

2 Symbolic FRAMEWORK





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SYMBOLS



SYMBOLS REPRESENT AND EDUCATE

A symbol is an image or a figure with a certain feature that enables it to represent an object, situation, concept or process. Every symbol comprises a signifier and a signified. The *signifier* is the perceptible image of something and the *signified* is the concept to which the signifier refers.

Scales, for example, are considered to be a symbol of justice: because their essential nature has to do with balance, they are taken to represent equity, which is essential for justice. The scales are the signifier and justice is the signified.

The language we use to communicate with each other, for example, is a system of symbols. The words represent realities and enable us to identify, understand and relate them, but they are not realities in themselves. Our ability to function on the basis of a symbolic system enables us to mentally construct or represent reality, even when the content to which the signifier refers is not actually present.

The fleur-de-lys is the symbol of Scouting. Its design varies from one national association to another, and derives from the ancient maps in which it figured in the compass rose pointing North. In the words of Baden-Powell, it represents the "good path that all Scouts should follow".



On an educational level, the existence of a symbol helps to build up the momentum needed to move towards becoming something with which we identify. A symbolic framework encourages young people to look a little further than what they see before their eyes. It inspires them to make the ordinary extraordinary, the impossible possible, and the imperceptible something that can be felt intuitively. It helps them to see, think and feel things and situations that they may not usually notice.

A number of conditions are necessary to bring about this transformation:



The signifier has to correspond –or be “in tune”– with the signified. There must be no ambiguity. For example, some supposed Scout “traditions” which some Units have unwittingly or carelessly added to the original symbol –such as the overuse of Amerindian images or emblems of medieval chivalry– conspire against the identity of the symbol, which the founder quite clearly indicated was *exploration*.



The signifier must be relevant to the psychological needs of the age group. A girl playing with a doll may be a positive identity symbol, since she is identifying with one possible life model and the potential role of motherhood. But an adult woman playing with a doll would be a sign of regressive identification, since the game bears no relation to the normal development needs of a person her age. For the same reason, the symbol of the fairy tale of the *Free People of the Wolves*, of Kipling’s *Jungle Books*, cannot be used beyond the age of 10 or 11, since by that stage children are changing their form of thought.



The signifier needs to be continually present to evoke the signified. For seven centuries, for the Spanish the image of Santiago de Compostela riding into the wind on his white charger evoked the fight to recover their land from its invaders. The symbol of the Scout Section has lost clarity and force in some Scout Units, either due to empty routine or because the leaders attribute little importance to it. The symbol will not have the strength needed to inspire styles of behaviour if it is used only occasionally as a jaded reference in formal celebrations.

THE SYMBOLIC FRAMEWORK OF THE SCOUTS: EXPLORING NEW TERRITORIES WITH A PEER GROUP



The symbolic framework that the Scout Method proposes for young people of 11 to 15 years of age –exploring new territories with a peer group– is closely related to the needs that they naturally experience and express in their own activities at this age.

It is built on three essential urges which are characteristic of this age group:



The taste for exploration.



Interest in taking over a territory.



Belonging to a peer group.



These concerns are also to be seen in other age groups, but in early adolescence they are particularly important.



THE ROLE OF THE SYMBOLIC FRAMEWORK

The symbolic
framework is a referential

environment that underpins the shared life in the Patrol and the Unit,
helping to make everything that we do consistent.

It offers educational advantages
from several different perspectives:



Encouraging imagination and
developing sensitivity



One of the virtues of symbols is that they give things different meanings from those they apparently or usually have. The testimonies of explorers, discoverers and scientists are far apart in space and time and we have little possibility of reproducing them. However, they broaden our horizons and serve to demonstrate that self-fulfilment is achievable. The *signifier* of these testimonies is the possibility of building *significance* in one's own reality. Reality thus takes on a dimension that it might not otherwise have, or a dimension that one might not have the sensitivity to perceive without the help of the symbol.



Strengthening the sense of belonging to a community
that is pulling in the same direction

The purpose of Scouting is to help the young people become self-reliant, supportive, responsible and committed people able to participate in building a better world. This purpose is implicit and, of course, is not likely to figure among the interests of a young person when he or she decides to join Scouting, but it is made explicit through the symbol.

For a young person involved in Scouting, exploring new territories is the *signifier* with respect to the search for new dimensions for his or her personality. And the group of friends is the signifier of the value of peers at this age and, consequently, of the *significance* of their Scout Patrol.





Giving the leaders an attractive way to present Scout values and helping the young people to identify with them

To really assimilate values, we need to see them exemplified by others who have been able to embody them in their own lives. There is nothing more powerful than a person living by what he or she really thinks. These people are the real *heroes*. When there are no heroes, young people have no choice but to make do with *idols*. From a hero we draw inspiration, but an idol only serves to imitate their appearance. A hero signifies something that is permanent, while an idol merely encourages imitators. A hero makes people free, an idol enslaves them. A hero never fails, unless he or she is idolatrized – or made into an idol. Sooner or later an idol always proves to be a disappointment.

In Scout education, the example of people who have lived in accordance with their principles is used to present and underpin the values contained in the Law and to create enthusiasm about doing a little more with our own lives.



Giving cohesion to the activities

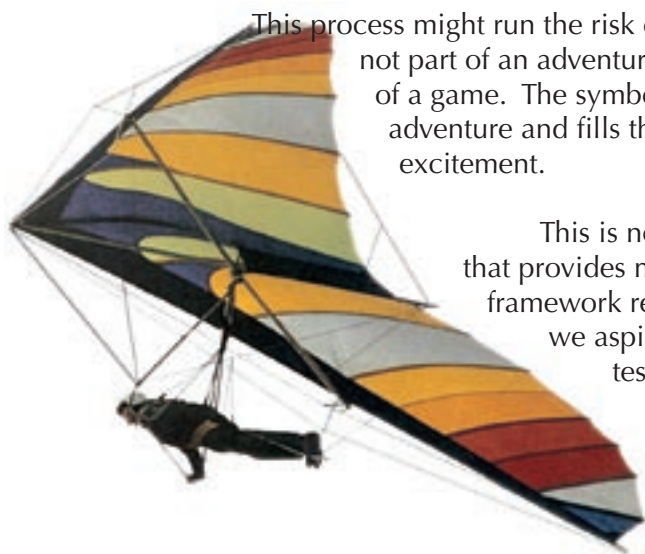
In a system of activities in which the young people are asked what they would like to do before a programme is prepared, that programme often ends up consisting of activities that are very different in nature. The presence of a common signifier –exploring new territories with a peer group– connects and unifies the meaning of everything that we do.



Encouraging the achievement of personal objectives and making them important to the young people

As we will see later, the gradual and sequential accumulation of personal experiences from the activities leads to the achievement of the objectives proposed by the Method. The young people *personalize* these objectives to adapt them to their needs and aspirations.

This process might run the risk of being dry and scholastic, if it were not part of an adventure that is experienced in the manner of a game. The symbolic framework provides this sense of adventure and fills the life of a Unit with enthusiasm and excitement.



This is not a trivial game, however, or a pastime that provides mere sensations. As the symbolic framework represents the type of man or woman we aspire to be, it is directly related to the testimonies of the heroes we meet, to the values of the Scout Law and to the behaviour through which each young person shows that he or she has achieved the proposed objectives.

