

buildings from their historic contexts. In a historic cemetery on the south-facing hills behind the settlement, thawing permafrost has caused caskets to push through the ground surface and tumble down the slopes. Finally, up to three cruise ships now visit the island annually, resulting in footpaths and general wear and tear on buildings. In this way, the book relates history and heritage to climatology, oceanography and earth science so beautifully that non-specialist readers will be left with a greater understanding of just how fragile Canada's Arctic heritage has become in recent decades. I would therefore recommend this book to anyone interested in the natural and cultural history of the Canadian Arctic, and I consider it a worthy addition to any coffee table or library.

Peter C. Dawson
Department of Anthropology and Archaeology
University of Calgary
2500 University Drive NW
Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4, Canada
pcdawson@ucalgary.ca

FROZEN ASSETS: BRITISH MINING, EXPLORATION, AND GEOPOLITICS ON SPITSBERGEN, 1904–53. By FRIGGA KRUSE. Groningen, The Netherlands: Arctic Centre, University of Groningen, 2013. ISBN 9789491431333. Circumpolar Studies 9. xiii + 466 p., maps, b&w Illus., references, appendices. Softbound. €36.57 (incl. VAT).

Frigga Kruse's doctoral thesis on the history of British mining, exploration, and geopolitics on Spitsbergen in the first half of the 20th century is published as Volume Nine of the University of Groningen's Circumpolar Studies Series. Readers will immediately recognize this work as an unrevised dissertation with all the strengths and weaknesses this genre entails. The structure is somewhat formulaic, the introduction is highly theoretical, and the text is quite long. But this is a fascinating and highly original work that will be of great interest to historians of Spitsbergen/Svalbard, as well as to historians of the Arctic in general. In particular, it offers an excellent example of the innovative work of the Large-scale Historical Exploitation of Polar Areas (LASHIPA) project, which came out of the International Polar Year of 2007–08 and combines historical archeology with extensive archival research.

The book's central research question is, "What were the driving forces behind the development of the British mining industry on Spitsbergen between 1904 and 1953?" (p. 4). Using a theoretical framework that combines a center-periphery model with Bruno Latour's (2005) Actor Network Theory (ANT), Kruse suggests that a combination of economic and political motivations sustained British mining interests in Spitsbergen during that period. The study aims to move the history of economic exploitation in the Arctic away from a national or nationalistic perspective

towards a broader and more international approach by integrating previously disparate research methods. ANT offers an ideal framework for achieving this goal since it gives a role to non-human "actants" and connects local histories to global networks. This theoretical framework potentially has a lot to contribute to Arctic history, and a fuller discussion of how ANT fits into this broader field might therefore have been useful. For example, does ANT function as an alternative to the more established approaches of environmental history, history of science, and historical geography, or is it better thought of as a tool to be applied across a variety of historical disciplines?

Spitsbergen is probably not a place most readers would immediately associate with Britain and the British Empire, but an early chapter on "Britishness" helps to make this connection. Building on Francis Spufford's *I may be some time: Ice and the English Imagination* (1996), Kruse shows how Britain's longstanding interest in the polar regions played an important role in stimulating British economic interests in Spitsbergen. The British had a romantic interest in the history of the polar regions that sometimes provided the motivation for men like the polar explorer William Speirs Bruce to take an interest in mining on Spitsbergen. But economic and political factors were central. The coal industry that had both stimulated and been stimulated by Britain's industrial revolution was constantly looking for new opportunities to exploit. At the same time, Britain's empire was seeking to project power across the globe, and Spitsbergen functioned as another node in this geopolitical system.

The majority of text presents detailed case studies of the four British companies that operated in Spitsbergen in the first half of the 20th century: the Spitsbergen Coal & Trading Company Ltd., the Spitzbergen Mining & Exploration Syndicate Ltd., the Northern Exploration Co. Ltd., and the Scottish Spitsbergen Syndicate, Ltd. Beginning with the Spitsbergen Coal & Trading Company's arrival on the island in 1904 and ending with the departure of the Scottish Spitsbergen Syndicate in 1953, the combined operations of these four British companies represent 87 years of activity. These detailed on-the-ground studies fit neatly into the ANT approach outlined above, since they reveal how local environmental conditions played a key role in shaping the histories of global networks, and vice versa. While some of the more detailed descriptions of the archeological study of British mining camps will be of interest primarily to historical archeologists, the very impressive integration of archeological and archival sources provides a useful model for all historians conducting this sort of study in the Arctic or elsewhere.

