



## **South Pole: Nature and Culture (Earth)**

Elizabeth Leane

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As one of two points where the Earth's axis meets its surface, the South Pole should be a precisely defined place. But as Elizabeth Leane shows in this book, conceptually it is a place of paradoxes. An invisible spot on a high, featureless ice plateau, the Pole has no obvious material value, yet it is a highly sought-after location, and reaching it on foot is one of the most extreme adventures an explorer can undertake. The Pole is, as Leane shows, a deeply imagined place, and a place of politics, where a series of national claims converge.

Leane details the important challenges that the South Pole poses to humanity, asking what it can teach us about ourselves and our relationship with our planet. She examines its allure for explorers such as Robert F. Scott and Roald Amundsen, not to mention the myriad writers and artists who have attempted to capture its strange, inhospitable blankness. She considers the Pole's advantages for climatologists and other scientists as well as the absurdities and banalities of human interaction with this place. Ranging from the present all the way back to the ancient Greeks, she offers a fascinating—and lavishly illustrated—story about one of the strangest and most important places on Earth.



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