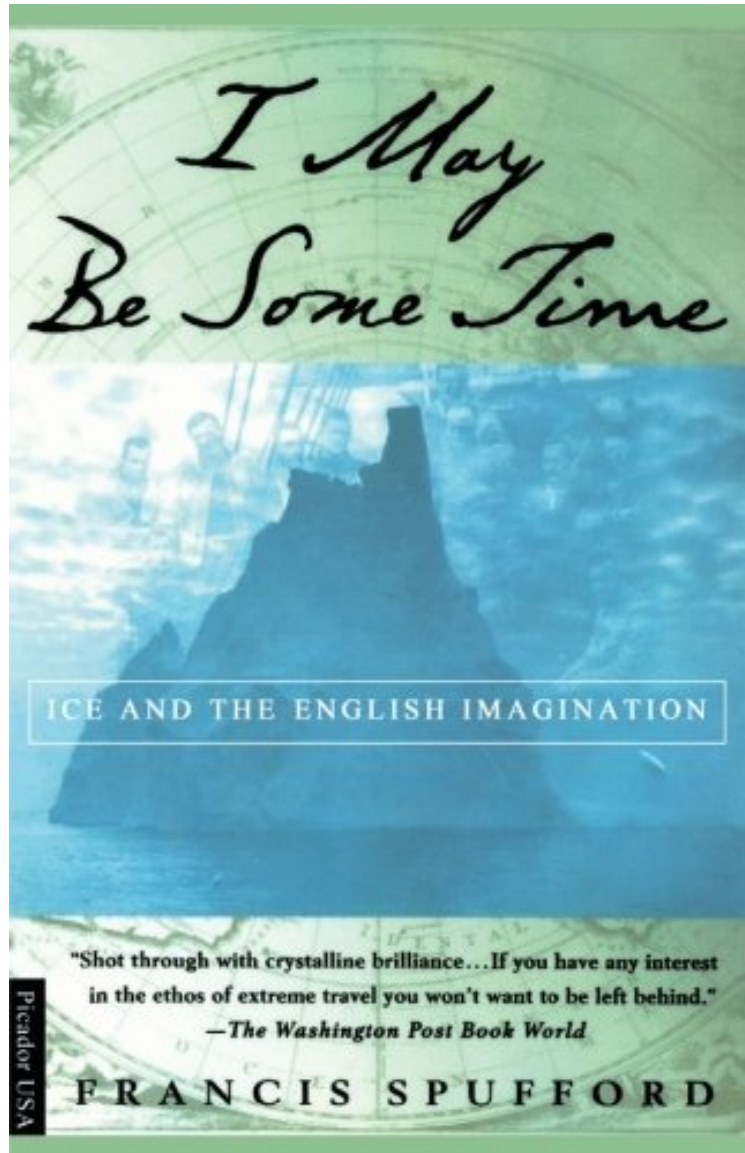


# I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination

Francis Spufford

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#774273 in Books Francis Spufford 1999-07-30 1999-07-30 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .3 x 5.50l, .98 #File Name: 0312220812388 pages I May Be Some Time Ice and the English Imagination | File size: 24.Mb

**Francis Spufford : I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Different perspective on polar exploration By James C. Casterline This book sounded more interesting in a bibliography in another book I read about arctic life and exploration than it proved to be. I found the honesty with which some exploration failures were treated refreshing when it comes

