

**Masculinity and Religion in the Life and Posthumous
Representations of Antarctic Explorer H. R. Bowers,
c.1902 - 1939**

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Abstract

This thesis is the first academic study of the life of Lt. Henry Robertson ('Birdie') Bowers, the fifth man of Robert Falcon Scott's ill-fated Terra Nova expedition to the South Pole of 1910 - 1913. Bowers played a central role in Scott's last expedition and the famous Cape Crozier Expedition with Edward Wilson and Apsley Cherry-Garrard. Scott included him in the final party of five that marched to the South Pole in January 1912, only to discover they had been preceded by a Norwegian expedition led by Roald Amundsen. Bowers died alongside Scott and Wilson on their return journey from the Pole at the end of March 1912.

This thesis presents the first academic analysis of Bowers in relation to three bodies of scholarship. Firstly, the thesis examines the specialist polar literature to map how Bowers has been represented. Secondly, the thesis engages with scholarship on gender, to situate representations of Bowers within broader trends in the history of masculinities in the first-half of the twentieth century, and to reveal how Bowers conceived of himself as man. Finally, the thesis uses a study of Bowers' faith to intervene in debates about the history of religion on the eve of the First World War.

Chapter one demonstrates that Scott's representation of Bowers as described in his 1913 journals as strong, reliable, indefatigable and cheerful, became the de facto one echoed by Bowers' contemporaries. Chapter two shows that Scott's representation persisted in expedition narratives during the 1920s and 30s, culminating in the Reverend George Seaver's 1938 biography, *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic*. Chapter three is the first study to analyse Bowers' correspondence in detail. It reveals a very different Bowers engaged in family life and expressing complex ideas on many subjects including sexuality, the role of women, politics and the passing of Empire. Chapter four charts Bowers' extensive, peculiar, and hitherto undocumented personal engagement with faith and, in particular, with the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and the work of its founder Charles Taze Russell. It reveals a complex character whose actions, including his decision to remain in the tent with Scott at the end, cannot be fully understood, without an appreciation of his faith.

The implications of this research for historians are three-fold, demonstrating the significant interplay between faith, manliness and identity in the period. Firstly, Bowers offers a valuable case study in how representations become fixed, and subsequently remain unchallenged. Secondly, the analysis of under explored personal correspondence of a well-known heroic figure reveals the importance of subjective experience through autobiographical writings. In keeping with other historians, this thesis supports the emerging focus on the individual nature of masculinity. Thirdly, a consideration of the personal faith of significant historical characters cannot be overlooked. An exploration of men's religious faith and its effects on their subjective experience of being male is under explored. A detailed appreciation of Bowers' faith provides a new perspective not only on his role in the final few months of the Terra Nova expedition, but more generally in charting the nature of religion in subjective masculine experiences.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Introduction

Bowers (Birdie) stout, strong redhair [sic]. Most energetic of all, runs stores, always working, reads little, don't argue much but a hopeful conservative, enjoys chaffing. Gets on well with everyone.¹

Nearly one hundred years ago the geologist Frank Debenham echoed his fellow geologist, Griffith Taylor, in his description of his colleague Henry Robertson 'Birdie' Bowers as 'a fat little man with a perfectly immense nose and red bristly hair, unquenchable spirits and energy'.² Such colourful characterizations of Bowers have gone largely unexamined, in spite of the considerable scholarship on the British Antarctic Expedition 1910-1913, led by Captain Robert Falcon Scott, RN. Although representations of Bowers have continually appeared in relation to other team members, he has never been the subject of a detailed academic study. This dissertation presents the first scholarly analysis of the public representation and personal testimonies of Birdie Bowers, with particular reference to masculinities and religious faith.

1. Biography

Born in Greenock, Scotland on 29 July 1883 the son of a merchant seaman with links to the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) Alexander, and a deeply religious mother Emily, who had taught as a missionary, Henry Robertson Bowers was the youngest of three children.³ His father having died when he was a young child, he was

¹ Griffith Taylor 'Dramatis Personae of the Expedition', no date MS1003/9/591- attachment to 9/590, National Library of Australia.

² Ranulph Sir Fiennes, *Captain Scott* (London: Coronet, 2004), p.171.

³ George Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers of the Antarctic* (London: John Murray, 1938), pp.1-2.

brought up by his mother in a staunchly protestant, devout household. Although in possession of a modest income, Bowers and his two sisters, May and Edie, were forced to work and contribute financially to the family.⁴

Educated first at Streatham High School where the family had moved after his father's death in 1887, he joined the merchant marine service at 14 via *HMS Worcester*, a training ship based at Greenhithe.⁵ Travelling all over the world, but mostly to India, Burma, and the Persian Gulf, he maintained close relationships through copious correspondence, often writing to his family several times a week.⁶ Rebecca Earle has written that through the study of correspondence, 'we can watch how people dealt with anxiety, illness and isolation. We can see how they found means of self-expression, personal development and even power'.⁷ In his letters Bowers discussed not only the happenings of his day-to-day life, but also deeper, more personal, issues relating to his faith.

Bowers possessed a deep fascination with polar exploration and discussed his desires for Antarctic adventure with his family: 'Thank you both for the cuttings about the SP [South Pole] expeditions. I thought it splendid. My only regret was that I was not one of them. If only they leave the Pole alone for a bit they may give me a chance'.⁸ In 1910, the former President of the RGS, Sir Clements Markham, approached Bowers after he had spent five years serving in the East, to see if he had an interest in 'going south'.⁹ Roland Huntford has argued that it was Bowers' time on *Worcester* that influenced Markham, who had forged strong links with the training

⁴ Anne Strathie, *Birdie Bowers: Captain Scott's Marvel* (Gloucester: The History Press 2012) See particularly Chapters 1-3 for a detailed biography of Bowers early life.

⁵ Fiennes, *Captain Scott*, Strathie, *Birdie Bowers*, p.22, Fiennes, *Captain Scott*, p.170.

⁶ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, pp. 46-129.

⁷ Rebecca Earle, *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p.25.

⁸ H. Bowers to M. Bowers, 23 April 1909, MS1505 1/1/2/63, BJ, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge (hereafter SPRI).

⁹ H. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 9 April 1910, MS1505 1/1/3/82, BJ, SPRI.

ship and took a keen interest in the careers of its graduates. Markham and Lieutenant Edward ‘Teddy’ Evans persuaded Captain Scott to take on an individual whom he had never met, with no previous experience in polar travel.¹⁰ When Bowers joined the expedition’s ship *Terra Nova* as a junior officer in charge of stores he had not even met Scott. Bowers viewed his being picked from 8,000 applicants as a sign of the involvement of a higher power in his destiny.¹¹

Originally engaged as a stores officer, Bowers quickly gravitated from the ship to the Antarctic landing party. He played a central role in Scott’s last expedition, taking part in both the depot-laying journeys and the famous ‘Worst Journey in the World’ with Edward Wilson and Apsley Cherry-Garrard in search of the eggs of the Emperor penguin at the rookery at Cape Crozier.¹² Scott included Bowers in the final party of five alongside himself, Dr Edward Wilson, Captain Lawrence Oates and Petty Officer Edgar Evans, RN, which marched to the South Pole in January 1912, only to discover they had been preceded by a Norwegian expedition led by Roald Amundsen. Bowers was the first man to sight the Norwegian flag at the Pole, continued to make meticulous meteorological observations on their return journey, and died alongside Scott and Wilson at the end of March 1912. Scott described him as ‘a perfect treasure’,¹³

Even though Bowers’ importance to arguably the most famous Antarctic expedition of them all is thus undeniable, scholars and popular historians alike have paid surprisingly little attention to him, with his personality frequently reduced to a

¹⁰ Roland Huntford, *Scott and Amundsen* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), p.260.

¹¹ H. Bowers, 4 April 1910 MS1505/1/1/3/83, BJ, SPRI.

¹² Apsley Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey in the World*, New ed. / foreword by Paul Theroux. ed. (London: Picador, 2000).

¹³ Robert Falcon Scott, *Journals*, [New ed.] / edited with an introduction and notes by Max Jones. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.83.

two-dimensional caricature.¹⁴ Most writers have recycled a standard set of clichés, paying little or no attention to Bowers' distinctive, even peculiar beliefs.

This thesis will present the first academic analysis of Bowers in relation to three bodies of scholarship. First, the thesis will examine the specialist polar literature, dominated by biography and expedition narratives, to map how Bowers has been represented. Secondly, the thesis will engage with scholarship on gender, not only to situate representations of Bowers within broader trends in the history of masculinities in the first-half of the twentieth century, but also to reveal how Bowers conceived of himself as man. Finally, the thesis will use a study of Bowers' faith and beliefs to intervene in debates about the history of religion on the eve of the First World War.

This thesis will present the first detailed analysis of Bowers' extensive correspondence prior to his participation in the *Terra Nova* expedition.¹⁵ Bowers' correspondence and later representations of his life will serve as a lens through which to examine broader issues surrounding gender, masculinities and religious faith. The thesis will challenge the standard view of Bowers' religious beliefs, demonstrating how his intellectual involvement with the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, and the writings of Charles Taze Russell, profoundly affected his conceptions of death and the afterlife. This involvement has been almost entirely ignored in existing accounts, yet the thesis argues that Bowers' decision not only to join, but also repeatedly to risk his life on the expedition cannot be fully understood without this intellectual context.

¹⁴ See both Charles Friend, "Scott of the Antarctic," (England: Ealing Studios, 1948), Trevor Griffiths, *Judgement over the Dead: The Screenplay of the Last Place on Earth* (London: Verso, 1986) where Bowers is portrayed as a comedic character.

¹⁵ Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), p.37.

2. Narratives of Scott's Last Expedition

Bowers received far less attention in commentaries on the Antarctic disaster from its first announcement on Monday 10 February 1913. He was placed below Captain Scott, Captain Oates and Dr Wilson in the hierarchy of heroes that the press constructed, a hierarchy determined in part by social class. Scott's sledging journals, first serialised in the *Strand Magazine* in the summer of 1913 and then published as the first volume of Smith Elder's *Scott's Last Expedition* in November 1913, became the foundation for later accounts of Bowers. Scott set down a series of descriptions, which were either quoted verbatim or paraphrased in most later accounts of the *Terra Nova* expedition.¹⁶

Scott's account was extended and consolidated by four additional key texts written by crew members who knew Bowers personally: geologist Griffith Taylor's *With Scott the Silver Lining* (1916)¹⁷; second-in-command Teddy Evans's *South With Scott* (1921)¹⁸; photographer Herbert Ponting's *The Great White South* (1921);¹⁹ and assistant zoologist Apsley Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey in the World* (1922).²⁰ These texts presented Bowers as a cheerful, well-organised, strong man, an exemplar of Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska's description of normative masculine codes at this time, of 'neo-Spartan virility, as exemplified by stoicism, hardiness and endurance.'²¹

¹⁶ Robert Falcon Scott and Max Jones, *Journals : Captain Scott's Last Expedition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹⁷ Thomas Griffith Taylor, *With Scott: The Silver Lining* (London: Smith Elder, 1916).

¹⁸ Edward Evans, *South with Scott* (London & Glasgow: Collins, 1957).

¹⁹ Herbert George Ponting, *The Great White South : Being an Account of Experiences with Captain Scott's South Pole Expedition and of the Nature Life of the Antarctic* (London: Duckworth, 1921).

²⁰ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*.

²¹ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'The Culture of the Abdomen: Obesity and Reducing in Britain, Circa 1900-1939', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005), p.244.

These accounts reinforced Scott's view that Bowers 'proved himself about the toughest man among us'.²²

Alongside Scott's journals, the second central text for later representations of Bowers has been the Reverend George Seaver's 1938 biography, the only biography of Bowers published until 1999. Given access to family correspondence, Seaver portrayed Bowers as an adventure hero, whose masculinity was linked to physicality as a form of muscular Christianity.²³ Seaver's work remained the sole source for much of Bowers' correspondence through the twentieth century and all subsequent representations have been powerfully influenced by his portrayal.

1948 saw the release of the film *Scott of the Antarctic*, with John Mills as Captain Scott. Klaus Dodds considered that the film 'reinforced for post-war audiences the stoical achievements of Scott and his final party'.²⁴ Gill Plain has argued that the film was less successful than had been hoped because so many individuals felt a personal connection with the expedition: 'everybody has their own Scott'.²⁵ Representations of Bowers, in contrast, remained dominated by the set of stereotypes established by Scott. The screenplay of *Scott of the Antarctic* described Bowers as 'exceedingly stocky, exceedingly muscular, almost comic in appearance'.²⁶

²² Evans, *South with Scott*, p.8, Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, Herbert George Ponting and Robert Falcon Scott, *The Great White South: Being an Account of Experiences with Captain Scott's South Pole Expedition and of the Nature Life of the Antarctic* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1921), p.50, Taylor, *The Silver Lining*.

²³ For the influence muscular Christian ideals on responses to Scott's death see Max Jones, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.241.

²⁴ Klaus Dodds, *The Antarctic: A Very Short Introduction*, Very Short Introductions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.33.

²⁵ Gill Plain, *John Mills and British Cinema: Masculinity, Identity and Nation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p.100, p.102, Friend, "Scott of the Antarctic.", Martin Francis, 'A Flight from Commitment? Domesticity, Adventure and the Masculine Imaginary in Britain after the Second World War', *Gender and History* 19, no. 1 (2007), Dodds, *The Antarctic*, p.31.

²⁶ Roger Manvell, *Three British Screen Plays* (London: Methuen, 1950), p.226.

The film continued to emphasise Bowers particular physicality, drawing comment from expedition member Griffith Taylor:

The film is extremely real. Wilson is uncanny; just like Uncle Bill. Teddy Evans is very life like. Oates is not in the least like soldier...but the public won't care. Mills has a narrow face, and in the opening scenes was too cordial for Scott. Bowers is done by a real Birdie like figure, but I wish they'd put a false nose on him...from the back view he looks very real.²⁷

Stella Bruzzi contends that 'whether the masculine body is "triumphant" or "in crisis", it is through images of muscularity that masculinity is defined'.²⁸ Bowers was defined in the film by his muscularity, but his representation as a hero was undercut by humour.

As Max Jones has recently argued biographies of Scott published in the 1950s and 1960s focused more heavily on Scott's psychological state. After the publication of Reginald Pound's *Scott of the Antarctic* in 1966 'interpretations coalesced around this portrait of a moody, fatalistic leader'.²⁹ Stephanie Barczewski suggests that the 1950s and 1960s saw Scott become the focus of a smaller number of books, many which begin to criticise Scott's decisions.³⁰ In contrast, the major Scott biographers continued to portray Bowers as a standard figure, recycling Scott's representation with Reginald Pound stating 'Scott sketched him [Bowers] in words'.³¹ Interestingly Ian Cameron chooses to use Bowers' voice to assist in the narration of the Expedition rather than to describe Bowers himself, 'Bowers paints an even gloomier picture'.³²

²⁷ Griffith Taylor to Charles Wright, 1 June 1949, MS1003/9/3118 SPRI.

²⁸ John Gibbs et al., *Close-up 03: The Police Series; Weimar Cinema; Men's Cinema* (London: Wallflower, 2009), p.150.

²⁹ Reginald Pound and Robert Falcon Scott, *Scott of the Antarctic* (London: Cassell, 1966), Max Jones, 'From "Noble Example" to "Potty Pioneer": Rethinking Scott of the Antarctic, C.1945-2011', *The Polar Journal* 1, no. 2 (2010), p.196.

³⁰ Stephanie L. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies: Scott, Shackleton, and the Changing Face of Heroism* (London: Continuum, 2007), pp. 240-241.

³¹ Harry Ludlam, *Captain Scott: The Full Story* (Foulsham, 1965), p.172, p.187, Pound and Scott, *Scott of the Antarctic*, p.197, Peter Brent, *Captain Scott and the Antarctic Tragedy* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), p.176.

³² Ian Cameron, *Antarctica the Last Continent* (London: Cassell & Company, 1974), p.186.

Only Norwegian Kare Holt's novel *The Race* offered a revisionist interpretation of Bowers in 1974 as weak, unable to withstand the physical side of the expedition, 'an anonymous kind of chap' who 'lost his head'.³³ In this novel, Scott considers taking Bowers to the Pole as he feels he 'appeared to be immortal' and becomes angry when he considers Bowers has let him down.³⁴ David Thomson described Bowers as self consciously ugly, but recycled much of Seaver's earlier representation. He did comment that Bowers' 'views are extreme even in the conservative company of Scott's men', indicating he had spent some time reading Bowers' correspondence, but did not pursue this suggestive insight.³⁵ Roland Huntford's 1979 revisionist polemic *Scott and Amundsen* described Bowers in familiar terms as Scott's happy subordinate: 'earnest, good-humoured, anxious to do his duty, [he] responded with a gluttonous appetite for work, to become Scott's willing prop'.³⁶

Trevor Griffiths' 1985 TV series *The Last Place on Earth*, portrayed Bowers as characterised through a familiar combination of servility and stoicism. The casting of well-known comedian, Sylvester McCoy, coupled with significantly limited screen time, combined to relegate Bowers to the role of subordinate stores officer. In academia at this time, Bowers elicited almost no interest, with only one short article in the *Polar Record* continuing the preoccupation with his physical strength by analysing his ability to withstand extremes of temperature.³⁷

³³ Kare Holt and Joan Tate, *The Race* (London: Joseph, 1976), p.207, p.240. This is in contrast to Peter Brent and Ian Cameron who offer no real impression of Bowers other than quoting from his journals about the expedition itself, Brent, *Captain Scott and the Antarctic Tragedy*, Cameron, *Antarctica the Last Continent*.

³⁴ Connell, *Masculinities*, p.82.

³⁵ David Thomson, *Scott's Men* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), p.161.

³⁶ Huntford, *Scott and Amundsen*, p.347.

³⁷ David A Stroud, 'Whence Came Bowers' Great Heat Supply?', *Polar Record* 24, no. 150 (1988).

The end of the 1990s witnessed a resurgence of interest in the ‘heroic age’ of polar exploration, driven initially by a new awareness of Ernest Shackleton’s achievements.³⁸ A number of studies focused on the *Terra Nova* expedition, including both biographies, and specialist academic studies. The first new biography of Bowers since Seaver in 1938, Charles Lagerbom’s *The Fifth Man* appeared in 1999. Lagerbom largely recycled Seaver’s earlier work, however, adding little or no new information. The book’s referencing is patchy, for example, ‘Bowers, Letter June 30, 1907’ makes no mention of to whom they were written or where they are held.³⁹ Indeed, it appears that Lagerbom did not access Bowers’ correspondence in the Scott Polar Research Institute, but worked instead from the quotations included in Seaver for his early life and latterly a mixture of quotes from Apsley Cherry-Garrard’s *The Worst Journey in The World*, and Scott biographies, including Pound, Thomson and Huntford.⁴⁰

Since 2000, a number of academic studies have offered new perspectives on Scott’s last expedition. Susan Solomon investigated the temperature of Antarctica in 1911-1912 in comparison with previous years, in order to respond to Huntford’s criticisms that Scott’s complaints of extreme low temperatures were fictitious.⁴¹ Max Jones has examined the role of the Scott Expedition members as heroic icons of the period, challenging some of the stereotypes that have formed around impression of the tragedy.⁴² Recently there has also been a resurgence of interest in biographies of Expedition members. Sara Wheeler’s sensitive biography of Apsley Cherry-Garrard

³⁸ Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, Barczewski explores in detail the changing nature of representations of Scott and Shackleton.

³⁹ C. H. Lagerbom, *The Fifth Man : The Life of H. R. Bowers* (Whitby: Caedmon of Whitby, 1999), p.17.

⁴⁰ Lagerbom, *Fifth Man*, p.148, p.150, p.151, p.152 amongst others.

⁴¹ Susan Solomon, *The Coldest March: Scott's Fatal Antarctic Expedition* (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 2001).

⁴² Max Jones, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp.9-13.

has shed new light on the complexities of him as an individual and brought much to the understanding of Cherry-Garrard's role in the post expedition history.⁴³ Latterly, Ranulph Fiennes new biography of Captain Scott, was an explicit retort to Roland Huntford, which attempted to redress the balance more positively in Scott's favour. However, while these works made significant and original contributions to our knowledge and understanding of the expedition, none challenged the established view of Bowers. Solomon repeats Scott's 'Bowers is wonderful' while Jones describes him as 'an indefatigable Royal Indian Marine'.⁴⁴ Two books, though, did move understanding of Bowers forward. In 2005 David Crane's excellent and meticulously researched biography of Scott emerged, and presented a new (if a little sensational) interpretation of Bowers.⁴⁵ Crane became the first author to mention Bowers' involvement with the Watch Tower Movement, presenting his religious beliefs as harsher, angrier and more unforgiving than previous accounts. However, Bowers was not Crane's focus and his work had only limited space to discuss Bowers. 2012 saw the publication of a sensitively written biography of Bowers by Anne Strathie. Strathie's meticulous research drew on new and previously unexplored sources, adding much to our knowledge of Bowers' early life.⁴⁶ Strathie presented a more balanced picture of Bowers than has previously been seen, and her research demonstrated an extensive engagement with both the Bowers papers in the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge, and those in private collections. 2012 also saw the publication of Bowers' Polar Journals for the first time.

⁴³ Sara Wheeler, *Cherry: A Life of Apsley Cherry-Garrard* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2001).

⁴⁴ Solomon, *Coldest March*, p.88, Jones, *Last Great Quest*, p.77.

⁴⁵ David Crane, *Scott of the Antarctic: A Life of Courage, and Tragedy in the Extreme South* (London: HarperCollins, 2005), Wheeler, *Cherry*.

⁴⁶ Henry Bowers, *The South Pole Journals*, ed. Naomi Boneham, Heather Lane, Robert D. Smith (The Scott Polar Research Institute, 2012), Strathie, *Birdie Bowers*.

3. Gender and Masculinities

In addition to contributing to our knowledge and understanding of the *Terra Nova* expedition within the specialist polar literature, this thesis also contributes to scholarship on British masculinities in the first half of the twentieth century, what has been described by scholars as a ‘nascent field’.⁴⁷ This field emerged out of the interest in gender in the 1980s, as scholars looked beyond the retrieval aspect of women’s history. Historians such as Joan Scott built on the distinction between an individual’s biological ‘sex’ and the socio-cultural construction of their ‘gender’. Rather than just retrieving women’s historical experiences from neglect, Scott argued that gender was an important category of historical analysis and that scholars should analyse how ideas about masculinity and femininity changed over time.⁴⁸ Scholars swiftly turned their attention to the history of masculinities. The field has been politically controversial, as some have argued that the history of masculinity provides yet another means of marginalising women. Yet few would dispute that much important work in the field has been published over the last twenty-five years. Key works on British masculinities have included the edited collection, *Manful Assertions*, Graham Dawson’s *Soldier Heroes* and John Tosh’s *A Man’s Place*.⁴⁹ Tosh’s argument that the second-half of the nineteenth century witnessed a ‘flight from

⁴⁷ Alexandra Shepard, 'From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentleman? Manhood in Britain, Circa 1500-1700', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005), p.281.

⁴⁸ Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986), Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), Kathleen Canning, 'The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in Gender History', *Gender and History* 1, no. 3 (1999).

⁴⁹ Michael Roper and John Tosh, *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991), Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

domesticity' away from the head of the household as the dominant model of middle-class masculinity has proved particularly influential. He argued that the perception of life as dominated by a feminine sphere created sexual antagonism and a fear of feminization. He quotes Kipling as saying 'taking tea at five in the afternoon has become the tell-tale sign of the effeminate aesthete'.⁵⁰

This thesis will contribute to those historians such as Martin Francis who have complicated Tosh's thesis, revealing that while Bowers may have fled to the other side of the world, he maintained close emotional relationships with his family and frequently performed the role of the head of the household. Commentators have rightly pointed out that the masculinities of groups beyond the middle classes have received much less attention from historians, a point which Tosh himself would support.⁵¹ Martin Francis has challenged the 'flight from domesticity' thesis more directly, arguing it was possible for men both to be fully involved in domestic life, and also be entranced by adventure stories on the imperial frontier. 'Men constantly travelled back and forward across the frontier of domesticity, if only in the realm of imagination', Francis has written, 'attracted by the responsibilities of marriage or fatherhood, but also enchanted by fantasies of the energetic life and homo social camaraderie of the adventure hero'.⁵² Francis argues that this ability to move across 'the frontier of domesticity' was evident both in the escape of suburban fathers and husbands into fiction, on the one hand, and also in the longing for home and the trappings of domesticity by men in homo-social environments serving on the imperial

⁵⁰ Rudyard Kipling quoted in John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p.181.

⁵¹ Theodore Koditschek, 'Review: [Untitled]', *Social History* 26, no. 2 (2001), p.227, Jessica A. Gerard, 'Review: [Untitled]', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 32, no. 3 (2000).

⁵² Martin Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Masculinity', *Historical Journal* 45, no. 3 (2002), p. 643, Michael Mason, 'Review: [Untitled]', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 25, no. 1 (1993), p.141.

frontier, on the other. Imperial adventurers and soldiers could still fill the pages of their letters and journals with longings for the scent of roses.⁵³ Bowers encouraged his family to discuss the minutiae of life in their letters, and expressed a longing for home.⁵⁴

Reviewing work in the field of masculinities in a special issue of the *Journal of British Studies* of 2005, Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepherd outlined four methodological approaches that historians have begun to employ.⁵⁵ Two of these approaches are particularly relevant for this thesis. This dissertation will follow Harvey and Shepard, by analysing representations of Bowers, and then by examining his subjective experience through his correspondence.

Firstly, many historians have adopted a cultural history approach in considering representations of manliness and masculinities.⁵⁶ Chapters one and two will follow Harvey and Shepard and map public representations of Bowers from the announcement of his death in 1913 to the outbreak of the Second World War, analysing how his public image related to changing cultural codes of masculinity. This approach has proven to be popular with historians considering fields of study such as athleticism and public schools⁵⁷, and working lives⁵⁸. Karen Hunt's

⁵³ Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male?', p.643.

⁵⁴ For example, H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers 10 August 1907 MS1505/1/1/2/43, BJ, SPRI.

⁵⁵ Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History Circa 1500-1950', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005), p.275.

⁵⁶ Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity?', p.275.

⁵⁷ J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), J A Mangan, 'Britain's Chief Spiritual Export: Imperial Sport as Moral Metaphor, Political Symbol and Cultural Bond', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no. 1-2 (2010), J A Mangan, 'Duty Unto Death: English Masculinity and Militarism in the Age of the New Imperialism', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no. 1-2 (2010), J. A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), J A Mangan, 'Global Fascism and the Male Body: Ambitions, Similarities and Disimilarities ', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 16, no. 4 (1999), J A Mangan, 'Happy Warriors in Waiting? Wykehamists and the Great War - Stereotypes,

work on socialist masculinities emphasised the links between masculinity, strength, respectability and male comradeship before 1914.⁵⁹ Popular media reinforced the ideal of heroic sacrifice during the war, regularly deploying Christian and chivalric imagery.⁶⁰ Adventure literature retained its popularity between the wars, with many stories adapted for the new media of radio, film and newsreel.⁶¹

Secondly, historians have begun to consider psychology, selfhood and the subjective experiences of being male in new studies.⁶² Harvey and Shepard, along with John Tosh consider that there is much work to be done moving masculinity away from specific contexts and into terms of subjective identity.⁶³ Chapters three and four will turn to analyse Bowers' extensive correspondence, in order to explore his subjective experience of being male.⁶⁴ These chapters will draw on Michael Roper's

Complexities and Contradictions', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, no. 3-4 (2011), J A Mangan, 'Imperial Origins: Christian Manliness, Moral Imperatives and Pre-Sri Lankan Playing Fields', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no. 1-2 (2010), Roberta J. Park, "Biological Thought, Athletics and the Formation of a 'Man of Character: 1830-1900," in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, ed. J. A. Walvin Mangan, James (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

⁵⁸ Sonya O. Rose, "Gender at Work': Sex, Class and Industrial Capitalism', *History Workshop*, no. 21 (1986), Sonya O Rose, *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) , pp.126-154 where she describes the differences between male identities in differing working class professions, John Tosh, 'Masculinities in an Industrialising Society: Britain, 1800-1914', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005).

⁵⁹ Karen Hunt, "Strong Minds, Great Hearts, True Faith and Ready Hands?' Exploring Socialist Masculinities before the First World War', *Labour History Review* 69, no. 2 (2004), pp.203-211.

⁶⁰ Robert A Nye, 'Western Masculinities in War and Peace', *American Historical Review* 112, no. 2 (2007), p.422.

⁶¹ John M. MacKenzie, *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p.8, Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p.171.

⁶² Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity?', p.275.

⁶³ Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity?', p.280, John Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth Century Britain', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 38 (1994), p.184.

⁶⁴ Hannah Barker, 'Soul, Purse and Family: Middling and Lower-Class Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Manchester', *Social History* 33, no. 1 (2008), Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity?', p.275, Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), Bourke Joanna, 'Effeminacy, Ethnicity and the End of Trauma: The Sufferings of 'Shell-Shocked' Men in

important recent examination of soldiers' correspondence to illuminate masculinities during the First World War.⁶⁵ Roper's use of correspondence material to highlight men's subjective experiences will be utilised here. He argues that publicly circulating codes of masculinity leave unanswered questions about the relationships between behaviour and emotion, stating that investigation of self-expression and experience is necessary to the understanding of personal identity.⁶⁶ Bowers self expression and personal subjectivities that he discussed in his correspondence have never previously been examined, leading to a discrepancy between the public masculine codes as created by representation and his individual identity. As Roper suggests it will question what 'the relationship of the codes of masculinity is to actual men, to existential matters, to person and their psychic makeup.'⁶⁷

4. Faith and Religion

In addition to exploring issues around gender and masculinity, this thesis also engages with debates about religious faith in the first half of the twentieth century. The thesis offers the first detailed analysis of Bowers' engagement with the fringe religious group, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. Chapter four, in

Great Britain and Ireland, 1914-39', *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, no. 1 (2000), Wendy Jane Gagan, 'Remastering the Body, Renegotiating Gender: Physical Disability and Masculinity During the First World War, the Case of J.B. Middlebrook', *European Review of History* 14, no. 4 (2007).

⁶⁵ Michael Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity: The "War Generation" and the Psychology of Fear in Britain 1914-1950', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005), Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War*, Cultural History of Modern War (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), Michael Roper, 'Slipping out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 59 (2005), Michael Roper, 'Re-Remembering the Soldier Hero: The Psychic and Social Construction of Memory in Personal Narratives of the Great War', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 50 (2000).

⁶⁶ Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity', p.345.

⁶⁷ Roper, 'Slipping out of View', p.58.

particular, examines how the philosophy of the society's charismatic leader Charles Taze Russell influenced Bowers ideas on a range of subjects. Through an examination of Bowers' correspondence, the thesis also exposes areas where Taze Russell's philosophy caused debate between family members.

Whilst Edward Wilson's religious faith was accepted as a key part of his character by both expedition members and historians, the spiritual dimensions of Bowers' character have been largely ignored. David James' book about the film *Scott of the Antarctic* described Wilson as 'a Sir Galahad of Real saintliness', but mentioned nothing about Bowers' faith.⁶⁸ Until David Thomson's 1977 *Scott's Men*, Seaver's biography offered the only interpretation of Bowers' faith, a somewhat misleading interpretation, as will be shown. Of the many works about Scott's last expedition published in the twentieth century, only David Thompson discussed Bowers' faith in any detail, and he followed Seaver's analysis:

God was not a hollow cliché for Bowers. Instead he had worked his way towards a naïve view of the spirit that is manifested in his behaviour in the south. Bowers wrote long introspective letters from India to his mother and one contains this account of the journey of his soul. It is unlikely that he would have shared it with many people on the expedition but Bowers was close to Wilson and there we may assume a special affinity and tent conversations long into the night.⁶⁹

In the last ten years, David Crane and Anne Strathie have at last fleshed out more detail to Seaver's account. Crane's important 2005 biography *Scott of the Antarctic* presented the first analysis of Bowers' extensive correspondence in the Scott Polar Research Institute. Crane was the first historian to note Bowers' involvement with the Watch Tower Movement, describing Bowers as a 'proto-

⁶⁸ David James, *Scott of the Antarctic: The Film and Its Production* (London: Convoy Publications, 1948), p.22.

