

“THE WIDE WHITE STAGE”
REPRESENTATIONS OF ANTARCTICA IN THEATRICAL
PRODUCTIONS (1930 – 2011)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

Degree

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Abstract

This project examines representations of Antarctica in the theatre and analyses these in terms of space and place in order to chart the development of awareness of the continent. As examples of cultural production, plays and their treatment of imagined Antarctic space can provide insights into how attitudes towards the continent have developed and been expressed by revealing the dominant narratives at various points in time. A close reading of nine plays from 1930 – 2011 focuses on the use of mimetic and diegetic space within the theatre, examining the language used, stories told and attitudes present. Such analysis reveals the factors determining the choice of an Antarctic setting, be they ecological, political or metaphorical, whilst shedding light on how attitudes towards place, space and representation have changed within the theatre context.

These plays can be grouped under four thematic headings, namely “In Scott’s Footsteps,” “Retelling,” “Reimagining,” and “Returning.” While Antarctica remains a backdrop in earlier plays, where Heroic Era narratives are foregrounded, more recent productions have seen the continent come to the fore, where it is treated as part of a global web of connections. These plays illustrate a progression in how Antarctica has been represented upon the stage, a progression that parallels how we have thought about Antarctica in general.

Keywords: Antarctic, Scott, Heroic Era, Theatre, Performance, Space, Place, Imagining

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Introduction

Up until the turn of the twentieth century “Antarctica was as remote as myth” (Glasberg 2012, 4). Although the southern continent has now been mapped, explored, surveilled and colonised, for many Antarctica remains a landscape of the imagination even today. Most people never go to Antarctica, so their experience of the ice is mediated by texts, be they diaries, photos, films, novels or, as in this case, plays. As examples of cultural production, plays and their treatment of imagined Antarctic space can provide insights into how attitudes towards the continent have developed and been expressed by revealing the dominant narratives at various points in time. From *Endurance* to the environment and Scott to science, these stories both reflect and shape public consciousness and awareness of the south. Examining representations of Antarctica upon the stage offers a snapshot of the values associated with the continent at any given time, providing a better understanding of how we have to come to know, understand, imagine and reimagine the ice at the end of the world. These representations of Antarctica also provide an insight into changing attitudes towards the spatiality of the stage. Examining how playwrights have tackled the problem of representing large tracts of space within an enclosed area helps us to understand how the concepts of space and place have been used in the theatre over the past 80 years.

Antarctica has been represented using a range of mediums and for many different ends. Elizabeth Leane tracks these imagined versions in *Antarctica in Fiction* (2012), observing that in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries Antarctica acted as a kind of “no place” on which writers could project their own visions of Utopia (2012, 29). The Pole was often conceived of as being either a whirlpool or a magnetic mountain that pulls ships in: Leane notes that “few people who go to Antarctica in pre-twentieth-century fiction do so deliberately” (2012, 38). During the twentieth century Antarctica became the backdrop for Heroic Era stories, particularly that of Scott’s final journey, with Francis Spufford observing that “like any successful myth, it provides a skeleton ready to be dressed over and over in the different flesh different decades feel to be appropriate” (4). As the continent has become more accessible, more and more ways of representing the place have been trialled,

from photography to film making, sculpture to sound pieces. All, including theatre, try to recreate a sense of Antarctic place in a non-Antarctic setting.

This project involves examining representations of Antarctica in the theatre and analysing these in terms of space and place in order to chart the development of awareness of the continent and the values associated with it. Space and place have formed the basis of several recent studies into theatre (Chaudhuri 1995, McAuley 2006) where the difference between space and place is defined phenomenologically: “space” is an abstract conceptual framework, not experienced by humans, and “place” is concrete, tangible and inhabitable with a human association and history (McAuley 2006, 282). When applied to Antarctica this framework is particularly interesting because the continent has such a recent and well-documented human history. According to these definitions, the diaries of Heroic Era explorers essentially track the turning of Antarctic space into Antarctica, the place.

The following close reading of nine plays from 1930 to 2011 focuses on the use of mimetic and diegetic space within the theatre, examining the language used, stories told and attitudes present. Such analysis reveals the factors determining the choice of an Antarctic setting, be they ecological, political or metaphorical. These plays can be grouped under four thematic and loosely chronological headings, namely “In Scott’s Footsteps,” “Retelling,” “Reimagining,” and “Returning”. Colonialism and modernism are important contexts for the first two, while a postmodern and postcolonial approach in the “Reimagining” section signals an important attitudinal change. In the “Returning” section this postmodernism transforms into globalisation, where an ecocritical approach reflects wider concerns about Antarctica as part of the world as a whole. Before examining these imagined versions of the continent it is useful to track the human involvement in the Far South that made these imaginings possible.

Terra Incognita

Antarctica existed for centuries as Terra Australis Incognita, marked out on maps as the unknown continent long before ships had sailed into its vicinity (Leane 2012, 27). While Captain James Cook crossed the Antarctic Circle in search of Antarctica in 1773, the first known sighting of the Antarctic mainland did not take place until 1820. In subsequent years maps of the coastline were not reliable, partly due to the constantly changing sea ice and partly because it was in the commercial interests of sealers and whalers to keep their competitors from finding out the locations of their fertile hunting grounds. The Heroic Era followed (1899-1922), with multiple national expeditions all vying to traverse this last frontier. Robert Falcon Scott and Roald Amundsen's simultaneous dash to the Pole has dominated Antarctic storytelling ever since, with Amundsen's successful conquering of the Pole in December 1911 contrasting with Scott's arrival some five weeks later. The death of Scott's party on the homeward journey has become the seminal Heroic Era narrative, with the tragic events being translated into legend by those back in Britain. Such stories continued to be retold, even as science became the dominant activity on the Ice and issues of climate change came to the fore. In less than 200 years we have come to know Antarctica as a desert, an adversary, a challenge, a habitat and an indicator of the state of the world. Antarctica now appears on the margins of most maps, and while this may be an indication that it does not figure highly in general consciousness, it is also fitting: governed by the Antarctic Treaty System rather than any one nation, Antarctica possesses a spatiality that argues against final conclusions.

Described by Klaus Dodds as "the rationalisation of a particular spatial experience," (2006, 65) the Antarctic Treaty System was signed on December 1, 1959 by the 12 nations who had worked together on Antarctic science during the International Geophysical Year of 1957-8. Seven of these nations had also made territorial claims on Antarctica in the past, namely Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom. While the Antarctic Treaty makes it clear that "No acts or activities taking place while the present Treaty is in force shall constitute a basis for asserting, supporting or denying a claim to territorial sovereignty in Antarctica or create any rights of sovereignty in Antarctica," and

that “No new claim, or enlargement of an existing claim to territorial sovereignty in Antarctica shall be asserted while the present Treaty is in force,” (*The Antarctic Treaty*) territorial claims still stand and continue to provide political motivation for a nation to engage with Antarctic politics. This is worth keeping in mind, particularly when examining cultural production from claimant nations.¹

Klaus Dodds puts the spotlight on views of Antarctic governance in a number of his articles, tracking attitudes towards the Antarctic Treaty and noting that “when the Antarctic Treaty was negotiated in 1959, many nations were not even independent in Africa and Asia” (2006, 66). The treaty system was by no means uncontroversial, with nations such as Malaysia and India voicing concerns about the accessibility of the treaty and the continent to developing nations and those who were not original signatories. Although the Antarctic Treaty is still in force, issues of governance and ownership have continued as recurring themes over the past decades and continue to underlie all current human dealings with the continent. Governance is one important area in which Antarctica and the Arctic differ, and the fact that Antarctica has no native inhabitants gives it a very different history to the far north. Indigenous populations have been living in the Arctic Circle for centuries, developing their own forms of cultural production and creating their own, non-European histories. It can be tempting to compare both the North and South Poles, making assumptions based on icy topography, but Antarctica’s isolation, relatively recent human history and unique system of governance under the Antarctic Treaty System all argue against reducing the two Poles into one.

Much more has been written about the Arctic than the Antarctic, both generally and in terms of theatre (O’Neill, Brask and Morgan, Grace). To date very little has been published about representations of Antarctica in cultural production, with a few notable exceptions: Elena Glasberg’s *Antarctica as Cultural Critique* (2012) raises issues of representation, particularly with regards to the visual arts; Marion Munz-Krines touches on

¹ Countries such as New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom have all offered Artists in Antarctica programmes, although the only playwright in this study who travelled to Antarctica was Mojisola Adebayo, who did so aboard a tourist vessel with the support of the Arts Council England and not as part of the National Antarctic Programme.

the subject in her book *Expeditionen ins Eis* (2009); and Leane's *Antarctica in Fiction* stands out as a seminal text in terms of literary interpretations of the far south. While both Leane and Munz-Krines examine novels and poetry, theatre dealing with Antarctica has not yet been addressed, so it makes sense to fill in the gap and address the landscapes of the south alone. In addition, the physical component of theatre staging adds another element to the concept of representing Antarctica in terms of space and place. In the theatre physical and imagined encounters merge, with materially present actors, representing characters, inhabiting an equally material but evidently constructed landscape. This forces a consciousness of the way the imagination engages with the real, making the audience aware of a process that happens whenever we engage with a place.

Human interaction with a place that is "other" often raises questions of colonialism, mainly related to the presence of native populations: "the concept of *terra nullis* – the land as "empty" or pure space – was historically used as a pretext for conquest and denial of aboriginal land rights" (Buell 147). Conquest and imperialism therefore go hand in hand. When applied to a continent that is devoid of a native population, Edward Said's definitions of imperialism and colonialism take on an interesting dimension. According to Said, "'imperialism' means the practice, the theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; 'colonialism,' which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory" (qtd. in Gilbert and Tompkins 13). In Antarctica, scientific bases are effectively implanted settlements, so the "colonialism" aspect is present, but because the continent is governed not by one nation but by the Antarctic Treaty System, the "imperialist" aspect differs from any in Said's experience. A postcolonial lens and an awareness of Said's definitions can nevertheless be useful when analysing recent Antarctic texts.

These texts are important because, as Elizabeth Leane puts it, "Until the late twentieth century, most people ... could only ever visit Antarctica ... in their imaginations" (2009, 509). Emerging literature on postcolonial Antarctica by critics such as Klaus Dodds and Christy Collis raises further issues related to human interaction with Antarctica. Collis notes that "frontier mobility is associated with masculinity while domestic settlement is

associated with femininity” (Collis 2009, 515). Under this model imperialism, or the practice of domination, is linked to the mobile and the masculine, while colonisation is linked to the static and the feminine. Ever since the first human attempts to inhabit Antarctica, both modes were present and enacted by men: men made the colonies and did all the “domestication.” However, the static, “feminine” aspects of their inhabitation were not made into plays until the late twentieth century, when plays like David Young’s *Inexpressible Island* (1998) turned their attention to men who stay in one spot.

Many of the early plays in this study involve long treks and movement through the Antarctic, thus bringing ideas of imperialism and masculinity to the fore. Later plays reflect the wider range of voices that speak for and of the continent, with marginalised groups such as women, the elderly, non-Europeans and the unemployed all appearing on the Antarctic stage. Gender is an issue for Antarctica in other ways, with women having been used “both symbolically and physically to colonise and settle the Antarctic, despite their general absence” (Dodds 2009, 508). The most notable example of this is the Argentine and Chilean practice from the late 1970s of flying pregnant women to national bases so they might give birth on the Ice, thus strengthening each respective country’s claim to a slice of the continent. It is not necessary to physically visit Antarctica in order to make a claim, however, and in some instances creating an imaginary version of a place can have a far wider impact than a single visit. These plays illustrate how “one also becomes attached to places by the power of imagining alone... it’s entirely possible to care more about places you’ve never been – the Africa or Israel/ Palestine [or indeed, Antarctica] of your imagination – than the ones you know first hand” (Buell 72).

These plays also encourage the audience to examine how they engage with the environment around them. In *The Future of Environmental Criticism* (2006) Lawrence Buell explains the importance of public perception in changing environmental attitudes and spurring on change:

For technological breakthroughs, legislative reforms, and paper covenants about environmental welfare to take effect, or even to be generated in the first place,

requires a climate of transformed environmental values, perception and will. To that end, the power of story, image and artistic performance and the resources of aesthetics, ethics, and cultural theory are critical. (Buell vi)

Cultural production can raise awareness of environmental issues, but it can also raise awareness about Antarctica as whole. In this case, that cultural production takes the form of theatrical performances, which in turn highlight ideas of space and place. Una Chaudhuri has addressed the issue of staging place in her work of the same name, arguing that “the meaning (not merely the ownership) of place has given this century its politics; we should not be surprised to find, as this book argues, that it has also given it its theatre” (*Staging Place*, 3). The plays examined deal with Antarctica for a range of different reasons, using the power of story and theatre for many different political, social and environmental ends.

Two Traditions

Stephen Pyne writes in his interdisciplinary history of Antarctica that the continent has “largely been a wasteland for imaginative literature,” and that “no representational art or literature could hope to express it” (154). He argues that modernism was ideally suited to taking Antarctica as a subject, so the absence of more Antarctic plays during the first half on the twentieth century is striking. While the minimalist qualities of the plateau would have complemented traditions such as the “theatre of the absurd,” Pyne claims that modernists instead looked inwards and remained oblivious to Antarctica as a possible setting. The notable exceptions to the rule are German: Georg Heym’s *Die Südpolfahrer* (1911), Stefan Zweig’s *Der Kampf um den Südpol* (1927) and Reinhard Goering’s *Die Südpolexpedition des Kapitäns Scott* (1929) all illustrate how modernist writers outside the English tradition were using the empty plateau of the Antarctic to address the idea of personal struggles at a time when other writers remained oblivious to the possibilities of the South.

Many prominent Germans turned their attentions southwards in the early twentieth century, with writers such as Lion Feuchtwanger (*Polfahrt* 1928) and Reinhard Goering

writing specifically about Antarctica at a time when no national German expeditions were directly underway.² Reinhard Goering's *Die Südpolexpedition des Kapitäns Scott* was the first play to depict a Heroic Era figure on the stage, but other plays were penned and not performed, including Vladimir Nabokov's *The Pole* (1924), which was written soon after Nabokov moved to Berlin.³ Friedrich Dürrenmatt also wrote an essay on a theoretical play that placed Scott in a commercial freezer, freezing to death whilst shopping for his expedition (Brady). This concept was not so far removed from the *Das Letzte Kleinod* play *Eismitte* in 2004, which told the story of Alfred Wegener's last Greenland expedition and was performed in a giant freezer at -24 degrees Celsius. Other canonical German writers such as Thomas Mann had a similar obsession with snow and while their texts are set in the mountains, they address similar themes and have characters that undergo similar life changing experiences when exposed to the white wilderness (Mann 641). The tradition of German literature with Antarctic themes continues past the era of Expressionism, with Wolfgang Weyrauch's *Das grüne Zelt* (1969) widely studied in schools as an example of a radio play and Manfred Karge's *Die Eroberung des Südpols* (1985) one of the most performed Antarctic plays, having been translated several times. The number of texts available and the prominence of works such as Karge's make German plays an ideal comparison for the English texts. Although they come from a different cultural background, these plays illustrate the same progression of themes as their English counterparts, moving from following "In Scott's Footsteps" by retelling Heroic Era stories to imagining Antarctica in ever more complex ways.

This project is limited to texts produced after Antarctica was a known place, hence all of the plays considered are written post Heroic Era. There are earlier examples of playwrights using the Antarctic as a setting prior to the twentieth century, such as the 1841 play *South Polar Expedition* that retold James Clark Ross's expedition, but no script survives. The 1900 musical *Australis, or the City of Zero* is another example of Antarctica on the early stage, with a souvenir programme offering a taste of the giant whirlpool that was depicted

² There were two German Antarctic expeditions during the height of the Heroic Era: Drygalski's *Gauss* expedition (1901-1903) and Filchner's *Deutschland* expedition (1911-1913).

³ Nabokov lived in Berlin from 1922 – 1940. *The Pole* was not performed until 1996, when Michael Grüber directed a production in German translation at the Berlin Schaubühne (Zimmer).

at the South Pole (Leane 2012, 37). Any earlier attempts at representing Antarctica fall into the period when the continent was still an imagined space, and these are few and far between. Further, all of the plays examined in this project are well known or critically acclaimed, having been penned by well-known playwrights (Brenton, Goering), awarded prestigious prizes (Cornelius, Chanwai-Earle), performed often (Karge, Tally) or studied as part of an official school curriculum (Stewart, Weyrauch).⁴ They also clearly illustrate several turning points in the way Antarctica has been imagined in its own right and represented accordingly, and the richness of each text provides a wealth of material to analyse and understand. Many other plays set in the Antarctic have been performed over the years, often in smaller theatres or to specialist audiences. Such plays can also be grouped under the thematic headings of this project, and while they are not examined in any detail, an outline of other performances provides an overview of the field and helps to situate the plays examined within a wider context.

Wide White Stages

Reinhard Goering's *Die Südpolexpedition des Kapitäns Scott* from Germany (1929) and Douglas Stewart's *The Fire on The Snow* from Australia (1944) are both examples of early plays in which Antarctica serves simply a backdrop for heroic stories. Following "In Scott's Footsteps," they represent the first time Scott's story was presented on the stage (Goering) and the first time his story was told from a Commonwealth perspective (Stewart). Colonialism and modernism are important contexts for the first two chapters. Writing between the World Wars, these writers are more interested in exploring themes of sacrifice and self-determination than the landscape itself; the white polar plateau allows for few distractions from the characters as they grapple with their predetermined destinies. Nationalism is a theme of both these early plays, and this idea is also explored in George Hummel's 1931 play *The World Waits*, where Hummel provides an American perspective. While it offers an interesting comparison to the plays that come out of Germany and the

⁴ The exception is Mojisola Adebayo's *Moj of the Antarctic*, a play that is included because of Adebayo's first-hand experience of Antarctica. As a multi-media work, this play points to what can be expected of Antarctic theatre in the future.

Commonwealth, not least because it takes place indoors, Hummel's play is little known and therefore falls outside the scope of this study. The political climate in which these plays were written has a strong impact upon how the Antarctic landscape was conceptualised and presented on stage, with both Goering and Stewart reinforcing the dominant themes of sacrifice and endurance. Such themes were important in the context of the World Wars and recognised by Antarcticans themselves, including Sir Ernest Shackleton, who dedicated his 1919 book *South* "To/ My comrades/ Who fell in the white warfare/ Of the South and on the/ Red fields of France/ And Flanders."

Later retellings of Heroic Era polar legends tend to subvert the ideas of heroism and sacrifice that lie at the heart of the story of "Scott of the Antarctic." They strongly critique the idea of nationalism and provide alternative versions of both Heroic Era narratives themselves and the continent on which they took place. Plays in the "Retelling" section include Wolfgang Weyrauch's *Das grüne Zelt* (1969), Howard Brenton's *Scott of the Antarctic: Or, What God Didn't See* (1972) and Ted Tally's *Terra Nova* (1977). A focus on the narratives of the Heroic Age is still apparent, but these texts undermine the ideas of heroes present in the original versions. While Brenton's approach is excoriating and presents Scott as a bumbling fool, other retellings such as Weyrauch's and Tally's react against the negative public attitude towards Captain Scott. They attempt to rehabilitate Scott in the eyes of the public by responding to historiographic accounts that painted Scott as a symbol of out-dated modes and customs.

Retellings of Heroic Era stories are not limited to the period in which the aforementioned plays were written; Stuart Hoar's play *Scott of the Antarctic* (1988) epitomises the plays of the "Retelling" tradition. Hoar makes fun of Brenton, using exaggeration and self-reflexivity throughout the story of "Scott of the Antarctic" in order to construct a critique of gender and power issues and to question audience expectations of theatre goers in New Zealand. Later parodies such as Michael Christian's 2004 musical *Meet The Real Ernest Shackleton* have more in common with earlier retellings than with contemporary works dealing with the Antarctic. Although a contemporary of Scott, Shackleton received little attention until the late twentieth century. The delay in addressing

his stories means it is not surprising that theatrical works dealing with Shackleton follow the same trajectory as earlier plays about Scott, even when written at a much later date. David Young's 1997 play *Inexpressible Island* can also be grouped in this section because its focus on the men of Scott's northern party self-consciously avoids the heroic tale of the race to the Pole, offering instead an alternative version from the point of view of distinctly unheroic men whose stories would not otherwise be heard. The 2008 play *The Last South* by G. M. Calhoun is also part of the retelling tradition. Like Tally, Calhoun places Scott and Amundsen together on stage and has them question each other's motives and practices. In this instance, the performance notes make it clear that "what's important are the characters. The race for the Pole is the gimmick used to explore the men," (Calhoun) so the Antarctic setting itself is of minor importance. This privileging of story over setting remains a hallmark of the "Retelling" plays.

The tradition of retelling Antarctic stories and recasting Antarctic space enabled later playwrights to move away – partially – from Antarctica as a setting, whilst still using the mythical polar narratives of Scott and Amundsen as "a central conceit." In Manfred Karge's *Die Eroberung des Südpols* (1985), Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* Part One: Millennium Approaches (1990) and Part Two: Perestroika (1992), and Patricia Cornelius' *Do Not Go Gentle...* (2011) the characters create their own version of Antarctica on the stage and explore social issues (namely unemployment, sexuality and aging) through their interaction with their own imagined space. This brings a new dimension to the questions of space, place and landscape, as the Antarctica presented is not only an imagined landscape as in previous productions, it is an *actively* imagined landscape and the audience are privy to the ways in which the characters construct it. In fact, an examination of the construction of place, rather than place itself, is at the heart of these distinctly postmodern works. While the majority of the action is set in the USA, *Angels in America* (1990) features several scenes set in a self-consciously imaginary Antarctica, used by a housewife as an escape from her highly gendered role at home. As Antarctica was traditionally a male preserve and a place to escape from the complications of the fairer sex, it is significant that a female character seeks out a version of the place for the same refuge purposes.

The fact that Kushner's version includes fir trees and Inuit make it obvious that it is an imagined landscape that exists only in the character's mind, thus highlighting the constructed nature of this version of place. Karge's characters use sheets on the washing line to stand in for Antarctica, while Cornelius' characters inhabit an imagined landscape up until a large white structure is brought onto the stage, at which point the imagined Antarctic landscape becomes more real for the characters than any other. Paradoxically, this version of Antarctica becomes less real for the audience, who now look at a white structure rather than constructing the icescape in their own imaginations. These plays show how exploration stories can be used as parables in a range of situations and applied to the lives of those for whom a literal visit to Antarctica is outside the realm of possibility, such as the unemployed or elderly.

Recent plays such as Lynda Chanwai-Earle's *Heat* (2008) and Mojisola Adebayo's *Moj of the Antarctic* (2008) and multimedia productions such as Pierre Huyghe's *A Journey That Wasn't* (2005) return to Antarctica with the idea of the continent a foremost priority, reversing the earlier plays where story came first and place was in the background. Antarctica is no longer a passive backdrop but rather a highly loaded cultural symbol that is intimately connected to a range of global networks, raising questions about the environment, colonisation and ownership. *A Journey that Wasn't* is a multimedia film and live performance show that took place on an ice rink in New York's Central Park. Like *Moj of the Antarctic*, the work began with a trip to Antarctica. Although Huyghe did travel to the Ice, his work depicts a version of the place where "global warming has melted away the poles' ice shelf and created previously non-existing islands and ecosystems" (van der Meulen). Huyghe further complicates the idea of imagining a place by creating a version that never existed and projecting ecological fears onto that imaginary landscape. Ecological concerns are central to recent theatrical productions and come to the fore in *Heat*, where self-sustaining energy sources were used to run the production. Such an expansion of themes beyond the presentational space indicates the playwright's awareness of the environmental impact of any performance. It also invites the audience to reflect on their own contribution to anthropogenic change within Antarctic ecosystems.

Moj of the Antarctic also deals with environmental concerns, but in addition Adebayo has chosen to use Antarctica to make a statement and to make a claim. As a black lesbian writer, she is claiming a right to this Antarctic place for herself and the various marginalised groups of people she represents, thus introducing a link back to claimant nations and the history of nationalism on the Ice, as addressed in the first chapter. She also questions the process of claims in a postcolonial context and invites a discussion of themes such as race, gender and sexuality (Leane 2012, 105), making her work ripe for examination through an ecocritical lens. In these works Antarctica is still represented on the stage, but it is no longer the passive Antarctica of the white backdrop or simply a metaphor used to explore the social issues of faraway continents. Instead, it is a dynamic player, prompting the audience to think about Antarctica as a concrete continent that is integrated into the global system and upon which they too exert an impact.

Methodology

By examining how Antarctica has been represented upon the stage over the past 80 years, this project charts the developing awareness of the continent, the values that have been associated with the icy South, and changing attitudes towards space and place within a theatrical context. The analysis involves the close reading of nine texts, chosen to illustrate four distinct themes that emerge in the history of imagining Antarctica. An examination of the language used, venues chosen and the use of both mimetic and diegetic space within the production helps to reveal the factors that determine why each playwright chose to use Antarctica as a setting. Focusing on the way one location has been used as a setting for plays over time also reveals the changing relationship between theatre and spatiality. Lawrence Buell claims that “up to a point, world history is a history of space becoming place” (63). As historical stories are performed, the stage provides a unique medium through which to explore the place-making process.

When it comes to the terms “place” and “space,” definitions can be confusing. Tim Cresswell begins his introduction to place with the admission that place is a contested

concept (12) that has been the subject of ongoing debates in human geography, philosophy, planning, architecture and countless other disciplines. In order to understand the terms and come to a working definition for this project, it is helpful to have an overview of how the terms have evolved. Place has traditionally been thought of as subordinate to and a mere subset of space: the binary of space and time as espoused by Newton, Leibnitz, Kant and Schopenhauer assumes the two terms are opposites of equal status. In his seminal work *The Production of Space* (1991), Henri Lefebvre distinguishes between the abstract “absolute space” and the meaningful “social space,” or the setting in which we live (Lefebvre 92). This social space is the equivalent to place, which is understood by Tim Cresswell as “spaces which people have made meaningful” (7). Edward Casey points out that “we experience space and time *together* in place,” (37) bringing place to the fore. Cresswell too moves away from models of subordination, thinking of place and space as being on a scale: “the continuum which has place at one end and space at the other is simultaneously a continuum linking experience to abstraction” (7). It is important not to think of the two as binary opposites, as the continuum concept becomes apparent in the plays of the last two sections.

On the one hand Antarctica is a real place that has been visited, studied and understood. In this sense, human understanding of Antarctica has moved along Cresswell’s continuum over the years: although it was once a space only accessible through the power of imagination, today Antarctica is a place. Tangible in its crunching crust of ice underfoot, its ferocious and unrelenting summer sunshine and the irritation of wind on skin, it can be experienced through the body’s senses, and has been by many people. This was not always the case, and for a long time Antarctica existed only as a space, imagined but never experienced firsthand. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan succinctly sums up Antarctica’s transformation, explaining that “what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (Cresswell 6). Prior to the first sighting of the Antarctic mainland, Antarctica existed only in the imagination. Human contact with and experience of the continent have brought about a change, with first-hand experiences of the Ice endowing it with value and transforming it into the place it is today.

On the other hand, every place is, to some degree, imagined. No matter how concrete, the physical experience is not the whole picture, as any place is always mediated by our own imagination and preconceptions. Two people will interpret the same landscape very differently, depending on their past experiences, and are likely to endow it with different values. In addition, Antarctica is often imagined and written about by those who have never been to the continent themselves. The study of theatre shows how the terms “space” and “place” are not as separated as they may seem. Faraway places are represented within the theatre space and create upon the stage a tangible version of that which would otherwise remain purely conceptual for the audience, thus exemplifying and problematising the process of place-making. Explorers and theatre-goers alike approach any new situation with the weight of their past experiences behind them, meaning the process of imagining and reconciling one’s preconceived ideas with the concrete reality complicates a simplistic reading of place.

