

## Travelling Mass-Media Circus: Frank Hurley and Colonial Modernity

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In this paper I will outline the argument of the book I am writing about the Australian photographer and film maker Frank Hurley. Its title is *Travelling Mass-Media Circus: Frank Hurley and Colonial Modernity*. It is not a biography but a study of Hurley's career, and of his stage and screen practice in the context of the early twentieth century's mass-media landscape. At the same time, I am preparing an illustrated edition of the diaries Hurley kept for many years, including those from the Mawson and Shackleton Antarctic expeditions and those from the two world wars.

Central to my conception of Hurley's career is a form of entertainment that I call a travelling, mass-media event. His own term was 'synchronized lecture entertainment'.<sup>1</sup> In the early years of the twentieth century, a film was not a single, stable text or discrete media presentation. Hurley's entertainments were dispersed performances exploiting a number of media, and different versions in each medium were created at different times by different people, often in different countries, and for audiences with different tastes and expectations. This was a consequence of uneven changes in the media industry, as the forces of internationalization, especially at the level of distribution and exhibition, co-existed with older forms of local expertise and hand-made production techniques. Typically, Hurley's synchronized lecture entertainments involved a combination of at least some but normally all of the following media: photographic exhibitions, including the sale of prints and albums; saturation newspaper and

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magazine coverage in the form of articles, advertisements, interviews and photographic essays; the presence of a celebrity lecturer; silent cinema projection, often involving several titles on a single programme; coloured lantern-slide projection; live music; advertising posters, illustrated programmes and themed theatre decorations; the display of related historical or ethnographic artifacts – sledges, for example, from Antarctic expeditions or hand-carved canoes from Papua; and finally radio broadcasts and mainstream book publication, all coordinated, syndicated and, in the industry jargon, ‘tied in’, to achieve maximum advertising exposure and maximum revenue.

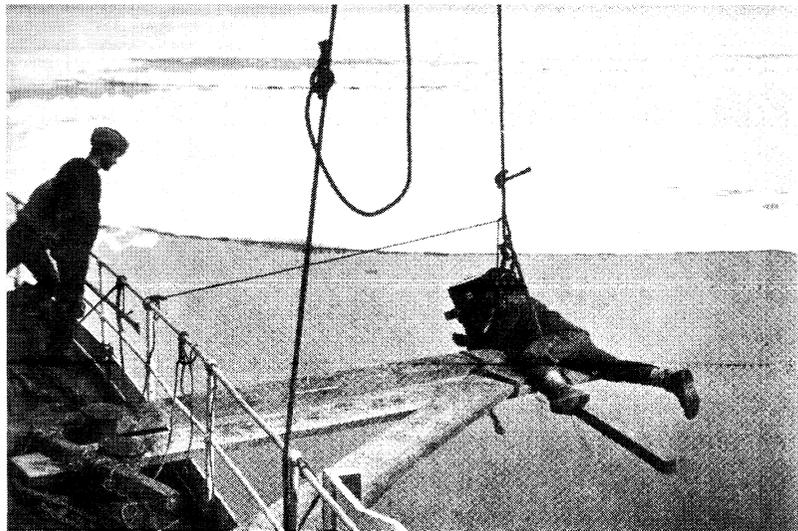
The number of trades and institutions involved in staging such an event was daunting: theatres, art galleries, exhibition halls, museums, book publishers, newspapers and magazines, printers, commercial artists, musicians, cinema agents, lecturing agents, photographic equipment manufacturers, companies specializing in the latest techniques for reproducing images, new modes of urban and international travel and communication, and the complexities of contract, company and copyright law. These events were entertaining as well as educational, drawing as much attention to their own ‘attractions’ as to the events they purported to document. There was about them a sense of self-promotion and even opportunistic contrivance that smacked of what contemporary press men called ‘stunts’. And finally, Hurley’s mass-media spectacles not only toured Australia’s capital cities and regional towns; they often took place simultaneously overseas by arrangement with the press and various entertainment agencies in Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Canada and the United States. By the 1920s, Hurley had become not only the ring-master but also the main attraction in his own travelling, international, multi- and mass-media circus. There could be no hint of provincialism or colonial belatedness. A Hurley event, wherever it was staged, was alert to the very latest ebbs and flows of an increasingly international, if not yet global, entertainment industry. What I want to re-imagine in this book is the social life of Hurley’s texts as they once moved through the complicated topography of the early twentieth century’s mass-media landscape.

As a way to conceive of that space and the social life of the people and things within it, I use the concept of *colonial modernity*.

I explored some of these questions in a previous book, *Impact of the Modern: Vernacular Modernities in Australia 1870s–1960s*.<sup>2</sup> Put briefly, theories of colonial modernity take issue with the assumption that modernity is first invented in metropolitan centres and then exported to the colonial peripheries, which are always, by definition, supplementary or belated. Instead, *Impact of the Modern* re-envisages the cultural landscape of empire as a set of interdependent sites, as a network of relations rather than a one-way transfer of culture and authority.<sup>3</sup> This replaces the idea, fundamental to postcolonial theory, of a ‘writing-back’ to the centre that is always reactive and supplementary. I use Frank Hurley’s career as a way in to explore a series of research questions about Australia and colonial modernity in the early decades of the twentieth century. Let me begin with some early influences on that career.