⁶⁹ Thomson, *Scott's Men*, p.161.

Jehovah's Witness'.⁷⁰ Crane offers little context for the Movement's activities, however, an unsurprising omission given the paucity of scholarship on the Movement's activities in Britain. A deep analysis of Bowers' religious faith is sacrificed by the requirement to provide a brief but striking character sketch of a supporting actor in a biography dedicated to Captain Scott. Crane presents Bowers as a fanatical 'hater'⁷¹, riven by contradictions, arguing that Bowers' involvement with the Watch Tower Movement 'helped bounce the bigot into the serenely untouchable, well-nigh invincible fanatic he became'.⁷² Crane's Bowers is a mass of contradictions:

an imperialist who looked with glad eyes to the imminent destruction of the British Empire; a patriot who had no time to his king; a little Englander who saw the Church of England as the "Daughter of the Harlot"; a naval officer who could salute a Dreadnought as the instrument of Divine Retribution—contradiction was at the heart of his character.⁷³

Crane offers an arresting portrait, but Bowers' correspondence reveals a far more thoughtful figure than the sensational fanatic he paints. This thesis, in contrast, will trace how Bowers' religious faith was either neglected or misrepresented by expedition members and historians alike before the Second World War. The thesis will offer the first detailed analysis of Bowers' faith based on his correspondence, in the context of the activities of Charles Taze Russell and the Watch Tower Movement.

5. Sources and Chapter Breakdown

Following the methodology set out by Harvey and Shepard discussed above, this thesis analyses not only public representations of Bowers and the *Terra Nova*

⁷⁰ Crane, *Scott of the Antarctic*, p.415.

⁷¹ Crane, *Scott of the Antarctic*, p.415.

⁷² Crane, *Scott of the Antarctic*, p.415.

⁷³ Crane, *Scott of the Antarctic*, p.416 (footnote).

expedition, principally printed texts (books, magazines, newspapers et. al.), but also personal testimonies, principally correspondence in the Scott Polar Research Institute. The Bowers family appear to have corresponded on a weekly basis and their letters formed the mainstay of their relationship. The Scott Polar Research Institute holds 237 letters from Bowers, most to his mother Emily (116), closely followed by his elder sister May (111), and finally a handful to his sister Edie (10). Many previous writers have consulted Bowers' correspondence, but with the exception of Seaver, Crane and Strathie their analysis has been cursory. Moreover, neither Crane nor Strathie used an analysis of Bowers correspondence to explore broader debates about gender and religious faith in the first-half of the twentieth century.

Chapter one begins by mapping the first representations of Bowers between 1913 and 1922, the end of the expedition and in the aftermath of his death. The template established by Scott himself powerfully shaped later representations. The chapter draws on recent work by Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska and Ana Carden - Coyne among others to demonstrate how representations of Bowers expressed broader attitudes to masculinity in this period.⁷⁴ The chapter shows how Bowers' status as a heroic male was undercut by his unusual appearance, as writers frequently juxtaposed his strength and resilient character with his comic appearance: short, fat and ugly. This juxtaposition helped position Bowers below Scott, Oates and Wilson in the hierarchy of Antarctic heroes on the *Terra Nova* expedition.

Chapter two charts the development of public representations of Bowers from 1922 to 1939, looking in particular at George Seaver's 1938 biography. Written with

⁷⁴ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Culture of the Abdomen', Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain, 1880-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), Ana Carden-Coyne, 'Classical Heroism and Modern Life: Bodybuilding and Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century', *Journal of Australian Studies* 63(2000), Ana Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism, and the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

access to previously unseen family papers, Seaver's work became the primary source for all later historians interested in Bowers. The chapter analyses how Seaver's portrayal of Bowers was shaped by broader changes in the representation of masculinities in the 1930s. The physical characteristics largely ignored by Cherry-Garrard in 1922, were once again brought to the fore by Seaver's focus on Bowers' appearance and inter-war preoccupations with physical culture.⁷⁵

After analysing public representations of Bowers in chapters one and two, chapters three and four look in detail at his personal correspondence to reveal for the first time a more complex figure than either the cheerful caricature portrayed by Scott, or the confused fanatic portrayed by Crane. Chapter three examines Bowers' letters to reveal his multi-faceted masculinities, influenced by and involved with broader social trends.⁷⁶ The chapter will contribute to scholarship on Edwardian masculinities by showing how Bowers' apparent 'flight from domesticity' concealed a deep longing for home and domesticity.

Finally, chapter four examines Bowers' religious faith. Bowers' comrades on the *Terra Nova* made little mention of his spirituality, and it was not until Seaver's 1938 biography that a portrait of Bowers as a religious man emerged. Seaver, however, carefully edited Bowers' original writings to mould a religious representation more in keeping with his own faith than Bowers' distinctive, personal beliefs. The chapter offers the first detailed analysis of Bowers' engagement with the writings of Charles Taze Russell and the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

⁷⁵ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*.

⁷⁶ Lagerbom, *Fifth Man*, p. 237.

1.

Scott's 'Treasure': Representations of Henry Robertson Bowers, c.1913 - 1921

I appreciate his wonderful upright nature, his ability and energy. As the troubles have thickened his dauntless spirit ever shone brighter and he has remained cheerful, hopeful, and indomitable to the end ¹

Robert Falcon's Scott's final eulogy to Bowers epitomised the importance that he placed both on Bowers as an individual, and upon particular manly characteristics that he personally prized. Bowers' acknowledged character attributes all reflected 'manliness', a neo-Spartan virility as exemplified by stoicism, hardiness and endurance - but his five feet four inch, 12 stone, beaky nosed, red-haired outer shell did not conform to Edwardian physical images of heroic manliness.² This dichotomy was significant as from the late Victorian period onwards the body was considered a visual icon, muscle and mind being interconnected.³ Bowers' features were not 'clear cut'.⁴ He was neither 'inspirational leader, gallant cavalry officer [nor] hardy blue jacket.'⁵ Despite Scholars' acknowledgement of Bowers' importance to the expedition, representations of him have remained fixed, with Robert F. Scott's image of Bowers 'the marvel' overwhelmingly dominant.⁶

Originally engaged as the ships' stores officer, Bowers quickly gravitated from the ship to the landing party, took part in all depot journeys, and was included at the 11th hour into the polar party as the fifth man, his inclusion causing lasting

¹ Robert Falcon Scott, *Journals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 415.

² Roberta J. Park, "Biological Thought, Athletics and the Formation of a 'Man of Character: 1830-1900," in *Manliness and Morality : Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, ed. J. A. Walvin Mangan, James (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), p.1.

³ Park, "Biological Thought, Athletics and the Formation of a 'Man of Character: 1830-1900." p.11, p.14.

⁴ Max Jones, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.216.

⁵ Jones, *Last Great Quest*, p.216.

⁶ Robert Falcon Scott and Max Jones, *Journals : Captain Scott's Last Expedition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Scott, *Journals*, p.369.

controversy. He was the first to sight the Norwegian flag at the pole, continued to make meticulous meteorological observations on the return journey and remained with Scott and Dr Wilson, dying alongside them 11 miles from One Ton Depot.

Representations of Bowers have been formed primarily around five key texts published in the first decade after the expedition. These first-hand accounts, all written by members of the expedition who knew Bowers personally, were: *Scott's Journals* which first appeared in the *Strand Magazine* in the summer of 1913, and then in volume one of *Scott's Last Expedition* in November 1913 and which was the first detailed public presentation of Bowers as an individual; Griffith Taylor's *With Scott the Silver Lining* (published in 1916); Edward Evan's *South With Scott* (published in 1921); Herbert Ponting's *The Great White South* (published in 1921); and, after Scott, the most personal and detailed of these accounts, Apsley Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey in the World* (published in 1922).⁷ Cherry-Garrard's account was the most successful of the post Scott primary publications. Due to its significance, and Cherry-Garrard's relationship with the 1938 biography of Bowers by George Seaver, it is examined in detail together with Seaver's work in chapter two.

While Scott remains a well-known historical figure, the other team members are less well known outside of polar circles. Griffith Taylor was an Australian scientist, specializing in geomorphology, glaciology and meteorology, well known for his political leanings, and affectionately nicknamed 'Keir Hardie' a reference to the socialist and labour leader.⁸ Following the expedition he became a respected research

⁷ Scott, *Journals*; Scott and Jones, *Journals : Captain Scott's Last Expedition*, Thomas Griffith Taylor, *With Scott: The Silver Lining* (London: Smith Elder, 1916), Edward Evans, *South with Scott* (London & Glasgow: Collins, 1957)[1921], Herbert George Ponting, *The Great White South : Being an Account of Experiences with Captain Scott's South Pole Expedition and of the Nature Life of the Antarctic* (London: Duckworth, 1921), Apsley Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey in the World*, New ed. / foreword by Paul Theroux. ed. (London: Picador, 2000)[1922].

⁸ Scott, *Journals*, p.40.

scientist. Taylor's book, *With Scott the Silver Lining*, was a memoir of his time on the expedition, contributing to the tradition of expedition accounts for a popular audience.⁹ An acidic personality, Taylor often mocked Bower negatively in relation to his appearance in contrast to other team members, 'the killer whales are going for Birdie's fat legs.'¹⁰ His mockery did not appear to be countered by the obvious affection towards Bowers shown by others such as Cherry-Garrard.

By contrast Edward Evans was a naval officer, originally Scott's second in command on the *Terra Nova*. Evans was not chosen for the final push to the Pole, becoming seriously ill with scurvy on the return journey, his life being saved by his companions William Lashly and Tom Crean. Evans went on to have a glittering military career, eventually becoming Admiral Lord Mountevans. A somewhat controversial figure whose account *South With Scott* included a portrayal of his own role and that of others that conflicted with the views of Cherry-Garrard and Ponting, leading to a public clash with Ponting in *The Times*.¹¹ His account considered Bowers as a purely military figure inferior in role to his own.¹²

Herbert Ponting was the first professional photographer to join a polar expedition. With his main focus being photography, he was responsible for teaching Bowers photography in order for the team to record their arrival at the South Pole. His book *The Great White South* is part record of the expedition, and part textbook on the subject of photography. Commercially successful, the book was hardly out of print in

⁹ Carolyn Strange, 'Griffith Taylor's Antarctica: Science, Sentiment and Politics', *Polar Record* 46, no. 236 (2010), pp.65-68.

¹⁰ Taylor, *The Silver Lining*, p.327.

¹¹ Sara Wheeler, *Cherry: A Life of Apsley Cherry-Garrard* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2001), p. 150, p 206, *The Times* 11 December 1919, p.10.

¹² Evans, *South with Scott*.

the years 1921 to 1939. In the 1930s, Ponting also released the first movie footage of the expedition, which briefly showed the Polar Party.¹³

This chapter will examine the representations of 'Birdie' Bowers that emerged through these key texts in the first decade after his death. Beginning with *Scott's Journals* it reviews these accounts to determine both the volume of references to Bowers, and the nature of those references. It will demonstrate that Scott's dominant picture can be traced throughout the other key texts. From the announcement of his death to the publication of *The World Journey in The World*, Bowers is consistently viewed through the lens of Scott's interpretation. Commemorative articles written immediately after the announcement of the disaster, focused on Bowers as 'strong and hard', 'valuable' and 'thorough' echoing Scott last message of 'the hardihood, endurance and courage of my companions.'¹⁴

In this analysis, the chapter makes a new contribution to the study of Edwardian masculinities by examining the tensions that existed within the idealised image of the Edwardian hero. Recognition of masculinities as socially constructed began over recent decades following Joan Scott's work on gender as a relational construct.¹⁵ The study of masculinities grew in the 1990s, and 'facilitates a better understanding of how the structured order of gender is maintained'.¹⁶ Leading practitioner John Tosh emphasised that 'masculinity like femininity is historically

¹³ Herbert Ponting and British Film Institute, "The Great White Silence [Videorecording] : The Official Record of Captain Scott's Heroic Journey to the South Pole," (London: BFI, 2011); Herbert George Ponting and Robert Falcon Scott, *The Great White South: Being an Account of Experiences with Captain Scott's South Pole Expedition and of the Nature Life of the Antarctic* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1921).

¹⁴ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, *Daily Mirror*, 14 February 1913, p.4, Scott, *Journals*, p.422.

¹⁵ Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986), p.1054, Sharon Bird, 'Welcome to the Men's Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinities', *Gender and Society* 10, no. 2 (1996), p.120.

¹⁶ Bird, 'Men's Club', p.120.

expressed in complex and confusing variety with comparable dangers to conceptual coherence'.¹⁷ Ana Carden-Coyne has noted that competing forms of masculinity ensure the nature of masculinity is fluid.¹⁸

Moves away from physical labour into office-based roles generated tensions, as Sascha Auerbach notes: 'Victorian masculinity, was an ideal that lower middle-class men, who often found employment as clerks found particularly difficult to attain in the public eye'.¹⁹ Kirsten Guest has argued that late-Victorian melodrama expressed such tensions through a 'crisis of masculinity', acknowledging 'social identity [was] defined by money, only to subordinate it to demonstrations of the hero's merit, effectiveness and respectability'.²⁰

Michael Roper's work on the subjective experiences of men in the First World War through their correspondence opened a field of scholarship in which focus was given to tracing how these cultural codes were absorbed and expressed by individual men.²¹ He argues that that publicly circulating codes of masculinity leave unanswered questions about the relationships between behaviour and emotion, stating that investigation of self expression and experience is 'necessary if we are to consider masculinity as more than a set of abstract codes'.²² Michael Roper and Paul Deslandes have both questioned approaching the study of masculinity simply as external representations and argued that masculinities must be considered in part through the

¹⁷ John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire*, 1st ed. ed. (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005), p.61.

¹⁸ Ana Carden-Coyne Julie Anderson, "Stoics: Creating Identities at St Dunstan's 1914-1920," in *Men after War* ed. Stephen McVey and Nicola Cooper (New York Routledge 2013), p.80.

¹⁹ Sascha Auerbach, "'A Right Sort of Man': Gender, Class Identity and Social Reform in Late Victorian Britain", *Journal of Policy History* 22, no. 1 (2010), p.67.

²⁰ Kirsten Guest, 'The Subject of Money: Late-Victorian Melodrama's Crisis of Masculinity', *Victorian Studies* 49, no. 4 (2007), p.636.

²¹ Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War*, Cultural History of Modern War (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

²² Michael Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity: The "War Generation" and the Psychology of Fear in Britain 1914-1950', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005), p.345.

development of ‘interiorised masculine subjectivities’, more than abstract codes, and the development of masculine identity which must include ‘autobiographical experience.’²³ Paul Gilchrist highlights an important debate between the unattainable ideal of Victorian and Edwardian codes of manliness and characterisation of stoic manliness set by sacrifice and pain, both of which are pertinent when examining Bowers.²⁴ As Marshall suggests, reliance on these codes to explore masculinity can overlook an individual and its personality in shaping how men carry out or understand their lives.²⁵ Recent work examining the differences between ‘manliness’, a looser collection of characteristics about conduct, and ‘masculinity’ as a more focused counterpoint to femininity demonstrated a slow transition between the two in the early part of the 20th Century.²⁶ Although there were no sudden shifts between these concepts both Roper, and Lucy Delap and Sue Morgan posit this as an under explored area in masculinity studies.²⁷

Kelly Boyd, Peter Hugill, and Joseph Kestner’s work on juvenile and adventure literature has revealed the importance it placed on specific masculine characteristics.²⁸ Fear of physical deterioration intensified the masculine agenda of

²³ Paul R Deslandes, 'The Boundaries of Manhood in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Britain ', *Gender and History* 19, no. 2 (2007); Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity', p.376.

²⁴ Allen Warren, 'Popular Manliness: Baden Powell, Scouting and the Development of Manly Character,' in Park, "Biological Thought, Athletics and the Formation of a 'Man of Character: 1830-1900.", p.199, Peter J Hugill, 'Imperialism and Manliness in Edwardian Boy's Novels', *Ecumene* 6, no. 3 (1999), p.320, Joseph A. Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction, 1880-1915* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p.3.

²⁵ David B. Marshall, "A Canoe, a Tent and God's Great out-of-Doors: Muscular Christianity and the Flight from Domesticity," in *Masculinity and the Other* ed. Heather Ellis and Jessica Meyer (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2009), pp.24-25.

²⁶ Lucy Delap and Sue Morgan, *Men, Masculinities and Religious Change in Twentieth-Century Britain*, *Genders and Sexualities in History*, p.11.

²⁷ Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity', p.345, Delap and Morgan, *Men, Masculinities and Religious Change in Twentieth-Century Britain*, p.12.

²⁸ Kelly Boyd, 'Examples and Ingrates: Imperialism and the Boy's Story Paper 1880-1930', *Historical Research* 67(1994), Hugill, 'Edwardian Boy's Novels', Kestner, *British Adventure Fiction*.

popular literature in this period.²⁹ Victorian conceptions that ‘a healthy physique was more important than a veneer of social culture’ were reinforced through fiction.³⁰ Many works portrayed, in the words of E.S.Grogan, ‘manly boys, uttering, manly thoughts, and performing manly actions.’³¹ The success of *Scouting for Boys* is a good example of the dominance of one particular masculine adventure image.³²

Stephanie Barczewski suggests that it was Bowers’ cheery disposition and indefatigable constitution that earned Bowers his ‘place in the pantheon’ even if he was a ‘lesser hero’.³³ She suggests that this position related to his lack of important institutional connections in similar fashion to Edgar Evans, although she claims Evans received greater publicity (mainly negative) after his death.³⁴ Bowers appeared to quickly become placed in a subordinate position in the ‘hierarchy of heroes’ established by narratives of the *Terra Nova* Expedition. His position in this hierarchy was potentially affected by a number of factors. Although an officer, his modest background placed him nearer to Petty Officer Edgar Evans than Captain Lawrence Oates in terms of social hierarchy. His career in the merchant navy and Royal Indian Marine was adjuvant to Scott and Evans in the Royal Navy. Moreover, he actively positioned himself as Scott’s subordinate, a follower and not a leader: ‘I am Captain

²⁹ Kestner, *British Adventure Fiction*, p.4.

³⁰ Allen Warren, ‘Popular Manliness: Baden Powell, Scouting and the Development of Manly Character,’ in Park, ‘Biological Thought, Athletics and the Formation of a ‘Man of Character: 1830-1900.’, p.199, Hugill, ‘Edwardian Boy’s Novels’, p.320.

³¹ E. S. Grogan cited in John M. Mackenzie, ‘The Imperial Pioneer and Hunter and the British Masculine Stereotype in Late Victorian and Edwardian Times,’ in *Manliness and Morality: Middle Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, ed. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1987), p.192.

³² Mackenzie, ‘The Imperial Pioneer and Hunter and the British Masculine Stereotype in Late Victorian and Edwardian Times.’, p.189.

³³ Stephanie L. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies: Scott, Shackleton, and the Changing Face of Heroism* (London: Continuum, 2007), p.173, Stephanie Barczewski, ‘Two Weeks in the Spring of 1912: Captain Scott at the Crossroads of Tradition and Modernity’, *Endeavour* 35, no. 4 (2011), p.137.

³⁴ Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, pp.173-175.

Scott's man and shall stick by him right through.'³⁵ His un-prepossessing physical appearance reinforced this subordinate position. Appearing uncomfortable with attention, 'Evans says he is going to name a Mount Birdie in the Antarctic - a good idea as it would deceive the uninitiated as to my identity', he can often be seen standing at the back in group photographs, frequently obscured by other, taller men.³⁶ As James Smyth and Michael Penman demonstrate, reputation has 'nothing to do with significance, but more with a dramatic or romantic life story that simply captures the imagination in the way that a fictional character might.'³⁷ The life of Henry Bowers was neither dramatic nor romantic, and therefore did not catch the public imagination as much as Oates' cavalry deeds or heroic death. As early as 1915 commemorative artefacts such as the Player's cigarette card series placed Bowers' position lower in the hierarchy than the others he died alongside, a position that was to persist.³⁸

Scott's image has continued to be the dominant representation of Bowers. This demonstrates that 'once an image has become established it is remarkably immune to academic criticism and revision'.³⁹ However, other team members' comments about Bowers' unusual physical appearance began to be incorporated into narratives of the expedition from the mid 1940s onwards.

Next to Wilson in popularity was a young man, a little man, who had come home from the Indian Marine Service to join Scott. His name was Bowers. He had a large nose and bright red hair, a combination that would have made him conspicuous anywhere.⁴⁰

Attitudes to Bowers were shaped by the emerging physical culture movement and

³⁵ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 1 November 1911, MS1505/1/1/3/113, BJ, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge (hereafter SPRI.)

³⁶ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 28 August 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/93, BJ, SPRI.

³⁷ Michael A Penman & James J Smyth, 'Reputations and National Identity, or What Do Our Heroes Say About Us?', *Etudes Ecossaises* 10 (2005), p.15.

³⁸ Rosamunde Codling, 'Player's Antarctic Cigarette Cards and the Involvement of 'Teddy' Evans', *Polar Record* 47, no. 241 (2011)

³⁹ James J Smyth, 'Reputations', p.13.

⁴⁰ Sara Maynard, *Scott and His Men* (New Jersey 1945), p.14.

debates about obesity, cultural trends which influenced men's 'perceptions of society and their place within it.'⁴¹ This chapter considers Scott's external representations of Bowers in the context of attitudes to maleness and body image. The male body 'was thought to symbolise society's need for order and progress', and masculinity in decline could precipitate a decline in society.⁴² The male body took on a symbolic meaning partly through its increased presence in political imagery, and partly through the emergence and popularity of sciences like as physiognomy, which attempted to classify men by physical appearance. Men whose physical appearance did not meet classical standards of beauty, became what Mosse terms 'countertypes', defined in opposition to what he termed, the hegemonic masculinities in the period.⁴³

The next sections will discuss aspects of Bowers' physique and character. Section one focuses on the positive characteristics and capabilities most valued by Scott, and shows how these were echoed by other members of the expedition. Section two examines Bowers' height and physical build from the perspective of the main authors, and shows that although less dominant in the accounts, the foundations for later representations were laid and Bowers' position in the hierarchy of heroes established. Section three develops this analysis of physical representations of Bowers in the primary accounts, and examines the tensions of idealised body image and physical culture. It demonstrates how the physical characteristics of ugliness, and the increasing number of later references to red hair as dominant, begin to demonstrate the tension between Scott's image of Edwardian hardiness and ideas of male physical beauty.

⁴¹ George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, Studies in the History of Sexuality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.12.

⁴² Mosse, *The Image of Man*, p.9.

⁴³ Mosse, *The Image of Man*, p.15.

1. Scott's Bowers - 'The Strongest Of Us'

Scott's Journals make reference to Bowers 163 times, in comparison with 156 times for Lawrence (Titus) Oates, 128 times for Dr Edward Wilson and 71 times for Edgar Evans. In general, the references are mostly fleeting and mention Bowers in relation to activities like exercising the ponies⁴⁴, taking part in scientific activities⁴⁵ and in relation to setting camp, organizing stores and taking measurements.⁴⁶ This section uses these references to reconstruct Scott's impression of Bowers' character, and provide examples of how this image has influenced other writers.

The section begins with an analysis of three key aspects of Bowers' character and physique that were consistently emphasised by Scott: his strength and endurance; his meticulous approach, thoroughness and dedication to duty, and; his cheerfulness and good humour. It follows this with a review of how the authors of the other principle accounts reflect Scott's language and representation of Bowers.

It is possible to consider *Scott's Journals* as a piece of literature rather than simply the documentation of an expedition. Having written and published his previous *Discovery Journal The Voyage of the 'Discovery'* in October 1905, it is likely that Scott's intention would have been to follow a similar route with those journals from the *Terra Nova* expedition. Max Jones states that the production of a book was now an essential part of an expedition in this period.⁴⁷ It is probable that Scott followed an established literary style to make the journals more appealing for publication. In doing so his representation of Bowers also contained elements of

⁴⁴ Scott, *Journals*, p.108, p.116.

⁴⁵ Scott, *Journals*, p.178, p.190.

⁴⁶ Scott, *Journals*, p.284, p.288, p.290.

⁴⁷ Scott, *Journals*, p. xxiv, R. F. Scott, *The Voyage of the Discovery* (Herts: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2009).

established Edwardian literary masculine heroism no longer seen as linked to one segment of the population, but its acquisition now the result of hard work.⁴⁸ However this emphasis on physical hardness as a positive masculine attribute was not confined solely to fiction. Non-fiction accounts by police detectives drew positive public respect with their emphasis on strong, manly police officers.⁴⁹ Graham Dawson argues that Edwardian masculinities reflected the growing concern of imperial degradation through poor physical health, a strong male body being a most visible sign of strong masculinity.⁵⁰ Manliness was a state to be attained by effort.⁵¹ It was through strength and endurance that men would be successful. In these terms a 'real man' was one who was prepared both to fight and sacrifice himself for those around him.⁵² The 'virility of manhood was therefore to be expressed through the hardness, mass, and agility of the male body'.⁵³

Scott's writings provide a rich picture of the different manly characteristics he considered important in those around him. Most dominant amongst these is the focus on Bowers' strength and endurance, attributes to which Scott gives the greatest attention. Paul Deslandes and Janice Cavell suggest that characteristics of strength, endurance, stoicism and anti-effeminacy reflected aspects of Victorian and Edwardian masculinity.⁵⁴ As Semple argues masculinities were 'characterised by energy, virility

⁴⁸ Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper in Britain: A Cultural History, 1855-1940* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.71.

⁴⁹ Shpayer-Makov, 'Shedding the Uniform', pp.150-155.

⁵⁰ Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.119.

⁵¹ Ben Griffin, *The Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain: Masculinity, Political Culture, and the Struggle for Women's Rights* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.173.

⁵² Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p.119.

⁵³ Ana Carden-Coyne, 'Classical Heroism and Modern Life: Bodybuilding and Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century', *Journal of Australian Studies* 63(2000), p.145.

⁵⁴ Janice Cavell, 'Manliness in the Life and Posthumous Reputation of Robert Falcon Scott', *Canadian Journal of History* 45 (2010), p.539, Paul R. Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men: British*

and strength, refined by moral notions of decisiveness, courage and endurance.⁵⁵

Scott's Bowers fits this description. Scott frequently linked Bowers and Edgar Evans in terms of physical strength, despite their differences in size and social background, 'Evans is a giant worker with a really remarkable headpiece.'⁵⁶ It implied that they had equivalent strength and stamina despite their significant physical differences.

John Tosh argues that Victorian manliness was closely identified with work 'it is by work, work, work – constant, never ceasing work – work well and faithfully done... that you are to rise out of things into men.'⁵⁷ This hardy endurance to Scott was clearly an expression of manliness, one which Bowers own desire for hard work clearly fed into, 'We are working from about 5am till after midnight and presently I don't mind how much I work as long as human nature holds out. It is a glorious life and I enjoy every minute of it.'⁵⁸

These references to strength and endurance are evenly spaced throughout the journals demonstrating the importance of this characteristic from the beginning of the expedition. Scott consistently stressed that one of Bowers' principal characteristic was his physical capacity to endure hardship. 'I believe he is the hardest traveller that ever undertook a polar journey, as well as the most undaunted.'⁵⁹ Hardihood was an important characteristic for Scott.

The greatest source of pleasure to me is that I have such men as Bowers and PO Evans for the southern journey. I do not think that harder men or better sledge travellers ever took the trail. Bowers is a little wonder.⁶⁰

Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850-1920 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), p.50.

⁵⁵ Rhonda A Semple, 'Missionary Manhood: Professionalism, Belief and Masculinity in the Nineteenth Century British Field', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 3 (2008), p.397.

⁵⁶ Scott, *Journals*, p.369.

⁵⁷ John Tosh, 'Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002), p.466.

⁵⁸ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 7 January 1911, MS1505/1/1/3/106, BJ, SPRI.

⁵⁹ Scott, *Journals*, p.256.

⁶⁰ Scott, *Journals*, p.291.

Scott clearly believed that hard men such as Bowers would prove key to his success in the South. Scott was impressed by Bowers' powers of endurance from the beginning of the voyage, 'Campbell and Bowers have been untiring', and 'Bowers has kept going in all weathers.'⁶¹ Scott frequently mentioned Bowers' ability to withstand cold more than any other individual: 'His face and ears remain bright red. The rest of us were glad to have thick balaclavas and wind helmets. I have never seen anyone so unaffected by the cold.'⁶² Scott obviously considered this to be a positive personality trait: 'the astonishing physique that enables him to continue to work under conditions, which are absolutely paralyzing to others. Never was such a sturdy, active, undefeatable little man'⁶³ Mangan argues this dominance through physical strength was paramount for men, 'Life is conflict, strength comes through struggle and success is the prerogative of the strong.'⁶⁴ Scott saw his success through Bowers untiring strength.

In 1913, the *Daily Mirror* had published Ponting's photographs and Wilson's paintings under the headline 'Heroes who lay down their lives in the cause of Science.'⁶⁵ In spite of Bowers' significant contribution to the expedition's scientific research, he was never described as a 'martyr to science' in the same way as Scott and Wilson.⁶⁶ Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Norwegian accounts published in English made little or no reference to Bowers. Only Helmer Hanssen listed the names of the British

⁶¹ Scott, *Journals*, p.18, p.63.

⁶² Scott, *Journals*, p.123.

⁶³ Scott, *Journals*, p.256.

⁶⁴ J A Mangan, 'Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no. 1-2 (2010), p.84.

⁶⁵ *Daily Mirror* 15 February 1913, pp.8-9.

⁶⁶ Jones, *Last Great Quest* see chapter five in particular, Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.139.

team, stating ‘we felt their loss as though they were our own men’.⁶⁷ Self-sacrifice was viewed as a key characteristic of heroism in the Edwardian period and beyond into the war years. Max Jones has shown how celebrations of the heroism of the dead explorers coalesced around a common vision that character was forged through struggle and the virtues of selflessness, enduring hardship for a higher cause.⁶⁸ Popular works such as *Like English Gentlemen* promoted the heroic death of the Polar party as the ultimate sacrifice.⁶⁹ A greater sense of meaning was ascribed to their deaths through ‘the language of sacrifice’ and identification with a higher cause, although Jones suggests this was open to interpretation.⁷⁰

In addition to his powers of endurance, Scott also praised Bowers’ efficiency and organizational prowess. Scott frequently describes Bowers as a ‘treasure’ or a ‘wonder’: ‘Bowers is wonderful’⁷¹ and ‘Bowers is a wonder of course.’⁷² Partly this was because he supported Scott’s position, ‘he’s a perfect treasure, enters into one’s ideas at once.’⁷³ but also in terms of his efficiency, ‘he proves a perfect treasure, there is not a single case he does not know or a single article of any sort but he cannot put his hand on at once.’⁷⁴ This language is reiterated much further into the journals reinforcing this idea of Bowers more strongly: ‘Bowers is all and more than I ever

⁶⁷ Roald Amundsen, *My Life as an Explorer* (Gloucester: Amberley Press, 1927); Roald Amundsen, *The South Pole: An Account of the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition in the "Fram", 1910-1912* (London: John Murray, 1912), unknown, ‘Captain Roald Amundsen and the Society’, *The Geographical Journal* 70, no. 6 (1927), Helmer Hanssen, *Voyages of a Modern Viking* (London: Routledge & Sons, 1936).

⁶⁸ Max Jones, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.234.

⁶⁹ J. E. Hodder-Williams and Robert Falcon Scott, *Like English Gentlemen*. [on the Death of Robert Scott and His Companions.] to Peter Scott from the Author of "Where's Master?" [I.E. Sir John Ernest Hodder Williams] (pp. 61. Hodder & Stoughton: London, 1913), p.57.

⁷⁰ Max Jones, ‘“Our King Upon His Knees”: The Public Commemoration of Captain Scott’s Last Antarctic Expedition’, in Geoffrey Cubitt and Allen Warren, *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.115.

⁷¹ Scott, *Journals*, p.123.

⁷² Scott, *Journals*, p.263.

