

How to Be a Heroic Explorer in a Friendly Arctic

A Chronotopic Approach to Self-Representation in Vilhjalmur Stefansson's
The Friendly Arctic: The Story of Five Years in Polar Regions (1921)

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Introduction

This dissertation is about *The Friendly Arctic: The Story of Five Years in Polar Regions* (1921), exploration account and Arctic manifesto of explorer, anthropologist, writer, lecturer and polemicist Vilhjalmur Stefansson (1879–1962). *The Friendly Arctic* is perhaps best characterized as a generically hybrid narrative. Spanning nearly 800 pages, this weighty volume can be read as an anthropological record, a wilderness survival guide, an essayistic contribution to the history of the exploration of the North—not to forget a travelogue and a narrative of discovery; in short, Stefansson’s multifaceted and yet distinctive vision of the Arctic between two covers.

The Friendly Arctic is furnished with an optimistic title and framed with an imperative. The opening words of Gilbert Grosvenor, former president of the National Geographic Society, shed light on what must be considered a central motive of the text, namely to make readers “see the Arctic through Stefansson’s eyes, no longer tragic and desolate, but converted by his adaptable spirit and clever creative hand to become fruitful and friendly—comfortable and almost jolly” (Grosvenor, in Stefansson 1921: xx). As this quote demonstrates, it is in many respects a revolutionary tale of the North that *The Friendly Arctic* imparts. Stefansson’s persistent message throughout the volume is: Go north! Live by the Inuit example, and open your eyes to the friendliness and to the bounty of these underestimated regions.

Another aspect of the narrative presents itself as no less important, however, and this will serve as a main focus in the present dissertation: *The Friendly Arctic* is not only a story about the professed superiority of a geographical region, it is just as much about the explorer who lends his eyes and mind to his readers to perceive that region through. In Stefansson’s tale, perhaps more so than in comparable narratives of exploration, the image presented of the explorer is inseparably intertwined with the image presented of his surroundings. This close relationship between man and locale was the first matter that intrigued me when I opened the pages to Stefansson’s account of a friendly Arctic, and I have later come to perceive it as one of the very girders that holds the narrative together. However, this relationship is not always uncomplicated,

something which makes for another, even more, intriguing aspect of Stefansson's text: there is sometimes a conflict between that text's *what* and its *how*, between its persuasive friendly Arctic discourse and the narrative construction of such a persistent message. What follows over the next chapters is my attempt to deconstruct and describe this distinctive and yet complex relationship between the narrative representation of the friendly Arctic and the friendly Arctic explorer.

My discussion and analyses of *The Friendly Arctic* are organized in five main chapters. While I lay out the background to such discussion in Chapter One (by introducing the North as a malleable concept, Stefansson as a friendly Arctic explorer, and the present study as informed by recent work on Arctic discourses), Chapter Two gives an introduction to the theoretical and methodological approach of my study. Because narrative space and time, as well as plot and character, feature as key concepts in my critical discussion of Stefansson's text, I devote some space here to explaining chronotope theory. I also relate this concept coined by Mikhail Bakhtin to Hayden White's emplotment and discuss how the chronotope can be productively applied to the literature of exploration. In Chapter Three, however, I move from theory to literary analysis by examining how the above-mentioned features in Stefansson's text may be visualized together as a friendly Arctic chronotope. I continue the analysis of that text in Chapter Four, where I shift the focus from the narration of Stefansson's actual journey through the Canadian Arctic, to the equally important but still rather different "argumentative" journey he conducts in and through his text. The chronotope also here remains a focal analytical concept. The topic of Chapter Five is Stefansson's self-representation as Arctic explorer and expert. I here return to the generic conventions of the literature of exploration, in order to examine how Stefansson narratively stages or fashions himself in accordance with—and, more importantly, in contrast to—such conventions. I also attempt to dissect the general narrative communication situation in *The Friendly Arctic*, and thus nuance the otherwise sturdy image given by the text of Stefansson's implied author. In my final analytical chapter, Chapter Six, I argue that Stefansson's self-representation must be seen as closely related to his portrayal of Inuit as the anthropological Other. I explore some of the specifically temporal terms used to convey such an image of Inuit characters, and see

how such terms imply (at least to today's readers) a problematic relationship between Stefansson and Inuit. Chapter Six, therefore, explores themes of the self in relation to themes of the other, but is more importantly placed towards the end of my dissertation because it demonstrates how the problem investigated and the approach taken in previous chapters matter on the level of power and discourse. In Chapter Seven I offer my concluding remarks, as well potential agendas for future research.

Chapter One: Heading North

Similar to Stefansson's *Friendly Arctic*, North is the fundamental direction that guides the compass needle of the present work. North, however, is not just a direction or even a specific locale, but also an object of representation—an idea. In the present chapter I introduce three subject matters that form the background to my discussion of Stefansson's text. First, I explore the many shapes of North; secondly, I introduce Stefansson as explorer and author of *The Friendly Arctic*; and, finally, I comment on the *literary* nature of his account. I thus seek to set the tone for my critical discussion of *The Friendly Arctic* in the analytical chapters of this thesis, which is preceded by an introduction of methodological and theoretical material in Chapter Two.

What is North?

Our imagination is drawn to the unknown. This may be the reason why the once unexplored blank spots on the map—the interior of Africa, the Sahara Desert, or the areas surrounding the Poles—so memorably have lent themselves to literary representation. Some haunting examples are the stories of Marlow's journey towards “the Inner Station”, the encounter of the enigmatic Hungarian count Almásy with a utopian desert landscape, or Frankenstein's botched creation who meets his tragic destiny in the icy wastelands surrounding the North Pole.¹ Not only fictional narratives fill such geographically blank spots, however. Representations of the same areas are also found in travelogues, in naval logbooks or ethnographical reports; in the multitude of what may be called documentary genres which in various ways take the geographically remote or unknown as an essential condition of their

¹ In *Heart of Darkness* (Conrad 1998 [1899, 1902]), *The English Patient* (Ondaatje 1993), and *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus* (Shelley 1992 [1818]), respectively.

production. This diverse body of writings—narratives fictional or factual, or a blending of both—share essential narrative features and strategies, and reproduce images or representations of the unknown that have had an impact across a variety of genres and historical periods.²

The specific images or representations examined in the present study have one common denominator: they all stem from or relate to the geographical region known as the North. I therefore start with the seemingly strange question: where is North? One may think of the geographical North as a more or less stable entity, but at closer examination a definition in terms of exact location poses the first of several obstacles on our way towards comprehension. The borders of the North have been drawn in terms of latitude, but also in terms of mean summer temperatures, the presence or absence of trees, or other biological factors such as typical faunal or floral species (Graham 1990: 22). Yet other definitions of the North are based on population density (or sparseness), or amount of infrastructure. Although all these definitions continue to be used, they still tend to disregard individual variations between localities that are considered northern, but still may lack one or more defining factors. In order to account for such discrepancies, Canadian geographer Louis-Edmond Hamelin devised a system of delineation and classification that would take into consideration more than one component at the same time. This was his Global Nordic Index where multiple factors—geographical, climatic, biological, social and economic—were combined to give a more precise definition of the circumpolar North (Hamelin 1979).³ Hamelin’s influential (and criticized) index has been followed by similar systems. However, another parallel and in recent years perhaps more common tendency has been to treat the North as a given entity, as a region that does not *need* any definition but whose exact location is still conjured up in our minds

² Cf. Ryall et al. 2010: ix–xi.

³ The factors on which Hamelin (1979) based his index were “latitude, summer heat, annual cold, types of ice, total precipitation, natural vegetation cover, accessibility by means other than air, air service, population, and degree of economic activity” (Graham 1990: 25).

by its very name. Such a tendency is perhaps most striking in governmental policy documents that present a northern strategy without any further specification of the exact region to which such a strategy is to apply, neither geographically, politically, nor climatically.⁴

If giving a clear-cut definition of a seemingly concrete geographical region proves so challenging, then it is perhaps only to be expected that images or representations of the northernmost areas of the globe also are inconsistent, to say the least. Peter Davidson, author of *The Idea of North* (2005), points out that such an idea depends entirely on the perspective of the beholder. Thus, “to say ‘we leave for the north tonight’ brings immediate thoughts of a harder place, a place of dearth: uplands, adverse weather, remoteness from cities”, an encounter with “intractable elements of climate, topography and humanity.” By adjusting our viewpoint, the situation changes, however. Thus, to a Northern Italian the opposite direction would give similar connotations, and the south would instead represent “the place of dearth”, according to Davidson (2005: 9). While northern Norway historically has been described in similar terms, a change has become visible over the past years, and Arctic Norway is now starting to be perceived as the nation’s most important foreign political area of priority.⁵

The characteristic images or conceptions of the North preserved in *texts* display a similar inconsistency, and it is also here possible to detect variations over time. Around 400 BC, the Greek historian Herodotus envisioned the utopian land of *Hyperborea* as somewhere beyond the north wind. While the *Hyperboreans* were described as a strong and healthy people, the North also served as breeding grounds for the much later medieval witches whose habitat was the rim of the earth where Satan roamed about (Schimanski, Theodorsen and Wærp 2011: 10–11). Similarly, but far more recently, British children’s book writer Roald Dahl placed the first witches in Norway, “with its black

⁴ Cf. Fredriksen 2011.

⁵ According to a press report from the Norwegian Government on 8 October 2014 (regjeringen.no, web).

forests and icy mountains” (Dahl 1985: 12). To philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, yet again, the icy landscape (Arctic or Alpine) presented a perfect setting for the making of the *Übermensch*, “for the strong who is longing for power and has freed himself of morality” (Frank 2010: 107). A parallel to Nietzsche’s Arctic superman can be found in Stalinist fiction from the 1930s, although here the cold has been transformed into social warmth and the Arctic is therefore rendered as an ideal background for the hero endowed with a significant social character (ibid: 128). The representation of a friendly Arctic, as will be discussed over the next chapters, is similarly connected to Stefansson’s narrative representation of himself.

The shifting and often conflicting ideas of the North can thus be traced both backwards in time and across geography, culture and genre. The North has many faces, and it is often the perspective and motives of the observer that determine its expression. Naturally, questions of sovereignty, of economy or potential for industry are important here, as is the distinction between an inside and an outside perspective. North, therefore, is at the same time both a direction, a region and a perceived entity. North is relational, it is both stable and constantly changing, and these are some of the very qualities that make it such a fascinating object of representation. The North as the archetypal unknown has the potential of all kinds of cultural inscription in the form of desire and fantasy. As emphasized by Francis Spufford, the perception of Arctic emptiness invites such inscription, “for blank space, like blank paper, can be scribbled over with the wishes of the onlooker” (Spufford 1996: 83).

The Malevolent North

Both this dissertation and Stefansson’s *Friendly Arctic* take as their starting point one particular conception of the North that has proven to be long-lived. In *Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature* (1995), novelist and literary critic Margaret Atwood demonstrates how an essentially negative

conception of the North has been particularly dominant in the Canadian literary imagination. The origins of the malevolent North, she explains, are found in the story of the disastrous Franklin expedition of the mid-nineteenth century, which failed famously in its attempt to traverse the Northwest Passage, only to strand somewhere off the coast of King William Island in the Canadian Arctic.⁶ The tragic deaths of Franklin's whole crew, not to forget the later stories about starvation, cannibalism, mutiny and murder, has had mythical resonance in Canadian literature, according to Atwood.⁷ As a result, she claims, "popular lore, and popular literature, established early that the North was uncanny, awe-inspiring in an almost religious way, hostile to white men, but alluring; that it would lead you on and do you in, that it would drive you crazy, and, finally, would claim you for its own" (Atwood 1995: 22).

To Atwood, the Franklin story represents a particularly robust image of the Arctic: the image of the Arctic as a place of terror and tragedy. In *Canada and the Idea of North* (2001), literary scholar Sherrill Grace likewise notes that stock descriptions of the North are those of a region that is "deadly, cold, empty, barren, isolated [and] mysterious" (Grace 2001: 16). The North can almost effortlessly take the form of both a spectacular setting and a menacing antagonist in the tale of an encounter with unfamiliar territory. "One of the most 'likely stories' [...] about North", Grace continues, "is the narrative of outrageous men battling a dangerous, hostile, female *terra incognita* to prove their masculinity and the superior force of their technology, or to die nobly in the struggle, or to map, claim, name and control unstructured space, even if only on paper" (ibid). Still, every image or construction relies on an *opposite*, and Atwood's malevolent North may therefore be claimed to subsume what

⁶ British Royal Navy Officer Sir John Franklin's expedition departed England in 1845 and was thereafter never heard from again. Many search parties were sent out to establish the whereabouts of the expedition and, as time lingered on, to unveil the mystery surrounding the fate of the 129 men who never returned from the ice. Since then, scientists have excavated three of the bodies from Franklin's expedition and launched the hypothesis that tinned foods caused the deaths of many men by lead poisoning and scurvy (Beattie and Geiger 2004 [1987]). More recently, in 2014 the wreck of one of Franklin's two lost ships, *The Erebus*, was found and researchers now hope this may be used to determine the whereabouts of *The Terror* (Hutchins and Sorensen 2015, web).

⁷ See also Levere 1993: 3.

Grace on the other hand describes as “a friendly North of sublime beauty, abundance, natural resources waiting to be exploited, and of great spiritual power” (ibid: 17). The looming shadow of the Franklin disaster on a whole tradition of narrative representations of the Canadian North may perhaps also partly explain why Stefansson, whose Canadian Arctic Expedition later covered some of the same areas as the Franklin search parties, so forcefully uses his exploration account to argue the case of a *friendly* Arctic.

The narrative construction of an Arctic that is friendly will serve as a main topic in this thesis. In some respects, however, it seems much easier to describe what representations of the North *The Friendly Arctic* does *not* impart, rather than to identify the constituent features of Stefansson’s characteristic northern vision. Stefansson’s Arctic is no cold and alluring *femme fatale* in the vein of Hans Christian Andersen’s Snow Queen⁸ or the White Witch featuring in C. S. Lewis’ *Narnia* chronicles. Likewise, it is hardly a female, virgin land awaiting the conquest and dominance of some sturdy, male explorer, to invoke a common gendered image from the literature of discovery and exploration.⁹ At the center of Stefansson’s journey is furthermore no metaphysical void or nothingness.¹⁰ His Arctic is not shrouded in the kind of sublimity which eighteenth century philosopher Edmund Burke and the Romantic poets attributed to nature in its most extreme forms; “a pleasurable encounter with forbidding landscape or the darker passions” triggering “a sensation of wonder mixed with fear” (Spufford 1996: 18). Neither are the grounds through which Stefansson travels depicted as awe-inspiring because of their beauty, nor are they in any way seen as horrifying. In *The Friendly Arctic*, the sight of northern lights does not inspire eruptions of poetry, nor do the growls of hungry polar bears in any way frighten the explorer. Stefansson’s narrative, then, is in many ways a prime example of an Arctic anti-text: it is constructed around a series of

⁸ Cf. Hansson 2008.

⁹ Cf. Bassnett 2002: 229, Ryall 2004: 35, Grace 2001: 16, and Hansson and Norberg 2009: 9. Beer points to a more general tradition in scientific writing of portraying nature as female (Beer 2009 [1983]: 64).

¹⁰ Cf. Melberg 2005: 216.

negations, descriptions of what the Arctic is *not*. In some respects, the contrast to Atwood's malevolent North, or the barren and mysterious North described by Grace, could not have been more stark. *The Friendly Arctic* is a text in which the notion of counter-discourse is crucial. This apparent divergence will serve as a point of departure for the discussion in the subsequent chapters.

One thing must be dealt with first, however: like many other documentary narratives of the North *The Friendly Arctic* starts with a journey into the Arctic, undertaken by Stefansson and a large crew of scientists and seafarers in the years between 1913 and 1918. I will therefore leave the discursive landscape of the North for the time being, and instead move on to the historical and biographical landscape against which Stefansson's text must be viewed.

Vilhjalmur Stefansson and the Canadian Arctic

The Stefansson-commanded Canadian Arctic Expedition was a large-scale scientific research endeavor that filled some of the last blank spots on the Canadian map. Even up to the present, this expedition has been considered one of the most important efforts to explore the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. When Stefansson set sail in 1913, around two hundred expeditions had preceded him to the Canadian North. The Canadian Arctic Expedition thus did not pass through entirely untrodden land, nor did it navigate completely unknown waters. Over the past century, the great fascination with the North had spurred many explorers to embark on voyages into the unknown. Their missions tended to be aimed at two concrete geographical objectives and their neighboring regions: the Northwest Passage and the North Pole, the latter of which has been described by historian of science Trevor H. Levere as “an economically and scientifically still more useless target” than the former (Levere 1993: 6). In 1913, these symbolically laden destinations had been traversed and reached. Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen had successfully

navigated the Northwest Passage in 1903–06, and the Peary-Cook controversy reached its height after 1909, when both explorers claimed to be the first to set foot on the Pole.¹¹ Stefansson biographer Tom Henighan accordingly argues that Stefansson’s journeys of discovery “may be best understood as part of what was surely the last great age of planetary exploration, the period when the colonial empires were breaking up, and new states [were] emerging from the dark past of empire” (Henighan 2009: 125). The motive that now presented itself as imperative to the budding Canadian nation was mapping and thus claiming the yet unknown landmasses to the north.

According to Levere, a northern status was integral to Canada as a prospective sovereign nation.¹² At the turn of the century, he demonstrates, considerable areas of the Arctic Ocean were still uncharted. Norwegian explorer Otto Sverdrup had just discovered a new group of islands west of Ellesmere Island, and, in an attempt to ward off potential conflicts with the United States and Russia, imperial Britain had transferred the Arctic archipelago to Canada. Levere explains that “Canada’s title under these circumstances was precarious, in spite of a plaque [...] placed on Melville Island, claiming the archipelago from the mainland to the North Pole” (Levere 1993: 1, 8). The timing of a self-directed *Canadian* Arctic expedition could not have been better. “It is practically the one remaining place in the world where great geographical discovery is possible”, the director of the Geological Survey of Canada wrote enthusiastically in favor of Canadian participation in 1913.¹³ Although Stefansson’s proposed venture was initially to be sponsored by the National Geographic Society and the American Museum of Natural History, at the eleventh hour the Canadian government instead became sole sponsor.

¹¹ In 1908 and 1909, respectively, American explorers Frederick A. Cook and Robert E. Peary were both celebrated as the first man to reach the North Pole, although later research has verified neither claim. For the Peary-Cook controversy, see Robinson 2006 and Riffenburgh 1994.

¹² The former British colony of Canada achieved dominion status in 1867, however, by the time of Stefansson’s expedition Canada “was in many ways self-consciously a sovereign nation” (Levere 1993: 1).

¹³ Director Reginald Brock’s words are taken from a letter to minister of mines, W. J. Roche, on 4 Feb. 1913 (Borden Paper Series 3 File 2117 (RLB) microfilm FB674 reel 90, Robarts Library, University of Toronto), quoted in Levere 1993: 390.

“[W]hile the public spirit, sympathy and co-operation of these important institutions were highly appreciated,” Canadian Prime Minister Sir Robert Laird Borden later stated in his introduction to Stefansson’s *Friendly Arctic*, “the Government preferred to assume entire responsibility for the Expedition, as any lands yet undiscovered in these northern regions should be added to Canadian territory” (Borden, in Stefansson 1921: xxi). Stefansson’s expedition, therefore, set sail under British flag, but as part of a symbolically laden nation-building project commissioned by the Canadian Dominion.

Explorer and Anthropologist

The Canadian government appointed Vilhjalmur Stefansson overall commander of the expedition and head of the scientific work of its northern section. By that time Stefansson had already considerable experience from Arctic research. He was born in Canada, in the Icelandic settlement of Arnes, but was brought up and educated in the United States.¹⁴ His decision to change William Stephenson—the English-sounding birth name—into the Old World Vilhjalmur Stefansson, established him not only as an unconventional character, but this choice may perhaps also be seen as a symbolical act through which he laid claim to a northern identity and being at home in the North.¹⁵ Stefansson was brought up in an environment that valued learning and education, and took his first academic degree in religious studies. Anthropology was to become his main field of study and research, however, and after becoming affiliated with the Anthropology Department and the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, he turned his academic attention

¹⁴ In a recent article, historian Janice Cavell explores the long-debated question of Stefansson’s formal citizenship. Although born in Canada, Stefansson became American by law after the naturalization of his Icelandic father in 1887. Due to a set of judicial circumstances, however, Cavell demonstrates that Stefansson was in reality an explorer without a country at the time of commanding the Canadian Arctic Expedition—in spite of him giving his patrons the impression that his status as a British subject had remained unaltered (Cavell 2009: 237). Levere also observes that “Stefansson in his career was to make good use of his multivalent national status” (Levere 1993: 378).

¹⁵ On name change, see Stefansson 1964: 6.

towards the Arctic. As an anthropologist in the field Stefansson then participated in two successive expeditions to the Canadian Arctic, first the Anglo-American Polar Expedition (1906–07), followed by the partly self-commanded Stefansson-Anderson Expedition (1908–12).¹⁶ On both of these expeditions, ethnography, mainly among the Inuit of the Mackenzie Delta, was his primary concern (Pálsson 2001: 7–8).

Professor of anthropology and Stefansson biographer Gísli Pálsson characterizes Stefansson as a relativist in the field and as a practitioner of cultural anthropology in the tradition of pioneering Franz Boas. He portrays Stefansson as a serious fieldworker who subscribed to the method that later became known as participant observation. Stefansson traveled and lived among his Inuit informants, studied their traditions and way of life, adopted their techniques for trekking and dressing, recorded their language, and also became fluent in Inuktituk (Pálsson 2001: 35). As we shall see in later chapters, the general image of Inuit that Stefansson presented in his narratives was largely sympathetic: here local craftswomen and huntsmen often assume the roles of Arctic guides and experts. Despite such a generally positive image, however, there is both in Stefansson’s books and in his diaries that which Pálsson describes as a “conflictual and sometimes asymmetrical relationship between Stefansson and the Inuit that does not quite resonate with the egalitarian and sympathetic image he presented of himself” (ibid: 38). Not unlike the publications of many contemporary anthropologists, Stefansson’s work expresses a marked difference between the western, educated observer and the aboriginal Other. This asymmetry can perhaps most strikingly be detected in the silences in his texts—in those aspects of Stefansson’s interaction with and assistance from Inuit which he does not acknowledge here (Pálsson 2005: 201).

In two biographies on Stefansson, Pálsson includes some of the remaining testimonies to an intimate relationship that Stefansson formed with

¹⁶ See Diubaldo 1998 (1978): 15–55, Hunt 1986: 18–63, Levere 1993: 380–388, Pálsson 2001: 7–16 and 2005: 75–128, as well as Stefansson 2007 (1913) and 1964: 65–144.

one of his main informants during his second Arctic expedition: a skilled Inuit seamstress named Fannie Pannigabluk who accompanied Stefansson on two of his expeditions.¹⁷ During this period, Pannigabluk gave birth to their son Alex. Stefansson never officially acknowledged his relationship with Pannigabluk, nor did he openly talk about his child in the Arctic. *The Friendly Arctic* contains no apparent traces of the relationship between Stefansson and Pannigabluk, in spite of the fact that Stefansson encountered her again during his third expedition, probably around 1915.¹⁸ Pálsson demonstrates, however, that Stefansson's Inuit family at the time seems to have been no secret among his fellow Northern travelers. His biographies give voice to the other side of the story, the one represented by the descendants of Stefansson's Inuit family who are still living in the Canadian Arctic. "[O]ne of the strengths of Stefansson's ethnography from the second expedition", Pálsson even suggests, may be credited to this relationship (Pálsson 2001: 12). Both professionally and personally, Stefansson was engaged in the lives of the people of the Mackenzie Delta. This fascination with Inuit culture occupy a central place in his wide-ranging authorship, and although other works by Stefansson deal more directly with anthropological concerns, *The Friendly Arctic* also contains material of interest to the anthropologically-minded reader.

The Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913–1918

Although the chief objective of the Canadian Arctic Expedition was geographical discovery, this venture provided Stefansson with a protracted and much appreciated opportunity to study Inuit life in northern Canada. Apart from anthropology, other sciences were also to be conducted. The expedition was divided into two parties: a northern party under Stefansson's command and

¹⁷ Pálsson 2001 and 2005.

¹⁸ While researching his first book on Stefansson, Pálsson found that Pannigabluk was listed as Stefansson's Inuit wife and Alex Stefansson (Alik Alahuk) as their son in church records from 1915, found in Aklavik in the Northwest Territories (Pálsson 2001: 12–15).

a southern party headed by his former partner in exploration, zoologist Rudolph M. Anderson. The two parties had different main priorities. While Stefansson's teams explored the Beaufort Sea and surrounding lands and waters, Anderson's southern party devoted themselves to in-depth scientific work in the Coronation Gulf. The southern party in fact carried out their work much according to plan, and upon their return to Canada in 1916, the scientific staff brought back valuable material from the field. Data from geological and topographical surveys, linguistic and anthropological observations, and a range of zoological specimens were only some of the material that contributed to shedding new light on the high-Arctic environment of Canada.¹⁹ While the overall performance of the southern party therefore must be characterized as quite successful, it seems safe to say that Stefansson's northern party fared less well during what was to become their 5-year long northern residence.

Shortly after the departure from Nome, Alaska, in 1913, the northern party encountered one of the major setbacks of the whole expedition; a tragic event which was to cast a shadow on Stefansson's reputation as Arctic explorer. The flagship *Karluuk* was caught in ice west of Flaxman Island off the Alaskan coast, and started drifting involuntarily northwards. At this point, Stefansson had already taken leave of the *Karluuk* to hunt caribou. He therefore did not follow the last drift of the *Karluuk* himself, which ended near Wrangel Island in the Chukchi Sea where the ship finally gave in to the surrounding ice. In order to reach land, the crew had to march across moving sea ice, and eight men died before they were able to reach desolate Wrangel Island. Three more died on the island before the remaining crew were rescued. According to Stefansson biographer Richard J. Diubaldo, it was "the greatest arctic disaster since the disappearance of the Franklin expedition" (Diubaldo 1998 [1978]: 83).

The *Karluuk* tragedy in many ways turned public opinion against Vilhjalmur Stefansson. Stefansson had to fend off criticism both from members

¹⁹ On the scientific work and results of both parties, see Levere 1993: Chapter 10.

of his own expedition and from politicians and patrons at home. Not only was he accused of neglecting his duties as commander by abandoning the *Karluk* in time of danger, but his methods of exploration were also criticized, and, to top it off, there was a growing conflict with Dr. Anderson and the southern party scientists which escalated towards an open dispute over the distribution of resources after the loss valuable crew and equipment on board the *Karluk*. From the perspective of the Canadian government, the expedition became both far more expensive and more time-consuming than originally stipulated. In fact, after mid-1916, Diubaldo points out that Stefansson seems to have operated in the Arctic largely on own his own initiative, against the wishes of the government (ibid: 122).

Journeying further and further north, in successive exploratory sledge parties, Stefansson did, however, reach some of the goals originally set. Most importantly, he added valuable new lands to the Canadian map. Diubaldo sums up the geographical feats of the Canadian Arctic Expedition:

Between 1914 and 1918, Stefansson and his companions discovered the world's last major land masses, Brock and Borden Islands, Meighen and Lougheed Islands. His exploratory parties ran a line of hydrographic soundings one hundred miles northwest of Cape Isachsen, and redefined portions of the arctic islands' coastlines. Stefansson lifted the curtain on about 65,000 square miles of Beaufort Sea to the north of the Mackenzie basin, 10,000 square miles of the Arctic Ocean west of Prince Patrick Island, about 3,000 square miles along the northeast coast of Victoria Island, and more than 15,000 square miles of land and sea to the northeast of Prince Patrick Island. (Ibid: 127)

Stefansson's expedition thus not only reached and explored vast areas of land and sea, but his "five and one-half years in the Arctic was [also] a world's record for continuous arctic service" (ibid). Still, upon his return to Canada in 1918, the *Karluk* tragedy had surfaced in the media and provided critics with ample opportunity to question Stefansson's qualities as a leader. In retrospect,

therefore, the achievements of the Canadian Arctic Expedition constitute Stefansson's greatest Arctic successes, while the tragic fates of his shipwrecked crew marked the absolute low-point of his career.

Scientist and Showman

According to Canadian writer Rudy Wiebe, "Stefansson is so fascinating a character that he must be avoided; the whale which is his life would swallow any storyteller" (Wiebe 2003: 113). The Canadian Arctic Expedition was merely one of several controversial affairs later associated with his name. Throughout his career, Stefansson's actions and public opinions earned him both admirers and detractors alike. As one scholar puts it, "few who knew or studied Vilhjalmur Stefansson remained neutral" (Webb 1992: 217). Evelyn Stefansson Nef, Stefansson's widow, describes some of the many—and often conflicting—traits he was attributed with: "Stef was called a charlatan, as well as Prophet of the North; a publicity-hunter, as well as a great seal and caribou hunter; a faddist, as well as a splendid scientific observer" (Nef 1978: x). No doubt, Stefansson had an aptitude for attracting public attention and for stirring debate among his audience. If not a devoted practitioner of the philosophy that all publicity is good publicity, Stefansson definitely saw the benefits of using the limelight to disseminate his ideas.

Besides the 1913–1918 expedition, Stefansson's reputation as Arctic explorer has perhaps just as frequently been associated with the discovery of the so-called Blond Eskimos of the Coronation Gulf, which took place during Stefansson's second Arctic expedition.²⁰ The Blond Eskimos (whom they later, with Stefansson's encouragement, were referred to as) were an alleged tribe of

²⁰ "Eskimo" is the term once given to Inuit by European explorers. It is now rarely used in Canada, and is often considered derogatory (naho.ca, web). In the present work, I will therefore mainly use the term "Inuit". In (direct or indirect) quotations from Stefansson's work, however, "Eskimo" is used, in accordance with the terminology of the time. The majority of the aboriginal members of Stefansson's expedition were Inupiat of northern Alaska.

fair-haired Inuit thus far unacquainted with the outside world. Stefansson was able to locate the tribe on Victoria Island in 1910 (Levere 1993: 386). He later presented the Victoria Islanders as an important scientific discovery. Bearing in mind that “here a thousand and there a hundred men of Scandinavia and of England had disappeared into the Northern mists”, he writes in his later expedition account, “I knew that I had come upon either the last chapter and solution of one of the historical tragedies of the past, or else that I had added a new mystery for the future to solve: the mystery of why these men are like Europeans if they be not of European descent” (Stefansson 2007 [1913]: 192). When the news of Stefansson’s sensational encounter made its way back home, the press furnished it with the fitting headline: “American Explorer Discovers Lost Tribe of Whites, Descendants of Leif Eriksson”.²¹ Although later research never has validated such a missing link,²² such headlines positively earned Stefansson new and conflicting characteristics.

Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen was one of the fiercest critics of Stefansson’s achievements and ideas at the time.²³ Amundsen used his autobiography to fire away at Stefansson’s Arctic authority, in a chapter devoted solely to men characterized as polar charlatans and unfit explorers.²⁴ In Amundsen’s view, both Stefansson’s Blond Eskimos and his so-called friendly Arctic “should be taken with many grains of salt” (Amundsen 1927a: 227). At best, the “Blond Eskimos” were nothing more than the result of sexual relations between Eskimos and Scandinavian explorers, and the Arctic was certainly not as friendly as Stefansson made it out to be. Amundsen, like the majority of their professional counterparts, knew it to be the exact opposite; and so giving the impression that the Arctic is anything but an essentially hostile place is not only damaging to the work of serious explorers but also to “adventurous

²¹ *Seattle Daily Times*, September 9, 1912, quoted in Stefansson 1964: 133.

²² Cf. Pálsson 2008.

²³ Christina Adcock points to other explorers’ doubts about Stefansson’s explorative method in Adcock 2010: 86.

²⁴ Amundsen’s criticism was first published in English as an article titled “Arctic Follies and how Careful Planning Eliminates Them” in *The World’s Work* 54 (Sept. 1927).

spirits” who might “venture into those regions only equipped with a gun and some ammunition. If they do,” Amundsen warns, “certain death awaits them” (ibid: 229).²⁵ The autobiography’s criticism of Stefansson is undoubtedly fierce, and accusations of Amundsen’s caliber may certainly explain why Stefansson’s characteristic vision of the North seemed to fall from grace with the public over the years. Adcock also suggests that two other “spectacular, widely publicized failures of Stefansson’s attempts in the early 1920s to prove the friendliness of the Arctic” played their part in this process: His failure to establish a muskox ranching industry on Baffin Island, and an attempt to colonize Wrangel Island that caused the deaths of four young subscribers to the “Stefansson method” of Arctic exploration (Adcock 2010: 120).²⁶ Such events no doubt clouded the message of a friendly Arctic, as did the fatal voyage of the *Karluuk* in 1913.

The Friendly Arctic: The Story of Five Years in Polar Regions

Accused or applauded, Vilhjalmur Stefansson was widely read in his own time, and continues to receive scholarly attention to this day. Stefansson’s widespread authorship includes hundreds of published titles: scholarly and popular books, articles and contributions to periodicals and newspapers, one autobiography (Stefansson 1964), and even a children’s book set in the Arctic

²⁵ Interestingly, the “many grains of salt” in the English translation of Amundsen’s Norwegian autobiography *Mitt liv som polarforsker* is really is a moderation of Amundsen’s initial characterization of the Blond Eskimos as “the most palpable nonsense that ever came from the North” (“det mest håndgripelige sludder der nogensinne er kommet nordenfra”) (Amundsen 1927b: 209). Even more serious is Amundsen’s blow against Stefansson when he goes on to state that “a more unreasonable distortion of conditions in the North has never been asserted than the one that a skillful marksman can ‘live off the country’. Stefansson has never done it, in spite of the fact that he claims to” (“En mere urimelig forvrengning av forholdene nordpå har aldri vært fremsatt enn at en dygtig skytter ‘kan leve av landet’. Stefansson har aldri gjort det, til tross for at han påstår det”) (ibid: 211, all English translations are mine). Several minor sections in the Norwegian original have been omitted from the translated English version, and certain characterizations have been altered. The Norwegian original is undoubtedly far more harsh and direct in its criticism of Stefansson.

²⁶ On the Wrangel Island tragedy, see e.g. Niven 2003.

(Stefansson and Irwin 1924).²⁷ The two most frequently quoted works by Stefansson continue to be *My Life With the Eskimo*, published in 1913 after his second expedition, the essay collection *The Northward Course of Empire* (Stefansson 1922), and *The Friendly Arctic*, based on his experiences during the momentous Canadian Arctic Expedition. *The Friendly Arctic* was published in 1921, some years after Stefansson's return from the field, and the following spring the book was among the ten American best-sellers (Levere 1993: 422).²⁸ As pointed out by Diubaldo, what plans Stefansson might have had to write an official version of the expedition seem to have vanished in its muddled aftermath, and such an account was in fact never published (Diubaldo 1998 [1978]: 203). *The Friendly Arctic* must therefore be considered Stefansson's "unofficial version of the adventure," something which "allowed [him] far greater freedom to express his own views than any publication under government auspices" (ibid: 195–96).

The Friendly Arctic is first and foremost the account of Stefansson's personal experiences during the Canadian Arctic Expedition. This level of the story, however, becomes an entry point to what in many ways may be called an Arctic life vision; a presentation and demonstration of how the right methods of exploration turn the cold and misty North into a friendly place. *The Friendly Arctic* should therefore be considered the epitome of Stefansson's career. Many of the theories formulated here are tried out or supplemented elsewhere, in articles, books or public lectures, written and published both prior to and after 1921. As I seek to demonstrate in the following chapters, *The Friendly Arctic* is a multi-layered narrative and offers several possibilities for interpretation. Based on the real-life experiences of Stefansson and describing a concrete region, the friendly Arctic is still a textually imagined entity, constructed by

²⁷ For an overview of Stefansson's authorship, see Mattila 1978.

²⁸ While portions of *The Friendly Arctic* originally were published as magazine articles, the whole story appeared as a one-volume work in 784 pages in 1921 — amply illustrated with pictures from the expedition, and also containing maps, charts, lists and appendices. This original volume of *The Friendly Arctic* can still be found in relevant libraries and second-hand bookshops. A more accessible two-volume pocket edition of the book appeared on the market in 2007 (Stefansson 2007a/b [1921]).

language. Yet another contextualization of the narrative is therefore required before I venture into a closer examination of it, and in the following I therefore view *The Friendly Arctic* in terms of Arctic discourse.

Arctic Discourses

My main concern in this dissertation is to examine the documentary account of an Arctic expedition through the lens and by the means of the literary scholar. The theoretical background and methodological framework of such an undertaking will be introduced in detail in Chapter Two. In the following, however, I present what should be considered the overall frame of context for my analysis. The general objective of this study is in line with the proposed aims of the Arctic Discourses project based at UiT The Arctic University of Norway, which I was so fortunate to be part of as a Doctoral Research Fellow. From one of the main publications to come out of the Arctic Discourses project I also take my general understanding and working definition of the term *discourse*, and particularly of those discourses that are distinctively Arctic:

Accounts of the Arctic and appeals to Arctic images represent what may be called Arctic discourses, within which we form our expectations of the Arctic. These expectations are regulated by the textual traditions—consisting of genres, narratives and figures—in which they are embedded. On a global scale, these textualities are formed within a much larger cultural field in which discourses of the Arctic play a formative role alongside many other discourses. (Ryall et al. 2010: x)

Implied in such a broad definition is the essentially social constructivist premise that our understanding of the Arctic is based not only on actual encounters with the ice but is also “formed by an interplay of expectations and experiences” (ibid), and that textual representations of the Arctic are particularly central when investigating how the North has been and still is

conceived. Arctic discourses may be understood as a domain of statements (i.e. texts, images, representations, ideas) about the Arctic which have been persistent over time, but which are also open in the sense that they are capable of mutation or change. Thus, as we have seen in the beginning of this chapter, some images or representations of the Arctic have been particularly influential. When these discourses meet conflicting or alternate discourses they may transform into new forms. A common trope from what may be called the heroic age narrative of Arctic exploration is the fearsome polar bear, the undisputed king of the Arctic. As more recent discourses have begun to surface the field, however, the polar bear is instead portrayed as a lone and emaciated figure on a diminishing ice floe, dethroned from its once so mighty position and now an iconic symbol of the imminent threat of climate changes.

As this example shows, Arctic discourses build on or incorporate elements of other, related discourses. Central among these are imperial, nationalistic, scientific, or, as in the latter case, environmentalist discourses. At the basis of such a wide-ranging definition of Arctic discourses are Michel Foucault's influential investigations into the dominant discourses of different social domains and historical epochs, as well as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's later development of a theory of open, changeable and overlapping discourses (ibid: xiii).²⁹

In a historical perspective, Arctic discourses can be perceived as one variant of the colonial discourses that accompanied the appropriation of foreign lands by western colonial powers during the last centuries—and as the domain of statements through which this activity has been justified. The Arctic Other as an object of conquest, to echo the work of Edward Said, is here not just the human Other (in terms of people or cultures native to the northern regions), but also characteristically the Arctic nature itself. In *topoi* peculiar to such a

²⁹ Foucault's characteristic conception of discourse pervades his whole, comprehensive authorship, however, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* discourse is more directly conceived as a domain of statements (Foucault 1972). Laclau and Mouffe's flexible discourse model is described in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). The theoretical inspirations of the Arctic Discourses project are stated in Ryall et al. 2010: xii–xiv, and Ryall et al. 2005: 2–3.

colonial Arctic discourse, Susi K. Frank observes, “nature serves as a challenge and as a foil to present the colonizer as a legitimate conqueror” (Frank 2010: 106). The courageous, male explorer who struggles on in the face of gale and hunger, thus taming a northern, virgin land, is a common topos in the literature of exploration, as already mentioned. Implied here is the idea of the Arctic as a *frontier*, as a blank space or wilderness inviting dominance and development, an image voicing the overlapping discourses of gender and imperialism.

When it comes to standard representations of the North, it may be argued that colonial Arctic discourses have taken up a particularly central place, perhaps even to such an extent that opposed understandings of the Arctic are sometimes disregarded. In recent work, however, political scientist E. Carina H. Keskitalo contests the hegemonic role of such an Arctic frontier discourse by highlighting different and conflicting conceptions of the North (Keskitalo 2009: 25). She argues that a “frontier mentality” is typical of Canadian or Northern American understandings of the Arctic, whereas in northernmost Europe the Arctic has not necessarily been perceived in the same way.³⁰ In most Nordic states, for example, the lines cannot as easily be drawn between wilderness and civilization, indigenous and non-indigenous, or traditional and modern, all binary categories that Keskitalo ascribes to a frontier understanding of development (ibid: 35). Keskitalo therefore not only challenges the Arctic frontier discourse itself, but the very concepts of the “North” or “Arctic” whose meanings often are taken for granted:

To question the categories of the frontier mythology, it has to be acknowledged that “northernness”, like “the Arctic”, is a construct, not a given, and the result of relationships developed in historical periods. During these periods, an image of the “Arctic” or “North” has been created and used for specific purposes, such as to develop national mythologies and identities.

³⁰ Keskitalo attributes Canada’s frontier mentality to their “striving for a self-delineation in relation to its southern neighbor (the USA) and a wish to deal with the ‘blank space on the map’” (Keskitalo 2009: 28).

This has taken place in Canada—a country where the Northern “frontier” has been described as wilderness—and, contrastingly, in northern European states where the Northern has been seen as a way of identifying and presenting the own states as modern. [...] [The] concepts of ‘the North’ and ‘the Arctic’ are far from clear-cut and cannot be used without clearly defining what is meant by them in the given context, as well as problematising and avoiding to essentialise these meanings. (Ibid: 36)³¹

Keskitalo’s contribution to the field of Arctic studies is an important reminder not to generalize the discourse of exploration as frontier expansion to *all* northern localities. It is also a demonstration of the constructedness of concepts. The North or the Arctic, as shown in the previous, can take many forms and be molded by different discourses. Stefansson, however, followed in the immediate footsteps of many great explorers of the nineteenth century. No much more than a decade before his first Arctic expedition, Fredrick Jackson Turner had announced the closing of the American frontier,³² and for Stefansson and his contemporaries the Arctic provided the new *terra incognita*. It therefore makes sense to read his narrative in light of the kind of colonial discourses that accompanied their activity, to which Keskitalo’s Arctic frontier discourse belongs. Not only in *The Friendly Arctic*, but also elsewhere in Stefansson’s prolific authorship, such discourses play a prominent role and are actively engaged with.

While the theoretical pillars described above underpin this dissertation, I wish to emphasize that a wide application of the term *discourse* will be used in my own critical discussion of Stefansson’s work. I do not aim to undertake an investigation of my subject material in the vein of critical discourse analysis³³, nor will I directly make use of key notions developed by the above-mentioned theorists. Instead, the basic idea of Arctic discourses—defined as dominant

³¹ On Nordic modernity, see also Stadius 2014.

³² Cf. Bloom 1993: 32.

³³ Cf. e.g. Fairclough 1989.

conceptions and representations of the Arctic that have persisted over time and that can be singled out for discussion—will guide my explorative foray into the literature of exploration, and, more concretely, into Stefansson’s text. It is that which may be called the Arctic textualities that constitute the main object of study in my examination of *The Friendly Arctic*.

Reading Arctic Accounts as Literature

One of the basic assumptions of this study is that there is a two-way traffic between works of fiction and works that are documentary or nonfictional. To avail of myself one of Gillian Beer’s productive formulations, accounts on both sides of such a generic divide share a discourse through which “not only *ideas* but metaphors, myths, and narrative patterns can move rapidly and freely to and fro between scientists and non-scientists” (Beer 2009 [1983]: 5).³⁴ While the history of science and exploration has held a central place within such a shared Arctic discourse, the typically *literary* discursive strategies which give form to scientific and historical accounts of the Arctic have until recently remained a fairly neglected area of scholarly attention. Narratives of the Arctic, ranging from fictional to factual, may, however, be seen as providing particularly fertile ground for the interaction of scientific and literary discourses. Due to the fact that the northernmost regions for a long time were conceived of as a blank space, it can even be argued that the wider field of

³⁴ Although *Darwin’s Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* by Gillian Beer (2009 [1983]) does not concern textualities that are specific to the Arctic, she challenges notions of genre borders by examining how nineteenth century fictional writers responded to the discoveries of Charles Darwin, and to his innovations in scientific language in particular. One of her basic arguments is that Darwin did not invent the natural laws but that he instead *described* them. His description, she observes, “is necessarily conditioned by the assumptions and beliefs condensed in the various kinds of discourse active at the time he was writing. Though the events of the natural world are language-free, language controls our apprehension of knowledge, and is itself determined by current historical conditions and by the order implicit in syntax, grammar, and other rhetorical properties such as metaphor, as well as by the selective intensity of individual experience” (Beer 2009: 46).

factual narratives about these regions cannot help becoming infected by literary discourse (Ryall et al. 2010: xi).

While Northern Studies by now is well-established within academia as a separate field of research and study, the literary strategies of the texts of the North have until recently been paid little systematic, critical attention. Typically covering topics on Arctic history, policy, natural resource management or indigeneity, Northern Studies is currently offered as individual study programs in several universities across the circumpolar region. Arctic literary studies may be viewed as a budding branch on the Northern Studies trunk. In the past decades, the study of the literature of the North has begun to take shape of a discipline of its own, for which several publications have prepared the ground. In relation to the present work, attention must be drawn to two brief articles from the late seventies as important forerunners to such a relatively young field: “Voyaging and the Literary Imagination” by John Tallmadge (1979) and “Canadian Exploration as Literature” by T. D. MacLulich (1979), both of which I will pay detailed attention to in later chapters.

More recent works include, among others, Lisa Bloom’s *Gender on Ice: American Ideologies of Polar Expeditions* (1993). Bloom’s study sheds light on the discourses of science, masculinity, race and nationalism that operate in accounts of Peary and Scott’s polar ventures. She also explores the role of the National Geographic Society and its journal in constructing polar explorers as national heroes. While Bloom’s range of focus is predominantly American, Francis Spufford traces what he calls “an imaginative history of polar exploration” in order to explain the characteristically British fascination with the poles in *I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination* (Spufford 1996: 7). The category of the romantic sublime holds a central place in Spufford’s survey, where the Arctic is portrayed as a quintessentially sublime place; an ideal setting for the heroic deeds and great sacrifice of British explorers. Similar to Spufford’s work, the basis for Peter Davidson’s *The Idea of the North* (2005) is an impressive range of material, including works of art,

literature and history. Davidson demonstrates how the idea of North (or Norths) is shifting, and how we frame the term through our own situational apprehension of it. The ideas surrounding the terms cold, snow and ice constitute the focal points of *Cold Matters*, a collection of articles edited by Heidi Hansson and Cathrine Norberg (2009). Not unexpectedly, this volume also demonstrates—through the shifting lens of several humanistic disciplines—how the meanings of these terms are “context-dependent and far from stable” (Hansson and Norberg (eds.) 2009: 13).

I have already mentioned the Arctic Discourses project, which resulted in two anthologies published in 2010 (eds. Ryall, Schimanski and Wærp) and 2011 (eds. Schimanski, Theodorsen and Wærp). Together with the previously mentioned Margaret Atwood’s *Strange Things* (1995) and Sherrill Grace’s *Canada and the Idea of North* (2001), the Arctic Discourses anthologies constitute a main source of inspiration for my own project. While the works by Atwood and Grace identify a typically Canadian tradition of depicting the North in literature and in the arts, the two anthologies have a much wider focus, transgressing both geographic, historic and generic borders. The same can be said of the combined influence of all of the above-mentioned titles. What these works share is a particular focus on Arctic discourses; on the solidity and diversity of such discourses, and a renewed attention paid to the written Arctic(s)—on the texts and other medias that convey and construct our perceptions of the many-sided North.

A Literary Study of *The Friendly Arctic*

While the major portion of the above-mentioned works describe a general discourse level, i.e. representations of the Arctic that permeate whole epochs,

authorships or genres,³⁵ my contribution to this field is to find out how such discourses express themselves in one particular text, namely Vilhjalmur Stefansson's account of his five-year long sojourn in the Canadian Arctic. This means that discourse remains a fairly general term in my analysis, an overarching category that I refer to and make use of in order to direct the attention to the *how* of Stefansson's text, to the ways in which the text is constructed to promote the message of a friendly Arctic. This entails subjecting *The Friendly Arctic* and all of its complexities to a close and detailed analysis: I intend to focus on the distinctive narrative means and strategies used by the travelling explorer to find out how they accentuate particular images and topics, how they relate to and express particular discourses. Previous work has focused most on textual content, on ideas, whereas the *form* of the expedition account, its specific *narrative means*, has tended not to be a main object of study.³⁶ With the exception of a few studies, a close literary analysis of the expedition narrative is something that rarely has been done, and this is where I hope to make my contribution to the field of Arctic literary studies.

