

“Discovering” Inuit Women: Photographer Geraldine Moodie and the Advancement of Canadian Sovereignty in the Arctic

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Abstract: Geraldine Moodie arrived in the Arctic in 1904 as part of a Canadian expedition charged with extending Canadian sovereignty. As the wife of the expedition’s leader, Moodie normalized colonial men who usually appeared without their families, shaping the Arctic as a site of heroic masculine performance. As a professional photographer and as a western woman, Moodie established relationships with Inuit women. Her studio work created images of Inuit women that would become popularized and associated with the Arctic and Canada’s possession of the north. Rooted in Fanon’s, Said’s, and Smith’s understandings of the processes of colonialization, including European concepts of “discovery,” Geraldine Moodie can be said to have “discovered” Inuit women, presenting them to her western audience as different, exotic, decontextualized and othered. This archives-based study explores the gendered role of Moodie, a colonial woman, in the absorption of Inuit and their land into Canadian jurisdiction and the “discovery” and “creation” of Inuit women in the colonial imagination.

Keywords: Geraldine Moodie; Arctic exploration; Arctic women; Arctic photography

Introduction

This paper situates Canadian photographer Geraldine Fitzgibbon Moodie (1854-1945) in the narrative of Arctic “discovery” and colonization. As the first woman to photograph Inuit, Moodie’s Arctic presence and work advanced British-Canadian sovereignty in the north. Reflexively, as the wife of a colonial official, Geraldine Moodie acted as the friendly, feminine, congenial face of colonialism. The colonization of the Arctic would not be effective or complete

until colonial women were present in the region; while men claimed land for the imperial centre, women would, as wives, normalize the men who claimed the land. Geraldine Moodie came to Hudson Bay in 1904 with her husband, Major John Douglas Moodie of the North-West Mounted Police, who was charged with establishing Canadian law and policing in the Eastern Arctic. Geraldine Moodie’s presence and photographic work served to enhance Inuit reception to colonial men and their activities

and smooth over the colonization process. This paper builds on previous analyses of Moodie's work as photo-colonialism by emphasizing the importance of Moodie's very presence in the north in addition to her photography. The paper demonstrates how Moodie used a domestic focus as a bridge to Inuit women, whom she photographed as a form of "discovering" and claiming. Although it has not been fully recognized as such, Moodie's work ran parallel to and supplemented the sovereignty-advancement work of colonial men. Merely by her relatively long-term presence, she brought a new dimension to colonialism that helped seal Inuit fate in what is now Canada.

This paper responds to Laura Nader's call to study the colonizer (1972), rather than those colonized; this call has been more recently echoed by Kim TallBear (2013). It aims to situate Moodie in Arctic colonial history and explain her role in this history as the "discoverer" of Inuit women. Here, I address the specifics of how colonization was performed in the Arctic by a Euro-Canadian woman in the early 20th century. The Arctic is viewed as a site of intentional colonial activity buoyed by European legal and ideological concepts. The Arctic is also understood as an exclusive sphere for the performance of the heroic masculine ethic. Besides her novel presence on Inuit land, Geraldine Moodie's primary tool of communication (to Inuit as well as to others) was photography of Inuit women, and an

emphasis on domestic activities, such as clothes production, common to Moodie and to northern Indigenous women. The paper aims to situate Moodie in the history of "discovery" and the colonization of what is now Canada's north and develop an understanding of the nature of Moodie's photography.

Background

The long-held colonial view of Inuit lands as empty space (*terra nullius*) and thus ripe for acquisition and resource exploitation (Hanrahan 2017; McGhee 2005; Banner 2005; Levere 1993; Richardson 1993) has become so engrained in western society that it has influenced academic research (Smith 2012). Much research reinforces the concept of Indigenous people and the land on which they live as "discovered," then named and claimed (Smith 2012). Following Said (1978), Indigenous people and the land on which they live are without agency and othered. "Discovery," as understood and enacted by Europeans, renders Indigenous people and the complexities of Indigenous societies invisible (Smith 2012). According to Greenlandic Inuit scholar Karla Jessen Williamson, "It has been very trying for Indigenous populations to have their existence annulled – that's what the last 150 years [since Canada was founded] have been" (MacDonald 2017). During this time, Inuit lost agency and Inuit population health has suffered accordingly. Despite political accomplishments such as the establishment