⁷³ Scott, *Journals*, p.88.

⁷⁴ Scott, *Journals*, p.83.

expected of him. He is a positive treasure, absolutely trustworthy and prodigiously energetic. He is about the hardest man among us.⁷⁵

Scott made many references to Bowers' attention to detail, thoroughness and efficiency. Early journal references focused on Bowers' speed and efficiency when undertaking tasks: 'Bowers attacked the ships stores,' and Bowers, 'Dashes off to the ship.'⁷⁶ These characteristics were not only an expression of Scott's positive view of Bowers, but also expressed a broader Edwardian association of Britishness with energy, industriousness and dynamism, as discussed by Peter Cain.⁷⁷ For Scott, Bowers was closely linked with the characteristics of thoroughness and meticulous attention to detail. As the journal progressed Scott becomes more and more reliant on Bowers to undertake important tasks. Ponting, who suggested that Bowers had become Scott's right-hand man, supports this.⁷⁸ Scott once again links Bowers and Evans as those who can be trusted: 'Thanks to these people and more especially Bowers and PO Evans, there is not a single detail of our equipment, which is not arranged with the utmost care and in accordance with the tests of experience.'⁷⁹ Further on it is to Bowers only that Scott entrusts with important tasks: 'I find that Bowers is the only man on whom I can thoroughly rely to carry out the work without mistake with its array of figures.'⁸⁰ Graham Dawson has noted how adventure narratives frequently portrayed a 'Man Friday' figure, whose duty was to side with

⁷⁵ Scott, *Journals*, p.302.

⁷⁶ Jones, *Last Great Quest*, p.9, Scott, *Journals*, p.83.

⁷⁷ Peter J Cain, 'Empire and the Languages of Character and Virtue in Later Victorian and Edwardian Britain', *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 2 (2007), pp.252-254, See also Stefan Collini, 'The Idea of 'Character' in Victorian Political Thought ', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 35(1984).

⁷⁸ Ponting, *The Great White South*, p.73.

⁷⁹ Scott, *Journals*, p.284.

⁸⁰ Scott, *Journals*, p.302.

the principal hero (the Robinson Crusoe) during his struggle and lend the hero his support.⁸¹

Scott frequently referred to Bowers' good humour. Scott portrayed Bowers as an amusing figure, who remains positive in the face of adversity. After a balloon became lost, Scott noted how 'whatever his feelings [Bowers] went off as gaily as usual on the search for the balloon'.⁸² By portraying Bowers solely as a humorous individual Scott creates a representation of Bowers one whose humour is more evident than his intellect, regardless of the circumstance, 'He is thoroughly enjoying himself'.⁸³ On the way back from the Pole Scott confided Scott's statement 'I don't know what I should do if Wilson and Bowers were not so determinedly cheerful over things.'⁸⁴ Michael Roper suggests these character attributes were an 'older language of the self, drawn from Edwardian ideals of manliness, courage and stoicism.'⁸⁵ Scott implied a cheerful Edwardian stoicism to Bowers, which we cannot substantiate as he himself had given up his journals writing by this time. Perhaps Scott saw only this aspect of Bowers' personality, and was comfortable with the stereotype that had been created. Bowers may have concealed the serious side to his nature. Scott never refers to Bowers as a serious minded individual, which is contradicted the way Bowers saw himself. He frequently discussed a variety of serious topics in great detail with his family, 'I have very strong political opinions in certain directions but they are to be found in all parties except the Irish Nationalists.'⁸⁶

⁸¹ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, pp.60-76, Byron Farwell, *For Queen and Country* (London: Allen Lane, 1981), pp.132-137.

⁸² Scott, *Journals*, p.265.

⁸³ Scott, *Journals*, p.369.

⁸⁴ Scott, *Journals*, p.406.

⁸⁵ Michael Roper, 'Slipping out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 59 (2005), p.66.

⁸⁶ H.R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 1 March 1910, MS1505/1/1/2/87, BJ, SPRI.

Scott's journals clearly show that he believed he was intellectually superior to Bowers. This view could be seen most clearly in Scott's assessment of Bowers' lecture on sledging rations, which praised the effort and good humour, but was condescending towards Bowers' analysis.

He has shown great courage undertaking the task, great perseverance in unearthing facts ... was both entertaining and instructive when he dealt with old time ration; but he naturally grew weak in approaching the physiological aspect ... He went through it manfully and with a touch of humour much appreciated.⁸⁷

In this though, Scott still considered the manliness of Bowers as expressed through his attempts to master a difficult topic. Scott expressed shock when Bowers' showed intelligence. 'He surprises always, for his intelligence is of quite a high order and his memory for details most exceptional'.⁸⁸ The use of 'quite' here is telling.

The dominance of Scott's portrayal is evidenced in the direct paraphrasing of his descriptions of Bowers in the later representations. These vary from repetition of single words to full quotes from Scott's journals. Scott's 'It is relief to have the indefatigable little Bowers' is reflected in Teddy Evans' initial 'This indefatigable little worker', and later 'The indefatigable Bowers swung his thermometer'.⁸⁹ Evans' references to Bowers are sparse, mostly quoting verbatim from Scott rather than providing his own description.⁹⁰ Griffith Taylor only described Bowers' personality once, but used the same word: 'Bowers was the most indefatigable of these "pseudo scientists."⁹¹ Ponting directly speaks of using Scott as his reference point. In the epilogue to *The Great White South* he states 'There are numerous high tributes in Scott's journal to his hardiness.'⁹² Ponting reflected characteristics described by Scott,

⁸⁷ Scott, *Journals*, p.205.

⁸⁸ Scott, *Journals*, p.302.

⁸⁹ Scott, *Journals*, p.355, Evans, *South with Scott*, p.54, p.203.

⁹⁰ Evans, *South with Scott*, p.230.

⁹¹ Taylor, *The Silver Lining*, p.199.

⁹² Ponting, *The Great White South*, p.305.

‘He was chosen by Captain Scott because of his never flagging energy, strength and efficiency and for the stamina, ability and resource which he has displayed in the unparalleled mid winter journey.’⁹³ Ponting, too, noted how the ‘capable young officer became the leader’s right hand man.’⁹⁴ Like Evans, Ponting also quotes Scott verbatim, ‘no work is too hard. It is difficult to get him into the tent; he seems quite oblivious to the cold.’⁹⁵

Again there is direct paraphrasing of Scott as supporting evidence, ‘No wonder Scott wrote of him: “He is the hardest man that ever went into the Polar regions.”’ observed Ponting.⁹⁶ Ponting also reflected the Kingsleyian view of a clean, healthy manliness unfettered by otherworldliness and an antidote to the ‘poison of effeminacy’, where sleeping with snow falling on the covers of the bed was to be revered and positively enjoyed.⁹⁷ He alluded to Bowers washing in snow and ice as a sign of his strength and endurance, ‘Every morning the Spartan Bowers would undergo a stoical ordeal.’⁹⁸

Like Scott, Ponting gave the impression of a kind and cheerful personality, popular with all. ‘Bowers’ humour and never failing high spirits were a great asset to all his comrades.’⁹⁹ Ponting noted that ‘To Birdie’s never failing good humour and kindly nature we owed almost as much as to Uncle Bill’s sagacity’.¹⁰⁰ Kindness and cheerfulness were considered valued features of late-Victorian and Edwardian masculinity.¹⁰¹ However, in contrast to Scott’s image of Bowers as the ever-cheerful

⁹³ Ponting, *The Great White South*, p.304.

⁹⁴ Ponting, *The Great White South*, p.73.

⁹⁵ Ponting, *The Great White South*, p.276.

⁹⁶ Ponting, *The Great White South*, p.50.

⁹⁷ David Newsome, *Godliness & Good Learning: Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal* (London: Murray, 1961), p.212, p.207.

⁹⁸ Ponting, *The Great White South*, p.49.

⁹⁹ Ponting, *The Great White South*, p.304.

¹⁰⁰ Ponting, *The Great White South*, p.161.

¹⁰¹ Mangan, 'Social Darwinism', p.79.

stoic, Evans alluded to the more serious side to his personality. He talked of Bowers as ‘the most surprising personality’, and discussed a number of serious conversations where Bowers discussed his past in India and the future he saw for himself, ‘He had some good tales to tell of the Persian Gulf, of days and weeks spent boat cruising, of attacks made on gun running dhows.’¹⁰² Scott’s journals do not show any evidence of such serious conversations with Bowers. Other primary source recycling of Scott’s image of Bowers helped cement the dominance of Scott’s representation. As all later scholars have accessed these sources Scott’s portrayal of Bowers characteristics has disseminated through to become an unquestioned image.

2. ‘A Fat Little Man’?

‘a fat little man with a perfectly immense nose and red bristly hair, unquenchable spirits and energy’.¹⁰³

While authors praised Bowers’ possession of many positive, manly qualities, they also frequently described him as squat, and in some cases fat, and a large nose. He became an example of what George Mosse has described as ‘a normative standard of ugliness’, different to the established ideal of symmetrical beauty and proportion.¹⁰⁴ Mosse argued that ‘Mankind must seek perfection through beauty’, and that ugliness reflected not only bodily but also mental failings, a mind lacking in control.¹⁰⁵ The stereotype of heroic manliness was so powerful precisely because ‘it could be seen, touched, or even talked to... all men were supposed to conform to an ideal masculinity’.¹⁰⁶ Drawing on classical images manly beauty ‘was associated with

¹⁰² Evans, *South with Scott*, pp.14, 16, 46.

¹⁰³ Ranulph Sir Fiennes, *Captain Scott* (London: Coronet, 2004), p.171.

¹⁰⁴ Mosse, *The Image of Man*, p.59.

¹⁰⁵ Mosse, *The Image of Man*, p.69.

¹⁰⁶ Mosse, *The Image of Man*, p.6.

physical strength, whereas feminine beauty distinguished respectable women.

Beautiful bodies were idealised in life and death'.¹⁰⁷

Both Bowers and later writers reflected a growing anxiety around physical manly attributes accentuated by the crisis in healthy wartime recruits in successive conflicts.¹⁰⁸ The rise of the mesomorphic male and a fascination with male anthropometric data in the formulation of ideal manliness demonstrates the importance of these figures to men in the Edwardian period.¹⁰⁹ Park cites William White who in his 1887 article a physician's view of exercise and athletics suggested that 'the careful study of weight, height, circumference of chest, size of legs, forearms and so on could reveal a great deal about a man's general condition and also his nature.'¹¹⁰ In America in the 1910s there still remained a focus on gaining weight as thinness equated to poverty and malnutrition. The adjective *fat* was used to equate health.¹¹¹ Park supports this suggesting Englishmen were viewed as positive when 'stout and virile' and 'bold in adventure and battle.'¹¹²

These ideas developed alongside the new physical culture movement and its focus on bodybuilding. The most famous proponent of this movement, Eugen Sandow, the Victorian strongman and body builder, with his compact, strong, muscled body became synonymous with development of male power. For Sandow

¹⁰⁷ Ana Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism, and the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.5.

¹⁰⁸ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'The Culture of the Abdomen: Obesity and Reducing in Britain, Circa 1900-1939', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005), p. 242.

¹⁰⁹ Roberta J Park, 'Muscles, Symmetry and Action: "Do You Measure Up?" Defining Masculinity in Britain and America from the 1860s to the Early 1900s', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 22, no. 3 (2007), p.377, Paul R Deslandes, 'The Male Body, Beauty and Aesthetics in Modern British Culture', *History Compass* 8, no. 10 (2010), p.1194.

¹¹⁰ Park, 'Muscles, Symmetry and Action', p.377.

¹¹¹ Helen Zoe Veit, "So Few Fat Ones Grow Old": Diet, Health, and Virtue in the Golden Age of Rising Life Expectancy', *Endeavour* 35, no. 2-3 (2011), pp.91-92.

¹¹² Park, 'Muscles, Symmetry and Action', p.374.

‘Bodily appearance was the best indicator of a healthy brain and soul.’¹¹³ Sandow, stated that ‘chest measurement is generally a correct enough guide to the physical capacity of a man.’¹¹⁴ Richard Holt suggests that the culture of measurement extended into the realms of amateur sport, ‘the new male body, advocated by doctors and the proponents of amateur sport alike, was a neo-classical norm of human proportion, balancing height, weight, muscle development and mobility. The ideal athlete was neither too tall nor too small, too thin nor too fat’¹¹⁵ As Michael Budd demonstrates, ‘Prized as they were, beauty and strength had to be considered in the context of ideologies of race, gender, sexual behaviour and class.’¹¹⁶

When considering responses to male disability, Wendy Gagan argued that masculine body images were expressed through physical culture mediums such as bodybuilding. These were so socially entrenched they created a sense of anxiety for men physically impaired during the First World War.¹¹⁷ This preoccupation with perfect masculine body ideals continued throughout the 1920s and 1930s. It was eventually incorporated into the fascist ‘masculine’ body of the Second World War.¹¹⁸ Male bodies were the first to be subjected to intense scrutiny and that the physical culture movement was inspired by the celebration of the male body beautiful.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ Michael Anton Budd, *The Sculpture Machine: Physical Culture and Body Politics in the Age of Empire* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p.67.

¹¹⁴ David Waller, *The Perfect Man: The Muscular Life and Times of Eugen Sandow* (Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2011), p.166.

¹¹⁵ Richard Holt, 'The Amateur Body and Middle-Class Man: Work, Health and Style in Victorian Britain', *Sport In History* 26, no. 3 (2006), p.631.

¹¹⁶ Budd, *The Sculpture Machine: Physical Culture and Body Politics in the Age of Empire*, p.117.

¹¹⁷ Wendy Jane Gagan, 'Remastering the Body, Renegotiating Gender: Physical Disability and Masculinity During the First World War, the Case of J.B. Middlebrook', *European Review of History* 14, no. 4 (2007), p.527.

¹¹⁸ Petra Rau, 'The Fascist Body Beautiful and the Imperial Crisis in 1930s British Writing', *Journal of European Studies* 39, no. 5 (2009).

¹¹⁹ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain, 1880-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.11.

The focus on the body, its place in gender history and the inherent difficulties in producing a working definition of what a male body is, have been examined by Kathleen Canning.¹²⁰ This work has continued with Ana Carden-Coyne's examination of bodily reconstruction and its cultural impact on the idea of manly beauty.¹²¹ She suggests that the physical culture movement and its focus on areas such as bodybuilding went deeper than just the physical: 'the idea that the fitness of the body could reveal the state of the human mind was popularised by bodybuilding culture'.¹²² The physical culture movement regarded 'fat men as cowards, it was assumed they could neither flee nor fight, their inertia rendered them un-heroic and impotent.'¹²³ Manly self-control was seen as central to successful reducing, and controlling corpulence very much in your own hands 'would you remain so fat (or become still fatter) or else bring yourself back to the normal and the reasonable.'¹²⁴ The stunted, narrow-chested, urban casual labourer represented such a 'countertype', as did the overweight body of a sedentary worker.¹²⁵ Many forms of masculinity became linked with male beauty and physicality, with the obese man viewed as deviant to the norm.¹²⁶

Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska has considered the cult of beauty, health and fitness, along with a detailed examination of the rise in the fascination of slimming and a what was considered a 'reducing culture' for men popularised by Frederick

¹²⁰ Kathleen Canning, 'The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in Gender History', *Gender and History* 1, no. 3 (1999), p.503.

¹²¹ Carden-Coyne, *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism, and the First World War*.

¹²² Carden-Coyne, 'Classical Heroism', p.139.

¹²³ Carden-Coyne, 'Classical Heroism', p.141.

¹²⁴ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain, 1880-1939*, p.54.

¹²⁵ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain, 1880-1939*, p.19.

¹²⁶ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Culture of the Abdomen', p.245, Mosse, *The Image of Man*, pp.107-19.

Hornibrook who was celebrated as the 'Man who has lost ten thousand pounds of fat and deflated innumerable waistcoats.'¹²⁷ Her work led other historians into more detailed analysis of how boundaries around accepted norms of male beauty and physicality were examined and measured. The fight against obesity reflected more general concerns about physical degeneration of men and developed an ideology that 'to cultivate a fit and healthy body (was) part of a wider obligation of citizenship.'¹²⁸ Male degeneration was closely linked to excess consumption, resulting in obesity, amongst primarily middle class men and a growing preoccupation with weight loss and physical fitness resulted¹²⁹

Obesity was more than a personal issue, it reflected wider concerns about deterioration and racial health and men were encouraged to remain fit as an 'obligation of citizenship'.¹³⁰ Shannon suggests from his investigation into fashion and advertising that men and women's vanity over their personal appearance were 'implicitly equated in their mutual desire for a slimmer waistline.'¹³¹ His work around attempts to masculinise the man's corset explains that it was marketed in terms of health giving properties and not to limit obesity.¹³² However it appeared that the issues around obesity were somewhat fluid. Christopher Forth has argued that the denigration of fat emerging in the early twentieth century 'acquired some of its edge through this on-going tendency to depict desire for and acceptance of fat as fundamentally 'savage' or uncivilised'. An obese man threatened the important hegemonic codes of masculinity linked to restraint and self control by his greed and

¹²⁷ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Culture of the Abdomen', p.239, p.240.

¹²⁸ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Culture of the Abdomen', p.245.

¹²⁹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Culture of the Abdomen', p.242.

¹³⁰ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Culture of the Abdomen', p.254.

¹³¹ Brent Shannon, 'Refashioning Men: Fashion, Masculinity and the Cultivation of the Male Consumer in Britain 1860-1914', *Victorian Studies* 46(2004), p.620.

¹³² Shannon, 'Refashioning Men', p.624.

self-indulgence.¹³³ Holt has argued that being ‘overweight’ was both unhealthy and aesthetically undesirable¹³⁴. Fat, incited ridicule, was considered ‘unhealthy, lethal, ugly and morally corrupting’ and as such according to Zweiniger-Bargielowska conflicted with more dominant masculinities.¹³⁵ Today, the reducing culture is a societal norm and fat is a pejorative term.

Bowers himself was anxious about his weight. As early as 1907 he was consciously trying to lose weight by dieting. Seaver reported that:

In spite of vigorous exercise ashore (cycling, rowing, swimming, boxing, and occasionally trying to get his ‘sea-legs on horseback’), and rigorous dieting (cutting out all starches, sweets and fats), he could not reduce his weight which remained at 12 stone – his height was 5 feet 4 inches.¹³⁶

Bowers was uncomfortable with his weight. ‘I suppose it is the result of a contented mind or something, yet it *is* rather disconcerting’.¹³⁷ He successfully reduced down to 10 stones 2 lbs after cycling in 1907, but subsequently regained 17 pounds within seven weeks.¹³⁸

Griffith Taylor joked about his ‘deposits of fat, and an inflamed head’, suggesting Bowers’ weight gain persisted in the Antarctic.¹³⁹ Others attempted to phrase their descriptions more politely than Griffiths, but the meaning was still evident: ‘Bowers, short, thickset and round, with body and limbs as tough as teak yet devoid of any ugly knots or ridges of muscle’, commented Ponting.¹⁴⁰ Many writers commented on the physical dimensions of the men involved in the expedition. Most notably, Cherry-Garrard described the height, weight and build of the expedition’s

¹³³ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain, 1880-1939*, p.19.

¹³⁴ Holt, 'The Amateur Body', p.361.

¹³⁵ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Culture of the Abdomen', p.262.

¹³⁶ George Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers of the Antactic* (London: John Murray, 1938), p.77.

¹³⁷ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.77.

¹³⁸ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.128.

¹³⁹ Taylor, *The Silver Lining*, p.293.

¹⁴⁰ Ponting, *The Great White South*, p.160.

key characters: Scott ‘a strong man, 5'9’ in height, 11 stone 6lbs’;¹⁴¹ ‘Wilson was of a slimmer, more athletic build, a great walker, 5 feet 10 1/2 inches in height, 11 stones in weight’¹⁴²; and Bowers, ‘Aged 28, he was only 5 feet 4 inches in height while his chest measurement (which I give more as a general guide to his physique than for any other reason) was 40 inches and his weight 12 stones’.¹⁴³ Not all writers emphasised his physical characteristics. Writing after the First World War Teddy Evans, for example, noted instead his regiment and rank, noting ‘Lieutenant Bowers came home from the Royal Indian Marines’.¹⁴⁴

Vanessa Heggie’s reinterpretation has revealed a decrease in the size measurements of military recruits from 5 feet 8 inches in 1861 to a low of 5 feet 3 inches in 1883 and again in 1900.¹⁴⁵ Bowers at 5 feet 4 inches was perhaps not unusually short for the period, yet the only members of the *Terra Nova* expedition smaller than Bowers were the two Russian horse grooms, Anton and Dimitiri. Thomas Nelson, Michelle Acker and Melvin Manis have analysed how height, such a visible feature of day-to-day social relations, is closely associated with ideas about gender.¹⁴⁶ Roderick Floud has argued that Scottish men were in general taller than English men between the 1850s and the 1940s, which may have intensified impressions of Bowers’ peculiarity given the regular emphasis on his Scottish origins.¹⁴⁷ Bowers’ himself did not emphasise his Scottishness or origins in Bute. ‘I don’t enjoy being identified with a locality and I shall never own myself a Butanian. As I

¹⁴¹ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.212.

¹⁴² Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.212.

¹⁴³ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.212.

¹⁴⁴ Evans, *South With Scott*, p.8.

¹⁴⁵ Vanessa Heggie, 'Lies, Damn Lies, and Manchester's Recruiting Statistics: Degeneration as an 'Urban Legend' in Victorian and Edwardian Britain', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 63, no. 2 (2007); Heggie, 'Lies, Damn Lies', p.182.

¹⁴⁶ Michelle Aker Thomas E Nelson, Melvin Manis, 'Irrepressible Stereotypes', *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 32 (1996), p.17.

¹⁴⁷ Roderick Floud, 'The Dimensions of Inequality: Height and Weight Variations in Britain, 1700-2000', *Contemporary British History* 16, no. 3 (2002), p.18.

am fortunate in being half and half I can claim either nationality – though why differentiate between English and Scotch.’¹⁴⁸

The adjective used most frequently in physical descriptions of Bowers was ‘little’, used nine times in Scott’s published journals and six in Evans, *South with Scott*. Scott’s references usages do not appear in the early chapters, but become more common following the Cape Crozier expedition, as he increasingly came to rely on Bowers help. ‘Indefatigable little Bowers.’ is followed by ‘Little Bowers remains a marvel.’¹⁴⁹ Scott continues to describe Bowers as ‘little’ through the rest of his journal: ‘Little Bowers is wonderful’; alongside him as an ‘undefeatable little man’ and ‘Bowers is laying himself out to get sights’¹⁵⁰. The adjective ‘little’ carried both positive and negative associations. It could act as a term of endearment, as in Scott’s ‘Little Bowers remains a marvel ...he is an undefeated little sportsman’¹⁵¹ Evans copied Scott’s use of both ‘little’ and ‘indefatigable’, describing ‘the careful little Bowers’¹⁵², and ‘This indefatigable little worker’.¹⁵³ Some of his uses appear more condescending than Scott’s, though, ‘Here is what Little Bowers says’.¹⁵⁴ Neither Cherry-Garrard nor Ponting described Bowers as ‘little’, using instead ‘5 feet 4 inches’, and ‘short’ respectively.¹⁵⁵

Although used affectionately at times, descriptions of Bowers as ‘little’ reinforced his subordinate status. ‘I am afraid he must find these long marches very trying with his short legs’, Scott commented on the polar journey,¹⁵⁶ observing

¹⁴⁸ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 25 September 1910, MS1505/1/1/2/101, BJ, SPRI.

¹⁴⁹ Scott, *Journals*, p.355, p.369.

¹⁵⁰ Scott, *Journals*, p.256, p.373.

¹⁵¹ Scott, *Journals*, p.336, p.382.

¹⁵² Evans, *South with Scott*, p.203.

¹⁵³ Evans, *South with Scott*, p.54.

¹⁵⁴ Evans, *South with Scott*, p.277.

¹⁵⁵ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.212, Ponting and Scott, *The Great White South*, p.160.

¹⁵⁶ Scott, *Journals*, p.382.

elsewhere that ‘Bowers managed to struggle through the soft snow without tiring his short legs.’¹⁵⁷ By placing Bowers on his shoulders (an almost child-like position) to gain a better view of the surrounding landscape Scott reinforced Bowers’ size simply by the fact that he was small enough for the others to lift in this way, ‘I could see nothing and Bowers on my shoulders directed me.’¹⁵⁸ Cherry-Garrard repeated this view. ‘To slog along on foot in soft snow’, he wrote, ‘in the middle of four men pulling rhythmically on ski must have been tiring and very painful; and Birdie’s legs were very short’.¹⁵⁹ Cherry-Garrard also suggested Bowers was self-conscious about his height: ‘Being the smallest man in our party he schemed to have allotted to him the largest pony.’¹⁶⁰

3. *Ugly, Large Nose and Red Hair*

I was the first to pick up a nickname- as usual. I was “Polly” at Sidcup, “Beakie” at Streatham, “Kinky” on the Worcester, “Bosun Bill” on the Dufferin, “Nosie” on the Fox and now I am ‘Birdie’.¹⁶¹

Many descriptions of Bowers commented on his distinctive facial features, focusing almost without exception on his large nose, with later references to the colour of his hair. Bowers himself commented with resignation on his distinctive features. References to his appearance have proliferated from the first primary sources to the most recent texts. ‘He is an odd chap to look at’, wrote geologist Frank Debenham in his Antarctic journal, ‘red hair, enormous nose and red face’.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ Scott, *Journals*, p.374.

¹⁵⁸ Scott, *Journals*, p.374.

¹⁵⁹ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.513.

¹⁶⁰ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.215.

¹⁶¹ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.162.

¹⁶² Frank Debenham and June Debenham Back, *The Quiet Land: The Diaries of Frank Debenham: Member of the British Antarctic Expedition 1910-1913* (Bluntisham: Bluntisham Books and the Erskine Press, 1992), p.19.

Peter Berek and Naomi Baker have analysed attitudes to facial appearance in early modern Europe, showing that big noses were seen as alternately, Jewish, comedic and as representing sexual deformity in men.¹⁶³ Johann Kaspar Lavater equated beauty and morality in the eighteenth century, ‘the more virtuous, the greater the beauty of any human being; the less virtuous, the uglier his appearance’.¹⁶⁴ With the rise of physiognomy, faces were viewed as increasingly significant markers of character, ‘the main tenet of physiognomy was that the physical features of a person’s face and body indicate instincts and behaviour’.¹⁶⁵ Lucy Hatley has shown how noses in particular came to be viewed as embodying the moral life of an individual through the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁶

By the time of the departure of the *Terra Nova*, large noses had become linked with deviance and criminality. Influential criminologist Cesare Lombroso’s book *Criminal Man*, first translated into English in 1911, suggested that murderers’ noses were ‘often aquiline like the beak of a bird of prey’.¹⁶⁷ A year earlier, Charles Kassel in ‘Physiognomy and Genius’, had argued that ‘the nose we seem instinctively to look upon as a decisive index to character ... the hawk nose, to most observers is a sign of an aggressive, self sufficient nature not troubled overmuch with moral scruple’.¹⁶⁸ At times, large noses also carried positive associations, notably for example in the figure

¹⁶³ Peter Berek quoted in Jane Hwang Degenhardt and Elizabeth Williamson, *Religion and Drama in Early Modern England: The Performance of Religion on the Renaissance Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p.63, p.66, Naomi Baker, 'To Make Love to a Deformity': Praising Ugliness in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Studies* 22, no. 1 (2007).

¹⁶⁴ Mosse, *The Image of Man*, p.25.

¹⁶⁵ Lucy Hartley, *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.16.

¹⁶⁶ Hartley, *Physiognomy and Expression*, p.34.

¹⁶⁷ Cesare Lombroso and afterwards Ferrero Gina Lombroso, *Criminal Man According to the Classification of Cesare Lombroso*. Briefly Summarised by His Daughter Gina Lombroso Ferrero. With an Introduction by Cesare Lombroso. Illustrated (New York ; London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911), p.16.

¹⁶⁸ Charles Kassel, 'Physiognomy and Genius', *Popular Science Monthly* 78(1911), p.161.

of *Cyrano De Bergerac*,¹⁶⁹ who declared that ‘Tis well known, a big nose is indicative of a soul affable and kind, and courteous’.¹⁷⁰

Although less frequently referred to than his large nose, some commentators also drew attention to Bowers’ red hair. This feature was not emphasised so prominently. Importantly Scott never referred to Birdie’s hair colour. Of the initial five key sources, only Griffith Taylor emphasised Bowers’ red hair: ‘Bowers was Birdie from his outstanding features and Titian crest’,¹⁷¹ Taylor also mentioned Bowers’ appearance in his private journal, ‘Bowers (Birdie) Stout, strong red hair. (sic) most energetic of all’.¹⁷² and later, slightly cruel comment, ‘Birdie had been nodding a bit so I said he was evidently scorbutic, as he exhibited a tendency to syncope, deposits of fat, and an inflamed head (a cruel hit at his red hair)’.¹⁷³ By adding this caveat in brackets Taylor reinforced the pejorative nature of his point. Although alone among the initial five key expedition accounts, other crew members noted Bowers’ hair colour in their private journals. Edward Wilson wrote of a man ‘whom you will remember by sight, a short, red-headed thick-set little man with a very large nose’¹⁷⁴. Although not assigned particular prominence in the decade after the Antarctic disaster, Bowers’ red hair would receive increasing attention in later narratives.

Men’s hair has received little attention from scholars, with a few exceptions such as Christopher Oldstone-Moore’s perceptive study of the links between beards

¹⁶⁹ Edmond Rostand, Mary F. Guillemard, and Gladys Translator Thomas, *Cyrano De Bergerac. A Play in Five Acts*. Translated from the French by Gladys Thomas and M. F. Guillemard (London: W. Heinemann, 1897).

¹⁷⁰ Rostand, Guillemard, and Thomas, *Cyrano De Bergerac. A Play in Five Acts*. Translated from the French by Gladys Thomas and M. F. Guillemard, p.28.

¹⁷¹ Taylor, *The Silver Lining*, p.213.

¹⁷² Griffith Taylor Papers, Undated, MS1003/9/591- attachment to 9/590 ‘Dramatis personae of the expedition.’, SPRI.

¹⁷³ Taylor, *The Silver Lining*, p.293.

¹⁷⁴ Seaver, ‘*Birdie*’ Bowers, p.153.

and masculinity, Dwight E Robinson's study of shaving fashions,¹⁷⁵ and Brent Shannon's research on the increasing sales of male grooming products.¹⁷⁶ However, scholars have paid far more attention to women's hair.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, we know members of the *Terra Nova* expedition had read works by Elinor Glyn, described by geologist Frank Debenham as 'an authoress of the period much discussed for her risky novels.'¹⁷⁸ One of her works was titled *Red Hair* (1904), about a 'penniless adventuress with green eyes and red hair'.¹⁷⁹ The connection between Bowers hair colour and his Scottish birthplace was certainly been made by later authors: 'Henry Robertson Bowers, a tough, redheaded, wiry little Clydeside Scot', wrote Roland Huntford in 1979.¹⁸⁰

Anthony Synott has argued that hair is considered the 'most powerful symbol of individual and group identity – powerful first because it is physical and therefore extremely personal, and second because, although personal, it is also public rather than private'.¹⁸¹ Galia Ofek in her study of representations of hair in Victorian literature, suggests that our self-identity is both constructed and determined at a visual level, and, that of all bodily parts, hair is crucial to the formation of identity because it

¹⁷⁵ Christopher Oldstone-Moore, 'The Beard Movement in Victorian Britain', *Victorian Studies* 48, no. 1 (2005), Dwight E Robinson, 'Fashions in Shaving and Trimming of the Beard: The Men of the Illustrated London News 1842-1972', *American Journal of Sociology* 81, no. 5 (1976).

¹⁷⁶ Shannon, 'Refashioning Men', p.620.

¹⁷⁷ Elisabeth G Gitter, 'The Power of Women's Hair in the Victorian Imagination', *PMLA* 99, no. 5 (1984), Virginia M Allen, 'One Strangling Golden Hair': Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Lady Lilith', *The Art Bulletin* 66, no. 2 (1984), Galia Ofek, *Representations of Hair in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

¹⁷⁸ Frank Debenham, *In the Antarctic: Stories of Scott's Last Expedition* (J. Murray, 1952), p.19.

