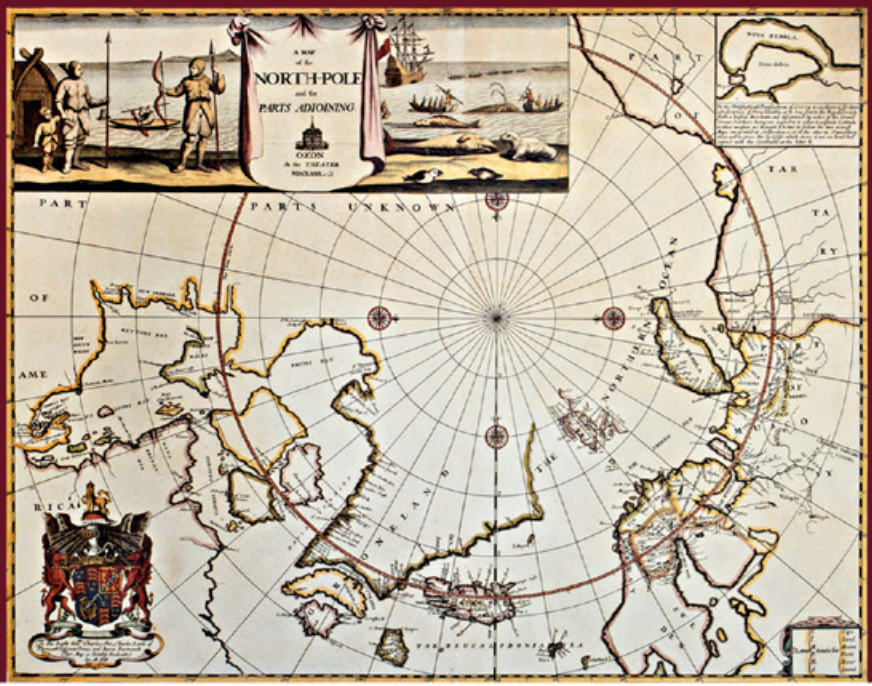
STUDIEN ZUR GERMANISTIK, SKANDINAVISTIK
UND ÜBERSETZUNGSKULTUR 21

Agata Lubowicka

Mapping Ultima Thule

Representations of North Greenland in the Expedition Accounts of Knud Rasmussen



PETER LANG

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The book addresses the relationship between the historical process of the Danish colonization of North Greenland and the literary representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit people in Knud Rasmussen's expedition accounts ***The New People*** and ***My Travel Diary***. The two works are read side by side to showcase the ambivalence inherent in representing North Greenland and the Inughuit, and, through this, to highlight common mechanisms and cultural practices involved in the mapping of the Other in the context of asymmetrical power relations. Applying a textual approach founded on colonial discourse analysis, the reading asserts that literary mappings of geography and identity can never be stable, as they are in a constant flux, perpetually recontextualized and reinvented.

The Author
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Mapping Ultima Thule

Studien zur Germanistik, Skandinavistik und Übersetzungskultur

Herausgegeben von Stefan H. Kaszyński, Andrzej Kątny,
Maria Krysztofiak und Beate Sommerfeld

Band 21

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Bibliographic Information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available online at http://dnb.d-nb.de.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

The publication was funded by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education as a part of the National "Programme for the Development of the Humanities" in the years 2018-2019, project number 21H 17 0258 85. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Ministry cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

NATIONAL PROGRAMME
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMANITIES

Cover illustration: © Shutterstock.com/Marzolino
Reviewers: Maria Krysztofiak-Kaszyńska, Hieronim Chojnacki
Proofreading: Elaine Horyza, Tomasz Gałązka

The publication of the Polish version of the book was funded by the Foundation for Polish Science's programme "Monographs" in 2017.

Printed by CPI books GmbH, Leck

ISSN 2192-3310
ISBN 978-3-631-79764-8 (Print) · E-ISBN 978-3-631-80163-5 (E-PDF)
E-ISBN 978-3-631-80164-2 (EPUB) · E-ISBN 978-3-631-80165-9 (MOBI)
DOI 10.3726/

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When you enter Arctic narrative, you enter every narrative of the Arctic ever written. When you enter the Arctic in person, you become part of the extended text. When you write the Arctic to affirm your presence in the world, you become in writing an imaginative creation. You could imagine anything and write it down and it would seem real forever.

John Moss, *Enduring Dreams*[1]

1 John Moss, *Enduring Dreams: An Exploration of Arctic Landscape* (Ontario: Anansi, 1994), p. 105.

For Michael

Acknowledgement

This book grew out of my PhD project, which I completed at the University of Gdańsk in 2014. My warmest thanks go to Professor Maria Sibińska, my PhD advisor, who inspired, helped and generously shared her expertise with me. I am also grateful to my referees, Professor Maria Krzysztofiak-Kaszyńska and Professor Hieronim Chojnacki, for their valuable comments and suggestions.

Contents

I Introduction

Let us not be discouraged if they fail once,
Let us not be discouraged if they fail again,
They will not lose!
They will win!
For themselves! And for us!
We fellow countrymen will defend them,
They will win[2]

In a New Year address delivered on 1st January 2016, the Prime Minister of Greenland [Greenlandic: *Kalaallit Nunaat*] availed himself of this passage from Greenland's bard Augo Lynge (1899–1959) to appeal to his compatriots for social solidarity and sustained effort for the sake of the island's economic independence despite all the odds and adversities. The political leaders of Greenland, which has enjoyed substantial autonomy within the Danish Commonwealth since 2009, realise that the complete independence they seek will stand a chance of success only if Greenland stops being dependent on funding from Denmark, which currently accounts for more than half of Greenland's overall budgetary spending. Given that the narrative of Denmark as a land of universal felicity, social prosperity and an exceptionally humanitarian colonial past is widespread indeed, we should enquire why Greenlanders have actually been so consistent and vocal in their efforts not only to manifest their national distinctiveness but also to win complete independence from Denmark.

Although research into Danish colonialism has long been part and parcel of Danish academia, the fact that public debates and controversies erupt time and again over artists' attempts to address this multifaceted issue suggests that colonialism is, in fact, partly or fully suppressed in the general public self-consciousness.[3] This suppression readily translates into a growing incongruity between the perceptions of Denmark within and without its borders. While Danes are only too eager to embrace the idea of Denmark as a humanitarian nation and a leader in developmental aid for underprivileged countries, this flattering self-perception

2 The passage was translated from Danish by Jørgen Veisland. See http://naalakkersuisut.gl/~/media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Naalakkersuisut/DK/Taler/Nytårstale%202016%20DK_endelig.pdf (Accessed 7 Feb. 2016).

3 See Sylwia Izabela Schab, "Zmowa (prze)milczenia," *Czas Kultury*, Vol. 169, No 4 (2012), pp. 46–51.

is increasingly being undermined by counter-narratives that proliferate in the world media as the migration crisis sweeps across Europe.[4] Admittedly, the gist and validity of some interpretations of Denmark's current political situation can be disputed, yet the cracks in Denmark's image as a "small country in the North of Europe" that rushes to help the vulnerable and the threatened cannot be doubted.

Denmark's colonisation of Greenland should be studied in a comprehensive socio-historical context, for the processes unfolding at the northernmost periphery of Europe cannot be adequately explored without considering the political, economic and ideological developments that determined the course of events at the centre of Northern Europe. Missionary Hans Egede would not have set off for Greenland in 1721 had the absolute monarchy in Denmark not acquired overseas territories in quite different parts of the world in the 17th century. Denmark's imperial past, which has only recently been retrieved from the murkiness of the nation's collective oblivion by Danish historians, comprises the colonisation of the West Indies (the present-day Virgin Islands), the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) and Tranquebar (present-day Tharangambadi) as well as a robust Danish slave trade, which ranked seventh-biggest among all the colonial powers.[5] With Greenland's west coast colonised up to Upernavik in the north of the island, 18th-century Denmark was an empire that extended over the overseas territories, Norway, Schleswig, Holstein, Iceland and the Faroe Islands.

However, the Danish colonisation of Greenland hardly resembled the manner in which colonies were administered in hotter parts of the world. As the geographical conditions were challenging in the extreme and revenues depended heavily on the raw materials which could only be delivered by the indigenous population of the colonised areas, Danish colonial rule of Greenland did not involve a ruthless exploitation of its people and natural resources. Rather, it was founded on holding a monopoly on Greenland's trade throughout the 19th century and on keeping Greenland's traditional, hunting-based economy in place

4 This found what was probably its most vivid expression in a satirical cartoon which appeared in *The Guardian* on 26th January 2016. The cartoon showed Denmark's PM Lars Løkke Rasmussen wearing a Nazi uniform, with a caption that parodied the slogan of an internationally known commercial for Carlsberg, a Danish beer brand: "Probably the stupidest political party in the world." See http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/picture/2016/jan/26/steve-bell-on-denmark-seizing-refugees-assets-cartoon (Accessed 7 Feb. 2016).

5 Søren Flott and Thomas Laursen, *Danske tropekolonier: I kølvandet på Galathea* (København: Jylland-Postens Forlag, 2007), p. 71.

at all costs, while at the same time Denmark itself was gradually disposing of its other colonies, the monopoly on trade with Iceland and the Faroe Islands was being abolished, liberalism and the market economy were on the rise in Europe, and the world superpowers were asserting their imperial ascendancy in the non-western parts of the world. Moreover, the Royal Greenland Trading Company, which was charged with administering Greenland, came to prioritise self-maintenance rather than financial revenues, with potential profits redirected to improve the education and living standards of Greenlanders.[6]

A distinctive feature of the colonisation of West Greenland was that it was non-violent and did not meet a lot of resistance from Greenlanders themselves.[7] Importantly, the Christianisation of Greenland proved effective largely because the new religion was preached in the language of the indigenous population. It was in the interest of the Trading Company to make Greenlanders stick to hunting and to keep them from adopting the European ways, yet changes precipitated by the colonial system could not be stopped. As a result, Greenland's society faced considerable impoverishment in the 19th century, the population grew more and more dependent on European commodities, the sedentary mode of life spread, and social stratification increased significantly.[8]

The 19th century saw Denmark suffer two military losses. One of them was related to an enforced alliance with Napoleon Bonaparte's France and resulted in the Treaty of Kiel in 1814, which stripped Denmark of Norway, handing it over to Sweden. The other took place in 1864, when Denmark, overpowered by the Prussian-Austrian coalition, lost Schleswig and Holstein. In the long run, these defeats were not only to determine the current topography of the Kingdom of Denmark but also to permanently transform the self-perception of Danes, who came to think of themselves as citizens of "a small country threatened by the powerful German neighbour from the south."[9] The society of what had once been an

6 Henning Bro, *Kilder til en dansk kolonihistorie* (København: Det Grønlandske Selskab, 1993), p. 99.

7 Bro, *Kilder til en dansk kolonihistorie*, p. 60.

8 Bro, *Kilder til en dansk kolonihistorie*, pp. 94–95.

9 This can be blamed on Danish historians, who since the 1970s have almost exclusively described the past of Denmark as a state confined within its current borders and have only rarely addressed its former territories. Consequently, studies of Danish history have not covered the numerous, vast areas that had formed part of the Empire over centuries. The past has been comprehended as leading directly to the modern Danish nation-state with the frontiers as known today. Michael Bregnsbo and Kurt Villads Jensen, *Det danske imperium – storhed og fald* (København: Aschehoug, 2004), p. 8.

empire (and which still possessed the West Indies and Atlantic territories) came to focus on domestic development, following the popular slogan that "what was lost on the outside must be won on the inside" [Danish: *hvad udad tabes, skal indad vindes*].[10] The catchphrase did not affect Denmark's actions vis-à-vis Greenland, a fact that has gone unmentioned or ignored for decades in line with the narrative of Denmark's history as a small and poor country. Towards the end of the 19th century, an interest in East and North Greenland, areas that had remained outside the Danish colonial system till then, emerged and grew in Denmark. This was closely linked to an increasing preoccupation on the part of the world's powers, as well as of neighbouring Sweden and Norway (which worked hard to manifest its national separateness), with those territories, which had until then escaped Western colonisation. Denmark made its first important move in this regard when the so-called Danish Umiaq Expedition [Danish: *Konebådsekspeditionen*] was dispatched to East Greenland in 1883. Led by Danish naval officer Gustav Holm (1849–1940), the expedition resulted in the founding of a Danish trading station at Ammassalik on the east coast in 1894, which fell under the trade monopoly covering the entirety of West Greenland. Denmark's slightly later interest in North Greenland was associated with the world-famous feats of American polar explorer Robert Edwin Peary (1856–1920), who chose the surroundings of present-day Thule as a base for his expeditions to the North Pole.[11] In 1909, Greenland-born Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen set up a mission station and, a year later, a Cape York Thule Trading Station [Danish: *Kap York Handelsstation Thule*], whose establishment should be construed as a strategic step of on the part of the Danish state, which had no intention of engaging in any explicit attempts at expanding its sovereignty over the entire territory of Greenland before selling the West Indies to the US in 1916. Only after the US government had officially declared that it would not object if Denmark extended its political and economic influence to include the whole of Greenland did other

10 The entire sentence, reading "For hvert et Tab igjen Erstatning findes, hvad udad tabes, det maa indad vindes," was coined by author Hans Peter Holst (1811–1893). Whenever there are no official English translations of the Nordic-language terminology I use, I add the original word in brackets the way it was spelled when a given text was published. For example, nouns were as a rule capitalised in Danish when Knud Rasmussen's texts on which I focus in this book appeared. All quotations from Danish and Norwegian literary texts as yet unpublished in English were translated by Jørgen Veisland.

11 Klaus Petersen, "Handselsstationen i Thule," *Tidsskriftet Grønland*, Vol. 44, No 6 (1996), p. 224.

countries accept Denmark's rule of Greenland, which was formally announced by Denmark's Minister of Interior on 12th May 1921.[12]

Denmark's actions towards validating its political sovereignty over the entirety of Greenland clashed with the aspirations of Norway, which – independent since 1905 – laid claim to Erik the Red's Land, a part of its former colony on the east coast of the island. The dispute between Denmark and Norway, an unprecedented development in 20th-century intra-Scandinavian relationships, escalated throughout the 1920s, culminating in Norway's occupation of East Greenland in the early 1930s. The contention was settled by the Permanent Court of Justice in the Hague, whose verdict of 5th April 1933 ultimately granted Denmark sovereignty over the entire area of Greenland. The territorial expansion of a country whose official motto espoused domestic development became a reality.

Danish policy vis-à-vis Greenland changed after a period of isolation caused by the outbreak of the Second World War and the American occupation of the island. Both Danish state officials and the Greenlandic elite demanded the abolition of the trade monopoly, opening the country to external influences and implementing a process of modernisation. As Denmark's constitution was amended in 1953, the status of Greenland as a Danish colony was lifted and the island became an integral part of Denmark. However, the accelerated modernisation of Greenland, which involved the development of the infrastructure, industry, housing, health care, courts of law and education and was effected mainly through the efforts of a mass workforce from Denmark, did not bring about equality between the "South Danes" and the "North Danes" [Danish: *norddanskere*], as Greenlanders came to be referred to in official Danish discourse. Consequently, Greenlandic society grew more and more frustrated, the disgruntlement combining with the increasing population and better means of mass-communication to spark the rise of the first organisations that advocated the urgent need for any further development to follow guidelines and priorities set by the Greenlanders themselves.

Despite the efforts of Danish reporters and film directors,[13] general public opinion in Denmark is still inclined to pass over some of the post-war decisions

12 Petersen, "Handelsstationen i Thule," p. 228; Gert Müntzberg and Peter Simonsen, "Knud Rasmussen og handelsstationen Thule 1910–37," *Historie/Jyske Samlinger*, No. 2 (1996), pp. 220–221. Knud Michelesen presents a different viewpoint, claiming that Denmark's lack of interest in expanding its sovereignty over North Greenland was due solely to the fact that the government regarded such an expansion as financially unviable. Knud Michelsen, *Vejen til Thule: Knud Rasmussen belyst gennem breve og andre kilder 1902–1910* (København: Forlaget Falcon, 2014), pp. 60–61.

13 Such attempts included, for example, Poul Brink's (1953–2002) journalistic investigation into the crash of a US B-52 bomber in the vicinity of the US Thule air-base. Brink's

which Danish cabinets made without consulting or seeking consent from the representatives of Greenland. The building of an American air base in Thule, in the wake of which local residents were forcefully displaced 130 kilometres north of Qaanaaq, and the seizing of twenty-two Greenlandic children, who were separated from their families, brought to Denmark and then placed for many years in an orphanage in Nuuk as a social experiment in transplanting Danish customs and culture to Greenland, still count as highly symbolic to Greenlanders as evidence of the wrongs committed by the Danish authorities in less than good faith.

The debates and protests which Greenlanders started to organise in the 1960s and 1970s were dominated by the voices of young Greenlandic politicians educated at Danish universities, who began to champion a Faroe-like model of autonomy for Greenland. This time, Denmark's administration did not protest, and a commission was set up to collaboratively develop a future Act of Autonomy. The Act came into effect on 1st May 1979, giving Greenland the status of an overseas territory as well as a local government.[14] However, some contentious issues, such as rights to Greenland's raw materials and independent foreign politics in matters directly pertaining Greenland, were not resolved. As a result of calls for the expansion of the existing autonomy, further negotiations were held until solutions were put in place for Greenland to remain part of the Danish Commonwealth as long as it deemed it necessary itself.

Commencing on 28th June 2009, this expanded autonomy opened a new chapter in the history of Greenland and propelled the processes of nation-building. The development was marked by establishing national institutions of culture (e.g. the National Theatre, founded in 2011), vigorous debates on the shape of Greenland's future constitution and, importantly, enhanced Danish and Greenlandic media attention to Denmark's prospective relations with its former colony and ways of interpreting their shared past. One answer to the opening question of this Introduction is the rejection by consecutive

findings were published in *Thule-sagen – løgnens univers* (1997, *The Thule Affair: A Universe of Lies*), a book adapted to the screen by Christina Rosendahl as *The Idealist* (*Idealisten*, 2015). Another notable effort was a book-length reportage entitled *I den bedste mening* (1998, *With the Best Intentions*) by Danish journalist Tine Bryld (1939–2011), who revealed the experiences of the twenty-two Greenlandic children that were first sent to Denmark and then consigned to an orphanage in Nuuk. The book was used by Louise Friedberg for her film *The Experiment* (*Eksperimentet*, 2010).

14 Tomasz Brańka, "Geopolityczny status Królestwa Danii – mit państwa unitarnego," *Przegląd Politologiczny* No. 4 (2012), p. 22.

Danish cabinets of the proposal made by Greenland's Naalakkersuisut (Local Government) that representatives of both countries should work together within the Reconciliation Commission. Despite formal proclamations of partnership, mutual respect and the equality of the two parties involved, Greenland is still denied the right to define its own history. Denmark's doubts about Greenlanders' capacity to make pronouncements on blame or blamelessness in the context of colonial ramifications, which have directly affected a lot of Greenland's citizens, exemplifies the asymmetrical nature of the mutual relations between the countries, a problem which is continuing despite the passage of time. Given these complications, it should hardly be considered surprising that the recognition of Greenland's complete independence by their former coloniser is the Greenlanders' supreme goal.

***

1 Greenland and Greenlanders in Danish Discourse

In our age of Anthropocene, when no place on earth can any longer be called "virgin" and untouched by the human hand, historical narratives about both imaginary and real places which are secluded or practically inaccessible to travellers and, as such, resist the practices of direct representation, kindle more nostalgia than ever before. Although the Arctic and, in particular, North Greenland with its indigenous Inughuit population are certainly natural locations that anybody can reach with relative ease today, they are also cultural phenomena which have long been a predominantly discursive construction in the Western discourse. This is aptly grasped by Canadian author John Moss, who insists in his *Enduring Dreams* that "[t]he Arctic of outsiders is a landscape of the mind, shaped more in the imagination by reading than by experience and perception,"[15] which highlights the prevalence of outsider views in representations of Arctic regions. The construct was fuelled by two entirely dissonant ways of perceiving the North.[16] Namely, associations with

15 Moss, *Enduring Dreams*, p. 28.

16 This is consistent with Hanna-Mari Ikonen and Samu Pehkonen's position that humans tend to perceive the world in a dualistic manner. Hanna-Mari Ikonen, Samu Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic: Doing Feminine Nature in a Masculine Way," in: *Encountering the North: Cultural Geography, International Relations and Northern Landscape*, eds. Frank Möller and Samu Pehkonen (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 129. On the construction of the North in the discourse of the South, see James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,

its brightness produced representations of its virginal nature, purity and innocence, while associations with its darkness bred visions in which it was marked with peril, menace and devilishness.[17] As noticed by Norwegian scholars Johan Schimanski, Cathrine Theodorsen and Henning Howlid Wærp, such representations of the North generated stereotypically ambivalent perceptions of the dwellers of northern areas as "the epitomes of purity, authenticity and naturalness," on the one hand, and agents of "dark powers, dangerous and defying any control," on the other.[18] Alternately – or, for that matter, simultaneously – a paradise and a dystopia, the Far North has attracted and fascinated, but has also evoked fear and awe as the non-Western Other,[19] serving

1994), pp. 157–158; Hieronim Chojnacki, *Polska "poezja Północy": Maria, Irydion, Lilla Weneda* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 1998), pp. 9–30; Peter Stadius, "The Gothic Tradition and the North: The Image of Gustavus Adolphus and His Men in 17th-Century Spain," in: *Northbound: Travels, Images, Encounters 1700–1830*, ed. Karen Klitgaard Povlsen (Århus: Århus University Press, 2007), p. 64; Jesper Hede, "Northern Time Travel in the Eighteenth Century: European Invention of Nordic Literature," in: *Northbound: Travels, Images, Encounters 1700–1830*, ed. Karen Klitgaard Povlsen (Århus: Århus University Press, 2007), p. 29; Hendriette Kliemann-Geisinger, "Mapping the North – Spatial Dimensions and Geographical Concepts in Northern Europe," in: *Northbound: Travels, Images, Encounters 1700–1830*, ed. Karen Klitgaard Povlsen (Århus: Århus University Press, 2007), p. 83.

17 Johan Schimanski et al., "Arktis som litterært projekt," in: *Reiser og ekspedisjoner i det litterære Arktis*, eds. Johan Schimanski et al. (Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk Forlag, 2011), p. 9.

18 Schimanski et al., "Arktis som litterært projekt," p. 9.

19 Explored by thinkers as different as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) and Emmanuel Lévinas (1906–1995), the notion of the Other is understood here comprehensively as whatever is "unfamiliar and extraneous to a dominant subjectivity, the opposite or negative against which an authority is defined." Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature. Migrant Metaphors* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 21. When using the notions of the Other and the Same throughout this book, I rely primarily on Lévinas's metaphysics as outlined in *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (1961), which was first published in the English translation of Alphonso Lingis by Martinus Nijhoff Publishers in 1969. For interpretations of the Other in the context of travel literature, see Syed Manzurul Islam, *The Ethics of Travel: From Marco Polo to Kafka* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 78–115.

as an antithesis to the familiar Western world. American anthropologist Ann Fienup-Riordan likens Western attitudes to the Arctic to Edward W. Said's (1935–2003) definition of Orientalism and calls them "Eskimo Orientalism,"[20] while Danish researcher Kirsten Thisted refers to them as "Arctic Orientalism."[21] Similarly to the Orient that was constructed as the antithesis of the West, the Arctic was imagined and represented as the opposite of the Occident which in the Nordic context denoted the Scandinavian countries.[22]

Within the European world-image, Greenland was first invested with meanings by old-Icelandic settlers. Eiríkr Þorvaldsson, called Erik the Red, called the newly found territory a "green land," whereby he imposed meaning-producing expectations on the area and laid the imaginary foundation for its "discovery" by land-hungry Icelandic settlers, who arrived there time and again, starting in 985. They referred to themselves as Greenlanders – dwellers of that "green land." This intellectual or metaphorical "reinvention"[23] of Greenland by Erik the Red survived and thrived even when the island became known across Europe. Greenland remained a "green land" while Iceland, despite its more southerly location, remained a "land of ice." The Inuit that "Greenlanders" encountered

20 Ann Fienup-Riordan, *Freeze Frame – Alaska Eskimos in the Movies* (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 1995), p. XI.

21 Kirsten Thisted, "The Power to Represent: Intertextuality and Discourse in *Smilla's Sense of Snow*," in: *Narrating the Arctic: A Cultural History of Nordic Scientific Practices*, eds. Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin (Canton: Science History Publications, 2002), p. 313; Kirsten Thisted, "Danske grønlandsfiktioner: Om billedet af Grønland i dansk litteratur," *Kosmorama*, Vol. 49, No. 232 (2003), p. 63.

22 Drawing on Said's concept of Orientalism, Danish literary scholar Hans Hauge has coined the notion of "Northientalism" or "Northism" [Danish: *nordientalisme*/*nordisme*], which he defines as the othering by Scandinavians of the peoples of Asian origin (i.e. Finns, Sami and Greenlanders) in order to produce an opposite against which to define their own identity. Hans Hauge, *Post-Danmark. Politik og æstetik hinsides det nationale* (København: Lindhardt og Ringhof, 2003), p. 146. For a discussion of the Other as opposed to the peoples living in Nordic countries, see Kirsten Hastrup, "Nordboerne og de andre," in: *Den nordiske verden*, ed. Kirsten Hastrup (København: Gyldendal, 1992), pp. 205–231.

23 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992) p. 111.

came to be called *skrælingar*, which can be translated either as "weaklings" or as "people wearing animal skins."[24]

Over the following centuries, a variety of texts about the remote island and its inhabitants contributed to the production of a coherent discourse on Greenland. The development of such discourse was fostered by increasingly closer relationships, which intensified with the onset of colonisation initiated by the Danish-Norwegian missionary Hans Egede (1696–1758) and the continued Danish presence on the western coast that it brought about. As a result, several tropes appeared and became entrenched, reducing things Greenlandic to a kind of "tropological commodity"[25] which, repeatedly used by writers of travel reports, made the texts similar in vocabulary and imagery.[26] As convincingly shown by historian Hanne Thomsen, the dominant representations of Greenland and Greenlanders were linked to colonial policies of the Danish state,[27] which is consistent with Michel Foucault's (1926–1984) theory of the power-knowledge nexus, in which, as Foucault claims, "the power relations give rise to a possible corpus of knowledge, and knowledge extends and reinforces the effects of this power."[28] In the 18th century, the describing and interpreting of Inuit culture became the sole monopoly of professional missionaries, whose narratives painted the (largely baptised) Greenlanders as living proof of the progress and success of Danish missionary and colonial pursuits, while Greenland was primarily depicted in scientific terms within the frameworks of geography

24 *Saga o Grenlandczykach i Saga o Eryku Rudym*, ed. Anna Waśko (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2006), p. 33; Hans Christian Gulløv, "Kulturmøder i Nord," in: *Grønlands forhistorie*, eds. Hans Christian Gulløv et al. (København: Gyldendal, 2004), p. 211. The term "Greenlanders" was adopted in the 18th century by missionary Hans Egede to refer to the Inuit he encountered, which implies that he might not have realised they were a people of Eskimo origin and not the descendants of the Old Norse settlers. Mads Fægteborg, "Hans Egede," in: *Grønland – en refleksiv udfordring. Mission, kolonisation og udforskning*, ed. Ole Høiris (Århus: Århus Universitetsforlag, 2009), p. 53.

25 Lesley Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks: Rewriting the Tropics in the Novela de la Selva* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), p. 96.

26 A similar mechanism is also at work in Western literature on the Sami, as noticed by Maria Sibińska. Maria Sibińska, *Marginalitet og myte i moderne nordnorsk lyrikk* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2002), pp. 15–16, footnote 14.

27 Hanne Thomsen, "Ægte grønlændere og nye grønlændere – om forskellige opfattelser af grønlandskhed," *Den Jyske Historiker*, No. 81 (1998), pp. 28–30.

28 Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 29.

and natural history, aligned with the classifying and cataloguing spirit of the Enlightenment.[29]

In the 19th century, texts about Greenland authored by travellers, educated officials and scientists started to appear side by side with the accounts of missionaries. The prevalent representations of Greenlanders resulted chiefly from the locally anchored critique of absolute power in Denmark, a related criticism of the colonial governance of the Royal Greenland Trading Company in Greenland and the *Zeitgeist*-coloured European belief that traditional societies were doomed to perish in a clash with Western civilisation.[30] The staple images of Greenlanders included, on the one hand, "a noble savage" embodied in a hunter pursuing the traditional, independent lifestyle and, on the other, "partly civilised" colony dwellers in need of support from others as they were too indolent and spoilt by too much contact with the West.[31] Greenland was further discursivised in systematic geographical depictions and in the writings by officials and travellers affiliated with the colonial apparatus, which devoted a lot

29 The best known of such depictions include accounts authored by Hans Egede: *Omstændelig og Udførlig Relation ang. den grønlandske Missions Begyndelse og Fortsættelse* (1738) and *Det gamle Grønlands nye Perlustration eller Naturel-Historie, og Beskrivelse over det gamle Grønlands Situation, Luft, Temperament og Beskaffenhed* (1741), and the writings of his son Poul (1708–1789): *Continuation af Relationerne betreffende den grønlandske Missions Tilstand og Beskaffenhed forfattet i Form af en Journal fra anno 1734 til 1740* (1741) and *Efterretninger om Grønland, uddragne af en Journal holden fra 1721 til 1788*. These descriptions concerned the known areas of the Danish colony, while the territories situated north of the remotest colony (i.e. Uummannaq in 1763, and after the founding of Upernavik, the Tasiusaq trading station) still formed a *terra incognita*, and despite an interest in them which these texts express, the language in which the areas are referred to is conjectural and speculative. Poul Egede, "Efterretninger om Grønland uddragne af en journal holden fra 1721 til 1788," ed. Mads Lidegaard, *Det Grønlandske Selskabs Skrifter*, No. 29 (1988), p. 64; Henrik Christopher Glahn, "Glahns anmærkninger. 1700-tallets grønlændere – et nærbillede," ed. Mads Lidegaard, *Det Grønlandske Selskabs Skrifter*, No. 30 (1991), pp. 19, 35.

30 Such critiques were voiced primarily by the educated Danish elite, who knew about the conditions of life in Greenland. Criticism of colonial rule, instances of which appeared as early as in the diaries of Henrik Christopher Glahn (1738–1804) and accounts of other missionaries in the first half of the 19th century, such as Johan Christian Wilhelm Funch (1802–1867), was thus in fact no novelty at that time.

31 Thomsen, "Ægte grønlændere og nye grønlændere," p. 30.

of attention to the potential industrial uses of the Danish "dependent territory" [Danish: *Biland*], about which Danish public opinion still did not know much.[32]

Eskimologist Erik Gant encapsulates the Danish "reinvention" of Greenland and Greenlanders in an apt commentary: "Strikingly, the scale is meagre indeed: virtuous Hyperboreans got themselves their own Hyperboreans, a harmless addendum to the monstrous history of European colonialism."[33] Representations, as an ideological process resulting both from expectations and imaginings concerning the unknown Other and from real cultural encounters with that unknown Other, contributed thus to the construction and subordination of the northern peripheries by the economically and discursively stronger centre. Paradoxically enough, that centre itself remained (and to a degree still remains) a periphery in the perception of dominant Western countries.

Nonetheless, the 18th- and 19th-century representations of Greenland and Greenlanders of the island's west coast had little of the one-sidedness that Said suggests in his *Orientalism*. As Hans Egede and later missionaries were actually steeped in Greenlandic culture and felt at home in the Arctic, their descriptions of the realities they experienced were highly heterogeneous[34]: despite their negative traits, which were particularly underscored in early accounts, the Inuit were portrayed as independent and individual human beings, while their culture was depicted in its own right through scientific discourse.[35] Brought forth from the realm of myth and anonymity, Greenlanders were recognised by the writers as humans who, endowed with a certain morality, understanding and reason, could

32 Johan Christian Wilhelm Funch, *Syv Aar i Nordgrønland* (Viborg 1840), Preface (n.p.).

33 Erik Gant, "Den excentriske eskimo," *Tidsskriftet Grønland*, Vol. 44, No. 5 (1996), p. 177.

34 Besides the accounts by Hans and Poul Egede, notable examples include first and foremost *Historie von Grönland* (1765) by David Crantz, *Anmærkninger over de tre første bøger af Hr. David Crantzes Historie om Grønland* (1771) by Henrik Christopher Glahn and *Tredie Continuation af Relationerne betreffende den grønlandske Missions Tilstand og Beskaffenhed forfattet i Form af en Journal fra Anno 1739 til 1743* (1744) by Niels Rasch Egede.

35 In the introduction to his *Efterretninger om Grønland*, Poul Egede describes Greenlanders as "fellow humans" of Europeans. Egede, "Efterretninger om Grønland," p. 12. Danish literary scholar Karen Langgård argues that in the texts by Egede and his sons (as well as by Moravian missionaries), Greenlanders exhibit a considerable subjective agency in cultural encounters with missionaries. Karen Langgård, "John Ross and Fr. Blackley: European Discourses about Inuit and Danes in Greenland 1700–1850," in: *Northbound: Travels, Images, Encounters 1700–1830*, ed. Karen Klitgaard Povlsen (Århus: Århus University Press, 2007), p. 309.

abandon the state of savagery and, through the mediation of Danes, become converted inhabitants of a European colony. Even those early accounts characteristically disrupt colonial univocality through regular recourse to indigenous knowledge (e.g. in animal descriptions), reliance on Greenlandic terminology and/or the incorporation of letters written by literate and baptised Greenlanders into European texts.[36] Later accounts put ever more stress on the contribution that Greenlandic catechists made to the work of European missions and ever more vocally expressed an understanding of and sympathy for the people of Greenland and its culture.[37] Some writers communicated authentic admiration for and amazement at Greenland's nature and wondered at the abundance of its resources, which defied the sternness of its natural conditions.[38] The writers of 18th-century accounts largely headed to Greenland with strong intentions of settling down for lengthy stints, considered the island their home and devoted considerable periods of their lives, if not their entire lifetimes, to this engagement.[39] For this reason, although the images of Greenland and its inhabitants they produced were embroiled in the colonising project, they are hardly one-dimensional, diverging quite considerably from the first European representations of the American New World. The reports of missionaries imply that Greenland, rather than being "new" to the Danish settlers, was reinvented by them and integrated with their Enlightenment-inflected image of the world.

In the mid-19th century, attitudes to the yet-unexplored areas of Greenland changed: while in the first half of the 19th century they were shrouded in silence, in the second half attention was turned to the interior of Greenland

36 "Efterretninger om Grønland" by Poul Egede and *Historie von Grönland* by David Crantz also contain such letters. Dated in 1756, a letter included in Egede's account, attributed to Poul the Greenlander and re-printed by Fridtjof Nansen in his book on Greenlanders entitled *Eskimoliv* (English edition: *Eskimo Life*, 1893), is now believed to have been written by Poul Egede himself, following the popular European convention of producing imitations of travel literature in which European authors used non-European narrators to criticise the developments in their own countries. Inge Kleivan, "Poul Egede," in: *Grønland – en refleksiv udfordring. Mission, kolonisation og udforskning*, ed. Ole Høiris (Århus: Århus Universitetsforlag, 2009) pp. 104, 122.

37 In this respect, Hans and Poul Egede's first accounts are far more ambivalent about, for example, eating foods made by Greenlanders, their standards of hygiene and the smells in their homes.

38 For example, Glahn compares the pleasure of looking at icebergs to that of contemplating the monuments of antiquity in Italy. Glahn, "Glahns anmærkninger," p. 37.

39 Fægteborg, "Hans Egede," p. 42; Kleivan, "Poul Egede," pp. 105–107.

and the regions situated north and east of the borders of the Danish colony.[40] This shift resulted from the increased interest of the world's superpowers in the last uncharted territories of the globe. Such preoccupations spurred scientific expeditions into the polar regions and fuelled the rise of a new discipline, which came to be referred to as "polar studies" and garnered prominence in Denmark as a source of the country's international prestige.[41] As a matter of fact, polar explorers and their accounts were primarily responsible for the discursivisation of the previously unknown regions of the Arctic and their inhabitants, a process which also effected a shift in the perceptions of Greenlanders and Greenland in general.[42] As Western expeditions took on indigenous techniques of travelling by land in winter and their supplies grew dependent on hunting, the nomadic people that called themselves Inughuit became indispensable helpers of European leaders on the road. The two hundred or so members of this nomadic people were greatly admired, especially for their coping capacity amidst the extremities of the Arctic climate, which led to their idealisation as heroic superhumans.[43] In keeping with the principles of 19th-century Darwinism, people who were ideally adapted to their environment came across as remarkable and easily lent themselves to idealisation.[44] In stark contrast to the representations of Greenlanders from the colonised areas of West Greenland as verging on extinction, it became common practice to represent the Inughuit, called polar Eskimos, as "noble savages" – natural, unspoilt, primaeval people who had a symbiotic connection to nature and needed no help from others; people who enjoyed true freedom and independence and, as the evolutionist world-perception had it, stood at the very origin of humankind, representing Europe's remote past.[45] Moreover,

40 Hinrich Johannes Rink, *Om Grønlands Indland og Muligheden af at berejse Samme* (København: G.E.C. Gad 1875), pp. 1–2, 9.

41 Kennet Pedersen, "Is-interferenser: København som verdenshovedstad for den etnografiske eskimoforskning i perioden 1900–1940," in: *Videnskabernes København*, eds. Thomas Söderquist et al. (Roskilde: Roskilde Universitetsforlag, 1998), pp. 156–158.

42 In her master's dissertation *En anden verden – forestillinger om Inuit. Repræsentation og selvrepræsentation af Inuit i nyere tid* (2006) Lill Rastad Bjørst presents the mechanisms of discourse formation regarding Greenland and Greenlanders in 19th and 20th century. Lill Rastad Bjørst, *En anden verden – forestillinger om Inuit. Repræsentation og selvrepræsentation af Inuit i nyere tid* (Odense: Syddansk Universitet, 2005), pp. 14–28.

43 Kirsten Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte: Knud Rasmussen og hans tid* (København: Gad, 2010), p. 44.

44 Fienup-Riordan, *Freeze Frame*, p. 15.

45 In the light of the universal concept of man, this also meant that Greenlanders could become civilised over the course of time as Europeans had before them.

successive accounts produced by polar explorers portrayed the Inughuit as if they had never met white people before; each encounter entailed a new beginning, with the Inughuit being discovered anew time and again.[46] Reports from North Greenland stressed that although they were purportedly uncivilised, those "free children of nature" were immensely intelligent and resolutely indefatigable in coping with the unfriendly environment (their home as it were), which was later fixed as a staple element of their image.[47] The emphasis that well-known polar explorers put in their narratives on the harshness of the natural conditions in North Greenland amplified the heroic stature awarded to its indigenous population as well as aggrandising the accomplishments of the Europeans whose pursuits were part of a broader national project aimed at augmenting the international glory and prestige of their homelands.[48] It was precisely in the last decades of the 19th century that Greenlanders acquired an indisputably favourable image which has survived into our times, a romanticised image of "nature people" [Danish: *Naturfolk*],[49] perpetuated as the Other for the outsiders who described them.[50] This effect was produced, to a large degree,

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Ole Høiris, *Antropologien i Danmark. Museal etnografi og etnologi 1860–1960* (København: Nationalmuseets Forlag, 1986), p. 167.

46 Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, p. 52.

47 Bjørst, *En anden verden*, pp. 24–28. This is to be found, for example, in accounts by the American Robert Peary and in *Blandt nordpolens naboer* (1895, English edition: *With Peary near the Pole*, 1898) by Norwegian Eivind Astrup, a member of Peary's expeditions in 1891–1892 and in 1893, a book which first ushered the Inughuit onto the Nordic literary scene.

48 Chauncey C. Loomis, "The Arctic Sublime," in: *Nature and the Victorian Imagination*, eds. U. C. Knoepflmacher and G. B. Tennyson (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: California Press, 1977), p. 95.

49 This English rendering of the term is offered by Frederik Brøgger, who remarks at the same time that the notion "primitive races" was widely used in the English-speaking world. The term *Naturfolk* was commonly applied in Danish anthropology at the turn of the 19th century. This concept triggered further divisions of the peoples, which hinged on their stage of civilisational development. Within this framework, the Inuit were described as representing "higher hunting culture" [Danish: *højere jægerfolk*]. Fredrik Chr. Brøgger, "The Culture of Nature: The View of the Arctic Environment in Knud Rasmussen's Narrative of the Fifth Thule Expedition," in: *Arctic Discourses*, eds. Anka Ryall et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), p. 85.

50 Kirsten Thisted argues that this romanticised image is also consolidated by Greenlanders, whom it helps obtain distinction and respect as well as lobby successfully for advantageous decisions in several international contexts. Thisted, "Danske grønlandsfiktioner," p. 33. For a discussion of the stereotypical and romantic image of

by the enormous popularity of Knud Rasmussen and his vivid expedition accounts.[51]

2 Knud Rasmussen

The life and work of Knud Rasmussen, one of Denmark's most celebrated national heroes, stretched over the last two decades of the 19th century and the first three decades of the 20th century.[52] Born on 7 July 1879 in Ilulissat [Danish: *Jakobshavn*], Greenland, to a Danish pastor and a half-Greenlander mother,[53] Rasmussen grew up in a relatively privileged family as for the modest life standards of the Danish colony. With Greenlanders as his playmates in childhood, he naturally mastered the difficult Greenlandic language and the technique of driving a dogsled, skills which he later emphasised on a number of occasions to prove the edge he boasted over other polar explorers in the study of Inuit culture.[54] As later researchers of Rasmussen's life and work observe, his ethnic background and social status when

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Greenlanders in Denmark, see also Niels Højlund, *Krise uden alternativ. En analyse af dansk Grønlandsdebat* (København: Gyldendal, 1972); Susanne Dybbroe, "Danske horisonter – og grønlandske: Advokater, eksperter, og den 'indfødte' befolkning efter hjemmestyret," in: *Dansk mental geografi. Danskernes syn på verden – og på sig selv*, ed. Ole Høiris (Århus: Århus Universitetsforlag, 1989), pp. 149–161.

51 Thisted, "Danske grønlandsfiktioner," p. 33; Ole Høiris, "Dansk antropologis vilde og eksotiske folk," in: *Dansk mental geografi. Danskernes syn på verden – og på sig selv*, ed. Ole Høiris (Århus: Århus Universitetsforlag, 1989), p. 61; Kirsten Hastrup, *Menneskesyn: kultur, race og Knud Rasmussen*, 2000, p. 3, at www.hum.au.dk/ckulturf/pages/publications/kh/mkr.pdf (Accessed 2 Mar. 2012).

52 As Olof Lagercrantz observes in his reading of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, all boys wanted to be discoverers in those days, and natural scientists were hailed as heroes of their times. Olof Lagercrantz, *Rejse med mørkets hjerte: en bog om Joseph Conrads roman*, trans. Karsten Sand Iversen (København: Nansensgade Antikvariat, 1989), p. 19. For young Knud Rasmussen, Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen was such a hero. Kirsten Thisted, "Knud Rasmussen," in: *Grønland – en refleksiv udfordring. Mission, kolonisation og udforskning*, ed. Ole Høiris (Århus: Århus Universitetsforlag, 2009), p. 247.

53 Rasmussen's maternal grandfather was a Greenland-born Norwegian and his grandmother was a Greenlander.

54 In *Across Arctic America* (Danish: *Fra Grønland til Stillehavet*, 1925), the dual origin of Knud Rasmussen is cited as an salient factor behind the success of his Arctic expeditions: "From the very nature of things, I was endowed with attributes for Polar work which outlanders have to acquire through painful experience. My playmates were native Greenlanders; from the earliest boyhood I played and worked with the hunters, so that even the hardships of the most strenuous sledge-trips became pleasant routine

growing up in Greenland were Danish, which is attested by the fact that at twelve years old he was sent to Denmark for schooling.[55] He completed his education in 1900, when he passed his final high-school exams with considerable difficulty and started travelling as a reporter for the Danish dailies *Kristeligt Dagblad* and *Illustreret Tidende*. First he went to Iceland, where he met Ludvig Mylius-Erichsen (1872–1907), a future leader of the Literary Expedition, and then to Sweden and Sápmi, a region on Sweden's northernmost extremities. During his first journey, he worked with Mylius-Erichsen on a plan to reach the uncolonised area of North Greenland[56]. The plan was accomplished in 1902, when the Literary Expedition was launched. In its aftermath, Rasmussen successfully debuted as a writer with *The New People*.

In 1910, Rasmussen collaborated with engineer Marius Ib Nyeboe (1867–1946) to establish the Cape York Thule trading station in North Star Bay. Colloquially dubbed just the "Thule trading station," it provided the economic backup and served as a base camp for seven scientific trips known as the "Thule expeditions."[57] The expeditions, which spanned from 1912 to 1933, brought Rasmussen international fame and recognition, while the travel narratives and collections of Inuit myths and legends he compiled in their wake proved a considerable readership success, shaping the way in which the Inuit and in particular Greenlanders have been perceived by Danes till this day.[58] The longest and most spectacular Fifth Thule Expedition (1921–1924), during which Rasmussen and his two Inughuit

for me." Knud Rasmussen, *Across Arctic America: Narrative of the Fifth Thule Expedition* (New York & London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), p. vi.

55 Karen Langgård, "Hvad skrev Knud Rasmussen når han skrev på grønlandsk?," *Grønlandsk kultur- og samfundsforskning* (2008), p. 132; Thisted, "Knud Rasmussen," p. 247.

56 According to Rasmussen's great-nephew Knud Michelsen, the plan to cross Melville Bay and to reach North Greenland originated with Knud Rasmussen's father, Christian, who already in 1900 discussed with the representatives of the Church of Denmark the issue of establishing a mission post in the territory. Knud Michelsen, *Den unge Knud Rasmussen belyst gennem breve og andre kilder 1893–1902* (København: Forlaget Falcon, 2011), p. 126.

57 I discuss the founding of a trading station at Thule and the colonisation of North Greenland in detail in my article "Duńska ekspansja na terytorium Grenlandii Północnej jako następstwo zjawiska 'imperializmu małych państw' – postkolonialne odczytanie 'Wstępu' do *Grenlandii nad Oceanem Arktycznym* autorstwa polarnika Knuda Rasmussena," in: *Nowocześni i postępowi? Cywilizacyjny wymiar Skandynawii z polskiej perspektywy. Studia Północnoeuropejskie*, eds. Kazimierz Musiał and Maja Chacińska, Vol. 3 (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2013), pp. 81–97.

58 Thisted, "Knud Rasmussen," p. 243.

companions from Thule: Qaavigarsuaq Miteq (later Kristiansen, 1900–1978) and Arnarulunnguak (1896–1933) used dogsleds, is regarded as his crowning achievement.[59] They travelled about 18,000 kilometres from the north-western part of Hudson Bay, across the Northwest Passage and Alaska, up to Chukotka on the western side of the Bering Strait. During the journey, Rasmussen visited all the Inuit communities along the northern coast of America and in the interior, wrote down their myths and beliefs and collected ethnographic items (nearly 20,000 pieces) for the National Museum in Copenhagen. Authored both by Rasmussen and by the other travellers, the accounts of the journey still serve as the basis of international Inuit research.[60] The expedition elevated Rasmussen into a national hero and cemented his reputation as a researcher and a writer – an awardee of honorary doctorates from the University of Copenhagen in 1924 and the University of Edinburgh in 1927. When he died unexpectedly on 21st December 1933 of a stomach infection he contracted on his last expedition, he enjoyed the status of an indisputable national hero and an authority on Greenland.

For my argument in this book, Rasmussen's biography is particularly relevant in that he was "a product of the contact zone"[61] between the Danish and the Greenlandic, his management of the trading station and his travels across the Arctic involved mediating between Inuit and European cultures, and he adopted the dual role of a Greenlander and a European – a native and a coloniser. When I refer to Rasmussen as "a product of the contact zone," I mean not only his experience of growing up in West Greenland but also his method of exploring the Arctic and associating with Inuit communities which resulted from his childhood experiences and personal predispositions. Anthropologist Erik Gant states that Rasmussen "was born into his research field"[62] and took over the mode of moving across the polar zones from his predecessors.[63] Because he defined his

59 Anthropologist Kennet Pedersen calls this expedition a "culmination of Danish polar enterprise." Pedersen, "Is-interferenser," p. 149.

60 Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, p. 15.

61 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 90.

62 Erik Gant, *Eskimotid. Analyser af filmiske fremstillinger af eskimoer med udgangspunkt i postkolonialistisk teori og med særlig vægtning af danske grønlandsfilm* (Århus: Århus Universitet, 2004), p. 128.

63 In this regard, his predecessors included, for example, marine officers Wilhelm August Graah (1793–1863) and Gustav Holm, who separately travelled to the east coast of Greenland by Greenlandic umiaqs, and the American Robert Edwin Peary, who used dogsleds in his attempts to reach the North Pole.

goal as doing ethnographic research and locating the cradle of Inuit culture, the indigenous travelling techniques served him not only as a means to an end, but also as a prerequisite of cultural encounters that followed the rules of the communities he visited.[64] Pedersen calls the method used by Rasmussen during the Fifth Expedition "prerevolutionary" – in relation to Bronisław Malinowski's (1884–1942) "anthropological revolution" – since Rasmussen's travels at that time largely aimed to collect ethnographic exhibits and accumulate knowledge about the spiritual culture of the communities he visited. But, as Hastrup observes, Rasmussen's early field research during the Literary Expedition was a form of participant observation that he practiced several years before Malinowski went to the Trobriand Islands for the first time.[65] As Rasmussen had spent long years amidst the Inughuit, he was largely treated by them as one of their kind who, like them, lived as a nomad, driven by a desire to see new lands and new people.[66] His extraordinary literary talent helped him compose an exceptionally captivating story of a slowly perishing world of hunters and shamans, in which he also inscribed himself, contributing to his own image as a hero and a mediator between the two cultures.[67]

Rasmussen's biographer, Kurt L. Frederiksen, emphasises that the famous polar explorer "could live as Eskimos did, speak their language and become one of them although, at the same time, when he stayed in Denmark, he behaved like a European both in mindset and in culture."[68] This complexity of Rasmussen's personality is also mirrored in his activities and ventures in North Greenland. He did not commit himself only to romantic travelling from one Inughuit community to another, sharing the daily routine with the natives and salvaging their spiritual culture from oblivion. He also co-founded the Cape York Thule trading station, the first private company in Greenland

64 Pedersen, "Is-interferenser," pp. 152–153; Gant, *Eskimotid,* p. 142.

65 Pedersen, "Is-interferenser," pp. 149–156; Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, p. 243.

66 Perceptions of Rasmussen in North Greenland are discussed, for example, by Danish Eskimo researcher Erik Holtved (1899–1981) in a story of his stay in the Cape York region between 1935 and 1937. Holtved recalls that he hardly heard the local people speak of Rasmussen and explains this by concluding that as the Inuit never mention the names of their dead, they must remember Rasmussen as one of their own folk. Erik Holtved, *Polareskimoer* (København: Carl Allers Bogforlag, 1942), p. 18.

67 Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, pp. 608, 653. Kirsten Thisted, "Over deres egen races lig. Om Knud Rasmussens syn på kulturmødet og slægtskabet mellem grønlændere og danskere," Tidsskriftet Antropologi, Vol. 50, No. 6 (2006), p. 139.

68 Kurt L. Frederiksen, *Kongen af Thule* (København: Borgen, 2009), p. 54.

since the establishment of the Royal Greenland Trading Department in 1776.[69] As such, Rasmussen was a pioneering capitalist entrepreneur in the North-Greenland peripheries, engaged in skin and fur trading, which not only financially supported his polar explorations but also gave him his livelihood.[70] For many years, the trading station funded Rasmussen's Thule expeditions, multiplied the invested capital and provided salaries to Rasmussen himself and his employees.[71] Scholars who study the links between Rasmussen's pursuits and Danish colonialism argue that the establishment of his trading station made it possible to extend Denmark's influence over the "no man's land" that North Greenland had been[72] and, after Rasmussen's death, to incorporate it fully into the Danish Crown on 1st August 1937.[73]

Particularly relevant to my goals in this book is Rasmussen's "indeterminability" [Danish: *ubestemmelighed*] as recognised by the researchers of his life and work,[74] or, in terms of Homi Bhabha's theories, his hybrid identity as simultaneously a Dane and a Greenlander, capable of negotiating between the two positions.[75] This duality is especially interesting because it proves what Mary

69 Müntzberg and Simonsen, "Knud Rasmussen og handelsstationen Thule 1910–37," p. 209.

70 According to Michelsen, Rasmussen had no education beyond secondary school and his journalism did not ensure an adequate livelihood. To provide for himself and his growing family, he needed a regular, dependable income, which was supposed to be secured by the operations of the trading station. Knud Michelsen, "Handelsstationen ved verdens ende," *Kristeligt Dagblad*, 16.08.2010, p. 5.

71 Petersen, "Handselsstationen i Thule," p. 229.

72 Officially, the Danish government did not interfere with the trading station. Yet both its establishment by subjects of the Danish monarch and its exploration activities bolstered the cabinet's position in negotiations in case Denmark were to seek to assert its sovereignty over the whole of Greenland. The strategy was successful, considering that in 1920 several powerful states accepted Denmark's dominion over Greenland and the Permanent Court of Justice in the Hague later endorsed Denmark's claim to the area.

73 Until Rasmussen's death in 1933, North Greenland remained his private colony even though, legally speaking, the Thule region belonged to Denmark. The status of Rasmussen as a great national hero and the fact that the trading station funded his expeditions stopped the Danish state from taking Thule over as early as in 1920. Petersen, "Handselsstationen i Thule," p. 228.

74 Gant, *Eskimotid*, p. 159.

75 Thisted, "Over deres egen races lig," pp. 143-144. Thisted, "Knud Rasmussen," p. 242. Rasmussen's hybrid identity and his capability to negotiate his various identities are also

Louise Pratt observes in her reading of travel writings composed in the age of European colonialism; namely, that the movement of people and ideas took place not only from the European centre to the colonial periphery, but also in the opposite direction.[76] I believe that this impossibility to define Rasmussen's ambivalent role in colonialism is reflected in his literary texts, in particular in their representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit, which are equally ambivalent, complex and dynamic.

3 Research on Knud Rasmussen's Literary Work

Postcolonial critique in Poland and Denmark has developed robustly over recent years but still remains a somewhat niche research framework. While in Denmark studies on Danish-Greenlandic relationships are already well entrenched and appreciated, the theme is still only occasionally addressed in Polish academia. One reason for this paucity is a lack of Polish translations, which makes such research practicable only for a narrow group of scholars with a good command of one of the three Scandinavian languages, who are as a rule affiliated with Scandinavian Studies Departments at the universities of Gdańsk, Poznań, Cracow and Warsaw.[77]

highlighted by Kirsten Hastrup, "Knud Rasmussen (1879–1933). The Anthropologist as Explorer, Hunter and Narrator," *FOLK. Journal of the Danish Ethnographic* Society, Vol. 46/47 (2005), p. 162; Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, pp. 652–653; Niels Barfoed, *Manden bag helten: Knud Rasmussen på nært hold* (København: Gyldendal, 2011), p. 404; Brøgger, "The Culture of Nature," p. 90; Fredrik Chr. Brøgger, "Mellom tradisjon og modernitet: Knud Rasmussens femte Thule-ekspedisjon (1921–1924) og møtet med urfolkene i Arktis," in: *Reiser og ekspedisjoner i det litterære Arktis*, eds. Johan Schimanski et al. (Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk Forlag, 2011), pp. 192–198. Thisted observes additionally that Rasmussen himself discursivised his own dual background as a privileged position which enabled him both to look at the Arctic as an outsider, the way common Europeans did, and to see it as an insider, through Inuit eyes. Thisted, "Knud Rasmussen," p. 242.

76 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 90.

77 The first book-length study of Scandinavian literature within the postcolonial framework in Poland was the PhD project developed by Maria Sibińska, a literary scholar of the University of Gdansk's Department of Scandinavian Studies. Her dissertation, entitled *Marginalitet og myte i moderne nordnorsk lyrikk* (2002), explored myth and marginality in North-Norwegian poetry. My own interpretation of the two best-known Polish young adult novels about Greenland and its inhabitants, authored by Alina and

Given that publications devoted to the life and work of polar explorer Knud Rasmussen still enjoy unvarying popularity in Denmark,[78] it can come as a surprise that, as Scandinavian studies scholars Henk van der Liet and Astrid Surmatz observe in their article on re-readings of Danish colonial literature: "One of the most renowned names within this literary tradition – which one may describe as 'sledge romance' – is of course Knud Rasmussen. He is a very productive and most interesting figure within the history of Danish literature, and his authorship has – as far as we are aware – never been the subject of profound literary analyses based on postcolonial theories."[79]

Though the observation was made in 2004, it is still valid as literary analyses of Rasmussen's texts are few and far between amidst the wealth of publications about him. One of the notable examples is *Thule i hjertet* by Danish literary scholar Knud Wentzel (1990), in which the author offers a psychological reading

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Czesław Centkiewicz, was the axis of my article "Anaruk og Odarpi – ædle vilde børn i et eskimoisk frilandsmuseum. En behandling af eskimoeksotisme i polsk litteratur," *Aktuel forskning. Litteratur, kultur og medier* (2014), Syddansk Universitet: http://www.sdu.dk/Om_SDU/Institutter_centre/Ikv/Videnskabelige+tidsskrifter/AktuelForskning/2014AF (15 Feb. 2015).

78 Rasmussen's first biography was published in Denmark in 1934, barely one year after his death. See Peter Freuchen, *Knud Rasmussen som jeg husker ham: fortalt for ungdommen* (København: Gyldendal, 1934). This book and following biographies interpreted Rasmussen's life and work through the lens of his status as a popular national hero. Kaj Birket-Smith, *Knud Rasmussens Saga* (København: C. Erichsen, 1936); *Bogen om Knud skrevet af hans venner*, eds. Johannes V. Jensen et al. (København: Westermanns Forlag, 1943); Niels Fenger, *Knud Rasmussen – Grønlands Aladdin* (København: Wøldike, 1979). In the 1990s, a new wave of Rasmussen's biographies appeared, revealing previously unknown details of both his life and the historical conjuncture in which he lived: Knud Wentzel, *Thule i hjertet: nærbillede af Knud Rasmussen* (København: Munksgaard, 1990); Frederiksen, *Kongen af Thule*; Ebbe Kløvedal Reich, *Den fremmede fortryller* (København: Vindrose, 1995); Knud Michelsen, *Jeg vil ikke dø for et skuldertræk. Knud Rasmussen skæbneår* (København: Rosinante, 1999). Recently, an interest in the events of Rasmussen's life has surged again, triggering a new series of publications: Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*; Michelsen, *Den unge Knud Rasmussen*; Barfoed, *Manden bag helten*; Michelsen, *Vejen til Thule*; Knud Michelsen, *En værkende tand. Striden om 2. Thuleekspedition* (København: Rosinante, 2017); Knud Michelsen, *I videnskabens navn: Knud Rasmussen belyst gennem breve og andre kilder 1910–1921* (København: Forlaget Falcon, 2018).

79 Henk Van der Liet and Astrid Surmatz, "Postkolonialisme og nordisk litteratur – en orientering," *TijdSchrift voor Skandinavistiek*, No 2 (2004), p. 13.

of passages from Rasmussen's travel accounts. Rasmussen's life and views have also been repeatedly analysed by Kirsten Hastrup, an eminent anthropologist of the University of Copenhagen. In her articles "Menneskesyn: kultur, race og Knud Rasmussen" and "Den anden sandhed. Et essay om Knud Rasmussen," Hastrup uses Rasmussen's literary texts and journalism to offer a Said-inspired, anthropological critique of his Eurocentric views of Greenlanders, including the Inughuit. Hastrup has also authored a very comprehensive study entitled *Vinterens hjerte. Knud Rasmussen og hans tid* (2010), in which she provides rich biographical details and interpretations of Rasmussen's diaries and fragments of his popular expedition reports. Still, because the methodology she uses is geared primarily to showing how the dominant ideologies and discourses of the age shaped Rasmussen as an individual, she devotes only scarce attention to rhetorical devices used in his writings and the techniques of presenting the Other.[80]

The literary qualities of Rasmussen's narrative of the Fifth Thule Expedition were more directly addressed by Norwegian literary scholar Fredrik Chr. Brøgger of the University of Tromsø, who interpreted the original Danish edition of *Fra Grønland til Stillehavet* (the book appeared in English in a slightly revised version entitled *Across Arctic America* in 1927) in two papers discussing Rasmussen's views of the nature of the American Arctic and the Inuit communities inhabiting the region, respectively.[81] The texts look into the ways in which Rasmussen's "hybrid identity" is reflected in the representations of Arctic flora and fauna or of its population. Brøgger's approach is largely consistent with the idea of Rasmussen as a person and writer which was outlined by the most prominent Danish postcolonial scholar, Kirsten Thisted of the University of Copenhagen, in her article inspired by Homi Bhabha's theories, entitled "Over deres egen races lig. Om Knud Rasmussens syn på kulturmødet og slægtskabet mellem grønlændere og danskere" (2006). Thisted comprehensively analyses *Fra Grønland til Stillehavet* and the abridged version of this account entitled *Den store slæderejse* (1932) in two articles published in Danish and English, respectively: "Knud Rasmussen" (2009) and "Voicing the Arctic: Knud Rasmussen and the Ambivalence of Cultural Translation" (2010). In both publications, the starting point for the textual analysis of representations of cultural encounters

80 For example, Kirsten Hastrup observes that the author is always present in the texts both as a hunter and as a scientist. Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, p. 703. Anthropologist Kennet Pedersen also approaches *The New People* in a biographical fashion in his article "At finde og opfinde sin niche: Omkring *Nye Mennesker*," *Grønlandsk kultur- og samfundsforskning* (2004/2005), pp. 79–92.

81 Brøgger, "The Culture of Nature;" Brøgger, "Mellom tradisjon og modernitet."

with the Canadian and American Inuit is provided by Rasmussen's hybrid identity, his capacity to negotiate between different positions and his skill at navigating cultural allegiances associated with them. Although Thisted's approach clearly differs from those adopted by other Danish scholars, she follows her predecessors in reading Rasmussen's texts as a record of real events which happened during the expedition and is less interested in their literary quality.[82] Rasmussen's identity and cultural belonging are also addressed by Karen Langgård, a Danish literary scholar of the Ilisimatusarfik (University of Greenland), who comparatively analyses the Danish and Greenlandic texts of *The New People* to conclude, like Thisted and Brøgger, that Rasmussen's identity was a hybrid one.[83]

Although these studies by Danish scholars rely on postcolonial theory, they exemplify the biographical approach to the study of Rasmussen's works, which continues the prevalent tendency registered by Van der Liet and Surmatz in 2004. Only in recent years have the accounts of polar expeditions started to invite more literary-minded readings. Important studies in this respect include *Den svenske Ikaros. Berättelserna om Andrée* (2003), in which Per Rydén of the University of Lund focuses on discursive representations of the balloon expeditions of Swedish polar explorer Salomon August Andrée (1854–1897), and the PhD project completed by Silje Solheim Karlsen at the University of Tromsø in 2011. Her dissertation, entitled *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand: Fridtjof Nansens Fram-ekspedisjon [1893–1896] – og bøker i dens kjølvann* (2011), examined accounts of Fridtjof Nansen's expedition to the Arctic Sea.

As a result of an increased interest in the North Pole rivalry involving the countries that possess Arctic territories and in the role of Greenland in the context of global warming, polar themes are climbing their way out of the obscurity of the northern peripheries. It is likely only a matter of time before the humanities, including literary studies, develop a vigorous interest in the Arctic regions and their inhabitants.

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82 It should be noted that Thisted brilliantly demonstrates how contemporary Danish authors still draw on Rasmussen's representations of North Greenland in her essay "The Power to Represent: Intertextuality and Discourse in 'Smilla's Sense of Snow'"(2002).

83 Langgård, "Hvad skrev Knud Rasmussen når han skrev på grønlandsk?," pp. 131–145. Issues related to Knud Rasmussen's identity were also explored by Claus Oreskov, "Den skære hvide nysne. Et forsvar for Knud Rasmussen," *Tidsskriftet Grønland*, Vol. 8 (2001), pp. 293–300; and by Michelsen, "Jeg vil ikke dø for et skuldertræk."

