyrdom, *A Tale of Two Cities*, the idea for which occurred to Dickens as he lay 'dying' in the character of Richard Wardour (Schlicke, 2011, p. 561) and (Dickens Vol 8, 1993, p. 432). In these works of Collins, Dickens and Buchanan, the Arctic is represented as a place of redemption, reconciliation and forgiveness, in which their protagonists face temptations of a biblical magnitude with divine fortitude and grace. These texts are therefore prime examples of one very broad category of Arctic fiction typical of the mid-nineteenth-century; a fictional representation that focuses on the character, or personal qualities, of the Arctic explorer, promoting in and through them the 'manly/muscular Christian' discussed by Norman Vance (Vance, 1985).

The protagonists of one predominant form of non-fictional Arctic representation are likewise often endowed with the qualities of character that Vance identifies. They are the subjects of the voyage narratives published by John Murray under the auspices of the Admiralty on behalf of officers returning from the Arctic, and Jen Hill argues that they reinforced a state of "homo-nationalis" (Hill, 2008, p. 31) created among Arctic explorers by their extended periods of isolation from their homeland. Purporting to embrace the genre of life-writing, such narratives were

based on the diaries, journals, letters, reports and articles written by the naval officers themselves, both during and after their Arctic voyages. The narratives were, however, edited by the Admiralty to negate any ill-fortune and portray the officers as ‘heroes’, thus calling into question not only the veracity of the narrative but also the honesty of the views expressed in the original documents, and discussions on this theme recur at various points in this thesis.

In another broad band of Arctic fiction, the region is represented in its raw and/or romanticised state, as a landscape to be either admired or feared: as either Mr Booley’s “inhospitable region, surrounded by eternal ice, cheered by no glimpse of the sun, shrouded in gloom and darkness (Dickens, 1850, p. 76) or as Captain Littlepage’s “strange sort of country ’way up north beyond the ice” (Jewett, 2008, p. e.loc. 279). In such representations, the Arctic is used sometimes as a point of geographical reference but often as a means of reflecting and deflecting both physical and emotional states, as discussions of novels by Charlotte Brontë and Thomas Hardy, in Chapters Two and Five respectively, explore.

In the world of art too, the Arctic provided a popular topic for artists throughout the nineteenth century, irrespective of whether or not they had visited the region. However, as Chapter One discusses, the experience of being in the Arctic could have a significant effect on the way an artist portrayed it. Moreover, sketches and watercolours produced in the Arctic could enjoy a diverse afterlife if, like those made by John Ross and George Back in the 1820s, they were adapted and reproduced in a variety of ways, from engravings used to illustrate books and newspapers to theatrical backdrops for panoramas and other live shows and exhibitions.

Despite a slight mid-century lull in their popularity, panoramas and similar forms of entertainment, alongside theatre performances and pantomimes, kept the Arctic in the public’s eye throughout the nineteenth century, although by its final decades they had largely given way to more domestic forms such as Magic Lantern shows and Stereographs. Whereas the panoramas, dioramas and *Tableaux Vivantes* of the 1830s and 1840s had tempted people out of their

homes to be immersed in exhibitionary re-creations of Arctic scenery, the Stereoscopes and Magic Lanterns of the 1860s and 1870s brought the Arctic into those same homes and enabled them to experience the snow and ice in their own parlours or drawing rooms, paradoxically enjoying the frozen Arctic in the warmth of their own fireside.

As formerly stated, the main focus of this thesis is on the literature and art of the long-nineteenth-century, and while this naturally includes the exhibition of relics and other artefacts as objects of artistic interest or amusement, it is the representation of these items by words and images in which I am most interested: a stuffed polar bear from the 1894 to 1897 Jackson-Harmsworth expedition for example, as discussed in Chapter Five, may represent the size, texture and strength of its body, but it does not represent the emotions, majesty and vitality of the animal in the way that the paintings of, for example, Francois Auguste Biard[5], Edwin Landseer[6] and Briton Rivière[7] do.

Likewise in literature, passionate and emotive rhetoric can outmanoeuvre clear, well-informed scientific facts, as Charles Dickens proved in his tripartite denunciation of Dr John Rae's rationally expounded accusations of cannibalism in 1854 (Dickens, 1854 i) (Dickens, 1854 ii) (Dickens & Rae, 1854). An examination of this verbal affray features in Chapter Three alongside further analysis of Rae's long-undervalued contribution to Arctic exploration and Dickens's lifelong obsession not only with stories of such exploration but also with defending the reputation of Britain's naval officers.

Conversely, the stereoscopic images that took a selection of relics from the Franklin expedition into Victorian drawing-rooms appear to do little to enhance or even replicate the effect of seeing the relics first-hand in an exhibition, and this raises questions, in regard to visual representations of the relative powers of

[5] *Fight with Polar Bears,* 1839. Owned by the Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum, Norway – discussed in Chapter One
[6] *Man Proposes, God Disposes*, 1864. On display in the Picture Gallery of Royal Holloway University of London in Egham, Surrey – discussed in Chapter Three
[7] *Beyond Man's Footsteps*, 1894. On display at Tate Britain, London – discussed in Chapter Five

paintings and photographs, and whether the emotional attachment of the artist is portrayed along with his subject in a way that it cannot be by a camera – especially using the precise and primitive photographic equipment of the nineteenth century, as discussed in Chapter Four. Thus I return to Janice Cavell's notion of "representation [as] a cultural artefact" (Cavell, 2008, p. 7) and ask, when viewing any physical representation, "are we looking at image or essence – at a sign for the thing or the thing itself?" (Plotz, 2005, p. 112). Such fundamentals of Thing Theory underpin investigations into the commodity culture that entranced Victorian society and, particularly in relation to the Arctic, turned images, artefacts and memorabilia into "signifiers, with a definite human meaning attached to them by way of representation" (Plotz, 2005, p. 112).

By exploring the Arctic through its representations in the art, literature and popular culture of the nineteenth century, the following chapters demonstrate that together these media brought the region full-circle in the imagination of the British public, from a place of deepest danger and despair, to a site of sanctity and salvation, and back again over a period of just over one-hundred years: 1796 to 1909.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter One investigates the reasons that a British tradition of Arctic exploration dating back to Elizabethan times was revived by the Admiralty in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, and the means by which this revival was represented in many aspects of literature, art and popular culture. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the polar regions, both north and south, were commonly represented as bleak, desolate spaces, as inaccessible and hostile to man as any place on earth could be. Yet, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the northern polar region began to be represented to the British public as ripe for exploration and adventure, with the first of many expeditions setting sail in 1818. With their most ardently publicised goals being the discovery of either or both of a Northwest Passage and the North Pole, many a naval career, many a robust

reputation, and many a myth and narrative was thus indebted to Arctic expeditions.

Chapter Two considers how, as successive expeditions failed to achieve their stated goals, the Arctic regions came to be associated with extremes of hope and despair yet attained an ironically warm place in the hearts of the British public. With retirement looming, the man who had been the driving force behind such ventures invested all his effort, experience and knowledge, as well as the technical skills of the best boat-builders and crew at his command, to launch one last attempt. The result was the notorious Franklin expedition of 1845, the fate of which resonates across many fields of enquiry to this day.

Chapter Three explores how, as the primary goal of Arctic expeditions shifted in the 1850s in favour of finding Franklin and his men, the Arctic was increasingly imbued with a sense of mystery and intrigue. By 1860 illusions of a glorious victory over the Arctic plains were shattered, and with them the hopes of the nation. What remained was the paraphernalia of a few men's lives – books, knives, crockery, for example – recovered by Dr John Rae and search expeditions such as those led by Robert McClure, Francis Leopold McClintock and their American counterpart, Charles Francis Hall. Through a multiplicity of representational filters, these items helped to propel a material culture created and sustained by the exhibitions and museums of previous decades into an era defined by its growing commodity culture and concepts of novelty and sensation; a commodity culture in which the authenticity of goods achieved prominence in assigning value, both financial and sentimental.

Chapter Four discusses the ways in which, in an era of sensationalism, Arctic memorabilia fed, was embraced by, and was celebrated in, a growing commodity culture, and how this led inexorably to the region resuming its former connotations of gloom and desolation. The repercussions of Rae's, McClure's, McClintock's, Hall's and others' findings reverberated around the world, transforming attitudes to, and perceptions of, the Arctic in a way that wound the clock back forty years. The expectations of the public, developed by decades of propaganda concerning

the allure of Arctic exploration, were thwarted, yet their appetite for tales of the Arctic was unabated.

Chapter Five argues that, as the nineteenth century evolved into the twentieth century, so representations and perceptions of the Arctic began to resemble more those of the 1800s than the 1850s. In other words, as my title suggests, the wheel of representation had turned full circle and representations of the Arctic resumed their former apocalyptic aura, reflecting and affecting public perceptions accordingly. In fictional literature, for example, the Arctic that had nurtured the spirit of heroes in mid-century fiction and drama became for Rudyard Kipling in 1894/95 a place of "very real danger" (Kipling, 1998 i, p. 270), for the wildlife and people indigenous to the region. For M. P. Shiel in 1901, moreover, it became the catalyst for worldwide devastation, destruction and death. Earlier authors had represented the Arctic as a space affecting and affected by British explorers, but Shiel extends this concept to apocalyptic levels as a lethal cloud of gas is emitted once the North Pole is discovered. Kipling's focus, in contrast, is on preserving the Arctic, representing it as the home of its indigenous populations of both people and wildlife: a place to be preserved and not plundered. From an eco-critical perspective this demonstrates a significant, positive and anachronistically modern development in representations of the Arctic as Kipling implies that his readers should be concerned not with invading and conquering the region, but with respecting and conserving it.

Chapter One – 1796 to 1839

In which a tradition that had lain dormant for two centuries – that of British exploration in the Arctic – is revived by the Admiralty and achieves for the forlorn ice-ridden region a ubiquitous presence in the public imagination, as evidenced by its representation in the worlds of art, literature and popular culture.

Rediscovering the Arctic

In his 1796 poem *The Destiny of Nations; A Vision,* Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote, with reference to the Arctic, of the:

> … legends terrible, with which
> The polar ancient thrills his uncouth throng (Coleridge, 1796).

Two years later, as the young Italian nobleman and explorer Giuseppe Acerbi commenced a two-year voyage into the Arctic seas around Lapland and the North Cape – which he identified as "the most northern point of Meagre Island, in the Norway tongue called *Magerön*, under 71° 10' north latitude." (Acerbi, 1802 ii, p. 377) – Coleridge turned his attention to the Antarctic to personify his 'polar ancient' as the title character in *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere*. Here, the 'uncouth throng' becomes an ensnared and anxious wedding guest as Coleridge tells indeed one of those 'legends terrible' to which he had alluded in 1796. The 'rime', or hoar-frost, of his 1798 title suggests the frosty visage and ice-cold spirit of the eponymous Mariner, whose tale invokes a similarly frosty and forbidding polar seascape wherein:

> The Ice was here, the Ice was there,
> The Ice was all around:
> It crack'd and growl'd, and roar'd and howl'd,
> Like noises of a swound. (Coleridge, 1991, p. 12)

With this monstrous representation of the polar ice, threatening to envelop and consume its prey of ships and mariners alike, Coleridge captures the terrifying appeal of nature's overpowering and enduring strength, at once attractive and repellent to the ambitions of mankind.

A decade earlier, Scottish explorer and fur-trader Alexander MacKenzie had ventured into Arctic waters further north than Acerbi's route to chart a course along the river that was later to bear his name. The purposes of the two expeditions could not have been more different, however. Acerbi was enjoying an unusually challenging version of the Grand Tour so commonly undertaken by young European noblemen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. MacKenzie, on the other hand, was following commercial interests in pursuit of a possible trade route across the Arctic – an elusive Northwest Passage that was, in time, to excite the imaginations of Victorian England – and the anticipated discovery of the North Pole. Each of the above enterprises was instrumental in awakening in the early nineteenth century an enthusiasm for polar regions that had flourished in the Elizabethan era – when the achievements of Martin Frobisher and John Davis were particularly celebrated in England – but had been latent during the wars and revolutions of the two intervening centuries. This is not to say, however, that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had seen no polar expeditions. A perusal of Jeanette Mirsky's 'Chronology of Northern Exploration' (Mirsky, 1970, pp. 324-328) reveals several British expeditions to the region from 1497 onwards; ceasing, as noted in my Introduction, for the duration of the English Civil War and its ensuing years of unrest, to resume in 1707 under the relatively calmer reign of Queen Anne. From then on, the eighteenth century saw at least one expedition in each of its decades, but the impact of these and previous such forays on the general population was negligible compared to that of their nineteenth century successors.

Acerbi's impressive two-volume, brown leather-bound voyage narrative, with the royal crest embossed on both front and back, was published by Joseph Mawmon of London in 1802. First appearing in English rather than his native Italian, the narrative is illustrated, as the title page states, with "seventeen elegant engravings" (Acerbi, 1802 i), some of which, in the copy held at the British Library, are signed by 'J.Smith, sculptr'. It is likely that this is the same John Thomas Smith (1766-1833), also known as 'Antiquity Smith', who, as a successful engraver and painter was mentor to the artist John Constable (1776-1837) and became keeper

of the prints at the British Museum in 1816 (Graves, 2013). Lapinkäviját, the website of Lapland's eight leading cultural institutions, however, ascribes the book's illustrations to "the original drawings of A. F. Skjöldebrand [variously engraved by] A. F. Skjöldebrand [himself] …J. F. Martin … M. R. Heland …[and] C. Akrel" (Lapinkäviját, 2015).

While the book's artistic attribution is, therefore, open to question, it is plausible that through its illustrations and the words of Acerbi, knowledge of polar exploration became more widely available and interest began to grow. As the Lapinkäviját website affirms:

> [t]he publication was meant to be a sensation so it attracted great attention already at the time of its publication. For later generations Acerbi has stayed in history as the first foreigner who made it all the way from Tornio to the North Cape by land and wrote a journal of his travels. (Lapinkäviját, 2015)

For Acerbi, the venture was part of his education as a young European gentleman for whom "[f]ashion, which extends its influence over every thing, appears, in our day, to favour travels and expeditions to the North" (Acerbi, 1802 i, p. x). Referring to the reverberations across Europe of the previous decade's revolution in France, Acerbi ascribes this 'fashion' partly to "the political troubles in the South of Europe" (Acerbi, 1802 i, p. x) and nevertheless acknowledges that he found:

> much gratification in contrasting the wild grandeur and simplicity of the North, with the luxuriance, the smiling aspect, and the refinements of [Europe] … exchang[ing] for a time, the beauties of both nature and art, for the novelty, the sublimity, and the rude magnificence of the northern climes … [which do] not by any means hold out the same luxuries, the same allurements of climate, and the same temptation to pleasure presented by a more genial and inviting soil. (Acerbi, 1802 i, pp. vii-x)

He therefore concludes that:

> [j]ourneys in the North will be undertaken by those only who have a just and masculine taste for nature, under every aspect, and are actuated by a desire of enlarging their own information, and of instructing others. (Acerbi, 1802 i, p. x)

This inclination to associate the Arctic with justice, masculinity and honourable intentions was to intensify in the middle years of the nineteenth century as representations of the region moved along the circular trajectory for which this

thesis argues, and as Victorians came to regard the Arctic as the spiritually inspiring and pseudo-sacred space that later chapters will explore.

For Acerbi, every stage of his expedition uncovered new wonders to be reported, and, alongside references to Norse folklore, music and poetry, his narrative provides vivid descriptions of the scenery, people and climate conditions that he met as he travelled towards, and ultimately reached, the edge of the Arctic circle. Early in his journey, as far south as Stockholm, he notes that, in this city of islands:

> [t]he same water which divides the inhabitants of the different quarters in the summer unites them in winter [as it] becomes a plain which is traversed by every body. …[including] horses in sledges, phaetons, and in vehicles of all sorts placed on skates … (Acerbi, 1802 i, p. 39)

Later he describes the “ice, transparent as crystal” beneath his feet, emphasising the translucency and fragility of the terrain, as he crosses the rivers of Finland, and informs the reader that “until you have reached Palljoveniö, you cannot be said to geographically to have set foot in Lapland.” (Acerbi, 1802 ii, p. 29). Once arrived in that territory, a traveller who:

> desires to see a country different from any that he has ever seen, and contemplate the manners of a people unlike, in every particular, to all the inhabitants of Europe, … must proceed northwards [from Asele], and leave behind him the great towns, and all notions of a civilized state of society. (Acerbi, 1802 ii, p. 29)

Noting that “[a] Norwegian mile is about eight English miles.” (Acerbi, 1802 ii, p. 77fn) Acerbi observes that:

> wandering Laplanders inhabit during winter the mountainous tracts, and move from place to place with their tents, and herds of rein-deer; … [h]orses have they none: all journeys are performed on foot or in boats in summer, and during winter, in sledges drawn by rein-deer (Acerbi, 1802 ii, pp. 77-78)

His astonishment and awe at reaching his destination is tangible as he declares that “[h]ere every thing is solitary, every thing is steril [sic], every thing sad and despondent.” (Acerbi, 1802 ii, p. 110) and observes:

> [t]he northern sun, creeping at midnight at the distance of five diameters along the horizon, and the immeasurable ocean in apparent contact with the skies, form the grand outlines in the sublime picture presented to the astonished spectator. (Acerbi, 1802 ii, p. 111)

As the suitably 'astonished' Acerbi completed his sojourn into this 'solitary … steril [sic] … [and] sad' region, a ten-year-old William Scoresby in Whitby, on the north-east coast of England, was embarking upon his first Arctic voyage, aboard the whaling ship commanded by his father, also called William Scoresby, as was his father before him. Beginning thus a career of commercial, navigational and scientific interest in the Arctic seas and ice, young Scoresby was to become one of the most influential voices of the whaling industry and, later, following a significant career change, Vicar of the West Yorkshire town of Bradford. While Acerbi was an aesthete, representing the beauty and wonder of the Arctic, and MacKenzie was an explorer representing its potential intercontinental trade routes, Scoresby took an academic and scientific approach to representing the region's previously unknown geological and mineral qualities. A paper that he submitted to Edinburgh's Wernerian Natural History Society, which led its field in Scotland from 1808 to 1858, for example, "was .. important as being the first detailed scientific description of polar ice" (Stamp & Stamp, 2002, p. 52). A second paper, submitted in 1817, documented his discoveries of "the little-known Jan Mayen island … which [Scoresby wrote] had rarely been visited of late years, and never scientifically examined" (Stamp & Stamp, 2002, p. 63).

As an advisor to the Admiralty, Scoresby could have ensured them a much more efficient and effective programme of exploration, and possibly spared many lives, but his views that "the discovery of a north-west passage could be of no service" (Scoresby, 1820, p. 21) because "it would be [open] at intervals only of years … and then, perhaps, for not longer than eight to ten weeks in a season" (Scoresby, 1820, p. 21) did not chime with those of Sir John Barrow. So, although the Admiralty initially consulted him in regard to their Arctic ambitions, Scoresby suffered an acrimonious rebuttal at Barrow's hands and concluded his Arctic career with the publication in 1820 of *An Account of the Arctic Regions* (Scoresby, 1820); the two volumes of which are considered by some to constitute "one of the most remarkable books in the English language" (Stamp & Stamp, 2002, p. 77).

Through his writing and literary friendships with, for example, the daughters of another Yorkshire Vicar, Patrick Brontë, Scoresby was to inspire Elizabeth Gaskell to spend a holiday in his hometown of Whitby, on which she then based

her 1863 novel *Sylvia's Lovers*, as discussed in Chapter Three. At ten years old in 1799, however, and as he established himself as commander of his own whaling vessel in 1815, all this was far ahead of him.

The Arctic in Fiction – 1818

Twenty years after Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere*, and across the globe in the Arctic of Scoresby, MacKenzie and Acerbi, James Hogg's title character in his novella *The Surpassing Adventures of Allan Gordon* was adopting a polar bear cub, with whom he was to become improbably intimate as she grew to be "a treasure sent to [him] by heaven" (Hogg, 1818, p. 27) and "the whole of his world's inheritance" (Hogg, 1818, p. 28) as well as "the preserver of [his] life and the supporter of it" (Hogg, 1818, p. 33). The sole survivor of a whaling vessel shipwrecked on an Arctic iceberg, Gordon nurtures and tames the young bear after inadvertently slaying her mother. His mastery over the polar bear, the esteem afforded him by the small Inuit community to which he eventually appends himself, and his desire to sire and "raise up a stock of fine hardy highlanders" (Hogg, 1818, p. 35) among them personifies, as Sarah Moss identifies, "the physical and epistemological threat posed by the Arctic … [to which] Allan's relationship with [the bear] encodes a response" (Moss, 2007). Thus, Hogg's novella serves as an analogy for western man's taming and conquest of the Arctic regions, and, as such, its timing is highly prescient. Published in 1818, it reflects admirably the desires of Barrow and his colleagues to expand British exploration into the Arctic and discover those aforementioned elusive goals of a Northwest Passage and the North Pole. Prophetically, Hogg has Gordon declare that:

> I have often thought that the North pole would never be discovered or that the discoverer would never return with the tidings (Hogg, 1818, p. 7).

Mary Shelley conveys similar doubts in her novel *Frankenstein*, published just a few weeks after Hogg's tale of Allan Gordon. Shelley has Captain Walton, whose letters to his sister frame the novel, unable to rid his mind of the image of the Arctic "as the region of beauty and delight." (Shelley, 1992, p. 13), as suggested by Acerbi's narrative, despite his own observations of the "frost and desolation"

(Shelley, 1992, p. 13) indicated by Coleridge's poem. He eventually concedes, as prophetically as Gordon, that "[t]he cold is excessive, and many of my unfortunate comrades have already found a grave amidst this scene of desolation" (Shelley, 1992, p. 206). Real space has, naturally and irrevocably, subsumed imagined space, in the fictional context of the novel, just as it did in the vast open Arctic spaces encountered by explorers. The American explorer Dr Elisha Kent Kane expressed similar emotions when he wrote in 1856 that:

> time and experience have chastened me. There is every thing about me to check enthusiasm and moderate hope. I am here in forced inaction, a broken-down man, oppressed by cares, with many dangers before me, and still under the shadow of a hard wearing winter, which has crushed two of my best associates (Kane, 2007, p. 17)

Kane was writing, as later chapters will show, in an era that chose largely to ignore such warnings as Shelley's Walton and Coleridge's 'polar ancient' felt compelled to impart to others regarding the dangers of those uncharted seas into which "[w]e were the first that ever burst" (Coleridge, 1991, p. 14): 'we', so often of course, meaning western 'civilised' man rather than mankind as a whole.

As one writes to his sister and the other dictates his story to an old schoolmaster, the fictional characters of Walton and Gordon weave their narratives in tandem with the debates in other, non-fictional media, concerning the real expeditions being proposed and prepared by Barrow. Thus, Hogg perpetuates the myth of man's ability to overcome and control every aspect of his environment, while Shelley challenges and condemns such assumptions, thereby identifying a move from eighteenth to nineteenth century representations and perceptions of the Arctic: a move that would see the region evolve into an alluring archipelago ripe for exploration, adventure and the honing of strong 'masculine' character; and a move which would be reversed between 1859 and 1909, as later chapters will reveal.

British Arctic Aspirations

In 1801, the newly formed United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, avidly asserting its presence on the world stage, had been engaged in naval battles with its European neighbours that culminated in its victories at both Trafalgar and

Waterloo, in 1805 and 1815 respectively. A resultant surge in national pride and renewed support for what had been an ailing monarchy gave rise to:

> [the] moment that the mythology of Merrie England, of the sceptred isle, was born, complete with especially passionate revivals of the appropriate Shakespeare histories (Schama, 2002, p. 110)

Ignoring the devastation of the Tudors' religious battles with which it was synonymous, this 'Merrie England', was equated nostalgically to the purportedly halcyon days before the civil and royal upheavals of the seventeenth century and the accession of the House of Hanover to the British throne; a supposedly simpler time of peace and prosperity. Viewed in this light:

> *[a]nything* historical found an enthusiastic following, a market, … [becoming] a way to discover Britishness [as] [t]he romance of Britain had begun as radical geography and had come of age as a patriotic history (Schama, 2002, p. 110 original emphasis)

In such an atmosphere, and with the aforementioned surplus of naval officers no longer required to serve in battles and campaigns of war, Britain's Admiralty sought fresh ways of exercising and maintaining its recently acquired dominance of the seas.

From 1804, the most powerful position at the Admiralty, that of Second Secretary, was held, as previously stated, by Sir John Barrow, a man with an immense fascination with all things Arctic. Eager to fully exercise his curiosity in that direction, he ensured that, as the situation became favourable, he steered the attention of his colleagues at the Admiralty, and of the government and the public, skilfully northwards.

Barrow was, unfortunately, however "a man whose lifelong Arctic passion stood in inverse ratio to his first-hand knowledge of the subject." (Potter, 2007, p. 38). With an arrogant and officious manner, as his dealings with Scoresby among others demonstrate, he drove forward his programme of exploration with ardent determination throughout his tenure at the Admiralty. He believed there to be a warm, open sea surrounding the North Pole, within the barriers of icebergs through which his ships fought to pass. This was, he claimed, "[t]he opinion of the learned, and the experience of the whale-fishers, [who] have long been in favour of an open polar sea" (Barrow, 1818 i, p. 365). He was equally convinced of the

existence of a navigable Northwest Passage through the ice between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, yet his knowledge and ambitions regarding the Arctic were based not on personal experience but on his study of maps and books and his unwavering desire to “fill those blanks” (Fleming, 1999, p. 9) that he found therein. His ships therefore carried the latest scientific equipment and well-trained officers capable of using it to survey, record and analyse the region from both cartographical and geological aspects. Fergus Fleming therefore concludes that although he did much harm with his missions, he also did much good because although:

> [e]very single one of [his] goals proved worthless in the finding … he had filled so many gaps on the globe, had instigated so many dramatic events, … had stretched the known world to limits that would not be surpassed for half a century … [and] inspired many others (Fleming, 1999, pp. 422-423).

His goals were threefold. Put simply, they comprised the discovery of a Northwest Passage, the discovery of the North Pole, and confirmation of his belief that the Pole was surrounded by a calm sea of warm water that might also offer an entry into lands internal to the globe – a concept rooted in Greek mythology and Norse legend and also espoused in 1818 by John Cleves Symmes’s “hollow earth theory” (Wilbur, 2007), as will be discussed below and in later chapters. Not one of Barrow’s goals was achieved in his lifetime, and it was later proved that his much vaunted “Open Polar Sea, …, was not only not worth finding but not even there to be found” (Fleming, 1999, p. 423).

In his pursuit of these goals, however, Barrow had, as Fleming suggests, enabled many expeditions to explore and chart the Arctic regions, filling in the huge gaps that had previously existed in the many maps he liked to spend his time poring over both at his Admiralty office and his home. In the process, he had provided many young naval officers with the opportunity for adventure and fame, and he had directly and indirectly supplied a wealth of material to journalists, publishers, engravers, artists, and others with which to entertain and inform a burgeoning and seemingly voraciously literate public. He had, therefore, not only stretched the boundaries of the physical and geographical ‘known world’, but also of the known worlds of literature, art and popular culture.

In 1818, Barrow published the resplendently titled:

> *A Chronological History of Voyages Into the Arctic Regions: Undertaken Chiefly for the Purpose of Discovering a North-east, North-west, Or Polar Passage Between the Atlantic and Pacific: from the Earliest Periods of Scandinavian Navigation, to the Departure of the Recent Expeditions, Under the Order of Captains Ross and Buchan* (Barrow, 1818 i).

In this 379-page volume, with its 48 pages of Appendices, Barrow chronicled the long history of European engagement with the Arctic in what proved to be a successful attempt to validate his proposed programme of exploration. In an author's preface dated 1st August 1818, Barrow confirms that his book sought to "serve as a proper introduction to the narratives of the present voyages" (Barrow, 1818 i); those 'present voyages' being the ones he had instigated that year under the command of Captains John Ross and David Buchan. Ross's expedition was to end in ignominy for its commanding officer, and Buchan's in a similarly disappointing manner. Both men terminated their voyages against the advice of their subordinate officers, John Franklin and William Edward Parry respectively, and to Barrow's eternal fury. Ross turned back because he thought he saw a mountain range blocking his route through Lancaster Sound. He named them the Croker Mountains in honour of the First Secretary of the Admiralty, Sir John Wilson Croker, but, unfortunately for Ross, they later proved to be nothing more than an hallucination, probably caused by a combination of fatigue and atmospheric conditions. Buchan, meanwhile, was deterred by the heavy storms he encountered off the coast of Greenland.

Barrow's book, nevertheless, concluded with a section headed 'The Discoveries of Ross, Buchan, Parry and Franklin' (Barrow, 1818 i, pp. 364-379), and this "most inexplicable statement" (Ross, 1819, p. 2) is challenged by an incredulous Ross in an open letter that he published anonymously in 1819, enquiring:

> in what possible manner the discoveries of these officers could have been written previously to their return home, and before it was known *whether any discoveries really had been made,* or what had been the issue of their efforts? (Ross, 1819, p. 2 original emphasis)

Ross proceeds to call out Barrow's "vaunting self-conceit, … cunning … unmanly remarks … false premises and fallacious conclusions" (Ross, 1819, pp. 4-6) and

accuses him of exceeding the remit of his office as "Secretaries [should be] *transmitting*, not presuming *to give* orders" (Ross, 1819, p. 16 original emphasis). Ross was naturally antagonised by Barrow's merciless response to his failure to traverse a Northwest passage, but his letter goes beyond the sphere of personal acrimony as he cites other cases in which Barrow has undermined and refuted "the arguments of an old and distinguished officer, *who has actually been to the place of which he treats*" (Ross, 1819, p. 4 original emphasis). So, Ross highlights the tensions between the Admiralty, in the form of John Barrow, and the officers and men who carried out its orders, and he continues his attack against the:

> empiric … [who] contrive[s] to write Discoveries, *not yet made*, in order to persuade the world, that of all expeditions, that of which [he] had the direction was the best, and the most efficient, that human wisdom ever yet planned" and heaps "imputation upon the Navy (Ross, 1819, p. 5 original emphasis)

Signing himself, in capitals, "A FRIEND OF THE NAVY" (Ross, 1819, p. 16), Ross paints a picture of Barrow as an egotistic autocrat imposing his will on a navy that consequently feels it is blamed for faults and failures that are more fairly due to "those who directed these undertakings" (Ross, 1819, p. 15).

That Barrow promoted the expeditions exponentially with little regard for truth or his own culpability is clear too from the many articles he contributed to the popular Tory periodical the *Quarterly Review*, owned and published by his friend John Murray and edited by his senior colleague at the Admiralty, First Secretary John Wilson Croker. Adriana Craciun argues, therefore, that:

> [t]he exclusively naval and scientific tenor of most modern accounts of Arctic expeditions is due in part to John Barrow's self-serving presentation of them as such in the *Quarterly Review* (Craciun, 2016, p. 85)

One such 'self-serving presentation' was published anonymously in the magazine's October 1817 edition but is commonly attributed to Barrow because of the language it uses and the information it reveals, much of which only he would have known at the time of publication: this includes, for example, the appointments of officers, the double pay to be made available to "[a]ll the men to be employed on this bold and hazardous enterprize [sic] … [and the] fresh provisions [of] wine, spirits, medicine, and warm clothing" (Barrow, 1817, p. 220).

This article argues convincingly and emotively, during its preparation stages, for the Arctic expedition to which Ross's letter refers, and it "was one of eighteen pieces on Arctic voyaging that he wrote for the *Quarterly* between 1816 and 1840" (Johns-Putra, 2015, p. 5). It begins, as its title affirms, as a review of the recently published:

> *Narrative of a Voyage to Hudson's Bay, in His Majesty's Ship Rosamund, containing some Account of the North-eastern Coast of America and the Tribes inhabiting that remote Region*, by Lieut. Chappell, R.N., (Barrow, 1817, p. 199)

However, Barrow quickly dismisses that work as containing "literally nothing worth communicating to the public at large" (Barrow, 1817, p. 199) and continues his article as "a puff piece for the first of [his Arctic] expeditions" (Johns-Putra, 2015, p. 5). Hence, each subsequent page is headed with the different, and more accurate, title *On the Polar Ice and Northern Passage into the Pacific*.

Asserting that "[t]he arctic regions are at this moment, from many circumstances, so peculiarly interesting" (Barrow, 1817, p. 199), Barrow comments on the "unusual quantities of … ice observed in the Atlantic" (Barrow, 1817, p. 200) in 1817, and "the disappearance of an immense quantity of arctic ice" (Barrow, 1817, p. 202), providing evidence from a range of informants, such as:

> Olaf Ocken, master of the *Eleanora* of Hamburhg [sic] … Greenland fishermen, on their return in August 1817 … [and] five different masters of whalers belonging to Aberdeen and London … [as well as] the direct testimony of Mr. [William] Scoresby the younger, a very intelligent navigator of the Greenland seas … (Barrow, 1817, pp. 201-202)

Scoresby, then, was by 1817 a recognised authority on the Arctic, credited by Barrow with expert knowledge despite their disagreements. Barrow, on the other hand, had only once, and very briefly, visited the region, when he "tried his hand at sailing with a whaling ship as a teenager" (Johns-Putra, 2015, p. 6), in approximately 1780. Nevertheless, Barrow excites his readers' imaginations with speculation and propositions regarding three issues raised by this evidence of the arctic ice shifting southwards. Firstly, he contemplates the possible implications for the future climate of the UK, suggesting that summers will get cooler as the wind passes over fields of ice on its way across the ocean. Secondly, he considers the possibility of reaching coasts of Greenland that an

encircling barrier of ice had rendered inaccessible for over four hundred years, and discovering the fate of the lost Scandinavian communities who had settled there in the tenth century and were known to have thrived until at least the fifteenth century. Thirdly, he turns his attention to the real purpose of his article; the opportunities offered by the receding ice for the successful navigation of "a direct passage over the pole, and the more circuitous one along the coast of America, into the Pacific" (Barrow, 1817, p. 204). Each of these three propositions is reflected in the poet Eleanor Porden's reference to a "revolution in the Polar Seas" (Porden, 1818, p. 5), giving added poignancy to her manuscript in the midst of what is generally known as 'The Age of Revolutions', circa 1774-1849.

Porden's 'revolution' also, of course, reflects the circulatory nature of Arctic representation proposed by this thesis; the wheel of public opinion, and therefore the way the Arctic was represented, was beginning to turn in favour of the region.

Expounding enthusiastically on his pet project, Barrow lays out his plans for, and expectations of, the Ross and Buchan expeditions then preparing to set sail and, in a blatantly emotive attempt to enlist public support, extols not the scientific and geographic objectives of the expedition but the virtues and:

> character of the several officers who have been appointed … [with] the strongest presumption that whatever talent, intrepidity, and perseverance can accomplish will be effected (Barrow, 1817, p. 220).

Regretting that conflicting legislation, without which "the problem of a north-west passage and the approach to the pole would have been solved long ago" (Barrow, 1817, p. 223), has deterred whaling ships from venturing further north, Barrow stirs the pot of patriotism and national pride as he adds that:

> [it] would be somewhat mortifying, if a [foreign] naval power … should complete a discovery in the nineteenth century, which was so happily commenced by Englishmen in the sixteenth; and another Vespucius run away with the honours due to a Columbus (Barrow, 1817, pp. 219-220)

Relating here the 'discovery' of an Arctic trade route to that of the American continent – commonly credited to Christopher Columbus but named for his rival Amerigo Vespucius – in the sixteenth-century, Barrow again forges a link in the public's imagination between their own times and the perceived greatness of the

Elizabethan age. This appeal to the historical narrative, conflating contemporary campaigns with those of a former 'Golden Age' of exploration and national supremacy, was effective in changing opinions of the Arctic among his peers and among the public. Therefore, in publishing his *Chronological History*, Barrow was both responding to and promoting increasing public interest in his operations; an increasing interest that he acknowledges he had a large part in developing. Writing in another article for the *Quarterly Review*, he affirms that:

> the subject of the Arctic regions ha[s] become one of the fashionable topics of the day, (which we may fairly take to ourselves the credit of introducing) (Barrow, 1818 ii, p. 208)

Reviewing in this article Bernard O'Reilly's 1818 publication *Greenland, the adjacent Seas, and North-West Passage to the Pacific Ocean; illustrated in a Voyage to Davis's Strait during the Summer of 1817,* Barrow methodically destroys the credibility of Ship's Surgeon Bernard O'Reilly as both writer and explorer and criticises the "folly which pervades every page … [of his] worthless volume" (Barrow, 1818 ii, pp. 209-214). This arrogant, dogmatic rejection of any reports not conducive to his own visions of the Arctic was a feature of Barrow's personality and management style, as these two reviews from the *Quarterly Review* evidence as much as his relationships with the officers he engaged. His anger with Ross on account of the Croker Mountains debacle, for instance, was sufficient to ensure that "Ross was never again employed actively by the Royal Navy" (Fleming, 1999, p. 61). This explains, in part, the wrathful nature of Ross's letter, as previously quoted, but also provided him with a certain freedom denied to other expedition leaders, as will be shown later in this chapter.

The *Quarterly Review* was regularly published late, so the October 1817 edition did not reach its audience until February 1818, making claims that the article Barrow contributed to that edition influenced Mary Shelley's writing of *Frankenstein* unsustainable. It did, however, influence Eleanor Porden, whose poem *The Arctic Expeditions* ably captured the public mood of optimism and heroic venture that Barrow sought to create.

Porden states in her introduction that:

> [t]he doubtful fate of the Colony believed to have been once established on the Eastern Coast of Greenland, and the possibility of a passage to the Pole, are subjects on which for some time my mind has dwelt with peculiar interest; this feeling was once again excited when I heard of the revolution in the Polar Seas, which made it probable that one might be reached, and the fate of the other ascertained. (Porden, 1818, p. 5)

Signing this with the date “March 31, 1818”, Porden explicitly connects the thoughts it expresses to Barrow’s “delightful article in the last Quarterly Review” (Porden, 1818, p. 6) and a visit she has made to Deptford to see the ships that Ross and Buchan were to command being prepared for service in the Arctic. Inspired by both Barrow’s quasi-factual report and the sight of the ships, Porden sets forth her passionate support for the expeditions as she salutes and encourages the explorers, imploring them in finest imperialist fashion to “… go fearless forth, … [g]ive to mankind the inhospitable zone, [a]nd / Britain’s trident plant in seas unknown” (Porden, 1818, p. 10).

Like *Frankenstein*, the poem evokes an Arctic that is both a beautiful sanctuary, with its “[v]ast piles of ice, now bright with heavenly blue, / [n]ow tinged by setting suns with flamy hue” (Porden, 1818, p. 12), but is also hostile and contemptuous as its “[d]ense fogs, fast floating on the frozen tide, / [v]eil the clear stars that yet might be your guide” (Porden, 1818, p. 16). Yet, unlike Shelley’s dire prophecies of death, Porden’s tone is at once pleading, optimistic and naively fanatical as she enlists both science and religion in the service of preserving “you, aspiring Youths! heroic band” (Porden, 1818, p. 8), you “[c]onquerors of the deep” (Porden, 1818, p. 18), and “undaunted heroes” (Porden, 1818, p. 22), and anticipates on their return:

> The heart-felt welcome to your native land,
> The dear embrace, the gratulating hand,
> When joyful thousands throng the white-cliff’d shore,
> To greet as brothers men unseen before: (Porden, 1818, p. 21)

Porden’s reference to a ‘white-cliff’d shore’, as found along the south coast of England, is curious as ships returning from the Arctic usually docked in London or a more northerly port. On the other hand, her implication that men returning from service in the Arctic will be greeted as ‘brothers’ by complete strangers is

striking, and it makes it difficult not to draw an analogy with the young women who encouraged the youths of 1914 to enlist for war, and presented white feathers to those who declined. Like them, Porden perceives only glory and triumph and does not contemplate failure or loss of life. She envisages instead the expansion of the British empire and scientific advancement as the "aspiring Youths! heroic band leave, by science led, [their] native land" (Porden, 1818, p. 8), and she anticipates opportunities to further her own knowledge at the expense of the young men she so ardently cheers on their way.

Conversely, in *Frankenstein*, subtitled *The Modern Prometheus*, Mary Shelley contemplates the dangers that such scientific advancement might bring and the devastating mental and physical effects that its pursuit could have on those most closely involved in its attainment.

Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus

In a review now accredited to John Croker[8] - who is presumably the same John Croker who was Barrow's superior at the Admiralty - the May 1818 edition of the *Quarterly Review* condemned Shelley's novel, which was then unattributed, as "a tissue of horrible and disgusting absurdity" (*Quarterly Review*, 1818, p. 382). This review, of course, reflects the periodical's links to John Murray, who had previously refused to publish the novel and with whom, as already discussed, Barrow had formed such a close publishing alliance. Porden's hopeful, positive tones were naturally fairer to the ears of the Admiralty and their supporters in the Tory press than Shelley's ominous reservations, and other reviews of *Frankenstein* were more positive. The eminent Scottish novelist, Sir Walter Scott, for example, writing in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* of March 1818, concluded that "the work impresses us with a high idea of the author's original genius and happy power of expression" (Scott, 2012, p. 231), thus confirming his own high opinion of Shelley's work. Similarly, an anonymous reviewer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of April 1818 declared that "[t]his tale … is evidently the

[8] The review is reproduced with this attribution in (Shelley, 2012, pp. 215-219)

production of no ordinary writer …[as] many parts of it are strikingly good, and the description of the scenery is excellent" (Anon, 2012, p. 237).

Like many novels of the Romantic era, as Gary Kelly observes, a central theme of *Frankenstein* "is a Romantic irony of excessive selfhood thwarted by social conventions, oppressive institutions, or cosmic indifference" (Kelly, 2013, p. 200). In the life and career of Victor Frankenstein, and also in the progress of his creation as it ventures across continents seeking knowledge, acceptance and companionship, these three 'thwart[ing]' elements all play their part, and Walton's letter to his sister rings alarm bells for the reader within the first sentence of the novel, with the words:

> [y]ou will rejoice to hear that no disaster has accompanied the commencement of an enterprise which you have regarded with such evil forebodings" (Shelley, 1992, p. 7)

What 'evil forebodings' his sister had harboured are not made explicit, but the implication is that Walton is embarked on a mission fraught with danger that might well lead to 'disaster', as it eventually does. Walton's sister, then, represents the misgivings and apprehensions of many people in the face of renewed Arctic exploits, and Shelley's fears for those same explorers that Porden is lauding are as palpable in Walton's opening words as those of his sister.

Shelley and Porden, both young women when their work was published, shared the advantages of a wide-ranging liberal and scientific education denied to the majority of their female peers. Each had an intelligent awareness and understanding of contemporary scientific research, as Shelley evidences through Victor Frankenstein's enquiries and experiments in "those branches of natural philosophy which relate to physiology" (Shelley, 1992, p. 31). Porden appends her poem with an informed and erudite explanation of contemporary knowledge of the magnetic poles, electricity and the functioning of the earth's meridians, and concludes by predicting that with further studies of the Aurora Borealis, and experiments in the Arctic, "a connection between magnetism and electricity … might easily be [proved]" (Porden, 1818, pp. 29-30).

Myth versus Science

In contrast to this appreciation of scientific advancement among educated young British women, an American army officer, lecturer and trader by the name of John Cleves Symmes chose 1818 to address the world with his own theory regarding the polar regions. Writing in his local journal, the *Cincinnati Literary Gazette* of 10 April 1818, Symmes stated:

> TO ALL THE WORLD!
> I declare the earth is hollow, and habitable within; containing a number of solid concentric spheres, one within the other, and that it is open at the poles 12 or 16 degrees; I pledge my life in support of this truth, and am ready to explore the hollow, if the world will support and aid me in the undertaking. (Wilbur, 2007)

Inside the earth, once he had entered it via the aperture at the pole, Symmes expected to discover a “warm and rich land, stocked with thrifty vegetables and animals if not men” (Wilbur, 2007). His expectations and assertions were not, however, supported by the evidence of Nevil Maskelyne, whose experiments on the Scottish Mount Schehallien had proved, more than thirty years earlier, that the earth was solid. In papers written for the Royal Society in 1773 and 1775, Maskelyne concluded that:

> the great density of the internal parts of the earth, is totally contrary to the hypothesis of some naturalists, who suppose the earth to be only a great hollow shell of matter; supporting itself from the property of an arch, with an immense vacuity in the midst of it. (Maskelyne, 1775)

In direct contravention of Maskelyne’s discoveries, however, Symmes’s proposals echoed and enhanced themes prevalent in the folklore of Norse communities and the mythology of the ancient Greeks. This latter civilisation, as Kathryn Schulz reports, knew the Arctic region as “Hyperborea: the region beyond the kingdom of Boreas, god of the north wind” (Schulz, 2017) and believed that:

> [s]omewhere above his frozen domain, … lay a land of peace and plenty, home to fertile soils, warm breezes, and the oldest, wisest, gentlest race on earth. (Schulz, 2017)

Referring to this race as Hyperboreans, the Greek poet Pindar (circa 518 – 438 BCE) muses that “disease has no place among that holy people, nor ruinous old

age, but they live without toil or battle, avoiding Nemesis' severe judgement" (Pindar, 2007, p. 82).

Despite the attractiveness of such a vision, and perhaps because of Maskelyne's more recent conclusions as well as a general mistrust of anything that sounds too good to be true, Symmes's call in 1818 for people to accompany him on a polar expedition in search of this utopian inner-earth and its peaceful and pious populace was answered by a fraction of the one-hundred people he desired. The plan was therefore abandoned, yet, just as Barrow stuck relentlessly to his beliefs in the natural superiority of character and ability of his officers to overcome all obstacles in pursuit of his goals, so Symmes and his followers continued to expound the theory of an open polar sea and a hollow earth as late as the 1870s. Indeed, taking inspiration from its roots in Norse folklore, the idea persisted in William Morris's epic poem *The Earthly Paradise* (Morris, 1870), published in 1870 and discussed further in Chapter Four, while a Bradford Grammar School science master, writing in 1873 with the intention of helping colleagues to prepare students for University entrance exams, identified the Arctic Ocean as "ice bound, but probably open sea round the Pole" (Bird, 1873, p. 28). Such theories were only finally disproved to the satisfaction of all by Symmes's fellow American, Robert Peary, who claimed to have reached the north pole on 6 April 1909 and was, as Chapter Five discusses, until quite recently widely acknowledged to be the first person to have done so.

There is clear evidence, then, in contemporaneous literature of the Arctic acquiring renewed widespread attention at the beginning of the nineteenth century: *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere* was the foremost work in the era's best-selling volume of Romantic poetry, the Coleridge and Wordsworth collaboration *Lyrical Ballads;* Acerbi's narrative was widely read, and, in February 1818, just as Barrow's most stirring articles were being published in the *Quarterly Review*, James Hogg published *The Surpassing Adventures* of *Allan Gordon* and Mary Shelley published *Frankenstein*; a few months later, Barrow himself published his *Chronological History of Arctic Exploration*, and Eleanor Porden

published *The Arctic Expeditions* while, in the US, John Cleves Symmes decreed the glories of life inside the globe; in 1820 William Scoresby's *An Account of the Arctic Regions* appeared in print and the voyage narratives of naval officers engaged in Arctic service began to appear.

If Coleridge had rekindled fears and demons in the public's imaginings of the polar regions, Scoresby, Hogg and Symmes had rekindled thoughts of adventure, exploration and discovery.

If Porden had spurred on the adventurers, Shelley had cautioned them.

If these authors had between them reawakened public excitement and patronage for polar exploration, Barrow encouraged and exploited it.

Visual Representations of the Arctic

In the world of art too, the Arctic was being rediscovered and re-explored, although some early responses to Barrow's ambitions took on a satirical tone such as that evidenced by George Cruikshank's 1819 caricature *Landing the Treasures, or Results of the Polar Expedition!!!* This hand-coloured etching, now in the possession of the British Museum, was produced in response to reports of the disappointing results of Sir John Ross's expedition in 1818 and his infamous error of judgement in Lancaster Sound. Although the expedition had failed in its primary objectives, it had succeeded in collecting myriad souvenirs of the Arctic, all of which Cruickshank's satirical sketch imagines being carried ashore in London by members of the crew, led in column formation by Ross. As the curator's notes on the British Museum's website assert:

> The event portrayed by Cruikshank was recorded in 'The Times', 8 December 1818, p.2 column 4: "Yesterday morning, the curiosities, &c., brought from Baffins-bay, by Captain Ross, were landed at Whitehall-stairs, from the boats of the *Isabella* and *Alexander* discovery ships. ... Among the curiosities was an amazingly large skin of white bear, about 7 feet in length: a sledge of bone, about 5 feet long and 2 high, with the whip, &c. used by the newly-discovered inhabitants; specimens of mineralogy and botany, and some very remarkable star-fish. The whole of the productions were conveyed to the British Museum, for the inspection of the public." (British Museum, 2019)

In complete contrast to the reception that Eleanor Porden's poem *The Arctic Expeditions* had foreseen for such a homecoming, Cruikshank portrays Ross pompously goose-stepping from ship to museum at the head of a long procession of sailors, each one carrying one of the spoils of their voyage. Among the items thus transported are all those listed above by *The Times* as well as a stump of "Esquimaux wood", containers of "red snow" and "Moluscæ", all clearly labelled by Cruikshank, and a tattered Union Jack flag. Husky dogs are dragged reluctantly from the ship and greeted with snarls and growls by an English pug. Similarly, speech bubbles divulge the jeers of the assembled crowd of spectators as they observe the passing parade, jumping up and down and throwing their hats in the air. A baby astride its parent's shoulders waves its arms, and in the foreground, a taciturn gentleman in a broad-brimmed hat and carrying a walking-cane supposes that there are enough goods in the country already "without going to the north-pole for them" (Cruickshank, 1819). A black fiddler – commonly identified as the London busker Billy Waters (1778-1823) – with a wooden leg, greets Ross at the door of the museum while a strangely under-dressed character, who looks as if he would be more at home in a caricature of Captain James Cook's fatal encounter with Hawaiian natives in 1779, carries a tall staff and a document portfolio as he strides along at the rear of the procession. Every one of the sailors, apart, peculiarly, from the two of non-European ethnicity, has lost his nose to frostbite but while most wear a triangular black patch to cover the resulting wound, Ross pretentiously wears a large false nose resembling the beak of a raven, and also reminiscent of the masks worn by fourteenth-century plague doctors – thus enhancing the ridicule implicit in the caricature by allying him to primitive practices of quackery. Several of the men portrayed are also missing fingers, hands, or legs, presumably also due to frostbite, but they strut purposefully behind their leader in defiance of the spectators' taunting comments.

Cruikshank's satirical etching was mirrored in literature by "the anonymous *Munchausen at the Pole* (1819) which parodies John Ross's 1818 expedition" (Hansson, 2018, p. 48) in similar vein. The satirical magazine *Punch* was to do the same with similar expeditions ninety years later, as Chapter Five discusses, but this is in contrast to the esteem in which such expeditions and explorers were

to be held for the major part of the nineteenth century. In general, as each expedition sailed or returned, interest continued to grow, and Barrow played no small part in ensuring that it did.

