

Trice Forgotten – Below Decks 3 – Nautical Collections in the 19th Century

Content Warnings

- Slavery and the Slave Industry
- Colonialism
- Imperialism
- Racism
- Food
- Discussions of: Classism
- SFX: Sea & Wind

NEMO

Hi everyone. This is Nemo. Just a heads up that due to technical difficulties some of the audio in this episode isn't as polished as you're used to from us. The editors have worked their magic to bring you this episode and I hope you enjoy it as much as I enjoyed recording it.

[Show Theme - Intro]

SIVA

Rusty Quill Presents Below Decks – a Trice Forgotten deep dive. Episode 3 – Nautical Collections in the 19th Century.

NEMO

So, hello everyone, welcome to the third episode of Below Deck, where we dig into some of the research, questions, stories, and generally tangential interesting things that went into the making of Trice Forgotten.

I'm Nemo Martin, my pronouns are they/them, and I am the creator and lead writer of the series. Today we are going to be talking about nautical collection in the 19th Century, and I'm thrilled to be joined by Sarah Pickman, if you'd like to introduce yourself with your pronouns, tell us a little bit about what you do, and your relationship with the show.

SARAH

Hi, I'm Sarah Pickman, my pronouns are her/hers. I have just finished a PHD in history of science and medicine just a couple of months ago at Yale University, the topic of material culture and expeditions in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Basically, I love geeking out about explorers and the stuff that they brought with them, and also the stuff that they collected, and mostly focus on British and American explorers.

The way I always explain my research is I say that I unpack packing, so I'm really interested in what things people pack for voyages during this time period and the stuff that they brought back with them, and I am also a huge fan of audio dramas and am just very excited to be able to geek out with Nemo today about collecting in the 19th century, natural history, cartography, some of the things that have shown up Below Deck on this series so far.

NEMO

Ah, it's so cool.

(Laughter)

I am so... I feel like Below Decks eventually every episode gets to oh my god I'm so glad I'm here, and so I'm already at the stage of being like oh my god I'm so glad I'm here, because my interest in writing this show was to do with all of the men on ships genre of TV shows and I love Black Sails, I love The Terror, I love all of these kind of shows and, one thing that I did want to focus on was what was being packed, like...

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...trade routes and who can our characters specifically talk to, I mean especially a lot of the men in boats drama shows, they have ports that they can go to because they are cis white men...

(Laughter)

...and they are part of Empire and stuff like that.

SARAH

Right, yeah, that just reminded about a tweet that I saw recently where someone has... I forget who originally tweeted it but they said, "Moby Dick is a

SEAS - Below Deck 3

book that asks the tough questions like, what if a bunch of weird men were on a boat together?"

(Laughter)

NEMO

Yes.

SARAH

I feel like there is this sort of this genre and I feel like it's also got some cultural traction in a lot of ways in the last few years, you mentioned The Terror, Black Sails and now there's Our Flag Means Death...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...and of these shows that I think there is always been a real interest, in among a certain group of people, in these narratives of these men on boats but as you said they're mostly cis white men, they're mostly this sort of heroic stories of explorers and navigators and people in the Royal Navy, people in the American Navy and there's always been a sort of... from a certain group of readers and also a certain group of historians, there's always been an interest in these kinds of narratives, and I mean I will out myself, I got into this topic partly because I loved reading those kinds of narratives.

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

I read Alfred Lansing's book about Shackleton when I was doing my Masters and just got completely obsessed, and was... that wasn't the whole reason but part of the reason that I picked my dissertation topic ultimately is that I enjoy reading this stuff so much, partly because it's meant to be... we can talk about this later, but all these narratives were created with audiences in mind, even in the 19th century, these explorers/famous ship's captains were writing memoirs taking notes with a public audience in mind. So, they are meant to be consumed, they're meant to be kind of colourful adventure literature, but that's obviously not the whole story and so I think one of the things that some of these shows have done recently and that also a lot of historians are doing recently, is trying to pick about who are these other people who are, as you said in the first episode of Below Decks, who are behind all of these white men, who are the... I think you talked a little bit about "the boys"...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...who are sort of standing off to the side, you know they're not maybe completely out of the frame, but they're not the people who traditionally have been examined by historians or been written about as the main people who are sort of standing in the frame who are the most visible, but that there's a lot

SEAS - Below Deck 3

of work now to make those individuals and their stories more visible and to say hey, it wasn't just thirty

(Laughter)

...cis white men...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...all living together singing songs and pounding their fists on the tables, they drink, course that was going on...

NEMO

(Laughter)

Yeah.

SARAH

...but there were all these people, like Siva in the show, who are making those kind of voyages possible.

NEMO

Wow, so many questions because I have my list of “boys” that I like to talk about, have you come across any people like that in your research that you’re particularly interested in?

SARAH

I started out my research looking mostly at polar explorers and polar explorers are still the focus that I tend to focus on quite a lot because I find their stories so fascinating in a kind of gruesome way.

