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Between chaos and the cosmos: the imaginary of traditional climbing

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ABSTRACT

The imaginary is constituted as one of the bases of human desires. The images created in us when in contact with the environment sometimes drive or hinder human actions. A study on the climbers' imaginary can help in understanding the impulses that move them to this activity. Thus, the objective of this article is to develop a reflection on the imaginary of traditional climbing, seeking images that inspire climbers in their relationship with the world. The analyses were elaborated through the following research process: search in historiography and mythology about representations that reveals the climber's imaginary through time; dialogue with authors of imaginary studies and research on climbing and adventure sports; ethnographic field research with interviews conducted at famous climbing points of the Chilean and Argentine Patagonia. The image of the traditional climber is configured beyond the ascending movements in the cliffs. It has a dynamic structure guided intimately in the relationship of the body with the mountain environment. To clarify these reflections, we coined the expression "intimate body", in line with the thoughts of Yi-Fu Tuan, Merleau-Ponty, and Ian Heywood. Such elaborations highlight the importance of the body-environment relationship in the human imagination and its influence on human impulses.

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Introduction

By living in the world, we impregnate matter with affective charges inherent to subjectivity. We link to the materiality of the world its own symbolism. Human wills and impulses have a great emotional affective load, and these are directly related to the human imaginary and our ability to symbolize and create meaning (Rocha Pitta, 2005). The imagination is this human ability to deform the images provided by perception to attribute symbolic meaning to the materiality of the world. These symbolisms happen to constitute the human imaginary (Bachelard, 1943/2002; Durand, 1999). It is possible to suggest that this broader social imaginary (Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012) is also revealed in the narratives and gestures – in different times and cultures. It may appear in the movies, in publicity and so on. How it would be with the modern climbers? Understanding the symbolic universe attributed by climbers to their

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surroundings helps understand the drives that lead participants to enter this leisure activity. In this context, the objective of this article is to develop a reflection on the imaginary of climbers, specifically of traditional climbing, seeking the images that inspire them in their relationship with the world.

When reflecting on a possible imaginary of the climber, we need to consider the various ways of understanding climbing. Faced with this diversity, Heywood (1994), Kiewa (2002) and Donnelly (2003) argue that there is historically a distinction between adventure or traditional climbing and sport climbing. The different climbing modalities have distinct objectives, corporealities and even social groupings. These authors clarify these particularities sufficiently well, and such framework provides the assumptions of analysis for our reflections. Each type of climbing makes up the macrostructure of the climbing imaginary in general. However, differences in the environment and organization are fundamental for an in-depth study, as the images are deeply attached to the culture, and the way practitioners relate to time and space. Therefore, this article focuses on the imaginary of traditional or adventure climbing, here understood as a multi-pitch rock climbing for ascending cliffs and some peaks.[1] These climbs aim to reach the top of the rock, but this is not a strict rule.[2]

Kiewa (2002) and Heywood (1994) identified that traditional or adventure climbing is characterised by a climb in which the participants climb the wall without previous checks, using primarily mobile protections trapped in the natural features of the rock removed after use. In addition, the scope of this research did not cover climbers looking for high altitude peaks or climbings with extreme climates, such as Everest, Aconcagua, Mont Blanc, or Fitz Roy. These climbs are often performed in extreme climates and altitudes and may suggest physiological needs and perceptions of the environment different from the group considered here.

Therefore, we first introduce the theoretical framework on the imaginary followed by the methodological paths with detail about the fieldwork conducted with climbers. Next, the three subsequent sections systematize the dialogue with the literature. Through a detailed description of this practice, we will establish relationships between the environment and its provocation to the climber's imaginary, assuming that this imaginary is at the base of the instigations about living in the world (Wunenburger, 2015).

Studies of the imaginary

The theoretical background for this article is based on studies of the imaginary developed mainly by Gilbert Durand (1994, 1999) and Gaston Bachelard (1938/1964, 1942/1983, 1943/2000, 1943/2002). For Bachelard (1943/2002), the faculty of imagination deform the images provided by perception. According to him, the imagination expands the world beyond its geometry, giving it symbolic depth. A stone, a mountain, becomes ascension games precisely because of the potential attributed by the human faculty of imagination. Bachelard, a pioneer in imaginary studies, develops the notion of material imagination (1942/1983) and imaginary (1943/2002). The human is taken to go beyond what he perceives in contact with matter, with the elements. In his work dedicated to the imaginary, he describes the images generated from contact with certain elements such as fire, water, air and earth (1938/1964, 1942/1983, 1943/2000, 1943/2002). For Bachelard, these elements would be at the base of the human imaginary, and later, he expands his