to heroic failures in the Scott and Franklin expeditions. On the other hand I wasn't at all excited by some of the silliness regarding hollow earth and holes in the poles which I felt were, at the least, over represented and perhaps could have been dealt with as footnotes. The book did broaden my knowledge of British efforts. On a recent visit to Auckland I saw replicas from Scott's expedition in a museum setting and felt I had a greater appreciation because of this book. That being said, this book wasn't right for me. 7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A Well Argued Thesis, but One that Must be Critically Evaluated By Roger D. Launius Francis Spufford's "I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination" seeks to show the relationship between polar exploration and English literature. He asks why British polar explorers willingly placed their lives in jeopardy in the harsh polar environment; was it gold or glory or something else? The answer, Spufford believes, rests not with the explorers themselves but with the English imagination as expressed in the writings of such the Brontës, Edmund Burke, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Dickens, and others. At a sublime level this book is about the power of ideas to shape imperial ambitions. Romance about the Arctic distorted perceptions both of reality in England and in the far-off lands of the North. The concept of the sublime in the works of Edmund Burke and Samuel Coleridge found themselves deployed to explain the inspiration and terror of the Arctic ice and the environment of the cold. Arctic explorers transmogrified the sublime into a nostalgic identification of the Poles with the best of the human imagination. Conquest of the Arctic in Spufford's estimation might be equated with virtue and destiny. It propelled the British Empire into an unending quest for knowledge about the Polar region. Spufford's argument is quite useful, but it tends to downplay what I view as the critical component of English exploration of the Arctic, the quite mundane and practical desire to find a water route around the Americas to foster trade with Asia. The search for the Northwest Passage had motivated English Arctic expeditions since the sixteenth century and while imagination certainly aided in sustaining those efforts in the face of failure, there was a clearly understood and delineated rationale for undertaking them that had little to do with the sublime and philosophies. A fascinating account nonetheless, that requires serious consideration by anyone seriously interested in the history of Arctic exploration. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A wonderful--and moving--book. By Bonneelevel I May Be Some Time is a wonderful--and moving--book. Readers who were disappointed in it may have been looking for an adventure story. Well, it is that at the end, but the end comes as the climax of a long, complex, and fascinating cultural history. Readers interested in English culture in the 19th century--the world that gave rise to much Arctic and Antarctic exploration--will find this book compelling. Spufford examines imaginative literature of the period, the impact of new developments in the sciences, changing ideas of history and culture, British pride in the empire, and the roles expected of and actually played out by men and women whose lives involved them in exploration. He concludes his study with a profoundly moving narrative account of Scott's doomed final journey. This is a book that requires patience and attention on the part of the reader, but it is also a book that offers real rewards.

Francis Spufford explores the British obsession with polar exploration in a book that Jan Morris, writing in *The Times*, called, "A truly majestic work of scholarship, thought and literary imagination . . ." The title, a last quote from one explorer to his party as he left their tent never to return, embodies the danger and mystery that fueled the romantic allure of the poles and, subsequently, the British imagination. Far from being a conventional history of polar exploration, *I May Be Some Time* attempts to understand what was going on in the minds of the polar explorers as they headed toward destinies like *Terra Nova*. Serving up a heady brew of Captain Perry, *Jane Eyre*, gastronomic obsessions with iced desserts, and the daily lives of Eskimos, Spufford treats the reader to one of the most satisfying and imaginative contemporary works dealing with exploration and human need.

. . . a high-cultural history, both passionate and intricate . . . Breathtaking. *The Boston Globe* An engaging, elegant, often majestic work of cultural history. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* Thoughtful, suggestive and oddly fascinating. *Men's Journal* From the Publisher "Shot through with crystalline brilliance...If you have any interest in the ethos of extreme travel you won't want to be left behind." --*The Washington Post Book World* "Francis Spufford's account of the early expedition to the Arctic and the Antarctic...is thoughtful, suggestive and oddly fascinating." --*Men's Journal* "An engaging, elegant, often majestic work of cultural history." --*The Philadelphia Inquirer* "I May Be Some Time is a high-cultural history, both passionate and intricate...breathtaking" --*The Boston Globe* "I May Be Some Time is a truly majestic work of scholarship, thought and literary imagination." --Jan Morris About the Author Francis Spufford, writes for the *Guardian*, has edited two anthologies and lives in Cambridge, England with his wife and daughter. For this, his first book, he received a Somerset Maugham Award and was named *The Sunday Times* (London) Young Writer of the Year.