Major influences on Hurley’s synchronized lecture entertainments were the mixed-media travel documentaries that were popular in Britain and the United States around the turn of the century.<sup>4</sup> Showmen, as they were called, toured with magic lanterns, projecting slides to the accompaniment of a lecture, and sometimes music and sound effects. The most famous American exponent was the elegant Elias Burton Holmes. Unlike some earlier showmen, Holmes was himself a photographer and took many of the slides used in his shows. He was a charismatic performer, engaging audiences with dramatic accounts of his travels in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Appealing to middle-class audiences, he dressed in an evening suit and was renowned for his well-modulated delivery. This kind of entertainer became known as a ‘platform personality’.<sup>5</sup> For a time it seemed that the new motion pictures might kill off the old type of show, but in the season of 1897 Burton Holmes took the important step of including cine film in his lectures. Initially, he used it only as a supplement to the slides but the two media were soon fully integrated. In 1904, he coined the term ‘travelogue’ to describe these new multi-media entertainments. Frank Hurley would later acknowledge him to be the world’s leading travelogue presenter.<sup>6</sup>

One important link between Hurley's career and these international trends was Herbert Ponting, Scott's 'camera artist' on the British Antarctic Expedition.<sup>7</sup> Born in 1870, Ponting was Hurley's senior in both years and media experience, and Hurley set him up as an ideal. Ponting left England in his early 20s to settle in California. He took up photography around 1900 and became one of the first of a new breed, the globe-trotting, free-lance photographer who sold his work to photographic agencies or worked on assignment for the world's illustrated press. Ponting was at home in the international mass-media landscape. He understood how to maximize publicity and profits through syndication and tie-ins, how to work in more than one medium and how to project his work in more than one city – or even continent. When Scott engaged him in 1909, Ponting used his grasp of the world's mass-media to exploit a polar expedition for the first time in a truly modern way.



*Illustration 1: Herbert G. Ponting, 'Kinematographing in the Pack', The Great White South; or With Scott in the Antarctic, [1921], 3rd edition, London, 1923.*

In his book *The Great White South* (1921), Ponting is the quintessential adventurer-cameraman. His celebrity status is announced by self portraits illustrating the book's leading theme: the adventurer-cameraman at work in the Antarctic. 'Kinematographing in the

Pack' shows Ponting 'spread-eagled' with his heavy cine camera on a platform built to film *Terra Nova's* bows breaking the pack [Illustration 1]. Ponting devoted an entire chapter to these stunts, turning his own recording of the expedition on camera into his main story. Here is the self-reflexive style that Tom Gunning calls 'the cinema of attractions';<sup>8</sup> here too is the unmistakable signature of modern media reporting – journalists as their own subject.

During the long winter aboard *Terra Nova*, Ponting entertained the crew with lectures on his travels, using a compact American lantern. This led to discussions with Scott about a proposed show based on the expedition. Ponting was stunned by the British naval officer's lack of commercial acumen and naivety in dealing with the press, noting that 'He seemed to have little idea of the value of photographs made at so remote a part of the earth'.<sup>9</sup> But they agreed that Ponting would stage a travelogue in London at the conclusion of the expedition. He later recalled, 'A beautiful series of films and lantern slides of the adventure ... was arranged, and to these I lectured at a London Hall for ten months in 1914, until the outbreak of the Great War ended what had been a highly successful beginning to a novel feature in the entertainment world'.<sup>10</sup>

Ponting's show was a landmark event, one of the most complete entertainments of its kind yet to appear in London. A press agent arranged publicity, and notices and celebrity interviews appeared in the press. The Philharmonic Hall in Great Portland Street was chosen as a quality venue, a cut above the other theatres and music halls of the West End. Ponting's lecture was synchronized with sequences of cine film, lantern slides and musical interludes. Advertising was tied in to sales of the new book, *Scott's Last Expedition*, and to an exhibition of photographs at the Fine Art Society in New Bond Street. According to one critic, 'There is nothing in the theatres of London to approach this ... tale in pictures'.<sup>11</sup>

Although Hurley had previously put on small exhibitions, he had not yet attempted anything like this. When he returned to London from Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition in November 1916, Ponting's show was on again at the Philharmonic and Hurley saw it at least four times. It was a revelation to him of

what might be achieved in his own career. He went for the first time on Saturday 18 November, describing it as 'the acme of photographic perfection'. Hurley was still learning the craft of lecturing, especially synchronizing words and images. He noted in his diary, 'Ponting's manner & delivery are excellent, his patter splendid, giving one the impression the penguins were actually performing to his words'.<sup>12</sup>