The idea of first-hand, physical experience from the “place” end of Cresswell’s scale underpins the approach of phenomenologists and is also a key concept when thinking about the physical nature of theatre. The phenomenological idea of “lived experience” has played an important role in providing both a vocabulary and analytical and theoretical concepts with which to examine the role of space in theatre (McAuley 2002, 16) as works have come to be recognised not only as texts but as performances, encompassing time and grounded in a particular location. The physical nature of performance also makes phenomenology relevant for actors as they experience and navigate the stage, particularly if place is thought of as that which we as humans experience directly, using bodies as a vehicle. To be human is also to analyse and imagine that which we come across and to relativise those concrete experiences with reference to the past and the experiences of others, thus linking experience and abstraction. Phenomenological theory, as adapted by theatre studies scholars such as McAuley, will underpin many of the analyses of productions in this work, helping to unravel how and why the Antarctic landscape has been represented on the stage and what this means for the playwright, performers and audience as they imagine Antarctica.

On Stage

When it comes to the stage, the terms “space” and “place” are applied within a very particular context. Gay McAuley (2006) provides useful definitions of “places” and “spaces” that will be used throughout this work. After surveying a range of interpretations of the terms, McAuley defines “places” as “imaginal” – that is, ordinary life permeated with acts of imagination. “spaces,” on the other hand, are “imaginary” – they are a theoretical condition or framework (McAuley 2006, 282). Places are concrete, tangible and inhabitable, while spaces are intangible as an abstract conceptual framework. The theatre building, like the Antarctic, is therefore a place, while the stage itself can be thought of a space. Space is also the medium for theatre, which McAuley defines as “a relationship between performers and spectators” (2002, 281). Theatre allows for a staging of both the literal and the imagined, thus offering the audience a chance to reconcile the concepts of place and space.

In order to analyse the representations of various places that are enacted within the stage space, the elements of the performance need to be broken down further. Michael Isacharoff makes the useful distinction between mimetic space – that which is directly perceived and does not require mediation – and diegetic space – that which is communicated verbally and not visible to the viewer (55). Anne Ubersfeld makes a similar distinction between stage space and scenic space, while Hanna Scolnicov uses the terms “theatre space” and “theatrical space” (McAuley 2002, 20). As well as expanding the temporal possibilities of a production, diegetic space forces the audience to engage with the setting by actively imagining the scenes as they are described, so it adds another dimension to both the spatial elements of staging a production and the idea of “imagining Antarctica.”

While the majority of the plays examined in this project are performed on a stage within a theatre, several are site specific. Das Letzte Kleinod performed their 2012 production of *Die Filchner Barriere* on the very docks Filchner’s Antarctic expedition set out from (Das Letzte Kleinod). Although it is set in the Arctic, the 2004 Das Letzte Kleinod production of *Eismitte* is part of the same polar trilogy as the 2012 production and is worth a mention because of its unusual staging. Chronicling Alfred Wegner’s winter stay in

Greenland, the play is set in a giant freezer as an attempt to include the sensation of coldness in the production. Similarly, Howard Brenton's *Scott of the Antarctic: Or, What God Didn't See* (1972) and Pierre Huyghe's *A Journey That Wasn't* (2005) were both staged on ice rinks. Such sites were chosen for different reasons, with Brenton's choice helping to subvert the traditional story of Scott as Antarctic hero, and the Huyghe and Das Letzte Kleinod productions site specific works designed to evoke particular phenomenological and historical resonances for the audience.

Representing another type of site specific work are the plays that have been performed in the Antarctic itself. Mojisola Adebayo's *Moj of the Antarctic* (2008) includes film footage shot in Antarctica, and the significance of this multimedia approach is addressed in chapter IV ("Returning"). Jenny Coverack's staging of her one-woman show *A Father For My Son* (2000) in Scott's Cape Evans hut in 2006 is interesting in that it turns the Antarctic place into the stage place. Coverack tells the story of Captain Robert Falcon Scott's expedition from the point of view of his wife, Kathleen. The Antarctic place carries all of the cultural history associated with both Scott's story and views of the continent itself, and by performing her play in the hut at Cape Evans, Coverack not only returns to the place that sparked her story, but also adds new layers of meaning to the place. Coverack's Antarctic staging also carries echoes of the plays performed by the men of the Heroic Era expeditions, including *Ticket of Leave* on the Discovery (1902) and *The Washerwoman's Secret* on the Australian Antarctic Expedition (1912).

Captain Scott saw the theatre as a creative outlet as well as a way to maintain the psychological health of members of his expedition (Leane 2012, 126), therefore the Discovery hut was turned into the Royal Terror Theatre during winter months, providing both a rehearsal area and performance venue whilst doubling as a place to store supplies. Elizabeth Leane has explored the importance of the *Ticket of Leave* production to the expedition at large in depth, and explains how the performance of a play about ex-convicts encountering a pretty woman represented a situation familiar to the men, echoing their own return to civilisation after exile (Leane 2012). In this case, the theatre was used to bring faraway England and the glamorous West End to the Antarctic, complete with social mores

such as “catching a cab” home after the show. This mirrors the productions examined in this project, where theatre facilitates the opposite exchange, bringing the faraway Antarctic to the West End, as it were.

Amongst the productions that took place in traditional theatres (West End or otherwise) a bare stage is a common choice. The Antarctic space is equated with emptiness, and this is often translated into the theatre by stripping the performance space back to a bare minimum. Thus Karge presents “the stage as a stage” (37) and G.M. Calhoun specifies that his set should consist of “an amorphous white location or bare stage with room to move about, address each other, and compete for the audience’s favour” (Calhoun 1). Similarly, Tally instructs that “no attempt should be made at the literal representation of an Antarctic landscape, yet this should be suggested, both in its starkness and its beauty. The setting above all should be simple and flexible, close to a bare stage” (xi). While several productions have called for elaborate and authentic props (Goering, Chanwai-Earle, Cornelius), the elements used to represent Antarctica itself have often been kept to a minimum, with the emphasis on non-mimetic modes of representation. This means that audiences have always been called on to use their imaginations to a greater or lesser degree whenever a version of Antarctica is presented on the stage.

Near and Far

When it comes to theatre, Una Chaudhuri suggests that “for the characters, acting (lies, dissimulation, self-deception) provides a way to *occupy* spaces without *inhabiting* them” (57). Analogies between how the East and the South (Antarctica) have been presented on the stage can prove useful. When examining the East, colonialism, and the theatre, Edward Ziter concludes that “the theatre compressed vast distances as the obscure and magical East was integrated into the Empire. In the process, the theatre transformed the East into a safe, accessible and familiar colonial interest” (190). Early depictions of Antarctica represented within the stage space acted in a similar way, making the far away continent a place accessible to a distant audience and telling stories with strong nationalistic

themes. One such example is George Hummel's *The World Waits*, which brings Antarctica to the American stage and has characters discussing the annexing of the continent, while Reinhard Goering's *Die Südpolexpedition des Kapitäns Scott* addresses the importance of nationalistic ideals to both Scott and Amundsen. It is worth noting the lack of representations of Antarctica upon the British stage, where for a long time Antarctica was not conceived of as "safe" and "accessible," but rather a faraway place for heroes, usually associated with Scott, whose mythical status made any attempt at representation undesirable.

The way in which Antarctica was constructed and restructured by those at home, using snippets brought back from earlier explorers, newspapers and photographs, is also similar to the way in which Edward Said saw the Orient being brought to the stage. The East "would be reconverted, restructured from the bundle of fragments brought back piecemeal by explorers, expeditions, commissions, armies and merchants into lexicographical, bibliographical, departmentalised and textualised Orientalist sense" (qtd. in Ziter 192). The gathering of knowledge through this colonial model continued to be used throughout the early days of Antarctic exploration and this is mirrored in Antarctic plays, many of which draw upon the limited number of published explorer diaries as authentic primary resources. In recent years, a much wider range of knowledge about Antarctica has become available. As the continent has become more accessible, new stories have been told and older stories have been retold in different ways. When examining these it is worth remembering that "history is not the past: it is a consciousness of the past used for present purposes" (Greg Denning qtd. in Gilbert, 106). Examining how Antarctic space has been represented in a range of plays over the past 80 years can provide us with a better understanding of how cultural views of Antarctica have developed and changed.

Gay McAuley points out that "scholarly analysis of the multi-layered spatiality of the theatre is a relatively recent phenomenon" (2006, 16). Such an approach has not yet been applied to Antarctic theatre. Much of the recent criticism relating place theories to the theatre has dealt with colonial settings (McAuley, Daniels, Chaudhuri), while the texts that have specifically examined Antarctica literature (Leane, Spufford, Pyne) have not explored

theatrical works in any depth. It is timely to do so, with the 100th anniversary of “the race to the Pole”⁵ providing an opportunity to examine the changing face of Antarctic stories over the past century. These plays increasingly become aware of and critique both the process of place-making and the assumptions involved in the imagining of Antarctica. Together, they show how Antarctica has gone from being seen as a blank white of emptiness to a white that, like light, is made up of all the colours of the spectrum and accommodates many voices and perspectives.

⁵ Amundsen and Scott’s Polar Expeditions of 1911-1912 were dubbed “the race to the Pole.”

Chapter I: In Scott's Footsteps

Although the legend of “Scott of the Antarctic” entered into common cultural currency in Britain in 1913 with the news of the Polar Party’s fate, Reinhard Goering’s *Die Südpolexpedition des Kapitäns Scott* (1929)⁶ and Douglas Stewart’s *The Fire on the Snow* (1941) are the first to translate this legend into a theatrical context. As such, they are the first plays to grapple with representing the setting of Scott’s mythologised story within an enclosed area. Although the plot of each play remains the same, as in any tragedy, Goering and Stewart approach the question of how to represent the Antarctic in different ways. Goering reverts to a classical model, combining the three-part tragedy with techniques of Expressionism, such as a bare stage, while Stewart uses blank verse to heighten the drama, and addresses the question of representation by choosing the medium of radio, thus avoiding all visual cues.

It is significant that the first time Scott was represented on the stage was not at home in his native Britain, but in Germany. Scott’s widow, Kathleen, and his colleagues, such as Louis Bernacchi, strongly objected to any attempt to represent the Captain upon the stage, preferring instead to consecrate his memory in the legendary version of a man whose heroic acts made him larger than life. Such objections meant Scott’s story was not staged in Britain until after his widow’s death in 1947. Britain and Australia share a colonial history, and Stewart’s radio play is the first dramatic version of the legend to come out of the Commonwealth. *The Fire on the Snow* was studied by Australian school children for many years, thanks to the themes of endurance, sacrifice, and masculine heroic struggle. Goering’s and Stewart’s plays create the tradition of telling Scott’s story in the theatre. Both show the primacy afforded to legend at the expense of other ways of representing Antarctica in early works.

⁶ This chapter draws on research by Hanne Nielsen and Elizabeth Leane, co-published in a 2013 article in *New Theatre Quarterly* (Nielsen and Leane).

Goering and Stewart

Reinhard Goering's play *Die Südpolexpedition des Kapitäns Scott (Südpolexpedition)* premiered at the Staatliches Schauspielhaus in Berlin on 16 February 1930 and was directed by the influential Leopold Jessner. Based on Captain Robert Falcon Scott's account of his polar expedition, the play often quotes the explorer's own words from his journals, which were available in German from 1913 onwards (Scott *Letzte Fahrt*). Although the journals did not have the cultural weight they bore in Britain they were nevertheless of interest because of the prominence of themes such as sacrifice and endurance. Goering is primarily known as an Expressionist writer, although his work bridges the gap between German Expressionism and *Die Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity). New Objectivity retained the "formal innovations" of Expressionism – its reaction against realism, paring back of plot, non-mimetic dialogue and acting, and a focus on expressing inner experience – but changed "the spirit" in which these principles were applied (Richie 22). Reacting against the pathos of Expressionism, the theatre of New Objectivity is characterised by a more practical engagement with the surrounding environment. Such theatre calls for a political rather than an emotional response, and scenes are often presented in a cool and distanced way. The distanced narration by the chorus found in *Südpolexpedition* is a hallmark of the later movement, while the focus on internal struggles and the strongly pared-back plot are strongly Expressionist, as are the themes of suicide, sacrifice and self-determination that are central to Goering's Antarctic play.

The trial of man and his values in the face of his destiny is a common theme for Goering (Fäth 215), with the idea of self-determination apparent throughout both his personal life and the plays he wrote. Goering was awarded the Schiller prize in 1922 for *Seeschlacht*, a play about the battle of Skaggerat that sees five doomed sailors all face their destiny in different ways, but then ceased writing for nearly a decade. *Die Südpolexpedition des Kapitäns Scott* broke his silence, and in an explanation of his return to writing for the theatre after ten years (intended to be published in the playbill produced for the 1930 premiere), Goering detailed his own crisis of self-doubt and existential fear (Goering, "Wieso ein neues Stück?"). The play itself touches on this fear with an exploration of the distinctly

modernist existential significance of coming too late. Scott's Antarctic story provides the ideal vehicle for this, where Antarctica becomes a testing ground to find out about the nature of being human in the face of extremes and to address the idea of fate. Although Scott's narrative provides a way for Goering to explore some of his own personal obsessions – specifically, destiny and self-determination – many of the central themes of the play are familiar parts of the traditional Scott narrative: nationalism, heroism, and sacrifice. As neither a British nor Norwegian national, Goering's outsider's perspective put him in a position to critique the nationalism displayed during the "race to the Pole" at a time when Antarctica still consisted largely of undiscovered space.

Douglas Stewart's radio play *The Fire on The Snow* was first broadcast on 6 June 1941 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, although the play had been published previously as a serial in the *Bulletin* newspaper. Based on Scott's dash to the Pole, the play takes a ready-made legend and uses it to address ideas of heroism, endurance, failure, and life and death. Stewart used Scott's diary and Apsley Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey In The World* (1922) as sources for the play, and prefaces the play text with an introduction explaining that "the characters of the play are the men of the British Antarctic Expedition, 1910, who made the final dash to the Pole." As in Goering's play, the outcome of said final dash is known in advance, allowing the audience to focus on the characters and their reactions to their situation. Stewart wrote *The Fire on the Snow* in 1938-39, at a time when "Man as Hero" was a central preoccupation in all of his works (Keesing 16), and this preoccupation attracted him to Scott's polar narrative. Other hallmarks of Stewart's earlier poetic works that are present in the play include a focus on "the persistence of myth; and [the] significance of landscape" (McCooey 359). *The Fire on the Snow* also has parallels to Stewart's play *Ned Kelly*, where the wide Australian landscape is inhabited by a character who quickly entered the realms of myth following his death. These ideas of landscape are explored further in the section "In Search of the South."

Described by one prominent critic as a "playwright whose verse dramas... have won him world recognition" (Keesing 3), Stewart was also well regarded as a poet and literary critic. Born in New Zealand, Stewart spent much of his working life in Australia and often wrote about the landscapes of both his homeland and his adopted home. Keesing goes so

far as to suggest that the Antarctic landscapes conjured up by *The Fire on the Snow* are constructed “imaginatively from memories of New Zealand snow country and explorers’ accounts” (16). *The Fire on The Snow* was not Stewart’s only Antarctic work, and he attempted a narrative poem about Scott in New Zealand seven years prior to finishing his play. Stewart also wrote a dramatic lyric sequence entitled “Worsley Enchanted” that tells the story of New Zealander Frank Worsley during Shackleton’s 1914 Antarctic expedition. Worsley captained the *Endurance* when it became trapped in sea ice and was eventually crushed, and his story was closer to home for Stewart than Scott’s expedition. Stewart’s other works of note include a cycle of war poems and a series of works about famous explorers including Charles Darwin and Henry Bates. With landscapes and exploration so central to Stewart’s writing, it is not surprising that he turned his attention to the South, where the two were united in the legend of “Scott of the Antarctic.” An examination of Stewart and Goering’s plays side by side reveals several similar themes and techniques used to make both Scott’s narrative and the Antarctic setting accessible to two very different audiences.

Polar Context

The Heroic Era is generally agreed to have ended in 1922, with Ernest Shackleton’s death in South Georgia signalling its close.⁷ Britain’s Captain Robert Falcon Scott and Sir Ernest Shackleton and Norway’s Roald Amundsen are the best known explorers of the Heroic Era, but Germany’s Wilhelm Filchner and Erich von Drygalski, Australia’s Douglas Mawson and Japan’s Nobu Shirase also led expeditions during the early twentieth century, charting territory and gathering data on land and by ship. These national expeditions could easily have provided the subject matter for Goering’s and Stewart’s plays, with Drygalski (1901-03) and Filchner (1911-13) leading the German contingent and Douglas Mawson in charge of the Australian Antarctic Expedition (1911-14). It is significant, then, that both playwrights turned their attention to a British National instead. As Australia had been part

⁷ Some commentators put the date for the end of the Heroic Era as 1917, which was the last time a traditional expedition penetrated the Antarctic.

of the British Empire, it inherited many legends from Britain and this goes some way to explaining why Stewart chose Scott over Mawson. Goering, however, steps outside his national context completely, choosing to write about Scott because of the ideas of fate and sacrifice so intrinsic to the story.

Both Goering's and Stewart's plays are examples of both the negation of emptiness through the focus on narrative and the negotiation between setting and story that occurs whenever Scott's story is retold. Antarctica is often described as being vast and empty, but literature offers "an iconic negation of this emptiness" (Rawlinson). This literature consists of explorers' diaries as primary texts – such as those of Scott, Shackleton, Amundsen and Mawson – and also of the range of plays and other creative texts that have been created in response. The diaries bridge the gap between the continent itself and the imagined landscapes conjured up by the playwrights in this study, offering a starting point for the writers to explore their own, mediated version of the Ice.

Scott's diaries are particularly important for this project because they record space being turned into place acting as a mediator between Antarctica and the outside world. As the men get closer and closer to the Pole, each step takes them to a point that has never before been trodden by humans. Although the continent's edges have been discovered and mapped, this party is travelling into the unknown, experiencing the surface and landscape of the interior of Antarctica for the first time and transforming the unknown space into experienced place. The diaries record this transformation by documenting their experiences and associating human stories with the ice.⁸ All theatrical works that deal with Captain Robert Falcon Scott as a character draw from the narrative that Scott himself penned in his own diaries. This means the plays that follow "In Scott's Footsteps" are already mediated by another text, positioning the diaries as a vital step between the Antarctic itself and the playwright's imagined version of the place.⁹

⁸ Scott took a different route to Amundsen and thus was covering new territory even though he arrived second at the Pole. Although he followed Shackleton's earlier route for the first part of his journey, the last section had not been traversed before.

⁹ In later plays the diaries are themselves a subject, where Scott is depicted writing in his journal.

Stories play an important role in the place-making process, because by associating human actions with a particular set of coordinates, they acquire a history that reinforces their place-ness. The recording process allows others to imagine both the story plots and the place where they occurred, remembering and reimagining those coordinates as the place of those stories many times over until they become legends. In a sense story, or place-making, takes precedence over space, or the Antarctic setting, in these works. While the polar party missed out on the nationalistic glory of being the first to the South Pole, they traded their lives for an immortal story. This grand narrative is closely linked to the narrative of nationalism, offering a myth that would be shared by the “imagined community” (Anderson 48) of England and the greater Commonwealth and later used to justify great sacrifices during World War One.

War and Sacrifice

War is an important context for Goering’s and Stewart’s plays, particularly when it comes to ideas of nationalism and sacrifice. Goering’s play references both: sacrifice is central to the plot, and both Amundsen and Scott are given lines in praise of their respective countries. Stewart’s play aired in the midst of World War Two at a time when a story of national endeavour could not help but be interpreted by the audience in a nationalistic way. The idea of sacrifice plays a key role in the story of “Scott of the Antarctic,” and the deaths of the men elevated them to legendary status within Britain. While they would still have been feted as returning explorers, the men were instead held up as outstanding examples of altruistic sacrifice – examples that held particular resonance as Britain entered the First World War. In retrospective assessments the construction of Scott’s polar party as national martyrs is usually tied to Victorian or Edwardian cultural frameworks, but Goering’s play shows this is not always the case (Nielsen and Leane, 5). As a modernist and a foreigner, Goering also had a particular interest in sacrifice, although he decontextualises the concept from specific national concerns in favour of a pan-European view. The chorus opens Act II by chanting:

O blutiges Europa!/ Auch hier auf weißem Altar verschwendest du Leben./ Opferst es eifernd,/ Unangetastet im Geheimnis./ Und doch: Europäer sein, welcher Ruhm!
(Goering 523)

[O bloody Europe, even here on the white altar you waste life. Sacrifice it eagerly, the secret untouchable. And yet, to be European! What glory!]

Post World War One, the theme of sacrifice was familiar to European audiences. The line “*Auch hier auf weißem Altar verschwendest du Leben*” can be seen as a reference to the European sacrifice – on both sides of the conflict – that had occurred between the time of Scott’s journey and the play being written, with the “*auch*” putting the deaths of the explorers in the same category as the deaths of wartime soldiers of various nations who died for their countries. Such an analogy is not unique, and the Heroic Era explorer Shackleton drew a similar parallel between the hostile Antarctic landscape and the battlefields of Europe when dedicating his book *South: The Story of Shackleton’s Last Expedition, 1914-17* to his fallen comrades both in France and on the Ice. Nevertheless, for Antarctica to be associated with such an idea sends a strong message to the audience. In wars, blood is spilt to claim land, and the deaths of Scott’s men act in a similar way. In retrospective interpretations, they lay claim to the continent by creating a storytelling tradition centered on sacrifice.

The figure most associated with sacrifice in the Scott tragedy is Lawrence Oates, whose deliberate exit from the expedition tent and famous line “I am just going outside and may be some time” (Scott *Journals*, 410) quickly entered into popular mythology. When Oates becomes debilitated, the party are left with two unenviable alternatives: to abandon Oates and leave him to die; or to stay by his side, a decision that would likely result in the deaths of the whole party. Oates creates a third option by actively walking to his death rather than waiting passively for it to come, and this choice was interpreted in Britain as altruistic sacrifice rather than suicide.¹⁰ This interpretation is evident in Stewart’s version of events, which includes Oate’s famous last line. Goering’s Oates also sees himself as a

¹⁰ The morality of Oates’s decision has been debated, although arguments have been overshadowed by interpretations that focus on Oates’ act as a form of selfless sacrifice (Limb and Cordingley 1982, 270).

martyr, but not a specifically English one. He does speak the famous last lines attributed to him by Scott as he exits the tent, but these are not the last words he speaks in the play. Instead, Oates finishes with the plea:

O Du, der Du das Opfer forderst,/ Rette die Freunde. Rette die Gefährten!/ Rette Europas süßes Wunder/ Und seine Ehre und seinen Glauben. (Goering 542).

[O, thou who demands this sacrifice, save my friends, save my comrades! Save Europe's sweet wonder and her honour and belief.]

This language suggests that Oates is thinking of those back in Europe as well as his comrades in Antarctica. Goering takes a tale that “would have stirred the heart of every Englishman” (Scott *Journals*, 422) and makes the story relevant to all Europeans.¹¹ By including a reference to Europe instead of England he makes the continent accessible to non-British audiences. This line leaves the audience in no doubt that this is a sacrifice, and that Oates hopes that by offering himself up to the landscape his friends may be spared a similar fate.

Oates's act “speaks to the central concern of Goering's play,” namely the relationship between human destiny and autonomy (Nielsen and Leane, 5). In choosing to exit the tent, Oates both accepts the inevitability of his demise yet gains a sense of control over his own fate (Martin 19). As the scene was played in the premiere, the expedition leader does nothing to stop his companion's suicide. Instead he stands “silently in the background staring into nothing” whilst Bowers and Wilson attempt to prevent Oates from leaving (Graphic 1930). Although this scene angered Scott's widow Kathleen when she saw it (Lady Scott 274), when seen in the context of the play's focus on destiny and free will Scott's response indicates not a callous disregard for Oates but a thoughtful understanding of the significance of his companion's decision: “*Birdy, verstehst du nicht?*” (Goering 542) [Birdy, don't you understand?] he asks Bowers, having earlier noted: “*Ich fühle die Blicke der Welt auf unser Zelt gerichtet./ Es ist nicht gleichgültig, was wir tun. Niemals.*” (Goering 540)

¹¹ Oates' death is not the only such icy suicide Goering wrote about. In his story *Die Braut* (1928) the bridegroom lies down in the snow to die after failing to find redemption in love. These scenes reflect Goering's own belief that “suicide was the ultimate proof of the autonomy of the individual,” and parallel the author's own death (Martin 19).

[I feel the eyes of the world upon our tent. It is not immaterial what we do. Never.] Oates makes a conscious decision to leave the tent and die, and Scott makes a conscious decision to die a natural death: while death is a non-negotiable factor, the men have a choice as to how they meet their ends. Whether solipsistic or altruistic (Fäth 233), neither man acts out of instinct: conscious of the results of their actions, both make choices and therefore bring a sense of self-determination to their inevitable passing.¹²

Although death is inevitable for these men, their story becomes immortal. The fire in Stewart's title is a metaphor for endurance, both of Scott the man and Scott the enduring legend. Wilson tells Scott "Such a struggle as ours is living; it lives after death/ Purely, like flame, a thing burning and perfect" (Stewart 44). The fact that this play has been written and that Scott's story continues to be retold even now attests to the fact that Wilson's flame has indeed kept on burning, a fire on the snow. The parallel between fire and enduring life emerges several times in Stewart's play, with Bowers' death broken to Scott with the line "While you were sleeping/ A fire went out in the tent: Bowers is dead" (Stewart 41). Similarly, Oates remarks on "that look in his eyes. Fire, ice, jewels" (Stewart 23) immediately before Evans' death. The more the characters freeze, the more their language contains fiery imagery, conjuring up ideas of purification and rebirth, with parallels to the phoenix. In this instance, the men will not rise again out of the ashes, but their stories will emerge from the frozen snow, giving new life to the narrative and the places the men have been. Fire is also a ritualised image, one that is often associated with sacrifice. When it comes time for Oates' death, the fiery imagery returns, with the Announcer comparing Oates to a saint or martyr who burnt for the sake of others:

Announcer: In grief and shame
 They let him go
 Out to the flame
 Of wind and snow
 Where he burns for them. (34)

¹² Goering emphasizes this in a passage where he contrasts a scorpion in a ring of fire, who stabs his barb into his own chest in a reflex action, with humans in a parallel situation, burdened with greater awareness and responsibility: "*Der Mensch allein opfert Unendliches, / Wenn er sich opfert*" [Man alone suffers infinitely when he sacrifices himself] (Goering 528).

Here burning and freezing take on the same function as a vehicle for sacrifice, while the Antarctic landscape remains subordinate to the legend of heroic human endeavour.

A Legend Emerges

Thanks to Scott's diary, Oates' final words have become a kind of cultural shorthand for Scott's expedition as a whole. The expedition has entered the realm of legend, with the proud and noble heroes struggling against fate, passing the milestones of the Pole, Oates's death and the final blizzard, all whilst displaying unstinting stoicism in the face of impossible odds. Scott's story was presented as a tragedy in the media long before being presented on the stage, and Goering and Stewart address the tradition of portraying Scott as a tragic hero in their stylistic approaches. Goering uses the ancient form of the three part tragedy to highlight the tragic elements and imbue the story with a timeless quality. An expository prologue means the outcome is shown in advance in both plays, with Goering's Chorus and Stewart's Announcer making the characters' fates clear from the outset. It is also significant that both Goering and Stewart choose to use poetic language to memorialise Scott. Stewart's blank verse carries echoes of Shakespeare's canonical tragedies and heightens the drama of the unfolding events. By employing such techniques to start the tradition of putting Scott on the stage, both playwrights make the legend even more legendary.

