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**Southward**
An analysis of the literary productions of the Discovery and Nimrod Expeditions to Antarctica.

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INTRODUCTION

When we think about Antarctica, we cannot help thinking of names such as Roald Admunsen, Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Shackleton. These names represented the greatest demonstration of human endurance and courage in exploration and they still preserve these features today. The South Pole represented an unspoilt, unknown, unexplored area for a long time, and all the Nations competed fiercely to be the first to reach the geographical South Pole. England, which displays a great history of exploration, contributed massively to the rush to the Antarctic especially in the first decade of the 20th century. The long years spent in the Antarctic by the British explorers left a priceless inheritance. First of all, the scientific fields such as meteorology, geology and zoology were tellingly improved. The study of the ice sheet allowed the scientists of the time to partly explain the phenomenon of glaciations. In addition, magnetism was still a new field to be explored and the study of phenomena such as the aurora australis and the magnetic pole as a moving spot were great discoveries that still influence our present knowledge. The discovery of fossils proved that Antarctica was not a sterile land of ice and blizzards but a great variety living beings were and are present on the continent. As a matter of fact, new animals were discovered and their existence was displayed to the audience of the time. Frequently, the British audience stated that it was not possible at the beginning of the 20th century that such a huge area of the world was still unknown and still to be conquered. As a nation of colonizers and explorers, the British were constantly caring for this continent totally covered by ice. As the attitude of the colonizer requires, the first speculations on the Antarctic concerned the economic exploitation of the continent. As for the seas of the Arctic, whaling was the commonest activity that was meant to be practiced in such an inhospitable region of the globe. Thus, not only the sea, but also the land was to be investigated for

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1 See Y. de Chazournes, Arctica Esplorare i Poli, Modena, Logos, 2010, p. 162. (The volume, which is written in four languages, is a rich collection of pictures, images, maps and drawings about the history of exploration on both the Arctic and the Antarctic.)

the industry of extraction. However, the experience in the northern seas proved that whaling was a delicate activity, for there was only one good type of whale that could be exploited for the market and it lived mainly in the Arctic. Furthermore, expeditions for investigating the soil of Antarctica were required in order to establish the existence of deposits of metals, especially gold. In addition, the financial aspect of the enterprise was not to be ignored. Financing an expedition that could prove ineffective was risky.\(^3\) Despite the colonizer’s attitude, the feeling of the explorer was lurking in the geographical community: discovery, adventure, proud and honour of being the first to conquer a new and unknown land soon superseded the mere commercial interest in the Antarctic. The first decade of 1900 the British contributed with three main important missions in the Antarctic: the Discovery Expedition (1901-1904) and Terra Nova Expedition (1910-1913) led by Robert Falcon Scott, Nimrod Expedition (1907-1909) led by Ernest Shackleton. These journeys to Antarctica left not only a scientific inheritance but also had an interesting cultural and social impact that immediately gained success and interest from the audience, mainly due to the publication of the journals and the various lectures given as soon as the southern teams came back. They were welcomed as heroes, and the myth of the body taken to the limit, human endurance and courage reached its apex soon after the world knew about Scott’s death in a small tent in the middle of nowhere in the spring of 1913. During the long polar winter the camp turned into a microcosm where officers and the members of the crew had to live in close quarters. The small hut became a piece of England, where the time was spent on planning the missions of the warm season and journals and reports were written. In the Discovery expedition led by Scott, the crew produced also a monthly journal named *The South Polar Times*. The junior officer Ernest Shackleton edited the magazine, with illustrations by Doctor Wilson. The publication of this journal was resumed in Scott’s last Expedition of 1910. As typical of English tradition, also plays were set into stage during the dark polar winter. As a matter of fact, a small part of the frozen *Discovery* was turned into a

theatre, which was called “The Royal Terror Theatre.” At the end of the 1910’s, Scott led his last expedition, the “Terra Nova”. Scott decided to include in the crew also a photographer, Herbert Ponting, in the team. New way of witnessing the enterprise were brought to Antarctica, since Ponting not only took pictures, but thanks to a camera he could also film episodes of everyday life at the camp, the animals’ behaviour in their environment, the aurora australis. This series of videos were later collected in the first filmed documentary: *90° South* (1924).

This dissertation is meant to deal with the literary and cultural material that was produced in the Discovery Expedition and the Nimrod Expedition. In the first part of the dissertation a general overview on the history of the Antarctic exploration is given. The focus is mainly on the expeditions that took place during the period that lasts from 1897 to 1922, which is called The Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration. In this period the exploration to the south reached its apex, since seventeen missions to Antarctica took place. The British gave a telling contribution, with Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Henry Shackleton as the heroes of the time.

The Second chapter of my dissertation present a biographical account on the figures of Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Henry Shackleton. My main aim is to present them first of all as men and then as polar heroes. Thus, the focus shall be on the childhood and education of these two important figures and on what they did before becoming Antarctic explorers. In addition, the biographical overview is functional to show the differences in character that are also evident in the narrative style of the two journals I analyse in Chapter Four.

The Third Chapter is devoted to the analysis of texts that I consider both valuable models and literary sources for Scott and Shackleton’s journals. In this section I firstly focus my attention on the Victorian travel literature tradition, showing the development and the literary importance of travelogues and travel journals. Secondly, I give an analysis of *The Voyage of the Beagle* by Charles Darwin and of *Scrambles Amongst the Alps* by Edward Whymper. The analysis is mainly

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on the contents and the style of the journals, especially on the process of legitimization of adventure as a mean to improve human knowledge. In addition, the final part of the chapter is devoted to a comparison between the two journals, showing the points in common and the differences.

The core of my dissertation is Chapter Four. In this chapter I analyse *The Voyage of the Discovery* by Robert Falcon Scott and *The Heart of the Antarctic* by Ernest Henry Shackleton. The journals are written by the leaders of the Discovery and Nimrod expedition to Antarctica. Scott and Shackleton were both on the Discovery expedition of 1901-1904, Scott as the leader and Shackleton as an officer. They attempted together the first march to the South Pole but after the first winter, Shackleton was invalidated home for scurvy. For this reason, he planned a personal attempt to the South Pole in the Nimrod expedition of 1907-1909. The journals are a detailed account of the expeditions. My analysis focuses mainly on the aims of the expeditions and the important role played by the scientific cause in these missions. In addition, a literary analysis of the texts is made, especially on the romantic inheritance of the sublime, which is present in both texts. The final part of the chapter is devoted to a comparison between the two journals. In addition, I attempt to link the models analysed in Chapter Three with the Antarctic journal here analysed, showing the results of the legitimization of adventure as a tool for science, which started in the Victorian period, in the Edwardian Era.

Chapter Five is about the literary productions that took place in Antarctica during the Discovery and Nimrod expeditions. During the winter of 1902 and 1903, Scott and his comrades produced a monthly magazine named *The South Polar Times*. Shackleton was appointed as editor of the paper and each month a single copy appeared, with the contributions of all the members of the expedition. The first part of the chapter is devoted to the description and analysis of the contents of the magazine, which has been published for the first time in 2011 in a precious limited edition. The copy I could work on and make reference to in my dissertation is in the library of The Royal Geographical Society in London. Moreover, a small section is devoted to theatre and the plays that took place in “The Royal Terror Theatre” during the Discovery expedition. The other literary
production I analyse in this chapter is *Aurora Australis*, which represents Shackleton’s ambitious editorial project. Shackleton intended to write, illustrate, print and bound a book for the general public in Antarctica, thus becoming the first editor of the frozen continent. The analysis focuses on the production and the contents of the book, showing where it is possible similes with *The South Polar Times* and the other literary works analysed in the previous chapters.

To conclude, the last section of my dissertation is devoted to the social and cultural involvements of the Discovery and Nimrod expeditions and the audience’s response to these enterprises in the Antarctic and the journals produced.
THE HISTORY OF EXPLORATIONS IN ANTARCTICA

The exploration of the Antarctic dates back to a period identified as “the Golden Age of Antarctic exploration”, from the late 1830’s to 1897. Early attempts took place before this period, such as James Cook’s second long voyage to the South in 1772-75, when the Arctic Circle was passed for the first time. He did not reach the coastline and actually doubted the existence of a continent under the huge icebergs and ice floes. However, the path for a new Era of exploration was opened.

In 1838 the famous French navigator Jules Dumont d’Urville (1790-1842) attempted to reach Antarctic but he failed, due to the various dangers he encountered sailing from the Land of Fire. However his hydrographical engineer, Vinciendon-Dumoulin discovered the existence of the magnetic South Pole for the first time. In 1840 d’Urville tried again to reach Antarctic. This time he had to compete with the British Expedition of James Clark Ross and another American expedition, which was approaching. Finally d’Urville and his ship Astrolabe touched the coast of Antarctica for the first time and he confirmed the existence of a continent under the ice. He called the area he discovered Adélie Land, by his wife’s name. The expedition also attempted to reach the magnetic South Pole, but too many dangers occurred and they were forced to come back to Tasmania.

Another important name of the “Golden Age of Antarctic Exploration” is James Clark Ross (1700-1862). He was a very well known figure of his time, as he was a glorious veteran of Arctic Exploration. The British Admiralty chose him for a scientific expedition on magnetism to Antarctic and provided him with two ships: the Erebus and the Terror. During the voyage various dangerous accidents occurred, such as the collision of the Erebus with both an iceberg and the Terror. Fortunately they found shelter in a small bay and the crews could fix the damages. However, this accident forced Ross to come back without succeeding in reaching the magnetic South Pole. Despite the tragic events, Ross’s Expedition proved to be very important for mapping Antarctica.

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7 Ibid., p. 164.
Before being able to go ashore, Ross had to sail along a huge ice shelf that took his name. In addition, the expedition discovered two of the three biggest volcanoes of the Antarctic. In keeping with tradition, the volcanoes were named as the two ships: the active Mount Erebus and the inactive Mount Terror. Finally, they established a record by reaching 78°11’ S.

After these early attempts, the interest in Antarctica was lost until 1897. At the end of the century a period of hustle expeditions took place. The South Pole problem was still open and discussions took place on a revival of Antarctic Exploration, especially on the possible economic implications of further missions in the area. The public opinion was divided: the scientific and geographic community stressed on the important results that could stem from meteorological, zoological, geological and geographical studies, but many were actually interested in the commercial exploitation of the Antarctic that, according to the results of the previous explorations, proved to be scarce. However, a distinctive role was played by national pride: “Britain is the only Nation in the world that has done good work in the Antarctic, let her keep up her reputation”\(^8\). Again all nations undertook a race to the Antarctic, and the so-called “Heroic age of Antarctic exploration” started. The first expedition of this new era was Belgian. Young Baron Adrien de Gerlache (1866-1934) attempted the conquering of the South Pole with a ship equipped with steam power.\(^9\) The adventure to Antarctica should have lasted three months; but, the journey actually lasted two years. The Belgica, whose crew included also scientists and officers of different nationalities, was stuck in the ice sheet and the crew had to face the Antarctic winter. Being very young and physically weakened, de Gerlache and his captain were no more able to command. Frederic Cook, an American doctor, and a young Norwegian explorer, Roald Amundsen, saved the whole expedition. A few years later, Amundsen’s name would pass to history as the first to reach the South Pole. Cook solved the problem of starvation and diseases by forcing the crew to eat penguin and seal meat once the provisions had ended. But another major problem was to be solved: how to come back home, if the


\(^9\) See Y. de Chazournes, op. cit., p. 178.
ice trapped the ship? Cook and Amundsen decided to dig out a one-kilometre passage from the ice by shovelling and using explosives. The enterprise took many weeks and the Belgica was finally freed from the ice sheet and the crew could safely go back home.

In 1898 the Danish Carsten Borchgrevink (1864-1934) led the whaler South Cross in the British Antarctic Expedition. The main purposes of the expedition were mainly scientific and geological, but the crew had also to verify the possible existence of gold depots under the surface, for further extractions. For the first time, dogs and sledges were used once ashore and never was so much time planned to be spent in Antarctica before. The expedition broke Ross’ record by reaching 78°50 S and attempted to climb the ice barrier. A tragedy was almost to take place during a zoological inspection. Three members of the crew were studying and collecting penguin eggs on the shore, when suddenly a huge piece of ice broke off from the barrier and the tidal wave hit the small group that, as soon the ice fell in the sea, climbed up the ice slope. Fortunately, they were strongly hanged on to the barrier and they could save themselves. The ship was near the coastline and immediately gave aid to the party.

At the turn of the century, also Sweden took part in the Antarctic rush. In 1901 the Swedish Antarctic Expedition took place. Otto Von Nordenskjold led the expedition; instead a well-known Norwegian explorer, Captain Larsen, commanded the whaler Antarctic. The team left during the southern summer and camped on a small island, Snow Hill, which was previously discovered by Ross. The team spent the whole winter in Antarctic and waited for the ship in springtime; however, the ice did not melt and the ship could not reach the shore party. The explorers decided to spend another winter at Snow Hill but they later resolved to seek help and they left the camp. In the meantime, captain Larsen sent a rescue team of three men but they got lost and found shelter in a small inlet, Hope Bay. The Antarctic was stuck in the ice and sank. The whole crew was forced to leave the ship and encamped on Paulet Island. Miraculously, on October 1903 Nordenskjold group

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met the three lost rescuers and they moved back to Snow Hill. Sweden inquired Argentine to send another ship in order to rescue its men and they could finally go back home safely.\footnote{See O. Nordenskjold, “Summary of Events”, \textit{The Geographical Journal}, vol. 23, n. 2, (1904), pp. 207-209.}

From 1901 to 1904 it is Britain’s turn. Britain contributed massively to the Antarctic rush of the Heroic Age with seven expeditions that improved significantly the scientific and geographic knowledge of the time and tragically gained the South Pole. The British National Antarctic Expedition (BNAE), or Discovery expedition, of 1901 was a dream turned into reality thanks to Sir Clements Markham. He was a well-known British geographer, explorer and writer. As a young man, he served in the Royal Navy and he took part the rescue expedition of the Northwest Passage Expedition leaded by Sir John Franklin. He became Honorary Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society thanks to a project that made England independent from many countries of South America in the production of quinine.\footnote{See B. Riffenburgh, “Introduction” to R. F. Scott \textit{The Voyage of the Discovery}, Ware, Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, 2009, pp. vii-xxi, pp. viii-ix.} Markham was in love with the polar regions and he influenced a new revival of British Arctic exploration by planning an expedition to the North. The positive results made Markham launch a campaign for renewing British interest in the Antarctic areas. Due to his election as President of the Royal Geographical Society, the strong support of the German meteorologist von Neumayer and the Prince of Wales’s financial aid, his plans took plain sail and the British National Antarctic Expedition became a reality. There were several disagreements on the choice of the captain, but finally Markham’s candidate, Robert Falcon Scott (1868-1912), won the title of commander of the expedition.\footnote{See B. Riffenburgh, “Introduction” to \textit{The Voyage of the Discovery}, cit., pp. ix-x.} On 31 July 1901, the \textit{Discovery} set off for the Antarctic and in January 1902 the crew landed at Cape Adare.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp. vii-xxi.} The expedition sided the Great Ice Barrier and traced the Western part of the Ross Sea. The team also landed on the Barrier and they made an inspection of the ice sheet with a balloon: Scott became the first man to fly over Antarctica, together with his junior officer, Ernest Shackleton. The camp was placed in Hut Point, a small area in the eastern part of McMurdo Sound. The area was also chosen in order to let \textit{Discovery} being...
frozen intentionally. Life in the winter camp was spent with a strict conformity to the social roles of the officers and the crew. The time was spent not only in preparing the missions of the warm season but lectures took place, theatrical plays were set in stage and also a monthly journal named *The South Polar Times* was produced. It was edited by Shackleton and illustrated mainly by the junior surgeon and artist of the expedition, doctor Wilson. The expedition can be divided in two main moments: the attempt to reach the South Pole and the journey to McMurdo Sound. The Polar party, which was formed by Scott, Shackleton and Wilson, left Hut Point at the beginning of November 1902. They also brought a pack of dogs to pull the sledges. However, the team had no experience in driving the dogs and they were forced to man-hauling, which was a terrible, exhausting task. In addition, the team soon started to suffer from overwork, snow blindness and lack of food. Many unfortunate events occurred, which the most serious was that Shackleton started showing signs of scurvy. Despite this, the southern team moved south and they break every record by reaching 82° 17’ S. The journey back to the camp was miserable: the weather turned bad and the three men were in very poor physical conditions but they could go back to Hut Point on 3 February 1903. In the meantime, another group of explorers led by Armitage crossed McMurdo Sound. The aim of the expedition was to find a passage through or over the mountains of Victoria Land into the inland and, if possible, reaching the magnetic South Pole. Several days were spent in climbing the mountains and Ferrar Glacier was discovered. The party moved on in the mountains but the path proved too dangerous so they decided to keep on through Ferrar Glacier. This meant to pass Descent Glacier, which was the most difficult and dangerous part of the journey. During the way, Armitage decided to leave a small group of men behind, since their conditions were not good. He kept on until he reached the top of the glacier and finally the Polar Plateau was in front of them. Armitage became the first man to stand in the world’s largest icecap. Worried about the small group he left, Armitage turned back instead of exploring further. During the way back to the camp, a man collapsed descending Descent Glacier. A tragedy almost happened when three men fell in three
different crevasses at the same time, hanging inside thanks to the ropes that connected the sledges. Fortunately, they were taken out and the group could go back to Hut Point.

Four days after Armitage’s return, a relief ship was seen. But the *Morning* could not reach the *Discovery*, as there still was too much ice. The *Morning* had to sail northward otherwise she would be trapped by the ice too. When she left, the relief ship brought back to England the members of Scott’s Expedition that did not want to stay in the Antarctic for another winter. Shackleton too did not stay, because of the scurvy and he unwillingly went back home. Another winter came at Hut Point and the team spent the time more or less as the previous cold season. Spring operations were planned and in addition there was the *Discovery* to be freed from the ice as soon as the summer started. An expedition to collect emperor penguin eggs was prepared. Wilson and Royds, with a small group, walked as far as Cape Crozier but they were late, as the brooding season had already passed. In the meantime, Scott planned to investigate further the Polar Plateau. He followed Armitage’s previous path. He spent nine terrible days in the Polar Plateau, with icy winds and food shortage. When they came back, the *Discovery* was still surrounded by ice. Again the *Morning* came, with another relief ship, *Terra Nova*. The *Discovery* was supposed to be left to sink. However, with the higher temperatures the ice almost broke away and thanks to explosives the ship was finally freed.

From 1901 to 1904 the Antarctic is simultaneously invaded by various expeditions attempted by different European nations. The *Discovery* proved to be the most successful mission, but in the same years also Germany, Sweden, Scotland and France set off to the frozen land of Antarctica.

Germany attempted an expedition to the South Pole in 1901. The First German Antarctic Expedition, or Gauss expedition, was led by the geologist and Arctic veteran Erich von Drygalsk (1865-1949).\(^\text{16}\) Being the first attempt to the Antarctic, Drygalsky was aware of the lack of experience of the whole team, and he frequently remarked it in his account. They spent the whole

journey to Antarctica in getting used to the ship Gauss. The aim of the expedition was mainly to study the Southern Sea from the Cape to Kerguelen Island and further, as far as the icy coast. The Gauss stopped at Possession Island, Kerguelen Island and Heard Island. In Kerguelen a small group was left and a station for magnetic and meteorological observations was build. In addition, the study team found many rabbits on the island, which were left there by a previous expedition in the area thirty years before. The team could observe the disastrous consequences on the local flora produced by a foreign specie. The Gauss then moved to the coastline but remained trapped in the ice for fourteen months. During this period, the expedition operated on the land, and discovered Keiser Wilhelm II Land and the volcano Gaussberg. In addition, when sailing to Antarctica, the team found a trough 4500 metres deep running between the Crozet Islands and Kerguelen linking the abysses of the Indian Ocean with a ravine on the Austral glacial sea. The study of the Southern Sea proved also the existence of cold water under 800-900 meters from the surface even in the tropical areas.

Although the Scottish expedition to Antarctica was not very famous, it was extremely important for the scientific results collected. The Scottish National Antarctic Expedition of 1902 was meant for studies in oceanography, meteorology, biology and magnetism, including sounding operations for geographical studies and observation of the plankton.¹⁷ Notwithstanding the ambitious aims and the figure of William Speirs Bruce (1867-1921) as a leader, the expedition had difficulties in being financed and for this reason the possibility of a winter camp was not considered. Despite the low budget, the Scotia commanded by Captain Thomas Robertson sailed to the South Atlantic Ocean. An observatory was built in South Orkney Islands and Laurie Island was chosen as a camp, where the team made various zoological studies and mapped the island. Since no safe place for an anchorage was found, the Scotia came back to Argentina for the winter season, leaving a small group in the island. In springtime, she was again sailing south and this time the party moved on to

the Weddell Sea, where Coats Land (74° S) was discovered. This geographical discovery in this precise area of the continent was the most important improvement on the map of Antarctica since Ross’s expedition of 1841. The expedition lasted two years, and in 1904 the southern team came back home with a great amount of scientific data collected, especially in zoology.

When the *Scotia* came back to Buenos Aires for the first time, Bruce met the French expedition, which was venturing in the Antarctic. The French Antarctic Expedition (1904-1907) was led by Jean Baptiste Charcot (1867-1936). He was a doctor but he devoted his life to the study of polar areas, bacteriology, oceanography and hydrology. At that time, also Nordenskjold was in Buenos Aires after being rescued at the end of his expedition. Charcot met Nordenskjold, who updated the French team’s maps and informed them on the difficulties and the conditions they might encounter during the voyage. Like the German expedition, also Charcot and the crew of the *Français* had no experience in sailing in polar areas. Despite this, the expedition proved successful. The expedition coasted the Palmer Archipelago and first landed on Wiencke Island. The winter camp was built in Wandel Island, which was sheltered and rich in seals, penguins and cormorant. In the island also an observatory for magnetic observations was erected and various excursions were made. The *Français* then sailed through the Scholaert Channel and proceeded southward, toward Graham Land and Alexander I Lands. The furthest point reached was Adelaide Island, and the coast opposite the island was named Loubet Land, by the name of the French President. During the exploration of a channel, the ship collided with a huge tabular iceberg. The men made their best to repair the ship in order to finish the hydrographical studies but Charcot then turned back to Argentina, since the ship could not bear further southern explorations. The exploration was mainly geographical, but also hydrographic, magnetic and astronomic observations were carried out. When Charcot came back in France, he was welcomed as a hero.

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In 1907 Britain made another attempt in the Antarctic with an expedition led and planned by Ernest Henry Shackleton (1874-1922). Shackleton was the junior officer of Scott’s expedition and he was sent home because of scurvy. He was attracted by the ice and snow of Antarctica until he set off again for the frozen continent. The *Nimrod* left New Zealand on 1907.\(^{20}\) The winter quarters were set at Cape Royds, in Ross Island, under the pressure of circumstances. The expedition was divided in three journeys: the journey to the geographical South Pole, the journey to the magnetic South Pole and the journey to McMurdo Sound in order to search for fossils. Once the winter camp was set, the first enterprise to be accomplished was the ascent of Mount Erebus, an active volcano and the second highest mountain in the Antarctic. A group of six men reached the crater of the volcano on March 10, 1908. Geological and meteorological studies were made; as a result the two main features of the Erebus were the ice fumaroles and the feldspar crystals around the crater and its surroundings. In early spring the arrangements for the sledging journeys of the warmer season were made. The first group to reach Cape Royds was the northern party of Professors David, Professor Mawson and Mr. MacKay. The aim of the journey was to reach the magnetic South Pole. The party men-hauled for three months and eleven days. The journey was very difficult, due to the dangers encountered in the Drygalsky Glacier, the terrible blizzards and high sastrugi they found once on the Polar Plateau. On 16 January, 1909 the magnetic South Pole was reached at approximately 72\(^{\circ}\)21’ S, which moved almost 200 geographical miles from where Ross located it in 1841 to the Discovery expedition in 1902. The journey back was characterized by forced marches because the ice was to brake out. According to the plans, the *Nimrod* had to meet the party along the coast when leaving Antarctica. After a first fruitless attempt, the small group was luckily found in a small inlet near the coast.

The second group that left was the southern party. The team consisted on Adams, Marshall, Wild and Shackleton. They left with a supporting group of six men on October 29, 1908. A preliminary

journey on the Barrier was made in order to test the surface. The group left with help of four Manchurian ponies, which were killed and eaten during the journey south. They also had some dogs, but after the experience made during the Discovery expedition, Shackleton trusted them not. At the beginning, good marches took place since the Beardmore Glacier was reached and discovered. The passage through the Glacier proved dangerous and hard because of razor-edged crevasses, often hidden by the snow. The last pony left fell in a crevasse before the passage of the glacier was over and from that moment on the group was forced to men-haul. On January 6, 1909 they reached 88° 7’ S, a new record was established. Shackleton dared not going on to the South Pole, even if it was 93 miles far. The weather conditions and food shortage could prove lethal. As a matter of fact, the journey back was difficult for food shortage and the several attacks of dysentery that affected the three men, due to the meat of one of the ponies. Fortunately, the depots they left were found without any difficulty and on March 4, the team was on board the Nimrod.

The western party, whose members were Armitage, Priestly and Brocklehurst went searching for fossils in the Beacon sandstone formation. A meticulous geological analysis was made also in the surroundings but it proved fruitless. The party had to join with the northern party but the meeting took not place. The Nimrod rescued them after having escaped tragedy on a drifting ice floe. When the whole groups were on board the ship, they sailed south for geographical purposes but they soon came back because of the ice and the journey back home started.

In 1908 Charcot was again the leader of another French expedition to Antarctica. Charcot wanted to complete the work of the previous voyage to Antarctica; this is the reason why he came back in the same areas of 1903 expedition. The team was almost the same of few years before, being the sailors and officers keen to follow him again in another adventure in the Antarctic. The main aim was to study thoroughly as much as possible of the ground of Antarctica, without taking care of the latitude. The ship Pourquoi Pas? was provided with the best instruments and fitted out for polar

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environment. South Adelaide was reached and a small bay, Marguerite Bay, was discovered. In addition Loubet Island was investigated. After several attempts Alexander I Land was reached, however there was no good place for anchorage and the team had to come back and established their winter camp at Petermann Island. During the autumn many excursions in the glacier and the coast took place. The winter season proved extremely difficult, due to strong winds, blizzards and scurvy. As a matter of fact, many members of the group suffered from scurvy. The Pourquois Pas? made further explorations southward in the sea and a new area was found, which was called Charcot Land, past Alexander I Land. The geographic knowledge about the continent was tellingly improved thanks to the French expedition, which honoured the aims of the enterprise; several small islands and new areas in the mainland were discovered and mapped for the first time.

