

Reports

International Multidisciplinary Conference

Extreme conditions and situations

in the North, the extreme South, the Arctic and the Antarctic



At the University of Iceland
Reykjavik, **April 1st to 3rd 2019**

IV ICO WORKSHOP

*EXTREME / CONDITIONS AND SITUATIONS
IN THE NORTH, THE EXTREME SOUTH,
THE ARCTIC AND THE ANTARCTICA*

Háskóli Íslands (University of Iceland), Reykjavík, April 1-3, 2019

APRIL 1 (Monday)

10:00-12:00 **ICO Executive Committee meeting** (for members only).
Gimli building, 301, University of Iceland

12:00-14:00 **Lunch** (University campus restaurant, Háma, University Square).

14:00-14:15 **Inauguration of the ICO Workshop**. Gimli 301. (Helgi Gunnlaugsson, Enrique del Acebo Ibáñez & Daniel Chartier)

TABLE I: “Arctic Traditions” (Chairperson: Helgi Gunnlaugsson, Háskóli Íslands)

14:15-14:45 **Kristinn Schram, Associate Professor of Ethnology, Háskóli Íslands**

“Mobility and change in the Arctic: an ethnographic case study of sled dogs in Greenland”

Understanding the societal impact of climate change entails many challenges and presents us with wide knowledge gaps. One example is how a changing environment, mobility and increasing tourism are transforming the use of sled dogs and opening up new scenarios and perspectives on traditional practices in the Arctic, both in the economic and cultural dimension. Through participant observation of practices linked to sled dog use this article addresses perceptions of local inhabitants regarding sled dogs, environment and tourism. The ethnographic research offers insights into the hunting, recreation and tourism activities in Kulusuk, a small village in East Greenland. The relationship between people and sled dogs can unveil multiple meanings regarding how the value of animals, environment and heritage vary and change through traditional, rural and urbanizing areas. The investigation shows how social patterns of the coexistence of humans and animals are changing in this crucial period of transition in the Arctic and sub-Arctic. In this context, the perceptions and effects of increasing tourism and climate change will throw light on the future dynamics of mobility in these areas.

14:45-15:15 **Alina Nakhodkina, Head of the Department of Translation, Northeastern Federal University**

«The chilling world of demons: the Arctic as an embodiment of hell in the Yakut epic tradition»

The article introduces a new approach to the stylistic and symbolic features of the Sakha heroic epic *Olonkho "Nurgun Botur the Swif"* by Platon Oyunsky considering the metaphor of the Arctic as hell. The epic Olonkho has been recently translated into English, which allows both interlingual and intercultural comparison. The author suggests an analysis of the verbal means depicting the Arctic phenomenon, its space and its main characteristics. This hostile and dangerous environment is seen in the light

of the three level world like in some other Turkic epics. The description of the ominous Under World reproduces typical natural phenomena of the Arctic region such as hoarfrost, drifting snow, fog, polar night, landscape, etc. The epic space in *olonkebo* is based on the traditional semantic opposition «north-south». According to this correlation, epic quest starts in the south and leads to the north imitating the model of the Sakha migration to northeastern Siberia. The animosity of some Arctic landscape elements reflects in their demonic feminine origin. These peripheral objects with negative symbolism are situated in the west and north unfavourable directions. The embodiment of the Arctic as a hell is unfolding in antagonists – demons and monsters Abaahys and Ajarais. The traditional image of enemy assumes new elements that reflect a historical fate of the Sakha.

15:15-15:30 **Coffee break. HÁMA Cafeteria, University Square.**

<p>TABLE II: “Modern Issues” (Chairperson: Daniel Chartier, Université du Québec à Montréal)</p>

15:30-16:00 **Helgi Gunnlaugsson, Professor of Sociology, Háskóli Íslands**

“Overcoming extreme conditions: how social media has changed drug dealing in Iceland”

Recent Eurostat findings show Iceland to be one of the most digitalized nation in the world. Internet access and internet use is the highest in Iceland in the world according to most recent 2019 data. Internet use has changed drug dealing over the past decade owing to the emergence of darknet services. Yet, little is known about drug dealing in public online services. In this seminar talk, findings from a first ever study on social media drug dealing in Iceland will be presented. A qualitative study using online ethnography and semi-structured interviews was conducted in late 2017 and early 2018 in Iceland, a modern nation close to the Arctic. The data shows a high degree of drug dealing activity on Facebook and Instagram, as well as on Snapchat and Facebook Messenger. Buyers and sellers also make use of encrypted platforms, such as darknet forums and the Wickr-app on their smartphones. The overall lesson to be learned is that even in remote, small and difficult places, modern day technology can in some cases enable

inhabitants to overcome physical and natural conditions, in this case using social media in drug dealing.

