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Sheep bound for mountain pastures in Lyngsalpan ['The Lyngen Alps'] in Northern Norway 2014. Photo: Tor Arne Lillevoll.

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As the Arctic ice retreats, various aspects of the region are attracting increasing attention in science, politics and the media as well as in the arts, firing imaginations regarding future scenarios and generating greater interest in relevant events of the past. The book under review here fits into and contributes to this general trend. It is a product of research funded by the Norwegian Research Council under the auspices of a broad project entitled “Arctic Discourses.” The project ran from 2005 to 2012, involving a collaborative network of 17 researchers (Ryall *et al.* [eds.] 2010; Schimanski *et al.* [eds.] 2011; for a review of the latter book see Heith 2012). Currently, a second project is being financed through the Research Council’s polar programme (POLARPROG). It is entitled “Arctic Modernities” (2013–2016) and, like the previous one, is also situated at Tromsø University (UiT, now also calling itself the Arctic University of Norway). These two research projects constitute a cultural sciences prong of a much larger funding effort, most of which has gone to the natural sciences, to boost Norway’s Arctic profile and identity.

The authors of the present book are, in other words, participants in an extensive network of researchers in what are nowadays called the Arctic humanities (Sörlin 2015). Ulrike Spring is a cultural historian, also specialized in *Germanistik*, and a onetime curator (2003–2004) at the Wien Museum in the Austrian capital. With research interests in museology, archival and critical cultural heritage studies, she is now affiliated with the University College of Sogn og Fjordane. Johan Schimanski originally hails from Sweden, but is now settled in Norway as a prominent scholar of comparative European literature. He is affiliated with both the University of Oslo and UiT, at the latter in the Department of Culture and Literature. The collaboration between the two authors breaks new ground and demonstrates the power and significance of the cultural turn in the historiography of Arctic science and exploration (Walsch 2015).

Before us we have a formidable monograph with a bread text of 550 pages that deal with the privately sponsored Austro-Hungarian *Tegetthoff* expedition of 1872–1874 to Franz Josef Land led by Karl Weyprecht (commander-at-sea) and Julius Payer (commander-on-land). Payer was a military officer, experienced alpinist and cartographer who had already gained Arctic experience as a member of the Second German North Polar Expedition on the *Germania* (1869–1870) to East
Greenland. Weyprecht was an officer in the Austro-Hungarian Navy. In 1871, he joined Payer on a preliminary expedition to Novaya Zemlya. The expedition that followed—led by the pair jointly—is more famous because it involved the first recorded discovery, mapping and naming of some places in a glaciated archipelago of 191 islands in the north-eastern Barents Sea. It was, in other words, the first expedition to introduce to the world Franz Josef Land, named in honour of Franz Josef I, the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, Croatia and Bohemia (Barr 1995; Capelotti [ed.] 2015). It was soon followed by annual hunting expeditions conducted by small Norwegian ships as well as expeditions headed by a number of legendary British and American explorers that also left varying legacies of both new discoveries, hardships and failures.

Today, the archipelago is inhabited almost solely by Russian military base personnel located in the Arctic Ocean, Barents Sea and Kara Sea. Additionally, there is a meteorological station with year-round postings and, during the summer season, scientists are active in the area. When weather conditions permit, there are occasional sorties by tourists on icebreakers or tourist cruise ships, the latter sometimes operating from Longyearbyen, Svalbard. Franz Josef Land’s nearest large Arctic island neighbours are north-eastern Svalbard and the northern tip of Novaya Zemlya, situated respectively 260 kilometres to the west and 360 kilometres to the southeast.

The story of the dramatic events of the expedition of 24 men into the Arctic on the steam-aided three-masted schooner, the Admirall Tegethoff, has been told many times. Its intent was to explore the northern coastal area of Siberia and possibly the then not yet traversed Northeast Passage, but that objective failed. A couple of months after its departure from Tromsø, where the Norwegian captain Elling Carlsen was taken on board as ice pilot and harpooner, the ship became firmly trapped in the grips of the pack ice north of Novaya Zemlya and drifted instead continuously for eleven months towards hitherto unknown polar regions. In his account of the expedition published in 1876, Payer remarks: “No longer were we explorers, but passengers of the ice against our own free will.” Three of these winged words have found their way into the title of the present book—Passagiere des Eises. But, the two authors Johan Schimanski and Ulrike Spring also subsume a further meaning in their title, suggesting there were also other entities that travelled or circulated—metaphors, images, concepts and other cultural tags connecting the Arctic to Europe and vice versa.