analysis of the imagination beyond the basic elements. For Bachelard (1958/1994), the human imaginary has two movements: resonances and repercussions. The resonances exist in the world on different planes of our lives, and repercussions are how these resonances become part of us. In simpler terms, several images in the world are being told and retold through stories, images, dances, and poems. These images somehow provoke us and instigate our being. For Gilbert Durand (1999), the imagination is a reciprocal exchange of subjective drives and provocations arising from the material and social world. In this constant exchange we symbolize the world, and we find the meanings of our existence. Durand (1999) defines the imaginary as all images that constitute the thought capital of human beings, and these images would be the common denominator of human actions. Durand (1999) categorizes the images of this universal imaginary into two major regimes: Diurnal and Nocturnal. Diurnal images are heroic images of confrontation, power, battle. The nocturnal regime is subdivided into two sub-regimes: one embraces the images of descent, intimacy, and rest, and the other is the union of opposites. Durand's anthropological structures of the imaginary framework bring a relevant contribution for making sense of the complexities related to different phenomena (Bellehumeur, 2020), and the study from this perspective may amplify our understanding of climbing. Thus, investigating the imaginary of the climber helps to understand the impulses and desires that compel human beings to seek more than just a biological search for survival. Identifying the symbolisms that structure the will of climbers to seek climbing as a leisure practice also helps us understand human actions in the relationships established with the environment.

Methodological paths

The research described in this article develops a philosophical investigation of the imaginary of the traditional climber, based on the phenomenology of the image. The whole process lasted two years (2018–2019), considering theoretical study and ethnographic field research, with semistructured interviews with climbers in the intervals between climbs. In dialogue with the theoretical framework, these reports gave rise to the reflections presented in this article. Using a triangulated approach considering representations of the climber's imaginary, the dialogue with authors of imaginary studies and adventure sports, and ethnographic field research strengthens the research with the possibility of a broader understanding. Besides, being in the field as a researcher brought new perspectives for a former climber, and the field experience suggests further questions to the theoretical framework.

An ethnographic field study was conducted during 44 days, between January 6th to February 18th, 2019, covering a common path among traditional climbers: a place known as Frey, in the Argentine Patagonia, and Cochamó, in the Chilean Patagonia. These locations were chosen due to the high presence of climbers of different nationalities and levels of experience. This stage of the research was performed by a participant researcher experienced in climbing, so it was possible to climb together with practitioners, contributing to the approximation and understanding of different perceptions. During this period, the researcher's events were recorded in a field notebook and 14 practitioners were interviewed,[3] including nine men and five women of different nationalities (Brazil, Chile, Argentina, United States, England and Ireland). On the interview date,

they were between 20 and 45 years old. The interviews were conducted in the camps of the visited sites and carried out according to the possibilities of the field routine. The testimonies were based on guiding questions, encouraging climbers to describe their experience and perception of the mountain. Furthermore, the daily experience with climbers at the mountain base and on the ascents guided the field research. The entire process was accompanied by intense reflection considering the literature to avoid possible bias. The interviews were recorded on video, transcribed and sent to the participants to check for potential misunderstandings. The narratives were organized according to their symbolic recurrence following the myth-hermeneutic style of Ferreira-Santos and Almeida (2012), Saura and Zimmermann (2019). For ethical reasons, the names of the participants were replaced by fictitious names.

Alongside, extensive historical research was conducted on climbing, seeking references from ancient myths about the mountains to modern climbing. These research steps allowed the reflection about the various relationships that the climbers established with the place and the community in which they are inserted. The following sections present the dialogue between the theoretical framework and the field research records. The first section proposes looking at the imaginary of climbing through time, considering the dialogue with the literature from the history of climbing and the imaginary. Thereafter, findings from the participants are the base for reflections on the two following sections exploring the imaginary of traditional climbing and, finally, proposing the notion of an intimate body from the experience of climbing.

Results and discussion

The imaginary of climbing through time

Throughout the history of humankind, the mountain has inspired human beings. In response to this provocation, several myths emerge in all parts of the world, linking a strong symbolism to the mountain. Monte Meru, Sumeru, Altae, Olympim, Haraberezaiti, Qâf, and Gerizin are some of the names of the sacred mythical mountains around the world (Dell, 2012; Eliade, 1963; Guénon, 1995). The myths bring the symbology attributed to the materiality of the world by ancestral civilizations. They are the oldest expressions that expose the relationship of the being with the world. Through symbolic hermeneutics (Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012; Saura & Zimmermann, 2019), we can find the meaning of these symbolisms. In the present study, we see how they are current up to the present day in the narratives of climbers.

