

Making of Arctic heroes

Charles Brower's *Fifty Years below Zero*, Jan Welzl's *Thirty Years in the Golden North*, and Ideas of Arctic heroism and national character

—
Michaela Pokorná

Master thesis in English literature ENG-3992

November 2014



Acknowledgement

My thanks for finishing this thesis belong to Johan Henrik Schimanski who was a very good and patient supervisor, to Lucie Taraldsen Medová who proofread the text, and to my family and friends who have always supported me.

Abstract

This thesis examines literary representation and imaginative construction of arctic heroism and national character in autobiographical memoirs *Fifty years Below Zero* by Charles Brower (an U.S. writer) and *Thirty Years in the Golden North* by Jan Welzl (a Czech author from the Austro-Hungarian Empire). I discuss the ways Brower and Welzl fashion heroic images of themselves in their texts, and how these heroic images fit into the paradigm of turn-of-the-century heroic polar literature and the paradigm of the national character in American and Czech nation-building pedagogical discourses in the times when the narratives were published. I thereby examine a position of Brower's and Welzl's texts within the framework of national ideology related, in Brower's case, to Alaska as the 'Last Frontier', and, in Welzl's case, to the emergence of independent Czechoslovakia. The conclusion I draw is that the narrators became national Arctic heroes and their narratives popular partly because their narratives and self-portrayals satisfied the demands of the genres of polar literature, but partly also because they challenged the very ideas on which these genres had been formed.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	I
ABSTRACT	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS	III
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. THE TOPIC OF THE THESIS.....	1
1.2. THE AUTHORS AND THEIR NARRATIVES	3
1.3. METHOD.....	7
1.4. THEORY, RESEARCH AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	10
1.4.1. <i>Exploration genre and the frontier genre</i>	12
1.4.2. <i>Representations of arctic nature</i>	15
1.4.3. <i>Representations of the Inuit</i>	21
1.4.4. <i>Research Questions</i>	25
CHAPTER 2. THE ARCTIC NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE TEXTS	27
2.1. WELZL AND THE PERILS OF THE FAR NORTH	28
2.1.1. <i>The lonesome hero in the sublime Arctic</i>	29
2.1.2. <i>The human superhero overcomes challenges</i>	30
2.1.3. <i>The heroes of the Frozen Sea</i>	32
2.1.4. <i>Welzl as a Czech explorer-hero</i>	33
2.2. BROWER AND THE HIDDEN DANGERS OF THE ARCTIC.....	41
2.2.1. <i>A 'friendly Arctic'?</i>	41
2.2.2. <i>'Mother' Nature</i>	43
2.2.3. <i>The greatest enemy in the Arctic</i>	44
2.2.4. <i>Brower as an expert</i>	46
CHAPTER 3. ENCOUNTERS WITH THE INUIT	49
3.1. JAN WELZL AND HIS STRANGE 'ESKIMOS'	50
3.1.1. <i>The primitive Noble savages</i>	50
3.1.2. <i>The white gentleman among the slobs</i>	52
3.1.3. <i>'Civilizing the Inuit'</i>	55
3.1.4. <i>Welzl as 'the Eskymo'</i>	57
3.2. CHARLES BROWER AND STRANGELY FAMILIAR INUIT	60
3.2.1. <i>Deconstructing the stereotypes</i>	60
3.2.2. <i>The present life of an Inuit</i>	62
3.2.3. <i>Civilized versus primitive</i>	64
3.2.4. <i>Between the Inuit and the white man</i>	65
3.2.5. <i>Brower as a mediator between cultures</i>	67
3.2.6. <i>Positive transformations in Barrow community</i>	69
CHAPTER 4. AMERICAN FRONTIER REVISITED	73
4.1. THE TALES OF SUCCESS	73
4.2. THE LAND OF FREEDOM AND EQUALITY	76
4.2.1. <i>Freedom without restrictions</i>	76
4.2.2. <i>Challenging the ideas of Anglo-Saxon hegemony in the Arctic</i>	78
4.2.3. <i>Challenging the ideas of masculine North</i>	79

4.2.4. <i>The melting pot</i>	81
4.3. THE PROMISED LAND.....	84
4.3.1. <i>The land of fortune</i>	84
4.3.2. <i>Living off the land and ocean</i>	86
4.3.3. <i>'We get to have it all'</i>	88
4.4. IS WELZL AN AMERICAN CHARACTER?	89
4.4.1. <i>An American pioneer – or a mythological Czech peasant?</i>	89
4.4.2. <i>A promised Czech Land in the Golden North</i>	91
4.4.4. <i>Tramping for freedom</i>	93
4.4.3. <i>Unsettled identity as a Czech trait</i>	95
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS	97
LITERATURE	99

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. The topic of the thesis

Arctic discourses have been an expanding field and various accounts of Arctic explorations are the dominant object of scholarly interest within this field. Throughout the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, Arctic explorations as such became a prestigious endeavour. Expeditions to the Polar Regions were undertaken especially for nationalistic reasons and were a source of national pride and identity. Noble virtues such as courage and stamina with which the explorer fought the extreme Arctic conditions, together with their scientific expertise and ingenuity, became synonymous with the traits of the explorer's nation. Polar explorers were among the most popular national heroes. And so were their narratives, in which the explorers demonstrated the qualities of their nations, formed – and perpetuated – the heroic image of both the explorer and the country they represented. Several scholars have pointed out that in the process of a formation of the national identity, exploration narratives – so popular among readers – were often more important than the geographic discoveries and scientific achievements themselves (Riffenburgh 70). Thus, the topic of arctic heroism is discussed in a wide range of publications in both cultural and literary studies.

Recently, the omnipresent interest in nationalist and imperialist discourse of polar explorers has been accompanied by studies of indigenous voices within the discourse. However, significantly less attention has been paid to narratives that represent a bridge between the national and indigenous discourses; the accounts written by non-indigenous 'amateurs', for whom exploration was not their main occupation. There were whalers, traders, trappers, gold prospectors and other adventurers who worked in the Arctic regions for periods much longer than the explorers; sometimes, they have lived among the native people for most of their lives. These men came to the Arctic to follow their own interests and only seldom took part in a national project. Since they worked for their nations only indirectly – especially by sharing knowledge about the Arctic with explorers and other researchers, as pointed out by scholars about Norwegian and Canadian trappers – these men were very unlikely to become acclaimed polar heroes (Hauan 53, Sawchuk 275). However, there were exceptions, and about these exceptions, I write in this work.

This work is centred around memoirs of an American, Charles Brower and a Czech-born, Jan Welzl, men who – as I argue – were such 'bridges' between the western and native cultures. Both men became legends and iconic figures associated with the Arctic for their fellow citizens: Charles Brower (1863-1945), was a whaler and trader who lived for fifty years among the Inuit in the settlements around Point Barrow, the northernmost post of the Alaskan mainland. Scholar

Terence Cole, in his preface to the 1994 edition of Brower's memoirs *Fifty Years below Zero: A Lifetime of Adventure in the Far North* (first published 1942), calls Brower a 'legendary figure among explorers' who 'remains a central figure in the history and culture of the frozen North' (xi). According to Cole, the explorers regarded Brower the 'King of the Arctic' (xi). Vilhjalmur Stefansson, a distinguished U.S.-born Canadian anthropologist and Arctic explorer, in his introduction to Brower's *Fifty Years below Zero*, calls Brower's book 'a source-book on frontiers and high adventure' (xxv). For Stefansson, Brower was 'America's most northerly pioneer', representing 'what a loyal American likes to think of a typical American' (xv). It may thus not be a coincidence that when President Theodore Roosevelt gave Brower a private audience, he welcomed Brower with the exclamation 'Brother!' (*Fifty Years below Zero*, 236).

Jan Welzl (1868-1948) was a Czech adventurer who settled down on the New Siberian Islands, which became his home for nearly thirty years. However, Welzl also travelled all across the Arctic as a craftsman, trader, whaler and trapper, and his activity radius encompassed an enormous area: from Franz Josef's Land to the northern and eastern Alaskan coast and it even includes frequent visits to the interior of Alaskan and Canadian Arctic. Martin Strouhal, a Czech expert on Jan Welzl's life and work, calls Welzl 'the greatest Czech polar explorer and settler', in the title of his publication on Jan Welzl *Svoboda pod Bodem Mrazu. Příběhy a záhady, které zanechal nejvyšší český polárník Jan Eskymo Welzl (Freedom Below Zero: The Stories and Mysteries left by the Greatest Czech Polar Explorer and Settler Jan Eskymo Welzl)*.¹ The famous Czech writer Karel Čapek, who wrote the foreword to Jan Welzl's memoirs *Tricet Let na Zlatém Severu (Thirty Years in the Golden North)* and *Po stopách polárních pokladů (The Quest for Polar Treasures*, first published 1930), called Welzl 'our northernmost country fellow' who 'made his way through the world with all the typical characteristics of one of our people' (5-6). In his time, Welzl was given great publicity in media: He gave public lectures about the Arctic and he was also received by the iconic Czech president Tomáš G. Masaryk (Strouhal 102). Up to (and even) today, many Czechs would have regarded Welzl as the first Czech polar explorer of the independent Czechoslovakia (founded in 1918) (Strouhal 100).

Brower's and Welzl's memoirs became instant bestsellers in their time and have remained in print even up to today. In addition, Welzl's memoirs were translated into many European languages, including Icelandic and Esperanto, and the English translation of *Thirty Years in the Golden North*, published by Macmillan Company in New York in 1932, won the 'Book of the Month Club' award (Strouhal 135). However, neither Brower nor Welzl probably expected that their activities in the North would ever bring any benefits to mankind or public recognition to them.

¹ The Czech term '*polárník*' does not distinguish between 'an explorer' and a 'settler', it can refer to both.

As Welzl aptly puts it, ‘the main interest of a polar man is his stomach and pocket, not fame like in the case of explorers’, and the polar man’s quest and achievement in the Arctic was ‘fur and gold, and not a latitude’ (q15, 243). Brower makes the same point when he points out that the only thing he and his friends had expected from the Arctic when they first arrived was ‘taking whales and getting rich’ (75). Yet, in their respective countries, they stand out as the Arctic heroes.

The central question of this thesis thus is: Why did Charles Brower and Jan Welzl become national Arctic heroes and why did their narratives become so popular?

To answer this question, I examine the position of Jan Welzl’s *Thirty Years in the Golden North* and *The Quest for Polar Treasures* and Charles Brower’s *Fifty Years below Zero* within the literary tradition of western exploration. I also investigate how they relate to nation-building ideologies predominant in the USA (where my focus is particularly on the discourse of Alaska as the Last Frontier) and Czechoslovakia at the time of the emergence of both narratives. I discuss the ways in which Welzl and Brower fashioned the heroic image of themselves in their accounts, and how their self-portraits conform to conventional ideas about heroic explorers and pioneers in their respective countries. Further, I discuss the ways in which Welzl’s image secured Welzl’s popularity among the Americans.

Charles Brower and Jan Welzl are not well-known outside American and Czech culture. Before I go any further, I use the following section to outline their biographies, their public status and history of the publication of their narratives to give the reader a head start on the heroes.

1.2. The authors and their narratives

The outline of Brower’s life and work is based entirely on Terrence Cole’s preface to 1994 edition of Charles Brower’s *Fifty Years below Zero*, the only comprehensive source to Brower’s biography, bibliography and public reception so far. In Jan Welzl’s case, I use Martin Strouhal’s introduction to *Svoboda pod Bodem Mrazu (Freedom Below Zero)*, published in 2009, which – at present – is the most detailed book on Welzl’s life and literary work. The numbers in brackets after the quotes refer to the pages of Cole and Strouhal’s texts, respectively.

Let me start with Charles Brower. Brower was born in 1863 to a middle-class family in New York. He spent his teenage years at sea, sailing as a carpenter apprentice and a cabin boy all around the world. In 1884, he was hired as a coal prospector by San Francisco’s Pacific Steam Whaling Company and made his first voyage to the Arctic. In 1886, the Company convinced Brower to return to the Arctic and – together with his friend George Leavitt – operate the first shore-based whaling station in the Alaskan Arctic at Point Barrow –near an ancient village of Utqiagvik, the

largest Inupiaq settlement on the Arctic coast (xiv). Brower imagined that he would be working in Barrow for only a year or two to make a decent fortune. As it happened, he stayed and lived there for nearly sixty years, even long after the demise of the whaling industry. In 1893, Brower and his companions established their own firm, the Cape Smythe Whaling and Trading Company, which became one of the most successful and growing whaling companies in Alaska. Browerville, as the site of Brower's main store in Barrow was called, was the 'shopping centre for northern Alaska and a well-stocked grocery store where Inupiaq people exchanged furs for anything from canned food and coffee to oysters, pineapples, figs and candy' (xv). Brower also learned the basics of law, business as well as medicine so that he was able to provide some legal help and stand in for a doctor when necessary. The first hospital on the Alaskan arctic coast was also built thanks to Brower's initiative (275). Brower thus made Barrow into an important social centre and a meeting point for the whole indigenous and white community. In 1900, Brower became the official census taker for northern Alaska and, as a postmaster and U. S. Commissioner, he became 'the law north of the Brooks Range' for many years (xvi). Both of Brower's wives were Inupiaq and he fathered fourteen children, many of whom became influential leaders in the Indigenous community. Brower died in Barrow in February 1945, eighty-two years old. During his life in the Arctic, Brower became a self-educated expert 'on all Arctic matters'; by his friends, he was called 'a virtual one-man arctic research institute' (xviii). He was considered a man who 'changed the course of Arctic history' (xiii). As an amateur ornithologist and biologist, he preserved and shipped precious specimens to museums across the United States, 'adding sixty-three new species and subspecies to the list of known birds in arctic Alaska' (xviii). Above all, Brower learned and mastered Inupiaq so that he spoke with no trace of an accent; in his own words, he 'learned to speak Eskimo better than English' (xvi). His interest in natural science, archaeology, history and ethnology, and his expertise in Inupiaq language made him a friend and colleague with many famous Arctic explorers and scientists, and Barrow became, in Brower's words, a popular 'headquarter' (297) for e.g. Danish Knut Rasmussen and Norwegian Roald Amundsen. Vilhjalmur Stefansson was among Brower's closest friends.

As early as 1920, Stefansson convinced Brower to write memoirs of his life in the Arctic. Brower mailed Stefansson a manuscript nine hundred pages long, which turned into a book later entitled 'The Northernmost American'. William Bailey, Brower's friend and ornithologist at the Denver Museum of Natural History, edited and serialised some portions of the memoir in 1932-1934 for *Blue Book*, a men's adventure magazine. Obviously, Brower's memoir was not publishable in its original form as a single volume. According to Cole, the publishers were scared away both by its size and its style (xix). The text was then substantially 'shortened and polished' by two journalists, Philip J. Farrelly and Charles Lyman Anson (xx). The collaboration between Brower

and his ghost-writers was a long-distance one; they met for the very first time only after the book appeared, when Brower came to Chicago to help with the book's promotion. As Cole observes, Brower, 'though clearly pleased with his autobiography and delighted to see it finally in print, commented to his long-distance collaborator, "Somehow I don't seem to remember a lot of that conversation you put in"' (xx). The final version of the Brower's text with Stefansson's introduction was published under the title *Fifty Years below Zero: A Lifetime of Adventure in the Far North* in 1942, by Dodd, Mead & Company, New York. The book became an instant bestseller and 'one of the most widely read memoirs ever written about Alaska'. It has been reprinted at least nineteen times, latest in 1997 by University of Alaska Press (xi).

Jan Welzl's life in the Arctic, as he describes it in his narratives, is strikingly similar to Brower's life, with one significant difference: whereas Brower's activities in the Arctic have many eyewitnesses, in Welzl's case, there is virtually no evidence or a witness that would confirm that Welzl really settled down on the New Siberian Islands, that he made his many journeys in the Arctic and that he lived there for thirty years, as he claims. The only documented events of Welzl's life – that precede his return to the European continent – is his birth in the Moravian town Zábřeh in 1868 and then, in 1921, a record of the immigration office in Cordova, Alaska, according to which Welzl was suspected of espionage for the Soviet Union and hence deported from the United States to Hamburg (Strouhal 71). Most of the following data (here, again, cited from Strouhal) about Jan Welzl's life before his return to Europe was drawn from Welzl's narratives alone; thus, its reliability might be questionable. Similar to Brower, Welzl spent his young years as a locksmith apprentice travelling around Europe and he also spent some years at sea. Around 1894, he found himself working as a locksmith on the construction of Trans-Siberian Railway near Irkutsk. Convinced by the tales of sailors, construction workers and runaway convicts about fabulous fortunes (i.e. in gold, whalebone and fur) waiting to be found in the Far North, Welzl decided to try his luck. He purchased a cart and a pony, and – without any knowledge how to read maps – he set out for the journey across the entirety of Siberia, led only by the stars and knowledgeable people's advice, to the ultimate goal of his journey: the Arctic Ocean (*Thirty Years* 22-23). It took Welzl three years and many detours, but in 1898, he reached his goal. He had himself hired to a whaler bound to the New Siberian Islands and, eventually, settled down on one of them (Strouhal 56). Like Brower in Barrow, Welzl became a postmaster, a doctor as well as 'the law' in New Siberia, even more so after he has been elected the Chief of the New Siberian Islands. Also similarly to Brower, Welzl established his own company – called the Eskymo Trading Post New Siberian Islands Company (Strouhal 64). Probably in 1921, Welzl's schooner *Laura* shipwrecked with him and his wealth on board somewhere near the western Alaskan coast (Strouhal 70). Welzl travelled to Cordova in order to make money for his return to the Arctic, but he attracted attention of the

immigration office; at the time of a political tension between the USA and the Soviet Union, a man without identity documents certainly would. Ignorant of the fact that the Austro-Hungarian Empire (of which he claimed to be a citizen) no longer existed, he furthermore asserted that his home was the New Siberian Islands, then a part of the Soviet Union. Consequently, Welzl was deported from the United States as a Soviet spy. He was sent to Hamburg, where he lived in 1922-1926, telling stories about the Arctic in pubs where, as a fascinating storyteller, he attracted attention of a professor of Inuit dialects who paid Welzl for his information (Strouhal 96). Waiting for his identity documents and passport, Welzl also entertained the employees at the Czechoslovak consulate with his stories. At the embassy, he soon became a legendary figure known as the 'Eskymo'. The employees encouraged Welzl to give his incredible memoirs to journalists in order to be published, and recommended Rudolf Těsnohlídek, a well-known Czech writer, as one of them. This was the beginning of Welzl's long-term collaboration with Czech journalists that gave birth to three books and made Welzl a popular author. Welzl himself never intended to return from the Arctic and, had the unlucky coincidence not caused his deportation from the USA, nobody would probably learn that he, Jan Welzl, had ever existed. It is then only by the lucky coincidence that Czech culture can boast 'Eskymo Welzl', the 'Greatest Czech polar explorer'.

Jan Welzl's first book was based on letters sent from Hamburg to Těsnohlídek, who, during 1926, edited and serialized some of the stories from Welzl's letters in the *Lidové noviny*, one of the most widely read Czech daily newspapers. As in the case of Brower's memoirs, Těsnohlídek had to 'translate' the letters to a readable and comprehensive language: the letters presented rather incoherent text written in a language which Welzl erroneously considered Czech, but which – in fact – was a mixture of English, German, Russian, Czech and other, presumably Inuit, languages (Strouhal 97). Těsnohlídek later transformed Welzl's letters into a form of a travel book with the title *Eskymo Welz: Paměti českého polárního lovce a zlatokopa (Eskymo Welzl: Memoirs of a Czech Polar Hunter and Gold Prospector)*. The book was published by Borový Company in 1928 with Jan Welzl as the only author and Rudolf Těsnohlídek as an editor. The book became a bestseller and Jan Welzl, who in the same year returned to his native country for the first time after thirty years, became at once a popular public figure as the first Czechoslovak polar explorer (Strouhal 100).

In 1928, Edvard Valenta and Bedřich Golombek, other distinguished Czech writers and journalists at the *Lidové noviny*, took over the role of the ghost-writers for Welzl's stories; Welzl dictated his memoirs to them and they edited six hundred pages of chaotic stenographic records into two volumes. Both volumes were published by Borový in 1930 under the titles *Třicet let na Zlatém Severu (Thirty Years in the Golden North)* and *Po stopách polárních pokladů (The Quest for Polar Treasures)*, again, with Welzl as the only author, Valenta and Golombek as editors and with Karel Čapek's foreword to the books. Welzl received a decent compensation for *Třicet Let na Zlatém*

Severu and he left the country in 1929 with the intention to return back home to the New Siberian Islands. That, incidentally, proved impossible due to the political situation of that time. He lived for the rest of his life in Dawson, Canada, where he died in 1948. Welzl never visited Czechoslovakia again; nevertheless, he is still popular among Czechs as a distinctive Czech adventurer, polar explorer and settler, and ‘Chief of the Eskimos’, even nowadays. Welzl’s narratives have a permanent place in the Czech literature. His books have been passed from one generation to the next and Czech children grew up (and keep growing) with Welzl’s stories. Welzl became an inspiration for a range of Czech literary fictional characters, among other the Captain Vantoch in Čapek’s *War with the Newts*, or Jára Cimrman, an extremely popular figure invented by Zdeněk Svěrák and Ladislav Smoljak. Svěrák and Smoljak’s play *Dobytí severního pólu Čechem Karlem Němcem 5. dubna 1909* (*The Conquest of the North Pole by a Czech Karel Němec on 5 April 1909*) from 1985 belongs among the cult pieces of Czech culture and it is highly inspired by Welzl’s life and his narratives.²

1.3. Method

Both Brower’s *Fifty Years below Zero* and Welzl’s *Thirty Years in the Golden North* and *The Quest for Polar Treasures*, though generally considered autobiographical memoirs, are to a high degree mediated narratives written in the collaboration with others (ghost writers) whose intention was to make the narratives appealing for the audience. Thus, there is a legitimate question as to whose ideas and perceptions of the Arctic the narratives actually project. The question of authenticity and authorship has raised many controversies and discussions, particularly around Welzl’s life and work. Welzl contributed to the controversy himself: he first authorized *Thirty Years in the Golden North* and *The Quest for Polar Treasures* and received royalties as their author, but also renounced all copyright by signing a legal contract in favour of the editors and ghost writers Golombek and Valenta. When he learned that he could not share the enormous profit that the books had made in Czechoslovakia and abroad, Welzl denied his authorship and declared the books a collection of unauthentic lies. The affair brought a lot of attention and also Stefansson participated in the debate; first by branding *Thirty Years in the Golden North* an ‘illustration of public ignorance’, claiming

² Writers and actors, Zdeněk Svěrák and Ladislav Smoljak, invented in the late 60ies a fictional character, Czech universal genius Jára Cimrman, who allegedly lived at the beginning of the 20th century and was extremely talented and influential in many fields of human endeavour (he was a successful play writer, inventor, musician, scientist – to name just a few fields of his expertise). There is even a theatre in Cimrman’s name, extremely popular in the Czech society; the theatre promotes Cimrman as the greatest living Czech at the beginning of 20th century. Even though fictitious, Cimrman regularly wins genuine popularity contests in media; in 2005 for instance, he won ‘The Greatest Czech’ contest, and was disqualified as fictitious (to a strong disapproval from the Czech society). More about Cimrman on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jara_Cimrman

that the tales were fabricated by Karel Čapek, whom he held to be the real author of the book (qtd. in Voda 161). Stefansson initially did not believe that Jan Welzl had existed outside the narratives, but after Welzl sent him a letter asking for help, he attempted to support him in the conflict. Welzl nevertheless lost the controversy and died as a poor man (Strouhal 168). Some of Welzl's stories and assertions which writers like Stefansson labelled 'pure lies', later proved to be true (e.g. the Siberian Islands were inhabited both by Inuit and white settlers who lived in caves, later confirmed by the Russian anthropologist Pinegin) (qtd. in Strouhal 68; 131). However, most Czech scholars agree that to believe Welzl's narratives is challenging. Some regard Welzl's narratives as fabrications of a simple-minded man with a rich imagination (Velechovský 56-64). Others hold the ghost-writers to be the genuine authors of Welzl's books and believe that the journalists adapted the narratives so that they 'corresponded with the public interest raised about the Polar Regions by Amundsen's expeditions' – i.e. so that they would sell well (Voda 159). Others, like Strouhal, travel literarily in Welzl's footsteps and verify Welzl's descriptions of places and people based upon their own experience or the experiences of other travellers, in an attempt to demonstrate that Welzl's stories, though they tend to be exaggerated, are authentic and that Welzl gives more or less trustworthy account on real conditions of the Arctic (Strouhal 140-42).

For this thesis, the question of veracity or authorship of Welzl and Brower's texts is not a major subject of disputation. This thesis is concerned with the imaginative constructions and literary representations of ideas and images of the Arctic, heroism and national characters, and I assume, based on the theory of imagology, that these images and ideas 'lie outside the area of testable reports or statements of fact' (Beller and Leersen xiv). Furthermore, the methodical approach of this thesis is based upon the assumption that subjective perceptions of narrators are always, to a certain degree, representative of literary and discursive conventions. Peter Davidson's favourite refrain in his book *The Idea of North*, '[e]veryone carries their own idea of north within them' is a nice summary of this conception (Davidson 8).³ What Davidson tells us with this sentence is, first, that there are as many ideas and experiences of the Arctic as there are individuals. Second, as Davidson and other scholars on the Arctic discourse point out, 'one already carries his ideas of the North within one'; our ideas of the Arctic are formed and regulated by an interplay of the individual experiences and the expectations that constantly return to fixed topoi and the textual traditions represented by canonical exploration narratives. Thus, exploration narratives imbue the public imagination with ideas and images of the Arctic environment and heroism, and these ideas, in return, shape the representations of the environment and heroism in the narratives (Ryall, Schimanski and Wærp x). This is, in Beau Riffenburgh's words, a 'circular and self-perpetuating

³ In this thesis, I use the terms 'North', 'Far North' and 'Arctic' interchangeably.

process as most of the books published about distant lands reinforced the others' (Riffenburgh 42). Thus, if I ask myself whether Brower's and Welzl's narratives were representative of authentic experience of these men in the Arctic or whether they reflected their own (or even their ghost-writers') motivation to 'sell' the stories, my short answer would be: most likely both. The Arctic, arctic heroism and national character are viewed as literary and imaginative constructs in which individual experience interplays with popular ideas.

As scholars generally agree, the popular western ideas of Arctic heroism have been formed by discursive strategies of exploration genre and they are closely related with particular conventional images and representations of the Arctic landscape, climate and the Inuit people (see below). In the textual analyses of Welzl's and Brower's narratives provided in chapters 2 and 3, I look at the ways in which the narrators construct a heroic image of themselves through their representations of the Arctic natural environment (chapter 2) and Inuit people (chapter 3). I examine to what degree their heroic images fit the conventional public ideas of an explorer-hero and a pioneer-hero and to what degree the men are representative of the 'typical' traits of Czech and American identity associated with heroism and heroic figures in their countries. The discussion is grounded on the methodological approach of imagology as applied to the hero. We thus need to take into consideration 'mythological, historical and religious figures, the historical context and national instrumentalisation that constitutes a figure into a hero' (Beller and Leersen 332). I focus on the national characteristics that were seen as particularly valuable and important in American and Czech culture at the time when Brower's and Welzl's books were published and became bestsellers. In Brower's case, the discussion involves 1900-1940s, i.e. the time when American thinkers discussed the national character in the context of the 'vanishing American frontier' and Alaska was largely understood as the American Last Frontier. Imaginative representations of Alaska, as one of circumpolar regions, followed to a great extent the mainstream public perceptions about other arctic regions; however, the images of Alaska as the Last American Frontier as well as of heroism on the frontier, involve some specific characteristics that differ from these mainstream perceptions. These distinctions are given focus particularly in the first part of chapter 4 where the debate is centred on the images of Brower and Welzl as pioneer-heroes in the context of the nation-building ideologies associated with the American Last Frontier. Welzl's narratives feature Alaska as one of Welzl's trade and trapping destinations, and despite the fact that Welzl was not American-born, his character possesses – as I argue – many traits and ideals that were in his time associated with heroic pioneer-figures. Therefore, I include both Brower and Welzl and their texts into my discussion about their popularity among an American audience. In the last part of the chapter, I examine the portrait of Welzl as a pioneer in the context of Czech nation-building discourses in the early 1930s when his books were published, involving thus the nation-building ideologies of the

young republic of Czechoslovakia that emerged as an independent national state in 1918. Furthermore, the reflections of Czech national characteristics and values in Welzl's accounts are discussed in the relation to the communist regime and a short period of democratic reforms and freedom of speech during 1963-1968 directly preceding the so called 'Prague Spring' when Welzl's books were reprinted and their popularity increased significantly.⁴ The major question I explore here is: Was it Welzl's 'American identity' that appealed to the Czech audience or was his popularity secured by the fact that Czech audience could relate Welzl's figure to their own history and distinctive traits of Czech identity?

For the textual analyses of Brower's narratives in this thesis, I chose the 1994 edition of *Fifty Years below Zero: A Lifetime of Adventure in the Far North*, prefaced by Terrence Cole. For the analyses of Welzl's memoirs, I chose – for practical reasons, and also because these books were widely received among an American readership – the English translations of his texts *Thirty Years in the Golden North* and *The Quest for Polar Treasures* (both published by Macmillan Company in New York in 1932 and 1933) as sources of reference. In my text, the references to pages in *The Quest for Polar Treasures* are marked by 'q'.

1.4. Theory, research and research questions

Brower's and Welzl's books have not been an object of published works of literary criticism, to the best of my knowledge. The major source of literary comments on Charles Brower's text appears to be Terrence Cole's 'Preface' to the 1994 edition. More has been written about Welzl's life and work. However, most of the critical works about Welzl are concerned with verifying or challenging the veracity of Welzl's texts, as I have alluded above. None of the studies about Welzl so far provided a critical literary analysis of the narratives selves. Hence, a critical literary analysis of both Welzl's and Bowers prose within the Arctic discourse is the ultimate goal of this thesis.

By the end of the 19th century, exploration narratives had become an established and popular literary genre. When Brower's and Welzl's books were published in the 1930s and 1940s, the American and Czech public had already had a long-time literary experience of polar explorations and they cherished their own Polar heroes. Before Peary reached the North Pole in

⁴ The Prague Spring (5 January 1968- 21 august 1968) was a short period of political liberalization and democratic reforms during the era of Communist regime in Czechoslovakia, preceded by a period of cultural liberalization marked by increasing freedom of speech, freedom of press and freedom of movement. Jan Welzl's books were reprinted during this time, in 1965. The Prague Spring ended by the invasion of Warsaw Pact members into the country. It was followed by the period of 'normalization' lasting until 1989. The 'normalization' period of 1969-1989 has been perceived and represented as a time of resignation and moral degradation of the Czech and Slovak society.

1909, Americans had created a pantheon of heroic Polar explorers such as Kane, or DeLong. The Czech Lands, then time a part of Austro-Hungarian Empire, were a proud home of five members of the Austro-Hungarian expedition to the North Pole in 1872-1874, including one of the leaders, Julius Payer (Borovička 43). These explorers became public heroes celebrated in the press long after the official public acclaim in town squares had ended, and their exploration accounts contributed greatly to their fame (Riffenburgh 2, 83). According to Riffenburgh and other scholars, through the exploration narratives, the greatness of a nation was reproduced and re-created in the public mind and, as Riffenburgh points out, the society used heroic accounts to ‘educate its youth in the traditions it wished to emphasise’ (Riffenburgh 6, Spufford 184).

The Arctic exploration narratives thus became an important part of the pedagogy in the national discourse at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. Homi K. Bhabha argues that in national narratives, the nation’s people have a dual function. On the one hand, the national heroes are seen as ‘historical ‘objects’ of a nationalist pedagogy’ drawing on the traditions constituted in the past. On the other hand, people are also ‘subjects’ of a process of signification that erases any prior traditions ‘to demonstrate the prodigious living principles of the people as contemporaneity: as that sign of the present through which national life is redeemed and iterated as a reproductive process’. According to Bhabha, in the production of national narratives, there is a split between the strategies of the pedagogical nature on the one hand, and the performative strategies on the other (Bhabha 209-210). Brower’s and Welzl’s heroic status indicate that they were both regarded as such ‘typical’ heroic representatives of their nations and their nation’s values and ideologies. Thus, one might, on the one hand, expect that their narratives should have satisfied demands of the heroic polar narratives both by the traditions of exploration and frontier genres, as well as by the nation-building pedagogical discourses. On the other hand, however, one might also expect that both Brower and Welzl would challenge the expectations of the pedagogical traditions by their individual ‘performances’ of the ordinary men who were not consciously a part of any national project. How is this reflected in their narratives?

