



Arctic Discourses 2008

Tromsø 21-23/2

ABSTRACT BOOK

with abstracts in alphabetical order and space for notes

PARTICIPANT LIST

with affiliations and e-mail addresses

PROCEEDINGS PUBLICATION

with information of planned second special issue of *Nordlit*

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Oslo

Heroes and Nomads in the Norwegian Polar Exploration Literature

Fridtjof Nansen's *På ski over Grønland* (1890) started a hegemonic tradition in Norwegian polar exploration literature. Whereas the explorer Fridtjof Nansen has inspired Norwegian polar explorers in generations, the writer Fridtjof Nansen was a great source of inspiration for those who wrote about their expeditions in the Arctic. Nansen constructed his book as a story about a few brave men who exposed themselves to trials and dangers to accomplish an important mission. He had such a great influence on Norwegians that, between 1890 and 1920, almost all travel writing in Norway concerned polar areas. These books, like Nansen's, were constructed around an adventure formula.

Another book, which had the potential for starting a tradition, is Eivind Astrup's *Blandt Nordpolens naboer* (1895). Astrup describes his journey across North Greenland, a journey which covered a distance four times as long as Nansen's. *Blandt Nordpolens naboer* focuses less on the goal, and ignores the dangers altogether. The intention behind the journey was not to achieve honour and knowledge in the name of the nation, but to live in contact with the Inuits and with arctic nature.

Consequently, Astrup describes what Syed Manzurul Islam has called nomadic travel. Despite its potential for changing Norwegian polar travel literature, Astrup's book remains one of a few exceptions over a century after its publication. From the time of Nansen and Astrup until today, Norwegian polar exploration narratives have followed in Nansen's tracks. When Norwegians write about their expeditions, they write about victory and national honour, and rarely about slow travelling or loss of the goal.

Linda Andersson Burnett

Session 2C

University of Edinburgh

The Appeal of the Magical North in Eighteenth-Century British Literature

This paper will look at northern Scotland and northern Scandinavia and their association with superstition in British eighteenth-century literature. By the 1700s, there was a long history of parallels being drawn between the two areas in the discussion of magic. Further, the north had, for centuries, an association with the Devil in European thought. The focal point of the paper will be the book, *The History of the Life and Adventure of Mr. Duncan Campbell* (1720), which has been attributed to the British writer Daniel Defoe. It narrated the life of the mute and deaf mystic and soothsayer Duncan Campbell, who supposedly was brought up in northern Sweden by a ship-wrecked Scottish Highlander and a Sámi woman. Campbell was taken back to Scotland by his father, where he became famous for his power of second sight. The book not only highlights the association between northern Scandinavia, Scotland and the supernatural, but also illustrates the multi-faceted aspects of the supernatural and paganism in the eighteenth century – indigenous beliefs that served as resistance against colonisation and modernisation; a symbol of backwardness and evil in the eyes of the metropolitan governments; and an exotic colonial fantasy that fascinated writers and early tourists. The paper will conclude by addressing why there was a growing intellectual fascination with the North and its inhabitants from the mid-eighteenth century in Britain, and why so many works were written on this topic. The paper will also discuss how literary works on the sub-Arctic shaped wider attitudes to these northern peripheries, to the extent that the North was transformed from a place previously not deemed

worthy of visiting to a prime destination for the adventurous traveler in search of sublime scenery and pre-modern societies.

Anders Aschim

Session 2A

Norwegian Bible Society

An Orientalist in the Arctic: Elias Blix (1836-1902) and the Arctic Discourses of His Time

Celebrating the return of Fridtjof Nansen's first "Fram" expedition in 1896, Elias Blix wrote a short patriotic poem that effectively demonstrates the vast political and symbolic importance of polar research in general and the polar hero in particular for the nation-building process of the young and not yet fully independent Norwegian nation.

The most important literary contribution of Elias Blix, however, is his collection of church hymns in *nynorsk* ("New Norwegian"), one of the two competing orthographic standards of written Norwegian language. The authorization of these hymns for church use in 1892 was an early step towards the official recognition of two equal standards of the Norwegian language. During the 1880s and 90s, the *nynorsk* movement was a cornerstone of the nation-building programme of the liberal political party *Venstre* ("Left-wing party"). Blix served as a member of the liberal government during the period 1884–1888.

As a professor of Hebrew, Blix was a member of the Steering Committee of the 8th international congress of orientalists in Stockholm and Kristiania (Oslo) 1889. This event clearly served nation-building purposes, inscribing the young Norwegian nation and its equally young university on the academic map of Europe. Among the few Norwegian paper proposals was a presentation of J. A. Friis' ethnographic map of Northern Norway. This thought-provoking attempt to include Sami studies in the area of Oriental studies – almost a hundred years before the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* – will serve as the point of departure for a discussion of the processes of nation-building and delimitation, focusing on the liberal political movement and its attitude towards the Sami population.

The paper is based on the author's recently completed biography of Elias Blix, to be released on 24 February 2008.

Bård A. Berg

Session 3A

University of Tromsø

The Construction of Arctic Indigenous Identities: A Question of Strategic Essentialism?

As a Sámi historian I have been interested in the way the Sámi (and other indigenous peoples) have chosen to understand and define themselves.

To simplify the options, we might say that any given group of people can choose to understand their identity within either an essentialist or a constructivist frame of reference. An essentialist understanding of collective identity will link the identity closely to fixed and enduring cultural characteristics in a given group, with a particular focus on language and history. The collective identity is assumed to be almost innate – anchored deeply in a traditional culture. The opposite of essentialism is constructivism, the theory that every individual and every group *constructs* its identity. An essentialist-based collective identity will, amongst other things, cause the distinction between *us*, on the one hand, and *them* – i.e. *the other* – on the other hand, to be very marked.

It is no longer good practice among historians and others who carry out research into the past to defend essentialist principles. At the same time, it is still argued that it should be legitimate,

even for a researcher, to defend essentialist principles with respect to marginalized groups such as indigenous people, for example.

My colleague at the University of Tromsø, the archaeologist Bjørnar Olsen, has observed the fact that at precisely the same moment that many marginalized groups, including indigenous peoples, began to lay claim to rights as a group, nationalism in particular, and essentialist principles in general, were declared dead and buried. Or, as Bjørnar Olsen himself puts it:

The deconstruction of monolithic and essentialist attitudes towards culture and identity may be seen to have reached the point where a conceptualization of this kind was on the point of becoming a means of political mobilization and grounds for, amongst other things, the claims of minorities to land rights.¹

The expression “strategic essentialism” is used to characterize the view that a researcher might be permitted to adopt an essentialist position, *in order to attain something positive* for marginalized groups – although the requirements of tact and good practice dictate that this should not happen where scientific theory is concerned.

In my paper I will discuss to what extent the Sámi and/or other Arctic indigenous peoples have chosen to define their identities within an essentialist frame of reference. I will also discuss the concept of “strategic essentialism”, as described above. Is it or is it not acceptable for a researcher to base minorities research on different principles of scientific theory from those used in majorities research?

M. Susan Birkwood

Session 3B

Carleton University

From “naked country” to “sheltering ice”: Rudy Wiebe’s Revisionist Treatment of John Franklin’s First Arctic Narrative

Canadians may sing of “the true north strong and free” in our national anthem, but too few of us living in southern regions know much about the far north beyond terms such as “tundra” and “permafrost.” Global warming is rapidly changing the nature of the far north, however, and the idea of a North-West Passage that motivated European explorers in the nineteenth century is becoming a reality. The control of this potential transportation route is becoming the subject of heated debate. Many voices have been calling for environmental protection of the North for some time, and a number of these voices belong to visual artists and to writers who are working to change the general perception on the part of the dominant culture of the arctic and of northern peoples. This paper will focus on John Franklin’s *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819, 20, 21, and 22* and Rudy Wiebe’s *A Discovery of Strangers* (1994). Wiebe’s revisionist construction of Franklin’s first expedition to find the North-West Passage attempts to show the disparate views of the landscape held by the British explorers and the Yellowknife Native people of the Coppermine region and to sound a warning about the devastating effects of imperialism and capitalism.

Tales of danger, hardship, and heroism were part of the attraction of exploration narratives in 1823 as they are now, and Franklin, who came to be called “the man who ate his boots,” was seen as a hero, and the published account of exploration, starvation, hypothermia, murder, and possible cannibalism was a bestseller. As Richard Davis points out, however, the expedition was, in fact, “an ill-prepared undertaking,” and Franklin arguably brought some of the hardships upon his party because of his inflexibility and by his not giving proper credence to the

¹ Olsen 2001: 84.

advice and warnings of the First Nations people from whom he sought assistance but to whom he believed himself culturally and technologically superior. It is striking how after his account of days spent walking, charting, and naming landscape features after Britons of note in August 1821, Franklin's focus suddenly narrows to a recording of the availability of food and fuel. Reduced to eating *tripe de roche*—lichen—and bits of old leather, the men's hunger, growing debility and flagging hope are the main concerns of the narrative of the journey across the Barrens, which Franklin calls "this naked country" (393).

The efforts of Wiebe—a well-established white writer—to change non-Native readers' perceptions of the far north as a desolate and barren place are clear in his depiction of the "sheltering ice" (11) and the "life-giving cold" (317), as well as in his decision to write his first chapter from the point of view of "The Animals in this Country" (the title of the chapter), the caribou and wolf, in particular. By inserting excerpts from the journals of Franklin and of expedition doctor John Richardson into a novel that examines the contact between British and Native North American cultures and portrays a strong and vital Tetsot'ine (Yellowknife) community, Wiebe dismantles the hierarchy and authority that Franklin and his officers wished to establish in the interests of the Empire. As Kathleen Venema has pointed out, Wiebe gives us "a story about aboriginal people's encounter with Europeans" (141), one that privileges memory, local knowledge, and a healthy respect for the land.

Taking into account critical commentaries on Franklin's and Wiebe's works, as well as studies relating to the differences in European and Native mapping practices, such as Renee Fossett's "Mapping Inuktitut: Inuit Views of the Real World," I will discuss the implications of Wiebe's work of historiographic metafiction and its representation of the landscape and peoples of the arctic and sub-arctic regions forever changed by the "brutal hiss and clangour" (2) and the "strange and various sicknesses" (315) that are the destructive signs of European invasion.

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Annie Bourguignon

Session 1C

University of Nancy 2

Conquering the Arctic and Conquering the Sky: Views on Technical Progress in Saint-Exupéry's *Night Flight* and P. O. Sundman's *The Flight of the "Eagle"*

P. O. Sundman's novel *Ingenjör Andréas luftfärd* (English title: *The Flight of the "Eagle"*) is both an historical and a documentary novel about the Swedish engineer Salomon August Andrée's attempt to reach the north pole in a balloon in 1897. But the expedition was a failure and the three men who were on it perished when trying to get back to land. The novel, which was written in 1967, deals with the idea of conquest, both of territories and knowledge, and with the human being's ambition to gain greater and greater control on things, on the earth and the world. Sundman does question that ambition, but on the other hand the novel cannot be read merely as a condemnation of the daring enterprise it describes.