Born in Sydney's Glebe in 1885, at 63 Derwent Street, Frank Hurley had worked in the views and postcard trades, and exhibited with local photographic clubs before his surprise appointment to Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition in 1911.<sup>13</sup> When Mawson returned to Australia in 1914, he was heavily in debt and he sailed immediately for London to cash in on the expedition by exploiting it in the world's mass-media. Under contract to the publisher William Heinemann, Mawson worked to produce the 'popular' edition of the book, *Home of the Blizzard*. It was a collaboration, drafted by Mawson, substantially re-written by his colleague Archie McLean, and illustrated with Hurley's photographs.<sup>14</sup> It was published in January 1915 and distributed simultaneously in Britain, the United States, Canada and Australasia. As a tie-in to the book, Mawson arranged a photographic exhibition modelled on Ponting's at the Fine Art Society. The catalogue advertised the new book and boosted Hurley's persona as an adventurer-cameraman. The photographs chosen for exhibition were not scientific, but included the pictorially novel and now famous scenes of men 'leaning on the wind'.<sup>15</sup>

Mawson was planning to stage a travelogue like Ponting's, but given the globally dispersed conditions of its production it was impossible that there could ever be a single, stable filmic text. Personnel working in the early mass-media were astonishingly mobile, even by twenty-first-century standards. Mawson was now in London while Hurley, along with most of the negatives, was in Sydney. Mawson wrote and telegraphed instructions while Hurley worked long hours at the Kodak laboratories developing photographic prints, colouring slides and tinting sequences of film. And then, at the very moment that Mawson most needed him, Hurley accepted an appointment as Shackleton's photographer on the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, leaving Australia for

Punta Arenas in October 1914.

Having set up the London exhibition, Mawson himself left England on a round of lecture tours, first in Australia and then in the United States and Canada. In Hurley's absence, and from the other side of the world, he had to locate the best developers, write his own lecture and learn to synchronize it with the film and lantern slides. Ponting warned him, 'This film business is really a most difficult and dangerous thing to dabble in'.<sup>16</sup>

Like Scott, Mawson was new to the entertainment industry. His agent in London, Harry Hughes, whose background was in music halls, wrote telling Mawson that the lecture he had sent over from New York was 'rotten'. A new version must be got up that tied in with the most exciting parts of the book. It was not to be a university lecture but an entertainment realistically geared to the tastes of London audiences. As Mawson could not come to London, Hughes suggested they work with their own texts, each suited to the particular presenter and his audience. Only when the narrative was established in the most dramatically effective order could Hughes go ahead with the costly development and tinting of film sequences. Mawson, an academic scientist, was appalled to learn that sequences of the ship sailing *in* to the pack ice were used later, as if she were sailing *out*, and that sequences documenting scientific work must be relieved at regular intervals by the comic and highly popular penguins. 'In London', Hughes patiently explained, 'a film lecture must be absolutely popular as the majority of Londoners are quite superficial, and only go to places of amusement to be amused'.<sup>17</sup>

*Home of the Blizzard* eventually opened at London's Alhambra Theatre on 20 April 1915. In a letter to Hurley, Mawson would later describe it as a 'nightmare'.<sup>18</sup> He had learned that a popular travelogue was not a single, definitive account of scientific facts or an historical account of what really happened. *Home of the Blizzard* was a dispersed event comprising multiple texts in several media, and different versions in each medium were created at different times by different people, often in different countries and for audiences with different tastes and expectations. Authorship was fluid, collaborative and dispersed. All forms of textuality, both visual and verbal, were

like photographic negatives: mobile, impersonal and infinitely reproducible in novel combinations to suit commercial opportunities.

Suddenly, with the outbreak of war in August 1914, shows about polar exploration were no longer popular. Mawson was bitter that his shows in London and North America were running at a loss, while book sales world-wide slowed to a trickle. Almost immediately, however, there were plans for exhibitions about the war that also involved the synchronized use of multi-media. During the final two years of the war, a series of propaganda exhibitions was held in London. There were two by the Canadians at the Grafton Galleries, two of 'British' photographs at the Grafton Galleries and the Royal Academy (which included the Australians) and a fifth by the Australians alone, again at the Grafton Galleries. Given their scale and technical virtuosity, these were what we would today call blockbuster exhibitions. The driving force behind them was Max Aitkin, Lord Beaverbrook, a Canadian financier who had come to Britain in 1910 and quickly rose to power through his wealth, his media interests, and his links to leading businessmen and politicians. In 1918, he became Britain's first Minister of Information.<sup>19</sup>

Unlike Scott and Mawson, Beaverbrook understood that public opinion was best shaped by those with media experience, and in mid 1916 he recruited Ivor Castle, a seasoned press photographer with the *Daily Mail*, to head the Canadian War Records Office. In December 1916 they mounted the first 'Canadian War Photographs Exhibition' at the Grafton Galleries. There were over 200 prints of various sizes, but the centrepiece was a series of giant mural-sized enlargements. They were made using the technique of composite printing from multiple negatives. The enlarged panels were then artificially coloured, first with spray guns and then in more detail by hand. A second Canadian exhibition opened in July 1917. It, too, featured mural-sized enlargements which outdid those in the earlier exhibition. In language more suited to a fairground than an art gallery, one was claimed to be 'the largest photograph in the world'. Titled 'Dreadnaughts of the Battlefield', it occupied an entire wall of the gallery and measured 6 metres by 3 metres.<sup>20</sup>