When the human passengers, believed to be lost, surfaced again to re-enter the civilized world, a host of ideational “passengers” were
generated, and heroes culturally constructed. In the mass media of the day, both fictional and realistic phantasms circulated through Europe and were projected back onto the polar ice as “Arctic imaginaries.” Schimanksi and Spring’s take on their subject differs radically from the traditional approach of historians of polar science and exploration. The focus is not primarily on the conventional narrative of the expedition, its motives, the mapping and scientific achievements and their significance or connections with later expeditions. Nor do they foreground the plans and activities of the leading personalities, all the dramatic events, or how the men, finally using small boats, were able to reach Novaya Zemlya where they were by sheer chance picked up on 24 August 1874 by two Russian schooners who still happened to be there at the tail end of a fishing trip. All this information is there, but viewed through a different analytical lens.

The volume under review starts from the fact that, back in Europe, the members of the expedition were by most believed to be dead and lost until suddenly on 3 September 1874 telegrams sent off from Vardø in northern Norway told another story. A fuller picture emerged as more telegrams were sent soon afterwards from several other Norwegian towns to various European cities and towns destined for families, friends, sponsors and newspapers back home reporting that all but one of the members of the expedition were alive and well and that they would soon turn up in the capital of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Vienna. The book is concerned with the media coverage of “the return” of the expedition to civilization and all the celebrations that took place, first en route as the men were received in various places in Norway, Sweden and Germany. Secondly, the study discusses the narratives relating to the grandiose display of welcome by masses of people and many dignitaries when the expeditioners arrived on 25 September 1874 by rail at Vienna’s Nordbahnhof. Thirdly, there is a perusal of the more diverse media coverage of an amazing wave of festivities and other events that followed for another month and, thereafter, subsequent echoes now and then in new contexts as time went on.

The focus is on cultural reception history based on discourse analysis of reports in newspapers, family weeklies, posters, exhibitions, Payer and Weyprecht’s lectures and pictures of them posing as Artic explorers in photographic studios, as well as satirical sketches in magazines. The conceptual frame of performativity theory is used to interpret literary styles, tropes and the strategies journalists employed to portray banquets, public gatherings, meetings in scientific academies, beer-hall talks, theatre plays, poetry readings and other festive activities. Nar-
rative is viewed as both a making and a doing (Peterson & Langellier 2006). With this in mind, Schimanski and Spring have read through several thousand newspaper articles written in several different languages. The book’s bibliographic list of what they call primary sources in the changing “mediascapes” (short for media landscapes) includes, apart from expedition reports, the proceedings of learned societies and other books, about 150 different newspapers, weeklies and the like issued at the time with names linking them to 50 different cities, towns and even villages, not only in the Austrian-Hungarian empire but also some emanating from Britain, Germany, Norway and Sweden. In the case of the latter two countries one finds witnessing of celebrations and meetings reported in newsprint from, for example, Tromsø, Trondheim, Kristiania (Oslo), Bergen, Stockholm, Malmö, Örebro, Finspong (now Finspång), Linköping and Norrköping. The reason Finspång featured in all this was that Payer and a companion went there for an audience with Oscar II, the King of Sweden and Norway who happened to be there to open a subsidiary stretch (Pålsboda–Finspong) of railway connecting to the trunk line between Stockholm and Göteborg. There they also met the astronomer Hugo Gyldén and geologist Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld who both, like Oscar II, valued scientific exploration of the Arctic and expansion of the railway net equally as signs of progress and modernity.

