

Writing the Ascent: Narrative and Mountaineering Accounts

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Abstract

Mountaineering is an activity traditionally practiced in remote areas of the world by a select few participants. Upon returning from an expedition, some mountaineers retrospectively publish their account as a testament of the experience. This is a common practice in the mountaineering subculture, and encouraged by the fact that an account can also act as a guide to the mountain for later expeditions. This thesis argues that this practice becomes troubling because even as later expeditions attempt to distinguish their ascents from their predecessors, a similar framework of ideals is reiterated. The expedition's actions can be justified using frameworks based on domination of the environment and indigenous cultures. The repetition of these ideals is encouraged by the teleological narrative adopted by the authors to describe the episodic order of the expedition as well as the goal of the summit. However, this common narrative, as well as the subject matter, also allows accounts to be read in dialogue with one another. This thesis examines accounts which describe subsequent attempts on the Himalayan peaks Annapurna and Everest. Maurice Herzog's Annapurna (1950) describes the first successful expedition to climb a mountain over 8000 meters. Later expeditions by Sir Chris Bonington, in Annapurna South Face (1971), and Arlene Blum, in Annapurna: A Woman's Place (1980), contextualize Herzog's representation while offering their own experiences. Mountaineering was commercialized during the 1990s, and Jon Krakauer's Into Thin Air (1996) and Anatoli Boukreev's The Climb (1997) narrate their respective experiences in an industry based upon expectations of summit glory. Through a close reading of these three ensuing generations of mountaineering accounts this thesis argues that subsequent generations attempt to

challenge the dominant representation to allow alternate definitions of success and climbing styles within the subculture. These challenges are only partially successful due to the central place of the summit in the narratives, and conventional inclusion of the disaster episode. Using sources which contextualize these expeditions historically, this thesis also analyses the accounts from an ecocritical, feminist, and sociological perspective.

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Introduction: The Narration of Mountaineering Expeditions

On the morning of June 3, 1950, French expedition leader Maurice Herzog and fellow mountaineer Louis Lachenal awoke on the Northwest side of Annapurna. It was the day the two Frenchmen would attempt to reach the summit. If they succeeded, they would be the first men to summit the tenth-highest mountain in the world, and the first mountain over 8000 meters. They had to move quickly. The summer monsoon would move in within the week, by which point the French expedition had to be off the mountain and back in the Nepalese lowlands.

Frostbite had already settled into their feet, and altitude sickness slowed their thoughts and reactions. Justifiably concerned, Lachenal asks Herzog if they should continue. Would they have enough strength to reach Annapurna's summit; would they have enough strength to descend?

Herzog recoils at the suggestion. In his official narrative account of the expedition, Annapurna (1952), he writes that:

A whole sequence of pictures flashed through my head: the days of marching in sweltering heat, the hard pitches we had overcome, the tremendous efforts we had all made to lay siege to the mountain, the daily heroism of all my friends in establishing the camps. Now we were nearing our goal. In an hour or two, perhaps, victory would be ours. Must we give up? Impossible! My whole being revolted against the idea. I had made up my mind, irrevocably. Today we were consecrating an ideal, and no sacrifice was too great. (206)

If he must go on alone, Herzog insists, he will; Lachenal must decide for himself. Each climber privately justifies his decision, and later that day the pair stand atop the tallest mountain

yet climbed. According to Herzog, Lachenal's agreement is made from a realization of brotherhood, and what kind of "sacrifice" is needed to succeed. He will continue to the summit in support of Herzog and the "ideal" of "victory" over the mountain. The price of the summit for both men is the amputation of their toes due to frostbite, with Herzog also losing most of his fingers.

In the climax of his account, Herzog claims that the events of the past months and a moral code demand that they continue. If each step upward increases a climber's weariness, then the summit will require the ultimate sacrifice. The goal of the summit is for an "ideal" beyond any climbers or their bodily concerns. At this level of Himalayan mountaineering, Herzog conveys that success is the only option.

As he is the expedition leader, Herzog's account of the successful expedition is considered authoritative, so generations have read of this moment in his terms. The sale of 11 million copies and a dozen translations has further ensured that the dominant representation of the first expedition to Annapurna is his. Because Herzog's account is written entirely in the first person, it only allows us to read about this event from his perspective. Lachenal's own version appears in Carnets du Vertige (1956), which was written shortly before his death in a skiing accident. Taking advantage of the circumstances, Herzog and Lucien Devies, the president of the French Mountaineering Federation, subjected Carnets to heavy editing before it was published. This would ensure that Herzog's account, which was authorized and approved by Devies, was the dominant representation of the expedition. Lachenal's full account would have to wait decades to be revealed to the public, finally being published, unexpurgated and in its entirety, in 1996. A collection of several expedition accounts and essays, Lachenal's restored

Carnets contains his diary from his time on Annapurna, as well as an extensive commentary on the expedition written five years later (Roberts 174). At the same moment of indecision as Herzog describes, Lachenal writes: “For me, this climb was only a climb like others, higher than in the Alps but no more important. If I was going to lose my feet, I didn't give a damn about Annapurna. I didn't owe my feet to the youth of France” (qtd. in Roberts 224). Lachenal's decision to continue climbing is to safeguard Herzog in his obsession, which demonstrates a personal concern beyond that expressed in the official account.

The focus of Lachenal's account presents a vivid contrast to that of Herzog. Herzog's view of the expedition is supported by expectations of victory and domination. Cloaked in collective pronouns, Herzog's account demonstrates that he saw himself as the distinguished mountaineer who persevered for all despite a weakening team. In summiting Annapurna, Herzog will defeat the mountain and secure a place in mountaineering history. This victory will allow Herzog to return to France as a hero with his injuries as badges of honor. More than for himself, though, Herzog climbed Annapurna for the good of humanity, as the “consecration” of the “ideal” is signified in reaching a high point on the earth.

Also written in the first person, Lachenal's Carnets offers a challenging perspective to Herzog's account. There are no universal “ideals” worth sacrificing the body for, only personal ones, in this case a friend in need of support. No national acclaim is worth mutilation, so the idea of being celebrated for climbing a peak is meaningless. As the other expedition members are not there to influence decisions, Lachenal feels that if they must turn around, then so be it. The suppression of this description indicates that Lachenal's perspective, and the ideals which support it, are not in line with what Herzog and Devies believe the account of the expedition

should say.

Herzog's and Lachenal's interactions with Annapurna as a landscape are also significant. Through Herzog's official account, the reader learns that this was the first attempt to climb Annapurna. After the end of World War II, the Himalayan range again became the focus of Western mountaineering expeditions, but these attempts required massive funding and international cooperation which had been unavailable during the war (Clark 167). The French expedition was backed by national climbing clubs which had close ties to the restored government. This was France's first expedition on the world stage, a chance to match the mountaineering efforts of other countries, such as Britain's repeated attempts at Everest in the 1920s, and regain face after the humiliations of the Vichy regime (Roberts 30). Herzog's, and by association, France's "victory" over the mountain occurs through the use of martial rhetoric and tactics; the mountain is portrayed as an enemy which will be conquered by the heroic climber. The Himalayan environment becomes a landscape for a battle to be fought, a fortress to "lay siege to," requiring sacrifice, heroism, suffering. These ideals and the hostile environment are supported by a conceptual framework that values the summit over all else. For Herzog, each climbed ridge and each step forward are personal challenges for the mountaineer, yet if the French team can persevere, then it means "victory" for the good of all.

Lachenal's descriptions also focus on the environment. But no histrionics for him; the Annapurna expedition is only another climb, even if it does require a greater commitment. Significantly, Lachenal reduces the tenth-highest mountain in the world to his familiar scale of the Alps, and though Annapurna may be a larger prize to Herzog, to Lachenal, the importance of the mountain only matters if one can climb again. If Lachenal lost his feet, his career as a guide

in Chamonix and the income it provided would be in jeopardy, concerns that Herzog, as an upper-class business executive, did not have. National pride is also dismissed, along with any concern with historical significance. In the commentary of Carnets, there are no universal values being fought for, only the experience of doing a loved activity in a new landscape.

Herzog's decision to continue to the summit was personal; Lachenal's question and decision to continue on was the same. Yet in the accounts, two different views of the expedition emerge. A close reading of these passages from the respective accounts reveals a dialogue about the expedition, about the landscape of the mountain, about definitions of success, and about what mountaineering can mean on a personal and a public level. In this thesis, I will examine the dialogue between official mountaineering accounts by concentrating on comparable narrative episodes. Through contrasting descriptions of the environment and the activity, I will demonstrate how dialogue challenges the dominant representation of an expedition and permits alternate interpretations of the ascent.

* * * *

In 2000, mountaineering scholar and writer David Roberts published True Summit: What Really Happened on the Legendary Ascent of Annapurna. A climber himself, Roberts begins by recounting how it was Herzog's account that encouraged him towards the mountains. As a boy, the description of expedition life and mountaineering was inspiring in "the ideals that Herzog lyrically sang - loyalty, teamwork, courage, and perseverance - that rational apprehension was drowned in a tide of admiration" (23). Herzog's account had become legendary. In a 1980 article written for Ascent magazine, "Slouching Towards Everest," Roberts ranked Annapurna at the top of his list of twenty greatest mountaineering books.

His confidence in his childhood hero was shaken in 1996, when Roberts learned that Herzog's account was not the whole story. Two sources had risen to public consciousness. The first was Lachenal's Carnets, with the original manuscript being published in its entirety by his son. The second was a biography of another prolific member of the expedition, Gaston Rebuffat. In Un vie pour le montagne (1996), Yves Ballu had relied heavily on Rebuffat's own notes and letters home for the section on Annapurna, which led to another challenge to Herzog's dominant representation. Reading multiple accounts of the truth, Roberts decided that "the true history of Annapurna, though far more murky and disturbing than Herzog's golden fable, might in the long run prove to be an even more interesting tale" (26). His scholarship used the French volumes of other expedition members along with interviews with friends, family, and an aged Herzog to reconstruct this "more interesting tale." In attempting to reconcile the separate accounts, and especially the disaster following the summiting on June 3, Roberts finds discrepancies throughout Herzog's account. If the leader's version is lacking specific details of actual events, as proven by the other accounts, then it is also far from what Roberts feels the narrative could be. The "interesting tale" can come out of the "true history" through dialogue, though ultimately Roberts desires the appearance of a unified voice.

Eventually, the reason for the heavy editing of Lachenal's Carnets and the silence of the other expedition members is revealed as the legal consequences of a contract which they all signed before departing France. Roberts writes of the dilemma of Rebuffat and Lachenal, both of whom were beginning to see their writing becoming part of their mountaineering careers but who were forced into silence by an agreement which had Herzog speak for them all. This heavy-handed tactic was "designed by Devies and Herzog to keep the story of Annapurna the property

of the expedition's patron and its leader," and removed any possible chance for the public to read of a competing view of the expedition (Roberts 43).

Even with access to new sources, though, Roberts can not find the desired "true history" or a "more interesting tale." He writes that "the full ambiguity of what had happened on that distant mountain almost fifty years ago came home with a vengeance, and I realized that no single person could ever grasp the whole truth of Annapurna 1950" (220). He concludes his investigation into the past by offering Lachenal's version of the summit bid on June 3; this is a different story than what Herzog had reported, but one which must necessarily exist alongside it.

Roberts attempts to construct a single definite version of the 1950 expedition through contrasting accounts. Neither account exists in a vacuum and both are representations of the social experience of mountaineering. Despite Herzog's control of the representation, the inclusion of his teammates in his narrative indicates the possibilities of alternate perspectives. Though it is possible to view the French expedition from multiple perspectives due to the separate accounts, no unified voice emerges. From their respective positions and responsibilities on the expedition, Herzog, Lachenal, and Rebuffat all tell a different story that transpired at the same time, which is filtered through their own frameworks of meaning. Though Roberts must give up his effort to create a "more interesting tale" compiled out of all the climbers' experiences, there is value in his scholarship as a model. Instead of contrasting accounts as an attempt to reach an unified truth, why not view the accounts as a dialogue? If neither account can be proven to be the dominant representation, but they stand alone as personal accounts, then what aspects of the expedition are revealed through contrast? The dialogue of differing ideals and perceptions of the environment between Herzog and Lachenal on June 3 with which I began

is my extension of Roberts' analysis. A close reading of comparable passages enables a greater understanding of the ideologies of mountaineering accounts.

The dialogue which emerges out of the contrasting accounts indicates that multiple ideologies about mountaineering are functioning at once on the same expedition. These competing ideologies, heard through each climber's voice, are silenced when the official account is written. For example, the moment of indecision between Lachenal and Herzog, which I examined earlier, indicates that any "whole truth" can only come about through the exclusion of other representations. A dialogue occurs as Lachenal's account necessarily competes with Herzog's, but neither version can dominate the experience. Instead, the two voices enter into a dialogue about their experiences on Annapurna. Their contrasting perceptions can be analyzed in order to understand how different frameworks of meaning structure a mountaineer's expectations of the expedition, the mountain itself, and how these experiences are represented. This model of dialogue can be extended to analyze accounts about later expeditions to the same mountain as well.

In mountaineering, the act of climbing defines the activity, and representations by climbers attempt to convey a degree of the hardship and excitement experienced. In writing an account of a climb, mountaineers use a variety of frameworks to provide meaning for descriptions of their personal experiences as they progress towards the summit. A framework is defined here as a perspective which shapes both a climber's actions while on the mountain and the later representation. Characterized by shared values and a vocabulary, a framework assumes certain things about reality and how it should be described.

Comparison between accounts is possible due to the similarity of the subject matter in the

various accounts. The journey to and from the mountain's summit is the focus of the expedition's efforts. The goal and the methods chosen to achieve it imply certain conventions in travel and climbing. While these conventions relate to the activity of climbing, accounts are written in a fashion which reflect that movement. Thus, representing the expedition often leads authors to episodic repetitions and a reliance on certain rhetorical strategies, in particular narrative. For example, in Annapurna South Face (1971), expedition leader Chris Bonington describes his team's movement as being the same described in any mountaineering account, even Herzog's: "An approach march falls into a pattern that is very similar on every expedition and has therefore been written about a hundred times before" (62). Despite this, Bonington, like Herzog before him and Arlene Blum afterwards, embraces redundancy and goes into detail as to the specifics of his particular experiences. A lack of description would indicate a lack of worth, so therefore each event is narrated, even if it has already been described "a hundred times before," as the approach march is a necessary convention of the genre. In following conventions, Bonington's account matches expectations as to how an ascent should be described.

It is precisely this unquestioned repetition in the account which attracts my attention. Certain events, such as the approach march or a climber's elation upon reaching the summit, are standard fare and expected by both readers and other climbers (McQuillan 49). These expectations rely on the narrative of the account, which in turn is supported by strategies like martial rhetoric and episodic progress. Through the guise of an expedition's progression, the conventions of the mountaineering narrative used in most accounts force a teleological framework upon the activity which emphasizes the domination of the mountain as a definition of success. In confirming these conventions, the account's author also defines him or herself as a

mountaineering authority in order to establish the “truth” of the dominant representation. I will argue that one of the effects of these repetitions and the strategy of narrative damages the activity of mountaineering by enforcing harmful expectations and definitions of success in expeditions. Through an analysis of the dialogue between accounts, I will demonstrate that troubling questions are ignored in the dominant representation. If the summit is an “ideal” beyond the worth of the body, what else is being sacrificed in order to conquer? How does the narrative enforce these damaging frameworks over the course of several accounts? How does a climber's identity depend upon these frameworks?

While frameworks support the expedition's goal of the summit, the goal of the account is representation of that experience. Mountaineering mediates a conflicted interaction between climbers and the environment, and the activity constructs a landscape of temporary significance for the participants (McCarthy 179). The temporality and the significance of an isolated mountaineering expedition can be conveyed to the public through an account, and the fleeting experience can be solidified into a dominant representation. In describing the initial preparation through to returning home, the narrated account constructs the teleological framework for the mountaineer and the reader in which the goal of the expedition, the mountain's summit, is of the utmost importance. This representation actually transforms the reality of the mountain and the expedition into a story for the rest of the population, with the mountain serving as backdrop. This story, based on a combination of actual events, personal impressions, and partial memories, functions as the dominant representation of the mountain itself. The Annapurna which Herzog's team climbs is not the same mountain as the one in his account, but it is his representation, not the actual environment, which helps influence the next expedition to climb it. As

mountaineering is an activity applied to a specific locale, the narrative describes the expedition as being appropriate and necessary to the chosen summit. Thus, the mountain is characterized through the frameworks of an account as appropriate to the author's expectations, where its only significance is as the expedition's goal. But when an account inspires participation, then the author's representation of reality has begun to structure a reader's expectations about mountaineering and possibly guide their actions. This leads to a social construction of reality, and a reinforcement of the dominant representation through the next expedition's adoption of past goals and frameworks.

The consumption of the account by readers, either as 'armchair climbers' or as members of the mountaineering subculture, contribute to the imposition of the author's representation on the mountain through the popular imagination. Thus, the mountain becomes constructed according to narrative and subcultural conventions. In a mountaineering account, a writer often describes the mountain environment as isolated from the rest of the world, as these spaces entail the "last places left for Western explorers to discover and traffic" (Ellis 22), which allows these explorers, such as mountaineers, to appropriate the landscape to their own goals. Their activities give these places meaning. Through the act of authorship, geographer Yi-Fu Tuan writes, a mountain can become a "stable and permanent" place for expeditions and the frameworks they are enforcing, "even though no physical manipulation of nature had occurred" (668). As Herzog's account shows, a discovered space, such as Annapurna's summit, can have meaning imposed upon it. In Herzog's framework, success is defined as reaching the summit, an arbitrary point in the journey, which shapes the significance of the mountain.

In stabilizing and defining the mountain, the account serves the mountaineering

subculture, a slightly different group than the rest of the readership. The initial account of a first ascent, such as Herzog's, is a contribution to the knowledge of mountaineering and acts as a guide for a specific mountain landscape. Reading about the previous team's challenges can help prepare later expeditions for greater success through descriptions of the environment, details of logistics and travel, and the dynamics of foreign cultures. The guide becomes established truth in this way, a template for further expeditions with clear definitions of success, rather than an interpretation of an experience. As such, the repetition of a climb can be an attempt to match the experiences described in the initial account, which includes success. Using a past expedition's definition of success in repeating a climb can be preferable to attempting a climb on an unknown mountain or route. The existence of a previous account can guide a subsequent expedition to this similar definition of success (Mitchell 106). Instead of facing an unknown environment, mountaineers use old accounts to prepare by familiarizing themselves with the landscape through descriptions.

What usually is not considered by these subsequent expeditions is that their own expectations are based on what they have read. An account can dictate and limit a later expedition's movements over the mountain landscape and the trajectory of ascent through the descriptions. By emphasizing aspects of the ascent that subscribe to a stable view of the landscape and a narrow definition of success, later expeditions conform their efforts to the subculture's expectations. This becomes troubling when combined with the large number of new participants seeking success in mountaineering. Since the end of World War II the subculture of mountaineering and the general public's access to wilderness spaces has rapidly increased through transportation and with the popularity and availability of outdoor 'risk' recreation

(McIntyre; Johnston and Edwards). However, this new popularity of mountaineering is still based upon past dominant representations of mountains, such as Herzog's, that understood the mountain as something to be conquered. These attitudes and ideologies can be perceived as being necessary to mountaineering by new participants and repeated through their own activity. The conventional definitions of success based around the summit perpetuate a multi-million dollar industry which involves thousands of participants, media support and the necessary material development, and has a worldwide environmental impact. The subculture of mountaineering reciprocates and enforces the past expectations through guiding services, commodification, and greater media exposure. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Three, rather than attempt to provide unique experiences or offer alternative styles of ascent, the mountaineering industry continues to portray the activity as having a narrow goal.

The method of challenging this homogenization rests in the subculture. As Roberts has shown, mountaineering accounts which are written about the same mountain will reveal an ongoing dialogue of description which challenges any one dominant representation of the landscape. In extending his model, I will show that subsequent accounts of the same mountain will also produce a dialogue between the climbers and the landscape that can transform the initial dominant representation of the mountain. Some of the discrepancies and differences between the accounts are indicative of changes to practices and frameworks by the subsequent expedition. In my analysis, the dialogue process will demonstrate how repeating claims of narrative authority and the use of episodic events reveal hierarchical practices and teleological definitions of success. The dialogue process will show further possibilities about the interaction between the climber and the mountain, and prevent the "stable and permanent" portrayal of the

dominant representation. In my first and second chapter, I will contrast the initial account of Annapurna by Herzog with subsequent accounts produced by Chris Bonington and Arlene Blum. Bonington led a British expedition to Annapurna's south-west face in 1970, while Blum's 1978 all-women American expedition reproduced Herzog's initial route. The expectations of each expedition are based partly on the French team's initial success, but also on the representation of that success in Annapurna.

These expectations structure the author's presentation: the account is written as fact, yet is only available to the audience through a narrative voice. Hayden White has discussed the process of how reality becomes translated through representation, or how the past becomes history. He writes that the account becomes valued through the authority of the author, and provides a solution to "the problem of how to translate knowing into telling" (White 5). The narrative creates a chain of events which assumes both a starting point and end closure, which allows an authority over both the representation and the reality (White 22). The episodic events of an expedition match this chain of events, as the account provides a starting point with the selection of team members and ends with the expedition's return. Whatever elements the author considers important to the account are included as facts, while other elements which might convey a different impression are disregarded. The account is then presented as complete.

In analyzing mountaineering accounts, Peter Bayers and Reuben Ellis have argued that what the author includes can lead to the enforcing of harmful ideologies in mountaineering, such as a justification for colonialism or a narrow definition of success. Bayers writes that mountaineering accounts, in belonging to the genre of exploration literature, are "intimately tied to the literary and cultural tradition of imperial adventure" in the authors' self-portrait of

themselves as masculine heroes on quests (2). In his study, this portrayal of superiority enforces an ideology which makes imperialism seem natural and right in the contested mountainous areas of northern India and Alaska at the beginning of the twentieth century. Ellis had previously considered the unspoken superiority within an account as “an intriguing complicity with what has been called neoimperialism,” as mountaineers, like governments and corporations, have interests in the retention of and dominance over environments and indigenous peoples (8). The associations forged by this perspective are egoistic and used to justify all manner of exploitations and prejudices. This effect expands exponentially when an initial account is considered as the definitive guide to a mountain.

It is my argument that an analysis of accounts in dialogue can reveal the harmful expectations that are encouraged through this shared perspective. That these accounts are in dialogue has already been alluded to by mountaineering writers, albeit those with a teleological concern. After the failure of the 1938 Everest expedition, HW Tilman, the expedition's photographer, stated that his account “should be read merely as yet another chapter in this adventure story” (1). This description indicates the influence of an ongoing narrative of expeditions leading to success, but also the possibility of dialogue. Everest is the setting of an “adventure story,” and the techniques and information gleaned from one expedition, or chapter, can inform the next. Furthermore, Tilman contemplates that “some day, no doubt, someone will have the enviable task of adding the last chapter, in which the mountain is climbed...that book, we hope, will be the last,” as if one expedition's success ensures that all possible routes over the mountain's terrain will eventually be exhausted (1). “The last chapter” links the conclusion of the narrative, and any reason for dialogue, with reaching the summit.

The danger of Tilman's statement leads from his metaphor; a book must inevitably have a conclusion, an ending which allows no more to be added. The success of one expedition, and its account, would become the dominant representation of Everest. This would lead to a stable representation of an uncontrollable environment, and one set of expectations. The turning of the final page marks the achievement of the ideal and an end to striving for that particular summit. The narratives of expeditions would then become monolithic through an erasure of dialogue. A consequence of this can already be seen in Bonington's acceptance, and reiteration, of the banality of the approach march. Despite having been described many times before, Bonington follows his predecessors in both action and framework to support his own mountaineering experiences. That his account both confirms and rejects the dominant representation in turn, however, means that Herzog's account is by no means conclusive.