Both Goering and Stewart employ commentators in their plays to act as a reference to the theatricality of each performance. Goering's play features both traditional and modern elements, with the three-part tragedy and chorus stemming from the ancient Grecian tradition, while techniques such as the inclusion of actors posing as audience members and commenting on the action from the gallery share something with Brechtian drama (R.C. Davis, 217). Both techniques allow for a commentary on the on-stage action. In the case of the chorus, each section is introduced before the actors perform the narrated story, meaning that the outcome, and therefore the characters' destinies, are known in advance. This removes the suspense from the plot and allows the audience to focus instead on the characters and the nuances in their responses as they deal with the spectre of their

imminent deaths. The chorus places the viewer at a rational distance from the action by revealing the constructed nature of the story on stage (Fäth 218). In Stewart's play the Announcer takes on a similar role to Goering's chorus. This announcer begins by telling the radio audience "I am to interrupt true contemplation/ Of the familiar headlines of the day," (8) thus acknowledging that the radio medium is usually used for news broadcasts. A commentator is a clear intermediary between the characters in Antarctica and the theatre audience and demonstrates a desire to make the audience aware of the nature of the performance. In fact, Stewart's Announcer makes it clear that the voice of another is being channeled from afar, asking "Who am I to deny or question/ A voice that says to speak of ice/ And to speak of death" (8). The distance between Announcer and characters mirrors the distance between Antarctica and Australia, where the play was broadcast, and also makes it clear that the Announcer cannot change the predetermined outcome of the march.

Although technically similar, Stewart's Announcer and Goering's chorus elicit different responses from their respective audiences. Goering's chorus makes the audience aware of the theatricality of the play, beginning by addressing the audience directly in the line "*Erwachendes Deutschland*" (507) [awakened Germany]. The chorus addresses the characters (508) and the audience directly, asking probing questions such as whether it is possible that Scott, Wilson, Bowers and Oates still hold out hope: "*Ist es möglich, daß sie immer noch hoffen?*" (539) [is it possible that they still have hope?]. This creates suspense as the audience does not know the answers, but must observe the characters carefully in order to glean a reply, thus drawing them into the Antarctic world on the stage. In contrast, Stewart's Announcer provides the audience with a window into the men's' thoughts, as in the extended passage following Oates' death: "They wish that Oates could come back/ So they could tell him what stars and flames they feel/ That a man should walk to his death for his comrades' sake" (35). Stewart's intermediary figure puts all of the pieces of the puzzle together for the audience, while Goering's guides the audience as they come to their own conclusions. This suggests that Stewart intended for his audience to take away one particular message of noble sacrifice, whereas Goering was more interested in exploring human themes through the interaction of his characters and had a less didactic agenda when it came to representing Antarctica on the stage.

In the absence of a visual element, a radio play necessitates more textual interpretation, and thus lends itself well to a more didactic approach. Stewart admits that “in a radio play, where your scene and your actors are invisible, you have the special problem of letting your audience see what is happening,” but goes on to add that “this is also sometimes a problem of the stage when vast or distant events have to be encompassed” (Stewart “Author’s Foreword”). Stewart’s solution is to use the Announcer to describe the situations Scott and his men find themselves in, acting like the Greek chorus. The Announcer bridges gaps in distance and time between the various scenes, allowing the characters to explore a situation that is already clear to the audience. While the Announcer is listed as a character and was played by a female actor in the first performance, Stewart describes how he used the Announcer “simply as a mask for [himself] – a way of speaking directly to the invisible audience” (Stewart, “Author’s Foreword”). The Announcer not only narrates events and describes the setting, but also passes “editorial comment” on what the men are thinking and provides a particular interpretation of events (Oliver 202), shaping the story in order to evoke a particular emotional response. This is important when it comes to the representation of Antarctic space and place as it adds another layer of mediation between the landscape, the diaries, the characters and the audience. The Announcer thus provides another opportunity for Stewart to shape the audience’s imagined version of Antarctica by continually bringing the ideas of sacrifice and endurance to the surface.

The language used in *The Fire on the Snow* mirrors the men’s growing fatigue as they traverse the ice. The play is written in blank verse, with the metrication at the start mirroring the footfalls of plodding men on the journey to the Pole. At the start of the final march Scott sees the task ahead as “a simple matter of a journey... there’s nothing to do but march” (12). This contrasts with the men’s movements later in the play when they slip, slide and are at the mercy of the environment. The way the men move through the landscape parallels their attitudes towards the place as they go from “plodding” (12) to “stumbling” (31). This change is also mirrored in the rhythm of language, which goes from being very regular and rhythmic to stumbling over half rhymes and onomatopoeia:

Announcer: Stumbling. Oates. Crashing. Scrambling to his feet
 And shambling on, and crashing, and rushing on,
 And his mind, thrusting to avoid the knowledge of his fate,
 Rambling, skimming across the ice like a stone (Stewart 31)

This is an example of the language drawing attention to itself and its relationship to the environment it is being called upon to represent. Nevertheless, the language highlights Oates' fate over the Antarctic environment itself, and the ice is important only insofar as it is an obstacle to Oates' efforts to keep moving through the Antarctic landscape.

Staging Concerns

The most obvious difference between how Goering and Stewart represent Antarctica is their choice of medium. *Südpolexpedition* was written to be performed on a theatre stage in a traditional building complete with a gallery, as the women in the gallery help to narrate the story when the men reach the Pole. Stewart, on the other hand, wrote specifically for radio. The two mediums were appropriate for different audiences. While Goering was interested in communicating the themes of sacrifice and self determination to an audience familiar with German Expressionist techniques, Stewart wrote to reach a wider, commonwealth audience and to narrate a story of nationalism and sacrifice from his country's own tradition. The different mediums necessitated different techniques for the creation of space, with Stewart's play relying on wind noise and the characters' descriptions to help the audience imagine the setting. Goering's almost bare stage, supplemented with wall hangings and projections, offered a mimetic set as the starting point for imagination.

While mimetic, Goering's Antarctic set is also minimal, mirroring the minimalist space of the Antarctic plateau and allowing few distractions from his characters' own existential concerns. The set of *Südpolexpedition* was designed by Caspar Neher, more famous now for his partnership with Brecht, and the premiere featured projections by Nina Tokumbet (Willett 1986, 84). Goering's stage directions give little indication of how the icescape itself was to be evoked, though the Antarctic action calls for fog, wind, a pile of snow, and props

including a tent, flag, sleeping bags, sledge and diary. Wind sounds are used to evoke an Antarctic gale, while mist is used to assist scene changes and to obscure the characters whilst the women in the gallery take over the commentary. These gesture towards the place but do not try to recreate Antarctica in a realistic manner. The Antarctic location is to some extent irrelevant in the play as a place in itself: given that Goering's interest was in the inner quest experienced by the men, its advantage is its lack of distinctive features (Nielsen and Leane 7). The minimalist landscape of the plateau permits few distractions from the existential concerns of the characters.

Goering's play includes five distinct settings, with two located far from the Antarctic itself, providing a contrast to the empty Antarctic scenes. In Act I the audience are taken back in time to London, where Scott's friend Tompson provides advice, while Act III is set on the docks at Hobart. The scenes set in London and Hobart call for everyday props, such as houses and a table, but it is unclear from the playtext how segues between these and the Antarctic scenes might be made. The busy domestic scenes serve to provide a contrast between the bustle of "home" and the barrenness of Antarctica, with the elaborate nature of the dock setting making the Antarctic ice seem all the more bleak. It is significant that Antarctica, Hobart and London share the same stage. While set changes are a familiar part of theatre, they also affect the way Antarctica is viewed by the audience. In this case the Australian and English settings are just as real for the audience as the Antarctic setting. Placing other sets on the "Antarctic" stage helps make the audience aware that they are watching a play and that the Antarctica that is being represented is really just a construct.

Goering's interest in theme over plot is evident in his decision to stage events out of chronological order. Part I is based on Scott's party reaching the Pole, Part II presents the journey home and the men's demise, and Part III deals with the reception in Hobart, Tasmania, of Roald Amundsen, leader of the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition.¹³ By placing the arrival at the Pole so early Goering emphasises the journey over the destination, an emphasis that corresponds with the experiences of early polar explorers themselves. The

¹³ Scott's party reached the Pole in mid-January 1912; Amundsen reached Hobart on 7 March 1912; and Scott's last diary entry, presumably made shortly before his death, is dated 29 March 1912.

point of the play is not to recount the narrative drama of the expedition but to put the inner struggles of the men on stage as they confront their destinies and become the subject of legend. Antarctica, then, becomes a screen upon which these inner struggles are projected.

The issue of how to visually represent Antarctica is removed in a radio play such as *The Fire on the Snow*. Radio drama “substitutes for the physical eye the sight of the imagination,” (Phillips 1949, 8) drawing in the audience by requiring the constructive cooperation of those listening. This medium is a significant choice for a play with an Antarctic setting: in Antarctica, the “dissolution of perspective” (Rawlinson) plays an important role in how the place is perceived and experienced, and radio offers one way to approach this dissolution of perspective. Although the polar setting is never seen by the audience, listeners are constantly reminded of the characters’ location. As Scott, Wilson and Bowers sit in their tent in the blizzard, Wilson alludes to their situation:

Wilson: It maddens me most
That all this elaborate setting of snow and wind
Was needed for such a simple thing as our passing. (Stewart 40)

This is an interesting remark to make in a radio play as “this elaborate setting” to which Wilson refers must be imagined by the audience. The reference to a “setting” is self-referential, demonstrating the play’s awareness of itself as a text constructed out of elements such as plot, character and setting. The juxtaposition of the description “elaborate setting” and the term “our passing” also puts the theme of sacrifice and the Antarctic setting side by side, allowing the play to reflect on its own problem of wanting to represent space in order to explore a particular idea.

The Fire on the Snow was written to be broadcast, with the ideal audience being a fictional collection of citizens belonging to the British Empire, akin to one of Benedict Anderson’s “imagined communities.” Radio was a crucial medium of communication during the 1940s, with news of World War One and other world events disseminated via the radio waves. The BBC Empire Service was a very powerful arbiter of ‘home’ in the colonial

imagination, with daily news programmes preceded by a swell of music that instilled a sense of great expectation in the listener. Radio was also the medium the British Monarch used to communicate with the people of the Commonwealth, so it can be seen as a medium of imperialism – it was a way of bringing British values to faraway lands and evoking pride in the “Motherland” amongst a diaspora of Commonwealth citizens. Stewart plays on the fact that radio was a trusted medium of communication, creating dialogue for Scott’s party and attributing it to the men themselves in order to make them seem more immediate. By using a familiar medium and talking about Antarctica in the same way as England was talked about, Stewart also creates a sense of ownership, both of Scott’s story and, through the story, of place and of Antarctica as a whole.

In Search of the South

The place at the centre of both works is the South Pole, the discovery of which is narrated rather than shown by both Goering and Stewart. They conjure up vast tracts of diegetic space on which marches and discoveries have taken place, thus offering a solution to the mimetic representation of Antarctica. The use of diegetic space is another way to expose the gulf between that which is being described (Antarctica) and that to which it is being compared (scenes back home). Goering uses diegetic space to narrate current events, such as the men reaching the Pole. Two women in the gallery describe the unseen actions of Scott’s party, extending the represented Antarctica beyond the bounds of the presentational space:

Ich habe ein Glas und kann sie deutlich erkennen. Ich werde Ihnen sagen, was ich sehe... Die Norweger sind ihnen zuvorgekommen, Amundsen ist der erste am Pol.
(Goering 520)

[I have binoculars and can see them clearly. I will tell you what I can see ... The Norwegians arrived before them. Amundsen is the first to the Pole.]

In a classic *verfremdungseffekt*, this incident draws the audience's attention to their own spectatorship, both collapsing and ironically emphasising the distance between the theatre and the Antarctic plateau. This solves the problem of representing vast tracts of ice within the confines of a theatre, making use of diegetic space to involve the audience's imaginations and to avoid giving one mimetic version of the events that occurred. This suggests there might be more than one possible version of events and that these may differ from Scott's first-hand account, an idea that is explored further in later plays. Stewart's diegetic space highlights the isolation of the men by contrasting their memories of England, New Zealand and Cape Evans with their present situation. In both cases, representation deals with more than simply what can be seen, and the playwrights encourage the audience to engage with Antarctica through active imagination of the place.

The concept of turning space into place by virtue of marching into the unknown becomes particularly interesting when the expectations of Scott and his men do not match up with the reality of their situation. They imagine they will be the first to the Pole and therefore will be able to create the place as they have pictured it, complete with flag and victory in hand. When they discover that Amundsen has already been to the Pole, and that it is therefore already a place associated with human stories, Scott's party must revise their thinking about Antarctic place and space. Interpretation of the landscape has a direct bearing on Goering's characters when they come across the Pole. The first indication of human presence that they come across is a pile of snow, and when the men ask themselves whether the pile is natural or man-made, the question goes to the heart of ideas of space and place. The pile itself is not represented on the stage, only described, but the question of its origins makes all the difference as to whether the men are marching towards a space they will conquer by turning into a place, or a place that has already been experienced by other men:

Bowers: Ein künstlicher Haufe Schnee!

Scott: O meine Angst!

Wilson: Warum denn künstlich? Den hat der Wind so angeweht. (Goering 514)

[Bowers: A man-made pile of snow!

Scott: Oh, my fear!

Wilson: Why man made? The wind has blown it like that.]

Although the pile remains the same regardless of how it was formed, the question of whether it is natural or artificial determines how the men interpret the surrounding landscape. Either it is a natural feature in a space they will triumphantly claim, or it signals that the Pole is already a place and heralds their disappointment. The audience never sees the pile of snow, so they must rely on the characters' interpretation of the landscape they encounter either a space to conquer or a place that has been claimed. For Goering, it is not the adversity itself that is of interest, but how the men react to the adversity, and how it shapes their attitudes towards the place they find themselves in. Stewart's characters face a similar situation, with Oates concluding that as they are not at the Pole they imagined then they must be "nowhere" (Stewart 20). Stewart's Scott has "dreamed of this moment for many, many years" but "the dream was different, no footprints scarring the snow/ No mark of men..." (Stewart 20). Without precedence the Pole is meaningless as it has already been "narrated" and made into a place. As Scott's men have no place in that narrative, they must write themselves a new story in order to understand their position within the landscape. This highlights the importance of imagination and expectation in place making.

Imagination and expectation are both informed by memories of past experiences. The ending of *The Fire on The Snow* is a prime example of diegetic space in a radio play as it delves into the past, with Scott asking Wilson "Do you remember it all, remember living?" (Stewart 42). Scott and Wilson then trade a series of lines starting with "I remember," tracking the journey that has brought them from England to Christchurch to Cape Evans and finally to a green tent on the Ross Ice Shelf in the midst of a blizzard:

Wilson: I remember the ship going out, so much more daring

Than the gulls that so quickly scudded back to the port.

Scott: I remember before that, vaguely, England...

That was years ago. I remember more clearly

New Zealand, that garden at Christchurch, how sharply blue

The peaks of the Kaikouras stabbed the horizon...

Wilson: I remember the winter, the comradeship in the hut....

Scott: I remember the black flag that told us about Amundsen,

That fateful day. (43)

The constant repetition of the phrase “I remember” serves to remind the audience that these colourful sights, these sounds of life, belong to another time. The contrast between what the men remember and conjure up in diegetic space serves to make their current situation, including the hunger and cold they are experiencing in the mimetic space, seem even starker. Memory can also be a consolation and a way of making an alien landscape more familiar by filling it with memories and stories from one’s life. As the transformation of space into place is closely linked to the telling of stories, the use of diegetic space to bring memories of home to the Antarctic setting is also a place-making strategy. Comparing the Antarctic fog to the smoke of chimneys back home (Stewart 32) helps Oates make sense of what he finds shortly before his death, and also hints at the importance of memory and metaphor when trying to represent Antarctica.

Both mimetic and diegetic space are important for building the Antarctic setting, but the convergence of the two is problematic. The more similar mimetic and diegetic space become, the less comforting the characters find it to remember their pasts. Scott’s memory of reaching the Pole, only to find Amundsen had beaten them there, ends his foray into the comforting diegetic space of home and brings him back to his present reality:

Scott: And the Pole was ghosts and ruins, and the snow on our mouths

Was ashes, ashes. And Evans crumbled away,

And the Soldier after him.

How am I justified,

Wilson, how am I justified for Oates and Evans,

And Bowers... and you? (Stewart 44)

Scott conducts an outward journey to the Pole but then must journey into himself in order to justify the risks he has taken and to come to terms with the fact that he and his party will die in the Antarctic. This space is neither mimetic nor diegetic, but intensely personal. The journey to the interior of Antarctica is paralleled by a journey into the mind and the two begin to blend together towards the end of the play.

When Scott tells Wilson “My brain’s a snowdrift” (Stewart 41), he questions the boundaries of place by internalising the physical snowdrifts. This suggests that place is not just a location, but is also very much tied to the one experiencing that place and the way in which they see and interact with it. Internalisation of the landscape is another kind of place-making, as it indicates that conscious interaction has occurred. It is also a way of attempting to describe the indescribable by using the last possible metaphor. When found inside a human’s head, a boundless territory that one cannot make sense of is known as madness:

Announcer: Fifteen miles,
 Only fifteen miles.
 A day’s march once,
 Now far as stars
 And close as madness. (Stewart 36)

Where once fifteen miles would have been covered in one day’s work, the same distance now represents a gaping crevasse that cannot be traversed. This crevasse echoes the gap between the imagined and the real, reminding the audience how small yet crucial the gap between space and place is.

The Mind’s Eye

Metaphor can help to bridge this gap, and both Goering and Stewart use metaphor to conjure up images of the Antarctic setting in the minds of the audience. Stewart’s Announcer talks of how “the iron/ wind is blowing,” (27) while Goering’s chorus describe

the ice as a “white altar” (523). Metaphor is a way of making the foreign seem familiar, by making it more accessible and less “other.” Like diegetic space, it offers a way to deal with the challenges of representing the Antarctic. The use of metaphor is also a form of colonisation. Just as the first steps into the unknown turn space into place, applying metaphors to a landscape links it to another place, usually a place the one making the comparison is from.

To make the Antarctic recognisably human is also to make it less space-like, and metaphor and anthropomorphism are both examples of colonial place-making strategies, ascribing familiar qualities to an unknown space in order to better understand and lay claim to it. Goering’s characters imagine the Pole as being a “sphinx,” or a holder of dangerous and corrupting secrets: *“Eine Sphinx, deren Rätsel verdarb den, der es lösen wollte”* (518) [A Sphinx whose riddle corrupts those who wish to solve it]. Sphinxes are traditionally merciless, and just like the surrounding polar landscape, the storm that is coming is uncaring: *“Er vernichtet, was noch hofft./ Er löscht aus geschwächtes Leben ohne Mitleid”* (528) [It destroys the hope that remains/ It annihilates weakened lives without remorse]. Like a sphinx, the Pole signals death for those who cannot answer the riddle. As Scott’s party have come second, they have not solved the riddle of the Pole as this has been done already by Amundsen. Comparing Antarctica to a mythological beast links it to a human history of storytelling that stretches back far beyond the time when Antarctica was first discovered, and also points forwards to a time when Scott himself becomes a legendary figure.

The association of the ice with human qualities is apparent throughout Stewart’s play, and when Scott, Wilson and Bowers are all stuck in their tent in the midst of a blizzard, Wilson again imbues the Antarctic with active qualities:

Wilson: It’s a clumsy way of killing us. We should be flattered
That the whole Antarctic has to lash itself to a fury
To kill three men.

It’s taken its time,
Weeks and weeks since the Pole when it marked us down;
But it knows what it’s doing now, it’s making certain. (Stewart 39)

Here the Antarctic becomes a predator, hunting down the men and actively engaging in the game of man versus wild until, with “an axe of wind and snow and a block of ice,” (Stewart 40) it is triumphant. Such personification makes the danger element of the Antarctic accessible to a faraway audience, who are familiar with the concept of men killing men and coming home as heroes. This metaphor also develops the theme of sacrifice by again linking the story of the deaths of the polar party to the deaths of those who die in battle for their country.

Metaphor and personification are both ways of creating a representation of Antarctica and imbuing it with agency, but the idea of the power of landscape emerges at other points in the play, where it is not only limited to an outside force. Battles with both internal and external landscapes can lead to mixed metaphors, with the icescape both an adversary and something to be internalised. These inconsistencies serve to highlight the focus on legend, with both internal and external trials being used to foreground a variety of masculine heroic struggles throughout both plays. Wilson recalls the previous winter, and how the darkness and wild weather of the Antarctic have a psychological impact on the men:

Wilson: I saw last winter how the climate changed us,
 We hardly spoke once that long silver twilight
 Had really begun to permeate our bodies. (Stewart 15)

This idea of place changing people is an early pointer to Scott’s own experience later in Stewart’s play and relates to earlier discussions about the boundaries between space and place. As Scott and Wilson shelter from the blizzard outside, the storm enters Scott and becomes internalised, creating a place for itself in the midst of a space that does not conform to Scott’s dream:

Scott: If we had a shovel handy, Wilson, I’d ask you
 To shovel away the snow that’s inside my head,
 That’s where it’s falling now. My brain’s a snowdrift.

Somewhere deep down there's a fire. I can almost see it,
Red under masses of snow. (Stewart 41)

Instead of the characters inhabiting the landscape, here the landscape inhabits a character, again raising questions as to who is the active agent. As they come closer to death, the boundaries between man and ice blur, paving the way for the men to become part of the landscape once they die. Scott's men were not only covered by ice, joining the landscape in a literal sense, they also became part of the cultural landscape of Antarctica as their story was told and retold.

In Scott's Footsteps

If imperialism is associated with movement and colonialism with settlement (Collis 2009, 509), Stewart illustrates how these men who set out on an imperial journey have ended up making the ultimate colonial statement, securing a place on the continent in which to embed their very English story. The Announcer introduces the idea of a legacy early on:

Announcer: What monstrous crop will grow
When five madmen, hauling the sledge behind them, grind
Through thirteen frozen days, ploughing the wastes of snow? (Stewart 13)

Ploughing is associated with the cultivation of land and permanent settlement. It is also linked to ideas of harvest and bounty as it usually leads to planting and reaping of crops to sustain life. In this case, nothing will grow to sustain life, but a form of permanent settlement will occur. It is stories that will be reaped from the icescape when Scott's diaries are recovered, and those stories will sustain imaginations on the other side of the globe. Although Scott's party intend to walk through the landscape, enacting imperialism, their deaths mean they eventually stay in the place, becoming frozen settlers.

Douglas Stewart's *The Fire on The Snow* and Reinhard Goering's *Die Südpolexpedition des Kapitäns Scott* retell the same story in different ways, using Scott's footsteps as the basis of their representations of Antarctica. Both use Scott's diary as a starting point and Antarctica as the setting, but the place is represented using different techniques and to different effects. While it is dangerous to simplify the texts too much, both texts treat the Antarctic setting as subordinate to an Antarctic legend. This interest in story indicates an apparent self-awareness of the problems with representing Antarctica. Stewart and Goering do begin to problematise place-making by using a chorus to provide distance from the subject matter and by breaking down the fourth wall, but they do not go far in questioning whether representing Antarctica on stage is actually possible. Instead, Stewart focuses on the men's actions and Goering is more preoccupied with the men's reactions to the situation they find themselves in than the setting itself. Themes such as nationalism, sacrifice, internalisation and self-determination are explored in each play using metaphor, diegetics and story. These elements work together to create two different representations of the same place, presenting a different version of Antarctica in each of the plays. If Antarctica has become a palimpsest, with stories layered upon stories, the legend of Scott was the first. *Südpolexpedition* and *The Fire on the Snow* offer an insight into how Antarctica was viewed from the end of the Heroic Era until the end of World War Two, whilst setting the scene for the stories that were to be retold and the representations of Antarctica that were to follow.

Part II: Retelling

While Scott's story provided a way of focussing grief and "digesting the horror" (McInnes 75) of World War One, subsequent events like Hiroshima and the mass deaths in concentration camps meant it was no longer possible to romanticise death, nor was it taken for granted that death had any meaning (Carter and McRae 412). Against such a backdrop, the deaths of the polar party were no longer relevant for the same reasons and the ideas of sacrifice, honour and imperial achievement associated with Scott's story were called into question. Wolfgang Weyrauch's *Das grüne Zelt* (1963), Howard Brenton's *Scott of the Antarctic* (1971) and Ted Tally's *Terra Nova* (1977) are examples of retellings of an Antarctic story where the idea of "hero" is subverted and the idea of sacrifice critiqued. As they dismantle the legend of Scott and question the cultural premises that led to him being feted as a hero, they provide alternative versions of both Scott's polar narrative itself and the continent on which the story took place.

In terms of the trajectory outlined in this thesis, these are transitional plays that keep the legend of Scott in the foreground even as they critique it. The question of how to represent Antarctica remains a secondary concern, but there is a strong correlation between the dismantling of Scott's story and the questioning of place-making processes. By applying a critical lens to the legend of Scott, these playwrights separate Antarctica from its historical baggage, challenging the assumption that Scott and the Antarctic are one and the same. The disentanglement of "Scott" and "the Antarctic" is not limited to depictions within the theatre, but also characterises its treatment within British culture more broadly. Max Jones argues that first, comedians began to mock Scott and the heroic culture he stood for, second, a negative portrayal of Scott was used in order to critique Edwardian culture, and third, Scott's psychology and inner thoughts came onto the radar (2011, 191). These factors combined to create new retellings of the Heroic Era stories, allowing for multiple voices to emerge, and saw the ideas of heroism and sacrifice that were at the heart of the early versions ridiculed and dismantled. By the time the Monty Python sketch "Scott of the Sahara" aired in 1970 people were aware of the limitations of the classic Antarctic story. This sketch "focussed more on the inaccuracy and bombast of Hollywood historical epics

than Scott himself,” (Jones 2011, 194) acting as a precursor to the social commentary of Brenton’s play two years later.¹⁴

Plays in Context

The Antarctic Treaty (1957) signalled an important shift in the way Antarctica was conceptualised, framing the continent as a place for peace and science rather than for nationalistic gain. Although territorial claims still stand, events like the International Geophysical Year (IGY) of 1957-8 encouraged cross-national projects. Antarctica was much more accessible than in previous decades, with an ever-increasing number of permanent national bases being established and thirteen nations all having a year-round presence. The fact that all three of these plays still deal with Heroic Era stories at a time when Antarctica was beginning to open up to scientists of all genders and backgrounds illustrates the difference between policy and cultural interests in Antarctica.¹⁵ While the treaty recast Antarctica as a unique international arena, the continent still needed to be reimagined several times in order to evolve from a heroic site for place-making into a modern place that had been settled and had everyday concerns.

Change was also afoot in the world of theatre as the theatrical revolution between 1956-60 transformed the stage into a “platform for antidisestablishmentarianism, directorial, political and sexual-political” (Alexander 365). This rise of the theatre of the absurd was part of this transformation, with playwrights such as Stoppard and Beckett staging social commentaries and plays with minimal plot. It is striking that Antarctica was not used as a setting for any of these plays, as the plateau appears to lend itself well to themes of existentialism and circularity, but at this time Antarctica was still too closely associated with Heroic Era narratives to be interpreted in other ways.