It was his strong instincts for publicity and marketing that had led him into partnership with the London publishing house of John Murray, which was thereby "[d]esignated in 1813 as the 'Official Bookseller to the Admiralty and Board of Longitude'" (Craciun, 2016, p. 29). Together they published lengthy and detailed Narratives based on entries in the diaries and journals that all naval officers were contractually obliged to submit to the Admiralty on their return to British shores. Such Narratives appeared first in expensive quarto versions, costing upwards of "£3 13s 6d" (Cavell, 2013, p. 52) – or three pounds, thirteen shillings and sixpence – at a time when, according to a table appended to the final pages of Arthur Bowley's analysis of the subject, average wages in Agriculture, for example, ranged between nine and ten shillings per week (Bowley, 1900, pp. 144-145). Extracts from these quarto volumes were, necessarily for the continuation of Barrow's project, reproduced in newspapers for readers unable to afford the originals. Soon, however, the narratives themselves were reproduced in cheaper formats, such as "smaller octavo and duodecimo editions" (Craciun, 2016, p. 112), for a wider audience. As Janice Cavell has demonstrated, however, the demand of readers for ever cheaper and more accessible versions of such texts led to other publishing houses entering what had been Murray's preserve until by "the 1850s all but one of the Franklin search narratives were published by other houses, most notably by Longman" (Cavell, 2013, p. 68).

The compulsion for naval officers to submit any and all written documents from their voyages to the Admiralty remained in place throughout the century, nonetheless, and this raises questions regarding the authenticity, accuracy and integrity of not only the resultant published narratives but also of the original documents thus tendered. Chapter Five will show, for example, that a Captain's account of his men's health could diverge greatly from the information provided to him by his surgeon, and similar disparities are evident in the preserved letters of F. Leopold McClintock, held at the Scott Polar Institute and discussed in Chapter Three. It is clear, therefore, and possibly rather obvious, that knowing

that the Admiralty would be examining and editing the texts affected what officers wrote, thus casting doubt on all their observations apart from the starkly factual, scientific and geographical data they were reporting. Such accounts, written for one purpose but pressed into service for another, in a very different context, play a significant role in the changing representations of the Arctic and the way the region was consequently perceived by the public.

John Franklin's *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the years 1819-22,* published in 1823, for example, proved how powerful such publications could be, and demonstrated the value of Barrow's approach to representing the Arctic expeditions in this way. Franklin had returned from his voyage an emaciated shadow of his former self, having lost eleven of his twenty men to starvation, cannibalism and murder. Despite this, his narrative told a tale of resolute spirit, courage and perseverance in the face of extreme adversity; a tale of how British 'pluck' and character could overcome anything that nature threw at it and how a man could survive by sucking on the leather of his boots. Thus, as Sarah Moss affirms, although the expedition was "from all points of view … catastrophic … Franklin's account of heroic survival was an instant best-seller which made a hero of its author" (Moss, 2006 i, p. 15) and earned him a place in the nation's hearts as 'the man who ate his boots'. This epithet, in its representation of survival in Arctic climes, had cultural resonance as late as 1925, when Charlie Chaplin's character appeared on screen cooking and eating his boots as the snow surrounded his isolated Klondike shack in *The Gold Rush* (IMDb, 2020) – the film that was playing in the faux-Victorian cinema at the Museum of British Columbia when I visited in November 2019. Although directly inspired by a Californian tragedy in 1846 – ironically the year that Franklin might himself have been driven again to these extremes – Chaplin's boot-eating scene nevertheless evokes memories of Franklin's earlier Arctic exploits.

Paintings, Sketches and Engravings

One man who shared and survived that first Franklin expedition in 1819-22 was George Back (1796-1878), after whom the Back River was afterwards named.

He served as one of two midshipmen appointed by Barrow as “draughtsmen and artists” (Fleming, 1999, p. 127), making him one of only a few artists who sketched and painted the Arctic who were also serving officers in the Royal Navy. In all, Back, who was later knighted for his exemplary service, completed five expeditions to the Arctic and North America, and his sketches and watercolours were based entirely, and unusually, on his own observations. They include, for example, *Setting out on Point Lake – June 25 – 1821* (Houston, 1994, pp. 227-274, Fig.5), which Edward Finden engraved as *Expedition Passing through Point Lake on the Ice June 25, 1821* (Houston, 1994, pp. 227-274, Fig.6) and *Midnight Scene in Moore’s Bay* (Houston, 1994, pp. 227-274, Fig.19) on which ‘B. Audinet, engr.’ based his lengthily entitled engraving *Moore’s Bay, Polar Sea: lat.67°.48N. long 110°.36W. with the Expedition under Capt*ⁿ*. Franklin R.N. 29*ᵗʰ *July 1821 (Midnight View)* (Houston, 1994, pp. 227-274, Fig.20).

Back records this landing in his journal, in an entry dated 29 July 1821, stating:

> … we did not lose any time in crossing a deep bay (Moores Bay) at the opposite side of which there appeared an open channel as far as the eye could distinguish. At midnight we landed to repair the canoes – and to give some refreshment to the men. It consisted of some musk ox flesh and portable soup, whose united powers kept them in the most active state of alarm imaginable. (Back, 1994, p. 152)

It is easy to imagine Back, kept awake by the ‘active state’ of his men, sitting on the shore, sketching the scene before him in the early hours of an Arctic morning. As Ian McLaren observes, “Back was evidently possessed not only of the talent to describe a scene colourfully but also of an intriguing emotional range” (MacLaren, 1994, p. 279)

In the Moores Bay example, Back’s dramatic wash of grey-blue clouds fading to white above a distant red and yellow sunburst on the horizon are lost in Audinet’s blank monochrome-grey sky with its distant burst of snow-white cloud, as are the Arctic terns, swooping low above the heads of the sailors in Back’s painting but absent in Audinet’s engraving. The shapes and sizes of the ice-floes, rocks and men are reproduced with some degree of accuracy, however, unlike those in Edward Finden’s engraving based on another of Back’s paintings, *Landing near Point Evritt* (Houston, 1994, pp. 227-274, Fig.15). The scene portrayed in these

pieces is clearly the same, but in his engraving, entitled *Expedition landing in a Storm* (Houston, 1994, pp. 227-274, Fig.16), Finden has added extra storm clouds, reduced the number of people, and made those remaining more robust; all are on their feet, climbing the rocks, whereas in Back's painting they are stumbling ashore under the weight of their heavy loads. Was Finden deliberately adapting Back's images to falsely represent and underplay the hardships of life in the Arctic, or was his purpose more aesthetic? It is likely that he was fulfilling editorial and public expectations to represent the men as stronger and more resilient than could actually have been the case. Just as diaries, journals and personal accounts of a voyage were manipulated by the Admiralty and its publishers to create a narrative that the public wanted to read and would respond positively to, and just as a young poet's "feeling[s] … [were] excited" (Porden, 1818) into verse by quasi-factual reports and the sight of ships undergoing refurbishment, so artists and engravers manipulated their images to please that ever more discerning and demanding audience, the general public.

There was a lot at stake in so doing. Continued support from Government and private subscribers depended on the continued popularity of their expeditions with the public. Through increasing and oft-repeated representations in art, literature and light entertainment, the Arctic had become commercially as well as geographically and scientifically important to the UK. Thus, the circular trajectory of Arctic representation was unfolding as the style and tone of such representations became more optimistic.

Edward Finden and his brother William, working from their London studio with the assistance of numerous apprentices, were responsible for converting many of Back's paintings and sketches into engravings. Edward in particular supervised the production of plates to illustrate newspapers such as the *Times* and the *Illustrated London News*, and also larger publications such as John Franklin's *Narrative of a Second Expedition to the Polar Shores of The Polar Sea in the years 1825, 1826 and 1827, including an account of a detachment to the eastward* (Franklin, 1828), which is illustrated with engravings signed 'E. Finden' and based on the sketches and watercolours of George Back.

Not all artists favoured Back's representations, however, as they sought to portray not just the topography but the emotional and atmospheric aspects of the Arctic. With his 1824 masterpiece, *Das Eismeer* – or *The Sea of Ice* – for example, German artist Casper David Friedrich challenged the general enthusiasm and swelling public support for Arctic exploration with a painting that suggested "exploration of this region was nothing short of suicide" (Høvik, 2013, p. 87).

Inspired by William Edward Parry's expedition of 1819-1820, Friedrich's painting, which is sometimes known by the alternative titles of *The Polar Sea* and, more ominously, *The Wreck of (the) Hope*, depicts the Arctic as an expanse of smooth, sharp, angular shards of ice and rock, resembling to modern eyes a fallen city of skyscrapers sinking into the icy plains beneath them or a "an explosion of immense blades" (Wilson, 2009, p. 260). The stern and mast of a wrecked ship are visible to the centre-right of the painting, caught by the ice, which is packed around and above it and "crushed like paper" (Wilson, 2009, p. 260) in its grasp. The painting's alternative title might suggest that this scene is depicting the stern and mast of an HMS *Hope*, but an online search of naval records reveals that not one of the sixteen ships of that name owned by the Royal Navy since the sixteenth century was lost in polar seas. The naming of 'Hope' thus, assumes more chilling associations with human emotions, endeavour and ultimate defeat. The ship's mast follows the same diagonal as the sinking icebergs against which it leans, pointing heavenward into a clear blue Arctic sky whither, the viewer is led to speculate, have fled the souls of its crewmen. Thus, "[t]he bold attempt by man to burst the bounds of his allotted sphere ends in death" (Kren & Marx, 1996); a theme that would recur in art forty years later in the work of Edwin Landseer, as Chapter Three discusses.

Unlike most nineteenth century painters of Arctic landscapes, Friedrich "sought … spirituality through the contemplation of nature" (Artble, 2019) and accordingly represented the Arctic region's "lunar eeriness – as mysteriously attractive as it is harshly annihilating" (Wilson, 2009, p. 260) in a manner reminiscent of Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere.*

Like Coleridge, Friedrich never visited the Arctic regions so he painted his "otherworldly … haunted … ghostly" (Wilson, 2009, p. 260) polar vision solely from an imagination influenced by a deep-rooted fear and mistrust of ice that began with the loss of a brother, who died saving him from drowning after a fall through the ice on a lake at the age of 13. Friedrich is likely to have perceived in the icy regions of the Arctic a magnified version of that frozen lake, and himself, or perhaps his brother, as the helpless ship – signifying hope – sinking beneath its crust. Like Frankenstein's creation, Friedrich envisaged the Arctic explorers "borne away by the waves and lost in darkness and distance" (Shelley, 1992, p. 161) as his brother had been borne away from him. Here again is evidenced the Arctic's ability to resonate with people's deepest emotions, irrespective of any physical connection to the region. Here is also evidenced the starkly contrasting ways in which the Artic could infiltrate people's lives. For some it was an entertainment to be visited on a day out or brought back to the safety of a drawing room fireside, as will be discussed in later chapters, but for others it was a terrifying reminder of past traumas and loss.

Panoramas and similar shows

As readers and art critics discussed the ethical, psychological and moral implications of *Frankenstein*, *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere* and *Das Eismeer*, popular culture too reflected the public's growing fascination with Arctic exploration and in 1819 the first Arctic Panorama attracted visitors to London's Leicester Square. This was Henry Aston Barker's *Description of a View of the North Coast of Spitzbergen … Painted from Drawings Taken by Lieut. Beechey, who Accompanied the Polar Expedition.* Beechey's narrative account of his 1818-19 expedition aboard HMS *Dorothea* with Buchan was not published until much later, in 1843, but making his sketches available to Barker enabled that entrepreneur of public entertainment to create a panoramic Arctic experience that "from the start … drew astonished crowds … mostly of the middling classes but including everyone from artisans to archdukes" (Potter, 2007, p. 41). Such a broad appeal clearly evidences the popularity of Barrow's programme of

exploration, and the wide-ranging public support it enjoyed. That Beechey was permitted, by the Admiralty, to share his sketches in this way indicates that institution's complicity in promoting Arctic exploration by this means.

The panorama was a relatively new invention, the concept having been patented by Barker in 1787 and the name "coined in the late eighteenth century from two Greek roots, *pan* [all] and *horama* [view]" (Oettermann, 1997, p. 6 original brackets and emphasis). Creating a panorama show took an average of "about a year from the start of the preparatory stages to the finished product" (Oettermann, 1997, p. 57) as initial research was followed by the procurement of sketches, which were then transferred to the canvas with appropriate enlargement, or scaling-up, of details before painting could commence. Once completed:

> [a]s a rule the exhibition lasted for one season or perhaps a year … [before] it was dismantled and … like today's successful musicals … sent to tour the provinces (Oettermann, 1997, p. 57)

For a nineteenth century audience, therefore, the Arctic was a transient and transportable concept, accessible yet remote, and represented in a form constructed to deliberately evade the reality it purported to portray. The panorama transported its viewers not to *the* Arctic but to *an* Arctic created and presented to reflect the preconceptions and expectations of their own imaginations as much – if not more than – the observations of explorers. By employing an artistic technique known as trompe l'oiel – literally, 'deceiving the eye'– whereby the viewer is tricked into perceiving a painted detail as a 3D object, and "surround[ing] observers [to] envelop them completely, so as to exclude any glimpse of their real whereabouts" (Oettermann, 1997, p. 49) the panoramas "removed all impediments to verisimilitude in order to make the spectator feel part of the scene itself" (Waters, 2008, p. 72). To further promote verisimilitude, London museum owner and goldsmith William Bullock extended the scope – and the ethics – of the genre by introducing into his 1822 exhibition a living family of Lapps – "father, mother and children" (Oettermann, 1997, p. 129) – along with "several live reindeer" (Oettermann, 1997, p. 129) to keep them company. Oettermann is quoting here from a German encyclopaedia as he describes the differing summer and winter living accommodation provided within the panorama for this

unfortunate band of human and animal exhibits in Bullock's "hugely successful" (Oettermann, 1997, p. 129) display of *The North Cape with a Family of Lapps* at his newly erected Egyptian Hall, in London's Piccadilly. Again, as it did for Walton in *Frankenstein's* Arctic scenes, reality subsumes imagination, and the boundaries between the real and the unreal elide as the Lapp family and their animals fuse into the fiction that is the panoramic landscape. This representation of the Arctic as a transportable entity – and of its people and wildlife as similarly portable objects – demonstrates another shift in the circular nature of Arctic representation in the nineteenth century: a public formerly averse to, and far removed from, the region now had it implanted in their capital city.

Following Bullock's success in drawing the crowds, Samuel Hadlock's 1824 live-human exhibition *Esquimaux*, also displayed initially at London's Egyptian Hall, "was only moderately successful in Britain, but was widely praised on the Continent" (Potter, 2007, p. 212), where it toured for several years thereafter. Such success was emulated, usually without the need for living exhibits, by other panoramas at various intervals throughout the nineteenth century and while most were housed in buildings designed and constructed for the purpose, like Bullock's Egyptian Hall, others toured the provinces in much the same way as many West End shows do today. One such was *Messrs Marshall's Peristrephic Panorama of the Sublime Scenery of the Frozen Regions, with Eight Views of Captains Parry, Ross, Franklin, and Buchan's Voyages of Discovery in the Polar Regions*, which was presented in Edinburgh and Glasgow in 1821 before embarking on a tour of Scotland and England. Last exhibited in 1833, Marshall's polar panorama proved a popular attraction in all the venues it visited, with the *Bristol Mercury* of 16 June 1823 encouraging its readers to go and see it because, as John Plunkett quotes:

> if they neglect it under the impression that it is merely a show, they will lose the gratification of seeing a representation of one of the most sublime and awful scenes in nature; a source of equal instruction and amusement. (Plunkett, 2013, p. 18)

The concept of a panorama being 'merely a show' suggests a snobbish reluctance among some elements of society to embrace the artistic merit of the form. This is countermanded here, however, by the assurance that the 'representation' will 'instruct' as well as 'amuse'. This implies a fear among

readers that their time might be wasted in visiting such exhibitions, and a concomitant desire for their leisure to afford them some educational benefit. The *Bristol Mercury's* reference to the 'sublime and awful' nature of the display is, moreover, reminiscent of Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancyent Marinere* and Shelley's *Frankenstein,* lending weight to the argument that readers would find more to intrigue them than a 'mere show' should they take the trouble to attend.

If Messrs Marshall's panorama itself had a long, overly-descriptive name, a thirty-three-page accompanying booklet published by Leith in 1821, and "printed by William Heriot, Quality Street" (Anon., 1821) carries an even more elaborate and illuminating title, demonstrating how images from quite different voyages could be conflated in the name of education and entertainment:

> *Description of Messrs Marshall's grand peristrephic panorama of the Polar regions: which displays the north coast of Spitzbergen, Baffin's Bay, Arctic Highlands, &c., now exhibiting in the large new circular wooden building, George's Square, Glasgow; painted from drawings taken by Lieut. Beechey who accompanied the Polar Expedition in 1818; and Messrs. Ross and Saccheuse, who accompanied the expedition to discover a North-West passage* (Anon., 1821)

Priced at sixpence, or half a shilling (or 2.5 pence in today's decimal currency), this booklet was evidently aimed at those of above average earnings and presented its reader with a detailed account of the images to be seen in the panorama. The copy digitised for the Internet Archive, interestingly, has the words '*large new circular wooden building, George's Square, Glasgow*' crossed out and replaced, in handwritten ink, with the words "Exchange Room, Nottingham" (Anon., 1821), thus demonstrating the panorama's tour of the country and the recycling of resources along its route. The drawings of Lieutenant Beechey and 'Messrs Ross and Saccheuse' were, by means of this booklet, represented in words as well as in the panoramic painting. In this way, promoters not only increased their profits but also provided those who could afford it with an informative souvenir with which to extend their enjoyment and understanding of their experience.

Encountering the 'other'

Coeval with these early panoramas were private expeditions to East Greenland, led by William Scoresby and Sabine Clavering, aimed at discovering the fate of the Scandinavian colonials with whom all contact had been lost five hundred years earlier, as referenced in Barrow's influential article of 1817/18 and Porden's subsequent poem.

Settled in Greenland in the tenth century, this Christian community's:

> intercourse … [with] the rest of the world, was intercepted about the year 1406 when the seventeenth bishop attempted to reach his see, but was prevented by ice (Scoresby, 1820, p. 66).

Decreasing levels of ice in the early nineteenth century, however, made the Greenland coast accessible once more and people were curious to discover their fate: had they somehow survived, or had they been:

> destroyed by their enemies the Esquimaux, … or perished for want of their usual supplies, or [been] carried off by a destructive pestilence (Scoresby, 1820, p. 66)?

Although interest in these communities was built on kinship and concern, attitudes to the native inhabitants of the Arctic – the Inuit communities generally referred to by Victorians as Esquimaux – was less philanthropic, as Scoresby's text shows. This is also evidenced by the aforementioned exhibitions featuring live Inuit as their centrepiece, emphasising the perceived 'savagery' of coloured races in contrast to the supposedly superior 'civilisation' of their white counterparts.

Such 'othering' of non-Europeans as an inferior race was based on theories of 'degenerationism'[9], and 'developmentalism'[10], each of which shared a presumption of the superiority of white, 'civilised' people of European origin. Høvik cites Encyclopaedia Britannica entries from both 1823 and 1855 to support her argument that:

[9] 'degenerationism' proposed that contemporary Europeans represented humankind in its original condition, from which others had "deteriorated into various degrees of 'savagery'" (Høvik, 2013, p. 55)
[10] 'developmentalism' proposed that contemporary Europeans had progressed – ie: developed – from "an original 'savage' condition to a 'civilised' one" (Høvik, 2013, p. 55)

> … whether humankind was comprised of one or several species … was very much an open question … [and] it was only in the decades following Darwin's publication of *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 that a clear evolutionary human history and diversity would be established (Høvik, 2013, p. 61)

Thus, in the mid-1820s Hadlock had no hesitation in 'replacing' any Inuit who died during his tour with "Roma and others of the right 'kuller' [sic]" (Potter, 2007, p. 212), and his audience were presumably none the wiser.

Encounters with Inuit in the Arctic were recorded in the voyage narratives that Barrow and Murray published from the diary and journal entries of naval officers. Often these reflected the attitudes exemplified by those thronging to see the exhibitions provided by the likes of Bullock and Hadlock. Writing in 1835, however, Captain Sir John Ross sought to reconcile his experiences of the generosity, gentleness and honesty of the Esquimaux whom he encountered during his four winters stranded in the Arctic between 1829-33 with the prevailing nineteenth century understanding of all non-European races as 'savages'. He resolved his dilemma by labelling them "virtuous savages" (Ross, 1835, pp. 18, quoted in Høvik 2013), thus simultaneously acknowledging and denying their humanity and setting up an archetype similar to that of the 'noble-savage' constructed fifty years earlier, a concept often attributed to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and a concept which Dickens would strongly contest in 1853, as Chapter Two will explain. Rousseau's allusion, if it was his, was to the uncivilised nature of many supposedly civilised societies, because "ideal society was to be found among the 'noble savages' of the New World, while modern society … was corrupt and decadent" (Høvik, 2013, pp. 55-56).

As W. Gillies Ross records in his 1985 commentary, subtitled *Narratives of the Davis Straits Whale Fishery*, whaling ships too engaged with native populations and in 1839, William Penny, captain of the *Neptune,* gave passage to an Inuit youth named Eenoolooapik, who shared the British curiosity about foreign lands and wished to see the homeland of the white men who so regularly visited his shores. During his stay in Aberdeen, as Sophie Gilmartin affirms, this ambitious and daring young Inuit with a talent for mimicry was employed for a while in the

home of Captain Penny, whose wife, Margaret, would later accompany her husband to the Arctic, becoming in the 1857-58 whaling season the first woman to over-winter in the region (Gilmartin, 2020).

Ross's book includes a lengthy extract from the journals of Alexander McDonald (often also written M'Donald), who later perished on the Franklin expedition but was formerly the ship's surgeon for Eenoolooapik's return journey aboard the *Bon Accord* in the spring of 1840. Writing in that year, but reflecting on events of the previous October, McDonald notes that "the arrival of an Eskimo in Aberdeen produced a considerable sensation among all classes of the inhabitants" (Ross, 1985, p. 117) and postulates that the "uncultivated manners of savage existence" (Ross, 1985, p. 116) inevitably enthral people because

> when a real "son of the desert" is brought amongst us, we naturally feel a strong desire to witness the workings of his untutored reason, and the development and display of energies which have slumbered till the moment he is ushered into the midst of civilization (Ross, 1985, p. 116)

According to McDonald, Eenoolooapik's 'energies' enabled him to emulate the ways and manners of his companions, thus demonstrating his own 'strong desire' to be accepted by those among whom he had chosen to travel – for, unlike many of the indigenous people brought to Europe to be exhibited for the entertainment of the public, Eenoolooapik travelled of his own volition, having begged his family for several years for permission to sail with the British whaling fleet. He was "about twenty years of age" (Ross, 1985, p. 112) when he made the voyage, and suffered much ill-health, ascribed by McDonald to "the insalubrious influences of our moist, inconstant atmosphere" (Ross, 1985, p. 123).

Received as a civic guest in Aberdeen, however, Eenoolooapik mixed with all levels of society, attending dinner parties, taking countryside tours, studying "elementary branches of education" (Ross, 1985, p. 119) and visiting local gentry, as well as demonstrating his canoeing skills on the River Dee. Thus, he returned to the Arctic with many tales to tell of his experiences among the strange white men, as well as a collection of goods that he felt might be useful to him in his homeland, some of which were procured with the aid of a donation from:

> The Lords of the Treasury [who] placed twenty pounds at the disposal of [his] friends in Aberdeen, for the purpose of procuring whatever might be considered necessary to establish him in his native country in more comfortable circumstances than he had formerly enjoyed (Ross, 1985, p. 123).

Such largesse on the part of the government suggests that Eenoolooapik had proved to be a popular figure among the upper echelons of society and had endeared himself to them by his efforts to become educated in, and conform to, their western customs and behaviours.

Eenoolooapik, then, fared better than his compatriots exhibited in earlier years, such as those mentioned above who were brought to Europe by another, less scrupulous, or perhaps, in Russell Potter's opinion, more "enterprising" (Potter, 2007, p. 65), whaling captain, Samuel Hadlock. Many such captives were struck down with disease or criticised for being "taciturn; occasionally subject to great depression" (Ross, 1985, p. 110) as if that was their natural condition rather than a reaction to their discomfort and exploitation so far from home. Similar errors in understanding and interpreting behaviour and facial expression occurred in relation to the animals displayed in Victorian zoological gardens, as Chapter Three will discuss in relation to artworks of the era.

In 1824-25, as Hadlock's show toured Europe and Parry's third expedition returned to the UK, Franklin set sail on his second Arctic voyage, as recorded in the aforementioned *Narrative* that he, with Murray and Barrow, published in 1828 (Franklin, 1828), and which, as already mentioned, was illustrated with engravings by Edward Finden, taken from the sketches and watercolours of George Back.

Some of these illustrations have a very pastoral effect, as if either Back or Finden was trying to represent the Arctic as akin to a view of the English countryside; softening the impact of the landscape to appeal to a UK audience. In *The Mountain in Bear Lake River,* between pages 48 and 49, for example, a small rowing boat peopled by five top-hatted sailors glides the still waters of the treelined lake, behind which a billowing, swirling icescape gives the impression of gently rolling hills beneath the clear, white sky. In *Vale of the Clearwater River From the Methye Portage,* between pages 4 and 5, too, the impression is of a

leafy valley where trees and wildlife abound and the men carrying their canoe to the water's edge could equally well be doing so on the banks of the Thames or the Cam as on those of an Arctic river. This implication of a cultivated Arctic, compliant with the aesthetic penchants of the English elite, bears comparison with Hogg's suggestion that a polar bear can be tamed and trained to obey man's commands, and with the attempts of Penny and others to domesticate and educate young Inuit, such as Eenoolooapik, into the ways of western men.

Others of Back's images do, however, demonstrate harsher climes, while two folding maps attached inside the back cover, and measuring 50cm x 62cm and 40cm x 48cm respectively when unfolded, provide visual context for the locations discussed and portrayed. The first of these depicts the:

> Route of the Land Arctic Expedition under the Command of Captn. J. Franklin R.N. from Great Slave Lake to Great Bear Lake River, Surveyed and Drawn by Mr. E. N. Kendall, Assistant Surveyor. The Astronomical Observations by Captn. Franklin, A.D. 1825 (Franklin, 1828),

while the second includes diagrams "Shewing [sic] the Discoveries made by British Officers in the Arctic Regions from the year 1818 - 1826". These maps represented for the first readers of this narrative the most complete and up-to-date view of the Arctic Archipelago. Through such maps – the google-earth of their day – readers could identify more closely with the distances involved and track their heroes' footsteps across the ice.

This second voyage earnt Franklin a knighthood from King George IV, among other honours, and cemented his reputation as a national hero, but his wife, the poet Eleanor Porden of *The Arctic Expeditions* fame, had passed away during his absence, leaving him with a young daughter, also named Eleanor. In 1828, Franklin remarried and thus Jane Griffin, who was to become infamous in her role as Lady Franklin, entered his life. In 1836, they sailed across the globe together as Franklin took up his new position as Governor of Van Diemen's Land; a posting that was to leave his previously exemplary reputation tarnished by political intrigues and a post that, therefore, led directly to his accepting the commission of his third and final Arctic expedition, which is discussed in Chapter Two.

Ross as Explorer and Artist

As the 1820s evolved into the 1830s, John Ross was again in the Arctic but this time on a privately funded mission. Due to his aforementioned disputes with Barrow, the Admiralty had lost faith in him. Nevertheless, on his 1829 to 1833 voyage, Ross was accompanied by his nephew, James Clark Ross, and it was he who, in 1832, was credited with discovering the North Magnetic Pole. A significant advantage of this voyage for John Ross was that he was free from obligations to submit his records of it to the Admiralty. Instead, he was able to make his observations and his artworks immediately available for use by others. So, while the watercolours that he completed on this voyage were never themselves exhibited they were widely reproduced to be re-presented in panoramas, dioramas and magic lantern shows as well as in printed publications.

In London's Vauxhall Gardens in 1834, for example, visitors enjoyed, as the handbills proclaimed, *A Grand Scenic Representation of Captain Ross's Polar Exhibition [sic] to the North Pole* (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 174). Ross had supervised, according to the handbill, every aspect of the development of this show, which covered 60,000 square feet of space in the city's largest and most popular Pleasure Garden and included "immense papier-mâché and canvas icebergs" (Potter, 2007, p. 87) towering to seventy feet or more. As the show proceeded, these 'icebergs' parted to reveal representations of the ships' crews, stranded in three small boats. A fourth boat, described as "belonging to the *Isabella* of Hull" (Potter, 2007, p. 88), a whaling vessel, would next appear to rescue the men, and the show culminated, to again quote the handbill, in "a grand allegorical display complimentary to British Enterprise" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 174). This finale, Lewis-Jones asserts, was "essentially a thunderstorm of fireworks, smoke, flags, and a brass band – from which rose [as the handbill affirms] 'a gigantic image of Captain Ross… in his polar costume'" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 175). The effect must have been quite alarming to an audience more used to the gentler atmosphere of an indoor panorama. It might, also have created an effect as close to that of the Aurora Borealis as most of the audience were likely to experience and thus served to enhance the credibility of the performance. However, as Russell Potter observes, "[s]uch a massive

presentation would seem to have aimed for spectacle over accuracy" (Potter, 2007, p. 88). This again indicates the circular nature of Arctic representation in the nineteenth century, with the public's enthusiasm for ever more varied, sensational, and absurd representations of the region growing in tandem with their enthusiasm for the continuance of Arctic exploration.

Meanwhile, across London, at the Queen's Bazaar near Hyde Park, in the same year, an *Arctic Diorama "with Captain Ross's own drawings, painted by E. Lambert*" (Potter, 2007, p. 213) was the main attraction and "*Miss Reader's Optical Exhibition of Captain Ross's Polar Expedition Touring Magic Lantern Show accompanied by a moving panorama"* (Potter, 2007, p. 213) entertained and informed crowds in a variety of towns and cities across the UK. Similarly, J. B. Laidlaw's touring panorama, *Voyages of Captain Ross* exhibited in Edinburgh in 1834, Dublin in 1835, and Hull in 1836. Thus, Ross's illustrations were acquiring spectacular exposure across the country as similar shows proliferated, and this suggests that his representation of the Arctic, interpreted and developed as it was through the skills and imagination of panorama painters as well as of engravers, had a greater influence on the general public than the representations of any other single artist or explorer. With this in mind, it is probable that Ross's images affected public perceptions of the Arctic to the same extent as Barrow's rhetoric, and in terms of the circular trajectory of representations and perceptions of the region, the impact of these two men is therefore immense.

That Ross retained an interest in the way his artwork was used and reproduced is evident not only in the handbill of the Vauxhall Gardens' display but also in a review that appeared in *The Times* of 14 January 1834 concerning a panorama presented by Robert Burford and his business partner H. C. Selous in their purpose-built Panorama building in London's Leicester Square. Burford and Selous's *Panorama of Boothia* was not only based on Ross's artwork and created under his direction but was also accompanied by a guide "from the pen of Captain Ross himself" (*The Times*, 1834, p.5). Commending the quality and impact of this panorama's painters in representing the scene so effectively, *The Times*

comments that "the three spots where Captain Ross wintered … are all brought within the sight of the spectator" (*The Times*, 1834, p.5) and, echoing the tones of the previously quoted *Bristol Mercury* of eleven years earlier, adds that "those who anticipate that such a subject can produce nothing but a dull and monotonous picture will be most agreeably disappointed" (*The Times*, 1834, p.5).

Thus, *The Times* acknowledges the persistent nature of the Romantic dichotomy between Arctic beauty and Arctic desolation in the public imagination, again progressing the changing nature of Arctic representation along its circular path as it becomes a more familiar and less forbidding landscape - a landscape with which the panorama audience could feel themselves engaged in an almost tangible way, as the story of Mr Booley, discussed in Chapter Two, demonstrates.

The Arctic in Popular Culture

As previously noted, the first panorama to feature an Arctic expedition had appeared in 1819 representing Ross's first voyage into that region. Expeditions led by others had, however, also been represented in the panoramic medium in the meantime. One such display, presented at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, from 26 December 1829 to 2 February 1830, took the form of David Roberts':

> *Moving Diorama of the Polar Expedition: Being a Series of Views Representing the Progress of His Majesty's Ships Hecla and Fury in Their Endeavours to Discover a North-West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean* (Potter, 2007, p. 213)

The *Hecla* and the *Fury* were Parry's ships on the second and third expeditions that he commanded[11] and it is interesting to note that Roberts' title claims the 'endeavour' of discovery for them and not for their captain. This transfer of responsibility to the inanimate tools of Parry's trade indicates the familiarity and affection that the public felt for the ships as much as for the men who served on

[11] Parry's first expedition was as second-in-command to John Ross in 1818-19. He commanded the *Hecla* on all four of his subsequent expeditions; alongside the *Griper* in 1819-20, alongside the *Fury* in 1821-23 and 1824-25, and as a solo vessel in 1827.

them. These vessels of Arctic exploration took on their own personality in the hearts and minds of readers, viewers and commentators.

Further evidencing the Arctic's ubiquitous appeal and familiarity across all levels and ages of nineteenth century society, it also began to infiltrate that bastion of British family life, the Christmas pantomime. On the same day that Roberts' panorama opened, for example, Covent Garden also saw the opening of:

> Charles Farley's *Harlequin and Cock Robin; or, Vulcan and Venus …* [in which a] moving diorama presented the drama of polar exploration in thirteen brightly painted drop screens (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 155).

As Roberts's panorama was occupying the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, the pantomime must have been across the road in the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, where, in 1826, the Arctic had also seeped, via a panorama of Hudson's Bay, into a production of the pantomime *Harlequin and the Eagle* and would, in 1835, feature again, by means of J. H. Grieves's diorama of the *Polar Expedition,* in a pantomime production entitled *Old Mother Hubbard and her Dog*. In the Theatre Royal of the northern city of Kingston-upon-Hull, meanwhile, the pantomime that ran from 1 January 1829 to the middle of March that year was "William Leman Rede's *Harlequin Harpooner; or, The Demon of the North Pole"* (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 157). This focused, as its title suggests, on the local whaling industry and featured a variety of polar images similar to those used in the Vauxhall Gardens' set five years later.

In pantomime, the Arctic presumably served as a topical allusion to enhance the pathos rather than the comedy of the stories being told. It is clear, nonetheless, that promotors, showmen, writers, publishers and editors – indeed anyone seeking to engage with the public – could be as sure as Walton was in writing to his sister of their acquaintance with its symbolism if not its shores.

Poetical Representations

As in popular culture, Arctic images continued to captivate the public imagination through the worlds of art and literature, with the phenomenon of the Northern

Lights, or Aurora Borealis, particularly stirring poetic palettes. In 1825, for example, Felicia Hemans' reference to "the heavens … bright [w]ith the arrowy streams of the northern light" (Hemans, 1825) used the Aurora Borealis to contrast and emphasise the "dimness … [and] dark … [of the] midnight way" (Hemans, 1825) in her epic poem *The Sword of the Tomb: A Northern Legend*. Like Acerbi before her, Hemans was inspired as much by the Norse legends as by the Arctic itself, and this was also true of William Morris, whose Arctic influences are discussed in Chapter Four.

A few years after Hemans' poem appeared, two fellow poets published works inspired purely by those 'arrowy streams' of which she wrote: the first was *The Aurora Borealis* by Glaswegian poet Dugald Moore, who could often have witnessed the aurora from his hometown, and the second, in 1834, was a poem of the same name by American poet and Unitarian minister Stephen Greenleaf Bullfinch.

Moore is reported to have claimed, in indignation at a critic of his art, that:

> [p]oetry is the language of the tempest when it roars through the crashing forest [and] [t]he waves of the ocean tossing their foaming crests under the lash of the hurricane (*Scots Magazine*, 1891)

He proved his point as he saluted the suddenness with which the aurora appears and disappears, addressing its:

> Wild phantoms of the dark, from height to height
> Fresh leaping into being now, and lost –
> Ye look like drunkards dancing through the night
> And reeling o'er the slippery crags of frost, / … [as]
> Shooting like glory up among the stars,
> Ye flash like moonlight on perdition; there … /
> Like Satan stuggling over chaos – well
> That savage region, where death makes his lair, (Moore, c.1830)

Bullfinch, similarly, acknowledges the spectacular nature of the Aurora Borealis as the "splendid vision [that] strikes my eyes, / [i]n glory bursting … / [f]orth from the northern skies" (Bullfinch, 1834) but sees "[t]he majesty of Deity / … manifested there" (Bullfinch, 1834), not as illuminating Satan's 'lair', where "death sits darkly on his throne of frost / [w]aving his icy sceptre" (Moore, c.1830) but as multiple rays of light "[t]o guide the erring steps of youth / [f]rom earth's vain joys,

to Heaven" (Bullfinch, 1834). For both Moore and Bullfinch, there is a feeling of being drawn into the northern lights; a feeling of helplessness and submission to a greater power in the brief presence of such a dazzling display of atmospheric energy; a feeling of awe and wonderment beneath its luminescent power.

Living variously in Washington D.C., South Carolina and Boston, Massachusetts, Bullfinch would have witnessed the phenomenon on its rare appearances along the New England coast, where the first recorded sighting was in December 1719 and the most recent (at the time of writing) in September 2019, when the spectacle was visible as far south as the city of New York.

Another Massachusetts Unitarian minister, Christopher Pearse Cranch, addressed his 1840 poetic offering directly *To the Aurora Borealis,* addressing it as the "Arctic fount of holiest light" (Cranch, 1840) and borrowing Hemans' imagery of its "arrowy course" (Cranch, 1840) to ponder its "wondrous essence … [and] electric phosphorescence" (Cranch, 1840) as he pursues an extended metaphor of flowers blossoming and growing, and reaching for the light, to compare auroral activity to "human fantasy … blossoming in nightly dreams" (Cranch, 1840).

Such colourful, ebullient attempts to capture the effervescent flames of Arctic skies led other poets and authors of literary fiction to pursue Arctic visions as Barrow's dreams of British supremacy in the region reached their climax in the middle decades of the century. However, just three years into the reign of Queen Victoria, and bewitched by her marriage in February of that year to a handsome young German Prince, Britain in 1840 was focused on expanding the empire it had been cautiously establishing since approximately 1750. In this context, the Arctic, as Jen Hill observes, "was as much ideological as physical terrain, one on which Britons could stage debates about domestic and imperial identities, far from British and colonial shores" (Hill, 2008, p. 3). The Arctic, then, had become, by 1840, far more important in the British psyche than it had ever been before. It had become a testing ground for national as well as individual character, and a testing ground in which nations as well as individuals could prove their authority and

power over their own frailties, but more importantly, over those of other peoples and of nature itself.

International Representations

Such views were not entirely confined to Britain. A painting by French artist François-Auguste Biard (1799-1882) sums up the prevailing attitude across the western world of man's superiority over nature. In *Combat contre des ours blancs* – or *Fight with Polar Bears* – Biard depicts two men and a boy fighting off an attack on their small boat by three aggressive adult polar bears, with a fourth lingering menacingly in the background. One of the men has lost his hat, which lies forlornly upside-down on the ice in the right-hand-foreground of the painting. Its owner, his head now protected only by the hood of his coat from both the cold and the indignity of appearing bare-headed in public, dominates the centre of the canvas as he and his fellow human combatants, armed only with a spear and a dagger, prevail in overcoming the ferocity of the bears. The boy thrusts his dagger into the mouth of the foremost bear as it claws at the leg of a recumbent man. The bear draws blood, causing the man to turn his bright blue eyes towards it in a terrified stare, and distracting him from the intimidating jaws of a second bear approaching his right arm. As this man lies temporarily immobilised, the second man, standing, jabs his spear at the eye of the third bear as it grabs the side of the boat in its paws. The ultimate triumph of the human trio in this dramatic episode is ensured by the appearance through the mist of a second small boat from the ice floes in the rear right of the painting. One of this boat's occupants raises his right arm, pointing the way towards the stricken sailors and alerting them to their imminent rescue and victory over the beasts.

The painting was first exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1839 (Oakley, 2017). Completed just before Biard joined an Arctic expedition at Spitzbergen, it represents his perceptions and expectations of the Arctic rather than his experience of it. The manly prowess he portrays was the accepted order of things in western society in the Victorian era and represented the sovereignty and power of man over beast, and of man over the Arctic. Thus, as Jen Hill observes,

"accounts of national masculinity … serve[d] to claim new geographies for national space and to privilege male citizenship in the era of British imperial expansion" (Hill, 2008, p. 31). Such representations of the Arctic as a place where a man could prove not only his own masculinity but that of his country and compatriots were imperative to Victorian Britain's imperial ambitions.

As later chapters will show, representations and perceptions of the Arctic through the lens of man's relationship with the region's native polar bears provide a clear indication of the circular trajectory traversed by all forms of representation and perception in this era.

Chapter Two – 1840 to 1854

In which the Arctic regions become associated with extremes of hope and despair, yet achieve an ironically warm place in the hearts of the British people.

In 1840, in the Antarctic seas of the south-polar regions, Captains James Clark Ross and Francis Crozier were entering the second year of a four-year expedition of discovery aboard the ships *Erebus* and *Terror*. Meanwhile, the ships' future commander, Sir John Franklin, was serving his fourth year as Governor of nearby Van Diemen's Land, later to be renamed Tasmania in honour of its Dutch discoverer, Abel Tasman, rather than his superior officer. As Franklin and his wife entertained the ships' officers at their home in Hobart in August 1840, little did they realise how intertwined their lives, as well as the lives of the two ships, would soon become.

Meanwhile, back in London, this foray into the globe's southern hemisphere did not long distract Barrow from his ambitions toward the north. His eyes were still set chiefly on the Arctic prizes of a Northwest Passage and the clear, open waters that he supposed encircled the North Pole. Privately funded British voyages, as well as those sponsored by American and European interests, continued to sail in that direction and Barrow continued to be concerned that the honour of discovering these prizes would be wrested from his grasp, and that of his nation, by one of them.

In *Winter in the Arctic Regions,* published in 1846, Charles Tomlinson echoed Barrow's concerns about England ceding success in the Arctic to a foreign power, stating that:

> the glory of all these peaceful enterprises belonged peculiarly to England, and it was natural that an anxiety should be felt to complete these discoveries … [though] [t]he commercial value of a North-West Passage, if such could be proved to exist, had long ceased to occupy attention … it was most desirable to put an end to the various doubts and conjectures which, during more than three hundred years, had occupied the public mind. (Tomlinson, 1846, pp. 9-10)

With his final sentence, Tomlinson acknowledges a certain futility in the pursuit, as it satisfies no scientific or commercial goal but merely addresses the curiosity

of the ‘public mind’. His words suggest that England’s collective ‘anxiety’ and ‘desir[e]’, which could equate to an innate stubbornness in the nation’s psyche, were what was driving Arctic exploration rather than any sincere belief in the value of its ultimate objectives.

Changing Perceptions

Other writers and artists too were pragmatic in their appraisal of the region’s attraction, and not least among these was the aforementioned French painter François-Auguste Biard. Following the exhibition of his *Combat de Contre Ours Blanc* in the summer of 1839, as discussed in Chapter One, Biard travelled north, over land with his fiancé, to join the French Admiralty’s *Le Recherche* expedition as it left Spitzbergen, the most northerly point of Norway. Undertaking the challenge of being the expedition’s unofficial artist, Biard gained a much clearer appreciation of the dangers and conditions inherent in sailing the Arctic seas and the paintings of that region that he subsequently exhibited were created not purely from imagination and hearsay but from his own observations and experience, using sketches made during this and one further voyage.

These paintings include, firstly, *Magdalena Bay; View from the Tombeaux Peninsula, to the North of Spitzbergen, Effect of the Aurora Borealis* and, secondly, *View of the Arctic Ocean, Walrus Fishing by Greenlanders*, both completed in 1841. Each of these, in contrast to his 1839 painting, depicts an environment that is supremely hostile to man. In the former, for example, the ghostly glow of a pale aurora lights up a small group of explorers, some apparently already dead and others kneeling despondently on the ice close to the wreckage of their vessel. In the latter named painting, monstrous pillars of “bizarre ice forms” (Oakley, 2017) threaten to devour hunters in kayaks that are dwarfed by the walrus they seek to slay. The immensity of scale thus portrayed is overwhelming, acknowledging not only the frailty and inferiority of man but the magnificence of the natural world.

From this development in Biard’s representation of the Arctic, it is clear how visiting and observing the region first-hand could influence an artist and not only

challenge but completely revolutionise his perception and representation of the region. The contrast is emphasised by a third Biard painting, *Nova Zembla Coast,* also from 1841. In this painting, Biard returns to the theme of polar bears, this time placing them some distance behind a group of men, who shelter behind the upturned hull of a boat outside a shack, smoke emitting from its chimney to suggest a degree of comfort and long-term residence. Guns replace the spears and daggers of Biard's earlier painting, and they are aimed squarely at the bears. The painting divides diagonally from the middle-distance to the right-foreground between the civilisation represented by the men and the savageness of nature represented by the bears. Man is no longer overpowering the bears, or even grappling with them on even terms; he has moved in – literally – on their territory and is keeping them at bay from a distance. As Howard Oakley points out, this painting closely resembles an earlier one, *Overwintering with a Team of Dutch Sailors on the Eastern Coast of Nova Zemlya*, 1839, by the French painter, lithographer and caricaturist Eugene Lepoittevin (1806-1870).

Lepoittevin's explorers, however, are portrayed in bold colours in the left foreground of his painting. Guns in hand, they are ready to fight off any onslaught from the polar bears barely visible across a ravine in the ice as they blend, rampant though they are, into the whiteness of the icy background. The painting is, like Biard's, divided diagonally, but the men are much more prominent than the bears, whereas Biard, with his superior knowledge of Arctic conditions, affords them equal weight. Lepoittevin, who was awarded the honorary title *Peintre de la Marine* by the French government in 1849, was not a traveller. He lived, worked and exhibited mainly in Paris and both his painting and that of Biard were probably "made from a published account of a group of Dutch sailors" (Oakley, 2017) and not entirely from the artists' imaginations and observations. The representation, modification and re-representation exemplified here demonstrate the multiple channels through which views and experiences of the Arctic were filtered, and through which they influenced and inspired public perceptions of the region.

More of the Arctic in Poetry

Although he might not, at the time, have been aware of Biard's 1841 depiction of the Aurora Borealis, David Vedder expands on its portrayal of the phenomenon in his 1842 poem, named simply *The Aurora Borealis*. A native of Orkney and an experienced Captain of Arctic whaling ships, Vedder must have been familiar with the Arctic skies in all their splendour and his poem captures the aurora's vitality and vibrancy as he observes, in imperfect rhyming couplets:

> From palpable obscurity
> Tumultuous streams of glory gushed,
> Ten thousand thousand rainbows rushed
> And revelled through the boundless sky
> In jousting, flashing radiancy.
> Careering around the welkin's brim
> Like bright embattled Seraphim
> Or soaring up to the dome of Night,
> Flooding the Milky-Way with light;
> Or streaming down on the mountain peaks,
> On the muirland wastes, and the heather brakes;
> On lake and river, on tower and tree,
> Showering a sky-born galaxy,
> Like a storm of pearls and diamonds driven,
> Imbued with the gorgeous hues of heaven. (Vedder, 1842)

In imagery reminiscent of Dugald Moore's poem of a decade earlier, the energy and scope of Vedder's description elides the boundaries of earth and heaven as his 'streams of glory' 'rush' and 'revel' and 'flash' as they 'career' from the highest 'dome of Night' to the lowest 'lake and river' with the radiancy of 'pearls and diamonds'. This glorious 'shower' of light comes in an instant, out of nowhere; emerging from nowhere – 'from palpable obscurity' indeed – to illuminate and transform the night sky before his eyes.

For other poets, the Aurora Borealis represented more than the oscillating, scintillating and vibrant flashes of light to be seen in Arctic skies, and in their attempts to represent it, they reveal the breadth of its appropriation in popular culture across the nineteenth century as, whether seen or unseen, it generated creativity and inspired the imagination. Hannah Flagg Gould's 1850 poem *The Aurora Borealis,* for example, addresses the "founts of light … blazing o'er their sphere" (Gould, 1850) creating a celestial city in the Arctic skies, while the English

novelist and poet Dinah Craik, also writing in or around 1850, describes not *the* Aurora Borealis but *An Aurora Borealis* bursting like a giant firework display into a colourful celebration of life that awakens the senses in a metaphor for recovery and rebirth, or "[t]he glad Aurora of the soul" (Craik, 1865, p. 139). In another poem, *The Aurora on the Clyde*, dated September 1850, Craik invests the Arctic with connotations of spirituality and holiness as she represents it as a place akin to heaven, and invites her readers to:

> See now, that radiant bow of pillar'd fires
> Spanning the hills like dawn … / …
> That [is] heaven's gate with its illumined road
> … [to] the very throne of God, …" (Craik, 1865, p. 135)

Such allusions to heavenly glory became more and more prevalent in the mid-century decades and led, in part, to the sensationalism and sentimentality that characterised Arctic representations in the 1860s and 1870s, as later chapters discuss.

Arctic Symbolism

That the Aurora Borealis was familiar to the public imagination is evidenced by its use in the *Illustrated London News* as an analogy for another astronomic spectacle witnessed across Europe and southern England in March 1843. With an illustration "sketched on the spot" (*ILN*, 25 March, 1843, p. 212) at Blackheath, 'The Grand Meteoric Phenomenon – The Comet' is described as being "like one of the vaulting sashes of the northern lights" (*ILN*, 25 March, 1843, p. 212).

With the launch of the *Illustrated London News* in May 1842, news, and its impact on the public, had begun to change. No longer were newspapers confined to reporting and describing artefacts, events and people with words alone; suddenly, sketches – such as that referenced above – or, more commonly, engravings accompanied all the main stories, and this soon became the standard form of presentation as readers came to expect their news reports to be illustrated with images that supported and enhanced their understanding of the text.

When the ill-fated Franklin expedition was being prepared in the spring of 1845, for example, the *Illustrated London News* carried full page accounts of the

refurbishment of its ships *Erebus* and *Terror* at the docks in Woolwich. When the expedition eventually set sail from Greenhithe, just a few miles downstream in the Thames estuary, on 19 May that year, the *Illustrated London News* again carried a full page report of the event, accompanied by engravings of its commander, Sir John Franklin, the two ships being accompanied down the Thames by a flotilla of smaller boats, and interior views of the cabins of both Franklin and one of his sub-ordinate officers, James Fitzjames (*ILN*, 24 May, 1845, p. 328). The head-and-shoulders sketch of Franklin shows him wearing civilian waistcoat, cravat and jacket rather than naval uniform, as, bare-headed, he looks confidently, but a little wistfully, out from beneath his thick, bushy eyebrows, from the centre column in the top third of the page. Either side of him is text concerning the expedition, while beneath him the scene portraying his ships on the Thames fills the page's central third. The bottom third of the page, divided again into three columns, shows the two aforementioned cabins, either side of a column of text. In Franklin's cabin, three rectangular, four-paned, glass windows and a vaulted roof give a sense of light and airy spaciousness that is probably deceiving given the limited amount of space onboard the ship. Fitzjames's cabin appears more cramped: one window, obscured from the reader's eye, sheds its light across a three-drawered desk and a bed that, between them, fill the available space. Bookshelves and a skylight, however, add a homely feel that would doubtless have reassured readers of the *Illustrated London News* at the time of publication, as the expedition was already on its way up the east coast of England.