In other words, we have here a study of celebratory practices and the constructions of polar heroes in a variety of different contexts, reflecting traces of micro-histories wherein one finds inscribed a range of different values, interests, ideologies and cultural traditions. It is these that are reconstructed with the discourse analyst’s eye to detect what words and images tell us not only about the expedition and its men but also about the societies and locales in which the reporting was done. Each discursive fragment is regarded as an historical act of representation that was continuously integrated with other historical contexts over time as stories got retold, recycled and—in the process—transformed right up to present day. An inspirational precursor in Scandinavian literature appears to be Per Rydén’s book on Salomon August Andrée’s Arctic balloon expedition (1897) and its aftermath. Espen Ytreberg’s paper on Roald Amundsen’s South Pole expedition as a media event is also mentioned, as are Urban Wråkberg’s studies of the embedding of Swedish polar exploration and research in culture, science and politics, and his important work on the history and politics of naming (Rydén 2003; Wråkberg 1999; Wråkberg 2002; Ytreberg 2014).

The human passengers of the Admiral Tegetthoff made up a multi-ethnic social mosaic with codes of class difference on board between
officers and sailors, the latter stemming from different parts of the Imperial and Royal Austro-Hungarian (double) monarchy (formed 1867) reaching to the shores of the Adriatic Sea. This afforded journalists another theme: media in retrospect handily depicted the ship as a microcosm of the Habsburg dynasty in the process of slowly cracking under the pressure of its recent defeat (1866) by the Prussian army and the subsequent advent (1873) of a rampant economic crisis—the speculative simile, albeit tacit, lay near to hand, the ship suffering a battering by the Arctic ice and finally having to be abandoned. Fictional and factual representations blended. Satirical journals even had graphic representations (reproduced in the book) of polar bears dressed in European clothes or adopting Viennese ways of café life. Images attached to the newfound land pictured it as desolate and forbidding, but also as a natural resource to be exploited; metaphors of purity and danger and a wilderness to be tamed mixed with a belief in science as a means to harness Nature.

Different representations of the Arctic, the authors demonstrate, were contingent on place, politics and national self-image. Production and recycling of reports and imaginations of “the Arctic” in Viennese journalism, in particular after the surprise return of the expedition, is foregrounded. Typical aspects of the Viennese reception are contrasted with the celebratory practices that overwhelmed the expeditioners en route in Norway. In Bergen, for example, celebrations tended to situate the expedition in a scientific discourse, but in a much more material way than was the case in Austria: in Norway the connection to practical economic interests such as sealing and new hunting grounds was foregrounded. This was also apparent in separate festivities later in Tromsø to celebrate the town’s local son Elling Carlsen who stayed put at home, declining an invitation to join Payer and Weyprecht onward to enjoy greater limelight in the imperial capital of the Habsburg monarchy.

By contrast, in Vienna where over a hundred thousand people were reported to have attended various festivities, the focus was more on aesthetic and spectacular dimensions while scientific aspects were played up in an altruistic spirit, namely as symbolic of universal enlightenment values and new knowledge to contribute to the progress of the world in general (also see Spring & Schimanski 2015). The reason the authors give is that prospects of actual economic exploitation of Franz Josef Land were hardly conceived of as a feasible undertaking in the troubled double monarchy. A visible fault line, moreover, existed between the rising bourgeois society with its advocacy of modernity and the values of science, mercantilism and patriotism (both local and national) on the one hand, and on the other hand, backward-looking forces of a conservative
brand and the Catholic Church. The authors do an excellent job of probing and analysing the multiplicity of contexts, each one with its complex ideational, historical, political and socio-cultural contingencies, as well as contradictions, and what various actors within these scenes appeared to be signalling.

Concentration is on laudatory speeches, artistic events and academic lectures as well as popular talks and writing, plus other events refracted through the lens of the media during a few autumn months in 1874. However, as already indicated, the reception history does not end there, since integration of parts of the early discourses into later historical contexts followed intermittently over five or six historical periods right up to our own time. Thus, the book’s narrative necessarily extends far beyond the events of 1874.

The entire work is structured around a number of different themes that form the respective thematic focal points successively clustered and elaborated in four overarching parts. Part I (“Reception,” comprising Chapters 1–4) is by far the most extensive one, devoted as it is to the actual reception during a few months of 1874. It deals with what is called “Northern competence,” that is, the motives and capacity to engage with the Arctic in economic terms and/or scientific terms, thus distinguishing between material and instrumental symbolic dimensions, with distinct differences appearing between Norway and the Austro-Hungarian empire. Thereupon follows an elaborate description of the “spectacle” in Vienna when the returning expeditioners are greeted and feasted. Gender differences are traced in the ways men and women, respectively, during welcoming events relate to and perceive the polar travellers, even in terms of body language (also see Schimanski & Spring 2009a). A third theme pertains to the “spectacle discourse” played out in the media, and a close reading of the same. A final section takes up the fanfare in the peripheries of the Central European empire as members of the ship’s crew, the ordinary seamen come home to local communities where further celebrations and media coverage cast them in the roles of local heroes—a democratization of the epithet “hero.”