of Nunavut, food insecurity is a pressing problem throughout Inuit regions (Ford and Berrang-Ford 2017; Beamier and Ford 2010). Accidents, suicides, violence, and substance abuse are now of “major importance” in most Inuit communities and the prevalence of chronic disease is increasing (Bjerregaard, Young, Dewailly, & Ebbesson 2004). The Inuit suicide rate is among the highest in the world, at least partly because of colonialism, especially the intrusive government initiatives of the 1950s and 1960s, which altered Inuit social structure (Kral 2012). Williamson asks, “...what kind of Canada is it when 70 percent of people in Nunavut are hungry? (MacDonald 2017). Yet, as Inuit leader Sheila Watt-Cloutier asserts, Inuit thrived in the Arctic, *nunangat*, their land, for millennia (2015). Inuit had their own systems of law and order, their own legal concepts and practices, before colonization, as Labrador Inuit lawyer Elizabeth Zarpa reminds us (White 2020). These Indigenous systems were eroded, even to the point of erasure, through the process of colonialization, which began in the Arctic with exploratory voyages from Europe. Accordingly, there is a through-line from the early polar explorers to Canada’s expeditions from the 1880s onward to the establishment of Canadian law and other institutions on Inuit land to present-day scientific and social science research in the Arctic. Geraldine Moodie and her photography were part of this through-line.

Colonialism is a tool of imperialism, the goal of which is to take ownership of the

territories of others so that the imperialist centre can establish dominance and accrue wealth through resource extraction and other means. Franz Fanon (1963), Edward Said (1978), and Linda Smith (2012) have increased our understandings of colonialism as an ongoing violent process that maintains harmful power imbalances, further leading to negative impacts on populations that become othered, subaltern, and dehumanized, as would happen to the Inuit of Canada’s Arctic.

The Canadian Arctic was among the last regions to be successfully incorporated into British imperialism, long after parts of Asia and Africa. Polar exploration has additional layers, given the harshness of the geophysical environment and explorers’ relatively late access to the Arctic. Initial exploration of the Arctic and other spaces was carried out in the interests of empires and states, and had at its foundation “a complex ideology ...” (Smith 2012, 23) that included strands of racism and European legal theory (Banner 2005) as well as romanticism (Spufford 1996). Explorer and expedition narratives advanced this view (Kent 1861; Hayes 1871; Peary 1910; Bartlett 2006, first pub. 1926; Green 1926; Cox, Vanier, and Mill 1936) and continue to inform Arctic discourse and policy (Hanrahan 2017; Rosner 2009; McRae 2007). The Arctic and other regions of the world presented opportunities for “discovery”; as understood by Europeans and by North Americans of European origin, “discovery” meant finding land for the first time, being the first human

being to ever see an island or a peninsula, and “claiming” it for one’s own country. “Discovery” is linked to naming, claiming, and categorizing, as per Smith (2012). “Discovery” even extended to people; as anthropologist Diamond Jenness wrote in 1921, “Intense interest was aroused in the scientific world when Mr. Stefansson [the Icelandic-Canadian explorer, Vilhjalmur Stefansson] announced his so-called discovery of ‘blond Eskimos’ in Victoria Island” (257). A premise of this paper is that through exploration and discovery (as Europeans conceived it), colonialism was imposed and a power imbalance established; in the words of Inuit writer and activist Zebedee Nungak, “Not a thought was given to consulting or even informing the Aboriginal inhabitants of these lands, as their lands were carved up and allocated willy-nilly among governing units who held dictatorial powers over all they surveyed...” (2017, 88). In his memoir Labrador Inuk Paulus Maggo stated, “No prior discussions were held between the non-Natives and us, and community ethics have been totally disregarded” (1999, 150).

“Discovery” and exploration were gendered processes. Sites of “discovery” and exploration, such as the Arctic and, perhaps especially the Arctic, constituted an exclusively masculine sphere; Ernest Shackleton once refused three female applicants to a polar expedition by bluntly stating “[there] are no vacancies for the opposite sex on the Expedition” (Leane 2012, 99). The polar regions were shaped as

solely male spaces, where western men could carry out acts of heroism and endurance; if women were present, this would not have been possible. Margaret Atwood understood this when she wrote of the Arctic as a man’s world: “even though the North itself, or herself, is a cold and savage female, the drama enacted in it—or her—is a man’s drama, and those who play it out are men” (Hulan 2002, 90). Explorers wanted to maintain this state if they could. As Lisa Bloom put it, “polar exploration narratives played a prominent part in defining the social construction of masculinity and legitimized the exclusion of women from many public domains of discourse” (1993, 6). Thus, much is understood about the roles western men played in the Arctic, but little is known about western women who are absent from many narratives (e.g. Peary 1910) and, indeed, the Arctic itself. There is, then, a further need to understand colonial women’s significant role in imperial acquisition of the Arctic.