I shall compare Sundman's novel with Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's successful *Vol de nuit* (*Night-Flight*), which appeared in

1931 and tells about the – very dangerous – first night flights in the history of aviation. That novel also deals with a pioneering enterprise. It expresses a strong, almost indefectible faith in technical and human progress. Seen today, some of the explicit or implicit theses in Saint-Exupéry's book are problematic indeed, as for instance the blind approval of sacrifice. A question is if similar ideas do not appear, though less obviously, in *The Flight of the "Eagle"* also. Comparing the two novels might allow to point out the changes in intellectual attitudes toward technical progress during the 20th century and to cast some new light on Sundman's book.

Fredrik Chr. Brøgger

Session 1B

University of Tromsø

The Culture of Nature and the Nature of Culture: Sensuality and Spirituality in Knud Rasmussen's Narrative of the Fifth Thule Expedition

In the years 1921-24 Knud Rasmussen traveled, largely by dog sledge, from an island near Greenland across the entire Arctic of the North American Continent to the Pacific (the Bering Strait). The main objective of his "Fifth Thule Expedition" was to describe the cultures of the various groups and tribes of Eskimos that Rasmussen encountered on this journey. His main concern is quite clearly stated in the popular book (entitled *Den store Slæderejse*, "The Great Sledge Journey") that he published after his trip (in addition to his scientific findings): "The Eskimo is the hero of this book. His history, his present culture, his daily hardships, and his spiritual life constitute the theme and the narrative" (xxxiii). This paper focuses on the interconnections that his descriptions evoke precisely between people's "hardships" (in their interaction with nature) and their beliefs and values (as embodied in their stories, songs, legends, and visions of otherworldly beings). This does not mean, however, that I analyze Rasmussen's accounts of Eskimo life from the vantage point of religious history or comparative religion. Instead I am concerned with analyzing the analogies and interconnections between *experience* (lived life) and *outlook* (world view) that I find embedded in Rasmussen's use of *language*, his *discourse*, as he portrays both his own progression across the land, the nature of the Arctic itself, and the way of life and beliefs of the people that he stays with and talks to in the course of his journey. The main body of my paper concerns itself with what I see as Rasmussen's fundamentally physical, sensory, and sensual conception of life, evoked in the descriptions of both his own sledge journey and the Eskimo tribes he encounters in this harsh and brutal Arctic environment. The world in which he moves is an insistently sensuous one. At the same time there is rarely any sense of dualism in Rasmussen's discourse between the material and the non-material, hardly any distinctions drawn between the physical and the spiritual, the natural and the supernatural; they are in many ways one and the same. In some instances, however, fissures and rifts between Rasmussen's Inuit and Danish worldviews emerge; my paper will also discuss these.

Adriana Craciun

Session 5B

Birkbeck College, University of London

Inscribing the Arctic: The Franklin Relics and the Arctic Palimpsest

McClintock's *Voyage of the 'Fox'* (1859) outsold both Darwin's *Origin of the Species* and Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, published that same year. A large part of the appeal of McClintock's narrative lay in the accounts he gave of discovering numerous relics of the Franklin expedition disaster of 1845-48. The *Voyage of*

the Fox appended a long annotated list of relics and their locations, constructing an eclectic archive of religious, navigational, institutional, and personal detritus. The relics themselves were then publicly displayed and widely reproduced in contemporary periodicals, newspapers, and collection catalogues. These material relics and their representation gripped the Victorian imagination and elevated the dead explorers, whose memories had recently been tainted by a cannibalism scandal, to saintly heroes, an apotheosis shared, like the searches had been, across national boundaries (indeed Amundsen, when visiting the Franklin gravesites on Beechey Island, described them as being “holy ground”).

Beginning with an overview of the Franklin relics phenomenon, this paper will consider the significance of European material inscription of the arctic—that is, the physical symbolic traces, whether written, visual, or otherwise (e.g., cairns, memorials and tombstones)—deposited in the arctic by explorers. We are more familiar with what Europeans took from the arctic (including people, minerals, animals, resources, knowledges), and of course with what they wrote about the arctic. I want to explore the material inscription of arctic places themselves, how writing about the arctic has always coexisted with literally writing in and on the arctic. Competing imperial and colonial claims, then and now, rest in part on such material traces, and of course stand in awkward and untenable contradiction with the earlier material claims of indigenous peoples. But beyond this important territorial dimension of arctic inscriptions, I wish to examine how a longer history of aesthetic inscription of the arctic itself has shaped our enduring imaginings of the arctic.

Does the late nineteenth-century obsession with finding Franklin relics (especially the missing journals), which continues into the twenty-first century, represent a new dimension in the selfreferential focus of exploration? To what extent does this popular fascination with fragments of books, letters, bones and messages, reflect a larger aspect of arctic exploration, one in which European voyagers consciously participated in recreating distinct arctic places as palimpsests? And how did European inscriptions incorporate Native inscriptions and traces into such a palimpsest? Two examples that I will briefly outline in answering these questions are: Churchill in subarctic Hudson Bay, inscribed over a two-hundred year period by Jens Munk, James Knight, Christopher Middleton and Thomas Hearne; and Bloody Falls (Kugluktuk) on the Coppermine River, as inscribed by Hearne, Franklin and their successors. By placing the late nineteenth-century profitable business of arctic relics and their reproduction into this larger geographical and historical picture, this paper will illuminate an important material aspect of arctic discourses.

Hanna Eglinger

Session 5B

Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich

“Traces against time’s erosion”: The Polar Explorer between Documentation and Projection

“The virgin snow and the untrodden land” (Godfred Hansen) have always been a main attraction to polar explorers. It’s a matter of making one’s mark both on a (supposedly) untrodden land and in the book of history – what more fitting metaphor could there be than the endless white expanse of snow and ice that can be named, mapped and tinted with national colour? In explaining one of his motivations for preparing the second *Fram* expedition, Otto Sverdrup declared: “On the northern part of the map were several white spots that I had great desire to tinge with Norwegian colour”. The discovery of new land, its geological,

cartographic, and literary documentation, the emphasis on being the first man there, and the problems of bearing testimony – for all of these a landscape of ice and snow provides the perfect figure, a landscape where the insignia of triumph can quickly be covered over, trickle away or even be altered by those who come after. My analysis of expedition reports such as Roald Amundsen's *Nordvestpassagen* (*Northwest Passage*), Otto Sverdrup's *Nytt land* (*New Land*) and Godfred Hansen's *Mod Kong Haakon VII's Land* (*Towards King Haakon VII's Land*) focuses on the literary representation of the explorer's efforts to leave traces, and his reflections about their impact on posterity. The assertion in this literature of a close metaphorical connection between topographic exploration and historical/chronological progress raises questions both about conceptions of authenticity and "discovery", and about conflicting priorities between documentation and projection, fact and fiction, memory and repression.

Pär Eliasson

Session 2B

Umeå University

Station Cultures and Some Therapies against Arctic Ennui

Discussions on the possible threats of polar ennui and recommendations of good therapies against it, constitute an almost obligatory topos in the many travel books and expedition reports written from the polar regions in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The pioneer of Arctic therapy was Willam E. Parry, commander of several British Admiralty expeditions that wintered in the High Arctic during the 1820s. Parry's ships were well prepared for wintering, but he was not really convinced that his men were mentally prepared for a life in total isolation during the seemingly ever-lasting cold and dark Arctic winter. Parry believed that the darkness could lead to mental states such as irritation, insomnia, irresponsible behaviour and bad conduct, perhaps even cases of severe mental illness. Parry's own remedies against these illnesses were a strict naval routine, an educational programme and the establishment of a theatre company.

In my paper I will take a closer look at what these notions of the possible threats of polar ennui meant for the establishment of what could perhaps be called station cultures, that is, the way in which daily life was organized on a number of polar expeditions.

Peter Fjågesund

Session 4A

Telemark University College

From Sailor to Scientist: John Phipps at Spitsbergen 1773

John Phipps's 1773 expedition in search of a navigable passage across the North Pole was the first major British expedition for more than a century. The expedition exemplifies how science, from the period of Captain Cook onwards, radically changes the scope and the foundation of polar research, bringing a new dimension and a new jargon into the picture. The paper will discuss this transition by taking a closer look at the expedition, its participants and its context.

“With your tragic ship you discovered the *City of the Sun* in the Arctic”: How the Story of a Collapsed Expedition was Transformed into the Soviet Myth of Realizing Utopia, and How the Arctic Became a Crucial Place in the Symbolical Construction of Soviet Space

The paper analyses two literary eye-witness descriptions of the Cheljuskin expedition (1933-34), its collapse and the famous aircraft rescue mission (Sel'vinskij, Tretjakov). In the first part, it tries to reconstruct the literary strategies to transform the expedition's failure into the Soviet myth of realizing utopia and thereby to generate the soviet hero. It highlights the importance of the difference between the European or American rhetoric of conquest in Arctic discourse and the Soviet view of Arctic heroism. The second part concentrates on the Arctic in its function as a specific symbolic centre of Soviet space as a whole. In this case, the Arctic as a frontier, as de-geographized and as an equivalent to other important loci of Soviet space will be discussed. The conceptualization of the expedition as microcosm, the axiological convergence of centre (Moscow) and periphery (Arctic), the temporalization and totalization of space will play a central role.

The Strategies of Coping in the Árbbolaččat (The Heirs), Novels Written by the Sámi Novelist Jovvna-Ánde Vest

Jovvna-Ánde Vest has written three novels about the lives of the people living in Máhtebáiki, a small Sámi village in Northern Finland, from the late 1950s until the early 1980s. This is a time when new great changes coming from the majority society also have impact on the living conditions in a society where agriculture and fishing are the main lines of work. My project is to discuss how the people in the novels interact and with what kind of coping strategies they choose to meet the impacts of the new time.

Whiteout: Snow and Whiteness in Literature since 1800

Usually, “whiteout” is understood as a weather condition in polar or mountain regions. In a “whiteout” snow, overcast, and

diffuse lighting reduce visibility and contrast. In this case, however, the idea of “whiteout” is not only taken as a motif, but also to show disruptive effects in the structure of texts. The project points out how “snow” in the broadest sense, while being suspended as a motif, pervades the structure and language of texts by Adalbert Stifter, Alexander Puškin, Lew Tolstoi, E.A. Poe, Herman Melville, Robert Walser, Christoph Ransmayr, and Conrad Aiken.