¹⁴ While Brenton does turn the focus back to Scott, he does so in order to critique the social assumptions and values inherent in Scott’s story.

¹⁵ Opportunities to conduct research in Antarctica became more available during this period. Although women were not present in any real numbers until the 1970s and the majority of scientists were white, official policies of National Antarctic Programmes were changing to allow a more inclusive mix.

Social Realism, which was used to comment on political issues, also developed during this time, with John Osborne's 1956 play *Look Back in Anger* giving rise to the left-leaning "angry young men" movement that questioned established orthodoxies. For young playwrights with something to say, portable theatre troupes provided a means to mount a production and share their message (Cottrell 179), leading to a theatre scene awash with many voices and a range of perspectives on the human condition. The abolition of theatre censorship in Britain in 1968 made discussions of a range of unpopular topics possible and allowed those in the theatre to actively question the world around them without fear of prosecution (Innes 1995, 444), while exploration of the audience as active rather than passive encouraged political agency amongst theatre goers (Allain and Harvey, 133). Small independent companies were radically rethinking the conventions of traditional theatre (Fischer 5), leading to the development of site-specific works like Brenton's play and to the acceptance of "happenings" as part of the theatre scene (Szilassy 66). The 1970s and 1980s also saw the rise of musical theatre and ushered in the age of mechanisation in terms of set design, with sound designers and multiple lighting technicians helping to set an elaborate scene on the stage (Brown 1995, 502). In this context, the use of a bare stage takes on a new meaning, as the lack of elaborate setting was not because of a lack of materials, but rather a conscious decision on the part of the playwright.

During this period many playwrights took a historiographic approach to Heroic Era Antarctic stories, recognising that writing the past "[would] never be an objective practice, but rather one that is subjective, interpretive and fundamentally creative" (Allain 160). These retellings reflect the public moods of the time, when the legend of Scott was being called into question. Roland Huntford's *Scott and Amundsen* (1979) brought debates over what the explorer stood for to a head, but discussions over the causes of the failure of the *Terra Nova* expedition had been current for over a decade.¹⁶ Debate often centered on planning and Scott's decision to use ponies, motor sledges and man-hauling to transport stores rather than dogs. Brenton's excoriating account of Scott's interaction with Antarctica exemplifies the dominant discourse of ridicule, while Tally's play treats Scott's story much

¹⁶ Peter Cook's sketch "Polar Bores" was performed for the Cambridge Footlights Revue in 1959 and lampooned Scott and his expedition (Jones 2003, 288).

more gently, exploring the inner workings of the leader's mind by using other characters as mirrors. In both instances it is the received legends that are questioned, along with the traditions they exemplify: a critique of sacrifice and its relevance to contemporary culture is at the heart of both. The theme therefore had less to do with Antarctica or Scott specifically, than with providing an avenue to reflect on current concerns and society at large (Jones 2003, 289).

Heroic Era characters still dominate the stories of this time, but the received legends are looked at in different ways. Weyrauch's Scott, for instance, questions himself, asking "who am I?" and "what is a hero?" (29). His radio play is a forerunner of the debates about sacrifice, heroism, internal struggle and ways of remembering that lie at the heart of Brenton's and Tally's stage productions. Tally and Brenton provide interesting staging contrasts and present two very different ways of deconstructing the myth of Scott, hence they will be examined side by side. Tally's production notes indicate that "The setting should above all be simple and flexible, close to a bare stage" (Tally xi). In contrast, Brenton set his performance on an ice rink and used the stage space to support his subversive retelling of original tale of "Scott of the Antarctic." The ice in the ice rink is so obviously not Antarctic ice, and the small scale of the rink versus the vastness of Antarctica itself makes a parody of the story, illustrating how staging can be used to support or undermine a particular narrative theme. As new ways are sought to tell Scott's story, new ways of representing the Antarctic landscape emerge.

Das grüne Zelt

Wolfgang Weyrauch (1904-1980) was a German writer who trained as an actor before studying literature and working as a freelance journalist. Weyrauch was a member of the famous "Gruppe 47"¹⁷ whose works are characterised by a "naked directness" (Closs

¹⁷ Gruppe 47 was an influential literary group that operated in Germany from 1947 – 1967. Attendance at events was by invite only and other well-known members included Günter Grass, Heinrich Böll, Ilse Aichinger and Erich Kästner.

398). He served as a soldier from 1940-45 before being captured by Soviet forces and was later awarded the prize of the German War Blind for his radio play *Totentanz* in 1961. While Weyrauch wrote a range of prose texts and anthologies, he was well known for his radio plays, becoming one of the most influential German writers in the genre (Wuerffel 15). By the time the radio play *Das grüne Zelt* was written in 1963 Weyrauch had several decades of experience with the medium and his work was already acclaimed. Based on Captain Scott's polar journey and named for the green tent in which Scott's body was found, *Das grüne Zelt* was widely read within German classrooms as an example of a radio drama (Landzettel 13).

Narrated by Scott, *Das grüne Zelt* is a retelling of his march to the Pole and the tragic aftermath, told in a way that reveals the importance of the landscape. The play features Scott's polar party and the Norwegian Roald Amundsen and takes place after the deaths of all five Englishmen. Scott's recital of camp names at the opening of the play orients the listener in space, but it is the treatment of the elements that is of particular interest. Weyrauch makes use of sound in order to personify the Antarctic environment, with musical tones used to represent parts of the landscape such as the Pole, fog, ice and storm. These tones respond directly to the Scott character, sounding when called upon and asserting their presence on cue. The elements represented by the tones are attributed agency, as we see when Scott refers to the late Wilson and Bowers: "*Der Sturm hat sie getötet. Das Eis hat sie getötet. Das Schneegestöber hat sie getötet*" (8) [The storm killed them. The ice killed them. The snowdrift killed them]. This creates a landscape that is still subservient to the men in that it responds when called, yet not completely passive, as it is able to kill, with the latter characteristic foreshadowing later representations of Antarctica as active in its own right.

While Goering saw Scott's story as ripe for an exploration of nationalistic sacrifice in 1929, Weyrauch's deconstruction of this interpretation illustrates that shifting views of Heroic Era stories were not restricted to the English-speaking world. The fact that he wrote a play about an English hero that questioned the notion of sacrifice shows how the social climate had changed across Europe in the wake of World War Two. Weyrauch had addressed the theme of sacrifice before in plays such as *Die japanischen Fischer* (1955) and

this idea comes to the fore in *Das grüne Zelt* when Scott debates aloud the worth of his journey with Amundsen, whom he never actually met. In Weyrauch's play they discuss what makes a hero:

Scott: Was ist ein Held?

Amundsen: Einer, der denen hilft, die keine Helden sind?

Scott: Einer, der stirbt, damit andre leben können?

Amundsen: Einer, der lebt, damit andre leben können? (Weyrauch 29)

Scott: What is a hero?

Amundsen: One who helps others who are not heroes?

Scott: One who dies so that others may live?

Amundsen: One who lives so that others may live?

This passage reflects the different definitions of a hero and illustrates how the idea of what constitutes a "hero" can change over time or depending on the situation. "Hero" is no longer a term in the domain of the Edwardian psyche (Jones 2003, 12), but one that is being actively questioned and redefined. Later plays such as Brenton's ridicule both the concept and the word, but Weyrauch does not suggest that Scott should not be called a hero. Rather, he broadens the definition from a tragic hero who is remembered because of failure and sacrifice to one who is ultimately human and fallible like everyone else. Weyrauch dismantles Scott's heroic deeds by having the Captain be questioned by other characters who are either dead (Evans, Oates) or not present (Amundsen). Foreshadowing Tally's later exploration of Scott's motives, these characters offer a mirror on Scott's (imagined) psyche. Collectively, they offer a range of different points of view on Scott's expedition, externalising internal struggles so as to make them tangible for the audience.

Weyrauch has Scott talking to Oates and Evans after their deaths, but it is not clear whether the voices of the dead are ghosts or imagined voices created by the Scott character himself. They raise the idea of madness by blurring the lines between internal and external reality. Several disembodied characters offer varying critiques on Scott and his practices,

illustrating an awareness of the debates over Scott the bungler¹⁸ and Scott the explorer with bad luck.¹⁹ They fragment the man at the heart of the Scott myth, a process that continues in both Brenton's and Tally's later plays. These voices mirror the historiographic arguments that were taking place at the time, offering either a sympathetic or excoriating version of Scott's actions and confronting him with their points of view. The voice of Evans accuses Scott of being responsible for his death and refuses to let Scott change the subject from his guilt: Evans: *"ich bin tot...Du hast mich getötet... Du bist schuld daran"* (13) [I am dead... You killed me... It is your fault], while Oates says *"wir sind Freunde"* (10) [we are friends] and recalls how Scott once retrieved his pipe when Oates could not. More than one version of Scott is described, as each character sees him differently. Scott himself questions his identity, claiming at the opening of the play:

Ich bin nicht mehr Kapitän Scott. Ich bin nur noch Robert Falcon Scott. Nein, das bin ich auch nicht mehr. Ich bin nichts mehr. (Weyrauch 9)

[I am no longer Captain Scott. I am just Robert Falcon Scott. No, I am no longer him either. I am nothing any more.]

Here, nothing is certain and Scott becomes discontinuous as a historical figure thanks to the multiple perspectives availed by a historiographic critical consciousness. The European nationalism that made Scott's story so attractive early in the century has disappeared, leaving the story scrambling for new ways to be understood.

Scott's inner thoughts and fears are projected into the mouths of other characters rather than onto the landscape, leaving the monolithic figure "Scott of the Antarctic" fractured into many versions. Despite these developments, Antarctica continues to be connected to Heroic Era stories, as illustrated by Amundsen's assurance to Scott near the end of Weyrauch's play:

¹⁸ This is the version of Scott that Roland Huntford paints in his 1979 dual biography *Scott and Amundsen*.

¹⁹ The version championed by Rannulph Fiennes in his 2003 rebuttal to Huntford's biography entitled *Captain Scott*.

Amundsen: Wenn man im Jahr 2000 vom Südpol spricht, wird man nicht von Amundsen sprechen, sondern von Scott und Amundsen. (Weyrauch 29)

Amundsen: When people talk of the South Pole in the year 2000, they will not speak of Amundsen, but of Scott and Amundsen.

Thus, Weyrauch predicts that the South Pole will be associated with both Scott and Amundsen in 40 years' time, suggesting that he still saw the Antarctic landscape and Heroic Era figures as being intertwined. The use of a tone to represent Antarctic elements such as the Pole, the wind and the fog, however, signals an imminent change. Later plays prised the landscape and the stories of heroism apart and by addressing the elements directly, Weyrauch opens the door for Antarctica to be treated as an independent body. Ideas of haunting and heroes, the refutation of sacrifice, and the questioning of an established legend all help to untangle Scott from the Antarctic, a separation that continues in the works of Howard Brenton and Ted Tally.

Howard Brenton and Ted Tally

Howard Brenton is an English playwright whose works often portray his socialist beliefs. A prolific British writer, Brenton has authored over 50 scripts, many of which deal with themes of revolution, empowerment and injustice. Brenton's habit of adapting older works and using them to comment on contemporary issues (Wilson "Introduction," xv) comes to the fore in *Scott of the Antarctic*. Commissioned and directed by Chris Parr for the Bradford Festival, 1971, the play takes place in an ice rink and features many farcical elements in order to undermine the idea of Scott as a tragic hero who sacrificed all for his country. An "obsessive singleness of purpose" (Innes 1992, 197) is a common theme in Brenton's plays, with the protagonists always failing. In this case, Scott failed to be the first to the Pole and also failed to return safely. Other plays by Brenton see the protagonist try to navigate through a corrupt society, but single-mindedness and ignorance prevent success. This is mirrored in Scott's portrayal, where the polar party is shown as jolly, bumbling fools

who overestimate their abilities in a foreign landscape. Brenton uses the Antarctic landscape and Scott's Antarctic story to critique British society as a whole.

Ted Tally's *Terra Nova* is another important play that helped to untangle the Antarctic setting from Heroic Era stories of sacrifice. Written as Tally's drama school thesis when he was 25 years old, *Terra Nova* premiered at the Yale School of Drama on 10 March 1977 (Tally 3). Tally went on to win an Obie award for this production and to write a number of screenplays, including *The Silence of the Lambs*, (1991) for which he won an Oscar. Tally was intrigued by the contradictions associated with Scott's Antarctic story, explaining that "the contradictions in him mirrored those of his own age, and perhaps ours" (Berkvist). He saw contemporary relevance in ideas such as ambition, heroism, foolishness and courage and, like Brenton, made use of the Scott story in order to critique such themes.

Brenton and Tally thus do similar things in deconstructing myths of heroes and nationalism but they take different approaches. As a well-known left wing playwright, Brenton openly attacks ideas of religion, monarchy, heroes and consumerism, while Tally offers alternative viewpoints by using characters such as Kathleen Scott and Amundsen to question Scott and his motivation and gently deconstruct the myth of the polar hero. These two plays epitomise the different approaches taken by English-speaking playwrights when addressing Antarctic stories during this period.

Staging Concerns

Brenton's interest in "integrating performance space and dramatic material" (Innes 1992, 197) led to the staging of his Antarctic play on an ice rink. This setting brings questions related to the surface of Antarctica and movement across the continent to the fore, as an ice surface is visible. Scott's party stumble and slip, moving with difficulty: "The Polar Party drag their sledge onto the ice. They wear clumsy snow shoes, not skates. They often slip up. Great pain, great difficulty for them. They often have to catch their breath" (Brenton 79). Meanwhile, skaters representing the Norwegian team provide a contrast by gliding over the

surface and making movement in this setting look easy. This raises questions relating to different kinds of transport and different approaches to traversing a particular terrain, gesturing to contemporary debates about Amundsen's use of dogs and skis and Scott's foot journey. While the story of sacrifice associated with Scott paints man-hauling as noble,²⁰ it is difficult to look noble whilst slipping on ice, so Brenton uses visual cues to undermine this idea. The setting is also a way of externalising struggles, as it makes the difficulty of crossing the icy surface visible, rendering descriptions of the snow and sastrugi unnecessary. Instead, verbal descriptions of the landscape are used to set up attitudes towards the place, with the Announcer calling it "A dead white land colder than any ice-cream or ice-lolly" (Brenton 79) and God describing it as "the worst place I made on earth" (Brenton 79). Both descriptions undermine the common trope of Antarctica as a vast and pristine icy wilderness that induces feelings of the sublime, asking questions about both the heroism of Antarctic stories and the setting in which they took place. Here issues of representation in response to the Scott legend lead to issues of representing Antarctica and directly inform Brenton's choice of performance venue.

The quasi-mimetic ice rink setting and the physical manifestation of ice within the performance arena make a farce of the idea of Antarctica. Instead of being wide and unending, the ice rink has clearly defined edges and an audience seated all around the edge. This setting reinforces ideas of spectatorship for the audience, as do frequent sporting references.²¹ By taking a story of great heroic sacrifice and presenting it in the same manner as the football games that are played all over England every week, Brenton questions the exceptionalism of Scott's story. Football chants are interspersed with the howling Antarctic wind and the patriotic song "Land of Hope and Glory" to set a scene of patriotism and to suggest that the enthusiasm of sporting crowds is akin to "religious and patriotic fervor" (Spencer 42). Later, Antarctica is introduced directly when the King scoops

²⁰ The idea that man hauling was noble was championed by the funder of Scott's expedition, Sir Clements Markham, who praised "this deed of derring-do, without the aid of dogs to be slaughtered afterwards, but by their own unaided efforts" (Jones 2003, 118).

²¹ The comparison of theatre and sport has been made on many occasions, with Berthold Brecht advocating the boxing ring as a model for theatre (Allain and Harvie, 115).

up the globe like a goalie and points it out, while towards the end of the play rugby is used as a metaphor for Evans going mad:

Tape: Scrum down, scrum down, get down Evans... Penalty goal! There goes my reason, boy, right between the uprights... Hurt! Hurt! Injury time! Injury time!... I've got stud marks on my brain... (Brenton 100)

Here losing one's reason, which is usually an internal and personal process, is externalised and made visible to the audience like a spectator sport. The analogy between Scott's Antarctic journey and the sports field serves to highlight the theatricality of the entire race to the Pole. While making fun of Scott's desire to "play by the rules," it also trivialises the Antarctic environment. A sports field is a place of conflict that one battles upon but then exits at the end, much as the audience exit the ice rink and leave "Antarctica" with such ease at the close of the play. In such an enclosed setting, the failure of the party to reach either their destination or the end of their story seems absurd.

Brenton's performance is not limited to the inside of the ice rink, with the "anti-Scott" figure of Roland dressed in polar rags and sitting on the ground outside the venue prior to the show (Brenton 9). While he went unnoticed by most of the audience members, who placed little importance on an eccentric homeless man, this part of the performance is important. Brenton had used ghosts and visions from another time as "projections of the characters' psychological needs" (Innes 1992, 204) in other plays of his such as *Greenland* (1988) but in this instance Roland also serves to highlight ideas of place and space. "Antarctica" exists within the rink, but Roland's presence outside expands Brenton's critique, suggesting that the ideas that play out upon the ice can also be applied to contemporary life outside of the "theatre." This blurring of the lines between performance space and public space is typical of Brenton's socially conscious plays, several of which were written to be performed in public places.²² When coupled with the Scott story, Brenton's

²² This is evidenced in the title of the anthology containing "Scott of the Antarctic" (Brenton, *Plays For Public Places*). Brenton wanted to use theatre as a medium for social change, taking his performances outside the bounds of traditional theatres to do so.

challenge to traditional notions of the bounds of the stage illustrates how a Heroic Era legend can be used as a vehicle to comment on contemporary issues.

In contrast to Brenton's literal icescape, Tally's production notes call for the setting to be "simple and flexible, close to a bare stage" (Tally xi) and he explicitly states that "no attempt should be made at the literal representation of an Antarctic landscape" (Tally xi). In the absence of an appropriate mimetic solution, Tally relies on the trope of the sublime to represent the Antarctic setting. Photographs taken during Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition are projected onto a cyclorama to narrate the ship's journey South²³ before the screen fades to a bright white and the noise of the wind turns into "impossible towers of sound" (Tally xvi). The bright lights and raging noise present an overpowering scene that, like Antarctica, is too vast for the audience's senses to comprehend, thus highlighting the contrast between human perception and nature's majesty (Shaw 4). By resorting to such a well-known trope Tally admits the impossibility of representing a mimetic version of Antarctica on the stage.

Tally's bare stage presents an unstable setting that challenges audience assumptions about the characters' location and calls place-making into question. Regular flashbacks and flash forwards mean the setting is constantly changing, but where Goering's flashback scenes were signalled by a clear change in set, Tally provides no mimetic clues to orient the audience. Having decided that in his retelling the events "would all take place in Scott's mind," (Berkvist) Tally is free to present Amundsen, Kathleen, and Scott's men simultaneously on the same stage without logistical concerns.²⁴ In several instances Scott addresses two characters concurrently, as in this exchange involving Kathleen, who represents home, and Bowers, who represents the Antarctic setting:

Bowers: Are you coming, Sir?

Kathleen: Come inside. Come to bed.

²³ They are also a reference to the way Tally's interest in the Antarctic began. Inspired by a photographic exhibition by a friend who had accompanied a scientific expedition to Antarctica, Tally read Scott's journals, which he found "poetic" and well suited to an "impressionistic, free flowing" play (Berkvist).

²⁴ Tally's play therefore foreshadows the plays in the next section that highlight the imagined nature of their landscapes.

Scott: (*Confused*) In – a bit.

Bowers, concerned, takes a step or two towards Scott

Bowers: Are you alright, Captain?

Kathleen: Will you be alright out here?

Scott: Yes – if I could just – have some time.

Bowers: Right, then. (He moves away, upstage. He stops, looking off)

Kathleen: Good Night. (She turns to go)

Scott: Kath!

Kathleen: (Stopping) Perhaps we shouldn't talk any more. (Tally 15)

This scene questions what is “real” as both Kathleen and Bowers respond to Scott’s words as if they were meant for them alone. Importantly, Antarctica is not given precedence in this exchange, with Kathleen having the last word. For Scott, both characters are just as real as each other, and Tally’s juxtaposition of the two puts Scott’s domestic life on a par with his heroic endeavours. Tally therefore uses ambiguity of setting to present a more personal side of the explorer, one that is absent from the traditional heroic legend. The ambiguity of setting in place and time also complicates the representation of Antarctica as it is not always clear when flashbacks start and end and when Scott is actually located in Tally’s version of the Antarctic.

Falling Heroes

The deconstruction of the Scott legend goes hand in hand with the questioning of the notion of “hero.” Brenton’s God and Jesus observe the polar party once Evans and Oates are both injured, with Jesus asking “They sure they know what they’re doing?” (95). God replies “They’re heroes. Course they know what they’re doing” (Brenton 95). This is a critique of the way people back home think of heroes and elevate them to a higher status than other men. Tally’s play carries echoes of this too, with Amundsen telling Scott that a leader whose ambition gets the better of him is just an ordinary man:

Amundsen: Duty. Honour. Sacrifice. All very nice on a full belly.

Scott: But what is a leader, if he can't locate his duty above his own ambition?

Amundsen: A man, such as other men. (Tally, 32)

Making the men of Scott's polar party more human by highlighting their material vulnerability is one way to dismantle the myth of Scott the hero. Tally has Amundsen narrate all the gory details of Evans' decline, forcing Scott to acknowledge that "[Evans'] hands are swollen to lumps. The fingernails are all dislodged... his ears are lost... the mind is clouded" (Tally 51). Instead of the two dimensional "sailor" who perishes first in the legend, this Evans is very human, and his mortality and vulnerability make him the antithesis of a hero.

Brenton explores how changing values affect people's perception of what constitutes a hero, using "panto-villains" as visual triggers. The Devil is used to show that the Pole is already a place, planting a flag and parodying the idea that Scott was sent by God to claim the Pole for the glory of the British Empire. This undermines the idea that a hero on a national mission automatically has the support of God thanks to his nationality. The characters of God and the Devil narrate and pass judgment on the situation before them, such as when the Devil and his sidekick Snodgras spot the polar party and realise they are headed for the South Pole:

Snodgras: They must be... (searches for the word.)

Thick. Skat. Right out of their public school nuts...

Nothing there. Is there?... Jus'... (searches for the word.) Snow? ...

Devil: They're not going there for snow!

Snodgras: What are they going there for, then?

Devil: Honour.

Snodgras: 'Ow much is that a pound? (Brenton 84)

Snodgras cannot understand why anyone would undertake such a journey without the promise of financial gain, highlighting how values change over time: honour and sacrifice no longer hold currency in Brenton's world.

Tally uses the character of Kathleen to challenge the dominant discourse upon which the Scott legend is built, where masculine brute force is held in higher regard than feminised creative and intellectual endeavours. When they first meet, Kathleen challenges Scott's status as a hero, asking "don't you ever feel just a bit of a sham?" (Tally 54). She believes that his travels have enriched only himself and suggests that there is more worth in "a daring expedition, deep into the darkest depths of a concert hall" (Tally 55) than another polar expedition because of the way the arts can change the way people "see, and think, and feel" (Tally 55). In acknowledging that "exploits like those don't often capture the headlines" (Tally 55) Kathleen highlights the imbalance between how artists and others are viewed and valued, an issue that was still current for Tally as a writer in the 1970s. Kathleen worries that hero-worshipping will perpetuate outdated values, leading to a new generation being taught "that duty and honour should be held above an independent spirit" (Tally 56). This independent spirit is crucial for developing new paradigms and challenging established legends; Tally uses Kathleen to champion the creativity and critical thinking that will lead to alternative perspectives in later retellings of the Scott story. In offering an alternative model he suggests that values can change over time and therefore the legend of "Scott of the Antarctic" may not be as timeless as it seems.

Changing values mean the correlation of Oates' death with supreme sacrifice is questioned in both Brenton's and Tally's plays. Brenton undermines the idea by focussing on Evans' death instead of Oates', raising questions about class politics in the process. The lowest ranked of the five men in the polar party, Evans was also the first to perish, but his death is not given much consideration in many retellings. By putting the sailor Evans' death on the stage and deliberately truncating the soldier Oates' more famous exit line, Brenton raises questions about the versions of history, undercutting the traditional hierarchy. Tally does stage Oates' death but questions the heroism associated with his actions. By the 1960s and 1970s there had been much conjecture about whether the version of Oates'

death recorded in Scott's journal was reliable, with some commentators suggesting that Oates was pressed to leave rather than doing so of his own free will (Leane 2011, 44). Tally picks up on this and on the question of whether Scott's insistence that Wilson distribute opium tablets was an act of mercy or coercion when he portrays an alternative scene, with Scott bending over Oates and coming close to injecting the soldier with a lethal dose of morphine (Tally 72). This scene not only undermines the classic tale of sacrifice associated with Oates, it also explores the gap between what was recorded and what may have been left unsaid, leading the audience to question the truth of the tale of sacrifice they were familiar with from Scott's journals. While the dose of morphine is never administered in *Terra Nova*, the idea of euthanasia raises ethical questions. It is also worth noting that Tally's play influenced later productions, with Stuart Hoar referencing this scene in his own *Scott of The Antarctic* (1989) where he parodies the episode of Scott trying to inject Oates. This shows how alternative versions of Oates' death endured and led to an ongoing questioning of the concept of heroic sacrifice.

Echoes of the Past

Just as the audience members enter the play venue with their own pre-existing ideas about Scott and Antarctica, Scott's men carried a wealth of tradition, history, values and assumptions with them as they sailed South. Hauntings, quotations and intertextuality are all reminders that no story takes place in isolation. Both Tally and Brenton play with this knowledge, using it to subvert audience expectations (Brenton) and to explore alternative narrative possibilities (Tally). Hauntings also give psychological depth to the plays, and a focus on theatricality leads to the externalisation of fears. Figures such as Amundsen (Tally) and Roland (Brenton) haunt Scott and question his actions and the premise of his expedition. Tally's Amundsen acts as a mirror on Scott's thoughts as his inner fears are vocalised in the conversations between the two. They appear on stage together on several occasions, but Amundsen is visible only to Scott and the audience, not to Scott's men:

Scott: (*Shouting*) Look at him! He's standing there, he's taunting me!

Wilson: There's no-one! (*He turns to Scott and shakes him*) *Do you understand?*
(Tally 68)

The Amundsen character allows for exploration of Scott's inner landscapes, playing devil's advocate and being used as a sounding board for suggestions such as leaving Evans behind (Tally 30) or taking the opium pills (Tally 75). In this way he is similar to Brenton's Roland figure who is visible only to Scott and haunts him throughout the action. This idea of haunting is epitomised in Amundsen's pose at the end of Act I of Tally's play, putting his arms around the shoulders of the men as they take their famous photo at the Pole (Tally 42). Seconds later, a slide of the original photograph is shown on the back wall, without Amundsen present. This photographic quote reinforces the idea of Scott's men being haunted by Amundsen's earlier presence and the weight of history. Amundsen's presence on the stage raises ideas of madness and questions of what is real and what is imagined, mirroring questions over what is real in Antarctica the place and what has been imagined and projected, both onto Scott's Antarctica and the theatre stage.