European men had long come to the Arctic as explorers, “discovering” and then naming lands thought to be uninhabited as per the legal doctrine of *terra nullius*. Though they did not see the Arctic as a viable place to live (Bergmann 1993), they made claims of ownership, a vital step in the colonization process. Their accounts portrayed the Arctic as hostile and dangerous, the perfect site for the display of hyper-masculine prowess. Explorers wrote enthusiastically of the Arctic as a place of western male bravery and

courage (Cox, Vanier, and Mill 1936; Green 1929; Bartlett 2006 first pub. 1926; Green 1926; Hayes 1872; Kane 1861). Colonial women were excluded from colonializing exploits unless they “duplicated their domestic roles when traveling abroad,” (Prasch 1995, 175). When they appear, these women are usually depicted in supporting roles, as aides to their husbands, lacking agency themselves, but providing a feminized and civilizing role in a wild masculinized space (Herbert 2012).

Josephine Diebitsch-Peary, for instance, wife of Robert Peary, went to the Arctic as an adjunct of her husband, who controversially claimed to have reached the North Pole in 1909 (Dick 2004; Harmon 2001; Bryce 1997; Rawlins 1991). With tablecloths and silver cutlery, Diebitsch-Peary recreated Thanksgiving dinners in Greenland, acting the part of a dutiful wife and skilled hostess (Herbert 2012; Diebitsch-Peary 1893). On a lengthy visit to Greenland in 1893, Josephine gave birth to a daughter, Marie, who was dubbed “the Snow Baby” in the popular books her mother wrote about her (Diebitsch-Peary 1901). Diebitsch-Peary did indeed enact her domestic role in the Arctic as her husband pushed to plant a United States flag at the north pole. Robert Peary’s actions in propelling the colonial project are well-understood but Josephine’s complicity has been underestimated, as is the case with so many colonial women (Prasch 1995).

The wife of one of the men who led Canadian intrusion into the Arctic, Geraldine Moodie is generally known as an early Canadian photographer; she was one of the first women photographers in Western Canada. From its earliest days in the 1830s, photography has been associated with authority; police used it frequently as a tool of law enforcement (Geller 2004). Photography became established as a visual form of communication much later in the nineteenth century when newspapers and other publications began to feature photos (Geller 2004). By then, photographs were important, carrying, by consensus, an inherent “undisputed truth” (Geller 2004, 9); we still see truth in photographs (Close 2007). Instead of undisputed truth, photographs have meanings attached, messages from the photographer to consumers of photography. In addition, photographs do not necessarily contextualize, which strengthens the message of the photograph itself. These aspects of photography allowed Western interlocutors to shape the colonial narrative of the Arctic with their pictures. A notable example was Albert Peter (A.P.) Low (1905), the geologist on J.D. Moodie’s expedition who took and published many photographs of Inuit. Low invited Inuit to formal photo sessions; some Inuit looked uncomfortable in Low’s posed pictures, and women’s face paint was emphasized, highlighting the “otherness” or exoticized difference of the Inuit (see Low 1906, 168-170). Low’s pictures

were designed to emphasize the allegedly poor health of the Inuit and have been described as unsympathetic (Hatfield 2018, 104). Echoing many colonial justifications, Low described Inuit as “destitute” (1906, 66) and “lawless” (1906, 87). Such offensive descriptors (and worse) were common in exploration narratives, though the concept of “race hatred” (what is now called racism) would not gain currency until the 1930s. Low also delegated charge of one Eskimo “tribe” [sic] (1906, 27) to Captain George Comer and another to himself. In these ways, Low reinforced and maintained his status and power as a colonial white man. Further, the objectification of the Inuit extended beyond Low’s photography to an appendix in his book that recorded the physical characteristics -- age, weight and head circumference -- of Inuit whom he does not name (1906, 343). This material, presented in chart form, reduced individuals to medical specimens and numbers, serving to dehumanize, objectify, and other Inuit. The material foreshadowed the federal government’s later practice of assigning numbers on dog tags to individual Inuit in what by then was Canadian territory. Low’s commentary corresponds to the narratives of Arctic explorers who ventured to Greenland, Canada, and Alaska both before and after Moodie’s Arctic presence (Hanrahan 2018). Arctic photography reduced and othered Inuit, rendering Inuit objects of gaze rather than equal human beings.

