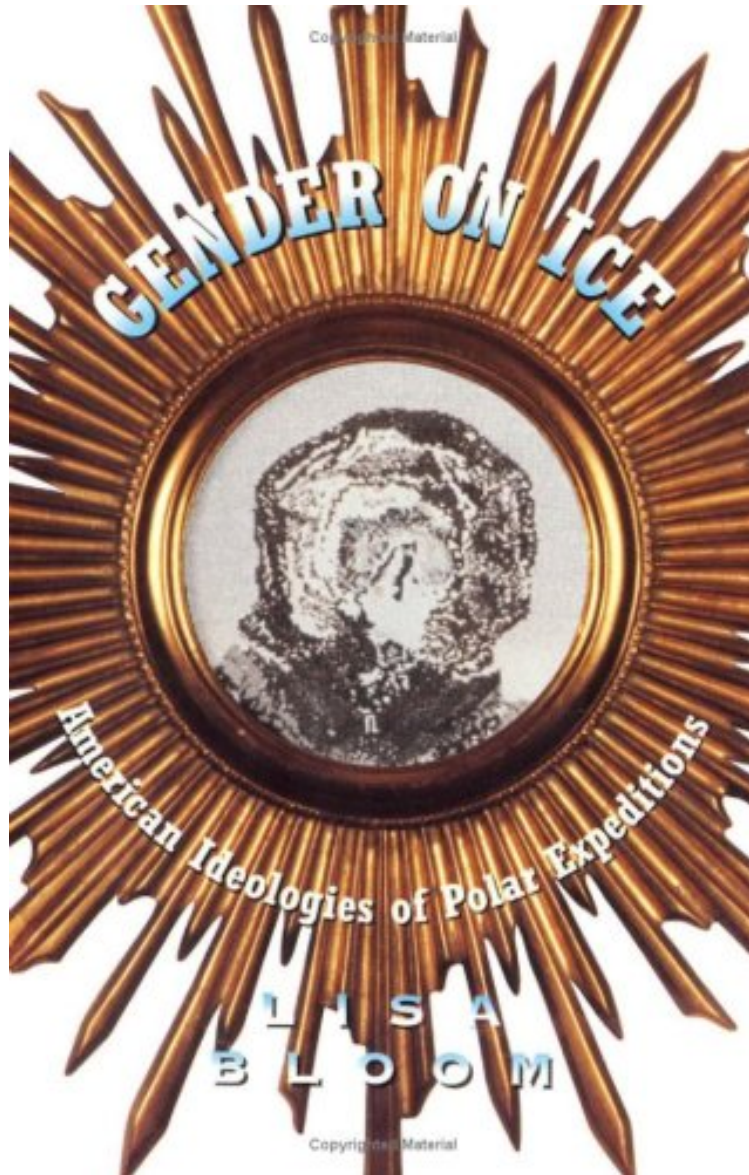


[E-BOOK] Gender On Ice: American Ideologies of Polar Expeditions (American Culture)

Gender On Ice: American Ideologies of Polar Expeditions (American Culture)

Lisa Bloom

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Lisa Bloom : Gender On Ice: American Ideologies of Polar Expeditions (American Culture) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gender On Ice: American Ideologies of Polar Expeditions (American Culture):

In this work, the author focuses on the conquest of the North Pole as she reveals how popular print and visual media, including photography and video, defined and shaped American national ideologies from the early 20th century to the present. She goes on to analyze gendered and racial constructions and idioms of American identity by examining the powerful and continuing cultural investment in the legacy of the so-called discovery of the North Pole in 1909, and the ongoing celebration of white explorers, such as Robert Peary, as "heroes". Her analysis of the polar expedition opens up contemporary questions in cultural studies about gender, race, male sexuality and social relations of science. Bloom demonstrates how the North Pole's literal emptiness made polar expedition appear in the dominant media as an intrinsically pure field of knowledge, rather than a form of colonial discourse. She portrays the National Geographic Society as a magazine and institution that tied itself to the national image of the United States in the early 20th century and seized the poles and polar expeditions as a metaphor for modernity and progress. By focusing on the development and legitimation of an American national discourse and identity that excludes women and people of colour, "Gender on Ice" offers a significant contribution to current debates on multiculturalism.

From Publishers Weekly Bloom makes a good case for her intriguing central thesis, that both Robert Peary and Robert Falcon Scott rendered accounts of their respective polar expeditions in terms that inflated the heroism of their deeds and exemplified "the particular imperial and masculinist ideologies that each characterized." Of the two, only Peary receives extended scrutiny as Bloom examines his unwillingness to share the glory with Matthew Henson (the black explorer who accompanied him); the question of whether or not he actually reached the North Pole; and his relationship with the National Geographic Society, which provided funding for his venture and promoted the myth of Peary as white male hero. Also interesting, but less effectively integrated, is Bloom's discussion of National Geographic magazine's "colonial discourse of women and development." Although the author offers many astute observations, the text is marred by her own prejudices, which keep her from recognizing that women can be exploitive colonialists and allow her to see Peary as "simply incompetent" in failing to reach the Pole while not tagging Henson--who apparently deserves credit but not blame--in the same way. Bloom is a Mellon postdoctoral fellow at Stanford University. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From the Back Cover 'In this book, Bloom takes what might seem a very localized subject and shows how it opens up to all the central questions today in cultural studies around gender, nationhood, the politics of imperialism, race, male homosocial behavior, and the sociality of science. Gender on Ice has an eloquence and elegance that positively refreshing and the prose is stylish, engaging, and direct.' - Dana Polan, University of Pittsburgh