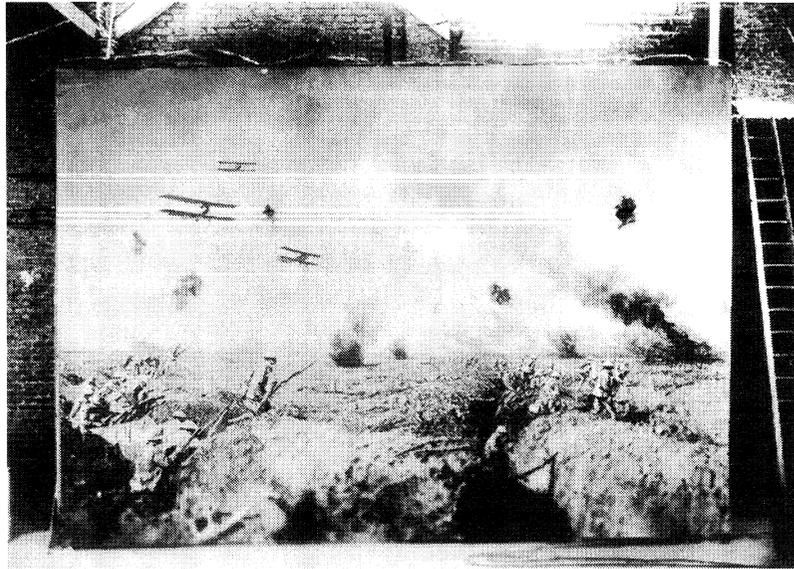
Beaverbrook's initiatives inspired Australia's official war corre-

spondent, Charles Bean, to establish the Australian War Records Section in June 1917. Frank Hurley was one of the two photographers appointed in August. For the past two years he had been in the Antarctic with Shackleton, and was only briefly in London before crossing over to France. Almost at once he undertook his major work of the war, photographing the Third Battle of Ypres. It is quite clear from his war diaries that Hurley's main aim during these months in the field was not to record events exactly as they happened, as Bean expected of him, but to assemble a powerful collection of photographs, lantern slides and cine film suitable for mounting a show like those Ivor Castle had already staged in London. 'Canada', he wrote, 'has made a great advertisement of their pictures and I must beat them'.<sup>21</sup> This would involve Hurley competing with Castle in producing 'the largest picture in the world'.

The Australians concluded the season of blockbusters with their own exhibition at the Grafton Galleries in May 1918. This fifth and final show, which took place only weeks after Hurley's return from Palestine, is the first such event in which he was directly involved. For several weeks he supervised the enlargement and colouring of the prints, their transport to London and their hanging at the galleries. There were 130 photographic prints, many of them enlargements. The exhibition also featured a lecture, music by a military band, a display of coloured lantern slides, and paintings and drawings by Australia's war artists. Hurley prepared an impressive range of photographs. He used composite printing to suggest not only the scale of modern warfare, but also a spiritual and even spiritualist interpretation of events, as in the well-known 'The Morning of Passchendaele'.<sup>22</sup> And then there was his own attempt at the 'largest picture in the world'. It was a composite titled 'The Raid', made from twelve individual negatives [*Illustration 2*]. We can see in these remarkable, mural-sized panels the convergence of new and existing forms of visual representation. They are like monumental salon paintings. They are also, or aspire to be, cinematic: the two waves of men going over the top in Hurley's composite suggest the movement between two consecutive frames of cine film. The pictures also echo the dioramas, stage scenery and even film sets that would go on to influence

museum exhibits after the war.

Hurley had worked hard on the Grafton Galleries exhibition but



*Illustration 2: Frank Hurley, 'The Raid', or 'Over the Top', (composite enlargement photographed leaning against a wall in London, May 1918), Australian War Memorial, Canberra, P1438/01.*

he was all along frustrated by his lack of artistic control. This was largely due to Bean's efforts behind the scenes to minimize the extent of his influence. But during his final, hectic days in London in July 1918, Hurley had been negotiating for the Australasian rights to three films of Antarctic exploration: his own *Home of the Blizzard* and *In the Grip of the Polar Pack Ice*, and Ponting's *With Scott in the Antarctic*. He left London having secured the Australasian rights for the three films with their associated lectures and slides.