So-far, Knud Rasmussen's literary writings have only rarely and selectively been examined specifically as literature, within a framework informed by post-colonial theories. The literary quality typical of Rasmussen's works and the role of this literariness in constructing representations of the world have also remained grievously underexamined. It is my ambition and goal to fill in this gap by exploring the literary aspects of Rasmussen's texts in order to establish how and how far they construct and subordinate North Greenland and its inhabitants at a particular colonial moment, yet also give voice to the Other, not only as a participant in the cultural encounter but also as a part of the narrator's "self."[84]

4 The Structure of the Book

My fundamental objective in this book is to analyse the literary construction of North Greenland and the Inughuit in Knud Rasmussen's first two expedition accounts: *The New People* and *My Travel Diary*. This is supposed to help me explore the complicated network of relationships between these literary texts and the historical process of the Danish colonization of North Greenland. My analysis starts from an a priori assumption that travel writing is intrinsically ambivalent due to the inevitable positionality and contextuality of the literary subject. Consequently, in my argument I will follow two parallel paths. Specifically, I will focus on the relationships between colonial discourse and the representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit in Rasmussen's narratives; and, at the same time, I will explore how these very narratives articulate an opposition to the dominant representations. It is only through constantly "being at the frontiers," through "analyzing and reflecting upon limits" that we stand a chance of moving "beyond the outside-inside alternative," which Michel Foucault's "philosophical ethos" calls for.[85] The ultimate goal of my reflection on popular polar literature of the early 20th century is thus to conduct a "historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment into the possibility of going beyond them" in order to demonstrate that there indeed are common mechanisms and cultural practices which transcend the colonial moment I am analysing.[86]

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84 My first insights into the thematic concerns of this book lay at the core of my 2013 article: Agata Lubowicka, "The Presence of the Other in Knud Rasmussen's *The New People*," *Forum for World Literature Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2013a, pp. 257–268.

85 Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," in: *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 45.

86 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," p. 50.

Before exploring Rasmussen's texts, I briefly address Postcolonial Studies in a separate, likewise entitled chapter, in which I attend first of all to the links between travel narratives and colonial ideologies. Further, I discuss the tools provided by postcolonial theory that promote postcolonial re-readings of the Western ways of "mapping" the Other. One such tool is the colonial discourse analysis developed by Edward W. Said, with its key notions of "representation" and "colonial tropes." The Saidian discourse analysis is augmented by Homi Bhabha's nuancing framework of the split subject, which produces possibilities for resistance to oppressive representation practices in every colonial text. Bhabha's theories and the idea of ambivalence inherent in the representations of the Other provide the basis for my analytical approach later in this book.

Chapter 2 discusses ways of constructing North Greenland and the Inughuit people by means of the entrenched colonial tropes of idealisation, essentialisation, binary oppositions and exoticisation in Knud Rasmussen's pioneering account entitled *The New People* (*Nye Mennesker*, 1905). The tropes are confronted with the narrative sites of resistance to the dominant representations, which are a testimony to the discursive heteroglossia inherent in Rasmussen's narrative. Chapter 3 shows the ambivalence of the representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit people in Rasmussen's *My Travel Diary* (*Min Rejsedagbog*, 1915). My argument proceeds in two main stages, each of which focuses on how the representations of North Greenland's nature and the Inughuit companions of the Danes, Uvdloriaq and Inukitsoq, are linked to constructing the masculinity of heroic polar explorers. The first part examines the practices of constructing the masculinity of polar explorers on the basis of hierarchised and gender-marked binaries, such as safety vs. danger, home vs. away, passivity vs. activity and nature vs. culture. The second part investigates the construction of the masculinity of polar explorers in relation to North Greenland's nature, which is feminised as an effect of practices labelled as "scientific and aesthetic masculinity." My reading of Rasmussen's work proves, however, that it also contains meanings that oppose the colonial masculinist ideology, which results in an ambivalent construction of North Greenland and the Inughuit.

In my concluding Chapter 4, I point out discursive shifts in the image of the North-Greenlandic telluric and cultural Other which took place between 1905 and 1915, i.e. when Rasmussen morphed from a rank-and-file member of an Arctic expedition into one of the major actors, who in the long run contributed to Denmark's sovereignty over the entire territory of Greenland.

5 Terminology

5.1 Cultural and telluric Other

The distinction between the "cultural" and "telluric" Other as related to North Greenland builds on the notions of "cultural Otherness" and "telluric Otherness" proposed by British literary scholar Lesley Wylie. In her PhD dissertation on colonial and postcolonial tropes in the Spanish American genre of *novela de la selva*, Wylie uses the two terms to examine descriptions of the tropical regions of South America and their inhabitants. Following her division, I understand the cultural Other as a general term that designates the Inughuit community and their culture as discursivised in the narratives I examine, whereas the telluric Other as referring to the totality of North Greenland with its animate and inanimate nature. A parallel differentiation between the "cultural" Other and the "biological" Other in conjunction with the representations of the Arctic and its inhabitants in Rasmussen's *Fra Grønland til Stillehavet* is also employed by Norwegian literary scholar Fredrik Chr. Brøgger, who draws on the views and insights of another Norwegian literature researcher, Johan Schimanski.[87]

5.2 Inuit, Inughuit, Eskimos and Greenlanders

To refer to the population inhabiting Greenland, I use traditional Greenlandic names which are based on the identification of a community with the region in which it lives.[88] When I write about the inhabitants of Greenland in general, I employ the commonly accepted term "Greenlanders," which is a direct translation of the Greenlandic word *kalaallit*.[89] I mainly apply it to describe the inhabitants of the part of the island which Denmark started to colonise and gradually subordinate in 1721, that is, the area between Upernavik in the north and Cape Farewell in the south. I refer to the community inhabiting the northern part of the island and usually called "Polar Eskimos" by Europeans[90] as "Inughuit"

87 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, pp. 49, 136; Brøgger, "The Culture of Nature," p. 98.

88 Bjørst, *En anden verden*, p. 8.

89 Bjørst, *En anden verden*, p. 8.

90 Rasmussen never uses the term "Inughuit" in his numerous texts; instead, he consistently abides by "Polar Eskimos", his own coinage. Thisted argues that when writing in Danish, Rasmussen employed the name "Eskimos", yet when writing in Greenlandic, he opted for "kalaallit" or "inuit." Thisted, "Knud Rasmussen", p. 240, footnote 4.

(sing. "Inughuaq").[91] It is their representations in Rasmussen's travel writings that I explore in this book. The term "Inuit" (sing. "Inuk"), meaning "people," is used here in relation to all the communities of the Thule culture, which were formerly labelled "Eskimos," a name that came to be regarded as pejorative in the wake of the anti-imperialist movements of the 1970s.[92] Therefore, in my book the word "Eskimo(s)" appears only in quotations from the texts I analyse.

5.3 North Greenland

By representations of North Greenland, I mean representations of the vast area that stretches north of the line between Upernavik on the west coast of Greenland and the Land of Erik the Red at the island's east coast, a territory whose charting was completed only in the 1930s. This is a huge expanse which was variously defined throughout history[93] and is highly differentiated itself.[94] Approaching North Greenland as a whole, I do not seek to homogenise these differences; rather, I identify a discursive field that embodies a Foucauldian heterotopia, combining a variety of often incongruent discourses.

5.4 The spelling of local names and words in the Greenlandic language

In my historical-literary and theoretical argument, I spell Greenlandic toponyms following modern Greenlandic spelling rules. In analytical passages, I rely on the

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91 "Inughuit" appears as a direct translation of the term "Polar Eskimos" in the latest edition of the Danish-Greenlandic dictionary compiled by Robert Petersen, Professor of Eskimo Studies at the University of Copenhagen (*Ordbogen dansk-grønlandsk*, Nuuk 2003), and in phonetically recorded myths and tales of the inhabitants of North Greenland. Erik Holtved, "The Polar Eskimos: Language and Folklore," *Meddelelser om Grønland*, Vol. 152, No. 2 (1951). Anthropologist Kirsten Hastrup in her 2015 book based on fieldwork in North-West Greenland also states that today's population of the former Thule region "call themselves *inughuit* at present." Kirsten Hastrup, *Thule – på tidens rand* (København: Lindhardt og Ringhof, 2015), p. 8.

92 Bjørst, *En anden verden*, p. 8. At the Inuit Circumpolar Conference held in Barrow, Alaska, in 1977, the term "Inuit" was adopted as the common designation for all peoples which had been called "Eskimos" over the previous centuries. Bjørst, *En anden verden*, p. 8.

93 This is shown by Kirsten Hastrup in her monumental study *Thule – på tidens rand*.

94 This is consistent with Barbara Johnson's insight into a "repression of differences within entities" which are perceived as homogeneous wholes while in fact they differ from themselves. Barbara Johnson, *The Critical Difference: Essays in Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. x–xi.

spelling that Knud Rasmussen used in the first editions of the writings I address. For example, when referring to a North-Greenland island where the participants of the Literary Expedition camped, I write "Agpat," which is consistent with the spelling of the name in the first edition of *Nye Mennesker* of 1905. In quotations from the English editions of reports by polar explorers from Scandinavia, I retain the Greenlandic spelling employed in the original editions, and when providing bracketed Danish and Norwegian vocabulary and expressions, I use their original spelling.

5.5 The primary literature

My Polish book entitled *W sercu Ultima Thule. Reprezentacje Grenlandii Północnej w relacjach z ekspedycji Knuda Rasmussena*, which grew out of the PhD project I completed in 2014 and was published in 2017, was based on my study of Knud Rasmussen's books which appeared in Danish. In this version, I use quotations from English editions of texts by Rasmussen and also by Fridtjof Nansen and Eivind Astrup. Since Rasmussen's *Min Rejsedagbog* (*My Travel Diary*) has not been translated into English yet, quotations from this book and from the chapter "Efter Vildren" in *Nye Mennesker* were translated from Danish by Professor Jørgen Veisland, based on the first editions of the two works.

II Postcolonial Studies

This book is part of a robust field of postcolonial studies defined concisely by British literary critic Nicholas Harrison as "an attention to the history of colonialism/imperialism and its aftermath."[95] According to Polish literary scholar Michał Paweł Markowski postcolonial studies as a discipline focuses "on exploring representations of the world as constructed from the imperial (and thus politically and culturally dominant) point of view."[96] Drawing on the concepts of Michel Foucault,[97] postcolonial scholars rely on the notion of "colonial discourse" or "discourse of colonialism"[98] comprehended as a system of signifying practices. The aim of such practices is to produce and naturalise hierarchical structures of power within the imperial enterprise and to use them to shape colonial and neo-colonial relations.[99] Postcolonial researchers are thus preoccupied with the ways colonisers "interpret" the subjugated areas and people in order to take possession of them, whereby they "subject the individuals to themselves" through the imposition of knowlegde.[100] Referred to as "othering" by Gayatri Spivak,[101] this ideological

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95 Nicholas Harrison, *Postcolonial Criticism. History, Theory and the Work of Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), p. 9.

96 Michał Paweł Markowski, "Postkolonializm," in: Anna Burzyńska and Michał Paweł Markowski, *Teorie literatury XX wieku. Podręcznik* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2006), p. 551.

97 Discursive process or formation is thereby defined as both linguistic and extra-linguistic communication or production of meaning pertaining to a given issue (Stuart Hall, "The Work of Representation," in: *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall [London: Sage Publications, 1997], p. 41), which is a dispersed and latent conglomerate of power – "the violence which we do to things." Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," in: *Untying the Text: A Post-Structural Anthology*, ed. Robert Young (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 67.

98 For theorisations of colonial discourse, see Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (London & New York: Methuen, 1986); Stephen Slemon, "Monuments of Empire: Allegory, Counter-Discourse, Post-Colonial Writing," *Kunapipi*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (1987).

99 Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 2.

100 Michel Foucault, "Sexuality and Power," in: Michel Foucault, *Religion and Culture*, ed. Jeremy R. Carrette (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 126.

101 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives," in: *Europe and Its Others*, Vol. 2, eds. Francis Barker et al. (Colchester: University of

process that forms a system of representation involves the projection of the systemic codes of the imperial "self" onto the "empty" or "unwritten" territory of the Other. Within this system of projection, the Other undergoes an inscription mediated by textualisation networks which perpetuate the reduction of the Other's values and meanings, while the imperial self is accorded an exclusive right to be a natural whole.[102] Consequently, the world crafted by this discursive strategy does not reflect any physical or cultural reality, being instead a product of "European systems of perception, conceptualisation and representation."[103]

By having entrapped the Other by and within European inscriptions, the reality has been constructed or produced anew only to be later presented as axiomatic or "universal."[104] Textuality played a prominent role in the construction of the colonial Other as an outsider that posed a threat to Europeans, by employing an array of written forms that served as "a vehicle of imperial authority."[105] Postcolonial critics unanimously agree that seizing control of an area did not only entail exercising economic power, but that it also involved "imaginative command,"[106]

Essex Press, 1985), p. 132. Johannes Fabian, who introduced the notion of othering to anthropology, defines othering as practices in which the category of the Other is produced by creating divisions and emphasising the distance between the knower and the known. Johannes Fabian, "Presence and Representation: The Other and Anthropological Writing," *Critical Inquiry* 1990, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1990), p. 755.

102 Slemon, "Monuments of Empire," p. 6.

103 Margaret E. Turner, *Imagining Culture. New World Narrative and the Writing of Canada* (Montreal, Kingston, London & Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), p. 8.

104 Diana Brydon and Helen M. Tiffin, *Decolonising Fictions* (Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1993), p. 105. The immense impact that the discursive technique exerts in constructing the New World is also demonstrated by literary critic and theorist Stephen Greenblatt and theoretician of literature, critic and philosopher Tzvetan Todorov, who show, in their different ways, that it was pivotal to the conquest of America. Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999).

105 Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, p. 13.

106 Jacques Derrida labels this process a "symbolic conquest." Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other, or, the Prosthesis of Origins*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 39.

and that imperial relations were sustained largely through textuality, both in institutional and in less formal ways.[107]

Literary fictions and the vast corpus of texts referred to as travel writing were considerably complicit in this process of interpreting the new in the light of the old (i.e. of one's own cultural preconceptions). As British postcolonial critic Peter Hulme argues, "only a narrative can provide proper authority,"[108] and Edward Said concurs, insisting on the role of narrative in disseminating and consolidating imperialism: "The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future – these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative."[109]

The links between textuality and imperialism in relation to travel writing are also highlighted by critics of English literature Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, who denounce travel literature as an imperialist discourse endorsed by dominant cultures (white, male, Euro-American, middle-class), which as a rule happens at the expense of others.[110] British travel literature researcher Dennis Porter observes that even the most patently apolitical travel account bears certain features of political intervention.[111] The Swedish critic of travel literature Arne Melberg observes that what writers of travel accounts do is "mapping," which he understands as practices of cultural geography aimed at producing comprehensive, explanatory narratives about the world and people who inhabit it.[112] Melberg

107 Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson, "The Textuality of Empire," in: *De-Scribing Empire: Post-Colonialism and Textuality*, eds. Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson (London & New York: Routledge), 1994, p. 3.

108 Peter Hulme, "Polytropic Man: Tropes of Sexuality and Mobility in Early Colonial Discourse," in: *Europe and Its Others*, Vol. 2, eds. Francis Barker et al. (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985), p. 23. Hulme understands narrating the world as a meaning-making process which involves "reduction" – not only reduction in terms of content, but also reduction of the chaos with which new worlds were identified.

109 Edward W. Said, *Culture & Imperialism* (London: Vintage Books, 1994), p. xiii.

110 Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. XIII.

111 Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 14.

112 Arne Melberg, *Å reise og skrive. Et essay om moderne reiselitteratur*, trans. T. Haugen (Oslo: Spartacus Forlag, 2005), p. 26. Postcolonial critic and geographer Richard

argues that in its broader sense "mapping" corresponds to what travel writing scholar Mary Louise Pratt calls "imperial gaze", i.e. a mode of subjecting a "foreign" reality through distinctively Western frameworks of perception and description which travellers used to make this reality understandable to their readers back home.[113] Western travel writings can thus be understood as enactments of "imaginative geographies," where representations of people and places not only express the cultural and ideological entanglements of their authors, but are also involved in the conquest of the non-Western world.

1 Colonial Discourse and Representation Analysis

Nicholas Harrison in his comprehensive *Postcolonial Criticism* (2003) describes the postcolonial field as "eclectic," explaining that postcolonial theory cannot be defined in the same (reductive) way as, for example, deconstruction, Marxism, psychoanalysis and feminism, i.e. the theories on which postcolonialism tends to draw.[114] Moreover, as there are several different critical postcolonial theories, rather than a single one, no critic can aspire to represent or speak on behalf of the entire postcolonial field.[115] This multiplicity of varied postcolonial projects implies that there is not one, shared research object and, furthermore, that there is not one, universally upheld theoretical and critical methodology. Colonial discourse analysis, whose concepts and tools I employ in this book, is thus just one among other methods which are used within this critical framework. It has moved to the forefront of postcolonial studies "by establishing the historical context in which a colonial position or condition can make sense" and by emphatically recognising the "pre-eminence of location."[116] With its theoretical context transcending regional boundaries, colonial discourse analysis focuses on issues which are prompted by these very boundaries and, at the same time, articulate specific local problems.

Phillips also believes that literary texts should be viewed as maps which contribute to the shaping of our geographical imaginaries. Richard Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire: A Geography of Adventure* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 45.

113 Melberg, *Å reise og skrive*, p. 27.

114 Harrison, *Postcolonial Criticism,* p. 9. According to Harrison, the discipline of postcolonial studies has no conceptual founding fathers, and its career in academia is bound up chiefly with literary research. Harrison, *Postcolonial Criticism,* p. 9.

115 Stephen Slemon, "Post-Colonial Critical Theories," in: *Postcolonial Discourses: An Anthology*, ed. Gregory Castle (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p. 101.

116 Gregory Castle, "Editor's Introduction: Resistance and Complicity in Postcolonial Studies," in: *Postcolonial Discourses: An Anthology*, ed. Gregory Castle (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p. xiv.

Because colonial discourse claims to be objective, constructing itself as axiomatic and universal, analysis of this discourse aims to expose it cultural embeddedness and the biases that inform its practices. In this context, Diana Brydon and Helen Tiffin talk of the dismantling of colonial authority which has been supported by multifarious systems of imperial control, for example by the written word.[117] A first step to exposing the mechanisms of confining the colonial object within European textuality is to analyse colonial tropes, forms, themes and the ways they function – with one set of cognitive codes being privileged over others – as a mode of cultural control.[118]

In his *Orientalism* (1978), the founding text of colonial discourse analysis, Said argues that although a populated space which Europe refers to as the "Orient" has indeed existed and still does, it was actually fashioned as an imaginary conceptual entity by the European "style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.' "[119] Said calls this "style of thought" "Orientalism" and examines in detail the discursive practices that reduced the Orient to a well-established repertoire of characteristics forged from superficial and simplified information in order, basically, "to raise Europe or a European race to dominion over non-European portions of mankind."[120] Helping Westeners deal with the foreign, non-Western world by constructing it as the ultimate Other in literature and culture, Orientalism, in fact, helped them to exert control over it and maintain their hegemonic power.

Said called for analysing discourse itself, focusing on its "internal consistency" and "its ideas about the Orient," while largely disregarding the reality outside it.[121] Postcolonial critics were supposed to dissect the imperial strategy of textual control of conquered lands and people exerted in particular time and place. This approach involved viewing the colonial situation as produced by colonial discourse and contributing to the production of it. In such explorations, the concept of "representation" serves thus as the major analytical tool. Addressing "representation" as the "production of the meanings of the concepts in our minds through language,"[122] Jamaican-born British cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1932–2014)

117 Brydon and Tiffin, *Decolonising Fictions*, p. 81.
118 Brydon and Tiffin, *Decolonising Fictions*, p. 81.
119 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books), 1979, p. 2.
120 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 232.
121 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 5.
122 Hall, "The Work of Representation," p. 17.

developed a tripartite concept of human world-perception which involves really existing things; concepts we use; and signs referring to our assemblage of mental concepts. Hall labels what enables us to correlate the three components as "systems of representation," which are responsible for the process of meaning production and consist of various ways of organizing and classifying concepts and establishing relations between them, as well as communicating these concepts through a given system of signs. Representation is thus a practice which involves material elements, such as writing or literature, which represent concepts that can function as signs and carry or bestow meanings.[123]

The meanings of things thus do not reside in themselves, but they are rather constructed though representing (signifying) practices, which confer meaning on things.[124] This meaning is never ultimately given but depends on the cultural and historical context, on a specific time and place. Similarly, literature as a system of representation cannot be attributed any conclusive, final meaning and, given its constructionist nature, takes part in "shaping social subjects and historical events"[125].

Said argues that literary representations of the Orient have served colonialism as vital tools for exerting domination and maintaining power over the non-European Other by using effective "vocabulary, imagery, rhetoric, and figures."[126] This means that every study of the Orient is linked to other studies of it.[127] British geographers Trevor Barnes and James Duncan define this phenomenon as intertextuality, that is, a process in which meaning is produced from text to text rather than between a text and the world: new worlds come into being based on old texts only to become old worlds serving to produce new texts.[128] This

123 Hall, "The Work of Representation," pp. 25–26.

124 Hall, "The Work of Representation," p. 24.

125 Hall, "The Work of Representation," pp. 5–6, Stephen Greenblatt emphasises additionally that representations affect the discourse that brought them forth and stresses that they "are not only products but producers." Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions*, p. 6.

126 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 41.

127 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 20.

128 Trevor J. Barnes and James S. Duncan, "Introduction: Writing Worlds," in: *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*, eds. Trevor J. Barnes and James S. Duncan (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 3.

development is discussed in relation to travel literature by Peter Stadius, who studies constructions of the North in European writings. Stadius argues that prior travel literature becomes "a source of conscious or unconscious intertextuality" [Swedish: *en källa för medveten eller omedveten intertextualitet*][129] in works of later writers. As systems of representation, literary texts are works written by individual people whose choice is, to a degree, pre-determined by what Sherrill Grace, the author of *Canada and the Ide of North*, calls "tools, codes, signs"[130] – ready-made and ready-to-be-reused elements, rhetorical devices designed to produce meanings and persuade readers. In colonial literary texts, they are important components of representations which impose European cognitive codes on the Other, through which the Other is "read" on the basis of a pre-existing matrix of understandings and, consequently, subjected to colonial appropriation.[131]

Postcolonial critics take different positions on how these fixed, recurrent literary elements instrumental in coding the ideology of imperial discourse should be named.[132] Drawing on the approaches of scholars such as Mary Louise Pratt, Peter Hulme and Lesley Wylie,[133] in this book I employ the term "colonial tropes,"

129 Peter Stadius, "Reseberättelsen som kulturhistoriskt forskningsobjekt," *Historisk Tidsskrift för Finland*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (2002), p. 312.

130 Sherill E. Grace. *Canada and the Idea of North* (Montreal, Kingston, London & Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), p. 24.

131 Slemon, "Monuments of Empire," pp. 5, 9. Peter Hulme also discusses tropes in a similar vein in the context of recurring anxiety which is triggered by the inconsistencies of colonial discourse. It is colonial tropes that this discourse falls back on to cope with this anxiety. Hulme, "Polytropic Man," p. 25.

132 Marta Dvořák and W. H. New, "Introduction: Troping the Territory," in: *Tropes and Territories: Short Fiction, Postcolonial Readings, Canadian Writing in Context*, eds. Marta Dvořák and W. H. New (Montreal, Kingston, London & Ithaca: McGill-Queens University, 2007), p. 4; Christine Lorre, "The Tropes and Territory of Childhood in 'The Lagoon and Other Stories' by Janet Frame," in: *Tropes and Territories: Short Fiction, Postcolonial Readings, Canadian Writing in Context*, eds. Marta Dvořák and W. H. New (Montreal, Kingston, London & Ithaca: McGill-Queens University, 2007), p. 249.

133 Hulme, "Polytropic Man"; Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*. As an example of another terminology for these rhetorical devices, Anna Cichoń in her postcolonial reading of Henryk Sienkiewicz's *In Desert and Wilderness* (*W pustyni i w puszczy*, 1911) analyses what the scholars listed above call "tropes" as the colonial "codes and conventions" of the novel. Anna Cichoń, "W kręgu zagadnień literatury kolonialnej – *W pustyni i w puszczy* Henryka Sienkiewicza," *Er(r)go*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (2004) p. 93.

defined as "repertoires of devices and conventions"[134] of colonial travel writing, and focus on their role in exerting discursive power over literary texts.[135]

2 The Split Subject and Ambivalence

Said has invited ample criticism for, among others, overlooking fissures, and that which is forcefully excluded from the text of colonial discourse.[136] This issue is addressed by Indian postcolonial theoretician and critic Homi K. Bhabha (born in 1949), whose theories of the split subject and the ambivalence of colonial articulation I also use in this book.

In his essay "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," Bhabha quotes Said's distinction between latent Orientalism, which is "an unconscious positivity," and manifest Orientalism, which is "the stated knowledges and views about the Orient."[137] Bhabha develops this theory by examining the changeability and ambivalence of Orientalist discourse and attending to cracks in articulations of colonial power. By claiming that colonial discourse is ambivalent *in and by itself*, he means not only that at any moment of colonial articulation there must be a resistance to power, but also that there always must be an agency of colonial resistance, not because the colonised display an intention of oppositional action, but because colonial representations are always overdetermined and ambivalent.[138]

This crack within the unilateral working of colonial discourse and the ambivalence which results from it entail – inevitably, according to Bhabha – a split within the subject. Bhabha insists that it is impossible to pinpoint the source of

134 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes,* p. 11.

135 Hulme, "Polytropic Man," p. 28, footnote 14.

136 Benita Parry. "Overlapping Territories and Intertwined Histories: Edward Said's Postcolonial Cosmopolitanism," in: *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, ed. Michael Sprinker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London & New York: Routledge, 1990). For critical views of Bhabha's theory, see e.g.: J. M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1988); Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992).

137 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 71.

138 Stephen Slemon, "The Scramble for Post-Colonialism," in: *De-Scribing Empire: Post-Colonialism and Textuality*, eds. Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson (London & New York: Routledge), 1994, pp. 23–24.

both the coloniser and the colonised "within a tradition of representation that conceives of identity as the satisfaction of a totalizing, plentitudinous object of vision,"[139] and for this reason, the construction of subjectivity within colonial relations must always recur "as a persisting questioning of the frame, the space of representation."[140] This space of interrogation, which Bhabha calls "the space of the adversarial,"[141] is grounded in a fundamental difference which disrupts or topples dominant representations. The difference surfaces even in the most conventional colonial texts, without ever being "entirely on the outside or implacably oppositional."[142] As Stephen Slemon observes in his interpretation of Bhabhas theory, it is in this antagonistic space that the colonised become "agents of resistance and change."[143]

Bhabha's theories have provoked criticism from other postcolonial theorists. One reason for this criticism is their refusal to locate the Other's resistance within the contradictions of the colonial text, which purportedly obfuscates proper anti-colonial actions.[144] Another important objection is Bhabha's disregard for any specific colonial conditions.[145] According to Abdul R. JanMohamed, Bhabha promotes a misguided belief that the native in a way possesses colonial power and, consequently, that colonial discourse is a discourse of both the coloniser and the colonised.[146]

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139 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 46.

140 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 46.

141 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 109.

142 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 109. Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, p. 21.

143 Slemon, "The Scramble for Post-Colonialism," p. 24.

144 Tiffin and Lawson, "The Textuality of Empire," p. 8. A similar critique was levelled at Bhabha by Ania Loomba; see Ania Loomba, "Overworlding the 'Third World'," *Oxford Literary Review*, No. 13 (1991), p. 180. Stephen Slemon also observes that according to Bhabha the discourse of the Empire overshadows practices unfolding within wide-raging postcolonial literary production. Slemon, "Monuments of Empire," pp. 13–14.

145 Benita Parry, "Signs of Our Times: Discussion of Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*," *Third Text*, No. 28/29 (1994), pp. 5–24.

146 Abdul R. JanMohamed, "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature," *Critical Inquiry*, ed. Louis Henry Gates Jr., Vol. 12, No. 1 (1985), p. 79. JanMohamed contends that Bhabha's strategy serves the same ideological function as humanistic explorations of old, i.e. it suppresses the history of colonialism. Another point of JanMohamed's criticism of Bhabha is that discourse, on which Bhabha focuses, seems to linger as if in a vacuum.

Despite such critiques, Bhabha's theoretical thought has fostered a growingly common view among postcolonial researchers that clear connections between literature on the one hand and imperialism and colonialism on the other are by no means a testimony to the absolute authority of colonial writing.[147] Namely, colonial texts are never exclusively "imperialist" or, for that matter, "anti-imperialist"; rather, they are always to some extent hybrid and ambivalent as a result of the encounter of the coloniser and the colonised.[148] Therefore, postcolonial re-readings of colonial literary texts are supposed not only to demonstrate the writers' links to imperialism, but also to identify the "counter-colonial properties"[149] of these texts through what has come to be called "motivated acts of reading."[150]

3 Colonialism and the Discourse of Polar Expeditions: Polar Literature as a Product of Their Liaisons

In the 19th century, the Arctic areas of Greenland attracted the attention of several world powers, in particular the US and the UK, for whom the exploration of remote and trackless Arctic territories – the last "uncharted parts" of the Western world – was a matter of re-asserting their prestige and position in the international power structure.[151] The enhanced interest in successive expeditions and their profound discursivisation fostered a dynamic, coherent discourse on the exploration of polar zones.[152] The fact that the Scandinavian countries joined the rivalry for the last "undiscovered" areas in the second half of the 19th century was associated with the rise of nationalism in these countries, which was expressed in what Swedish scholar Inger Nilsson calls "small state imperialism" [Swedish: *småstatsimperialism*].[153] Small state imperialism manifested itself in an

147 Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, p. 4.

148 Hans Hauge, "Introduktion," in: *Postkolonialisme*, ed. Hans Hauge (Århus: Århus Universitetsforlag, 2007), p. 23.

149 John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 158. A similar stance is advocated by Leela Gandhi, who calls on postcolonial critics to show the ambivalence of the Oriental stereotype and to refuse "the pleasures of an Occidental stereotype." Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 79.

150 Tiffin and Lawson, "The Textuality of Empire," p. 10.

151 Loomis, "The Arctic Sublime," p. 95.

152 Bjørst, *En anden verden*, 17–18.

153 Inger Nilsson, "Grönlandsfrågan 1929–1933: en studie i småstatsimperialism," *Umeå Studies in the Humanities*, No. 17 (1978). Admittedly, though, none of the Scandinavian

increased preoccupation with the Far North, its scientific conquest and, importantly, territorial expansion.[154] As in Said's Orientalism, science and conquest went hand in hand.[155]

Kirsten Hastrup observes that the self-reflectivity of polar explorers and their motivations to act were associated with nationalism, patriotism and national pride.[156] Polar research boosted scientific careers and, at the same time, made participants of the expeditions into national heroes, if they only managed to make it back home.[157] Scandinavian polar explorers took part in the international race for new political, geographical and scientific feats, and their achievements were not only relevant to their own careers and hero status, but also had political implications and an immense impact on their national cultures.[158] While Swedish and Norwegian polar explorers were committed first and foremost to exploring uninhabited areas of Greenland (the first crossing of the icesheet over the island's interior, attempts at explaining the circulation of sea currents around Greenland, efforts to reach the North Pole), Denmark – which was the last Scandinavian country to join the race for glory and prestige – dispatched scientific expeditions to the yet-unexamined areas of Greenland in order to study their indigenous

countries, their capacities severely limited as they were, aspired to an imperial status comparable with the British Empire. Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, p. 140.

154 Emphatically, Scandinavian explorations of the polar zones varied profoundly between various states in terms of the time-frame of their respective concerted efforts, the territories on which the exploration focused and the nature of their pursuits. Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 129.

155 Norwegian scholar Urban Wråkberg, who studies the social, political and scientific aspects of the Arctic, observes that the vast majority of scientific polar explorations commenced in the 19th century explicitly aimed to facilitate taking possession of the area under exploration. Urban Wråkberg, "Polarområdenes gåter," in: *Norsk polarhistorie. I Ekspedisjonene*, eds. Einar-Arne Drivenes and Harald Dag Jølle (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2004), p. 22.

156 Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, p. 139.

157 Wråkberg, "Polarområdenes gåter," p. 22. According to Wråkberg, this hero status was connected to an interest in descriptions of and information about polar expeditions which arose in the 19th century. Wråkberg, "Polarområdenes gåter," p. 22.

158 Silje Solheim Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand: Fridtjof Nansens Fram-ekspedisjon (1893–1896) – og bøker i dens kjølvann*, a PhD dissertation completed at the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciencies and Education, Department of Language and Culture (Tromsø: University of Tromsø , 2011), http://munin.uit.no/bitstream/handle/10037/3796/thesis.pdf?sequence=3 (Accessed 15 Sept. 2011), p. 11.

populations as well.[159] A separate scientific discipline referred to as polar studies evolved and received institutional validation in 1878, when the Committee for the Management of Scientific Research in Greenland [Danish: *Kommissionen for Ledelse af Videnskabelige Undersøgelser i Grønland*] was founded.[160] Operating until 1931, the Committee was the force behind sending fifty early scientific expeditions to Greenland.[161] The knowledge produced by the discourse of polar studies was legitmised by the discipline's alliance with colonial state institutions, which also supported the expeditions with funding. Consequently, polar studies became an extraordinarily important scientific field in Denmark and a source of international prestige as one of the few branches in which Danish researchers had a decisive edge over other scholars internationally.[162] As with natural history described by Pratt, polar studies produced a discourse of expeditions and themselves became their product, so to speak.[163]

Voyages into the Arctic regions turned into a literary vogue, fashioning what came to be called "polar literature," which had a wide readership in American and British metropolises and, in the second half of the 19th century, in Scandinavian countries as well.[164] Among the polar genres, accounts from

159 Beau Riffenburgh views the rise of polar studies as bound up with Scandinavia, specifically with Sweden, and at first strictly scientific expeditions, such as the expedition to Sptisbergen undertaken by Swede Otto Martin Torell (1828–1900) in 1861, and with the pursuits of Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld, who contributed to the commercialisation of polar explorations. Beau Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensationalism and Geographical Discovery* (London & New York: Belhaven Press, 1993), p. 37.

160 Hastrup states that one reason why the Committee was founded was that a heated debate broke out in the Danish scholarly community after Nordenskiöld had found meteoritic iron in the island of Disko in 1870. The national rhetoric was marshalled to insist that as Greenland belonged to the Danish Crown, its exploration could not be left to chance and the will of "foreign researchers." Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, p. 246.

161 Bjørst, *En anden verden*, p. 18.

162 Bjørst, *En anden verden*, pp. 24–25.

163 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 57.

164 "Polar literature" is a term used by literary scholar Nils Magne Knutsen to refer to a broad and heterogeneous body of texts, including besides Arctic expedition accounts writings such as biographies, memoirs and literary fictions about the Arctic. Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand,* p. 25. In 2017, an anthology edited by Norwegian literature researcher Henning Howlid Wærp was published, which featured the term "Arctic literature." Henning Howlid Wærp, *Arktisk litteratur: fra Fridtjof Nansen til Anne B. Ragde* (Oslo: Orkana Forlag, 2017).

expeditions described as journeys of discovery and science enjoyed particular popularity.[165] Wherever their writers came from, a common feature of such texts was that they tended to inscribe themselves in their respective contemporaneous national discourses and to frame their authors as fulfilling a special mission in the Arctic peripheries for the sake of the worldwide progress of Western knowledge. In this respect, the role of the Royal Geographical Society as "the greatest promoter of travel and exploration" must be mentioned. In spite of its president's, Sir Clements Markham's official pronouncements that exploration should preserve the model of "disinterested science plus brave endeavor," in reality it was most eager to promote the heroism of the explorers who triumphed against an extremely harsh and threatening nature[166]. As a result, the expedition accounts produced well into 20th century retained their anachronistic character in spite of the new tendencies in Western travel writing that followed and reflected the developments on the international arena[167].

American historian Beau Riffenburgh points, however, to a distinctive way in which the Arctic and expeditions were discursivised by the Scandinavian polar explorers and highlights their different understanding of their environment, respect for human life and freedom from constraints of nationalist supremacy.[168] These features add up to what can be called a specifically Nordic matrix for representing the Arctic and its inhabitants. In this book, three narratives of such journeys are particularly relevant as important points of reference in examining Rasmussen's representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit. These depictions include, chronologically, an account of the Umiaq Expedition to Ammassalik on the east coast authored by Danes Gustav Holm and Thomas Vilhelm Garde, entitled *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition til Grønlands Østkyst. Populært beskreven* (1887, *The Danish Umiaq Expedition to the East Coast of Greenland. A popular description*); Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen's

165 Beau Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 2. Expedition accounts, which were written for a broad readership, contributed considerably to elevating polar explorers into heroes. Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand,* p. 69; Wråkberg, "Polarområdenes gåter," p. 23.

166 Roy Bridges, "Exploration and Travel outside Europe (1720–1914)," in: *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, eds. Peter Hulme and Tom Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 60–61.

167 Brigdes, "Exploration and Travel outside Europe," pp. 66–67.

168 According to Riffenburgh, this showed in the Scandinavians' eagerness to acquire Inuit knowledge and skills for survival in the Arctic. Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, pp. 114, 142–143.

report from the first successful crossing of Greenland's icesheet, entitled *Paa ski over Grønland. En skildring af den norske Grønlandsekspedition 1888–1889* (1890, the first English edition: *The First Crossing of Greenland*, 1890); and Norwegian Eivind Astrup's account of the expedition under the command of Robert Peary and his stay among the Inughuit in the area of Smith Sound, entitled *Blandt nordpolens naboer* (1895, English edition: *With Peary near the Pole*, 1898). To keep my argument lucid, I address Rasmussen's intertextual references to these works in footnotes.

Although each of the three texts is anchored in another national context,[169] they were all authored by Scandinavian writers, and they all revolved around pioneering expeditions into as-yet unexplored areas of Greenland (East Greenland, the icesheet, North Greenland) which were launched in the last decades of the 19th century[170]. As popular editions based on original travel diaries rather than official expedition reports, all three texts exemplify a hybrid genre which interweaves depictions of the journey, elements of a scientific report, a mapping narrative, hunting tales and ethnographic data about the indigenous population encountered along the way. When published, these works won immense popularity, which was largely linked to their affinity with fiction.[171] Rasmussen's direct predecessors, their authors established a particular model of the discursivisation of the Greenlandic Other at the end of the 19th century. According to the principles of so-called "salvage anthropology,"[172] Greenlanders from the east coast

169 Accounts of Norwegian polar expeditions were distinctively associated with national discourse, which thrived with particular robustness at the turn of the 19th century, when Norway became an independent nation. Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand*, p. 11.

170 Whereas Astrup died shortly after the English edition of his account was published, Rasmussen, for most of his life, remained in close contact with both Nansen and commander Holm: he met with them on many occasions, exchanged letters, asked for their advice or for letters of recommendation. They were all part of the great circle of Scandinavian polar explorers vividly described by Hastrup in her comprehensive work *Vinterens hjerte*. Michelsen, *Vejen til Thule*, p. 218; Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, pp. 41–53; 184–200.

171 As observed by Riffenburgh, writing skills were a highly relevant factor in promoting polar explorers' fame. Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 164.

172 "Salvage travel writing" denotes a tendency which was particularly common among ethnographers towards depicting non-European peoples as subjects who will soon disappear from the globe and therefore need to be preserved for posterity. Helen Carr, "Modernism and Travel (1880–1940)," in: *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, eds. Peter Hulme and Tom Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 82.

and the Inughuit from North-West Greenland, who lived outside the European system, were perpetuated as "noble savages" and a true "nature people" – symbiotically attached to nature, unparalleled in their knowledge of Arctic conditions and perfectly adjusted to living in the polar zones. At the same time, the uninhabited icesheet and North-East Greenland came to be represented as a predominantly delightful and compelling unique site of male adventure. This image stood in stark contrast to the earlier representations of the area as a terrifyingly perilous environment.

Since the authors of these expedition accounts hailed from countries which cultivated expansionist aspirations[173] and their ventures in Greenland were associated with the rivalry of Western countries in and for the exploration of the Arctic, which spiralled in the late 19th century, I believe that their texts should be regarded as a species of colonial or colonialist literature, as discussed by postcolonial scholar Elleke Boehmer.[174] The Scandinavian reports also sought to legitimise Western presence in the areas under exploration and their subordination to the Western system of knowledge, which was sometimes followed by physical territorial expansion, as was the case with East and North Greenland. As a variety of colonial travel literature, the writings about polar expeditions are, to use Arne Melberg's expression, an "ecumenical" genre[175] which mediates between facts and fiction, and autobiography and ethnography as well as interlacing various discourses, literary categories and social codes.[176] Given the

173 This is argued by Inger Nilsson in his study of small state imperialism. Nilsson, "Grönlandsfrågan."

174 According to Elleke Boehmer, colonial literature can generally be described as writing "reflecting a colonial ethos," and more specifically as "writing concerned with colonial perceptions and experience, written mainly by metropolitans, but also by creoles and indigenes, during colonial times." Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, p. 2. With such a generalised and generalising definition, all literary production generated across the Danish state throughout the colonial period can be classified as colonial literature since it spread imperialism as the regular order of things. "Colonialist literature" is described by Boehmer as writing particularly involved in colonial expansion, "written by and for colonizing Europeans about non-European lands dominated by them. […] informed by theories concerning the superiority of European culture and the rightness of empire." Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, p. 3.

175 Melberg, *Å reise og skrive,* p. 12.

176 Holland and Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters*, p. XI; Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, "Introduction," in: *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, eds. Peter Hulme and Tom Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 6.

complicated meaning-making processes resulting from the discursivisation of the Other which I presupposed, polar expedition literature should at the same time be comprehended as an "interference," despite its obvious connections to imperialism. What I mean is, as Holland and Huggan observe, that such literature nurtured expansionist aspirations on the one hand and challenged commonly upheld preconceptions about the Other on the other.[177]

That I refer to *The New People* and *My Travel Diary* as colonial literature results from my belief that relationships between Denmark and Greenland can be examined within the framework of postcolonial critical theory, at the same time asserting the distinctiveness of the history of the Arctic regions. Since every colonial and postcolonial conjuncture, as emphasised for example by Diana Byrdon and Helen Tiffin, is different,[178] some critics decry the practice of explaining local conditions by means of imported theoretical models.[179] For this reason, specific geographical, social and historical factors must be taken into account in every case.[180] Danish postcolonial scholars who study the complex Danish-Greenlandic relationships in literature, notably Karen Langgård and Kirsten Thisted, argue that, if applied self-critically, postcolonial theories do not have to "absorb" local traditions. Rather, such theories can contribute to augmenting these traditions with a new dimension. As this idea is one of the cornerstones of my book, I analyse the representations of North Greenland by drawing on the canonical theoretical texts of postcolonial studies (Homi Bhabha, Edward W. Said and Johannes Fabian) and critical studies, in particular on analyses of colonial travel literature (Mary Louise Pratt, Syed Manzurul Islam, Peter Hulme, Lesley Wylie and Richard Phillips), but I also rely on the

177 Holland and Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters*, p. IX.

178 Brydon and Tiffin, *Decolonising Fictions*, p. 12. For example, Karen Langgård stresses that the colonial and postcolonial situation of Geenlanders differed from that of the inhabitants of other colonies as there was no colonial or colonialist literature that depicted the former as an embodiment of evil; neither did European settlers write literature about Greenland inspired by their sense of displacement. Karen Langgård, "An Examination of Greenlandic Awareness of Ethnicity and National Self-Consciousness through Texts Produced by Greenlanders 1860s–1920s," *Etudes Inuit Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1998), p. 99.

179 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 5.

180 Castle, "Editor's Introduction," p. xiv. Greenblatt also emphasises that European practices of representation vary, despite their copious common features, and points to discrepancies between respective nations, religions, social classes and professions. Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions*, p. 8.

contributions which attend specifically to polar expedition accounts with their distinctive features (Kirsten Thisted, Silje Gaupseth, Silje Solheim Karlsen, Johan Schimanski, Ulrike Spring, Fredrik Chr. Brøgger, Hanna-Mari Ikonen and Samu Pehkonen).

My analyses below are powerfully informed by Brian Porter's observation that travel writings markedly embody "the fundamental ambiguity of representation."[181] This ambiguity results from the fact that every representation, which is a construct in itself, inevitably contains a subject position which is neither stable nor ultimately given.[182] This means that, as Bhabha insists, the subject is always split and it is impossible to trace back the subject's source (just as it is impossible to find "an origin for the Other").[183] Therefore, the subject that speaks about reality is not just Said's Orientalist, who is positioned "outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact" and as a "self-authorised 'authority'" that represents the Other.[184] Rather, as Pratt insists, as the traveller interacts with the local travelees, his/her travel narrative grows polyphonic, a quality Pratt calls "heteroglossia," including the presence of the Other as well.[185]

These discordant positions vis-à-vis the Other are expressed in two modes of travelling and their related strategies of representations, which are investigated by literary researcher Syed Manzurul Islam. One of the modes involves demarcating a rigid boundary between the (European) subject and the (non-European) Other, which immobilises the former in the space it occupies. The other mode entails a genuine interaction with the Other, which affords the subject mobility and promotes either going beyond or completely eliminating the prior boundary. Islam calls these two models of travelling, respectively, sedentary travel and nomadic travel[186] and associates them, accordingly, with imperialist ideology and with transcending it. In this book, I argue that it is possible for one subject to practice both these modes of travelling and to take the different positions they entail. This translates into the ambivalent construction of North Greenland in Rasmussen's writings.

Emphasising the constructionist nature of literary representations, my argument focuses on what Swedish literary scholar Peter Stadius calls "travel

181 Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, p. 14.
182 Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, p. 13, footnote 17; Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 88.
183 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 46.
184 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 21; Barnes and Duncan, "Introduction: Writing Worlds," p. 9.
185 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp. 135–136.
186 Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. vii.

depiction" [Swedish: *skildring av en resa*],[187] that is, on the *texts* of Rasmussen's accounts, on their exteriority in relation to the objects they depict,[188] whereby I do not attempt to assess the fictionality or referentiality of his works. This also concerns the autobiographical "I," which I construe to be not Knud Rasmussen himself but his self-staging persona,[189] a kind of metonymic extension, which reverberates with Carl Thompson's insight that travel literature is not only "a form of writing about the self" but also "a writing *of* the self."[190] The writer's "self" is thus viewed as delimited by textuality and constructed through certain language discourses, while its existence hinges upon the system of representation in which it develops and through which it expresses itself.[191] The system also includes the fashioning of the narrator, which is one of the most important strategies expedition accounts contrive to win popularity with the readership.[192]

The approach outlined above dovetails with the method of reading literature as a *process* which Bhabha postulates:

> The "true" is always marked and informed by the ambivalence of the process of emergence itself, the productivity of meanings that construct counter-knowledges *in medias res*, in the very act of agonism, within the terms of a negotiation (rather than a negation) of oppositional and antagonistic elements.[193]

187 Stadius, *Reseberättelsen*, p. 293.

188 Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 20–21.

189 The author's self-staging is discussed by Swedish literary scholar Arne Melberg, who explains that the literary "self" can be constructed in a variety of ways, which fosters the fictionalisation of both the subject and the reality the subject presents. In her study of autobiographical literature, with which travel writing is affiliated, Leigh Gilmore states that at the centre of travel texts lies the only ostensibly " 'unifying' I," which is in fact intrinsically split by its locatedness in different discourses. Arne Melberg, *Selvskrevet: Om selvframstilling i litteraturen* (Oslo: Spartacus, 2007), pp. 9–12; Leigh Gilmore, *Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory and Women's Self-Representation* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 45.

190 Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London & New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 109.

191 Gilmore, *Autobiographics,* p. 84. This approach does not mean that referentiality and fictionality are dichotomous and mutually exclusive; in fact, they affect each other. Gilmore, *Autobiographics,* p. 84.

192 Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand,* p. 38. In her PhD dissertation, Karlsen explores in detail the fictionality of travel writing and "self-writing" practised by travel writers. See Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand,* pp. 27–38, 41–44.

193 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 22.

The English researcher of postcolonial literature David Huddart argues that the critical reading proposed by Bhabha is as ambivalent as colonial discourse, which is the primary object of study of the postcolonial author.[194] The position of a critic (also of a literary critic) always and inevitably involves being *in medias res*; consequently a critic must be prepared to work on a project without any ultimate guarantees, certainty or the sense that his/her object is fixed, which Huddart labels as "a lack of finality."[195] Given this, my reading of *The New People* and *My Travel Diary* lays no claim to discovering the complete meaning of the two works, since such a project would be a sheer impossibility. My aim in this book is different: I seek to demonstrate that the representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit in these texts are multifaceted and counterpoised despite but also *by virtue of* their entanglement in the Danish colonial project in the Arctic.

194 David Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 18.
195 Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha*, p. 19.

There are those who say that a native will not speak to a white man. Error. No man will speak to his master; but to a wanderer and a friend, to him who does not come to teach or to rule, to him who asks for nothing and accepts all things, words are spoken by the camp-fires, in the shared solitude of the sea, in riverside villages, in resting-places surrounded by forests – words are spoken that take no account of race or colour. One heart speaks – another one listens; and the earth, the sea, the sky, the passing wind and the stirring leaf, hear also the futile tale of the burden of life. (Joseph Conrad, "Karain: a Memory")[196]

They travelled and travelled
in a country where they thought
that no human beings could settle and live.

They travelled and travelled
and when they arrived they found people
who did not know anything else
about human beings than themselves.

They travelled and travelled
and the hospitality was big
the curiosity without limits
but the guests could not be satisfied.

They travelled and travelled
and everywhere they came
people were examined
their clothes, sledges, and equipments were brought up.

Aqqaluk Lynge (1982)[197]

196 Joseph Conrad, "Karain: a Memory," in: Joseph Conrad, *Tales of Unrest* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1898), p. 40.

197 Inge Kleivan, "Poetry, Politics, and Archeology in Greenland," in: *Fifty Years of Arctic Research Anthropological Studies from Greenland to Siberia*, Vol. 18, eds. Rolf Gilberg and Hans Christian Gulløv (Copenhagen: Department of Ethnography, The National Museum of Denmark, 1997), p. 187.

III Encounters with the Cultural Other in the Land of the New People

1 The Literary Expedition to Greenland, 1902–1904

The New People is an account of the Literary Expedition to Greenland, which took place between 1902 and 1904. Among the travellers were the leader of the venture, writer and *Politiken* journalist Ludvig Mylius-Erichsen (1872–1907), lieutenant Harald Count Moltke (1871–1960) (draughtsman and painter), physician Alfred Berthelsen (1877–1950), Greenlandic catechist and translator Jørgen Brønlund (1877–1907) and twenty-two-year-old Knud Rasmussen, whose responsibilities involved putting down the tales told by the Inughuit. The expedition set off on 1st June 1902, when the travellers went by sea from Godthåb [Greenlandic: *Nuuk*] to Jakobshavn [Greenlandic: *Ilulissat*], stayed there till January 1903 and then moved on by dogsleds to Upernavik. On 27th March 1903, they departed from Tasiusaq, the northernmost settlement in Greenland's colonised part, and crossed Melville Bay for the first time in centuries, reaching Cape York. Their chief aim was to conduct observations among the indigenous Inughuit population which lived in the region in isolation from Danish Greenland and had been spotted earlier by whalers and prior polar expeditions.[198] Their original plan was to spend five-to-six weeks among the Inughuit, return to Nuuk over the ice and, finally, sail to Frederikshåb [Greenlandic: *Paamiut*] and Julianehåb [Greenlandic: *Qaqortoq*]. While things did run according to plan in terms of the topographic design, the time-frame of the journey was considerably extended because Moltke fell seriously ill. The explorers had to spend the winter in Agpat/Saunders Island, whence they set out on the return journey in late January 1904. Moltke got back to Copenhagen in mid-1904, while Mylius-Erichsen and Rasmussen remained in South Greenland, travelled as far as Lindenow Fjord on the east coast and returned to Copenhagen on 7th November 1904.[199]

198 See Hans Hendrik, *Memoirs of Hans Hendrik the Arctic Traveller Serving under Kane, Hayes, Hall and Nares 1853–1876 Written by Himself*, trans. Hinrich Johannes Rink (London: Trübner & Co., 1878); Robert Edwin Peary, *Northward over the Great Ice* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1898); Frederiksen, *Kongen af Thule*, p. 57.

199 For historical details about the Literary Expedition, see Wentzel, *Thule i hjertet*; Frederiksen, *Kongen af Thule*; Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*; and Barfoed, *Manden bag helten.*

The New People was Rasmussen's literary debut. Admittedly, he had written *Lapland* earlier (1901), but the book was published only six years later. Dedicated to "Mother and Father," *The New People* is a revised and enriched version of the original diary in which Rasmussen recorded the Literary Expedition.[200] *The New People* is thus a type of expedition account which Karlsen calls "a second-position report" [Norwegian: *annenposisjonsberetning*], in which the author is subordinate to his commander. Usually this entailed a delayed publication, which was actually not the case with *The New People* as Rasmussen's book was released one year before Ludvig Mylius-Erichsen and Harald Moltke's *Grønland* (1906), as the first literary narrative of the Literary Expedition.[201] According to Knud Michelsen, the account was originally entitled *The Last Heathens in Greenland* (*De sidste Hedninger i Grønland*), but Rasmussen changed it into *The New People* after his encounter with the Norwegian explorer Otto Sverdrup, who in 1903 published the expedition account *Nyt land: fire aar i arktiske egne* (English edition: *New Land: Four Years in the Arctic Regions*, 1904).[202] The likewise entitled actual account of the journey (*Nye Mennesker*) takes up the first, one-hundred-page-long part of the book, which is followed by two other parts: "Primitive Views of Life" (*Primitive Livsanskuelser*) and "Fables and Legends" (*Fabler og Sagn*), which contain Greenland's verbal folklore (myths, fables, legends, tales, songs, depictions of customs, etc.), collected and translated into Danish by Rasmussen. In this book, I focus primarily on the narrative of the journey in the first part of Rasmussen's work, which unlike its further ethnographic sections is narratively, thematically and generically

200 Rasmussen's original expedition diaries are kept at the Danish Royal Library and can be accessed online at http://www.kb.dk/da/nb/materialer/haandskrifter/HA/e-mss/knud_rasmussen/index.html/#2 (Accessed 27 Mar. 2014).

201 Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand*, p. 16. Hastrup observes that during that first expedition in which Rasmussen was a member rather than a leader, he did not refer to his work as "scientific." It was only in the First Thule Expedition account that he expressly placed his labours "in the service of science." Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte, p. 249;* Knud Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog. Skildringer fra den Første Thule-ekspedition* (København & Kristiania: Gyldendalske Boghandel Nordisk Forlag, 1915), p. 61.

202 Michelsen, *Vejen til Thule*, pp. 66, 76. For a comprehensive analysis of Sverdrup's account's literary qualities, see Henning Howlid Wærp, "Hva gjør en ekspedisjonsrapport verdt å lese? Om Otto Sverdrups Nyt land. Fire aar i arktiske egne," in: *Reiser og ekspedisjoner i det litterære Arktis*, eds. Johan Schimanski et al. (Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk Forlag, 2011), pp. 93–110.

diversified and yet offers a coherent story about cultural encounters with the Inughuit. The narrative does not cover either preparations for the expedition nor its stages from Copenhagen to Godthåb, Jakobshavn and Upernavik. Similarly, it does not mention the journey back home. The plot starts with their arrival at an Inughuit settlement on the island Agpat after crossing Melville Bay and ends with the narrator's farewell to an old Inughuit woman called The Sinew. The major axis of the narrative is provided by the traveller-protagonist's interactions with various members of the Inughuit community and by various aspects of their daily life, beliefs, customs and tales, which are predominantly quoted as being spoken by them. The story revolves around the actions and reflections of the narrator and his indigenous interlocutors, while the other Danish expedition members are scarcely mentioned in the text. The account is chronologically and thematically structured by the titles of the successive subchapters: "First Meeting with the Polar Eskimos" (*Første Møde med Polareskimoer*), "The Magician's Last Great Inspiration" (*En Aandemaners sidste store Inspiration*), "A Tribal Migration" (*En Folkevandring*), "The Old Bear-Hunter" (*Den gamle Bjørnejæger*), "The Orphan" (*Forældreløs*), "Women" (*Kvinder*), "A Summer Journey" (*En Sommerrejse*), "The Dark Draws Near" (*Mørket nærmer sig*), "Hunting for Reindeer" (*Efter Vildren*) and "Weatherbound" (*Vejrfast*). This is followed by the section devoted to Inughuit beliefs and old fables.

Generically speaking, *The New People* is a first-person travel narrative, which rarely morphs into a personal diary. Published by Gyldendal in 1905, the book sported a graphic design which resembled fictional literature, as each chapter was preceded by Moltke's artfully crafted plates and the volume contained no maps, photos or drawings of the route, which typically featured in such accounts.[203] In his diary from the Literary Expedition, Rasmussen stated that he wanted to avoid producing a "travel description" as Mylius-Erichsen, the leader of the expedition, had taken the task upon himself.[204] As a result, Rasmussen came up with a literary hybrid which defies any simple definition and vastly differs from his later writings, though it shares with them the theme of a journey into the unknown and the encounter of the European subject with the non-European Other.

203 For the first edition of the account, see Knud Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, Gyldendalske Boghandel Nordisk Forlag, København og Kristiania 1905.

204 Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, p. 240.

2 The Subject's Preconceptions about North Greenland and the Inughuit

> When I was a child I used often to hear an old Greenlandic woman tell how, far away North, at the end of the world, there lived a people who dressed in bearskins and ate raw flesh.
>
> Their country was always shut in by ice, and the daylight never reached over the tops of the high fjelds.
>
> Whoever wished to go there, must travel with the South wind, right up to the Lord of the wild northern gales.
>
> Even before I knew what travelling meant, I determined that one day I would go and find these people, whom my fancy pictured different from all others. I must go and see "The New People," as the old story-teller called them.
>
> While I was growing up in Denmark, the thought of them was always with me, and the first decision I came to as a man was that I would go to look for them. My opportunity arrived, and as a member of the "Danish Literary Expedition to Greenland," I passed the winter of 1903–1904 among these Polar Eskimos, the most northerly dwelling people in the world.
>
> And it is from this sojourn, remote from all civilisation, that the following recollections date.[205]

This poetical introduction to *The New People* lays the foundation for establishing a relationship between the subject of the utterance and its objects: North Greenland and the Inughuit. The narrator, whose distinctive features include Europeanness, masculinity, middle-class membership and scientific aspirations as implied by his participation in the "literary" expedition, presents his motivations for undertaking a journey in order to meet the Other, which he then turns into the object of his narrative, thereby investing it with new meanings. His first step towards the discovery of the North-Greenlandic world is an imaginary feat, driven by the power of the old Greenlandic story-teller's narrative, which the introduction evokes. This narrative breeds the concept of an origin in which the Inughuit are imagined – invented – as exotic Hyperboreans who inhabit the northernmost of all lands, situated on the fringes of the European world. Consequently, a journey to this place, which the narrator perceives as remote, is discursivised as ensuing from the cumulative influence of pre-existing, superimposed information, prejudgements and narratives about the Other.

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205 Knud Rasmussen, "The New People," in: Knud Rasmussen, *People of the Polar North*, ed. G. Herring (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd, 1908), p. xix.

Telling a story of himself and the events preceding the journey in retrospect, the narrator begins with his expectations as to the remote, northern realm: it is forever locked in ice, knows no daylight and is inhabited by half-legendary, exotic creatures who, "different from all others," do not resemble people he knows. This image of North Greenland and its inhabitants reproduces an entrenched stereotype of the island as the space of the Other and as "other" space: like Said's Orient, the unknown Arctic Greenland, as perceived by a traveller who plans on going there, embodies that which Europe is not and exists first and foremost as a projection of his own ideas and expectations. That his perspective is rooted in European (Danish) culture is indisputable, yet the menacing, distant Other tempts him with its exoticism and remoteness, becoming the imaginary destination of his future journey. This journey will produce another narrative, one which the traveller is now presenting to the reader, wiser as he is from all his experiences on the journey. The new narrative will serve as a starting point for other travellers.[206]

For the narrator of *The New People*, the experience of North Greenland begins at an indefinite place in West Greenland in his childhood and is mediated by the tales of an indigenous Greenlandic story-teller, to whom people living far off in the North are as foreign and as exotic as they are to a European boy that listens to her stories. The character of an old Greenlandic woman is not only an evocation of an old memory. Importantly, she embodies native knowledge, which the narrator accepts and recognises as a worldview equally as legitimate as the European one. It is from this woman that he first hears the term "new," which he picks up to call the object of his dreams: new people and new land. At the same time, his narrative gets inscribed in the European mythological order as the imagined "new people" are placed at the periphery of the charted world, just behind the dwelling

206 In *The Conquest of America*, Tzvetan Todorov asks himself and his readers: "Is not a travel narrative itself the point of departure, and not only the point of arrival, of a new voyage? Did not Columbus himself set sail because he had read Marco Polo's narrative?" Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, p. 13. This pattern was also re-enacted with each new journey to Greenland: Erik the Red's tale urged Old-Norse inhabitants of Iceland to settle in "Green Land." Hans Egede's dream of going to Greenland was spurred by his readings about the Old-Norse settlers; Henrik Christopher Glahn read Hans Egede and earlier writings, while Hinrich Johannes Rink read Glahn's texts and Gustav Holm and Thomas Garde read Rink's reports and studies; Holm and Garde were then evoked by Fridtjof Nansen, whose achievements are referenced by the narrator of *My Travel Diary*. Each new journey – and each new narrative about it – originates in tales about previous travels and people encountered along the way.

of the god of the North Wind, Boreas.[207] Underpinned by both indigenous and European knowledge, the dual mythical pattern resembles the quest in search of the promised land of Canaan; it sets the direction and the route for the journey into the unknown as a network of metaphorical associations enabling the narrator to orient himself amidst "the unpredictable novelty of things."[208]

In the preface to the account a split has already been produced in the European subject, who on the one hand inscribes his narrative in the ancient European myth of Hyperboreans inhabiting the outermost edge of the world and on the other builds on the indigenous knowledge about people who wear bearskins, feed on raw meat and live far off in the North, a realm unknown to West Greenlanders. The nexus of references stretches at the same time to the cradle of European civilisation with its grand narratives and to the Greenlandic oral tradition of telling stories of their ancestors by the light of fish-oil lamps when a storm is raging outside or the polar night has set in. Evoking both tale species simultaneously, the subject locates himself in-between the two stories, with the meaning of his own narrative similarly finely poised as "neither the one nor the other."[209]

The journey to North Greenland is motivated by sentimental reasons that guide the European traveller. His innocence is highlighted by the fairy-tale nature of both tales: one heard from an old Greenlandic woman and the other produced by the narrator. Although he is already a grown-up male, he still resembles a young boy, who mirrors young Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* with his curiosity about the "blank spaces" on the map of the world and his urge to pursue his dreams of distant journeys and meetings with exotic, non-European Others in order to *re-assert* his own expectations and beliefs.[210] Such journeying,

207 The Inughuit are first called "the northernmost human race of the world" [Norwegian: *verdens nordligste folkestamme*] in Eivind Astrup's account. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 33. Astrup, *Blandt nordpolens naboer*, p. 20.

208 Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature,* p. 16.

209 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* p. 36.

210 Similarly, the introduction to Nansen's *The First Crossing of Greenland* highlights the original cause behind his expedition: "[…] a young man's fancy was drawn irreststibly to the charms and mysteries of this unknown world". Nansen, *The First Crossing of* Greenland, p. 2. Richard Phillips observes that many adventurers – both literary characters and real travellers – began their relations with the Other by looking at maps with *terra incognita* patches charted on them to symbolise places "in which anything seems possible and adventure seems inevitable." Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 3.

which Syed Manzurul Islam labels "sedentary travel,"[211] indeed institutes a rigid boundary between the Other and the knowing subject, immobilising the latter in its self-sufficiency.[212] Such positioning leads to othering, a process based on essentialisation and the binary frame.[213] The aims of Rasmussen's traveller, which are presented as an innocent aspiration to capture otherness in the form of knowledge and patently unrelated to the goals of Eurocolonial expansion, inscribe the narrative about the original reason behind the expedition to the space inhabited by the mythical "new people" into the discursive paradigm of "anti-conquest." This paradigm is expressed in a craving "for a way of taking possession without subjugation and violence,"[214] where narrative is relied on for subordinating non-European subjects – despite or, rather, *due to* the obtrusive passivity and innocence of the western traveller.[215] It results in a story entitled *The New People*, the foreword to which is the first of many inscriptions the narrator will perform upon the Inughuit people and the area of North Greenland.