The article's introductory verse of five rhyming couplets echoes Eleanor Porden's familial terminology of 1818 as it speaks of their homeland shore as "a parent bird" watching them depart (*ILN*, 24 May, 1845, p. 328), and so they sail away as sons to return as "brothers" (Porden, 1818, p. 21). The growth from boyhood to manhood and the embracing of Arctic explorers as part of a vast national family that such metaphors represent demonstrates the emotional links forged in the public's shared imagination by Barrow's endeavours – and as these emotional links grew stronger, so representations of the Arctic moved on around their circular nineteenth century trajectory.

Three years after reporting the departure of Franklin's expedition, the same newspaper would carry news of 'The Expedition in Search of Sir John Franklin'. The images published on 13 May 1848, however, show a more pragmatic attitude to Arctic exploration and concern is expressed for the welfare of the men on both expeditions. Alongside the two ships, the *Enterprise* and the *Investigator*, being sent in search of the missing vessels, are illustrations of the protective clothing and equipment provided to the crew – from 'seal-skin and fur gloves' and 'snow spectacles' to 'ice implements' such as saws, hooks and anchors. The image at the top right of the article, however, is of the "stern of the 'Terror' crushed by ice" (*ILN* 13 May, 1848, p. 318) in an earlier expedition. The inclusion of this image is doubtless meant to imply that a similar fate might have befallen the ship on its latest foray north, preparing the readers of the *Illustrated London News* for bad news. This representation of a possible or perceived, rather than actual, fate is indicative of the sombre but speculative tone of the article it illustrates. It also adds another level of filtering to the public's perception of the Arctic as readers are invited to view past, present and future events through the lens of just one image. The content of the article is, at the same time, informative and reassuring, emphasising the strength and durability of the ships, of both this and the missing Franklin expedition, rather than the strength and character and fortitude of the men, which Barrow had touted and which would become a dominant theme in the impending decade.

Barrow had retired shortly after the departure of Franklin and his crew in 1845, and official enthusiasm for Arctic exploration had consequently suffered an inevitable decline. The Victorian public's interest, however, continued unabated, as demonstrated by their unstinting voracity for new instalments in this serial tale of adventure, such as the abovementioned reports in the *Illustrated London News*, and for the panoramas, dioramas and other such exhibitions that fed their hunger for Arctic scenery, stories and objects. Moreover, the popularity of such entertainments was not confined to the UK. In 1843, for example, dioramic paintings from E. Lambert's 1834 exhibition at London's Queen's Bazaar were exhibited in Boston, Salem and New York in the USA by a "Mr Wright" (Potter,

2007, p. 215), making them “the first panoramic or dioramic shows of an Arctic subject to be seen in America” (Potter, 2007, p. 87).

Mystic, magical, Arctic

The years 1840 to 1854, then, saw the Arctic pervade all aspects of Victorian life as the nation’s drive to lead the world in every conceivable field of human endeavour added fuel to Barrow’s flame, even after he had left it behind. As the 1840s progressed, the air of spirituality, magic and mystery referred to earlier also began to develop around representations of the Arctic regions. Increasingly, the Arctic was represented through the metaphor of a heavenly plain in which glory could be attained and miracles achieved. It was portrayed as a place of redemption, a place for displaying moral and physical courage, and a place where purity and honesty of heart prevailed. As illustrated by the poems of Dinah Craik and the novels and articles still to be discussed in this chapter, this extended into all forms of literature, but it was particularly prevalent in fictional literature aimed at young children.

As Jack Zipes observes, “it was from 1830-1900, during the rise of the middle classes, that the fairy tale came into its own for children” (Zipes, 2009, p. 31), and tales set in the Arctic, such as Hans Christian Andersen’s *The Snow Queen* – first published in 1844 and still popular today in its many reproductions and adaptations – made a substantial contribution to this field. Growing literacy rates and a legion of newly-wealthy, socially aspirational, middle-class parents created a quickly expanding market for children’s literature, and the influence of such stories should not be underestimated for, as Peter Hunt explains:

> what may at first sight seem like trivial or ephemeral texts are in fact immensely powerful. They have been read by millions upon millions of people at the period of their lives when they are most susceptible to new ideas. It is inconceivable that these texts have not shaped society in fundamental and lasting ways. (Hunt, 2009 i, pp. 15-16)

In *The Snow Queen*, as in his many other stories, Andersen “combined humor [sic], Christian sentiments, and fantastic plots to form [a tale] that amused and instructed young and old readers” (Zipes, 2009, p. 31), and he does so in a way

that, contrary to the "male supremacy" (Zipes, 2009, p. 31) advocated in many similar tales, brings female courage and virtue to the fore.

Andersen's young heroine, Gerda, is saved from the icy elements, robbery, and the threat of cannibalism by "her own purity and innocence of heart" (Andersen, 2013, p. 77), by which "men and animals are obliged to serve her" (Andersen, 2013, p. 76). Her quest to save her childhood companion, Kay, from the clutches of the Snow Queen results in their reconciliation when "grown up, yet children at heart" (Andersen, 2013, p. 93) in compliance with biblical exhortations to "become as little children … [or] in no wise enter the kingdom of God" (Andersen, 2013, p. 92)[12]. Andersen's message of Christian redemption is clear, for as Gerda's:

> hot tears, … fell on his breast, and penetrated into his heart, and thawed the lump of ice, and washed away the little piece of glass which had stuck there (Andersen, 2013, p. 86),

so a separate small shard of broken magic mirror with which the Snow Queen had afflicted Kay's eye is washed away by his own tears of joy. With the evil shards removed from both his eye and his heart, Kay is once again able to see and love aright, with the purity of the child that he was before his abduction; before he was 'grown up'. This moral imperative is vital to the popularity and success of this story and the many others in the same genre, because "adult Victorian readers considered the presence of a moral message [in children's stories] a necessity" (Harper, 2004, p. 128). Such a 'necessity' resembles that noted in Chapter One concerning a desire for educational benefits in the popular entertainment market. An analogous need to profess purity, honesty and innocence in tales of exploration was frequently allied to stories set in the Arctic, leading Henry Morley to declare in 1853 that:

> the people at home … connect in their hearts the Arctic Regions with those pure and noble thoughts about humanity that are so thoroughly associated with them (Morley, 1853, p. 242).

This statement could not have been made at the beginning or end of the nineteenth century, when people were more likely to connect the Arctic with thoughts of fear and trepidation, but Morley was writing at the height of public

[12] Referring to the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 18, Verse 16

sentimentality for the Arctic in Dickens's weekly journal *Household Words*, and similarly emotive statements were common in the columns of this and other journals and newspapers. Entitling his leader article to the 12 November 1853 edition of *Household Words* 'Unspotted Snow', Morley emphasises the difference between lives lost amid the bloodshed of battle and those lost through exposure to the extremes of hunger and cold in the Arctic. He claims, for example, that:

> [t]he history of Arctic enterprise is stainless as the Arctic snows, clean to the core as an ice mountain … [as] [t]he only blood shed by our Europeans at the Pole has been the blood of animals, honestly killed to supply a pressing want of fresh provisions." (Morley, 1853, p. 241)

Morley's point was that death in the Arctic was a much slower, more painful, yet somehow 'clean[er]' death than that of the battlefield, and his allusion was not new. In the same journal on 27 April 1850 Richard Horne's dramatic episode 'Arctic Heroes: a fragment of Naval History' had contrasted the experience of men's battles against other men with their battles against nature and considered the blood-shed and immediacy of common warfare versus the slow, lingering, yet unbloodied death of exposure to the Arctic elements.

Horne's characters lament that:

> We have felt the crush of battle side by side,
> Seen our best friends, with victory in their eyes,
> Suddenly smitten down, a mangled heap,
> And thought our own turn might be next; yet never
> Drooped we in spirit, or such horror felt,
> As in the voiceless torture of this place
> Which freezes up the mind.

Thus, they conclude that:

> Death, flying red-eyed from the cannon's mouth,
> Were child's play to confront, compared with this
> Inch by inch famine in the silent frost (Horne, 1850, pp. 108-109)

The men agree that their countrymen will not forget them, and "relief will some day surely come … but perhaps too late." (Horne, 1850, p. 109) – just as many feared, in spite of all hope, that it might by 1850 be 'too late' for the Franklin expedition to be relieved.

Horne's characters emphasise the Christian message at the heart of his piece, and at the heart of much of the literature, art and popular culture associated with the Arctic, as they vow that:

> We to the last, / With firmness, order and considerate care,
> Will act as if our deathbeds were at home …
> So future times shall record bear that we,
> Imprisoned in these frozen horrors, held
> Our sense of duty, both to man and God. (Horne, 1850, p. 109)

The steadfast, honourable and courageous nature of British explorers expressed here was indisputable in Dickens's mind, and in the minds of those whose work he published, and in extoling their virtues so profusely he was surely also considering the numbers of his readers with whom their lives were inextricably linked: the parents, wives, children and friends of the Arctic explorers, patiently waiting for news that may never come; the "people at home" (Morley, 1853, p. 242) of whom Morley wrote in 'Unspotted Snow'.

Franklin's Final Expedition

The Franklin expedition, which Morley, Horne and others were lamenting in the early 1850s, had, as aforesaid, sailed from Greenhithe in Kent on 19 May 1845. It was the final expedition to set forth in that direction at the behest of Sir John Barrow, who retired later that year from his role as Second Secretary of the Admiralty and died three years later, in 1848, at the age of 84.

Franklin had been a controversial choice of commander. He was, at the time the expedition sailed, approaching 59 years of age and was not in the best of health, being undeniably both "portly and sedentary" (Moss, 2006 i, p. 14). However, having returned from his term as Governor of Van Diemen's Land under a cloud of political intrigue, he was determined to reassert his credentials and redeem both himself and his reputation to regain his former status as a national hero. His wife, Jane, Lady Franklin (nee Griffin) shared his ambition and was later to prove

indomitable in her pursuit of what she believed to be due recognition of his achievements[13].

The ships *Erebus* and *Terror* had both undergone significant refurbishment and reinforcement to prepare them for service in the Arctic and their crews had every expectation of accomplishing Barrow's dreams by finally traversing a Northwest Passage. As all such enterprises did on their way to the Arctic, the expedition called at the port of Stromness in Orkney to replenish its stock of provisions and discharge, in this case five, crew members who had proven unsuitable in one way or another to continue the voyage. During this stopover, according to records on display at Stromness museum, Franklin dined one evening, and also stayed overnight, at the home of Marion Hamilton and her husband – a fact which is notable because Marion was the sister of Dr John Rae, the Arctic explorer and Surveyor who would nine years later discover the first remnants of the ill-fated Franklin expedition and – as Chapter Three discusses – be castigated mercilessly by much of Victorian society for his report into his findings. The friendship between the families that is suggested by the Hamiltons' hospitality towards Franklin emphasises how unjust this criticism and ostracism was, as Rae, in rushing his report of 1854 back to the Admiralty was acting honourably, out of amity not animosity.

All that was still to come, however, when, in early July 1845, having taken on fresh water from Login's Well, on the shore road, and weighed anchor in Stromness harbour, Franklin's ships – the same *Erebus* and *Terror* whose crews he had fêted in Hobart five years earlier – encountered some whaling vessels off the coast of Greenland before disappearing for ever into the Arctic seas that lead to the Davis Strait and Baffin Bay. With the crews of these whaling vessels Franklin's men exchanged pleasantries and sent their last letters home. "We are very happy" (Dickens, 1859, p. 320) stated the young Captain James Fitzjames in a letter later published privately by his foster father and quoted extensively in

[13] As I argued in my M.A. Dissertation *Reclaiming the Arctic Hero: How and Why Charles Dickens helped Lady Franklin redeem the reputation of her lost husband, Sir John Franklin*, University of Kent, 2016. See also (Alexander, 2013), (Behrisch Elce (ed), 2009), (McGoogan, 2006), (Franklin, 2014), and (Woodward, 1951)

Dickens's journal, *All the Year Round.* The letter was Fitzjames's final correspondence with his foster family, the Coninghams, in Brighton, and was probably written while sitting at that same three-drawer desk in his cabin that had been depicted in the *Illustrated London News* on 24 May 1845. As Fitzjames declares, he and his fellow voyagers probably were 'very happy' at that point, as they anticipated with excitement the expedition ahead of them on that bright summer's day off the coast of Greenland. Franklin was a popular leader, of whom Fitzjames wrote warmly: "[w]e are very fond of Sir John Franklin, who improves very much as we come to know more of him." (Dickens, 1859, p. 320). It is entirely possible, of course, that in his letter home Fitzjames was merely endeavouring to reassure his foster-family at a time of great, and, as it transpired, justified, apprehension for them on his behalf, and that in fact his words were meant to convey a simple message of positivity and resignation rather than the joy or contentment to which they might more literally translate.

Francis Crozier, who as captain of the *Terror* had enjoyed Franklin's hospitality in Hobart, had retained that ship's captaincy and was now Franklin's second in command on this Arctic expedition. He too was liked, admired and respected by the men who had volunteered to join the voyage. In a lecture delivered on 6 February 1850, the Assistant Secretary to the Royal Society, Charles Richard Weld, quoted from another letter written by James Fitzjames. This letter, dated 1 July 1845, is addressed to Sir John Barrow at the Admiralty and in it Fitzjames asserts: "I like Crozier, he is a most indefatigable man and a good observer; just suited for his position, I should say" (Weld, 1850, p. 29). Fitzjames's somewhat sycophantic style, perhaps borne of youthful enthusiasm but more likely to indicate a desire for optimum preferment on his return from this voyage, is repeated in this letter and in another, also addressed to Barrow but dated 31 May 1845. Now writing about Franklin, Fitzjames declares that he is:

> delightful, active, energetic, and evidently even now persevering … I have a real regard, I may say affection [for him] … and believe this is felt by all of us … [he is] one of the best I know … of all men he is the most fitted for the command of an enterprise requiring sound sense and great perseverance … [and] he is full of benevolence and kindness withal (Weld, 1850, pp. 27-28)

Regarding the crew, Fitzjames's letter of 31 May affirms that "we are all very happy, we have a most agreeable set of men, and I could suggest no change, except that I wish you were with us" (Weld, 1850, p. 27). His desire for Barrow to be onboard the expedition is far-fetched and a little naïve, but his tone is sincere as, in his letter of 1 July, he reiterates his main point, asserting that "[y]ou have no conception how happy we all are" (Weld, 1850, p. 29).

Their happiness must soon have faded, however, for Franklin died on 11 June 1847. He pre-deceased Barrow by about eighteen months, although, as Chapter Three explains, news of his death did not reach England until twelve years later. Meanwhile, Lady Franklin for many years refused to admit that she might in fact be his widow rather than still his wife, and search expeditions such as that featured in the *Illustrated London News* in May 1848 regularly scoured the Arctic throughout the interim years, funded mainly by Lady Franklin or other private individuals, with enthusiastic support from the British public – an enthusiasm maintained by regular allusions to, or representations of, the Arctic in art, literature and popular culture; each in its turn reinforcing the other and creating an interesting circularity of representation integral to the wider circular trajectory of representations and perceptions in the era.

Broadside versions of the still well-known ballad *Lady Franklin's Lament*, for example, can be traced back to 1850 (Waltz & Engle, 2015). Inevitably, over time, different versions of this ballad's lyrics have evolved, but in each the singer melancholically intones words to the effect that:

Ten thousand pounds would I freely give
To know on earth that my Franklin do live.

The reference here to financial rewards offered by Lady Franklin reflects only a small part of her investment in searching for the lost expedition and underlines her willingness to commercialise both her grief and her romance in order to further her campaign and redeem not only her husband's status and reputation but with it, of course, her own. The stakes were high, and Alison Alexander's chapter on 'Family Upsets' (Alexander, 2013, pp. 229-239) documents the effect this had on her relationship with other family members.

Arctic Adventure Stories

While ballads conveyed a concise and rhythmical commentary on events, popular fiction too remained a key vehicle for representing and reflecting the Arctic region and the adventures of Arctic explorers, especially for younger readers. While fairy tales such as *The Snow Queen* fed their imaginations with wonderfully magical images of the region, stories aimed at a slightly older age group of, particularly, young boys exploited the Arctic as a theatre of opportunity and adventure, with authors such as William Henry Giles Kingston, Jules Verne, William Gordon Stables, and Percy Bolingbroke St. John using it as a backdrop to their stories. Kingston's first Arctic story, *Peter the Whaler,* was published in 1851 and conformed closely to the aforementioned moral propensities expected of children's literature. Sent away to sea as punishment for a series of youthful misdemeanours, the eponymous Peter, son of an Irish clergyman, is redeemed by his adventures and eventually restored to his family. Serving aboard a variety of ships, including merchant schooners, a pirate ship and a US Naval frigate, as well as, ultimately, on Arctic whaling ships, Peter is twice shipwrecked – once on an iceberg with three companions and again with the same three companions in an ice-field among friendly and helpful Esquimaux. He is sustained by his gentlemanly and Christian values, his innate courage and gallantry, and his conscientious, positive attitude to every situation in which he finds himself embroiled. Written in the first person, from the perspective of its protagonist, and with dramatic descriptions of hunting and killing whales, polar bears, seals and other wildlife, and of the conditions both at sea and on the ice, the novel alludes briefly to Franklin's lost expedition in the final paragraphs of Chapter XXVII, concluding:

> I was unable to refrain from giving this brief sketch of a subject in which every man worthy of the name of Briton must feel the deepest and warmest interest (Kingston, 1851, p. 273)

His account, nevertheless, leaves the reader wondering whether Peter, being from "a large parish in the south of Ireland" (Kingston, 1851, p. 1), would in fact wish to be considered as a 'Briton', and how and where Kingston obtained his knowledge of the Arctic seas, shipping and subsistence. He was not himself an

explorer or a sailor, but it is likely that he, like Dickens and others, read the narratives of naval officers such as Franklin, Parry, Ross and Richardson. He was probably also familiar with the work of William Scoresby Jnr. and might have visited the many panoramas, dioramas and other exhibitions concerned with Arctic exploration, as previously discussed.

Another of Kingston's sources is likely to have been a novel by American author Edgar Allan Poe, published in 1837. Although set in warmer, more southerly waters, Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* weaves together the lives of its young hero, Pym, with those of whalers, pirates and other seafarers to create a storyline not dissimilar to Kingston's, nor indeed to that of Melville in his 1851 masterpiece *Moby Dick.* Published in the same year as *Peter the Whaler, Moby Dick,* or *The Whale* as its original English edition was entitled*,* was aimed at an adult audience, and whilst Kingston's tale for young boys was instantly popular and led to a long career as a children's author, Melville's novel remained until much later in the century "an all-but-forgotten book" (Parker, 2017, p. xv). Only in recent years has it "passed from the realm of the broad 'reading public'… into the general culture" (Parker, 2017, p. xv), while Kingston's work has, in contrast, faded into relative obscurity.

There is a clear distinction too in the quality of prose between the two novels, which possibly explains the longevity of Melville's work, but the immediate popularity of *Peter the Whaler*, as opposed to the slow climb to attention of *Moby-Dick,* is probably attributable to the approach the two novels took to their topic. Kingston took the information he had gleaned from representations of the Arctic in literature, art and popular culture and used his imagination to expand it into a narrative exposition on the righteous results of exploits at sea for the creation of good character. Thus, he was giving his audience an Arctic that they knew about, could relate to, and felt they understood: an Arctic based on their own 'protentions and secondary expectations', to use the terminology of Husserl, discussed in my Introduction. Melville, on the other hand, used his knowledge and experiences as a seasoned seafarer to reflect the less glamourous and appealing realities of life at sea, thereby failing to supply an Arctic reconcilable with public expectations at the time of its publication; expectations that had themselves been created through

popular literature, art and entertainment of various kinds. That its genius was only recognised later in the century is compliant with the circular trajectory of Arctic representation that this thesis seeks to prove: in 1851, *Moby Dick* represented the Arctic as it was perceived in the early or late nineteenth century, whereas *Peter the Whaler* represented the Arctic as it was perceived at the time of its publication.

Different Arctics

One man who would have recognised Melville's Arctic is Orkney-born Dr John Rae. In 1846 he began a solo voyage deep into the region, working as a Surveyor for the Hudson's Bay Company and charged with mapping the north coast of America on the company's behalf. Chosen for his proven skills in survival and exploration techniques, Rae travelled with a small party of men and minimal supplies, surviving by hunting and fishing, and learning from the Inuit communities he met along the way. This approach was anathema to the Admiralty and British naval officers, who believed that their own 'civilised' manners and inadequate woollen clothing were far superior to those of the indigenous populations, who they viewed as 'savages' in their furs and snow homes, eating raw flesh for the vitamins it provided to protect them from diseases.

Rae published his narrative of this expedition in 1850, shortly after returning from a second voyage on which he was engaged in searching for the lost Franklin expedition, and his discovery that Boothia was a peninsula and not an island "corrected a misconception held by the Admiralty that would have cost time and lives in the search for the Northwest Passage" (Orkneyology.com, 2019).

As will be discussed later, in this chapter and the next, Rae was to cause outrage with subsequent discoveries regarding the Franklin expedition, which continued to occupy the public's attention in the late 1840s. As the first anniversary of its departure came around in 1846, Charles Tomlinson's aforementioned *Winter in the Arctic Regions,* was published in London by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, or SPCK. This organisation, founded in 1698 "to communicate the Christian faith to a wide audience through education and the

provision of Christian resources" (SPCK, 2018), regularly supplied ships with stock for their libraries on long voyages, as evidenced by a letter from Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson in 1801 declaring that "I am again a Solicitor for the goodness of the Society ... to hope that [it] will again make a present of Books ..." (SPCK, 2018). The books thus solicited might well have been those to accompany Nelson to his final battle three years later, and their source makes it clear that spiritual welfare and guidance were at the forefront of literature available to sailors. Used as teaching resources for the illiterate seamen, as well as for the reference and entertainment of their more literate peers and officers, the books in a ship's library were crucial to maintaining morale and good spirits during long sea voyages. The libraries on board "Franklin's *Erebus* and *Terror*, for example, had three thousand volumes between them" (Blum, 2019, p. 49).

Tomlinson's book, dedicated to Captain Sir George Back as a "slight tribute of respect" (Tomlinson, 1846, p. 4), provides a reverential review of recent Arctic voyages, comprising three accounts of winters spent in the Arctic: 'Winter in the open sea – the adventures of HMS *Terror* beset by ice in Hudson's Strait' (Tomlinson, 1846, pp. 13-74); 'Winter in a Secure Harbour – the adventures of HMS *Hecla* and *Griper* at Melville Island during the winter of 1819-20' (Tomlinson, 1846, pp. 75-122); and 'Winter in a Snow Hut – the Esquimaux of Winter Island' (Tomlinson, 1846, pp. 123-176). Briefly summarising the history of Arctic expeditions in his introduction, Tomlinson, who was better known at the time for his scientific investigations into weather phenomena, states that:

> [t]he various expeditions fitted out by government had produced results full of interest to geographical and natural science, had furnished narratives of surpassing interest, and developed the noble and heroic qualities of the British sailor (Tomlinson, 1846, p. 9).

As well as their 'noble' and 'heroic' qualities, Tomlinson also attributes the British sailors with good humour as he describes "the light-hearted fellows" (Tomlinson, 1846, p. 26) laboriously chopping at the ice with axes for hours on end and hauling on ropes attached to the larger ice-boulders, all in an attempt to free a passage for their ice-bound ship, and all accompanied by "a cheerful song, [as they] laughed and joked with the unreflecting merriment of schoolboys"

(Tomlinson, 1846, p. 26). Such joviality is less evident, however, as Tomlinson's account of *HMS Terror's* 1836 expedition progresses towards Christmas and New Year, when "the officers *encouraged* cheerfulness" (Tomlinson, 1846, p. 37 my emphasis) by organising various forms of entertainment for the men's amusement. Being a publication of a Christian organisation, of course, Tomlinson's book emphasises the moral and spiritual wellbeing of the crews and the observance of religious rituals on board the ships as even "in the midst of all this peril the sabbath was not neglected" (Tomlinson, 1846, p. 45) and "[t]o prevent the ship from actually falling to pieces, they adopted the very same device which is mentioned in the memorable voyage of Saint Paul; … (Acts xxvii.17)" (Tomlinson, 1846, p. 76). The 'device' to which Tomlinson refers is the tying "of ropes around the ship to hold it together [as] [t]hey lowered the sail and let the ship drift along" (Bible, 2002 i). The sanctity associated in people's minds with the Arctic, and its connection to the aforementioned "pure and noble thoughts" (Morley, 1853, p. 242) of which Henry Morley was to write in 1853, are thus confirmed.

In the literature of the 1840s and 1850s, therefore, the Arctic served multiple purposes: it was a symbol for goodness and purity, a symbol of extreme coldness of either heart or climate, and a symbol of remote territories of mystery, adventure, and intrigue. In the circular trajectory of Arctic representation and perception, it was approaching its zenith and occupying a crucial role in a wide variety of texts, as demonstrated by, for example, the novels of Charlotte Brontë.

Charlotte Brontë's Arctic

In Brontë's 1853 novel *Villette*, Lucy Snowe's young charge, Polly Home, ponders over her picture-book with the observation that "here – most strange of all – is a land of ice and snow, without green fields, woods, or gardens" (Brontë, 1987, p. 88). Snowe herself observes "the polar splendour of the new-year moon – an orb, white as a world of ice" (Brontë, 1987, p. 375), while Dr Bretton and the Count de Bassompierre are furthermore said to be in "arctic disguise" (Brontë, 1987, p. 362) – the latter resembling "an enormous Polar Bear" (Brontë, 1987, p. 362) –

as they arrive through the snowy blizzards and “wild howl of the winter-night” (Brontë, 1987, p. 362) at La Terrasse .

Snowe’s name itself, of course, evokes Arctic associations, and her wandering, independent lifestyle with "no possibility of dependence on others ... self-reliance and exertion forced upon [her] by circumstances" (Brontë, 1987, p. 95) markedly reflects that of Arctic explorers as she invites her readers to “picture me …as a bark slumbering through halcyon weather, in a harbour still as glass” (Brontë, 1987, p. 94) and observes that “[a] great many women and girls are supposed to pass their lives something in that fashion” (Brontë, 1987, p. 94). These are themes on which both Jen Hill and Francis Spufford expand as they conclude that women were able to identify more closely with Arctic explorers than with those travelling in warmer climes because they recognised a similarity between the cold, unforgiving ice that obstructed the men’s progress and the icy, oppressive patriarchy that restricted their own lives. Thus, “Brontë … asserts for women those qualities developed by male Arctic explorers: courage, resolution, patience, endurance” (Hill, 2008, p. 90) because, in their “thwarted attempts to ‘conquer’ the ice, men [were] learning what women knew” (Spufford, 2003, p. 104).

Snowe, however, does not wish to be one of those ‘women and girls’ to whom she refers in the quote above; her eight years of ‘slumber’ as companion to Miss Marchmont are a torment to her as she recalls, in a passage abounding in Arctic imagery that must have chimed with her early readers’ concerns for the missing crew of Franklin’s expedition:

> a time – a long time, of cold, of danger, of contention. To this hour, when I have the nightmare, it repeats the rush of saltness of briny waves in my throat, and their icy pressure on my lungs. I even know there was a storm, and that not for one hour nor one day. For many days and nights neither sun nor stars appeared; … a heavy tempest lay upon us; all hope that we should be saved was taken away …the ship was lost, the crew perished (Brontë, 1987, p. 94)

The biblical[14] and nautical allusions herein accentuate Snowe's inner turmoil as she strives to find a place and purpose in life, stressing her inability to "navigate … [or] fix her position" (Gilmartin, 2017, p. 90) with nothing and no one – 'neither sun nor stars' – to guide her as, "[l]ike a mariner, she watches the skies" (Gilmartin, 2017, p. 94) as she seeks to steady herself amid the storms of her life. Extending her maritime metaphor accordingly, Snowe imagines herself to be not now a 'bark' but:

> [a] life-boat, … only putting to sea when the billows run high in rough weather, when cloud encounters water, when danger and death divide between them the rule of the great deep (Brontë, 1987, p. 254)

This image she contrasts, with a mixture of admiration and dejection, with her godmother's ability to sail through life like a "stately ship, cruising safe on smooth seas" (Brontë, 1987, p. 254), an image remarkably redolent of the stereotypical Victorian matriarch.

In Brontë's earlier novel, *Jane Eyre*[15], which was published in 1847, similar views are reinforced as the author deploys representations of the Arctic to present her reader with a protagonist who experiences the world as a landscape of loneliness and isolation parallel to that experienced by Arctic explorers. As the first major female bildungsroman, the novel's reception in some quarters was similarly cold and hostile, although "[e]arly reviewers in general shared and spread the public's enthusiasm for *Jane Eyre*" (Lodge, 2009, p. 5).

Sara Lodge reports, for example, that:

> George Henry Lewes (1817-78) announced that it was 'decidedly the best novel of the season' and others concurred in praise for 'a story of surpassing interest, riveting the attention from the very first chapter' (Lodge, 2009, p. 5)

An anonymous reviewer in *The Atlas* in 1847 likewise lauded *Jane Eyre* for, as Lodge reports, its "great promise …youthful vigour, …freshness and originality, … nervous diction and concentrated interest" (Lodge, 2009, p. 6)

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[14] "The storm was fierce … For several days we could not see either the sun or the stars" (Bible, 2002 i)

[15] Much of the analysis of *Jane Eyre* that follows featured in a talk I gave to the Dickens Fellowship in London in July 2019 and appears in my consequent hub-post at https://hubpages.com/literature/Jane-Eyre-1847-the-greatest-Victorian-novel-that-Dickens-didnt-write

The opinion of *The Atlas* was echoed in the same year by other journals, such as *The Era* and *The Athenaeum*, as Lodge evidences, but reception in *The Spectator* was “noticeably cooler” (Lodge, 2009, p. 9) as it declared “the effect ‘unnatural’, with too much attention to the ‘minute anatomy of the mind’ and too much contrivance in the plot” (Lodge, 2009, p. 9)

The December 1848 edition of the *Quarterly Review*, and the March 1849 edition of the American *Littell’s Living Age* magazine, both carried an anonymous review, later identified as being written by Elizabeth Rigby, later Lady Eastlake[16]. Rigby castigated the character of Jane Eyre as “proud … [and] ungrateful” (Rigby, 1849, p. 505) and the novel itself as “pre-eminently an anti-Christian composition” (Rigby, 1849, p. 506). In her biography *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, published in 1857, Elizabeth Gaskell condemns Rigby’s article for its “cowardly insolence … [and the stabbing cruelty of [its] judgement” (Gaskell, 2009, p. 203), noting that an American clergyman with whom she is in correspondence recognises the book as being “a good influence on character, *our* character” (Gaskell, 2009, p. 203 original emphasis). Algernon Swinburne and Augustine Birrell, writing in 1877 and 1887 respectively, also slated Rigby’s review – the former “advocat[ing] that the reviewer be nailed to a barn door” and the latter “compar[ing] the reviewer’s ‘nauseous and malignant hypocrisy’ to that of the novel’s Mr Brocklehurst” (Sheldon, 2009, p. 841)

Margaret Oliphant joined with Rigby, however, in disparaging the novel, decrying its protagonist, as Lodge quotes, as:

> something of a genius, something of a vixen – a dangerous little person, inimical to the peace of society …[an] impetuous little spirit which dashed our ordered world, broke its boundaries, and defied its principles (Lodge, 2009, pp. 19-20)

Appearing in *Blackwood’s Magazine* in May 1855, Oliphant’s article lamented that “the most alarming revolution of modern times has followed the invasion of Jane Eyre” (Gilbert & Gubar, 2016, p. 465), because prior to Brontë’s masterpiece, the heroines of novels were “humble and devoted” (Gilbert & Gubar, 2016, p. 465).

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[16] Elizabeth Rigby married Charles Lock Eastlake in 1849, becoming Lady Eastlake when her husband received a knighthood in 1850, on his appointment as President of the Royal Academy

Oliphant's use of the word 'invasion' implies the strength of the novel's impact in presenting an independent and resolute female protagonist, whilst Rigby's accusations of anti-Christian sentiment fail to recognise the true Christian values at the centre of a novel that is, essentially, socially responsible, with an underlying Christian ethos that was appreciated by Gaskell's American clergyman friend but nevertheless undermined the established Church in England. The novel professes, for example, ideals of human compassion, humility, and kindness. It rejects falsity, immorality and duplicity, and it recognises the virtues of service, respect and justice. John Eyre, Jane's tormentor in childhood, for example, is justly rewarded when he dies in a London opium den having caused the mother and sisters implicit in his persecution of Jane untold misery and financial embarrassment. With similar providence, the illegitimate Adele, orphaned by the death of her profligate mother in Paris, becomes Rochester's ward and thus succeeds to kindness and good fortune, in stark contrast to Jane, orphaned by the death of both her lawfully-wed, upright and respectable parents yet subjected to years of deprivation, abuse and misery in the name of Christian charity.

Such oppositions abound in the novel, most notably the opposing images of ice and fire that follow Jane Eyre throughout her narrative, reflecting the ups and downs of her life, from unwanted, despised and ill-treated child, through honest, diligent school-girl and loyal friend, impoverished but hard-working and enthusiastic governess, to jilted lover, destitute vagabond, schoolmistress, heiress and wife – all in about ten years. These images of ice and fire also reflect the extremes of Jane's fluctuating moods as she struggles to comply with social expectations for females to be gentle, submissive and silently resilient as ice, in direct contravention of her natural disposition to fight fire with fire and defend herself and others from the wrongs and injustices of the world. *Jane Eyre* is a tale of endurance, perseverance and courage, a tale of an orphan, growing up unloved, unwanted, and unappreciated, and a tale of patriarchy, oppression and passion – and it begins by setting an Arctic chill amid the red heat of anger at Gateshead Hall.

We first meet Jane Eyre as a child sitting – or hiding – on a window-seat behind a curtain in her aunt's house, where her cousin John reigns supreme in the

absence of his late father. With much the same wonderment as *Villette's* Polly Home perused her picture-book, Jane is contemplating Thomas Bewick's descriptions of the Arctic, as recorded in his *History of Birds*, published in Newcastle in two volumes in 1797 and 1804. From his descriptions, Jane envisages:

> those forlorn regions of dreary space – that reservoir of frost and snow … [and those] death-white realms … [giving] significance to the rock standing up alone in a sea of billow and spray (Brontë, 2016, p. 10).

Here we are presented with a 'dreary space' into which Jane's mind if not her body can meander; 'reservoirs' of deep clear water into which it can dive and discover untold treasures; 'realms' of fantasy restricted only by imagination as she herself stands as 'the rock' that faces the 'billow and spray' of her life.

Jane's courage, patience and physical and mental strength are constantly and ruthlessly tested by that 'billow and spray', and in her early reading we see reflected the magical encounters that Charlotte and her siblings had with the Arctic in their childhood games, as "Anne and Emily chose Ross and Parry as names for their characters, while Branwell and Charlotte chose Bonaparte and Wellington" (Hill, 2008, p. 91). Indeed, Chauncy Loomis speculates that Charlotte had her sister Emily in mind when describing Jane's reading because it was Emily, he believes, who had the strongest fascination with the Arctic, and with the celebrated leader of no fewer than five Arctic expeditions, Sir William Edward Parry, in particular (Loomis, 1977, p. 103). Nevertheless, the pairs the children chose have parity as the published narratives of explorers such as Parry and his counterpart Sir John Ross "manufactured national heroes whose bravery, courage, and bodily risk put them in the same category as figures from the Napoleonic Wars" (Hill, 2008, p. 91), such as Napoleon Bonaparte and the Duke of Wellington. For Jane's – and perhaps Emily's – favoured author, Thomas Bewick, however, it is argued that the Arctic's:

> cold expanses … represented the nemesis of ornithology … a dreadful thought but a striking one to a man as mindful of Providence as Bewick (Spufford, 2003, p. 9).

Chillingly, at once reflecting and anticipating Jane's cold, lonely experiences of life, Brontë foreshadows her fate and identifies her world with a region where delicacy and beauty struggle to survive.

In so doing, Brontë has Jane endure conditions and circumstances comparable to those endured by men exploring the Arctic. It is, therefore, reasonable to assert that Brontë rewrote "nation-building masculine rhetorics … as the domestic experience of a young woman" (Hill, 2008, p. 90)., and it was partly this aspect of the story that so divided its early reviewers.

A Gendered Arctic

For most authors, such environments as Brontë conveyed were more suited to the male spirit and character than the female. The success of Kingston's moral tale of Arctic heroism, *Peter the Whaler*, had secured him a career for life, and later novels represented the Arctic in similar ways, inciting boys to adventure and exploration. In Percy Bolingbroke St. John's *Arctic Crusoe*, published in 1854, for example, and also in Jules Verne's *A Winter Amid the Ice*, published the following year, the second-in-command of an Arctic expedition fails to make sufficient effort to recover, alive or dead, his lost Commander amid the Arctic ice. Criticism may here be inferred regarding the searches for Franklin that dominated contemporary Arctic debates, and of which the first remnants were discovered in 1854, but in each tale there is a satisfactorily happy ending that was, alas, denied to Franklin.

In stories like these, the Arctic became a platform for adventure, opportunity and the testing of character, and Robert G. David suggests that it may be for this reason that such books were often given as school prizes rather than being studied on the general school curriculum, evidencing what he calls "a Victorian intellectual determinism separating factory fodder from future leaders" (David, 2000, p. 197). This suggestion is indicative of more than a class divide in the purpose and distribution of nineteenth century children's literature: it also indicates a clear gender divide in the minds of fiction writers. In contrast to the adventure stories aimed at boys, stories aimed at girls:

> featured charitable children, poverty-stricken families, and pious deaths [while] [f]or boys there were 'empire-building' novels, … most of which had the same … pattern of home – foreign conquest – home, and, … a sense of British superiority" (Hunt, 2009 ii, p. 74)

Nevertheless, survey results published in 1888 by Edward Salmon, using information obtained from 790 boys aged 11-19, "from the ordinary Board school boy to the young collegian." (Salmon, 1888, p. 14) and "a few more than a thousand" (Salmon, 1888, p. 21) girls aged 11-19, showed that "purely boys' books" (Salmon, 1888, p. 28) were also read by girls. This conclusion is upheld in the magazine market, where *The Boys' Own Paper* was read by 88 of the girls as well as by 404 of the boys, while The *Girls' Own Paper* was read by 315 of the girls and none of the boys. In the novels market results were similar as Salmon concludes that girls read stories aimed at boys because "they can get in boys' books what they seldom get in their own – a stirring plot and lively movement." (Salmon, 1888, p. 28).

Such tales could also, however, be very descriptive and evocative. Verne declares that "mountains of ice … would shatter us like glass if we got entangled between them." (Verne, 2009, p. 146), while St. John observes that the "… sea is never still [and] [i]ts changes are like those of a kaleidoscope." (St.John, 1863, p. 39). These images, emphasising the fragility of mankind amid the crushing ice and the unpredictable nature of the sea, balance an awareness of the dangers inherent in Arctic exploration with a desire, like Kingston's, to spread a spirit of courage and heroism among readers. St John's kaleidoscopic sea, multi-coloured and constantly moving as it reflects the colours of the Arctic ice and sky like the colourful glass shards in a popular Victorian children's toy, is inspired by descriptions in the published Narratives of returning explorers. For example, in his 1850 *Narrative of an expedition to the shores of the Arctic Sea, in 1846 and 1847,* Dr John Rae reports that:

> [we] had not been more than half an hour under shelter before almost every spot of open water outside was filled with ice, so rapidly had it followed in our wake (Rae, 2012, p. 86)

The impression here of the speed at which the ice moves to close in and imprison a ship is startlingly simple, while Rae's observation that "a few streaks of orange-

coloured aurora showed themselves to the southward (Rae, 2012, p. 91) echoes Felicia Heman's imagery of "arrowy streams of … northern light" (Hemans, 1825) piercing the night sky and is reflected in the poetry of Vedder, Moore and Craik discussed above.

Searching for the Lost Franklin Expedition

While literature, art and popular culture continued to inform and enthuse public opinion, Government and Admiralty interest in Arctic exploration had dwindled since Barrow's retirement in 1845. It therefore fell to Franklin's wife – or widow, as she vehemently resisted being called – to maintain momentum, which she did with the assistance of friends and supporters. Because she was not born to the title she should not, according to the rules of etiquette, be referred to as Lady Jane Franklin. She can, however, be correctly referred to in one of three ways: Jane Franklin; Jane, Lady Franklin; or Lady Franklin; I have used the latter thus far and will continue to do so.

An 1850-51 expedition initiated by Lady Franklin and led by Horatio Austin was funded by the American tycoon Henry Grinnell, a New York merchant who "poured no less than $100,000 into the endeavour" (Fleming, 1999, p. 418). As UK government funding was redirected to the war in Crimea and other conceivably more urgent concerns, alternative sources of funding for these expeditions was necessarily raised by public subscriptions and appeals to wealthy individuals such as Grinnell. The American government also "contributed $150,000" (Fleming, 1999, p. 418) so that, between 1848 and 1859, it is estimated that between forty and fifty expeditions set out to search for the missing crews.. Some of these search expeditions were simultaneous and the ships' crews would meet and work together to overcome their difficulties.

The first attempt, in 1848, for example, was designed as a three-pronged military-style attack in which "[t]he enemy was to be surrounded and its captive freed" (Mirsky, 1970, p. 139); the 'enemy' being the Arctic ice and 'its captive' the Franklin expedition in a battle analogy that reveals how embroiled in the terminology of warfare and out of touch with Arctic conditions the men at the

Admiralty were. The plan was for two ships under the command of Captain Sir James Clark Ross to follow the route that Franklin *should* have taken while a second pair of ships, under the command of Captain Henry Kellett took an alternative route to Bering Strait in order to head-off the Franklin expedition and assist it in completing the last stages of the Northwest Passage that it was hoped they would have found. The third prong of attack, under the command of Franklin's old friend, colleague and eventual biographer, Captain Sir John Richardson, travelled overland with the Hudson Bay Company's surveying expert Dr John Rae in case the *Erebus* and *Terror* had been wrecked and the men were proceeding on foot. In this scenario, the Arctic was still being represented as something that could be conquered; overcome by force of numbers; an opponent – or 'enemy' – whose moves could be anticipated and accounted for, which demonstrates once more the lack of understanding among those responsible for organising such operations. Failure for the threefold expedition was inevitable.

After various travails, these three search expeditions returned at intervals over the next three years, and although they had failed in their primary aim, they had, between them, surveyed and charted innumerable new miles of Arctic coastline. They had also not been alone in Arctic waters: coeval with their expeditions had been several of the aforementioned privately funded search voyages, one of which had discovered the first traces of the Franklin expedition in the form of a few bits of scattered debris and, on Beechey Island, three graves marked by small headstones, "helpfully inscribed with names and dates, and facing west in what had become an Arctic tradition" (Fleming, 1999, p. 383). Present at the first examination of these headstones was Dr Elisha Kent Kane, an American who would later lead his own expeditions into the Arctic but was, in 1850, serving as ship's surgeon on a voyage sponsored by Grinnell and commanded by Lieutenant Edwin De Haven. The graves were of the first three fatalities among Franklin's crew: John Torrington of the *Terror*, and John Hartnell and William Braine of the *Erebus*. Engravings based on Kane's sketches of them appeared in the press and in his narrative account of his expeditions, but more surprisingly, perhaps, they also featured in a panorama that toured America in 1855. Managed by

Edmund Beale and painted by George Heilge, this panorama focused purely on Kane's expeditions and, as Russell Potter affirms:

> for all its claims to artistic merit, had at the same time a distinctly sensationalistic tone … crowded with natural spectacles – auroras, icebergs, walruses, and polar bears – and, as if for good measure, … gratuitous scenes of shipwrecks and disasters, including a ship on fire at sea (Potter, 2007, p. 121).

The emotive impact of this image, in all its guises, must have been immense, melding as it did the spiritual sanctity of the Arctic with the grim reality of man's mortality, and accentuating the insignificance of human life as the three tiny gravestones nestle beneath the colossal cliff of ice that towers above and behind them. Moreover, Potter's reference to the 'sensationalistic tone' of the panorama is interesting as this is something that was soon afterwards to affect British representations of the Arctic.

A 'Sensational' Arctic

Even as Kane, Richardson, Kellet and so many others were engaged in some of the earliest expeditions to scour the Arctic for signs of the Franklin expedition, a high degree of sensationalism is evident in the response to, and representation of, their exploits. The first to return, in 1849, were the ships commanded by Sir James Clark Ross, and, on arriving back on UK soil, their crews found that "London Society was thrilled by a number of Arctic spectacles mounted for the Christmas holiday season" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 198). The contrast of society's 'thrill' of excitement with their own dire 'thrill' of near-death experience in the Arctic might have caused some consternation and amazement among the crew, again highlighting the divergent perceptions of those who sailed to the Arctic and those who experienced it through secondary representations.

Among the spectacles to 'thrill' Londoners that season was Hamilton's *Grand Moving Panorama of the Arctic Regions*, advertised in the *Theatrical Journal* of 3 January 1850 as exhibiting "grandeur and beauty [that] will excite universal admiration" (Potter, 2007, p. 90 & 215). Appearing at a time when public and government anxiety over the fate of the Franklin expedition was reaching its peak,

this panorama was painted by A. Adams and based on “original drawings by Sir James Ross and Captains Lyon and Beechey” (Potter, 2007, p. 90). Exhibited at the Minerva Hall in London’s Haymarket in 1849-1850 before moving to Bath and thence Exeter, this was “the first new moving panorama of the Arctic in more than a decade [to make] its London debut” (Potter, 2007, p. 90). Meanwhile, at The Colosseum in Regent’s Park:

> Danson’s *View of the Polar Regions* was running a brisk trade … whilst dissolving-views were being shown in rooms all over town, including the Royal Polytechnic Institution and the Western Literary Institution (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 198)

and the big attraction at the Royal Polytechnic Institute was:

> *Scenes in the Arctic Regions, …. With Popular Description by DR. WYLDE, and Appropriate Music by MR. COTTERILL …* [d]escribed on handbills as a ‘Grand Original Diorama,’ but more likely a magic lantern show” (Potter, 2007, p. 215).

Other attractions in London that season included *Summer and Winter Views of the Polar Regions,* presented by Burford and Selous at their Panorama Royal in Leicester Square, and a *Polar Regions* panorama at the Partheneum Assembly Rooms in St Martin’s Lane – from where it later went on a tour of the provinces. The title of the former display might have intrigued an audience more used to the wintry associations of the Arctic and curious to see how ‘*summer views’* might contrast with their common perception of the region. The title of the latter suggests the possibility of Antarctic as well as Arctic images.

In 1851, an *Arctic Diorama (dissolving views) with a talk by “Mr Malcolm”* no doubt enthralled visitors to the Lecture Hall of the Western Literary Institution at Leicester Square in London, whilst the Linwood Gallery just across the Square boasted a moving panorama simply entitled *The Search for Sir John Franklin.* The city’s Partheneum Assembly Rooms, meanwhile, replaced their abovementioned exhibit with Moses Gompertz’s moving panorama *Arctic Regions* prior to its nationwide tour, which took it to Portsmouth in January 1852 and Brighton in May and June of that year, and which some reports claim continued until as late as 1864.

The most unusual Arctic exhibition of 1852, however, was probably the recurrence of an outdoor display in the Vauxhall Gardens, although this "'Moving Diorama' of Arctic Scenery, proprietor or artist unknown" (Potter, 2007, p. 216) is likely to have been little more than a shadow of the extravaganza presented there in 1834. Moreover, tensions regarding the re-presentation, provenance, and authenticity of the artwork on display in such exhibitions were evidently beginning to surface, as this notice from the *Athenaeum* magazine of 12 January 1850, quoted by Russell Potter, demonstrates:

> … [p]erceiving that several Exhibitions are open purporting to show views of the Arctic or Polar regions, I shall feel greatly obliged by the insertion of my statement, that I was the only officer of person in the Enterprise who took any drawings of those regions during the late Expedition under Sir James Ross, – and which drawings the Admiralty have allowed Mr. Burford of Leicester Square to use. – I am, &c. W.H.J.BROWNE., (Late Lieutenant of the Enterprise). (Potter, 2007, p. 91)

The commercial competition between the different promoters of these exhibitions is also on display here, as Burford tries to outmanoeuvre his rivals. The *Enterprise* had been one of the first ships to be sent in search of the Franklin expedition and Browne's reference to the Admiralty granting permission for his work to be used signifies how tightly the artistic and literary output of its officers was still controlled, even after Barrow's retirement.

This revival of Arctic panoramas nevertheless inspired Charles Dickens to write an article entitled 'Some Account of an Extraordinary Traveller', published on 20 April 1850. In this quasi-fictional account of a panoramic experience, Dickens's hero, Mr Booley, immerses himself in the re-creation of James Clark Ross's 1848 expedition as it over-winters in the Arctic – presumably this is Hamilton and Adams's re-creation, but Dickens does not specify it as such. In whichever guise it was viewed, Mr Booley observes in the panorama an "inhospitable region, surrounded by eternal ice, cheered by no glimpse of the sun, shrouded in gloom and darkness" (Dickens, 1850, p. 77). He meets no indigenous people however, and is comforted to encounter instead:

> two Scotch gardeners; several English compositors, accompanied by their wives; three brass founders from the neighbourhood of Long Acre, London; two coach painters, a gold-beater and his only daughter, by trade a stay-maker; and several other working-people from sundry parts of Great Britain who had conceived the extraordinary idea of 'holiday-making' in the frozen wilderness (Dickens, 1850, p. 76)

So, Dickens satirises a Victorian equivalent of ‘virtual reality’ that many of his readers, and he himself to some extent, relied on for their knowledge and understanding of the Arctic regions and their communities.

In an environment specifically designed to “reproduce the real world so skillfully [sic] that spectators could believe what they were seeing was genuine” (Oettermann, 1997, p. 49), Mr Booley considers himself to have experienced the Arctic through its representation in the Panorama, yet he has done so in the secure knowledge that he is among people he could equally well meet in the town, and within a safe distance of home. He is therefore, like Dickens himself, denied the torturous suffering and isolation of a true Arctic explorer. Similarly, and in common with all visitors to such exhibitions, as John Plunkett observes:

> Mr Booley is always in two places at once: a viewer in London or Bristol or Barnstaple but also a virtual visitor to New Zealand, Australia, the Arctic, and India. His picture-going embodies the manner in which, through the moving panorama, the nineteenth-century ‘local’, ‘regional’, and ‘provincial’ were themselves being profoundly reinvented to encompass global spaces. (Plunkett, 2013, p. 8)

Like Friedrich substituting the Arctic ice for the frozen pond that drowned his brother; like Hadlock substituting any person of the “right ‘kuller’” for a deceased Inuit on his tour; and like Finden substituting stout upright figures for the bent and struggling ones in Back’s watercolour, the Panorama enabled its viewers to substitute the Arctic for whatever geographical location they actually found themselves in.