The first symbolic recurrence we found in history with the help of Eliade (1963) is that the mountain represents a rupture, that is, an opening between the divine and the terrain. All these mountains harbour gods or are points of communication with them, so we see in various religions that the sacred revelations are attributed to the mountain environment. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, Moses would have received the Ten Commandments at the top of Mount Sinai (Brandão, 2015). Meishu-Sama, lord of light in the messianic religion, would have received the divine revelation in Mount Nokogiri. The Quechua people ascended to mountains at altitudes greater than 6000 metres to make offerings to the gods (Ceruti, 2005). All these representations delimit the mountain as a sacred place. The myths also reveal the symbolism of the centre linked to the symbolism

of the rupture. Mount Meru, for example, is the centre of Jain cosmology, as in Hindu culture, it occupies the centre of the lotus that represents the world. According to René Guénon (1995) and Mircea Eliade (1963), both scholars of the phenomenology of religions, the centre signifies the axis of the world. It is the unshakable centre around which everything else moves, the symbol of permanence, of eternity. In the Hindu tradition, the centre is the Supreme Principle, the pure being.

In some representations, Monte Meru is cited as the one in which only the pure heart can ascend (Dell, 2012). For several ancestral peoples, ascension is an existential transcendence, the symbol of the path to the heavens, to the gods. According to Eliade (1963), ascension plastically represents a transition from one mode of being to another.

In this way, we understand that the mythical mountain represented by the ancestral peoples was sacred in opposition to the profane sites. The ascent to these mountains was considered an act of transformation, of approaching the divine.

From the end of the eighteenth century, another way of relating to the mountain gained strength, leveraged by the industrial revolution and the Enlightenment ideals. Despite being controversial, some historians defend the ascent of Mont Blanc as a historical landmark of this new way of ascending the mountains. According to Frison-Roche and Jouty (2017) and Jahn (1940), the passion of being on the edge was forged in humans from the ascent of Mont Blanc. As a result, there was a paradigm shift and a thirst for conquest, power and notoriety for ascending mountain peaks (Frison-Roche & Jouty, 2017). According to the authors mentioned, this would be the beginning of modern climbing. The image of the conqueror becomes part of the imaginary of climbing, as we find in the speech of the writer and journalist Teófilo Gautier when he saw a young Englishman returning from a climb in Zermatt:

> Whatever reason may object to it, this struggle of man with the mountain is poetic and noble. The crowd, which has an instinct for great things, surrounds these daring people with respect, and always gives them a standing ovation on the descent. They are the will protesting against the blind obstacle, and they place the flag of human intelligence on the inaccessible. (Gautier, 1985, p. 285)[4]

In this historical context, the pursuit of achievement by individual merits takes centre stage in the images inspiring climbers. Religiousness is replaced by rationalism, and brands, times, strategies, and technological resources gain prominence amid narratives of heroism.

Therefore, we can highlight two elements that make up the general imaginary of modern climbing: the sacred, divine space separated from the profane world that leads to transcendence, and the conquest, searching for heroic deeds through combat against the mountain. This overview provides references to address the imaginary of traditional climbers.

The imaginary of traditional climbing

Traditional climbing forms a community that presents in its narrative a substantial distinction from the others. These differences, already explored by Heywood (1994), Kiewa (2002) and Donnelly (2003), are also evident in our study. Kiewa (2002) even suggests that this differentiation can become oppressive. However, these divergent images and

mechanism of power relations, also reveal the symbolic structure that constitutes the image record of traditional climbers. Such records help to understand the dynamic relationship of the imaginary with the environment. Therefore, we will address these discourses to understand the relationships that are established. Among the most common recurrences (Saura & Meirelles, 2015) is identifying an activity that goes beyond athletics. As mentioned by some climbers interviewed:

> For me, climbing is much more than the physical and the technical, it goes much beyond the movements, the grades. I believe it is the university of life, as we call it here. (Testimony of Hannah, Bariloche, 2019)

> From an early age, involvement with nature was what most called me. Much more than the athletic part was the involvement with the mountain, climbing it with everything it involves: opening the trail, if you have to walk in the snow, walk in the snow. It was never just the athletic part. (Testimony of Mauricio, Bariloche, 2019)

> I started in the traditional one [climbing] with very, very easy routes. And I loved being on the mountain. This part fascinated me, as being at the height, I enjoyed the climb in a very different way. As before: I have to climb 5.10, I have to climb 5.11, always in grades, and it was more like a competition. And when I had my first experience in traditional I remember doing the summit, and looking at everything in peace in the mountains, and I had this appreciation for the place (…) Nature is very important to me. I reach a level of pleasure and happiness just by being in the place. (Testimony of Simone, Bariloche, 2019)

Climbers claim that the activity goes beyond what they call the "athletic part" or "technical part", i.e. the movements on the rocky face. They say that it is only in the totality of their relations with the environment that the activity is fully expressed. Illustrating this range, climbers tell about the environment in which they are inserted: nature and mountains. Such perceptions have significant consequences in constructing the climber's imaginary and consequently with their actions in the environment. It is possible to deepen the study of these images, starting with the idea of the remote present in some statements:

> Because it is less about the physical part, traditional climbing takes you to some places, it takes you to climb in such remote places, or to mountains that you couldn't access otherwise. Sports climbing is fun I recently took a trip to climb sport, but traditional takes you to some places that are more remote (Testimony of Ângela, Cochamó, 2019)

In the dictionary (Longman, 1999), the word remote means: far distant in space or time; quiet and lonely: a remote village; widely separated; not close, a remote connection; slight: a remote chance of success. The remote location indicates a distance. It is essentially far. However, it is not necessarily a physical quantity, measured in objective scales of distance. For a place to be considered far, the body must recognize the distance. The Frey Valley in Bariloche is approximately 16 km from the city centre. This distance travelled by car would take approximately thirty minutes. However, for climbers, this is not the distance measurement. The only access to the valley is through a trail of approximately 10 km. The access of climbers is always made with backpacks loaded with climbing equipment, camp equipment and supplies for the stay. The weight of a backpack for the first arrival at the site is between 25 and 35 kilos. The slope of the terrain with the backpack's weight demands even for the bodies used to this endeavour. As much as the distance is not so long, fatigue in the bodies defines a perceptual distance. Besides, there is a distance from the urban way of life. There is no cell phone signal at the site.

Electric energy is available only from a generator for the internal part of the small mountain refuge. The water is captured directly from the rivers of the valley. It is necessary to make stone barriers to shelter the tents from wind or find refuge in the middle of the vegetation. The modes of existence differ from the way of living in cities, as Bell expresses in his speech when she tries to define what climbing is:

> It's kind of a lifestyle, I can have several conversations with climbing friends, but outside of climbing, people don't understand […]. Why is there no Wi-Fi in the places? They do not understand the point, the objective. For me it is a kind of lifestyle, I like it, I go and do it and I try to convey what it is to other people and that also enchants me. (Testimony of Bell, Bariloche, 2019)

These perceptual marks paint the mountains' image for climbers and provide the characteristics of what is remote. Time is also one of the aspects in the elaboration of remote images. Such perceptions are apparent in discourses that highlight the contrast with the times of the city:

> It is terrible when you go back to the city and hook yourself in turns. It is like: you have a period of peace and tranquillity, you come with all the energy of the mountain, calm and suddenly wow, everything is spinning very fast. I don't know what happened. This is not good. (Testimony of Bell, Bariloche, 2019)

Like music, the images that make up the repertoire of the human imagination have a rhythm. In cities, the flow is marked by the pace of people, the pace of traffic, and the urban environment's needs. As David explains:

> Last year when I returned to the city, I left my apartment and walked a block. I saw how people push each other, exchange insults, the cars that brake and honk, this noise, all very accelerated, and I who came from here saw everyone almost as an outsider. (Testimony of David, Bariloche, 2019)

Climbers usually perceive the pace of cities with more latency after returning from a prolonged period in a location with another temporal cadence. These perceptions mark the climber's imaginary. The city is perceived as something that moves too fast. The rhythm of the relationships is established by external patterns, such as the objective time of the clocks. According to the testimonies, in the mountains, the rhythm is given by the flow of free animal life, rivers, and the climate such as rain, wind or heat. In this case, temporality is orientated by the time lived (Merleau-Ponty, 2012) in organic relationships. Such characteristics contribute to the definition of a remote location, highlighted by climbers. To enter the remote place is setting the body's rhythm with the provocation of the environment. Climbers talk about connecting with the place or with nature:

> We took everything we needed for a month and fell in love with these really wild places, the sense of connection you have with the place when you live there, you know, you fish in the river, you drink water straight from the source, and this became part of who I am. I need to get out to the cities, have the time and space to be a little more free. (Testimony of Jean, Cochamó, 2019)

This connection mentioned by climbers is partly due to the pulse of the ecosystem's summoning over the body. In this sense, we can approach the reflections of what Naess called deep ecology (1973). The Norwegian philosopher and mountaineer Arne Ness (1912–2009) considers climbing a school of wisdom (1970/2005) and elaborates

his reflections based on his own bodily experiences in the mountains. He was the founder of a deep ecology called "EcosophyT"[5] and an enthusiastic friluftsliv. Friluftsliv means "life in the open air" and indicates physical activities oriented towards opening the senses in nature (Breivik, 2010). It is prevalent in Norway and converges with ecological perspectives. A deep ecology affirms a nondualistic perspective between humans and nature. Hence it emphasizes egalitarianism, diversity, symbiosis and complexity.