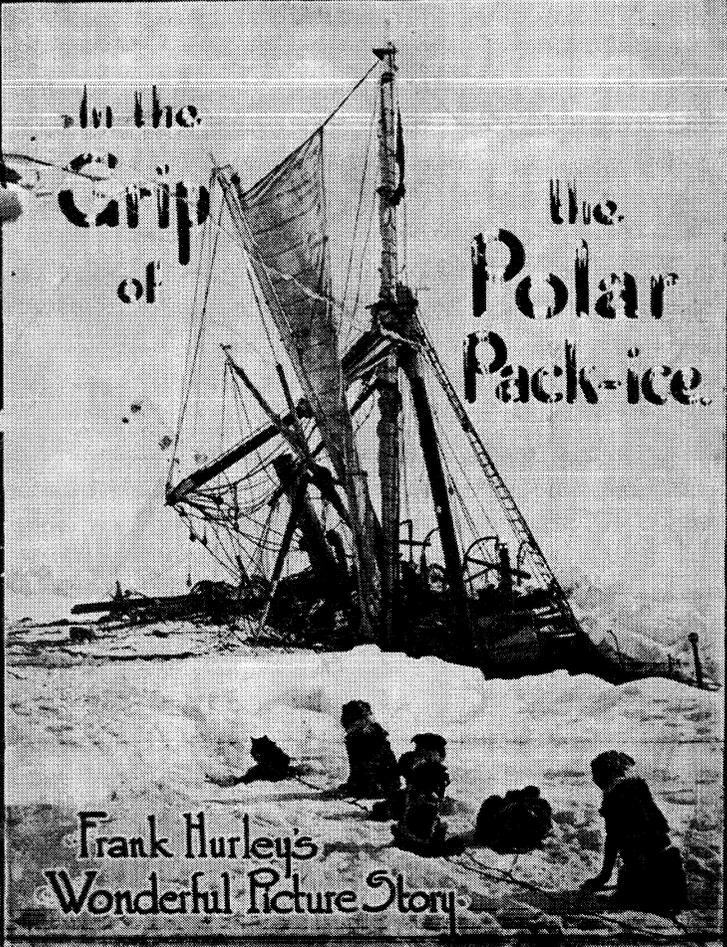
In November 1919, he took his Shackleton film, *In the Grip of the Polar Pack Ice*, on a national tour of Australia<sup>23</sup> [Illustration 3]. This was the first purely 'Hurley' event. He contracted with West's and Union Theatres to perform his show in their theatres in Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Melbourne, where it was integrated into their variety programmes. Travelling interstate by train, he took with him an assistant lecturer and a lantern-slide operator. Using other people's projection equipment and performing in unfamiliar venues

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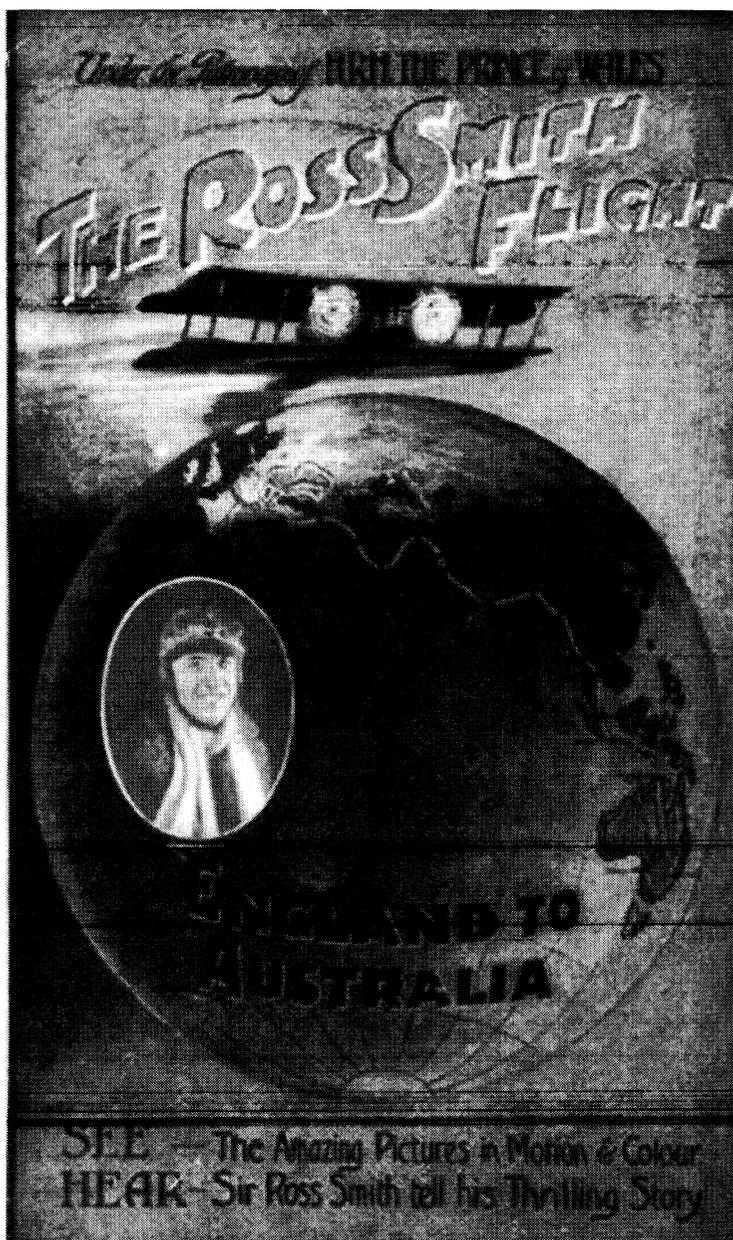
OF  
THE Shackleton Expedition.