Dickens’s concern with the Arctic was not, of course, confined to fictional representations and he may at this time have read, or even heard, the aforementioned lecture given at London’s Royal Institute by Charles Richard Weld, Assistant Secretary to the Royal Society, on 6 February 1850, and

published shortly afterwards by that doyen of Arctic publishing, John Murray. After providing a brief chronology of Arctic exploration from its earliest days, and discussing the reasons behind its resumption in 1818, Weld focuses on the ongoing search for the 1845 Franklin expedition, and speculates as to the men's chances of survival, noting that "[i]t is a remarkable fact, and one particularly cheering at this moment, that the Arctic expeditions have been attended with a singularly slight loss of life" (Weld, 1850, p. 41). Weld's optimism matched that of Dickens, who, on 18 May 1850, published an account of 'A Visit to the Arctic Discovery Ships' written by Frederick Knight Hunt. Like Porden before him, Hunt was inspired to enthuse over preparations at Woolwich for an expedition to the Arctic. This time, there were four ships undergoing refurbishment for service in the icy waters; two large sailing ships and two smaller steam-tugs that would be used to tow the larger ships through the narrower channels when the wind failed them. Hunt reports that:

> [t]he names of the four ships as put together by an old sailor in [his] hearing, express[ed] their mission. The 'Resolute', 'Intrepid', 'Pioneer', goes with 'Assistance' to Sir John Franklin in his frozen-up pack" (Hunt, 1850, p. 181)

This humorous combination of the ships' names was emulated the following winter by a sailor – possibly the same one – on board the *Resolute* who submitted the following snippet to the ship's onboard newspaper *The Illustrated Arctic News* under the heading 'SHAKINGS':

> A good Pioneer must be a Resolute man.
> Few men however Intrepid, but have felt
> the want of Assistance (*IAN*, 1852, p. 10)

Beneath this fragment of maritime mirth appeared another in the form of a pair of 'CONUNDRUMS', one of which reads:

> Q. Why should we in our current position be considered very knowing?
> A. Because there's nothing green about us (*IAN*, 1852, p. 10)

The humour is trite and typical of this genre of publication. The *Illustrated Arctic News* was one among many newspapers to be published onboard ships by and for the officers and men stranded in the Arctic. One early example was the *North Georgian Gazette*, *or Winter Chronicle*, edited by Edward Sabine during his ten-

month sojourn amid Arctic ice with Parry's first expedition, on which he served as Astronomer. Along with other entertaining distractions, this "weekly journal … had a happy influence on the minds of the ice-bound adventurers" (Weld, 1850, p. 14), and Hester Blum's recent study reveals that there were at least twenty-seven such publications during the period 1819-1914 (Blum, 2019, p. 15), although this includes at least five Antarctic publications.

Obviously intended as a parody of the popular *Illustrated London News*, founded in 1842, the *Illustrated Arctic News* enjoyed a limited run between October 1850 and March 1851 and was published primarily to entertain the ice-bound officers and sailors of HMS *Resolute* as it over-wintered in the Arctic with its sister-ships. Bound copies were, however, published for wider circulation in 1852, following the expedition's return, and these retain the hand-script style and sketches of the original. The purpose of such publications, written, printed and distributed by the crews of ice-bound ships was to engage officers and crew members in diverting literary pursuits. It also includes, however, advertisements for other ship-bound diversions, such as a:

> Grand Bal and Masque [aboard] HMS Resolute [on] Dec 5 1850 …, the "Grand Historical Drama … of Charles the Twelfth [to be performed in] The Royal Arctic Theatre, HMS Assistance … [and a] "Grand Fancy Dress Ball on Wednesday the 11th of February 1851" (*IAN*, 1852, p. 23 & 53)

All of which suggests that the men had no difficulty keeping themselves amused and, indeed, did so in company with crews from other ships.

Stories contributed included, for example, the tale of Benjamin Balloon, who:

> literally inflated himself from a cask containing Hydro-Gin … became light-headed as a consequence and falling into a current of air soon disappeared from the sight of the astonished spectators (*IAN*, 1852, p. 8)

A sketch of a balloon, adorned with an anxious facial expression and with several bow-shaped messages tied to its string, but being held down by two sailors, accompanies this piece as the effects of hydrogen and gin are conflated for comic effect. Furthermore, there is an implied ridicule of the Admiralty's approach to progress and technology as such balloons, designed to convey important

messages across the ice between ships, were an innovation on the 1850-51 voyages. A prototype had been demonstrated at the conclusion of Weld's lecture in February 1850, when he rejected the concept of men travelling across the Arctic by balloon but announced that:

> the utility of messenger balloons … is so obvious that … the Admiralty purpose sending about 50 of the kind of balloons constructed by Mr. Shepherd, who proposed their adoption, in each relief ship. / The gentleman is now present, and has kindly prepared one of these balloons on a similar scale, which he will elevate at the conclusion of the lecture, when you will have an opportunity of seeing it (Weld, 1850, p. 45)

The *Illustrated Arctic News's* satirical portrayal of the balloon suggests that it was perhaps not of such great 'utility' as Weld and his peers had hoped.

In their second edition, dated 30 November 1850, the editors of the *Illustrated Arctic News* included a request that contributors should "cede to the editors all judgement on the appropriateness" (IAN, 1852, p. 11) of their contributions and submit them under "some feigned name, to which the writer shall if possible constantly adhere … [whilst] originality in all Articles is a sine qua non[17]." (IAN, 1852, p. 11). The scope thereby given for mischief and morale-boosting rhetoric is immense, but the articles, poems, jokes, advertisements and illustrations do offer a valuable insight into the atmosphere and environment onboard the ships stuck for months, and sometimes years, on end in the Arctic waters.

Like the examples quoted above, the contents of these newspapers were "generally comedic or parodic" (Blum, 2019, p. 18), representing life amid the Arctic ice, and therefore the Arctic itself, almost as a holiday-camp, and leading Blum to conclude that "we might see newspapers as the social media of polar expeditions." (Blum, 2019, p. 24).

Household Words

Charles Dickens might well have had in mind the four ships that were then over-wintering the Arctic, as well as the Franklin ships, when, on 21 December 1850

[17] An essential condition

he published the article 'Christmas in the Frozen Regions' in his journal *Household Words*. Co-written by Dickens and a former ship's surgeon, Robert McCormick, the article acknowledges the strong sense of community that developed among crews stranded in the Arctic, as evidenced above. Written for his journal's Christmas edition, it challenged readers to "[t]hink of Christmas in the tremendous wastes of ice and snow … Christmas in the interminable white desert of the Polar sea!" (Dickens & McCormick, 1850, p. 306), assuring them that "it has been kept in those awful solitudes, cheerfully, by Englishmen …" (Dickens & McCormick, 1850). To support this assertion, Dickens and McCormick report that:

> [i]n 1819, Captain Parry and his brave companions did so; and the officers having dined off a piece of fresh beef, nine months old, preserved by the intense climate, joined the men in acting plays, with the thermometer below zero on stage. [while] In 1825, Captain Franklin's party kept Christmas Day in their hut with snap-dragon and a dance, among a merry party of Englishmen, Highlanders, Canadians, Esquimaux, Chipewyans, Dog-Ribs, Hare Indians and Cree women and children. (Dickens & McCormick, 1850)

The Parry reference is, of course, to the same ten-month overwintering of which Weld had spoken in his lecture of February that year, and both instances are taken from the published narratives of the expeditions' respective leaders. In this article, McCormick goes on to recall himself keeping Christmas in the Antarctic in 1841, aboard the same two ships that were, as he wrote in 1850, missing with Franklin in the Arctic, the *Erebus* and the *Terror.* Therefore, the article concludes, in similar vein to Weld, that "it is not beyond hope" that the Christmas of 1850 is being celebrated by the men of the missing Franklin expedition, and they will return "ready with a yarn about Christmas at the Pole" (Dickens & McCormick, 1850, p. 309). By means of such rhetoric, the aforementioned community of 'The Lost Arctic Voyagers' of which Dickens was to write so passionately in December 1854, and of which more will be said later in this chapter, is established in his readers' minds.

As well as speculation and sensation over the fate and fortunes of explorers, there was, naturally, continuing interest in the commercial aspects of Arctic

voyaging. This is reflected, for example, in James Knox's 'Chips: Seals and Whales' published in *Household Words* on 6 September 1851. 'Chips' was a recurrent title for a regular series of shorter than average articles on topical issues, and Knox was possibly influenced in his subject choice on this occasion by the recent publication of the aforementioned novels of Herman Melville and W.H.G. Kingston. The article discusses the ways in which whaling fleets had gradually driven the world's population of whales further and further north and, at the same time, diversified their own hunting exploits to the more easily captured white seal pups, of whom "[d]uring the present season of 1851, a flock … extending to about fifteen miles was discovered, not far from the Scottish coast" (Knox, 1851, p. 564). Noting that an increasing need for oil for the purpose of lubricating industrial machinery had mitigated a reduction in demand for lamp-oil, caused by the introduction of gas lighting, Knox goes on to discuss the profits to be made from hunting in the Arctic regions, reporting that:

> the produce of the ten vessels which sailed from [Peterhead] in 1850 … [was] 1,144 tons of oil. 63,426 seal-skins. 14 tons of whalebone: the aggregate commercial value of the whole would amount to about fifty thousand pounds (Knox, 1851, p. 564)

According to the National Archives' online currency converter, this equates to a profit of £4,009,305.00 in 2017, while the damage to marine life involved in such a haul defies calculation. The figures, nonetheless, support Knox's assertion of:

> an interesting branch of commerce … flourishing in a high degree, adding extensively to national wealth, and giving employment to a large portion of the seafaring community" (Knox, 1851, p. 562).

In the light of such profitable Arctic activity, and with the advent of the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, the subject of Arctic exploration and the loss of Franklin's expedition could easily have been overshadowed. Instead, a self-sustaining cycle of representation in literature, art and popular culture kept the issue alive in the public imagination and financial investment was procured by these means, as well as by the efforts of Lady Franklin, alluded to above.

The ‘three native Esquimaux’

In the world of entertainment, lectures, panoramas and dioramas continued to represent their own version of an Arctic suitable for the day-trip enjoyed by Dickens’s Mr. Booley. In 1853, for example, Mrs Ormonde's *Grand New Panorama of Sir John Franklin's Expedition to the North Pole* was entertaining the people of Edinburgh, while in London the magnificently named dramatist and playwright Leicester Silk Buckingham provided an “illustrative lecture, agreeably delivered” (*ILN* 18 Feb., 1854, p. 148) to accompany the exhibition at the Lowther Arcade Rooms in Adelaide Street of:

> three native Esquimaux, who had recently the honour of appearing before her Majesty and a distinguished circle at Windsor Castle, …[and who were] among the most singular specimens of humanity that have ever been brought before the public (*ILN* 18 Feb., 1854, p. 148)

The ‘three native Esquimaux’ were a young couple, Ebierbing and his wife Tookoolito, aged about 17 and 15 respectively, and an unrelated boy of about 7 years of age by the name of Akulukjuk. These names and their spellings vary in different reports, and the sailors with whom they travelled generally called the couple Joe and Hannah (Harper, 2020). Such disregard for their individual identity is again indicative of the British disdain for other cultures, and the representation of the Arctic people as ‘savages’ to be ogled and pitied.

The trio of ‘Esquimaux’ had been brought to England in 1853, by Hull merchant John Bowlby as part of a scheme to establish a new colony in Greenland. Presumably, this was to replace the one lost in 1406, just as Hadlock ‘replaced’ deceased Inuit in his shows and visitors to such shows temporarily replaced themselves geographically. In representational terms, Bowlby’s scheme saw the Arctic as the proverbial blank canvas on which he could imprint his own, and Britain’s, commercial and imperial values. Bowlby hoped that his project would “not only confer an immense benefit on the natives, but would also be highly advantageous to the interests of British commerce” (*ILN* 18 Feb., 1854, p. 148).

The audience with Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and two of their daughters, as alluded to in the above quote from the *Illustrated News*, took place on 3 February 1854 at Windsor Castle and "lasted about 20 minutes" (Harper, 2020). Facilitated by Robert Bowser, the treasurer of the Hull Zoological Gardens, who "received 25 pounds for his effort" (Harper, 2020), it further indicates the conflation of animal and "human specimens" (*ILN* 18 Feb., 1854, p. 148) in the minds of Victorian society.

Advertisements for the public exhibition of Ebierbing, Tookoolito and Akulukjuk advised readers that they would be seen "[i]n their native costumes, with their Huts, Canoe, and other accessories of Arctic Life" in shows that started at 3pm and 8pm each day, and for which tickets ranged from one to two shillings, with children paying half-price (*ILN* 4 & 25 Feb., 1854, p. 99 & 171). This relatively high price would have excluded a large part of London's population, yet the *Illustrated London News* acknowledged that the Arctic was a topic that continued to fascinate everyone, opining that:

> [t]he painful excitement which has so long pervaded the minds of all classes with respect to the fate of Sir John Franklin's Arctic Expedition, lends additional interest to the examination of these natives of the dreary North (*ILN* 18 Feb., 1854, p. 128)

A year earlier, in his New Year's Eve 1853 edition of *Household Words*, Dickens too had alluded again to Franklin, lamenting that his "unhappy overland journey" (Dickens, 1853 i, p. 409) of 1822 had not been his last, and proceeding then to reflect on several stories of lost seamen, recalled as a result of "[a] shadow on the wall in which [his] mind's eye … discern[ed] some traces of a rocky sea-coast" (Dickens, 1853 i, p. 409). The 'shadows' that hung over the lost Franklin expedition were, however, about to become much bigger and darker.

Rae's Discoveries and Report

Following his voyage in search of Franklin, Dr John Rae had resumed his former tasks as Surveyor for the Hudson's Bay Company, so, ironically, it was while

surveying the coast of King William Island on their behalf that he discovered the first clues to the fate of the expedition for which he and so many others had been searching for so long. It was clear to Rae at this point that there could be no survivors. So, eager to share news of his discoveries as quickly as possible, and to thereby prevent further expeditionary costs and loss of life, Rae hurried back to London and submitted his report, headed “Repulse Bay 29 July 1854” (Rae, 1854), to the Admiralty, who immediately released it, unedited, to *The Times* newspaper.

The Times published the report in full on 23 October 1854, and whilst it was widely welcomed with a mixture of grief and relief, one paragraph of it caused public outrage and heaped condemnation rather than praise on Rae’s head. The now infamous paragraph read:

> [f]rom the mutilated state of many of the corpses and the contents of the kettles, it is evident that our wretched countrymen had been driven to the last resource – cannibalism – as a means of prolonging existence (Rae, 1854).

Three years earlier, Herman Melville had posed the provocative question “who is not a cannibal?” (Melville, 2017, p. 231) as he argued for the moral and spiritual superiority of those eating human flesh in the face of famine over those electing in times of plenty to eat the meat of animals. Nevertheless, that any British Officer might resort to cannibalism was anathema to the British public, and that anyone should suggest that ‘the man who ate his boots’, the great Sir John Franklin, might have done so, was particularly galling.

Rae’s report was endorsed in the October 1854 edition of *The Household Narrative,* the sister paper of Dickens’s *Household Words,* with its report concerning “Dr Rae’s account, which may, of course, be implicitly relied upon” (*HN*, 1854, pp. 225-226). Within weeks, however, its contents had become repugnant to Charles Dickens, a regular contributor to both magazines and also their founder, executive editor and publisher. It is widely supposed, as suggested by Ken McGoogan (McGoogan, 2006, p. 340), that this is because Dickens had been approached in the interim by Lady Franklin for assistance in her campaign to protect and redeem the reputation of her husband, and was persuaded by her

to use his skills as a writer and dramatist to undermine and destroy the arguments of John Rae. Such a meeting is not corroborated in the published letters of Dickens, but he did write to her on 30 November 1854 enclosing:

> two articles he [had] written on a subject of deep interest to her; … [and offering] the assurance of his heartfelt sympathy, and his profound admiration for the character of Sir John Franklin (Dickens vol 7, 1993, p. 474)

So, whether or not a meeting took place, Dickens certainly threw all his sympathies behind Lady Franklin's cause and flew passionately to Franklin's defence in a series of three articles, all entitled 'The Lost Arctic Voyagers', that he published in December 1854. In these articles, Dickens lambasted Rae and used his own grandiloquence to completely crush the reasonable arguments of that eminent and experienced Arctic explorer. From the stories of exploration and cannibalism that he had read in his boyhood comics, such as *The Terrific Register* and *The Portfolio* (Stone, 1994, p. 73) and from newspaper and journal reports as well as his personal collection of Arctic Narratives, Dickens was evidently convinced that:

> [i]n weighing the probabilities of and improbabilities of the the "last resource", the foremost question is – not the nature of the extremity; but, the nature of the men (Dickens, 1854 ii, p. 392)

Believing in the irreproachable 'nature of the men' serving in Britain's Navy, he was not to be swayed by Rae's experience of living and working in the Arctic regions for more than twenty years. To cement his argument, therefore, Dickens obtained what he described to Angela Burdett-Coutts as a "wilderness of books" (Dickens vol 7, 1993, p. 471) on relevant topics from the London bookseller Charles Edmonds, to whom he wrote on 23rd November 1854 stating:

> I will keep all the books and am much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken. I do not require any others on the subject: my enquiries (as you will see next week)[18] being merely directed on one point (Dickens vol 7, 1993, p. 472).

His 'one point', of course, was to counter Rae's allegations, and in the process destroy – in the public imagination at least – the reputation of the man who

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[18] ie: with the publication of part one of 'The Lost Arctic Voyagers' (Dickens, 1854 i) on 2nd December 1854.

remains to this day one of the few Victorian Arctic explorers not to be recognised with a knighthood.

Dickens's campaign was relentless, extending over a number of years to include theatrical productions as well as articles and poems in his journals, as Chapter Three discusses. In the meantime, the three parts of 'The Lost Arctic Voyagers' published in *Household Words* on 2, 9, and 23 December 1854, were interspersed on 16 December with the inclusion of a poem, 'The Wreck of the Arctic', by Thomas Kibble Hervey[19]. The title is deliberately ambiguous, and effective in retaining Arctic images at the forefront of readers' thoughts.

The "bark baptised with a name of doom!" (Hervey, 1854, p. 420) to which Hervey refers in the opening line of this poem, is the SS *Arctic*, launched in 1850. This "gallant ship – / [t]he master of the seas" (Hervey, 1854, p. 420) is named alas, in Hervey's eyes, for disaster. Thus, Hervey implies, its fate was foretold at its launch and his poem draws attention to the coincidence between this and the first reports of the Franklin expedition's fate both being reported in the same month.

Larger than most steamships of its time, the SS *Arctic* was a luxury passenger liner designed for comfort and speed. Its engines – personified by Hervey as a "heart of fire to quell the wave" (Hervey, 1854, p. 420) – drove large paddle-wheels placed on either side of its hull, while her sails provided "canvas for the breeze" (Hervey, 1854, p. 420) to supplement engine power with the more traditional wind power when required. It set sail from Liverpool, bound for New York, on 20 September 1854 carrying "400 persons, [including] 185 1st class passenger [sic], 75 2nd class passengers and 130 crew" (*Northern Times*, 1854), among whom were several VIPs, including members of the ship-owner's family and the Captain's young son. Seven days later, in thick fog, in the northern-most region of the Atlantic Ocean "about 54 miles S.E. of Cape Race" (*Northern Times, 1854)* on the Arctic coast of Newfoundland, the steel hull of a French steamship, the *Vesta*, rammed into the wooden bows of the *Arctic*, causing water to gush in through the resulting holes.

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[19] I also discuss this poem in my research blog posts dated 16 December 2017 and 17 December 2018, available at https://c19arcticrepresentations.wordpress.com/?s=hervey

Three hundred and fifty lives were lost as the *Arctic* quickly sank, but the *Vesta*, which "had on board 147 passengers and a crew of 50" (*Northern Times*, 1854) stayed buoyant, with the loss of only one life, because its compartmentalised hull enabled it to be stabilised by the expert seamanship of its captain and crew. As reported in the *Illustrated London News* on 28 October 1854, it arrived safely, but with its bows badly damaged, in Newfoundland on Saturday 30 September 1854. In the immediate aftermath of the collision, however, confusion was such that survivors reported that the *Arctic's* "Chief Officer was sent in a boat to rescue the crew of the VESTA" (*Northern Times,* 1854*)*. Nonetheless, as the SS *Arctic* disappeared beneath the waves, its Purser, John Geib, and 2nd Officer, Mr Baahlam, managed to guide:

> 14 passengers and 31 crew of the ill fated steamer … in two small boats belonging to the ship, after spending 2 days and 2 nights on the deep … [to Broad Cove where they waited for] a fair wind to take [them] up to St Johns (*Northern Times*, 1854)

Baahlam corroborates this account from Geib, adding that as the two small boats left the scene of the wreck "the surface of the sea was strewn with human beings, [to] whom, it was impossible to render any assistance" (*Northern Times*, 1854) but concluding that as:

> there were many vessels in the area where the disaster occurred, it is not improbable that many lives may have been saved [but] [n]o doubt … is left in my mind as to the loss of the steamer ARCTIC (*Northern Times*, 1854)

Baahlam's optimism regarding survivors was sadly misplaced and Robert McNamara notes that "the sinking of the steamship Arctic in 1854 stunned the public on both sides of the Atlantic, as the loss of 350 lives was staggering for the time (McNamara, 2018). Especially shocking was the fact that none of the many women and children on board – including the Captain's young son – were among the survivors, who numbered instead "24 male passengers and 60 crew members" (McNamara, 2018). This alarming statistic led to stricter enforcement of a 'women and children first' policy in subsequent marine emergencies, although an insufficiency of lifeboats remained a problem until the sinking of the *Titanic* 60 years later caused outrage and a public enquiry into marine safety (Vanner, 2015).

News of the SS *Arctic* tragedy reached Liverpool on 3 October 1854, with, as reported in *The Northern Times* on 13 October, the safe arrival in port of the Canadian steamer, *Cleopatra*, from whose crew the paper states:

> … we have received St John's newspapers for the 3rd inst giving the melancholy details of the loss of the American steamer [Arctic] … with a fearful sacrifice of life, off Cape Race. (*Northern Times*, 1854)

The *Illustrated London News* of 21 October 1854 augmented its report of the incident, on page 393, with an illustration that fills one-third of the page and shows ethereal head-and-shoulder images of three of the SS *Arctic's* officers floating amid a cloud of fog and steam around its submerging masts. This allusion to the spirituality and other-worldliness so commonly associated at the time with the Arctic region from which the ship took its name demonstrates, in the same month that Rae returned his controversial report on the fate of Franklin's expedition, a connection in the public imagination between the two disasters.

Undoubtedly inspired by reports such as these, Hervey's poem clearly conflates the fate of the SS *Arctic's* victims with that of Dickens's 'Lost Arctic Voyagers' and reflects upon the ominous connotations of the ship's name "speaking to our English ear / … [and] English heart" (Hervey, 1854, p. 420), in which, he implies, it has a peculiarly melancholic resonance. Linking the lives lost in the shipwreck to those lost on Arctic expeditions, Hervey contemplates the SS *Arctic* sailing "[a]cross a darker sea" (Hervey, 1854, p. 420) over which Franklin's ships had also sailed. Just as the SS *Arctic's* "[g]ay, happy hearts upon her deck / [l]eft other hearts behind" (Hervey, 1854, p. 420), so Franklin's men had left behind loved ones, and, similarly, each group of people, Hervey emotively surmises, "[s]ent up the spirit's prayer / … [as] hopes for others poured like rain, / [w]hen for themselves all hope was vain!" (Hervey, 1854, p. 420).

Lamenting that "our dying Hope has a double shroud, / [t]he pall of snow and the pall of cloud" (Hervey, 1854, p. 420), Hervey articulates the nation's 'double' grief at those lost in the 'snow' and those portrayed in the *Illustrated London News* as lost in the 'cloud'. With reference also to the "voiceless gloom, / [o]f a mystery and an unfound tomb!" (Hervey, 1854, p. 420) Hervey alludes unmistakably to Franklin, whose tomb remains 'unfound' to this day. The language of death

pervades the poem, with words such as ‘haunt’, ‘pulseless’, ‘spirit’, ‘spectre’, and ‘funeral’, as well as the aforementioned ‘tomb’, ‘shroud’ and ‘pall’, providing a theme of morbid devastation as Hervey affirms that “[t]he Arctic name is a name of fear / [w]hen a ghost of the northern world is near!” (Hervey, 1854, p. 420).

It is likely that the shipwreck of the SS *Arctic* also inspired the short-story compilation *The Wreck of the Golden Mary*, which formed the Christmas 1856 edition of *Household Worlds*, and which is explored in the following chapter. Printing Hervey’s poem in December 1854, in the week that separated the second and third episodes of his own ‘Lost Arctic Voyagers’ trilogy, indicates however just how keenly Dickens wished to keep thoughts of the Arctic alive in his readers’ minds at that time. It was a subject with which he, like much of the British population, was obsessed as the Franklin story approached its dramatic denouement.

Chapter Three – 1855 to 1865

In which the Arctic becomes a site of mystery, intrigue and reverence as a burgeoning commodity culture sensationalises and sanctifies items retrieved from its shores.

Controversies

As the New Year and Twelfth Night celebrations of 1855 gave way to the frosts of February, so the impact of Dr John Rae's report, and his failure to successfully defend it against Dickens's grandiloquence in the columns of *Household Words,* began to dissipate. The *Reading Mercury* of 13 January 1855 merely acknowledged that "[s]ome doubt has since been cast upon [Rae's] story" (*Reading Mercury*, 1855, p. 7) while Reynold's Newspaper of 7 January 1855 attributed 'Seasonal Benevolence' (*Reynold's Newspaper*, 1855, p. 5) to Dickens:

> who, to prove that his advocacy of Christmas and its humanizing tendencies means something more than mere talk, did actually publish, in last week's Household Words, a communication from Dr. Rae, and in the most disinterested manner, put the author's name to it – *Diogenes* (*Reynold's Newspaper*, 1855, p. 5)

The signature '*Diogenes'*, alluding to the ancient Greek philosopher for whom honesty and truth were revealed by actions not words, and to whom "[t]radition ascribes … the famous search for an honest man conducted in broad daylight with a lighted lantern" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2020 i), suggests that *Reynold's Newspaper* was inclined to trust Rae's conclusions over those of Dickens yet appreciated the difficulty of identifying the truth of the situation. Its premise, however, ignores Dickens's final blow to discredit Rae: his appending to Rae's words "an extract from Sir John Barrow's account of Franklin's and Richardson's second journey" (Dickens & Rae, 1854, p. 435). This 'extract' extends over three pages and concludes by affirming that "[t]he language of course is that of Franklin … [whose] veracity is beyond all question" (Dickens & Rae, 1854, p. 437). Thus, Dickens, far from displaying the 'disinterested manner' referenced by *Reynold's Newspaper*, emotes Franklin's voice from across the boundaries of space and time and affords it greater 'veracity' than that of Rae.

Controversy was further fuelled by Sir John Ross's searing appraisal of the Admiralty's failures and shortcomings in relation to the lost expedition. Cumbersomely entitled:

> *Rear Admiral Sir John Franklin, a Narrative of the Circumstances and Causes which led to the Failure of the Searching Expeditions sent by Government and Others for the Rescue of Sir John Franklin*,

Ross's book was published by Longmans of London in 1855 and described by newspapers such as the *Hampshire Advertiser*, on 17 March 1855, as:

> [a]n admirable compilation of all the evidence in connection with the expedition, and subsequent death of the lamented Sir John Franklin … [including the] narrative of Dr Rae … in the conclusions of which Sir John Ross fully coincides (*Hampshire Advertiser*, 1855, p. 3)

Having incurred the wrath of Sir John Barrow in 1818, Ross believed himself to have suffered the ruthless hostility of the Admiralty ever since, and in this book he took his revenge. A no-holds-barred condemnation of the Admiralty's role in planning, provisioning, monitoring and, most of all, failing to rescue Franklin's final expedition, its pages reveal the deep divisions not only between Ross and the Admiralty but also between Ross and various other interested parties, including: his nephew, Sir James Clark Ross; the newly formed body of Admiralty experts commonly referred to as the Arctic Council; and many other senior officers and Arctic explorers. It also reveals Ross to be a rather bombastic and persistent character, pursuing good intentions in an ineffective and somewhat ham-fisted manner.

Against all opposition, Ross pursues – as his transcriptions of much relevant correspondence show – the "most sacred promise" (Ross, 2012, p. 9) he made to his "ever-to-be-lamented friend and brother officer" (Ross, 2012, p. 6), Sir John Franklin, on several occasions before he sailed in 1845, that should it become necessary, he, John Ross, would lead the search expedition. Being the only one, he believed, to have pledged such support, Ross defied all attempts by the Admiralty to pension him off and sought permission to fulfil his promise by arranging and leading an expedition in search of Franklin. Feeling "repulsed and embarrassed by the frigid treatment of the Admiralty" (Ross, 2012, p. 30) Ross accuses them of negligence in the search expeditions, stating that:

> [t]here can be no doubt that Sir J. C. Ross and his friend Sir John Barrow had made up their minds to treat the search for poor Franklin as a secondary consideration, in order to accomplish their favourite object, the north-west passage (Ross, 2012, pp. 31-32)

Presenting much evidence in support of his case, he quotes a letter from the Danish governor of Greenland stating that "[t]he people of Denmark think it strange that the English Government are sending to search for Franklin in every place but where he is to be found" (Ross, 2012, p. 67). Like Ross, he evidently doubted that Franklin could have proceeded up the Wellington Channel, as he should have done, because of an unusually severe winter in the years 1845-1846, his expedition's first winter in the Arctic.

That such debates were alive in both literature and art is evidenced by an 1851 painting, *The Arctic Council planning a search for Sir John Franklin,* by Stephen Pearce. Bequeathed to the National Portrait Gallery in 1899, the painting "represents the officials, naval officers and explorers most active in the search for Sir John Franklin" (NPG, 2020) in discussion. On the wall behind them, as if ghostly apparitions observing their deliberations from afar, hang portraits of Sir John Franklin, Captain James Fitzjames, and Sir John Barrow. On the table before them lies a mass of charts and maps on which they appear to be identifying a particular position, but it is, according to Ross "a position where the unfortunate navigators *never were*, nor were there any just grounds for supposing that they had ever sailed up the Wellington Channel" (Ross, 2012, p. 57 original emphasis). Ross's anger and incredulity at the scene portrayed is evident, but, in his ire at the Admiralty, he is taking the scene portrayed in the painting too literally.

Significantly, Pearce's painting does not represent an actual meeting of the figures it portrays. According to the National Portrait Gallery website the men it depicts "did not constitute an official body .. [and] the advice of these experts … was tendered individually" (NPG, 2020). The painting is, therefore, a composite portrait, designed by the artist, featuring the ten most influential officers involved in organising official expeditions in search of Franklin from 1847 to 1859. The 'position' indicated by the compasses of Francis Beaufort and the pointing finger of Sir John Richardson – and to which Ross took such exception – is therefore

an arbitrary choice made by the artist for the purposes of good artistic composition. It bears no claim to accuracy or authenticity. The meeting place of compass-point and finger merely creates a focal point to which the eye of the viewer is instantly drawn. From this, the eye is led diagonally upwards in one of two directions; right, to the portrait of Barrow, or left, to the portrait of Franklin – both fundamental to the existence of such an auspicious gathering. Between these two, the circular frame of Fitzjames's portrait complements the circle of men gathered beneath it around a circular table and directs the viewer back to the charts under discussion. To the left, and slightly forward, of the group stand George Back and William Edward Parry, their eyes focused on another chart, which they hold in their hands, their fingers pointing to a position hidden from the viewer. Their presence in this aspect gives the viewer a sense of presence in the painting, as if just entering the meeting room through an open door, in much the same way that entering into the auditorium of a panorama building immersed the viewer in the scenery and action of an Arctic expedition. Pearce's painting thus provided its Victorian audience with a sense of being involved in the deliberations taking place and encouraged public engagement with the momentous decisions being taken.

Needless to say, Ross's contributions to the debate and his counter-recommendations for the routes of search expeditions were refuted at every turn, not only by his peers at the Admiralty and contributors to the illusory 'Arctic Council', but also by Lady Franklin, who he nevertheless considers to be one of "the individuals most to be pitied on this occasion" (Ross, 2012, p. 32). Like Rae, Ross tended to trust the Inuit testimony that official channels dismissed, and others too were inclined to accept if not favour Rae's account of Franklin's fate in honouring the memory of the lost hero. The Earl of Ellesmere, for example, speaking at the Royal Geographical Society on Monday 28 May 1855, recalled Franklin as "the hero and victim of the Arctic regions" (*Evening Standard*, 1855, p. 1), justifiably juxtaposing his reputation as a national hero with that of a victim; not only of the unforgiving Arctic environment but also of a poorly provisioned expedition and his own insuperable ambitions. Ellesmere therefore concluded

that “[a]s long as the name of Franklin should be known, it would be venerated and admired” (*Evening Standard*, 1855, p. 1).

Although controversy endured, Rae was still welcome at meetings of the Royal Geographical Society, as recorded in newspaper accounts such as those in *The Standard* of 15 February 1855 and the *Caledonian Mercury* a few months later, on 29 June. The former of these described Rae as “the celebrated Arctic explorer” (*Standard* 15 Feb., 1855, p. 1), while the latter included him in a list of “distinguished individuals” (*Caledonian Mercury*, 1855) in attendance. This suggests that he was still well-respected by his peers in Arctic exploration despite attacks from Dickens, Lady Franklin and their supporters. It is therefore worth surmising that a fracture arose between the different groups as those with experience of the Arctic regions were more able and willing to accept Rae’s conclusions than those whose knowledge was based only on representations of the region in art, literature and popular culture. Echoing the dichotomy faced by Mary Shelley’s Captain Walton, as discussed in Chapter One, and reflecting the arguments that both Scoresby and Ross had with Barrow, as discussed in Chapter Two, the tension between realistic and romanticised notions of the Arctic is thus perpetuated and highlighted. In terms of the circular trajectory of Arctic representations being traced in this thesis, this divergence of opinion is useful in moderating the overall view of the region at any one time within the nineteenth century.

In the periodical press of 1855 as well as in its newspapers matters of the Arctic were widely represented, discussed and ruminated upon, with Dickens’s views on Rae’s report by no means universally endorsed. The title of the monthly journal *The Ladies’ Cabinet of Fashion, Music and Romance* does not immediately imply empathy with, or even an interest in, topics of exploration and cannibalism, yet its anonymous Editor, writing in the magazine’s edition of 1 April 1855, implored readers to reserve judgement and consider the circumstances of the ‘Lost Arctic Voyagers’ in a more pragmatic fashion, pointing out that although:

> [t]he mind naturally revolts from the conclusion forced upon us by the contents of the kettles who may tell by what amount of total privation, of ravening hunger, such a state of fierce unnatural appetite may have been aroused? … let us not, in the pride of civilisation and the refinements of social life, set up our veto of impossibility against the desperate measures of famished men. (*Ladies' Cabinet* 04 Apr., 1855, p. 199)

A century ahead of Abraham Maslow – and a decade before Charles Darwin's revelatory exposition *On the Origin of Species*, which is discussed later in this chapter – the writer of this editorial shows an awareness of a human hierarchy of needs that is equally applicable to everyone, irrespective of race or social background. He or she therefore acknowledges what Dickens failed to see: that when deprived of their most basic needs, even men of the most "undaunted resolution, courage, and endurance" (*Ladies' Cabinet* 04 Apr., 1855, p. 199) might become "simply imbecile … [or] raging mad; and who then would step between them and the 'last resource' which promised to prolong existence?" (*Ladies' Cabinet* 04 Apr., 1855, p. 199). That Dickens could not overcome his socially constructed prejudices to recognise this possibility is difficult to reconcile with the empathy and concern he reveals elsewhere in his work towards the poor and underprivileged of his own society. Nevertheless, his passion for defending the reputation of Franklin and his fellow officers persisted, as events and publications of 1856 and 1857 were to prove.

Disunity and further controversy

Remaining for the moment with 1855, however, public interest in the Arctic, and in the fate of the Franklin expedition in particular, approached its zenith amid another controversy that would further challenge the public's perceptions, as promoted by Dickens, of the impeccable character of Britain's naval officers. The newspapers of January 1855 reported "disunion among the officers" (*Standard* 09 Jan., 1855, p. 1) of an Arctic expedition commanded by Captain (later Sir) Richard Collinson.

Collinson's expedition had begun in 1850 alongside that of Robert McClure, Collinson aboard the *Enterprise* and McClure aboard the *Investigator*. Having

concluded its fruitless search of the Arctic, the *Enterprise* was returning home via Hong Kong, but most of its officers had been forcibly confined to their cabins for many months. A letter published in *The Standard* on 9 January 1855 and in the *Manchester Times* the next day, and identified as being “from an officer onboard the fleet at Hong Kong … [and dated] Nov.1 [1854]” (*Standard* 09 Jan., 1855, p. 1) (*Manchester Times*, 1855), asserted that:

> three lieutenants and master have been upwards of 15 months, and are still, under arrest. No officer has been out of this paradise of a ship during that period. The first lieutenant has been under arrest upwards of two years; … [and the ship] will sail about the 20th of this month for England, where these extraordinary proceedings on the part of her captain will be cleared up. (*Standard* 09 Jan., 1855, p. 1) (*Manchester Times*, 1855, p. 5)

The impression conveyed to readers by this revelation of naval unrest must have been hard for them to reconcile with those officers that Dickens described as “the flower of the trained adventurous spirit of the English Navy” (Dickens, 1854 ii, p. 388), who were to be praised for their “noble conduct and example” (Dickens, 1854 ii, p. 392).

The letter-writer’s satirical reference to the ship as a ‘paradise’ belies the terrible conditions under which the crew were surviving, but survive they did, to Collinson’s credit, albeit in circumstances that were geographically, mentally and physically hostile to their health and wellbeing. The implication that all fault in these ‘extraordinary proceedings’ lay entirely with Collinson is clear in the letter, indicating that such disunity on expedition ships was considered rare. However, the conflicting accusations that flew in all directions between the captain, his crew and the Admiralty once the *Enterprise* reached London, far from ‘clear[ing] up’ the situation, apparently “fizzled out inconclusively” (Fleming, 1999, p. 409) and it may have been only his success in bringing the *Enterprise* home that saved Collinson from court-martial in a year that saw three other ships – the *Resolute*, the *Intrepid*, and McClure’s *Investigator* – lost or abandoned in Arctic ice.

Collinson’s exploits were eulogised in 1856 in *Arctic Enterprise; a poem in seven parts,* by Chandos Hoskyns Abrahall, a minor member of two Herefordshire families of ancient nobility, whose poem is inexpertly contrived into continuous

rhyming couplets with, as the title suggests, seven parts. In the first lines of Part VI, Abrahall imagines the ship:

> Borne on wild winds o'er life-deserted strands,
> Her lonely-devious flight the Muse expands; ...
> Joyless inhuman scenes 'tis hers to scan,
> Ungenial worlds, new to the steps of man;
> Where, midst portentous fires that nightly rise,
> Disclosing ghastly deserts to the skies,
> Fierce from the Pole infuriate Frost prevails;
> While Death o'er his own sphere triumphant sails,
> In funeral-clouds above, and spreads below,
> His spectral rove, a winding-sheet of snow (Abrahall, 1856, p. 87)

The ‘spectral’ Arctic, so prevalent in the British imagination at this time and so elaborately explored by Shane McCorristine in his work *The Spectral Arctic, a History of Dreams and Ghosts in Polar Exploration* (McCorristine, 2018), here claims the men of the Franklin expedition as its own, sweeping them up and along in ‘funeral clouds’ that form both their shrouds and their graves amid the ‘life-deserted strands’, and yet that same land is deemed ‘new to the steps of man’, despite the numerous expeditions that had visited it over a period of three hundred years and the Inuit whose home it has been for countless centuries. Abrahall’s Aurora Borealis, or ‘portentous fires that nightly rise’, bring here not the heavenly plains of fairy tales but ‘deserts’ that are ‘ghastly’, ‘ungenial’ and ‘fierce’. The harsh negativity of the language, the contrasting extremes of ‘fire’ and ‘frost’, and the emphasis on ‘death’ and funereal imagery lends an eerie conclusion to Franklin’s expedition in response to Rae’s report, but the overall timbre of the poem lacks conviction or consistency.

Abrahall had some influential backers, however, and subscribers to his publication included John Barrow (presumably Jnr, as Snr had died in 1848), Lady Franklin, and Rear Admirals Sir John Ross and Sir W. Edward Parry. (Abrahall, 1856, pp. 213-216). Listing all the "Expeditions sent in search of Sir John Franklin, K.C.H. and the Crews of Her Majesty's Discovery Ships, ‘Erebus’ and ‘Terror’, from 1848-1855;” (Abrahall, 1856, pp. 211-212), Abrahall ensures that each of these subscribers is fully acknowledged for their part in the searches for Franklin, and provides for each Part an “Argument”, which serves as a summary of the lines therein. This rhetorical device elucidates the text for readers

and is helpful in overcoming the shortcomings of his poetry. It also serves to elide the respective approaches of journalism, naval reports and poetry to the reporting and reflecting of Arctic expeditions, calling into question the effectiveness of any one without the other. This highlights the need to consider all forms of representation – be they in art, literature or popular culture – and the interplay between them in order to understand the ways in which representations and perceptions of the Arctic followed a circular trajectory during the course of the nineteenth century.

Relics

Unlike the *Enterprise's* Captain, Collinson, McClure was successful in recovering some remains of the Franklin expedition, and he also gained recognition and reward for being the first person to traverse a Northwest Passage, albeit in two different ships with an overland trek between them. The items that he, Rae and members of other search expeditions that continued to sail into the Arctic regions recovered were immediately endowed on their return to the UK with the status of holy relics, reflecting the "spectral men" (*Ladies' Cabinet* 04 Apr., 1855, p. 196) and "martyrs of science" (*Ladies' Cabinet* 01 Feb., 1855, p. 67) with whom they were so closely and tenaciously connected.

As I argue elsewhere[20], there is a revealing religiosity in the words 'martyrs' and 'relics', the former of which identifies the lost men as having laid down their lives for a hallowed cause, and the latter of which has been associated since the thirteenth century with the sacred bones of saints and martyrs; yet the terms were adopted in the middle years of the nineteenth century to refer to any goods and chattels retrieved from lost Arctic expeditions. The affecting language of the *Ladies' Cabinet*, quoted above, is indicative of a wider hyperbolic tendency in celebrating the memory of men lost in the Arctic to elevate them to a status akin to that of the saints. This is evident not only in the classification of their belongings as 'relics' but also in their immortalisation as 'spectral men'. That they were also

[20] ie: in my research blog post 'Arctic Relics; a story of Transformation', dated 24 May 2019 at https://c19arcticrepresentations.wordpress.com/2019/05/24/arctic-relics-a-story-of-transformation/

perceived as 'martyrs of science' equates science to a religion and implies that the men willingly sacrificed themselves in its cause. Nevertheless, the style and tone of language adopted by the *Ladies' Cabinet* was prevalent as representations and perceptions of the Arctic progressed around their circular trajectory. This was in part due to the magnificent exhibition that the French had mounted following the recovery of the remains of an expedition led by Jean-Françoise de Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse in 1788. Celebrated and commemorated as lost heroes, the image of La Pérouse and his crew's "spectacular absence and memorials remained long in the British public's collective imagination" (Craciun, 2016, p. 63), ultimately creating a typically rivalrous desire in the English to retrieve and display the relics of Franklin's expedition in a similar or superior manner.

Such relics did not include the remains of the 'martyred' sailors, any corporal remains of whom were usually buried where they were found, but their belongings, which, no matter how small, were referred to from the outset as relics. Images of the "crests on articles of plate brought by Dr. Rae" (ILN 28 Oct., 1854, p. 421), for example, had been denoted in the *Illustrated London News* as "relics of the Franklin expedition" (*ILN* 28 Oct., 1854, p. 421) as early as 28 October 1854, and further images of these very first items to be recovered from that expedition appeared in the following week's edition, on 4 November 1854, under the title "The Franklin Relics" (*ILN* 04 Nov., 1854, p. 431). These items, mainly obtained by Rae from the Inuit in trade negotiations, included two images of Franklin's badge of the Royal, or Hanoverian, Guelphic Order, signifying his knighthood; a medallic portrait of Franklin by the French sculptor Pierre-Jean David d'Angers (usually referred to simply as David); part of a flannel shirt; a piece of plate; part of a compass; a certificate case; some buttons, linked with cord; a cook's knife; a knife handle, without its blade; another button; a gold lace band; and a seaman's knife.

Rae himself did not use the term 'relic' in his report, preferring to refer to the items he had recovered as "articles" (Rae, 1854). Nevertheless, the affecting tone of newspaper reports labels them "memorials … most painfully interesting" (*ILN* 28 Oct., 1854, p. 421), and echoes Dickens's initial response in *The Household*

Narrative, as discussed in Chapter Two, in asserting that these relics were recovered by a man who is "highly distinguished" (*ILN* 28 Oct., 1854, p. 421) and whose word "may …. be implicitly relied upon" (*ILN* 28 Oct., 1854, p. 421). Despite the controversy surrounding Rae and his discoveries, this initial emotive response to the objects themselves remained sacrosanct.

Consequently, as the objects were laid to rest in museums, exhibition halls or private homes, they were imbued with the same reverential sentiment previously reserved for holy relics. In what was the culmination of a nineteenth century media-led obsession with polar exploration, therefore, the Franklin relics became, as Adriana Craciun affirms:

> a shrine to the global circulation and mutability of … manufactured things [which] left England's industrial cities as commodities and technology, reached beyond the furthest periphery of Britain's empire in disaster, and returned to the capital transformed, usually through Inuit agency (Craciun, 2016, p. 43).

Thing Theory suggests that usage dictates purpose, and purpose becomes transitory as the intention of the maker is subverted by the interpretation and adaptation of the user. Thus, Craciun (Craciun, 2016, p. 37), agrees with Nicholas Thomas's conclusion that "[o]bjects are not what they were made to be but what they have become" (Thomas, 1991, p. 4), and items recovered from the Arctic were universally deemed to have become 'relics'. Their classification, however, created for the Victorians, as it still does today, a dilemma for the curators of museums and other exhibitions: should items be classified as what they were made to be or as what they have become? Twenty-first century museums generally choose to classify such items as "the object as it stood at the point of collection, rather than of origin … [simultaneously] acknowledging the interchange between European and indigenous technologies" (Craciun, 2016, p. 49), and thereby also acknowledging the processes through which artefacts have passed in their transition from intention to purpose.

In the Victorian era, as its commodity culture evolved, Britain developed a new affinity to 'things' in general, but particularly to things that could be proved to be associated with specific places or individuals, and the Franklin relics are important early examples of this. Bill Brown asserts that "we look through objects

to see what they disclose about history, society, nature or culture – [and] above all, what they disclose about us" (Brown, 2001, p. 4), and this is certainly the case here. Through the Franklin relics, the Victorians were able to reflect on the history of several decades of generally fruitless Arctic exploration and consider the nature of the men whose lives had been lost and the nature of the society and culture that had sacrificed them to the Arctic wastes. They could admire, too, the skill of those they considered to be 'savages' in repairing and adapting broken tools discarded by the expeditions. Looking at the relics now, we view not only our own history, society and culture but also those of the Inuit communities disturbed and amazed throughout the nineteenth century by frequent tribes of white men traipsing so ill-prepared through their homelands. We sense the contrast between the explorers' tendency to discard items that had broken or outlived their purpose and the natural instincts of the Inuit to repair, adapt and make useful again whatever fell into their hands: an original 'make-do-and-mend' society, based on the Inuit people's innate inclination to preserve, conserve and create beautiful yet functional items using the sparse resources available to them.

Some Franklin relics, of course, remain in the Arctic to this day – one thinks specifically of the ships *Erebus* and *Terror*, lying on the seabed, undiscovered until 2014 and 2016 respectively, and too fragile to raise – while others have been recovered intact, and still more have been returned to British shores in an altered form due to the interactions of weather, time or Inuit intervention. Exhibits in the National Maritime Museum's 2017 exhibition *Death in the Ice*, for example, included, as their captions explained:

> a bow made from musk-ox horn, skin and caribou sinew attached to European hardwood probably salvaged from Franklin expedition equipment, [and] arrows with traditional bone tips but also European iron ground on a whetstone.

An iron file exhibited close by is branded with an arrow-head that identifies it as British government property, while exhibits such as a "Harpoon Head, Man's Knife and Ulu (Woman's Knife) …, combining local knowledge and European metals, highlight the technological ingenuity of Inuinnait culture" (Ryan, 2017, p. 71). As alluded to above, questions of categorisation still arise with such artefacts as museum curators decide whether to display them as the object they were

made to be, or the object they have become, and this creates a delightful instability in the nature and purpose not only of the items – the 'relics' – but also of the museums and galleries that exhibit them, and the people who go to see them. Janice Cavell asserts that "there can be no unproblematical representation of the real world, since a representation is a cultural artefact rather than a mirror" (Cavell, 2008, p. 7). Therefore, it is important to consider the ways in which the relics of the Franklin expedition are perceived; are viewers seeing something of Franklin, something of Victorian life and values, something of Inuit creativity and craftsmanship, or some conglomeration of all these, conflated in the mind's eye?

Fewer questions arise concerning the display of those items that have returned intact from the Arctic, although one still wonders at their unique provenance and how their fate could, so easily, have been different had a different person bought, made or otherwise acquired them. The fate of 'things' as well as of people is forever uncertain.

The fiddle that John Rae took with him on all his Arctic travels, for instance, could have ended its life as firewood, or it could have survived as a regularly played member of an orchestra or string quartet. Instead, it resides today in a glass cabinet in the museum in Rae's hometown of Stromness in the Orkney islands. Beside it sits the octant with which he surveyed many thousands of miles of Arctic shoreline, and on a shelf beneath it lies the rifle with which he slew caribou and other wild animals to provide food, clothing and tools for himself and his companions on their journeys. The museum's curator, Janette Park, suggested to me, during a conversation at the museum on 24 October 2018, that these three items sum up Rae's life and his success as an explorer. With survival skills far in excess of those attained by most of his British Naval counterparts[21], Rae assimilated himself to the conditions of the region and learnt the ways of the Inuit tribes with whom he lived, worked and traded.

The fiddle shows signs of careful and expert repairs, carried out, Park affirms, by Rae himself with masterful precision, craftsmanship and attention to detail.

[21] The exceptions were the Royal Navy's uncle and nephew team Sir John Ross and Sir James Clark Ross, both of whom "but especially James, anticipated Rae in coming to know the Inuit intimately; all three [being] fascinated by native ethnology" (Cowan, 2014, p. 35)

Occasionally, the fiddle is released from its home in Stromness in order to fulfil its remaining musical potential. One such occasion was Saturday 22 September 2018, when I heard Orcadian musician Jennifer Wrigley play it at the official opening of the new Polar Gallery at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. Playing her own composition, *An Ayr for John Rae*, as well as a few more traditional Scottish tunes of the kind her countryman Rae might have played on it, Wrigley made the fiddle sing again with a clear, rich tone.