Is that there are a number of Inuit individuals who not only become guides for arctic expeditions in the 19th and early 20th century, but in some cases make a career out of guiding and work for repeated expeditions, I’m thinking most specifically of a man name Hons Hendrik who lived in Greenland in the late 19th century and worked for a number of American and British explorers as a guide and what we might call a knowledge broker, somebody who facilitated communication between different kinds of communities, had a lot of information about weather conditions but also how to hunt, how to provision these ships so that men wouldn’t die, they wouldn’t get scurvy, and made a career out of working on these kind of voyages in the same way that these explorers were, but he’s not often mentioned in the same breath as being an explorer because he wasn’t the person necessarily designing the voyage, or leading a voyage, or coming up with the idea of a particular expedition back in New York or London, but certainly went to many places that Inuit communities had never been in the arctic, many places in the high arctic in the high latitudes worked on repeated expeditions so, had the contours of an exploratory career but until recently I think hasn’t really been discussed with the word explorer attached to his name. So, Hans Hendrik is somebody who I find to be absolutely

SEAS - Below Deck 3

fascinating; and there's so many, you mentioned Ali Wallace, or Ali Wallace is a name that Alfred Russell Wallace gave him.

(Laughter)

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

In the first episode of Below Decks.

NEMO

Yeah, it's interesting I have just been reading a book called, Waves Across the South by Sujit Sivasundaram actually and it is really interesting this idea of the word explorer, I think that is something that I have been wanting to like unpack and to think about, and the idea that like you know through the 17th, 18th, 19th centuries who was getting... who was being allowed to be called an explorer, because often I think whenever we think of explorers, we think of the like historical dramas from white perspectives talking about the "natives and savages" and the people in the global south in a very like, oh, you know we went there and found these people, but I've been reading things that are being researched now where people from the other side of the world were coming to London or like meeting white people for the first time, meeting European cultures, and describing them in very...

(Laughter)

...funny ways in the same kind of language that white people were using for them and being like wow, these like European women, they like bind themselves so tightly in their culture's practice – that's so strange and weird, and the kind of explorer as a figure that can be seen as a natural history curiosity in itself, like we often think is like...

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...the naturalist as the white man with the ability to write down what he sees, but how can we turn that on its head.

SARAH

Right, yeah, I was thinking of this term that David Chang, historian whose written about, about exactly that about native Hawaiian in this his case native Hawaiian geographies and Kanaka Maoli navigators and travellers, and the term that he uses is turning the telescope around, so people who for so long were the objects of the gaze through a European telescope that was pointing at them; and then what happens when you start to look at people who, you know who are obviously had their own opinions about these people who were peering at them and was furiously scribbling down notes...

(Laughter)

SEAS - Below Deck 3

...and what happens if we try to figure out what their perspective was in the 18th or 19th centuries, what were they saying at the time about these people who are coming to their lands who were training their gazes on them, who in some cases were employing them as guides on ships, but in all cases were sort of making their own sets of knowledge and trying to fit these people into their own hierarchies, or what if we flipped that on its head. So, I like that image of the turning the telescope around, as it's very, very visceral.

NEMO

Yeah, it's such a...yeah, it's such a good visual tool because just how we have been conditioned, I guess.

There was a quote which because I can't find it, we'll put it in the show notes, but basically about Hollywood being a teaching tool and through repetition we see stereotypes over and over again and even those of us who, I mean I see myself as being fairly liberal...

(Laughter)

...and educated and read in a certain way, even I fall into the trap of like you know believing stereotypes because that is what they are used for, they are used to be believable and easy to accept, yeah it has been... both *The Terror* and *Our Flag Means Death*, I mean just to caveat, we had finished writing this show...

(Laughter)

...before *Our Flag Means Death* came out...

(Laughter)

...and I was like, oh no! People are going to think that I stole all of my plots from it, but with Our Flag Means Death and The Terror, I thought that they were both quite interesting that they did slightly turn the telescope around and we got perspectives of black and indigenous peoples, and the joke was not on them, the joke was always on the white explorer figure and I was like, ah, I'm appreciating that even in The Terror which is very white and male like you know you have to watch it two or three times to start differentiating between white man with brown hair, oh god, which one are you?!

SARAH

(Laughter)

Yes.

NEMO

(Laughter)

But there is power in the indigenous people there and that felt quite new and interesting to me.

SARAH

Yeah, one of the things that I think is also really interesting is that people often forget, again because we have certain images that have come down to us from

SEAS - Below Deck 3

Hollywood and from popular books you know most people even if they really love historical narratives don't... you know, they're not reading scholarly work or they're not doing arch- stuff in the archives every day because you know that's not their job.

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

You don't often see portrayals of sea crews, especially in the 19th and early 20th century, and realise that they were incredibly diverse in most cases and also even earlier in the sort of golden age of piracy, Caribbean piracy or Indian ocean piracy, a lot of these crews were... pirate crews especially, because they picked up people from all over and they were often picking up people who were running from something. You had all walks of life, people from all geographic regions, people of different religious backgrounds you know or whalers in the United States in the 19th century, a lot of whaling crews had indigenous folks on them, indigenous folks from New England had their own whaling traditions so they got hired onto these ships fairly early on. There were a lot of folks of African descent, including runaway slaves. There's actually an exhibit, I don't know if it's still up or maybe it just closed at the New Bedford Whaling Museum in Massachusetts about the maritime dimensions of the underground railroad, and how there was this maritime... this whole maritime component of the system that helps slaves escape from the American South and part of the reason that you ended up having a lot of black individuals on these whalers and other ships is that you could just jump onto a ship in a New England port, and you know get out to sea and be hundreds of

SEAS - Below Deck 3

miles away from your pursuers, which again it makes sense when you think about it, and when you start to kind of read into these log books of some of these deeper accounts of these ships you find that the crews, usually all men but still really diverse, but you never really see that portrayed in a lot of Hollywood films or until recently a lot of television shows.