The fact that expeditions have not ceased with Everest in 1953 or Annapurna in 1950 attests to the fact that there may be further motivations for mountaineers than being the first to reach the summit, and that dialogue can serve another purpose than simply being a culmination of knowledge geared for conquering. Tilman's consideration of dialogue is conditional, as it is only used to contribute to the summit goal. In Tilman's view "the final chapter," or the account of a successful expedition, is definitive. There can be no room for further interpretation of events, either by the audience or subsequent expeditions. But due to the reliance on accounts for information and ongoing ascents, I argue that the dialogue among accounts about the landscapes, goals, and activity of mountaineering can potentially alter past frameworks and overcome the restrictions of authority. My intention is not to attempt to construct a more inclusive narrative of any one expedition, as Roberts sought through historical documentation. Rather, I am interested

in exploring how expeditions distinguish their climbs and accounts from their predecessors.

Using a dialogue approach would be appropriate for considering the interplay of the authority and narrative, the climber's reality and the representation, but my interest in this environment is better supported by the arguments of geographer M. Folch-Serra and ecocritic Michael J. McDowell. Folch-Serra argues that geographers can use dialogue as “a tool for understanding the popular response to the conditions created by status of a particular landscape,” by emphasizing history and the interpretations of competing interest groups in regard to geographical location (258). This would give greater agency to the dialogue produced by competing mountaineering accounts and prevent a dominant representation. Contradictory interpretations of the landscape, which range from the personal challenges valued by mountaineers to the sacred meanings some mountains have in indigenous cultures, can achieve greater meaning through dialogue (Folch-Serra 256). McDowell uses dialogue as a system-based approach, much like ecology, to literary texts with the aim of renewing and emphasizing relationships beyond the human (372). This analysis of landscape descriptions “enables the nonhuman elements of an ecosystem to take on the qualities of a society, with hierarchies, differing values, and lively interplay” (373). Elements of the landscape become individualized and valuable, complemented by human participants, but not defined by them. Herzog's description of Annapurna as a fortress immediately comes to mind as a specific example of a monolithic view of the landscape. Yet this image does not need to remain static thanks to the dialogue of other accounts and McDowell's arguments. Bonington's account can respond to and “refract” this dominant representation of the mountain to indicate other interactions between the climber and the landscape.

When an account is written, it represents an expedition, but it also represents a construction of a climber's identity as a member of the mountaineering subculture. The reference to past frameworks by climbers using the account as a guide also limits their identity, as they bow to expectation. Membership in the mountaineering subculture is dependant on convention. In a number of sociological studies, certain traits, particularly language, can be identified as being specific to mountaineers. A number of studies address this identification. For example, Peter Donnelly and Trevor Williams identify the activity of climbing as the primary indicator of a person's inclusion in the subculture, yet this is mediated by knowledge of terminology, equipment, goals, controversies, locations and personalities (3). In a related article, Donnelly terms a person with inside knowledge of an activity but who is not always engaged in that activity a "participant observer" (223). Mountaineering is not an activity which many people can practice year-round, but the status of being "participant observer" still entails knowledge and captures a large segment of the population interested in climbing. Accounts are read, debated, and considered by these people and used in the construction of identity.

Richard Mitchell overtly defines the act of mountaineering as a "social activity" and again defines inclusion through participation, but notes how mountaineering is usually practiced in relatively isolated wilderness settings (83). The solitude is one of the reasons that an account is considered to be the dominant representation, yet also points to the problem of that authority. If the experience of climbing is mostly personal and isolated, as Mitchell points out, then why would a climber bother to describe the mountain in anything but the briefest of terms, or simply provide a relief or topographical map? Why include personal impressions of the geographical features, or emotional changes brought on by summiting? Why repeat what has already been

written, as Bonington does? Joe Kelsey, while researching the production of climbing guidebooks, observes that “the ostensible purposes of reporting a climb...are to provide information, and in the longer accounts, share an experience...[or] claim credit” (109). Certainly the mountaineer's account can contain information for subsequent expeditions. But does the narration only contain information, or does identity factor into the descriptions? Consider the inclusion of the photograph of a triumphant mountaineer holding a flag from the mountain top, which has become the finale of the teleological narrative; the accounts of both Herzog and Blum include these photos. This type of evidence tells climbers little about conditions on the actual summit, but it does enforce a conventional episode and provide evidence of success. Episodes such as this are reinforced through subsequent accounts, creating an expectation for the subculture.

Though dialogue is a strategy with which to criticize the dominant representation, the disaster is an event within the narrative that also provides a challenge to the teleological narrative. It cannot be avoided that mountaineering is an activity with a high death toll. As a result, the ascent of a mountain is usually planned in such a way as to prevent disaster. Despite these precautions, the expectations of the expedition can suddenly be interrupted by a life-altering situation. Disaster is a part of the episodic nature of mountaineering but often does not factor into the expectations of those who only focus on the summit. Due to logistics, an expedition's success can be greatly affected by unforeseen and sometimes unpreventable factors. These can range from the sudden illness of climbers to human errors in judgement, as well as what Bonington terms “objective dangers,” such as the terrain or weather (391). Statistically, disasters more frequently occur on the descent. This happens because often the perceived value

of the summit leads to the mania Herzog felt at his moment of indecision, and “summit fever” ignores the amount of effort needed to descend safely (Mitchell 161). Climbers, in a weakened state, may not be as conscientious in their movements, as the perceived goal of the expedition has been achieved.

But for the narrative of an account to be complete, the author must include the disaster episode. This is a problem, for if the narrative is meant to confirm the mountaineer's success over the landscape, how is the disaster, a negative consequence of negotiating that landscape, accounted for? Does an expedition's definition of success abruptly change? How do the authors represent this event within a framework that privileges their dominance? There are only so many strategies for safety in the mountain environment, and the dangers can be overwhelming. Though mountaineers try to remain aware of the potential for disaster, I would argue that either on the expedition or in the account the disaster interrupts the expectations of the expedition and resists an account's frameworks. Unlike the goal of the summit, the potential for disaster receives almost no attention from the climbers, beyond standard safety measures, until it occurs. Instead of the episodic repetition like the rest of the expedition, a disaster represents the unknown and frequently leads to a climber's death or injury. Survival becomes the main focus on the expeditions, while the accounts emphasize feelings of guilt and a desire for safe return. The climber's representation of disaster can introduce other meaning to the account, but this occurs during the course of the narrative. Disaster provides the account with an internal dialogue as the consequences of the initial frameworks become apparent when contrasted with the descent's mishaps. I will also argue that subsequent expeditions, in relying on the initial accounts for conventions, have no choice but to disregard past disasters as being particular to

that ascent. This results in blind spots within their own narratives as the expectations of past accounts are adopted without considering the impact of those particular disasters. As no framework can explain or predict the unknown, climbers are forced to rely on familiar expectations for the ascent and ignore the fact that no stable meaning can be applied to the disaster. Thus, the goal of the summit continues to dominate the climbers' expectations even if the possibility of disaster is ever prevalent.

In addition to using Folch-Serra and McDowell's concepts of dialogue in regards to landscape, I will also use another consideration of the environment to analyze the disaster's interruption to teleology. In his collection of travel essays The Ends of Our Exploring, Hooley McLaughlin criticizes preconceived Western ideas of evolution and progress, which he compares to the expectation of maps. Though McLaughlin's arguments are mainly based around the scientific 'map of progress,' I can extend his analysis both to the actual maps used by mountaineers as well as their descriptive maps, their narratives, which provide the same function on a linguistic level.

Like Western science, the expected progression of mountaineers is goal-oriented. Though the amount of time spent on the summit may be only minutes, after several weeks involved in the research, approach and climb, this high point is seen as the expected culmination of all the effort. The climber has reached the pinnacle of his or her progress. McLaughlin states that "the map is laid out before the journey even begins. The map substantiates the concept that all things are thought to be headed in a direction that requires that they be shaped or designed to 'fit in'" (3). The mountaineer's episodic chain of events, which relies on prior description, often disregards the descent on the assumption that it will follow exactly the same path as the ascent:

the assumption that the map holds true. But the reality of the mountain changes with the direction of travel; “maps do not reveal reality, they are only filters,” and a map, or a narrative, used by an expedition filters the reality of the environment (McLaughlin 16). Ascending demands one map, which is supported by past accounts and subcultural conventions; the disaster interrupts this filter with another reality, based on the will to live. As with the arguments of Folch-Serra and McDowell, McLaughlin emphasizes the environment as having a dynamic response, both to the author's descriptions and the constraints of narrative. A disaster indicates “escape from the old order, the escape from a paradigm,” which itself “requires destruction. The old order comes up against what it is not, and new synthesis occurs” (McLaughlin 219). As I am arguing that the mountain is an unstable landscape, the expectation of success does not ensure that there is a path to the top, or that it is the same path to the bottom. While the fact of reaching the summit remains the goal, after the disaster episode mountaineers describe their accomplishments differently. With the interruption to expectations, mountaineers begin to realize the precariousness of their activity on the mountain and the transparency of their supporting frameworks. As a part of the narrative, the disaster demonstrates the altering influence of the landscape upon the expected dominance of the expedition, and forces mountaineers into actions outside of their expectations.

My thesis deals with accounts written over the last half of the twentieth-century. Each account I will be analyzing can be roughly understood as being part of a separate generation which responded to the success and failures of previous expeditions. Taken together, they chart the modern growth of mountaineering from state-sponsored siege-style expeditions in Herzog's Annapurna (1950), to expeditions defining themselves through goal or framework, as in

Bonington's Annapurna South Face (1971) and Arlene Blum's Annapurna: A Woman's Place (1980), to the pressing concerns of over-commercialization in the accounts of Jon Krakauer and Anatoli Boukreev (1997). This sampling represents the modern form of the mountaineering account, which is closely tied to the domineering relationship Western peoples have had with mountains over the centuries.

The significance of the mountain environment has changed over time. Initially, Walther Kirchner writes, the view of mountains in Western civilization was hostile, as the environment was perceived as being unfit for habitation or use. The act of climbing mountains for pleasure's sake was unknown, and travel over them was forced by the necessity of trade routes (Irwin xi). Then, in 1336, the poet Petrarch ascended Mont Ventoux of his own volition, and positively described his experience in a letter. Petrarch combined descriptions of the physical effort of the climb with his own Christian awareness, resulting in an awe of nature verging on what was eventually termed the sublime (Kirchner 422). While others had no doubt ascended mountains before, Petrarch's letter is significant in that he provided a description of the mountain environment mediated by his own interactions and thoughts, which makes this the first known example of a mountaineering account.

The popularity of mountains increased during the Renaissance due to the cataloguing spirit of science, with the naming of individual Alpine peaks by 1400 and a series of high-profile attempts to climb moderate European peaks by curious clergy and noblemen (Kirchner 424). It is in these ensuing generations that writing about mountains from a mountaineering perspective becomes more apparent, with emphasis placed on the goal of the summit. The popularity of the mountains gradually increased, with the Alpine village of Chamonix becoming a tourist

attraction by the 1730s for featuring access to climbs with local guides (a system which continues to this day) and the ascent of Europe's tallest peak, Mont Blanc, in 1787. This latter event points towards modern mountaineering, as the subsequent account was written using a teleological narrative. In Relation d'un voyage a la cime du Mont Blanc. En Aout 1787, H.B. de Saussure starts his account with the beginning of the expedition, follows with a rising action leading to the achieved goal of the summit, and concludes with the expedition's return (Kirchner 430). To some extent, this has become the standard narrative of mountaineering, complete with the familiar episodes. The expedition accomplished a difficult ascent, and the account argued that mountaineering could be done for its own sake, without a scientific or nationalist agenda.

In the aftermath of Romanticism and widespread social change, European mountaineers began to adopt a combative attitude towards the landscape (Kirchner 434). Being close to the Alps led to opportunities for upper-class mountaineers to climb due to their social rank, and in their accounts they gave their new activity a specific framework featuring the common elements of hardship, classical references and poetry, and moments of awe brought on by the landscape. The ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865 represented a sea change in mountaineering styles, as there were few 'virgin peaks' left to be climbed in Europe. The British Empire and the Survey of India in the nineteenth century eventually led to the mapping of the Himalayan environment and the 'discovery' of the tallest peaks in the world (Clark 94). However, any possibility of climbing these mountains was halted by the outbreak of World War I.

The First World War caused a disruption in mountaineering history, but the knowledge gained in logistics served European nations well in regards to the perceived 'siege tactics' needed to conquer the Himalayas. These ensuing "official" expeditions were nationalistic in

atmosphere and martial in framework, as they required massive expenditures in inter-government planning, conscription of locals for labor, media exposure, state-of-the-art equipment, air and rail transport, all with one goal in mind: the summit (Clark 167). World War II caused another disruption in foreign expeditions, but the war actually proved somewhat beneficial to the activity. The war-torn landscapes of Europe, Africa and Russia all offered mountainous terrain which demanded that soldiers adapt climbing techniques and equipment that were as efficient as possible. These technical innovations were put into practice in the years after the war, as greater understanding of altitude and temperature enabled climbers to go higher and faster. All this resulted in a reserve of well-trained personnel available for large-scale expeditions who were unfazed by hardship and danger (Clark 167). Indeed, the French expedition to Annapurna in 1950 and the famous British ascent of Everest in 1953, which included Hunt and Edmund Hillary, were almost totally made up of climbers who had served in the military during the conflict. The martial terms which many climbers write in, Herzog and Bonington included, are part of the legacy of their service.

The ascents of Annapurna in 1950 and Everest in 1953 were part of mountaineering's new "golden age" (Clark 64). The return to the Himalayas after World War II led to new goals. As historian Ronald Clark writes, "other routes could be explored, more difficult perhaps, but helpful in keeping the sport alive as climbing techniques improved and scientific justification for mountaineering disappeared" (74). In this time period few Himalayan peaks were actually climbed, but climbers at last had the resources to achieve their goals through state sponsorship. The summits of all the major peaks became possible, and were treated as such, due to the advancement of transportation and geographical knowledge.

Bonington belongs to the next generation of mountaineers, a generation which valued the summit but also the style used to get there. As Clark writes, "Tenzing's appearance on the summit [of Everest] marked the end of one age and the beginning of another; it speeded up changes in the principles, practices, and ethics of mountaineering which had been evolving since 1945" (213). Elements of the alpine style began to be used on mountains in the 1970s to ensure speed and safety by smaller expeditions on increasingly difficult ascents. Climbers began to focus more on the aesthetics of a chosen route, the kinetic experience, as well as who they climbed with, which in turn influenced their method of ascent. The martial framework and a dominating view of the landscape were also challenged through a proliferation of accounts. Authority in climbing and writing also became more contested due to the increase in mountaineering's popularity.

The latest generation of mountaineering has been termed the "post-modern" age by one of its most infamous participants, Jon Krakauer. As a climber and journalist, Krakauer witnessed the rise of the commercial expedition and a reinforcement of the summit as a goal in the 1990s. In his account Into Thin Air and through a dialogue with Anatoli Boukreev's The Climb, Krakauer portrays the new generation of mountaineers as being characterized by an awareness of their location in mountaineering's history and romance. This does not mean that past frameworks are challenged or altered so much as that they are used to promote the goal of the summit. The rise of commercial expeditions to Himalayan peaks coincides with and promotes this latest shift. For the better part of two hundred years, then, mountain environments have often been portrayed as landscapes to be conquered and subdued. That this perspective has continued into the post-modern era is linked both to the expectation of what the account will

describe, as well as why it was produced.

My brief history of mountaineering can be neatly divided into two perspectives which leads to my selection of accounts. In the initial phase of mountaineering which lasted until about 1960, which I will term first ascents, expeditions were mounted with the purpose of reaching the summit by the easiest way possible, linking achievement of the highest point with success. As I will later discuss, the French team's primary ascent of the tallest peak at that time and the tenth in the world and its representation in Herzog's best-selling account focused national and global attention on personal success through subjection of an environment. The primary ascent establishes the framework and the expectation; the dominant representation of Annapurna depends on this account.

According to Williams and Donnelly's studies of mountaineering's subculture, the "first ascent establishes a range of sufficiency of means for that particular climb and every climber who follows can and does either reinforce the range as appropriate, and therefore reproduces it, or redefines it" (12). Re-definition is another method of making a 'first ascent', in using a different path up the mountain, or by repeating the initial path in a different style (Mitchell 104). This alternate 'first ascent' also establishes a dominant representation, even if the initial account is relied upon for information. An example of this type of first ascent includes Chris Bonington's expedition to Annapurna's summit via the more difficult southern face in 1970, which nonetheless invokes Herzog's account at several points. Though the mountain had been climbed on the Northwest side, Bonington's account establishes new expectations of Annapurna through his narrative. Therefore, my first chapter will analyze Herzog and Bonington's accounts as a dialogue of first ascents. In considering these two dominant representations, I will be reading for

the expected narrative of the expedition. In finding similar episodic events and ideologies, my analysis will reveal that a level of dialogue between accounts is apparent through descriptions of the landscape, martial rhetoric, and the interruption of disaster.

The majority of climbs are currently located in the phase of reproduction. Secondary ascents are characterized by an expedition repeating an ascent of a mountain by using the first ascent route, and referring to the initial account. The 1978 American women's expedition selected Annapurna as a site because no Americans had climbed the peak, and no woman had been above 8000 meters (Blum 6). In chapter two I will analyze how Arlene Blum, as expedition leader, explicitly invokes the 1950 expedition by climbing the same route as the French and allowing Herzog to write the foreword to her account. Further dialogue occurs through the use of maps, Herzog's metaphysics, a diplomatic legacy with local officials, and the expectations of Sherpas and porter. But Blum chooses to define her expedition as feminist. She describes the American women's attempt on the mountain as being significant in that it is an all-woman expedition in a often hyper-masculinized activity. Annapurna: A Woman's Place is an account written as a direct challenge to the masculine mountaineering subculture. This became possible through Blum's adoption of the signifier of Annapurna and a shifting definition of success. But she still writes using the narrative framework of her precursors. This means that though this third account of Annapurna opens new possibilities for descriptions of the landscape and the inclusion of women, Blum still enforces the past expectations of success.

If representations of the mountain expand further with dialogue, then the mountaineering industry attempts to restrain those possibilities through reinforcing the traditional narrative through secondary ascents. With a lack of first ascents available and in a throwback to the

Victorian era, the mountaineering industry has reinscribed the client/guide relationship to make Himalayan mountaineering, particularly on Everest, possible for those who have the capital, but not necessarily the skills or experience. Better equipment, modern transportation to the base of mountains, and the option of 'paying into' an expedition have reduced many of the difficulties which even Blum's generation of climbers faced. In this age, identity becomes a primary concern: who is a mountaineer, and what do they achieve? On modern commercial expeditions, the guide becomes responsible for all the logistics and the actual navigation of the landscape in ensuring that the client reaches the top of mountain, and thus fulfills the client's expectations. In their discussion of the rise of mountaineering's commodification, Barbara Johnston and Ted Edwards write that the industry and guides enforce these expectations of "enhanced security and convenience" over actual dangers and damage to landscapes and indigenous populations (464). The problem with this ideology became frighteningly clear in 1996 on Everest.

In chapter three, I will analyze how Jon Krakauer and Anatoli Boukreev offer competing accounts of one night in 1996 when the summit of Everest became congested with three separate expeditions trying for the top at once. These were clearly secondary ascents using the initial line which the British climbed in 1953. The reason these accounts were written is due to the disaster, one of the most significant in modern mountaineering. When a storm struck, disorganization in all parties and the expectation of the summit led to the deaths of five people on the south side. The casualties were both clients and guides. Though the disaster serves as a comment on the commercial exploitation of Everest's landscape, the dialogue between the accounts of Krakauer and Boukreev also reveals different ideologies. Krakauer, in the role of a reporter for Outside magazine writing on the commodification of mountaineering, grapples with the history of

Everest expeditions before recounting his own experiences. In Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster, he attempts to engage with the mountaineering narrative and even to expose it to criticism, but due to his paying position he finds himself in a powerless role. The storm, as a disaster, reinforces this powerlessness, and as a client Krakauer must rely on others for his well-being and expectations. Boukreev, as a guide for a rival expedition attempting to summit on the same day as Krakauer's team, is featured somewhat unfavorably in the former's account, leading him to produce his own version of events. In The Climb: Tragic Ambitions on Everest, Boukreev describes many of the same events as in Krakauer's account, but with the professional eye of a guide. The responsibilities with which he was charged change his perception of events.

As mountaineering becomes increasingly available and affordable to the public, there is no reason to assume that both primary and secondary ascents will cease. Nowadays, the near-impossible first ascent is accomplished alongside the routine hike to a modest peak's summit, sometimes by the same climber. The current generation of mountaineers has more awareness of their historical context than any previous one as well as unprecedented access to climbing areas and equipment. These opportunities for mountaineering do not translate into an awareness of the implications and biases of past frameworks, however. Instead, the narrow definitions of success continue to portray mountain landscapes as locations of human domination, where the only experience drawn from the interaction is a semblance of victory. In order to escape these confining definitions, an examination of past accounts will show that mountaineers have always been in dialogue about the significance of their expeditions. While negative aspects of the accounts are emphasized at times, the dialogue process adds meaning to the expedition beyond

the conventions of the dominant representation.

Chapter One: Redefining Herzog's Summit: The Influence of Expectation and Dialogue

The publication of Maurice Herzog's Annapurna in 1951 did more than describe the methods used to successfully ascend an 8000 meter peak. As the best-selling mountaineering account of all time, Annapurna provided the reading audience with a thrilling narrative of adventure while documenting the beginning of Himalayan mountaineering's golden era (Roberts 22). Due to the French expedition's position as the first team to summit a Himalayan peak over 8000 meters, Annapurna became representative of a period in mountaineering history that emphasized the summit as the ultimate goal. In order to represent the expedition as triumphing over nature, Herzog relies on several frameworks to support the progression of his narrative and of the ascent. In drawing on aspects of military organization and the religious sublime, Herzog's use of frameworks manages to construct the expedition's eventual success as natural and expected. The application of frameworks also allows for the construction of Herzog's identity as a mountaineer and as the authority on this historically significant ascent.

When Chris Bonington's team climbed the south face of Annapurna twenty years later, the expedition shifted the goals of mountaineering into yet another era through the partial application of alpine style to one of the tallest mountains on earth. In his narrative, Bonington contextualizes the expedition in relation to Herzog's account and the mountaineering subculture to prove the significance of the ascent. Trying for a goal that has already been attained and represented allows Bonington to define the ascent differently. By attempting for an alpine-style ascent, which emphasizes speed and the climbing ability of each team member over the rigors of the traditional siege style, Bonington creates an opportunity for dialogue about Annapurna. In

using different frameworks, an account of a new first ascent can challenge the dominant representation of the mountain.

In the case of Bonington's 1971 expedition to Annapurna's south face, Herzog's representation influences the latter's account, yet this is diffused in Annapurna South Face by a dialogue of the activity and the landscape. It is these instances when the teammates' voices, in particular that of Dougal Haston, become important in Bonington's account, as they provide a challenge to both authors' representation. Unlike Herzog, who effaces the members of his expedition through generic quoting of dialogue and self-centered description, Bonington relies heavily on the personalities and voices of his team members to move the narrative forward and to discuss aspects of the ascent. A reliance on radio communications, quoted at length, permits the climbers to engage in debate about details of the expedition even when spread out along the mountainside. Individual personalities, with their own influences and expectations about Annapurna, are allowed to be heard and influence the reader's impressions.

This chapter will analyze the occasions of dialogue between and in Herzog's Annapurna and Bonington's Annapurna South Face. The two accounts are comparable in regards to their goal of reaching Annapurna's summit, the method of ascent, and the narrative frameworks which support their expectations. The accounts participate in a dialogue about Annapurna and the activity of mountaineering that informs the reader of each generation's expectations and values. In challenging Herzog's dominant representation of the mountain through the dialogue presented by and in Bonington's account, I will illustrate how the teleological narrative and domination of the landscape are just one approach to mountaineering. After outlining the origins of each expedition to consider the establishment of Herzog's and Bonington's authority, I will analyze three episodes from the accounts: the approach march, the summit, and disaster.