THE TASTE FOR EXPLORATION



DISCOVERING NEW WORLDS

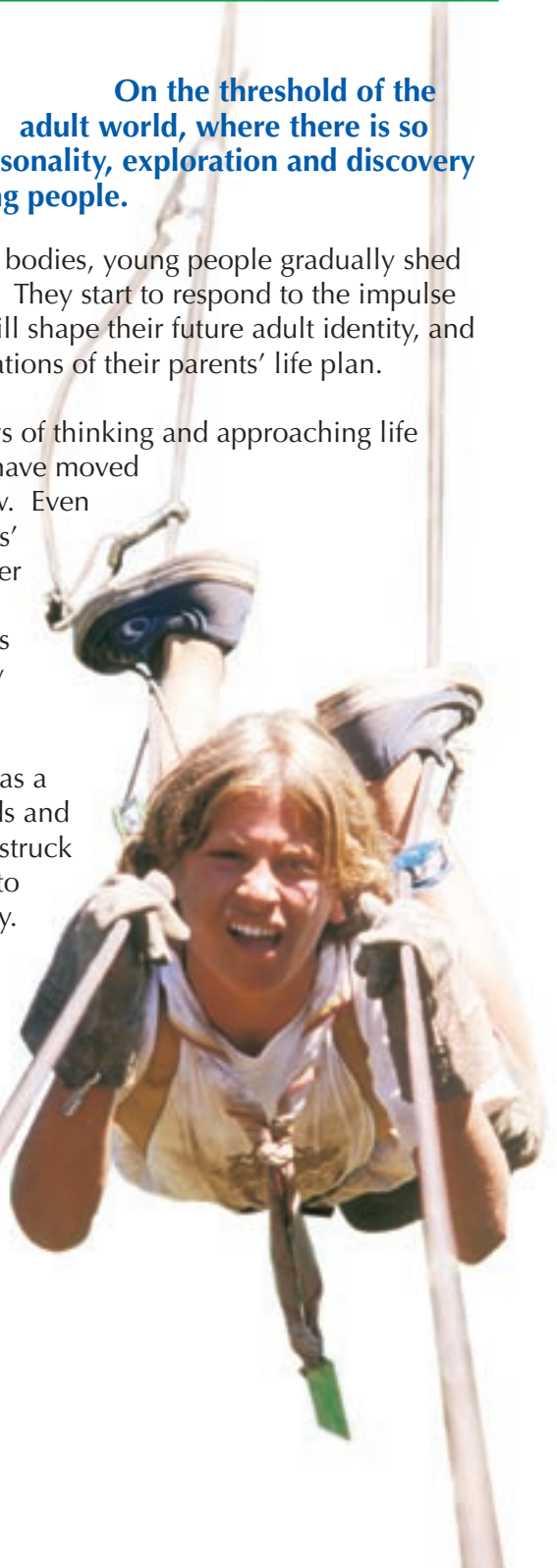
On the threshold of the adult world, where there is so much to discover, including one's own personality, exploration and discovery are particularly relevant in the life of young people.

Amazed by the transformations in their bodies, young people gradually shed the childhood securities acquired in the home. They start to respond to the impulse to seek new sources of identification, which will shape their future adult identity, and which may or may not coincide with the aspirations of their parents' life plan.

In any case, this gradual change in ways of thinking and approaching life means that the frame of reference which they have moved within until now suddenly becomes too narrow. Even though they may later concur with their parents' plans, for now these young people need broader horizons to enable them to express their new and greater abilities. There is nothing that gives more pleasure at this age than discovering new things and being surprised by the unexpected.

The Scout Method proposes adventure as a means to let these tremendously dynamic needs and abilities develop. This is no longer gazing awestruck from the outside at things that have happened to other people. Now it is time for their own story.

An inspirational background based on an imaginary world is no longer enough for this kind of experimentation. It is no longer enough to have fictional characters and groupings who are attributed almost absolute values to exemplify types of behaviour and models of society. Now we have to get into the real world, the world of real live events and people of flesh and blood, the world in which history actually took place and the reality that is happening

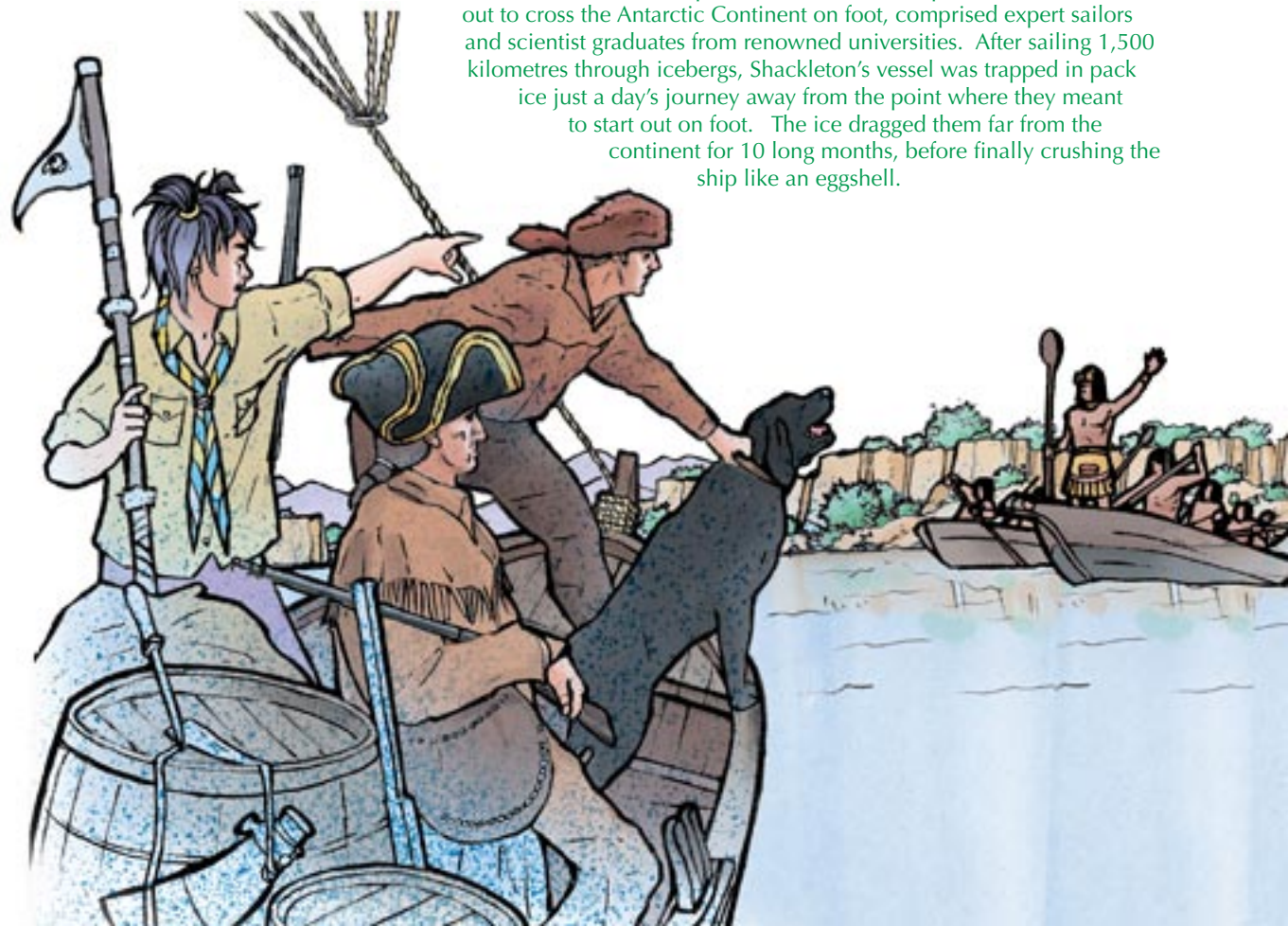


The jungle world that was offered to Cubs during their childhood, with its imaginary characters who left the first prints on the trail, is now replaced by the attraction of the great explorations and their exemplary leaders. These explorations and their protagonists not only arouse enthusiasm, but also help to develop new identifications, offering an example that can be emulated here and now.