Alongside these three items and other smaller remnants of Rae's life in the collections of Stromness Museum is the Halket boat, in which he crossed stretches of open water within the Arctic Archipelago, and the snowshoes he crafted to enable him to move more quickly across the ice. The boat is one of only two surviving examples of this innovative inflatable craft of rubber-impregnated cloth, invented in the 1840s by Lieutenant Peter Halket, and it sits, as deflated as the ambitions of Victorian explorers of the Arctic, on the museum floor. The snowshoes, like the fiddle and octant, are occasionally lent out to other exhibitions, as they were, in the company of Rae's sketchbooks, during the winter of 2018/19 to a touring exhibition of paintings and sketches by the Scottish artist Barbara Rae CBE RA FRSE, in honour of her late namesake. Viewing this exhibition at the Pier Arts Centre in Stromness in October 2018 and again in Canada House in London a few months later, I was struck by the artist's imposing use of shape and colour, in contrast to the detailed images and paler tones of the nineteenth century. In such ways, the representation of the Arctic and its Victorian associations is perpetuated to be reappraised through modern eyes.

Commodity Culture

'Things', such as those mentioned above, are treasured, however, not just for what they are or what they have become, but for whom they belonged to; authenticity of provenance is key to the continuing value and survival of such artefacts, as TV shows about art and antiques constantly remind us. However, this now commonly accepted axiom was a new challenge in the Victorian age as "questions of authenticity were not really raised before the middle of the

nineteenth century" (Bodenstein, 2011, p. 8). In French museums, for example, "in 1844, no one expected any explications concerning the provenance [of exhibits] … [whereas] in 1852, authenticity was declared the essential condition and principle of [such] collections" (Bodenstein, 2011, pp. 8-9). Thackeray reflects this changing perception of goods in his 1847/48 novel *Vanity Fair* as Amelia, on learning that it was a gift from Dobbin and not George, rejects her previously treasured piano on the grounds that "[i]t was not George's relic. It was valueless now!" (Thackeray, 1998, p. 759). In this one act, Amelia affirms both her love for her late husband, George, and her contempt for her devoted suitor, Dobbin. Her action also affirms her belief in the 'thingness of things'; the inalienable ability of objects to represent more than their practical or decorative purpose. This concept underpins commodity culture and it fascinated Thackeray, for whom, as John Carey observes, "[c]ommodities were an unfailing stimulant …[as] [h]is imagination kept returning to the relations, *or* failed relations, between commodities and consumers" (Carey, 1977, p. 61 original emphasis).

Such relationships between people and goods were, then, an evolving issue in the 1850s, with the result that, "[w]hether understood in existential or empirical terms, authenticity was a cultural problem that assumed a new urgency for the mid-Victorians" (Waters, 2008, p. 64), who found themselves to be the first generation to grapple with issues of verification relating to the provenance of items displayed for public entertainment or information. Thus, with increasing access to material goods, and a growing commodity culture among the middle and upper classes, Victorian Britain developed a new affinity to 'things' in general, but particularly to things that became, to follow Thomas's conceit, more than they were made to be through association with specific places or individuals.

With the new factories manufacturing replica items or thousands of identical 'originals', the possibility for fraud and deceit increased, so this was a major factor in the move to verify the authenticity and provenance of goods, the possession and display of which in the home became synonymous with wealth and social status. Dickens highlights this by introducing his readers to Mr and Mrs Veneerings' plethora of 'bran'-new' things in their "bran'-new house in a bran'-new quarter of London" (Dickens, 1864-65, p. 6), while Gaskell similarly

emphasises it with her intimate itemisation of the goods on display in each of the houses in the eponymous village of her 1851 novel, *Cranford* (Gaskell, 2010).

Away from fictional texts, crucial examples of this evolving focus on the authenticity and provenance of goods are the relics of the lost Franklin expedition. As discussed in Chapter Two, the first of these relics was discovered in 1854 by John Rae, ironically not during one of the many public and privately funded search expeditions but whilst engaged on "a geographical expedition desired, organized [sic] and financed by the HBC [Hudson's Bay Company]" (Casarini, 2014, p. 63) by whom he was employed as Chief Factor and Surveyor. A piece of wood, clearly stamped with the mark of the British Royal Navy, that could easily have been overlooked as mere flotsam on the shore, led Rae to other objects identifiable with the lost ships and sailors. Through scavenging and through trade with the Inuit, Rae returned these items to the UK, where their representation as 'relics' immediately affected the public's attitude towards them, making them, as already suggested, items to be revered despite their humble beginnings and dilapidated or altered state. They were no longer what they had been manufactured to be, nor what Inuit agency had made them; they had become, instead, 'relics'.

A photograph taken by Byrne and Co., London, in 1889, portrays Rae "posing with those Franklin relics that he was allowed to keep, …" (Moore, 2014, p. 155). They include two forks and a spoon, among other smaller items, and in this photograph, now stored in the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company[22], they are shown displayed in a small glass-fronted box that rests on a table beside Rae's chair. The forks cross diagonally to form the centrepiece of the display, whilst the spoon stands vertically, bowl down and forward facing, to their left. By Thomas's definition, these 'objects', which were manufactured as practical implements to aid the consumption of food, have become through time and agency decorative symbols of one man's achievements. The now elderly, white-haired and moustachioed gentleman sits cross-legged and straight-backed, his eyes directed through the camera lens at the viewer, his left arm resting on the wooden

[22] Archival reference: HBCA 1987/363-R-2/6 (Moore, 2014, p. 154)

arm of his chair and his right hand tucked nonchalantly inside the folds of his jacket. In front of the relics he so clearly treasures stands his "Royal Geographical Society medal, an honour of which he was obviously proud" (Moore, 2014, p. 154), whilst a map recording his 1851 survey results drapes the table beneath them; a symbol of western ambition as much as of Rae's personal accomplishments. A head-and-shoulders left-profile portrait of Rae at a similar age, and therefore probably painted in London at around the same time, hangs in Stromness museum, having been donated by his widow. The artist is unknown but the confidence and vivacity represented in his elderly features belie the adversities of the Arctic conditions he had endured for most of his life, not to mention the Arctic-cold resentment he suffered from much of the British public following his assertions regarding "the contents of the kettles" (Rae, 1854).

On 30 June 1855 – the day after Rae's attendance at a Royal Geographical Society meeting was reported in the *Caledonian Mercury* – an exhibition of *The Arctic Collection of John Barrow, with Franklin Relics*, opened at the Royal Polytechnic Institution in London with a lecture by William Scoresby, and further public lectures accompanied the exhibition throughout its two-month tenure of the Institution. Carrying a half-page illustration of a selection of the exhibits – including an ornamental pouch, a watch case, a lady's belt, charms made of coral, carvings of animals, and tobacco pipes – *The Lady's Newspaper and Pictorial Times* of 14 July 1855 asserts that:

> [t]he Polytechnic Institution have rarely brought forward anything that could contribute more to the amusement and instruction of the public than [this] collection … [which] we trust will not be again separated, but by some means secured for the permanent use of the public *(The Lady's Newspaper & Pictorial Times*, 1855, p. 21)

The focus here on 'instruction' as well as 'amusement' implies a desire, on the part of the writer and the exhibition's curators, to educate readers and visitors in their appreciation of Inuit craftsmanship and culture. Admiring the intricate craftwork evidenced in the items on display, all adapted or manufactured by the Inuit, and challenging readers' assumptions of the 'uncivilised' and 'savage' nature of a people who can create such beauty, the writer invites readers to imagine in their:

> mind's eye … the rude artist, surrounded by picturesque admirers, patiently by the lamplight fashioning these rough, yet somewhat characteristic, imitations of nature from the hard tusks of the Walrus … [for] [m]any who visit the Arctic collection will wonder at the clever manner in which copper, lead, ivory, &c, have been converted into tools and weapons. (*The Lady's Newspaper & Pictorial Times*, 1855, p. 21)

In this rather homely image of Arctic life, *The Lady's Newspaper & Pictorial Times* represents the Arctic through the cultural filters and devolved significance of the items on display, acknowledging the humanity and domesticity of the 'rude' yet 'picturesque' Inuit through an awareness of their creativity and ingenuity. It thereby presented its Victorian readers with an unusual representation of the Arctic's native people, a people who, as previously discussed, were widely considered to be of an inferior race to those of European descent. The 'lamplight' shines here on the absent Inuit workers as much as on their artwork, just as it might shine on a theatrical stage, making them the players in a show that readers of the magazine and visitors to the exhibition could only access through their 'mind's eye'. Though distanced from admirers of the exhibition, who were nevertheless left to wonder about the validity of their preconceptions and prejudices against such skilful artisans, the Inuit were teaching the nation who sought to teach them. So in a bizarre process of reverse-education, the British public was learning about the superior skills of a supposedly inferior civilisaton.

Public Lectures

With his background in Arctic whaling, scientific research and preaching, Scoresby was well qualified to open the Royal Polytechnic Institution exhibition and to comment on Barrow's legacy, and he is known to have given other, similar lectures. The *Liverpool Mercury* of 10 November 1854 reports, for example, that on the previous Wednesday evening he had addressed "The Liverpool Church of England Institution … in the Hope Hall, Hope Street" (*Liverpool Mercury*, 1854, p. 3) on the subject of 'Sir John Franklin And The Arctic Regions'. He also toured both America and Australia, although on these tours he mainly preached to

church congregations and lectured on mesmerism. In the final year of his life, however, he "was persuaded to give a course of four lectures on the Arctic Regions" (Stamp & Stamp, 2002, p. 241) in Edinburgh.

Lectures about the Arctic, and about the history of exploration in the region, were not, however, confined to either the major cities or the major players on that icy stage. In the county of Kent, for instance, the local newspaper, the *Kentish Independent*, reported on Saturday 24 March 1855 that:

> on Saturday week, Mr Cresy delivered his second lecture upon the Arctic voyage to the members of the Sutton-at-Hone Mutual Improvement Society, taking up the subject where he had left it in his former lecture, as reported in the *Kentish Independent* of March 10th, …" (*Kentish Independent,* 1855, p. 6)

Melville & Co's *Directory and Gazetteer of Kent* for 1858 records that Sutton-at-Hone, which lies in Kent's Darenth Valley, in the north-west of the county, had a population of just 1290 people in 1851. The Directory lists a "George Creasey, shopkeeper" (Sutton-at-Hone History, 2019 i) among its local traders, as does the village's Post Office Directory of 1855 (Sutton-at-Hone History, 2019 ii), so it is likely that this is the same 'Mr. Cresy' who delivered the lectures reported in the *Kentish Independent*. Beginning this second lecture with an account of voyages in 1631, the newspaper reports, Cresy/Creasey ended his presentation with an account of Franklin's first expedition, leaving "further consideration of the subject to a future opportunity" (*Kentish Independent,* 1855) and therefore not yet directly addressing the story of the Arctic tragedy that was unfolding as he spoke.

That a local shopkeeper should be delivering a series of lectures about the Arctic to a Mutual Improvement Society in a small Kent village indicates the breadth and level of interest the topic aroused and suggests that it was widely deliberated upon and discussed among people of diverse social status. It has not yet proved possible to ascertain whether Cresy/Creasey was a former seafarer, who, like Scoresby, was able to inform his audience from first-hand experience, or whether his information was gleaned through his engagement with art and literature, but the newspaper report nonetheless suggests that he found an attentive audience among a cross-section of his fellow villagers.

These same villagers, and Creasey himself, might also, of course, have travelled the twenty-or-so miles to London to see panoramas such as "Atkins's 'Grand Pictorial Entertainment,' *The Earth from Pole to Pole*" (Potter, 2007, p. 217), which enjoyed a season at the Linwood Gallery in Leicester Square in 1855.

Further north, other local amateur lecturers also found an audience. The *Derby Mercury* of 26 September 1855, for example, reported in its section devoted to news from Staffordshire that:

> [o]n Friday evening last a panorama illustrating Sir James Ross' voyage to the Arctic Regions, in search of the late Sir John Franklin, was exhibited to the children, teachers, and friends of Christ Church Sunday Schools, Burton-on-Trent, when a descriptive lecture, accompanied by appropriate music, was delivered by Mr. Simons, one of the teachers, in which the privations, difficulties, and hardships the voyagers had to endure, their passage to those inhospitable regions, with the manners and customs of the inhabitants, were geographically described." (*Derby Mercury*, 1855, p. 5)

It would be wonderful to know what was considered to be 'appropriate music', and how it compared with the similarly 'appropriate music' played by Mr Cotterill at the Royal Polytechnic Institute in 1850, as referenced in Chapter Two. It would also be interesting to know exactly what 'manners and customs' Mr. Simons attributed to the Arctic's native 'inhabitants' and how these related to the living exhibitions that he might have read about if not seen. Given his role in the Sunday School and the nature of his audience, Simons doubtless emphasised in his 'descriptive lecture' the sacred integrity of both the region and the explorers. There is no indication in the *Derby Mercury's* report as to the provenance of his information, and he may, of course, have been reading from a script provided with the panorama images, which, in turn, might well have been the ones previously displayed in London. A rich interplay emerges from such speculation concerning the London exhibitions being transposed to provincial venues over a period of years, to be viewed and interpreted in different ways by different presenters, audiences and local press reporters. The viewing experience in a church hall, for instance, must have been very different from that in a purpose-built auditorium such as those found in London, with the former surely being a far

less immersive experience than the latter and thus losing some of its precious verisimilitude.

‘The Man …’, ‘The Wreck …’ and *The Frozen Deep*

By the middle of the nineteenth century, then, the Arctic had become ubiquitous in British culture and, with Cobbe’s article 'The Man on the Iceberg' included in its edition of 31 May 1856, *Household Words* continued its own Arctic coverage. In this tale, a body – presumed lifeless – is blasted into the sea by the cannon fire of a passing ship deliberately overturning the iceberg on which it has been seen, through the lens of a telescope, resting “on [its] back with one arm folded in an unusual manner under his head” (Cobbe, 1856, p. 479). The crew experience “[a] sensation of inexpressible relief” (Cobbe, 1856, p. 480) in depositing the body thus into the sea, as if by doing so they had afforded it the final sacrament of burial.

For that same year’s Christmas edition of the journal, Dickens commissioned some of his best contributors to help him construct an eight-part collection of short stories that together told the Arctic tale of ‘The Wreck of the Golden Mary’. As suggested in Chapter Two, this was partly inspired by the sinking of the SS *Arctic* in 1854, and its authors included Wilkie Collins, Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald, Harriet Parr, Adelaide Anne Proctor and James White, as well as Dickens himself. The result was a fictional community of trans-Atlantic passengers adrift in two lifeboats on the Arctic sea. Men, women and an ‘Angel child’, nicknamed The Golden Lucy, sustain each other, even through the child’s death and much sickness, with stories, songs and prayers, in much the same way that Dickens and his readers hoped ‘The Lost Arctic Voyagers’ of the Franklin expedition had done, and thereby displaying all the characteristic fortitude that Dickens believed to be inherent in his countrymen. In a letter to his sub-editor, William Henry Wills, on 13 November 1856, Dickens demonstrated his passion for the subject as he wrote: “I am glad you like ‘The Wreck’, … I never wrote anything more easily, or I think with greater interest and stronger belief.” (Dickens Vol 8, 1993, p. 222).

Earlier that same year, as Government funding for search expeditions diminished and Sir John Franklin's widow grew ever more indomitable in her pursuit of the recognition she felt was due to her late husband, Dickens had commissioned Wilkie Collins to write the play *The Frozen Deep* (Collins & Dickens, 1966). Collins wrote – as Michael Slater, Peter Ackroyd and Robert Louis Brannon, among others, have affirmed – under the close direction of Dickens, who determined the key elements of the plot, including the characters and their relationships, wrote the Prologue and also provided Collins with much of the dialogue[23].

An extract from a letter that Dickens sent to his friend and biographer John Forster on or around 2 March 1856 indicates his inspiration for the relationship between the play's primary male characters, Frank Aldersley and Richard Wardour. It reads:

> Lady Franklin sent me the whole of that Richardson memoir, and I think Richardson's manly friendship, and love of Franklin, one of the noblest things I ever knew in my life. It makes ones [sic]heart beat high, with a sort of sacred joy. (Dickens Vol 8, 1993, p. 66)

The memoir that Dickens refers to had been published a month earlier in the eighth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Volume X, February 1856*, and on 6 April 1856 Dickens wrote to Wills saying that "Collins and I have a mighty original notion (mine in the beginning) for another play at Tavistock House" (Dickens Vol 8, 1993, p. 81). On 3 October that same year he informed the banking heiress, Angela Burdett-Coutts, with whom he had collaborated on several social welfare programmes, that "it is called *The Frozen Deep,* and it is extremely clever and interesting – very serious and very curious" (Dickens Vol 8, 1993, p. 199).

A playbill from the very first performance, at Dickens's home, Tavistock House, on Twelfth Night 1857 reveals that Dickens had gathered a cast of friends and family that included himself, two of his sons, Charley and Alfred, his sister-in-law

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[23] This play is also discussed or referenced in seven posts on my research blog – https://c19arcticrepresentations.wordpress.com/?s=frozen+deep – and in my M.A. Dissertation, 'Reclaiming the Arctic Hero: How and Why Charles Dickens helped Lady Franklin redeem the reputation of her lost husband, Sir John Franklin', University of Kent, 2016

Georgina Hogarth, his daughters Katy and Mamie – who were famously replaced by professional actresses when the play transferred to larger venues – and friends including his co-author Wilkie Collins, Mark Lemon, Augustus Egg, and Janet Wills. This latter cast member, the wife of sub-editor Wills, was recruited by Dickens specifically because she was Scottish and the play featured a "Scotch Nurse", Nurse Esther, who was omitted by Collins from his 1866 short-story version of the tale. In the play, Nurse Esther's 'second sight' is derided by other characters in a direct attempt by Dickens to further undermine and ridicule the Scottish explorer John Rae as an 'outsider', or an 'other' in British society.

The set for the play was created by William Telbin – renowned for his Panorama paintings – and Clarkson Stanfield, who was by then an established artist but returned to his former occupation of scenery painter as a special favour to Dickens. Their representation of the Arctic for the stage, therefore, drew directly from the representations they had formerly used in creating Panoramas and Dioramas, and thus, by deeper derivation, from the watercolours and sketches of artist explorers such as George Back and John Ross, evidencing a continuum in Arctic representation across the spheres of art and literature and through the filters of time and media.

A photograph taken in the garden of the great entrepreneur of Arctic and Alpine Panoramas, Albert Smith, in January 1857 shows Telbin and Stanfield standing alongside the cast as they gathered for rehearsals, showing again the close working relationship that existed between artists working in the theatre and artists working in other fields of popular culture.

On the stage, the play opens with a lonely community of women waiting at home for news of their missing menfolk – just as, in 1817, Jane Austen's Mrs Croft had waited:

> [t]he winter … by [her]self in Deal, when the Admiral (*Captain* Croft then) was in the North Seas … in perpetual fright … from not knowing what to do with [her]self, or when [she] should hear from him next; (Austen, 2007, p. 54 original emphasis)

From this scene of domestic anguish, the audience is transported to an equally lonely and infinitely more isolated community of those same lamented menfolk,

hungering for news of home as well as for food and warmth. Their cook, John Want, whose constant grumbling whilst asserting that "I don't grumble" (Collins & Dickens, 1966, p. 121) adds a dry humour to the play, "mix[es] bones and hot water for soup" (Collins & Dickens, 1966, p. 122) in a saucepan. In a tacit allusion to the possibility of cannibalism, the origins of the bones are, intriguingly, never revealed. Furthermore, in a pivotal twist of fate, thoughts of that same 'last resort' recur as the play's two main characters, Richard Wardour and Frank Aldersley – who are by accidents of space and time betrothed to the same woman – find themselves separated from their peers. Alone together in the Arctic's inhospitable desert of ice, the weak and feeble Aldersley is at the mercy of Wardour. Thus, tension builds in anticipation that Wardour will succumb to the temptation to rid himself of his rival in full knowledge that it is Aldersley on whom she has set her heart. The audience watch, breath bated, as he struggles with his conscience and relates his anguished wrangling in:

> the waste of snow .. [with] the tempter … the Devil … [until, with] the night-wind … [and] the groaning icebergs … the wicked voice floated away … away, away for ever!" (Collins & Dickens, 1966, p. 159).

The desert of Arctic ice is here substituted for the dry desert in which Christ faced his torment from the devil (Bible, 2002 ii), and Christ-like, Wardour faces his temptation too. Following the prevailing tendency to represent the Arctic as a sacred space, where, as in Andersen's *The Snow Queen*, and Kingston's *Peter the Whaler*, the most "pure and noble thoughts" (Morley, 1853, p. 242) predominate, and where all the deceased become martyrs and all remains become relics, Wardour resolves to sacrifice his own life for that of the weaker Aldersley, dragging him to safety and telling their betrothed with practically his dying breath "I have saved him – I have saved him for *you*" (Collins & Dickens, 1966, pp. 158, original emphasis). Wardour has realised that by this action he can attain a greater good: "a far, far better thing" (Dickens, 1950 i, p. 335) as his later re-incarnation Sydney Carton would say[24], and in saving his own soul and

[24] Dickens acknowledged in a letter of 5th September 1857 to Angela Burdett Coutts that the idea for *A Tale of Two Cities*, and its protagonist Sydney Carton, came to him while he was onstage playing the part of Richard Wardour (Dickens Vol 8, 1993, p. 432) (Schlicke, 2011, p. 561).

the life of his arch-rival, he is "redeemed and becomes a martyr, because he has chosen to reject the temptation which faced him" (Oulton, 2001, p. 157).

With their Finale to *The Frozen Deep,* Dickens and Collins evoke an atmosphere of hope in a hopeless situation and envisage, as their Prologue had predicted:

> … Arctic sailors, … [who] put gloom away, …,
> Hail'd the warm sun, and were again at Home. (Collins & Dickens, 1966, p. 98)

A triumph from its very first performance, *The Frozen Deep* went on to entertain packed houses at the Manchester Free Trade Hall in the summer of 1857 and, prior to that, at the Royal Gallery of Illustration, where the initial performance, on 4 July, was reserved for Queen Victoria and her invited guests. Dickens played Wardour in a style that "electrified everyone" (Slater, 2011, p. 418) as he "[n]ight after night, … tore himself to pieces, in order to fuse thousands of strangers into one community" (Andrews, 2006, p. 262), and benefit performances in both the above venues raised money for the bereaved family of the cast's friend and colleague Douglas Jerrold, whose death on 10 June that year had come as shock to them all. Most importantly for this thesis, however, the popularity of the play reignited the flame of public interest in Dickens's 'Lost Arctic Voyagers' of 1854, ensuring renewed support for the continuation of search expeditions looking for any trace of Franklin or his crew and ships.

The Later Search Expeditions

The main beneficiary of this renewed support was the expedition led by Francis Leopold McClintock in Lady Franklin's newly acquired yacht *Fox*, for which a Royal Geographic Society announcement was carried under the heading 'The Franklin Expedition' in the *Illustrated London News* of 9 May 1857. Letters held at the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge[25] demonstrate that preparations for this expedition were well underway in 1857, with McClintock corresponding with the Admiralty over their refusal to release an officer whose

[25] I also discuss these letters in 'McClintock's Letters', posted 31 July 2018 at https://c19arcticrepresentations.wordpress.com/2018/07/31/mcclintocks-letters/

service he had requested "in consequence of his being in actual service in H. M. Mary" (McClintock, 1857). Writing from the Arctic Discovery Yacht *Fox*, moored in Aberdeen, McClintock nevertheless states that he is "truly happy that their Lordships have had much pleasure in granting leave of absence to any officer upon half pay to join the 'Fox'" (McClintock, 1857). In essence, McClintock is asking 'their Lordships' at the Admiralty to allow him to select the most suitable and experienced officers for his expedition, but his choice is being restricted to only those most readily available. The sarcastic tone he adopts in this letter indicates the friction that existed between Admiralty-led expeditions and those that were privately financed. Such friction had existed throughout the decades, first between Barrow and Scoresby and then between Barrow and Ross, as discussed in earlier chapters.

Dickens continued to smooth the path for Lady Franklin by publishing two articles fervently in favour of her campaign on 14 February and 25 April 1857. Both were written by Henry Morley, the author of the 1853 article 'Unspotted Snow' and the first, entitled 'The Lost English Sailors', follows the reasoning of that earlier article and Horne's 'Arctic Heroes' (Horne, 1850) in emphasising the relative safety of Arctic exploration in comparison to forms of warfare, and, indeed, living in a disease-ridden London. By engaging in Arctic expeditions, Morley suggests, "more men have lived than might have lived had they remained at home; and they have lived and learnt what they could not have learnt at home" (Morley, 1857 i, p. 145). With this he dismisses all opposing arguments – which must, therefore, have been prevalent – concerning the perils of continuing to search for the lost expedition and concludes that "[t]he peril talked about is not … too great; and, were it greater, should not daunt us if it be a duty to complete – as we now can – the search for Franklin" (Morley, 1857 i, p. 146). Advising his readers that "volunteers … are already eager for permission to proceed" (Morley, 1857 i, p. 147) on such a venture, Morley represents the idea of a further search expedition as a 'duty' neglected by government but imperative to the resolution of a mystery, and one which "left undone … [will] blot … the best page of all our history" (Morley, 1857 i, p. 147).

Morley's subsequent article of 25 April 1857, entitled 'Official Patriotism', quotes extensively from three letters written by Lady Franklin to the Admiralty in 1856 and 1857. In these letters – reproduced in their entirety in Erika Behrisch Elce's volume of selected letters (Behrisch Elce (ed), 2009, pp. 125-152) – Lady Franklin's pleas for one "final and exhausting search … in [sic] behalf of the first and only martyrs to Arctic discovery in modern times" (Behrisch Elce (ed), 2009, p. 144) are laced with assurances that, if government money is not forthcoming, she is prepared to fund it herself. Again, Franklin's crew is elevated to saintly ranks, alongside the 'martyrs' of religious crusades, on their "mission so sacred" (Behrisch Elce (ed), 2009, p. 144). The spiritual connotations of the Arctic region are thus reinforced in the readers' minds, leading Morley to evoke equally spiritual images as he persuasively and emotively construes that:

> [s]he will sacrifice her whole fortune, devote her life's blood and energy to the work cast upon her woman's hands … [s]he does not ask the nation for a penny, but only for the use of what the Admiralty has put by as lumber (Morley, 1857 ii, p. 390)

Such 'lumber' included not just the naval officers offered by the Admiralty as surplus to their requirements, but also the loan of HMS *Resolute* – a ship whose story represents a lighter side of Arctic exploration: one of the ships 'lost' in the Arctic in 1855, it was recovered by a US whaling captain, who, abandoning his own ship to sail the *Resolute* home, subsequently sold it to the US Navy. They, in turn, refurbished it and returned it to the UK as a high-profile gift to Queen Victoria, but, in what Fergus Fleming calls "an odd game of diplomatic pass-the-parcel" (Fleming, 1999, p. 410), when the ship was later decommissioned and destroyed, some of its wood was made into a desk that was presented to the US President and is still used in the Oval Office of the White House today.

Asking "[w]ill the public suffer this request … to be refused? (Morley, 1857 ii, p. 390), Morley called on the government of Lord Palmerston – then leader of the Whig party and newly elected in one of the UK's rare plebiscite general elections as Prime Minister – to accede to Lady Franklin's requests. They did not, and Lady Franklin purchased instead the aforementioned *Fox* – variously described in books, articles and newspaper reports as a screw-yacht, a schooner-yacht and a steam-yacht.

The *Fox* finally set sail in July 1857 and public interest in the Arctic in its various representations continued unabated. The *Illustrated London News* of 17 April 1858, for example, carried a notice regarding an exhibition of Franklin relics in the United Service Museum, accompanied by a plea for funds for a ‘People's Expedition’ in search of Franklin. When McClintock returned in 1859 with conclusive evidence, in the form of a document that became famous as the Victory Point Record, that Franklin had died in 1847 and all his men had later abandoned their ships, “[m]ystery, [which] had been the watchword of the searchers in the 1850s, [was] overtaken after 1859 by disaster” (Craciun, 2014, p. 13), and public interest attained – literally in some cases – monumental heights as its focus shifted from the men onto the ways in which their ‘sacrifice’ could remembered.

Poetry Competition

In 1860, academia expressed its interest in Franklin’s legacy in the form of a literary prize offered at Oxford University for the best poem on the theme of Sir John Franklin and his lost expedition. Entrants included Algernon Charles Swinburne with his *The Death of Sir John Franklin*, and Richard Doddridge Blackmore with *The Fate of Franklin,* but these famous English writers were beaten by Canadian undergraduate Owen Alexander Vidal with his entry, later published as:

> *A Poem upon the Life and Character of Sir John Franklin, with special reference to Time, Place, and Discovery of his Death: recited in the Sheldonian Theatre, Monday, July 2, at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.* (Vidal, 1860)

In his poem, Swinburne alludes to the Elizabethan age of Arctic exploration as well as more recent naval exploits as he prefaces his text with a quote from Shakespeare’s *Pericles* and argues that, “[l]ike those dead seamen of Elizabeth / [a]nd those who wrought with Nelson and with Blake” (Swinburne, 1860, p. V), the names of Franklin and his men should be revered as “[p]art of all noble things that shall be done, / [p]art of the royal record of the sea” (Swinburne, 1860, p. IX).

Blackmore adopts a similarly nationalistic but more fatalistic tone as he immediately contemplates “[t]he landmark where a sailor died” (Blackmore, 1860, p. 10) – a sailor, moreover:

> [i]n whom three centuries, resolved
> [t]o turn the flank of death,
> [w]ere number’d and absolved (Blackmore, 1860, p. 10).

A sailor, too:

> [w]hom many lands unite to mourn,
> [b]ut only Britain could have borne,
> [a]nd Britain’s navy rear’d” (Blackmore, 1860, p. 11).

Thus, Blackmore and Swinburne each create a eulogy for Britain as much as for Franklin. In contrast, Vidal’s stanzas assume a more lyrical quality, with varying pace and tone to represent the vicissitudes of Franklin’s career in a chronological biographical format. Serving as “signal midshipman on board the Bellarophon” (Vidal, 1860, p. 9fn) at the Battle of Trafalgar, for example, Vidal tells us that:

> … Franklin saw that signal
> In the calm before the strife,
> And made that burning sentence
> The motto of his life (Vidal, 1860, p. 9)

The ‘signal’, hoisted ahead of battle on the instruction of that “prince of seamen” (Vidal, 1860, p. 8) Lord Nelson, had passed into the national consciousness as “England Expects that every man will do his duty” (Knowles (Ed), 2001, p. 540), and Vidal’s evocation of it sets the tenor of his account of Franklin’s career as one of devoted service to his country. The poem, which is divided into twelve parts, reaches a crescendo of excitement in its middle stanzas as Vidal imagines Franklin’s 1845 expedition advancing:

> On through the broad north water,
> That glances fair and free,
> Where glittering bergs like gems are set
> Upon the purple sea; (Vidal, 1860, p. 15)

The final rallying call of Part VI is thus repeated at the end of Part VIII as Vidal declares "… onward, onward is the word, – / "Hurrah for Behring's [sic] Straits!" (Vidal, 1860, p. 16).

In the six stanzas of Part XIII, however, the tone is bleaker and more negative as Vidal imagines the lost voyagers dolefully attempting to trudge homeward. The men are repeatedly and inexorably "marching down to the southward" (Vidal, 1860, p. 23). Their steps are "staggering … and slow"; "the wind [is] against their faces"; and "on the frozen earth beneath / [t]he men fall one by one" (Vidal, 1860, p. 23). Drawn on by delusions of "English chimes, / [and] [a] phantom fragrance … / [f]rom England's flow'ring limes" (Vidal, 1860, p. 23), the men plough on until "gazing still towards the south / [t]he last man dropped and died" (Vidal, 1860, p. 23).

The obdurate futility of their mission is made clear in Vidal's words, and all three of these poems represent the Arctic as a bleak and barren, unforgiving territory that has robbed Britain of some of its finest men. All three also acknowledge Lady Franklin's role in ensuring their fate was discovered, as:

> Though England and her sons despair,
> Her daughter shall pursue:
> And though his country cease to care,
> His wife shall win his due (Blackmore, 1860, p. 36)

Blackmore's poem, its cover page states, was published later that year "in aid of the Spilsby Fund for Erecting a Statue of Franklin in his native town" (Blackmore, 1860). Thus, in Franklin's hometown of Spilsby in Lincolnshire, a statue of Franklin, with inscriptions confirming that it was "[e]rected by public subscription" and created by "C. Bacon. Sc. London" in 1861, dominates the High Street, while a plaque placed more recently on a nearby baker's shop identifies that to be his birthplace. The words encircling the plinth at ground level were written some years later for a memorial in Westminster Abbey, as discussed in Chapter Four, and only three stone compass-point markers surround the area – omitting to designate a southerly direction. Atop the plinth, Franklin's effigy stands erect and portly, his left hand resting on a ship's anchor and his right hand grasping a telescope firmly at his side. The plinth beneath him erroneously declares him to be the "[d]iscoverer of the North West Passage", while in Spilsby's parish church

of St James, among memorials to other members of his family, a plaque that states it was “erected by his widow” asserts that Franklin and his crew “first discovered the north west passage” and “forged the last link with their lives”. Such phrases would be echoed on later monuments and memorials to Franklin’s memory, as, again, Chapter Four discusses.

Refiguring Perceptions of the Arctic

Significantly, from this point on, Arctic expeditions did not set sail in search of men but of the things they had left behind; items by which they could be remembered, and items that could be retrieved and refigured into relics to represent their lost lives in a tangible form for an eager public more ready than ever to devour them in any available form, from museum exhibit to panorama, from newspaper illustration to stereoscopic slide show. In all these guises, and more, Franklin’s final expedition came to represent the ultimate yet glorious defeat of British ambitions in the Arctic, and representations of the region in the 1860s thus focused on celebrating and sensationalising the feats and failings of the preceding decades.

In terms of a circular pathway for Arctic representations, such attention mirrored that of the century’s early years. Then, as the published works of Eleanor Porden and John Barrow, discussed in Chapter One, demonstrate, men like Parry, Ross, Franklin and Richardson had held the hopes of a nation in their hands and had been lauded as great heroes. This, despite the warnings of Coleridge, Hogg and Shelley, is what had enthused the youthful Dickens and families like the young Brontës to admire and support their Arctic exploits. The years had seen them tested, worn and defeated by the overwhelming challenges of Arctic exploration, yet there remained about their story a glow of lost expectations that their nation felt was worthy of memorialising not only in poetry and stone monuments but also in a proliferation of media made available to popular culture by developments in science, mechanics and technology.

Those dubbed by Morley the ‘Lost English Sailors’ and by Dickens the ‘Lost Arctic Voyagers’ thus attained a mythical majesty in the minds of the British public, who

continued to revere their memory for decades to come. Dickens, however, laid them to rest in an article that he wrote for the first edition of his new weekly journal – the successor to *Household Words* – *All the Year Round,* published on 30 July 1859. This article, entitled 'The Last Leaves of a Sorrowful Book', reflects that:

> [f]ew subjects of national interest have sunk deeper into the public mind than the fate of the lost heroes whose last earthly resting place is still hidden from us in the mysterious solitudes of the frozen deep (Dickens, 1859, p. 319)

Therein repeating the title of his play of three years earlier, Dickens secures the link in his readers' minds between the 'Lost Arctic Voyagers' of 1854, his theatrical triumph of 1857 and his current lament, and thus evidences again the serial nature of Arctic exploration, with each article or drama another instalment in the continuing saga. As mentioned in Chapter Two, 'The Last Leaves of a Sorrowful Book' emotively incorporates extracts from the letter and journal pages that were sent to Mr and Mrs Coningham by James Fitzjames in July 1845, and Dickens remarks on the "pathos in those four simple words, [we are very happy], read by the light of our after experience!" (Dickens, 1859, p. 321). The 'four simple words' were those with which Fitzjames had ended what he called his "catalogue" (Dickens, 1859, p. 321). Concluding his article with a fading light flickering and dying into a "night whose eternal morning dawns in the glory of another world" (Dickens, 1859, p. 323) as a metaphor for the souls of the lost men, Dickens draws to a close his part in this particular chapter of Arctic representation, and later articles in his journals were concerned more with representing reports and discoveries regarding the geology and meteorology of the region.

In *All the Year Round* in 1860, for example, two articles – one published on 21 April and one published on 8 December – each consider themes relating to climate change in both the northern and southern polar regions. The first article, 'Deluges' by Edmund Saul Dixon[26], speculates on the work of the French mathematician Alphonse Joseph Adhémar (1797-1862), whose book *Les Revolutions de la mer*, laying out his calculations for a 26,000-year cycle of

[26] Author's identity deduced by Dr Jeremy Parrott from his annotated set of *All the Year Round* and confirmed to me via email.

astronomical effects on Earth's oceans, had been published in 1842 and later translated into English as *Revolutions of the Sea*. Beginning with a biblical allusion to "Noah's … the last grand deluge" (Dixon, 1860, p. 40), Dixon contemplates the implications of Adhémar's work and anticipates that:

> Adhémar's deluge will happen … six thousand three hundred years hence … produced by the breaking up of the Antarctic glacier coinciding with the increase of the arctic glacier (Dixon, 1860, p. 46)

A similar theme informs the second article, 'Water Everywhere', by John Laws Milton[27]. The title indicates the circular trajectory around which representations and perceptions of the Arctic were travelling in the nineteenth century as it recalls Coleridge's lines from 1798:

> Water, water, every where
> And all the boards did shrink;
> Water, water, every where
> Ne any drop to drink. (Coleridge, 1991, p. 14)

Alluding, as Coleridge does, to the power of water to both preserve and destroy life, the article considers its propensity to "penetrate[.] into everything save metals, and even into some of these" (Milton, 1860, p. 203), and asserts that "this mighty fluid" (Milton, 1860, p. 203) is more powerful than other natural phenomena, such as earthquakes and volcanoes. Written in appreciation of the then newly published *Geological Gossip, or Stray Chapters on Earth and Ocean*, by Professor David Thomas Ansted (1814-1880), the article contemplates, among Ansted's other observations, the implications of significant movements of ice in the Arctic regions. It thereby concludes that:

> [h]ad man been able to read and interpret Nature's signs aright, he might have learned from dozens of the ice-fields how to get through the north-west passage by a very short cut (Milton, 1860, p. 204)

This conclusion combines an implied criticism of the ill-preparedness of the exploratory and search expeditions that had sailed in the previous decades with the sense of frustration expressed in the final paragraphs of 'Deluges' at the slow

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[27] Author's identity deduced by Dr Jeremy Parrott from his annotated set of *All the Year Round* and confirmed to me via email.

pace of scientific discovery, wherein “all our science is of yesterday” (Dixon, 1860, p. 46).

Ansted responded by contributing an article of his own to the edition of *All the Year Round* published four months later, on 13 April 1861. Arctic representation in the journal had been maintained in the intervening weeks by three items – two of which were published in the edition dated 2 February 1861. These were the still unattributed article, ‘In Praise of Bears’ – both Brown and Polar – which carried allusions to Arctic voyages of both eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and a poem, by James Macfarlan entitled ‘Northern Lights’. This latter demonstrates poetry’s continued fascination with the colours and effects of “young Aurora’s golden hair” (Macfarlan, 1861, p. 395) as the poet stands entranced, feeling himself blessed to experience such “shaking glory” (Macfarlan, 1861, p. 395). The third item, published on 2 March 1861 and entitled ‘Under the Sea’, again contemplates the mysteries of the oceans and the importance of the sea in the lives of the journal’s readers and is linked by its consideration of polar meteorology in relation to the work of a US naval officer, Captain Maury, to another article, ‘Marine Meteorology’, which Dickens published in *All the Year Round* on 27 April 1861.

Ansted’s article, ‘Arctic and Antarctic Lands’[28], similarly considers the climate and geology of the Arctic region in comparison to those of Antarctica. Asserting that “[t]here is … some reason to believe that the climate is even now changing, and the vegetation actually receding still further away from the pole” (Ansted, 1861, p. 57), Ansted discusses the:

> prevalent idea … that there is a gradual elevation going on in the vicinity of the north pole, tending to increase the quantity of ice, diminish the moisture and temperature of the winds, and thus gradually lower and deteriorate the climate of the north temperate zone (Ansted, 1861, p. 56)

He ponders the effect that this will have on the sea-channels within the Arctic and on the temperatures and land masses of the northern hemisphere and goes on to describe the geological make-up of the region, from its “[g]ranite, granitic, and

[28] Author’s identity deduced by Dr Jeremy Parrott from his annotated set of *All the Year Round* and confirmed to me via email.

other crystalline rocks …[its] limestone beds … [c]arboniferous limestone and even beds of true coal …[its] poor kind of sulphurous coal … [and] sandstone" (Ansted, 1861, p. 57), and the fossils found therein.

Perpetuating 'otherness'

Educated at Cambridge and an Honorary Fellow, by 1860, of King's College, London, as well as a Lecturer at a military college in Addiscombe, Ansted had travelled extensively throughout his life, first, as a boy, with his father and then alone, but his travels did not take him to the Arctic or Antarctic regions. Nevertheless, his article had harsh words to say concerning the indigenous populations of the former, describing in detail three "tribes" of people indigenous to the Arctic. Ansted tells us that the Esquimaux:

> are a well indicated race of pure blood and fair growth … [with] egg-shaped faces …; the eye … small and placed obliquely, the nose broad and depressed, the lips thick, and the hair black and coarse. … They live in an atmosphere which to a European is quite unendurable, and feed almost exclusively on animal food, rejecting scarcely any part, and hardly cooking at all. (Ansted, 1861, p. 57)

What Ansted, Dickens and others missed here, is that fresh, uncooked animal flesh provided vital nutrients needed in such infertile regions to prevent diseases that were so often the nemesis of English sailors, who routinely refused to acknowledge the wisdom of indigenous communities on food, shelter or clothing. Nonetheless, after discussing the migration habits of the Esquimaux, Ansted continues: "although lively and talkative enough in society; … they are inveterate thieves and liars, like almost all savage and half-civilised peoples." (Ansted, 1861, p. 58). Ansted's scathing tone continues as he criticises the Esquimaux for marrying late, having small families, and "suckl[ing] their children till about four years of age" (Ansted, 1861, p. 58) – all of which subverted the social norms of Victorian society and served to perpetuate readers' perceptions of the Inuit as untamed, almost inhuman, savages in contrast to those of British and European descent.

Ansted is equally scornful of the Lapps and Samoyed, stating in terms more redolent of animals in captivity than of human beings, that the former are:

> confined to the Northern extremity of Scandinavia … depend[ing] on rein-deer for their very existence … embrac[ing] Christianity in a very imperfect manner [and] rank[ing] among the lowest of the white races (Ansted, 1861, p. 58)

His views on the Samoyed are similar: they are, he writes, less “coarse [and] rude [than the Lapps, but] an inferior people to the Eskimos, though in many important respects resembling them” (Ansted, 1861, p. 58). As discussed in Chapter One, such opinions were based not on any experience of interaction with indigenous Arctic communities but on the contemporary theories of degenerationism and developmentalism, which had prevailed unquestioned until Charles Darwin published his *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. The first of these held that ‘savage’ races had degenerated from western civilisation, whilst the second, which was a theory established at the Enlightenment, held that in fact the reverse was true and western civilisation had developed, and was still developing, from a state of savagery through the auspices of literature, art and science.

Each of these theories shared, for the main part, an essential presumption of the superiority of western, white, ‘civilised’ races, and this supposition was defended against such notions as the ‘virtuous savage’ – which, as discussed in Chapter One, Sir John Ross had proposed in 1835 based on his first-hand experience of meeting and trading with indigenous Arctic communities – and the earlier concept, often attributed to Jean Jacques Rousseau, of the ‘noble savage’; an idea that Dickens had decried in an article of that name in *Household Words* on 11 June 1853, describing his eponymous ‘Noble Savage’ as “… a prodigious nuisance, and an enormous superstition … [because a savage] is a savage – cruel, false, thievish, murderous;” (Dickens, 1853 ii, p. 337). Admirers of the Inuit craftwork exhibited, as previously discussed, at the Polytechnic Institution in 1855, might easily have disagreed with this evaluation, and Darwin’s publication of *On the Origin of Species* should have turned all such theories on their head. Attitudes were, however, slow to change, as Ansted and Dickens prove with this article from 1861.

As with the contradictions between Nevil Maskelyne's scientific discoveries of a solid earth and the widespread notions of an inner-globe exemplified by John Cleves Symmes's 'hollow earth theory', this disjuncture between Darwin's revelations and Ansted's representations highlights the complex relationship between popular culture and scientific enquiry. Although Victorians revered science as a means of developing and progressing their society, its power to influence the attitudes and perceptions of individuals – and thus the wider public imagination – was very limited.

Dickens, as aforesaid, had become deeply embroiled throughout the 1850s in the conflicts regarding accusations of cannibalism among Franklin's stranded sailors. In continuing to publish articles relating to the Arctic, he shows not only that the region was still a popular topic with his readers, but also that he was still pursuing his own fascination with the region, and with exploration in general. As late as 1870, in the last weeks of his life, the subject crept into his final, unfinished, novel, *Edwin Drood*, as Rosa Bud, on the point of:

> losing her spirits … light[ed] on some books of voyages and sea-adventures … [and] Miss Twinkleton, reading aloud, made the most of all the latitudes and longitudes, bearings, winds, currents, offsets, and other statistics …[with] Rosa listening intently … (Dickens, 1950 ii, p. 498)

The interest Rosa and Miss Twinkleton display here – albeit in an attempt by the latter to moderate the former's reading to texts less likely to excite her romantic tendencies – is a reflection on that with which Dickens would have read such tales in the magazines of his youth, creating a poignant link between the reading material that captured the imagination of the young Dickens, and that that still inspired him in his final days.

Frederic Edwin Church and *The Icebergs*

Artists too continued to be fascinated by the Arctic and although many British and European artists, engravers and illustrators were content to work from the accounts and sketches of others, some American artists were more proactive in

collecting their own material. Frederic Edwin Church (1826-1900) was one such artist and therefore:

> [u]ndert[ook] his own Arctic quest: to paint, from actual observation, those Arctic scenes that his contemporaries had only imagined or extrapolated from the sketches of others (Potter, 2007, p. 180)

In June 1859, just weeks before McClintock returned with his devastating news regarding the deaths of Franklin and his crew, Church sailed north in search of icebergs and other Arctic phenomena. He returned home in 1861 and from the many sketches and oil-on-board studies that he made during his voyage he created his most famous painting, eventually entitled *The Icebergs*. This was first exhibited in 1861 as *The North* – patriotically named in recognition of the civil war that had recently begun in his native country (Raab, 2014, p. 588). The painting was ill-received in America, however, so before exhibiting it in England in 1863 Church adapted it to appeal to the tastes and sensitivities of a bereft British audience, thus demonstrating how a painting, unlike a revised edition of a book, can mask its own history, eradicating previous versions of itself with new layers of paint or the addition of new details. Renaming his painting *The Icebergs*, Church added the broken mast of a ship lying diagonally left-to-right, just left of centre in the foreground of the painting. The empty crow's nest, still attached to the mast and thus preventing it from lying flat on the ice, gives an eerie sense of loss and, given its usual role as an elevated observation platform, of failed vision as well as of failed endeavour. Like a fallen crucifix on the icy plain the mast points across the sea to the massive walls of ice that blocked its passage and mirror those that crushed the bodies and hopes of its ship and crew. In adding this detail and changing the name, Church's intention was clearly to make his painting more marketable in the aftermath of McClintock's revelations regarding the lost Franklin expedition, leading Jennifer Raab to assert that "the mast in *The Icebergs* is the relic that was never discovered" (Raab, 2014, p. 589). Raab's implication here is that a relic does not need to exist in tangible form, but can instead exist in representation, which adds another level of filtering to the process of presenting and representing artefacts as relics. Following the discovery of the ships *Erebus* and *Terror* in 2014 and 2016 respectively, sonar imaging has revealed "shadows of the deckhouse, masts and other fixtures" (Potter, 2016) of

the latter ship, but the wreckage is so delicate that nothing will be removed from the scene for public or private display. The real masts, therefore, now constitute a most remarkable concept: relics that can be perceived only in the representation of their shadows, as intangible, surreal, yet poignant as the mast that Church added to *The Icebergs*.

Progress …

While Frederic Church was searching the Arctic for inspiration for his paintings, Scandinavian scientist Nils Adolf Erik Nordenskjöld and geologist Otto Torrell were exploring the waters north of Spitsbergen. Their 1859-1860 expedition is notable for Torrell's observations of glacial phenomena, but it also led to the discovery of Bell Sound, on the west coast of the island of Svarlbaard, and to Nordenskjöld making several more voyages into Arctic waters over the succeeding three decades. During these expeditions, his scientific and geographic contributions to knowledge of the polar regions led to academic success and the award of the rank of Baron by the Swedish government. Yet, while the Scandinavians focused on the eastern areas of the Arctic and ploughed a north-east passage through the ice to China – or Cathay, as they poetically chose to call it – the British focus remained intently on the western routes around Baffin Bay as the search for Franklin's lost ships and crew continued.

… and Speculation

Coeval with the above expeditions, various Arctic themed Moving Panorama shows, accompanied by descriptive lectures, toured the cities of Church's home country. Many of these focused on the Arctic expeditions of Dr Elisha Kent Kane, whose *Arctic Explorations; The Second Grinnell Expedition in Search of Sir John Franklin, in the Years 1853, '54, '55* had been published in 1856, just prior to his death the following February. *Dr Kane's Arctic Voyages* and Pierce and Marston's *Grand Panorama of Kane's Voyages,* for example, each drew on Kane's

narrative, and these spectacles were supplemented in the social calendar with Mechanical Theatre productions – including some by the American theatrical entrepreneur and showman Phineas Taylor Barnum – and Magic Lantern shows. Each of these fed the sensationalist appetite commonly associated with the 1860s, while in the UK that envoy of Herefordshire nobility, Chandos Hoskyns Abrahall, published another poem on an Arctic theme. This time, his pen focused on the loss of Sir John Franklin as, with his trademark irregular stanzas and erratic rhyming couplets, he clearly acknowledges the spectre of "the last resort" (Rae, 1854), surmising that in such conditions as the crews found themselves:

> Fell Want assumes the hideous shape
> of that foul hunger;
> That comrade (fearful but to name!)
> Eyes his wan fellow's famish'd frame
> With love no longer;
> And one doth rise against the other,
> And fall upon his human brother; (Abrahall, 1860, p. 10)

For Abrahall, it seems, there is little doubt about the lengths the desperate seamen might have gone to in their attempts to survive, each watching the other in dread of becoming either consumer or consumed.