The approach march is usually described as a time of transition by the expedition leaders. This episode is considered as the time when team members assume their identities as climbers through their discussion of expectations and the importance of the summit (Mitchell 68). Approach marches also bring climbers into contact with foreign landscapes and cultures due to the need to travel and transport equipment. The approach march allows the Himalayas, with Annapurna as the specific setting, to become adopted by the climbers as their goal. Reaching the summit is the goal of these expeditions, and this episode serves as the climax of their accounts. The summit represents achievement for the mountaineer and realization of the expectations which led there. Rather than lead to a uniform reaction, however, the summit experience of mountaineers can differ depending on the climber's motivations. Having reached an end point in both the effort of their activity and possible movement on the mountain, the summit initiates a reorientation in perspective. As I have described in my introduction, the disaster episode serves as an interruption to the expectations of the expedition. This interruption causes a shift in the supporting frameworks of the account which had legitimized the summit as a goal and the means to achieve it. With the introduction of the unknown and the concern for survival, there is space for reactions in the account that exceed convention.

* * * * *

The beginning of Annapurna enforces a sense of immediacy and expectation about the expedition which will continue through the narrative. On the eve of departure, the expedition team and its supporters have gathered in a small office in Paris. It is here that the goals and expectations will be revealed to the team members. In particular, the presence of Lucien Devies, as the president of the Club Alpin Francais, the Federation Francaise de la Montagne, and the Groupe de Haute Montagne, conveys the importance of the expedition by delivering a

speech which dispels any ideas of failure. Bolstered by a national subscription campaign which raised 14 million francs and drawing on nationalist rhetoric, Devies describes the expedition as “a campaign of national honor” for France (Roberts 32). Annapurna will not be climbed for the pleasures of the activity, but for the sake of the nation and international prestige.

Initially, it is Devies who introduces the expectations of success: “The Himalayas, by their size, fully merit the title of ‘the third pole.’ Twenty-two expeditions of different nationalities have tried to conquer an ‘eight-thousander.’ Not one has succeeded...Only after you have become familiar with the lay of the land, and have drawn up a plan of attack, will the Expedition be able to launch the attempt” (Herzog 24).

The French expedition is opposed to the twenty-two others which have preceded it due to the expectation that it will succeed where other nations have failed. Victory for France will entail the domination of the landscape and the achievement of the summit. The representation of the Himalayas as the “third pole” implies the importance of success and possible global prestige, as it invokes the nationalistic races which typified Arctic and Antarctic exploration earlier in the century (Clark 127).

When the meeting is about to conclude, it is Devies who stands first and demands that the climbers all swear an oath of loyalty to Herzog: “This, gentlemen, is the oath which like your predecessors in 1936 you must take - ‘I swear upon my honor to obey the leader in everything regarding the Expedition in which he may command me’” (Herzog 25). With this, the authority of Devies and the national influence of his committees are entrusted to Herzog. Using Devies' authority and martial rhetoric as the setting for the beginning of his account, Herzog efficiently establishes himself as the leader. To meet the expectations of this oath, each climber must repeat it in the presence of the others. Though presented in the account as a simple ceremony, the oath

is serious enough that it prompts a swell of emotion in Herzog and frustrations in the other climbers, though the latter reaction is not reflected in Herzog's account. There is only a sense of this discontent in other, unauthorized, accounts of the expedition. Roberts writes that for Gaston Rebuffat, the oath was described in his journal as being "depersonalization...a certain nazification," a harsh opinion considering France's recent history (33). Yet for Herzog, the oath serves as a uniform display of confidence from his teammates, and Herzog concludes that, like him, the other climbers are heading to the Himalayas in pursuit of "a great ideal" (23). The repetition of the oath begins the effacement of the other climbers which Herzog will perpetuate throughout his account.

At this point in mountaineering history, the structure of the expedition is conventional. Mountaineering in the Himalayas was rare, as Nepal had only recently re-opened its borders, and any expedition required state approval and support. As Devies' speech demonstrates, Himalayan expeditions carried heavy price tags as well as national pride, which meant that the goal was decided for the climbers (Roberts 29). Annapurna's place as the goal of the French expedition is due less to its features or aesthetics, which Bonington justifies as his own expedition's motivations, than the fact of its height. 8000 meters is a magic number, to paraphrase Devies' speech. Indeed, Annapurna is not even the initial focus of the expedition, as the French expedition spent seven weeks looking for routes up Dhaulagiri, Annapurna's neighbor and taller by 100 meters. Yet even as a consolation prize, Annapurna is still a first ascent which will satisfy the demands of France and demonstrate its mastery over a globally-contested landscape.

Herzog represents that dominance through his account's claim as truth, which is permitted due to Devies' influence over France's large mountaineering culture. According to Hayden White, the invocation and maintenance of authority are apparent as one of the main

claims to the truth of any history: "Once we note the presence of the theme of authority...we also perceive the extent to which the truth claims of the narrative and indeed the very right to narrate hinge upon a certain relationship to authority per se" (White 22). Herzog's account becomes the dominant representation through this claim to truth, a claim which does not depend on the support of his fellow climbers, but on his relationship with France's patron of mountaineering. The self-centeredness of Herzog's narrative is supported by those in power who made the initial decisions. If there is any doubt in this relationship, Devies's preface to the account makes it clear: "And this book which we now hold in our hands is a triumph without parallel...It is not like any other book. It reads like a novel, but it is truth itself, truth almost too elusive to grasp or to express...You are taking us with you too, my dear Maurice, to the very end - to the end of the ordeal" (Herzog 15). In the preface, the other climbers, including Lachenal, who also reached the summit (and probably saved Herzog's life) are barely mentioned; instead, Devies heaps praise upon the expedition leader. This concern with the "truth" and a lack of distinction between the other climbers makes Annapurna less about the reality of the expedition than Herzog's interpretation of the experience.

Chris Bonington's Annapurna South Face begins in a different fashion. Twenty years had passed since Herzog's team climbed the first of the 'eight-thousanders,' during which the remaining fourteen mountains had been climbed, with the last, Shishapangma, being climbed just six years previously. With all the primary ascents on these mountains accomplished, climbers turned to greater challenges. In Trevor Williams' and Peter Donnelly's analysis of the climbing subculture they found that a new route on a previously climbed peak results from a "dissatisfaction with a previously accomplished ascent" (13). This is very close to the reasons which Richard C. Mitchell also attributed to a new route, though he places more emphasis on the

possibilities afforded, rather than previous limitations (105). Both reasons apply to Bonington, who found himself in 1970 halfway through a career in adventure journalism but desiring a return to the mountains and a potential new career as a professional climber. After a trip down the Blue Nile, Bonington found that “it had been all too exciting; yet it was unsatisfactory, for I had been outside the environment to which I was accustomed, exposed to too many risks over which I had no control” (12). The solution to this personal conundrum and a return to control is a journey to the Himalayas to seek out a primary ascent via a new line. Before the expedition has been formed and with no mountain selected, Bonington takes on the role of expedition leader through the desire to climb, and be recognized, on his own terms (Bonington 29).

The authority of Bonington, then, is of a different type when compared to Herzog. While in 1950, mountaineering, and an expedition to the Himalayas, was prone to bureaucratic processes, by 1970 funding was more available. Bonington's selection of Annapurna seems to reflect this. Devies was firm that the French expedition try for a mountain that was unclimbed, a mountain worthy of being conquered. In comparison, Bonington's authority becomes established by replacing the committee-based decisions of the past with a desire for meaningful success based on his own ideals. Retaining control of the expedition allows Bonington to select a mountain that will meet his expectations of what mountaineering should entail. Annapurna's south face is selected over other smaller peaks: “I wasn't attracted - they would have given me a lesser experience than I had received on the previous two expeditions I had been on” (16). Annapurna's challenges are likened to a greater reward; in this case, there is an expectation of pleasure in the demands of climbing a large mountain, rather than just reaching the summit.

Curiously, Bonington's selection of Annapurna's south face seems to have been almost by default, as it is based on the memory of a photograph. Taken by a friend of Bonington's while

the two were on a previous expedition to Annapurna II, the photo serves as an initial opportunity for dialogue about the landscape. This two-dimensional representation has influenced Bonington's expectations because of its difference from his prior experiences. Once convinced of the expedition's goal, Bonington writes: "I don't think that I've ever looked at a mountain photograph that has given such an impression of huge size and steepness. It was like four different Alpine faces piled one on top of the other" (17). The observations of other mountaineers are listed as well, and they are uniform in their opinions of avalanche danger on the south face. This helps to contextualize the framework of Bonington's proposed expedition as compared to the past experiences of other climbers. Danger, and potential disasters in the form of avalanches, are considered part of realizing Bonington's own ideals, and thus part of the narrative. Because none of the other consulted climbers had been to Annapurna in person, Bonington prefers to rely on prior experiences and his frameworks as a safeguard against this natural hazard. Before even contesting Herzog's account, Bonington has already constructed expectations of success for Annapurna's south face based on prior experiences with altitude and technical difficulty (Bonington 18). The goal of the south face can be achieved because other mountain landscapes at similar elevations have been reached by members of his team. This justifies the ascent of the south face, even with obvious danger, as an appropriate first ascent worthy of recognition in the subculture.

It is Bonington's comparison of the south face to the Alps which is most telling. The French expedition was put together based on the climbers' experiences in the European Alps, and as Bonington's own selection of climbers further demonstrates, mountaineers believe that expertise in familiar, domestic mountain ranges can be transferred to the Himalayas. As this is a new line of ascent on a peak that has already been climbed, Bonington's justifications must

necessarily contextualize Herzog's experience along with his desire. In the second chapter, "Why Annapurna," a brief history of Himalayan mountaineering is recounted in order to explain the significance of the expedition. Bonington begins by listing the order of the 'eight-thousander' peaks in order of ascent, which started with the original "conquering" of Annapurna (28). However, as he proposes a new line on this mountain, and in keeping with Williams and Donnelly's observations, Bonington must express sufficient dissatisfaction with prior expeditions in order to warrant a new climb. Thus the "conquering" of Annapurna's northwest side by the French team becomes conditional, creating an expectation that Bonington's expedition will be different: "[The 1950 approach march] was fairly easy-angled up a huge glacier leading into the upper slopes, but the party must have been tired by their exertions and had very little time before the arrival of the monsoon" (30). While the cost of the French ascent is acknowledged in terms of the disaster that nearly killed Herzog and Lachenal, the northwest side is devalued as a climb through the description of the landscape as having "easy-angled" sections and the fact that the climbers were actually already worn out from searching for routes on Dhaulagiri. The south face, in being compared to the Alps, will be a different sort of climb: "We were planning to tackle one of the most formidable walls in the Himalayas, as difficult from a technical point of view as the Eiger, but twice its size, with all the problems of altitude thrown in" (30). To a knowing audience and the climbing subculture, this particular reference to the Alps denotes both the severity of the south face and the ideals of Bonington's expedition.

The Eiger, one of the infamous peaks of the Alps in the same category of difficulty as the Matterhorn, had seen its first ascent during the 1860s, but in Bonington's terms of difficult face climbing, he is referring to the Eigernordwand, or its notorious north face. Clark's brief history of the Eigernordwand lists nearly ten attempts between 1932 and the eventual summiting in

1938, and a significant body count due to exposure, sudden storms, rockfall, and pure technical challenge (152). Bonington's proposed climb sounds horrific compared to his description of the French route, or even Everest, which he calls "an easy scramble [if it were] at sea level" (17). The denigration of these Himalayan mountains betrays a confidence resulting from experience, but also expectations in regards to his own climbing ability matching the chosen goal.

While the scene in the Paris office provides a brief introduction of purpose before the French expedition is away, Bonington takes several chapters to describe the preparations needed for his expedition. In contrast to Herzog's effacement of his team, Bonington outlines the complementary strengths and weaknesses of his climbers. Each of the climbers selected is chosen for the expedition not as a result of a committee's decision, but through the combination of his friendship with Bonington and his climbing skill on familiar landscapes, such as Britain's Lake District or the Alps. The result of this process is a realization of Bonington's ideal, as he will lead a team of climbers who are confident and permitted to climb to the limits of their abilities. In this era, Bonington's leadership balances between authoritative demands and democratic decision making (Ortner 192), both of which demonstrate how he values the social situations mountaineering constructs. Expectations of reaching the summit follow this, as Bonington relies on all his climbers to contribute to the expedition and the goal.

The pair which would eventually reach the summit are emphasized early on in the narrative. Dougal Haston is described as having "a reserve that is difficult to break through and yet at the same time a very easy companion, whether drinking at the foot of the mountain or sitting out a storm half way up" (Bonington 15). In this description Bonington that indicates Haston's valuable qualities extend beyond climbing prowess to a level of friendship unavailable outside of the expedition. Stoic yet amicable, Haston is characterized in such a way that his

status as a mountaineer is without question due to his being comfortable anywhere on the peak, even under the leader's authority. The other half of the summit pair, Don Whillans, only earns his place on the expedition when he climbs "incredibly quickly and smoothly" an "evil chimney, lined with ice and just too wide for comfortable bridging" which almost confounds Bonington (23). The value Bonington places on climbing skill means an approach to the expedition that, unlike Herzog, emphasizes surmounting the challenges of the mountain landscape alongside the goal of the summit. When Bonington admits that his position as expedition leader does not equal greater climbing skill, it does mean that his authority on the mountain will be shared, and that he is willing to defer to the judgement of other climbers who are leading the route. Members of his team will be able to contribute to the expedition in their own way without challenging Bonington's leadership.

The expectations of both accounts are elaborated during the approach marches to Annapurna. An episodic event, the approach march to the mountain is a time of transition; the goal has been defined, supplies bought and transported, and the first step on the quest taken (Mitchell 68). But climbers are not yet engaged in the activity which motivated the journey. As such, the approach march can be analyzed as a section of the narrative in which the landscape of the mountain is initially encountered as the climbers assume their identities. This is done through the use of frameworks to describe the experience.

In Herzog's account, the expedition's journey begins when they land in Delhi, India and proceed to hike to Tukucha, Nepal, for the establishment of basecamp. This path takes the climbers from relatively populated areas to one of rural isolation. As the team moves further into the wilderness, the hike becomes defined as an approach march as it introduces a military framework. The routines of camp life, such as sleeping in tents and hauling loads, become

emphasized and replace the routines of home. The sense of movement, of upward progress, is consistent as the climbers are always spurred onward by the promise of what lies ahead: “The problem now seemed quite simple; to reach the mountains as quickly as possible and to battle with them” (Herzog 33). This statement is prompted by Herzog's initial view of the Himalayan range, the biggest peaks he has ever seen, yet it betrays an expectation of welcoming conflict with the landscape. The prospect of violent interaction helps Herzog assume a heroic identity.

Herzog's rhetoric also justifies dominance through a religious superiority only available to himself. Siege-style climbing uses indigenous labor to support the expedition in carrying the massive amounts of food and gear between the climbers' camps on the mountain. As the porters and Sherpas are supporting the expedition, yet not participating in it, Herzog can use the account to show how his own activities will exceed indigenous practices in importance. The squalor and ignorance which Herzog notes in the villages which they pass through only confirm his belief that the Nepalese do not use the Himalayan landscape appropriately. When the team procures a guide to lead the way to Tilicho pass, Herzog soon realizes that the man “was just an ordinary shepherd...all he really knew was the way up to the grazing grounds” and he has little interest in the summit (75). Though Herzog wants to include the Sherpas as a part of the expedition, even referring to them as “our climbing partners” when he first encounters them, he denies them any real agency in the expedition (29). The lack of Sherpa or porter agency is in keeping with Herzog's authority in the account. Folch-Serra refers to this narrative dominance as “monologization” which “destroys the essence of the object under investigation” (258). The Eastern religions and practices of the laborers are ignored in favor of Herzog's own values. Even the figure of Buddha becomes part of Herzog's self-importance: “he who had founded one of the wisest and most beautiful of all religions had perhaps trodden the paths we were now following”

(31). Herzog's own path to enlightenment is one of many in Nepal, but even it can be compared to Buddha. As Roberts points out in his analysis, mysticism is a theme which Herzog uses to give meaning to the events of Annapurna to reach beyond the interests of the mountaineering subculture (126). Mysticism can contribute to the expedition's sense of progress as spiritual awareness increases in the rarified atmosphere, which adds further meaning to the goal of the summit. In distancing himself from the Nepalese but emphasizing his own spirituality, Herzog has added another framework to support his account.

The mountains themselves eventually come into view, and Herzog is rapturous in his description of the Himalayas; it is here where the "ideal" will be met. Expectations of what they would see had come out of books and conversation, and Herzog actually fears being disappointed. But "the sight which awaited us at the top of the hill far exceeded anything we had imagined ... This was the Himalaya, our promised land. From now on we would always carry with us this vision" (33). Traces of Christian mysticism continue through the associations of pilgrimage and a "promised land," a place which has remained dormant to the locals and which needs the actions of mountaineers to give it meaning. Shortly after this view comes a description of Dhaulagiri, the ninth-tallest mountain and the expedition's primary goal. Though the mountain is alluded to in the familiar terms of mysticism, it also undergoes a dissection through the constructed 'dialogue' of the climbers. Their half-captured lines of chatter indicate the mountain's possible features, then they lapse into silence in amazement. Roberts points out the effacement of the climbers' voices as a technique which Herzog has used since the recitation of the oath (47). None of the climbers are referred to by name, and their homogenized words, as well as the mountain's physical features, become part of Herzog's monologue.

A logistical difficulty with Himalayan expeditions at this time was that there were no accurate maps of the area (Herzog 24). The heights of Dhaulagiri and Annapurna had been only reckoned through triangulation, and the Indian Survey maps were misleading and did not refer to local indigenous knowledge. Mountaineering historian Kenneth Mason refers to the bind which the French expedition found itself in: "It is a curious trait among some mountaineers who set out to explore new ground that they expect to have a map of it accurate in detail; they like to have it both ways; to be the first there and have had surveyors there before them" (315). The expectations which the expedition has gained from the maps are quickly frustrated in preliminary hikes past the treeline, and desperation sets in as weeks pass in exploration trying to find a way onto the glaciers. Combined with the emphasis on combat, the assumption of the accuracy of the Indian Survey maps led to expectations of the terrain and the potential for quick success (Herzog 46).

But until the French expedition learned otherwise, the Indian Survey map was the "true lay-out." McLaughlin's analysis refers to this expectation of a teleologically 'true' landscape; the map provides the template for behavior, and predicts the actions of climbers (62). It is not until Herzog's team is frustrated by the lack of accuracy that the Indian Survey map is abandoned in favor of the construction of a new map, the real "true lay-out." This new map is one of the few opportunities of dialogue within the account, as Herzog and the other climbers accumulate knowledge of the landscape through exploration hikes and conferring with locals (Herzog 46, 47). As the landscape of Dhaulagiri has frustrated Devies' directives, the creation of a new map allows the climbers to engage with the realities of difficult terrain. Paths and routes are now charted after the experience. The "true lay-out" of the landscape is dynamic, as it is "mapped after the fact, representing the experiences of the mapmakers. [The maps] represent the

interaction of the [climbers] and the landscape” (McLaughlin 70). The information provided by interaction can of course create other expectations, but at this point reality has been approximated through experience. In the account, Devies’ rhetoric becomes temporarily replaced by actual discussions of Annapurna’s features and how a climber may deal with the challenges (Herzog 50). The end result of their map construction of Dhaulagiri is for naught though; the mountain will prove to be too much for the climbers, and they must turn their attentions to Annapurna in order to salvage some success.

Bonington's description of his team's approach march is, in his own words, redundant. My introduction using Bonington’s statement referred to the repetitive nature of expeditions through Bonington's statement, and as his team faces none of the problems in locating Annapurna, he chooses to emphasize other aspects of the landscape. Compared to the months which the French team labored just to figure out which mountain they should attempt, Bonington's march lasted only eight days and has a repetitive nature: “Our second day out from Pokhara can act as a model for all successive days”, he writes, then details just what a 'typical' day might entail (67). This period is portrayed as an opportunity. Bonington writes that the march helps to increase the climbers' fitness, as they begin to assume their identities as mountaineers, and consider the changes this growing industry has brought to Nepal.

As many climbers on the expedition had been to the Himalayas on previous trips, Bonington enforces the repetitive nature of an expedition's episodes. The journey is not as startling or strange as it may appear to Herzog. Prior expeditions have groomed their expectations, and though they may have originally expected the fantastic, this has given over to the acceptance of local ways and unease with Western technology:

...When I had walked both to Annapurna in 1960 and to Everest in 1961 I never

even saw a European. But the present invasion in no way intrudes on the character of the Nepalese countryside, and I don't think that it will ever do so, unless they start building roads. It is the motor car and jeep, the criss-cross of power lines, that destroy natural beauty...The Nepalese villagers have not yet made any special accommodations for [Europeans]. (Bonington 69)

As much as this description evokes the same timeless pastoral as Herzog, it also indicates resistance on behalf of Nepal to signs of development. Bonington remarks on the uselessness of money in a subsistence economy, and even though his expedition grants employment to several hundred porters, their main concern is that they make it back to their farms in time for the harvest (69). Compared to Herzog's self-importance, Bonington's awareness of Nepalese culture represents the expedition as just one event in a busy society. As the expeditions arrive, climb, then depart, the lasting influence of the climbers' "invasion" of the country seems to be minimal. The natural beauty of Nepal will endure because the purpose of climbers is to share the landscape but not to develop it.

Yet the expeditions must have some impact on the landscape, given Bonington's characterization of the Western presence as an "invasion." This is due to the presence of the mountains, which dictate the purpose of unique missions, unlike the routines of a rural culture. When the expedition reaches the mountainous landscape, the tranquility abruptly ceases with the possibility of action as the mountain begins to dictate the climbers' actions. After reaching the high point of Camp III, Bonington writes that "[Annapurna] was ... a mysterious place of cloud reminiscent of those Victorian alpine prints with improbable ice-towers, huge over-dramatic crevasses and spidery arretes" (137). These descriptions contextualize the landscape of the mountain as hyperbolic, and Annapurna's features stretch into the impossible, much like

Herzog's land of extremes. The historical reference to a Victorian painting connects Bonington's expedition, and the uniqueness of the goal, to a time when first ascents were done in fantastic and isolated settings. It also reflects the isolated, homosocial atmosphere which would have been the standard team in such a fantastic setting, as a few men braved the unknown, yet idealized, heights. Through this isolation comes a sense of importance, as the climbers are the only active presence on the mountain which they can recognize.

Part of the expectation of success on either route on Annapurna comes through the combative rhetoric used to describe the climbers' situation. But there seems to be a disconnect between the perceived worth of the experience and the ultimate goal. Herzog believed that his team members were accompanying him due to faith in an "ideal" only accomplished through climbing, yet they were also braving the "grips of Nature at her most pitiless" (11). Bonington describes how when he added more climbers to his team the expedition changed "from a rapid blitzkrieg into a full-scale siege" (34). This martial terminology also seem at odds with Bonington's own 'ideal,' in which the "truest joy of mountaineering" is "being a very small party in the midst of some of the most impressive mountains in the world" (35). In the descriptions of the expeditions we have the rhetorics of tranquility and violent struggle are placed in opposition. The value and pleasure of reaching the summit of these peaks seems at odds with the terms used to describe the effort.

Some mountaineering scholars have previously noted the proliferation of martial terminology in accounts¹. Sherry B. Ortner writes, "the military framework was used to define

¹ In addition the analysis of martial rhetoric by Roberts and Ortner, see also Peter Bayers and Reuben Ellis. Clark's descriptions of how mountaineering technology was advanced

virtually every aspect of the endeavor, including the technical organization of the climbing, the language of the enterprise, and the forms of leadership, authority, and command” (47). In his analysis of the French expedition to Annapurna, Roberts describes how some team members were part of a French climbing club for youth during the Nazi occupation called Jeunesse et Montagne (35). Similar to America's Boy Scouts in “inculcating such virtues as manliness, industriousness, and team spirit,” the goal of the state-sponsored program was to create “an army of true alpinists” (35). While there was resistance to the rhetoric on behalf of some climbers, Herzog seems to have wholeheartedly embraced the portrayal of the landscape as enemy in his own descriptions. Bonington's own use of martial rhetoric indicates a similar tradition, that of the mountaineering subculture, which uses the martial framework in a similar way to that of the French youth group or his own background in the British military. The martial framework comes out of past authors' early definitions of mountaineering expeditions as military operations, yet the martial framework which Ortner describes does not account for that which gives mountaineering meaning: the landscape itself.