Riffenburgh observes, in relation to representations of polar exploration in American newspapers, that ‘the depiction of exploration was rarely changed once formats were discovered that were not only mutually beneficial to the explorers and the newspapers, but popular with the hero-seeking public’ (3). This model seems to fit the first-hand narratives as well, as we have mentioned above. In order to provide a theoretical background and a point of departure for the later textual analyses of Brower’s and Welzl’s narratives, I use following pages to outline some of the ‘pedagogical’ stereotypical images, literary conventions and discursive strategies of exploration genre that were instrumental in the western cultural imaginative construction of a national explorer-hero figure. Further, the outline involves the discourses associated with American Last Frontier

formative of the image of a heroic pioneer. I focus on the mainstream representations of the arctic landscape and climate, Inuit people and arctic heroism that were in the turn-of-the-century polar narratives – and in the narratives from Alaska – shaped by the nation-building rhetoric involving discourses of masculinity, science, imperialism and national identification. I also suggest some expectations concerning the ways in what Brower's and Welzl's narratives may present a challenge to these conventions.

My outline draws particularly on Francis Spufford's cultural study, *I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination* (1996), Beau Riffenburgh's *The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensation and Geographical Discovery* (1993) and Sarah Moss's *The Frozen Ship: The Histories and Tales of Polar Exploration* (2006): in these works, the scholars demonstrate how reading of the exploration narratives shaped the ideas of the Arctic environment in the public imagination and formed the audience's demands on both the explorer-hero and the exploration literature genre. There is a number of articles (especially in journals or collections of Scandinavian and Arctic cultural and literary studies) on various aspects of Arctic heroism that prove highly relevant here. In particular, I refer to the articles in *Narrating the Arctic: A Cultural History of Nordic Scientific Practices* (2002) edited by Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin, *Nordlit's* special issue 'Arctic Discourses' (2008), and in the book *Arctic Discourses* (2010) edited by Anka Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp. The discursive constructions of Alaska as the Last American frontier is the major topic of Susan Kollin's study *Nature's State: Imagining Alaska as the Last Frontier* (2001). Roderick Nash's *Wilderness and the American Mind* (1967) and the collection *Desert, Garden, Margin, Range. Literature on the American Frontier* (1992) edited by Eric Heyne devote each a chapter to cultural images and literary representations of Alaska.

1.4.1. Exploration genre and the frontier genre

Several scholars have pointed out that a successful exploration narrative must hold to the literary conventions of the genre established through long tradition and satisfy two sets of demands: 'it must be both an accurate report and a good story' (Moss 25, Tallmadge 6). Most of the heroic accounts thus employ narrative strategies of both non-fiction and fiction. Among the conventional 'non-fictional' rhetorical devices belong, in Tallmadge's overview, narratorial references to earlier authorities on exploration, along with the recitation of technical details or employment of scientific and nautical jargon. These traits then serve as building blocks with which the narrator creates 'an aura of expertise and authenticity' and 'wins his reader's trust' (9-10). Demonstrating his scientific expertise in his accounts was particularly important for an explorer-hero in the times of imperialism and nationalism in the 19th and early 20th centuries when the explorer was made to personify the

nation. Thus, explorer's expertise, geographical discoveries and scientific enlightenment achieved during expeditions testified about the advancement of a national science and nation's modernity (Riffenburgh 2, Cavell 36, Hauan 57). In Riffenburgh's words, 'men who achieved remarkable feats were more than just popular heroes; they were symbols of real and imagined nationalist or imperialist cultural greatness' (2). Thus, as Moss observes, 'anyone who was sent there was assumed to be serving his country by definition' (25, 94). On the other hand, popular explorers often emphasised that the success of their expedition would not have been possible without using the tools, virtues and knowledge peculiar to their nation. A classical example then would be Nansen's claim in *The First Crossing of Greenland* that the Norwegian knowledge of skiing and the Norwegian experience with the outdoor life were the essentials that helped him to carry out the expedition with success (31). Promoting scientific excellence of the explorer's nation in his narratives was in a way obligatory (Mook 173-183, Sörlin 74, 109, Harbsmeier, 33-69). In this way, explorers emphasised also their strong sense of identification with their nation, which might play an essential role in their reputation of the public arctic heroes.

It was equally important, however, that the narrator made his report accessible to the readers through the rhetorical devices of fiction. These involve, for instance, employing a dramatic plot or the usage of figurative language, though, as Cavell points out, it was beneficial to write in a plain, modest style, since 'any obvious attempt at literary effect was equated with artifice and insincerity' (Cavell 19). According to Tallmadge, the narrative persona, or the authors' skill at self-characterization, was a 'crucial rhetorical strategy for the genre' because thrilling stories with a heroic central character sold – and thus sustained the popularity – both of the account and its hero (Tallmadge 10). This is ingeniously shown in Henning Howlid Wærp's comparison of the narratives by Fridtjof Nansen and Otto Sverdrup, both Norwegian explorers. Sverdrup's narratives that lack tension, excitement, and strong self-characterisation of the narrator were never reprinted and Sverdrup's name is nowadays 'very much forgotten' among readers. The Norwegian icon Nansen, on the other hand, fights both the ice and bears and a narrow escape from a certain death is an omnipresent leitmotif ('Sverdrup's Arctic Adventures' 305, 310).

Brower and Welzl lacked formal education and promoting scientific excellence of their nations was hardly a purpose of their narratives. Therefore, I assume that their memoirs provide the reader with thrilling stories, rather than with accurate scientific reports. On the other hand, both of them needed to promote themselves as the men of expertise. I expect that rather than employing scientific discourse, their image of experts is built by the narrator's emphasis on their experience. Displaying their expertise by contrasting or sharing their experience-based knowledge with other explorers in their narratives may be among the narrative tools by which Brower and Welzl build this image.

Whereas the Canadian trappers and travellers' accounts from the Canadian Arctic are understood as Arctic discourses following the footsteps of the exploration genre, Alaska, on the other hand, has been defined as American frontier. As a consequence, early-twentieth-century American literature from Alaska has been classified as a subgenre of the Western. According to some scholars, the popular writers like Jack London and particularly Rex Beach, with their stories – typically written in a short-story Westerns style and featuring a male society, adventure, romance, and 'explosive action' (Kollin 76) – had relocated the western frontier genre to the North, in their quest for new narratives from the wilderness after the western frontier had been ecologically and literary exhausted (Heyne 4-9, Senpkiel 135). Kollin observes that since the U.S. did not have a strong tradition of writing about the North as Canada did, these narratives also employed a strategy of borrowing and further developing the Canadian iconography of the North that emerged during the late nineteenth century as a means of establishing Canada's cultural differences from the United States. As Kollin argues, using this strategy, London successfully fortified the common perceptions of the Canadian Far North as a new American frontier, 'his name so closely associated with the Klondike that the region is still commonly misrecognized as U.S. terrain' (74).

In order to disprove the assumptions that the imaginative American frontier with its heroism and romance is a parent of the twentieth-century literary Canadian Far North, Canadian scholars argue that Canadian literature followed its own path. According to Senpkiel, Canadian narratives from the Arctic retell and re-evaluate the contributions of the 'giants' of the exploration of the Northwest Passage such as Rae or Radisson, and adopt the style and diction of explorers-trapper narratives, which involved, for instance, tropes of expeditionary progress, wintering, on the one hand, and 'insider' perspectives on the other hand (135-40). As an insider, Sawchuk observes, 'the hero less often conquers the wild Canadian or Arctic wastes than he or she is consumed by them; in such narratives, the land is the first and strongest character' (275). The 'insider' perspectives reflect, according to Senpkiel, another proto-form of Canadian literature, namely the 'native voices' and oral traditions of indigenous people, who view the far North not as a dangerous wilderness or a 'frontier' – the marginal space of the past – but as 'home' which is 'right here' and right now (141). According to these scholars, these were traits of distinctively Canadian literature of the North, as opposed to American frontier literature which involved motives of 'conquest' of the land, and was seldom written 'on' the Arctic frontier itself, but it was shaped almost entirely by mere visitors to the strange 'place of the Other' (Heyne 3-5, Sawchuk 275, Senpkiel 136-39,). According to Heyne, Alaskan texts in fact embody the contradictions of the frontier tradition (of which, I would point out, pioneers-settlers and farmers were representatives) because they are mostly 'tourist literature' written by short-term visitors and 'outsiders who can leave the frontier and therefore feel free to romanticize it' (9). It is possible to assume that the insider perspective and the native views will

project in the narratives of Brower and Welzl who lived among the Inuit in the Arctic permanently and considered the Arctic their home. Their texts might thus considerably challenge the arguments of the Canadian scholars.

The public heroic images of Brower as ‘a legend among explorers’ and ‘the northernmost American pioneer’, and Welzl as ‘the greatest Czech polar explorer and settler’ indicate that they were brought by the interplay between ‘exploration’ discourse on the one hand and the ‘frontier’ discourse on the other. Likewise, their memoirs – as I argue in this thesis – may be regarded a bridge between literary traditions of exploration and the literary traditions of the American frontier. As mentioned above, literary Alaska – and the discursive strategies of heroization in the narratives from this region, as I outline below – have been regarded as a part of American west (rather than the Arctic) and as such it also seems to stand outside the interest of literary criticism in the Arctic discourses field. As a matter of fact, a large number of scholarly articles within this field mention American narratives from Alaska only when ‘the western American’ needs to be contrasted with ‘the arctic Canadian’. Therefore, one of the leading questions I want to explore in this thesis is the way in which Brower’s and Welzl’s narratives navigate between exploration discourse and frontier discourse, and how Alaska is drawn into the imaginative space of ‘arctic discourses’.

1.4.2. Representations of arctic nature

In the exploration accounts – and the frontier accounts alike, as we shall see – the narrator’s self-characterization as a hero was revealed particularly through his encounters with the arctic landscape and climate, and, once again, the masculine virtues that the hero exercised in the Arctic were understood as an expression of restless national virtues. Since the tales of danger and hardship were part of the attraction of exploration narratives, most of the arctic accounts depicted arctic conditions as extremely hostile and fierce. In this way, the narrators simultaneously highlighted the heroism in their achievements (Spufford 30, Moss 48, Birkwood 26). The Arctic was imagined as a land of ‘eternal’ ice (88), ‘the magnificent desolation’ (108), ‘treacherous’ icebergs (86, 87), ‘black depressing darkness’ (92) ‘ferocious’ winds (3, 85), or cold ‘terrible beyond description’ (97), to give some examples from Matthew Henson’s account on his journey to the North Pole in 1909.

Nevertheless, the scholarly writings on the Arctic agree that at the turn of the 19th century, the Arctic (and the Antarctic) was imagined both as exotic hell and paradise. On the one hand, the Arctic was defined as a region of emptiness, isolation, deprivation and lack of life. On the other hand, it was also a place of pristine and unspoiled beauty, in Wærp’s words, a ‘sanctuary where modernity had not arrived’, and where an explorer could find a peaceful refuge from civilisation (‘Fridtjof Nansen’ 44). This ambiguity is characteristic of Arctic discourse in the 19th century,

influenced by Edmund Burke's Romantic philosophy of the sublime, a conception that dominated western literary and imaginary approach to nature in general.⁵ Nature in the sublime Arctic was designed to evoke feelings of terror and delight at the same time. The floating icebergs might evoked danger, hardships and catastrophe, but they simultaneously might be a source of fascination, particular beauty and a strange 'delight of being overpowered' face to face with the destructive power of nature (Spufford 17, 38). Obviously, the sublime Arctic was a matter of aesthetical experience from a distance rather than practical experience at the location; the delight of the sublime belonged mainly to a reader who could – from a safe distance – contemplate explorer's fate, admire him and empathise with him, but above all, enjoy his suffering (Spufford 29-31). According to Moss, the 'thrill of *schadenfreude*', i.e. pleasure derived from misfortune of others, was, 'arguably one of the reasons for reading the genre in the first place' (48). As the scholars consent, the Romantic sublime Arctic thus lost much of its appeal when the public had learned details about cannibalism and agonizing deaths of Franklin and his expedition in the late 1840s. The Arctic then became a stage of realistically imagined catastrophes rather than the Romantic sublime experience (Moss 18, Loomis 110).

Nonetheless, throughout the 19th and 20th centuries the vocabulary of the sublime remained the narrators' foremost tool for the construction of their heroic images (Spufford 40). The literary Arctic invested with such images as given in the examples above, represented a perfect source of the challenges, obstacles and hardships necessary for the hero to demonstrate his masculinity and exceptional physical and mental fitness, courage, energy and endurance. The Arctic was often personified as an enemy who captured, imprisoned or killed men, and it was imagined as a battlefield on which men, the synecdoches of their nations, fought and conquered and where only the most capable survived (Sörlin 89, Spufford 87, Mook 175). A portrait of a polar explorer as '[a] frostbitten heavily bearded figure pushing through an endless blizzard surviving only on pemmican, willpower and the quest for knowledge or for fame....' drawn by the present-day writer Robert McGhee, summarises quite aptly the main characteristics of a turn-of-the-century polar hero (130).

The reader expected the hero to struggle until the very last moment. According to Mook, exploration narratives were, above all, expected to be stories of hard-won survival or heroic death in which the hero had to display his self-sacrifice and willingness to risk life for his nation (175). Explorers who did not risk death until the end were less likely to be publicly admired as heroes. In this regard, Mirsky and Moss mention the British explorers W.E. Parry and Ross, who lost their reputation of heroic explorers, after they, each in his time, turned back at the point of finding the

⁵ For Burke's concept of the sublime see Burke, E.: *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Oxford World's Classics, 2009.

North West Passage, because they felt that their men were too exhausted and thus they, as leaders, risked too high (Mirsky 100, Moss 61). As Stefansson sarcastically pointed out, the explorer in the Arctic is expected to 'be worn, haggard, starving, and struggling on with one last effort' (1:76).

Stefansson tried, in his words, to 'demolish' many of the stereotypical ideas about the Arctic, especially those that viewed the Arctic as a hostile wasteland of deprivation and death (22). Stefansson's *The Friendly Arctic* (1921) was a major counter-discourse to mainstream western ideas about the Arctic shaped – according to Stefansson – by reading popular canons of exploration literature. He believed that stereotypic heroism with ideas about the region as lifeless and desolate resulted in explorers' ignoring the possibilities of finding fresh food and also their ignoring the Inuit presence in the region, which led many expeditions into difficulties after their imported provisions ran out. Stefansson argues that the Arctic regions provided abundance of fresh meat and blubber fuel so that starvation, scurvy and cold could be almost completely avoided, if one discharged the conventional views and began to perceive the environment with open eyes (1: 1-26). Several scholars have suggested that the presence of the Inuit people was marginalised in many narratives; firstly, it was felt, it undermined the heroic achievements of the explorer who experienced extreme hardships and struggled for survival in the region where native people lived for generations; secondly, it questioned imperial quests for conquering the territories that were imagined as empty and unclaimed (Karlsen 201, Spufford 189). Stefansson believed that explorers like Franklin got into trouble only because they perceived the Inuit culture as inferior and were not willing to learn from the Native people (qtd. in Spufford 191). To the contrary, as Stefansson pointed out, mastering Inuit survival strategies, methods of travel, and appropriating their diet, was among the major conditions of a successful polar expedition. Even though there actually were many explorers who had successfully mastered and used Inuit survival strategies and lived off the land, probably none of these explorers shared Stefansson's idea that the Arctic is a friendly land, where life is as uncomplicated, as Stefansson pictured it. Even the experienced Nansen, as Stefansson points out, 'killed the dogs one by one, feeding the dead to the living, because he did not conceive it possible to secure food for them' (1: 5-6).

Regardless whether Stefansson was right or wrong, experiencing dangers and hardships were important both for the heroic image of the explorer and for promoting his achievements. In this respect, the friendly Arctic was an unfriendly idea. Silje Gaupseth discusses Stefansson's problems in fashioning himself as a man who does not encounter any difficulties related to the Arctic conditions, while at the same time needing to promote heroism in his own achievements, important if he wanted to get publicity (69-78). Thus, to become a hero, the narrator had to represent the Arctic environment as hostile and he had to struggle against all odds, displaying qualities and virtues with which his nation could identify.

In his *Wilderness and the American Mind*, Roderick Nash shows that the perceptions of wilderness in the American western frontier narratives were, in a way, parallel to ideas about polar wilderness in exploration accounts. The western frontier was represented as a region of extremely harsh environmental conditions and a testing ground for masculine virtues. For pioneers alike, the wilderness was a root of hardships and privations that magnified heroic achievements; it was an obstacle and an enemy to conquer, and for the pioneers, in addition, an enemy to tame and transform into a civilized farmland (26). It was also a source of his pride, since, as in the case of the exploration discourse, the individual achievements of the pioneer in the conquering and civilizing the land were idealized as progress on the part of the society as such (25-26, 42). In American nation-building discourses of the late 19th and early 20th century, the western frontier figured as a space where the distinctive American values of individualism, liberty, equality, solidarity and democracy were forged and constantly reproduced in heroic pioneers conquest and civilizing of wilderness in the continuous national expansion westwards (Turner 1853-57, Roosevelt 'The Strenuous Life' 1860).

In 1890, the census revealed that the majority of American population had lived in urban areas and there was no wilderness left to conquer in the West. In his 1893 'Frontier Thesis', Frederick J. Turner declared the American western frontier closed and expressed his concerns that the decline of natural environment, progressing urbanism and modernization of American society would inevitably result in degradation of American character and the loss of the national values and ideals (Turner 1853). With the closure of the western frontier, Kollin observes, Alaska, one of the few American remaining wilderness areas, got a new significance as the Last Frontier – a concept shaped by environmental and cultural discourses encoding anxieties about American identity and the nation's future. As the Last Frontier, Alaska became to be imagined as a place that reopened the western frontier in the north, preserved national identity, and encoded the nation's future, 'solving the crisis of material and spiritual exhaustion facing the United States' (10). It became the site of the continual rebirth of what Americans imagined as an authentic American life and all good virtues and values of the nation (Kollin 5-10, Yannella 128).

'Primitivism' was a major voice in the American national discourse of the 1920s and 1930s. Inspired by Henry David Thoreau's and Ralph Waldo Emerson's nineteenth-century transcendentalism philosophy that – referring often to the lives of Indigenous peoples like Thoreau had in *Walden* – promoted simplicity and 'real life' experience against excessive material desires and formal education, the American nation-building discourse called for a revitalization of the American identity through wilderness experience (Nash 143, Thoreau 847). President T. Roosevelt and other advocates of the back-to-nature ideologies encouraged young men to leave the effeminising luxuries of the cities for the woods of the wild. According to Roosevelt, wilderness

provided a perfect environment for exercising the ‘iron’ qualities of ‘fathers’ of the Americans – strength, resolution, courage, indomitable will and endurance, individual freedom and ‘the spirit of adventure which is the maker of commowealths’ (‘The Strenuous Life’ 1860). Similar to the western frontier and arctic regions in the exploration discourses, Alaska was defined as a masculine space; a region of extremely harsh environmental conditions functioning as a testing ground for the masculine virtues of the nation.

Just like other Arctic territories, Alaska was portrayed as an exotic remote region isolated from the rest of the modern world in both space and time, and it was romanticized as wilderness, which the encroachments of civilization had not yet altered. According to Kollin, the appeal of Alaska lay in its position of an ‘anachronistic space’ where ‘time has disappeared and where progress has long ago halted in its tracks’, and of ‘anti-modern space’ with the ‘apparent ability to resist change and ravages of history while remaining fully archaic’ (92). Most of the frontier narratives draw on nostalgia for a heroic pioneer past lost with the decline of the western frontier and sought to ‘resituate the past – [the national myths about the winning of the West and national renewal through continual expansion] – in the present era’ (8). In addition, American ‘conquest’ of Alaska was a matter of national security; American settlement of the isolated and remote region was instrumental in securing national interests in the region and protecting it against influence of the Soviet Union (88, 98). As Kollin’s study implies, Alaska was drawn into the nation’s imagination not so much as the last frontier, but rather as a last-but-not-least frontier: the region was to be imagined as a gate for future American expansion eastward, to regions in Bering Sea and particularly to the south (82). As several scholars observed, the Last American Frontier imagined in the American nation-building discourse happened to be Canada – Canadian Yukon territory in particular – rather than Alaska; and this perception was further enhanced and perpetuated by extremely popular Jack London’s novels and stories (Kollin 64). London’s stories also represent many of the distinctive features that distinguish Alaskan Last Frontier from other Arctic regions.

Firstly, as Kollin points out, early 20th century racial nationalist discourse – one of the dominant in the imaginative construction of the Last Frontier, and considering American masculinity endangered by massive immigration from abroad – specified Alaska as a space where ‘Anglo-Saxon males could re-enact conquest and reclaim their manliness’ (63-64). Alaska – and potentially other Arctic regions, as argued below – were designated as a space of Anglo-Saxon masculine hegemony. London’s books featuring Anglo-Saxon heroes as super-pioneers who exceed everybody in the region contributed to this notion. This conception propounded by Roosevelt differed thus from the that-time almost forgotten Turner’s conception, according to which the frontier should keep the original function of a ‘melting pot’ where different nations and races merge into one American ‘composite nationality’ (Turner 1855).

Secondly, whereas on the western frontier and in the polar regions the essence of the pioneer's and explorer's heroism was subduing the untamed land, in Alaska, the nation's heroic enterprise was apparently no longer about the conquest of the wilderness, but its protection and preservation for future generations (Roosevelt 'The Strenuous Life' 1861, Kollin 64). According to Kollin, Alaska – as the Last Frontier – was constructed by two mainstream cultural ideas of environmental preservation. The first preservationist ideal (propounded by the famous naturalists, environmentalists and travellers into the region John Muir and Robert Marshall) sought to reduce human activities in the wilderness to minimum, mainly through a system of forest management and national parks. In their conceptions, Alaska should remain preserved as unspoiled wilderness and pristine sanctuary designated as places of recreation for American tourists from urban areas (Kollin 12, 24, Nash 151, 147). The second stream, conservationist (promoted by president Roosevelt and popularized particularly by London's, Rex Beach's and James Oliver Curwood's frontier narratives from the Klondike Gold Rush times), represented Alaska as a material promised land for the US gold-miners, potential farmers and settlers. It emphasized economic possibilities, advocating, however, a carefully planned and efficient use of Alaskan natural resources and a controlled development of the region in order to avoid the destruction of the landscape (Kollin 10, 82, 88). Thus, unlike the former American pioneers (and unlike explorers), the writers of the Last Frontier framed their narratives by the new nation-building environmental rhetoric that presented their heroic characters as environmental experts. In Kollin's view, it was precisely the environmental awareness and advocacy of the heroic characters, as well as their efforts to halt ecological damage caused by careless stampedes and gold miners, that distinguished these American figures from other nationalities in the multinational arctic environment. It also justified the presence and authority of these Americans characters on the Canadian ground and the territories inhabited by First Nations and 'erased' Canadian and Native claims to the land (68-73). In that way, as Kollin continues, London and others were effectively rewriting a history of conquest into an 'eco-friendly enterprise' (71). In praxis, the preservationist and conservationists activities focused – to various degrees – on regulating human contact with wilderness in order to keep it unspoiled for urban Americans (so that they can practice the primitive or pioneer life) paradoxically contributed to the regulation of Indigenous activities and it often lead to a removal of actual native people from the wilderness (Kollin 39).⁶

Both frontier and exploration narratives belong to western colonial discourses and share many of the conventional ideas about the Inuit. In the following paragraphs, I outline these ideas

⁶ In this regard, Kollin notes, for instance, how Muir's celebratory narratives helped secure the creation of Glacier Bay national Museum in 1925. This forced the Tlingits in the nearby village into sacrificing their best hunting and fishing grounds to nature tourism. (Kollin 2001, 39)

referring particularly to exploration literature and point out the moments when American perceptions digress from those conventional.

1.4.3. Representations of the Inuit

Whereas the hero's struggle with the Arctic nature should display the masculine virtues of his nation, his encounters with Inuit people should testify about his nation's cultural advancement. As scholars generally agree, exploration and frontier narratives were a part of western colonial discourses that used images of native people as an instrument by which the colonial power justified its territorial and political claims, as well as claims on cultural supremacy and authority over colonised people. In most of these accounts, the representations of the Indigenous people, both positive and negative, reflected the narrator's awareness of his cultural superiority. Both explorers and pioneers viewed the Inuit from the perspective of Western cultural criteria as benighted compared to Western standards, morals and habits, which they often considered – in Spufford's words – 'the peak of the progress so far' (208). Narratives from the Arctic are no exception, even though the colonial claims were – with the exception of Danish Greenland and Alaska – cultural rather than territorial or political (Riffenburgh 2, Sörlin 74). Therefore, ethnographical passages about the Inuit were an important part of an exploration account. Not only did they make the account attractive for readers, since Inuit people were a source of constant fascination and made the Arctic an attractive exotic region (Spufford 187). Through his encounter with the 'primitive Other' the narrator proved that his homeland belonged to the most civilised part of the world and his culture to the most developed – and this, then, probably helped secure and perpetuate the narration's popularity.

Naturally, then, western narratives tended to focus on such traits of Inuit life that western standards considered exotic and sensational, and let us add that in a negative sense more than a positive one. Spufford, as well as other scholars, noted that in many accounts the Inuit were portrayed in a dehumanizing fashion and were represented in terms of their repulsive diet, lacking hygiene, unconventional sexual life and irrationality related to their spiritual practices (198-201). Encyclopaedias and other media (often directly quoting from the first-hand ethnographical passages) reproduced and disseminated these perceptions. Spufford gives an example of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in which the Greenland Inuit were defined, quoting literarily, as an 'uniformly filthy' people who are 'disgusting in the extreme', 'eat out of bowls after their dogs' and live in the middle of bones, food rests, blubber and other juices accumulated in their 'intolerably filthy' tents (200). Nonetheless, all these representations belonged to an overall positive image of the Inuit in the western culture and its Romantic idea of the 'noble savage' attributed to the Inuit

who were assumed innocent people uncorrupted by civilization, living in a violence-free society without any social hierarchy, the experience of warfare and political sense (Thisted 'The power to Represent' 320; Bravo 235).⁷ Most explorers viewed the Inuit in a benign rather than negative way, and, like Nansen in the following examples, pointed out Inuit virtues of 'kindness' and 'honesty' of these 'innocent children of nature' (115).

Sometimes, the images of the Inuit innocence served the narrator, as well as the public, as a tool to criticise (or question) values of the civilised world. Alnæs gives an example of Norwegian explorer Eivind Astrup who 'expressed his disgust with the life in Euro-American civilisation' and glorified Inuit 'uncorrupted' life 'in peace, equality and brotherhood', the virtues he believed Europeans had lost in the civilising process (18). The Danish Knud Rasmussen, whose grandmother was Inuit, became 'the Danish hero of 1920' celebrated as a 'self-taught anti-intellectual who has thrown off the ties of civilisation' and lived among the native people as a 'naked man clad only in honesty' (Ries 213). Rasmussen's public reputation implies that 'living in the Inuit fashion' and partially 'turning native' could be a desirable part of the heroic image. It maintained the authenticity of explorer's experience and his account – especially later in the 19th century when the methodology and logistics of expeditions had changed and explorers travelled more over land and ice. Explorers-ethnographers like Stefansson and Rasmussen incorporated Inuit methods in their expeditions and deeply respected Inuit people whom they regarded as companions and friends. Likewise, many other explorers (without Inuit ancestors) implied that it was possible to identify with the Inuit and 'go native' (Nansen 271, Pálsson 290). On the other hand, as Spufford points out, reverting to the primitive also involved – in public imagination – a danger of becoming demoralised and 'literally de-graded'(232). In this regard, scholars often mention the successful Scottish explorer John Rae who considered his Inuit friend's reports on the cannibalism among Franklin's crew trustworthy, conveyed this message to the British public and, consequently, lost his good name (Spufford 198, McGoogan 220-246). Thus, it was important for the public hero to return to and favour the 'civilized' standards (232).

Even though the above-mentioned explorers tried to promote the Inuit without either romanticism or prejudice, they regarded the Inuit experts on local conditions and used their services as guides, seamstresses or food providers, still, none of them perceived the Inuit and their culture as equal to himself and his culture. Stefansson was convinced that a white man could thrive in the Arctic even more than the Inuit, if he combined Inuit survival methods with the white man's reason, intellect, technological knowledge and physical predispositions (1: 5-7). It is symptomatic, and in

⁷ This assumption was challenged already in the late 19th century by the Danish ethnographer H.J Rink who proved that the Inuit had 'principles of government as well as laws, religion, history and art, in principle all the institutions upon which the idea of civilization rests' (Thisted 327).

accordance with mainstream discourse of that time, that Stefansson did not consider the possibility that the Inuit could appropriate western knowledge in the same way and that despite his appreciation of Inuit lifestyle he continued representing the Inuit as ‘the most benighted people on the Earth’ (1: 7). As the scholars contend, in the most of the arctic accounts, the Inuit were seldom given any other agency other than being the explorer’s friends or companions, and they are rarely portrayed as having any leading role or control during the expedition (Thisted ‘Voicing the Arctic’ 60; Harbsmeier 36). By giving the Inuit an inferior role in the accounts, the narrator emphasized his capacities of the leader and the heroism of his survival in the hostile environment; as Spufford suggests, ‘the Eskimos belonged in descriptions of the region, in studies of its folklore and ethnographic practices. They did not belong in the stories of discovery and achievements’ (188).

At the end of the 19th century, social Darwinist visions of the destruction of weaker ‘primitive’ societies in the progress of stronger, modern cultures were wide-spread and influenced perceptions of many Arctic explorers-ethnographers and anthropologists. Many explorers-scientists presented themselves as being in the position of protectors and archivists of the native culture: they protected it by collecting anthropological and ethnographical data about the Inuit before it was too late. Thus, they contributed to the image of the Inuit as people of the past. Several scholars have observed that the present state of the Inuit societies often became a projection of the uncorrupted childhood of modern western societies. It was rather common that ethnography and anthropology of that time studied Inuit practices in order to, among other, explain and understand the early, ‘primitive’ stages of the European past (McGhee 8, Spufford 203, 213). Johannes Fabian criticizes these practices and the perceptions of Indigenous people as ‘people of the past’ in his work *Time and the Other: How Antropology Makes its Object* (1983). Fabian uses terms ‘denial of coevalness’ for narrators’ temporal distancing themselves from the described society by placing it to his past, and ‘ethnographical present’ for the praxis of referring to the other cultures in present tense along with making categorical or general pronouncements about the people as a uniform, undifferentiated group (32). He makes the point that the denial of ‘being the same age’ and referring to other societies in the present tense not only projects categorical views, but also claims general validity for those views, sustaining western notions of cultural superiority and thus giving western societies moral and political agency (143-54).

In polar accounts, the similar practices often worked as a rhetorical strategy that gave the explorers the agency to describe and represent the Inuit; in most of the arctic accounts, the Inuit people were deprived of the possibility to speak for themselves. Western narratives seldom gave the Inuit their own narrative point of view or a voice to express their opinions from their own perspective. As Thisted points out, the Inuit became ‘subjects to description, rather than being actively involved in any describing’ (‘The Power to Represent’ 315). According to Bravo,

‘indigenous people became ‘anthropological objects‘ of scientific descriptions through their kayaks, umiaks, winter houses and summer tents’; the key informants of many anthropologists were thus Inuit technologies, rather than Inuit people themselves (261-67). In some accounts, the Inuit had narrative agency, which, however, reflected the western narrator’s interests rather than the native people’s ones. For instance, in Thisted’s view even Rasmussen, who shows Inuit own perceptions of the world through the collection of Inuit legends and stories published in his *Fra Grønland til Stillehavet in 1925-1926*, tends to frame Inuit narratives according to his needs. In particular, Rasmussen’s goal was to archive and preserve Inuit past traditions before they were destroyed, and he does not mediate Inuit opinion about, for instance, their life in the modern time. Thus, Rasmussen contributed to the popular public image of the Inuit as ‘people frozen in the past’ (‘Voicing the Arctic’ 75). Furthermore, representing the Inuit society as modern and progressive challenged the popular western notions about the primitive, exotic people who made the Arctic so attractive. The picture of the ‘modern Inuit’ was thus perhaps not what the reader expected and what the narrator desired to present if he wanted to make his account popular.