And so we pack our rucksacks and set off, like in the great explorations, heading for the unknown. The normal camping expedition comes to represent much more than it really is, or much more than it seems to us as adults, and it takes on a new significance in the young mind and spirit. A young person who sets off on an excursion is building a bridge between his or her reality and the adventures of the great explorers. They are following, for example, the route of Lewis and Clark, who set off in May 1804 at the request of President Jefferson, on a historic journey up the Missouri River, in an attempt to find a route to link the centre of North America and the Pacific Ocean.

Just as Meriwether Lewis, William Clark and the other members of their valiant team travelled for almost two and a half years up the tumultuous river, bearing the rain, wind, dangerous currents, sand banks, the threat of hostile natives, hunger and snake and mosquito bites, a young man or woman will face challenges on any excursion. These may be more in proportion to their strength than those faced by Lewis and Clark, but not for that any less attractive or exciting. And like Lewis and Clark, they will grow in the attempt and live through episodes that will make an indelible impression on their young lives.

The potential discomforts of life in the outdoors are almost nothing compared with the legendary 1914 to 1916 voyage of Ernest Shackleton and his 27 men. The Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, which set out to cross the Antarctic Continent on foot, comprised expert sailors and scientist graduates from renowned universities. After sailing 1,500 kilometres through icebergs, Shackleton's vessel was trapped in pack ice just a day's journey away from the point where they meant to start out on foot. The ice dragged them far from the continent for 10 long months, before finally crushing the ship like an eggshell.



The expedition survived for another 10 months in the Antarctic with a bare minimum of equipment, camping and walking hundreds of miles on massive ice floes, or sailing in fragile crafts they had been able to salvage from their ship, eating raw animal entrails to fend off scurvy. No one had the remotest idea where they were, until their endurance paid off and they were rescued at last by Pilot Pardo and the tugboat *Yelcho* of the Chilean Navy.

The example of Shackleton and his men is not intended to place the young people in a situation that requires them to run the same kind of risks. Rather, this episode is an example of how to resolve difficulties with fortitude and integrity, as symbolized by the name of their ship, the *Endurance*.



Ocean Camp, built on an ice floe 6 metres thick with equipment rescued from the ship's wreckage.



Officer of the *Endurance* H.T. Hudson, who became known for his skill in trapping penguins.



Sir Ernest Shackleton (1874-1922), leader of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition (1914-1916).



EXPANDING PHYSICAL SKILLS

Looking for new trails, treading paths that were previously unknown, climbing a hill, crossing a gully, scrambling down a river bank, sleeping out under the stars, preparing one's own food, getting shelter and finding safety are activities that enable us to use our body to discover the world, explore our own possibilities, test emerging strengths, develop new certainties and gain self-confidence.

There are many outstanding testimonies of physical effort in the great explorations of the Americas.

In 1799 the great German naturalist, geographer and historian Alexander von Humboldt stepped onto the Venezuelan shore. For 5 years, in the company of the French naturalist Bonpland, he explored the plains, travelled up the Orinoco and then reached the Black River and the Equatorial jungle via the River Casiquiare. They were in Cuba and Colombia, they sailed up the River Magdalena to reach Quito, from where they headed towards the Andes, climbing the Chimborazo. They crossed the mountains, studied the Upper Marañón, returned to Lima and visited Mexico in 1804, before returning to Europe.

Before, during and after Humboldt's travels through the Americas, many other researchers explored the continent in extremely adverse conditions. José Celestino Mutis was a doctor from Seville settled in Bogota, who mounted an expedition in the 18th century with learned men and artists who prepared over 24,000 files on the flora of the Americas, representing almost 5,000 species. The library he left in Bogota was considered by Humboldt to be "better than the best in the world".

Francisco José de Caldas, a learned Colombian born in Popayán, came to be a great friend of Mutis. Caldas first presented himself to Mutis with a train of 14 mules weighed down with trunks containing his travelling museum. In Caldas' own words, the many and varied objects, descriptions and observations from his travels included "...a respectable herbarium of five or six thousand skeletons dried amidst the trials and speed of the trip...".

Antonio Raimondi was a native of Milan, an Italian botanist, chemist, geographer, geologist, physicist, meteorologist, traveller, naturalist, historian, teacher, illustrator, painter, archaeologist and anthropologist, but above all an explorer. He began his scientific explorations in Peru in the mid-19th century. His collections include 595 anthropological pieces; 11,575 zoological items; 590 botanical exhibits; and 7,513 fossils, minerals and rocks; in addition to the 20,000 species in his herbarium. Addressing the young people of Peru, to whom his work is dedicated, he writes that "trusting in my own enthusiasm I have undertaken a task greatly superior to my strengths. Help me. Call a cease-fire in your political passions and devote yourselves instead to discovering your country and its immense resources."

These and many other testimonies of exploration in the service of humanity would not have been possible without an effort on the part of their protagonists to develop their physical potential to the maximum.

This dimension of exploration coincides perfectly with the need of boys and girls of this age to develop their physical abilities!

It was on the basis of this educational coincidence that Baden-Powell founded the Scouts and gave them their name. The word "scout" means *explorer*, the one who goes out in front, the one who brings news of what lies ahead, as Humboldt, Mutis, Caldas, Raimondi and so many others who explored and brought the first knowledge of the Americas did in their time.





The urge to develop physical potential also underpins the importance that the Scouts attribute to life in the outdoors. Exploration means, above all, going out, getting going, acting, being on the move, travelling, searching. “Explore” comes from the Latin *explorare*, which means to conduct reconnaissance. And “adventure” comes from *venire*, which means movement towards a specific place.

For most young people today, whose prospect of adventure is reduced to the television screen or video games, the testimony of the great explorers enhances the ability to dream, opens up new horizons, and enriches the world of their games. It is made real through activities and projects, and beckons them to act, to set things in motion, to discover the potential of their own body.



EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE AND USING INGENUITY

the expression “explore” as a synonym of “investigate”.

As we have seen in these testimonies, exploration also tries the intellect. Indeed we often use

Likewise, the word “scout” does not only mean “explorer”. Its origins go back to the Latin word *auscultare*, meaning to listen, examine or scrutinize.

What a magnificent opportunity for young people and their emerging capacities for abstract thought, deduction, questioning and generalization!

No exploration is free of problems or conflicts, and no explorer can do without the ability to solve conflict by means of ingenuity. And ingenuity needs knowledge. For exploration to be relevant, mental development and growth are required as the exploration progresses.





At 6.00 a.m. Greenwich Mean Time, on Sunday 21 March 1999, Bertrand Piccard and Brian Jones became the first air balloonists to fly non-stop round the world, after piloting their balloon for 19 days, 21 hours and 55 minutes, covering a distance of 41,920 kilometres. This would not have been possible without their amazing 55-metre high balloon, which held a pressurized cabin 6 metres long, with the latest technology supported from the Earth by meteorological equipment which enabled them to predict airstreams 3 days in advance.