Arctic photography became established and large collections of images accrued as Canada sought to advance its sovereignty in the north (Condon 1989; King and Lidchi 1989). Governments commissioned photographs, indicating that officials had some sense of the value of photography in claiming land and territory. Notably, Inuit photographic subjects were rarely named, people were not individuated, leading to the creation of Project Naming by Library and Archives Canada decades later (Smith 2008). As methods of communication conveying concepts, photographs constructed the Arctic and Inuit in terms that corresponded to the political goals of the Canadian government (and before it, European powers). Naming specific locations in “empty lands”, after “discovering” these sites, was central to the colonization process. Photography was an effective way to appropriate these places. Photos from Captain Joseph Elzéar Bernier’s two expeditions between 1903 and 1911 bear this out. Bernier was pictured building a cairn and planting the British flag in the Arctic, thus helping to produce an official record of advancing Canadian sovereignty in the region (Geller 2004). Later the federal government’s Department of the Interior set up a Northwest Territories and Yukon Branch, largely to create a substantial archival photography collection (Geller 2004). For Geller, these collections were “illusions of possessions,” with the camera

as a metaphor for Canada's extension of power in the Arctic (2004, 166).

Photography was a leisure activity for some nineteenth century British noblewomen (Rosenblum 2010) but women had few entries into professional photography (Birrell et al. 1983). One route was as part of family businesses, often as widows (Denny 2009). The 1848 Gold Rush was one of the first times women engaged in paid photography, but barriers remained. Women were strongly associated with portraits of other women and children, reflecting the prevalent idea that they were better suited to taking these kinds of pictures because of their maternal nature (Williams 2009, 129).

Methods

This paper is based on archival research at the Glenbow Museum, Calgary, which recently acquired the Geraldine and Douglas Moodie Fonds. These fonds contain material from 1813-1967, constituting 1.05 m of textual records and 1014 photographs, most taken by Geraldine Moodie, and many taken in what is now Nunavut. The fonds includes the diaries kept by Geraldine Moodie during her time in the north, as well as photography registers and copyright records. With student research assistance, these materials were collected, reviewed, synthesized, and categorized by theme. This paper is also the result of an intensive literature review with identified papers undergoing close readings.

The relevant literature was shaped into an annotated bibliography with themes from archival materials highlighted to enhance veracity and analysis. Important search terms while conducting the literature review included such stem words as Arctic, photography, and sovereignty, and terms such as colonial women, settler women, Arctic women, and early women photographers. Research materials were examined using feminist, Indigenist (or decolonized) understandings. In addition, I took a grounded theory approach, as I sought to determine the meaning and impact of Geraldine Moodie and her photography in the early 20th century Arctic and the history of colonial "discovery".

The Moodies in the Arctic

Born in 1854 in Toronto in what was then Canada West, Geraldine Fitzgibbon Moodie came from a creative family whose female members helped shape perceptions of Canada's geography here and abroad. Moodie was the granddaughter of English memoirist and novelist Susanna Strickland Moodie, author of the iconic settler narrative *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852). She was the great-niece of Agnes Strickland, a celebrated Victorian biographer, and of Catherine Parr Traill, author of another famous settler narrative, *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836).

After meeting him in England, Geraldine married John Douglas (J.D. or Douglas)

Moodie, a distant relative, in 1878. Later Moodie set up her own photography studios in three locations in western Canada (Denny 2009, 185), making her the first professional female photographer on the prairies (White 1998). J.D. joined the North-West Mounted Police in 1885 (White 1998) and his career would in many ways determine that of his wife. Of most interest here is the Dominion Government Expedition of 1903-1904, aimed at extending Canadian sovereignty into the Arctic through the establishment of policing in the region. On this expedition, J.D. Moodie set up a police station at Fullerton in Hudson Bay (Qatiktalik in Inuktitut, and now part of the Kivalliq Nunavut, although it is abandoned). In doing so, he initiated the enforcement of Canadian law in the north. In sending Moodie north, officials in Ottawa, including Prime Minister Laurier, were reacting to the ongoing activity of American and Scottish whalers in and beyond Hudson Bay because they had realized that occupation was key to securing jurisdiction of the area.

Geraldine joined the expedition in 1904 and over-wintered at Fullerton. There she became the first colonial woman to take pictures of Inuit women (Forster 2004; Polk 2001). Commissioned by the Government of Canada, Geraldine took numerous photographs at Fullerton. She returned north in 1906, accompanying J.D. to Fort Churchill, Manitoba, where he set up another NWMP post. The Moodies stayed in

Manitoba for three years while Geraldine continued her photographic work among Inuit. In 1910, after their posting ended, the Moodies remained keen to be sent north again. One Northwest Mounted Police (NWMP) official wrote to another, “I gathered from him [J.D.], as also from Mrs. Moodie that their desire is to be stationed in the North, as far away as possible from civilization, Athabaska [sic] preferred” (White 1998, 152). The Moodies did not get an Athabasca assignment but in 1912 they started a three-year stay in Dawson, Yukon. J.D. Moodie retired in 1917 for health reasons, probably arthritis, which ended the Moodies’ northern activities (White 1998). Collections of Moodie’s photographs are held at the British Museum, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Museum in Regina, SK, Library and Archives Canada, the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, and elsewhere. Moodie took care to copyright many of her photographs, which was unusual for a woman of her time, and indicated her commitment to photography as a career.