Illustration 3: Advertisement for In the Grip of the Polar Pack Ice,  
NLA, Ms 883, Series 2, Item 33.

was a challenge. Hurley was scathing about the poor equipment and maintenance standards of West's theatres, and although he shared the lecturing, his voice was often strained from speaking to large houses with poor acoustics. As the tour went on, he became fascinated by what he called 'the sociology of crowds'. The greatest range was in Melbourne: 'From the aristocratic heights of the Town Hall we have descended to the dungeon confines of the Britannia Theatre a continuous house where we give four shows a day to a very mediocre crowd chiefly of servant girls, roughs & squawking kids'. The manager, whom Hurley at first took to be a 'Yankee stiff' or a 'pub expeller', turned out to be 'Diablo', 'the man who used to perform the "loop the loop" stunt on his bicycle'. This suggests that however much travelogues aspired to be educational, they were also a form of entertainment and had to compete with the music hall, feature films and the fairground. This was literally the case at St Kilda's famous Palais de Danse, where Hurley's voice was drowned out by people screaming on the switchback railway at Luna Park next door. During one matinee in Sydney's Haymarket, women came in with their shopping and pelted the screen with peanuts.<sup>24</sup>

Hurley had now perfected the art of staging and spruiking his mass-media events. His next vehicle would be the England-Australia air race. In 1919, the Commonwealth announced a £10,000 prize for the first Australian crew to reach Sydney from London. By far the best aircraft was the Vickers Vimy bomber and the best man for the job was the Australian Flying Corps's ace pilot, Captain Ross Smith. With his brother Keith as navigator, Smith left England on 12 November 1919 and touched down in Darwin on 12 December. From here they cabled Hurley to meet them in Charleville to film the final stage of their flight to Sydney. Huddled in the nose of the Vimy with his huge cameras, Hurley filmed their flight south-west to Bourke, then east along the main railway line, crossing the Blue Mountains to Penrith, then on to Sydney, where, for the benefit of tens of thousands of spectators, they made several passes over the harbour before landing at Mascot. Sydney was gripped by aviation fever.<sup>25</sup>

The two major texts associated with the flight were Hurley's film, *The Ross Smith Flight – England to Australia*, and Ross Smith's book,



*Illustration 4: British poster for Sir Ross Smith's flight from England to Australia, NLA, Ms 883, Series 2, Item 31.*

*14,000 Miles Through the Air*, published by Macmillan in London in 1922. Hurley's film premiered at the Sydney Town Hall on 8 June 1920 and was later shown in London, where it was attended by the Prince of Wales [Illustration 4]. It was supported by a masterly advertising campaign featuring the novelty of aerial photography. In Sydney, the *Sun* and *Daily Telegraph* featured large souvenir photographs of Sydney and its harbour from the air. In press interviews, Hurley implied that he had made the entire journey from London. It was classic stunt journalism.

The programme for the Sydney premier gives a good indication of Hurley's use of multi-media, combining cinema with much older theatrical traditions. He began with an 'Overture' performed by a full orchestra, followed by an introductory address by Keith Smith. Act One, 'From Darwin to Adelaide Through the Air', combined the film and lantern-slides shot by Hurley from the Vimy with some of his old war footage of the Palestine desert passing as the outback. Act Two showed the flight from England to Darwin, using footage shot by Ross and Keith Smith, but with additional trick effects by Hurley. During interval there was a scenic tableau of the Vimy in flight over Europe. On the night of the Governor's attendance, the model Vimy crashed into the Swiss Alps and in struggling to get it free, Hurley brought down the drop screen, exposing himself holding the model plane on a long pole.<sup>26</sup>

Although Hurley's lectures have not survived, we get some sense of his 'patter' from his advertising material, in which we hear the practised voice of the showman:

You'll see one-half of the globe spinning beneath your feet – cities, towns, rivers, mountain peaks – all strange to you, yet brought so close you feel like reaching out and touching them. You'll almost feel the insufferable heat as the Vimy ploughs her way through the skies above the steaming deserts – you'll shiver, even as the 'men who did it' might have, as you are entrapped in the drenching, torrential rains of the Near East – you'll clench your teeth and hang tight to the seat as the giant 'plane swoops, dives and swirls through the vast open spaces of the air route.<sup>27</sup>

Hurley's prose recalls the early cinema's close relation to the fairground in exhibitions such as Hale's Tours, in which films taken from moving vehicles were screened in theatres designed to resemble

the interiors of buses and trains. Wolfgang Shivelbusch termed this 'panoramic perception': 'the traveller sees the ... landscape ... *through* the apparatus that moves him through the world.'<sup>28</sup>

In discussing the Ross Smith flight, I hope to have suggested something of Hurley's entrepreneurial brilliance in linking the powerful new technologies of flight, cinema and aerial photography with popular patriotic sentiments about nation, empire and modernity. In the 1920s, Hurley would turn these new technologies northward upon Australia's own colonial territory in Papua. It was to be his greatest and most original stunt.