There are of course many publications that in one way or another deal with *The Friendly Arctic* and the prolific authorship of Vilhjalmur Stefansson. The majority of these publications have a shared focus on biography, on the historical and political impact of Stefansson's work, and on the controversy surrounding him.³⁷ Several biographical titles belong to this category, including three volumes that were published in the decades after Stefansson's death: *Stefansson: Ambassador of the North* (LeBourdais 1963), *Stefansson and the Canadian Arctic* (Diubaldo 1998 [1978]) and *Stef: A Biography of Vilhjalmur*

³⁵ Several of the individual anthology contributions and book chapters naturally have a much narrower focus.

³⁶ Wærp (2008), however, points to some of the specific narrative devices that make an expedition report worth reading. Karlsen (2011) explores some of the narrative strategies used by Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen in her doctoral dissertation on Fridtjof Nansen's *Farthest North* and related books. Also, in Chapters Two and Five I refer to some of the works that deal specifically with the narrative strategies of the travelogue.

³⁷ Many of the works already mentioned in relation to Arctic literary studies also comment more specifically on Stefansson, i.e. on aspects of his work beyond the biographical. To this list belong MacLulich (1979), Bloom (1993) and Grace (2001), as well as Adcock (2010). Over the subsequent chapters, I will be looking in more detail at their references explicitly to Stefansson.

Stefansson, Canadian Arctic Explorer (Hunt 1986). More recently, Gísli Pálsson has explored new biographical material in *Writing on Ice: The Ethnographic Notebooks of Vilhjalmur Stefansson* (2001) and *Travelling Passions: The Hidden Life of Vilhjalmur Stefansson* (2005), and Tom Henighan has authored a general introduction to Stefansson's career in the form of the short biography *Vilhjalmur Stefansson: Arctic Adventurer* (2009). Stefansson's widow, Evelyn Stefansson Nef, has chronicled their time together in her autobiography (Nef 2002), and, to conclude this far from exhaustive overview of titles, many of these publications naturally relate to Stefansson's own autobiography *Discovery* (Stefansson 1964).³⁸

The present study does not purport to add new knowledge to the body of biographical works about Vilhjalmur Stefansson. Compared to the above titles, my dissertation entails an alternative way of studying Stefansson. Equipped with the insights and methods of the literary scholar, I hope to unearth new perspectives on *The Friendly Arctic*—his chief Arctic narrative—and perhaps thereby also shed new light on his long-debated legacy. Insofar as I examine elements of Stefansson's biography this is due to the fact that my object material is a personal travel narrative, a story about Stefansson's experiences during his third Arctic expedition turned into literary form.

The literary construction of Stefansson's account will be my entry point to what I see as the central paradox of *The Friendly Arctic*, which will remain my main concern in this dissertation: At times, there is conflict between Stefansson's proclaimed message of a friendly Arctic and the narrative representation of that friendly Arctic, between what may be called the *what* and *how* of the text. What in general terms has been described as the text's *how*, i.e. its narrative means and strategies, will naturally be nuanced in the following. Plot, however, remains a central part of that discussion, as do character—and the dynamics between these two key narrative features. *The Friendly Arctic*

³⁸ Numerous articles and other texts belong to this general category of historical and biographical publications, which also includes books that focus more specifically on the impact of Stefansson's life and legacy other on members of his expeditions, e.g. Niven 2003, Ashlee 2008 and Jenness 2011.

paradox, however, not only pertains to potential contradictions between plot and theme in Stefansson's narrative, it also entails the issue of inconsistencies between the two main layers of action and discourse in the account, and what overt and covert thematic implications these may have.

Before I venture into the details of Stefansson's text to explore such a paradox, one thing needs to be said about its persistent message of the friendliness of the Arctic. Stefansson's motives for writing his account were no doubt multifaceted, but one motive—that of defending himself against censure—presents itself as focal. As commander of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, it is only to be expected that Stefansson met with criticism, both at home and from members of the crew. The *Karluk* tragedy was one thing, his leadership abilities another. The fact that Stefansson often stole away with a dog sledge and a few good men to live like Arctic hunters, did not always meet with approval; some would rather have him running the branches of the expedition more directly. Added to this, the Blond Eskimos had long been condemned as a publicity stunt by critical voices in the media. Seen against this kind of receptive climate, it is only natural to view Stefansson's position when writing *The Friendly Arctic* as essentially defensive. While the narrative serves as his rationale and justification for past actions, as Diubaldo sees it (1998 [1978]: 196), the fact that it provides Stefansson with a chance of being on the offensive must be perceived as no less important.

The *Friendly Arctic* paradox is therefore intrinsically bound together with the imperative *what* of Stefansson's text, or rather the *performative function* of that text. Stefansson in fact pursues several projects in his book, all related to his narrative self-representation. First of all—as imparted by his inviting title—the malevolent North needs to be supplanted by a fertile and friendly North. Secondly, the narrative should serve as a justification for Stefansson's own role and actions in the field, and thus counter potential criticism. This is naturally connected to a third but equally important project: demonstrating the basic success of his venture. All of this should be done convincingly, through the literary strategies and specific narrative means of the

expedition narrative. *The Friendly Arctic* is therefore both bound by the generic conventions of the heroic expedition narrative and at the same time (by arguing the case of an alternative vision of the Arctic) a book that revolts against some of those same generic conventions. It is a delicate balancing act that Stefansson has taken on here, with the potential success or failure of not only the account itself but also his reputation as Arctic expert at stake. What, then, if narrative representation (the text's *how*) somehow stands in the way of Stefansson's projects in this book (the text's *what*)? Perhaps it even becomes possible to read Stefansson's ambivalent legacy as Arctic pioneer as rooted in the characteristic narrative construction of his most widely circulated Arctic text. This is the question that informs my discussion of Stefansson's text over the next chapters, which follows after an introduction to theory and method in Chapter Two.

Chapter Two: Theory and Method

The present chapter provides the theoretical and methodological framework for my analysis of Stefansson's *Friendly Arctic*. The chapter is divided into two separate sections, one short introduction on genre theory and a more comprehensive one on the chronotope, a spatial/temporal unit introduced by Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin for the characterization and analysis of literature. The first section consequently places the narrative of travel and exploration in the literary landscape, and points to some of the characteristic generic traits of this kind of literature. As chronotope theory provides a chief theoretical framework for my discussion in the analytical chapters of this thesis, however, the bulk of this chapter is devoted to the constituent features of the chronotope, to relevant parts of its reception history, and to explaining how I propose to use the chronotope in the literary analysis of a narrative of geographical exploration and discovery. Here, the notion of emplotment also importantly features. While the concept of the chronotope remains an overarching framework in the following chapters, other terms and ideas from narrative theory and method are also introduced in my running discussion, where I find it useful for the analysis.

The Literature of Travel and Exploration: Fact and Fiction

The written word seems to have accompanied voyages to faraway places ever since the first western explorers and travelers set foot on foreign shores. Back home, their tales were received with enthusiasm, and even today you will find accounts of journeys, both historical and recent, factual and fictional, among the best-selling book titles of the general reading audience. "The travel narrative", as expounded by literary scholar Casey Blanton, "is a compelling and seductive form of storytelling" that has "proven to be remarkably popular reading" (Blanton 2002: 2). In recent years, several studies have traced and

explored the long history of travel writing, often focusing on the development of the genre from early forms represented by biblical or classical texts, to medieval travel accounts by pilgrims and crusaders, and, even later, as exemplified by the narratives of celebrated explorers like Marco Polo and Christopher Columbus. Examples of what may be described as modern era travel writing include works by travelling scientists like Charles Darwin, as well as eighteenth-century travelers—inspired by Rousseau and Romanticism—who searched for “various forms of ‘the primitive’” (Hulme and Youngs 2002: 2–6). Focusing on the general development of the genre from such early forms to the contemporary travel narrative, Blanton notes that as “the purpose of travel has shifted from political exploration or mercantile errands to travel for its own sake, gradual but fundamental changes have occurred in the narratives that describe these trips.” While she sees these early travelers as more interested in (ostensibly factually describing) the outer world, the works of twentieth-century travel writers are more concerned with the inner world, with “social and psychological issues” (Blanton 2002: 4).³⁹

This dissertation does not attempt to trace the multifaceted history of travel writing, nor the more recent developments within travel writing theory that has provided some of analytical approaches used by many scholars who in the last decades have provided new perspectives on such texts.⁴⁰ Over the following chapters, however, I single out some of the specific narratives means or generic characteristics of the Arctic exploration narrative, some of which have been identified by travel writing scholarship. In the present chapter, I dwell chiefly on one of these characteristics, namely the tendency to read narratives of exploration and discovery not first and foremost as *literary* representations, but instead as source material for our understanding of the (western) history of exploration and its achievements; of important events,

³⁹ Blanton’s examples include works by the travel writers Graham Greene, V.S. Naipaul and Bruce Chatwin (Blanton 2002: Chapters 4, 6 and 7).

⁴⁰ As indirectly suggested in the previous chapter, such models are often based on the works of discourse analysts and postcolonial theorists. For a general overview of travel writing theory, see e.g. Campbell 2002.

eras, dates and actors.⁴¹ Pertaining more specifically to the polar exploration narrative, the question that inevitably presents itself is therefore: Why are these narratives often read solely as factual accounts, as the *truth* about the Arctic, as it were?

A possible explanation may be found in one of the genre-specific traits of this kind of literature. Considered from a sweeping perspective, the narrative of polar exploration belongs to the genre of the travelogue or travel narrative, one of the numerous genres that can be sorted under the more general term life writing. I thus follow Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's broad definition of life writing as "a general term for writing that takes a life, one's own or another, as its subject" (Smith and Watson 2010: 4). While such writing can be "biographical, novelistic, historical, or explicitly self-referential and therefore autobiographical" (ibid), the subject of Smith and Watson's survey is the autobiography. Their study moreover addresses the tendency to view autobiographical literature in general simply as factual or historical documents:

Sometimes people read autobiographical narratives as historical documents, sources of evidence for the analysis of historical movements, events, or persons. From this perspective, autobiographical narrative and history writing might seem to be synonymous. (Ibid:13)

This seems to be the case of the polar narrative as well, where factual information holds a central place. Smith and Watson, however, warn against making a simple equation between autobiographical texts and history writing, and instead insist on the literary dimension (among others) of the life narrative:

Although it can be read as a history of the writing/speaking subject, however, life narrative cannot be reduced to or understood only as historical record. While autobiographical narratives may contain information regarded as "facts," they are not factual history about a particular time, person, or event.

⁴¹ Cf. Pratt 2008 (1992): 12.

Rather, they incorporate usable facts into subjective “truth” [...]. When life narrators write to chronicle an event, to explore a certain time period, or to enshrine a community, they are making “history” in a sense. But they are also performing several rhetorical acts: justifying their own perceptions, upholding their reputations, disputing the accounts of others, settling scores, conveying cultural information, and inventing desirable futures, among others. The complexity of autobiographical texts requires reading practices that engage the narrative tropes, sociocultural contexts, rhetorical aims, and narrative shifts within the historical or chronological trajectory of the text. To reduce autobiographical narration to facticity is to strip it of the densities of rhetorical, literary, ethical, political, and cultural dimensions. (Ibid)

Here it must be noted, however, that historians also perform “rhetorical acts” when they chronicle the past, and that history writing, like autobiography, therefore should not be reduced to pure facticity. Instead, it may be productive to focus on the historical text *as text* (and, more specifically, in terms of literary tropes or modes of emplotment), as do historical narrativists like Hayden White.⁴²

Focusing on the travel narrative, Anka Ryall argues a similar case by characterizing these accounts as a hybrid form of literature where documentation and fictionalization merge or melt into each other (Ryall 1989: 15–16). While older travel literature may be of value as source material for ethnologists and historians, she points out, a *literary* analysis of the same narratives may prove equally useful when determining the source value of the text (ibid: 15). Like other life narrators, the travel writer is not simply an unmediated recorder of facts about the journey undertaken and destination reached, but often has specific motives, drives or aims with the text. On the other hand, understanding the travel narrative *merely* as the subjective

⁴² Smith and Watson, however, distinguish between autobiographical and historical writing on the basis of their narrators, who are posited either at the center of their (own) story or “outside or at the margin of the historical picture”, respectively (Smith and Watson 2010: 14). White’s historiographical notion of emplotment will be examined in more detail at the end of this chapter.

expression of the author's personality may be equally unrewarding. As observed by Ryall, a travel narrative is written from a particular historical situation and with a particular audience in mind (ibid: 16–17).

As these introductory remarks demonstrate, one of the most important generic traits of the narrative of travel and exploration is surely what must be characterized as its close association with truth or facts, or, the claims that it makes about a referential world, as put by Smith and Watson (2010: 10). Being a *constructed* narrative, however, the travel narrative must also present such claims through rhetorical means. Truth in travel literature, as expounded by Arne Melberg, is not only a question of whether literary representation matches an underlying truth. Truth in itself must also be *produced* (Melberg 2005: 19). There are several ways of creating this appearance of truth. Among the specific narrative features actively employed to such an end are plot, persona, narration, and setting. The travel writer must actively translate his or her experience into a readable plot. By doing so, s/he is recounting the journey undertaken from greater or smaller temporal distance, which in turn involves the representation of dialogue, setting, etc. This also necessarily entails some kind of dramatization of the persona of the travel-narrator (cf. Korte 2008b: 619–20). Besides such a conventional “focus on the centrality of the self”, Hulme and Youngs furthermore point to travel writing's “concern with empirical detail, and [its] movement through time and place which is simply sequential” (2002: 6). Over the next chapters, in my close reading of Stefansson's *Friendly Arctic*, I will pay specific attention to each of these narrative features.

Documentation and fiction have so far been established as two essential components of the travel narrative, but how are we to understand these two elements in relation to one another? Author and essayist John Tallmadge (1979) visualizes their relationship schematically on a spectrum of narrative genres. When examining narratives of travel and exploration,⁴³ he accordingly

⁴³ Tallmadge defines literature of exploration as “factual accounts of voyages of discovery written by the explorers themselves or by participants in their expeditions” (Tallmadge 1979: 3). His article

singles out the two elements of the *communication situation* and the *rhetoric* of the text. The communication situation is here understood as what may be called the general agreement established between the author and reader of the text, and rhetoric is the sum of textual devices through which the story is told.⁴⁴ On a literary spectrum, Tallmadge proceeds to argue, the communication situation of any text can be characterized as based on either report or fiction. In the first case, verification *is* part of the pact between author and reader, while in the fiction it is no longer part of this pact. The text's rhetoric, on the other hand, ranges from being documentary, via historical, to imaginative. While the rhetoric of documentary on the one hand is predominantly denotative and declarative, imaginative use of language is connotative and figurative. The rhetoric of history, which holds the middle position between these two extremes, permits both denotative and figurative uses of language (ibid: 6).

A work of fantasy can be plotted on Tallmadge's proposed spectrum to illustrate these governing principles. The rhetoric of the fantasy is inclined towards the imaginative, while its communication situation must be characterized as fiction; here, verification is clearly not part of the pact between author and reader. In other words, we do not expect to be told the absolute truth about the events narrated in a work (of nonsense fantasy) like *Alice in Wonderland* (Carroll 1865). In contrast, the newspaper story or military dispatch—both genres identified by Tallmadge as counterparts of the fantasy—has a language of denotation and purports to tell the truth. The most significant element of the communication situation is therefore verification (ibid: 8).

Where does the literature of exploration find its place on Tallmadge's suggested spectrum of genres? Tallmadge states that he believes it is “constructive to consider the exploration narrative as a report which in some sense purports to be a fiction”. This makes it “a true hybrid combining certain

should be considered an early statement that the literature of exploration be included as a separate prose genre in a coherent theory of literature (ibid: 1).

⁴⁴ “The sum of all the textual devices which the author uses to tell his story, not only verbal features (diction and imagery) but formal stratagems (plot structure and format) and stylistic techniques (tone and characterization)” (Tallmadge 1979: 6).

features of both ‘reportage’ and imaginative fiction” (ibid: 2); or, more specifically, “a genre in which verification is the principle which governs the communication situation and story-telling [...] is the principle which governs how the message is communicated” (ibid: 6). The exploration narrative can therefore be characterized as a report told through the rhetoric of the historical. In order for it to be successful, Tallmadge concludes, it “must be both an accurate report and a good story” (ibid). The writing explorer must be able to convince his or her readers that the journey undertaken is real; that sights, experiences, or claims to new discoveries are accurate, and the story must also be crafted in a way that is sure to capture the reader. In the analytical chapters of this dissertation, I explore how *The Friendly Arctic* relates to this as well as related generic characteristics.

Chronotope Theory

Over the next pages I suggest that the concept of the chronotope can be productively used to examine and describe *The Friendly Arctic*. As a theoretical concept or framework the chronotope has been widely applied, and it has an equally long and multifaceted reception history. I therefore narrow down my focus by framing it around two aspects of the chronotope that will be relevant to my critical discussion of Stefansson’s text, namely the implication of chronotope on character and what I see as the inherent potential of chronotopes for engaging narratives of exploration. As can be recalled, Smith and Watson point to the complexity of autobiographical texts and call for reading practices that do not disregard dimensions of the text other than its factuality (Smith and Watson 2010: 13). Ryall (1989) and Tallmadge (1979) also insist that narratives of travel and exploration be regarded as a genre distinguished by its characteristic fusion of fact⁴⁵ and fiction. The following

⁴⁵ Or, rather, documentation or report.

therefore introduces the chronotope as a theoretical framework that enables me to identify and discuss both the documentary and fictional aspects of this kind of literature, and also the gliding transitions between them.

An Introduction to the Chronotope

The chronotope is a central concept in literary theorist Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's (1895–1975) extensive model of the novel. Although a concise and definitive definition of the chronotope is never offered by Bakhtin himself, its most important aspects are highlighted in the very name given to this concept. Chronotope means, literally, "time space". Instead of treating time and space as separate entities, Bakhtin insists on "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (Bakhtin 1981: 84). This is how narrative events in Bakhtin's vision become representable:

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (Ibid)

The chronotope thus highlights the representation of time and space, and implies a fusion of these two dimensions in the literary work that somehow can be grasped through one and the same concept. Still, such a preliminary definition merely points us in the direction of the complexity of the concept and says little of its concrete application in literary analysis. This naturally poses a challenge for the literary scholar, to whom several questions may present themselves: What are the constituent features of the chronotope and how should it be used as a tool for analysis when examining a particular narrative work? And, finally, with regards to the present study, why is it

fruitful to apply a chronotopic perspective in the discussion of an exploration narrative? A closer examination of the first of these questions may hopefully point us in the direction of an answer to the latter.

The problematic vagueness in Bakhtin's own use of terms is an aspect that several critics have dwelt on.⁴⁶ As Bernhard F. Scholz puts it, Bakhtin's terms "frequently do not satisfy the standards of explicitness and context-freeness which terms are normally expected to meet." Instead,

More often than not, [they] are introduced in the wake of a number of concrete examples rather than by means of explicit definitions, and their meanings only gradually unfold as the argument progresses and the examples accumulate.

Bakhtin's terms, in other words, are frequently encountered "in use", without explicit statement of the rules governing such use. (Scholz 1998: 142–43)

This characteristic discursive practice also pervades the essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics" (Bakhtin 1981), in which Bakhtin's analytical insights into some of the major novelistic chronotopes are reached through a series of discussions of space and time relations in specific literary works. The essay constitutes the groundwork of chronotope theory, and will also serve as an entry point into my chronotopic reading of Stefansson's *Friendly Arctic*. In his discussion of Bakhtin's essay, Scholz chooses to emphasize one particular aspect of this Bakhtinian vagueness. Bakhtin, Scholz points out, "did not himself attribute any finality to his theoretical formulations or to his definitions." Therefore, he suggests, "instead of reading [Bakhtin's texts] as self-contained monological treatises, we should perhaps try to read them as at times rather tentative contributions to an ongoing debate" (Scholz 1998: 144). The key passage from which Scholz finds his rationale is found in the opening section of "Forms of Time", where Bakhtin professes not to "pretend to completeness or precision in our

⁴⁶ See e.g. Ladin 1999: 213, Bemong and Boghart 2010: 5, and Lawson 2011: 387–88.

theoretical formulations and definitions” but rather points to ongoing developments within the study of space and time in art which in time will supplement, and perhaps correct, his own contribution to the field (Bakhtin 1981: 85). Bakhtin thus explicitly invites other researchers to consider his own work as a starting point for new explorations through and into the chronotope. Although this particular approach may sometimes go against precision and clarity in his terms, it must also be considered a particularly dynamic aspect of his ideas that encourages researchers to explore and make use of the chronotope in new contexts.⁴⁷ The chronotope has accordingly featured in areas of research as diverse as linguistics and archaeology, as well as art, gender and film studies.

Many literary scholars have used the chronotope as an analytical tool in their discussions of literary works of more recent origin than Bakhtin’s explanatory Greek romances and other ancient literary forms, and have thus contributed to exploring important aspects of the concept.⁴⁸ Although the work in this thesis should not primarily be considered a contribution to this kind of reception history of the chronotope, as a part of my discussion over the next chapters of Stefansson’s self-portrayal in *The Friendly Arctic* I propose to view space and time in his narrative through an essentially Bakhtinian perspective, i.e. by focusing on some of the chronotopes which I maintain can be productively described in Stefansson’s text. My use of the chronotope is first and foremost related to aspects of plot and character portrayal. I understand the chronotope primarily as encompassing a complex of narrative and compositional features that combines many elements from narrative theory. While narrative theory and method provide the critical basis for my concrete

⁴⁷ Bakhtin even gave the subtitle “*Notes toward a Historical Poetics*” to “Forms of Time”, a formulation which encourages an understanding of his essay as something other than a closing statement to chronotope theory (Scholz 1998: 144, emphasis added).

⁴⁸ In her doctoral thesis on Knut Hamsun’s novels *Pan, Markens Grøde (Growth of the Soil)* and *Landstrykere (Vagabonds)*, Linda Nesby gives an overview of some of the most frequent ways in which the chronotope more recently has been used as a tool for close reading in literary analysis. She divides these into three categories, according to the different aspects of the chronotope which here have been brought to light, namely its existential, semiotic and cognitive aspects (Nesby 2008: 34–35).

analysis of passages from Stefansson's text, I propose to use the chronotope as a theoretical concept which enables me to sum up and discuss not only formal elements of the narrative, but also aspects extending beyond the borders of the text and into the discursive and historical context into which it enters. The chronotope will in this sense provide me with an additional angle through which Stefansson and his *Friendly Arctic* can be viewed. My primary tools of analysis, however, are taken from narrative theory and other relevant sources.

Before venturing into this discussion, it is necessary to introduce the three main texts which serve as a theoretical background to my chronotopic discussion. Because of the central position of "Forms of Time" in chronotope theory, Bakhtin's renowned essay will also necessarily guide my application of his theory on the literature of exploration. In two later texts by Bakhtin critics Bernhard F. Scholz (1998) and Joy Ladin (1999), the link between chronotope and character in literary texts is explored further, and these two particular contributions to the chronotope's reception history shape my understanding of Bakhtin's thoughts. Combined, all of these three texts provide the basis for my chronotopic discussion of Stefansson's narrative in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis. Towards the end of the present chapter, a fourth background text will also be introduced. This is literary scholar T. D. MacLulich's short article "Canadian Exploration as Literature" (1979), in which the previously mentioned Hayden White's term *emplotment* is developed and skillfully adapted for the study of exploration literature.

Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel

Although the work of Mikhail Bakhtin has been heralded as one of the "most remarkable accomplishments" of the Russian Formalist movement in the 1920s, it has also been considered "one of the most powerful attempts to

transcend its limitations” (Kristeva 1986: 35).⁴⁹ To Bakhtin, a merely scientific abstraction of language did not constitute an adequate formula for capturing the concrete reality of living utterances. Instead, he emphasized the importance of conceiving of language as a *multitude* of languages, as utterances taking part in an endless dialogue; as words in endless dialogic communication. Dialogism, according to Bakhtin, is the therefore primary feature of language. The novel, moreover, is the primary literary genre in which such dialogism features (Gaupseth 2004: 22).

The Dialogic Imagination (1981) is a collection of four of Bakhtin’s most influential essayistic explorations into the genre of the novel and presents a syncretic theory of the genre. Bakhtin here sees the modern novel as a hybrid form of fiction. Adopting his term, the novel is *polyphonic*, a plurality of linguistic elements in dialogical relationships, be it the representation of the concrete discourse of narrator or fictional characters, or the imprints on the work of other genres, forms and styles, texts and contexts—all contributing to the stratification of language in literature. “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel” is *The Dialogic Imagination*’s third essay, and it is in its entirety devoted to the chronotope.⁵⁰ Like the ideas of dialogism and polyphony, the chronotope applies to both literary form and content. According to Bakhtin editor and critic Michael Holquist, the chronotope poses “yet another way to define the distinctiveness of the novel by means of its history, using differing ratios of time-space projection as the unit for charting changes” (Holquist 1981: xxxiii). In the opening pages of his essay, Bakhtin declares that many traditional generic forms have in time “lost any meaning that was productive in actuality or adequate to later historical situations”. It is this

⁴⁹ Bakhtin’s work includes *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art* (1929), *Rabelais and his World* (1965), and other equally influential essays. There is great controversy over the authorship of three of the books ascribed to Bakhtin (*Freudianism* [1927], *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* [1929/30], and *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* [1928]), which were published under the names of V. N. Voloshinov and P. N. Medvedev. I do not go into this query here, however.

⁵⁰ This essay was written in 1937–38; however, it was not published until 1974 in the literary journal *Voprosy Literatury* (*Problems of Literature*). The previous year Bakhtin had added the “Concluding Remarks” to his essay, and here his theory of the chronotope had been further developed.

actuality of literature that is captured by the chronotope, according to Bakhtin. The novelistic chronotopes permit us to look back at the “various histories of generic heterogeneity in the European novel” but also contain the seeds of future novel types (Bakhtin 1981: 85). By redefining the basic categories through which literature may be viewed, Bakhtin challenges readers to rethink the concepts of traditional genres.

“Forms of Time” is a comprehensive essay in which Bakhtin demonstrates his wide knowledge of western literature by discussing chronotopic relations in a range of works, both past and present, major and minor. Both style and structure in the essay may seem somewhat digressive, but the text is divided into eleven clearly separate sections, including Bakhtin’s short introductory statement and his informative “Concluding Remarks”. Not all sections of Bakhtin’s essay will be equally important to my reading of Stefansson’s text, and in the following I will therefore concentrate on those passages that pertain to aspects of character and plot, and connections between work and context in particular. A brief overview of Bakhtin’s essay must be included in such a discussion, however, as it is difficult to consider these two aspects independent of the greater whole of the text into which they enter. Dialogism, in this sense, is the framing feature also of Bakhtin’s essay.

The opening pages of “Forms of Time” contain some of Bakhtin’s most quoted formulations, and set the tone for his subsequent discussions of novelistic time and space relations. Bakhtin starts out by identifying three ancient or basic types of novels, each of which represents a distinct novelistic chronotope, and which he claims to a large degree have determined the development of the adventure novel up to the mid-eighteenth century (ibid: 86). The first type of ancient novel is (1) “the adventure novel of ordeal”, in the form of Greek romances; the second is (2) “the adventure novel of everyday”; and the third type is (3) the ancient biography and autobiography. What, then, are the constituent characteristics of the three novelistic chronotopes represented by these three ancient novels?

The adventure chronotope (1) is composed of the two major coordinates of adventure-*time* and an abstract, historically undetermined and interchangeable expanse of *space*.⁵¹ Bakhtin sees the plots of Greek romances as consisting of the very same set of (and therefore interchangeable) motifs (i.e. a meeting, a flare-up of love, a forced separation, a journey, an obstacle, an unexpected turn of events, etc.), which combine to form a plot which moves between two central poles; from a decisive first meeting to the final union of hero and heroine in marriage.⁵² Time in between these two major events must be considered an extratemporal hiatus in the sense that it introduces no new elements into the lives of the characters, as we shall see later. Space, on the other hand, consists of an abstract and alien world, a great geographical expanse in which the characters roam about and the plot may unfold. I will come back to the details of the adventure chronotope in my later discussion of the movements of Stefansson as a character in the narrative world of *The Friendly Arctic*.

The second type of ancient novel is (2) the “adventure novel of everyday life”. This kind of novel is in essence represented by two works: Petronius’ *Satyricon* and Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass*.⁵³ The temporal dimension of the new chronotope created by these works is “a mix of adventure time with everyday time” (ibid: 111). The general plot shared by these novels cannot therefore be described as an extratemporal hiatus between two central poles. Instead, it includes the critical moments in the life of the hero, who moves through concrete and familiar territory (space). Thus, Bakhtin demonstrates how Lucius, the protagonist of *The Golden Ass*, goes through a metamorphosis

⁵¹ Belonging to Bakhtin’s category of the “adventure novel of ordeal” are the “so-called ‘Greek’ or ‘Sophist’ novels written between the second and sixth centuries A.D.” (Bakhtin 1981: 86–87).

⁵² Bakhtin here uses the term “motif” interchangeably with “chronotope” and “chronotopic motif” (ibid: 97), something which suggests that several chronotopes — major and minor — can be found in one and the same literary work. In his subsequent “Concluding Remarks”, Bakhtin shifts the general focus from the major, genre-defining chronotopes to the minor chronotopes that can be found in a literary work. Motifs and minor chronotopes seem to be equivalent also here.

⁵³ These are Graeco-Roman works of fiction written in the (late) first and second centuries AD, respectively. According to Bakhtin, the characteristic features of this type of chronotope also occur in satires, in the Hellenistic diatribe, and in some works of early Christian literature (Bakhtin 1981: 111).

by turning into an ass, and this becomes a critical turning point in his life which ultimately decides his fate.

Central to (3) the chronotope of the ancient biography and autobiography is also necessarily the life of an individual.⁵⁴ At the heart of these two forms, Bakhtin states, “lies a new type of *biographical time* and a human image constructed to new specifications, that of an individual who passes through the course of a whole life” (ibid: 130). We are dealing here not only with the critical, life-changing events of the (auto)biographical individual’s life but also life in its entirety. The hero is placed in a space which is public (the *agora* or public square), and the course of his (or her) life is thereby made known or “exteriorized” (ibid: 135). Both the ancient autobiography and biography, therefore, had an essentially public character, and these forms eventually came to influence not only the European biography but also the development of the European novel as a whole. The public character of an exploration narrative like *The Friendly Arctic* is certainly prominent; this is one of the defining features of Stefansson’s work that I will return to presently.

In the development of the novel from these ancient forms, however, Bakhtin explains how the popular chronotope of the public square broke down and man became detached, private and individual. The latter part of his essay demonstrates how the tables are turned again by the works of Rabelais and Goethe, which Bakhtin sees as significant attempts to re-establish the fully exteriorized individual in literature (ibid: 136). The Rabelaisian chronotope, although not directly relevant for my study, is yet another demonstration of Bakhtin’s insistence on the vital origins of the modern novel in the basic or ancient literary forms, and the interconnectedness of work and world. In the

⁵⁴ As representatives of these works, Bakhtin discusses works of Plato, Tacitus, Plutarch and others.

Rabelaisian chronotope, he sees a new chronotope unfolding; “the completely unrestricted, universal chronotope of human life” (ibid: 240–42).⁵⁵

What is the Significance of all These Chronotopes?⁵⁶

What becomes apparent through Bakhtin’s elucidations of the chronotopic history of the modern novel is that there seems to be affinities not only between the representation of time and space in a literary work, but also between literature on a more general plane and what can be designated as “real life” or history. Likewise, the chronotope pertains both to the representation of narrative character (whether it be individual or collective lives) and the perspectives of the reader or writer outside that narrative, as we shall see later on. Bakhtin’s treatment of the ancient novels demonstrates how difficult it is to discuss one of these aspects independently of the others. The temporal and spatial dimensions of the literary chronotope cannot be separated from the life of the character who enacts and experiences such a space/time. At the same time, such a literary representation somehow both reflects and originates in a concrete, historical space/time. In its broadest sense, Bakhtin’s chronotope may thus be perceived as a concept that fuses together such complex interrelationships, and as a means through which they may be envisioned and discussed.

My primary concern in the present work is not to bring to light *all* of those chronotopic interrelationships which might be said to characterize Stefansson’s exploration account and into which that account enters. As a theoretical concept, however, the chronotope offers me a framework through which I may identify and describe the salient characteristics of both the

⁵⁵ This final section of the essay, Nesby notes, is closely linked to Bakhtin’s controversial dissertation on François Rabelais, in which he discusses grotesque realism, the history of laughter and Rabelais’ *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (Nesby 2008: 27). Bakhtin’s dissertation was published in 1965 as the book *Rabelais and his World*.

⁵⁶ This is one of the questions Bakhtin poses and tries to explicate in his “Concluding Remarks” (Bakhtin 1981: 250).

narrative universe and the cultural context of Stefansson's account. Central in both narrative and context is Stefansson himself. Therefore, over the next chapters, I propose to view particular aspects of his narrative self-representation in light of the chronotope. In order to do this, however, it is necessary to first emphasize what many critics have argued to be the central position of *character* in Bakhtin's chronotope theory.

Chronotope and Character

How are we to understand Bakhtin's statement in "Forms of Time" that "the relationships themselves that exist *among* chronotopes cannot enter into any of the relationships contained *within* chronotopes" (Bakhtin 1981: 252)? What some Bakhtin critics have deduced from these words is that chronotopes are operating on different levels of the text. In the article "Bakhtin's Concept of 'Chronotope': The Kantian Connection", Scholz consequently makes a distinction between inside and outside perspectives on space and time relations in a narrative. By inside perspective he refers to the ways in which the chronotope is understood by "the personages populating the world ordered by that chronotope," or the perspective on the chronotope of the characters in the narrative (Scholz 1998: 155). The reader of that same narrative, on the other hand, views the chronotope from an outside perspective, as an entity or as a constituent category of literature, where certain literary works can be viewed as ordered by the same chronotope. In both cases, however, the chronotope cannot be grasped independent of perspective. Such distinctions have implications both for character analysis and for a discussion of the reader, and Scholz emphasizes that both of these perspectives must be taken into consideration in a Bakhtinian analysis of a narrative.

Ladin also explores the relationship between chronotope and character in her article "Fleshing Out the Chronotope" (Ladin 1999). This relationship, she points out, is in reality one of interdependence. For any kind of linguistic

representation, it is impossible to “represent either image or action without implying a consciousness, and we cannot imply a consciousness without implying (at least vaguely) a spatial and temporal context” (ibid: 213). In almost any narrative we can therefore expect to encounter not only one but several chronotopes, all of which enter into different relationships with one another. Chronotopes, as stressed by Ladin through Bakhtin’s words, “are mutually inclusive, they co-exist, they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in ever more complex interrelationships” (Bakhtin 1981: 252). In order to understand these characteristic relations among chronotopes, and—perhaps more importantly for the present discussion—the “major chronotopes that emerge from these relations” (Ladin 1999: 220), Ladin insists that we should direct our attention to the aspect of character portrayal in literary analysis. She demonstrates how Bakhtin’s Greek romance chronotope effectively limits its characters’ ability to change throughout the narrative, and thus turns them into static figures. Reversely, only through the presentation of human character does the Greek romance chronotope become representable (ibid: 223). We are thus dealing with a circular relationship between chronotope and character: Chronotopes can only be understood in relation to character as a narrative construction of consciousness, and that consciousness, in turn, can only be understood against the space and time in which it unfolds.

Ladin furthermore distinguishes between three different kinds of chronotopes that can be examined in a text: an intrasubjective chronotope, an intersubjective chronotope, and a transsubjective chronotope. These are defined as follows:

an individual character’s perception (an intrasubjective chronotope); a collective space-time that is actually or potentially shared by more than one character (an intersubjective chronotope); or an extradiegetic space-time, perceptible only to narrator, author, or reader, in which disparate chronotopes can be related, reconciled, or synthesized (a transsubjective chronotope). Each

of these types of chronotopes is simultaneously defined by the consciousness, (i.e., character) to which it is related and *makes that consciousness visible*; transsubjective chronotopes are a primary means by which literature implicates readers and makes our responses (aesthetic, moral or otherwise) part of the work. (Ibid: 224)

Similar to Scholz, Ladin may thus also be seen as operating with “inside” and “outside” perspectives on chronotopes, and she proposes that the diegetic levels of a narrative may demarcate the borders between such perspectives. While the intrasubjective and the intersubjective chronotopes both are perceived by characters—from a perspective which emanates from inside the world ordered by those chronotopes—the transsubjective chronotope is perceptible only from an outside perspective, to extradiegetic narrator, author, or reader.⁵⁷ Character (or, rather, narrative consciousness) thus becomes a central element in Ladin’s understanding of chronotopes because chronotopes must be experienced and “lived through” rather than merely pointed to (ibid: 231). At the same time, it is only through the chronotope that that consciousness becomes discernible, as we have seen.

Character is thus a cornerstone in both Scholz’ and Ladin’s proposed chronotopic analyses of narrative. Ladin maintains that only through character is it possible to experience and describe the local chronotopes of individual works, and only by assessing the relations between these local chronotopes can the reader perceive the major chronotopes emerging from those works (i.e. Ladin’s transsubjective chronotopes) (Ladin 1999: 224). My discussion of Stefansson’s self-presentation in Chapter Five is underpinned by the interdependency of chronotope and character accentuated in Scholz and Ladin’s articles. Equally important for my study will be an examination of

⁵⁷ It might be argued that perspective of *the narrator* is a bit of a hitch in this kind of model. Does the narrator provide us with an inside or outside perspective on literary chronotopes? An extradiegetic narrator no doubt defines transsubjective chronotopes (as do the author and reader of the literary work); however, I would assume that an (intra)diegetic narrator (who is a character within the world of the novel) may be perceptive of both intra- and transsubjective chronotopes.

outside and inside perspectives on the chronotopes of Stefansson's account because of the "extrovert" or context-dependent nature of the polar narrative. I will, however, attempt to nuance the general picture of chronotopic perspectives made by Scholz and Ladin by looking more closely at the constituent features of the *Friendly Arctic* chronotope(s).

Exploration Literature and "Real-Life" Chronotopes

My discussion of the narrative self-representation of Stefansson as Arctic explorer will be centered on the idea of the interconnectedness (or circular causality) between chronotope and character, which I intend to read against other narrative dimensions of Stefansson's work such as plot, and temporal and spatial features. An equally significant aspect of chronotope theory also requires specific consideration when it is to be applied in a critical discussion of a narrative such as *The Friendly Arctic*, however. This pertains to the "exteriority" of chronotopes which already has been mentioned in my review of Bakhtin's essay. I will now focus on a slightly different dimension of this, which needs to be emphasized in relation to the literature of exploration.

In his examination of the ancient biography and autobiography, Bakhtin discusses one of the distinguishing features of their associated chronotope. "These classical forms", he maintains, "were not works of a literary or bookish nature, kept aloof from the concrete social and political act of noisily making themselves public." They were instead completely determined by very real lives and events. Therefore, he continues,

the important thing here is not only, and not so much, their internal chronotope (that is, the time-space of their represented life) as it is rather, and preeminently, that *exterior real-life chronotope* in which the representation of one's own or someone else's life is realized either as verbal praise of a civic-political act or as an account of the self. (Bakhtin 1981: 131, emphasis added)

The ancient biography and autobiography not only portrayed real lives and events but also unfolded in an equally important real time and space (which in ancient times was constituted by the *agora*, according to Bakhtin [ibid]). Thus it becomes quite clear that these literary forms, as emphasized above, both contain an internal chronotope but also directly relate to and unfold in an “exterior, real-life chronotope”.

Such internal and external chronotopes cannot be said, however, only to be activated by the purely (auto)biographical forms. Bakhtin’s “Concluding Remarks” offer an instructive perspective on the question of the relevance of literature in general to reality. Here, again, Bakhtin differentiates between the “*represented* world in the text” and “the actual chronotopes of our world”. The latter, he specifies, “serve as the source of representation”. Out of these, “emerge the reflected and created chronotopes of the world represented in the work (in the text)” (ibid: 253). Bakhtin then draws a sharp line between the worlds of actual and reflected chronotopes, and warns against confusing them in literary analysis.⁵⁸ Such a boundary line, however, should *not* be considered as a categorical or impermeable divide. Rather, the two worlds are “indissolubly tied up with each other and find themselves in mutual interaction [...] The work and the world represented in it enter the real world and enrich it, and the real world enters the work and its world as part of the process of its creation [and subsequent reception]”. This process of exchange between literary work and outside world is in itself chronotopic, Bakhtin concludes; it occurs in a historically developing social world and in a similarly changing historical space (ibid: 254).

Bakhtin’s overall vision of the chronotope thus encompasses not only the internal chronotopes of individual works and the larger generic (or major) chronotopes emerging from several works, but also actual or exterior real-life

⁵⁸ “[W]e must never confuse [...] the *represented* world with the world outside the text (naive realism); nor must we confuse the author-creator of a work with the author as a human being (naive biographism); nor confuse the listener or reader of multiple and varied periods, recreating and renewing the text, with the passive listener or reader of one’s own time (which leads to dogmatism in interpretation and evaluation)” (Bakhtin 1981: 253).

chronotopes. In this sense, the chronotope must be conceived as “a concept for engaging reality” instead of taking leave of it, as Clark and Holquist have noted (1984: 278). “In individual works,” another critic points out, “chronotopes form a bridge between formal elements of texts and the time/space of their production/reception. [...] [They] provide a ‘ground’ for representation out of which narrative events emerge, a series of temporal markers conjoined with spatial features which, together, define specific historical, biographical, and social relations” (Pier 2008: 64). It is precisely this flexible and transboundary quality of the chronotope that Scholz emphasizes in his interpretation of Bakhtinian theory.⁵⁹ The advantage of a chronotopic analysis, in Scholz’ view, is that it takes into consideration not only the concrete narrative events of the text but also links the literary chronotope by which these events are ordered to “the life-world in the context of which it was produced.” Such an analysis of narrative (in contrast to a structuralist one) “manages to avoid having to sever the ties which link a particular plot, a particular plot-structure or a particular literary chronotope to the life-world in the context of which it was produced”, Scholz claims (Scholz 1998: 160–64).

Why is it important for my discussion of Stefansson’s narrative to emphasize this particular aspect of chronotope theory? The most evident reason has to do with one of the fundamental generic traits of the literature of exploration. Like most other works belonging to this category of narratives, *The Friendly Arctic* is not a purely fictional text. It tells the story of the travels of an actual person in a concrete space and at an equally concrete historical time. In contrast to, for example, the author of a gothic novel, Stefansson as the writer of an exploration account from the Canadian High North cannot take imaginative liberties but must establish a more direct relationship between real

⁵⁹ Scholz does this by proposing a four-level analysis of narrative which pays attention to the level of the concrete text, the plot which can be extracted from this particular text, the concomitant plot-structure (which must be understood as a “generic” plot structure), and, finally, at the most abstract level, the concomitant chronotope. “In this four-tier structure”, he comments, “the chronotope represents the most abstract level, but significantly, even at this most abstract level the Bakhtinian reflection of narrative does not aim to disentangle itself from historical contingency” (Scholz 1998: 160–61).

and narrated events. In the communication situation of the exploration narrative *verification* is a compulsory part of the pact between author and reader, as we have seen Tallmadge argue (1979: 8). Put differently (and viewed through a Bakhtinian perspective), in the exploration account the divide between real-life chronotopes and the work's internal chronotopes is anything but impermeable. Indeed, the close interaction between work and world is one of the genre's defining features.

While a distinguishing feature of the exploration narrative thus is its claims to truth about a referential world, we have seen that such a narrative also shares features we ascribe to fictional writing. It goes without saying that there never can be any unmediated representation of real persons or events in texts; writing in itself always entails some kind of distancing from reality. Although Stefansson's exploration account is based on his field diaries and the notes he made during the five years he spent exploring Arctic Canada, such notes were later compiled and intermingled with later recollections and other texts, and thus the manuscript underwent a process of considerable editing prior to the publication of the "polished" product of *The Friendly Arctic* in 1921. It is Stefansson's book as a finished product or narrative *construction* which is the object of the present study. My intention is to examine and—perhaps more importantly—to bring to light the predominantly narrative aspects of the literature of exploration; this I propose to do by describing the internal chronotopes of Stefansson's account and by identifying the role of Stefansson as a character in such chronotopes. At the same time, however, I wish to emphasize the work's origins in and reflection of real historical circumstances—in Scholz words: "the life-world in the context of which [the narrative] was produced" (Scholz 1998: 161).

In relation to this latter concern, it is important to stress one more concrete aspect of Bakhtin's chronotope as a concept through which the present dissertation conceptualizes the connection between text and reality. External chronotopes have a lot to do with the performativity of texts. By this I mean texts as actions, or the effects that a text may (or purports to) have on the

external world. By writing his account, there is no doubt that Stefansson quite openly aspires to achieve something in the greater context into which his narrative then enters. His aim is to bring about *change*; not only by fashioning a new kind of exploration narrative which foregrounds a friendly Arctic, but also by changing the actual ways in which polar expeditions should be conducted, thus bringing in his proclaimed final stage of polar exploration (Stefansson 1921: 6), which I will return to. As a theoretical framework for analysis and discussion, my use of the Bakhtinian chronotope concept is intended to elucidate the interaction between work and context so evident in the literature of exploration.

Types of Emplotment in Exploration Accounts

In answer to the claim made by fellow Canadian literary scholar Northrop Frye that explorers “are as innocent of literary intention as a mating loon”,⁶⁰ T. D. MacLulich set out to identify some of the literary conventions found in Canadian exploration literature in an article from 1979.⁶¹ According to MacLulich, the writing of an exploration account is far from a random process. Rather, it involves an active engagement of narrative strategies by its author; it takes an essentially literary effort to shape the material into a story:

The explorer must choose which events to record and which to omit; he must select some events to stress and others to pass over lightly; he must decide on the amount and kind of interpretive commentary he will offer; and above all he must shape his account in accordance with his own sense of pattern inherent in his personal experiences. (MacLulich 1979: 73)

⁶⁰ Frye 2004 (1965/1971): 10.

⁶¹ MacLulich’s brief study poses an attempt to trace a very general history of Canadian exploration writing, from early accounts of enforced winterings in early 1600 to Vilhjalmur Stefansson’s travels in the friendly Arctic at the beginning of the twentieth century (MacLulich 1979).

MacLulich thus anchors the literature of exploration in the kind of materiality which is constituted by the explorer's travels. Similar to the historian, he asserts, when preparing his account for publication the explorer must impose order on "a set of events which are given rather than imagined". Because the creative activities of explorer and historian thus essentially are the same, MacLulich proposes that the conventionally historiographic notion of emplotment may be used also to categorize exploration accounts (ibid: 73).

Emplotment is one of the central terms in *Metahistory*, historian Hayden White's influential study of the archetypal modes of history writing in nineteenth-century Europe (White 1973), ironically influenced by the aforementioned Frye. White here repudiates the view of narrative as a "neutral" container of facts, and of the historian as an unbiased mediator of such facts. He points out that:

It is sometimes said that the aim of the historian is to explain the past by "finding," "identifying," or "uncovering" the "stories" that lie buried in chronicles⁶²; and that the difference between "history" and "fiction" resides in the fact that the historian "finds" his stories, whereas the fiction writer "invents" his. This conception of the historian's task, however, obscures the extent to which "invention" also plays a part in the historian's operations. (White 1973: 6-7)

Explanation by emplotment, White argues, offers the historian one way of providing a historical story with a specific "meaning":

Emplotment refers to the transformation of a set of historical events into a sequence endowed with the structure of the plot types of myths and literary genres. [...] By emplotment, sets of events can be transformed into stories with beginnings, middles and ends and thereby provided with positive or negative moral or ideological valences. (White 2008: 137)

⁶² Chronicle is defined by White as the initial arrangement of historical events into "the temporal order of their occurrence" (White 1973: 5).

The four different types of emplotment identified by White in historical texts are Romance, Tragedy, Comedy and Satire. White thus borrows for historiography four of the *mythoi* or generic plot structures originally explored by Frye in his *Anatomy of Criticism* (Frye 1957).⁶³ While Frye analyzed the dominant forms of mythic and fabulous literature, White's material is realist in the sense that it depicts actual historical events. Still, White argues, "Frye's analysis [...] serves very well for the explication of the simple forms of emplotment met with in such 'restricted' art forms such as historiography" (White 1973: 8).

