

Exploration

A Very Short Introduction

By Stewart A. Weaver

Questions for Thought and Discussion

- What is exploration? What distinguishes it from such other forms of travel as migration, tourism, or religious pilgrimage?
- What is the relationship between exploration and geographical discovery? Does one depend on the other?
- What is the relationship between exploration and adventure? Is exploration necessarily adventurous?
- How does exploration lead to cultural convergence? What is the significance of exploration to the broad patterns of global change?
- Who were the first explorers?
- In what sense were the Polynesians explorers? What qualities distinguish their maritime achievements?
- How did Norse exploration ultimately lead to the first European landfall in North America?
- Why is Leif Eiriksson's "discovery" of America less celebrated and/or denigrated than that of Christopher Columbus century's later?
- What motivated the European turn toward Atlantic and Indian Ocean exploration in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries? What do we mark this period out as the "age of exploration and discovery"?
- What were the distinguishing qualities of exploration in the Enlightenment? How did the explorations of Captain James Cook, for instance, compare to those of his maritime predecessors?
- What was the native and/or indigenous contribution to exploration in modern period? To what extent have explorers traditionally relied on native guidance?
- How did the spirit of exploration change with the advent of Romanticism?
- Describe the relationship between exploration and empire in Africa?
- What accounts for the pathological quest for the Northwest Passage? How do we explain the exploratory fascination with the icy wastes of the Arctic?
- What motivated the epic race to the South Pole in the early twentieth century?
- Compare and contrast the exploratory styles and achievements of Roald Amundsen and Robert Scott.
- Is space exploration really exploration at all in the traditional sense? Why, or why not?
- Is space indeed "the final frontier," as Captain Kirk famously claimed?

Other books by the Author

With Maurice Isserman, *Fallen Giants: A History of Himalayan Mountaineering from the Age of Empire to the Age of Extremes* (Yale University Press, 2008)

The Hammonds: A Marriage in History (Stanford University Press, 1997)

John Fielden and the Politics of Popular Radicalism (Oxford University Press, 1987)

Further Reading

John Logan Allen, ed., *North American Exploration* (University of Nebraska Press, 1997)

Felix Driver, *Geographical Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Blackwell, 2001)

Felipe Fernández-Armesto. *Pathfinders: A Global History of Exploration* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006)

Dane Kennedy, ed., *Reinterpreting Exploration: The West in the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014)

John McCannon. *A History of the Arctic: Nature, Exploration, and Exploitation* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012)

Nicholas Thomas, *Cook: The Extraordinary Voyages of Captain James Cook* (New York: Walker, 2003)