And it is not only in the technological era that exploration has required intellectual development. Everything would have been even more difficult for Lewis and Clark on the Missouri River without the help of Sacagawea, a young Shoshone Indian who joined the expedition with her French husband. As she knew the land, she served as a guide, and as a speaker of other languages, she was able to serve as interpreter with the Indians. Knowing the herbs and fruits of her native land, she was able to prepare medicines and food for her expedition companions. Sacagawea herself would have been in dire straits had Lewis not had the skills to assist in the difficult birth of her son John Baptist.

The key lies in turning knowledge into science and technique. The application of appropriate science confers legitimacy and value on the exploration. All kinds of feats are seen nowadays, but without science these cannot be described as exploration; without science no feat is more than random wanderings. It would be as if Scouts camped without their pioneering techniques, ropes and knots and without devising clever ways to protect the environment. Or as if we were to describe a group of friends out on a picnic as “explorers”.



TAKING A DIFFERENT VIEW OF LIFE

Exploring not only implies new lands, physical exertion and the discovery of science. It also means acquiring new dimensions from which to observe everyday facts in a different way.



After each expedition or camp, parents are surprised to see their children come back slightly different. From these new lands they come back a little more autonomous, a little better able to enter into a discussion between equals, and also transformed, with a different look in their eyes. This new way of seeing everyday things is so important that in his long work *In Search of Time Lost*, the French writer Marcel Proust claims that “the

only real voyage of discovery is not going to new places, but seeing them with new eyes”.

In 1924, when he was 83 years old, the Frenchman Clement Ader came to be recognised as the first person to venture into aviation, despite the fact that in 1873 –30 years before the Wright brothers became famous– he had already manufactured a mechanical bird which he had managed to raise from the ground. As a child others had laughed at him because he would spend hours watching birds in flight. When he began his research he travelled to Strasbourg to study the flight of the storks and to Algeria to observe the great African birds of prey. In 1881 when, with great trepidation, he mounted the first plane-building workshop in the Parisian street of Assomption, he had a huge cage installed with birds to serve as models for the workers.



In 1891, when he was just 18 years old, Santos Dumont, a Brazilian forerunner of aviation, hung an automobile from a tree in the middle of a Paris square, to see if the engine would vibrate when suspended in the air. Finding that it did not, he installed gasoline engines in aerostatic balloons. He came to build 6 balloons and 8 dirigibles or airships. In 1906, he managed to fly 120 metres at a height of 6 metres, in an aeroplane of his own construction, which he baptized “14-bis”.



PUTTING ALL WE HAVE INTO A COMMITMENT

Although it almost goes without saying, we should mention that **exploring is** muscle. Physical and mental exploration bring with them the development of character, the expression of feelings and emotions, social sensibility and a spiritual quest.

When Neil Armstrong –a Scout, as Baden-Powell had predicted that the first man to walk on the moon would be– landed there on 20 July 1969, he was testing all the values that had tempered his character.

Annie Smith Peck, an American Latin teacher who conquered the 6,768-metre Northern Summit of the Huascarán in the Peruvian Andes at the age of 59 in 1908, did not begin her mountaineering career until the age of 45. She was not an expert, but what she lacked in experience she made up for with her considerable tenacity. She reached heights that no other woman had reached before her, and her last climb was Mount Madison in New Hampshire, when she was 82 years old.

When a group of roped climbers ascend by their fingertips to a narrow ledge, each step is an adventure and also a gesture of love and solidarity with the other climbers who are tied to them by fragile strings.

This certificate is proudly displayed in the World Scout Bureau. It reads: "I certify that this World Scout Badge was carried to the surface of the moon on man's first lunar landing. Apollo XI, July 20, 1969. Neil A. Armstrong, Crew Commander, Apollo XI".

Aldrin and Armstrong moved with a hopping gait over the moon's surface, amazing millions of people who were following their every move on television. The image of the moonwalk came to be an icon of the 20th century and symbolizes the human spirit of exploration.





When, in her rudimentary laboratory in Paris, the Polish scientist Marie Curie was exposed to the radiation that would eventually cause her death, as well as exploring the mysteries of science she no doubt thought of the lives her discovery would help to save. At the age of 56 she wrote, "We cannot hope to build a better world if we do not improve individuals. With this in mind, each of us must work on improving ourselves, accepting our share of responsibility in the wider life of humanity."

Cándido Mariano Da Silva Rondón spent years exploring the Brazilian interior, setting up telegraph lines in vast zones with no roads, populated by Amerindians alone. His expeditions clocked up over 40,000 kilometres, which is equivalent to the distance round the earth. Despite the merits of this gigantic work of progress, Rondón was better known for his respect for indigenous cultures and his spirited defence of their rights and way of life, which earned him the name "Marshal of Peace", by which he is known to this day. His motto was "...to die, if necessary, but never to kill". There are Scout Groups named after him in almost all the regions of Brazil.

When Piccard and Jones had completed their journey round the world and were about to land their balloon on the sands of Egypt, Piccard wrote "...for now I let the biting cold of the night remind me that we have not landed yet, that we are still experiencing one of the most beautiful moments of our lives. The only way I can make this moment last is to share it with others. We were lucky, thanks to the winds of Providence. Let the winds of hope keep blowing around the world".

All these testimonies show that exploring is an activity which combines with other human activities to celebrate the human spirit and involve all the facets of the personality.



MAKING EXPLORATION A PERMANENT QUEST

Exploring is not just setting off. Coming back is also part of the adventure. Once the trial is over, the path found, we come back and share what we have learned. From the Latin word *venire* is also derived *adventus*, which means arrival.

But after being back at base and sharing the experience for a while, something inside urges us to set off again. *Adventus* gives way to *explorare*. And suddenly we find ourselves on the eve of a new journey, be it into the depths of a new idea, the intricacies of a different culture or our own interior. We need it to rebuild ourselves, to grow, to be more, to keep living.

Robert D. Ballard, a scientist of the Mystic Exploration Institute of Connecticut, who found the spot where the famous Titanic sunk, said "life is an epic journey and an epic journey you begin with a dream or concept, something crystallizes in your mind and then you have to prepare for it. You have to go and assemble your Argonauts to do it".

Ballard, who describes his work like those old legendary quests, adds, "the spirit of exploration is an integral part of a human being". And he concludes, "we are all explorers. How could anyone spend their life looking at a door without ever opening it?"

Exploring comes naturally to young people. It came naturally to them before the Scout Method existed and even if it did not exist they would still explore. The value of the Method lies in the fact that it makes the most of this characteristic of the young spirit and turns exploration into a motivation, into a symbol, a style and a passion which mingles with our search for the origins, nature and destiny of humankind.



INTEREST IN TAKING OVER A TERRITORY



GAINING GROUND

Exploration is closely linked to adventure and adventure to the search for new territories or spaces, which always mean new dimensions and perspectives for life.

In the ancient expeditions, with much of the world still to be discovered, exploration was associated with the quest for new territories. Practically all explorations were marked by this purpose.

This was what drove Erik Thorvaldson, better known as “Erik the Red” to leave behind the fjords and shores of Norway in the 10th century and head off into the freezing Atlantic. His fragile vessel was no more than 5 metres wide, and he had no compass other than the sun, the moon and the stars. At the age of barely 20, Erik organized the flight of his family, ruined by the taxes of the kinglet Haarfager, who had eliminated almost all of the Norwegian kings and suppressed the rights of land-owners.