While White's historian outlines the pattern of the historical story after the classical *mythoi*, MacLulich in his turn employs a different set of narrative categories to describe the emplotment of exploration accounts. Most of these, he claims, "are emplotted in one of three ways, either as quests, as odysseys, or as ordeals" (MacLulich 1979: 74).⁶⁴ The explorer of the *quest* undergoes a challenging journey; a succession of crises which must be overcome in order to attain some specific, far-reaching goal. "This authorial strategy results in a swift-moving, straight-line narrative, focused on limited issues", MacLulich explains (ibid: 74). The *ordeal*, on the other hand, entails great suffering and hardship, and the climax of the account is either the explorer's narrow escape from danger or full disaster (ibid). With such diverse outcomes, it seems only natural that the explorer-heroes in these two main categories of emplotment differ from each other in important respects. Put differently, MacLulich argues that the choice of literary form directly influences the explorer's self-portrayal through his or her narrative. Accordingly, the quest encourages an image of the explorer as determined and forceful, as someone who displays "bravery, physical strength, resourcefulness, and unflagging determination" — while the suffering explorer of the ordeal, on the other hand, may seem to lack such

⁶³ Cf. Frye 1957: 158–238.

⁶⁴ These three forms, as argued by MacLulich, are not necessarily mutually exclusive and one individual account may contain elements of several forms. However, in any case, "one of the three forms will dominate" (MacLulich 1979: 76).

qualities (ibid). Here it must be added, however, that there can be something heroic in suffering, as pointed out by Francis Spufford (1996). Robert Falcon Scott's central place in the British national imagination seems to be the prime example of this kind of hero-image.⁶⁵

The *odyssey* is MacLulich's third option for the emplotment of an exploration account, and finds its place somewhere between the extreme points of the quest and the ordeal. In this third form of narrative, he says,

the incidental details of the journey become the main focal point of the account. The explorer describes the things seen and the experiences undergone for their own sake rather than simply as adjuncts to a quest for some specific place or object. [...] Focusing on incidental details in this way results in a loose and digressive structure, which may be described as an *odyssey*. Like Homer's wanderer the explorer will often seem more interested in his immediate surroundings than in reaching his distant objective. (Ibid: 75)

Instead of having a more or less given narrative perimeter, the Odyssean explorer must therefore "choose his own thematic focus, and must organize a mass of details in a way that is both consistent and interesting", according to MacLulich (ibid: 81).

Instead of employing the concept of emplotment as given by White, in Chapter Three I use MacLulich's appropriation of White's term for the literature of exploration as an integral part of an essentially chronotopic reading of *The Friendly Arctic*. A discussion of *The Friendly Arctic*'s plot structure, I propose, not only helps bring to light distinguishing features of Stefansson's narrative self-presentation, but also allows me to discuss the major chronotopes that can be seen as emerging from his account. How, then, should the relationship between emplotments and chronotopes be visualized?

⁶⁵ "Had we lived," Scott's stated in his legendary written message to the public upon his death at the Ross Ice Barrier in 1912, "I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance, and courage of my companions that would have stirred the heart of every Englishman. These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale" (journal entry on 29 March 1912, quoted in Scott 2005 (1913): 422).

Emplotments and Chronotopes

First of all, in what ways are emplotments and chronotopes similar? It should be clear from the previous discussion that as theoretical concepts both emplotment and chronotope (as well as related terms such as literary topoi or schemata) are forms of intertextuality because they denote a set of dominant structures or motifs that feature in several narrative works. White understands emplotment as a “comprehensive or archetypal story form” (White 1973: 8), while Bakhtin insists on the capacity of the chronotope to define genre and generic distinctions (Bakhtin 1981: 85). On the basis of such general similarities, both concepts must be perceived as instruments through which literature may be viewed and classified. While White’s emplotment has been used to categorize historical texts of discursive prose, Bakhtin’s chronotope has opened up for a reconceptualization of the generic traits of the novel by foregrounding archetypal representations of time and space relations. This, however, also means that the subject matters and materials of White’s and Bakhtin’s studies are essentially *dissimilar*: Emplotments in *Metahistory* denote particular narrative structures in historiography or nonfiction accounts, while Bakhtin devotes the greater part of his chronotope essay to the novelistic or fictional chronotopes. This dissimilarity opens up for a possible complication of my project: Can chronotope theory be fruitfully applied in the analysis of an essentially nonfiction narrative (in the sense it that claims to be and have been read as the story of actual, historical events) such as *The Friendly Arctic*?⁶⁶

⁶⁶ In an article from 1987, Hayden White actually suggests using the chronotope as an alternate or additional perspective through which historians today may conceptualize the nineteenth century. The chronotope, he emphasizes, is not just something that has to do with literature. Rather than being merely “figments of the writer’s imagination”, chronotopes “function as well as effective organizing structures of individual and of general social consciousness, beyond the confines of ‘literature,’ within the domain of reality we designate by the term ‘history’” (White 1987: 122). In contrast to the notion of a historical period, the chronotope in White’s view has the advantage of giving both a more concrete and a more nuanced picture of a historical and sociocultural age; it “provides us with a medium-range, molar unit for conceptualizing regional variations in a cultural epoch somewhere between the atomic event and the galactic expanses of ‘periods’”, he notes (ibid: 125). White makes no direct comments

The potential chronotopes of what may be considered nonfictional or documentary genres are not considered specifically in Bakhtin's "Forms of Time". As can be recalled, however, a key section of his essay deals with the ancient biography and autobiography, two literary forms used to portray real historical persons and events. Bakhtin's general focus in this section is on how these forms and their corresponding chronotopes "had a profound influence not only on the development of the European biography, but also on the development of the European novel as a whole" (Bakhtin 1981: 130), something which suggests that his vision of the chronotope is quite comprehensive and cannot be restricted to the purely fictional forms like the works of Rabelais which he himself is primarily concerned with in the last part of the essay. At the heart of the ancient biography and autobiography, Bakhtin explains, lies "a human image constructed to new specifications" and a new type of "biographical time" (ibid: 130). While Bakhtin explicates how temporal and spatial features are combined to create the literary universes of such forms, his insistence on the "exterior, real-life chronotope[s]" by which they are determined (ibid: 131) testify not only to the close connection that he sees between literature and reality, but also suggests that chronotopes may be identified and productively discussed in narratives which relate to such an external reality more directly than fictional novels.⁶⁷

The proposition made in the present chapter is that certain chronotopes can be identified and productively discussed also in the predominantly nonfictional genre of the literature of exploration. I thus follow Bakhtin's claim in "Forms of Time" that chronotope theory is far from completed with his own study, and see the chronotope as a particularly flexible notion that may be made use of in new texts and contexts. A chronotopic reading of Stefansson's

here about the possible affinities between the concepts of chronotope and his own employment, however.

⁶⁷ Bakhtin's statement elsewhere in the essay that the function of the minor chronotope (or chronotopic motif) of "the road" historically had been exploited also outside the novel, "in such nonnarrative genres as journalistic accounts of travel in the eighteenth century" (Bakhtin 1981: 245) may also point to such a broad scope of the chronotope.

narrative of exploration moreover constitutes an attempt to address one of the previously discussed oppositions frequently encountered when dealing with this kind of literature, namely, the notion that there is an essential difference between travel literature and the novel—and that while the latter is fictional the former deals only with truth and real events.⁶⁸ In the present study, the chronotope serves as a theoretical framework which encompasses the kind of generic hybridity which I argue instead characterizes the literature of exploration; the chronotope is a bridge between elements of fact and fiction, between historical and narrative dimensions in Stefansson's account.

Admittedly, the chronotope is not the only concept that spans and connects fact and fiction, history and narrative, as my previous discussion of Frye and White's use of the term *emplotment* plainly demonstrates. Still, I maintain that the chronotope is a concept that may be productively employed when studying narratives of exploration, and that an examination of those narratives' *emplotments* or, rather, plots, plays a central part here. As for the distinctive relationship between chronotopes and *emplotments*, Bakhtin scholars Pieter Borghart and Michel De Dobbeleer make an important distinction between the two terms that seems relevant to repeat here.

In an article from 2010, Borghart and De Dobbeleer grapple with the question of whether specific chronotopes can be attributed to nonfictional texts—a question, they initially argue, which has not received enough attention in the chronotope's reception history and therefore still requires further investigation (Borghart and De Dobbeleer 2010: 85). The main project of Borghart and De Dobbeleer, however, is to demonstrate that the seeds of what they term a documentary chronotope in nineteenth-century realism are present also in prescientific historiographical texts (*ibid*: 85). In such a documentary chronotope the fictional world has a “close, ‘documentary’ resemblance to the

⁶⁸ Cf. Melberg 2005: 16.

extra-literary world” (ibid: 79).⁶⁹ Borghart and De Dobbeleer demonstrate how some of the same narrative features are shared by works of realism and historiography, and argue that “the documentary chronotope may indeed be ‘at work’ in fictional as well as non-fictional, for example historiographical, texts.” In fact, they point out, “realism, in fiction, and historiography, in non-fiction, turn out to be genres par excellence that provide us with ‘documentary’ passages (or ‘documentary motifs’)” (ibid: 80). I will not go into a detailed discussion of the documentary chronotope here, nor will I make extensive use of Borghart and De Dobbeleer’s term in my analysis; however, I wish to retain their general idea of a documentary chronotope that transcends borders of genre, elements of fiction and nonfiction, and incorporate the observations made here in my own running text in the analytical chapters.

The point I wish to make in the present discussion, however, can be deduced from Borghart and De Dobbeleer’s general observation that “within the context of historiography, *plot*, or more specifically, *emplotment*, is the mechanism *par excellence* that can turn the ‘documentary motif’ into a genuine documentary chronotope” (ibid: 83). Borghart and De Dobbeleer do not examine *how* this is done, however, nor do they provide any concrete examples in their article. Still, such a statement points to the central place given to plot (which they equate with emplotment) in Bakhtin’s chronotope. Plot or emplotment, as accentuated here, denotes the story’s development of events and actions, and thus features as an essential element in the narrative world constituted by the chronotope. The chronotope, however, is a concept which encompasses a much broader range of narrative components, which becomes a main reason why I propose to view exploration accounts in light of chronotopes.

It follows from this that I perceive the chronotope as a *node* of narrative and compositional features which encompasses plot—as well as other equally

⁶⁹ While the notion of a documentary chronotope never occurs in Bakhtin’s own work, more recently it has been developed and applied in analyses of films and historical novels, as well as realist and naturalist fiction (Borghart and De Dobbeleer 2010: 79–80).

important narrative elements such as character and perspective, not to forget the representation of space and time (both as key elements of setting and as fundamental categories of the narrative which permit us also to discuss aspects extending beyond the borders of the text, as we have seen). The node-like quality of the chronotope may be illustrated through Bakhtin's well-known initial formulation in "Forms of Time", where in the chronotope the indicators of time and space are envisioned as fused together in such a way that time "thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible" and, likewise; that "space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history" (Bakhtin 1981: 85). Throughout Bakhtin's discussion of the ancient novels, plot recurrently features as a prerequisite for the movement and development of characters in the narrative universe constituted by a chronotope. While character (or the "human image") must be seen as a cornerstone in Bakhtin's chronotope essay, it may still seem that plot here takes precedence over character. In narrative theory, however, the *interplay* between plot and character has always been central, and it is precisely this idea of a mutual interaction between the two that will influence my analysis of Stefansson's narrative.⁷⁰

By bringing the chronotope into play in such an analysis in Chapter Three, I thus wish to emphasize that *several* narrative and compositional features need to be taken into consideration in a discussion of Stefansson's account. Accordingly, I propose to look more closely at plot development, character portrayal, and related motifs and themes. As a comprehensive and yet unifying theoretical concept I believe the chronotope is particularly suited for describing such features of the literature of exploration. It is important to note here, however, that although the chronotope is brought into play in my running discussion, it does not serve as a main instrument of literary analysis. Instead,

⁷⁰ The following much-quoted formulation by American writer and literary critic Henry James testifies to such an interplay between character and plot: "What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?" (Besant and James 1885: 69). Although James here speaks of the mutual interdependency of the two, elsewhere he seems to prioritize character as the driving force of plot.

my analysis will be largely based on methods and insights from narrative theory, through which I examine Stefansson's work and his self-representation primarily as a literary construction through close reading of selected passages from his narrative. In the last sections of Chapters Three and Four, therefore, the chronotope will serve as the main instrument through which I sum up and discuss the findings of my analysis, and through which I attempt to view Stefansson's account against a larger historical and literary context.

One final aspect of the chronotope must be addressed first, however. We have already seen how Bakhtin's chronotope theory continually circles around questions pertaining to aspects of literature other than its purely narrative components. At a more general level, one even may argue, Bakhtin uses the chronotope to raise extensive questions about human existence, and he sees the history of literature as an attempt to answer questions about our very being. The aspect of human *experience* will serve a focal point in my discussion of Stefansson as explorer-hero in *The Friendly Arctic*. Throughout Bakhtin's essay, the category of time (perhaps more so than space) functions as a gateway for experience; for the ability of characters to acquire new knowledge and change throughout a narrative. We have seen how the characteristic representation of time and space in the adventure chronotope in essence denies its hero any form of new experience. This stands in sharp contrast to the journey towards personal development undertaken by the hero of the *Bildungsroman*. How are we to understand the Arctic journey of Stefansson as a travelling subject? What kind of *experience* does Stefansson give expression to under the characteristic spatial and temporal conditions of his friendly Arctic? Is new knowledge presented as the outcome of his journey—or does Stefansson resemble the character of Odysseus who in essence remains the same under constantly changing conditions?⁷¹ These are some of the questions that will inform the next chapters' explorative foray into the details of Stefansson's text.

⁷¹ Cf. Gaasland 1999: 56.

Chapter Three: The Friendly Arctic Chronotope

Spatial and Temporal Dimensions in *The Friendly Arctic*

As noted by Jakob Lothe, the connection between a narrative text's spatial and temporal dimensions stands out perhaps most clearly in travel narratives, where the journey can be described as the "expression of a strong spatialization of the experience of time".⁷² In the literature of exploration, space and time take on an additional meaning because it is through his/her narrative that the explorer perhaps most convincingly can document that s/he has in fact traveled to the unknown fringes of the map, to places only few or no one have described before. The narrative representation of space and time, in this sense, must be seen in relation to verification as one of the genre-specific traits of this kind of literature, as previously discussed. In the exploration narrative, the explorer documents his/her accomplishment by providing the spatial and temporal details of any (for example) polar records that have been broken or extreme destinations reached. In the following, I therefore examine the kind of time and space that feature in Stefansson's narrative, in order to describe how temporal and spatial references are used to depict his journey through Arctic Canada in 1913–1918.

Similar to most other narratives of exploration, *The Friendly Arctic* has (1) a time scheme that mirrors real historical time and (2) presents a concrete geographical space through which Stefansson as the protagonist of his own story moves. The story of his journey is accordingly related through 63 main chapters, in which (1) temporal markers such as years, months or specific dates—sometimes even exact minutes—are given chronologically and at regular intervals to provide the reader with a sense of progressing historical time. We sign on to the Canadian Arctic Expedition as its three flagships, the

⁷² Nøjgaard 1976, quoted and translated in Lothe 2000: 50.

Alaska, the *Mary Sachs* and the *Karluk*, set sail in late July 1913; then, we follow Stefansson's exploratory parties in their subsequent 5-year long period of trekking through the polar zone; and, finally, we are there for the moment (in April 1918) when Stefansson realizes that his journey has come to an end by looking over the Arctic Circle and to the "Temperate Zone" in the last ordinary chapter of his narrative—thus reversing the standard point of view of looking at the North from the South (Stefansson 1921: 685).

It is likewise possible to determine (2) the exact geographic position of Stefansson throughout this kind of narrative timeline, and a fold-out map is even provided in a separate folder of the book so that the reader may trace his actual spatial movement while reading about the various stages of the expedition. The first stage of this itinerary follows the sea route of the *Karluk* from Nome and up the northern coast of Alaska; from here, Stefansson and his men conduct five ice trips in the large coastal area which is encompassed by Banks Island to the south and Axel Heiberg Island to the north, where they discover and explore new land; and finally, in the last chapter, we take leave of Stefansson at Fort Yukon back in Alaska. Temporal markers are thus given together with place names at regular intervals throughout the text and function to anchor Stefansson's narrated journey firmly in a tangible temporal and spatial landscape, in both history and geography.

Place, Space and Character

What I have described in general terms above is the incorporation of what may be called real space and time as two central elements of the characteristic narrative setting for Stefansson's journey. At the same time, however, there is in Stefansson's narrative a certain confusion of any linearities of space and of time, setting in right from the start, which is different from comparable narratives of exploration. In the present chapter, I examine how this confusion is manifested in *The Friendly Arctic's* plot. My discussion of plot leads the way

into a consideration of some of the narrative features that Stefansson's account might be said to share with the modern novel as a literary genre, which then forms the basis for the friendly Arctic chronotope which I argue emerges from this account. Before addressing these topics, however, it seems advisable to commence with a clarification of the three basic terms place, space and character.

Mieke Bal introduces a subtle nuance in her presentation of the concept of space which will be useful in the following. This concept, in her view, is “sandwiched between that of focalization [...] and that of place, [which is] a category of fabula elements” (Bal 1997: 134). While *place* thus refers to the topological position of characters (which, as we have seen in Stefansson's case, varies and forms a concrete route within a specific area of Arctic Canada), place defined in terms of perception—through the focalization of a character—constitute the story's *space* (ibid: 136).⁷³ It is exactly this kind of space *perceived* which I believe must be taken into consideration when reading for the interconnections of plot and character in Stefansson's narrative. Space, as accentuated by Bal, is connected to the characters who “live it”; who are situated in it, observe it, and react to it (ibid: 133). Two questions guiding my reading in the following thus become: What kind of Arctic space does Stefansson as a character move through and interact with, and how is the plot of his narrative constructed to support his characteristic experience of the Arctic?

That plot and character are closely connected in the exploration narrative is, as previously mentioned, also accentuated by MacLulich (1979), although his article focuses specifically on some of the typical ways in which exploration literature is emplotted and the implications that such ways of structuring one's narrative have on the image presented in it of the explorer-

⁷³ While Mieke Bal (and other thinkers of place, such as Michel de Certeau) understand *place* as “the physical, mathematically measurable shape of spatial dimensions” (Bal 1997: 133), others again see place as meaningful and related to people. A nature writer like Gary Snyder, for example, views place in this latter sense, i.e. as an experience ingrained in all of us (Snyder 1990).

hero, as we have seen in Chapter Two. My reading of *The Friendly Arctic*'s plot is in many ways predisposed by MacLulich's three emplotment categories of quest, ordeal and odyssey, and by his contention about the different kinds of heroes that emerge from these three narrative categories. What category, then, does MacLulich assign to Stefansson's *Friendly Arctic*, and what kind of hero does he see depicted here? Stefansson, MacLulich states,

[...] does not want to arrive at some particular place so much as to prove that it is possible to travel more or less indefinitely, with a minimum of supplies and equipment, by obtaining food from the land. Therefore, he need not organize his account as a quest, but can adopt the looser, more digressive, odyssean approach. [...] Stefansson emerges as the hero of his account; but he is a hero with an odyssean slant. His prime attribute is not the ability to perform heroic deeds, but his superior knowledge of the Arctic regions and his skill in living there. Every detail in *The Friendly Arctic* is arranged to highlight what Stefansson refers to as his "polar-craft." Unlike the American explorer Robert Peary, with whom he contrasts himself, Stefansson does not marshal his intellectual and physical resources to direct a journey of conquest; his intelligence is used to come to terms with the environment, not to subdue it. "I have always been temperamentally inclined to deal with natural difficulties by adaptation and avoidance rather than by trying to overwhelm them," writes Stefansson. His whole book supports this self-analysis. (Ibid: 82–83)

While MacLulich extracts from Stefansson's book his alleged self-analysis, my discussion centers around the kind of self-representation which I propose that his text constitutes. There may perhaps not be such a great difference between the two terms, however, by using the latter I wish to emphasize that as a writer Stefansson stages or narratively constructs himself as a particular kind of explorer-hero by way of a particular kind of plot structure and a particular conception of space. In the following, I consequently seek to establish whether Stefansson's narrative is "loose and digressive" in the sense that his plot

resembles that of an odyssey. Against a close reading of passages that pertain to aspects of plot, setting and character, I ask whether Stefansson really emerges from his narrative as *merely* a “polar hero with an odyssean slant”, or whether his self-representation perhaps may be best described by employing an entirely different category. These questions will also be addressed more directly in the concluding chapter of the dissertation.

In such a discussion, it becomes necessary to distinguish between the different subject positions of Stefansson in the text. As the first-person narrator of his own story, Stefansson not only functions as *The Friendly Arctic*’s main character but also as its retrospective narrator. A reading of Stefansson’s self-representation as explorer-hero therefore also entails analyzing the fluctuations and potential nuances between these two narrative instances, to see what implications this has for the kind of hero we (readers) perceive him to be.⁷⁴

Three Questions Regarding Plot

While the account of a journey encourages linear and episodic narration, literary theorists have nuanced this general impression by demonstrating how the plots of travel writing can be seen as based on a variety of literary models.⁷⁵ MacLulich’s article presents a tripartite, structuralist model of exploration narrative emplotments, through which he attempts to map the “grammar” of exploration accounts by uncovering some of their recurrent narrative patterns—which then form the basis for their categorization. Following MacLulich’s lead, I consequently propose that the plots of exploration narratives organized as quests and ordeals share certain common features which serve to distinguish them from the Odyssean account. I start out by presenting a general or

⁷⁴ In Chapter Five, I will discuss aspects of Stefansson’s self-presentation in more detail by focusing on his role as the narrative’s implied author. This entails a further nuancing of his “double identity” as character and narrator.

⁷⁵ Some of the basic travel narrative plot structures may also be found in literary forms such as the epic, the picaresque novel, the utopian novel, the Bildungsroman, etc. (Korte 2008b: 619).

“archetypal” plot structure that represents a *combination* of similar plot elements from MacLulich’s quest and ordeal, and develop this model through insights from Northrop Frye’s analysis of the quest romance (Frye 1957). Such a basic (quest/ordeal) plot formula constitutes the standard against which I then read the Odyssean plot of Stefansson’s narrative.

The general quest/ordeal exploration narrative plot may be seen to move between two extreme points, from the beginning (in which the explorer sets out on his/her journey) to the end (in which his/her goal either is reached or the mission fails). Like the adventure plot of Frye’s quest romance, such a rudimentary plot structure can be described as “a sequence of minor adventures leading up to a major climactic adventure, usually announced from the beginning, the completion of which rounds off the story” (Frye 1957: 187). The plot, we might say, is structured around some version of a central conflict between two main characters; namely that of an explorer-hero versus the polar environment. There are two possible outcomes of this conflict: Either the explorer succeeds in combating the North, or s/he must witness her/himself conquered by the very same land that s/he set out to discover, map or traverse. In any case, the explorer has to go through a set of complications on the way towards some distant goal. Such complications may come in the form of extreme cold, treacherous ice, starvation, competing explorers, fierce animals, or similar hindrances that must be overcome during the course of the narrated journey. As a result, new land may be discovered, a farthest North record may be set, or the Pole may finally be reached (depending on what is presented in the beginning as the explorer’s far-reaching goal).⁷⁶

While the beginning and the end make out the two central poles of such a story, the *nature* of the events experienced or obstacles met underway by the

⁷⁶ Admittedly, in linear exploration narratives the goal of the quest is often *not* the end, as explorers must for example return after reaching the Pole, the most remote point, etc. In *Farthest North* (Nansen 1897), for instance, both Fridtjof Nansen and Hjalmar Johansen describe their journey southward after having reached their farthest North at latitude 86° 13,6' N in April 1895. The journey home again includes several momentous incidents, not to forget the subsequent “fête to fête, along the coast of Norway” (ibid: 596), which take place before they finally reach the home port of Christiania in September.

hero-character matters less in this kind of overall plot structure than the hero's final attainment of/failure to reach the main goal. Such a plot, therefore, can be characterized as more or less straight-lined in the sense that it involves a "progressive, goal-oriented search with stages, obstacles and 'battles'" (DuPlessis 1985: 200). In the proposed quest/ordeal plot, therefore, the explorer (a) sets out on a journey, (b) goes through a set of interchangeable obstacles, and (c) ultimately reaches the climactic objective of that journey—or tragically fails to do so.

With this model quest/ordeal structure in mind, my reading for the Odyssean plot of *The Friendly Arctic* will be guided by three basic questions: (1) What is the objective of Stefansson's journey/what makes the plot of his narrative move forward? (2) Can the Arctic be perceived Stefansson's main adversary/is the plot based on a central conflict between hero and environment? And, finally: (3) Does his story come to an end with some kind of climactic (or anti-climactic) finale through which Stefansson's status as a quest/ordeal explorer is established once and for all? I attempt to answer these questions over the next pages. Finally, against this kind of background discussion, I ask the general question: What kind of explorer-hero emerges from Stefansson's *Friendly Arctic*?

The Fourth Stage of Polar Exploration

The main objective of Stefansson's journey into the Canadian High Arctic is not necessarily a geographical one, but should instead be understood in relation to the scheme for exploration which he provides in the first chapter of his narrative. Here, Stefansson describes what he calls the "four great successive stages" of polar exploration history, which serve as the direct background to his own Canadian Arctic Expedition (Stefansson 1921: 1).

According to Stefansson's hierarchical model, men like Davis and Hudson represent explorers of the first stage in the history of polar exploration.

The chief problem of these two men, however—that which referred them to merely the initial stage—was that they “were universally in such fear of the North that they only made furtive incursions into it by ship in summer, returning South before autumn if they could.” Their dealings with the Arctic could therefore not be anything but limited, Stefansson observes (ibid: 2). The criteria for Stefansson’s classification of polar exploration are thus established; they are those of hostility versus friendliness, and intrusion versus belonging.

The next generation of polar explorers did come somewhat closer to fulfilling Stefansson’s criteria. “In the second stage, of which Edward Parry is typical,” Stefansson explains, “the polar winter was still dreadful, but a few men were found of such stern stuff that they were willing to brave its terrors. The battle with frost and storm at that time was a form of trench warfare.” Here, the likes of Sir John Ross did make some notable polar achievements by looking to the Eskimos. However, no explorer seemed to think of “borrowing their system of life and travel in toto”. Eskimo methods were therefore still used “with the ineptitude of the novice”, and did not serve to take the history of polar exploration into its next stage (ibid: 3), according to Stefansson.

In contrast, Robert Peary of the third stage finally managed to *make friends* with the polar winter, thereby taking what Stefansson perceives to be “a greater step forward [...] than any of the preceding.” What still handicapped Peary, however, was that he failed to see how the Arctic Sea could supply him with provisions for the journey, and thus had to cut his route unnecessarily short (ibid: 4–5).⁷⁷ The summit of polar exploration, therefore, still awaits the most adaptable explorer. Stefansson explains:

Now if it could be demonstrated that food suitable to sustain indefinitely both men and dogs could be secured anywhere on the polar sea, then obviously

⁷⁷ The following explorers feature in Stefansson’s three first stages of Arctic exploration. First stage: English navigators and explorers John Davis (c. 1550–1605) and Henry Hudson (c. 1656–1611); second: English navigator and explorer Sir William Edward Parry (1790–1855), English naval officer Sir John Ross (1777–1856), and Irish naval officer and explorer Sir Francis Leopold McClintock (1819–1907); and third stage: American explorer Robert E. Peary (1856–1920).

journeys over the ice would cease to be limited either in time or distance. [...] To demonstrate the feasibility of this and thereby to bring in the fourth stage of polar exploration, was the main task of our expedition. *From my point of view, at least, any discoveries which might be made through the application of this method were secondary to the establishment of the method itself.* For, with the method once established, anyone could go out and make the discoveries. When the world was once known to be round, there was no difficulty in finding many navigators to sail around it. When the polar regions are once understood to be friendly and fruitful, men will quickly and easily penetrate their deepest recesses. (Ibid: 5–6, emphasis added)

The potentially great value of Stefansson's proposed achievement is duly emphasized here. Should Stefansson succeed in demonstrating that the explorer can act as a self-sufficing travelling unit and thus broaden both the geographical range and duration of his journey accordingly, the expedition will do nothing less than revolutionize the art of Arctic exploration. Be that as it may, however, the implication of such an initial presentation is also that Stefansson's journey has no fixed geographical destination or other similar concrete endpoint; it is not geared towards setting a farthest North, nor beating a competing explorer to the Pole. It is the explorative method in itself, and not the potential records broken or hindrances overcome by use of that method, which Stefansson presents as the main objective of his expedition. The establishment of a method (or the installment of a fourth stage), one might say, seems not to pose a conventional Arctic quest goal. How, then, can a *method* be established narratively, and how does this proposed grand project of Stefansson relate to the story's overall plot?

Serpentine Plot

Generally speaking, *The Friendly Arctic's* plot follows the movements of Stefansson during the course of his five-year long expedition, and can be

summarized as follows: After the initial presentation in the two first chapters of Stefansson's proposed fourth stage objective, the expedition sets off and soon encounters what appears to be one of the greatest hindrances during the course of the whole journey when the *Karluk*, one of its flagships, is jammed in the ice and starts drifting away in a storm. Stefansson himself has left the ship, and instead of recounting the subsequent fatal journey of the *Karluk*, this event in many ways marks the starting point of Stefansson's own journey which is to give structure to the subsequent narrative. From now on, the storyline is comprised of the actions and movements of Stefansson as a character and member of various small exploratory parties.

After a first complication on this journey in the form the severe criticism from his men that Stefansson has to face after having "lost" his ship, the first success of the expedition is established when it becomes clear that Stefansson and his advance party have indeed managed to travel on ice floes across a great stretch of the Polar Ocean while subsisting on seals caught underway. After this, narration follows Stefansson and his men as they alternate between exploring lands to the north and journeying southward again to make new plans and prepare for new advances. Significant climactic events of the plot are the discoveries of three "new lands", while complications tend to come in the form of people encountered who oppose of Stefansson's plans or ideas, both aspects of which I will return to later.⁷⁸ In the periods in between such events, however, Stefansson hunts, constructs igloos, meets with Inuit informants, collects scientific specimens, and maps the areas through which he travels. His journey comes to an end when he falls ill after the fifth winter in the North, and Stefansson must therefore return to civilization, as we soon shall see.

While the general plot of *The Friendly Arctic* as outlined here does contain some of the same elements that I have presented as typical of the quest/ordeal plot (namely, a set of climactic events and complications that

⁷⁸ A total of four islands were discovered by Stefansson's northern party in 1915 and 1916: Brock and Borden Islands (first believed to be one and the same island), Meighen Island and Lougheed Island (Gray 2003, web).

Stefansson has to go through during the course of his journey), a set of other, essentially suspense-decreasing elements mark the story as wholly different from a polar quest or ordeal. In order to describe such elements, it is necessary to take a closer look at the distinct course of action that is constituted by the characteristic movement through the Arctic landscape of Stefansson as a character. Bal's (1997) insistence on viewing a story's space as perceived by characters moreover influences such a reading of the plot, and it is exactly this kind of perspective that I wish to keep in mind in the following. How, then, is Stefansson's movement through the landscape narratively represented, and how does he perceive and interact with the Arctic world through which he travels?

Flowing with the Arctic

Gísli Pálsson describes Stefansson's characteristic strategy of exploration as "flow[ing] with the arctic environment" instead of waging war against it (Pálsson 2002: 279), and several examples from *The Friendly Arctic* show that such a strategy of adaptation instead of confrontation also informs the narrative representation of Stefansson's dealings with the Arctic on his 1913–18 journey. In the chapters devoted to the activities of Stefansson's advance parties across ice floes, this strategy is quite literally shown to be the case by the sheer fact that the parties intentionally submit to the forces of nature by letting sea currents and ice surfaces largely determine their daily course and progression. Here, Stefansson's distinctive explorative strategy entails being actively passive by purposefully surrendering to the flow; the key to his journey is being targeted *with* (the aid of) nature, instead of working against it.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Other memorable flowing Arctic explorers are, for instance, Fridtjof Nansen, who even more literally surrendered to the flow in late 1893 by letting the *Fram* freeze in the pack ice, with the intention of drifting with the east-west current of the Arctic ocean towards the North Pole (Nansen 1897). In contrast, the men of the Austro-Hungarian Expedition (1872–1874), led by Carl Weyprecht and Julius Payer, became captives of the flow when their ship was caught in the ice and they involuntarily drifted for two years before abandoning the ship and making their way back to Europe (Schimanski and Spring 2015). Even later, in 1937, the Soviet North Pole-1 Expedition established on an ice floe a manned drifting research station led by explorer and scientist Ivan Papanin, thus—in Stefansson's spirit—making the sea ice their sole vessel (Youngs 2010 and Frank 2010). The recent FRAM 2014/15

Stefansson thus demonstrates how the explorer should have an almost instrumental approach to the landscape; how the sea ice provides him with a vessel, how seals and caribou become live provisions, and how he turns heather into fuel and snow into shelter. This kind of approach to the landscape is clearly modeled on the Inuit example, and this is something that Stefansson continues to emphasize throughout his account.⁸⁰

The point being made in the following is that in this kind of useful space Stefansson's movement in time is characterized by a "conspicuous lack of hurry" (Stefansson 1921: 88) which seems characteristic of the Odyssean wanderer—in some respects even the (Arctic) flâneur; "the perfect idler" and "passionate observer" who immerses himself in the ebb and flow of the metropolis (Baudelaire 1972: 399). This is how Stefansson and Ole Andreasen's exploratory travels on Banks Island in the summer of 1914 are rendered:

Ole's journey and mine was for pleasure and to pick up such incidental information as came in our way. We traveled so light that our three pack dogs were able to carry everything, and we wandered from hilltop to hilltop, enjoying the scenery, examining the ancient camp sites and killing a fat caribou whenever necessary. This combined the freedom from care of a picnic with the fascination of exploration. (Stefansson 1921: 258)

The landscape encountered in this passage seems abundant and easily traversed, and the fact that the two companions take time to enjoy the scenery and wander *over* hilltops instead of cutting their route short suggests that their movement through the landscape is non-linear and that time is *not* of the essence. In fact, Stefansson's journey seems almost unstructured or unfocused, and can therefore be compared to the characteristic movement of the Odyssean

expedition (promoted as a Norwegian ice drift 118 years after Nansen), however, used a hovercraft on top of the ice as a platform for a one-year long drift in the polar basin (sabvabaa.nersc.no, web).

⁸⁰ See Chapter Six for a discussion of the impact of Inuit knowledge on Stefansson's characteristic method of polar exploration.

wanderer who travels; “not along a road, from A to B, but along many roads, without setting a final destination” (Montiglio 2000: 86). Instead of working one’s way swiftly towards a fixed geographical destination, exploration as presented by Stefansson above entails taking time to absorb the details of the landscape, picking up “incidental information” and making use of its ample natural resources en route—thus conducting a generally “delightful and carefree journey” (Stefansson 1921: 258).

Even when the environment is portrayed as more hostile, the same kind of lenient approach is adopted and emphasized by Stefansson. On two different occasions Stefansson goes astray in fog and bad weather, and has to wander through the night in order to find his way back to camp again. Neither of these events, however, are presented as ordeals or tales of tragedies narrowly averted. Instead, the *lack* of narrative tension in the portrayal of his adventures seems marked. At one point, Stefansson as retrospective narrator even uses the occasion to emphasize that a snowy ground may provide a suitable bed when the traveler must spend the night under the open sky while waiting for the weather to clear:

A belief that has in the past handicapped polar explorers is that when you are lost in the Arctic you must not go to sleep. It is said that if you do go to sleep you never wake. [...] People who are awakened from sleep by being too cold in bed [, however,] become warm through mere wakefulness, providing the cold to which they are exposed is not too intense. That is exactly what happens to a person who lies down as I did now. The approach of sleep brings on a chill that wakes you up, so that I have never under such conditions been able to sleep more than a quarter of an hour or so at a time and more often I have not been able to go to sleep at all. With clothing a little warmer I could have taken longer naps. (Ibid: 455)

Stefansson’s suggested appropriation of the cold snow as a means of avoiding a fatal outcome of the situation seems perhaps an extreme way of “flowing” with the environment. The passage nonetheless testifies to his repeated insistence on

accommodating himself to the whims of the Arctic landscape rather than attempting to master these through sustained endeavor. Had Stefansson only worn warmer clothes, he concludes, he could have become even more accustomed to the cold. In fact, whenever he has been cold in the North it has been his own fault, Stefansson states later, thus testifying to the close relationship that the Arctic explorer should forge with his surroundings (ibid: 608).

Stefansson's characteristic explorative approach here, and in similar passages of the narrative, resembles the kind of movement that cultural geographer John Wylie describes as a "smooth, nomadic occupancy of landscape" where "the art of polar *voyaging* [is] intertwined with the art of polar *dwelling*" (Wylie 2002: 176). While the object of Wylie's study is the explorer Roald Amundsen's characteristic execution of polar exploration in the race against Robert Falcon Scott to the South Pole in 1910, a comparison to Stefansson is relevant. In Amundsen's case, Wylie explains:

Such a dwelling was nomadic: for occupation and 'command' of the landscape it required continual movement, a 'smooth' sensibility anterior to any division of points and lines, settlements and the paths between them. In essence, Amundsen's Antarctic sojourn could be viewed as an illustration of the argument that to travel well in a hostile environment, one has to be *at home* within it [...]. (Ibid)

The aspect of being at home in the Arctic is a recurrent topos in Stefansson's narrative.⁸¹ While the quoted passages above provide two concrete examples of how a strategy of exploration by adapting to the landscape is adopted by Stefansson as an individual traveler, other chapters demonstrate how polar voyaging involves activities related to Arctic sojourns just as much as concrete

⁸¹ See for instance Chapter XXI, where Stefansson refers to the "at-home-ness of the land ice" (Stefansson 1921: 224); Chapter XXV, where he describes "the soft beauty and homelikeness of Banks Island" (ibid: 258); or, Chapter XVII, in which Stefansson claims that his ice floe provides a far more comfortable accommodation than chilly urban houses (ibid: 179).

geographical movement. Stefansson goes into detail when describing how snowhouses (igloos) are erected, how his parties spend hours and days on the ice waiting for seals to pop up through their breathing holes, or how they choose to prolong their stay in a particular area when the opportunity arises to visit an Inuit settlement. A summary account of the activities of the northern section suggests that the same “conspicuous lack of hurry” also informs the movements of this branch of the expedition as a whole, and, moreover, that friendly Arctic exploration seems largely determined by the landscape and by the cycles of the year: Thus, hunting camps are established in summer in particularly profitable locations to secure provisions for the winter, while the winter darkness presents the crew with an excellent opportunity to prepare for the exploratory work of advance parties during the coming spring. Voyaging and dwelling seem inseparably intertwined in Stefansson’s characteristic representation of polar exploration.

What kind of plot structure, then, may be used to describe the account of such an Arctic journey? Based on the examples given above, the plot structure of the narrative as a whole seems to mirror Stefansson’s characteristic pattern of movement (and non-movement) through the landscape, which may be more aptly described as *serpentine* rather than straight-lined. The plot follows Stefansson’s journey in its many stages of advances and detours, through decisive incidents and equally important “everyday” undertakings such as setting up camp or skinning a seal.⁸² In fact, it is the frequent passages devoted to such seemingly “anti-climactic” events which to a large degree constitute the narrative’s main course of action because they provide the narrator with an opportunity to elaborate on some particular subject of importance to his message of a friendly Arctic. Similar to the *Odyssey*, at the foreground of *The Friendly Arctic* are thus “events taking place in leisurely fashion and with very

⁸² Similar to such a plot structure, a glimpse at Stefansson’s “Key Map of Canadian Arctic Expedition Discoveries in the Arctic Sea 1913–18” shows an itinerary which is serpentine rather than fixed towards a final destination, and which can be divided into various years and stages of advance trips and detours.

little of suspense”, rather than pivotal scenes only (Auerbach 1953: 11).⁸³

Because Stefansson as a traveler does not strive for one fixed destination, we might say, his goal seems to be “already present in every point of his progress” (ibid: 5), and this is reflected in the narrative non-linearity of his account.

Stefansson’s serpentine plot moreover becomes a key element of his tale precisely because it marks the narrative as *different* from exploration narratives plotted as quests or ordeals. The plot structure itself reinforces Stefansson’s characteristic perception of the landscape as an essentially friendly space; a space that offers only minor obstacles to the explorer and which therefore does not need to be overcome. Instead, it invites a strategy of exploration by flowing with the landscape.

Out of the Arctic

By reading *The Friendly Arctic*’s plot against the “archetypal” quest/ordeal plot that has been deduced from MacLulich’s brief survey (1957), two of my three initial questions about Stefansson’s account have so far been addressed: First, we have seen how the objective of Stefansson’s journey is a method rather than some more conventional polar quest goal, and, secondly, how his plot can be described as serpentine rather than straight-lined, something which undermines the impression that the narrative’s main course of action is not fueled by a central conflict between hero and environment. It therefore remains to determine how the story of Stefansson’s friendly Arctic voyage comes to an end.

In the account that leads up to the last ordinary chapter we learn how Stefansson’s ship unexpectedly runs aground on his voyage out of the Arctic in

⁸³ In “Odysseus’ Scar”, literary critic Erich Auerbach discusses the marked lack of suspense in the Homeric poems, as exemplified by the *Odyssey*. It is what he calls the “retarding element” of the Homeric poems which is his main concern; “the going back and forth” (as described in a letter exchange between Goethe and Schiller in 1797) which, to Auerbach, seems “to be opposed to any tensional and suspensive striving toward a goal” (Auerbach 1953: 5).

late 1917. Stefansson now faces the prospect of having to spend the whole winter near Barter Island on the Alaskan coast before he can continue his journey home. Instead of lamenting this setback, however, such an unexpected turn of events causes Stefansson to launch an entirely *new* plan: In the final chapter of his narrative, he consequently introduces the idea of accomplishing a drift on an ice field much in the same way as Fridtjof Nansen's *Fram* and Lieutenant de Long's *Jeanette* have done in the same area before him— although the novelty of Stefansson's plan is to do so entirely *without* a ship.⁸⁴ Stefansson admits that he has had such a grand plan in mind for several years, although his “intention had been to go home, publish the results of the [current] expedition, and organize a second one for the purpose of such a drift”. Being bound for civilization again, his parties have therefore already “sold most of [their] dogs and disposed of much of the equipment needed for exploration” when the opportunity presents itself for this protracted journey which Stefansson now declares to be “one of the most interesting and important that the expedition had undertaken” (Stefansson 1921: 675).

We can readily imagine how Stefansson's proposed advance drift would present an ideal polar quest objective because a success would entail outdistancing both De Long and Nansen, and how such an endeavor consequently would hold a central position in the archetypal quest/ordeal plot.⁸⁵ However bold his plan may be, in the ultimate chapter of his narrative, Stefansson's drift is presented as more of a whim than a long sought-after goal. Its late introduction does not accentuate the importance of such an achievement

⁸⁴ After having sunk near the New Siberian Island in 1881, wreckage from George Washington De Long's ship the *Jeanette* was later found on the southwest coast of Greenland, apparently having drifted right across the Arctic Ocean. Nansen later proposed that his ship could also be made to conduct such a drift, and that the *Fram* Expedition (1893–1895) thus would provide an excellent base for scientific investigation of the Arctic Ocean and, incidentally, a means of reaching the North Pole (Armstrong, web). Being partly based on the drift of ice floes, Stefansson's expedition thus presages the aforementioned Soviet and Russian manned drifting ice stations, starting with Papanin's North Pole-1 in 1937.

⁸⁵ At the same time, such a goal is naturally related to Stefansson's objective of demonstrating how to live and travel in/through nature, i.e. to his characteristic Odyssean approach to Arctic exploration.

in the plot as a whole, and therefore does not serve to build narrative suspense, nor underline the heroism the proposed venture.

This anti-climactic ending of the account is reinforced by the fact that it is his partner in exploration Storker T. Storkerson, and not Vilhjalmur Stefansson himself, who in the end commands the ice floe party across the Beaufort Sea, and the account of the drift is therefore referred to the appendix, wholly outside the main narrative.⁸⁶ Suffering from what turns out to be a serious bout of typhoid fever, Stefansson cannot venture north, but is instead rushed back to Herschel Island in order to receive urgent treatment at the police barracks. The final stage of Stefansson's Arctic voyage thus turns into a tale of an explorer's battle against a life-threatening infection. Does his narrative therefore present an Arctic ordeal? Stefansson seems not to think so. His account of the incident is everything but a tale of tragedy narrowly averted, although he does emphasize that this final adventure easily could have had another ending had he stuck with the ineffective treatments given to him at Herschel Island:

my condition kept growing worse until every one finally agreed that I was going to die. Then [officer] Phillips took the stand that if I was going to die, anyway, I might as well die as I wanted, trying to get to the hospital. [...] A sled was specially prepared for me with springs taken from a small spring bed. I was very comfortable from the start, and at the end of the fifteen-mile drive to Stokes Point to everyone's surprise I had no fever. [My travelling companion] Mr. Fry, now that we were away from the settlement, was less inclined to insist on the orthodox liquid diet for a typhoid convalescent and I was allowed to eat some raw fish. This seemed to do me good and next morning there still was no fever. (Ibid: 681–82)

⁸⁶ "Drifting in the Beaufort Sea" is authored by Norwegian Storkerson, "ranking member of expedition" (ibid: 764) and one of Stefansson's most trusted men. Storkerson's account first appeared in *MacLean's Magazine*, March 15 and April 1, 1920.

[...] Three days later we arrived at St. Stephen's Hospital, Fort Yukon, and I was so far recovered that I walked without assistance from the gate to the house. Some enterprising Alaska journalist later wrote a vivid story printed in many newspapers about my hardships and sufferings on a four hundred-mile journey over snow-covered arctic mountains from Herschel Island to Fort Yukon "in a neck-and-neck race with Death." On the said race I never noticed the hardships, probably through lack of the journalistic instinct. I enjoyed each day the events thereof and rejoiced in the increasing certainty of recovery. If the reader insists that on such a journey under such conditions there must be hardships, I shall not argue the point. Perhaps I don't know what the word means. But I do know that on the twenty-seven-day journey I gained in weight thirty pounds. (Ibid: 685)

Stefansson's message through these passages cannot be mistaken. While the various "civilized" treatments given to him at Herschel Island (such as disinfecting the police barracks with sulphur fumes and putting him on a milk-only diet) cause serious relapses in his condition, it is the Arctic cure of eating raw fish on a journey over snow-clad mountains which becomes his rescue. The truth is, he maintains, that the polar regions are a source of strength and health. Either way, we might say, through the vivid testimony of some "enterprising" journalist who reports on Stefansson's narrow escape from death, or through Stefansson's own conflicting account of the same journey, it is Stefansson himself who emerges as the sturdy polar hero. By quoting the journalist, Stefansson has his cake (or fish) and eats it, too. While his main concern in the last chapter is to explain to the readers how his journey came to an abrupt and most unwanted end, the element of toned down self-presentation appears as the common denominator of these passages—as it does throughout the rest of Stefansson's narrative.

More importantly, however, the above passages aptly demonstrate how the Arctic in Stefansson's narrative not only refers to the actual place through which he travels—to his topological position—but how it must be conceived of as an ultimate space *perceived*, in Bal's sense (1997: 134). The Arctic,

perceived or focalized through Stefansson as a character, is throughout the account rendered as a genuinely friendly space. It is outdoors that Stefansson manages to pull through, and thus the story of his recovery further underlines the persistent message that the Arctic is no setting for a tragedy.

One final point needs to be made about Stefansson's near-tragedy cum health-restoring trek: Such a story underlines the fact that the account has no final climax in which some major conflict of the plot is resolved. This does not mean, however, that Stefansson lets the story of his Arctic venture come to an end without emphasizing that it has been a success. Both in the final chapter and elsewhere in the narrative the achievements of the Canadian Arctic Expedition are duly publicized: Stefansson underlines the importance of their geographic discoveries, the valuable scientific information his expedition brings back, not to forget the record-breaking treks that he and a few of his companions conduct across the sea-ice. Neither of these events, however, are directly linked to the plot's final climax. Instead, Stefansson explains in his final chapter, "the most valuable result of the expedition will not be any of its concrete achievements but rather the general trend of the world's thought which should follow from a broad consideration of all that was done and of *how* it was all done" (Stefansson 1921: 687, emphasis added). It is the friendly Arctic method in itself, and not the potential records broken or hindrances overcome, which both from the outset and now towards the end, is presented as the main objective of his expedition. The serpentine plot of the narrative must therefore be seen as closely related to such a characteristic conception and execution of polar exploration, through which Stefansson narratively installs the fourth stage of polar exploration.