Given McCarthy's definition of mountaineering as an activity which constructs a landscape of temporary significance, it must be remembered that accounts are a representation of that interaction. An actual climb is of relatively short duration with few witnesses beyond the expedition members. But in order for a climber to gain status in the climbing subculture, and thus be considered for future expeditions, sponsorship money, and even fame, representation must occur. Mitchell's sociological study considers the endurance of a mountaineer's accomplishment and actions as a “negotiation” through the “symbolic representation of ability

through the demands of the world wars was also useful.

and accomplishment” (83). The account, then, has little to do with the climb as it is occurring, and much to do with the expectation of the representation. The martial framework provides meaning for the climbers' struggle by personifying the mountain into a known adversary, with obvious terms of success and failure. In the words of John Brinkerhoff Jackson, the military framework when recorded portrays “the environment as a kind of setting or empty stage upon which certain alarming and unpredictable decisions and actions took place” (133). Thus, Bonington’s and Herzog's accounts use the term “siege” in order to convey a specific approach to climbing, even if the term does not exactly match a classic military definition. Briefly defined, siege-style ascents rely on extensive planning, laborious load ferrying, and large amounts of equipment to progressively establish temporary camps on the mountain. These camps then become the locations which climbers can temporarily inhabit as the climbers make it past the mountain’s features, or “defenses,” on their way to the top. The summit, as the goal, and the mountain itself resist these attempts at climbing by their very existence.

However, this military framework as portrayed by Ortner is not all-encompassing for either Herzog or Bonington. Even as martial rhetoric shapes the progress of the narrative, the significance of the ascent, and the summit, can also be described in other ways. These other strategies help reconcile the conflicts in the account between the desired dominance of the landscape and the climbers' enjoyment of the activity. They can also provide a more enduring meaning to the expedition.

Herzog's mysticism is a vital component of his experiences on the expedition. Domination of the landscape through military thinking provides the means of achieving Annapurna's summit, but religious rapture is what gives the goal universal significance. As “pilgrims of the mountains,” Herzog has invoked a different set of expectations than if he had

constructed his narrative as a traveler (28). James Clifford notes that while “pilgrim” is less biased in regards to class or gender than the privileged form of travel, its historical associations lean towards the sacred (33). This sacredness limits the possible interpretations available to the reader, and reinforces Herzog's dominant representation. Even the oath taken in the Paris office can be seen as a type of prayer, or promise. As a ‘ceremony,’ in which Herzog's predecessors participated in 1936, the oath carries as much weight in the French mountaineering subculture as the tradition of communion in the Church. A private promise of obedience done in public, each climber must repeat the oath, in effect giving up his life to Herzog's authority and his “ideal.”

Gene McQuillan focuses on the summit experience in his survey of mountaineering accounts, and his argument supports Herzog's use of the term “pilgrimage” in all its religious trappings, due to the expectation of epiphany. Reaching a summit is an occasion of revelation and celebration, and Herzog is not just following the descriptions of Tilman, but also the gushing proclamations of Wordsworth, Thoreau, and John Muir (53). This contextualization includes transcendental writers in order to place Herzog's spiritual beliefs about mountaineering into an established literary tradition. With the experiences of these predecessors in mind, “modesty in the presence of an unclimbed mountain seems an unnecessary and even insincere restraint” (McQuillan 53). In this tradition, Herzog's time on the summit, complete with flag waving and photographic evidence, is the appropriate action to take, while Lachenal's desire to descend discounts the climax of the pilgrimage.

Herzog's revelations can only occur on the slopes of Annapurna, as the pilgrimage moves into real wilderness, a space which no map, save expectation, has been able to reconstruct. Herzog's communion with the landscape goes in hand with his dominance as it points to an expectation of triumph culminating on the summit. Upon reaching this sacred point, Herzog has

achieved what ecocritic Greg Garrard argues is standard at the end of a pilgrimage: “a renewed, authentic relation [to] humanity and the earth...found in a space of purity, founded in an attitude of reverence and humility” (59). Herzog is quick to extend his achievement to the rest of the world, starting with his team members, but this is done through his grace in mastery of the landscape. Once on the summit, Herzog writes: “Above us there was nothing! Our mission was accomplished. But at the same time we had accomplished something infinitely greater” (208). The mountain’s summit is the ultimate high point for Herzog, and from this perspective he can see the significance of his actions from a global perspective. As (one of) the first men to stand on a mountain over 8000 meters, he has transcended the limitations of a more terrestrial view, such as the Nepalese or those at home in France.

By contrast, Bonington relies on his teammates and on-going dialogue to provide significance in his account. In a 1990 profile probing his reasons for climbing, Bonington answers that his desire is partially due to the presence of other climbers: “[On a climb] the expedition becomes a tiny little world of its own with, in microcosm, between its members, all the tensions and conflict that can take place in the larger world” (Gardiner 50). The homosocial “microcosm” is a world in itself complete with drama and success, but it is limited to the duration of the expedition. Even if Bonington's reduction of the world to his present circumstances betrays a conceited view of the expedition's importance, it also indicates a higher regard for his team members and their own efforts.

These interactions are foregrounded in Bonington's account. In contrast to Herzog's domineering perspective, Bonington's descriptions of his experiences support the ecological claim that “no one can change in isolation merely through the effort of a transcendental ego” (McDowell 371). Bonington could not only envision himself standing on Annapurna’s summit

because he knew it would take more than one person to climb the south face. The potential for the expedition to generate greater meaning is due to the number of climbers making contributions towards reaching the summit. Evidence of this focus comes out, again, through Bonington's selection of the climbers. Though he chooses them based on ability, experience, and acceptance of his authority, choice also occurs through disposition. Haston, stoic though he may be, is still portrayed as a dynamic person in the character sketch, while Whillans complements Bonington's leadership as a result of his opposing temperament (23). It becomes clear that Bonington's expedition is made up of people whom he likes and who can meet his expectations of success, unlike Herzog's expedition in which the climbers were selected by committee. In respecting, and knowing, his climbers, Bonington's proposed route and the account will be completed only through a group contribution, which reflect his own ideals.

In further contrast to Herzog's monologization, Bonington's account also includes page-length discussions as a team, the journals of his team members and transcripts of radio communication. These are also examples of dialogue, as they are opportunities for the other climbers to voice their opinions about mountaineering on Annapurna. Throughout the account, Bonington's responsibilities as expedition leader actually limit his possible experiences on the mountain. As Bonington cannot be in two places at once, he delegates responsibility to other climbers to advance the route. The first actual view of the south face is conveyed by Whillans, who offers his own impressions in an authoritative way as the leader totally accepts the climber's judgement. Bonington quotes Whillans as saying that "[The route will be] very close to what we had already planned. I think we'll be able to get around the right-hand side of the lower part of the ridge all right" (79). Unlike Herzog, Bonington delegates such key revelatory moments to others, creating a narrative of dialogue, one that decenters his authority.

As Mitchell writes in his analysis of the mountaineering subculture, “mountain summits are small places with large symbolic potential” (130). As the defined goal of an expedition, the summit represents success. The symbolic act of planting the flag on the peak is the climax of the narrative and a fulfillment of expectation. But as a location, the summit also means both the highest point that can be reached and the turnaround point of the journey. After this height, all the momentum will be downward. Reaching the summit means an end to the landscape; expectations of the mountain have been confirmed through the act of climbing it. Though both expeditions use the familiar strategies of photographs and flags to signify achievement of the summit, the frameworks used to describe the experience vary depending on the perception of success.

When I initially considered the moment of indecision which Lachenal raises with Herzog moments from Annapurna's summit, it provided an opening for dialogue. The contrast between Lachenal's Carnets and Herzog's Annapurna was significant in their rhetoric as well as in the personal evaluations of the situations. But in focusing my analysis on official accounts, I find that Lachenal's voice still sticks out as a challenge to Herzog's monolithic “ideal” in this climactic episode.

When the climbers decide to struggle on, Herzog's narration becomes almost entirely internal observation. Once invoked as reasons to continue, the trials of the past months, and the other expedition members, disappear from the narrative (Herzog 206). Herzog becomes his perceptions, a random collection of physical, visual, and mystical stimuli. These perceptions mix with his expectations of the summit, expectations which can now only be explained in otherworldly approximations: “This diaphanous landscape, this quintessence of purity – these were not the mountains I knew: they were the mountains of my dreams” (Herzog 207). The

Alps, even the present Himalayas, cannot compare to this; quite literally, Herzog's upward march has taken him out of reality and well beyond the religions of Nepal's lowlands, into an isolated, individual "fantastic universe where the presence of man was not foreseen, perhaps not desired" (207). These descriptions of the landscape reach a climax through a reference to the "ladder" of St. Teresa of Avila, a sixteenth-century Spanish mystic who advocated a method of silent prayer as leading to personal ascension (Zimmerman). Though Herzog will continue to allude to mystical imagery in Annapurna, at this point he is very close to stepping into heaven.

It is a heaven of his own creation, though, and conventional success is still demanded. The connections which Herzog makes between his mystical landscape and his expectations suddenly cease when the summit is reached. Where minutes before he had been observing the sky as "sapphire blue" and ice as "crystal," the attainment of the goal reinforces the definitions of success bestowed on Herzog by Devies. This reminds the reader that the expedition had an explicit goal beyond Herzog's representation of the experience. Upon setting foot on the highest mountain yet climbed, Herzog provides the numerical value of Annapurna in both measurements of feet and meters (208). These numbers, more than the rhapsodic descriptions or the cries of triumph, are what have mattered since Devies authorized the expedition.

Being the first on the summit, Herzog gets to plant the flag. He insists on going through a series of poses which Lachenal must photograph, which results in four representations of victory to ensure that they will bring "back records to be cherished in the future" (Herzog 209). Roberts reports that in two photos, Herzog raised the French flag; in another, the flag of the French Alpine Club; and lastly, the banner of Kleber-Colombes, the tire company which employed Herzog as an executive (218). Each shot will serve as support for the framework through its inclusion in the account. Placed among the pages of narrative, these photos lend

further authority to Herzog. While this posing goes on, Herzog is already contextualizing himself and his leadership so as to put himself, more than the expedition, in perspective. Herzog lists famous mountaineers, though not their achievements or the mountains they climbed, as the teleological progress of the expedition reaches its end. Bonington uses this technique at the beginning of his account to justify his new route by comparison to the French's first ascent. Herzog uses context here to justify the inclusion of his accomplishment alongside mountaineering legends, where the mere mention of his name will now connote heroic achievement and sacrifice.

Naming among his “predecessors” British climbers of Everest such as George Leigh Mallory, Andrew Irvine, and Tilman, as well as Alpine pioneers Alfred Mummery and Willo Welzenbach, Herzog aligns his “ideal” with the efforts of these others: “How many of them were dead – how many had found on these mountains what, to them, was the finest end of all” (210). This allusion to death alongside the famous names indicates Herzog's full identification with the expected status that this ascent will grant him, even if he dies on the descent. Though it foreshadows the upcoming disaster episode, these references to death indicate that Herzog is already a legend in his own mind.

Herzog's summit description and the use of names position the 1950 expedition to Annapurna as a significant, stable point within mountaineering's history, even though the expedition has not yet ended for readers (Tuan 688). The use of Mallory and Irvine in particular is telling. The debate continues to this day as to whether this pair reached Everest's summit in 1922, as they were lost in a storm on their ascent; some physical evidence has been found near the summit, but nothing conclusive, and the first ascent is still attributed to Hillary and Tenzing in 1953 (Unsworth, Hold 324). The lack of evidence has not stopped the mountaineering

subculture from endlessly speculating that Everest might have been climbed decades before it finally was acknowledged as such. That Herzog would liken his efforts to the lost pair further reinforces the heroic way in which the summit achievement is represented. Death, if it must occur, is more meaningful in the course of an expedition as it demonstrates a commitment to the goal and the values which support it. Suffering is a prerequisite to enlightenment, but death can also ensure legendary status. More aspects of this perspective are illustrated through the disaster episode of the narrative.

Through contrasts with Carnets, Roberts indicates the full extent of Lachenal's dissent from Herzog's rhetoric, but examples do exist in Annapurna that reflect the desire to turn around. These examples are interjections within Herzog's attempts at representation, which maintain that the landscape of Annapurna is a mountain and not an "ideal." The pair have only been on the summit for a few minutes when the weather begins to turn for the worse. Lachenal demands they go down, becoming more impatient as Herzog dawdles with the camera, yet the leader reflects, "Did [Lachenal] simply think he had finished another climb, as in the Alps? Did he think one could just go down again like that, with nothing more to it" (209). With his impatience, Lachenal refers to the environment's threatening realities, rather than Herzog's satisfaction with their success. Though we are given no opportunity to hear Lachenal's own perceptions of the summit, Herzog's opinion of his partner's demands indicates different ideals. In the account, Herzog's framework values the summit so much that he disregards the present reality. The above rhetorical questions suddenly give way to acceptance on Herzog's part, and as the weather deteriorates he admits that "[Lachenal's] was the reaction of the mountaineer who knows his own domain" (209). This "domain" can be taken to mean a differing set of ideals from Herzog's, as Lachenal's concern at this point is safety over celebration. As Herzog

represents the summit experience in this fashion, he has privileged his own experiences to give the summit greater significance. Lachenal is valued in the account as a witness to the accomplishment, even if he cannot participate due to his perspective. That this domain is the reality of the mountain will be in line with the frameworks used in future expeditions, as Bonington places much more emphasis on the daily actions of his climbers. True, the logistics of climbing the south face nearly overwhelm Bonington's expedition and the narrative, but his concerns are more akin to Lachenal's.

Bonington never reached the summit of Annapurna's south face. Worn out from load-carrying and a chest infection which had grounded him for a time at basecamp, Bonington, as leader of the expedition and author of the account, cannot fulfill Herzog's heroic role. Rather than the escalating summit fever which grips Herzog and pushes him to the top despite his physical weariness, Bonington experiences total exhaustion: "I found it difficult to appreciate the magnificent setting any longer – I had been on the face too long, was surfeited by over-exposure to the same mountain scenery and, above all, was too tired and cold to do much more than keep going, day after day" (245). Repetition of episodes has been a trademark of Bonington's account, yet statements such as this reinforce the hardship of mountaineering which Lachenal's interjections only hint at. The references to an "over-exposure" to the landscape and the cold are symptoms of the weariness which grips the whole expedition. Rather than Herzog's increasingly emotional rhetoric, Bonington emphasizes drudgery and routine as they approach the summit. The chapters "Attrition" and "In Support" mainly detail complications of moving loads along fixed ropes to the highest points on the mountain in worsening weather while climbers become sick. The stamina of most having faded, Bonington frequently redrafts his plans for moving

supplies, and these complicated descriptions which mimic military strategy overtake the narrative.

Perhaps the lowest point of Bonington's account occurs when he must load-carry between Camps III and IV. It is one of the toughest sections of climbing on the south face, and Bonington's imagination takes the inherent difficulty of the pitch and magnifies it to hellish proportions. Rock fall around the route which he must climb prompts fears that a stone might hit him or the rope:

I could only find out by trusting my weight to [the rope] and if it did break, then I should die. I thrust out of my mind a vivid picture of my body hurtling down the rocks trailed by a useless rope, my jumars peeling from it; and then the rocks tearing at me, red blood and brains, falling, spinning, down and down the endless snow slopes – red bloody horror – get a grip of yourself; drive the thought out of your mind. (Bonington 246).

This imagined death draws on certain fears about the act of mountaineering itself and affects the reader's perception of Bonington's identity. There is the shallow trust which climbers place in equipment which can quickly become “useless,” as well as the fear of a pointless death through a voluntary action by taking ‘one false step.’ Finally, the mountain becomes a vengeful landscape which actively destroys the climber, as the rocks “tear” at Bonington's body as he falls down the “endless” slopes, never to be seen again. The sensation of helplessness and exhaustion, only countered by self-control, is enough to convince Bonington that despite being the expedition leader, he will not be able to go to the summit.

However, the pair of Don Whillans and Dougal Haston continue to climb strongly throughout the expedition. On May 27, Bonington writes despairingly that the spring monsoon

seems to have moved in, as heavy snows cover most of the mountain and climbers are stuck at each camp. At the end of the "In Support" chapter, Bonington, concerned for Haston and Whillans stuck at Camp V, goes to the radio to inquire as to their well-being. He is surprised when Haston simply informs him, "we've just climbed Annapurna" (261). This statement by Haston counters Bonington's expectations of the expedition's current situation; as all the other climbers are nearly snowed in, the leader reasons that the pair of Whillans and Haston must be as well. By informing Bonington after the fact, the pair further demonstrate that climbing, and acting, independently is an important aspect in this era of mountaineering and permitted in the social setting. Achievement can occur outside of the planned logistics and conventions. In reaching the goal, Haston takes on the leader's authority in representation and also introduces a new measure of dialogue into the account.

Bonington briefly introduces the chapter before Haston describes the summit bid. Titled "The Final Push," Haston's contribution to the account indicates a higher level of dialogue than found in Herzog's account. To apply Folch-Serra's discussion of Bakhtin to this sharing of the narrative, dialogue is the natural outcome of a difference in experience (259). Because Bonington has no knowledge of Annapurna's south face beyond Camp IV, he cannot claim the summit, despite seeing it in representations. Relying on Haston for a chapter's worth of description increases the variety of frameworks used, especially as Haston has a distinct writing style compared to his expedition leader. While Bonington has included other incidents of dialogue throughout the account, ranging from journal entries of other climbers to transcribed radio conversations, they have mostly appeared as support for his own descriptions of the situations, even if they were not to his liking. Haston's chapter appears directly after the one-line claim of success and ends nearly without any comment from Bonington, although the amount of

editorial control is not clear. Either way, this leaves the representation of the summit and the definition of success completely in Haston's hands, decentering Bonington's authorial presence.

The connections of these climbers to the landscape in both expertise and mentality are made explicit by Haston, who, along with partner Whillans and unlike the rest of the expedition, actually feels in better shape the higher he climbs. From Haston's journal: "Often at high altitudes one's mind is working so hard that one cannot appreciate the surroundings fully. It all came rushing back. The things I wanted most. Big mountains, savage surroundings, difficult climbing, with the body and mind completely in tune with the situation" (265). Haston's declaration opposes Bonington's lowest point. Whereas the expedition leader saw the mountain vengefully acting against him while he was constrained by the fixed ropes, Haston desires to act on the mountain and gain greater pleasure through his chosen method of interaction. Expectation is tempered because climbing becomes the goal, rather than the summit.

As Haston and Whillans begin to approach the summit of Annapurna, the descriptions of this desired style of climbing become prominent, even as it superficially matches Herzog's account. At a comparable point in each expedition, the final push to the summit is accomplished by a pair of climbers who climb independently. Neither team bothers with setting up belays, and neither are they roped to each other for safety. This situation means that the other climber simply becomes a presence on the mountain to the one who is narrating. They are able to observe the act of climbing at the same time that they are engaging in it. Haston writes that "each moved upward in his own special world" (278), and though he avoids Herzog's religious mentality, the perceived isolation is very close to what the French leader observed: "Lachenal appeared to me a sort of specter – he was alone in his world, I in mine" (206). Approaching the summit seems to dictate an ideal of self-reliance which was not applicable on the lower slopes of

the mountain, and certainly not possible with the shared load-ferrying between camps. While Herzog used this isolation for transcendence, Haston uses the space to define his own ideal, that of independent freedom through climbing. In having his “body and mind completely in tune with the situation” and even isolated from Whillans, Haston is only responsible for himself in the moment (Bonington 265).

This desired state of activity seems to not last long enough, as Haston and Whillans finally reach the top of the mountain. At this point, Haston's account breaks completely away from Herzog's descriptions of ecstasy and heroic triumph. Instead of the “unspeakable happiness” which moved Herzog to rhapsody (208), Haston's descriptions blandly counter the expectations of the summit. Every emotion and perception which Herzog invoked during his time on the summit becomes inverted in Haston's account because of a difference in perception of the experience. For Herzog, reaching the summit of Annapurna entails the “consecration of an ideal” and the accomplishment of Devies' mission, so the summit becomes the pinnacle of human worth because it is over eight thousand meters and they are the first men to reach that height. To Haston on the south face, however, the importance lies neither in the height of Annapurna nor in standing on its summit but in the practice of climbing. As his summit celebration shows, Haston's descriptions value the activity, and demonstrate little concern with being first to the top. This ideal connects Haston to Bonington's motivations for the ascent, as a personal accomplishment that can still be presented to the subculture.

It is due to these conventions that Haston and Whillans engage in the expected ritual of photographing each other on the summit, though there is little else to convey any sense of accomplishment: “We didn't speak. There was no elation. The mind was still too wound up to allow such feelings to enter” (Bonington 279). This absence of emotion moves further into

disappointment, as due to cloud coverage the view of Dhaulagiri and base camp which Haston was looking forward to is obscured. The elation of Herzog, which transported him to another heaven, is not applicable here, and Haston's concerns reflect the ideal of the activity.

Celebrations can wait, as at the summit both climbers know that they have only gone halfway. Haston is already preparing for the difficult descent, considering the movement of the weather as evening approaches and fixing a rope to rappel down the face. "The greatest moment of both of our climbing careers and there was only a kind of numbness", Haston writes, before Whillans and he leave the summit as they found it (Bonington 279).

If Haston's description of the summit seems anticlimactic considering the expectations which Herzog raised, then the difference is not solely due to a generational gap but also to a difference in ideals. Another of Herzog's team members, Lionel Terray, recorded Lachenal's impressions in his autobiography, Conquistadors of the Useless (1963), which contains a separate account of the 1950 expedition. Terray and another team member, Gaston Rebuffat, met Lachenal and Herzog after the latter pair had descended from the summit to Camp V. Terray paraphrases Lachenal's description of his own emotional state upon reaching the summit, and there is again an inversion of the expectations and emotions which Herzog experienced. Lachenal describes his experience on the summit in nearly the same terms as Haston: "those moments when one had expected a fugitive and piercing happiness had in fact brought only a painful sense of emptiness" (Terray 289). Terray's interpretation of this description is akin to hero-worship, though, as he maintains the martial framework by ignoring what Lachenal describes: "With what typically French panache Herzog and Lachenal had set the coping stone in this great arch of endeavor, showing the world that our much-decried race had lost none of its immortal values", he writes, reinforcing Herzog's representation of the summit experience and

the importance of the goal (Terray 289). The ability of Lachenal's comment to counter Herzog's representation of the summit becomes lost in claims of nationalism and heroics, and is not given voice in Herzog's account.

The similarities of Haston's and Lachenal's experiences on the summit do match those of other climbers, though. Gene McQuillan has considered the anticlimax of the summit as a reaction to climber's expectations. He points out that there is nearly two centuries worth of mountaineering writing, and that most of it "comes burdened with the expectations of some moment of insight," as the act of reaching the summit is "an obligation which the mountain should be able to 'fulfill'" (51). This "moment of insight" becomes expected due to the culmination of the expedition's episodic progress, but is also linked to the epiphany, and the final goal of a pilgrimage (McQuillan 53). Herzog defined his expedition as such early on through the martial framework, and also characterized himself as heroic, so his acceptance of suffering and frostbite is in line with this mentality. But if Haston's and Lachenal's descriptions of the summit do not contain any transcendental insight or conquering anthem, then they clearly are not about triumph over the mountain. Instead, the revelations within the descriptions are about climbing itself, and how the summit exists, but only as another pitch. Herzog was ready to die alone to reach the top of Annapurna, which could have happened without the urgency of Lachenal, who refused to abandon him (Mason 319). Haston dismisses the expectations of sacrifice and heroism first by relating the sensation of emptiness on the summit, but later adding that he finally felt happy about the climb once he had a chance to share it with the other climbers through the radio (280). While each account offers a different representation of the summit experience, it is clear that Herzog's account is more in line with the convention of finding

epiphany on the mountain's peak. Haston's difference is valuable in indicating dialogue surrounding the summit and other ways of defining success.