One consequence of the U.S. territorial, political and cultural claims in Alaska was a more ambiguous image of the Inuit in these narratives. On the one hand, Inuit and other native people were portrayed as the ‘noble savages’ and races bound to disappear as a result of the U.S. progress in the region, which was sometimes presented as an unfortunate, but inevitable (Kollin 69). Yet, in the nation-building discourses of the Last Frontier, the disappearance of the native inhabitants was also desirable, since their presence in the region was considered a threat to the U.S. environmental efforts, and thereby also to modernity progress and the U.S. expansion, of which these efforts were an expression (Kollin 68, 112). The narratives from Alaska thus employed strategies that would downplay, marginalize or erase the role of First Nations in the region. It was – perhaps to an even larger degree – present in texts about Alaska than it was common in the exploration accounts (Kollin 79-81). As Kollin shows in her study, one of these strategies involved fashioning the American hero as an environmental expert, whereas the Inuit figured as ‘poor stewards of the land’ who damaged the wildlife (Kollin 112). Another trait in Alaska texts was an employment of a domestic rhetoric that defined Alaska as a civilized home and, in this way, to distinguish it from the native ‘Other’. This, thus, incorporated Alaska into the imaginative space of American (105). Similar to explorers, American pioneer-heroes learned the native methods and languages as well, or, they dressed in native fashion, at least. However, as Kollin points out, in Alaskan narratives was the ‘turning Native’ of these heroes still a part of the above-mentioned strategies. Figuratively, through racial cross-dressing, the pioneer ‘literally takes place of the land’s original inhabitants’ and erases their claims to the land (68).

1.4.4. Research Questions

Having outlined the conventional views of the arctic nature and the Inuit in the dominant arctic and frontier discourses, I can now point to ways, in which Brower's and Welzl's texts negotiate these ideas, and the ways these discourses challenge the construction of the narrators' heroic self-portrait.

Let us presume that the lifetime of Brower and Welzl's residence in the Arctic and among the Inuit influenced their perceptions of the Arctic natural environment and its native inhabitants. It is then safe to expect that their texts negotiate the dominant discourses by providing realistic – rather than romanticized and exotic – images of nature and the Inuit.

Let me anticipate that Brower's and Welzl's representations of arctic nature are closer to Stefansson's conception of a 'friendly Arctic' and, thus, they are less representative of the stereotypical portraits that emphasised hostility and harshness of the environment. Similarly, I assume that Brower's and Welzl's representations of the Inuit are less 'westernized' (i.e., based on western standards) and that the division line between the Inuit culture as inferior and the western culture as superior is less significant than in other narratives. It is also possible to assume that in their narratives, the Inuit characters get more important roles than usual – and that it includes at least a certain degree of narrative agency.

On the other hand, it doesn't become less of a fact that Brower and Welzl *became* – indeed – arctic heroes and their narratives must have been representative of the nation-building discourses of exploration and of the Last Frontier. It is then to be expected that Brower and Welzl exhibited the required masculine qualities of heroic explorers and pioneers in their texts. But: given that the major instrument of heroization was to emphasize harsh arctic conditions, what, then, are the narrative tools and strategies the narrators employ in order to build their self-portraits of masculine heroes? Heroes, who overcome obstacles and promote the qualities of their nations, as the tradition would demand? Similarly, if Brower and Welzl identified with the Inuit people as much as they claim they did, what are the narrative strategies to project themselves and their cultural background as superior to the Inuit? A particularly interesting problem to address, in this regard, is the narrators' position between western culture and native culture, and, last but not least, a position of their narratives within the U.S nation-building ideologies.

It seems to be relatively unproblematic that the American audience appreciated Brower's and Welzl's experience of a simple, real life in arctic wilderness, and their life in an Inuit fashion resonated positively among the general readership. I can also imagine, that Brower's activities on the northernmost Alaskan coast appealed to the average American reader as an example of a 'real-life' American expansion. Given Brower's status of a heroic American pioneer, the American audiences could easily view Brower's position of the 'insider' in the Alaskan society as a genuine

proof of Alaska's incorporation into the U.S nation space and a slow, yet inevitable decline of the Inuit.

However, if American public imagined the Last Frontier as a space of Anglo-Saxon dominance, what kind of a frontier-concept does Brower, who spoke better Inuit than English, offer? And, what kind of Anglo-Saxon dominance is presented by Welzl, who was not American at all – and yet, his books enjoyed a great popularity among the American readers? Furthermore: if the environmental awareness was a factor constituting an American hero on the Last Frontier, in what way are these environmental ideologies reflected in the texts of Brower and Welzl? It is a delicate question, as it rests on a controversial premise: Brower and Welzl's major interests were without a doubt material gain, so, in what way do they incorporate environmental issues into their texts? And do they at all? Finally: if both Brower and Welzl identified themselves with the Inuit, hence, the very people, who were regarded a hindrance to the U.S nation-building, what is their contribution to the nation-building discourse? How are these paradoxes reconciled in their texts?

With these assumptions as a background, I set to explore the above stated questions. In the next chapter, I want to explore how is the Arctic natural environment constructive of Welzl's and Brower's (self)-portraits as the heroic explorers and polar settlers.

Chapter 2. The Arctic natural environment in the texts

There is one feature that set Brower and Welzl apart from most of the explorers or Alaskan pioneers: they were not mere ‘visitors’ and adventurers seeking a temporary experience in wilderness. Whereas in Euro-American narratives, Moss observes, the Arctic was rarely represented as home and it was imagined as a ‘place to endure more than inhabit’ (57), for both narrators, the Arctic was their *home* where Welzl felt ‘overjoyed’ (98), and Brower ‘supremely happy’ (160). Neither of them intended to return to the places where they came from, though Brower in his *Fifty Years below Zero*, was initially sceptical about his staying in the Arctic for good, unlike Welzl who gets ‘depressed’ any time he has to leave ‘[his] home’ (24, 149) on the Islands and make a business trip to the south (103). Brower swears he would ‘stick to civilization’ once his contract with the whaling company expires (72) and repeats that rather than returning to the Arctic, he would go to Africa instead (14, 72). Unlike Welzl, Brower never makes a clear break with his native place and the civilization. He enjoys his trips ‘outside’ to the south to visit his parents or settle his business matters (215, 270). He loves San Francisco, to which he refers to as ‘my city’, and he likes the big city life in Washington or New York (215, 237, 306). Yet, he points out that it is precisely the city life and the ‘luxuries, soft living and so-called civilization’, which make him appreciate Barrow even more (306). He always returns ‘home’ to Barrow where he ‘belonged’ to (81, 270, 271).

The south, on the contrary, is occasionally represented as a strange and exotic place in both Brower’s and Welzl’s texts. Welzl ‘had become unused to the ways of the civilized world’ and he feels like a stranger when he travels around towns in the United States outside Alaska (151). Similarly, he cannot wait to tell the Inuit stories about the ‘wonders’ he has experienced in Europe (352). When Brower takes his son to see his grandparents in New Jersey for the first time, the boy is frightened by unfamiliar animals – horses – and takes a mosquito for a bird. Brower then realizes ‘what the familiar “outside” world could mean to a small American boy brought up on the shores of the Arctic’ (235).

By their references to the North as ‘home’ – while the rest of the world is ‘outside’ –, Brower and Welzl’s texts project the Arctic as a domestic space. This is in Brower’s case further enhanced by the fact that he married and founded a family in Barrow where, as he says, he ‘felt like a family man for the first time in his life’ (141). Brower is very happy about being a family man and, in this sense, his text challenges the popular associations of the Arctic as the right place for the men who seek exotic adventures outside of the ordinary or family life. Moss points out that much of the appeal of polar narratives was precisely the fact that they depicted adventures set apart from the ordinary life’ (29). In Brower and Welzl’s narratives, it seems, their permanent residence in the

Arctic did not make their adventures less thrilling. On the contrary, the appeal of their memoirs may be precisely the fact that both narrators describe their challenging journeys in the Arctic in terms of ‘ordinary routine’ (q70) and ‘most common trifles’ of Polar men’s everyday life Welzl (18), or, in Brower’s words, ‘all in the day’s work’ (207).

Both of the narrators thus tell their stories from the perspective of the ‘insiders’ to whom the Arctic was ‘right here’. We should also note that their world is ‘right now’, since their narratives are at their beginnings and their ends framed by images of the narrators sitting in their arctic homes at the very moment one reads their books. Thus, one might expect that both Brower’s and Welzl’s texts reflect the ‘insider’ perspective – by and large. However, as we are going to see in the following text, Welzl’s and Brower’s perceptions and representations of the arctic environment (and the heroism needed for it) were radically different, especially concerning the landscape and climate. Therefore, I set to discuss their representations, respectively.

2.1. Welzl and the perils of the Far North

In the opening of his narrative, Welzl recalls writing down his adventures during the ‘gloomy polar nights’, sitting in his warm cave in New Siberia ‘smoking a pipe’, while the ‘islands are trembling beneath the terrible blows of the freezing ocean and his dogs are howling with terror’ (17). His narrative closes with a similar image: Welzl sits in his cave and tells the stories from Europe to his Inuit friends and imagines himself being ‘buried somewhere in the North’ (349). Hence, the opening and closing passages give the impression that Welzl’s stories emerged from the sublime arctic natural environment known to the reader from other narratives.

Indeed, if vastness, obscurity and privations belonged to the ‘recognisable components of the polar scene’ (Spufford 30), then *Thirty Years in the Golden North* and *The Quest For Polar Treasures* belong to recognisable conventional narratives within western discourse. Welzl describes the landscape and climate of the Far North through the register of adjectives and expressions of the sublime, evoking danger, dearth, solitude and other difficulties and in this way, the image of the Far North as an extremely forbidding region is tangibly reinforced.⁸ Even though Welzl refers to the Arctic as ‘regions of horror and beauty’ (241), it is safe to say that in comparison to its horrors, the beauty of the Arctic landscape is much less emphasised in his narrative. The Northern lights, for instance, are mentioned when the narrator sees them for the first time, and even though he is ‘vastly astonished at this strange freak of nature’, he knows that ‘all the things which now I regarded as an

⁸ The following adjectives are employed in the text regularly: *awful, terrific, terrible, dreadful, vast, inhospitable, forlorn, sad, cheerless, gloomy, dreary, desolate, bare, endless, infinite, lost, unknown, perpetual, impenetrable, dangerous, treacherous, or cheerless.*

absolute miracle, I should later on consider as ordinary as sunset and sunrise had been hitherto' (65). In the narrator's view, the Arctic beauty soon becomes a commonplace and that is perhaps the reason why it remains unnoticed in most of the text. The astonishing terrors, on the other hand, never seem to become too ordinary to remain unmentioned as the narrative progresses; the Arctic nature 'inspires' Welzl 'with horror' from the beginning to the end (103).

2.1.1. The lonesome hero in the sublime Arctic

Welzl describes the Far North as a 'God-forsaken' place (q299, q230) 'at the end of the world' (95). Siberia and Alaska are often described as endless 'dreadful wastes and wilderness' (174, q169) and likewise, the Arctic Ocean and its islands are 'strange regions of infinite perpetual ice', 'icy wilderness' (96), where the narrator sees 'nothing but snow and silence' (82). The New Siberian Island seemed to him – at first – 'cheerless and desolate' (104, 81), and this perception does not seem to change as the narrative continues. Welzl's descriptions of weather conditions focus particularly on the 'dreary' Arctic winter and early spring: periods of constant danger represented by 'dreadful' frosts that split trees into shreds (q109), 'raging Polar storms' (115), 'violent blizzards' (269) and hurricanes that 'drag large boulders from the mountains' (115). The images of 'ice floes crackling and smashing like thunder' (q209), with an 'appalling roar' which makes the earth tremble and the narrator crazy, are also among the pictures describing the Arctic landscape (112). The narrator is often 'overwhelmed' by the sublime impression of dreadful desolation (34, 92). He experiences 'uneasy creepy feelings' (103) and he often feels lonesome and sad (74, 104).

The image of the Arctic as harsh, forlorn and desolate region emphasises the narrator's solitary achievement of being able to travel and live alone in the Arctic – after all. At the same time, Welzl's texts reveal (similarly to other western exploration narratives) a paradox discussed by e.g. Wærp in connection to Sverdrup' exploration accounts. Sverdrup, in order to emphasise his expedition's achievement of 'being the first', repeatedly talks about 'white spots on the maps' and 'the land untouched by men'; on the other hand, he reports on abandoned Inuit settlements and traces of human presence everywhere ('Sverdrup's Arctic Adventures' 312). Paradoxically – and in the same way, Welzl observes that there are 'great number of animals and fish living in such forsaken regions where there is nothing but ice and snow' (q280). Like Sverdrup, Welzl also always seems to run into the traces of human existence in the regions that he describes as forlorn and completely desolate 'wastes': there are roads and road marks, even though 'disappearing', and he always meets people – native tribes, escaped convicts and other hermits – who show him the way and give him food (41, 43). Inuit tribes on the 'desolate' New Siberian Islands provide him both with food and the 'know-how' of survival in the Arctic conditions (71). Nevertheless, complete

independence from others is an essential part of the 'lonesome traveller' image that Welzl usurped for himself, in a fashion of other explorers-narrators who construct such a portrait in order to highlight their accomplishments (Karlsen 199): he is the one who can withstand the solitude and other challenges in the harsh environment all alone. As the new settler on the New Siberian Islands, he describes himself, symptomatically, as a 'regular Polar hermit' (87), a 'Polar Robinson Crusoe' (104), and a castaway on the islands (180). We shall shortly note here that the image of Jan Welzl as a 'Robinson Crusoe' is not coincidental. His narrative is indeed representative of a Robinsonnade genre set in the Arctic, which we shall further discuss in the connection to Welzl's representations of the Inuit (section 3.1.3) and particularly to his success story (section 4.1). Even though Welzl sometimes feels abandoned, the fact that he managed to walk through Siberia on his own gives him confidence for the new life in the Arctic and its challenges (103).

2.1.2. The human superhero overcomes challenges

Welzl never represents his encounters with the Arctic as a conquest of the untamed wilderness. Nonetheless, in accordance with the western exploration discourse, the landscape and terrain of the Arctic in Welzl's texts still present mental and physical ordeal, countless adventures, catastrophes and death. The narrator never ceases to emphasise that his journeys in the Arctic are 'strenuous' (q77), 'extremely trying' and 'difficult' (q244, 207, 214) and usually undertaken under 'hazardous circumstances' (19). When the narrator looks back to his journeys through Alaskan and Canadian Arctic, he sees 'hardships everywhere, privations of the worst kind; everywhere life hangs by a thread; men rush often in despair and exhaustion persecuted by all possible things; they drag themselves from one hellish place to another...' (q227). Besides unstable and dangerous weather conditions and terrain represented by 'endless' and impenetrable' forests (43, q182) or treacherous swamps (46), there is a constant threat of dangerous animals that can attack and kill a man at any moment. His narrative gives examples of many of such incidents (q110, q214) and Welzl himself fights both with bears (q182) and wolves (65). Yet, he continues, the adventures in Alaska and Canada 'pale into insignificance beside the memory of those in the mysterious Frozen Sea' (q242), where he travels in frosts that 'kill on the spot' (113) and in appalling blinding blizzards that blow tents to tatters and make the men desperate (q80). Welzl's Arctic is a place where even strong men die of exposure, being trapped by the ice and storms and many of the narrator's friends 'perish miserably right in front of his eyes' when they fall into crevasses or the freezing water of the Arctic Ocean with their sledges (q70, 168). It is a place where 'death is everywhere on the lurk' (20) and there is always an almost certain 'risk of destruction' (274). The adventures of close survivals follow in Welzl's narrative one after another, yet, as the narrator claims, 'the most terrifying things

of all are yet to come' (111, 113). This narrative strategy holds the reader in suspense for most of the books and Welzl's texts thus meet the requirements of the exploration and frontier genres concerning the required thrill and adventure. The narrator often 'cannot find the words' to describe all the hardships and terrors of the Arctic, but the reader does not have to search between the lines to understand the narrator's outstanding achievements (279). Welzl is rather explicit in this regard and his narrative makes it very obvious that the Far North is a dangerous and perilous environment, where a man like himself risks his life on a daily basis. On the other hand, it is perhaps the expressiveness of his language and explicitness of the text that somewhat undermines both narrator's reliability and his heroic image – features I return to shortly.

Despite the suffered hardships and privations, Welzl loves the challenges of travelling in the regions of the Arctic (q71) and he fashions himself as a man with 'wanderlust in his blood' (49), 'eager for any adventure' (152). For Welzl, it seems, adventure is his profession. Yet, Welzl does not conceal that he sometimes feels frightened and desperate. Fear, horror and despair 'overcome' him quite often in the narrative (111, q222) and he is often 'terribly frightened' during his later trips in the Arctic Ocean (q259). These human traits in Welzl's image may have some appeal, because they remind the reader that Welzl did not come to the Arctic as an experienced explorer, but rather as an inexperienced man who could not even read maps (23) and had the same failings as ordinary people. The reader could perhaps identify with Welzl more easily than with an ideal 'superhuman' explorer. The fact that an ordinary man has achieved heroic deeds associated with famous explorers only adds to the appeal of Welzl's heroic image. Welzl, indeed, exhibits all the virtues of the classical heroic explorer who fights on and never gives up. Instead of falling into despair completely, Welzl always recovers and 'pulls himself together' to bravely face whatever is to come (80, 111). He never gives up, and he struggles on against countless suffering and privation, armed with physical strength, superhuman patience and enormous determination (57, 172 q230). Thanks to these qualities, he thrives and survives where many other men before him have given up and perished.

Welzl's own heroic image is partly built on the contrast between him and other white people living in the surroundings, a narrative strategy known from other heroic exploration accounts where expeditions' leaders stress their excellence by criticising, ridiculing or patronising other members of the expedition (Moss 63, Wærp 'Sverdrup's Arctic Adventures' 308). Welzl is very open about his being stronger and smarter than most of the polar settlers around him. He often describes these people as kind-hearted but 'poor and wretched' (313) and 'hardly the flower of intellect of the white races' (q242). In his depictions of white polar settlers, Welzl often employs the same rhetoric and stereotypes by which he describes the Inuit, and there is little doubt that Welzl viewed himself in many respects superior to both the white and the Inuit people in the region. The narrator treats many

of the white people in his surroundings with sympathy, empathy and the indulgence of the man who knows that he is able to deal with the harsh conditions better than others are; a large number of the white polar settlers in his narrative are lost, pathetic existences deprived of all their wits and dignity by the harsh arctic environment and long solitude. Welzl devotes several chapters to these ‘crazy hermits’ some of whom talk to themselves, fall in love with pictures of calendar girls, and run naked into arctic storms (211-219). Many of the white settlers in Welzl’s accounts shoot themselves in fear, sorrow and despair when the hardships become too much to cope with (q214, 189, 301). Welzl, on the contrary, never loses his wits and he never yields to sentiment or self-regret. Whereas others grow weak and fall into despair, Welzl remains optimistic, strong-willed and self-confident – and these qualities are the keys to his success in the Arctic and, ultimately, to his heroic self-image.

2.1.3. The heroes of the Frozen Sea

There are only few men among the polar settlers whom Welzl admires. He names some of the ‘famous Captains’ and ‘heroic Eskimo hunters’ (q292) – Inuit, American Indian, and white – in his chapters ‘The Heroes of the Frozen Sea’ (q241-308) and ‘The Famous Expedition of Captain Ivanov’ (q309-48). The narrator suggests that the exploits of these men exceed many of the European and American Polar explorers, despite the fact that they remain unknown to western readers. The chapter about the famous expedition led by the Inuit captain Ivanov is an account of a journey from the New Siberian Islands towards the North Pole, which – according to Welzl – took place in 1914 with the goal of discovering new hunting grounds. According to Welzl, over two hundred men took part in the enterprise. It was led by ‘the most famous experts and the best-known Polar captains, and accompanied by the bravest Eskimos’: Welzl was one of the leaders. The base camp of the expedition was, still according to Welzl, at latitude 85° 63’N – a point reached by only very few, even very few of the famous North Pole expeditions (Nansen’s and Peary’s, for instance) before.⁹ But in Welzl’s account, this latitude was only a point of departure for further exploration of the hunting grounds, and the ultimate latitude reached by the Inuit leader Tamarak was, as the narrator informs us, 87° 17’: there, the expedition discovered new hunting grounds for seals and even an unknown tribe of ‘pigmy Eskimos’ (q325). In this chapter, Welzl demonstrates achievements of completely unknown polar settlers, achievements that by far exceed the famous polar explorers. Not only do they make new discoveries and reach higher latitudes, they are also able to use the land in these extreme latitudes for a long-term practical purpose, instead of merely making a scientific point and returning to more hospitable environment. In Welzl’s view, these

⁹ 86° 14’N was Nansen’s record during his North Pole expedition 1893-1896.

indigenous and white captains and hunters are the ‘real experts’ and the genuine heroes of the Arctic (q260), unlike most of the European and American polar explorers, regarded by Welzl as inexperienced greenhorns who always get lost both physically and mentally. It is obvious that Welzl fashions himself as one of the experts when he recommends these people, ‘who know nothing about the regions in the high Arctic’, to better ‘stay home and not to make fool of themselves’ (q259-260). Welzl, on the contrary, claims he has travelled ‘into all the damnable and God-forsaken holes of the North’ (q299) and he walks in ‘horrible’ regions where ‘only hunters may venture who know the way perfectly’ (q224).

As the lines above imply, Welzl’s knowledge of the arctic environment was based on his experience, and he promoted this kind of expertise as the most valid and advantageous for life in the Polar Regions. Nevertheless, Welzl further creates the ‘aura of expertise and authenticity’ by employing scientific discourse and the narrative tools that – according to Tallmadge – are hallmarks of ‘non-fictional’ devices, e.g. referring to earlier authorities and recitation of technical details (9). The chapters ‘The Heroes of the Frozen Sea’ and particularly ‘The Famous Expedition of Captain Ivanov’ give examples of such scientific discourse. ‘The Heroes of the Frozen Sea’ is an introduction to the chapter about the famous Ivanov’s expedition. Here, Welzl summarises most of the previous expeditions and achievements of local heroes. In ‘The Famous Expedition of Captain Ivanov’, Welzl describes preparations for the journey, he gives a list of all its leaders and commanders and he continues with chronological reports about reached latitudes, tide and ice conditions. Finally, he gives a summary of the expedition’s achievements. In this part in particular, Welzl uses narrative devices very similar to, for instance, Nansen’s *Farthest North*, and, just like Nansen, he reinforces the truthfulness of his account (Karlsen 196).

2.1.4. Welzl as a Czech explorer-hero

Unlike those explorers who became national heroes, Welzl shows no strong attachment to his native country. He sets out for the North with the conviction that he ‘had no home’ (22), he remarks that he does not speak Czech well any longer (q349, 202, 349), and asserts to know ‘the mysterious and mostly unexplored’ Alaskan and Canadian forests ‘better than woods around Zábřeh’, his native town (q71). In the Arctic, he, he claims, he was living ‘a happier and better life than I should have had in the places which I left’ (24). On the other hand, his narratives, indeed, seem to ‘fulfil people’s ideas about the wilderness’, and ‘greatly contribute to popularity of the Arctic’ among the Czech audience, as Strouhal suggests (3). As we have seen so far, Welzl, in his descriptions of the Arctic environmental conditions, gives rather conventional image of the Arctic and arctic heroism. Even though Welzl regarded the Arctic as his home, this home still appears to be exotic, extremely

challenging, and dangerous wilderness that the audiences had known from other popular accounts. In this respect, Welzl's narratives meet the requirements of the exploration genre and contribute also to Welzl's popularity among the Czechs.

Equally important – for the Czech context – was the narrator's self-image (and building of such an image) as a heroic survivor who is able to deal with the arctic conditions and the obstacles they pose better than nearly anybody else, included the famous explorers. In a time when the public interest in Polar Regions was at its highest – richly nourished throughout the 1920s by the achievements of the expeditions made by Peary, Rasmussen, Amundsen or Nobile – Jan Welzl could have been easily associated with genuine explores, and that would have been particularly important in the Czechoslovakia of 1920s. Czechoslovakia emerged from the ruins of Austro-Hungarian Empire as a new independent national state in 1918. When Welzl returned to the country in 1928, the state was in the middle of a process of nation-building and, as such, had strong needs for national heroes. It then would seem that since polar explorers belonged among the favourite national heroes, Welzl's shipwreck and return to Europe could not have come at a better time. Welzl, who portrayed himself as a polar hero, became – naturally – celebrated in the media as the very first polar hero of the independent Czechoslovakia. With his courage, energy, strength and confidence, with his independence and ability to survive bad times, Welzl was both a perfect model figure for and personification of the young Republic. As we discuss later (section 4.4.), Welzl embodied many ideas upon which the new Czechoslovak state was created. The leading one (a common motivation for the foundation of many other small nation-states) is the slogan that even though they were a small nation, Czech people were able to keep pace with bigger nations and more developed states, and even exceed them in many ways (Hroch 26). Welzl, then, is the perfect prototype of this urge: in Welzl's own words, to 'be no longer an inferior', richly documented and perpetuated within his narrative (q292).

2.1.4.1. The survivor

The ability to survive in all conditions and against all odds is among the characteristics that the Czech people (obviously, similar to other nations) tend to imagine as a typical national trait. In the relation with arctic discourses, this 'typically' Czech trait is reflected in the above-mentioned satirical Svěrák and Smoljak's play *The Conquest of the North Pole*. In the play, a fictional Czech expedition reached the North Pole on the 5th of April 1909 and thus had beaten Peary's expedition by one day. The expedition, however, would not take credit for the achievement: if it did, it would be regarded as an Austro-Hungarian success. Particularly telling in this context is the lyrics to the central song 'Polar Night' (it has become a cult song): it portrays the heroic Czech people, who

adapt in conditions where even wolves and reindeer die¹⁰. A major source of inspiration for the play was (as I mentioned earlier) Jan Welzl, as the heroic survivor in the harsh Arctic environment. However, rather than to nature, the Czech ability to survive and adapt is more often related to a cultural environment. In the Czech imagination, arctic nature is more often associated with the refuge from political conditions or society in general.¹¹ The above mentioned song ‘Polar Night’ written in 1985 may (and was intended to) be read as a metaphor: the hard arctic environment stands both for the centuries under Austro-Hungarian rule, as well as for the decades of the communist totality in Czechoslovakia in the period of 1948-1989. Both of these eras have been – in the collective Czech consciousness – perceived, as ‘the dark times’ of political and cultural dependence, and moral degradation of a once strong and confident Czech nation.

Probably the most internationally known Czech personification of this ‘survival and adaptation ability’ is Švejk, Welzl’s fictional contemporary and a hero of Jaroslav Hašek’s canonical book, *The Good Soldier Švejk* (1921-1923). Švejk and Welzl as literary figures are sometimes put side by side when it comes to definitions and discussions of who is a ‘typical Czech’ (Borovička 457, Vecka 188). However, while Welzl is perceived as a generally positive hero, the relation of Czechs to Švejk is somewhat less straightforward. On the one hand, people like Švejk’s ability to survive the hardest times by playing a coward and incompetent idiot in the face of mindless authorities. This – a presumably typically Czech – strategy of survival in oppressing political systems found a special term, *švejkování* (translated as *švejkism* by Robert Porter, 4). On the other hand, *švejkism* is often described as antithesis of nation-building ideas: being associated with cowardice, survival only on an individual basis and resignation instead of fighting for better future (Porter 5). During 1920s, Czechoslovakia’s first president and ‘founding father’ Masaryk was a fervent critic of *švejkism* and later, shortly after the end of the Prague Spring of 1968, the baton was taken over by future President Václav Havel. Both Masaryk and Havel pointed out that a strong nation cannot be built by ridiculing any given regime or complaining about the nation’s bitter fate; rather, every individual in the nation must be persistent in fighting and working for freedom, independence, a better life and the future (Havel 193-200, Čapek *Spisy* 339). The figure of Jan Welzl – bravely fighting for survival with continuous struggle, yet never complaining about

¹⁰ Translation by Craig Cravens (available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dobyti_severniho_polu): *The Polar night // has a special might // the sadness attacks one and all // Christian and Muslim // British and German // the sadness it makes one bawl. // Even these crafty Japanese // are at their end and ill at ease. // Only one nation will not succumb // the horrors of the north overcome. // There, where wolves die in packs // and caribou breathe their last // the Czech, he will adapt. // The Czech, he will adapt.*

¹¹ Commenting on the return of the Austro-Hungarian expedition in his feuilleton in 1874, the famous Czech writer Jan Neruda suggests that the death of a Czech member of the expedition was perhaps not coincidental and that the man chose to stay in the Arctic rather than returning to the hypocritical bourgeois society (2).

circumstantial adversities, but always taking fate into his own hands – is the very opposite of Švejk. Hence, it seems rather natural that Čapek, in his introduction to *Thirty Years in the Golden North* (6-7), saw Welzl as a way more favourable expression of a Czech mentality than Švejk: Welzl, as a heroic polar explorer and settler, gave the Czech nation confidence that it can survive in the harshest conditions with honour. What is more, gaining independence and freedom through hard work – the values emphasized most by the Czech leaders – were among the major reasons for Welzl's departure to the Arctic and we shall return to these traits of Welzl in detail in chapter 4.

2.1.4.2. Welzling or Welzl's credibility, as represented in the text

Some Czechs recognize Welzl as the 'first genuine Czech polar explorer' and the 'greatest Czech adventurer and traveller of his time' (Vecka 67, Voda 160). Regarded a die-hard adventurer, Welzl became an icon for travellers and adventurers who since 2004 meet in Welzl's native town Zábřeh for an annual festival called 'welzlování' (*welzling*; my transl.), now a part of an official celebration of the town's foundation. On the other hand, 'welzling' is nothing but a prankster's festival, featuring among other competitions of a human sled run or a race with suitcases (Strouhal 3, 200). This is quite indicative and it reflects the ambiguity of the heroic image of Welzl in the Czech culture: although Welzl is highly esteemed as the first Czech polar hero, he, still, has never become a national hero recognised and acclaimed in the same way as Nansen in Norway or Scott in Great Britain. Similarly, Welzl's books, though very popular, were never accepted as serious exploration literature. For many people, Welzl is 'one of the most bizarre figures among the Czech travellers' (Borovička 457). Many are sceptical about the achievements and adventures that Welzl claims to have experienced, and for them, Welzl is a 'Chief of Liars' rather than the 'Chief of the Eskimo' (Strouhal 182, Vecka 186). In his review of the U.S. edition of Welzl's accounts, Stefansson summarizes this popular disbelief neatly by saying that 'Welzl's foot never touched the Arctic ice' and that *Thirty Years* is a 'parody on the life in the Arctic conditions' and 'illustration of public ignorance' (qtd. in Vecka 180, Voda 161). Welzl himself explains the critical response to his books by pointing that he lacks the social status and eminence of the famous polar explorers; in the introduction to his first book *Eskymo Welzl*, he claims that, 'If I was as famous as Amundsen, everybody would believe me, but because I am a poor man, my knowledge of the North is regarded as fabrications' (9). Nevertheless, Welzl's texts give many reasons to question their reliability. Though I have stated in the introduction that I will not try to verify Welzl's stories, his trustworthiness and reliability make up an important part of Welzl's self-presentation. Therefore, I use the following lines to briefly show in what ways the narrator in his text undermines the heroic image of himself – at the same time as he is trying to construct it.

A plain, honest style and certain humility of expression was considered a proof of a book's authenticity and, as such, became a paradigm for the best exploration literature, as Cavell observes (19). When Nansen and Astrup wrote about their journey across Greenland, they do not, in Alnæs words, 'brag about their achievement and the reader has to read between the lines to understand that this was an impressive and outstanding achievement' (17). As the pages above imply, Welzl seems to do quite the opposite. He is often very explicit about the dangers, hardships and his achievements and he emphasises them perhaps too much and through rather expressive language, with the effect that they appear exaggerated. Second, many of Welzl's statements and stories are – indeed – hard to believe, for instance, when he vividly depicts how he fought off a wolf with the help of dynamite and then followed the scared-away wolf halfway across the Canadian woods only to take revenge on the animal (q63-66). Amusing (yet most likely) invented yarns are a part of good storytelling – and Welzl's narratives apparently belong to it, at least if we measure by their popularity. However, Welzl seems to take himself rather seriously as a reliable narrator; he presents himself as trustworthy and he insists on the reliability of his stories. To give 'a truthful account' of the things that the Europeans scarcely believe, but which were 'the most common trifles of everyday life' in the Arctic, was, after all, Welzl's motivation to write his narratives (18). The narrator often points out that what he experienced is true even if nobody wants to believe it (177), and he further attempts to demonstrate his reliability when he, for instance, alerts the reader that he is telling a story which he has heard from somebody else and cannot confirm its truthfulness (q28, q162). Yet again, many of these stories – which Welzl claims to be genuinely authentic because he or their storytellers undoubtedly experienced them, such as the story about 'Dawson Tom' (q39) or the 'Syljean's story of the greatest catastrophe in Canada' (q85-92), – give the impression of being Arctic folklore and tall-tales that have circulated among the settlers from the times immemorial. Moreover, in their short-story tall-tale style, these authentic stories are suspiciously reminiscent of Bret Harte's iconic narratives from the western frontier.¹² The story of 'Dowson Tom', for an illustration, features both backwoods humour, peculiar half-criminal characters with typical Western nicknames or colloquial language and dialogues, swearing as well as the 'explosive action'; literally, since Dowson Tom's favourite prank involves a massive use of dynamite. Perhaps, it is not a coincidence that many of these short stories make part of Welzl's accounts from Alaska and Canadian Yukon Territory, the regions defined (and challenged) as the new American literary frontier. It is possible that Welzl found inspiration in these narratives and, in this sense, it seems that he, indeed, relocates the western frontier to the North. Even further North and east, since some of

¹² See for example Bret Harte's 'The Luck of Roaring Camp' (1868).

these stories, such as ‘The Strange Affair of Pitt’s Nose’, are located on the New Siberian Islands (295-299).