Affinities with the Modern Novel

So far I have highlighted what has been established as the Odyssean aspects of *The Friendly Arctic*. There are, however, several features that mark

Stefansson's narrative as quite different from an epic structure. Bakhtin and later Benedict Anderson have both explored the modern novel as a literary form. By accentuating some of the characteristic temporal components they identify as typical of the novel, I wish to illustrate that *The Friendly Arctic* contains elements that make it a complex work; a multifaceted travel narrative whose distinctive character can be perceived not only through its Odyssean plot features but also through its affinities with the modern novel.

In the essay "Epic and Novel", Bakhtin focuses on the differences between the epic, which he views as a "hardened", "antiquated", or even "half-moribund genre", and the modern, still plastic novel as it began to find its form in the eighteenth century (Bakhtin 1981: 3, 14).⁸⁷ For the purpose of the present discussion, there is especially one feature of the novel as a genre-in-the-making that I wish to focus on: While Bakhtin sees the epic as representing a "closed" narrative system basically out of touch with evolving time, one of the distinguishing features of the modern novel is that it opens up for that which he calls a new zone "for structuring literary images, namely, the zone of maximal contact with the present (with contemporary reality) in all its openendedness" (ibid: 11).

According to Bakhtin, the interconnectedness of literary form and the present manifests itself in the aspect of character portrayal in literature. Because the epic describes an "absolute past of national beginnings and peak times" (ibid: 15), its events and heroes are raised to the past's "valorized plane" where they are attributed with value and grandeur. The novel, in contrast, essentially denies its characters such a heroic depiction because, as Bakhtin puts it, "[i]t is impossible to achieve greatness in one's own time" (ibid: 18). When contemporary reality becomes the vantage point from which events and characters are seen, this entails a *familiarization* of the world and the people

⁸⁷ "Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel" was originally given as a paper at the Moscow Institute of World Literature in 1941 under the name "The Novel as a Literary Genre". The essay was first published in 1970 and features as the opening piece of *The Dialogic Imagination* (Bakhtin 1981).

represented in the literary work. The epic distance has been replaced with a new form of simultaneity:

The shift of the temporal center of artistic orientation, which placed on the same temporally valorized plane the author and his readers (on the one hand) and the world and heroes described by him (on the other hand), making them contemporaries, possible acquaintances, friends, familiarizing their relations [...], permits the author, in all his various masks and faces, to move freely onto the field of his represented world, a field that in the epic had been absolutely inaccessible and closed. (Ibid: 27)

Where there previously had been a border between the planes of the represented world and that of the epic singer/audience, in the modern novel the planes of heroes and author/readers are collapsed. As a consequence, Bakhtin proclaims, the novelist may even enter the boundaries of his own work:

He may turn up on the field of representation in any authorial pose, he may depict real moments in his own life or make allusions to them, he may interfere in the conversations of his heroes, he may openly polemicize with his literary enemies and so forth [...] [because both author and represented world] find themselves now subject to the same temporally valorized measurements. (Ibid)

In more than one sense, this rhetorical flexibility of the author characterizes Stefansson's narrative situation. Similar to Bakhtin's vision of the modern novel, in *The Friendly Arctic* the planes of author and hero are thoroughly collapsed. As autobiographical author, Stefansson is not only the protagonist of his Arctic tale but as narrator he also provides the dominant perspective through which the Arctic, the major events of his expedition—and even himself—are to be perceived. Moreover, large portions of his narrative constitute a direct address to Stefansson's audience, indeed an open polemic with his fellow writing explorers. The flexibility of the modern novelist, as propounded by Bakhtin, must therefore also be said to characterize Stefansson

as author. In his exploration narrative, Stefansson moves freely between the planes of author and represented world. Over the next two chapters, I will therefore discuss the generally persistent, although perhaps sometimes divergent functions of Stefansson as autobiographical subject—the narrative representation of Stefansson as hero, narrator and implied author of *The Friendly Arctic*.

Another frequently employed narrative feature in *The Friendly Arctic* must also be mentioned in a discussion of the text's affinities with the modern novel. This pertains specifically to the narrative representation of time. As the story of Stefansson's expedition progresses, both prolepses (flash-forwards) and analepses (flashbacks) are used to anticipate later action or fill in gaps in the general narrative timeline. During the spring of 1917, for instance, Stefansson is heading an exploratory party across what may be called a sea desert, as he starts to suspect that two of his travelling companions may show symptoms of scurvy.⁸⁸ But how can they be affected by scurvy when friendly Arctic exploration entails eating plenty of fresh meat en route to ensure good health? It simply does not make sense to Stefansson. The reasons, however, are uncovered in an analeptic passage of the narrative, in which the afflicted men's eating habits during the previous winter are examined more closely. It turns out that “just for spite”, they have often refrained from eating fresh meat and instead lived comfortably on dried pork and other groceries found in a nearby cache. “The dietetic regulation had been carried out in about the spirit of schoolboys who do things for no other reason than that they have been told they must not do them”, Stefansson stoically comments (Stefansson 1921: 614). The men now clearly pay for their mistake. This particular analepsis thus not only reveals the important “prehistory” to the problems that present themselves in the story's present, but also (and perhaps more importantly) reinforces Stefansson's message of the benefits of friendly Arctic subsistence.

⁸⁸ The men in question are Harold Noice and E. Lorne Knight.

Prolepses also feature recurrently in Stefansson's account. Stefansson here typically anticipates later action, for instance by stating halfway through the narrative that "[o]n the basis of what we *now* know [i.e. at the time of writing the book], this delay at Cape Bathurst put upon us some of the heaviest handicaps against which we had to struggle during the next two years" (ibid: 394, emphasis added).⁸⁹ Likewise, in Chapter XLVIII, after having to relinquish the original plan of hauling sugar to a nearby depot because of a disappointing "failure in preparation and operation", Stefansson states that "[t]hese sugar depots were abandoned on the north coast [instead]—to play their part a year later in a tragedy undreamed beforehand and incomprehensible after the event" (ibid: 472–73). As Stefansson anticipates dramatic action in a later chapter, suspense is heightened.

Both analepses and prolepses are forms of narrative anachronies widely employed in the modern novel. Stefansson's recurrent use of both forms is not the sole narrative strategy that his exploration account shares with this particular literary form. Another parallel can be found in the use of non-traditional plots. In *The Rise of the Novel*, literary critic Ian Watt identifies the rejection of traditional epic plots as one key characteristic of the new novel developed by early eighteenth-century writers like Defoe, Richardson and Fielding. Unlike their literary predecessors, he argues, these three novelists "did not take their plots from mythology, history, legend or previous literature". Instead, they emphasized—as manifested through the plots of their novels—individual apprehension of reality, and allowed the "narrative order to flow spontaneously from [the writer's] own sense of what the protagonists might plausibly do next" (Watt 2000: 14–15).⁹⁰ The plot of Stefansson's narrative, as we have seen, is inextricably bound up with his strategy of adaptable and casual interaction with the landscape. While my analysis has

⁸⁹ The delay (during the autumn of 1915) is caused by Stefansson and his party having to wait for two ships before they can proceed to Banks Island (Stefansson 1921: 394–96).

⁹⁰ It was Defoe in particular who thus "initiated an important new tendency in fiction [through his] total subordination of the plot to the pattern of the autobiographical memoir", Watt observes (2000: 15).

demonstrated that *The Friendly Arctic* resonates some characteristic Odyssean plot features, it is still important to emphasize that the plot is inextricably bound up with Stefansson's personal experience of the Arctic; with the kind of representation of Arctic exploration that he wants to project through his narrative. More importantly, therefore—and similar to the novels described by Watt—Stefansson's plot may be seen as a conscious *rejection* of the plots of his literary predecessors, a motif that will be examined in more detail in Chapter Four. Instead of making use of two archetypal models of plotting previously available to the Arctic explorer—the heroic quest or the dramatic ordeal—Stefansson's individual Arctic experience is manifested in his serpentine plot, which thus becomes part of his narrative demonstration of a friendly Arctic.⁹¹ As a *general* term used to describe a traditional way of telling a story (related to a mythical past) the epic is something that Stefansson's narrative clearly departs from. However, as a term restricted to describing a *particular* kind of story—the Odyssean epic—it is useful for characterizing the narrative structure of *The Friendly Arctic*.

An Imagined Arctic Community

The narrative representation of time in *The Friendly Arctic* also marks another affinity with the modern novel as a literary form, which deserves a discussion of its own. While Bakhtin's modern novel is, in a sense, *simultaneous* because it opens up for a zone of maximal contact of literature with the present (Bakhtin 1981: 11), Benedict Anderson focuses on simultaneity in another

⁹¹ Apart from the use of narrative anachronies and non-traditional plots, other affinities between the modern novel and Stefansson's exploration narrative pertain more specifically to these works' representation of reality. This, however, has to do with aspects of setting. In his discussion of the realist novel, Watt describes the particularization of both time and space (i.e. a turn towards historical specificity and a new solidity of setting), which, combined with the prose style, give these novels "an air of complete authenticity" (Watt 2000: 21–27). The "real" space and time featured in Stefansson's narrative has been dealt with the present chapter, while the "climate of authenticity" of the exploration account will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

meaning of the word in his *Imagined Communities* (Anderson 2006).⁹² Like Bakhtin, Anderson perceives literature and time (or history) as interwoven. In his vision of this close relationship, “fiction seeps continuously into reality”, and may therefore be perceived as a barometer for historical change. In antiquity, Anderson claims, there was “a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable”. In modern times, however, under the impact of vast economic, technological and social change, this model no longer held true, and a new way of apprehending the world and the nation manifested itself instead (ibid: 36). Among the objectives of Anderson’s study is to consider such a historical and conceptual shift through the structure of the novel, which he conceives as one form of imagining which first flowered in Europe in the eighteenth century (ibid: 24–25).

Anderson understands the novel as “a device for the presentation of simultaneity in ‘homogenous, empty time,’”⁹³ or, as he more concisely puts it, “a complex gloss upon the word ‘meanwhile’” (Anderson 2006: 25). What may be termed a simple novel-plot is used to illustrate his point. While general plot development is not Anderson’s main concern, he instead draws attention to the new kind of simultaneity that features here. In the modern novel, he proclaims, characters are depicted against the setting of societies, and their acts are represented as being performed at “the same clocked, calendrical time, but by actors who may be largely unaware of each other” (ibid: 26). Through such a distinctive representation of simultaneous lives, therefore, the characters of the novel are embedded in the minds of the readers as an “imagined community”. Such a literary representation of a sociological organism, Anderson continues, is analogous to “the idea of the nation, which also can be conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history” (ibid). While most individual members of a nation at any given moment do not know of each other’s existence, they still feel part of this greater, steadily moving forward

⁹² *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* was first published in 1983. In the following, I will be using the revised edition which appeared in 2006 (Anderson 2006).

⁹³ This is a term which Anderson borrows from Walter Benjamin (1973: 263).

whole, the “community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations” (ibid: 36).⁹⁴

By suggesting that Anderson’s perspective be applied on Stefansson’s narrative, I wish to emphasize two aspects of that narrative in particular. I have already discussed Stefansson’s characteristic perception of the physical landscape through which he travels, his narrative demonstration of a friendly Arctic space. What I am getting at here, however, is another distinguishing feature of the narrative world presented by Stefansson. Although he often may be said to represent his exploits chiefly as one man’s Arctic journey, Stefansson is still never really *alone* in the Arctic.

Exploration, as it is presented in *The Friendly Arctic*, never really entails “going it alone”. This is a truth that requires moderation, of course, as there is sometimes a marked distance between Stefansson and his travelling companions, perhaps most striking in the chapters devoted to the advance trips of Stefansson’s three- or four-man parties. The Arctic world through which Stefansson and his men travel is not, however, presented as a desolate space in the sense that it is uninhabited. Instead, Arctic *encounters* prominently feature in several chapters of the narrative, something which influences its representation of the Arctic space, as we shall see in the following.

Admittedly, the encounter is not a feature unique to Stefansson’s account, but may instead be considered somewhat of a melodramatic topos in the literature of travel and exploration.⁹⁵ In 1871, to use a well-known example, journalist and explorer Henry Morton Stanley finally caught up with the almost mythical figure of Dr. Livingstone at the shores of Lake Tanganyika. This became a well-known African encounter which later found its Arctic

⁹⁴ The imagined communities of three modern novels are discussed by Anderson, namely *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) by José Rizal, *El Periquillo Sarniento* (The Itching Parrot) (1816) by José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi, and *Semarang Hitam* (Black Semarang) (1924) by Marco Kartodikromo. All three novels, Anderson explains, are “inextricably bound to [Filipino] nationalist movements” (Anderson 2006: 26–32).

⁹⁵ Wærp, for example, argues that (unexpected) encounters in the extreme North is one of the attractions of the expedition narrative; elements of the text that makes it worth reading (Wærp 2008: 312).

counterpart in Nansen and Johansen's meeting with Jackson at Cape Flora in 1896.⁹⁶ Both in text and in image, both of these events have been employed to dramatic effect. The majority of encounters depicted in Stefansson's *Friendly Arctic*, however, are not of this kind. Instead, they seem more mundane than momentous. On several occasions during his journey, for instance, Stefansson crosses paths with other members of his own widespread expedition. Such meetings generally unfold with little suspense, and instead they give Stefansson as traveler and narrator occasion to catch up on the activities and whereabouts of other sections and parties, to outline new plans, or to comment on some of the scientific and exploratory results obtained so far. Other encounters, again, provide him with the opportunity to make new acquaintances among the indigenous population, to meet up with old friends in the area, and, every so often, he is invited to stay with local traders, hunters, police, and the like.

In many ways, therefore, Stefansson's friendly Arctic seems to take the form of a vibrant community of Northern dwellers, even beyond the city limits of the port of Nome or the most northerly trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. In fact, because mundane encounters are such an integral part of Stefansson's Arctic odyssey, they seem representative of the whole region through which he travels. As a result, the setting against which they unfold often appears more settled than desolate. It is not only a physical landscape that Stefansson moves through in his narrative, but also to large degree a sociological landscape of Northern dwellers, both members of the indigenous population and westerners who have settled in the area.

The sociality of the Arctic, moreover, is not a notion Stefansson presents in *The Friendly Arctic* alone. Instead, in the later *Northward Course of Empire*, he puts these ideas forth in more direct form: The Arctic of the near future, which here is sketched out through several brief articles, is not only demonstrated to be livable, but indeed ideal for food production, husbandry,

⁹⁶ Stanley depicts this event in *How I Found Livingstone* (Stanley 1872: 330), while Nansen describes his encounter with British explorer Frederick George Jackson in *Farthest North* (Nansen 1897: 529–530).

and transpolar commerce by air. Stefansson's vision of the Arctic as an inhabited space—even as a future empire—is the central message of this book (Stefansson 1922). In *The Friendly Arctic*, although this time through the account of a journey of exploration, the Arctic is similarly represented as a space of settlements; as a region with plenty of opportunity to engage in profitable enterprises, through which one may move freely in several directions. Like Anderson's imagined community, in other words, Stefansson's friendly Arctic in many ways takes the form of a social and settled space. However, in contrast to the nationalistic projects of Anderson's Latin American novelists, such an imagined Arctic community must be seen as part of Stefansson's active strategy to incorporate the North into imperial space.⁹⁷

While I have argued that Stefansson's typically mundane encounters are emblematic of the kind of imagined Arctic community which is constructed by his narrative, I have not yet addressed the particularly temporal aspects of this kind of representation. As mentioned, a central element of the imagined communities identified in Anderson's study is the new kind of simultaneity featured here. Is it likewise possible to view the relatively large cast of characters in *The Friendly Arctic* as part of a social whole because their acts are represented as occurring at the same time? While Stefansson as autobiographical narrator does not share the all-embracing perspective of Anderson's omniscient narrator (Anderson 2006: 26), several of his reported encounters still serve to fill in many of the temporal blanks in the timeline of the events of The Canadian Arctic Expedition. Thus, when Stefansson meets up with topographer Kenneth G. Chipman in winter quarters at Collinson Point in 1913, readers learn of the discontent with Stefansson's explorative method that has erupted in his absence among the crews of the *Mary Sachs* and the *Alaska* (Stefansson 1921: 92). Likewise, in a later chapter, Stefansson encounters Emiu who tells him the story of how Captain Gonzalez has offended the Minto Inlet Eskimos by treating them as inferiors after Stefansson himself has left the

⁹⁷ See also Chapter Six.

area, in spite of Stefansson's insistence that Gonzalez should treat them as "white men" (ibid: 431–33). Even later again, Stefansson runs into Herman Kilian and Pikalu on the northern coast of Banks Island, who bring him the sad news of the death of yet another member of the expedition, the "little too stout" John Jones who has died from heart disease (ibid: 483). Such encounters thus often serve an analeptic function in the narrative because they provide readers with information about events that have taken place at an earlier point than where we are in the story of Stefansson's journey at any given moment.⁹⁸ Stefansson's journey features many such encounters, and, as a consequence, readers are continually (although most often retrospectively) informed about the activities of other members of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, of events that take place in other branches at the same time that Stefansson is occupied elsewhere.⁹⁹ The narrative features that make the "simultaneity" of *The Friendly Arctic* possible not only point to the sociality of Stefansson's Arctic but also marks yet another distinctive affinity between his narrative of exploration and the modern novel.

The Friendly Arctic Chronotope

While Benedict Anderson traces the cultural roots of nationalism back to the kind of imagined community he finds in the eighteenth century novel, the Arctic community rendered in Stefansson's account becomes an integral part of a textually imagined Arctic that bolsters a distinctive vision of polar exploration. On a more general plane, Anderson's notion of the imagined community shares with Bakhtin's chronotope the ability to "[fuse] the world

⁹⁸ The analepses described here may moreover be considered completing analepses, or, in Genette's definition, "returns [which] comprise the retrospective sections that fill in, after the event, an earlier gap in the narrative" (Genette 1980: 51).

⁹⁹ Other parts of Stefansson's narrative also serve a similar function, such as the accounts featured in the appendix. The full story of the *Karluk* (which Stefansson has watched drifting off in a storm in Chapter VI of the main narrative) is related here, through Stefansson's condensed and commented version of a summary made by Commander John Hadley. Also, a brief and revised summary account provides information about the work of Dr. Anderson's southern section.

inside the novel with the world outside” (Anderson 2006: 30). This is a perspective that I retain through my chronotopic reading of Stefansson’s literary journey. A chronotopic approach is also taken by literary scholar Barbara Korte in her article on the temporal dimensions of English travel writing. “In its most fundamental generic understanding,” she states here, “the travelogue is defined by the chronotope of a route covered in a certain amount of time.” Still, she continues, “within this basic chronotope, a wide range of variation is possible”, depending on “how strongly (or weakly) the time axis of the chronotope is ‘staged’ or not” (Korte 2008a: 29).¹⁰⁰ Stefansson’s almost leisurely journey of exploration, as we have seen, is closely connected to his representation of the Arctic as a social—and thus friendly in the sense of inhabitable—landscape.

In conclusion to the present chapter, I shall focus on the chronotopes which give form to Stefansson’s narrative, and to the characteristic representation of the North this narrative consequently conveys. As established in Chapter Two on theory and method, the chronotope should be understood primarily as a means of synthesis through which I sum up and discuss my findings. I propose to do so by focusing on the particular aspects of the chronotope that were singled out and discussed here, by which I mean some of the characteristic narrative and compositional features pertaining to the representation of time and space, and, more specifically, to the ways in which they are connected to plot, character and perspective.

My main objective in the following is to establish an overarching *friendly Arctic chronotope* as the synthesis of three *intrinsic* chronotopes present in Stefansson’s narrative: (1) a documentary chronotope, (2) an odyssey chronotope and, finally, (3) what I term a modern novel chronotope based on Bakhtin (1981) and Anderson’s (2006) characteristic understanding of

¹⁰⁰ Korte argues that criticism has tended to discuss travel writing primarily in terms of space, and, as a contrast, provides an overview of temporal features that are found in some historical varieties of the English travelogue. Her examples include the Elizabethan report of discovery and exploration, travel writing in the Victorian period, and travel writing during high and post-modernism (Korte 2008a: 38–49).

the modern novel. The friendly Arctic chronotope should be considered a major chronotope because it frames these minor and intrinsic chronotopes within the borders of Stefansson's narrative. Both Scholz (1998) and Ladin (1999) focus on the plurality of chronotopes described in Bakhtin's work, and insist on taking into account both the inside and outside perspectives on space and time relations in a chronotopic reading of the literary text. In the following, accordingly, I maintain the difference between *The Friendly Arctic's* intrinsic chronotopes which I see primarily as perceived from within the narrative (i.e. by Stefansson as character/autobiographical narrator), and the major, friendly Arctic chronotope which implicate readers and also the somewhat problematic implied author of Stefansson's narrative, as we shall see in Chapter Five.¹⁰¹

The first of the intrinsic chronotopes that can be extracted from my analysis is (1) a documentary chronotope. I adopt this particular term because such a chronotope in Stefansson's narrative holds a similar function to that of the previously discussed documentary chronotope which Borghart and De Dobbeleer identify in works of realism (Borghart and De Dobbeleer 2010: 78–81). As discussed previously, Bakhtin's two primary categories of the chronotope are *chronos* and *topos*, time and space. The representation of time and space in *The Friendly Arctic* can be described in different ways, and I have so far seen their representation from two angles. First of all, it is imperative for Stefansson's exploration narrative that it unfolds in real historical time and

¹⁰¹ While both Scholz and Ladin explain the divergence between an inside and outside perspective on the chronotope by relating this to the different perspectives on the chronotope offered by characters and authors/readers, respectively, it is only Ladin who explicitly includes in her model also the *narrator's* perspective. As can be recalled, Ladin's suggested transsubjective chronotope represents an "extradiegetic space-time, perceptible only to narrator, author, or reader, in which disparate chronotopes can be related, reconciled, or synthesized" (Ladin 1999: 224). Ladin, in other words, argues that the (third-person) narrator in essence provides an *outside* perspective on the literary chronotope. An autobiographical account such as *The Friendly Arctic*, however, assumes a direct relationship between Stefansson as character, narrator and author, and thus there is always both an "intrinsic" and an "extrinsic" dimension present here. As character, it is possible to view Stefansson as positioned within the internal chronotope(s) of his narrative. However, as narrator he also enters a chronotope which links the text with the world of the readers. Put differently, because readers are invited to identify with Stefansson's narrating "I", there are bound to be slippages between the chronotopes and the (inside/outside) perspectives of Stefansson as first-person narrator and author, as there also will be between those of Stefansson as implied author and author.

against the setting of a concrete geographical space. Throughout the narrative timeline, temporal indicators such as years, dates and hours are combined with actual place names and map directions. Stefansson thus travels through a specific area of the Canadian High Arctic in the period between 1913–18; this is the concrete temporal and spatial setting for the story which serves the important purpose of verifying his narrative. From a chronotopic perspective, we might say, a direct link is thereby established by narrative means between the external, real-life chronotope of Arctic Canada at the turn of the century and the intrinsic documentary chronotope of Stefansson’s narrative.

With regard to *The Friendly Arctic*’s (2) odyssey chronotope, the dimensions of time and space come together in yet another way than in the proposed documentary chronotope. Here, the contours of Stefansson’s friendly Arctic are formed. Stefansson as autobiographical subject is central to our understanding of the odyssey chronotope. It is primarily through Stefansson’s *inside* perspective on the chronotope that we experience the Arctic as he sees and interacts with it throughout the narrative, in all its plenty and potential for the future, a “comfortable and almost jolly” space (Greely, quoted in Stefansson 1921: xx).

The representation of Stefansson as a character in the odyssey chronotope must moreover be viewed in relation to the *Friendly Arctic* plot. MacLulich perceives Stefansson to be an Odyssean slanted hero because he has adopted a digressive and “odyssean approach” when organizing his narrative (MacLulich 1979: 83). In my reading of the same narrative, I explore this assertion further by accentuating similar plot features of Stefansson’s narrated journey and Homer’s epic poem. I characterize Stefansson’s plot as serpentine, and discuss some of the ways in which his narrative differs from that of a polar quest or an ordeal. In terms of plot, *The Friendly Arctic* is the exact opposite of a “progressive, goal-oriented search with stages, obstacles and ‘battles’” (DuPlessis 1985: 200). Instead, the plot combines major and minor events of Stefansson’s Odyssean journey of exploration in such a fashion that neither the time elapsing, nor the space through which he roams, present an impediment to

Stefansson in the character of the travelling explorer. The odyssey chronotope, therefore, has a weak temporal dynamic,¹⁰² and, instead of there being a central conflict between explorer and the environment (in the form of spatial obstacles), the Arctic space in Stefansson's account is generally represented as fruitful and friendly, a helper rather than adversary. Against these characteristic spatial and temporal conditions, Stefansson can adopt a practically nomadic approach to exploration—he can flow with the Arctic¹⁰³—and this is a strategy which seems to be upheld even in the more extreme climactic situations he finds himself in. Through the text's discursive formation (i.e. particularly through those narrative and structural elements that are manifested in the plot), the temporality of travel may therefore be viewed also as a *thematic* element in Stefansson's account: Demonstrating that the Arctic does not need to be overcome and that travelling here in fact can be conducted in a relaxed and unscheduled manner is part of Stefansson's key message. In many ways, therefore, *The Friendly Arctic* tells the story of a peaceful residence rather than an arduous journey. Against the historical backdrop of the shipwrecked *Karluk*, we might say, the potential divergence and dichotomy between the Arctic as an actual *place* and as Stefansson's hospitable *space* perceived, seem evident.

I have characterized the third minor chronotope contained within the friendly Arctic chronotope as (3) a modern novel chronotope, and, by doing so, I wish to emphasize three specific narrative features that Stefansson's account shares with the modern novel. First, similarly to Bakhtin's modern novelist, Stefansson may be said to repeatedly move “onto the field of his represented world”. As retrospective (and autobiographical) narrator, Stefansson recurrently comments on his own past actions in the field, he offers new insights into some particular topic of relevance to his narrative journey, or openly polemicizes with other explorers. There is thus a constant going back

¹⁰² In contrast, Korte explains, a chronotope *gains* a strong temporal dynamic when “reaching the goal becomes difficult and/or the traveller is running out of time because the journey's time-space reaches a predetermined temporal limit [such as in Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*]”. This chronotope is characteristic for a journey of the quest type (Korte 2008a: 30).

¹⁰³ Cf. Pálsson 2002: 279.

and forth between what Bakhtin terms the “temporally valorized” planes of author and character/hero in Stefansson’s text (Bakhtin 1981: 27). Such a movement must necessarily be seen in relation to the previously mentioned performativity of the text, to the kind of interaction or exchange which Bakhtin envisions between the represented world of the literary work and the “actual chronotopes of our world” (ibid: 25). By polemicizing and demonstrating through his narrative what the North is *really* like, Stefansson wants to change the readers’ common misperceptions of the Arctic as a heroic testing ground, as a place of triumph or tragedy, as will be expounded in the next chapter of my dissertation.

The second feature that Stefansson’s narrative shares with the modern novel is its convoluted plot. My reading of *The Friendly Arctic*’s plot demonstrates how the narrative can be read as the exact opposite of a polar quest or tragedy. While MacLulich argues that the odyssey is one of three archetypal types of exploration narrative emplotment, it is perhaps possible to maintain instead that Stefansson—by furnishing his story with a serpentine plot—deliberately *diverges* from exploration narratives emplotted as quests or ordeals. Stefansson’s plot must in this sense be read as a contrast to what he perceives to be polar literary conventions, and to the melodramatic aspects of a more traditional understanding of plot in particular (i.e. a plot constructed around spatial obstacles).

The third feature of the modern novel chronotope that I want to highlight here pertains to one of the characteristic spatiotemporal dimensions of Stefansson’s account. Anderson’s notion of an imagined community pertains to the literary representation of many people living at the same time in a modern space (Anderson 2006). Stefansson’s Arctic takes the form of such a space because it is characterized by frequent encounters and because it features not only the exploits of Stefansson himself, but also the concurrent activities of others, other branches of the expedition in particular. In more than one way, therefore, the idea of the polar expedition as the hero’s solitary conquest of virgin land is repudiated in Stefansson’s narrative. The narrative world through

which Stefansson moves is seldom represented as an Arctic “empty space”. Instead, the Canadian High Arctic of the 1920s appears to the readers of the narrative as an imagined community, a modern space characterized by the simultaneous lives of many Northern dwellers.

A Confining Chronotope?

“Within the limits of a single work”, Bakhtin famously states in his conclusion to “Forms of Time”, “we may notice a number of different chronotopes and complex interactions among them”. It is the dialogue between such chronotopes, he explains, that transcends the boundaries of the represented world and “enters the world of the author, of the performer, and the world of the listeners and readers” (Bakhtin 1981: 252). If we are to perceive how the literary text resonates in the outside world, in other words, we must direct our attention to the interactions between the different chronotopes that can be identified and productively discussed in the text. The same kind of dynamics, I maintain, also holds true for the Arctic explorer’s self-representation. In order to understand the narrative construction of Stefansson’s autobiographical self in *The Friendly Arctic*, we must examine how the predominant chronotopes which give form to this narrative are combined—how they potentially concur with or contradict each other.

The relationship between the proposed friendly Arctic chronotope and the intrinsic or minor chronotopes described above is that the latter three chronotopes are enveloped by the former. Such a predominant chronotope, therefore, should be perceived as a synthesis which captures any internal contradictions in Stefansson’s text, as I will examine in more detail over the next two chapters. There is, however, not only a structural reason for the friendly Arctic chronotope to be considered a major chronotope. Chronotopes, as Bakhtin scholars Scholz and Ladin point out, significantly also relate to the portrayal of human character because they (in Ladin’s words) “at the most

‘major’ level, define and limit the ways in which human character can exist in the narrative” (Ladin 1999: 223). This has implications for the way in which Stefansson as autobiographical subject should be understood against the major chronotope which gives form to his narrative.

I have already mentioned that the characteristic spatiotemporal dimensions of the friendly Arctic chronotope seem not to confine the *movements* of Stefansson as a character in the world presented in his narrative. Instead, such a chronotope allows Stefansson to roam freely about and thereby to deliver his friendly Arctic message. In fact, Stefansson’s northern ramblings in many ways constitute a textbook example of how Arctic exploration should be executed, and his account often reads like an Arctic manual. Like the Odyssean model of learning through wandering, knowledge therefore seems to be presented as the outcome of Stefansson’s journey. But is it Stefansson who acquires new knowledge through his journey, or does the journey merely present him with a chance of showing off what he already knows? It seems advisable to examine this situation in light of one of the distinctions made by Bakhtin between the Greek adventure chronotope and the chronotope of the ancient biography and autobiography, as previously discussed in Chapter Two.

It is not only because of its characteristic plot that the friendly Arctic chronotope seems diametrically different from Bakhtin’s Greek adventure chronotope.¹⁰⁴ Another important distinction has to do with one specific aspect of time in Stefansson’s narrative. Because adventure time is not biographical time, Bakhtin maintains, Greek romance heroes are rendered incapable of making any *new* form of experience throughout the romance plot; time is empty in the sense that “the biographical life of the heroes does not change, their feelings do not change, [and] people do not even age” (Bakhtin 1981: 91). *The Friendly Arctic*, being a narrative of exploration, combines elements of both travelogue and autobiography. It is, in a sense, both the report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition and also Vilhjalmur Stefansson’s life story.

¹⁰⁴ Such a chronotope would rather have more in common with the Arctic quest or ordeal.

Admittedly, the episodes rendered in Stefansson's narrative do not span over the course of his whole life, but readers of the narrative still insert those episodes into what we perceive to be Stefansson's life in its entirety, in what we may call an external, autobiographical chronotope.¹⁰⁵ *Friendly Arctic* time is therefore also Bakhtin's biographical time, and this would presumably render Stefansson a round rather than flat character; someone who may change and develop through the narrative, and perhaps even hold potentially conflicting views.

Still, in one important respect, Stefansson seems *not* to change through his narrative. Even though he goes through several momentous incidents during his five-year long expedition, as a character he appears in essence to hold the same view of life at the outset of his journey as he holds at its end. In the friendly Arctic chronotope, Stefansson can never appear as anything other than an explorer in harmony with his surroundings; should he make experiences to the contrary it would unsettle his thesis of the friendly Arctic. Even though Stefansson is allotted great freedom of movement within the friendly Arctic chronotope, we therefore can say, the same chronotope also *confines* him because it does not allow for him to experience that the Arctic is unfriendly—to voice doubt over or even disprove his own thesis. Against a friendly Arctic space and in an Odyssean time, Stefansson must appear as a hero with nothing to conquer, at least not in terms of a hostile environment. This is Stefansson's fundamental dilemma, or what may be called the internal contradiction in his text. In the next chapter I will therefore look more closely at one rhetorical strategy actively used in the narrative to overcome this kind of dilemma. This entails viewing Stefansson's narrative journey as a whole from a new perspective.

¹⁰⁵ Hanna Eglinger describes a similar function of the exploration narrative. The main objective of her study, however, is to explain how the records of Scandinavian explorers from around 1900 “are affected by paradoxical entanglements between efforts at achieving primarity and future-oriented concepts of progress on the one hand, and archaising references to past beginnings and heroic antecessors/ancestors on the other.” As a result, these explorers can be seen as stuck in a “problematic temporal void between past and future” (Eglinger 2010: 14–16).

Chapter Four: The Friendly Arctic Quest

Text as Discourse

In the previous chapter I have examined how Stefansson in the character of the Odyssean explorer flows with the Canadian High North, and how his narrative in many ways presents a friendly Arctic chronotope. The aim of the present chapter is to approach Stefansson's voyage from another angle, or, more specifically, to identify and discuss the kind of journey that simultaneously takes place on the argumentative, or, what I will term the discourse level of his text. A brief reassessment of the narrative's opening chapters will hopefully make this concern clearer. Stefansson chooses to open the very first chapter of his narrative with the following "warning" to the reader:

This chapter and the next are concerned with fundamental aspects of polar exploration and of the polar regions. They are put here rather than in an appendix because a grasp of general principles should help to make clear many things that might otherwise seem inexplicable in the narrative which follows. [...] Anyone who does not care to be told in advance what polar exploration and the polar regions are like should skip to the beginning of the narrative proper in Chapter III. (Stefansson 1921: 1)

Readers expecting a heroic quest narrative will surely get a rather unpleasant surprise in Chapter III when the story of Stefansson friendly wanderings opens. More importantly for the present discussion, however, two whole chapters are thus signaled to be both instructive and yet redundant. On the one hand, Stefansson informs his readers, these opening chapters may be skipped, and yet they are somehow too important to be relegated to the appendices. What is presented in these introductory pages outside the "narrative proper" (starting on page 27) is in reality far from insignificant. The previously discussed Chapter I, "The Four Stages in Polar Exploration", gives the goal of Stefansson's survey:

to link the proposed exploits of the Canadian Arctic Expedition with the achievements of a whole line of past explorers—Hudson, Parry, Peary, and the like—and thereby to justify and make way for Stefansson’s own venture. The chapter, therefore, contains a historiographical narrative of the exploration of the Arctic, but also a condensed version of Stefansson’s friendly exploration strategy which is inextricably bound up with the proposed objective of his narrative; to install the fourth stage in polar exploration. Accordingly, in Chapter II titled “The North That Never Was”, readers may learn what the polar regions *are really like*, i.e. (made) friendly (through Stefansson’s approach)—as opposed to what other explorers have led the public to believe. I will return to the specific rhetorical strategy here employed by Stefansson presently. For now, however, I will merely point to one of the narrative effects that such a structuring of the text has: readers of *The Friendly Arctic* must wait until Chapter III before the three ships of the expedition finally leave the port of Nome to commence their northern adventure, thereby marking the beginning of the story of Stefansson’s Odyssean journey trajectory.¹⁰⁶

The element of *delay* or postponement of action is not an unusual feature of the literature of exploration. This narrative technique, which Henning Howlid Wærp argues is borrowed from prose fiction, is frequently employed by Fridtjof Nansen in his account *The First Crossing of Greenland* (1890).¹⁰⁷ Nansen’s narrative delays generally consist of essayistic passages, even whole chapters, that constantly interrupt the advancement of the story of his journey, thus sharpening readers’ expectations concerning later action (Wærp 2007: 106).¹⁰⁸ Although Stefansson’s initial chapters postpone the narration of his departure from Nome and the general storyline constituted by his Arctic journey, they seem not, by and large, to function as to engender tension through delay of action, and should therefore not be skipped as easily

¹⁰⁶ Chapter III is accordingly titled “Good-Bye to ‘Civilization’ for Five Years” (Stefansson 1921: 27).

¹⁰⁷ The original (Norwegian) title is *Paa ski over Grønland: En skildring af Den norske Grønlands-ekspedition 1888–89* (Nansen 1890).

¹⁰⁸ Such essayistic delays also serve other functions in the narrative, such as providing both a historical and geographic contextualization of the expedition (Wærp 2007: 107).

as initially stated by the narrator. In fact, by reading *The Friendly Arctic* in light of the journey that takes place on the argumentative level of the text, it is even possible to argue that the narrative's opening constitutes some of its most central chapters. It is at least clear that by revealing in Chapter II the *true* nature of the North, Stefansson gives the conclusion to his narrative in advance, i.e. after his journey has been completed. *Thereafter* follows the story of ice forays and ramblings in the northern landscape, which should demonstrate what the Arctic is really like—and which ironically is less exciting than Stefansson implies when he encourages readers to skip to the main story, thus invoking an established topos of the heroic quest narrative.

Why does Stefansson open his narrative with these two *ex post facto* chapters? The effect of Nansen's delayed narration of his encounter with the icy landscape is that a boundary is constructed between the familiar world he leaves behind and the eastern coast of Greenland. By giving the conclusion to his journey in advance, Stefansson, on the other hand, seems *not* to want to foster a conception of the Arctic in which going into the North entails the crossing of a barrier. In fact, as can be recalled, in his concluding Chapter LXIII, Stefansson looks over the Arctic Circle to the "Temperate Zone" again—thus looking over the border from the North to the South, and thereby reversing the standard perspective of the inaccessible North (Stefansson 1921: 685). If the Arctic is indeed friendly, both of these examples imply, then Arctic exploration does not entail any border crossings.

The centrality of Stefansson's friendly Arctic message is thus signaled right from the start of his narrative. In the first two chapters, we might say, the narrative's discourse progresses while story time stands still.¹⁰⁹ It is this characteristic (and constant) movement between discourse and story in *The Friendly Arctic* which will be examined in more detail in the present chapter. To begin with, however, this entails making a crude distinction between two general levels in Stefansson's text: the level of story and the level of discourse.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Wærp 2007: 107.

By *level of story* I consequently refer to the ostensibly dominant level of the unfolding of events. Generally speaking, this is the level containing the main action of the story, the level on which Stefansson as protagonist operates by performing the actions that are narrated in the book; this is where Stefansson makes his way northward, pitches camp on an ice floe, hunts caribou, and, while underway, meets others, issues orders, and dispenses letters to his sponsors. The level of story or action, in other words, involves Stefansson's physical journey trajectory, the level of geography, story time and the actual Arctic travels.

As a contrast, at the *level of discourse*, Stefansson's narrative should be understood primarily as an act of writing, i.e. as the written presentation of the story. It is on this level that Stefansson as retrospective narrator more clearly comes into view, through factual prose sections where he openly "contemplates" on various topics regarding Arctic exploration. Like Bakhtin's modern novelist discussed in Chapter Three, he typically comments on events that take place at the story level. At the level of discourse, it is furthermore possible to discuss the effects that Stefansson's text—with all of its plot elements and narrative features combined—purports to have on the external world. As already pointed out, the element of authorial intention is very much present in an exploration narrative such as *The Friendly Arctic*. Stefansson's two first chapters leave no doubt about his aspiration to make an impact on his audience through a text that so clearly foregrounds one version of the Arctic in contrast to other representations of it. In this sense, therefore, the text must be perceived as symbolic *action*, as Stefansson's distinct contribution to the debate about how the North really should be conceived. Stefansson's aim is to forge an entirely new perception of the North. So central is this objective that it even can be argued that the level of discourse is just as important as the level of story in Stefansson's text. In the following, I therefore seek to find out how the message of a friendly Arctic is communicated by examining the text's characteristic movement between these two levels, something which entails

trying to describe the essential journey that Stefansson can be said to undertake at level of discourse.

A brief reservation must be made before venturing into this discussion, however. The distinction that I make here between *The Friendly Arctic's* story level and the level of discourse may of course make sense in principle, but in practice (and interpretively) it is difficult to distinguish between the two levels as they are constantly mixed and often merge into one another. Chapters I and II serve as examples. Although I have pointed out that story time stands still here, one may argue that Stefansson also narrates actions when he gives his history of Arctic exploration practices. Conversely, an equally apparent reason for the crudeness in my distinction is that *all* parts of the text may be viewed as discourse, not just those parts which diverge from story by privileging argument, and that the story as action also has discursive/thematic implications. A structuralist thinker like Genette, however, distinguishes between discourse (*récit*) and story (*histoire*); or, the written *presentation* of events and the narrated events (or actions) that can be abstracted from this kind of presentation, respectively (Genette 1980). While both levels in Stefansson's text admittedly are (conveyed by) discourse, I see the level of story as providing more directly access to Stefansson's concrete actions in the Arctic than the level of discourse. Sometimes, however, it is useful to discuss another kind of action through this latter level, namely the previously mentioned symbolic action that his text constitutes. While I therefore (in theory) see the relationship between the two levels as complex, and do not establish any kind of hierarchies between them, my distinction is mainly of practical use for the analysis of the text.

As autobiographical narrator, moreover, Stefansson operates on both levels: he is both the character of the explorer who undertakes a journey into Arctic Canada at the story level *and* he is the outspoken, retrospective narrator whom I have identified as being central to the kind of journey that simultaneously goes on at the narrative's level of discourse. In Chapter Five, I

explore these different roles of Stefansson in more detail. My discussion in that chapter, therefore, should be considered a continuation of the present one.

Fresh Water and Sea Ice

The fluctuation between such different levels of Stefansson's narrative may be illustrated by examining the opening of Chapter III. Right after leaving the port of Nome in July 1913, a gale hits the *Karluk* and causes over fifteen hours of heavy sea. Stefansson, who at this point already has had the time to fear that he should be bored by all the "smooth-working machinery" of his sumptuously outfitted expedition, now finds to his relief that things are getting interesting, and he welcomes the first line of white which now can be observed from the rigging. The "appearance of the ice", he professes, "was friendly and familiar, [however,] it was in another sense not propitious, for it meant delay" (Stefansson 1921: 27–29).¹¹⁰ Together with the veteran sea captain Robert "Bob" Bartlett, Stefansson decides to take advantage of the incoming ice that now hinders their passage by teaching the "bunch of scientific tenderfeet" aboard that fresh water can be got from sea ice (ibid: 30).¹¹¹ This new development at the narrative's story level is followed by a pause in story time in which Stefansson finds place to describe the properties of sea ice, starting with an embedded anecdote about a meeting that has taken place some time earlier:

This remark [of Bartlett's] recalled a series of episodes beginning in an impressive suite in a London hotel where I had gone to call on Sir John

¹¹⁰ To Nansen, in contrast, the drifting floes of pack-ice off the eastern coast of Greenland present "a long and weary imprisonment" (Nansen 1919 [1890]: 146) which does not cease until his party finally encounters "the 'Inland ice', the goal of our aspiration" (ibid: 108), and—at last—the familiar, steady ground under their feet (ibid: 148).

¹¹¹ Commander of the *Karluk*, Robert Abraham Bartlett (1875–1946) had by then assisted Robert Peary in two of his attempts to reach the North Pole (Stefansson 1921: 763). He was later to play a vital role in saving the survivors of the shipwrecked *Karluk*, an achievement which earned him the highest award of the Royal Geographical Society (cf. Bartlett 1916).

Murray, who at that time divided with the Prince of Monaco the honor of being considered by scientific men the leading living authority on oceanography.¹¹² (Ibid)

During his visit to London, Stefansson learns that in spite of being “the greatest living oceanographer” Sir John has in fact never happened to discover that sea ice becomes fresh after a certain amount of time, and that drinking water therefore can be made from it (ibid: 31). He discreetly tries to explain this phenomenon to Sir John, but the expert seems more than skeptical about Stefansson’s new information. Stefansson continues his story:

Indeed, I don’t think I got so far as this in my explanation when I noticed that Sir John was not looking responsive. Some interruption occurred, and he changed the topic. Evidently he cared for no information from me on this subject and had no idea that what I was telling him was anything more than some unsupported heresy of mine. (Ibid: 32)

Stefansson now winds on to another meeting; this one taking place in Nome as the *Karluk* is being loaded up for the Canadian Arctic Expedition. The scientific staff on board has requested a meeting with Stefansson before departure. They are worried about the size of the *Karluk*’s fresh water tanks, and demand that the commander should do something to increase their capacity so as to not risk running out of fresh water at sea. The men are firmly convinced of the urgent need to replace the tanks:

At this point [oceanographer and member of scientific staff James] Murray became party spokesman. He said that in winter it would be easy to get snow for cooking and drinking, but that in summer there would be no snow on the sea ice, and that if the ship became hemmed in by floes in such a way that it

¹¹² As oceanographer, Sir John Murray (1841–1914) traveled with an 1868 expedition to the islands of Jan Mayen and Spitsbergen, and was later in charge of the biological specimens collected by the 1872–76 Challenger expedition (“Sir John Murray” 2013, web).

was impossible to reach the land, we could have no way of getting drinking-water. [...] And he went on to say that I might possibly consider it to smack of insubordination, but that he had been constrained to tell the other members of the scientific staff in this connection about my interview with Sir John Murray, where he had himself been present and where Sir John, who was the greatest authority on the ocean living, had dismissed as ridiculous my suggestion that salt water ice became fresh. It was only then I recalled the silence of James Murray on that walk home.

It turned out impossible for me to convince my staff that it would be safe on the score of drinking water to take a ship out among the ocean ice. A number of them were prepared to resign, considering that a person so lacking in judgment and discretion as to be willing to take an entire ship's company into a position where they might all die of thirst must be in general unsuitable for the command of any arctic expedition. (Ibid: 33)

What started out as the concrete problem of incoming ice has through these two embedded analepses changed into an obstacle of quite another sort, namely that of people who mistrust Stefansson's judgment. As the situation is now, Stefansson faces two opponents on his way to prove that sea ice indeed can produce fresh water: the substantial Arctic authority of Sir John Murray and his own crew of scientists, both of whom are thereby established as persons who do not have faith in this particular aspect of the bountiful Arctic. When Stefansson cannot convince the scientists on board of his fresh water theory, the situation comes to a stalemate: If members of his own crew resign, then the whole expedition is in jeopardy of becoming a failure even before it has set sail, and Stefansson risks being perceived as both an irresponsible leader and a lesser authority on the Arctic.¹¹³

¹¹³ According to Stefansson biographer Richard J. Diubaldo, the Nome confrontation included more serious matters than simply the men's refusal to believe in Stefansson's fresh water theory. In reality, he writes, the men here posed "fundamental questions about the expedition" and voiced concern not only over the condition of the *Karluq* itself, but also over lack of supplies and proper equipment for the southern section, as well as the necessary authorization to purchase more necessary equipment (Diubaldo 1998 [1978]: 75–82). See also Hunt (1986: 64–70) for an account of the dissatisfaction of

When the solution to Stefansson's problem finally presents itself, we are back at the story level again, as the *Karluk's* first officer drags a hose to a pond on the surface of the sea ice near Wainwright Inlet in 1913. Now the time has finally come to test Stefansson's preposterous theory in practice. Before the fresh water conundrum can be resolved once and for all, however, Stefansson has to deal with yet another complication. It turns out that the new water is indeed brackish, and their next meal of spoiled food and salty coffee therefore becomes "a triumph to the staff" instead of a vindication of Stefansson (Stefansson 1921: 34). The situation seems more hopeless than ever, until it is found that the *real* trouble is that "the mate, being a new man, had taken water from a pond near enough to the edge of the floe to have been filled with salt spray during the recent gale" (ibid). Another obstacle, therefore, presents itself in human form. When the ship's tanks are refilled, however, this time with perfectly fresh water, Stefansson and Captain Bartlett are finally justified in their "absurd" claim.