Achieving the summit is the culmination of the expedition's effort, but it is not the end of the narration. Though the teleological focus of the expedition has been realized, the descent is also a necessary episode. There is the expectation that in having summited, the mountain becomes a known landscape, yet this is a safety net that fails when disaster interrupts the progress of the narrative. When Lachenal notices a storm rising and Herzog loses his gloves, the decision is made to quickly descend to Camp V where the other climbers Rebuffat and Terray will be waiting. Moments after watching his gloves roll down the slope and away, Herzog observes that the resulting feeling of powerlessness is only calmed by the knowledge that the other climbers are waiting at the below camp (211). The summit attained, Camp V becomes the next objective. But having already passed through this part of the mountain, the pair assumes that it is a simple matter of hiking down, and so fail to tie themselves together or even follow each other closely. Even as the morning's "gloriously fine" begins to shift while they are on the summit, the descent slowly becomes more and more foreboding, as "everything had become gray and dirty-looking. An icy wind sprang up, boding no good" (Herzog 211). The storm transforms the landscape into the unknown, defying expectation. Whereas previously Herzog had stood in his own version of heaven, he now describes his surroundings as unfamiliar and threatening.

The episodic progress of mountaineering narratives dictates that even though most accidents and disasters occur on the way down from the summit, the descent, as Herzog believes, is assumed to be an easy reversal of the way up (217). Camp sites are established with supplies and their locations are known. The terrain has been climbed over and over again due to load-

carrying. Ropes have been fixed along difficult sections. Each of these factors becomes an aspect of security for the climber, a dependable element within the tenuousness of the landscape. But each of these factors can also act as a detriment, as assumptions about the mountain's landscape are now firm once the initial goal of the summit has been met. Expectations still dictate the climber's actions: "Moving into a new map, a new paradigm, cannot be recognized because such an action confronts the very definition of the original map" (McLaughlin 171). Herzog's loss of his gloves, the climbers' complete exhaustion, the decision to descend unroped, all these factors are more immediate than the fact of their summiting, yet the latter is all that the account continues to focus on. When Herzog reaches Camp V, his declaration of triumph is deflated by his team mates, who notice the damage to his hands and the absence of Lachenal, who had fallen down a slope near camp. Herzog's heaven is displaced by the reality of Camp V: "Words failed me. I had so much to say. The sight of familiar faces dispelled the strange feeling that I had experienced since morning, and I became, once more, just a mountaineer" (213). Though the return to being "just a mountaineer" could signify an acceptance of the ideals which Lachenal had displayed on the summit, at this point it indicates Herzog's return to expectations and familiar terrain.

The extent of Herzog's injuries and the perception that the landscape is becoming hostile transform the leader's representation of the mountain, as each aspect of the disaster interrupts the expectations of the descent. What should have been a moment of triumphant return for Herzog to the rest of the team becomes, instead, a realization of their situation as they regard the leader's mangled hands and weigh this damage against victory over the summit (Herzog 215). The expected air of celebration becomes further interrupted by the near-death of Lachenal, whose fall down a slope necessitates a rescue from Terray. Psychologically, Herzog has passed from the

heaven of the summit to the reality of the climbers' plight to a new low, as the storm turns the night into an "absolute hell" (Herzog 215). The climbers make several more mistakes the next day, as Terray's precautions about properly packing up Camp V and carrying supplies down the mountain are ignored over expediency and expectation. "I remember perfectly," Herzog claims, "There were no tracks to show us the way, but it was engraved in all our minds - straight down the slope for 400 yards then traverse to the left for 150 to 200 yards to get to Camp IV" (217). Memory of the route up Annapurna is referred to again and again as the expedition gets further off track. Herzog's representation becomes schizophrenic between what he remembers and insists is the route compared to the reality of the landscape. The charted distances, much like the attained summit's elevation, serve to maintain the expectation of the mountain's landscape, despite the evidence that they are completely off course.

The memory of expectations has to be discarded in order to deal with the unknown:

"Each time we thought we had recognized the right route, and each time there was fresh disappointment. If only the mist would lift, if only the snow would stop for a second" (Herzog 218). Even as the storm increases the confusion of the climbers as to which direction to travel, the riskiness of their situation is magnified by the fact that they left all of their equipment at Camp V based on the expectation of easily finding Camp IV. The climbers have no choice but to continue hiking in circles. This pointless action, from which there is no respite, eventually takes on the same epic proportions as the final pitch before the summit. The difference in the account of this episode is that it is not centered on Herzog; his exhaustion and injuries enforce a passive objectivity upon him. He writes that "I let myself be handled like a baby" as Rebuffat dresses him for the descent and leads him on a rope (216, 217). The actions of Terray and Rebuffat finally become the focus of the account, though the descriptions match Herzog's heroic

perceptions of the expedition. Rebuffat breaks trail “with the strength of desperation and at the price of super-human effort...in the end the mountain yielded in face of perseverance,” while when Terray takes the lead he “was like a force of nature: at all costs he would break down these prison walls that penned us in” (Herzog 218, 219). Though the efforts of these two climbers may dominate the landscape, the lack of a clear goal prevents their efforts from amounting to anything. Eventually they admit that they are lost, and they must bivouac in a crevasse.

As the storm abates, the night spent in the crevasse helps Herzog transcend the reality of the landscape as “absolute hell” and moves him, through his passivity, into a realm of peaceful resignation. The disaster episode has led to a reappraisal of the frameworks of the expedition, and Herzog’s perspective has become more self-centered as a result. “Every man withdrew into himself and took refuge in his own inner world,” Herzog writes, as his own inner refuge centers itself back on the moment in which he approached heaven and the summit (222). The expectations of an easy descent have been dispelled by the disaster of human error and storm, but the supports the climbers are left with are not constructive. When daylight does arrive, a denial of the present continues through Herzog’s passivity. The religious ecstasy of the summit has been transformed into a martyr’s optimism, as Herzog is expecting his suffering and probable death to be part of a mountaineering legend (Roberts 126). The earlier invocation of Mallory and Irving can now include Herzog in all regards. As the climbers stumble further down the mountain, Herzog is content to be led, as death, after so much, seems to be the natural outcome: “Behind them I was living in my own private dream. I knew the end was near, but it was the end that all mountaineers wish for – an end in keeping with their ruling passion. I was consciously grateful to the mountains for being so beautiful for me that day, and as awed by their silence as if I had been in church. I was in no pain, and had no worry” (Herzog 226). Having achieved his

goal of triumphing over the mountain, Herzog reaches a privileged perspective thanks to his passive suffering, and Annapurna becomes a sacrificial temple. Whereas climbing up the mountain demanded Herzog act upon the landscape, descending entails being carried off the mountain and leaving a legacy.

Even if the disaster forced this martyred perspective on Herzog, his whole-hearted adoption of it reinforces the strength of his authority. Because the account has been written retrospectively, Herzog can alter the reality of his experiences so he becomes the martyr, with Annapurna becoming a symbol of his accomplishment. His final view of Annapurna identifies the mountain with its previous religious signification, but only through his accomplishments: “Resting against the mountain, which was watching over me, I discovered horizons I had never seen...There is a supernatural power in those close to death. Strange intuitions identify one with the world. The mountain spoke with the wind as it whistled over the ridges or ruffled the foliage. All would end well. I should remain there, forever, beneath a few stones and a cross” (Herzog 276). As much as the lost, heroic figure of Mallory has become identified alongside Everest, Herzog goes further in his identification, so that the sum of the mountainous landscape gains significance only through his experience.

Herzog concludes his account metaphorically by shifting the representation of Annapurna. Throughout the disastrous descent, Herzog links his possible death with the representation which he has constructed of the mountain. By focussing on Annapurna's numerical value in the climbing subculture as well as the effort required to reach the summit in siege fashion, Herzog's narrative appropriates all aspects of the landscape. When he concludes that “there are other Annapurnas in the lives of men,” the mountain undergoes another shift in meaning (Herzog 311). Herzog universally links man's ongoing efforts at overcoming

challenges with eventual triumph. In this way, Annapurna, and the resulting account, can refer to more than a mountain climbed by an expedition, but to the whole of the expedition and all its episodes, not just their time on the specific mountain (Tuan 688). It also invokes other aspects of Herzog's account which he wants emphasized, such as his suffering and the expected triumph which he felt on the summit. The use of the name in this way, as a symbol for dominance and heroic suffering, reinforces the teleological expectations of mountaineering by emphasizing a willingness and need to conquer obstacles.

For Bonington, the mountaineer's presence leads to the disaster episode. Rather than the culminating series of human errors compounded by atrocious weather which nearly doomed the French expedition, Bonington's teammate, Ian Clough, is the victim of "objective danger", a swift and nearly unpredictable accident. With the summit reached by Whillans and Haston, the rest of the expedition debates whether to tear down the camps and move down the mountain. Suddenly an avalanche, the very thing which Bonington was repeatedly warned against before beginning the expedition, sweeps down the mountain between Camps I and II, and Clough is crushed to death, with two other climbers and four Sherpas narrowly escaping. Though the disaster is over as quickly as it begins, foreshadowing and a tone of foreboding pervade the final chapter of the account, as Bonington realizes that his expectations for the climb may have been harmful to his team. Certainly risk is a part of mountaineering, Bonington writes, but accepting the possibility of disaster is much different from actually dealing with one (289). After Haston and Whillans inform Bonington of their success, the leader realizes that he has another pair in position to go for the summit, Tom Frost and Mick Burke. Both Frost and Burke are allowed to set themselves up for a summit bid two days after the original pair descend to Camp V, though Bonington only gives his permission grudgingly. Bonington writes that "we had always worked

on the assumption that as many people as possible should go to the summit. It only seemed fair, for this is the natural, personal climax to an expedition for the individual” (281). That reaching the summit has become the “natural” outcome to a climber on an expedition makes the decision of Frost and Burke the right one according to expectation, but Bonington's foreshadowing indicates some unease with this convention. In writing retrospectively, Bonington is aware that the disaster has interrupted the frameworks which support risk in pursuit of reward. The mountain is still described as a threat using martial rhetoric, but none of the heroic values can be salvaged from the unknown. The logistics at this point are also intimidating: the upper camps are nearly depleted of supplies, as climbers still cannot move up from the lower camps due to snowfall. A pair going for a summit bid will be entirely self-reliant and, with the goal already attained, appear to be vulnerable.

The descent should have been a straightforward episode detailing their return to civilization, if it were not for Clough's death. Bonington's worries manifest themselves much in the same way as his earlier fear of falling did. The mountaineer, tentatively making his way up the peak, is helpless as the mountain reacts against him: “There was a feeling of indefinable menace in the air. It was as if the whole mountain was ready to reject us, as we were tiny foreign bodies or parasites clinging to a huge, living organism, whose automatic defence mechanism had at last come to life” (Bonington 282). With the activity of the expedition nearly done, Bonington sees a vacuum as a result of accomplishing their primary goal, a vacuum which is filled by the enemy landscape (284). Herzog's descriptions of the storm which clouded their descent are described in similar terms, increasing the agency of the mountain even as the climbers become more aware of the risk and danger the landscape holds. The expectation of the summit met, the mountain once again becomes a place inhospitable to climbers.

Disasters, which Mitchell terms “untoward events,” are usually described by mountaineers as consequences of human error, where “mishaps are created, not fated” (73). The circumstances of Herzog's expedition would certainly reinforce such descriptions, as one error after another compounded their delicate position. On Bonington's expedition, though, the disaster is swift, forceful, and, entirely by chance, only directly affects Clough. Mike Thompson, a climber who witnessed the avalanche which kills Clough, describes the event: “There was practically no warning, just a thunderous roar and the impression of a huge, dark mass filling the sky above...Ian hadn't a hope and was engulfed in the fall” (288). The suddenness of the disaster and the lack of any other injuries or death compound the randomness of the event. Clough died because of his position on the landscape, not his actions, and any other climber could have been in his place. As the disaster is unpredictable, Clough's death is not a comment on his abilities, but on the expedition's presence. Analysed in this way, the disaster episode is reinforced as a necessary, though unwanted, part of the narrative.

Thompson concluded his account of the disaster by stating that “it seemed such a stupid way to die,” a sentiment echoed by Bonington (288). The leader's impressions of the disaster counter his own expectations of the easy descent, and challenge his overall expectations of the expedition: “In a strange way it would have been easier to come to terms with during the actual course of the ascent, but now, the whole climb seemed to have been over, success achieved, the risk passed. And now this” (Bonington 289). “This,” the chance death of one of his team members, clouds Bonington's final view of the expedition and alters the expected mood of triumph. If someone had been killed on the ascent, it would have given further meaning in reaching the summit, using their own version of Mallory as incentive to triumph over the landscape. A climber's death on the descent, however, is devoid of meaning. The goal attained,

Clough's death is just "stupid," a consequence of being a mountaineer and taking on a degree of risk through the activity, rather than any sort of heroic descent like that of Herzog. While lip service is given to risks and dangers inherent in mountaineering, the actual fact of possible death is never discussed or, if it is in the case of the south face's characteristic avalanches, it is presumed that death can be avoided through ability. When these narrative strategies fail is when death cannot become part of the framework or the definition of victory. Clough's "stupid" death was on the descent, and his role was peripheral in the expedition, which means that little can be gathered from the disaster episode save the death of a friend.

The absence of meaning from Clough's death influences the final images Bonington has of Annapurna. Where in Herzog's account, each image became part of a rich interior mysticism that linked his prowess to the mountain's presence, Bonington is at a loss to find any universal conclusions out of his own experiences. The simple ceremony of burial which takes place for Clough at base camp is done hours before the climbers begin their homeward trek. The landscape of Annapurna's foothills become a "vast junkyard" of rotten ice and rocks, unfit for climbing or habitation, and desolate as "the tents had been pulled down, the porters were waiting with their loads and all that was left of two months' occupation, with all its struggle, drama and laughter, were a few piles of empty tins and the lone grave of a close friend" (Bonington 290). Clough's death will not become a defining event of Annapurna South Face, but its inclusion does indicate Bonington's ability to consider and regard the experiences of other climbers as valuable beyond the conventional definitions of success.

Any final meaning that does come out of the expedition ultimately relies on the account of Herzog, who is willing to make those transcendental leaps of symbolism which Bonington, who never reached the summit, does not. In his conclusion, Bonington invokes Herzog's "story"

through a paraphrased quotation of the metaphorical use of the name Annapurna (291). Used in this way, Bonington's expedition can be seen in the way Herzog portrayed his own, as an eventual triumph over a harsh landscape. Rather than being just another climb on a mountain which has already been climbed, it is, according to Bonington, a "breakthrough" as a result of climbing the south face rather than repeating the trudging ascents of other Himalayan peaks. He predicts that his own account will act as a precursor to more alpine-style ascents of hard Himalayan faces. It will be the "start of an era, not the end" and he positions his account as a dominant representation, as Herzog had done twenty years earlier (291). Viewed in this way, Bonington's account reinforces not just the expectations of future climbers attempting their own first ascents, but also how they may view their success.

Chapter Two: "A Woman's Place"?: Feminism and the Mountaineering Narrative

The important aspect of the ascent of Annapurna's south face was Bonington's attempt to shift the emphasis of an expedition from the domination of the landscape by reaching the summit to the ideal of climbing. While Bonington's account expanded the dialogue of mountaineering narratives by including diary entries by other team members, a stronger desire for the team to reach the summit forced the British climbers to adopt and repeat the earlier siege tactics. This method of ascent reinforced the paradigms of past expeditions, including martial rhetoric, and though this did not displace Bonington's goal, it did displace his intent. Thus, despite the death of Ian Clough and Dougal Haston's almost banal description of the summit, Bonington's account is occasionally influenced by his predecessor.

The 1970s would see other challenges to the frameworks of domination through the growing number of participants. The popularity of both mountaineering and rock climbing in Britain had led to Bonington's attempt, and the growing feminist movement led to the increased presence of women in mountaineering. This participation, however, was not entirely welcome due to the climbing subculture's view of women. The advent of women climbers meant a challenge to "the whole social contract of gender relations" (Ortner 195). Many male climbers experienced the female presence as an intrusion into the homosocial space of the expedition. This intrusion on masculine space also caused conflict with the frameworks which supported the absence of women

Prior to the 1970s women had climbed mountains, but their accomplishments were mostly ignored in both history and practice. This was due to the subculture's value of heroic ideals and the masculine comradery of expeditions. For example, in James Ramsey Ullman's

300 page history of European climbing, The Age of Mountaineering, published in 1954, the author separates women's experiences from the men's by segregating the former to a two-page appendix. This brief summary tells us that women who climb are of two sorts. First, there are the extraordinarily rare women who are capable of climbing independently, though not originally, so their accomplishments do not necessitate contextualization with the rest of mountaineering's history; and then there is the "more common -and rather less euphoric" type who grudgingly follow men, usually their husbands, up the mountains (Ullman 322). Herzog's account would support this, as he terms women "the climber's biggest problem," in regards to having a wife support her husband's efforts while still maintaining the domestic space (21). The idea of women being involved in serious climbing was a curiosity until the 1970s, and so remained an anomaly.

But even as Bonington's team was pushing the standards of climbing difficulty on Annapurna, American mountaineer Arlene Blum was attempting to do the same for gender equality in climbing's subculture. As a university student, Blum began making climbing outings with school groups, and her passion for mountaineering eventually led to the Himalayas. Here, Blum found that sexism and paternalism would be more of a challenge than the peaks themselves. Before a woman could even be invited on an expedition she had to first overcome the bias that women were not climbers, and climbers were not women. Women were also faced with other excuses, ranging from insulting expectations about their emotional and physical stamina to lewd proposals (Blum xxii). Ortner's study of this era in mountaineering finds "some of the most intensely sexist rhetoric of the whole century," as if Blum and other women produced a backlash against their gender in the mountaineering subculture through their very desire to be part of it (195).

After receiving numerous rejections while attempting to join expeditions due to her gender, Blum managed to participate in the 1976 American Bicentennial Everest Expedition. Blum uses the opportunity to secure a permit for an expedition to Annapurna in 1978. But Blum's desire for an expedition which matches her ideals also means a rejection of the sexism which she faced in the mountaineering subculture. The 1978 Annapurna expedition would be different. It would be a feminist expedition in its framework and by the fact that the climbing team and supporting laborers would all be women. The desire for such a climb came out of a simple wish, as Blum writes that "our achievements in the mountains should speak for themselves" (xxiv). Much like Bonington's expedition, Blum wanted her team's accomplishments to be valued by mountaineering's subculture based on the methods these women used to reach Annapurna's summit, and not on negative expectations of gender. The achievement of the 1978 Annapurna women's expedition would be best articulated in a space where the mountaineers, who happened to be women, could reach their own definitions of success equal to those of men.

Blum's account, Annapurna: A Woman's Place, is possibly the most famous mountaineering text written by a woman. Published in 1980, the account describes attempts to create broader standards for mountaineering informed by the ethics of second-wave feminism. Along with other feminists in the period who were willing to challenge the ideology of patriarchy through cultural action (Moi 23), Blum's feminist perspective includes an awareness of the mountain as a sacred space and as having significance for the indigenous populations, and a genuine love for the activity and social situations of mountaineering. Rather than focus on prestige, women climbing "for the fun of it" becomes important in the expedition's efforts to distinguish themselves from their more conquest-minded male

counterparts (Blum 188). Blum seems to be arguing that there can be a difference when a woman's body is engaged in the act of mountaineering which affects the representation of the mountain and the achievement of summiting. In her dedication, Blum writes that: "you never conquer a mountain. You stand on the summit a few moments, then the wind blows your footprints away" (vii). If Herzog saw Annapurna as a battle necessitating a "plan of attack" (24), Blum's dedication emphasizes how worthwhile, yet fleeting, the experience can be when alternate definitions of success are used. The mountain is acted upon through climbing, but the physical space of Annapurna reciprocates, and affects the climbers through their recognition of the value of the experience. The mountain is not dominated through reaching the summit but valued for what it provides the expedition members and potentially others.

Even the name of the mountain is given a feminist significance, as in her foreword Blum provides two translations for Annapurna that reflect its role as a goddess in the indigenous cultures (xxiii). The inclusion of these names within the framework contributes to the "moral dimension" (Tuan 694) of Blum's perspective on women climbing and helps distinguish her expedition from others. As another aspect of her ethical framework, Blum's leadership is more democratic and collectivist than in previous Annapurna accounts. Decision-making on the expedition is often a group process, and Blum's account includes journal selections and radio conversations from the team members to provide perspective on the climb, a technique also utilized in Bonington's account. Perhaps most important to the feminist framework is a definition of success that excludes domination of the landscape as a requisite. True, the goal will be achieved by a woman reaching Annapurna's summit, but only through the activity of a community of women climbing together (Blum xxii). The sum of all these changes points to a new kind of account, one which disregards and opposes the

frameworks and expectations of prior expeditions in favor of realizing a collective ideal through a rewarding, yet difficult, endeavor.

Blum's account attempts to negotiate the gap in her narrative brought on by her insistence on ideological difference from prior expeditions. However, in the account the emphasis on feminism as the only framework of meaning contradicts Blum's expectations of the climb. In order for the expedition to reach the summit of Annapurna, Blum's feminism becomes compromised by her practice of authority and the use of other frameworks based on dominance. By emphasizing the feminist framework yet wanting the expedition to match the subculture's definitions of success, Blum creates the expectations that actually counter the stated feminism.

With the recent re-publication of Blum's account in a special twentieth-anniversary edition, Annapurna: A Woman's Place has received increasing critical attention. Ortner, whose main focus is the changing relations between Sherpa culture and Western mountaineering, uses Blum's account as an example of how women participating in Himalayan expeditions affected the relationships and representation of Sherpa culture. Susan Frohlick analyzes gender as a social construction in the sphere of mountaineering, drawing on Blum's account for her arguments that a woman's presence on an expedition is always "contested" by the questions of men (478). Most recently, Julie Rak has analyzed Blum's leadership style in contrast to the other Annapurna expeditions which I have also considered, those of Herzog and Bonington. This scholarship can also be contextualized alongside the studies of masculinity by Bayers and Ellis, all of which further discussions about gender in mountaineering.

As much as Blum's account does provide an alternative to the masculine portrayal of mountaineering, there are some troubling aspects of the account. Written as an account of a feminist expedition, Blum fails to realize that her feminism is liberal in its framework and not as inclusive as she would believe (Rak 36). Like the previous accounts I've examined, leadership, and how that authority is derived, becomes an issue in the face of disappointment, itself a consequence of those familiar expectations of success. The interruption to expectation will be considered through a disaster which resulted in the loss of climbers Vera Watson and Alison Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz. Their deaths in attempting a secondary, yet unclimbed, summit looks back to a prior era in mountaineering, one which refuses to disappear despite the advent of new methods and frames of reference. Finally, the presence of Maurice Herzog and his ideals haunt the account, both in references by Blum throughout and in the foreword he wrote for the account.

There are a variety of tactics employed by male climbers in their accounts that marginalize women mountaineers, in effect reducing the importance of their efforts. This effect can be illustrated by an incident from Bonington's account. When his expedition was stationed at a temporary camp at the base of Annapurna's glacier, the British climbers are joined by a Japanese women's expedition en route to the neighboring peak of Annapurna III. The two groups had matched each other's progress through the lowland villages, and Bonington had been impressed by the women's fitness and their self-reliance in ferrying their own loads. However, this respect is overshadowed by his description of the group as "nine petite ladies and nine Sherpas to look after them" (Bonington 90). These women, though belonging to a legitimate expedition, are considered incapable of handling themselves on the mountain and thus need the protective presence of the Sherpas. That Bonington's team relies

on Sherpas as well for their camp chores and ferrying loads is forgotten at this point, as he further reduces the Japanese women through an additional national stereotype by writing how “we entertained some of them to tea, amidst giggles and clicking camera shutters” (91). This bit of playful hospitality also negatively contributes to the image of the women climbers, as if Bonington’s team had lowered themselves to a level of entertainment fit only for children.