Part II (Chapters 5–8) is entitled “Identities.” It first traces the theme of the Teggethoff as a microcosm of the troubled double monarchy. In a second section, the identity-construction of polar heroes and their features is found to follow the lines of social differentiation and ethnicity; first the officers, petty officers and a machinist in one category, thereafter in a third section discussion turns to the sailors, the multi-ethnic crew with their different tongues and affiliations as another distinct group, and recognition of some individuals who stood out. Here appear also
differences in modes of representing characters in the two worlds of the
double monarchy, the Hungarian as opposed to the Germanic-Austrian,
for example in the way the Hungarian born ship’s surgeon, Dr Gyula
Képes, was lauded in his homeland compared to some ironic caricatures
of him featured in the German-language Viennese press. And, of course,
there is the question of how the Norwegian ice pilot Elling Carlsen was
occasionally mentioned with his first name changed to “Olaf,” when of-
tentimes he was more or less invisible in journalistic discourses. Finally,
the authors return to the issues of science, education, politics and their
resonance in life and reason on the ship as a microcosm and in the de-
sires and aspirations of the liberal bourgeoisie in a secular Austria where
a dynamic interplay was simultaneously unfolding between state, peo-
ple(s), and imperial power.

Part III (“The Arctic,” Chapters 9–12) concerns the discursive ap-
propriation of the Arctic. Different representations of the Arctic and its
multiple facets are made visible—the Arctic in Vienna, terra incognita,
terra nullius, myth(s) and mystique of the Arctic and efforts to domes-
ticate or bring order into the imaginary assemblages by connecting to
the known, for example to contemporary readers’ own experience and
knowledge of the European Alpine regions. A second focal point is “me-
dialisation of the Arctic,” visualizations and iconization, that is, con-
struing certain entities as iconic in the printed and other media—polar
bears, the Aurora Borealis. Furthermore, they note a process of commod-
ification and branding, as the terms Arctic and North Pole—or associ-
ated images—were attached as hyphenated labels for a while to various
products such as clothing articles, furniture, lanterns, etcetera to signal
quality. There were also “Weyprecht socks,” “Franz Josef-Land Bier,”
Northpole champagne, and photographs of the polar heroes became
popular collector’s items. Thirdly, there is the depiction of the Arctic as
a scientific space, the concept of the North Pole, the question of wheth-
er or not it was reachable, its environs, the hypothesis (rejected by Payer)
of a large interior open sea, and so on. The authors also provide a com-
prehensive discussion of the politics of mapping and naming practices,
how these in the topography of the Franz Josef Land-cryosphere with
its mountains, fjords, bays and capes replicate a hierarchy of social or-
der and values back in the civilized world, with monarchs, sponsors and
dignitaries at the top, names of hometown communities at the bottom
and in between the names of leading explorers including those of the
Tegotthoff. Cognitive order inscriptively replicates social order by other
means.

We are reminded how naming and description of a prominent fea-
ture is itself a performative act and a manifestation of power expressed in rituals such as flag-hoisting and messages under cairns erected as evidence of first discovery, meant to be witnessed by members of later expeditions. In a final section, the case is made that the expedition and the discovery of Franz Josef Land was embedded in a contemporary colonial discourse, not in the sense of colonial expansion but through a cultural colonization of what was formerly unknown and mysterious (also see Schimanski & Spring 2009b). Recognizable moral values and images were projected into the new found land to cognitively and symbolically integrate it as a part of Austria. Some of the most effective rhetorical strategies in this respect are found to hinge on the use of metaphors, irony, humour and absurdity in written and visual dress.