The ordeals that Stefansson has to face in this situation do not belong to the natural world, or, at least, the depiction of the natural obstacles that he encounters is not fraught with narrative tension. At the level of story, Stefansson and the *Karluk's* crew face a gale, and then incoming ice which hinders their passage; however, instead of despairing they choose to take advantage of these hindrances by proving that even sea ice can be friendly. In fact, it seems that Stefansson's real ordeals in this situation are those of human nature. It is at least around the process through which Stefansson has to overcome the differing beliefs of others that his tale hinges, and by laying out the scene through the two flashbacks readers gradually learn how much really is at stake here. An obstacle encountered at the level of story has almost unobtrusively been transformed into an obstacle at the level of discourse, and it is only the latter of these obstacles that is presented in a way that builds

the scientists and their later disagreement with Stefansson about what was really being discussed in Nome.

suspense and sharpens readers' expectations of the outcome of the incident. When the tanks are finally filled with fresh water, it can be argued, a concrete problem at the story level has been solved, however, at the level of discourse a much greater obstacle has been overcome: Stefansson has proven wrong some of the disbelievers of the friendly North, and has thereby established himself as a greater Arctic authority than even the (presumably) most knowledgeable Arctic experts.

The Ordeal is with the Human

The sea ice beliefs of Sir John Murray and the scientists among the crew are not the only challenges that Stefansson faces on his way to install the fourth stage of friendly Arctic exploration. Time and again, Stefansson encounters people who do not believe in his thesis, or whose bias towards the *unfriendly* Arctic causes problems for Stefansson in one way or another. At the discourse level, it is possible to detect four general types of similar ordeals, all in the form of human obstacles somehow complicating Stefansson's mission: (1) members of Stefansson's own expedition, (2) western Arctic experts, (3) Arctic natives, and, finally, (4) the media, all of which seem to present almost equally great challenges to Stefansson. While Sir John Murray necessarily belongs to the second of these categories, the scientists on the *Karluuk* both possess the Arctic expertise of category two, and, being Stefansson's "own" men, they also belong to the first category. Chapters IX to XII, leading up to and concerning what is described as the trouble at Collinson Point, are particularly illustrative of the ordeals of category one.

Dr. Anderson and the Collinson Point Trouble

When Stefansson and a party five of men first reach the winter quarters of the vessels *Mary Sachs* and *Alaska* at Collinson Point in late 1913, they walk into a

camp where winter hibernation has set in. Stefansson now learns that his second-in-command, Dr. Rudolph M. Anderson, has left for Herschel Island and that topographer Kenneth G. Chipman is in charge of the camp in his absence. Before leaving, it appears that Dr. Anderson has exempted the men in camp of the planned exploration of the Mackenzie Delta on the grounds that that no topographical or geographical surveys can be done in the middle of winter (Stefansson 1921: 91). Stefansson, of course, does not agree with the decision made by Anderson. In line with the principles of adaptable exploration, his opinion is instead that “the arctic cold need not entirely prevent work of this kind and that some sorts of geological work can be even better done in winter than in summer” (ibid: 92). While Anderson, in Stefansson’s words, believes that the survey is beyond their resources, Stefansson instead insists that a far wider program is possible if they purchase more dogs and supplies (ibid: 91–94). It thus seems that both Dr. Anderson and the men in camp stand in the way of Stefansson’s grand plan of exploration. This first encounter at Collinson Point, however, merely marks the beginning of a greater conflict which in many ways seems to reach its high point in Chapter XII, titled “The Collinson Point Difficulties” (ibid: 111–22).

Among the ordeals constituted by (1) members of Stefansson’s own expedition, Stefansson’s long-time partner in exploration and head of the Canadian Arctic Expedition’s southern section, Rudolph M. Anderson, holds a central position.¹¹⁴ Several of the writing members of Stefansson’s expedition, as well as later biographers, have described the already strained relationship between Stefansson and Anderson that seems to have become even more tense in early 1914. At Collinson Point, Stefansson biographer Diubaldo notes, matters came to a head when Stefansson was seriously challenged by Anderson and the southern section (Diubaldo 1998 [1978]: 87). The disagreement

¹¹⁴ Canadian zoologist Rudolph Martin Anderson (1876–1961) also participated in the Stefansson-Anderson Arctic Expedition to Alaska and the northern Yukon in 1908–12. Anderson later wrote and served as general editor of the few scientific reports that were published from the Canadian Arctic Expedition.

apparently involved the distribution of goods and equipment, which Stefansson—now without the resources of the *Karluk*—needed for his proposed ice foray. It also seems that questions about Stefansson’s position as leader of the expedition were being raised. The episode at Collinson Point, Diubaldo observes, “boiled down to different points of view as to each man’s respective right to carry out his program of exploration” (ibid: 93). It also seemed to have been symptomatic of the discontent with Stefansson as commander that Anderson and many of the expedition scientists felt at the time.

In *The Friendly Arctic*, the dispute at Collinson Point is treated in a chapter of its own, and Anderson here no doubt appears as one of Stefansson’s fiercest critics. It is not my intention to exceed the boundaries of Stefansson’s text to comment on the potentially different versions of the disagreement between Stefansson and Anderson’s southern section in 1914, nor do I wish to go into all of the details of the dispute as it is rendered in Stefansson’s account. However, the episode is important because it is fraught with narrative tension and, moreover, because it places Anderson centrally among the ordeals constituted by members of the expedition. In the narrative leading up to the account of the meeting itself, we learn that Storkerson has been sent ahead to the base at Collinson Point with Stefansson’s instructions to form a new base at Martin Point. From here, Stefansson intends to outfit his advance party for the proposed journey north over the Beaufort Sea. Assuming that everything goes according to plan, Stefansson then travels westward towards Martin Point to embark on his northern venture.

On the third or fourth day [of this trek], about fifteen miles west of Herschel Island, I met several sledges proceeding eastward. When I saw that they were ours and recognized the men with them, I realized I was facing the most serious development of the expedition so far. For some of these were men who should have been now employed at Martin Point, getting things ready for the ice trip. The written directions had been definite, and yet they had not only not

been carried out, but things were being done incompatible with both their spirit and letter. (Stefansson 1921: 112)

This unexpected encounter alerts Stefansson to the trouble that is brewing, and functions to anticipate action later in the chapter, as we shall see presently.

Axis of Conflict

My interpretation of Stefansson's confrontation with his men as it is presented in the Collinson Point chapter is based on the actantial model proposed by linguist and semiotician A. J. Greimas.¹¹⁵ In narrative analysis, Greimas' model is used to determine the various functions of characters in a text, something that tends to have an impact on the unfolding of the plot. The actantial model is composed of three pairs of actants, or, three "great functions or roles occupied by the various characters of a narrative, be they humans, animals, or simple objects" (Vandendorpe 1993: 505). Actants should therefore not simply be equated with characters. Rimmon-Kenan accordingly makes a distinction between *actants* and *actors*. Actants, she states, are "general categories [of behavior or doing] underlying all narratives (and not only narratives) while [*actors*] are invested with specific qualities in different narratives." This means that the same actant can be represented by more than one actor, and also that the same actor can embody more than one actant (Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 34–35). Greimas identifies a total of six actants in a text, namely: Subject and Object, Sender and Receiver, and Helper and Opponent. He organizes these actants into three pairs, and presents them schematically as follows:

¹¹⁵ The actantial model provided by Algirdas Julien Greimas in *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method* (Greimas 1983 [1966]) was based on the work of structuralist Vladímir Propp, and especially his analysis of the basic functions of the characters' actions in Russian folk tales (Propp 1928). A second major source for Greimas' model was the syntactic theories of linguist Lucien Tesnière (1959).

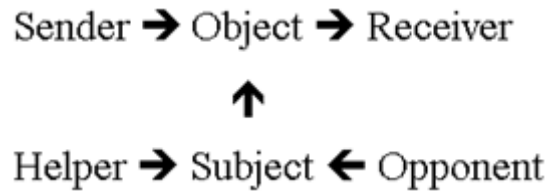


Illustration: A schematic presentation of Greimas’ actantial model

The simplicity of such a scheme, Greimas explains, “lies in the fact that it is entirely centered on the object of desire aimed at by the subject and situated, as object of communication, between the sender and the receiver—the desire of the subject being, in its part, modulated in projections from the helper and opponent” (Greimas 1983 [1966]: 207). In the simplest form of this scheme, the hero of a folk tale (the subject being) embarks on an adventure with the intention of winning something or someone, i.e. the object of desire. The sender is the actor who has commissioned such a task (often a king), while the receiver benefits from its accomplishment (and may thus be the hero himself). Along the way, the hero encounters both opponents and helpers, either complicating or assisting him in his task. While we easily can see how such a formula can be used to describe folk tales, it has also proven useful for analyzing other literary narratives, as well as philosophical, religious or scientific texts (Vandendorpe 1993: 505).

Envisioning Stefansson’s trials in Chapter XII through the latter of the relationships encompassed by Greimas’ model—through the helper-opponent axis or the axis of conflict—is my aim in the following. At the story level of this chapter, the concrete object of desire of Stefansson as a subject is to ensure the backing of the southern section so that he can have the needed equipment and supplies to commence his *true* northern adventure; making his way across the sea ice where no one else have traveled before him. Both the sender and the receiver of this particular mission, we therefore might say, is Stefansson himself. A succession of depicted encounters—all taking place during Stefansson’s journey to Collinson Point—lead up to his final trial on this

journey, in the form of a meeting with the staff at camp. All of these encounters together delineate the chapter's axis of conflict.

I have already briefly mentioned the first of Stefansson's encounters, which takes place when he unexpectedly runs into geologist J. J. O'Neill's sledge party fifteen miles west of Herschel Island in early 1914 (Stefansson 1921: 112). The appearance of the sledges at this position and at this point in time signifies a most unwelcome delay for Stefansson. O'Neill therefore represents the opponent actant, indirectly standing in the way of Stefansson's desired ice foray. Also, the extent of the challenge that Stefansson now faces becomes clear when O'Neill brings him news from Anderson: It turns out that Anderson and the scientific staff have decided not only to openly defy Stefansson's orders; they have even sent a report about Stefansson's planned "misuse of public property" to the Canadian Government, thus effectively undermining his position as the expedition's leader and ultimate decision maker (ibid: 113). Stefansson lays out the charges made against him accordingly:

[Anderson] and the rest were of the opinion that my proposed journey north over the ice was a "stunt" to get me newspaper notoriety; that no serious scientific work was intended; and that if any were intended none could be accomplished on any such plans as I was contemplating. They considered themselves justified not only in withholding assistance for this journey, but also in preventing me from using any supplies that were at Collinson Point on either of the ships *Alaska* or *Mary Sachs*. (Ibid)

"Our situation could scarcely have been worse", Stefansson declares, thus emphasizing the scope of the challenge he is up against on his mission to attain the desired support and equipment (ibid). In the narrative that follows, however, Stefansson nevertheless manages to turn O'Neill from opponent to helper by "[shaking his] confidence a good deal" through "a little quiet discussion". Stefansson has thus not only overcome an important obstacle through discourse, as a result of O'Neill's change of heart, he also obtains an

invaluable piece of equipment for the ice trip; a much-needed pocket chronometer (ibid: 114–15).¹¹⁶

A succession of encounters follows after the decisive chat with O’Neill, and the various individuals whom Stefansson thereby incorporates into his narrative may be grouped according to the Greimasian actant axis of helper and opponent. The people who represent the *helper* actant along Stefansson’s way turn out to be Captain Bernhard (who volunteers to accompany Stefansson to Collinson Point); Captain Martin Andreasen (who—against the warning of the southern section—sells him a support vessel for the ice foray); Captain Cottle (who warns Stefansson of conditions at Collinson and helps him keep his “credit good with the Eskimos”); the whalers at the *Belvedere* (who supply more details of the unrest at Collinson); the “sportsmen” on the *Polar Bear* (who volunteer to go with Stefansson over the ice should his own party refuse); and, finally, the engineer on *Mary Sachs* J. R. Crawford (who lists those valuable few men at Collinson whom Stefansson can rely on having support from) (ibid: 116–120). Stefansson’s helpers, as can be seen, thus consist mostly of people who are not directly associated with the expedition (but who instead belong to the kind of imagined Arctic community which I have described in Chapter Three), thus reinforcing the impression that it is his own crew that constitutes one of Stefansson’s major ordeals in *The Friendly Arctic*.

The other extreme end of the axis of conflict running through the Collinson Point chapter—the *opponent* actant—is constituted by a complementary list of both named and unnamed individuals whose actions somehow hinder Stefansson in performing his task. Sailor Louis Olesen sticks to the decision to disobey Stefansson’s orders, taking “the position that Dr. Anderson [is] his real commander”; “members of [Stefansson’s] party” are reported to having warned whalers and traders in the area that Stefansson has

¹¹⁶ As retrospective narrator, Stefansson then interrupts the narrative of his encounter with O’Neill in order to underline the importance of this acquirement: “This watch was the one we relied on in our successful ice journeys over the next several years and without which they could not have been made” (Stefansson 1921: 115).

lost the favor of the Government; and, as a consequence, trader “Duffy” O’Connor goes back on a bargain to sell Stefansson his supplies¹¹⁷; meanwhile, at Collinson Point, Stefansson’s emissary Storkerson has been refused to use the expedition’s dog teams in preparations for the ice work, and his party has therefore “been compelled to harness themselves to the sledges, taking the place of dogs [while these stand] fat and idle in the barns”; such a sight, in turn, has “done a great deal with the Eskimos to undermine [Stefansson’s] credit, for it [seems] obvious to them from these circumstances that [he is] no longer in control of the equipment or the supplies of the expedition” (ibid: 116–119).

The narrative of Stefansson’s journey towards Collinson Point thus effectively splits the characters he meets underway into an actant pair of helper and opponent, something which builds suspense and structures the action recounted in the chapter. When Stefansson’s party finally arrives at Collinson towards the end of the chapter, the scene is therefore set for his long-heralded confrontation with Anderson, and readers are alerted to the grave implications a defeat at this point might have. When the time comes for a direct confrontation between Stefansson and Anderson’s southern section, narrative time is slowed down dramatically, almost coming close to story time, thus narratively reinforcing the gravity of the situation Stefansson now finds himself in. The meeting itself is rendered through several passages of indirect speech, through which the conflicting views of the two parties become clear:

Dr. Anderson [said] that my position was analogous to that of certain kings of England who had been undisputedly kings as long as their conduct was worthy of a king and as long as the people had confidence in them. But when the kings of England had become either insane or criminal they had been deposed and in some cases executed. While he disclaimed any intention of an execution, he thought that I had already shown by what I had done and by the

¹¹⁷ Although, in the end, and “after some talk”, Stefansson gets hold of the supplies after all by “raising the price slightly to compensate him for the risk he now thought he was taking” (Stefansson 1921: 118).

plans which I had announced, especially the much-talked-of “ice trip,” that I was either not quite sane or was outlining plans which I had no intention or prospect of carrying out to any useful conclusion, but which could, nevertheless, use up a good deal of the resources of the expedition. [...] It was well known that no useful purpose could be served by [the trip], the theory on which it was based had the support of no well-known arctic explorer or any one on the expedition, and of no whaler or Eskimo, in so far as the soundness or tenability of the basic hypothesis was concerned. (Ibid: 120–21)

What is sardonically presented as the greatest hindrance to be overcome in this situation is thus the unwillingness of Anderson and his compatriots to believe that Stefansson’s foray into the ice is feasible; to believe in his method of friendly Arctic exploration.¹¹⁸ The recurrent threat of falling out of favor with Ottawa lingers in the background, as well as the skepticism of another category of human ordeals, the Arctic natives, which I will come back to presently.

While it is possible to read Stefansson’s whole narrative as an answer to the assumedly “insane” idea of a friendly Arctic, the concrete problem that Stefansson must tackle at the story level in Chapter XII requires resolute action. Once again, however, it takes action in the form of discourse (or persuasion through discussion) to overcome the hindrance presented by his opponents. As an answer to Anderson’s announcement that no man will join in on his folly mission, Stefansson is able to make a “break in the ranks” by having some of his helpers among the crew publicly announce their support for him (ibid: 121). When this is accomplished, it seems just a matter of details before the dispute can be settled, and narrative tension can be resolved once again. Stefansson sums up:

It was a rather tense two hours, but before eleven o’clock a *modus vivendi* had been agreed on. By eight o’clock the next morning every one was at work doing the things which he should have begun doing not the morning after I

¹¹⁸ On Stefansson’s use of humor to promote the friendly Arctic message, see Chapter Five.

came home but a month earlier, on the morning after receiving my instructions from Storkerson. (Ibid: 122)

Even though Stefansson is forced to make “certain promises and guarantees” to his adversaries, the implication of the narrative presentation through an axis of conflict of the events leading up to the Collinson Point dispute is that Stefansson has emerged victorious from his mission; with the coveted supplies and equipment, he is now able to march north over the ice, which is his object of desire.

It is interesting to notice how the opponent actant in this chapter is *not* represented by the ice or some other manifestation of a hostile northern environment, and how Stefansson’s actual journey from Fort Macpherson to Collinson Point is not even thematized. Instead, the physical landscape, as previously demonstrated, tends to be of use to Stefansson, and thus often embodies a helper rather than opponent in his narrative. Put differently, it is not the difficulty in overcoming a physical landscape around which the axis of conflict of this chapter is constructed, but rather Stefansson’s and Anderson’s “*views [that are] so diametrically at issue*” (ibid: 97, emphasis added).

Other Human Obstacles

Two other obstacles in human form repeatedly stand in Stefansson’s way throughout the narrative of his journey, and should also be mentioned here: (3) the Arctic natives and (4) the media. By Arctic natives I not only refer to various members of the indigenous population whom Stefansson comes into contact with over the years, but also other Arctic dwellers such as local whalers and traders. Both of these types of natives feature among the obstacles encountered in Chapter XIII, “Shall We Dare to March North?”. Here, Stefansson’s struggle (at the level of story) to get volunteers for his proposed ice foray over sea is (at the discourse level) framed as a trial in court, where he ostensibly has to clear the name of exploration by forage upon which his plan largely is based (Stefansson 1921: 125). “I think any lawyer or other person

used to pleading a cause”, Stefansson states in defense of his method, “will agree that the first principle of good argumentation is to concede in the beginning every point which the opposition are eventually going to make you concede” (ibid: 126). He thus systematically goes over the arguments, and the authorities, he is up against, to “stat[e] his case” (ibid: 125) by countering the “objections” (ibid: 135) made by his “local judges” (ibid: 136).¹¹⁹ Stefansson’s tedious opponents in this chapter are not only actual (though unnamed) members of the crew but also the Arctic authorities to whom they appeal: explorers like Nansen and Peary, geographers and whalers who apparently do not believe that live provisions can be got in a region of heavy polar ice. “To make the case against me all the stronger”, Stefansson finally states, “there were the Eskimos” (ibid: 129). The reluctance of (3) the Arctic natives seems to pose the strongest argument against Stefansson’s explorative method. Yet again, however, Stefansson is able to overcome these obstacles through sound argumentation, as the narrative—and the pleading of his case—subtly move between the levels of story and discourse, sometimes blurring out the borders between them. Once the obstacles have been overcome, Stefansson has his volunteers, and the story of the next year’s ice treks across the Beaufort Sea can commence.

Critical voices in (4) the media often loom in the background of Stefansson’s narrative. Like some of the other human obstacles encountered, these voices tend to remain unnamed and generic. In early 1914, for example, “newspapers were saying that the entire complement of the *Karluk* had perished, that [Stefansson’s] plans were unsound, and that the expedition had failed” (ibid: 72). While not entirely true, such negative characteristics may naturally do serious damage to Stefansson’s reputation. By including them in his narrative, however, Stefansson yet again reinforces the challenges he is up against, thus narratively making the realization of his proposed venture an even

¹¹⁹ For a discussion of the characteristic argumentative strategy used here and elsewhere in *The Friendly Arctic*, see Chapter Five.

greater feat. In this particular case, it is the newspaper editors that are singled out as being unsympathetic to Stefansson's thesis, and thus must be proven wrong. These editors, Stefansson states, "who presumably had been through high school, were asserting that all the knowledge ever gained in the Arctic was not worth the sacrifice of the life of one young Canadian" (ibid). Needless to say, Stefansson's stance on the cost of exploration diverges from the editors'. Such recurrent references in *The Friendly Arctic* to the essentially unreliable stories about the expedition that feature in the media, however, point to another distinctive feature of the narrative: Whether it is an obstacle to be overcome or part of a rhetorical strategy actively employed in his own narrative, Stefansson demonstrates that he is well aware of the power of the written word.

The Literary North

The common denominator of the major part of the ordeals that present themselves in human form throughout Stefansson's narrative seems to be their essentially *unfriendly mindset*. This is why Stefansson continually has to convince other people of the friendliness (in all its various forms) of the regions through which the expedition travels. But where does the idea of the unfriendly Arctic stem from? A closer examination of passages from the text reveals that Stefansson in fact actively negotiates two Arctics here: the concrete, tangible area covered by his expedition, as well as what may be called the "literary North" (ibid: 20) which he continually runs up against during the course of the narrative.¹²⁰ The latter of these Arctics is introduced as a central motif in the introductory chapters of his narrative. Here, a story about

¹²⁰ "The literary North" is merely one of the names that Stefansson assigns to this motif. In Chapter II he refers to it as "The North That Never Was" and elsewhere as "the imaginary Arctic" (Stefansson 1921: 11) or "the Arctic as it has been imagined to be" (ibid: 19).

the different experiences of two explorers who arrive at the same northern location highlights its constituent features. Stefansson recounts:

A young man by the name of Thomas Simpson had come in 1838 direct from his home among the woods and hedges of England to the limit of the forest area on the arctic circle, just north of Great Bear Lake. [...] He came to a lake about thirty miles long surrounded by hills of varied form [...] [and] did what is customary when a European “discovers” some place to which he has been guided by the natives whose ancestors have been brought up in the vicinity: he gave the lake a name. He named it “Dismal Lake.” And in his book he goes nearly to the limits of language in telling us how desolate and dreary, forlorn and forbidding, blasted and barren the country was.

Half a century later there grew up in England a man by the name of David Hanbury. [...] He had read Thomas Simpson’s book, and the adjectives had made enough impression upon him so that when he approached Dismal Lake he expected the place to live up to its name. But all Thomas Simpson had really meant when he strained his vocabulary was that trees were absent or far away and that there was some snow on the ground. To Hanbury treelessness and a covering of snow would not of themselves have constituted desolation. Perhaps partly as a reaction against Simpson, he goes to the other extreme and describes the lake as a wilderness paradise. [...] I have lived a year in the vicinity of Dismal Lake and visited it both summer and winter, and I agree with Hanbury that the man who describes such a place as dismal, desolate and dreary is telling nothing of interest beyond revealing the peculiar meaning which certain common words have in his mind. (Ibid: 21–22)¹²¹

There is an apparent divergence between the North preserved in Thomas Simpson’s narrative of discovery and the one that both David Hanbury and Stefansson experience firsthand some decades later.¹²² Prior to their arrival at

¹²¹ Thomas Simpson (1808–1840) was a Scottish Arctic explorer and Hudson’s Bay Company agent. English explorer David Hanbury (1864–1910) wrote about sport and travel in Canada in the 1890s.

¹²² The aspect of perceiving a landscape through past experience with similar landscapes is dealt with in Chapter Six.

Dismal Lake, however, both Hanbury and Stefansson have read Simpson's account, and they are therefore surprised to find that none of the rather discouraging adjectives fit the actual place they find themselves in. The literary North, Stefansson's example more than implies, is not the real, tangible North of actual experience; it is instead a false motif found in reports by earlier explorers. Just how widespread, ridiculous and even potentially damaging this fictional motif is, is demonstrated through other passages of his narrative.

In Chapter VII, for example, Stefansson dispels one of the misconceptions that he believes characterizes the literary North, namely that of its "eternal silence" that "exists only in books" (ibid: 74), or merely as a figment of the imagination of the "poet in his London attic". "But we of the far North", he instead ensures his readers, "never forget the boom and screech and roar of the polar pack" (ibid: 20). Another constituent feature of the literary North is a hostile wildlife. This is contested in a similar observation by Stefansson: "Only in the books of the nature faker is the wolf fleet enough to overtake the caribou after a short rush, and his fangs long and keen enough to cut the jugular vein." In contrast to such fictional beasts, however, *real* wolves have the decency to prey only on animals that fall from exhaustion (ibid: 227).¹²³ Northern foxes have apparently been likewise misrepresented in Arctic literature. According to Stefansson, it is only "in ancient fables and modern nature-faking" that we learn of "the wisdom of foxes". His experience of the true North, however, testifies to the opposite, namely that "foxes are stupid" (ibid: 333).

Besides such humorously countered misconceptions concerning the flora, fauna and climate, one aspect of the literary North seems to be even more damaging than others, not only causing frequent delays to Stefansson en route, but also generating new obstacles to be overcome at the narrative's level of discourse. This is the idea of polar exploration as hardship. Most of

¹²³ "If animals have a sense of humor", Stefansson sarcastically remarks, "it is a pity they cannot read our popular nature stories or come to see an occasional 'Great North Woods' or 'God's Country' movie" (Stefansson 1921: 227), thus reinforcing the gap between the real and the literary North.

Stefansson's companions have brought this idea with them to the Canadian Arctic, and with it "the heroic ideals of the classic explorer" (ibid: 35). They believe that polar exploration entails starving, freezing, nearly dying, and being generally miserable all through their northern sojourn, thus making a heroic sacrifice in the name of progress and geographical discovery. One by one, however, Stefansson works his way through the list of what he in effect perceives to be false notions of the discourse of the suffering explorer. One such notion is the "discomfort of life in camp". This, he remarks, is "a classic feature of the popular polar narrative [which] can never truthfully mark any of our stories" (ibid: 165). "Were we as uncomfortable as polar explorers usually have been [in winter camp]", he states later, "we should neither have the inclination to listen to [the yarns of Inuit informants] nor the facilities for recording them", once again juxtaposing one of the tropes of Arctic literature against (his) actual experience.

The unrealistic portrayal of snowblindness in fiction is dealt with in a footnote to Chapter XIX. Stefansson here explains:

* I have read a novel where the plot hinges on two things: (1) that a snowblind person is temporarily stone blind; and (2) that when you have recovered from snowblindness you can still pretend to be snowblind. The first premise is ridiculous and the second untenable. A snowblind person is not blind in any such sense as is required by the plot of this novel. During severe snowblindness tears flow as rapidly as in violent weeping. This condition is difficult to simulate when you are getting better. Further, in the movie made from the story no attempt is made by the snowblind actress to simulate tears while she is supposed to be pretending to be snowblind. (Ibid: 201)

Although Stefansson refers his comment on fictional snowblindness to a seemingly trivial footnote, it may be argued that this minor observation is anything *but* trivial because it is part of the rhetorical campaign that Stefansson uses his entire narrative to wage against the literary North. The literary North that we encounter in the footnote—and in all of the shapes it takes on

throughout the narrative—brings to mind Margaret Atwood’s aforementioned malevolent North. It is a place of terror and tragedy, a quintessential setting for suspense-filled tales of suffering and heroism; it is a dark and dismal place where wolves have lethal fangs and snowblindness makes you stone blind (although temporarily).

The literary North is thus introduced as a motif that spans borders of texts and genres, fiction and nonfiction, time and geography. Behind the literary North is the idea of literature as intertextuality; as a dynamic field of influence and exchange where “texts are interconnected, interdependent, polyvocal, part of a network of authors, works, and readers”. The concept of intertextuality allows the reader of a given text to recognize “both a clear myth of filiation and an intricate network of connection” between several texts (Cheney 2012: 67). Here we arrive at a paradox that characterizes Stefansson’s own text: As demonstrated by the previous discussion, Stefansson does not intend his *Friendly Arctic* to be a contribution to the literary North. It is instead an account that actively refutes other narratives of the North. At the same time, however, Stefansson cannot avoid contributing to precisely the same kind of network of textual representations that he so unmistakably distances himself from. Sherrill Grace describes Stefansson’s paradox in similar terms, although her main concern is analyzing and describing what she terms the discursive formation of the Canadian North.¹²⁴ She uses Stefansson’s *Friendly Arctic* as an example of how a single text both actively negotiates with and must find its place within the larger picture of such a discursive formation:

At [the qualitative or intermediate level of analysis of her study, Grace states,] we can appreciate how passionately, overtly, deliberately, and skillfully Stefansson marshals his materials—his language and his other modes of

¹²⁴ “Because I insist upon a plurality of ideas of North that are in constant flux yet are persistent over time, across a very wide field of endeavor, and are capable of being isolated for analysis, I call this phenomenon the *discursive formation* of North” (Grace 2001: xiii). Grace’s material is impressively wide, and includes, among others, works of literature, painting, music, television, etc.; “a range of signifying practices over the last 150 years” (ibid: 21–22).

representation—to argue the case for a *friendly* Arctic that will serve precise political, social, economic, and national ends. Moreover, he does this by entering the already powerful and widely circulating system of the discursive formation of North with fists flying. He breaks his way into the system, forcing a rupture, creating a discontinuity, resisting and challenging, while at the same time necessarily relying on the very discursive formation within which he must operate, by which he is himself ruled and appropriated. At this level Stefansson has entered into a dialogue with many others who have written about, studied, explored, and represented the Canadian Arctic. Even in this text, which at times might sound like a monologic rant, Stefansson is *extremely* sensitive to other voices, some of which are quoted directly, some of which are re-presented intertextually and re-accentuated. (Grace 2001: 29).

The Friendly Arctic, in Grace's perceptive observation, both revolts against and relies on the same kind of discursive formation of North. This is an aspect of his text that I will return to presently, although my frame of analysis will be the chronotope rather than Grace's discursive formation. It is, however, the implicit (and, at the level of discourse of Stefansson's text, quite explicit) dialogue with other northern texts that remains my main concern in the following. Stefansson's text continually refers to, incorporates, negotiates with, rejects or defends other Arctic texts. Throughout his entire narrative Stefansson is, in Grace's words, extremely sensitive to other Arctic voices. The invoked relationship to these voices is fraught with tension, however, and can best be described as conflictual. This represents a specific aspect of intertextuality.

The Polar Explorer's Anxiety of Influence

While Julia Kristeva coined the term intertextuality in her groundbreaking study of Bakhtin's work and his notion of heteroglossia,¹²⁵ Harold Bloom has

¹²⁵ Kristeva's essay "Word, Dialogue and Novel" was written in 1966 and published in 1969. The essay marks the first introduction of Bakhtin's work to a major western academic audience (Kristeva 1986)

come to represent a more limited approach to intertextuality; one with a specific focus on the relationship between the poet and his/her poetic predecessors. In *The Anxiety of Influence*, Bloom's influential study of the Romantic poets, he concerns himself with what may be called the "poet in the poet", or, as he explicates, "the [poet's] absolute absorption of the precursor." He visualizes this essentially intertextual relationship as a "battle between strong equals, father and son as mighty opposites, Laius and Oedipus at the crossroads" (Bloom 1973: 11). Bloom thus "reconstructs literary history as a narrative of 'misreading' [where new poets] 'misread' their precursors; [and] more importantly, the new poets' writings reflect, *write* this very 'misprision'" (Moraru 2008: 259). The "strong poet", in Bloom's words, "invents his work in a conscious 'misreading' of his 'precursor' — a literary relationship between one poet and another modeled on Sigmund Freud's Oedipus complex" (Cheney 2012: 717).

The relationship between Stefansson and his intertextually invoked predecessors bears semblance to the Oedipal relationship envisioned between Bloom's Romantic poets and their precursors. As discussed in Chapter Three, Stefansson claims to stand on the shoulders of men like Hudson, McClintock and Peary when he takes Arctic exploration into its final stage and most ideal form. He thus openly ties his efforts in the field in with those of the great explorers who have gone there before him. With the same stroke of the pen, however, he also *rejects* the efforts made by these authorities by holding up his insights as better or more true than theirs. In Chapter XVII, for instance, at the level of discourse of his text, Stefansson strikes a blow for the use of snowhouses in the field. Many explorers before him have experienced the great advantage of this kind of housing, he claims. Their construction, however, has remained "a sort of mystery" to them, which presents an "inconsistency" in their explorative strategies:

[1969]: 34). Kristeva's approach to intertextuality has been described as "universalist" because it posits "intertextuality as an intrinsic, universal attribute of all texts", rather than restricting it "to the interplay of identifiable [...] or 'traceable' texts" (Moraru 2008: 257).

Antarctic explorers, like Shackleton, have realized the superior comfort of the snowhouse but have used tents, explaining the apparent inconsistency by saying, “There are no Eskimos in the Antarctic whom we could hire, as did Peary, to make snowhouses for us.” Sir Leopold McClintock was one of the first, if not the first of polar explorers to point out that snowhouses are so comfortable that their use would make arctic exploration a simpler, safer and pleasanter occupation; but he went on to say that unfortunately white men cannot make them, and that he himself did the next best thing by erecting vertical walls of snow and roofing them over with a tarpaulin. [...] Following the idea that while snowhouses are excellent camps they are a sort of racial property of the Eskimos, Charles Francis Hall was comfortable in them as a guest of the Eskimos but never learned how to build one. The like was true of Schwatka and Gilder and later of Hanbury. Peary used them for years as built for him by the Eskimos, but it does not appear to have occurred to him to learn to build one. So it was curiously reserved for us to be the first explorers to build our own snowhouses for field use. (Stefansson 1921: 175–176)¹²⁶

Although Amundsen “took steps to have his men learn snowhouse building”, Stefansson admits in a footnote, he did not seem to make extensively use of it later (*ibid*). Stefansson’s Arctic precursors, as demonstrated through this quote, are not just anybody. Here, and elsewhere in the text, names like Shackleton, McClintock, Amundsen, Nordenskiöld, Franklin, Sverdrup, Nansen, Greely, Peary, or even Magellan and Columbus,¹²⁷ recurrently feature, and thus Stefansson demonstrates not only his solid knowledge of polar literature, but also that *The Friendly Arctic* is part of the same kind of network of authoritative Arctic texts that are associated with these men. Moreover, the passage demonstrates, Stefansson’s own work *surpasses* that of these same authorities. It is “curiously reserved” for him to “be the first” or most adaptable

¹²⁶ On snowhouse building as a “racial property of the Eskimos”, see Chapter Six.

¹²⁷ Shackleton (Stefansson 1921: 20), McClintock (*ibid*: 313–314, 343), Amundsen (*ibid*: 7, 165, 468), Nordenskiöld (*ibid*: 335), Franklin (*ibid*: 7), Sverdrup (*ibid*: 238, 427, 515, 533–536, 559, 564, 572), Nansen (*ibid*: xxii, 5, 127, 133, 513–514), Greely (*ibid*: xvii, 194, 385) and Peary (*ibid*: xix, 7, 17, 31, 35, 37, 42, 128, 135, 137, 165, 365, 461, 564), Magellan and Columbus (*ibid*: 162).

of them (ibid: 176). Whether the source of conflict between Stefansson and his precursors involves seemingly minor activities such as snowhouse building or assessing the correct size of pressure ridges¹²⁸—or more fundamental aspects such as the right method of polar exploration—we have here (in Bloom’s terms) a scene of intertextuality “with particularised (writing) agents locked in antagonistic struggle with other such agents from the past,” the latter of whom are “defeated” through “acts of misreading” (Moraru 2008: 259). In this sense, what Stefansson does in his text should be considered “misprision proper”; “a corrective movement in his own [text], which implies that the precursor [text] went accurately up to a certain point, but then should have swerved, precisely in the direction that the new [text] moves” (Bloom 1973: 14).¹²⁹ By intertextually incorporating noteworthy precursors, Stefansson adds crucial gravity to his own text and feats. At the same time, he makes sure that his readers know exactly where these precursors went wrong, thus establishing himself as an Arctic Oedipus.

Overwriting and Repainting

An even more literal misprision of the work of one of Stefansson’s Arctic precursors is committed in Chapter LIX, aptly titled “In the Footsteps of Earlier Explorers”. At the level of story, we find ourselves south of Knight Harbor on Banks Island in late July 1917, as Stefansson, who is out hunting, accidentally steps upon a brass cylinder lying on the ground. He carefully examines its

¹²⁸ In *Farthest North*, Stefansson recounts, Nansen “tells us that no pressure ridges are more than thirty or thirty-five feet high and that accounts of pressure ridges much higher are merely careless statements founded on inaccurate observation. [...] But Nansen’s ice experiences were of a particular and limited sort.” In order to prove Nansen wrong Stefansson quotes Sverdrup, as well as the testimonies of “several captains of the Beaufort Sea”, which back up his own first-hand experience of enormous ice ridges (Stefansson 1921: 513–514).

¹²⁹ Bloom’s “misprision proper” or “*clinamen*” is one of six revisionary ratios that he envisions between the strong poet and his precursor. The term *clinamen* is taken from Lucretius, Bloom explains, “where it means a ‘swerve’ of the atoms so as to make change possible in the universe. A poet swerves away from his precursor, by so reading his precursor’s poem as to execute a *clinamen* in relation to it” (Bloom 1973: 14).

contents and discovers that it is the original document recording commander Robert McClure's renowned discovery of the Northwest Passage in 1850. In the following narrative, McClure's message from the past is in its entirety embedded into *The Friendly Arctic*, not only through direct quotation, word by word, but also through a photocopy of the actual document with McClure's barely legible handwriting on it.¹³⁰ By embedding a central Arctic text such as this into his own, Stefansson frames or lends his own text authority. In other words, he narratively follows "in the footsteps of earlier explorers", and connects his work with two of the very milestones in the history of Arctic exploration: the Franklin search and the discovery of the Northwest Passage.

Literary scholar Hanna Eglinger describes how the relationship between the Arctic explorer and his predecessors may be visualized through the mutable map. The explorer, she states, "enters new territories drawing upon the maps and experiences of the predecessors and looks at the new land with their predetermined eyes." The explorer's status as "first and only" is therefore bound to be questionable (Eglinger 2010: 4), and the act of mapping reflects this kind of predicament:

The map can thus be employed for Arctic projects of overwriting previous accomplishments, of breaking records, crossing boundaries, and innovation based on traces that are left behind or modified under the banner of one's own glorious nation. The conquest of untrodden land is imagined as a national tinting and completion of blank spaces, but also as an act of *overwriting and repainting*—and that means as a media-based modification and appropriation of already existing territory. (Ibid: 4, emphasis added)

¹³⁰ McClure's record runs as follows: "This Notice was deposited by a Traveling Party from Her Britannic Majesty's Discovery Ship *Investigator* who were in Search of the Expedition under Sir John Franklin which up to this date has not been heard of. 'The *Investigator* wintered in the Pack N.E. four Miles from the Princess Royal Isles; upon the S.W. side of the large (word missing, paper torn) left a depot of Provisions. 'The Crews are all well and in excellent Spirits, having escaped any sickness during the winter. 'A party discovered the North West passage by traveling over the Ice upon the 26th October last in Latitude 73° 31' N., Longitude (by Lunar) 114° 14' W. 'It is requested whoever may find this will communicate the Same to the Secretary of the Admiralty, London. 'Dated (several words illegible—perhaps 'safe and sound') *Investigator* frozen in the Pack, Latitude 72° 50', N. Longitude. '21 April, 1851. '—McClure (Signature partly illegible), 'Commander.'" (Stefansson 1921: 637–638).

Stefansson's depiction of his exploration of Banks Island in Chapter LIX may best be described as a conquest in the latter sense of the word given by Eglinger. However, while Eglinger envisions how the *map* is used to modify and appropriate a territory that is already there, I want to emphasize how the explorer's *text* also overwrites and repaints the written work of his/her predecessors, and how the act of writing thus may be seen as yet another form of "conquest". McClure's intertextually embedded record serves as a case in point. Immediately after quoting McClure, Stefansson relates that "[in McClure's] monument we left a copy of [the] document, taking the original along with us, and added a record of our own, giving some information about what we had done" (Stefansson 1921: 638). By following this exploratory convention, Stefansson not only symbolically takes possession of the land by inscribing himself into the physical landscape, but he also attempts to situate *The Friendly Arctic* in the intertextual landscape of the North. He does this (both quite literally and narratively) by taking possession of McClure's authentic document, embedding it into his own story, but he also points out where McClure went wrong:

Point John Russell by our observations is a degree farther west than the longitude given in McClure's record and upon the map. This is not surprising, especially in view of the parenthesis in his record which explains that the longitude was secured by a lunar distance observation. This is well known to be an inaccurate method of getting longitude and especially so if there is but one observation and that taken under conditions of discomfort, as probably was the case with McClure. (Ibid: 639)

One may only speculate whether this slight error would had crept into McClure's historical document (and the official map based on it) had he only been able to, in Stefansson's terms, make friends with the Arctic and thus conducted his geographic observations under more agreeable conditions. This remains, however, a possibility that is merely hinted at in Stefansson's narrative. By correcting the "discrepancy between the map and our

observations” (ibid), or, making sure to point out where McClure should have “swerved” and moved in the direction where Stefansson’s new exploration method now takes them, Stefansson’s text overwrites or repaints McClure’s document; he “defeats” his Arctic precursor through a Bloomian act of misprision.

The Quest Chronotope

In conclusion to the present chapter I apply the chronotope as a means of synthesis through which I sum up my discussion of Stefansson’s rhetorical movements on the level of discourse of his text, which, as demonstrated, are inextricably bound up with the recounted actions he performs in the Canadian Arctic, at the text’s level of story. My main objective in the following is to establish a *quest chronotope* as a major chronotope which operates on two general levels of Stefansson’s text. These two levels should not be confused with the distinction made above between discourse and story, as the quest chronotope applies to both of them, as will be made clear presently. Instead, in the following, I wish to emphasize and explain how the quest chronotope pervades: (1) the level of the literary Arctic, and (2) the level of grand narratives, both of which are related to each other in *The Friendly Arctic*.

At its most concrete level, the quest chronotope pertains to (1) the level of the literary Arctic. In arguing this, I am well aware of the fact that yet another level of narrative tends to be prominent in accounts of exploration and discovery, namely that of the land that can be colonized; the level of the physical Arctic landscape. Here, the explorer’s quest is typically linked to the conquest of land. *The Friendly Arctic* is also a story about conquest in this sense of the word. One of the main objectives (and conditions for funding) of the expedition was adding yet undiscovered lands to Canadian territory, something which Stefansson succeeded in doing by recording the discovery of some of the last islands to be entered on westerners’ maps (Pálsson 2005: 167).

In a direct sense, therefore, his journey can be perceived as a quest for land, where the objective is obtained through claiming, naming and mapping of the landscape. Still, Stefansson's text deviates from traditional polar narratives in one important respect. As demonstrated through the previous discussion, his tale is not constructed around the conquest of the *physical* landscape, which instead takes a back seat to Stefansson's engagement with the *literary* North. *The Friendly Arctic* is no tale of man against the elements, where the "conquest" of land typically bolsters the explorer's masculine qualities, or his status as a national hero. When Stefansson thus renounces the battle against the elements, insisting on being a collaborator with the physical landscape and not its conqueror, the idea of conquest becomes instead an (inter)textual matter; the quest and conquest enacted at the level of the literary Arctic come more clearly into view.

At the level of the literary Arctic, we can identify and discuss chronotopes that stem from texts. *The Friendly Arctic*, as we have seen, negotiates with intertextually invoked Arctic authorities, and actively refutes what is identified as these authorities' negative conception of the Arctic. This invites a comparison between Stefansson's relationship to his Arctic precursors and the one that Bloom's Romantic poet forms with his/her literary precursors. Stefansson is well aware of the fact that his narrative—like the physical journey itself—can never fill any vast, wholly untainted blank spaces in the Arctic terrain. When describing the discovery of an island shaped like a comma in 1915, he therefore announces that his survey "had completed the gap between [McClintock] and Meham—that our comma island was a period to the story of linking up the work of our predecessors and making the outline of Prince Patrick Island complete" (Stefansson 1921: 315). Stefansson's own tinting of the map is thus linked to a tradition of great polar feats, stretching back to the discovery of Franklin's lost expedition. But rather than referring to the level of physical travel, the quote invites a literary context. Texts, like maps, are after all abstractions, and in the same way that new maps repaint older ones, Stefansson's *Friendly Arctic* rewrites the narratives of McClintock,

Mecham, and the like. Importantly, however, the quote implies, Stefansson's contribution to this narrative landscape is not a comma, but a period; the objective of his *Friendly Arctic* quest is a *culmination* of the written work and successes of his Arctic predecessors.

The level of the literary Arctic should thus be seen as a logical part of (2) the level of grand narratives; of dominant stories about Arctic exploration that legitimize such an endeavor. One such story is that of progress. The quest chronotope operating in Stefansson's narrative is a future- or progress-oriented chronotope, where the expansion of knowledge is of key concern. Such a chronotope emerged in the western world in the seventeenth century, accompanying expeditions into all corners of the world, justifying their "discovery" and colonization. *Time*, the first of the two fundamental chronotopic categories, is in the case of the quest chronotope that of *modernity*. This entails viewing the progression of time in a historical sense, characterized by an essentially dialectic relationship between historical epochs, where the realization of the new entails a subsumption of its opposite, and where the present becomes a goal for that which has taken place in the past. With his narrative, Stefansson contributes to the collective history of the discovery of the Arctic; to a timeline of momentous Arctic events and feats. He does this by positing the relationship between *The Friendly Arctic* and its literary precursors as an intertextual battle between new and old knowledge, where previous advancements stand in the way of new. His own work, as we have seen, is a period and not comma to such a timeline. Narratively installing the fourth stage of Arctic exploration, therefore, entails taking the collective history of exploration into its final phase; into modernity.

Space, the second fundamental chronotopic category, is in the case of *The Friendly Arctic's* quest chronotope that of an Arctic *space of expansion*. This kind of space can be seen from a double perspective: it is a form of space that is contained within the literary work but which also exists outside of it, in a global context connected with the dissemination and public discussion of polar research. We have seen how Stefansson constantly positions his text in relation

to other Arctic texts: how he navigates a spatial landscape consisting of other narratives of exploration and discovery, letters, newspaper articles, poetry, popular nature stories, novels, movies, as well as documents embedded into the physical Arctic landscape. The story of Stefansson's quest thus unfolds against the setting of this kind of space, but importantly also invokes an interconnected global space consisting of libraries, geographical societies, lecture halls in rural America, conversation rooms in London hotels, etc. This is the space of polar research as a collective, against which Stefansson's quest must be conceived.

The temporal and spatial dimensions of the quest chronotope emerging from Stefansson's narrative are thus a combination of modernity and an Arctic space of expansion as an end point of a dialectically historical development. Against this characteristic setting, Stefansson's conducts his quest journey, in the name of the advancement of knowledge. Greimas' actantial model can be applied not merely to the Collinson Point controversy, but also to this kind of journey running through the narrative as a whole. Here, the distinctive objective of Stefansson (as Greimasian subject) is to persuade others (i.e. a tripartite receiver consisting of other characters/the reader/the public at large) of the friendliness of the Arctic, and thus of the supremacy of his exploration method (object). This aspiration is, in turn, modulated by two actants: Stefansson's own ideas of the friendly Arctic (helper), and the literary North (opponent). The literary North appears in many guises (or actors) throughout the narrative; as the common prejudice of people towards the Arctic, what may be called unfriendly mindsets, or as the written words of past explorers and other Northern chroniclers. In Stefansson's narrative all of these actors represent the same opponent actant, and readers are constantly reminded of the negative impact this actant has on Stefansson's mission. Stefansson's journey towards the ultimate goal of persuasion, therefore, takes the distinct form of a goal-oriented quest where Stefansson goes through a succession of non-friendly struggles. At the basis of his narrative is the conflict between the friendly North and the literary North which gives structure to Stefansson's argumentation, and around which narrative suspense is constructed.

A Friendly Arctic Quest

Stefansson's *Friendly Arctic* demonstrates that in the 1920s Arctic exploration is no longer about the discovery of land. Now, the explorer must actively (intertextually) engage with the literature of others, in a rhetorical battle where experience is constantly turned into literature, which new experience (and literature) has to fight. In Bakhtin's terms, the two worlds of actual and reflected chronotopes are interconnected and in constant mutual interaction (Bakhtin 1981: 254). There are accordingly (at least) two narratives in *The Friendly Arctic*. In addition to the narrative of Stefansson's Odyssean journey, there is also the narrative of the four stages of polar exploration, which points to the collective of polar explorers and concerns the development of polar research. Other narratives and stories also intersect and merge in the text, such as the one about the "journey" conducted by readers of *The Friendly Arctic* towards new knowledge. This will be dealt with in the next chapter, in connection with the trope of narrative self-representation. As a conclusion to the present chapter, however, I raise the question of how the relationship between the two principal narratives of *The Friendly Arctic* should be conceived. Put differently, and viewed in terms of chronotope theory, I ask: what is the relationship between the quest chronotope and the friendly Arctic chronotope, which was the topic of Chapter Three?