The traveller's yearning for the mythologised Other, however, expresses something more than just an aspiration of the remote and immobilised subject to give meaning to a non-European people in the guise of anti-conquest ideology. The subject's utterance is split in itself, which comes to light when "the call of the other" surfaces in the narrator's reflective retrospection.[216] This call, which is first heard as an old Greenlandic woman is spinning her tale, becomes part of the narrator's past experience and present moment, in which the Inughuit are *still vivid* in his mind, which is why he wants to meet them face to face. The discursivised *presence* of the Other makes the traveller mobile and directs him towards North Greenland. This shows that interaction is possible and, consequently, that it is possible to transcend "the paranoia of othering that represents the other in relation to oneself," thus portending the viability of "nomadic travel," during which the stiff boundary dividing the subject and the object will be demolished.[217] Productive of his epistemological position, the journey of the foreword's narrator to North Greenland may thus equally be an upshot of the

211 Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. vii.
212 Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, pp. 3–4.
213 Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. viii.
214 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 57.
215 According to Pratt, anti-conquest ideology is essentially nothing else but "sanitized and mystified" European expansionism. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 78.
216 Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. 3.
217 Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. vii.

shared past of the Other and the European subject and a project expressive of the passage of mutual experience from the past to the present.[218]

3 North Greenland and the Inughuit as the Other

North Greenland becomes a "new world" for Rasmussen's narrator many years before he physically crosses the boundary between the parts of Greenland colonised by Denmark and the "no man's land" in the north, where his narrative of the expedition commences. "We had reached our goal!"[219] the European traveller announces triumphantly in the first sentence of his account, without explaining why he finds himself in this unknown area in the first place.

His joy is tarnished because one of his companions falls terminally ill and the natives, on meeting whom the success of the expedition hinges, are nowhere in sight. The travellers only come across recently abandoned "strange, primitive human dwellings"[220] of the Inughuit, which makes them feel that they have come into contact with something unknown and new. The former dwellers apparently could not have gone far away because their tracks are only slightly covered in snow, and a big, yet-ungutted seal is found behind one of the snow huts. The narrator makes a poetic pause to reminisce about a legend an old Greenlander from the island's western part once told him about a man who had lived north of all the settlements and who, like the travellers themselves now, had come across traces of strangers and freshly deserted dwellings several times, without ever seeing their inhabitants.

The inclusion of a Greenlandic legend into the story about the mysterious people of the North confirms the narrator's familiarity with the oral folklore of Greenlanders, which had already been highlighted in the introduction to the account. This confirms the complexity of the narrative perspective, as the narrator is not just a Danish, middle-class male who is propelled by an *innocent* desire to meet "new people." He is well versed in Greenlandic realities, which helps him interpret the traces left by "strangers" beyond that which the European framework of reference would allow. The dramatic nature of the situation which the travellers face is thus expressed through a parable whose course, if re-enacted, will be disastrous to the expedition members, dependent on the help of the absent natives as they all are.

218 Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 93.
219 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 3.
220 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 3.

Having thoroughly scrutinised the abandoned abodes, the travellers grow even more distressed as the homes differ strikingly from everything the Europeans recognise as human dwelling places. Discursive processes of othering surface in the narrative:

> The first time one sees a house of this description one is struck by the little with which human beings can be content. It is all so primitive, and has such an odour of paganism and magic incantation. A cave like this, skilfully built in arch of gigantic blocks of stone, one involuntarily peoples mentally with half supernatural beings. You see them, in your fancy, pulling and tearing at raw flesh, you see the blood dripping from their fingers, and you are seized yourself with a strange excitement at the thought of the extraordinary life that awaits you in their company.[221]

The "imagination was at work" both in the narrator and in the expedition members, and as it soared, so did the processes of making sense of the unknown reality.[222] As perceived by the narrator, North Greenland turns into the space of "others," and the otherness is marked by their heathen, uncivilised ways, mysterious aura and purported supernatural features. North Greenland is also "other" space as the narrator – who is a European traveller and a citizen of the country that took possession of a northern territory many times larger than itself, which it calls "Danish West Greenland"[223] – refers to the Greenlandic hunters who accompany him as "our Greenlanders,"[224] whereby he marks the difference between the familiar and the otherness he encounters, deflecting the imaginary constructs which emerge in his mind. A solid foundation is thus laid for the otherness of the Inughuit even before they appear as subjects within the superior European narrative.

The alterity of the "other" which is crafted in this way is, at the same time, moderated by the explanatory voice of the omniscient narrator. Describing the burial sites he comes across, he states: "There, then, men lay buried with all their possessions, as Eskimo custom prescribes,"[225] which explicitly points to his expertise in the cultural habits of the indigenous population. As his additional, non-European knowledge is revealed, it seems less plausible that the traveller is entirely astonished by the foreign, exotic culture. Similarly, the Inughuit name

221 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 5.
222 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 5.
223 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 4. The dividing line between the space of the Same and the space of the Other overlaps with the boundary between the colonised part of Greenland and the area of North Greenland.
224 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 5.
225 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 5.

of the settlement he cites (Netsilivik)[226] indicate that North Greenland was not a completely "new," blank slate to him. This enhances the impression that otherness is rhetorically *constructed* in the descriptions of the first encounters of the European traveller with the North-Greenlandic cultural landscape.

The first "strangers" the Europeans meet are an Inughuit married couple: "Our dogs begin to bark, and the sledges meet to the accompaniment of loud yelps. We spring off and run up to each other, stop and stare at one another, incapable of speech, both parties equally astonished."

"I explain to him who we are, and where we come from."

" 'White men! White men!' he calls out to his wife. 'White men have come on a visit!' "

"We have no difficulty in understanding or making ourselves understood."[227] Being immediately recognised by the first Inughuit he encounters as a white man from Europe widens the crack in the traveller's ostensibly coherent narrative about the "Others" and their alleged novelty, which is exposed as another of his projections. For the Inughuit, the newcomers are first and foremost strangers: they are identified as belonging to the same species as other "white men" they had met earlier – people who certainly differ from themselves, but are by no means new.

The narrative present tense used in the passage above, which is often used in travel writings as a fictionalising device,[228] serves a variety of functions. Here, it is employed to produce an impression that the narrator is reporting the events as they happen and to build tension. For it is the first moment of contact between the Danish travellers and the non-European Other that will determine whether the polar explorer's preconceptions about the Inughuit will be confirmed or overthrown, which is a decisive factor in the further course of events and the success of the expedition. To dramatise and dynamise the episodes, the narrative past tense is also used in reporting another meeting. This time the travellers meet a much bigger group of the Inughuit who live in an Agpat settlement:

> And then, like a mountain slide, the whole swarm rushed down to the shore, where we have pulled up – a few old grey-haired men and stiff-jointed old crones, young men and women, children who could hardly toddle, all dressed alike in these fox and bear-skin furs, which create such an extraordinarily barbaric first impression. Some came with long knives in their hands, with bloodstained arms and upturned sleeves, having been

226 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 6.

227 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 7.

228 Melberg, *Å reise og skrive,* pp. 223, 237; Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks,* p. 32.

> in the midst of flaying operations when we arrived, and all this produced a very savage effect; at the moment it was difficult to believe that these "savages," "the neighbours of the North Pole," as Astrup called them, were ever likely to become one's good, warm friends.[229]

The way the arrival at Agpat is related even more explicitly renders the mental detachment of the travelling observer from the events at the heart of which he finds himself. By producing a gap between the European subject and the native object of his observation, the narrator seeks to install the "Eurocolonial discursive order" through applying clear binary oppositions between the Other and the Same.[230] The savagery, barbarity, strangeness and geographical remoteness of the Inughuit, their exotic apparel of animal skins, "long knives in their hands"[231] and "bloodstained arms," all but emphasise the alterity of the dangerous Other, who diverges from everything that is familiar, known and represented by "civilisation," "normality," "proximity" and "domesticity," interlocked with an array of characteristically European behaviours. Nevertheless, the binary investment of the description and the dramatic undertones that pervade it are soon neutralised by the voice of the transcendent narrator, who puts the readers at ease by intimating that it is possible to befriend and, thus, "domesticate" the Other. Evoking in the text the name of Norwegian polar explorer Eivind Astrup, the first Scandinavian to pass the winter among the indigenous inhabitants of Smith Sound, further reassures the European reader that this will actually happen despite all the ominous signs to the contrary. At work here is the strategy of "the unquestioned reliability of the transcendent narrator,"[232] which – typically of European travel writing – consists in first exercising the practices of othering in order to foreground a potential threat and then foreshadowing the future in which the peaceable nature of the Other is borne out through the speaker's personal relationships with him. In Rasmussen's narrative, however, the strategy is used differently than

229 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 9–10.

230 Brydon and Tiffin, *Decolonising Fictions*, p. 124.

231 The literal expression in the Danish original is "long knives in their mouth," which enhances the effect of exoticisation. Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, p. 8.

232 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 24. The device is also employed in *The Danish Umiaq Expedition*: "[a]stonishingly, the people whom we then regarded as wild beasts half-wanting common human reason became but one year later our good and faithful friends, who lent us a helping hand on many occasions." Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 51. "The unquestioned reliability of the transcendent narrator" comes also to the fore in the description of the first encounter with the Inughuit in Eivind Astrup's account. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 73–75.

in other authors of Scandinavian expedition accounts, as his narrator includes a West-Greenlandic perspective on an equal footing with the Europe-rooted narrative. For the narrator of *The New People*, the familiar and the domestic are associated not only with Europe/Denmark but also with West Greenland, with which he identifies and which differs from the space of the North-Greenlandic Other he is experiencing.

Recounted from the outsider perspective, the dramatic narrative rendering of the first encounter with the Other is intertwined with a complementary story in which the course of events is shown from the viewpoint of two Inughuit hunters who return to the settlement in the wake of the arrival of the European visitors. The hunters see traces of unknown sledges and are completely at a loss because the trail stretches from the south while "sledges never come that way!"[233] The tension generated by another application of the dramatic present tense is additionally enhanced by references to old tales about murderous people from the South. The hunters worry about their wives who have stayed at home alone with their children. The ostensible native perspective is debunked when the men arrive at the abandoned settlement, which, as the narrator mentions, was a place "where our dogs had disported themselves."[234] The narrator's use of "we" to refer to himself and his companions alternates with "strangers," and the merging of these perspectives heralds the idea that he seeks to understand and adopt the indigenous viewpoint without renouncing his privileged outsider view, which once again confirms that in perceiving the reality he observes he takes two (or even more) positions at the same time.

The suspenseful story of the native hunters' homecoming culminates when on returning to the settlement they are welcomed by a commotion, noise and sensational news from a swarm of children who rush out to meet them: " 'White men! White men have come!' "[235] The narrative about the arrival of the Danish travellers at Agpat and the later return of the Inughuit hunters to the settlement make up two separate episodes which are combined by the textual time-space. The inclusion of the indigenous story serves to portray the dramatic tension on either side of the dividing line which is drawn in the newly emerging contact zone. Consequently, interaction between the newcomers from Europe and the population of the non-Western periphery is portrayed as triggering insecurity and being potentially risky, while this effect is eventually neutralised, on the one

233 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 12.
234 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 12.
235 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 13.

hand, by a reference to knowledge about the Inughuit acquired from writings by other Scandinavian travellers and, on the other, by the image of excited Inughuit children.

Arrival episodes are a staple of the travel literature convention, instrumental in "framing relations of contact and setting the terms of its representation" in the text.[236] Although initially the Inughuit make "such an extraordinarily barbaric first impression" on the Europeans and all the tokens suggest to the Inughuit hunters who are hurrying back home that the strangers have not come "with any friendly intent,"[237] the propitious hints at the end of each story are soon re-asserted as the narrative unfolds. The Inughuit turn out to be hospitable hosts and quick and effective helpers. The visitors are offered a welcome meal of walrus liver, pay a visit to *angekok* (shaman) Sagdlork himself and have an igloo built for them within half an hour as "'There is a sick man with you, so you must be helped quickly' – they said."[238] The narrator explicitly appreciates the welcome they are given as "affectingly cordial" and, again, foreshadows the future events by saying: "it seemed that they could not do enough for us. And just as they were on our arrival: helpful as they could possibly be, and most generous with their gifts, – so they remained the whole time that we spent among them."[239]

The relationship of contact is established again between the European travellers and the Inughuit, which is predominantly defined by the natives' hospitality and helpfulness. The relationship is strikingly asymmetrical, for while the Inughuit display initiative and activity, the Europeans are passive, exhibit "submissiveness and vulnerability," and behave as "receptors" rather than "initiators,"[240] without even disclosing why they have come to the area in the first place. The events follow a pre-scripted scenario in which the inhabitants of the natural world rescue European heroes to enable them to return home. Another fixed element of narratives about the Western protagonist's adventure in the space on the non-European Other, this convention serves to establish the bilateral relationship as a time of harmony, which is symbolised by the mutual respect of the travellers and the hosts.[241] At the same time, making contact produces a

236 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp. 78–80.
237 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 13.
238 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 11.
239 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 11.
240 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 78.
241 Hulme, "Polytropic Man," p. 20.

new order for the lands and the people described by the narrator.[242] Framing the Inughuit as friends and co-habitants of the Danish travellers is a harbinger of the permanent presence of Europeans in North Greenland, an issue about which the Danish protagonists of the narrative are ostentatiously silent.

Established in the arrival episode, the relationships between the European traveller and the Inughuit may be based on help and mutual understanding, but they are not free of tension and drama as they are fraught with the strange and the unfamiliar, which spurs a sense of distance in both parties involved. The adjectives reiterated by Rasmussen's narrator from the very beginning, such as "extraordinary," "primitive" and "pagan" (as opposed to "common," "civilised" and "Christian," which connote not only Western/European/Danish qualities but also the properties of the colonised parts of Greenland) always appear at the moments of insecurity which contact with the unknown Other stirs in him. At such points, the stereotype reigns supreme as a major strategy of colonial discourse: "a form of knowledge and identification," oscillating between "what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated."[243] The production of the Inughuit as the ideological Other of the Danes entails ascribing certain fixed traits to them which are supposed to represent their essence as unchangeable, yet because the stereotype is indeterminate and ambiguous rather than stable, it must be rehearsed time and again in order to be effective. In the text of *The New People*, the reiteration of the stereotype of the Other is based on particular ways of coding which aim to fix the Inughuit and North Greenland as constant and immutable categories which are discursively subjected to the colonial ideology. This can be effected by a stable and autonomous subject located

242 This also happens in *The Danish Umiaq Expedition,* where the contact of the visitors and the indigenous population heralds the inception of a new order as the mission of Christianisation starts and the Angmagsalik region comes under Danish jurisdiction. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 360. When contact is established between the ostentatiously innocent narrator of *With Peary near the Pole* and the Inughuit, they grow gradually dependent on European commodities, which breeds serious long-term ramifications for their lifestyle: "When we first arrived on these coasts, in 1891, the chase was still carried on with bow and arrow: at our departure, in 1894, these were put away upon the shelf, and the time is not far distant when they will be on view only in the glass cases of a few collectors, while of the reindeer itself no traces will be left." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 135. This also concerns changes in the dietary habits of the Inughuit, even though the account stresses that: "they know nothing of spirits and tobacco, and we took good care not to initiate them." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 271.

243 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 66.

outside the depicted reality, a subject whose latent desire is to exert cognitive command over the world he perceives.[244] Such an urge is expressed by the narrator when he discloses the actual aim of his presence in North Greenland: "I had come up here, first and foremost, for the impartial *study* of life under other conditions than those to which I was accustomed."[245] The verb "study," a direct translation of the Danish verb *studere*, means – both in English and in Danish – "to look at something very carefully to learn about it."[246] Admittedly, the narrator stands firm by the neutrality of his study, yet he presupposes that it will be grounded on visual perception, which entails a distance from the object of study.[247] Drawing on Michel Foucault's theories, Syed Manzurul Islam observes that experiencing the Other from afar through vision is predicated on the power-underpinned taxonomy of representation.[248] Given this, intrinsic to the position of the observer-narrator who is located outside the object of his study is a lopsided power relationship between the looker and the looked-at, i.e. the subject and the object, an imbalance that buttresses the discursivisation of the North-Greenlandic Other and the stereotyped representations forged through it.

Nevertheless, the fact that the colonial stereotype needs to be re-stated time and again is a testimony to its instability, which results from ambivalence that typically inheres in entire colonial discourse and threatens its "official"

244 As Leslie Wylie concludes, the European traveller is only capable of reflecting on the world he perceives if positioned outside this world. Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 45.

245 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 57 (emphasis mine).

246 *Den Danske Ordbog. Moderne Dansk Sprog*: http://ordnet.dk/ddo/ordbog?query=studere&tab=for (Accessed 27 Mar. 2014).

247 As claimed by geographer Yi-Fu Tuan in his exploration of the interrelatedness of distance and visual perception, distant objects can only be perceived visually, which makes us inclined to regard objects we see as remote (even though they may actually be quite nearby). Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1974), p. 10.

248 According to Islam, a product of the metropolitan panoptic regime, the European subject amidst non-European nations or cultures turns into "the very eye-machine," which is fuelled by the scopic mania of registering and producing knowledge. Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. 29. Consequently, the relation between the observer and the observed is inevitably political because, as pointed out by historian Martin Jay, there is no such thing as a "view from nowhere". This also concerns narratives which result from verbally describing what one is looking at. Martin Jay, "Introduction," in: *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, ed. Martin Jay (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), p. 8.

knowledges.[249] In *The New People*, this ambiguity comes forth as an effect of the split within the European subject that assumes various positions vis-à-vis the Other: on the one hand, immobilised on the other side of the fixed line that separates him from the Other and, on the other, traversing "thresholds" and crossing "boundaries" as a result of inevitable interaction with the Other in the contact zone.[250] This produces ambiguities in the relationship as othering practices tie the Other to the North-Greenlandic space of primordial alterity, but, at the same time, a world of experience deviating from the European one is emphatically endorsed, which implies the agency of indigenous resistance against the dominant representations.

3.1 The Eskimo Arcadia and Arcadians: Disrupting the Idealisation Trope

One of the first things the European traveller notices on arriving at Agpat is the prosperity of the Inughuit: "Meat there was in abundance, and everywhere in-between the houses, you saw cooking-hearths. It was immediately apparent that these people were not suffering from privation."[251] As the newcomer's perceptive eye identifies and takes note of the Inughuit's well-being, the idealisation of the Other commences. The abundance of game and the plenitude of nature are underscored throughout the narrative, which never mentions "starving" while the European travellers are staying among the Inughuit. The inhabitants of North Greenland are depicted as a "well-to-do folk" and "strong, healthy, energetic people, possessing a sufficiency of the necessities of life as demanded by an existence which is, according to their ideas, free from care."[252]

The idealising portrayals of North Greenland and the Inughuit are undoubtedly facilitated by the fact that the travellers come to Agpat shortly before the Arctic summer begins and most descriptions of nature in *The New People* dwell on this season of the year. Carefully scrutinising his surroundings, the narrator admires the sight of the cracking ice, when animals are vigorously active and nature awakens:

> The ice round the village was torn by the current, and on the floes lazy seals lay sunning themselves. From out at sea came a long, monotonous roar and whistling, – the old he-walruses, who recognised the signs of the times, and were beginning to make their

249 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 81.
250 Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. 5.
251 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 10.
252 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 156–157.

> way in towards the land; they knew that the ice was doomed. Down below the houses, in some of the larger openings in the ice, long-tailed ducks and black guillemots swam to and fro and wrangled, till their cries re-echoed from the steep cliff side. The eider-ducks had begun to ramble about the promontory; you could hear the musical swish of their wings in the distance long before their arrival, in bevies, in the breeding islands, each endeavouring to be first. Groups of women and children had taken up their position below the great bird-rock; they lounged about on the loose stones in intent listening clusters; the whole side of the cliff was alive, and a voluminous murmur pealed out from all the moving mites on its ledges. The petrels and the razorbills had arrived![253]

Looking from outside, the disembodied eye takes in the invigorated space which is rippled by motion and sounds and saturated with animals and humans. From a distance, the I-speaker listens to the noises of people and beasts, casually recognising and registering the array of fauna, especially of birds, whereby he reveals his knowledge about their habits. The accumulation of past-tense verb forms expressing movement conveys the inner dynamics of the scene, in which the narrator does not take part but watches passively, albeit meticulously. The space – the object of his perception – is a safe and well-furnished shelter for innumerable animal species. Consequently, it teems with vibrant life, and its human inhabitants, who live in harmony with the seasonal rhythms and in a symbiosis with generous nature, are "happy and good, and [take] no thought save for the day the sun gave."[254] In this idyllic rendering of the North-Greenlandic world, even the darkness-shrouded polar night is cheerfully welcomed since it brings plentiful gifts to the Inughuit, enabling them to hunt on the ice, which is impossible in summer. The image of the rock cliff as a throbbing hub of animal and human existence exemplifies the inner harmony of the North-Greenlandic world, whose life cycle is governed by unchangeable laws of nature.

Incorporating the observed reality into his discourse, the narrator disguises his exteriority to the idealised Other by emphasising his intimate bond with the landscape. This happens not only through revealing his knowledge of Greenland's fauna and flora, as is the case in the passage above, but also through employing

253 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 14–15.

254 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 16. The whole passage is reminiscent of a slightly more modest description of the sun's return after winter in Astrup's narrative: "when at last the sun itself rises in full glory above the southern horizon, their joy is unbounded. Then men and women, old and young, flock together upon the crags which form a background where the view is widest, there to greet the returning ruler of light with bright glances of gratitude and joyful shouts of welcome." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 282.

the rhetorical device of anthropomorphisation: "A few snow buntings fly up to us and ensconce themselves under the jutting edge of the snow, to wash in the dripping water. But the great snowfield is groaning in the sunshine, and sighs so profoundly that a chasm breaks in it, furrowing the white forehead of it like a broad wrinkle."[255]

"The great snowfield" is scaled down and domesticated by being invested with human features (e.g. "sighing" and the comparison to a wrinkled, white forehead) and having its vastness contrasted with little birds that bathe in its proximity. Again, what finds itself in the spotlight is the non-threatening character of nature, which comes across as available and almost within hand's reach. A rhetorical device very frequently applied in accounts of polar expeditions, anthropomorphisation[256] contributes to the idealisation of North Greenland's space not only by animating it, but also by domesticating it – by making it friendly and innocuous. Such an animistic interpretation of nature also dovetails with literary conventions of Romanticism, which is a reminder that the readership targeted by the narrator, who remains outside the Western order, resides in the European metropolis.[257] Similarly to the narrator's observations of the Inughuit as the objects of his study, his perception of the nature is also grounded in the oppositions between the subject and the object, the Self and the Other, which, according to Wylie, lie at the basis of the colonial aesthetics of space.[258]

The North-Greenlandic landscape can stimulate the narrator's aesthetic production as it is a source of pure delight to his disembodied eye:

> There lay the Igfigssork Glacier, immeasurable in extent; whitish yellow in the pale daylight, it lost itself in swells of fog far out on the horizon. It was midday, and a ray of red

255 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 44.

256 Anthropomorphisation in *The Danish Umiaq Expedition* is particularly pronounced in relation to Arctic nature. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 33, 279. In Nansen's account anthropomorpisation is especially pronounced in numerous descriptions of northern lights and other celestial phenomena. Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 146–7, 412–413; Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 2, pp. 19, 157. In Astrup's narrative anthropomorphisation is used to depict the motions of celestial bodies, e.g. the movement of the sun across the sky (Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 90), and animal behaviours: "Here, too, the small polar fox is enjoying himself to his heart's content, in view of the happy days in store for him, and the fact that he can always remain comfortably within doors, when cold or wind outside are raging at their worst." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 65.

257 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 101.

258 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 9.

> sunlight penetrated the haze, like the reflection of a fire very far away; on the south-west wing the colours were sharp and yellow, the sky overcast and rent with gashes of blue. The dark blue precipices at the edge of the glacier itself stood out like walls against the soft, red blush at the summit; but the ice on the sea, out beyond the glacier, gleamed pale green in the daylight. This was the Polar day in all its splendour.[259]

The space is aestheticised through the accumulation of adjectives describing the colours and properties of the glacier and through a wealth of similes involving phenomena transplanted from another context, which "improve" the space and add to its idealisation. Viewed from above, the North-Greenlandic glacier is beautiful and sublime. Glistening with resplendent tints and "immeasurable in extent," it is rendered by means of European conceptualisations to resemble a European work of art, which the connoisseur-narrator admires, "bend[ing] in silence and accept[ing] the beauty, without words."[260] To the narrator, the sight of the glacier is a source of aesthetic joy, stimulating him to act and affording him gratification. Such a manner of representation fixes the other space in a simplified and thus defective form, precluding the acknowledgement of its difference. However, the narrator gives hardly any hints that his perception interferes with the perceived reality. The amassment of verbs and participles conveying the motions of inanimate nature ("lost itself," "penetrated," "stood out," "overcast and rent") suggests that it is not the narrator's eye that determines what falls within his field of vision, but rather that the feat is accomplished by what can be called "the occult forces" of nature, to use an expression Pratt avails herself of.[261] The narrator is positioned as a merely passive, *innocent* observer who senses "the power of Nature over one" and admires the "Wondrous Earth."[262]

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259 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 91.

260 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 91.

261 The phrase was employed by Alexander von Humboldt. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 124. The quotation can also be interpreted as an expression of vitalism, a widespread doctrine in the first two decades of the 20th century, to be found, for example, in the works of Johannes V. Jensen and Karen Blixen. Stefan H. Kaszyński and Maria Krysztofiak, *Dzieje literatury duńskiej* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 1985), pp. 169, 206.

262 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 91. Astrup's narrative includes a passage which brings together all the tropes discussed above. This passage might have been a model or an inspiration for Rasmussen's later depiction: "Green and bright in early summer morning, the fjord lay stretched out; and upon its surface shining icebergs swam like giant swans. Around it the perpendicular mountain sides, with bands of varied colours and all sorts of shades, rose majestatically, their reflections cut sharp and clear

Characteristically permeating colonial literature, the trope of idealisation[263] contributes to fixing North Greenland as a space that is friendly to all its creatures, a prosperous and safe place which pulsates with robust human and animal life and an object of sublime aesthetic experiences of the gazing, disembodied eye of the transcendent narrator. Because he is located outside the object, the narrator is capable of constructing the North-Greenlandic space as a stable and ideal picture, set within the Western narrative framework and readily admirable. Moreover, this gesture is authorised by the narrator's ostentatiously emphasised passivity and innocence, which imply that he has no aspirations to impose a foreign order on the "other" reality. This reinforces the anti-conquest ideology, which is ushered in by the preface to *The New People*.

The narrator's eye focuses not only on scrutinising the space as from the very first contact with the indigenous population it attentively registers their behaviours, which are presented in unambiguously positive terms. The Inughuit are hospitable, cordial, satisfied, kind, cheerful, carefree and skilful at hunting. The narrator also itemizes various external traits of his hosts, attending particularly to their clothing, but in this respect he is quite moderate as compared to detailed depictions of Greenlanders' appearance in accounts of other Scandinavian polar explorers. For example, describing the orphaned Kajoranguark, the narrator states only: "He was worse dressed than any of the others, but his eyes rivalled the blubber of the lamps in their brilliance,"[264] while in a story about the slothful hunter Ehrè, he reports that the man "was not a notable sportsman; it was said of him that he rowed a kayak covered with the skins of another's catch; and that was not befitting a man!"[265]

The narrator clearly avoids passing value judgments, especially on occasions when deviations from what is considered the European norm could invite condemning responses. The disfavourable impression that Kajoranguark's

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in the dark sea. […] Now and then the lively gibbering cries of a passing flight of auks reached us where we were standing. Farther below two snow-white hares were frisking merrily among the stones, in a purling watercourse. From a cold, lifeless desert we had returned to a world full of animation and beauty." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 261–262.

263 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 75. As to Rasmussen's use of the trope of idealisation, Knud Michelsen is very explicit on this topic, notably with reference to Peter Freuchen, see for example: Michelsen, *En værkende tand*, p. 172; Michelsen, *Vejen til Thule*, p. 74.

264 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 51.

265 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 54.

seal grease-smeared face could evoke is neutralised by animisation: "his eyes rivalled the blubber of the lamps in their brilliance." The device underscores the boy's intensely shining eyes even though he is a destitute, homeless orphan. Such remarks seem to be neutral, or even *positive*, descriptions. People are presented through their behaviours or others' opinions of them, which the narrator cites, for example, when describing the hunter Ehrè. While depicting the space, the narrator similarly tends to steer clear of interfering with the reality he reports and is content simply to record the behavioural aspects of people and events.

Only in one respect does the narrator's eye relinquish its reticence in describing the native bodies; namely, it displays an unmissable soft spot for handsome males. Conspicuously, the adjective "handsome" [Danish: *smuk*] is applied to depict males rather than females,[266] unlike in other polar expedition accounts.[267] Also, "handsome" is not often employed, but when it is, it betrays the narrator's Eurocentric aesthetic preferences. This is best exemplified in the episode in which Majark sings at a singing ceremony: "Majark was singing. The light fell strongly in through the tent's thin bladder curtain and its rays broke against his handsome face. He did not resemble in the least the type that is usually regarded as Eskimo. His face was narrow and clear cut, his nose slightly

266 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 32, 46. In *The New People* there is only one remark about the "beautiful wives" of two Inughuit hunters, Odârk and Agpalersuârsuk. Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, p. 86.

267 In *The Danish Umiaq Expedition*, it is Johanne, a half-blood Greenlander whose beauty seems to be inextricable from the brilliant mind that emanates from her face. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 92. When staying at a Greenlader camp on the east coast, Nansen's narrator states: "[…] we saw more than one face which a European taste would allow to be pretty. There was one woman especially who reminded me vividly of an acknowledged beauty at home in Norway, and not only I, but one of my companions who happened to know the prototype, was greatly struck by the likeness." Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 246, 347. Before that, his attention is drawn to the male beauty of a Greenlander from the east coast whom he considers "actually handsome", yet it turns out that his judgment is prompted by the fact that "[t]here was something soft, something almost effeminate, in his good looks, so much so indeed that we were long in doubt whether he was a man at all". Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, p. 332. Astrup's account also includes evocations admiring male Inughuit bodies, but they do not involve an aesthetic appraisal, foregrounding rather their perfect adaptation to living in the harsh conditions of the Arctic. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 77.

aquiline. His long hair fell down loosely over his shoulders. Buoyant and fiery in his movements, he was much more like a gipsy than an Eskimo."[268]

The aesthetic pleasure experienced by the European eye, which focuses on the extraordinary details of the singer's appearance, such as his strong facial features, angular nose, sinewy and proportionate frame and energetic, spirited motions, may seem to convey an all too dangerous racially-laden evaluation. Majrak is handsome because he does not resemble an Inuit, but rather a Gipsy, i.e. a member of an ethnic group which embody a more European canon of beauty, as the narrator sees it.[269] The peculiarity of Majrak's good looks sets him apart from what is regarded in Europe as the "Eskimo type of beauty," which implies that the Western travellers view the indigenous population as less than comely, to put it mildly.[270] Ever though he describes the others sparsely and as a rule non-evaluatively, the narrator of *The New People* shares the way of thinking expressed in the accounts by other polar explorers, who endorse the canons of beauty sanctioned by the West and consider individuals who are their closest look-alikes to be handsome.[271]

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268 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 38.

269 At another point, the narrator mentions Odârk's handsome Indian profile. Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, p. 86. Greenlanders who resembled Indians tended to be regarded as more handsome by European travellers, which can be seen, for example, in the description of Kolotengva in Astrup's narrative: "He was about thirty-five years old, small of stature, but of stout build, with muscles of steel, and possessing uncommon physical strength. His eyes were small and lively, and he could see objects far beyond the usual range of vision. His long black hair, naturally wavy, formed a handsome frame about his bold face; otherwise he reminded of the popular pictures of Indian chiefs." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 292.

270 Astrup's narrator also firmly avers that the Eskimo's facial features "would be black-balled at a European beauty show," which implies that the narrator is indeed aware of there being various aesthetic frameworks of reference for evaluating the appearance of the Inughuit. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 76. Nansen's narrator endeavours to problematise the notion of beauty as well, by stating that if we managed to put aside the European ideals of beauty, Greenlanders could actually be good-looking; this, however, requires staying among them for a long time. Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, p. 346. Nevertheless, both travellers endorse European benchmarks as the dominant criteria of aesthetic evaluation in their accounts.

271 For example, in *The Danish Umiaq Expedition*, Johanne, a half-blood Greenlander, is described as beautiful. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 92. In Nansen's narrative, native female residents of Danish colonised West Greenland are "a striking sight in their picturesque attire", which envelops the arrival at Nuuk in the

Rasmussen's narrative strikingly does not attribute negative traits to Greenlanders: whereas other Arctic travellers often present them as rash and lazy,[272] in Rasmussen they are always painted as accomplished hunters, irreplaceable travel companions and friendly helpers, with the slothful hunter Ehrè being a curious rarity that simply confirms the general rule. Similarly, *The New People* never mentions the Inughuit households as being smelly and dirty or the community as lacking hygienic standards, which is a frequent complaint in other Arctic expedition accounts.[273] Despite his initial remarks about "strange,

aura of positive exoticism. Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 2, p. 176. In the original Norwegian edition of Nansen's account, the same page features a photograph taken by the Royal Inspector Carl Ryberg of "Bolette, a Greenlander of mixed descent," whose image was probably chosen because the woman's appearance is aligned with European beauty canons. Nansen, *Paa ski over Grønland*, p. 563.

272 Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 108, 235; Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 2, p. 188.

273 Describing the abodes of Greenlanders from the east coast, Nansen's narrator directly states that "the atmosphere of their dwellings was the reverse of pleasant" (Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 336–337) and then proceeds to details: "The smell, which was a peculiar blending of several characteristic ingredients, was quite enough to occupy one's attention at first entrance. The most prominent of the components was due to the numerous tran-oil lamps which were burning, and this powerful odour was well tempered with human exhalations of every conceivable kind, as well as the pungent effluvia of a certain fetid liquid which was stored in vessels here and there about the room, and which, as I subsequently learned, is, from the various uses to which it is applied, one of the most important and valuable commodities of Eskimo domestic economy. Into further details I think it is scarcely advisable to go […]". He adds nevertheless: "However, familiarity soon has its wonted effect, and one's first abhorrence may even before long give way to a certain degree of pleasure," adding that not everybody will be eager to admit to that. Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, p. 337. Astrup's report explains the Inughuit's filthiness and unhygienic ways by citing the exceptionally harsh conditions in which they live: "One can hardly blame the Esquimaux at Smith's Sound for their filthiness; it is almost an unavoidable consequence of the rough and primitive conditions under which they are compelled to live. All the water required for drinking or their plain cooking must, for nine or ten months on end, be procured by laborious melting of snow or ice in stone vessels over blubber-flames. A bath, or thorough wash, is to them an unknown luxury, which, in spite of our comparatively good example, they will never be able to introduce under their present conditions, though a good deal might be done with nothing more than a moist bird-skin, or, in case of need, with a sharp stone, if once the sense of cleanliness could be awakened in them". Astrup, *With*

primitive human dwellings,"[274] the narrator eagerly stays among the natives and spends nights at their homes, where he adapts to the rhythms of their daily chores, taking them for granted as not inviting any further commentary. The explanations he cares to provide elucidate how various activities are relevant to survival in the Arctic or to the social life of the Inughuit, while he does not deem the Inughuit practices of personal hygiene deserving of a place in his tale.

These strategies of describing the Inughuit, which on the one hand suggest that the perceiving eye is neutral, but on the other foreground the positive features of the perceived people, contribute to the idealisation of the image of the North-Greenlandic world as represented in *The New People*. Focused on behavioural aspects, the narrative style produces an image of the Inughuit as self-reliant individuals in their own right, which again demonstrates the speaker's aspiration to impartiality. This is compromised by the disclosure of the narrator's Eurocentric aesthetic preferences, yet they tend to be an exception in his descriptions of people. This mode of representation results from the external positioning of the European subject who presents the Other in the narrative. Although he avers his passivity and renunciation of any attempts at imposing an order on the reality he scrutinises, the Inughuit and North Greenland are in fact caught up in an endless meaning-making process, which results in constructing them as idealised "nature people" who inhabit an abundant natural space. This conveys "the potentials of the Eurocolonial future"[275] for the entirely *innocent* European observer, who is silent over his actual purpose for visiting "the most northerly dwelling people." He may be a scout of the progressing capitalism, which will soon enough reach even those northernmost areas, sprawling beyond the seat of the Lord of North Wind.

The utter idealisation or demonisation in representations of the Other is one of the most widespread tropes of European travel literature.[276] When Rasmussen

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Peary near the Pole, pp. 78–79. While *The Danish Umiaq Expedition* registers that the homes of Greenlanders are indisputably dirty and smelly, the narrative insists that the inhabitants themselves are kind and have pleasing manners. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 109–110.

274 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 3.

275 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 61.

276 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 9. Thisted also points to Rasmussen's idealisation of the Inughuit in *The New People and My Travel Diary*. Thisted, "The Power to Represent," pp. 326–327.

was writing *The New People*, the image of a hostile land of ice and death still prevailed in depictions of the northernmost regions of Greenland,[277] though the first harbingers of change had appeared with popular accounts by Robert Edwin Peary and Eivind Astrup, which were beginning to change the status of North Greenland in the Scandinavian cultural circuit into an inhabited and *friendly* place. *The New People* largely consolidates this transformed image as the prevalent representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit in the text are not only favourable, but even verge on the idyllic[278]. Rasmussen's rendering thus re-asserts the European myth into which the Inughuit are inscribed by the narrator in the introduction: they are the most northernly inhabitants of the world who live their utopian lives in an Eskimo version of Arcadia.[279]

277 This image was spawned by the prevalent accounts of British and American expeditions, many of which, like Franklin's expedition, were ill-prepared for travelling in the Arctic and, consequently, claimed dozens of lives. Loomis, "The Arctic Sublime," pp. 106–112.

278 A dozen years later, this vision was additionally re-confirmed in writings by the Canadian American anthropologist and polar explorer of Icelandic descent, Vilhjalmur Steffansson (1879–1962), in particular in his *The Friendly Arctic: The Story of Five Years in Polar Regions* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921). In the book, Steffansson highlights the suitability of the Arctic for future settlement, which should be based on Inuit-like adaptation to the climatic conditions. Silje Gaupseth, "Naive naturbarn eller ren klokskap? Inuittene i Vilhjalmur Stefanssons vennlige Arktis," in: *Reiser og ekspedisjoner i det litterære Arktis*, eds. Johan Schimanski et al. (Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk Forlag, 2011), p. 218. However, the trope of the friendly Arctic is not a novelty in Danish writings about Greenland, as it had already appeared in the accounts of missionaries who settled in Greenland of their own accord, such as Hans Egede, his son Poul, Henrik Christopher Glahn and Johan Christian Wilhelm Funch. What is new about the "friendly Arctic" motif is weaving it into a narrative about the northernmost areas, which the earlier authors either did not mention at all or described as ice-bound and uninhabited. In this regard, the pioneering work was done by Greenlander Hans Hendrik's *Memoirs of Hans Hendrik the Arctic Traveller Serving under Kane, Hayes, Hall and Nares 1853–1876 Written by Himself*. A participant in four Western expeditions to the Arctic, Hans Hendrik was the first to settle among the Inughuit for several years and to portray North Greenland as exceptionally abundant and friendly.

279 On the discursivisation of the North as a paradise and Arcadia, see Peter Stadius, *Southern Perspectives on the North: Legends, Stereotypes, Images and Models* (Gdańsk & Berlin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego & Nordeuropa-Institut der Humboldt Universität zu Berlin 2001).

The narrator devotes plenty of attention to the hunting mode of life of the Inughuit, as the Agpat settlement owes its evocatively dwelled-on prosperity to skilful Arctic hunters. Eulogising the native hunter is a dominant motif in Scandinavian expedition reports at the turn of the 19th century.[280] In *The New People*, this entrenched convention promotes the portrayal of the Inughuit as noble savages who are perfectly adjusted to living in the Arctic conditions.[281] The narrative abounds in depictions of brave hunters and admirable individuals, among whom old Sorkrark perfectly epitomises the features of the noble savage. The narrator describes Sorkrark by accumulating the attributes in which he excels above others: Sorkrark is not only "the finest bear hunter in the tribe," but also a shaman, an unparalleled dog breeder and sledge driver, the life of every party and "the largest eater in the tribe."[282] Sorkrark is depicted exclusively through positive adjectives, such as "great," "clever," "passionate," "best," "largest," "happy" and having "unfailing good spirits." Repudiating the attributes of civilisation, e.g. firearms (which he deems to be "without strength"[283]), and escaping unscathed from an accident that would have left any other person dead or incapacitated for life, Sorkrark embodies the primitive power of nature and genuine, unfettered freedom.

Notably, the otherwise pervasive strategy of the disembodied eye, which gazes at the space and people from an indefinite, remote vantage point, is not employed in the descriptions of the old bear-hunter. It is replaced by first-person narrative which brings into relief the experience of the European "self" in interaction with

280 While in the accounts by Gustav Holm and Thomas Garde and by Fridtjof Nansen, the representations of the Greenlanders of the east coast were ambivalent, the solid foundations for an indisputably favourable image of Greenlanders from beyond the Danish colonised areas of the island were laid by Eivind Astrup. His *With Peary near the Pole* was first to usher a comprehensive portrayal of the Inughuit living around Smith Sound onto the Scandinavian cultural stage. Clearly idealising, this portrayal affected all subsequent ways of picturing the inhabitants of North Greenland as admirable, brave and tough hunters as well as kindly, intelligent and cheerful companions who had no equals in the Arctic areas.

281 Ethnologist Ter Ellingson argues that the notion of the "noble savage" appeared in anthropological discourse only in 1859, independently of Rousseau's "savage," who was mistakenly dubbed "noble" and served merely as a fictional construct in Rousseau's philosophical critique of civilisation. Ter Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), qtd. in Gaupseth, "Naive naturbarn," p. 213.

282 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 41.

283 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 46.

the Inughuit Other. The remote gaze of the transcendent narrator is replaced with a conversation, and as Sorkrark himself is made to speak, the dialogue can be anthropologically construed as an instance of participant observation, where the native's life experience and unique worldview are voiced in his own terms: " 'One must not talk about bear-hunting,' he used to say; 'if one's thoughts turn upon bears, then drive out and kill some. But sit inside and prate about them? No, leave that to old women; they are never backward when it is a case of chattering. But we men, we drive out one day with our dogs, and if we see a bear, it is not long before its meat is in our cooking-pot. I have nothing else to say!' "[284]

As Sorkrark's words evince, he embodies not only the ideal of the Inughuit nomadic personality, but also "authentic" masculinity. This affects the so-far stable and coherent identity of the European visitor, who begins to feel "feminine" passivity[285] as ascribed to him and expressed in the old hunter's exhortation: " 'The man who idles about the house when spring is here is wasting his life!,' " for " '[t]his is when men start off on their travels.' "[286] To avoid feminisation in the eyes of Sorkrark (and the readers) and to be legitimised as a male, the European traveller adopts the role of a true Inughuit hunter to follow the bear-slayer on a hunting excursion, unaccompanied by women, like the old hunter, because " 'where men are gathered together there is pretty well always a woman as well.' "[287] The idealised masculinity of Sorkrark and other Inughuit hunters subordinates the North-Greenlandic space to a community of men, strong and independent of relations with women.

Sorkrark's constructed idealisation is predicated first and foremost on his genuineness as a free man of nature, which can be interpreted as springing from a more general Western desire, shaped by a longing for the primaeval and the authentic which was thriving in industrialised countries at the turn of the 19th century.[288] The Inughuit bear-slayer embodies a *quasi*-Edenic primitivism, which

284 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 39.

285 Carolyn Martin Shaw writes in a similar fashion about travellers who envied African nomads their male image. Carolyn Martin Shaw, *Colonial Inscriptions: Race, Sex, and Class in Kenya* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1995), p. 12.

286 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 42.

287 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 42.

288 Within Western modernist discourse, metropolitan authors associated with European modernism showed an interest in "the primitive" and used the character of a native in order to look at their own, increasingly undistinctive culture through a relativising lens. Western thinking about the Other was, however, informed by a paradox as, on the one hand, non-Western societies were primitive, but on the other they represented

serves as a corrective to Western civilisation and its lifestyle. At the same time, the way Sorkrark is portrayed adds to the idealised construction of the world in *The New People*, but unlike in the representations of the North-Greenlandic realm and other characters, the narrator is far less detached from the object he describes. His interaction with the man opens up a space for questioning the European subject's stable identity, which modifies his ways of discursivising reality.

In the Inughuit language, "Sorkrark" means "a whalebone"; in the original narrative the name was translated into Danish as *barde*, which also denotes a "bard," i.e. a travelling poet. This is actually the function performed by Sorkrark in Rasmussen's tale: he is an Arctic poet whose pithy expressions encapsulate the wisdom of many generations and whose life philosophy inspires the young European traveller to engage in further action. Sorkrark's departure on a male hunting expedition has him musing: "Happy Sorkrark! Thou wast born with an energy that will never let thee rest. Thou must live travelling because thou canst not stand always and every day to return to the same pen. The domestic animal nature has never formed part of thy composition."

"The world is large, that men may take it in possession. And so, when the travelling fever comes over thee, then do thou fling thyself on thy sledge, lord of thy day, master of thy dogs!"[289]

In the narrator's perception, Sorkrark is precisely an incarnation of freedom, self-reliance and primaeval authenticity expectations of which were articulated early in *The New People* and which the entire narrative celebrates. "The domestic animal nature" is contrasted with the animal instinct that forbids resting, with domestication serving as an opposition to vital wildness, a prerequisite of being constantly on the move. In the similes in which human individuals are compared to the animal world, nature is pitted against and eulogised above culture.

Rasmussen's narrator, who acknowledges that Sorkrark's view of life is superior to the enslavement characteristic of modern societies, follows the Inughuit bear-slayer and, in this way, makes a first step towards adopting the identity of an Arctic hunter – one that is free, unfettered by culture and perfectly adjusted

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the state of nature on which all societies should be founded. Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, p. 101; Simon During, "Rousseau's Patrimony: Primitivism, Romance and Becoming Other," in: *Colonial Discourse, Postcolonial Theory*, eds. Francis Barker et al. (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 53.

289 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 42–43.

to living in the Arctic setting, in a word, a true "superman," as the Inughuit were pictured at the turn of the century.[290] The narrator comes to perceive the North-Greenlandic space as a place where one can withdraw from society to live up to one's romantic phantasies, though the narrator's words express a more ambivalent longing. Living a truly nomadic life, unconstrained by the limitations of Western civilisation, one can venture into a remote, foreign world in order to take possession of it. For the European polar explorer, the journey not only brings joy occasioned by "the rich possibilities of life,"[291] but also metaphorically signifies capturing "new" lands and subjecting them to the domination of the metropolis, which craves grand deeds and glory. It is also for this purpose that he seeks to become a genuine Arctic traveller by acquiring knowledge from the best experts in the field, mastering Inughuit hunting techniques and their nomadic lifestyle and endorsing the worldview that informs their attitudes.

The narrator's pondering on Sorkrark is the first instance of the self-othering of the European traveller, i.e. finding oneself in and identifying with the Other.[292] The strategy involves more than just an imitation of the peripheral norms by the centre through superficial "self-spectacularisation," that is, by transformation into an exotic object in order to trigger the interest of one's own community.[293] The meeting with Sorkrark affords the European traveller an opportunity of becoming-Other,[294] which results from crossing the boundaries and thresholds demarcated by obsessive attempts at capturing otherness in knowledge.

290 Fienup-Riordan, *Freeze Frame,* p. 15; Gaupseth, "Naive naturbarn," p. 214. This manner of presenting the Inughuit is pervasive in Astrup, while the accounts by Holm and Garde and by Nansen are far more ambivalent in their images of the Greenlanders of the east coast. Nansen's narrator can question the utility of native techniques of travelling in the Arctic and native geographical knowledge while emphasising the superiority of the European (Norwegian) means of transport and European knowledge. Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 332, 377–378.

291 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 79.

292 During, "Rousseau's Patrimony," p. 47.

293 Dominika Ferens, "Zwiedzanie cudzych kolonii. Wiedza i władza w afrykańskich powieściach Karola Maya," *Er(r)go*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (2004), p. 84. Ferens cites ample examples of self-spectacularisation practised by authors of travel novels (e.g. wearing Oriental garments or having an Oriental spouse) and concludes her examination by stating that later they "described their experience of the exotic in books for white readers." Ferens, "Zwiedzanie cudzych kolonii," p. 84.

294 Islam defines becoming-Other as "a process of self-transformation in the proximity of the other." Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. 76. Besides becoming-Other, another option listed by Simon During is "going native" entirely. During, "Rousseau's Patrimony," p. 64.

Apostrophising the old bear-slayer, the passage above is thus the young traveller's response to the "call of the Other" which he hears despite the boundary between the Other and his own self. This means that the Other takes hold of him even though he does not entirely eschew the Eurocentric worldview expressed in the expansionist desire to subjugate new territories. Still, taking part in a hunting excursion together with the much-admired Sorkrark is an opportunity to cross to the other side. It is there, in a nomadic settlement far away from his European travel companions and in a constant chase after game, that he can engage in the bilateral process of mutuality and go beyond the Eurocentric point of view.[295]

The interaction with Sorkrark triggers changes in the European traveller's identity and way of life, which affects the representations of the Inughuit in *The New People*. In the subsequent chapters, the narrator goes on trips with the natives, unaccompanied by the other European explorers. As he physically moves away from Agpat, the representation of North Greenland as a space of friendliness and abundance is gradually destabilised. The shattering of this image is prominent in "A Summer Journey," a chapter that describes a foray undertaken by the narrator, his West-Greenlandic companion Jørgen Brønlund and two Inughuit, Sitdluk and Krisunguark, to see whether the route to the Danish colony at Upernavik is open.

The account of the trip differs stylistically from the rest of *The New People* and is a brief harbinger of Rasmussen's future famed reports from the Thule expeditions. For the most part a diary, it alternates between the past and the

295 Self-othering of the European I-speaker also takes place, albeit to a lesser extent, in Nansen's account and is quite prominent in Astrup's *With Peary near the Pole*. In the former, the narrator talks of his "fast turning Eskimo": "I live as the natives do, eat their food, and am learning to appreciate such dainties as raw blubber, raw halibut-skin, frozen crowberries mixed with rancid blubber, and so on. I talk to the people as well as I can, go out in my 'kayak' with them, fish, and shoot on land and water. In fact, I begin to see that there really is nothing to prevent a European turning Eskimo if he only have his time before him." Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 2, p. 402. In the latter, the narrator does not offer such straightforward statements, instead presenting readers with ample evidence of his shared life with the Inughuit. He adulates the Inughuit as an incarnation of authenticity, long relinquished by the West. This appraisal is best summed up in: "On the whole their morals are at all events in full accord with the ideals of Christianity; but while we who are living under different conditions of life, daily tempting us to disregard ideal principles, must often content ourselves with owning their beauty and our incapacity to live up to them, the poor Innuits may more easily maintain their standard, since they are born under more simple and sounder conditions." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 288.

present tense, the latter suggesting that the events are being described as they happen. This part also establishes the authority of the future polar explorer by using concise, matter-of-fact language and providing a profusion of accurate "technical details," such as dates, geographical locations, stock inventories, items of equipment and methods of finding food.[296] The narrative mode reflects the hardships, inconveniences and dangers involved in travelling across the Arctic, with predominantly short sentences summarising the events of each day.

> We must attempt to reach Netsilivik; perhaps there are men there.
>
> We break up towards midday and drive up to the top of the glacier ridge, about 3400 feet up. We drive all day in a glorious sunshine through deep snow. Marvellously lovely glacier landscapes spread themselves out before us; there is a view over the whole of Whale Sound, with its islands, and the island of Agpat, and Wolstenholme with Jennak. The sea is like a mirror, but up here, where we are driving, a fresh north wind is blowing, and it is cold – in spite of the sun[297].

The diaristic descriptions indicate that the European traveller is traversing the space of North Greenland the way the Inughuit do, that is, by dogsled, hunting for food along the way. While Arctic nature is abundant but not always kindly, he must face up to entirely different aspects of the Inughuit life, such as hunger when game is lacking and cold when the weather changes unpredictably. What results from these experiences is the image of North Greenland as also unfriendly and perilous: "We advance through the fog, seeing nothing and hoping for no more, our feet sore and our stomachs empty. After a few hours' toilsome march, we reach a rapid stream which we cannot cross; and we lie down under a great boulder, discuss the position, and decide which of the dogs we shall be obliged to shoot, if we do not meet with people. We have eaten nothing for forty hours, and the last few days' travelling have been exhausting."[298]

Such a representation is aligned with a well-entrenched Western discourse of an "inhuman" Greenland, which I will analyse in Chapter 3. Furthermore, it helps make sense of the Inughuit experiences of the space ridden with loneliness, starvation and death, which are conveyed in old Merkrusârk's and Panigpak's tales of the great crossing of the Inuit from Canada, which the narrator cites: "Kritdlarssuark's wife, Agpârk, and my father and mother and Ehrè's, died of hunger. And those who were left, and who refused the salmon, began to

296 Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand*, p. 37. These rhetorical devices are strikingly missing in the remaining part of *The New People*.

297 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 74–75.

298 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 75.

eat the dead bodies. Minik and Maktârk were the worst. I saw them eat my father and my mother. I was too young and could not stop them. Then one day Minik flung himself upon me from behind, to kill me and eat me. But fortunately my brother came up just then, and Minik only had time to thrust out my one eye […]."[299]

Evidently, it is enough to leave the last oasis of the region which will come to be called Thule to be devastatingly confronted with the dark side of "friendly North Greenland." The suppressed Other is always upon the heels of the suppressing subject, ready to challenge the metropolitan traveller at any moment.

Mediated by the narrator, the tale of old Merkrusârk makes it clear that Rasmussen's representations of the Inughuit community are also far from unalloyed romanticism and idealisation. Besides noting that Inughuit domineering husbands abuse their wives (which is explained by recourse to anthropological argumentation),[300] orphans are ruthlessly mishandled[301] and deliberate-seeming violence is rampant,[302] the narrator cites old Inughuit legends which abound in gory details, such as cutting people's limbs off,[303] impaling people,[304] slaughtering entire villages, women and children not excepting,[305] and acts of cannibalism.[306] The penumbra of another, quite un-Arcadian, dark and dangerous North Greenland and its inhabitants lurks in the fissures of the story, disrupting the homogeneous narrative of the paradisal condition of the land and human nature.

The emphatic eulogising of the Inughuit hunter in *The New People* is countered by the Inughuit themselves, who, for example, report that "the great Agpalerk" actually shot himself when his own gun exploded in his hand. The story is told to the narrator and his companions by two young hunters who

299 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 33.

300 The chapter entitled "Women" (*Kvinder*) mentions a domestic row between Ehrè and Alekrasina.

301 Describing the orphaned Kajoranguark, the narrator wonders: "it was really rather extraordinary that he had not been put out of the way long ago." Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 51.

302 Inughuit men's ruthless and violent treatment of infertile women is depicted using the example of Sâmik and Ekrariusark in the subchapter entitled "Barren" (*Den Ufrugtbare*). Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 65–68.

303 "The Woman Who Told a Lie" (*Konen, der løj*). Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 60–62.

304 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 61.

305 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 61.

306 "Hunger" (*Sult*). Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, p. 86–88.

speak of the community's elders without the deference which is visible elsewhere in the narrative: "'What do old men want with guns? […] even if they have so thick skulls!'"; "'Old men get confused by their hunting zeal, thinking they can handle gunpowder like sand and loading in a hurry.'"[307] Voiced by the Inughuit themselves, such critical judgments undermine the very foundation of the pedestalised image of the "noble savage," exposing its artificiality, instability and constructedness. As a variety of the idealisation trope, the construct is but one of the othering strategies in which the Other is cast in a form with which it can never be identical. This attempt at universalisation by imposing a fixed identity on the Other must be unremittingly repeated if it is to produce any lasting results. The surplus of meaning in Rasmussen's narrative proves that, despite concerted discursive effort, it is impossible either to completely idealise the Other or to construct a fully homogeneous, autonomous subject.

3.2 The Eskimos are Primitive: Subverting the Essentialisation Trope

As already stated, the idealisation of North Greenland and Inughuit primordiality is one of the prevalent tropes employed in *The New People*, yet to unveil the latent meanings of the work it is necessary to explore how this primordiality is constructed discursively. In her article "Naive naturbarn eller ren klokskap? Inuittene i Vilhjalmur Stefanssons vennlige Arktis," Norwegian scholar Silje Gaupseth examines the rhetorical devices used to describe the primordiality of the Inuit by the anthropologist and polar explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson in his book *The Friendly Arctic* (1921) by leaning on the work of anthropologist Johannes Fabian. In the following, a similar analytical approach is employed in order to show how Rasmussen's account establishes the scientific authority of the narrator by using vocabulary and linguistic structures specific to the ethnographical descriptions of the colonial period.

Quoted above, the episodes in which the travellers chance upon the deserted Inughuit dwellings and first encounter the residents of Agpat, copiously feature the adjective "primitive." The abodes are "primitive" and have "an odour of paganism and magic incantation," while fur-wearing people produce "an extraordinarily barbaric first impression."[308] All possessions of the Inughuit and practices involved in their way of life exude a temporal alterity which locates the

307 Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, p. 94.
308 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 5, 9.

narrator and the objects he observes in different time-orders. Called by Fabian "allochronism,"[309] this device consists in distancing oneself from the "Other" by relegating it to the European past and, thereby, consolidating the asymmetry of power between the observing (scientific) subject and the observed object of the cultural encounter.

The Inughuit, who are scrutinised and described by the narrator, have an ensemble of interrelated properties attributed to them, such as "primitivism," "wildness" and "barbarity," all of which serve to conceptualise temporal relationships. The frequently employed descriptor "pagan" [Danish: *Hedninger*][310] should also be interpreted within the framework of Fabian's theory, given that in the Greek model of world-perception, which Christianity appropriated, savage barbarians at the bottom of the hierarchy were equated with pagans: imperfect human beings who, lagging behind European levels of progress and development, did not endorse European worship or did not follow European norms.[311] Consequently, consigning the inhabitants of North Greenland to the European past by calling them "primitive," "savage," "barbaric" and "pagan" could entail denying them their full humanity.

One of the allochronic devices listed by Fabian is portraying "others" as children, i.e. creatures that likewise find themselves at an earlier developmental stage than the European who discusses them. This trope, which Jo-Ann Wallace refers to simply as "the child," is very deeply ingrained in colonial literature[312] and is also often used in Danish discourse on Greenlanders.[313] However, in *The New People* it is employed only twice: in the discussion of male-female relationships among the Inughuit, where married couple Ehrè and Alekrasina are said to have "laughed and gambolled like a pair of wanton children"[314]; and at the very

309 Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 32.

310 "Pagans" of the east coast are also dwelled on in the narratives by Holm and Garde and by Nansen. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 187, 189; Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, p. 321.

311 Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne & Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 19, 24. *Barbarus* became synonymous with *poganus* (a pagan, a non-believer) in the 4th century AD, and was used in this sense, for example, by Pope Gregory the Great. Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, p. 20.

312 Jo-Ann Wallace, "De-Scribing 'The Water-Babies': 'The Child' in Post-Colonial Theory," in: *De-Scribing Empire: Post-Colonialism and Textuality*, eds. Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 176.

313 See Lubowicka, "Anaruk og Odarpi."

314 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 55.

beginning of the work, where the narrator talks of the indigenous population as "Nature's children" [Danish: *Naturbørn*], having a "winning bashfulness" about them.[315] Thus the child trope is not extensively used by Rasmussen, and its ideological force in *The New People* is considerably limited as compared to accounts by earlier travellers.[316] Although the Inughuit are portrayed as representing the European past and belonging to another temporal order, they are still viewed as independent subjects in no need of the care or protection of the "adult" Europeans.[317]

Not only the semantics but also the syntax of Rasmussen's text is influenced by travel writing conventions. Specifically, it tends to employ what is called the "ethnographic present."[318] Rasmussen's expedition account unfolds in the past tense, yet it is interspersed with present-tense passages on sundry matters of everyday Inughuit life and customs. Resembling an ethnography, they are sometimes barely distinguishable from the narrative proper. The present tense used in them serves a different purpose than the dramatic present tense which I addressed above. Here, it registers phenomena or features of people from different cultures in a way that reinforces and confers a common validity on statements about them.[319] Consequently, separate remarks about the Inughuit and their habits are generalised onto their entire community, envisioning it as static and unchangeable. Admittedly, the narrator of *The New People* does not principally homogenise the Inughuit, but his account does include passages which employ the devices and tropes censured by Fabian.

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315 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 10.

316 The narrator in Astrup's account is also evidently wary of comparing the Inughuit to children. He only relies on Rasmussen-like metaphors, such as "the country's own children" and "this child of nature," or indeed repudiates the stereotypical Western perception of the Inughuit as naïve and freely expressing their "childlish joy that one would expect from these dark heathen". Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 150, 289, 327. In the Norwegian's narrative, it is only the description of Kolotengva's wife – as "a laughing child, with rosy cheeks and glittering white teeth" – that clearly belongs to the colonial template of describing a "typical Eskimo." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 292.

317 In Denmark, the idea was widespread that as Greenlanders were not "grown up" enough culturally and socially, they were in need of Danish "care." This belief justified the Danish presence in Greenland and colonialism. Lubowicka, "Anaruk og Odarpi," pp. 6–7.

318 Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 80; Pratt calls the same narrative trope "a timeless present tense." Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 64.

319 Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 80.

"On the whole, I have retained the pleasantest impression of the mutual relations between man and woman. If we can take their own social and moral ideas as the basis of our judgment, it must be conceded in their favour that their life is happier and more free from care than that of civilised people in general. Life has no bitter disappointments in store for them, because they are not brought up to believe in theories which in practical life collapse."[320] The present perfect tense, combined with the first-person singular in "I have retained," underscores the narrator's scientific aim for the text from which readers find out directly what he can report as a fact.[321] Rasmussen's first-person narrator draws on his own observations to transmit knowledge about the Inughuit, who are constructed as a "third person" in the text: "Life has no bitter disappointments in store for *them*." Citing *Problems in General Linguistics* by Emile Benveniste, Fabian claims that the "third person" is actually not a "person" altogether, but rather "the verbal form whose function is to express the *non-person*" and is constructed as the Other situated outside the dialogue between the "first" and the "second person" (i.e. the narrator and his Western audience).[322] The "third-person" Inughuit as pictured here are denied coevalness[323]: they are made into an object of scientific description which amplifies the contrasts between them and the describing subject and enhances the distance between the two.[324]

Rendered as static and immutable, the population's customs can also affect the cultural landscape of North Greenland as pictured in the account: "When Eskimos, travelling from one fishing-place to another, meet with a quarry, they generally store the greater part of the meat in a deposit, as it is often a matter of difficulty to transport it. These stores of meat are regarded as places of refreshment for any travellers, and there are always enough of them scattered along a day's driving distance, to render it unnecessary for any one to carry provisions for a journey, in the more frequented districts. The meat is stored under formidable piles of stones, to protect it from bears and foxes."[325] Despite constructing

320 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 65.
321 Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 84.
322 Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 85.
323 Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 35.
324 Constructing the Inughuit as the "third person" of ethnographic description is a major feature of Astrup's *With Peary near the Pole,* which uses the dramatic present tense and directly quotes the Inughuit far more rarely than *The New People*. Gaupseth shows that such devices are pervasively used to describe the Inuit by Vilhjalmur Stefansson in his *The Friendly Arctic*. Gaupseth, "Naive naturbarn," pp. 204–210.
325 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 44.

a largely positive image resulting from the overall prosperity, which is due to prudence and husbandry practised by the inhabitants of the North, the present tense – paired in this passage with adverbs "generally" and "always" – perpetuates the authoritative view of North Greenland, virtually abrogating any alternative one. Similarly to the ethnographic descriptions of the Inughuit, the territory they inhabit makes an impression of being "frozen" and "conserved" or, to use Bhabha's term, "fixed" in its set construction.[326]

Notably, the ethnographic present tense goes hand in hand with definite nominal forms in both the singular and plural, which usually function as grammatical subjects or objects in the sentence/clause. In cataloguing behaviours and customs, the narrator objectifies the people he describes by using collective notions, such as "they," "he," "Eskimos," "Eskimo," and definite nouns which refer to their culture (which in English is conveyed by pairing such nouns with the definite article). In the passages above, this is exemplified in the plural noun "Eskimos" [Danish: *Eskimoerne*] and the expression "the mutual relations between man and woman" [Danish: *Forholdet mellem Kvinde og Mand*].

In Danish, definite noun forms are formed by morphological suffixes in the singular and the plural and are used to refer to something that is familiar, mentioned again or generally known. When forms such as "the Eskimos" [Danish: *Eskimoerne*], i.e. the plural definite noun denoting *all* the Inughuit, or "the Eskimo" [Danish: *Eskimoen*], i.e. the singular definite noun denoting a representative of the group, are followed by the present tense of a verb, indisputable truths are established about the population of North Greenland as a collective, defined whole.[327] In a similar manner, the phrase "the mutual relations between man and woman" subsumes all relationships of Inughuit couples, disjoined from any specific time or context – it acts as a synecdoche making all

326 Besides essentialising adverbs such as "always" and "never," instrumental to the "fixing" of the Inughuit are also other expressions employed in the narrative, for example "with genuine Eskimo sham modesty," and references to the Inughuit viewpoints, e.g. "the Eskimos say then," "as the Eskimo says," "as the Eskimos say," "as the Eskimos said" and "the sound principle of the Eskimos." Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 16, 17–18, 39, 48, 70, 87.