Using the scientific term “whiteout” to describe the poetic structures of literary texts is motivated in three ways:

1. “Whiteout” is not only considered as a weather condition but as a psycho-physiological phenomenon regarding the distortion of perception. The subject’s constricted ability of reading signs in order to gain a sense of direction is transferred to the reader of a literary text: the reader also depends on the visibility and readability of signs for his orientation in the text. This analogy is sustained by an analysis of literary texts in spatial terms, as well as by a metaphorical reading of the term “whiteout” and the specific relationship it creates between landscape, paper, and text.

2. Thus, “whiteout” establishes a relation between form and content of the literary “snow” texts the project deals with.

3. “Whiteout” gives emphasis to the interaction between science and literature in the 19th and early 20th century. This is especially true for the polar expeditions and the intricate relations they unclothe between fictional and non-fictional texts as well as between their historical and cultural configurations.

Harald Gaski

Session 3A

University of Tromsø

Longing towards the North, towards Sun and Summer: The Sami Poet Nils-Aslak Valkeapää’s Imagery of the North

Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (1943–2001) was the greatest Sami multimedia artist. He made his debut as an author in 1971 with a book of essays in Finnish, which was translated into English thirteen years later as *Greetings from Lappland* (1984). Valkeapää is so far the only Sami who has been awarded the prestigious Nordic literature prize, for his book of poetry and old photographs, *Beaivi, áhcázan* (1991) (*The Sun, My Father* [1997]). His last book, *Eanni, Eannázan* (“The Earth, My Mother”) appeared in 2001, intended by the author to be the female counterpart to *The Sun* book. Another book in English by Valkeapää is *Trekways of the Wind* (1994). Valkeapää was also an acknowledged musician, composer, painter, sculptor, and actor. In 1993 he was awarded the Prix Italia Prize for the composition *Bird Symphony*, which only consists of natural sounds from the environment in which the artist himself grew up, later recorded on CD with the title *Goase dusse* (1994).

In this talk I want to present Valkeapää’s view of the north, which is different from the general perception of the region as a place of constant cold and darkness. My talk will concentrate on the way in which Valkeapää in his poetry makes use of the traditional Sami singing, the yoik, to convey the view of the reindeer-herding Sami about the spring migration with the herds as a journey towards summer and happiness.

“Paper Seas”: Polar Adventures in the Contemporary German Novels of Sten Nadolny and Christoph Ransmayr

The present study takes into exam the Arctic discourse in two recent novels by German speaking writers: *Die Entdeckung der Langsamkeit* (1983) by Sten Nadolny and *Die Schrecken des Eises und der Finsternis* (1984) by Christoph Ransmayr. Both works tell the story of two different historical expeditions to the Arctic in the 19th century. The facts presented in the novels become the starting point for a general criticism of Western culture and civilization. The aim of my study is to explore the symbolic value attributed to the Arctic intended as a metaphor of the literary activity of writing itself through the above mentioned works. The virgin space to be conquered in the 19th century can be seen as the allegory of the blank page that the modern writer must contend with and is unable to escape from, even if he is aware of the hybris of his activity. This creates a sort of parallelism between both enterprises, that of writing and the discovery of the unknown.

The Gender of the Absent Native in Renarrating the “Race” to the South Pole

Lisa Bloom’s 1994 *Gender On Ice* is widely cited and its title even re-deployed in polar studies world-wide. The title term gender notwithstanding, we tend to forget that race is as present a factor and lens of critique as gender in Bloom’s analysis. In this essay I want to use Bloom’s opening up of the knowledge of imperial practices in creating or constructing polar places to again include racial discourse. It seems obvious to state that race is much more discussed in north polar studies as opposed to the uninhabited south. Just as obvious is the separation of poles – north and south polar studies rarely integrate. I will focus on work that borrows on the well-developed and documented imperial history of racial appropriation in north polar studies to approach south polar exploration, particularly renewed arguments over the legacy of Scott and Amundsen. In arguments for Scott’s racism and Amundsen’s relative openness to adopting native cold weather traveling techniques, I consider the figure of the “absent” native as a symptom of a neo-racism and neo-imperialist present.

Sexual Polarities: Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Polar Exploration as a Search for Origins Beyond 'Woman'



My paper is an interrogation of the choice of Polar landscapes for the playing out of narratives of gender difference. This is specifically with regards to the question of 'where do I come from?' and sexual and social reproduction in stories of Arctic and Antarctic exploration.

I propose a reading of the gendering of this search for origins through addressing aspects of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. *Frankenstein* is a story of a search for origins. *Frankenstein* can be seen as a cautionary tale against male creative ambition trying to elide the reproductive body of 'woman'. The framing narrative of Shelley's novel is that of the Captain of a Polar expedition that encounters Dr Frankenstein, and subsequently his monster, in the icy Arctic wastes. I will compare this to other narratives of Polar expedition, and with a closer reading of the 1970s short story sci-fi fiction of Ursula Le Guin titled *Sur* which describes an all-female expedition to Antarctica that leaves no trace.

In order to elucidate this further, I will apply aspects of Freud's psychoanalysis, Arendt's writing on natality, and Irigaray's critique of the gendering of Western philosophy and her thoughts on what she terms the 'homosocial'.

Looking for Redemption in a Globalised North: Representations of the Arctic in Judith Hermann's short stories "Kaltblau" (Cold-Blue) and "Die Liebe zu Ari Oskarsson" (Love for Ari Oskarsson)

In Judith Hermann's second collection of short stories, *Nichts als Gespenster* (*Nothing but Ghosts*) (2003), young, metropolitan people travel to various destinations in Europe. As is typical of Hermann's oeuvre, these characters belong to an urban generation which is disenchanted with the conditions of modern life. They are looking for romance yet find it difficult to believe in love. Their outlook on life borders on cynicism but they still find themselves on a quest for a purposeful existence.

Two of the book's stories are set in northern Scandinavia. This paper explores the way Iceland and Norway (more specifically Tromsø) are represented in the two texts and puts a combined focus on the depiction of these countries as part of the globalised western world and on the redemptive potential they are ascribed by the author. As will be shown, Hermann to some extent continues a long German tradition of looking at Scandinavia from an almost colonial perspective, and she describes both countries as a mere extension of contemporary central Europe where English and German is spoken with ease: both places seem almost devoid of distinguishing national characteristics. Whilst the culture of these northern countries is thus disregarded, the arctic nature of the environment is highlighted and the characters' responses to Nordic nature as 'other' are registered. Fundamental to this process is the way in which the two

countries are associated with the well-known topos of the north as a vast and empty space and how the characters' often implicit search for meaning and for orientation in a fragmented world leads them to experience these locations as places of realisation and enlightenment. To conclude, the central role of arctic natural phenomena in this context, in particular of the northern lights, is analysed and discussed.

Heidi Hansson

Session 7B

Umeå University

Cold Days and Murder: Crime Fiction in the Arctic

The popular genre that has most often made use of an arctic setting is the adventure tale. The – usually male – main character is confronted with difficult conditions and physical challenges which he overcomes, proving his strength and resourcefulness. Thus, the arctic discourse of the adventure story has a clear masculine tone, and the main theme is man's encounter with and mastery of nature. The detective story, on the other hand, is a social, literary genre where the plot is propelled by characters who breach social contracts in various ways, and there have been female main characters throughout the history of crime fiction, in later years also in subgenres like procedural school police novels and hardboiled detective stories. These strong connections with nature and culture respectively makes the arctic adventure and the crime story seem thematically opposed, and there are indeed only a few crime series set in the Arctic. Dana Stabenow's stories about the Aleut policewoman Kate Shugak, set in Alaska, is one of the more interesting series, however, partly because it places a woman main character in a conventionally masculine environment, partly because it foregrounds the Arctic as a social, not only a natural region. Because the novels fuse a tradition where insufficient knowledge of nature constitutes the greatest danger with a tradition where threats to the social order disturbs equilibrium, there are two competing structures in the texts. In my paper, I will discuss the intersections between an arctic discourse and a gender discourse in Stabenow's series by discussing the role of setting and characterisation in the novels *A Cold Day for Murder* (1992), *A Cold-Blooded Business* (1994) and *Break-Up* (1997). Analyses of the texts will be supplemented with a study of how descriptions of the arctic setting, the genre-typical content of the series and the feminist messages are valued in reviews and reader comments.

Nina Hinrichs

Session 1A

University of Kiel/Imaginatio borealis project

"The Arctic Sea" – Constructs of the North in the Work of Caspar David Friedrich



The German artist Caspar David Friedrich created the art work "The Arctic Sea" in the years 1823/24. It shows a tiny shipwreck in confrontation with huge ice floats.

The interpretation of this work shows the different discourses of the North from Romantic up to the present day. There are many various ways to receive and construct Northerness.

"The Arctic Sea" represents Friedrich's idea of the North. He obviously never saw the Arctic Sea. The model for the ice floats were little sheets of ice of the German river "Elbe".

Friedrich's idea of the North is based on reports and illustrations of Arctic-expeditions in the 19th century and on his imagination.

The picture evoked conflicting opinions. Many of Friedrich's coevals were irritated. Most of them accepted the ideals of classical art and according to that the North was no subject of art.

From the Romantic up to the present day there are many different interpretations of "The Arctic Sea". Of course the painting contributes to the discourse of the sublime and it is related to philosophical theories by Burke, Kant, Schiller and Lyotard. Besides that there are political, historical, religious, psychological and ecological interpretations. "The Arctic Sea" refers both to issues of "hope" and "salvation" as well as to issues of "desperation" and "destruction".

Depending on the political, cultural, social and historical background the painting "The Arctic Sea" and the idea of the North is exploited for various issues.

Hanna Hofmann

Session 5C

Technical University Berlin

Crisis of the Mythical? The Melting of the Polar Ice in Greenland in Alfred Döblin's *Berge Meere Und Giganten* (1924)

My presentation deals with Alfred Döblin's text regarding the melting of the polar ice in Greenland. The text is taken from the fifth book in Döblin's novel *Berge Meere und Giganten* (1924). The conquest of the Arctic that this book describes forms the highpoint of an imaginary history of humanity that stretches from the 20th Century into the 27th Century. In this part of the novel, the Western imperialists attempt to store the heat of the Icelandic volcanoes and transport it to the Arctic in order to make it melt. Greenland manages to "fight back"; firstly by putting its conquerors under a magic spell and secondly by unleashing ancient forces unable to be matched by civilisation.