An important date in the history of Antarctic exploration is 1910. This is the year of the two most famous expeditions to Antarctica: the Norwegian expedition led by Amundsen and Scott’s last expedition, the Terra Nova. The rush to the geographical South Pole was to its apex. Amundsen reached the South Pole first, just nearly a month before Scott’s polar party. But the effort cost the lives of the British polar team and turned the race to the South Pole, which was surrounded by general enthusiasm and pride, into a tragedy. Just few know that in the same year another expedition took place: Japan attempted the Antarctic for the first time. This is a quite unknown chapter in the history of Antarctic exploration. The expedition was entirely realized thanks to the contributions of private financers. This is due to the fact that during the Tokugawa Dynasty leaving Japan was strictly prohibited and it was punished with death penalty. This element of tradition survived even in 1910 and this explains why the organizer of the expedition, Lieutenant Nobu Shirase (1861-1946), could not reckon on public support but just on private grants. The ship, Kainan Maru, left Japan on December 1910 and stopped in Wellington, New Zealand, for fresh supplies. The whole voyage was characterized by bad weather and rough sea. The expedition was

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not well equipped for wintering and the team was forced to come back. Once in Australia, the expedition was not agreeably welcomed, especially from the press. They spent miserable months in Australia and then tried again the icy seas of the south. The aim of the expedition was mainly scientific. They approached the ice barrier and the Bay of Whales, although the navigation was difficult due to ice floes. During the first exploration in the mainland a glacier, The Four Men’s Glacier, and Kainan Bay were discovered. When the Kainan Maru moved from the new discovered bay a ship was in sight: it was Amundsen’s Fram. The Japanese expedition frequently met the men of the Norwegian team during the explorations on land and sea. They mutually visited the ships and the Japanese discovered the skies, which were commonly used in polar exploration. Japanese geographical exploration was at its outset, due to the survival in their culture of the ancient prohibition. As a matter of fact, the team not only lacked of experience but also was badly equipped. For example, their garments were of cotton, instead of wool. Once ashore, seven men climbed up the ice barrier, the camp and an observatory were built and two of them stopped there in order to carry out meteorological observations. A group, leaded by Lieutenant Shirase, was to form the so-called Advance party, or the “Dash Patrol”. The Advance Party faced strong blizzards and toilsome marches without recording great progresses. They courageously reached 80° 5 S and they turned back because of the terrible weather. Once they came back to the camp, two shore parties were made. One group explored the south-west area of the camp for zoological purposes. Two of them decide to climb an ice slope and they reached Alexandra Range. They took a rest avoiding a dangerous avalanche and one man fell in a crevasse. Fortunately he was rescued by his teammate. The other group had to face two high and steep ice walls but they were not able to pass them and they came back. On board the Kainan Maru they sailed eastwards towards icebergs and drift ice. Like in the South Cross Expedition, a tragedy was escaped for the falling in the sea of a huge piece of ice. When sailing back to New Zealand, the Okuma Bay was discovered.
The whole story of the Norwegian expedition can be summarized in two words: surprise and luck. Roald Amundsen’s (1872-1928) expedition was organized and meant to go to the North Pole. However, during the preparations for the mission, his friend doctor Cook, his teammate during the Belgica expedition, declared to have reached the North Pole on April 21, 1910. A few days before Cook’s revelation, the famous Arctic explorer Robert Peary claimed the same heroic deed. This gave birth to a great controversy on who was the first to reach the geographical North Pole. Thus, thinking that the North Pole had been achieved and nothing else could be done Amundsen secretly changed his plans and focused his attention on the South Pole. He hid his idea even to his greatest supporters, Nansen and the King of Norway, and he let his plan known just half way to the south. His team welcomed the new destination with enthusiasm, the world with surprise and Captain Scott with bewilderment. The British expedition was sailing to Antarctica with the main purpose of reaching the geographical south pole. The unexpected news thrilled the audience, as the two expeditions to Antarctica were no more simply in the name of science and knowledge, but also national pride, honour and competition were involved. The Norwegian expedition to the Antarctic started the 9 August 1910. The Fram, a well-equipped ship for the icy seas provided with provision for two years and a pack of ninety-seven sledge dogs, sailed from Norway to the Bay of Whales in the Ross Ice Shelf, were the polar team encamped. The choice of that bay in the ice barrier was curious enough, as all the expeditions thought dangerous to camp just on ice, since there was no evidence of land under the barrier. Amundsen studied the maps of Ross’s 1841 expedition and Shackleton’s 1907 expedition and he realized that in the ice shelf there was a small area that did not move in the last sixty years, so there would probably had been land under. Once entered in the bay, the ice had just broken up more than usual, thus the ship could approach the coastline much

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24 Ibid.
26 Ibid., p. 2.
27 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
more than the previous expeditions. The team first examined the best area to camp on and the formations they found gave them the proof that there was land under the ice; as a consequence it was safe to encamp there. They excavated the area in order to make the hut sheltered by heavy winds and storms, with the dangerous barrier as a safe shelter. On February the shore party left the camp in order to lay depots for the long rush to the south. Differently from Scott, Amundsen trusted on the sledge dogs and the ski. A new strategy to mark the way and the depots was experimented. Finding the depots in a desert of ice with no point of reference was one of the main risks, because it would condemn the polar party to starvation and death. For this reason a line of flags at an east-west direction were left from nine kilometres on each side of the depot, which lay as a central point. The flags were also marked, thus the team could know in which direction they were going and where the depot was. This new strategy proved a great success, even in the thickest fog. 28 The winter at the camp was spent in excellent weather and health conditions: no storms, no excessively cold temperatures, and no illnesses. On October 20, the polar party left the camp to conquer the South Pole. A small party of three men went to King Edward VII Land in order to examine it, instead the rest of the shore party went south. The journey proceeded easily until 81° S, where crevasses, pressure ridges and abysses were found. At 80° S the team started to build snow mounds as signals for the journey back to the camp. Once reached the point were the ice barrier and the land joined, the team had to climb up small glaciers and then they had to face icebergs and the Devil’s Glacier. The new mountains they found were named Queen’s Maud ranges. They finally reached the polar plateau, which was named “the Devil’s Dancing-room”, and in a few days they reached the geographical South Pole. Amundsen in an account given to the Geographical Journal describes the conquest of the pole as follows:

The distance was covered. The goal reached. Calm, so calm stretched the mighty plateau before us, unseen and untrod by the foot of man. No sign or mark in any direction. It was undeniably a

moment of solemnity when all of us with our hand on the flag-staff planted the colours of our
country on the geographical South Pole, on King Hansen the 7th plateau.  

The team spent some time at the geographical South Pole and many meteorological observations
were made. On their journey homeward the Norwegian polar team was again blessed with fine
weather and they came back to the camp with no difficulties. In the meantime the small party
marching to King Edward VII Land carried out a good work and confirmed what Scott recorded in
the Discovery expedition, but the journey during the autumn proved very difficult with heavy pack
ice and storms. Notwithstanding the efforts, the expedition proved a complete success with the
record of the century conquered.

When Amundsen was sailing to Antarctica a telegram reached Captain Scott and his team in
Melbourne, Australia. Amundsen informed vaguely the British team of his intentions: “Beg leave to
inform you, Fram proceeding Antarctic. Amundsen.” The message was quite ambiguous, since
there was no mention to the South Pole and the team knew that Amundsen should be supposed to
go to the Arctic. Once reached New Zealand, the Terra Nova sailed for the Ross Sea facing heavy
gales and ice. Scott’s intention was to camp at Hut Point, the same area of Discovery expedition.
However, the terrible conditions of the sea forced him to move the winter quarters in a small area
northern than Hut Point, named Cape Evans as his second-in-command. Soon after the camp was
built, Scott made a journey south in order to leave depots for the dash to the South Pole of the
springtime. In the meantime, the geologist Griffith Taylor led a small party to McMurdo Sound for
investigating the physiography and geology of the western mountains. The Terra Nova sailed east
and left a small team led by Victor Campbell at King Edward VII Land, but the terrible weather
conditions forced them to land in the Bay of Whales, the area identified in the Ice Barrier by
Shackleton in Nimrod expedition and also the area chosen by the Norwegian team as a camp just a
few weeks before. Campbell hurried back to Cape Evans to report the bad news: now it was clear

29 R. Amundsen, op. cit., p. 11.
30 B. Riffenburgh, “Introduction” to R. F. Scott, Scott’s Last Expedition, Ware, Worsworth Classics of World
that the expedition was in a race for the South Pole. During the winter the team prepared for the mission of the springtime and an inspection to Cape Crozier took place. Doctor Wilson, Cherry-Garrard and Lieutenant “Birdie” Bowers travelled in the middle of the antarctic winter to the emperor penguin colony on the far side of Ross Island when the penguins incubated, in order to collect eggs and to make observations about the origin of birds and the relation of reptilian scales to feathers.\(^3\) The journey was extremely difficult and miserable, it was reported in Cherry-Garrard journal and then published as *The Worst Journey in the World*. On November 1, 1911 Captain Scott set out for the South Pole. The team was equipped with two motorsledges, ten ponies and a team of dogs. The expensive motorsledges broke down soon after the beginning of the enterprise and the party had to men-haul. The ponies died because of low temperatures and exhaustion, part of the polar party was sent back to the camp with the dogs and a small group of five men remained men–hauling for the rest of the journey to the South Pole. The team took the way Shackleton discovered three years before, ascending the Beardmore Glacier to the polar plateau. Captain Scott, Wilson, Bowers, Oates and Evans marched to the geographical South Pole to discover that the Norwegians had reached it before them. The team, which was in terrible physical conditions had nothing to do that facing the journey back to the camp; they never returned. Part of the group remained at Cape Evans and waited for the polar party but they soon realized that something happened. The next spring a team under the command of surgeon Edward Atkinson found the bodies of Scott, Wilson and Bowers frozen in the tent. They could not reach One Ton depot, the biggest that was left while preparing the journeys for the South Pole and that could save them. They also found the pictures they took during the journey and their diaries. Thus, the world could know what happened during the ill-fated march. Dejected emotionally, inadequately supplied with food and fuel and the worsening weather conditions wore out the polar team. Evans died near the base of the Beardmore Glacier. Oats, whose feet were damaged by frostbite and gangrene, walked out of the tent to his death in order to avoid slowing down his teammates. Scott, Wilson and Bowers were forced to stop

\(^3\) B. Riffenburgh, “Introduction” to R. F. Scott, *Scott’s Last Expedition*, cit., p. xvi.
because of a terrible storm and they weakened and died in their tent. Scott left his last words in the final page of his journal, his last message to the world, asking to help the families of those who lost their lives in the expedition. Once published, Scott last words deeply moved the audience of the time and as Riffenburgh states in the introduction of Scott’s last journal, the whole deed represented a proof that British manhood was still ascendant in a period in which many had feared its decline.\(^{32}\)

After the tragic British expedition, the interest for Antarctica did not decreased. Germany provided the ship *Deutschland* for an expedition mainly for scientific purposes to Antarctica.\(^{33}\) The voyage was extremely difficult due to icebergs and ice floes. The team sailed \(77^\circ S\)\(^{34}\) and reached a bay they called Vahsel Bay, by the name of their captain. Thanks to sledge inspections, they found that the land was covered by an ice cap and a great wall of ice stretched out along the coast, like the Ross Ice Barrier. According to their observations, it seemed that the current moved the ice from Coats Land to their newly discovered bay and along the surrounding area that they named Liutpold Land. In addition, the ice would probably accumulate to Graham Land. The winter quarter was established in an ice floe in Vahsel Bay, since no other suitable place for landing was found. Unfortunately, bad weather occurred and great icebergs and their ice floe included started to be carried away. Some other desperate attempts of landing in the ice sheet were made, but the team had to give up and they went back to South Georgia, as the captain thought it was better to spare the group’s energy for another attempt the following year. However, the ship was trapped by the ice and started to drift. During these uncomfortable circumstances the team made several meteorological, zoological and magnetic observations. A sledge excursion to search for New South Greenland was made. An American explorer first observed this piece of land many years before. Nevertheless, no sign of land was found; this can be recorded as the most important geographical result of the expedition. In addition to the terrible situation the *Deutschland* and her team were experiencing, the captain died because of bad health conditions and an old hearth disease awakened by the difficult and extreme


environmental conditions. Thanks to the meteorological conditions of the Weddell Sea, the ship was freed by the ice also through dynamite and given at the disposal of the Argentine government in order to relieve the members of the meteorological station in South Georgia.35

Many of the attempts to Antarctica had the South Pole as a main goal. Just few expeditions had only scientific purposes, such as the Australasian expedition of 1911. The main aim of the mission was to study the Antarctic from the southward of Australia. 36 Douglas Mawson, an Australian geologist who took part to Nimrod expedition, planned the new mission. Two other veterans of Antarctic exploration were part of the team: John King Davis as the captain of the ship Aurora and Frank Wild. They were both in Shackleton’s expedition of 1907 and Wild was already a veteran of the “Discovery Expedition” of 1901. Firstly, the team explored Macquarie Island, which is a sub-Antarctic possession of Tasmania. Here, they established the first wireless relay station, which connected the Antarctic continent with the rest of the world. When they approached the coastline of Antarctica, they soon discovered a new bay they called Commonwealth Bay and they built the winter quarters in Cape Denison, in the newly discovered area. The expedition was divided in small groups, in order to study the biggest possible area. The first sighting from the ship was a long tongue of ice along the coast they called Mertz Glacier, which was a continuation of Adelie Land. There was also a great variety of sea birds and unknown species were discovered and new eggs collected. The Aurora kept on her observations from the sea and after Adelie Land a new unknown area was found and christened Wilkie’s Land. Also a new ice shelf was discovered and named Shackleton’s Ice Shelf. It became the place where the Western Party was landed and a small camp was built. The sledging inspection proved successful, notwithstanding the terrible weather and the strong winds. The geological observations made in Wilkie’s Land were extremely accurate, being Mawson a geologist himself. Besides this successful result, his sledge journey with the Eastern Party was a disaster. The other members of the team were Mertz and Ninnis. They left the winter

35 See W. Filechner, E. Przybyllock, op. cit., p. 430.
quarters in order to survey King George V Land, but the path proved to be extremely difficult. Once they met the Ninnis Glacier, named by one of the members of the expedition, the situation turned awful, with invisible huge crevasses covered by the snow. Ninnis fell and died in one of the crevasses with the dogs and the sledge with part of their provisions. The physical conditions of the two members left soon became bad and they were forced to eat the rest of the dogs. Mertz turned weaker and died in general delirium, due to a surplus of vitamin A contained in the dogs’ liver. A rescue party for the lost team was sent but Mawson men-hauled back to Cape Davison alone, where a message to the *Aurora* was sent thanks to the small wireless station built at the winter quarters. However, the ship had already gone and the group had to spent a second unplanned winter at the camp, and the expedition was prolonged to 1914. The expedition collected a great amount of scientific observations, especially on geology, oceanography, meteorology, zoology and magnetism. Thanks to the sledge journeys of the teams along the coast new areas were discovered and also geographical inspections of the land sightings by previous missions were carried out, in order to verify if there was actually land or not. Most of them proved not true.

After the South Pole was reached, it seemed that there was nothing more to do in the Antarctic. However, in 1914 Shackleton announced “The Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition”, “the biggest polar journey ever jet attempted”\(^37\) as he defined it. His aim was to cross the Antarctic continent from sea to sea, from the Weddell Sea to Ross Sea, via the South Pole.\(^38\) The ship, the *Endurance*, left England the 8 August 1914 sailing to the Weddell Sea and on January 1915 was stuck in the ice near Coats Land and Liutpold Land. The drift carried the ship south-westward, near Vahsel Bay, where Shackleton intended to land. The ship was crushed by the ice and sank just a few weeks later. The team camped on a moving floe, where they stayed for the summer with dangerous cracks that opened near the tents. Three boats were launched and the team could reach a small beach in Elephant Island. That little piece of land became their home for nearly a month. Shackleton and five


men took one of the boats, the *James Caird*, and sailed to South Georgia where they crossed the mountains on foot and reached Stormness whaling station. He immediately planned a rescue mission and at the fourth attempt he could save the team at Elephant Island, thanks to a Chilean ship. The team in the island was not in such bad conditions, also due to the experience of the second in command of the expedition and well-known Antarctic veteran, Frank Wild. On the other side of the frozen continent, the second team leaded by captain Aeneas Macintosh in the ship *Aurora*, could cross Ross Sea and lay down the depots with the provisions for the crossing team in the Ice Shelf, at Mount Hope and near Beardmore Glacier.\(^{39}\) The journey was extremely difficult. Soon the men started to show signs of scurvy, starvation and one of the members died in the march. In the meantime, the *Aurora* was tore off from her moorings by a storm and part of the provisions and the equipment was lost. A terrible accident occurred, due to a mistake in calculations; Captain Macintosh and Hayward lost their lives in a premature attempt to reach Cape Evans and Macintosh’s journal was lost. This is why the Ross Sea Party’s story is not well known; a history of efforts, sufferings and death almost forgotten when the Endurance expedition is discussed. The audience has information about the *Aurora* just in the second part of Shackleton’s journal of the expedition, which was published as *South!*; where a collection of pages from the journals of the Ross Sea Party is made in order to reconstruct the events that took place on the other side of Antarctica.

The Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration ended in 1922, when Shackleton died in his last expedition. The so-called “Shackleton-Rowett Expedition” of 1921-1922 had as its main aim the circumnavigation of the Antarctic, the focus especially on the almost unknown area of Enderby Land and the little islands of the Southern Ocean.\(^{40}\) The ship named *Quest*, was provided with instruments for soundings and oceanographic observations, kites and balloons for atmospheric and meteorological surveys, wireless telephones and a set for radio-telegraphy. Also an airplane was

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brought, as a help in making observations. Half of the team was formed by men that had previously served under Shackleton in his expeditions. Mr. John Quiller Rowett was the man who made the expedition possible, since he sponsored the whole mission and as a sign of gratitude his surname was added to Shackleton’s.\(^{41}\) During the voyage to South Georgia, strong winds, bad weather and some problems to the ship occurred and also health started to weaken: Shackelton, the leader of the expedition, fell ill. He died of a heart attack on January 5, 1922 in Grytvieken, South Georgia. From this moment on, the leadership was in Frank Wild’s hands, who followed Shackleton also in his last expedition. The body was sent to Monte Video, Argentina, but Lady Shackleton wished her husband to be buried in the so-called “Gateway of the Antarctic”, that is South Georgia. He was laid in the little graveyard near the hillside of Grytvieken.\(^{42}\) Wild carried on the expedition as Shackleton planned and he reached the coastline of Enderby Land. He then turned back to South Georgia, due to coal shortage.

The “Shackleton-Rowett Expedition” closed the “Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration”, and the Antarctic was almost forgotten for years, when a new era of exploration, with new features opened: the “mechanical age”.

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## HEROIC AGE OF ANTARCTIC EXPLORATION: CHRONOLOGY OF EXPEDITIONS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Expedition</th>
<th>Ship/Names (Latitude)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1897-1899</td>
<td>Belgian Antarctic Expedition Adrien De Gerlache</td>
<td>Belgica 71° 36’ S</td>
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<td>1898-1900</td>
<td>British Antarctic Expedition Carsten Borchgrevink</td>
<td>Southern Cross</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901-1904</td>
<td>National Antarctic Expedition Robert Falcon Scott</td>
<td>Discovery Morning – Terra Nova 82° 17’ S</td>
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<td>1901-1903</td>
<td>First German Antarctic Expedition Erich Von Drygalsky</td>
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<td>1901-1903</td>
<td>Swedish Antarctic Expedition Otto Nordensiold</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902-1904</td>
<td>Scottish National Antarctic Expedition William Speirs Bruce</td>
<td>Scotia 74° 01’ S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-1905</td>
<td>Third French Antarctic Expedition Jean Baptiste Charcot</td>
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<td>1908-1910</td>
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<td>Pourquoi Pas? IV</td>
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<td>1910-1912</td>
<td>Japanese Antarctic Expedition Nobu Shirase</td>
<td>Kainan Maru 80° 05’ S</td>
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<td>1910-1912</td>
<td>Amundsen South Pole Expedition Roald Amundsen</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910-1913</td>
<td>British Antarctic Expedition Robert Falcon Scott</td>
<td>Terra Nova 90° S (South Pole)</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<td>1911-1913</td>
<td>Second German Antarctic Expedition</td>
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<td>1911-1914</td>
<td>Australasian Antarctic Expedition</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1914-1917</td>
<td>Ross Sea Party (support of Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition)</td>
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<td>Ernest Shackleton</td>
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As I stated in the previous chapter, the history of Antarctica is filled with heroic and outstanding deeds to the limit of human imagination and difficult situations that the heroes of the Frozen Continent were willing to face. Equally special men carried out these special adventures. Two of the main outstanding figures in Antarctic exploration were Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Henry Shackleton. They both were part of the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration, when the rush to the South Pole was to its apex. Notwithstanding the fact that they first cooperated in the Discovery expedition, with Scott as captain and leader of the whole enterprise, the history of exploration stressed on their rivalry. This is due to some episodes that took place especially during the march to the South Pole and to differences in character and behaviour, which journalists of that time and critics of the second half of the 20th century stressed and focused as the main reasons for their controversial relationship.

Robert Falcon Scott was a reserved character, very introspective and somehow gloomy. He was not a leader but he learned to be one. He was born in the countryside from a humble family and soon joined the Navy, which was a family tradition, in the training ship Britannia.\(^{43}\) The education at the naval school was mainly focused on seamanship, navigation, elementary physics, astronomy, geometry and trigonometry. It was a practical and strict training that left out classical studies, literature and arts. Scott proved to be a good pupil, he passed successfully his exams and he was declared midshipman. His first part of the adolescence was lived on board the training vessel, where the boys had to learn quickly to become men. For Scott it must have been a traumatic experience, since the environment he was plunged into was hard and completely different from the warm and comfortable home mood. Midshipmen were still pupils when they were instructed in the art of running a warship and take responsibility and discharging it quickly and efficiently.\(^{44}\) Survival was acquired with the ability of taking quick decisions, self-control, courage, boldness and caution in a

\(^{44}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 25.
balance. Panic, fear, doubts had to be concealed. Scott learned these lessons very well, since the commanders under whom he served gave positive feedback about him and his quick ascent in the lower ranks of the navy career witnesses this. When he was almost in his twenties he set the exam for his lieutenancy and passed it successfully, being awarded first-class certificates in pilotage, torpedoes and gunnery and he got the highest mark in seamanship of his year.\textsuperscript{45} Despite his good results and the strict instruction he received in the Navy, he soon started to show a gloomy character, which Huxley in his biography on Scott defines as “a deep malaise verging in self-hatred, a state of mind familiar to many intelligent young men and women searching for certainties and getting only dusty answers from an indifferent world.”\textsuperscript{46} The self-questioning and self-distrust, the lack of self-confidence and a sense of doom are typical features of his character and they accompanied him for all his life, even in his successes. His sense of reserve and lack of confidence grew when the family got bankrupt. He never pitied himself but young Scott developed a strong sense of secrecy and also inferiority. Another important feature of his character was his sense of duty, first of all to his family. Once poor, he had also to face the death of his father, therefore he took charge of his mother and his sisters despite his simple wages until he was promoted torpedo lieutenant to the flagship of the Channel Squadron, HMS Majestic.\textsuperscript{47} While serving in the Majestic, Scott met Lieutenant Michael Barne and Engineer-Lieutenant Reginald Skelton, who subsequently took part in the team of the Discovery expedition with James Dellbridge, Edgar “Taff” Evans and David Allan thanks to Scott suggestion.\textsuperscript{48} At this time, when serving in the Majestic and facing the death of his father ad his brother, Scott met Sir Clements Markham and he was informed of the selection for the Antarctic expedition he was organizing. This was not the first time they met. Markham was positively impressed by young Scott during a ship competition a few years before and when he asked for references about him, Scott’s previous captains had just positive feedback to give. Scott sent a letter to volunteer as leader of the polar expedition and Markham was deeply glad

\textsuperscript{45} See E. Huxley, op. cit., p. 27.  
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 28.  
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p. 35.  
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p. 36.
to give him the command. He was appointed the role of captain and also of leader of the expedition, exercising his command also on the scientific staff. Despite the various entries in his journals and private letters that witnessed his black and uncertain mood, Scott brilliantly coordinated the organisation of the expedition. Before leaving for the Antarctic he read as much as he could about previous polar journeys and he also asked for advice and subsequently met in Oslo the most famous polar explorer of his time, Fridtjof Nansen, who showed Scott his vessel for the Arctic and discussed with him various aspects and issues of a polar expedition.\textsuperscript{49} Scott’s keen research was mainly done in the Royal Geographical Society (RGS). He was helped by the librarian Hugh Robert Mill, who described him as pragmatic, smart and quick in learning and grasping scientific notions, especially about meteorology and oceanography, which were Mill’s specialities.\textsuperscript{50} As a matter of fact, the members of the team for both the explorations he carried out frequently defined him as “scientific”. The expedition was to be led according to the discipline and style of the Royal Navy, notwithstanding the fact that part of the team came from the Merchant Navy and civilians formed the scientific Staff. Despite this, the hierarchical division of the team, the order and discipline required, the formalities adopted in everyday life proved successful to face the difficulties and the forced cohabitation of so great a number of people, especially during the six months of polar night. Although Scott was a disciplinarian, he was always fair and humane towards his men. He avoided judging them harshly if he could give them the benefit of the doubt, and he always preferred a good telling-off in order to keep discipline instead of the traditional Navy methods of punishment for disobedience.\textsuperscript{51} The Naval hierarchy acted in formal terms, since Scott always recognized that collaboration and working as a team were the keys of the success in his first polar expedition. It was “a common desire to work for the common good”\textsuperscript{52} that made the enterprise possible. They were like a family, with Scott as a severe but benign father, where there was no cause for jalousie or rivalry, as they were all equals sharing a common aim and holding an equal fundamental role in the

\textsuperscript{49} See E. Huxley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 62.
\textsuperscript{52} E. Huxley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 173.
whole enterprise. Wilson’s selection in the Scientific Team is an example of Scott’s good judgement. Once the members of the crew were selected, the scientific staff was still searching for an assistant doctor to help in the zoological field. Edward Wilson was a talented artist, with a great interest in nature, especially birds, which he used to represent in fine drawings. He was not fit for the expedition because of tubercular scars on a lung. However, Scott was so positively impressed that he admitted him in the expedition without taking much care of the medical report.\textsuperscript{53}

A curious feature of Scott’s character was daydreaming, an attitude he was born with and which manifested especially during his childhood. He perceived this as an embarrassing weakness; as a matter of fact, it clashes with the strict discipline he received in the Navy. However, he always made his best to cure himself from it and also from idleness. He was so worried about constraining it that in his last letter to his wife Kathleen he asks her to take care of their son and to safeguard him from idleness.\textsuperscript{54} Scott was severe and a disciplinarian first of all with himself. He harshly reproached himself since he was very self-demanding. For example, he cannot stand his fear of the sight of blood, which he considered a form of cowardice, since he could not take part in the butchering of seals and penguins, horses and dogs that was functional for their nutrition and the scientific cause.\textsuperscript{55} Self-reproaching is due also to his typical strong sense of duty and the responsibility he took charge of during the expeditions. Huxley defined him a slave to duty.\textsuperscript{56} When Shackleton announced his own expedition to the South Pole for 1907, Scott was already thinking of going back south again. However, this represented a real challenge and he could not refuse. It was his duty going back to Antarctica and finishing the work he had started few years before. If anything went wrong the first person he blamed was himself. When he was dying with his men in a small tent in his journey back to the pole he clearly considered his and his comrades’ death his own fault, since the expedition was his own project. As a matter of fact, his last words were spent for his comrades’ families and the responsibility for their dependants:

\textsuperscript{53} See R. Fiennes, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{54} E. Huxley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 136.
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 95.
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 216.
Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance, and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman. These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale, but surely, surely, a great rich country like ours will see that those who are dependent on us are properly provided for.\textsuperscript{57}

Or, again: “For God’s sake look after our people.”\textsuperscript{58}

Scott was usually calm and self-controlled, however he became impatient, nervous and irritable in stressful and proving situations. His favourite ways for relaxing were reading and smoking his pipe.\textsuperscript{59} He was also described as a good talker and very interested in scientific matters. He used to read with pleasure the scientific reports of the sledge journeys carried out by some members of the team,\textsuperscript{60} or to read aloud from \textit{The South Polar Times} after dinner.\textsuperscript{61} During the Discovery expedition, he took with him Darwin’s \textit{The Origin of Species} and \textit{The Voyage of The Beagle} in his sledge journeys, which Scott read with his comrades in turn.\textsuperscript{62} For the Navy hierarchical scheme he did not take part in certain frolics and jokes of the sailors but he never discouraged them. He was very interested in the work of the scientific team and he frequently took part in discussions asking questions and giving suggestions, always with humbleness since he approached the matters as a layman and not as a specialist. However, the scientific teams he guided were glad of their captain’s interest and they witnessed his versatile mind, his ability to grasp the problems and to help out in finding solutions. During his last journey back from the South Pole, Scott and his men manhauled for almost the entire way back their sledges with fossils and minerals in addition to their equipment and supplies, in the name of the scientific cause.