327 The definite singular and plural forms of "Eskimo," "Inuit," "Greenlander" and "native" or of the names of respective regions' populations, e.g. "Angmagssaliks" [Danish: *Angmagsalikerne*] are used very frequently in expedition accounts by Scandinavian polar explorers. See Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 115, 227, 254; Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 336; 380–381. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 67, 69, 99, 105, 144, 264.

Greenlanders virtually identical. Such an essentialising mode of representation turns the Inughuit into a catalogue of features which is embedded into another temporal order than that of the narrator, who performs the inscription, and of his metropolitan readers. What results is a stereotyped construction in which local differences and the dynamics of change are reduced to accommodate them to the externally imposed representation that fixes the Inughuit in the static, monolithic construction of a "bodyscape."[328]

Coupled with particular temporal forms, syntactic constructions that cast the Inughuit as a "third person" of the ethnographic description reinforce the image of their culture as belonging to a different temporal order, while the ethnographic present tense and definite nominal forms homogenise this culture and imbue it with invariability. The narrator, whose presence is as a rule masked by the "rhetoric of absence,"[329] talks from the position of power identified with the place of the Western scientist, which enables him to demonstrate why the Inughuit are "typical of the type."[330] This is yet another othering practice which results from the position of the European subject, who (as in the case of idealisation of the described world) has transcendent features despite expressing himself through an autonomous and stable "I." The allochronic devices employed in the text place the Inughuit in another time than the time of the Europeans, a manoeuvre which is bound up with a one-directional pattern of the history of progress and modernity.[331] If the Inughuit and the space they inhabit are fixed as examples of stagnation, backwardness and tradition, this practice can be understood as an ideological instrument of power serving a political agenda by, among others, justifying the take-over of the indigenous territory by an expansionist Western state or its agents.[332]

In *The New People*, the allochronic devices contribute to constructing the Inughuit and North Greenland as unchangeable cultural essences, produced by simplifying, universalising narratives or statements, much like Said's Orient and its inhabitants. This enables Westerners to frame the North-Greenlandic Other as a stable, homogeneous entity against which to define themselves. Underscoring that the Inughuit are a culturally backward people helps tout Western societies as most advanced and, consequently, authorised to establish the conditions and

328 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 64.
329 Barnes and Duncan, "Introduction: Writing Worlds," p. 7.
330 Harrison, *Postcolonial Criticism,* p. 100.
331 Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 143.
332 Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 144.

benchmarks for the evaluation of the progress of other peoples. This gesture is performed in *The New People* by the authority of the scientific, first-person self, whose characteristically anthropological depiction fixes the Inughuit as the Other of Europe, i.e. as "pagan, primitive and childish," despite their nobility, vitality and communion with nature as proclaimed by the trope of idealisation. Although the practice of othering concerns predominantly people, it can also affect the way of representing the area a given community inhabits and can consolidate it as essentially homogeneous and immutable, thereby negating any difference within it.

However, such a reading of *The New People* is barely tenable since, like the idealised images of North Greenland and the Inughuit, the native as trapped in his authenticity and primitivism is hardly a stable concept. This transpires in the semantics of the plot in Rasmussen's work, both in the information transmitted directly by the narrator and in the words of the Inughuit he quotes.

Clearly versed in matters Greenlandic, the narrator underscores in several communication contexts that the Inughuit have already come in contact with visitors from the outside world, for example with the American polar explorer Robert Edwin Peary[333] (whose long sojourn in the area of Smith Sound made the Inughuit dependent on Western commodities, especially firearms), Scottish whalers (whose ships regularly come to the area)[334] and other expeditions.[335] This means that the Inughuit culture must also have undergone and is still undergoing changes, which precludes perceiving it as static and unchangeable. This is exemplified in old Merkrusârk's tale about the Inuit who came over from Canada in the latest great tribal migration. Quoted by the narrator, Merkrusârk talks about the Inughuit adopting the customs of the Canadian Inuit, e.g. the fashion of eating meat together called *amerkratut*, building igloos with long passages and entrances from below, using bows and arrows, catching salmon with spears and making kayaks for hunting.[336] As the old Inughuaq portrays it, the culture of North Greenlanders is a dynamically developing entity which is impacted by foreign influences and transformations, as is the case with any other society. This vision contradicts the essentialised image of immutability, which the ethnographic

333 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 65.

334 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 69.

335 For example, a meeting with the members of the Norwegian "Gjøa" expedition led by Roald Amundsen is mentioned. Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 78.

336 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 31–32. Changes in the Inughuit culture precipitated by the influx of immigrants from Arctic Canada are also referred to in Astrup's narrative. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 131.

description acribes to the most northernly people of the world. The dynamic picture is re-asserted by Imerârsuk's tale about the way their fathers hunted reindeer in days of yore: "Back then everyone was an archer. Young people like us only played with bows and arrows as children, but for the old people they were not just toys. They preferred making them out of reindeer horns bound together by sinewy thread; these were bows shooting far for those strong enough to tighten them."[337]

Imerârsuk's story intimates that the Inughuit abandoned bow-shooting as a result of changes in their society.[338] In Rasmussen's narrative, most of the Inughuit are described as using firearms, all their primordiality notwithstanding; even Sorkrark, whom the narrator admires and idealises so much, carries guns.[339] The text also implies that the Inughuit are familiar with canned food, knives and needles, objects which are mentioned only in passing as they appear in tales.[340] Such moments undercut the trope of silence over whatever could suggest that the Inughuit are less "primitive" than the narrator pictures them to be, a strategy that permeates *The New People*. Evidently, describing Inughuit culture as a fixed entity immune to changes is not the sole mode of representing it.

The allochronic devices which serve to essentialise the Other are also challenged in *The New People*; and the chapter entitled "Hunting for reindeer" [Danish: *Efter Vildren*] stands out in this respect. The narrative relates the narrator joining three Inughuit: Imerârsuk, Odârk and Agpalersuârsuk to take part in another hunt. Having followed Sorkrark to a hunting settlement, the narrator takes another step towards "becoming-Other" as his distance from his European travel companions is growing. During the summer expedition, the European traveller experiences the genuine life of Arctic hunters with its hunger, feverish chase of game, freezing mornings and story-telling at night. Getting immersed in the Inughuit experiential world, the narrator transforms, which is registered in the changes in his way of talking about the Inughuit, where the ethnographic present tense comes to be supplanted with subjectival phrases into which his own "I" is incorporated: "It is always a great pleasure to get meat from another catch when one has been living on a monotonous diet for a long time. The

337 Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, p. 96.

338 Changes in reindeer hunting are reported in Astrup's account, which informs that bows and arrows had been entirely abandoned in the aftermath of Peary's expedition to North Greenland in 1894 "and the time is not far distant when they will be on view only in the glass cases of a few collectors". Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 135.

339 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 49.

340 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 53, 56–59.

reindeer hunters want walrus and the walrus-catchers reindeer. Therefore the two new arrivals went straight up to our pot and served themselves the still only half-cooked meat while we ate the reindeer meat raw like the great delicacy it is in these regions."[341]

Although the present tense in this passage also confers a general validity on statements about the Inughuit (an effect strengthened by the adverb "always"), the collective pronoun "we" is strikingly used to refer to the three companions from Agpat and, later, to Osarkrak and Krisunguark as well. The characters referred to as "we," therein the narrator, invariably practise what was related in the present tense before and thus imposed as indisputable truth for all individuals who inhabit "these regions." There is no exception to the rule formulated in the ethnographic present tense, and counting himself among the Inughuit, fixed in their essence as they are, the narrator must also conform to the local customs.

The narrator siding with the essentialised natives disrupts at this point the previously constructed elaborate division into the first-person-singular observer who reports what he considers fact and the third-person Inughuit, an object of his report. The Inughuit are no longer presented as "third persons" but rather as "first persons." Moreover, the collective "we" can and does transition into the indefinite *man* (in Danish, translated to English as "one"). As this happens, the narrative of *The New People* morphs into an intimate personal confession: "Reindeer hunting is special in that the excitement of the occasion overwhelms one completely; one only talks about, only thinks about reindeer, and when one closes his eyes to go to sleep one sees reindeer; and if one finally manages to sleep one dreams about reindeer only. When one has been in the mountains for a couple of days one is no longer tired out; and one is happy to starve during the daytime and freezes with dignity in some mountain crevice at night – as long as one may hope to spot more animals."[342]

In this passage, it is impossible to decide from what position the narrator addresses the reader – whether he is talking only on his own behalf or perhaps on behalf of others as well, and if the latter, who those others might be. The

341 Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, p. 89.

342 The original quote in Danish is as follows: "Der er det ved Renjagter, at Dagens Spænding ganske bliver Herre over en; man taler kun om, tænker kun paa Rener, og lukker man Øjnene for at sove, ser man Rener; og falder man endelig i Søvn, drømmer man kun om Rener. Har man først været et Par Døgn i Fjældene, kan man ikke længer løbe sig træt; og man sulter med Glæde om Dagene og fryser med Anstand i en eller anden Klippespalte om Nætterne – bare man endnu har fjerneste Haab om at se flere Dyr." Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, p. 95.

Danish impersonal *man* translated into English makes purely individual experience a highly unlikely referent and strongly implies a more general truth. However, this is not the universal truth of the ethnographic description which produces a distance between the perceiving subject and the perceived object and fixes the Other in a timeless, essentialised construction. Islam argues that the English indefinite pronoun "one," which is an equivalent of the Danish indefinite pronoun *man*, dismantles "the illocutionary frame of I-thou" and triggers the kind of individuation which philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari refer to as *haecceitas*. When using the impersonal "one" (*man*), the narrator stops being the subject of the sentence and becomes part of an anonymous statement, which, according to Islam, means "individuation beyond representation" and signals "the moments of becoming, becoming other."[343]

Seized by reindeer fever, the narrator as an Arctic hunter abolishes the gap between the reality he depicts and his own self, expressing the wisdom, perception and experience of North Greenland as produced by his genuine interaction with the environment and people rather than by the imposition of his own knowledge through "a machine of othering."[344] Rasmussen's narrator, like an Inughuit hunter who kills in order to survive, has his mind steadily set on game, irrespective of whether the prospect of getting to hunt it is close or remote.[345] This is indicates that as he describes the world, he comes to accept its rules and becomes part of it, which is intimated by Canadian writer John Moss, who, when writing about the Arctic landscape, insists: "if truly there, you cannot tell yourself apart from it."[346] What is expressed through the Danish form *man* is the narrator's participation in the reality he depicts and the indivisible communal experience of it, which transcends the frames of colonial discourse and the insurmountable distance this discourse produces between the Self and the Other. As the European traveller is becoming the Other and the process is conveyed in the text, the construction

343 Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. 76, 223 (footnote 237).

344 Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. viii. In his reading of *Fra Grønland til Stillehavet* Brøgger also pays attention to the different narratorial points of view in the account and interprets the switching between first-person and third-person narrative as indicative of Rasmussen's "pluralistic consciousness." Brøgger, "Mellom tradisjon og modernitet," pp. 194–195.

345 Hastrup points to such an attitude to animals and hunting as "a profoundly integrated part of Eskimo culture." Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, p. 441.

346 Moss, *Enduring Dreams*, p. 5.

of the autonomous and stable subject which underpins the idealising and essentialising representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit is undermined and his authority questioned.

In *The New People*, the authority of the European subject is certainly far from complete. Even the plot of the narrative offers insights which interfere with his view of the unchangeable, monolithic culture of the Inughuit. This happens, for example, when cultural encounters in the North-Greenlandic contact zone are evoked either directly by the narrator or by the indigenous inhabitants he quotes. Such passages generate a vision of a heterogeneous culture in constant flux, which defies the monolithic, essentialised representations produced by the anthropological description. Once again, the text of *The New People* brings to the fore the split in the European subject who, despite insisting on the authority which comes with his privileged position, fails to stage himself as a stable and unchangeable source of knowledge, for, like the objects he discursivises, he bears difference within himself. As a result, cracks appear in the narrative, channelling the representations that oppose the hegemonic ideology which legitimises the unequal power distribution.

The position of the European subject as an anthropological authority that *studies* his objects changes as the European traveller increasingly engages in interaction with the Inughuit and his physical and mental distance from the remaining European expedition members grows. This is mirrored in the increased use of the *man*-form, which serves to include the perception and knowledge of the Other rather than to detach one from them, which is what the anthropological description accomplishes. Depictions which employ the *man* pronoun express crossing the boundary between the self of the European traveller and the Inughuit Other, which is emphasised in the introduction to *The New People* and made possible by the European traveller's meeting with Sorkrark. Instead of perceiving and constructing the reality in opposition to himself and his own status, the narrator becomes a traveller in the "in-between" – between the Same and the Other. Thus, the narrator's reliance on the *man*-form is part of his threshold-crossing negotiations, while his native knowledge is a testament to his interaction with the Other and to a gradual metamorphosis of the "moved body" of a sedentary traveller into the "moving body" of a nomadic traveller, which comes to pass as he transcends successive boundaries.[347]

347 Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. 77.

3.3 We and Others: Reversing and Interrogating Binary Oppositions

In my argument above, I concluded that the construction of the homogeneous and undifferentiated alterity of the Inughuit and North Greenland, which is perpetuated in essentialisation practices, serves to frame them as a diametrical opposite of the Same. This process relies on binary oppositions and/or strategies of reversal which function as tropes of colonial literature in *The New People*.

I showed that, in the episode when the expedition arrive at Agpat, the narrator's mental detachment from the reality he observes and experiences is expressed in binary codings of the known vs. the other and the strange. Binary oppositions and the closely related device that French historian François Hartog calls "inversion"[348] lie at the heart of othering and contribute to the establishment of the Eurocolonial discursive order, where the savagery of the Inughuit is contrasted with the civilisation (and, consequently, cultural superiority) of the travellers from Europe.[349]

The binary codifications used in *The New People* focus predominantly on the nature-culture opposition in conjunction with the primordiality epitomised by the Inughuit and civilisation identified with the European travellers.[350] Admittedly, the narrator admires the free and manly life of the Inughuit "noble savages" as true people possessing essential traits such as authenticity, instinct, liberty and innocence contrasted with the artificiality, calculation and thralldom of civilisation-corrupted Europeans, yet the different position of Europeans on the ladder of civilisational

348 The figure of inversion is employed by the traveller to translate cultural difference, following the pattern in which "otherness is transcribed as antisameness." François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1988), p. 213.

349 Like the terms "*a*" and "the converse of *a*," which form the axis of Hartog's inversion figure, the entities of Said's Orientalist discourse "coexist in a state of tension produced by what is believed to be a radical difference." This difference is, according to Said, the result of the Orientalist practices that serve to define the Occident (Europe) "as its [the Orient's] contrasting image, idea, personality, experience." Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 45, 2. Therefore, binary oppositions and inversion both afford an opportunity to talk about the Same by using the Other and translating the Other's difference.

350 The binary opposition of the "natural state" of the Inughuit and the "civilisation" of the European travellers recurs throughout Rasmussen's text. Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 23, 38, 41, 50, 56, 63–65, 78–79, 87.

progress is nonetheless highlighted.[351] The essential features of the Inughuit, albeit favourably assessed, connote the pre-Christian and pre-modern past of Europe, at a lower rung of cultural development than the current Western model. This is where Hartog's inversion comes to the fore, because a part of the Inughuit's primitivism lies in that, as opposed to the civilised Westerners, they are "uncivilised." It is only in the context of coping with Arctic conditions that the Inughuit are unmatched by Europeans, but this is founded on their primitive Greenlandic essence, as illustrated in the following passage: "You take your rest when it offers itself, and you take it thoroughly, and drink it in in deep draughts; that storm and misfortune must be slept through, is the sound principle of the Eskimos. Then, they can take a brush, when necessary, and there are few of us civilised men who have as much staying power."[352]

The Inughuit surpass "culture peoples" in features promoting perfect adaptation to the demands of life in the Arctic, but in other matters, such as for example conjugal life, they contradict the cultural standard so thoroughly that animal behaviours rather than human conduct are better suited to convey their ways: "There was an animal lack of restraint about their intercourse and affection which at times vented itself in the most savage outbreaks. The Eskimos are much like animals. The men love their wives; but when the fancy takes them, when they are satiated with love, they maltreat them in a manner that we civilised men

351 In Holm and Garde's account, Greenlanders are described as "uncivilised" and "lagging a few thousand years behind us all." Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 49, 96. Despite numerous idealising depictions of the Inughuit, Astrup's work also abounds in binaries of "natural peoples" contrasted with the "cultured man" [Norwegian: *kulturmenneske*] or "civilised people." Astrup, *With peary near the Pole*, pp. 80, 315. Astrup, *Blandt nordpolens naboer*, pp. 70, 283. The opposition is conveyed by modifiers which define the Inughuit as finding themselves in the "primordial stage of innocence," (the original Norwegian phrase: *i den opringelige uskyldigheds tilstand* is translated as "they are still innocent" in the book's English edition), being "uncontaminated by civilisation" and having their musical sense and religious beliefs at a "low level of development" (the Norwegian phrase *paa et saa lavt trin*, is replaced by "still undeveloped" in the English translation). As "a people just emerging from the stone age", the Inughuit represent the long-gone European past. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 271, 284, 312, 313, 314. Astrup, *Blandt nordpolens naboer*, pp. 241, 278. The adjective "civilised" is reserved exclusively for Europeans and the narrator as one of them: "us Southerners" (the original Norwegian "*os sydboere*," is replaced with an indefinite form [a Southerner] in the English translation of the book), "us white folk" or "the sons of civilization." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 145, 171, 269. Astrup, *Blandt nordpolens naboer*, p. 138.

352 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 87.

would consider brutal. But, say the Eskimos, if affection is to be kept alive, the woman must feel occasionally that the man is strong."[353]

This is one of the most ideologically charged passages about the Inughuit in *The New People*. Cruel behaviours rampant among North-Greenlandic married couples are explained by a recourse to the "state of nature" in which the indigenous population live, which makes them closer to animals than to humans in terms of cultural development. The nature-vs.-culture opposition is overwhelming, and the distance between its poles proves irreducible and irremovable as the two are fixed by the present tense and definite forms discussed in the previous subchapter. The evolutionary comparisons which conjure up physical analogies between the indigenous people and animals are an ingrained trope of colonial literature.[354] In Rasmussen's account they relegate the Inughuit to another temporal order again, thereby making them, to use Hastrup's expression, "infinitely different" from Europeans, who do not refer to themselves by means of beast imagery.[355] In the

353 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 55–56. The English edition of the book does not contain the paragraph in which the Inughuit's behaviour is directly compared to that of dogs. Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, pp. 54–55.

354 Animal similes, which are used as an imperial literary trope called "the beast in man", are associated with 19th-century evolutionary theories and consist in depicting the characters as resembling animals. William Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel 1880–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 72.

355 Kirsten Hastrup, "Den anden sandhed. *Et essay om Knud Rasmussen,*" in: *Et opmærksomt blik. Litteratur, sprog og historie hen over grænserne. Festskrift til Per Øhrgaard*, eds. Christoph Bartmann et al. (København: Museum Tusculanums Forlag, 2004), p. 95. In *The New People*, the Inughuit are likened to animals in the episode of spirit conjuration by Sagdlork, who "sprang about the floor like a wounded animal." Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 21. Animal similes also appear in earlier polar expedition accounts. In Nansen, they refer both to Ravna and Balto, the Sami members of the group, and to Greenlanders from the east and west coasts: Ravna used to "lie curled up like a dog in some corner of the deck" (Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, p. 124), East Greenlanders had "the lightness and agility of cats" (p. 325), their cries resemble "the barking of dogs" (p. 332), an even "a whole herd of cows" (p. 335), while a woman running away from the travellers "fled like a rabbit" (p. 400). In Holm and Garde, comparisons of Greenlanders to animals are more frequent, but they are mostly accumulated in the depictions of a shamanistic ritual and of a drum-dance. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 45, 179, 302. The narrator of *With Peary near the Pole* emphatically repudiates such animal comparisons, which can be seen in the following passage devoted to Kolotengva: "Some would probably say that he was directed in the right course by animal instinct, but this would be an insult to our good Esquimau friend. No; the human brain appears to be on the whole

passage above, the Inughuit and their conduct are entirely equated with the world of nature, of which they are part in the same way as animals and the landscape are.

Unlike other authors, Rasmussen in *The New People* does not project an opposition between the "noble savages" of the yet-uncolonised region of Greenland and the Greenlanders from the western colony, who – impoverished and "vitiated" by Western civilisation, as they are pictured – fall short of meeting the Europeans' expectations and visions of "typically Greenlandic" primordiality and authenticity.[356] Rasmussen's narrator scarcely refers to Danish Greenland, and if he does so, it is only in order to compare it with North Greenland and point out how much they differ culturally – in house building, sledge making, clothing, local customs and beliefs – whereby the reader gets a glimpse of the narrator's hybrid and split identity. The Inughuit and North Greenland are thus re-affirmed as the Other in opposition to the narrator's familiar West-Greenlandic setting, but this happens without recourse to the discourse of civilisational critique or, more specifically, to criticism of Danish colonial rule in Greenland and its largely disastrous consequences.[357]

In terms of worship, the Inughuit are conceptualised as pagan in contrast to Christian "civilised men" [Danish: *Kulturmennesker*], yet both paganism and Christianity are presented as bound up with two disparate systems of references, and the Inughuit beliefs are discussed in their own right without any interference from European notions. While the narrator evaluates Inughuit beliefs at the beginning of the account, which serves to emphasise the alterity of North Greenland and its inhabitants in order to dramatise the plot sequence, he later respects and, even, displays a fascination with *the difference* of their utterly unique spiritual life: "no other magician could crawl out of his skin, and then draw it on again; but he could do that. Any man who saw a magician in this state, 'flesh-bare,' would die, they declared."

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very similar, whether it is in the skull of the North Greenland Esquimau or in the angular cranium of an African pigmy, and the man could only have done what he did by means of practical observations." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 328.

356 Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 40, 49. In Nansen's *The First Crossing of Greenland*, the "savage" and "uncivilised" Greenlanders of the east coast are discreditingly compared with Greenlanders from the Danish colony, who are described almost exclusively by means of favourable adjectives as part of the Western "civilised world." Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 2, pp. 176–177.

357 These themes are explicitly addressed in both *The Danish Umiaq Expedition* and *The First Crossing of Greenland*, but the passages which address them were dropped from the English edition of Nansen's book published in 1890. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 175–176; Nansen, *Paa ski over Grønland*, p. 626.

"Such a man was Sagdlork."[358]

While watching the spectacle of Sagdlork's spirit incantation, the narrator describes the shaman through what he sees and through other people's words: "*It seemed as though* Sagdlork were fetching his words from a long distance, as though he were struggling with an invisible being,"[359] without directly discrediting what he calls "heathen mysteries"[360] or comparing them with Christian rites. Unlike the accounts by Holm and Garde or by Astrup, where spirit conjuration is presented with understanding but is explicitly regarded as deceitful,[361] *The New People* does not discount native rituals and beliefs, which emphasises that European and Inughuit modes of life are equally valid despite and *because of* their differences. As a result, the naturalness of the imperial ideology is undercut.[362]

Another clear binary opposition featured in *The New People* is the centre-vs.-periphery opposition and the appended identification and alienation of the European subject. In all polar expedition accounts, "home" is equated with Western metropolises, which are at the same time bulwarks of civilisation and the overriding point of reference for all cultural comparisons.[363] As

358 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 17.

359 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 19 (emphasis mine).

360 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 17.

361 The narrator of *With Peary to the Pole* stresses that "I dare not doubt that the holy men themselves are in earnest, remembering the saying that he may tell a lie who believes in it himself." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 321. Holm and Garde's narrative plainly mentions "angekoks' deceptions." Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 305. Although *The First Crossing of Greenland* does not include any accounts of shamanistic rites, its narrator's sceptical attitude to the indigenous beliefs is revealed in branding Greenlanders' use of amulets as "superstition." Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 2, p. 396.

362 The European narrator's scientifically detached view of the rituals which are first described from the native standpoint is expressed only in the second part of *The New People* entitled "Primitive Views of Life," at the very end of a section devoted to Inughuit shamans: "The magicians themselves are undoubtedly self-deceived in the conduct of their incantations; I do not believe that they consciously lie." Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 156. This represents the only moment in the account when spirit conjuration is classified as fraud from the European point of view.

363 In *The Danish Umiaq Expedition* by Holm and Garde, Denmark is referred to as "home" and the "realm of civilisation" as opposed to the Greenlandic "uncivilised world"; Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 58, 136. Astrup's narrative does not leave any doubt, either, that Norway, which is identified with European civislisation and described as "the distant 'ocean-encircled fatherland' " and the "old rocky land, with its wispering forests and green hills," is the narrator's homeland and point of reference.

the narrative commences, the narrator repeatedly highlights the distance from what he considers his "home," i.e. the Western world order. This is most vocally expressed when the European traveller encounters the Inughuit for the first time: "Never in my life have I felt myself to be in such wild, unaccustomed surroundings, never so-far, so very far away from home, as when I stood in the midst of the tribe of noisy Polar Eskimos on the beach at Agpat."[364]

The European traveller seems to be completely alienated, and his estrangement is not alleviated even by the warm welcome offered the visitors by the villagers. The narrator's distancing is conveyed in his persistent references to the Inughuit as "pagan," even though they have proved benevolent and helpful. Underlining the Other's alterity in opposition to the known and the familiar in this fashion is typical of the opening sections of expedition reports, which describe first encounters with the natives and their territory: the Others are always defined by the same modifiers, such as "heathen," "uncivilised," "extraordinary," "savage," "dirty," "far from handsome," "peculiar," "poor specimens of humanity," or having "a gloomy and forbidding appearance."[365] The narrator's word-choices at the beginning of *The New People* evidently indicates that he looks at the space and people from a physical and mental distance, demarcating a boundary between the familiar and the strange by constructing the Other as the opposite of the values with which he identifies. Such a representation of the Inughuit is largely based on popular European literary beliefs about Greenlanders and has little to do with the real inhabitants of North Greenland whom the young traveller meets.

Astup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 333, 342. Still, it is the narrator of *The First Crossing of Greenland* that displays the deepest mental rootedness in his native Norway. His language reflects national pride in all things Norwegian, e.g. winter means of transport, such as sledges and skis (Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland,* vol. 1, p. 33), and eminent scholars and travellers (Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland,* vol. 1, pp. 283, 312, 503; vol. 2, p. 58), as well as emphasising Norway's old links to Greenland, which is characteristic of later "small state imperialism." However, in the English translation of the book, "the old Norwegians" [Norwegian: *de gamle nordmænd*] become "the old Scandinavians", which alters the ideological tenor of the historical relation. Nansen, *På ski over Grønland*, p. 250; Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland,* vol. 1, p. 275.

364 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 9.

365 Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 49; Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, p. 321; Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 74. At the same time, the first encounters with Greenlanders trigger positive responses in the Europeans, which are conveyed in their vocabulary, e.g. "favourable," "friendly," "attractive,", "handsome" and "very winning." Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 49; Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 321–322; 346.

When the expedition members realise that they will not be able to return to Upernavik before winter, they build a stone house in which to winter at Agpat. This prompts the narrator to go down to the sea-shore and have a glimpse at the new shelter from afar: "Up there, then, in that cave half-buried in the cliff, we were to await our fate, the Winter and the Dark. We were going to pass the next few months of cold and night far north of the civilisation which so many of us regard as a necessity of life. Our tiny winter lair was of cold stones, and we had no stove to warm ourselves with, and no firing."[366]

This passage also relies on clear oppositions to highlight the distance between the remote and what the narrator considers the civilisation-marked centre. His own allegiance to the latter is however left somewhat undecided as the wording "so many of us" may imply that he does not count himself among the "many." The effect of a total opposition is thus stymied and later lifted when the narrator reminisces: "And yet – I felt a warming wave of joy rush through my body, the joy which those who live on their travels feel most keenly: excitement at the rich possibilities of life!"[367]

The ideology which the narrator has taken over from bear-hunter Sorkrark and made his own invalidates the earlier established opposition of the civilised centre and the uncivilised periphery. Living far away from his permanent abode affords him the freedom he covets so much, and being constantly on the move offers him thrilling possibilities which are unavailable when he is bound to one place. Therefore, challenging the Europe-established and endorsed concepts he upheld before, he refers to the stone hut as his "home" as soon as in the following sentence.

This shift is re-affirmed and reinforced when the narrator leaves the village and his European travel companions to take part in hunting excursions in the exclusive company of the Inughuit. When trapped with Krisunguark in a rock cave, he muses: "Far from other humans, out in the middle of the great Polar desolation, it can be exceedingly snug and agreeable for two alone together in a primitive shelter from the howling storm."[368]

In this passage, the narrator's point of reference for the distance he foregrounds is provided not by the Danish centre but by the "the conveniences of the over-heated huts"[369] in the peopled regions of North Greenland. Still, the remoteness and the separation it breeds are positively appraised by being associated with the

366 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 79.
367 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 79.
368 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 88.
369 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 88.

warmth of the hearth, where "you can rest at ease with a good friend, wrapped in soft skins – with well-filled stomachs and delicacies to eat,"[370] until the food runs out. The ideology of the "friendly Arctic" refuses to recede even at the remote, weather-beaten, desert shore.

The narrative of *The New People* pictures one more site of the narrator's cultural allegiance, i.e. West Greenland. This is conveyed in frequent comparisons between the customs and culture of the Inughuit and those of the Greenlanders from the narrator's familiar Danish colony. For example, he is surprised at the sight of Mekro, an Inughuit woman, driving a dogsledge because "[i]n West Greenland you never see a woman drive."[371] The North-Greenlandic Inughuit use a different type of sledge than their brethren from the colonised part of the island, while the language of the former "differ[s] but little from the ordinary Greenlandic."[372] This shows that the European subject harbours within himself a difference which engenders his frequently ambivalent attitude to belonging and identification.

The narratorial centre also shifts depending on the particular object on which the narrative focuses. While romantic descriptions of the hunting life in the Arctic put North Greenland at the very centre of the narrator's mental map, depictions of some non-Christian or non-European Inughuit customs, including those from the remote past, tales of which he listens to at night by tran-oil lamplight, evoke a sense of distance in him as expressed in the adjective "extraordinary." When Krisunguark tells him an old Greenlandic legend about Alûsark, who loved his wife Inutark so much that when she died tragically he "flung himself, weeping, upon her, and took a last long embrace of his dead wife,"[373] the narrator cannot suppress the comment: "Yes, Krisunguark, you grow strange and wild up here in this extraordinary land!"[374]

Though addressed personally to Krisunguark, the apostrophe expresses the alterity of all Inughuit, which is emphasised by the essentialising and distance-producing personal pronoun "you" [Danish: *I*]. It also conveys the otherness of the space the Inughuit inhabit, which – despite its difference – is not remote or

370 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 88.
371 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 8.
372 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 11.
373 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 91. The Danish original contains a far more intriguing statement that "he exercised his conjugal privilege for the last time." Most likely, the English translator sought to mitigate this morally perplexing report. Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 108.
374 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 91.

foreign to the narrator, as suggested by the adverbial "here" [Danish: *heroppe*], denoting a familiar place one perceives as one's own centre. Throughout the account, the adverbial "here"/"up here" [Danish: *heroppe*] is used by the narrator when he tells his readers about North Greenland[375] and from time to time also when Denmark is meant [Danish: *her*; *hernede*].[376] This blending of perspectives, another proof of the split within the European subject, is characteristic of the entire work, as the North-Greenlandic space is neither *fully* foreign nor *entirely* his own, while sometimes it is very remote.

The narrator's silence about the colonised part of Greenland, which I noted above when discussing the binary codings at work in *The New People*, undoubtedly supports the imperial overtone of the account. The envisioned primordiality of the Inughuit and their communion with nature would hardly make a fitting counterpart to the often distressing situation of the Danish colony's impoverished population. Still, the trope of silence itself can serve as a site of resistance to the colonial ideology of a text. I believe that this is the case in the plot of *The New People*, in which the typical colonial convention is inverted, and the events in which the European expedition members could play the major role are passed over or left untold.

The account begins with the crossing of Melville Bay and ends with a farewell scene just before the narrator departs from Agpat. As the title *The New People* suggests, the main objective is to accommodate the Inughuit in the Western world order by stamping a newness/primordiality-marked otherness on them. Any other events or characters that could dispel this newness/primordiality are thus left out as redundant. This concerns, for example, the presence of Danes Ludvig Mylius-Erichsen and Harald Moltke, whom the account mentions but a few times, or of Gabriel and Jørgen Brønlund, the narrator's helpmates from Danish West Greenland, who are referred to only rarely.

Such silence certainly bolsters the construction of the Inughuit as a primordial and "uncontacted" people, yet the message it communicates is deeply ambiguous. Erasure, as a conventional trope of colonial literature, usually serves to show the "new" areas as an empty space, a land without a mythology or memory and, as such a suitable site for a new history to commence.[377] However, *The New People* hinges on an opposite device: by almost completely erasing any other

375 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 5, 38, 57, 77, 91.

376 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 79.

377 Slemon, "Monuments of Empire," p. 11. Such a new beginning can be marked by settling in the areas "made empty." Tiffin and Lawson, "The Textuality of Empire," p. 5.

people than the Inughuit, the presence of the indigenous inhabitants is not only noted but, indeed, amplified. This is a deliberate manoeuvre the narrator uses to *get closer* to the world he describes, while at the same time moving away, physically and mentally, from what was his centre at the beginning of the account.[378]

The process in which the narrator comes closer to the object of his description is visible in another reversal of the convention of European colonial travel writings, specifically of the traditional asymmetry in the European-native relationship. This asymmetry is usually expressed in the dichotomy of the passivity of the perceived object and the activity of the perceiving subject.[379] Yet, as already shown, in the arrival episode the Inughuit are framed as *active* objects – hosts and masters in their own country – whereas the European newcomers as *passively* perceiving subjects. Portraying the inhabitants of North Greenland as an active party in the encounter of the two cultures in the North-Greenlandic contact zone, the narrator emphasises the passive traveller's innocence (as discussed above)[380] and makes the Inughuit agents of the events he relates. This strategy upends the colonial binarity, for the actions undertaken by the Inughuit ensue from their own will, which they are also capable of imposing on the visitors.

Such an effect is exemplified in one of the closing episodes of the narrative, in which an Inughuaq called Krisunguark proposes that the narrator should become his master – " 'a man of wisdom and power, who can think thoughts for other people as well as himself, and tell one what to do.' "[381] The Dane, however, objects: " 'Perhaps thou wouldst get tired of it, Krisunguark. All you men up here are accustomed to be the masters of your thoughts and actions yourselves.' "[382] Krisunguark explains that he is motivated by the prospect of material gains: " 'Yes; but a master gives the one who helps him possessions. That is what the great Peary always did up here. And I am fond of thee; and I should like to possess something.' "[383]

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378 Thisted explains Rasmussen's notion of "new" people as follows: "His interest was in people who were new in the sense of being 'undiscovered,' but the point was that they were 'old' in mind and culture: representatives of a view of life untouched by West European culture." Thisted, "The Power to Represent," pp. 324–325.

379 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 75; Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand,* p. 48.

380 Pratt calls this avowal of innocence "self-effacement" or "*the display* of self-effacement," listing it as one of the strategies of the "anti-conquest" ideology espoused by colonial travel writing. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 78.

381 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 89.

382 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 89.

383 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 89.

While the traveller is patently *eager* to maintain the existing active-passive dichotomy and the power relationship it embodies, Krisunguark is equally *eager* to possess something and to stop having to borrow weapons and hunting tools from others as it would advance his social standing among the Inughuit. He can accomplish this by choosing a European traveller for a master and accompanying him on a journey into the unknown southern region of the country. Even though the native declares to wish bondage, he continues to be an active subject whose decisions and actions are sovereign, with the passive and compliant narrator having little influence on the events.

This is confirmed by what happens later when Krisunguark changes his mind: "'Riches and possessions are death!'"[384] he announces, and the narrator, rooted in a culture largely founded on these values as he is, takes this claim to bespeak insanity. Krisunguark explains that he has been admonished by the spirits of the dead, whose words bear wisdom, and that is why he believes that death awaits him among strangers. The narrator can neither comprehend nor accept the explanation, believing that the young Inughuaq "thought himself mad over his plans for the future."[385] An attempt to calm the distraught Krisunguark causes the two former travel companions to come to blows. Asked whether it is an Inughuit custom "for friends to fight like enemies,"[386] Krisunguark replies: "'Friends? […] I have always been afraid of you. Thou hadst a power over me that I did not understand; I was afraid of thee even when thou smiledst. But thou didst not know it, because I did not dare to speak.'"[387]

The young hunter is vocal about his misgivings about the European traveller, who *in his perception* is the mysterious and menacing Other that seizes power over him. Krisunguark's words exemplify the bilateral nature of the traffic of thoughts and ideas in the contact zone and of the transformations this exchange spurs. Their conduct driven by the will and independent interpretation of situations, the indigenous people can also verbalise their sentiments about the visitors from the West, based on their own observations of and interactions with them. Rather than silent and passive objects, the natives are active subjects.

This suggests that binary codifications used in the account to mark the disparity between nature people and culture people, as well as between the centre and the periphery, constitute the Inughuit and North Greenland as the Other

384 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 93.
385 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 92.
386 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 93.
387 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 93.

of Denmark – as the opposite or the inversion of the Same. However, these oppositions are profoundly ambivalent and fraught with fissures in the imperial inscription. The dichotomy is rattled even in the narrator's words, which shows that the inscription is also bilateral and concerns the European subject as well. Despite constructing essentialising and uniformising representations of the Inughuit, the European subject is capable of recognising the cultural difference, for example in worship, and acknowledging the Inughuit system as founded on its own rules; he is likewise prepared to adopt some aspects of the Inughuit alterity and regard them as his own. The narrator's becoming-Other is, nevertheless, by no means undisturbed and can be frustrated by some aspects of otherness that seem unsurmountable to him. That is why, despite robust negotiation processes in the "in-between" space, some of the thresholds that punctuate it must remain uncrossed.

The domination of the European centre over the North-Greenlandic peripheries and the one-directionality of the imperial discourse are ruptured in *The New People* by alterations in the conventions characteristic of colonial literature, i.e. by erasing the European presence and by reversing binary oppositions. This promotes representing the Inughuit as active subjects and the European travellers as passive, which despite the vicissitudes of the anti-conquest narrative furthers the agency of the indigenous population as initiators of the cultural encounter. This dismantles the Eurocolonial order and the domination of the Western worldview, which are underpinned by binary codings. Native agency is exemplified in the words of the Inughuit quoted in the narrative, notably in the insights articulated by Krisunguark, who makes sovereign decisions about his relationship with the European traveller even while considering servitude for the sake of material profits. This is made possible by the weak European subject who, by embracing the nomadic life on the road, makes the Inughuit the protagonists of his story. The narrator's self-effacement helps the Other speak up even when what the indigenous inhabitants say casts an ambiguous light on the deeds of Europeans.

3.4 The Inughuit as the "Infinitely Other": (Missing) Exoticisation

The last, but definitely not the least notable device instrumental to othering practices is exoticisation, as a result of which the Inughuit in *The New People* are imbued with exceptionally bizarre traits that enhance the European narrator's distance. Like the binary codings discussed above, exoticisation serves to oppose the non-European Other to the inferably European Same by focusing on

what the European perception deems to be as intriguing as it is disagreeable.[388] Defined as *thôma* by François Hartog, such phenomena demonstrate that the readers confront truly unknown things which are worlds apart from everything they find familiar.[389] Polish literary scholar Jerzy Brzozowski observes that the concept of exoticism is imprecise as it refers the reader to "aesthetic notions, and especially to the descriptive element,"[390] and insists that in a literary work the exotic should be explored in two ways – as an evaluative perception of the Other and as contemplation of aesthetic values.[391] Below, I look into the trope of exoticisation as employed in *The New People* and examine how the evaluation of things North-Greenlandic translates into their aesthetic construction. I also highlight the ambivalence of the exoticised world, which results from the fact that the European subject takes various positions in and vis-à-vis this world.

"One old Eskimo has spread out a reindeer skin on the ground, and was revelling in the sunshine without a stitch upon him. By his side sat his daughter, in the same Edenic costume, nursing her little baby. Down on the seashore, at the edge of the ice, lay the dogs with tongues hanging out of their mouths, panting with the heat. All over the country hung the heavy spring haze which the sun sometimes draws up out of the awakening earth; […]."[392] Even though the passage, which is part of a larger narrative about the onset of the Arctic summer, does not reveal the narrator's attitude to the object of his description, it nevertheless epitomises exoticisation as practised in *The New People*. The object of distant observation, an Inughuit family are stripped of any specific identities. Otherness is heightened by the focus on their nakedness and extraordinary activities, from which the narrator detaches himself through his unrelentingly matter-of-fact depiction, which

388 Erik Svendsen claims that this emotional ambivalence is spawned by the indeterminate place of the exotic, which is "beyond," "outside" of where the observing subject is located. Erik Svendsen, "Danske kanonforfattere som eksotikjægere. En rar historie om Johannes V. Jensen og Martin Andersen Nexø," *KULT,* No. 3, 2006, pp. 23–35.

389 Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus*, p. 230. Defining *thôma* as "marvels" and "curiosities," Hartog explains that the inclusion of such elements in travel accounts is one of the devices of the rhetoric of Otherness. The narrator must incorporate them to meet the expectations of his readers. Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus*, p. 230.

390 Jerzy Brzozowski, "Intertekstualna gra Juliusza Verne'a z Brazylią," in: *Intertekstualność i wyobraźniowość*, ed. Barbara Sosień (Kraków: Universitas, 2003), p. 99.

391 Brzozowski, "Intertekstualna gra," p. 99. In Brzozowski's view, "both layers form an organic whole" and they must be discussed jointly. Brzozowski, "Intertekstualna gra," p. 100.

392 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 16.

offers no explanations whatsoever (unlike reports on Inughuit culinary habits which I address below).[393] Presented in this way, the Inughuit custom of eating their lice is a frequent motif (often combined with nakedness) in descriptions of Greenland's native population,[394] which evokes a sense of distance and strangeness in the readers as well. In describing the Other through diet, the observer's difference or distance from the Other is conveyed by the trope of abjection, which was traditionally used in European representations of Native Americans as well.[395] Such practices crucially involved bringing to the fore the ingestion of so-called "improper food" (e.g. raw insects) by the Other.[396] Because the passage above does not include any commentary, readers can be convinced that what they consider an extraordinary way of things is "common." This effect is similar to the use of the present tense and the "third-person" position of the Inughuit, as analysed by Fabian; briefly, the Inughuit *are* different from Europeans. In such representations, difference in transposed onto readily definable elements which are comprehensible to the hegemonic culture[397]: by fixing the Other in its exotic form and focusing on the superficial layer of alterity, otherness is reduced to an innocuous, exciting element.

This is even more emphatically pictured in the episode of a singing ceremony at Sorkrark's tent, where native songs are sung in turns by two males, Majark and Ilanguark, while dancing to the acompaniment of a little bladder drum. The narrator's criterion for assessing the performance is its divergence from European music, with which the travellers are familiar: in comparison with it, the native songs are first judged as "peculiar sounds," "noise," "monotonous" and

393 A similar descriptive technique appears in Nansen's original narrative in Norwegian when a naked West-Greenlandic mother feeds her baby inside a tent to which the travellers have been invited. The episode was removed from the English edition of the book, which appeared in 1890. Nansen, *Paa ski over Grønland*, p. 307.

394 Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 233; Nansen, *Paa ski over Grønland,* pp. 315–316 (the descriptions were not included in the English translation of Nansen's narrative). Astrup's original account in Norwegian offers an explanation of the Inughuit custom of lice-eating: "they do so only and exclusively because it is the easiest and most certain manner of killing them." An extended passage devoted to lice was dropped from the English edition of the book. Astrup, *Blandt nordpolens naboer*, p. 80.

395 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, pp. 72–73. Lice-eating was also a staple component in the descriptions of American Indians, as Todorov observes. Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, p. 151.

396 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 74.

397 Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus*, p. 232.

"buzzing."[398] Denying Greenlandic music any aesthetic values is an entrenched trope in expedition accounts.[399] In *The New People*, similarly, although the narrator is acquainted with Greenlandic culture, he stumbles over conceptual and lexical difficulties when trying to convey the spectacle in words. To cope with them, he resorts to comparisons with a familiar genre of German song which is sung in turns (referred to in the Danish original as an "Eskimo 'Lied ohne Worte' ") and dubs the dance an "extraordinary *danse du ventre*." By framing the phenomena that defy easy classification in notions derived from Western culture, the narrator admittedly recognises the musical accomplishments of the Inughuit as "art", yet he also squeezes them into delimiting European aesthetic categories.[400] His endeavour to explain and assimilate the Other's difference is, however, thwarted by demeaning adjectives and the labelling of the song's ending as "a long, unmelodious howl," which brings to mind animals rather than humans.[401]

"The singing had gone on for an hour, the same tune all the time. The time had become somewhat quicker, and the contortions of the singer's torso more rapid and pronounced. Curious buzzing sounds issued from his lips, and his body moved in time with them. His tightly closed eyes trembled with excitement, and the perspiration poured down from his naked body. His only garment was a pair of bearskin breeches."[402] Described in the passage, Majark's exotic alterity both repels and attracts. Unlike in other descriptions of the Inughuit where their naked bodies are imaged as natural and not calling for any commentary, Majark's nudity in this passage highlights his sexuality (by the earlier focus on his exceptional attractiveness and the sweat trickling down his body) and turns him

398 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 38.

399 In the accounts by Holm and Garde and by Astrup, Inughuit music and songs are depicted by means of the same adjectives: "monotonous," "scarcely variating," "strange." Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 311; Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 245, 343. Astrup's original narrative in Norwegian includes a dog-sled trip during which an Inughuaq who accompanies the Western travellers is crooning a song "whose composer," as the narrator observes, "must undoubtedly have been deaf and mute." Astrup, *Blandt nordpolens naboer*, p. 139.

400 Wylie observes an identical textual practice in the representations of Amerindian shamanic chanting in the works of fiction on the tropics. Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, pp. 76–77.

401 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 38. The Inughuit singing and dancing to the accompaniment of the drum are directly compared to animals in *The Danish Umiaq Expedition*. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 45, 179, 302.

402 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 38.

into an object of desire – a body put on display for others to gaze at.[403] Majark's wildness is symbolised by his fast, vehement movements, eyes pulsating with excitement and by his bearskin pants, while his mysteriousness is conjured up by his incomprehensible dance, which encourages associations with the supernatural world. This is a portrayal of the exotic Other, which triggers both a thrill of sexual delight aroused by his nakedness and a shudder of terror sparked by his savagery.

The monotony of the tune is appreciated by the narrator-listener as particularly deviating from his idea of the musical, which makes him conclude that "[t]he melodies themselves are perhaps the most primitive form of song that exists."[404] Still, he calls them music, validating such definition by anthropological criteria:[405] "It was all monotonous and primitive, the notes, the movements, the rapture, and no sudden raising of the pitch in the tune seemed to stimulate the imagination; still it was music to these Polar Eskimos, and music it was to us."[406]

Early in the episode, distance and boundary are established so pointedly that the concluding remark, which sounds like the voice of a Western anthropologist, cannot possibly either cancel or erase them. While accorded ethnographic value, the music of the North Greenlanders is denied artistic value, and the Inughuit as anthropological creatures are regarded as capable of producing artefacts specific to cultures positioned higher in the social Darwinism hierarchy, yet they remain infinitely other: the inhabitants of the "land of polar bears, walruses, and blue foxes," who have "no conception of civilised culture."[407] Once again, the Inughuit

403 Diana Brydon and Helen Tiffin list nakedness of the natives as one of the conventional tropes of colonial literature. Brydon and Tiffin, *Decolonising Fictions*, p. 140.

404 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 37. Holm and Garde also state that Greenlandic songs are "monotonous." Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 130. They refer to drum-dance as "one of the most bizarre things a human creature is capable of doing" and describe it through animal similes. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 179–180. In Astrup's narrative, dancing and singing are presented as a pagan ceremony complete with "the most weird grimaces and gestures". Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 24.

405 Both Pedersen and Hastrup make such a point in their respective readings of *The New People*, see: Pedersen, "At finde og opfinde sin niche," pp. 79–92;" Hastrup, "Den anden sandhed," pp. 85–103.

406 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 38.

407 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 38.

are relegated by the European narrator to a lower stage of human development, which reinforces the immovable barrier between them and him, causing him to even more strongly entrench himself in what embodies Europeanness and the modernity it connotes. The trope of exoticisation employed in *The New People* inscribes the narrative in the imperial rhetoric that serves to legitimise Western supremacy over the non-Western world.

In Rasmussen's narrative, lice-eating is not a frequent practice. Unlike their music, Greenlanders' food, which other polar explorers tend to describe as inclining Europeans to distance themselves hugely from Inughuit culture,[408] does not evoke any sense of strangeness or otherness in the narrator of *The New People*. When treated to a piece of ripe, raw-frozen whale meat, he just states that it is considered "one of the greatest delicacies that can be offered to one's friends" and *explains*: "It is by no means an easy matter to get high meat up there, where the thermometer so seldom indicates many degrees above zero, even in the height of summer."[409] The narrator's external positioning in relation to this setting is only implied by his final statement: "When you have grown accustomed to the taste, this 'issuangnerk,' as they call it, is really a very pleasant change from all the fresh meat."[410]

The native food is discursivised, yet – in contrast to the naked lice-eating characters whom the narrator watches from the vantage point of the Same – Inughuit cuisine becomes part of the narrator's own experiential world. This reduces the sense of distance to the foodstuffs he eats, such as the blood-dripping seal liver, the walrus heart or the raw reindeer meat, and prevents them from exoticisation. The distance-shortening effect is again achieved by the impersonal form *man*, which when used in the context of the Inughuit food suggests that the traveller and the Other share this aspect of life: "It is always a great pleasure to get meat from another catch when you have been living on a monotonous diet for a long time. The reindeer hunters want walrus and the walrus-catchers reindeer. Therefore the two new arrivals went straight up to our pot and served themselves

408 What Rasmussen frames as a feast is a disgusting custom in *The Danish Umiaq Expedition*, e.g. flaying a seal inside a shared home and eating, or rather devouring, it raw. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 298. Despite his considerably enthusiastic attitude to Inughuit culture, the narrator of *With Peary near the Pole* is also markedly reserved in narrating their eating habits, using the "third person" device as analysed by Fabian. This casts doubt on his participation in this aspect of the Inughuit life. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 268–270.

409 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 39.

410 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 39.

the still only half-cooked meat while we ate the reindeer meat raw like the great delicacy it is in these regions."[411]

The dietary categorisation of the Other equally applies to the narrator. The Inughuit food is not only part of the traveller's everyday activities, but also a factor that makes him feel authentic *pleasure*, much like the indigenous North-Greenlandic hunters do.[412] As Wylie explains, since the times of the ancient Greeks, eating meat, especially raw meat, has been identified with cultural plainness and barbarity and has served as one of the crucial determinants of difference between nature and culture.[413] The narrative of *The New People* features the European traveller indulging in "transgressive eating"[414] and, by the same token, re-semanticises the imperial trope, which attests that another barrier to the relationship between the Western subject and the Other has been surmounted and that the former successfully negotiates the liminal zone. Instead of taming the Other by imposing his knowledge, the narrator accepts and accommodates the Other in its own right. By participating in Inughuit feasts without any hints at difference and distance that could separate the European traveller from the North-Greenlandic reality which he gets to know through the sense of taste, the narrator relinquishes the primacy of visual perception as the basis of experiencing the Other.

The New People is the first Western polar expedition account to abandon the traditional trope of disgust with the Inughuit food and to remove almost all distance and boundaries between the narrator and the Other regarding the latter's eating habits. Whereas the abhorrence of the diets of non-European societies counts among the major ways of degrading these societies in literature, the protagonist of Rasmussen's narrative breaches this customary dietary taboo, sides with the Other and proves what was as a rule negated by other writers – namely, recognising the Inughuit as fellow human beings. As the narrator abandons the immovable position of the observer and becomes a participant, the imperial discourse of the Other and the Same is undermined.

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411 Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, p. 89. The original Danish quotation is as follows: "Det er altid en stor Nydelse at faa Kød af anden Fangst, naar man i længere Tid har levet paa ensartet Kost. Renjægerne vil ha' Hvalros og Hvalrosfangerne Ren. Derfor gik ogsaa de to nyankomne straks op til vor Gryde og tog til sig af det endnu kun halvkogte Kød, mens vi tog Renkødet raat som den store Delikatesse, det er i disse Egne."

412 Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, p. 459.

413 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 136.

414 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 136.

That the young traveller has crossed the boundary between himself and the North-Greenlandic Other and ventured beyond imperial discourse is substantiated by the narrator's frequent references to his knowledge of Inughuit customs. Clearly, the allochronic devices used in *The New People* to fix the Inughuit in the unchangeable, rigid mould of primitive "nature people" are not the only model of presenting the knowledge, culture and mentality of North Greenlanders that the reader comes across.

One way of representing indigenous knowledge in *The New People* involves portraying North Greenland as a space suffused with local meanings and history, for example:

> In Wolstenholme Sound right next to the mouth of Umanak Fjord there are three small rocks, so small that they are submerged by the waves when the wind comes up and the sea beats against the shore; they are called krekretârssuit. In the times of our ancestors they were larger, the Inuit say; but the sea has eaten them up. In those days people were living on the rocks, now there are only some ruins of houses left; halfway collapsed sidewalls still hold up and offer shelter against the wind. In these ruins hunters used to live: kayakers out to waylay the migrating walrus; reindeer hunters waiting for a favourable wind for hunting, eastern or northern, on their way to the mainland.[415]

This informative passage is based on Inughuit knowledge, which is foregrounded by the use of the local terminology (*krekretârssuit*) and the inclusion of the history and function of the location for the local population through descriptions of people's behaviours, references to the local tradition and allusions to local tales. All these features are consistent with the way the native inhabitants relate to the natural environment, as discussed by geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, a theorist of place and space.[416] Underpinned by shared experiences, the nomadic life with North Greenland's native population immerses the European traveller in the totality of nature, like an Inughuaq, to acquire knowledge about it through inhabiting and functioning within it rather than through observing it from afar. This breeds a narrative that endorses the Inughuit world-perception, which is often recognised as right and superior to another, non-native interpretation of reality, for example in terms of Inughuit expertise in local nature and weather. This is illustrated in the manner their responses to the premature manifestations of the Arctic summer are reported: "But the Eskimos, who knew that June, "the breeding month" [Danish: *Ynglemaanen*], always sees the final convulsions of the winter, regarded this rapid change to heat and sunshine merely as a curiosity. The

415 Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, pp. 84–85.
416 Tuan, *Topophilia*, p. 63.

snowstorms were only gathering strength, they thought, and time was to prove them in the right."[417]

In this passage, Inughuit knowledge is founded on another system of references, one in which natural phenomena are explained with recourse to years-long experience of daily life in the Arctic.[418] As the narrative suggests, this knowledge complements the travellers' way of thinking, which relies on the findings of Western science. The Inughuit are acknowledged as being in the right, which bolsters their previously established image of non-pareil authorities on the Arctic and offers an alternative to the European imperial narrative (and interpretive) domination over North-Greenlandic realities.

Addressed above, the animisation of nature, expressed in frequent anthropomorphisations of weather, celestial bodies, inanimate nature, plants and animals, can similarly be construed as an ambivalent trope which serves more purposes than just the romantic aestheticisation of the North-Greenlandic world by the external, European narrator. Strewn copiously across *The New People*, the anthropomorphisations can also signal the distinctively Inughuit perception of the universe as animate.[419] Such a reading adds new overtones to the narrator's depictions of hillsides "reduced to tears" or the "delighted sun," sailing hot across the heavens and "forgetting to hide behind the horizon,"[420] as well as to his attribution of human traits to animals, as e.g. in "the lazy seals," the petrels that "look down with contempt on the razorbills" and their "angry abuse," the kittiwakes that "marvel" at other birds and the "wise" gulls that "sink into profound reflection."[421] Anthropomorphisations tend to be paired with the impersonal subject *man* ("you" or "one" in the English translation), which refers to knowledge shared by all: both the narrator and the Inughuit: "When, a whole summer through, your eyes have

417 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 14.

418 That opting for the term "the breeding month" means adopting Inughuit terminology is confirmed by Krisunguark calling November "the visiting month" [Danish: *Besøgsmaanen*] later in the narrative. Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 83.

419 This is conveyed in many utterances by the Inughuit cited in the account. For example, Krisunguark says "It is the glacier bleeding" to explain why the water flowing from the glacier is red, and he comments on the unusual weather conditions: "The world is ill at ease, the sea does not freeze!" Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 75, 83. In his reading of *Fra Grønland til Stillehavet* Brøgger points to Rasmussen's use of anthropomorphisation when describing animal behaviours as revealing the explorer's "close identification with the Inuit mindset." Brøgger, "The Culture of Nature," pp. 90–91.

420 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 14.

421 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 14–15.

been bathed in light, day and night, you long to see the land vanish softly into the darkness again, that the stars and the moon may light their lamps"[422]; "you know that one day the storm will wear out."[423] Such passages strongly suggest that the trope of anthropomorphisation can – or perhaps even should – be read as an expression of the native worldview. As such, the trope serves as a source of resistance to the visual perception-based, European representations of the North-Greenlandic space.

As already stated, the narrator of *The New People* is perfectly versed in various species of North Greenland's wildlife. While detailed catalogues of animal names in travel narratives tend to be regarded, like frequent anthropomorphisations, as typical of classifying scientific discourse, they are inherently ambiguous because the knowledge they parade may very well be aligned with the Inughuit world-perception. In contrast to the scientific parlance-donning narrator of Fridtjof Nansen's *The First Crossing of Greenland*,[424] Rasmussen's narrator does not use Latin names to catalogue animal species; more than that, he relies on Inughuit terminology from time to time.[425] In the native world of North Greenland,

422 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 79. The original quote in Danish is as follows: "Naar man har gaaet en hel Sommer og badet Øjnene i Lys Dage og Nætter igennem, længes man efter en Gang igen at se Landene forsvinde i Mørke, så at Stjerner og Maane kan tændes."

423 Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, p. 90. The quote in Danish is as follows: "man ved, at Stormen blir træt en Dag, og saa slipper man vel ud."

424 For example, on his way from Iceland aboard the "Jason," the narrator reflects: "As hitherto, we see a great deal of whale. They are chiefly the 'bottle-nose,' several of the larger species of whalebone whales, most of them probably the blue-whale, and most of them moving westwards, possibly towards Greenland. Whales have evidently their migrations, though we know little or nothing about them. Now and again we see one of the smaller kinds of whalebone whale, which our sealers sometimes called 'klapmyts'-whale, as they maintain that it is in the habit of frequenting the grounds where the 'klapmyts,' i.e. the bladder-nose seal, is caught. It seemed that it might possibly be the same species as that found on the coasts of Finmarken, where it is called the 'seie'-whale (*Balænoptera borealis*)." Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 163–164.

425 One example is the Greenlandic name *Taterat*, used instead of the Danish *tretået måge* to refer to the kittiwake in the Danish original of Rasmussen's book. Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, p. 13. Given this, *With Peary near the Pole* is an interesting case as Astrup's narrator fuses the two orders, using the native and Latin nomenclatures side by side: "The seal most often met with in these regions is the so-called 'netchik' (*Phoca fætida*), or as the 'Innuits' call it 'pú-si'. […] Another and much larger seal is the so-called 'ogsok' or 'ugsuk' (*Phoca barbata*), which may reach three yards in length." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 69–70.

the knowledge of animals and their habits is a prerequisite for survival; consequently, enduring in the Arctic demands uninterrupted attention to wildlife and its behaviours.[426] Symptomatically, when the narrator experiences "reindeer fever" on a hunting expedition, the episode is related in the chapter entitled "Hunting for Reindeer," which opens with third-person narrative from the viewpoint of a young bull in search of a cow.[427] The omniscient narrator reveals that he is perfectly familiar with the habits of young reindeer as he adeptly interprets even the slightest motions of one of them (inhaling air which makes the nasal cartilage quiver, lying down in the snow to rest, skittishness caused by the keen senses in the rut) and, simultaneously, recounts how it has lived since the previous spring. This poetic and at the same time sensual description of the animal's appearance and behaviour also provides valuable information on how to hunt a reindeer: the trick is to deceive its senses by staying away from the wind. Such a presentation of animals has a lot in common with Inughuit tales, which are sampled in the third part of *The New People*, entitled "Fables and Legends." The beast fables, which were handed down from generation to generation in Greenlandic communities, transmitted vital information about the habits of various species of game. The significance of animals in the life of the Inughuit is evident in the close bond between the animal protagonists of traditional tales and people: as animals were often capable of shape-shifting into a human form, humans could likewise come to resemble animals or even marry them.[428]

As Inughuit knowledge seeps into the narrative of *The New People*, the simplified translation of the Other's difference by means of European knowledge and aesthetic categories can be questioned, which helps subvert their superior position in the discursivisation of the North-Greenlandic world in the account.

426 Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, pp. 438–441.

427 Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, pp. 83–84. Brøgger observes a similar textual practice in Rasmussen's *Fra Grønland til Stillehavet* and concludes that it is indicative of a vision where there are "no sharp divisions between people and other live beings" and the worlds of humans and animals are interconnected. Brøgger, "The Culture of Nature," p. 96.

428 "The owl who was too greedy" (*Uglen, som var alt for graadig*), pp. 164–165; "The man who took a wife from among the wild geese" (*Manden, som tog Kone blandt Vildtgæssene*), pp. 165–167; "The man who took a fox to wife" (*Manden, som tog en Ræv til Kone*), pp. 167–168. The Inughuit also believed that not only humans had souls, but animals too, as Maisanguark explains in the narrative. Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 111.

Far from being solely an animated, exotic background of a romantic adventure of Western males, Rasmussen's North Greenland proves that the influences exerted in the contact zone between the Other and the Same are, in fact, bi-directional.

4 North Greenland and the Inughuit: An Indigenous Myth Perspective

In her analysis of Spanish-American novels on the tropics Lesley Wylie points to the presence of indigenous language and myths as a trope that opposes colonial codings of Western narratives of the Other. In the following, I draw on her findings in order to show how the stereotypical representations of the Inughuit are challenged in Rasmussen's text. The local lore encoded in myths, legends, fables and epic tales is a special variety of Inughuit knowledge that comes to be heard in the discursivisation of North Greenland and its inhabitants in *The New People*. The stories make their way into the account in two different fashions: first, they are directly woven into the texture of the narrative in the opening part and, second, they are recounted in two other parts of the book, entitled, respectively, "Primitive Views of Life" and "Fables and Legends." Out of the 246 pages of the book's first edition in 1905, the first part accounts for 112 pages, while the remaining ones are taken up by narratives about the Inughuit world-perception as told, according to the author, by the Inughuit themselves.[429]

In Rasmussen's narrative, myths are not simply an ethnographic record drafted by the scientifically-minded European traveller; they also perfectly correspond to reflections on the cultural encounter recounted in the first part of the book. The Inughuit oral folklore registered in *The New People* is both an effective counter-discourse to the Western narrative on the North-Greenlandic Other,[430] as the North Greenland and the Inughuit it pictures are far from idealised, and a quintessence of Inughuit knowledge and worldviews, as underscored by Inughuit story-teller Osarkrak, quoted at the beginning of "Primitive Views of Life": "Our tales are men's experiences, and the things one hears of are not always

429 The introduction to the third part of the book, entitled "Fables and legends", claims: "This is the first time that the legends of the Polar Eskimos have been put on record, and my principle, during my task, has been never to repeat any story until I myself had learnt it and told it. In this way I made the whole manner of the story-telling my own, and I have endeavoured, as far as possible, to give literal translations." Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 159.

430 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 83.

lovely things. But one cannot deck a tale to make it pleasant, if at the same time it shall be true."

"The tongue must be the echo of the event and cannot adapt itself to taste or caprice."[431]

Osarkrak justifies his story-telling by insisting that, as opposed to common stories (such as, for example, *The New People*!), the "ancestors' wisdom" speaks through the story-teller. In confrontation with the content of the European narrative within which Inughuit tales are placed, his words put a silent question mark over the faithfulness of this narrative. From the indigenous perspective, telling a beautiful story or a good one is not imperative; what is imperative is transmitting through the story the knowledge which all the forebears considered expedient to preserve for future generations. Osarkrak's idea of the role of the tale and the storyteller lends the narrative a mythical dimension, for each of the Inughuaq's stories conveys a multiplicity of voices from across the centuries, binding the present to the past. The things of the greatest relevance *to the Inughuit* thus form the content of the indigenous tale: the way they understand them now and the way they were understood by their ancestors many generations ago.