¹⁷⁹ Elinor Glyn, "Red Hair" In *The vicissitudes of Evangeline*. (1904); Elinor Glyn, *The Vicissitudes of Evangeline* (Lond.: Coss Press, 1905), p.7.

¹⁸⁰ Roland Huntford, *Scott and Amundsen* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), p.259.

¹⁸¹ Anthony Synnott, 'Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair', *The British Journal of Sociology* 38, no. 3 (1987), p.381, Ofek, *Representations of Hair in Victorian Literature and Culture*, p.1.

is high on the list of things that is noticed first about an individual's appearance.¹⁸²

Synott has argued that beards played a particularly significant role as a marker of masculinity.¹⁸³ Beards were particularly associated with military men,¹⁸⁴ but were far less common in naval circles, where they were permitted only at the discretion of the commander.¹⁸⁵ Bowers, like most members of the *Terra Nova* expedition, was clean shaven, with beards usually only grown during sledging journeys, possibly reflecting the naval character of the expedition.¹⁸⁶

Red hair has often been seen as a negative characteristic, linked to Judas Iscariot, who was commonly portrayed with red hair to distinguish him from the other apostles.¹⁸⁷ In sixteenth-century literature those with red hair were frequently called 'Judas coloured'.¹⁸⁸ Ruth Melinkoff demonstrates that red heads have historically been designated liars, cheats, traitors, murderers and devils, 'besmirched' by adjectives including 'false, dangerous, tricky, shameless, over-sexed, deceitful, hot-tempered', among others.¹⁸⁹ In Tennyson's poetic drama *Queen Mary* (1875), courtiers discuss the villain Phillip of Spain as having Judas-like hair.¹⁹⁰ In 1891 Arthur Conan Doyle published *The Redheaded League* as part of his *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* series. Jabez Wilson embodied many negative characteristics later applied to Bowers. Dr Watson noted there was 'nothing remarkable about the man save his blazing red hair', and he is described elsewhere as 'obese, pompous and slow'. Wilson is duped into acting as a front for a robbery on his own shop. He is

¹⁸² Ofek, *Representations of Hair in Victorian Literature and Culture*, p.1.

¹⁸³ Synnott, 'Shame and Glory', p.383.

¹⁸⁴ Oldstone-Moore, 'Beard Movement', pp.18-33.

¹⁸⁵ Oldstone-Moore, 'Beard Movement', p.12.

¹⁸⁶ Oldstone-Moore, 'Beard Movement', p.29, Budd, *The Sculpture Machine: Physical Culture and Body Politics in the Age of Empire*, pp.13-27.

¹⁸⁷ Ruth Mellinkoff, 'Judas's Red Hair and the Jews', *Journal of Jewish Art* 9(1982), p.34.

¹⁸⁸ Paul Franklin Baum, 'Judas's Red Hair', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 21, no. 3 (1922), p.520, p.522.

¹⁸⁹ Mellinkoff, 'Judas's Red Hair', p.32.

¹⁹⁰ Alfred Tennyson Baron Tennyson, *Queen Mary and Harold* (Macmillan, 1892), p.582.

strong but stupid, spending weeks copying out an encyclopaedia without questioning why.¹⁹¹ Literary representations thus couple red hair with broader character flaws.

Hair colour was also discussed in works of science. Thomas Huxley's *Geographical Distribution of the Chief Modifications of Mankind* (1870) examined male subjects from around the world, categorising them by hair colour, skin colour and eye colour.¹⁹² the physician and psychiatrist Henry Havelock Ellis in his work *The Criminal* (1890) considers those with red hair to form a higher proportion of the insane and as Joanna Bourke has identified, he considered sex offenders more liable to sport¹⁹³ In 1912 the prolific writer Charles Kassel published his monograph on *Genius and Hair Colour*, noting how 'in nearly all countries popular superstition has looked askance at red hair.'¹⁹⁴

Conclusion

By critically examining the key early accounts of the *Terra Nova* expedition, this chapter has shown how representations of H. R. Bowers were formed by and also absorbed characteristics of manliness prized by Robert Falcon Scott. From the announcement of the disaster in February 1913, commemorative articles focussed primarily on Captain Scott and Captain Oates, as the two principal actors in the tragedy. Bowers took a lesser place in the hierarchy of Antarctic heroes from the beginning, in part as little was known about the obscure Royal Indian Marine officer.

¹⁹¹ Arthur Conan Sir Doyle, *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. The Red-Headed League ... Abridged and Annotated, Etc (1904.), p.12.

¹⁹² Thomas Huxley, 'Geographical Distribution of the Chief Modification of Mankind' *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London* (1870) *Scientific Memoirs* 3 <http://aleph0.clarku.edu/huxley/SM3/GeoDis.html> accessed 26/05/2012.

¹⁹³ Henry Havelock Ellis, *The Criminal*, Contemp. Sci. Ser. (Lond.1890), p.77, Joanna Bourke, 'Sexual Violence, Marital Guidance and Victorian Bodies: An Aesthesiology', *Victorian Studies* 50, no. 3 (2008), p.424.

¹⁹⁴ Charles Kassel, "Genius and Hair Colour " in *Popular Science Monthly* (1912).p.286.

The publication of Scott's Journals in the second half of 1913 presented the first detailed descriptions of Bowers. Scott presented a positive description of a sturdy, cheerful subordinate, defined by his capacity to endure hardship and by his distinctive physical appearance. Scott's representation powerfully influenced the accounts published by Thomas Griffith Taylor, Teddy Evans, and Herbert Ponting, in the first decade after the disaster.

Later sources linked Bowers' physicality to the growing physical culture movement, and also drew attention to characteristics such as his height, weight, and hair colour, which were in contradiction to some of the manly ideals of the inter-war period. Bowers remained a figure of fun to his compatriots and, in spite of his heroism, was considered unattractive. At times references to Bowers' nose appear affectionate, as in Dennis Lillie's caricature. Clearly he inspired friendship amongst his comrades, but there's no doubt his distinctive face made him the butt of jokes.

Previous studies of masculinity have focused on its general representation through literature, speeches, domestic life and imperialism. Representations of Bowers have fed into these cultural codes that are differing and constantly circulating.

2.

**Apsley Cherry-Garrard, George Seaver and Representations of Henry
Robertson Bowers, c.1922 -1939**

‘Into this beautiful land came Birdie – short, stocky, red and with a nose like Turner. Not at all a stage hero.’¹

Chapter one highlighted a tension in representations of Bowers between the accepted heroic character traits of the period and his unusual physical appearance, which did not conform to the masculine norms of Edwardian Britain. This tension exerted a powerful influence over later representations of Bowers, which frequently contrasted his physical strength and resilient character with his comic appearance: short, fat and ugly.

The following chapter moves on to chart representations of Bowers from the publication of Apsley Cherry-Garrard’s *The Worst Journey in the World* in 1922 to the outbreak of the Second World War, in order to intervene in historical debates about British masculinities. A range of masculinities circulates at all times, fluid, contested and at times contradictory.² This chapter will show how the shifting patterns of British masculinities can be traced in the changing representation of Bowers after the war. Carolyn Strange’s recent article examined the ‘cheerful masculinity’ of the *Terra Nova* expedition, arguing that the shore party displayed an emotionally positive outlook that was at odds with the stoic ideal presented by Scott.³ She argues that the expedition should be viewed not as a ‘flight from domesticity’ as

¹ Apsley Cherry- Garrard quoted in George Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers of the Antactic* (London: John Murray, 1938), p.xiii.

² Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History Circa 1500-1950', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005), p.278.

³ Carolyn Strange, 'Reconsidering the 'Tragic' Scott Expedition: Cheerful Masculine Home-Making in Antarctica 1910-1913', *Journal of Social History* 46, no. 1 (2012), p.67..

described by John Tosh, but as an exercise in ‘masculine home-making in extremis’.⁴ In common with most historians, she portrays Bowers as a cheerful, good-humoured individual, much liked by all.

While some historians consider the war to have had a feminising effect on masculinities, others have contested this view.⁵ The public representation of Bowers established by Scott before the war largely persisted after 1918. John MacKenzie has argued that not only was the empire seen as a ‘saviour from decline’, but that heroic representations of imperial masculinity increased in the 1930s, when the adaptation of stories for the new media of radio and cinema intensified their appeal.⁶ Graham Dawson has demonstrated how interest in the story of T. E. Lawrence allowed men to vicariously imagine and test desirable masculinities, and served as an ‘escape from modernity’.⁷ The focus on earlier elite masculinities in plays and films between the wars expressed a commitment to the ‘the rehabilitation of the manly virtues of the officer class.’⁸

This chapter will build on the representations of Bowers in chapter one and will reveal how the most significant new accounts and biographies that emerged at this time built on Scott’s representation to cement his image of Bowers further into the public consciousness. Section one focuses on the first hand accounts of Bowers in Cherry-Gerrard’s *The Worst Journey in the World* and Ponting’s expedition film, *The Great White Silence* and shows that Scott’s representation permeated these later works. Section two begins to look at popular secondary accounts of the Expedition

⁴ Strange, 'Reconsidering the "Tragic"', p.66.

⁵ Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991).

⁶ John M. MacKenzie, *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p.8, Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.171.

⁷ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p.174.

⁸ Paul Ward, *Britishness since 1870* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.46.

published in the 1920's and argues that it is possible to trace Scott's representation throughout these.⁹ Section three considers in detail the first biography of Bowers by the Reverend George Seaver, *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic*. Published in 1938, six months before the outbreak of the Second World War, Seaver's book was the only single biography of Bowers published until 1999, and became the principal source for all later accounts.¹⁰ Section three will reveal for the first time how Seaver edited Bowers' letters and journals under the guidance of his sister Lady May Maxwell. The editing process simplified Bowers' character, especially his unconventional religious beliefs. Finally, section four will situate Seaver's book within the context of changing British masculinities in the 1930s. Seaver's revelation of Bowers' anxieties about his weight can be interpreted as a response to the rising physical culture movement of the period. In a period when different cultures raised the chiselled body as the masculine ideal, Bowers' physical shortcomings reinforced his subordinate position within the hierarchy of Antarctic heroes.

1. *The Worst Journey in the World (1922) and The Great White Silence (1924)*

A series of texts were produced about the *Terra Nova* expedition in the 1920s and 1930s, including memoirs by members of the expedition, biographical studies, and historical works about Antarctica and its explorers. Before the publication of George Seaver's Bowers biography in 1938, the most significant in terms of originality of interpretation or of form were Apsley Cherry-Garrard's two-volume *The*

⁹ Apsley Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey in the World*, New ed. / foreword by Paul Theroux. ed. (London: Picador, 2000), Herbert Ponting and British Film Institute., "The Great White Silence [Videorecording] : The Official Record of Captain Scott's Heroic Journey to the South Pole," (London: BFI, 2011).

¹⁰ Anne Strathie, *Birdie Bowers: Captain Scott's Marvel* (Gloucester: The History Press 2012); Strathie, *Birdie Bowers*, C. H. Lagerbom, *The Fifth Man : The Life of H. R. Bowers* (Whitby: Caedmon of Whitby, 1999).

Worst Journey in the World (1922) and Herbert Ponting's film, *The Great White Silence* (1924). Whilst nearly all texts mentioned Bowers as an actor in the polar drama, many works passed over him briefly. The key development in biographical writing in this period was the rise of more psychological understandings of the self, driven in part by the visibility of shell-shock during and after the war. Michael Roper has suggested the inter-war years saw a shift from a pre-war language of 'manliness' to understandings of 'masculinity' informed by the writings of Sigmund Freud and the growing psychological movement.¹¹ Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey* expressed the rise of more psychological understandings of the self, but this new development had little influence on either Cherry-Garrard or other authors' representations of Bowers in this period.

Apsley Cherry-Garrard, Scott's 'assistant zoologist' and adaptable helper was closest to Bowers in age and had developed a strong friendship with him during the Cape Crozier expedition (which later became the subject of *The Worst Journey in the World*¹²). He was a member of the team that discovered the bodies of Scott, Wilson and Bowers in November 1912. Cherry-Garrard suffered significant mental health problems in part brought on by the realization that he might have saved the Polar party.¹³ He struggled for many years to overcome his feelings of guilt, writing *The Worst Journey In The World* in 1919 and 1920 whilst recovering from depressive illness.¹⁴ The book was first published in 1922.¹⁵ In his eight page biography of Bowers in *The Worst Journey In The World*, Cherry-Garrard presented the most detailed description of Bowers until Seaver's biography in 1938. *The Worst Journey*

¹¹ Michael Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity: The "War Generation" and the Psychology of Fear in Britain 1914-1950', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005), p.361.

¹² Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.lxx.

¹³ Sara Wheeler, *Cherry : A Life of Apsley Cherry-Garrard* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2001), p.146.

¹⁴ Wheeler, *Cherry*, p.208-209.

¹⁵ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, pp.xi-xv.

in the World remains one of the most commercially successful travel accounts of all time. It is continuously in print and is now also available on a range of new media such as Kindle and audio book available on iTunes.¹⁶ It provides us with the most detailed, if hagiographic, account of Bowers as an individual. Alongside practical descriptions of Bowers and his role in the expedition, Cherry-Garrard wrote a eulogy for his dead friend: ‘

Those who the God’s love die young. The God’s loved him, if indeed it be benevolent to show your favourite a clear, straight, shining path of life, with plenty of discomfort and not a little pain, but with few doubts and no fears¹⁷

As in Scott’s diary, the greatest proportion of references related to Bowers’ powers of endurance. Like Scott, Cherry-Garrard used general descriptions of Bowers as ‘the strongest of us’¹⁸; ‘Scott and Bowers were probably the fittest men’.¹⁹ However Cherry-Garrard offered a more nuanced description of Bowers’ capacity to endure hardship and confront obstacles than Scott. ‘His tendency was always to understate difficulties’, Cherry-Garrard remembered. ‘For him difficulties did not exist. I have never known a more buoyant, virile nature.’²⁰ The impression is given of a man who did experience difficulty, but strived to overcome it. ‘He was temperamentally one who refused to admit difficulties. Indeed, if he did not actually welcome them he greeted them with scorn, and in scorning went far to master them’.²¹

By echoing Scott’s view of Bowers as meticulous, organised and hard-working, Cherry-Garrard reinforced the presentation of Scott’s invaluable (yet

¹⁶ http://www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_i_0_19?url=search-alias%3Ddigital-text&field-keywords=the+worst+journey+in+the+world&sprefix=the+worst+journey+i%2Cdigital-text%2C180 accessed 10/03/2012, http://www.audible.co.uk/search/ref=sr_lftbox_1_1 accessed 10/03/2012.

¹⁷ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.214.

¹⁸ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.312.

¹⁹ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.536.

²⁰ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.51, p.216.

²¹ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.213.

subordinate) helper. 'As time proved his capacity Scott left one thing after another in Bowers' hands', Cherry-Garrard wrote. 'To the leader of an expedition such a man was worth his weight in gold.'²²

The Worst Journey In the World aroused controversy for mixing praise of Captain Scott with descriptions of his negative qualities, presenting a moody and depressive leader.²³ The book's title referred not to the polar journey, but to the winter expedition in 1911 to Cape Crozier in search of the eggs of the Emperor Penguin by Bowers, Wilson and Cherry-Garrard. The book served as a vehicle for the author to express his grief at the loss of Bowers and Wilson. Cherry-Garrard's account was significant, not least because it was one of the first narratives openly to criticise Scott's leadership and character: 'Naturally so peevish, highly strung, irritable, depressed and moody', Cherry-Garrard wrote.²⁴ 'Temperamentally he was a weak man and might very easily have been an irritable autocrat'.²⁵ This criticism drew both praise and censure, the latter especially from Kathleen Scott, who unsuccessfully tried to prevent the publication of certain passages. 'I went to arrange with John Murray that some effort should be made to prevent a passage in Cherry-Garrard's book ... from gaining credence. "Weak and peevish" are his silly words about Con'.²⁶ Others, though, welcomed a fresh interpretation of the expedition. As veteran Geographer Hugh Robert Mill stated in *Nature*, 'we cannot view Mr Cherry-Garrard's analyses of the character of his leader or his comrades as ill natured', observed Mill, noting Cherry-Garrard's contributions to Polar psychology and, in particular, his focus on the psychological elements of Scott's personality in line with

²² Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.215.

²³ Wheeler, *Cherry*, p.221.

²⁴ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.205.

²⁵ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, pp.205-206.

²⁶ Kathleen Lady Scott, *Self Portrait of an Artist: From the Diaries and Memoirs of Lady Kennet* (London: John Murray, 1949), p.253.

more modern masculinities.²⁷ ‘It will never be fair to compare the searching analysis of Captain Scott with the more conventional pre-sentiment of other leaders whose qualities have been dealt with, let us say, with the reticence dictated by Victorian standards of consideration’.²⁸ Some critics also condemned Cherry-Garrard’s approach: ‘he has evidently, quite in the post war manner resolved to say what he thinks and emphasize the “heroism” of the story as little as possible’.²⁹

In contrast to the book’s complex treatment of Scott, *The Worst Journey In The World*’s presentation of Bowers was almost hagiographical in tone, portraying him as a man without flaws, ‘The gods loved him, if indeed it be benevolent to show your favourites a clear, straight, shining path of life, with plenty of discomfort and not a little pain, but with few doubts and no fears’.³⁰ Kelly Boyd has written how in ‘the years between 1855 and 1940 heroes exhibited most virtues and few vices’.³¹ While the book highlighted some of Scott’s vices, the idiosyncrasies of his dead comrade were almost entirely ignored by Cherry-Garrard. His omissions are as significant as his inclusions. He offered little comment on Bowers’ distinctive facial features, explaining he found ‘it hard to give the reader a mental picture of Birdie Bowers which will not appear extravagant’.³² This omission may well have been deliberate. In his 1938 introduction to Seaver’s *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic*, Cherry-Garrard’s comments suggest he was well aware of how Bowers was usually portrayed: ‘He is for one thing, a living example to me that looks (in men at any rate) do not matter’.³³ Cherry-Garrard also omitted from the published text observations he had made in his

²⁷ Hugh Robert Mill, ‘An Antarctic Saga’, *Nature* 111, no. 2786 (1923), p.387. Mill was firmly in the Shackleton rather than the Scott ‘camp’.

²⁸ Mill, ‘Antarctic Saga’, p.388

²⁹ *The Times* 5 December 1922, p.12.

³⁰ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.214.

³¹ Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper in Britain: A Cultural History, 1855-1940* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.109.

³² Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.216.

³³ Seaver, ‘*Birdie*’ Bowers, p.xiv.

journal about occasional strained relations between Scott and Bowers. For example, his note that ‘Scott gave Seaman Evans, Birdie and Wilson a rotten time’, did not appear in the published text.³⁴

Carl Murray has rightly argued that *The Worst Journey in The World* should be treated as a ‘highly authored’ text and not a documentary record.³⁵ Cherry-Garrard’s story,

is always the one preferred amongst all other possible versions, and involved a striving, not only for a formally satisfying narrative or a coherent version of events, but also for a version of self that can be lived with in relative psychic comfort.³⁶

Cherry-Garrard created a hagiographic version of Bowers that not only fitted within accepted public narratives of the expedition, but also allowed him to deal comfortably with his own remembrance of what happened.³⁷ Cherry-Garrard did not mention Edward Atkinson’s view that Bowers should have reorganised the polar party’s food rations to accommodate five men, a plausible view considering Bowers’ well documented role as the store master.³⁸ The excision of any implied negative characteristics by Cherry-Garrard helped formulate a representation of Bowers as a faultless man, but also flattened his personality. His hagiography did not introduce new elements, but took the constellation of virtues identified by Scott to their extreme.

In contrast to his flawed Scott, Cherry-Garrard presented Bowers and Wilson as saintly figures, without blemishes. If *The Worst Journey In The World* stands as the

³⁴ Wheeler, *Cherry*, p.244.

³⁵ Carl Murray, "Scott of the Antarctic: The Conservation of a Story" (University of Tasmania, 2006)p.109, Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*.

³⁶ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p.23.

³⁷ Michael Roper, 'Re-Remembering the Soldier Hero: The Psychic and Social Construction of Memory in Personal Narratives of the Great War ', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 50 (2000), p.183.

³⁸ Carl Murray, "Scott of the Antarctic: The Conservation of a Story" (PhD University of Tasmania, 2006), p.109.

exception that privileged Bowers above Scott, then Herbert Ponting's film *The Great White Silence* first exhibited two years later in 1924, reinscribed the familiar hierarchy of Antarctic heroes.³⁹ The first identifiable, although uncaptioned, shot of Bowers does not appear until 42-minutes into the film. Bowers appears in a total of 3 scenes in the film, appearing on screen, briefly during the football match and the ski demonstration. Bowers is then identified in the story board at 1:25:51 with Scott, Wilson and Evans during the cooking scene for roughly 3 minutes. In one scene, 'Explorers who remained in the South', Bowers is shown standing directly behind Scott and Wilson, but is seen briefly as they move.⁴⁰ Such footage reinforced the displacement of Bowers from the front of the narrative.

Ponting's editing may have been influenced by his perception of Bowers' face. 'We who knew him rather loved his vast beak,' wrote Ponting to Frank Debenham, when trying to select a flattering photographic portrait of him, the suggestion being that those who did not know him would view him less favourably.⁴¹ This point is underscored by the fact that while Ponting took numerous portrait photographs of Bowers, none were chosen to represent him in the final tableaux shots of the five dead explorers at the end of *The Great White Silence*. While the other members of the polar party are shown in dignified portrait shots, Bowers in contrast is presented laughing at the camera, a comedic impression that was built upon more by later writers.

³⁹ Herbert Ponting and British Film Institute., *The Great White Silence [Videorecoding]: The Official Record of Captain Scott's Heroic Journey to the South Pole*, Dual format ed. (London: BFI, 2011).

⁴⁰ Dennis Lynch, 'Profile: Herbert Ponting', *Polar Record* 26, no. 158 (1990), p.222, Ponting and British Film Institute., "The Great White Silence [Videorecoding] : The Official Record of Captain Scott's Heroic Journey to the South Pole."

⁴¹ Dennis Lynch, 'The Worst Location in the World: Herbert G Ponting in the Antarctic 1919-1912', *Film History* 3, no. 4 (1989), p.300.

Despite Ponting's attempts to promote the film, it drew poor audiences in the 1920s, its appeal hampered by the lack of footage of the polar party, and the film's focus on nature rather than adventure.⁴² Ponting's biographer H. J. P. Arnold wrote that the photographer could not see that the lack of commercial success was due to the paucity of content and a 'product being unsuitable for the times in which it was being shown.'⁴³ The heroism of the polar team had been supplanted by a changing masculine ideal and the film, and by association those within it, appeared old-fashioned.

2. *The Persistence of Scott's Bowers*

The story of Scott's last expedition was told in a variety of other works between the wars, from biographies to school books, which largely repeated the two-dimensional stereotype of the cheerful, stoic Bowers established by Scott and intensified by Cherry-Garrard. This section briefly examines references to Bowers in the material published upto 1938.

Henry Newbolt's school book *The Book of the Long Trail* (1919) showed how explorers could serve as vehicles for heroic masculinity for those disillusioned by the destruction and carnage of modern war.⁴⁴ Importantly Newbolt mentioned Bowers by name (but Edgar Evans is the only team member not mentioned), telling readers 'if you do not love him [Scott] and Wilson and Bowers and Oates then this book can be

⁴² Wheeler, *Cherry*, p.227, Stephanie L. Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies: Scott, Shackleton, and the Changing Face of Heroism* (London: Continuum, 2007), pp.160-161.

⁴³ H. J. P. Arnold and Herbert George Ponting, *Photographer of the World: The Biography of Herbert Ponting* (London: Hutchinson, 1969), p.94.

⁴⁴ Henry John Sir Newbolt, *The Book of the Long Trail. [Biographies of Explorers.] ... With ... Illustrations, Etc* (London: Longmans & Co., 1919), p.ix.

of no use to you'.⁴⁵ 'Where will you look for finer men than these', Newbolt asked, 'or greater dangers and suffering than theirs, or moments more full of daring and excitement?'⁴⁶ Newbolt's work offered another clear example of how Scott's account of Bowers determined later representations, describing Bowers in Scott's words:

A positive treasure, absolutely trustworthy and prodigiously energetic. Nothing seems to hurt his tough little body, and certainly no hardship daunts his spirit. His indefatigable zeal, his unselfishness and his inextinguishable good humour made him a delightful companion on the march.⁴⁷

Newbolt's later descriptions focused on Bowers' position in the team 'responsible for the stores and the meteorological record'.⁴⁸ David Gilmore notes how texts make a 'presentation' of an appropriate manhood in particular circumstances.⁴⁹

Kelly Boyd has argued juvenile literature revived robust pre-war models of heroic masculinity to reassert British imperial dominance in an uncertain world after 1918.⁵⁰ Men returning from the front after 1918 faced problems of reintegration into society. Paul Ward has suggested that the visibility of women's work threatened the masculinities of men attempting to return to civilian life.⁵¹ Psychological problems and social stigma left some men feeling emasculated.⁵² Questions were raised as to whether previous norms could be sustained in the light of the crisis around shell

⁴⁵ Newbolt, *The Long Trail*, p.ix.

⁴⁶ Jay Winter cited in Joseph Canning, Hartmut Lehmann, and J. M. Winter, *Power, Violence and Mass Death in Pre-Modern and Modern Times* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.207, Newbolt, *The Long Trail*, p.xii.

⁴⁷ Newbolt, *The Long Trail*, p.273.

⁴⁸ Newbolt, *The Long Trail*, p.251.

⁴⁹ David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press, 1990), p.11.

⁵⁰ Kelly Boyd, 'Examples and Ingrates: Imperialism and the Boy's Story Paper 1880-1930', *Historical Research* 67(1994), pp.143-151.

⁵¹ Paul Ward. *Britishness since 1870*, (London, 2004), p.46.

⁵² Jessica Meyer, "Not Septimus Now": Wives of Disabled Veterans and Cultural Memory of the First World War in Britain', *Women's History Review* 13, no. 1 (2004). In this article Jessica Meyer considered the effect of male shell shock on a group of wives in the post war period.

shock.⁵³ In this context, Scott's portrayal of Bowers as strong, stoical and capable offered a reassuring and accessible image of manliness at a time of flux. Fears that modernity had undermined the traditional traits of manliness help account for his appeal:⁵⁴ 'Little Bowers, indefatigable, oblivious to the cold, organiser extraordinary.'⁵⁵

Many texts in the 1920's passed quickly over Bowers, offering a positive but limited assessment of the explorer. Sir Clements Markham's posthumously published *The Lands of Silence: A History of Arctic and Antarctic Exploration* described Bowers as a 'young lieutenant of the Royal Indian Marine', Markham mentioned Bowers briefly, quoting Scott directly: 'Little Bowers remains a marvel'.⁵⁶ The Reverend James Gordon Hayes made minimal reference to Bowers in his *Antarctica: A Treatise on the Southern Continent*, although he dedicated an introductory paragraph in his later *The Conquest of the South Pole* to Bowers, quoting a previous shipmate:

Bowers was a remarkable man with unusual qualities. His physical endurance was extraordinary; he was very clear headed and had a bright and cheerful nature, a great sense of humour and great powers of mental concentration ... He had a very fine character. He was as straight as a die and one senses deeply religious instincts below the surface.⁵⁷

The passage stands out as a rare acknowledgment of Bowers' deep religious faith.

Stephen Gwynn's authorised biography of Scott paid tribute to the leader's right-hand-man.

⁵³ Ted Bogacz, 'War Neurosis and Cultural Change in England 1914-22: The Work of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into Shell Shock', *Journal of Contemporary History* 24, no. 2 (1989), p.236.

⁵⁴ Mark Humphries, 'War's Long Shadow: Masculinity, Medicine and the Gendered Politics of Trauma 1914-1939', *The Canadian Historical Review* 91, no. 2 (2010), p.507.

⁵⁵ Howard Percival Marshall, *With Scott to the Pole* (London, 1936), p.34.

⁵⁶ Clements R. Sir Markham, *The Lands of Silence: A History of Arctic and Antarctic Exploration* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1921), p.500.

⁵⁷ J. Gordon Hayes, *Antarctica. A Treatise on the Southern Continent* (London: Richards Press, 1928), J. Gordon Hayes, *The Conquest of the South Pole: Antarctic Exploration, 1906-1931* (London: Butterworth, 1932), p.105-106.

There went also Lieutenant Henry R. Bowers of the Royal Indian Marine, who maintained, if ever man did, the reputation of his service for ability to put a hand to a job and do it to some purpose. It is evident from the records that no man on the expedition was of more service to its commander than this one. If a better fate than that which fell to him was possible, he had earned it; but while Scott's name is remembered, his will not be forgotten.⁵⁸

The response to Gwynn's biography was mixed. As Jones states, it was hailed at the time in *The Times* as a fine tribute to a national hero, although some critics described the book as 'disappointing' and 'one sided'.⁵⁹

Both Antarctic textbooks and new accounts of Scott's last expedition continued to present Bowers largely in Scott's terms into the 1930s. Louis Bernacchi offered a pen portrait in his biography of Captain Oates, writing how Bowers' 'physique was extraordinary. He was efficient, clear headed and cheerful'.⁶⁰ Martin Lindsay – an Arctic explorer himself – wrote a hagiographic account, *The Epic of Captain Scott*, in 1934 and quoted more extensively from Scott's journals, describing 'the indefatigable little Bowers',⁶¹ 'a marvel',⁶² and 'the hardest traveller that ever undertook a polar journey as well as one of the most undaunted'.⁶³ Lindsay's text also showed the influence of Cherry-Garrard's praise of Bowers and Wilson as 'gold, pure, shining, unalloyed'.⁶⁴ 'Little "Birdie" Bowers was a quaint but capable person', Lindsay wrote, 'with a capacity for work that was prodigious. There was only 5ft 4 inches of him, but all of it was pure gold'.⁶⁵ Two years later Howard Marshall's *With*

⁵⁸ Stephen Gwynn, *Captain Scott* (Oxford: The Bodley Head, 1932), p.162.

⁵⁹ Frank Debenham, 'Biography of Captain Scott: Review', *The Geographical Journal* 75, no. 4 (1930), p.357, Max Jones, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.266, *The Times* 'Captain Scott', 10 December 1929, p. 24.

⁶⁰ Louis Charles Bernacchi, *A Very Gallant Gentleman* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1933), p.277.

⁶¹ Martin Lindsay, *The Epic of Captain Scott* (London: Peter Davies, 1934), p.60.

⁶² Lindsay, *The Epic of Captain Scott*, p.72.

⁶³ Lindsay, *The Epic of Captain Scott*, p.68.

⁶⁴ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.251.

⁶⁵ Lindsay, *The Epic of Captain Scott*, p.67.

Scott to the Pole repeated Scott's descriptions of 'the hardest traveller',⁶⁶ an 'undefeated little sportsman'.⁶⁷

All of these accounts replicated the representation of Bowers in *Scott's Journals* through the language and imagery they used.

3. George Seaver, *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic* (London: John Murray, 1938)

The Reverend George Seaver's *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic* (London: John Murray, 1938) made the most significant new contribution to Bowers' reputation since Scott's journals. Seaver was born in 1890 in Cheltenham. Educated at Oxford and London he served with the Connaught Rangers during the First World War, later becoming Assistant Native Commissioner in Northern Rhodesia. Ordained in 1925 he taught for a number of years before becoming rector of Kilkenny and afterwards Canon of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.⁶⁸ From the 1920s Seaver wrote a number of biographies of prominent men of faith, from David Livingstone to the Archbishop of Dublin John Gregg, in addition to specialised analyses of their religious beliefs.⁶⁹ His later writings included collections of sermons and religious texts like *The Magnet of the Cross*.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Marshall, *With Scott to the Pole*, p.27.

⁶⁷ Lindsay, *The Epic of Captain Scott*, p.92.