Despite Scott’s lack of self-confidence, gloominess, reserve and self-blaming he brilliantly carried out his extraordinary enterprises. This is due to the strict discipline and hierarchy he adopted but also to the fact that he gained his men’s trust thanks to his good and conscious judgement. In a

\textsuperscript{57} R. F. Scott, \textit{Scott’s Last Expedition}, Ware, Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, 2011, p. 426.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p. 415.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p. 415.
\textsuperscript{60} See R. Fiennes, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{61} See E. Huxley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p. 277.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., pp. 116, 147.
small hut in the middle of nowhere, Scott realized equality in a hierarchy, something that had never taken place before in English society, where class differences were the natural order of things. And this was probably the key to cohabitation, to assert his authority on the team and to gain his men’s confidence.63

A complete different figure, both in behaviour and nature was Ernest Henry Shackleton. He was Anglo-Irish, his family moved to Ireland a few generations before and he grew up in Kilkea, in the ancient English Pale near Dublin.64 He had a numerous family but they lived comfortably. Shackleton had the makings of an explorer since his childhood. He was firstly educated at home by a governess and then moved to school. But he was not fit for formalised education. He attended Dulwich, which became a typical Victorian Public School following the traditional idea of schooling, but Shackleton later complained about the methods, saying that he did not learn things in that school. He had a more modern and practical view of schooling, with an education that was useful for those who would have gone into business.65 Thus, he was bored and out of place at school, but he always harboured a great interest in literature. He used to read The Boys’ Own Paper, a British weekly publication that was sold every Saturday and collected fiction, practical advice, moral uplift and adventure, whose target was later Victorian pupils, like Shackleton.66 The Boys’ Own Paper with its adventures probably fuelled Shackleton’s dream of going to sea, since the magazine published Verne’s 20,000 Leagues under the Sea and Shackleton identified with Captain Nemo, also in his adulthood when he chose Nemo as a nickname.67 The adventurous stories of his favourite magazine and his attitude of living of daydreams were the reasons that pushed Shackleton to choose a different path than his father’s. He was a doctor and he hoped that his son would follow his career. However, Shackleton’s father soon realized he was not fit for this and allowed young Shackleton to go to sea. The family could not afford the fees for a Navy training in the Britannia,

63 See E. Huxley, op. cit., pp. 162, 163.
65 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
66 Ibid., p. 10.
67 Ibid., p.100.
but they could find a place in a merchant ship, the *Hoghton Tower*.\textsuperscript{68} At the age of twenty he became a qualified Mate and four years after he was certified as Master. Subsequently he enrolled in the Union Castle Line, the élite of the Merchant Navy service.\textsuperscript{69} It was in his twenties that he became very keen on books, especially literature. He was always interested in literature, an inheritance from his family and from middle-class Victorian tradition. His favourite poet was Browning, whom he quoted repeatedly also during the Antarctic expeditions. He also loved reading Tennyson and Shakespeare.\textsuperscript{70} Moreover, he tried to write in verse, but without success. Shackleton was interested in history and he read especially Prescott. Prescott was an inspiring reading for him, since his books about the Spanish Empire of the-14\textsuperscript{th} century were filled with such figures as the *conquistadores*, which were the model of the explorer. Shackleton was a romantic and Prescott’s works provided what he was searching for. According to Huntford, Shackleton was experiencing the British Empire, but its literature was not fit for a romantic like him.\textsuperscript{71} When he enrolled for the Discovery expedition, he was appointed the task of providing the books to be taken to Antarctica. He took care of choosing volumes that could be interesting for all the members of the expedition. From essays and technical manuals to the classics, Shackleton also took a copy of the Bible, the whole Shakespeare’s collected works and the *Encyclopaedia Britanica*.\textsuperscript{72} He was also in charge of finding the material for theatrical plays. Theatre had an important role during the expeditions, since it was a good way to face the long, depressing polar winters, but also a solid tradition of British culture and of the Royal Navy, as well.\textsuperscript{73} In order to face the polar night, a printing machine was taken in the frozen continent. Shackelton was appointed as editor of a monthly magazine, *The South Polar Times*, to be produced during the Discovery expedition. Once he came back home, he also attempted at a career in journalism. Before leaving for Antarctica for the first time, Shackleton edited and published a small volume named “*O.H.M.S* an illustrated record of the voyage of the

\textsuperscript{68} R. Hutford, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{71} See R. Huntford, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{72} See M. Tenderini, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{73} *Ibid.*, p 41.
S.S. “Tintagel Castle”, containing twelve hundred soldiers from Southampton to Cape Town March 1900,\textsuperscript{74} written while trooping in the Boer War. Once he left the frozen continent, he started writing for the \textit{Royal Magazine}, a middle-class monthly and he wanted to create a press agency. \textit{Potentia}, the name of his innovative magazine, was meant to promote international understanding thanks to news that were guaranteed to be true and written by the finest intellects throughout the world. The idea came from a Dane, Grøn, who actually drove Shackleton in a fraud since the business was not successful and did not prove worth the money he invested.\textsuperscript{75} He also thought to publish \textit{The South Polar Times}, but his literary hopes were fulfilled in his own Antarctic expedition of 1907. He took with him a printing machine and he produced the first book to be entirely written, illustrated and printed in the Antarctic. The small volume was called \textit{Aurora Australis}, where poems and short narratives are collected. When he came back he also spent many months in lecturing his experience in Antarctica, visiting many countries.

Shackleton was a “human dreadnought” as the Bishop of Christchurch defined him.\textsuperscript{76} He was full of energy and, unlike Scott, whose tendency of daydreaming was perceived as embarrassing, Shackleton’s daydreaming turned into inventiveness in adulthood. However, it was also a mark of a restless soul that was not fit for conventional works or lifestyle. As a matter of fact, soon after he returned to England after the Discovery expedition, he was hired in the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) in Edinburgh.\textsuperscript{77} He totally revolutionized the Society’s environment. He provided the headquarter with a typewriter and a telephone; the rooms were totally tidied up and new conferences took place. The revolution brought new members and a wider audience, an increasing popularity of the Society’s image and the old methods were swept away. But he soon started to feel uncomfortable in there. The revolution was ended and he just had to keep the improvements he brought and this inevitably meant a routine to follow, but he was not fit for a unadventurous life. He

\textsuperscript{74} R. Huntford, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{76} M. Tenderini, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{77} See R. Hutford, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 133.
wanted to be in the core of action, since he wanted to become rich and gain success as soon as he could.

It was during his revolutionizing activity in the RSGS that his persuasive, charming character burst out, with a natural talent in eloquence. His convincing attitude and charisma and his gift in public speaking drove him into seeking a career in politics.\textsuperscript{78} The thrilling mood of policy was what Shackleton was searching for, after the experience in the RSGS. He participated in the general elections of 1906 as a candidate for the Liberal Unionist party for Dundee. He had to make a campaign, to speak to meetings and to be interviewed, facing the problems of England in the Edwardian Age. Notwithstanding the fact that the career in policy turned out to be unsuccessful, since he lost the elections as a candidate, Shackleton participated probably in the most important political event of his epoch, since the Liberal Party was recognized as a true political force in Parliament for the first time and a Liberal man, Henry Campbell-Harlderman, was elected as Prime Minister. This phenomenon that was taking place also in other countries of Europe, marked the beginning of a new epoch.

In the meantime, Shackleton had started also a small ship company with his brother Frank, his school friend Nicetas Petrtides and another big associate.\textsuperscript{79} They planned to start trading with Russia, since it represented a new market. However, Shackleton soon realized that he had been exploited as a public figure and he was not going to have such an important role in the bargain they were following. As a matter of fact, the business turned out to be unsuccessful as the Russian were secretly making agreements with another company in order to gain the best price. Shackleton realized that he had been exploited and he gained only economic difficulties from this financial enterprise. But the world of finance and commerce never abandoned his mind. He had a natural disposition for the risk and the adventure, especially in the economical field. Once he came back home from the Nimrod expedition he started lecturing about his enterprise to Antarctica and he

\textsuperscript{78} See R. Hutford, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 146-148.
\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 148-150
went on a tour throughout Europe and America. He also went to the court of the Austro-Hungary Empire, where he was informed of the existence of some alleged gold mines in Hungary. He was immediately attracted by the idea of making out a fortune from this El Dorado in *Mitteleuropa*.\textsuperscript{80} Also in this occasion, Shackleton persuaded some important investors but the deal followed all the others in his “limbo of faded hopes”.\textsuperscript{81}

Shackleton’s inventiveness and dynamic character made him a busy man in life, always engaged in projects and enterprises. Also Antarctica can be seen as one of his many projects, the only one that actually proved to be successful. His energy, ambition and desire of being successful and make a career at any cost also heavily indebted him and his family,\textsuperscript{82} showing a restless feature of his character: he was not a man that could easily submit to a simple, ordinary life. Although the people he involved in his projects could see traces of their possible ineffectiveness, they could not resist Shackleton’s persuasion and charm. This ability proved fundamental especially during his Antarctic expedition. His infectious enthusiasm and charm easily gained the trust and confidence of his men. Unlike Scott, who preferred to follow a “formal” hierarchy typical of the Royal Navy, Shackleton considered all the men his peers. The officers used to call him “Shack” or “Shackles”, instead the subordinates used to call him “Boss”,\textsuperscript{83} a form of closeness out of the ordinary for that time. He was himself an informal, enthusiastic, self-confident, benign and positively disordered figure with a tellingly ability of attracting people and persuading them. Unlike Scott, he was a trueborn leader; he was able to hide his insecurities and doubts and being optimistic and self-confident even in the worst situations. Due to his peculiar character and behaviour, he could easily make friends but also enemies. Certainly, his strong character also clashed with other people, but trusting him was irresistible.

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\textsuperscript{80} See R. Huntford, *op. cit.*, pp. 322-323, 333-335
\textsuperscript{81} *Ibid.*, p. 341
\textsuperscript{82} *Ibid.*
\end{flushright}
As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the history of exploration stressed on Scott and Shackleton’s rivalry. However, according to Ranulph Fiennes and his latest biography on Scott, the relationship between these two astonishing figures was completely different. The whole myth stemmed from Scott’s decision once Shackleton, Wilson and Scott himself came back from the southern journey of the Discovery expedition. Shackleton was heavily weakened by scurvy. Also Scott and Wilson were showing the first signs of the illness, however Shackleton was in the worst situation. At that time, the relieving ship Morning reached the coast of Antarctica in order to take back the whole team, but Scott had already decided to stay for another winter. Therefore, the relieving ship took back home those who did not wish to stay another year in the Antarctic and the sick comrades. Those who left the expedition willingly chose to leave, except for Shackleton. He was forced to leave because of his serious physical conditions. He was deeply sad and wounded in his pride, since the expedition in the Antarctic meant success and the possibility to made a career. Also Scott, in a letter to his mother, showed his sorrow in the decision he had to take, and he seemed sincerely sad for Shackleton’s departure.\(^{84}\) This episode started to gain importance when Lieutenant Albert Armitage, who at that time was second in command in the Discovery expedition, reported a terrible argument between Scott and Shackleton during the southern march, twenty-five years later. In addition, Armitage also reported his talk with the doctor of the expedition, Koettliz, who told him that the case history was not that bad and it was not necessary to invalid Shackleton home.\(^{85}\) These memories appearing many years after the expedition had a terrible consequence on Scott’s memory and on the legacy of his relationship with Shackleton. Even thou Armitage’s later recollections looked like a legend, they were taken as true by the subsequent generations of biographers. To this end, Ranulph Fiennes questions the credibility of such statements, reporting Reginald Skelton’s (Chief Engineer in the Discovery expedition) opinion of Armitage. He is described as not genuine, a “peculiar chap (with) that silly inferiority complex of the merchant


\(^{85}\) *Ibid.*
Navy for the Royal Navy”, unlucky in his private life and unpopular among the team, “His books are not always accurate, and...he is inclined to claim too much”. Did Armitage made the whole story up? For what purpose? Fiennes is inclined to think that he actually made up these anecdotes probably for jalousie and personal dissatisfactions, since the letters and journals of all the members of the Discovery expedition were thoroughly analysed, but “No single shred of evidence has come to light by the year 2003”. In addition, Scott accidentally favoured the myth by asking Armitage if he wanted to go back home in the *Morning*. Armitage thought that Scott’s offer was linked to the fact that, like Shackleton, he was part of the Merchant Navy too. However, Scott was asked by the Admiralty to persuade Armitage to come back home, since the reason was Armitage’s wife, who was linked with a brewing scandal that was bursting out. The situation was extremely delicate, but these episodes and misunderstandings accidentally provoked Scott and Shackleton’s lifelong rivalry.

The mythical enmity between the two explorers was fuelled also far away from the polar plateau. Once back, Scott was a national hero and Shackleton the one invalidated home for illness. Proud and ambitious, Shackleton thought of going back to Antarctica with his own expedition and in 1907 he announced to the RGS his plans. Scott was thinking of organising a new mission too, he had conquered a new field to operate and at that time the attention was mainly focused on the North Pole. Once he came back home in 1904, Scott also had news that Shackleton was not contemplating any other exploration. Shackleton’s announcement of his South Pole enterprise came in a difficult moment for Scott, since he was facing the difficulties that stemmed from a terrible accident in the Atlantic during a battle tactics drill. He was stressed and worried about his career. Things subsequently showed that he had no responsibility, but when he received the news of Schackleton’s plans he was still in a stressful and painful condition. He wrote a letter to Shackleton, saying that he

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91 *Ibid*, p. 139.
was planning to go south too but he asked him to change route, since he intended to work in the area of the Discovery expedition. In his letter Scott claimed that like many other Africa explorers and Peary in the North, who had a sort of right on the areas they discovered, this area of Antarctica was to be considered his own field of work and he was sure that it was just because things were not public that he planned to use his same route. Even though these claims could sound unfitting and out of place now, since Antarctica responds to the rules of International Law, at that time Antarctica, like other parts of the planet, was an unknown place still to be explored and to be mapped. It was not unusual that the first person to discover a place had also a claim on it for his own country but also for himself as a scientific and exploring “property”. This custom was especially used to prevent other countries’ attempts in the same area. As a matter of fact, the expeditions of the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration, where different nations were involved, all had different areas of action in the frozen continent. Although many letters were exchanged in the most friendly tone and Wilson was as a mediator between the two, the episode inevitably altered the relationship between Scott and Shackleton, since they were actually fighting for the same ambitious reason: the South Pole. Even a fictional story written by A. E. W. Mason, a famous writer of that time, suggested the rivalry between the two explorers. The Turnstile was partly based on their controversial relationship, where Scott was to be identified with the character of the Antarctic explorer Harry Rames, and Shackleton with the explorer Walter Hemming.

92 See E. Huxley, op. cit., pp. 139-140.
93 “The view an explorer may have, like birds and other animals, an exclusive right to his own territory, was shared by some others, for instance the Frenchman Jean Charcot, who was also planning an Antarctic journey. “There can be no doubt”, he stated, “that the best way to the Ple is by way of the Great ice Barrier, but this we regard as belonging to the English explorers, and I do not propose to trespass on other peoples’ grounds.” E. Huxley, op. cit., p. 187; “Cape Royds, British antarctic Expedition, Spetember 20, 1907, Professor David, DEAR SIR, - If you reach the Magnetic Pole, you will hoist the Union Jack on the spot, and take possesion of it on behalf of the above expedition for the British nation. When you are in the wetern mountains, please do the same at one place, taking possession of Victoria Landa s part of the British Empire. If economic minerals are found, take possession of teh area in the same way on my behalf as Commander of this expedition. Yours faithfully, (Sgd.) ERNEST H. SHACKLETON Commander” E. H. Shackleton, The Heart of the Antarctic, Ware, Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, 2007, p. 278.
94 See R. Fiennes, op. cit., p. 141.
95 See R. Huntford, op. cit., p. 306.
Scott and Shackleton inevitably became rivals, despite the mutual respect and this gave birth to a series of misunderstandings but also furnished material for the vicious interpretations of the journalists of the time and for the future generations of biographers.

Nevertheless many clues show that Scott and Shackleton were not the enemies for jalousie and even hatred that the myth bequeaths. For instance, Scott decided to appoint Shackleton as editor of *The South Polar Times*, the magazine written during the Discovery expedition. In addition he chose Shackleton as the third member of the southern march. If he had thought him a rival, he would have not appointed him such important roles. In addition, the journals of both Scott and Shackleton report that the relationship between the two during the southern march was good, with no sign of serious arguments.  

In my opinion, the myth of enmity could not be trivialized, as the journalists of that time and the subsequent storiography tend to do. The situation was much more complicated. The two main characters involved in this affair had a different attitude and behaviour, but the ambition was the same: the South Pole. Shackleton was very proud, ambitious, energetic and he wanted to make a career and be successful in life. The fact that Scott forced him to go back home was clearly a humiliation for him, especially because he was ill and physically unfit for the climate and the harsh conditions of the Antarctic. He was also teased by Scott’s way of defining him in his journals once published and during the conferences, defining him in the last part of the southern journey as an “invalid” or “poor patient”.  

Certainly, it was not fair by Scott, but probably the worst aspect was that he was sent back because of scurvy. Scurvy was the illness that generally burst out in all the expeditions to the poles and in long voyages both at that time and in the previous epochs; it was cause of shame when it affected the men of an expedition, because it was a sign of an inappropriate both physical and organisational preparation. Thus, for Shackleton being the only one

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96 See R. Huntford, *op. cit.*, p. 108
invalided home for scurvy meant also reducing the possibilities for making a career in Antarctic explorations.

It was Scott’s decision to send Shackleton home, as well as Shackleton’s disposition towards that episode and his illness that caused their alleged enmity? We would never know. But I think that possibly at the bottom of it there was the same great, unknown object: the Antarctic.
ANTARCTIC JOURNALS: THE MODELS

The journals and personal accounts I shall analyse in the following chapter stem from a long tradition of travel writing, which was inherited especially from the Victorian period. After the Napoleonic wars and the political instability of the first half of the 19th century, the English started to travel again in Europe, which represented an almost unknown place for the time. Travelling in the continent gave birth to the massive phenomenon of tourism, since both the higher classes with the traditional Grand Tour and the middle class could afford a visit of the most famous and fashionable countries of Europe, such as Italy and France. This new phenomenon gave birth to the so-called massive tourism, which was first experienced in England during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). Travel literature became very popular in the Victorian Age, because these numerous travels and journeys to the continent produced a great amount of texts that today are conventionally called travelogues. Together with personal accounts of these journeys the first tourist guides and illustrated books were published. However, the massive production and consequently its standardization pushed travellers to search for novelty both in what they visited and in what they told. Thus, certain parts of the continent such as the Alps, their inaccessible peaks and isolated valleys became a new destination to be explored and to be reported to the English audience. This meant a new style of travelling, which was more adventurous and lacking of those comforts that English tourists were accustomed to. In addition, it meant new information and new fields such as geography, geology, zoology and ethnography to be thoroughly investigated. As a matter of fact, in addition to the Royal Society, the oldest and finest English institution for natural sciences and geography, during the Victorian period various societies for the advancement of geographic and scientific knowledge were founded, such as the Royal Geographical Society (1830) and the Alpine Club (1857). Travelogues about excursions in the Alps and scientific studies on glaciers and geology became very popular in that period. But since exploring and discovering new places is a typical English feature, the interest in new, unknown and apparently inaccessible places
drew the attention of English explorers also outside Europe. In the matter of this, in the first volume of *The Alpine Journal* is stated:

> The Himalyas, which are daily becoming more accessible to enterprise, offer an unlimited field for adventure and scientific observation, not to mention the numerous ranges in all parts of the world, which the Englishman’s foot is destined to scale.\(^9^9\)

Certainly, the interest in the Himalaya was to its outset, but it is important to underline the self-confidence that English explorers demonstrated in engaging in the discovery and conquest of new mountains and peaks. Leslie Stephen, the eminent Victorian who was also president of the Alpine Club (1865-1868),\(^1^0^0\) wrote several essays on the mountains, recording his explorations in certain areas of the Alps. But in a posthumous collection of his essays on mountains named *Men, Books and Mountains*,\(^1^0^1\) he also testified the widespread tendency of searching for inaccessible places and in remote areas outside Europe such as the Himalaya, which started to attract the interest of the explorers of the time and gave birth to a true rush to the highest peak of the world that reached its apex in 1953, when the Everest was finally conquered.

New destinations meant new and fresh fields to be explored and a progressive improvement of knowledge. Many travelogues gradually investigated and submitted new ideas and theories about geology and glaciology, zoology and biology, social and ethnographical studies. Thus, travelogues became popular also to a higher instructed and specialized audience, especially on sciences. A typical travelogue is John Tyndall’s *Mountaineering in 1861*.\(^1^0^2\) His account focuses mainly on his summer climbs in the Alps but he dedicates various parts of the account to geology and to theories about glaciers and their effects on the origin of valleys. On this subject, a fundamental, very well-known and innovative text of the time was *Principles of Geology* (1830-3) by Charles Lyell. Lyell was a member of the Church of England but also wrote a famous treaty on geology in three


volumes, where he searches for the origins of the earth starting from the observation of the rocks, also introducing some new theories about glaciers. Such theories were the basis for the comparison of all the theories on geology and glaciology that were developed throughout the century. The Alpine Club had a very important role on the publication and popularisation of travelogues and studies, thanks to its annual review named *The Alpine Journal: a Record of Mountain Adventure and Scientific Observation*, where all the members of the club reported their experiences in the Alps and also outside Europe. In the first volume published in 1863-1864 a section is devoted to the ascent of Mount Bauld and an excursion in the Bay of Reykjanes, both in Iceland,\(^\text{103}\) and another section is devoted to the ascent of the extinct volcano El Viejo in Central America.\(^\text{104}\) As a demonstration of the importance of geology and glaciology for the time, a chapter is devoted to the discussion of the evidences of Lyell’s geological theories presented in his volume *Antiquity of Men*.\(^\text{105}\) Another important and successful publication of the Alpine Club was *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers; Being Excursions of Members of the Alpine Club*, a collection of accounts and observations in the Alps and outside the continent. The collection was so successful that many editions were published. In the second edition of 1862, published in two volumes, the editor and president of the Alpine Club enthusiastically states in the preface that thanks to the success of the first edition the number of members that joined the club had doubled and the number of accounts in the new edition had increased.\(^\text{106}\) He proudly says that thirty-two narratives were published, written by twenty-three non-professional authors but mountain climbers.\(^\text{107}\) The first part of the volume is devoted to an extensive tour of Iceland and nine accounts of ascents of inaccessible mountains are given with the description of ten new passes, with useful and practical information for those who would visit and explore these districts. It is important to stress the intent of these publications and of

\(^{103}\) See *The Alpine Journal*, pp. 360-364, 247-249.


\(^{107}\) *Ibid.*
travelogues in general, since the aim was not merely to promote and to spread knowledge but also to give practical advice and information to those who would explore and visit certain areas. The practical aim is clearly stated in the Preface to *The Alpine Journal*:

> It is intended to report all new and interesting mountain expeditions, whether in the Alps or elsewhere; to publish all such new items of scientific and geographical knowledge as can be procured from the various available sources; to give some account of all knew books treating of Alpine matters, and, generally, to record all facts and incidents which it may be useful to the mountaineer to know.\(^{108}\)

Moreover, the journal also contains a large section called “Alpine Notes and Queries” opened to “all persons interested in the matters with which we concerns ourselves.”\(^{109}\) The section provides a series of reports and contributions from non-members and non-specialists, who can also ask questions and submit mountain problems to be treated and discussed. In addition, a part of the journal offers a report on a discussion about ropes, axes and alpenstocks by the special committee of the Alpine Club,\(^{110}\) where also pictures of the items treated are provided. The practical and useful aim is also declared in the introduction to *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers*:

> Ten new passes are described in these volumes, which will be found of much practical utility and interest, in enabling mountaineers to explore many magnificent districts previously unknown, and to pass from one to another over glorious scenery hitherto unvisited.\(^{111}\)

Thus, spreading useful and practical knowledge was considered a fundamental duty, especially if it concerned the new fields of science that were strictly related to exploration and that spread during the Victorian period.

An important mountain travelogue, which marked a turning point in climbing for the time, was Edward Whymper’s *Scrambles Amongst the Alps* (1871). Edward Whymper was a legend of


English mountaineering and climbing, who first saw the Alps because he was sent to Switzerland by Longman publisher to take some illustrations of the beautiful landscapes of that area for the Alpine Club publication of *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers* (1862). The 20-year-old Whymper was a talented engraver and dreamt of becoming an Arctic explorer.\(^\text{112}\) However, when he went on his first scramble in the Alps in 1860 he fell in love with the sublime landscapes and inaccessible, unknown peaks, thus discovering his real passion: climbing. From 1860 to 1869 he frequently scrambled peaks and passes of the Alps in the border of Switzerland, Italy and France, discovering new routes and conquering various tops of the Alps, which were still virgin in exploration at that time. His most important enterprise was the ascent of the Matterhorn, which he attempted seven times. Finally, in 1865 he could conquer the top of the mountain everyone considered unclimbable, and solving one of the main mountain issues of the time.

Whymper’s *Scrambles amongst the Alps* is a travelogue of the Victorian Age, mainly dealing with the author’s attempt to conquer the top of the Matterhorn and the popular study of glaciers. The author clearly states the aim of his book in the Preface:

In endeavouring to make the book of some use to those who may wish to go mountain-scrambling, whether in the Alps or elsewhere, undue prominence, perhaps, has been given to our mistakes and failures; and it will doubtless be pointed out that our practice must have been bad if the principles which are laid down are sound, or that the principles must be unsound if the practice was good. We were not immaculate. Our blunders are not held up to be admired, or to be imitated, but to be avoided. These scrambles amongst the Alps were holiday excursions, and as such they should be judged.\(^\text{113}\)

Notwithstanding the useful and practical aim that the author has in his book, *Scrambles Amongst the Alps* provides the reader with a dense range of information about geology, anthropology, geography and also scientific data about the inventions of the time. He experiences and reports the

\(^\text{112}\) E. Whymper, *Scrambles Amongst the Alps*, Washington DC, 1871, National Geographic Adventure classic, 1871, p. IX.

\(^\text{113}\) E. Whymper, *Preface to Scrambles Amongst the Alps*, cit., p. 2.
novelties of the unbeaten tracks of this part of Europe to inform the English audience, but the text is also an opportunity for scientific discussion and debate on new theories. As a matter of fact, he frequently quotes from important contemporary figures in mountaineering, such as Ferdinand De Saussure and John Tyndall in order to support his theories but also to question them. Thus, the text is meant to be a guide but it also contributes to the scientific knowledge of the time.

As stated by Whymper, the text is clearly a useful point of departure for those who want to scramble. As a matter of fact, many descriptions of the equipment used in climbing are given also with the support of drawings and schemes, which are recurrent in the book. For example, Whymper describes the pickaxe used when he scrambled the passage of Col Dolent by giving an illustration of it\textsuperscript{114} or the tent he created after many experiences of raw sleeping in the mountains.\textsuperscript{115} Another piece of advice given to climbers supported by a picture is the instruction of the correct use of the rope.\textsuperscript{116}

To this end, a small part of the book is devoted to the use of the rope and the kind of ropes to be chosen in climbing. This is due to the fact that a terrible accident occurred after the conquering of the Matterhorn: four members of his team died because of the use of a weak rope. The accident shocked the English audience of the time so much that Queen Victoria herself questioned the value of climbing and whether this activity was to be considered against the law.\textsuperscript{117} The author also reports the experiences of other climbers. For example, he talks about the risks of crossing high snow in steep slopes and the consequent dangers of avalanches. In this case he reports the terrible accident of the alpine guide J. J. Bennen, who died trapped under an avalanche because the group had crossed high snow in the incorrect way.\textsuperscript{118} This event is quoted in the final part of the book, where three appendixes are provided in order to give a wider range of information and practical examples to his reader, even though the facts told in those pages are not part of the author’s direct experience.

\textsuperscript{114} E. Whymper, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 324.
\textsuperscript{115} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 92,93.
\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 350.
\textsuperscript{117} A. Brandt, “Introduction” to E. Whymper, \textit{op. cit.}, p. xiii.
\textsuperscript{118} E. Whymper, \textit{op. cit.}, Appendix A, pp. 383-385.
The book also gives an accurate and interesting series of geographical data, which frequently mingles with anthropological notions. Whymper made use of the Longman maps for his account but he also helped out to outline part of the mountains, which were still unknown at the time. As a matter of fact, many schemes of slopes and peaks are present in the text, especially about the Matterhorn. For example, the first pages of chapter II, The Ascent of Mount Pelvoux, are devoted to a precise geographical description of the area, with mounts and peaks, the position of the valleys, and a brief account of the various attempts to conquer the tops of this area in history. As previously stated, Whymper is a legend of early Alpine exploration, and the following passage witnesses how limited the knowledge of these areas at that time was:

The district is still very imperfectly known; there are probably many valleys, and there are certainly many summits which have never been trodden by the feet of tourists or travellers; but in 1861 it was even less known. Until quite recently there was, practically, no map of it; General Bourcet’s, which was the best that was published, was completely wrong in its delineation of the mountains, and was frequently incorrect in regards to paths or roads.