NEMO

Yeah, but this idea that whaling crews, especially was where I first was learning about oh, you know it's not just white men on ships going around, these crews are built of people who needed to have coin and so used their labour to do that and I don't know, just the complexities of all these things as well were things that I want to think about in this podcast where it's like okay now we have the idea that it's not just white people on these ships, so how did race operate within these ships, was there like outside of the white gaze that we have written down, what relationships were being formed? What skills were being intermingled?

SARAH

It's an open question, right?

NEMO

To turn away from this slightly, you said that you liked... like the history of packing basically...

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...and I find that really fascinating, are there items that you think in nautical fiction that aren't seen, or is there anything that you're like, oh they should be packing these things, but they haven't or...?

SARAH

Oh, that's a great question, in terms of the thinking about the accuracy of some of these fictional portrayals, this is maybe a kind of a small point, but if you watch a lot of the kind of swashbuckling movies especially...everyone's really clean for having been on a ship for...

(Laughter)

...a year or two years/three years, not just because of... this kind of blew my mind when I first thought about it, but a lot of common sailors, maybe less so in the 19th century but especially in the 18th century and earlier, people who came from very poor backgrounds in some cases were pressed into or coerced into military service let's say in the Royal Navy, would have only had one maybe two sets of clothes...

(Laughter)

...and even on whalers this became a huge problem because if you were a rookie let's say and this was your first time in the era when people actually processed whales on ships, if you were trying to do that process and you were covered in whale grease and guts and blood, you actually did not want to change your

SEAS - Below Deck 3

clothes during that process, you didn't want to swap out your other set of clothes because then you would have two bloody sets of clothes...

NEMO

(Laughter)

Right.

SARAH

...and what were you going to sleep in? So, going back to the idea of the kind of glamorous Hollywood portrayal...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...is so sort of like clean and adventurous, but actually so much of shipboard life in the you know before the 20th century was so gross...

(Laughter)

...in a way that I think is hard for us in the 21st century who are used to showers to really wrap our heads around, but people did that because they needed, as you said, they needed to make a living. They needed to survive somehow. They needed to eat.

NEMO

It's interesting like so, Raf and I, the director and I we actually just went to... there's a ship called the Götheborg, I'm not sure how to pronounce it, it's a Swedish ship I think, and it's a tall ship, a three mast tall ship which was built in the 18th century, and so it's just docked in London, and it's really interesting because it's still a working ship, they still sail it around the world, so it's not like some of the like replica ships that have been built and then stay in port in that you know, there were still crew in the riggings, they were provisioning in London and so they were retarring their ropes, they were retarring the ship and it was just so fascinating because obviously intellectually it's easy to read like old tar or pitch would smell like carbon would smell like burning, would smell like smoke, but stepping onto that ship and smelling it, and actually afterwards we went to a restaurant and I was like, oh we were only on that ship for an hour and my clothes smell of burning wood and you know we didn't like climb any riggings we only like you know walked up and down the deck for an hour, but my hands were covered in tar and it was like under my fingernails, Raf got it on her face, and it was such a like oh these ships are dirty!

(Laughter)

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

They smell, they're dirty, they're very physical places and unfortunately, we'd already written season one, but I think like you know in the future of this show

SEAS - Below Deck 3

that that all consuming presence of a ship is so... is something you just can't think about when you don't know what the reality is.

SARAH

Yeah, yeah, I was thinking about the... what you said you know what is the item that... an item that these crews seem not to have, I was thinking about pitch because it comes up and so I've done some research on the history of waterproof garments, and there is a sort of older tradition, and this maybe gets back to the like a bigger discussion about how do you recover some of the sources, how do you recover some of these voices that you know are there but maybe don't survive in textual reference, is that there seems to have been an earlier tradition of sailors kind of improvising waterproofing with pitch, because it's impermeable, as you said it's really...

(Laughter)

...it's smelly and it gets everywhere, but if you have pitch on your clothes, even those very heavy and smells bad, it provides some kind of waterproof layer. So, if you're out day after day on a ship often in very rough weather, that's something that you want, because if you were walking around all the time wearing damp clothes that can cause all kinds of health issues as well...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...and so that's a very early but it's a sort of I don't like to use the term folk tradition, but like a... people say vernacular as a sort of fancy academic term vernacular...

NEMO

Right.

(Laughter)

SARAH

...waterproofing tradition, before you have macintosh which is made out of rubber, and then of course before you have nylon and gore tex and the stuff that comes in the 20th- and oil cloth and things that come later than are mass manufactured.

NEMO

So easy to take a... yeah, another thing to take for granted, soap and waterproof clothing, because yeah, it would be so... I mean as you said, health issues also just being soggy all the time...

(Laughter)

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...just make you so upset, like I know...

(Laughter)

...oh my god, this is such a like wow, first world problem, but like going to the theme park, going on a water ride and then spending the rest of your day just annoyed because your jeans are stuck to your legs...