As Paul mentions, when talking about what this connection with nature would be:

> Because to be connected with nature is to be connected with birth and death, […] you are much more connected with the whole circle. When you live in the city you don't have that, it's all packed. Here you know that it is affecting nature by cutting the tree, but you are using it to build your house. […] So every place you climb is very connected to nature as well. And Cochamó makes you walk a lot to get to the base and you camp there, you drink the water straight from the river, without treatment or anything, it is a life much more connected with nature. (Testimony of Paul, Cochamó, 2019)

For climbers, these remote places, with the environment summoning, lead to other possibilities of being in the world, as stated by Arthur:

> When you are on the mountain, everyone forgets and everything becomes more profound, everyone stops thinking, there is still ego but it seems that it dissolves and people are very open with each other. It is a very quick connection of people with each other. (Testimony of Arthur, Bariloche, 2019)

For some climbers, the mountain's image is associated with a different way of acting and relating to others. This perceptual change is mainly related to the image of the mountain as a teacher or master.

> It's like a great teacher. That does not speak, but well, you have to understand it and know […] it is a relationship with a master, with much respect. (Testimony of Hannah, Bariloche, 2019)

> At the end of the day I try to be a good student, try to listen to what the mountain says. Wherever, it's just stone. That changes very slowly, but that has always been there. And you meet it in a different place every time you go. So the relationship changes because you change. (Testimony of Jean, Cochamó, 2019)

This idea of the mountain as a teacher is in line with what Bachelard indicates about hard materials, which teach humans their limits with their resistance and strength. For the philosopher, this "material reality instructs us" (Bachelard, 1943/2000, p. 21). It is through its greatness and the numerous challenges presented during practice that the mountain teaches mountaineers. The climbers highlight here the relationship with the environment, the difficulties and learning of the trajectory and the efforts made in ascension. These experiences are the school of wisdom mentioned by Næss (1970/2005) and approach the mythical images of the sacred mountain.

Between chaos and cosmos: the intimate body

Although the narratives presented are close to the image of the sacred mountain, the imaginary conquest that gained strength from the eighteenth century is also noticeable in the climbers' discourse. In this case, it seems to be present when they emphasize personal

challenges facing the mountain. However, most climbers from this group highlight a change of perspective through the relationship of intimacy between human and matter, which requires effort, presents challenges and teaches.

> I was obsessed with grades and doing hard things all the time, climbing the longest routes, but now it's more about the people I spend time with, connecting with this place, this place's history, the people who live here. (Testimony of Ângela, Cochamó, 2019)

> Many years ago I was: I need to get stronger, I wanna do this route, I, I, I. I think it's part of growing up; if you grow up, you start to see evolution, it has to be more. More than something focused on the circle of him. (Testimony of Paul, Cochamó, 2019)

> [what attracts the climb] It changed, first it's a desire, I think, to climb higher grades. You know, go up the numbers. However, now the motivation is always the adventure and friends. (Jean, Cochamó, 2019)

When comparing different experiences, difficulties and images of achievement are always reported at first. Climbers highlight long and challenging routes, grades, and physical strength. Following Durandian imaginary theories (1999), it is possible to suggest that these images are part of a diurnal structure of the imaginary. These are images that refer to the struggle, the battle, and the confrontation. They are structured under the archetypes of gladius, which is the powerful and cutting weapon that is always next to the sceptre, a symbol of power. The individual search for climbing grades is structured under the image of the combative warrior who fights for heroic glory, making use of all available tools.

However, climbers point to a change in perspective over the years. The pleasure of admiring the landscape, friendships, and the connection with place and community begin to rule the discourse of these climbers. These images are close to the nocturnal imaginary defined by Durand (1999), which instead of fighting, brings comfort and warmth.

Heywood (2006) discusses the relationship between Techne and Thumos. Thumos is combativeness, the urge to overcome, to subdue. On the other hand, Techne would be "that is, deliberate, embodied action on the basis of knowledge, training, experience, and technical refinement" (p. 456). For this author, climbing is, among other things, a constant game between them. Heywood (2006) refers to "cutting edge" climbers, those breaking the limits of the climb itself; however, these reflections help us understand the imaginary of other climbers.

If a person without climbing experience tries to climb a cliff, he/she will probably encounter resistance from a strange environment. In this case, to climb the wall, a person will need a huge combative momentum – Thumos – since she has almost no skills and knowledge necessary for that environment – Techne. For this person, his ascension will be a great battle, even in an easy route. An experienced climber will tend to feel more comfortable with the situation, and if he climbed this same route, he would feel the sensation of a pleasant walk. This relationship helps us understand one characteristic of inspiring images.

It was possible to monitor climbers of all levels of experience during the field research. One day, one of the authors of this article was doing a route with a less experienced climber. They were followed by a pair who worked as climbing rangers in a national park in the U.S.A. and were already in the Cochamó valley for the third time. All

climbed the same route but did not have the same experience. The fatigue of the researcher and his partner became increasingly visible as they ascended the road, while the next pair did not seem tired even in the last parts of the route. At many times, it was possible to see them moving on the rock. The movements of the first pair were hard and performed at significant cost, although they were also strong and familiar with other climbing techniques. The others moved lightly. They demonstrate the belonging of a body accustomed to those conditions instead of the hardness of a foreign body. Their bodies' musculature, and the calluses of their hands showed a great intimacy with the environment and the mountain.