The best example of geography that mingles with anthropology is chapter XVI, On the Valley of Aosta and the First Ascent of the Garndes Jorasses. In the very first pages of the chapter, details about the ibex and how this animal is protected in the area are given. Moreover, the author focuses his attention on a peculiarity of the valley: crétinism. This social issue was widely spread in the valley and in the book it is defined as: “the highest stage of Idiocy, although it differs from it, in having a vitiated state of the body, in conjunction with the loss of the faculties of the mind.” The analysis of this phenomenon gives the author the opportunity to discuss the medical theories of the time. It was formerly thought that the disease came from the habitual drinking of snow and glacier water. However, one of the authorities in the Alpine studies, De Saussure, opposed to this idea the

119 E. Whymper, op. cit., pp. 75, 114.
120 Ibid., pp. 21-24.
121 Ibid., p. 22.
122 Ibid., pp. 273-319.
123 G. S. Blakie, On Crétinism, quoted by E. Whymper, op. cit., p. 277.
fact that crétinism was actually unknown in those places where the population was dependant to these supplies of water, and this commonly assumed theory may stem from the confusion with another disease, the goitre, which was thought to be an incipient stage of crétinism.\textsuperscript{124} In addition, De Saussure identifies heat and stagnation of air as the main causes. This is due mainly to the morphology of the valley. But Whymper tries to correct the De Saussure’s statement, claiming that:

\begin{quote}
I attribute the oppression which strangers say they feel, in the middle of the valley, not to stagnation of air but to absence of shadow, in consequence of the valley’s course being east to west; and believe, that if the force of the wind were observed and estimated, (...) it would be found that there is no deficiency of motion in the air throughout the entire year.\textsuperscript{125}
\end{quote}

Another theory identified intemperance, poor living, foul habits and scarce personal hygiene as the causes of cretinism. Intemperance of various kinds was one of the main causes attributed to insanity. As a matter of fact, the author quotes two main figures of the field of his time, Dr. Christison and Dr. Jarvis, who were concerned about the origins of insanity and its relation with intemperance of living.\textsuperscript{126} Notwithstanding the fact that genetics had not been discovered, the author provides a new and modern answer to the origins of crétinism, which are recognized as due to the isolation of the population in the centre of the valley and, consequently, as one of the damages stemming from intermarriages. Whymper describes the theory in an astonishingly simple, correct and modern way, supporting his idea with studies of the time on the subject:

\begin{quote}
The large numbers of persons who are found in this valley having the same surnames is a proof of the well-known fact that there is little or no emigration from the valley, and that there is an indefinite amount of intermarriage between the natives. It is conjectured that the continuance of these conditions throughout a long period has rendered the population more or less consanguineous, and that we see in cretinism an example, upon a large scale, of the evil effects of alliances of kindred.\textsuperscript{127}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{124} E. Whymper, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 278, 279.
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 281.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 282.
\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 283.
In addition, the author explains why the disease is concentrated in the central part of the valley and it mostly affects the lower classes:

The disease is commonly found in the valleys, on islands or in other circumscribed areas, in which circulation is restricted or the inhabitants are non-migratory; and it is rare on plains, where the circulation is free. (...) “Why then are not the tributary valleys if the Valley of Aosta full of cretins?” the answer is, that these lateral valleys are comparatively sterile, and are unable to support their population (...). Large numbers annually leave, and do not return (...). There is a constant circulation and introduction of new blood. (...) These conjecture seems to explain, better than the other guesses, why it is that crétinism has so strong a hold upon the lower classes, while it leaves the upper ones almost untouched; for the former are most likely to intermarry with people of their own district, whilst the latter are under no sort of compulsion in this respect. 128

It is interesting to underline that Whymper supports his theory with studies of his time in new fields such as genetics, which were on the early stage of investigation. Thus, according to the author geography proves to be strictly related to the anthropological matters, as in the case of the valley of Aosta.

As previously stated, during the Victorian Age, geology was a widely investigated subject. At the time, numerous scientific treatises were produced about mountains, and rocks were also studied from an aesthetical point of view. For example, John Ruskin, who was a well-known art critic of the time, devoted volume IV of his Modern Painters to the beauty and morphology of the Alps, by giving the title Mountain Beauty (1856). He investigated the mountains not only geologically but also aesthetically. Also Whymper devotes part of his account to geology, focussing his attention on the study of glaciers. Whymper’s dream was to become an Arctic explorer, and after the journeys in the Alps he also travelled twice to Greenland in order to study the glaciers of the area. But he first encountered them in his early scrambles in Switzerland in the 1860’s. Two main parts of the book are devoted to this subject: chapter VI, The Val Tournanche- Direct Pass From Breuil to Zermatt (Breuiljoch)- Zermatt- First Ascent of the Grand Tournalin129, and again chapter XVI, On the

128 E. Whymper, op. cit., p. 283.
129 Ibid., pp. 117-150.
Valley of Aosta and the First Ascent of the Grandes Jorasses.\textsuperscript{130} In chapter VI, Whymper shows to the reader the process of erosion exercised by atmospheric agents and glaciers on rocks and valleys, providing notion of geology thanks to various schemes and drawings, such as the shape of the rocks worn by water,\textsuperscript{131} the striations produced by glacier-action\textsuperscript{132} and the outline of a landscape covered in ice and the effects of its erosion.\textsuperscript{133} Whereas in chapter XVI he discusses the origin of valleys and to what extent the glaciers contribute to this phenomenon. To this end, he discusses John Tyndall’s theories about the glaciers, both agreeing with him on the great power of erosion produced by the movement of the glaciers but at the same time he argues on the fact that they are the main cause of the origin of valleys. John Tyndall was a prominent 19\textsuperscript{th}-century physicist, who attempted the ascent of the Matterhorn in 1861, a year after Whymper’s arrival in the Alpine region of France and Switzerland. The report of his scrambles is given in Mountaineering in 1861: A Vacation Tour (1862), which devotes chapter VIII completely to the study of the movement of glaciers in the surroundings of the Matterhorn\textsuperscript{134}. He had previously published a little volume called Glaciers of the Alps (1860), where all his studies and theories on the movement of glaciers are reported. Again, in order to support his statements Whymper provides schemes and drawings, since his investigation and development of thesis is founded on the attentive observation. As a matter of fact, the author states: “It is one of the few things which can be said in favour of mountaineering alone (a practice which has little besides to commend it), that it awakes a man’s faculties, and makes him observe.”\textsuperscript{135} Observation is the main tool of research for Whymper, who seems to be influenced by The Voyage of the Beagle (1839) by Charles Darwin, a revolutionary masterpiece, which is both a scientific review on biology, geology and anthropology and a travel report. Like Darwin, Whymper proves to be a great observer, and his artistic education played a very important

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., pp. 273-319.
\textsuperscript{131} See E. Whymper, op. cit., p. 125.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., p. 126.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., p. 128.
\textsuperscript{134} J. Tyndall, op. cit., pp. 67-74.
\textsuperscript{135} E. Whymper, op. cit., p. 97.
role on that. Again, this part of the book proves to be more than a travel account: adventure becomes a tool of transmission and discussion of new scientific theories for the English audience.

As a typical work of the Victorian travel literature, the text is provided with many illustrations. As the author states in his Preface, the use of images are a way to put a remedy when the description is not enough. The engravings are about landscapes, mountains and valleys, but also people, tools and equipment, rocks, moment of the scrambles and, sometimes, funny episodes. He also provides schemes and graphics in order to support his theories. Since Whymper is describing and giving new notions to the English audience, he sometimes makes reference to elements of British culture in order to help the process of understanding. For example, in order to make the size of the icicles in the Moming-Pass more vivid he states:

We sat down and refreshed the inner man; keeping our eyes on the towering pinnacles of ice under which we had passed; but which, now, were almost beneath us. Without a preliminary sound, one of the largest-as high as the Monument at London Bridge-fell upon the slope below.136

In the Moming-Pass the team had to face a thick fog, which is described as “many varieties of vapour - from the quality of Scotch mist to that of a London fog”137. Moreover, he also witnesses the cultural clash between English customs and behaviour abroad and how the local inhabitants perceive them. In this passage he talks about a group of ladies travelling in the Rhone Valley:

A party of English tourists had passed up the valley a short time before with a mule. The party numbered nine- eight young women and a governess. The mule carried their luggage, and was ridden by each in turn. The peasants-themselves not accustomed to overload their beasts- were struck with astonishment at the unwonted sight; and made comments, more free than welcome to the English ears, on the nonchalance with which young miss sat, calm and collected, on the miserable beast, while it was struggling under her weight, combined with that of the luggage.138

137 Ibid., p. 236.
Whymper knows English travel habits well. Travelling to Europe, especially Italy was very fashionable at the time and the idea of travelling in groups became very popular. Thus, the everlasting debate on the differences between tourist and traveller took place.\(^{139}\) In this passage the author seems to be sympathetic with the inhabitants of the valley, as he tries to understand the local customs and he seems to agree with the porters’ mocking the ladies’ respectable behaviour since they are not accustomed to it and perceive it totally out of place. However, Whymper tells this episode at the very beginning of his adventures in the Alps, when he is still more a tourist than a traveller. His sympathetic attitude towards the people and the culture of these new places sometimes turns into suspicion for what is new and unknown, as in the following passage:

> The massive walls of the convent were a welcome sight as I waded through the snow-beds near the summit of the pass, and pleasant was also the courteous salutation of the brother who bade me enter. He wondered at the weight of my knapsack, and I at the hardness of their bread. The saying that the monks make the toast in the winter that they give to tourists in the following season in not founded on truth; the winter is their most busy time of the year.\(^{140}\)

The author makes reference to a bias on the bread offered by the monks in these areas, wondering if it is true or not; vice versa the monk looks sceptically to Whymper’s knapsack. They look at each other with curiosity and suspicion, but soon the cultural biases are broken. This attitude recurs frequently in the text, especially when a contact between the author and the innkeepers is established. On the contrary, the relationships he establishes with his guides and the teammates prove to be successful almost all the time, as the problems that they have to face during climbing helps to overcome cultural boundaries and favours fellowship.

> The novelty represented by the information collected by Whymper is also evident in the language he uses. The use of language acquired a special role in the Victorian Age to introduce new areas of experience. As just an example we can quote Elizabeth Gaskell, who represents the clash

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\(^{139}\) See J. Buzard, “Tourist and Traveller”, *The Unbeaten Track*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1993, pp.18-79.

\(^{140}\) E. Whymper, *op. cit.*, p.15
between the rural and the industrial worlds through the act of giving names to a new reality in her novel *North and South* (1855). As a consequence new words and expressions are created. Similarly, Whymper and his colleagues import mountaineering terminology from German and French in order to be as much precise as possible in what they say, since the English dictionary lacks the mountain word-stock they need. In the text, the reader frequently finds words such as *séracs, couloir, bergschrund* and *arête*, which are also present in Tyndall’s writings. In addition, the tone and the way the information is delivered in Whymper’s text are very similar to Ruskin’s *Compact Crystallines* in volume IV of *Modern Painters*, since the language is clear, direct but not especially when a topic is introduced, and it grows more technical when the author gains the core of the issue. Furthermore, the author’s method of research clearly reminds of Darwin’s way of argumentation, starting from the direct experience and a careful observation of phenomena.

The text proves to be more than a simple account of scrambles in summer holiday. Many elements of the Victorian Age and culture are present, but the most important point is that the text is also a way to improve both the cultural and scientific knowledge of the English audience of the time, by using adventure as a tool of discussion and transmission of novelties. In addition, it perfectly works as a model for the journals of exploration of the time and for the posthumous accounts, since the same method of direct observation of the phenomenon, the confrontation with theories from the specialized sources of the time and the simple way of reporting also difficult scientific ideas and processes are typical features also of the journals written in the Antarctic.

However, the father and the model *par excellence* of travelogues and journals of exploration is Charles Darwin’s *The Voyage of the Beagle* (1836). Notwithstanding it was written at the very beginning of Queen Victoria’s reign, it presents the main features of exploration accounts of the Victorian period. *The Voyage of the Beagle* is mainly known to be the account that gave Darwin of the stock of information necessary to write his *Origin of Species*, as it is often maintained, with some simplification, that Darwin started to think about the evolutionary theory and natural selection
principle soon after he visited the Galapagos Islands.\textsuperscript{141} Actually, as it is known, Darwin was not
the first to discover the theory of evolution. The idea of the ‘transmutation’ of species had a long
history that Darwin knew very well. To be more precise, he was the first to observe and promulgate
the environmental mechanism of preservation and destruction that causes competition between
species, which he called natural selection.\textsuperscript{142}

Darwin after the three years spent on the \textit{HMS Beagle} travelled no more. But during the voyage
with young Captain Fitzroy, he developed the most innovative and revolutionary idea of all times.
The voyage was meant to take two years, but in the end it turned out to last from 1831 to 1834. As
said in the Introduction, he went on board the ship because the Captain had asked for an additional
scientist, possibly a naturalist who would carry out the scientific research work on board and have
intellectual talks with him during the long two-years voyage. At that time, Darwin had abandoned
his study of medicine and was undertaking a career in the Church of England, so that he could
spend more time on his favourite subject: natural history. He acquired his notions of natural history
from his tutors in Cambridge, who were scientists but also churchmen that “saw God’s purpose in
nature’s design”.\textsuperscript{143} Thus, Rev. John Henslow, Darwin’s former professor of botany, heard about
Captain Fitzroy’s request and informed his former student, who went on board the ship after his
father’s initial opposition.\textsuperscript{144}

The journal is a richly speculative narrative that gives a thorough observation and description of
geological, biological, zoological, anthropological and partly geographical matters mainly
concerning South America, but also Cape de Ver Islands, Galapagos Islands, Thaiti, New Zealand
and Australia. During the voyage, Darwin reported all the observations and information he could

\textsuperscript{142} See D. Amigoni, \textit{Introduction} to C. Darwin, \textit{The Voyage of the Beagle}, Ware, Wordsworth Classics of
\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Ibid.}, p. vii.
\textsuperscript{144} \textit{Ibid.}, p. vii-viii.
gather in notebooks and diaries. These and the careful library research he made became the raw material he later organized and selected in order to write and publish *The Voyage of the Beagle*.

It is important to focus our attention on Darwin’s sources and models. During the Victorian Period, travel literature comprised a genre second only to novels in popularity, therefore Darwin was well learned in literature of travel and exploration, especially with books of explorers in South America and naturalists of the time. William Burchell’s *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa* (1822) was a two-volume account of exploration in the continental Africa that might have suggested Darwin the genre to be chosen for his account: the journal. The narrative style seems to be indebted to Alexander von Humboldt’s *Personal Narrative* (1814-49) in South America, which Darwin frequently quotes also as a source. Humboldt brought an “unprecedented holistic scientism to its task of observing and recording features such as geological structures, soil, climate, vegetation, zoology, human communities and their language”. Humboldt mixed the empirical reasoning with the imaginative and poetical language, which had a strong influence on Darwin’s narrative and method. Lyell and his *Principles of Geology* had the most influential effect on Darwin, who read and studied the three volumes while he was travelling. He used Lyell as the basis for his theories, especially in the one of the creation of mountain ranges and the presence of shells in the highest peaks through a slow and constant movement of the tectonic plates. Throughout the book he frequently quotes from scientists of the time in order to support or confront his theories.

Darwin did not considered himself a writer, but a scientist. As a matter of fact, he was very concerned about organizing and delivering all the information he collected during the voyage. The difficulty stood in reporting all the scientific material in a lively and grasping way, in order to keep his reader attentive and interested, since the account was to be accessible to the widest possible audience. The first thing to be developed was a storyline that Darwin decided that should not be in a chronological order of the events, but based on the union of the experiences in a single episode or

146 Ibid., p. x.
147 Ibid.
section of the book. The time of the voyage turns from a chronological sequence into a spatial and geographical structure, without altering the events.\textsuperscript{148} To the matter of this, John Tallmadge in his essay on the shaping of Darwin’s \textit{Voyage of the Beagle} draws a scheme presenting the line of the events as they are reported in the diaries and notebooks confronting them to the order given in the book. For example, the visit to the Falkland Islands took place in March 1833 and in March 1834, but in the published account the visit is reported in a single section of the book, at chapter IX.\textsuperscript{149} Another meaningful aspect to be considered was the voice of the storyteller. At the time, the personality of the traveller was as important as the material to be reported. Thus, Darwin had to present an engaging storyteller and use a grasping style, in order to enable the audience to sympathize with him. To this end, the use of the language had a very important role. Throughout the book, Darwin frequently uses humour and funny language, especially when he attempts something dangerous or difficult. For example, he reports his attempts of using the \textit{bolas} when he visited Argentina and he spent some time with the gauchos:

One day, as I was amusing myself by galloping and whirling the balls round my head, by accident the free one struck a bush, and its revolving motion being thus destroyed, it immediately fell to the ground, and like magic caught one hind leg of my horse; the other ball was then jerked out of my hand, and the horse fairly secured. Luckily he was an old practiced animal and knew what it meant; otherwise he would probably have kicked till he had thrown himself down. The gauchos roared with laughter; they cried out that they had seen every sort of animal caught, but had never before seen a man caught by himself.\textsuperscript{150}

His self-irony and, in this case, his clumsiness convey a more vivid image of Darwin as a traveller; the narrative is lively, since the humorous episodes liven up the scientific parts of the book, stressing the accessibility of the account and keeping the attention of the audience. These strategies enable the reader to be sympathetic with him. In another passage, Darwin uses funny language while referring to the species of birds that inhabited the surroundings of Areco, by saying that

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{149} J. Tallmadge, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 332. \\
\textsuperscript{150} C. Darwin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 46. 
\end{flushright}
“there is little interest in passing over these tracts, for they are inhabited by few animals or birds, excepting the bizcacha and his friend the little owl.”\textsuperscript{151} Or, referring to the bird, the Chileans call \textit{turco}, he says: “On first seeing it, one is tempted to exclaim, ‘A vilely stuffed specimen has escaped from some museum, and has come to life again!’”\textsuperscript{152} His affectionate way of making fun of animals is frequently used throughout the book, which shows both his interest in the animals he is studying and also the profound respect and care for nature and its living beings.

The method of analysis of all the data he collected in the voyage is structured in the simplest form he could use, because Darwin’s aim was to report all his observations and theories to the widest possible audience. For clarity’s sake at the beginning of every chapter he inserts a series of keywords under the main title of the section, in order to disclose the topics he discusses to the reader.

Darwin spent several periods of his voyage inland and following the course of the Beagle on foot. In doing this, he could explore the interior parts of the South America, observe the differences in landscape, climate, vegetation and manners from the countries he visited and, thus, reporting the curious and new information for the English audience. Novelty represented an important point, since the Victorian audience expected to read something useful, interesting, but most of all, new. The unknown had a great appeal on the readers of the time.

It is important to focus our attention on Darwin’s spirit of observation. While ashore, he spent a lot of time observing rocks and the conformation of valleys and mountains. The passage that follows is taken from chapter VII, while Darwin is making an excursion to Santa Fé:

\begin{quote}
I was delayed here for five days, and employed myself in examining the geology of the surrounding country, which was very interesting. We here see at the bottom of the cliffs, beds containing sharks’ teeth and sea-shells of extinct species, passing above into an indurated marl, and from that into the red clayey earth of the pampas, with its calcareous concretions and the bones of terrestrial quadrupeds. This vertical section clearly tells us of a large bay of pure salt-
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{151} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{152} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 258.
water, gradually encroached on, and at last converted into the bed of a muddy estuary, into which floating carcasses were swept.  

The description of the rocks is minute and precise; it seems as if he was ‘reading’ the carefully observed cliffs, as he recognises the various strata following the order of stratification and showing the peculiarities of each of them. He also suggests what the place looked like years ago, a salt bay that turned into an estuary where the fossils were trapped, and at the same time he explains why the fossils are there. The book presents many passages like this, which reports the different scientific processes with astonishing simplicity. Another example of observation is the description of the river Santa Cruz:

It was generally from three to four hundred yards broad, and in the middle about seventeen feet deep. The rapidity of the current, which in its whole course runs at the rate of from four to six knots an hour, is perhaps its most remarkable feature. The water is of a fine blue colour, but with a slight milky tinge, and not so transparent as at first sight would have been expected. It flows over a bed of pebbles, like those which compose the beach of the surrounding plains. It runs in a winding course through a valley, which extends in a direct line westward.

Darwin starts his description of the river from the dimensions, he then moves from a hydrographical observation reporting also the main colour of the water and the composition of the bed, by comparing it to the conformation of the beaches in the surrounding area. He also spends few lines in the description of the valley. It is clear that his aim is to report as many data as possible in order to improve the knowledge of the time on this geographical area, but at the same time he wants that knowledge to be accessible.

The accessibility of information is one of the main aims to be fulfilled in the *Voyage of the Beagle*. Sometimes, in order to help the reader to get a picture of a scene Darwin makes comparisons with something the audience knows. For example, in order to make the call of a small bird more vivid he

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says: “It utters a low note, like the clinking together of two small stones”\textsuperscript{155}. He frequently uses elements of English culture and environment, such as the description of the geography where the Beagle Channel flows, which “it may be compared to the valley of Lochness in Scotland, with its chain of lakes and friths.”\textsuperscript{156} The accessibility also passes through comparison, especially when customs and manners of a country are involved. Once in Chile did Darwin frequently visit the mining districts and spends a few words about Chilean miners and their habits and customs. He talks about they thoughtlessness and lack of care in earning and saving money, which he compares to the sailors’:

Their daily food is found them, and they acquire no habits of carefulness; moreover, temptation and the means of yielding to it are placed in their power at the same time. On the other hand, in Cornwall, and some other parts of England, where the system of selling part of the vein is followed, the miners, from being obliged to act and think for themselves, are a singularly intelligent and well-conducted set of men.\textsuperscript{157}

The comparison with the system adopted in England clarifies the conditions and the measures adopted in Chile but at the same time confirms that the English system works better than the one adopted by Chileans.

This comparison made by Darwin shows a typical Victorian sense of superiority.\textsuperscript{158} At the time England ruled the world both economically and socially, since its numerous colonies and the multiple international relations allowed the English to spread also their cultural models. The description of the various local populations Darwin encounters during his voyage frequently focuses on differences and similarities with English customs. For example, the differences between civilized and uncivilized men are shown by Darwin as follows: “the difference between savage and civilized men: it is greater than between a wild and domesticated animal, inasmuch as in man there

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., p. 132.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., p. 207.
\textsuperscript{157} C. Darwin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 323.
\textsuperscript{158} See J. Tallmadge, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 342.
is a greater power of improvement”. On the one hand, it demonstrates that the stage of human civilization and society follows the same steps of animal societies, thus also human beings respond to natural rules as the animals. In that sense, Darwin applied his evolutionist theory also to the degrees of human civilisation, which represented a great revolution for the time. On the other hand the comparison could sound rude, since it is clear that the wild animals are the inhabitants of the areas he visits and they are the result of the cultural models they received from European colonizers. However, Darwin observed and collected the data also about the populations he met first of all with the eye of the scientist. The inhabitants of South America probably seemed to Darwin in a lower stage of cultural evolution. Thus, in my opinion he also indirectly criticized the Spanish cultural models that were brought in that continent. However, Darwin is not simply a scientist but he is also the product of English society, which at that time was unquestionably one of the most developed countries of the world. A clear example of the power of civilisation is given in chapter VII, while ascending the River Plata: “How different would have been the aspect of this river if English colonists had by good fortune first sailed up the Plata! What noble towns would now have occupied its shores!” The superiority of his country is stressed by the efficiency and splendour of the towns that could have been built along the river. To a certain extent, English cultural model is Darwin’s point of departure for comparison. He always searches for similarities and differences in the manners and behaviour of the local populations starting from his own habits. As a matter of fact, when he meets the forms and elements that resemble English customs, he praises them because they work also as evidence showing the degree of civilization of the local population. On the contrary, when customs are too different from his, he tends to neglect or, in certain cases, to despise them. For example, when talking about the inhabitants of Argentina he reports:

The gauchos, or countrymen, are very superior to those who reside in the towns. The gaucho is invariably most obliging, polite, and hospitable: I did not meet with even one instance of rudeness or inhospitality. He is modest, both respecting himself and country, but at the same

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159 C. Darwin, *op. cit.*, p. 196
time a spirited, bold fellow. (...) The character of the higher and more educated classes who reside in the towns, partakes, but perhaps in a lesser degree, of the good parts of the gaucho, but is, I fear, stained by many vices of which he is free. (...) On first entering society in these countries, two or three features strike one as particular remarkable. The polite and dignified manners pervading every rank of life, the excellent taste displayed by the women in their dresses and the equality amongst all ranks. (...) Many officers in the army can neither read nor write, yet all meet in society as equals. (...) Nevertheless the absence of gentlemen by profession appears to an Englishman something strange.161

Politeness and hospitality are highly appreciated features, which are also the main characteristics of English culture. But the element of trouble is that these high features are present in the lower classes of society and they lack in the most educated. Another trait stressed by the author is the equality of the parties, but at the same time it sounds strange since there are no real gentlemen as in England. Therefore, when English qualities are found in other nations they are meet with pleasure and also pride, since it is a evidence showing the degree of civilization of the country and a feature in common between the two cultures. Another case showing the importance of hospitality and politeness is given while making an excursion to Colonia del Sacramento. Darwin stresses the miserable conditions of the place where they slept and the poverty of the people, however the extreme simple courtesy of the hosts was highly appreciated.162 Yet, when miserable and poor conditions are not accompanied by courtesy, the author dismisses them and tends to despise such terrible conditions that in England would surely not be possible: “I am sure no cottage or hovel in England could be found in a state so utterly destitute of every comfort”.163

Darwin is a bearer of Victorian conventions, and it is widely proved by his attitude towards the local populations he meets and also towards what the European colonizers had done in South America. Thus, Darwin is a patriotic traveller, since he makes comparisons with other cultures but always putting his own model on a privileged position. He is a learned Victorian Englishman, who knows perfectly where England stands both economically and culturally, from a global point of

161 Ibid., p. 149-150.
162 C. Darwin, op. cit., p. 142.
163 Ibid., p. 23.
view; his attitude is a national self-confidence typical of Victorian culture, which unmistakably takes the form of English superiority to the detriment of the other cultures.\textsuperscript{164}

The figure of Darwin as a traveller has many roles in the text. His attitude and way of presenting himself as a traveller is not focused on exceptional enterprises or heroic situations. On the contrary, he is always understated and sometimes self-ironic; his aim is not to display his qualities and deeds but to enable the reader to get involved in the narrative and, in so doing, to sympathize with him. As a matter of fact, Tallmadge states: “readers – and particularly general readers - will most likely engage with the scientific material in proportions as they are engaged by the personality of the scientist.”\textsuperscript{165} Thus, the personality of Darwin as a storyteller and a traveller is fundamental for grasping the attention of the audience and in this way transmitting all the information he has collected during his voyage. In addition, in the \textit{Voyage of the Beagle} the author has also the power to enhance and make the figure of the traveller respectable. His ideas and theories are thought to respond universally, that is, to be used and applied in general and in the simplest way because they are deduced from nature itself. In addition, his confronting, criticizing, quoting and referring to the scientists and the studies of the time helps the author to justify and confirm the solid basis of his theories and ideas. Studying and investigating nature both as a scientist and a traveller enables Darwin to enhance and ennoble the process of discovery. Hence, adventure becomes a tool of scientific investigation; it serves the useful and noble purpose of science and universal improvement. Therefore, the figure of the scientist-traveller is recognized and legitimized, since adventure takes a responsible role due to its function of serving the scientific cause. This way of seeing adventure is also the point of departure for the numerous missions to Antarctica at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, which proves that Darwin’s model played a very important role.

The \textit{Voyage of the Beagle} can be compared with Whymper’s \textit{Scrambles amongst the Alps} for certain aspects the work investigates and also for the use of the language. Like Whymper, Darwin

\textsuperscript{164} See J. Tallmadge, op. cit., p. 342.
\textsuperscript{165} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 340.
studied the glaciers and their processes of erosion. In addition, in the wide section devoted to glaciers, Darwin talks about the slowly descent of glaciers, the snow-line and the perpetual frozen state of the Antarctic islands.\textsuperscript{166} Darwin was fascinated by the great amount of ice of Patagonia and the huge glaciers in the Andes. To this end, he also makes comparisons with phenomena and quotes studies about the Arctic, such as the references to Scoresby’s \textit{Arctic Regions}.\textsuperscript{167}

Like Whymper, also Darwin spent part of his voyage on scrambling, especially when he was in Chile in the Andes range.