On the basis of the previous discussion I propose that *The Friendly Arctic*'s quest chronotope should be considered a major chronotope because it *encompasses* the friendly Arctic chronotope (and its three minor chronotopes, as described in Chapter Three). The quest chronotope is moreover a transsubjective chronotope because it is perceptible from an outside perspective (i.e. it involves the perspectives of narrator, author and readers), and because it is characterized by a space-time "in which disparate chronotopes can be related, reconciled, or synthesized" (Ladin 1999: 224). But the quest chronotope and the friendly Arctic chronotope find themselves in an even more complex interrelationship. There is an apparent contradiction between the goal-

oriented quest and the leisurely Odyssey, and the two chronotopes therefore enter into a *paradoxical* relation. In order to arrive at the quest goal of convincing readers of the friendly Arctic, the narrative's Odyssean plot elements are essential. While apparently contradictory, the two chronotopes are also *interdependent*. There would not be a friendly Arctic without the discursive quest chronotope, and vice versa. However friendly the Arctic may be (in Stefansson's vision), it will never be friendly to anyone else but Stefansson unless he can take the reader forcibly (i.e. discursively) by the hand in the course of the journey, step by step, fact by fact, and simultaneously overcome the (presumed) obstacles of prejudiced opinions about the Arctic. In other words, he takes the reader along on his discursive quest, intending to overcome her assumed skepticism towards the friendliness of the Arctic. In the next chapter, I will explore one of the ways in which this is done, and, more generally, how this and other narrative strategies impact Stefansson's self-representation.

Chapter Five: Narrative Self-Representation

The topic of the present chapter is Stefansson's self-representation in *The Friendly Arctic*. While I thus explore another of the cornerstones of the chronotope, namely character, I take leave of the chronotope as a focal perspective for now and instead look at Stefansson's text primarily through insights and means available from narrative theory. While this chapter therefore should be considered a continuation of the previous ones, it also entails a shift in analytical focus. The narrative tensions caused by the conflicting chronotopes of Stefansson's text remain in the background through the following discussion. Into the foreground steps the literary version of the friendly Arctic explorer, which I examine in terms of the rhetorical and narrative means through which Stefansson typically presents himself.

Climate of Authenticity

Scholes and Kellogg argue that "traveller's tales in all countries are notoriously untrustworthy, and untrustworthy in proportion to the distance of the travels from familiar territory, just as ancient maps become less and less reliable toward their edges" (Scholes and Kellogg 1975: 73).¹³¹ In Chapter Two of this thesis, a rhetorical remedy was prescribed for this predicament of the travel narrative: the production of truth through narrative means, which is one of the generic conventions of travel writing.¹³² What has been called the topos of the claim to empirical truthfulness, "so crucial to travel stories of all kinds, both factual and fictional" (Hulme and Youngs 2002: 4), also serves as a point of

¹³¹ The fact that some travel writers *do* deceive their readers by stretching or fabricating truth has most notably been discussed by Percy G. Adams in *Travelers and Travel Liars, 1660–1800* (Adams 1962).

¹³² Cf. Melberg 2005: 19.

departure for my discussion of Stefansson in the character of the friendly Arctic explorer in the present chapter.

Ryall raises the pertinent question of whether it really is possible to write a travel account without some kind of fictionalization of both the progress of the travel and the material conveyed by the traveler. The traveler *creates* meaning as s/he transforms her/his story into an ordered whole through writing, she asserts, thus suggesting that also the impression of truthfulness is a product of this creative process (Ryall 1989: 16–17). Since the actual experiences and observations made by the traveler cannot be verified by the reader but remains essentially a question of trust, the writer, “regardless of the extent to which she or he is present in the text, must convince the reader through narrative means that the travel account is based on reliable first-hand experience” (ibid).¹³³

A similar obligation of the travel writer is identified by Tallmadge. In his study, however, the topos of the claim to empirical truthfulness in travel writing finds its equivalent in the “climate of authenticity” of the literature of exploration (Tallmadge 1979: 9). Tallmadge, as can be recalled, places exploration accounts in a literary landscape that can be navigated according to the two basic elements of the text’s rhetoric and its communication situation. In exploration accounts, he argues, the principle of story-telling affects how the explorer communicates her/his message (rhetoric), while *verification* governs the text’s communication situation (ibid: 6). Readability and reporting of facts are therefore equally central elements of the explorer’s tale, as already established.

Both Ryall and Tallmadge accentuate one of the key dilemmas of the literature of travel and exploration: how to create a climate of authenticity by

¹³³ “Den tilliten vi som lesere har til en reisebeskrivelse, hviler på at forfatteren faktisk har erfart og observert det hun eller han beretter om. Men i praksis kan dette sjelden etterprøves. Følgelig må forfatteren — uansett hvor klart hun eller han er til stede i teksten — med språklige virkemidler overbevise leseren om at reisebeskrivelsen er basert på pålitelig førstehåndskunnskap” (Ryall 2004: 16, my translation).

narrative means. This particular concern is also imperative in Stefansson's *Friendly Arctic*, and will be central to my reading of that narrative. Since the reader has every reason to be skeptical to Stefansson's alleged friendly North, or even to his claims to the discovery of new lands in the Canadian Arctic, Stefansson must "convince his readers that he is an expert whose observations are not only accurate but valuable" (Tallmadge 1979: 6); he must create a climate of authenticity. According to Tallmadge, there are several narrative strategies which may be used to such an end. Briefly stated, three of the most central of these strategies are: (1) the appeal to scholarship; (2) the recitation of technical details; and (3) the creation of a narrative persona. Although all three strategies must be seen as interrelated and no doubt serve important functions in Stefansson's narrative, Tallmadge's third strategy—the narrative persona of the literature of exploration—will be of particular interest in the present chapter. It is no exaggeration to say that the narrative persona of *The Friendly Arctic* comes across as quite a distinctive figure. My discussion, therefore, focuses on the kind of explorer that is represented by this characteristic persona, and attempts to determine how it affects the climate of authenticity so crucial for the genre.

The Performative Character of the Exploration Narrative

While Tallmadge describes the literature of exploration as factual and ascertaining, Stefansson's work, on the other hand, emphasizes the *performative* character of these narratives, as has been established in previous chapters. Stefansson's book is intended to serve more than one objective. Not only should it simultaneously educate and entertain readers, it must also establish a position of authority for Stefansson within the Arctic research community—and hopefully thereby secure new ventures into the polar regions. The narrative must therefore function on several levels and simultaneously reach multiple addressees.

A number of recent studies have focused on the relationship between explorers and their historical (or real) readers and, more specifically, on how this relationship played a vital role in shaping the accounts that were written from the High North. The work of Michael F. Robinson (2006) on the role of science in the public campaigns of Arctic explorers will be discussed elsewhere in this chapter. Other scholars with a comparable focus are Beau Riffenburgh (1994) and Janice Cavell (2008), who have examined the representation of Arctic exploration in the Anglo-American nineteenth-century press. Cavell bases her study on a range of British publications, from serious newspapers to popular literature. She is concerned primarily with the reading experience of the nineteenth-century audiences, which she considers imperative to understanding the British discourse of Arctic exploration from within (Cavell 2008: 7). At the basis of Cavell's analysis is thus the role of the reader, but the personal motives of the (historical) author are considered no less important. This kind of interplay between reception and intention, she argues, can only be understood by placing the work in the context of the public discourse of its time, something which she does by focusing on the roles of renowned Arctic explorers in selected publications from the period (ibid: 11).

While focusing on a somewhat more generically homogenous collection of printed publications, Riffenburgh's study includes both American and English newspapers from the second half of the nineteenth century. Riffenburgh demonstrates how this period was marked by the growth of the popular press and by an increasingly sensationalized news coverage. Above all others, Arctic expeditions marked by controversy and tragedy sold newspapers. Riffenburgh accordingly examines the role of the press in establishing new sensational perspectives on the Arctic, which superseded the sublime and picturesque visions from the eighteenth century (Riffenburgh 1994: 197). Arctic accounts, he argues, were not created in a vacuum. Rather, they were constructed so as to serve both the explorer and the newspapers, as well as the hero-seeking public. The "images created of exploration and the explorers

themselves [...] could be specifically designed for the consumption of select audiences—geographical societies, financial supporters, scientists, or the general public”, Riffenburgh demonstrates through his survey (ibid: 3).

While both Cavell and Riffenburgh base their work on representations of the Arctic explorer in the print media, the object of the present study is the exploration account itself. Regardless of this difference in the object of study, insights from both Cavell and Riffenburgh are relevant for the literary analysis of Stefansson’s *Friendly Arctic*, particularly in a discussion of the role of the narrator. The literature of exploration has in many ways been part of a unique economic system in which a main intention of the writing was to stimulate interest which, in turn, could secure financial backing for new expeditions. This aspect necessarily shaped many of the actual accounts that were written about the Arctic, including *The Friendly Arctic*. Stefansson no doubt also had other motives for writing his book. After his return from the field in 1918, he engaged in a dispute with the Canadian Geological Survey-Naval Service over the publication of the technical and scientific results of the expedition (Diubaldo 1998 [1878]: 188). Stefansson was also met by public criticism from both former members of the southern section and other professional counterparts. According to Diubaldo:

The Friendly Arctic [...] was Stefansson’s version of the 1913–18 expedition, its trials and tribulations and, of course, Stefansson’s multitude of achievements in the face of adversity and near mutiny. In essence it was his rationale and justification for his actions. The topics ranged from the confrontation at Nome, the Collinson Point episode, and the many wranglings over priorities in terms of ships and supplies, Stefansson’s exploits, and his theories on arctic matters. (Ibid: 196)

The criticism with which Stefansson was met no doubt lingered in the background when he wrote his own literary version of the expedition, which

thus can be seen as addressing former expedition members, as well as readers among the scientific community and both former and new sponsors.

The Friendly Arctic's reception history would no doubt pose very interesting material for academic research. However, this is a far too grand project for the current work. Also, the discussion of what becomes realized by authorial intention belongs to the level of the historical author, and demands more of a biographical reading than undertaken here. In the following, the analytical focus is therefore redirected back to the internal world of the narrative text itself as this becomes discernible by examining its constituent features in light of narrative theory and method.

As established in the previous, the exploration account is constructed in specific ways in order to address different readers, and Stefansson's text is no exception. At the level of narrative several audiences are targeted by *The Friendly Arctic*, although very few specific readers are addressed explicitly by its narrator. In various passages of didactic discourse we see the contours of the kind of individuals these implied readers might be. Stefansson's portrayal of Inuit culture, his reflections on Arctic dietetics, on oceanography and climate, or on animal life, can be read as addressed principally to a scholarly community; implied readers here are fellow anthropologists, oceanographers, biologists, zoologists, or other trained specialists who might take an interest in the theories put to the test in Stefansson's account. To the same category belong geographical societies and fellow explorers. Nevertheless, another kind of reader must be singled out as imperative to Stefansson's tale, and especially to his self-presentation. This is the broad and somewhat diffuse category of the general public, which will be discussed in the following.

Professor of the National University of Polite Unlearning

Stefansson's implied reader, whether layman or scholar, is attributed with a far from insignificant role in the friendly Arctic quest. A helpful tip at the outset of

this journey is offered this reader in one of the opening chapters. Stefansson here states:

In order to understand the Arctic explorer and his work we must understand the Arctic as it really is. It might seem that the easiest way to do this would be to learn more about it. A far easier way is to forget what we think we already know. (Stefansson 1921: 8)

A main motive in *The Friendly Arctic* is the demonstration of Stefansson's Arctic expertise, which lays the foundation for his new vision of friendly exploration that will amend and thus supersede the visions of other explorers. According to biographer Tom Henighan, Stefansson apparently succeeded in this ambition, as his "air of objectivity, his persona of confident mastery never failed" (Henighan 2009: 128). The role assigned to *The Friendly Arctic's* implied reader is an important element in the narrative construction of Stefansson as an explorer who emanates precisely such confidence and mastery; as someone whose vision may be trusted.

A clue to understanding the role of the implied reader is found in *The Northward Course of Empire*, Stefansson's collection of articles on the appropriation and future development of the North published in the year after *The Friendly Arctic* (Stefansson 1922). Here, Stefansson introduces the character of Samuel McChord Crothers, who is a minister and essayist from Stefansson's Harvard days.¹³⁴ Obviously a source of humor and inspiration to young Stefansson, Doctor Crothers had proposed in an essay that each country should have a "National University of Polite Unlearning" where people could go and unlearn some of the misinformation that had been taught to them in school and college. Since lecturing about the Far North, Stefansson later says, I

¹³⁴ The chapter in *The Northward Course of Empire* where doctor Crothers appears is called "The North That Never Was". Stefansson used the same title in Chapter II of *The Friendly Arctic*.

have come to “think of myself as a professor in Doctor Crother’s University of Unlearning”:

With the initial advantage of knowing what the reader or listener thinks he knows about the North (for I knew those things myself once and believed them until I went North and found they were not true), I proceed [...] to demolish his misknowledge. (Stefansson 1922: 21–22)

Demolishing is hardly the same as polite unlearning, but it is interesting to notice how this quotation neatly sums up Stefansson’s characteristic rhetorical strategy of persuasion in central chapters of *The Friendly Arctic*.

Going back to Chapter II of this narrative again, it should be noticed how Stefansson from the very first paragraphs addresses the reader of his book by forming a “we” consisting of the reader and himself. After going through the false premises of the North, he concludes by stating that: “This, with individual modifications, is the current picture of the Arctic, and this is substantially what *we* have to unlearn before *we* can read in a true light any story of arctic exploration” (Stefansson 1921: 7, emphasis added). The narrator is explicitly inviting his reader to take part in the imminent journey towards discovering the *real* Arctic (through his book), and, more importantly, he is from the very start almost imperceptibly forming a close alliance with the implied reader.

The implied reader, like the implied author, is a construct of the text and must be distinguished from the historical or real reader. By focusing on the interaction between text and reader, “the concept of the implied reader takes us into the border area between narrative theory and theories of aesthetic response”, Lothe observes (Lothe 2000: 19). Quoting Ian Maclean, he furthermore states that “the implied reader who enters into this interaction, is a ‘role’ or a ‘standpoint’ which ‘allows the (real) reader to assemble the meaning

of the text”” (ibid).¹³⁵ The text thus invokes an “ideal” reader, one that represents a particular standpoint or certain attitudes that are presupposed in order for the text to achieve its full effect. What kind of ideal reader is invoked in these passages of Stefansson’s text?

Based on the alliance between narrator and implied reader discussed so far, it seems safe to say that the implied reader here (and throughout most of the book) has certain things in common with Stefansson’s narrator. “Just what moving sea ice is like may interest the general reader”, Stefansson opens a section on ice movement with in Chapter XIV (Stefansson 1921: 145). A later passage on the magnetic pole also invokes this kind of implied reader:

To those who have given little thought to the peculiarities of the magnetic compass, it may seem strange that land lying to the east should by compass be seventeen degrees west of north. This is because the magnetic needle does not point to the North Pole, which is north of us wherever we are unless we are standing on the Pole itself, but approximates towards the magnetic pole, which is at some not yet exactly located spot in the vicinity of the peninsula of Boothia Felix in northeastern Canada. (Ibid: 222–23, emphasis added)

“The layman” finds it curious that the plant known as “pink snow” seems to “flourish best on the north side of snowdrifts, where the sun is least warm at any time,” Stefansson notes in the next paragraph, and continues to account for his own observations of the plant (ibid: 223). From examples such as these we gather that Stefansson’s implied reader is an “average man”¹³⁶ (ibid: 278) (by which I mean that he apparently has no formal expertise within the sciences connected with Arctic exploration), and therefore serves as an ideal addressee in the more didactic passages of Stefansson’s book. He is “a southern reader”

¹³⁵ Maclean 1992: 131.

¹³⁶ The “average man” that Stefansson here refers to may just as likely be a woman, although the male pronoun seems to suggest otherwise (at least to today’s audience). In general, women (except in the role of Inuit seamstresses) seem to be largely absent in Stefansson’s book.

(ibid: 252), and, in contrast to Stefansson, more of an armchair explorer than experienced Arctic traveler:

Again I would like to recall that to *those who have not been in some country resembling the Arctic* it may seem incredible that in daylight so intense that the eyes have to be protected against it, objects not of dark color should frequently be invisible. (Ibid: 315, emphasis added)

Inferred from these and similar examples, the general image of Stefansson's implied reader suggests that he belongs to a predominantly western audience. Much of Stefansson's argumentation furthermore presupposes that the implied reader is generally interested in Arctic matters, and that he is already acquainted with the literary North. We therefore can assume that he is part of an educated segment of the population who knows the Arctic from books and newspapers—however misguided he sadly may be, in Stefansson's view. At the risk of making simplistic statements about a varied group of individuals, I have chosen to call this kind of implied reader the general educated public.

When invoking this implied reader, the extradiegetic narrator simultaneously emphasizes the fact that *we* are not alone in our ignorance. Just like his audience, he too has apparently once believed in the “salient characteristics” of the North. In fact, Stefansson says, “when I first went North [...] I had all the wrong notions about [it], or nearly all, for I had read most of the books that had been written on the subject” (ibid: 22). Coming out of his first Arctic winter, which according to literature ought to be a depressing affair, he recounts:

I was so obsessed with the “winter night” that I actually succeeded in working myself into something of a depression, and when, after an absence of several weeks, the sun came again, I walked half a mile to the top of a hill to get the first possible glimpse of it and wrote in my diary what a cheerful and wonderful sight it was. (Ibid: 23)

“I never did this again”, Stefansson comments dryly in the next paragraph, mocking his former ignorant self, and thus humorously reinforcing his point about having been misled about conditions in the Arctic, just like the reader and like “most of our contemporaries” (ibid: 8).

Readerly identification is one of four rhetorical strategies argued by Christina Adcock to be “designed to dilute the wells of misinformation that nourished” the resistance of Stefansson’s audience to his arguments (Adcock 2010: 97). Adcock’s informative study offers new insight into an often overlooked aspect of Stefansson’s authorship, namely his use of humor to promote the message of a friendly Arctic. Stefansson was in reality an Arctic debunker, Adcock maintains, and views this kind of rhetorical strategy as an attempt “to experiment publicly with an overtly humorous, even satirical exploratory identity” (ibid: 84).¹³⁷ She also points to the potential disadvantage of using such a strategy, however, and even suggests that Stefansson’s ambivalent reception in Canada and America may be partly explained by his essential failure in completely reconciling his satirical work with a more serious exploratory personality (ibid: 120). While humor thus is another of the four strategies specifically examined by Adcock, the prominence of a strategy of readerly identification in *The Friendly Arctic* should be supported by the above discussion an alliance between the text’s narrator and implied readers.¹³⁸ Through such a strategy, in Adcock’s words, Stefansson narratively ensures his audience that “[h]aving once been in the same position, he could allay the reader’s doubts through his own experiences” (ibid: 97). Such confessions, therefore, “alleviated any sense of guilt or embarrassment the reader might

¹³⁷ Debunking is defined by Adcock as “the often humorous deflation of falsehoods, prejudices, and myths that had been inherited and disseminated from antique to contemporary days” (Adcock 2010: 84). Against the cultural background of literary modernism and the Progressive movement, this was adopted as the ethos of a group of American writers and intellectuals, among whom satirist Henry Louis Mencken held a prominent position. Mencken later published some of Stefansson’s openly satirical pieces and encouraged his literary efforts as a debunker of the Arctic (Adcock 2010: 89–91, 104–107).

¹³⁸ The remaining two strategies are transparency and challenge to authority (all four strategies are discussed in Adcock 2010: 97–103).

have felt at realizing that he had put his faith in falsehoods”, and Stefansson thus “deliberately put himself forward as a model of conversion that others could follow” (ibid: 98).

Luckily, with Stefansson as a model of conversion—and as the reader’s personal guide in the process of “removing the imaginary Arctic from our minds”—we (i.e. Stefansson and the reader) can begin to see what the Arctic is *really* like, in contrast to what we previously “have thoughtlessly assumed” (Stefansson 1921: 11–12). The bulk of *The Friendly Arctic*’s Chapter II accordingly lists what Grace has termed “the seven cardinal sins committed by non-northerners against the North” (Grace 2001: 7), or what I previously have described as different manifestations of the opponent actant on Stefansson’s discursive quest to persuade readers of the friendliness of the North. “Why should anyone want to explore the Arctic further?”, Stefansson asks rhetorically, and presents seven well-known “facts” that all weigh against doing so:

The land up there is all covered with eternal ice; there is everlasting winter with intense cold; and the corollary of the everlastingness of the winter is the absence of summer and the lack of vegetation. The country, whether land or sea, is a lifeless waste of eternal silence. The stars look down with a cruel glitter, and the depressing effect of the winter darkness upon the spirit of man is heavy beyond words. [The Eskimos eke] out a miserable existence amidst hardship. (Stefansson 1921: 7)

The familiar contours of the literary North come into view in these characteristics. More importantly for Stefansson’s argumentation in this chapter, however, such characteristics become the basic premises or discursive obstacles which he sets out to overcome, one by one, using what Grace has described as “deconstructionist methods” (Grace 2001: 7), and which Adcock describes as a “deconstructive-reconstructive formula” upon which

Stefansson's Arctic debunking rests, where the "arc of his reasoning climbs from negative into positive realms" (Adcock 2010: 94).

I have already described Stefansson's characteristic rhetorical strategy for overcoming an obstacle on the discourse level of his narrative.¹³⁹ In Chapter II, a similar strategy is used, where (a) a particularly unfriendly aspect of the (literary) North is contrasted with and thus proven false by (b) Stefansson's intimate knowledge of the friendly (true) North, and/or other authorities that back up Stefansson's vision. One example is (a) the belief that all northern lands are covered with eternal ice. "In the process of removing the imaginary Arctic from our minds", Stefansson explains, however, we need to remind ourselves that "eternal ice" in the form of glaciers do exist in almost any part of the world and, moreover, that we have "thoughtlessly assumed that all northern lands" resemble the ice cap of Greenland—which thus incorrectly has been taken to stand for the whole Arctic region. Although glaciers do exist in the Arctic, the Canadian Arctic Archipelago and most of the mainland are in fact "quite free of them" (Stefansson 1921: 11–12). The Arctic, therefore, is (b) in reality *not* a permanently frozen area (in Stefansson's now adjusted definition). Although the alliance between narrator and implied reader is marked by the plural pronoun in these passages, the role of guide or educator given to the narrator still reveals that the relationship between Stefansson and his audience is far from equal, and Stefansson's expertise is thus established.

It may seem difficult to form an alliance between narrator and implied reader at the same time as their essentially asymmetrical relationship needs emphasizing in order for Stefansson to appear as the Arctic educator. However, a solution to this particular dilemma presents itself in the next paragraphs. Once we have demonstrated the "eternal ice" myth to be a false belief about the Arctic, Stefansson says, "we may meet the objection, 'But surely the land is covered with snow all summer'" (ibid: 13). A shift in perspective has

¹³⁹ See e.g. "Other Human Obstacles" in Chapter Four.

imperceptibly taken place, and the reader suddenly finds herself/himself taking part in an imaginary conversation in which “we” have become promoters of Stefansson’s Arctic vision. The alliance between narrator and implied reader is strengthened by having someone serving as a contrast or counterpart to “us”, i.e. “people” (ibid: 12) or “those” (ibid: 16) who do not know better and still rely on the literary North. A couple of pages later, there can be no doubt that the reader by now has gained knowledge of the *real* Arctic, and that s/he is taking an active part in the conversation:

Still following the typical view of the far north we come to the question of vegetation. Even those who would make the off-hand statement that the land is covered with eternal ice and snow would, *if you pressed them*, admit that they had heard of vegetation in the North. You would, however, find that in their minds the idea of vegetation was coupled with such adjectives as “humble,” “stunted,” “clinging,” and more specifically they would be of opinion that what vegetation there is must be mosses and lichens. *Should you succeed in reminding them that they have read or heard of arctic flowers*, they would think of these as an exception. (Ibid: 16, emphasis added)

The impression that the implied reader has become an advocate of the friendly Arctic is reinforced once again. Although not entitled to the exact same position as Stefansson, s/he has become an aspiring professor of the National University of Polite Unlearning.

An alternative way of viewing the key role of the implied reader in *The Friendly Arctic* is to consider her/him yet another obstacle on Stefansson’s quest mission. In Chapter Four, I identified four different human obstacles with which Stefansson wrestles in his narrative.¹⁴⁰ The implied reader, in the initial role given to her/him as an “Arctic skeptic”¹⁴¹, may be perceived as a fifth

¹⁴⁰ These were (1) members of Stefansson’s own expedition, (2) western Arctic experts, (3) Arctic natives, and (4) the media.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Grace 2001: 6.

obstacle. S/he is, however, somewhat of an exceptional obstacle because of her/his privileged position to tip the balance in favor of Stefansson's friendly Arctic, against competing visions of the polar regions. The high temperature in Stefansson's discourse, and the fact that his text is fashioned as a quest, imply that the reader has to be overcome in this sense. Starting out as a potential opponent, the passages above demonstrate, however, that the (actual) reader is also the receiver in this kind of model, where the object is the persuasive discourse of the text itself as a whole. Whether or not Stefansson may be argued to succeed in this mission remains outside the scope of my study. However, the critical climate at home may suggest that such a strategy in some respects failed. Still, a quote by Grace testifies to the force of the persuasiveness of his discourse: "By the time the reader has reached the final chapters of this 800-page tome," she explains, "she must be persuaded by Stefansson's rhetoric and sheer narrative skills, if not by his facts, tables, photographs, and the header 'The Friendly Arctic' at the top of every page, that 'the polar regions are ... friendly and fruitful' (Grace 2001: 7).

Science in Arctic Campaigns

The facts, tables and photographs mentioned by Grace above all belong to the domain of science in the explorer's literary campaign. In Stefansson's case, like so many of his contemporaries, the sciences connected to Arctic exploration feature as integral parts of the persuasive discourse of his text. The role attributed to science here, however, differs from that of many comparable narratives, and must be viewed as closely connected to Stefansson's proposed scheme of friendly Arctic exploration.

Historian Michael F. Robinson has chronicled the shifting images of the Arctic explorer as an American icon in the second half of the nineteenth century (Robinson 2006). Similarly to Cavell (2008) and Riffenburgh (1994), Robinson describes Stefansson's predecessors in the Arctic; explorers who

sailed north to solve the mystery of the Franklin expedition, to discover the Northwest Passage, or claim the North Pole itself.¹⁴² By removing these explorers from the icy backdrop of the Arctic and placing them instead within contemporary American cultural life (Robinson 2006: 2), Robinson more specifically highlights the relationship between science and exploration, and examines the role of science in the explorers' public campaigns. In these campaigns, he argues, "science's most important function was as a rhetorical tool, as a means of establishing social authority at home" (ibid: 5). During the 1850s, explorers appealed to science in order to cast themselves as men of character in the eyes of their audience. Robinson observes that:

these different forms of rhetoric—scientific, manly and moral—functioned as explorers' most powerful tools because *stories*, more than specimens or scientific observations, constituted the real currency of Arctic exploration. The writings and lectures of the explorers opened the wallets of patrons, whetted the appetites of publishers, and excited the interest of audiences at home. (Ibid: 6)

During the late nineteenth century, however, explorers had to change these stories in order to adjust to the shifting economics of exploration. Appealing to science became less important as newspapers such as the *New York Herald* replaced the role of former patrons from the scientific community. This shift was also accompanied by a change in Americans' ideal of manliness, Robinson points out. In the wake of rapid urbanization followed diseases and new social problems, believed by some to be caused by "the moral ills of city life" (ibid: 122). "As fears of overcivilization prompted explorers to portray themselves as muscular, primitive men, they found it more difficult to simultaneously

¹⁴² Robinson's study focuses on the years between 1850 and 1910, the period in which American explorers Elisha Kent Kane, Isaac Hayes, Charles Hall, Adolphus Greely, Walter Wellman, Robert Peary and Frederick Cook roamed the Arctic (Robinson 2006).

represent themselves as reasoned and dispassionate” (ibid: 6).¹⁴³ Science thus had to stand aside while other motives came to the fore in Arctic campaigns.¹⁴⁴

The key figures of Robinson’s study are prominent Americans who had preceded Stefansson to the North. In 1912, when Stefansson returned from his second Arctic expedition, the climate at home had changed. Now explorers were met with ridicule rather than admiration, Robinson observes (ibid: 7). Similarly, Heidi Hansson points to an alternative to the traditionally male, physical, heroic Arctic discourse in the satire magazine *Punch* and in music hall shows in turn of the century Britain. Against the background of the Peary-Cook dispute over the North Pole, she explains, “certain popular genres entered into a dialogue with the dominant Arctic discourse by pointing to the futility of the project, describing the final arrival as accidental and making fun of the myth of the Arctic hero”.¹⁴⁵ There is no doubt that Stefansson’s reputation as Arctic hero was the subject of much debate, both upon his return in 1918, but also throughout most of his active career and posthumous reputation. The “blond Eskimos” of Victoria Land provided a particularly exploitable topic for journalists, who questioned Stefansson’s professional competence. It was about this time that two camps among Stefansson’s audience appeared: “one supporting [him] as an honest and dedicated scientist and the other condemning him as a mere populizer and part-time charlatan” (Diubaldo 1998 [1978]: 50). Perhaps Stefansson’s “skills as a publicist undermined his reputation as a

¹⁴³ Lewander points to a similar “fin-de-siècle crisis in maleness, manliness and masculinity”, which provides the background for her reading of texts from the Swedish Nordenskjöld expedition to Antarctica in 1901-03 (Lewander 2004: 9).

¹⁴⁴ Heidi Hansson describes a similar trend across the Atlantic at the turn of the century. However, she reads the fear of the decline of the male character also in light of factors such as an increased level of prosperity and changes in the colonial administration, as well as the entrance of “the New Woman” into previously male-dominated domains in British society. Against this background, Hansson points out, “the polar hero served as an evidence that the fear of degeneration was exaggerated” (Hansson 2011: 241, my translation).

¹⁴⁵ “Långt innan nordpolsupptäckten kablades ut i september 1909 gick vissa populära genrer i dialog med den dominerande arktiska diskursen genom att framhålla projektets meningslöshet, beskriva den slutliga framkomsten som slumpartad och driva med myten om den arktiske hjälten. Humortidskrifter och *music hall*-föreställningar är två verksamheter där sådana alternativa arktiska diskurser förmedlades” (Hansson 2011: 241–242, my translation).

scholar,” suggests Philip Goldring (1987: 60). Nonetheless, controversy sold books, which in turn secured funding for new enterprises (ibid).

Although Robinson has described the receding role of science in the public campaigns of Stefansson’s immediate predecessors, science still plays a significant role in the account of Stefansson’s third Arctic expedition. Science in Stefansson’s discourse, however, differs from that of previous Arctic narratives in important respects. In the following I consequently examine how science is used as a rhetorical tool in *The Friendly Arctic*, and—more importantly—how this discursive strategy must be seen in relation to the image he presents of himself here.

Equipped with Academic Degrees

The Arctic exploration narrative typically opens with a detailed description of the make-up of the expedition. A case in point is the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen’s account of his Fram Expedition towards the North Pole in 1893 (Nansen 1897). In the introductory chapters of *Farthest North*, Nansen gives an outline of the careful preparations he has made before sailing into the ice. The construction of the vessel *Fram* is described in detail, followed by a comprehensive list of inventory and equipment. Attention is paid to technical equipment in particular. Nansen’s inventory includes thermometers, barometers, hygrometers and anemometers for meteorological observations; theodolites and sextants for astronomical measurements; chronometers for navigation; in addition to spectrosopes, electroscopes, pendulum apparatuses, photographic equipment and other instruments. There are several reasons for including such a detailed inventory of equipment, despite the apparent inconsistency in the fact that the instruments described here are of little importance to the subsequent account of his journey. As already mentioned,

such a delayed narration of the main events of the story may create narrative suspense.¹⁴⁶ It may also serve informative and pedagogical purposes, not to forget the appeal to other explorers that the text implicitly constitutes. A no less important function of the introduction, however, is to signal Nansen's scientific intentions with his expedition. By highlighting the technical details of his outfitting, Nansen demonstrates that he possesses essential knowledge of the sciences connected with Arctic exploration. The implication is that the results of the venture will contribute to increased knowledge about the Arctic regions, and as its leader Nansen is cast as a man of science.

Both Robinson and Tallmadge emphasize this same function of the rhetoric of science in exploration narratives. "The recitation of technical details," which Tallmadge specifies as:

Dates, geographic coordinates, lists of provisions and equipment, descriptions of experimental procedures, and technical terms such as scientific names and nautical jargon all convey precise information, but their value in the account may be just as much rhetorical as it is substantive. I suspect that most explorers who write for a general audience are aware of the rhetorical power of technical details and employ them deliberately to win their readers' trust. (Tallmadge 1979: 10)

Although this in many ways is the case also in *The Friendly Arctic*, Stefansson's introduction to his narrative still differs from Nansen's in other ways.

Like Nansen, Stefansson opens his account with an introduction to the journey he is about to undertake. In contrast to Nansen, however, he soon announces (in the preface) that he does not intend to waste too many words on detailed descriptions of equipment. He apparently finds long accounts of how Arctic expeditions are organized rather tedious, and his own inclination is

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Wærp 2007: 105.

therefore to say nothing about the matter. After requests from friends, however, Stefansson has chosen to include a short and general account of the organization of his expedition (Stefansson 1921: v), which takes up the whole of his nine-page long preface. Stefansson's main focus here, however, is on the financing of the expedition and on the selection of scientific staff. As for the outfitting, Stefansson says, "this expedition did not [...] differ materially from that of the recent polar expeditions. The outfitting, therefore, is not worth describing" (ibid: xi). In fact, the impression one gets from reading the preface is rather that the outfitting seems somewhat unplanned—at times even chaotic. "The equipment of the expedition kept growing and growing under our hands," Stefansson explains here, and adds:

It was one of the few drawbacks of our fortunate situation of ample financial resources that we had continually to yield to the argument [of the scientific staff] that after all we could carry this or that if we only wanted to, and that all we would lose in case the thing were not needed would be its money value and the cost of carriage. (Ibid: xii)

The narrative effect of this choice to dedicate so little of the preface to the details of the expedition's organization is at best paradoxical. The quote above seems rather to give readers a glimpse into an Arctic venture marked by disorder from day one. In fact, as can be recalled, even before the vessels had set sail in 1913 Stefansson was criticized for his abilities to command the expedition.¹⁴⁷ In the months prior to departure it was Rudolph M. Anderson, Stefansson's second-in-command, who had been left in charge of most of the practical arrangements while Stefansson traveled abroad to sell story rights and make advance arrangements for lecture tours in America (Diubaldo 1998

¹⁴⁷ In his diary, topographer Kenneth Gordon Chipman described the sight that met the crew at departure in Victoria in June 1913. The *Karluk* seemed to be overloaded and in a generally bad condition: "There she was piled high with fresh meat, vegetables, snowshoes, skins, alcohol, drums, canoes, and many varied boxes and cases' and the entrances to the cabins were blocked with bales of nets, boxes and wire ropes" (Chipman, quoted in Diubaldo 1998 [1978]: 78).

[1978]: 72). This could certainly be a direct reason for Stefansson's choice not to include any detailed inventory descriptions in the introductory chapters of his *Friendly Arctic*.

Similar to Nansen, however, Stefansson still includes some very important details in his preface. Although he does not follow Nansen's example of meticulously listing technical equipment, Stefansson has other ways of drawing attention to the scientific expertise with which his expedition is equipped. In the selection of personnel, therefore, careful attention is given to finding men of education. At least half of the crew has an academic degree equivalent to that of Doctor of Philosophy, and in a manner resembling Nansen's equipment inventory, Stefansson lists the prestigious universities represented by the various members of his expedition: Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, McGill, Oxford, Sorbonne, etc. (Stefansson 1921: x–xi). Stefansson thus stresses the high level of education of his staff, and the broad scope of scientific competence they represent. Flexible people seem more important than rigid equipment in Stefansson's account. With doctoral degrees, these candidates possess not only highly specific research skills; they have proven capable of handling almost anything, without any first-hand knowledge of the subject. Academic training is lifelong learning, which may be of good use in the Arctic. Stefansson's inventory of academic institutions underlines the scientific purpose of the expedition, and he himself—as the commander of the whole enterprise—appears as a man who serves “the advance of science” (ibid: 73). Based on my previous discussion, there may seem to be a paradox between Stefansson promoting his scientists in terms of their university background and promoting himself as a “professor” of the National University of Polite Unlearning, however, college men represent particularly suitable material for Arctic work, as we shall see presently.

The Advancement of Knowledge

Stefansson's account also includes other narrative strategies that accentuate the scientific aims of his northern journey. While the Canadian Arctic Expedition naturally served other objectives besides purely scientific ones, scientific progress is, as previously demonstrated, presented as a main rationale for exploration in Stefansson's account. In Stefansson's view, such an objective is so important that even the end justifies the means. To those voices of the media who have argued that "all the knowledge ever gained in the Arctic was not worth the sacrifice of one young Canadian" (ibid: 72), Stefansson has this to say:

The battle for the advancement of knowledge is being nobly fought where doctors submit to malignant inoculations to test the efficacy of a serum, where experimenters breathe poisonous fumes through thousands of tests to perfect a process in economic chemistry, where astronomers spend sleepless nights photographing the spectra of the remote stars. And the astronomer is not necessarily the least of these because it is least obvious just how his discoveries are to be applied to the problems of food and raiment.

Nor are the principles established by the arctic explorer necessarily worthless because no one may see their commercial application, nor the lands he discovers valueless because corn will not thrive there and water frontages cannot be subdivided into city lots with prospect of immediate sale. Their time will come. "The Far North" is a shifting term. (Ibid: 73-74)

The Arctic explorer in this quote is nothing short of a true pioneer. He is willing to take great risks for scientific progress. He finds his equals among researchers of medicine, chemistry or astronomy, and the cause he serves is so valuable that it is worth "the sacrifice of a dozen lives" (ibid: 73). While Stefansson thus raises the Arctic explorer and his work to a level of utmost importance, placing him firmly within the progress-oriented quest chronotope, the quote can on a more concrete level also be read as Stefansson's indirect

defense of geographic exploration in times of war, or as a response to the loss of lives after the shipwreck of the *Karluk*. Moreover, in Stefansson's view, "the advancement of knowledge" seems to be inextricably bound up with commercial prospects. To Stefansson, "the North is a greater frontier than the West ever was" (ibid: 74). The scientific results of his expedition will contribute to shedding false beliefs about the unfriendly North, and by demonstrating that the Arctic is indeed friendly, the eyes of the readers will be opened to the future commercial value of these unexploited regions.¹⁴⁸

The Canadian Arctic Expedition had been instructed by the Government to explore the Canadian coast and the ocean north of Alaska, "to do soundings and carry on other geographic and oceanographic work" (ibid: 71). Detailed instructions on the scientific work were issued upon departure (Diubaldo 1998 [1978]: 66). While Stefansson specifically lists each of the sciences to be investigated by members of the crew in the preface to his book,¹⁴⁹ it is striking that he chooses not to go into details about the scientific results elsewhere in the text. Riffenburgh describes a similar trend in other Arctic ventures that became more marked in the second half of the nineteenth century:

The role of science was highly variable. Although a number of explorers and sponsors were first and foremost devoted to the various branches of science, most individuals concerned with exploration, and certainly the majority of the press and the public, found it of secondary interest to adventure. Although it validated the expeditions and was therefore deemed necessary, most people did not really want to know about scientific data and results. (Riffenburgh 1994: 198)

¹⁴⁸ These ideas are developed and presented in fuller form in *The Northward Course of Empire* (Stefansson 1922).

¹⁴⁹ These were "anthropology (archæology, ethnology, somatology), biology (botany and zoölogy, both terrestrial and marine), geography, geology, mineralogy, oceanography, terrestrial magnetism" (Stefansson 1921: x).

The narrative format of an account such as *The Friendly Arctic* does not permit intricate elucidations of technical results. Being Stefansson's unofficial version of the expedition, aimed primarily at the general public, excessive technicalities would surely not meet the demands of the exploration narrative to entertain its audience. In the last chapter of his book Stefansson does note that "the very diversity and volume of the scientific results of the expedition makes the task of summarizing them really hopeless." Instead, he refers to perhaps as many as thirty volumes for the proper elucidation of the scientific work, which will be published elsewhere (Stefansson 1921: 687).¹⁵⁰ This piece of information, while perhaps seeming redundant in Stefansson's story as a whole, is still important for the establishment of the narrative's climate of authenticity. While the concrete results of the botanical, zoological, or geological investigations thus are of less importance in *The Friendly Arctic*, Stefansson still signals that he has not neglected the instructions given by his government sponsor.

An Ordinarily Adaptable Man

Although more in name than in detail, science plays a central role in Stefansson's text. Promoting an expedition launched to secure new knowledge about previously uncharted regions, it is important that the explorer appears as a man who is well qualified for the job. Still, academic training is not the only stuff that Arctic heroes are made of. Stefansson's ideal explorer possesses two equally important qualities: he is a man both of special qualifications and adventurous disposition (Stefansson 1921: 67). In a young man fresh out of college Stefansson therefore sees the makings of that ideal explorer.

¹⁵⁰ For a discussion of the dispute between Stefansson and the Naval Service over the completion of the reports containing the technical results of the expedition, see Diubaldo 1998 (1978): 187–207.

During Stefansson's visit to the winter quarters of the *Polar Bear* in 1914, rendered in Chapter XI, Stefansson encounters a group of men whom have been forced to live on rations due to a small and limited variety of food supplies. They are short of bacon but have enough sugar and flour, and have apparently therefore discovered a new delicacy in the "sugar sandwich"; two slices of bread with granulated sugar between. This group of men, Stefansson states:

four men from Harvard and one from Leland Stanford, impressed on me more forcibly than any other single instance, although I have seen many cases of a similar kind, the superior adaptability of young men of the college type as compared with those of the type of sailor or ordinary laboring man. [...] Accordingly, I heard no grumbling, but some of my companions who associated more with the sailors told me there was a great deal of dissatisfaction with the food. Much of the conversation of these men was about what fine things they were used to eating. In other words, what struck the college men as an adventure involving the interesting discovery that a sugar sandwich could be as delicious as anything they had ever eaten in Beacon Street, struck the sailors as a physical hardship and social indignity. (Ibid: 100)

While the contrast between the sailors and the college men of his crew is made quite explicit here, similar characteristics attributed to sailors are repeated elsewhere in the book. When setting up winter camp on Victoria Island in 1915, Stefansson complains about the disadvantage of having a large crew composed of sailors who will not settle for snowhouse accommodation but can only be satisfied with large frame houses resembling what they are used to back home (ibid: 398). In addition to their unwillingness to experiment with Arctic diet, they squander fuel and make the living quarters damp and disagreeable due to their "excessive desire to be clean" through frequent bathing (ibid: 405). Sailors are simply the most conservative among the men of the crew (ibid: 403). They lack *adaptability*, and certainly the kind of

adventurous disposition that is a key component in the making of the Arctic explorer.

It needs to be mentioned here that compared to white men, Inuit in general are not rendered as particularly adaptable in Stefansson's narrative.¹⁵¹ However, among the western members of crew college students are frequently demonstrated to be bolder than sailors. In another passage from the narrative, Stefansson's rationale behind such a generalization is disclosed. Again it is the subject of Arctic diet that prompts Stefansson's didactic discourse. He explains how crew companions "of intellectual type" readily take to "Eskimo cooking", and concludes:

This is one of the reasons why "well brought-up" young men are the best material for polar explorers, or indeed for any type of "roughing it," except the sort to which the "poorly brought-up" man is native. Generalizing still more: an educated man of diversified experience has the mental equipment to meet "hardship;" the ignorant are fitted to meet easily only those "hardships" that are native to them. (Ibid: 65)

Although the moderation is offered that "[i]t goes without saying that, like all rules, this has its exceptions", the implication is that adaptability is a trait of "well brought-up" young men. What these men may lack in native knowledge on a subject, their superior "mental equipment" apparently can make up for. As these and other examples imply, both race and class distinctions are visible in Stefansson's discourse, and his observations often involve categorizations of both people and natural phenomena. The hierarchical relationship between young college men and "those of the type of sailor or ordinary laboring man" (ibid: 100)—between the educated and the ignorant (ibid: 65)—is evident here, but the position on top of such a hierarchy is still reserved for someone else:

¹⁵¹ This is one of the topics that will be explored in Chapter Six.

The expert Arctic explorer needs to be both learned and adaptable, but he must also assume the role of Arctic visionary.

Science and Polar-Craft

From the examples above, we see the outline of Stefansson's ideal explorer and the qualities that enable him to flow with the Arctic. In many ways, Stefansson's implied author embodies a combination of these very qualities, and in the following I will therefore examine how he is narratively constructed as the adaptable explorer par excellence, and as a true pioneer of the North.

Stefansson's self-representation in *The Friendly Arctic* begins with two forewords to his story. Here, Gilbert Grosvenor, long-time editor of the *National Geographic Magazine* and president of the National Geographic Society warmly endorses Stefansson's work. Also a staunch supporter of legendary explorer Peary, Grosvenor had lauded him some ten years earlier by writing the introduction to *The North Pole* (Peary 1910). After Grosvenor's opening words in *The Friendly Arctic* follows another introduction, written by Canada's eighth prime minister, "The Right Honorable Sir Robert Laird Borden, P.C., G.C.M.G." (Stefansson 1921: xxi).¹⁵² The framing of an exploration narrative through testimonials by prominent statesmen, influential public figures or celebrated Arctic authorities may serve several objectives. In Stefansson's case, the foreword and introduction stress the great importance of his achievements. Upon his return from the Arctic, Stefansson had secured material of scientific value; with a record-breaking trek over the sea ice, he had explored uncharted regions and added many thousand miles to Canadian territory; and, most importantly (in the words of Borden and Grosvenor), he had held on to "his belief [against which] all the forces of observation and

¹⁵² Borden was a member of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada (P.C.) and had been awarded the Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George (G.C.M.G.).

experience were arrayed” (Borden, in Stefansson 1921: xxiii) in order to prove the Arctic to be “fruitful and friendly—comfortable and almost jolly” (Grosvenor, *ibid*: xx). With the narrative support of an iconic figure such as Grosvenor, Stefansson’s work is placed within an established tradition of science and exploration. Borden’s testimony, on the other hand, further serves the purpose of branding his expedition a national enterprise (*ibid*: xxi), and consequently cast Stefansson as a Canadian national hero.

Tributes by Greely and Peary

Stefansson biographer William R. Hunt suggests that it was in order to “ward off as much criticism as possible [that Stefansson] prefaced his book with testimonials written by the biggest names he could summon.” At the time of publication of *The Friendly Arctic*, there was an ongoing dispute between Stefansson and the expedition scientists, and Stefansson possibly feared an adverse reaction from bureaucrats in Ottawa (Hunt 1986: 172). It may certainly be argued that the foreword and introduction to his book were included to avert such negative focus. Another aspect of these testimonials is relevant to the narrative construction of Stefansson: the impact on Stefansson’s literary campaign of bringing two different explorers and, more importantly, the specific modes of exploration they embody together in *The Friendly Arctic*.

Gilbert Grosvenor’s rather brief foreword has the more important function of framing two embedded tributes to Stefansson paid by American Arctic explorers Robert E. Peary and Adolphus Greely, who presented Stefansson to the members of the National Geographic Society upon his acceptance of the Society’s annual Hubbard Gold Medal in 1919. This was to be Peary’s last public address, Grosvenor initially explains, and emphasizes that Admiral Peary and Major General Greely’s words of praise “will be forgotten unless tied up in a book” (Grosvenor, in Stefansson 1921: xv).

Interestingly, Robinson accredits to Greely and Peary two contrasting strategies of self-representation adopted by Arctic explorers. Such different strategies, in turn, must be seen in relation to the previously mentioned shifting ideals of manliness in contemporary America. According to Robinson, Greely's Lady Franklin Bay Expedition into the Canadian Arctic (1881–84) was promoted as a high-profile scientific expedition, and as its commander First Lieutenant Greely “appeared to embody the combination of scientific and soldierly qualities that formed [its] twin pillars” (Robinson 2006: 92). Although Greely did manage to reach a then farthest North, the outcome of the expedition was in many ways disastrous, and only seven out of the original crew of twenty-five men were found alive by a rescue party at Cape Sabine in 1884. Partly therefore, Greely “came to embody the ideal of manliness as an attribute of inner will rather than physical exertion”, Robinson argues. In the 1880s, however, physical prowess became increasingly important as a measure of manliness in America, and some interpreted what they saw as Greely's frailty or effete traits as signs of manly decline. Greely ran the risk of appearing over-civilized at a time when ideals of manliness were changing (ibid: 98–99).