Up until now, this text has not received much attention by literature researchers with regard to imaginary polar exploration – possibly due to the fact that Döblin's novel is in many ways difficult to approach. In the book, many typical connotations and motives of literary polar exploration are used, often in a noticeably stereotypical way. At the same time, by superimposing different episodes and narrative levels of discourse, not least by the integration of this book into the rest of the novel, Döblin also further distils various thematic aspects of imaginary polar exploration, which may well be revealing for a further examination of the arctic discourses. My presentation will, using Döblin's Greenland book as a basis, seek to address three questions, which can also be applied to polar fiction in general. The first question deals with the link between exoteric and esoteric perspectives with reference to ice (Eric G. Wilson). In what way is the Arctic portrayed as an area to be conquered and what sort of feelings and impressions of alienation do its conquerors experience? In Döblin's text, the conquest of Greenland is closely linked to colonial constellations and scenarios involving power and conquest. These include both gender aspects as well as the question of whether nature can be controlled. At the same time, male-civilising power positions are portrayed in a highly ambivalent way. The type of Western imperialist who manages to reach Greenland is intended by

Döblin to embody a type of a civilised man who is tired of progress, depressed and alienated from himself and who yearns for the natural. One central episode in Döblin's novel with respect to this is when the Western engineer Holyhead manages to convince the Bedouin Bou Jeloud to head into the Arctic, thus alienating himself from his tribal community. This episode is a key moment in which yearnings, self-identification and patterns of conquest become evident, all concepts which are closely linked to polar exploration in Döblin's work. The second question deals with the antagonistic relationship between warmth and cold which Döblin uses in a metaphorical way. In *Berge Meere und Giganten*, Döblin describes how a "cold" civilisation invades a "warm" polar area, on a whole series of different levels. These include the concept of a "warm" utopian wilderness, the idea of a menacing terrain which is linked to fertility, the organic and the feminine, the artificial heating of the Arctic by man and, finally, the pole as an apocalyptic "source of fire" and deluge. This ambivalent portrayal is particularly interesting in connection with Helmut Lethen's studies *Lob der Kälte (Praising the Cold)* and *Verhaltenslehren der Kälte (Cool Conduct)* in which aspects of the "coldness discourse" in German culture and literature of the 1920s in particular were examined. Döblin's Greenland is particularly interesting with regard to the question of how arctic discourses were represented and how they were further developed in German literature between around 1918 and 1925. There is also a clear modern-day component to the apocalyptic idea of the melting of the polar ice which is also worthy of discussion. The third question concerns literary polar exploration as an attempted self-justification of the texts as a text within the "virgin" space of the Arctic (Bettine Menke): which narrative strategies and ways of writing are employed in order to talk about the unknown, whether internally or externally. In *Berge Meere und Giganten*, a clear dilemma is in evidence: in addition to the experimental search for new literary processes, there are also many, fairly drastic signs which point to an essential linguistic crisis. It is above all in the use of polar myths and the attempt to remythologise the poles that the crises of the mythical itself becomes visible.

Ingeborg Høvik

Session 1A

University of Edinburgh

Heroism and Imperialism in the Arctic: Edwin Landseer's *Man Proposes – God Disposes*



The English painter Edwin Landseer contributed *Man Proposes – God Disposes* (Royal Holloway College, Egham), showing a gloomy landscape of ice and snow, to the Royal Academy's 1864 annual exhibition in London. Upon its first public showing, this imposing composition was sure to attract the audience's attention. The reason for this was not only that it was placed in one of the three 'posts of honour' in the Great Room of the Academy's premises on Trafalgar Square in London, or that the Mediterranean paintings that occupied the other two honorary positions showed opposing scenes from the warm and sunny south. The cause of the attention was more because of its

controversial theme. On a canvas measuring almost a metre by two metres and a half, Landseer presented two fearsome polar bears vandalising the remnants of a failed expedition. The British public readily associated Landseer's painting with the lost expedition of John Franklin, a national hero who had set out to find the Northwest Passage in 1845. Only five years after F. L. M'Clintock finally solved the mystery of the expedition's fate, Landseer presented a hot but delicate topic. Yet, while the public often found Landseer's painting inappropriate and painful to watch, connoisseur art critics repeatedly celebrated it as the artist's crowning achievement.

This paper discusses the reception of Landseer's work upon its Royal Academy exhibition in 1864. Utilising contemporary periodicals and newspaper articles, and by comparing Landseer's image to other paintings that were displayed, this paper explains the controversies of *Man Proposes – God Disposes*.

Tiffany Johnstone

Session 3B

University of British Columbia

Seeing for Oneself: Agnes Deans Cameron's Ironic Critique of American Literary Discourse in *The New North*

Agnes Deans Cameron's *The New North* (1909) documents her eventful 1908 journey from Chicago to the Canadian Arctic. Despite drawing upon the imperialist motifs of American exploration literature within this text, Cameron, a Canadian who lived and worked in the United States, presents a self-conscious critique of the very values that she transfers upon a Canadian setting. In the paper that I would like to present at "Arctic Discourses 2008," I will situate Cameron within the wider context of American representations of Canada as a mythic northern frontier at the turn of the twentieth century. Within this context, I will examine her sophisticated ability to subvert the imperialist discourse of American wilderness literature of the time period. Cameron's self-reflexive attitude toward her own construction of the north occurs through her meticulous attention to language and literature in *The New North*. First of all, her tendency to compare Canada favourably to the states according to American frontier rhetoric ironically presents Canada as more emblematic of American ideals than American society itself. Secondly, Cameron destabilizes her own literary voice in order to present Canada as evading or transcending the American cultural rhetoric that she uses. Cameron thus portrays the Canadian landscape, and the north in particular, as a site in which to recreate and rework the grand narratives of American culture. With attention to recent theory on women's travel literature, as well as to Cameron's background and involvement in American literary society, I will examine the way that she uses the setting of Canada to present a kind of travel literature in which dominant American literary values are contested and renegotiated.

The title is based upon the Winnipeg trappers advice to Cameron that you must see for yourself (11), thus hinting at the subversive emphasis on the subjective nature of language that runs throughout *The New North*.

Mary Katherine Jones

Session 6B

University of Tromsø

"A Purely Symbolic Gesture": International Media Responses to the Russian Flag-Planting at the North Pole in 2007

For a brief period, the Russian flag-planting at the North Pole during the summer of 2007 stimulated intense media coverage on an international scale. Focusing on the output of one newspaper

from each of the four other Arctic nations with direct territorial interests in the Arctic Ocean – Norway (*Aftenposten*), Greenland/Denmark (*Sermitsiaq*), Canada (*Toronto Star*) and the USA (*The New York Times*) – media attitudes are analysed and broadly categorized between a general Nordic emphasis on the need to observe a rule of law and a somewhat more belligerent North American response. The presentation then examines the different ways in which media references to the North Pole gradually became absorbed within coverage of other topics over the months that followed.

Silje Solheim Karlsen

Session 1C

University of Tromsø

“[...] he was to become a man”. A Reading of Klaus Rifbjerg’s Novel *Nansen and Johansen: A Winter’s Tale* (2002)

In 2002 the Danish author Klaus Rifbjerg published a novel named *Nansen and Johansen: A Winter’s Tale*. As the title shows, the novel deals with the Norwegian Fram Expedition towards the North Pole, first and foremost the fifteen months’ sleigh journey undertaken by Fridtjof Nansen and Hjalmar Johansen. As polar expeditions are synonymous with dramatic literature – linked to adventure, tragedy and heroism, as well as questions of nation-building and innovating discoveries – the connection of genres raises some questions: What is the author’s primary concern when using this background in his novel and telling this story on the borderline between fact and fiction? Seeing the erotic potential in the companionship of polar heroes, Rifbjerg clearly challenges the traditional ideas of manliness and heroic deeds connected with polar literature. Nevertheless, he also relates to these ideas, as his novel deals with Hjalmar’s struggle to become a man: “Det var her, han skulle blive en mand sammen med de andre, sammen med Nansen.” (54) (“It was here he was to become a man, together with the others, together with Nansen”). I will take a closer look at the ways through which Rifbjerg’s modern novel relates to the most obvious genre features in traditional polar literature as we see it in Hjalmar Johansen’s travelogue *With Nansen in the North: A Record of the Fram Expedition in 1893-1896* (1898).

Elizaveta Khachatryan

Session 6C

University of Oslo

The North Seen by People from South: Italian Explorers about the Arctic

The problem of the deficiency or insufficiency of words is one of the fundamental problems of the communication in general. This problem could be described on different levels of the discourse analysis. In the present paper we’ll analyse the situation when the speaker really doesn’t have enough words, or doesn’t have words at all to speak about the surrounding world.

The object of our analysis are travel writings and expedition reports of Italian arctic explorers. The aim of this kind of texts is to describe the reality in the most exact and realistic way. Moreover, as far as the aim of each act of communication is to be understood by the hearer, the speaker has to think also about the addressee (the hearer) of the text and to use the words that will be interpreted in the appropriate way. The mother-tongue and cultural identity of the speaker are important in this case. In our paper we'll describe what kind of difficulties has an Italian explorer (speaker) and what kind of discourse strategies he uses.

We have distinguished three cases which illustrate the problem of insufficiency of words when it's a question of explorer's descriptions:

1. description of the material culture (i.e. meal, clothes, instruments),
2. description of the natural phenomena (i.e. snow, ice, sea),
3. description of different actions (i.e. fishing, hunting).

If in the first case the explorer of every mother-tongue will use a loan-word accompanied by an, almost encyclopaedic, explication of it, in the two other cases the strategy can be different according to the mother-tongue and the culture of the explorer.

For our analysis we chose the texts written in Italian. On the one hand, there are the same natural phenomena in the Italian world (sea, ice, snow) and the same actions (i.e. fishing), it means that the speaker has the necessary words. On the other hand, these words describe another kind of reality and evoke another images (associations) for the addressee. For example, the North sea is not described with the same words as the Mediterranean sea, the way of fishing is different, the snow and the ice have different properties and functions in two different cultures.

In our paper we'll describe the strategies chosen by an Italian explorer when he speaks about these good-known but at the same time quite different objects. We'll see in what measure he appropriates another culture, but remains a representative of the Italian culture as well. We'll discuss if the speaker sees the world from the point of view of his own culture.

The analysis that we propose will be developed in the future by the analysis of expedition reports in other languages (i.e. Russian, Norwegian).

Nils Magne Knutsen

Session 6A

University of Tromsø

“In intelligence not much different from apes”: Some Comments on Archbishop Erik Valkendorf's Report from Finnmark in 1512

In 1511 Erik Valkendorf from Denmark was appointed Archbishop in Trondheim, and thereby head of the Norwegian church. The following year (probably) Valkendorf made an expedition to Finnmark, the northernmost part of Norway. In his report to the pope in Rome, Leo X, Valkendorf gives a very dramatic and frightening picture of the abnormal landscape, the abnormal climate and the abnormal human beings he has experienced in the far North.