In addition, also Darwin lacked the word-stock for certain features and elements that are typical of the places he visited. For example, he keeps the terms \textit{acienda} (a huge farm and estate), gauchos, \textit{amancaes} (yellow lilies), \textit{huacas} (burial mounds). The lack of technical words is also present in the Antarctic journals, since Captain Scott in his \textit{Preface} to his first journal takes care of providing the reader with a small list of words with their explanation in order to help the reader to understand what he is referring to in his narrative.\textsuperscript{168}

Moreover, like many Victorian travelogues, both Darwin and Whymper use pictures and images throughout the text, in order to provide the reader with a visual element of what the authors are describing. However, in Darwin’s text the number of images inserted (fourteen pictures, with schemes and maps included) are fewer than in Whymper’s account (one hundred and twenty-four images). The difference does not simply stand in the quantity of images but also in the quality and in the subjects represented. As Whymper was an artist, his drawings are finer and rich in details. He favours landscapes, since he was asked to illustrate the Alpine area by Longman, and he also devotes some images to mountain tools and their correct use. On the contrary, Darwin’s drawings are focused mainly on animals to the detriment of landscapes. The drawings of animals are very detailed, on the contrary landscapes are simpler and not so fine as Whymper’s. Furthermore,

\textsuperscript{166} C. Darwin, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 230-240.
\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 303.
Darwin prefers inserting schemes rather than pictures, especially about certain geological processes, such as the volcanoes\textsuperscript{169} as Whymper does about glaciers. Probably the difference in the quantity of images depends on the years when the journals were produced: Darwin writes at the early stage of the Victorian period, while Whymper writes when the conventions of Victorian travel literature are already established. However, despite the thirty-five year gap between the two journals, the differences are not so marked. The same can be seen in the journals to Antarctica of the first decade of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, which are not so different from the two models here analysed, so that we can say that there was no substantial change in the form of the explorers’ accounts. Starting from the analysis of my corpus, I can assume that the traditions, conventions and main features of travel literature did not take an entire epoch to be established, but the process of codification was rapid and contagious. Surely, this genre has its roots also in the preceding epochs, but the great amount of material written throughout the Victorian period favoured the creation of standards to be followed in writing about travels also for the following epochs.

\textsuperscript{169} See C. Darwin, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 447, 449 - 450.
ANTARCTIC JOURNALS: SCOTT’S ODYSSEY AND SHACKLETON’S PERSONAL ATTEMPT

Antarctic explorations were missions that generally turned into veritable odysseys. This is what emerges from the reading of the journals that were written and published after the long periods spent in the Frozen Continent. In this chapter the focus shall be mainly on Captain Robert Falcon Scott’s narrative The Voyage of the Discovery (1907) and Ernest Shackleton’s The Heart of the Antarctic (1909). I shall analyse the main similarities and differences in content and narrative style of the journals, comparing them with Darwin’s and Whymper’s journals.

Following a chronological order, the first journal to be analysed is Scott’s The Voyage of the Discovery. The book, which was published in two volumes in 1907, was immediately successful. This was due to the target audience he chose. Like Darwin, Scott wants to reach as many readers as he can, but he is firstly interested in giving useful information to the future generations of polar explorers. As he states in his Preface, the polar records studied for the expedition were useful but they lack in details, which would have been extremely useful to the members of the expedition while in Antarctica. For this reason, “the first object in writing an account of a Polar voyage was the guidance of future voyages; the first duty of the writer was to his successors.”

His main aim is to keep in mind this intent and, consequently, to report as many details as he can. He knows that the amount of details given are important to future explorers but they can be boring for the ordinary reader, “As, however, such matter is more or less massed into certain portions of the book, I take comfort for reflecting that the interested reader will have no difficulty in avoiding such parts as he may be consider tedious.” It is clear that his target audience is one made of future explorers and readers with different backgrounds, from the more to the less learned. To this end, he avoids using technicalities where it is possible, but he underlines the poverty of the English language to describe

171 Ibid., p. 9.
ice and snow conditions. Thus, he provides the reader with the definition of some technical words such as névé, sastruga or ice-foot, which he could not avoid using in the text. Scott’s main intent is recalled also in the closing pages of his book, while he reminds the reader that his narrative aims to focus on the events and results of the expedition and not on the hearty welcome of his countrymen back in England. To write the account of his expedition cost Scott many efforts and many months of revision of his work. Thus, he promptly informs his reader that he is not a writer and, with a sort of captatio benevolentiae, he wants to gain the sympathy of the audience by showing that the style of the book would be surely pardoned by his benevolent and interested reader. The method used to show his modesty but at the same time his confidence, also in the reader, is very intelligent and elegant:

I make no apology for the style or absence of style of this book; I have tried to tell my tale as simply as possible, and I launch it with the confidence that my readers will be sufficiently indulgent to its faults in remembering the literary inexperience of its writer.

There is a feature that is common to many explorers, which is the complete absence of predilection for the task. Scott tells his reader that he took command of the expedition almost by chance, he defines his story “tame”, and he spent a lot of time in collecting and learning useful information about polar exploration and the scientific subjects, which were to be investigated in loco. To this end, the well-known and esteemed Norwegian polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen had an important role as a source of information and direct confrontation for Scott and Sir Clements Markham, the mind of the Discovery expedition. At that time, the stock of information was mainly about the Arctic. There were many reports and journals about the attempts to reach the North Pole but the Antarctic still remained a mystery. Thus, confronting directly with the heroes of the North and thoroughly studying previous experiences was fundamental. One of the main sources for Scott was Fridtjof

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173 Ibid., p. 640.
174 Ibid., p. 10.
175 Ibid., p. 33.
176 Ibid.
Nansen’s *The First Crossing of Greenland* (1892), which was an invaluable guidebook about sledging and provided the rudiments to cope with ice and snow. For example, in Scott’s journal it is stated that the variable morphology of the ice surface Nansen described in his report was easily recognisable also in the Great Ice Barrier in the South, which caused many worries about the way men would and could sledge in such a surface.\(^{177}\) Scott and Markham also met Nansen in Christiania (Oslo), to ask for advice and suggestions about the sledges and the best equipment to be used, especially clothing. They also discussed about the most suitable form for a ship that has to face iced seas (see chapter I). Another important text was *Hints to Travellers* (1878).\(^{178}\) This text was produced by the Royal Geographical Society and took its inspiration from the increasing number of Victorian tourists who wanted to join the cause of geography. The text represented an inestimable source of technical data and figures, with mathematical tables, equations and instructions while travelling and exploring. Scott carried the 1901 edition with him also during sledging, since it was fundamental for calculating the latitude and longitude when there were no landmarks to be taken. However, during a strong blizzard that stroke Scott’s sledging party the book was lost.\(^{179}\) The terrible episode provoked many anxieties, since Scott relied on this handbook to make out the party’s position in the middle of the deserted and flat pack ice. Despite this, they could brilliantly carry on the rest of the march. Another important text mentioned in Scott’s narrative is *Antarctic Manual* (1901) by George Murray, who was a Fellow of the Royal Society (F.R.S.).\(^{180}\) Murray set out in the *Discovery* at the very beginning of the expedition, as temporary director of the scientific staff. He ensured the details of the scientific equipment for a while and he left in Cape Town. His manual provided very important scientific and historical instructions about the Frozen Continent.

The analysis and study of the sources was carried out also during the voyage of the *Discovery* to Antarctica. There was a library in the ship, where scientific, fictional and non-fictional books were provided. A section of the library was devoted to Arctic literature, which was a meaningful source. In the following passage Scott informs his reader of the main titles present and absent on the shelves. Some are texts also quoted in the journal; others are just mentioned as indications for the audience:

I find time also to read up Arctic literature, of which I am woefully ignorant; most unfortunately, our library is deficient in this respect, as owing to the hurry of our departure many important books were omitted. We have Greely, Payer, Nares, Markham, McClintock, McDougall, Scoresby, Nansen’s *Greenland*, and a few others of less importance; but, sad to relate, Nordenskjold, Nansen (*Farthest North*), and Peary are absent, and two of these at least would have been amongst our most valuable books of reference. Yesterday I was pleasantly astonished to find Wilson had some notes on Nansen’s *Farthest North*, giving extracts of his sledge weights, &c., and these may be of great use in calculating our own weights.181

The fact that Scott admits his ignorance as far as Arctic literature is concerned, partly confirms his previous lack of interest in being an Antarctic explorer. Nonetheless, he knows the names of the protagonists of the polar exploration very well and the must-have titles, to the point that he regrets the lack of accounts by the Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen and the American Robert Peary, who both carried out pioneering and relevant expeditions in the North and were successful figures of the time. To the matter of this, it is important to underline that Peary was the man who reached the North Pole for the first time in 1909 and also attempted to explore the South at the very apex of the Heroic Age of Antarctic exploration.

As far as the sources are concerned, the first chapter of Scott’s journal provides a brief introduction to the reader about the history of polar exploration. In this section there are many important names of scientists or explorers, such as Alexander von Humboldt for his studies on magnetism,182 who was also a source for Darwin in his *Voyage of the Beagle*. In order to give a complete historical description, he starts from the prehistory of exploration and the first news about

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the South, to the early attempts of Antarctic exploration, such as the French expedition of 1837\textsuperscript{183} and the Ross expedition with the well-know ships \textit{Erebus} and \textit{Terror}.\textsuperscript{184} The fact that Scott informs the reader with names and details about expeditions and scientific results implies that he had actually read a lot. Thus, we can assume that the text itself indirectly suggests that he consulted a great amount of sources, even though these books or essays are not directly quoted in the journal as those mentioned before.

Notwithstanding the preparations and the periods spent on studying and analysing the data available, Scott frequently recalls the reader his lack of experience and evident ignorance in snow and ice matters. This became clear especially when the first sledging was organised. Any element of the equipment was tested before and “the lack of system was painfully apparent in everything”.\textsuperscript{185} He looks retrospectively to the mistakes and the easy conditions they took in facing such a terrible place, since he gained experience by paying the price for certain mistakes with sufferings and discomforts. He adds: “On looking back I am only astonished that we bought that experience so cheaply, for clearly there were the elements of catastrophe as well as of discomfort in the disorganised condition in which our first sledge parties left the ship.”\textsuperscript{186} Sledging was one of the tasks that required a lot of experience since one of the most important elements of steering a sledge is the pack of dogs. Dogs to haul the sledges were suggested by Nansen, a piece of advice not attentively received by Scott. He and his men were completely inexperienced in breeding sledge dogs as well as in organising a camp while marching and in the use of the skis. Dogs were looked at suspiciously and skis had never been seen before. Long hours were spent on ice practicing with the skis and the sledges. Many details are given in Scott’s journal, in order to keep faith to its main aim: to provide the following generations of polar explorers with as many useful details as possible. Scott describes one of the first sledge experiences. Here some meaningful passages:

\textsuperscript{183} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 22-23
\textsuperscript{184} See R. F. Scott, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{185} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{186} \textit{Ibid.}
We were practically doomed to failure, but each hour was invaluable experience. (...) The hours that followed were comfortable enough to have discouraged the most ardent sledger. For two more days we pushed on in the same disorganised fashion (...) The daylight hours were now very short, and all too many were wasted in the unavoidable delays of inexperienced camp work, and from the want of facility in the details of our arrangements. (...) I have described these early troubles in some detail, partly because they show how much we learnt by our failures and partly because it is necessary to realise that sledging is not such an easy matter as might be imagined.  

He seems to reproach himself for the total carelessness and unconsciousness in delivering the task but at the same time he recognizes those difficult moments as necessary for acquiring the missing knowledge. The lack of experience was of course tragic but sometimes also amusing. The first time the men practiced with the ski or Norwegian snow shoes was a funny moment remembered with pleasure by Scott:

With very few exceptions we had none of us used ski before, and consequently our first trial caused vast amusement; but even in such a short time it was possible to see signs of improvement, and before the afternoon ended races were organised and figures were darting about in all directions, with constant collisions and falls and much laughter.  

The book is filled with important information for those who would attempt Antarctica: from the technical details of the equipment to the survival tips. For example, an interesting section of the book is devoted to the description of the vessel to be used in iced seas. To this end, a brief history of the Discovery is given with the addition of the comparison with the Fram, the first vessel to be built for the ice of the North, used by Nansen. The comparison is also supported by a scheme of the keel of both the ships and a profile drawing of the Discovery. As Scott himself informs the reader in the Preface, the sections of the journal with many details are concentrated in descriptive blocks that could seem boring for the ordinary audience, but would be of vital importance to the future explorers. The expedition, which was supported by the government, had precise instructions to follow. Therefore, Scott provides all the useful information gained with experience especially when

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188 Ibid., p. 95.
189 Ibid., pp. 40-54.
the deadlines of the instructions had to be followed. Thus, for example, all the details about the 
equipment for facing the low temperatures of the Antarctic would be given when the sledging 
activities for scientific and geographic purposes were organised. First of all, he describes the 
clothing and the boots. He describes the materials, the shape, the clothing for the outward and for 
the ship or hut, the advantages and disadvantages of certain garments and accessories. The 
following lines about boots provide a good example of detailed descriptive passage:

English leather boots were soon found to be far too chilling to wear on such excursions, though 
better adapted to climbing over the sharp, jagged rocks than anything we possessed; but for a 
long time we clung to the Norwegian leather ski boots, which is a looser and easier fit, and 
therefore allows a much freer circulation in the foot; in fact, ski boots are still worn, and in 
some cases have been fitter for a stouter sole by the cobbler abilities of that excellent man of-
all-trades, Lashly. But most of us have by this time taken to wear fur boots on our walks abroad, 
(... the only trouble is that they wear out rapidly, especially on the sharp, stony, hillside, and as 
we may need many pairs for our sledge journey we cannot afford to be too lavish in serving 
them out during the winter.\textsuperscript{190}

The description is minute and orderly, nothing is left out, from the type of boots to the surfaces they 
shall be used on. Moreover, some passages are devoted to ropes, crampons and ice axes,\textsuperscript{191} items 
thoroughly described also by Whymper.

A curious part of the narrative is about “watering ship”, that is, refilling the ship with drinking 
water. The ship was provided with condensers but the engines needed a lot of coal, so the company 
found a system to produce water from the ice. Yet, the pack ice is frozen sea-water but according to 
Scott: “it may be a surprise to many that fresh water can be obtained from it, and it should be 
explained that for making the fresh water one does not take the ice itself but the snow which has 
fallen to its surface.”\textsuperscript{192} The “hummocked”\textsuperscript{193} floes were preferable, since there would be much 
more snow in the deep pressure ridges, thus also time would be spared.

\textsuperscript{190} R.F. Scott, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 230-231. 
\textsuperscript{191} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 258, 308. 
\textsuperscript{192} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 96. 
\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 93.
One of the main problems while marching in the coldest areas of the globe was to protect the extremities of the body, that is to say hands, face and feet. Scott produces a series of survival tips in order to help and spare the future explorers from useless sufferings and discomforts. For example, a long paragraph teaches how to protect the face from the wind. He starts from the first attempts, showing the various solutions they attempted with their advantages and disadvantages. He moves on to the best invention they could create, which was actually very effective and highly recommended for the future explorers, but he underlines the fact that genius and inventiveness are required in the task, since it is necessary to cope with the materials furnished. The necessity of protecting the extremities mainly stemmed from the serious damages that the cold could produce. Frostbites were an evil very difficult to avoid and once appeared it was also difficult to nurse. The author provides a two-pages description, saying that there are different stages of frostbiting. Usually, “one has a distinct sensation on being frostbitten; the blood seems to recede from the veins in the exposed parts with a suddenness that almost conveys the sound of a ‘click’ and the feeling of a prick with a sharp instrument.” When it occurs, it is necessary to warm the frozen part. Nevertheless, the most serious frostbites are those procured while working, since the perception can pass unnoticed and the freezing process extends without being felt. Frostbites were extremely dangerous: sometimes the part of the body damaged had to be amputated, sometimes it could be nursed but the recovery was long and painful.

Another annoying but frequent discomfort was snow blindness. Snow blindness is a painful condition of the eye due to the prolonged exposure to the strong sunlight reflected by ice and snow. The members of the expedition mainly suffered from snow blindness in marching and sledging, since they were forced to take off protections in order to see crevasses and other dangers of the pack. During the march southward, the polar party had frequently to cope with it. The following passage clearly shows their extreme conditions:

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From start to finish of the march we have to wear goggles for protections to the intense glare, but we grow inexpressibly sick of these safeguards, and weary of always seeing the world through a tiny aperture. In spite of this protection, too, snow-blindness is common, and rarely a night goes by but someone needs doctoring the solution of zinc sulphate is thawed out, and the sufferer lies flat on his back whilst a ministering companion drops the remedy into his eyes with the end of a match. It is one of those remedies which might be thought worse than the disease, for it gives the victim what he calls ‘gyp’, and generally keeps him awake for the next hour or two with throbbing eyeballs.\textsuperscript{197}

It is interesting to underline the simple, concise but complete way through which the information is delivered. In a few lines the reader understands that to protect their eyes polar explorers usually wear goggles, a sort of sunglasses fit out with a tiny aperture, but this protection sometimes is not sufficient to prevent snow blindness. In addition, the reader understands that the inflammation lasts for a long time. Scott also reports the elements of the solution to be used and warns the audience that it is as painful as effective.

A typical disease that stroke explorers and sailors during long voyages was scurvy. Also Scott and his men were affected during the long and difficult march to the pole. At that time, theories about scurvy identified the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables as the cause of the illness. But still many doubts had to be clarified. Scott devotes a long section of his journal to the symptoms and the most plausible theories developed.\textsuperscript{198} The appearance of the illness came as a surprise for the men, since fresh seal and penguin meat was regularly eaten and a little mustard and cress were grown in a small garden inside the \textit{Discovery}. Scott admits to approach the matter as a layman but he tries to follow the theories of the time, which stated that scurvy was a poisoning due to the bacteria formed in the decayed meat. That being so, Scott followed Nansen’s indications, since the Norse obtained valuable results in the prevention of the disease during his voyages in the North. A list of all the provisions was made and the bad or suspicious tinned food rejected. The terrible disease attacked some of the members of the expeditions, even though medical check up were regularly taken. In my opinion, even though the reader of Scott’s time could find tiresome certain passages of his book, the

\textsuperscript{197} R. F. Scott, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 342.
\textsuperscript{198} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 367-368, 371-375.
organized structure of the narrative enables the audience to develop a personal reading scheme, which means to decide whether to leave out certain sections of the book or not. The detailed descriptive sections suspend the progression of the events, thus the reader does not risk missing out important incidents or losing the thread of the narrative. As a result, he creates a narrative that satisfies the widest possible audience, from the scientists to the future explorers, or simply from the most to the less curious or learned readers. In order to make his narrative more complete, Scott also quotes from the reports and the journals written by other members of the expedition. He frequently makes reference and reports passages from Lieutenant Armitage, who wrote about the life in the camp while the Captain was engaged in the sledging marches. Some passages are taken also by Lieutenant Royds, in order to report to his audience what happened in the sledging marches he did not take part.

As mentioned before, Scott received precise instructions about the expedition to be followed while in Antarctica. The instructions represented also the main aims of the expedition, which were mainly scientific. The National Antarctic Expedition, or Discovery expedition, was part of a scientific international program also involving German and Swedish teams. The numerous scientific results gained during the expeditions to Antarctica, show the important role played by science during the Victorian and Edwardian period. As stated by Edward Larson in his essay *An Empire of Ice*:

*Britain built and sustained its global empire during this period. In doing so, explorers and imperial officers took Western science to the four corners of the world—measuring mapping, and collecting specimens as part of their program to subdue alien territory and make it British.*

For the British the Empire was not merely conquering territories, but “it was always about scientifically exploring and systematically exploiting (...) It is also about power and politics;

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199 See E. J. Larson, *Preface to An Empire of Ice cit.*, p. IX.

As far as Antarctica is concerned, economical exploitation was seen as one of the first reasons for the revival of exploration in the area. However, there were new scientific fields that required to be thoroughly investigated. The Discovery expedition was mainly intended for the study of magnetism. British interest in magnetism dates back to the Victorian period, when a “Magnetic Crusade” took place between the 1830’s and 1840’s. The term was coined in the 1830’s and associated with the scientific efforts to chart the earth’s magnetic field. The subject was a fascination for the British but also for many other European countries, having in Britain its leading institutions in the BAAS (British Association for the Advancement of Science) and the Royal Society. The crusade lost its power with the time, when magnetism was institutionalised in British science, but “In many ways, this crusade fit the scientific goals and imperial resources of Victorian Britain.”

Scott reports some extracts of the instructions he received, in order to show the reader the main subjects to be investigated and the activities to be carried out once in Antarctica. The main aims of the mission are summarized in two points:

(a) to determine, as far as possible, the nature, condition, and extent of that portion of the South Polar lands (…); and (b) to make a magnetic survey in the southern regions (…), and to carry on meteorological, oceanographic, geological, biological and physical investigations and researches.

Neither of these objects had to be favoured to the detriment of the other. Nevertheless, magnetism was the most demanding task; as stated in the extracts of the instructions: “the greatest importance is attached to the series of magnetic observations to be taken under your superintendence, and we desire that you will spare no pains to ensure their accuracy and continuity.” These observations

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201 Ibid., p. XI.
203 Ibid., p. 35.
204 R. F. Scott, *op. cit.* p. 65
205 Ibid., p. 65
had to be conducted also during the voyage to reach Antarctica. In addition, studies on the icecap and deep-sea soundings had to be carried out. The geographical investigation focalised mainly on the inspection of the Ross Ice Barrier and to confirm the geographical indication reported in Ross’s expedition of 1839. The committee also demanded to investigate the mountain ranges in order to verify the presence of fossiliferous rocks and the volcanic activity of the area. Various sections of the text are devoted to the description of the scientific instruments, the result of these accurate observations, the way these observations were carried out, sometimes facing terrible weather conditions and with the risk of getting lost in a blizzard. Recording the data at low temperatures was no simple task, as the scientific instruments were placed outside the ship in small huts. For example, Scott informs his audience that writing the data in the record sheet in windy conditions and cold weather was very trying. Frostbites were always lurking, fingers could freeze while writing and the paper was covered in an icy film created by breath, which made marking with the pencil very difficult.\footnote{See R. F. Scott, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 195.} Meteorological observations were the most trying task. Scott calls the various difficulties and discomforts to be faced “the trials and tribulations of the meteorological observer”.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} Scott tells the reader that during the winter each officer had to record the night observations in turn. Despite the invaluable help offered, the meteorologist carried out the majority of the work, with turns from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and the most difficult task of replacing the papers on the recording instruments: “Anyone who is familiar with the ordinary barograph or thermograph can imagine that when the temperature was below -20$^\circ$, with a brisk wind, this task could appear attractive to no-one.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} Also tidal observations were part of the daily routine, with all the difficulties they involved. However, the most interesting investigations were those concerning magnetism. The author provides the audience with a scrupulous description of the instruments used, as reported in the passage that follows:
Within the larger of the huts, mounted on a solidly bedded oak plank, could be seen three small instruments, set at different angles, but each containing a delicately suspended magnetic needle to which was attached a tiny mirror; a shaded lamp and a roll of sensitised photographic paper were so arranged that the light reflected from each small mirror was thrown on the roll, and the latter was slowly but continuously revolved by clockwork. The sensitised paper came off the roll in long strips, and after being developed exhibited fine wavy lines drawn by the points of light focussed from the mirrors. The three small instruments recorded respectively the declination, horizontal force, and vertical force, or the elements of the earth’s magnetic pull from which its nature can be calculated at any moment.\footnote{Ibid., p. 198.}

The accurate but simple description of these mechanisms makes the most scientific points accessible to the widest possible audience. Scott cares for his reader, since it his effort of simplify without trivialize the contents is evident. In addition, in order to be as clear as possible, he directly addresses his reader by giving a short but effective explanation about what magnetism is and the earth behaving as a magnet, pointing out that the magnetic forces are variable; therefore, he shows his reader the importance of studying and collecting data about this strange and mysterious phenomenon.\footnote{R. F. Scott, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 213-214.}

As already stated, Scott was incredibly curious and interested in the work and study of the scientific team. In order to involve each member of the expedition in the scientific investigation of the continent, a series of meetings on board the ship were taken. The following passage informs the audience about the nature and the organisation of these meetings:

Every Tuesday after dinner we have a debate in the wardroom. (…) it was decided to have a technical subject one week and a lay one the next. (…) On technical evenings we have discussed the barrier, the climatic conditions, the prospect of getting east and west, the seals and the penguins, with results that have been both instructing and amusing. There is so much in these subjects that remains unexplained and mysterious that everyone must gain fresh ideas from their free discussions; of the barrier we still seem to know all too little, (…) in the climatic conditions we have yet to explain the astonishing differences of temperature in different localities and with different winds, (…) with regard to seals and penguins, we feel there is yet much to be learned as to their winter habits, their breeding, and their migration.\footnote{Ibid.}
The debates were followed enthusiastically, since they represented a way both to show the results of the observations taken but also to clearly set out the main problems in certain fields of investigation, and possibly to find out an effective method to gain the solution. As mentioned by Scott in the passage, some evenings were devoted to non-technical meetings, where current events and set of problems were discussed, such as women’s rights, conscription or the trade of the empire. Scott defines these topics as “subjects on which, without knowing anything, everyone can talk.” These evenings were spent in amusement and usually ended in ado. Taking little lectures was typical of the expeditions in the North, in order to involve also the members of the expedition not able to write or read.

Living in a frozen continent, where night lasts for six long months and winter carries temperatures 50° under zero, is not easy. Depression was always lurking, especially when a long time were spent in inactivity. However, in the hut a strict routine was followed. There were the spring journeys to be organised, the record of data with the scientific instruments, hours of practice with the skis and the sledges or the dogs to be trained. After dinner, the men had a few hours to spend as they pleased. There was a lot of reading, writing in the journals, playing, drawing, singing and smoking. Despite the inhospitable place, the company was always joyful.

Writing and smoking were Scott’s favourite activities, also during the sledging marches. As a matter of fact, many passages in the book report the original pages he wrote in his diary while in Antarctica. Despite Scott is not a man of letters, he provides the reader with fine descriptions of the landscape and of the typical phenomena of the place, such as the aurora australis and the midnight sun. The following passage is about a typical Antarctic sunset:

The sun is now very near dipping at midnight, and will soon give us an appreciable night. In the morning and evening it is therefore low, and gives the effect of sunset or sunrise for many hours together. The scene is wonderfully beautiful at such times; the most characteristic feature is a

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212 Ibid.
soft pink light, that tinges the snow-slopes and ice-foot and fades into the purple outline of the distant mountains. Here and there a high peak is radiantly gilded by a shaft of sunlight.\textsuperscript{214}

The total whiteness of the place can acquire a wide range of colours, which are poetically and vividly depicted by Scott:

Nothing could exceed the beauty of the scene this afternoon; the snow was bathed in rosy light, gorgeous shafts of gold sprang up from the sun, and the sky was blood-red behind the hills in its wake. The moon was up, a vast yellow disc to the east. It will be a companion for at least the first part of our journey.\textsuperscript{215}

The contrast between the white snow and the colours it can acquire is very strong, thanks to the choice of words he uses, such as \textit{blood} or \textit{gold} to mark the hue. On the contrary, in the following lines the description is about a moonlighted night. The mood is calm and relaxed but the beauty of the scene is glorious:

There can be few scenes more beautiful than that which is about us on a clam moonlight night. During the noon hours the silver rays are lost, and the moon itself is changed to a deep orange yellow in the diffused twilight cast by the gleaming crimson band to the north; but as the red glow slowly travels around and is lost behind the western hills, our white world is left alone with the moon and the stars. The cold, white light falls on the colder, whiter snow against which the dark rock and intricate outline of the ship stand out in the blackest contrast. Each sharp peak and every object about us casts a deep shadow, and is clearly outlined against the sky, but beyond our immediate surroundings is fairyland. The eye travels on and on over the gleaming plain till it meets the misty white horizon, and above and beyond, the soft, silvery outlines of the mountains. Did one not know them of old, it would sometimes be difficult to think them real, so deep a spell of enchantment seems to rest on the scene. And indeed it is not a spell that rests on a man alone, for it is on such nights that the dogs lift up their voices and join in a chant which disturbs the most restful sleepers.\textsuperscript{216}

The description is very poetical. The landscape lighted by the sunrays is a triumph of hot colours that animate the scene. The bright colours slowly give way to the moonlight that makes the animated panorama calm and peaceful. The pale moonlight marks the black shadows and the mist

\textsuperscript{214} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 157.
\textsuperscript{215} R. F. Scott, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 189.
\textsuperscript{216} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 255.
and the intense gleaming blur the atmosphere. The undefined lines of the mountains in the distance make the observer questioning their existence, since the mist and the gleaming of the snow are typical of a fairyland. The overall scene seems unreal, as if a spell is working and the men and the dogs feel its enchanting action as a presence. The beauty of this new and unfamiliar place unquestionably attracts Scott. The white, pure snow, the gleaming ice, the silence and desolation of Antarctica are almost violated by Scott and his men in their attempt of exploring and investigating its mysteries. However, Scott knows that this place is beautiful as much as dangerous. In my opinion, he suffers the inheritance of the romantic sublime, since he knows that the soft, gleaming snow hides deep crevasses; the moonlighted nights last for six months, when depression lurks; the calm and peaceful plateau can be fatal for a man, due to low temperatures, blizzards and frostbite. However, he cannot help being fascinated by this place. For example, Scott reports the signs of human activity in the area: “From one brief moment the eternal solitude is broken by a hive of human insects; for one brief moment they settle, eat, sleep, trample, and gaze, then they must be gone, and all must be surrendered again to the desolation of the ages.”