As shown before, the Inughuit's myths included in *The New People* often explain the recounted events differently than the narrator does. What is more, as a result of including the native tales into the account, North Greenland presents itself as more than a newly "discovered" physical site on the map: the mimetic reproduction of reality is disrupted by magical or animal protagonists in the Inughuit tales as well as by the fact that they transcend casual narrative patterns and conventions of realism.[432] The narrator also introduces mythical structures to his own account; they can be found in descriptions of people, where the Inughuit storytelling model is applied,[433] and in interpretations of North-Greenlandic reality and interactions with the Inughuit. The latter appears at the very beginning of the story, when the narrator recalls an old legend about an unknown people from the Far North he once heard in West Greenland and concludes that the sledge traces he sees suggest that the people who made them cannot have

431 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 97.

432 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 83. This is exemplified, for instance, in ghosts, dogs with human heads, spirits that assume animal forms, resurrections from the dead and people's metamorphoses into animals.

433 An example of this can be found in a tale entitled "Barren," in which the narrator introduces the wealthy hunter Sâmik: "It was said of him that his flesh-pits saw two suns rising without emptying, for neither men nor dogs could eat in one winter what he was able to bring down in the hunting season." Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 66.

gone far away.[434] Also, he manages to avert possible danger at the end of the account by referencing Inughuit beliefs in supernatural powers.[435]

Incorporating indigenous myths and tales into the European framework of travel narrative and, moreover, devoting separate chapters to them which make up more than half of the book whose title is borrowed from a story of an old Greenlandic woman the narrator heard as a child, equates the two planes on which the narrative unfolds.[436] The Danish subject's desire to tell his version of the encounter with the Other and the Inughuit mythopoeia are two equally valid modes of talking about the same objects: North Greenland and its inhabitants. The views of North Greenland and the Inughuit presented in the work cannot possibly claim any pre-eminence, for the "normative" European styles of thinking and narrative conventions are offset by the indigenous alternative.

The inclusion of the Inughuit myths and tales, which, as the narrator stresses, have been translated into a European language for the first time, coincides with the rise of interest in "unbastardised," "authentic" Inuit culture in Denmark and in Western Europe in general. For the most part, this interest arose following the emergence of anthropology as a new scientific discipline. The direct insertion of native verbal communication into a story about the Other differs nevertheless from the conventional European ethnographic narrative on the Inuit, represented by Gustav Holm's *Etnologisk Skizze af Angmagsalikerne* (1888, *Ethnological Outline of the People from Angmagsalik*) and Fridtjof Nansen's *Eskimo Life*.[437] As a hybrid, polyphonic, heteroglossic and multi-generic text, *The New People* formally resembles a textual collage or a literary bricolage; located at the intersection of ethnography, travel writing and adventure literature, the book represents what is termed a blurred genre.[438] A literary hybrid as it is, Rasmussen's account

434 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 5.

435 During the narrator's stormy argument with Krisunguark at the end of the narrative, the former appeases the raging Inughuaq by explaining that he is the spirit of dead Mîjuk, who has come for him. Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 93.

436 The motto of the book – "And he never knew rest again, after he had once heard the rumour of the new people" – placed at the beginning of the first part, which has the same title as the whole of the work, i.e. "The New People," is borrowed from old Merkusârk's tale cited later in the account. Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 1.

437 Traditional ethnography is embodied by Rasmussen's later publications: *Under Nordenvindens Svøbe* (1906, *Under the Scourge of the North Wind*) and *Myter og Sagn fra Grønland* (1921–1925, English edition: *Eskimo Folk-Tales*, 1921).

438 On the blurring of genres, see Clifford Geertz, "Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought," in: Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), pp. 19–35.

is inherently heterogeneous and syncretic; crossing the generally accepted limits demarcated for the literary by the dominant discourse and, at the same time, blending European genres with local lore, the book manages to undercut the authority of imperial textuality.[439]

Ubiquitous in the narrative, the Inughuit language is one of the factors that contribute to this unsettling of the authority of colonial textuality in *The New People*. In her discussion of the role of the native Sami language, Maria Sibińska observes that it is attributed enormous significance because language, which "transmits relatively unchangeable cultural elements from generation to generation," is viewed as a trove and a vehicle of cultural knowledge and memory.[440] Because colonial writing extensively erased native speech, the culture of the Other was mistakenly believed to be a *tabula rasa*,[441] a view ingrained in Western narratives on Greenlanders as well.[442] Notably, the narrator of *The New People* time and again displays his command of Greenlandic, which is a prerequisite to acquiring knowledge about navigating and surviving in the Arctic as well as to understanding and gradually accepting the Inughuit worldview.

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439 In the framework of postcolonial literature, Gandhi calls this effect "postcolonial counter-textuality." Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory,* p. 151.

440 Sibińska, *Marginalitet og myte*, p. 162. A similar view regarding the cultural significance of indigenous languages is expressed by a range of other postcolonial critics, see: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: James Currey, 1986), pp. 14–16; Willie Ermine, "Aboriginal Epistemology," in: *First Nations in Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds*, eds. Jean Barman and Marie Battiste (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2000), p. 104; Judy M. Iseke-Barnes, "Politics and Power of Languages: Indigenous Resistance to Colonizing Experiences of Language Dominance," *Journal of Thought*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Spring 2004), p. 56.

441 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks,* p. 87.

442 Both *The Danish Umiaq Expedition* by Holm and Garde and *The First Crossing of Greenland* by Nansen contain passages that divest east-coast Greenlanders of human speech by describing the native language as "strange sounds […] as it were, a mixture of human voices and the barking of dogs," or "bovine sound", an approach evocatively expressed in the following passage: "Now it was just as if we had a whole herd of cows about us, lowing in chorus as the cowhouse door is opened in the morning to admit the expected fodder." Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, pp. 333, 335. In Holm and Garde's account, the voices of Greenlanders resemble "sounds similar to water boiling in a cauldron" or a "deafening babble." Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 60, 67. Importantly, in each case, such impressions are registered on the first encounter with the indigenous population, the initial descriptions of which are always excessively exoticised.

From the first encounter of the European travellers with North Greenlanders onwards, the Inughuit language appears repeatedly in the account in commands for dogs to run: "'Tugto! Tugto!'" and "'Aulavte! Aulavte!'"[443] The bilingual narrator of *The New People* constantly resorts to Inughuit vocabulary, which refers to several different semantic fields, such as toponyms and names of the Inughuit and characters in their tales, sometimes accompanied by parenthesised Danish translations.[444] The narrative also includes indigenous abstract names, e.g. "Perdlugssuark" (the Evil fate or the great Evil)[445] and "Serratit" (magic formulae)[446]; customs, e.g. "Amerkratut" (a fashion of eating meat together)[447]; musical phenomena, e.g. "Pisia" (each singer's own melodies)[448]; Inughuit foodstuffs, e.g. "Issuangnerk" (ripe, half-frozen meat) and "Serâlatark" (meat fried in oil on a flat stone)[449]; constellations[450]; weather phenomena, e.g. "Nugssugsârtok" (when ice is not stable and is not adjacent to land)[451]; and people with special attributes, e.g. "Ilisîtsork" (a wise woman) and *tokrugssaungitsuminerssuit* (those who are invulnerable to death).[452] By including Inughuit words in the text, the narrator in a way compensates for the partial erasure he performs by translating into Danish his conversations in Greenlandic. The specific take on translating indigenous expressions into Danish in *The New People* also plunges its readers into the native universe as, for example, June becomes the "breeding month," the Sun – "the great Warmer" and the sound of the ice-foot grinding against a

443 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 8.

444 The Inughuit geographical names used in *The New People* include: *Igfigssork*, *Agpat*, *Kangerdlugssuark*, *Pitoravik*, *Kiatak*, *Iterdlagssuark*, *Itivdlerk*, *Kranah*, *Netsilivik* and mountains *Nungarugssuark*, *Umanak* and *Kangârsuk*; Inughuit names accompanied by Danish translations are: *Maisanguark* (the little white whale skin), *Mekro* (the feather), *Sagdlork* (the Lie), *Mikisork* (the Little One), *Sorkrark* (the Whalebone), *Piuaitsork* (The Peaceable One), *Krilernerk* (The Knot), *Sâmik* (The Left-Handed) and an entire catalogue of the Inuit who came from Canada to North Greenland in Merkrusârk's tale; names of supernatural creatures from Inughuit tales include: *Erkrilikker* (dogs with men's heads), *Tôrnarssuit* (spirits hostile to men) and *Nerrivik* (The Food Dish).

445 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 102, 119, 124.

446 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 120, 140, 141.

447 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 31.

448 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 37.

449 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 39, 120.

450 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 176–177.

451 Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, p. 88.

452 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 116. Rasmussen, *Nye Mennesker*, p. 93.

rock – "the weeping of those under the earth"[453]; Danish equivalents of Inughuit names alternate with their originals, especially as regards Sorkrark (Whalebone) and Krilernerk (Knot); and local toponyms are rendered in Danish, e.g. "The Curved Knife" being the name of a mountain top.[454]

The narrative of *The New People* also includes quotations from various Inughuit people, which are provided in the indigenous language followed by a parenthesised Danish translation, or the other way round.[455] Particularly conspicuous in this respect is the episode of Sagdlork's spirit conjuration, where passages uttered by the *angakok* and other participants in the ceremony are first cited at length in the original Inughuit form with the Danish translation coming below: " 'Ajornarê, ajornarê! Atdliulerpunga! Ikiorniarsinga, artorssarpavssualekrisunga!' "

" 'Ow, ow! It is impossible! I am underneath! He is lying on me. Help me! I am too weak, I am not equal to it!' "[456]

As the language of the Other is incorporated into the text, readers are sensitised to its difference, which destabilises the colonial codes for fixing Greenlandic in its simplified variant, translated into the language of the Same. By the same token, the authority of Danish as the exclusive medium of the narrative on the North-Greenlandic Other is incisively challenged. Nowhere else is this more emphatically achieved than at those points in the narrative of *The New People* where Inughuit words are interpolated without being translated into Danish at all.[457] On such occasions, the reader experiences what Wylie refers to as a semantic dislocation, for a lack of transparency between the imperial language and the realm of the Other finds itself in the spotlight then.[458] Wylie observes that the inclusion of untranslated words and expressions in colonial texts, which creates "metonymic gaps," destabilises the dominant language of the narrative, while the

453 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 14, 174, 88.

454 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 45.

455 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 72, 87, 137, 144, 153–154, 203.

456 Rasmussen, "The New People," pp. 18–19.

457 These are as a rule words or expressions conveying the speaker's emotional states, commands called out the Inughuit while driving a dogsled: " 'Tugto! Tugto!' " (Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 8), " 'Aulavte! Aulavte!' " (p. 8); " 'Tju! Tju!' " (p. 45); greetings: " 'Sainak-sunai!' " (p. 46), a child's wailing: " 'Atekrarum-avdlune' " (p. 116); incomprehensible mumbling of a dying infant: " 'ûmatit, tartortiga, inaluark, tinguk' " (p. 120); calling things, animals and people by names other tha their regular ones due to taboo (pp. 153–154).

458 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks,* p. 89.

words in a non-European language come to stand for the entire indigenous culture.[459] Such moments of inaccessibility in the text of a colonial account upset its infinite transmissibility and prevent the universality-claiming centre from obliterating difference.[460] Because Inughuit vocabulary is incorporated into *The New People*, the account – rather than presenting the Inughuit in a totalising and universalising manner from the position of the gazing subject, which is what colonial writing tends to do – emphasises the indisputable difference of the indigenous culture and the narrator's resistance to the practices of travel narratives that subordinate all non-European alterity to the discourse of the Same. In this way, the book challenges the very genre of such accounts as a means of presenting native cultures exclusively from the dominant Western perspective.

Made possible by nomadic travelling beyond the safe space of the Same, the extensive presence of indigenous knowledge, myth and language in the text proves that the subject of the narrative is processual and constructed in interactions with the Inughuit Other. The representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit which this subject produces retain the difference of the Other (native understandings and visions of the world) and function as an alternative to the European practices of discursivisation. At the same time, the difference is a factor in the narrator's apparatus for perceiving and comprehending the world. This, consequently, lessens the power of textual exoticisation, which conventionally serves to fix the Inughuit as objects of aestheticising depictions fuelled by the narrator's sense of distance, and contributes to the ambivalence pervading the representation of the native population in Rasmussen's account.

5 The Narrator's Voice vs. Native Voices: Master Narrative and Heteroglossia

There is more to the textual heteroglossia in *The New People* than just the inclusion of Inughuit world-perception and experience in the narrative. The effect of the

459 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks,* p. 89. For the discussion of "metonymic gaps," see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 122–123.

460 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks,* p. 89. Sibińska identifies a similar phenomenon in the work of Sami-North Norwegian author Ailo Gaup and refers to it as "selective lexical fidelity," a term borrowed from Ashcroft, Tiffin and Griffiths. Sibińska, *Marginalitet og myte*, p. 183.

proliferation of voices is also achieved by having native people speak directly in the text.[461] Even if the European narrator is the uncontested organiser of the work's overall framework, the profusion of narrative voices is a salient feature of the popular writings of the best known Danish polar explorer.[462] I argue that this diversity of voices speaking in the text and their ambivalent interdependence formatively affect the representation of the Inughuit and North Greenland and constitute a pattern much more intricate than what Spivak ironically calls "the ventriloquism of the speaking subaltern."[463] My concern is to examine the ways in which the negotiations between the European narrator and the Inughuit voices translate into the expressiveness and impact of indigenous agency and how relevant it is to the articulation of resistance to the European presence in North Greenland.

The ethnographic portrayals of the Inughuit discussed above in terms of essentialisation are by no means the only mode of picturing North Greenland's indigenous population in *The New People*. The narrative features a wide array of memorable Inughuit characters whose words add up to a narrative that unfolds in the past tense. As opposed to standard colonial accounts, here the narrator makes every effort to call each individual Inughuit by their proper names and to convey their distinctive attributes, which set each character apart from the rest of their community.[464] The Inughuit are exceptionally often allowed to speak

461 It is difficult to establish how accurately the Danish translation renders the Inughuit's original utterances, but (as specified above) my aim in this book is to explore the ways the Inughuit and North Greenland are represented in Rasmussen's account rather than determining how far this account is referential in relation to the actual events of the Literary Expedition. For this reason, when discussing the native voices in *The New People*, I focus on the Inughuit's words *as they are presented in the text*, that is, as independent voices of individual members of a community inhabiting the surroundings of Agpat.

462 This is highlighted, for example, by Michael Harbsmeier and Kirsten Thisted in their readings of Rasmussen's respective narratives. Harbsmeier's and Thisted's assessments of this polyvocality differ. Specifically, while Thisted contends that Rasmussen's work offers room for substantial native agency, Harbsmeier believes it is just another way of legitimating Danish power in Greenland. Michael Harbsmeier, "Bodies and Voices from Ultima Thule: Inuit Explorations of the Kablunat from Christian IV to Knud Rasmussen," in: *Narrating the Arctic: A Cultural History of Nordic Scientific Practices*, eds. Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin (Canton: Science History Publications, 2002), pp. 33–71; Thisted, "Knud Rasmussen", pp. 272–273.

463 Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, p. 255.

464 *The New People* fundamentally differs from *The Danish Umiaq Expedition* and (to a lesser extent) from *With Peary near the Pole* in that the former text (especially its

for themselves (with their words filtered through the Danish translation by the narrator, who understands their language and acts as a go-between) and they are heard by virtue of what Wylie calls "inverse-ethnography," i.e. a process in which the perspective between the subject and the object of a cultural encounter is reversed.[465] As a result, a shift occurs in the roles which are entrenched in travel literature: instead being "receptors," the Inughuit function as "initiators" of the interaction that takes place in the North-Greenlandic "contact zone," to use the terms proposed by Pratt.[466]

At the very onset of the narrative, the Inughuit appear not only as objects gazed at by the European travellers, but also as actively perceiving subjects that respond to the interaction with the unknown visitors. The young traveller's contact with the first Inughuit he meets, i.e. Maisanguark and his wife Mekro, makes it clear that while North Greenlanders are new and unfamiliar to the narrator, he and his customs are equally "other" for the community he visits. Brought up in European culture, the narrator habitually extends his hand to Mekro when greeting her, yet the reaction of the woman, who "looks at me, uncomprehending, and laughs,"[467] makes him the Other as perceived from the outside by the surrounding community.[468] Similarly, on arriving at Agpat, the young European traveller makes himself a laughing stock because, emulating a West-Greenlandic custom he knows, he stretches his booted foot towards a young Inughuit girl called Aininârk, which the inhabitants of the settlement decipher as a marriage

anthropological sections) break the then-characteristic silence about the travellers' local helpers, who tend to be glossed over collectively and left unnamed as "our Eskimos," "five Eskimos" and the like. In Rasmussen's relation, a parallel expression – "our Christian Greenlanders" – is used only to refer to Gabriel and Jørgen Brønlund, the travellers' Greenlandic companions from West Greenland. Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 17.

465 For further details of how this trope is applied and works in literature, see Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks,* pp. 10, 80.

466 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 78.

467 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 7.

468 The trope of a European traveller stretching his hand out to greet the natives also appears in the episode of the first encounter with the Inughuit from the Smith Sound area in *With Peary near the Pole.* In Astrup's narrative, the gesture is shown from the indigenous standpoint as well, with the Greenlanders "staring at us, without the slightest idea of what such an advance should signify." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 73–74.

proposal.[469] His ignorance of the Inughuit ways results in an immediate attempt at negotiations by Aininârk's mother, who is entirely at ease in this situation which the narrator finds awkward and who addresses him without any deferential reserve: "'It was my daughter thou wast talking to! […] Dost thou not think her beautiful?'"[470] The man endeavours to reclaim his surrendered discursive domination by dismissing the bold woman in a metaphor: "she rolled her little self-conscious eyes around" and by dropping the further conversation altogether, but the behaviour of Aininârk's mother undoubtedly belies the common stereotype of a Greenlander as a complaisant and reticent servant of Europeans.[471]

In such episodes, the Inughuit emerge as diligent observers of the outsider's actions, capable of articulating their view of his "otherness"; his presence affects their pursuits and desires, which they discursivise as well. Multiplying the moments when the narrator is perceived by the indigenous gaze implies an inversion of the European norms and strips the Western traveller of his alleged cultural authority. Turned into an object of common ridicule, the young man, rather than the Inughuit, becomes the bearer of "alterity," which invalidates the previous boundaries between "sameness" and "otherness," the subject and the object.[472]

"'You bring joy! […] the long expected has arrived at last!'" This is how old Sorkrark greets the European traveller as he nears the hunting settlement.[473]

469 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 10. During the hunting excursion, old bear-hunter Sorkrark also tells the narrator that it is unbecoming to travel in the Arctic without a woman and offers him two advantageous matches to choose from lest he "get[s] a bad reputation, and expose[s] [himself] to be made game of." Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 47. These are the only points in the narrative where a possibility of interracial love between the narrator and Inughuit women is at all intimated. The European traveller abides by the anti-conquest ideology, whose protagonists tend to have "a certain impotence or androgyny" about them, as observed by Pratt, who explicitly points to the "non-phallic aspects" of the naturalists' production of knowledge, for freedom is predicated on repudiation of conjugal life and women. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp. 56–57.

470 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 10.

471 Such an image is disseminated particularly by earlier European expedition accounts, but it is also to be found in Holm and Garde. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 44, 47. In Astrup's narrative, the Inughuit are shown as free, entirely independent and sporting a considerable sense of humour; see e.g. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 277, 284–290.

472 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 82.

473 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 46.

Produced by Sorkrark, who embodies the wisdom of the entire community, the outcry banishes any possible doubt that the presence of the outsider is *desirable* to the indigenous population. Such a reading of the narrative is corroborated by three other episodes recounted in *The New People*, where three highly respected community members: the old shaman Sagdlork and the oldest Inughuit, Krilernerk and Merkrusârk, who took part in the Inuit's migration from Canada to North Greenland, entrust to the traveller stories and mysteries they do not tell others. Sagdlork emphasises that he consents to it and is eager to talk to the narrator exactly because the latter is "a stranger."[474] Krilernerk admits that he "had grown fond" of the traveller because he is bound to leave soon, and there is no knowing when the mysterious magical formulas may come in handy for him.[475] Merkrusârk states that his confidences are meant " 'for a well-loved guest to one's country.' "[476]

As the words of the indigenous people underscore the special trust lavished on the European traveller by Sorkrark, Sagdlork, Krilernerk and Merkrusârk, the oldest and most respected members of the Inughuit community, the authority of the narrator as a mediator between the two cultures receives a serious boost. Consequently, his presence in North Greenland and, perhaps even more importantly, the account he constructs and presents to the reader in the physical form of *The New People* are strongly legitimised. The special status of the European traveller among the Inughuit is visualised when Sorkrark strokes him over the chest on the day of his departure in order to "make [him] strong for a long life."[477] Reminiscing on the farewell, the narrator declares: " 'And in the crowd of the many people that I have met and known I have not forgotten you,' "[478] which confirms that the participants in the cultural encounter in the North-Greenlandic contact zone exert mutual impact on each other.[479]

474 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 21.
475 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 140.
476 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 36.
477 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 50.
478 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 50.
479 The trope of reciprocity, which consists in retaining the memory of the cultural encounter, also appears in *The First Crossing of Greenland,* yet in Nansen's narrative it is presented from the native perspective when one of the narrator's "best friends among the Eskimo" states: " 'Now you are going back into the great world from which you came to us; you will find much that is new there, and perhaps you will soon forget us. But we shall never forget you.' " Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, pp. 437–438. Interestingly, this episode, which occurs towards the end of the book,

To understand the reasons why the Inughuit crave contact with the European traveller, we should focus on his "otherness," which is underscored by both Sagdlork and Merkrusârk. As the narrator desires to meet the "new people," whose image he had distilled in his mind from the tales heard in childhood, so the Inughuit desire contact with him – their European Other. *The New People* thus reveals a deep reciprocity at the root of the relationship between the European narrator and the Inughuit, despite and *because of* their mutual otherness. It is not only that the Inughuit are a concealed or latent repression of the European "self," which surfaces in contact situations in sustained attempts at fixing them as the stable and unchangeable Other. The point is that North Greenland's indigenous inhabitants also perceive the narrator as the Other: his presence is desirable exactly *as the Other* for them to re-assert their own identity. " 'When thou goest home to thy fellow-countrymen, thou canst tell them what thou hast just heard. Tell them that thou didst meet me, when I was still stronger than death,' "[480] appeals Merkrusârk, who came to Agpat especially to tell his story to the European traveller who knows his language. This re-affirms the meaning of his life, which is envisaged as an ongoing victorious fight against death: " 'my family are disappearing; I shall soon be the only one left; but as long as I can hold a walrus and kill a bear, I shall still be glad to live.' "[481]

The Inughuit actively respond to the encounter with the European traveller, whose presence they need to confirm their own identity and make their lives meaningful, which they do by virtue of their textual subjectivity. As they tell stories of and structured by their own experiences, they abolish the European monopoly on meaning production and thereby defy the yoke of Western knowledge. The transformation of the natives from objects into subjects is another manifestation of resistance to the hegemony of colonial discourse and, at the same time, evidence of the Inughuit's agency – i.e. "human capacity for transforming oneself, society and nature"[482] – in Rasmussen's narrative. The Inughuit's actions and words in *The New People* influence not only the European traveller, but also

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is nearly identical with the exchange between the narrator of "The New People" and the Inughuit woman Sinew, which it may have indirectly inspired. Holm and Garde, as well as Astrup, talk about the mutual influences of Greenlanders and Europeans, too. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 106; Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 74.

480 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 36.

481 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 36.

482 Andrzej W. Nowak, *Podmiot, system, nowoczesność* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Instytutu Filozofii Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, 2011), p. 8.

themselves as a result of the same interaction that changes the world-perception and behaviour of the visitor from Europe. Consequently, the narrative can be said to present both the European traveller and the Inughuit in interaction with him as continuously re-constructing agents whose daily practices prove mutually impactful.

Above, in my analysis of the travellers' arrival at Agapt, the relationships between the Europeans and the Inughuit as established at that point were described as a time of harmony and mutual concord. However, like other accounts of Scandinavian polar explorers, Rasmussen's texts harbours ambiguities which flare up when the indigenous inhabitants suggest that the mutual relationships are replete with conflicts and tensions.[483] This happens first in the episode of Sagdlork's shamanistic conjuration. When performing his rites, Sagdlork blames the "strangers" from Europe for bringing dog plague to the village and, consequently, for his wife's illness: " 'The white men brought the Evil Fate with them, they had a misfortune-bringing spirit with them. I saw it myself, there are no lies in my mouth; I do not lie, I am no liar, I saw it myself!' "[484]

Sagdlork is here the mouthpiece of "the wisdom of his forefathers"[485] he has inherited, but the European narrator emphasises that even though the shaman's words made a considerable impression on those gathered, they soon left to resume the work they had abandoned and "[s]oon the village rang once more with the laughter of happy men and women."[486] The charges against the Europeans are also alleviated by the observation that the approaching summer was on the minds of the villagers, ousting all their worries and making them disinclined to take heed of the admonitions of the old spirit conjurer. The narrator sounds very assured when saying this although, or rather because, he *cannot possibly know* how Sagdlork's speech was interpreted by the native participants in the ritual. At this point, where uncertainty is conveyed by means of certitude, the action gathers pace: dog plague and the European visitors' culpability for it are not mentioned again; instead, the death of Sagdlork's wife and his deliberately self-inflicted terminal starvation are rhapsodised in a moving report. This sequence

483 Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 121. Danes are perceived as "strangers"; Holm and Garde view this as well-founded, blaming Greenlanders' destitution on Danes. They also criticise mission and colonialism, clearly echoing the ideas of Hinrich Johannes Rink.

484 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 19.

485 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 22.

486 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 21.

re-asserts the discursive advantage of the narrator's voice, which is capable of muting the undesirable overtones of Inughuit's words. Nonetheless, and crucially for the work's overall ambivalent message, these words are not removed from the text, despite their intrinsic ambiguities and possibly conflicting interpretations.

The Inughuit also imply that the visitors from Europe are remiss in honouring the Inughuit dead. This is the accusation levelled at the Danish traveller by young Inughuit hunter Krisunguark: "'You are so strange, you white men! You collect things you will never require, and you cannot leave even the graves alone.'"[487] Confronted with such straightforwardly articulated displeasure and criticism, the traveller astutely and cunningly admits that, indeed, he has taken several objects from the grave but, in return, put in "exchange gifts to the soul": tea, matches, blubber and meat, "'just as they [the dead] had stipulated.'"[488] The European traveller's shrewd answer to Krisunguark evinces how conversant the former is in Inughuit logic, shaped by the native system of taboo and beliefs, as he skilfully chooses a strategy which both defends him and acknowledges the difference of the Other. Still, Krisunguark is not easily deceived by this argument, which is seemingly consistent with the Inughuit way of thinking and replies: "'The thoughts of the dead are not as our thoughts; the dead are incomprehensible in their doings!'"[489] At this point, which marks another instance of indigenous resistance, the narrator again cuts short considerations of the problem, focusing instead on what other characters say. Despite this strategy of silencing, Krisunguark has the last say in this debate as his argumentation is irrefutable, and although he has no power to determine the further course of the narrative, he is the winner in the dispute to the detriment of the European traveller's wily, but unsuccessful, tactics.

On another occasion, the same Krisunguark tells the European traveller that the sea will not be frozen over because "'[o]ur world up here […] does not love strangers,'" which leaves no doubt as to whom he blames for the situation: "'it must be your presence that is the reason of it. Do you not understand? Our earth is ashamed!'"[490] At this point in the story, the submissive and passive narrator cannot but see the point in the young Inughuaq's reasoning: "My good friend's explanation must assuredly have been the truth; undoubtedly something was wrong, for the sea was unusually late in freezing over that year."[491]

487 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 72.
488 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 72.
489 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 73.
490 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 83.
491 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 83.

Giving precedence to indigenous knowledge and logic, combined with a lack of any remonstrance, confirms the imputation voiced by the member of the Inughuit community, which reverberates not only with concern, but also with open reluctance to the prolonged sojourn of "strangers" on North Greenland's soil. As Krisunguark's words resound powerfully, they come to narratively upstage the voice of the frail and unprotesting narrator, buttressing the textual heteroglossia and the related ambiguity of meanings in *The New People*.

What Sagdlork and Krisunguark say implies distrust of the Danish travellers, who are perceived as outsiders guided by an unknown agenda and disrespecting local customs, and casts doubt on the visitors' innocence, one of the pillars of the anti-conquest ideology promoted by the text. The narrative of agreement- and mutuality-underpinned harmonious relationships is thus ruptured, and as fissures start to criss-cross it, the reader can catch a glimpse of genuine indigenous resistance to the European rendering of the cultural encounter in the North-Greenlandic contact zone.

The discursivisation of resistance is also performed when the parables told by the native inhabitants are recounted in the text. One of them is an old legend about a white boy found by the Inughuit in a box stolen from a European ship. The boy grew up among them until one day he started to crave "milk and the sweet dishes he had been accustomed to"[492] and disappeared without a trace. The tale ends with the following insight: " 'for you are strange, you white foreigners; one fine day you appear in our country, and as soon as we have learnt to care for you, you vanish, and we do not know where you go.' "[493] Another poignant truth is voiced by an old Inughuit woman called The Sinew, when the European traveller departs from Agpat; her words concluding the entire account are as follows:

> "You look so happy!" she said.
> "Yes!"
> "Ah! I understand you. You are going home. Are you anxious to get away?"
> "Yes, – nay, I think I am only anxious for a change."
> The old woman looked me gravely in the face, and said slowly:
> "Listen now, before you leave us, to a word from an old woman, who understands only love and – food.
> You are like the sea-king.[494] When the spring warms the country, it visits us. It comes from a country far, far away, which we do not know.

492 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 82.
493 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 82.
494 *Plotus alle*: the little auk or dovekie – a bird of the alcid family.

> You came here like the sea-king, with the welcome spring; but when the summer was over and the flight began, you stayed. So that is why you are eager now to get back to your country and your people; and it is good for you to go.
> Do you hear? Your dogs are whining… Never wait for the dawn, when you are eager to be gone!"[495]

Whereas the ending of the first tale about white people can be construed as intimating the Inughuit's wish for a constant European presence in the region, which legitimises a possible colonial expansion to follow, the content of the legend as such rather suggests the opposite. The point is to emphasise what is later corroborated by The Sinew's words, which close the entire account: white people come to where the Inughuit live and then *go away*, so they actually belong in the metropolis and not in the northern outskirts. What is flung at the reader is the indigenous appeal for the visitors from Europe to return home, an appeal supported by the knowledge handed down by their forebears and by the wisdom gleaned from the surrounding world.

The articulation of native resistance in *The New People* is possible due to textual polyvocality, which fosters agency displayed both by the European subject and by the Inughuit, who are the objects of his description. As the subjects of their own narratives, the indigenous inhabitants of North Greenland exhibit considerable agency, which consists in active efforts to effect change in their environment, i.e. the departure of the European traveller from the area they inhabit. The voices of The Sinew and of the anonymous teller of an old legend echo in Rasmussen's narrative unimpeded by any comment, which additionally enhances their expressiveness and contributes to representing the Inughuit as self-reliant, active agents capable of discursivising their dissatisfaction with the way things are at the moment.

The actions of the European traveller, who is the addressee of the words that question the authority of Western supremacy, follow the Inughuit's articulated wish. Even though, formally, the episode of his departure from Agpat does not herald any particular course of future events, let alone the narrator's return to the Danish metropolis, this is what the reader is supposed to assume.[496] On leaving Agpat, the narrator is not the same traveller that set out on the expedition driven by the desire to meet the mythical "new people," whose ready-made image had been carved in his mind even before the journey began. His words

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495 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 218.

496 That the protagonist will return home safely is inferable from the narrator's words in the preface as he speaks from the perspective of the concluded expedition and from the fact that the reader is actually holding the account whose very existence presupposes "the imperially correct outcome." Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 87.

to The Sinew when he bids her farewell encapsulate the transformation he has undergone: " 'I think I am only anxious for a change,' " he states when asked by the old Inughuit woman if he is eager to go. This tell-tale answer is certainly expressive of the time he has spent among the nomadic community, "the most northerly dwelling people in the world."[497] Change is a crucial element of the Inughuit lived experience as it largely motivates their actions: hunting to eat different food, preparations for the polar night and visiting other peoples, both known ones and entirely unknown ones, as in the trek in which Merkrusârk took part. When he admits he longs for a change, the traveller – whom we should perhaps stop calling exclusively European – offers The Sinew an Inughuit-like answer, emphasising that he has also gone through a metamorphosis himself.

The narratorial voice that dominates in most of *The New People* is thus a major, but not the only avenue for articulating meaning in Rasmussen's account. With the inclusion of the Inughuit standpoint into the narrative, it becomes polyvocal and discursivises worldviews that depart from the Western model. The relations between the narrator's statements and the Inughuit's utterances are ambivalent since whenever native resistance is articulated in the text, negotiations of meaning immediately follow, involving a range of narrative techniques: sudden shifts to another theme, abandoning the point altogether, citing neturalising words of other people or the European traveller's verbalisations, which are suggestive of his shrewdness and comprehensive knowledge of the Inughuit mentality. Nevertheless, despite continual negotiations of meaning, which result from unequal discursive power relations, the Inughuit as represented by Rasmussen exhibit considerable agency in contacts with the European Other. It is exercised in the ways of discursivising the cultural encounter, where the Europeans' presence in North Greenland is judged as either desirable or alarming and dismaying. As agents, the Inughuit are capable of discursivising their own history and identity, affecting the European traveller's desires and questioning his actions. The heteroglossia prominent in *The New People* and the negotiation of meaning it induces essentially contribute to the textual ambivalence in the representations of the Inughuit and North Greenland in the account.

6 *The New People* in the Historical Context

The application to the Danish Ministry of Interior for permission to enter the Greenlandic colony phrased the aims of the Literary Expedition in nationally

497 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. xix.

coloured and economically inflected wording: "The expedition had a national assignment: Through commonly readable and comprehensible depictions of Greenland's popular and commercial life as well as its social conditions it was meant to stimulate the interest of the Danish reading public, and especially the interest of the grant authorities, in our second country up north [Danish: *Biland*]; such interest was missing to a regrettable degree, and when stimulated it might lead to economic benefits for Denmark as well as to cultural progress for the people of Greenland."[498]

The emphasis on the expedition's national investment and the economic argumentation were expedient to successfully soliciting the approval of the authorities in Copenhagen. That the word *Biland*, denoting a dependent territory or a country under the sovereignty of another one,[499] was used to refer to the yet-uncolonised region of North Greenland, which was still perceived by the West as "no man's land," additionally underscored the expansionist nature of the enterprise and projected a further extension of Denmark's influence under the guise of a civilising mission on uncolonised peripheries. The application leaves no doubt that all four of its signatories[500] were loyal subjects of the Danish king, that their pursuits tallied with the established Eurocolonial order, and that the aims of their journey overlapped with the goals which, as Pratt explains, all travels during the imperial period actually had in mind: "territorial surveillance, appropriation of resources, and administrative control."[501]

The year 1905, when *The New People* appeared, witnessed burgeoning plans for capitalist expansion in North Greenland, initiated by Ludvig Mylius-Erichsen (who was to die tragically in 1908),[502] and a robust social and political campaign for a sustained Danish presence in North-West Greenland launched by Mylius-Erichsen and Knud Rasmussen.[503] The campaign chiefly trumpeted the urgency

498 Frederiksen, *Kongen af Thule*, p. 34 (trans. Jørgen Veisland).

499 *Ordbog over det danske sprog*: http://ordnet.dk/ods/ordbog?query=biland (Accessed 27 Mar. 2014).

500 Jørgen Brønlund, Rasmussen's childhood friend from Ilulissat, joined the expedition as its fifth member in the summer of 1902, when the travellers stayed at Nuuk and met him while visiting the village of Kangeq, where he worked as a catechist. Frederiksen, *Kongen af Thule*, p. 36.

501 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 39.

502 Barfoed, *Manden bag helten*, p. 260.

503 As part of the campaign, Mylius-Erichsen and Rasmussen sent petitions to the Danish Ministries of the Interior and of Foreign Affairs and went on a lecture tour across

of advancing civilisational development among the Inughuit, a goal which was sometimes given precedence over extending Denmark's sphere of influence and furthering Danish territorial expansion.[504]

The allochronic devices used in the text contribute to constructing the Inughuit as uncivilised, primitive Others and, as such, are accessory to colonial expansion paired with a capitalist venture which was to be named the Cape York Thule Trading Station a few years later[505]. In this way, the innocent dream of the child from the introduction to *The New People* was fleshed out in the adult's experience, nurtured by private scientific and economic aspirations and subservient to the cause of national imperialism.[506]

The idealised image of North Greenland and the Inughuit which was crafted in and through *The New People* should also be viewed as associated with the campaign launched by the initiators of the trading station in order to arouse general public interest in the unknown areas of North Greenland. Rasmussen's discursivisation of the villagers from the small Agpat settlement as free, *real* people boasting their own, unique culture complete with beliefs, mode of life, mentality and customs and living in a society founded on different, non-European norms would essentially contribute to re-casting not only the image of the Inughuit, who were largely unknown in Demark in the early 20th century, but also the Danish perception of all Greenlanders. The representations of the Inughuit as a people who had a special bond with nature (conveyed by the notion of *naturfolk* and reinforced by the opposition of "natural peoples" vs. "cultured peoples") were re-processed in the Danish imagination to subsume all Greenlanders, irrespective of where they actually lived.[507]

When reading *The New People* against expedition accounts by other Scandinavian polar explorers, e.g. Gustav Holm and Thomas Garde, Fridtjof Nansen, and Eivind Astrup, one immediately sees that they all use the same tropes which were endemic in European literature on Greenlanders in the

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Denmark to promote their cause. Frederiksen, *Kongen af Thule*, pp. 57–58; Michelsen, *Vejen til Thule*, pp. 198–199.

504 Barfoed, *Manden bag helten*, p. 263; Müntzberg and Simonsen, "Knud Rasmussen og handelsstationen Thule 1910–37," p. 215.

505 According to Michelsen, the founding of the Thule Trading Station was a direct consequence of the Literary Expedition. Michelsen, *Vejen til Thule*, p. 325.

506 The anti-conquest ideology supported this "greatest non-reciprocal non-exchange of all time: the Civilizing Mission." Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 125.

507 Thisted, "The Power to Represent," p. 327; Thisted, "Knud Rasmussen," p. 275.

1880s and 90s. Crucially, however, each of these texts, their similarities notwithstanding, is inscribed in a different context and reflects different power relationships. Because of its discursive purpose, *The New People* is most closely affiliated with Holm and Garde's *The Danish Umiaq Expedition to the East Coast of Greenland*, which similarly preceded Denmark's territorial expansion onto the yet-uncolonised area of Greenland. Although the narrator of *The New People* shares most features with the protagonist of Astrup's narrative, which offers explicitly positive representations of the Inughuit and their culture, the Dane's account – unlike *With Peary near the Pole* – is clearly implicated in the Danish project of territorial expansion, which is out of the question in the case of the Norwegian, who is the only European member of an American expedition to North Greenland. By fashioning the Inughuit as the "new" people and the area they inhabit as an equally "new," but friendly and affluent, land, the narrator of *The New People* showcases a place where Europeans (Danes) can readily bring their commercial, scientific and territorial ideas to fruition.

Why did we continually return to the attack? There in the darkness and cold stood Helheim, where the death-goddess held her sway; there lay Nåstrand, the shore of corpses. Thither, where no living being could draw breath, thither troop after troop made its way. To what end? Was it to bring home the dead, as did Hermod when he rode after Baldur? No! It was simply to satisfy man's thirst for knowledge. Nowhere, in truth, has knowledge been purchased at greater cost of privation and suffering. But the spirit of mankind will never rest till every spot of these regions has been trodden by the foot of man, till every enigma has been solved.

Fridtjof Nansen (1897)[508]

They travelled and travelled
to a country so big
that there cannot be people enough
to name that many places.

They travelled and travelled
and each island or fjord
headland or mountain was named
in honour of this or that or themselves.

They travelled and travelled
and returned
with maps of the country,
and the way of life described
to gain honor and glory
medals et cetera
for having travelled in a country
where people are settled and living.

Aqqaluk Lynge (1982)[509]

508 Fridtjof Nansen, *Farthest North Being the Record of a Voyage of Exploration of the Ship "Fram" 1893–96 and of a Fifteen Months' Sleigh Journey by Dr. Nansen and Lieut. Johansen,* vol. 1 (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Company 1897), pp. 2–3.

509 Kleivan, "Poetry, Politics, and Archeology," p. 187.

IV Mapping Ultima Thule: Encounters with the Telluric Other

1 The First Thule Expedition, 1912–1913

The Thule Expedition of 1912–1913 was the first polar expedition launched under the direct command of Knud Rasmussen and funded for the most part from the revenues of the Thule trading station.[510] Including Rasmussen himself, Peter Freuchen and two Inughuit hunters of Thule: Inukitsoq, aged about twenty-five, and Uvdloriaq, aged thirty-five, the expedition set out to map the north coast of Greenland up to Peary Land. Besides charting activities, the expedition members were expected to look for signs of prior settlement and, if possible, to rescue Ejnar Mikkelsen and Iver Iversen, who had gone missing, as Rasmussen and Freuchen were informed in August 1911.[511] Unlike the Literary Expedition to Greenland, which headed to the areas inhabited by the Inughuit, the First Thule Expedition aimed to explore unpeopled areas, where human settlement was discouraged by the extremities of climate.

The First Thule Expedition started on 14 April 1912, as 35 sleds and 350 dogs set out in the direction of the icesheet across the Clements Markham Glacier. The Inughuit accompanying the expedition were heading to Ellesmere Island to hunt, while some of them helped transport dog food and turned back at a certain point. The route stretched over the northern side of Greenland, across the icesheet up to Denmark Sound [Danish: *Danmark Fjord*] and then to Cape Glacier in Independence Fjord, where the travellers expected to find a message from Mikkelsen in a cairn erected by Mylius-Erichsen.[512] The further route – southward to Denmark Fjord or northward to Fort Conger – hinged on what the message would say. Already on 5th May, the travellers found themselves at the other side of the icesheet and embarked on a difficult descent along the Zig-Zag Valley [Danish: *Zig-zag-dalen*]; on 4th June, they reached Mylius-Erichsen's staging point, but as there was no message from Mikkelsen and Iversen in the cairn, they concluded that the two had not made

510 Müntzberg and Simonsen, "Knud Rasmussen og handelsstationen Thule 1910–37," p. 224.

511 Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte,* p. 250; Frederiksen, *Kongen af Thule*, p. 112.

512 Cairns [Danish: *varde*] were used by polar explorers to leave information about their route and events experienced underway.

it that far and, consequently, the decision was made to head to the original destination of the expedition, i.e. the purported Peary Channel. Progressing along Denmark Sound, they circumvented Cape Rigsdagen and reached the mouth of Hagen Fjord on 5th June. Subsequently, they crossed Independence Fjord and entered Peary Land, where they found game-rich hunting grounds. They arrived at the fjord bay on 17th June to realise that in fact the so-called Peary Channel did not exist, which meant that Peary Land was connected to the rest of Greenland by land.[513] This discovery radically changed the expedition's return plans. Over fourteen days of arduous effort, the travellers managed to cross the high ground which they named "Cape Schmelck." They called the glacier connecting Greenland and Peary Land "Nyeboe's Gletcher," and the area stretching on the other side, "Adam Biering's Land." Further, they went to Navy Cliff Land, where they began their return journey home. Rasmussen suffered an attack of sciatica, and his companions went hunting to replenish their provisions. The return journey proved far more difficult than expected: the travellers set out on 10th August, found Inglefield Bay on 4th September and made it back to Thule only on 15th September 1912 as a result of a navigational error. They departed for Demark in April 1913, driving dogsleds to the Danish colony of Holsteinsborg, where they boarded the "Hans Egede" and arrived at Copenhagen on 10th May 1913. Besides traversing the icesheet there and back as the first people ever,[514] the travellers brought copious geological, botanical and zoological specimens. They had also tried to conduct meteorological and glaciological observations, but they did not have the appropriate measuring equipment. Although the First Thule Expedition did not prompt Danish settlement in the newly charted area, it makes up part of Danish colonial history.[515]

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513 It had been discovered earlier by Ludvig Mylius-Erichsen, Høeg-Hagen and Jørgen Brønlund during the ill-fated Denmark Expedition. Frederiksen, *Kongen af Thule*, p. 125.

514 Frederiksen, *Kongen af Thule*, p. 126.

515 Before 1933, when the Permanent International Court of Justice at the Hague sanctioned Denmark's sovereignty over the entire territory of Greenland, the island had not been viewed as a geopolitical entity either in Denmark or in Greenland. Danish expeditions to the north-east areas of Greenland served as an important argument in favour of Denmark's claim to the region. Niels Jarler, "Det burde ikke gaa i Glemme: Kortlægning og polarpoesi i omegnen af Danmark-Ekspeditionen," *Spring*, No. 22 (2004), pp. 161–162.

Summarised above, the linear course of the expedition organises the narrative of *My Travel Diary*,[516] a subjective record of its events. The account begins as the expedition leaves Thule, when the narrator and the hunter Uvdloriaq, together with a few accompanying sledges, set out to an Inughuit village which is called "Meat" [Danish: *Kød*] by its dwellers[517]; the narrative finishes with the Europeans' return to Copenhagen. The stages of the journey are presented in chapters entitled "The Journey Begins" (*Rejsen begynder*), "Over the Inland Ice" (*Over Indlandsisen*), "Through the Zig-Zag Valley" (*Gennem Zig-Zagdalen*), "Out through Denmark Sound" (*Ud gennem Danmarksfjord*), "Along the Coasts of Peary Land" (*Langs Pearylands Kyster*), "Summer in the New Land" (*Sommer i det Nye Land*), "The Camp under the Great Rock" (*Lejren under det Store Sten*) and "Home through the Clouds" (*Hjem gennem Skyerne*). In the framework proposed by Silje Solheim Karlsen, *My Travel Diary* is written from the commander position [Norwegian: *førsteposisjonsforteller*] and displays far more affinity with traditional expedition reports than *The New People* does, in terms of both a greater generic coherence and a more conventional graphic design, including maps which are an outcome and proof of the charting activities.[518] The book's concise and concrete title *My Travel Diary: Sketches from the First Thule Expedition* (*Min Rejsedagbog. Skildringer fra den Første Thule-ekspedition*) suggests that it relies on a set of discursive strategies which aim first and foremost to make the account credible to the readers and thus to authorise the writer as a polar explorer and a leader of an Arctic expedition.[519] The book was "dedicated to the memory of Adam Biering," a Danish entrepreneur who supported the founding of the Cape York Thule Trading Station, which reveals the author's dependence on the Danish establishment. The language of the narrative is also

516 All quotations from Knud Rasmussen's *Min Rejsedagbog* (*My Travel Diary*) were translated from Danish by Jørgen Veisland, based on the first edition of the book in 1915.

517 Present-day Greenlandic *Neqé*, see e.g. Hastrup, *Thule – på tidens rand*, pp. 218–219.

518 There are no illustrations or pictures in the first edition of *My Travel Diary*, unlike in Rasmussen's debut book, in which the first page of each chapter was embellished with elaborate plates by Harald Moltke.

519 Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand*, pp. 16–17; 164. Generically speaking, *My Travel Diary* follows a particular model of expedition account, which is best exemplified by Nansen's *The First Crossing of Greenland*. The model has a fixed structure with the clearly marked beginning and ending of the journey and contains all the necessary elements to corroborate its credibility, for example detailed descriptions of the equipment and accurate data concerning daily distances, geographical locations, measurement activities and charting.

far more down-to-earth, despite its moments of poetic rapture, and often draws on contemporaneous scientific discourses. At the same time, *My Travel Diary* is also, primarily in fact, a record of an unusual adventure of Danish polar explorers on a dangerous expedition to the unknown edges of the world, who come back home having accomplished their mission. Telling a story of encounters with the North-Greenlandic telluric Other, *My Travel Diary* became a favourite read for young Danish generations for dozens of years.[520] In my argument below, I map the meanings it conveys.

2 The Split Subject: The Scientist's Authority vs. the Arctic Hunter's Instinct

Like *The New People*, *My Travel Diary* opens with a preface which contains two thematically different parts, devised to establish a contextualising framework for the narrative of the expedition. The first part provides an authorial meta-commentary. The dissimilarity between the ways in which the two texts discursivise the events they describe is signalled as early as in the first sentence: "The following account on the First Thule Expedition is taken from the travel diary I kept without substantial changes. Only the physical, bodily aspects of the expedition are covered here, and readers possibly interested in the scientific results are referred to *Monographs on Greenland*, published by The Commission for the Undertaking of Geological and Geographical Investigations on Greenland."[521]

The brevity and the matter-of-factness of this passage, in which the male narrator – who introduces himself as the leader of the venture and a scientist – advertises the report to the reading public, stand in stark contrast to the narrator's poetic and intimate language in the introduction to *The New People*. The reference to a publication on the First Thule Expedition in a scientific journal consolidates the authority of the position from which the narrator speaks, while he distances himself from the all too popular outcomes of his work, which he downplays by calling *My Travel Diary* just a "small book." This belittlement, however, is only ostensible since the "small book," non-scientific though it may be, will not cater to the tastes of the readers who seek just "exciting entertainment," for it deals with "monotonous toil and hard work during the struggle connected with penetrating unknown territory as hunters and explorers."[522]

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520 Thisted, "The Power to Represent," p. 326.
521 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 7.
522 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 7.

By skilful verbal manipulation, the words "explorers" and "struggle," dropped as if in passing (and contrasted with the condescending phrase "a small book"), make the reader realise what themes the book actually addresses and breed expectations of a narrative about discoveries, in which the protagonists, real males as they are, engage in a victorious fight against hostile Arctic nature. The masculinity and heroism of the European travellers are additionally highlighted by the noun "hunters," which as a matter of fact ushers in a certain ambiguity, for the word also makes one think of the indigenous inhabitants of North Greenland and their customs of travelling across the Arctic. Disclosing that the expedition members availed themselves of Inughuit travel methods to achieve their mission deflates the elevated status of the European accomplishments and disrupts the seeming coherence of the narrative's discourse.

As the narrator claims, the account presented to the reader is a faithful rendering of the events because they were registered during the expedition's operations in the Arctic. Given this, unlike in any text written in retrospect: "the moods of immediate experiences would best express the purely human dimension of the explorer's simple existence and the life of troubles and adversity, of uncertainty and exuberance in the midst of great nature that he values above all else in this world."[523]

A justification for the choice of the diaristic form, this meta-commentary on his own work indicates that the narrator is fully cognisant of the standards and criteria for polar expedition reports. As opposed to most such narratives, which are written after the return to the homeland, he believes that the hardships and adversities with which polar explorers cope should be related as they happen, because the merit of such accounts lies, after all, in that they capture "the moods of immediate experiences." With such a criterion of credibility for the genre in mind, the narrator renounces any poetic editing or "adorning"; the beauty and the truth of the narrative reside in the simplicity and the candour expressed by the author at the moment of writing. Although the narrator does not cherish much scientific ambition for the work he is offering to his readers, he still endorses the criterion of fidelity to the actual events, which suggests that despite his protestations he cares about retaining his authority as a witness to and a participant in past events who can be relied on to recount them truthfully.

This is another point where *My Travel Diary* clearly differs from *The New People*, because the narrator of the latter neither devoted any special attention to thematising his own work or marshalled any self-excuses. When the two texts

523 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 7–8.

are compared structurally, it seems that the only criterion by which the narrator of *The New People* abided was the disregard of any formal or content-related criteria. In contrast, the passages above imply that the narrator of *My Travel Diary* is guided by a defined set of rules, and if they prove incompatible, he institutes his own norms.

Similarly to the preface to *The New People*, the narrator of the prologue to *My Travel Diary* speaks as a person who has made the reported journey but distances himself from the traveller it describes, who he refers to alternately in the first and the third person: "Many of the *travelling man's* pleasures and experiences which *he* deems worth writing down will probably strike the more blasé city dweller as naïve and insignificant; however *I do not wish* to conceal such pleasures for the sake of feigning a superiority *I do not possess*; *I am* of the opinion that unreserved abandonment is based upon a fresh attitude towards the immediate."[524]

Clearly, in *My Travel Diary*, there are two distinct narratorial voices, a division buttressed by the meta-textual commentary, as indicated above. The narrator who writes the diary during the expedition and the omniscient narrator who has already returned from the journey speak from two different epistemological positions. These positions, as the pronoun "he" emphasises, are divided by an unbridgeable gap; more than that, there is no desire to bridge it in the first place.

Though serious, scientifically pragmatic and restrained (in order to avoid dishonest exaggerations), the narrator's voice in the preface to *My Travel Diary* harbours a passion which comes to light in the confession: "that he values above all else in this world." Specifically, his is a passion for the vastness of Arctic nature, which makes travelling in the Arctic an unforgettably emotional experience despite all the "troubles and adversity," "uncertainty" and "exuberance" it involves. By divulging this, the narrator inscribes himself in another polar narrative, i.e. in the myth of the Arctic adventure, with its axial "struggle" of heroic "explorers" to be first to set foot on "unknown territories" and thereby to further the progress of knowledge in the world. By evoking the myth of the polar explorer celebrated in expedition accounts, the narrator refers to the long tradition of representing the Arctic as a battlefield on which male subjects tussle with the menace of the Arctic space in order to be elevated into national heroes.[525] Nevertheless, there is more to this adoration of North-Greenlandic nature than just an eulogy of the polar hero's masculine adventure. Namely, it also expresses the recognition of the relationship the natives have with their environment,

524 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 8 (emphasis mine).
525 Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand*, p. 13.

which, coupled with the term "hunters," implies that the subject of the narrative speaks from the liminal space between the European and the Inughuit.

It is only in its second part that the preface to *My Travel Diary* begins to resound with national overtones which explicitly suggest that the narrative of the journey to North-East Greenland is part of the Danish imperialist project. In the first part, the narrator just states, modestly and innocently, that his object was "touching the soul and festivity of the travelling experience."[526] The awareness that his experiences cannot be adequately put into words again turns the readers' attention to the textuality of the representation and the unavoidable interpretation of reality it entails. The narrator makes the readers realise not only that the account is a subjective version of the events (all his efforts at rendering "the moods of immediate experiences" notwithstanding) but also that it is *only and exclusively* a text, a narrative of reality rather than its faithful copy.

As can be seen, the narrator of *My Travel Diary* fashions himself as a writer who is conscious of the limits to his work and its outcomes. Despite that, he invites the readers to "set out on the sledge journey" in the company of its protagonist – the European traveller and the Arctic hunter in one (that is, himself from before the journey), who was introduced earlier in the preface. Like in *The New People*, the direction and the route of this textual journey into unknown Arctic territories are laid out by the myth of the Arctic adventure in the company of male travel companions, whose expected reward is *being the first* to enter this uncharted "new land," that is, to meet the North-Greenlandic telluric Other. As the traveller makes his first steps in the "virgin" area of North-East Greenland, his narrative makes this area part of the Western system of knowledge. This is however not the only motivation behind the journey: as the narrator betrays his familiarity with the indigenous model of life, the expedition he recounts turns out to rely on the travelling techniques the Inughuit have used of old, which is a value in and by itself for the narrator – it embodies the lifestyle of Arctic hunters in their natural environment when, propelled by the need for change, they traversed huge expanses of land by dogsleds. Evidently, *My Travel Diary* is inscribed in a dual narrative: of the European adventure of polar heroes and of the Inughuit tradition of nomadic life.

The second part of the preface is devoted to the events directly preceding the First Thule Expedition, which the narrator believes the readers must know to understand the events he describes. It is only at this point that information about the permanent Danish presence in North Greenland appears: "In the year 1910

526 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 8.

I myself and Peter Freuchen established an Arctic station in the district of Cape York; because of its extreme northernly location we named this station Thule."

"Our initial scientific assignment at this station was the mapping of the so-called Peary Channel, which at the time was believed to separate North Greenland from Peary Land."[527]

As the word "station" [Danish: *Station*][528] appears alone and its funding is not disclosed, the capitalist character of the enterprise that was the Cape York Thule Trading Station is elided, while the scientific aspects of the task the narrator took upon himself are foregrounded. The unclear formulation locating the task "at this station" can be understood in two ways: that it was appointed by the travellers themselves as those who founded and lived in the facility and that the expedition began at Thule. In both cases, the trading station is the starting point, the natural centre and the cradle of their future pursuits.

The narrator meticulously reports the events from before the expedition proper. He begins with a reconnaissance trip in Melville Bay in the company of an Inughuaq named Qulutánguaq. This eventful trip, during which the protagonists face deadly risks of the cracking ice, camp on the icesheet and hunt polar bears, offers a foretaste of and a prelude to the grand expedition. Afterwards, the narrator describes the journey to Upernavik to get the necessary equipment from the manager of the colony, who "gave us everything we needed for this purpose."[529]

The latter piece of information gestures at the connections between the trading station and the Danish part of the colony, which is regulated by orders from Copenhagen. Thule is portrayed as a lonely island amidst the North-Greenlandic wilderness which, while not falling under anybody's jurisdiction, has undeniable links to the Danish colonial administration in Greenland. This sheds a different light on the scientific goals pursued by its founders. The European rootedness of the preface narrator is indisputable as he remarks that "*people at home* were seriously worried about the fate of Ejnar Mikkelsen," and for this reason "both Freuchen and I thought it was our *duty* to add a search expedition to the other plans we had."[530] It is only this part of the preface that shows how

527 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 8.

528 The Danish term for a trading station is *handelsstation*. With the prefix *handels-* (trading) consistently dropped, *station* is just a station, a facility devoted to unspecified activities, which are usually associated with the state sector. *Den Danske Ordbog, Moderne Dansk Sprog*: http://ordnet.dk/ddo/ordbog?query=station&tab=for (Accessed 28 Mar. 2014).

529 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 10.

530 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 9 (emphasis mine).

deeply the protagonists of the account of the journey to East-North Greenland are implicated in the Danish national project. For the European members of the expedition, the journey is not only a great male adventure in the hostile and yet admirable Arctic environment, but also – primarily, perhaps – a nationally-loaded venture aimed at ensuring Denmark its deserved share in the exploration of the last blank spots on the world map and the international prestige this brings. The hero status lies in store for those who set out on a perilous journey to further the cause of their homeland and nation. What lies at the root of the expedition is not somebody's tale of a journey,[531] but a national obligation to be fulfilled on remote peripheries in the name of science and progress.

These peripheries are very specific, as is the preface narrator's attitude to them – ambivalent and self-contradictory. His choice of Thule for a trading station founded in an "extreme northernly location" reverberates with the earlier images of the Inughuit from the introduction to *The New People*, where they are envisioned as "the most northerly dwelling people in the world" and neighbours of "the Lord of the wild northern gales."[532] By referring again to the oldest European representations of the edges of the world[533] – a mythical island which, symbolising a new land, is a metonymy of the remotest territories targeted by exploration and conquest[534] – the narrative of *My Travel Diary* not only inscribes itself in the centuries-old tradition of physical and literary efforts to ultimately locate Thule on the world map, but also constructs the territory of North-West Greenland as the materialisation of the endeavours science and expansion have undertaken hand in hand to reach the previously inaccessible brink of the world.

The meaning imposed by *The New People* on the Inughuit as the legendary Hyperboreans is re-asserted in *My Travel Diary* by naming the area they inhabit after the northernmost of all known islands and by incorporating them into the European world. Giving the colonised place the familiar European name of "Thule"[535] again promotes a symbolic experience of the old world and the development of a new one by instilling a synchronic temporal framework for this part of North Greenland. Although Thule is not Europe, it has been defined as

531 Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, p. 13.

532 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. xix.

533 Herodotus calls them *eschatiai*, which "denotes the remotest places in a way pinned to the rest of the world but different from it, like a frame differs from the canvas to which it is fastened." Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, p. 39.

534 Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, pp. 157–158.

535 *Thule*, without the modifier of *ultima* (i.e. remote, farthest) added by Seneca and Virgil, means simply the "world." Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, p. 158.

adjacent and subjected to the continent.[536] For the narrator of the preface to *My Travel Diary*, the "new" Thule, however, means something more than just an inscription of his dream onto a new territory. Defined at the beginning as another "home,"[537] it morphs into what Ernst Bloch calls a "paradoxical homeland," which combines extremity and inaccessibility with centrality and the warmth of the hearth: "Thule in the northern ocean is the mysticism of bad weather, with the open fire in its midst."[538] Thereby, the European subject is again revealed as split and having two different mental identification sites: the European metropolis and Thule, situated on the fringes of the Western world. As in *The New People*, this duality foreshadows different ways of discursivising the Other – the Inughuit and North Greenland.

My Travel Diary opens with the departure from Thule, which serves as a starting point for the entire work:

> Today our travels begin, the great venture the northern way around Greenland, in the spring sun and we are wonderfully delighted to get started. Hail friends, happy men on the threshold of joyous revelations! The mornings to come shall lift the veils of the great unknown and accompanied by the sun we set forth to encounter the goal of our longings!
>
> Abroad, abroad, filled with an appetite for dawning days! Muscular, greedy like bounding beasts of prey we greet the setting out, the northbound journey!
>
> Bright-minded, all sails hoisted we are ready to run before the wind to new worlds!
>
> – – –
>
> Could anyone be richer?[539]

This effusive tribute to travelling buoys the travel companions to head into the unknown realms by sketching a vision of future "joyous revelations," impatiently and gleefully awaited by the travellers. Compared to predators readying for a hunt, the male-only expedition members are setting a course for adventure offered by a journey in the North-Greenlandic space. Their expedition into the "new worlds" involves discoveries helpful for the progress of European knowledge and for the satisfaction of their own desires and expectations. The narrator's exhortation expresses the split which was signalled in the preface: on the one hand, he articulates his "demanding (masculine) self,"[540] which vocally longs to conquer

536 Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, p. 17.
537 "Home" [Danish: *Hjem*] is used a few times to refer to Thule during the scouting foray to Melville Bay. Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 9–10.
538 Ernst Bloch, *Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, eds. Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995), p. 781.
539 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 13.
540 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 57.

undiscovered lands scientifically, and on the other, he eulogises constant mobility and receptivity to the Other, which are associated with the nomadic mode of life and the crossing of thresholds and barriers such a life involves. In this way, the journey into the North-Greenlandic space accrues a double meaning, which was also voiced by the narrator of *The New People* as he projected his own desires onto the character of old bear-hunter Sorkrark. Specifically, it is a metaphorical act of conquering new lands and, at the same time, a mobile, nomadic lifestyle which offers true freedom and encounters with the Other.

The trope of a band of extraordinary men who, craving new sensations, set out on a dangerous mission on the remote peripheries suggests that Rasmussen's report follows the "adventure formula,"[541] focused on the protagonist and the hindrances he must overcome to accomplish his goal.[542] Describing the task of the polar explorers by means of rhetorical devices that directly refer to combat is, at the same time, aligned with the convention which Beau Riffenburgh dubs the imperial "myth and adventure of the hero."[543] The plot of *My Travel Diary* emulates a fixed pattern in which the hopeful protagonists form a homogeneous world of males who set out on a perilous journey in the exotic setting of unpopulated and largely ice-locked North-East Greenland. On this journey, they are put to a variety of tests, which they successfully pass as their special endowments enable them to accomplish their task and return home safely. This conventional model of the construction of male characters turns them into heroes no matter what outcomes their actions ultimately produce,[544] and the non-European world pictured in the account is doomed to have Western knowledge imposed on it in

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541 John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance*: *Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 40. Cichoń refers to the same mechanism as "the code of adventure" [Polish: *kod przygody*]. Cichoń, "W kręgu zagadnień literatury kolonialnej," p. 93. According to Phillips, this genre should not be separated from non-fictional, but still narrative, expedition literature because common to the two forms is telling about the journey and encounters "with nature and the unknown". Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 45.

542 Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance*, p. 40. Norwegian literary critic Jørgen Alnæs observes that Nansen's *First Crossing of Greenland* applies such a formula. Jørgen Alnæs, "Heroes and Nomads in Norwegian Polar Literature," *NORDLIT*, No. 23 (2008), p. 20.

543 Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 5.