Among other things he reports of sea monsters more than 90 metres long and whales more than 200 metres long. He states that, due to the cold and healthy air, the inhabitants of Finnmark can live until the age of 150. In the eastern part of Finnmark he has found people whose intelligence is not much different from that of apes. Far out in the ocean north-west of Finnmark there are some other strange creatures he has heard of, *skrælingene*, that are only 90 cm tall.

Valkendorf had his education from the University of Greifswald in Germany, and he was a well-travelled and well-read man. It is all the more surprising to read his frightening

images of life in Finnmark. For a modern reader the question is how we today ought to understand the fantastic elements of his report.

Sanne Kok

Session 4C

Roskilde University

Meeqquerivitsialak - A Greenlandic Pedagogy and its Importance in the Process of Decolonization

During the 1950s and 1960s, Denmark pumped a considerable amount of money and personnel into the modernization of the Greenlandic society. One element of this process consisted of sending Greenlandic children to Denmark to learn Danish and receive an education. These children had been hand picked to become the new elite and were supposed to found modern Greenland according to Danish standards. However, the fundamentally different lifestyle, modes of upbringing and values that these children were faced with resulted in much unhappiness, suicides and depression as many of them lost their mother tongues, their positive associations to Greenland and their family ties. The paternalistic Danish influence on both minds and material and structural development in Greenland has contributed to much of the collective low self esteem still experienced today.

In my presentation, I consider the complex historical as well as present relations between Greenland and Denmark and the consequences for developing a liberating Greenlandic pedagogy capable of fuelling the ongoing process of decolonization. In 2006, the Home Rule Government launched a day care reform called 'Meeqquerivitsialak' where Greenlandic culture and values were made central themes. The reform included local hearings in all of the 18 municipalities, but after only three very successful meetings this activity was stopped and the ministry of Education decided to adopt a Hawaii'an day care model. On the basis of this decision, I discuss the possible consequence being that the non-represented reality (non-discourse) dominating much of traditional inuit upbringing will (once again) be excluded from the teaching and learning environment (discourse) and hence that Greenlanders' cultural knowledge is devalued and sentenced to silence. A Greenlandic pedagogy would on the contrary qualify the work of Greenlandic educators and engage Greenlanders in discussions, selections and translations of traditional values and principles for upbringing to a modern context and maybe even reinstall a sense of collective self confidence.

Tatjana Kudrjavitseva

Session 7A

University of Tromsø

An Island in Time: Russian Arctic Anno 2006

The Russian film "Island" of 2006 has been shown at several international film festivals and has received a prize as the best Christian film of the year in 2007. The film contains several key scenes in which its characters commune with Arctic nature. One of these characters continues Russian culture's centuries-long tradition of "holy fools", and is deployed in the film in order to criticise the established Orthodox clergy. For much of its pre-1917 history, the Russian North functioned partly as a Christian emblem and this Christian symbolism was partially revived in late Soviet culture in order to criticise the religious prosecutions of the Soviet State. In spite of the film's obvious polemical intention, it upholds deeply conservative representations of women and of mental illness. These topics are going to be the main concern of my paper.

The Times of Men, Mysteries and Monsters: *The Terror* and Franklin's Last Expedition

The mystery surrounding the last Franklin expedition and the absence of concrete information concerning the fate of its members have resulted in a number of fictionalizations. The presentation will focus on Dan Simmons *The Terror* (2007), which is a curious mix of carefully researched facts and horror story in which the expedition members succumb to the cold, scurvy and lead poisoning, but are also hunted and killed by a fourteen-foot tall ice monster (a Wendigo, or a Tuunbaq). The monster (or the 'terror') is in part produced by the gradual loss of the expedition members' sanity in the hostile environment, but is also revealed as an integral part of the Arctic world. A discussion about cognitive time illuminates how these two strands of the narrative, the factual and supernatural, are merged; how the few facts which remain are utilized to create a persuasive story and how the supernatural elements are integrated. Real time is the time of narration, unfolding as the novel progresses. The numerous references to actual events and the use of real-life characters situate the story in time and give it a certain authenticity, a temporal category which may be termed historical time. Finally, mythic time can be seen as coexisting with both real and historical time, and as something which unites the two. The Arctic setting (both geographical and cultural) is crucial to how mythic time is worked into the narrative, isolated as the area is from the surrounding world. The climate itself, how the cold becomes an enemy, will provide a starting point for the discussion, and will be central to the ensuing analyses of the temporal categories.

New Communication Tool – Expanding the Discourses: A Mission Impossible?

The University of Tromsø Library is running a pilot project with the goal of analysing and describing how an open-access archive containing electronic research documents as well as research materials, within the thematic scope of the northern areas may be established and sustained. The pilot project aims at disclosing and describing the type of documents appropriate for inclusion in the archive. This, in turn, is a result of what is seen to be of interest for the research communities focused on the northern areas and other interested parties. Next there is the question of how to detect these documents, and hence how to harvest or by other methods import the documents and their metadata into the archive. And there is the question of how to make the content of the archive as easily available for the interested users as possible.

In the pilot project we need to enter into dialogue with important institutes and communities occupied with research on, management of or enterprise in the northern areas, starting with but not limited to Norwegian institutes and communities.

The end product of the pilot project will be a document, recommending whether to go for a project to build the archive

(with a working title of “Northern Areas Research Archive”) or not.

Jérémie Michael McGowan

Session 2C

University of Edinburgh

Eden in a Cold Climate: The ‘Ideal’ Arctic of Ralph Erskine



The British architect Ralph Erskine (1914-2005) who, from 1939 lived and worked primarily in Sweden, occupies a unique position in the history of 20th-century architecture as the ‘Arctic Architect’ of Modernism, champion and pioneer of ‘regionalism’ in the North. (Regionalism is an approach to architecture that seeks to develop built forms out of, and in response to, the traditions, needs and demands of a particular climate and culture.) Beginning in the mid-1950s Erskine launched a selfinitiated study of indigenous Arctic dwelling types – namely, the Inuit *igloo* and Sámi *goahti* – which developed into a theory of and approach to building called ‘Architecture in a Cold Climate’. While the climax of this study, Erskine’s comprehensive design for an ‘Ideal Town’ north of the polar circle, never really left the drawing board, fragments of his Arctic theory of architecture materialised in Europe and North America, in two public housing schemes in Kiruna (1955) and Svappavara, Sweden (1963), and one residential building in Resolute Bay, Nunavut, Canada (1973). Today, architectural discourse tends to frame Erskine as ‘The Humane Architect’, his three Arctic projects feature as exemplars of how to intimately, thoughtfully and appropriately design for the unique cultural and environmental ‘habitats’ of the Polar territories.

By contrast, this paper uses the physical reality of Erskine’s work in Kiruna and Nunavut to reconstruct Erskine’s unrealised Arctic utopia. What emerges is an Eden of the North, a personal fantasy set in an imaginary, ‘Ideal’ Arctic that acts as the limit, playground and carte blanche of Architecture.

Reinhard Mook

Session 3C

University of Tromsø

Imparting Polar Research to the 1880s Public

Founded in 1853 at Leipzig, *Die Gartenlaube* became in Germany one of the most popular illustrated family magazines through the second half of the 19th century. Reports concerning the Polar Regions as well as other exotic parts of the world met public interest. Frequently those reports prevaricated to place Germany on the map. However, from my point of view as a geophysicist, I will put in the focus the imparting of polar research as shown by two contributions to *Die Gartenlaube*: 1) About the change in the aims of polar research through the century since John Franklin’s birth, published by I. Loewenberg in 1886, pp. 291-292; 2) About reaching the North Pole in the future, written by “F.” in 1883, pp. 343-346.

Re 1): Referring to Georg Forster in 1776 and to Captain Clerk, second commander on Cooke’s third voyage, it was concluded that all the futile efforts to reach the utmost polar regions had

cured the world for ever from the mania of such exploring expeditions. One century later, Weyprecht in 1876 had pointed out that research in geophysics was more important than topographic discoveries, leading to the First Polar Year 1881. Though Weyprecht and Payer were in Austrian Service, and Nordenskjöld was Swedish, whether the recently discovered archipelago was named "Franz Joseph" and not "Wilhelm", and a mountain named "Andrassy" and not "Bismarck", all the enterprises were carried out by people of the Germanic tribe. The paper both wants to warn against human mistakes due to materialist interests as in the case of the great polar martyr Franklin, and to put up the torch for idealistic scientific work in the times to come.

Re 2): To reach latitudes as high as possible still was seen as a goal in itself. Based on knowledge to the Arctic environment and the technology anticipated, a futurological outlook is given how at last to reach the North Pole. In the colourful and partly sentimental language of that time – "several bold researches to come will wane in the fields of snow and ice of the polar territories and seas before one may succeed to unfold the banner of science at the very ending of the earth's axis, the North Pole" – the need of several years' stations and a carrier independent from water, ice or land is stressed. Specifying several conditions as acclimatization, the construction of houses and depots, the use of optical telegraphy, an aerostat is considered necessary to cover the ultimate leg to the Pole. After passing the Pole, one would have to hope for wind towards the south, or once may be able to navigate. The load may allow only one person or two to get airborne. The final sentence was: "Who will be the first one to entrust oneself to an aerostat in these zones? Kind reader, ask your own heart."

Jens Petter Nielsen

Session 4B

University of Tromsø

Russia's Changing Northernness from Lomonosov to Chilingarov

Today the high north is becoming more and more important to Russia, due among other things to reduced coastlines in the Baltic and Black seas after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the fact that most of the country's unexploited natural resources are to be found in Siberia and beneath the sea bed of the Arctic Ocean. In this connection I take a closer look on Russia's changing "northernness" (here defined as the degree to which the North has been perceived as a symbol of national identity) since the middle of the 18th century until today. I argue that in certain periods the northernness has been strong in the general public, in others less so. And what is more, in some periods northernness was a way for the Russians of expressing adherence to Europe and their prowess on the European arena. In other periods its function was, quite the contrary, namely to highlight Russia's national peculiarities and its aloofness from Europe. This naturally leads to the following question; will Russia's increasing northern self-identification today and its infatuation with the North Pole push it more firmly towards Europe, or will it divert it away from it?

A Sub-Arctic Vision: Rewriting Newfoundland in Wayne Johnston's *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*

*History is harvested and collected, to be assembled, made to speak, re-membered, re-read and rewritten, and language comes alive in transit, in interpretation.*²

The History of the Colony is only very partially contained in printed books; it lies buried under great rubbish heaps of unpublished records, English, Municipal, Colonial and Foreign, in rare pamphlets, old Blue Books, forgotten manuscripts...