The metaphor he uses clearly shows the grandeur and power of the continent violated in its solitude and peace in contrast with the busy activity of humans seen as insects. In addition, the reader can perceive the implicit respect and fear that Scott feels for this place. The desolation and the silence are elements that frequently return in the journal, since Scott immediately understood that the continent was beautiful but not benevolent towards the human presence. The placid and calm pack hid terrible dangers; it was no place for men, just for the few animals that could face the extreme life conditions of that area of the globe. Thus, Scott’s attitude and taste is typical of the sublime since the beginning of the journal, as the attraction for the fatal beauty of Antarctica is irresistible. The following passage describes again the insecure and insignificant human presence that delves into the timeless mysteries of this frozen continent:

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217 R. F. Scott, op. cit., p. 244.
It was one of those hours which impress themselves forever on the memory. (...) It seems an atmosphere in which all Nature should rejoice; the silence was broken only by the deep panting of our engines and the slow, measured hush of the grinding floes; yet, beneath all ran the mighty, relentless tide, bearing us on the possible destruction. It seem desperately unreal that danger could exist in the midst of so fair a scene, and as one paced to and fro on the few feet of throbbing plank that constituted our bridge, it was difficult to persuade oneself that we were so completely impotent. (...) We were here to fight the elements with their icy weapons, and once and for all this taught me not to undervalue the enemy. 218

The Discovery was nearly trapped in the pack ice due to a strong change of the tide in a channel they were sailing. The ice floes suddenly and silently surrounded the ship that was making her best to escape the forthcoming danger. The paradox revealed by Scott in this passage, but also in many other sections of his journal, is the unreality of the scene where accidents take place. The silence and calmness of the scene unlikely suggests a sudden catastrophe, and when accidents occur they are swallowed in the silence and stillness of the panorama, as if nothing has happened. Silence and desolation are firstly dreaded but they are also attractive. However, throughout the narrative, they become almost unbearable for Scott and his men, especially when they face these elements directly with the sledging marches. Human effort and endurance are not enough to face the vast and powerful desert of ice, as Scott says in his journal while marching back to the camp after having broken the record of the most southern point that human beings have ever reached:

But, after all, it is not what we see that inspires awe, but the knowledge of what lies beyond our view. We see only a few miles of ruffled snow bounded by a vague wavy horizon, but we know that beyond that horizon are hundreds and even thousand of miles which can offer no change to the weary eye, while on the vast expanse that one’s mind conceives one knows there is neither tree nor shrub, nor any living thing, nor even inanimate rock- nothing but this terrible limitless expanse of snow. It has been so for countless years, and it will be so for countless more. And we, little human insects, have started to crawl over this awful desert, and are now bent on crawling back again. Could anything be more terrible than this silent, windswept immensity when one thinks such thoughts? 219

218 Ibid., p. 104.
219 R. F. Scott, op. cit., p. 549.
Antarctica, the “promised land” at the beginning of the narrative turns out to be an “icy prison”. In addition, the fact that Scott tells the reader that the more they penetrate the continent, the less life is found makes me think of and invisible border that must not be crossed. Along the coast, penguins, seals, birds and fish are present in great abundance; on the contrary, in the inland the presence of animals gradually fades to the complete absence of life, as a warning to the explorer. The invisible border is a limit between life and death, a limit to man’s knowledge: what human beings are allowed to investigate and what should remain a mystery. Antarctica seemed to retain its secrets, until 1911, when Amundsen finally could breach this invisible boundary and violate the heart of the continent: the geographical South Pole.

As far as the structure of the book is concerned, I have already shown that Scott divided his narrative in descriptive blocks that the reader could chose to read or omit. For clarity’s sake, at the beginning of each chapter the author provides a small summary of the topics treated and a quotation from a poem or a novel, which also suggests the tone and the mood of the narrated events. It is interesting to underline that the majority of these literary quotations are about voyages to the poles, which possibly suggest that the long voyages to the northern and southern territories of the world had entered the collective unconscious, not only in literature but also in culture.

Scott is very concerned with the structure of the text and in Chapter XI he prefers explaining to the reader his choices through the form and the contents of the chapter: “I have therefore in this chapter endeavoured to describe what may be considered the normal experiences and environment of the spring sledging parties, and thus to provide a general background for the more varied adventures of our individual excursions.” He also spends a few words on the structure of his and his companions’ sledging diaries. The stress here is in what is avoided and in the form given to the content:

220 Ibid., p. 157.
221 Ibid., 458.
The diaries which record the doings of a sledge party, and which are written in such adverse circumstances as I have described, do not enter into the hardships and discomforts which are inevitable to the day’s work, but in the main are devoted to the special incidents of the particular day. Such references to the normal conditions as they contain are rather in the form of hasty and incomplete entries which would convey little to the outsider, though they may amply stimulate the memory of the writer, who posses the key to the situation.223

Scott adds that certain stock of information is not present in Arctic diaries. For the fact that Scott describes and makes a comment on the structure and the content of a specific type of diary, sledge marches diaries, I can assume that his narrative is devoted for a few paragraphs to metaliterature, since he is writing about and discussing a peculiar textual form.

The language of the narrative is simple, clear and precise, providing many examples in order to make the English audience familiar with what he is describing by conveying a more vivid image. For example, he describes the nets of the ship covered in ice crystals saying that the hanging icicles recalled the old-time candelabrum with crystal pendulums.224 The description of the perception of frostbite that I have reported before is very realistic, providing also an onomatopoeia in order to make the image more vivid. Sometimes, describing phenomena or elements typical of Antarctica but completely new both for the author and his fellow countrymen proves not an easy task. He shows his difficulty in giving a precise description, such as his attempt at describing the taste of seal meat: “It is almost impossible to describe the taste of seal; it has a distinctive flavour in a similar degree to beef and mutton, but it cannot be called ‘fishy’, or like anything else that is generally known.”225 Employing elements the readers are familiar with is a method used especially by Whymper in his Scrambles amongst the Alps, in order to provide the audience with elements that could be easily recognized, especially when the information given is more technical and requires a different approach.

An important aspect of Scott’s narrative is his relationship with the reader. He frequently addresses directly his reader, with formulas such as “the reader will see”, “the reader will consider” or “the

223 Ibid.
224 See R. F. Scott, op. cit., p. 351.
225 Ibid., p. 98.
reader will now understand”. He always refers to one reader, and not to a group; he is not referring to his audience in general, but to the single reader in front of his book. In this way, the relationship between Scott and the audience is more intimate, as Scott’s role of narrator is reinforced in telling the story of his expedition. As an example, Scott in the historical chapter at the beginning of his book introduces his reader to HMS Discovery.\footnote{Ibid., p. 44.} In addition, addressing the reader is an effective way of grasping the attention and involving the audience.

Like the Victorian journals analysed in the previous chapter, also Scott’s book is illustrated. Maps, schemes and photographs are inserted in order to provide the audience with pictures as a support to the author’s descriptions but also as an additional form of witness.

When Shackleton published his journal after his Nimrod expedition to Antarctica, the interest in the South Pole was considerably increased. This is due to the successful aftermaths of Scott’s expedition homeland. Also Shackelton’s journal had a great success when it was published in 1909, and soon a second edition appeared. Despite Shackleton was very into literature, he decided to ask for help in the draft of the journal. A young Australian journalist followed him in the journey back to England and helped him out in the process of planning all the notes he had collected during the expedition and in writing the final account. Notwithstanding the great success of the first edition, Shackleton in the Preface to the second edition points out that the first edition was expensive to publish and due to the great amount of scientific matters to be reported, the book was out of reach for the ordinary reader. Thus, “in this edition the narrative embraces all matters of general public interest (…) I feel that the time has come for the issue of an account of our Work in Antarctic, less bulky in form and at a lower price.”\footnote{E. H. Shackleton, op. cit., p. 7.} Like Scott and the models I have analysed in the previous chapter, also Shackleton wants to reach the widest possible audience through the simplification of the contents and the language used. However, unlike the other authors, Shackleton also pays attention to the economic aspect of the whole enterprise, since in order to be accessible being
simple was not enough; he also took care of being cheap. To me, by pointing out this aspect in his preface he gives a hint at his own nature, as it shows Shackleton as a practical and pragmatic individual, a man who had to build the entire expedition by himself and every aspect had to be taken in consideration. Shackleton planned a rich scientific program to follow. He informs his reader that the expedition had a thorough geographical exploration to make, especially concerning mountain ranges and King Edward VIIth Land, previously investigated in the Discovery expedition. Meteorology was particularly important for Australia and New Zealand as a field of investigation, in addition he focused his attention on mineralogy, a branch of geology. Moreover, the classic scientific fields as hydrography, tidal movements, magnetism, the aurora australis, biology and glaciology represented unlimited opportunities of study. The plan of the expedition was published in the Geographical Journal of March 1907, which Shackleton reports in his journal in a long passage. Notwithstanding the stress on the scientific program, the author also stresses that he intends to attempt the geographical South Pole, as stated in the following passage:

I do not intend to sacrifice the scientific utility of the expedition to a mere record-breaking journey, but say frankly, all the same, that one of my great efforts will be to reach the southern geographical pole.

It is important to say that Nimrod expedition was an ambitious personal venture planned by Shackleton. Besides the scientific program, the whole enterprise itself was truly ambitious. However, as stated by the author, one of the main difficulties to be faced in planning an exploration is to the financial support. He could not avail on the government financial support and searching for financers was not an easy task. Thus, the economic aspect mentioned in the Preface is now partly explained by the author’s personal experience.

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228 Ibid., p. 11
229 E. H. Shackleton, op. cit., p. 11.
230 Ibid., p. 10
Unlike Scott, his planning the Nimrod expedition did not happen as a mere chance. According to Shackleton, there are various reasons that push men to go into vast and void areas of the world:

Some are actuated simply by a love of adventure, some have the keen thirst for scientific knowledge, and others again are drawn away from the trodden paths by the ‘lure of little voices’, the mysterious fascination of the unknown. I think that in my own case it was a combination of these factors that determined me to try my fortune once again in the frozen south.\textsuperscript{231}

He adds that he was invalidated home from the Discovery expedition and he had a keen desire of further exploring the ice and snow of Antarctica. To this end, the first chapter of the book is devoted to the preparations of the expedition. In order to make it simple and clear, he divides the chapter into small sections provided with a title that anticipate the content of the paragraph, such as “Food Supplies”, “Equipment”, “The Nimrod”, “Clothing” or “Scientific Instruments”.\textsuperscript{232} A similar method is used in chapter eight, a section entirely devoted to sledging equipment.\textsuperscript{233} Like Scott, he provides the reader with an accurate list of items necessary for sledging, such as the food, the cooker, the tent and the sleeping bag. He also discusses the best and the worst materials to be used in those extreme conditions, spending a few words about the dogs and their behaviour while marching and making also comparisons with the experiences and choices made during the Discovery expedition. For clarity’s sake, throughout the book he frequently explains certain words he uses, such as the “4-in wire”, which is a wire used in the ships measured 4 inches in circumference and made of the finest steel, or “sastrugi”: “wind furrow, and is the name given to those annoying obstacles to sledging, due to the action of the wind on the snow.”\textsuperscript{234} Sometime he does not care about explaining certain specific terms, such as pancakes and slush, which are freezing phenomena concerning the seawater. However, he frequently makes descriptions adding

\textsuperscript{231} Ibid., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{232} Ibid., p. 9-24.
\textsuperscript{233} E. H. Shackleton, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 103-114.
\textsuperscript{234} Ibid., p. 118.
elements and concepts the audience is familiar with. For example, he simplifies the position of the ship by giving coordinates of the southern hemisphere he translates into coordinates of the northern hemisphere, which would be easier to grasp for his audience: “at noon on January 5 we were still north of the fifteenth parallel, a latitude corresponding to the South of England.”

Or, the description of shovelling the ice from the cases on the *Nimrod*’s deck: “The whole had the appearance of a piece of the sweet known as almond rock, and there was as many difficulties in getting the cases clear of the ice as would be experienced if one tried to separate almonds from that sticky conglomerate without injuries.”

Like Scott, Darwin and Whymper, also Shackleton makes references to familiar elements to his audience, since the accessibility of the text is of primary importance to him. The more technical and maybe complicated information about the expedition had already been given in the first edition. Thus, the author can relax the tone of the narrative also by providing simple but effective descriptions in order to reach the widest possible audience, from the more to the less learned. In order to make the narrative more vivid, in his journal he reports the pages of the diaries written while in Antarctica, like Scott. However, he sometimes adds a note at the end of the passage, which explains or clarifies it. For example, a note is present after the author reported the page of his journal of November, 7. In the note Shackleton illustrates the various difficulties in marching in snow and ice with a bad light, in this way he can also devote a few lines to one of the typical discomforts in exploring the polar regions, which is snow blindness.

Another note is given when the author reports the killing of the ponies, showing to the reader all the pity for the poor animals exploited in the marches.

As seen in Scott’s journal, also Shackleton quotes or reports passages from other companions’ journals, in order to tell all the events that took place during the expedition and give a complete report to the audience. Compared with Scott, who quoted from two other journals, Shackleton

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reports from five texts written by the members of his expedition. Some are simply reports, others are complete passages from the notes taken in the diaries. For example, chapter twenty-two is entirely taken from Professor David’s journal, the director of the scientific staff. This is due to the fact that many sledging marches took place at the same time and Shackleton could not take part in every expedition. Thus, in order to show the reader all the activities carried out and the results obtained, the author reports also from his comrades’ s journals. In this case, the entire chapter is about the northern march, which was carried out by Professor David as commander, Douglas Mawson, the physicist and Doctor Alistair Mackey, the surgeon. It is interesting to underline the fact that Shackleton does not mention sources important for the planning and fulfilment of the expedition. Nevertheless, he quotes from original texts such as letters or the instructions he gave during the expedition. For example, before Professor David’s narrative, Shackleton’s instructions are reported with the main investigations to be carried out. In addition a letter from the commander is reported with the instructions to be followed in the case that the magnetic pole was reached.

The other journals reported are second officer Mackintosh’s narrative of the return of the Nimrod in springtime in order to take provisions and the difficulties in facing ice floes while reaching the coastline. Moreover, the author quotes from Priestly, the geologist, and Armytage’s journals, as far as the western march is concerned and the tragedy prevented when the area where they camped went adrift as floating ice and they could miraculously came back on land. Finally, Shackleton also quotes from Doctor Murrey’s report on the summer work.

As I stated before, Shackleton had an ambitious plan to carry out in Antarctica. He kept faith to the main field of investigation of his time, magnetism. Professor David’s northern march was mainly intended for carrying out magnetic surveys and reach the south magnetic pole. Once reached, the party had to lift the Union Jack on the spot and claim the area on behalf of the British crown. In addition, geological inspections were extremely important, not only for the fact that the party to be carried out had to make further inspections along the mountain ranges of Victoria Land,

\[239 \text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 276-329.}\]
but also because geological surveys could prove the presence of valuable minerals on the continent for economical exploitation.

Together with Shackleton’s southward march and the south magnetic pole march, the third most important enterprise of Nimrod expedition was the ascent of Mount Erebus. The shore party had camped near the volcano and this proved a great choice, since the meteorologist had a wonderful spot for his observation and the area offered innumerable opportunities of scientific inspection. Shackleton devotes a section of the book to the conquest of the top of the volcano. It is interesting to report the following passage:

The ascent of such a mountain would be a matter of difficulty in any part of the world, hardly to be attempted without experienced guides, but the difficulties were accentuated by the latitude of Erebus, and the party started off with the full expectation of encountering very low temperatures. The men all recognised, however, the scientific value of the achievement at which they were aiming, and they were determined to do their utmost to reach the crater itself.240

The deed acquired great importance for the Edwardian audience, since it proved how science gave meaning to adventure. Facing dangers and discomforts was noble, since it was for the improvement of human knowledge. Again, science legitimised adventure and apparently worthless dangers and deeds. Ascending the volcano was an opportunity also of studying the morphology of the mountain and its glaciers. In addition, being on a raised spot made the observation of the surroundings possible.

As in the Discovery expedition, also in the Nimrod expedition the most interesting fields for the men were zoology and biology. Penguins and seals behaviour and reproductive habits were thoroughly investigated, since there was still many missing information about these local species. A sledge march was organised in order to make an inspection on a penguin rookery, where penguins used to nest. Many eggs were collected, in order to study the evolutionary stages of the embryo. The data and the new discoveries about penguins were so influential that Shackleton decided to devote Appendix I of his journal to some notes taken by Doctor Murrey, the biologist of the

240 E. H. Shackleton, op. cit., p. 117.
The section is very similar in structure to chapter one of the journal, since the appendix is divided into paragraphs provided with a title, such as “The Emperor”, “Adelie”, or “Rearing the chicks”, in order to schematize the scant information. The journal counts two appendixes. The second appendix is written by Shackleton and it concerns the southern journey distances. He provides the audience with a long and detailed scheme divided into date, geographical miles covered, the noon latitude, the statute miles, the yards and the relay.242

As part of the scientific inspections of the expedition it is useful to insert the observations about the various illnesses developed during the long time spent in the continent by the shore party. Unlike Scott, Shackleton’s men did not develop scurvy but strong dysentery. The discomfort lasted for a long time, especially during the sledging marches, and the cause was mainly identified with the meat of the ponies killed in order to create depots of provisions for the sledge marches. Shackleton explains that the meat of one of the ponies was infected with the toxin of exhaustion, which is recurrent also in the animals being hunted.243 Thus, poisoned meat seems to be the cause of the illness, like the case of Scott’s scurvy.

Another annoying discomfort described by Shackleton and already experienced in the Discovery expedition was snow blindness. The author talks about it when he informs the reader of the difficulties caused by marching in bad light conditions. He informs the reader that snow blindness is caused mainly when the sun is covered and the weather thick. In order to prevent it goggles with red or green lens were worn. The small aperture on the goggles avoids the eye to be attacked by the strongest rays, which are the most dangerous. However, in foggy weather the protection had to be taken off and consequently snow blindness occurred. The following passage accurately describes the symptoms and the cure for this painful discomfort:

The first sign of the approach of the trouble is running at the nose; then the sufferer begins to see double, and his vision gradually becomes blurred. The more painful symptoms appear very

242 Ibid., pp. 381-384.
soon. The blood vessels of the eyes swell, making one feel as though sand had got in under the lids, and when the eyes begin to water freely and gradually close up. The best method of relief is to drop some cocaine into the eye, and then apply a powerful astringent, such as sulphate of zinc, or in order to reduce the distended blood vessels.

Shackleton adds information, which Scott avoids. The description of the progressive appearance of the symptoms is very accurate and detailed. And he also specifies the components of the medical solution used in the eye to procure relief, which Scott just touched on in short, and he adds information about the structure and use of the goggles, which are missing in Scott.

In order to carry out the ambitious program planned, the shore party had a strict routine to follow, especially during the long polar winter, when six months of darkness had to be faced. Collecting the data and making observation was fundamental, not only for the scientific aims of the mission, but also to prevent depression. Shackleton informs his reader that in addition to the standing jobs of night watchman and messman there were other special duties to be carried out by some of the members of the expedition, who had to look after certain departments of the hut. For example, the meteorologist soon after breakfast had to wound up the chronometers and the chronometer watches, to rate the instruments, walk his pony and then move to the collection of data with his instruments. Then, there was the storekeeper and one of the men was in charge of the dogs and the sledges. The scientific team spent the most of the day in studying, observing and collecting data. Some hours of spare time were given in the evening, when a lot of writing, reading, playing and discussing took place. The mood was always joyful and the men were linked by a strong comradeship. The men gave a name to each part of the hut, depending on how it looked and who its inhabitants were. For example, a cubicle was known as “No. 1, Park Lane” because of its inhabitant’s neatness and order. Another section was called “Rogues’ Retreat”, inhabited by the storekeeper and the responsible for dogs and equipment. “The Gables” was probably named by the gabled appearance of the shelves and the “Pawn shop” for the variety of things that were located in

244 Ibid., p. 168.
the cubicle. The author also provides a scheme of the hut and the division into sections. In order to keep in touch with the outside world, they decided to celebrate birthdays, Christmas, Easter and some particular moments of the Antarctic year, such as Mid-winter or Mid-summer, when the sun disappeared and came back again after long months of darkness.246

Reading and writing were among the favourite activities in the spare time, also during the sledging marches. A collection of books about the French revolution and the Napoleonic Era were present in the hut, together with Dickens’s complete work and Shakespeare’s opera omnia. Of course there were also Shackleton’s favourites, Tennyson and Browning, who were probably also his source of inspiration for the poetical and sublime descriptions of the Antarctic landscapes. The author informs his reader also of the readings made during the southern march:

I am just finishing reading the Taming of the Shrew. I have Shakespeare’s Comedies, Marshal has Borrow’s The Bible in Spain, Adams has Arthur Young’s Travels in France, and Wild has Sketches by Boz. When we have finished we will change around.247

As in the Discovery expedition, also in the Nimrod expedition some time was devoted to theatre, but the author just briefly mentions it in the journal, as if it was not of much importance. However, he prefers informing his audience of the development and production of the first book in Antarctica. Aurora Australis was Shackleton’s ambitious project of entirely producing and publishing a book in Antarctica.248 The small volume would be sold once back home. As in The South Polar Times of the Discovery expedition, every member of the expedition had to give his written contribution. The collected material was enriched by the fine illustrations of the artist of the expedition, Marston, and then printed with the instruments specifically brought to Antarctica for this ambitious aim. Shackleton says about the text: “In its final form the book had about one hundred and twenty

246 Ibid., p. 142.
247 Ibid., p. 167.
pages, and it had at least assisted materially to guard us from the danger of lack of occupation during the polar winter.”

As stated by Shackleton at the beginning of his journal, there are various reasons that push a man to face such a void and extreme place as the Antarctic. However, his attraction for the icy desert of the south stemmed also from the fact that he was invalidated home for scurvy before the conclusion of the Discovery expedition. As I have maintained in the second chapter of this dissertation, this event wounded his pride but after reading and analysing his journal it seems that like Scott, also Shackleton was made a victim by the fatal fascination of the dangerous and extreme beauty of Antarctica. In my opinion, his interest for the Antarctic could not be simply trivialized in a feeling of revenge for the wounded pride, but it has deeper and purer roots. Hints of this may be seen in the descriptions he made of the polar landscape. The sublime appears in a sort of descriptive climax, in conjunction with the time spent in the continent and the hardships it presents. For example, at the beginning of the narration Shackleton makes a comparison between the Antarctic and Venice: “About 3 a.m. we entered an area of tabular bergs, varying from eighty to one hundred and fifty feet in height, and all the morning we steamed in beautiful weather with a light northerly wind, through the lanes and streets of a wonderful snowy Venice.” The tone is calm, the scene glorious and it seems that nature is benevolent towards man in this display of beauty. The enterprise acquires almost a legendary tone, due to the references Shackleton makes to Coleridge’s *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*:

The whole place and conditions seems so strange and so unlike anything else in the world in our experience, that one cannot describe them in fitting words. At one moment one thinks of Coleridge’s Ancient Mariner: ‘Alone, alone; all, all alone, alone on a wide, wide sea’.

Or again:

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This continuous bad weather was attributed by some on board to the fact that we had captured an albatross on the second day out. It is generally supposed by seaman to be unlucky to kill this bird, but as we did it for the purposes of scientific collections and not with the wantonness of the ‘Ancient Mariner’, the superstitious must seek for some other reasons for the weather.  

The tone sometimes varies from the poetical to the practical, from the legendary to the real, thanks to Shackleton’s passion for literature that frequently burst out in the narrative and his adding the seamen’s legends. As an example, Shackleton talks about an old tradition known to the sailors telling that after death the souls of old sailors, inhabit the bodies of penguins as well as of albatrosses. He reports this story in order to explain the general mood of good omen felt by the sailors when one day, steaming slowly southward, a penguin jumped out from the water on board the Nimrod. 

The poetical descriptions of the text may partly explain Shackleton’s fascination for Antarctica, especially when sunsets are described:

The western mountains stood out gloriously and the summit of Erebus was wrapped in crimson when the lower slopes had faded into grey. To Erebus and the western mountains our eyes turned when the end of the long night grew near in the month of August, for the mighty peaks are the first to catch up and tell the tale of the coming glory and the last to drop the crimson mantle from their high shoulders as night draws on. Tongue and pencil would sadly fail in attempting to describe the magic of the colouring in the days when the sun was leaving us. The very clouds at this time were iridescent with rainbow hues. The sunsets were poems. The change from twilight into night, sometimes lit by a crescent moon, was extraordinarily beautiful, for the white cliffs gave no part of their colour away, and the rocks beside them did not part with their blackness, and the effect of deepening night over these contrast was singularly weird.

Similarly to Scott, the triumph of colours that the snow can assume in these peculiar moments shocks the observer. His eye is almost harassed from the brightness and the dynamism of the colours that slowly fades away and the moon rises in the sky and paints the landscape with soft and calm hues, transforming the scene from light into darkness and shadows. The beauty of the scene,

252 Ibid., p. 40.
253 Ibid., p. 64.
the contrast of colours and hues deeply inspire Shackleton, to the point that he defines antarctic sunsets as poetical. Thus, similar moments of true inspiration and beautiful scenarios that only Antarctica could display may be a proof of his overwhelming attraction for the continent. To the matter of this, he frequently stresses the fascination played by Antarctica in the human being, as in the following passage:

We were now revelling in the indescribable freshness of the Antarctic that seems to permeate one’s being, and which must be the responsible for that longing to go again which assails each returned explorer from polar regions.\(^{255}\)

Or, alternatively:

Indeed the stark polar lands grip the hearts of the men who have lived on them in a manner that can hardly be understood by the people who have never got outside the pale of civilisation.\(^{256}\)

This way of addressing the reader is very frequent in the book. He stresses his audience’s inability to understand certain phenomena of Antarctica. Unlike Scott, who addresses the reader as an incitement to follow the narrative and what he is explaining, Shakleton seems to neglect his reader. However, this can be seen as a literary strategy in order to increase or decrease what he is saying. Formulas such as “hardly to be understood by the lay reader”\(^{257}\) or “the ordinary individual at home would scarcely understand”\(^{258}\) are present in the text, especially when an extreme situation is being described. These are the moments of sublime, as stated by Shackleton:

Professor David, also, hanging to the dripping rails, was fascinated by the wild scene, and between the gusts we spoke of many things. Somehow or another the conversation turned to one’s favourite poets, and it is but natural that, under these circumstances of stress and strain, Browning’s verse was often the subject of conversation.\(^{259}\)

\(^{255}\) Ibid., p. 54.
\(^{256}\) Ibid., p. 9.
\(^{258}\) Ibid., p. 107.
\(^{259}\) Ibid., p. 38
The moments of stress and strain, as defined by Shackleton, grow in number when the members of the expedition had to face the powerful and dangerous forces of Antarctica directly. For example, words such as “hard”, “tired”, “painful” and “gloomy” are recurrent in the description of the sledging marches, especially the southern march to the pole. In addition, the benevolent and glorious aspect displayed by the continent at the beginning of the narration, slowly shows its dangerous reverse as an admonition from nature: “It seemed as though the glacier were saying: ‘There is the last touch of you; don’t you come up here again!’”. Calm and peace are replaced by panic and omens of death: “our need is extreme, and we must keep going. (...) Our food lies ahead, and death stalks us from behind.” Like Scott, Shackleton seems to violate the secrets and the mysteries of the continent, as if he had challenged again Antarctica, which had already beaten him once. Nevertheless, the endurance and the sufferings are for the noble scientific cause and the improvement of human knowledge. However, Shackleton makes no mystery about the fact that he also wants to attempt the geographical South Pole, which is a direct hint at the fulfilment of both a personal and national ambition. Unlike Scott, whose expedition was intended for scientific reasons, Shackleton also includes and explicate the ambitious aim of the South Pole.