The different approaches Brenton and Tally take to staging the story of "Scott of the Antarctic" are clear when looking at their use of quotations. Brenton takes quotes and uses them out of context in order to heighten the theatricality of his production. He acknowledges how closely entwined Antarctica is with Scott's story of English sacrifice by paraphrasing Marx and gesturing to the weight of everything that has gone before:

Announcer: Ladies and gentlemen, men make their own history but they do not make it just as they please. The traditions of the dead generations weigh like a nightmare on the brains of the living. (Brenton 79)

In the case of this play, it is texts that have gone before and weigh on the brains of the audience, thanks to both the diaries of explorers and the retellings of Heroic Era narratives. Brenton's play is aware of its own intertextuality on both accounts. Including a Marxist

reference²⁵ adds another layer of intertextuality and reminds the audience of the socialist standpoint from which Brenton writes. Quotes from the polar explorers themselves are also used to refer directly to what has gone before in the Antarctic. At the end of scene 16 the whole party chant “Captain... Scott’s... Famous... Words... Dear... God... This... Is... An... Awful... Place”²⁶ (Brenton 99), while the Devil introduces Oates’ famous line with much hype and an accompanying banner. In other productions the chorus gives the audience clues as to how they should act, but in Brenton’s play the narrating characters explicitly tell the audience what kind of a reaction they are expecting. As the Devil and Snodgras wait for Oates to exit the tent with his final line – which is never delivered – the Devil ups the suspense by telling the audience:

Devil: Get your hankies out! Really moving bit. Tears, the lot. Brave Englishman giving his life for his friends. Even I, ladies and gents, have a salty trickle. (Brenton 102)

The encouragement of pantomime emotions mocks past interpretations of how Oates’ story has been revered and held up as a peculiarly British example that should stir all English hearts.

The structure of the play also undermines any heroic reading as it then leaves the audience hanging by denying Oates the chance to finish his line, allowing him to say only “I am just going...” (Brenton 102). Brenton plays with the fact that Scott’s Antarctic story is very well known by putting the famous lines in a new context and questioning their authenticity, with aposiopesis creating a breach in the canon and interrupting a predetermined narrative. Oates’ line is famous for signalling his heroic sacrifice, as Scott’s journals record it as his last. By ending the play midway through Oates’ quote Brenton

²⁵ “Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.” (Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto*).

²⁶ This is a deliberate misquote. Scott’s actual words were “Great God! This is an awful place and terrible enough for us to have laboured to it without the reward of priority” (Scott *Journals* 376).

makes a powerful statement about the insignificance of sacrifice, undermining the concept upon which both earlier plays and the “Scott of the Antarctic” myth are based. The missing word, “outside,” is also important for considerations of space. The ice rink is a setting that combines inside and outside – or rather, puts what is normally outside inside. The audience is about to “go outside” just after hearing these words, when the play finishes, so the final words spoken in *Scott of the Antarctic* bring ideas of space and place to the fore by encouraging the audience to examine their own place-ness within the performance arena.

Like Brenton, Tally uses quotations from Scott’s diaries and letters, but he is much more sympathetic to both the historical figures and source material that he dramatises. When his characters reach the Pole at the end of Act I, Scott cries “... Great God! This is an awful place! And it’s terrible enough to have come here, without the reward of priority” (Tally, 41). This quote is much more similar to Scott’s own wording and helps to reorient the audience within the Antarctic setting. It also makes the audience more sympathetic to the men’s plight, as Tally’s “awful place” sounds much more hostile than a landscape that is “colder than an ice lolly” (Brenton, 79). It is significant that Tally gives both the first and last lines of his play to Scott, bracketing his play with the explorer’s own words. After opening with the first lines of Scott’s “Message to the Public,” the play ends with the final line of the same message: “For God’s sake look out after our people” (Tally 78). This use of quotations gives Tally’s own words more weight and lends credibility to the other (invented) scenes throughout the play. In these scenes Tally uses original source material juxtaposed with imagined exchanges to encourage the audience to examine their own imaginings of Antarctica and their understanding of famed Antarctic stories. While showing compassion for the Scott character, he also invites the audience to critically reflect on the primary source material for the legend of “Scott of the Antarctic.”

The retellings of legends traditionally feature the same chronological narrative checkpoints each time, but Tally complicates the structure of the Scott legend by juxtaposing well-known events such as Evans’ death with a series of non-chronological flashbacks. This allows him to present famous Antarctic quotes within a new context, as

when Oates rubbishes Bowers' tea-making skills directly before making his exit from the tent:

Oates: Absolutely disgraceful. (*With great effort, he is able to stand. He leans on Wilson's shoulder for support.*) Do you know – I haven't had a decent cup of tea since I entered the service? (*Quickly*) I'm just going outside. I may be some time. (Tally 73)

Tally does not deny Oates his famous line, but by prefacing it with a discussion about a cup of tea he does question the heroic nature of Oates' act. Tea is associated with home and the domestic, not with the exploits of great explorers, and Oates' longing for the comfort of home paints a more human image than the noble martyr presented by Goering and Stewart. Oates' mundane complaint has the same humanising effect as Evans' graphic injuries, thus undermining the heroic ideals that are central to the Scott legend.

In both Tally's and Brenton's plays the use of quotations is a form of cannibalism of the past and previous texts. Debates surrounding polar cannibalism were current during the 1960s and 1970s²⁷ and both playwrights gesture towards the topic: Tally's Oates orders the head chef for dinner (Tally 46) and Brenton's polar party are devoured by Dr Livingstone, Sir Francis Drake and a host of other explorers at the end of the play (Brenton 103). Unlike Stewart's heroes, whose deeds live on like flames, Brenton's men are cannibalised by history and by those who went before them, offering a direct critique of the idea of Antarctic exceptionalism. This Scott shares the stage with explorers who conquered other places such as USA, Africa and the Pacific, putting Antarctica in the same category as those other places that were discovered and colonised. In contrast to earlier plays where imperialist goals were taken for granted, Brenton's comparison of Scott and other historical conquerors problematises the assumption that conquest is a worthy goal. Colonialism came with many problems, and although it had no native population, Antarctica was not immune to these. For Brenton, having history invade the stage at the end reminds the audience of the cultural baggage the explorers carried with them to the ice.

²⁷ Questions of cannibalism were raised in relation to both Australian Antarctic explorer Sir Douglas Mawson (Turney 322) and the Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin (Davis-Fisher 148).

Rethinking Legends

Both Brenton and Tally seek to remove the character of Scott from his pedestal in order to critique both the methods of the man himself and, more importantly, the attitudes of those who constructed his elevated status to begin with. Brenton represents Antarctica in order to deconstruct the myths associated with the Heroic Era. Issues of monarchy, religion, class and the notion of a “hero” remained current in Brenton’s England and he was not so interested in the Antarctic setting as in the cultural myths that underpinned the story of “Scott of the Antarctic.” This is evident in his opening scene where the King is panicking about the existence of the British Empire, an Empire that had long since ceased to exist by 1971. Antarctica is introduced soon afterwards when the King throws a tantrum because he wants the white region at the bottom of the earth for himself. This scene serves both to make royalty seem ridiculously infantile, but also to make fun of those who want to own and possess Antarctica:

King: But what is this white bit? (He reads from the globe.)

An... Tarc... Tic... A? South... Pole? No union jack. No flag at all...

(The King, like a kid, throws a fit.)

I wanna Union Jack at the South Pole! (Brenton 78)

The rhetoric associated with Scott’s story holds that the explorers sacrificed themselves for their King and country, so this scene calls into question the value of what was once seen as the supreme sacrifice. While nationalism had not disappeared from Antarctic politics, attitudes had changed since the days when it was taken for granted that Antarctica was a place to be conquered by virtue of a flag.

Plays such as Brenton’s and Tally’s are very much a product of their time and reflect contemporary historiographic debates about Antarctic heroes. Realising that place-making is always a project of imagining, communicated via narrative, these playwrights show how there are multiple ways of telling a story and of constructing place. They also show that

there are multiple ways of manipulating how the audience views that place once it has been created. The plays dismantle previous paradigms that link Antarctica to heroic stories of sacrifice, with multiple views of Scott rendering him discontinuous as a historical figure. Weyrauch, Brenton and Tally all break down the assumptions surrounding early explorers' exploits, externalise the characters' fears and allow Antarctica as a setting to become untangled from Heroic Era stories. This questioning of story sets in motion a questioning process that can later be applied to place-making itself. As such these plays are stepping stones on the way to seeing Antarctica as an independent landscape in its own right, even as they address Scott and the Antarctic upon the same stage.

Part III: Reimagining

The tradition of retelling Antarctic stories and recasting the Antarctic landscape enabled later playwrights to move away from the Antarctic as a setting, whilst still using the legendary polar narratives of Scott and Amundsen as “a central conceit” (Cornelius 6). In Manfred Karge’s *Die Eroberung des Südpols* (1985) and Patricia Cornelius’ *Do Not Go Gentle...* (2010) the characters create their own versions of Antarctica on the stage and explore the social issues of unemployment and aging through their interaction with their own imagined space. This brings a new dimension to the questions of space, place and landscape, as the Antarctica presented is not only an imagined landscape as in previous productions. Instead, it is an *actively* imagined landscape, meaning the audience is privy to the ways in which the characters construct it. Karge’s characters use sheets on the washing line to represent the white icescape as they act out Amundsen’s conquest of the South Pole. Cornelius’ characters occupy a bare stage until Act II, when a large white structure makes visible the Antarctic landscape, showing how this imaginary icescape is more real for the characters than any other setting. This puts the focus on subjectivity and perception, making it possible for multiple characters with a range of perceptions to have their voices heard. Antarctica is not the actual setting for either play, but the icy landscape serves as a metaphor for the struggles the characters are facing in their everyday lives.

Plays in Context

The Antarctic Treaty of 1957 had cast the continent as a place dedicated to “peace and science,” but scientific endeavours continued to be tinged with a heroic hue. Although the focus changed from geographical discovery to scientific exploration, Antarctica continued to be a masculine sphere dominated by the experiences of (mainly white) male scientists. The 1980s and 1990s saw gradual changes in the make-up of Antarctic base staff, with a greater number of Asian nations establishing National Antarctic Bases (India, China, South Korea). During this time the continent slowly became more accessible to female scientists, but female sexuality was a threatening addition to what was once a homosocial

environment populated by the “heroes” of the early days (Lewander 96). Glasberg writes that “It is no secret that women’s gradual arrival in Antarctica was resisted and finally lamented by the males-only club deriving from adventure, military and science legacies” (2012, 117). This was because women’s presence helped to undermine “heroic” ideas associated with the place. It also allowed for the emergence of new perspectives on the Antarctic continent, perspectives that Cornelius explores in her play.

Antarctic tourism opened up the continent to a wider range of people during this period, offering an Antarctic experience to anyone who could afford to pay. The growing number of tour operators during the late 1980s led to the founding of the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO), which describes itself as “a member organisation founded in 1991 to advocate, promote and practice safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic” (IAATO 2013). Tourist trips are often promoted as a way to create ambassadors for the continent, working on Lars Erik Lindblad’s principle that “you can’t protect what you don’t know” (IAATO 2013). The version of Antarctica that tourists come to know differs from that of field scientists or early explorers, as they experience a carefully curated version of the place, complete with over flights of the Pole and photo opportunities galore. This idea is explored in Karge’s play, where tourism is used to underline both social issues of inequality and the importance of imagination. The industry also makes possible a greater range of perspectives as more people travel South. These alternative perspectives are central to both Karge’s and Cornelius’ plays, which feature female, elderly, and unemployed characters who are all far removed from the dashing men of the Heroic Era.

Karge takes those dashing men and presents the twentieth-century legend of Amundsen’s conquest of the South Pole in a way that has contemporary relevance. His choice of topic had a precedent, as post-war German theatre consisted of a “repertoire dominated by radical experimentation with conservative works” (Stenberg 402). Dramatists often turned their attention to classics such as Goethe, Ibsen and Sophocles and put a new spin on established stories, much as Karge revisits the story of the race to the Pole. German-language theatre of the 1980s was very director oriented, with directors having “much greater staying-power than the playwrights whose works they often helped form into initial

successes" (Stenberg 400). Many contemporary writers from the 1980s have been forgotten, but as a director, playwright and actor, Karge experienced the best of the theatre world, both gaining recognition for the plays he directed and creating his own works that dealt with social issues.

Social issues are also an important context for recent Australian theatre, where race and gender are central themes. A growing awareness of "Indigenous ownership and colonial violence" (Crouch 204) has led in recent years to questions over space, identity and spatiality and a theatre that is "structured less by character or narrative, than by place" (Crouch 205). Setting takes on a central role in storytelling thanks to the recognition of the multiple layers of story and history that underlie all places and must inform all subsequent narratives. Antarctica has fewer existing layers of story than Australia, thanks in part to its recent human history and lack of an indigenous population. This makes it a more straightforward setting for an exploration of the place-making process that is foregrounded in *Do Not Go Gentle...*

Karge and Cornelius

Born in Brandenburg in 1938, Karge trained as an actor and a director before beginning his career with the Berliner Ensemble, the group founded in 1949 by Berthold Brecht and Helene Weigel. Karge worked closely with both Matthias Langhoff at East Berlin's Volksbühne and Claus Peymann in the industrial Ruhr area before writing his first play, *Jacke wie Hose*, at the age of 44.²⁸ *Die Eroberung des Südpols*, which premiered in Bochum in 1986, is set in the industrial coal mining town of Herne in the Ruhr valley. This is a play for actors and directors: Karge's theatrical experience led him to write a text that leaves plenty of room for interpretation by the company performing the piece. This was not the first time Karge had worked with a play set on ice, as he also co-directed and starred in Thomas Brasch's *Lieber Georg* at Berlin's Freie Volksbühne in 1980, a production that has been described as "Poetry on Ice" (Hensel 167). Based on the writer Georg Heym, who died

²⁸ Another of Karge's plays, *The Wall Dog*, was translated by Howard Brenton in 1990 (Bull, J. 1991).

after falling through ice whilst skating, Brasch's play also touches on Heym's Antarctic story "Tagebuch Shackletons" (1911). Heym's story about the golemisation of Shackleton, Adams, Marshall and Wild meant Karge was familiar with Antarctic narratives before writing his own polar play.

Die Eroberung des Südpols differs from Brasch's play because it turns the audience's attention to a contemporary issue. The harsh physical environment of the Antarctic is a metaphor for the inhospitable nature of a society in recession, with Karge using a role-play of Amundsen's Antarctic journey to explore themes of joblessness and hopelessness. For these characters the role-play acts as "a survival strategy in a social environment in which they have become all but invisible" (Remshardt 2004, 319). This survival strategy has had lasting resonance: since its premiere *Die Eroberung des Südpols* has been one of the most regularly performed Antarctic plays. It has been especially popular in recent years due to the centennial anniversary of Amundsen's reaching of the pole, while the concurrent global financial crisis has made the theme of unemployment particularly resonant.²⁹ The play has made "a considerable impact" (France, 340) as a German text on the English stage and several English language versions exist. While the Minter and Vivis version (1988) is a transliteration, Remshardt's 1992 translation uses English language idioms instead of direct translations in order to capture the essence of the play and make it more accessible to an English speaking audience. The Jones version (1990) goes further still, changing the character names and adapting the colloquialisms to suit the US market. My readings are based on the original German version, but an in-depth analysis of the differences between these various translations would make an interesting future project; while the language differs markedly, the themes remain relevant for diverse audiences.

When Cornelius' *Do Not Go Gentle...* premiered on the other side of the world in 2010, Karge's play was still being performed on a range of English and German stages.³⁰ *Do Not Go Gentle...* gained much critical claim within Australia and saw Cornelius awarded both

²⁹ Lyn Gardner's review of a 2012 performance in *The Guardian* (Tuesday 1 May 2012) remarks that thanks to the idea of job centres being full of hopelessly desperate young people, "it could be set in the here and now."

³⁰ Productions of Karge's plays include those put on by Kompass-Theater, Hannover (2007), Elephant Performance Lab, L.A. (2009), Strawdog Theatre, Chicago (2011), Landestheater Coburg, Bavaria (2011).

the 2011 NSW Premier's Literary Award for Drama and the Victorian Premier's Literary Prize. Patricia Cornelius is an Australian writer with over 20 plays to her name. Co-founder of the Melbourne Worker's Theatre, Cornelius aims to make powerful contemporary theatre about issues that are often ignored and people who are marginalised by society (Andrew). *Do Not Go Gentle...* juxtaposes the elderly and mentally ill, who are often forgotten, with Antarctic heroes whose memory has endured. This allows the characters to explore their own failures and acknowledges the very human desire to leave a legacy behind. The yearning for a life that is more vibrant is a common theme in Cornelius' plays, and this comes through strongly in the different regrets of the characters in *Do Not Go Gentle...* The title of the play is instructive as it is borrowed from a Dylan Thomas poem that urges people to "Rage, rage against the dying of the light" and to resist death to the last rather than going "gentl[y] into that good night" (Thomas 128). Although the outcome of their struggles is predetermined, Cornelius' characters rage until the end.

Julian Meyrick, who directed the premiere of *Do Not Go Gentle...*, describes Cornelius' play as "a meditation on time, loss and love, on what it is to reach a point when a judgment on one's life is both unavoidable and beside the point" (qtd. in Cornelius 3). He goes to explain why this makes Scott's polar journey an appropriate metaphor for the elderly as the end of their lives come into sight. As a cultural myth, Scott's story can be invoked and then requires no further explanation: "[It] places an uncompromising metaphor on stage – that of a long, ultimately fatal trek to the South Pole – as a means of exposing, exploring and expanding our experience of the aging process" (qtd. in Cornelius 5). The elderly characters in the play face their deaths one by one, heading alone into the snow and the unknown as they leave the stage. Meyrick also comments on what associations he thinks the Scott myth has for contemporary audiences, namely "associations of courage, comradeship, daring and determination" (qtd. in Cornelius 3). Following the "Retelling" plays, sacrifice is no longer a central concern. Both Cornelius and Meyrick are well aware of historiographic debates, with the director commenting that Australians "don't take kindly to the heroic posture" that saw Scott raised to a mythical status (qtd. in Cornelius 3). Cornelius makes Scott more accessible to her characters by comparing his famous suffering to their own struggles. In doing this, she also shows how the term "hero" can be applied to unlikely members of society. Scott's narrative is removed from the Antarctica and used as a frame

around which her characters create their own imagined landscape, helping them come to terms with reaching their own points of no return.

Staging Concerns

In earlier plays Antarctica was the setting for a particular story, but in the case of Karge and Cornelius it is story that leads to the construction of a version of Antarctica. Amundsen and Scott's narratives come first, as they offer ideal vehicles to address contemporary social issues relating to failure and triumph. It is only in acting out these stories that an Antarctic setting becomes necessary for the characters on the stage. Thus, these meta-theatrical plays stage the construction of place. They also reveal the problems associated with place-making by offering multiple perspectives on the constructed setting, and by questioning what constitutes the "real." These problems of perception are applicable in any setting, but exemplified in Antarctica thanks to its comparatively recent discovery and the dominance of Heroic Era narratives in the public imagination.

Karge's stage is minimalist, with *"Die Bühne als Bühne. Ein kleine rote Vorhang"* (Karge 37) [The stage as a stage. A small red curtain]. This sets the scene for a play that is largely about, and takes place in, the imagination of five unemployed men. Remshardt describe this "self-consciously performative and frankly anti-illusionistic" setting as "a paean to the unfettered imagination in the empty space of the theatre and a sober caveat about the limits of escapism" (2004, 317). These limits apply both to the characters on the stage and the audience watching the play. Audiences go to the theatre in order to be confronted with alternative possibilities and to escape their everyday lives, and in the case of this play they watch the characters on stage do the same. These characters are aware of the curtain and the ideas of spectatorship that it entails, building up to the moment when they reveal what lies behind it:

Büscher: Was ist hinter dem Vorhang.

Slupianek: Pfoten weg, Büscher. Hinter diesem Vorhang, Freunde, hinter diesem Vorhang, der gestern noch nicht da war-

Braukmann: Was ist hinter diesem Vorhang, der gestern noch nicht da war.

(Karge 38)

[Büscher: What's behind the curtain?

Slupianek: Paws off, Büscher. Behind this curtain, friends, behind this curtain that was not here yesterday-

Braukmann: What is there behind this curtain that wasn't there yesterday?]

When the curtain is pulled back Slupianek responds to the discovery of Seiffert in a noose using a theatre analogy, telling Seiffert that if he goes ahead and kills himself there will be no applause: *“Die Zuschauer sind taub, blind und temperamentlos”* (Karge 40) [The audience are deaf, blind and unresponsive]. The characters know that the audience is an important part of any performance, and that without one there is no point in performing. However, the men's actions as they act out Amundsen's story in private in the attic contradict this suggestion, thus raising questions about the nature of theatre and to what ends it can be used. For Karge's characters the Antarctic role-play offers an escape by breaking up the monotony of the men's day to day lives. Paradoxically, this private role-play is performed on a stage before the audience, thus highlighting the meta-theatrical elements of the performance that the presence of the curtain introduces.

Karge dramatises the process of imagination, thus allowing the audience to see how his characters create their own Antarctic setting. Sheets hanging on the washing line in the attic act as the catalyst for imagining the polar landscape, but they are not immediately welcomed:

Seiffert: Ärgerlich.

Braukmann: Was.

Seiffert: Die Wäsche hängt.

Braukmann: Ja, die Wäsche hängt.

Seiffert: Was kann man da machen.

Büscher: Nichts kann man da machen. (Karge 47)

[Seiffert: Damn.

Braukmann: What.

Seiffert: The laundry's up.

Braukmann: Yeah, the laundry's up.

Seiffert: What can you do about it?

Büscher: Can't do nothin' about it.]

Importantly, none of the men attempt to change the situation. This is symptomatic of their lives: the men feel powerless and remain passive. When Slupianek arrives to perform the role of Amundsen he sees the washing in a different light, imagining it as a great white Antarctic landscape instead of complaining about the inconvenience:

Slupianek: Noch nie, Freunde, hab ich eine schönere, wilder Landschaft gesehen. Gewaltig, die festgefrorenen Blöcke von Eis. Der Gebirgsstock zur Linken. Die bizarren Formen der Berge. Die Eiswellen, Pressungen. Zwischen den heimtückischen Abgründen die Eiskanten, Eisnadeln. Alles weiß, alles in schwirrendem Weiß.
(Karge 48)

[Slupianek: Never before have I beheld such a beautiful and wild landscape. Enormous, the blocks of ice frozen solid. The mountain range to the left. The bizarre shapes of the peaks. The waves of ice, compacted. Between the perilous abysses the walls of ice, ice needles. Everything white, everything dizzyingly white.]

Armed with a vision, Slupianek creates the Antarctic landscape in much the way Stewart's Scott creates an imagined version of the Pole. The other characters follow his lead, transforming the mimetic signifiers on the stage into an icy landscape by virtue of imagination.

An undefined setting in *Do Not Go Gentle...* allows for an exploration of the fragility of life and the subjectivity of the “real.” Events take place in a “fragile world” (Cornelius 10) and the set is minimalist:

Setting

A fragile world.

Act One:

On a field of ice

In sleeping bags

Act Two:

A labyrinth of crevasses and ice towers

In sleeping bags (Cornelius 10)

In Act II Cornelius provides mimetic triggers for her characters’ imagined Antarctic setting, but instead of reaching for the trope of the vast plateau she locates her characters within a labyrinth of the ice itself, emphasising the idea of entrapment. The inhospitable Antarctic landscape is a metaphor for a range of struggles her characters must face, struggles that become more immediate as the play progresses. The white labyrinth makes visible the Antarctic landscape, showing how this imaginary setting becomes more real for the characters than any other. This puts the focus on perception, making it possible for multiple characters with a range of perceptions to have their voices heard.

Cornelius rejects realism, and her production presents a world where instead of being opposed categories of experience, imagination and reality are linked and fluid. This reflects the situation of her characters, who grapple both with failing bodies and minds. Their perceptions of reality can differ markedly from each other, as when Wilson mistakes Scott for her husband Scot, or when Bowers can no longer recognise her husband. The lack of mimetic pointers led to many questions when Cornelius’ play was first performed. In a 2009 letter to the Australian Council, Julian Meyrick explained how, when talking to companies about staging the play, he “faced questions like ‘why are the characters in the Antarctic?’ and ‘why doesn’t Patricia show they are really in a nursing home?’” (qtd. in Cornelius, 5). Both the rest home and Antarctica are “places we don’t belong,” but both are

also imagined settings, so Meyrick's response was that "the characters aren't 'really' anywhere"(qtd. in Cornelius 5). Instead they are on the stage, with actors present in the flesh and telling stories that make both faraway and very personal settings come alive within the confines of the theatre.

Interest in the Ice

The respective use of Amundsen's and Scott's Antarctic stories by Karge and Cornelius says much about the needs of their characters. Karge's men are young, fit and out of work, but they have the energy and the years to go on to achieve many things. The success they experience from acting out Amundsen's conquest of the South Pole gives the majority of them the confidence they need to go on and achieve things in their own lives.³¹ In contrast, Cornelius' story deals with a group of elderly people who are facing the end of their lives. Scott's story is the story of men in decline and therefore offers a fitting parable for Cornelius' characters as they too decline, mentally, physically and emotionally. In each case the Pole was the goal of the original explorers whom the characters emulate, but only Karge's men seek to recreate the success of conquering that goal. Cornelius' characters are more interested in exploring ways to go to one's death than in conquering any specific place, as this is the part of the story that is relevant to their own lives. In both plays historical figures are taken out of place and used by these characters to create a place of their own.

Karge's characters are aware that Amundsen's successful Antarctic expedition may not offer the best metaphor for their own situation and they actively debate the use of his story. Upon reading about Shackleton in the foreword to Amundsen's journals, Büscher directly challenges the men's use of Amundsen's journey as a model for their own, using a quote from Shackleton's diary to ask whether his story of failure would not better fit their situation:

³¹ The exception being Seiffert, who commits suicide at the close of the play.

Büscher: Nirgends war auf der Ebene, die sich bis zum Pol erstreckte, eine Unterbrechung wahrzunehmen, aber wir wissen, daß das Ziel, das wir nicht erreicht haben, auf dieser Ebene liegt... So enttäuscht wir auch sind, wir haben doch den Trost, daß wir alles getan haben, was in unseren Kräften stand. (Karge 61)

[Büscher: There was no break in the plateau as it extended towards the Pole, and we feel sure that the goal we have failed to reach lies on this plain... Whatever regrets may be, we have done our best.]³²

Like these polar explorers, the men in this play are in the vicinity of their invisible goal, but it remains intangible and out of reach. Defeat permeates their lives, in every trip to the job centre, every rejection and every hour spent working for a pittance. This is why they turn to Amundsen, to try to experience a fleeting success. Slupianek urges the others not to give up on their chance for success:

Slupianek: Wollt ihr ihn wegschenken den Moment, wo wir wissen, dies ist sie, die Eroberung des Südpols. (Karge 62)

[Do you want to throw away the moment when we know, this is it, the conquest of the South Pole.]

While Slupianek and Büscher argue over which Antarctic story best fits their situation, there is no disagreement that the polar plateau is a suitable metaphor for their unemployed and disempowered state. Slupianek advocates acting out success, while Büscher seeks a story that mirrors their disappointment. This brings questions of imagination to the fore:

Slupianek: Pervers. Die Niederlage will er. Ich will den Sieg.

Büscher: Nein, nicht die Siege müssen wir spielen, Freunde, nicht die Siege. Die Niederlagen bringen wir besser, sie sind unser täglich Brot. Jeder Gang aufs Arbeitsamt, eine Niederlage. Jede Anruf auf ein Inserat, eine Niederlage... Shackleton

³² This passage is a direct translation from Shackleton's 1909 account of his Polar journey (Shackleton 1909).

sind wir, Adams, Marshall und Wild. Arme Schweine, die da irgendwo das Ziel sehen, verschwommen. Da hinten ist es, im Weißen, im Flimmern, im Eis, in der Kälte. Da hinten, da ist es. (Karge 63)

[Slupianek: Perverse. He wants a defeat. I want a victory.