D. W. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland* (1895)

Prowse's reflection, which stands as an epigraph for Wayne Johnston's 1998 novel *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, encapsulates a truth no one would debate nowadays: regardless of how thorough a historical account may be, it is still unreliable, only a version of the unfathomable "truth", a more or less disguised form of fictionalising the past. If history is often more akin to fiction (due to information gaps, historian's bias, political interests, insufficient evidence, etc.), fiction can also be crammed with historical facts, first-hand information, and closely observed details about the language, customs, lore, and lifestyle of a community, sometimes appearing more "authentic" (or, at least, verisimilar) than historical accounts or textbooks. This certainly is the case with Johnston's *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (short-listed for the Booker Prize in 1999).

This paper analyses Wayne Johnston's discursive strategies employed to rewrite Newfoundland from bits and pieces of history, factual debris, memories, direct experience, fantasy, official and unofficial records. "A contemplation of the soul of Newfoundland itself"³, Johnston's book is a self-confessed rewriting of the history of the Colony, with painstaking emphasis on all aspects concerning life (and death) on the island. Embedded in the narrative is a *Condensed History of Newfoundland*, an alternative to Prowse's *History*, a version (albeit conspicuously fictional) that takes into account not only the life of the "quality" (rich people), but also of the very poor, who could rarely afford to "cobble together" "shipwreck" dinner or "jig's dinner" (cabbage, potatoes and salt beef), and whose usual meal consisted of "salt cod and potatoes"⁴. The novel openly explores the catastrophic effects of various economic decisions made by distant powers and the cultural "clashes" between the English and the "savage descendants of the «dregs of England»" (34), "inbreeds for several hundred years" (36), whom they tried to "civilize" by teaching them in schools "next to nothing about Newfoundland" but "drilling into" them "instead the history and geography of England" (35). A Newfoundlander himself, the author seems to strip the island to the bone, leaving no stone unturned, no trade and no craft unaccounted for, and no weather shift unnoticed. Thus, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* abounds in vivid and compelling descriptions of the incredibly harsh working conditions of the fishermen and "sealers" (seal-hunters) who often risked their lives for a meagre income, of the modest existence of people in rural inland villages, of the unforgiving arctic and sub-arctic climate, of "a whiteness as absolute, as oblitative, as pitch-black darkness" (105-106), of the "forever-changing surface of the sea, which, though it registered the passage of time, was suggestive of no beginning and no end, as

² Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (1994), London and New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 3.

³ Cf. <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/conversations/t4-202-e.html> (9.09.2007).

⁴ Wayne Johnston, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, Toronto, Canada: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999, p. 24. All subsequent references will be made to this edition.

pointless as eternity" (131), and of the Newfoundlanders' "unrequited dreams of nationhood"⁵.

Laurel Parsons

Session 6C

Queen's University

***Anerca*: Representations of Inuit Poetry in Twentieth-Century Art Music**

In 1959, anthropologist Edmund Snow Carpenter published *Anerca*, a collection of Inuit poetry translated into English by Carpenter, Knud Rasmussen, and William Thalbitzer. This anthology captured the imaginations of several composers, who over the next twenty years produced musical settings of these poems, four Canadian and one British. What drew these musicians to the poetry of *Anerca*? More importantly, if song is a form of discourse between concurrent verbal and musical texts, how can we characterize the discourse created in these compositions between northern Inuit poetry from an oral tradition and southern European-style art music, particularly where none of these composers had any direct experience of Inuit culture?

This paper begins with a look at Carpenter's anthology including the visual layout of the texts with their generous use of "white space," a visual transliteration of both the snow and the vast geographical expanses that the Arctic conjures in southern imaginations. The discussion then outlines how each of the musical works in question responds to both the verbal and visual imagery of *Anerca*. These differences reveal something of each composer's musical style, but they also suggest the role played by the Arctic in two non-Arctic cultures. For the English composer, the choice of text reflects a fleeting Arctic exoticism. But for Canadian composers, the Arctic plays a crucial role in defining a distinct musical identity by opening up a vast, open space in the national imagination to the north that balances the densely populated cultural behemoth to the south that we more closely resemble and thus are always afraid to dissolve into: the United States. Furthermore, by seeking to evoke the Arctic in their music, Canadian composers also distinguish their musical identity from the southern European tradition that has so dominated Canadian art music.

Lennart Pettersson

Session 1A

Umeå University

The Pictures of the North

In my paper I will examine the use of illustrations in travel books written by foreigners travelling in the Nordic countries during the 19th century. There are more than a hundred travel books published by foreigners travelling in these parts of Europe during the period. Most of these books do not contain many illustrations, and the illustrations are often limited to maps or frontispieces. However, there are some illustrated travel books which contains more than 100 illustrations.

The key questions for the paper are what the authors and publishers tried to communicate via the illustrations. Is their purpose to highlight something in the text, to "just" represent something pretty, or to communicate something other than the text of the book? Can it really be true, as it is said, that a picture says more than a thousand words? In my paper I will give an overview of the various illustrated travel books of the 19th century dealing with the Nordic countries. The overview will deal with such questions as techniques, genres and the prevalence of illustrations.

⁵ Cf. <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/conversations/t4-202-e.html> (9.09.2007).

Representing Threats/Threatening Representations

During recent years a number of scientific reports have identified new threats to the well-being of Arctic populations (AMAP, ACIA, AHDR). This Arctic discourse concerning radioactive waste, climate change, persistent organic pollutants and many more has gained prominence as basis for political measures dealing with such threats to life in the far North.

I take a closer look at this scientific discourse of threats and conceptualise its potential impact on local frameworks of meaning. Do, for instance, warnings concerning high levels of contaminants in traditional foods issued by science-backed policy communities solely empower local populations and help them to deal with previously unconceptualised dangers? Or can the warning itself be seen as a potentially disruptive force destabilising local communities, disenfranchising roles, and rendering meaningless established rites and traditions? Can, as such, the *representation of* contaminants in forms of scientific narratives be seen as equally threatening to local cultural systems, as the contaminant itself is to local ecosystems?

As, for instance, AMAP's (2003) *combined effects assessment* indicates, a politico-scientific discourse of ecological threats tends to focus exclusively on changes to *ecosystems* and the subsequent impacts on the human organism and on *social* systems. I claim that, in addition, focus on the impacts on local *cultural* systems is essential. Contaminants do not matter due to their material qualities alone, but also due to the narratives constructed around them. In other words, viable solutions to the challenges faced in the Arctic claim sustainability also within given *cultural* settings. This claims new approaches to translation, where local knowledges are not just overcoded, but speak back and, consequently, have to be taken into account as important frames which determine the prospects of potential approaches to rapidly changing conditions.

At Home in No Man's Land: Sir William Martin Conway's *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen*

Before the Svalbard Treaty of 1920 established "the full and absolute sovereignty of Norway over the Archipelago of Spitsbergen", these islands in the Arctic Ocean had status as *terra nullius*, "no man's land". *No Man's Land* is also the title of Sir William Martin Conway's *magnum opus* from 1906, which tells the dramatic history of Spitsbergen from its discovery by the Dutch navigator William Barents in 1596 until Sven Lovén's Swedish expedition in 1837. According to Conway, the latter marked the beginning of "modern scientific exploration" of the archipelago, and even at the turn of the twentieth century the era of adventurous discovery still was not over. As the title of his own travel book, *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen* (1897), indicates, Conway's journey is narrated as a pioneering expedition through untrodden and uncharted land – in contrast to gentlemen tourists like his British predecessor and inspiration, Lord Dufferin, who had limited their activities to the coastal areas.

In his introduction to *The First Crossing of Spitsbergen* Conway laments the ruthless and unbridled exploitation of the archipelago's natural resources by many different nations. He therefore argues for its annexation of by "some power capable of regulating the country". Although he claims that "[t]he

Norwegians are the people upon whom the task should fall”, the narrative as a whole makes a case, I will argue, for the innate superiority of British control. Without explicitly presenting itself as part of the imperial and colonizing enterprise, it appropriates Spitsbergen for a British scientific, aesthetic, cosmopolitan and gentlemanly culture in a variety of ways. Hence, it anticipates Conway’s activism on behalf of British sovereignty over Spitsbergen during the negotiations leading up the Svalbard Treaty many years later.

Christina Sawchuk

Session 3B

Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge

An Arctic Republic of Letters in Early Twentieth-Century Canada

While government reports and travelogues have long been considered integral components of Arctic discourse, less attention has fallen upon correspondence between explorers, especially that of a sustained and organised nature. Yet such writings offer unique insight into a new code of northern Canadian exploration that developed in the early twentieth century among some Euro-Canadian and Euro-American men. Explorers such as George Douglas, Guy Blanchet, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and Richard Finnie formed an informal northern fraternity based on shared experience and opinion. Their private exchanges often questioned Canadian governance of the Arctic and criticized popular media representations of the region. The content and nature of this correspondence offers a fresh view upon the historical discourse surrounding Canadian arctic exploration.

The significance of this collection can best be appreciated if it is situated in the intellectual traditions of the “republic of letters” and of scientific correspondence networks. Then one may consider not only the letters’ factual content, but also the kinds of information that these men found essential for transmission and the processes of distributing and storing that knowledge. That they communicated by letter structured the content: the information shared is more personal and candid than that found in government reports, yet more accurate than that often reported in the media. However, the individual writing practices of each of the men differed to the extent that it determined the course of their public careers, as I will demonstrate. I will also examine the material characteristics of this correspondence and the texts that buttressed the network. What role did personal libraries and “messy” archives play? By delineating and describing the tenets of this network, I will explain its importance in the political and intellectual discourses about the Arctic that competed for dominance in the Canadian imagination at that time.

Johan Schimanski & Ulrike Spring

Session 6A

University of Tromsø



Polar-Nacht: Imagining the Arctic in Central Europe

In 1874, as the Austro-Hungarian Arctic expedition returned to Vienna, the Central European public was exposed to a constant flow of information about the Arctic in the major media event that followed. In negotiating descriptions made even more relevant by Central European involvement, a new image of the Arctic evolved in which specific topoi could be conventionalized (Spufford) and iconicized (David). We argue that these naturalized Arctic imaginings are most clearly delineated in those

representations which primarily use the Arctic as a way of addressing domestic issues rather than the Arctic itself. Examining especially newspaper editorials, feuilletons, satires, caricatures, illustrations, speeches, commercial products, food, poems and topical dramas, we trace the dynamic between the mediated experiences of explorers and the imaginations of a public discursively positioned as a collective “armchair traveller”. We focus on specific tropes connected to the different genres discussed, such as hyperbole and irony. The resulting image of the Arctic both confirms already established iconizations of the Arctic and is related to the historical and social context and to the specific fascinations and fixations of the Central European public in the 1870s.