As the decade wore on, however, the question of a sea of warm, calm, open water around the north pole, as discussed in previous chapters, re-emerged in literary representations of the Arctic with the publication in 1867 of a voyage narrative written by American explorer Dr Isaac Israel Hayes and emphatically entitled *The Open Polar Sea*. Hayes had first sailed to the Arctic in 1853 as ship's surgeon on the expedition of which Elisha Kent Kane wrote in his abovementioned narrative. After over-wintering in the Arctic with Kane for two seasons, Hayes remained curious as to what lay beyond the ice barrier that had thus far prevented similar expeditions reaching the pole. So, after a series of fund-raising lectures in the US in 1858 and 1859, he set sail again in July 1860, his "chief object and aim being to explore the boundaries of the Open Polar Sea; at least to determine if such a sea did exist, as had been so often asserted" (Hayes, 1867, p. vi). He does not appear from this narrative to have anticipated finding

the verdant inner-global pastures of Symmes's 'hollow earth theory', but his conviction that an open polar sea was to be found within the ice barrier and surrounding the North Pole is evident. Claiming on 6 November 1860 that "[t]he existence of this open water greatly puzzles me [because] [n]o such phenomenon was witnessed in 1853-55" (Hayes, 1867, p. 174), Hayes proceeds to debate, in Chapter XXXII, the meaning of the term 'Open Polar Sea' and then by convoluted explanations that could suggest he was suffering from delusions and hallucinations similar to those experienced formerly by Sir John Ross, to recount his own experience of discovering such a sea, concluding that:

> [w]ith the warm flood of the Gulf Stream pouring northward, and keeping the waters of the Polar Sea at a temperature above the freezing point, while the winds, blowing as constantly under the Arctic as under the Tropic sky, and the ceaseless currents of the sea and the tide-flow of the surface, keep the waters ever in movement, it is not possible … that even any considerable portion of this extensive sea can be frozen over (Hayes, 1867, p. 361)

Having deposited his scientific papers with the Smithsonian Institute and finally published his narrative, Hayes returned to the Arctic one last time in 1869. This time he accompanied an expedition led by the artist William Bradford, whose resultant work is discussed in Chapter Four. However, an undated newspaper cutting adhered to the inside cover of the edition of his narrative digitised by Google interestingly states that:

> [t]he reported discovery of a vast open Polar sea, east and north-east of Spitzbergen, by the Norwegian Captain Nils Johnson, confirms the original finding of Dr. Hayes, and should make doubters and scoffers feel ashamed of themselves (Hayes, 1867)

A similar report appears in the *Clearfield Republican* newspaper of Wednesday 27 November 1872, identifying, in an item headed 'Tidings from the Iceless Polar Sea' the date of Johnson's discovery as "the latter part of last August" (*Clearfield Republican*, 1872). This debate, then, persisted for some time, and the newspaper's identification of its opponents as 'doubters and scoffers' indicates how divisive and personal the arguments could be.

A Peripheral Arctic

Meanwhile, novelists who continued to be inspired by tales of the Arctic included Elizabeth Gaskell, who, in 1863, drew on her acquaintance with William Scoresby and a two-week holiday he had inspired her to take in the North Yorkshire coastal village of Whitby in 1859 to create the whaling community of Monkshaven. This village forms the setting for her penultimate novel, *Sylvia's Lovers*, and thus gives the Arctic an essential but peripheral role in the novel.

Reminiscent of the sacrifices made by those men caught up in the love-triangles created by Collins and Dickens in *The Frozen Deep* and again by Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities*, Gaskell's eponymous 'Sylvia's Lovers' meet unexpectedly on a middle-eastern battlefield, where Philip Hepburn, under the alias of Stephen Freeman, rescues his wife's former lover Charley Kinraid, who "was like to have killed him when last [he] saw him" (Gaskell, 2014, p. 375). Given the opportunity to slay his rival, Hepburn, like Wardour and Carton before him, instead saves him. Unlike Aldersley and Darnay, the adversaries of Wardour and Carton, however, Gaskell's rescued hero transfers his love to another and Hepburn/Freeman is indeed a free man; free, should he wish it, that is, to reclaim his wife and child. By this twist of the plot, Gaskell maintains the moral sanctity of marriage, in keeping with Sylvia's declaration to Kinraid that Hepburn, by marrying her, had "spoilt my life, … for as long as iver I live on this earth; but neither yo' nor him shall spoil my soul" (Gaskell, 2014, p. 332).

The use of dialect such as this in much of the novel was the focus of some early criticism, with an unsigned review in the *Daily News* of 3 April 1863, for example, claiming that "Gaskell was 'trying the patience of readers too far [by compelling] them to wade through three volumes of unpronounceable *patois*'" (O'Gorman, 2014, p. xxxiii original punctuation and emphasis). Nevertheless, the novel was "generally well received" (O'Gorman, 2014, p. xxxii), with acclamations in a range of newspapers and journals, including *John Bull*, *The Athenaeum* and *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Members of the English Church.* This latter publication, edited by Charlotte Yonge:

> devoted a whole article to examining the skilful construction of *Sylvia's Lovers* in April 1866, having earlier recommended it as 'a foremost […] work of art of the tragic school'" (O'Gorman, 2014, p. xxxii original punctuation and emphasis).

The Reader, meanwhile, found much to praise in "Gaskell's knowledge of working class lives and the way she encouraged understanding across classes" (O'Gorman, 2014, p. xxxii)

Most reviewers, and readers, therefore, found Gaskell''s use of dialect to be a surmountable obstacle, adding to, rather than detracting from, their enjoyment and appreciation of the novel. Indeed, the dialect serves to define the characters and their locality through the medium of their speech and vocabulary and it represents the Arctic through their eyes: "Cold! … what do ye stay-at-homes know about cold, a should like to know?" (Gaskell, 2014, p. 91) proclaims Sylvia's 'feyther', Daniel Robson, recalling the days when, as Specksioneer, or chief harpooner, on the whaling ships, a large whale "chuck[ed] [him] into t'watter" (Gaskell, 2014, p. 91). Describing in graphic detail the pain, discomfort and torment inflicted through all the senses by the Arctic on those who dare to enter its domain, Daniel goes on to recall that:

> [t]hat were cold, a can tell the'! First, I smarted all ower me, as if my skin were suddenly stript off me:: and next, ivery bone i' my body had getten t' toothache, and there were a great roar i' my ears, an' a great dizziness i' my eyes; an' t' boat's crew kept throwin' out their oars, an' a kept clutchin' at 'em, but a could na' make out where they was, my eyes dazzled so wi' t' cold (Gaskell, 2014, p. 91).

Daniel concludes that "it's little you women know o' cold!" (Gaskell, 2014, p. 91), but, of course, Gaskell implies, there is little that he or the town's other menfolk know of the similarly isolating and 'cold' experience of the women they leave behind while at sea.The life of the Monkshaven community revolves around the whaling fleet sailing to and from Greenland and the regular threat of the Government's Press Gang, from whom the whalers are supposedly protected by law but whose illegal actions initiate Kinraid's estrangement. Taking her cue directly from Scoresby's aforementioned *An Account of the Arctic Regions* published in 1820 – as Francis O'Gorman acknowledges in his notes to the

Oxford World's Classics edition of 2014 – Gaskell has Daniel declare that in the Arctic:

> [t]here's three things to be feared on, … there's t'ice, that's bad; there's dirty weather, that's worse; and there's whales theirselves, as is t' worst of all;… t' darned brutes (Gaskell, 2014, p. 89).

So, Gaskell represents the Arctic through the lens of her characters' reflections on their own experiences of the region, utilising an uncommon filter in its fictional representation. In *Sylvia's Lovers*, the Arctic becomes not the scene of its own drama but a distant player in the drama of everyday life; it is the source of industry and income that influences every aspect of life in the town and affects the business, activities and philosophical outlook of everyone in Monkshaven, irrespective of their position. It is the source of working-class livelihoods rather than of middle-class adventures, and it is thus portrayed as an unusual and inhospitable workplace rather than a playground for adventure and exploration.

A Versatile Arctic

For other authors, the Arctic, so successfully exploited by Kingston, Verne, Bolingbroke and others as a setting for boys' adventure stories, and as a magical kingdom by fairy tale authors such as Andersen, proved equally suitable as a backdrop for moralistic stories aimed at girls and young women. In 1864, for example, *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the English Church*, "an Anglo-Catholic periodical aimed at girls and young women" (Powney & Mitchell, 2014, p. 6), which had so praised *Sylvia's Lovers*, published the story of 'Hvit the Fosterling' (Gordon, 1864). Initially published anonymously, the story's author was later identified as Mary Gordon (also known as Mrs Disney Leith; 1840-1926), a wealthy Scottish aristocrat who, over a long career between the ages of 19 and 80, published fifteen novels as well as her short-stories and verse (Powney & Mitchell, 2014). Yonge's journal published stories, articles and other items that could be read in middle-class Victorian homes, and would have been considered, even among Sabbatarian families, as 'suitable reading' for a Sunday afternoon or evening. Because of, or despite this, its appeal was limited: in Edward Salmons' survey, published in 1888 and referenced in Chapter Two,

for example, it was read by just twenty-two of the girls but none of the boys – although the readership might have been wider twenty years earlier, when the story of Hvit was published. In Gordon's story, the sickly young Eskimo Hvit is rejected by his rich and powerful family, adopted and raised by peasants, travels as a young adult in search of the 'new faith' and returns, already an ordained priest, to convert his friends and family to Christianity at the cost of his own life. The self-sacrifice and religious devotion thus demonstrated are the key themes of such stories, which were designed to instil Anglo-Catholic Christian virtues in their readers. They also served an imperialistic and nationalistic purpose by emphasising the 'otherness' of people outside those readers' comfortable middle-class homes. Such 'otherness' could be represented, as in this case, by the purported savagery and ignorance of foreigners, or by the supposed indolence, criminality and vulnerability of the poor, as in, for example, Hesba Stretton's *Jessica's First Prayer* or Mary Louisa Charlesworth's *Ministering Children*, both published in 1867 (Hunt, 2009 ii, p. 74).

Hvit himself is a foundling, or a "fosterling", as the title tells us. He is physically small, weak and powerless, as many of the young women and girls reading or hearing his story may have felt themselves to be, but he is emphatically 'white' – even his name translates literally as 'white' – and he is strong in character and religious – specifically Christian – belief. His whiteness is the whiteness of the Arctic, a blank canvas on which to paint imperialist and religious doctrine. Thus, it reflects the preconceptions and preoccupations of a nation intent on building its empire. It represents the purity and innocence of his soul, opposing it to the darker colouring and heathen beliefs of his supposedly 'savage' countrymen, and in this respect the story is a backlash against Darwin's revelations of five years earlier, in much the same way as Ansted's article of 1861. Furthermore, "[t]his short story contains … violence, heroism, strong family loyalties, a slight love interest and the power of redemption through Christ" (Powney & Mitchell, 2014, p. 18), and its message is clear: feeble in body you might be, but with a strong heart, white skin and faith in Jesus Christ you will prevail! Such overt racism, shocking as it is today, was not uncommon in the Victorian era, as previously explained, and neither was the belief that the Christian religion was superior in all

respects to any other. Novelist, travel writer and public servant, Anthony Trollope, for example, wrote in 1861 that:

> [w]hether they be Arabs, or Turks, or Copts, it is always the same. They are a mean, false, cowardly race, … [and] are immeasurably inferior to those of us who have had Christian teaching (Trollope, 1994, p. 348).

Mary Gordon's tale of *Hvit the Fosterling* used the Arctic to exemplify this notion of white, Christian supremacy and advocate pity and sorrow for anyone unfortunate enough to be born into other races or religions. In the same year that it was published, however, the world of art radically challenged the notion that God favoured the causes of white Christian men.

Man Proposes, God Disposes

At the Royal Academy in 1864, with "the grim facts of Rae's report" (Gilmartin, 2008, p. 5) and the catastrophic outcome of the Franklin expedition still resonating agonisingly in the British consciousness, and the country's Arctic ambitions suspended in disarray, Edwin Landseer digressed from his usual paintings of the pets of wealthy landowners and gentry, to exhibit "one of his most startling works" (Donald, 2010, p. 8): his panoramic masterpiece *Man Proposes, God Disposes*, which is arguably the "bleakest of all his paintings … [and] a commentary on the ultimate helplessness of all mankind" (Cowling, 2008, p. 187). The spread of empire to the earth's most northerly regions – as proposed by man, in the form of the British Admiralty, government and the public – had been thwarted, Landseer suggested, by the intervention of a disapproving God.

As Landseer never travelled to the Arctic, Ingeborg Høvik speculates that he drew his inspiration for the painting from sources including Burford's panoramas, the discoveries of John Rae and Francis Leopold McClintock, the text of the Victory Point Record and the exhibition of Franklin relics at the United Services Museum in October 1859; "all of which Landseer would have been able to read about in late September 1859" (Høvik, 2013, p. 122) and all of which are considered within this thesis.

Whilst it is probable that his portrayal of the ice was based on the images he had seen in the panoramas and paintings of other artists and on the descriptions given in accounts and narratives of returning explorers, his polar bears were modelled partly on a polar bear skull borrowed from the palaeontologist Hugh Falconer (Chapel, 1993 (1982), p. 102) and partly on a pair of real polar bears exhibited in The Gardens of the Zoological Society of London – now London Zoo – in the 1860s. Transported to the UK by whaling companies seeking to subsidise their income, these bears were kept in an enclosure "completely devoid of natural features" (Wright, 2020) and neighbouring the similarly deficient enclosure of the lions on which Landseer was basing his sculptures for the foot of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square. Thus, as Alison Wright affirms, the splayed paws, lowered head and unnaturally long neck portrayed in Landseer's painting are indicative of the animals' severe stress levels (Wright, 2020); something that would not have been apparent to Victorian audiences but which adds another, deeper, level of poignancy to the painting today.

Painted just five years after McClintock had discovered definite proof that Franklin and all his men were lost:

> the dark tones, savagery and futility depicted in *Man Proposes, God Disposes* knocked the self-confidence of an England at the height of Empire, brimming with the happy belief that English science, industry and character could conquer the world (Gilmartin, 2008, p. 5)

The painting portrays the two polar bears engaged in ravaging a Union Jack flag, tearing it from a ship's mast that lies, like that in Church's *The Icebergs*, prostrate on the ice "resembl[ing] a fallen bloodstained crucifix" (Cowling, 2008, p. 187) and supplying "a strong diagonal force that separates the activities of the two bears" (Chapel, 1993 (1982), p. 102). As one bear rips the flag to shreds with its sharp white fangs, flinging a blood-red fragment far into the lower right corner of the foreground, his fellow devours a short, bare, unidentifiable, but presumably human, bone, savouring it with tight-closed eyes and the elongated neck referenced above. As storm clouds gather in the far distance, a sail atop the mast forms a ghoulish cloak over the carnage, as a skeletal rib-cage and a discarded telescope complete the scene of man's defeat.

Thus, in contrast to Biard's 1839 depiction of polar conquest – as discussed in Chapters One and Two – Landseer harshly represents man's vulnerability in Arctic climes to an extent that still disturbs people to this day: the painting hangs in the Picture Gallery of Royal Holloway University of London in Egham and, in conversation with the gallery's Curator in November 2017, I learnt that when students sit exams there tradition demands that this painting alone is covered up because it will otherwise bring bad luck to any candidate who looks at it. Ironically, when covering it, staff always use a Union Jack flag – for the purely pragmatic and somewhat disappointing reason that on the first occasion a cover was requested such a flag was the only material of suitable size that was available.

This painting and Biard's *Fight with Polar* Bears, discussed in Chapter One, show just how much, in less than three decades, representations and perceptions of the Arctic had changed. What in 1839 had been represented as an accessible and conquerable region over which mankind could one day claim sovereignty was by 1864 an impenetrable death-trap, its native polar bears transformed from victims to victors.

Waterloo Place Monument

Having avoided "enter[ing] the room where Landseer's 'offensive' painting was hung" (Gilmartin, 2008) during the prestigious opening event of the Royal Academy's summer exhibition in 1864, such thoughts were far from the mind of a frail yet still indomitable Lady Franklin on 15 November 1866 as she took her seat in a room on the first floor of London's Athenaeum Club to watch the unveiling of the statue she had commissioned to honour her husband's memory (McGoogan, 2006, p. 1). Life-size and cast in bronze, the statue portrays Franklin in confident, upright pose, his right foot slightly in front of his left, with a coil of rope at his feet and a sword held casually in his left hand. Positioned atop a granite plinth on Waterloo Place, half-way between The Mall and Pall Mall, it intrudes a little into the gardens of the Athenaeum Club and on the four sides of its plinth are bronze plates. Those on the front and back carry relief images, one

depicting a map of the Arctic region and the other a faux-funeral for Franklin. The two side plates list all the men lost from the *Terror* and the *Erebus*, while inscriptions on the granite itself confirm that the statue was "[e]rected by unanimous vote of Parliament" and that it was the work of "M Noble Sculpt 1866". Controversially, it also carries an inscription asserting the belief that "the Great Arctic Navigator and his brave companions … sacrificed their lives in completing the discovery of the North West Passage. A.D.1847" - a claim challenged at the time and not yet corroborated by any indisputable evidence.

As well as this and the aforementioned Spilsby statue, there were other memorials to Franklin, as Chapter Four will discuss, and each represented for its Victorian audience a final farewell to the dreams of Arctic dominance that Barrow had sold them in the decades between 1817 and 1848.

Evolving and Revolving Representations

Sombre yet spectacular as the abovementioned monuments were, they competed for public attention with a revival in the UK of more immersive and entertaining representations of their subjects.

In 'Moving (Dioramic) Experiences', published in *All the Year Round* on 23 March 1867, for example, Charles Dickens reflects on his experiences of visiting such exhibitions over the years. "The lecturers are always delightful", (Dickens, 1867, p. 306) he asserts, and "[a] really good diorama is a really high treat, and for the young, an entertainment second only to the pantomime" (Dickens, 1867, p. 304). Audiences, he laments, are not always as patient and appreciative as they could be, as they bang umbrellas and sticks on the floor in anger and frustration at shows encountering technical issues and delays – usually beyond the control of "[t]he poor showman … always helpless from his 'stand'" (Dickens, 1867, p. 304). Demonstrating how these shows could be re-appropriated to suit the evolving narrative of Arctic exploration, Dickens recalls a childhood visit to "the famous Diorama of the North Pole … [having] had the happiness of seeing the North Pole actually arrive" (Dickens, 1867, p. 304) in its London 'rooms' – an image which is, in itself, unnerving and indicative of the ways in which the Arctic regions could

invade the towns and cities of Victorian Britain. Dickens recounts in detail the scenes of that panorama, but then recalls his disillusionment with the genre when:

> [o]nly a few years ago, when the intrepid navigators, McClintock and others, were exciting public attention, a new panorama of their perils and wanderings was brought out. Faithful to the old loves of childhood I repaired to the show; but presently begun [sic] to rub my eyes. … [everything] was familiar. But I rather resented the pointing out of the chief navigator 'in the foreground' as the intrepid Sir Leopold, for he was the very one who had been pointed to as the intrepid Captain Back. (Dickens, 1867, p. 305)

In the same way that Frederic Church had modified his 1861 painting *The North* to transform it, in 1863, into *The Icebergs*, so the artists and showmen behind the panoramas and dioramas of the entertainment world evidently modified their figures and paintings and updated their lecture notes to appeal to each new audience. Possibly only someone with Dickens's acute skills of observation and memory would have noticed, had he not revealed the trick in the pages of his journal.

In 1869, a decade after the voyage that Frederic Church took to inform his paintings, another American artist, William Bradford (1823-1892), famous for his land and seascape paintings in the style of the Hudson River School, sailed to the Arctic "solely for the purposes of art" (Bradford, 2013, p. 5). However, unlike Church, whose expedition had also been solely an artistic venture, Bradford took with him two professional photographers, John L. Dunmore and George P. Critcherson, from "the establishment of Mr J. W. Black of Boston" (Bradford, 2013, p. 6). This might well have been at the suggestion of Dr Isaac Israel Hayes, of *Open Polar Sea* fame, who accompanied Bradford to the Arctic and who states in the aforementioned narrative of his own 1860-61 voyage that "[i]t was a great disappointment to me that I could not secure for the expedition the services of a professional photographer" (Hayes, 1867, p. 46). Bradford was more fortunate, and his aim was to collect sufficient photographic evidence to enable him to paint accurate representations of the Arctic on his return to America. These photographs were:

> the first to be taken by professional photographers in the High Arctic [and] … [a]fter the expedition's return, Bradford had albumen prints produced from Dunmore and Critcherson's wet-plate negatives (Lapides, 2013, p. xv)

Providing the Victorian public with an entirely new way of representing the Arctic, many of these photographs were later published alongside Bradford's narrative of the journey in a limited-edition elephantine book of exquisite quality, paid for by individual subscriptions and published in 1873, and which will therefore be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

As 1869 drew to its close, with Bradford and his crew safely back onshore and Germany's Carl Koldeway and Paul Hegemann leading their country's second and final Arctic expedition of the century to East Greenland, the region retained its hold on the public imagination. However, due to an increasing awareness and understanding of the fate that had befallen Franklin's expedition, the Arctic was increasingly represented and perceived as:

> a more frightening and inhospitable place, as was reflected in the increasing number of representations based on the eighteenth-century idea of the sublime (David, 2000, p. 240)

This style of imagery, David maintains "was still being employed in Arctic representations in the 1870s and 1880s, at a time when it found little favour elsewhere (David, 2000, p. 240). Such a return to former styles of representation "after a period in which illustrations and descriptions of the Arctic landscape had been made to adapt to the principles of the English picturesque" (David, 2000, p. 240) is indicative of the circular trajectory of Arctic representations for which this thesis argues.

Chapter Four– 1870 to 1889

In which the era of Sensationalism embraces Arctic memorabilia, and the region resumes its past connotations of darkness and despair.

Lights Both Heavenly and Earthly

Amid British newspaper accounts of the Siege of Paris during the winter of 1870-1871 appeared striking reports of an extraordinary occurrence of the Northern Lights, affecting not only the Arctic regions but also areas much further south along the eastern counties of the UK. Poet and Botanist Richard Francis Towndrow imaginatively conflated the two events – one man-made and one a feat of nature – in his poem *The Aurora Borealis*, published by the London based T. Fisher Unwin Publishing House in its 1892 anthology *A Garden and Other Poems.* Towndrow's introduction to his poem states that:

> [t]he nights of October 24th and 25th, 1870, were remarkable for the great brilliancy and beauty of the Aurora Borealis, the newspapers of the latter date containing accounts of the phenomenon of the preceding evening: this writer was not fortunate enough to see, but, on the evening of the 25th, he had unusual advantages, during a ten mile drive, and will never forget the weird grandeur of a belt of fir trees standing out against a nearly blood-red sky. The fate of Paris … and the recollections of the great battles, only recently fought, associated themselves … in many minds more or less completely and persistently with the spectacles of those two evenings (Towndrow, 1892, p. 14)

The 'blood-red sky' is allied in Towndrow's mind with the blood on the streets of Paris, creating a disturbing image of heaven's disapproval of events on earth. Viewing the aurora from a strangely southerly location, Towndrow recalls that from his carriage, travelling from Ipswich that night:

> … it seemed in the silence of that clear October even,
> The blood that cried for vengeance from the murder-stainèd sod,
> God painted, for a protest, on the canvas of His Heaven,
> And stars grew wan, beholding there the writing of their God.
>
> An apex of deep blackness into bloody bars diverging,
> A nimbus of red glory playing round a darkened brow;
> And from out the flame and darkness two mighty streams emerging,
> Poured forth their crimson torrents on the guilty earth below:
> (Towndrow, 1892)

For Towndrow, then, the Aurora Borealis is God's 'protest' against the evil actions of mankind, reflecting in the red skies the bloodshed on His 'guilty earth'. The allusion, in the 'nimbus of red glory', to the crown of thorns encircling the 'darkened brow' of Christ, and the subsequent linking of these 'crimson torrents' to "[d]iviner blood outpoured" (Towndrow, 1892, p. 15), extend Towndrow's metaphor to once again emphasise the religious connotations and sacred associations of Arctic extremes. Not here, however, the pure, white, unadulterated sanctity and sacredness portrayed by writers of the previous decades – such as Morley, Andersen, Dickens and Kingston – but a fiery-red "wrath-glory" (Towndrow, 1892, p. 16) emitting from Arctic skies in divine retribution and condemnation. Behind such a dramatic interpretation of the Aurora Borealis lies the fear of revolution that had plagued the entire nineteenth century. Since the previous century's French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars of 1803 to 1815, unrest on the continent was invariably perceived as an imminent threat to the UK. The sudden eruption of warfare on the streets of Paris in September 1870 was, therefore, viewed with suspicion from across the channel. That the heavens, of which the Arctic had become such a potent symbol, could pour forth the fury of a God in whom most Victorians expressed an undying trust and belief is a notion that confirms how powerful the region had become in the public imagination. It also begins to contest the notion of the Arctic as a place to be exploited, endured and conquered. Instead, it was to be feared, respected and enshrined as a place of anguish and loss surmounted by divine presence: Towndrow's oxymoronic 'apex of deep blackness' opposed to his 'nimbus of red glory', borrowed from Greek mythology's shining cloud that surrounds a deity on earth.

The Irish-born Canadian poet S. Moore, writing in the 1880s, also saw the Aurora Borealis as prescient of heavenly comment on earthly events as its "[g]reat phantom armies in deadly fight, [w]ith flashing swords and … helmets bright" (Moore, c.1880) became, for her,

> … a sign from heaven – / A timely warning to mortals given,
> That the flood-gates of wrath were thrown ajar,
> To deluge the world with an awful war. (Moore, c.1880)

Moore's 'flood-gates of wrath', like Towndrow's 'wrath glory', indicate an angry and vengeful God that many Victorians would have recognised and feared from the sermons of the preachers they heard in churches every Sunday, and whose characteristics and rhetoric were reflected in those portrayed in popular literature. Preachers like Charles Dickens's Reverend Mr. Chadband, "endowed with the gift of holding forth for four hours at a stretch" (Dickens, 2008, p. 280), from whom the mortified young crossing-sweeper, Jo, "would rather run away … for an hour than hear him talk for five minutes" (Dickens, 2008, p. 383), or Mr. Stiggins, the hapless preacher of *The Pickwick Papers,* described as one of "[t]he worst o' these here shepherds" (Dickens, 1950 iii, p. 300). Charlotte Brontë similarly represents the Reverend St John Rivers, in whose sermons:

> a strange bitterness; an absence of consolatory gentleness; stern allusions to Calvinistic doctrines — election, predestination, reprobation — were frequent; and each reference to these points sounded like a sentence pronounced for doom. (Brontë, 2016, pp. 314-315)

As literary allusions to religion continued to influence their readers into the later years of the century, references such as those made by Moore and Towndrow are indicative of the ways in which representations and perceptions of the Arctic were changing as the century entered its final quarter. Moore's allusions to 'flood' and 'deluge' as a 'timely warning' of 'wrath' and 'war' remind readers of the many biblical manifestations of heavenly retribution, foretelling a future laden with the 'doom' of Rivers' sermons, emanating from man's constant quest to not only inhabit but also claim ownership of the planet of his birth.

A decade and more after McClintock's conclusive evidence concerning the death of Sir John Franklin and his entire crew, the British nation was still seeking answers to the innumerable questions raised by their spectacular failure to complete the task for which they had seemed so well prepared and so competent to achieve. The Arctic, which had been for so many years represented as a blank white space of sacred hope and glorious expectation, and which had offered so much, as Jen Hill has highlighted, in the way of imperial and personal development (Hill, 2008), was now reverting in the public perception to its former role as dark and inglorious harbinger of doom and deathly desolation, thus clearly

demonstrating the circular trajectory of Arctic representation and perception in the long nineteenth century.

Science, Myth and Fairytale – an ethereal Arctic

Barrow's dream had all but died with him in 1848, and with government funds diverted elsewhere and Franklin proved to be beyond relief, British expeditions to the Arctic reduced drastically in number, while those conducted by other nations emphasised their scientific purposes rather than a geographical or trade-route purposes; despite Hayes' claims to have discovered the mythical 'Open Polar Sea', the days of the imprudent pursuit of illusory concepts and imperial conquests were all but over. It was instead the scientific proposals of Dr Hendrik Johannes Rink that inspired an expedition to the Greenland Ice Cap by Sweden's aforementioned Nils Adolf Erik, now Baron, Nordenskjöld and his compatriot Professor Sven Berggren in 1870. Rink, an internationally renowned Danish Geologist who published extensively on Arctic geology and indigenous populations and culture, having himself "passed 16 winters and twenty-two summers in the Arctic regions" (Brown, 1894, p. 65) had developed from his research a:

> theory of the Glacial Epoch, contending that, as Greenland is today, so once was most of Europe and North America, …[and] [w]hat the Rosetta stone was to hieroglyphics … the inland Ice-Cap of Greenland would be to the glacial era (Mirsky, 1970, p. 251).

Nordenskjöld and Berggren sought to verify Rink's theory and were accompanied for the first few days by two Inuit companions, who then abandoned the trip as too dangerous, leaving the Swedes to continue alone. Finding "deep, broad crevasses and a majestic river that flowed along the surface until it disappeared into the dark blue depths of the ice in roaring cascades" (Mirsky, 1970, p. 251) they also heard, once they laid or knelt with their ears close to the ground:

> peculiar subterranean murmer[s] from the streams enclosed below, while now and again a single loud cannon-report announced the formation of some new crevasse (Mirsky, 1970, p. 251),

Mirsky is quoting here from the 1928 publication *Greenland,* edited by Martin Vahl, but she goes on to confirm that Berggren and Nordenskjöld also discovered

the surface of the ice to be encrusted with what they identified as "cryoconite – [or] 'cosmic dust' … [so that] [t]he whole surface was made to resemble a huge sponge" (Mirsky, 1970, p. 251). What they identified as 'cosmic dust' is "now thought to be … bits of stone blown from the coastal mountains" (Mirsky, 1970, p. 251fn), but the perception of it as a substance emanating from outer-space and implanting itself on "one of the intriguing wonders of the earth" (Mirsky, 1970, p. 251) is again indicative of the Victorian perception of the Arctic as a hallowed, other-worldly region of multiple spiritual, heavenly and similarly transcendental connotations.

This perception of an ethereal Arctic persisted in children's literature despite the ominous tones re-emerging in poetry and adult fiction. George MacDonald's 1871 fairy tale *At the Back of the North Wind,* for example, exemplifies the region as a heavenly retreat for young sufferers of disease, disability or distress – a place of pilgrimage for those anticipating refuge and forgiveness rather than grief and retribution. Taking a very direct approach to delivering the moral message that Lila Marz Harper (Harper, 2004, p. 128) identifies was required of children's literature throughout the Victorian era, MacDonald's story exhorts its young readers to be selfless and considerate in their dealings with others, be they family, friends or strangers and remain steadfast in the face of adversity. Visited and befriended by the North Wind in her various forms and incarnations, the story's young hero, Diamond, travels with her on many adventures through which he encounters the privations of poverty, illness and abuse and develops a strong sense of service and empathy, chiefly through the childlike auspices of a cheerful and industrious disposition.

There is an element too in MacDonald's tale of distinguishing between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor as Diamond's father is required to prove "what sort of man he [is] and whether he [is] worth doing anything for" (MacDonald, 2006, p. 50). Such judgemental distinctions had been exacerbated by the Poor Law and New Poor Law legislations of the 1830s and '40s and were based on a pauper's ability to convince a magistrate of his or her moral virtue and integrity. Fortunately deemed worthy of assistance, Diamond's father is helped by the benevolent Mr Raymond, just as the 'cripple' Jim and Nanny the barefooted

crossing-girl are helped by Diamond in a sub-plot that sees the righteous actions of an adult reflected in those of a child. Deemed undeserving, however, and therefore denied charity, is Nanny's "wicked old granny … [who] is very cruel to her … and shuts her out in the streets at night" (MacDonald, 2006, pp. 40-41). In this way, whether to instruct his child or adult audience, MacDonald contrasts the innocent love and generosity of his child hero with the censorious strictures of Victorian society.

On arriving in the far north with Diamond, the personified North Wind dies away, "[h]er face [as] white as the snow, her eyes blue as the ice cave, … [and her] greenish robe like the color [sic] in the hollows of the glacier" (MacDonald, 2006, p. 26). Hovering perilously between life and death, Diamond finds himself passing through this embodiment of the Arctic so that "it was thus that [he] got to the back of the north wind" (MacDonald, 2006, p. 26), where he found

> a country where even the ground smelled sweetly … gentle air breathed in his face … [a] river as clear as crystal ran not only through the grass but over it too … the blue arch of the sky seemed like a harp playing the soft airs of Heaven … and all the people seemed happy … (MacDonald, 2006, p. 27).

There is an obvious allusion here to the aforementioned legends and hollow earth theories concerning utopian lands within or around the North Pole, which, despite the scientific evidence provided by Nevil Maskelyne in the 1770s was, as discussed in previous chapters, promulgated by its proponents well into the 1870s. This continued adherence to an outdated premise demonstrates how deeply ingrained in British culture were such visions of elysian fields hidden at the pole. It also recalls again Henry Morley's 1853 assertion of the "pure and noble thoughts" (Morley, 1853, p. 242) with which the Victorian public associated the Arctic. Envisaged by William Morris in his 1870 poem *The Earthly Paradise* (Morris, 1870) and epitomised in his 1890 publication *News from Nowhere* (Morris, 1998), utopian images of verdant pastures and eternal youth and happiness offered by such Symmesian hypotheses undoubtedly appealed to a population enduring protracted poverty and industrialisation, torn from the rural roots of their past and transplanted to a present in which they had only the slightest tangible stake, facing a future that threatened to obliterate the dreams

that had so inspired them in former years: dreams of Empire and Arctic exploration as much as dreams of high wages and comfortable homes in their ever-expanding towns and cities.

As his name suggests, the sickly but courageous Diamond of MacDonald's fairy tale is multi-faceted in his ability to reflect light onto the lives of others, observing that "I have been at the back of the north wind [and] … [i]f you have once been there, it just comes to you how to do a little to help" (MacDonald, 2006, p. 44). Thus, 'the back of the north wind' becomes a metaphor for adversity, and, having 'been there', Diamond finds himself increasingly adept in his ability to empathise with and relieve the sufferings of those around him. In his own pain, however, he yearns for the serene immortality that the Arctic region signifies for him, and it is ultimately "with such a smile on his face … [that he retreats to] that lovely country at the back of the north wind – to stay" (MacDonald, 2006, p. 75). Such vulnerability, such acquiescence to the vicissitudes of nature, such unity with the elements – all these are bound up in MacDonald's image of the child receding into the Arctic's embrace, and there is a clear parallel drawn here with the bodies, both discovered and undiscovered, of Franklin and his men, lying at one with their surroundings amid the icy plains of the Arctic Archipelago.

Arctic Sanctuary – and Arctic Adventure

For Victorian readers, accustomed, although not impervious, to high levels of child mortality, MacDonald's vision of salvation and tranquillity beyond the realms of the known world offered reassurance and comfort. By representing the Arctic as a heaven on earth, where Peter-Pan-like the young never grow old, MacDonald makes it an attractive home to aspire to, and, interestingly, in doing so, "feels no need to romanticize or exaggerate the Arctic landscape … as if the holiness of the Arctic is self-evident" (Moss, 2006 ii, pp. 228-229). This demonstrates again the sanctity and reverence afforded to the Arctic in the aftermath of the Franklin expedition and McClintock's discoveries in 1859. Moreover, the regularity with which the Arctic is represented in Victorian

children's literature demonstrates the region's significance in the shared cultural consciousness of the age and, as Sarah Moss observes:

> [g]iven the importance of polar exploration to national identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is not surprising to find that it figures more in children's literature than in that for adults (Moss, 2006 ii, p. 219).

Its presence, or representation, in so many different forms of literature, art and popular culture created a sense of familiarity with the Arctic region among even the least-travelled and least-educated reader, and just as Victorian preachers, like their aforementioned literary counterparts, could negotiate a path between a loving, munificent God and a God who would smite down all who displeased him, so the Arctic represented both the peace and vengeance of nature. Moreover, in keeping with the resolute national pride that had epitomised Barrow's era of Arctic exploration, yet despite the resolute failure of Franklin's expedition, the region came, along with other terrains of nineteenth century imperialist exploration, to be represented in many instances as a land of adventure and opportunity for young boys.

Anomalous as this may seem, nowhere is it more evident than in C. A. Stephens's *Left on Labrador, or the Cruise of the Schooner-Yacht 'Curlew' as recorded by 'Wash*. This American novel, published in 1872, coincided with American explorer Charles Francis Hall's 1871-1873 expedition to Smith Sound, which continental shift may go some way to explaining the anomaly, yet such stories did still abound in British fiction too, as will be discussed later in this chapter. Meanwhile, whereas MacDonald's fairy-tale of 1871 had represented the Arctic as the sacred, morally uplifting place of mid-century literature, Stephens's novel – the second in his juvenile fiction *Camping Out* series – saw his four young heroes embark, "in opposition to the wishes, advice, [and] counsel" (Stephens, 1872, p. 7) of their "folks" (Stephens, 1872, p. 7) on a wild adventure aboard a schooner-yacht, *The Curlew*, hired along with its captain and crew for the purpose with the proceeds of their adventure in Stephens's earlier novel. *The Curlew's* captain, George Mazard, becomes their navigator and advisor and the story carries strong undertones of the political and racial divides pertinent to the USA in the aftermath of its civil war of 1861-1865. One of the protagonists, Wade, for example,

criticises “[y]our abolitionist government [which] may turn a somersault some fine morning”, clearly identifying himself with the defeated Confederacy and doubting the fiscal policies of a government supported by his friends. Wade similarly denies the cook and former slave, Palmleaf, the right to re-identify himself by an alternative name that he has “lately ‘dopted” (Stephens, 1872, p. 5), complaining that “we’ll have enough of his airs” (Stephens, 1872, p. 5), whilst Kit argues for “[g]iv[ing] him a chance for himself” (Stephens, 1872, p. 5). This ethnic tension reflects that felt by the British explorers in the Arctic towards the Inuit communities they encountered, as discussed in Chapter One, and alludes to the controversies surrounding Darwin’s theories of evolution, published just a decade earlier. The debate continued with the publication in 1874 of his equally contentious *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex,* in which, in apparent contravention of his earlier work, A. N. Wilson tells us:

> Darwin assumes the superiority of … white human beings to those of other climates and hemispheres … and appears … to believe that acts of genocide, if perpetrated by the British, were somehow part of the Natural Process (Wilson, 2002, p. 375)

In Stephens’s story, Palmleaf continues to be treated by Wade in line with such beliefs, although once afloat on the ocean, he remains able to perform his role as chef while the four young protagonists of the story all fall foul of the rough seas and are confined to their bunks with seasickness as *The Curlew* heads north. Palmleaf, the reader concludes, is stronger and more resilient in both body and mind than his supposed masters; more adapted for survival than those who would claim to be his superiors. An analogy could be drawn here with the Inuit peoples of the Arctic, whose ability to survive in those desolate climes was so much greater than that of the explorers sent from the west.

When Stephens’s characters surface and gather on the deck of their schooner-yacht, the Aurora Borealis is viewed, with echoes of Towndrow, as “a sea of blood”. Rather than poetic evocations of its magnificent colours and ethereal connotations, however, Stephens pragmatically provides an instructive dialogue on the nature and definition of the electrical forces behind the phenomenon. In encounters with Esquimaux, as in the gradual acceptance of Palmleaf, the tone moves from suspicion to co-operation as the novel proceeds, and discussions

range across topics of geography, geology and hunting, designed to instruct, inform and educate readers as well as to entertain them.

In all this, Stephens represents the Arctic as a wealthy young man's playground – an open arena designed purely for adventure and exploitation – as does his British counterpart, William Gordon Stables in his own tales of Arctic adventures, aimed at a similar readership. These included a series of polar adventure novels such as *The Cruise of the Snowbird* (1882), *Wild Adventures Round the Pole* (1883), *From Pole to Pole* (1886) and *The Cruise of the Crystal Boat* (1891). In the first of these, a young Scottish Laird by the name of Allan sets sail with his two university friends from Cambridge: Rory, whose "soul was filled with life and imagination" (Stables, 1882, p. 14) and Ralph, "a great broad-shouldered, pleasant-faced young Saxon .. [who was] everything that a young English gentleman should be; … straightforward, bold and manly" (Stables, 1882, p. 14). Accompanied by Allan's foster-father, McBain, and a small crew in "*The Snowbird,* … a schooner-yacht of nearly two hundred tons" (Stables, 1882, p. 69), purchased for them in Cowes, on the Isle of Wight, by Ralph's father, they aim to sail "towards the desolate regions of the North Pole" (Stables, 1882). They do not get much further north than the farthest-most reaches of Scotland's Shetland Isles, yet during their voyage they battle a severe storm, overwinter amid Arctic ice, defeat marauding pirates and encounter whales, narwhals, Arctic foxes and all manner of other wildlife and 'game' before returning triumphantly to Allan's ancestral castle in the Scottish Highlands "on a lovely balmy August afternoon" (Stables, 1882, p. 218) that contrasts with "the stern and rigorous Arctic winter" (Stables, 1882, p. 149) from which they are returning.

The Snowbird – or, rather, an ornithological incarnation of it, "its plumage rivalling the snow in the purity of its whiteness, its shape more graceful than that of a swallow" (Stables, 2015, p. 11) – also features in a later Stables novel, *In the Land of the Great Snow Bear.* This tells the story of another young Scottish Laird, this time bereft of his father at the age of three, brought up in England and returning to his Scottish home, Dunallen Towers, as a youth. This young hero, Claude, Lord Alwyn, maintains a lifelong attachment to the snow-bird that settled in his cradle as a baby and, as he eventually ventures out on his quests to explore

the waters of the Arctic, his mother superstitiously believes that "so long … as the bird stays with me, my boy will return safely from sea." (Stables, 2015, p. 13). Unusually, the novel is not simply a tale of Arctic adventure. It is a minor bildungsroman, following Claude as he matures from the young boy dependent on conferring with his snow-bird in each decision he makes to the youthful gentleman-mariner, plotting his course across the Arctic waves, grappling with polar bears and icebergs, falling in love with an Icelandic girl called Meta, defending his love against his mother's prejudices, and finally marrying Meta, with whom he returns to sea, leaving his snow-bird with his mother at Dunallen Towers. It is also a moral tale that contrasts the heroism of Arctic adventure with the everyday heroism demonstrated by "lives … spent in the discharge of duty--be it high, be it low" (Stables, 2015, p. 137), as the narrator concludes in conversation with a faithful servant of the Alwyn family. This echoes, of course, the ethical and moral values of the book's original publishers, the Sunday School Union, instilling them vicariously in its readers through its pages. It also reflects the wider ways in which the Arctic came to be represented in children's literature: it was no longer purely a place to seek adventure and prove ones 'manliness'; it was a place of refuge in which to find love and to live a simple, peaceful and fulfilling life away from all the trappings of a grand estate.

Stables would later prove equally innovative in introducing female protagonists into tales of Arctic exploits. Two sisters, Aralia, aged 11, and Pansy, aged 8, stowaway on their uncle's ship with their cousin Frank, who is of a similar age, helped by the girls' brother, Tom, who is serving as a cabin-boy on the ship. Although discovered and their passage on the voyage reluctantly endorsed by their uncle, all four children become separated from the ship after a storm and are isolated on an Iceberg, thus becoming the novel's eponymous *Crusoes of the Frozen North*. First published in 1910, so slightly stretching the remit of this thesis, the children's way of life, as the title implies, emulates that of Daniel De Foe's *Robinson Crusoe*, with the boys enacting the role of Crusoe and the girls being their 'Fridays'. Rescue and a safe journey home eventually ensue, but not before Stables has heartily emphasised his message that it is the bravery and fortitude of the boys that has protected and saved the girls, who both end the novel sitting

demurely on a beach, beside their pet dog and newly acquired pet seal, vowing never again to leave their native shore.

Similar tales abounded in magazines and annuals of the late nineteenth century, aimed at the same youthful male audience as the novels of Stables and Stephens, while Stables himself contributed many such short-stories to magazines such as, for example, *The Boys' Own Paper*, alongside his regular columns on religious topics and the care of chickens.

The Gentleman Traveller

The exploits and attitudes of characters such as those Stephens and Stables portray reflect the adventurous spirit of empire, but also emulate another breed of Arctic adventurer that was emerging in Britain in the form of the 'Gentleman Traveller'. Wealthy, leisured, and accustomed to travelling in comfort and style, these voyagers restricted their Arctic expeditions to the region's outer edges, exploring the coasts of Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. Among them were the poet, artist, designer, social activist and translator William Morris and his companions "Charles Faulkner, mathematician, artist and engineer … a loyal companion since university days" (Greenlaw, 2019, p. x), "W. H. Evans, an army officer … who joined up with Morris and Faulkner to share resources" (Greenlaw, 2019, p. xi) and "Eiríkr Magnússon .. an Icelandic linguist and theologian … [who] greatly respected Morris's capacity to learn the language as well as the sagas" (Greenlaw, 2019, p. xi). Together the foursome travelled to and around Iceland in 1871, beginning their journey not at a seaport but at Kings Cross Railway Station in London, where the artist Ford Madox-Brown was among those gathered to bid them farewell. They travelled by train to Edinburgh, where, at the city's Granton dock, they caught a Danish mail boat to Reykjavik, whence they followed an itinerary that took them from one hospitable host to another, with the occasional night in a tent in between houses, across the country using a succession of horses, sleds and local guides to visit the major sites of the Icelandic Norse Sagas.

Unlike the majority of the explorers and whalers who preceded him, Morris had familiarised himself with the country's language, history, mythology and culture before travelling to Iceland. His biographer, Fiona MacCarthy, states that "he was a man of the north … steeped in Icelandic literature, [yet] the country in reality amazed him" (MacCarthy, 2010). This demonstrates the impossibility, for Europeans, of trying to imagine the Arctic; if one so 'steeped' in its history, culture and language was 'amazed', how much more so must the far less well-prepared officers of the Royal Navy have been?

For Morris, Peter Davidson observes, the "journey was unequivocally a pilgrimage – [as] he was approaching Iceland as a site of respected cultural production … [and] 'holy ground' …" (Davidson, 2016, p. 179). So, again the perception of the Arctic region as a space of spiritual sanctity is confirmed and, while to some extent, Morris was trying to emulate the heroes of his narrative epic *The Earthly Paradise,* "a tale of Norsemen sailing off in search of a perfect new world where no one grows old" (Greenlaw, 2019, p. ix), which he began writing in 1868 and published in 1870, he was also tracing "the territories hallowed by the saga narratives" (Davidson, 2016, p. 179).

The Earthly Paradise ran to "four hefty volumes" (Greenlaw, 2019, p. ix), and in its premise we again find notions of the Arctic regions concealing, as lines 2184 and 1880 of its Prologue declare, a "land of all felicity … a perfect land" (Morris, 1870), similar to that promulgated by Symmes and his disciples. Essential too to the poem's narrator is the region's power to preserve youthfulness and procure life-beyond-death, as implied by MacDonald's *At the Back of the North Wind.* Lavinia Greenlaw suggests that these concepts of bliss and longevity, along with the social inclusion that he witnessed in Iceland, "where there are no workhouses or lunatic asylums [so] the paupers or lunatics are distributed among the bonders to be taken care of" (Morris, 2019, p. 65), had "a profound influence on his later radical socialist ideas" (Greenlaw, 2019, p. xvii). These 'ideas' informed the utopian future envisioned in Morris's aforementioned novel *News from Nowhere,* subtitled *An Epoch of Rest, being some chapters from a Utopian Romance* (Morris, 1998) and serialised in the *Commonweal* from January to October 1890 prior to its publication in book-form later that year.

In a poem, *Iceland First Seen,* Morris recalls, as the title implies, his first impressions of the Arctic coastline as, watching from the deck of the Danish mail boat, he sees:

> Toothed rocks down the side of the firth on the east guard a weary wide lea,
> And black slope the hillsides above, striped adown with their desolate green:
> And a peak rises up on the west from the meeting of cloud and of sea,
> Foursquare from base unto point like the building of Gods that have been,
> The last of that waste of the mountains all cloud-wreathed and snow-flecked and grey,
> And bright with the dawn that began just now at the ending of day.
> (Morris, 1872)

The shapes and colours of the landscape are captured here along with the awe-inspiring proportions of its mountains, which stretch heavenwards into the sky to link the 'cloud and … sea' in the divine majesty of a 'building of Gods' as Morris approaches them in his self-confessed "quality of pilgrim to the holy-places of Iceland" (Morris, 2019, p. 81). In his journal of his 'pilgrimage', as Greenlaw suggests:

> Morris's writing … is unlike anything else he produced …[with] the shifting quality of natural speech, moving from playful to methodical to live-action, the rhetorical to the confiding (Greenlaw, 2019, p. ix)

On leaving Reykjavik, Morris tells his readers that the country looks:

> strange and awful .. a doleful land at first with its great rubbish heaps of sand, striped scantily with grass … here and there full of flowers and little willowy grey-leaved plants … [and] lava … grown over ... with thick soft moss, grey like hoarfrost (Morris, 2019, p. 37)

Later, his party cross "a huge waste of black sand all powdered all over with tufts of sea pink and bladder campion … like a Persian carpet" (Morris, 2019, p. 43) before encountering lava-fields, valleys and "jagged bare mountains, all beset with clouds, …dreadful inaccessible ravines … toothed peaks and rent walls" (Morris, 2019, pp. 95-96) as well as wading on horseback through fords or crossing wider rivers by ferry at various intervals. This southern-most outpost of the Arctic region is thus represented as a harsh and forbidding landscape that is nevertheless accessible to the ordinary traveller as well as the dedicated

explorer. It is also represented with those same connotations of mystery and sacredness with which the whole region was so commonly associated in art and literature at that time, creating a cohesion between all the disparate representations of the region. There is a link here too to Acerbi's voyage in 1798, with which Chapter One began, and to Stables' fictional story of the young Lord Alwyn. In each of these cases, the journey northward was not for national, imperial, geographical, scientific or artistic gain, but purely for personal enjoyment, fulfilment and interest. Like the Grand Tours of Europe undertaken by so many wealthy Victorian youths, these voyages are pleasure cruises, with the added excitement of encountering a frozen world so alien to that known at home.

Economic and Technological developments

Baron Nordenskjöld, the distinguished Swedish scientist and explorer, meanwhile, kept alive a more traditional style of Arctic exploration as he embarked on his second Arctic expedition, this time sailing to Spitsbergen in the years 1872-1873. Five years later, on his third and final expedition to the region, he was successful in traversing a Northeast Passage through the ice – a feat next attempted thirty-five years later, in 1913, but not repeated until 1915 (Mirsky, 1970, pp. 268-274). In the interim, a financial crisis affecting both Europe and the USA in 1873 sparked what many historians and economists term the 'Great Depression of 1873-1896'. During this time "fundamental changes [took] place in Britain's economic position" (Musson, 1959, p. 228) as the balance of her import and export markets shifted significantly and it:

> became obvious that she could not maintain [her] lead [in world production and trade] … [and lacked the] flexibility, resourcefulness, and technical progress … [to] still advance economically (Musson, 1959, p. 224).