Büscher: No, it's not the victories we should act out, friends, not the victories. We can perform the defeats better, they are our daily bread. Every visit to the job office, a defeat. Every phone call in response to a job ad, a defeat ... Shackleton's who we are, Adams, Marshall and Wild. Poor buggers who can see their goal somewhere ahead of them, hazy. It's out there, in the whiteness, in the glimmer, in the ice, in the cold. Out there, that's where it is.]

Although their journey to the Pole is imagined, the men's actions raise questions about what it means to be productive and to achieve something tangible. As Remshardt puts it, even Amundsen's original conquest of the Pole was "the conquest of the entirely invisible, of an imaginary coordinate in space, and thus essentially an aesthetic exercise a utopian pursuit" (2004, 319). Their end point was not visible, and Amundsen's team essentially trudged to the centre of a landscape, not in search of something tangible, but rather recognition and honour. Recognition is what the men in this Herne attic crave, and while Shackleton's story is more familiar to them in their circumstances, Amundsen's story promises rewards at the end of the dramatisation that otherwise seem unobtainable.

For Cornelius' characters, the outcome of death is inevitable, but Scott's narrative offers a model for how to meet that end. Her characters question this model even as they act it out, with their age adding a new dimension to the scene where Scott advocates for the distribution of morphine. Scott's remark that "Watching one another perish inch by inch might take many nightmare days and nights" (Cornelius 56) blurs the lines of the setting as it could refer either to being in an Antarctic blizzard or to being in a rest home watching one another's decline. Morphine can ease the pain of both frostbite and the terminal medical conditions that require nursing home care. While Scott thinks that "to allow such misery is plainly cruel" (Cornelius 57), Wilson believes "It's not right, Scot, to interrupt life, not even

one's own. God only can take on that responsibility" (Cornelius 56). In this passage, Wilson believes she is talking to her husband Scot. As her husband has put her in the rest home, he already has control over her life, but not over her death. Wilson and Scott present both sides of an argument on euthanasia, a topic that is of particular importance in a society such as contemporary Australia with an aging population. It is also a contentious issue, and the use of an established Antarctic narrative to frame this discussion makes it more acceptable.

Cornelius uses Oates to further address the issue of suicide, but this time the meditation on death does not centre on his own demise. Instead, Oates talks to his late son Peter who committed suicide after serving in Vietnam. Peter first appears at the end of scene two when "A strange silhouette appears, half man, half animal. He howls mournfully and lopes away" (Cornelius 15). It takes some time for the audience to learn who this creature is and why Oates is so haunted, but the situation becomes clear after Oates' own death. His conversation with Peter provides a view of suicide that contrasts with Oates' own glorified sacrificial death, focussing instead on the effect Peter's actions had on those he left behind:

Oates: There must've been something worth living for.

Peter: Living hurt.

Oates: You could've called someone.

Peter: I called.

Oates: I didn't hear.

Peter: No.

Oates: You're fucking cruel. (Cornelius 59)

Cornelius presents a view of suicide that is far more human than in earlier versions of Scott's story. She shows how the models of ways to go to one's death do not always match up with the reality, highlighting the fact that context has a big impact on how actions are interpreted. Oates' presence in the debate raises questions about the various versions of the historical Oates' demise, as explored earlier by Tally. Overall, the range of views about life and death presented in the play encourages people to examine their own stand on such

issues and to talk about death, which is the final outcome for all the characters and, less immediately, for all the audience members as well.

Out of Place

Antarctica is outside the possible realm of experience for both Karge's unemployed men and Cornelius' elderly characters, a fact that underlines the constructed nature of the staged version. Cornelius includes the voices of immigrants (Maria), women (Bowers and Wilson) and the elderly, with the average age of the actors in the Melbourne production being 73 years. The unusual blend of characters allows for the exploration of a range of social issues. Elderly people are not seen on the stage often, and their presence undermines readings of Antarctica as a place for solely for fit young men, challenging the notion of what constitutes a "hero." *Do Not Go Gentle...* also addresses how attitudes towards women changed between 1912 and 2012. Bowers and Wilson going head to head over what matters in life illustrates this point:

Wilson: I've had a good marriage, four wonderful children.

Bowers: So what?

Wilson: What do you mean, so what? That's a lot.

Bowers: No, it's not. It's not enough.

Wilson: That's plenty. (Cornelius 35)

Bowers and Wilson, both played by female actors, voice two different attitudes towards what a woman needs in her life in order to feel fulfilled. Wilson represents an older generation who felt their duty was first and foremost to their family, while the much younger Bowers believes that a woman needs to have a career, an opinion and a life of her own. Their differing views suggest that if the way women are conceptualised can change so dramatically, the way we think about landscapes might also undergo the same change.

Antarctica could then graduate from being seen as an ice maiden who must be awoken with a kiss³³ to being viewed as an independent body in its own right.

This Antarctica can exist independently of humans, who are alien and do not belong in the icescape. The idea of not belonging and of being mis-placed is a recurrent theme in Cornelius' play. Right at the beginning of the play Bowers, Evans and Oates raise questions about where they are and why:

Evans: What the hell are we doing here?

Bowers: I don't belong here

Oates: In this godforsaken place. (Cornelius 12)

This "godforsaken place" could equally be the rest home or the Antarctic, and Cornelius is deliberately non-specific in order to leave questions about place and the characters' own realities open to interpretation.

Maria is another character who does not take part in the Antarctic journey but nonetheless utters a similar refrain, telling anyone who will listen that "I want to go home." (Cornelius 31). An immigrant from Serbia, Maria's experience of seeing her homeland altered beyond recognition leaves her feeling displaced. It also brings the idea of place-making to the fore:

Maria: ... The town where I was born is populated by strangers, by those who speak a different language, who pray to a different god. My country hoisted its flag and another country pulled it down.

Scott: You have traversed a new and undiscovered land.

Maria: What's to discover?

Scott: Through discovery great advancements are made.

Maria: And dreams are trodden on. (Cornelius 48)

³³ Roald Amundsen famously described the South Pole thus: "Beauty is still sleeping, but the kiss is coming, the kiss that shall wake her!" (Amundsen 194).

Addressing the experience of an immigrant uncovers a new definition of “new and undiscovered land.” This term is applied to Australia, because although people were there already when Maria arrived, it was still “undiscovered” as she did not know the place. This definition takes away the importance of being first and highlights that there is a first for everyone. It also suggests that the immigrant’s experience of adjustment is just as tough as the ground breaking traverse of the original pioneers, both in Australia and, by virtue of Scott’s inclusion in the conversation, Antarctica. This is reinforced a few lines later, when Maria criticises the idea of a Heroic Age:

Maria: ... You’re deluded. You believe in a heroic age.

Scott: I do.

Maria: You’re a romantic fool. (Cornelius 48)

Scott is a “romantic fool” because there are heroes in every age and a whole range of adverse situations that must be overcome. People continue to make places all the time, moving continents and attempting to create a place called “home.” If a place like Serbia can change beyond recognition in Maria’s lifetime, this suggests that Antarctica may not be static either, and that to continue to cling to stories of the Heroic Era is to blind oneself to the contemporary developments in the understanding of the continent.

In the lead-up to Karge’s play these contemporary developments included women being flown to Antarctic to give birth, in order to reinforce territorial claims.³⁴ While nationalistic concerns do not surface in Karge’s play, the performance does finish with the cry of a South Pole child, introducing a voice not usually associated with Antarctica. Imagination and reality collide in this final scene, with Slupianek confirming their location to be the South Pole even as the sound of the baby reminds the audience otherwise:

Slupianek: So, sind wir am Südpol.

³⁴ The Argentine Emilio Marcos Palma was the first child to be born in Antarctica. He was born at Esperanza Base on January 7, 1978, and was followed by several more Argentinian and Chilean births.

Frankieboy: Aber, na klar.

Slupianek: Und wo ist der Südpol.

Frankieboy: Südlich von Herne.

Ein Kinderschrei. Slupianek legt den Pelz ab, geht. (Karge 80)

[Slupianek: So, are we at the South Pole.

Frankieboy: But of course.

Slupianek: And where is the South Pole.

Frankieboy: Somewhere south of Herne.

A child's cry. Slupianek lays the pelt down, leaves.]

This child is a hopeful sign, representing success and the possibility of new perspectives. As well as joining the men in the last leg of their metaphorical march to the Pole, Frau Braukmann has reached a "Pole" of her own and has given birth to the child she has always wanted. Children are traditionally associated with hope and success, as in Karge's play, but Cornelius has Wilson explore a common alternative that is not often talked about:

Wilson: Once I miscarried, but I couldn't tell you. I lay in bed and pretended I had the flu. I was too afraid you wouldn't be able to say anything, or hear me say anything to you.
(Cornelius 39)

This failure to carry a child to term underlines the ideas of disappointment and aborted dreams that permeate *Do Not Go Gentle...* Ideas of heroism and loss are removed from the Antarctic setting yet still find resonance in a domestic situation. This scene illustrates how the emotions that accompany heroic failure are not limited to being felt by thwarted explorers, but can be experienced by a range of people both in the Antarctic and elsewhere.

By the time these plays were written more and more people were finding themselves in Antarctica itself: tourism was available in the 1980s to those who could afford it, with the accessibility of the continent used by Karge to highlight the opportunity gap that exists between those who can afford leisure activities and the unemployed. Antarctica

remains firmly outside the scope of experience for Karge's main characters, a fact that is brought into focus when Rudi starts to boast about his recent polar holiday:

Rudi: Erlebnisreise ins ewige Eis.

Die Braukmann: Ins ewige Eis. Ist ja interessant.

Rudi: Ja, man läßt alles hinter sich, die ganze Arbeit, den Alltag. Man ist in einer anderen Welt. Das braucht man halt auch mal. Man klebt ja am Sessel. Die Sinne verkümmern. Man klebt ja am Sessel. (Karge 70)

[Rudi: Adventure trip into the everlasting ice.

Mrs. Braukmann: Into the everlasting ice. How interesting.

Rudi: Yes, you leave everything behind, all your work, the daily chores. You're in another world. You need that sometimes. You get stuck in your easy chair. The senses get dull. You get stuck in your easy chair.]

Rudi's comment about leaving everything behind mirrors the men's own experience in the attic, where imagining Antarctica provided a welcome escape from monotony. The similarities end when their preconceptions are rubbished by Rudi, who has the authority of having actually been to Antarctica: oil heaters thwarted the cold, five star cuisine replaced pemmican and instead of killing seals for food, Rudi and Rosi posed for photos with them. The climax of the conversation centres on the South Pole, a place that has been of huge significance for the men in their role-play but is belittled in Rudi's version:

Rudi: ... Hier ist der Pol.

Die Braukmann: Der Pol.

Rudi: Der Pol aus dem Flugzeug. Das ist richtig der Pol. Du kriegst eine Urkunde, ein Zertifikat, handschriftlich, Doktor Soundso.

...

Slupianek: Also, das ist richtig der Pol.

Rudi: Nein, ein Hinterhof in Herne. (Karge 73)

[Rudi: Here is the Pole.

Mrs. Braukmann: The Pole.

Rudi: The Pole from the plane. That's actually the Pole. You get a diploma, a certificate, handwritten, signed by Doctor So-and-so.

...

Slupianek: So, that's truly the Pole.

Rudi: No, it's a backyard in Herne.]

This tourist's version of Antarctica is not at all how the men imagined it to be, so this moment is their equivalent of Scott's men arriving at the Pole and discovering it has already been made a place by Amundsen. Rudi's cavalier attitude to the place grates against the version the men have built up in their minds, where tough journeying and the endurance through repetitive landscapes lead to success. They attack him at the end of the scene because he has trampled on their dream, making their project and efforts seem trivial. This episode brings to the surface the question of what constitutes the "real" Antarctica, a question that is mirrored by the production as a whole.

Versions of the 'Real'

Karge's characters come alive as they re-enact Amundsen's South Pole journey and escape to "another world." Braukmann's wife describes the difference she sees in her husband when he is role-playing right after telling him she has had enough of his behaviour:

Abgründe sind das ja, Abgründe... Da wirds einem ja Eiskalt. Eiskalt wird es einem da. Ja, beim Affentheater, da ist der Braukmann am dransten. Da ist er ganz da. Da macht der den Kasper. Da tanzt er. Da lacht er. Da kann er lachen. Aber ansonsten. Da sitzt er da und kaut Fingernägel. (Karge 45)

[It's an abyss this, an abyss... It's chilling. Chilling, that's what it is. Yes, when it comes to monkey business, Braukmann shines. He is completely there. He plays the

clown. He dances. He laughs. He is able to laugh. But otherwise. He sits about and chews his nails.]

Braukmann becomes animated when acting out the polar story as it gives him a purpose. It also provides an escape from the inertia of his everyday existence, allowing him to leave his fears and stresses behind. Cornelius' characters take another approach, using the icy setting as a way to deal with those fears and stresses rather than to forget about them. These characters are residents in a rest home, although as Meyrick points out in his foreword, the characters are not *really* in a rest home any more than they are *really* in Antarctica – instead, they are *really* on a stage. The ambiguity of setting allows for an exploration of space and place. It blurs the lines between the real and imagined by highlighting the fact that both settings are in fact imagined, and all that is “real” are the actors who physically stand upon the stage.

This ambiguity is a constant theme for Cornelius. When Scott remarks that “the elements have aged us so” (Cornelius 27) he refers not only to the harshness of the Antarctic landscape, but to the trials of everyday life that batter, bruise and wear one down. He tells the others “we’ve had our fingers nipped, inch-long blisters filled with frozen liquid; and our noses and lips split...” (Cornelius 41), referring to Antarctic cold weather injuries, but this sparks off a whole list of complaints from his companions:

Evans: I’ve got arthritis.

Wilson: I’ve got osteoporosis.

Bowers: I’ve got gingivitis. (Cornelius 42)

Everyday physical ailments take the place of cold weather injuries, suggesting that for the elderly, everyday living is just as hard as man hauling. A journey of endurance thus plays out across the stage, with Scott’s story providing a vehicle for the characters – who are located in a rest home/ Antarctica/ their own minds – to come to terms with their own decline.

Karge's characters must come to terms with the fact their coping strategy is not a viable long term solution when Seiffert gets lost within the polar fantasy. By the end of the play he thinks of his everyday problems in terms of a polar landscape, and uses the techniques he has developed to cope with the landscape during the imagined journey in order to attack his joblessness. Stuck in polar mode, Seiffert sees the door to the job office as an unassailable ice wall:

Was ist dahinter. Der Südpol. Ist dort wirklich der Pol. Ganz richtig oder nur aus dem Flugzeug. Vielleicht nur eine Eiswand. Steil, unzugänglich. Was heißt unzugänglich. Hab ich doch Pickel und Steigeisen. Stufen schlagen, kilckclick. Stufe um Stufe.
(Karge 79)

[What is behind it. The South Pole. Is it really the South Pole. The real Pole or just from an aeroplane. Maybe just a wall of ice, steep and unassailable. What do you mean, unassailable. I have an ice pick and crampons. Hack out steps. Click click. Step upon step.]

The imaginary ice landscape becomes a metaphor for Seiffert's everyday struggles, with a task such as visiting the job office fraught with dangers and requiring maximum focus. The polar role-play has taught him coping mechanisms, but he is no longer able to accurately recognise his situation so tries to apply inappropriate solutions from his story of success to an everyday situation that epitomises his repeated failure. After negotiating a treacherous landscape he reaches the door of the job office, only to introduce himself as the character he has been playing, indicating that for him the imaginary has become more tangible than the real:

Wie heißen Sie. Bjaaland, sagt Seiffert. Seltsamer Name. Haben wir nicht in den Akten. Dann, sagt Seiffert, Adams, Ja, ich heiße Adams. Sie stieren so. Ich bin, sagt Seiffert, Sie müssen entschuldigen, schneeblind. (Karge 79)

[What's your name. Bjaaland, says Seiffert. Strange name. We don't have it in our files. Then, says Seiffert, Adams. Yes, my name is Adams. You're staring. I am, says Seiffert, you must excuse me, snow blind.]

Karge uses Seiffert's confusion of the real and the imagined to highlight the dangers of using imagination as a place-making strategy with no tangible reference points. Acting out the polar story gave Seiffert purpose while the game lasted, but when the game became his life he was unable to escape from the icy world of imagination.

This scene follows in a tradition of going mad in the Antarctic, a tradition parodied by Brenton in his depiction of Evans' death in *Scott of the Antarctic*. In earlier plays such as *The Fire on the Snow* and *Terra Nova* tangible landscapes weaken and overtake the men, but here the landscape that Seiffert finds overwhelming is an imagined one. Rather than going mad as the result of being exposed to a harsh setting, he goes mad as a result of getting lost within a setting he creates in his own head. The unstable setting that Seiffert inhabits is also mirrored in the structure of Karge's play. The remaining text of this scene – a description of Seiffert's leap to his death through the window – is not attributed to any actor in particular, meaning that the producing company is free to interpret it as they choose. Just as Seiffert can no longer distinguish fact from fiction, the text can no longer provide direction as to whether Seiffert should narrate his own struggle and suicide, or whether it should be narrated for him.

Seiffert's engagement with Antarctica is similar to Cornelius' treatment of the Antarctic landscape, where the hostile environment represents an involuntary loss of ability on the part of the characters. The "labyrinth of crevasses and towers" in Act II is an important theatrical element that comes to stand for the characters' inner and past landscapes. As the play progresses, these internal landscapes become more important than either Antarctica or the rest home. The visible ice labyrinth is a metaphor for many intertwining story threads: for getting lost, for chasing the past, for how easy it is to lose your footing and fall down a crevasse. The characters face both physical and psychological hurdles such as gout and

memory loss, with Claudia/ Bowers' dementia is a case in point. In Act I Claudia's husband Alex comes looking for her, but she, identifying as Bowers, no longer recognises him at all:

Bowers: I hope you find her soon.

Alex: I hope so too.

Bowers: Yes, well, good luck to you.

Alex: But I think she's gone for good. (Cornelius 33)

In Act II the set is used to visually show the effect of Dementia on Claudia/ Bowers' mind:

Alex: Claudia!

For an exquisite second Bowers recognises her name

Bowers: Yes.

And then she forgets it. She disappears down an ice tunnel. Alex disappears down another. (Cornelius 51)

The crevasses and tunnels on stage are like those in the mind – treacherous, fleeting and easy to get lost in. Just as an ice bridge cannot be trusted with the weight of a life, the bridges between Bowers' present and her past have crumbled down into crevasses where they are irretrievable. The tunnels are used to show others in their searches too, and Oates follows the elusive Peter in and out of various openings. Finally, Evans emerges from one of the tunnels and articulates their situation: "Lost. Utterly lost... *Evans disappears down a crevasse*" (Cornelius 52). When the other characters notice that Evans is no longer with them, Oates says he "Last saw him when we crossed at the lights" (Cornelius 53).

References to an urban setting, rather than the Antarctica of spires and crevasses suggested by the set, remind the audience of the fragility of place in this play. This brings the question of what is "real" back into focus. Instead of one version of reality, there are many and each character enacts their own private battles upon the same stage.

The difference between our own reality and what we aspire to be is explored as Cornelius' characters come face to face with that gap in their own lives. In contrast to Captain Scott, who famously wrote "I do not regret this journey," (Scott *Journals*, 422) these

characters regret many things, and the regrets reveal the stories and episodes that have shaped them, making them all the more human. Evans “thought we’d achieve something great” (Cornelius 50), Wilson is “rather disappointed, actually” (Cornelius 19), and Scott “did not fulfil a single dream” (Cornelius 39). Still, all long to be remembered as they come face to face with their own mortality. It is not possible to fathom how people will interpret your deeds in years to come, but it is very human to desire to leave a legacy and to strive to leave your mark on the world, as Scott comments to Wilson in the final scene:

Scott: They died having done something great – how hard must not death be, having done nothing. That’s what someone will say about us one day... We did something remarkable, didn’t we, men? (Cornelius 61, 63)

The first sentence is a direct quote from Tryggve Gran, one of the men from the *Terra Nova* expedition who discovered Scott’s party in the spring. In the context of Cornelius’ play the remarkable thing these characters have achieved is to struggle on in the face of adversity, a heroic act that is performed by many every day but is often overlooked.

The way people change their perspectives over time is another element of Cornelius’ play that feeds into the theme of regret and the desire to make a difference. When Oates and Evans discuss ideals, they skim over their own histories and provide clues as to what principles they have used to guide their own lives:

Evans: ... Remain silent, and essential things, things that are at the heart of you, will be lost. Like ideals.

Oates: Oh yes, ideals. I used to think they were important.

Evans: Ideals are worth the fight. Ideals are what make us constantly seek a better life.

Oates: Now I’m not so certain.

Evans: Without them we’re lost.

Oates: They lead to disaster. (Cornelius 46)

There had of course been many disasters in the century between Scott's expedition and Cornelius' play, most notably World Wars I and II and the Vietnam War. This is an important passage as it shows differing views on ideals and how one's view of the world and values can change. In Oates' case, the death of his son changed his priorities and made him realise that instead of striving to make things the way you think they should be, it can be better to learn to deal with the way they are. In Act I Oates was a proponent of doing "something bigger than yourself," telling Evans "[you] have to honour your country and all that" (Cornelius 21), but coming face to face with his deceased son makes him reassess his priorities and assumptions. This mirrors the way views of Antarctica have changed over time, with changing priorities creating different views of the continent and making many different perspectives possible.

Reimagining Antarctica

While Cornelius' characters explore ideas of death and dying by using Scott's Antarctic story as a model, Karge's characters use Amundsen's conquest of the South Pole to obtain a set of skills for dealing with adversity. Their taste of success allows them to look at the world from a new perspective, revisiting earlier situations with a new understanding. In the final scene Slupianek asks Braukmann if he remembers what happened to Bjaaland when he fell through the ice and was asked how the crevasse looked, an episode that the men had acted out earlier:

Slupianek: Und was antwortete der sich an seinen Schlitten klammernde Bjaaland.

Braukmann: O wie gewöhnlich Bodenlos.

Slupianek: War das was.

Braukmann (im Weggehen): Ja, das war was.

Slupianek: Wie man sich an alles gewöhnen kann. Auch an die größte Gefahr.

(Karge 78)

[Slupianek: And what did Bjaaland answer as he clung to his sled.

Braukmann: Oh, bottomless as usual.

Slupianek: Was that something.

Braukmann (As he leaves): Yeah, that was something.

Slupianek: How you can get used to anything. Even the greatest danger.]

In this case it is boredom and the desperation of not being able to find a job that the men must deal with, not physical danger. By this point they are able to reflect upon and alter their own situations. Büscher immediately announces his plans to move to Canada and change his situation, Braukmann has a job, Frau Braukmann has her child and Slupianek finds meaning in the fact that he fathered a South Pole child. Only Seiffert remains at a loose end, lost within the icy fantasy from which the only escape is death.

In earlier plays Antarctica was the setting for a particular story, but with Karge and Cornelius it is the story that leads to the construction of a version of Antarctica. Amundsen and Scott's narratives come first, and it is only in acting out these stories that an Antarctic setting becomes necessary for the characters on the stage. They construct their own version of the "other-place" of Antarctica in order to try to escape from (Karge) or come to terms with (Cornelius) their situations. Thus, these meta-theatrical plays stage the construction of place, using polar narratives as a vehicle to address contemporary social issues. They actively question the construction of place by staging the problems associated with place-making, including the dangers of imagination (Karge) and the role of subjectivity in defining the "real" (Cornelius). These problems are applicable in any setting, but are exemplified by these Antarctic narratives thanks to the continent's recent human history. As a result of the myriad retellings, Antarctica no longer has to be the setting of a south polar story in order to exert a presence and conjure up a particular set of beliefs and associations in the minds of both the audience and the characters on stage. Instead, Heroic Era Antarctic stories can now be shifted to or conflated with very different settings and used as a vehicle to address contemporary social issues.

Part IV: Returning

Recent plays about Antarctica such as Mojisola Adebayo's *Moj of the Antarctic* (2006) and Lynda Chanwai-Earle's *Heat* (2008) have the material continent at their heart. Unlike earlier plays that focussed on Heroic Era stories and left the Antarctic setting as a background concern, here it is place that inspires story: these playwrights use Antarctica as the starting point for their plays, allowing their narratives to grow from the setting. Simultaneously, an engagement with past stories and with Antarctica itself allows these plays to raise questions about the environment, colonisation, ownership, spectatorship and perception. While Adebayo is the only playwright of those discussed here to have travelled to Antarctica, Chanwai-Earle also expresses a desire to visit the continent and learn more about contemporary science practices. Both plays are symptomatic of "a new, feminist-inspired anti-heroic literature that calls boldly into question the narrative tropes upon which the story of Antarctica has been built – tropes of masculinity, objectivity and empiricism, nationhood, progress, conquest and race" (Legler 208). They use multiple voices and environmental concerns to promote new perspectives on the continent, presenting Antarctica as being intimately connected to the world as a whole. Gretchen Legler argues that a "desire to understand and connect with the larger Antarctic ecosystem is... part of what makes the new era of Antarctic literature post-masculinist – it resists the dualistic, hierarchical thinking that is at the foundation of patriarchal, imperialistic ideology" (221). A resistance of binaries and traditional roles is a feature of both *Moj of the Antarctic* and *Heat*. Instead of a story leading to the imagination of a place, in these plays it is place that leads to the creation of a story.

Plays in Context

By the turn of the Millennium, Antarctica has become a palimpsest, layered with stories told by many voices. Adebayo and Chanwai-Earle approach Antarctica from different angles, setting their plays 150 years apart and writing out of different national contexts. The

fact that they represent a plurality of voices is important, as in these final plays there is no longer a white voice speaking for a white continent. Rather, two women of African and Chinese heritage respectively, who are concerned with the stories of marginalised people turn their attention to a marginalised part of the map, making links both to their own heritage and experiences and to the globe at large.

The best way to understand the staging of these plays is by examining the idea of connections – connections that include not only intertextuality and hauntings within the play texts themselves, but which expand to include environmental concerns outside the theatre. Chanwai-Earle’s portable sustainable energy generator is a prime example of thematic concerns from the play spilling over into the production logistics, creating links that go beyond the confines of the stage. These connections can also be read on a global level, where the two-way influence between Antarctica and the rest of the world is more pronounced than ever before.

During the late twentieth century environmental concerns came to the fore, with green movements “gaining ground, as the impact of unchecked industrial and technological growth promised devastating consequences” (Kershaw 208). The protection of the Antarctic environment was also addressed directly: signed in Madrid on 4 October 1991, the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (“Madrid Protocol”) came into force in 1998. This was an important development, as the protocol addressed environmental concerns, laying out obligations for member states of the Antarctic Treaty System to remove their waste from Antarctica and prohibiting the mining of mineral resources.³⁵ The Madrid Protocol also established the Committee for Environmental Protection, meaning that the days of pushing rubbish out onto the sea ice and discharging untreated wastewater were well and truly over. Environmental challenges gained more attention outside of Antarctica in the late 1990s, with the discovery of the ozone hole by the scientists of the British Antarctic Survey in 1985 reported by media all over the world. The issue of the ozone hole was a tangible example of anthropogenic change, and it also brought Antarctica into popular

³⁵ Article Three deals with Environmental Principles, including “wilderness and aesthetic values,” Article Seven prohibits mineral resource activity, Article 11 establishes the CEP and Annex Three addresses Waste Disposal and Waste Management in “The Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty” (*The Antarctic Treaty*).

consciousness: although the hole was over the South Pole, much of the damage was caused by people using CFCs³⁶ back home. Other examples of Antarctic science in the media include coverage of the collapse of the Larsen B ice shelf in 2002 (“Larsen Ice Shelf Breakup Events”) and public discussion over a proposed Marine Protected Area in the Ross Sea in 2012 (Readfern). These indicate both a greater level of scientific literacy amongst the population and an interest in Antarctica as a global warning system for ecological and climate change. In fact, Elena Glasberg notes that by 2012 “environmental concern [had] replaced imperial manifest destiny and even international scientific cooperation ... as justification for presence in Antarctica” (2012, 116). The continent “devoted to peace and science”³⁷ was living up to its name, though “southern ice now came with a ready-made politics” (Glasberg 2012, xii).