Erik and his family reached the “land of ice”, or Iceland, where the Swedish Viking Floki had arrived before him and where a colony was later established. But Erik set off again, this time alone, heading always North West, further and further towards the eternal ice of the Polar Circle.



In an immense ocean with neither day nor night, under a pale sun that never set, he finally reached a verdant coast, where he spied forests of willow trees and birch, blackberries laden with fruit and pastures perfect for raising cattle. Erik called this place “Green-land”.

About the year 1000, Leif Erikson, Erik’s son, who had inherited his father’s temperament, assembled 40 young men and built a fleet of vessels, in which they set sail South West into the Atlantic. They discovered coasts of leafy woodlands which they called “Markland” or “land of wood”, and other lands further south that they named “Vinland” or “country of wine”. After a year’s travel they returned to Greenland to announce their discoveries, but the inhabitants were not enthusiastic about the new lands.

Modern historians accept that Leif reached the coasts of Nova Scotia in what is Canada today, and therefore acknowledge that he was the first European to reach the American Continent, 500 years before Christopher Columbus.



History is strewn with epic explorations like this one, each of which took the dream of one man or one people and forged it into the means to appropriate a new territory.

MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE



Thanks to the tenacity of generations of explorers, there is barely an unknown or unnamed place left on the Earth. We know what there is in the depths of the ocean and on the summit of the highest mountain. Maps register the arid rocks of the desert and the glaciers of the coldest Polar Regions. Not even the Earth’s gravitational force has prevented explorers from penetrating outer space.

Now that the most far-flung places have become familiar to us, the nature of expeditions has changed. Now the challenge is not to discover unknown lands, but to understand the planet with its climate and its living beings.

For millions of years, ecosystems have been delicately balanced. Exploration in itself does not alter them. But when men emigrate to newly discovered regions, they cause permanent changes. The explorations of bygone times showed our ancestors the marvels of the Earth and they passed their testimony on to us. It is our duty to preserve these marvels for future generations. We live in the epoch of the exploration of new dimensions of life on our planet.

Explorers have visited remote tropical jungles, but scientists still know very little about the forest “canopy” –the layer of foliage 30 metres above the forest floor– for example. Most of the plant and animal species that live there have not even been named or identified yet. However, commercial development destroys almost 150,000 square kilometres of forest every year.



It may seem as though little remains to be discovered in the Amazon, but in fact scientific research is only just beginning –with great difficulty– to delve into the forest’s natural recycling system, its soil and water, its development and its insect life.

The Antarctic has been explored and is apparently well documented, but the 3.5-kilometre thick ice-cap is a massive, almost untapped database, with much to tell us about how the Earth’s climate and atmosphere have evolved over the last 160,000 years.

The satellites which circle the Earth at a height of 900 kilometres are no longer a novelty, but minute-by-minute they send us signals which computers convert into high-precision photographs that can be used to map the remotest of regions, locate mineral resources and detect pollution and crop infestations.

The exploration of the deserts dates back a long way, and one in eight of the Earth’s inhabitants live in desert or low-rainfall areas, but the scientific study of these areas is only recent. More than a million square kilometres of fertile land turns to desert every 5 years. Today’s challenge is not to explore these deserts, but to investigate what we can do to reverse the desertification process as soon as possible.





THE ADVENTURE OF GROWING UP

Be it on the prow of a Viking ship, trying to spot new lands, or looking through a microscope to decipher the mysteries of a single cell, down the centuries exploration has always been the fruit of the same spirit of adventure. Without that spirit there can be no new territories and no new dimensions to life.

Left blind and deaf by scarlet fever when she was 19 months old, by the age of just 13 the American writer Helen Keller had mastered German, could translate Latin, had some knowledge of Greek and was beginning to speak French. The “new territory” of her life consisted of substituting sight and sound for a world of tactile sensations and some taste and smell. This tangible world of volumes and shapes, of sensations and smells, enabled her to study, learn, communicate, write, love and devote a great part of her life to others like herself. This woman, who is known and admired throughout the world, wrote from her own experience in the shadows “...life is an adventure or it is nothing at all”.

For John Dewey, an American philosopher who has strongly influenced modern education, the test of life lay in the adventure of growth. In his book *“Reconstructing Philosophy”*, Dewey states that the objective of life is not perfection as a final goal, but the “constant process of perfection, maturity and refinement”. This process will always be an adventure and will always mean exploring new territories, dimensions and perspectives.

An eloquent testimony of the exploration of new

dimensions was passed down to us by the Mexican poet and humanist Sister Juana Inés de la Cruz, who came to be one of the most outstanding figures of 17th century Latin American literature. In 1667, at the age of 16, she abandoned the life of the Court of the Viceroy of New Spain to join a Carmelite convent. As she herself stated, only the monastic life could offer her the opportunity to carry out her intellectual purposes. To be able to write her beautiful poetic works, she had to vindicate the equality of educational opportunities for women, a territory strictly reserved for men in her time.





DISCOVERING ONESELF AND FORMING ONE'S OWN PERSONALITY

The spirit of adventure symbolized by the appropriation of new territories and dimensions is clearly expressed in the urges of young people. And if it is not expressed, it is latent. Getting it to develop is simply a question of motivation or changing conditioning factors that are usually inherent in the surroundings.

Like the explorers, boys and girls of this age continually turn their spirit of adventure towards gaining new territories or dimensions, as if the act of building a new dominion was a reflection or a projection of the desire to discover oneself and build one's own personality.



Signs of appropriation of new territories begin to appear naturally in family life, sooner or later, according to the educational criteria of the parents. Having a special closet for keeping "their" things, having their own house key, not being interrupted or checked on when they are with their friends, having a more flexible

timetable, having a room to themselves if possible, sleeping over at a friend's house and having a weekly allowance may seem like trivial things, but they nevertheless mean stepping over an existing boundary and entering "new territory". They are marks of autonomy or, at least, a recognition of independence that affirm one's own image and personality.

Unlike school, which always seems to discover the youthful need for "new territory" too late, the Scout programme of activities is a purposefully inexhaustible source of new dimensions.

Life in the Unit, organized by the youngsters without any manipulation by the leaders; the “secrets” of the Patrol, jealously kept in the Patrol Record Book; the Patrol’s meeting place or “corner”, which is exclusive to each Patrol; expeditions to diverse far away or new places; and facing individual and group responsibilities that have never been given to them before, are just some of the new territories and dimensions that give them the opportunity to explore and get to know themselves, gradually define their identity and become part of the world.

The new territories of girls and boys today will probably never be as threatening as the coast of Greenland was a thousand years ago for the solitary Erik in his fragile boat, nor will they demand the precision required to interpret a satellite signal, nor the kind of sacrifices that Hellen Keller had to make. But what is important is that they are just as significant for boys and girls and that from the example of those great explorers, they can draw the strength and the values they need to enter and deal with these new dimensions.

The Scout Method not only opens frontiers to new territories but also implies assigning a new meaning to familiar ones. As young people grow, these new territories will become ever more challenging. This is the adventure of growth of which Dewey spoke.

There is no need to fear the educational use of their powers of imagination. As Piaget showed, at this age young people have no difficulty in conceiving abstract spaces with no link whatsoever to concrete reality. There is time enough for total realism. Besides, who among us has not been shaped by the promises of our imagination?