⁶⁸ *The Times* 28 October 1976, p.19, *The Irish Times* 27 October 1976, p.8, *The Irish Times* 30 October 1976, p.9.

⁶⁹ George Seaver, *Albert Schweitzer: Christian Revolutionary* (London: J. Clarke, 1945), George Seaver, *Albert Schweitzer: The Man and His Mind* (London: A. and C. Black, 1947), George Seaver, *David Livingstone: His Life and Letters* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1957), George Seaver, *Francis Younghusband: Explorer and Mystic* (London: John Murray, 1952), George Seaver, *Nicolas Berdyaev: An Introduction to His Thought* (London: J. Clarke, 1950). The British Library catalogue suggests that Seaver wrote some 22 works, which went through multiple re-prints up to 1969.

⁷⁰ George Seaver, *The Magnet of the Cross. Addresses Delivered in Worcester Cathedral on Good Friday, 1945* (London: S.P.C.K., 1946); George Seaver, *Faith, Hope, and Love. Addresses to Clergy and Others* (Dublin: S.P.C.K., 1953).

Large sections of his biographies were often presented in an episodic, chronological structure with similarities to masculine adventure novels, the narrative comprised of exciting incidents in the protagonist's life-story. Seaver explained that it

is the duty of a biographer to present all the many aspects of his subject's character without partiality, inviting comprehension but not seeking to compel it unduly. For this reason there will be found in this book the maximum of presentation and the minimum of interpretation.⁷¹

The influence of the popular literature of Henry Rider Haggard and John Buchan can be seen in his biographies. One past pupil recalled after his death how Seaver 'used to tell us countless adventure stories and drive home in his own gentle way the dynamic Christianity that was the source of inner strength of a Scott or a Wilson'.⁷²

Seaver achieved some public prominence as an authority on Antarctica and Scott's last expedition in particular in the 1930s, beginning with a 'stirring biography' of 'noble hearted' Edward Wilson in 1933 having become friends with Wilson's widow, Oriana. Oriana Wilson recommended Seaver to Cherry-Garrard, reassuring him that 'Seaver although a priest, he was "not of the usual type"' knowing of Cherry-Garrard's dislike of the clergy.⁷³ Subsequently, writing of his enthusiasm at meeting Cherry-Garrard, Seaver remarked 'I have looked forward to meeting you – if only to shake your hand'.⁷⁴

Following an on-ongoing communication with Oates' mother, Emily Bowers died in 1928. Having been introduced to George Seaver, the Bowers' sisters – May (Lady Maxwell) and Edie – subsequently shared Bowers' previously unpublished

⁷¹ Seaver, *Livingstone: Life*, p.11.

⁷² *The Irish Times* 30 October 1976, p.9.

⁷³ Wheeler, *Cherry*, p. 239, George Seaver to Apsley Cherry-Garrard, No Date, MS559/114/1-2, D, SPRI.

⁷⁴ Wheeler, *Cherry*, p.239, Strathie, *Birdie Bowers*, George Seaver to Apsley Cherry-Garrard, No Date, MS559/114/1-2, D, SPRI.

letters and journals with Seaver.⁷⁵ These provided the basis for *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic* with some additional material relating to the later parts of the Expedition being provided after specific requests by Seaver.⁷⁶ Seaver clearly admired Bowers' strength of character, writing to Lady Maxwell about Bowers' South Pole journals, that 'The remarkable thing about it [Bowers' journal] to my mind is not what it says, but what it does not say. He writes so perfectly naturally – as if this journey was nothing much out of the way, but something to be taken in one's stride'.⁷⁷

There is no direct evidence to explain why Seaver chose to write about Bowers, but Sara Wheeler has plausibly suggested that his decision evolved out of his personal friendship with Oriana Wilson.⁷⁸ Seaver's choice of biographical subjects certainly reveals his admiration for a model of muscular Christianity which found expression in exploration, men enduring hardship in a peaceful cause. He again quoted Scott when describing Bowers in *Edward Wilson of the Antarctic*. 'Among all the exploits of the last expedition', he wrote in his account of the winter journey to Cape Crozier, 'this one performed by that "most undefeatable little sportsman" was as thrilling as it was heroic'.⁷⁹ He was also influenced by Cherry-Garrard's saintly characterisation of Bowers in *The Worst Journey*. Seaver's work on the Expedition exhibited a number of these continuities with Scott and Cherry-Garrard, but also introduced his own perspectives to the representations of the Expedition members. His earlier biographies had painted a complex picture of Edward Wilson. In his later biography of Scott, Seaver built on Cherry-Garrard's portrait to suggest that Scott's

⁷⁵ Strathie, *Birdie Bowers*, pp. 184-185. In 1924, Bowers' sister May married her 82 year old neighbour Sir William Maxwell becoming Lady Maxwell.

⁷⁶ George Seaver to Lady Maxwell, 25 January 1938 MS1505/6/2/7, BJ, SPRI

⁷⁷ George Seaver to Lady Maxwell 25 January 1938 MS1505/6/2/7:BJ, SPRI.

⁷⁸ Wheeler, *Cherry*, p.239.

⁷⁹ George Seaver, *Edward Wilson of the Antarctic: Naturalist and Friend*, 1st ed. (London: John Murray, 1933), p. 229, George Seaver, *Edward Wilson: Nature-Lover* (London: John Murray, 1937), *The Irish Times* 13 November 1937, p.7.

heroism resided in his personal battle to conquer his own fears and weaknesses.⁸⁰ This battle embodied perfectly the ‘contemporary vision of what an ideal masculine hero should be’.⁸¹ Seaver’s *Bowers* lacks the psychological depth of his *Wilson* and his *Scott*, however.

First published in 1938, Seaver’s *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic* offered a chronological survey of Bowers’ life split into two roughly equal halves. The first half began with Bowers’ family background and early life, emphasising how ‘he was just a sturdy, jolly, little boy full of merriment ... manly and unselfish withal’.⁸² It then charts Bowers’ adventures in the merchant marine in more detail, focusing on how his experiences in the service built his character.⁸³ At times, Seaver presented Bowers as an imperial adventure hero through devoting several chapters of the book to long extracts from Bowers’ letters about his adventures including ‘Gun running in the Gulf’ to subdue the forces of the Amir of Afghanistan.⁸⁴ In the second half, the book focused on the *Terra Nova* expedition from the beginning of the voyage South, to Bowers’ death with Scott and Wilson on the return from the Pole.

Apsley Cherry-Garrard wrote the introduction to *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic* and his portrayal strongly influenced Seaver. Sara Wheeler has emphasised the similarities between Cherry-Garrard and Seaver, men for whom ‘modernism was regarded, like the war itself, as a perilous destructive force’.⁸⁵ Cherry-Garrard’s descriptions of Bowers again mentioned his unprepossessing physicality in order to highlight his extraordinary character through juxtaposition. ‘He is for one thing, a

⁸⁰ George B Seaver, *Scott of the Antarctic: A Study in Character* (London: John Murray, 1940).

⁸¹ Barczewski, *Antarctic Destinies*, p.153.

⁸² Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.7.

⁸³ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.21.

⁸⁴ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.101. Chapters 8 – 11 cover this period of Bowers’ life.

⁸⁵ Wheeler, *Cherry*, p. 240.

living example to me that looks (in men at any rate) do not matter'.⁸⁶ 'Bowers had very little in the shop window: the best people seldom have;' he wrote, 'but the goods inside were pure gold'.⁸⁷ Seaver himself described Bowers' physicality using less derogatory language and emphasised his pure character. 'From his father he inherited a short, stocky build'⁸⁸ and 'outwardly he was just a sturdy, jolly little boy'. Seaver described a 'spiritual affinity that grew with his growth. Its root was in simplicity, sincerity, steadfastness to an ideal and directness of character'.⁸⁹

In another of his books, Seaver explained that:

the task of the biographer is to weave together all this scattered material into the pattern of a consecutive narrative. The Result is a book which is edited autobiography rather than biography; a self portrait rather than a critical study; for it is always better to let that man – when that man is honest – tell his own story.⁹⁰

Seaver built on Cherry-Garrard's portrayal to present a man of exemplary character:

'despite his modesty and his unimpressive demeanour', Seaver wrote, 'here was a jewel of the first water'.⁹¹ Graham Dawson has written how life-stories 'create a perspective for the self within which it endeavours to make sense of the day, so that its troubling, disturbing aspects may be "managed", worked through, contained'.⁹²

Seaver contained, managed and worked through negative aspects to portray a heroic Bowers, without flaws.

Seaver described how Bowers 'preferred for his companions men of character', pointing to Wilson and Scott.⁹³ In contrast to Cherry-Garrard, he presented an unblemished portrait of Scott and of Bowers' relationship with the

⁸⁶ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.xiv.

⁸⁷ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.xv.

⁸⁸ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.2.

⁸⁹ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p7.

⁹⁰ Seaver, *Younghusband*, p.vii.

⁹¹ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.152.

⁹² Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p.22.

⁹³ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.91.

expedition. Although always loyal to Scott, Bowers' journal later revealed moments of tension that Seaver obscured. 'In fact my name is mud just at present', Bowers wrote on the 27 December 1911, 'it is rather sad to get into the dirt tub with one's leader'.⁹⁴ Seaver's biography was thus selective, choosing not to draw attention to tensions between Bowers and Scott.

Kathleen Scott's attempts to control portrayals of her dead husband between the wars are well known, and were acknowledged at the time.⁹⁵ She authorised Stephen Gwynn to write the first biography in 1929 in part to counter Cherry-Garrard's portrayal of Scott. In spite of her efforts, expedition geologist Frank Debenham noted in 1930 that the 'picture of Scott as given in Cherry-Garrard's *Worst Journey In The World* is in its way a truer one than can be obtained from the formal biography'.⁹⁶

Bowers' elder sister Lady Maxwell played a similar role in guarding her late brother's reputation to an extent that has not previously been acknowledged. Seaver himself noted in the foreword how the 'immense task of transcribing the bulk of these letters was undertaken by his sister, to whom it was a labour of love'.⁹⁷ Her influence was not confined to transcription. Seaver himself encouraged her participation, noting 'I hope you will criticise freely anything at all that does not appeal to you'.⁹⁸ The glimpses of the editing process in the surviving correspondence reveal Lady Maxwell's determination to influence Seaver's representation of Bowers. 'Thank you so much for your encouragement to go ahead with that chapter even against your own

⁹⁴ Henry Bowers, *The South Pole Journals*, ed. Naomi Boneham Heather Lane, Robert D Smith (Scott Polar Research Institute, 2012), p.68.

⁹⁵ Jones, *Last Great Quest*, p.266, Wheeler, *Cherry*, p.161, p.221.

⁹⁶ Debenham, 'Biography of Captain Scott: Review', p.358.

⁹⁷ George B Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers of the Antarctic* (London: John Murray, 1938), p. xxiii.

⁹⁸ George Seaver to Lady Maxwell, 15 February 1938, MS1505/6/2/9:BJ, SPRI.

judgement in the matter'.⁹⁹ Seaver wrote about one unidentified section of his biography referring to one of Bowers' previous Captains – Captain Healey of the *Sladen* - whom Bowers had criticised. Seaver had corresponded with Healey and obtained his permission to include the criticisms, however Lady Maxwell appeared to be unhappy with this, and presumably requested that it not be included: 'From what you say you would prefer that all reference to Captain Healey was omitted, but you will see that he does not object to the insertion of the extracts (I cut one of them, after some consideration)'.¹⁰⁰ This was perhaps to continue the impression of Bowers as an ever cheerful, subordinate individual who was not capable of negative criticism of his superior officer. The negative statements by Bowers about Captain Healey were not included in the final version of the biography in line with Lady Maxwell's wishes.

Lady Maxwell also objected to a Bank Manager at Rothesay's description of Bowers as 'a very likeable wee fella and a whale for work'.¹⁰¹ 'Whale for work' was a common expression at this time, used by P. G. Wodehouse in *Love Among the Chickens* (1906), as well as by Ponting in his description of the *Terra Nova's* Navigation Officer Harry Pennell.¹⁰² Lady Maxwell may have viewed the description as undignified, or possibly open to interpretation as a derogatory comment about Bowers' appearance. Whatever her motivations, Seaver acquiesced, replying 'if you prefer, I will of course leave it out', and the phrase did not appear in the biography.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ George Seaver to Lady Maxwell 24 May 1938, MS1505/6/2/10, BJ, SPRI.

¹⁰⁰ Captain Healey to Lady Maxwell, 9 February 1938, MS1505/6/2/4, BJ, SPRI, George Seaver to Lady Maxwell, 5 February 1938, MS1505/6/2/8, BJ, SPRI, George Seaver to Lady Maxwell, 24 May 1938 MS1505/6/2/10, BJ, SPRI.

¹⁰¹ George Seaver to Lady Maxwell, 25 January 1938, MS1505/6/2/7, BJ, SPRI.

¹⁰² Herbert George Ponting and Robert Falcon Scott, *The Great White South: Being an Account of Experiences with Captain Scott's South Pole Expedition and of the Nature Life of the Antarctic* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1921), p.49, P. G. Wodehouse, *Love among the Chickens*, Newnes' New-Size 1/- Novels (Lond., 1929), p.36.

¹⁰³ George Seaver to Lady Maxwell 25 January 1938, MS1505/6/2/7:BJ, SPRI.

Seaver paid more attention than any previous author to Bowers' religious faith, quoting extensively from his correspondence. Chapter four will examine in detail how the published text sanitised Bowers' reflections on faith, obscuring his complex and peculiar beliefs to present a conventional believer very much in the muscular Christian mould of Edward Wilson. There are no letters held at the Scott Polar Research Institute that indicate Lady Maxwell's religious perspectives during this period. Whether Lady Maxwell or Seaver exerted more influence over the presentation of Bowers' religious beliefs in the biography is impossible to determine, in the absence of more detailed sources for the editing process. It seems likely that they shared a common desire to present an uncontroversial portrait of a conventional believer.

As the sole point of access to his journal and correspondence, *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic* remained the principal source for all studies of Bowers for nearly seventy years. The sole exception appears to have been when Lady Maxwell allowed the producers of the film *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948) access to Bowers' polar journals, although his correspondence remained off limits.¹⁰⁴ Charles Lagerbom's *The Fifth Man* offered the starkest example of this reliance, a new biography of Bowers based almost entirely on passages in Seaver's 1938 account.¹⁰⁵ The Scott Polar Research Institute allowed access to Bowers correspondence from 1985, with David Crane's biography of Scott in 2005 offering the first fresh analysis of the originals. Yet even Anne Strathie's recent biography emphasised Seaver's centrality to any study of Bowers, noting how her interest 'was further aroused when I realised that my copy of Seaver's biography had been given by my mother as a Christmas

¹⁰⁴ David Writer on Films James and Robert Falcon Scott, *Scott of the Antarctic. The Film and Its Production* (London: Convoy Publications, 1948), p. 41.

¹⁰⁵ Lagerbom, *Fifth Man*.

present to her younger brother before his death (at the same age as Bowers) in the Second World War'.¹⁰⁶

The publication of *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic* generated moderate attention in the press, reflecting his subordinate status in the hierarchy of Antarctic heroes. A twenty-year anniversary memorial article in the *Daily Mirror* in 1932 failed to mention Bowers by name.¹⁰⁷ That Bowers had largely faded from public consciousness was demonstrated in one promotional article for Seaver's book:

Indeed, Bowers was wonderful, and the wonder is that while the lives of the other heroic companions of Scott during that dreadful, but gallant, last journey have been written, his should have remained untouched until now, so many years after his death.¹⁰⁸

There were relatively few reviews of the book. It received modest praise - 'Bowers alone has lacked a biographer. The omission has now been made good by the Reverend George Seaver'.¹⁰⁹ Some however criticised the book for failing to offer a new interpretation of the expedition. *The Times Literary Supplement* judged 'Mr Seaver is rather prone to simplify and solemnity his subject.'¹¹⁰ The *Manchester Guardian* began its review of *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic* with a biographical synopsis of Bowers' life and involvement with the expedition, unnecessary if his story had been well known, and in contrast to reviews of Seaver's biography of Wilson five years earlier, when one headline had declared 'Antarctic Hero's Last words – Life of Dr 'Bill' Wilson.'¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Strathie, *Birdie Bowers*, p.10.

¹⁰⁷ *Daily Mirror*, 29 March 1932, p.9.

¹⁰⁸ *The Irish Times* 5 December 1938, p.5.

¹⁰⁹ Unknown, "News and Notes," *The Times Literary Supplement* 6 August 1938, p.2.

¹¹⁰ Unknown, "News and Notes," *The Times Literary Supplement* 25 November 1939.

¹¹¹ *Manchester Guardian* 13 December 1938, p.7, *Daily Express* 9 October 1933, p.9.

Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic has left little trace in the records of publisher, John Murray.¹¹² Although the sales figures have not survived, David McClay from the publisher's archive suggests that the print runs were small and numbers sold were fewer than for Seaver's other titles. However, the book appears to have been successful for a number re-prints. In contrast, Seaver's *Edward Wilson Nature Lover* (1937) was his most successful title, selling around 17,000 copies between 1937 and 1949, while his *Scott of the Antarctic* (1940) sold around 5,900 copies between 1940 and 1957.

4. Seaver, Bowers and British Masculinities

The patterns of British masculinities shifted between Bowers' death in 1912 and Seaver's biography over a quarter of a century later. Graham Dawson has rightly argued against any simplistic notion of the Great War as a cultural watershed, noting how adventure literature remained central to heroic masculinities after 1918.¹¹³ Michael Roper has noted that while the study of masculinities often begins with a desire to demarcate clear epochs and assess continuity or change, writers were always engaged in a complex process in which they both identified with and distanced themselves from the prevailing social codes.¹¹⁴ Significant developments between the wars included the depressions in the immediate aftermath of the conflict and in the 1930s, the continued rise of the physical culture movement, and the growth of socialist and fascist organisations.

¹¹² All information from David McClay (John Murray Archive) email to Kellie Vernon, 12 November 2012.

¹¹³ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, pp.171-172.

¹¹⁴ Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity', p.360.

Bowers writings expressed the Edwardian age in which they were written, as we shall see in chapters three and four. Seaver's biography can be viewed as an articulation of this Edwardian Bowers in a new inter-war context. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska has argued that the physical culture movement assisted the reconstruction of the male body following the carnage of the Great War.¹¹⁵ The movement promoted body ideals first developed in the Edwardian period around strength, sport and athleticism.¹¹⁶ Seaver's emphasis on Bowers' body should be interpreted in this context, describing how 'physical fitness was a passion with him'.¹¹⁷ Seaver repeated Scott's frequently quoted description of 'Bowers – the undefeatable little sportsman, buoyant and indomitable, cheerfully scornful of obstacles and oblivious of adversity'.¹¹⁸

J. A. Mangan has suggested that sport equated muscles with power.¹¹⁹ Seaver focused on Bowers physicality - his feats of endurance cycling and various sporting activities ('sprinter at the annual sports') - updating Edwardian anxieties about the health of the nation in the new context of the fitness Movement of the 1930s.¹²⁰ Zweiniger-Bargielowska has described how 'a distinctly British "superman" inspired by the ethos of Imperial manliness of the late nineteenth century' emerged in the late 1930s, and her description can be applied to Seaver's Bowers.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Building a British Superman: Physical Culture in Interwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History* 41, no. 4 (2006), p.601.

¹¹⁶ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain, 1880-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.11.

¹¹⁷ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.92.

¹¹⁸ Seaver, *Edward Wilson: Nature-Lover*, p.211.

¹¹⁹ Julie Gottlieb, 'Body Fascism in Britain: Building the Blackshirt in the Inter-War Period', *Contemporary European History* 20, no. 2 (2011), p.116.

¹²⁰ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'British Superman', p.608, Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.16.

¹²¹ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'British Superman', p.609.

Although rarely mentioned in medical literature of the 1920s, obesity was increasingly discussed in the 1930s.¹²² At this time obesity ‘invited ridicule and resulted in humiliation’, portrayed not only as ‘ugly, unhealthy and ridiculous’,¹²³ but also ‘morally repugnant’.¹²⁴ Zweiniger-Bargielowska has argued that obesity subverted one of the key characteristics of masculinity, self-restraint.¹²⁵ Writing in *The Road to Wigan Pier* the year before Seaver’s *Bowers*, George Orwell described ‘the most noble bodies’ of the ideal male worker with ‘wide shoulders tapering to slender supple waists, and small pronounced buttocks and sinewy thighs, with not an ounce of waste flesh anywhere’. In contrast, the ‘very short, pink and chubby’ socialist, a description that might have been applied to Bowers, ‘caused a mild stir of horror on top of the bus’.¹²⁶

Seaver repeatedly described Bowers’ fluctuating weight, a topic which had not been mentioned by Cherry-Garrard or earlier authors. ‘By July’, Seaver reported, ‘he could record that he had “swelled considerably and was much the same contour as when on leave”’.¹²⁷ Later he recorded how Bowers ‘had reduced his weight from 12 stones to 10st 2lbs ... but 7 weeks later he could report that he had put on 17lbs’,¹²⁸ and ‘on leaving the Gulf was thinner than he had ever been in his life, his weight was down to only 9 stone’.¹²⁹ Such passages publicised Bowers’ own, frequent reflections on his weight in his journals and correspondence, which we will examine in chapter

¹²² Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'The Culture of the Abdomen: Obesity and Reducing in Britain, Circa 1900-1939', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005), p.252.

¹²³ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain, 1880-1939*, pp.24-28.

¹²⁴ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Slimming through the Depression: Obesity and Reducing in Interwar Britain," in *The Rise of Obesity in Europe : A Twentieth Century Food History* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p.182.

¹²⁵ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Slimming through the Depression: Obesity and Reducing in Interwar Britain.", p.177.

¹²⁶ George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London: Gollancz, 1937), p.20, p.157.

¹²⁷ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.119.

¹²⁸ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.128.

¹²⁹ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.145.

three. With their inclusion Seaver further underlined his portrait of a man who fought to live up to the highest standards, in spite of the constraints of his physicality.

Bowers certainly did not fit with the idealised images of socialist and fascist male bodies that were increasingly popularised at this time. George Mosse has described the ‘keen sighted, taut and tightly muscled, broad shouldered man’ of socialist propaganda, while J. A. Mangan has written of a similar fascist emphasis on an ‘angular, sharp’ figure and ‘exaggerated muscular development’.¹³⁰ Indeed, Julie Gottlieb has argued ‘Fascist bodies were being conditioned as offensive weapons’, in the 1930s¹³¹ Seaver described Bowers as ‘stocky and hard as nails all through, the most impervious to adversity of them all, incurably optimistic’.¹³² But Bowers’ failure to conform to the chiselled masculine ideal of 1930s totalitarianism further reinforced his subordinate position on the hierarchy of heroes.¹³³

Any references to the Great War and its effects on men and masculinities are conspicuous by their absence from *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic*. Michael Roper argues that the years following the Great War demonstrated a significant shift in masculine identity, as many men realised it was impossible to live up to the earlier Edwardian stoic ideal.¹³⁴ The manly ideal corresponded to modern society’s felt need for order and progress. The Edwardian masculinity of hardness and stoicism embedded in Scott’s image of Bowers was developed further by Seaver, with a new interest in his weight arising out of the new concerns of the physical culture movement in the 1930s.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ J. A. Mangan, *Superman Supreme: Fascist Body as Political Icon - Global Fascism* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p.15.

¹³¹ Gottlieb, 'Body Fascism', p.123.

¹³² Seaver, *Edward Wilson: Nature-Lover*, p.205.

¹³³ George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, Studies in the History of Sexuality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.125-130.

¹³⁴ Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity', pp.359-360.

¹³⁵ Mosse, *The Image of Man*, p.111.

Conclusion

Chapters one and two have shown how Bowers was placed in a subordinate position on the hierarchy of Antarctic heroes between 1913 and 1939. Chapter one emphasised the influence of Scott's portrait of Bowers. The persistence of the representation of Bowers as a heroic explorer on the lines originally set out by Scott supports Jessica Meyer's contention that ideals of heroic masculinity proved more resilient than many historians have argued.¹³⁶ The depiction of a moody and depressive Scott in Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey in the World* was indicative of a new interest in psychology. However, new psychological understandings of the self did not shape published representations of Bowers after 1918. Like Cherry-Garrard, George Seaver's 1938 biography juxtaposed praise of Bowers' character with his unusual physical appearance. While his biography did not reflect the new interest in psychology, his revelations about Bowers' preoccupation with his weight echoed the concerns of the physical culture movement of the 1930s. The picture of Bowers as overweight fed into comic portrayals in later dramatisations. 'Bowers is exceedingly stocky, exceedingly muscular, and almost comical in appearance', noted the screenplay of *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948).¹³⁷

Seaver's biography flattened a complex character into a two-dimensional stereotype, a representation that has persisted over the last three quarters of a century. Without access to his original letters and journals, subsequent authors have repeated the stereotype of Scott's cheerful little sportsman. Seaver did acknowledge Bowers'

¹³⁶ Meyer cited in Stephen M Cullen, 'The Land of My Dreams' the Gendered Utopian Dreams and Disenchantment of British Literary Ex-Combatants on the Great War', *Cultural and Social History* 8, no. 2 (2011), p.197.

¹³⁷ Roger editor Manvell, *Three British Screen Plays : Brief Encounter. Odd Man Out. Scott of the Antarctic* ([S.l.]: Methuen, 1950); Roger Manvell, *Three British Screen Plays* (London: Methuen, 1950), p.226.

profound religious faith, a key facet of his life which many writers ignored. With the assistance of Lady Maxwell however, his biography obscured the peculiarity of Bowers' beliefs. Chapters three and four will now turn from published representations to analyse Bowers' personal testimonies and reveal a very different man from that described by Scott, Cherry-Garrard and George Seaver.

3.

‘A Strange Paradox’: Gender, Race and the ‘Flight from Domesticity’, c.1902 - 1912

‘I arrived here last night on my way up to Bhamo. Owing to the stupidity of the ship clerk I have not received your letters and am therefore not in such high spirits as I might be’.¹

In *Epistolary Selves*, Rebecca Earle demonstrates how little the subject of letter writing has been examined.² An examination of Bowers correspondence offers much to wider historical views on the importance of personal letters in the subjective experience of being male. Previous research focus has included the diaries of middle-class men, the colonial experience from the viewpoint of women, the correspondence of soldiers in the First World War and immigrant letters.³ Social Historians as David Gerber suggests can be perplexed by letters as they are at once ‘historical and yet paradoxically not part of history.’⁴ The letters of men serving in the Empire in the post mutiny period have been under explored. Bowers letters tell us about his understanding of his own masculine identity but offer clues into the important facets of manliness in this period. Bowers’ letters to his family have been largely overlooked by previous writers, and primarily used only as a source of biographical detail. No critical analysis of Bowers’ attitudes and relationship to broader cultural trends based on his personal correspondence has yet been published. The following

¹ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 15 July 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/19, BJ, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge (hereafter SPRI).

² Rebecca Earle, *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).

³ Kate Hunter, 'More Than an Archive of War: Intimacy and Manliness in the Letters of a Great War Soldier to the Woman He Loved, 1915-1919', *Gender and History* 25, no. 2 (2013), Sonia Cancian, *Families, Lovers and Their Letters: Italian Post-War Migration to Canada* (Manitoba: University of Manitoba, 2010), Earle, *Epistolary Selves*, David A. Gerber, *Authors of Their Lives: The Personal Correspondance of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York Univeristy Press, 2006).

⁴ David Gerber, "The Immigrant Letter between Positivism and Populism: American Historian's Uses of Personal Correspondance," in *Epistolary Selves*, ed. Rebecca Earle (Farnham: Ashgate, 1999), p.47.

two chapters will analyse Bowers' extensive writings for the first time to reveal a much more complex figure than has been described in the existing scholarship. The chapter will show how Bowers was not simply the cheerful and energetic stereotype of popular legend, but an idiosyncratic figure, both influenced by and involved with the society and culture in which he lived.⁵

Chapters one and two considered in detail how writers presented Bowers prior to the Second World War. These chapters showed that representations of Bowers were heavily influenced first by Scott's *Journals* (1913), then by Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey In The World* (1922), and finally by George Seaver's *Birdie Bowers* (1938).⁶ Later representations of Bowers consistently followed the models created by Scott, Cherry-Garrard and Seaver, juxtaposing his positive character with his distinctive appearance, in spite of the fact that his own writings displayed a richer and more complex interior life. Film and television dramatisations continued this two-dimensional view, projecting an ugly but loyal Bowers, a strong and hard-working sidekick, Scott's 'treasure'.

Seaver's *Birdie Bowers* remained the primary reference for Bowers throughout the twentieth century. Many writers and academics have treated Seaver's book as a faithful record of Bowers' character, without considering how his text was assembled. The most important exception came with David Thomson's book, *Scott's Men* (1977), which analysed the quotations published by Seaver to present a more conflicted Bowers.⁷ As late as 1999 Charles Lagerbom's *The Fifth Man* drew heavily on both Seaver's *Birdie Bowers* and Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey in the*

⁵ C. H. Lagerbom, *The Fifth Man : The Life of H. R. Bowers* (Whitby: Caedmon of Whitby, 1999), p.237.

⁶ Apsley Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey in the World*, New ed. / foreword by Paul Theroux. ed. (London: Picador, 2000); Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*.

⁷ See section 3 below.

World, reinforcing the dominance of their view of Bowers.⁸ One review noted that the:

author has made good use of Seaver's "life", which contains numerous extracts from Bowers' Letters home and his South Pole journal. He also quotes from Apsley Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey in The World*, which likewise reproduces extracts from the journal. There is no evidence that Lagerbom used the Bowers archive held by the Scott Polar Research Institute.⁹

Written by a former SPRI librarian Harry King, the review gently pointed out that Lagerbom's book added little new to our knowledge about Bowers.

Since SPRI opened access to his original writings in 1985, two authors have made important new contributions to our understanding of Bowers. David Crane's 2005 biography of *Scott of the Antarctic* sketched a larger-than-life figure: 'it is hard to imagine that the British Empire has ever thrown up a more improbable hero than the beak-nosed, twelve-stone, five-feet-four-inch part-saint and part bigot that was 'Birdie' Bowers'.¹⁰ Crane was the first author to challenge Seaver's simplified vision of Bowers' faith, noting for the first time his involvement with the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (which he somewhat misleadingly describes as proto-Jehovah's Witness).¹¹ Bowers formed only a small part of a book focused on Scott, however. In the three pages devoted to him, Crane presented an arresting new image of Bowers designed to capture the reader's attention: 'Given his eclectic range of religious and racial bigotries, in fact, he was lucky to be born into possibly the one age in European History where his opinions would not land him at the stake or in

⁸ Lagerbom, *Fifth Man*.

⁹ Harry King, 'Review. The Fifth Man: Henry R Bowers', *Polar Record* 36, no. 199 (2000), p.353.

¹⁰ David Crane, *Scott of the Antarctic: A Life of Courage, and Tragedy in the Extreme South* (London: HarperCollins, 2005), p. 414.

¹¹ Crane, *Scott of the Antarctic*, p.415. The Movement did not change its name to the Jehovah's Witness Movement until 1931, after several scandals and failed prophecies. See chapter 4.

gaol'.¹² Whilst Crane deserves credit for offering a fresh perspective on Bowers based on the sources available in SPRI, his overly sensational sketch failed to do justice to the complexity of Bowers' ideas within the confines of a biography dedicated to Scott.

Anne Strathie's *Birdie Bowers: Captain Scott's Marvel*, which was published in 2012 during the composition of this thesis, built on Crane to offer a richer analysis, presenting a wealth of new information about Bowers' family and early life drawn from previously unused sources.¹³ Strathie, for example, creates a new and much richer picture of Bowers' family life especially in the years before he went to sea, as well as excellent new material on the family post 1913 which have added much to our understanding of Bowers.¹⁴ The book was aimed at a popular rather than academic audience, however, and did not attempt to situate Bowers within the social and cultural context of Edwardian Britain. In contrast to Crane, Strathie's assessment of Bowers is unfailingly positive.

