

route would also have been helpful. But these are minor details in view of Whelan's overall success in providing the armchair explorer, or anyone interested in the future of the Arctic, with a vivid travelogue that doubles as both a valentine and a lament to a harsh, beautiful place on the cusp of change.

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***Face to Face: Polar Portraits.* By Huw Lewis-Jones. Photography by Martin Hartley. Cambridge: Scott Polar Research Institute, 2008. 288 pp. b&w and colour illus., further reading, index.**

Though Scott wrote upon reaching the South Pole in 1912, “[A]ll the day dreams must go ... Great God! This is an awful place,” the regularity of expeditions both north and south attest to the tenacity of the polar dream (14). His death, like the death of Franklin and his men in the Far North, seems to have in fact spurred adventurers, pioneers, and tourists—in addition to the nations and institutions that have established scientific bases near the poles—to seek out the ends of the earth today. Huw Lewis-Jones, art curator at the Scott Polar Research Institute, has compiled and written *Face to Face: Polar Portraits*, a collection of portraits both old and new “featuring men and women of many nations, exploring, working and living in the polar regions” (47). Specifically, the book offers sizable (and technically perfect) photographs of 100 historical and contemporary polar scientists, travellers, and residents as a means to “recover and to celebrate the range of contributions within this modern landscape—and to reflect upon the memory and the legacies of exploration and survival in the polar world” (47).

The book includes a foreword by the celebrated adventurer Sir Ranulph Fiennes on “The Changing Face of Exploration”; an essay by Lewis-Jones on the history and roles of photography and the portrait in shaping public awareness of the polar regions; a refreshing discussion between Lewis-Jones and Martin Hartley, the photographer of many of the contemporary portrait; and a powerful afterword by anthropologist Hugh Brody. As Lewis-Jones states, the book makes a claim for expanding our understanding of life at the poles, and many of the photographs included offer a new view on human experience and endeavour there. The faces of Scott, Shackleton, Henson, Peary, Franklin, Fiennes, Amundsen, and Messner are familiar; the more fascinating portraits are those of the

people who lived (and live) behind the scenes: mechanics, cooks, kayaking teachers. These people, so essential to the historical and continued success of polar travel (whether nationalist, scientific, or adventurous), deserve the recognition they receive in this book, and it is a pleasure to see them celebrated here alongside the public icons.

At first read, the organization of the photographs is somewhat baffling: the collection is based neither on chronology nor expedition, and Lewis-Jones provides no prefatory explanation for his choice of order. Almost in spite of the variety of images, however, a narrative thread emerges. Looking only at the portraits, the images appear to have little in common, other than the climate in which they were taken, and even this connection is spurious, as several portraits are studio shots. Within the commentary, however, subtle connections appear, and often ones of character, rather than accomplishment. The delicate connections between these portraits and the stories behind their subjects reveal Lewis-Jones's skill as an artistic director; the development of the narrative path from photograph to photograph is impressive in its subtlety. Because expedition members are not grouped together, occasionally the commentary is repetitive, but this infraction is minor compared to the satisfaction the reader enjoys in making the connections between portraits and personalities.

Though the photographs are the core of the book, the conversation between Lewis-Jones and Hartley that is included after the portraits is perhaps the most enlightening part of it since, as curator and photographer respectively, the two of them discuss the tensions between reality and representation, client desires and sponsor requirements, and what in fact makes a person an explorer. Hartley points to a contemporary "PR fog" surrounding human activity at the poles, arguing that "the word 'explorer' has been abused to the extent that the media employ the word openly to describe anyone that is not going on a package holiday" (258). While the interconnected commentary and the placement of the portraits does not dispel this fog, the discussion does, with Hartley stating unequivocally that his own understanding of what historically constituted an explorer was a person "who left the shores of [his or her] own country and ventured into an unknown to discover new things and bring knowledge back home for everyone to benefit from" (258). Interestingly, many of the people Hartley himself has photographed for the book fall outside this definition.

Indeed, though in his essay "Photography Then" Lewis-Jones sees "something essential that unites the old with the new" (43), in reading the narratives that accompany the photographs, it feels as if something has been lost between the heroic age of exploration and today's push for "first

attainment," even though the sense of competition remains the same. Perhaps this narrative break is best summed up by the comment offered by Dominick Arduin, a French woman who died on her solo (supported) crossing to the North Pole in 2004. Upon observing a group of fellow trekkers being airlifted over an expanse of thin ice, Arduin opined, "I want a real expedition, not that f\*\*king bulls\*\*t" (138). The "real expedition" Arduin and her contemporaries strive for is basically the opposite of what the explorers of old planned for themselves. Indeed, as Franklin's own expedition (and those of others who went after him both to the North and the South) show, the explorers of the "heroic age" tried to recreate as much as possible the comforts of home, not to abandon them. The picture of Scott in his cabin writing letters at a wooden desk, surrounded by his books and photographs of loved ones, is a testament to the explorer's efforts to bring a patina of normalcy to life on the ice (278). And, as the historical narratives of many narrow escapes reveal, an expedition in the "heroic age" would not have been abandoned over a broken binding.

The question Lewis-Jones asks concerning explorer aesthetics encourages his readers to interrogate their own definitions of what an explorer is: "Does an explorer need to appear frostbitten and adventurous to be seen as heroic and do we require faces like these to imagine their achievement?" (22). While the vast majority of contemporary polar travellers appear coated in rime and encased in technologically enhanced outerwear, the answer offered by the older portraits is "no." More than the contemporary portraits, in which, in Hartley's words, the "polar gladiator" looks directly at the camera, the older photographs show men much more at ease in their environment. Admittedly, many of the photographs were taken in the studio—the fake snow gracing John Cheyne's fur cap and coat is particularly endearing—but even those that were not, show individuals actually involved in the work of exploration: looking through binoculars, holding penguins bound for the cooking pot, or smoking a pipe, rather than looking back at the viewer. The older portraits, more than conveying a sense of nostalgia, reveal both the chivalry and the realism that helped define the heroic age of exploration in spite of its ruthless competition.

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