16:00-16:30 **Hasan Karaklinic, PhD Student in Latin American Studies at University of Iceland (Háskóli Íslands) and Université de Toulouse II - Jean Jaurès (France)**

“Buenos Aires punk scene during the 80’s and 90’s (Mapuche resistance within the Argentinean scene)”

Following the mid-80s and the end of the military dictatorship, the Argentinean punk enters a new phase characterized by a discursive paradigm shift. Leaving behind an anti-oppressive rawness, the scene slowly adopts an intersectional form of radicalism that includes criticism of power relations based on categories such as class, gender, sexuality and race. From these new perspectives, a growing interest in the resistance of *Mapuche* communities appears in fanzines, song lyrics and cultural events from the Buenos Aires counter-culture, before being appropriated by the punk scenes across the Patagonian urban areas throughout the nineties. My lecture will offer an overview of how these discourses first emerged within the Argentinean punk scene and how they then gained a momentum as a syncretic tool of resistance and valorization of identity by the so called “*mapurbes*” (urban Mapuches).

APRIL 2 (Tuesday)

TABLE III: “Travelogues and Polar Research” (Chairperson: Enrique del Acebo Ibáñez, Universidad del Salvador, USAL). Gimli bldg, 301.

10:00-10:30 **Alain Guyot, Professor of Literature, Université de Lorraine**
“How to endure cold temperatures? The traveller’s body in Siberian winter (18th-20th C.)”

How do travelers deal with the freezing temperatures of Siberia during the winter period? How does their body react? What solutions do they adopt to withstand extreme cold? We will try to see this through some extracts from European travelogues (18th-20th C.)

10:30-11:00 **Jan Borm, Professor of Literature, Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Paris-Saclay**
"Tierra del Fuego and the Moravians".

11:00-11:30 **Anna Stammler-Gossmann, University Researcher in Social Anthropology, Lapin yliopisto / Arctic Center**
"Polar anthropology and sensitivities of fielding".

Prolonged stay at the research site is the part of the main field method of participant observation in the social anthropology. Recording and evaluation of data, access to them, and relations with a community are some of the methodological challenges that can be nested. Doing fieldwork in remote places means for a researcher to be ready to face additional challenges related to accessibility of the research site, to matter of risk and award, to possible being an integral part of the social structure. In this presentation, I will highlight sensitivities and benefits of the fieldwork experiences, conducting study on different research issues and in different communities across the Arctic.

11:30-13:00: **Lunch** (University campus restaurant, (Háma, University Square).

<p>TABLE IV: "The extreme & theoretical frameworks" (Chairperson: Jan Borm, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Paris-Saclay)</p>

14:00-14:30 **Enrique del Acebo Ibáñez, Universidad del Salvador, USAL**
"The Extreme: Philosophical and Socio-Anthropological Disquisitions".

The "EXTREME" is a hyper-connoted but not well-defined word. A reductionist conception of the environment as a mere "ecological system" ("environmentalism") influences the answer given to the question about what "the Extreme" is. It contains negative conditions that are difficult to survive for most known life forms; these conditions, mainly obstacles, may be:• extremely high or low temperature or pressure;• high or low content of oxygen or carbon dioxide in the atmosphere;• high levels of radiation, acidity, or alkalinity;• absence of water;• water containing a high concentration of salt or sugar; presence of sulfur, petroleum, and other toxic substances. Consequently,

examples of extreme environments are: geographical poles, very arid deserts, volcanoes, deep ocean trenches, upper atmosphere, high mountains, outer space, environments of every planet in the Solar System except the Earth. But “extreme” is also the result of the dialectic between the *homo viator* and the *stabilitas loci*, in terms of internalization of the extreme environment -natural and constructed- and exteriorization of the landscape of the soul of such a subject and of such a local community.

The Extreme has more questions than certainties: is it a point of arrival or starting point? Is it an abysmal limit as a sort of *finis terrae* or, instead, should be considered as setting in motion of the place? Memory, uncertainty, silence are dimensions to be considered when analyzing the “extreme”, mainly when this phenomenon is not only related to the environment but also with socio-cultural, political, anthropological and economic variables.

14:30-15:00 Daniel Chartier, Professor, Research Chair on Images of the North, Winter and the Arctic, Université du Québec à Montréal, “The construction of the North as an ‘extreme’ place for ‘exceptional’ people”

The study of the occurrences of the term “extreme” in exploration narratives, essays and fictions related to the North and the Arctic reveals some recurring paradigms: on the first hand, it is first and foremost by the climate and the landscape that the North is a world posed as “extreme” compared to the rest of the world. On the second, the division between the two spaces — the North and the rest of the world — is part of a rhetorical process that serves to make the “North” a space populated by exceptional people: the Vikings, Inuit, explorers and settlers, themselves defined by their outstanding capacities. In this conference, I would like to question some of the parameters of the North’s construction as an outer space and see how it leads to a boundary between a “normal” and a “non-for-man-made” space in which solely some can survive.

