

ENCOUNTERS ON THE PASSAGE: INUIT MEET THE EXPLORERS. By DOROTHY HARLEY EBER. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008. ISBN 978-8020-9275-5. xxiv + 168 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, index. Hardbound. Cdn\$45.00.

In the summer of 1861 while travelling and conversing with the Inuit of Frobisher Bay, the American explorer Charles Francis Hall was amazed to realize that their stories concerning the previous presence of white men in the area, and especially on Kodlunarn Island, referred to Martin Frobisher's expedition of 1578, almost 300 years earlier (Hall, 1866). The message of Eber's book is that such Inuit oral traditions concerning early visitors are still alive and well in the Canadian Arctic. Over the period 1994–2008, Eber tape-recorded interviews with Inuit elders in person or on the phone. Her informants lived in Iglulik (formerly Igloodlik), Taloyoak (formerly Spence Bay), Gjoa Haven, and Cambridge Bay. She also collected stories from the Inullariaat Elders' Society Archives at the Igloodlik Research Centre.

The stories that she recorded referred to Inuit encounters with the expeditions of John Ross at Felix Harbour on the Boothia Peninsula in 1829–33, of Sir John Franklin on or near King William Island in 1848–50, of Richard Collinson near Cambridge Bay in 1852–53, and of Roald Amundsen at Gjoa Haven in 1903–05. In an appendix, Eber even introduces an interview by Dr. Susan Rowley in 1991 with Simonie Alaianga of Iqaluit, who related a story that he had heard from his grandmother concerning a shipwreck and ship-repair operation near Kodlunarn Island (Qallunaat) that clearly relates to Frobisher's expedition: the story had survived for 413 years.

Two aspects of the stories merit emphasis. First, not every Inuk who knows of a particular encounter with the explorers will relate precisely the same story; indeed, often quite widely diverging versions exist. For example, Eber collected four different versions of the punishment inflicted by Captain Parry on Oo-oo-took, an Inuk who was caught stealing a shovel, none of them accurate. After being confined below decks for some time, the man was given a dozen lashes: a mild punishment by Royal Navy standards. But according to the Inuit versions, rather than being given the lash, he suffered attempts to stab him, to cut off his head or limbs, or to wound him severely with an axe, none of which attempts were successful because he was a shaman. And a recurring theme, even as late as Amundsen's expedition, is that the Inuit were frightened, even terrified, at their first encounters with the white visitors, whom they thought might be spirits rather than humans.

With regard to the Franklin expedition, the Inuit accounts collected by Eber have turned up two aspects of the fate of that expedition that certainly should be followed up by research in the field. One story, collected at Cambridge Bay, concerns a ship that wintered at Imnguyaaluk, the northernmost large island of the Royal Geographical Society group. Inuit visited the ship and even saw enough of the men on board to give at least two of them nicknames.

The other Inuit account, first heard by Major L.T. Burwash in 1930 from Inuit at a winter camp in Rae Strait (east of King William Island), but later recounted to Eber, concerns a wrecked ship off Matty Island, northeast of King William Island. One of Eber's informants, Tony Anguttitauruq, insists that various pieces of metal found at Haviktalik (the place having metal), a location on the Boothia Peninsula opposite Matty Island, greatly pre-date Amundsen's expedition, and he believes that the metal was associated with the wreck off Matty Island.

Some of the stories that Eber collected present quite charmingly evocative images. One of these is that Abiluktuq, the first Inuk to spot John Ross's *Victory* at Felix Harbour, was so frightened that he ran away at great speed, with the long tail of his parka streaming straight out behind him. This incident has been beautifully captured in the illustration by contemporary artist, Germaine Arnaktauyok. Another charming incident was related by Annie Aqvik of Gjoa Haven, concerning her grandmother's visit to the cabin aboard Amundsen's *Gjøa*. Happening to look behind her, she saw a woman standing there, wearing a parka identical to her own, smiling when she smiled, and moving when she moved. This was her first encounter with a full-length mirror.

In general Eber's accounts of the events of the various expeditions are quite well researched, but there are a few slips. Thus on p. 17, the mountains that John Ross claimed he saw blocking Lancaster Sound in 1818 were named the "Croker Mountains," after John Wilson Croker, First Lord of the Admiralty, not the "Crocker Mountains." Eber appears to have confused the name with that of "Crocker Land," the non-existent land that Robert Peary claimed to have seen northwest of Axel Heiberg Island in 1906. And on p. 34, the long arm of the sea in northwest Baffin Island is identified as "Admiralty Sound" rather than "Admiralty Inlet."