Finally, but importantly, we have observed that Welzl tries to project himself as a trustworthy expert by employing the narrative devices of scientific discourse. The problem is that Welzl uses ‘scientific discourse’ to refer to questionable, or down right bizarre and absurd things. The narrator’s scientific – yet not quite plausible – account of the famous expedition of Captain Ivanov is an example of the ‘misplacement’ of scientific discourse in his narratives. For another example, in a chapter called ‘I Act as a Medico’, Welzl claims, without a trace of irony: ‘the best remedy for toothache up North, where we have no proper arrangements for pulling our teeth, is to get scurvy in your gums. Then you can pull the teeth out quite easily without any pain, because the gums become spongy’ (283). Ethnographical passages in Welzl’s narratives on the life and customs of the Inuit (221-224) give more examples of this scientific or pseudo-scientific discourse, and I return to them in chapter 3.

In these quotes, Welzl in fact undermines the credibility of his experience by the very act of emphasising the credibility too much, and thus fails to promote himself as a trustworthy narrator and expert on Arctic conditions. In comparison with other famous explorers, Welzl gives the impression of being a folk storyteller, a bragger, and almost a heroic-comical figure rather than a genuine scholarly explorer. Nevertheless, in the Czech culture, Welzl’s ‘bragging’ does not seem to have harmed Welzl’s image of a popular polar hero, perhaps on the contrary. His narrative style projects Welzl as a man of the simple folk and thus, the readers could identify with him more easily than with the highly idealised and esteemed explorers. Further more, the fact that Welzl lacks the touch of seriousness – a classical accompaniment of the heroic explorers’ reputation – makes him a very typical Czech hero. Czech people have always been fond of esteemed heroes, if and only if they somehow lacked solemnity, or they sometimes or somehow lost a part of their dignity (or both) and, to the Czech audience, the heroes thus remained very human despite their heroic reputation.¹³

Recent Czech writings that respond to Stefansson’s critique of Welzl’s texts often highlight the humanity, adventure, and excitement in Welzl’s books in contrast to Stefansson’s ‘lofty’ and ‘reserved’ scientific reports (Vecka 97, 11; Strouhal 131). Likewise, Čapek in his foreword to Welzl’s books wrote that Welzl’s ‘garrulous chatter’ gave him a better and more informative and revealing image of the Arctic and the people in it than the ‘scientific and heroic narratives of triumphant and tragic polar expeditions’ (5). Karel Čapek was deeply disturbed at the dehumanizing aspect of science and technology, and their threatening effect on human free spirit and creativity. In

¹³ An example of this was demonstrated in 2012, during the first anniversary of Václav Havel’s death: people all over the country went to the streets with their trousers folded up – as Havel accidentally wore way too short trousers during his first presidential inauguration – to commemorate Havel in this particularly symbolic way for the Czechs.

his science-fiction allegory *Válka s Mloky* (*War with the Newts*, 1936), Welzl – adopted into an eccentric figure of Captain Jan van Toch by Čapek – became a symbol of humanism that disappeared in the quest for scientific progress, with catastrophic consequences. Thus, if other polar explorers promoted themselves as experts to emphasize the advancement of sciences in their countries, Čapek (and the Czechs as audience in general), seem to appreciate Welzl for his failure to do so. In this regard, Welzl is one of few – if not the only – polar heroes with the ‘national’ stamp, whose heroic image was not destroyed by their scientific ignorance and whose boasting was considered an advantage and not a disaster.

2.1.4.3. Welzl’s narrator as pábitel

In one of the scenes in *War with the Newts*, Captain van Toch waves good-bye with a handkerchief and, ‘while doing it, a big, irregular pearl fell out into the sand. A pearl that nobody ever found’ (39). In Čapek’s novel, the pearl symbolizes both exotic adventure and creativity of human imagination, and in reality – and Czech literature – it did not disappear completely. Bohumil Hrabal, another acclaimed Czech author of post-WWII years, called his most distinctive characters –pábitels – and their stories ‘pearls of the deep’.¹⁴ In his study of twentieth-century Czech fiction, Porter refers to the pábitels quite aptly as ‘small people with tall tales’ (52).¹⁵ Pábitel is one of the most beloved character types in the Czech literature and Welzl and his narratives seem to be quite representative of it – despite the fact that pábitel, as a literary type, was not born before 1950s (Pytlík 281-372). Radko Pytlík describes pábitel as an ordinary folksy man, but at the same time quite an eccentric figure who often acts foolishly, feels a strong sympathy with all suffering and has the ‘incredible gift of surviving everything’, a scythe stuck in his head included (327). Pábitels substitute their lack of education and social prestige by enormous enthusiasm and activity and they love inventing and experimenting – similarly to Welzl, who, as he says, travelled all across the Far North without understanding maps (23) and constructed a water pump according to a drawing in newspapers (200). Above all, pábitels love telling stories. As Pytlík observed, storytelling is the essence of pábitels lives and their most distinctive trait. Pábitels have an obsessive urge to talk, they compulsively attack anybody anytime with their yarns – and if there is nobody at hand, they talk to themselves. The classical prototype is Hrabal’s uncle Pepin in *Postřižiny*. Similarly, Welzl notices

¹⁴ See Bohumil Hrabal: *Perlička na dně* (Pearls of the Deep), Praha, 1963.

¹⁵ English vocabulary lacks a term for ‘pábitel’; Hrabal’s book *Pábitelé* is translated as *Palaverers*, a term which does not quite capture the variety of meanings associated with the expression. In Hrabal terms, ‘pábění’ (verbal noun) means storytelling, narrating (*Pábitelé*, 181). It should be also added that the term is invented by Hrabal and while it became a rather common word (and concept), it became so only through Hrabal’s narrative.

that he remembered all his adventures not only because he lived them through, but also because he lived through them again and again in re-telling them to his friends – or to himself when he was alone (181). On the last page of his memoirs, he cannot wait to return up North and tell his Inuit friends about all the strange things and adventures that he had experienced in Europe (q349). Moreover, the reason anybody ever got to know about Welzl in Europe was precisely because of his continuous tales that he kept telling wherever he arrived. Just like in pábitel's stories, in Welzl's narrative, there is no border between reality and fantasy; pábitel perceives reality 'through the diamond lens of fantasy' or 'through the stories of other people which he absorbed and adapted as his own', and he 'magnifies and embellishes reality to the extremes in a flow of fabricated bizarre yarns, stories within stories and incoherent thoughts' (Pytlík 327). These descriptions fit Welzl and his narratives quite well, and, in the way Valenta and Golombek described it, they are also perfectly representative of the fashion, in which Welzl communicated in his letters (and speech) with his co-writers (*Thirty Years* 14-15). However, unlike the pábitel who does not mind not being taken seriously, Welzl puts quite a strong emphasis on his credibility and he seems to genuinely believe in what he says, 'with a child-like simplicity', as his co-writers observed (15). This is an important point, not only because it introduces Welzl as a likeable figure; the 'child-like simplicity' is one of a few traits – if not the only one – that connects Welzl with the image of the 'Eskimo', as we shall see in section 3.1.4. Nonetheless, based upon the descriptions given above, I believe that the Czech audiences associated Welzl with Hrabal's pábitel, and that precisely this is the reason for Welzl and his narratives popularity in the Czech literature.

To summarize: We have seen so far, that Welzl's representations of the Arctic natural environment are largely representative of the popular ideas of the Romantic sublime Arctic and Welzl's narrator employs conventional narrative strategies known from exploration accounts to construct his self-portrait of a heroic explorer. The images of the Arctic as a land of terrors and challenges, contrasts between him and other people in the region, and employing devices of scientific discourse are instrumental in Welzl's fashioning himself as a brave adventurer, a lonesome hero, a survivor and a man of expertise. In this respect, Welzl's narrative meets the criteria of exploration discourse. In his heroic self-portrait, Welzl further personifies the pedagogical, nation-building ideas about Czech nation and national state, and secures thus popularity for himself and his narratives.

However, there is a discrepancy between what Welzl's text projects *implicitly* and what Welzl's narrator *explicitly* tells and shows, resulting in a certain ambiguity of Welzl's portrait. Welzl undermines credibility of his heroic image by bragging and exaggerating – the narrative devices attributed to folksy men with a big fantasy in the Czech popular culture – and this, consequently, projects Welzl more as a pábitel rather than a heroic explorer. In this respect, Welzl

and his narratives are representative of the nation's performance, rather than the nation's pedagogy, and this enhances Welzl's popularity among the Czech audience as well.

Having discussed the peculiarities of Jan Welzl's narratives, we now turn to Charles Brower. As we shall see, many traits that we identified in Welzl's narrative strategies are found also in Brower, yet, as I show, there are important differences.

2.2. Brower and the hidden dangers of the Arctic

As we shall see in this section, the picture of the Arctic nature emerging from Brower's narrative is rather different from Welzl's portrayals. I argue in the following that Brower's representations of Alaskan nature make his work a rather unconventional heroic account within polar literature.

2.2.1. A 'friendly Arctic'?

Similar to Welzl's narrative, Brower's text is framed by sublime images of arctic nature. His narrative opens and closes with an image of the narrator sitting and 'spinning his yarns' in his warm home while 'a gale sent from the North Pole is howling around Barrow' (1, 310). Brower's opening passages give the impression that Brower is living in the Arctic with the harsh nature at close quarters. However, Brower's sublime lexicon is exhausted in these passages; in comparison to Welzl's narratives, the text of *Fifty Years below Zero* strikes one by an almost complete absence of imagery that is usually associated with the Arctic.

Some traditional images appear describing weather conditions, such as 'howling wind' (71), 'raging storm' (117) or 'the ice crushing offshore with the rumbling that shook the frozen universe' (144), but compared to Welzl's text, the harshness of the Arctic environment in Brower's narrative is much less emphasised by expressive language. To illustrate: While Welzl undertakes his journeys in 'roaring' gales and struggles for survival in the unforgiving landscape, Brower travels in 'weather which obliterated landmarks completely' (26), or he simply does not travel because a gale 'puts travel out of question' (41). Where Welzl uses two pages to describe the deadly conditions during his first winter on the New Siberian Islands (110-112), Brower commenting on his first winter in Barrow, rather prosaically asserts in a single sentence: 'snow covered the ground by the middle of September and my first attempts to navigate on snowshoes left the Eskimos weak with laughter' (20). The rest of Brower's descriptions of his first winter focus on his visits to Inuit villages and essentially indicates that he spends the winter in their dance houses (32). Unlike his friends who consider travelling in 'the dead of winter' impossible, Brower takes every opportunity

to go and visit Inuit settlements (34, 110): he foresees that once the whaling begins in spring, there will be no time for leisure and, in addition, the melting snow would make travelling uncomfortable (40-41). Similarly, spring is a time for hectic preparations for whaling (43), rather than reporting on the ‘rumbling Spring surf crushing the treacherous ice’, as Welzl does in his narrative (76). In Brower’s text, ice is ‘good’ when it brings whales close to the shore, while the ‘bad ice’ makes it necessary to go to sea to search for the whales (49). As the last examples illustrate neatly, Brower does not describe the Arctic through the language or imagery of the sublime, but refers to the arctic landscape and weather mostly in relation to their ‘usefulness’ for seasonal or daily activities of Inuit and white settlers. Further, in Brower’s text, more narrative focus is given to everyday life in the Arctic rather than the conditions themselves. Brower thus partly deprives the natural arctic environment of its exotic aspect. His view of the Arctic natural conditions, as far as the landscape and climate are concerned, is pragmatic and realistic, rather than Romantic, as we characterized it in Welzl’s text. In this respect, Brower’s representation of the Arctic may be an example of a ‘friendly Arctic’ discourse. On the other hand, the contrast between Welzl and Brower we established above does not mean that Brower wants to persuade the reader that the Arctic is a friendly place, as Stefansson did.

The narrator’s focus on the daily life and work of the Inuit reveals (with accuracy) that survival in the Arctic is not a simple matter. Brower shows that the everyday life of the Inuit centres on getting enough food supplies and provisions to survive the next winter and that the people in the region take every opportunity to go whaling, hunting and fishing. As Brower observes, ‘when caribou appear, all other work stops and everybody runs hunting’ (90), and his text constantly reminds one of the fact that the life of the people in the Arctic is dependent on uncertain resources and dictated by unpredictable conditions. As Brower remarks, ‘our business ranged from good to bad and back again, according to the mysterious dictates of ice and animal kingdom’ (295). Sometimes, ‘Mother Nature seemed prolific indeed’ and people catch a month’s supply of the fish within an hour (123), but other times, ‘with the ice closed solid’, people are ‘reduced to the scanty remnants of horribly rotten last summer’s seal-meat’ (39, 60). Brower observes on several occasions that whole families die of starvation and disease (139, 233). Brower repeatedly points out in his narrative that Arctic nature is unpredictable, and sometimes, the animals that ‘normally yielded [them] a living [...] just weren’t there!’ (292).

Brower’s way of representing the Arctic environmental conditions through the narrative focus on daily activities of the local people is reminiscent of Rasmussen’s narrative approach in the *Fifth Thule Expedition* where, to use Fredrik Ch. Brøgger’s words, ‘the life in the Arctic takes form of an almost ceaseless struggle for survival’ (89). Similar to Rasmussen’s narrative, Brower’s text reveals, through the narrator’s descriptions of native taboos and traditions, people’s constant fear of

starvation (88). Brower gives many examples of Inuit rituals, all of them undertaken in order to secure that ‘the devil [is] kind’ and the hunt and whaling successful (61; 55 91). He also describes numerous taboos, breaking of which would be ‘fatal to success’ during whaling (45). The narrator is rather sceptical about the effect of these Inuit traditions and refers to them with humour or irony. He observes, for instance, that the people ‘sit and listen to their headman chant a whale song handed down through the years as a powerful charm that never failed, while the first whale of the season was making rapidly out to sea’ (51); nevertheless, he realises the importance of these rituals in the Inuit lives. The accounts on different taboos and rites take a rather large narrative space in Brower’s text, and it seems that they serve the narrator to point out how the uncertainties of the environment determine Inuit spiritual life rather than to ridicule the Inuit people. Thus, Brower, with his narrative focus on everyday life of Inuit and white settlers, manages to construct the image of the Arctic as an unpredictable and rather harsh environment without using the traditional rhetorical devices involving the sublime Arctic.

2.2.2. ‘Mother’ Nature

The above-mentioned Brower’s reference to ‘the mysterious dictates of ice and animal kingdom’ (295) is illustrative of another trait which distinguishes Brower’s narrative from other exploration accounts: the main ruler of the environment in Brower’s text is the arctic nature – and not the man. The nature stands completely outside of the control or regulation of humans; it is the ‘animal kingdom’ which dictates the rules, and humans, then, must adapt all their activity to the rhythms of the nature and its demands. However, nature is not presented as an enemy: Brower refers to the nature as to ‘Mother’, which also connotes a certain intimacy and familiarity in his relationship to the Arctic nature. Thus, his Arctic resists definition as ‘the strange space of the Other’. I, then, find it rather symptomatic, that his narrative lacks the motif of the ‘conquest’ of the nature completely, and that the words ‘wilderness’ or ‘frontier’ – usually connoting remoteness and difference – are never used in Brower’s text. In these respects, Brower’s depictions of the Arctic landscape and climate differ significantly from the dominant discourse of exploration – but also from the discourse of the Last Frontier. Whereas the American environmental discourses sought to regulate human activities in the wilderness in order to protect it, Brower’s narrative puts any human control of the Arctic nature out of question. Rather, Brower’s portrait of the Arctic involves a ‘respectful and reciprocal relationship [...] where nature is not passive, acted upon place [...] but has ‘ability to modify itself in response to new situations’ – just as the people in it who follow the pace of nature. All these traits are characteristic of the native perceptions about the nature in Indigenous discourses (Kollin 130-31, 160). In this respect, Brower’s narrative thus conforms to the Indigenous discourse

more than to any of the various western ideas and it negotiates the U.S. environmental nation-building ideologies of his time. On the other hand, as we shall see in the next chapters, by involving the native perspectives, Brower's text provided the nation-building discourse with interesting alternatives, especially concerning the use of Alaskan natural resources and potential settlement in the region – and these alternatives prove important both for his nation and for his heroic image.

Finally, yet importantly, with his perspective of the insider, with the absence of the motif of the conquest in his narrative, and by giving the nature a role as 'the strongest character' (Sawchuk 275), Brower's narrative disproves the arguments of the Canadian scholars that these were traits of the Canadian 'arctic' narratives distinctively, as opposed to the American 'western frontier' literature from the North. Brower's narrative is an evidence, even though, perhaps, scarce, that not only was American literature from the Arctic written 'in' the Arctic and based upon other than 'Western genre', but it also reflected perceptions that negotiated the various literary traditions, and, that were – more often than not – based upon the man's experience.

However, Brower's narrating from the perspective of an insider and his focus on ordinary life does not mean that his memoirs lack the dramatic suspense, adventure and thrills required by the genres of the Arctic literature. His Arctic still *is* a stage for extraordinary adventures and disaster, and dangers are never far away, just as it was in Welzl's text.

2.2.3. The greatest enemy in the Arctic

Brower fashions himself as an adventurer who often 'feels a touch of the old wanderlust' (6, 110) and who loves the 'tackling the thrills and uncertainties of the far North' (175). Brower and his friends go through many life threatening adventures when a 'certain death is near and it is not a matter of hours, but minutes' (3, 41) – for instance during whaling, when an injured animal threatens to overturn their boat (52, 124, 175). He depicts the Arctic as a place where 'ice and storm take their annual toll' (174) and where shipwrecking is as a 'usual Arctic tragedy' (80) and an incident 'all too common' (14). An image of an icebound, wrecked, and abandoned ship is a recurring leitmotif in the text (14, 174) and the narrator often reports on marooned men and stranded crews forced to undertake exhausting and dangerous journeys through the ice (121, 201, 248). Brower undertook such a journey himself as one of the passengers on the *Navarch*, and one of the survivors of the tragedy caused, according to Brower, by the reckless and incompetent captain of *Navarch*. In Brower's view, captain Whitesides was an 'imbecile' (183) who issued needless or wrong orders, never took advice from more experienced men and who, when 'it was a time to keep one's head [...] lost his entirely' (187). When the ship was caught in an icepack, Brower and the most of the crew were sent ahead to find a way out. In the meantime, the captain returned to safety

with all supplies, weapons and other necessary equipment for the men to be able to provide food for themselves. The stranded men died one by one of exhaustion, exposure and starvation during their twelve-day long journey across the ice, before a steamer eventually rescues the men, noticing the people in the very last moment (183-200).

Brower's account on the tragedy can, on the one hand, be read as a classical story of a heroic survival on the Arctic ice. The reader can imagine that it was cold and that the journey was exhausting and agonising: for instance, very telling are passages on the men with worn-out shoes and clothes 'flickering out, mentally and physically', some of who killed themselves when they could not go any further (192). Others had to be left behind, and Brower can still hear them crying and begging him to take them along (193). The narrative projects Brower as a natural leader and physically and mentally strong man who withstands the cold and desperate situation better than the others do; he keeps his wits together, takes over the leadership and brings the men to a safer place, just like a typical Arctic hero.

On the other hand, his account is an illustration of a counter discourse to the classical heroic stories as well. Firstly, even though this particular account depicts thrilling adventures, Brower keeps his pragmatic 'insider' perceptions of natural conditions in his descriptions; the journey itself is never referred to as 'terrible' and neither the weather nor the terrain of the tragedy are emphasized as extraordinary. His references to the weather and the terrain are almost entirely related to the orientation in the natural surroundings; the sun, winds, and landmarks showed them the direction (193). Accentuating arctic natural conditions is thus not an instrument for Brower to build his heroic image in this particular account, or anywhere else in his text.

Secondly, in Brower's depictions of the events, the Arctic environment is 'left out' as a major villain in a typical arctic tragedy. Brower's account is in a stark contrast to the *Navarch* captain's report on his own journey in the *New York Times*. The captain eventually reached the shore in a small boat with the rest of the crew unharmed and, in the article titled 'Escape from an Ice Pack', he admits that the journey went well and that the weather was good. Still, Whitesides describes the journey in a traditional dramatic fashion with the nature as an enemy; it is an escape through 'treacherous ice', 'thick fog' 'massive icebergs' and 'darkness' that can all cause troubles at any moment. Their escape is represented as 'miraculous', for the weather could have changed any time and 'any rough weather would have instantly swept them' and kill them on the spot ('Escape from an Icepack' 10). Brower, on the contrary, rarely blames the human suffering or destruction on the weather conditions or terrain (193). For Brower, it seems, the greatest enemy of man in the Arctic is man himself (193).

Brower – unlike many other narrators – does not give natural elements the agency to kill a man. His narrative points out that human fault, foolishness and bad judgement are the real causes of

suffering in the Arctic, though somehow *hidden*: the tragedies are ‘too often blamed on the Arctic alone’ (257). Brower admits that sometimes ‘the elements get out of hand’, but underlines that – more often than not – it ‘remained for mere *men* to keep us stirred up and anxious’ (302). In this regard, Brower particularly refers to incompetent and irresponsible captains, as the lines given above have implied, but his list of incompetent people includes also some missionaries, schoolteachers and other authorities.

In comparison to the captain and other irresponsible people, Brower stands out as a man who faces any desperate situation with a cool head and with a common sense, and who – often unwillingly – takes upon himself the burden of a leadership and responsibility after the others have failed. To illustrate, he takes care of stranded sailors from other vessels and ‘brings some sort of order out of the mess’ after their captains ‘didn’t even try to manage their men, seemingly only too glad to shift responsibility on us’ (202). He organises rescue parties and settles quarrels between the white men and the Inuit (98, 209). Similarly, during an epidemic outburst in Barrow, he carries out necessary steps to prevent spreading of the infection and explains the Inuit inhabitants what to do in Inupiaq, taking thus responsibility from the hands of missionaries who demanded that Brower talked ‘in a language a white man could understand’, and ‘who couldn’t even get along with each other [...] and made any united effort between us almost impossible’ (255). In Brower’s narrative, weak leaders are a source of (almost) all the evil in the region. Therefore, perhaps, the major instrument that Brower uses in the construction of his heroic image is contrasting himself with these people, instead of employing images of the fierce Arctic nature as a narrative device.

2.2.4. Brower as an expert

Brower’s representations of the Arctic and his achievements appear more realistic and credible than the images of arctic heroism in Welzl’s narratives; not only because they lack the exotic aspect, but also because they lack the dramatic pathos undermining the reliability of Welzl’s narratives. In a sense, Brower’s style is closer to the ‘plain and honest’ paradigm of successful and trustworthy exploration literature (Cavell 19). Brower does not emphasise the dangers of the arctic natural conditions and he does not ‘brag’ about his achievements. On the contrary, the dangers of the Arctic are often hidden behind the narrator’s humour, self-reflection and the ironical perspective with which he deliberately disparages the gravity of the situations – and undermines his heroism. As an illustration, there is an incident where Brower forgets his sewing kit at home and tears his trousers in ‘the forty-below-zero weather’ (164). Brower retrospectively imagines himself as ‘a lone, shivering white man with no pants on, seated tailor-fashion in a snow hut eleven hundred miles from the pole, sewing for dear life’ with everything he finds at hand (164). In this particular case,

Brower admits that ‘it was no joke at the time’ (164), but the reader understands well that it was ‘no joke’ other times either and that, indeed, Brower went through real dangers many times. Brower thus wins his reader’s heart not only as an entertaining narrator, but also as a rather humble hero who copes with dangers and hardships without boasting much about it.

Brower is also more humble than Welzl in fashioning himself as an expert on Arctic matters. He holds the ‘professional’ explorers in esteem and he does not say explicitly that he knows the Arctic better than them. Scientific discourse or ethnographical passages are not a part of his narrative; all knowledge Brower has about the environment and the Inuit people is revealed through the stories of everyday work and Brower’s involvement in the everyday life among the Inuit. Nevertheless, these stories reveal that Brower’s knowledge is deep and detailed. The fact that his station in Barrow became, as Brower points out, a ‘popular summer resort for the scientists and explorers who found Barrow a handy stopover’ contributes to Brower’s image of as an expert in the Arctic matters (258). In this way, he became a part of many important expeditions, if not as a participant, then certainly as a local expert who provided the famous explorers as Stefansson, Rasmussen and Amundsen with logistic services, supplies and knowledge of local conditions and other help (258, 262, 297). Brower describes Barrow as a place where ‘no epoch-making events took place’ (237), but – in fact – he often shows that it did. Brower, in his words, was ‘the first to congratulate Roald Amundsen as he completed his epoch-making journey through the Northwest Passage right here, at Point Barrow’ (238). He watched the famous zeppelin *Norge* with Nobile and Amundsen on board passing right over his head; he followed the progress of its historical voyage over the North Pole, and – had the weather been better – he would have welcomed *Norge* after its expected landing in Barrow. He assisted in the first attempts of the American aviators (like Wilkins) to reach the North Pole, again, with Barrow as a point of departure (265). In other words, he eye-witnessed the epoch-making changes in arctic exploration. Brower’s narrative – along with accounts of other explorers – makes it clear that the explorers’ choice of Barrow as the point of departure or arrival was not coincidental: it was motivated by Brower’s abilities and the fact that he made Barrow Point a functioning headquarters for any expedition (Stefansson 1: 36-38, 67-68). Brower thus puts Barrow – a small American settlement where no white men had lived before Brower – in the context of a noble endeavour of Arctic exploration, and, in effect, thus emphasizes its national and international importance on the one hand and adds to the attractiveness and appeal to Alaskan region, his book and his person on the other.

By giving Barrow a prestigious role in the Arctic exploration, Brower attributed to the importance of Alaska as a place in the nation-building expansionist discourse: his texts redressed Alaska as a terra incognita awaiting American conquest by reassuring the readers that Alaska had, indeed, turned into a ‘jump-off site’ for further American expansion behind the continental border

(Kollin 6, 62). Thus, Brower's narrative partly contributes to the image of Alaska as the Last Frontier; on the other hand, however, Brower undermines this image by adopting the 'insider' perspective. Similar point is made by his narrative strategies: he fashions Alaska not as a strange, exotic wilderness, but as a home where everyday-life events take place and where American children are being brought up (235). According to Kollin, Alaska 'remains largely outside the United States' imagined community, serving as an extraneous space not fully accommodated into a national sense of self' (6). Then, I suggest, Brower's representations of Alaska – be it his insider perceptions of the landscape and climate or Alaska's role in arctic exploration – help incorporate the region into the American nation's imagined community (6).

To summarize: Brower's narrative provides a rather realistic portrait of the Arctic environment that is neither the Romantic space of the Other, nor a 'friendly' Arctic. This portrait is constructed through the narrator's insider perspective that reflects the narrator's experience – and thus, perhaps, native views – rather than literary traditions of the exploration discourse or the discourse of the Last Frontier. Though involving some conventional narrative devices of heroization, such as dramatic plots and contrasting his abilities and knowledge with others, Brower's text stands outside of the conventional arctic discourses.

Chapter 3. Encounters with the Inuit

Both Welzl and Brower spent decades among the Inuit, they adopted and mastered Inuit survival strategies, languages and lifestyle to such extent that they ‘went native’, both in public perception and in their own words. The narrators’ public reputation, i.e. ‘Eskymo Welzl’ (Welzl does not use this pseudonym in his narrative) and Brower, ‘The King of the Arctic’ is – to a great extent – based on these (self)-portraits. As I have outlined in chapter 1, certain appropriation of the Inuit lifestyle by an explorer-narrator was desirable – and, in fact, expected by readers of a popular exploration narrative, and it was also involved in the back-to nature advocacy of American nation-building discourse. On the other hand, in heroic accounts it was rather desirable to represent western culture as superior. Hence, our research question could be re-formulated as follows: How are the Inuit represented by the ‘schizophrenic’ men, that is, men with a western cultural background, but also men, who had a life-long experience of living among the Inuit? How do Brower’s and Welzl’s narratives navigate between these two backgrounds, and in what ways – and to which extent – do their narratives reflect the popular public discourse – and to which extent do they follow their live experience?

Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of the ‘contact zone’ seems relevant in the discussion of Welzl and Brower’s representations of the Inuit. Pratt uses ‘contact zone’ to describe a ‘social space in the travel narratives where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in high asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination’ (7). It is a space of imperial encounters, where ‘subjects previously separated by history and geography are co-present’ and ‘get constituted in and by their relation to each other, not in terms of separateness, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, and often within radically asymmetrical relations of power’ (8). Given Brower’s and Welzl’s long-term family-like association with the Inuit people and their reluctant relation to civilization, one might expect that relations with the indigenous people in their texts would be less asymmetrical and less representative of a colonial discourse of power and western superiority. Surprisingly, however, Welzl’s narrative, with which I begin this chapter, challenges these assumptions considerably and we shall see that his depictions of the Inuit strikingly follow the ‘expected picture’ of western superiority – rather unexpected for a man with the reputation of ‘the Eskymo’.

3.1. Jan Welzl and his strange ‘Eskimos’

The Czech audience popularly associates Welzl’s pseudonym ‘Eskymo’ with the narrator’s fondness of the Inuit and his living in Inuit fashion, in Welzl’s words, as ‘one of them’ (189, 223). On the one hand, there is ample evidence for Welzl’s appreciation of the Inuit in his text. Still, perhaps surprisingly, Welzl’s description of the Inuit people is always very strongly biased – so much that it is aligned with the description by the ‘average’ western-grounded explorer. In the previous chapter, I have suggested that Welzl’s representations of the Arctic nature contribute to the ideas about the Arctic as an exotic space of the Other. Welzl’s representations of the Inuit further reinforce this image of the Arctic, as I shall illustrate on the following pages.

3.1.1. The primitive Noble savages

Welzl regards the Inuit as friends who are closer to him than most of white people (349) and, undoubtedly, he was very fond of his Inuit friends; he depicts them as ‘trustworthy and honest’ and ‘the most kind-hearted people’ (119). Inuit customs fascinated him and he gives many details of Inuit family life, their clothing, housing, hunting activities, dialects, industry, religious views, art, and games. He was eager to learn the Inuit languages and their hunting methods, and wanted to get a ‘thorough knowledge of their custom’ (133), because, as he says, he ‘largely depended on the Eskimos’ (121), not only as a trader, but also because they ‘helped him to live and survive’ when he first came to the Arctic (128). Welzl regarded Inuit people as the experts where the Arctic environment was concerned. As we have previously mentioned, he depicts some of his Inuit friends as prominent explorers and capable leaders of successful expeditions to the unexplored regions of the Arctic Ocean. We have mentioned that in most of the western accounts, the Inuit figured as help or company for white explorers: never, though as independent leaders (section 1.4.3.). Even otherwise ‘Inuit friendly’ experts, like Stefansson, believed that the Inuit completely lacked capacities to organize, lead or even imagine travelling further away from the Arctic shores (Stefansson 1: 25, 38, 287). From this perspective, then, Welzl’s narrative is an extraordinary counter-discourse and it challenges the mainstream assumptions about the Inuit. Nevertheless, in the chapter ‘The Eskimos, Their Life and Customs’ (221-24), the narrator’s perception of the Inuit has been deeply influenced by western public imagination, and the narrator repeats most of the common stereotypes, prejudice and images about the Inuit known from other western accounts. We could even say that the narrator’s long experience among the indigenous people did not seem to have much affected the narrator’s western-centric views.