Leaving Sydney in December 1920, Hurley toured the Torres Strait Islands, then sailed north, visiting the Anglican mission stations along the east coast of Papua. He returned to Sydney at the end of 1921 and immediately began to exploit the new material. There was an exhibition of photographs at the Kodak Salon. He also edited and promoted the first version of his new Melanesian travelogue, *Pearls and Savages*, which proved a sensation with Sydney audiences [Illustration 5]. Premiering at the Globe, it screened up to three times a day for an unprecedented five-month season before going on a national tour. There was the usual avalanche of newspaper tie-ins, posters, promotional brochures and an illustrated souvenir book, all exploiting the exotic, even salacious, quality of the material.<sup>29</sup>

The financial success of *Pearls and Savages* led Hurley to make a second expedition to Western Papua in 1922 and 1923. His planning was a *tour-de-force* and its centre-piece was the use of aeroplanes both for aerial photography and as props. Hurley persuaded a wealthy Sydney aeroplane enthusiast to lend him two biplane seaplanes. His pilot was Captain Andrew Lang, a former Commander in the Australian Flying Corps. Hurley boasted that this was the best-equipped expedition ever to leave for Papua and he featured the new technologies in his publicity. He had a contract with the Sydney *Sun* to provide a series of illustrated articles as he went along, with some of the texts delivered on the spot via AWA wireless. The articles Hurley wrote in Papua for the *Sun* were perhaps his finest achievement in the medium of tie-in journalism. They were a profitable outlet for his travel writing and still photography, created a climate of anticipation

for his films in the major Australian market, and enhanced the intelligibility of the silent film for its first audiences.

Back in Sydney, a second edition of *Pearls and Savages* opened at the

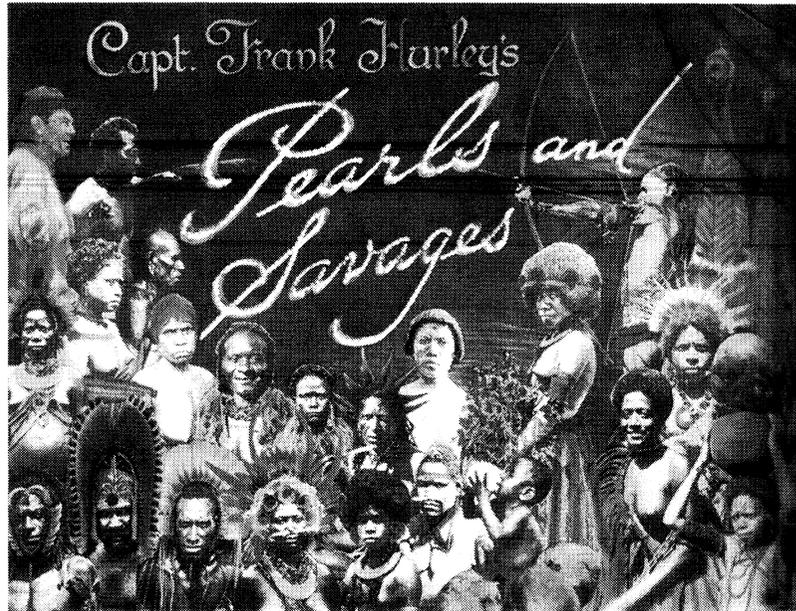


Illustration 5: Frank Hurley, title for *Pearls and Savages*, coloured glass lantern-slide, NLA, Frank Hurley collection, PIC FH/801.

Lyceum in October 1923. Like all his films, it was not a single text but a complex, multi-media entertainment. Sequences of film comprising discrete episodes were interspersed with hand-coloured lantern-slides and accompanied by Hurley's patter. Theme music was written especially for the occasion by Emmanuel Aarons, conductor of the Lyceum Orchestra, and inspired by original phonograph recordings made by Hurley in Papua.<sup>30</sup>

The Papuan section begins with the moment of first contact between the Stone Age and the air age. Filmed in villages on the outskirts of Port Moresby, the sequence makes no reference to the town and misleadingly presents Hurley as a pioneering explorer. The scene looks remarkably like the set of a sensation melodrama complete with a cast of native extras. Hurley wrote, 'No better stage setting could I have desired than this remarkable site'. Several

times in recounting these choreographed events Hurley referred to them as 'stunts'. In the film's final sequence, the seaplanes land at Kaimari village in the Gulf of Papua. Hurley and Lang had come to be regarded as 'supernatural beings and the machine became an object of veneration and awe'. Assuming it to be a living creature, the people of Kaimari placed a sacrificial pig on its nose. Hurley was stunned, describing it as 'the realization of a tale by Jules Verne'.<sup>31</sup>

Following the successful Australian tour of 1923, Hurley took *Pearls and Savages* to the United States, where it was re-named *The Lost Tribe* [Illustration 6]. The title was probably meant to resonate with Arthur Conan Doyle's 'Professor Challenger' novel of 1912, *The Lost World*. Attracting widespread publicity, Hurley was approached by the publisher George Putnam to prepare a lavishly illustrated travel book, titled *Pearls and Savages: Adventures in the Air, on Land and Sea – in New Guinea*. Addressed to an international readership, it appeared in New York in 1924. Later that year, Hurley took his travelogue to the United Kingdom. Once more *Pearls and Savages*, it enjoyed another successful national tour, beginning at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

The international success of *Pearls and Savages* illustrates how cultural production in Australia in the 1920s was becoming embedded in a network of globalizing commercial relationships: a transnational circuit of capital, personnel and intellectual property. Surprisingly, perhaps, the effects of this were positive rather than negative. Hurley had successfully penetrated the lucrative British and North American markets while remaining an independent Australian producer. He had learned how to tailor his product and his own image to suit different audiences. His books, films and photographs about 'our' territory in Papua were made partly for domestic consumption in Australia, but also for marketing in the UK and US as part of a globalizing entertainment industry. A professional Australian, Hurley functioned as a linkman, mediating local experience for at least three distinct metropolitan audiences in Sydney, New York and London. He was touring nationally and internationally with a degree of success only rivaled by today's generation of Australian cinema personnel. Depending on the topic and the place of presentation, the experience

he offered to his publics was either a sense of the international felt locally, or of the local projected on to the international stage.