As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, the likenesses between Scott, Shackleton, Darwin and Whymper are many. First of all, I can observe that the fields investigated are almost the same. The Discovery and Nimrod scientific teams had to investigate not only meteorological and magnetic phenomena, but also geology, zoology, biology and geography. Whymper’s glaciology was a thoroughly investigated topic also in the Discovery expedition. Like Whymper, many passages of Scott’s journal are devoted to glaciers, especially those discovered near the camp, such as Ferrar’s Glacier. In addition, he talks also about ice formations such as the tabular icebergs typical of the polar areas and curious phenomena of freezing, such as the pancakes and the ice-flowers. Pancakes are ice formations of various dimensions, round-shaped and with raised rims due to the collision of one piece with the other that recalls the same form as the sweet, flat cake. Ice-

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260 Ibid., p. 234.
flowers are small, peculiar ice formations from condensed air on newly frozen sea. Scott vividly describes them: “this is a season of flowers, and behold! they have sprung up about us as by magic: very beautiful ice-flowers, waxen white in the shadow, but radiant with prismatic colours when sunrays light on their delicate petals.” Another interesting and mysterious ice formation investigated during the Discovery expedition was the Great Ice Barrier. It was firstly discovered and studied by Ross but still many doubts had to be solved, since it was not clear if the entire barrier was a gigantic floating tabular iceberg or if this tabular formation was anchored to the land. Also Shackleton carried out important studies on glaciology, thanks to the discovery of the Beardmore Glacier, which represented a new passage to the polar plateau for the geographical South Pole.

Scott’s scientific team observed and collected data of the volcanic activity of the camp and its surroundings. Mount Erebus, the only active volcano of the Antarctic, was in plain sight from the camp and the team could collect data also about the seismic movements provoked by the volcano thanks to a seismograph. Shackleton’s men ascended the volcano a few years after Scott’s expedition, facing dangers and extreme low temperatures. However, the deed had a great scientific impact for the time, since the volcano was investigated from the slopes to the crater, where geological and physical inspections were made. Also Darwin in his *Voyage of the Beagle* reports the observations he made of an extinct volcano and he devotes many pages to the catastrophes of earthquakes in Chile.

A peculiar phenomenon reported by Scott but also by Darwin is the “red water”. Darwin talks about reddish spots in the sea, especially when the Beagle was sailing off the shores of Patagonia. These red spots are found also in the submerged part of the floating icebergs in Antarctica. The reddish hue is given by microscopic phytoplankton that usually floats in the sea and clings to the icebergs. I found it interesting that Darwin talked about this phenomenon when he was visiting the most extreme southern part of the South American continent, which is also the last piece of land before reaching Antarctica.

The field arousing much curiosity and interest amongst the men of both the Discovery and the Nimrod was zoology. Penguins and seals were already known as animals but a lot about their habits, behaviour and migration had to be learned. During Scott’s first long voyage south a great amount of new species or varieties of birds were discovered. The results of the scientific investigations carried out in the continent gave important contribution to the study of certain phenomena, such as magnetism. For the fact that Scott was so curious and interested in scientific matters and he actively participated in the investigation, I think he can be seen as a new Darwin. Like Darwin, he legitimizes the role of adventure to the noble scientific cause. The first expeditions to Antarctica masked the ambitious aim of reaching the geographical South Pole with the scientific instructions. However, also in later expeditions the scientific program remained one of the main reasons for the British exploration of the continent, even though the South Pole became one of the main goals, as explicated by Shackleton. In front of the Edwardian audience, the numerous efforts and the first attempts in the Antarctic gained respect because even though the explorers spent time in fulfilling a national implicit ambition, their long and difficult marches provided an inestimable opportunity of scientific gathering and observation. Sufferings, discomforts, dangers and endurance were noble because they were faced in the name of science and the improvement of human knowledge. I think the legitimization of adventure as a tool for scientific research is the most important feature common to Darwin, Whymper and the Antarctic journals of the first decade of the 20th century. Scott’s devotion to the scientific cause is unconditional, whatever the cost. He is ready to risk his life to carry out the instructions of the expedition and the orders received. This can be seen in the section of the book where he talks about the dogs. Scott nourished affection and respect for the dogs of the expedition, and he also suffered in exploiting them during the long marches. Nevertheless, exploiting the dogs to death is justified since they are tools serving a noble cause: scientific improvement. The following passage shows Scott’s affection and regret in the exploitation of the dogs: “One cannot calmly contemplate the murder of animals which possesses such intelligence and individuality, which have frequently such endearing qualities and which very
possibly one has learnt to regard as friends and companions.

However, he adds: “on the other hand, it may be pointed out with good reason that to forego the great objects which may be achieved by the sacrifice of dog-life is carrying sentiment to undue length. It is a case, if ever there was one, where the end justifies the means.”

Also Darwin feels affection and respect for the animals he studies, but at the same time he does not hesitate to kill them as a specimen to be taken in a museum in England. Like Scott, also Shackleton spends a few words about the ponies he carried to Antarctica, sharing the same tone of pity and necessary sacrifice. The use of ponies for polar exploration was a great novelty for the time. As stated before, Nansen and the north polar veterans highly suggested the use of the dogs, which in the end proved to be the best means of transport when Amundsen conquered the South Pole with a pack of fifty dogs. In addition, Shackleton brought a motorcar with him to be experimented as a sledge. The idea proved ineffective, but his attempt was not abandoned. Scott’s Terra Nova expedition researched and made projects for a more effective vehicle to be used in ice and snow, but the environmental conditions of the Antarctic were too extreme and again the motorcar failed. The research on the motorcar represented a great, both scientific and social, novelty for the time, since cars were starting to grow in number in the big cities. In addition, the various attempts spent on improving and adapting the structure of the motorcar to the irregular and difficult surface of the Antarctic represented the basis for the development of the tank, which would be used few years later, in the First World War.

Darwin and Whymper devoted many sections of their journals to anthropological observations, since they got in contact with the local populations of the places they visited. Scott and Shackleton could not make anthropological studies since in Antarctica there are not local inhabitants or ethnic groups, due to the extreme environmental conditions that do not allow human life. However, they provide the reader with a social study of a small English community in an uninhabited continent.

The two long years both Scott and Shackleton spent in the continent and the life on board the ship

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263 Ibid.
work as a sort of social experiment. The companies counted thirty-eight men in the Discovery and thirty-one in the Nimrod, for a total of sixty-nine men that brought with them their origins and the national traditions, culture and social habits. A small piece of Edwardian England was created in the pack of Antarctica. The groups had a strict routine to follow, especially during the winter period in order to prevent depression, a dangerous evil of polar expeditions. In addition, Scott decided to maintain the hierarchy of the Royal Navy both on board the ship and in the winter quarters. Nonetheless, the rules did not prevent the men-from living joyfully together in total respect. In addition, writing in The South Polar Times, reading, following the small lectures, acting and playing chess or “Shove ha’ penny” (a game invented by the men on board), contributed to reinforce human relationships between the men and develop a strong comradeship, no matter the rank. Shackleton decided to avoid the classical hierarchical division followed by Scott. Nonetheless, disorders and insubordination never took place both on board the ship and in the winter quarters on shore. In my opinion, it is important to consider how the aims of the expeditions were felt by the men of the two expeditions. In the journals analysed, I can say that the enterprise is never felt as a personal ambition but it is the ambition of the entire nation that is fulfilled. Certainly, being the first to reach the South Pole involves personal ambition, but when the polar party is formed, the small group represents the entire English nation. Every mile towards the geographical South Pole is not simply an opportunity of new scientific observations but it also represents a conquest made for the British fellow countrymen. Therefore, I can say that Scott’s devotion to the scientific cause and Shackleton’s ambitious program may be seen also as a demonstration of loyalty towards their country. In the Terra Nova expedition of 1909, Scott died in a tent in the middle of the ice desert of Antarctica in the name of the scientific cause. But was science the real and sole reason that led a party of five men to die in the middle of nowhere, at the end of the world? Or were they fulfilling the great ambition of their entire nation, that is to be the first to the South Pole? In my opinion, reaching the geographical South Pole was not scientifically functional, but had a great psychological influence for the nation, since the Empire was slowly fading and the catastrophe of
the First World War was relentlessly approaching. Making the South Pole British was a way to prove that the British Empire had not lost its strength and the glory of the Victorian period had not decreased during the Edwardian Era. In this ideal dimension, all the sufferings, discomforts, dangers and extreme conditions faced in the pack are appointed with a meaning: enduring in order to prove that England is still a powerful and advanced country with its influence as a guide for the world.
THE SOUTH POLAR TIMES AND AURORA AUSTRALIS: ANTARCTIC LITERARY PRODUCTIONS

It is typical of polar exploration devoting the spare time in recreational activities, especially during the long months of polar night. This is due to the dangers produced by isolation and the forced cohabitation on the same place and with the same people for very long times, which were peculiar conditions of life in a small hut in the icy deserts of the polar plateau. Norwegian explorers used to call this felling of depression and isolation Mørketiden, which literally means dark-boredom-depression.264 In this chapter I shall analyse the literary productions of the Discovery and Nimrod expeditions, which are the magazine The South Polar Times and the book Aurora Australis.

Notwithstanding the two productions were intended for different aims, they share a common origin: they were both written and produced in the pack of Antarctica. During the Discovery expedition of 1901-1904, a typewriter was taken on board the ship in order to produce a paper when the sun disappeared at the beginning of winter. According to Scott, it was widely discussed the production of this magazine especially for the target audience to be addressed. At the beginning, the paper was meant for an in-house use of the members of the expedition, but soon they realized that the volumes were fine and rich both in the contents and in the pictures. Scott in his journal says:

The journal is more ambitious in intentions, and far more effective in its realisation, than any of its predecessors of the North Polar region. On the one hand, we have some reading matter and many delightful sketches that would be appreciated by all; on the other, it has to be remembered that the humour and many of the references are local and would convey little or nothing to the uninformed reader.265

Thus, the publication for the wide audience was discussed but it never took place.

Ernest Shackleton was appointed as editor, as well as printer, manager, typesetter and office boy of the South Polar Times. The artist was Edward Wilson, the zoologist and surgeon of the expedition. However, when Shackleton was invalidated home for scurvy after the first year of mission in Antarctica, the physicist Bernacchi took his place. Scott in The Voyage of the Discovery talks about

the structure of the paper, saying that each number was composed by a table of contents, an editorial, a summary of the events of the past month, articles about the scientific work and results obtained and “certain others written in a lighter vein”. Also some wordplays such as acrostics and puzzles were inserted as a way to entertain and make the reader more involved in the reading activity. The writings were collected in the editor’s box until a certain date and they had to be anonymous. Each member of the expedition participated, from the officers to the sailors, and they masked their identity under a nickname, such as “Fitzclarence”, “East-oh”, “Sea Leopard”, “Loki” or “Shellback”. Writing anonymously was a funny way to involve the members of the expedition in guessing who was the author of each article, and thanks to the unique style traits recurring on every number of the paper the nicknames were soon attributed to the original authors.

The *South Polar Times* appeared for the first time on April 23rd, 1902, during the Discovery expedition. In addition, during Scott’s last expedition of 1910-1913 the publication of the magazine was resumed, with Apsley Cherry-Garrard as editor. The editorial of the first number perfectly works as a source for the panorama of both Edwardian England and the beautifully lonely landscape of the Antarctic. Shackleton informs his audience that the role of editor in such a place is different from an editor homeland:

> I might stand at the door, and look in vain for the row of boys, each with his red-rimmed bicycle, ready to fly to the street corner with his bundle, the moment the paper leaves the printer’s hands, and there unload to the grimy leather-lunged urchins of the pavement; In vain I might look for the flaunting flag, and plastered sides, of that terror to nervous ladies, and mild old gentlemen, the high cart with its six-foot wheels, which in half an hour spreads the news of the world from one end of the city to the other. I know we have not here as in England, the early train, which draws up at the many stations of Suburbia, to deposit with the milk, boundless of still damp sheets, rolled off by the press in hours when all the rest of the world was asleep; sheets that in due times will be read propped up against the coffee pot or loaf; and the latest rumour from the far East, or the tragedy of last night, commences the conversation of the day.\(^{267}\)

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\(^{266}\) R. F. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

\(^{267}\) The *South Polar Times*, April 1902, vol. 1, London, The Folio Society, 2012, p.1 (This edition was published in a precious limited edition of 1000 copies from the Folio Society of London in cooperation with the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), reprinting and collecting the original volumes of the magazine both of Discovery and Terra Nova expeditions.)
The description of the delivering of newspapers is very vivid, instilling in the reader the liveliness of the scene and recalling the noises and feelings of the beginning of a new day. On the contrary, the hectic activity homeland is total peace, calm and desolation in the frozen continent. When Shackleton looks out the door in here, the landscape he sees is all white with snow and ice, there are some black volcanic rocks and in the distance a thin column of smoke comes up from the crater of the Erebus. The only sounds in here are the whistle of the winds, the squeaking of the penguins, the blowing of seals when they come out of the water to breath and the crunching of the ice moved by the tides. The colours are no more, since the sun had disappeared and the light is now on the northlands.\textsuperscript{268} Despite the desolation and the awareness of facing a winter in complete darkness, the tone of the volume is joyful and there is no sign of sadness.

As reported from Scott’s journal, there is a recurrent structure, which is present since the beginning of the publications. During the winter of 1902 five volumes of the paper appeared, and three volumes in the winter of 1903. In addition to the information given by Scott, the other recurrent parts are the sections named “Arms and the Men”, where the picture of every member of the expedition’s ensign is given and the motto chosen, “Told at one bell” is a series of funny stories written in vernacular English by “Jacker”, the “Editor’s note” were the solutions of the monthly acrostics, information about the deadlines and the topics to be treated for the next number are given. Moreover, a section named “Letters form the readers” was added in June 1902. The publications of the paper are divided in two main volumes: volume I corresponds to the Discovery Expedition and Volume II corresponds to Scott’s Terra Nova expedition. For the fact that there was a typewriter on board the Discovery, the monthly magazine was produced in a single copy that was shared by the men. In the first series of the \textit{South Polar Times} the articles about science and entertainment are very well balanced. In addition, there are articles about the activities spent in the hut, such as the lectures taken once a week, or the celebration of certain festivities. The topics treated are reported both in Scott’s journal and in Armitage’s journal, second officer on board the Discovery. Scott

\textsuperscript{268} \textit{The South Polar Times}, April 1902, vol. 1, p. 1.
gives just a few examples of the subjects, differently Armitage reports a longer list of the discussions, both technical and non-technical: “What Meteorological Conditions are likely to Prevail at our Winter-Quarters during the Winter-Settled or Unsettled?”, “Women Rights”, “Our Commercial Supremacy: Are we taking Proper Measures to Maintain it?”,”Spiritualism and Sport”, “Would Conscription Benefit the Empire”, “Seals and their habits”, “Is South Victoria Land Part of an Antarctic Continent or not?”, “What are our Prospects of Successful Exploration in the Discovery, to the East and West, when the Ship is freed from her Winter-Quarters?”.

Moreover, he also adds a comment to certain discussions that took place. For example, the meeting about conscription turned out to produce a majority against the forced military service; nine out of ten agreed that women suffered from disabilities in comparison with men and that they should gain equal rights of men, when they were capable to maintain them; as far as the commercial supremacy was concerned, the group all agreed on the fact that the Empire was not taking the proper measures to maintain its economical power; finally, the most humorous speech was that about sport and spiritualism, instead the most interesting debates were those about the fauna of the Antarctic, such as seals and penguins’s habits.

The number of May 1902 reports a comment on the first inaugural meeting of the Debating Club, as they named the meetings. The author’s nickname is “Veritas” and he entered the Debating Club pretending to be a correspondent of The South Polar Times. The subject treated was “Whether the major portion of the Great Ice Barrier is afloat or not?” The topic was very controversial and the audience was reluctant to speak in the beginning. However, interesting theories were presented during the debate. It is interesting to focus on Veritas’ style. His attention is not mainly focused in the description of the theories shown, but on the speakers, their attitude and way of delivering the information. This is due to the fact that he lacks the scientific knowledge necessary to follow the whole debate. He refers to the speakers always by nicknames,

269 See A. B. Armitage, Two Years in the Antarctic; Being a Narrative of the British National Antarctic Expedition, Memphis, Tennessee, General Books, 2010, p. 46.
270 Ibid.
272 Ibid., p. 16.
for example Mr. Reggie Abyssinius. He is described as “willowy of stature, with luxurious dark locks coquettishly arranged, and lean astute features, he was the embodiment of intellectuality.” He presented eloquently and supported with innumerable deductions and inductions his theories, which were received brilliantly by the members of the club. Some other interventions were made by “Mr Skelherodotus” and “Dr Rara Avis” who were both not very clear in delivering their theories. “Mr Frostbitten Somebody” was the last to speak but he produced nothing interesting, being gifted with oratory he frequently lost the thread of his argument, but his ideas were not as good as his way of speaking.

Another event that took place during the mission and that is both reported in The South Polar Times and many journals are the games that took place on the day of King Edward VII’s birthday. The celebration and realisation of the games in name of his Majesty the King is reported in the second series of the paper, on April 1903. The event is carefully reported in Armitage’s journal and mentioned in Scott’s journal. In the magazine many pages are devoted to the event, giving a list of the games, how they were carried out and the winner for each speciality. The first game was a tobaggon race; the men were divided in teams of two and had to build a self-made tobaggon, which is a type of sledge, and glide down a slope. The first to arrive was the winner. The second competition was a sledge-dragging race, each team counted six men. The third activity was called “Putting the weight”, a typical sailor’s game. The fourth activity was the tug of war, consisting in pitting the rival sledge teams against one another. It followed a classical of winter games, the ski-slope running and the two miles flat race on ski. The two last games were another sledge-dragging competition and to conclude a shooting competition. Armitage adds that the day was ended with a good meal, a magic-lantern display on the messdeck of pictures from Australia and New Zealand, a successful concert and the distribution of the prizes to the winners of the day. The prizes were of different types. Several small silver medals were made before the ship left England, to be

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273 The South Polar Times cit., May 1902, vol. 1, p. 16.
distributed as a prize to any kind of competition taken on board, then there were Wilson’s beautiful sketches, a small silver-mounted aneroid barometer, and those who participated to the games received chocolate, tobacco, a stick of shaving soap, grog or a geological specimen.  

Another activity that was considered almost compulsory by the Royal Navy itself and by the planners of the expeditions to the poles was acting. Act is part of English tradition and it was obvious that such an important element of English culture was taken to Antarctica. When the Discovery took sail, Shackleton was appointed to find the books for the library on board, but he had also to collect all the material necessary for theatrical plays: stage costumes, greasepaint and scripts. Playing during the expedition was a solid tradition of the Royal Navy, to the point that in Sir Clements Markham’s small volume The Arctic Navy List, or A Century of Arctic and Antarctic Officers (1875), the most important qualification for those who applied for a polar mission was the inclination to take part to winter entertaining, the ability of hauling a sledge was taken in second position. The theatrical plays were usually taken by the officers. Some of the actors could also disguise as women in order to act the feminine roles present on the plays. The scripts were usually classics reworked in a humorous key and with many references to places, people and situations of the expeditions. In the Discovery expedition, the plays were put on stage in a small hut named “The Royal Terror Theatre”, and directed by Royds, who also acted and played the piano. There were just a few performances during the winter, also because the theatre was outside the main hut and to reach it sometimes the actors had to face low temperatures and blizzards. However, the performances were all successful. Hints about theatrical plays are given by Scott and Armitage in their journals, and also in The South Polar Times. Scott devotes several pages of his journal about the origins and the responses to the plays. It was Royds who first thought at the beginning of the winter to devote part of the small hut outside to a recreational place, soon after a concert took place and a long program was planned. However, there were not so many talented musicians but the few

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275 See A. B. Armitage, op. cit., p. 69.
277 Ibid.
exceptions of dramatic exhibition provided the opportunity to turn the music evenings into other genres. Barne was appointed the role of writing a play, he made a selection of the possible actors and the name of the play and the theatre remained a secret until the night of the performance. Soon after mid-winter was celebrated the theatre opened its doors. There was a row of seats in front of the stage for the officers and several benches for the men. The drop-curtain on the stage reported the name chosen for the theatre, “The Royal Terror Theatre”, and the ship Discovery with Mount Erebus were painted in bright colours. Despite the very low temperature, everybody followed with interest the play. The play was divided into two parts, Part I consisted of several songs by popular singers of the time, Part II was defined as Ticket of Leave, “A screaming comedy in one act”.279 Some actors were disguised as women. It was not clear if a real plot existed, but according to Scott a situation can be worked up by the audience: the hero of the play suddenly sees through the window the lady he is in love with, but he is not sure of her identity, since a long time had passed when he last saw her. The play reaches the apex of its climax when the intervention of the police is required. The stage becomes a battlefield where “for several minutes there is practically a free fight with imminent risk to the furniture.”280 In the end the curtain falls amid the cheering. Scott recognizes that he was gladly entertained and a lot must be written in The South Polar Times as one of the most successful entertainments took place in the Polar Circle. Acting was received with a hearty approval and Royds decided to organise a “nigger minstrel troupe”281. The nigger minstrel performance consists of various songs and choruses, between which the thread of the conversation keeps unravel among the minstrels in heavy conundrums that, after several useless attempts, are frequently solved by who firstly submitted them. The performance was scheduled for August, 6th. Despite the -40° and the strong wind, the whole hut assisted to the event. The play was called Dishcover Minstrel Troupe, and the twelve actors on stage were sitting in a row, with blackened faces and dressed for the occasion with shirts with big paper collars, grotesque colourful suits, wigs,

enormous boots and buttons, bones and skins. The songs played by Royds were typical plantation songs. In the choruses reference to their situation were inserted, as well as in the jokes, which were home-made and topical of both places and people but in the most humorous manner. The jokes talked about the ship, the dogs, the windmill and everything concerning the Discovery expedition. It was a great success, to the point that several jokes were reported both in Scott’s journal and in the *South Polar Times*. Here as follows a short extract of the play from the monthly magazine:

“Massa Squash can you told me why de crew ob the ‘Discobery’ am like yur mudder?...
Because dey am waitin fur the sun’s return.”

“Massa Bones can yu told me what am de wuss vegetable e ‘Discobery’ left London wid?”…
Why de Dundee leak ob course.”

“Why am de opening ob a tin ob Macconochile’s food like lije Noah’s Ark?”...
Because yu neber can tell what am comin out nex.”

“Why did Hut Point?”…. “Because it saw Ski Slope round the corner.”

“What made crater (H)jil?”... “Because it saw the Castle Rock.”

“Why did the Weddle waddle?”… “Because the Crab ‘it ‘er.”

The jokes are quite difficult to be understood for the readers if they do not know to what the plays are referring to. But I shall attempt an explanation for some of the jokes of the extract. For example, the worst vegetable taken from London was the deficiency of the new ship built in Dundee, which leaked water inside. The comparison between the food tin and Noah’s Ark may possibly refer to the entire lot of tinned meat the men were forced to throw away because it was seen as the possible cause of the appearance of scurvy. Hut Point is the place where the winter quarter was built. In the joke, it possibly refers to Hut and Ski as if they were two people. Hut points to Ski because he is leaving furtively around the corner. Crater Hill and Castel Rock are again places in the surroundings of the hut. Again the place may be personified, and Crater fell ill because he saw Castle shaking violently. The extracts from the minstrel performance is not the only script reported in the magazine. In *The South Polar Times* published during the winter of 1902 and 1903 there are

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two scripts entirely reported. However, it is not clear whether these scripts published in the magazine were also put on stage or they were simply drafts of possible future performances. The two plays are both set homeland in London, and the author wonders about how the explorers’ life would be once back home. For example, in the script of the play *When One Goes Forth a Voyaging, He Has a Tale to Tell*\(^{283}\) published in April 1903, the scene is set in a room of a fashionable London home, at tea time. The heroes are two members of the Discovery expedition. The script specifies that Hero I has a poetical attitude and Hero II is more scientific. The other characters are Mr Nincompoop Poodlefaker, Lady Valerie de Pip and her daughters, Gerty, Queenie and Dorothy de Pip. The scene opens with Mr Poodlefaker having tea with Lady de Pip’s beautiful daughters. Lady de Pip comes on the stage in great haste and excitement, introducing the two heroes and inviting them to join at the tea table. There is great excitement since Lady the Pip tells her daughters that she succeeded in capturing the two heroes, presented as “two gentlemen who have just returned from a most WONDERFUL journey to the North Pole in the “Discovery”, after having undergone nearly three years of most TERRIBLE sufferings and privations.”\(^{284}\) The girls answer in a chorus of “How interesting! How dreadful! How very brave of them!”\(^{285}\) On the contrary, Mr Poodlefaker seems not as excited as the young women and the heroes feel uncomfortable in all this hustle, as indicated in the script into brackets. The conversation is a sort of interview between the ladies, who ask questions about the expedition, and the two members of the Discovery expedition that answer more or less ironically, poetically or scientifically to the questions. The tone of the answers depends on who is the speaker. For example, Queenie de Pip asks if they made a lot of skating and Hero I responds enthusiastically; but when he mentions the fact that during the winter there is no sun, he adds poetically to Dorothy de Pip’s expression of intense surprise:

> Yes, that is one of the strange and peculiar features of the country. During four months Erebus cast its mantle upon us, and day after day the wind winged its wintry roar. In the summer the sun shone forever unchangeably bright. Ah! How it all returns to one with haunting persistency! I am reminded of a little thing I composed on the “White Silence” (quoted the lines, to the

The intensity of feelings in the process of recollection is exaggerated in the poetical vein of the speaker, which sounds too pathetic to his comrade Hero II. On the other hand, Hero II is much technical in answering the questions, giving scientific terms and notions, as it follows: “The great sea mammal, ognorhinus leptonyx, the rapacious skuas, the ice-pressures, the anti-cyclones, the blizzards, the yawning crevasses were a perpetual source of danger.” The exposition of the dangers they encountered in Antarctica is delivered in a list of technical words, which could sound unintelligible and probably boring. However, the obscurity of the terms used may cause in the audience curiosity, admiration and it increases the tension and anxiety of the listeners for what is unknown. At the beginning of the play, the ladies believe that the expedition was in the North Pole and when the heroes inform them that the mission was carried out in the South, the reaction is of surprise and puzzlement. At the beginning of the 20th century, the English audience was accustomed to the various expeditions in the north. Thus, the characters expect the two heroes to talk about Inuit populations and polar bears. Going to the South represented a great novelty for the ladies, which may possibly represent the reaction of the English audience homeland once the expedition would come back. In addition, the fact that Lady de Pip had “captured” the two heroes may be a sign of what the members of the expedition expects once they go back home: success and fame due to the novelties they would bring home. Similarly, the script of In Futuro published in August 1902, present the hero sitting on a luxurious couch in a room of Buckingham Palace, that His Majesty had specifically intended for the use of the National heroes of the Discovery expedition to Antarctica. The hero is described in the indications of the script as “somewhat pallid from the evenings continually devoted to the entertainment of his admiring fellow citizens and a trifle hoarse from constant repetition of “well chosen words” delivered to rapt post prandial audiences.” A young

287 Ibid., p. 21.
and vivacious reporter of the *Daily Tattler* interviews our hero on the expedition. The interview turns nearly into a monologue about the life and predilection to become an explorer of the hero and many references to the places of the expedition are made. The young reporter sometimes tries to interrupt the long monologue in order to remind to the hero the original question, but the hero almost annoyed resumes again what he was saying. Also in this script, the tone of the hero is poetical and with the tendency of portraying the dangers and landscapes of Antarctica in a romantic vein. In addition, the interview form may be a sign of the great amount of novelties the members of the expeditions had to tell once home. Thus, success and popularity is expected, as for the hero of this play who seems almost tired for the numerous banquets and speeches he took part to since the Discovery came back to England.