Welzl's choice of the Inuit people – described in 'The Eskimos, Their Life and Customs' (221-244) – reflects the western conventions and views considerably. The narrator differentiates between Inuit people from different regions by their level of 'civilization'. He observes that 'civilized' or 'intelligent' Eskimos lived in 'clean huts' or caves (71) and spoke Russian or English (125, 191, 218, 240), whereas 'backward' or 'stupid' Eskimos lived in 'dirty holes under worse conditions than cattle' (71) and 'never went to school' (237). Despite the fact that Welzl's narrator had many close friends among his civilized Inuit friends and neighbours and, apparently, spent a great deal of time in their company, his narrative does not give many details about the life in the 'civilized' families. Instead, the narration focuses almost entirely on the 'primitive' people of the New Siberia who were 'the most kind-hearted' and the 'far most backward of all Inuit tribes he met' (71, 224).

The narrator introduces the ethnographic chapter with an exclamation: 'And what a strange life those Eskimos of ours lead!' (221); the exclamation – and the use of a possessive – illustrate the narrator's friendly, yet clearly condescending relation to the Inuit. Condescending is also the narrator's choice to depict the Inuit as 'strange', exotic and inferior – exactly as the western readers would want to have them. In the same vein, Welzl employs literary strategies that downright downgrade or even dehumanize the Inuit. Some of the passages in the chapter have revealing titles, like 'Family life in holes' (221), 'The price of a wife' (225) or 'The babel of Eskimo dialects' (232). In these passages, Welzl observes that the Inuit 'usually sleep on the furs on the ground, among piles of bones, rotting entrails and offal' (224) or that the Inuit women feed their milk to anybody at any time, including adults and sometimes their dogs (221). In another example, he depicts a 'typical' Inuit feast: women hold half-rotten salmon up in the air and the others dance round them, tearing off bits with their teeth 'like dogs' (225). Some of these examples of animal-like imagery – often used by the narrator – are almost identical with the above-mentioned description of the Greenlandic Inuit from *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (section 1.4.3.). Likewise, Welzl's representations focus particularly on such Inuit manners, diet, and costumes that – to a western readership – would be repulsive, sensational or even shocking. This is taken ad absurdum when he claims that the Inuit – 'as a rule' – barter their girls for a bag of flour (146) or 'generally' throw their babies into the sea (201). Welzl describes such practices in a matter-of-course manner and he seems to be more amused than shocked by them – with the exception of killing children and the sick: that he regards as a 'wicked practice' (230). He does not provide a rational explanation for these Inuit customs and neither does he attempt to de-sensationalize them, as e.g. Rasmussen did – by saying, for instance, that killing new-born babies or the sick is a way of prevent starvation (and thus death in much a higher proportion) in the family (Rasmussen 139-42). This is – in part – understandable: Welzl was no anthropologist, but an uneducated man and his narrative lacks a scholarly insight into Inuit

cultural practices completely. Nonetheless, his ‘uneducated observations’ undermine his intention to present himself as a self-taught expert on the Inuit culture, in which attempt he fails, just as he did in the case of his expertise on arctic natural conditions.

Welzl employs narrative devices of scientific discourse also in his representations of the native people; he structures his observations into an ethnographic chapter; as illustrated in the quotes above, he refers to the Inuit in ‘ethnographic present’. Symptomatically, the chapter ‘The Eskimos, Their Life and Customs’ – along with references to the Inuit outside this chapter – are the only parts of Welzl’s memoirs narrated in present tense. Similarly, with the exception of Welzl’s prominent civilized friends Na Anko and Aa-Nook, the Inuit in the New Siberia rarely figure as individuals and, rather generally, are referred to as ‘the Polar Eskimos’ (125, 191). The strategy of ‘ethnographic present’ should have given Welzl’s observations general validity, yet, once again, Welzl employs these statement techniques *ad absurdum*: he tends to be sensational, absurd and unlikely – as, for instance, when he asserts that Inuit girls ‘generally have their first child between the age of six and eight’ (221). In a similar vein, Welzl claims to have learnt many of the Inuit dialects; yet, there are passages where he regards the Inuit languages as confusing and incomprehensible ‘babel’ and focuses mainly on depicting ridiculous gestures and body language by which the languages might be identified (232-33). Welzl’s – perhaps – too simple, views of the Inuit culture do not strike the reader as supporting Welzl’s proclaimed expertise. Welzl, then, hardly comes out as a man who knows the Inuit languages and customs thoroughly. Whereas Welzl fails in his attempt to project himself as an expert on the Inuit culture, his narrative succeeds in projecting Inuit cultural practices as inferior, and the Inuit as ‘backward’ exotic people of the past.

3.1.2. The white gentleman among the slobs

There is a very little room for doubt about Welzl’s perception: the white man is overall superior to the Inuit. Out of the many contrasts between the Inuit and the white people that Welzl’s text provides, the white man – and more often than not Welzl himself – is almost always represented as physically and morally stronger than the Inuit. Welzl claims that the Inuit are ‘feeble’; in the narrator’s words, they cannot ‘endure the Arctic cold as well as a white man’ and would not ‘take off their furs even on days when the heat made me strip to the shirt’ (227). Further, Welzl describes the Inuit as extremely ‘lazy’, people who cannot ‘do anything like the work that a white man does’ (225). These common stereotypes about the Inuit, repeated by the narrator on several occasions, sharpen the contrast with his self-portrait of a hardened, weather-beaten hero who deals with the Arctic weather better than the Inuit, and, who, moreover, has ‘lots of work and plenty to think about’ (179, 330).

Nevertheless, Welzl's major focus is on eating habits and cleanliness. Whereas some explorers (like Nansen) eventually got accustomed to the Inuit food and even found 'a certain pleasure' in the smell of Inuit dwellings, Welzl never admits to have adjusted to it. It even seems that the distance he keeps from the Inuit in his text is often larger than in the cases of explorers who spent much shorter time among the Inuit (Nansen 11). Welzl finds the Inuit food and the smell of their houses disgusting and doesn't forget to mention 'dirty habits' or 'unpleasant rancid stink' almost every time he talks about his neighbours, their homes or their diet (71, 224, 229). He admits that – even though he liked the Inuit people – he would not visit their homes; he only 'poked his head in' (84) to see what was happening there and never 'crawled into their holes [because] the disgusting stench would choke him' (223). He also declines the Inuit invitation to go fishing with them, because, as he puts it, 'many, if not all of them were very dirty and smelt horribly of fish grease' (119, 147). Welzl himself, in a stark contrast to the Inuit, seems to be very particular about keeping a clean, smart appearance, a tidy dwelling and eating white man's food. To keep his household, he only hires women 'who knew a little about keeping things clean and could cook for a white man' (205), and he even employs a girl to put ribbons in his long blond hair and to maintain his beard so that it would not 'get untidy' (206). Welzl's obsession with cleanliness is somewhat surprising: getting wretched to a certain degree was one (almost required) component of an explorer's Arctic adventure. The image of Welzl insisting on red ribbons in his hair may thus partly subvert his image of masculine hero. In the narrator's view, however, the tidy appearance and clean habits made him stronger and contributed to his good name, because, in his words, they 'added to the esteem in which I was held up North' (206).

The narrator claims that he was in a 'continuous contact' with his Inuit neighbours and that their 'dirty habits' were the only reason why he disliked visiting their houses (229). However, regarding Welzl's good name in the North, there are parts in his narrative that might indicate that the lack of closer involvement with the native people was governed by his fear to not to harm his reputation. He would, for instance, never marry an Inuit woman. In his opinion, 'the Polar Eskimo women are quite unsuitable for a white man': they are dirty and smell strongly, but, '[i]n the first place', they are lazy and 'think that a white man is strong enough to do his own work' (219). However, Welzl would not have a 'civilized' Inuit wife either, 'especially' as he says, 'later on when I had a prominent position up North' (202). Furthermore, even though the narrator generally refers to the Inuit as 'my Eskimo friends', it seems that the only Inuit with whom he keeps a closer contact are, symptomatically, the 'prominent' and 'civilized' hunters (125, 191). Hence, Welzl's relation to the Inuit is asymmetrical and condescending at best, and promotes western cultural standards as superior. His text tells the reader in many ways that it was more beneficial to the white man's success in the Arctic to stick to western standards and manners, rather than converting to

those of the Inuit. Despite Welzl's reputation as a man who became an 'Eskymo', there was an obvious cultural gap between Welzl and the Inuit people and the narrator kept physical and social distance from them.

The narrative structure of his books strengthens the impression of the narrator's distancing even further. Most of Welzl's observations related to the Inuit are condensed into the above-mentioned chapter 'The Eskimos, their Life and Customs' and, outside of this chapter, there are very few references to the Inuit people. This is in striking contrast to Brower's text, which describes the narrator's interaction with the native people on almost every page, as we shall discuss later. Welzl's text, on the other hand, projects Jan Welzl as a man who avoided – rather than adopted – Inuit ways of life. In fact, the text itself provides very little evidence for Welzl's 'going native' and the fact that the Inuit taught him to the art of survival is simply just his own assertion. With the exceptions of dog sledging, there is no other example of Welzl's learning or adopting Inuit hunting methods: most of the hunting or whaling passages show Welzl using western guns, boats and equipment. The narrator describes Inuit technologies and makes general observations about Inuit hunting or whaling methods, but the protagonist never gets directly involved in any whaling or hunting trip with the local Inuit (with the exception of the above-mentioned international expedition of Captain Ivanov). The only exception that displays Welzl's participation during an Inuit hunt, is an incident in which he helps the Inuit to secure a walrus on the shore with his sledge. However, rather than depicting Inuit hunting itself, the narrator's reconstruction of the event seems to be designed to emphasize Welzl's exceptional strength and shrewdness, and the fact that it astonished the apparently weaker and clumsy Inuit onlookers (219, 230). Thus, Welzl's narrative gives an impression that the narrator only observes and depicts what the Inuit generally do, and even this observation happens as if from a distance and without any involvement in any of the Inuit activities.

The picture of Welzl observing the Inuit from above, 'poking' his head through small roof-openings, without entering inside their 'holes', may be thus used as a metaphor neatly illustrating Welzl's approach to the Inuit in his entire text (84). In many ways, then, Welzl represents Pratt's 'seeing-man' whose 'imperial eyes passively look and possess' and who 'seeks to secure his innocence in the same moment as he asserts European hegemony' (9). Welzl's imperial eyes see the Inuit through the thick net of western prejudice and stereotypes and this net seems to prevent the narrator from entering the native space and, perhaps, from 'going native' and 'getting dirty' through such a contact. The narrator's innocence and hegemonic position of the 'civilized man' – who is better than the Inuit in almost every respect, superior to them both culturally and socially – is thus secured. On the other hand, Welzl's innocence relates less clearly to what Pratt calls the 'anti-conquest': despite Welzl's passivity in adopting the Inuit manners, he was far from being a 'passive

observer' when the 'civilization' of the Inuit was concerned. Welzl's 'civilizing' attempts are the topic of the next section, in which I continue my deconstruction of Welzl's 'Eskymo' image.

3.1.3. 'Civilizing the Inuit'

Despite having reluctant relation to the civilization himself, Welzl was convinced that adopting the western manners was for the benefit of the Inuit. In this connection, he emphasizes 'the enormous difference [between] Eskimos of Alaska' [and] our Polar Eskimos' (241). Welzl observes – with great satisfaction – that the Alaskan Inuit 'are clean and they wear clean clothes', their women 'dress for the great part like white women', 'they carry on trade like the white men and sell and buy not only by way of barter, but also for ready cash' and 'quite a number of them are studying in various colleges' (241). For Welzl, as he puts it, it was 'a great treat to watch these people'. For instance, he describes with awe how he watched their impressive celebrations during the American Independence Day (242). The American audience could have found these passages testifying about a successful progress of Americanization in the 'unsecured and endangered Alaska' particularly appealing, and I shall return to them in the next chapter. Welzl points out that the Inuit people in Alaska were 'almost the exact opposite of our Polar Eskimos', and he does not stop here: he – in many ways – attempts to improve the situation of his primitive neighbours (241).

There is no evidence in the narrative that Welzl would perceive the Inuit as a disappearing race, and, thus, he does not view civilizing the Inuit – by the means of 'incorporating positive values of Christianity, western education and modernity into their culture' – as the only way for their survival, as the civilization proceeds (Brøgger 84, 191). On the other hand, Welzl believed that 'primitive customs' made the Inuit weaker and vulnerable: hence, that acquisition of civilized manners was an important means for the Inuit to improve their health and living conditions. Moreover, there were Inuit's encounters with white criminals: according to Welzl, the white people often took advantage on the Inuit' simplicity, naivety and lacking knowledge of western customs (202, 229, 231). In the narrative, Welzl – as the chief in the New Siberia – uses much of his power to protect the Inuit against white rascals, particularly the so-called 'blind tigers': white people who sold the Inuit poisonous, blindness-causing spirit and then robbed the drunk people (306-7). Also, Welzl uses much of his power to civilize the Inuit, even though, apparently, Welzl was way more concerned with teaching the Inuit clean habits and some western manners, rather than providing them with – clearly more beneficial – business know-how and/or formal or Christian education. Symptomatic is the following anecdotal story: Welzl gives a sick man 'a thorough scrubbing' in a bath and makes, in his friendly words, 'the damned pig' promise that 'he will never live in such dirt again' (289), but, as he comments, the Inuit 'goes home and same thing happens' (290). In another

incident, he tries to force a woman to take his modern steel needles, after he has seen her child working skins with needles made of bone: an act that the narrator sees as ‘drudgery’ and child abuse. The woman refuses to take Welzl’s needles explaining that ‘she was accustomed to their own needles’. This made Welzl very upset, and, as he puts it, he had ‘a good mind to take my rifle and fire at the whole silly lot of them’ (222-23). Although most of his attempts to ‘civilize’ the Inuit people end up in a failure similar to these quotes, his text projects Welzl as a protector of the people who is genuinely concerned about their well-being, who wants the best for them and knows what is beneficial for the Inuit people – obviously even more than the Inuit themselves. This, in the end, might have added to the appeal of Welzl’s character and strengthen Czech public perceptions of Welzl as the ‘chief of the Eskimos’.

Welzl says that he had a great authority among the Inuit people, especially after he had become the chief on the New Siberian Islands. He asserts that the Inuit ‘showed [him] respect’ (85), admired him, feared him and held him in high esteem. This, ultimately, must be the reason for Welzl’s reputation as the ‘chief of the Eskimos’ for the Czechs. Nevertheless, it seems that the major – and the most successful – authority Welzl exercises above the Inuit is his narrative authority: for the Inuit in Welzl’s texts are in many ways reminiscent of Robinson’s native friend Friday. In particular, both Robinson and Welzl teach western manners to their respective audience, and, similarly, both objects of education are deprived of the possibility to speak. Similarly – and significantly – to Robinson Crusoe in Defoe’s colonial narrative, Welzl – in Pratt’s terms – ‘possess’ the Inuit as passive objects of his descriptions; the narrative perspective in his text belongs exclusively to Welzl: it is him who speaks for the Inuit and who often expresses ‘their’ opinion for them – rather than giving the Inuit an opportunity to speak for themselves. To illustrate, Welzl asserts that ‘the Eskimos would be glad to let me have their girls for my work’ (146), and that the entry of his cave that he gave to the girls ‘was a very comfortable place for them to live’ (147). The girls themselves never say a word in these passages. The dialogues between the narrator and an Inuit, mostly designed to illustrate native dialects, are other examples of Welzl de-voicing the Inuit. Most of them take form of dialogised monologues: the narrator asks questions and demonstrates what the Inuit people ‘usually’ answer. Similarly, most of other, indirect conversations between the narrator and the native people looks nearly as an interrogation, in which the narrator ‘plies [an individual] with questions after questions’ (86) and the Inuit give him answers, without ever asking anything themselves. The image of the Inuit drawn by Welzl’s text is thus often an image of the ‘anthropological objects’ defined through their technologies and customs, rather than through their own points of view (Bravo 266).

By now, I have deconstructed the image of ‘Eskymo Welzl’ as the man who became Inuit. Welzl might have lived among the Inuit people, but hardly as one of them. I observed that the text

reflects narrator's awareness of his superiority and promotes the white man's cultural hegemony above the Inuit. This may have contributed to the popularity of Welzl with some western readers. Yet, the question remains: in what way, then, can we perceive Welzl as the 'Eskymo'?

3.1.4. Welzl as 'the Eskymo'

The Czech historian Lenka Vaňková perpetuates the Czech myth of 'Eskymo Welzl' in one of her recent articles: she introduces Welzl as the man with 'the soul of the Eskymo', who conquered the icy desert with the determination of the simple man who takes life easy as it comes, and even became 'the chief of the Eskimos' (74). The simplicity and purity of Welzl's life in the Far North and his humanity, empathy and fondness for the native belong to major components of Welzl's Eskimo image – together with a common belief that Welzl lived like the Inuit and became their chief. As I have argued, these attributes are questionable in Welzl's reputation – and so is his reputation as a chief. I argue in the following section that the discrepancy between what Welzl asserts about his authority and superiority of the white man, and what his text actually shows, paradoxically makes it possible to see Jan Welzl as the Eskimo, eventually.

We have seen that Welzl's superior image is often based upon the contrasts he constitutes between himself – or the white man in general – and the Inuit. However, the narrator tends to contradict himself, and his text challenges most of his constructions about the white man supremacy. For an illustration: Welzl repeats that Inuit people are lazy, but, at the same time, he claims that 'it often happens that the Polar settlers have nothing to do [because] the Eskimos do their jobs for them' (186) and, as a matter of fact, the narrator employs several Inuit women himself. Similarly, he emphasizes Inuit dirty habits and disgusting manners – but then again, he depicts a typical party held in his cave, during which the host throws fritters into the mouths of his guests and observes that 'some guests are smart enough to catch the fritter in their mouths and eat it without touching it with their hands' (193). Here, Welzl gives the reader a portrait of the white man very little different from a portrait of the Inuit he constructs elsewhere in the text, when depicting the typical Inuit feast in the example above (225). Such a compelling contrast may be Welzl's narrative strategy designed to balance the differences established between the 'primitive' Inuit and the 'civilized' white men. Considering the distance and the difference constructed between the two cultures by the narrator, his narrative strategy appears rather unintentional: it is precisely these moments in which Welzl attempts to fashion himself as culturally superior, that reveal a touch of childish naivety and innocence of the narrator – qualities so often attributed to the Inuit.

As mentioned earlier, Welzl was very proud of his reputation as a prominent and authoritarian man and – according to common belief still vivid among the contemporary Czech

readers – a man who became the ‘chief of the Eskimos’. Curiously, there is not a single piece of evidence (neither in the text, nor anywhere else) that the Inuit actually chose Welzl as their leader. Moreover, Welzl never calls himself ‘the chief of the Inuit’; his only claim is that he was a Chief of the New Siberian Islands, a position to which the leaders of both white and Inuit people – allegedly – elected him. Nonetheless, contrary to the proclaimed admiration of the Inuit to the narrator, the Inuit people in the text do not seem to give Welzl much respect, neither do they seem to recognize his superior authority. All Welzl’s attempts to use his authoritative position and to teach the Inuit western manners fail, obviously. That includes events when Welzl threatens to use his gun in order to stop (or punish) an Inuit practice (the infanticide as the most remarkable case) (200-202); he never actually points his gun against the people and treats the Inuit with a paternal indulgence: he scolds them – but then he leaves them to do what they want. In the extreme case, he only points out that the Inuit were too backward to realize the benefits of civilization and change their habits. And so, it is often quite to the contrary: it is the Inuit who – apparently – show Welzl their indulgence; they let Welzl patronize them, without letting themselves be particularly affected by his views and his well-meant advice. Recall the examples mentioned above: the Inuit man who swears to keep clean, but always returns to have himself scrubbed, or, similarly, the woman who refuses Welzl’s tools – they do not seem to have much respect for Welzl’s authority. As a matter of fact, they appear somewhat smarter than Welzl who, naively, tries to convince the reader of the opposite. These episodes – as we suggest, unintentionally – endow Welzl’s Inuit with a great deal of independent agency. And it is this agency that undermines Welzl’s authority, subverts Welzl’s image of superiority that he tries to constitute in the narrative, and, ultimately, questions the public image of Welzl as the ‘chief of the Inuit’.

On the other hand, his failure to project himself as an authority and – as we have previously mentioned – also an expert, reveals that Welzl possessed the same positive virtues of simplicity and naivety, and a lack of formal education. Considering these attributes – along with the fact that Welzl was, very much like the imagined Inuit, notorious for his ‘absolute ignorance of geography’ – we get a perfect definition of the Inuit in the turn-of-the-century western discourse (Stefansson 1: 38, 287). All these characteristics thus justify the perception of Welzl as ‘the Eskymo’. Still, Czech scholars, as well as a broader audience, associate Welzl’s attribute ‘Eskymo’ mainly with his – alleged – Inuit-like lifestyle and his – equally alleged – authority among the people. Hence, it appears that in this work, we associate Welzl’s simplicity, naivety, and the childlike innocence (genuine Inuit characteristics) with the image of ‘Eskymo Welzl’ for the very first time.

Within the Czech context, these ‘native’ traits strengthen the imaginative association of Welzl with a typical Czech image of a pábitel. According to his editors, Welzl’s ‘child-like simplicity’ with which he told stories in which he believed ‘for all their absurdity’ enhanced the charm of his

narrative' (15). Thus, it seems that for the popularity of Welzl and his narratives, the imagined (as we documented above) 'native' traits were perhaps more important than Welzl's self-portrait as an expert and a man of authority. As we have seen, it also emphasized Welzl's humanity with which he approached the Inuit and tried to help them to a better life, as he believed. This accent on humanity is – according to Čapek – one of the major assets of Welzl's narratives. In Čapek's words, Welzl's narrative is 'no mere description of eternal ice, but of eternal humanity, however harsh its surroundings have made it'. In this respect, Čapek continues, 'Welzl's memoirs are a genuine revelation' (7).

To summarize Welzl's encounters with the Inuit, I suggest that Welzl's representations of the Inuit people reveal two very different 'heroic' portraits of Welzl. The first portrait, based partly upon Welzl's self-depiction (and, for simplicity, I call this portrait 'White Welzl'), represents Welzl as a civilized man, a man who is fond of the Inuit, but who is also adamant about his (and white men in general) superiority. Indirectly, then, his self-description reveals Welzl as the man who was culturally, socially and physically very distant from the native people. This portrait of Welzl, then, conforms to the popular ideas about a heroic Arctic explorer, and makes Welzl's narrative representative of western colonial discourse. The second portrait is that of 'Eskymo Welzl'. First, notice that this portrait is *not* isomorphic with the image of 'Eskymo' that Czech readers usually associate with Welzl (that of a man who has a deep understanding of the Inuit culture and language). Quite to the contrary: this is a portrait (and I showed it above) very difficult to disclose in the narrative. Rather, the discrepancies between what the narrator says and what his text actually shows, reveal Welzl's 'Inuit-like' soul: and this is the portrait we have in mind when we say 'Eskymo Welzl'. This essence of Eskymo Welzl lies in the uneducated simplicity of Welzl's observations, in his kind-heartedness and the naive innocence with which he shows good will in attempting to civilize the Inuit, as well as in the naivety with which he tries to persuade the reader of his supremacy and expertise. This portrait, then, conforms to the popular Czech ideas of a pábitel, as discussed in section 2.1.4.3.

We should stress that both of these portraits (i.e., 'White' and 'Eskimo' Welzl) are, nevertheless, built upon stereotypical perceptions of the Inuit in the western discourse and contribute equally to the popularity of Welzl and his narratives among the Czech readers. Whereas the 'White Welzl' portrait reassured Czech readers about advancement of their culture in comparison to the Inuit, the 'Eskimo' portrait links Welzl to the idea of innocent and noble 'primitive people'. The latter was very important in young Czechoslovakia's nation-building ideology: it – similarly to the U.S. discourse – sought inspiration in the nation's glorious past, in the case of Czechs, the Old Slavic times were the most prominent. I return to this glorification idea later

(in section 4.4.), in connection to Welzl's portrait as a pioneer and its importance in the national pedagogy.

In comparison to Welzl's narratives, Charles Brower's portrait of the Inuit is very unconventional and, in the following section, we shall see that he de-exoticize the people in a way similar to de-exoticizing the Arctic landscape and climate.

3.2. Charles Brower and strangely familiar Inuit

I have argued that Brower's representations of the Arctic natural environment stand outside of the Arctic discourses that define the Arctic as a 'strange space of the Other'. His portrayals of the Inuit further support this argument. Whereas Welzl's image of the Inuit was familiar to western readers as the exotic, and inferior Other, Brower's narrative gives the reader a strangely familiar image of the Inuit who is very much like other human beings, and cannot be defined by stereotypes of the western colonial discourses.

3.2.1. Deconstructing the stereotypes

Brower carefully avoids employing stereotypical vocabulary or repeating conventional notions that make the Inuit exotic, downgraded or simply other than the white man. For instance, any descriptions of physical features of the Inuit are very rare in Brower's text and, in fact, there is nothing that would suggest that the Inuit are physically 'other' than the white man. The comparison of Brower's text with Stefansson's accounts about the Inuit people at the Cape Smyth, where Brower ran a trading post and lived among the very people to whom Stefansson refers, gives a neat illustration of this trait of Brower's memoirs: Whereas Stefansson uses long paragraphs to describe the people's exotic tattoos and piercing, Brower does not make a single reference to the body art in his text (Stefansson 1: 38-40).

Likewise, Brower's representations of the Inuit lack the sensational aspect found for instance in Welzl's text. Negative stereotypes (expressed via vocabulary) degrading the Inuit are completely missing in Brower's narrative, as well as other references to strong smell or a lack of cleanliness. Brower obviously finds nothing exotic or repulsive about either Inuit people, or their food and dwellings. For instance, he does not make the eating of rotten fish into a typical component of Inuit diet, as in Welzl's narrative, but shows it as a temporary and matter-of-fact need at the end of the winter before fresh food becomes available again. Similarly, he suggests that, for instance, the infanticide was, again, a matter of survival and a custom of inland Inuit in particular: they had to follow the caribou and the newly-born were too great a hindrance to their travels; as he

comments, 'it wasn't that they weren't fond of their babies, or that most of the mothers didn't want to keep their newly-born. But custom was too strong...' (142). Brower shows things in proportion and in this light, these peculiar Inuit customs appear certainly less alarming and shocking than they do in Welzl's narrative.

Further, Brower avoids making general statements applied to the Inuit as a single, monolithic group. Hence, his text thus negotiates many western stereotypical assumptions about the Inuit and their culture. Similarly to Welzl's and many other scholarly western narratives, Brower distinguishes between different Inuit villages and tribes who speak different languages and have different traditions. What, however, makes his text very different, is that he demonstrates that different Inuit villages perceived each other as strangers. For instance, before his trip to Utkiavie, the Inuit women in Corwin Bluff began remodelling Brower's outfit 'into something more in line with what the well-dressed Arctic traveller should wear', because they did not want him to 'disgrace them among strangers' (23). In Brower's text, Inuit villages were in friendly relations sometimes, but sometimes they regarded the other as 'very bad people' (23). In many ways, then, Brower's text dispels western assumptions about 'noble savages' and 'innocent, carefree' people who live in 'peace, freedom, equality and brotherhood' (Alnæs 11-24). On the one hand, Brower emphasizes the hospitality and peacefulness of the people, a trait that appears startling compared to his friends' advice concerning an encounter with the Inuit, namely to 'lock yourselves in and be damned sure your guns are loaded' (15). Brower often refers to the Inuit as 'most reliable' (204) and 'honest' friends (25). This, however, does not mean that there are no examples of violence both between individuals and between villages. For instance, Brower describes blood vengeance as a widespread custom that sometimes destroyed whole families (148). Furthermore, his text reveals that there was a social hierarchy in the native communities and that the people feared their chiefs and shamans. In Tigara, Brower observes that 'the whole village was scared to death of Attungowrah' (36), the feared chief who welcomes Brower by showing him around his personal graveyard as a gesture of warning. The Inuit chiefs in Brower's text often take a great advantage of their privileged position. Attungowrah, for an illustration, after having forbidden all white man's tools and food on the ice during the whaling, makes his wife travel eight miles back to fetch Brower's stove to make tea for Brower and himself; as Brower remarks, 'the old fraud brazenly explained that he alone stood in with devil enough to do something forbidden to ordinary Eskimo' (55).

As this example illustrates, Brower's narrative also challenges western ideas about irrationality of the Inuit and their dependence on traditions and taboos. Moreover, the narrator makes it obvious that breaking with tradition was not reserved to the authorities only: in the narrative, it is usually Inuit women who initiate such a rebellion. Welzl describes Inuit women as 'in general a very poor lot' (225) and, similar to western narratives, tends to victimize the women as

powerless creatures at their male relatives' mercy. In Brower's text, Inuit women dare to eat white man's food or drink coffee despite angry 'outbursts' of their chiefs and husbands who, eventually, often join their women when they see that such offence against the tradition had no catastrophic consequences (106). It is certainly not the case that Brower suggests that the position of women in native society was easy. He observes that the women often do the hardest job alone (83) and that they are being mistreated by their husbands or male relatives; in his words, 'it would be many years before the white man's point of view made much of a dent – particularly in the treatment of women' (106). Still, as suggested above, most of the women in Brower's narrative are no poor creatures, but independent 'strapping females' (181). Brower recounts incidents in which a woman kills or humiliates her husband in order to 'square accounts for long years of mistreatment' (150, 181), and the women – in his text – are not afraid to speak their mind. In one of such episode, a chief – Mungie – invites Brower to go hunting, but he forbids Brower to do the shooting, explaining that 'these particular caribou were intended for Eskimos only and if a white man shot one, it would have a very bad effect on the devil' (91). Despite the ban, Brower kills a caribou after a while anyway, which makes the chief angry. The surprising part appears when the chief's wife had learnt what happened and Brower describes it in the following words: 'I was sure there would be murder in camp that night, the way Coccy told the world what she thought of her sullen spouse. "It was just like him," her voice sharp with scorn. "Mungie was always jealous if others got any game." Mungie took it all on the chin, staring stolidly at the fire as if he hadn't heard a word – I felt a little sorry for the man' (91).

In all these examples Brower provides unusual views on the Inuit people and negotiates western assumptions about the Inuit society. He also constructs a complex image of the Inuit people by representing the Inuit as individuals with voice, as I discuss in the following section.

3.2.2. The present life of an Inuit

The Inuit in Brower's text (more often than not) have their own Inuit names, good and bad qualities, and they act differently in different situations. What characterizes the Inuit in Brower's text is diversity and particularity – certainly rather than uniformity. Some of his Inuit characters have undoubtedly 'noble savage' qualities, namely Toctoo (who later became Brower's wife), and her brother and Brower's closest friend nicknamed Baby; both of them are caring, loving, protective, and wise figures. Baby – the only nickname for an Inuit person in the text, as well as an ironic hint at his body structure (Baby was tall and strong) – may become a strong symbol of the innocence lost through the contact with civilization, for Baby yields to drinking, then he kills a man and, ultimately, is killed himself in a drunk fight. On the other hand, characters like Attungowrah are

violent and brutal, far from representing the western idea of the ‘noble savage’. Attungowrah is the only Inuit character in Brower’s narrative described in dehumanizing terms as ‘the most brutish human I ever met’, a man ‘with cunning eyes and Neanderthal jaw’ (36), standing ‘apelike and passive amid the decaying corpses of those he had murdered...’ (115). Yet again, what makes Attungowrah representative of other Inuit is the complexity of his character: Brower gives him a very human face by displaying his human weaknesses of a ‘craven bully’ (150) and by referring to him in friendly terms as an ‘old boy’ (113) or ‘old fraud’ (55). Brower makes it obvious that the two men shared mutual admiration, respect and perhaps even friendship; as it turned out, Brower was the only white man whose presence Attungowrah tolerates in the village and he was also regularly invited to take part in the community’s festivities and whaling trips (150).

As illustrated above, Brower gives voice to the Inuit. He lets the Inuit define themselves in their own terms. Whereas Brower himself refers to the native people as Eskimo, the native characters in his text usually call themselves (or other native people) ‘Inuit’ and Brower ‘Cabluna’ (an Inuit word for a white man); when the native women see Brower in the new outfit they made for him, they, in Brower’s words, ‘jokingly made out that I was no longer a Cabluna, or white man, but an Inuit like themselves.’(46). Unlike e.g. Rasmussen who gives voice to the Inuit by recording their songs, storytelling and personal life-stories in order to preserve Inuit culture heritage for the future, Brower seems to be more concerned with representing the actual moments in present life. Instead of just ‘evoking their cultural past’, Brower gives the Inuit open space to tell about their presence and actual relations (Thisted 63-75). As the examples above illustrate, he lets the Inuit express their opinion about themselves, their family members or other Inuit tribes. In this way, the narrator partly reveals privacy of the Inuit people, displaying such relations as love and quarrels between siblings or husbands and wives, people’s fear of the strange Inuit, the authorities ‘bullying’ the people, or the people going round authorities. Consequently, Brower’s text projects the Inuit as very human and very normal people who, perhaps, are not too difficult for the reader to identify with. Thus, they are very far from the alienated ‘anthropological objects’ or the ‘people frozen in the past’ known from the turn-of-the-century western narratives.