Part IV (Chapters 13–18) is entitled “Literature.” With the influence of narrative theory in the 1970s, the earlier relatively rigid and oftentimes essentialist notion of what constitutes literature was loosened up, and reflexivity was introduced (Widdowson 1991). Investigation of boundaries between factive and fictive draws our attention to how the realm of the latter may feed on that of the former. This in turn, the authors argue, calls for a rethinking of genre codes. Narratives of discovery written by early explorers were previously kept outside of, or at most marginalized, in standard histories of literature, but now there is good reason to bring them into that corpus. Journalism, essays, dramatic productions, satire and other writing flourishing in Vienna’s 20 daily newspapers in 1874, particularly in the influential bourgeois liberal-leaning Neue Freie Presse (founded in 1864), displayed many literary qualities that also warrant adding them to the wider contextually contingent notion of literature. This is the argument advanced and evidenced in the introductory chapter of Part IV, where a number of classificatory criteria are discussed. We also meet two new key concepts: “literarisation,” for example literary engagement with scientists’ and explorers’ own accounts (including those found in telegrams, letters, public lectures and scientific reports) that bring about a transformation of the factual expedition into the genre of literature; and “remediatising,” the transposition of subject matter, style and literary strategy from one type of media to another.

During the celebratory and welcoming performances in the autumn of 1874, a mix of factual and literary (textual and visual) storytelling unfolded. In their investigation of the various genres, overlaps as well as crossovers between them, the authors invoke the concept of “discursive transfers.” In their material, they identify a number of specific discursive styles which they characterize in the following keywords: laudatory rhetoric, arctic metaphor, reflexive irony, sensationalism, sublime/ele-
vated, emotional appeal (pathos), and scientifically descriptive. In the five chapters (14–18) that follow the analysis of the literary dimensions in what are mainly journalistic discourses, the different stylistic strategies are traced, their workings explained and illustrated by citing from the vast corpus of texts of different kinds that form the empirical source material for the book.

The in depth studies of laudatory rhetoric in different celebratory contexts and practices make for fascinating reading. A distinction is made between learned speeches and banquet speeches in terms of differences in structure and intonations, how those celebrated are addressed, and how they in return praise their sponsors and other institutions, or apostrophize absent dignitaries and scientific luminaries so as to tacitly construct and legitimate their own authority by referencing universals (learning and powers that be) while rhetorically diminishing their own personal stature or achievements. Also instructive for scholars interested in Arctic humanities are the authors’ methods of situating and clarifying constitutive elements at work in discursive constructions of heroism and moral economies in the literary imagination relating to polar exploration and discovery.

We learn how journalists writing periodic serial articles or essays in newspapers and weeklies sometimes lacked sufficient factual information about the explorers’ personalities, their biographies, or actions back on the ice, or about some unusual manners in the lecture hall. In such cases, gaps were filled with anecdotes and fictional associations plus fragmentary concretizations in order to enliven and heighten the dramaturgical thrust of journalistic narratives. This is referred to as “fictionalization.” The role of anecdotes and allegories as anchor devices in this process is particularly interesting. Irony, a very prevalent style in literary journalistic essays in Vienna in the 1870s, was another genre that used such devices. It was used in feuilletons that distinguished themselves from pedestrian forms of news reporting in other sections of the same paper; in this case the journalist might employ commentary on “the expedition” as a vehicle for oblique cultural, political and social criticism of the Austro-Hungarian regime. In a sense, irony appears as the opposite of laudatory rhetoric, since it allows the writer to convey a double message, affirming the accomplishments of the explorers while at the same time distancing oneself from the self-congratulatory language of officialdom.

The early 1870s was also a time when Jules Verne’s science fiction novels were widely read in both Budapest and Vienna. This partly explains why some journalists sought help there in their efforts to fictively
visualize what suffering and dangers their brave compatriots had experienced in the new found land named after their Kaiser. Allusions to classical Greek mythology, expeditions in Africa, and well-known images of shipwrecks were also drawn upon, resonating with more familiar images such as Caspar David Friedrich’s oil painting Das Eismeer (1823–1824). Schimanski and Spring also discuss Julius Payer’s feuilleton, “Eine Eispressung in der Polarnacht,” a dramatic tone-setting account of the Tegetthoff beset by the ice, an essay published in a major Viennese newspaper already the week before the expedition party’s arrival in Vienna. Payer’s style in this episodic disaster narrative is characterized as subjective and romantic; it operates with strong contrasts and is spiced with metaphors, for example to describe the movement and sounds of the pack ice. This is contrasted with the objectifying prose of Payer’s later book-length expedition narrative (Payer 1876).²