Although the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition was promoted as a scientific endeavor, it therefore still seems that Greely somewhat reluctantly presented himself as a man of science. His caution, in the words of Robinson, reflected a new “ambivalence about the status of science as a manly activity in Gilded Age America” (ibid: 101). Instead, the element of Greely's *sacrifice* for science was emphasized by his supporters, something that can be seen in relation to a rise in the ethics of scientific self-sacrifice in modern America.¹⁵³ Even as Greely's men faced starvation at Cape Sabine, they did not forsake to take barometric readings. This sacrifice for science motif, as represented by Greely, is echoed in Stefansson's narrative. Although the scientific technicalities of the Canadian Arctic Expedition remain in the background of

¹⁵³ Cf. Herzig 2006.

his text, we have seen that the scientific cause itself is proclaimed to be so noble that it is worth suffering and sacrifice (Stefansson 1921: 73–74).

While the role that Stefansson assigns to the ideal explorer in his narrative thus in some ways resembles Greely's role as a man of science in the 1880s, there are also interesting parallels between Stefansson's self-representation and that of Peary at the turn of the century. In one sense, both Stefansson and Peary belong to what the latter calls the "old school, the old régime of Arctic and Antarctic explorers, the worker with the dog and the sledge"; both can be characterized as men of "polar craft" (Peary, in Stefansson 1921: xviii). However, polar craft in Stefansson's text must still be seen as interconnected with his proclaimed *new*, almost avant-garde form of friendly exploration.

Robinson sees the kind of explorer that Peary came to embody in relation to the ambivalent status of science at the end of the nineteenth century. By then, science had become a powerful symbol of civilization and the modern world. At the same time, however, a new "savage vogue" took form as a response to the threat of over-civilization facing young Americans (Robinson 2006: 123). Against this backdrop of changing cultural values, Peary chose to cast himself a man of the frontier. In the Arctic, he could escape the emasculating influences of the modern world (ibid: 107–110). He fashioned his expeditions on the example of Arctic "savages", and his popular campaigns accentuated his use of local tools and techniques. If not the first, Peary certainly became a famous advocate of the "polar-craft" of the Eskimo. He promoted the fundamentally self-sustaining method of Arctic exploration, modeled on the Inuit example; "the ability to live off the land itself, the ability to use every one of the few possibilities of those frozen regions", as he defines this concept in the preface to *The Friendly Arctic* (Peary, in Stefansson 1921: xviii).

The objective of Stefansson's friendly Arctic quest is to take the history of polar exploration into its last stage; this goal is inextricably bound up with

the pivotal idea of crafting a methodology of exploration largely based on the practical knowledge of Inuit.¹⁵⁴ In the first chapter of his book, Stefansson acknowledges Peary's contribution to the history of polar exploration as a greater step than any of the preceding. This is due to the fact that Peary had realized that the cold should be courted and not feared, he contends. Unlike his predecessors, Peary had found the winter months ideal for Arctic travelling (Stefansson 1921: 3). Thus making use of indigenous travelling techniques, the parallels between Peary's and Stefansson's explorative approaches become apparent. Although it has been established in Chapter Four that Stefansson's work entails *exceeding* that of earlier explorers, the thematic implication of such a direct comparison is that Peary and Stefansson are both established as expert practitioners of polar-craft.

The echoing in *The Friendly Arctic* of another aspect of Peary's self-representation (against the contemporary cultural climate) must also be mentioned here. Stefansson's narrative contains several passages in which life in the Arctic wilderness is rendered as superior to life in the southern metropolis. Stefansson, like most of his travelling companions, longs for the North when he is not there. He professes to be "quite of the Eskimo opinion that there is no food anywhere better than caribou meat", and, he says:

in the winter when we are hunting on some such land as Banks Island and when we sit in these warm [snow]houses, feasting with keen appetites on unlimited quantities of boiled caribou ribs, we have all the creature comforts. What we lack, if we feel any lack at all, will be the presence of friends far away, or the chance to hear good music. At any rate, it is true that to-day in the movie-infested city I long for more snowhouse evenings after caribou hunts as I never in the North longed for clubs or concerts or orange-groves. (Ibid: 179)

¹⁵⁴ See Chapter Six for a discussion of the impact of Inuit on Stefansson's characteristic exploration method.

The “pleasures and ease of the city or the summer resort” cannot be compared to the northern caribou hunt, Stefansson says elsewhere. While the former are passive, receptive and enervating, “the open life of him who lives by the hunt keeps indefinitely the thrill of endeavor and achievement” (ibid: 254). The Arctic in these quotes is rendered as an ideal setting for an active man of the outdoors, while the “movie-infested city” has a weakening, even emasculating, effect on those who dwell there.¹⁵⁵ Stefansson’s implied author, as we have seen, no doubt belongs to the former. At the same time, however, he does not embody the classic ideal of the explorer who proves his strength by combatting an unfriendly (and archetypically feminine) landscape. As demonstrated in Chapters Three and Four, it is generally not the *physical* landscape that boosts Stefansson’s heroic status in *The Friendly Arctic*, but rather his struggles in the literary North.

While Peary commends Stefansson’s Odyssean traits in particular, Greely’s tribute pays closer attention to the scientific contribution of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, as perhaps might be expected. Then again, it is not necessarily the specific contents of these two framing narratives that are important to the narrative construction of Stefansson as Arctic pioneer. Rather, it is the *combination* of the two explorer roles assigned by Robinson to Peary and Greely that points to one of the distinguishing features of Stefansson’s self-representation. While Greely fashions himself as a man of science (although this image, apparently, is not entirely unproblematic), Peary stands out as a man of polar-craft. Stefansson’s ideal explorer embodies a combination of the

¹⁵⁵ This quote echoes the critique of civilization and urbanism at the turn of the century for which American President Theodore Roosevelt came to be an emblem. Roosevelt (and others) warned of the destructive effects of too much civilization on the American (male) adolescent. Roosevelt wrote: “Over-sentimentality, over-softness, in fact, washiness [sic] and mushiness are the great dangers of this age and of this people. Unless we keep the barbarian virtues, gaining the civilized ones will be of little avail” (Roosevelt, in a letter to G. Stanley Hall in 1899, quoted in Lesko 2001: 60). In fact, not only in words but also by personal example, Roosevelt embodied the active man of the outdoors. After being diagnosed with neurasthenia (a nervous condition believed to be caused by modern civilization), Roosevelt allegedly cured himself by moving to the American West where he was remade “as a hybrid woodsman, cowboy, and, above all, virile man” (Lesko 2001: 60). Stefansson’s sledge journey of recovery from illness over snow-clad Arctic mountains (described in Chapter Three) takes this kind of cure a step further into the wilderness.

qualities represented by both explorers; in his narrative self-representation, he seeks to fuse precisely these two contrasting roles. While we thus can say that there is a tension between the qualities represented by Greely and Peary, the same kind of tension sometimes characterizes Stefansson's autodiegetic narrator, as shall be examined through a more narratology-oriented perspective in the following.

The Science of Living off the Country

In *Gender on Ice*, scholar and author Lisa Bloom's revisionist account of the heroic narratives of American polar explorers, Stefansson is placed in an explorative tradition that glorified a progressive scientific ideology. Stefansson anchored the authority of his discourse, Bloom argues, under the banner of science and progress (Bloom 1993: 128). Progress has already been established as a key element in Stefansson's quest at the discourse level of his text, and thus as an important part of his narrative self-representation as pioneering explorer. Science, however, still remains a somewhat elusive term and requires further nuancing in the sense of a means through which Stefansson rhetorically legitimizes his friendly Arctic project.

Stefansson frequently halts the narration of his journey through Arctic Canada by delving into a range of topics which must be categorized as belonging to the scientific domain. Stefansson's anthropological observations will be discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis. Other topics from the same domain can be labeled "medical science" and frequently concern the effects of Arctic life on the body; either it be a discussion of "dietetics in the North" (Stefansson 1921: 87), of scurvy (ibid: 593–94), of snow blindness (ibid: 199–200), or even of the so-called "Temperature Factor in Determining the Age of Maturity Among the Eskimos" (ibid: 75–79), which I will come back to later. There is also another interesting group of passages in Stefansson's narrative that belongs under the general heading of science, which must be seen as

promoting his characteristic version of the science of Arctic subsistence. In one of these, the narrator gives the word to member of scientific staff, Burt McConnell, in his praise of Stefansson's exceptional path-finding abilities in an (intertextually embedded) interview with *The New York Times*.¹⁵⁶ While his commander's sense of direction here is reported as seeming quite extraordinary to McConnell, Stefansson's level-headed response to his tribute is that the path-finding principles "were really very simple". Stefansson elaborates:

To begin with, I knew the country. It is a region where only three kinds of wind blow. The strongest is from the southwest, the next strongest is from the northeast, and the third is from east-northeast. [...] On the same principles as are employed by stratigraphic geologists, you can tell by size and other characteristics which drifts were made by the strongest winds, and furthermore you can tell the direction of the wind by the fact that the drift is lowest and narrowest to windward and gets higher and wider to leeward before finally dropping down abruptly to the general level. [...] Then, having determined either the N.E. or the S.W. drifts, the whole remaining problem is to cross every such drift at an angle of about forty-five degrees, ignoring all the other drifts. By doing this you are really travelling the compass course S.E., which takes you from our starting point on the west side of Harrison Bay towards a gap about four miles wide between the mainland and the Jones Islands on the east edge of the Bay. (Ibid: 80–81)

Then, in Chapter XXX, titled "Men and Bears as Seal Hunters", Stefansson expounds on his preferred seal hunting methods. There are three situations in which seals can be encountered on the ice. Accordingly, he explains, there are three branches to the method of the hunter: First, the method through which one secures a seal in open water; then, the *mauttok* or waiting method; and finally the *auktok* or crawling method (ibid: 301–311). The objective of the

¹⁵⁶ *New York Times*, September 18, 1915 (Stefansson 1921: 80).

latter method is to impersonate a seal in order to get close enough to get the animal within shooting distance:

You crawl ahead while the seal sleeps and you lie motionless while he is awake. Had you been upright or on all fours he might have noticed you at 300 yards but now he does not till you are perhaps 200 yards away. When he first sees you his actions are plainly interpreted—he becomes tense, raises his head a little higher, crawls a foot or two closer to the water ready to dive, and then watches you, intent and suspicious. If you remain motionless, his suspicions increase at the end of the first minute, and before the third or fourth minute are over he plunges into the water, for he knows that no seal is likely to lie motionless that long. Therefore, before the first minute of his watching is over you should do something seal-like. You are lying flat on the ice like a boy sleeping on a lawn. The easiest seal-like thing to do is to lift your head ten or fifteen inches, spend ten or fifteen seconds looking around, then drop your head on the ice again. By doing this half a dozen times at thirty or fifty-second intervals you will very likely convince your seal that you are another seal. [...] It is [...] advisable for the hunter to roll about a little and to flex his legs from the knees frequently as if scratching with hind flippers. These actions make an impression upon the seal which in the long run is convincing and in eight cases out of ten a good hunter is accepted as a fellow seal that has just come out of his hole to bask and sleep. (Ibid: 307–308)

Both of these passages read like instructions from an Arctic manual. In the first quote, the implied reader learns how to find her/his way in a snow-clad landscape, while the second gives the basic principles of seal-impersonation. Stefansson not only demonstrates how (in the Odyssean spirit) he makes use of the Arctic landscape when exploring, he even shows that his techniques are modeled *on* the landscape itself (or on the animals who dwell there). Both passages thus serve as convincing testimonies of Stefansson's solid skills at polar-craft. At the same time, however, they demonstrate how polar-craft is fused with science in Stefansson's discourse.

The first case provides an example of how Stefansson prescribes the use of logical reasoning to the problem of finding one's way in thick weather; it is thus a demonstration of the "science" of path-finding, so to speak. By looking at the facts at hand, the snow drifts; their "size and other characteristics", Stefansson is able to determine the direction of the winds. Then, crossing these drifts at "an angle of about forty-five degrees", he travels in the S.E. compass course which takes him in the wanted direction (ibid: 80–81). The description of this procedure is systematic and logical, an impression which is reinforced by the use of geometrical and geographical terms. The physical characteristics of the landscape are thus molded into objects of knowledge which can be arranged graphically and spatially, and which may be used to serve the objective of the explorer. Features of the landscape are turned into instruments for Arctic exploration in Stefansson's discourse. Here, however, science is predominantly *practical* instead of a science of technical equipment—it is the science of survival in the Arctic, of living off the country.

While the first quotation thus clearly illustrates how polar-craft is rewritten in the idiom of science in Stefansson's text,¹⁵⁷ the same aspect of Stefansson's discourse cannot be said to be equally apparent in the second example. Here, we notice again how Stefansson's "crawling method" of hunting is presented as a systematic procedure in which a set of technical elements needs to be in place for it to be successful. Within the third or fourth minute after being noticed by the seal, the hunter must lift his head "ten or fifteen inches," "spend ten or fifteen seconds looking around," at "thirty or fifty-second intervals" (ibid: 307). If done right, this kind of procedure will give him an eighty percent chance of being accepted as a fellow seal, according to Stefansson (ibid: 308). We notice how Stefansson models his approach on

¹⁵⁷ Bloom makes a similar case in her portrayal of Peary as a man of science. Here, Peary is presented as a scientific manager who conceived of Inuit and dogs as technology. Peary, in Bloom's view, "rewrites the Inuit in the idiom of scientific management in order to establish absolute power hierarchies in which all others—Eskimos and blacks—are subordinate to him" (Bloom 1993: 45). While similar power hierarchies also are discernible in Stefansson's discourse, the role given to his Inuit travelling companions is somewhat more complex, as will be discussed in Chapter Six.

the actual behavior of the seal itself (and how his polar-craft skills thus are expertly demonstrated), and also how a systematic and technical language is used to convey the details of this approach. In a sense (and in contrast to the dimensions of the Odyssean chronotope informing his narrative), what Stefansson does here is to tame the Arctic landscape through the discourse of science. Nevertheless, in this particular passage there seems perhaps to be a tension in the text between his use of scientific jargon and the way in which Arctic nature is depicted. While the focus of Stefansson's chapter clearly is to give a systematic outline of different hunting methods, the "science of sealing" here seems to take a back seat to Stefansson's descriptions of the characteristic behavior of the seal itself. It is as if the style of the Arctic manual is dropped for a brief moment as Stefansson relates the delicate situation in which the seal wakes up on the ice, raises his head, and carefully watches the hunter closing in on him.

Deconstructing Stefansson's Rhetorical Maneuver

In the last part of this chapter I return to Tallmadge's climate of authenticity and to the narrative persona as a key feature of the literature of exploration. As demonstrated in the previous sections, not only is the narrative persona one of the main rhetorical means used by the explorer to convince his/her readers of the accuracy of his/her tale, as becomes quite evident in Stefansson's case, this persona must also be seen in relation to the text's performativity. The general questions informing the following discussion are therefore: What happens if the implied author of the exploration narrative fails? Is it possible to read the kind of criticism with which Stefansson frequently was met as rooted in some of the narrative aspects of *The Friendly Arctic*, the most central of his Arctic texts? A brief introduction to theory on the narrative communication situation (in particular) is required before venturing into the discussion of such potential dilemmas in Stefansson's text.

A Closer Look at the Narrative Communication Situation

A lot seems to hinge on the narrative persona of the literature of exploration, as several scholars have suggested. Tallmadge's narrative persona seems to be bound up with the author's skills at self-characterization (Tallmadge 1979). Tallmadge does not, however, go into details when describing the constituent elements of this kind of role in the text, nor does he provide any clues as to how it should be understood. In literary theory the term "persona" has commonly been applied to the speaker or enunciator in a literary work, (often the first person narrator in a poem or a novel. It has, however, also been equated with the implied author of a literary work (Murfin and Ray 2009: 377), something which opens up for the question of how this key narrative feature of the genre should be apprehended and described.

A complication of this initial question can perhaps be seen as a consequence of the previously discussed narrative claim to truthfulness of travel literature. "Due to the fact that travel accounts in principle always document the traveler's own experiences," Ryall notes, "the genre assumes that there is an identity between the historical writer, the narrator and an acting person in the text. The writer dramatizes herself/himself both as storyteller and—typically—as the main character of her/his own story."¹⁵⁸ This potentially confusing aspect of the narrative technique of the travelogue is also emphasized by Barbara Korte, who states:

travelogues are almost exclusively written in the first-person: the narrator and persona are accordingly fused, and by autobiographical contract the reader of a travelogue also assumes that the narrator-traveller is basically identical to the author. Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish between author, narrating-I, and experiencing-I, since the views voiced by the narrating-I might not be

¹⁵⁸ "Fordi reisebeskrivelser i prinsippet alltid dokumenterer den reisendes egne opplevelser, forutsetter sjangeren at det er en identitet mellom den historiske forfatteren, fortelleren og en handlende person i teksten. Forfatteren setter seg selv i scene både som beretter og—vanligvis—som hovedperson i sin egen beretning" (Ryall 2004: 15, my translation).

fully identical with those of the ‘real’ author, and the narrator may also, just like any first-person narrator, create a certain distance from himself as traveller. (Korte 2008b: 620)

Combined with the genre’s characteristic claims to truth, the classical narrative situation of the travelogue may encourage an understanding of the text in which several roles are collapsed into one; thus, the author, narrating-I and experiencing-I are frequently perceived to be one and the same. Nevertheless, the importance of distinguishing between these roles is emphasized in both quotations above. In a narrative analysis of *The Friendly Arctic* this is of particular importance, and my discussion therefore takes as a premise that the three features operate on different narrative levels of the text. A brief explanation of my own use of narrative terms is in place.

My basic narrative communication model is taken from Jakob Lothe and may be viewed as an expanded version of Wolfgang Kayser’s “epic proto-situation” (Kayser 1971), supplemented by Roman Jakobson’s constructive model of verbal communication (Jakobson 1987). Lothe makes the common distinction between the historical author (as an addresser), the narrative text (as the message), and the historical reader (as an addressee). Furthermore, within the “frame” of the narrative text itself, he locates the four concepts of implied author, narrator, narratee, and implied reader.

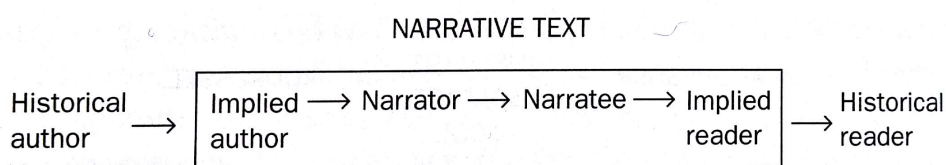


Illustration: Basic narrative communication model (Lothe 2000: 16)

I have examined the role of the implied reader of Stefansson's narrative in previous chapters; presently, however, some preliminary remarks must be made regarding the functions of the implied author and the narrator.

The Friendly Arctic is a travel account written in the first person, and focuses retrospectively on Stefansson's experiences and discoveries in the Canadian Arctic during a five-year period. As in the travelogue and other autobiographical work intended for an audience, Stefansson is thus the first-person narrator who functions within the text as Stefansson the author's narrative instrument. The reader is thereby invited to attribute the voice s/he hears in the text to the explorer in his own person. The implied author, on the other hand, has no voice in the same sense as the narrator. In the words of Wayne C. Booth, the implied author is the author's second self; we infer him as "an ideal, literary, created version of the real man", someone who "chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what we read" (Booth 1961: 74–75). In Lothe's observation, "the implied author then becomes practically a synonym for the ideological value system that the text, indirectly and by combining all its resources, presents and represents" (Lothe 2000: 19). In the following analysis, Tallmadge's narrative persona can be equated with the implied author, which is perceived to be a central element of Stefansson's self-representation. As has been demonstrated in the previous, such a narrative version of Stefansson the explorer is generally one of integrity and confidence. In order to grasp the crucial implied author, however, the role of the narrator must be examined first.

Stefansson's exploration account provides an example of autodiegetic narration, in the terminology of Gérard Genette; it is a first-person narrative in which the narrator also functions as the story's protagonist. Whereas the narrator in heterodiegetic narration is absent from the story he tells, the narrator in homodiegetic narration is present as a character in his own story (Genette 1980: 244–45). It is moreover possible to separate between degrees of such narratorial presence, according to Genette: The narrator may function as a mere observer or witness in his narrative, or he may be the hero of that narrative.

Autodiegetic narration can thus be characterized as a strong degree of the homodiegetic type (ibid). *The Friendly Arctic* belongs to this latter category, with Stefansson as the active narrator-hero of his own story.

I have so far stressed the importance of preserving the nuances between the implied author and the narrator in narrative theory. This aspect will also guide my concrete analysis of *The Friendly Arctic*. Likewise, it is important to separate between the narrator (or narrating-I) who functions at this narrative's extradiegetic level and the character (or experiencing-I) who functions at its diegetic level, or dominant level of action.¹⁵⁹ In most examples of historical life-narratives narrator and character can, however, be perceived as closely related, as already demonstrated. In general, the difference between these two roles seems to be of minor importance also in Stefansson's exploration account, and we can therefore say that his story provides an example of consonant self-narration, in which an "unobtrusive narrator [...] identifies with his earlier incarnation, renouncing all manner of cognitive privilege" (Cohn 1978: 155).¹⁶⁰ The views expressed by the Stefansson's narrator—who is a fervent advocate of the friendly Arctic—seem to be largely in accordance with Stefansson the character's friendly dealings with the Canadian Arctic. My analysis of the narrative communication situation in *The Friendly Arctic*, however, entails an attempt to nuance this general picture.

¹⁵⁹ In the previous chapter, this point has already been argued through the distinction made there between *The Friendly Arctic*'s levels of discourse and of story (or action)—and the thematic implications of the text's movement between these two levels.

¹⁶⁰ In contrast, Proust's fictional account *Remembrance of Things Past (A la Recherche du temps perdu)* (1913–27) provides a particularly illustrative example of *dissonant* self-narration, according to literary scholar Dorrit Cohn. Here, "a lucid narrator [turns] back on a past self in ignorance, confusion, and delusion" (Cohn 1978: 145), something which implies a significant distance between these two instances.

No Hero of the Literary North

There seems to be little doubt that Stefansson's implied author is a passionate proponent of exploration by forage. (In this sense, he comes close to the ideal Arctic explorer whom we meet in several didactic passages of the narrative). He is a robust man of the outdoors, and by combining his intellect and considerable northern experience turns exploration into a more or less effortless ramble across the friendly Arctic. Passages from Chapter XXXVIII (with the intentionally ironic title "We are 'rescued' by Captain Louis Lane") further testify to this general impression of an explorer in harmony with the Arctic environment. Stefansson is now two years into his northern journey and halfway through his narrative. In terms of geographical exploration, he has gone beyond McClintock's farthest to discover new land to the north, and he is now heading south again with two of his men. The three of them have been separated from the rest of the northern party since April 1915. Then, on August 11, which is to become a "momentous day" (Stefansson 1921: 374), an approaching schooner is finally sighted from Cape Kellett. Stefansson rushes along the beach to greet what turns out to be the *Polar Bear*, and finds that his arrival causes quite a commotion among the men onboard; they simply cannot believe that Stefansson has survived these past months in the Arctic wilderness. Thinking that he must be famished, the *Bear's* Captain Lane immediately offers Stefansson anything he would like to eat:

I had only to say what I wanted and the cook would prepare me the finest dinner I ever saw. I tried to make clear that while I was hungry for news my appetite for food was very slight. In fact, the excitement had taken away what little I might have had. As for that, I had been in the North so long that I could think of nothing so good as exactly what we had been eating on shore—caribou meat. I had the delicacy to refrain from stating to Captain Lane that none of his food was as good, but I tried to put him off by explaining how eager I was for all sorts of news that I knew he could tell me. But these diplomatic protests evidently rather worried him, so I finally asked for some

canned corn. Corn has always been my favorite vegetable yet I don't think I had eaten half a dozen spoonful before I forgot to continue. (Ibid: 375)

The general impression that Stefansson's journey is a textbook demonstration of friendly Arctic exploration is reinforced here. Narration is slowed down into a scenic presentation of the encounter between the two men, although their dialogue is not rendered directly. Narrative perspective here seems to approximate the vision of Stefansson the protagonist (the experiencing-I) who politely tries to turn down the captain's well-meaning offer. As a consequence, the reader is invited to sympathize with Stefansson. Captain Lane would surely find a more appreciative recipient of his offer in the *literary* Arctic, and the underlying message here is that in the real Arctic (i.e. Stefansson's friendly Arctic) starvation is avoided by following Stefansson's example. The captain's attempt to fatten him up simply appears ridiculous through this kind of perspective.

Two pages later narrative perspective is external and limited to the later first-person narrator (the narrating-I) who reinforces the impression that Stefansson's implied author is no hero of the literary North. As he has been away from civilization for so long, Stefansson receives the news of WWI over a year after it has started. The story of this tragic "revelation" seems to have provided later newspaper articles with material for a particularly moving scene. These are the comments of the retrospective narrator on such stories:

The question of how the news of a world cataclysm would strike a person who heard of it only when the tragedy had been a year in progress seems to have been generally interesting to newspaper editors and paragraphers. [...] A story that isn't true is usually interesting—that is what it is made to be. This was extremely interesting, as the number of editorial comments proved. It was usually printed under the heading, "Stefansson Wept." After a dramatic account of how the news of the war was brought to me comes the climax: Under the crushing effect of the tragedy that had come upon the world I broke down and wept. These were not the ordinary snivelings of a sentimentalist—

they were the tears of a hero who had borne all the terrors of the polar wilderness without flinching and who had met stolidly even his own semimiraculous rescue from the jaws of death. For it appeared the *Polar Bear* had rescued me from starvation. (That she did so with a warmed-up tin of corn was not specified.) (Ibid: 377)

Even though Stefansson in all probability is taken aback by the sad news of the Great War, the focus of these passages (and object of Stefansson's cutting sarcasm) is rather the crude exaggeration of this scene which has been presented in the media. As opposed to what people back home might have assumed, the important thing to get across is that the party's summer journey has never come near to being a narrow escape from death in the polar wilderness. The image given of Stefansson as a daring hero of the literary North is a misrepresentation which the later narrator simply refuses to let pass in silence. His language contains subtle variations between reporting and reproving, and thus irony is used to counter the discourse of a weeping polar hero. Instead, the passage testifies both to the polar expertise and to the level-headedness of Stefansson as implied author.

Narration in both of the two quoted passages is retrospective, however, there is considerable temporal distance between the protagonist who is active in the plot and the later narrator who comments on the situation. In this example it becomes clear that the distance between the act of narration and the related events probably spans several years, as the narrator refers to newspaper articles written after the news of Stefansson's so-called revelation had reached civilization. This makes it possible to see Stefansson's autodiegetic narrator as oscillating between degrees of presence in his story, to avail myself of Genette's terminology (Genette 1980: 244–45). While in the latter case he serves as merely an observer or commentator to his story, in the former he is more clearly present as the story's protagonist. It may moreover be argued that the narrator is at its greatest degree of presence in the sections of didactic in the book. Another way of conceiving of this variation is through the concept of

perspective or vision. The dominating perspective in *The Friendly Arctic* is that of the much later narrator who “sees” the events without participating in them (external perspective). However, perspective may also be delegated to Stefansson as character (internal perspective).

What these examples demonstrate is that both the protagonist’s actions and the later narrator’s evaluation of events serve to support the view of a friendly North. Both belong within the discourse of Arctic friendliness. Also, in both passages irony is used to demonstrate that the notions of the captain and other disbelievers of Stefansson’s vision have no root in reality. The difference between the two roles of narrator and character is thus of minor importance here. This is yet another example of consonant self-narration in Stefansson’s text, as previously described. The general picture of the narrative communication situation in *The Friendly Arctic* is therefore one in which the implied author appears as both a reliable narrator and an experienced explorer.

Tension in the Implied Author

A quote by Stefansson addresses the question of how temporal distance impacts narrative perspective. After citing an entry from his field diary, the retrospective narrator follows up with an explanatory footnote where he informs his readers that:

This statement and one or two other sentences from the diary entry of September 26th [1916] are reproduced here not as facts but to show a state of mind at the time of writing. [...] In this book I am trying to present things not as they appear now but as they seemed then—with, of course, the exception of immutable facts, such as topography or temperature. It is in exploration as it is in life of tamer environments, that the moods of yesterday are difficult to enter into to-day. My mind has now a very different picture of the expedition from what I find in my diaries. I have assumed that the reader would be interested in the feelings and outlook he might have shared had he been with us, rather

than in direct facts as they appear now that time has settled uncertainties and reversed contemporary judgments. (Stefansson 1921: 555–56)

This statement may be read as Stefansson's own reflection on the kind of divergence there is bound to be between the perspectives of the character-bound narrator and a much later narrator who does not participate in the action but who enjoys retrospective interpretive privilege. Even more interesting, however, this latter narrator maintains that his position enables him to relate "direct facts" and not merely things as they *seemed* in 1916.¹⁶¹ This ultimately leads me to the question of what the narrative implications for the implied author are if the experiences of the protagonist and the comments of the later narrator are more clearly at odds with each other?

Chapter XLIX provides an interesting case in point. Its rather neutral title is "Wilkins leaves the expedition [1916]". The story of how this happens is no less neutral. George Wilkins has served as the expedition photographer, but after his cameras have been lost with the *Karluk* his skills are apparently no longer needed, and he decides to join the forces at the front instead. There is no drama to this story, and it takes up only one and a half of the chapter's 21 pages. My point, however, is not found in these pages but in the rest of the chapter which is devoted to the spring work of Stefansson and two of his companions, Natkusiak and Emiu, as they travel northeast from Liddon Gulf. More importantly than Wilkins' goodbye to the expedition, therefore, the chapter is largely devoted to the various obstacles at the story level that Stefansson's party encounters on this journey.

One of the most serious of these obstacles turns out to be an accident in which Stefansson breaks through a crusted snowdrift and sprains his ankle. Both the trivial nature and the rare occurrence of an incident such as this are initially emphasized by the narrator. "In general my polar experience has been

¹⁶¹ Melberg, in contrast, points out that many travel writers use the present tense and direct representation as means of presenting themselves as "eyewitness observers", thus increasing the appearance of truth in their stories (Melberg 2005: 16–17).

nearly free from the hardships that most impressed me in the books I read before going North”, Stefansson explains:

For nine polar winters I have never frozen a finger or a toe nor has any member of my immediate parties. My only experience was on my first expedition when I once got my feet wet in an overflowed river with the temperature perhaps forty below and froze one of my feet enough to raise a slight blister. I have now forgotten whether it was a heel or a toe. (Stefansson 1921: 490)

A trifling matter such as a frozen toe is no obstacle to the experienced Arctic traveler, the retrospective narrator assures his readers.

With this kind of introduction one should think that a sprained ankle poses an equally minor problem for Stefansson. However, in the following narrative the injury still appears to be an annoying hindrance to the work of his party: Stefansson is forced to ride on top of the sled, “blanketed and propped up in the manner of white men in western Alaska” (ibid: 491); then, six weeks of continual fog make surveying difficult (ibid: 496); also, the weather conditions are reported as being particularly unfavorable (ibid); and fog and clouds cause considerable suffering to their eyes, and consequent delay to their travels (ibid: 497). To top it off, the party has not spotted any seals for some time, and Stefansson finally comes to “the conclusion that the food question [is] getting serious” (ibid: 499). In fact, all of these scenes of obstacles jar loudly with the discourse of friendliness found elsewhere in the narrative.

Finally, Stefansson decides that he must solve the problem by securing a seal. He professes that it has been a long time since he has been “anything but a burden” to the others (ibid), but still hobbles along on his bad ankle, thinking that this little excursion will probably not delay the healing process, as he will have to do most of the hunting by crawling anyway. The account of this adventure is copied directly from his diary. This means that narrative voice is delegated to Stefansson as a first-person diary narrator, thus reducing the

temporal distance between narration and related events. Narrative perspective is (at least for the most part) limited to the protagonist. On setting out for a seal, he encounters a tide crack in the ice, and comments:

I am not sure what I was thinking, but probably of finding a crossing of the tide crack that would not expose my foot to a wrench, when I found myself falling. [...] When I struck, it proved to be on glare ice—the blizzard that roofed over the crevasse must have been blowing while there was still water in it, so that the snow which fell into the crack dissolved in the water. I seem [sic] to have struck on my feet, but of course they slipped, and I fell on my left side—the one of the sprained ankle. The crack was not wide enough for me to fall either backward or forward, for my face was towards one wall, my back to the other. [...] Before moving I noted the thickness of the ice I lay on, which was about eight inches, but with a fresh tide crack an inch wide through which water could be seen. According to this eight-inch thickness I should have drowned had I fallen in yesterday. (Ibid: 500)

The dramatic nature of Stefansson's fall is underlined by rendering it in the form of a scenic presentation taken directly from the diary; here, narrative time comes close to story time. Careful attention is paid to details, and through the diary narrator's assessment of the potential danger of the fall the readers are alerted to the tragic outcome this might have had. Both of these narrative aspects combine to *increase* suspense and remind us that Arctic exploration is no risk-free activity. In fact, Arctic nature may prove to be *unfriendly*, even yet a dangerous hindrance to the explorer. And yet, when we read on to learn how Stefansson crawls thirty yards along the floor of the crevasse and climbs out of an opening nine feet above him—only to shoot a seal “without incident at a hundred and thirty-five yards” (ibid: 501) the discourse of friendliness is restored. In fact, the rest of the diary excerpt resembles a self-rescue manual, and when narrative voice and perspective are back with the much later narrator, he concludes by re-emphasizing the unusual character of the incident instead of the peril:

There are several points for reflection about this accident. [...] the most remarkable thing is that such an accident should never before or since have happened to me or to any one with whom I have been associated. We fall into cracks often, but with this exception they have always been so narrow that we have been able to catch and support ourselves by our arms. This accident would not have happened now but for my Eskimo type goggles with their narrow angle of vision that prevented my seeing where I stepped. (Ibid: 501–502)

It is a remarkable rhetorical maneuver which is performed in these pages, and which also seems to be carried out in other parts of Stefansson's account.

While the narrator of the above quote downplays any drama in this narrowly averted crisis, the scenic presentation of the protagonist's accident has just the opposite effect. On a larger scale, then, two opposing claims are made in Stefansson's *Friendly Arctic*. On the one hand, the narrative can be read as an Arctic manual, (potentially titled) "Stefansson's advice on how to turn even the most barren lands into a friendly place". And yet, when reading against the grain of this larger discourse, it seems that Stefansson both frequently runs up against hindrances and at times even seems to lose faith in his own advice.

For instance, sometime after the fall into the crevasse, the narrator confesses that "during that last week or two I must have suffered from an attack of nerves brought on probably by my helplessness and inactivity" (ibid: 504). The food problem still lingers, and when his two travelling companions will not stop chatting about tinned sardines and boiled potatoes, Stefansson loses his patience and decides to send them back home "where they could have them to their hearts' content" (ibid: 505). "A mental depression" allegedly appears in Stefansson's field diary on September 26, 1916. This is due to the "uncomfortable time" Stefansson has experienced recently, with the snow being "too soft for house-building and the temperature nevertheless too low for comfort in a tent"—conditions which make even his ink freeze (ibid: 555). The depot with equipment and ammunition which Stefansson has relied on for the

upcoming spring work, he now regretfully maintains, has never been established; thus, he pessimistically notes in the diary, “Castel’s complete failure [in establishing the depot] is now too unfortunately clear” (ibid). Even more unfriendly dealings of expedition members with the Arctic environment occur in Chapter XLVIII when commander John Hadley is attacked by a polar bear, and is lucky to escape the encounter without any serious injuries (ibid: 484–85). Chapter LX is in its entirety devoted to the tragic fates of Peter Bernard and Charles Thomsen, two key members of the northern section who lose their lives in 1917, in what appears to have been bad weather and open water somewhere around the northwest corner of Banks Island (ibid: 646–54). Measured in number of casualties, however, the loss of 11 men aboard the *Karluk* still represents the gravest reminder in *The Friendly Arctic* of how hostile the North really can be.

These examples are merely some of the scenes of obstacles and dangers in *The Friendly Arctic* which destabilize the discourse of friendliness found elsewhere in the text. Put differently, the inconsistencies between the level of story and the level of discourse in Stefansson’s text surface in passages like these. At the level of story, Stefansson and his men do sometimes experience hardship and drama, but these tend not to be underlined at the level of discourse—where the focus is instead on co-existence and friendly dealings with the North.¹⁶²

If examples such as these (and the analyzed excerpt from the field diary in particular) destabilize the dominating discourse of friendliness in Stefansson’s narrative, then why are they still part of that narrative? One answer may be that they are stock ingredients of the genre of the literature of exploration and discovery, and of the narrative representation of the heroic

¹⁶² As can be recalled, in the last chapter of *The Friendly Arctic* Stefansson scorns the very idea that his rushed sledge journey towards Fort Yukon to receive treatment for typhoid fever should be a “neck-and-neck race with Death” (Stefansson 1921: 685). Although readers can easily imagine how this situation (i.e. falling ill in the middle of Arctic wilderness) could have been dramatic, at the discourse level, however, Stefansson implies that it would have been far more dangerous to get typhoid fever in civilization.

explorer in particular. Although Stefansson's implied author clearly does not want to be associated with the so-called heroism of the literary North, he still needs to stress his own achievements in some way. But in giving room for the traditional requirements of the genre, Stefansson is faced with the formal-thematic question of how to be a hero in a friendly, non-combative environment. As discussed in earlier chapters, the archetypal explorer overcomes a set of obstacles in order for him to stand out as the hero of his tale. Stefansson's predicament, however, is that the very same set of obstacles belongs to a northern vision which his narrative essentially rejects. Perhaps as an answer to this kind of narrative dilemma he finds himself in, Stefansson's exploits are fashioned as a distinct quest at the discourse level of his text. It is, however, a delicate balancing act that Stefansson takes on in doing so, and in the present chapter I have proposed that the text's intrinsically paradoxical relation between discursive quest and friendly Arctic Odyssey can be related to the tension that deeply characterizes Stefansson's implied author. While the narrative version of Stefansson generally is one of integrity and confidence, at times there appears to be an internal dissonance in the implied author which undermines such an impression. As a consequence, my initial argument about the "unobtrusive narrator" whose opinions on Arctic matters generally accords with the character's experiences in the field is only partially right, and those instances in which this narrator cannot be identified with the protagonist have been of particular interest to my reading. The question remains whether the authority and credibility of Stefansson's narrative persona—and, ultimately, his crucial role as herald of a new northern vision—is undermined by such narrative tensions.

Chapter Six: Children or Shrewdness Itself? Inuit in the Friendly Arctic

At the feet of the skilled explorer the North lies as an endless expanse of adventure and opportunity. The key to the traveler's accomplishment is adaptability; being perfectly attuned to the environment—virtually an Arctic native. Stefansson's self-representation in *The Friendly Arctic* is thus inextricably bound up with the role he gives to Inuit in his narrative, as duly noted in Prime Minister Borden's introduction. Stefansson's accomplishments, Borden here maintains, are largely due to his eagerness to learn from the masters themselves, the Eskimos, who have “acquired habits of life admirably suited to their surroundings [...] through the accumulated experience of successive generations” (Borden, in Stefansson 1921: xxv). While the Eskimos in this sense should be regarded as “shrewdness itself”, in many respects they are nevertheless still “as children”, according to Borden (*ibid*). In the present chapter I examine the kind of ambiguity which comes to the fore in this quote, which largely characterizes the representation of the anthropological Other in Stefansson's text. I moreover consider the role given to Inuit in his vision of the friendly Arctic, and examine the relationship between Stefansson and some of the indigenous characters presented in the text. While I do not purport to provide an exhaustive analysis of the anthropological discourse in Stefansson's text, the main objective of my analysis is thus to examine how the portrayal of Inuit also affects Stefansson's narrative self-representation. My discussion entails a close reading of selected passages from *The Friendly Arctic*, through which I examine how Inuit as the anthropological Other are constituted and maintained through literary means. I also contextualize some of the prevailing discourses in the text.

The Literary Eskimo

As a point of departure I once again return to the literary North. Among the seven “cardinal sins”¹⁶³ committed by non-believers of the friendly North, according to Stefansson, is the one made against the indigenous people. The current picture of the Eskimos, he explains, is that they live “on the fringes of this desolation” called the Arctic, and that they are “the filthiest and most benighted people on earth, [...] eking out a miserable existence amidst hardship” (Stefansson 1921: 7). This image is presented as yet another discursive obstacle facing Stefansson on his friendly Arctic quest. In order to counter the discourse of the literary Eskimo, however, a complementary image is offered instead (and thus a parallel meta-discursive strategy is employed here to the one which Stefansson uses to topple the literary North itself)¹⁶⁴: The *real* Eskimos are far from wretched, Stefansson’s story demonstrates. After all, they find all that is needed for a comfortable life in their abundant surroundings, which they expertly make use of in most areas of daily life. Such a preliminary conclusion would perhaps implicate that the general image of Inuit in *The Friendly Arctic* is that of people who are perfectly attuned to their environment. This, however, is not always the case: Stefansson’s portrayal of Inuit is neither clear-cut, nor always that idyllic. My discussion, therefore, takes as a starting point the kind of ambiguity that is found in the gap between the two opposing poles of “children” and “shrewdness itself”, which largely characterizes the representation of Inuit in Stefansson’s text. I will moreover examine this kind of representation through three different angles: first, by looking more specifically at the function of *time* in Stefansson’s anthropological discourse, secondly, by discussing what Stefansson perceives to be the essentially destructive effects of civilization on indigenous people, and, finally, by examining the narrative representation of Inuit as Arctic authorities.

¹⁶³ Cf. Grace 2001: 7.

¹⁶⁴ See Chapter Five of this thesis.

Allochronic Discourse in *The Friendly Arctic*

Among the many essayistic detours taken by Stefansson from the otherwise chronological narrative of his journey through northern Canada, the factual prose sections on Inuit life and culture stand out, both in terms of space and content. Such sections typically follow after Stefansson has arrived at settlements or otherwise encountered Inuit in the area, and they may even be read as independent ethnographic accounts. Pálsson accordingly notes that the boundary between the two genres of travelogue and anthropological record in *The Friendly Arctic* is sometimes hazy (Pálsson 2005: 168).

By examining the many passages in the text that in one way or other concern Inuit life and culture, a rather nuanced image of the anthropological Other presents itself. Stefansson clearly feels at home among Inuit encountered along the coast east of Point Barrow in 1913. The exploration program enables him to meet up with former informants, and he enjoys “[t]heir delight in seeing you when you come, the hospitality and friendliness of their treatment no matter how long you stay, and the continual novelty of their misknowledge and the frankness with which they lay their entire minds open to you” (Stefansson 1921: 89). Although Stefansson’s local hosts no doubt are both friendly and welcoming individuals, they are at the same time depicted as naïve and childlike, almost like people from ancient times. Stefansson observes:

Continually there recurs to me the thought that by intimacy and understanding I can learn from these people much about my own ancestry. These men dress in skins, commonly eat their meat raw, and have the external characteristics which we correctly enough ascribe to the “cave man” stage of our forefathers. But instead of ferocious half-beasts, prowling around with clubs, fearful and vicious, we have the kindest, friendliest, gentlest people, whose equals are difficult to find in any grade of our own civilization. (Ibid: 89)

Two aspects of this quote catch immediate attention. First, the idea of a temporal hiatus between Stefansson and his hosts as anthropological objects,

and, secondly, the conflicting relationship between innocence and civilization which seems to be implied here.

It is no exaggeration to say that Stefansson's hosts are rendered as prehistoric people in the above quote. When encountering Inuit Stefansson may in other words gain unique access to the past, and he may learn much about his own ancestry, as asserted here. In this sense, the depiction of Inuit in *The Friendly Arctic* may be said not to differ significantly from the anthropological discourse of Stefansson's time. In order to bring out the nuances within this general picture, however, it is necessary to examine more closely the characteristic narrative means through which Inuit are constructed as primitive. A related concern is to find out how such a depiction affects the essentially hierarchical relationship between Stefansson and Inuit as the anthropological Other envisioned in the text. In the following, I therefore equip myself with terms and insights from critical anthropology before proceeding to address such questions.

While Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* (2008 [1992]) is one of the most momentous studies to come out of the linguistic turn within anthropology, a related perspective is adopted in Johannes Fabian's *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (Fabian 2002 [1982]). Fabian's study entails a critique of the anthropological discourse for denying its objects of study that which he sees as a "sharing of present Time", or, in Fabian's term, a "coevalness" (ibid: 32). Fabian demonstrates how the ethnographic text typically places anthropologists and their readers in a privileged time frame, while the anthropological Other is referred to another time, to "a stage of lesser development". This denial of coevalness is what Fabian terms the "allochronism" of anthropology. Typical features that construct and convey such an essentially asymmetrical relation are "temporal categories [like] 'primitive' [which is used] to establish and demarcate anthropology's traditional object" (Bunzl 2002: xi): "We" distance ourselves from the Other by referring "them" to another time, thus denying them the kind of coevalness

which ultimately makes interaction and understanding possible. Of particular interest to the present study is Fabian's efforts to identify some of the rhetorical means used in anthropological prose which serve precisely such a distancing end.

Temporal terms hold a central place in Fabian's critical deconstruction of the discourse of anthropology. On the lexical level of discourse in anthropological texts, Fabian demonstrates, there are several expressions which in one way or other conceptualize time and temporal relations. We have here to do with expressions typically denoting "sequence, duration, interval or period, origins, and development" (Fabian 2002 [1983]: 75). Fabian singles out the word "savagery" as one example. As a "technical term in evolutionary discourse", he explains, savagery "denotes a stage in a developmental sequence." Furthermore, as "an indication of relationship between the subject and the object of anthropological discourse, it clearly expresses temporal distancing", and the term is therefore crammed with "moral, aesthetic, and political connotations" (ibid). The same can be said about the representation of Inuit as children, which is repeated and expressed in different ways in Stefansson's text. Not only does Stefansson depict various individuals of local communities as naïve and innocent, he also confesses to finding Inuit "a delightful people for all their childlike notions"—in the same way that "children may be kindhearted, attractive and in every way charming and still believe in Santa Claus or even in Jack the Giant Killer" (Stefansson 1921: 107). In another chapter, he relates how some of his "western Eskimo companions" refuse to use a certain kind of heather for cooking and heating when other sources of fuel in the area are sparse, and proclaims it to be a "marvel" how "the Eskimos of northern Alaska are able to grow up from childhood to maturity and old age without learning, either by accident or by the instruction of some wiser people, how to use certain common plants for fuel" (ibid: 243).

Even though Stefansson's Eskimo companions are mostly adults, they will in other words always remain children in relation to Stefansson himself. On the one side of this temporal divide is the child stage of development which represents prehistory, and on the other is adulthood or the present. This kind of relationship is founded on a specific conception of historical growth; on the idea of the historical development of the autonomous individual up to our age of modernity (Larsen 2005: 166). What Stefansson describes here in plain terms is therefore a temporal divide where his anthropological objects are located in a past stage of development, from which "we"—i.e. Stefansson and his readers—long since have moved on. We belong to Fabian's privileged time frame and distance ourselves from the Other by referring them to the past. We thereby delegitimize their way of life and turn them into objects of study in one and the same intellectual maneuver (ibid: 164).

The Friendly Arctic's anthropological discourse can thus be seen as directly related to the text's colonial discourse, where essentially unequal power relations between Stefansson and Inuit are exposed and thereby validated. Fabian correspondingly regards the allochronic strategies of anthropology as "a vehicle of Western domination, reproducing and legitimizing global inequalities" (Bunzl 2002: xiii). By shifting the analytical focus back to the details of Stefansson's text again, and more specifically to its level of syntax, it is possible to detect an additional literary convention of the anthropological narrative, namely the ethnographical present.

The ethnographical present is defined by Fabian as "the practice of giving accounts of other cultures and societies in the present tense" (Fabian 2002 [1983]: 80). A statement like the one made by Stefansson that Inuit "*lack* [...] exact words for time and distance" is one example (Stefansson 1921: 287, emphasis added). Fabian presents two main objections against such a use of the present in the anthropological text. First and foremost, he points out, the present "magnifies the claim of a statement to general validity." Secondly, it inevitably implies both a static and a categorical view of the society studied

(Fabian 2002 [1983]: 80–81). It must be noted here that Stefansson’s view of Inuit on the whole is much more complex than this. In his work, Stefansson gives both detailed and nuanced descriptions of Inuit customs and conceptions, and he distinguishes between the different languages, traditions and beliefs of Inuit communities encountered in the Canadian Arctic. Nevertheless, in *The Friendly Arctic*, there are several passages where the account of the journey itself, recounted in the past tense, is disrupted by brief anthropological passages marked by the present tense, through which certain of his statements appear to be granted the kind of general validity Fabian points to.