The following two chapters analyse Bowers' writings to extend and challenge the important recent works by Crane and Strathie. Bowers wrote extensively throughout his life, both composing letters and keeping journals. The Bowers family appear to have corresponded on a weekly basis and their letters formed the mainstay of their relationship. The Scott Polar Research Institute holds 237 letters from Bowers, most to his mother Emily (116), closely followed by his elder sister May (111), and finally a handful to his younger sister Edie (10). The earliest letter is dated 1897, the latest coming from the year of his death in 1912. SPRI also houses a small

¹² Crane, *Scott of the Antarctic*, p. 416.

¹³ Anne Strathie, *Birdie Bowers: Captain Scott's Marvel* (Gloucester: The History Press 2012).

¹⁴ Strathie, *Birdie Bowers*, especially chapter 1 and 2 on early family life, and 16 and 17 on the post expedition period. The photograph (number 12) between pages 96 and 97 shows Bowers in an entirely new light.

collection of their correspondence to him, 26 letters in total covering the years 1903-1905. The collection is incomplete, as some letters have not been purchased by Scott Polar Research Institute as they do not contain any polar references.¹⁵ In addition to writing letters, Bowers also kept an Antarctic journal, which was recently published by SPRI in 2012. Bowers original journal notebook was written in pencil in his somewhat illegible handwriting. He began the journal after 10 months in the Antarctic when he set out for the South Pole on 1 November 1911, an aide-memoire for later expansion.¹⁶ Anne Strathie has described these journals as a ‘continuation of the lively and descriptive correspondence with which Bowers had entertained his family during their years of separation’.¹⁷ In fact, Bowers’ letters contained very different material, with family details largely confined to correspondence, while the journals served as a factual record of the progress of the expedition.¹⁸ Bowers wrote his journal in the knowledge that it might one day become public: ‘Bye the bye diaries and journal are supposed to be kept for Capt. Scott’s perusal if desired’.¹⁹ Indeed, he appears to have kept a journal during the polar journey solely out of an obligation to the expedition. ‘Just a line to send home tonight with the first returning party and to enclose some of my journal which I shall be obliged if you will give to mother’, he wrote to his sister Edie in December 1911, ‘– there is nothing private in it. I have never kept a private log and don’t see much idea in it’.²⁰ His most intimate thoughts would be found in his correspondence, not his journals.

¹⁵ Personal correspondence with Naomi Boneham, Head Archivist SPRI.

¹⁶ Henry Bowers, *The South Pole Journals*, ed. Naomi Boneham, Heather Lane, Robert D. Smith (Scott Polar Research Institute, 2012), pp.74-77.

¹⁷ Henry Bowers, *The South Pole Journals*, ed. Naomi Boneham, Heather Lane, Robert D. Smith (The Scott Polar Research Institute, 2012), p.6.

¹⁸ Bowers, *South Pole Journals*, p.6.

¹⁹ Bowers, *South Pole Journals*, p.80.

²⁰ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 21 December 1911, in *Bowers Journals*, p.83.

The following analysis of Bowers' personal testimonies not only adds a new dimension to historical understanding of Bowers himself, but also contributes to scholarly debates about Edwardian masculinities. Intensely private, Bowers expressed views in his letters solely for his family, views which contrasted strongly with the outward, public persona documented by the other team members. He felt secure to discuss personal matters in these letters, which offer new insights into his character and attitudes. The 'domesticated and private categories of masculinity' exposed in Bowers' correspondence with his family have not been analysed before.²¹

John Tosh's research remains an essential starting point from which to explore Bowers' attitudes to family and domestic life. Tosh famously argued that middle-class men in mid-Victorian England viewed the role of the head of household as the pinnacle of masculinity, and were deeply involved in family and domestic life. He argued that this attitude changed in the second half of the nineteenth century with a 'flight from domesticity'.²² The closing years of the century saw an increasing belief that domesticity was 'unglamorous, unfulfilling and ultimately un-masculine'.²³ In the Edwardian period, masculinities became closely linked with a militarism that 'valorised the trained and powerful body and invoked high ideals of courage and sacrifice'.²⁴

Bowers, an unmarried man who left his home to sail around the world and died in Antarctica, might initially seem to be a perfect example of Tosh's 'flight from domesticity'. Chosen for his strength, endurance, and navigational ability, Bowers

²¹ Martin Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Masculinity', *Historical Journal* 45, no. 3 (2002), p. 641.

²² John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

²³ Tosh, *A Man's Place*, p.7.

²⁴ John Tosh, "Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender," in *Masculinities in Politics and War*, ed. Karen Hagemann and John Tosh Stefan Dundick (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 49.

revelled in the adventure lifestyle, writing to his mother from the Antarctic ‘that I am happy in having struck the most glorious of jobs in a climate that suits me in every way’.²⁵ Yet Martin Francis’s critique helps us move beyond the simple division between home life and adventure embedded in Tosh’s model of a ‘flight from domesticity’. Francis has argued that male responses to domesticity were both complex and ambivalent, and that men could enjoy domesticity, while also enjoying fantasies of homosocial camaraderie through adventure literature.²⁶ Men could simultaneously both ‘embrace and reject the attributes of domestic manliness’.²⁷ At the same time as he enjoyed a life of adventure serving in the navy around the world, Bowers maintained intense emotional relationships with his family and domestic life through his correspondence.

Bowers’ letters discussed the minutiae of daily life, personal news, and the family’s interests and hopes. There were significant tonal differences between letters to his mother, which focussed more on the domestic sphere and family, and to May, which provided a forum for the expression of his distinctive religious beliefs.

How awfully easy our times are to those when to confess Christ crucified brought not merely death but horrible tortures. It is almost inconceivable nowadays, yet I have no doubt – if it were practicable – the old ‘Daughter of Harlots’ – and perhaps some of her young ‘dissenting’ pups would try it on again fast enough. It is the insidious indifference which Satan uses nowadays that saps the Christian’ strength.²⁸

Chapter four will examine Bowers’ religious views in detail.

²⁵ Bowers discusses his appointment in a letter to his mother - H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 9 April 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/82, BJ, SPRI, Apsley Cherry-Garrard wrote in his forward to *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic* ‘When they first saw him in London they were very doubtful about him. They were quite wrong.’ In George Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers of the Antarctic* (London: John Murray, 1938), p.xiv, H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 23 January 1911, MS1505/1/1/3/107, BJ, SPRI.

²⁶ Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male?', p.643.

²⁷ Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male?', p.643.

²⁸ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 5 June 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/13, BJ, SPRI.

A number of scholars have made productive use of personal testimonies when studying gender. Hannah Barker, for example, has noted how part of the appeal of diaries as sources stems from their apparently ‘honest’ portrayal of day-to-day life. ‘As a source for a study of masculinity diaries are thus particularly revealing, since they tell us not just about how men behaved (or said they did) but also about what they thought about and – perhaps more importantly – how they hoped to alter themselves and their lives’.²⁹ Barker’s comments on diaries are applicable to letters, too. Rachel Earle has emphasised how correspondence shows ‘how people dealt with anxiety, illness and isolation’.³⁰ Spending so much of his time away from home, letter writing became the means by which Bowers could express himself and participate in family life, including reflections on his career, contentment and religious faith. He frequently played down the dangers he faced in an attempt to insulate his mother especially from concern. Bowers’ correspondence reveals how he coped with the unique pressures of both a life on board ship in the East, and an expedition to Antarctica.

Michael Roper’s recent study of soldiers’ letters during World War One, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War*, offers many insights relevant to this analysis of Bowers’ correspondence.³¹ Roper argues that men on the front line were often deeply involved in domestic life at home through correspondence.³² In similar fashion, Kate Hunter has noted that soldiers’ efforts to sustain emotional relationships with family and friends were hugely important during the war: ‘through these attempts to mitigate the separation they were experiencing, men revealed a great

²⁹ Hannah Barker, ‘Soul, Purse and Family: Middling and Lower-Class Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Manchester’, *Social History* 33, no. 1 (2008), p.15.

³⁰ Earle, *Epistolary Selves*, p. 25.

³¹ Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War*, Cultural History of Modern War (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

³² Roper, *The Secret Battle*, p.53, pp.68-72.

deal about their understandings of themselves as men'.³³ Writing and receiving letters from home proved vital to Bowers' 'emotional survival' on the other side of the world.

Tosh and Roper have also noted that 'one of the most precarious moments in the reproduction of masculinity is the transfer of power to the succeeding generation'.³⁴ This issue was particularly problematic for Bowers, given the death of his father at an early age. The formation of his identity was thus left to his mother Emily, whose evangelistic approach harked back to an earlier attitude to masculinities, where the pivotal figure was the mother 'credited with the dominant influence over her son'.³⁵ As such Bowers' subjective attitude to being male was formed in part by his mother's attitudes and influences from the various codes to which she had been exposed.

The following chapter will argue that Bowers' apparent 'flight from domesticity' in fact concealed a deep longing for home. Section one reveals Bowers' involvement in his family's domestic affairs, his deep affection for his mother and sisters, and the significance of their correspondence. Section two, examines Bowers' attitudes towards gender and sexuality. It will also consider his attitudes to manliness, analysing what Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard call 'selfhood and the subjective experience of being male'.³⁶ Section three will explore Bowers' attitudes to empire and 'race'. The section will argue that David Crane offered a misleading and

³³ Hunter, 'Intimacy and Manliness', p.339. Also see Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), pp.22-23.

³⁴ Michael Roper and John Tosh, *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.17.

³⁵ Tosh, *A Man's Place*, p.113.

³⁶ Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History Circa 1500-1950', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005), p.275.

overly sensational interpretation of Bowers' attitudes to race through highly selective quotation from his letters.

1. 'A Strange Paradox': Domesticity and Adventure

Bowers' occupation as a sailor and lengthy tours of duty away from home ensured that correspondence offered the primary means of forming and maintaining family relationships. Writing weekly to his mother and often to his sister May, letters formed a continuous conversation amongst the family, which provided an essential emotional support. 'I don't know what life would be like out here without ones mails', Bowers wrote to his mother. 'I am afraid I have been spoiled myself as it would be a great hardship to do without your letters'.³⁷ The absence of correspondence left a powerful sense of loss.

I was so disappointed when the mail came in and as officer on guard I boarded her returning with the bags containing our precious mails. Not a word no line was there for yours truly- not even an advertisement. I know however that it has got muddled in the office somehow, which is rather hard on me.³⁸

Letters enabled Bowers to feel closely involved with family life whilst he was away. 'I also have a fine collection of PCs [postcards] which you have consistently sent me from time to time. They are all most interesting and keep me more closely in touch with home that you would suppose'.³⁹

Correspondence was all the more significant as Bowers was often so far from home. Leave was not only difficult to take, but also required a significant time in

³⁷ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 12 July 1909, MS1505/1/1/3/64, BJ, SPRI.

³⁸ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 8 April 1909, MS1505/1/1/3/52, BJ, SPRI.

³⁹ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 24 July 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/20, BJ, SPRI.

service before it would be granted.⁴⁰ ‘I think it a record for a sub who has not been out 3 years to get any leave out of India on private affairs’, Bowers noted in 1908.⁴¹

Rebecca Earle has suggested that letter writing could serve as a form of ‘long distance mothering’. Correspondence helped sustain emotional bonds between Bowers and his family, ‘After all no mother and sister could be more in touch and sympathy than we are in most things’, Bowers wrote to his mother, ‘and distance seems nothing to me when my letters are before me from home’.⁴² ‘I have just found this sheet of paper lying about’, Emily wrote to her son, ‘so I am going to utilise it for my usual letter to my dear son – not that I have very much to say, still I can have a pen and ink talk with you’.⁴³ The physical act of writing, her ‘pen and ink’ talk, reinforced their emotional bond a form of long distance mothering.⁴⁴ Emily too expressed disappointment when letters did not arrive, asking ‘did you forget me altogether last mail as you did not mention me in any way’.⁴⁵

Bowers’ letters reveal tensions between his adventurous life and his relationship with his mother. Knowing that his mother would be unhappy if he joined an Antarctic expedition, he kept news of his application secret until after he had been selected.

I have been trying to picture your face on receiving that telegram. Well mother dear – let me tell you right away it was no fault of mine, at least mainly. I know how you have stuck out against Polar Exploration for me and here I of 8000 am appointed. One can only say it is destiny, it cannot be helped, it had to be. This may seem foolish but it is not God knows how and why I was appointed and I am in his hands entirely.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ In 1906 men were required to enroll for a minimum of 3 years. For background and history of the Royal Indian Marine see E. J. Headlam, ‘The History of the Royal Indian Marine’, *Journal of The Royal Society of Arts* 77, no. 3985 (1929), pp.519-540.

⁴¹ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 18 April 1908, MS1505/1/1/3/40, BJ, SPRI.

⁴² H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 28 August 1910, MS1505/1/1/2/99: BJ, SPRI.

⁴³ E. W. Bowers to H. R. Bowers, 3 April 1903, MS1505/1/2/2/2, BJ, SPRI.

⁴⁴ Earle, *Epistolary Selves*, p. 9.

⁴⁵ E. W. Bowers to H. R. Bowers, 10 July 03, MS1505 1/1/2/2/6, BJ, SPRI.

⁴⁶ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 9 April 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/82, BJ, SPRI.

He felt the need to return to the issue again and subsequently expressed remorse for taking on such a dangerous endeavour, which would reduce their contact even further.

I cannot think how you will have received the news about my going of course I can quite understand – considerations of danger will have first entered your mind, secondly that it will be back to the old sailing ship days for letters again. I have not forgotten that you once said you hoped you would be dead before I started on anything so foolhardy.⁴⁷

Bowers was at this point facing up to the reality of a period of nearly 12 months without letters, from the departure of the *Terra Nova* from the Antarctic around March 1911 until its return the following year. ‘I am finishing up at 3am with my last letters to my own dearest and last before we start and then you will hear nothing more for a year’.⁴⁸ ‘It was not only the news from home’, Michael Roper has observed of British soldiers in the First World War, ‘but the writing of letters which drew these soldiers back into the lives they had left behind’.⁴⁹ Bowers continued to write letters throughout his time in the Antarctic, even though he knew they would not be sent for over a year. Although delighted to be on the expedition, he said that only one thing could ‘make a man happier ... that is more means of communication with those he loves best’.⁵⁰ The letter concluded by reassuring his mother that ‘wherever I am I am always your own son. If a wanderer I am one by nature and not because I don’t realise that nobody has a happier home to go to’.⁵¹

Bowers chose to begin and end his letters with open displays of affection, usually variations of ‘my dearest mother’ or ‘your ever loving son.’⁵² Letters to his sisters, especially May, involved colloquialisms and pet names as displays of

⁴⁷ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 18 April 1910, MS1505 /1/1/3/83, BJ, SPRI.

⁴⁸ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 23 January 1911, MS1505/1/1/3/107, BJ, SPRI.

⁴⁹ Roper, *The Secret Battle*, p.50.

⁵⁰ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 23 January 1911, MS1505/1/1/3/107, BJ, SPRI.

⁵¹ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 23 January 1911, MS1505/1/1/3/107, BJ, SPRI.

⁵² H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 9 April 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/82, BJ, SPRI.

affection, such as ‘Dearest Bird’.⁵³ Although he often repeated certain phrases, he expressed one passage in particular only at times of great stress: ‘it will be soon, very soon when we shall meet on the joyful tomorrow when he shall wipe away all tears from our eyes’.⁵⁴ He used this passage in a letter to his mother as he left New Zealand, a letter full of emotion and affection. It was repeated in his last letter: ‘your ever loving son to the end and in this life and the next when we will meet and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes’.⁵⁵ In contrast to every other letter he wrote to his mother he chose to end this final message with his signature ‘H. R. Bowers’, transforming the document into a formal, last testament. If his body were eventually discovered, then other men would read the letter before his mother, so he may also have deemed a more personal expression inappropriate.

Throughout his letters home, Bowers maintained a great interest in domestic matters, the mundane, everyday, activities of the household. Indeed, he stressed that he treasured such minutiae. ‘Thanks much for your letters etc. they are always interesting, don’t imagine anything is too commonplace to interest me, all news from the better country is like a break a good British Breeze’.⁵⁶ Roper argues that for the First World War soldier, ‘the more stressful the situation, the greater was the urge to construct home as haven’.⁵⁷ Bowers’ interest in domestic matters demonstrates that this desire to escape into an imaginary haven of home was not solely a feature of trench warfare.

Bowers was not only a passive spectator of family life. At times he actively took on the role of head of the household, especially with regard to financial matters.

⁵³ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 20 Jan 1909, MS1505/1/1/2/57, BJ, SPRI.

⁵⁴ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 26 Nov 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/101, BJ, SPRI.

⁵⁵ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 22 March 1912, MS1505/1/1/3/115, BJ, SPRI.

⁵⁶ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 10 August 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/43, BJ, SPRI.

⁵⁷ Roper, *The Secret Battle*, p.72.

Three months before he sailed for the Antarctic, he offered detailed advice on investments.

I cannot say how very relieved and pleased I was to hear about the Penang money. Certainly stick to the £104. Surely you have waited long enough for the instalments and why – because they come in a lump – should it go into principal. No, I certainly agree with you and enclose the following chit which can be shown to Mr Crawford if you want anything signed and have not time to send it out.⁵⁸

The efficiency of the postal service allowed him to take an active role in the management of the family's finances, even when abroad.

Bowers displayed a keen interest in the debates surrounding tariff reform and the People's Budget and the impact of these national policies on the family's daily life:

What is your candid opinion? It is rather a complicated subject and such a spendthrift policy as the old age pensions had to be made up for. Apart from that however, if the money is necessary it must be got from some source. Tariff reform would help but not altogether cover the deficit and unless America with her enormous protection and prosperity with a deficit of 20 millions – on the whole the burden affects us – the middle classes - but little foodstuffs are not taxed at all. We have no motors and I think you have made a mistake in thinking the income tax is ½ - from what I have read it seems that the extra 2d is for incomes over £3000 and an additional 6/d for those over £5000...the liberal budget I think affects us but little.⁵⁹

This passage reveals how Bowers considered himself a member of the 'middle classes'. Here we see a man fully engaged in current affairs at home, even though he spent most of his life working abroad.

Published works about Bowers are dominated by accounts of these foreign adventures, yet his correspondence reveals a man dreaming of home and family. Bowers acknowledged a tension between his love of adventure and yearning for home.

Why did you give me this nature that loves and longs to stay with you yet when once away glories in the [word illegible] that he is. It is a strange paradox. I love home and always think if this as a cheerful house – well with

⁵⁸ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 30 March 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/81, BJ, SPRI.

⁵⁹ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, Unknown date April 1909, MS1505/1/1/3/59, BJ, SPRI.

its own grounds surrounded by trees and hedges – and having plenty of green about the grounds and you and the girls always there – and peace above all things. But my life is cast in the midst of the noisy [word illegible] racket of a ship routine, without peace, without privacy and yet revelling in it, always moving and yet wanting to move more.⁶⁰

Bowers himself described this tension as a ‘strange paradox’. Although he never directly explained what he enjoyed so much about life at sea, it was clearly a source of great pleasure: ‘I shall be right glad to get to sea and have my good salt lady to keep me company on many a watch between here and Melbourne’.⁶¹

Bowers’ early letters expressed a more confident and assertive personality, than the happy subordinate of many later accounts.⁶² Bowers described to his sister how he challenged previous commanding officers. ‘I took the bull by the horns and told him just what I thought about it, I reminded him that I was not a gunner but an executive officer and as such demanded an explanation as regards some of his allegations’.⁶³ ‘1st Lieutenant is a very nice job’, he wrote to his mother in 1908 from the East, ‘but my *Sladen* experience made it clear that I did not like to be interfered with. It will be impossible for me to ever knuckle under again like I used to’.⁶⁴

Even as late as 1910 Bowers continued to outline his approach to challenging authority if he felt it was appropriate to do so ‘and if an officer in command is going to try to squash a man as good as himself - because that man happens to be junior - the said commanding officer needs telling off and his victim is the best man to do it’.⁶⁵ There is no evidence in Bowers’ letters or journals that at any point in time he chose to challenge Scott’s authority, even when Bowers believed that Scott was unjustifiably angry with him:

⁶⁰ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 28 August 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/93, BJ, SPRI.

⁶¹ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 3 September 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/94, BJ, SPRI.

⁶² For example, Roland Huntford, *Scott and Amundsen* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), p.454.

⁶³ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 25 April 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/34, BJ, SPRI.

⁶⁴ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 28 January 1908, MS1505/1/1/3/33, BJ, SPRI.

⁶⁵ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 29 January 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/78, BJ, SPRI.

I reported the hypsometer accident & got an un-usual outburst of wrath in consequence, in fact my name is mud just at present – it is rather sad to get into the dirt tub with one's leader at this juncture but accidents will happen and this was not carelessness as I look after my instruments with the utmost care.⁶⁶

This was not merely sycophancy as Roland Huntford has argued. We can infer instead that Bowers relationship with Scott was different to that he had experienced with many other Commanding officers, and that he fundamentally respected Scott's position as the leader of the Expedition. Bowers consistently expressed a positive attitude towards Captain Scott and his leadership. 'Captain Scott is a topper I cannot say too much for him as a leader and as an extraordinarily clever and far seeing man'.⁶⁷

2. *'Despicable as an Effeminate Man': Gender and Sexuality*

Bowers' letters reveal he led an active social life, interacting with both men and women. He consistently expressed admiration for men and women who conformed to established gender norms, and strongly disapproved of those who transgressed those norms. His letters consistently described a vision of appropriate manhood based on hard work in the outdoors, physical exercise, and the absence of unnecessary comforts. He wrote to his mother of his love of

good plain food, an open air life with plenty of swimming and plenty of work with a dash of excitement – or at least anticipation occasionally- and no luxuries. What more can one want. It is essentially a man's life and one that I hope for me – will be prolonged.⁶⁸

In this and other letters he wrote explicitly about what 'a man's life' should be, and his 'idea of manliness'.

The delicious feeling of having earned one's meals and rest no worry now only marching- observing, navigating, grooming cooking and sleeping etc.

⁶⁶ Bowers, *South Pole Journals*, p.68.

⁶⁷ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 26 June 1911, MS1505/1/1/3/111, BJ, SPRI.

⁶⁸ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 23 November 1909, MS1505/1/1/3/72, BJ, SPRI.

serving out one's full allowance of time under conditions that fulfil my idea of manliness.⁶⁹

Both these letters clearly reveal his commitment to a strenuous active life well before he sailed south to the Antarctic.

Bowers veneration of hard work as the highest expression of manliness caused him to criticise members of the upper classes whom he felt didn't pull their weight.

I would go a long way rather than meet or speak to 2/3rds of my brother officers of those ships. I found more manly men in the fore-castle over and over again and found out that there were better men than oneself in the lowest walks of life.⁷⁰

Here he expressed his preference for the more authentic physical manliness of the crew to the dissolute officers. He also criticised the excessive weight of some officers, reflecting his own personal anxieties. He viewed being fat as a marker of a bloated and dissolute officer class:

Nature has inflicted a terrible retribution on him for his excesses at the table [Charles]. I cannot conceive anything more horrible than being so obese. A stout tubby man is one thing, a walking collection of lard bags is quite another.⁷¹

This pre-occupation with weight as a marker of health and vigour reflected the broader anxieties about the health of the nation in this period described by G. R. Searle and others.⁷² 'We are a pretty tough stock', Bowers wrote to his mother, 'but years of luxury don't improve either our officers or men'.⁷³

Bowers also consistently expressed his opinion that men and women should perform distinct and different roles.

I really think a lady who smokes is as objectionable to my mind as a suffragette. It takes away all a man's ideal in a woman to see her act the same as he does. The woman of my fancy is as unlike a man as it is possible to me..

⁶⁹ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 20 January 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/108, BJ, SPRI.

⁷⁰ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 18 December 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/5, BJ, SPRI.

⁷¹ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 23 November 1909, MS1505/1/1/3/72, BJ, SPRI.

⁷² G. R. Searle, *A New England?: Peace and War 1886-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p.375.

⁷³ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 26 September 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/25, BJ, SPRI.

The manly woman is an abortion and altogether out of place (I should say man-ish) and I think is nearly- not quite- as despicable as an effeminate man.
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The ‘manish woman’ and ‘effeminate man’ were an anathema to his.

The contrast between his descriptions of the wives of two of his Antarctic comrades, Captain Scott and second-in-command Commander Teddy Evans, neatly captured his views about appropriate female behaviour. In Hilda Evans, Bowers described the epitome of womanhood. ‘Mrs Evan’s [sic] is a person apart in my esteem’, Bowers wrote to his mother, ‘– she is not my style in most ways but for a womanly woman of remarkable beauty and general charm she stands out of the crowd as about everything a wife should be’.⁷⁵ In contrast, Bowers openly criticised Kathleen Scott’s more assertive style and involvement in the management of the expedition.

Mrs Wilson has not been about much owing to the strained relations between Mrs Scott and Mrs Evans. I don’t know who to blame but somehow I don’t like Mrs S. I don’t trust her- though I have always been prepared to give her her due. Nobody likes her in the expedition and the painful silence when she arrives is the only jarring note of the whole thing. There is no secret that she runs us all now and what she says is done – through the Owner.⁷⁶

Bowers expressed such open criticism only to his sister May, offering a more sanitised view of the expedition to his mother.

Most previous authors have only depicted Bowers’ social relationships with men. Yet his letters reveal both his interaction with, and his interest in, the opposite sex. ‘Talking about the fairer sex there were one or two bewitching madams at that dance and they came to see the ship the next day’, he wrote to his sister May after a social event in Littleton, New Zealand as the *Terra Nova* sailed south in 1910.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 22 March 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/8, BJ, SPRI.

⁷⁵ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 7 December 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/103, BJ, SPRI.

⁷⁶ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 28 November 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/104, BJ, SPRI.

⁷⁷ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 28 August 1910, MS1505/1/1/2/99, BJ, SPRI.

Although Bowers did not marry, we see glimpses in his letters of the formation of deep emotional attachments with women.

When one looks back on one's mild attachment it is a [illegible word] that circumstances prevents people- particularly sailors from following them up. Unless one is really and truly in love 3 or 4 weeks are enough to cool one down. Still I must confess I thought of Miss Nancy longer.⁷⁸

Such frank exchanges are more often to be found in letters to his sister than to his mother. As Davidoff and Hall argue the intensity of the brother – sister relationship was not only idealised in literature.⁷⁹ Bowers' appeared to enjoy an intense emotional relationship with his sister May. His earliest surviving letter from 1897 began 'my dearest Ducky Darling Cherub May' and ended with 45 'x's (kisses) and the closing comment 'count them they're from me'.⁸⁰ The financial restrictions affecting when young men married ensured that these relationships continued into adult life. Tosh has argued that the intimacy between siblings actively restricted the marriage prospects of some men.⁸¹

Although he did mention meeting women to Edith, Bowers frequently sought to reassure his mother that he had no intention of marrying at the moment. 'There are quite a lot of passable people here. After so long without feminine society it has been a great pleasure to have a yarn with some of them. However I have not lost my heart so don't be afraid'.⁸² Throughout his correspondence he offers the fact that his closest

⁷⁸ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 25 September 1910, MS1505/1/1/2/101, BJ, SPRI.

⁷⁹ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), p. 348.

⁸⁰ H. R. Bowers to E. M. Bowers undated, likely 1897, MS1505/1/1/2/1, BJ, SPRI.

⁸¹ Tosh, *A Man's Place*, p. 109.

⁸² H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 25 December 1909, MS1505/1/1/3/76, BJ, SPRI, See also H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 17 November 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/99, BJ, SPRI.

emotional bonds remain with his family as a consolation for his physical absence from home.⁸³

Bowers never referred explicitly to sex and sexuality in his correspondence, with the exception of one striking letter to his mother, in which he described a social occasion in Madeira only a month after the *Terra Nova* set sail from Cardiff.

I am afraid there was an atmosphere of immorality about the place that was unmistakable however, and as far as that old beast Reid did I tell you? He is the wealthy owner of a good deal of land and the chief hotel on the island "Reid Hotel" which is a magnificent place in lovely grounds. WE thought he was a nice old chap and accepted an invitation to a most sumptuous lunch at his country house 1100 feet up. It is a lovely place and there were quite a number of English Ladies there. We were asked to call at his office on return and he offered a locked drawer containing a collection of the filthiest and most disgustingly repulsive curiosities I could ever imagine. I never realised such things could exist or the hand of man could be employed in constructing such deformed and crude examples of filth. To the surprise of my companions I told him straight- host or no host - that I thought it was the most disgusting (illegible) I had ever seen. The mind of than man must be a cesspool.⁸⁴

The secret collection of pornographic materials by the Victorian elite is well known; the British Museum famously opened a 'Secretum' in 1865. Bowers' obvious distaste for what was likely pornographic material is clear. Rather than participating in the masculine enjoyment Bowers responds in an aggressively puritan way. His response seems an expression of the evangelical position described by Tosh, which set out to 'destroy the sexual licence of the old physical manliness by anchoring masculine energies in the home'.⁸⁵

How Bowers actually behaved when shown the materials in Madeira is impossible to know. His letter might have been intended as a show of distaste to reassure his mother, perhaps even a fantasy of how he *should* have behaved,

⁸³ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 3 January 1911 [actually 1912], MS1505/2/5/9, BJ, SPRI, 'in the meantime you are ever in my thoughts my dearest one – may God bless and keep you always and bring me back safely to you in His own time – what a day to look forward to.'

⁸⁴ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 10 July 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/91, BJ, SPRI.

⁸⁵ Tosh, *A Man's Place*, p.112.

motivated by his shame at his actual enjoyment of the moment. In the only other description of this meeting I have found, Apsley Cherry-Garrard mentioned neither Mr Reid's 'locked drawer' nor Bowers' response. 'We finished Madeira in good style', Cherry-Garrard recorded in his journal. 'A party of us lunched and spent the afternoon with the Reids - he keeps a big hotel'.⁸⁶ In an earlier letter to his sister May, Bowers also mentioned the illegitimate child of a fellow officer. 'On board the S/S Mandalay (of the Irrawaddy Flotilla) Capt. Bereford (a relative of (Lord Charles) introduced me to his son (aged 7 or so) as "my little piece of Sin", isn't it awful?'⁸⁷ What is not clear is whether Bowers was offended by the child's illegitimacy or that its mother is non-white.

3. *Empire and Authority*

The principal change in representations of Bowers since George Seaver's 1938 biography has revolved around the issue of racism. David Thomson first cited letters quoted by Seaver to present Bowers as an aggressive, imperial racist in 1977. His view was extended by David Crane in 2005, who cited Bowers' original letters for the first time. The final section of this chapter will complicate Thomson and Crane's interpretation. Bowers was certainly a proud Briton, committed to the empire, who often disparaged foreigners. Yet the view put forward by Crane in particular is overly sensational and based on selective quotation of sources.

In 1977, David Thomson described how while serving with the Royal Indian Marine in Burma, Bowers

⁸⁶ A. Cherry-Garrard Journal 27 June 1910, MS599/2, BJ, SPRI.

⁸⁷ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 1 September 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/44:BJ, SPRI.

had become a scourge of pirates and an emphatic believer in the inferiority of oriental people. He was especially disapproving of ‘so called democratic ideals’ falling among the ‘blighters’(sic) and was convinced of the inherent virtues of being British. The language is jingoistic and the complacency hard.⁸⁸

Bowers did indeed retain many of the prejudices of his age. But by taking passages out of context, Thomson’s overall account was misleading. Seaver cherry-picked certain passages from Bowers’ letters that he then used to project a particular representation of Bowers. Writing in June 1907 Bowers commented on the fall of India:

Now the (illegible word) and cheap labour specimens and Keir Hardie wallocs (sic) have come out here and said to the coolies – whose very existence depends on our occupation practically – you’re my equal why are you salaaming get up and say you won’t work for less than 1/- per day. No longer is the sahib what he was, no longer do they respect the nation, who - by the Grace of God- licked them times without number sometimes at 100 to 1 and gave them peace, famine relief, protection and a degree of happiness therein.⁸⁹

Writing a month later, again to his sister May, the way Bowers wrote about serving his country to amplify a strident religious perspective on the judgement and fall of man:

I love my country and trust that I shall not be found wanting when the day comes to act at the same time I realise that God’s way will prevail, and if it will hasten in the coming of the long promised kingdom (sic) of Jesus, I am willing to see it go – may I go under before I see the former, much as I should rejoice in being alive and remaining at the manifestation of the latter.⁹⁰

Seaver constructed a different quote from these two letters:

No longer is the sahib what he was, no longer do they respect the nation, who by the Grace of God- licked them time without number at odds of 1:100, and gave them piece, famine relief, protection, and a degree of happiness thrown in. I love my country, and trust that I shall not be found wanting when the day comes to act. That dear old country – I wonder if a fraction of its inhabitants appreciate its worth.⁹¹

⁸⁸ David Thomson, *Scott's Men* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), p.160.