Society’s environmental concerns had an impact upon theatre and its reception during this period as writers started addressing contemporary environmental issues and critics asked questions such as “How do geography and climate influence a work?” (Marranca xiv). Antarctica epitomises the growing awareness of how interconnected the world really is; a remote continent of ice, it is nevertheless melting in response to human activity, with the resultant sea level rise having a direct impact on those in faraway places. Both *Moj of the Antarctic* and *Heat* include this environmental element, which is significant because “imagination is an ecological force, and representation, in its many manifestations as stories, celebrations, and patterns of signification, is one of the ways people participate in their material/ecological condition” (May 86). The representation of Antarctica on the stage in both of these plays is therefore an active way of engaging with the environment as a whole and seeing Antarctica from within a global context. Critics recognised this environmental turn, with ecocriticism examining “the interconnections between nature and culture” (Glotfelty xix) from an interdisciplinary viewpoint. Although there are many forms of ecocriticism, they have at their heart Barry Commoner’s first law of ecology, namely that “everything is connected to everything else” (Glotfelty xix). This concept of connection is crucial to the plays in this final section.

³⁶ CFCs are Chlorofluorocarbon compounds often used in aerosols or refrigeration units. Ultraviolet light breaks them down to chlorine radicals in the atmosphere, which catalytically destroy the ozone.

³⁷ Article Two of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty designates Antarctica as a continent for “peace and science” (*The Antarctic Treaty*).

Globalisation is another key context for *Moj of the Antarctic* and *Heat*, with connections and networks coming to the fore. Poet Katharine Coles explains how Antarctica loses its isolation in a global sense: “it’s a place on the globe that is connected to every other place, and no matter where you are on the globe you are standing at a convergence of sorts” (qtd. in Rejcek). These connections change the way space and place are understood. Space is abstract and intangible, where place is concrete and experienced. Traditionally, this meant that one had to visit Antarctic shores in order to know place and experience Antarctica. Developments such as anthropogenic climate change have seen important changes, such as melting ice that leads to rising sea levels elsewhere in the world. This melting ice makes the political personal by making tangible the effects of climate change, as the rise in sea level has a direct impact on those in coastal areas all over the world. Even though they are far from Antarctica itself, in a way they are experiencing the Great White South first-hand from their homes. In light of environmental, postcolonial and postfeminist concerns, the interconnection between Antarctica and the rest of the world becomes clear and Antarctica ceases to be a faraway “other,” instead being recognised as part of a global system. This view sees the lines between space and place blur, with the continent becoming a place on every shore upon which it has an impact. At the same time the global system of connections is so vast, abstract and complex that the network itself begins to resemble space, that abstract framework that cannot be grasped or experienced phenomenologically. This multi-layered network is at the heart of both *Heat* and *Moj of the Antarctic*.

In the context of globalisation, questions of claim, origin and belonging take on new meaning. Julian Murphet talks about the ever-increasing number of networks that break down the barriers between discrete places:

In everyday life it seems increasingly impossible not to find oneself caught within a worldwide web of spatial threads: eating Thai food, wearing garments made in China, vacationing in Cuba, driving a Korean car, singing karaoke, drinking Australian wines. It is often as though our every act of consumption draws us into a palimpsest of places we may never visit, but whose effects and determinations are now inescapable. (Murphet 130)

Antarctica is very much a part of this web: although most people will not visit the Antarctic, they will be familiar with advertisements for Bluebird chips that feature dancing penguins or internet sidebar adverts for adventure trips to the South. The continent is available to be viewed remotely via Google Earth at the click of a button, just as the outside world is available at the click of a button for the characters in *Heat*. When workers at Antarctic Bases can make online purchases and have them delivered, their home is well and truly part of the palimpsest of global places. Similarly, cruise ships offer a direct link to consumerism in the Antarctic. On board an Antarctic cruise one might enjoy Japanese cuisine, drink Italian wine and ride in an inflatable boat made in Canada before uploading the images from the day onto a blog that is accessible to people in India, Germany and Samoa. The closer we look, the more connections we find to those who hold stakes in Antarctica yet will never visit the continent themselves.

Adebayo and Chanwai-Earle

Mojisola Adebayo's *Moj of the Antarctic* premiered on 14 November 2006 at the Lyric Hammersmith and was later developed at the Oval House Theatre in London (Adebayo 150). The multimedia performance features live theatre, dance and song and is unique in that it also includes projected video footage of Adebayo (dressed as Moj) that was shot on location in Antarctica itself. Adebayo travelled to the Antarctic Peninsula in 2005 together with photographer Del LaGrace Volcano, and Volcano's photographs of the Moj character formed the starting point for Adebayo's theatre piece. This is the only play I examine where the participants physically go to Antarctica.³⁸ It marks an important turning point as the opening up of access to the continent via tourism makes possible a whole body of multimedia work and cultural production that is based on the physicality of the body. It also references earlier Antarctic and colonial history whilst giving a voice to those who have been marginalised in the past. Adebayo remarks that although the title was originally a joke,

³⁸ Jenny Coverack's play "A Father For My Son" was performed on an ice breaker in the Ross Sea and an excerpt was also performed in Scott's hut at Cape Evans in 2006. The play tells the story of Kathleen Scott and is not set in the Antarctic, hence it is not discussed further in this project.

“it just stuck... I’m no great Scott of the Antarctic, I’m just Moj of the Antarctic. But I was really interested in heroism and remembering the forgotten heroes like Ellen Craft” (“Mojisola Adebayo on Moj of the Antarctic”). Ellen’s story of escaping slavery by dressing as a white man forms the basis for *Moj of the Antarctic*, so in this regard Adebayo’s work is similar to that of contemporary playwrights in the USA who were also working on the rescue of voices of neglected black women from history” (Kolin 7).

Of Yoruba and Danish heritage, Adebayo grew up in England and champions Afri-Queer theatre. She has devised and written a number of plays that “draw attention to... inequalities and exploitation” and “celebrate the stories of past black heroes and heroines” (Goddard 2011, 12). Since 2003, “Black British drama has achieved an unprecedented profile in the British theatre scape” (Osborne 255), with a range of stories and alternate histories being told from multiple viewpoints. Adebayo is the first black woman to have performed on Antarctica, and as a black lesbian woman she represents several minorities whose voices were missing from the initial Heroic Era stories. Referencing Joseph Conrad, *Moj of the Antarctic* presents “a kind of reversal of stories of whiteness into blackness to discover something about oneself” (Adebayo “Mojisola Adebayo on Moj of the Antarctic”). Adebayo uses Antarctica and its whiteness to explore questions of identity, ownership, environmentalism and gender, creating a postmodern theatre piece that reflects a whole range of contemporary concerns: *Moj of the Antarctic* explores issues of globalisation whilst focussing on the South. “South” itself is one of the first terms to be explored because of its double meaning – in the USA, where the character Ellen Craft is located at the start of the play, “South” is synonymous with slavery. Later, once Ellen has escaped to England, “South” carries connotations of riches and adventure thanks to the whaling industry. The terms have different meanings depending on who and where you are, and this highlights the importance of perception, a theme that is central to Adebayo’s play.³⁹

Inspired by the Carson McCullers novella *Ballad of the Sad Café* (1943), Lynda Chanwai-Earle’s play *Heat* premiered in Wellington in 2008. The play, which details a love

³⁹ Mat Johnson’s recent novel *Pym* (Spiegel & Grau 2011) is very similar to *Moj of the Antarctic* in its use of black/white reversals and the connection of South and slavery.

triangle in the heart of the Antarctic winter between a human couple (Stella and John) and a penguin, was supported by the Circa Theatre Birthday Commission and has a distinctly New Zealand flavour. Set in an Antarctic hut kitted out with authentic Antarctica New Zealand gear, *Heat* gained two nominations in the 2008 Chapman Tripp awards, with the Best Actor prize going to Brian Hotter in the role of the penguin (“Lynda Chanwai Earle”). The music for *Heat* was composed by Gareth Farr who travelled to Antarctica in the summer of 2005-6 as an Antarctic Arts Fellow, so this element of the performance was influenced by direct experience of the Southern continent. Chanwai-Earle speaks of a desire to visit Antarctica herself,⁴⁰ and planned for *Heat* to be the first play in an Antarctic trilogy: “When I get a chance I will write the next piece in my Antarctic Trilogy: HOLE will be about the time the ozone hole was discovered down in the Antarctic which has had a huge impact on our environmental consciousness” (qtd. in Liang).

Despite overt environmental concerns, *Heat* has a personal story at its heart. The play is about a couple who are coming to terms with the loss of their child and rebuilding connections with each other. For Chanwai-Earle, Antarctica was an attractive setting because of both its remoteness and its symbolic value as a “global thermometer” (Jamnadas). The remoteness allows a focus on character, and as Chanwai-Earle herself notes, the play “touches on issues about global warming, about the fragility of the Antarctic environment, but it’s not an eco rant... this is about the frailty of human relationships and our relationship with other creatures in the world” (Jamnadas). Familiar with recent Antarctic history and the importance of the Madrid Protocol, which she references directly in her play,⁴¹ Chanwai-Earle remarks that “The early 80's seems like the wild west of Antarctica times – pre-Greenpeace days when they were still using nuclear power and chucking their garbage into the sea” (qtd. in Liang). This is symptomatic of a change in consciousness about Antarctica amongst the general public. As neither a scientist nor someone who has visited Antarctica herself, Chanwai-Earle nevertheless demonstrates a

⁴⁰ “...Then I'll have another crack at that ol' Antarctic Fellowship and see if I can finally get down there. Failing that, I'll offer myself as a domestic and clean the loos at Scott Base for a year!” (qtd. in Liang 2010).

⁴¹ When John cleans up the toilet buckets and has a spill, Stella calls after him “Hey, you left a spot. Madrid Protocol-” (Chanwai-Earle 11)

concern for the Antarctic environment and an awareness of the impact of her own production on anthropogenic climate change.

Chanwai-Earle is a fourth-generation Chinese New Zealander who spent her childhood in Papua New Guinea before being educated in New Zealand. The New Zealand influence is strong throughout her play, which comes from a literary tradition of texts that deal with people living in an enclosed area in an isolated environment with only penguins for company, such as Graham Billing's *Forbush and the Penguins* (1965) and Pamela Young's *Penguin Summer* (1971). All are set within the Ross Dependency, New Zealand's area of claim in Antarctica, indicating that geopolitics was still an important concern even as Antarctica opened up to a range of new narratives. *Heat* contains a wealth of New Zealand cultural references, such as a "buzzy bee" children's toy and John's rugby ball, which, as Stella remarks, is signed by "Buck Shelford '86. When he nearly lost his balls – " (Chanwai-Earle 6). Such details serve both to make the Antarctic more accessible to the New Zealand audience and to reinforce the connections between New Zealand and Antarctica in a political sense.

Staging Concerns

A focus on relationships of different kinds sees Adebayo and Chanwai-Earle approach the staging of Antarctica in very different ways, with Adebayo making use of projections and props that change their function to represent a range of places during Moj's journey, and Chanwai-Earle choosing the static domestic setting of a hut's interior to dominate the stage. It is significant that by this time neither setting can be seen as "more Antarctic" than the other, as the multitude of voices telling stories about the Ice over the previous decade has necessitated a range of different representations, with some, like Karge's, not even representing Antarctica at all. The presence of a "large block of real ice" (Chanwai-Earle ii) downstage of the main hut in *Heat* is particularly interesting because its relationship with the continent is more synecdochal than metaphorical. While Antarctica is entirely off stage, the physical immediacy of the block of ice reminds the audience of the materiality of Antarctica. As the human drama plays out on the stage, the ice reduces and

changes form, creating a sub-narrative and standing for the whole of Antarctica as it quietly melts under the bright stage lights. This is the theatre equivalent of Anne Noble's and Connie Samaras' recent photography work in which they work to "foreground the materiality ... of the visual production of ice" (Glasberg 2012, 111). The physical properties of ice are also talked about in the play, with Stella referring to melting at the opening of scene three when she is racked by doubt and worry about climate change: "What if John's right? Sea ice everywhere; Larsons,⁴² the Wordie, Prince Gustav, the Peninsula, all breaking up. Melting like icecream on hot pavement..." (Chanwai-Earle 12.) Her concerns relate to her field of interest, showing how environment and ecosystems are interconnected: "... My poor, poor birds. How will you live if it all finally disappears?" (Chanwai-Earle 12). These lines provide pointers for the audience to consider what the melting they see before them could mean on a more global scale, prompting them to make connections with their own daily lives.

The use of a camera to document life in the hut also strengthens the theme of connections whilst allowing for a form of diegetic space to be used. When John gives a tour of their quarters, he takes a step outside with the camera, remarking "and there it is... Antarctica." (Chanwai-Earle, 3). The setting is spoken about but not imitated mimetically, establishing the couple's isolation, but avoiding problems relating to the staging of Antarctica itself in a similar way to earlier radio plays. Weather conditions are relayed in a similar manner, with John updating the VHF operator Darren – "temperatures today at minus 10, wind speed one knot, wind-chill factor nil. A balmy day mate, over!" (Chanwai-Earle 12) – via radio, so the audience's experience of the Antarctic environment is overtly routed through their own imaginations. Similarly, when Stella hits her head and John requests evacuation, Darren replies, "Sorry John, conditions too extreme. Evacuation not possible until early September, in a few weeks. That's the best we can do." (Chanwai-Earle 67). The complete isolation of the hut is revealed via radio conversations, but the very fact that those conversations take place shows that the characters are connected to a wider network of people.

⁴² This is a misspelling of Larsen, referring to the Larsen A, B and C ice shelves on the Antarctic peninsula.

Antarctica is thus created on Chanwai-Earle's stage thanks to a combination of diegetic space and mimetic ice, both techniques discussed in earlier chapters. Other playwrights have used ice in their productions, but Chanwai-Earle's staging differs from (for example) Howard Brenton's in several important ways. While Brenton took his theatre to the ice, Chanwai-Earle brings the ice into the theatre. Brenton's ice remains frozen throughout the play and acts as a surface upon which the characters slip and fall in order to reinforce the political themes of his play and tear down notions of heroism. The ice in *Heat* comes in the form of a block that is not to be walked over but rather takes up room on the stage alongside the actors. The ice does not hold one form throughout the performance but is dynamic, suggesting that the story is bigger than the tale being played out on the stage. It encourages the audience to think beyond the frame they see before them and to make connections of their own, both between the staged ice and Antarctica and between their own actions and the environment at large.

Moj of the Antarctic features a minimalist yet dynamic set, where a bookcase in "the library of a rich plantation owner's house" (Adebayo 156) transforms into a kitchen before the stage becomes a pub, whaling ship and finally Antarctica. Presenting several settings on the same stage and recycling props for new purposes highlights the links between the different places depicted. Video projections of film shot in Antarctica are used throughout the play, including before Moj escapes from slavery. "Visuals of Antarctica in all its whiteness: Icebergs, snow, light" (Adebayo 167) are displayed as the female slave Moj prepares to transform into a white man and such images become more frequent towards the end as Moj nears Antarctica's shores. The projections are similar to Tally's photographs in that they narrate a journey southwards, but instead of the images setting the scene for a play that takes place entirely in the South, Moj journeys with the images in real time. Her actions respond to "visuals of the sea in good weather" (181), "the video of an albatross projected" (182), "Antarctica in all its colour" (185) and "visuals of a whale" (185) as she interacts with the projections. It is significant that the closing scene of Adebayo's play echoes the opening scene, with the African Griot⁴³ returning to narrate Antarctica's more recent history, accompanied by the same video projection as in scene one. In this way the

⁴³ A Griot is a traditional African storyteller who passes down oral histories from generation to generation.

play returns to its own beginnings with new knowledge gained, much as Adebayo has done by creating the character of Moj. Moj lays claim to Antarctica with the weight of history behind her. Her actions echo those of early explorers, while her back story of being an escaped slave undermines the validity of those very claims.

Adebayo's performance spills beyond the boundaries of the stage and begins before Moj even appears. Even before she leaves the dressing room in character as the Griot, she pours the first drop of water "into the bowl of the African slave woman in the carving which [she] brought back from the Gambia" as "a reminder to remember, to never forget" (Adebayo "Supernatural Embodied Text," 95). Where the environmental concerns of *Heat* are highlighted by the portable power source outside the theatre, Adebayo performs a ritual outside of the on-stage performance because the weight of history presses down on her in more ways than those explored in *Moj of the Antarctic*. The expansion of the performance to outside the theatre venue is an indication of how environmental and historical issues loom large not only in the work of the playwrights, but also in their own extra-theatrical lives. These plays are therefore a way of understanding and responding to the world they live in.

Making Connections

Moj of the Antarctic was conceived after Adebayo returned to her own beginnings, as it was in Africa that she first realised the importance of Antarctica to her own history. Standing on James Island, where so many of her people's ancestors had been shipped abroad as slaves, she realised it was slowly being covered by rising sea water. This water would eventually drown sites of historical, political and personal significance. The realisation that the majority of the water that was contributing to the rise was coming from melting ice sheets was the catalyst for the play, as the Griot explains in the introductory scene:

Gondwana:

Africa.

Antarctica.

A history of
 The future:
 Antarctica melts,
 Africa sinks,
 We all disappear. (Adebayo 152)

Despite Antarctica becoming a part of the global web of commerce, *Moj of the Antarctic* is unusual amongst Antarctic plays in touching on the economic aspects of Antarctic history: Moj travels to Antarctica aboard a whaling ship. Whaling was once an important Antarctic industry, and the inclusion of a whaling vessel is both a gesture to the way our conception of the environment has changed and the way some things have remained the same. When the cross-dressing female whaler William Black tells Moj “The Western world must have something to burn!” (Adebayo 178) she is talking about whale oil, but she could just as easily be referring to fossil fuels, the very resource that allowed Adebayo to visit Antarctica in the first place. Where once whaling ships were the hub of economic activity in the Antarctic, cruise ships are the modern day equivalent, as tourism is now one of the main commercial operations in the Antarctic, alongside fishing.⁴⁴ Despite tourism’s popularity, environmental implications and the fact that it provides the most obvious example of Antarctica being part of a global network, Karge’s 1985 *Die Eroberung des Südpols* is the only play to touch on the issue. Although Adebayo does not address this issue directly in *Moj of the Antarctic*, her own Antarctic experience was produced by travelling on a cruise ship, during which time she was very much a part of the “worldwide web of spatial threads” (Murphet 130).

Adebayo weaves her story with threads drawn from a rich base of sources. This intertextuality allows her to cross-dress in a literary sense, wearing the identities of other authors and giving new contextual resonance to their words. By the early twentieth century the many layers of Antarctic story are recognised and openly mined by playwrights in order to create works that resound with historical depth whilst addressing contemporary

⁴⁴ With 46,000 tourists visiting Antarctica in the 2007-2008 season alone (IAATO), the industry has a strong influence over the way in which large numbers of people experience the frozen continent.

environmental and social issues. Antarctica has been accepted as a palimpsest and is no longer defined by the handful of Heroic Era narratives that have previously been dominant. It is no longer restricted to being represented by one medium either. Inspired by Ntozake Shange's "choreo-poem style," Adebayo acknowledges the physicality and multiplicity of her performance, remarking that the "play text is one element of a physical theatre choreographed performance with visuals, movement and music" (Adebayo 151).

The intertextuality of the play is made clear from the outset, with the title page reading "'Moj of the Antarctic: An Antarctic Odyssey' by Mojisola Adebayo with quotations from Ellen and William Craft, Samuel Coleridge, Charles Darwin..." and a total of seventeen sources (Adebayo 149).⁴⁵ This play represents the first time Adebayo sat down to create theatre in a formal playwriting sense, having devised all her previous pieces in collaborative workshops, and she admits that she found the idea of authoring quite inhibiting. As a result, she approached the project by pretending she was devising alongside many people, namely a canon of authors from history. The result is a richly layered play text that puts Darwin and Marx side by side,⁴⁶ referencing many different histories and suggesting new interpretations.

Workshopping is another collaborative behind-the-scenes technique and this was used when rehearsing *Heat*. Scientists were invited to talk to the cast about a range of contemporary Antarctic concerns, while documentaries were often screened following rehearsals so that cast and crew were all aware of the specific problems facing the continent (Silverton). This process of seeking out connections is typical of ecocritical theatre. As Theresa May notes in *Greening the Theatre*, "green playwrights do well to seek out environmental scientists and educators" (94) in order to gain a better understanding of the issues that underlie the stories they are trying to tell. Concern for Antarctica's future is a

⁴⁵ The sources credited come from a range of eras and backgrounds. They are: "Ellen and William Craft, Samuel Coleridge, Charles Darwin, Frederick Douglass, Frances Ellen Harper, Homer, Harriet Jacobs, Karl Marx, Herman Melville, John Milton, Phillis Wheatley, Harriet Wilson, William Shakespeare, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Ernest Shackleton, Harriet Beecher Stowe and other spirits..." The introductory notes say the play was created "by Mojisola Adebayo and the Antarctic Collective (Adebayo 149).

⁴⁶ "And only the fittest survive!" (Darwin *Origin of the Species*) is immediately followed by "In my own century/ Nature faces subjection/ To man and machinery" (paraphrased from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*) with both being used to highlight environmental concerns.

constant thread throughout *Heat*, and is not limited to staging elements or plot. Consciousness-raising amongst all those involved in the production was an important part of bringing the story to the stage and therefore an important part of the production as a whole.

Many Voices

Adopting lines from famous writers of the past and using the “myths of history” (Kolin 7) to connect past and present allows Adebayo to present multiple viewpoints, providing a variety of lenses through which to think about whiteness and Antarctica. Postmodernist theatre has challenged the assumption of the unitary self “by presenting characters whose fragmentary identity is constructed from bits of cultural texts” (Auslander 114). Adebayo challenges the homogeneity of Antarctica, using direct quotes from the European literary tradition, African songs and the words of slaves themselves to construct her polar narrative. When faced with this weight of history, the dominant narratives of the Heroic Era no longer hold sway over the Ice. They do still have a presence, however: Adebayo writes back to history, referencing Scott’s blackface minstrels in both Moj’s white face charade as a white man and her black face performance on the ice.⁴⁷ Finally, Moj’s last line, “I am just going outside and may be some time...” (Adebayo 188) means that “like Oates, Moj becomes an Antarctic anti-hero” (Adebayo “Supernatural Embodied Text,” 99). The fact that this famous line is spoken by a black woman in situ in Antarctica⁴⁸ reveals the specifically European cultural context the famous British Heroic Era narratives came from. This context is rarely remarked upon but rather taken for granted as the norm against which all other Antarctic expeditions are measured. By attributing famous lines to a character who does not fit the traditional mould of polar explorer, Adebayo challenges the assumptions associated with that history.

⁴⁷ “During my research I had seen photographs of the famous British Polar explorer’s Captain Scott’s men engaging in black face minstrelsy for entertainment during expeditions to Antarctica a century ago... wanted to mimic their mimicry and mock their mockery” [sic] (Adebayo “The Supernatural Embodied Text,” 96).

⁴⁸ The line is spoken by Adebayo as she stands on the stage, but is accompanied by “One image of Moj naked on a whaling boat in Antarctica” (Adebayo 188)

Adebayo notes that “The discourse of Polar exploration is layered with the language of white supremacy” (Adebayo “Supernatural Embodied Text,” 96). If, as her play asserts, white is no longer the default position from which to view Antarctica, the question must be asked: “what effect does this have on a continent that is all white?” Adebayo’s answer is to reconceptualise the continent by digging deeper, both into history and under the ice:

Moj: And under all this white

Antarctica is a broken rock as Black as my great-grandfather (*Black rock still image*)

...Black as the lips between my lover’s thighs,

Black as a Pharoah’s eyes,

White is a cover up

Is a beautiful lie. (Adebayo 185)

Presenting Antarctica as black but in disguise, Adebayo gives the audience a new way of thinking about the continent. She challenges the binaries of black and white and male and female, both in her cross-dressing lesson on “How to make a white man” (168) and in the way she presents “the great white continent” itself in another light.

Chanwai-Earle’s characters also see Antarctica in a different light, in that it is a place that foregrounds a very personal past. For Stella and John, being in Antarctica is the starting point for a discussion about the death of their son, Cam. The inhospitable environment forces them to come face to face with what has remained unsaid and to renew their own personal connections, but first they must endure both an Antarctic winter and a metaphorical emotional winter of their own. This focus on personal concerns makes *Heat* similar to earlier plays such as *Südpolexpedition* and *The Fire on the Snow*. All three plays use the Antarctic setting as a way to focus in on the very human concerns of their characters as they either face their destinies or, in this case, come to terms with their pasts. In the case of *Heat*, environmental concerns are interspersed with that human story, indicating that in the intervening decades Antarctica has come to be seen as part of an ecological framework rather than a place apart from the rest of the world. Nevertheless, tropes relating to the

emptiness of the plateau remain useful and Chanwai-Earle's inclusion of such ideas indicates an awareness of the literary history of representations of Antarctica.

Heat signifies the first time wildlife has been represented on the Antarctic stage, moving away from anthropocentric stories whilst also highlighting the difficulties of this approach. Stella recognises her dead son Cam in Bob the penguin and is haunted by the similarities. His appearance mirrors the beast Peter that haunts Oates in *Do Not Go Gentle...: "Bob rears up, lurching at [John and Stella]. Suddenly he becomes feral, cat-like. He leaps over the table, removing his muzzle on the way. As Bob lands he becomes penguin again"* (Chanwai-Earle 33). Feeling the absence of the connection she once had with her son, Stella takes Bob in and cares for him as a substitute child:

Stella: Look at him, he's sick. He's been rejected by his colony. Cam needs us, we need to pull together –

John: You just said Cam –

Stella: I did not.

John: You did too.

Stella: Whatever. You know who I'm talking about. (Chanwai-Earle 49)

Bob is a symptom of the environmental problems facing Antarctica, as his unnatural eggless state gestures to wider changes in the ecosystem that are the result of climate change. He also personifies Stella's grief, both because he longs for an egg himself and because he comes to stand for her own son. As Bob gets sicker the second reading becomes dominant and Stella relives Cam's death, accusing John of letting him die "Just like you let Cam die" (Chanwai-Earle 75). This prompts John to retaliate, recounting his own grief and anger:

John: You wanted to have your precious party, if we'd gone to hospital sooner he might have lived!

Stella: It's always my fault isn't it.

John: Don't you know how much I hate you for that –

Stella: (savagely) Then we hate each other – (Chanwai-Earle 76)

Here at the climax of the play John and Stella finally address the issue that has come between them and has been eating away at their own personal connections: each blames the other for Cam's death.