544 Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand*, p. 13. While Riffenburgh enumerates such features as vitality, unusual strength and readiness to help others, Cawelti focuses on a special "superhero" type that, though equipped with exceptional strength or skills, is also an ordinary human being, "one of us." Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 6; Cawelti, *Adventure,*

othering practices. As a result, the myth of the polar explorer can be re-asserted and European domination established and reinforced.[545]

At the same time, the expedition is a journey into the unknown and a nomadic trek which is an aim in and of itself, rather than just a means enabling its European participants to "discover" territories unknown in the Western system of knowledge and, thereby, to confirm their status as heroes who have succeeded in mastering dangerous, wild nature. When Rasmussen's narrator reflects on the very act of travelling at the moment of departure, he concludes that "all journeys in the world exist only for those who undertake them; for everyone else remains only the poor impression of words."[546] The real journey is *an experience* which no narrative is capable of rendering. Conscious of the limits to and the inadequacies of the written word, the narrator seeks to instil in the readers that the real journey lies *somewhere else*, i.e. beyond textuality, which inevitably produces a distance to the objects being presented. He is already expressing these insights in the preface to the work, a gesture which brings to light not only his authority as a scientist and an expedition leader, but also his awareness as a traveller who is inside the world he experiences rather than in the exteriority crafted by the textual representation, a derivative of the journey.

The place from which the European traveller sets out on "the great travelling venture"[547] is not the European metropolis, but "our settlement at Umanaq's monumental 'heart mountain.'"[548] The Inughuit toponym the narrator employs to name their departure point shows that he familiarly relates to the landscape through the lens of local knowledge, and the possessive pronoun "our" implies that he considers the place his centre. This impression is sustained by the joyful memories which are stirred by the landscape he takes in as he speeds along on a sledge: "Here outside this cove young, inexperienced seals gather when the sun begins baking; there between the islets the walrus migrates when the summer

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Mystery, and Romance, p. 40. Martin Green describes such typical protagonists of adventure tales as "WASPs" (e.g. White Anglo-Saxon Protestants). Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), p. 3.

545 Riffenburgh argues that narratives about polar explorers emphasised the role of heroic men in augmenting the fame and glory of the nation and served nation-building and/or expansionist aims. Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 6. Green is of a similar opinion and refers to the adventure tales he analyses as "the energizing myth of English imperialism." Green, *Dreams of Adventure*, p. 3.

546 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 17.

547 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 17.

548 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 13.

has opened up the fjord; and on top of the 'patch-on-the-sole mountain' one could always be sure to spot a rabbit. Happy memories of the hunt and of bountiful well-being at the campsites where the spoils of the hunt were digested, come to mind and make you smile!"[549]

Heading towards the unknown, the traveller displays his intimate familiarity with the scenery he perceives. Even though his position is elevated – "poised like a king on the sledge, welcoming fjords and coves rushing by"[550] – and corresponds to the colonial literary "the-monarch-of-all-I-survey" trope,[551] the narrator's perception of the landscape is filtered through the knowledge he has acquired during his many hunts in the area. As a result of being-within-the-landscape and interactions with the hunters who inhabit it, the expedition commander's interpretation of the space constantly involves thoughts about game, on which his survival in the Arctic depends. Evoked in *The New People*, the narrator's close bond with nature, bespoken by his Inughuit-like understanding of the reality he experiences, is upheld and continued in *My Travel Diary*. The second narrative of North Greenland also frames his being-in-the-described-world as bursting the constraints of colonial discourse and arching the distance between himself and the Other, yet it also has the subject express his awareness of the limits to the textual discursivisation of his experiences.

The way the expedition leader presents the surrounding world at the beginning of *My Travel Diary* proves that the subject of the enunciation is split: on the one hand, he speaks as a strong and stable sender who is autonomous and immobilised vis-à-vis the world he is going to textually subordinate through a narrative of the heroic discovery of unknown territories; on the other hand, he is aware of the limitations inherent in the medium of the written word and gives precedence – over any tale – to the nomadic being-in-the-world and interaction with the Other it fosters. As the subject negotiates between these two discrepant positions, the representations of the North-Greenlandic world in the text accrue ambivalence, which is the focal point of my examination.

3 The Male Journey and the Male Adventure

Starting from the opening apostrophe to "happy men on the threshold of joyous revelations" and ending with the final passage of the narrative in which the

549 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 14–15.
550 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 15.
551 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 201.

description of a polar explorer's life consistently employs the masculine pronoun "he,"[552] the narrator of *My Travel Diary* repeatedly emphasises that the expedition in which the protagonists take part is a *male* journey. The androcentric world of the protagonists includes the male narrator, who denounces the bourgeois lifestyle of Western societies and stresses his masculine self, and the remaining travellers – all men of superior qualities – whose desires can be satisfied only by a journey to the remotest, undiscovered and dangerous corners of the world. This vision of masculinity applies equally to the Europeans and the Inughuit, as can be seen in the hunter Odark's stories about Inughuit men accompanying white men on polar expeditions.[553] Being male is also underlined when talking about the tragically deceased members of the Denmark Expedition [Danish: *Danmark-ekspeditionen*], whose traces the travellers find along the empty coasts of North-East Greenland.[554]

Finnish researchers Hanna-Mari Ikonen and Samu Pehkonen argue that the polar-explorer-and-researcher figure in polar accounts, which Riffenburgh refers to as "the myth and the adventure of the hero," is produced in reliance on masculinist discourse, where the masculinity of the hero is an exceptionally important trope that serves to represent the polar regions as areas beyond the order of Western civilisation and, as such, fit only for "real" men, representatives of the Western metropolis, who prove their strength and courage in community with other males.[555] Adventure literature scholar Richard Phillips similarly points out that the masculinity of the hero – a linguistic and rhetorical product as it is – is a permanent trope of the "geography of adventure," among which he also counts texts about polar expeditions.[556] The hero of Empire, as discussed by Riffenburgh, embodies the traits that justify a colonial state's territorial expansion, to which he is accessory by his exploratory activities.[557] As at the turn of the 19th century it was widely believed that knowledge should be accumulated in the field, that is, "out in the wild," polar research evolved as an utterly male enterprise.[558] The exploration and control of new territories which it enabled

552 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 267.
553 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 30.
554 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 158.
555 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 148.
556 At the same time, Phillips demonstrates that masculinities of adventure are always historically and geographically contextual. Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 45.
557 Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 6.
558 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 133.

were the sole monopoly of European males – white, middle-class Christians. The masculinity of expedition account protagonists is thus closely linked to Empire, for the greatness of a nation or a culture was supposed to be embodied in men, and this embodiment served as a symbol instrumental to justifying the narrative of national, imperial and/or scientific progress.[559] The achievements of polar explorers evince the masculinity of science, which also typified Danish polar research at the turn of the 19th century. Heading into the Arctic regions to master new territories by scientific penetration, males can be interpreted as the formation and inscription of hegemonic (male) power, which marked polar research and its practices with gendered colonialism.[560]

The heroism-structured masculinity of polar explorers in *My Travel Diary* is constructed through the performative action of "a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization."[561] Ikonen and Pehkonen point to two major strategies applied in expedition reports for such practices. One of them is based on binary oppositions of mutually hierarchised, gendered elements, while the other involves female gendering of the Arctic space and landscapes. Because both strategies are pervasive in constructing the imperially serviceable masculinity of the protagonists in *My Travel Diary*, my argument will accordingly unfold in two complementary parts. My aim here will be to examine the representations of the North-Greenlandic Other in Rasmussen's second expedition account in order to show not only how it is entangled in colonial discourse and imperialist practices but also, crucially, how it produces a surplus of meaning as a result of the subject's unstableness and positionality as discussed above.

3.1 The Icesheet and North-East Greenland as a Dangerous Wilderness: Heroisation and Sensationalism

One of the two strategies of defining and consolidating masculinity discussed by Ikonen and Pehkonen is based on binary oppositions, such as safety/danger, home/away, passivity/activity and nature/culture, whose "masculine" elements are ascribed to polar explorers, who are "*actively* and *at the risk of death* travelling away from the stable and the known, towards *the unknown* and

559 Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 6.

560 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," pp. 147, 150.

561 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York & London: Routledge, 1999), p. xv.

dangerous."[562] Within this theoretical framework, the narrator of *My Travel Diary*, who ventures into the Far North and exposes himself to perils far away from the Danish metropolis, proves that he is part of culture by undertaking activities that contribute to the scientific progress of Denmark and the West in general. Below, I argue that the construction of the male polar explorer in Rasmussen's account is founded on the oppositions listed by Ikonen and Pehkonen and that the travellers go through the rite of passage in the liminal space of adventure,[563] proving that their bid for both scientific acclaim and heroic glory is well-founded.

Despite the physical and geological differences between the icesheet, the massive layer of ice and snow that covers Greenland's interior, and the east coast with its landfast ice and pack ice, they are cast as largely similar in the narrative: they are both unpopulated areas with little or hardly any game to hunt, and they are barely fit for travelling by dogsleds. Especially at the beginning of *My Travel Diary*, the icesheet and North-East Greenland are identified as lethally dangerous: as a boundless wilderness and a mysterious, indefinite, vast expanse, which evoke awe and anxiety in the travellers. This image is generated by rehearsing an ensemble of fixed metaphors and adjectives which are conventionally used in the discourse of polar expeditions[564]: "the great unknown," "the might

562 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 130 (emphasis mine). Ikonen and Pehkonen add one more binary opposition: "everyday/exceptional." Since, in my view, it is already subsumed by the other ones, particularly by the dichotomies of "safety/danger," "home/away" and "passivity/activity," I will not discuss it separately in my analysis.

563 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 165.

564 Johan Schimanski and Ulrike Spring, "Oppdagelsesreise bliver til litteratur: Skrivestrategier i mottakelsen av den østerriksk-ungarske nordpolsekspedisjonen," in: *Reiser og ekspedisjoner i det litterære Arktis*, eds. Johan Schimanski et al. (Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk Forlag, 2011), p. 61. In *The Danish Umiaq* by Holm and Garde, these are first and foremost the modifiers "wild" and "austere", associated with the east coast. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 140, 157. Nansen's narrative features a wide array of adjectives: "wild," "desolate," "mighty," "great," "unvarying," "monotonny," "mysterious," "magnificent" and "interminable" and metaphors: "a huge white glittering expanse stretching as far as the eye can reach," "one vast expanse of sea," "desert," "wildness of desolation and monotonny", "alluring desert of snow", "these huge tracts of ice and snow," "ocean of snow," "infinite expanse of white."; there is also a quotation from Nordenskiöld, who calls the icesheet the "Northern Sahara." *The First Crossing of Greenland,* vol. 1, pp. 148, 219, 242–243, 267, 399, 494, 509; *The First Crossing of Greenland,* vol. 2, pp. 48–49. *With Peary near the Pole* repeatedly uses modifiers, such as "gigantic," "enormous," "immense," "desolate,"

of the waste land," "monstrous ice desert," "white desert," "our great desert of cold and death," "the white throat abandoned by God and life," "heart of the winter," "the enormous desert of the glacier," "the great waste land" and "a monster."[565] These metaphors envelop the text in a distinctly emotional colouring, presenting the expedition's destination not only as overwhelmingly immense and lethally dangerous, but also as shrouded in mystery.[566] The peril of the unpeopled areas of North Greenland, where the male protagonists of the narrative are heading, is all too amply authenticated when they come across remains in Denmark Sound, palpable proof of the tragic death of the Denmark Expedition members. The telluric Other is patently a place where life is exposed to mortal hazards and returning home is far from certain.

Rasmussen's representations of the icesheet and North-East Greenland as places of utmost danger display considerable affinities with the characteristically Romantic vision of the polar zones as a desert and an unknown land of eternal snow and ice, whose power and menace evoke dread and desolation.[567] Yet even quite a cursory reading of the initial passages of *My Travel Diary* is sufficient to notice that, in fact, another manner of representing the polar regions prevails in the account. Despite exposing the expedition members to grave threats, the icesheet and North-East Greenland are also an exciting *adversary* to be engaged with and, eventually, defeated.[568]

The rhetoric of struggle, with its stylistic devices (i.e. metaphors and modifiers referring to war), is one of the most characteristic tropes of polar expedition

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"lifeless" and "infinite," and metaphors, such as an "cold, wide-spread winding sheet," "desert of snow," "snow-white desert" and "emptiness." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 56, 91, 180, 191, 199, 244, 245, 262.

565 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 13, 15, 30, 51, 69, 71, 86, 88, 123, 198.

566 This is emphasised by adjectives and similes, e.g. "silent like a desert and enigmatically merciless." Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 51.

567 Schimanski and Spring, "Oppdagelsesreise bliver til litteratur," p. 76; Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 17. Riffenburgh attributes this to the unexplained disappearances of many expeditions and a general growth of interest in such themes, stimulated by the dynamically developing press. Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 17.

568 Prevalent in the early episodes of Rasmussen's narrative, the warfare metaphors build a suspense while the travellers are setting out into the unknown, which is viewed as being of the utmost danger. However, when the expedition is actually traversing the icesheet and then travelling along the island's eastern coastline, this rhetoric gradually subsides, to be replaced by other discursive devices.

writings.[569] The word "struggle" already appears in one of the first sentences of the preface to *My Travel Diary*, which muses on "the struggle connected with penetrating unknown territory as hunters and explorers." The mood of combat-thirsty soldiers impatiently awaiting the battle is explicitly rendered in the episode of the departure from Thule, where the expedition members are compared to aggressive animals: "Muscular, greedy like bounding beasts of prey we greet the setting out, the northbound journey!" Further on in the narrative, when the future discoverers intently anticipate the confrontation with their impending challenge, they are like "an eagle dashing up into the air"[570] and "young wolves, fiercely devouring adventures in the new hunting fields."[571] Even though, according to the narrator, victory and defeat hinge primarily on the whims of fortune, the travellers are ready for either option: "let our path carry us towards brilliant victory or to the great darkness swallowing men's defeat!"[572]

The aura of warfare intensifies in the subsequent episodes of the account, which describe the gathering of provisions and food for the dogs before setting out on the first stage of the journey – a sixteen-day ride by four dogsleds across the icesheet. The travellers' sojourn in a prosperous and affluent Inughuit settlement called Meat gives the narrator an opportunity to discursivise qualms concerning the fearsome "waste land," which lurks ahead of him and his companions like a mortal enemy, denying access to the territories on the opposite coast of Greenland and offering "a challenge as hazardous as any duel."[573] The narrator's

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569 Jarler, "Det burde ikke gaa i Glemme," p. 164. The rhetoric of struggle is conspicuous in Holm and Garde; for example, the "new land" (East Greenland) is portrayed as a "battleground" while the ice binding the east coast is framed as "one of the toughest adversaries one can meet." Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 58, 142. Symptomatically, Nansen's *The First Crossing of Greenland* and, later, Astrup's *With Peary near the Pole* hardly ever employ warfare rhetoric, and whenever it appears, it is used playfully to ironise grandiose metaphors. Nansen's description of an attack of mosquitoes is an excellent case in point: "eventually by getting the wind in our favour, we at last succeeded in beating off, or at least escaping from, our enemy. But the loss of blood on our side was nevertheless very considerable." Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland,* vol. 1, p. 398. In Astrup's narrative, the successful crossing of the icesheet is crowned with the mutual snapshot camera-"shooting" with the members of the American expedition: "the quick subdued reports of which lent a certain martial finish to our greeting, as of a *fin-de-siècle* infantry fire." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 259.

570 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 14.

571 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 38.

572 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 15.

573 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 29–30.

anxiety culminates in his performative statement resembling an exclamation amidst a military commander's address to his troops: "The might of the waste land or our will!"[574] It establishes beyond any doubt that only one party can be victorious in this combat between people and the merciless elements. Like in war, the polar explorers' activity means putting everything on the line.

Finally, the expedition sets out on the road from Meat, accompanied by a train of accessory sledges, which the narrator calls an "Arctic parade." The scene makes one think of parading troops that march out to a battlefield: "The glacier was forced at a regular pace upwards, and a shower of good humour still passed above our heads. I stopped to take a picture, and as the sledges filed past I heard Freuchen's powerful voice break out in song: 'The March of Napoleon Across the Alps!' "[575]

The verbs "forced" and "filed past" used to describe the movement of dogsleds indicate that the impression of a military departure is evoked deliberately. The tune of a military march intoned by the other European expedition member directly conjures up the military feats of one of the best know conquerors in Western history and can be interpreted as an expression of the "imperialist nostalgia"[576] induced by the vision of facing the North-Greenlandic "wilderness." This impression is enhanced by the heroic diction that transforms the expedition into a tableau of fearless heroes parading out to war. Like soldiers in propaganda war films, they are unperturbed by the previously rhapsodised dangers which lurk amidst the emptiness of the "ice desert." Since the tropes used in the narrative paint them as braving death to prove their valour, they have the status of real heroes conferred on them even before any opportunity for heroic deeds presents itself.

The metaphorical warfare rhetoric constructs the space of the icesheet and North-East Greenland as an extremely dangerous place which is comparable to an enemy whom soldiers tackle in war. By exalting North-Greenlandic nature, a space of utmost peril is conceived which evokes anxiety, fear and awe, while at the same time being pictured as an object of excitement and an adversary to surmount. In this way, *My Travel Diary* is positioned astride two ways of representing the polar zones which had prevailed in popular descriptions of the Arctic since the mid-19th century.[577] The trope of the Arctic sublime is re-cast in

574 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 30.
575 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 42. The piece is *Napoleon-Marsch* op. 156 by Johann Strauss.
576 Holland and Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters,* pp. 29–30.
577 Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 6.

Rasmussen's account by having an emphatic "sensationalist" aspect added to it.[578] The representations of the North-Greenlandic telluric Other discussed above are thus bound up with the dissemination of a new Western view on how the human relates to the world. This view upheld human domination over nature and paired it with social Darwinism, which fuelled common desires of conquering the world and human mastery of nature.[579] The emphasis on the hazards posed by the icesheet and North Greenland is an imperial trope geared to supporting the discourse of conquest and subjection of nature by Western males. At the same time, in the national context, representing the North-Greenlandic telluric Other through warfare metaphors serves as one of the major strategies of laudatory rhetoric, as observed by Johan Schimanski and Ulrike Spring,[580] aimed at evoking associations with patriotic service to the motherland and, thereby, fostering the reader's identification with the narrator and the collective imperial identity he represents.

The extreme harshness of the natural conditions the polar explorers confront is proportionate to the glory garnered by those who manage to subdue it. Consequently, the reiterated emphasis on the utmost austerity is part of the heroisation of the expedition members, making them *men* "of extraordinary energy and action,"[581] who "challenge the nature and face the wild for the sake

578 Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 73.

579 Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 33. This was associated with a new era of geographical enquiry, which aspired to know every corner of the world, even the most remote one. Since the mid-19th century, such subjugation of nature had been made a point of honour by several Western organisations, e.g. the Royal Geographical Society. Polish polar explorer and member of the Belgian Antarctic Expedition Antoni Bolesław Dobrowolski (1872–1954) expresses this in an impassioned introduction to his book on polar expeditions, emphasising that the struggle with Arctic nature was, crucially, noble and disinterested: "Nowhere else did the notion of struggle receive an equally ideal and noble form as it did in polar struggles. Man did not oppress man here. These were grand battles between man and nature, only nature: the only form of struggle that behooves people, their supreme calling and most sacred duty. Nowhere else was the struggle with nature as hard, nowhere else did the elements put up an equally hostile, an equally powerful and obdurate fight. Nowhere else were people's intents purer and more disinterested. Nowhere else did man withstand such trials of perseverance, fortitude and valour." Antoni Bolesław Dobrowolski, *Wyprawy polarne* (Warszawa: Nakład Henryka Lindenfelda, 1914), p. 4.

580 Schimanski and Spring, "Oppdagelsesreise bliver til litteratur," p. 63.

581 Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 6.

of knowledge."[582] This representation is channelled through the accumulation of conventional adjectives which, used like Homeric epithets, appear repeatedly whenever the polar explorers and their achievements are mentioned.[583] These adjectives express emotionally charged, univocally positive, absolute qualities, such as "brave," "tough," "great" and "famous," as well as values associated with polar exploration and polar explorers, such as friendship, science, heroism, honour, struggle and fame. Such laudatory rhetoric envelops not only the triumphs of the still living polar explorers, e.g. Robert Edwin Peary and Fridtjof Nansen,[584] but also the feats of the tragically lost members of the Denmark Expedition. The latter are called "friends whose courage to freely explore drove them to a death that will never be forgotten."[585] In the narrator's perception, death from starvation and exhaustion brings his former travel companions only greater glory, for they fell on their research field.

A veritable commemorative plaque is to be found in the passages devoted to Greenlander Jørgen Brønlund. A legacy of polar research, his attainments are likened to an Old-Norse saga of heroes of yore which has been "chiselled into the poor stone fields of these regions."[586] The narrative pathos illuminates Brønlund's glory and merit: "And the young Greenlander who struggled ahead alone through the dark and the cold, carrying with him the precious results of the exploration, after his companions had turned rigid in the grip of merciless

582 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 134.

583 Schimanski and Spring, "Oppdagelsesreise bliver til litteratur," p. 62. The conventional adjectives used in Nansen's *The First Crossing of Greenland* serve primarily to stress the Norwegian origin of the admired researchers and polar explorers. This means that their aim is to consolidate and affirm their readers' *national* identity, an effect which is amplified by the possessive adjective "our": for example, "our celebrated countryman, the astronomer Hansteen" [Norwegian: *vor berømte landsmand Hansten*]. Nansen, *First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 2, p. 58. *Paa ski over Grønland*, p. 479. With a different readership in mind, the English translation of the book gives up on some of such possessive pronouns; for instance, "the Norwegian geologist Helland" replaces "our countryman Amund Helland" [Norwegian: *vor landsmand Amund Helland*]. Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, p. 503, *Paa ski over Grønland*, p. 429.

584 Nansen's and Peary's travels are described as "great," and Nansen's achievement is bathed in "a blaze of glory." Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 35–35. This refers to Nansen's crossing of Greenland's icesheet in 1888 and to Peary's expedition of 1891–1892, which discovered that Greenland is an island. Norwegian Eivind Astrup took part in Peary's expedition.

585 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 158.

586 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 158.

death, toiled on, his feet marked by death, and finally collapsed exactly where other men one day would find the maps of the new land."[587]

Although a Greenlander, Jørgen Brønlund is honoured by his former friends and the current expedition members, who fly the flag at half-mast and regard his great deeds in the service of Danish science as an example of utter sacrifice. The stylistic devices of laudatory rhetoric add an affective layer to the narrator's language, and the values he hails by invoking the most important national symbol of Denmark contribute, like the rhetoric of warfare, to affirming the readers' national and imperial identity.[588]

The conventional adjectives of positive emotional colouring are also applied to the expedition members and their deeds, but the way in which they help construct them as heroes differs from the heroising portrayals of other polar explorers. Although their journey is often described as "great," the narrator avoids adulating either himself or his companions and tends to refer to them by modifiers designating good human relationships or moods, such as "delighted," "joyous," "happy" and "bright-minded."[589] Apparently, the greatness of the deeds performed by the protagonists of *My Travel Diary* is to be borne out by their achievements described in the account, rather than by a deliberate narrative contrivance. Still, the laudatory rhetoric is not entirely eschewed in these depictions and surfaces in the early passages of the account in which the travellers are presented one by one. Though ostensibly this part is only informative, exceptional features of each man are brought into relief as distinguishing him from the rest of (Danish and Inughuit) society and, consequently, predestining him to face up to the perils of North-Greenlandic nature. Peter Freuchen is described as an individual who has a "*very unusual* ability to adjust to the life of the Eskimos and on several occasions proved himself to be an arctic worker of the *first* order."[590] Though very young, Inukitsoq "was *known* as an enduring and capable hunter and sledge driver" and harboured the "Eskimo *ambition* to excel at travels and hunts – an ambition that *never diminished* during the entire journey."[591] The greatest superlatives are reserved for Uvdloriaq, the older of the two Inughuit, who is described in terms reminiscent of the noble savage trope discussed in the previous Chapter. "*The best* hunter and sledge driver I have ever met,"[592] Uvdloriaq is also poetically portrayed

587 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 158–159.
588 Schimanski and Spring, "Oppdagelsesreise bliver til litteratur," p. 62.
589 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 13.
590 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 37 (emphasis mine).
591 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 38 (emphasis mine).
592 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 37 (emphasis mine).

as "*a motivator of power and prowess* who often could make the dogs perform *the incredible*," and as a hunter he boasts not only "a far-reaching eye and a sure shot," but also "*the tracker's never tiring* ability to find game and, when necessary, the will to go without sleep, even *disregarding* hunger and exhaustion."[593]

The manner in which the narrator depicts Uvdloriaq is very similar to the representation of Sorkrark in *The New People*, where the old bear-hunter is endowed with an array of superior qualities. They set him apart from the other members of his community and make him into "a paragon of the Eskimo" and an ideal "noble savage": brave, fearless, sharp-tongued and a repository of life wisdom, which he preaches in succinct, ironic and highly apt rejoinders. The latter is practically the sole point in which Uvdloriaq differs from Sorkrark as the former does not deliver penetrating insights that could prompt the European travellers to reflect deeply on their own lifestyle and inspire their future pursuits. Instead, Uvdloriaq is a perfect model of the Inughuit hero of extraordinary abilities who can accomplish the impossible.[594]

The men are eligible for participation in the Arctic adventure not only because of their superior qualities, but also due to the experience they have acquired in other Western expeditions. Freuchen is "known as a former member of the Denmark Expedition," and Inukitsoq "had participated in all recent expeditions of Peary."[595] The names of prior expeditions and well-known predecessors authorise the protagonists and authenticate their credentials as members of a polar expedition. Still, the most important factor underlined by the narrator is their mastery or capacity to master *Inughuit* techniques of travelling and living in the polar regions. Freuchen is capable of it due to his "unusual ability to adjust," while Uvdloriaq and Inukitsoq are born Eskimos and, as such, are intrinsically and essentially intimate with nature.[596] The point is that the expedition the narrator is leading is wholly based on the travelling method of the indigenous people, which he finds unparalleled in polar conditions. For this reason, the positive adjectives describing the Arctic travellers are often accompanied by modifiers "primitive"

593 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 37 (emphasis mine).

594 On many occasions, the narrator stresses Uvdloriaq's exceptional skills. For example, he is called a "champion shooter," and his endurance excels even that of the other expedition members. Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 147, 259.

595 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 37–38.

596 This is emphasised by the "Eskimo ambition," which the narrator discerns in Inukitsoq, and by the comparison of Uvdloriaq to a tracker.

and "Eskimo,"[597] which validate the protagonists of the narrative as experts on the Arctic.

Coupled with fixed adjectives and narrative pathos, the representations of the icesheet and the north-east coast of Greenland as awe-inspiring, cold, vast and mysterious expanses function to heroise the expedition members and construct an imperial tale of the adventure of Danish males who withstand enormous danger on the outlying northern peripheries. They are portrayed as heroes even before they have any chance to perform great deeds and accomplish their mission because their direct confrontation with the perilous vastness of the Arctic alone makes them heroes and puts them on a par with their illustrious predecessors, both those who perished in the field and those who gloriously subjugated polar nature in the national interest of their Western homelands.

As observed by Phillips, exotic, remote and dangerous settings – the scenery of the mysterious Arctic land of ice being one of them – are "liminal spaces," places where, by performing great deeds, the protagonists experience what is known as the rite of passage.[598] As scientists of the "highest rank," polar explorers head towards the unknown and the dangerous in order to prove the superiority of man over nature.[599] Their *masculine* features, such as determination in pursuing their goals, adamancy, impudence, tenacity and egoism, are the fulcrum of their success.[600] Despite the heroisation of Rasmussen's protagonists as discussed above, it is only their participation in an Arctic expedition (its final outcomes notwithstanding) to the incredibly dangerous icesheet and East Greenland that enables them to confirm their eligibility to be polar explorers and, thus, to re-assert the masculine nature of science. Therefore, their activity should be viewed as an inscription of the hegemonic, male power of Empire, and the cultural practices resulting from it as masculine-gendered and colonialism-structured.

Describing himself and his companions as acting "in the service of science,"[601] the narrator admits that the expedition is "trying on [his] strength."[602] The exploration of death-ridden territories, where the best thing the travellers can expect is toil, hunger and suffering, is a challenge which the narrator of *My Travel Diary*

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597 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 36, 110, 146–147.

598 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 30.

599 Ascribing polar explores the top position in the scientific hierarchy was an effect of the re-discovery of Francis Bacon's (1561–1626) philosophy and the superiority of natural scientific methods. Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," pp. 130–131.

600 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 130.

601 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 61.

602 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 64.

perceives as motivated by scientific ends. That this "trial" of the rite of passage is a thoroughly male affair is confirmed by the plaudits for the heroic Jørgen Brønlund, who fell on his research field: "a *masculine* beauty radiates from your achievement, endowing all of us with a rich and holy sense of a true calling."[603] The profession of the polar explorer is thus constructed as a task that has (also moral) precedence over all other ones and is reserved exclusively for males, an appraisal consistently upheld across the narrative.

Going through the rite of passage on the remote, unknown and extremely perilous peripheries located out there, beyond the Western world, hangs upon masculine-marked qualities such as courage, toughness, perseverance, a self-sacrificing spirit and strong will, which are all constructed in opposition to the features the narrator considers unmanly: "the soft, luxurious life"[604] led by people who value primarily comfort and safety. Travelling in extremely harsh conditions entails sacrifices, is replete with privations (lack of sleep, starvation, eating frozen food), abounds in physical suffering (snow blindness, frostbites, sciatica) and demands perseverance (in enduring arduous work, pain, cold and loneliness). Like the protagonists of adventure fiction discussed by Phillips,[605] the expedition members are constantly put to the test and undergo all kinds of ordeals, which "steel up" their bodies and, thus, forge them into real polar researchers.

The return home, first to Thule and later to Copenhagen, offers an opportunity to confirm the rite of passage, a test in which all the travellers acquitted themselves admirably. Symptomatically, the narrator focuses on Peter Freuchen, the other European expedition member, whom he especially thanks, praising his "joy of life" and "meticulous care and skilfulness making him stand out as a worker."[606] As the commander, the narrator validates Freuchen's credentials as a polar explorer: "His astonishing endurance and frugality endow him with the qualities indispensable to the Arctic explorer."[607] He similarly anoints the Inughuit expedition participants as "natural polar travellers," extolling their "personal qualities" and "resourcefulness," which helped in overcoming the difficulties faced during the journey.[608] Clearly, not only the Europeans underwent the rite of passage.

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603 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 159.
604 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 62.
605 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 8.
606 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 265.
607 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 265.
608 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 266.

That danger makes the work of the polar explorer relevant lies at the heart of the narrator's reflection at the conclusion of *My Travel Diary*:

> The risks he takes are more obvious, more immediately present, his contribution more concrete; and all this serves to simplify one's existence in a design that is either for you or against you.
>
> Everything is staked on one throw of the dice and chances are constantly changeable with the turning of the seasons; seasons that must be held fast and scrutinised.
>
> His life is a hand-to-hand fight with fate where every adversity is felt to be merely physical and evanescent if it is vanquished.
>
> Therefore the joys and pleasures are fresher and fuller than those experienced on the beaten track. He is nourished by the wild abundance of nature and quenches his thirst in the depths of the wide expanse.[609]

The polar explorer, whose masculinity is highlighted in the consistently used pronoun "he," does not exist without the danger that defines his work. Still the danger of the liminal Arctic wilderness also occasions him wonderful moments which cannot possibly be experienced "on the beaten track." He needs lethal, wild Arctic nature to prove himself as a hero and as a male. The last sentence in the passage above confirms the common notion that polar explorers are idealists who do not crave fame and honours, but are guided by an inner need to quench their thirst "in the depths of the wide expanse." The asymmetry between the components of the "safety/danger" dichotomy listed by Ikonen and Pehkonen is re-asserted, affirming the superiority of the masculine "hand-to-hand fight with fate" and exposure to risk. The perilous space of North Greenland is a site where male representatives of Empire can become heroes by virtue of the disparity between the remote, Arctic "wilderness" and their Western homeland. Thus the representation of North Greenland, North-East Greenland and the icesheet in *My Travel Diary* has a lot in common with the notion of Greenland as, what Thisted calls, the "Danes' private wilderness,"[610] that is, the place where the citizens of a small country in the north of Europe can commune with real children of nature and pursue their ambition of performing heroic deeds for the greater glory of Western science.[611]

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609 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 267–268.

610 Kirsten Thisted, "Stepping off the Map? Greenlandic Literature between Nation and Globalization," in: *Centering on the Peripheries: Studies in Scandinavian, Scottish, Gaelic, and Greenlandic Literature*, ed. Bjarne Thorup Thomsen (London: Norvik Press), p. 62.

611 It expresses the neo-colonial notion that wild nature is a site of refuge from conventions intrinsic to bourgeois life. Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 95. This belief lies at the heart of Astrup's narrative.

The ideal decor for the extraordinary struggles of polar explorers, the exotic background of *My Travel Diary* is more than just a necessary element of the tale of adventure. Both the icesheet and the north-eastern coastline of Greenland are marginal zones in which the protagonists undergo a rite of passage, which turns them into real polar explorers – representatives of male-dominated centres of science and power of the Danish metropolis and, at the same time, of modern "Western" culture, which succeeds in subjugating the lethally dangerous natural elements.

3.2 A Place "Away from Home": Home vs. Away

Phillips describes the protagonist of the adventure tale as a "wanderer, a social outsider who is most at home in the liminal geography of the road."[612] This highlights the trope of being away, out in the open, which, as argued by Tuan, connotes freedom and a promise of adventure, while closure is associated with security and domestic tranquillity.[613] This trope is also prominent in expedition accounts. The binary opposition of home vs. away already appears in the episode of the departure from Thule, when the narrator ponders the impending journey: "One is happy to venture out and meet challenges, far from the comfort of home and regular meals. One feels like an eagle spreading its wings in the air and one is not sorry to leave. A man is where his work requires him to be, and our work consists in moving on for the longest while."[614]

The passage pits sedentary, domestic living and its routines against continual travelling, necessitated by the polar explorer's world.[615] The latter mode of being

612 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 137.

613 Tuan, *Topophilia*, pp. 27–28. In his discussion of the geography of modern adventure literature, Phillips also refers to "the dialectical geography between home and away" and emphasises that adventure always happens far away from home, in an unknown space. Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 29.

614 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 13–14. A similar metaphorical praise of travelling, which relies on the clear opposition of home vs. away appears in Nansen's narrative: "Life was indeed bright and hopeful now, for when can it be brighter than when one sees the attainment of one's wishes possible, when uncertainty at last begins to pass into certainty? It is like the tremulous joy which comes with the breaking day, and when is not the dawn fairer and brighter than the full noontide?" Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, p. 273.

615 The superiority of "away" to "home" is also explicit in the accounts by other polar travellers. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 29, 58, 142, 360; Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 212–214. In Nansen's narrative, the Norwegian

is given a gendered marking by stressing that it concerns males, such as the protagonists of the narrative. The masculine-gendered journey into the unknown is thus rated above "the comfort of home and regular meals." The narrator of *My Travel Diary* pointedly presents the space of the journey into the unknown as unmistakably masculine. Its construction is reinforced by evoking the ideology which in *The New People* was embodied in old bear-hunter Sorkrark, who professed that men go travelling while women's role is to stay at home. Conjuring up the ideal of the Inughuit man, who has never internalised "the domestic animal nature,"[616] the narrator constructs his own masculinity and places it above the femininity associated with the domestic space. The masculinity embodied in Sorkrark is assimilated by the European traveller as his own, and its elements serve to stress his own authority as "a real man" – free and setting out on a long journey without women and redundant farewells.

Accommodating what the narrator presents as Sorkrark's ideology, the European expedition members are subsumed under the collective "we" and presented as Arctic travellers, which is synonymous, to them, with the indigenous inhabitants of North Greenland. Envisaged in *The New People*, the transformation of Danes into the Other serves in *My Travel Diary* as a means to an end, since it is only by living and travelling the way the Inughuit do that they can discover unknown territories. What is at stake therefore is not only the recognition and appropriation of indigenous knowledge as a result of two-directional processes of transculturation in the contact zone, but also the deployment of this knowledge for the imperial purposes of the Danish nation represented by the European travellers.

Tuan describes the trope which is used in *My Travel Diary* in more detail: travellers do not feel "at home" when they actually are at home (i.e. in the European metropolis), yet they still belong to it ideologically, and while the perils of the frozen world are an unending temptation to them, "they remain proud

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expedition members' desire to be away is contrasted with the Sami's reluctance to abandon the hearth: "Poor Ravna deserves most sympathy. He is not yet at all accustomed to the sea and its caprices. He moves silently about, fiddling with one thing or another, now and again goes up on to the highest points of our floe, and gazes anxiously out towards the breakers. His thoughts are evidently with his herd of reindeer, his tent, and wife and children far away on the Finnmarken mountains, where all is now sunshine and summer weather." Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland,* vol. 1, pp. 236–237.

616 Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 43.

of their native place, nation, and culture."[617] The male travellers in Rasmussen's account also feel best when away and underway, heading along the route determined by their scientific goal and carving a makeshift home for themselves in the shelter of a hastily put-up igloo during their breakneck crossing of the icesheet or around a fire lit up on the mainland of North-East Greenland. Consistent with Tuan's insights, Rasmussen's narrator, who speaks on behalf of his small community of men, extols the "fight for life," which shows that, although the icesheet and North-East Greenland are portrayed as utterly inhospitable and death-ridden, he in fact revels in the privations and sacrifices occasioned by the journey, delighting in the friendly and cordial atmosphere and his companions' sense of humour. Reserved for a small circle of men, these experiences are the sole privilege of "persevering polar travellers."[618]

Despite being "away from home" all the time, the narrator is indisputably dependent on the metropolis-based institutions, and his Danish ethnic belonging and identification cannot be doubted. The expedition leader dispatches a report to the Thule Committee when the sea ice cracking forces him to re-design their route[619] and leaves in the cairn erected by the tragically deceased Ludvig Mylius-Erichsen a note saying that the expedition is "funded by the Carlsberg Foundation and patronised by The Commission for the Undertaking of Geological and Geographical explorations on Greenland."[620] In the preface to the narrative, the narrator also mentions the "duty" of going to the aid of Danish polar explorers Mikkelsen and Iversen.[621] Such passages encapsulate the commander's indubitable connections with the institutions of the Danish colonial state.

The narrator's Danish ethnicity is also conveyed in the phrase "old Denmark" and the adverbials "home"/"at home" [Danish: *hjem*/*hjemme*] he uses, as well as in his celebrations of Danish feasts, e.g. Walpurgis Night, Pentecost and Midsummer's Eve.[622] What he is familiar with and identifies with Denmark is

617 Yi-Fu Tuan, "Desert and Ice: Ambivalent Aesthetics," in: *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*, eds. Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 155.

618 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 92.

619 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 32–34.

620 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 155–156.

621 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 9.

622 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 42, 68–69, 133, 194–196.

contrasted with the dangerous space of the icesheet or of North-East Greenland.[623] The account's final episode, in which the travellers enter Danish territorial waters and sail by the haven of Skagen, re-affirms this ethnic membership: "After three years' absence we see once again the flat Danish shores emerge at the horizon. Our thoughts hasten towards everything awaiting us; dormant longings break out and so one approaches one's loved ones with a beating heart."[624]

However, the European subject of the narrative repeatedly reveals a split within himself and his various identifications. His domestic space lies not only in Denmark, but also on the populated coast of North-West Greenland, as he calls home both the European metropolis and the Inughuit settlement in the vicinity of which his Thule trading station was founded. His rootedness in North-West Greenland is also implied by the structure of the text, which partly breaches the conventional plot pattern of Scandinavian expedition accounts, where the departure from the European metropolis and the return to it after the goals have been accomplished form the organising frame. *My Travel Diary* opens with a double departure scene (from Thule and from Meat) and concludes with a double return scene (to Thule and to Copenhagen). Thus the travellers set out into the unknown and part with civilisation[625] not at the Danish metropolis, but in the charted, populated and *domestic* space of North-West Greenland, which also welcomes them back on their first return – the return to Thule to celebrate the triumphs of the successful expedition together with the Inughuit villagers. Although the report as a whole is crowned with the European travellers calling at the port in Copenhagen, it is in fact their prior return to Thule that functions as the protagonists' real

623 This happens, for example, during Walpurgis Night, when the narrator recalls the traditional songs which are sung on this occasion and feels homesickness swell in his breast. Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 69.

624 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 266–267.

625 In *The Danish Umiaq Expedition*, this moment comes during a farewell to the early travel companions, who are the last link to the "civilised world." Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 193. In Nansen's narrative, it happens when the expedition members disembark the "Jason": "we have broken the last bridge which could take us back to the civilization. Henceforth we shall follow our own path. Then goodbye!" Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, p. 222. However, the Norwegian original does not actually refer to "civilisation," stating only that "The last bridge is broken behind us" [Norwegian: *Den sidste bro bag os er kastet*]. Nansen, *Paa ski over Grønland*, p. 212. In Astrup's narrative, the travellers parted with civilisation when the "Falcon" sailed away to Newfounland "and all communication between us and the civilised world was from this time cut off." *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 40.

homecoming, when they arrive wearing new clothes kept especially for the occasion and bringing treats from the unknown parts, such as musk-ox fat.

While crossing the icesheet and travelling along the inhospitable coastline of North-East Greenland, the narrator's words imply his identification with the Inughuit-populated North-West Coast. The sight of the first seal he spots on the shore makes him think immediately of "the old fleshpots on the West Coast, […] our friends, our lives and joys far from these rough uncertain regions that suddenly turned into a friendly home by this unexpected experience."[626] The strangeness and inhospitableness of the unknown territories are contrasted with the warmth of the hearth and communal life, which are embodied by Thule, situated in North-West Greenland. Similarly to the Danish homeland, Thule and its surroundings are framed in *My Travel Diary* as a feminine domestic space, opposite to the masculine-gendered "away."[627]

This patent "domestication" of the Thule region connotes a varied array of things in the text. On the one hand, it highlights settlement practices in North-West Greenland, which are not only a private venture, but also a *Danish* enterprise in the region. That is why the official messages the travellers leave in cairns contain the information where the expedition starts and ends, i.e. at North Star Bay.[628] Importantly, towards the end of the report, when the narrator reflects on the unfinished charting of Greenland's north coast and envisages another expedition (the prospective Second Thule Expedition), he underlines the strategic location of the trading station for scientific projects: "From Thule it is always possible to undertake an expedition at any time without incurring too great an expense; such an expedition will conclude the work of several previous expeditions in these barely accessible regions in a thorough and completely safe manner."[629]

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626 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 146.

627 The discursive shift which takes place between *The New People* and *My Travel Diary* is expressed by the narrator, who, when resting in an unexpectedly found "oasis" in Peary Land, states: "It is the first time since we abandoned our companions from the settlement that I have felt that I am far in the North, so unspeakably far away from other people, in the middle of this wild country." Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 165. This time "wild country" refers to North-East Greenland and the point of reference is provided by a village in North-West Greenland and its dwellers rather than by the European homeland.

628 The message left in a cairn which the travellers put up before the return crossing of the icesheet states: "Today the expedition heads towards home – North Star Bay." Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 236.

629 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 225.

A significant difference between *My Travel Diary* and other texts of the genre results from the fact that the Thule Trading Station represents the first successful attempt at permanent European settlement in North Greenland and serves as a base camp for expeditions into the region. Crucially, settlement is fuelled by something more than just the expectation of revenues from the conquered areas as it involves *settling* – making a home and living in it, which implies feeling like an "Arctic dweller." In comparison to the settlement at Agpat, which is described in *The New People*, Thule is no longer a liminal space as it is cultivated, charted and incorporated into the narrator's own world. The frontier shifts northwards to the icesheet and Greenland's north-east coast.

3.3 Chasing the Scholarly Goals: The Activity-vs.-Passivity Opposition

Phillips states that the liminal space of adventure is "a space in which to move, not to stop."[630] The protagonists of *My Travel Diary* are also incessantly on the move, taking heed of the narrator's opening exhortation "Onwards! He who lingers loses!"[631] Ikonen and Pehkonen observe that explorations involved sustained activity, and being active was part of being male[632] – travelling continually across remote and dangerous areas that formed the research field of the polar explorer. This idea is articulated by Rasmussen's narrator, whose praises of the atmosphere of life on the road invoke "all travelling men"[633]: "The harsh life of the hunter has hardened and trained us so that we are seldom tired when it comes to enduring excessive hardship. This life on the move makes us the masters of our bodies and every day we experience the happiness accompanying a healthy physical strength […]."[634]

The travellers' ceaseless activeness and the drive forward are always motivated by a defined *goal*, i.e. the exploration of unknown territories and the scientific achievements it involves.[635] It is the pursuit of this elevated goal that makes the polar explorer mobile. As the narrator puts it, the polar explorer who travels "in

630 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 165.

631 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 67. Similar overtones reverberate in the initial passages of Nansen's report, which specify plans for the expedition: "There was no choice of routes, 'forward' being the only word. The order would be: 'Death or the west coast of Greenland.'" Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, p. 5.

632 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 141.

633 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 166.

634 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 164.

635 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 150.

the service of science" is "*constantly on his way* to wonderful things."[636] For this reason, as observed by Ikonen and Pehkonen, in polar explorers' accounts "there is no time of passivity," for the sense of duty and responsibility to the scientific mission always makes male polar explorers find a job to keep them occupied.[637]

Having in mind the utmost relevance of their task, the expedition members can rarely afford any longer pause, and if they eventually take more time to rest than they believe warranted, it is always justified by descriptions of inordinate prior exertions. When badly stricken with snow blindness, Peter Freuchen bewails having to remain in the camp while the other travellers go searching for game, for he finds it unbearable "to lie around inactive and still."[638] Especially during the crossing of the icesheet, the narrator registers with particular meticulousness the distances covered daily, the number of hours on the road and the activities the travellers undertake, with relaxation and their own needs treated as the least important aspects: "At nine o'clock in the evening we came to a halt and had only done 53 kilometres within 14 hours. […]"

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636 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 268 (emphasis mine). The scientific and exploratory goals of polar expeditions were more important to the protagonists of the reports than accounts of death, which is emphatically stated by Nansen's narrator in *The First Crossing of Greenland*: "the mere fact that the interior of Greenland is a part, and no insignificant part, of that planet on which we dwell, is quite sufficient to make us wish to know it, and to impel us to preserve until we do know it, even though our way should lie over the graves of our predesessors." Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland,* vol. 1, p. 510. The original idiom employed in the book's Norwegian version is "even if our way should run over graves" [*om end veien skulde gaa over grave*]. It suggests that the protagonists of the account considered the scientific and cognitive goal of the polar expedition to be more importat than death, and their actions were single-minded and unfliching. The English translation renders the expression more palpable and shifts the focus onto the sacrifices of the previous generations of travellers in the service of science. Nansen, *Paa ski over Grønland*, p. 434.

637 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 141. At moments of leisure, the protagonists of *The Danish Umiaq Expedition* perform measurements and observations as well as going on charting outings. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 226, 244–246, 270, 336. The protagonists of *The First Crossing of Greenland* never have time for any longer rest because they are driven by the urgency of their goals. Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 315, 332. In Astrup's narrative the polar explorers are busy even while reposing: they mend their clothing and ski bindings, and when the weather is bad, they prefer confronting it to mere idleness. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 235, 238.

638 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 109.

"There were so many things to take care of at camp before one could rest that it was six o'clock in the morning when we finally got to sleep after a 27 hour day."

"It takes time to chop up frozen meat for 140 hungry dogs, and we had to make ourselves something to eat as well."[639]

In keeping with an anonymous Inughuit observation cited earlier that "while travelling a person finds it easier to go hungry than a dog does,"[640] the expedition members put the well-being of their pack first. The dogs' health and strength are, after all, a prerequisite of the success of the enterprise and the survival of the travellers, exposed as they are to numerous obstacles and dangers which the narrator underlines repeatedly during the journey.[641] In order to follow their schedule, they must properly pace their daily movement, which is also an overriding priority when going along Greenland's north-east coastline.

As the danger that the explorers face puts their mission at risk, the narrator's activity involves never forgetting about it. Even when facing hunger and aware that the expedition could go back to game-rich, hospitable Peary Land, the narrator concludes that "the distance one has arduously covered to get to the end of the journey one is reluctant to cover once again."[642] Also during a sojourn at a desert "oasis" of wildlife that the travellers come across in Peary Land, his mind is set on the risk that the Arctic summer poses to the success of their venture.[643] To accomplish their mission is the ultimate priority and the end that justifies all the actions the polar explorers undertake. A responsibility of both the Inughuit and the European expedition members, one of their most important activities is hunting. Because it is the basis of the survival of the people and the dogs, hunting is the most important means to the end of arriving at the Peary Channel, yet the travellers sometimes go hunting even when it is not an immediate necessity, treating it as a kind of entertainment and one of the many manifestations of *male* activity.[644] Hunting as a marker of the masculine space is another characteristic trope of polar expedition accounts and colonial literature in general.[645]

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639 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 47.

640 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 27.

641 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 67.

642 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 171.

643 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 166.

644 Ikonen and Pehkonen bluntly call such activities "arctic slaughtering." Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 142. In *My Travel Diary*, the narrator mentions hunting musk oxen, stating that it is "no elegant hunting." Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 134.

645 Cichoń, "W kręgu zagadnień literatury kolonialnej," p. 94; Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 142.

Having achieved their scientific aim, that is having arrived where the Peary Channel was supposed to be and found that it did not exist, the explorers revise their itinerary to start a return journey as quickly as possible to avoid having to winter at Peary Land.

> Such a stay over the summer followed by a wintering here on Adam Biering's Land and Peary Land I actually consider to be safe for experienced hunters even though hunting for game were the only way to get food for the dogs and the men. However, you should never keep going further and further if it can be avoided. Now we had already gone so far and for so long and still had further to go to get home that we could afford to start thinking a bit about ourselves, our dogs and our duties at Thule.[646]

As a result of their "discovery," the further route is determined by the desire to return home and resume their duties there. The narrator does not specify what obligations these are, but the very fact that there are responsibilities for them back home warrants that when the expedition is over the explorers will not fade into an idleness from which they have been prevented by the hardships of their escapade. That they will be involved in further active pursuits is also ensured by the prospects of going to the metropolis, whose male-dominated institutions supported their operations. The results of the journey and the attainment of the goal can be announced in the security of the centre, i.e. the narrator's European homeland. Only there will it be possible for the male representatives of the scientific community to authorise the male travellers' research and discoveries and to validate their qualifications as polar explorers who have contributed to the progress of Western science for a greater glory of the Danish metropolis.

3.4 The Inughuit as Representatives of Nature: The Culture-vs.-Nature Opposition

Like in a classic adventure tale, the protagonists of *My Travel Diary* make up a *male community*, which is consistently highlighted by framing the narrative in the first-person plural. The community also includes the Inughuit men, whose sex and extraordinary skills make them eligible to partake of an exclusively male adventure. Used throughout the narrative, the pronoun "we" turns the expedition into a unitary organism that functions in four bodies and amalgamates the experiences, goals and desires of all the participants, who practically speak in one voice through the narrator. The sense of community is also promoted by the democratic nature of the enterprise, as all decisions are made in collective deliberations.[647] The protagonists

646 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 224.
647 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 111, 121.

are united by the shared effort of confronting the same adversary – Arctic nature. The challenging struggles they undertake together augment their mutual cordiality,[648] humour[649] and reciprocal help, which often demands sacrifices of them.[650]

The protagonists are united by the hardships they share on the journey, which is largely based on the Inughuit techniques of hunting and travelling. This aspect essentially affects the life rhythms of the expedition participants. Their daily existence is structured by the routines of setting out, driving the sled, making stops, taking rest and, after they reach the east coast of Greenland, of scouting forays and hunting, on which the success of their mission depends. Though united, the travellers have their distinct functions and duties, which are bound up with their particular positions in the implicit hierarchy of the expedition, where the major divisions are organised by the polarity of nature and culture[651].

That there are divisions among the travellers is suggested at the very beginning of the account, when the narrator assiduously makes an inventory of the expedition equipment. Among the items there are Eskimo hunting implements as well as what the narrator calls the "civilised equipment" – e.g. firearms and food for people and dogs[652], "scientific instruments" and "a small box with reading material."[653] That the Inughuit tools belong to another temporal order is highlighted when the narrator envisages the possibility of making bows "in case conditions might force us to live a stone age existence."[654] As is made clear at the very beginning of the narrative, the Arctic expedition may heavily rely on Inughuit inventions, but it is patently a Western scientific venture.

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648 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 57.

649 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 250.

650 This is shown on several occasions when, afflicted with various infirmities, the travellers one by one ask to be left behind in the camp so as not to hinder the expedition, and their companions firmly refuse to comply. Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 235, 259.

651 In Nansen's account the hierarchised binaries of culture and nature are associated with the Norwegian and the Sami members of the expedition respectively. While the first are ascribed activity and being-away, the latter represent passivity and the security of the hearth. Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 236–237. However, the binarity between nature and culture in *My Travel Diary* produces radically different meanings.

652 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 52.

653 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 53.

654 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 54.

This plainly produces an ambivalence which derives from the hybridity of the split narrative subject, who endorses the Inughuit means of surviving in the Arctic and, at the same time, commands an expedition organised by a colonial state. The reiterated emphatic admiration for the "brilliantly constructed"[655] Inughuit inventions and their wonderful utility in Arctic journeys ennobles the Inughuit as non-pareil Arctic experts and promotes recognition of their cultural achievements. Towards the end of the expedition, the narrator appreciatively underscores the Inughuit's immense contribution to the mission, insisting that their role has been "different from the usual role of Eskimo members [of polar expeditions]"[656]: "Their personal qualities and their resourcefulness in the face of difficult situations often made it easy for us to overcome things that would otherwise have proven to be great obstacles."[657]

At the same time, however, both Inughuit travellers are emphatically identified as belonging to the realm of nature, the opposite of the culture embodied by the European explorers. The narrative portrays Inukitsoq and Uvdloriaq as uniformly praiseworthy, admirable hunters, dogsled-drivers and pathfinders. The depiction of Uvdloriaq is particularly informed by the "noble savage" trope, which – similarly to *The New People* – serves to amplify his special endowments. Undisputed experts in polar survival, Inukitsoq and Uvdloriaq have no equals across the Arctic, yet they are also attributed some permanent, essential features which are never used to describe the European explorers. Like all hunting people, the Inughuit are cheerful and down-to-earth,[658] their minds are "simple" and "uncorrupted,"[659] and as a result their tales are "naive" and "beautiful."[660] Their response to European cultural production is symptomatic: when the commander summarises to them a sentimental Italian novel, "all intrigues and effects leave them cold and I cannot persuade them that it is a true story."[661] Their inborn penchant for the mundane and their attachment to "genuine reality"[662] prevent them from understanding the book.

In contrast to the Danish travellers, Inukitsoq and Uvdloriaq are pictured as "born hunters" in whom the familiar sight of a seal – the first one sighted on

655 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 54.
656 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 266.
657 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 266.
658 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 18.
659 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 21.
660 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 179.
661 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 68.
662 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 68.

the eastern coast – inspires "a mystical sense of joy […] comparable perhaps to the rearing of the battle horse at the sound of the familiar horn signalling departure."[663] As the Inughuit's instinct is compared to an animal response, their affinity with nature, as postulated by the narrator, is enhanced. That they are associated with the state of nature is also borne out in depictions of Uvdloriaq's behaviour while hunting a seal: "in every form and move becoming a live seal,"[664] the man scratches the ice and eagerly rolls in the snow, "as a seal is wont to do when it has just emerged from its breathing hole, about to take its noontime rest and bathe in the sun."[665] Although the passage oozes admiration, such a thorough likening of Uvdloriaq to a beast produces a distance between the looker and the looked-on actor. The narrator may identify with his Inughuit travel companions in many respects, but his language suggests that he views them as deserving, yet stuck in the stage of the human development which civilised white people have long left behind.

The distance between the narrator and the Inughuit travellers is also underlined by collective, anonymity-laden nominal phrases, such as "two good Eskimo men," "both Eskimos," "the Eskimos," "our Cape Yorks," "the two Eskimos," "our Eskimos," and "the hunters"[666]. On other occasions, the distance is spotlighted when the frequently used collective narrative subject is split, such as in the expression "we as well as the Eskimos."[667] Admittedly, the narrator as a rule employs the Inughuit's proper names, but collective terms are far more frequent in *My Travel Diary* than in *The New People* and contribute to submerge Inukitsoq and Uvdloriaq's in "collective anonymity."[668] This is likely connected with the authority-building practices of the narrator-and-leader, who commands the expedition members. For example, in "Freuchen and the Eskimos,"[669] the Danish explorer is referred to by his name, while Inukitsoq and Uvdloriaq are cast as

663 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 146.

664 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 147. Astrup's account includes a similar, albeit less vivid, portrayal of the hunting Kolotengva, whom the narrator watches with awe and admiration, however without fully identifying with him. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 347.

665 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 147.

666 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 117, 146, 148, 178, 245, 246, 259.

667 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 185.

668 Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. Howard Greenfield and Lawrence Hoey (London: Earthscan, 1990), p. 106.

669 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 231. Another example is "I and the two Eskimos." Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 245.

anonymous Eskimo helpers whose names tended to be omitted in polar expedition accounts.[670] A similar effect is achieved by expressions with possessive pronouns, e.g. "our pathfinder" (Uvdloriaq),[671] which foreground the role the Inughuit play in the expedition: though crucial to its course and success, their functions include hunting, tracking and sled-driving, and they are subordinated to the (admittedly democratic) command of the European leader. Relevant as they are, the Inughuit are secondary to the European explorers, whose responsibilities form the axis of the enterprise: conducting measurements, collecting scientific samples and, most importantly, making geographical discoveries, which involves charting of the unknown territories.[672]

The dividing line between nature and culture in Arctic exploration is most emphatically drawn in the narrator's speech delivered at the farewell tea-drinking ceremony in the settlement of Meat: "I spoke about polar exploration in North Greenland and the North Pole expeditions from the time when the white man started using the travelling techniques of the Eskimos and the Eskimo people themselves in the service of science. They had always confronted great risks with a broad sense of humour, and as nameless toilers they had unconsciously made it possible to execute the work that was to illuminate and solve many arctic riddles."[673]

The passage reveals the ambivalence in which European narrator is entangled as, even though indignant about insufficient acknowledgement of the Inughuit – "nameless toilers" – as contributors to polar discoveries, he does not negate the superiority of the idea of progress and the role of Western science in explorations of Greenland. While he builds up the Inughuit into unsurpassed Arctic heroes and recognises their merits in the service to Western science, the narrator emphasises that their contribution has been "unconscious," and discoveries could properly have been made only under the command of "the white man." This suggests that when traversing the Arctic and reaching its least friendly corners, the Inughuit did so unreflectively and instinctively, unguided by reason or a desire to illuminate the darkness of ignorance.[674]

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670 This trope is very frequently used in colonial travel writings, therein in polar expedition accounts. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 52; Gaupseth, "Naive naturbarn," pp. 211–212.

671 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 198.

672 Pratt observes that the "disponibilité" and inferior role of indigenous characters in travel writing is "taken for granted." Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 52.

673 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 30.

674 This is asserted by how the expedition members interpret stone circles they come across: they have been left by those who camped at this remote place because of their "impeccable instinct for the hunting." Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 181.

The white man, on the contrary, is aware of the relevance of travelling in order to discover the world because he belongs to Western culture, which is distinguished by its civilisational advancement, an unbridgeable gap for people of non-Western cultures. For this reason, while the narrator feels an unquestioned kinship with Jørgen Brønlund – a native of Danish West Greenland who perished in the service of European science during the fateful Denmark Expedition when striving to salvage its cartographic findings – and counts him among the representatives of culture, he denies such a status to Inukitsoq and Uvdloriaq, who embody the stage of nature despite their exceptional skills as "professional travellers and explorers."[675]

While the narrator sees the Inughuit as incarnations of true Arctic heroes, he attributes their grand deeds to their Eskimo essence and inborn travelling instinct, which helps them surpass all other people in the Arctic regions. The Inughuit mode of life is again likened to animal behaviour, with lemmings providing the point of reference this time[676]: similarly to massively migrating lemmings, the nomadic inhabitants of North Greenland "were never at rest, always wanting to continue, out on great expeditions to explore new lands and new peoples."[677] The Inughuit are driven by a "deep disquiet in [their] minds," which the narrator perceives as their crucial and unchangeable feature: "As he was, so were his ancestors, and his children will be no different."[678] By calling them "the travelling people,"[679] the narrator essentialisingly identifies being on the move as a fixed and immutable component of the Inughuit nature.

Unlike the Inughuit, Western polar explorers are guided by reason rather than by instinct when embarking on long and dangerous journeys into the unknown. Their efforts are crowned with accomplishing their scientific aims, which further the progress of modern knowledge. Because the Inughuit find themselves at a lower stage in human civilisational development, they can contribute to the "sacred" goal of exploring the uncharted parts of the world only as subordinates

675 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 29.
676 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsadagbog*, p. 179.
677 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsadagbog*, p. 179. This formulation echoes the words of old Merkrusârk, who told the narrator about the Canadian Inuit's migration to Greenland: "And he never knew rest again, after he had once heard the rumour of the new people," a phrase which serves as a motto of the entire narrative. Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 1.
678 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 30, 179.
679 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 180.

of Europeans. Civilisation only advances owing to the efforts and industry of Westerners, which is why they have an indisputable edge over other people and enjoy the right to lead other, less "developed" nations on their path to culture as representatives of this culture.[680]

The binary of nature epitomised by the Inughuit and culture represented by the Danish travellers, an othering device which in *The New People* served to produce the North-Greenlandic Other as subordinate to the West, is re-employed in *My Travel Diary*. However, as it features in the context of a polar expedition some of whose members are indigenous people, it accrues additional meanings. In Rasmussen's second account, it also serves to consolidate the domination of Western culture over the rest of the world, but at the same time it legitimates Danish leadership in Greenlandic explorations as "natural" and the equally "natural" role of the Inughuit as underlings to white male Westerners, thereby reinforcing the lopsided power structure in Danish-Greenlandic relationships. The masculinity of polar heroes is thus structured by their commanding, superior position over the less "civilised" North-Greenlandic Others in actions that further the noble cause of the progress of Western knowledge.

3.5 Destabilising Binary Oppositions at the Basis of the Polar Explorers' Male Heroism

The liminal space of the geography of adventure, as Phillips explains, simultaneously "constrains and enables" because elements of the recognisable world re-appear in odd, kaleidoscopic configurations, which often foil dominant discourses. Briefly, the space reproduces entrenched patterns and generates opportunities for crossing boundaries and categories.[681] Below, I will argue that the space of adventure in *My Travel Diary* works in similar ways.

In the previous chapter, I showed that binary oppositions which recur in what is referred to as colonial literature are ambivalent. A reversal of fixed discursive dichotomies takes place in *My Travel Diary* as well, which results in resistance to the dominant discourse of the Western metropolis. This can be traced in the

680 The narrator's admiration for Western civilisation's progress is most emphatically expressed when, having returned from their journey, the protagonists enter Danish territorial waters: "One more time we are entering oceans made live by industrious people; back in the whirl of forces that swell and roar in the wake of our mighty civilisation." Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 268.

681 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, pp. 165–166.

home-away opposition, where complicated identifications of the European subject are played out.

The protagonists of *My Travel Diary* undoubtedly prefer being-away to relaxing in the security of the hearth, for the former affords them opportunities to prove themselves as polar explorers and, by extension, as heroes. At the same time, they are Arctic settlers and the founders of a trading station in North-West Greenland, who take pleasure in nomadic life on the road and adeptly craft a home for themselves at whatever sundry place their small company stops to spend the night while travelling. Many passages convey or hint at re-drawing the line between the "domestic" space and its beyond. Provisional though it may be, "a home" can be found in the dead of the Arctic winter: "It is only 4 o'clock and we are sitting in our tent in a circle around the burning primus stove, enjoying the heat and the food before leaving."

"A sense of well-being and the joy of travel create an idyll in mid-morning, making us indifferent to wind and weather."[682]

On several occasions, the narrator dwells on place-specific situations which feel pleasurable and cosy, which is often rendered through the Danish adjective *hyggelig* (denoting contentment, snugness, security, company and comfort) and the noun *Velvære* (well-being). The sensation is triggered by certain smells, warmth, satiety and security.[683] Accumulated to convey responses to the Arctic, which other narrative passages paint as an icy desert and the least welcoming place on earth, such expressions unsettle the straightforward image of the icesheet and North-East Greenland as ridden with death and afflicted with suffering. In this way, a liminal space takes shape which serves as a terrain of Arctic adventure and encounters with the telluric Other, a space which is by default indefinable and polysemous.

In Rasmussen's depiction, the journey along Greenland's eastern coastline is punctuated with blissful stopovers when the travellers enjoy not only their well-deserved rest but also genuine pleasures of domesticity and cosiness the place offers. Having killed their first musk ox, they rapidly put up a snow hut amidst the approaching snow storm and take "a truly good" refuge in it, while the blizzard rages wild outside.[684] In the moments of wellness associated with the security and warmth of the hearth, the companions are often (fully or partly) undressed, as is the case when a glimpse is given into the intimacy of diary-writing during a

682 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 66–67.
683 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 92, 109.
684 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 109.

stopover in the heart of the icesheet: "Here I am lying naked on my soft reindeer hide, pipe in my mouth, a steaming mug in my hand."[685] The scene is more redolent of the conventional bourgeois delights of evening leisure after a hard day's work than of the hardships and toils of weather-beaten men coping with the lethal perils of Arctic nature.