⁸⁹ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 2 June 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/38, BJ, SPRI,

⁹⁰ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 17 July 1907, MS1505 1/1/2/41, BJ, SPRI

⁹¹ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.75.

The final phrase ‘That dear old country – I wonder if a fraction of its inhabitants appreciate its worth’ is from an unidentified third source that may or may not be directly ascribed to Bowers.⁹² Writing in 1938 in the build up to the Second World War, Seaver may have been attempting to show Bowers and the Expedition in a patriotic light. Thomson’s quotation of Seaver’s edited letters, is thus doubly misleading, ignoring the religious motivation behind his views. Thomson replicated Seaver’s quote above direct in his 1977 account using it to ascribe a more aggressive Imperialistic position: ‘[he] was convinced of the inherent virtues of being British. The language here is jingoistic and the complacency hard.’⁹³

David Crane also amplified the Imperialist perspective of Bowers’ letters, however he only quotes from three letters - two from 1907 and one from 1909 – with the bulk of his interpretation coming from one letter from Bowers to May dated 2 June 1907.⁹⁴ In doing so, Crane implies a consistency of view on which the primary source letters are less equivocal if viewed in their entirety. Crane argues that ‘even at the height of the Raj, however, there can have been few better “haters” than Birdie Bowers and fewer still with such a rich portfolio of prejudices’.⁹⁵ Although he states that ‘contradiction was at the heart of his character’, Crane’s Bowers is a straightforward, xenophobic, racist:

Hated the half-caste and he hated the native. He hated the “heathen darkness” of Islam and the fetishist, crucifix-worshipping antics of popery. He hated the priest-ridden Irish and the idolatrous Spanish and Portuguese. He hated the Russians and he hated the “Maccaroni.” He hated the ‘Filthy, smelly creatures he found in the Far East an the “Godless, heedless, happy, licentious desperately wicked “froggie” he found in Paris.’⁹⁶

⁹² Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.75 – this part of the quotation is from an unidentified third source.

⁹³ Thomson, *Scott's Men*, p. 160-161.

⁹⁴ Crane, *Scott of the Antarctic*, p.415, H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 2 June 1907, MS1505 1/1/2/38, BJ, SPRI, H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 1 September 1907, MS1505 1/1/2/44, BJ, SPRI, H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 7 April 1909, MS1505 1/1/2/61, BJ, SPRI.

⁹⁵ Crane, *Scott of the Antarctic*, p.415.

⁹⁶ Crane, *Scott of the Antarctic*, p.415.

Bowers did indeed frequently express his prejudices against foreigners: ‘Yet they wear the indian capes and coats, with the Burmese longi altogether they are a loathsome race.’⁹⁷ But Crane’s sensationalist description is misleading. Most importantly, he fails to convey either the variability of Bowers’ views, his frequent expressions of affection for some foreigners, or the ways in which his deep religious faith shaped his prejudices.

Bowers consistently expressed great affection for many non-Britons in his letters, such as his mother’s lodger Elsa: ‘Elsa is very bookish and seems to have enjoyed her holiday in the fatherland (sic).’⁹⁸ On the *Terra Nova* expedition, he was friendly towards and positive about the Norwegian Trygve Gran, once Gran had earned his trust’, Could be something in what you sat Oates, but all the same I wager what you will that Gran would be with us if England is forced into war through no fault of her own.’⁹⁹ His letters also contain no evidence of prejudice towards the only practicing Irish Catholic on the *Terra Nova*, Petty Officer Tom Crean. Indeed, after sharing a tent with Crean and another Petty Officer Robert Forde, he described them as ‘excellent men full of hard work and good nature’.¹⁰⁰ Enjoyment of hard work again emerges as the principal characteristic of manliness in Bowers’ writings.

Bowers’ views on race were often inconsistent, sometimes even within the same letter, and varied with circumstances. In October 1907 he began a letter to May complaining about the train with, ‘3rd class carriages crammed with filthy natives of every description ‘ but in the same letter goes on to describe his Hindustani exams ‘I had a huge Punjabi artilleryman to speak to. He was a jolly good chap and spoke so

⁹⁷ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 6 April 1908, MS1505/1/1/3/39, BJ, SPRI.

⁹⁸ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 13 September 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/23, BJ, SPRI.

⁹⁹ Trygve Gran and G. Hattersley-Smith, *The Norwegian with Scott: Trygve Gran's Antarctic Diary, 1910-1913* (London: National Maritime Museum : H.M.S.O., 1984), p.60.

¹⁰⁰ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 20 January 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/108, BJ, SPRI.

clearly and distinctly that it was impossible to mistake anything.’¹⁰¹ He had inherent racial prejudices but once he had worked alongside others he tended to judge them via their actions and not their ethnicity. Writing to his mother from India in 1907, for example, condemning the natives of Goa: ‘I am not very keen on native servants, perhaps I hadn’t appreciated the fast going out “old” type who were so faithful. Goanese I loathe’ but goes on to say more positively (in the same letter) ‘my boy is one- he is quite good really’.¹⁰² In Karachi in early 1910 he described the ‘10th jarls’ (a Hindu regiment stationed in 1910 in a predominantly Muslim area) as ‘a fine lot of men I find it impossible to conceive the yarns about them. Anyhow they are a magnificent crowd of men and as sound and respectful as you could want’.¹⁰³

His deep commitment to the British Empire complicated any simplistic racism. He initially objected to the recruitment of grooms from Russia for the expedition: ‘had 2 grooms been wanted they should have been supplied from our own Empire – even 2 Kashmiris would not have been out of place’.¹⁰⁴ Here, then, imperial allegiance trumped ethnicity and skin colour. Yet once he got to know them, his letters expressed friendship and admiration for the Russian groom, Dimitri’ Dimitri is always cheerful.¹⁰⁵ His belief in the gospel of hard work transcended racial prejudice.

We have already seen how Bowers criticised dissolute officers who did not live up to the standards he set for himself. He extended such criticisms into broader reflections on the nature of imperial rule, which Crane’s simplistic portrait of a ‘hater’ obscures. ‘We came into a country with strong men and sound if forcible business methods’, he wrote to his mother from India in 1907. But ‘- the high respect and

¹⁰¹ H. R. Bowers to M Bowers 15 October 1907 MS1505/1/1/2/46, BJ, SPRI.

¹⁰² H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 27 June 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/16, BJ, SPRI.

¹⁰³ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 10 February 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/79, BJ, SPRI.

¹⁰⁴ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, Undated, MS1505/1/1/3/102, BJ, SPRI.

¹⁰⁵ Bowers, *South Pole Journals*, p.36.

surprise with which the natives received us is all gone now – with good reasons - any native in a position to “pay” will tell you that “every Englishman has his price”.¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

Analysis of Bowers’ personal testimonies both adds a new dimension to historical understanding of Bowers himself, and contributes to scholarly debates about Edwardian masculinities. Bowers placed great value on his family correspondence, as we have seen, sustaining deep emotional relationships by writing letters. Bowers’ example complicates any simple picture of a ‘flight from domesticity’ in Edwardian Britain. He himself identified the ‘strange paradox’ that his love of adventure coexisted with a yearning for family and home. He supported the established norms about the roles of men and women, his own ‘idea of manliness’ defined as much through his correspondence and relationships with his mother and sisters, as by his work and his relationships with his comrades.

Bowers expressed robust views about foreigners in his correspondence, but his letters express more complex attitudes than the sensational stereotype offered in David Crane’s biography of Scott, a product in part of highly selective quotation. Hard work and a cheerful attitude were central to his beliefs, more significant than social class, and even ethnicity. Religious faith, though, was the cornerstone of all his beliefs, and will be the subject of analysis in the final chapter of this thesis.

¹⁰⁶ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 15 July 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/19, BJ, SPRI.

4.

Henry Bowers, Charles Taze Russell and Religious Faith

I devote the evening after dinner to reading my 'Dawns' and Watch Towers in all of which I am very interested and think a lot but like Jack's parrot - say very little.¹

Writing to his sister in September 1907, Henry Bowers was involved in an ongoing family debate about spiritual ideas. These discussions were a private expression of his faith; such reflections appear to have gone unnoticed by even his closest colleagues on the *Terra Nova* expedition.

As the previous chapters have demonstrated, representations of Bowers have mainly focused on his endurance, cheerfulness and unusual appearance. Both his companions on the expedition and later commentators rarely mentioned Bowers' religious beliefs, yet his correspondence reveals that faith was of huge significance to him. The secular perspective of writers since 1945 such as Roland Huntford has pushed Bowers' faith further into the shadows, with other issues taking precedence.

Those who have mentioned his religious beliefs have for the most part followed George Seaver by linking Bowers to Edward Wilson. Charles Lagerbom's *The Fifth Man* noted how religion 'became one of the main pillars of his life', but did not explore his faith in any detail.² Seaver's biography overemphasised the similarities between the religious faith of Wilson and of Bowers, however.³ Unlike Wilson, Bowers explicitly declared that he had no religious allegiance or

¹ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 13 September 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/45, BJ, SPRI.

² C. H. Lagerbom, *The Fifth Man : The Life of H. R. Bowers* (Whitby: Caedmon of Whitby, 1999), p.1.

³ George Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers of the Antartic* (London: John Murray, 1938).

denominational affiliation.⁴ Moreover, his faith did not manifest itself as Wilson's did, through the scientific and artistic observation of the natural world.

The paucity of attention devoted to Bowers' religious faith can be viewed as a facet of what J. C. D. Clark has described as the 'comparative eclipse of research on the actual and complex history of religion' over the last twenty years.⁵ David Nash has noted how religious history has been 'marginalised or forgotten by social and cultural historians in favour of reaching a wider audience with more apparently dynamic and deeper questions'.⁶ Although writing from very different perspectives, Clark, Nash, Callum Brown and Jeremy Morris, among others, have argued that understandings of religious history have been dominated by the sociological concept of secularisation, with historians repeating a story about the steady and inexorable decline of religious beliefs and practices over the last two centuries.⁷ Clark has argued instead for historians to view secularisation as a fluid process, 'always happening and never completed', which leads to the cyclical appearance of religious revivals throughout history.⁸ By exposing Bowers' religiosity, this chapter makes a contribution to this broader scholarly drive to retrieve the religious dimensions of the twentieth-century from neglect.

David Crane's biography *Scott of the Antarctic* offered the first portrayal of Bowers as a religious individual that differed substantially from George Seaver,

⁴ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 18 May 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/36, BJ, SPRI.

⁵ J.C.D Clark, 'Secularization and Modernization: The Failure of the Grand Narrative', *The Historical Journal* 55, no. 1 (2012), p.162.

⁶ David Nash, 'Reconnecting Religion with Social and Cultural History: Secularization's Failure as a Master Narrative', *Cultural and Social History* 1(2004), p.302.

⁷ Nash, 'Reconnecting Religion', p.303, Jeremy Morris, 'Secularization and Religious Experience: Arguments in the Historiography of Modern British Religion', *The Historical Journal* 55, no. 1 (2012), p.95, Clark, 'The Failure', p.162, Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000*, 2nd ed. ed. (London: Routledge, 2009).

⁸ Clark, 'The Failure', p.189.

describing him as a mass of contradictions. Crane was the first scholar to note Bowers' involvement with the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society:

In the theology of the nineteenth century's proto-Jehovah's witnesses, Bowers found that peculiar range of beliefs, justifications, and eschatological certitudes that helped bounce the bigot into the serenely untouchable, well-nigh invincible fanatic he became.⁹

Crane rightly recognised the influence of Charles Taze Russell, but his use of the term 'proto-Jehovah's witnesses' is misleading, designed primarily to underline his depiction of Bowers as an eccentric. The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society with which Bowers engaged in the 1900s was a very different Movement from the Jehovah's Witnesses, which did not emerge until the later 1920s. Whilst Crane offered a new perspective on Bowers' faith, he did not fully explore the peculiar nature of his beliefs within the constraints of a biography dedicated to Captain Scott.

Anne Strathie had more space in her detailed 2012 biography of Bowers, publishing new information about his family's religious background. She explained that Bowers inherited 'a form of Christianity rooted in a nineteenth-century schism in the Anglican Church', but did not analyse his personal faith in any detail.¹⁰ Whilst observing that 'Emily also sent Henry some evangelical magazines', for example, Strathie does not acknowledge that these magazines related to the Watch Tower Movement.¹¹ Secondly, although writing that Bowers 'would spend hours pursuing his interest in Biblical and ancient history by reading about the Great Pyramid', Strathie does not make the link between Pyramidology and the theology of Charles Taze Russell.¹²

⁹ David Crane, *Scott of the Antarctic: A Life of Courage, and Tragedy in the Extreme South* (London: Harper Collins, 2005), p.415.

¹⁰ Lagerbom, *Fifth Man*, p.1, Anne Strathie, *Birdie Bowers: Captain Scott's Marvel* (Gloucester: The History Press 2012), p.10.

¹¹ Strathie, *Birdie Bowers*, p.42.

¹² Strathie, *Birdie Bowers*, p.54.

Faith was for many individuals a matter of private reflection rather than acts of public worship. Callum Brown has suggested that by studying personal testimonies we can ‘reconstruct an individual’s religious identity from how they in their own words reflected Christianity’.¹³ Such reconstructions reveal how religion permeated all aspects of life through ‘the individual’s negotiation between discourses on religion on the one hand and discourses on other things (such as femininity, masculinity, respectability, parenting)’.¹⁴ This chapter will present the first detailed analysis of Bowers’ religious faith. A close examination of his correspondence reveals a man actively engaging with the religious literature of the period, discussing ideas with members of his family, and using letters to explore his spirituality.

Section one provides an examination of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and the work of its founder Charles Taze Russell. George Chryssides has rightly noted the scarcity of academic analyses of Taze Russell and the Watch Tower Movement before 1914. Much of the published material is either produced by the society itself or written by former members or critics with a particular agenda, with many works either uncritically positive, or narrowly focused on rebutting specific doctrinal issues.¹⁵ Section two shows how Taze Russell’s ideas had a profound influence on Bowers’ spirituality. Whilst interested in the views of Taze Russell, Bowers’ letters also reveal his reluctance to follow a single Movement and preference for developing his own (somewhat peculiar) system of beliefs. Section three moves on to examine how George Seaver doctored his portrait of Bowers’ faith by carefully editing his letters, sometimes ignoring and sometimes wilfully misinterpreting the

¹³ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p.13.

¹⁴ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, p.14.

¹⁵ George Chryssides, *The A to Z of Jehovahs Witnesses* (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2008), p.xv.

views Bowers expressed in his correspondence. The section will show how Seaver amalgamated passages from numerous letters to craft a conventional portrait of an unconventional man. The involvement of Bowers' sister Lady Maxwell in the development of Seaver's book will also be considered. Finally, section four reflects on why Bowers' faith generated little comment from his polar colleagues, with particular reference to his final days in 1912.

1. Charles Taze Russell and the Watch Tower Movement

Between 1907 and 1909 Bowers and his sister May regularly discussed the theology of a charismatic American, Charles Taze Russell, in their correspondence. Taze Russell espoused Millenarianism, the belief that a time would come when life would be changed irrevocably. Millenarianism was not a modern concept but had been a feature of numerous evangelical groups since the eleventh century, focused specifically on interpretations of the Books of Revelation and Daniel.¹⁶ Andrew Holden has described how Millenarianism offered:

visions of the Messianic Kingdom depicted large numbers of faithful people enjoying salvation. This salvation would be realised on this earth rather than some extra terrestrial place such as heaven, and not only was the event imminent, it would occur suddenly. Transformation of life would be total, in the sense that eternal bliss would replace suffering and imperfection.¹⁷

¹⁶ Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1957), pp.13-14 Robert S. Ellwood, *Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p.374, Crawford Gribbins, *Evangelical Millenialism in the Transatlantic World 1500-2000* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan 2011), p.92, Robert Crompton, *Counting the Days to Armageddon: Jehovah's Witnesses' and the Second Presence of Christ* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 1996), p.17, D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London ; Boston, MA., USA: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p.85.

¹⁷ Andrew Holden, *Jehovah's Witnesses: Portrait of a Contemporary Religious Movement* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.9.

Give the paucity of British scholarship on Taze Russell, the following paragraphs will briefly review his life and ideas, before section two moves on to explore how Bowers engaged with them.

Born in 1852 in Allegheny Pennsylvania, Charles Taze Russell was brought up in a family with strong Presbyterian beliefs.¹⁸ Some confusion exists as to the origin of his decision to break from his Presbyterian roots, with James Beckworth suggesting that Taze Russell had a revelatory experience whilst Zydek cites the death of his mother.¹⁹ Andrew Holden has argued that Taze Russell's disagreements with 'orthodox Christian Explanations of the ills of American Society provided the context for his new Movement'.²⁰ Frederick Zydek, who has written the only biography of Taze Russell, has argued that the sudden death of his mother at an early age affected him profoundly, and that the thought of her being in an environment such as 'hell' caused him great distress.²¹ By 1864 Russell had become increasingly interested in eschatology as well as the concept of hell, predestination and the human soul. He was conflicted by the ideology that "a God of love" could condemn human beings to suffer in hell.²² He also began to question a fundamental doctrine of Christianity, the Trinity.

Taze Russell formed a small bible study group in 1870. In 1879, following a dispute with another Millennialist Nathan Barbour, he decided to publish his own

¹⁸ Heather Botting Gary Botting *The Orwellian World of Jehovahs Witnesses* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1984), p.34, Edmond C Gruss, *The 4 Presidents of the Watch Tower Society (Jehovah's Witnesses): The Men and the Organisation They Created*. (2003), p.81, Fredrick Zydek, *Charles Taze Russell, His Life and Times. The Man, the Millennium and the Message*, 2010 ed. (Connecticut: Winthrop Press, 2010), p.11, George D. Chryssides, *Exploring New Religions* (London: Cassell, 1999), p. 94.

¹⁹ James A. Beckford, *The Trumpet of Prophecy: A Sociological Study of Jehovah's Witnesses* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975), p.2, Zydek, *Charles Taze Russell*, p.11.

²⁰ Holden, *Jehovah's Witnesses*, p.9.

²¹ Zydek, *Charles Taze Russell*, p.11.

²² Zydek, *Charles Taze Russell*, p. 20.

journal entitled *Zion's Watch Tower and the Herald of God's Presence*.²³ In 1881 Taze Russell founded the Zion Watch Tower Society. The society was given legal charter in 1884 and by 1886 over 6 million copies of the first Millennial Dawn were sold.²⁴ The Society published the principal works that established Taze Russell's reputation, *The Plan of the Ages* (1886), *The Time is at Hand* (1889), *Thy Kingdom Come* (1890), and *The Day of Vengeance* (1897).²⁵ The Movement spread internationally with an office in London established in 1900.²⁶ Taze Russell began a proselytising campaign, giving lectures around the world, and with groups established in Europe, Africa, Australia and Japan.

Taze Russell's campaign focused in part on his view that the end of the world would be a process lasting seven years starting in 1907 and ending in 1915, and affecting every aspect of life. He argued that evil was a direct result of Man's disobedience and could only be altered by God personally taking over the world.²⁷ 'Christendom', he wrote in 1905,

entered upon the final seven years of harvest time in October 1907. Promptly on time the present panic gave Christendom a convulsive tremor, and it is our anticipation that the entire seven years thus started will witness a succession of panics and difficulties, each pressing a little more upon the interests of mankind, the rich as well as the poor, and each bringing conditions to a little harder plane than its predecessor, until, with the close of the seven years, during 1915, according to the Bible, we expect that anarchy will gain the upper hand of control throughout Christendom, overthrowing present

²³ This publication continued under this name until 1909 when it changed to *Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* from 1 January 1909.

²⁴ Holden, *Jehovah's Witnesses*, p.18.

²⁵ Charles Taze Russell, *The Divine Plan of the Ages* (Brooklyn: International Bible Students Association 1886), Charles Taze Russell, *The Time Is at Hand* (Brooklyn: International Bible Students Association 1889), Charles Taze Russell, *Thy Kingdom Come* (Brooklyn: International Bible Students Association 1890), Charles Taze Russell, *The Day of Vengeance* (Brooklyn: International Bible Students Association 1897).

²⁶ Chryssides, *Exploring New Religions*, p.96.

²⁷ Geoffrey K. Nelson, *Cults, New Religions & Religious Creativity* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), p.78.

institutions, civil and religious, financial and social, and in a general way plunging the poor world into the most awful trouble it has ever experienced.²⁸

After publishing a disclaimer early in 1914 that ‘we are by no means confident that this year, 1914, will witness as radical and swift changes of Dispensation as we have expected’, Taze Russell and many of his followers felt that the events of World War One supported their position about the world’s end.²⁹

Taze Russell died on 31 October 1916 whilst undertaking another tour.³⁰ His theology was complex.³¹ Bowers engaged in particular with four aspects of Taze Russell’s teaching. First, Taze Russell declared that humanity was living its last days and the return of Jesus Christ was imminent. Christ would return as an invisible entity leading to the end of the ‘Gentile times’ when the present world system would collapse.³² Robert Crompton has shown how Taze Russell’s prophecies were based on those of the Books of Revelation and Daniel, and were linked to the principle that one day in prophecy represented one year in fulfilment: once those years ended, there would be a decline in the papacy and the inauguration of a millennium in which good would triumph over evil.³³ Bowers’ writings would consistently explore such millenarian themes.

²⁸ *Zion Watch Tower and Herald Of Christ’s Presence*, 6 February 1908, p.5.

²⁹ *Watch Tower and Herald Of Christ’s Presence*, 1 January 1914, pp.3-4, Zydek, *Charles Taze Russell*, p.371.

³⁰ See biography and testimonials of Taze Russell life in *Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence* 1 December 1916.

³¹ Zydek, *Charles Taze Russell*, pp.1-74.

³² Charles Taze Russell, *Object and Manner of Our Lord’s Return* (Brooklyn International Bible Students Association 1877), p.37, *Holy Bible: King James Version*, (London: Collins, 2007) – ‘And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.’

³³ Crompton, *Counting the Days to Armageddon: Jehovah’s Witnesses’ and the Second Presence of Christ*, pp.17-18, Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, p.85.

Secondly, Taze Russell expressed his opposition to the traditional concept of ‘hell’.³⁴ According to the *Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, Taze Russell believed: ‘that man does not possess, an immortal soul, that he is a soul and is mortal; that the wages of sin is death -- not eternal torment’³⁵ Taze Russell argued that the soul was not immortal, and that survival after death was not automatic but bestowed by God on individuals.³⁶

A third key area of theological interest for Taze Russell was Piazzzi Smyth’s essays on the great Pyramids of Egypt. Smyth, a member of Edinburgh's Royal Society, had proposed that the Great Pyramid of Giza was a library that revealed the past, present and future of humanity’s relationship with the Judaic / Christian God.³⁷ The study of the Great Pyramid and biblical history were central themes for Charles Taze Russell, and his third book, *Millennial Dawn - Thy Kingdom Come* devoted large sections to the study of Pyramidology.³⁸

Finally, the Movement encouraged individual Bible study using Taze Russell’s works, *Watch Tower* magazines and the *Emphatic Diaglott*, an ‘interlineary word for word English Translation’ of the bible, with the Greek on one side of the page and English on the other.³⁹ The *Emphatic Diaglott* was considered so essential that the book was advertised at the beginning of all *Watch Tower* editions at reduced costs. Taze Russell’s books and pamphlets, the *Watch Tower Magazine* and a series of

³⁴ Chryssides, *Exploring New Religions*, p.101.

³⁵ *Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, 1 December 1916, p.357.

³⁶ Chryssides, *A to Z*, p.xxxvi.

³⁷ Zydek, *Charles Taze Russell*, p.46-47, Charles Piazzzi Smyth, *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid* (London: Isbister & Co., 1874).

³⁸ Russell, *Thy Kingdom*, pp. 313-376.

³⁹ Benjamin Wilson, *The Emphatic Diaglott* (New York, N.Y.: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1942)[1864] – This publication pre-dated the foundation of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

books called *Studies in the Scriptures*, combined to present a ‘meticulous and clear statement of the ways in which he saw the biblical narratives’.⁴⁰

The *Watch Tower* actively encouraged theological debate, either by relating theology to current affairs or by publishing letters written to Taze Russell for clarification on key issues. Taze Russell himself encouraged his followers to study and debate his teachings.⁴¹ The largest of the groups to follow his works was the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society founded in 1881, but there were at least 40 other small groups that held even more closely to Taze Russell’s interpretation of the scriptures.⁴²

Following Taze Russell’s death in 1916, the Movement took a new direction. The brethren in England were unhappy with the quality of the Brothers’ ministering to the parishes in Britain, where there were complaints of financial irregularity and improper conduct.⁴³ In 1918 the publication of the final *Study in the Scripture* series, *The Finished Mystery*, sparked significant controversy, first by claiming to be the posthumous work of Taze Russell, and secondly (and more widely outside of the faith) because of its anti-war stance, which was unpopular in the wake of the US entry into the First World War in 1916.⁴⁴ This eventually resulted in the arrest and trial of the Movement’s new leader, Joseph Rutherford and the Elders. Their sentencing to 20 years in prison on charges of espionage and conspiracy was well documented in the *American Press*, and sparked aggression and violence towards Watch Tower

⁴⁰ C. T. Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures* (Pennsylvania: Intern. bible students assoc., 1914).

⁴¹ Zydek, *Charles Taze Russell*, p.42.

⁴² Zydek, *Charles Taze Russell*, p.75.

⁴³ See *Harvest Siftings* 1 August 1917, pp.5-10.

⁴⁴ George Chryssides, "Finishing the Mystery: The Watch Tower and 'the 1917 Schism'," in *Sacred Schism: How Religions Divide*, ed. James R. Lewis and Sarah M. Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 116-118.

members.⁴⁵ Although later acquitted in 1919, the book remained banned both in Canada and America.⁴⁶ There appears little evidence that this controversy was reported in the British Press at the time, but it was widely discussed both in the *Watch Tower* and in a later publication *The Golden Age* in 1920.⁴⁷ Unease was reinforced by the failure of leader Joseph Rutherford's well-publicised declaration that 1925 would herald the end of the 'Gentile Age'. Large numbers left the Movement disillusioned by the failures of 1914, 1918 and 1925.⁴⁸ Joseph Rutherford radicalised the Movement along very different lines to those laid down by Charles Taze Russell.⁴⁹ On the 26 July 1931 at 4pm Rutherford called on believers to accept the new name of 'Jehovah's Witnesses.'⁵⁰ This new Movement, which became increasingly politicised through the twentieth century, differed greatly from the religious Movement with which Bowers and his family had engaged over two decades before the Jehovah's Witness Movement we know today.⁵¹ Whilst it is true that the modern Jehovah's Witness Movement had its origins in the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, it evolved into a fundamentally different organisation. To give just one example, it wasn't until 1945 that the Movement prohibited the use of blood transfusions for its

⁴⁵ *Oklahoma City Times*, 18 October 1916, p.1, *Tacoma Times*, 17 August 1917, p.1, *Kingdom News*, 15 April 1918, p.1, *The Sun*, 4 February 1917, p.8.

⁴⁶ *The Sun*, 2 July 1918, p.16, *The Sun*, 9 May 1918, p.9, *New York Tribune*, 9 May 1918, p.11, *New York Tribune*, 28 March 1918, p.9, *The Sun*, 22 June 1918, p.5, *The Sun*, 1 March 1919, p.2, *The Sun (New York)*, 16 May 1919, p.8. Also see *New York Tribune*, 12 December 1921, p.7.

⁴⁷ Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, *The Golden Age* (Brooklyn International Bible Students Association 1920).

⁴⁸ Holden, *Jehovah's Witnesses*, p.1, *Daily Mail*, 26 June 1922, p.7, *Daily Mail*, 17 May 1924, p.25, *Washington Times*, 28 March 1921, p.4, *Washington Times*, 28 November 1921, p.12.

⁴⁹ M. James Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed: The Story of Jehovah's Witnesses* (University of Toronto Press, 1985), p.58.

⁵⁰ Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed: The Story of Jehovah's Witnesses*, p.62.

⁵¹ John R. Hall, Philip Daniel Schuyler, and Sylvaine Trinh, *Apocalypse Observed: Religious Movements and Violence in North America, Europe and Japan* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.199.

followers.⁵² Crane's description of Bowers as a proto-Jehovah's witness is therefore misleading as it associates Bowers with this later, more radical Movement.⁵³

2. *The Religious Faith of Henry Bowers*

This section examines Bowers' religious faith. David Gerber has written how letters can act as a vehicle by which 'both parties involved in a correspondence may come to that which they most desire but cannot obtain – an intimate conversation'.⁵⁴ Bowers' correspondence with his sister May in particular, took the form of an 'intimate conversation' about religion and faith. In the absence of ties to any particular denomination, Bowers and May explored a range of different beliefs.

Throughout his extensive correspondence, Bowers expressed multiple, at times confusing, religious beliefs. Discussions of faith were not confined to specific 'religious' letters, but were interspersed throughout almost all of his correspondence, including extended reflections over several pages. Faith provided a focus for the family. 'It is most extraordinary how we as a family have been blessed by God', Bowers wrote. 'I wonder every time I think of it'.⁵⁵

Bowers undertook individual Bible study throughout his life and from 1906 this study extended to a consideration of the *Watch Tower* magazine and the issues it raised. His interest in the Watch Tower Movement and Charles Taze Russell appeared most prominent in the years 1907 to 1909. Bowers' correspondence demonstrates that the Watch Tower organisation was active in Scotland and that May

⁵² Holden, *Jehovah's Witnesses*, p.28.

⁵³ Crane, *Scott of the Antarctic*, p.415.

⁵⁴ David A. Gerber, *Authors of Their Lives: The Personal Correspondance of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York Univeristy Press, 2006), p.2.

⁵⁵ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 10 August 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/43, BJ, SPRI.

Bowers was interested enough to attend meetings sometime in 1908 and early 1909.⁵⁶ Bowers himself remarked on a later visit by Taze Russell ‘I see by my Watch Tower that Mr Russell has been over to Glasgow and Edinburgh’ and ‘The Movement seems to call forth a lot of devotion among its adherents’.⁵⁷ Bowers himself wondered in one 1908 letter if he would be able to attend one of Taze Russell’s meetings.⁵⁸ From the end of 1909 references became much sparser, with very few made during his time in the Antarctic. This chronology helps explain why historians interested in the *Terra Nova* expedition have failed to notice Bowers’ engagement with Taze Russell’s teachings.

Bowers’ first reference to the Movement appeared in 1907.⁵⁹ By the end of the year he was regularly reading the *Watch Tower* magazine, which was sent to him by both Emily and May. He wrote to both of his sisters to express his appreciation for their efforts in sending him the magazine.

I want to know who sent me a packet of watch Towers papers just received. No body has mentioned it and yet I have had 6 sent 2 for May, June and July. I read the first through last night and the second this morning. Whoever is responsible please accept my best thanks I am tremendously pleased with them.⁶⁰

His letters were peppered with references to Watch Tower publications, as well as the *Millennial Dawn* series, and the *Emphatic Diaglott*.⁶¹

⁵⁶ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 16 May 1908, MS1505/1/1/2/54, BJ, SPRI, H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 23 May 1908, MS1505/1/1/2/55, BJ, SPRI.

⁵⁷ H. R. Bowers to E.W. Bowers, 12 July 1909, MS1505/1/1/3/64, BJ, SPRI. Bowers also mentions that his sister May has been to see Taze Russell preach: ‘I was glad you liked Mr Russell, perhaps I shall be able to hear him when I come home I should like to very much.’ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 16 May 1908, MS1505/1/1/2/54, BJ, SPRI.