Discussion

By the time Geraldine Moodie arrived in Hudson Bay, the Arctic had long been a site of colonial activity, with forays aimed at the acquisition of Inuit lands and resources (Hanrahan 2017), with the imperialist centre shifting from Britain to Canada after the latter gained dominion status in 1867.

Bolstered by an objectification of the Inuit that framed them as inferior, colonialism would render Inuit subordinate in their own lands. As the Moodies arrived in Hudson Bay, London continued to extract raw material for its industries from Canada, India, the Caribbean, and other territories that were British pink on the map, treating “discovered” and “empty” lands as their own.

The Moodies are another example of this phenomenon. The work and impact of John Douglas Moodie has been discussed in the literature and its impact understood (Hatfield 2016; Cavell 2011). A Scot, J.D. Moodie had a long career with the North-West Mounted Police, often in leadership positions, extending the reach of the force in the north. Moodie oversaw detachments at Churchill, Manitoba, and at Dawson City, Yukon, retiring in 1917. Geraldine Moodie has been recognized and celebrated (Forster 2004; White 1999; White 1998) and, at times, critiqued and criticized as an early colonial photographer (Hatfield 2018; Hatfield 2006; Close 2007). Her central role in advancing Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic and shaping colonial Canadian views of the region and its people, the Inuit, have been underestimated. There has been a great deal of attention on Moodie’s photography but not as much on the meaning of her Arctic presence and, through it, her role as an agent in colonization. I demonstrate here that Moodie’s presence,

as a woman who was part of a government expedition to the Arctic, propelled Canadian colonial goals. This would have been the case even without her photography. The northern presence of Moodie, wife, mother, and photographer, normalized official colonial activity for Inuit; until she came, this activity had been almost entirely composed of single white men or white men whose wives were far away and invisible. The wives of missionaries were exceptions in that their functions were similar to Moodie, but their efforts served the church while Moodie’s more directly served the state.



Figure 1: Moodie took this studio photo of Nanowk at Fullerton Harbour, Hudson Bay. File number: ND-44-27, Geraldine and Douglas Moodie Fonds, Glenbow Museum; [1904-1905]. Printed with permission.

Geraldine Moodie was part of the history of women in the Arctic, solidifying her place in the profession of photography in 1895 when she opened her three portrait studios

in Saskatchewan and Alberta, later bringing her skills to the Arctic and, as a photographer, playing a key role in the imperialist push. Thus, this paper goes beyond Geller (2004) to see Arctic collections, including photography, as more than illusions of possessions; such collections are part of the process of acquisition or possession so intrinsic to colonialization, as Smith (2012) asserts. Hence the repatriation of museum artifacts previously collected from Indigenous lands and Indigenous people, as such repatriation is consciously part of decolonization processes. Moodie's photographing as a colonial woman, photographing Inuit women she barely knew, also has an element of possession. And it is not an illusion since photographs have an air of authority dating from their early use by police and, in Moodie's time, because of their novelty. In addition, images captured on film continue to be associated with what are considered objective truths (Close 2007). As the wife of the man charged with extending Canadian policing into the eastern Arctic, Moodie was afforded prestige, jurisdiction, and influence, if not command.

On October 22, 1904, not long after arriving in Hudson Bay, Geraldine Moodie noted that one of the first Inuit women she met had never seen a white woman before (October 22, 1904, FONDS). Inuit had, however, had contact with explorers and whalers for more than 150 years and all of them had been male. Moodie's appearance thus had great

significance for this and other Inuit women by adding a whole new dimension to the presence of colonial men. Moodie invited Inuit women into her makeshift studio where she would pose and photograph them. Of Inuit she wrote on March 10, 1905, "They make splendid subjects, never look awkward, even the children take kindly to being photographed" (March 10, 1905, FONDS). It was important to Moodie that Inuit pose in Inuit clothing, featuring sealskin, caribou skin, and fur: "They look so much better in their native clothing than in 'kabloona' [white] garments" (March 10, 1905, FONDS). Moodie occasionally took pictures of men, such as Tululick, but her main interest was women. As photographic subjects, these women wore Inuit clothing such as *amautis* (parkas with large hoods to carry babies or young children) or they posed in *qulittaqs* (parkas with fur sides over the top). Some women wore *attigis*, a beaded under-layer top. Beads sometimes featured in the clothing of Moodie's photographic subjects. Her choice then, was to record what she perceived as her subjects' Inuitness, the characteristics and adornments that made them different from the westerners who would consume Moodie's photographs at a distance. Moodie wanted to capture on film the Inuit tattooing tradition. An example of this occurred in March of 1905 when she discussed her attempt to photograph a woman whose clothing featured a coloured pattern of a caribou. She wrote, "It is impossible to get