The achievements in the history of humanity refer to the conquerors of foreign lands. In the history of modern climbing, climbers planted flags on mountain peaks. Photos of the mountain climber with the flag of his country are recurrent as a symbol of achievement. The conquest refers to something that does not belong to us but becomes ours through struggle and effort. The image of the conquest of the mountains represents the conquest of this foreign space, far from the climber himself. At the time of the first European ascension, the popular imagination populated the mountains with monsters and spectres. It was a space hostile to the human being. No nocturnal image (Durand, 1999) of receptive and warmth is built on a perception of unreceptive space.

Understandably, those who suffer from the bodies used to other environments feel in a constant battle when entering the mountain territory. However, those who adapt their physiology to the physiology of the environment for long periods take an significant step to transmute the battle images into receptive images. For the nocturnal images of the imaginary to be incorporated into the climbers, it is necessary, among other things, that they are not foreigners in that environment. It is essential to transform themselves into the body of a native gradually. In this case, we are talking about the incorporation of the environment besides muscle strength. As Merleau-Ponty says, the body "[…] is a nexus of living meanings, not the law for a certain number of covariant terms" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 153). The native body is developed in intense contact with the environment. As Tuan (2001, p. 184) states, "A sailor has a recognizable style of walking because his posture is adapted to the plunging deck of a boat in high sea". In addition to a muscular force instigated by the reliefs of the earth, this body manifests a bodily understanding of touch, sight, the smell in close and known sensations, discrete and comfortable, as well as the feeling of putting on an old pair of slippers (Tuan, 2001). This relationship of intimacy is established not only in the ascension moments but also in the camp, in the bivouac, in the trails to reach the mountain base. To incorporate the environment is to find vertical comfort and to sleep comfortably under the rock or beaten ground. It is to walk with acuity in the terrains of the environment, and be comfortable with the changing temperatures on the skin.

The body of the foreign climber will never be the body of natives, who inherit the traces of the earth in their own body, who carry within themselves the cultural traces of genetic inheritance. Therefore, they have a complex relationship of belonging to the place. However, outlander climbers approach their existence to the locals in the intense coexistence with the environment and the mountain people. Therefore, experienced climbers can develop a closeness to the mountain through perceptual experience. Thus, we will call it "intimate body". The word "intimate" is an adjective of intimacy that

means a state of being intimate, remark or action of a kind that happens only between people who know each other very well (Longman, 1999).

An intimate person is one whose body is not foreign to us. However, it is not our own body. It is a distinct body whose absence is felt as a lack. The touch of the intimate person is not adverse, but it brings a comfortable feeling of union. The intimate body is the one bound to the place by affection and trust. It is a body that feels the environment as warm and welcoming. The intimate body integrates the skills to climb, from Heywood's ideas on "Techne" and relationships with the environment and mountain people: the trails, the camps, the meals, the baths in rivers and lakes. Among other things, it seems necessary that the climber's body is an intimate body with the mountain for the images of conquest to become the welcoming images.

Thus, we can approach a change in the symbolism linked to the mountain by beginner climbers and more experienced climbers. The imaginary is not limited to perception; it is an adventure of perception (Bachelard, 1943/2000). The provocations of the environment instigate the constituent images of the symbolic universe of the climber. These summonings are corporeal. It is in the contact of the body with the world that humans attribute meaning to it. The appropriation of the environment in the body itself is crucial to understand the changes attributed to the constituent images of the climber's imaginary. If the environment is understood as hostile to the climber's corporeality, the images of conquest, strength and war tend to stand out; if the environment is recognized as part of itself, the nocturnal images of familiarity, intimacy and warmth gain power. These changes in the climber's corporality and imaginary are perhaps the subjective motivations of what Kiewa (2001) called the re-writing of the heroic script. She suggests that some classic heroic images are transformed into another idea of a hero. These images lose the emphasis on conquest and increase the desire to protect the natural environment. But, as Heywood (2006, p. 464) mentions, all these perspectives help in the total understanding of what climbing is, but none can explain "the madness necessary to climb". Bachelard, mentioning the navigation and the chimeric interests generated by the images, states that:

> No utility could justify the immense risk of setting out over the water. For man to run the risks implicit in navigation, powerful interests have to be present. Now really powerful interests are visionary interests. These are the interests about which one dreams; they are not those about which one makes calculations. These are mythical interests. (Bachelard, 1942/1983, p. 74)

One of the climbers highlights in reports:

> For me, climbing is a way to connect with the landscapes, it is a kind of way of life, it is something I do that feels like a meditation, sometimes it does not look like this, sometimes it is hard and scarring. (Testimony of Ângela, Cochamó, 2019)

What Ângela calls "hard and scarring" is what prompts madness to climb. Heywood (2006) attributes this aspect to Plato's Thumos, the combative spirit. In our studies, we identified a systole and diastole process in traditional climbing. It is a dynamic pulse with different levels. Systole refers to the moments of tension that Ângela calls "hard and scarring", which evoke Thumos (Heywood, 2006). It is when the struggle of movement on the mountain meets the difficulty of protection. At this moment, strong momentum is

needed to ascend. However, mountains are never regular, there are tensioning moments and there are moments that can become easing depending on the "techne" of the climber. When the line on the wall relieves the need for physical strength or when the possibilities for protection are abundant, the body finds some relaxation. As much as the mountain has a constant difficulty, which is not common, at some point, it will have a stop, an anchoring point of breathing and contemplative beauty. Clinging to a stop is always a relaxation. Sometimes the routes pass through plateaus or even caves amid the verticality of the mountain, as is the case of the routes "Imaginate" in Frey and "E.Z. does it" in Cochamó. Both have large caves or ledges for pleasant relaxation amid the vertical wall. These are moments of diastole when the tension on the body is relieved. Thus, the process of escalation frequently varies between systoles and diastoles in a constant pulse. This dynamism brings the variant beauty of traditional climbing: sometimes, it is taken by the minutiae of movements and occasionally opens to the entire landscape that the environment offers.

Such descriptions of the perceptions of ascension help us to understand the symbolism related to it. The moments of diastole are symbolized as the connection with nature, as the warm and cosy environment. On the other hand, systole moments can take on different meanings depending on some aspects that we will report below.

Ancient people represented their cosmologies between cosmos and chaos.

> The former is the world (more precisely, our world), the cosmos; everything outside it is no longer a cosmos but a sort of "other world", a foreign, chaotic space, peopled by ghosts, Demons, "foreigners" (who are assimilated to Demons and the souls of the dead). (Eliade, 1963, p. 29)

The mountain symbolized by an intimate body does not become an adversary with the systole perceptions, but a teacher or a master. The posture with the mountain transforms the whole relationship. To feel part of the environment is to understand it as part of our being. In ancient cultures, the human did not represent a confrontation with the earth. The Quechua cultures of South America, for example, call it Pachamama, the mother earth. It is the telluric mother who challenges her children in the daily task of existing (Ferreira-Santos, 2015). Recognizing the environment as a part of oneself, assigning a matriarchal symbolic depth to space, alters how we relate to the environment and, consequently, changes ourselves. Perhaps, because of these changes, the ancient peoples attributed a divine transcendence to the mountain ascent.

For Næss (1970/2005), the search for conquering a mountain is based on the separation between humans and the environment. From this view, humans position nature as something to be dominated. Such a perspective can be particularly problematic and destructive. Besides, it is a mistake since the mountain never fights against us. The focus on comparing results can also alienate the climbers from their relationship with the environment when numbers measures achievement and superficial ratings guide climbing instead of spontaneous desire arising from the climb. Næss (2008) describes the intense relation between mountains and mountain people and highlights the exercise of modesty in this context. He talks about modesty due to understanding ourselves as part of nature: "This way is such that the smaller we come to feel ourselves compared with the mountain, the nearer we come to participating in its greatness" (Næss, 2008, p. 67). A relational approach suggests that individuals will develop a personal

understanding of climbing based on their own experience. Although Næss (1970/2005) defends powerful ideas on deep ecology movement, he sustains the diversity of motive and method since no single concept of climbing dominates to spoil the possibility and pleasure of different climbers.

For a long period of the history of climbing, the diurnal images of combat with the mountain reached their peak. This period is associated with what historians call the golden age of mountaineering and the race for pioneering access to the highest peaks. Durand (1994) studies the movements and transpositions of dominant images of the European imaginary and identifies that such images have periods of duration. By the very dynamics of the imaginary, like a river that dissipates into deltas and meanders, the images flow through saturation and give rise to new dominant images derived from the saturated conflict of the old dominant image. From the saturation of the Apollonian solar image in the climb (Maffesoli, 2004), the force of the Dionysian nocturnal images arises vehemently as an exacerbated negation of the saturated image. These images are favoured by the context of traditional climbing of lush landscapes and remote environments. They gain strength by establishing a counterpoint with a perception of an external and chaotic environment.