Though the men accept sharing a camping space with the Japanese women, Bonington also makes it clear that the difference between the two parties is more than simply a matter of strength, ability, and intention. There is also a separation due to the perceived gender roles, and what a woman is actually on the mountain for. In the evening, two of Bonington’s team make “a social call on the girls” only to be “shepherded” back to their own camp by the women’s expedition’s liaison officer (Bonington 91). Bonington does not have to be explicit in his implications of what this “social call” might mean. Ortner argues that this denigration of women from climbers to objects also makes them eroticized, as they are absent from the conventional domestic space (220). In an earlier chapter, Bonington informed the reader that all of his climbers, save two, were married, a fact which he attributed to adding stability to his team. This episode, and in particular the references to predation, reminds the reader of the homosocial space of the mountain. Even in the 1970s counterculture, the mountain landscape still provided male climbers the “unique symbolic spaces on which to enact their masculine fantasies,” which made the presence of women a sexualized intrusion into both masculine space and heroic ideals (Bayers 5).

In addition to his sexism, Bonington’s account demonstrates that expedition leaders must consider the accomplishments of the past in order to place their own efforts in the proper context. Because Blum conceived of the expedition as an adventure beyond social

conventions as well as into dangerous mountain territory, her justification encompasses more than just a desire to move beyond what prior expeditions have accomplished: "...As women, we faced a challenge even greater than the mountain. We had to believe in ourselves enough to make the attempt in spite of social convention and two hundred years of climbing history in which women were usually relegated to the sidelines" (3). This justification moves past Mallory's quip in response to the question of 'why climb a mountain,' as Blum extends the goal of the expedition to overcome the restraints of society and the history of climbing culture through reaching the summit of Annapurna. Her expectations for the expedition are therefore linked to a desired reaction from others when it is learned that this group of women will reach the summit. The consequences of insisting on this framework often backfire because of these expectations. As the expedition progresses, Blum finds herself making compromising, and contradictory, statements and decisions compared to her initial wishes. Some of these compromises come about through the logistical realities of Annapurna itself.

The feminist framework is meant to extend to all aspects of the expedition, which includes the selection of porters. The preference for Sherpanis over the traditional male Sherpa seems a logical extension of the framework to Blum. Since women are the climbers and an ascent would be impossible without indigenous labor, why not give Sherpanis a chance? On arriving in Nepal, the team had planned for the Sherpanis to have climbing and English lessons before they joined the expedition. There was resistance at this attempt at equality. In the Nepalese mountaineering industry, sardars are the climber's contact with the Sherpa culture. Often ex-army officers, sardars are Nepalese whose familiarity with the locals, knowledge of the terrain, and linguistic skills allow them to hire Sherpas and supervise them on the mountain (Ortner 14). Ortner writes that the veritable monopoly which Sherpas

had on high-altitude portering and the already-expanding mountaineering industry meant that eventually Sherpanis found themselves thrust into the supporting roles that only men had previously occupied, yet this was still rare at the time of the American expedition (238). As there were no sardars who were women, Blum has no choice but to hire a man, thus compromising the framework of the expedition. Upon arriving in Nepal, Blum is informed by Mike Cheney, her liaison to the Sherpa portering industry, that “your [sardar] hired two of his women relatives. They’re not the strongest, the most intelligent nor attractive Sherpanis I’ve ever met. They’re supposed to help with laundry and washing up, and having them around will be good for Sherpa morale” (23). Cheney’s statement betrays many of the same sexist prejudices which Bonington’s evaluation of the Japanese climbers demonstrated, which includes an eroticization of the subject over any faith in their abilities on the mountain.

The disappointment which Blum feels upon learning this is based on her belief in the feminist framework. The forced inclusion of Sherpas is a consequence of dealing with an indigenous culture which supports a different view of women’s roles and possibilities. As Blum’s framework is located in the North American women’s movement, she “believed in the worth of the individual and the need for equality [but] did not understand that [she] contributed to inequalities based on class, race, and sexual differences” (Rak 34). This lack of understanding meant that in Blum’s mind, the Sherpanis would want the same opportunity as her team due to their common experiences as women and proximity to climbing. But to the Sherpanis, this framework threatened their culture’s industry. When Blum is ultimately forced to dismiss the Sherpanis over the issue of pay, the disagreement disintegrates into insults and throwing rocks at each other. Her expectations of an all-female and hence feminist expedition compromised, and in this case nearly leading to violence, Blum confesses

that “our frames of reference were too different. We had probably been naive to try bringing such changes into their lives” (80). That Blum uses the term “frame of reference” indicates a level of expectation at odds with events, as the feminist framework “filters” an implied teleology that does not know what to make of the Sherpanis’ resistance (McLaughlin 16).

The assumption that the Sherpanis would have welcomed the chance to climb is just one of Blum’s preconceptions that are challenged. Other changes to the framework come about through an attempt to balance traditional definitions of success. Expectations of success manifest themselves early on in the account, which include how to fund the expedition. Because of the climbing subculture’s scepticism of women’s abilities, funding was difficult, so the women created a t-shirt to sell. Showing an outline of a mountain with the risque slogan “a woman’s place is on top,” these t-shirts became a boon for the expedition, as they eventually sold 15000 of them. But even as the slogan “provided inspiration for countless jokes and became the expedition’s motto,” it also reinscribed the eroticization of the women climbers. Blum also writes that all the t-shirt sales “increased the pressure we felt to succeed” (11). In effect creating a higher profile for the expedition in the minds of both the public and expedition members, the slogan’s impertinence implies the assumption of victory over the mountain, an assumption in line with Herzog’s own ideals.

Though partially due to its availability, Annapurna is also a good choice for the high-profile expedition due to its significance in mountaineering history. The trek through Nepal’s villages and foothills to a base camp site becomes an opportunity for Blum to recount the narratives of previous expeditions. The French are credited with pioneering the route up the north side of the mountain, and the disaster which befell Herzog and Lachenal is summarized. Blum chooses to emphasize the difficulty that the French had in finding the mountain, which

makes up the bulk of Herzog's account, but describes their ascent as "rapid," and more description is taken up with the disaster episode and the numerous errors which occurred on the descent (50). This is similar to the dismissal which Bonington leveled at the French. In regards to the British, Blum has little to say, only that they climbed the "precipitous south face" and that the route took Bonington's team up "the most difficult climbing done at such altitudes" (50). Though Bonington's ascent is acknowledged, this lack of consideration by Blum could be because the route the American women will take is closer to Herzog's expedition, and differs only in a variation on the upper glacier by trailing to the east. This line was taken by a successful Dutch expedition in 1976, which "avoided the dangers" the French team had experienced (Blum 50). In this manner, Bonington's expedition need not be directly connected to Blum's, which allows her to define the 1978 expedition as unique and worthwhile without having to match or challenge the technicality of the south face ascent.

The way in which Blum uses the history of Annapurna's ascents is to gain distinction from previous expeditions. Thus, even though the route the women were attempting had been climbed before and through similar actions, the feminist framework positively justifies another ascent as being different from previous ones (Mitchell 138). Not only does a change in frameworks justify the women's efforts, but the recounting of history legitimizes Blum's authority as a climber in a leadership position and the author of a narrative. This positions her expedition as the natural successor to Bonington's efforts instead of the Dutch. As White writes on the inclusion of events in a historical narrative, and the history of climbing Annapurna certainly is one, "the reality of these events does not consist in the fact that they occurred but that, first of all, they were remembered and, second, that they are capable of finding a place in a chronologically ordered sequence" (23). As Annapurna has been climbed,

and accounted, in all ways possible, Blum's account can accommodate these past expeditions in order to present her own expedition as an integral part of Annapurna's mountaineering history due to the variation in the framework.

Certainly there are differences between the French expedition and the women's, but the expectation of the summit and of following a similar route up the mountain blur some of those distinctions. Blum's assumption of difference does not recognize that success in mountaineering is still based on conventional definitions, ones which Blum implicitly supports. Although defining their framework as different, the women climbers must still contend with the fact that their actions become increasingly similar to their predecessors over the course of the ascent. This is partially due to the line which they chose, as the research involved in learning about a previously climbed route leads to actively repeating it in person. When two climbers approach the chosen site of Camp II, one of them is awestruck by an ice formation on a ridge. The climber suggests that their expedition name this beautiful landscape feature, but Blum informs her that "a more prosaic, or perhaps hungrier, climber had already named it Cauliflower Ridge" (85). By describing the first climber, Blum emphasizes the difference between verbally creating the route for the subculture and merely participating in the maintenance of it. The use of the adjective "hungrier" also connotes a greater desire than the women might possess, as if the French, who climbed the mountain when most of the women were children, had consumed the first ascent rather than wait for others. That Herzog originated the name of the ridge and that it is repeated by Blum means that Cauliflower Ridge, and hence the accomplishments of the French, are "kept alive by social support" and will "seem more real if not only the name is used by stories, continually elaborated, are told" (Tuan 689). Through repeating a route, the women's expedition

contributes to the prestige given to the first ascent and justifies the decisions, frameworks, and names the French used on the mountain. That the basic fact of Annapurna's height is known and that the mountain has been accurately mapped translates into individual landscape features being named and the location of camps known ahead of time. This means that the women's expedition threatens to become routine, or at least redundant.

My previous analysis of the Annapurna accounts considered the role of the leader and how they derived their authority. Blum places herself in the position of expedition leader much in the same way that Bonington did, simply by coming up with the idea of the expedition and beginning to secure the means to accomplish it. When Blum receives the longed-for invitation from the Nepalese government to climb Annapurna, she begins to send out some invitations of her own. News of the expedition led to hundreds of women contacting Blum, but in her position as leader she focuses on those climbers who will best deal with the implied hardship. Prior experience is an asset, and one of the most experienced women to join up was Alison Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz. Like Bonington's experience with Don Whillans, Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz is the trump to Blum's efforts at leadership. Though the two had met in previous encounters on various peaks, Blum writes that Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz "seemed to know how a proper expedition leader should behave" (20). This admission of difference also leads to doubt about her role as leader, as Blum is certain that Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz is the stronger climber due to her having reached a higher altitude. Though not in competition, as they have the same goal of climbing Annapurna, there is conflict between the two climbers, and in particular on the question of climbing style.

The French used the traditional siege tactics of the military framework in order to move themselves and their supplies up Annapurna. This was in keeping with how big

mountains were climbed at the time. Though the logistics were expensive, climbers saw nothing wrong with this style, as it could ensure the defined success through reaching the summit. Bonington's expedition would have preferred to make their ascent of the south face in alpine style using a minimum of climbers and little fixed rope, but they were forced to adopt the siege style due to the size of the mountain.

The advantages of the alpine style are in the speed which climbers can move over the terrain combined with a lightweight approach to logistics. A small team of self-reliant climbers attempt to move from base camp to the summit without returning to any camps for supplies. The only equipment and food taken is what can be carried, all of which leads to the peak being climbed in a matter of days instead of weeks. The drawback of such a style is commitment; each pitch further up the mountain increases the difficulty in descending, and in almost all cases a rescue is impossible. Blum finds that her main conflict with Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz is over the question of style.

Referring back to the inclusion of the Sherpanis, Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz's preference for the alpine style is more in keeping with her expectations of a feminist expedition, as she wants to climb without any male presence. Despite Blum's own feminist framework, she finds this question of Sherpas over Sherpanis troubling, as she must admit that the Sherpas are, in regards to physiology and experience, better and faster climbers who can increase the safety of the climb while ensuring a greater degree of success. This schism in the feminist framework between the two climbers is a question of definitions of success: "[Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz] felt we not only had to reach the top of Annapurna, we had to do it in style. She was a purist and did not like the group decision to employ Sherpas and to have [bottled] oxygen available for the summit day" (Blum 21). Despite claiming to want to climb

Annapurna in their own way, Blum's dismissal of Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz's challenges in favor of the siege style indicates a very conventional definition of success which only values the summit. The rest of the mountain becomes a necessary hurdle. Blum actually terms the siege style as being more "pragmatic" (21), and eventually justifies the inclusion of the Sherpas not just over the Sherpanis, but also over other female team members: "Having a Sherpa on the summit team would be less of a logistical burden than having an additional member who would use oxygen for the last day" (76). The masculine presence of Sherpas is supported by Blum as a more realistic way of climbing and summiting Annapurna than the presence of another woman. The evident pressure created by the t-shirt slogan seems to have become a self-defeating prophecy for Blum. Over the course of the expedition, the team decision-making breaks down into a tower of Babel. Blum finds herself acting as an "authentic army general" in order to ensure that the expedition occurs at all (29). The goal of the summit has taken over the framework.

In a literary technique similar to Bonington's account due to the expedition leader's absence from the summit, Blum presents Irene Miller's diary as the account of reaching Annapurna's peak. Ironically, when Miller and fellow climber Vera Komarkova stand on the summit and wave their flags, including a "woman's place is on top" banner, it was a Sherpa, a man, who reached the summit first (202). But this fact, which compromises the feminist framework almost totally, seems to matter little compared to definable success, perhaps due to the cultural perception of the Sherpas. Since the dismissal of the Sherpanis, Blum's descriptions of the Sherpas increase the sense of the women's superiority. Despite the gender of the Sherpas, throughout the account they are criticized for being childish and demanding. Given the relative happiness of the women during the ascent, the demands of the Sherpas for

more food, better equipment, and more rest days leads the women to ridicule them as an expedition joke (Blum 182). Even though the Sherpas are retained for the increased safety they provide, their non-white status complicates their masculinity, which reduces the concern some of the women have over the Sherpa presence. Infantilization is a common strategy to regulate the other, according to Bayers (86), and here Blum uses the technique to ignore the Sherpas' contributions due to their status as indigenous labor. With the masculine presence dismissed, the women are free to partake in the conventional summit celebrations. Rather than the personal satisfaction which the feminist framework expounded and the engagement with the physicality of the mountain, the waving of flags and other summit celebrations reduce Annapurna's challenges to a "backdrop" for what really matters (McDowell 379). Blum's opinion is that with the summit reached, the mountain has been climbed, and the women's expedition a success.

Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz did not share Blum's view. No sooner had the summit party reached Annapurna's peak than Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz and Vera Watson began to focus on a first ascent to Annapurna's secondary summit, which was beyond what was originally planned. This decision by Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz directly countered Blum's authority, as the expedition leader wanted everyone off the mountain since the summit has been reached and most of the Sherpas exhausted by the effort. If another ascent was to occur, it would happen without Sherpa support. This was, however, what Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz wanted, as reminding Blum what the feminist framework for the ascent could have been: "...this attempt is what our expedition is all about - a real all-woman team. No Sherpas, little oxygen" (Blum 194). Perhaps reminded that the framework provided the inspiration for the expedition, Blum agrees to support Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz's version of a "real" ascent by

permitting the climbers their attempt. After all, rather than simply repeat the accomplishments of past expeditions, this proposed ascent on Annapurna's secondary peak will be an actual first ascent, and if it is done in the method proposed, it will, in the words of Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz, be a "coup" by "making the climbing world sit up and take notice" (Blum 194). Blum describes herself as being more concerned with their safety and the effect this attempt will have on the rest of the team's descent (196). Concerned with the lack of Sherpa support, Blum nonetheless allows the two climbers their chance at a different definition of achievement. Blum also calls Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz a "purist" for a second time, which is a title that the leader does not share. The label of "purist" connotes a different set of ideals and definitions, ones more in line with Haston's independence or Lachenal's workman-like approach to danger. Blum could be criticizing Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz through the label as it is not in line with the feminist framework, but rather masculine individuality and dismissal of group concerns (Bayers 132). Standing on the summit means little to Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz if she is not satisfied by the means with which she got there, which includes the help of men.

One of Blum's reasons for wanting to include the Sherpas on the expedition is the increased safety they would provide. While a Sherpa's physical traits ensure a higher degree of success for the expedition, Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz wants the uncertainty and danger of an unsupported climb to increase her sense of accomplishment. This uncertainty, combined with the feminist framework, actually implies a different set of expectations than that of Blum. When Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz and Watson do leave for the secondary summit, Blum finds herself having to rely on the climbers' prior climbing experiences for comfort. Both Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz and Watson had reached the summits of peaks just as difficult

(though not as high) as Annapurna in the past, so Blum has little choice but to rely on their knowledge and experience to keep them safe on their hike up to Camp V. But after the two climbers fail to reappear the next day, Blum becomes frightened that something has happened. From the safety of a tent at Camp II, Blum writes that “on many Himalayan expeditions, after one team successfully reaches the summit, the momentum is all downward. The rest of the team is tired, the danger suddenly seems unjustifiably great” (212). This description shifts the paradigm of the climb. With conventional success achieved, another attempt at a different goal outside of the framework changes the perception of the mountain. Rather than be seen as a cause of further celebration, the secondary ascent becomes a location of distress and transforms the mountain into a place beyond expectation. The “beautiful and challenging arena” is now a place of danger due to the climbers’ lack of knowledge.

When neither Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz nor Watson are seen for two days after setting out for the secondary summit, Blum begins to suspect disaster. Using binoculars and telephoto lens from the lower camps to scour the top of the mountain, Blum waits in “agony” and she actively begins to question her decision, or lack of it, in allowing the two climbers to go ahead. As in the other accounts, the disaster episode provokes a response from the climbers that assumes maliciousness on behalf of the mountain. Avalanches are noted with increasing frequency, and any sign of snow or wind seems like a bad omen. Annapurna is vilified; Blum wonders if the mountain has “given us the summit, [only to] take away our lives” (216). Her descriptions reflect this new perspective. When the Sherpas do recover from the initial summit push and have sufficient energy to return to Camp V to search for the missing climbers, the discovery of the bodies of Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz and Watson makes them retreat down the mountain “as though chased by evil spirits” (219). The personification

of Annapurna in such a way contradicts Blum's feminist framework, but then the experience of death is much more tangible, and personal, than any discussion of climbing styles. Blum writes: "Occasionally I felt waves of elation that we had actually succeeded, had reached the top of Annapurna, but mostly I was filled with despair" (222). The achievement of the summit by conventional means pales when compared to what has been lost and what has been taken. There is little discussion in retrieving the bodies of the two climbers, and the first women's expedition to climb a mountain over 8000 meters is forced to descend.

Once at base camp and in the process of packing up, Blum describes how when she reaches the meadows below the glacier, she had "felt myself on a distinct edge: on one side was the abyss of falling snow, burial, death; on the other side was life and a renewed appreciation of its value" (229). Life, in all its forms, takes on a greater meaning at the end of an expedition, maybe more so in the wake of a failed alpine attempt. This proximity of death in the mountain environment shows other climbers that it could happen to them at any moment. Annapurna, a mountain environment, will remain constant and cold, along with the bodies of Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz and Watson, while Blum and the rest of the expedition must necessarily move in a different direction.

The edge Blum describes above seems more in line with Herzog's perception of Annapurna than a conclusion to an experience supported by feminism. According to this division, climbing a mountain puts a person in an environment in which impersonal death can occur through the risks of pursuing a goal. Intruding in such an environment with a desire to climb demands a perspective that is aware of the mundane life that the climber is leaving, a life that becomes more significant due to its absence from the mountain's threats. The reward of reaching the summit, then, must be worth as much as the life which the climber left.

Rather than the communion with the mountain through activity which the feminist framework supports, this division concludes Blum's adoption of an older framework, one built on expectations of reward through hardship and the domination of an environment that denies life. The final lines of Annapurna: A Woman's Place are thus a reiteration of Herzog's metaphysical conclusion, as Blum directly quotes the French expedition leader's now-familiar phrase. But if Herzog claims that there are other Annapurnas in the lives of men, Blum adds that there must be other such challenges in the lives of women as well (232). In adding onto Herzog's statement, Blum has not quite avoided the issues of dominating a mountain through reaching the summit, but merely expanded the number of participants.

The explicit use of Herzog's claim at the end of Blum's account reinforces the combative framework which was lurking throughout. Unable to draw any meaningful conclusions from the deaths of her companions, Blum opposes herself and her team against the mountain, sometimes in martial terms. Another, older, level of meaning has been added to Blum's claims to be acting as the "authentic army general" in her leadership, as well as her focus on the summit. The fate of the second summit team does little to console the families they left behind, but it does reinscribe the ideal of sacrifice in order to dominate a landscape. The use of Herzog's words to conclude the account also reinforces the man's association with Annapurna, especially as he was asked by Blum to write an introduction to the account.

The introduction by Herzog conveys a different framework than the espoused feminist one, and it is what is first presented to the reader. Overall, Herzog is quite supportive of the expedition and rails against the sexism of the climbing community and society at large which would prevent such opportunities for women. But this emotional diatribe to prejudice becomes limited and even damaging when Herzog writes "why shouldn't women be chiefs of

state, Nobel prize winners, heads of multinational corporations, legendary heroines” (Blum xi). This perspective reflects a troubling expectation similar to that which Blum had in regards to the Sherpanis. Rather than have women achieve success on their own terms, which was one of the intentions of the expedition, Herzog defines success as women being able to reach the same level as men. Success is conventionally defined, a definition which Blum began to adopt as the goal of the summit overtook the feminist framework.

The framework and terms may be the only ones available to Herzog, even as he seems to recommend other ways of thinking. After arguing for women to be able to approach his level, Herzog commends the women’s expedition for “conquering their Annapurna” as the expedition was an “act of courage and sacrifice performed with passion” (Blum xii). This endorsement of the expedition links the women’s efforts to the combative framework and epic scale even as it keeps their achievement at distinct odds from the French expedition’s accomplishment. The activity of climbing once again becomes tied to the mystical ideals introduced by the lack of meaning in the wake of World War II. Domination of a landscape by planting a flag demonstrates more than reaching the summit in a satisfactory style. However the women did reach the summit, though, it is not permitted to rival the accomplishments of Herzog’s expedition. The women have clearly conquered “their” Annapurna, which can be the personal satisfaction inherent in difficult personal challenges, but it cannot be the physical Annapurna of history books. That peak was climbed and conquered by Herzog, and ensures a definition of success far beyond what any woman can aspire to or repeat.

In light of the introduction, Blum’s slow adoption of Herzog’s framework makes a certain type of sense. For something as lasting and impartial as a mountain, it is difficult to

measure any gains, though the losses are obvious enough. Using a framework that credits conventional success in terms of domination is easier to convey to the climbing subculture. Certainly, the deaths of Vera Watson and Alison Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz were terrible to contemplate for the rest of the team and the reader. But when Herzog invests those deaths with the assumed glory of the military framework and does not even refer to them by name, what Annapurna: A Woman's Place leaves us is with another sacrifice in the name of the "ideal."

Chapter Three: A Storm of Confusion: Disaster and the Modern Mountaineering Industry

In 1985, Dick Bass, a fifty-five year old amateur mountaineer, successfully became the first person to climb all Seven Summits. Bass was able to accomplish this feat mainly thanks to the freedom his substantial income allowed him. Rather than being the most difficult peaks in the world and necessitating superior mountaineering skills, the Seven Summits are, to some degree, a question of logistics and travel. As the tallest peaks on each continent, the Seven Summits vary in actual difficulty, ranging in height from Australia's Kosciusko at 2228 meters to the tallest of them all, Mount Everest at 8848 meters. Having the money to afford such a venture, Bass found the means to climb Everest in guide David Breashears, who led his client to a triumphant finish at the top of the world. Bass described his accomplishments in an account titled Seven Summits (1988). Journalist Jon Krakauer writes that the account inspired “a swarm of other weekend climbers to follow in [Bass'] guided bootprints, and rudely pulled Everest into the post-modern era” (22).