Anne-Kari Skardhamar

Session 7A

Oslo University College

Changes in Film Representations of Sami Culture and Identity

My intention is to analyse changes in ideas and discursive strategies in selected films from 1929 to 2007 as regards representations of Sami culture and Sami identity in Finnmark. In different ways the films indicate a conflict of cultures and point to problems of exploitations of indigenous peoples, which may be regarded as part of Nordic colonialism.

The emphasis will be on *Lajla* (1929) and the prize rewarded *Veiviseren* (1987). The story of the young girl Lajla is told from a non-Sami point-of-view, and the mode of representation of otherness is of importance. Sami culture is described as exotic and ingenuous, and the ethnic identity of the protagonist turns out to be crucial for the solution of the story. Two versions of Per Høst's narrative documentary film *Same-Jakki* (1957), seen from an ethnic Norwegian perspective, will briefly be discussed and compared to the ideas and discourse in *Lajla*.

The action film *Veiviseren* by Nils Gaup represents a totally different perspective by focusing on power relations, religious attitudes and ethic values. The language of the film is Sami. Gaup's most recent film, *Kautokeino-opprøret* (2007), a narrative based on historic events, will also be referred to.

Roswitha Skare

Session 7A

University of Tromsø

Nanook of the North: The First Documentary about the North

Robert J. Flahertys *Nanook of the North* (1922) is considered the first documentary and possibly one of the best known of the silent-era documentaries. Flaherty went on several expeditions to the sub-Arctic eastern coast of Hudson Bay to map the area in the years between 1913 and 1916. He had captured many hours of film telling the story of the Inuits living in this area. Unfortunately Flaherty dropped his cigarette, thus burning all the 17 hours of film.

What is special about this story, is that Flaherty actually went back to make a new film. But now he had an idea about what scenes he needed to tell the story. He decided to structure the material around one man and his family. Nanook was chosen by Flaherty to represent the life of the Inuits. In 1922 he presented the story of Nanook and his family, using film, intertitles, and music. Nanook became a success both among the public and the critics.

In this paper I want to focus on which means Flaherty uses to tell his story and how Nanook and the North is represented. In addition to the film I will also include Flahertys own reflections on the film process.

University of Tromsø

Utvær – Shifting Sentiments and Meanings

Nature constitutes a very powerful rationale for understanding Norwegian and North-Norwegian sentiments (Gullestad, Witoszek). Much emphasis has been put on the mountains, valleys and the fjords in the constitution of Norwegian heritage, less on the coast. During the past decades there has been a growing awareness of the coastal areas. This is also apparent in governmental policies both concerning cultural politics, as well as in conservation activities, manifested through the new Protection Plan for the coastal areas, *Kystverneplanen*. My research emanates from the inscription of the Vega Archipelago as a new, Norwegian World Heritage Site, where the eider down harvesting tradition is celebrated. From the perspective of Vega this inscription was quite puzzling. Less than 30 years ago the islanders were paid to move from the rookeries, *utvær*, due to the North-Norwegian plan, and the archipelago was abandoned as permanent settlements. In this presentation I will explore some texts and images of the coast (related to the seabirds and rookeries) from different periods of time, in order to try to identify shifting sentiments and ideologies in the nation-building processes of the past century.

Växjö University/University of Amsterdam

Depicting and Gendering the (Sub-)Arctic: Negotiating Identity in a Norwegian Picture Book

Within the early history of the Scandinavian picture book tradition, little attention has been paid to the interaction between the Northern Scandinavian minority of the Sámi and the dominant cultures in north-western Lapland. In this paper, the ethnographic discourse on the Sámi identity in a Norwegian picture book, Lisbeth Bergh's *En lappfamilie. Tekst og bilder fra Nordland* (1905), will be examined. The question of the addressee of the book is especially intriguing. As the book is presented with Norwegian, German and English texts, a triple project might be indicated: firstly, establishing a discourse on the "exotic" Sámi identity vis-à-vis the Norwegian population; secondly, promoting and confirming tourism and the tourist gaze by catering to perceptions of foreign tourists; and – possibly – thirdly, presenting a remarkable metatextual narrative in which Sámi and Norwegian identities are merged to show the Sámi as part of the Norwegian nation's attractiveness. Though this aspect of the book is slightly paternalistic, there is also a genuine striving for a factual, truthful representation of family life in the tradition of the ethnographic travel description. Since Linnaeus a certain ambiguity of perception has been inherent in this genre, and this also includes a gendered aspect contributing to a process of gendering cultures. All addressees, the Sámi minority, the Norwegian majority and the German or English-speaking tourist, are written into the metanarrative of this picture book, which oscillates between cliché and a genuine project of intermediation.

Lexical Specificity in Travelogues about the Nordic North.

This paper, written in collaboration with Anders Steinvall, analyses how a collection of English- and French-speaking writers visiting the Nordic North have depicted native people and their abodes. More specifically, the focus of the study is on the lexical specificity used both with regard to nominal and adjectival categories.

Detail and precision in categorisation are typical features of scientific discourse, but are less common in ordinary discourse, where basic level terms (the middle level in a given taxonomy) are preferred (Lakoff 1987). If high precision is felt to be unwarranted, it may even create 'marked' readings, through which other meanings are evoked (Cruse 1977). Too little precision may also create marked readings.

Because travelogues have frequently been viewed as a distinct text genre, mixing features of scientific discourse and fiction, a study of lexical specificity is of particular interest as it may reveal patterns that are unique for the genre. In focusing on the levels of specificity, our aim is to show that lexical precision may be used for more purposes than "accuracy" alone. As the norms of travelogues are different from those of scientific writing, high precision may frequently create marked readings, most of which we interpret in terms of exoticism. Thus, we argue that the level of specificity in descriptions of people is crucial for the construction and conception of the people of the Nordic North.

CRUSE, D.A. 1977. The Pragmatics of Lexical Specificity. *Journal of Linguistics*, 13, 152-164.

LAKOFF, G. 1987. *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Interpreting Canada's Yukon Relics: Pinholes Into the Past

Yukon's residents and visitors use the material evidence of the past to build their community of memory, and in doing so they create personal relics. These relics can and do provide a connection between our present, the place that we know through our senses, and the tangible past, a place that we extrapolate through our sense experience and imagination. The implications inherent in creating our own heritage through the tangible past is one that requires acknowledgment that it is us who is making the story, and there are inherent biases within this process. The purpose of this exploration is to primarily trace the methods used in creating the community of memory, and secondarily to understand the motivations and outcomes that cause us to create the community of memory.

Political Realism and the Fantastic-Romantic: Indian Culture and the Sami in Theodor Mügge's Novel *Afraja* (1854)

In his novel *Afraja* the German novelist and liberal Theodor Mügge (1802-1861) creates an image of the Sami, which is a mixture of myths, political realism, fantastic-romantic elements as well as stereotypes of the dirty, uncivilized indigenous people on the one hand and the 'noble savage' or Rousseau's 'homme naturel' on the other hand. But first of all, the Sami becomes the transmitter of classical motives well known from adventure and Indian novels in the tradition from James Fenimore Cooper and Charles Sealsfield.

The novel *Afraja* tells us about hidden treasures, magical forces and fights with bears. Furnished with feathers attached to the hat, magical skills and a cosmological mythology, the Samis rise as the Indians of the North. They are the indigenous people, who are expelled from their hunting areas and crowded into lesser and lesser space. The Samis defending this territory with weapons, makes it a dangerous adventure for ethnic Norwegians or Danes to enter the wilderness.

Afraja is chief and medicine man. He is the Sami Tokeah, the Indian chief in Sealsfield's novel *Tokeah and the white rose* from 1828. So the Samis are being politicized or stereotyped as a suppressed minority group. Prejudice clichés and stereotypes are being deconstructed as the situation is seen from a global perspective, and not merely a local one. Mügge's liberal ideology from an external point of view and his sympathy for minorities in general make him see the Sami as a minority group on equal terms with the Indians.

This paper will discuss the meeting between German liberal discourse, Indian adventure romantic and the Sami in fiction. The analyse will reveal a paradox: The picture of the Sami and their situation in Northern Norway at this time is far more realistic in Mügge's fiction than in his prose, his travel writing, where he is relying on local knowledge.

Knud Rasmussen and the 5th Thule Expedition

Seen from an Inuit perspective, the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921–1924 is the most important arctic expedition to have taken place in the 20th century. The expedition was led by Knud Rasmussen (1879–1933), who in March 1923 broke up from the main expedition, located north of the Hudson Bay in Canada, and with two Inuit from Thule in Northwest Greenland continued along the Northwest Passage on dog-sled all the way to and across the Bering Strait. Visiting with the people living in small settlements along the way, Rasmussen collected ethnographical material and folklore and proved the shared language and cultural roots of the Eskimo groups all across Alaska, Canada and Greenland. The Fifth Thule Expedition had a decisive impact on the negotiation of identity among the Greenlanders, who came to define themselves as Greenlandic Inuit. Likewise the expedition became a major inspiration for important political associations as the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC). The paper studies the literary style and political discourse of Knud Rasmussen's description of the journey in *Fra Grønland til Stillehavet*, 1925 (*Across Arctic America*, 1927).

The Distribution of Place: Some Photographs by Ellisif Wessel

This paper will look at some photographs by Ellisif Wessel (1866-1949) in the context of the book *Fra vor grændse mod Rusland* [From our border to Russia]. The book is structured as a diary from a journey along the Russian-Norwegian border and was published in 1902 – only a few years before Norway became an independent nation state.

In order to explore spatial issues at stake in the use of photographic images, Wessel's photographs will be discussed as spatial markers that form a kind of geography. This perspective sidesteps dominant notions within photographic discourse such as representation and reference. Instead, the paper will focus on photography's ontological relation to place, and examine how the photographic document can be thought in relation to a politics of space.

The paper will consider conceptual and structural relations between photography and place, and show how Wessel's photographs open for a certain distribution of places. This kind of distribution has been essential to the construction of national territories – for example in the Arctic – and the paper aims to contribute to an understanding of how photographs can take part in processes of spatialisation.

Ingrid Urberg**Session 7B****Gender, Landscape and the Svalbard Experience**

The gendering of nature and wilderness in both oral and written literature from ancient to modern times has garnered considerable critical attention (Sherrill Grace, J. Hillis Miller, etc.) in recent years. It has been noted that polar exploration literature is striking in the way in which landscape has frequently been gendered as female in these accounts, not in the ancient sense of the benevolent mother, but in the sense of the wild, arctic landscape as an unpredictable and dangerous force to be dominated and conquered. Similarly, it has been noted how gendered language has been used to exclude women from the polar realm. However, women's voices which have been, in the language of Tillie Olsen, silenced are now being uncovered, and are being considered in the study of arctic discourse on gender. I would like to draw some Svalbard perspectives into this discussion.