During a crossing of Banks Island in the late summer of 1915, the journey trajectory of Stefansson’s party intersects with a Minto Inlet family camping in the area. Both Stefansson and this family are searching for caribou, but game seem to be in short supply. Stefansson recounts:

They *enquired* eagerly whether we had seen any cattle and when we said that we had not, either this year or the year before, they gave it as their opinion that all of them had now moved away from Banks Island. That *is* always the way with the Eskimos and the northern Indians. They can never conceive of any animals being exterminated, and when none are any longer found in any district the explanation given is that they have moved away, usually because some taboo has been broken which has given great offense to the animals and has induced them to abandon the locality. (Stefansson 1921: 370, emphasis added)

This example shows how the account of the journey (at the story level) comes to a halt while the retrospective narrator (at the discourse level) deliberates on the beliefs and opinions of Inuit. This narrative shift is marked by a parallel shift in grammatical tense. As a result, Stefansson’s comment takes the form of a generalized statement, an impression which is further reinforced by his use of the word “always”; stating that something is *always* the way with the Eskimos does not leave much room for change, nor individual variation.

By looking at several of the passages where the ethnographical present features in *The Friendly Arctic*, an even more detailed image of the “standard” Eskimo presents itself.¹⁶⁵ Stefansson’s observations on Inuit customs apply to their typical food preferences: “One of the most universal Eskimo traits is the dislike for anything very hot” (ibid: 429); his superior sense of smell: “my experience is that while in eyesight, hearing and every other natural faculty [the Eskimo] is about the same as the rest of us, he does seem to excel in the sense of smell” (ibid: 59); their superstitiousness: “With the Eskimos there seems to be literally no end [to the list of superstitions]. Their range of information about the facts of nature is limited and their information about the non-facts correspondingly voluminous” (ibid: 409); their lack of “common sense”: “I believe that their greater liability to losing their way than that of white men of outdoors experience is due in part to their lack of mental training and in part to the fearsome superstitions which lead them to become panic-stricken and confused” (ibid: 460); or, as demonstrated by the following example, his fear of strangers:

Nothing is more ingrained in the real Eskimo and nothing pervades more thoroughly his traditions and folklore than the idea that strangers are necessarily hostile and treacherous. Every Eskimo group always believes that wicked Eskimos are to be found on the other side of the mountain or down the coast at a distance. (Ibid: 426)

All of these statements are rendered in the present tense, and thereby presented as the “truth” about the Eskimo, as it were. It is, however, not a very flattering image of Inuit that materializes from the above examples, but (again) one of a childlike people whose adaptable existence in the Arctic is due to some instinctive or inbred behavior rather than their cognitive skills.

¹⁶⁵ As the following examples demonstrate, whenever this stock Eskimo is referred to in the singular, “he” is used for the generic form.

Even though it is necessary to stress that Stefansson on other occasions does leave room for both change and variation among the Inuit communities he studies, by employing the grammatical present as a device of temporalizing discourse he still signals what Fabian describes as *scientific intent*, something which, in turn, has implications for the way in which his objects of study are perceived. Fabian's line of argument here rests on the works of the two linguists Émile Benveniste and Harald Weinrich, as demonstrated in the following.

In ethnographic accounts the present tense signals the writer's intent to give a discourse or commentary on the world, Fabian argues (Fabian 2002 [1983]: 83). Such an observation is based on the distinction made by Benveniste and Weinrich between the two narrative categories of discourse/commentary and history/story.¹⁶⁶ In general, use of the present amplifies the scientific intent of the author in the text. However, verb forms are not only marked by grammatical tense, they are also inflected according to person. The ideal communicative situation of what may be called the genre of commentary, therefore, is one in which the present is combined with the first-person singular; a speaking "I". This, Fabian argues, "would reflect the locutionary attitude or communicative situation where a speaker conveys directly and purposefully to a listener what he believes to be the case or what he can report as a fact" (ibid: 84). In general, this is the rhetorical situation which characterizes Stefansson's discourse in *The Friendly Arctic*. As already seen, Stefansson is unmistakably present as first-person narrator in his own text: he is the observer who reports "the truth" about Inuit, as it were (and also as pointed out by himself). As demonstrated in Chapter Five of this thesis,

¹⁶⁶ According to Fabian, Benveniste (1971 [1956]) and Weinrich (1973) (predominantly studying French and related languages) organize verb tenses into two basic groups which, in turn, correspond to "two fundamental categories of speaking/writing". In contrast to discourse/commentary, Fabian explains, the category of history/story indicates "a humanistic rather than scientific intent on the part of the writer" (Fabian 2002 [1983]: 83). In the following, I use the term "commentary" rather than "discourse" in order to avoid confusing the latter with "discourse" as it is used in the rest of the dissertation.

implied readers of Stefansson's text are posited as partners in dialogue-cum-targets of its persuasive discourse, and while Stefansson generally may be said to address a white, educated audience, he also specifically targets the scientific community, other polar authorities, and potential patrons and supporters of new Arctic endeavors.

It is, however, less relevant for the present discussion to nuance the addressees of Stefansson's didactic "dialogue". What is more important here is that the third person ("they"/"the Eskimos") is not posited as a participant in that dialogue at all. In contrast to the grammatical first and second persons, Benveniste points out, the "'third person' is not a 'person'; it is really the verbal form whose function is to express the *non-person*" (Benveniste 1971 [1956]: 198). Fabian expounds:

He [i.e. the ethnographer] need not explicitly address his ethnographic *account* to a *you* because, as discourse/commentary it is already sufficiently placed in a dialogic situation; ethnography addresses a reader. The dialogic Other (second person, the other anthropologist, the scientific community) is marked by the present tense; *pronouns and verb forms in the third person mark an Other outside the dialogue*. He (or she or it) is not spoken to but posited (predicated) as that which contrasts with the personness of the participants in the dialogue. (Fabian 2002 [1983]: 85)

This kind of narrative exclusion of the third person is in reality another form of denial of coevalness, and the divergence between "us" and the Other is thus made even more apparent. In the following example from *The Friendly Arctic*, the pronouns "them" and "they"—which are juxtaposed with "us"—demonstrate that this kind of rhetorical situation characterizes some of the ethnographic passages in Stefansson's text as well. In one example, Stefansson has persuaded two of the Copper Eskimos from Minto Inlet to come live with the expedition "for ethnological purposes" (Stefansson 1921: 424). These two men have never in fact seen a ship before, nor many of the appliances and tools

used by the crew, and Stefansson notes their curious reaction in hearing music from a phonograph for the first time. He observes:

The distinction between the phonograph and the rest of the articles we showed them was the difference between ordinary things which they could understand and a miracle which, while they did not understand it, they accepted readily. Their own minds are not so filled with anything as with miracles. Those who understand primitive people know that to *them* nothing is more commonplace or uninteresting than a thing that appears miraculous. That is because while miracles are decidedly the exception with *us*, they are the rule with *them*, for there is so little of the operations of nature which *they* understand. (Ibid: 428, emphasis added)

While not addressing his discourse directly to the reader, Stefansson's dialogic Other is here still incorporated in the collective pronoun "us", and the passage must therefore be seen as part of the previously discussed ongoing didactic dialogue with Stefansson's (western) implied reader, with the objective of teaching her/him about the real Arctic. The two Copper Eskimos, on the other hand, apparently have no place in this kind of dialogue, as established by the use of third person pronouns. In this kind of narrative situation, it is "we" that are in the privileged position to observe and make assertions about "them". Equally noteworthy is the shift in verb tense, from the narration of story events in the past tense, to Stefansson's observations concerning Eskimo convictions marked by the present tense. Both pronouns and tenses, therefore, narratively exclude Inuit in the text, and exemplify the kind of denial of coevalness laid out by Fabian.

In contrast to Benveniste, who discusses linguistic theories of subjectivity, Fabian's theory thus steps out of the particulars of linguistics by "relating a certain discursive practice to political praxis" (Fabian 2002 [1983]: 86). Fabian emphasizes that our production of knowledge about the Other increases our distance to them, and, as a consequence, the relationship between the anthropologist and her/his object of study is demonstrated to have political

implications. Both political Time and political Space, Fabian thereby establishes, are ideologically constructed instruments of power (ibid: 144). Critics of imperialism have already argued such a point with regard to space; when imperialists have occupied “empty”, undeveloped space “for the common good of mankind”, they have in reality based their activities and the rationale behind them on a lie which serves only the dominant part. Fabian contends that the same holds true for time. If time, like space, is conceived as something which can be “occupied, measured, and allotted”, time also becomes an instrument through which unequal relations of power are constructed and maintained (ibid).

Past Innocence and the Corrupting Effects of Civilization

We have seen how Inuit in Stefansson’s account frequently are assigned to prehistory, to a stage of lesser development left behind by “us”, and how this depiction in turn establishes uneven power relations between Stefansson and Inuit as the anthropological Other. At the same time, however, the representation of such a prehistorical existence in *The Friendly Arctic* is not only fraught with negative connotations. In fact, according to Stefansson, it is the prehistorical or traditional way of life of the Eskimos which belongs to his idealized, *real* Arctic.

On Stefansson’s trek along the coast from Point Barrow to Collinson Point in 1913, depicted in Chapter VIII, the account of the journey again yields for a passage of observations made by Stefansson on Inuit life. This time, readers are presented with a theory on the increasing age of maturity of the female population in the area.¹⁶⁷ Stefansson explains that he has received information from the settler and trader Charles D. Brower and others “that the

¹⁶⁷ Stefansson’s theory, in a somewhat different wording, was originally published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* as “Temperature Factor in Determining the Age of Maturity Among the Eskimos” (Stefansson 1920).

age of maturity of Eskimo women is on the average higher now than it was ten or twenty years ago” (Stefansson 1921: 75). Mr. Brower, according to Stefansson, “has had unequalled opportunities to study the Eskimos during their transition from their native mode of life which was unaltered when he settled among them to the present half-understood and often misapplied ‘civilization’” (ibid). During this period, the Eskimos have gradually been exposed to “civilization”, and more specifically to two of its more negative facets: poorer clothing fabrics and colder houses. This has apparently affected their reproductive ability. The rationale behind such a theory is the assumption that there is a connection between the temperature and the age of maturity, and that “the hotter the environment the earlier the maturity” (ibid: 76). Based on what Stefansson claims to be such a generally agreed upon supposition, one might expect that women in the polar zones would reach puberty later than in the tropics. This, however, is not the case: Eskimos who lead a “native mode of life”—who wear proper fur clothing and live in traditional dwellings—have in reality no problem keeping sufficiently warm at all times, both indoors and outdoors. As a consequence, they even reach maturity at a younger age than people in hotter climates (ibid: 75–77), according to Stefansson’s theory.

The transition from what Stefansson views as the traditional or native mode of life of Inuit to their present form of “misapplied” civilization has clearly not entailed a positive development. Exposure to western civilization—in the form of traders, sealers, explorers, missionaries, and their “civilized” ways of life—has had corrupting effects on the aboriginal population, even (as the example above demonstrates) direct physical consequences. Stefansson admits to finding Eskimos “less charming as they grow more sophisticated” (ibid: 107), or even “better to deal with” the less sophisticated they are (ibid: 431). The potentially most damaging effect of such an increased contact,

however, is the loss of traditional knowledge. The Arctic natives run the risk of no longer being perfectly adapted to their native environment.¹⁶⁸

Throughout his narrative, Stefansson provides several examples where Inuit individuals or even whole communities apparently have suffered as a consequence of the colonial encounter. In the Mackenzie Delta, he witnesses whole families on the verge of starvation due to the fact that they have spent the previous summer journeying to meet missionaries and traders, and have consequently ruined their traditional fishing season (ibid: 108). In the same district, younger generations of Inuit do not know how to build snowhouses anymore. This has become a skill that is dying out with “the older men who were mature before the coming of whalers in 1889”, according to Stefansson (ibid: 173). Such characteristics are not attributed to *all* Inuit encountered by Stefansson on his journey, however. The general impression of the corrupting effects of civilization is in many ways reinforced by the fact that Stefansson distinguishes between different types of more or less civilized natives, something which in turn seems to depend on the amount of contact these individuals have had with the world outside their native communities. In my view, it is possible to distinguish between three main categories of Inuit portrayed by Stefansson: the Copper Eskimos, the neophytes, and, finally, Emiu from Stefansson’s own crew.

The Copper Eskimos have had minimal association with white men and therefore represent Inuit in their so-called natural state; they are the “real Eskimos”, according to Stefansson (ibid: 426). Their snowhouses are beyond comparison the best, considerable food stores testify to their brilliant hunting skills, and they make fascinating ethnological objects (ibid: 416–29). In contrast, the neophytes or previously mentioned “recently civilized” natives

¹⁶⁸ The Danish/Greenlandic explorer Knud Rasmussen (journeying through Arctic Canada on his Fifth Thule Expedition [1921–1924]) likewise predicts that western civilization will be the end of the traditional way of life of Inuit in the area. As pointed out by Brøgger, however, Rasmussen’s expedition narrative does not convey an entirely negative view of the colonial encounter on the part of Inuit. Instead, it expresses a generally ambivalent view of *both* Inuit and western culture, which several scholars have related to Rasmussen’s own dual or pluralistic background (Brøgger 2011: 192).

have already started to lose such valuable practical skills through their increased exposure to western culture. As a result of this new intercourse with “all sorts of white men”, Stefansson finds that they are “changing into a less attractive and less fortunate people” (ibid: 107). Emiu, however, is presented as a seemingly more complex character, although essentially still out of his element in the Arctic.

In the “Who’s Who of the Expedition”, Stefansson lists Emiu (or “Split-the-Wind”) as a cabin boy and member of exploratory parties in 1916 and 1917 (ibid: 758). As a general rule, the many roles played by Stefansson’s local guides and assistants (and women in particular) are not sufficiently acknowledged in Stefansson’s work (Pálsson 2005: 201). Inuit are often referred to as “our Eskimos” (Stefansson 1921: 38), as nameless individuals or in collective terms as groups of for instance “ten Eskimos” (ibid: 765).¹⁶⁹ Pálsson accordingly notes how Stefansson’s anthropological practice did not differ considerably from contemporary explorers, and that we find also in his texts a “silence concerning the contribution of local people”(Pálsson 2005: 201). Emiu is therefore one of the exceptions to this rule. He appears as a named individual in the chapters on hunting and treks across Melville Island in 1916, and stays on with the expedition as an active member over the next years.

Emiu has been brought up by foster parents in the vicinity of mining camps around Nome, Alaska. He has therefore “never lived very much with his own people under Eskimo conditions”, according to Stefansson (1921: 423). What is more, Emiu has spent two years in Seattle where he has competed as a long-distance runner and served as “an attendant at an Alaska moving picture show” (ibid). To Stefansson, Emiu therefore remains what may be called a city Eskimo who largely lacks the ability to be perfectly adapted to Arctic nature like the “genuine” Copper Eskimos. This point is reinforced through several

¹⁶⁹ An entry in the same “Who’s Who of the Expedition” simply reads “ESKIMOS. Many unnamed” (Stefansson 1921: 758).

narrated incidents. On one stretch of the expedition route, Emiu is sent out with a speedy dog team to pick up pemmican and kerosene from a nearby depot. Prior to departure Emiu himself estimates that the errand will only take a few minutes, however, several hours later he has still not returned to camp. Stefansson and the rest of the party are starting to become alarmed and they can only speculate as to what has happened to him:

He must have found the cache, packed his load, and started for home. Here he would fall victim to one of *the weaknesses due to his bringing up with white men in Alaska*, who generally overestimated the intelligence of dogs. Emiu had the naïve belief that his dogs could find the way when he himself could not. (Ibid: 451, emphasis added)

In spite of Emiu's many talents, a previous chapter reveals that another of his so-called weaknesses is his incapacity to grasp the principles of snowhouse building. When their party spends the night in a freshly made snowhouse, it is Stefansson who must take on the role of the expert who eventually overcomes Emiu's skepticism towards its solidness by climbing up on the roof without breaking through it (ibid: 424). The case of Emiu thus strengthens the general claim made in *The Friendly Arctic* that Inuit growing up under proper "Eskimo conditions" (such as the Copper Eskimos) preserve some kind of innocence which the city Eskimo has lost. By employing a familiar image from anthropological discourse, it can even be argued that the former category represents the "Noble Savage", while the neophytes and, even more so, Emiu personify the more negative aspects of the civilization of the Arctic native.

Inuit as Noble Savages

Although the term Noble Savage did not appear until later, the roots of the myth of noble primitive man can be found in travel-ethnographic literature and European cultural criticism from the eighteenth century. The myth itself is

often wrongly attributed to French philosopher and writer Jean-Jaques Rousseau, according to Ter Ellingson in *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (2001). Ellingson points out that despite of claims often made to the contrary, the term itself was invented at the beginning of the seventeenth century (nearly a century and a half before Rousseau) when it appeared in an ethnographical account from eastern Canada (ibid: xv, 13). Rousseau in fact never refers to the Noble Savage, according to Ellingson. Instead, over two hundred years after its first appearance, the concept is reintroduced by John Crawfurd, later president of the Ethnographical Society of London, and thereby reenters the theoretical discourse of anthropology (ibid: xv, 291).¹⁷⁰ In order to examine the specific contents of the concept, however, Ellingson goes back to Rousseau again, and more specifically to his momentous critique of anthropological representations in *A Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind* (Rousseau 1761 [1755]).¹⁷¹

While Rousseau's "savage" admittedly is based on ethnographic information, he is all the same a "deliberate work of fiction", a theorizing of man in a state of nature, according to the writer himself (Ellingson 2001: 80–81). Ellingson presents Rousseau's savage in this way:

[...] in Rousseau's construction, the savage was in some ways happier and more fortunate than civilized man precisely *because* he was not, and could not be, 'Noble': lacking the abstract concepts of good and evil that civilization had invented, he was also spared the practical effects of socioeconomic and moral exaltation and degradation that developed alongside them. (Ibid: 82)

Rousseau's savage is first and foremost a figure used to criticize certain aspects of civilized life. He represents man in an egalitarian state of nature and thus embodies a contrast to the negative effects of civilization: to economic

¹⁷⁰ Here, however, the concept is imbued with negative connotations and used to serve an essentially racist agenda which over the following years contributed to creating a "scientifically" justified divide between "civilized white" society and others (Ellingson 2001: 291–97).

¹⁷¹ Original title: *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755).

inequality, to class distinctions and oppression, to greed and injustice (ibid). Although the term “Noble Savage” does not appear in *The Friendly Arctic*, it is reasonable to assume that Stefansson’s view of Inuit is influenced by the myth of the Noble Savage as it came to develop within anthropology in the years after Crawford. Whether his idealized representation of Inuit in what is called their natural state also can be read as a critique of civilization is, however, more dubious.

Even though Stefansson on multiple occasions points to the negative effects of westerners’ entry into the Arctic as well as romanticizes life in the North by juxtaposing it with southern (urban) life, it would be an exaggeration to claim that it is western civilization in itself which is being critiqued in *The Friendly Arctic*.¹⁷² Admittedly, however, Stefansson does have a somewhat flexible view of the world’s civilizational progress. In the previously mentioned *The Northward Course of Empire* (Stefansson 1922), the global centers of civilization are envisioned as having shifted gradually northward: from Babylonia, via Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, to present-day London and Berlin. This kind of development is presented as a movement from hotter towards colder climates, a civilizational shift from South to North.¹⁷³ The hubs of future civilization are thus found in the Arctic Regions, Stefansson predicts. What place Inuit are allotted in this future Arctic empire remains, however, somewhat unclear. Stefansson’s idea, in the words of Frank, “implies a colonization process in the course of which new civilizational appropriations

¹⁷² MacLulich, however, argues that from the “near-idyllic description of northern camp life emerges the implicit message of Stefansson’s account, a critique of the overcomplicated and artificial nature of civilized life” (MacLulich 1979: 82), words that echo a strong intellectual current (and modernist idea) of civilization criticism at the time. See also Chapter Five on Stefansson’s self-presentation in relation to that of Peary.

¹⁷³ Stefansson’s ideas about the forthcoming pivotal role of the North are more concretely visualized in the graph which figures as the frontispiece of *The Northward Course of Empire*. The graph, titled “The Path of Supremacy”, is borrowed from professor of social sciences S. Columb GilFillan and was originally published in GilFillan’s article “The Coldward Course of Progress” in 1920 (Stefansson 1922: iv–v).

become the new centre of world civilization” (Frank 2010: 121).¹⁷⁴ Thus, the emphasis is on the Arctic of the future as colonized space, and, moreover, Stefansson’s text leaves no doubt that the writer himself comes close to the prototype of the new Arctic “native”.

Inuit as Arctic Experts

As already demonstrated, Inuit living in what has been termed their natural state are to be preferred to the “half-civilized” Eskimos whom Stefansson comes across in the Canadian Arctic. Western civilization apparently has a powerful impact, and such examples narratively reinforce the statement made by Sir Borden in his introduction that when “a primeval civilization comes into contact with ours, the new wine is too strong for the old bottles” (Borden, in Stefansson 1921: xxv). In contrast to Rousseau’s savage, who moves in a forward direction,¹⁷⁵ Inuit in Stefansson’s representation seem not to be able to step out of their perpetual existence in the past. In spite of the fact that Emiu is practically “white” and seems to be a most trusted member of Stefansson’s expedition, he still remains a child in comparison to Stefansson himself, who refers to him as “this boy” and “a most amiable and charming little fellow” (Stefansson 1921: 423). Such characteristics take us back to Fabian’s temporal terms as manifestations of the allochronic strategies deployed in anthropological discourse. As a result of the colonial encounter, Emiu has apparently acquired at best misunderstood knowledge about civilization, at the same time as he has lost valuable knowledge of survival in the Arctic. Still, in the account of Stefansson’s expedition, Emiu and other named Inuit expedition

¹⁷⁴ Comparably, Frank points out, Soviet Arctic discourse in the 1930s transforms the Arctic “from a zone of death into a zone of life, where human life is taking its form now and forever” (Frank 2010: 120). This, however, entails integrating Arctic space into Soviet space, both discursively and through expeditions and settlements, thus “transforming [Arctic territories] into paradigmatic places of Soviet space”—places where “Soviet people can live like they do everywhere” (ibid: 119).

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Ellingson 2001: 91.

members do seem to play quite significant roles. Stefansson even frequently appears to prefer Inuit to westerners as fellow travelers, especially in the small and tightly knit exploratory parties which are the spearheads of his grand expedition.¹⁷⁶ While rendered as childlike, therefore, Inuit are also depicted as Arctic authorities in *The Friendly Arctic*, both implicitly and explicitly.

There is little doubt that Stefansson's professional interest in Inuit mythology, language and daily life inspired many of his Arctic endeavors. As can be recalled, Pálsson labels Stefansson's field practice participant observation, and emphasizes that he believed in the "necessity of pushing aside preconceptions of the Arctic and the people who lived there" (Pálsson 2005: 82–83). To Stefansson, Inuit held the very key to the *real* Arctic, and it was therefore imperative for him to travel and live among his informants, to learn their language and to understand "their life and culture 'from the inside', with the eyes of the Inuit themselves" (ibid). According to one biographer, Stefansson therefore "got rid of, as he worded it, his 'nearly outworn woollen suit and was fur-clad from head to heel, an Eskimo to the skin'" (Diubaldo 1998 [1978]: 28).

It is thus nothing less than the shrewdness of the Eskimos, to use Sir Borden's phrase again, which Stefansson seeks to absorb from the Arctic natives. If Stefansson can live off the land in the manner of his informants—dress in fur, procure his own live provisions, sleep in self-made snowhouses—his expedition has the potential to be essentially limitless, both in terms of time and of space. Both at the concrete level of Stefansson's ramblings in the northern landscape, therefore, and at the level of his more focused discursive journey towards convincing readers of the friendly Arctic, the practical Inuit knowledge is key. It is therefore imperative that Stefansson demonstrates his intimate familiarity with local traditions; that he signals how he has indeed

¹⁷⁶ See list of "Commanders of Ships or Divisions of the Expedition" in *The Friendly Arctic's* appendix, where several Inuit (named or unnamed) figure as members of exploratory parties (Stefansson 1921: 763–65).

acquired “the typical [...] Eskimo attitude” (Stefansson 1921: 193). One way of doing this is by providing detailed accounts of local practices, such as hunting methods. *The Friendly Arctic*’s chapter XXX is accordingly devoted in its entirety to sealing, and Stefansson consistently employs local terms when laying out the different seal hunting methods. The “‘mauttok,’ or waiting method”, for instance, is to be preferred to the “‘auktok’ or crawling method” (ibid: 305). Once killed, the floating seal is secured by the “manak” (ibid: 302).¹⁷⁷ In Chapter XL, “inuksuit” (or “likeness of men”) is used as a term denoting the strategy commonly adopted by caribou hunters with bows (ibid: 401). These are merely some examples demonstrating that Stefansson’s choice of terms hardly is coincidental. However, even though such examples rhetorically reinforce the impression that he has learned from the Arctic masters themselves, there is still an insurmountable distance between Stefansson and Inuit in the text. About his own choice of seal hunting methods, Stefansson has this to say:

There is little originality about our methods of hunting seals—we have borrowed them from the Eskimos unchanged except for the omission of numerous superstitious practices which, though considered integral parts of the technique by the natives, present themselves to our minds as clearly adventitious. (Ibid: 301)

Even though Stefansson undoubtedly both respects and admires Inuit for their superior hunting skills, such words also imply that he—in contrast to *them*—is in a position to separate fact from fiction. Stefansson can peel off the many layers of native superstition and transform Inuit hunting methods into “polar technique” (ibid: 3); into the kind of practical science which has already been discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis. After having “observed and analyzed”

¹⁷⁷ A *manak*, according to Stefansson, is “a ball of wood the size of a grapefruit” with steel hooks, which is attached to a long line (Stefansson 1921: 302).

the construction of a snowhouse in the Mackenzie Delta some ten years earlier, Stefansson explains that:

The principles [of snowhouse building] appeared so simple that, in spite of having read in various arctic books that their construction is a racial gift with the Eskimos and a mystery insoluble to white men, I never from that moment had any doubt that I could build a snowhouse whenever I should want to. (Ibid: 172)

In fact, he later states:

We have found by experience that an ordinarily adaptable man can learn snowhouse-building in a day. [...] When the snow dome has been otherwise finished, a tunnel is dug through the entrance of the house, giving a sort of trap door entrance through the floor. *Most Eskimos, failing to understand certain principles of thermodynamics*, use a door in the side of the house. But it is obvious that if a door in the wall is open and if the interior of the house is being artificially heated, then warm air being lighter than cold, there will be a continual current of heated air going through the upper half of the doorway, and a cold current from outside entering along the floor. (Ibid: 176–77, emphasis added)

At the same time as Stefansson accentuates his own competence through such words, by describing how he constructs his thermodynamically modified snowhouse he also discursively refutes one of the many manifestations of the literary North. In contrast to the prevalent idea (typically found in Arctic books) that snowhouse building is something of an innate ability of Inuit, Stefansson's tale demonstrates that any adaptable (western) individual can make his/her own home out of snow. Stefansson, however, is not only capable of building snowhouses for field use, he builds them *better* than most Inuit because he—again, in contrast to *them*—possesses two important skills: He is both adaptable and he has academic training. Stefansson can therefore fuse

Inuit know-how with science; he sees possibilities where the Arctic masters themselves must give in.¹⁷⁸

A Too Natural Element?

The passages analyzed above in many ways sum up the ways in which Inuit are represented in *The Friendly Arctic*. As demonstrated, Stefansson's professed ideal is to learn from the indigenous population, to view the Arctic and its plentiful resources through their experienced eyes. On the one hand, Inuit are thus portrayed as the very models of perfectly attuned Arctic subsistence. On the other, however, there is still a divide between "us" and "them" in the text, comparable to the rhetoric of "intellectual imperialism"¹⁷⁹ in contemporary anthropological discourse: Inuit are rendered as a prehistoric people who—unlike Stefansson—seem not to be particularly adaptable. Compared to Inuit characters in *The Friendly Arctic*, Stefansson therefore appears as something of a "super Eskimo" himself, to borrow a characterization from one of his eulogies (Finnie 1978: 76). While Inuit are depicted as Arctic authorities, the central message of his text is nevertheless that Stefansson is the greatest of authority of all.

Such a portrayal of Inuit still exposes some of the ambiguities in the text, and specifically in relation to Stefansson's narrative self-representation. Inuit in their "natural state" are lauded for their symbiotic relationship with nature, and it is on their example that Stefansson models his "avant-garde" theory of friendly Arctic exploration. Still, the Arctic masters themselves are bound to be a disturbing element in Stefansson's theory due to the simple fact that they are already living off the land which the friendly Arctic explorer is

¹⁷⁸ This notion is of course reinforced by the central idea put forth in *The Friendly Arctic* of venturing into areas of ice-covered Arctic Sea while subsisting on hunting. In contrast to himself, Stefansson points out, the "Eskimos themselves considered it impossible to make a living by their method anywhere except on land or on the ocean near land" (Stefansson 1921: 5).

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Fabian 2002 (1983): 164.

out to “conquer”. While Inuit thus are rendered as a natural element in Stefansson’s vision of the friendly Arctic, on occasion they seem nevertheless to be too natural. Perhaps as a solution to this kind of dilemma, Stefansson narratively reinforces his distance to Inuit characters by focusing on his own expertise and their shortcomings. After giving an outline of how to find one’s way in a blizzard, he symptomatically comments that his simple procedure “will show at once why it is that a white man of trained mind can find his way home so frequently where an Eskimo gets lost” (Stefansson 1921: 281). On another occasion, while listening to the sealing yarns of some of his local informants, Stefansson is able to “enjoy the intellectual gymnastic of trying to separate the biological knowledge from the superstition, the facts from the theories” (ibid: 89). The white explorer, he thus suggests—in spite of the fact that he might not be native to the North—can apply his superior intellectual abilities on the best of Inuit practices and thus even improve the art of perfect interaction with the Arctic environment.

The said ambiguity in the narrative representation of Inuit may also characterize aspects of Stefansson’s self-representation in an even more direct way. This becomes apparent through the question which ultimately presents itself from the theories on Arctic adaptability put forth by Stefansson: Is it necessary to be native to a region in order to truly master it? On the one hand, Stefansson’s tale demonstrates, the expertise of the natives is clearly due to their place of origin. On the other, Stefansson’s “mental equipment” (ibid: 65) and academic training put him in the privileged position to master any challenge, even those of non-native regions. And yet, Stefansson does make sure to stress his own familiarity with landscapes similar to the Canadian Arctic. It is, for instance, due to his upbringing on the treeless Dakota prairie that he has never conceived of the North as barren and desolate (ibid: 20–21). Likewise, it is because he has lived for so “many years with Eskimos” and thus “knows every trick there is” (ibid: 134) that he excels at sealing. While this admittedly does not make him an Arctic native, it still demonstrates that the

many years of experience Stefansson has from the field, puts him a more advantaged position to master the environment than other of his western travelling companions.¹⁸⁰ The Inuit presence in *The Friendly Arctic*, therefore, not only unsettles the foundations of Stefansson's pioneering plan for friendly Arctic exploration, it also complicates the image he presents of himself as Arctic expert.

¹⁸⁰ As previously argued, the name change from Stephenson to Icelandic Stefansson might even be seen as Stefansson's symbolical claim to a northern nativeness or identity. Also, Stefansson's photographic self-representation in *The Friendly Arctic* seemingly suggests the same: In the frontispiece he features in skin garments, holding Inuit hunting tools, and dragging a seal behind him.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

In its most elementary form, the question that has guided the discussion in the present thesis is this: How is the persuasive discourse of an exploration account conveyed and even potentially undermined by narrative representation? The case of *The Friendly Arctic* demonstrates that such a question cannot be posed without considering the performative functions of that account. The explorer's narrative self-representation, more specifically, serves such an important performative function. The literary version of the explorer—as an experiencing subject, as a reliable observer of an alien world, even as a herald of a new way of conceiving of that world—is of vital importance to the intended impact of the text on the world outside. In the case of *The Friendly Arctic*, such functions must be understood against the dual context of the biographical/historical landscape of Stefansson's Canadian Arctic Expedition and the discursive landscape of the North at the beginning of the twentieth century. Several of Stefansson's biographers demonstrate how his career was associated with some essentially flawed, even tragic events, among which the *Karluk* cast the longest shadow on his reputation as Arctic visionary voice. Seen against this kind of background, my study implies, the motif of countering public criticism had an important part in the shaping of Stefansson's text. Moreover, that text interacts with and must be considered against another kind of landscape, namely the discursive landscape of a North that is archetypically envisioned as hostile. By fashioning himself as an explorer in harmony with what really is anything *but* a hostile North, Stefansson thus also refutes what his narrative identifies as prevalent discourses of the Arctic: the Arctic as a place of terror and tragedy, as the last frontier, as virgin landscape, or as a factory of heroes, as Stefansson himself puts it.

Under the general topic of Stefansson's self-representation in *The Friendly Arctic* I have singled out and discussed the narrative means and strategies through which Stefansson typically presents his northern vision and

himself as an integral part of that vision. In the analytical chapters of my dissertation, these means and strategies have been discussed under the general headings (1) plot and character, (2) levels of action and discourse, (3) narrative communication situation and the rhetoric of “science”, and (4) ambivalent representations of Inuit, all elements of Stefansson’s text which contribute to establishing Stefansson’s persuasive discourse of the friendly Arctic.

Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope has provided the frame for my analysis of the first two of these four subjects in particular. *The Friendly Arctic* has (1) a plot structure that consciously deviates from exploration narratives fashioned as quests or ordeals (which narratively sustain the idea of a hostile North), and can more aptly be characterized as serpentine rather than straight-lined, goal-oriented and driven by suspense. Such an anti-plot, moreover, mirrors Stefansson’s characteristic strategy of leisurely and adaptable exploration, his non-linear Odyssean wanderings through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. Perceived through Stefansson as a character, the Arctic is thus demonstrated to be a friendly and homelike space, and, moreover, a seemingly social space—an imagined Arctic community, to adapt Benedict Anderson’s term to the exploration narrative. Plot and character (as well the characteristic perspective represented by that character) are thus closely connected to the narrative representation of space and time in *The Friendly Arctic*. The friendly Arctic chronotope has therefore been established as the synthesis of and as a means through which these narrative elements may be productively viewed. Such a (major) friendly Arctic chronotope encompasses three minor, intrinsic chronotopes: first, a documentary chronotope composed of the real, historical temporal and spatial setting for the story; secondly, an odyssey chronotope characterized by a weak temporal dynamic and a friendly Arctic space; and finally, a modern novel chronotope where one of the narrative features that *The Friendly Arctic* shares with the modern novel is its representation of an imagined (Arctic) community.

While T. D. MacLulich maintains that Stefansson “does *not* marshal his intellectual and physical resources to direct a journey of conquest” (MacLulich 1979: 82, emphasis added), Lisa Bloom, on the other hand, argues that Stefansson’s “narrative is organized around the conquest of nature” (Bloom 1993: 129).¹⁸¹ My study has proposed that while Stefansson’s journey on *The Friendly Arctic*’s story level poses no gripping tale of the conquest of Arctic nature, at the discourse level of the narrative Stefansson still does marshal his “intellectual resources” to conduct an apparently successful journey of conquest.

By describing the fluctuation between (2) the levels of story and discourse in Stefansson’s narrative, I have demonstrated how the latter entails an argumentative journey of overcoming a series of ordeals that all in one way or another represent the literary North, a widespread but to Stefansson essentially false motif found in polar literature where the Arctic is rendered as hostile. Behind such a motif, moreover, is the idea of Arctic literature as a large network of texts, authors and readers. Stefansson’s *Friendly Arctic* enters into such an intertextual network consisting of the works of his professional counterparts. Inspired by Harold Bloom’s idea of the anxiety of influence of the literary modernists, I have demonstrated how Stefansson in various ways intertextually incorporates some of his Arctic predecessors in his own text, but more importantly also overwrites or repaints *their* texts, thus enacting a quest and conquest at the discourse level of his narrative. A quest chronotope may thus be identified in the discourse of *The Friendly Arctic*. In contrast to the temporally weak friendly Arctic chronotope, such a quest chronotope is future- or progress-oriented (towards modernity) and entails viewing the space of polar research as a collective and as a space of potential expansion.

¹⁸¹ Although such a conquest, in Bloom’s view, is related to the essentially positive values—the homeliness—that Stefansson finds in the polar landscape. This kind of homeliness, she points out, however, “is expressed in terms of some extreme scientific alienation from the environment” (Bloom 1993: 129).

Ironically, Stefansson's self-representation as *both* Odyssean wanderer and quest hero, as a character in both the friendly Arctic chronotope and in the quest chronotope, is essential to his narrative's persuasive discourse. The friendly Arctic enables Stefansson's discursive quest, as that quest brings about the friendly Arctic. The relationship between the two chronotopes—which thus is both paradoxical and interdependent—may, however, also undermine such a discourse. By examining *The Friendly Arctic's* implied author, I have suggested that such an inherent paradox of the text also can be visualized through the sometimes conflicting characteristics attributed to this key role of the exploration narrative, upon which much of the authority of that narrative rests.

I have accordingly discussed (3) three prominent features of Stefansson's implied author, starting out with the kind of alliance the narrator rhetorically forges with the implied, “layman” reader of the narrative. Such an alliance is part of Stefansson's active strategy of overcoming that reader's assumed skepticism towards his friendly Arctic, but, perhaps more importantly, also a way of displaying his own expertise.

Science plays an equally prominent part in establishing Stefansson's implied author as a man of expertise. In Stefansson's discourse, however, science (à la Greely) is fused with polar craft (à la Peary) into Stefansson's own version of the science of living off the country, exemplarily embodied by the implied author. By delving into the details of *The Friendly Arctic's* narrative communication situation, however, my study has disclosed an internal dissonance in Stefansson's implied author. While Stefansson's self-narration is generally consonant, on some occasions there are still inconsistencies between the text's story and discourse, typically when the dramatic nature of experiences reported by the character-bound narrator *contradict* the reassuringly “friendly” observations offered by the retrospective narrator. Thus two opposing claims about the friendliness of the Arctic are intermittently made in Stefansson's text. As demonstrated through my discussion of the

paradoxical relation between the two major chronotopes of his narrative, as well as the narrative tension in the implied author, the discourse of the Arctic as unfriendly sometimes seeps through the narrative foundations of Stefansson's text, destabilizing the friendly Arctic.

The (4) fundamentally ambivalent portrayal of Inuit characters in *The Friendly Arctic* must be seen in relation to Stefansson's narrative self-representation as explorer and, consequently, to the kind of narrative tension that sometimes undermines his text's persuasive friendly Arctic discourse. By demonstrating how Stefansson's anthropological discourse actively employs temporal terms—the anthropological present and third person pronouns as means of denying Inuit characters *coevalness* with Stefansson and his readers¹⁸²—my study has suggested that the allochronic devaluation of the Other in contemporary anthropology is upheld in Stefansson's text. Nevertheless, such a prehistorical existence or native mode of Inuit life also belongs to Stefansson's idealized, friendly North. Therefore, the “genuine” Copper Eskimos (who are in some ways exemplary Noble Arctic Savages) present far better models for Stefansson's proposed exploration by forage than Emiu, the “city Eskimo” who has “lost” his innate adaptability. The example of Emiu is, however, an important factor in Stefansson's narrative self-representation because it provides a contrast to Stefansson's own expert adaptable explorations skills—and thus a means of accentuating his supreme position in the Arctic. Still, at a more basic level, the Inuit presence in the Arctic is bound to be a disturbing element in any story of western mastery of that region, no matter how adaptable the explorer may be.

In extension of this summary of the analysis and discussion in my dissertation, there are especially two aspects that deserve further reflection. The first one pertains to the allochronic representation of Inuit in *The Friendly Arctic*, and the second entails viewing Stefansson's characteristic strategy of

¹⁸² Cf. Fabian 2002 (1983).

self-representation against the generic affinities of his account with epic and modern novel. First, I tie the discussion in Chapter Six of the narrative representation of Inuit to the two major chronotopes informing Stefansson's narrative by asking what place is there for the indigenous population within those chronotopes?

Being *at home* in the Canadian Arctic, Inuit presumably share Stefansson's inside perspective on the friendly Arctic chronotope, which is rendered as an ideal spatial and temporal setting for Arctic subsistence. It is on the example of the nomadic way of life of Inuit that Stefansson's bases his adaptable explorative program, even the bold idea of venturing beyond the limits of the known Arctic into the assumed lifeless polar ocean by making the sea ice his home. As might be expected, therefore, Inuit feature as an integral part of the friendly Arctic chronotope. It is more difficult to envision, however, what place they have within the parameters of the quest chronotope. In Stefansson's representation, it is impossible to view Inuit characters against the same temporal and spatial setting as the discursive friendly Arctic quest explorer. Inuit are presented as incapable of conducting anything but a past existence, in contrast to the privileged time frame of Stefansson and his readers. In this sense, Johannes Fabian's denial of coevalness is yet another part of the progress-oriented quest chronotope, an element of the text that narratively reinforces *Stefansson's* success in taking the history of exploration into modernity. In the same operation, however, Inuit are denied access to such a temporal dimension, and thereby also to the space of polar research as a collective. Through the application of a chronotopic perspective on his narrative, therefore, the essentially asymmetrical relationship between Stefansson and the indigenous population of Arctic Canada is exposed.

In order to make my final point about Stefansson's narrative self-representation, I draw upon his words of witty mockery of the "heroism" of polar exploration, offered to the audience at a public address in 1929. Why, Stefansson initially asks here, do people still believe in the falsehoods of the

North? His answer exposes some of the intrinsic complexities in his own narrative self-representation, and runs as follows:

Why, I think it is because it pays to be a hero. Heroism pays. It pays for the explorers to have the public believe that the Far North is such a dangerous and such a dreadful place that no one would go there unless he were a combination of a hero and a martyr. [...] We are all fond of heroes and we never have quite enough of them and the greatest hero factory in the world always has been the Far North. All you have to do to be a hero is just go there. The public already knows what a dreadful place it is; they are already self-deceived; they know about the eternal silence and darkness and cold and desolation. In their minds it is an awful place; it stands to reason that none but heroes would go there. And so if I want to be a hero all I really have to do is to go North and stay for a while and come back and certify to the public that I have really been there and the public is then in a frame of mind to worship me for my heroism and the chances are if I don't brag too much about it, they will admire me for my modesty in addition. All I really have to do is to refrain from giving the game away. But you see I am not refraining. I am giving the game away to the best of my ability. (Stefansson 1930: 111)¹⁸³

Christina Adcock presents this quote as an instructive example of how Stefansson uses humor to “lampoon the popular image of the exploring fraternity” (Adcock 2010: 101). The quote, however, also points to the important relation between man and locale in the exploration account; to what I at the outset of this dissertation called the two narrative girders that spurred my own investigative journey into Stefansson’s *Friendly Arctic*. By drawing such a direct line between the image presented by the explorer of a hostile North and his/her public status as hero, Stefansson reflects on how narrative representation fundamentally shapes and conveys the persuasive discourse of

¹⁸³ The address was originally given to the Missouri School Teachers Association and later published as “Abolishing the Arctic” in the journal *School and Community* (Stefansson 1930).

the exploration account, and, more specifically, how the element of self-representation is an integral part of that discourse.

The image offered of Stefansson in *The Friendly Arctic* is that of an explorer whose identity is found somewhere in between the epic and the modernist hero (or anti-hero). Stefansson's Odyssean traits mark him as an epic hero. Like Odysseus, Stefansson navigates unknown terrain and continually lets himself be caught up by his surroundings, thus making a lengthy and circuitous journey before returning home again. Such Odyssean ramblings are, however, an essential part of his *other* journey, the discursive quest through which he one by one outwits the various obstacles presented by the literary North. In thus actively "refraining from giving the game of Arctic explorers away", fashioning his text as a deviation and improvement of theirs, Stefansson may nonetheless be argued to emerge from the intertextual field of Arctic literature as a hero.

At the same time as Stefansson shares some of the characteristics of the classical hero, other traits suggest that he may also be conceived as a modernist hero. First of all, because Stefansson's implied author does not ostensibly display the traditional heroism connected with the archetypal (quest/ordeal) explorer who battles a hostile landscape; he may instead be seen as taking on the role of the modernist (Arctic) anti-hero. Stefansson's repeated insistence on being "ordinarily adaptable", a representative of the "everyman" capable of venturing into the North without difficulty, supports such a proposition. Such a display of self-deprecation must therefore be seen as part of Stefansson's efforts to question the traditionally heroic values connected with Arctic exploration, as is more directly expressed in the quote above. As a writer, Stefansson thus shares with the modernists their imperative to challenge tradition by holding up literary models of (anti)heroism in their works; their aesthetic response to the changing sociopolitical atmosphere in the early

twentieth century.¹⁸⁴ However, while Stefansson similarly promotes his critical message by constructing himself as a self-deprecating explorer, his implied author nevertheless fails to share other distinguishing features with the modernist anti-hero, for instance the introspective nature of such a character, his/her indecisiveness and propensity for making mistakes, and consequently his/her traits as an essentially round character. Whenever Stefansson experiences that Arctic nature *is* hostile—something which presumably would cause him to doubt his own beliefs—the retrospective narrator cuts in to restore the harmony of the friendly Arctic discourse otherwise conveyed by his narrative. In fact, by focusing on Stefansson’s narrative self-representation as an explorer *in between* static epic hero and modernist anti-hero, we arrive at the heart of the internal contradictions characterizing Stefansson’s text. Put differently, the case of Stefansson’s *Friendly Arctic* demonstrates the difficulty in successfully reconciling the generic conventions of the heroic exploration narrative with the critical agenda of the modern novel, and still retain the performative functions of that narrative. At times, narrative representation thus undermines the otherwise forceful persuasive discourse of *The Friendly Arctic*.

The findings and main arguments made throughout this dissertation are to be seen as primarily of relevance to the field of travel and exploration literature, but can also be applicable to literary and narratological studies in general. Another apparent relevance is to the historical and biographical research that has been conducted on the life and legacy of Arctic explorers. My study suggests that the literary perspective needs to be taken into consideration when discussing Stefansson’s essentially ambivalent position as Arctic pioneer, and, more specifically, that this position may be traced to narrative dimensions of his self-representation in *The Friendly Arctic*. My study is by no means exhaustive; other potential research topics present themselves in the wake of such a methodological approach to the exploration narrative. Among these are

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Neimneh 2013: 88. Adcock, comparably, sees Stefansson’s debunking of Arctic myths in relation to literary modernism and the American Progressive movement (Adcock 2010: 89).

the potentially different gender characteristics with which the quest and the Odyssean explorer (or the implied authors of accounts featuring other forms of narrative emplotments) may be attributed. Another equally interesting project would be to read the narratives of different polar explorers against each other in a discursive or intertextual landscape, thus conducting a comparative analysis of works that belong to the same or to different periods within the history of literary exploration of the North. A related but critically different concern would be to focus more specifically on the Arctic as a “contact zone”¹⁸⁵ and, consequently, on the kind of interaction that may be envisioned between the western explorer (as colonizer) and the indigenous peoples (as colonized). Finding and reading accounts written by Inuit during the period of the “discovery” and exploration of the Arctic would be vital to such a project.

This dissertation as a whole has demonstrated that the so-called factual Arctic exploration narrative shares with fiction some typically literary discursive means and strategies, and that it therefore is productive to view such narratives *as literature*, and (as has been done in previous chapters) through the insights and means of narrative theory. Viewed against the larger background of the growing interest in the Arctic regions experienced in the past decades, my study moreover suggests that it is important to include such a literary perspective in order to conceive of the discourses that have shaped the characteristic and sometimes conflicting understandings of the North, which consequently impacts political decision-making and environmental resource management. More specifically, the literary discussion in the past chapters demonstrates that the chronotope may provide an effective means of describing and analyzing the exploration narrative. This is because a chronotopic analysis takes into consideration that narrative’s different levels of story and discourse, and thereby becomes a means through which the internal world of the text and the world outside that text (i.e. the real life-world; the historical and cultural

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Pratt 2008 (1992): 8.

context of the text) may be connected and described. While the chronotope has featured in several studies of travel literature, my own study thereby contends that there is great potential in applying a chronotopic perspective on the literature of exploration.

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