The method by which Bass accomplished the Seven Summits serves as context for the state of mountaineering in 1996. Krakauer makes the above comment in his own famous account, Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster (1997), which was written to represent his own experiences as a climber and journalist on a modern expedition. This expedition was one of three which were attempting to reach Everest's summit, the coveted third pole of the world, on the afternoon of May 10th. When a storm blew in, the disaster resulted in five deaths on Everest's south side and illustrated that in the few decades since Herzog had reached Annapurna's summit, mountaineering had become supported by a world-wide industry. Technical advances in equipment, fabrics, nutrition, medicine, and

transportation now mean that preparing for an expedition and the necessary travel time can all be done in weeks (often less), compared to the months which expeditions took in the past. For the price of joining a commercial expedition, a guide deals with all the logistical issues and provides the expertise to progress up the mountain. These changes, combined with the income of a growing leisured class, means that mountaineering has become more accessible. A statistic from Johnston and Edwards illustrates the distinction: in 1978, the same year as Blum's Annapurna expedition, 500 people attempted to climb Alaska's Mt. McKinley, the tallest point in North America. In 1992, 500 people reached the summit in one day, with many of them being guided (463).

That someone paying for the opportunity to reach the tallest points on each continent is enough to “rudely” shift the ideology of mountaineering into “the post-modern era” indicates a failure to Krakauer. His concern stems from the fact that the mountaineering ideals which supported his original involvement in the subculture are disappearing through its industrialization. Along with this change in frameworks comes a change in the climber's identity. As Bass' use of income demonstrated, skill is no longer the defining factor in reaching the summit of a mountain. Along with this, the resurgence of guides in this era of mountaineering attests to a monetary influence that alters the traditional authority structures of the expedition.

By 1996, most peaks in the world had been climbed, along with their distinctive faces and features. There were few first ascents left, but this does not seem to be an issue for many climbers who were happy to climb mountains by familiar, and extremely established, routes. The absence of concern for a first ascent, or attempting to re-define a past ascent through a

new approach, does not seem to lessen the accomplishment which many climbers feel. Rather, the reproduction of famous ascents in practice and accounts “sustains the mountaineering community in ... reproducing its lore and introducing newer generations to the addictive, adrenalin-laden sport” (Johnston and Edwards 468). In modern accounts such as that of Bass, the summit still takes priority as goal, regardless of the means used to reach it. In this way climbers re-inscribe the value of domination over the landscape, but it is a participatory accomplishment, and a demonstration of identification with the subculture.

As in previous generations, climbers still publish accounts to contextualize their expeditions. With the bulk of first ascents accomplished, modern accounts attempt to apply alternate frameworks to their expeditions in order to distinguish their accomplishments, much as Blum did with her all-women expedition. The accounts which these climber’s actions mimic have become supported by an industry which uses expectations conveyed by past ascents to sell the possibility of a summit victory . Along with the tourism divisions in China and Nepal, mountaineering outfitting companies provide all that is necessary to make an expedition possible, which includes frameworks and definitions of victory that romantically refer to mountaineering’s mythology (Beedie and Hudson 635). Promising the experience of a lifetime, these companies combine their expertise with the clients' funds and determination to reach the desired summit (Rosen 161).

The expectations of Blum and Bonington both became compromised in the course of their expedition due to logistics and the need to meet a goal. Through this, the proposed frameworks of their expeditions changed and lead to a repetition of earlier ideologies, mainly of Herzog's martial rhetoric. Yet even within this repetition, the disaster episode can interrupt

the teleological progress of the narrative. In prior accounts, the disaster occurs at the end of the expedition, and especially for Blum and Bonington, seems to point towards a question for the mountaineering subculture which cannot quite be articulated. How can the summit be justified if the loss of life is probable? The disaster seems to re-introduce the unknown into the expedition and counter a climber's expectations. Though an accepted part of the mountaineering reality and the narrative, a disaster shifts the expedition's framework from supporting the summit attempt to a new situation with severe limitations. By analyzing the disaster as the primary event of the ascent and central to the narrative, rather than the summit, there is an opportunity for a better examination of what influence this interruption has on the entire expedition. The disaster re-introduces the unknown into the expedition and counters a climber's expectations. In the context of a profit-driven mountaineering industry, the accounts derived from events during the 1996 Everest disaster led to a re-appraisal of the climber's authority, the formation of a person's identity as a climber, and the perception of the mountain. Of these re-appraisals, the question of identity becomes the most troublesome in modern accounts due to the divisions of labor and the ways a climber's role on the mountain is defined. From these considerations, the representation of the mountain also changes to reflect the expectations of climbers who want to be on the top of the world, regardless the cost.

This "post-modern" era of climbing is more aware of its position in mountaineering's history than any before. The amount of available literature has ensured an access to the subculture's values, heroes and myths, be it in the form of guides, glossy magazines, newsletters, or websites². Implicated through his role as a journalist in this industry, Krakauer

²There are several periodical magazines devoted to climbing, with Rock + Ice and

was supposed to be writing a comment on commercially-guided expeditions to Everest. Into Thin Air actually began as an expose for Outside magazine, when a disaster on the day of the summit attempt interrupted Krakauer's expedition and transformed it into something else.

The success of Into Thin Air went well beyond the subculture, and propelled the publishing of other accounts related to the disaster. Some were written as explanatory efforts, in an attempt to understand their role in the events, such as climber Beck Weathers' Left For Dead: My Journey Home from Everest (2001). A member of Krakauer's expedition who paid for the opportunity to climb, Weathers was literally left for dead after becoming lost during the night after reaching Everest's summit. Like Weathers, Matt Dickinson's The Other Side of Everest: Climbing the North Face Through the Killer Storm (1997), details the author's experiences on the south side of the mountain during May 10th and his subsequent involvement in a rescue. Either of these accounts would offer a fine contrast with Krakauer's impressions of the disaster and an occasion for dialogue about modern mountaineering. Shortly after Into Thin Air came out, however, Anatoli Boukreev, a guide from the second expedition attempting to reach Everest's summit, published his own account. This was mainly written as a response to Krakauer's. Throughout Into Thin Air, Krakauer portrays Boukreev's actions as being arrogant and borderline negligent towards his fellow mountaineers. The impression a reader

Climbing having the largest circulation in North America. The website www.drtopo.com is a fine example of the climbing community capitalizing on the internet: the site acts as a host for a North American bouldering guidebook database. Membership to the Alpine Club of Canada includes a bi-monthly copy of the national office's Gazette, while the Thunder Bay section also publishes their own newsletter, Outcrops, three times annually.

gains of Boukreev is contested in his own account The Climb: Tragic Ambitions on Everest (1997). Attempting to justify his actions during the night of May 10, Boukreev also focuses on the disaster as the main event of the narrative.

The critical evaluation of mountaineering accounts as texts partially came about from Krakauer's success, with Into Thin Air becoming a bestseller. In addition to recent evaluations of the mountaineering industry in disciplines such as leisure studies, outdoor recreation, and tourism studies in which Krakauer's context is explained and chronicled, Into Thin Air has been studied using a variety of critical perspectives. Both Stephen Slemon and Peter Bayers have used post-colonial theory to consider the role of empire and masculinity in Krakauer's account. The account has also been analyzed in terms of its employment of literary devices. Katherine Ericson applied an ecocritical perspective to the account in order to examine Krakauer's metaphors for the mountain; Gene McQuillan evaluated the account's claim as a tragedy in the traditional sense of character and action; and John Trombold has explored Krakauer's narrative for the themes of hubris and the reading public's reaction to social elitism³. These studies will be used as a context for my arguments about Into Thin Air even if they don't consider the dialogue as presented by Boukreev.

The disaster itself has nearly become as famous as the circumstances leading up to it. Mountaineering historian Walt Unsworth writes that "once it became apparent that mountaineers were prepared to pay huge sums of money to attempt Everest, the authorities in China and Nepal abandoned any pretense of proper control ... At times, [base camp on the north and south sides] resembled a three-ring circus" (Everest 533). Along with the

environmental abuse inherent in overcrowding, the amount of activity meant that there was no isolation for any expedition and clients and climbers alike had to go along with whatever else was happening on the mountain. With only a small weather window in which it was possible to summit Everest, guiding services attempted to meet the demands of their clients, which led to several expeditions trying for the summit on the same day by the same route. By 1996, Everest was considered a peak for the masses, being mapped out with its dangers catalogued and known. As Scott Fischer, the expedition leader for the Mountain Madness commercial expedition tells Krakauer, “experience is overated. It's not the altitude that's important, it's your attitude...We've got the big E figured out, we've got it totally wired...we've built a yellow brick road to the summit” (Krakauer 66). The result of this is that the majority of climbers are present by virtue of paying for the privilege to climb, which led to a crowded situation in which a few skilled guides were charged with meeting the expectations of many clients with little or no high-altitude climbing experience. Thanks to the claims of the industry, clients expect a stabilized mountain as it has been represented in past accounts, rather than a dangerous, uncontrollable environment. Weathers is quoted in Krakauer's account as saying that a client could expect to climb Everest “assuming you're reasonably fit and have some disposable income,” which assumes that only a moderate level of expertise is needed to conquer the summit (23).

Shortly after midnight on May 10th, the clients of the Mountain Madness and Adventure Consultants expeditions prepared for the summit. The amount of time varied for each climber moving from Camp IV to the south summit, but as the morning turned to afternoon a bottleneck began forming at the Hillary Step, an exposed piece of rock which

requires technical climbing and is perhaps the most difficult section of the whole route. Though the Hillary Step was insured with a fixed rope for clients to ascend, the various stages of exhaustion meant that clients were sometimes waiting hours for their turn to ascend, slowly using up their vital supplies of bottled oxygen. Even worse, as clients struggled to get up the rope, others who had reached the summit struggled to get down. Krakauer, one of the first to reach the summit, was on his way down, and had almost returned to Camp IV when the storm began. Boukreev was not that far behind Krakauer, but was beginning to become concerned with the number of clients still trying for the summit as afternoon turned to evening. Earlier in the trip, expedition leaders Rob Hall and Scott Fischer had made a point of instilling in their clients respect for their orders. As such, a turn-around time was given to clients, at which point they would be required to return to Camp IV for safety regardless of whether they had reached the summit. A question of logistics, the turn-around time is supposed to allow sufficient daylight to return to camp and remind clients that their lives are worth more than reaching the summit. On both expeditions, however, there was no enforcement of this turn-around time and radio communication was almost abandoned. In the late afternoon, well after everyone should have descended, clients, guides, and leaders alike were still strung out along the Hillary Step when the storm struck. For clients struggling to get either up or down the Hillary Step and being out of communication with their guides the situation quickly became deadly. The confusion of the clients was compounded by miscommunication from the guides, and exacerbated by a lack of available oxygen.

Boukreev, who had descended to the safety of Camp IV with the first batch of clients, shouldered some reserves in his pack and attempted to return to the fixed ropes to gather what

clients he could. The terrain of Everest, the storm, even his own equipment worked against the guide, as he struggled in the darkness to find some sign of familiarity: "...my power [i.e. stamina] was almost gone. I took off my pack, sat on it, and put my head into my hands, trying to think, trying to rest...The wind is driving snow into my back, but I am almost powerless to move" (168). This resignation was not permanent, though, as later on Boukreev receives directions from other climbers and is able to make it to the base of the fixed ropes. As the only guide with any energy left, Boukreev describes a wasteland at Camp IV. Going from tent to tent looking for additional assistance, Boukreev tells how "nobody answer. Very quiet" (189). Boukreev's rescue attempts pull him in several directions, but efforts are minimized by the severity of the storm. After running out of oxygen above Camp IV, Krakauer had barely made it to his tent as the storm increased. He would remain nearly comatose until morning and was unable to aid in either Boukreev's rescue attempts or any others: "Oblivious to the tragedy unfolding outside in the storm, I drifted in and out of consciousness, delirious from exhaustion" (Krakauer 208). Krakauer would not grasp the extent of the situation until he regained consciousness the next day. If not for the rescue efforts of other expeditions waiting for their summit opportunities, the number of casualties would have been much higher.

The industry of guiding clients to the tops of mountains was adapted in the Himalayas from the system in place in the European Alps. Since the early 1800s, climbers had been paying those with more experience and knowledge of the mountain environment to lead them to the summit. In effect industrializing the activity of mountaineering, the guide's role in the Alps was restricted mostly to labor, similar to the role Sherpas would occupy in Himalayan

climbing: “The climbers planned the strategy and the guides undertook the tactics. They selected the line to follow and did the hard work of step-cutting” (Unsworth, Hold 74). The fact that many of these guides had questionable climbing abilities did not matter in the context of the Alpine climbing system; convention made it unthinkable, except for a few exceptional climbers, to not use the guiding service up to World War One. But the attempted reproduction of the Alpine guiding system in the Himalayas becomes difficult when one considers the logistics needed on the largest peaks in the world. Unlike the Himalayas, many Alpine peaks can be scaled in a day, and provisions can be limited to what can be easily carried in case of emergency due to the proximity of urban centers and a pastoral economy (Johnston and Edwards 461). Most importantly, Alpine peaks do not require acclimatization, which means that the local guides, even if they lack technical expertise can avoid the compounded difficulties of oxygen deprivation.

This distinction in the scale of Himalayan peaks means that the mountaineering industry has forced itself into policies and standards for which there are no comparisons. More than any other episode, the May 1996 Everest disaster demonstrated that there was not just a lack of comparison for the Himalayas, but also a lack of perspective. The scale of the Himalayas, and the commitment to the amount of time needed for a safely acclimatized ascent, means that it is no longer a question of whether the mountain can be climbed, but of whether the mountain should be climbed by a particular person (Unsworth, Everest 536). With the dangers on the mountain mapped, known, and expected, it is the abilities and personalities of the clients which are uncertain. One would think that a successful expedition, regardless of commercial intentions, would ensure that its climbers are competent

enough to handle themselves on a peak, but this is not often the case. Commercial expeditions are often hard-pressed to find enough climbers to fill their permits at the full projected cost, never mind finding climbers of an ability that would allow them to function independently on a mountain like Everest.

The different roles of guides and clients are further opportunity for analysis. These simple titles indicate complex roles, especially as they function in an industry that deals so heavily in peoples' expectations and dreams. Krakauer, in writing the first account of the events, has the benefit of describing the situation and his role in it without the interference of competing representations of the truth. Not just an account of an expedition, then, Into Thin Air is also a cathartic exercise which justifies Krakauer's actions as a climber during the disaster. Krakauer's authority in representation partially comes out of his role as a journalist, as being a supposedly impartial observer permits him the distance to criticize. Boukreev's account is much the same as Krakauer's in its narration of the events, but from the other side of the experience. People give Boukreev the authority to act and speak out based on his prior experiences, but his role as a guide is complicated by the financial basis for the industry. My intention here is not to dictate what Krakauer or Boukreev should have done during the ascent. Rather, I wish to analyze how they represent themselves on the mountain through their descriptions and their perceptions of the mountaineering industry and Everest itself.

Early in his account, Krakauer introduces himself along with the traditional framework with which he wishes to describe the expedition. Through a recounting of the history of Everest as a goal and a mountain, Krakauer attempts to contextualize his own experiences as a mountaineer and demonstrate how different his own era is compared to past

ascents. This context includes both the history of Everest as a goal for climbers, beginning with the British siege expeditions of the 1920s, and Into Thin Air's emplotment in that history. Each chapter of the account is headed with a lengthy quotation from famous Everest accounts which focus on the exclusivity and uniqueness of the mountain. Herzog used a similar tactic when he reached the summit of Annapurna. In including these quotations as the introduction to each chapter, Krakauer has attempted to integrate his account with mountaineering's past. Authority and the objectivity to criticize comes out of this contextualization. If Krakauer evaluates his account amongst all the others, than his version of the truth will become a decisive chapter in Everest's "post-modern" history. This is a narrative strategy which will align Krakauer's account with past ascents and serve as an ironic comment on the current state of Everest. Each quotation nostalgically refers to a mountaineering past with which Krakauer identifies, but cannot participate in due to his position. However, as each quotation also refers to the heroic frameworks of the past, Krakauer's emplotment of Into Thin Air indicates a resurgence and renewed importance of those ideals in the face of commercial vacuity. The contextualization refers to what has been lost, but also the promise of what could be gained through the re-application of past frameworks. This is also evident through the singularity of Krakauer's subtitle, as if the events on May 10 were the only disaster to ever occur on Everest.

The authority gained by the use of quotations is further supported by Krakauer's personal perceptions of himself as a climber within that history. Krakauer writes that though Hillary and Tenzing's first ascent of Everest occurred a decade before he was born, "a subsequent ascent of the mountain helped establish the trajectory of my life" (19). The ascent

of Everest's unclimbed west ridge in 1966 by Americans Thomas Hornbein and Krakauer's family friend Willi Unsoeld was accomplished in the same vein as Bonington's ascent of Annapurna's south face. It became a primary ascent as it was a new route with an emphasis on technical difficulty and self-relaunch. The ascent is legendary in "the annals of mountaineering" according to Krakauer, and the proximity to the Unsoeld family inspired him in his own mountaineering efforts (19). Krakauer's lifetime of progressive climbing is the result of his background. Everest thus becomes the natural culmination to his mountaineering career due to his personal historical context.

Krakauer defined himself as a climber from an early age. In less than a paragraph, Krakauer lists several impressive ascents on North American peaks, usually done in alpine style, which includes "a frightening, mile-high spike of vertical and overhanging granite called Cerro Torre...it was once (though no longer) thought to be the world's hardest mountain" (25). Though the description of his alpine ascent of Cerro Torre is only a sentence long, it implies as much difficulty as Bonington's comparison of the Eiger to Annapurna's south face. These ascents are difficult enough that Krakauer begins harboring an attitude familiar to all "alpine cognoscenti" that Everest was an unsightly rubble pile which just happened to be the tallest peak in the world (21). Even before Bass' seven summits ascents, Everest had been climbed hundreds of times via Hillary and Tenzing's route on the Southeast Ridge, which led to the denigration of the route to the "Yak route" (21). Krakauer's perception of himself and the routes worthy of his abilities clearly do not match what Everest has to offer, at least until he has aged, and the circumstances are right. In the context of his

career as a journalist and ten years beyond his last significant alpine ascent, Krakauer takes the story on Everest's industry as another chance to imagine himself alongside Unsoeld.

Krakauer's denigration of Everest sits uneasily alongside his desire to climb it, but this conflict is also partially due to the mountaineering industry. The monetary transactions which brought Krakauer to the peak confuse the roles with which he is familiar. The role of a journalist implies passive observation, yet Krakauer must actively participate as a climber in order to make the summit of Everest. But as a climber, his own climbing experiences do not match those of his fellow clients, but more closely match those of his guides. Furthermore, the expedition is lacking the traditional focus which an expedition team had when the climbers were selected by the leader, rather than the inverse. Whereas in the past, an expedition leader chose climbers based on an assessment of abilities, Rob Hall, the expedition leader of Adventure Consultants, told Krakauer that "it wasn't me he was actually interested in, or even the publicity he hoped my article would generate ... what was so enticing was the bounty of valuable advertising he would reap from the deal he struck with Outside" (66). Bayers, in his analysis of this account, writes that Krakauer is rendered "subordinate" in his role as client through having to repress his own instincts as a seasoned mountaineer (133). In having his presence traded for advertising exposure with the goal of encouraging further clients, Krakauer begins to realize that the mountain of his expectations may not match that which he is supposed to climb.

What reinforces this unsettling of Krakauer's expectations is that despite his considerable skill, Everest demands different kinds of methods to ascend. Due to the number of climbers moving up and down from the summit, expeditions make a habit of having

Sherpas fix lengths of rope nearly the whole length of the mountain, demonstrating an even higher reliance on equipment than the siege tactics of the past. A climber does not need to 'waste' effort leading pitches or breaking trail, they simply clip onto the fixed rope and hike "the yellow brick road" to the next camp: "I soon learned that on Everest not even the rope -- the quintessential climber's accoutrement -- was to be utilized in the time-honored manner...expediency dictated that each of us climb independently, without being physically connected to one another any way" (Krakauer 78). This isolation of the climbers from each other counters the past expectations of expeditions being nucleuses of comradery and self-reliance. The fact that even the rope, a necessary part of equipment that physically links the activity of a climbing team together, is not used in the traditional manner foreshadows for Krakauer the coming interruption to his expectations. The source of this interruption is the impending disaster. Writing retrospectively demands a certain ignorance of the future, but the events of the past days only magnify Krakauer's present uneasiness.

Between the methods used in climbing and the greater skills which isolate him, the reality of Krakauer's situation does not match his expectations gathered from past accounts. That the martial framework and its heroic roles are no longer available to Krakauer is obvious by the day of the summit attempt:

In this godforsaken place, I felt disconnected from the climbers around me -- emotionally, spiritually, physically, -- to a degree I hadn't experienced on any previous expedition. We were a team in name only, I'd sadly come to realize. Although in a few hours we would leave camp as a group, we would ascend as individuals, linked to

one another by neither rope nor any deep sense of loyalty. Each client was in it for himself or herself, pretty much. I was no different. (163)

As I will demonstrate, Krakauer will turn to other frameworks to lend significance to his ascent and meaning to the disaster, but his impression of the industry which has brought him this far does not match any prior experience. This ascent has little in common with Unsoeld's ascent, nor any of his own independent climbs. Though he has submitted to the authority of the guides, Krakauer does not enjoy the experience which they are providing. Every time he puts his familiar equipment on, he is reminded of the disruption to his ideal of shared experience.

Meeting Rob Hall, the expedition leader and owner of Adventure Consultants for the first time, Krakauer's physical description of the man manages to combine the two sides of the modern mountaineering industry. Mountaineering may be play, but it is also a dangerous business that demands maturity. Despite Hall's "cherubic" appearance, Krakauer recognizes the leader's authority by decoding a framed poster that depicts the mountains Everest, K2, and Lhotse with Hall's face superimposed over top (32). The poster functions as an advertisement for Hall's company, in both senses of the word, through the recognizable difficulty of the ascents. Krakauer writes that "between 1990 and 1995, Hall was responsible for putting thirty-nine climbers on the summit of Everest -- three more ascents than had been made in the first twenty years after Sir Edmund Hillary's inaugural climb" (35). In these descriptions of his expedition leader, Krakauer's comparison of Hall's professional achievements with the entire generation that came after the 1953 summiting of Everest demonstrates the new standards with which the mountaineering industry defines success.

With Everest being such an attractive point in the outdoor tourism industry, it is only a matter of time until there is competition for clients. Hall is opposed to another guide in Krakauer's account, expedition leader and owner of Mountain Madness, Scott Fischer. Early in the account Fischer had figured prominently as Hall's rival in the Outside deal. Rather than the slick, desirable package which Hall represents, Fischer's character is evaluated by Krakauer in a manner designed to undermine the leader's role. His involvement in numerous accidents is described, though these are bracketed by other incidents of bravery and suffering which Krakauer claims to understand or be impressed by (61). Overall the impression is of a climber continuously searching for recognition through increasingly dangerous climbs, or someone greedy for celebrity and perfectly suited for Everest's "circus."

Lurking among the 'madness' on Fischer's expedition is a guide named Anatoli Boukreev. In Krakauer's first chapter, the journalist describes his time on the summit amid the growing confusion of climbers, and he is joined at the third pole by guide Andy Harris, of Hall's team, and "a Russian climbing guide working for an American commercial expedition" (6). This inclusion, and subsequent labeling, of Boukreev in Krakauer's account seems to be a consequence of the mountaineering industry and a post-Cold War world. Krakauer's initial description of Boukreev changes during the narrative, and the next reference to the guide labels him as being "from Kazakhstan [and] working for Fischer"(130). Another role which Boukreev occupies is as one of the "four luminaries [who] stood out" from clients and expedition leaders alike (Krakauer 130). Certainly there is ability implied by labeling Boukreev as a guide and a luminary, but why does a change in nationality occur?