(Laughter)

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

But that and doing hard physical labour.

(Laughter)

SARAH

Yeah, yeah and no, imagine it's seawater but it's in your socks and you only have one pair of shoes, technically...

NEMO

Yeah.

SEAS - Below Deck 3

SARAH

...your skin is slowly peeling off inside your boots.

(Laughter)

NEMO

Oh my god.

Yeah, it's like because it will be abrasive right...

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...because of that saltiness...urgh, uh...

(Laughter)

I mean yeah, the ship the Götheborg that we went on they do offer, you can like pay to do small legs of the trip, and I was like considering it and then being like I will be so miserable.

(Laughter)

I could not do that.

SARAH

I think there was this real shift, and I hadn't really thought about it until I read a book called *Fathoming the Ocean* by Helen Rozwadowski, and it's mostly about the development of oceanography as a science but it's also about how people, especially she focuses on the United States, people came to see the ocean in a different way in the 19th and you know sort of more modern period than they had before, and I think again it's easy for us to forget that waterfronts used to be really often very dirty and polluted place, they were places of heavy occupation right, they were places where there were ports, there were things being loaded and unloaded, they were all the industries associated with outfitting ships, so you'd have you know, provision and contractors but also all the folks making sales, selling tar and pitch, making rope, you know ships chandlers, all the kind of related industry that's near a port, and in many cases there were also other kind of industrial sites things near waterways that were dumping all of their waste into the ocean. So, it used to be that these waterfronts were like very busy congested, often dirty places that you say wouldn't want if you were a wealthy person, you wouldn't want a mansion right on the beach because the beach is probably where all of the like the actual industrial activity was taking place, or pre-industry activity, and that's been a real shift that happened for a number of different reasons but to having beaches be a place that you, you know, you want to hang out...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...or that you want to go on vacation and then being you know thinking about beaches as like pristine places where you can put your towel out and lay in the sun as opposed to a place where that would be, you know, real signs of occupational activity.

NEMO

I was having this very similar realisation in that the Götheborg is currently docked in Canary Wharf, which is like the business centre, and like you know, it used to be the docks it's a dockland, so all of those kind of areas that there's a bit of the Thames which kind of goes like squiggly and all of those places had like docks in it, because that you know the training port, that's where London was commercial capital, and if you are on this tall ship now and I was looking around and all around you are sparkling, beautiful buildings and residential buildings for like rich people, and so everything is metal, everything is glass, the water I mean it's the Thames so it's not exactly like crystal clear...

(Laughter)

...but it was clean, it wasn't, it didn't smell of sewer water and we were walking down the docklands and just being like it's unrecognisable, but also the irony of the fact that Canary Wharf was able to become this huge commercial capital because of the money that was brought in through the docklands...

SARAH

Right.

NEMO

...and slavery and colonisation and all those things that operated out of Canary Wharf or these docklands it's...yeah, it was just so like oh god...

(Laughter)

...the money was here and then it was here and oh god, yeah.

SARAH

Yeah, I was thinking about that actually with some of the things that show up on the show, so I was listening to the first two episodes and reading the scripts for some of the later ones...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...and all the different sorts of objects that show up, like the ray skin gloves and thinking about said all these things that are sort of traded in and out that create wealth for a certain group of people...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...but it's like...and also that have become so much a part of how we think about the history of Europe or the history of the United States, you know think about like the ways in which the goods like cotton and tea and the more exotic things like ray skin and feathers are so much a part of how we sort of visualise the European or the settler past, but all those things came from somewhere else.

NEMO

(Laughter)

Yeah, I really like bubble tea...

(Laughter)

...and you know the history of bubble tea being the like England goes and takes tea from China, makes plantations in South Asia, then brings tea to the UK adds milk and sugar to it, then places like Taiwan and Hong Kong go, "Hmm, milk and sugar in tea – sure, let's also add tapioca" and then if you go around China Town now in London it's like maybe 75% bubble tea shops and it's like, wow, this is so...

(Laughter)

... in that thing we were talking in the first episode about authenticity, like what is authentic bubble tea, you wouldn't have that without colonization but also trade building on top of each other and bringing ideas and then taking

SEAS - Below Deck 3

ideas and then adding to ideas and now we have “authentic Taiwanese” or “authentic Hong Kong bubble tea”.

(Laughter)

SARAH

Right, yeah, no that's... yeah, this question of authenticity is so thorny because it's like what even is authentic anymore. So, thinking about the ways that people feed each other, but as part of that thinking about things like tea and chocolate and coffee, that become like de rigueur on packing lists, especially by the late 19th century the every ship is bringing these things, and they're these sort of luxuries but also seen as very much as essentials, people really start to rely on the caffeine and the sugar in order to do all this work, but again these are all raw ingredients that you know were not native to Europe and in fact would have represented the end product of a lot of processes of all these chains of colonialism and slavery in most cases in terms of who was actually harvesting the raw ingredients, a lot of times it was some slaved people, you know that these kind of small food items in fact are the end of a very, very long chain or very, very long network, but they were being brought on these ships that are then also going out and going on these further voyages of conquest or you know “discovery”.

NEMO

Yeah. One thing that was fairly interesting again in waves across the south, I think we also underestimate in the modern era of like being able to travel to places on one voyage, like...