As previously stated in this chapter, the paper was a collection of technical and non-technical articles in a balance. The technical articles were especially concerned with science, phenomena of the Antarctic and accounts about the experiences the men made while on the continent. As an example, the titles presented in the table of contents of April 1902 are “An Arctic Sledge journey”, “Horticultural notes”, “Polar Plant Life”, “Watering ship”, “A Seal Chase”.\(^{290}\)

Obviously, the tone and the language used are different for this type of writings, as in the article about the mariner’s compass.\(^{291}\) The article is divided into two parts: the first part appeared in June 1902 and the second in July 1902. The article gives a thorough description of the history, development and use of the mariner’s compass. The extract I shall focus my attention on is the second part published in July 1902. The author resumes the history of the compass as it was left in the previous number, providing the reader with thorough information about the difficult development and application of this instrument for the Royal Navy and the invaluable contributions given by such important names of sea and exploration as Ross, Beaufort and Johnson in setting up some practical rules to be revised from time to time for a correct use of the compass. In addition,


the author adds that thanks to the recent studies and experiments carried out by Sir Airy, the Astronomer Royal, on the disturbance of the compass needle in iron ships the improvements for the creation and application of this object increased considerably. The author speculates on the increasing use of iron in the production of ships and quotes form an important publication of the Admiralty, *Manual for the Deviations of the Compass* (1862), a fundamental book for the seafarers. Also on board the *Discovery* a copy of it was present. In addition, the audience is informed that a cooperation between the Compass Department of the Admiralty and Captain Creak R. N., took place in order to make the *Discovery* fit for thorough magnetic studies and observations without interfere with the compass; a work widely appreciated by all the men on board the ship. Magnetism, its observations and effects on the compass become the main issue treated for the rest of the article, which actually responds the interest of the epoch for this new and mysterious scientific field. Notwithstanding the majority of the articles about science presented in the paper are mainly characterized by the essay form and tone, the contributors to *The South Polar Times* lack not of the necessary creativity to turn a scientific subject into literature. This is the case of the various poems published in the magazine. Most of the poems are about events or subjects of the Antarctic, such as *Ode to a Penguin* or *South Pole Volunteers*. The form of the poem is also used to create the monthly acrostics, which were word puzzles very difficult to solve. However, some poems were also about scientific instruments or phenomena, such as *Bioloveria* or *To a Reversible Thermometer*. *To a Reversible Thermometer* was written by “Fitzclarence” and it appeared in June 1910. The poem is about an instrument used to record the temperature on deep waters. The author describes in verse the various concerns of using this instrument. The delicate thermometer was firstly greased and then put into the water with a long cable. When the desired

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deep was reached the thermometer was reversed and then brought back to the surface. The lines that follow are some extracts of the long poem:

When I take you from the box, trying not to
Give you knocks,
When I’ve wiped you clear of grease and Vaseline,
Then I think you look so pretty that I write
this little ditty
But to drop you in the sea I’m not so keen.

When the engines they are stopped, and each yard is duly dropped
Upon the cap, the sails clewed up so clean;
Then I bend you on the wire and I breathe an anxious prayer
That this will not be the last time that you are seen.

(...)

The reel unwinds apace, as I watch the counters face
Till it shews perhaps nine hundred and nineteen,
Then the wheel begins to jump like a donkey feeding pump
And we begin to think that all is not serene.

But before we make a motion to withdraw it from the ocean,
To heave the beggar up again, I mean;
A messenger we slide which adown the wire will glide
And upset the gagetometer machine.

But ere the messenger has started, I feel sure the wire has parted
And I wish some unseen power would intervene
And spirit me away, till some brighter happier day,
And we pass the word below for heaving in.

(...)

Then things begin to hum, as towards the end we come
And Billy on the bridge begins to preen,
But I’ll finish up my tale as I lean across the rail
And regard the curling end with great chagrin.\(^{297}\)

The tone of the poem is funny but at the same time it shows the justified worries of the poet that had to use the instrument, since it is very delicate, fragile and possibly expensive. Using the verse for a scientific matter is original and shows great imagination from the part of the members of the

expedition. It may prove as a valuable option to the essay form, which would be the form expected from the audience for a scientific issue. In addition, while reading the poem the audience is informed of how the thermometer works and how it is used. It is a new form of witnessing and reporting a scientific matter in a new and unusual way. In my opinion, the scientific-poem perfectly reflects the scientific interest of the epoch, which did not meant a progressive abandon of the arts and letters; on the contrary, the literary and the scientific fields merge together in this peculiar form of writing lines. As in this case, the poem and the paper itself work as a literary successful attempt of witnessing also technical and possibly difficult matters of the expedition. As previously stated, lines and verses are used also to create the monthly acrostics and the word puzzles. The wordplays were Scott’s peculiar contribution to the magazine, which were obscure and very difficult to solve. Solving the acrostics gave birth to a veritable tournament with medals for those who counted the highest number of acrostics solved. Each month an acrostic in series was published and the solution was given in the editorial’s note of the following month. As an example, I report the following acrostic published in the first volume of April 1902:

From day to day the traveller bold
In polar regions, I am told
Thinks much of this; indeed it may
Be said to cheer him all the way.

1
Though founded on myth, a word sometimes used,
A creature whose license was often abused.

2
Turkey may be the clue to invoke it
So now put that in your pipe and smoke it.

3
It o’er tops creation, yet still we may find
Some parts of this Southland are not far behind.

4
Perhaps your divinity hunts, if so
She may give you a clue to this word, you know.

5
Many are dark, and some are damp too,
And one very famous example is blue.

6
Though in it the ploughman homeward may plod
There’s one thing that’s certain it never is odd.298

To solve an acrostic the reader has to read certain letters, usually the initials of the line, in order to create a word or a motto. In this case, Scott also gives instructions on how to solve this double acrostic: the initials and finals of each word read downwards, from the subject of the four-line verse. The acrostic was correctly solved by “East-oh”, who received the highest point, 10 out of 10. The other competitors gained less point, for the fact that the solution was incorrect for one or more words, but the ideas submitted were considerably original and interesting. One person responded correctly but did not sign the solution, which was “POLAR TIMES”.

The contributors of The South Polar Times give prove of great imagination, especially for the number of stories that appear in the paper. The story which appears regularly in the contents of the magazine is Told At One Bell, written by “Jaker”. Told At One Bell are funny stories usually written in vernacular English. The language used present many short forms and informal structures, in order to create puns, paradoxes, double senses and misunderstandings. For example, the history appeared in June 1903 is a dialogue between Westo and Chucks, the two main characters of the tale.299 The two creates a dialogued based on double senses and paradoxes, starting from a misunderstanding. Chucks is sad because he broke up with the girl he was in love with soon after he came back from the Discovery expedition. He gave her a pair of old collars pretending that they were bracelets made by the inhabitants of the Antarctic. However, when Chucks gave the bracelets to her, he called them as garters and the young indignant woman left him. The whole story is a series of jokes and double senses on women stockings and sheer legs, which Westo used to create jokes in the fishing and medical fields. In my opinion, these kind of funny stories are not easy to understand, since not only the language used is informal and tries to recreate a certain accent or variety of English, but references to life in Antarctica are made. Another interesting story, which appeared in July 1902, is An Old Document.300 The story is about the launch of the Discovery, from the early stages of building to the long voyage to Antarctica, and the origins of the entire

expedition. At the beginning of the narration, the author informs his audience that the tale he is going to tell was found on some ancient anonymous papers. The tone is mysterious and obscure, in order to intrigue the readers. In addition, the tale is combined with a series of fine and funny drawings, which reproduce pieces of a pampered and burnt Egyptian papyrus, also in the style of the images.

Since there was just one typewriter in the hut, each month a single copy could be produced and shared by all the members of the expedition. However, the contributions for the first number of *The South Polar Times* were so numerous that another magazine was produced. The paper was called *The Blizzard* and it was a collection of all the essays and funny contributions that could not be included in *The South Polar Times*. The first number of *The Blizzard* was enriched with very fine and funny drawings by Lieutenant Barne, which are present in great number in Armitage’s journal. The magazine was not published every month like its rival, as stated by Armitage in his journal: “A rival magazine which was brought out, named The Blizzard, whose contents consisted of poetical effusions rejected by the *South Polar Times*, did not survive the first number.”

Thus, the additional magazine appeared just one number and in a single copy, for the fact that just a typewriter was brought to Antarctica and not the entire printing apparatus. Also Scott spends a few words about the this additional magazine:

> Before the appearance of the first number of the “S. P. T.”, which came out with the departure of the sun, the editor had to face a rather delicate situation: (...) the novelty of the venture had aroused such widespread interest that the box was crammed with manuscripts, and though there was not so much difficulty in making a selection, there was some danger of wounded the feelings of those literary aspirants whose contributions were rejected. In this dilemma the editor decided to issue a supplementary journal, to be named the *Blizzard*, and one number of this redoubtable publication was produced, but fell so lamentably short of the “S. P. T.” that the contributors realised that their mission in life did not lie in the paths of literary composition, and thereafter the editor’s box contained only what that astute individual required for the original periodical.

Notwithstanding the unsatisfactory literary level of this magazine, *The Blizzard* aroused various laughs for its caricatures and humorous texts.

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301 A. B. Armitage, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
During the Nimrod expedition of 1907-1909 printing material was brought to Antarctica for the realisation of an ambitious project. Shackleton thought of producing a book during the winter, which was intended not for an in-house use, but for the general public. In other words, he wanted to become the first editor of the Antarctic. The realisation of a written material was not simply a way to occupy and entertain the men, but it was an invaluable source of information about the life of a small Edwardian community in Antarctica. The men appointed for the task of producing the book throughout the winter were Frank Wild (in charge of provisions), Ernest Joyce (in charge of dogs and sledge equipment), Bernard Day (motor expert) and Marston as artist. The project was ambitious because the small volume was the first book to be entirely written, printed, illustrated and bound in the Antarctic in more copies. Thanks to the generosity of Messrs. Joseph Causton & Sons, Ltd., a complete print outfit was provided for the expedition, with the necessary paper for the book. In addition, Wild and Joyce had been given instructions in the art of typesetting and printing, instead Marston learned etching and lithography. The lithography was set up in the area of the hut named “The Gables”, where Marston and Day lived.\(^303\) Printing in Antarctica was anything but an easy task. The vibrations of the steps on the wooden floor, the smoke and soot that menaced every page in production and the little space continually disturbed the printmakers. The work of printing had to be made on turns, since “The Gables” was extremely narrow as a room. The texts were printed during the evening, instead the delicate lithographs and etchings were produced during the night, when most of the men went to sleep. In order to print, a candle was put under the lead types and the inks as well, since the low temperature made the lead letters dangerous to be handled and the inks hardened.\(^304\) The first attempts of printing were not successful, since many mistakes in the composition of the pages were made. However, the men soon got accustomed to the work, especially in the laborious work of “dissing”, that is distributing the type again for creating another page. The average production per day was one page, but sometimes they could even produce two

\(^303\) See E. H. Shackleton, *op. cit.*, pp. 98, 142-143.
pages on the same day. It is not clear the exact number of copies produced during the winter, but almost thirty books were bound. The wooden packing cases were used as a cover for the book, in this way the name of the products contained in the cases appear in the internal part of the cover. It is thanks to these peculiarities that the different editions produced are distinguished now. For example, there is the “Butter” Edition, the “Bottled Fruit”, the “Burberry” or the “Huntley and Palmer’s wheat biscuits”.

Like *The South Polar Times*, also *Aurora Australis* was a collection of the members of the expedition’s written contributions. Each author could decide whether to maintain his real name or to disguise his identity with a nickname. The book was not intended to be a journal, thus each man wrote about what he liked the most. The texts in the book are ten, which includes different genres. The scientific contributions were provided by the scientific staff of the expedition. For example, *Life Under Difficulties* by Doctor James is an essay divided into entitled paragraphs about his botanical studies.

He talks about the unbelievable capability of a type of fungus and algae that also live in the Antarctic, of adapting to climates both extremely cold and hot. The first text to appear in the book is *The Ascent of Mount Erebus* by T. H Edgeworth David. The text is a long and accurate account of one of the most important enterprises carried out during the Nimrod expedition. In my opinion, it can be included in the scientific texts, since the geological and botanical observations made are very accurate and technical. The main party consisted of three men, in addition three men followed as supporting party. The main party had to reach the crater of the only active volcano of the Antarctic. The description of the ascent, the dangers and the breathtaking landscapes that the mount offered are very poetical. The romantic inheritance of the sublime is present also in this text, as in the following passage:

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306 See *Aurora Australis; The British Antarctic Expedition 1907-1908*, USA, The Long Riders’ Guild Press, 2007, pp. 79-86. (In this edition it is reported the original data of publication: “First published at the Winter Quarters of the British Antarctic Expedition, 1907, during the winter months of April, May, June, July 1908. Illustrated with Lithographs and Etchings by George Marston. Printed at the sign of the Penguins by Joyce and Wild. Latitude 77° 32’ South, Longitude 166° 12’ East Antarctica.”)
The scene that now suddenly burst upon us was magnificent and awe-inspiring. We stood on the verge of a vast abyss, and at first could neither see the bottom, nor across it, on account of the huge mass of steam filling the crater, and soaring aloft in a column 500 to 1000 feet high. After a continuous loud hissing sound, lasting for some minutes, there would come from below a big dull boom, and immediately afterwards a great globular mass of steam would rush upwards to swell the volume of the snow-white cloud which ever sways over the crater. (…) The air around us was extremely redolent of burning sulphur. (…) A gentle northerly breeze fanned away the steam cloud and at once the whole crater stood revealed to us in all its vast extent and depth.  

The power and impetuosity of the volcano is beautifully dangerous for the author. Its greatness, incalculable depth and obscurity provoke a strong reaction on the author, to the point that he defines the view “magnificent” and “awe-inspiring”; the author is unequivocally living and feeling a sublime moment. The realisation of the sublime may be seen in the passage concerning the recollection of all the amazing scenes the group could enjoy during the trip, especially when they discovered the geological formations in and around the crater:

One cannot but be impressed with the wonder of the sights and scenes that had unfolded themselves to us during our brief journey. The glorious sunsets, the magic of the sunrise seen from our camp above the clouds, when the great shadow of Erebus swept across McMurdo Sound, and touched the far-off Western Mountains, the weird shapes of green and white ice mounds built around the fumaroles of the old crater, its pavement of sparkling felspar crystals interspersed with snow and pumice; the hissing and booming caldron of the modern crater, with its long lines of steam jets, and its snow-white pillar of steam, will never fade from the memory.

Entire expanses of feldspar crystals and pumice rocks, the yellow hue of the sulphur on the geological specimens make the crater look as if it was another planet. These beautiful formations are the product of the violent energy of the volcano, which is both dangerous and attractive at the same time. The fact of perceiving Antarctica as another planet is seen also in Mawson’s *Bathybia*, where the author describes the endurance of a southern march as if the South Pole was an imaginary and unknown region.

As I previously stated, the book is a collection both of different topics treated and of genres. As a matter of fact, the various authors give two accounts of the life on board the *Nimrod* and in the

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307 *Aurora Australis* cit., p. 32.
308 Ibid., pp. 39-40.
309 Ibid., pp. 87-107.
hut. The account about the life on board the ship during a storm is by “Putty” (Marston), and it is entitled *A Pony Watch*. The subject is non-technical but the tone is serious. On the contrary, the account of the daily routine in the winter quarters is very funny. *Trials of a Messman* by Raymond Priestley, under the nickname of “A Messman”, is a comical account of a typical day in the hut and the various responsibilities and difficulties that the messman had to face. A messman is a sailor who mainly serves in the kitchen, but at the same time he is in charge of many other tasks concerning the ship keeping. However, Priestley humorously says that a messman “was not a man who was expected to make messes,(…) I have learnt by experience that he is expected to do everything and do it all at the same time.”

Probably the most interesting and funny text is *An Interview with an Emperor*, by Mackey or “A. F. M.” As suggested in the title, the text is an interview between two of the members of the expedition and an Emperor Penguin with a strong Scottish accent. The two comrades are searching for geological specimens but they suddenly meet an enormous penguin, which is very offended because the men are invading his territory. The text is interesting both for the great imagination of the author and for the numerous points in common with Scott’s narrative style. The moon shines bright and calm on the sky and the snow is a triumph of blues and whites. Mackay says it would be a cliché to compare the moment to a fairyland scenario, but he feels that the whole scene seems supernatural. The magic of colours, the lights and shadows of the pack under the moonlight arouses the same supernatural feeling in Scott, as I described in the previous chapter. In addition, the penguin says to the visitors that they had crossed a private property. It is interesting to notice that the two explorers believe to be in the land of nobody, so they could take possession of it on behalf of the British crown:

This goodly portion of the Earth’s fair surface was ours. No polluting foot save ours defaced its virgin solitudes. We might fare where we list; none could say us nay. No “TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED” here. No “PRIVATE GROUNDS, NO THOROUGHFARE”. No

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310 *Aurora Australis cit.*. pp. 49-51
uniformed park-ranger, or corduroyed gamekeeper could bar our way, with horrid threats, and perhaps still more horrid action.\textsuperscript{314}

Even though any signal of prohibition was seen, the penguin admonishes the two explorers that they should not tread on this land. He asks the men if they were part of the new expedition to Antarctica, and he says that seven years before another group came in the area and the penguins on the rookery thought they were sea-leopards attacking their nests. He is referring to the Discovery expedition. The penguin adds: “Ye’re queer folk, men! I often wonder what brings ye here.”\textsuperscript{315} In my opinion, the penguin should be seen as the voice of the entire continent that is clearly admonishing the explorers to beware of what they do and where they go. In this small piece of imaginative narrative, it seems that an invisible border on the frozen continent is marked. The barrier is a way to keep the secrets and the mysteries of Antarctica but at the same time it could represent the point that human curiosity and knowledge could reach. Once the border is trespassed, the continent would not be benevolent towards the human presence. I could see that also Scott shares the same motif of admonishment, limit and prohibition. In the end, the two explorers bid farewell to the penguin that suddenly disappears. The whole story seemed to have been a dream but at any rate the men obey the penguin’s order and get out of the prohibited area. Another interesting and funny story is An Ancient Manuscript, by “Shellback”- Wild. The story is about the origins of the Nimrod expedition. Wild with a satirical, pompous and pathetic tone describes all the difficulties faced in the organisation of the expedition and the strain for finding the financial support, he describes all the member of the expedition and their hardships until the Ross Island is reached. In order to be more dramatic, Wild uses the language of the Bible and he paraphrases the Genesis. The story, which is written in the most sacred and ancient manuscript, shares the same method used in the story of the Discovery published in The South Polar Times. To me, the fact that the whole story of the two expeditions is pretended to be written in such old documents may suggest the desire of the members

\textsuperscript{314} Ibid., pp. 58-59.
\textsuperscript{315} Aurora Australis cit., p. 63
of the two expeditions to be remembered forever for their deeds and efforts for the improvement of human knowledge and to be part of human history.

To conclude, in the book poems are not missing. Shackleton, under the nickname “Nemo” or “Veritas”, obviously contributed with two poems: Erebus and Midwinter Night. In addition, Doctor Eric Marshall, who signed his contribution under the nickname “Lapsus Linguae”, devotes a poem to the long voyage of the Nimrod, entitled Southward Bound. The poems are usually one page and a half long and are written in quatrains or couplets with a regular rhyme scheme.
CONCLUSION

Once Scott and his men came back form Antarctica, the East India Docks in London were crowded of people waiting for the ship to come back after three years of mission. The men were welcomed as heroes and the interest for Antarctica notably grew. However, in the beginning the news about the expedition circulated rather mildly. This is probably due to the fact that the results of the expedition were still to be displayed. Nonetheless, The Times praised captain Scott and his men as soon they reached the coast of England:

The ship, her captain, and her crew have all done very well indeed, and have earned their welcome. The whole enterprise - its inception, execution and successful termination - is exceedingly characteristic of this country.316

Or again:

The combination of the spirit of adventure with devotion to the cause of science which inspires the Polar explorer will always appeal strongly to the countrymen of FROBISHER and FRANKLIN. The main object of the National Antarctic expedition was the increase of knowledge, that satisfaction of a legitimate curiosity as to the nature and past history of that universe of which man forms a part and this object has been attained in a measure which leaves no room for doubt as to the wisdom of the policy which prompted the despatch of the expedition. (...) it is freely admitted that the expedition commanded by COMMANDER SCOTT has been one of the must successful that ever ventured into the Polar regions, north or south.317

The scientific importance was immediately recognised, since a piece of unknown land had been discovered and taken on behalf of His Majesty the King. The lectures and numerous luncheons and dinners that took place in the following months demonstrate the progressive recognition of the value of the enterprise. In addition, an important contribution to the interest on the expedition was given by the publication of Captain Scott’s journal. The literary criticism of the time coldly welcomed Scott’s journal. The critics agreed in saying that the book represented not a novelty, since the audience was already acquainted with polar adventures thanks to the numerous accounts of

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316 The Times, Spetember 16th, 1904, p. 7.
317 The Times, September 10th, 1904, p. 9.
voyages to the northern lands. The plot was monotonous, safe for the interesting details about the
*Discovery*\(^{318}\), the origins of the expedition and the details given for the southern march.\(^{319}\) Despite
this, the general public responded positively to *The Voyage of the Discovery*, with a good number of
copies sold.

The return of the *Nimrod* had a warmer welcome. In my opinion, this is due to the
progressive interest on the scientific results that slowly started to circulate after the Discovery
expedition. The scientific and geographical community as well praised the importance of these
voyages south. In addition, the general public got interested in the South Pole since some other
expeditions started to sail to Antarctica with the secret aim of conquering the geographical South
Pole. At this point, it was not simply a matter of improving human knowledge but National pride
was involved. Both Scott and Shackleton received a medal for their enterprises; in addition,
Shackleton was appointed the medal of the Victorian Order, which was not given to Scott, soon
before living for the frozen continent. Once the *Nimrod* came back home, the newspapers acclaimed
warmly the men and their deeds with titles such as “South Pole Discoveries. Lieut. Shackleton’s
Achievement. World-Wide Chorus of Praise. Contributions to Science. How the News Came to
London.”, \(^{320}\) “Captain Scott’s Praise. “Most Magnificent” Journeys.”, \(^{321}\) “Mr Shackelton on His
Expedition. Presentation of the medals by the Prince.”\(^{322}\) The *Nimrod* was moored at Temple Pier
and opened to the public. On board the ship an exhibition about Antarctica and the expedition was
created, which was most welcomed by the general public.\(^{323}\) In addition, various articles advertised
the publication of Shackleton’s *The Heart of the Antarctic*. The literary critics this time were much
more benevolent, since Shackleton had broken all the records south. If Scott was considered
monotonous and without any novelty, Shackleton was praised as a hero, his narrative captivating
and the journal a real page-turner:

\(^{318}\) See *The Speaker: the liberal review*, November 11\(^{th}\), 1905, p. 126.
\(^{319}\) See *The Academy*, October 21\(^{st}\), 1905, pp. 1096-1097.
\(^{320}\) *The Daily Mail*, London, March 25\(^{th}\), 1909, p. 5
\(^{321}\) Ibid.
\(^{322}\) *The Times*, June 29\(^{th}\), 1909, p. 10.
\(^{323}\) See *The Times*, September 30\(^{th}\), 1909, p. 8.
More than in general fitting out and commanding of the expedition, in his method of furthering the advance and at the same time providing for the return that Sir Ernest has proved his qualities as a polar explorer. Of the heroism, the fortitude, and the exceeding good-fellowship of that journey, what can be said here? For these things, as for the plain human telling of it all, its thrills and its wondrous interest, the reader must go to the book itself.\textsuperscript{324}

Or again:

We seem to be living in times when men have reverted to the age of the elemental heroes. The old Norse blood in us tingles afresh as the modern man ploughs his new, weird vessel through the heights of the air, and still more as he grapples and flings the Polar giants of the cold and the dark. (…) The proprietors of \textit{Pearson’s} are to be congratulated on having secured from Lieutenant Shackleton himself the story of his assault on the South Poles, with its frowning fortresses of ice, and its panoply of night. (…) The enterprise of Pearson’s Magazine will surely be rewarded by a tremendous demand for the diary of this Polar hero.\textsuperscript{325}

A sort of polar fever burst out: Shackleton made a tour of lectures also outside Britain, from the United States to Russia, which registered the sold out. Even a board game was created. \textit{To the Pole with Shackleton!} became a successful game, which was a sort of snakes and ladders on a map of the Antarctic constellated of sastrugi and crevasses the contenders had to escape. Each player had a small sledge with the name of one the most famous polar explorers as a pawn that had to be moved on the map.\textsuperscript{326}

The efforts, endurance and heroism of the men in Antarctica became national pride. In my opinion, the Edwardian era was living in the sadness and nostalgia of the great precedent epoch: the Victorian Period. It was during the reign of Queen Victoria that England became a super power both economical and cultural. England represented the light and the model of progress and human advancement for the known world and as a colonizer it had also the role and the duty of spreading its culture and customs. But, the power and safety of the Victorian period could not last forever and soon after the Queen died things started to change for the British. The Edwardian era became the sunset of the flourishing previous epoch that found its end in the First World War. A peculiar moment for the crisis of the English Empire was the Boer War in South Africa at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The English Army was defeated for the first time, and its reputation was

\textsuperscript{324} J. E. Patterson, “To the Frozen South” in \textit{The Bookman}, n. 37, December 1909, p. 149.


\textsuperscript{326} See M. Tenderini, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 136.
inevitably spotted. The Army’s defeat represented a defeat for the whole Nation that started to question its role as an Empire and an economic power. However, all the values of the Victorian period had to be maintained and in order to demonstrate and restore the position and reputation of the British Empire a new wave of exploration took place. The growing interest for science of the Edwardian era is a result of the novelty represented by Darwin in the Victorian period. Exploring was necessary for the improvement of human knowledge. To me, this became the motto of the expeditions to Antarctica. The scientific cause and the progress of knowledge had to be served, at any cost. The long process of legitimisation of adventure as a tool for knowledge that started with Darwin was totally accomplished in the missions to Antarctica. Thus, facing dangers, living in extreme conditions, taking the human body to the limit and risk life made sense, and these sufferings were noble since they were functional to the scientific cause and the advancement of knowledge. It was also a way to show that human curiosity could break almost every limit. It is not a case that England decided to take this illustrious burden, since it was a way to prove that England was still a model of progress. In an epoch where the European Nations were undergoing deep changes in the asset of their political equilibrium, when Germany was growing more and more powerful and dangerous both economically and politically speaking, a period of uncertainties was outlining on the horizon. England could not accept to lose its supremacy. Thus, the expeditions to Antarctica became a way to prove the values of the Nation. The expeditions to the south of the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration were mainly intended for scientific purposes. However, each explorer that went to Antarctica secretly wished to fulfil a great ambition: being the first to the geographical South Pole. As a matter of fact, Shackleton in his Nimrod expedition made not a secret his intention to carry out a rich scientific program but at the same time to attempt the South Pole. This geographical spot was one of the last places to be conquered on the earth. Thus, the exploring tradition that every British carries with him as almost a genetic feature could not be restraint once Antarctica was reached. Each member of the expeditions to the south hoped to be part of the polar party, because everyone secretly hoped to bind his name with the conquest of the South
Pole. However, when the polar party was marching in the pack, facing blizzards, crevasses, frostbites and enduring the enterprise that they were carrying out was not felt as strictly personal, but they represented the entire Nation. This felling of duty and devotion towards the British Nation is present in the Antarctic journals I analysed in my dissertation, both in the deeds described and in the contents reported. Scott and Shackleton made history not simply in the annals of polar exploration, but with their deeds they left a mark for an entire epoch, partly restoring the role of the British Empire and its cultural level that seemed to be almost lost. Thanks to their witnesses they provided the Nation with exemplary models of duty and loyalty; in this way they demonstrated that despite the numerous uncertainties of the Edwardian Era, England could still be great. Scott and Shakleton both marched south for science and knowledge’s sake and for showing the entire British Nation that the Empire was not over, the values and the reputation of the Victorian Period were not faded and England was still the great model of strength and culture that it had always been.
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