the ta-too [tattoo] marks to show in the picture, they are ta-tooed in blue which is about dark enough to take the same as their yellow skins. I am painting over some to see how that works" (March 10, 1905, FONDS). For some shoots, she positioned a woman with her child, who might be completely naked except for a beaded decoration. Inuit babies were often not clothed and were kept warm in their mothers' fur hoods. Moodie wrote about this aspect of Inuit child-rearing, amazed by it, and determined to include it in her staged images. Like other Arctic photographers, her ambition was to demonstrate how different, if not strange, Inuit were rather than emphasizing the humanity they shared with the consumers of her photographs. With this approach, Moodie othered Inuit and her memorable images were widely circulated in the south, where they helped establish colonial constructions of Inuitness, especially of Inuit women. These constructions appear in the large Project Naming collection.



Figure 2: Moodie created this portrait of Ooktook with a naked child. File number: NC-81-60, Geraldine and Douglas Moodie Fonds, Glenbow Museum; [1904-1905]. Printed with permission.

Moodie's photographs revealed at least as much about her as a domesticated wife in the Arctic of the early 20th century as they did about her subjects, but they are rarely viewed from that perspective. Moodie maintained her established identity despite her new surroundings and her new status as a member of a small white minority. Kelcey concluded that this stance was automatically adopted by colonial women in the north; women "sustained familiar customs in isolated settings because they needed to remember who they were, where they came from" (2001, 35). In addition, colonial women sometimes tried to impose their own cultural practices and norms in the Arctic; the Pearys' Thanksgiving dinner in Greenland is an example of this. Reproducing one's own culture was in keeping with colonial objectives. Women could and did reproduce the slate of ascribed

female domestic responsibilities, which served to help normalize colonial encroachments. For instance, when an Inuk told Moodie that she didn't have a petticoat, Moodie saw this an important matter and hastened to give the woman one, made of Turkey red cotton.

Geraldine Moodie played a role in the ongoing process of colonization relatively early on and her role was important. Other images of Inuit existed by Moodie's time; "Lady Travellers," upper class British women tourists, had gone to the reaches of the British Empire and produced travel sketches, including some of Inuit (Reeploeg 2017, 36), but, unlike Moodie's, their northern stays would be brief and not attached to official expeditions. Colonial men, such as the geologist A.P. Low who worked with J.D. Moodie, had also photographed Inuit. Yet Moodie was not just one of a series of photographers who contributed to the construction and meaning of Inuit women and men in Canadian society. Her gender meant that her role was pivotal and her nearly year-round presence in Fullerton was necessary to the project's endeavours. Lady Travellers set on exploring the far-flung British Empire were more transitory than Moodie who spent a year in Hudson Bay; they had no official functions and were passers-through. Moodie, on the other hand, was part of an official expedition with the specific purpose of advancing Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

With his military background and title of superintendent of the North-West Mounted Police, J.D. Moodie's status and authority automatically projected on to his wife. Here was a representative of the Canadian government building a house in Hudson Bay where he would live with his wife. Inuit were well-used to seeing single colonial men, some travelling through their territory, others, like explorers Vilhjalmur Steffanson, over-wintering in the Western Arctic from 1913 for several years (Steffanson 1921). Some, like Robert Peary and his African-American colleague, Matt Hanson, fathered Inuit children but the men themselves were never more than temporary visitors to polar Greenland and lost contact with their polar families (Hanrahan 2018; Hanson 1969, first pub. 1912). The Moodies were the first government-sponsored married couple to set themselves up in the Canadian Arctic, reinforcing colonial gender constraints while advancing alien sovereignty.

There had been and continued to be missionary women in the Arctic during Moodie's time there. Missionary women interacted with Indigenous people in the Arctic because they were propelled by their desire to teach Inuit, Inupiat, and Dene about "the eternal things that matter" (Kelcey 2001, 122). Female missionaries among the Inuit were more tangential to the colonization process than was Moodie; these women might have helped establish occupation as the foundation of ownership

claims, but their work was less tied to strategic government purposes. The Moodies were stationed north directly because of government ambition. Theirs was not the flag of a Christian church but that of an Empire.