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...ports are so necessary and ports that are friendly to you are very necessary, and during this period, even white Europeans especially white Europeans, they were fighting each other all the time the English, the French, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Dutch, they were all like making allyships of each other trying to make sure that they were like allying with one so that the third one wouldn't be too strong and like be completely like defeating each other and having wars and by the time some vessels had sailed out from Europe to another port, that port would report that they were no longer friendly because a war had already started in Europe again and so they were like left basically provision-less with soldiers and sailors who had nothing left to eat and so were just desire giving in...

(Laughter)

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...because where else do you go?

(Laughter)

SARAH

Yeah, y another book that I really love called How to Hide an Empire, which is about the history of the US as an imperial power which in the US were not often taught...

(Laughter)

...in you know grade school or sort of you know in Hollywood that the US was an imperial power, part of the book is about how did the US acquire all these overseas territories that it has now in the Pacific, the Pacific especially, but also thinking about some of the other like islands that the US has taken over and in many cases these really small islands would have been coaling stations and Hawaii kind of fits that bill as well as sort of a place to stop over and refuel your ship, but also like provisioning and watering stations and also some of these islands were conquered because they were sources of like natural sources of nitrate as agricultural fertiliser which comes from bird poop, so...
...the sort of gross 19th century.

NEMO

Yeah, so I was talking to this writer called Caro Black Tam and they were talking about their family's history as Chinese diaspora in Peru and they called them "infernus flutuantes" (floating hells) about Chinese diaspora workers in Peru who would be shovelling bird poo for the nitrates, and that Chinese people because there was loads of poverty and land would be taken on ships through Liverpool to Peru in order to shovel bird shit for nitrates in order to make good fertiliser for crops in other places like it...

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

It's not just picking cotton that we were making people do.

SARAH

Right.

NEMO

There were all of these industries that we were creating in different countries.

SARAH

Yeah, yeah...and the ways in which there's, there are all these chains that sort of rely on other industries, and I think this like a thing about having an empire, it is that you can... you have industries that need different components that you can draw from other places you can set up in other places and kind of make them interdependent... I think about this sometimes with reading about British explorers or even American explorers because the American, there's a sort of close relationship between a lot of the anglophone explorers and they were reading each other's media and a lot of people who were members of say the American Geographical Society would have social ties to the Royal Geographical Society and they were very much in touch, they'd take advantage of each other's sort of networks and connections and a lot of these explorers would, even if they were going to into a place that was "unknown", they were relying on a lot of different colonial stopovers to get there, so folks who were

SEAS - Below Deck 3

going into central Africa were reliant on networks of trading ports, places where you could outfit yourself with supplies.

In some cases if you needed permission of particular colonial officials in order to enter certain regions, there was all this sort of framework that colonialism provided for a lot of these folks especially in the kind of... as you get towards the late 19th century that before they could go do the “discovering”, they actually were reliant on a lot of these structures or like frameworks or infrastructure that was already in place because of empires, and even in terms of fund raising like a lot of the Antarctic explorers going from Britain, made stopovers in places like South Africa or Australia...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...Tasmania that were settler colonies to do extra rounds of fund raising and to give lectures about upcoming expeditions, because you know that there’s an audience there of settler colonists who feel a kind of emotional connection back to Britain and are going to be a willing audience and hopefully will open their purse to fund your expedition.

(Laughter)

So, thinking about yeah, it’s like before you can jump off into the unknown, you need all this like sometimes literal stuff also like figurative stuff that you get from being part of an empire, and having the right you know the skin colour or the background that is the people in the empire who are in power.

NEMO

Yeah, the South Africa is definitely one where I've... because again, I feel like we're not really taught about the history of South Africa in the UK, I am not sure whether you are in the US but...

SARAH

No, we're definitely not.

(Laughter)

NEMO

(Laughter)

Yeah, and... but you know it's not again, not just white versus black but class comes in very heavily there like within Dutch people there were poor Dutch workers who were trying to start rebellions against the VOC, the Dutch imperial kind of group, and the way that they were going about that was being like well, we should be classed with white people, because we are better than the black indigenous people tribes...

SARAH

Right, yeah.

NEMO

...and the Dutch VOC were bringing imprisoned Chinese workers from Batavia because they were saying, actually, these Chinese indentured servants work better than the poor Dutch people because they're getting too uppity, and so it's like, yeah, all of these communities of people trying to find a hierarchy between themselves and it not just being like white versus people of colour, it also happened with Japanese imperialism. I know that Okinawa is a place that both Japan and the USA in particular, have fought over quite a lot for sugar and military space, and is one of these islands that is now...

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...just a commercial like tourist place...

(Laughter)

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...but was like that exists mostly as a place to provision other countries and it's still happening. Island as items I think is an interesting way of seeing this maybe as I think we tend to forget that obviously colonisation happened on a big scale in big places and you know took whole countries, whole peoples with

SEAS - Below Deck 3

these small islands or small relatively small islands are still acting as colonial outposts essentially...

(Laughter)

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...in order to exchange items for cheap rates.

(Laughter)

SARAH

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely yeah, they small... I was just thinking about you know in that kind of artic and Antarctic context like the Falklands...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...and you know Denmark and Canada fighting over Hans Island off the coast of Greenland, which is named after Hans Hendrik...

