

The discussion of penny periodicals is very helpful, but no discussion occurs of the Arctic panoramas that attracted sizable crowds to London's Leicester Square and elsewhere. Only bare mention is made of juvenile literature, which abounded in rehearsals of explorers' exploits, for example, John Harris's publication of *Northern Regions; or, A Relation of Uncle Richard's Voyages for the Discovery of a North-west Passage* (1825), which centred on Parry. The famous anonymous dream-vision song known by turns as "Lord Franklin" and "Concerning Franklin and his Gallant Crew," and with various sets of lyrics, receives no discussion, and of theatrical renderings, only *The Frozen Deep* by Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens makes an appearance.

This book is at its most promising when directing its attention to the hitherto seldom-considered representations of the North American Arctic in the 19th-century British periodical press, but it falls short of fulfilling its promise because it does not sustain all its claims, covers only part of the territory across which it promises to range, and fails to locate itself in existing scholarship even as it dismisses or ignores it.

I.S. MacLaren
Department of History and Classics and
Department of English and Film Studies
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2H4, Canada
ian.maclaren@ualberta.ca

FACE TO FACE: POLAR PORTRAITS. By HUW LEWIS-JONES. Photography by Martin Hartley. Cambridge: The Scott Polar Research Institute, 2008. ISBN 987-0-901021-08-3. 288 p., b&w and colour illus., further reading, index. Hardbound. £25.

In addition to the vast library collections of polar books and related literature, the Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI) also has a collection of some 20 000 photographic negatives dating from 1845 to the 1980s, representing visual records of British and international polar exploration. Project Freeze Frame began in 2007 to capture and preserve this archive of historical images in digital form. Sir John Franklin is honored with the oldest image in this book, a daguerreotype taken by photographer Richard Beard in 1845, the only photo of Franklin ever taken, and also the last, since he and his men and two ships were lost in their search for the Northwest Passage. Dr. Huw Lewis-Jones is historian and curator of art at SPRI. In producing this impressive work, he was assisted by many others, including Kari Herbert, daughter of Sir Wally Herbert, who is featured on p. 90–91. The names of Herbert Ponting from Scott's expedition of 1910–13 and of Frank Hurley from Shackleton's 1914–16 expedition come immediately to mind as photographers whose names are as famous as the works that came from their cameras. On a modern scale, expedition photographer Martin Hartley was engaged in filling out the selections

illustrated in this book, drawing from men and women from many nations who are exploring, working, and living in polar regions today. Of the 100 individuals pictured in the book it would appear that about half are from early expeditions and half from a contemporary age. Many are rightly included because of their 'firsts,' such as Amundsen, Fuchs, Herbert, Fiennes, Steger, Messner (mountaineering and other feats), and Swithinbank, who has probably seen more of Antarctica than any other person, living or dead. Others are there simply because of their importance in polar exploration. Some names have the knighthood 'Sir' attached to them because of their polar accomplishments, and perhaps others are yet to receive the honor. The modern or contemporary photos and images are a different matter, and unless one follows relatively recent expeditions to the north and south poles, faces and names are vague at best.

A preview of all 100 is illustrated in miniature scale on p. 46, and an interesting challenge for anyone knowledgeable in polar literature, expeditions, and photographs is to attach a name to each. Many faces are familiar, having been exhibited many times in a variety of books and magazines, but others are not. Some unpublished images, rediscovered within private albums and personal collections, have never been seen by the public eye and are a genuine treat.

One of the most striking photographs is the excellent portrayal on the book's cover of Cecil Meares from Scott's expedition, taken by Ponting in 1912. Some photos in the past, it is admitted, were faked, embellished, or manipulated (p. 29–30). For example, Dr. Frederick Cook claimed to have climbed Mt. McKinley in 1906 but fraudulently described the photo, and his claim to have reached the North Pole first stands out as another fraud (p. 169).

A foreword by Sir Ranulph Fiennes introduces the book, followed by an essay by Huw Lewis-Jones entitled "Photography Then," a historical account of the subject, which states that the first known photograph was taken in 1826 using primitive methods.

The "Polar Portraits" of the 100 individuals, featured on pages 47 to 247, starts with Herbert Ponting and ends with Hugh Brody. There is no attempt to sort the portraits alphabetically or chronologically, and some names to be expected in the content are not there. Each entry consists of two pages, one a photo in either color or black-and-white (depending on the antiquity of the event), and a page of brief text to provide the background for the individual. The location where the photo was taken is specified, as well as the year of birth, and when appropriate, the year of passing. The reader might be puzzled by the entry of Jane Nedzhipova (London, 2008; birth year 1982–) on p. 186–187; the accompanying text only hints at why she is included.

A section entitled "Photography Now," a discussion between Lewis-Jones and Martin Hartley, contrasts the modernity of the current profession to the trials and tribulations faced by photographers in early expeditions. A visit to Scott's hut at Cape Evans and the darkroom inside that was used by Ponting provided the author a good indication of what Ponting faced attempting to produce an accurate

photographic account of the 1910–13 expedition under various conditions. Readers interested in a comparison to polar photography using the finest of modern equipment may refer to the recent book by Klipper (2008) as a notable example.

