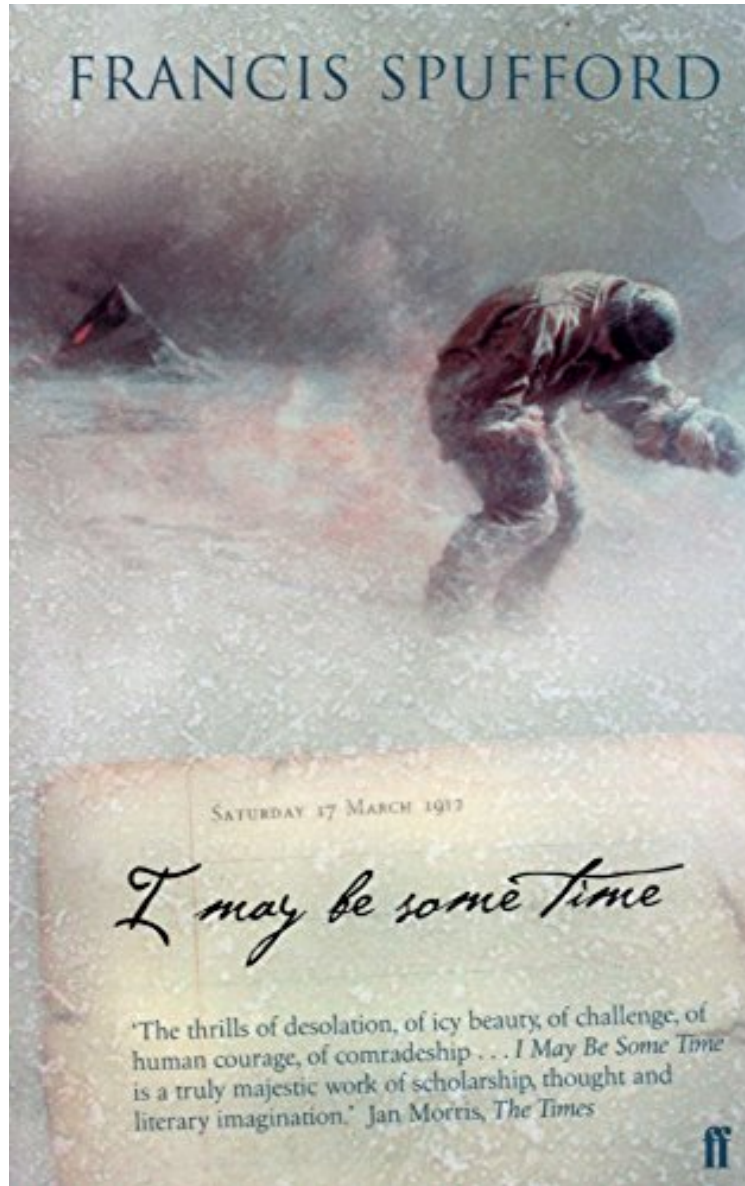


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## I May Be Some Time

*Francis Spufford*

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#2127380 in Books 2003-04-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.76 x 1.02 x 4.96l, .58 #File Name: 0571218652416 pages | File size: 17.Mb

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

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Different perspective on polar explorationBy James C. CasterlineThis 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.

I May Be Some Time is a richly engrossing cultural history of our obsession with ice, Eskimos and polar exploration. When Captain Scott died in 1912 on his way back from the South Pole, his story became a myth embedded in the national imagination. Despite wars and social change, despite recent debunking, it is still there. Everyone remembers the doomed explorers' last words - 'I'm just going outside, and I may be some time' - and history is what you can remember. Conventional histories of polar exploration trace the laborious expeditions across the map, dwelling on the proper techniques of ice-navigation and sledge-travel. But we rarely ask what the explorers thought they were doing, or why they did these insane things. I May Be Some Time is about the poles as they have been perceived, dreamed, even desired. It explores the myth as myth, showing how Scott's death was the culmination to a long-running national enchantment with perilous journeys to the ends of the earth. 'The thrills of desolation, of icy beauty, of challenge, of human courage, of comradeship . . . I May Be Some Time is a truly majestic work of scholarship, thought and literary imagination.' Jan Morris, The Times

". . . 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" 0;. . . a high-cultural history, both passionate and intricate . . . Breathtaking. 1; 2;"The Boston Globe" 0;An engaging, elegant, often majestic work of cultural history. 1; 2;"The Philadelphia Inquirer" 0;Thoughtful, suggestive and oddly fascinating. 1; 2;"Men's Journal" ". . . 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" ". . . 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 was born in 1964. He is the author of five highly-praised books of non-fiction, most frequently described by reviewers as either 'bizarre' or 'brilliant', and usually as both. The most recent, *Unapologetic*, has been translated into three languages; the one before, *Red Plenty*, into nine. He has been longlisted or shortlisted for prizes in science writing, historical writing, political writing, theological writing, and writing 'evoking the spirit of place'. In 2007 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. He teaches writing at Goldsmiths College, University of London, and lives near Cambridge.

Francis Spufford, a former Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year (1997), is the author of five highly-praised books of non-fiction. The first, *I May Be Some Time*, won three literary prizes, and helped create a small new academic field, dedicated to the cultural history of Antarctica. The second, *The Child That Books Built*, gave Neil Gaiman 'the peculiar feeling that there was now a book I didn't need to write'. *Backroom Boys* was called 'as nearly perfect as makes no difference' by the Daily Telegraph; *Red Plenty* has been translated into nine languages, including Polish, Russian and Estonian; *Unapologetic* is richer in expletives than any previous work of religious advocacy, and is currently shortlisted for the Michael Ramsey Prize for Theological Writing. He has also been shortlisted or longlisted for prizes in writing about science, history, politics and 'the spirit of place'. He teaches at Goldsmiths College and lives near Cambridge with his wife and younger daughter. In 2007 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.