NEMO

Oh.

SARAH

...the Inuit guide who I mentioned at the beginning, but I was thinking going back to South Africa, maybe this is like a bit of a tangent but...and thinking about collections, one of my favourite pieces of, may be not in our artistic sense but have you ever seen the painting, *The Inside of my Wagon* by William Burchell? I had a friend kind of tipped me off to this, he was a British naturalist, going out looking for specimens and collecting for museums back in Britain, and he was on a collecting expedition in South Africa in the 1820s and he was also an artist, as a lot of these naturalists were, and he painted the inside of his collecting wagon so you can see all the sort of tools of his trade in there, so there are drawing supplies, there are nets for catching insects, there are jars of alcohol for preserving specimens, paper including, not just for writing but for pressing dry specimens in between, but there's also a British flag and there's sort of like more domestic items and these are things that would have been in the back of his wagon and we know from his memoirs that he had a caravan of several wagons, one of which was the kind of living space and then one of which carried all of his stuff, he talks in his memoirs about having to buy a second wagon in the style of the Dutch settlers of the sort of upland or interior Dutch settlers that was more suited to the terrain to the kind of unpaved roads going into the South African interior. So, it's a really nice little snapshot of like if you are going out on one of these collecting expeditions, one of the things that you're actually bringing with you, and also he exhibited this painting when he got back to Britain, so what does he want people to understand about his sort of gentleman collector's life in the field.

NEMO

Yeah, I love those kind of paintings, because it is so fascinating to be... to see what they thought was important for you to know that they brought with them and yeah, it's fascinating... we're going to be talking to more people from the Natural History museum in a couple of future Below Decks, because I worked there quite a lot of inspiration came from people who do current day expeditions to like natural history expeditions, and sometimes it's really funny that pretty much nothing has changed.

(Laughter)

Like what you're bringing on an expedition.

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

The problems that you're coming across the tools, the fact that things rot...

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...if you don't take care them properly, the things like we were on the road and so this accident happened because our wheels weren't good enough you know, the same kind of problems that were happening before but then also

SEAS - Below Deck 3

new problems that are coming with age of technology and stuff and it's really cool to see snapshots like that it's interesting, I'll definitely go and look at that painting and yeah.

SARAH

Yeah, it's cool and the thing that I'm also fascinated by, by the kind of the end of the 19th century so it's a little bit passed the time period of the podcast, but end of the 19th turn of the 20th century, you start to see this knowledge being clarified, I mean I think that there had always been sort of informal networks of people, especially facilitated by groups like the Royal Geographical Society...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...who were sharing information about how to outfit an expedition especially what scientific instruments to bring, but also who would you buy the tents from, who would you buy your tinned food from...

(Laughter)

...or the salt pork or things like that, in who many cases were actually military contractors before they also started outfitting expeditions, but then by the end of the 19th century you see people writing this knowledge down in books so I've looked a lot at Francis Galton's Art of Travel, which the first edition came out in 1855, but he keeps revising it for the next couple of decades, and it stays

SEAS - Below Deck 3

in print for a really, really long time, I think it might have even been re-issued in the 21st century in a new printing...

NEMO

Oh.

SARAH

...but you can find it online in all the different editions, and so it's like a compilation of all of this knowledge if you're designing an expedition, you know he's mostly concerned with land based expeditions, what are the things that you need to bring and so here's the chapter about like here's how to find water, here's how to find a good space to camp but also, here's how to order your porters around, here's how to select the best porters, here's what you need to bring to trade with local indigenous people so they will let you through, here's the kind of food to bring, here's the kind of clothing to bring based on the climate, here's the sort of medical supplies that you need to bring, and you start to see other guide books that are like this, some of them interestingly are very, are really specifically geared towards soldiers in the British army or civil servants who are working in the colonial bureaucracy, especially who are going to tropical places and sort of their you know here's what you need to bring in order to sort of keep your stay healthy but also keep yourselves sort of composed as a white person and a white person in a position of authority...

(Laughter)

...in these tropical, colonial spaces, and a lot of that is about what do you bring, how do you dress, how do you sort of comport yourself during the day so you stick to a routine that would have been familiar to somebody back in Britain, and people are you know obviously on the ground they're making all kinds of different changes to their wardrobe and they'll be doing things in different ways, interacting with local people to a greater or lesser extent, but at least there's a sort of expectation that part of what it means to go and travel to these places is to bring these like real material things from the home country with you.

NEMO

Yeah, it was making me think of kedgeree, which is a very British... I don't know if you in America have kedgeree, but it's seen as something like you know the Queen's Jubilee just happened in the UK and it's one of those foods that is brought out during like very British events, kedgeree and coronation chicken, and coronation chicken is like chicken with mayonnaise and curry powder.