On the other hand, Brower partly contributed to such perceptions himself. His interest in ethnography and collecting and archiving Inuit cultural relics triggered Brower’s collaboration with famous arctic scientists and his funds supplied museums in the USA and Canada, contributing thus to the mainstream knowledge (39, 243, 259). However, even though he calls one of his first trips among the Inuit a ‘several week’s dip into the Stone Age’ (40), Brower clearly differentiates between the past and the present of the Inuit people. Contrary to Welzl’s view – in which Inuit technologies ‘had not developed much since their ancestors’ time’ (73) – Brower observes that their finds occasionally revealed ‘customs and practices as old and forgotten as the relics themselves’

(245). Referring to the finds of an old suit of armour and clubs, the narrator mentions that the ‘ancients of the village recalled hearing of arenas in Cape Halkett and young men being trained as gladiators’ (245). The amusing allusion to ancient Rome that Brower draws here is rather significant: it associates the Inuit culture with, what was believed, one of the most glorious periods in European history, rather than with the ‘primitive’ stage of European Stone Age and thus gives the Inuit history a certain touch of prestige. Moreover, the lines make it obvious that the Inuit people no longer lived exactly as their ancestors, as popularly assumed by the western imagination. His projection of the Inuit society as dynamic and progressive is one of the strongest traits of Brower’s counter-discourse, to which I return in section 3.2.6.

3.2.3. Civilized versus primitive

There are only few images suggesting a contrast between ‘primitive’ and ‘civilized’ manners in the Brower’s narrations. For instance, when referring to Inuit houses, Brower mentions that ‘though lacking frills, they were comfortable enough’ (21), and concerning Inuit feasts, he observes that ‘there was no “After you” rule in their book of dark-day etiquette’ (93). Cathrine Theodorsen observed that a similar employment of imagery or vocabulary associating good manners in civilized society with native manners was often used ironically in western discourses, as a rhetorical device and an instrument ‘to present the author’s collective as superior and to draw a clear distinction between civilized people and barbarians’ (168). However, more often than not, Brower seems to challenge the notions of western superiority by employing this strategy in a reversed order: in a way, he associates the stereotypical notions about the Inuit with the white man. To illustrate, in Brower’s text, the Inuit always ‘eat’ their food, while Brower or his white friends ‘gorge and stuff’ themselves on white man’s food’ (44). On another occasion, Brower describes an encounter with wracked white whalers who approach the beach and mistaken Brower and his Inuit company for ‘just one more lousy bunch of natives’. Here are Brower’s own words:

‘I didn’t mind in the least being taken for an Eskimo, but the language coming across the water would have roused a saint [...] I waited until they hit the beach, then, bowing low, cut short their leader’s foul abuse with a clipped and really elegant, “Good evening gentlemen! Please, consider us at your service.’ Sixteen jaws dropped. Next moment they turned into human beings, as far as possible for a type like that’ (170).

In these lines, the Inuit men – and Brower as an Inuit – are obviously represented as gentlemen with manners, while the downgrading expression ‘lousy bunch’ apparently suits better to the white whalers. In addition to the deliberate misplacing of the stereotypical notions, Brower challenges the western dichotomies primitive-civilized/modern and inferior-superior when he uses

the word 'primitive' and other stereotypical expressions related to the Inuit in the situation, when he ridicules white man's attempts to cope with the Arctic environment by insisting on white man's methods, instead of Inuit strategies. For instance, his ironic exclamations, such as 'Oh we'd show those poor superstitious natives how to whale!' refer to incidents, when Brower and his companion attempt to whale in a 'western fashion' and these attempts fail completely: the only whales caught in that season are those caught by the Inuit (82, 99, 102). Brower often points out that the Inuit with their old time methods and 'with nothing else but old-fashioned harpoons and lances' are more successful than the white whalers who had 'the best of whale-guns and everything else to work with' (70).

Further, Brower dispels notions of white man's superiority by letting the Inuit voice their sceptical opinions about the white man's points of views, his existence and survival in the Arctic. As he often points out, Brower's and other white man's outfit, equipment, or attempts to do things in Inuit ways, are a constant source of amusement; the Inuit 'die laughing' (144, 91) and give him 'sound advice' when they see the white men's attempts to catch a whale (86), or manoeuvre a kayak (171). Likewise, the Inuit laugh out Brower's and other white men's attempts to 'bring some justice in Inuit treatment of women' (83) or to prevent them from distilling spirit (182). Whereas Welzl along with other authors patronize and show indulgence to the Inuit, in Brower's narrative, as the examples above imply, it is often the other way round, especially in the situations when Brower tries to impress the Inuit and fails. To illustrate, Brower gets lost in a fog for three days during a trip that should prove his independence, and is saved by a small girl (19-24). Since then, as he complains, the Inuit women always make him take one of their kids along 'for fear I'd get lost' (90) or send the children to secretly follow him 'to make sure I found my way home' (90).

Brower points out that the longer he stayed among the Inuit, 'the less cocky [he] felt at being a white man' (38). However, even though Brower sometimes downgrades the white man and represents the white man's knowledge and methods as inferior and less effective, he does not seem to use this strategy in order to represent the Inuit as the only masters of the environment; his narrative makes it obvious that for a successful life in the Arctic, the knowledge of both white and Inuit men was indispensable, as we shall discuss later. Rather, these Brower's representations serve to establish more balanced relations between the Inuit and the white man and to force the readers to see the Inuit from a symmetrical perspective.

3.2.4. Between the Inuit and the white man

Contrary to Welzl, Brower keeps no distance from the Inuit, he is more than a mere observer of their lives. He fashions himself as a man eager to learn everything about the Inuit people, and as the

only man among his white fellows who never gave up visiting Inuit villages regardless how remote they were. However, instead of sharing his knowledge in separate ethnographic chapters, the readers learn about Inuit customs, practices and life through the descriptions of daily life. Brower points out that he took every opportunity in trying to live in an Inuit fashion and, gradually, it becomes his lifestyle when with the Inuit (21). Unlike Welzl, Brower sleeps in Inuit houses or igloos with the people (41), feeds on raw fish and meat (41), takes part in their festivities (62), marries an Inuit woman and does not seem to have anything at all against his ‘turning into the Inuit’. Neither does he conceal his pride in being taken or mistaken for an Inuit. He ridicules white people who treat him with scorn before learning his real identity, and, likewise, he makes fun of a white whaler captain who ‘looked him over with sympathy’ and insisted on taking him on as a member of his crew in ‘hope to prevent an otherwise normal white man from going entirely native’ (68).

In this regard, Brower implies that the ‘chance to go native’ (21, 41) was not completely under the control of the white man (as it seems to be e.g. in Welzl’s case, to whom – in the narrative – the Inuit immediately showed everything he needed to know, p. 86-87), but that it was – indeed – the Inuit who had an essential agency in this matter. To be invited to hunting or whaling was obviously not a matter-of-course (a white man was a taboo) and, in addition, ‘the Eskimos did not want their own hunting interfered with by strangers’ (87). Sometimes, he must beg the Inuit for their permission to join their whaling or to see their rituals (44). Nevertheless, Brower makes it clear that the Inuit community has adopted him and became his family. In many accounts from Alaska, as Kollin pointed out, the narrators domesticated the wilderness by taming it, and used the domestic rhetoric to remove the Inuit from the picture of the U.S. nation in Alaska (93, 105). Brower’s narrative, then, is quite the opposite of these accounts, since here, it is the Inuit who seem to domesticate Brower: they make him an outfit for him to look like them, they treat him like a son for whom they feel responsible to take care, they simply allow him to ‘turn native’. In this way, Brower’s text reverses the dichotomy between ‘white colonizer’ and ‘native colonized’ and challenges contemporaneous notions about Euro-American conquest. Brower ascribes a significant agency to the native people of the region and instead of removing them from the ‘American’ picture, he makes them a very visible and important part of it.

On the other hand, Brower has no aversion to civilization; when he resides on his trading post, he lives in a frame house, which was, according to his biographers, equipped with an extensive library and a gramophone, he enjoys going south and admits that sometimes the only thing he wanted was ‘white man’s food and white man’s bath’ (49, 60). Brower also kept some white man’s views about the Inuit, particularly about their customs. As I have mentioned in section 2.2.1, Brower respects the Inuit traditions and realizes their importance in the life of the Inuit, nevertheless

he never stops joking about the native taboos and rituals and perceives (most of them) as ‘silly chores’ (46, 55). Even though Brower tried to avoid breaking Inuit taboos himself, he does so with an indulgence of a rational man who, in his words, ‘listened to the endless things I mustn’t do ... and accepted the various taboos as solemnly as they were offered’ (46). Perhaps we could ascribe Brower’s sceptical humour pointing the superstitions and ignorance of the native people to western reason and rationality. Nevertheless, Brower puts these contrasting images into balance again: he reminds the readers of western rituals, for instance ‘the bottle of champagne solemnly smashed across the bow at any “civilized launching”’ (128). Moreover, he is sometimes willing to try out some Inuit rituals himself, especially when there is nothing to lose; then, with no white company in sight and ‘feeling like a fool’, he tries to call down fair weather (117) or ‘drive the devil out’ of his frozen heels (99).

3.2.5. Brower as a mediator between cultures

Brower’s close association with the Inuit, his thorough knowledge of their language and customs, and perhaps also his unbiased relation to the people, made him a popular mediator and – so to speak – a bridge between the white and Inuit communities. Whereas Welzl may have been afraid to harm his reputation by turning into an Inuit, in Brower’s case, ‘going native’ seemed to be the advantage, that, gradually, gained Brower his high status and natural authority in the community. The white people commissioned Brower ‘to do the trading for the whole ship’ (79) and ‘get some whalebone from these friends of yours’ (66, 79) and, in the text, Brower always tries to make the trade fair and negotiates good prices for the Inuit. Both the white and Inuit communities benefit from the trade connections established by him, and Brower’s station in Barrow becomes a thriving and popular ‘hangout’ (88). Similarly, both the white people and the Inuit go to Brower when a conflict arises between the two communities; needless to say, Brower always settles down the matters to the satisfaction of both sides (214).

Cole noted (in his preface to Brower’s book), that Brower’s grandson and a proponent of Native rights, Billy Neakok, called his grandfather ‘the first crook who was up here’. Neakok considered Brower a ruthless trader and exploiter of the Native people (xvi). Perhaps Neakok was right. A destructive effect of modernity and western lifestyle on the Inuit – and Indigenous cultures in general – is unquestionable, and Brower – directly or indirectly – contributed to the progress of modernity in the region. Further, Brower’s text gives the impression that Brower – indeed – was a tough businessman and a man of enterprise, who never missed an opportunity to make a profit; perhaps, he really was selling to the Inuit for more than he was buying for from them, as Cole implies (xvi). His text does not give examples of such incidents, naturally, considering the nature of

the autobiographical genre and the narrator's obvious strategy to present himself in a good light. Thus, we should keep in mind that his words in the following lines do not necessarily have to reflect reality: Brower claims, with certain pathos in his words, that 'I did everything practical that I could do for them. If they were hungry or hard up, I always helped. I gave them medicine when sick, coffin when dead – and never charged for these things the way certain missionaries were doing' (255). These lines, in addition, provide an example of a patronizing tone in Brower's representations, and a superior perspective from which he fashions himself as a protective authority. At the same time, however, Brower avoids making suppositions about his superiority: he adds that the fact that the Inuit continued to treat him 'like one of themselves' and came to him in any difficulty, 'was a confidence [he] valued highly' (255). Moreover, his narrative shows that the Inuit hunters-traders were as tough businessmen as the white man, and were equally eager to make profit; for instance, by preventing the white man to hunt on their grounds, using the 'white man's taboo' as a means to sort the white man out of the business competition (87). Brower respects this; he is impressed by 'prosperous independence' of the Inuit traders and represents the Arctic as a place where every man is entitled to pursue his happiness. A comparison of Brower's memoirs with Inuit narratives from the region of that time is beyond the scope of this thesis, nevertheless, such study might provide some answers to the question of plausibility of Brower's views as he presents them in the text.

As far as Brower's portrait is concerned, the narrator fashions himself – quite convincingly, as I showed above – as a man, to whom the interests of the Inuit were imperative and, quite often, he might even seem to suggest that the interests of the Inuit were even more important to him than those of white people. Rather than presenting himself as superior to the Inuit, Brower often contrasts his knowledge and reasoning with that of white missionaries who, according to Brower, lacked rationality and common sense in dealing with the Inuit people. Though having no apparent objections against the Inuit being given western education – he sent his children to colleges in the South and many of teachers and priests in Barrow were his friends – he points out the negative impact of certain missionary efforts concerning the Inuit culture, health and industry. For instance, he observes that the missionaries prohibited the native people to whale on Sunday, 'even if it were the one chance to secure their year's supply of vital whale meat and blubber', and persuaded the people to abandon their homes at the best hunting and whaling spots, just to have them closer to church. At this point, Brower had stepped in, gone directly to the people, persuaded them to stay where they were, and let the preachers come to them. For this – as he claims – he was 'never quite forgiven' (254-55).

Kollin has argued that American fictional pioneers secured their hegemonic position in the region by employing native features – such as racial cross-dressing and language as a literary means

of overtaking the place of the land's original inhabitants and erasing Indigenous interests in the territory (45, 68-69). Given the examples of Brower's use of Inupiaq and his knowledge of the people, we can argue that Brower – through the same means – promoted Indigenous interests and, literally, returned the people back to their hunting grounds. Brower was obviously sceptical about the benefits of western cultural practices upon the Inuit, especially regarding alcohol abuse and religious practices, as mentioned above. However, introducing modern technologies and western views into the Inuit industry did not belong to this list.

3.2.6. Positive transformations in Barrow community

Brower demonstrates that it was by the combination of the Inuit knowledge, customs and technologies complemented with the introduction of modern equipment that was the best way to achieve material success in the Arctic. In this respect, his narrative presents Brower as a resourceful man. When whaling, he uses light Inuit oomiaks instead of heavy western boats, but he goes even further: he equips the oomiaks with western whaling guns and native crew. Then, he further motivates the sceptical Inuit by promising them to do everything else 'the Eskimo way' and, hence, to perform all the necessary rituals (122). Brower points out that this was 'a great success'. Whaling Inuit-western way marked one of the best seasons for those, who adapted the new methods of whaling and who did not 'cling to many of their ancient methods' (152, 181 225). Even though Brower refers here clearly to the native ancient whaling methods, his remark might be read as an innuendo to the white people: as mentioned above, he showed that insistence on purely modern methods had not brought much success, either (139). In that sense, Brower represented a perfect example of Stefansson's ideal of a white man in the 'friendly Arctic'. However, Brower suggests that in the Arctic a white man and an Inuit man could be equally successful – if they gave up some of their own cultural traditions (and prejudices) and accepted new views with an open mind. His narrative shows that it was not only the white men, but also the Inuit alike, who had a full capacity to adapt to the new conditions and new technologies – and that they eagerly welcomed such an opportunity. This is a circumstance often disregarded in a western discourse, and, in this regard, Brower's views negotiate also Stefansson's conceptions (Stefansson, 1: 5-7).

Brower's success story represented – in many ways – a typical American dream story, as I shall further show in chapter 4. Thus, regarding a material profit, Brower's text suggests that in an Alaskan American dream, the Inuit were not a hindrance but an asset, and Inuit and western culture were both indispensable. In contemporary Indigenous literature from Alaska responding to the turn-of-the-century ideas of the Last Frontier, the idea of pursuing 'American dream' – and related accent on material gain – have been ranked among the western-grounded ideas, adaptation of which

had a negative effect on Indigenous knowledge, values and lifestyles (Kollin 143-48). Brower – naturally, for one who is pursuing this dream – does not give any thoughts to such perceptions. In his narrative, he, obviously, sees no reason why the Inuit should not get as rich as the white man does. In this regard, Brower’s text may represent an early-twentieth-century example of the ‘progressive white attitudes’ that, according to the famous black American author W. E. B. Du Bois and his social study ‘The Black North’, opened the way towards the inclusion of minorities into the American society and securing their equality and economic power (qtd. in Yannella 23).

Brower observes that the Inuit of the younger generation ‘began more generally to adopt our whaling gear, tackles, guns, bombs and all. They even insisted on hard bread and tea out on the ice’ (124). Likewise, when Brower suggests to quit whaling once it became unprofitable and go for fur trade instead, his idea is, according to Brower, ‘greeted with the broad grins that made evident that the new order of the day might pan out quite well’ (243, 248). Brower realizes very well that the arrival of white men and modern technologies marks the end of some Inuit traditions and cultural traits. He describes such a transformation in the Inuit society: there is, for example, the loss of a prestige on the part of shamans, both because they were unable to cure people during the flu epidemics and because the Inuit people saw that the western whaling guns worked better than charms (230). Brower watches these changes with some regret, but as he puts it, ‘neither native nor white had time for sentiment where whaling was concerned’ (165).

Unlike other western authors and scholars, Brower’s perceptions of these changes lack the catastrophic scenario associated with the images of the Inuit race dying out and the inevitable end of their culture. Brower’s remark about the Inuit ‘insisting on hard bread and tea on the ice’ implies that the Inuit were not simply passive recipients of a strange culture (that harmed their own), but that they comfortably incorporated western fashions into their own traditions; for instance by making a former taboo of white man’s food into a new requirement of successful hunt. Brower’s narrative reveals that, in Barrow, the Christian faith was adopted among the Inuit in a very similar manner. The narrator shows this in the story of a female shaman who, while working with traditional magic and charms, took advantage of her pregnancy and gained enormous popularity by presenting herself as another Madonna. As Brower observes, the woman was greatly upsetting missionaries by her ‘sacrilegious angle’, but only until a girl was born, by which she lost all her reputation because the Inuit could not ‘see any Madonna having *a girl!*’ (231). His text thus casts a new light on the image of Inuit in the western discourse, where Inuit people often figure as victims or passive recipients of the western culture. Brower’s narrative demonstrates that the Inuit people were equally eager to accept changes and adapt to new situations as white men, that they had their own peculiar ways of adapting to new circumstances, and continued on living without losing the essence and authenticity of their culture. Brower’s narrative thus negotiates the western mainstream

ideas about the Inuit society as frozen in the past: in his text, the Inuit community is represented as able of development or independent action. As a result, Brower's text projects the Inuit people not as victims of the modern world, but as its independent, confident partner. His narrative thus goes against expectations of those who wanted to find the past in Alaska, and, also against perceptions of those, who found the present Inuit culture unauthentic and corrupted by civilization. Brower's text shows most of the ongoing transformations of the Inuit in a more positive way and he seems to be rather optimistic about the future of the Inuit people.

To sum up, Brower provides the readers with very unconventional images of the Inuit. His representations reflect the narrator's symmetrical relations to the Inuit, and his narrative features the Inuit as human and quite normal people who resist being defined through stereotypes, general assertions and fixed categories. His narrative also challenges western assumptions about white man's cultural superiority over the Inuit by representing the positive traits of both cultures as equally important and beneficial for the life in the Arctic, and by showing that white and native people occupy the Arctic space on rather equal terms. In his narrative, the Inuit society is not 'frozen' and disappearing, but it is able of positive transformation and progress, just as any other society. Brower removes the contrast between the 'civilized' white man and the 'primitive' native man and negotiates the romanticized views of the Arctic as an 'archaic' place of the Other.

Considering all these traits of Brower's representations of the Inuit, along with his representations of the Arctic natural environment, I can conclude that Brower's narrative presents an important counter discourse to western ideas about the Arctic and to the conceptions of Alaska as the Last Frontier. I suggest that Brower's narrative represents an exceptional example of 'arctic Realism' in turn-of-the century American literature written by a non-indigenous author. Thus, Brower's book provides readers with a refreshing take on the literary Arctic and I believe that this is precisely one of the reasons why Brower and his book became so popular.

Brower the does not employ stereotypical ideas about the Arctic and the Inuit in order to promote himself as a hero. Yet, his representations of the Arctic in general are still instrumental in the construction of his heroic image; they project Brower as a man who 'left behind him all [his] ancient prejudices and manners, embraced new mode of life [and] acts upon new principles, entertains new ideas and forms new opinions' – a definition identifying Brower with J. Hector St. John De Crèvecoeur's ideal of 'an American', the archetypal American pioneer (312-13). As we shall discuss in the following chapter, Brower – and Welzl as well – contributed to the 'frontier' image of Alaska as a site of continual rebirth of American identity and values, indeed.

Chapter 4. American frontier revisited

The first part of this chapter is devoted to Brower and Welzl as American pioneer-figures. Though divergent in their representations of the Arctic nature and the Inuit, their texts, I show, consent in projecting Alaska – and in Welzl’s case, also other Arctic regions – as a genuine American frontier: a land of opportunity and a material paradise, as well as a land of freedom and egalitarianism. I argue that precisely by representing Alaska and the Far North in terms of the original American frontier of the first pioneers, Brower and Welzl challenge the American early-twentieth-century nation-building concept of Alaska as the American ‘Last Frontier’. In the last part of the chapter, I focus on Welzl’s position in the Czech nation-building discourse, and examine the ways in which the supposedly typical American values his text promotes fit the Czech ideologies and public ideas about Czech national character.

4.1. The tales of success

In his lectures on American Literature, Martin Procházka associates the concept of ‘American dream’ with the success stories of individuals seeking a new life and striving for riches and social status (8). Brower’s and Welzl’s narratives undoubtedly belong to such stories. In both cases, it involves featuring traits of a Robinsonade genre that, as scholars consent, belonged to the building stones of Western frontier narratives, and, if we move to the North, also the Norwegian accounts written by over-wintering hunters and whalers on Svalbard (Green 53, Hauan 53-55). According to Hauan, in Norwegian Robinsonades men freed themselves of bounds and expectations of their families and society; having empty hands at first, they gradually built an independent life for themselves on the Arctic islands, first in building of their huts, and then in building their careers and gaining material wealth from the wilderness around them. They also ‘colonized’ the wilderness by bringing modernity into it (53-55). Welzl and Brower’s narratives share many of these traits. First of all, for Brower as well as Welzl, the Arctic was a land of new beginnings, and, in this respect, their portrayal of the Arctic is very close to Turner’s vision of the frontier as the land where everything was open to him who knew how to seize the opportunity (Turner 1856). Obviously, Brower and Welzl are men who knew this, as their texts demonstrate.

Brower works himself up from a cabin boy who quit school to the independent founder and the head of one of the most profiting whaling and trading companies in the far North, which controlled a string of trading posts across the Alaskan Arctic (182, 247). Point Barrow, where no

white man had lived before, becomes under Brower's leadership not only a profitable trading centre, but also a site of the first hospital in the region and the important headquarters for famous explorers and their expeditions. Brower came to be held in high esteem both in Point Barrow and outside, and despite the fact that he never calls himself by his nickname in his own narrative, he becomes known as the 'King of the Arctic''(xi).

Welzl follows similar paths of success as Brower did. He resolves ambitiously that he is not going to be 'one of the nobodies on the islands' (124) and works his way up from being a 'hungry tramp' (336) to a 'hunter of note' and 'established trader', recognized among the Arctic dwellers across the circumpolar region (q13). In the Arctic, Welzl fulfils all his dreams about being an independent master of his life – a motivation that had him move to the North in the first place (24); he makes a fortune and buys his own ship *Laura*, a recurring motif in his narrative and an important symbol of Welzl's complete economic independence and individual liberty (253). He becomes a man who was 'very much looked up to' (207) and refers to himself as 'the man of prominence' (203). The polar settlers eventually elect him to be the 'supreme judge of Indian justice' and the 'chief of the New Siberian Islands' (332).

As their narrative testify, the key to Brower's and Welzl's success – perhaps surprisingly in Welzl's case, since he was not born American himself – were the narrators' possession of the 'striking characteristics of the American intellect' which Turner ascribed to the pioneers on the Western frontier, and which popular American authors attributed to their fictional heroic pioneer-characters in Alaska and Canada: self-education, self-reliance, ambition, common sense, hard work, restless energy and the inventive turn of mind of an individual who works for the wealth of the whole community (Turner 1856, Kollin 78). Many of these traits of Brower's personality distinguish the narrator from other characters in his memoirs. I have mentioned that Brower fashions himself as the only white man in the neighbourhood who, unlike his Company fellows, takes an interest in learning the Inupiaq language and customs (22). I have also pointed out that this cultural knowledge and Brower's good relations with the Inuit people were beneficial to the whole community, generating fruitful trade connections. The other qualities were his optimism, creativity and ability to take on challenges, adjust to every situation and benefit from it. With whaling as his main profession, Brower never gives up his optimistic vision of making a fortune from the sea, and a bad whaling season or difficulties never discourage him. While some of his friends give up their hunting, trading or whaling attempts and leave the Arctic 'delighted to get away' (80, 133), Brower stays and waits for his luck to return the next season. Brower's exclamation 'But wait for the next season!' is a recurring motto in the text, and summarizes quite aptly Brower's optimism, patience and determination (174, 26, 66). Brower is not afraid of change or of adjusting to new conditions. He repeats that in the Arctic, there is no time for sentiment and man has to 'take things as they

came' (76, 126). So, he has always 'a brand new plan' when business is concerned (121), for instance, when he discovers that the whaling industry is about to stop being profitable, he immediately searches for other possibilities and makes the whole community in Barrow shift its focus to profitable fur trapping and trading (82, 108).

Welzl, likewise, works hard and against all odds in order to fulfil his dream of complete independence (336). As a 'Polar Robinson Crusoe' – and similarly to his famous archetype – he immediately starts building; first his new home which becomes the best dwelling on the Islands and gradually also his successful career (124). He learns as much as possible about the new environment and looks for possibilities of 'new sources of income' everywhere (q55, 57). He projects himself as a man who always has the cunning 'lucky idea' of how to make profit (143). Besides the seasonal work on whalers and as the trapper and hunter, he mends and repairs traps for others and being a skilful locksmith – as he claims – he is the only one who can do the job properly, which gains him both money, trust of the settlers and more customers (125, 126). Having collected enough capital, he destroys the exploitative trade monopoly of whalers by establishing a direct trade between the New Siberian Islands and banks in Nome and later in larger cities such as San Francisco (122, 149, 183). In times when the trading business does not go well, Welzl keeps working as a locksmith and sticks to fishing and hunting and, as he says, he is always able to provide for himself (145). In the contrast to the people, who yield to the vision of quickly gained fortune and turn to smugglers, thieves and other criminals, Welzl emphasizes strongly that he was a careful and honest trader who preferred to get rich with honour and avoids 'get[ting] mixed up in some shady business' (183). Welzl is obviously very conceited about his good reputation among the polar settlers. On the other hand, he also projects himself as a pragmatic businessman who does not conceal his pleasure in having 'got much for giving little', for instance, when he sells supplies to starving stampedes before the first spring vessel have time to reach them (q15; 67). Similarly to Brower, Welzl's narrative makes it obvious that there was no time for sentiment in the tough life in the Arctic. Nevertheless, honesty and hard work are among the strongest features of Welzl's self-portrait, along with his reliability. His clients' interests are his own and sometimes he even risks his life in order to stand by the promises he has given; for instance, he gets trapped in a blizzard for three days, because instead of going home before the storm begins, he decides to undertake another dangerous journey and deliver the goods to a customer in need (191).

Welzl exhibits his solidarity in many similar incidents in his narrative, but this particular incident gained Welzl his nickname 'Bear-Eater', because the customer feeds starving Welzl the meat of half a bear (197). His other nickname, the 'Arctic Bismarck', was given to Welzl when he invented and constructed a water pump for gold miners, based upon a drawing in the German magazine *Über Land und Meer* (200). Both of these nicknames are thus related to Welzl's virtues of

solidarity, reliability and creativity and symbolize the prestige which an uneducated and poor man, previously known as Welzl, can achieve by his diligence when he comes to the North; as the narrator claims, ‘nobody has ever heard of Welzl, but they all know who Bear-Eater and Arctic Bismarck is to this very day’ (197).

All the above-mentioned virtues Brower and Welzl display in their texts were – in Benjamin Franklin and his essay ‘The Way to Wealth’ – formative of a typical American hero of the eighteenth century (220-26). Brower and Welzl, then, make an impression of typical American heroes of the early twentieth century: the Alaskan ‘super-pioneers’ of London’s and Beach’s novels (Kollin 78). Their Arctic is the land of new beginnings, opportunities and possibilities open for anybody who knows how to seize them and where individuals can fulfil an American dream by achieving wealth and social status. It is certainly possible to regard Brower’s and Welzl’s texts as contributions to the American pedagogical discourse of Alaska by their literary constructions of Alaska/Arctic as the American frontier, a place where American values and identity are reborn or, more accurately in Welzl’s case, *born*, considering his national background. On the other hand, it is also possible to read their texts as counter-discourses to the American pedagogies of their time. The next section shows that both Brower and Welzl further reinforce the frontier image of Alaska, by the narrator’s picturing the region as a land of freedom and equality. In doing so, the narrators negotiate the dominant nation-building ideologies about Alaska as a space of Anglo-Saxon masculine hegemony. Rather than promoting these views, the narrators re-introduce the idea of the ‘melting pot’ to the nation-building discourse and redefine thus Alaska in terms of the original ‘New World’ frontier: as the land of freedom and equality open to everybody, regardless his or her national or social background.

4.2. The land of freedom and equality

4.2.1. Freedom without restrictions

Both Welzl’s and Brower’s text represent the Arctic as a land of possibilities and almost unrestricted freedom, where men can go wherever they like and do almost whatever they want to enjoy the resources provided directly or indirectly by nature. Both Brower and Welzl realize that much of this freedom is owed to the remoteness of the Arctic and the location of the region outside of an efficient supervision of one or another state’s administrative.

Brower’s text implies that the lack of administration in Alaska allowed men to ‘pursue their happiness’ in ways that would probably be illegal or impossible in more populated areas of the U.S.. Brower himself – just like most of the settlers in the region – profited from so called ‘piracy’:

‘salvaging abandoned wrecks’ before their crews get back to them – a trade that, according to Brower, everybody in the Arctic nevertheless considers ‘uncertain but legitimate’ (127, 140, 152). Similarly, according to Welzl, the Tsarist government of Russia showed little interest in the Arctic regions, and likewise the influence of a stricter Soviet government ‘cannot make itself felt immediately’, hence the dweller of the Russian far North could reap the profits of gold mining and fur trading wherever he liked and without paying taxes to anybody (305). As Welzl puts it, ‘everything is yours, there is nothing to stop you’, and he points out that the ‘freedom which has existed up North is certain to remain there for a long time’ (306).

Both Brower and Welzl fashion themselves as advocates of such freedom. Brower’s narrative demonstrates that to ‘live and let live’ was a motto of the polar settlers, and Brower obviously lives according to this motto. Describing the problems he met as the 1900 census taker, he observes that some of the arctic dwellers were ‘offering to fight the whole Government’ when they were asked to answer the question forms and thus reveal their identity – their names or nationalities (218-19). In such cases, though having to occasionally use some force to calm these people down, Brower only takes harmless information, or allows the people to tell him what they want to tell, and does not dig into their private lives or past (219). Similarly, though being the U.S. commissioner and the head of the trading station in Point Barrow, Brower nevertheless recognizes settlers rights to live according to their own rules, and avoids, for instance, getting mixed into what he calls for a ‘strictly native feud’ (224). When an Inuit kills a white man, Brower and all involved sides negotiate the situation to their mutual satisfaction (148).

Welzl draws a similar picture of the Arctic, although in his narratives, the individual liberty and independence are much more accentuated than in Brower’s text; perhaps because Welzl was born as a Czech, hence, a subject to the Habsburg Empire, and thus came from less free and democratic surroundings than Brower. Hence, the search for individual freedom and independence – if one looks away from the material – was probably not as strong a motivation for Brower, as it was for Welzl. For Welzl, liberty and independence are sacred values and the narrator shows strong compassion with all human beings whose independence is restricted by ‘cruelty of white man’, be it the Siberian convicts (26), the Inuit robbed by the blind-tigers (312), or white castaways cheated by their captains (204). Welzl never takes advantage of his power as the ‘Chief and the supreme judge on the New Siberian Islands’, and claims that he ‘never did any mischief with the authority’ (333).