My Travel Diary evidently shows that travelling in the Arctic involves something more than just grappling with an extremely dangerous enemy, arduous labour and physical pain. Even the unfriendly space of the icesheet and North-East Greenland can be, what Tuan calls, a "home-away-from-home."[686] In his essay on the ambivalent aesthetics of dessert and ice Tuan defines a "homeplace" as "a protected — at least partly enclosed — space: that is to say the tent and corral of the nomad and the igloo of the Eskimo. Homeplace is also a variegated world of shapes and colors, sounds and odors, even in the desert."[687] Such "homeplaces" which the travellers manage to create both during their journey across the icesheet and along the north-eastern coast of Greenland give the explorers aesthetic pleasure and infuse domesticity into the space of the masculine adventure. The enjoyment of pleasure from the semblance of domestic security disrupts the homogeneous construction of the polar explorers' maleness by bringing in a conventionally feminine element,[688] which proves that the protagonists' "masculinity" is not passively reproduced but actively constructed and re-constructed in a flux of changes.

The fact that the narrator feels at home in North-West Greenland can serve as a hub of resistance against the overarching rhetoric of the text. The representations of the icesheet and North-East Greenland as spaces of extreme danger are set against representations of affluent, secure and welcoming areas at the northern outstretch of the island's west coast. Like in *The New People*, idealisation is a dominant trope in the representations of North-West Greenland in *My Travel Diary*, but in contrast to the earlier account, it does not rely on the distant subject's visual scrutiny, but on the subject's direct *participation* in the reality he discursivises.

The idealisation of the surroundings of the Thule trading station is most fully rendered in depictions of the explorers' sojourn at the Inughuit settlement of Meat and the episode of their return from the months-long, arduous journey.

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685 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 61.
686 Tuan, "Desert and Ice: Ambivalent Aesthetics," p. 150.
687 Tuan, "Desert and Ice: Ambivalent Aesthetics," p. 139.
688 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 90.

Game-rich Meat is a settlement whose inhabitants the narrator knows by their first names and in whose daily life he is steeped. This space is not only what he knows, but also what he feels deeply attached to. This is expressed in his language, which lovingly voices admiration for the diversity of the Arctic region he inhabits. North-West Greenland is first and foremost an affluent space: due to the plenitude of walruses, which are like "the living daily bread" for the local population,[689] their meat caches are always full. For the narrator, the Inughuit settlement of Meat is an "oasis of abundance"[690] he wishes all people in the world to enjoy. Its domestication is symbolised in its nickname of the "Eskimo Canaan," which – combined with the mythical "Thule" – inscribes the region in the cultural space of the Western world. Furthermore, the narrator's referring to the topos of the promised land indicates that his imaginative and physical search for the tempting legendary place inhabited by "the most northerly dwelling people in the world" has indeed come to an end.

The trope of idealisation in the representations of North-West Greenland stands out in the episode of the return to Thule, which the narrator refers to as "home" or "our settlement."[691] Coming back after a long absence, he recognises the familiar landscape from afar: "the last lake a quarter mile from our settlement where young boys and girls angle trout from the newly frozen ice."[692] To celebrate the occasion, the travellers are wearing new clothes: "beautiful, glossy kamiks[693] and smooth sealskin coats"[694]; they carry tasty meat and the fat of musk oxen they have saved in order to grace the celebratory welcome-home meal. The four men run the final stretch of the road and stop at the sight of the village, which spreads out before them when they have climbed up the last hill: "Evening had come and the autumn dusk of September covered sea and shore. Out between the houses cooking fires were glowing with flames brightly illuminating people standing around; it was so still that the smoke drifted straight up into the air. The sea was completely quiet, smooth and black, with a few icebergs slowly sailing past in the stream of the fjord."

689 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 18.
690 The original expression is *Fornødenhedernes Oase*, which literally means an "oasis of everything one needs to live." Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 18.
691 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 261.
692 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 262.
693 Inuit boots with long uppers.
694 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 262.

"Everything was idyllic, breathing quietly in the cosy comfort of the settlement."[695]

The description is phrased in common language which differs from sensationalist depictions of the icesheet ant the north-east coast. The familiar language, soft-spokenness even, which the narrator adopts in describing the Thule region, so strikingly divergent from the heroic diction of exploration and male arrogance, emphasises his identification with this part of North Greenland. The landscape he outlines is peopled, breathes ubiquitous peace and exudes domesticity, which is encapsulated in the phrase "cosy comfort of the settlement" [Danish: *Bopladshygge*] and pictorially imaged in the brightness of the fireplaces. The only motion registered in this scene is smoke slowly rising into the air and icebergs equally slowly gliding across the smooth lake. Here, the huge ice-blocks are a familiar component of the Arctic landscape rather than a sublime element of North-Greenlandic nature which dwarfs humans or engenders sophisticated aesthetic sensations in them. The evidently positive image of the village is also fostered by references to the idyllic, which connote the earthly paradise, one of the most frequent stereotypes concerning "new lands." However, this passage in *My Travel Diary* does not narrate the discovery of a "new world," but describes the return of the travellers to the place they regard as their home. Their belonging to the Thule space is reflected in a series of contrasts employed later, where "the harsh temperature of the glacier," to which the travellers have grown accustomed, is set off against "a warm wave [that] welcomed us from the land we had returned to," while "the great unknown that we alone had set human foot on" is set in opposition to "the well-known outlines of the landscape."[696]

In terms of conventions, the explorers' homecoming to the settlement is staged in ways reminiscent of adventure fictions and fairy tales: after a long, danger-studded quest, the male heroes return home to be welcomed with well-deserved cheers. The travellers' spectacular arrival is first announced by shots they fire one by one; only when they have stirred due attention can the proper, celebratory scene of return unfold: "The four of us stood out as sharp silhouettes against the evening sky up on the hill, and people knew at once who we were. Freuchen's tall figure was unmistakable. And as we quietly descended the mountain, people came running towards us from all directions, drowning us in a shower of questions."[697]

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695 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 263.
696 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 264.
697 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 264.

Like in a happy-ending of a fairy tale or an adventure story, the exuberant welcome of the travellers is followed by a banquet at the pastor's home, to which all the residents of the settlement are invited. The narrator stresses that the revellers feast "the way the Eskimos know how," yet the distance between the European "us" and the non-European "them" constructed by this essentialising remark is cancelled out by the following "[w]e had all become happy children, exalted and boisterous."[698] This statement, an iteration of the happy-ending formula of an adventure tale as it is, concludes the text of the diary, which is followed by the final account of the return of the Danish explorers to their European homeland.

As the expedition commander, the narrator undertakes a journey whose aim is to reach unknown territories, which invites associations with centuries-old attempts to discover the North-West Passage or to find the mythical *Ultima Thule*. However, North Greenland is not just a means or a method for him to win the fame of a discoverer and to assert his authority as a researcher. It is equally an end in and of itself for him.[699] With Thule as its centre, the north-west coast of Greenland is his point of reference in the encounter with the Other in the previously unknown regions of the island. The expedition participants undertake the journey to reach the Peary Channel, which turns out not to exist at all. Thule patently does exist and always lies in the foreground for the narrator; who never loses sight of it even while questing for his goal, his eyes staring into the distance.

One of the dominant tropes in *The New People*, the idealisation of the Thule area in *My Travel Diary* ensues from the subject's immersion in the reality he experiences rather than from his detached perception of it. The idealisation trope is re-semanticised to fulfil different functions and produce different meanings than the idealising devices employed in the 1905 account. Speaking to the *at-homeness* of the narrator of *My Travel Diary* in the North-Greenlandic space, the idealisation of North-West Greenland conveys his belonging to the region and identification with its inhabitants in contrast to the "newness" of the icesheet and the north-east coast of Greenland. The juxtaposition of such representations of Thule and its surroundings with the images of lethally dangerous spaces discursivised in the narrative foster the heterogeneous and counterpoint image

698 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 265.

699 For more details about this difference in attitudes to the North, see Aron Senkpiel, "Places of Spirit, Spirits of Place: The Northern Contemplations of Ruby Wiebe, Aritha van Herk, and John Moss," in: *Echoing Silence: Essays on Arctic Narrative*, ed. John Moss (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1997), pp. 132–133; Moss, *Enduring Dreams*, p. 135.

of North Greenland as an area of utter diversity which defies any straightforward classification through coherent discourses on the *monolithic* and *stable* North-Greenlandic Other.

As demonstrated at the beginning of this Chapter, in *My Travel Diary* the representations of the icesheet and North Greenland as an extremely dangerous and deadly space contribute to the construction of the European polar explorers as heroic "conquerors" of the Arctic in the service of scientific advancement. Although the Inughuit expedition participants are depicted as representing a primitive people whose propinquity with nature warrants their subordination to Europeans in matters of the conscious, *scientific* exploration of the unknown Arctic territories, the narrative is profoundly ambivalent as regards the production of the European explorers as heroes.

This ambivalence conspicuously surfaces when preparations for the journey at the Inuit settlement of Meat are recounted. The narrator's commendation of the Inughuit for their role in Arctic explorations is countered by a young Inughuaq called Odark, who "proudly" responds: "Don't talk about what we have accomplished, nor about the help we have managed to give. Is it our fault that our mother gave birth to us with a deep disquiet in our minds, or that our father taught us early on that life is a journey where only the incompetent are left behind?

The lives of young men must be spent discovering new things and so we followed the white men on their travels."[700]

What Odark avers sharply opposes the narrator's view of explorations in the Arctic. The young Inughuaq highlights what is also observed by the Canadian author Rudy Henry Wiebe, namely that, in contrast to the difficulties experienced in the Arctic by even the strongest of white men, "the Inuit – both men and women, infants and elderly – have lived there happily for at least eight thousand years."[701] This matter-of-fact observation questions the heroism of Western

700 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 30.

701 Rudy Wiebe, *Playing Dead: A Contemplation Concerning the Arctic* (Edmonton: NeWest, 1989), p. 15. Astrup's account conveys a similar moment of resistance to the narrative of heroic discoveries performed by Western polar explorers. The counter-opinion is also articulated by a representative of the Inughuit – the hunter Kolotengva. Accompanying the narrator on a trip to Melville Bay, Kolotengva reaches a new land, "which no merry caravans of Esquimaux had ever reached." The young Inughuaq "shook his head, exclaiming in tone full of conviction 'Pryungitoksua nuna manni' (the country about here will not do)." In the native view, European journeys of discovery are clearly rather irrelevant. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 352.

polar explorers, including the Danish members of this particular expedition. For the Inughuit, traversing the Arctic is part and parcel of daily living and, as such, it is not viewed as a grand achievement by them. As Odark states, long journeys into the unknown simply are what young males do at a certain developmental stage to hone their skills; therefore, involvement in polar expeditions was viewed by them as an opportunity to see new places (which they could as well visit without white people). Despite the essentialising opinion about the nature of the Inughuit expressed in the narrator's remark about their "inborn" travelling instinct,[702] Odark's reply challenges the idea that the space of adventure was reserved exclusively for Westerners.

The Inughuit present themselves as restless adventure-seekers; this attitude is a regular part of their lives. This is corroborated by the archaeological remains which the travellers come across on the east coast; specifically, they find stone circles which are remnants of the tents of Inughuit hunters in the area which Europeans took to be a lethal wilderness: "Here, so far from all other people, some of their fellow countrymen have tempted fate with a wife and kids; and we actually thought we were in a new land where no one had set foot till now, except the wild animals in the mountains!"[703]

Odark's words not only upset the narrator's image of the Inughuit as Arctic heroes, but also question the representation of European polar explorers as great champions performing extraordinary deeds. By articulating his own view of Western polar research and his people's role in it, Odark demonstrates the agency of the Inughuit and divests the pursuits of Europeans of the heroism and lustre they are eager to ascribe to them.

Odark's utterance can also help re-interpret the participation of the two Inughuit – Inukitsoq and Uvdloriaq – in the European expedition. It can be taken to question the heroism of the polar explorers as constructed in the narrative, with the Inughuit's masculinity competitively pitted against European masculinity. In contrast to the Danes, the two Inughuit undertake the journey simply as one in an entire series of similar ventures in which they gain experience necessary to survive in the Arctic. Their exploits are just part of their everyday lives and do not seem anything special to them. Although the narrator ascribes to the Inughuit an essential travel lust, which is compared to that driving "thoughtless" lemmings and viewed as distinctive of the entire Inuit people, it is on the techniques that this very people developed that the grand deeds of the European

702 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 180.
703 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 178.

travellers rely. While agreeing with the narrator that without the white man the Inughuit would likely not have ventured into the most desolate corners of the part of Greenland they inhabit, we could enquire what sense the indigenous people make of these expeditions if they are themselves not motivated by any partisan or expansionist goals serving to glorify a particular nation-state. The humour with which the Inughuit approach their European companions suggests that the expedition is just one of several journeys and, similarly to those undertaken without any Westerners, it has first and foremost a practical aim, which has nothing to do with utter heroism and sacrifice for the supreme cause of the colonial homeland that is touted throughout the narrative.

Occasionally, the heroic posture of the polar explorers is also undermined by the narrator himself. Having crossed the icesheet, he remarks that "that which at the beginning of the journey looked like a daring feat has now turned into an ordinary Eskimo tour by sledge."[704] The narrator realises that, when juxtaposed with the everyday routines of the Inughuit, the celebrated deeds of polar explorers – in particular of his famous predecessors Fridtjof Nansen and Robert Edwin Peary, idolised all over the world for their purportedly exalted exploits – lose much of their dazzle. Still, the expedition is not "an ordinary Eskimo tour by sledge," but a scientific project under his own command. Referring to "an ordinary tour," the narrator seeks to make the readers acknowledge that his expedition is an extraordinary achievement which deserves special recognition.[705] In this way, he strips his forerunners of heroism, however without diminishing his own accomplishments.

Although Rasmussen's account does not afford the Inughuit members much room to speak for themselves, it is not entirely emptied of their voices, which can destabilise the heroic construction of the polar explorers by advancing non-European viewpoints. Such a ripple rises in *My Travel Diary* when the narrator recounts a situation in which "the two good Eskimo men had a hilarious time of it and for a long time it was a source of chuckling explosions of laughter."[706] Peter Freuchen is the protagonist in the event. His snow blindness not fully healed yet, the man moved with his eyes shut and, at a certain point, started to chew on the bones of previously killed dogs dug up by the pack, mistakenly believing

704 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 81.

705 This is confirmed by the initial musings of the narrator who, considering the professional equipment of his famous predecessors, defines the expedition he is organising as "primitive." Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 36.

706 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 117.

they were musk oxen's. Only having swallowed a particularly disgusting bit, he opened his eyes to see that "the legs of the musk ox have grown long padded claws."[707] The narrator aptly comments: "The unintentional humour of this little episode pleased our companions so much that it has become a stock ingredient of the entertainment when, after coming home, we told stories about funny incidents on the way."[708]

The event shows that despite the hegemony of the Western narrative in which the Inughuit are gazed at by the European travellers, the latter are also an object of the indigenous gaze, which casts them in roles rather different than that of the heroic conquerors of the Arctic. Like in *The New People*, the "inverse ethnography" at work in *My Travel Diary* fashions the Inughuit into actively perceiving subjects, capable of reciprocating the Europeans' "imperial gaze."[709] Turning the European traveller into the laughing stock for the Inughuit denies authorisation to the heroic masculinity of the polar explorers the narrative seeks to construct. Coupled with the indigenous view of polar research articulated in the account, this unsettles the ostensibly fixed hierarchy of power in *My Travel Diary*, making room for alternative understandings of European actions in North Greenland.

4 North Greenland as *Terra Feminarum*

My argument below draws on the insights of Canadian scholar Sherrill E. Grace, who points out that acts of exploration and adventure in the Arctic space are presented as "exclusively masculine," while the environments in which they occur are gendered feminine.[710] Ikonen and Pehkonen refer to such a discursivisation of the Arctic as *terra feminarum*, by which they mean that the Arctic is constructed as a place "somewhere beyond the known world," which the male gaze turns into a feminine object and subordinates to itself.[711]

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707 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 119.

708 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 119.

709 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 80.

710 Sherill E. Grace, "Gendering Northern Narrative," in: *Echoing Silence: Essays on Arctic Narrative*, ed. John Moss (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1997), p. 164. The subordination by male travellers of the previously unknown territories by gendering them feminine is also discussed by Pratt. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 213.

711 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 129. Postcolonial feminist scholar Anne McClintock dubs such practices a "porno-tropic tradition." Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 22.

This is achieved in two ways: by extolling and by measuring, which Ikonen and Pehkonen refer to as "aesthetic masculinity" and "scientific masculinity," respectively, building on the concepts proposed by British cultural geographer Gillian Rose in her *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (1993).[712] The gendering of the Arctic space is intertwined with the privileging of sight, the sense traditionally regarded as male. Considered a masculine domain, polar research was viewed as predicated on seeing and thus as a distance activity, in opposition to the "female" senses of smell, taste and touch, defined by their bodiliness or "proximity."[713] Such a gendering of space is clearly structured by power relations.

The visual experience of the Other, which is pivotal to *The New People* and involves immobilising the autonomous, stable subject, is coupled in *My Travel Diary* with an equally salient aspect of the masculinity of the looker. Therefore, below I will examine the ways of representing North Greenland and the Inughuit that result from the gendered gaze of the commander of the Arctic expedition. However, because travel accounts are equally sites of negotiation between the subject and the Other, I will also attend to the discursivisations of North Greenland and the Inughuit which oppose imperial gendering and consequently contribute to the ambivalent images of the North-Greenlandic Other.

4.1 Scientific Masculinity: Erasing, Charting and Measuring

Ikonen and Pehkonen state that science is one of the major motives behind the desire to conquer the North,[714] and, indeed, the narrator of *My Travel Diary*, who speaks both for himself and on behalf of his companions, is affiliated with the institution of Danish polar research. When he announces: "Yet not with fire and sword, as it is written, but with the theodolite we were going to forge a way and conquer land for old Denmark!"[715] he inscribes himself in the long tradition of scientific conquest of the Arctic, which gave polar explorers an opportunity to contribute to the glory of their Western homelands. The proclamation is one of rather few passages in which the narrator, foregrounding the national dimension of the venture, explicitly states whom the expedition he is leading is supposed to benefit.

712 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 129.
713 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 132.
714 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 138.
715 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 42.

The polar explorers subjugate nature by measurements and observations, through which they conquer, take possession of and tame the last empty, virgin expanses on their own behalf as well as on behalf of their nation and (Western) humanity.[716] Because the scientific drive of the male polar explorers is controlled by male institutions, the knowledge they produce is clearly defined in terms of gender. This has an obvious impact on the ultimate outcome of representing the Other, which Ikonen and Pehkonen, following Gillian Rose, refer to as "scientific masculinity."[717] Pointing out that the cultural geography practised by polar explorers is clearly scopic, Ikonen and Pehkonen insist that the North as a terrain of field research is treated by expedition members as a remote region waiting to be discovered by the "male" gaze of the researcher, who accumulates knowledge in a remote wilderness where his eyes can verify the theories acquired earlier in a lecture hall. Discussing the links between cultural geography and observation, Ikonen and Pehkonen highlight the interdependence of visual perception and the research field: "becoming and being a geographer demanded engaging oneself working in the field, and in the field it was the sight, which was the prerequisite for the highest art of geography." [718] Dominated by the "male" senses, northern explorations thus produced representations of the Other which were based on observations and measurements, often conducted by means of specialised technical instruments.

Below, I focus on the representations of the icesheet/North-East Greenland which are an effect of "scientific masculinity": as a virgin territory, as a place that is charted and named and as a research field of Western scholars.

During a stopover on the icesheet, the narrator of *My Travel Diary* plans: "Tomorrow we venture out in the weather once more and beat a track in the white snow."[719] "White snow" symbolises *terra incognita* – a blank, unwritten page,[720] a space "beyond the map,"[721] a vast expanse as yet unnamed in the colonial imagination, which makes it possible to spin geographical fantasies and carry out a male adventure.[722] For all polar explorers, being the first to traverse

716 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 129.
717 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 129.
718 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 131.
719 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 64.
720 Pratt uses the term "carte blanche," which must be filled with writing. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 117.
721 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 58.
722 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 137.

a territory justified their expeditions and confirmed their hero status. This is one reason why, although the icesheet and North Greenland had already been crossed twice by Peary, every patch of land the narrator of Rasmussen's narrative visits *must* be new to him and, being new, it is subordinate and ready to be taken into possession.[723]

On many occasions, *My Travel Diary* dubs North-East Greenland "new," "unknown" or a "new land"; such expressions are used by both the European and the Inughuit expedition members.[724] They emphasise that the territories into which they venture are an uncharted space and, as such, make up a necessary object of scientific exploration. This is conveyed in a passage describing the travellers' situation after passing from the icesheet down to the north-west coast: "The land we so joyfully had driven down into was *completely new and unknown* to all of us. When we left home the Denmark Expedition's map of these regions had not yet been issued, and the only help we had in charting our course during the journey was one of the Meteorological Institute's small ice charts of the coast of Greenland where Denmark Sound had been marked."[725]

The motif of a new land which the travellers do not know and which is an object of their dreams and desires is expedient to legitimise the act of discovery and, thereby, to incorporate the land into a particular historical narrative. Evocative

723 Notable among the many expressions used in expedition accounts is the metaphor of "virgin territories," which constructs the Arctic regions as "new" and open to male intervention. The trope of "virginity" appears both in Astrup and in Nansen. The protagonists of *The First Crossing of Greenland* even name one of the nunataks they did not previously know "the Virgin" [Norwegian: *Jomfrua*] (this passage is missing in the English translation of the book). Nansen, *Paa ski over Grønland,* p. 381. Similarly to Rasmussen, Astrup also resorts to the trope of the new land "trodden by the foot of white men," which corroborates the widespread notion that discoveries could only be made by Westerners. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 236.

724 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 7, 13, 15, 19, 29, 84, 87, 89–90, 194, 197, 202, 216, 219. The fixed adjectives "new," "unknown," "unexplored," "mysterious" as well as the phrase "a/the new land" are used in polar expedition accounts as a rhetorical strategy to justify the very act of travelling and exploration. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 5, 29, 140, 157, 187, 193, 224; Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 198, 217, 231, 233, 245, 343–344, 351; Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 2, 4, 211, 508. Nansen calls the yet-unexplored interior of Greenland *terra incognita* as well, but in the English translation the Latin phrase is replaced with the rather less laden "undiscovered country." Nansen, *Paa ski over Grønland,* pp. 6, 375. Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland,* vol. 1, p. 431.

725 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 84 (emphasis mine).

of newness, the blank page entails a lack of any prior history and constructs the future as a time-space to be written over.[726] The tale about the discovery of a new land that the polar explorers produce places them at the very start of a "long and glorious history."[727] As Phillips insists, the dream of *terra incognita* seems to be "universal and innocent," yet in the era of imperialism "the geographical fantasy belongs to the man" and is allied with actual imperial acts, i.e. with charting and naming.[728] The textualisation of the landscape by the narrator, who rehearses the lexicon of a "new land," constructs the space of North-East Greenland as a blank page awaiting Western cartographic inscription. Symbolised by the "white snow," the openness and indefinability of the region are curtailed as a result of being constructed as a colonial space. Below, I will look into the cartographic inscriptions carried out by the travellers and the metaphorical transformations of the discursivised land they effect.

The avowal "not with fire and sword […], but with the theodolite […]" makes charting an important, if not the most important, achievement of the expedition led by the European traveller. Naming and putting "unknown" places on the map was one of the most essential occupations of all polar explorers,[729] yet the traveller's narrative bears witness to something more than just the presence of the protagonists in remote, virgin areas. As cartographic inscriptions do not merely reflect reality, but also organise and legitimise the appropriation and exploitation of new territories, the geographical naming has an enormous role in the process of subordinating people and lands.[730] The masculinity of cartographers crucially marks the territories they chart and reveals the colonial authority of the travellers.[731] The main image of this authority is the map, according to Phillips "a visual representation from an imaginary bird's-eye perspective [that] imaginatively controls and possesses the geography of the interior."[732] Such a colonial

726 Simon Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness: Cartography, Exploration and the Construction of Australia," in: *De-Scribing Empire: Post-Colonialism and Textuality*, eds. Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 127.

727 Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness," p. 127.

728 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, pp. 3, 5.

729 See Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 26, 226, 244, 266; Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 319, 431; Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 344, 346–347, 349.

730 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 144; Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness," p. 127.

731 Senkpiel, "Places of Spirit, Spirits of Place," p. 129; Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 83.

732 Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness," pp. 126–127.

map becomes what Phillips calls "a gendered image" which naturalises "the masculine authority" of the colonial cartographer.[733]

Already the introduction to *My Travel Diary* makes the point that charting unknown territories (the non-existent Peary Channel) is one of the major goals of the expedition, or its "initial scientific assignment," as the narrator puts it.[734] Having passed from the icesheet to the east coast, Rasmussen's protagonists look at every point for an elevation from which to canvass the surroundings. In doing this, however, they aim first and foremost to track animals, on which their survival depends, and only secondarily to carry out charting. Clearly, the important scientific task, though so emphatically embraced both in the introduction and throughout the text, is eclipsed by the threat of starvation. Nevertheless, the account includes descriptions of the surroundings as seen from elevations which afford a broad view of the area. These passages demonstrate that, though lacking food and consequently at mortal risk, the travellers all the time tower over the landscape and gaze at it from a distance and an altitude: "Almost right at my feet, stretching West to East, I had a large lake flowing on through wide valley gorges into several minor lakes. A broad river connected the lakes and valleys, edged round by fairly tall sandstone mountains in warm, brown colours, as well as wide, evenly sloping inclinations that seemed well-suited to the vegetation favoured by the musk ox."[735]

In the description, the narrator is looking down at the landscape from a height and, detached from it as he is, he enjoys a wide perspective which enables him to control nature, the object of his perception. The masculinity of this mode of viewing the landscape is all the more pronounced as the narrator, in a manner typical of hunters, constantly weighs the possibility of coming across the game he needs to survive. The landscape stretching below him seems to be a gigantic map which undergoes inscription in the act of textualisation. This seals the domination of the looker over the looked-at object: presenting the land as a text entails making it legible and, by the same token, staking a claim to exercising power over it.[736]

Scrutinising the North-Greenlandic landscape from above may also serve as compensation to the traveller, for example when the enforced hasty return home prevents him from charting "Adam Biering's Land," a newly discovered territory

733 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 85.
734 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 8.
735 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 91.
736 Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness," p. 126.

which can only be taken in from a distance: "From this high positioned land we have a splendid view over Adam Biering's Land, which stretches into the blue horizon, traversed by clefts, valleys, torrents and small solitary glaciers. In the remote distance a tall mountain raises like a blue fog, although the outlines are clear enough to us to estimate the distance at around 25 Danish miles; it is probably situated near the Nordenskiöld's Inlet."[737]

In this passage, the narrator assumes the role of a scientific subject and adopts the posture of a modest producer of information who carefully surveys the landscape, which is pliant to his masculine gaze. The observer who perceives everything in a broad, panoramic view corresponding to the trope which Pratt calls "the-monarch-of-all-I-survey"[738] and the dichotomy of the looker and the looked-at are entrenched imperial tropes of colonial literature.[739] They invest the narrator with an "imperial gaze" which places him at the centre of the scrutinised surroundings – an object of his aspirations – despite his ostentatious withdrawal from it. The fashion in which he relates what he sees embodies his territorial ambitions[740]: the land is appropriated through the charting textualisation of the landscape and the names

737 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 223.

738 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 201.

739 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 48. The trope of "the monarch of all I survey" is especially conspicuous in the expedition accounts authored by Nansen and Astrup. In Nansen's narrative, the scrutiny of the environment from an elevated vantage point not only helps the looker establish his whereabouts but also requites the exertions of climbing and offers him additional, valuable natural-scientific knowledge: "At last we are on the top, and are richly rewarded for all our toil and tribulations. The great white snowfield lies before us in all its majesty. The rain is still falling in the form of fine dust-like spray, but it is not enough to hinder us from seeing all necessary detail even at a considerable distance. The whole surface seemed smooth and crevasseless quite to the horizon. This we had expected, indeed, but what we had not expected was the number of 'nunataks,' or peaks, small and large, which protruded from the great field of snow for a long distance inwards. Many of them were covered and quite white, but many others showed cliffs and crags of bare rock which stood out in sharp contrast to the monotonous white ground, and served as welcome resting-places for the eye." Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, p. 439. In Astrup's account, "the-monarch-of-all-I-survey" trope is the source of aesthetic pleasure for the travellers and is associated with the equally imperial act of naming: "By nine o'clock we had reached the mountain top, and from a height of 3800 feet we obtained a magnificent, never-to-be-forgotten view. Mr. Peary christened the rock upon which we were standing 'Navy Cliff.'" Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole,* p. 227.

740 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 78.

that the narrative has given to it. This confirms and legitimises the performative acts whose felicity is guaranteed by the authority of the narrator as simultaneously the author of the narrative and the traveller who personally makes the discovery.

Acts of naming in accounts of polar explorers are another facet of their mastery of the landscape.[741] In *My Travel Diary*, acts of naming appear in the part which describes the northward journey along the eastern coastline up to the supposed location of the Peary Channel. The acts of naming as a rule commemorate benefactors and patrons of expeditions, mentors, colleagues and also monarchs. This indicates a profound connection between royal dynasties or national parliaments and polar expeditions, once again corroborating the notion that expeditions were launched on behalf of entire nations.[742] The acts of naming are always recorded as performative acts[743] in the present tense (despite the past tense of the narrative), e.g.: "In memory of one of the station's and the expedition's best friends *we give it the name* 'Adam Biering's Land,' "[744] or: "One of the obstructing glaciers at the bottom of the fjord *we now baptise* 'Nyboe's Glacier' after the chairman of our committee; the two major capes north and south of the glacier *we name* 'Cape Schmelck' and 'Cape Lundbohm' after a Norwegian and a Swedish friend of the expedition, respectively."[745] Besides proper present-tense

741 The acts of naming as part of the charting practices are a sine qua non component of all expedition accounts. In *The First Crossing of Greenland*, Nansen's narrator relates two acts of naming which he performed himself: "Cape Garde" [*Kap Garde*] and "Nordenskiöld's Nunatak" [*Nordenskiölds Nunatak*], the latter of which was entirely omitted in the English translation of the book. Nansen, *Paa ski over Grønland*, pp. 293, 376; Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. p. 319. In Astrup's relations, the naming acts are recounted only in the Past Simple tense. Because Astrup's narrator takes part in an American expedition, the namings are performed under the US banner by Robert Edwin Peary, which is additionally emphasised by the illustrations included both in the original and in the English editions of the text. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 227, 231. It is only when he is on a trip with Kolotengva that the narrator has an opportunity to effect an act of naming himself. Specifically, he christens one of the peaks around the "Haffner Mountain" [*Haffner fjeld*]. Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 349; Astrup, Blandt nordpolens naboer, p. 309. In Holm and Garde, naming is coupled with physical territorial expansion: "Dannebrog was raised, the land taken into possession, and the act of baptism celebrated with a glass of rum." Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, p. 244.

742 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 144.

743 Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness," p. 128.

744 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 203 (emphasis mine).

745 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 190–191 (emphasis mine).

performative utterances, acts of naming are also conveyed in the past-tense narrative, which recounts prior discoveries and conferrals of new names, as is the case with, for example, the Crane Fly Gorge: "They [crane flies] were here in such large numbers that they literally filled the gorge which we therefore *named* after them."[746]

Discovery and name-giving delimit the indefinite and unlocated space of the *terra incognita* as in the acts of articulation included in the account "the endlessness of possibility is circumscribed, for an actual identity is announced."[747] A result of these acts, the map is both an expression and a tool of the colonial ambitions harboured by male travellers through which a potential colonial geography is constructed. Emphatically, however, giving names and interpolating them onto the map are also an indelible record of Western encounters with the Other.[748] Although the two parties in the relationship of the travellers and the Other are never on an equal footing, Rasmussen's narrative affirms that the Other can exert power over the travellers. Notably, not all acts of naming in *My Travel Diary* serve to commemorate eminent figures of the Danish nation-state and/or science, sponsors of the expedition or people involved with the trading station. Names such as the "Zig-Zag Valley," the "Poppy Valley" and the "Crane Fly Gorge" are chosen for the sake of the landscape itself, to honour the space in which the polar explorers find themselves and which has impressed its mark on them. While their male aspirations to exercise mastery over the succumbing (feminine) landscape are sustained, the colonial map includes liminal spaces, where the imposed meanings can in fact be negotiated.

Before such a map can be charted, the "discovery" proper must take place, a notion, as Lesley Wylie observes, that is marked with Eurocentrism.[749] The act of discovery is effected by means of performative utterances and is legitimated by being incorporated into the textualised travel narrative: "Today we are facing an absolute turning point in our travels. *We have made a great discovery* and we are not yet in a position to anticipate what consequences it may have for our explorations further on."[750]

My Travel Diary evinces that the author's authority and his eye-witness account sometimes do not suffice for the performative act of discovery to occur.

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746 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 111 (emphasis mine).
747 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 57.
748 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 57.
749 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 80.
750 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 189 (emphasis mine).

That the travellers see for themselves that "Greenland is connected with Peary Land; the canal did not exist at all!"[751] is actually not a genuine discovery, as the authorial meta-commentary in a footnote discloses. The performative act of discovery turns out to be infelicitous because the discovery was in fact made by Ludvig Mylius-Erichsen, the commander of the fateful Denmark Expedition, five years earlier. To varnish the infelicity of the performative act in the text, the author's commentary musters elaborate reasons to justify the expedition he commands. The most pertinent justification is the charting of the entire region, which provides conclusive evidence of Mylius-Erichsen's prior discovery.[752] The protagonists – solely the Danes – relinquish the status of the "first discoverers" they have conferred on themselves, yet they do so without regret because the glory goes to "former expedition mates, an honour they paid for with their lives."[753] This declaration again underlines the community of male discoverers, as their achievements add to the *shared* legacy of European polar research.[754]

In *My Travel Diary*, the imperial project and textual agency amalgamate as the travellers register the reality and, at the same time, leave their own inscription on it: their actions, rather than just presenting the palpable state of things as they are, impose an entirely new order on them.[755] As Simon Ryan observes, charting combines textual and material vectors of colonialism, for the performative acts of discovery and naming are interpolated onto the colonial map, which is supposed to authorise the new order.[756] The "male journey" of the protagonists of Rasmussen's account produces representations of North-Greenlandic nature as a place "beyond the known world"[757] which charting helps discover, name and appropriate through "scientific masculinity." The primacy of sight and the related representation of the space as a new and unknown land, a blank page waiting to be written over, dovetail with the primacy of the travellers' masculinity over the feminine submissiveness of the space, which is filled with the effects of the European looking subject's perception. Although the North-Greenlandic space as the Other is capable of impressing itself on the travellers, it cannot possibly

751 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 189.
752 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 234, footnote.
753 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 234, footnote.
754 As Riffenburgh insists, "the most powerful hero is the dead hero […] since it is through his death for the cause that his heroic status can be most easily created, interpreted and manipulated." Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, p. 6.
755 Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness," p. 128.
756 Ryan, "Inscribing the Emptiness," p. 128.
757 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 129.

avoid gendering, which is produced by the Western masculine narrative and constitutes Greenland as surrendering to the male conquest.

The scientific masculinity of the polar explorers is also expressed in the measurements and observations of the feminine North-Greenlandic territory, actions which are instrumental to documenting the scientific victory over it and the actual "being there."[758] Direct observations and the collecting of exotic samples were required as proof of the possibly closest contact with nature.[759] In this context, the research field was also treated as feminine and waiting to be discovered by the masculine gaze of the researcher.

The representation of the research field examined by the polar explorers in *My Travel Diary* is stamped by several features which are all traditionally considered feminine attributes – they include virginity symbolised by the whiteness of snow, changeability, maternal nurturance and hospitality.[760] While travelling along the north-east coastline, as the explorers unexpectedly come across "oases of abundance" at the heart of an icy wilderness, the narrator refers to Greenland as "the land of variety" because "[w]here death lets go life begins."[761] In contrast to the white, glacial emptiness of the frozen shores, the oases of vibrant plant and animal life at the edges of Peary Land appear as a friendly and smiling mother, "wanting to nourish her starving children."[762] Peary Land is also depicted as "the hospitable land" which "seemed to salute its guests,"[763] its generosity attested to by the plentiful game. The area personifies a caring and welcoming facet of submissive, feminine North-East Greenland, which "invites" the travellers to indulge in in-depth research and explorations.[764]

The gendering of the diversified space of North-East Greenland in *My Travel Diary* is a trope which features profusely in expedition writings authored

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758 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 144.

759 Ikonen, Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," pp. 131, 135.

760 Anka Ryall, *Odyssevs i skjørt: kvinners erobring av reiselitteraturen* (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 2004), p. 35.

761 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 202.

762 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 164.

763 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 236. A similar description of the new land is provided by the narrator of *With Peary near the Pole* after the crossing of the icesheet: "A couple of snow sparrows greeted us with their merry twitter, and amongst the large round stones with which the ground was covered we stood listening to the welcome sound of running water, and did not long resist its invitation. Stretching ourselves at full length, we quenched our thirst to our heart's content. Never had life appeared more beautiful." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, p. 217.

764 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 224.

by other explorers as well.[765] It contributes to the construction of the *terra feminarum*, in which, as Ikonen and Pehkonen explain, the North-Greenlandic space is turned into a research field yielding to the scientific masculinity of the European protagonists of the narrative. Rasmussen's account is interspersed with descriptions of various measurements and observations undertaken by the travellers,[766] whereas their activities are as a rule left unspecified. Though rather scarce in comparison to the relations of other polar explorers,[767] such information serves to additionally consolidate the authority of the travellers as researchers. Still, their authority is even more underscored by the classifying gaze of the male narrator, which produces depictions of nature any post-Linnean naturalist-cum-botanist could be proud of: "Just as in the gorge we came from we also found saxifrage and bell heather here; but they appeared to be larger, heavier and more juicy down here in the sunlit, open country. There were also water- and ice-buttercups, fleabanes, chickweed, just to mention a few of the most predominant, and arctic willows in whole small bushes between the moss and green lawns. Magnificent colonies of red rhododendrons were flaming on irrigated spots on the mountain slopes, and every time we passed a small lake, the banks would be gleaming, snow-white with cotton-grass."[768]

This depiction of the Poppy Valley is based on the perception of the looker whose presence in the Arctic is authorised by his profound knowledge of the bounteous vegetation he sees. The detailed and specific description, with its accumulation of plant names, both affirms his authority as an Arctic traveller

765 This is done through adjectives and metaphors connoting femininity, which are used particularly profusely in *The First Crossing of Greenland*: "beauty," "dreamy," "alluring," "marvellously beautiful" and "pure and virgin" [Norwegian: *ren og jomfruelig*], with the latter eliminated in the English translation of the account. Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol.1, pp. 243, 259, 399; Nansen, *Paa ski over Grønland*, p. 381. In Astrup's narrative, such adjectives include, for example, "attractive" and "mysterious." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 231, 236.

766 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 58, 218, 229.

767 Including the activities of measuring, observing and examining in the literary discourse is characteristic of all polar expedition accounts. Such activities include meteorological and mineralogical measurements, anthropological examinations, the collection of anthropological specimens, zoological, climatic, geological and glaciological observations and photographic documentation. Holm and Garde, *Den danske Konebaads-Expedition*, pp. 99–100, 270, 336, 356; Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 167, 244, 248, 414–421; vol. 2, pp. 137–140; Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 202, 219, 223, 227, 230.

768 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 205.

and subordinates Arctic flora and fauna to European taxonomies. Similarly to the immobilised European subject in *The New People*, who gazes at the landscape from afar, the narrator of *My Travel Diary* does not attempt to interfere with the thoroughly scrutinised reality either. His marginal presence is limited to impassive reporting on how the group of travellers moves across the static, passive landscape. Rasmussen's narrator displays features of the scientific subject analysed by Pratt whose authority is predicated on his detachment from the objects he describes and his rejection of subjectivity.[769] By observation and the compilation of facts, he transforms the nature he encounters into natural history, and his scientific gaze makes an inscription on the landscape, "naturalising" it, i.e. subordinating it to European natural history.[770]

The travellers' encounters with Arctic nature are conveyed not only in the observation-based, classifying representations of North-Greenlandic animal and plant life. Setting out on the return journey across the icesheet to Thule, the narrator announces: "our luggage also contains the various items of geological, zoological and botanical nature that we have been gathering since the moment we came down into the Zig-Zag Valley."[771] The animal resources of the Arctic are coveted by the travellers not only as their means of survival, but also as objects of research interest and specimens expected to augment European knowledge of the non-European world. The protagonists' scientific curiosity is especially stirred by the first seal they kill on the east coast; they carefully measure the carcass and inspect the stomach for its content.[772] They also hunt and collect specimens on the newly discovered "Adam Biering's Land," an area replete with varied plant and animal species: "After a while a big bee comes buzzing over our fireplace; a new chase begins and it is not long before it is drowned in a small glass with spirits, thus making the long journey to the Zoological Museum."

"A small young hare, taking its carefree pre-noon exercise along the river, suffers the same fate although it gives up his life at a dear cost. Even though it was tiny we had to exert ourselves to catch it."[773]

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769 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 76.

770 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp. 51–52. The strictly scientific narrative about the places the travellers visit also appears in Peter Freuchen's diary depiction of a gorge on the east coast, quoted in *My Travel Diary*. Besides meticulous, also numerical, data on the landform, it recounts collecting geological samples as well. Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 113–114.

771 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 238.

772 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 148.

773 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 201–202.

Gathering samples to enrich European museum collections serves to legitimise the harnessing of North-Greenlandic nature in the service of masculine-gendered Western science. Generously providing material for various disciplinary studies undertaken by the male travellers from the metropolis, North-East Greenland is constructed as a territory open to conquest via knowledge production and to the actual territorial expansion which follows in its footsteps. The conquest is imaged in the physical appropriation of North-Greenlandic nature by the polar explorers through collecting specimens, an activity in which nature is an equivalent of femininity consigned to home.[774] Ostentatiously innocent because he is acting *only* on behalf of science, which is emphatically contrasted with territorial conquest at the beginning of the narrative, the male subject ravages North-Greenlandic fauna and flora in order to satisfy his own aspirations and egoistic desires. The collected specimens – photos taken by the explorers and geological, zoological and botanical samples – have no other value than as an expression of a scientific drive to accumulate and produce knowledge through discriminating and othering beings. Acting in the service of science, Rasmussen's protagonists again re-assert their masculinity within the feminised space of North-East Greenland, which is subjected to their ambitions and desires.

4.2 Aesthetic Masculinity: East Greenland and the Icesheet as a Source of the Sublime

According to Ikonen and Pehkonen, "aesthetic masculinity" in expedition accounts consists in representing Arctic nature as sublime, that is, as an object of unfathomed desires of the perceiving subject, which gives this subject mental energy and scopic pleasure, but at the same time triggers a shudder of imminent threat.[775] Like scientific masculinity, aesthetic masculinity is expressed in representations of the polar zones as a seizable feminine space. This time,

774 The trope was also characteristic of the narrative of "anti-conquest" developed by Western naturalists, which is pithily summed up by Pratt: "Eve is the garden whom he in his unobjectionable way plunders and possesses." Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 57.

775 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 129. For the trope of the sublime in polar expedition accounts, see Loomis, "The Arctic Sublime"; Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer*, pp. 11–14; Francis Spufford, *I May Be Some Time. Ice and the English Imagination* (London & Boston: Faber and Faber, 1996), pp. 16–40. The sublimity trope is particularly conspicuous in narratives by Norwegians Nansen and Astrup. The description of an iceberg of "overwhelming magnitude" and the impression it made on the travellers in *The First Crossing of Greenland* is a classic example of the sublimity

however, the possession is effected not by performing scientific activities for the sake of the advancement of knowledge, but by extolling the extraordinary and spectacular features of the admired object.

In his treatise *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Edmund Burke (1729–1797) defines the sublime as "the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling."[776] The sensation is triggered by "a mode of terror or a pain" which is associated with things that we cannot fully take in or comprehend – "visual objects of great dimensions."[777] Despite the fear that the sublime involves, it is also a source of delight for the individual who experiences it, provided that a distance is maintained between the

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trope as applied in expedition accounts: "From its top rose two points like slender church spires high into the air. Far up on its cliff-like side was a huge hole passing like a tunnel through the whole mass of ice; and down below, the sea had hollowed grottoes so large that a small ship could readily have ridden within their shelter. […] When one comes across icebergs of this kind, which happens now and again, a wealth of beauty is found in fantastic forms and play of colour which absorbs one's whole imagination and carries one back to the wonders and mysteries of the fairy-land of childhood." Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 384–386. Moreover, at another point in the narrative, Nansen's narrator explicitly talks about the "sublime beauty" of the mountaintop-encircled icesheet, thereby revealing that he is perfectly versed in Western aesthetic concepts. Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, p. 243. Among the many descriptions of sublime lanscapes in *With Peary near the Pole*, one particularly stands out. It is recorded by the narrator in a diary he keeps during a sledge journey in the moonlight: "One can scarcely imagine anything so entirely lacking in animation, so desolate, as the landscape before us. It was as though we were no longer moving on our own planet, but were suddenly transported to the surface of some mystic strange spot in the universe, so desolate, so distant and different from any human dwelling-place was that locality. […] the silence of death reigned over the country, and only now and then weird heavy sighs reached us from mountain recesses close by, as ice blocks gathered upon rocky points and ledges, and the tide fell. The white broken plain around us, illuminated in ghostly fashion by the pale silent moon, brought to our minds a churchyard in winter time, numerous ice blocks bearing an uncanny likeness to snow-clad tombstones and large monuments." Astrup, *With Peary near the Pole*, pp. 279. In both passages above, the Greenlandic landscape is portrayed as a space shrouded in the mystical – in Nansen, suffused with the aura of fairy-tale mysteriousness, and in Astrup, evoking unbridled dread associated with Gothic cathedrals and abandoned cemeteries.

776 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: printed for R. and J. Dodsley, in Pall-mall, 1757), p. 13.

777 Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 154.

person and the object that engenders the sublime.[778] Because, as Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) asserts, the sublime "concerns only ideas of reason"[779] and is not a phenomenon of nature as such, Wylie aptly points out that the sublime furnished the authors of imperial adventure literature with a ready-to-use set of vocabulary to confront boundless natural expanses. Additionally, it also empowered them to make the construction of Otherness into a source of self-construction.[780]

Consequently, in order to examine the construction of aesthetic masculinity in Rasmussen's account, we should look into the trope of the sublime and the stylistic devices accessory to its production in order to grasp how they differ from regular representations of nature as a dangerous and mysterious expanse and "objects too large or powerful to grasp cognitively."[781] In their definition of the Arctic sublime, Spring and Schimanski focus on the transformation of phenomena threatening to and more powerful than humans into "a variety of aesthetic pleasure conditioned by the fact that what arouses the sublime is kept at a distance and, as such, it does not pose a real threat."[782] It means that although the experiencing subject can be affected by Arctic nature to feel a jolt of terror at being confronted with an unknown, indefinite magnitude, in fact the distance between them still leaves ample room for positive aesthetic sensations. This translates into domesticating the sublime space by gendering it feminine and, consequently, making it subordinate. The use of the sublimity trope in representations of the Arctic in polar expedition narratives should thus be investigated as such a practice, by Rose denoted as "aesthetic masculinity."

In Rasmussen's narrative, descriptions of sublime North-Greenlandic nature are mainly clustered at the beginning of the journey, when the travellers are engaged in the final preparations among the villagers of Meat and then enter the icesheet, but before they actually confront dangers at later stages of the expedition.

Leaving Thule for Meat, the narrator indulges in a contemplation of the sunset which he sees from the position of a dogsled driver: "The arc of the April sun is still short and long before evening the old flame throws himself into the sea in order to cool off in the ice at the horizon."

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778 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis & Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), p. 120.

779 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 99.

780 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 50.

781 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 49.

782 Schimanski and Spring, "Oppdagelsesreise bliver til litteratur," p. 75.

"Oh look! The crimson clouds of the sunset and the white of the snow spread the ancient colours of Denmark across the mountains of Greenland."[783]

The utterance signals a blending of two different subject positions – scientific and sentimental. The narrator first notices the short arc of the April sun only to focus on the aesthetic beauty of the view, which is enhanced by anthropomorphisation and contrast. The narrator directly addresses the readers in order to make them co-experience the unusual spectacle of, as he sees it, "the ancient colours of Denmark," dominating over the Greenlandic landscape. The metaphorical diction symbolically constitutes the relationship of Denmark and Greenland – of the old world and the new world – in which the latter, passive and placed beneath, is outstripped by the former, active and placed above. An immense realm of ice and high mountains, Greenland is subordinated to Denmark, symbolised by the *Dannebrog*, the Danish flag. The scene opens the expedition, whose aim – of subjugating unknown territories, boosting Danish settlement in Greenland and adding to the glory of the "old" country – overlaps with the narrator's vision. The portrayal of the Greenlandic space as submissive and yielding to conquest re-enacts the gendering of North Greenland as a feminine space, but this time employs other rhetorical devices than "scientific masculinity." On this occasion, the sublime features of the Other, though terrifying, are adulated, affording the looker exquisite pleasure.

In the safe and affluent space of North-West Greenland (a domestic space for the narrator), when the travellers arrange the last practicalities and gather supplies for the road in the Inughuit settlement of Meat, one of few moments of repose is enveloped in extraordinary scenery: "The sun had already begun to melt the southern slopes of the mountains standing in a sunburnt dark against the white snow around them. The strong 'fang tooth mountain,' famous for its dog amulets, tears a glowing gash in the red sunset clouds; the mountain is standing there, erect and inaccessibly steep like a protest against the flat uniformity of the ocean ice."[784]

As in *The New People*, the narrator reveals himself as a Western viewer who appreciates the landscape in aesthetic terms, which brings to mind a connoisseur contemplating a work of art. The inner dynamics of the landscape are drawn by means of the contrast between the darkness of the mountain slopes and the whiteness of the snow around them, of the pointed summit of the bulky mountain and the softness of the clouds it pierces, and of the horizontal sea ice and

783 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 17.
784 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 31.

the vertical mountain steepness. The impression of movement is fostered by anthropomorphisation: the mountain "tears a glowing gash" in the clouds, is "erect" and "inaccessibly steep," which is supposed to lend vividness to the vision of active protest the narrator conjures up. The adjectives "erect" and "inaccessible" connote a woman figure who fends off attempts at coming near her. The viewer projects the sublime onto the landscape whose dominant elements are the vertical elevation of the mountain, vastness and the feature which Burke calls difficulty, resulting from the "rudeness" of the perceived object,[785] all set against the crimson of the evening sky. The impression is not disturbed by the narrator's evident familiarity with the place he presents as sublime. An expression of the viewer's emotions of admiration mixed with respect, the depiction of the inaccessible mountain from a distance subordinates the landscape to the narrator through feminine-gendered aestheticisation.

A subchapter of *My Travel Diary* entitled "The Ice Breaks up" (*Isen bryder op*) reports the cracking of the sea ice witnessed by the expedition members, a moment which was supposed to be followed by a dogsled drive along Greenland's northern coastline: "The lungs of the storm are filled with the whistling weather and blows its wild song over the lands. A song of forces let loose and bonds that break; the homage of the wide waste lands to untamed nature that whimsically sweeps sky and earth together, drowning the horizon in cascades of arrogant laughter."[786]

Watched from a safe place, North-Greenlandic nature is a source of exciting sensations to the lookers. As he is not at any immediate risk, the narrator takes delight in the wildness of nature and the threat it produces, as a witness of the element which is unbridled, powerful above everything else and representing mysterious forces that crush all restraints. The nature he describes has typically sublime traits. For one, it is vast and powerful, as underlined by anthropomorphisation and metaphors such as the "lungs of the storm," "forces let loose," a "wild song" of the weather and the "cascades of arrogant laughter," which engulf the horizon. At the same time, despite its unimaginable force and size, the natural environment is given human features, such as volatility and arrogance, which are associated with femininity in male narratives.[787]

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785 These are features Burke counts among the sources of the sublime. Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry,* pp. 51, 60.

786 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 32.

787 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 141.

The vastness and the power of North-Greenlandic nature are even more amplified: "From the sea mighty swells came rolling under the ice, lifting it up like a waving carpet in long, supple undulations; they are like large invisible animals swimming by and in their might do not have the heart to break through the thin, receding crust that should have been our thoroughfare today."

"We can only watch and wait, so harmlessly small, hanging our heads."[788]

The comparison of the ice stretch to a huge, undulating carpet with invisible creatures swimming underneath highlights other features productive of the sublime, such as the "rugged and broken surface" and the obscurity of the object.[789] The vision of the power of nature is enhanced by the adjectives "mighty" and "large," yet it is in the final contrast with the "harmlessly small" observers, who watch the raging element while being feeble and impotent themselves, that the force and the immensity of nature are brought out most graphically. The passage reverberates with Kant's mathematical sublime, which involves "the inadequacy of even the greatest effort of our imagination to estimate an object's magnitude"[790] – in *My Travel Diary*, the magnitude of the invisible powers of nature.

With an enormous wave swelling, the ice, which is compared to a giant who "has been straining his broad shoulders," finally breaks. This is accompanied by a roar of the ice cracking along several miles, while "foam-crested waves" shake off their harness and "sweep to their freedom like a fleeing herd over storm-lashed acres."[791] The metaphors of a giant, a harness and animals let loose suggest that, while perceived as vast and sinister, nature remains an object watched from a safe distance. With the sensationalist motif of fighting the wilderness entirely missing here, the only combat that unfolds is a struggle of dangerous elements against each other, in which the observer has no intention of engaging. The mind of the perceiving subject is filled with respect and amazement, which trigger aesthetic sensations expressed in the accumulation of stylistic devices as discussed above.

These passages from the opening parts of the account, in which preparations for the journey are described, do not aspire to the typical objectivity of the self-effacing scientific subject. Instead, the subject they feature is "sentimental," as Pratt puts it,[792] and positioned at the very centre of a discourse which is shaped by sensory – primarily visual and aural –impressions. Instead of the narrator's

788 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 32–33.
789 Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, pp. 52, 43.
790 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 112.
791 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 33.
792 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 78.

passivity and renunciation of imposing an order on the reality he scrutinizes his discursive practice reveals his aspirations to gain cognitive command over the telluric. His subjective take on the space he experiences in this way is emphasised by the trope of anthropomorphisation, which imbues North Greenland with feminine features and masters it as an object of Western aestheticisation. This expresses the discursive power of the narrator over the object he perceives.

The representations of the North-Greenlandic space produced by means of aesthetic masculinity also appear as the travellers enter the icesheet. Having parted with the auxiliary Inughuit teams and set up camp, the narrator reflects on the challenges ahead of them:

> All around me I see only the white desert, the glacier breathing heavily in the deadly cold and drifting snowstorms. Towards all horizons well snow and ice, blinding the eye in their white monotony. Only when the sun sends its warming rays down on the sparkling crystals will the mute landscape smile in a strange, melancholy peace that moves you and makes you surrender.
>
> Then the wide, hundreds of miles long road lies ahead of us, silent like a desert and enigmatically merciless in its challenge to whomever dares set foot on it. It is as if all words written down from now on by themselves put one in a serious mood.[793]

In this depiction, the subject who appreciates nature is also a sentimental Western aesthete. Like in the previously discussed representations, his representation of the icesheet seems to be in the grip of "the occult forces" of nature (similar to those evoked in *The New People*), whose presence is conveyed by anthropomorphisation combined with a cluster of active verbs and participles. This observer is manifestly reluctant to interfere with the landscape. However, despite the vocabulary, which ostentatiously highlights passivity, the European subject finds himself at the very centre of this spectacle: North Greenland as represented here is produced by his mental state and forged out of his repertoire of Western aesthetic categories.

The narrator of *My Travel Diary* reveals his capability to interpret nature by referring to fixed patterns of Western conceptualisation of landscape. The white, monotonous vastness of the icesheet, which is after all a space of lethal danger, is simultaneously utterly captivating in the sunshine, so much so that it overwhelms the viewer and causes his astonishment,[794] triggering both admiration and reverence. The powerful feelings this beauty entices in the viewer are ungraspable by the human mind: the white tract spreading in front of the narrator is unperturbed in its inscrutability, which makes aesthetic pleasure coalesce with a shiver of anxiety

793 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 51.
794 Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p. 41.

about the perils potentially looming ahead. The admiration of the icesheet's awe-inspiring beauty proves that the human mind is capable of ordering its surroundings and dominating the telluric.[795]

In this case, however, the subject does not survey nature around him from a comfortable vantage point. The viewer's vision is not unlimited; in fact, it is all the more restricted by the dazzling sun, with beams of light reflected by the ubiquitous snow and ice. The contrast between the vast expanse of the icy desert – "the wide, hundreds of miles long road" – and the figure of the looker provides a "comparative" concept of the magnitude of the icesheet,[796] which is additionally underlined by the seriousness it evokes in him.[797] The sublime of the icesheet is also composed of the pervasive silence, which fuses with the viewer's solitude to generate a sense of privation, and of the "enigmatically merciless" vastness of the icesheet, which makes it impossible to fully assess the impending danger.[798] The narrator articulates the sense of solemn gravity from a safe place – a human encampment whose presence amidst the threatening and mysterious carapace of the icesheet forestalls any immediate hazard to the narrator. This indicates again that the sublime primarily serves to transform the threat of nature into aesthetic pleasure for the viewer, which proves and re-asserts his supremacy over nature.

References to European, specifically Old Norse, mythology characteristically proliferate in Rasmussen's version of the sublime. When the expedition is halted by a snow storm and forced to set up camp in the midst of the glacier, the narrator, who is awake to watch the dogs while his companions sleep soundly, is affected by the impressive hugeness of the icesheet: "It overwhelms me with a kind of dull mystique, this mighty, white chest that lets the fine, white snow-drift whip over it; this ocean of imperturbable quiet drawing its primordial breath, smelling of ancient heathendom."

"And by themselves half-forgotten mythological visions are released from the mind: Ragnarok! Now I understand your imagination and your dreams, ye old Nordic heathens!"[799]

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795 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 51.

796 Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 104.

797 Such a "comparative" version of the sublime also appears in Nansen's *The First Crossing of Greenland*, where the previously contemplated vastness of nature is contrasted with the "[s]ix men drifting southwards on a floe." Nansen, *The First Crossing of Greenland*, vol. 1, pp. 260–261.

798 Manifestations of privation include, according to Burke, "Vacuity, Darkness, Solitude and Silence." Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry,* p. 50.

799 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 63.

Besides the sublime properties of the icesheet ("mighty," "quiet" and "imperturbable"), the narrator dwells here on the aura of the mythical he ascribes to it by evoking Old-Norse mythology – the "heathendom" of his own Scandinavian forefathers. This is what begets the "dull mystique" gleaned in the icesheet, expressed through a series of anthropomorphisations – "primordial breath," "smelling of ancient heathendom" – and evoking "mythological visions," which readily appear in the narrator's mind's eye. The cry "Ragnarok!" and the apostrophe to "mythological visions" transport the readers into the era of legendary heroes who braved extreme dangers. The effect is heightened by another reference to the mythological end of the world, followed by a rhetorical question evoking other Norse mythological heroes: "Ragnarok! Or is it the wild, forgotten land of the giants we are witnessing here?"[800]

Schimanski and Spring show that references to European mythology are an effective stylistic device of "laudatory rhetoric,"[801] which serves to heroise polar explorers and, by weaving a symbolic network of references, to foster the reader's identification with the nationalistic ideology epitomised in the protagonist. The mythological vision of the end of the world, pictured as a blizzard sweeping across the icesheet, is amplified by the continual whining of the dogs which move around outside: "the whole great monotonous chorus, trembling with a fright that will not be released; and not a single little echo breaks the silent pathos of the ice landscape."[802] The sense of menace induced by the elements seizes not only the human observer, but also all other living creatures. Despite the piercing howl of the animals, the narrator highlights the sublime "silent pathos," apparently undisturbed either by the canine yelping or by any "single little echo."

The moment, however, marks a sudden change in the perspective of the gazing subject, as the following lines disclose that he is speaking from within a sheltered snow hut, where he has found refuge from the snow storm: "The mouth of the glacier is irrevocably closed. Only the wind is gushing over our small snow cabin, singing its wild song and swiftly fleeing down towards distant, sun-warmed shores."

"But through a small peak-hole in the cabin my eyes follow the sweeping snow showers that team up with the storm, whipping mercilessly down over the dead spring of the glacier."[803]

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800 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 64.
801 Schimanski and Spring, "Oppdagelsesreise bliver til litteratur," p. 64.
802 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 64.
803 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 64.

The motif of the storm (here the snow storm) is a staple of travel literature conventions since it gives the protagonist a classic opportunity to metaphorically demonstrate his ascendancy over nature.[804] Following the Romantic tradition, as Wylie observes, the moment of disorientation is followed by enhanced self-awareness[805]: "My energy is intensified by the strange mood of this night and I feel like trying on my strength by defying the howling storm of the desert!"[806] Having experienced sublime sensations occasioned by the snow storm-shrouded space of the North-Greenlandic icesheet, the narrator feels an upsurge of strength to master the environment, not only mentally. This is conveyed by the metaphor in the following sentence, which caps the reflective depiction of sublime nature: "Tomorrow we venture out in the weather once more and beat a track in the white snow."[807] The statement indicates a transition between the human mental and physical endeavour to exercise power over the environment and, at the same time, is attuned to the convention of sensationalism as analysed by Riffenburgh. The white snow, in which the explorers' sledges will impress their trail, symbolises the virginity of the areas they traverse and its pliant femininity exposed to the pushy, aggressive masculinity of the explorers, who are compelled by their desire to "discover" and, thus, to subjugate new lands. The feminine gendering of the admired, sublime territories, which simultaneously evoke dread and pleasure in the viewer, is re-affirmed at the end of the account, when the narrator is nearing the port of Copenhagen and contemplates for the last time the land he has left far behind: "The grand beauty of the silent waste lands sinks into one's memory; the great stillness emanating from the land where we were the first to set foot on virgin soil, captivates us and enchants us."[808]

This is the narrator's last reflection on North-Greenlandic nature, which is again channelled through the conventional trope of the sublime, stressing "the grand beauty" and "the silent waste lands" of North Greenland, whose charm still "captivates" the travellers. The sublime again enthrals the viewers, though they find themselves at a safe distance from what produces it. At the same time, the wording "virgin soil" once more genders the North-Greenlandic territory feminine. Despite its terrible beauty, it has feminine features attributed to it and, by the same token, it is defined as subordinate not only to the masculine gaze of

804 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 53.
805 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 52.
806 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 64.
807 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 64.
808 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 268.

the European subject, but also to the male polar enterprise, which is associated with imperialist ideology and conquest.

The trope of the sublime in *My Travel Diary* generates aesthetic masculinity, which is constructed through the exoticisation and feminine gendering of North Greenland.[809] Aesthetic masculinity expresses the male subject's desire for cognitive domination over nature and involves aestheticising the object, which follows the traditional Western principles of representing the Arctic. Through portraying the space of North Greenland as a lethally dangerous place, which is pervaded by mysteriousness, silence and elemental clashes and breeds a sense of solitude, threat and pleasure, the educated European male is elevated over feminine nature and thus predestined to dominate and rule it. This discursive strategy is only possible if the subject is positioned at a distance, for approaching the source of the sublime too closely stirs fright and terror, leaving no room for fascination and precluding any aesthetic pleasure bound up with pre-eminence over the landscape. The menace of undue propinquity is cogently pictured when the explorers discover the traces left by their tragically perished colleagues in Denmark Sound.

The representation of North Greenland as sublime, feminised nature is produced by the masculine gaze and, at the same time, promotes this masculinity, with the metaphorical femininity of the landscape serving as the Other against which the protagonist can define his male "I."[810] Then, the conclusion is that *My Travel Diary* maps masculinity in relation to the construct of femininity fixed by the text. North-Greenlandic nature is "virginal" like a blank, unwritten page – dangerous, treacherous and unpredictable, but also seductive with all its sublime beauty and impenetrability. This femininity is confronted, as a rule, from a safe distance, often from the tops of hills which provide a convenient vantage point for visual scrutiny. The representation of the feminised telluric Other is thus based on remoteness, separation and an emphasis on difference. Producing such an image of the icesheet and North Greenland, the polar explorers construct masculinity and femininity as dialectical opposites, where femininity is fixed as submissive to masculinity, the latter being naturalised as homogeneous and limited to being: white, Protestant, European, heterosexual and middle-class.[811] Incarnating an array of heroic qualities and, at the same time, remaining

809 Jerzy Brzozowski claims that the sublime is one of the means of exoticisation. Brzozowski, "Intertekstualna gra Juliusza Verne'a z Brazylią", p. 100.