(Laughter)

NEMO

Yeah, and kedgeree is a dish which is like a... it's kind of like a fried rice but it's like rice with smoked mackerel and like peas and an egg on top and with yeah, like curry powder in it and it's one of those things where like I guess as a kid didn't really think about it was like yeah this is British food, but you know in the Queen's Jubilee was looking at all these recipes coming out being like here's how to cook the best kedgeree for your Jubilee celebration and it's like, oh this item of food that we are cooking here is like, and I believe and this

SEAS - Below Deck 3

might just be like a you know one of those histories that's passed along by people and isn't actually true but I believe it's something that was made in British hotels in India as a way of like combining Indian food and British food in a way that would be palatable to white people. So, they had lots of rice, they had smoked fish and they had curry powder, but it's not like it's... it's not super fragrant, it's not super hot, it's not super outside of your wheelhouse and it makes a nice touch of foreignness without being too different for our palate.

(Laughter)

SARAH

Yeah, as soon as you started saying that I was like, where did the curry powder come from?!

(Laughter)

NEMO

Yeah, exactly, yeah. So, food is a colonial object – yeah, basically objects is...ah.

SARAH

Yeah, food is yeah, there's so many fascinating ways/avenues in which food becomes like a sort of cultural marker, but also a way in which these kinds of you see these... you see all these sort of colonial processes happening, things being moved from place to place being taken up in places, raw ingredients being cultivated in one place or another for certain audiences.

SEAS - Below Deck 3

There's some wonderful work there's a scholar named Hi'ilei Hobart who's looked at this in terms of, we're talking about islands and sort of tropical environments, she looked at this in the case of Hawaii and what she calls thermal colonialism which I think is really interesting thinking about the sort of the experience of the ways in which colonialism permeates all aspects of people's lives in the past and today arguably, and thinking about the ways in which temperature works in Hawaii, so she looks at the importation of ice into Hawaii...

NEMO

Oh.

SARAH

...and the ways in which ice in drinks didn't use to be a thing before the 19th century before you had ships that were kitted out to take ice from places where it was harvested, usually in the American context this was Northern New England sawn out of lakes in the middle of winter, packed in sawdust and brought on these ships to different parts of the world, including Hawaii where then for the planter class having a cold drink in a very hot humid environment.

NEMO

Oh my gosh.

SARAH

Putting ice cubes in your drink...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...became a marker of wealth, of power and then now we associate cold drinks/cocktails with tropical vacations...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...like we were saying earlier and these sort of island beach vacations, but we don't really think about where that comes from and in fact there is a sort of... there was a deliberate process by which people were trying to say, even though we're in a different environment, we're only going to adapt to that environment so much we want some of the things that we're used to from back home and some of these markers of the culture that we're used to and we're going to use these physical things to set ourselves apart from other people, she contrasts that with more recently there have been these indigenous Hawaiian communities protesting the observatory site on Mount Aloha and there's snow on the top of these very high volcanic mountains, and the way that some of the media portrayals of these indigenous led protests have been like, oh but it's like cold at the top of these mountains like, how are the Hawaiian people going to deal with the cold...

(Laughter)

...like they don't know how to deal with the snow and the ice up there, it's like dude, it's their space!

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

But yeah, the ways in which even something like you know temperature what you know how do you expect your drinks to be, can be the result of these colonial processes and also then becomes a marker for people that just to try to differentiate themselves from other people.

NEMO

That whole idea of a tiki drink is like pineapples...

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...plantations.

SARAH

You're right.

NEMO

Sugarcane plantations, ice – oh my god, yeah, wow! And coconut as well.

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

Yeah, I feel like everyone's kind of a bit like ooooooh a bit about them now but even that ice is like such a powerful thing to think about.

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

So, we were talking a bit like right at the beginning about like not just white versus person of colour, one thing that I've always really wanted to talk about is that in another project I'm working on it's about this [unclear 0:52:59] who is a navigator in the 14th century, and he has an Islamic background in that, I just think it's something that we don't ever see in media. In China they were importing people from the middle east because that's where all of the universities were, that's where all the thinkers were.

SARAH

Right.

NEMO

That's where everyone who was navi- studying navigation, the stars, philosophy, poetry, and you can find all of these compasses from the 14th century of China that are written in Arabic, and I just find that so like you know we think, well I personally think of the compass as being something very like British naval institution you know like get my compass, get my pipe...

(Laughter)

...get my little navy hat and ooo I'm British...

SARAH

Yeah.

(Laughter)

NEMO

...and I'm being imperialism, but that that there are these like time pieces and huge star machine to calculate constellations, all of these beautiful instruments that were a combination of middle eastern thinking and Chinese thinking in the 13th/14th centuries and beyond, and that was way before...

(Laughter)

...British people were doing their imperialism and...

SEAS - Below Deck 3

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...you know these trade routes have always existed outside of just Europeans coming...

SARAH

Yeah.

NEMO

...and making ports, so, that's my final thought on...

(Laughter)

SARAH

Yeah.

Yeah, absolutely and I think that you're starting to see this a little bit like the last time I was at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, they have the pacific worlds exhibit now...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...which talks about Polynesian traditions of not just astronomical navigation but navigation based on wind patterns, currents, very intimate knowledge of an environment that you really only get from having a deep connection to it, not from being a kind of interloper from the outside and so, seeing the discussion more and more in these public spaces and exhibits and in books about other traditions of way finding that have existing for thousands of years, as you said outside of you know it wasn't... nobody was waiting for Europeans or...