<p>TABLE V: “Crafting History” (Chairperson: Anna Stammler-Gossmann, University Researcher in Social Anthropology, University of Lapland (Lapin Yliopisto)</p>

15:30-16:00 Agustín García Serventi, Associate Professor, Universidad Nacional de Tierra del Fuego, “First impressions about a possible

archive of the audiovisual heritage of the province of Tierra del Fuego, Antártida e Islas del Atlántico Sur

Imagining the extreme south has always been an invitation to fantasy. The southern land in world, the last frontier, the bravest sea on Earth. All kind of conceptualization about a fragmented territory emerge from the traces of the history. Tierra del Fuego, Antártida e Islas del Atlántico Sur is the youngest province of Argentina. Due to its social and productive characteristics and its geo-estrategic position, the province has faced a high immigration rate and territorial disputes throughout its history resulting in a rich social- and cultural history, from myth to geopolitical conflicts. The policies and poetics of an archive confront a disputed history and a tense present with the identity and the identification constitution of a past portrayed as a diffuse field. The representation of indigenous population as a distant past, a unstable and weak social and-productive structure along with an extreme social mobility have challenged the researchers' work of thinking an archive and its possible links with the present and the past in an insular, fragmented and unstable territory. To think the audiovisual archive in this context is to think of movement, giving rise to what Georges DidiHuberman calls "the symptom" or the movement that is proper to the images and manifests itself as a discomfort that interrupts the normal course of events. To gather, analyze, classify and expose are actions both aesthetic and political, and is the case of this project enquires both aspects through the constitution and systematization of the audiovisual heritage of the province of Tierra del Fuego, AeIAS. All this enables us to investigate in the visual representations of a circumpolar, insular, bicontinental and multinational territory.

16:00-16:30 Sumarliði R. Ísleifsson, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Humanities, Háskóli Íslands, *"Was Iceland Extreme?"*

It has been common to describe Iceland as an extreme country in many ways in the period from 18th century to first half of the 20th century. Can we conclude and explain why this was done? Was it because Iceland was really extreme or were there other reasons? Also: Did the situation of Iceland change in the course of the 19th and early 20th century or did Iceland behold it's extremity? Which are the most important concepts this connection? How did ideas and terms related to nationalism, masculinity and colonialism influence the

situation of Iceland as extreme in this period? The paper will be built on research on travelogues on Iceland from the 18th to the 20th century.

16:30-17:00 **Ceremony for the prize given by ICO** to Dr Juan Carlos Luján as **“Best Circumpolar Trajectory/2018”** (Helgi Gunnlaugsson, Daniel Chartier, Enrique del Acebo Ibáñez). Gimli Building 301.

17:00-17:30 **Drinks**, Gimli, 301. To be continued at the Student Bar on campus.

APRIL 3 (Wednesday)

09:30 – 09:35 **Introduction to the Films exhibition:** *About the importance of Film Studies and Visual Sociology & Anthropology in Circumpolar issues* (Enrique del Acebo Ibáñez). Gimli 301.

09:35 - 12:45 **Northern Circumpolarity Films exhibition** (Presentation by Hólmfríður Garðarsdóttir, Professor in Spanish, University of Iceland)

09:45-11:00 Screening **“The Deep” (Djúpið), Dir. Baltazar, Iceland, 2012** [Gimli,301].

The winter, the cold weather and the open sea are waiting for the fishermen. The boat is small as the sea is immense. Based in real facts, the film reveals how difficult is to survive a shipwreck under the conditions of the Northern Atlantic. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OasZbZbKzG0>)

11:00-11:10 **Coffee Break**

11:10-12:45 Screening **“Rams” (Hrútar), Dir. Hákonarsson, Iceland, 2015.** [Gimli,301]

In a remote Icelandic farming valley, two old single brothers who haven't spoken in 40 years have to come together in order to save what's dearest to them – their sheep.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rams_\(2015_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rams_(2015_film)) /
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWOFWaltGRw>

12:45–13:00 Screening: “*World of Cow: Human-Animal Adaptation to the Arctic Environment*”, (Documentary (11’), by Anna Stammler-Gossmann, 2017.

Two ‘Arctic sisters’, Sakha cow (Republic of Sakha Yakutia, Russia) and Lappish cow (Lapland, Finland) represent a local breed of a high genetic distinctiveness, outstanding tolerance towards freezing temperatures, fat- and protein rich milk content, modesty in the care taking, and an exceptional intelligence subscribed to them. Two parts of this documentary represent records made by Sakha and Lappish cows with a gopro camera.

13:00-13:15 **Discussion**

13:15-14:00 **Lunch, Háma, University Square.**

14:00 – 16:30 **Southern Circumpolarity Films exhibition** (Presentation by Enrique del Acebo Ibáñez)

14:00- 15:30 Screening *The boss. X-ray of a crime* (“*El Patrón. Radiografía de un crimen*”) (Dir. Sebastián Schindel, 2014, 90’). [Oddi Building on campus, 203].

With dreams of a better life, a humble but illiterate worker and his wife leave their poor village in Santiago to move to Buenos Aires. However, a sinister boss' promise of a bright future will come at a high price.

15:30-15:40: **Coffee Break. Oddi Cafeteria.**

15:40–17:05: Screening “*Mundo Alas*” (Dir León Gieco, 2009)

Documentary road movie where a group of young physically disabled artists travel Argentina with the renowned singer León Gieco on a concert tour. Gieco puts this group together to make their dream come true.

17:05- 17:15 **Discussion**

17:15 – 17:20 **Ending words of the ICO Conference** (Helgi Gunnlaugsson)