Both of the narrators also show that everybody is welcome to try and profit from the Arctic environment, regardless nationality, race, social class, past and even gender, as I show below. As previously mentioned, turn-of-the-century ideas of American frontier defined Alaska as a testing ground for Anglo-Saxon masculine virtues, the decline of which was seen as a result of increasing new immigration into the U.S.. In the nationalist American discourses with Roosevelt as one of the

advocates, Alaska was to become a locus of re-establishing endangered Anglo-Saxon masculine dominance (Kollin 63-64, 92). Brower and Welzl challenge these nationalist conceptions of the Arctic when they define the Arctic in the terms of Crèvecoeur's ideology of primeval American frontier, in which the frontier figured as a space of egalitarianism, free of discriminating social restrictions, conventions or hierarchies of the European 'Old World' (310-13). Hence, their texts are representative of the 'frontier' conception promoted in the early-twentieth-century nation-building debates by Turner – as opposed to the nationalist 'germ' advocated by e.g. Roosevelt ('American Ideals' 1857-60).

4.2.2. Challenging the ideas of Anglo-Saxon hegemony in the Arctic

Brower's narrative projects the Arctic as a multinational space. However, unlike other American national narratives constructing the images of Anglo-Saxon hegemony in the region, Brower does not seem to give any importance to the nationality, race or social background of the polar settlers; he does not distinguish between people according to these qualities or use popular national stereotypes to define the arctic settlers. Brower is undoubtedly the hero of his memoirs and exceeds other settlers in many ways. In a sense, his text might indirectly support the notions about the Anglo-Saxon dominance in the region. However, as far as the pursuit of happiness or American dream is concerned Brower's text implies that people have equal chances to fulfill them regardless of their background. Brower's colleagues and friends both at the Station and outside of it have different nationalities, from Inuit to Irish or Portuguese, and all reap the profit from their individual or collective activities, as well as they contribute to the successful running of the community.

Kollin has argued that in Curwood's novel *Alaskan*, the main U.S. hero figure established Alaska Natives as part of an American agrarian dream by presenting them as mere employees on his farm, by which act he, at the same time, dismantled the native's own claims to the land (84). Brower's Station has Inuit employees, too. However, Brower avoids constructing similar impressions by – for instance – letting himself be impressed by 'the air of prosperous independence' of other Inuit traders selling 'whalebone [...] for good money' to a western whaler (10), or perhaps more importantly, by giving the Inuit an essential agency in the collective success, as we have pointed out in the previous chapter. In other words, Brower does not ascribe the credit for making Barrow a thriving headquarters solely to himself. For example, when he speaks about running the Station, organizing hunting trips or rescue parties, he often refers to the organizers using the collective 'we' or 'the station' instead of using a first person singular speech (202, 124, 214, 260). Given that 'the station' and the 'we' were composed of different nationalities with equal chances to make success in the Arctic and contributed to the wealth of the community in Barrow,

Brower, in this way, partly negotiates assumptions about Anglo-Saxon dominance and other hierarchies in the region.

Welzl, himself a European ‘immigrant’ into the Arctic, is an embodiment of the message his narrative conveys: everybody can come to the North and achieve what he wants. Welzl claims: ‘There is true liberty up North. Nobody is limited in his freedom. The banner of the sons of the Golden North is the banner of the freest men on earth’ (305). In his narrative, the community of ‘the sons of the Golden North’ is composed of people of different nationalities, social background, or races. Similar to Brower, Welzl represents the Arctic as an international space of freedom and equality where all people are free to pursue their happiness, regardless of whether they were escaped political prisoners or criminals (20, 44), or men like himself, seeking unrestricted economic and social independence. Likewise, Welzl does not categorize between people, and neither does he attribute the polar settlers any ‘typical’ characteristics based upon their nationality or social background – though with the exception of the Inuit people, as we have previously observed. However, where material profit and personal freedom are concerned, the Inuit are not excluded from the egalitarian image of Welzl’s Arctic, as illustrated by Welzl’s descriptions of famous Inuit explorers. Similar to Brower’s text, the nationality, race or past of arctic settlers is irrelevant. On the contrary, Welzl promotes the Arctic as a place where – as the narrator claims – ‘the man can call himself what he likes’(q34). It is a place that lies outside the social barriers and conventions of the world the narrators left in the South.

It seems, furthermore, that the lack of restriction also involves lack of the social conventions related to gender: women – in both texts – are included in the egalitarian picture of the Arctic, as I argue in the following.

4.2.3. Challenging the ideas of masculine North

Brower, as we have suggested in the previous chapter, describes women in the Arctic as independent, direct and strong. Brower’s Inuit wife Toctoo has an important role in the narrative, not only as Brower’s companion, but also as one of the factors balancing assumptions about white man’s dominance in the region: she saved Brower’s life already as a little girl, and throughout the narrative her skills, wit and intelligence constantly reminds Brower of his own ignorance (144, 164). Concerning ‘white women’, the only white woman in the Arctic in Brower’s text is Mrs Whitesides, the wife of the Navarch’s captain. Brower depicts her as a brave woman who withstands the shipwrecking calmly and without complains, and undergoes their first attempt to cross the ice with Brower, as opposed to her cowardly husband, who returns to the safety of the ship, leaving his wife behind in somebody else’s hands (188).

In the contrast to Brower, Welzl fashions himself as a man who would hardly get married and women are for him only a distraction that ‘kept him from his business’ (208). His narrative – undoubtedly – belongs to a masculine discourse. On the other hand, however – and regardless of his reference to the ‘sons’ of the Golden North – Welzl’s text demonstrates that women belonged to the arctic community of independent people. He refers, for instance, to a well-off ‘lady from New York’ who, according to the narrator, came to the New Siberian Islands to cure her lungs, as recommended by her doctor. Welzl conveys, that the woman lived with her maid in his cave for more than a year and that he was very relieved when the ladies finally left. Nevertheless, he also shows the woman’s independence when he points out that she spent a year in the Arctic despite her husband’s – and apparently also Welzl’s – objections (206-7). The narrator gives a similar example of an independent woman in an episode dedicated to a Korean castaway from a sardine-fishing vessel: the lady – according to Welzl – ‘found New Siberia so much to her liking that she stayed there’ (204) and ‘lived by herself’ (202). Welzl otherwise implies that most of other castaways were in the Arctic against their will and he feels sorry for their suffering, but this particular woman was ‘all right’, in Welzl’s view. His text shows that the woman settled down on the Islands by herself, helped the Inuit, worked sometimes as a nurse, other times as a housekeeper and she seems to have been as independent, adaptable and optimistic as Welzl himself (202).

Welzl and Brower’s texts thus negotiate both the masculine exploration discourse and the discourse of the last frontier by making the women from different social and cultural backgrounds visible as independent and strong actors in the Arctic.

This, then, is a place for me to suggest, that Brower and Welzl promote – whether explicitly or implicitly – Alaska or the Arctic in general as a region where everybody can transform their life and fulfil their dreams, regardless their gender, nationality or social circumstances, from Inuit people to a Korean women or European immigrants. Hence, the narrators remove the boundaries and hierarchies that were for the Arctic region designed by the nationalist masculine discourses of Anglo-Saxon or European dominance, and replace them with central American ideals of equality (Crèvecoeur 313). In a certain sense, their literary Arctic is more representative of the American ‘New World’ frontier as captured, for instance, in the popular frontier novel *O Pioneers!* (1913) by Willa Cather – featuring a female Swedish immigrant as the major pioneer hero –, rather than the expected masculine Anglo-Saxon Arctic, as depicted by London and other popular authors at that time. Brower’s and Welzl’s texts implicitly promote the immigration, and in Brower’s case also the presence of the native Americans, as a positive factor contributing to the prosperity in the (American) North. Also in this sense, Brower and Welzl rewrite the conceptions of Alaska or the Arctic as the Last Frontier: they connect the regions with the original frontier meanings and – indeed – relocate the old frontier to the North.

4.2.4. The melting pot

Literary scholar Yannella pointed out that Cather's novel – published in a time of national anxieties and animosity against immigration – represented one of few literary works that gave a positive view both on the immigration and the integration of the newcomers; it was the novel's heroine that personified many important American ideals and virtues (47-52). Brower's and Welzl's narratives seem to extend the ranks of these works. In a similar way as Cather on the Western frontier, they mitigate the U.S. national concerns about the security of an American identity in the North, by representing the Arctic frontier in terms of Crèvecoeur's ideal of the 'melting pot', where 'individuals of all nations are melted into a new [i.e. American] race of the man' (311-13). Turner drew on the Crèvecoeur's idea of the 'melting' in his own multiculturalists concept of the frontier and its 'composite nationality', which, according to Turner, was democratic and non-sectional, and it was rooted strongly in material prosperity. In his view, these were the main assets of the frontier and the essence of an American identity and American democracy (1855).

We have seen that Brower and Welzl represent the Arctic as a space of multiculturalism and cultural fusion. In Brower's text, the frontier is no longer a strange place inhabited by strange people. The narrator's domestic rhetoric, insider perspectives, and his making people of different nationalities equal participants in the American dream, seem to help to draw Indigenous and white men under one roof and turn them into 'Alaskan Americans'; a notion that Brower emphasizes by using this term for his half-Inupiaq children (236). Thus, Brower's narrative places the estranged region into the nation's imagined community and relieves the American anxieties about nation-building progress in the region.

We have also seen that as far as Alaska and Alaskan native peoples are concerned, Welzl partly confirms the same: especially when he shows the readers that the Alaskan Inuit had already lived according to American standards, as mentioned above. On the other hand, the composite nationality of the 'sons of the Golden North' in his text seems to be arctic, rather than anything else. In this sense, Welzl's text extends the American ideal of 'composite nationality' beyond the context of American nationalism. If we assume that Alaska belonged on the banner of the 'sons of the Golden North', Welzl's narrative, then, counters Roosevelt's nationalist claims to Americanization of immigrants. According to this ideal, people in the U.S. should only live 'under one our flag' and 'no other flag should even come second' ('American Ideals' 1858). However, even though Welzl resists inclining to any particular national identity – except for the 'arctic', he nevertheless exhibits what was believed to be genuinely American virtues and, willingly or not, he advocates many important American ideals. His narrative thus projects Alaska and the Arctic as a functioning 'melting pot' generating American identity. Given further Welzl's outstanding performance as a polar explorer and settler, his narrative conveys that other nationalities in the Arctic were an asset –

and not a threat – to American identity and nation building. Finally, yet importantly, even though Welzl does not explicitly connect New Siberia and other Arctic regions to American nationhood, Welzl's performance as a pioneer is implicitly an extension of the American virtues behind the border of Alaska; and this notion may further be enhanced by Welzl's Western-style stories from the New Siberia. Thus, his narratives give an imaginative support to the American ideologies about the 'expansion of American-self' even further north and east of Alaska (Kollin 67-68). In this regard, Welzl's narrative could have been an important and positive contribution from the North to then current debates about the future of the American nation. Unfortunately for Welzl, his books were published perhaps too late in the U.S. to dispel contemporaneous anxieties about the nation's security in the far North. Thus, paradoxically, instead of becoming a popular author on account of his promoting what can be seen as American ideals – which he eventually did become after his books were published– he was deported from the U.S. as an alleged Soviet spy.

Both Brower's and Welzl's texts assure the U.S. audience that the frontier in the North – indeed – was a place of perpetual re-birth of an American identity, and we can suggest that they thereby secure for themselves popularity with an American audience. They further do so by showing that the communities composed of nationally and socially distinct individuals who, however, prospered because of solidarity and democratic, self-governmental principles, according to Turner, profoundly American features (1855). Since Brower and Welzl were leaders in these communities, these representations could contribute to their heroic image as advocates of these ideals and, thus, truly American heroes. The characters of Brower and Welzl apparently use their authority only in the cases when wrongdoers threatened to harm (or have already harmed) other people in the community, in which cases, nevertheless, the whole community seem to take measures and punish the crimes. Welzl, for instance, referring to the blind tigers in the chapter 'The Horrors of Polar Justice' (305-326), observes that 'every honest person living up North is under the compulsion to take part in the manhunt' and 'nobody shows mercy' in the cases of serious crimes (309, 313). Welzl's lines imply that taking part in a manhunt and in the rather harsh punishments of the criminals belonged to the expressions of the solidarity among the polar settlers. Similarly, in Brower's opinion, 'a crazed killer was everybody's affair', and his narrative gives evidence that shooting the offender at the spot, after a short deliberation of present settlers, was not an unusual punishment (222-224). In a certain sense, Brower and Welzl's texts confirm the words of an Alaskan governor mentioned in the introduction to *A Guide to Alaska: Last American Frontier* (1939). In the governor's opinion, in times when there was no legal authority and administration to punish criminals in Alaska, 'the profound instinct of American people for self-government and their tradition of democracy made local self-government effective until the creation of the Alaskan Legislature in 1912' (Colby 28). Nevertheless, both Brower's and Welzl's texts give much more

examples of a more ‘human solidarity’, for instance by organizing rescue parties in Brower’s text (214, 260) or, in Welzl’s narrative, by providing shelter and supplies to those who need them (197).

In Brower and Welzl’s time, the U.S. faced several economic depressions and social crises, and, as Yannella observes, many U.S. writers criticized ‘unscrupulous individualism’ and ‘predatory boundless ambition of free Americans’ and the capitalist society. It was felt that ‘‘the melting pot’ [had] ceased to function’, and American notions of liberty and equality contrasted at that time with the racist and xenophobic features of American nationalist discourse (41-2, 47). In this light, Brower and Welzl’s pictures of Alaska and the Arctic society could represent a rather important input in the American nation-building discourse. They displayed American society in a more positive light; they reminded the readers of the essential and original American values and, last but not least, they conveyed to the readers again that the building stones of the American nation have not disappeared with the closure of the western frontier, but were relocated and revived in the North instead.

In this way, Brower and Welzl at the same time implicitly promoted Alaska as an alternative site for those U.S. citizens, who wanted (or needed) to escape from the other economically depressed and disillusioned places in the U. S. – in a same manner, as the European immigrants did to the American New World before. In Brower and Welzl’s narratives, the Arctic is indeed very close to the image of feeding ‘*Alma Mater*’, which Crèvecoeur draws in the third letter of *his Letters from an American Farmer* (1782): a material Promised Land capable of providing sufficient food for individuals of all nations (313).

So far, we have seen that as far as Alaska is concerned, Brower and Welzl’s texts give evidence about ongoing civilization in the region, regarded by the narrators (and presumably also by their audiences) as a positive development. On the other hand, given the fact, that in Brower’s and Welzl’s time, the major interest of the American nation-building discourse was to keep Alaska an ‘uncivilized’ wilderness where an American identity could be reborn and preserved, their narratives may have given the American audience a new reason to be anxious at the same time. And yet – they did not do so. In one of the following sections (4.3.3.), I argue that Brower and Welzl provided the reader with an alternative vision of Alaska: in their view, it was a region where it was possible to ‘have it all’. It was also a region, which – despite the progressive modernization – remained the ‘untamed’ wilderness.

4.3. The Promised Land

Kollin argues that the preservationist and conservationist ideas of the ‘Last Frontier’, in which Alaska figured as a modern sacred site – be it a redemptive untouched sanctuary or a carefully developed region –, were not fully challenged until the discovery of oil deposits in Prudhoe Bay in late 1960s. Since then, she observes, Alaska has been promoted to a region where ‘[we] get to have it all. Wilderness and industrial development. Scenic landscape and booming economy. They all go naturally together’ (xiii). Since then, Kollin continues, ‘Alaska’s status of the Last Frontier was threatened as it had never been before’ (123). Welzl and Brower’s texts are thus perhaps rare examples of early-twentieth century texts that were ahead of their time. I argue here that both of the texts challenge the conservationist Last Frontier image of Alaska and that they represent it as a region where it was possible to ‘have it both ways’: wilderness and a booming economy at the same time.

4.3.1. The land of fortune

As suggested above, material profit was among Welzl’s and Brower’s strongest motivations to come and live in the far North, both picturing the North for themselves as a region of ‘real fortune’ (Welzl 19), where one can make ‘personal fortunes in a year or so’ (Brower 77). Regardless Welzl’s romantic representations of the arctic natural elements, both his and Brower’s perceptions of the Arctic wilderness are pragmatic and mundane. This is true even if they partly represent the Arctic as a redemptive alternative to the civilized world; Welzl cannot wait to return from the civilized south back to the ‘peaceful’ Arctic (151), and Brower, likewise, once back from the cities seems satisfied to ‘resume the calm routine of Arctic existence where no epoch-making events took place’ (237). With material gain being their major interest, Welzl’s and Brower’s accounts on whaling, hunting, trapping, fishing and the business connected to these occupations cover a major part of the narrative space in their books. Symptomatically, the positive images of the beauties in the Arctic landscape are in both texts often associated with the material side of the country, rather than the aesthetical. Welzl notices the ‘magnificence’ of the arctic sceneries particularly on the return journeys from hunting trips, when his sleds are loaded with furs and skins and the narrator is shining with happiness (157, 173). Similarly, the images of the beauty of the landscape that Brower gives in his narrative are closely associated with caribou hunting; he takes two ‘perfect shots [under a full moon] that lighted the snowscape for miles around and celestial display followed of such unearthly beauty that recollection after more than fifty years still sends shivers along my spin’ (96). As Brower says, ‘with caribou all about us and fish so numerous ... it was a great life’ (167), and

‘plenty of skins, many bales of dried meat, and all the woodwork for three new oomiaks’ made a perfect ‘summer vacation’ (172).

Both Welzl and Brower profit from the resources that the land provides and both often emphasize the abundance of arctic nature. Welzl depicts the Arctic as a place where ‘nature grants so many gifts that man only has to take them’ (305) and where the Arctic Ocean is ‘a godsend, a storehouse which is always full’ (q281). Brower’s narrative gives a similar image, referring to the Arctic as a place ‘for harvesting a whalebone fortune’ from the sea (81), while the land provides for ‘some of the most profitable trapping’ (246). In this regard, Welzl’s and Brower’s narratives once again recast the ideas of a materially inexhaustible Paradise and a land full of economic opportunities that wait for every capable man, the ideas associated both with of the original American frontier and the Arctic (Kollin 122, Riffenburg 36). The myth and the ‘rumours that millions are waiting in the North’ (Welzl, q249) were in the late 1890s revived particularly during the Gold Rushes in the Canadian Klondike and Alaskan Nome, but also during the 1920s and 1930s economic depressions. American audiences could thus find Brower and Welzl’s image of the material Promised Land in the North particularly appealing.

During the economic depressions, Alaska was in focus for the American public as an alternative place of settlement for the farmers from poverty-stricken south. According to Kollin, envisioning and promoting farming, herding and careful industrial development in Alaska belonged to an essential argument in the conservational discourse; such images ‘promised to link the region to the rest of the United States’ and guard it thus against political influence from the outside, particularly from the Soviet Union (84, 87). The experimental Matanuska Colony established in southern Alaska in 1935 as a part of Roosevelt’s New Deal plan to help several hundred American families from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan recover from the Depression can serve as a practical example of this national project (Miller 5). As we have already mentioned, popular early-twentieth-century novels from Alaskan frontier were supportive of the American national projects in the region by reflecting the conservationist ideas of the then time nation-building discourse. Kollin has observed that in London’s *Burning Daylight* and Curwood’s *Alaskan*, the main heroic characters’ quest to ‘farm gold’ (*Burning daylight*), or ‘herd and farm’ (*Alaskan*) positioned them as the quintessential U.S. figures: the agrarian heroes and ‘the northern equivalents of American farmers’ (67-68, 83-84). Further, these narratives advocated an efficient management of Alaskan natural resources in order to avoid the destruction of the last American wilderness as the testing ground of American character. Nonetheless, the main characters in these novels eventually realize that the ultimate vanishing of the frontier is unavoidable, whether caused by the ecological damage caused by ruthless mining, or through the taming and civilizing of the wilderness by even a careful agricultural or industrial development – hence, the nation-building project would, once again, be in

danger (69-71, 85). In this regard, Brower and Welzl's texts may offer readers an alternative way out of this problem.

4.3.2. Living off the land and ocean

Brower's quest in 'harvesting whalebone fortune' and Welzl's reference to the Arctic Ocean as 'a storehouse' may position the narrators within the same national agrarian myth in which we find London's and Curwood's heroes. Unlike these heroes, however, neither Brower nor Welzl employ the mainstream environmental rhetoric, and the topics of preservation or of a careful development of the region remain untouched in their narratives. To illustrate, when Welzl visits Nome and Brower Kotzebue sound (then the major sites of culminating Alaskan Gold Rush), neither of the narrators comments on a potential negative ecological impact of the prospectors' activities. Rather, they describe 'humanitarian' catastrophes caused by the gold rushes; Welzl observes that many of the people had 'gone up north full of hope' but 'perished on the very threshold of the mysterious land of gold' (154, 205) or became thieves and 'all sort of riff-raff' (159, 205). Similarly, Brower watches 'hundreds of homesick men and women milling about aimlessly' (215), and gives many examples of such people causing trouble all around the Arctic, after the rumours that had brought them there in the first place proved wrong – and they were left in the Arctic without money to return home (215). Brower and Welzl's texts make it obvious that gold mining was the least profitable and secure way of gaining fortune. Contrary to the public perception of Welzl as a 'Czech gold-miner' (rather strong among the Czech audience), neither Welzl nor Brower actually tried to get rich in this way, at least according to their texts.¹⁶ Unlike many other western narratives from the gold rush times, in Welzl's and Brower's narratives, images of fabulous riches were associated not with gold (or farming and herding for that matter), but with arctic wildlife and the profits from fur trapping, whaling, hunting and fishing, hence from their living off the wild land and ocean.

Gaining livelihood this way (and on permanent basis) was a key to Brower's and Welzl's material well-being and economic independence. Whereas American fictional or real environmentalists advocated different forms of wilderness management to keep the nature safe for various national purposes, Brower and Welzl obviously preferred the Arctic untamed and free of human regulations and restrictions. We have suggested in the relation to Brower's representations of the arctic nature that rather than regulating or managing natural resources, Brower was adjusting his subsistence and commercial activities according to the shifting seasons of the year, adopting thus the Inuit ways of life (section 3.2.). Similarly, Welzl seems to follow the pace of nature's

¹⁶ The whole title of Welzl's first book *Eskymo Welzl* edited and published in 1928 by Rudolf Těsnohlídek is *Eskymo Welzl. Memoirs of a Czech Polar Hunter and Gold-miner*.

rhythms as well. He displays such adaptation when he, for instance – and in a way similar to Brower – provides the reader with rather detailed information about the best times and places to hunt or trap a particular animal, or he goes on how to adjust one's business so that it suits the resources available at the particular moment (q 108-109).

The narrators benefit from living in harmony with nature's pace, and in respect to material profit: to that end, they represent the arctic nature in terms indicating the nature's agency over men; it is the 'Mother' (Brower 123) or the one who is 'granting gifts' (Welzl 305). This makes Brower's and Welzl's narratives more representative of Indigenous environmental awareness – rather than the American conservationist ideas, in which the nature figured as a passive object of human protection or management.

Neither Brower nor Welzl's texts indicate that living in this manner was easy. Both narrators partly undermine the image of the material promised land by showing that only few men have actually 'harvested the fortune' of the Arctic. Brower's and Welzl's narratives make clear that success and happiness in the Arctic is difficult to achieve, and it is not a matter-of-course. As Welzl observes, 'only a man who is able to withstand years of privation' and get used to a hard life full of uncertainties might profit in the Arctic (q13-14). Brower makes the same point when he pictures Barrow as 'the world's northernmost "gambling den" [where men] played against the Arctic through good luck and bad.' (174). However, both the narrators point out that living off the wild nature made them self-sufficient in times of economic crisis and provided them with enough food (or alternatives to make living) in difficult times. Brower observes, in connection to the decline of whaling industry or to 1930s economic depression, that while the rest of the country was in troubles, people in Barrow went on hunting and trapping as usual and could 'forget the foolishness of civilization'. As he puts it, 'that was the advantage of dealing with dumb animals [...] instead of being dependent on dumb financiers' (292). Welzl makes a similar point when he observes that in the times when trading business fell off, he kept on trapping and fishing and was always able to provide for himself (145).

The narrators thus foreground the advantages of the subsistence and living off the land, by which they give the audiences alternatives for a successful life in the Arctic, apart from otherwise promoted farming and herding. Their texts also convey that by the virtue of living off the land, it was possible to settle permanently and live more or less comfortably even in the extreme North. In a sense, their narratives imply that the extreme North with its harsh conditions paradoxically provided a more stabile and yielding environment for life than rural countryside or cities, exhausted by droughts and economic depressions. In this sense, it is possible to regard Brower's and Welzl's texts as a nation-building literature promoting American settlement even further north than generally imagined and thus appealing to the contemporaneous American expansionist visions. Last

but not least, in contrast to agrarian lifestyle through which the frontier was ‘civilized’ and thus endangered as a site of national revival, living off the wild nature promised preservation of the frontier for future generations of Americans.

4.3.3. ‘We get to have it all’

As discussed above, the desire in the divergent environmental discourses of the Last Frontier was either to ‘carefully’ colonize Alaska, or, quite to the contrary, to preserve the region as an unspoiled wilderness for recreational use, essentially so that the future generations might see it as a site of perpetual rebirth of American identity. In either case, however, the concerns were that the protection or management of nature would always ultimately lead to civilizing the wilderness and, thereby, the frontier would ‘vanish’ either way.

In their narratives, Brower’s and Welzl’s living off the land and in the native fashion seem to have put these two divergent ideas – either colonization or preservation – in balance, while the regenerative function of the American frontier was preserved at the same time. Brower’s and Welzl’s commercial activities undoubtedly signalled the arrival of civilization into the region and set in motion a certain process of modernization, e.g. in whaling methods. On the other hand, however, we can safely assume that living off the land at the turn-of-the-century had hardly ever any devastating ecological impact on the land and neither did living in the Inuit fashion. In this sense, we can suggest, that Brower and Welzl ‘civilized’ the natural environment, yet the environment still remained an ‘unspoiled’ wilderness. Brower’s and Welzl’s narratives implicitly convey the message that protection or management of the natural resources was, in fact, not necessary: living off the wild nature (and according to its rhythms, like the Inuit) kept the nature in a better shape, perhaps, than the conservationist projects would.

In this regard, Brower’s and Welzl’s texts challenged considerably also the U.S. perceptions of Native people as the ‘poor stewards of the land’ (Kollin 112): in their narrations, the Indigenous knowledge and traditions are presented as an essential factor contributing both to the American wealth in the region and to the preservation of the frontier. Furthermore, as American super-pioneers and as advocates of quintessential American ideals, Brower and Welzl (and their narratives) were living evidences that the American frontier has kept – and would keep – its function, that is, that it produces and preserves the American virtues. Considering the fact whaling or trapping was a largely profitable industry at times, then Welzl’s and Brower’s narratives promoted Alaska as the region where one ‘can have it all’ – and where it, indeed, was possible to enjoy a ‘booming economy’ and wilderness together, without endangering the perpetual rebirth of American identity.

Brower's and Welzl's counter-narratives perhaps did not alter contemporaneous mainstream nationalist ideas about Alaska and its present and future inhabitants. Yet, their texts could be still regarded as a positive contribution to the U. S. nation-building discourses; they promoted Alaska as a land of freedom, equality and opportunity, and a land that was civilized, yet wild, and, importantly, as a land where American identity kept on generating. It was – in Brower's text in particular – a place where Americans could feel themselves at home. This is one of the reasons, I believe, why their texts met with such a positive response of American audience.

4.4. Is Welzl an American character?

So far, we have outlined Welzl's contribution to the Czech nation-building as a Czech explorer (section 2.1.4.). Yet, in many respect, we suggested that Welzl bears resemblance to a typical American figure. I shall argue in the following paragraphs that, on the one hand, the image of Welzl as an American pioneer was indeed an important asset appealing to the Czech nation-building ideology and, in essence, it enhanced Welzl's popularity in the Czech culture. On the other hand, I also show that Welzl can be viewed as a typical Czech character and that he embodies many Czech nation-building ideals associated with the Czech nation-building discourse distinctively.

4.4.1. An American pioneer – or a mythological Czech peasant?

American ideals had influenced greatly the major figures of the Czech nation-building process of the early 20th century, be it the first presidents Masaryk and Edvard Beneš or writers like Čapek. Through these popular Czech figures, American ideals were essential in shaping the concept of an independent Czechoslovakia and, in this way, influenced Czech public consciousness. Masaryk's American wife and her family inspired Masaryk as the continuation and personification of – in Masaryk's words – 'the great tradition of life and moral energy of the western pioneers.' (Čapek *Spisy* 80-83; Pekař 442). According to the Czech philosopher Jan Patočka, Masaryk relied particularly on the 'severe and Puritan ideal' of hard and persistent work of individuals' (2: 326). These qualities, along with 'vigorous creative optimism of every individual' attributed to Americans, were – in Masaryk and Beneš's view – the virtues necessary to achieve political freedom and national wealth and to secure the future of the nation (Čapek, *Spisy* 339-340, Beneš 2: 545). Influenced further by the early-twentieth-century American school of Pragmatist philosophy, Masaryk and Čapek advocated the human experience over faith. They also pointed to the capacity of Czech people – in Masaryk's words – to 'open their mind for the practical secular matters and

direct it towards the needs of their nation' (Čapek, *Spisy* 328). We have seen that Welzl was an embodiment of these qualities; he was also a man, who – against all odds – gained wealth and independence through his hard work, self-reliance and pragmatism. Pragmatism with no time for sentiment and 'Lord's Prayers' apparently helped Welzl significantly in the rough life of an Arctic businessman (301). Welzl, then, satisfied the needs of his nation by providing a living evidence that Czechoslovakia's founding fathers' ideas worked in praxis, and that the Czech nation can secure its independence and respect among the stronger European nations– by the same means used by Welzl, a brave American pioneer.

On the other hand, even though Masaryk and Čapek draw their inspiration from the American pragmatism, neither Masaryk nor Čapek (or the Czech audience, for that matter) would necessarily have seen Welzl's positive characteristics as exclusively American. When Čapek points out Welzl's diligence, pragmatism and common sense, he characterizes him as a 'typos of our man' and compares him to 'a Czech peasant' (5-7). Pragmatism has been considered a typical Czech trait; it was often associated with the general lack of interest in religious and spiritual life, and the predominant preoccupation with the practical and mundane affairs (Patočka 2: 310). Similarly, Masaryk and other liberal philosophers within the early twentieth-century nation-building discourse underlined the continuity of the noble traditions of freedom, brotherhood and humanity in Czech history (they traced these ideals to the Old Slavic times), and with these ideals in mind, Masaryk interpreted (and developed) the ideas of nineteenth-century proponents of the Czech National Revival. Similarly to the turn-of-the-century American nation-building, the Czech nation-building discourse of that times was seeking inspiration in the Czech nation's own traditions and glorious past (Čapek *Spisy* 328-330, 440; Pekař 409-415).

Inspired by the popular Rousseaus' ideas of 'noble savages' and, particularly, by the philosophy of Johan Gottfried Herder and his romantic views of the Old Slavic people, the nineteenth century Czech historians and politicians (like František Palacký – 'the Father of the Nation') believed that democracy and humanism were originally Old Slavic inventions and that it was really the Old Slavic people who virtually gave the democracy to the mankind. (Pekař 393, 409). The Old Slavic people – with the Czechs as one of the tribes – were (at that time) represented as a moral, non-belligerent, peace and freedom-loving nation that, rather than by war, was occupied by diligent work in agriculture and handcrafts. The Old Slavs, by the same coin, had no interest in conquer or achievement of hegemony over other nations. According to Patočka, to a Czech mind, the results of the WWI and the emergence of an independent Czechoslovakia was understood as a return to the old traditions and an achievement of the ancient (i.e. Old Slavic) program (2: 319). According to the Czech historians, Old Slavic non-belligerence was the very sources of the democratic and liberal principles of the Czech nation. As it was then believed, the distinctively

Czech ideals of universal human freedom, equality and brotherhood distinguished the peace-loving Czechs from the violent and oppressive Germans (Hroch 192, Pekař 409). These ideas became a settled part of the Czech national self-portrait and, it thus so happened that Welzl appeared to be a perfect example of the myth. His self-projection as a peace- and freedom-loving man, a craftsman who is honest, hard-working and skilful, a man who tries to be on good terms with everybody, a man who advocates democracy in the Arctic without making territorial claims for any particular nation – all these characteristics would fit these romantic images of Old Slaves quite well. Thus, the reader could associate Welzl's figure with either an American pioneer – or with a mythological Old Slave (Czech). Or both.

