Reimagining the Poles: Shifting ideas of Wilderness and Extremes

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* Clues to the Living Polar Regions

• Portraying either of the polar regions as barren shuts down a lot of possibilities for understanding.
Understanding the Poles unlocks the questions about universal truth and who has the keys to the living polar regions.

Key concepts:
- Cosmography
- Polarity
- Globe
- Extremes
- Universal Truth
Peter Apian, bestselling author of cosmography influenced by Albrecht Dürer, 1524, first edition
Planispheres and the Planet-Sphere
MacDonald (Max) Gill, c. 1934,
Mercator’s Polar Map
c.1600
A Question of Polar Orientation

Writing about the Arctic (from outside)?

or

Writing from the Arctic (from within)?

- Tim Ingold, Boreas Project
Margaret Cavendish: Science and Fantasy, a Precursor to Mary Shelley. Reworks Gender and the Poles from the Interior.

How students can experience the polar regions as inhabited vacariously through embodiment and indigenous traditional knowledge

The Atlas is one of the outcomes of the project “The Northwest Passage and the construction of Inuit pan-Arctic identity” (funded by SSHRC—the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council), and co-directed by Claudio Aporta (Affairs Program, Dalhousie University), Michael Bravo (Geography, University of Cambridge), and Fraser Tay (Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre, Carleton University). This project looks at Inuit occupancy of the Northwest Passage, through a study and documentation of traditional trails and place names, which have interconnected Inuit groups across the Arctic since time immemorial.

The two main research questions for this project are:

1. how extensive and significant is the historical Inuit presence along the Northwest Passage?
2. how interconnected Inuit groups were before European arrival?

This Atlas focuses on historical written evidence of Inuit presence in most of the Canadian Arctic. It contains a of material obtained from hundreds of published and unpublished documents produced by explorers, ethnographers and other visitors who were in contact with Inuit during the contact period or shortly before Inuit moved to permanent settlements. A very significant proportion of those trails and place names are still used today. The Atlas is a database that the sources can be found through searches, or clicking features on the map. Each document has been given a geographic reference (which in some cases, it occupies the whole Canadian Arctic). Whenever possible Inuit place names and trails encountered in the documents were digitized separately.

It should be noted that accuracy of the geographic data according to the cartographic techniques of the original and of the scale employed. This atlas does not attempt to provide precise local geographic locations, but a regional cross-regional sense of how intensively the waters and lands of the Northwest Passage were used by Inuit.
Class of 30 senior Cambridge Geography undergraduates

Immersive learning
Joanasie Makpah (above) with translator

Pairngut Peterloosie, Pond Inlet (r)
Stefansson’s Pole of Inaccessiblity”
Turning the Poles Inside Out

• Q: Does this map show an empty unhabited Arctic (from above) or a space of dwelling (from within)?
• Ans: Both, *about* the Arctic and *from* the Arctic.
1. Review notes

2. Read Bates on Risk

3. Go through +1 (intranet); review Reading list; read Curtis; Prepare for Museum visit.

Organise notes and Photographs

Cultures of Risk lectures
Donovan, Hulme

MGK lecture 1
Risk and environmental uncertainty in other knowledge traditions or cultures
Oct 24

MGK lecture 2
Understanding object mobilities and histories in museum collections
Nov 2nd

Polar Museum Visit
Working with Objects
Rotating through three stations
Nov 5th

MGK lecture 3
Reflecting on the Museum Visit and the +1 Coursework
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Material Politics

This Inupiat (Alaska Inuit) bag was knitted by an Inuit person.

Q: What is the bag knitted from?
A: Plastic

Points for Reflection

• Is plastic an inauthentic material for Inuit culture?
• Does the dependency on northern towns and cities on hydrocarbons is a factor in your judgement?
• Does reuse (possibly ‘upcycling’) change the kind of object this is?
J Verne, *The Purchase of the North Pole, 1891*