Consequently, "[a]n increasing proportion of British trade … was with the Empire" (Musson, 1959, p. 228) and, in line with rising emigration and unemployment, "the percentage of 'male able-bodied indoor pauperism' aged fifteen to sixty-four … increased" (Friedlander, 1992, p. 32). Although its identification as a time of Great Depression remains controversial, Dov Friedlander concedes that "people who lived through the period were aware of a depression and felt economically

insecure" (Friedlander, 1992, p. 19). This, in part, explains the reduction in expeditions sailing to the Arctic in these decades, and it is arguable that it also accounts, in part, for the fascination displayed by the public for stories and relics of the Arctic in these decades. Feeling insecure in their present and uncertain of their future, people sought solace and escapism not only in the realms of literature, art and entertainment but also in an increased sentimentality – or nostalgia – for 'things' and people connected to the past. Through the proverbial 'rose-tinted glasses', Arctic ephemera such as Franklin's crockery, a leather glove, and a ship's copy of Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* assumed a captivating aura and emotional significance far beyond their intrinsic value. The growing importance of authenticity, as discussed in Chapter Three, added to this, and the increasing availability of home entertainments – primarily in the form of magic lantern shows and photographs – made such items, or representations of them, more accessible and affordable. No longer did people need to travel to a panorama, for example, when they could borrow or buy a set of stereoscopic slides to view in their own home.

An example of this is the photographing, by a veteran of three Franklin expeditions, Commander John Powles Cheyne, of the Franklin relics recovered by McClintock's expedition and displayed in the United Services Institution in 1859. With, as Lewis-Jones affirms, the endorsement of his former ship-mate, McClintock (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 204), Cheyne reproduced his photographs as stereoscopic images[29] that could be bought relatively cheaply for home-viewing. Selling in 1860 for one guinea – or, one pound and one shilling – a price that included "a descriptive catalogue … [t]hey are the first photographic records of these sacred objects" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 204), yet Adriana Craciun believes that such images:

> removed McClintock's objects from the narrative of heroic suffering and into middle-class homes, to be enjoyed or ignored like any other *bric-`a-brac* (Craciun, 2014, p. 13 original emphasis).

[29] Three of these images can be viewed online at http://www.ric.edu/faculty/rpotter/cheyne.html accessed 26/02/18

So, in contrast to the sanctification and reverence assigned to the relics themselves, representations of Arctic relics and the explorers and expeditions they signified came to be part of the paraphernalia of everyday life; objects to be discussed or discarded at whim; remnants of lost hopes as well as of lost lives.

More than a decade after their first production, Cheyne supplemented the sale of his slides with a series of public lectures incorporating Magic Lantern Shows, proving that a market for entertainments external to the home was still prolific. The first such lecture and lantern show, in November 1875, was, as Lewis-Jones documents, not a great success as Cheyne "ran out of time, … dropped his notes, and his illuminating equipment was refusing to work" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 204). Despite this inauspicious start to his lecturing career, Cheyne completed a successful tour of the provinces in 1875-76 and in Edinburgh in 1877 revealed his "… 'New Dissolving View Apparatus', powered by oxy-hydrogen limelight, projecting images more than twenty-five feet wide" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 213).

With this, Cheyne went on to stage a series of popular lectures in various London venues before revealing that his masterplan was to reach the North Pole by hot-air balloon. Such balloon excursions had, of course, been rejected by Weld and his associates in 1850, as discussed in Chapter Two, but Cheyne's elaborate plans formed the basis of his lectures, which thus became also appeals for funding, in 1878-79. He was lampooned in *Punch* magazine on 24 January 1880 by a cartoon in which the North Pole is represented by a tall pillar of ice, barely wide enough at its apex for the polar bear atop it to grasp his balance, being caught in the four-pronged anchor lowered by rope from the basket of a balloon floating nearby. One of the basket's occupants brandishes a Union Jack Flag, while one sways the anchor-rope and a third quaffs from a bottle of some unidentified alcoholic beverage (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 222). Public interest, however, was directed more towards the stories of relics of past expeditions, and official support from the government and the Royal Geographical Society was not forthcoming, so Cheyne's high-flying ideas were abandoned in favour of his profitable lecture tours.

New Journalism

Newspapers continued to be interested in stories relating to the Arctic, however, and a new 'yellow journalism' emerging in the USA in the 1870s became known as 'The New Journalism' or 'personal journalism' in the UK as leading editors argued that "the desire for personal details with regard to public men is healthy, rational, and should be yielded to" (O'Connor, 2005, p. 362). Thus, the relics recovered from the Franklin expedition attained a more wide-spread sentimental value than might otherwise have been the case as the lives to which they were attached were more widely exposed to public scrutiny. This helped lecturers such as Cheyne, who could claim a close affinity to the men of whom he spoke and could, therefore, offer some anecdotes or personal observations concerning the relics associated with them. In the print media, meanwhile, a new kind of journalist, the special correspondent, was established:

> called into being by developments in journalism that were themselves both cultivating and responding to the interests of an expanding reading public eager to know more about the world at home and abroad (Waters, 2019, p. 2)

T. P. O'Connor, who founded "the radical *Star* … in 1888" (King & Plunkett, 2005, p. 361) counselled that "[g]ossip should be always good-humoured, kindly, and free from political or other bias" (O'Connor, 2005, p. 363) but the move away from more staid and restricted forms of reporting in newspapers and journals led them to take a more sensationalist perspective on the stories they published. At the same time, images retained a powerful place in the media as "the visual imperative to picture the news was an important distinguishing feature of special correspondence" (Waters, 2019, p. 132). The trend for illustrations alongside news stories had been pioneered in the UK, of course, by *The Illustrated London News,* founded in 1842, and *The News of the World*, founded in 1843, and their style was parodied in the papers produced onboard ice-bound ships in the Arctic, as discussed in Chapter Two. However, it was newspapers such as *The Pall Mall Gazette* – published from 1883 to 1889 and edited by William Thomas Stead – that established the concept of reportage, in which their special correspondents delivered news stories in a more descriptive and emotive style than was formerly common. Another early pioneer of The New Journalism, Alfred Harmsworth,

founded the *Evening News* in 1894 and the *Daily Mail* in 1896, and also provided the funding for the Jackson-Harmsworth Arctic expedition to Franz Josef Land in those years. It was from this expedition that Dover gained its polar bear, and written records from its Ship's Surgeon feature in Chapter Five.

Bradford's *The Arctic Regions*

In 1873, meanwhile, one of the marvels of Arctic exploration literature appeared on the bookshelves of its subscribers. As referenced at the end of Chapter Three, this was the publication of William Bradford's account[30] of his voyage to the Arctic in 1869. Entitled *The Arctic Regions, illustrated with Photographs taken on an Art Expedition to Greenland, with Descriptive Narrative by the Artist,* each limited-edition copy was printed on pages of "royal-broadside size of 25 by 20 inches" (Potter, 2013, p. xix), and had been carefully designed with spaces amid the text for the photographs to subsequently be attached to the pages with glue. An early form of text-wrapping, this technique was not completely successful, making the text difficult to follow in parts, but it was effective in creating three hundred beautiful and uniquely individual volumes, a few of which are extant and one of which is held securely at the British Library in London.

As Michael Lapides suggests, "[i]t is fair to speculate that no two volumes of *The Arctic Regions* were identical" (Lapides, 2013, p. xviii), possibly because negatives became worn with use, or plates broke, so photographs in one volume might be replaced with similar exposures taken from a slightly different angle in another, and "the cropping of photographs from one volume to another varied to some degree" (Lapides, 2013, p. xviii). The implications of this variation in the visual representation of the region are immense as the photographs, which proverbially 'do not lie' evidence their ability to do just that; to misrepresent, even as they represent, a scene in ways analogous to those of the artists and

[30] I also discuss or reference this book in posts dated 28 November 2017 and 6 January 2018 at https://c19arcticrepresentations.wordpress.com/?s=bradford

engravers who modified sketches and watercolours in transposing them to publishable and marketable formats.

It is interesting to note here the similarities of photographic representation to the more common form then found in the printed media, the engraving. As previously observed, this too was prone to misrepresenting the scenes it professed to represent. It was also seen by some to be a cheap alternative to other, more traditional, forms of art, leading John Ruskin to comment in 1872 that:

> engraving, and the study of it, since the development of the modern finished school, have been ruinous to European knowledge of art (Ruskin, 2005, p. 399)

Still the nineteenth century print media relied on the skill of wood-block engravers to illustrate the written word and inform, instruct and entertain readers through visual as well as literary means. Seen through the filter of the engravers' art, however, the artworks created by Back and others, as discussed in previous chapters lost a further layer of integrity and veracity. Original Arctic scenes, converted through the artist's eye into first sketches and then colourful compositions of subtle and blended hues became, as Ruskin decries, "a vague and dead mass of neutral tint;" (Ruskin, 2005, p. 399) in the hands of an engraver. Added to the loss of colour, which descends into shades, or tones, achieved by the drawing of different lengths, thicknesses and directions of lines on the engraver's plate, is the addition by the engraver of details "impertinently added … to make his plate popular" (Ruskin, 2005, p. 399). In other words, the original artwork could be modified by the engraver to reflect his own preferences and the perceptions and expectations of his market, as was discussed in Chapters One and Two in relation to the engravings produced by Edward Finden and based on the artwork of Sir John Ross. In the age of the camera, such modifications could equally well be achieved by the clever selection or manipulation of photographic negatives. Sometimes the manipulation would be evident to the audience, such as in the Magic Lantern dissolving slide shows, but in other instances, like Bradford's book, it would be imperceptible to all but the most stringent examiner of the images.

The British Library's edition of Bradford's *The Arctic Regions* has been stripped of its original "sumptuous morroco and gilt binding" (Houston, 2016) and the 89 pages, each 2-3mm in thickness, are stored as individual documents in a sturdy red cardboard box. The 125 Victorian black-and-white or sepia photographs, some of which have the superficial surface damage that is inevitable after almost 160 years are nevertheless all extant and untorn; the beautifully illustrated initial capital letters of each chapter resemble a medieval monastic manuscript; the meticulous placement of each photograph in the centre of its printed frame reveals the care and attention lavished on each volume; and the texture, dimensions, thickness and delicate aroma of each page likewise express the utmost in quality and design.

Bradford's book, which was reproduced in a more accessible and affordable modern format in 2013 to mark its 150th anniversary, is, in spite of its inconsistencies, a monument to early photographic representations of the Arctic, and to the skill of the photographers grappling with "the wet-plate collodian process [which] required the plates to be swiftly developed before they dried, … [in] their improvised darkroom aboard ship" (Potter, 2013, p. xxi). This process for developing photographs had been invented in 1851 by an English photographer, Frederick Scott Archer (1813-1857) and was "[t]he dominant photographic process used between 1851 and 1880" (MacKenna, 2001). It was not commonly used, however, in such austere and uncompromising situations as Dunmore and Critcherson faced. Working in cramped conditions with temperatures significantly below freezing, they prepared, coated, exposed and developed the plates whilst ensuring that prepared solutions remained at a usable temperature, but they were restricted in the views they could capture on camera. Lengthy exposure times meant that fleeting or moving sights, such as the Aurora Borealis, escaped their lens. Similarly, an animal spied by their eyes might have bolted by the time the camera lens could seize its image. The chemicals these illustrious pioneers of wildlife photography were working with, like most chemicals, changed with the temperature, becoming less effective in extreme heat or cold than at 'room-temperature'. Similarly, the plates on which images were reproduced were extremely fragile, and more so in low temperatures. With

Arctic temperatures regularly several tens of degrees below freezing, Dunmore and Critcherson must have fought a constant battle to preserve their equipment, and indeed Bradford himself lauds their "promptitude and knowledge of their profession … [which is] worthy of the highest praise" (Bradford, 2013, p. 118).

Their efforts were also appreciated by their employer, J. W. Black of Boston, by whom, under the title *The Wonders of the Arctic Regions! The Arctic Stereopticon of the Expedition of Dr. Hayes and Mr. Bradford*, "they were projected as stereopticon slides in Boston and New Bedford in 1870 – predat[ing] Bradford's success with them in London by nearly two years" (Potter, 2013, p. xxi). Black continued to exhibit the slides and in 1872 – still a year in advance of the photographs' publication in Bradford's book – paired them with images of the Great Chicago Fire of that year in what must have been a stunning juxtaposition of fire and ice; similar to that presented in Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and the *Aurora Borealis* of both Towndrow and Abrahall, as discussed in previous chapters.

When, at America's Centennial Fair in 1876, Bradford "came upon [Black's] display of 'his' photographs quite unexpectedly; the two men exchanged pleasantries" (Potter, 2013, p. xxii) and Russell Potter speculates that it was this encounter that inspired Bradford to later embark on his own very successful 'Bradford Recitals' with "photographic testimony to the perils and beauties of the Arctic, along with Bradford's own narration, and a musical accompaniment of some kind" (Potter, 2013, p. xxiii). Here, more clearly than in other examples previously discussed in this thesis – such as the sketches and watercolours of George Back, the paintings of Church, the panoramas and dioramas, and the items published in Dickens's journals – we see a definitive progression in the representation of the Arctic, a clearly identified chain of representational reproduction, reimagining and reinterpretation that leads directly from Bradford's artistic vision, through the technical skills and creativity of Dunmore and Critcherson, and the innovative entrepreneurial skills of Black and Bradford, to bookshelves, Magic-Lantern screens and lecture halls across Britain and the USA throughout the 1870s and '80s.

As well as his artistic vision and impressive flair for business and marketing, Bradford had a wonderful and imaginative eye for detail and colour. Sailing towards Julianeshaab on 14 July 1869, he remarks that:

> the deep blue of an Arctic sky was reflected in the water so strangely flecked with indescribable icy forms ... [n]one … very large, but no two … alike, and … the scene could be compared to nothing but the quick-changing views of a kaleidoscope. Nor were the colours wanting to carry out this illusion. From deepest green to all the lightest shades; from faint blue to deepest "lapis lazuli;" and again, as some lofty berg passed between us and the sun, its crest would be bordered with an orange-coloured halo, in which sometimes prismatic shades appeared (Bradford, 2013, pp. 21-23).

The kaleidoscopic cornucopia of colour that Bradford evokes here brings the Arctic to life for his reader and on 7 September 1869, Bradford continues his theme as he describes that evening's Aurora Borealis as:

> exhibiting a mass of green, violet, and purple light, which, relieved against the blue sky, formed a singular but harmonious blending of colours. From this base, … , the light shot out in fan-like form, the rays extending to and beyond the zenith, … breaking and blending together, or totally disappearing … to burst forth with renewed strength (Bradford, 2013, p. 160).

He then adds that "[t]he whole display suggested the idea of fiery serpents with their head confined, and the extremities left free to writhe and twist about at will" (Bradford, 1873, p. 87). Again here, Bradford depicts an Arctic alive with colour and constant movement. His Arctic is a far cry from Robert McCormick's invocation in 1850 of "the tremendous wastes of ice and snow … the interminable white desert" (Dickens & McCormick, 1850), and also in stark contrast to the heaven-sent vengeance of a wrathful God envisaged in similar scenes of intense aurorean activity by the poets Towndrow and Moore, with whom this chapter began. The 'fiery serpents' that they may have interpreted as a sign of devilry and hell are, for Bradford, a playful ensemble of oscillating light streams, dancing and glowing in a night sky viewed with his artist's eye for colour, pattern and awe-inspiring beauty.

Referring next to Felicia Heman's poem *The Sword of the Tomb: A Northern Legend* (Hemans, 1825), Bradford remarks that he "never before realized the force of the line: – 'the arrowy streams of Northern Light'" (Bradford, 1873, p. 87).

He goes on to report that "this remarkable exhibition lasted nearly an hour" (Bradford, 1873, p. 87). His choice of the words 'exhibition' here and 'exhibiting' in the previous quote suggests an aesthetic spirituality behind his observations, indicating that he considered the Aurora Borealis to be the work of a divine artist with whom he could commune in creative spectacle, and his reaction is to seek auroral comparisons, not in narrative descriptions but in literary representations. Whereas Towndrow had envisaged a God who "painted, for protest, on the canvas of His Heaven" (Towndrow, 1892), the 'canvas' for Bradford was the pure white of the Arctic ice, bespattered by God in the effervescent colours of the aurora's Northern Lights. His reference to an 'exhibition' also serves to evoke a feeling of familiarity in his readers, bringing his experience of the aurora closer to them as he reminds them, subliminally, of the exhibitions they themselves were able to visit in museums and galleries, and the light-shows they were able to view as Magic Lantern shows in their homes. Since the Great Exhibition of 1851, the popularity of exhibitions had continued to grow, with those representing the Arctic, as discussed in previous chapters, being among the most successful.

Bradford's Paintings

Although Bradford's words vividly capture his sense of awe and wonder at the sights he beheld, none of the paintings he produced in the years following his voyage depict an incident of the Aurora Borealis. This is presumably because he was working from photographs and not his journals and, as already noted, a photographic exposure was too long to capture such a dynamic image. Nonetheless, two paintings – namely *Arctic Sunset with Rainbow, 1877* (Hansen, 2015, p. 60)*,* and *Rainbow over the Arctic*, 1879 (Hansen, 2015, p. 74) – illustrate a rainbow effect in the Arctic skies, and in this case the images can be linked not only to his colourful descriptions but also to some of the, albeit monochrome, effects shown in Dunmore and Critcherson's photographs.

The first of these paintings shows a stream of colour spurting into the ashen sky from the surface of the water beside an iceberg. Beneath it and the low, dark, ominous clouds, a small fleet of sailing ships adorns a tranquil sea lapping around

a few almost insignificant icebergs, whilst in the foreground a fishing boat glides peacefully by, its two occupants busily trawling their nets. An orange-pink glow pervades the scene, emanating from some lower background clouds, and the overall effect is, deceptively perhaps, that of a calm autumnal day amid the ice floes. The painting's most striking aspects are its colours and the predominance of sea rather than ice, and the inspiration for it may lie in Bradford's entry for 14 July 1869, as quoted above and continuing:

> [w]hile this shifting panorama was thus developing new beauties, another was awaiting us that proved the crowning glory. For some time a faint yellow streak of light in the southern sky had been attracting our attention, This grew stronger in the afternoon when the sun was falling rapidly … [until] [a]bout three o'clock this phenomenon appeared well-defined. It was of a bright orange hue at its base, which seemed to rest on a range of hills that took about an octant of the horizon at an elevation of twenty degrees, the light gradually fading until it blended with and was lost in the sky. Hills were there none in that direction … [but] one of the party, … directed his attention in the opposite direction [and] [t]here, above the hill-tops, was a long, low-lying line of yellow light, gradually growing stronger as the oblique rays of the setting sun fell full upon it (Bradford, 2013, pp. 23-24).

In reading this, one senses the spellbinding spectacle emerging before Bradford's eyes, and, despite their monochrome nature, the accompanying photographs reveal something of the original grandeur and wonder of such scenes as the gradations of light reflect between sea and sky. So, in examining the works together it is possible to connect painting, text and photograph and trace Bradford's images through the filters of his imagination.

Other paintings, such as *Ice Floes under the Midnight Sun*, 1869 (Hansen, 2015, p. 43), and *Sunrise Cove*, 1878 (Hansen, 2015, p. 69), include vibrant orange and yellow hues of dusk and dawn, again clearly drawn from the observations recorded in his journals, while a later painting, still inspired by the 1869 voyage, returns us once more to the theme of polar bears. Entitled *Arctic Invaders,* 1882 (Hansen, 2015, p. 85) this painting presents the viewer with an image of three explorers encountering a polar bear and her cub on the ice. The perspective is perfectly neutral, leaving the viewer to decide whether it is the men or the bears that are the 'invaders' of the painting's title. Two previous paintings, each dated 1879, and titled *Ice Dwellers, Watching the Invaders* (Hansen, 2015, p. 78) and

Ice Dwellers Watching the Invaders (Hansen, 2015, p. 77) respectively – with just a comma difference in their titles – had introduced into Bradford's work this tension between the concept of the invader and the invaded, indicating that, like Landseer and, later, Briton Rivière, Bradford wanted to challenge assumptions of man's superiority over nature and its animal kingdom. It is probable he was also, thereby, challenging Britain's assumptions of superiority over all the nations and races it invaded and colonised.

In a world slowly, and perhaps reluctantly, coming to terms with Darwin's revelations on evolution and the origins of life, such assumptions were under increasing scrutiny in both spiritual and secular circles, yet much of the British population, still believed, perhaps more strongly than ever, that their nation "rule[d] the waves" (Thomson, 1740) and everything beyond the waves too. It was, nevertheless, the Austro-Hungarian explorer Karl Weyprecht and his lieutenant Julius Payer who in 1873, having drifted for more than twelve months amid Arctic ice, discovered the archipelago of Franz Josef Land off the northern coast of Russia and spent the next year exploring it before returning home to Austria in 1874 to propose the formation of an organisation that would bring together the skills and knowledge of all governments interested in Arctic and Antarctic exploration. This long-overdue proposal for international collaboration led, eight years later, to the formation of the International Polar Commission (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019), making 1882-83 the first International Polar Year of the four so far celebrated.

Franklin Memorials and Monuments

Although part of the new polar alliance, when it came to issues relating to the Arctic Britain was still immersed in mourning the loss of Sir John Franklin and his crews. Therefore, on 1 July 1875, a monument to his memory was unveiled in Westminster Abbey, its epitaph penned by Franklin's sister's son-in-law, the Poet Laureate, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, and reading:

Not here:
the white north has thy bones;
and thou, heroic sailor-soul,
art passing on thine happier voyage
now toward no earthly pole.

These words are also those that encircle the statue in Franklin's hometown of Spilsby – engraved on the ground, as referenced in Chapter Three – despite that statue being erected fourteen years earlier.

Just two weeks after the unveiling of the Westminster monument, Franklin's widow died, presumably content that, with this memorial in the UK's foremost shrine to its great and good, she had achieved for her husband the ultimate accolade. Ironically, at the foot of the monument is a simple stone paving slab, installed as recently as 2014 and engraved "John Rae 1813-1893 Arctic Explorer" – a belated tribute to a man now widely acknowledged to be far more deserving of recognition and memorial than Franklin. *The Scotsman* newspaper of 3 October 2014 asserts that with the unveiling of this stone a "Victorian wrong was righted" (Turnbull, 2014) but its positioning at the foot of Franklin's memorial emphasises the unfortunate fact that wherever Rae is remembered in stone it is invariably not in his own right but as the "Arctic Explorer [and] Intrepid Discoverer of the fate of Sir John Franklin's last expedition". These words, followed by the dates of his birth and death, and those of his own Arctic expeditions, form the inscription on both his most imposing memorial, inside the cathedral of St Magnus in Kirkwall on Orkney's Main Island, and the smaller monument that marks his final resting place, against the wall of the small burial ground that surrounds that same cathedral. Explicitly connecting his fame to his association with Franklin, the indoor memorial was erected by public subscription in 1895, two years after his death. Sited in the thirteenth-century chapel dedicated to St Rognvald, it resembles a sarcophagus, upon which a stone effigy of Rae reclines, leaning on his right hip, one leg crossed over the other, and hands clasped behind his head, facing north across the chapel's sanctuary, towards a similar memorial to another local hero, William Balfour Baikie (1825-1864) whose exploratory expeditions took him southwards to the African continent.

The unveiling of the Westminster Abbey memorial was, of course, a few years after those of the statues in Spilsby and Waterloo Place, which were discussed in Chapter Three. The contrasting poses of the Franklin statues and the Rae memorial in Kirkwall reflect the characters and attitudes of the two men, one kindly yet ruthlessly ambitious, the other successful and self-reliant yet modest. As members of organisations such as the Royal Geographical Society, they would undoubtedly have met, and must have been on good terms because, as affirmed in Chapter Two, Franklin dined with Rae's sister and her husband on the eve of his fateful expedition leaving Stromness in July 1845. Nevertheless, whereas Rae surveyed and explored the Arctic with a genuine interest in its people and its wildlife, developing survival skills and learning from the Inuit, Franklin, as a loyal naval officer with an established record of heroic service, approached the region much as Frobisher had done in the sixteenth century: as a means of procuring "advancement" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 63), not, of course, at the Elizabethan court but in Victorian society.

In the Tasmanian (formerly Van Diemen's Land) city of Hobart, where Sir John Franklin had resided while serving with varying degrees of success as Governor from 1837 to 1843, a statue erected in 1865 also, anachronistically, carries the lines that Tennyson wrote for the Westminster Abbey memorial, as quoted above (Campbell, 2016). As with the Spilsby statue, this indicates that the inscription must have been added some ten years or more after the statue was erected. Above Tennyson's words, Franklin's likeness stands atop a tall column, striking an almost identical pose to that of the Spilsby statue. It presides today over the specially created Franklin Square and is surrounded by a circle of water fountains. Alongside the names of the crewmen of the *Erebus* and *Terror*, the plinth again ascribes him erroneously to be the "Discoverer of the Northwest Passage", an epitaph universally acknowledged to have been insisted upon by his widow.

Possibly most impressive of all the Franklin memorials, however, is the eight-foot high, ten-foot wide marble tableau, now situated, since it was moved and

rededicated in 2009 (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 289), in the vestibule of the Old Royal Naval College Chapel in Greenwich, London SE10. Originally installed in the Painted Hall at Greenwich Hospital, it was created in 1869 by British sculptor Richard Westmacott (1799-1872) and depicts two explorers, one on either side of the central panel; one stands erect and confident, consulting his charts in front of a globe and unfurled flags while the other slumps despondent upon a rock, his head in his hands and his telescope discarded on the ground beside him. Behind the first figure, the sails of a ship, its mast clearly signifying a Christian cross, reflect his optimistic stance, whilst the second figure is shadowed by the upturned bow of a ship dashed against an iceberg. A central panel lists the names of all the crew members of the two ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*, and the verse on the plinth below affirms that:

BENEATH LIE THE REMAINS
OF ONE OF FRANKLIN'S COMPANIONS
WHO PERISHED IN THE ARCTIC REGIONS
1848
DISCOVERED AND BROUGHT AWAY FROM
KING WILLIAM'S LAND BY CAPTAIN HALL
THE UNITED STATES ARCTIC EXPLORER
1869

The remains mentioned here were long believed to be those of Lieutenant Henry Thomas Dundas Le Vesconte (Potter, 2009), a senior officer of HMS *Erebus*, and were recovered, as the inscription states, by the American explorer Charles Francis Hall and returned to London in 1869. Their inclusion in this memorial, and their transfer with it from the Painted Hall to the Chapel, makes it a uniquely macabre representation of the Arctic, and a supremely sensational one – especially as recent scientific analysis of the bones indicates that they are more likely to be the remains, not of Le Vesconte, but of Harry Duncan Spens Goodsir, the anatomist and naturalist who served as Ships' Surgeon on the ill-fated 1845 expedition (Warrior, 2020). A similar misidentification of remains recovered from the Arctic, Claire Warrior suggests, applies to those buried in Dean Cemetery in Edinburgh under the inscription 'John Irving' (Warrior, 2020). Irving served as 3rd Lieutenant aboard HMS *Terror*, but the true identity of the bones buried beneath his impressive memorial is in doubt – although, as the *Atlas Obscura* website opines:

> [t]his grave marks one of few bodies retrieved from the disastrous Franklin Arctic expedition … [and] regardless of its identity, some part of the Franklin expedition was put to rest in this quiet corner of Edinburgh (*Atlas Obscura*, 2020)

Both the Irving grave and the sarcophagus beneath the Greenwich memorial can thus serve the purpose of an ‘unknown warrior’ grave – such as those at the west end of the nave in Westminster Abbey and beneath the Arc de Triomphe in France – in representing not just one lost soul but all those who sailed with or in search of Franklin. Their value thus attains a higher level of national significance as they become the relics of not one but all of the ‘Lost Arctic Voyagers’.

Such mute and immobile representations of lost heroes still today form sites of pilgrimage for some people, inspiring not only the historical record but new feats of endurance and exploration. Opposite the Franklin memorial in Waterloo Place, for example, stands a statue of a similarly ill-fated polar explorer, Robert Falcon Scott. His mission to reach the South Pole in 1910-1912 ended in catastrophe, yet the later recovery and publication of his journals ensured his place alongside, if not in the stead of, Franklin as a national hero. In February 1997, his statue was climbed by David Hempleman-Adams and Rune Gjeldnes in order to raise awareness of their forthcoming expedition to the North Pole (Lewis-Jones, 2020, pp. 313-315), which they reached on 28 April 1998 (Hempleman-Adams & Uhlig, 2002, p. 263). It is interesting that they chose the statue of an Antarctic hero rather than the Arctic hero just a few metres across the road for their publicity stunt, and it demonstrates how firmly discredited today are the claims made for Franklin on all the memorials dedicated to him; to associate their Arctic expedition with his would have thrown into question the credibility of their own quest, so they chose instead to appropriate an Antarctic hero to their cause.

Relics

While statues and other memorials represented the physical appearance and noble stature of men such as Franklin, the flotsam and jetsam of their lives retained the power to stir public emotions more. By 1878, as Volume 3 of the

periodical *Old and New London* records, the United Service Museum in London's Scotland Yard was storing:

> the sad relics of the unfortunate expedition to the Arctic regions, conducted by Sir John Franklin, and discovered by Sir Leopold M[c]Clintock, of H.M.S. *Fox*, in 1859 (Thornbury, 1878)

How many of the 'sad relics' this included, or exactly what form they took, is unclear, but in 1880, H. Frith, writing in *Golden Hours: an illustrated magazine for any time and all time*, confirmed that "[t]he public interest in all that concerns our Arctic exploration is very great" (Frith, 1880, p. 779), and the continuing popularity of panoramas, dioramas and Magic Lantern shows on such topics demonstrates that the public's appetite for vibrant visual entertainment based on these relics and similar Arctic themes was unimpaired in the final decades of the nineteenth century.

From 1875 to 1876, and again in 1883, George Rignold's *Panorama of the Arctic Regions*, was displayed around the UK in somewhat of a whirlwind tour, being, as its publicity handbill states:

> exhibited for eleven weeks in Glasgow, five weeks in Preston, one month in Cheltenham, eight weeks in Brighton, four weeks in Southampton, &c., and recently for six weeks in Portsmouth, where it was honoured by the patronage of SIR LEOPOLD McCLINTOCK and witnessed by the majority of the OFFICERS and CREWS of the latest expedition. (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 14)

McClintock, as stated by Thornbury above, had been responsible for the recovery of the Victory Point Record in 1859, finally confirming the loss of all of Franklin's men, but the 'latest expedition' referred to in 1883 was that led in 1875-1877 to Northern Ellesmere Island in Greenland by George Strong Nares, commanding the ships HMS *Alert* and HMS *Discovery*. Just as previous expeditions that had proved disappointing, or downright disastrous, had been transformed by the publication of their officers' narratives into paradigms of heroic victory, so the Nares' expedition was transformed by a new breed of Arctic lecturers, who "projected an almost unwavering popular image of naval success" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 69) into a "moral victory: a triumph of British pluck and manly character" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 69) Rignold himself performed lectures to accompany his

panorama, which his publicity described as “THE FINEST MARINE PAINTING and the most stupendous record of ARCTIC SCENERY, DISCOVERY, and ADVENTURE extant” (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 14 & 70) The endorsement of McClintock and others added authenticity to Rignold’s representations and served to validate its legitimacy in the minds of its audiences.

In art, meanwhile, the circle was nearing completion as the region was represented once more in the way it had been at the beginning of century. As Eric G. Wilson observes, the “lunar eeriness – as mysteriously attractive as it is harshly annihilating” (Wilson, 2009, p. 260n.71) of Coleridge’s polar regions of the Antarctic in his *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere* “comes luridly to life” (Wilson, 2009, p. 260n.71) not only in Casper David Friedrich’s 1823 painting *Das Eismeer*, discussed in Chapter One, but also in the work of Frederic Edwin Church, fifty years later. His 1875 painting *The Iceberg* – as distinct from his 1861/63 painting *The Icebergs* (plural), which was discussed in Chapter Three – reflects the spirituality of *Das Eismeer*, portraying the Arctic as

> a region that dwarfs and lifts the human … [his] ship … decentred and diminished, a toy beside the frozen immensity …his apricot light at the top of the berg point[ing] to a space beyond the freeze, an indifferent grayness reaching to infinity (Wilson, 2009, p. 260n.71).

Thus, Church sought to articulate not an affinity of man and Arctic, but a distancing and incompatibility of the two, contrasting the immense size and power of the ice “here … there … all around” (Coleridge, 1991, p. 12) against the vulnerability and futility of man’s excursions amongst it.

In 1880, as the first Boer War engaged British troops in Africa and British explorer Benjamin Leigh Smith made two Arctic voyages, one to Spitsbergen and one to Franz Josef Land, a young medical student by the name of Arthur (later Sir Arthur) Conan Doyle served a season as Ship's Surgeon on the Greenland whaler *Hope* of Peterhead. This experience was to inspire at least two of his many stories when, after qualifying as a doctor, he later turned to writing as a career. Serving on whaling ships as a way to fund their studies and pay their rent, as well

as to gain valuable medical experience, was a common practice among medical students at Edinburgh University, so Conan Doyle was not unusual in pursuing this course. The first of his polar stories, *The Captain of the Pole Star,* was first published in *the Temple Bar magazine*, January 1883 edition, and subtitled *Being an extract from the singular journal of John McAlister Ray, student of medecine* [sic]. An Arctic ghost story, drawing on all the ethereal connotations of the region, it tells the tale of a ship's captain who mysteriously orders his ship to anchor mid-ocean, in danger of being engulfed by ice at any moment. One after another the crew members witness a ghostly apparition near the ship, until one day the captain himself is lured away by this 'ghost' and found the next day dead on the ice but with a wide smile on his face – reminiscent of that on the face of young Diamond in MacDonald's tale of 1871. The Captain's hand is outstretched, grasping as if to hold the apparition that betrayed him, and perhaps embracing the tranquillity of an Arctic afterlife in the same way that Diamond did. The second of Conan Doyle's Arctic-related stories was published a decade later and tells the tale of *Black Peter,* in which a veteran of the Arctic whalers terrorises his wife and daughter and is one morning found harpooned to death in his garden shed – or cabin, as he prefers to call it. The 33rd of his celebrated Sherlock Holmes stories, *Black Peter* was first published in the *Collier's magazine* dated 27th February 1904 in the USA and in *The Strand Magazine* dated for March 1904 in the UK. (arthur-conan-doyle.com, 2020)

In each of these stories, Conan Doyle implies that the Arctic has a detrimental effect on the mental health of anyone who spends a great deal of time there. Such a representation is indicative of the reflective nature of changing attitudes to polar exploration, and to the North Pole in particular, as people contemplated the histories of expedition relics and the men who had owned them in a more subjective and emotional way. Mirroring Coleridge's Ancyent Marinere, driven mad by his time in Antarctica, and Shelley's Victor Frankenstein, suffering a similar fate across the globe in the Arctic, the title characters of *Black Peter* and *The Captain of the Pole Star*, experience the mentally debilitating effects of exposure to the Arctic. This suggests that representations and perceptions of the polar regions in 1900 resembled more closely those of a century earlier rather

than those of the mid-nineteenth-century. This in turn, demonstrates a circular trajectory of Arctic representations and perceptions in the long-nineteenth-century as the fin de siècle saw a revival of interest in the formation and celebration of polar expeditions, both north and south, but also saw a return to more menacing and perilous representations of those regions than most of the previous few decades had produced, as Chapter Five will explore.

Chapter Five – 1890 to 1909

In which the wheel has turned full circle, and the Arctic resumes its eighteenth-century reputation as the site of desolation, destruction and despair – and in which Barrow's questions are finally answered.

Reaching the North Pole

On 6 June 1891, the American explorer Robert Peary set off aboard *The Kite* on his second Arctic expedition, having first ventured as far as the Greenland ice sheets in 1886. Now accompanied by his wife, Josephine – who thus became the first woman known to have participated in Arctic exploration – and seven other companions, he "sledged 2,100 km … to northeastern Greenland, discovered Independence Fjord, and found evidence of Greenland's being an island" (Rafferty, 2020). Several expeditions, and eighteen years, later Peary would be officially recognised as the first man to have reached the North Pole, despite counterclaims from, for instance, his former expedition companion, Frederick Cook. Both these claims were later discredited, Peary's as late as the 1980s when further investigations suggested that "[t]hrough a combination of navigational mistakes and record-keeping errors, Peary may actually have advanced only to a point 50–100 km … short of the pole" (Rafferty, 2020). Nevertheless, on 19 September 1909 the cover of the illustrated supplement to *Le Petit Journal* in France portrayed "Rival explorers Robert Peary and Frederick Cook fight[ing] for the glory of being the first to the North Pole" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 347).

At the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge in 2018, displays identified Peary as the first *to be recognised* for accomplishing this key objective of Arctic exploration, but researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara, offer a range of other contenders for the title. One such is Matthew Henson, a black American on the 1909 expedition who recalled Peary being "hopping mad" (Norrington, 2018) to find that he, Henson, had reached the Pole ahead of him. Peary's journal indicates that the displeasure Hensen recalls was compounded by an assumption of superiority in more than just rank: echoing the friction between Wade and Palmleaf in Stephens's novel, *Left on Labrador,* as discussed

in Chapter Four, Peary writes that, on reaching the Pole, “I have with me 5 men, Matthew Hensen, colored [sic], Ootah, Egingwah, Seegloo, and Ookeah, Eskimos; 5 sledges and 38 dogs” (Peary, 2007, p. 89). His focus here on Henson’s racial ethnicity rather than his nationality as a fellow American citizen negates the latter, more appropriate, yet missing, signifier.

Intense international competition for polar recognition persisted, therefore, in the years covered by this final chapter. Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen, who would later defeat Britain’s Robert Falcon Scott in pursuit of the South Pole, also initially had his eyes firmly on Arctic triumph, having been inspired as a boy by tales of Franklin’s expeditions and those sent out in search of the lost ships and men. Amundsen’s claim to have been the first to truly traverse a Northwest Passage is universally acknowledged and confirmed, despite the inscriptions on all the Franklin memorials discussed in previous chapters. Regarding the North Pole, however, the identity of the person to actually first set foot on that mystical spot, where “[e]very breeze which could possibly blow … must be a south wind” (Peary, 2007, p. 85), is an issue that remains – and is likely to remain – unresolved.

Royal Naval Exhibitions

In Britain, the success of expeditions from other nations did not play well with either the public or the establishment. Remembering Barrow’s counsel of 1817, as quoted more fully in Chapter One, against allowing “a [foreign] naval power …[to] complete a discovery in the nineteenth century, which was so happily commenced by Englishmen in the sixteenth” (Barrow, 1817, pp. 219-220), the nation believed that the Arctic was British – or, more specifically, English – by right. So, it was with this in mind that the Royal Naval Exhibition at Chelsea in 1891, styling itself "an exhibition illustrative of the history, development and progress of the Navy" (*RNE* Editor, 1891, p. xxxiii), brought together a plethora of naval memorabilia that would eventually form the basis of collections in the museums and galleries of present-day Britain.

Organised in just eight months, following an inaugural meeting on 16 September 1890, and possibly inspired by the success of that year's Royal Military Exhibition, from which it acquired some buildings, the Royal Naval Exhibition opened on 2 May 1891 with the intention of remaining:

> open from 11a.m. to 11p.m. daily until about the end of October, 1891, excepting Sundays and any two Wednesdays which may be specially reserved (*RNE* Editor, 1891, p. xvii).

Entering the exhibition, visitors passed beneath an inscription soberly reminding them that "[i]t is on the Navy under the good providence of God, that our Wealth, Prosperity and Peace Depend" (*RNE* Editor, 1891, p. 1). Once inside, although the exhibition covered all aspects of naval history and tradition at least as far back as 1512, the first gallery that visitors encountered was "The Franklin Gallery, containing the interesting and pathetic relics of the several Arctic Expeditions" (*RNE* Editor, 1891, p. xxv). In this gallery, the collections of smaller 'relics', such as "… part of a cherry-stick pipe stem, piece of a port-fire, a few copper nails, a leather boot-lace, a seaman's clasp-knife, [and] two small glass-stoppered bottles (full) …" (*RNE* Editor, 1891, p. 7), were numbered 1 to 24A. Most contained several – often many – items recovered by a specific person or expedition, making the total number of individual 'interesting and pathetic' items virtually incalculable. These items, so personal and so insignificant in everyday life, had assumed a powerful role as emissaries for their missing owners, and yet, as already discussed, the sheer numbers of such relics was liable to diminish that power in the eyes of all but those owners' nearest and dearest. Item 22, however, was a relic worthy of national recognition: it was "[t]he Franklin Record … the only authentic information we have ever received" (*RNE* Editor, 1891, p. 7), and now generally known as the aforementioned Victory Point Record.

The reference here to authenticity is notable. As Chapter Three discussed, the importance of this concept emerged from the 1850s onwards alongside, and in large part due to, the recovery of relics from Arctic expeditions. To the men who left the UK with Franklin in 1845, therefore, its effect on financial and sentimental value was unknown. To them, their piece of paper was a mere note left in a cairn to record their presence and intentions, and that only one such note exists is

indicative of how careless they were of such practices. Yet, this one piece of paper, clearly signed initially by Lieutenant Graham Gore and Charles Des Voeux, Mate, and a few months later by Captain's Francis Crozier and James Fitzjames, is identified by the editor of the exhibition's *Official Catalogue and Guide* as the 'only authentic information we have'. The authenticity of the other relics on display, therefore, is circumstantial and based on speculation and estimation.

The Franklin Gallery's exhibits 25 to 197, as listed on pages 7 to 13 of the *Official Catalogue and Guide*, included an array of Arctic memorabilia from portraits and sledges to stuffed mammals and birds. In the portrait section, designated item 61, hung Stephen Pearce's 1851 portrayal of *The Arctic Council,* as discussed in Chapter Three. Its presence, as much as anything else in the gallery, brought:

> to the RNE an iconography of historic naval resolve that matched Markham's hopes to encourage public and government support for new explorations (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 263).

The name 'Markham' refers to either Captain Albert H. Markham R.N., A.D.C., a veteran of naval expeditions to the Arctic, or to his cousin Clements R. Markham, geographer, historian, writer and Arctic explorer, who served in the roles of secretary and president to both the Royal Geographic Society and the Hakluyt Society at various times. Both men are listed in the exhibition's *Official Catalogue and Guide* as contributors to the exhibition, members of the exhibition's Navigation Committee – which would have been primarily responsible for "The Franklin Gallery which is devoted as it is to the ARCTIC SUB-DIVISION OF THE NAVIGATION SECTION" (*RNE* Editor, 1891, p. 2) – and, in Albert's case, as a member of the "Portsmouth Local Committee" (*RNE* Editor, 1891, p. xxx). Through their shared passion for Arctic and Antarctic exploration, the cousins:

> were chiefly responsible for reinvigorating, mythologising, and propagating [the] romantic polar narratives of this period … [as] central figures on the RNE Arctic organisational committee (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 245)

Just as Sir John Barrow had exploited the publishing media available to him at the beginning of the nineteenth century to propagate 'romantic polar narratives' to 'reinvigorate' and 'mythologise' the Arctic in all its supposed Elizabethan glory

against the backdrop of Coleridge, Shelley and Hogg, so the Markhams exploited the media of their generation to recall and resurrect the golden age of Arctic expeditions that had ceded to McClintock's discoveries, and to stir up enthusiasm for further expeditions to both north and south poles.

Thus, the Royal Naval Exhibition of 1891 can be said to have begun the process of generating a cohesive national naval history to unite and inspire the nation as it:

> marked the starting point of a decade of increased interest in Britain's past and future goals in the polar regions, which culminated in the 'Heroic Age' of Antarctic exploration in the early twentieth century (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 245)

The purpose of repeating the exercise at London's Earl's Court in 1905, to mark the centenary year of the nation's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar, was more commercial as it sought:

> to 'arouse patriotic sentiments and to re-tell the tales of nautical derring-do', exploiting the commercial possibilities of the exhibition format both as sober showcase and funfair (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 292).

Including such delights as "'a switchback railway, a submarine, a shooting gallery, a 'gigantic' wheel, 'Distorting Mirrors', Burns's 'Ants and Bees', and a 'Lager Beer Hall'" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 292), the second exhibition was clearly not confined to presenting its visitors with either naval or Arctic memorabilia, although some paintings, tableaux, and photographs on a polar theme were displayed. By representing the Arctic as a naval preserve and associating it with fun and excitement, the exhibition went against the grain of the region's contemporaneous representation in art and literature. There, it had reverted to the bleakness of eighteenth century representations and perceptions. So, with the 1905 exhibition, the Markham's and their co-organisers were exploiting, as aforesaid, the media at their disposal in the best way they could to further their own polar ambitions, just as Sir John Barrow had done a century earlier.

The timing of the two Royal Naval Exhibitions is therefore critical in demonstrating the circular nature of Arctic representation in the long-nineteenth-century because it demonstrates the links in the national mood and in official reactions to

that mood at either end of the century. In the early 1800s, British ships were engaged in battles at sea, ultimately emerging triumphant from the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. Following that victory, John Barrow's enthusiastic and persuasive articles, and his persistent cajoling of the Government and his colleagues at the Admiralty, led to a golden age of Arctic exploration that raised the status of naval officers to that of great conquering heroes in the public's perception. In the wake of Rae and McClintock's discoveries concerning Franklin, and with the country, "facing unprecedented political, economic, and diplomatic competition from other nations …[so that] it was felt that her supremacy at sea would soon be challenged" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 295), there was a desire among many to once again promote the power of Britain's naval defences. Thus, the Royal Naval Exhibitions were a vital tool in resurrecting at the fin de siècle that same fervour and pride that Barrow had aroused in the nineteenth century's early decades.

The Arctic in Fin de siècle Fiction

Even as the Royal Naval Exhibitions of 1891 and 1905 completed in respect of naval ambitions the circle of Arctic representations and perceptions in the long-nineteenth-century, in fiction the region had resumed its role as a reference point for notions of extreme, debilitating cold, both physical and emotional. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles,* published in 1891, for example, Thomas Hardy conveys his impression of the Arctic in his description of the "cataclysmic horror [of] inaccessible polar regions of a magnitude such as no human being had ever conceived …" (Hardy, 2000, p. 421). The snow Tess and Marian encounter at Flintcomb-Ash Farm is on the periphery of Arctic weather, as it:

> had followed the birds from the polar basin as a white pillar of cloud, and individual flakes could not be seen. The blast smelt of icebergs, arctic seas, whales and white bears, carrying the snow so that it licked the land but did not deepen on it … (Hardy, 2000, p. 253).

The description intensifies the reader's perception of how bitterly and brutally, cold and bleak life is at the farm, both emotionally and physically, as Hardy invokes Arctic conditions to emphasise the workers' vulnerability and isolation. Like Coleridge's Antarctic in 1798, Hardy's Arctic was a region to be avoided at

all costs and endured only at its furthest reaches, where even at their mildest its weather systems cause misery and hardship as they viciously ‘lick’ the land that gentler snows might dust. Hardy’s birds, like the most fortunate of Arctic explorers, flee the Arctic ahead of the weather that still follows them mercilessly. His powerful ‘white pillar[s] of cloud’, annihilate the individuality of the snowflakes, just as conditions at the farm annihilate the individuality of the workers and, similarly, the Arctic ice had annihilated the individuality of the numerous explorers now “scattered on those wastes of snow” (Dickens, 1854 ii, p. 392), like nothing more than the dust and ashes of the traditional Christian burial service. The same ‘white pillars’ mimic those of eminent buildings in the popular Gothic style, yet they support not roofs, statues or high social status, but a fierce thermal ‘blast’ that brings not just cold air and winds but the very smells of the Arctic, ensuring that all the readers’ senses are overwhelmed by its devastating effects. With this one brief allusion to the Arctic, Hardy draws on all the connotations of the region stored in the collective memory of his readers, and paints a picture, almost sublime, of innocence eclipsed by experience.

By the fin de siécle, then, the Arctic was once again symbolic in fictional literature of a forbidding place, wrought with danger, gloom and desolation, as it had been at the previous turn of a century. This is reflected again, a decade after Hardy’s *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, in M. P. Shiel’s 1901 novel *The Purple Cloud*. Shiel’s story is set in what was then the future – circa 1920 to 1940 – and anticipates thirty-one attempts being made to reach the North Pole in the interim years of the early twentieth century (Shiel, 2004, p. 166). The protagonist, Adam Jeffson, is a young doctor seconded at short notice onto an Arctic expedition following the sudden illness of the ship’s surgeon – an illness induced by Jeffson’s fiancée, Clodagh, to this very end. As she had hoped in manipulating her intended’s way so callously onto the expedition, Jeffson subsequently becomes the first man to reach the North Pole, but, rather than returning in glory to claim the fame and fortune that Clodagh had anticipated, his achievement precipitates the release of a poisonous purple gas cloud that engulfs the earth, wiping out all forms of life.

As James Hogg had predicted in 1818, and as noted in Chapter One, "the discoverer [of the pole] would never return with the tidings" (Hogg, 1818, p. 7). In this way, by echoing Hogg's reservations, Shiel indicates a return to the way in which the Arctic had been represented a century earlier.

The only human survivors of the purple gas cloud are Adam and a girl born in an air-tight cell on the day it first appeared: the two do not meet for twenty years, at which time Adam, unsurprisingly perhaps, names the girl Eve. Any prelapsarian allusions in their meeting are short-lived, however, and the apocalyptic premise of this novel is chilling in its anticipation of the exterminatory gas clouds that were in fact deployed in the era in which it is set, and Shiel's detailed account of the chemical constitution of the cloud demonstrates that the work is based on contemporary scientific research. Thus, Shiel's novel has in common with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, written almost a century earlier, a warning about the dangers of overambitious scientists, and of being careful what you wish for: Jeffson's dreams of Arctic glory, followed by marriage to his fiancée and a lifetime of recognition for his Arctic heroism, emulate Victor Frankenstein's dreams of "bestowing animation upon lifeless matter" (Shelley, 1992, p. 32), marrying Elizabeth, and enjoying a lifetime of recognition and respect for his scientific endeavours. Both men are thwarted by the unexpected consequences of their actions, again demonstrating a circular trajectory in representations of the Arctic from the early nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries.

Moreover, and in similar vein, Jeffson's stricken sailors, who lie:

> in many attitudes, some terrifying to see, some disgusting, several grotesque, all so inhuman … with dropped heads, and grins, … and eyes that stared, and eyes that dozed, and eyes that winked (Shiel, 2004, pp. e-loc.1004-1014)

reflect those of Coleridge's *Rime*, who "[e]ach turn'd his face with a ghastly pang [a]nd cursed me with his ee" (Coleridge, 1991, p. 18).

The suddenness and unexpectedness of the deaths is eerily prescient in each case, and for some critics the:

> supernatural events of [Coleridge's] poem symbolize the pattern of sin, repentance, grace and expiation that is part of man's religious experience (Brett & Jones, 1991).

Others argue that, because “[t]he mariner’s guilt is not a constructive response to a particular crime, there is little he can do to expiate it” (Ashenden & Brown, 2014, p. 91), adding that the mariner’s “life is guaranteed by his guilt, as is the peculiar inspiration of his ‘strange power of speech’ [l.591]” (Ashenden & Brown, 2014, p. 92 original brackets).