810 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 62.

811 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 64.

common men, Rasmussen's protagonists embody the masculinity of imperial agents. *My Travel Diary* legitimises clearly the ideological construct of the "natural" authority of "real men" – polar heroes acting "in the name of national pride and manhood."[812]

5 Resistance to Othering through Scientific and Aesthetic Masculinity

Analysed in the previous subchapter, scientific and aesthetic masculinities in *My Travel Diary* are nevertheless far from uniform. In this respect, Rasmussen's narrative is also highly ambivalent as it is criss-crossed by discursive strategies and tropes that question the hegemony of colonial meaning-making. Therefore, I focus below on the narrative articulations which resist the constructed and fixed identity of the heroic male polar explorer who subordinates "other" territories located beyond his known Western world. The fissures in the dominant discourse on the North-Greenlandic Other come to light when North Greenland is represented as a place that defies discursivisation and measurement and features as a source of telluric horror as well as a space saturated with its own history and language, which the narrator experiences from close up and through other senses than sight. Such cracks result from the heterogeneity of the speaking subject and expose the ambivalent character of his account.

5.1 North Greenland as a Source of the Telluric Horror and a Measurement-Resisting Place

Although the representations of North Greenland as a place yielding to the gaze of the male travellers and their practices prevail in *My Travel Diary*, the North-Greenlandic space is also capable of defying discursivisation as a place which the narrator cannot grasp and discursively subdue. The travellers' ignorance about the "new" territories and their concomitant insecurity become patent when they pass from the icesheet to the east coast: "We had no help whatsoever getting our bearings in this place; at the moment all we knew was the information deduced from our observations, and that sufficed to tell us that we had reached the eastern ground somewhere in the vicinity of the north shore of Denmark Sound. But we had no idea what conditions for traveling would be like from our campsite here and down to the coast."[813]

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812 Tuan, "Desert and Ice: Ambivalent Aesthetics," p. 139.
813 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 85.

The narrator conveys uncertainty about the new, unknown and yet-uncharted territory. Measurements performed on the spot give the travellers only an approximate idea of their location without allowing them to establish where precisely they find themselves. Anxious about his own position and the future of the expedition, the European subject focuses only on obtaining at least a minimum view of the surroundings and, thereby, securing a dominant position vis-à-vis the space he seeks to discursivise.[814] Still, the view is often very limited, which is the case, for example, when the explorers travel along the east coastline and are forced time and again to venture deep into "the new land" in search of elevations from which to look around:

> Under such conditions one is accompanied by mysterious sentiments when one enters a vast, unknown territory and is swallowed up by the sombre loneliness of the mountains. These mighty waste lands exude an earnestness that is involuntarily absorbed by one's mind. Hour after hour you walk around there like an infinitely lonely man, without hearing a single sound, without seeing a living thing, and since all your senses are alert in order to trace, to see, to hear, you work up a state of excitability in these solemn surroundings so that you catch yourself starting at the sound of your own footsteps. For every mountain crest I saw ahead of me new hope was dawning.
>
> "As soon as you have a view from there – I thought – so you can see everything you cannot see from here, then you will possibly all of a sudden face the game you are looking for." And you go on, tense and eager, to the next spot – only to be disappointed and to discover a mountain top even farther on that must be reached before you can have new views and fresh hope. And then you feel the silent mouth of the waste land closing around your destiny, and you walk on and on, ignoring pain and fatigue because you know that giving up now will lead to a ruinous end.[815]

In this passage, the solitary, isolated European subject finds himself amidst "vast, unknown" nature and the "sombre loneliness of the mountains," in "solemn surroundings," the vocabulary redolent of the conventional trope of the sublime. However, the hungry, terrified and confused wanderer is worlds apart from the proud conqueror on a quest to challenge a grand danger or feast his masculine eyes on the beauty of the mighty, yet directly unthreatening nature. The anthropomorphisation pictures the narrator "swallowed up" by the mountainous solitude and, combined with the metaphor of "the silent mouth of the waste land," constructs the space as horrifying and alien, which may indeed be

814 Wylie observes that in travel writings Western travellers desire to enjoy "unobstructed views," which consolidate the notion of the human primacy over nature. Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 46.

815 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 90–91.

associated with the sublime. Yet, in the direct experience, nature does not evoke any pleasure in the starving, fatigued and disoriented traveller, who differs strikingly from the explorer who puts himself above the landscape and invests it with meanings. His sensations rather approximate being trapped in an endless labyrinth, where every mountain top offers new hope only to immediately snatch it away. The narrator wanders from mountain to mountain, down the stony ravine slopes and up again over scattered ridges. The vagueness of the descriptions implies the subject's difficulty with discursivising the North-Greenlandic telluric Other, which appears to him as wayward, unruly and chaotic. This brings into focus the untranslatability of the irreducible cultural difference[816] of East Greenland, which attests to a splitting of the colonial discourse. At the same time, the fear of defeat, precipitated by this difference, triggers a gush of energy in the traveller, enabling him to focus on the monotonous effort of continuing to push forward.

The imperial trope of what Wylie calls "telluric horror"[817] in *My Travel Diary* is thus productive of the ambivalent meanings of the narrative. As in the postcolonial works of fiction on the tropics analysed by Wylie, the surrounding landscape becomes "a horrifying and potentially insurmountable threat," instead of being just another obstacle to overcome by the European traveller.[818] In such representations, North Greenland is not a blank space to be written over, but rather a terrain that resists being put on the colonial map, which must remain full of gaps and white spots despite the traveller's endeavours.[819]

The last chapter of the account, describing the return journey across the icesheet to Thule, opens with the narrator's admission that it was a real test and trial because of the massive cloud formations that "showered over us and blocked off every view."[820] Additionally, the travellers were exhausted by "the horrible monotony" of the arduous crossing and long periods of detrimental, enforced inactivity.[821] Such an introduction justifies the announcement that "[t]he words of the diary will from now on be short and sparse, attempting only to provide the most needed descriptions."[822] The caveat demonstrates that, faced with the

816 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 55.
817 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 56.
818 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 56.
819 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 85.
820 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 241.
821 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 241.
822 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 241.

impossibility of depicting the Other in unambiguous terms, the confounded narrator chooses to remain silent and limits himself to what he understands as bare data. At this point, *My Travel Diary* reveals a discursive rupture which indicates that, rather than being masters of North-Greenlandic nature, the European travellers are overwhelmed, confused and made insecure by it, which they seek to cover up with silence. Their state is rendered in curt, often one-sentence-long entries:

> August 12th
> Laid over because of fog and snow. We shouldn't have snow already now. The sun shows itself in the afternoon though, and we get up.
>
> Camp 2.
> August 13th
> Setting out at 9 o'clock last evening we keep going till 5.30 in the morning, but we put a mere 38 kilometres behind us at this time; the sledges make deep tracks in the snow and the dogs get exhausted struggling through the soft under-snow where there is no firm ground to step on. We continue at 11 o'clock in the evening. […]
>
> August 15th
> We are laid over by a snowstorm.[823]

Far from exerting power over the environment through the strategies of aesthetic or scientific masculinity, the European subject's silence seems to confirm the irreducible otherness and irrepresentability of North Greenland. As Wylie observes, a traditional item in the colonial literary repository, the trope of the "unknowability" of nature is inherently ambivalent. On the one hand, it is part of the colonial strategy of othering, but on the other it opposes the practices of domesticating nature through imperial discursive strategies in travel literature.[824] Rasmussen's narrator's silence about North-Greenlandic nature is thus a source of ambivalence which helps North Greenland slip away from the grip of the textual power of the colonial narrative. Arctic nature resists the Western attempts both at gaining cognitive command over it and at producing the telluric as a stable and monolithic Other. This serves as a corrective to the previously discussed European tropes of landscape aesthetics, which contributes to projecting a far more ambivalent vision of North Greenland as a site of the imperially framed and coded journey.

Reporting on the travellers' actions, always complete with the date, the distance covered daily, the time spent underway, the specifics of the weather and information about the measurements and observations performed, is a

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823 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 242–243.
824 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 59.

mandatory component of the polar expedition account, whose primary rhetorical function is to strengthen and lend credibility to the authority of the narrator as a commander.[825] The same aim is supposed to be achieved by cataloguing the European measurement gear (e.g. theodolite, thermometers, barometers, binoculars, etc., inventoried at the very beginning of the account[826]) and describing the ways of using it.[827] Still, Rasmussen's narrative shows that Western science with all its inventions is not always capable of furthering the human rational dominance of austere North-Greenlandic nature. This impotence is emphatically disclosed when bad weather renders technical appliances useless. At such moments, visual perception, in which the oppressive discursivisation of North Greenland is grounded, grievously fails as well: "Snow and sky are of the same colour. It is impossible to stick to a straight line forward as there are no detailed marks to set a course."[828]

As the journey progresses, the travellers stop using the aneroid barometer and the compass. Then it turns out that, fatigued and exhausted, they wrongly determined the date already when crossing the Zig-Zag Valley towards the northeast coast and, as a result, they are in fact "one date behind."[829] It is only at this point that the narrator reveals the uncertainty that has bothered them all for quite a while: "For a long time we have had the impression that the timing and the dates are amiss since our positions do not match the places we believe we should have reached."[830] Despite the explorers' meticulous dedication to registering the measurement data and the number of kilometres covered every day, the measurement equipment falls short, as do those who stake a claim to subordinating nature and placing themselves above it by means of science and its inventions. The narrator's confession wrecks the carefully chiselled image of the polar explorers as authorised by Western scientism and fully in control of the activities they perform and, as a result, a clear crack appears in the scientific discourse of the account.

Another radical rupture occurs at the very end of the arduous crossing of the icesheet. The entry dated "September 4th-5th" contains information about

825 Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand*, pp. 37, 73.
826 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 53.
827 For example, measuring the distance by means of a hodometer fastened to the sledge handle bar. Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 43.
828 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 249.
829 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 245.
830 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 244.

a land the explorers catch a glimpse of on the horizon: "it is unrecognisable from here as most peaks are wrapped in fog, but we assume that it must be the land right north of Melville Bay by Sidebriks Fjord and Cape Melville."[831] Ten kilometres further on, the travellers try to identify the land on the horizon, but "the contours are somewhat wiped out by the fog," and besides they are not used to seeing it from behind and from the inland ice.[832] Nevertheless, they quickly begin to realise that they must have followed a wrong course. Having analysed their data, they conclude that as a result of the prior dating error their observations have directed them to the northern rather than the southern side of Inglefield Bay. The discursive authority of the scientist and his superior position, which the narrator has been laboriously building, are questioned again.[833] This mistake reveals the uncertainty and confusion of the European subject, casting doubt on the epistemological authority of the narrative of *My Travel Diary* as a whole. By the same token, the aspirations of the narrative to achieve discursive supremacy over its objects are divested of legitimacy, alongside its construction of the polar explorer as a heroic conqueror. The colonial Danish self-image of technological superiority collides with the realisation that the expedition members would not have survived in the Arctic had they not adapted to the Inughuit methods of living and travelling. This questions the utility of knowledge and the founding values of Danish culture, which fail in a confrontation with the forbidding and unknowable vastness of North-Greenlandic nature.

At such moments in *My Travel Diary*, its representations of Arctic nature appear thoroughly ambivalent. Far from being just an exotic, feminine background of masculine adventure, North Greenland resists the European subject's discursive attempts to produce a coherent narrative of travel and exploration by applying the conventional repertoire of colonial codifications. Rasmussen's split subject is not always able to be an omnipotent, autonomous and stable observer of the environment he turns into a feminine landscape. When his vision is hampered (and, consequently, measuring thwarted), he loses his bearings and proves incapable of discursivising North Greenland through imperial tropes.

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831 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 254.

832 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 255.

833 This authority and this position are closely linked to the trope of technological superiority of the West, as discussed by Peter Hulme. Hulme, "Polytropic Man," p. 26.

5.2 North Greenland as a Place with a History of Its Own: Language, History and Inughuit Voices

Although *My Travel Diary* seeks to produce particular readings of the North-Greenlandic landscape, Rasmussen's narrative also includes "alternative geographies," a motif Phillips discusses in relation to adventure writings. Phillips defines them as "[g]eographical narratives [that] are denied the power to map," such as, for instance, marginalised "imagined and oral geographies of those without the power to write."[834] The representations of North Greenland as nature which is either receptive to exploration or admired as the sublime are fissured as a result of a split in the perceiving subject, which is revealed in his profound knowledge of Inughuit history and culture. Although the discursivisation of the heterogeneous narrator's identification with the Inughuit in *My Travel Diary* serves to legitimise him as a polar explorer and thereby to re-assert the superiority of European civilisation and knowledge over other cultural forms and cognitive models,[835] the narrator explicitly perceives and experiences the North-Greenlandic reality through the lens of indigenous knowledge.

A splitting of the subject and the representational ambivalence it produces surface in the interpretation of the North-Greenlandic landscape through Inughuit notions and burst the narrative of "new," "unknown" and "wild" territories. The narrator is familiar with various kinds of snow and ice, precipitation and landforms, and uses Inughuit terms (or their Danish translations) to refer to them: "old ice, so-called sikûssaq,"[836] "deep, melted snow with water underneath, the infamous among all sledge-travellers putineq,"[837] "light snowstorm of a type by the Eskimos called 'floor blizzard' [Danish: *gulvbrise*],"[838] "wide plateau – pingo, as the Eskimos call it"[839] or "nunap akisungnerssua – colour ekko

834 Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 88.

835 The duality of his position is advantageous to the narrator: as an Inughuaq, he is one of the indigenous Arctic heroes he idealises while as a European and a "cultured man" he is superior to them both metaphorically and literally, as a commander who gives orders to his subordinates. The two statuses combined reinforce his exceptional individuality as a polar explorer. Having mastered the Inughuit skills of survival in the polar zones, he can be of service to Western science in ways available only to Westerners.

836 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 150.

837 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 173–174.

838 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 246.

839 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 251.

of the land against the snow."[840] To refer to the topography of North Greenland, the narrator uses Western terminology side by side with indigenous toponyms, such as Umanaq, Neqe, Aruigdluarvik, Kangerdlugssuaq, Qaqujârssuaq, Qeqertarssuaq, Iterdlagssuaq, Qânâ, Quinisut, Nunatarssuaq and Pitugfik.[841] When talking about the places in West Greenland with which he is familiar, he displays knowledge of their significance to Inughuit culture and to the daily life of Thule dwellers. Some names which the narrator gives to places, for example the "Poppy Valley," the "Crane Fly Gorge" and the "Zig-Zag Valley," have a lot in common with the indigenous onomastics despite the links of Western mapping practices to the colonial project.[842] Clearly the perception of North Greenland – both of the known, domesticated west coast and the desert territories in the north-east part of the island – is far more complex than potentially aestheticising descriptions of non-Western nature by a typical European traveller.[843] This multidimensionality results from the narrator's immersion in the totality of the surroundings as a consequence of his prolonged nomadic living and interactions with the Inughuit. In this respect, *My Travel Diary* has a lot in common with *The New People*, where the space of North-West Greenland is represented as suffused with local meanings and histories, rather than perceived only from beyond by the panoptic gaze of the autonomous subject which imposes an order grounded in Western aesthetic categories on the reality he scrutinises.

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840 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 79.

841 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 13, 35, 42, 246, 256, 260, 262. Western names always appear in official letters, reports and messages left in cairns. The hybrid perspective is exemplified in an early passage describing the journey towards the icesheet, when the narrator uses the Inughuit and the European names side by side (accentuating their hierarchical relationship): "we follow it up to 'Aruigdluarvik,' or to Clements Markham Glacier, as it is called *in a more civilised way*." Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 41–42 (emphasis mine).

842 The indigenous onomastics is comprehensively described by Danish archeologist Joel Berglund: "places were not given names; rather, they were described by means of images borrowed from the immediate surroundings, such as one's own body (*niaqornaq* – head-shaped) and the animals one hunted (*taleruusaq* – resembling the bear's front paw); alternatively, the descriptions signalled something special that happened at this place (*pisissarfik* – a place of bow-shooting). […] The names evoked familiarity, made it easier to take one's bearings, emphasised features of the landscape and introduced an order into the chaos of the unknown land." Joel Berglund, "Kulturlandskab, fortidsminder og fredning," in: *Grønlands forhistorie*, eds. Hans Christian Gulløv et al. (København: Gyldendal, 2004), p. 357.

843 Tuan, *Topophilia*, p. 63.

The Inughuit language is pivotal to the ambivalence of Rasmussen's second account, although it appears relatively rarely in comparison to its conspicuous presence in *The New People*. In *My Travel Diary*, other than the indigenous terminology used by the narrator, the native language is employed primarily in descriptions of direct interactions with the Inughuit expedition members, when their utterances are quoted verbatim. These are exceptional occasions: setting out on the journey,[844] eating the first seal killed on the east coast[845] and the triumphant return to Thule.[846] At the beginning and at the end of the expedition, the Inughuit words are not translated into Danish, which – as shown in the analysis of *The New People* – produces textual chasms and questions the ambition to perform a homogeneous inscription on the described object, undercutting the authority of the Western text.[847]

The North-Greenlandic dialect, on which the narrator relies to refer to natural phenomena, places[848] and animals[849] and to quote the Inughuit's words, disrupts the hegemony of the Danish language of the narrative. Despite the pronounced prevalence of the latter, the narrative cannot be said to be fully dominated by one medium of communication; on the contrary, the narrative patently exhibits hybrid features and is "bastardised" with otherness, which unstoppably trickles through the fissures in the colonial discourse.

Knowledge of Inughuit culture is also conveyed in ethnographic descriptions of the travellers' sojourn at Meat. The depictions are largely ambivalent as they employ allochronic devices, which are used in *The New People* as well: the indigenous people are a third person, and the essentialising present tense appears

844 For example the cries "'Upernaleqissoq, upernaleqissoq!'" with which the Inughuit celebrated the coming of spring. Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 31.

845 "'Kîsa angerdlarssíngitsunik aqajaroqardluta sinijaleqissugut!' said the young Inukitsoq as we crawled into our sleeping bags. 'Finally we go to sleep with stomachs that are not homesick!'" Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 149.

846 On coming across traces of people other than the travellers themselves, Inukitsoq and Uvdloriaq shout out loudly: "'Tumerssuit! Tumerssuit!'" Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 117.

847 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 10.

848 Like in *The New People*, the presence of the Inughuit language in *My Travel Diary* is also rendered in Danish translations of Inughuit proper names, notions and local toponyms; the North-Greenlandic idiom is here exposed through inverted commas: the "'fang tooth mountain'" (Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 31), "Meat" (pp. 18–31), the "'patch-on-the-sole mountain'" (p. 15), the "'heart mountain'" (p. 13) and "'the Star'" as referring to Uvdloriaq (pp. 99, 101–102, 123–125, 132, 138–139).

849 "Taquligtoq," "Tiggak." Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 146–147.

together with adjectives and phrases that relegate the Inughuit to another temporal order (e.g. "simple," "unspoilt," "pristinity of the minds," etc.).[850] Painting an ethnographic picture of Inughuit entertainments, the narrator explains to his Western readers the utility of the pastimes and their functionality in the acquisition of survival skills. Though an amusement, dog fights have "first and foremost a moral intention" in helping to discourage the animals from tussling,[851] and playing at bear-hunting is viewed as a testbed for hunters and sled-drivers since the men can show what they have taught their dogs.[852] Even children, who play outside at night because there is no room for them in igloos full of visitors, "grow accustomed to the irregular habits that necessarily accompany the polar Eskimo's life."[853] The narrator avoids assessing the Inughuit customs within European value-frameworks, understands their relevance to indigenous culture and accepts this culture in its own right.

Although the narrator keeps his distance from the discursivised Inughuit and their culture, he can explain Inughuit gestures and rituals. More than that, he can use them as well. The things that the narrator of *The New People* found incomprehensible and estranging as an *outsider* are not only clarified in *My Travel Diary*, but are also applied in practice by the expedition commander. An excellent case in point is provided by non-verbal communication with the Inughuit through patting the thigh to signalise that "something unusual is about to happen."[854] While in *The New People* this gesture performed by Maisanguark evokes a straightforwardly articulated alienation in the narrator,[855] in *My Travel Diary* the narrator's distance is rather expressed in the essentialising manner of describing communication with the Inughuit, which suggests that the European traveller knows and has learnt the gesture, but he neither finds it natural nor has made it his own.[856] Clearly initiated into the Inughuit communication system, he

850 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 21, 26.
851 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 23.
852 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 24.
853 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 26–27.
854 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 175.
855 "Never in my life have I felt myself to be in such wild, unaccustomed surroundings, never so far, so very far away from home." Rasmussen, "The New People," p. 9.
856 The essentialism of the description is expressed in the statement: "The Eskimo perform a special gesture with their right arm, hitting their thigh to let their friends know that something unusual is about to happen." That this gesture is external to the narrator's culture is conveyed in: "*Following the percept* I slap my right thigh." Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 175 (emphasis mine).

still draws a distinct dividing line between his own culture and Inughuit culture he knows, accepts and adopts.

Consequently, the narrator of *My Travel Diary* perceives the North-Greenlandic world similarly to, though not identically with, its natives. Like the Inughuit, the narrator is thoroughly steeped in the environment, which is expressed via indigenous knowledge, tradition and interpretations of the world. The narrator is familiar with this knowledge as he has acquired it in long-lasting interactions with the Inughuit; however, this knowledge is not an integral part of his identity in the way it is for Inukitsoq and Uvdloriaq.

As shown above, the presence of the Inughuit among the expedition members disrupts the homogeneity of the male community of polar explorers. Likewise, the presence of indigenous voices in the narrative overthrows the univocity of the account of the European conquest of new lands for the sake of the advancement of knowledge. The narrator in *My Travel Diary* gives unmediated voice to the Inughuit far more rarely than in *The New People*. As a result, the Inughuit are cast in the former as objects of the narrative rather than as subjects boasting textual agency. Nevertheless, even though the narrator wields textual authority, this authority is frustrated at points by sporadic articulations of Inukitsoq and Uvdloriaq. Infrequent and conveyed usually in indirect speech though they are, their utterances are capable of producing fractures in the ostensibly coherent narrative of the realistic male adventure in the unknown space of a dangerous wilderness.

Besides Odark's rejoinder discussed above, the notable instances when the Inughuit voices are resoundingly heard in *My Travel Diary* include first and foremost Inukitsoq's and Uvdloriaq's reports from their scouting forays. Even though translated into Danish, they offer an interesting testimony of the expedition as viewed from another perspective than the European one. The objectivity of translation matters a lot to the narrator, as he insists before recounting the first report: "For this diary Inukitsoq has given me a thorough report of his hunt, which I have recorded from dictation as he hasn't learnt how to 'hide words in lines,' and therefore I reproduce his account in translation in what follows."[857]

Again, the narrator is shown to fully realise that written language is an insufficient medium in rendering the world and to be anxious that his credibility as the conveyor of the story may be questioned, though this time the Inughuit version of events is at stake. The narrator's words imply that this version is as pertinent as the rest of the text he authors. The explorer finds the reliability of the account

857 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 103.

equally vital, whether it represents the Western point of view or the Inughuit outlook. Whatever the final effect, this reveals egalitarian intentions which are at odds with his repeatedly expressed desire to impose a homogeneous meaning on the reality he reports.

Inukitsoq's report tells about the pursuits of a hunter who comes across traces of musk oxen, tracks them and, finally, kills eight of them. The language of the report does not differ much from the way other hunting adventures which involve the narrator are told: they abound in details about the behaviour of the game and references to hunting experiences. However, Inukitsoq's tale includes particulars of events prior to the hunt which are missing in the preceding narrative. Specifically, when tracking the game, Inukitsoq meets his travel companions and using the gesture of thigh-slapping lets them know that something extraordinary is at hand. This shows that the text of the narrative has gaps which belie its authority as a reliable account of the events.

Inukitsoq's manner of reporting differs from the narrative of *My Travel Diary*, which is exemplified in the following passage: "During my examinations my attention was caught by some strange large stones which I therefore kept my binoculars focused on. They were quite far away, but as I by and by realised that they must be musk oxen, I didn't leave them out of my sight. It was indeed strange that the black stones looked like each other; they had the exact same shape all of them… and then, yes, that's it: one of the stones started moving and went up to one of the others!"[858]

The young Inughuaq may use Western equipment (binoculars), but he does not rely on his visual perception as much as to offer categorical verdicts. His experienced eyes as a hunter tell him that the "stones" he sees *must* actually be musk oxen, but he asserts it only when one of them moves, which confirms his inference beyond doubt. Such a gaze does not carry the impudence of irrefutable judgments on the scrutinised world or a boundless trust in one's own infallibility. When mentioning "some strange large stones" for the first time, Inukitsoq most likely knows perfectly well that what he sees is the game he has been tracking. Yet he is cautious enough not to offer any final statement which would be expressive, as a matter of fact, of a triumph he fully deserves to celebrate for securing many days' worth of food for his starving companions.

Another Inughuit report included in *My Travel Diary* is Uvdloriaq's account of his successful hunt of a musk ox, a feat that, like Inukitsoq's before, most probably saves the lives of the starving expedition members after the hardships of

858 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 47.

crossing the Zig-Zag Valley. The report is another testimony of a hunter-and-tracker who interprets animal behaviours and the traces he comes across by relying on the knowledge and experience he has acquired over many years of Arctic hunting.

Uvdloriaq's report also contains information which is missing in the preceding narrative. Specifically, it mentions the narrator's presence at the very beginning of the hunting excursion, which the narrator himself passes over. This reveals lacunae in the imperial text once again. Uvdloriaq's narrative also voices a different way of understanding animate nature, in particular animals, which he interprets as living and feeling like humans do. This transpires in the Inughuaq's explanation of why a hare, accustomed to big animals as it is, should not have got scared by him and yet it did: "Maybe I looked so terrifying in my hunger and desire to get to it that it had to escape; probably I opened my mouth while I still had far to go!"[859] Uvdloriaq seems to contend that the hare interpreted his appearance and behaviour the way people interpret animal reactions. Animals are believed to be capable of "entering the mind" of humans, as is the case with the musk oxen Uvdloriaq sees later in his dream: "I dreamt that a large herd came up to our camp just as we were about to leave, and that Angutikavsak, Inukitsoq's deceased father, let his dogs loose at them in his wild abandonment to the hunt. And the dogs howled and barked so fiercely that I woke up by the noise."[860]

Uvdloriaq conclusively interprets his dream: "Whenever I dream of the deceased I am never far away from hunting prey."[861] His interpretation is borne out by the events of the day as he finds a large bull during his hunting excursion. The cohesive discourse of the polar explorer myth and adventure is thus disrupted by indigenous beliefs and a different vision of the order of the world than the model upheld by the European expedition members. Since Uvdloriaq does not differentiate between the mundane and the supernatural, the dead can appear whenever they have something important to communicate to the living, whether the latter are asleep or awake.

Uvdloriaq's story of dream visions is mediated through the words of the narrator, who simply retells the Inughuit hunter's interpretation of the dream, without expressing his own attitude to the radically different system of world perception: "He had had dreams about his deceased father right before setting out. He thought that meant irreversible luck for us for a long time to come. The

859 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 126.
860 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 129.
861 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 131.

dead prepare the way for the living whom they loved; the deceased who are no longer consumed with daily hardships, carefree passing the time on the bountiful hunting grounds of heaven."[862]

My Travel Diary is strewn with moments when the narrator is not eager to exercise discursive power over the North-Greenlandic Other. At such points, indigenous voices indicate possibilities of interpreting the non-European world in ways that diverge from the overriding ideology of Rasmussen's narrative. Generally dominant though this narrative may be, it contains gaps which stem from the split subject's shifting positions. Involved in an intercourse with the Other over long years, the narrator includes the Inughuit's reports side by side and on an equal footing with reports by other expedition members. This engenders a heteroglossia, reminiscent of – albeit different from – Rasmussen's first account.

5.3 "Being within the Landscape" and Dismantling the Primacy of Visual Perception

Above, I argued that in *My Travel Diary* the European subject who perceives the North-Greenlandic landscape and natural environment necessarily gazes at the object of his view from a distance. Canadian author John Moss refers to this phenomenon as being "remote in geography"[863] and claims that geography is "the imposition of knowledge on experience in a specified landscape,"[864] which presupposes that one is detached from the world one experiences, since one mentally inhabits a different order.[865] Antithetical to being "remote in geography," as Moss proposes, is being "within the landscape." This is expressed, according to Moss's commentator Aron Senkpiel, in the subject's focus on the foreground rather than on the distant background.[866] Below, I argue that a similar way of perceiving North-Greenlandic nature is part of the narrator's experience in *My*

862 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 197.
863 Moss, *Enduring Dreams*, p. 3.
864 Moss, *Enduring Dreams*, p. 1.
865 According to Moss, geography articulates our vision of the world as "knowable," as that which we ourselves believe it to be. The discipline is thus an interpretation of the perceived world, and for that reason, as Phillips shows, the geographical tale is always something more than just a sum of facts. Moss, *Enduring Dreams*, p. 1; Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire*, p. 141.
866 Senkpiel, "Places of Spirit, Spirits of Place," p. 132.

Travel Diary, which undermines the previously discussed colonial dichotomies and contributes to the ambivalence of the account.

Before beginning the return journey across the icesheet, the travellers set up camp in a ravine they call the "Crane Fly Gorge." The description of the site is preceded by sketching a wide perspective of the circumambient landscape: "The water from the ice of the mountain peaks seeps down the slopes, fertilising hills and valleys; every modest spot where a bit of earth has settled, is full of flowers and a multitude of insects are humming nearby."[867]

Such a fashion of discursivising nature results from the scientific subject's distanced scrutiny of the world. The narrator's gaze, however, gradually nears the object of his observation, and he begins to notice what Senkpiel calls (quoting American poet and writer Kathleen Norris) "miraculous 'little' things,"[868] which in fact fill the purported "emptiness" of the Arctic: "Blossoming bell heather, red saxifrage, yellow poppies and lousewort compete for their share of earth wherever there is even a handful of it to be found."

"Radiant butterflies, humming bees, rove beetles and spiders try their strength and their luck."

"And crane flies! I believe we have never seen so many as we have here. As soon as you turn your face towards the breeze you see them coming, sailing along in an insecure flight, swirling and ridiculous, their much too long legs sticking out in every direction."[869]

Admittedly, the experience of the North-Greenlandic world is still grounded in visual perception, and what happens here is, basically, a naturalist's gaze classifying the vegetation and wildlife he surveys. However, the gaze of the speaker, rather than turning to the remote horizon, shifts to the foreground and discerns a wealth of "miraculous 'little' things" in his vicinity. In contrast to the naturalist's gaze, the subject is at the centre of discourse which is shaped by his sensory experiences. This cancels out the previous distance, emptiness and absence as terms that define North Greenland when the aim of the viewer is to get "somewhere else." This profound change in perception and the shift of focus onto the foreground attest that " 'here' is where you want to be."[870]

The narrator's gaze is fixed time and again on the foreground to register the multitude of Norris' "miraculous 'little' things": skuas, plovers, sandpipers and

867 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 200.
868 Senkpiel, "Places of Spirit, Spirits of Place," p. 133.
869 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 200.
870 Senkpiel, "Places of Spirit, Spirits of Place," p. 132.

snow buntings swishing just above his head; a "comfortably arranged" lemming's den[871]; swarms of flies that buzz "right to your ear"[872]; a small lemming squatting vis-à-vis the camp whose "slightly odd appearance" makes the travellers burst out laughing[873]; a clash of musk oxen watched from close up[874]; and a visit of a polar wolf in the tent.[875] When herding a flock of musk oxen to make it easier to bring their meat to the camp later, the narrator notices "the long-haired furs, in the middle of the worst shedding time, with long, torn-off tufts of wool hanging down their flanks, fluttered in the blowing breeze like melancholy, black flags of distress."[876] As a hunter and a tracker, he also attends to the tracks of animals – polar foxes, lemmings, stoats, musk oxen and hares – which constantly make him reflect on often surprising animal behaviours. As his attention is transferred to the foreground and his desire to be "here and now" increases, the language of the narrative changes. Specifically, the masculine, heroic and arrogant discourse of exploration, scientific jargon and Western aesthetic glossary recede to make room for a more natural language expressive of greater humility towards the world.

On the one hand, the narrator needs the Arctic landscape as a site of his test, but on the other, the European traveller is interested in the Arctic for its own sake and longs to be in the polar landscape, which, as he claims, cannot be fully conveyed in words. The Arctic is not exclusively a place of harsh conditions, an alien space whose contours he outlines on the map. Situating himself within the landscape rather than at a privileged point beyond it, the narrator becomes part of the world he is experiencing from close up.[877] As a settler at home in the Arctic, the nomadic traveller finds himself capable of crossing the boundaries between himself and the object of his desires, the North-Greenlandic Other.

Wylie observes that a more impartial vision of nature which does not seek to elevate the human above the landscape, but which rather looks for an ordinary, sensory experience, is a trope that opposes the imperial ideology of travel

871 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 166–167.
872 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 166.
873 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 201.
874 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 210–211.
875 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 216.
876 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 214.
877 A different, truly profound experience of Arctic nature is also evoked by Moss: "You may situate yourself in landscape, within the landscape. You are not in a privileged position; you are landscape." Moss, *Enduring Dreams*, p. 17.

writings.[878] As already ascertained, northern explorations are enveloped in the senses regarded as "masculine," in the experience and representation of the world founded primarily on visual and, in a less pronounced way, aural perception. Although the representations of North Greenland in *My Travel Diary* are largely constructed on the basis of the male subject's sight experiences, the narrative still displays a considerable ambivalence, allowing another kind of sensory appreciation. This brings forth representations of the North-Greenlandic Other which resist the masculine, colonial imaginaries discussed above.

Pehkonen and Ikonen count taste and touch among the "feminine" senses (as opposed to "male" sight and hearing) and classify them as ensuing from "proximity" in contrast to "distance activities" traditionally performed by males.[879] Smell and touch as involved in the experience of the Arctic world are both incorporated in the narrator's representations of North Greenland. When camping in the Crane Fly Gorge, the narrator wakes up in the new place for the first time to admire its abundant vegetation and wildlife and attends to his olfactory impressions: "The mountain summer is upon us giving off its potent smell of crop. Every little breath of air is filled with freshness and the scent of flowers, and the air vibrating over us is sharp and bright."[880]

On coming back to Thule, the travellers also begin to sense intensifying smells, especially when they meet Uvdloriaq's cousin, who runs out to welcome the returning explorers: "And now it hit us how long we actually must have been gone from home, for it seemed that a completely different air and smell accompanied him than we were used to breathing. We sensed an indoor atmosphere of food and nauseous warmth around him; sweet blubber and lamp reek, were the expressions Uvdloriaq used."[881]

In the former passage, the subject, situated within the landscape, is thoroughly enchanted by the nature around him ("It is as if the earth in this gorge is bursting with life"[882]) and perceives the environment through a variety of senses, sight being merely one of them. In the latter, he dwells not only on his own olfactory sensations, but also on how they are conveyed by Uvdloriaq. This produces two effects: the domination of visual perception is dismantled, and an alternative is offered to the Western meanings imposed on non-Western reality.

878 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 57.
879 Ikonen and Pehkonen, "Explorers in the Arctic," p. 132.
880 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 200.
881 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 264.
882 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 200.

The incorporation of Uvdloriaq's voice shows that the narrator is a mediator and also proves that the recognition of the Other's difference is associated with the European subject's adoption of this difference. As a result, both the narrator and the Inughuaq experience homecoming through identical sensations, but the native of North Greenland is capable of verbalising them, while the narrator just mediates their communication. The "feminine" experience of reality through smell overthrows the primacy of the "masculine" senses in contact with the North-Greenlandic Other, adding a layer of ambivalence to its gendered construction.

Of all the "feminine" senses, taste is the most pronounced in *My Travel Diary*, linked to the frequent references to Inughuit foods. In the descriptions of the sojourn at Meat, the perception of reality through taste adds to the idealisation of North-West Greenland: "*Delicious* hares are jumping around in the grassy meadows. Reindeer *fat with tallow* can be hunted just by driving across the inland ice for a day."

"Packs of furry blue foxes flit around in the primaeval mountains, and from May till way into August the rocks are showered with little *delicate* auks that willingly let themselves be caught in nets and then are preserved in fatty, freshly fleeced sealskin, an exquisite *dessert* for the *feasts* of the polar night."[883]

The passage is a model example of the idealisation of the North-Greenlandic world, yet the reliance on the sense of taste indicates that the knowing subject participates in this world, rather than remaining at a distance, which is inherent to the "imperial" trope of idealisation in *The New People*. Although the village of Meat is referred to by means of Western notions ("Eskimo Canaan"), the narrator views the space of North-West Greenland through the lens of game hunting, which – as spelled out in my reading of *The New People* – overlaps with the indigenous world-perception. The verbalisation of positive emotions about the Inughuit food breaks the domination of sight in the representations of the North-Greenlandic reality, suggesting that the subject is not rigidly separated from the object of his description, and the Other he discursivises is part of his own "self." Unlike the autonomous observer, who towers over the reality at which he looks from afar, the narrator cannot fully differentiate himself from the Other as a result of being "contaminated" by things North-Greenlandic. Wylie defines the colonial aesthetics of space and perception of the world in general as validated by the oppositions: the inside vs. the outside, the Self vs. the Other, and the

883 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 19 (emphasis mine).

human vs. the telluric.[884] Consequently, when the boundaries between the oppositions are transgressed or demolished, the colonial meanings of Rasmussen's text are suspended.

North-East Greenland is also experienced through the sense of taste by Rasmussen's narrator. The success of the expedition depends heavily on hunting and, if effective, hunting affords the narrator an opportunity to share his gustatory impressions of the meals he ingests. These impressions are always positive. The meat of musk oxen is depicted as "juicy and delicate," and the layer of fat around it as "dessert"[885]; on another occasion, the meat of a musk ox together with its tongue and heart is called "delicious"[886]; the hare's raw heart, kidneys and liver (the rest is cooked) deserve praise as "a healthful and solid meal"[887]; the wind-dried ribs of musk oxen are good for a "feast"[888]; and the hearts, tongues and kidneys of these animals are real "delicacies."[889] Only on one occasion does the narrator resort to an evaluative comparison with European food while discursivising his gustatory impressions. Namely, when he is eating the first seal killed on the east coast, he compares it with the meat of musk oxen, which he describes as "more noble" in taste, likening it to wheat bread [Danish: *franskbrød*], while the seal's meat makes him think rather of hearty rye bread [Danish: *rugbrød*],[890] a staple in the diet of the lower social strata. At this point, the narrator's preferences diverge from Inughuit dietary proclivities, which he has fully embraced so-far, as the indigenous people regard seal meat as the best food possible. Admittedly, it satiates him, but his commentary: "so plebeian may a hunter's taste become"[891] suggests that while entering the Inughuit reality, the narrator continues to linger beyond it, partly at least, even though he is himself an object of his value-judgments.

Wylie observes that Western travellers' abhorrence of indigenous foods is a fixed trope in colonial literature and serves to degrade the non-European Other. This manoeuvre is triggered by a fear of transgressing their own subjectivity by

884 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 9.
885 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 236–237.
886 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 110. The musk ox's tongue and heart are referred to as the greatest delicacies on several other occasions in the narrative.
887 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 199.
888 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 232.
889 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 199.
890 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, pp. 148–149.
891 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 149.

"going native," i.e. by becoming the Other.[892] Rasmussen's narrative topples this binarity by framing Inughuit food as a factor that helps the European narrator participate in the Other's reality. North Greenland is repeatedly experienced by the European traveller through taste. Far from dreading "going native," the split subject becomes the Other, or rather the Other comes to be part of his world, through food. As in *The New People*, where the experience of sharing meals with the Inughuit overcomes the binary codings of the text, in *My Travel Diary* eating together is one of the dominant anti-imperial tropes. As othering is not practised in relation to Inughuit food, the dividing line between the subject and the object is blurred, and Rasmussen's second account grows more ambivalent.

5.4 The Space of the Indigenous Myth

As compared with *The New People*, the imperial framework of the adventure story about heroic explorers in *My Travel Diary* is far more rarely questioned by the incorporation of indigenous myth into the narrative. Nevertheless, such an inclusion is not entirely absent.

On the way from Thule to Meat, the narrator and Uvdloriaq discern a far-off figure and "catch up to it at our breakneck pace as if it was standing still."[893] It is Ilánguaq, whom the narrator describes as "the man who once in the past stopped and remained still."[894] His dogs emaciated, his sledge shabby, his gear and weapons in disrepair, Ilánguaq is, for the expedition commander, a personification of all those who lag behind when it comes to development because of lacking "the speed in his blood which makes things evolve through renewal only."[895] The evocation of development can be construed as praise of Western modernity, but the narrator's words – and Ilánguaq himself, whose indeterminate being is quite possibly just a fantasy of the narrator – can also be comprehended as a foil to eternal wandering and frontier-crossing, the necessary conditions of being-in-the-world. Apostrophising Ilánguaq, the narrator implies that his own longing for travelling to remote places arises in opposition to the static attitude the man embodies: "Hail, Ilánguaq! It was good to see you! Those who set out on a long journey must needs encounter you. You temper the exhilaration we feel when setting out, just as we are borne by the wings of the great travelling venture."[896]

892 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, pp. 72–73.
893 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 15.
894 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 16.
895 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 16.
896 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 17.

Ilánguaq is a character that challenges the essentialising view of Inughuit culture touted throughout *My Travel Diary*, which holds that all peoples of Eskimo origin are novelty-chasing nomads. The meeting with Ilánguaq inspires the narrator to reflect on travelling and writing about travel: "For all journeys into the world exist only for he who makes the journey; for everyone else there is merely the poor gift of words."[897] This highlights what the introduction also insists on, namely that the experience of journey (and genuine interaction with the Other) is superior to any available mode of its discursivisation. The narrator seems thus aware, even as he starts his account, of the limitations which the written word inevitably brings, together with its rigid conventions, unavoidable choices and incessant translation. Writing practices (with *My Travel Diary* being an example) result only in "the poor gift of words," while truth, in the sense of a complete, direct, verbally inexpressible experience, is located elsewhere. This can be interpreted as a meta-commentary and a justification by the author, who, aware of his limitations, does not stake a claim to describing reality as it is because he recognises the sheer impossibility of such a venture.

The order of the myth is evoked by the narrator when he reflects on the Inughuit as an intrinsically nomadic people. He refers to an old native tale, the content of which he directly cites. It is a legend about two friends who desired to travel around the world in order to tell their countrymen about it. Years later, the men met again towards the end of their lives, most of which they had spent travelling.[898] Still, the narrator attributes the essential need to find out about the world not only to the Inughuit, but also to all the expedition members: "And so they have arrived at these vast waste lands which we mean to force our way through, driven by a mutual desire to get to know the world; and if we make it back home safe and sound then we shall tell other people about what we experienced out here to the best of our ability."[899]

The narrator inscribes the current journey into the indigenous myth of the exigency and the beauty of travelling, framing himself and his companions not only as polar explorers in the service of Western enterprise, but also as nomads who travel for the sake of travelling itself, driven by a desire to see the world. In this context, the collective noun "we" can be understood in two ways: it can mean harnessing the Inughuit into shared service for the greater glory of the European metropolis, but it can also make the European expedition members

897 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 17.
898 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 180.
899 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 181.

into Inughuit nomads. This ambivalence is sustained by the unstable trope of the eulogy of perpetual travelling, which on the one hand is a pole of the home-away binary used in the narrative's imperial construction of masculinity and on the other expresses the nomadic yearning for travel reiterated throughout the narrative.

By inscribing the journey at hand into the indigenous myth, Rasmussen allows a non-European understanding of the non-European world to be heard in the narrative and, at the same time, decks the journey with additional, timeless overtones. Undeniably a story about the heroic members of a Western expedition in the service of science and progress, *My Travel Diary* also becomes a supranational testimony to the beauty of nomadic life and to the crossing of boundaries such a life brings as a result of encounters with the Other, precipitating changes in the travelee and in the traveller himself. The space of the narrative turns into a site where the text's colonial tropes and codings crumble in the ambivalence of the liminality, while the Third Space emerges from the narrator's being outside the arbitrary boundary between himself and the Other and simultaneously crossing this boundary repeatedly.

My Travel Diary concludes with the arrival of the Danish explorers in Copenhagen, where the narrator's joy of homecoming blends with undertones of regret: "And the farewell mood, as we ponder over what is behind us, descends upon us like a muted song about times when life grew, forever renewing itself."

"A journey has ended."

"A new one is already opening up its horizons…"[900]

The ending reverberates with the typical ambivalence of the two narratives by Rasmussen examined in this book. The speaking subject – a European polar explorer who has satisfied his masculine need for the conquest and appropriation of the "virgin" North-Greenlandic land – articulates the longing of a nomadic traveller which can only be gratified by being constantly on the move: crossing the invisible barriers and boundaries that prevent him from encountering the Other he relentlessly pursues.

6 *My Travel Diary* in the Historical Context

Published in 1915, *My Travel Diary* was read at a very special moment in Danish colonial history, when Denmark was beginning to develop a standpoint which would later evolve into its comprehensive and long-lasting Greenland policy.

900 Rasmussen, *Min Rejsedagbog*, p. 268.

It was founded on reiterating the claim that the *entirety* of Greenland (and not only the part up to the northern border of the Upernavik District) was a Danish territory, which was supposed to have been settled by the Treaty of Kiel of 14th January 1814.[901] The Danish Crown's initial, circumspect attitude to the uncolonised northern areas of the island was ousted by a rapidly growing interest in them. Eventually, after selling the West Indies to the US and the official declaration of the US government that no objections would be made should Denmark try and expand its sphere of political and economic influence to include the whole of Greenland,[902] the Danish state openly launched initiatives to extend its sovereignty over the entire territory of the island.

Given this, *My Travel Diary* should be read as an outcome of changes in the discourse on the North-Greenlandic "no man's land," whose harbingers appeared even before the First Thule Exhibition. As early as on 21st October 1905, Rasmussen wrote in the Danish daily *Berlingske Tidende*: "No other nation has a legitimate interest in the exploration of Greenland to the same extent as the Danish people. Greenland is our land. And at this moment in time we have from a scientific point already subdued a substantial part of Greenland, that we should hurry up to add the last bits, before others with less legitimacy go in first."[903]

This commentary on Ludvig Mylius-Erichsen's plans to explore North-East Greenland is a tell-tale expression of Rasmussen's outlooks[904]. Founding the Cape York Thule Trading Station in 1910, Rasmussen became one of the "legitimate players" in Denmark's colonial enterprise[905] and, boasting no specialised education, joined the circle of polar explorers he had admired so fervently. Rasmussen's call to extensively investigate Greenland was closely connected to the still unclear political status of the island's northern region. When Rasmussen

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901 In fact, as early as 1908, parliamentary debates resulted in amending the Governing Act (*Styreloven*) to re-define the territory of North Greenland from the area demarcated by the northern border of the Upernavik District to the territory stretching north of Nordre Strømfjord [present-day Greenlandic *Nassuttooq*]. Petersen, "Handselsstationen i Thule," p. 228.

902 *Danmarks Traktater efter 1814*, vol. 7, København 1951, p. 596; declaration of 4th August 1916, qtd. in Müntzberg and Simonsen, "Knud Rasmussen og handelsstationen Thule 1910–37," p. 220.

903 Frederiksen, *Kongen af Thule*, p. 66.

904 For a detailed analysis of the article's context see Michelsen, *Vejen til Thule*, pp. 102–104.

905 Hastrup, *Vinterens hjerte*, p. 242. Rasmussen came to be regarded in Denmark as an expert on Greenland, which resulted, for example, in entrusting him with the official mission of explaining to Greenlanders the new Governing Act of 1908. Frederiksen, *Kongen af Thule*, pp. 83–84.

and Marius Ib Nyeboe established their trading station, North Greenland was not officially under the governance of any nation-state even though the colonisation of Thule had been tacitly authorised by the Danish state.[906] The exploration of "unknown" territories by polar researchers served to manifest an interest in a given region, while the knowledge produced about the area was often cited as a basis for later claims to sovereignty over it.[907] This is what actually happened with North Greenland.

My Travel Diary is a record of the Danish presence in the Arctic – of expedition practices which promoted taking control of new territories by staying and accumulating knowledge about them. The ideology of the account is inscribed in the discourse of Scandinavian polar researchers, who responded to the Americans' concerted efforts to reach the North Pole by robustly propagating their own image as "proper and legitimate heroes of the North," unmatched in exploring these regions.[908] While reports of Norwegian researchers cast them as a naturally "elect" northern nation, predestined to explore the polar zones,[909] Danish reports sanction their authors as polar explorers by showing them adopting the Inughuit style of living and travelling. Admittedly, the subject of enunciation in *My Travel Diary* deems Greenlanders to be real, "natural born" polar explorers, but insists that the inventions and skills they have honed over centuries could only be fruitfully used for the advancement of Western knowledge and science by the white man. While *The New People* has a lot in common with *With Peary near the Pole, My Travel Diary* considerably resembles Nansen's *The First Crossing of Greenland* in terms of the narrator's position in the hierarchy of the expedition, the way he builds his authority as a commander, the clearly defined goal of the expedition and the overall structure of the account.[910]

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906 Importantly, even during the parliamentary debate on the Governing Act in 1908, several politicians criticised the bill on demarcating the area of North Greenland by the northern border of the Upernavik District, which led to a change in legislation and defining North Greenland as a terrain north of Nordre Strømfjord. Petersen, "Handselsstationen i Thule," p. 228.

907 Urban Wråkberg, "The Politics of Naming: Contested Observations and the Shaping of Geographical Knowledge," in: *Narrating the Arctic: A Cultural History of Nordic Scientific Practices*, eds. Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin (Canton: Science History Publications, 2002), p. 158.

908 Karlsen, *Triumf, lojalitet, avstand,* p. 57.

909 Pedersen, "Is-interferenser," p. 143.

910 The differences between Astrup and Nansen are discussed by Alnæs, who argues that they represent two important tendencies in travel writing: nomadic and sedentary. Alnæs, "Heroes and Nomads in Norwegian Polar Literature."

My Travel Diary also further perpetuates the special status of Thule in Danish discourse. Still, the continued idealisation of North-West Greenland serves not only to disseminate a positive image of the Inughuit, to foster the reading public's interest in the "no man's land" or to sway the Danish state to take Thule over,[911] which was the case when *The New People* was published in 1905. By defining Thule as a "home," the narrator performatively colonises the region five years after the foundation of the Cape York Thule Trading Station, which is the source of the author's livelihood. Despite its indisputably ambivalent representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit, Rasmussen's narrative comes across as "a vehicle of imperial authority,"[912] which was instrumental to the agenda of capitalist expansion and, in the longer run, of Danish territorial expansion, which triumphed in 1933, when Denmark officially extended its governance over the whole of Greenland.

911 As argued by Petersen, after the First Thule Expedition Rasmussen no longer solicited a takeover by the Danish state of the profitable Cape York Thule trading station, the basis of his subsistence. Rasmussen was still vitally interested in Denmark's dedication to exerting its sovereignty over the whole of Greenland, which he actively promoted until the final ruling of the Permanent International Court of Justice in the Hague in 1933. Petersen, "Handselsstationen i Thule," p. 229.

912 Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, p. 13.

V Conclusion

Given that after nearly one hundred years the so-called Arctic Eight's[913] interest in the areas around the North Pole is soaring again, it can indeed come as a surprise that modern ideas about the polar regions are still shaped by the desire to re-affirm their stereotypical representations. I hope that my examination of the ways in which literature is implicated in culture-produced constructions of the world will contribute to a better understanding of how literary representations of Greenland and Greenlanders have affected the rise of Danish colonial identity, but also will invite further insights into the bi-directionality of influences entailed by all cultural encounters.

The juxtaposition of texts as different as *The New People* and *My Travel Diary* within one critical study is justified not only by the fact that they were authored by the same individual within a colonially-marked time-frame, but also by an equally relevant factor of generic affinity, as they are both deeply subjective expedition accounts sharing the thematic concern of travelling into the unknown. They are both records of encounters with North Greenland and its inhabitants and, as such, become a site of contact of mutually alien spaces and mediate their cultural differences. In a sense hybrid and contaminated, the texts, different though they are, have a heterogeneous structure whose dynamics is fuelled by the difference of the Other they contain, which questions and challenges the oppressive representations.

The starting point for my analysis of the representations of North Greenland in the two texts was provided by the realisation of the complex positionality of their I-speakers: the subject is immobilised outside the arbitrary boundary that separates him from the Other, but at the same time he is constantly on the move, crossing this boundary time and again because of aporias produced by the ambivalent liminal space. Although the protagonist (and, simultaneously, the narrator) of the two texts is the same person – a middle-class Danish male who is intimately acquainted with Greenland – the ways in which the world is discursivised in them differ, depending on the position the narrator takes in the hierarchy of the expedition and on the respective goals of the texts implied by this position. The narrator of *The New People* is a rank-and-file member of an

913 The Arctic Eight are Canada, Norway, Denmark/Greenland, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Russia and the US.

Arctic expedition who is fascinated with the Inughuit and their culture, while the narrator of *My Travel Diary* is the commander of an expedition who travels in the service of the nation and civilisation, pursuing a defined aim. The narratorial "selves" are also shaped by different discourses: whereas in *The New People* it is a clearly articulated anti-conquest ideology paired with anthropological discourse on Greenlanders as "natural people," in *My Travel Diary* it is chiefly masculinist discourse likened to the myth of heroic polar researchers and their male adventure. These discourses affect the ways of representing North Greenland and the Inughuit in the two accounts.

On the whole, these representations construct and fix North Greenland and the Inughuit as the Other of Denmark/Europe, which, as I have shown, is largely a result of the entanglement of representational practices in colonial discourse. In each of the two narratives, these practices employ an array of tropes: idealisation, essentialisation, binary oppositions, exoticisation and gendering, which are coupled with an ensemble of narrative strategies to inscribe North Greenland and the Inughuit into the Eurocolonial discursive order.

With its action set in inhabited North-West Greenland, *The New People* aimed to foster its readership's interest in the yet-uncolonised, previously unknown part of the island and, indirectly, to sway the Danish state to engage in the colonisation of this area. Consequently, North Greenland is portrayed as a friendly, resources-rich space with vigorous vegetation and wildlife, whose beauty enchants a European visitor, while its inhabitants are free people who live in close communion with nature, following their own norms and unafflicted by hunger or poverty. At the core of the narrator's interests are primarily the Inughuit, whom the text's allochronic devices displace to a temporal order other than the Westerners', which justifies the conjectured Danish expansion into the uncolonised territory. The profoundly idealised representations of the exotic Other as friendly, affluent and helpful, though still primordial and primitive vis-à-vis the standards set by the West's present modernity, promote the idea that North Greenland is an attractive location for the Eurocolonial future.

My Travel Diary was written when Denmark was developing a new policy for the Greenlandic territories which still lay beyond its administration. Partly colonised by Rasmussen, North Greenland was one of such territories. Hence the discursivisation of the pursuits of the heroic Danish polar explorers in this terrain should be viewed in conjunction with the growingly explicit expansionist investment of the Danish state. My initial examination of *My Travel Diary* showed that North Greenland is constructed by means of the "northern narrative" convention associated with the discourse of

colonial power[914]; in other words, it is a story about tough Danish males who go on a journey replete with adventures and dangers across a feminine space. Therefore, I probed into how far the account is an inscription of socially constructed gender identity and renders the masculinity of polar explorers as essentially active and independent of femininity, which is identified with North-Greenlandic nature.

My Travel Diary teems with representations of uninhabited regions of North Greenland, and specifically of the icesheet and the north-east coast. The imperially marked masculinity of the heroic Danish polar explorers is constructed in relation to the representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit, whereby this construction is founded on hierarchised binaries of gendered elements. Danger, being away, activity and belonging to culture are associated with masculinity and exalted above staying at home, passivity and belonging to nature, which are gendered feminine. The binary oppositions produce the icesheet and the north-east coast of Greenland as an extremely perilous wilderness, which is a liminal space for the Western travellers and the site of their rite of passage, as by communing with the hostile North-Greenlandic telluric Other they become real polar researchers. Such representation of North-East Greenland and the icesheet serves to define and consolidate the masculinity of the European travellers who venture into the area. This construction of masculinity also encompasses Uvdloriaq and Inukitsoq, the Inughuit expedition participants, although they only partly belong to the community of males celebrated in the text. Even though they are introduced as equal members of the group, they are relegated to the stage of nature, rather than culture, by practices of essentialisation and allochronic devices known from *The New People*; by the same token, they are subordinates of the Europeans and their *disponibilité*[915] is taken for granted. The representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit which contribute to constructing the masculinity of the polar explorers are linked to the national and imperial discourse of the "hero myth and adventure" and, as such, re-assert the national or imperial identities of the readers.

I then focused on the gendered representations of Arctic nature. The ambiguities inherent in this mode of representation involve strategies defined as "scientific" and "aesthetic masculinity" by Ikonen and Pehkonen. They result in the construction of North Greenland as, respectively, an object of scientific research and a beautiful and sublime source of aesthetic pleasure. In such representations,

914 Grace, "Gendering Northern Narrative," p. 165.
915 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes,* p. 52.

North Greenland is produced as an object to be possessed: a *terra incognita* taken into possession by charting, naming, measuring and observing, or an object of pleasure controlled by extolling its aesthetic qualities. As a result, knowledge is produced through the male gaze, which represents nature as feminised, but whose masculinity is, at the same time, constructed by these very representations. North Greenland is thus envisioned as a site open to male (European) exploration and conquest, which is also effected by imposing Western aesthetic cognitive codes on the area.

Such representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit are warranted by an autonomous and stable subject whose goal is to gain knowledge about the place he is visiting and experiencing primarily as an object of his visual perception. The scrutiny of the North-Greenlandic reality from a distance entails observing it as a totality, with knowledge posited as the sole purpose. This mode of experiencing the space of the Other only the reinforces the boundary between the explorer and the explored and, hence, fixes the explorer in his own Europeanness. Though traversing the territory of North Greenland, he is in fact undertaking "sedentary travel," as he invariably encounters and represents the Same.[916]

However, since colonial literature, as any other kind of enunciation, is inevitably hybrid and ambivalent because of what Bhabha calls "the space of the adversarial," my purpose was to identify and examine the ways in which the two texts oppose the colonial discourse that underpins them. Actually, the narratives resist the meanings produced by their own colonial tropes at a variety of levels: the semantics of the plot (both in what the narrator states and what the Inughuit he quotes say), syntax, narrative construction and the overall structure of the text.

In *The New People*, this resistance is effected in representations of North Greenland as a menacing and unfriendly space, in the European subject's adoption of the Inughuit worldview, in the inversion of the binary codings which traditionally support the discourse of inequality, in the acknowledgement of the Other's difference by including Inughuit knowledge and language in the representation of the world, and in weaving indigenous voices into the narrative. All these practices produce ambivalent meanings of *The New People* and contribute to subverting the efforts to construct the objects presented in the account as monolithic, coherent and fixed.

916 Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. 28.

In *My Travel Diary*, the representations of North Greenland as an extremely dangerous space in the remoteness of which the Danish polar explorers can realise their heroic aspirations are contradicted by different strategies of discursivising the Arctic and its inhabitants. Since the narrator discursivises North-West Greenland as his "home," "North Greenland" in Rasmussen's narrative turns out to be a highly heterogeneous structure infested with self-contradictions and oppositions. My reading of the account also points out fissures and cracks in the construction of the masculinity of the polar explorers, which can be seen in their attempts at crafting a "feminine-gendered" domestic space in the environment they discursivise as hostile. While the text insistently fashions the explorers as heroic, the vision of their special valour is undermined by the Inughuit quoted in the account and their view of Western explorations, which veers from the European one. As a result, the lines that the dominant discourse draws between home and away, between masculinity and femininity and between heroic exploits and common life are unstable which reveals "the breakdown of representational fixity."[917]

The representations of the North-Greenlandic telluric Other which is constructed by means of scientific and aesthetic masculinity are equally unstable. North Greenland can be a place that eludes measurements and observations; it can even be a threat to the European subject. The narrator of the account is both the leader of a European polar expedition and an inhabitant of the Arctic, well versed in and communing with the cultural and the telluric Other. This is evinced by the representations of North Greenland as a place with a history of its own and of its inhabitants as people with a language and a culture of their own. The inclusion of words in another language than the text of the narrative and the textual heteroglossia of *My Travel Diary*, exemplified by the incorporation of Inughuit voices (their utterances and reports from their scouting forays), undermine the Eurocentric ideology of the text. The overarching European structural framework of the work is disrupted by the indigenous myth, which also defies the imperial mode of discursivisation of the world. Another instance of resistance to the dominant ideology can be found in the frequent shifts of attention onto the foreground (as opposed to the view from a remote and elevated position) and in the dismantling of the primacy of vision as the only tool for experiencing things North-Greenlandic. My reading of *My Travel Diary* shows that, similarly to its construction of North

917 Wylie, *Colonial Tropes and Postcolonial Tricks*, p. 79.

Greenland and the Inughuit, the masculinity it produces is neither homogeneous nor unambiguous.

Both in *The New People* and in *My Travel Diary*, the ambivalence of the representations of North Greenland and the Inughuit is linked to the position of the subject who strives to stage his own "self" as stable and autonomous of the reality he perceives, but always turns out to be split and continually constituted in encounters with the Other. Produced by and in the interactions in the North-Greenlandic contact zone, the mutual influences of the traveller and the "travelees" couple with the processual character of the European subject to trigger a continual negotiation of narrative meanings. Symptomatic of this negotiation is the fact that the same representations and tropes (e.g. the idealisation of North-West Greenland) are vehicles of discordant meanings, which vary depending on the enunciative context. In both accounts, the subject simultaneously takes several positions. As he is shaped by European discourses (of conquest and on the Other), the subject is immobilised in his Europeanness, which separates him from the Other, who is watched from a distance; however, by virtue of his unavoidable split, he can also become mobile. This is made possible because he inhabits the "in-between," which Islam interprets as "the space of passage and travel" that "slips through the net of power."[918] This paradoxical combination of being immobilised and being on the move at the same time – which is intrinsic to the subject of *The New People* and *My Travel Diary* – fuels the negotiation of meanings between the European and the North-Greenlandic and generates the ambivalence of representations in the two narratives. Its final outcome is, as I have argued above, the heterogeneous construction of North Greenland and the Inughuit. North Greenland is diversified, encompassing both the friendly and affluent Thule region on the west coast, as well as a vast icesheet, whose dangers pose a challenge to Danish males on a heroic quest and whose expanse is a research field for travellers on a mission "in the name of science." At the same time, North Greenland is a habitat where Europeans can also settle and feel at home, living side by side with the Inughuit in mutual recognition and respect.

As such, Rasmussen's construction of North Greenland is in league with difference-denying colonial discourse but, at the same time, perpetuates this difference. In doing so, it shows that Western travel literature on the non-European Other is a variety of Foucaultian fissured and internally incoherent heterotopia,

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918 Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. 30.

located in the "in-between" of colonial enunciation. It produces constructions of geography and identity which – forever built and re-built – never achieve stability. By historical reflection on the limits imposed on us and the sustained effort to cross them, we stand a chance of engaging in "a permanent critique of our historical era" and, thereby, of living up to the injunction of Michel Foucault's ethos.[919]

919 Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," p. 42.

Epilogue

The popularity of Rasmussen's narratives about expeditions to North Greenland – *The New People* and *My Travel Diary* – gave the later Thule region, Rasmussen's "promised land," a very special position in Danish discourse, as observed by Hastrup in the foreword to her monumental monograph on the cultural history of Thule: "It is impossible to think of Denmark or Greenland without the farthest North."[920]

The exceptionally powerful impact of both accounts also contributed to the creation of a new Arctic narrative about Knud Rasmussen himself which has become a myth. This is evocatively illustrated in the last stanzas of a poem written by the Danish author and expressionist poet Tom Kristensen at the news of the explorer's unexpected death on 21st December 1933:

> All of them must be awakened. Sorrow's but started,
> Soon it will spread to where all Alaska's uncharted.
> The great magician is dead! The mighty wizard is dead!
> Did you all hear my song? Did you all get the thread?
>
> Islands, lands and rivers are locked with chains of ice.
> The joy, that warmed you all has paid the final price.
> Shiver, as we all do today, our fire is dead,
> For he's forever dead, it is Knud who is dead.
> Do you all understand?[921]

920 Hastrup, *Thule – på tidens rand*, p. 8.

921 Tom Kristensen, "It is Knud who is dead," in: *Contemporary Danish Poetry An Anthology*, eds. Line Jensen et al. (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1977; Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1977), p. 36. The poem entitled "Det er Knud, som er død" was published in Tom Kristensen's poetry volume *Mod den yderste Rand* in 1936.

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