(Laughter)

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...sailor folks to just show up and give them a telescope, give them a compass, teach them how to take a sextant reading, that they were these traditions of sort of navigation and also just kind of deep knowledge of environment that you have people who then come in who want to take advantage of that without really giving, always giving proper credit to people who you know who have that knowledge and are giving it to Europeans in the first place, one of the things there's so many things to talk about but one of the things that I was thinking about was talking about like life on, on board a ship and thinking about things that people would bring with them. You know it's true that a lot of the portrayals of shipboard life have been, especially the kind of Hollywood tv heroic account travels have been about you know heroic sort of men...

(Laughter)

...going out and just constantly battling storms or doing whatever, but there's also a lot of boredom kind of on ship life that we don't really...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...talk about a lot, and also a lot of really kind of mundane daily tasks.

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

So, even in an environment that we think about as being very male, very cis and in a time period when we think about people having rigid gender roles and doing work based on gender identification in a very like rigid hierarchical way, you on ships you have you know there's no women, you know maybe sewing is a woman's task but whose going to do the sewing when you're out at sea for a couple of years.

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

So, you have all these traditions of sailors cooking for each other, repairing clothing, repairing each other's clothing, crafting, doing these kinds of very intimate and caretaking also, you know taking care of other people who are ill, and so you have all these very sort of intimate if you want to call domestic tasks/care taking tasks, things that would be creating a home that maybe would have been traditionally associated with women but that that male sailors are doing as well, and there's two really wonderful photos from Antarctic expeditions that always make me think of this from Robert Falcon Scott and Roald Amundsen, both of their crews sitting around, in Amundsen's case, it's the whole crew that is sort of sitting and repairing gear and there's like they've all got needles and they're all sewing and in the photo I'm thinking of in the Scott expedition I think is just two folks who are repairing sleeping bags, but still it's like you don't often see in our, in the sort of portrayals of heroic masculinity from the past today, you don't often see the sort of more intimate moments where people are doing that kind of caretaking labour, the sort of domestic labour, and I think that's a thing to always keep in mind is that there's the kind of master heroic narrative, the normative narrative, but there's always ways whether it's thinking about gender roles whether it's thinking about people of colour who are very intimate you know parts of these expeditions on to whom a lot of explorers actually owed their lives to the knowledge and labour of people of colour who never get acknowledged.

There's always more going on than first blush and I think that that's really important because you hear a lot of critiques from people who are like well, you know today everybody's trying to insert...

SEAS - Below Deck 3

(Laughter)

...women, or they're trying to insert people of colour, they're trying to insert queer folks into, they don't use the word queer usually...

NEMO

Yeah.

(Laughter)

SARAH

Into these stories and like that's not accurate, that's like no, actually...

(Laughter)

NEMO

It's not accurate because you are basing your entire history on like Pirates of the Caribbean...

(Laughter)

NEMO

...or on like you know the autobiographies by captains who only talk about their own heroic deeds...

SARAH

Right.

NEMO

...or their lieutenants and stuff like that like, yeah.

SARAH

Right, yeah, I guess this goes back to the beginning of our conversation, a lot of these heroic narratives. They were written for the public because a lot of how explorers especially, but you know Royal Navy Captains as well would make... in some cases they were making money by selling the publishing rights, so they knew that they had to turn a book out if they could get home if they survived...

(Laughter)

...they had to turn a book out go on a lecture tour...

NEMO

Right.

SARAH

...especially in the late 19th century, but also in the case of the Royal Navy, the Royal Navy sort of had ownership over captains you know kind of logs and diaries, things that had to you know, that kind of documentation had to be handed over to the Admiralty at the conclusion of different voyages and so they exercised a very heavy editorial hand in a lot of these publications, and so

SEAS - Below Deck 3

they were meant for a certain audience, they were meant to be best sellers but that meant playing up the heroism and the accomplishments of the captain, the expedition leader and the officers and down playing the labour...of everyone else and downplaying the kind of dependencies of these expedition leaders. So, you know, people were written out of the narratives on purpose...

NEMO

Yeah.

SARAH

...it wasn't just that like, oh they weren't there, or they weren't there they didn't do that much they were written out on purpose.

NEMO

They were made forgotten, hence the title of this show!

SARAH

Yes. Yes!

NEMO

Being Trice Forgotten.

SARAH

Oh my god, I just put that together!

NEMO

(Laughter)

Yeah, I cannot claim that that was the marketing team doing a great job, producers having more naming sense than me, but yes, the idea of who is forgotten and that forgetting being active job.

I feel like we could talk about this for so many more hours but unfortunately, we do have to wrap up for this episode of Below Deck.

Sarah, where can people find you if they want to find you online?

SARAH

Yeah, I am extremely on Twitter, my handle is @sarahmpicks, and I also have a website sarahmpickman.com you can shoot me an email through there, always happy to hear from folks, always happy to geek out about expeditions, geek out about expedition stuff and Nemo this has been such a pleasure, it's been so much fun.

NEMO

This is an audio medium so you know people can't see but I have been just like very excitedly like shaking the entire conversation, like yes! Yeah!

SARAH

Yeah.

SEAS - Below Deck 3

NEMO

Thank you so much for joining us, that's it from me, Nemo, and goodbye from Sarah...

SARAH

Goodbye.

NEMO

And we will see you next time on Below Decks.

[Show Theme - Outro]

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and

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SEAS - Below Deck 3

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