Weyprecht, born and growing up in Germany before he joined the Austro-Hungarian navy, was even more reserved when it came to mingling affective language into his presentations. This may be seen in his address a week before the grand arrival in Vienna. On 18 September 1875, he spoke at the 48th Meeting of German Scientists and Physicians in Graz, Austria, where he outlined the “basic principles of Arctic research” and emphasized the need for an inductive science principle for organizing a network of Arctic stations taking regular measurements of weather and ice conditions with identical devices and at pre-established intervals. It was the concept behind his proposal for what became the First International Polar Year (1882/83) that he worked hard at to promote but did not live to see translated into action (Elzinga 2009).

The final chapter (both of part IV and of the book as a whole) deals with journalism as situated between science and literature. Rydén in his book on the reception history of Andrée’s expedition, similarly identifies three different genres, but in the present volume the scheme is made more dynamic, adding some critical depth, and introducing the notion of hybrid styles (compare above with the idea of “discursive transfers” and “transposition”). The investigation is based on a close reading of Payer’s first extensive report on the expedition that appeared as a long article in the Neue Freie Presse on the very same day the expeditioners arrived in Vienna. The article, entitled simply “Die Nordpol-Expedition” is an interesting example of creative non-fiction, documentary and is solidly factual in content, but in style is adapted to the quasi-literary code and format of the feuilleton. It incorporates several literary elements such as (self)-irony, picturesque icescape descriptions mixed with dramatic recollections of emotional moments of danger and dramatic struggle.
expressed in affective and metaphorical language—Nature portrayed both as sublime and austere. The compositional strategy shifts back and forth, tacking between the logics of descriptive scientific and refined literary narration similar to what can be found in some travel literature of the time. Schimanski and Spring argue that the feuilleton form served as an intellectual space for an “interdiscourse” between explanatory and romanticizing prose, and indicate that journalism accommodated several transitional forms between science and literature, and thus served as a kind of bridge between the arts and sciences. What remains unclear in their analysis is whether they see it simply as a blurring of genre boundaries or as a matter of a scientific narrative being adapted to the literary genre while maintaining its own generic integrity.3

Parts I–IV of the book are flanked by a substantial introduction and a short postscript. The latter recapitulates the purpose and some main themes of the study and summarizes the most important findings as well as their significance for the multidisciplinary field of Arctic humanities. The book is well structured, which makes it easy to follow the various threads of the discussion introduced at the outset and then reappearing again here and there as the text proceeds. There are also two helpful tables (covering 9 pages) with chronological overviews of the many receptions, audiences and celebrations (almost 50 events in all) that took place in Vienna and elsewhere in the course of one year (from September 1874 to October 1975), specifying who participated and the character of the activity. Thereafter come the endnotes (covering a little over 100 pages), a long list of primary and secondary sources consulted, and finally a useful index with names and thematic key words that allows the reader to trace particular points, concepts, arguments and factual information. In many of its chapters, the book raises meta-theoretical questions that have a bearing on the “cultural turn” in our field. Altogether, it is a significant contribution to the history and cultural studies of polar exploration and research, both as a reference work on the Austro-Hungarian expedition to Franz Josef Land and as an exemplar for similar studies—with cross-national comparative angles—dealing with celebratory practices and reception histories of other late nineteenth and early twentieth century polar expeditions. My hope is that the monograph will be translated into English to reach a broader readership.
NOTES

1 Peterson and Langellier (2006) characterize the “performance turn” as one that emphasizes narrative embodied in communication practices, constrained by situational and material conditions, embedded in fields of discourse, and strategically distributed to reproduce and critique existing relations of power and knowledge.

2 The text first appeared as a series of installments, between October 1875 and June 1876, in the *Neue Freie Presse*.

3 Regarding genre theory cf. the visual semiotician Daniel Chandler’s “Notes;” http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/intgenre/chandler_genre_theory.pdf; access date 19 December 2015.

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