Since ancient times, the mountain has been a sacred space, isolated and protected from profane and mundane things. It is related to the environment summoning that leads to the symbolism of the remote to which we have just addressed. The structure of the mountains chosen as the main points of the sport does not have significant climatic instabilities like the Alps or high altitudes above 8000. They are generally valleys of mild climates. All such beckoning from the environment helps to symbolize the environment as welcoming, despite the great difficulties. Such images are directly associated with the images of lost paradise portrayed in various stories throughout the history of humankind, among them Shambhala in Tibetan culture (Znamenski, 2011) and in a more recent example, Shangri-la, under the direction of Frank Capra, in the North American film Lost Horizon of 1937. These images made possible by the demands of the environment contribute to this symbolism to the traditional climbing valleys. As such, since ancient times, it is a place protected from the agonies of its temporality.

Human symbolisms are formed in the relationship between being and the world. By inhabiting space, transforming it into a place (Tuan, 2001), that we bring affection to geometric space. Such affectivity, in the scope of the imaginary, is responsible for instigating the actions of being in the world. By attributing this symbolic meaning to the place, climbers allow themselves to live under other demands and other images. There is a whole range of environmental beckoning that leads humans to symbolize the mountain as this protected, remote place, enabling a transformation. Such being-world relationships make such images possible for the traditional climber's imagination. If they are experienced as inspiring images, they enable other ways of being in the world and different rhythmic perceptions from the mountainous territories.

Final considerations

This article sought to reflect on the imaginary of traditional climbing and its relationship with the mountain environment. For this, we conducted research both in the historiography of climbing and in the ancient mountain myths. These materials revealed two

distinct symbolic structures in different eras of humanity: the sacred and the conquest. To deepen the discussions, we sought an approximation with the experience in climbing through ethnographic field research in high-frequency points of climbers from multiple nationalities and experience levels. These research steps enabled an analysis of the images reported by contemporary climbers.

Based on the reports collected in the field, it was possible to initially identify a dichotomous structure of images, transitioning between diurnal images of fighting and nocturnal images of reception. However, when considering the body experience of the climber, we found a record of images that goes beyond this dichotomy. The images of confrontation and battle experienced in the mountain can be transmuted to images of warmth and teaching. We understand that this movement between opposites is bodily elaborated in the experience. The climber imaginary has a dynamic structure based on the relationship of the body with the environment. Familiarity with the mountain enables the constitution of an intimate body. In this case, intimacy indicates an approximation, openness to dialogue. It reveals a body that allows itself to be guided by the images presented in this relationship. This perspective highlights the importance of understanding the body-environment connection in the human imagination, and its influence on human impulses to the world.

Much research on climbing and adventure sports looks at physiological or psychological aspects of practitioners (Bertuzzi et al., 2012; Llewellyna & Sanchezb, 2008), or even at the issue of risk and achievement (Heywood, 2006; Llewellyna & Sanchezb, 2008). In addition, however, researchers highlight the relationship between adventurers and the environment (Howe, 2019; Zimmermann & Saura, 2017). These reflections under the scope of imaginary expand the understanding of the symbolic universe of traditional climbing, focusing on the relationship between body and world. The experience of traditional climbers strengthens the notion of how the human body and nature became intertwined with intense coexistence.

Despite all attention given to risk, adventure or even athletics, the traditional climbing experience shows that there is much more between humans and mountains. The notion of the intimate body can address some complex points of research on practitioners' motivation and enriches studies on human imagination and subjective elements present in adventure sports and leisure. Such understanding may enrich narratives related to the practice of climbing in different fields, from educational to leisure projects. The picture of traditional climbing that emerges from this research is comprehensive. Still, it is possible to highlight the powerful presence of the imaginary at the base of the instigations about living in the world. Further research could look closer at ethical and ecological consequences by understanding the body-environment relationship.

Notes

1. The term "peaks" refers to high altitude mountains, such as Everest, or alpine mountains, such as Mont Blanc. Still, it is also used to refer to what in Argentina is called "aguja", whose direct translation would be "needle", but it is an unusual term in English. Therefore, we will use the word "peaks" broadly in this work, referring to this " agujas", which are prominent points in a rocky outcrop.

2. Some traditional climbing routes do not reach the summit, but they are exceptions.
3. The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Physical Education and Sport at USP, Project number: 04107018.8.0000.5391. All respondents were informed of the research objectives and authorized the use of the information for research purposes.
4. Quoi que la raison y puisse objecter, celte lutte de l'homme avec la montagne est poétique et noble. La foule, qui a l'instinct des grandes choses, environne ces audacieux de respect, et à la descente toujours leur fait une ovation. Ils sont la volonté protestant contre l'obstacle aveugle, et ils plantent sur l'inaccessible le drapeau de l'intelligence humaine (Gautier, 1985, p. 285).
5. "EcosophyT" is Naess' version of a deep ecology which included personal views and experiences about the relations between humans and nature. In this spelling, T refers to Tvergastein, his "expedition cottage" in the Hallingskarvet mountain range (Breivik, 2019).

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