The great English writer William Shakespeare said, “What is of interest is not the night itself, but dreams that we dream always, in all places, at any time of the year, awake or asleep.” And Goethe added, “Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, magic and power in it.”

This is the impulse we are talking about when we say that one of the urges that drives young people is to take over territory. What is special about Scouting is that it turns this urge into a lifestyle and an educational strategy.



BELONGING TO A PEER GROUP



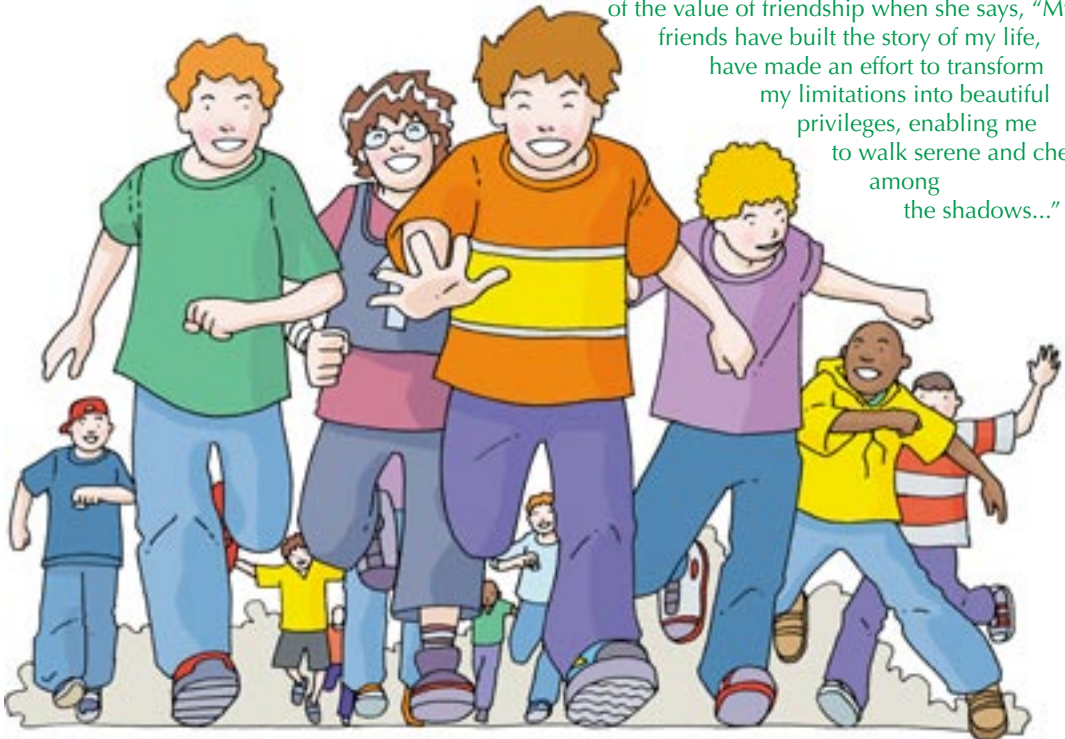
FRIENDS BUILD OUR INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

Friendship is one of our commonest feelings and virtues, and it is one of the many different kinds of expressions of love. It is not erotic or filial love, neither is it passion. It is disinterested love that springs up in our relationship with some people –not all, or even many– based on a certain identity that we establish with them.

Freely given affection is not a duty since –like love– it cannot be given to order. Personal affection is free of envy, it is reciprocal and leads to a sense of community, sharing, and fidelity. And it grows with time.

Anne Sullivan, who had a sad and difficult childhood, and who had her sight restored by a series of operations, was Hellen Keller's teacher and dear friend for over 40 years. She was instrumental in helping Hellen to overcome her blindness and deafness. Maria Montessori called her "creator of a soul", also exclaiming, "They call me a pioneer, but *she* is the pioneer!" Indeed, in the education of Hellen Keller, Anne Sullivan was twenty years ahead of the great Italian educator in applying the principle of encouraging self-education on the part of children. Hellen Keller herself speaks

of the value of friendship when she says, "My friends have built the story of my life, have made an effort to transform my limitations into beautiful privileges, enabling me to walk serene and cheerful among the shadows..."



Aristotle said that “without friendship life is a mistake” and Raïssa Maritain, writing about the friendship between the French Christian Humanists of the first half of the twentieth century, adds that “our friends form part of our lives and our lives explain our friendships.”

If we think about it, the experience of Raïssa Maritain is not very different from the experiences we all have. Any one of us could see our life as part and fruit of a community of friends. We build ourselves through sharing with our friends, loving them and learning from them, often borne up by them.

When Meriwether Lewis sought a companion to co-direct the exploration of the Missouri River, he wrote to his friend William Clark, who complemented him perfectly, “If there is anything ... which would induce you to participate with me in the fatigues, dangers and honours [of the journey], believe me there is no man on earth with whom I should feel equal pleasure in sharing them as with yourself.”

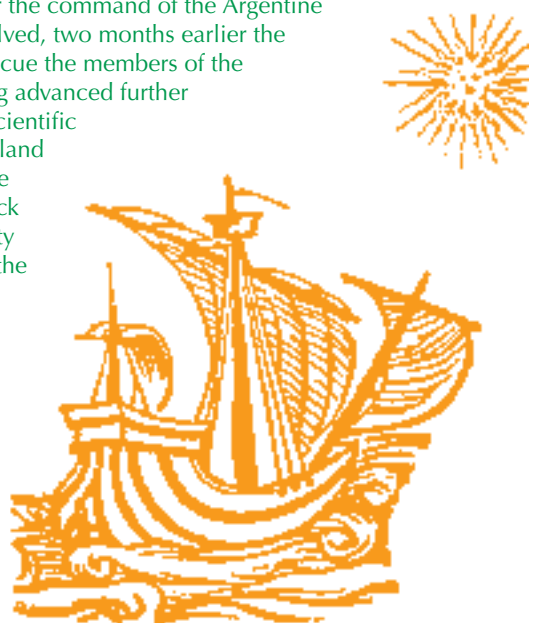
Clark, who had spent a great deal of time on the frontier of Ohio and Kentucky, learning to fight and to negotiate with the Indians, build refuges in the undergrowth and find trails in unknown lands, was four years older than Lewis. He was less educated, but had much more practical experience and a firm and resolute character. He replied immediately to his friend’s invitation, saying, “This is an undertaking fraught with many difficulties, but my friend I do assure you that no man lives with whom I would prefer to undertake such a trip than yourself.”

On their return, when Lewis reported to the President of the United States, he wrote of his friend William Clark, “If any credit be due of the success of this arduous enterprise, [William Clark] is equally with myself entitled to your consideration and that of our common country.” Far from separating them, the tensions of the two years of expedition strengthened the friendship between the two men.

Shackleton’s men, lost in the Antarctic, could not have survived without a mutual concern to lift each other’s spirits and keep nerves and depression at bay. One of the members of the crew wrote that Shackleton was popular among his men not because he could do anything particularly amazing, but because “he personally took care of the smallest detail that affected each of us”. More than a captain, he was a friend.

In December 1903, over 100,000 people turned out to cheer as the corvette *Uruguay* sailed into the harbour of Buenos Aires, under the command of the Argentine Lieutenant Julián Irizar. Regardless of the dangers involved, two months earlier the small wooden vessel had set out for the Antarctic to rescue the members of the scientific expedition of Professor Nordenskjöld. Having advanced further than anyone before them towards the South Pole, the scientific party had been forced to hibernate for 2 years on the Island of Cerro Nevado since, though they did not know it, the vessel in which they had travelled and which was to pick them up had been shipwrecked. Thanks to the solidarity of those who risked their own lives to rescue them, all the members of the expedition were saved.