By way of conclusion, I will return to some of the key research questions that Hurley's career raises about colonial modernity:

- What *metaphors* can best describe the movement of modernity within and between nations – imperial networks, webs of empire, the traffic in colonial knowledge?
- What can a theory of colonial modernity tell us about the relations between modernity, imperialism and globalization? Were Britain and the Empire always belated in relation to American popular culture, or could the Empire, too, be a *vector of modernity*?
- What *were* the main vectors of colonial modernity – trade routes, new modes of transport, war, commerce, and new communication technologies?
- What were its main *technologies of representation* – photography, cinema, newsprint?
- What were the leading intellectual and social formations that allowed individuals to move through the increasingly transnational flows of imperial culture?
- Was colonial modernity a consequence of *vernacular* rather than elite forms of modernism – cinema, magazines and the popular stage, say, rather than poetry and the novel?
- What was the *industrial landscape* of colonial modernity and how was it organized locally, nationally and globally? How was the English-speaking world divided into territorial rights arrangements by publishers, manufacturers of technologies, entertainment agencies, performers, theatre syndicates and entrepreneurial personalities?
- What were the *spaces* or sites of colonial modernity – the art gallery and the learned academy, or the music hall, the picture palace, and the illustrated magazine?
- What was the *temporality* of colonial modernity? Were provincial cultures doomed always to be belated, or did modern urban entertainment allow them to be coeval with the metropolitan centre, to experience simultaneity?

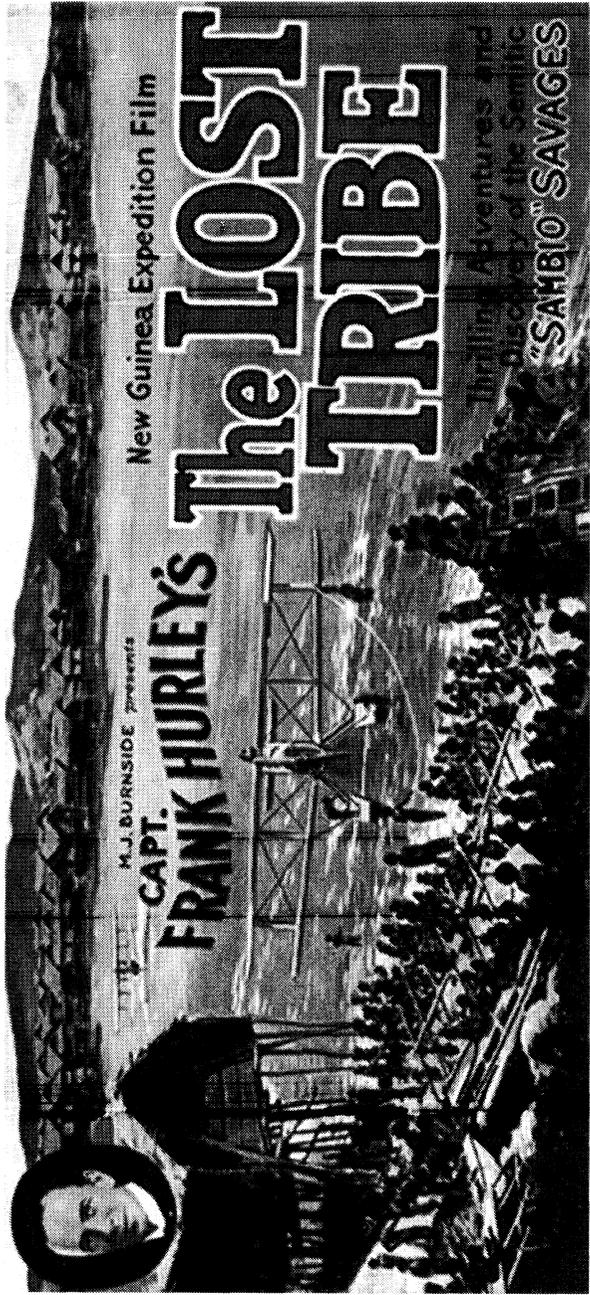


Illustration 6: American poster for The Lost Tribe, NLA, Ms 883, Series 2, Item 71a.

- Who were the *others* of colonial modernity? Could there be an indigenous or Aboriginal or Melanesian modernity? What is the relation between colonial modernity and the pre-modern?

## Notes

- 1 Hurley to Mawson, 22 July 1922, Mawson Antarctic Collection, South Australian Museum (hereafter MAC), 7 DM.
- 2 Robert Dixon and Veronica Kelly, eds, *Impact of the Modern: Vernacular Modernities in Australia 1870s–1960s*, Sydney, 2008.
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