This admission allows for connections to be rebuilt: Bob's death, which immediately follows this emotional outburst from both John and Stella, becomes cathartic as it is a chance to have some control over a passing and end Bob's suffering:

John: He's dying

Stella: Not again –

John: Help him ... Stop the suffering

Stella plunges the syringe into Bob, he moves slightly, and then goes limp

(Chanwai-Earle 77)

Stella's actions also carry echoes of earlier Antarctic plays such as Tally's, where Scott was depicted as being on the brink of injecting Oates with morphine, or Cornelius', where the merits of euthanasia are openly debated. Bob's death mirrors Cam's death, but this time it provides a resolution rather than the starting point for conflict. Unlike in *The Ballad of the Sad Café*, upon which the plot of *Heat* is based, the removal of one corner of a love triangle allows Stella and John to be reunited.

Where McCullers' story ultimately represents "the impossibility of reciprocal love" (Fielder 453), *Heat* offers its characters a way to overcome isolation and to reconnect, providing hope for the future of both Stella and John's relationship and the environmental issues that are constantly present thanks to the block of ice that melts alongside the action. This melting ice provides a mixed metaphor, because although thawing is a positive sign in the context of John and Stella's relationship, it is a negative development for the ice and for the world's climate as a whole. This in turn highlights the paradox of being in Antarctica in the first place, as even those who travel to the Ice to study the ozone hole and human effects on the environment themselves have a detrimental effect on that environment.

The issue of the ozone hole is central to *Heat* both because it gives John a reason to be in Antarctica and because it highlights the idea of resolution: with fewer CFCs being used post Montreal Protocol, the ozone hole is shrinking and a solution has been found. John's discovery that "the [ozone] hole's getting smaller" (Chanwai-Earle 74) occurs shortly before he and Stella resolve their own personal problems and reconnect over Bob's death, so the two issues are closely linked in the play. A focus on the ozone hole, which is reversible, also serves to highlight both the irreversible nature of Cam's death and the dynamic nature of the connections between people who are still alive. Like the ozone layer, those human links are salvageable. Having provided one example of success, the play asks whether Antarctica itself is salvageable as the spectre of climate change still hovers in the background, with the continued release of carbon an unresolved issue. Linking personal resolutions and environmental resolutions further reinforces the anthropogenic underpinning to Antarctica's environmental problems.

Environmental Elements

Dynamic environmental concerns bracket Adebayo's play, with the Griot introducing the idea that "Antarctica melts/ Africa sinks" (Adebayo 152) in the opening scene and reinforcing the idea in the closing lines, which are borrowed from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*:

'Water, water everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.' (Adebayo 190)

The idea of melting ice, presented visually in *Heat*, is referred to several times within the play. When Adebayo quotes from William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, which is often regarded as the first English colonial play, she places Moj's history as a slave alongside concerns for the future:

'Full fathom five
 [my great-grandfather] lies
 of his bones are coral made:
 those are pearls that were his eyes,
 Nothing of him that doth fade,
 But doth suffer a sea-change,
 Into something rich and strange...' (Adebayo 166)

Here Moj is talking about her Grandfather throwing himself overboard a slave boat because "he would rather become a fossil than see his family treated like cattle" (Adebayo 166), but the quote also has contemporary significance from an environmental point of view. The "sea-change" refers to a literal change in sea level, and Adebayo seeks to remind the audience "that if we do not take care, it is not that bones will become coral, but that coral will become our bones..." (Adebayo "Supernatural Embodied Text," 98).

A call and response sequence near the opening of Adebayo's play sets the scene for viewers to question their wider attitudes towards the environment by drawing their attention to the binaries that are about to be challenged:

Griot: If the world is a globe
 Then there is no above
 No below
 No North or South
 No heaven or hell
 No white or (*She prompts audience to respond.*) black
 No male or (*She prompts audience to respond.*) female
 No God or (*She prompts audience to respond.*) Devil
 Magic! (Adebayo 155)

This is a precursor to the idea that there is no longer a binary of "place" and "space": Adebayo's play shows how the two come together, with the audience's actions having a direct impact on the global environment. The removal of traditional binaries challenges the

audience to actively engage with the world around them, urging them to understand connections in new ways. As a result, they leave with a more concrete idea of what anthropogenic climate change could mean and how different places on the earth are interrelated. This is Adebayo's aim, as she talks of environmental concerns and her desire to raise awareness of the impact humans have on even the most remote areas of the world:

The irony is that in making and touring *Moj of the Antarctic* I have deepened my carbon footprint and caused ecological damage. The challenge is to make sure these footprints lead towards consciousness raising on climate change. (Adebayo "Supernatural Embodied Text," 102)

Lynda Chanwai-Earle's *Heat* provides one example of an answer to this problem of energy use and environmental impact, thanks to a portable energy system. The play premiered during the third International Polar Year (2007-2009) and this timing is fitting as it illustrates that it was not only scientists who were thinking about the effects of energy usage on the Antarctic environment. While the storyline deals with working through a personal trauma, environmental issues surround the production. This is evidenced by the use of self-sufficient energy sources. *Heat* was the first show to tour New Zealand with portable wind and solar generators. One production used just 800 watts, the equivalent of "what four or five laptops would charge off," (Jamnadas) as compared to the 50,000 watts required for a regular performance (Silverton). Marcus McShane, alternative energy designer for the show, explained the portable energy sources as necessary because "the themes of the play conceptually and morally demand it" (Silverton). The play's characters are concerned about anthropogenic climate change and the production team respond by minimising the play's own environmental impact.

Contradictions

Heat is the only performance examined in this thesis that had the direct support of a National Antarctic Programme. Chanwai-Earle was open about their involvement, remarking that "Heat is in total alignment with the Antarctic ethos and endorsed by Antarctica New

Zealand” (Silverton). Antarctic artefacts that formed the on-stage set, such as clothing and food boxes, were all supplied by Antarctica New Zealand, with carbon credits purchased in order to offset the effect of flights and the transport of materials. This is an example of the themes of a play having far reaching consequences beyond the confines of a theatre and indicates that Antarctica is conceived of by Chanwai-Earle as a very real place, not simply a setting for a story.

This awareness of Antarctica, so clear from the logistics of staging the play, does not come through so strongly in the text of the play itself. Although the play self-consciously identifies with environmental concerns, *Heat* focuses on a human story and uses Antarctica’s isolation to highlight the dynamics between a couple. As Theresa May notes in *Greening the Theatre*, “even when a director makes choices to drive home an ecological meaning, that meaning may be obscured when it meets deeply ingrained humanist listening in the audience” (85). In this case Antarctica provides an isolated environment from which there can be no physical escape, far from the networks of home. This environment forces the two to address the past and come to terms with Cam’s death, as Stella acknowledges:

Stella: People say grief feels cold. They’re wrong Bobby. It burns. That’s why I’m here. I’m on fire. (Chanwai-Earle 46)

Chanwai-Earle talks of the importance of this human story and how the content of the play led to the Antarctic setting: “I was inspired by the landscape, by the stories I’ve heard about Antarctica, and I thought ‘what better setting to place this couple who already have a dysfunctional relationship, and put them in an extreme situation where they’re having to survive for 12 months on the ice in a survival capsule, in a hut, in a tiny little hut, marooned out by an emperor penguin colony’” (Jamnadas). In this regard *Heat* is similar to early plays such as Goering’s, because the landscape is used to focus on people and human struggles.

Heat does differ from the early Heroic Era narratives in many ways, however, and the fact that it is set *inside* an Antarctic hut is significant. Unlike in earlier plays, where the struggles resulted from interaction with the environment, here the Ice acts as a catalyst for existing, domestic stories to be told. Rather than highlighting a particular theme, such as

sacrifice, this play shows the characters as multi-dimensional, investigating ideas of gender roles within both relationships and society. John tells Stella how hard it was for him to keep everything together when she had her breakdown following Cam's death, particularly when everyone asked after Stella "like mothers own all the fucking pain" (Chanwai-Earle 75). This version of masculinity challenges the Heroic Era image of the stoic male who puts sacrifice and national pride before any personal concerns, offering a new and nuanced model. There are minimal references to Heroic Era narratives or characters in Chanwai-Earle's play and it is telling that the first historical reference is not to Scott or Shackleton but to the men of the 1957 International Geophysical Year who ran out of toilet paper:

Stella: Back in '57 during operation "Deep Freeze', [sic] they ran out.

John: And -?

Stella: So they used Adelie chicks to wipe their arses instead. Can't see us doing that with emperors somehow. (Chanwai-Earle 7)

Not only are these men of history scientists, their problem was also a very mundane one, and this illustrates how priorities have changed over the years. Where characters once battled the elements and saw themselves as being "free from [domestic] encumbrances" (Stewart 12), these characters talk about the necessities of life, be they food or electricity. Having a cluttered set kitted out with authentic Antarctic New Zealand gear, including bucket sinks and toilets, highlights the nature of the hut as both a scientific workplace and a domestic setting. Chanwai-Earle wants to present a realistic representation of life on the Ice but uses a non-realistic combination of characters to do so. Using scientists as main characters reflects the contemporary makeup of Antarctic field teams and reminds the audience of the environmental concerns that underpin the play, while isolating a husband and wife team exposes unique tensions that are not part of the typical Antarctic experience.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ The situation in *Heat* is similar to the season spent in Commonwealth Bay by John and Margie McIntyre in 1995 (*Two Below Zero*) and the season spent in Gadget Hut by Jim and Yvonne Claypole in 1999 (*Living on the Edge*).

Tensions also arise in *Moj of the Antarctic* as Adebayo stakes a claim in Antarctica even as she problematises the colonial nature of past claims. Before travelling to Antarctica Moj is told “for an explorer today, there’s only two places left to conquer, it’s Africa or the ice. And I can’t see you in the heart of darkness somehow, half naked carrying an English man on your head” (Adebayo 177). This parallel between Africa and Antarctica is a deliberate strategy that sets the scene for Moj’s trip “into the heart of whiteness, to hunt the great leviathan” (Adebayo 178). Adebayo allows her black explorer “to be fascinated by whiteness as much as white explorers have been fascinated by blackness” because “whiteness as an idea has not been explored as a territory in the way that blackness has been explored” (*Mojisola Adebayo on Moj of the Antarctic*). Mirroring earlier exploration into the Heart of Darkness, Moj approaches the Antarctic landscape as something tactile and conquerable:

Moj: Our boots crunched beneath our feet

And it was all so beautiful and new.

I’ll say ‘this island’s mine!’ and remain a frosty Caliban (Adebayo 188)

This idea of conquering and of making footprints parallels earlier colonial history, raising questions both about colonialism in Africa and the claims that one can make to Antarctica. Lisa Bloom writes that the idea of Antarctica as blank space was never a reality, but rather “a discursive strategy that produced the rationale to justify the process of filling [it] in” (Bloom 2). By travelling to Antarctica in character as a black woman masquerading as a white man, Adebayo questions the justification for exploration and colonisation whilst highlighting the parallels between the ways in which Antarctica and other colonised places have been conceptualised. As Dodds points out, although Antarctica has often been seen as a blank slate, in fact “the polar continent was and is a lively and dynamic place that could and did call into question attempts to settle and colonise” (2006, 61). It is this questioning that Adebayo reveals in her representation of Antarctica.

Ways of Looking

The idea of perception is important in Adebayo's play, where the question of who is looking at whom is brought to the fore in a scene where Moj looks at a photo of her father, which is in fact a picture of Adebayo dressed as the father character. As the portrait is projected onto the back wall, Adebayo describes how "I look into my own eyes which look like Ellen's eyes, Moj looks into her father's eyes, which are her master's eyes, and the audience look at us all" (Adebayo "Supernatural Embodied Text," 100). This makes the audience aware of their own watching, both of Adebayo in character on the stage and of the pre-recorded scenes filmed in Antarctica. Antarctica is woven into Moj's story, where it acts as a mirror, with scenes of the landscape augmenting Moj's thoughts and feelings. These scenes also provide a way for the audience to see the anthropogenic climate change in which they are complicit as a result of their everyday consumption of fuel electricity and commodities, with the projection switching to show "visuals of the new Orleans 2005 flood" (Adebayo 169). In a postmodern world of global capitalism, there is no longer any separation between the public and private spheres and this is a defining feature of globalised awareness. The political is the personal, with the public issue of climate change having tangible effects on private lives thanks to effects like sea level rise, and everyday actions having an impact on the most remote and icy parts of the earth.

Remote and icy as it is, Antarctica is also "the most-mediated, manipulated, surveilled territory on the planet" (Glasberg 2012, xix). These concepts of voyeurism become personal in *Heat* as questions about representation and spectatorship are raised by the characters' use of a video link. Scene two opens with John watching the last few minutes of an important rugby game, tossing his ball from hand to hand and yelling encouragement at the screen, when "suddenly the lights flicker, momentarily plunging the hut into dark silence – the internet connection is broken" (Chanwai-Earle 8). The internet provides a tenuous link to the outside world, both refuting and revealing the characters' isolation. While the existence of the link shows that the hut is hooked into the global network, the failure of the power and internet at such a crucial moment in the game emphasises the distance between the hut and home, as well as the fragility of John's own spectatorship. The idea of being watched is ever present, thanks both to the rugby being beamed in to the hut

and the webcam broadcasting their lives to the outside world. This technology blurs the line between public and private spheres, as illustrated early on when John washes himself with a towel and a bucket:

Stella: Oh look darling, incoming mail: Jason E. Arataki Primary; “Dear Stella, why did John have his hands down his pants?”

John: (starts) Fuck!

John switches the web cam off.

John: Easy to forget when that thing’s on. (Chanwai-Earle 10)

This scene highlights the performative elements of the characters’ lives, showing the difference in how the couple act when the camera is on or off. It also foregrounds the idea of subjectivity: just as there is more than one version of the characters depending on their audience, there is also more than one way of seeing Antarctica. In addition, the camera reveals how characters’ actions sometimes fail to conform to outside expectations, such as keeping their distance from wild animals. Bob’s appearance in the hut leads to questions from Scott Base about why the camera has been offline for so long, reminding the audience that they are not the only ones watching. This scene also shows how technology can be used to filter different versions of the truth:

VHF – Darren (V.O.) Hey Stella, you’ve been very quiet lately. We were wondering why your web cam’s been switched off?

...

Stella: (giggling) Technical hitches, wiring. No biggie, we’ll sort it. Over.

VHF – Darren (V.O.): Just that one of the guys thought he saw a penguin in your hut the other day. Over.

Stella: Roger Darren. A tagged bird followed me back. He was egg-less. Got really broody but he’s found a surrogate egg now, so all’s well. Over. (Chanwai-Earle 53)

In fact, Bob is still in the hut in contravention of environmental protocols, which is why Stella has turned the camera off. In this case, what can’t be seen by the outside world mirrors what can’t be said about Cam’s death, drawing attention to the fact that the

couple's isolation cannot erase what has gone before. This in turn gives weight to the idea that Antarctica is not a blank slate, as conceptualised by earlier writers, but a place which people experience subjectively, filtered through their past experiences.

Revisiting Antarctica

Heat was promoted with the tagline: "A woman, a man and a penguin. Theatre of the Antarctic," brazenly laying claim to Antarctica in promotional material. In many ways the treatment of Antarctica in *Heat* does hark back to earlier productions where the plateau allowed for no distractions from the human struggle at hand. While the indoor setting of a cluttered hut allows plenty of opportunity for distraction, even this clutter ceases to distract after a long period of time, such as the year Stella and John endure. With nowhere to run and Bob the penguin coming between them, they are forced to face their relationship issues and come to terms with their son's death. *Heat* is similar to *Südpolexpedition* and *The Fire on the Snow* in that it tells an intensely personal story and uses Antarctica's remoteness to focus in on a human story, but it nevertheless sees Antarctica as a place that is part of a bigger system. The fact that the play is powered by renewable energy shows an awareness of the interconnected nature of the world's systems, while the block of ice on stage serves as a physical reminder of Antarctica's materiality. These environmental elements largely surround the play rather than being present in the performance text, but this in itself is a sign that the way playwrights think about Antarctica has changed, indicating a more integrated view of theatre, the environment and everyday life.

Instead of a being a remote and isolated corner of the earth that is other to all that we know, Adebayo's Antarctica is an integral part of the global climate system.⁵⁰ This becomes obvious in the Griot's reference to the ozone hole, a hole that was discovered by scientists working in Antarctica but which has had an impact on many other parts of the globe:

⁵⁰ Adebayo is adamant that "It's also really important to talk about climate change with people in Africa." (qtd. in Adebayo, Mason and Osbourne "No Straight Answers" 18).

A little pin-prick of pollution
 Opens a hole in our protection.
 The earth's lungs are stretched
 With the last gasps of a whale
 And both the rich and the poor move closer to the sea.
 And the cold heats
 And the ice secretly retreats. (Adebayo 189)

Antarctica is represented not as a faraway continent on which human stories play out, but as a thermometer for the state of the world as a whole. This thermometer is intimately bound up with human activity around the globe. These plays show how the continent is present in everyday choices as simple as turning off the lights to save electricity, using less fossil fuel, or refusing to tour a production because of the carbon footprint doing so would leave. Adebayo's refusal to tour her show to New York (Adebayo "No Straight Answers," 18) is analogous to *Heat* being powered off the grid, as both choices mirror the thematic concerns of the plays. For Adebayo and Chanwai-Earle, the Antarctic continent is closely linked to everyday life and choices, giving it an immediacy that is not present in earlier productions that represent Antarctica upon the stage.

Adebayo and Chanwai-Earle encourage the audience to look at Antarctica in a new way, but in terms of place and space the most important aspect of their plays is the way they return to Antarctica and allow the continent to come first, rather than serve as a backdrop to stories with men at their heart. Where once Antarctica was seen as a white desert, devoid of colour or comfort and represented thus, these plays show how that monochromatic view has given way to the concept of white light. This Antarctica is made up of all the colours in the spectrum thanks to intertextuality, multiple voices and a conscious awareness of a whole range of histories. These final plays reveal how the ice can have an impact on the lives of those who will never set foot on the continent and force a rethink of the divisions between "place" and "space." They challenge the borders of the theatre, incorporating on-site Antarctic footage and energy generation into their own productions, whilst illustrating how the actions of the audience have a direct impact upon Antarctica, that faraway place. At the same time, references to melting ice and the phenomenological

impact this has on people on distant shorelines suggest that Antarctica is becoming tangible to those in other parts of the world, blurring the lines between “place” and “space.” In a world where “anywhere is linked to everywhere” (Glasberg 2012, 8), Antarctica plays a part in the lives of us all.

Conclusion

In 1818 Captain James Clark Ross claimed that the Arctic wilderness was “beyond the power of art to represent” (Daniels 297). Many similar claims have been made about Antarctica; at 14 million square kilometres, the vastness of the continent has proven to be problematic when it comes to representation. Nevertheless, Antarctica has been represented in many ways, including on the theatrical stage. The plays in this study chart the development of awareness about the southern continent over the past 80 years, with the different ways of imagining and representing Antarctica upon the stage characterising a variety of ways of thinking about place, space, the environment and the world around us. Elena Glasberg’s in-depth study *Antarctica as Cultural Critique: The Gendered Politics of Scientific Exploration and Climate Change* provides a cultural commentary on the ways Antarctica has been viewed in a wider sense, as it “examines conflicting modes of approaching, arriving at, and making sense of the ice, not as a symbol or as a new territory to be controlled, but as a material reality that itself has been part of how life on earth has been shaped” (xv). This journey is paralleled in the play texts examined in this study, with early plays using Antarctica as a backdrop to tell human stories about sacrifice and later playwrights recognising the continent as interconnected with the rest of the world rather than being a discrete and remote unit at the bottom of the globe. The ice that is “so easily converted to symbolic enemy, wilderness, or data field” is in fact “a very unsettling and unconventional terrain” (Glasberg 2012, 125) that has been experienced, imagined and interpreted in many different ways.

One of these ways is upon the stage. Richard Eyre notes that “Theatre is a medium that lives in the present tense... it must reflect the heartbeat of its time” (Eyre and Wright 378). Examining plays that are set in the south can therefore provide unique insights into the different ways Antarctica has been viewed over the past 80 years. Early plays follow “In Scott’s Footsteps,” with Reinhard Goering’s *Die Südpolexpedition des Kapitäns Scott* and Douglas Stewart’s *The Fire on the Snow* presenting the legend of Scott within a theatrical context for the first time. In both cases Antarctica is closely bound up with Heroic Era stories

of supreme sacrifice and the icy landscape is used to foreground a human story of endurance. Ideas of sacrifice and heroism held particular currency at this time because of the context of the World Wars. Goering compares Scott's death to those on the battlefields of Europe, while Stewart remains acutely aware of how Scott's altruistic sacrifice was used as a model for British soldiers. Poetic language and, in Goering's case, the structure of a three part tragedy, are used to reinforce the legendary status of the story of "Scott of the Antarctic" in both plays. They create the tradition of telling Heroic Era stories upon the stage, a tradition on which subsequent plays either build upon or react against. Importantly, the Antarctic setting remains a background concern, attractive precisely because of its lack of features to distract from the human struggles that play out on the stage. As a result, these plays that follow "In Scott's Footsteps" treat the Antarctic setting as subordinate to an Antarctic legend.

Later "Retelling" plays see Scott become discontinuous as a historical figure as the concept of the hero is subverted and ideas of sacrifice, honour and colonialism are all called into question. Wolfgang Weyrauch's *Das grüne Zelt*, Howard Brenton's *Scott of the Antarctic* and Ted Tally's *Terra Nova* all seek to remove the character of Scott from his legendary pedestal in order to critique the attitudes and values that led to his elevated status. Changing values in the aftermath of World War Two made it impossible to romanticise death, meaning that the ideas of sacrifice and endurance that formed the pillars of the Scott legend were no longer relevant. "Scott of the Antarctic" came to stand for an outmoded set of cultural values and assumptions and this made his story ripe for attack. By taking a story of great heroic sacrifice and presenting it in a sporting arena (Brenton) or associating it with humanising the characters (Tally), these playwrights undermine the heroism of Scott's polar march and question the exceptionalism of his actions. They combine language and setting to present Scott's narrative in a new way, mirroring the questioning process that was also taking place within both historiographic circles and society at large. By undermining the foundations of a story that is so closely bound up with the southern continent these playwrights allow the untangling of Heroic Era stories from the Antarctica setting, paving the way for both to be imagined independently of one another. This revision of Scott's story also sets in motion a questioning process that can later be applied to place-making itself.

Where these “Retelling” plays fractured the singular version of Scott, the later plays that I have classed under the term “Reimagining” go further, presenting multiple versions of reality. Manfred Karge’s *Die Eroberung des Südpols* and Patricia Cornelius’ *Do Not Go Gentle...* see the characters create their own versions of Antarctica upon the stage, using an imagined icescape to help them deal with their own personal struggles with unemployment and aging respectively. In these plays story leads to the construction of setting: in acting out Amundsen and Scott’s narratives the characters come to create their own versions of the Antarctic. This approach allows for an exploration of the fragility of place and highlights the importance of subjectivity in the place-making process, as many versions of reality play out simultaneously. Characters talk of icescapes and the polar plateau as they traverse the stage, but these meta-theatrical plays do not represent Antarctica directly. Instead, they stage the construction of place, using polar narratives as a vehicle to address contemporary social issues. These plays show how Antarctica no longer has to be a direct setting in order to conjure up particular associations, narratives and beliefs in the minds of the audience. This situation, where Antarctic stories can be addressed independently of the Antarctic setting, has become possible thanks to the “Retelling” plays that dismantled a legend and in doing so, made room for an understanding of Antarctica that was not solely defined by Heroic Era stories.

Finally, Mojisola Adebayo’s *Moj of the Antarctic* and Lynda Chanwai-Earle’s *Heat* see playwrights return to using Antarctica as a setting, but here place takes precedence over – and directly inspires – story. In the case of Adebayo, this returning is literal, as she is the only playwright in this study to travel to Antarctica and gain first-hand experience of the continent. Chanwai-Earle adds a first-hand flavour to her production by using props from Antarctica New Zealand, but the use of self-generated power to run the production is more important. This technique indicates her acute awareness of the impact humans have on Antarctica through their energy use in everyday life, a theme that is at the heart of both of these “Returning” plays. This development was forecast long before these last plays premiered: in 1987 Historian Edwin Mickleburgh gestured towards the coming tide of environmental concern when he observed that “there is a glimpse of a possible re-orientation of the values that has its genesis in Antarctica, a way in which man might come to regard earth as a whole, politically, economically, and environmentally” (qtd. in Glasberg

2012, 2). This is exactly what has happened in these final works, where Adebayo and Chanwai-Earle reveal the political, economic and environmental threads that link Antarctica to every other place on the planet. Starting with an environmental idea such as melting ice or the science behind the ozone hole, they allow narrative to grow from setting by using the Antarctic continent as the starting point for their plays. These stories both refer back to earlier versions of Antarctic stories, providing a postmodern and postcolonial perspective on older narratives, and highlight modern day environmental concerns. In doing so they show how Antarctica has become part of a global network of commerce, climate, politics, perspectives and story.

While Antarctica is a setting for each of these plays, every version of Antarctica differs both in terms of staging choices and attitudes towards place. These plays illustrate a progression in how Antarctica has been represented upon the stage, and this progression parallels how we have thought about Antarctica in general. As the continent has become more accessible, Heroic Era stories have been overlaid by those of scientists, tourists and Arts fellows, all of whom are aware of Antarctica's human history as they lay down their own layer of personal narrative onto the Ice. Glasberg explains the mounting flood of voices on the continent thus: "Whether by direct representatives of governments, private adventurers, tourists, or more likely, associates of national science programs, polar ice has become evermore filled-in, storied" (2012, 4). This filling-in process is sure to continue into the future, leading to new interpretations both on and off the Ice.

Antarctica's current accessibility has led to a wider range of installations and site-specific theatre being created. These multi-media performances are outside the scope of this theatre project, but they are nonetheless important, all the more so because of their contemporary nature. Pierre Huyghe's *A Journey that Wasn't* and Jenny Coverack's *A Father for My Son* indicate that a new wave of Antarctic-based theatre is turning its attention to the Ice itself, the place that has provided the source of so many historical narratives and continues to dominate debates about climate change. Multimedia productions present an interesting field of investigation for a future project, particularly because as Antarctica becomes more accessible to installation artists and for site-specific theatre more possibilities for performance will emerge.

Physical and imagined encounters merge within the context of the theatre, with actors present but inhabiting a constructed landscape. Performance bridges the gap to a faraway place by recreating it upon the stage, creating a version that can be experienced by the viewers firsthand even as they witness its very construction. Theatre therefore forces the audience to become aware of the way the imagination engages with the real, foregrounding a process that happens whenever we engage with any place. The physical and temporal qualities of theatre also bring ideas of place and space to the fore in other ways by encouraging active imagination of a setting that is often located “elsewhere,” such as Antarctica. They take us to the centre of the continuum that links place to space and experience to abstraction (Cresswell, 7). This process reveals the fact that we encounter every space through imagination and that place and space are not the diametric opposites they may have first seemed.

Staging is an ideal way to think through the problems of place, space and nation inherent whenever we talk about Antarctica. As examples of cultural production, plays and their treatment of imagined Antarctic space provide valuable insights into the ways in which attitudes towards the continent have developed and been expressed. As such, they effectively track the values associated with Antarctica at different points in time. By gaining an understanding of these past modes of questioning we are able to reflect on contemporary questions and better understand how our current concepts of Antarctica are developing. In narrating the development of the imagination, these plays show how Antarctica has gone from being seen as a blank white page for heroic stories to existing as both a palimpsest and a globally-connected continent. Just as white light is made up of all the colours of the spectrum, today the whiteness of Antarctica represents the sum of many stories working together and against each other, layer upon layer. These are the stories that have played out across the wide white stage, even as the Ice itself broods beneath them all.

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