While Eber appears to be reasonably familiar with the relevant primary accounts of the various expeditions, she does not appear to be so conversant with the more recent literature. On p. 115, she writes that on Collinson's expedition on board HMS *Enterprise* (1850–55) "some of his officers had been mutinous." A recent analysis of Collinson's expedition (Barr, 2007) details Collinson's bizarre, paranoid behaviour, whereby he progressively placed all four of his executive officers under arrest for trivial or even non-existent offences. The surprising aspect is that they did not mutiny. Elsewhere, in connection with James Anderson's and James Stewart's trip down the Back River in 1855, Eber reports that "Incredibly ... Anderson had no interpreter" (p. 103). Firstly there were very few fluent Inuktitut/English interpreters in 1855, since Fort Chimo, Eastmain, and Churchill were the only posts where the Hudson's Bay Company personnel regularly interacted with Inuit. And secondly, as Barr (1999) has recorded in detail, William Oman, an interpreter for the Company at Churchill, was dispatched across country in winter, accompanied by two Chipewyan, to join Anderson's expedition at Fort Chipewyan, but had to abandon what was undoubtedly a gruelling trip when he

became lame. In other words, a serious attempt was made to provide Anderson with an interpreter, and there was nothing incredible about the fact that the attempt failed.

These minor slips do not seriously detract from Eber's book, however. One is left with the thought that she has probably not exhausted the fund of stories still current among Inuit elders, and that there is probably potential for further research in the area.

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TRACING THE CONNECTED NARRATIVE: ARCTIC EXPLORATION IN BRITISH PRINT CULTURE, 1818–1860. By JANICE CAVELL. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8020-9280-9. xii + 329 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, bib., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$60.00; £40.00.

This print-cultural history analyzes the role that 19th-century Arctic explorers and exploration played in British culture through more than four decades (in fact, chiefly only in two: the 1820s and 1850s). Uninterested in the Arctic itself, the author proceeds from an initial dismissal of scholarship based on books of exploration to study, chiefly in chapters 7 and 8, the burgeoning British periodical press's representation of the search for a northwest passage and for Franklin's missing expedition. Moreover, the attention given is uneven: several book-length narratives receive detailed discussion, while many others, even ones relating to the same expeditions as those discussed in detail, receive no mention and are not to be found in the bibliography. In contrast, the bibliography lists titles of many secondary sources not mentioned in either the text or the endnotes.

Especially as the author contextualizes each periodical's political stripe and purpose, she engagingly enlightens readers by analyzing, among other topics, the periodicals' class-based criticism of the way Parliament and the Admiralty handled two simultaneous events: the search for Franklin's missing expedition of 1845 and the Crimean War. Generally, this approach introduces a more nuanced account than was

available to date, but it does not take historical understanding in directions not covered in other recent work, such as *Finding Franklin*, Peter Bate's documentary for Crossing the Line Films. One notable exception, the profile of explorer Sherard Osborn as a strong journalist and editor, does suggest that he must hereafter be regarded as more central.

Basing her interpretation on a highly positive, uncritical acceptance of the role played by John Barrow, second secretary of the Admiralty through most of the period under discussion and one of Britain's first career civil servants, Cavell provides clear evidence that Britain refashioned its identity into that of a selfless, disinterested chivalric knight sallying forth in the face of mortal danger to conquer evil (that is, geographical ignorance). This romantic cast, understandably heavy in Christian virtue, pervades the articles and reviews that monitored that era's activity as newsreels and radio did in the 20th century and as blogs and twitter do today. Its signatures include the narration of heroic deeds through modest firsthand observations (the greater the achievement, the more humble the narration of it). This humility/modesty topos is effected by *atechnos* or *diminutio*, two names, neither mentioned by Cavell, for a rhetorical device by which plain-speaking, firsthand observers modestly and unnecessarily apologize for the quality of their writing. Cavell does not note that this signature was no innovation: the well educated in 19th-century Britain would have known this rhetorical device well (and if she knew her Mackenzie, so would Cavell in an Arctic context). Like the 19th-century periodical writers, the author does not discriminate between the explorer and his literary persona—that is, the Franklin who ate his boots and the Franklin presented to the public by John Murray's books are one and the same—so her analyses remain basic. There is no room in this orientation for the Franklin who, according to George Back, on 13 August 1820 north of Great Slave Lake, vowed to blow out the brains of any voyageur who threatened to desert him; there is only room for the Franklin who would not smack a mosquito.

Much of this book's argument for a connected narrative comprises both quotations from the book reviews published in periodicals, which deserve again to see the light of day, and the author's rehearsals of exploration history and of the book-length publications, most of which are well known and several of which appear to be better known to the scholars dismissed in the opening pages than to the author herself (more of which below).

The author faults 20th-century authors for concluding that only naval heroes satisfied the British public, so that the likes of John Rae were, ultimately, denounced or all but ignored (p. 179), but she fails to notice that in his *Chronological History of Voyages in the Arctic Regions* (1818), Barrow had initiated this trend, casting aspersions on several 16th-, 17th-, and 18th-century explorers who failed him by concluding that no passage existed, or whose books failed to anticipate the model of English seamanship that the popular imagination's portrait of James Cook would introduce. Good examples of this Barrovan tactic are his remarks about the