Just like the solidarity of the companions in adventure, the solidarity of our friends in daily life is a force that preserves us and enables us to grow in an environment of emotional intimacy and trust.



BETWEEN 11 AND 15 PEERS ARE ROLE MODELS



Although we build and develop our friendships during our day-to-day lives, they take on special importance at critical

moments. Between the ages of 11 and 15, when physical changes are associated with feelings of insecurity, our peers play a fundamental emotional and social role. They are a crucial audience that helps us to affirm our own attractiveness and obtain sexual and affective acceptance.



Peers are also very important for developing the dimensions of the identity: interpersonal enrichment, values, recognition of skills, widening of options, sexual identity and social participation.

The importance of peers –and even more of those who become our friends- is accentuated during this period of life by the perceived limitations of the family, which until now has represented a stable and unquestionable frame of reference. The growing capacity to reflect and look analytically at one's own way of thinking and that of others leads young people to question that frame of reference and seek other models outside the home, and the influence of peers therefore becomes much more powerful.

Unlike in the past, today the family is no longer in a position to provide its children with a social development process restricted to the family. For different reasons, the family gives children "independence at an ever younger age, without having provided them with the autonomy they need to use that independence responsibly" (Jacques Moreillon, Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement, 2nd Summit of Chairpersons, Dominican Republic, 1999).



And so the media and the street become an environment of interaction and recognition that is very influential for young people. Little by little, they have significantly more interaction with their peers than with adults, and feel most happy and relaxed with them.



THE PEER GROUP PLAYS AN EDUCATIONAL ROLE

The informal group of friends or the neighbourhood gang is where each young person seeks assurance that he or she is not strange, that there are others who have the same worries, the same frustrations and the same dreams.

A kind of spontaneous complicity develops within the group of friends. Far from worrying us, we should value this as a source of creativity and personal growth.



On a September day in 1940, four boisterous and inseparable French boys –Marcel Ravidat, Georges Angelot, Jacques Marsal and Simon Coencas– were exploring the Perigord countryside as usual, with their dog *Robot*. When they were chasing hares and foxes among the heather and pine on the plateau of Montignac, *Robot* disappeared into a hole. After following their dog carefully and spending a couple of days in secret investigation, they found that this hole was in fact a gigantic cavern 30 metres deep by 10 wide, surrounded by adjoining caverns and potholes, the walls of which were completely covered in pre-historic animal paintings.

The young friends had discovered what is known today as the Grotto of Lascaux, one of the world's greatest Paleolithic treasures. They cautiously took their discovery to an old school teacher, who informed the Abbot Breuil, a man known for his pre-historic research. Throughout the early investigations, Marcel Ravidat and his friends shared the work of providing support, took turns to watch over the works of the Abbot Breuil to protect them from ill-intentioned curiosity and quickly established codes to help preserve the secrecy of the enterprise.

Each young person strengthens their identity through the similarities they find in the peer group. The peer group does not cultivate differences: these youngsters are drawn to each other because they are like each other. They embrace anything that will reinforce this shared identity, such as names, similar clothes, badges, secret hideouts, in-jokes and initiation rites.

THE SCOUT PATROL "ORGANIZES" THE NATURAL PEER GROUP



The genius of Baden-Powell lies in having understood the dynamics within the peer group, the attraction it holds for young people and the innumerable opportunities it offers for the solid development of autonomy.

The Founder noticed young people's capacity for bonding in a group of peers during the Transvaal War, when he observed how they discharged their duties as messengers and look-outs during the 217 days of the siege of Mafeking. Later, when he opened the first Scout camp in August 1907, on Brownsea Island, the first thing he did was to organize the first 22 Scouts into 4 Patrols: Wolves, Bulls, Curlews, and Crows.



A Scout Patrol is a group of young people like any other, but it has a particular meaning for their lives and is guided by Scout values. Even a gang of young people thrown together by shared racial or economic discrimination, for whom the present is a dead-end street and who are at risk of evolving into a delinquent gang, differs from a Scout Patrol basically insofar as the latter lives by the Scout Law. The sociological elements that underpin their identity as a group are practically the same.

There is no need to repress the force of the natural peer group. Rather it should be acknowledged and guided to help them build their personality. Scouting's entire small group system is based on this conviction, but it is particularly relevant during this stage of adolescence. The way a Scout Patrol works will be analysed in detail in our next chapter.

THE SYMBOLIC FRAMEWORK IN ACTION

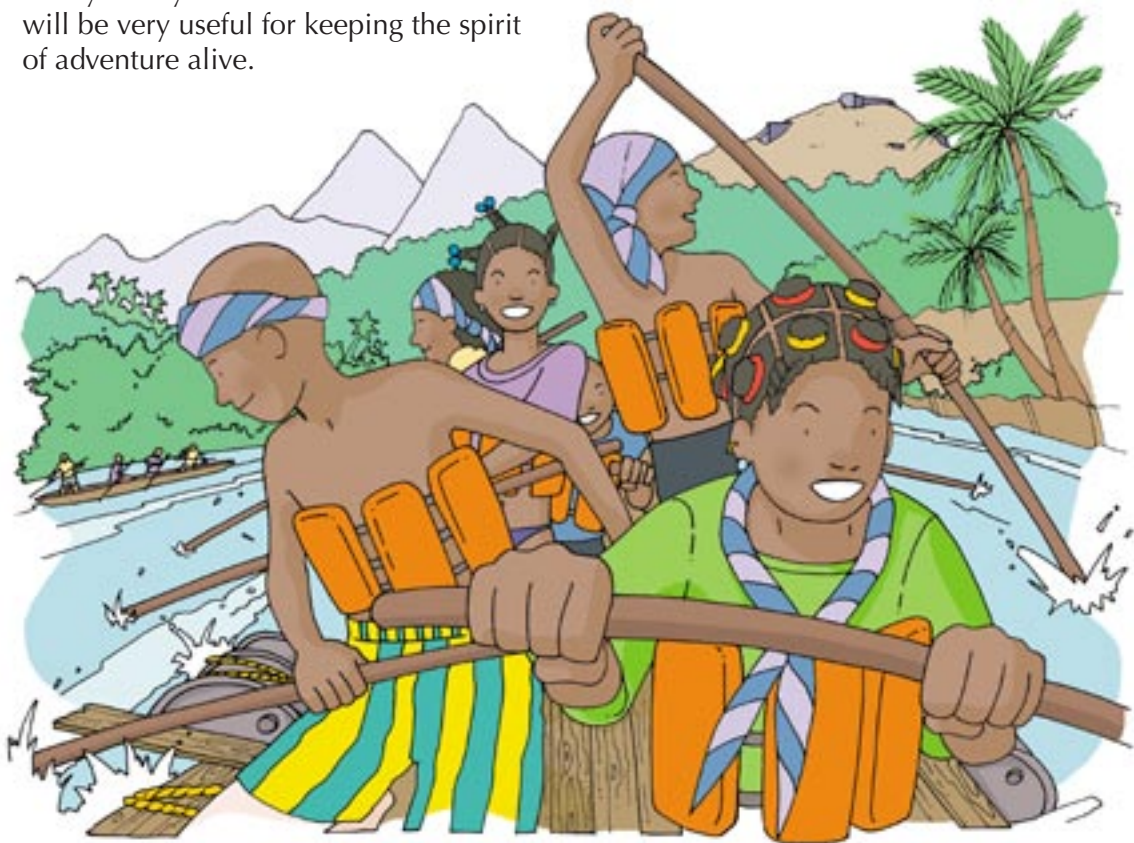


KEEPING THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE ALIVE



The unparalleled success of Scouting among young people, just as much today as in the beginning, is attributable to the fact that it beckons them towards activities that are closely related to these three essential urges: exploration, territory and peer group. A Scout Unit may not be all that rigorous in applying all the elements of the Scout Method, as we will see in detail in chapter 4, but if it keeps the response to these three urges alive, the interest of the young people will never fade.