Ultimately, Kruse's aim of taking the history of economic exploitation in the Arctic beyond a national framework is only partially realized by this book. ANT certainly opens new possibilities and perspectives for examining the economic exploitation of the Arctic, and the conclusion that geopolitical factors were often of central importance to decision making appears valid. But the decision to focus almost exclusively on British companies inevitably

maintains the nation-state close to the center of the analysis. More references to other dimensions of the LASHIPA project—which was indeed a thoroughly international endeavor—would have helped to overcome this relatively narrow national focus. This book needs to be recognized as one important part of a broader research project that certainly seems to be achieving the author's stated goals. As it stands, some revisions to the doctoral dissertation would be necessary to make this book attractive to general readers with an interest in Arctic history. But this fascinating book will already be of great interest to a broad range of specialist scholars working on polar themes.

REFERENCES

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Adrian Howkins
Department of History
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523-1776, USA
Adrian.Howkins@colostate.edu

SKIN FOR SKIN: DEATH AND LIFE FOR INUIT AND INNU. By GERALD M. SIDER. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0-8223-5521-2 (pbk.). xix + 288 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, references, index. Hardbound, US\$ 89.95; Softbound, US\$24.95.

Attributing the miseries of colonial history to the stupidity or willful blindness of individual actors—traders, mine employees, or government officials—is a mistake. Historically, they operated within the necessities of a particular way of making sense, communicated through edicts, texts, and norms embedded in the logic of capital expansion and their (our) culture. Colonial behaviour is more than a case of stupid people doing mean and hurtful things.

In *Skin for skin*, Gerald Sider, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, Graduate Centre, City University of New York, focuses on Innu and Inuit of Labrador, the title being a reference to the personal price paid, historically, for delivering fur to the Hudson's Bay Company.

Sider is at pains to explain the self-defeating and destructive behaviour of Inuit and Innu, plagued by persistent substance abuse, youth suicide, and violence against women and children. In the first four chapters, he walks us through the brutal history of White/Inuit, Innu relationships. The remaining chapters are a salvage operation—but not entirely. While documenting the strength of contemporary Innu and Inuit cultures, he notes new exploitive threats: contemporary versions of what he has previously documented.

Sider's writing is heavily influenced by the theorizing of anthropologist Paul Willis (1977). Willis' contention was that the self-destructive behaviour of British working class 'lads' was a form of resistance against their attempted socialization to the labour regimes of industrial Britain. This was, at the time, an attention to agency by Willis that broke with the rigidity of Marxist structuralism. Sider aspires to do more than recount a colonial history. He wants to make a difference by offering a way out of this cycle of self-destructive behaviour.

Substance abuse as resistance takes agency in peculiar and questionable directions. Sider might have benefited from the experiential wisdom of Aboriginal theorists like Brave Heart (2003) and Wesley-Esquimaux (2004), who understand substance abuse as an attempt to make the pain of historical trauma disappear; a response that returns pain in ever-widening circles.

In her 1992 review of Willis' *Learning to Labour*, Beverly Skeggs argues that his political project leaves the reader with a romanticized, celebratory view of working-class 'lads' and that rhetorical devices like the use of "we" invite a commitment to the text without prior consideration of theory. Sider does the same. In writing *Skin for skin*, he uses archival sources. He did a little "hanging out" in Labrador towns. He interviewed no Innu or Inuit. Nevertheless, not unlike the results of Jean-Paul Sartre hanging out with Simone de Beauvoir in Paris cafés, his observations are worth taking seriously.

Sider duplicates Willis' rhetorical style with full force. The reader is often provided a lecture framed by, "As we shall see...", "As we all know..." etc. Canadian readers will also be jarred by Sider's reference to Indians and Native people. Arguing for the use and historical context of this language, in that the State and traders were busy trying to make Innu and Inuit "Indians" and "Eskimos," reinforces images that Sider wants to change. "Native people"—a term used throughout the text—is current in the United States, but definitely passé in Canada. Sider might have empowered Aboriginal peoples in Canada by deferring to Inuit Tapirisat Canada's online resources stating how they would like Inuit, Aboriginal, and the term Indigenous to be used.

The first half of Sider's text is a rough but important read. The reader is given a thorough journey through a colonial history badly in need of deconstruction. Sider delivers. The text, however, is not a straightforward chronology. Like Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1976), Sider's narration, en route to detailing capitalist expansion in the New World, gives us many asides. A discussion of the Spanish Flu epidemic in northern Labrador introduces us to the spread of the Black Plague in Europe. Sider makes the point that, like the European peasants, Inuit and Innu endured years of suffering—famine and relocation—that made them vulnerable to whatever diseases came along.

In the chapter "Living Within and Against Tradition, 1800–1929," Sider takes issue with the glorification by Native people and outsiders of the fur-trade era as