The arctic archipelago of Svalbard is one of the last wilderness areas in Europe, and it has inspired a large body of literature, both fiction and non-fiction. Though Svalbard was, until recently, a society in which men far outnumbered women and in which the primary activities—exploration, hunting and mining—were carried out predominantly by men, women have lived and worked there for over a hundred years. Their first-hand accounts are less numerous and have received less critical attention than those of their male counterparts, and they are worthy of more study.

In this paper, I will focus on the representations of the wilderness in five twentieth century personal narratives by women who have spent extended periods on Svalbard. I will argue that wilderness, rather than functioning as an opponent—as frequently predicted by those resistant to the presence of women on Svalbard—functions as a powerful and benevolent helper. Not only does Svalbard's physical landscape and isolation aid these women in fulfilling tangible personal and professional goals; this isolated archipelago is also described as possessing the power to

transform the way in which these women identity themselves, functioning not as a force to be conquered, but as one to be revered.

Margherita d'Ayala Valva

Session 6A

Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa

Touristic and Chauvinistic Approach to the Arctic in the Italian Popular Press: Some Cases of Literary and Artistic Reception from the *fin-de-siècle* to the Fascist Era



My paper will focus on Italian non-scientific approaches to the Arctic at the beginning of the 20th Century. Starting from some journalistic travel writings, children's books and their illustrations, I will examine some cases of images of the Great North focusing on the Duke of Abruzzi's Polar Expedition of 1900 and on Umberto Nobile's of 1928, involving artistic and literary reception, popular imagery and political implications.

The linguistic barriers leads to some aestheticizing interpretations (by means of images) of a faraway land: landscapes seen as

Divisionist paintings, or as Japanese prints (and illustrated as such). Pictures have pre-eminence in this kind of literature, and artists are the ideal readers and the protagonists of the pages (see the relevant role played by the art critic Vittorio Pica in informing the Italian public about the Scandinavian artists exhibiting at the Venice Biennale in the first decade of the century).

A children's book first published in 1909 plays here the role of an exemplary connection between this first image of the North (more related to a *fin-de-siècle* world) and the Fascist era, then dramatically represented by Nobile's expedition of 1928. *Mastro Spago al Polo Nord* (*Master String travelling to the North Pole*) is the story of a Florentine shoemaker who bets with his drunkard friends not only that he can surpass Cagni's goal of 86° 34' but also that he can reach the North Pole and bring it back to Florence as a souvenir. The 'epic' story of this journey announces in a satirical way the fascist rhetoric about the permanent *ire ultra* (surpassing the limits), a concept then paradoxically anchored to a municipal-chauvinistic horizon.

Inna Veselova

Session 4C

University of St. Petersburg

The Construction of Personal Memory in Northern Russia: From Materialization to Narrative

The paper is based on autobiographies collected in the Vologda region of Russia in the framework of the project "Museum of Biographies. Russian Province. 20th century". The research focuses on the phenomenon of autobiographies of Russian rural and provincial residents. In the 20th century biographies of "ordinary" people in different forms (diaries, memoirs and articles in the local press) became a widespread discourse

practice. My aim is to explicate the intermediary position of those autobiographical documents between oral archaic tradition and written narrative.

The idea of maintaining social memory in general, and personally focused reminiscences in particular was not popular in Russian traditional culture. The intentions of writing are discussed in relation to non-written forms of commemorative acts. This commemoration is mostly impersonal, likewise the memory itself. There has been only one way to leave a personal memory – by its materialization.

Leila Werthschulte

Session 4A

Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich

Light, Love and Longing for Infinity: The Experience of Arctic in Heleen van der Laan's *Waar blijft he licht*

Heleen van der Laan's book, published 1993 in the Netherlands, is based on her yearlong sojourn in Spitsbergen. After working on a Greenpeace ship, she spent one year living with the seal hunter Nils in the solitude of the Arctic. She describes her life in the long winter circumstances, her relationship with the reticent yet obtrusive Nils, and her focus on the basic rules of survival in the cold and long darkness. She develops a new view of animals, of her physical work and the weather conditions.

Van der Laan's work is more than a travelogue, it discusses in a literary manner the way Europeans cope with the Arctic world as well as the general gender question. This paper focuses on these two categories which cause Heleen to create not only her own reality about the Arctic but also accept the rules of the nature. The Arctic with its powerful presence causes the change in Heleen's mind and in the end helps her find her true self. The gender issue especially appears as a parallel to man's the struggle against darkness and ice. The role allocation is discussed here as well as her romantic relationship with Nils, who only sees her as a sex object at the beginning, without showing his true self. Later, their relationship becomes "more than a result of circumstances".

While Heleen learns to understand and love the light and darkness of the „actual, beautiful“ Arctic reality, her own idea of the Arctic fades away. Thus, her stay in Spitsbergen becomes "a mirror for the search for [her] true identity", which, in the words of romantic author E.T.A. Hoffmann's describes the European feeling of "longing for infinity".

Lisa Williams

Session 4B

York University

Telling an Arctic Tale: Arctic Discourses in Canadian Foreign Policy

Recently in Canada, much attention has been paid to concerns over Arctic sovereignty and security, especially in light of contending claims by other Arctic countries over both the under-ice sea-bed of much of the Arctic as well as sovereignty over the Northwest Passage. This attention has found its way into policy documents, speeches and practices that are a part of Canadian foreign policy. Yet in these policies and speeches, the meaning of the Arctic – the discourses and assumptions that structure knowledge about it – is rarely if ever explored. But importantly, Canada's foreign policy in the Arctic is a discourse, one which imagines the Arctic as pure and imperiled yet feral, a clearly bordered homeland to Indigenous subjectivities, and perhaps more crucially, as a potential site for resource development and exploitation. The narrative of Canada's Arctic foreign policy is one of perceived threat to an unproblematic and seemingly unified Canadian identity, an identity linked to the protection of

a spatially distinct, Arctic territory. Through an engagement of selected policy documents and speeches, my paper argues that within Canadian foreign policy circulates a dominant Arctic discourse that is comprised of three sets of related and contestable knowledges: that the Arctic is a colonial, marginalized and indigenous space. This dominant discourse needs to be confronted and unsettled in order to provide the opportunity for new discourses about politics in the Arctic region to ascend.

Roxanne Willis

Session 4B

Harvard University

The American Arctic: Finding Alaska's Place in the North

The United States has long had an ambivalent relationship to the Arctic and Sub-Arctic environments within its borders. When the United States purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867, the Arctic was a “foreign” land—a mysterious place with an icy, inhospitable environment the likes of which most Americans had never seen. After several decades of simply ignoring its new acquisition, the government began trying to render Alaska's landscape comprehensible—to make it more “American”—by promoting development schemes in the frontier mode. Unfortunately, these projects were based on models from the continental West, and they failed to transfer to Alaska's unique Arctic and Sub-Arctic environments. American scholarly discussions of Alaska have largely mirrored the historical record by viewing the region as an extension of the American West rather than part of the circumpolar North.

My paper will consider twentieth century discourses surrounding environment and development in Alaska, focusing specifically on Outside, non-Native attempts to recreate the Western experience in Alaska by fashioning the region as “the last frontier.” I will examine how historians have mistakenly repeated this quest to put the Alaskan Arctic into the American West—at least discursively. I will then propose some ways in which our understanding of Alaska, its history, and its peoples can be improved by imagining the region as part of the circumpolar North rather than the American West.

Stephen F. Wolfe

Session 6B

University of Tromsø

Moving the “Geographic Missionaries” from Africa to the Arctic Regions: John Barrow's Writings in the *Quarterly Review*, 1816-1820

This paper will focus on the years 1816 to 1820, to investigate how Sir John Barrow Second Lord of the British Admiralty, changed his discursive strategies to move the focus of public discussion and geographical exploration, North. He did this in a series of essays in the *Quarterly Review*, and his own *Chronological History of Voyages into the Arctic Regions* (1818). The paper seeks to revise the popular public picture of Barrow developed by Francis Spufford and Fergus Fleming through a close study of the tropes and rhetorical structures in Barrow's presentation of the reasons for “the very defective geography of the Arctic Regions” and how expeditions sponsored by the Admiralty could change that. While all of Barrow's reviews were anonymous, they can be identified by their self-referencing movements from East to North; their length; a turgid style; and his clear ideological attempt to set government policies in the exploration of the Arctic. Few critics have systematically examined this material, nor have they considered the attacks on Barrow in such essays as John Ross's *The Reviewer Reviewed*, from 1818.

The paper argues that Barrow's reviews construct a discourse, which sets the Arctic current, winds, and ice floes in motion from the North, and the geographic missionaries in movement from the South. It is a discourse structure which sets the "real curiosity" of the explorer in a programmatic movement Northward so the occasion for the imaginary can be explored. Barrow instructed his expeditions not just as a naval representative but also as a writer, setting the plot; reading the draft; and reviewing the final product with the authority of a discourse practitioner and imaginative reader.

Henning Howlid Wærp

Session 2B

University of Tromsø

The Second Fram Expedition: Otto Sverdrup's *Nyt land* (1903)

Otto Sverdrup was a member of Fridtjof Nansen's expedition across Greenland in 1888 and was captain of the vessel Fram in 1893–96, on Nansen's North Pole expedition. In 1898 Sverdrup launched his own expedition with Fram, a journey to Arctic Canada, not returning until 1902. This was a scientific expedition, but not without nationalistic overtones, and in his narrative *Nyt Land*, published in 1903, he writes self-confidently in the preface: "There are white spots on the map up there that I would like to put the Norwegian colours on."

At the same time he is in doubt about his ability to write a book from the journey. In his diary, while he is working on the manuscript, he writes: "I don't think I am able to write something that people might like to read. I only list up one thing after the other." In spite of this, the book was published in two volumes of more than 1000 pages in 1903. In my paper I will look more closely at Sverdrup's narrative and discuss why the book today is less known than the expedition reports by Nansen, Amundsen, Johansen and Astrup, although it was translated into German and Czech immediately after its publication.

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Arctic Discourses Conference 21–23 February 2008

For information on the Arctic Discourses project see <http://uit.no/humfak/arkdisk/>

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Proceedings Announcement

We will be publishing conference proceedings, a second special issue of *Nordlit* on arctic discourses. *Nordlit* is a series of working papers in literature published by the Humanities Faculty, University of Tromsø. The journal appears twice a year, both in paper version and on the internet. Contributors are at liberty to publish their articles elsewhere later on.

The journal's internet address is: <http://uit.no/humfak/publikasjoner/>

If you wish to participate, please submit your article by April 15, 2008 to henning.waerp@hum.uit.no

Illustrations are accepted; they will be reprinted in black and white in the paper version of the journal, but appear in colour on the internet version.

Contributors will receive 3 copies of *Nordlit* by end of June 2008.