The symbolic idea of “exploring new territories with a group of friends” should always be present in group life. To make sure this is the case, the leaders should revise the concepts of this symbolic framework continually, and compare them with the day to day reality of the Unit. This exercise will be very useful for keeping the spirit of adventure alive.





EVOKING THE HERO AND TRANSFERRING THE SYMBOL



In the Unit and in the Patrols there are a number of activities to evoke different episodes of the life and adventures of men and women who were explorers and researchers:

- Lively tales on camp nights
- Exhibitions
- Mounting video documentaries
- Campfire dramas and sketches
- Short stories to provide an inspiring background for a lengthy game
- Visits to historical sites and museums
- Interviews with people who can supply information about events and characters
- Discussions in the Unit with special guests
- Forums and debates based on documentaries or texts
- Reading material suggested to the young people on an individual basis
- Research activities by Patrol
- Theme evenings, in which everything is related to a story or a character, including the venue, setting, clothing and food.
- Mounting experiments, models or useful objects that use the discoveries of famous scientists
- “Inventors” fairs to stimulate the young people’s creativity

The list of ideas is endless and the activities will vary depending on the environment, the initiative of the young people and the resources available. What is important is to bring the young people into contact with a real hero or heroine: an explorer or an investigator whose work benefited humankind. Not a warrior or colonist involved in dark causes, or who pursued power or an ideology. The means chosen should also be attractive – it is important to avoid making the approach too intellectual. As well as receiving information, the young people have to be able to “do things” that help them to assimilate what they have learned.

To make these activities attractive and capture the young people’s interest, the leaders need to have enough information to be able to supply ideas, suggest examples and really inspire the activity. This Handbook offers many testimonies of explorers and investigators and many other examples are to be found in the young people’s *Logs* for the different progress stages. However, research in specialized texts will never go amiss.

Constant evocation leads naturally to **symbolic transfer**, as we assimilate the value that is exemplified by the conduct of the hero and reflect upon the impact that this value may have on our own life and behaviour. The symbol thus plays its educational role, pushing us to become something that we identify with. In other words, the *signifier* leads to the *signified*.

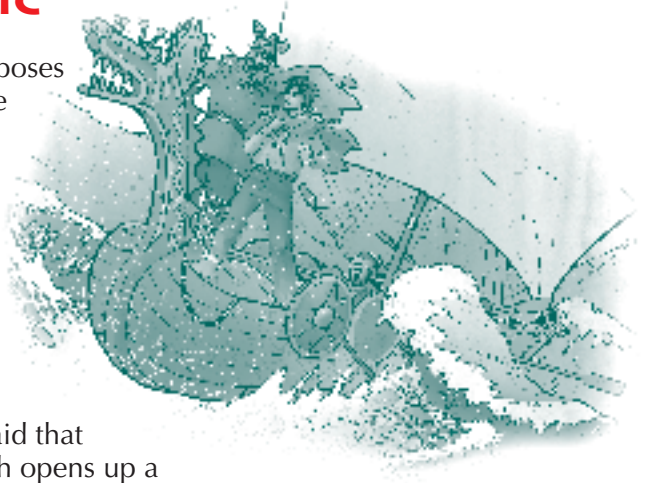
The Leaders should try to encourage this shift with a minimum of interference. The young people's process of identification with the hero's testimony should come about as an *experience*, which is unique to each person and cannot be manipulated. The adult's role is one of an educator, in other words to *reveal* what the young people might not see otherwise, then assess their personal behaviour and reflect it back at them like a *mirror*. We will return to the subject of personal progress in chapter 11.



STORY-TELLING IS WEAVING MAGIC

The symbolic framework supposes that the Scout Leaders have the virtue of being “good story-tellers”, a gift that is not always valued as it should be. If an educator has this skill, little value is placed on it; if not, he or she is not expected to acquire it.

Gabriela Mistral, a primary school teacher and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1945, said that “to tell a story is to cast a spell, which opens up a world of magic”. In an article published in the French town of Avignon, in February 1929, she wrote that everything can be learned through the “beautiful architecture of a story”, causing the young people to feel “the same enchantment as a fable”.



That means that recounting the testimonies of the explorers does not consist of merely listing facts or boring the young people with dates, places and names. “Good story-telling” recreates an atmosphere. The characters in it walk, gesture and act before the eyes of the young people and, as the Chilean poetess put it, “enter their souls to reach the core where they keep all their other familiar and loved ones”.

You do not have to be an artist, poet, professional story-teller or comedian to tell something well. The strength of the telling lies in really feeling what you are saying, so that the tale wells up inside you and “comes from within”.

To achieve this, the story-teller must have a wealth of intimacy, thoughts and experiences. In other words they must have something to communicate to others. This comes from observing, listening to others, reading, experiencing things and living intensely. The story-teller can pick out the different hues of green in a landscape, because he or she looks beyond the superficial appearance of things. The story-teller also has to weave words with charm and fluency, because young people are very sensitive to gracefulness.

We can draw some good advice from the texts of Gabriela Mistral and the experience of good story-tellers:



The tale should be direct and not get sidetracked. A good story “streaks like an arrow to its centre and fatigues not the eye of child nor man”.



A tale has life if it is simple in style. It is enough that the magical or extraordinary fact is in itself “well charged with creative electricity”. Unwieldy adjectives or pedantic or tedious expressions do not hold interest. The attractiveness should burst out “honest and clean from the very heart of the tale”. Like a good gymnast, a good story has no fat of superfluous detail, just “lean muscle”.



If the tale is to be communicated “without embellishments nor spices”, the teller must be “simple and even humble”, so that the young people no longer see the teller and become immersed in the events that are unfolding.



The teller must be able to choose the right time. He or she must also learn to transform apparently lost time into an opportunity for a good story. A rainy day, a night in camp with no light or a gap in the programme of activities can be made into an unexpected and agreeable evening.



The description should reduce as much of the story as possible to images, leaving “only that which cannot be translated into images” standing alone.



The language used should be relevant to the young people’s environment and evoke day-to-day situations for them.



The teller must train his or her voice to “draw some sweetness from it”, because the listener “is thankful for the gift of a pleasant voice that drapes itself like silk around the subject”.



Story-telling is more than saying the words. The non-verbal language communicates much more than the verbal. So –without indulging in excess of course– the teller must make his or her face, hands, gestures and looks contribute to the beauty of the tale, because young people like to see “the teller with an animated and lively face”.



Gabriela Mistral concludes her article speaking as an educator, commenting that “I would not confer a teaching qualification upon anyone who did not tell stories with agility, freshness and even a degree of fascination”

With all the more reason, we might say the same of a Scout Leader.