As part of a colonial couple and family, both Moodies had an easier entry into Inuit society, which facilitated Geraldine's photography activities. The Moodies spoke of their children down south and their son, Alex, accompanied them to Hudson Bay and hunted with Inuit. On November 4, 1904, Geraldine wrote, "Alex has won the hearts of all the natives. Susie [an Inuk] says 'your piccannie [sic] [child] good me like him'" (November 4, 1904, FONDS). Indeed, early in the Moodies' Arctic tenure, Alex Moodie was given gifts by Inuit: sealskin boots, mittens, and a tobacco pouch. Alex's presence, as the offspring of two colonial parents, served to normalize the Moodies and their presence, which promoted their acceptance by Inuit. To the Inuit, the Moodie family would have appeared more conventional and less odd or eccentric than the colonial men who left their wives behind to engage in heroic adventures in the north. If Inuit women felt threatened or intimidated or even baffled by colonial men, the appearance of a colonial woman alongside one of them might have reassured them. After all, like them, Geraldine Moodie sewed and cleaned house, as they did, and she was a mother whose relationship with her son they witnessed.

Moodie noted that most Inuit women she encountered had only one or two children and, because of this, they admired her for having five children. In addition, several of Moodie's children were sons, highly valued by Inuit because of men's ascribed hunting role. It is likely that Inuit women could relate to Moodie, a mother like most of them, which would have made them more comfortable in her studio than posing for, say, A.P. Low.

Moodie's presence and her growing intimacy with Inuit women through photography meant that colonial activities had a less threatening edge, their political goals layered under reciprocity so highly valued by Inuit. Given the expedition's mission to bring and begin to enforce Canadian law in the region, John Douglas Moodie "faced the delicate task" of notifying Inuit (as well as foreign whaling crews) that they were now subject to an authority far away (Ross 1976, 100). Lorris Elijah Borden, the expedition's young surgeon and botanist, described Moodie's ceremonial approach, similar to others enacted elsewhere in the colonies, including Inuit lands such as Labrador as far back as 1775: "The Major had about eight gallons of tea made and with five pounds of hard tack [bread] and other biscuits soon disappeared. A clay pipe and a bit of tobacco was given to each of the twenty-five natives present...Major told the natives that there was a big chief over them...King

Edward VII [who] had the welfare of all his peoples at heart. [The king] had sent the major as his personal representative...The Major wanted them to do what was right and good and to settle all quarrels but he would punish all offenders” (Ross 1976, 100). This was followed by a gift-giving ceremony during which the Inuit present were given woolen underwear, tuques, mittens and sashes. Still, Borden reported that the Inuit appeared baffled and amazed. Some of them might have been thinking about their close ties to American whalers as well as the spuriousness of British-Canadian claims to their land.

All the Inuit present seem to have been men, but women were involved in the celebration of the king’s birthday that came soon after the ceremony. This is largely because of Geraldine Moodie, who knew the women, was photographing them regularly, and now played hostess on board the ship. Moodie wrote that the walls were draped with flags and portraits of the king and Queen Mary hung on the walls. Beforehand, her husband had given each of the Inuit women five yards of material to make a print dress. Geraldine wrote, “The ladies arrived in their new dresses, they had sat up most of the night making them. It is marvelous how they make the five yards go so far. Princess dresses with leg of mutton sleeves. Some of them improvised trimming out of other material...All the young women had their hair hanging down, and most of them had

very long hair but a little coarse...They have all square dances to music by our interpreter on a concertina. Douglas had the organ brought up, this greatly fascinated the na [native] men who do not join the dance” (November 11, 1904 FONDS). After the dance, Geraldine served the Inuit guests, now British subjects, cakes and coffees, “a treat to them all” (November 11, 1904 FONDS). In playing this role, Geraldine Moodie echoed the actions of Robert Peary’s wife in Greenland a decade before. In Fullerton, she instructed Inuit women in how to wear blouses and she consulted with them about the design of their dresses. Of an Inuit woman she called Chuck, Moodie wrote, “I gave her a collar to finish off [her dress] and she looks quite ‘kabloona’ [white]” (Jan. 8, 1905, FONDS). By the New Year’s Eve dance and certainly by the St. Patrick’s Day festivities in March 1905, Inuit women were experienced in the enthusiastic copying of the dresses Moodie herself wore. Moodie helped Britain ease into the Arctic, and, finally, into the lives of Arctic women. Through gifting dress material and food, she and her husband demonstrated reciprocity. Her presence there was an advantage for the Dominion Government Expedition of which she was part, smoothing its way. Inuit women had a relationship with Moodie, taking part in the photographic sessions that would result in the longstanding southern gaze on and depiction of Inuit women, the kind of “discovery” that is inherent in the colonial process.



Figure 3: Geraldine Moodie's photo of Koo-too-took featured on a Canada Post stamp issued in 2013. The photo was taken in 1905.