In both interpretations, there are clear supernatural and spiritual overtones in *The Rime* that emanate from its polar influences. In contrast, the events of Shiel’s novel are based solidly on scientific pragmatism. The victims of his noxious ‘purple cloud’ of the title are caught in the midst of their everyday activities, “flensing and cutting-in” (Shiel, 2004, p. e.loc.1004) their prey, “removing the gums from a mass of stratified whalebone” (Shiel, 2004, pp. e-loc.1014), coiling ropes, handling harpoons and other whaling equipment, or, in one case, lazily taking a swig of rum in the forecastle of the ship. Through discovering their bodies, Jeffson gradually realises how momentous is his predicament and rationally works out a scheme for his own survival. For Coleridge’s eponymous Mariner, the bodies that “[w]ith heavy thump, a lifeless lump … dropp’d down one by one” (Coleridge, 1991, p. 19) rise, in his delirium, as spectres “their limbs like life-less tools – … a ghastly crew” (Coleridge, 1991, p. 23) to steer his ship home to his “own countrée” (Coleridge, 1991, p. 28). The spirituality and mystery of the polar regions is therefore present in Coleridge’s work in a way that pre-empts that in which it would be represented in the mid-nineteenth-century, and in a way that is completely rejected in Shiel’s work.

So, as much as the Arctic had resumed its former reputation of dire and dreary domain by the fin de siècle, it had lost on the way many of its connotations of sacred mystery, restorative powers, redemption and sanctity. No longer completely uncharted territory, it was more ‘known’ and more accessible than it had ever been, and through their reading of the many stories set in its icy climes, children and adults alike were able to identify with it, feeling with the region that same familiarity that Dickens had expressed in 1853 when he wrote:

> I wonder it should have come to pass that I never have been round the world, never have been shipwrecked, ice-environed, tomahawked or eaten (Dickens, 1853 i, p. 409)

In common with the many other armchair travellers of his time, Dickens is not 'wonder[ing]' here at the sights, sounds, and experiences he has read about. Rather, he is perplexed that these things feel so real to him that he cannot believe he has not actually been to the remotest corners of the world and seen, heard and experienced them himself.

Closing the Circle

By 1893, forty years after Dickens wrote the above, not only had rising literacy rates, wider education and improved printing processes opened up the world of literature to a greater number of readers but travel of all kinds was becoming easier and faster. Consequently, the world already seemed a smaller place, with Arctic destinations featuring in the itineraries of people travelling for pleasure as well as those of explorers – as demonstrated by the real and fictional 'Gentlemen Travellers' of the 1870s, discussed in Chapter Four. Representations and perceptions of the region therefore began to reflect its proximity and relevance to British culture in juxtaposition to its remoteness and horrifying desolation. This reflects Romanticism's notion of the sublime, summed up by Lord Byron - as noted in my Introduction - as "[a]ll that expands the spirit, yet appals" (Byron, 1996). The dichotomy expressed by Walton in *Frankenstein* mirrors this concept, which re-emerges in the final decades of the nineteenth century to bring representations and perceptions of the Arctic full circle as the region became at once 'expand[ing]' to the 'spirit' and 'appal[ing]' in the prospect to the British public.

Mary Shelley's fears for a future fractured by scientific misadventures was thus echoed nearly a century later by fiction writers who were beginning to recognise the impact that western intervention was having on the polar environment, its wildlife and its indigenous communities. Rudyard Kipling, for example, writing his *Jungle Book* stories in 1894-95, represented the Arctic as a place of tremendous danger, not for explorers but for indigenous humans, flora and fauna; a place where "the fields [of ice] round them cracked and starred in every direction, and the cracks opened and snapped like the teeth of wolves" (Kipling, 1998 i, p. 272),

and from which *The White Seal*, Kotick, needed to escape to seek a safe home for himself and his brethren, threatened as they were not just by the breaking-up of the ice but by the seal-culling activities of "men, each with an iron-bound club three or four feet long" (Kipling, 1998 ii, p. 75). In the story of the *Quiquern* too, Kipling addresses the plight of Arctic wildlife under threat from western hunters more interested in sport and commerce than food. Alluding not only to the cruelty of the infiltrators but also to the mystical aura of the region and the natural synergy between the indigenous communities and their surroundings, Kipling relates a tale ostensibly retrieved from the storyboard-drawing of a young Inuit hunter, Kotuko, and "scratched … on a long, flat piece of ivory with a hole at one end" (Kipling, 1998 i, p. 276). Kotuko's drawing, having been given as a present to his father, is unfortunately:

> lost in the shingle when his dog-sleigh [breaks] down one summer on the beach of Lake Netiling at Nikosiring, … [where] a Lake Inuit found it next spring and sold it to a man at Imigen who was an interpreter on a Cumberland Sound whaler, and he sold it to Hans Olsen, who was afterward a quartermaster on board a big steamer that took tourists to the North Cape in Norway. When the tourist season was over, the steamer ran between London and Australia, stopping at Ceylon, and there Olsen sold the ivory to a Cingalese jeweller for two imitation sapphires. [Kipling] found it under some rubbish in a house in Columbo, and … translated it from one end to the other (Kipling, 1998 i, p. 276)

The by then familiar story of Arctic provenance – whereby objects lost in the Arctic are returned as relics to British homes and museums – is thus reversed, demonstrating a reciprocity in material culture as goods find their way both to and from the Arctic across Europe, Asia and the USA by means of loss, barter, exchange and sale. Kipling ponders on this earlier in the story too as he evokes an image of Inuit domesticity dependent on the metalwork of a craftsman almost nine-thousand miles away in the Indian city of Kolkata, reflecting that the Inuit:

> traded with the whalers and the missionary-posts of Exeter and Cumberland Sound; … so the chain went on, till a kettle picked up by a ship's cook in [Kolkata's] Bhendy Bazaar might end its days over a blubber-lamp somewhere on the cool side of the Arctic Circle (Kipling, 1998 i, p. 257)

The interconnected nature of international trade and relations is thus a key tenet of the story as Kipling emphasises the interdependency of these far-flung corners of the world.

The 'Quiquern' – a name invented by Kipling – of the story's title is believed by Kotuko to be a sign sent by the spirit world to guide him to food with which to feed the starving people of his village. With his dogs and his companion – named only as "the girl from the North" (Kipling, 1998 i, p. 265), and possibly, therefore, intended to remind readers of the personified North Wind, who leads Diamond to safety in MacDonald's fairy-tale – Kotuko follows his spirit guides far from his village. Such supernatural forces at the centre of his community's beliefs are again clearly portrayed as the two young people calmly anticipate an untimely yet peaceful death in which they will "go to Sedna [the mistress of the underworld] together" (Kipling, 1998 i, p. 266).

The eponymous Quiquern saves them, however, by leading them to food with which to feed their village, but the creature is then revealed to be in fact nothing more mysterious than a pair of their own dogs. Let loose because of their descent into madness, the dogs have become closely bound together by a tangled harness, giving them the appearance, at a distance, of an eight-legged, two-headed monster – or Quiquern. Restored to health by a combination of food and freedom, they loyally howled out their triumph to their master, guiding him too to the source of their food. Thus, Kipling renounces any belief in the spirituality of the Arctic and suggests his disapproval of Inuit superstitions by providing a rational explanation of the forces that have led Kotuko and his companion to the seal-beds from which they are able to retrieve a large seal to take back to feed their village.

Stories like this indicate a move, with the approaching dawn of a new century, towards respect for the indigenous communities of the Arctic and concern for the region's wildlife and environment. Their impact was not immediate or universal, however, as the stuffed bodies of Arctic birds and animals brought to the UK from the region, and still on display in museums and other public and private places today shows. An unfortunate legacy of an era oblivious to its duty to conserve

and protect the planet, these exhibits are a reminder today of the careless excesses of our recent ancestors, who, once they conceded their inability to conquer the Arctic, instead brought what they could of it back to the UK.

Displaying Animals – dead and alive

The Arctic fox and Arctic hare on display in glass cabinets at the National Maritime Museum's Polar Gallery in Greenwich provide fine examples of the taxidermist's art, and evidence a persisting fascination with such exhibits. Two fellow victims of the Victorians' predilection for preserving the bodies of slain creatures for public exhibition are the stuffed polar bears to be found at Dover Town Museum in Kent and the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) in Exeter, Devon. There are doubtless innumerable similar examples around the UK.

Dover's polar bear, which greets visitors menacingly as they turn the corner at the top of a flight of stairs, was brought back to the UK in 1897 by Dr Reginald Koettlitz, the Ship's Surgeon and Medical Officer of the 1894 to 1897 Jackson-Harmsworth Arctic expedition – funded, as noted in Chapter Four, by the newspaper magnate and innovator of the popular press, Alfred Harmsworth, and led by the explorer Frederick George Jackson. Before being donated to the museum in the 1950s, the polar bear stood for many years in the surgery of Koettlitz's nephew, a family Doctor in Dover, and one can only speculate how many of the town's children were traumatised by its ominous presence during their visits to the doctor in the first few decades of the twentieth century.

Exeter's polar bear, on the other hand, was shot in 1902 by big-game hunter Charles Peel (1869-1931). In contrast to the spear and dagger of the boatmen defending themselves from a surprise attack in Biard's 1839 painting – or indeed to the Dutch sailors aiming their guns in self-defence in his 1841 painting – Peel deliberately sought out and slew this bear, exulting in his prize as he lamented – or perhaps boasted – in 1928: "I do not suppose there are many Englishmen alive today who have seen twenty polar bears bagged in ten consecutive days"

(Peel, 1928, p. 16). Having hunted across all seven continents, he believed that big-game-hunting:

> exercises all the faculties which go to make a man most manly … [as] [t]he big-game hunter must be endowed with great powers of endurance, self-denial, forbearance, and tact when dealing with the natives (RAMM, 2019).

Interestingly, such attributes were those regularly ascribed to Arctic explorers and – although presented here by Peel as the essence of manliness – were, as Chapter Two discussed, generally required of women and, therefore, often those with which women found themselves most able to empathise. Peel's words indicate an attitude to the Arctic that is in stark contrast to that of Kipling and demonstrate an indifference to the Arctic as anything but an arena for his own amusement.

So, from 1860 onwards material elements of the Arctic and of Arctic exploration – such as Dover and Exeter's stuffed polar bears – had become the desirable objects of not only doctors' surgeries but homes, museums and libraries throughout the UK. In this capacity, they permeated society's most private and most public spaces, and some even found themselves embedded in reconstructions of the Arctic landscape. The fixed-circle cyclorama entitled the *Panorama of the Greely Expedition,* for example, was displayed "[s]outheast of the rotunda in the Government Building, and closely adjoining that beautiful apartment" (Paul V. Galvin Library, 1998) at Chicago's World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. A successor to the panoramas and tableaux vivants that had been so popular earlier in the century, this cyclorama combined its painted canvas scenery with "figures and actual properties [that] take stated positions before the painting, and become an inseparable portion of the scene" (Paul V. Galvin Library, 1998). Such 'properties' included "[r]elics of the expedition of Sir Jon [sic] Franklin … [while] [t]he icebergs built before the large canvas in the rear were successfully placed, and the effect was realistic" (Paul V. Galvin Library, 1998).

A few years later, in Germany, the enterprising proprietor of a Hamburg zoo, Karl Hagenbeck, who had previously hosted exhibitions featuring live Inuit in his Tierpark, similarly augmented his images of an ice-bound ship amid an ice-floe with live Arctic fauna in a dioramic setting. Expanding also on the concepts of Church's 1823 *Das Eismeer* painting and the 1834 Vauxhall Gardens exhibition, Hagenbeck created the ultimate outdoor exhibition: his *Eismeer-Panorama.* On display from 1896 to 1907, this display included:

> massive false scenery of rocks and icebergs, with an ice-filled pool at its center [sic] [and] [i]n the midst of this elaborate construction, an antipodal menagerie of polar bears, seals, sea lions, and penguins frolicked in an environment deceptively resembling their own (Potter, 2007, pp. 206-207)

Bringing together Arctic and Antarctic wildlife and trying to replicate the creatures' natural habitats were both revolutionary ideas that influenced and transformed the design of zoos and the welfare of animals in captivity around the world as the twentieth-century dawned. Growing consideration for the welfare of living exhibits had already precluded the exploitative exhibition of people, such as Samuel Hadlock's "taciturn" (Ross, 1985, p. 110) Esquimaux referenced in Chapter One, and with Hagenback's innovations it began to extend to protecting animals such as the distressed polar bears depicted by Landseer and discussed in Chapter Three.

The Haunting Pole

In the Arctic seas, meanwhile, the quest to reach the North Pole endured as, in 1893 Norwegian explorers Fridtjof Nansen and Otto Sverdrup set off on a three-year "[d]rift across polar basin" (Mirsky, 1970, p. 327). In 1895, Nansen left Sverdrup in charge of their ship, the *Fram*, while he tried to reach the North Pole on foot. Unsuccessful in this endeavour, he did, nevertheless, set a record for reaching the furthest latitude north, 86°14′, before returning independently of Sverdrup to Norway via Franz Josef Land.

In these same years, Robert Peary was embarking on another expedition to North Greenland, from 1893 to 1895, but it was still fourteen years before he would

eventually claim to have touched that hallowed North Pole. In fiction, however, Jules Verne's Captain Hatteras had already made that epic discovery, suffering irreversible damage to his mental health in the process. Strangely, Verne's juvenile novel *The English at the North Pole*, first published in 1864, ends before Hatteras's expedition reaches the North Pole, so that goal is not achieved until the final pages of its sequel *The Field of Ice*, which was not published until 1875. The former novel begins with a veteran Arctic seaman, Captain Shandan, receiving an anonymous letter and, on its instructions, overseeing the construction of a two-masted, square-rigged ship, known as a brig, for which he then musters a crew of eighteen men, including himself, of very precisely specified sobriety, integrity and experience. A later letter instructs Shandan to allow onboard a dog by the name of Dick, after which the brig, sets sail northwards without the mysterious letter-writing Captain who instigated it, and with neither Captain Shandan nor the crew aware of its final destination. As conditions inevitably deteriorate and relationships among the crew become critical, one of the men, an ordinary sailor by the name of Garry, reveals himself to be the writer of the anonymous letter, and therefore the mysterious Captain who has invested his immense personal fortune in the expedition. By true name John Hatteras, he is a sea captain of such dreadful repute that no one would have enlisted had they been aware of his identity. By the end of the book, most of the crew, under Shandon, have mutinied and set fire to the brig, leaving just five men to complete the trek to the North Pole: Hatteras himself, Dr Clawbonny, the ship's surgeon, Bell, the carpenter, Johnson, the Boatswain, and an ordinary sailor by the name of Simpson. As they set out on foot, they discover the remains of a collapsed ice-house, beneath which are buried two corpses and a barely-surviving body from an American expedition. Taking the survivor, later identified as Captain Altamont, with them, the group end the novel destitute on the ice and still some way from the Pole, ready to continue their quest in *The Field of Ice*.

Beginning where *The English at the North Pole* finished, this novel finds Simpson dead, and Altamont still under the care of Hatteras, Johnson, Clawbonny and Bell, who are determined to pursue their goal of reaching the North Pole. Setting off on foot, with what few resources they can salvage from the burnt-out wreck of

their ship, the four able-bodied men carry the gradually recovering American. As he regains his powers of speech and his health and fitness, he becomes part of the team and eventually saves Hatteras from an attack by a polar bear, ensuring the two men's enduring friendship and a declared ending of the national rivalry over who should claim the Pole.

Reaching the North Pole amid speculation that it will be, in Symmesian fashion, surrounded by calm waters and an entrance to another, better, world within the globe, the men find that it is actually sited at the peak of:

> [a live] volcano, fixed like a lighthouse on the North Pole of the world … pouring out burning stones and glowing rock … [with] at every fresh eruption … a convulsive heaving" (Verne, 1875, p. 228).

After only a little deliberation, Hatteras insists on climbing to the top of the volcano so that, despite his former agreement to share the triumph with the American, he will be able to claim that an Englishman first set foot on the North Pole. In this aspect, the story is prescient of the claims and counterclaims still unresolved concerning Peary's 1909 expedition. Hatteras's treachery against Altamont does not go unpunished, however, and his ascent to polar glory finally concludes his descent into madness, leading Clawbonny to declare that "we have only saved the body of Hatteras; his soul is left behind on the top of the volcano. His reason is gone!" (Verne, 1875, p. 252). Verne appears, thereby, like Coleridge and Shelley almost a century before him, to make a clear connection between the Arctic, overreaching ambition, and a deterioration in mental health, and, like Hogg, to suggest that the discoverer of the Pole will not return to tell the tale; Hatteras's body returns, but without his soul and devoid of sound mind.

During their journey back to Liverpool, which is inexplicably much smoother, quicker and less eventful than their journey out to the Pole, the men stumble across the remains of their former crew, who have clearly resorted to cannibalism in their attempt to survive, but have all eventually succumbed to an icy grave. The men hasten past, and on their eventual return to Liverpool Hatteras is sent to live in a mental asylum where, in the delirium of his Arctic obsession, it is noticed that he "invariably walk[s] towards the North" (Verne, 1875, p. 321). This too is prescient, reflecting the reality of life for explorers such as Parry, the two Rosses,

and Franklin, who all felt throughout their careers drawn toward the north; compelled time after time to return to the Arctic wastes.

In these two novels, then, Verne echoes various aspects of the nineteenth century's fascination with Arctic exploration. There is mystery and uncertainty from the outset of the expedition. There is unrest and mutiny among the characters, who themselves represent an idealised cross-section of polar heroes. There is hunting for both food and sport, and by both bears and humans. There is insanity brought on by naked ambition and the single-minded pursuit of an elusive goal. There is cannibalism – perhaps with a hint of sacrifice – such as that discovered, controversially, among the remains of the Franklin expedition, and there is national pride in successfully planting the flag of Englishness and Empire above that of the USA.

Like Conan Doyle, whose Arctic stories were discussed in Chapter Four, Verne evidently believed that prolonged exposure to Arctic conditions provoked mental disorder and a deranged brain. This is also evident, of course, in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere*, published more than a century earlier and discussed in Chapter One. So, at the beginning and end of the long-nineteenth-century, characters such as Coleridge's Mariner, Shelley's Victor Frankenstein, Conan Doyle's *Black Peter* and *Captain of the Polestar*, and Verne's Captain Hatteras, all suffer from mental disorders during or after their exposure to the endless voids of the Arctic regions. In contrast, the heroes of mid-nineteenth-century fiction, such as Collins' and Dickens's Richard Wardour, Kingston's Peter (the whaler) Lefroy, Gordon's Hvit, and MacDonald's Diamond, are icons of muscular Christianity, gaining mental strength from the Arctic and becoming more powerful in faith, body and mind, more righteous and moral in character, and greater proponents of British colonial values, making them ideal role models for the youth of their day. The same is true of Robert Buchanan's novel *God and the Man*, published in 1881 but carrying forward into those later years of the century that mid-century sense of sacredness and redemption in its representation of the Arctic. Such stories expose in their heroes a different form of mental derangement from that displayed by Hatteras and Frankenstein; a derangement that manifests itself in religious fervour and an innate predisposition towards Christian virtues.

The name of Buchanan's hero, Christian Christianson, makes this explicit. Redeemed through the torment – or insane wrangling – of his soul as he rescues, nurses yet is finally forced to bury the man who has been his archenemy since birth, he ultimately "pass[es] forth, … [to find] the new-made grave, and set the cross upon it, as [his] last token of forgiveness and goodwill." (Buchanan, 1881, p. 238).

That the Arctic was understood to exercise incredible powers upon the mind is evidently beyond dispute, but the nature of the disturbance is clearly represented and perceived in different ways at different times during the long-nineteenth-century. From the manic ramblings of Coleridge's "grey-beard Loon" (Coleridge, 1991, p. 10), through the spiritual strife of Wardour, echoed later in Christianson, to the "delirious … excitement," of Captain Hatteras, the psychological effects of prolonged exposure to the endless open spaces, sub-zero temperatures and indistinguishable days and nights of the Arctic region are represented in nineteenth century fiction in ways that complement and affirm the public's view of the region at any one time; when the Arctic is perceived in negative ways, the psychological and psychiatric effects are portrayed as negative; when it is perceived in positive ways, they are portrayed as positive, and the reverse is also true.

In her 1896 novel *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, Sarah Orne Jewett reflects in the character of Captain Littlepage the haunted, mysterious, and pre-occupied figure of Coleridge's Mariner, weighed down with a terrible, disquieting knowledge and an urgent need to find the right person with whom to share it. This knowledge had been confided in Littlepage many years earlier, during a prolonged confinement amid Arctic ice, by Gaffett, a man who "had been on one of those English exploring parties that found one end of the road to the north pole, but never could find the other" (Jewett, 2008, p. e.loc.258) and had been "waiting to find the right men to tell" (Jewett, 2008, p. e.loc.324) before he himself expired. Littlepage has also been waiting, for many years, for the right person to tell, and once he finds her in the unnamed narrator of Jewett's novel, he is compelled like

his counterpart of a century earlier to impart his message to her, and just as “the bright-eyed Marinere” (Coleridge, 1991, p. 11) “holds [the wedding guest] with his glittering eye – ” (Coleridge, 1991, p. 10), so Captain Littlepage exchanges “the dulled look in his eyes … [for] a clear intentness that made them seem dark and piercing” (Jewett, 2008, p. e.loc258) as he discloses that:

> no other living soul had the facts, and he gave them to me. There is a strange sort of a country ‘way up north beyond the ice, and strange folks living in it. Gaffett believed it was the next world to this … a town two degrees further north than ships had ever been … like a place where there was neither living nor dead … [where] shapes of folks … all blowing gray … [like] fog-shaped men … they all believed ‘twas a kind of waiting-place between this world an’ the next. (Jewett, 2008, pp. e.loc.279-312)

Echoes of Symmes’s ‘hollow earth’ theory and the fairy tales and novels of Andersen, MacDonald, Conan Doyle, Morris and Verne pervade the short section of Jewett’s novel that is Littlepage’s narrative. His story takes much of its inspiration from these former works, but it is also partly based on the many such tales that Jewett might have heard during her lifetime spent on the coast of Maine, where the fishing and whaling industry that had been prevalent in the earlier years of the century was declining by the 1890s. Eventually, Littlepage pauses in confusion, “his eyes … fixed upon the northernmost regions [of a map of North America] and their careful recent outlines with a look of bewilderment” (Jewett, 2008, p. e.loc.324). He has held on to the story entrusted to him for so long, and held it in such seclusion from the world in which exploration of the region has progressed, that he is unable to reconcile the recent polar discoveries he sees charted on the map with what he knows and remembers. He is equally unable to comprehend the effect those changes might have on what he has believed for so long. The quiet, measured despair of Captain Littlepage contrasts with the wild restlessness of Verne’s Captain Hatteras, but each poignantly portrays the effects that the Arctic could have on the mental capacities of sailors and explorers obsessed with the region.

That mental impairment might have affected real-life explorers was not widely acknowledged until much later. Richard Collinson, whose imprisoning of many of his officers onboard his ship during an Arctic expedition – as discussed in Chapter

Three – had caused such a scandal in 1855, is quoted as blaming "some form of that insidious Arctic enemy, the Scurvy, which is known to effect [sic] the mind as well as the body of its victims" (Beattie & Geiger, 2004, p. 68) while, in the same season, on the *Enterprise's* sister ship, the *Investigator*, commanded by Robert McClure, "several of the men aboard went mad and had to be restrained, their howls piercing the long nights" (Beattie & Geiger, 2004, p. 68). Hallucinations were not uncommon, and although these can be attributed to atmospheric conditions, like those implicated in John Ross's imagined sighting of his Croker Mountains across Lancaster Sound in 1818, those that envision "coves, lined by orange trees … [and] watermelons" (Beattie & Geiger, 2004), such as were reported on the American expedition of 1853, are less easy to explain. Speculation regarding the fate of Franklin and his lost crew has, therefore, often focused on their mental health, with any decline in their rational or intellectual capacity being attributed not to their environment or scurvy but to "lead poisoning and botulism" (McGoogan, 2002, p. 81) brought about by eating the poorly sealed "canned soups and meats … hastily prepared by an unscrupulous merchant who had cut every possible corner" (McGoogan, 2002, p. 81). In 1984 and 1986, the bodies discovered at Beechey Island, as discussed in Chapter Two, were exhumed and analysed, and the autopsy report on one of the bodies, that of John Torrington, concluded that "lead levels from [his] hair … would indicate acute lead poisoning …" (Amy, 1986). If such findings are extrapolated to the whole crew, the implications for severe consequences of mass mental impairment are convincing but not conclusive, as Beattie and Geiger argue throughout their examination of the evidence (Beattie & Geiger, 2004).

John Torrington, a stoker onboard the *Terror*, was the first of the expedition's fatalities, dying on 1st January 1846. His grave lay alongside two crewmen from the *Erebus*, John Hartnell and William Braine, who died on 4 January and 3 April 1846 respectively. That lead poisoning caused these, or any other deaths among Arctic explorers – including Franklin's crew – is widely disputed, with many other contributory factors to be considered, but it is likely to have been detrimental to their mental capacity as well as weakening them physically. That these possibilities did not feature in representations of the Arctic at the time of the many

search expeditions yet were represented in literature at either end of the century, again emphasises the circular nature of Arctic representations and perceptions, and the impact of each upon the other, in the long-nineteenth-century.

Other health issues among Arctic explorers were also suppressed in, or omitted from, the published narratives and accounts of their expeditions, and therefore failed to feature in other forms of Arctic representation. While sailing, as referenced above, to Norway via Franz Josef Land, Fridtjof Nansen may well have encountered the men of the 1894 to 1897 Jackson-Harmsworth Arctic expedition, from which Reginald Koettlitz returned with the aforementioned body of the polar bear now exhibited in Dover museum.

It was Koettlitz, in his role as ship's surgeon, who was responsible for documenting the health and welfare of the expedition's officers and crew, and for reporting this to the expedition's commander, Frederick Jackson. Recording daily the health of individual sailors, the journals kept by ships' surgeons provide, as Erika Behrische Elce affirms, "an alternative chronicle that can alter the master narrative" (Behrische Elce, 2019) of an expedition. Unlike other officers, who could carefully choose and edit the information, ideas and opinions they recorded, a ship's surgeon was obliged to record his patients' ailments, diagnoses and treatment objectively in every detail. Also, unlike other officers, a ship's surgeon was privy to intimate details of every man aboard his ship, from the most senior officers to the lowliest seamen, and was not, fortunately, subject to any requirement to publish his journals on return to shore. He was, however, obliged to share certain information with the captain of his ship, and this could lead to discrepancies in ensuing records.

In the case of the Jackson-Harmsworth expedition of 1894-97, for example, there are, as Edward Armston-Sheret observes, significant differences between Jackson's published narrative and the correspondence he had on-board the ship with Koettlitz. As "the physical and mental health of A. Schlosshauer, the ship's captain, became a cause for concern" (Armston-Sheret, 2019, p. 10), Jackson recorded in his diaries what Koettlitz reported to him about the "very dirty ways … [and] impertinent behaviour" (Armston-Sheret, 2019, p. 10) of the captain, who

Koettlitz consequently diagnosed as “in a precarious state of health [and] totally unfit to withstand the rigours of the Arctic Climate” (Armston-Sheret, 2019, p. 10). Citing syphilis as the most likely underlying cause of the captain’s multiple physical and mental incapacities, the most disturbing of which seems to have been severe incontinence, Koettlitz wrote to Jackson. Despite his detailed diary notes on the topic of “the captain’s leaky body” (Armston-Sheret, 2019, p. 10) Jackson’s narrative, *A Thousand Days in the Arctic,* published in 1899, contains no reference to any such issues, and goes so far in attempting to erase them from the record as to omit any mention of the captain’s name. Instead, “[w]here mention of Schlosshaeur’s presence is unavoidable he is referred to simply as ‘the captain’ …” (Armston-Sheret, 2019, p. 11).

Jackson, then, was uncomfortable in admitting that his ship’s captain had suffered debilitating and embarrassing illnesses, yet he had demonstrated no such qualms in his previous book, *The Great Frozen Land,* published in 1895. Reporting there on the physical infirmities in the indigenous Samoyed people, Jackson “was willing to talk about [their] bodies and bodily fluids in a way that he avoided when writing publicly about the captain” (Armston-Sheret, 2019, p. 13), leading to the conclusion that “Jackson dishonestly presents the explorer’s body as more solid, sealed, and disciplined than indigenous people’s bodies” (Armston-Sheret, 2019, p. 13). It could be, as Armston-Sheret suggests, that Jackson was ‘dishonestly’, and somewhat anachronistically, upholding and reinforcing the conventions of Arctic exploration: the British explorer, strong in mind, body and spirit, but his indigenous counterparts weak and enfeebled. On the other hand, he might have felt that it was his duty to protect the captain from any undue investigation and humiliation in the wake of the Oscar Wilde trials, with the male body under scrutiny as never before in the public domain.

The Pole *Beyond Man’s Footsteps*

Fictional literature was, as the above discussions on the novels of Kipling, Verne and Shiel suggest, more willing to acknowledge and explore the susceptibilities of the body and the mind, and to do so in relation to the ways they could be both

effected and affected by the Arctic. No longer an arena for empiric conquest, the Arctic was beginning to be viewed – as Frederic Church's painting *The Iceberg*, discussed in Chapter Four, had anticipated – as literally *Beyond Man's Footsteps*; the title of an 1894 painting by Briton Rivière.

Now owned and exhibited by Tate Britain on London's Southbank, this painting completes the transition in artistic perceptions and representations of polar bears to reflect the frailty and futility of Britain's Arctic aspirations. The gallery label displayed in January 2018 confirms that, like Landseer, Rivière based his polar bear on inmates of London Zoo and never himself visited the Arctic. In his representation, the affinity of the polar bear with the Arctic region is emphatic in the gradations of colour that seep from the yellow-white clouds of the sky through the yellow-cream fur of the bear, to the pinky-whiteness of the glacier on which he stands. He is Lord of all he surveys, yet vulnerable in his isolation.

Triumphant in traversing, literally, *Beyond Man's Footsteps*, the bear looks down on a sun that is setting not only on the Arctic summer but also on a British Empire that had fought and failed to expand its power into these most northerly climes. There is an image reminiscent of this in the Disney film *The Lion King* – released, coincidentally, exactly one hundred years after Rivière's painting, in 1994 – as the young lion-King, Simba, stands on a high promontory of rock surveying his newly reclaimed kingdom. Like Rivière's polar bear, Simba has reclaimed what is rightfully his and set aside all opposing claims. The 'invaders' portrayed by Bradford in 1879 and 1882 have proved to be the men, and the bears have not only watched them but defeated and expelled them.

Portrayals of polar bears can, therefore, be seen to represent in microcosm the changes in the representation and perception of the Arctic in the nineteenth century: whilst Biard's polar bears of 1839 symbolise European ambitions in conquering the Arctic, and Landseer's polar bears of 1864 symbolise the thwarting of those ambitions, Rivière's solitary polar bear of 1894 symbolises the explorers' retreat from the Arctic and reminds us that by that year the region was again perceived in Britain and Europe, as it had been in the eighteenth century, as impenetrable by 'civilised' man. Even then, however, the success of Inuit

communities in surviving the region's ice and frost was discounted as evidence of their 'savagery', as explained in Chapter Two. Rivière's polar bear could, therefore, be said to also symbolise the 'savage' status of Arctic natives in the imaginations of a Victorian public more comfortable in ceding power to nature, in the form of a wild animal, than to the indigenous human populations of whom they thought so ill.

Still the North Pole remained tantalisingly present in the minds of explorers from across the world. The record set in 1895 was broken in 1900 when a party led by an Italian naval officer, Lieutenant Cagni, "surpassed Nansen's north by twenty-two miles and reached within 220 miles of the Pole" (Kirwan, 1959, p. 255). Cagni had been leading one of two parties that set out across the ice in search of the Pole from their ship the *Stella Polare* – whose name recalls Conan Doyle's fictional ship, the *Pole Star* – on an expedition commanded by Prince Luigi Amedeo Giuseppe Maria Ferdinando Francesco, Duke of Abruzzi (1873 – 1933), who was unable to complete the trek across the ice himself due to an operation to amputate two frostbitten fingers. The second party disappeared and was never heard of again, and Cagni's party, having attained latitude 86°34′ N (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020 ii) struggled with "a heartbreaking race over the floes, a fight against fatigue, hunger, and thirst – and … just barely managed to reach [safety]" (Mirsky, 1970, pp. 183-184).

Failing to reach the North Pole, the main achievement of Abruzzi's expedition was to map previously uncharted coasts and prove that former observations of lands named King Oscar Land and Petermann Land "had been mirages" (Mirsky, 1970), mirroring in the 1871 'discoveries' of an Austrian Army Lieutenant, Julius Payer, John Ross's 'Croker Mountains' error in Lancaster Sound in 1818 and again emphasising the detrimental effects that Arctic conditions could have on the mental and physical capacities of the men exploring the region.

Like Giuseppe Acerbi – who was in the Arctic exactly one hundred years before him and with whose adventures Chapter One commenced – Abruzzi was a young Italian nobleman: his father was both King of Spain and an Italian Duke but Abruzzi took his nationality from his own dukedom, in central-southern Italy.

Unlike Acerbi, however, Abruzzi was also a professional explorer, with other expeditions taking him to Alaska, Africa and to the top of the world's second-highest mountain, K2, before he became a commander in the Italian navy during the First World War (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2020 ii). Thus, he represents a cross between the bona fide explorers and the gentlemen travellers of his age, and his recommendations regarding alternative routes to the Pole informed later, successful attempts, such as those undertaken by Roald Amundsen in 1905 and Robert Peary in 1909.

Arctic by Balloon

Back in 1897, a Swedish scientist, Saloman August Andrée and his companions Nils Strindberg and Knut Frænkel attempted a very different approach to reaching the North Pole. Their vessel of choice was the *Eagle*, a specially designed hot-air balloon, with drag-lines to enable steering and thus minimise susceptibility to any changes in wind direction. This was a system 'proved' by Andrée in his earlier balloon flights, so that, as David Hempleman-Adams asserts:

> [b]y the time Andrée spoke at the International Geographical Congress in London in July 1895, he had completed nine flights with [a similar balloon] the *Svea* and worked out what he needed to fly to the Pole (Hempleman-Adams & Uhlig, 2002, p. 55)

The technology of flight had presumably progressed somewhat since 1880 when, as referenced in Chapter Four, John Powles Cheyne had proposed the use of balloons to cross the Arctic, and Andrée's preparations were thorough. Nevertheless, after leaving Spitsbergen, on Norway's most northern archipelago of Svalbard, on 11 July 1897, the flight into the Arctic lasted just three days. The drag-lines had been damaged on take-off and replacement ropes, spliced onto the remaining lengths of line, proved ineffective. Thus, at the mercy of unfavourable winds, the balloon landed in shreds on the icy Arctic plains on 14 July 1897. Undeterred from their goal, Andrée's team continued on foot across the Arctic ice, manually hauling their supplies and equipment on sledges, sailing one short distance by kayak, and killing polar bears, seals and gulls to supplement their dreary diet. By October 1897 they had reached the usually

inaccessible White Island, where, within days, they succumbed to a deadly bout of botulism – probably from eating rancid seal meat – and died within a few hours of each other. Their bodies were discovered thirty-three years later by a crew of seal-hunters and taken back to Sweden, where they were given a state funeral. Through careful preservation and examination of their diaries and almanac, their story was finally revealed and a mystery that had intrigued the Swedish press and public for more than three decades was resolved.

Their story does not end there, however, for, not content with reaching the Pole on foot in 1998, as referenced in Chapter Four, in May 2000 British explorer David Hempleman-Adams set out on a solo mission to recreate their balloon journey. His expedition is recorded in alternating chapters with that of his Swedish forebears in *At the Mercy of the Winds, Two Remarkable Journeys to the North Pole: A Modern Hero and a Victorian Romance* (Hempleman-Adams & Uhlig, 2002). In their title, Hempleman-Adams and his co-writer Robert Uhlig accentuate the difference, as they perceive it, between the two expeditions: the first a nineteenth century romantic notion that ended in disaster and the second a heroic mission that put "[t]he Pole … in the bag" (Hempleman-Adams & Uhlig, 2002, p. 288) for balloonists on 1 June 2000. However, Andrée, Strindberg and Frænkel had only their own wits and, by today's standards, quite primitive navigational aids to guide them. Hempleman-Adams was in daily telephone and radio contact with experts in Belgium and family members in the UK, yet still suffered mentally and "nearly lost it completely" (Hempleman-Adams & Uhlig, 2002, p. 256) as he neared the Pole, so the question of who was the most 'romantic' and who the most 'heroic' is surely open to discussion.

Reaching the Pole

While Andrée, Strindberg and Frænkel were engaged in approaching the Arctic by air, Robert Peary was leading an expedition to North Ellesmere Island, off the north coast of Greenland, his goal of the North Pole still some years away. Meanwhile, for the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen, inspired by the tales of Franklin that he read as a boy, the Northwest Passage remained an alluring

attraction, and on 26 August 1905 his first Arctic expedition became also the first to successfully traverse this elusive route between Atlantic and Pacific oceans. In Britain, however, when it came to a Northwest Passage, "[t]he tide of romantic appeal had subsided" (Mirsky, 1970, p. 273) with the loss of the Franklin expedition and by 1905 Amundsen's success had to compete with news of the aforementioned second Royal Naval Exhibition, held at Earl's Court in London that year.

With the new century had come new attempts to refresh the British public's interest in Arctic exploration, but the superficiality of the Royal Naval Exhibitions – especially the second instance – and the lasting pain of the Franklin expedition's loss – so constantly referenced and represented in its plethora of relics, monuments and other memorabilia – had dampened enthusiasm for northerly exploits as the nation's gaze turned south and Antarctica became the new British goal.

Internationally, however, interest in the Arctic endured and, as Robert Peary was preparing his final expedition in search of the North Pole, American poet Nellie Seelye Evans (also known as Mrs Dudley Evans) published a short verse entitled, like several poems already discussed, *Aurora Borealis*. For Evans, that vibrant Arctic phenomenon signified:

> … a flower of climate rare,
> That never bloomed for me,
> I searched the wood, I searched the moor,
> I robbed the emerald sea.
>
> Alone upon an icy coast,
> By Arctic's hem it grows,
> Its beauty is intoxicant
> To those who brave the snows.
>
> But when the Bear shines clear and high
> I dream of Polar night.
> Wherein this wondrous flower blooms
> In sheaves of rainbow light (Evans, 1906).

Her floral metaphor is reminiscent of that employed by Christopher Pearse Cranch in 1840, as discussed in Chapter One, and her imagery of an 'emerald sea' and 'rainbow light' are conventional, while viewing the Arctic's 'icy coast' as the 'hem' of a robe poetically recalls the fairy tale characters of Andersen's Snow

Queen and MacDonald's North Wind, both of whom personify the Arctic in similarly flowing mantles. Evans's choice of the word 'intoxicant' is, however, particularly and refreshingly potent. The history of Arctic exploration, the stories, both real and fictional, of the men who returned to the region time and time again to repeatedly 'brave the snows' despite mental and physical discomfort and disease, and the wide variety of ways in which the region infiltrates the literature, art and popular culture of the nineteenth century demonstrate indeed its intoxicating effects.

One victim of this intoxication was, of course, Evans's countryman, the American explorer Robert Peary and, on 6 April 1909, believing he had finally reached the North Pole, he wrote in his diary:

> The Pole at last. The prize of three centuries. My dream and goal for twenty years. Mine at last! I cannot bring myself to realize it. It seems so simple and commonplace (Peary, 2007, p. 84)

Here he represents both the climax and anti-climax of his expedition, and indeed of all Arctic exploration: what was for so long the 'dream' and the 'goal' of so many explorers, so many readers, lecturers, geographers and politicians, appears, ultimately, just 'simple' and 'commonplace'. The North Pole is, after all, "startlingly mundane … no different to any … other stretches of ice, snow and rubble" (Hempleman-Adams & Uhlig, 2002, p. 264). No open polar sea; no entrance to a hidden world of sumptuous plenty within a hollow globe; no volcano, no tower of ice with a polar bear balanced on its apex; no sacred haven for souls betwixt earth and heaven; nothing to corroborate any of the imaginings or theories propounded in the literature, art and popular culture of the long nineteenth century. Nothing but 'ice, snow and rubble' covering a pinpoint of the compass where every direction is south.

In the same year that Peary wrote the diary entry quoted above, Britain's Professor Edgeworth David and Sir Ernest Shackleton, travelling on independent expeditions, both reached the magnetic South Pole within a few weeks of each other. Norway's Roald Amundsen and Britain's Robert Falcon Scott would reach the 'true' South Pole, again within weeks of each other, two years later. Scott's party would later perish in the Antarctic ice, just as Franklin's party and perished

in Arctic ice sixty or more years earlier. Thus, in terms of the representation and perception of the polar regions, the long nineteenth century ended as it had begun, with the Arctic seen as a dreary, desolate region in stark contrast to the gloriously hopeful imaginings of the mid-century years.

Conclusion

In which the circular path of Arctic representation in the long-nineteenth-century is made clear in the light of evidence presented in the preceding chapters.

Scope and Purpose

This thesis was conceived as a project to argue that representations and perceptions of the Arctic traversed a circular pathway in the long-nineteenth-century, which is defined for the purposes of this thesis as 1796 to 1909. The trajectory envisaged was one that caused the Arctic to exert a ubiquitous and immersive influence on nineteenth century society as it took the region from bleak unforgiving and alien territory to alluring arena of glorious heroism – and back again – in the public imagination over the course of the period in question. This circular trajectory, alluded to by Huw Lewis-Jones as a "cycle of representation sustaining modern exploration" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 313), is central to the discussions of the preceding chapters, and while much discussion has necessarily focused on the nature, representation and public perception of people and communities, the main focus has been on the representation and perception of the Arctic region itself at different stages of the long-nineteenth-century.

Taking an interdisciplinary approach to the argument by exploring a range of primary and secondary sources in the fields of literature, art, popular culture, history, geography and science, this thesis has educed connections and inter-connections between these sources in order to demonstrate the feasibility of the argument. It thereby draws together and expands upon the work of other researchers in the field to demonstrate – as outlined in the following overview of its chapters – the circularity of representation and perception to which they allude and which it proposes.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter One demonstrated that, through judicious manipulation of the media, Sir John Barrow initiated and drove forward a nineteenth century revival of Arctic exploration in conditions unknown since Elizabethan times. Against the reservations and warnings of novelists such as Mary Shelley and James Hogg, the tide flowed in Barrow's favour with the aid of other writers, such as Jane Austen and Eleanor Porden. Promoted first and foremost to the public as being in search of a Northwest Passage and/or the North Pole, these expeditions served cartographical and scientific purposes but failed in what the public understood to be their primary objectives. Their failure was, however, couched in the rhetoric of the heavily edited official narratives published by Barrow's friend and business partner, John Murray, and by this means, the expedition leaders achieved the status of national heroes and were venerated across the country by children and adults alike – as evidenced by the Brontë family in Yorkshire and Charles Dickens in London.

Chapter Two demonstrated how, in the course of a decade, Arctic fortunes turned through an arc of the overall circle of representation and perception as people came to realise that the expedition they had waved off with such vigour in 1845 was lost. As attention turned to search expeditions rather than exploratory ones, and the retirement of Arctic exploration's chief advocate led to a reassessment of priorities at the Admiralty, funding for these search expeditions was necessarily sought from private and public subscriptions. The proliferation of the Arctic in literature, art and popular culture – in forms ranging from novels and fairy tales to paintings, panoramas and all manner of public performance attractions – accentuates a prevailing determination to resolve the mystery surrounding Franklin's disappearance. That this determination is brought to a head by the findings of Dr John Rae and fomented not only by Franklin's widow but by the leading novelist of the age, Charles Dickens, is key to understanding the "seismic shift" (Craciun, 2016, p. 6) that shook Victorian Britain and instigated

two decades of sentimental and sensationalist reflection on the perceived sacrifices and relics of these particular lost sailors.

Chapter Three demonstrated that, as controversy arising from Rae's discoveries in 1854 divided opinion roughly between those who knew the Arctic first-hand and those who knew it only through second-hand means, a commodity culture emerged in which those discoveries and other subsequently recovered remnants – or relics – of Franklin's expedition were a central factor. Although feelings varied regarding Rae's conclusions, the nation was united in revering not only the memory of the 'Lost Arctic Voyagers' but every artefact brought back to the UK from the Arctic that could be proved to have belonged to, or been used by, one of them. Thus, authenticity became a newly significant factor in the financial and sentimental value of goods as public attention in Britain shifted from recovering the men to recovering their belongings.

Chapter Four demonstrated how, in the later years of the nineteenth century, the Arctic became embroiled in the public imagination with the political intrigues and disturbances of Europe and America, yet also retained in that same public imagination the sense of mystery and sanctity nurtured during the mid-century years. Through the poetry of R. F. Towndrow and S. Moore the intense flashes of the Aurora Borealis constituted heaven's vengeance on man for the horrors of war and strife. Through Morris's poetry the utopian worlds envisaged by ancient Greeks and Norsemen are brought to life, as they had been in a less explicit sense by the fairy tales of MacDonald and Andersen. As attention turned to voyaging to the Arctic for more personal or pragmatic purposes, and 'gentlemen travellers' began to venture back there as Guiseppe Acerbi had done almost a century before, the Arctic came once more to be represented and perceived with the respect for its darker side that mid-century ambitions had discouraged.

Chapter Five demonstrated a certain conflict in the representation and perception of the Arctic at the fin de siècle. On the one hand, literature and art

reverted to early-nineteenth-century visions of the region as Jewett, Shiel and Rivière each echoed the cautionary tones of Coleridge, Shelley and Friedrich, and Kipling introduced a more empathetic perspective into the equation, anticipating eco-criticism in his treatment of man's impact on the environment. On the other hand, popular culture attempted to revive the mid-century enthusiasm for exploration and imperial expansion with, for example, the Royal Naval Exhibitions of 1891 and 1905. Meanwhile, quests to reach the North Pole continued for both real and fictional explorers such as Peary and Hatteras, with, as Hogg's novel had predicted in 1818, disastrous results.

So, with Barrow's Arctic goals all proven to be futile, unviable or non-existent, the long-nineteenth-century ended on a disheartening note for all involved in the era's Arctic endeavours.

Polar Bears

Pervading all of the above, the entire circularity of Arctic representation and perception can be traced through representations of that iconic inhabitant of the region, the polar bear, as I demonstrated in a Three-Minute-Thesis competition in 2017[31]. As discussed in Chapter One, Biard portrays the defeat of several polar bears by a small group of men and a boy in a small boat. By 1864, as Chapter Three discusses, Landseer perceives the polar bears as victors rather than victims as he portrays them destroying and devouring some remnants of Franklin's lost expedition. The tables have turned. The polar bears, once prey to man's ambitions, are now empowered to destroy those ambitions, and with them the hopes and dreams of a nation. Thus, by the power of visual representation, are the dangers of the Arctic suddenly and terrifyingly brought to the forefront of the viewer's imagination as the impact of great art surpasses that of the descriptive and persuasive powers of literature. In 1894, as Chapter Five discusses, the dangers depicted by Landseer are compounded in Rivière's

[31] See my blog post, dated 30 May 2018 at https://c19arcticrepresentations.wordpress.com/2018/05/30/my-3mt-entry/

Beyond Man's Footsteps. There is no longer room for the explorers in the Arctic as Rivière's solitary and regal bear steadfastly surveys his realm.

Overlay these artistic representations of the circular trajectory of Arctic representation with those of the 'Nelson and the Polar Bear' myth on which Huw Lewis-Jones hangs his 2020 study of Arctic imaginings (first published in 2017), and the circle becomes even clearer. The "visual genealogy of Arctic myth … [m]ontage created by the author" (Lewis-Jones, 2020, p. 90) shows that in 1806 and 1808, the years immediately following Nelson's death, the bear is shown cowering away from Nelson. In his centenary year of 1905 too, Nelson stands in superior aspect to the bear, demonstrating his dominance of the creature, and by extrapolation the Arctic. The images from these significant years for Nelson's commemoration are, however, anomalies in the circle of representation otherwise depicted by the images Lewis-Jones has selected. John Landseer's engraving of Richard Westall's 1806 painting, *Nelson's Adventure with a Bear*, for example, recurs at intervals, showing Nelson about to strike the polar bear, who glares open-jawed down upon him, with the butt of his musket. In 1830, however, as Arctic expeditions and narratives caught the public imagination, Nelson is shown fending off the bear rather than attacking it, while in 1850, as the search for Franklin got underway, he is assisted by two other sailors in overcoming a rampant but relatively docile-looking bear, thus making the Arctic perceptible as a surmountable object to those given sufficient support. Images from 1854 and 1859 – the years in which Rae and McClintock returned their tidings of woe regarding the fate of Franklin's expedition – show Nelson in superior aspect to the bear as imperialist hopes as yet unshattered remained high. By 1891, however, the bear has not only grown to exceed Nelson in size but Nelson is shown only in silhouette; a silhouette which by 1896 has receded to be barely visible in the distance as the bear fills more than half the space in the image, reclaiming, like Rivière's bear, his homeland for himself. Thus, the Arctic is perceived to be insurmountable after all and the circle of representation, as illustrated by Lewis-Jones's collection of images, is complete; the Arctic, as represented by the polar bear, has moved from a state of subjection to man's

endeavour, as represented by Nelson, to a state of overpowering that endeavour, and back again in the course of one hundred years.

That Nelson's encounter with the polar bear ever took place is highly unlikely, as Lewis-Jones concedes, but the myth persists as a symbol of a nation's reverence for both the man and the Arctic regions.

En Fin

The chapters and ideas summarised above demonstrate that representations and perceptions of the Arctic infiltrated all aspects of nineteenth century society, taking the region from the dreary desert of doom and despondency reflected in the art and literature of the era's earliest years, through a mid-century summit of alluring archipelago of hope and glory, and back to the dreary desert of doom and despondency with which it began. Supporting the thesis with a variety of appropriate and, where possible, original evidence, the preceding chapters also exclude much material due to the limitations of time, space or relevance, leaving ample scope for future expansion of this research in a number of directions. Dickens, for example, wrote and/or published extensively in his letters and journals on topics relating to the Arctic, making this a rich field for further investigation. Some charts and maps consulted in the course of my research include data concerning mineral deposits in the region, one of which is in the form of a Christmas card carrying greetings in at least fifteen different languages. These too offer significant opportunities for further research, as does a collection of hand-painted Magic Lantern slides of Arctic scenes held by the Kent Museum of the Moving Image in Deal. My access to these slides has been brief thus far, but I hope to work with them more in the future and identify their place in the history of Arctic representation.

That history is, if the assertions and proposals of this thesis are accepted, one that involves representations and perceptions of the Arctic 'Going in Circles' during the long-nineteenth-century. Traversing a circular pathway from the late eighteenth century, when they were influenced by prevailing literary and artistic

movements of Romanticism and the Gothic, through mid-century influences of imperialism and sensationalism to the re-emergence at the fin de siècle of an "increasing number of representations based on the eighteenth century idea of the sublime" (David, 2000, p. 239).

The End

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