⁵⁸ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 23 May 1908, MS1505/1/1/2/55, BJ, SPRI.

⁵⁹ H. R. Bowers to E.W. Bowers, 27 April 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/10, BJ, SPRI.

⁶⁰ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 10 August 1907, MS1505 1/1/2/43, BJ, SPRI, See also H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 6 September 1907, MS1505 /1/1/3/22, BJ, SPRI.

⁶¹ See amongst many H. R. Bowers to E.W. Bowers, 11 May 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/11, BJ, SPRI.

Taze Russell placed significant emphasis on bible study, recommending followers read the *Diaglott* alongside the *Dawns* to aid comprehension and interpretation of scripture. Bowers' letters suggest he devoted much of his spare time to the study of Taze Russell's theology.

Sometime today I should get another read at my Dawn volume IV for the first time since last Sunday. I read the Diaglott daily and am very interested in the little differences few of which really seemed to change the idea but they seem to bring out Mr Russell's idea more forcibly don't they?⁶²

Specific Watch Tower bibles were printed and published alongside the *Diaglott* and advertised for sale at the beginning of each *Watch Tower* publication. 'I always work my *Diaglott* in the morning at "coffee" time and the Bible pm last thing. I have done very little actual comparison as yet, but hope to take that up later. On Sunday I always get a dig at the "Dawns"'.⁶³

Following Taze Russell's instructions, Bowers read key texts and then debated the issues raised with his sister May. 'Edie's *Diaglott* is most interesting it seems like the "old" new testament cleaned up or shall we say "cleared up" as Regards the *Dawns* I have not more than half finished vol IV'.⁶⁴ It is also clear that Bowers was interested enough in the Watch Tower to read the weighty *Studies in the Scripture* series. 'I received my fortnightly Watch Tower yesterday and also finished book IV at last. On the whole I think the other 3 are more stirring but IV gives you a good idea of present times'.⁶⁵ Volume IV– The Day of Vengeance – referred to by Bowers, discusses in detail Armageddon and the end of the world.⁶⁶

⁶² H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 2 June 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/12, BJ, SPRI.

⁶³ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 10 August 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/43, BJ, SPRI.

⁶⁴ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 12 June 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/39, BJ, SPRI, see also H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 20 March 1909, MS1505/1/1/2/59, BJ, SPRI, H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 7 April 1909, MS1505/1/1/2/61, BJ, SPRI.

⁶⁵ H. R. Bowers to E.W. Bowers 20 September 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/24, BJ, SPRI, also see H. R. Bowers to E.W. Bowers 14 October 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/28, BJ, SPRI.

⁶⁶ Russell, *Vengeance*.

Bowers' engaged in particular with three key aspects of Taze Russell's teachings concerning Hell, the end of the 'Gentile World' and the Second Coming, and Pyramidology. Bowers wrote about Pyramidology after reading the third book of the *Studies in the Scriptures*. 'The Great Pyramid is certainly wonderful. I wonder if it is as supposed, the explanation seems pretty convincing doesn't it'.⁶⁷ His interest in the Great Pyramid of Giza and its relevance to Old Testament history expressed a wider interest in Pyramidology during the late-Victorian and Edwardian period.⁶⁸ He even hoped one day to visit the Great Pyramid himself:

I wonder if I shall be at home in time to hear Mr Russell. of course a visit to the pyramid is out of the question this time if I could only long for that better country wherein dwelleth righteousness.⁶⁹

Bowers' definite linking of Pyramidology with Taze Russell demonstrates a specific interest in Taze Russell's interpretation of Piazzzi Smyth's work:

Secondly, Taze Russell's argument that the concept of hell was incompatible with an all-loving God resonated deeply with Bowers. He observed in 1907 that 'human immortality is a very old idea borrowed by others from Rome at the same time it is remarkable how little is said about it in the Bible and I'm afraid I have long given up the idea of a literal blazing hell'.⁷⁰ Later in the year he reiterated this view, making an explicit link between Taze Russell's vision and the more traditional

⁶⁷ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 5 July 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/40, BJ, SPRI.

⁶⁸ Carl G. Howie, 'The Bible and Modern Religion Vii: British- Israelism and Pyramidology', *Interpretations* 11, no. 3 (1957), p.308, Katharine Anderson, 'Looking at the Sky: The Visual Context of Victorian Meteorology', *The British Journal for the History of Science* 36, no. 3 (2003), Francis O'Gorman, "To See the Finger of God in the Dimentions of the Pyramid': A New Context for Ruskin's "the Ethics of the Dust" (1866)', *The Modern Langauge Review* 98, no. 3 (2003).

⁶⁹ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 23 May 1908, MS1505/1/1/2/55, BJ, SPRI.

⁷⁰ H. R. Bowers to E.W. Bowers, 31 March 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/9, BJ, SPRI. See also H. R. Bowers to E.W. Bowers, 14 April 1909, MS1505/1/1/3/53: BJ, SPRI, H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 15 April 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/33, BJ, SPRI.

Christian perspective. ‘The “scheme” or plan that the “Dawns” refer to is certainly beautiful and far in advance of the horrible idea of Hell – borrowed from Rome’.⁷¹

Thirdly, Bowers correspondence exposed his engagement with Taze Russell’s ideas about a coming calamity. Writing in the *Watch Tower* in 1891 Taze Russell had declared that ‘since 1873 we have been living in the 7th millennium, that the lease of Gentile Dominion. “the times of the Gentiles” will expire with the year 1914.’⁷² Taze Russell regularly expressed this view in the magazine, and the topic was widely debated by his followers. ‘According to the interpretation seven years will finish these “times” - god grant it may be so’, Bowers wrote in 1907.⁷³

Bowers consistently reflected on the end of the world in his correspondence. ‘In comparison to eternity the transitionary state of the human race between Christ’s death and the second coming will seem less than a day ... I am a firm believer in the prophecy relating to the last days both in revelation and Daniel etc’.⁷⁴ He continued this discussion over a series of letters to his sisters. For example, ‘In other respects I still think a lot of the Dawns’, he wrote to May, ‘and was reading volume two this afternoon when the sin of righteousness comes then we shall see things that look dark clearly, the end of the Gentile rule must certainly be very near’.⁷⁵ Bowers and his

⁷¹ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 5 November 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/48, BJ, SPRI.

⁷² Charles Taze Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures Vol 3 Thy Kingdom Come*, 1911 [1891], p.305, *Zion Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, 15 December 1907, p.17, Gruss, *The 4 Presidents*, p.81.

⁷³ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 20 September 1907, MS1505/1/1/3/24, BJ, SPRI.

⁷⁴ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 13 July 1906, MS1505/1/1/2/27, BJ, SPRI. The view that social and political events also were affected by the prophecies was not confined to the Taze Russell Movement but had been a feature of the earlier Pre- millennialism Movement.

⁷⁵ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 13 June 1909, MS1505/1/1/2/69, BJ, SPRI, H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 25 April 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/34, BJ, SPRI, H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 10 February 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/31, BJ, SPRI, H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 13 May 1909, MS1505/1/1/3/61, BJ, SPRI, H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 23 April 1909, MS1505/1/1/2/63, BJ, SPRI.

family accepted that the end of the world would begin in 1914 and looked to find evidence in the world around them of the beginnings of degeneracy.⁷⁶

Bowers did not, however, blindly follow the Movement's teachings. Bowers' interest in the Watch Tower Movement should be viewed as part of his wider meditations on faith, as opposed to a more specific commitment to the teachings of Charles Taze Russell. He freely criticised areas of doctrine he felt were inconsistent with his own beliefs. For example, in 1908 Taze Russell instigated a vow to control the moral aspects of the organisation to prevent his followers being in the company of women to whom they were not related and declaring that 'so far as reasonably possible I will avoid being in the same room with any of the opposite sex alone, unless the door to the room stand wide open'.⁷⁷ Bowers, along with many other followers, appears to have been outraged by the suggestion that the company of women was somehow immoral and found the injunction insulting.

At the same time the aspersions on those who conscientiously – cannot take a vow - propounded by no authority other than that of a man – seem a little bit invidious, or would put my back up as much as the ecclesiastical authority of any of the self styled "churches."⁷⁸

Bowers clearly did not feel that he should swear a vow that he did not feel was necessary or relevant to him.

For Bowers, the structure and theology of the Watch Tower Movement would always be secondary to his personal faith. 'I will not commit myself further just now', he wrote to May. 'Perhaps it will act as a warning to you in case you are at any time in danger of losing your "first love" - much love and many kisses there is no real

⁷⁶ An example is H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 13 June 1909, MS1505/1/1/2/69, BJ, SPRI, 'However old girl we must not be pessimistic. When the Son of Righteousness comes -then we shall see things that look dark- clearly. His coming as the end of the Gentile Age must certainly be very near.'

⁷⁷ *Zions Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, 15 October 1908, p.317, Zydek, *Charles Taze Russell*, pp.248-249.

⁷⁸ H. R. Bowers to E.W. Bowers, 12 July 1909, MS1505/1/1/3/64, BJ, SPRI.

peace to be found in this world away from Jesus Christ'.⁷⁹ He maintained this position throughout the period when he was actively engaging with Taze Russell's teachings.

I had a letter the other day from two pilgrims of the Dawns Movement asking if I could arrange rooms for them in Bombay. I was addressed as "Dear Brother" but felt that I had no right to address others as brothers unless entirely of their community so I wrote back Dear Mr Thompson.⁸⁰

Bowers' letters expressed his deep engagement with the writings of Charles Taze Russell and the debates surrounding the Watch Tower Movement. But he never described himself as one of the Movement's 'Brothers' and retained a sceptical distance throughout his engagement with Taze Russell's teachings.⁸¹

3. *George Seaver and Bowers' Religious Faith*

Most scholars studying the *Terra Nova* expedition have turned to George Seaver's *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic* as the primary reference for Bowers' life, as we have seen.⁸² Until the acquisition of Bowers' papers by SPRI in 1985, Seaver's work was the only way in which Bowers' writings could be accessed. Indeed, for many years, Seaver appears to have been the only individual outside the Bowers family to have viewed his correspondence. 'Although Seaver used them, attitudes to history have changed since the 1930s', Anne Shirley – Polar Research Officer at the national Maritime Museum - is quoted as saying in 1985, 'and scholars may find things which he missed because he wasn't looking for them'.⁸³ In spite of the book's

⁷⁹ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 5 November 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/48, BJ, SPRI.

⁸⁰ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 5 December 1909, MS1505/1/1/3/73, BJ, SPRI.

⁸¹ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 7 April 1909, MS1505/1/1/2/61, BJ, SPRI.

⁸² Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*.

⁸³ *The Guardian*, 22 May 1985, p.3.

centrality to interpretations of Scott's last expedition, there has been almost no critical examination of Seaver's work until now.

Birdie Bowers contained relatively few passages about religion: 18 in total scattered throughout the book, with only 10 passages containing direct quotations from Bowers' letters on the subject of his faith.⁸⁴ Seaver is the only reference we have for Bowers' conversionary experience in 1902: 'One night on deck when things were at their blackest, it seemed to me that Christ came to me and showed me why we are here, and what the purpose of life really is.'⁸⁵ Seaver aligned Bowers' religious views with those of Edward Wilson. He wrote, for example, how there

must have been many points of contact between these two. But it was most probably in their unspoken thought that the tie was strongest, in the tacit recognition of a spiritual kinship, felt but not expressed, to which the word "religious" scarcely does justice but must serve for the want of a better. Wilson was the older both in years and depth and breadth of experience, but each must have known instinctively that the other shared the self-same incommunicable secret.⁸⁶

Here Seaver placed Wilson in a dominant position, reinforcing the notion of Bowers as subordinate. In fact, there is little evidence in either Bowers' or Wilson's writings to support the deep spiritual kinship Seaver sketches. When describing Bowers' service in the Royal Indian Marine aged 19, for example, Seaver wrote how 'many of those long sea-thoughts of Bowers, expressed in his earlier letters, sound like the very echo of Wilson's own'.⁸⁷ Yet the musings of Wilson to which Seaver referred bore little resemblance to the religious discussions in which Bowers engaged with his family between 1906 and 1909. It is also debatable whether Wilson really did have a superior 'depth and breadth of experience'. Bowers had travelled extensively, been

⁸⁴ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.7, p.8, p.32, p.40, p.42, p.47, p.48, p.54, pp. 72-73, p.95, p.96, p.97, pp.105-106, p.123, p.138, pp.150-151, p.228, p.262

⁸⁵ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.40.

⁸⁶ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.153.

⁸⁷ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.153.

exposed to the complexities of the Indian subcontinent, and been given command responsibilities.

Seaver's *Birdie Bowers* skipped over the years 1904 to 1907 in only six pages, with minimal reference either to Bowers' letters home or to the religious views he expressed. The following example shows how Seaver's editing simplified Bowers' controversial religious beliefs. Seaver described how Bowers' expressed his view of religion to his sister May:

I am sure you realise as I do the hopeless fallacy of all religious 'forms' and 'creeds' personally I continue to go to whatever Christian Church is handy simply to worship God in my own way, but do not identify myself with any beyond the fact that I am a Christian (would I could say I were a better one) - I wish for no further identity...so long as you are that, you are really no denomination.⁸⁸

This passage presented Bowers as a man with a simple Christian faith, bored by tiresome 'forms' and 'creeds', in keeping with the robust and cheerful character we have examined in previous chapters. The passage also encapsulates Bowers' identification of himself as a 'Christian', rather than the follower of any specific Movement.

Yet Seaver extracted this quotation from a longer letter, in which Bowers set out his controversial views on some Christian denominations:

I am reading Edie's diglot daily it is very remarkable in its explaining of many passages and on whole is most useful all the translations of the authorized versions (good men and true – all honour to them) were a little inclined to be biased by old beliefs, many of which were erroneous as some of the 'headings' in the authorized version show. Even Gods honoured in statements like Martin Luther and others including Calvin had ideas which we consider extraordinary. Never the less looking from their standpoint it is not difficult to understand. Luther was a devout Romanish Priest and everything he 'let go' was like the drawing of a tooth or worse – how noble his character must have been – little wonder it is that his doctrines were not more tailored with the blasphemous lies of the abominable harlot; she who then or until then had unbroken sway. I am so thankful old girl that you realise the hopeless fallacy of religious 'forms' and 'creeds' all of which are the 'oppressing' – say what

⁸⁸ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, pp.72-73.

we will about them – of the mother – the great whore – personally I continue to go to whatever Christian (evangelist) church is handy, simply to worship God in my own way but do not identify myself with any beyond the fact that I am a Christian (would that I could say I were a better one) I wish for no further identity – that is one thing that impressed me more than anything in Jesus all are alike, figuratively speaking Jews and Greek, circumcised and un- as long as you are his you are really no denomination thought temporarily blinded perhaps.⁸⁹

This dense and somewhat rambling quotation is a useful example of the confused nature of Bowers' religious views. Seaver edited out Bowers' more aggressive views about, for example, the 'blasphemous lies of the abominable harlot', which would have undercut his presentation of a brave, cheerful, subordinate. He also removed all direct references to the Watch Tower Movement. In keeping with his religious conversion in 1902 Bowers considered faith to be innate and internal, unencumbered by church structure and organisation.

Although his biography broadly followed the chronology of Bowers' life, Seaver quoted from multiple letters, often without dates and sometimes providing a retrospective view of events from other individuals. Often there is no delineation between Bowers' letters to his mother and to his sisters, and so passages may not only be disconnected in time, but also from the context of the letter and the individual it was meant for. This amalgamation has been described in the previous chapter. During his writing of *Edward Wilson of the Antarctic*, Seaver revealed his willingness to edit passages about religion to create a particular impression in a letter to Isobel Smith (wife of Reginald Smith, Apsley Cherry-Garrard's cousin). 'I agree that there is a little too much in his [Edward Wilson's] personal letters to her [Oriana Wilson], and also in his references to God' Seaver wrote, 'and I think that judicious elimination in both these would leave enough to give

⁸⁹ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 26 May 1907, MS1505/1/1/2/37, BJ, SPRI.

a strong clear indication of these fundamental feelings'.⁹⁰ This correspondence offers a rare glimpse of Seaver's editorial hand.

Bowers' sister Lady Maxwell exerted a powerful influence over the choice of material sent to Seaver. In his foreword, Seaver acknowledged 'the immense task of transcribing the bulk of the letters was undertaken by his sister', as we saw in chapter three, adding that 'the compilers' task of selecting and arranging extracts has been a happy one'.⁹¹ Lady Maxwell controlled the information Seaver received about her brother: 'thank you so much for your encouragement to go ahead with that chapter', wrote Seaver, 'even against your own judgement in the matter'.⁹²

Seaver eliminated any mention of Bowers' engagement with Charles Taze Russell's teachings from his biography. His decision seems likely to have been influenced by the controversies that surrounded the Watch Tower Movement between the wars. The failure of the 1925 prophecy and the questioning of the legitimacy of the Christmas festival further separated the Watch Tower Movement from other Christian groups.⁹³ By 1926 *The Times* was referring to the movement as one 'injurious to society' with its leaders as 'men with a distorted idea of Christianity', stating that

The vitality of the movement is ascribed to the orgiastic character of its meetings and partly the unrestricted ease with which the convert can attain dignity and standing in such contrast to the slow laborious degrees by which the adherent of a regular mission has to make his way to church membership.⁹⁴

The Manchester Guardian reports in more controversially,

Latterly it appears, Judge Rutherford has given an aggressive tone to his interpretations from prophecy. He finds the British Empire to be in truth the

⁹⁰ George Seaver to Isobel Smith, 9 February 1933, MS599/115/1-2: D, SPRI.

⁹¹ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.xxiii.

⁹² George Seaver to Lady Maxwell, 24 May 1938, MS1505/6/2/10, BJ, SPRI.

⁹³ Chryssides, *A to Z*, p.xlvii.

⁹⁴ *The Times* 9 July 1926, p.13

Empire of Satan symbolised in Revelation, and London to be the very Throne of the Beast .By this means the simple-minded American Ex-Judge has succeeded in upsetting a certain number of English people.⁹⁵

Given their earlier involvement with the Movement, it seems likely that May and Emily Bowers would have been aware of these controversies and were perhaps unwilling for Bowers to be associated with this later evolution of the movement. Although Seaver and Lady Maxwell omitted Bowers' discussions of Charles Taze Russell's teachings, occasional glimpses of his influence can be seen within the published biography.⁹⁶

4. *The Terra Nova and Bowers' Religious Faith*

Bowers regularly discussed religion between 1907 and 1909, but his correspondence from 1910 on the *Terra Nova* differed significantly from these earlier letters. He rarely mentioned religious matters during the expedition, usually confining himself to brief comments such as 'I feel that the Lord is with us'.⁹⁷ He referred either to earlier religious discussions or to the Watch Tower Movement only occasionally - in only 12 letters to his mother, and only two to his sister May - a striking contrast with their previous extensive correspondence on the subject.

While his meditations on faith markedly declined after 1909, Bowers still reflected on Taze Russell's teachings on three occasions. He mused on what might happen after death in one of these references alluding to Judgement Day:

⁹⁵ *The Manchester Guardian* 13 September 1926, p.8.

⁹⁶ Seaver, *'Birdie' Bowers*, p.94. 'He had other out-of-the-way interests and pursuits such as biblical history, and the architecture of the Great Pyramid.'

⁹⁷ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 29 November 1910, MS15051/1/2/105, BJ, SPRI.

If it is His will for me to slip over the narrow border which is so close to us daily you will know that in this narrow space of time it will be soon, very soon when we shall meet on the joyful tomorrow.⁹⁸

He continued this theme in a later letter,. ‘However old girl we must not be pessimistic’, he wrote to May in June 1909. ‘When the Son of Righteousness comes – then we shall see things that look dark - clearly. His coming as the end of the Gentile Age must certainly be very near.’⁹⁹

While many authors have recognised the influence of Bowers’ Christian beliefs on his bravery, none have connected his willingness to face death with his belief that the end of the world was close. The end of the ‘Gentile age’, which Bowers believed was ‘very near’ would herald the beginning of a new and wonderful Messianic era, so death was not to be feared. ‘Funny isn’t it, a sudden exit from this world seems to possess no very terrifying features’, he wrote a year before he sailed to the Antarctic.¹⁰⁰ Bowers’ belief that he would be reunited with his family in 1914 may have been a considerable comfort to him at the end. ‘We are justified by faith but that is only the beginning... I think I can join with all God's people in hoping for the present order of things to be overthrown and utterly obliterated’.¹⁰¹ For Bowers, the present world was ‘evil’ and a new age was to be welcomed. ‘There is no doubt that history is marching rapidly now and perhaps we are even as near the end of this present evil world as the Dawnists say’.¹⁰²

The change of tone and content in Bowers’ letters may have reflected his greater happiness on the *Terra Nova* than previous ships. He criticised earlier voyages when writing to Edie in December 1910 as the *Terra Nova* sailed south, describing ‘many times in the Loch Torridon and Cape Breton, particularly the

⁹⁸ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 26 November 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/101, BJ, SPRI.

⁹⁹ H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 13 June 1909, MS1505/1/1/2/69, BJ, SPRI.

¹⁰⁰ H. R. Bowers, 1 June 1909, MS1505/1/1/2/64, BJ, SPRI.

¹⁰¹ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 2 March 1909, MS1505/1/1/3/46, BJ, SPRI.

¹⁰² H. R. Bowers to M. Bowers, 1 June 1909, MS1505 1/1/2/64, BJ, SPRI.

former, when a glorious life was simply made unbearable ... I would go along (sic) way rather than meet or speak to 2/3rds of my brother officers of those ships'.¹⁰³

While David Crane emphasises Bowers' antipathy towards foreigners, here we see his disgust directed at 'brother officers' in the Royal Indian Marine. His negative experiences were ignored by Seaver and have never been discussed by scholars, but his unhappiness on certain ships seems likely to have further concentrated his attention on his faith and his family.

Few members of the *Terra Nova* commented on Bowers' religious beliefs and practices, a paucity that in part explains the limited attention that later historians have paid to his faith. Scott's journals made no specific mention of Bowers' religious beliefs. Instead, Scott focused throughout on Bowers' strength and character. A handful of passing comments by other members do suggest Bowers' hearty involvement in religious services: 'there was no end to the tunes known by Scott and Bowers', wrote Lashly,¹⁰⁴ while Charles Wright also stated how the 'port side choir [was] overpowered by efforts of Cherry who knows all the tunes and Birdie who knows all [the] words'.¹⁰⁵ But these passing comments are almost the only concrete observations on Bowers' religious beliefs and practices made by any of the crew of the *Terra Nova*. They appear to have been interpreted as the manifestations of his general enthusiasm, rather than indications of any deep religious faith.

Significantly, Apsley Cherry-Garrard also offered little direct comment on Bowers' personal faith in either his journals, his letters, or *The Worst Journey in the World*. 'Those who the Gods love die young', Cherry Garrard wrote. 'The Gods

¹⁰³ H. R. Bowers to E. Bowers 18 December 1910, MS1505/1/1/1/5, BJ, SPRI.

¹⁰⁴ William Lashly and Alec Robert Ellis, *Under Scott's Command: Lashly's Antarctic Diaries* (London: Gollancz, 1969), p.11, Thomas Griffith Taylor, *With Scott: The Silver Lining* (London: Smith Elder, 1916), p.254.

¹⁰⁵ Charles S Wright, *Silas: The Antarctic Diaries and Memoir of Charles S. Wright*, ed. Colin Bull and Pat F. Wright (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1993), p.156.

loved him if indeed it be benevolent to show your favourite a clear, straight, shining path of life, with plenty of discomfort and not a little pain, but with few doubts and no fears.’¹⁰⁶ Yet Bowers’ correspondence before the departure of the *Terra Nova* portrays a man besieged by religious doubts. In contrast, Cherry-Garrard’s tribute to Wilson commended ‘his courage, his faith, his steadfastness, above all his simplicity’.¹⁰⁷

Perhaps surprisingly, given his involvement with an organisation that focused on conversion through proselytization, there is also no evidence that Bowers ever attempted to convert his colleagues in the Antarctic, or to debate theology with them. Given the volume of testimonies left by the crew of the *Terra Nova*, it seems likely that Bowers kept his religious beliefs to himself, and restricted discussions of his spirituality to his personal correspondence. The lack of reference to faith in the Antarctic letters helps explain why historians primarily interested in the *Terra Nova* expedition have failed to notice Bowers’ engagement with Taze Russell’s teachings.

The President of the Royal Geographical Society, Major Lawrence Darwin, proposed a toast to Scott and his companions on the eve of the expedition. Darwin declared ‘they mean to do or die – that is the spirit in which they are going to the Antarctic.’¹⁰⁸ Bowers did not appear to have a ‘death wish’ - he frequently wrote about his successful return to his family, and reassured them that he would look after himself: ‘lastly I may say that knowing the difference of the South regions to those I

¹⁰⁶ Apsley Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey in the World*, New ed. / foreword by Paul Theroux. ed. (London: Picador, 2000), [1922] p.214.

¹⁰⁷ Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey*, p.lix.

¹⁰⁸ Max Jones, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.77.

have been used to I will not willingly put myself in any danger that can be avoided'.¹⁰⁹

Such statements open a final question for this thesis. After the deaths of Petty Officer Edgar Evans and Captain Oates, the three surviving men, Bowers, Scott and Wilson, marched within 11 miles of the 'One Ton' supply depot. Between 21 and 29 March 1912 they remained in their tent, although their food and fuel was exhausted. Bowers made plans to march alone to the depot, but did not do so and died alongside Scott and Wilson some time around 29 / 30 March 1912.¹¹⁰ Why did he not make a final attempt to get through to 'One Ton' depot? The previously ignored influence of Charles Taze Russell and the Watch Tower Movement helps explain his decision. Death held no fear for Bowers, as it was merely the beginning of a new life in which he would soon be reunited with his family in the hereafter.¹¹¹ This interpretation is surely more plausible than Roland Huntford's speculation that Scott 'persuaded' Bowers and Wilson 'to lie down with him and wait for the end, where the instinct of other men in like predicaments was to keep going and fall in their tracks'.¹¹² The independent-minded Bowers never shied away from what he felt was right. His decision to remain in the tent cannot be explained without an understanding of the centrality of religious faith to his life.

¹⁰⁹ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers 6 June 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/85, BJ, SPRI.

¹¹⁰ Jones, *Last Great Quest*, p.100, Robert Falcon Scott, *Journals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.412

¹¹¹ H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 9 April 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/82, BJ, SPRI, H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 6 June 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/85:BJ, SPRI, H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 10 July 1910, MS1505/1/1/3/91, BJ, SPRI, H. R. Bowers to E. W. Bowers, 28 August 1910, MS1505 1/1/3/93, BJ, SPRI, and 9 others.

¹¹² Roland Huntford, *Scott and Amundsen* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), p.525.

Conclusion

Bowers' letters offer more than simply information about his role on the *Terra Nova* expedition. They also give historians a unique opportunity to examine how Bowers imagined himself, illuminating the 'behaviour and emotional dispositions' of an individual.¹¹³

This chapter has explored Bowers' religious faith and his involvement with the teachings of Charles Taze Russell and the Watch Tower Movement. This Movement, which focused on daily bible study, grew in popularity during the years prior to the First World War. Bowers' family correspondence expressed a broader interest in the Movement in England and Scotland, revealing the success of Taze Russell's tours around the United Kingdom. Previous accounts of the *Terra Nova* expedition have either ignored or mis-represented this important aspect of Bowers' life. George Seaver's influential biography covered up Bowers' interest in Taze Russell, possibly under the direction of Lady Maxwell, keen to cover up her late brother's involvement with a Movement which had become increasingly extreme and controversial. Taze Russell's impact on the Bowers family suggests the influence of the Watch Tower Movement in Edwardian Britain deserves further study. Without an acknowledgement of the centrality of religious faith to Bowers any attempt to understand his decision to die with Scott and Wilson would be incomplete.

¹¹³ Michael Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity: The "War Generation" and the Psychology of Fear in Britain 1914-1950', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005), p.354, Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History Circa 1500-1950', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005).

Conclusion

This thesis has presented the first academic analysis of Henry Robertson ('Birdie') Bowers. Chapter one demonstrated how Scott's portrayal of Bowers in his journals published by Smith Elder as volume one of *Scott's Last Expedition* in 1913 powerfully influenced later representations. Scott focused on Bowers' positive characteristics of strength, reliability, and cheerfulness, characteristics echoed by Bowers' contemporaries on the expedition. Indeed, Scott's description can be traced through almost all subsequent narratives of the expedition. Scott considered 'little' Bowers of huge importance to him, but placed less emphasis on Bowers' unusual appearance than other team members. Commemorative representations of Bowers positioned him lower than Scott, Oates and Wilson in the hierarchy of heroes in the aftermath of the disaster.

Chapter two has shown that Scott's influence over representation of Bowers persisted in later expedition narratives during the 1920s and 30s, creating the two most important representations, Apsley Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey in the World* (1922) and Reverend George Seaver's 1938 biography, *Birdie Bowers of the Antarctic*. Granted access for the first time to Bowers' original correspondence Seaver subsequently became the unquestioned primary source for later texts. This thesis has shown that Seaver's works should be examined more critically, partly due to his editing, and partly because there may have been influence by Lady Maxwell through the selection from the family papers that she made available.

Chapter three is the first study to analyse Bowers' correspondence in detail, revealing a very different Bowers from that represented by Scott and those who followed him. It supports Martin Francis's complication of any straightforward 'flight

from domesticity' by middle class men in Edwardian Britain, by revealing the tension between a man who adventured to the South Pole but who also displayed a deep emotional investment in domestic life. In his letters to his sisters and his mother, Bowers comes through as a man deeply engaged in the minutiae of family life, who expressed complex ideas on subjects as wide ranging as sexuality, the role of women, the politics of taxation and the health of the empire.

Chapter four concludes by charting Bowers' extensive, peculiar, and hitherto undocumented personal engagement with religious faith and, in particular, with the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and the work of its founder Charles Taze Russell. The chapter revealed a much more complex character than previous representations. Bowers, whose actions, including his decision not to make an attempt to reach One Ton Depot but remain in the tent with Scott at the end, cannot be fully understood without an appreciation of his faith and his belief that the end of the world was close at hand.

This thesis has argued that Antarctic historians should pay more attention to the broader contexts that shaped men on expeditions such as the *Terra Nova*, revealing significant interplay between faith, manliness and identity in the period. Firstly, the work of scholars of the *Terra Nova* expedition has been conditioned by their primary focus on the Pole. The thesis has contributed to recent trends in the historiography of British masculinities by studying both public representations through the analysis of published texts, and the subjective experience of being male through the analysis of personal correspondence. In this aspect Bowers offers a valuable case study in how representations become fixed, and subsequently remain unchallenged. Secondly, the analysis of under explored personal correspondence of a well-known heroic figure reveals the importance of subjective

experience through autobiographical writings. In keeping with other historians examining the letters of men during the First World War, this thesis supports the emerging focus on the individual nature of masculinity. Thirdly, twentieth century historians must recognise the role of religion if they are to fully understand individuals such as Bowers. A more detailed appreciation of Bowers' faith provides a new perspective not only on his role in the final few months of the Terra Nova expedition, but more generally in charting the nature of religion in subjective masculine experiences.

This thesis concludes in 1939, but as noted in the introduction, representations of Bowers have continued to appear in film and television media post 1945, and these would merit further study. Further research is also required on the inter-relationship between religious beliefs, social class and masculinities.

My interest in Bowers was sparked by my desire to discover more about his personality and motivations. My research has revealed a much more fascinating and complex individual than represented by Scott, Seaver and others, offering a new perspective on one of the most recounted stories of the modern age.

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As many primary sources by Henry Bowers or about him were consulted as was possible. The bulk of primary source material relating to the expedition is held at the Scott Polar Research Institute. Some additional letters are held in private collections and could not be accessed. It was unfortunately not possible to gain permission from Dr David Wilson to view the Edward Wilson Archive, in Cheltenham. Papers and diaries relating to Kathleen Scott (Lady Kennett) are held at the Cambridge University Library but, after discussion with the Archivist, this was not felt to contain any relevant material.

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