Moodie rarely photographed Inuit women in their new western-style dresses, Niviaqsarjuk and Jennie adorned in their hats being two exceptions. Generally, Moodie posed her subjects wearing Inuit attire. She created "quite a good Rembrandt lighting" in her front room (Feb. 10, 1905 FONDS) while planning the portrait that become her most famous. She noted her interest in photographing "a deaf and dumb Inuit [sic] girl who has a very expressive face. If one could only get her with a natural smile it would be a picture worth having. Sush [such] fine dark eyes and perfect teeth" (Feb. 10, 1905 FONDS). Here, in writing of the young woman called Koo-tuck-tuck, Moodie provides readers with a striking example of othering. But two days later, she referred to Koo-tuck-tuck's obvious intelligence and her ability to speak animatedly in sign language

(Feb. 12, 1905 FONDS). She estimated Koo-tuck-tuck's age at 15 and noted that she was pregnant with her fourth child. Like other colonial writers, Moodie occasionally seemed to respect her Inuit subjects but she usually saw them as exotic and she largely othered them. As Close asserts, "in Moodie's time, the subjects are people who were most commonly photographed by ethnographers or anthropologists seeking only to illustrate specimens or exemplary types" (2005, 53).

Moodie's image of Koo-tuck-tuck was her most influential. The British Museum used the photograph for publicity for a 1998 exhibit and conference *Imaging the Arctic*. The image appeared on a Canadian postage stamp in 2013 and more than half a million stamps were issued (Koo-tuck-tuck Photograph, n.d). In the photography, Koo-tuck-tuck is alone, holding up a curtain of the type that is seen in photography studios; this position of her seems to extend an invitation and even hints at the young woman's sexuality. Like most of Moodie's subjects, Koo-tuck-tuck holds a conventional pose. Her hair is long and loose. She wears heavy Inuit clothing, elaborately embroidered. She holds a pensive stance and is beautiful. She is alone, decontextualized without her family or community, away from her own home and in what is a contact zone (Close 2017) devised by the photographer. For many in the south (even today most Canadians never venture to the Arctic), Koo-tuck-tuck would become the embodiment of Inuit

womanhood. Yet what we know of Koo-tuck-tuck, how we see her – these things are the creation of Geraldine Moodie’s Arctic imagination, Moodie’s western perspectives, her feminized views, and the traditions of contemporary photography. This is the Koo-tuck-tuck who endures.

There is little agreement on the meaning of Geraldine Moodie’s photographic work in the Arctic. For Osborne, Moodie’s photos captured “the dignity and essence of each person” (2013, 206). Newman saw Moodie’s photographs as “intuitive” and “detail-oriented” (1998, 90-91). Hatfield compared Moodie favourably to Low, asserting that Moodie’s images were less stereotyped (2008, 12-13) and “more sympathetic to the sitter” (29-30); he goes as far as to say that Moodie’s photographs were “an expression of the creativity and personality of the individual [being photographed]” (32). Hatfield based his conclusions on the fact that Moodie’s subjects were often seated, like guests, for their sessions, and the images Moodie created revealed an artistic and domestic style. Yet Hatfield allowed that Moodie’s images “convey[ed] cultural exoticism” (2018, 104), as did Rosenblum (2010), and that since Moodie was part of a colonial venture, her presence served to advance Canadian sovereignty. Newman (1998) agreed that Moodie othered or objectified Inuit women, noting that, for instance, the photographer was not self-reflective and was inconsistent in naming

her subjects. My review of Moodie’s notes and diaries led me to the same conclusion.

Conclusion

Although she would not have viewed it as such, Moodie’s presence as well as her photography became effective tools for imperial goals – possession and charge -- in Inuit lands. So did her very presence: as wife, mother, member of a colonial expedition, and semi-permanent resident of, rather than traveller through, the Arctic. Moodie’s work and presence demonstrated clearly that women could be colonizers, too, especially if they conformed to assigned female roles focused on the domestic, as Moodie did and as most Lady Travellers did not. Thus, Moodie helped to define women’s role as colonizer. Like the missionary women, Moodie “introduced civilization” to Inuit, as Kelcey put it (2008, 35) but she went farther; she “discovered” Inuit women, who had been largely out of sight for Europeans and North Americans, making them invisible residents of the Arctic. Moodie’s image-making presented Inuit women as different, as curious objects to be gazed at; generally, the women in Moodie’s enduring work are depicted alone and adorned and without naming. This practice helped to establish the tradition of photographing Inuit without contextualization and without naming them, a process that has not served Inuit. The objectification and othering of Inuit facilitated ongoing colonialism and Inuit continue to live with the damaging effects of

this process of which Geraldine Moodie was part.

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