4.4.2. A promised Czech Land in the Golden North

Consequently, the picture of the Promised Land – drawn by Welzl in his narratives – can be viewed in two ways. On the one hand, it is the Promised Land associated with the mythical American Western frontier; as I argued above, Welzl's narratives helped to reopen the frontier in the North, a place where independence and wealth can be gained. On the other hand, however, it can also be seen as the Promised Czech Land, promised to the Czechs by the Old Slavic myths. At the end of the nineteenth century – and for the nation-building purposes – these legends were (in a manner of speaking) codified in *Old Czech Legends (Staré Pověsti České)* (first published in 1894) by a popular Czech writer Alois Jirásek and became extremely popular (Třeštík 169). Jirásek's version of the Promised Czech Land – paraphrasing the archetypal biblical story of Moses and his people – depicts the mythical Forefather Czech leading his tribe through vast deep forests and treacherous swamps to an uninhabited Promised Land 'flowing with milk and honey', the land named later after the Forefather: the Czech('s) Land. The Forefather Czech decided that his tribe would settle down there (in the Promised Land) and live there a free, peaceful, moral, honest and industrious life of peasants (7-14). Welzl's story – in which he works his way through the dangers of Siberian woods and icy deserts in order to settle down in the Far North, a land that flows in 'real fortune' (19), and lead a virtuous life – is rather a life-like copy of the legend about the Forefather Czech.

In the early twentieth century, the myth of the Promised Czech Land revived in connection with Czechoslovakia's independent existence. An illustration of it is *Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence* (also known as *Washington Declaration*) written by Masaryk and drafted in Washington 1918 by Czechoslovakia's exile government. American ideals and the U.S. Declaration of Independence undoubtedly served as a paradigm for the Czech Declaration (Hroch 77). On the other hand, those parts of the text describing Czechoslovak's independence as an arrival to 'the Promised Land', where the nation's 'ancient dream came true' and where the people will keep on

living with a clean slate, honesty and dignity, might as well refer to the Promised Land that the Czechs had already known well from their own legends (*Declaration of Independence of Czechoslovak Nation*). Welzl's arrival to his Promised Land – his achieving of complete independence –, then, inspired the Czech readers not only because it represented popular American traditions, but also because they could relate it to the ideals and traditions dear to them from their own country.

Unlike the Forefather Czech (or the American pioneers), however, Welzl does not make any territorial claims for his nation; perhaps because conquering others' lands was not considered an innate Czech virtue, as I have mentioned. Furthermore, the Inuit had been in the Arctic already and Welzl could easily identify, or be identified, with them. As Anthony D. Smith observed, the young European nations often associated early stages of their history with the myths of their nation's 'golden age', i.e. the time when the primitive people led a virtuous life – before they became corrupted by civilization (36). We have mentioned that travellers into the Arctic found reflections of their nation's past in the life of (what they regarded as) primitive Inuit people. Indeed, the imagined lifestyle of the Inuit (that is, 'noble savages'), who figure in Welzl's texts as friendly, honest and kind-hearted people, was to a large extent similar to the imagined lifestyles of the Old Slavic people, as we have seen above. Then, it might not be a coincidence that even though Welzl's actual identification with the Inuit is somewhat arguable, the Czech audience identified Welzl with the Inuit and that, to Czech imagination, Welzl exercised the primordial noble virtues and qualities of the Czech nation literally as 'Eskymo' Welzl.

According to the contemporary Czech historian Miroslav Hroch, the Czech ideas – viewed as the 'nation's mission' – to maintain the ancient Old Slavic virtues and ideals of democracy and humanism for humankind, were a leitmotif in the nation-building discourses throughout the 19th century, and were particularly accentuated in and the early 20th century in the connection with Czechoslovakia's independent existence (175). Thus, Czech audiences could, indeed, regard Welzl a man who was successfully carrying out his nation's mission in the Arctic, despite the fact that he was not a conquering explorer – or perhaps precisely because of that. In the Czech context, what seems to matter the most for Welzl's text popularity is Welzl's imaginative extension of the 'Czech self' into the harsh Arctic environment. Welzl's hard, yet peaceful life in the Arctic presented the Czech readers with the evidence that their country's independence is achievable and that it can be maintained, along with humanity of the nation's people, no matter how harsh the circumstances were.

Let me suggest that Welzl's Arctic Promised Land was as a site of a revival of two 'golden ages': one associated with the American frontier ideals, and the other associated with the Czech ideals existing since the Old Slavic times. The appeal of Welzl's figure and narratives rested upon

the fact that they could be interpreted either way: as a representation of American traditions, or as a re-vision of the Czech myths about the nation's glorious past.

Thus, the 'Golden North' in the title of Welzl's book (certainly a reference to the North American Gold Rush times), might also be read as a reference to the mythological Czech 'golden age' revived by Welzl in the Arctic. Nevertheless, so far, I have only discussed Welzl's narratives in the context of Czech pedagogical discourse in the first half of the 20th century. If we now extend our attention also to the second half of the 20th century and look at Welzl's text in the context of the Czech nation's 'performance', we realize that the setting of Welzl's stories in Alaska and Klondike during the Gold Rush was of a particular importance and that it contributed greatly to the popularity of Welzl among Czech readers in more recent times as well.

4.4.4. Tramping for freedom

Since the first decades of the twentieth century, the Western genre, and its northern-frontier subgenre particularly, have been extremely popular among Czech readers. The Czech tramping movement which emerged together with the independent Czechoslovakia as a distinctive Czech alternative to the American back-to-nature movements was at its beginnings largely inspired by Western movies and literature, particularly by the novels of Bret Harte and Zane Grey (Hurikán 19).¹⁷ Tramping – advocating simple-living and non-consumer lifestyle, and the values of humanism, liberty and individualism – has soon become a one of the favourite activities among Czechs; according to Bob Hurikán, generations of Czech people has grown up playing 'cowboys-and-Indians' since 1910s (5). Around 1930, as Martina Hajná points out, the 'cowboy era' in the Czech pop-culture gave place to a 'Canadian era', clearly as a result of a popularity of Jack London's books. Appropriately, playing cowboys and Indians was replaced (or at least alternated) with playing 'greenhorns and sourdoughs' in Alaskan and Klondike Gold Rushes (9). Welzl's books featuring both the iconic far North, Gold rush and heroic pioneers were published at the very beginning of the 'Canadian era' and, symptomatically, Welzl became, perhaps as a genuine Czech alternative to London's heroes, an iconic figure for the Czech tramps, travellers and adventures. Svěrák and Smoljak's songs inspired by Welzl's narratives, *Northern Wind* and the above-mentioned *Polar Night* (footnote 11) later became hits, both among the tramps and among a wider audience (Hurikán 16).

¹⁷ Czech tramping (named after London's central characters in *The Road*) is an alternative week-end social activity for people of all generations and social backgrounds, associated with rambling in nature, romanticism and adventure. Unlike scouting and woodcraft from which it took inspiration, Czech tramping avoids a formal organization (Hurikán 16- 19)

Welzl's wanderlust and his strong desire for independence and individual freedom become especially important traits appreciated by many during the communist reign in Czechoslovakia. In the period between 1948-1989, the iron curtain isolated Czechoslovakia from the western world and it made travelling outside the country virtually impossible for most of the Czechoslovak citizens. (Borovička 621). As a historian of the Czech travelling habits, Michal Borovička, has noted, the only possible substitute for Czechoslovaks – 'the people always hungry for travelling and seeing the world' – to experience some travel adventures was travel literature (621). Hence, the popularity of travel literature increased enormously in times when the people's freedom to travel was restricted. In this context, Welzl's unrestricted rambling across the Arctic was important – not only because it might have somehow satisfied the Czech readers' hunger for travelling. Welzl's free rambling across the Arctic and his emphasise on having his life under his own control obviously inspired many people to follow Welzl's paths, both figuratively and literally, as I show on the following pages.

In these times, tramping became a movement at the verge of legality. Advocating liberal ideals, individual freedom and employing further American iconography of the Wild West and the Far North, tramping was considered (and practiced) as a manifestation of defiance against the totalitarian regime and Soviet ideologies, since it was precisely these iconographies that the regime accentuated, promoted and wished to incorporate into the Czech culture (Hajná 7-10). Welzl's character and his narratives became – once again – iconic, this time however, his stories obviously stood outside of the pedagogical discourse promoted by the communist regime. Rather, they became incorporated into that part of the Czech culture that was in opposition to the regime. It was a rather natural move, with tramps rejecting communistic outdoor organizations and the uniforms of Soviet pioneers or heroic partisans, using instead typical American nicknames and shabby outfits, establishing weekend settlements such as 'Klondike' or 'Roaring Camp' deep in Czechoslovak woods and outside of the regime surveillance. Hence it is not surprising that tramping was often persecuted by the regime (Hajná 32). For these people, Welzl became iconic; in Vecka's terms, as a 'liberal defiant Rambler' who chose to live at the margins of society and civilized world, hence at the places that made life in freedom possible (92). Symptomatically, Welzl's books became a very popular 'forbidden' literature at that time, only to become bestsellers again when reprinted during the liberation time in 1960s, and then again in 1990s, after the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia.

Welzl's books belong undoubtedly to the literature that was shaping Czech ideas about Alaska and the Arctic during all that times. According to Vecka, a former Czech tramp and an emigrant to Alaska, Czechoslovaks imagined Alaska and Canada exactly as Welzl had described it, as 'vast lands of unrestricted opportunities and freedom' (Vecka 19, 69). Thus, thanks to – among

others – Welzl’s books, these regions became popular destinations for many Czechoslovaks, both as an imaginative exile (exercised, in spirit and practise, in the geographical area of the Czech woods) and as a place for real emigration from Czechoslovakia.

The idea of exile – a political exile in particular – has been deeply rooted in a Czech mind and it is largely considered an identity feature of many Czech heroes, from the early 17th century’s protestant philosopher and educator Comenius, known to Czechs as ‘The Teacher of Nations’ (forced to leave the Czech countries under the Habsburg Counter-reformation), to the early 20th century presidents Masaryk and Beneš, who built the independent Czechoslovakia from their exiles in Paris and London. And, of course, with many emigrants in the second half of the 19th century, not to mention those from the second half of the 20th century. In this regard, Welzl’s deportation from the U. S. and his short, yet unwished-for exile in Czechoslovakia, seems to be equally important for his popularity, as the image of the Arctic he draws. While in Czechoslovakia, he describes himself as a stranger in a strange land; a stranger who doesn’t wish anything else than to return home to the Far North and to – what he called – ‘my redemption from Europe’ (Strouhal 98). Many people could see in this image of Welzl a reflection of their own situation; they were either entrapped in their own country, or, such as many Czech emigrants, the political situation forced them to leave the country they considered their home – again, exactly as in Welzl’s case. Welzl, then, raised sympathy both of the readers who stayed in Czechoslovakia as well as those who left.

It is thus perhaps not surprising that Czech emigrants have particularly strong relation to Welzl’s person and narratives. They became the first ‘welzlogists’, i.e. Welzl’s biographers and promoters of his books; they also initiated a public collection among the Czech compatriots all around the U. S. and Canada to give Welzl a proper gravestone in Dawson where Welzl died (Vecka 11). This gravestone has become a place of pilgrimage for many Czech travellers both in the past and in the present. It is covered by flowers and Czech national symbols, and it looks like a memorial of a genuine Czech national hero (Strouhal 198).

4.4.3. Unsettled identity as a Czech trait

As mentioned above, unlike explorers and other polar heroes, Welzl does not show any attachment to his native country in his narratives; he claims he had no home before leaving for the North, and that he forgot his mother tongue (section 2.1.4). Yet, speaking in a Moravian dialect, Welzl reflects about himself: ‘I am a Moravian Czech, though people usually consider me to be German’ (Strouhal 6). Welzl claims his new home is New Siberia, but at the same time, he considers himself to be a man ‘from the Golden North’ – apparently, some (and any) place between Siberia and Alaska or Canada. Yet, it is precisely this confusion and unrootedness of Welzl’s figure that makes him a

typical Czech character, since a certain unrootedness and unsettledness is generally regarded as a rather typical trait of a Czech identity. As an illustration, we might point to the ambiguous title of the Czech national anthem *Kde domov můj*, understood by most Czechs literarily as a question: ‘Where is my home?’. In that respect, it helps only a little that (following the logic of the text), the initial sentence of the anthem should, in fact, be read as a statement: ‘This is, where my home lies’.¹⁸ In the relation to the Arctic, the Czech writer Jáchym Topol has talked extensively about Czech ‘unsettledness and nomadism that are rooted in [the] Czech hearts’, referring to his well-known contemporary Czech polar explorer Miroslav Jakeš, and, naturally also to his own trip to Svalbard and Greenland (22-27). ‘Where is my home?’ is a question that characterizes Welzl quite well, both as a literary character and as a historical person. The Czech readers might find Welzl’s unrootedness appealing and forgive him a lack of a Czech national consciousness or even attachment to his native land.

An expression of this apparently typical Czech trait is Welzl’s (self)-portrait in his memoirs. Investigating the narrator’s representations of arctic nature and the Inuit, I have shown, that Welzl’s image oscillates between an image of a heroic explorer/polar settler on the one hand – and pábitel on the other, or between ‘Eskymo Welzl’ and ‘White Welzl’. My discussion about Welzl’s performance as a polar settler revealed another ambiguity in Welzl’s portrait: on the one hand, we have Welzl as an American pioneer-figure, a rather strong and typical representative of the American traditions and ideals. On the other hand, there is Welzl as a Czech peasant; an embodiment of the archetypal features and ideals of the Czech nation. Both of these images conformed – in early 20th century – to Czech national-building pedagogies, and later, they represented the ‘performance’ of Czech people in the opposition to the pedagogies of the communist regime. Thus, Welzl and his texts promoting hard work, liberty and independence became a symbol of his nation and the nation’s people, and his books inspired generations of Czech readers, particularly in times when these values needed to be accentuated. Ultimately, I believe it to be the reason why Welzl became a Czech national hero.

¹⁸ *Kde domov můj* was a song in a theatre play *Fidlovačka* by J. K. Tyl first staged in Stavovské Theatre in 1834. It became immediately a popular song and it gained quickly a status of a national song. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kde_domov_muj; After the initial sentence *Where is my home?/Where my home is*, follow descriptions of beauties of the Czech landscape with a final exclamation *that is the beautiful land, the Czech land, my home!*. Symptomatically, one can find a question mark, an exclamation mark and/or a period alternately after the final part of the anthem, depending on a translation (and/or original) of the song found on Wikipedia in these days.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

After having discussed Charles Brower's and Jan Welzl's texts in the context of early-twentieth-century exploration discourse, in the discourse of Alaska as the last American frontier, and, finally, in the context of Czech nation-building discourses, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Brower's and Welzl's memoirs are frontier narratives: not only because of the narrators' permanent residence in the Arctic, but especially because – in their texts – they involve tropes of American Dream and images of the land of freedom, equality, and material paradise. However, compared to the standard or typical representatives of the frontier narratives, both Brower and Welzl's representations reflect local perspectives and incorporate Inuit views, rather than pedagogical ideologies of the Last Frontier (dominant in the time in which the texts appeared). Further, the motives of polar exploration play an important role in both texts and both narrators employ narrative strategies of the exploration genre, partly to fashion themselves as heroic arctic survivors, experts on the Arctic environment and men who promoted Inuit lifestyle. These observations, then, lead us to a conclusion, that Brower's and Welzl's frontier belongs to the Arctic – rather than to the American West or to the American Last Frontier. In Brower's narrative, the Arctic lacks the exotic element of the Other entirely; hence, it is safe to argue, that Brower's Arctic is paradoxically not a frontier at all, but it is a genuine American home.

At the outset, I assumed that the fact that both Brower and Welzl spent most of their lives in the Arctic would reflect their perceptions and representations of the Arctic natural environment and, especially, the Inuit. Equally, I expected their texts to negotiate the mainstream ideas about the Arctic in the dominant discourses. In this respect, this assumption proved wrong in the case of Welzl's narrative. Abstracting away from Welzl's representations of material usefulness of the arctic wildlife, Welzl is in a way an author typical of the frontier genre: he gives the reader a conventional romanticized image of the exotic Arctic, he employs conventional narrative strategies of exploration and frontier genres, and, all in all, he constructs his heroic image in a genre-conventional way. His portrait of an extremely challenging Arctic environment inhabited by primitive Inuit is in absolute accord with the mainstream ideas about the Arctic, and it is instrumental in the construction of the narrator's heroic image. Against the background of the exotic Arctic, Welzl stands out as a lonesome adventurer and a survivor with qualities of a heroic polar explorer; also, he stands out as a civilized man superior to the Inuit. Thus, Welzl's text promotes strength and cultural advancement of his nation and, by doing so, it conforms also to pedagogical ideas of nation-building typical of those times. Furthermore, Welzl conforms to nation-building pedagogies by being a heroic polar settler who advocates hard work, independence, and liberty, again, commonplace strategies and traits that enhance his heroic image.

Not so Brower. Brower's representations of the Arctic appear to be based on his unique experience – rather than literary traditions or traditional discourses. Brower provides the reader with an original picture of realistic Arctic inhabited by the Inuit people that are equal to the white man in every respect. Brower does not use conventional notions about the Arctic in the constructions of his heroic self-portrait. His portrayals of the Arctic involve insider perspectives and he incorporates unconventional and unexpected (compared to the 'contemporary standards') views of the Inuit. Thus, Brower's narrative stands outside the paradigmatic exploration and American frontier literature and, in many ways, it deconstructs stereotypical ideas about the Arctic and arctic heroism.

Hence: even if two men of similar interests, occupations and heroic qualities spend their whole lifetime in the Arctic, their perceptions of the Arctic nature and people can still be radically different.

Within the contexts of American and Czech cultural discourses, I showed that it is not easy not to become national hero: even if a narrator's representations of the Arctic and his implicit portrait in the text differed radically from pedagogical ideas about polar heroism (or the nation's heroism in general), still, it seems that the narrator was destined to become his nation's hero, and, moreover, on multiple 'fronts', so to speak. Hence, we have Welzl as a pábitel, there is 'Eskymo Welzl', and, importantly, Welzl as a tramp. There is Brower as Crèvecoeur's archetypal 'new American man' who makes a strange place a home, and thus, paradoxically, indirectly fulfils the wishes of the very ideologies his text negotiates.

Thus, conforming to conventional ideas about arctic heroism in pedagogical national discourses, or meeting the demands of the genres of polar literature – neither of these conditions was necessary for a polar settler to become a hero. Rather, as I argued both for Brower and Welzl, it was important that the individual performance of the narrator could be taken to represent the 'performance' of the nation's ordinary people.

So, re-asking the essential research question again (Why did Charles Brower and Jan Welzl become national Arctic heroes and their narratives popular?), the answer is: partly because their narratives and self-portrayals satisfied the demands of the genres of polar literature, but partly also because they challenged the very ideas on which these genres had been formed.

Literature

Sources

- Brower, Charles D.. *Fifty Years Below Zero. A Lifetime of Adventure in the Far North*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1994.
- Welzl, Jan. *The Quest for Polar Treasures*. London: George Allen, 1933.
- . *Thirty Years in the Golden North*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932.

Cited works

- Alnæs, Jørgen. 'Heroes and Nomades in Norwegian Polar Explorer Literature'. *Nordlit* 23. Eds. Anka Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp. Tromsø: University of Tromsø, 2008. 11-24.
- Arctic Discourses*. Eds. Anka Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.
- Beller Manfred and Joep Leersen eds. *Imagology: The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters. A critical Survey*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007.
- Bhabha, K. Homni. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Birkwood, Susan. 'From "Naked Country" to "Sheltering Ice": Rudy Wiebe's Revisionist Treatment of John Franklin's First Arctic Narrative'. *Nordlit* 23. Eds. Anka Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp. University of Tromsø, Spring 2008. 25-38.
- Borovička, Michael. *Velké Dějiny Zemí Koruny České: Cestovatelství*. Praha: Paseka, 2010.
- E. Beneš. *Světová válka a naše revoluce*. 3 vols. Praha: Orbis, 1922-1927.
- Bravo, Michael. 'Measuring Danes and Eskimos.' *Narrating the Arctic: A Cultural History of Nordic Scientific Practices*. Ed. Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin. Canton: Science History Publications 2002. 235-273
- Brøgger, Fredrik Ch. 'The Culture of Nature: The View of the Arctic Environment in Knud Rasmussen's Narrative of the Fifth Thule expedition'. *Arctic Discourses*. Eds. Anka Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010. 82-105.
- Cavell, Janice. *Tracing the Connected Narrative. Arctic Exploration in British Print Culture 1818-1860*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.
- Cather, Willa. *O Pioneers!* Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.
- Crèvecoeur, John Hector St. John. 'Letters from an American Farmer'. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 7th ed. Ed. Nina Baym. New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2008. 310-324.
- Čapek, Karel. *Spisy XX. Hovory s T. G. Masarykem*. Praha: Československý spisovatel, 1990.
- . *War with the Newts*. New York: AMS Press, 1978.
- Colby, Merle. *A Guide to Alaska: Last American Frontier*. New York: MacMillan, 1939.
- Davidson, Peter. *The Idea of North*. London: Reaction Books, 2005.
- Declaration of Independence of Czechoslovak Nation by its Provisional Government. October 18 1918*. Web. 20 Sept. 2014.
- Eliasson, Pär. 'Swedish Natural History Travel in the Northern Space. From Lapland to the Arctic, 1800-1840.' *Narrating the Arctic: A Cultural History of Nordic Scientific Practices*. Ed. Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin. Canton: Science History Publications 2002. 125-154.
- 'Escape from an Icepack' *New York Times*, 15 September 1897: 10. Web, 10 Nov. 2014.
- Fabian, Johannes. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

- Goodyear, Frank. 'The Narratives of Sitting Bull's Surrender: Baily, Dix, and Mead's Photographic Western'. *Dressing in Feathers*. Ed. Elisabeth S. Bird. Boulder: Westview Press, 1996. 29-43.
- Franklin, Benjamin. 'The Way to Wealth'. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 7th ed. Ed. Nina Baym. New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2008. 220-226.
- Gaupseth, Silje. 'A Hero in the Friendly Arctic: Deconstructing Vilhjalmur Stefansson's Rhetorical Maneuver'. *Nordlit* 29 (2012): 69-78. *Cristin*. Web. 10 Sept. 2014.
- Harbsmeier, Michael. 'Bodies and Voices from Ultima Thule: Inuit explorations of the Kablunat form Christian IV to Knud Rasmussen'. *Narrating the Arctic: A Cultural History of Nordic Scientific Practices*. Ed. Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin. Canton: Science History Publications 2002. 33-71.
- Harte, Bret. 'The Luck of Roaring Camp' (1868). *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 7th ed. Ed. Nina Baym. New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2008. 1483.
- Havel, Václav. 'Český úděl?' *Václav Havel: O lidskou Identitu*. Ed. Vilém Přečan and Alexander Tomský. Praha: Rozmluvy 1989. 193-200.
- Hajná, Martina. *Tramping v údolí říčky Libochovky*. MS thesis Masaryk University in Brno, 2009. Web. 08. Nov. 2013.
- Hauan, Marit Anne. 'Fri of Vil? Overvintringsfangstens kulturelle betydning'. *Til Svalbar? Ottar* 210.2. (1996): 49-57.
- Henson Matthew A.. *Matthew A. Henson's Historic Arctic Journey. The Classic Account of One of the World's Greatest Black Explorers*. Guilford: Morris Book Publishing, 2009.
- Heyne, Eric. 'The Lasting Frontier: Reinventing America'. *Desert, Garden, Margin, Range: Literature on the American Frontier*. Eric Heyne ed. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992. 3-15
- Hrabal, Bohumil. *Pábitelé*. Praha: Mladá Fronta, 1964.
- . *Perlička na dně* Praha: Mladá Fronta, 1963.
- . *Postřižiny*. Praha: Mladá Fronta, 2009.
- Hroch, Miroslav. *Národy Nejsou Dílem Náhody: Příčiny a Předpoklady Utváření Moderních Evropských Národů*. Praha: Slon, 2011.
- Hurikán, Bob. *Dějiny trampingu*. Novinář: Praha 1990.
- Beller Manfred and Joep Leersen eds. *Imagology: The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters. A critical Survey*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007.
- Johnstone, Tiffany. 'Seeing for Oneself: Agnes Deans Cameron's Ironic Critique of American literary discourse in *The New North*'. *Nordlit* 23. Eds. Anka Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp. Tromsø: University of Tromsø, 2008. 69-87.
- Jirásek, Alois. *Staré Pověsti České*. Praha 1999.
- Karlsen, Silje Solheim. 'Fridjof Nansen's farthest North: Scientific report or Personal Account?' *Nordlit* 23. Eds. Anka Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp. Tromsø: University of Tromsø, 2008. 195-204.
- Kde domov můj* Web. 20 Sept. 2014.
- Kollin, Susan. *Nature's State: Imagining Alaska as the Last Frontier*. Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- Loomis, Chauncey, C.. 'The Arctic Sublime'. *Nature and Victorian Imagination*. Ed. U. C. Knoepfelmacher and G. B. Tennyson. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977. 95-112.
- McGhee, Robert. *The Last Imaginary Place: A Human History of the Arctic World*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- McGoogan, Ken. *Fatal Passage: The Untold Story of John Rae, the Arctic Adventurer Who Discovered the Fate of Franklin*. Toronto: HarperCollins publisher, 2001.
- Miller, Orlando W.: *The Frontier in Alaska and the Matanuska Colony* (1977) Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2009.
- Mirsky, Jeannette. *To the Arctic! The Story of Northern Exploration from Earliest Times*. University of Chicago Press 1970.

- Mook, Reinhard. 'Imparting of Polar Research to the 1880's Public'. *Nordlit* 23. Eds. Anka Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp. Tromsø: University of Tromsø, 2008.173-183.
- Moss, Sarah. *The Frozen Ship: The Histories and Tales of Polar Exploration*. New York: Blue Bridge, 2006.
- Nansen, Fridtjof. *The First Crossing of Greenland*. Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2002.
- Nash, Roderick. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. Yale University Press, 1982.
- Neruda, Jan. 'Feuilleton' *Národní Listy* 27 Sept 1874: 2. *Kramerius*. Web.15 June 2014
- Nordlit* 23. Eds. Anka Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp. Tromsø: University of Tromsø, 2008.
- Pálsson, Gísli. "Articality. Gender, Race, and Geography in the Writings of Vilhjalmur Stefansson." *Narrating the Arctic: A Cultural History of Nordic Scientific Practices*. Ed. Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin. Canton: Science History Publications 2002. 275-309.
- Patočka, Jan. *Češi. Sebrané spisy Jana Patočky svazek 13*. 2 vols. Ed. Karel Palek and Ivan Chvatík. Praha: Oikoymenh, 2006.
- Pekař, Josef. *O smysl českých dějin*. Ed. Martin Kučera. Praha: Dauphin, 2012.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Porter, Robert. *An Introduction to Twentieth-Century Czech Fiction: Comedies of Defiance*. London: Sussex Academic Press, 2001.
- Procházka, Martin, Quinn Justin. eds. *Lectures on American Literature*. Praha: Karolinum, 2011.
- Pytlík, Radko. 'Vyprávění o Bohumilu Hrabalovi'. *Bohumil Hrabal: Chcete vidět Zlatou Prahu? Collection of short stories*. Praha: Mladá Fronta, 1989. 281-372.
- Reiser og ekspedisjoner i det litterære Arktis*, Theodorsen and Henning Howlid Wærp (eds.), Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk, 2011.
- Ries, Christopher. 'Lauge Koch and the Mapping of North East Greenland. The Tradition and Modernity in Danish Arctic Research 1920-1940'. *Narrating the Arctic: A Cultural History of Nordic Scientific Practices*. Ed. Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin. Canton: Science History Publications 2002, 199-231.
- Riffenburgh, Beau. *The Myth of the Explorer: the Press, Sensationalism and Geographical Discovery*. London: Belhaven Press, 1993.
- Rasmussen, Knud. *The Netsilik Eskimo*. Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921-1924. Vol 8. Copenhagen: Gyldeddalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1931.
- Roosevelt, Theodore. 'American Ideals'. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 7th ed. Ed. Nina Baym. New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2008. 1857-1860.
- . 'The Strenuous Life'. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 7th ed. Ed. Nina Baym. New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2008. 1860-1863.
- Ryall, Anka, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp, eds. *Arctic Discourses*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.
- Sawchuk, Christina. 'An Arctic Republic of Letters in Early Twentieth-Century Canada' *Nordlit* 23. Eds. Anka Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp. Tromsø: University of Tromsø, 2008. 273-292.
- Senpkiel, Aron. 'From the Wild West to the Far North: Literary Representations of North America's Last Frontier'. *Desert, Garden, Margin, Range: Literature on American Frontier*. Eric Heyne ed. New York: Twayne, 1992, 133-42.
- Smith, Anthony. 'The Golden Age and National Renewal'. *Myths of Nationhood*. G. Hosking, G Schöpfin eds. London: C. Hurst & Co.,1996.
- Sörlin, Sverker. "Rituals and Resources of Natural History: The North and the Arctic in Swedish Scientific Nationalism". In *Narrating the Arctic. A Cultural History of Nordic Scientific Practices*. Ed. M. Bravo and s. Sörlin. Science History Publications 2002, 73-123.
- Spufford, Francis. *I May Be Some time: Ice and the English Imagination*. New York: St. Martin's press, 1997.

- Stefánsson, Vilhjálmur. *The Friendly Arctic: the Story of Five Years in Polar Regions*. 2 vols. Kila, Mont.: Kessinger Publishing, 2007.
- Strouhal, Martin. *Svoboda pod Bodem Mrazu. Příběhy a záhady, které zanechal největší český polárník Jan Eskymo Welzl*. Štítý: Veduta, 2009.
- Svěrák, Zdeněk and Ladislav Smoljak. *Dobytí severního pólu Čechem Karlem Němcem 5. dubna 1909* (1985). Praha: Paseka 2000.
- Tallmadge, John. 'Voyaging and the Literary Imagination'. *Exploration*. VII, 1979. 1-15.
- Theodorsen, Cathrine. 'I Was as True and Loyal as Possible: Images of the North and Sámi in Theodor Mügge's Travel Writing'. *Arctic Discourses*. Eds. Anka Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010. 152-178.
- Thisted, Kirsten. 'The power to Represent. Intertextuality and Discourse in Smilla's Sense of Snow.' *Narrating the Arctic: A Cultural History of Nordic Scientific Practices*. Ed. Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin. Canton: Science History Publications 2002. 311-342.
- . 'Voicing the Arctic: Knud Ramussen and the Ambivalence of Cultural Translation'. *Arctic Discourses*. Eds. Anka Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010. 59-81.
- Thoreau, Henry, David. 'Walden, or Life in the Woods'. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 7th ed. Ed. Nina Baym. New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2008. 844-920.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History'. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 7th ed. Ed. Nina Baym. New York: W.W. Norton Company, 2008. 1853-1857.
- Topol, Jáchym. 'Rozhovor'. *Reflex* 33, 2012. 22-27.
- Třeštík, Dušan. *Mýty kmene Čechů (7. - 10. století): Tři studie ke "starým pověstem českým"*. Praha: NLN, 2003.
- Vaňková, Lenka. 'S duší Eskymáka'. *100+ 1 Zahraniční zajímavost. Speciál zima 2014*, 74-77.
- Vecka, Jaroslav. *Tulák Welzl z Pohledu Trampa*. Brumovice: Carpe Diem, 2006.
- Velechovský, František. 'Co všechno povídá strýček Eskymák'. *Širým světem*. Vol. XX. Praha 1943. 756-764.
- Voda, Pavel. 'Omyly kolem osobnosti a literárního díla Jana Eskymo Welzla'. *Česká literatura. Časopis pro literární vědu*. 38-2 (1990): 157-167.
- Welzl, Jan. *Eskymo Welzl. Paměti českého polárního lovce a zlatokopa*. Podle jeho zápisků a dopisů pro tisk upravil Rudolf Těsnohlídek. Carpe Diem 2009.
- Wærp, Henning Howlid. 'Fidtjof Nansen: 'First Crossing of Greenland (1890): Bestseller and Scientific Report' *Arctic Discourses*. Ed A. Ryall, J. Schimanski and H. H. Wærp. Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2010. 43-59.
- . 'Sverdrup's Arctic Adventures. Or: What Makes an Expedition Report Worth Reading?- Otto Sverdrup: New Land. Four Years in the Arctic Regions (1903).' *Nordlit* 23. Eds. Anka Ryall, Johan Schimanski and Henning Howlid Wærp. Tromsø: University of Tromsø, 2008. 305-316.
- Yannella, Philip R. *American Literature in Context from 1865 to 1929*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.