The “Afterword” by Hugh Brody (p. 275–280) is a well-done section on some philosophical aspects of capturing the moment of a situation that illustrates an obvious message and a tribute to those who made this collection a work of art. One of the more famous of many photographs from Scott’s expedition of 1910–13 is that of the five men at the South Pole (p. 14), taken several times with the men in different positions in the scene. As Brody mentions (p. 276), their facial expressions show their disappointment to find that Amundsen was there before them, as well as their experience of great hardship in getting to the Pole, and their knowledge that they are “going to suffer yet more.” No preparation or posing for such a picture was necessary, for the subjects dominate the message. A “Further Reading” list is a boost toward searching for books relevant to the subject of polar photography; illustrations of cameras in the SPRI collections are helpful for comparisons with what is available today; and an index on p. 285 helps to locate individuals of your choice. The quality of the sturdy paper and the reproduction of photos are excellent. The book was published in association with Polarworld, and can be found at <http://www.polarworld.co.uk>. The book accompanies a touring exhibition that opened in Cambridge, England, in 2008 and will be displayed in select galleries in the United Kingdom and United States. Overall, I recommend the book to polar historians and others who value the art of specialized photography and as a handsome addition to a personal library and coffee table.

REFERENCE

Klipper, S.D. 2008. *The Antarctic from the Circle to the Pole*. San Francisco, California: Chronicle Books.

John Spletstoesser
Polar Consultant
P.O. Box 515
Waconia, Minnesota 55387, USA
spletts@embarqmail.com

THE BIG THAW: TRAVELS IN THE MELTING NORTH.

By ED STRUZIK. Mississauga, Ontario: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2009. ISBN 978-0-470-15728-2. x + 278 p., map, colour illus., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$29.95; US\$26.95.

Consider this book a collection of thoughtful dispatches from today’s front lines in what many regard as tomorrow’s war on global warming. Since 2006, the author has been “embedded” with scientific investigative teams deployed

across the Canadian Arctic. From these adventures, Ed Struzik combines vivid travelogues with his take on scientists’ current interpretations of their own findings. *The Big Thaw*’s first nine chapters are the resulting distillate. Its concluding tenth chapter and Epilogue step back from researchers’ trenches to some mid-latitude foci of geopolitical analysis. Thus distanced, the author puts scientists’ arcto-centric efforts into the context of international and global public policies—or the lack thereof.

Inevitably, readers calibrate the quality of writing by how it treats people and subjects common to their own and writers’ experiences. My calibrations include depictions of Andy Williams, mountain pilot extraordinaire (p. 65–68), Steve Blasco, geologist (p. 155), and the complex topics of vetting scientific activities by local game councils (p. 16) and traditional knowledge among indigenous residents of the Arctic (Chapter 7, p. 159–182). In each case, this author earns highest marks for combining accuracy, conciseness, fairness, and empathy with his human subjects.

In the dimension of breadth, *The Big Thaw*’s content also deserves praise. Struzik’s menu of natural history topics is analogous to the repertoire of a musical virtuoso. His topics range from the “iconic” polar bear and its variously beset populations (Chapter 1) to insidious microbes plaguing eider ducks and other species of wildlife (Chapter 5), and to matriarchal societies amongst red squirrels, the “chatterboxes” of the North (Chapter 9). In our age of specialization, we should revere the handful of generalists who open communications between scientists and non-scientists for substantive dialogue. Struzik’s book portrays the ruins of post-warming Arctic environments as what he might have called “A Dominion of Mosquitoes and Willows” (e.g., p. 208–218), in much the way that Jonathan Schell (1982) evoked an image of life surviving a nuclear war in his essay entitled, “A Republic of Insects and Grass.”

Struzik targets thoughtful citizens—especially of western European and North American nations—with a goal of swaying them from ignorance and apathy to action. This ambitious goal puts his work in distinguished company; we remind ourselves how many observers for so long have touted the imminent reality of contrasting human-induced global changes. On the rising tide of environmental concern in the second half of the last century, some scientists depicted in chilling detail the consequences of “nuclear winter” (e.g., Ehrlich and Sagan, 1984). A few years later, Asimov and Pohl (1991) explored threats of planetary warming by CO₂ and an array of other, more potent greenhouse gases. Some of their global examples are scarcely distinguishable from elements of Struzik’s catechism of more detailed Arctic examples: increased storminess (p. 61), sea level rise (p. 44–46), and increases in insect-borne and other southern diseases (p. 6).

To enjoy this book fully, overlook some lapses in copyediting. Garry Clarke with a terminal ‘e’ is correct, despite contradictory text entries (p. 52, 75). The *Louis St. Laurent* transited the Northwest Passage from west to east (not east to west) in 1998, but, the account on p. 85 notwithstanding,