The function of Krakauer's account must be considered here. This is not a traditional account with the summit of the goal, but rather a reconstruction of events made famous by a disaster. The initial sketch of Boukreev comes from the summit, while the second description is from a day of resting at Camp II. In both episodes, there is a foreshadowing of the impending disaster conveyed through the growing sickness and exhaustion of the clients and guides, in particular Fischer. Krakauer's own role in these events is questionable as his identity is destabilized, which leads him to question the actions and identities of others. Boukreev seems to be blamed for the overall situation, as Krakauer reveals a long list of complaints about the guide from both expeditions. At times the guide appeared callous and negligent towards the Mountain Madness team, so Krakauer ultimately decides that Boukreev's actions are due to a fundamental difference in expectation about mountaineering: "The underlying problem was that Boukreev's notion of his responsibilities differed substantially from Fischer's. As a Russian, Boukreev came from a tough, proud, hardscrabble climbing culture that did not believe in coddling the weak...in the course of his distinguished career he'd formulated a number of unorthodox, very strongly held opinions about how the mountain should be ascended" (Krakauer 149-50). These opinions, or frameworks, guided Boukreev's actions during the rest of the expedition and the rescues he accomplished. Despite any positive impact from Boukreev's actions, Krakauer presents a negative portrayal of the guide. The charm of both Hall and Fischer are that they may not be concerned with clients as climbers, but they are concerned with them as clients. The relative independence of Boukreev, which seems to be attributed to his ethics and vague nationality, bothers Krakauer

because this does not match his expectation of a guide; Boukreev acts more like a Sherpa in leading the climb than a “caretaker” (149).

As described in past accounts, Sherpas are mostly meant to facilitate the climb by taking care of mundane chores so as to leave time for the climbers to do some actual climbing. The parameters of a commercial expedition dictate that any advantage that a client can gain will ensure a greater success, which will translate into revenue. Where the advantages that the Western guides provide fail is when the mountain interrupts the certainty of the expedition’s trajectory with the unknown. As Rosen writes, “while it is certainly true that every climb is reliant on a team of people for a successful summit, ultimately, a climb comes down to an individual’s personal endurance, experience, and competence” (149). By his absence from the team structure, Boukreev was perhaps attempting to force the clients beyond their own roles and into that of his own ideal, that of independent climbing. If a client is not guided, then there is a greater chance for an experience beyond advertising’s promise of reaching the summit.

The key to Krakauer’s opinion of Boukreev is the guide’s use of bottled oxygen. The majority of climbers on Everest need a steady flow of oxygen to maintain basic awareness and functions in ascending and descending. This is even more true when climbers have failed to acclimatize properly. However, as one of the “luminaries” and an independent alpinist, Boukreev has faith in his skills beyond all the other climbers and guides due to his experience. Many successful ascents have convinced Boukreev of an ideal that avoids dependence on equipment. During the summit attempt, Krakauer reports that Boukreev was not carrying either an oxygen tank or a backpack with supplies, a practice which ignores convention and

“doesn't seem to be in [the] clients' best interests” (178). In Krakauer's estimation, Boukreev's refusal to use oxygen led to the guide becoming cold and returning to Camp IV early with the first climbers, which increased the coming confusion (211). Gathering from his previous criticism, Krakauer sees no room for a guide's personal ideals in a commercial expedition if the client is at stake. Krakauer believes that Boukreev should have capitulated to carrying supplies like the other guides.

In his account, Boukreev makes no mention of the cold, but instead attributes his actions to conserving his reserve strength and the foresight that he could help from the bottom if problems developed at the Hillary Step (155). Though this plan might have worked save for the storm which eliminated any chance of returning to the summit, Boukreev's reasoning continues to privilege independent action over the group's collective goal. These two accounts, which emphasize the instability a disaster causes, have difficulty reconciling independent action with the needs of those less capable. From either perspective, then, the relationship of the guide and the client is more complex than one simply assuming the ideals of the other. Both roles have their own definitions of success. As Krakauer's portrait of Boukreev demonstrates, when disaster collides with a refusal to meet those goals, it leads to troubling questions.

When Boukreev read of his portrayal in the Outside article and subsequent account, he was motivated to respond. Initially, before Into Thin Air was released, Boukreev sent several letters to the magazine to be printed as rebuttals to the article; Outside refused to publish them unedited (Boukreev 216). Eventually, Boukreev approached writer G. Weston DeWalt to help him articulate his version of events. The Climb: Tragic Ambitions on Everest attempts

to take a conventional approach to the event. The accounts of Bonington and Blum were based in the dialogue which occurred when team members contributed through their own descriptions and diaries, even if the author's framework prevented a full expression. Due to the limitations of Boukreev's English, The Climb uses a similar strategy in order to construct a more complete picture of the events surrounding the May 10th disaster. Official transcripts of a debriefing session with the remainder of the Mountain Madness team are combined with Boukreev's journals to cover all events of the disaster. These descriptions are then structured by DeWalt so that a coherent and by now familiar narrative emerges. The format of Boukreev's account, then, compiles disjointed voices as the narrative switches between third-person omniscience and selections from Boukreev's diary written in the first person. Compared to Krakauer's style, Boukreev's account seems pieced together, as the guide adds the particulars and emotions to DeWalt's descriptions. These techniques convey an aspect of immediacy and greater authenticity in Boukreev's account, as the combination of sources emplot The Climb while avoiding Krakauer's more self-centered descriptions and nostalgia. Despite his difficulties in English, Boukreev's account has a broader perspective than Krakauer's because the guide is in communication with all aspects of the expedition. While Krakauer is at pains to explain the events of May 10th before his post-expedition research, Boukreev's account uses ready instances of dialogue to reach an "attempt at truth-telling" (iix). That the guide admits to reaching only partial understanding of the disaster makes sense, because as a both a mountaineer and a fallible person Boukreev recognizes the limitations of his knowledge of the landscape and events.

Though from the perspective of a guide, Boukreev's account follows much the same trajectory as Krakauer's. Progressive episodes bring the climbers from the West up to the camps of Everest, and along the way the reader is introduced to the characters of Hall, Fischer, and the clients and Sherpas which made up the expeditions. The account introduces the industry of Everest like Krakauer does, by positing most of the blame for the current climbing circus on the shoulders of David Breashears (Boukreev 5). Guides, in this similar version of events, are titled "dollar dogs" for their tendency to run up the mountain for a fee, while Everest itself declines into a "cash cow" (5). Most of the introduction to the industry in the account is written by DeWalt. This section mainly concerns the conflicts between Hall and Fischer in securing Krakauer and the lucrative Outside deal, only briefly mentioning Boukreev as being a "committed guide" in Fischer's camp (12). Unlike in Krakauer's account, in which the author is allowed to evaluate his own mountaineering experiences in light of Everest's demands, in Boukreev's account Boukreev's career is mostly described by DeWalt. The reader is informed that Boukreev is "one of the world's foremost high-altitude mountain climbers," a man who was a "maverick climber who had dodged the draft for the Afghan war" (12, 13). Boukreev has little choice but to become a mercenary in this new era of mountaineering, and his talents are valued only insofar that they can help clients reach the top. Fischer's advertising propaganda emphasizes the guides' role in aiding the client's efforts: "We'll build a pyramid of camps, each stocked from the one below. The guides and high-altitude Sherpa staff will fix ropes, establish and stock camps, and provide leadership for all summit attempts. Climbers will carry light loads, saving their strength for the summit" (Boukreev 9). The impression a client would gain from this is that the summit is possible, but

only through a removal of much of the actual work of climbing. The tedious chores, the repetition of establishing camps and boiling water, are left to the Sherpas and guides so that the clients can focus on what they value. This constructs climbing differently for the two groups: for clients, the summit is the ultimate goal, but guides are there for a different challenge, one that is beyond simply reaching a high point.

This emphasis on the summit in the mountaineering industry obviously comes out of the subculture's past and the value of first ascents. But by emphasizing the fact of success, rather than the process of getting to the top, outfitting companies are perpetuating past frameworks. Despite different backgrounds, both Krakauer and Boukreev had misgivings about the system in which they were participating. Krakauer is described in The Climb as feeling “frustrated at having his decisions tied to the lowest common denominators of the climb, but he felt his position as a client had 'forced' him to give up his personal commitment to self-reliance and independent decision-making, to become a tin soldier” (134). The apparent passivity which the client role imposed on Krakauer is due to the emphasis on the summit as the only definition of success. A person's actual climbing performance, which would have been emphasized in a first ascent, is irrelevant here. Boukreev realizes much the same when his advice about acclimatization is repeatedly ignored by Fischer: “my voice was not as authoritative as I would have liked, so I tried not to be argumentative, choosing instead to downplay my intuitions” (Boukreev 121). Despite their prior experiences and identification with mountaineering, both journalist and guide seem powerless in the current environment surrounding Everest.

The summit has always been the goal, but for clients investing in an expedition for their chance to reach the top, the summit can dominate the process of the climb. Promotional material, such as Fischer's ad, emphasizes the summit at the expense of the activity of climbing. Stephen Slemon points out that "clients who didn't haul loads, didn't prepare camps, and didn't plan not only became dependant on their guides but lost the enabling sense of teamwork" implicit in expeditions from prior generations (25). The industry has compromised a client's expectations through his or her very participation, which was fueled initially by dreams adopted from past accounts (Johnston and Edwards 468). That both Krakauer and Boukreev are implicated as a result of their respective roles means their expectations for the climb must struggle against a monolithic definition of success. The heroic rhetoric and military frameworks of Herzog's era are deflated in favor of the logistics of a commercial climb, in which the only number of value is the number of clients who reach the highest point. The frustration of authority that both Krakauer and Boukreev comment upon is reinforced by Boukreev's real concerns about clients being able to reach Everest's summit safely and return home. Before signing onto Mountain Madness, Boukreev counters Fischer's claim of a "yellow brick road" by cautioning the leader: "You need good weather and very good luck. You need qualified guides, professional climbers who know high-altitude and the mountain. And clients? You need...people who can carry the responsibilities and challenges of high altitude...You have to develop self-reliance in your climbers because you cannot hold their hands all the time" (21). Fischer's earlier claims are a fantasy for how hard it can actually be to climb Everest, as Boukreev's concerns demonstrate.

The fact that Boukreev mentions the environment as a challenge, instead of simply referring to the route, reminds us that Everest is an uncontrolled and uncontrollable place subject to deadly conditions demanding considerable expertise and resources for even basic survival. Remember that Fischer had only been to Everest's summit once at this point, while even Boukreev, a mountaineering superstar, had been there only twice (though both times were without using supplementary oxygen). The concerns which Boukreev has are not just about the clients, but also the expectations which the leaders had. Rosen asks in her conclusion how the industry can classify some climbers as guides and experts when they have only reached the summit of the peak they are leading once or twice (164). The commodification of the summit has inverted the normal progression a climber takes, which means that clients and guides are arriving at Everest without having paid the physical price of increasing the difficulty of their climbs over time (Boukreev 81).

Aside from a loss of self-sufficiency, this also means a loss of authority for the guide, as Fischer perceives that Boukreev's only value within the industry is his ability to aid clients, and not the host of other skills a professional mountaineer must possess: "I began to understand that there was a difference in understanding about why I had been hired or somehow the expectations of me had shifted" (Boukreev 84). The difference in expectations eventually causes a crisis in Boukreev, who questions fellow guide Neal Beidleman for his opinion on their role in the industry. Boukreev argues for fostering self-reliance in the clients through preparing the route for them, which will ensure, he feels, a greater chance for their success on the summit attempt. Beidleman counters this stance by saying to leave such work to the Sherpas and that "equally if not more important was chatting and keeping the clients

pleased by focusing on their personal happiness” (84). While Boukreev’s perspective focuses on the role he believes the client is trying to fulfill, Biedleman’s comment illustrates a concern with climbing as entertainment and satisfaction which the clients may also share. Success, according to this guide, can also be defined in terms of the client’s happiness, and whether the expedition provides a good time. Boukreev cannot recognize this motivation from their shared situation, and his ideals continue to distance him from the team.

The day of the summit push, May 10, indicates just how different the authority of the leaders and guides has become compared to their predecessors. Forty years after Herzog asserted his “authority” over Annapurna, expedition leaders Fischer and Hall have only an illusory control over their clients and the expedition. The martial framework is still used in a fashion which will remind the clients of mountaineering's past hierarchies, even if those categorizations don't apply to the roles. Hall, in particular, is described by Krakauer as being a “quartermaster nonpareil” and an organizational genius (73). But the pressure from the clients' expectations of success begins to affect the leaders' decisions in allowing clients to disregard acclimatization plans in a bizarre attempt to conserve their strength for the summit. Safety is compromised for success, and the method of ascending Everest only serves to reinforce and expand the ramifications. Both Boukreev and Krakauer report that on summit day, clients who were ailing in the lower camps were still encouraged to head for the summit by the leaders (114, 159). This indicates a failure of the authority of the expedition leaders, a capitulation to the demands of the client based on client expectations. But because of the authority structures, no one questioned this fact, and a dangerous situation was only compounded.

The retrospective nature of the accounts allows the authors to see the folly of the client's expectations, which also influences the way in which Everest itself is described. Rather than use a framework which allows the climber to dominate the landscape through reaching the summit, the disaster episode influences these accounts so that success can not be defined in conventional ways. Indeed, success is meaningless when disaster interrupts the framework, as all the importance of human action goes to self-preservation, rather than celebration or domination. Indications of the disaster's pervasive influence is apparent from the initial descriptions of Everest. Flying into Nepal, Krakauer reports that his first view of the Himalayas is of "jagged incisors" of peaks, with Everest itself destroying the atmosphere by "ripping a visible gash in the 120-knot [jetstream]...That I proposed to climb [Everest] struck me, at that moment, as preposterous, or worse. My palms felt clammy" (30). DeWalt narrates an episode which preceded the expeditions at base camp by days, as the Sherpas become distressed at seeing the star Hyakutake over Everest, the "star that didn't belong" (1). By personifying Everest from the beginning as hostile, ravenous, and even as supernatural, both authors have attempted to discredit past frameworks as support for the expedition, and questioning their very presence on the mountain. The emphasis on the unnaturalness of Everest suggests that the desire to climb this mountain amounts to audacity, and the desire for success itself is mad.

The expectations of the clients led them to a static mountain landscape, which was supposed to be surmountable because it had been climbed before. With the uncertainty of Everest erased through the promises of commercial outfitters and accounts which solidify and stabilize the environment, clients assumed that the promise of a "yellow brick road" to the

summit was the truth. This teleological belief only passes when the disaster interrupts that version of truth and climbers realize the situation they have placed themselves in (McLaughlin 219). Rather than simply affect one episode of the expedition, though, the disaster changes the expedition in all ways, ranging from the establishment of authority to perceptions of the landscape. Overall, the disaster results in “destruction leading to the emergence of a new principle, one that is inherent in the old order,” which, in turn, can lead to new methods of writing mountaineering accounts and a change in the inherent values of mountaineering itself (McLaughlin 252). As an interruption to teleological progress, the disaster foregrounds elements disregarded from planning the ascent. The landscape becomes dynamic because climbers realize that the mountain’s terrain is partially unknown, which can allow access to routes and experiences beyond conventions.

As evidence of this factor, Krakauer opens his account from the summit of Everest and describes his lack of success: “I’d been fantasizing about this moment, and the release of emotion that would accompany it, for many months. But now that I was finally here, actually standing on the summit of Mount Everest, I just couldn’t summon the energy to care” (5). In matching Haston’s description of the summit and placing it first in the account, Krakauer has avoided the narrative trajectory of past accounts. That the disaster also encourages an emotional response on expeditions could lead to a more honest response to the activity, perhaps somewhere between Krakauer’s ennui, which he shares with Haston, and Herzog’s rapture. If expectation passes in favor of a dynamic response, then Krakauer may have found another way of defining his experience. This era will demand a different style of writing about the expedition, as the old certainties, and narrative tension, no longer apply.

In an effort to find some explanation for their part in the expedition and to exonerate their identities as neither clients nor guides but as climbers, the overarching disaster must be written about in a way that lends it some meaning. For Krakauer, his response to the uncertainty of the disaster is to invest it with the meaning of classical tragedy and all the weight that life can hold in that genre. Thus, the account begins with the usual maps of Everest, but also a cast of characters under the heading “*Dramatis Personae*” (xv). The structuring of the account as a tragedy can first be explained as Krakauer's emotional response to the loss of life on May 10 and secondly as a way of understanding his own actions. Significantly, Krakauer refers to writing his account as “an act of catharsis” which becomes a necessary strategy to grasp his role in “the death of good people” (xiii). McQuillan writes that as Krakauer was plagued by a “question of guilt,” the tragedy framework allows him to explore the events from a perspective beyond traditional definitions of success and to emphasize the humanity of each client (McQuillan 63). The advantage of seeing the events of May 10th as tragedy is that some of the romance of mountaineering's past is reinvested, so the events on the night of May 10 signify a new part of mountaineering's mythology (Bayers 131). Thus, Krakauer's title and account become appropriate as the most significant take on the disaster, as well as a criticism on the mountaineering industry's obsession with numbers and summits.

While Krakauer turns to classical modes to give meaning to the disaster, Boukreev's independent ideals permit him as a guide, and by extension full-time climber, a different perspective on the events of May 10th. After describing the attempt to reach Fischer's body on May 11th only to be turned back by another storm, Boukreev's account turns to the

aftermath of the disaster and his next challenges in mountaineering. These will be dealing with the media circus brought on by the disaster, as well as preparing for another expedition to Everest's summit as a guide on an Indonesian expedition. Concerns such as these imply that Boukreev's ideals will have a chance to be challenged again, as the guide will immediately place himself back in the narrative.

Overall and despite his authority, Boukreev's self-exonerations of his actions on May 10 seem to indicate that neither author has grasped the full version of events. In his conclusion, Boukreev reiterates Fischer's approval of his plan and points out that "If I had been further up the mountain when the full force of the storm hit, I think it is likely I would have died with the clients...I am not superman. In that weather, we could have all possibly died" (213). This comment demonstrates that Boukreev realized the gravity of the disaster and that there were limitations, even for someone with his ideals, as to what was possible in the storm. Krakauer's insistence on the error of Boukreev's actions disregards the guide's physical limitations in favor of a judgement of his moral qualities. The irony is, of course, that Krakauer slept, exhausted, during the storm while Boukreev made several forays from the safety of his tent to locate missing climbers. Yet, while Krakauer's tragic framework points the blame towards the guide, Boukreev's own independent ideals have convinced him that he did all that he could for people who valued their own lives just as he did.

Krakauer's identity becomes complicated due to the many roles which he is attempting to occupy. The question of guilt becomes the biggest factor in writing cathartically, as Krakauer strives to discover the cause of the disaster, and how he contributed to it. In a judgement of his own role as a journalist, Krakauer writes that the Outside coverage may have

contributed to Hall's and Fischer's disregard of the turn-around time. If the expedition leaders could put more clients on the summit, Krakauer would have inevitably reported favorably on the ascents. Weathers, who nearly died of exposure, reported in an interview afterwards that "I was concerned that [having their actions reported] might drive people further than they wanted to go. And it might even be for the guides" (Krakauer 138). Much as his profession might have amplified the ambitions of the expeditions, Krakauer also feels guilty about his own actions during the disaster. This guilt centers around the misidentification of guide Andy Harris, who Krakauer was certain made it to safety to Camp IV before him, but who had in fact become afflicted with hypoxia and disappeared above the Hillary Step. Before his own descent, Krakauer encounters Harris struggling with oxygen canisters, but due to the distinct roles that they occupied, he thought nothing of the guide's problems: "Since Harris was a guide, Krakauer rationalized that he could take care of himself, and left him" (McQuillan 63). This distinction between roles is superficial though, even more so considering Krakauer's own climbing experience and the fact that it was Harris' first time to Everest as well: "Andy and I were very similar in terms of ability and expertise; had we been climbing together in a non-guided situation as equal partners, it's inconceivable to me that I would have neglected to recognize his plight" (Krakauer 188). For his neglect of a guide, Krakauer can blame the industry; for his neglect of a fellow climber, Krakauer can only blame himself. The misidentification of Harris due to their roles on May 10 is another human casualty of the industry, and Krakauer believes it was a consequence of his preconceptions.

After descending to his tent on the South Col, Krakauer collapses exhausted, and is unable to answer Boukreev's requests for assistance. Partially a result of his weariness,

Bayers also believes that this exhaustion is conditioned into Krakauer as the appropriate reaction of a client to the disaster: "...throughout the debacle Krakauer suggests that he was unable to do anything to help the others, not just because of his physical exhaustion but because he had been 'indoctrinated' to follow his guides and not act heroically to save others" (134). This comment is supported by research in tourism, which suggests that even clients who have considerable mountaineering experience still defer responsibility to the guides which they employ (Beedie and Hudson 633). Bayers goes on to suggest that Krakauer's indoctrination as a client is incomplete, and that the anger which he feels towards Boukreev is because the guide was authorized to and did in fact act. The attempts to attribute Boukreev's actions to his nationality or selfishness pale with the knowledge that despite a difference in ideals, the guide did save lives at some risk to himself. That Boukreev did make some unpopular decisions about his responsibilities as a guide that Krakauer, as a paying client, was not comfortable with does not change the events of May 10. What it does do is indicate that the dialogue process reveals aspects of the event which might not be considered in an 'authoritative' account.

Critics of mountaineering-based tourism see identity as a vital aspect of selling the image and romance of the expedition. Outfitting companies rely on a perceived lack that their clients see in their own lives, on people who desire a successful expedition as a way of altering their identity. Expectations of the summit do not actually involve the activity of climbing, but only the prestige which can be gained through success (Beedie and Hudson 637). If the storm of May 10 had not occurred, no doubt Krakauer's article would have been what he intended, an expose on commercial mountaineering and a lamentation for a past era.

As a result of the interruption of the disaster, though, Krakauer needs other frameworks to provide meaning for his account and his own actions. Boukreev's own representation of the disaster supports Krakauer's opinions of the industry, but also indicates how this industry destabilizes the roles of those involved in it. Even as clients, guides, and leaders become less certain as to their roles, the physical challenges of the mountain reintroduce the unknown to the account and interrupt expectations of victory. The importance of mountain climbing in this era, it would seem, is not in reaching the summit, but in descending, and being able to tell the tale.

Conclusion: Expedition's End and the Next Route

The thesis has examined the ways in which mountaineering accounts engage in a dialogue about the activity through their published accounts. As descriptions of a personal experience, accounts are often taken as true, despite relying on frameworks for authority and a conventional narrative. This last technique, as it is based on a first-person narrator ostensibly reporting facts, establishes a monolithic authority over the episodes of the expedition. From this influence, the potential outcome of future ascents and personal meaning that can be derived from the experience becomes limited and dependent on past frameworks. In defining the summit of a mountain as a goal, climbers engage with subcultural expectations and definitions about success. These are frameworks which support and influence the expedition and its later representation in regards to authority, historical context, achievement, and the portrayal of the mountain.

It seems that being aware of the conventions of previous accounts leads to their reinforcement. In beginning with Herzog's version of Annapurna, I have argued that the subsequent attempts by Bonington and Blum, though distinct in style and framework, actually conform to the dominant representation. By repeating Herzog's metaphysical conclusion as their own, Bonington and Blum validate his martial frameworks and rapturous enlightenment as conditions for a proper ascent. In this fashion, mountaineering becomes narrowly defined.

Dialogue can still occur due to the proximity of other climbers, both in reality and representation. In writing about their experiences during a climb, a mountaineer will necessarily engage with other representations of the activity and location in an attempt to distinguish his or her own efforts. This initiates a dialogue process that contextualizes the ascent in mountaineering history. Even as a climber refers to past frameworks, though, there

is further opportunity for dialogue about the expedition through present encounters. The inclusion of elements such as diaries from other team members and radio transcripts, such as in Bonington's or Boukreev's accounts, lends authenticity to the narrative but also contributes to a dialogue about the ascent and the practice of mountaineering. In representing the contributions of the expedition team more equally, there is a greater chance that one perspective will not dominate the account.

While dialogue became part of the experience through equal contributions of team members, the introduction of mountaineering tourism returned the dynamics of the expedition to historical authority structures. In commercial expeditions, the summit becomes the only goal, one which can be achieved by any means necessary. Due to the similarity of the goal, whatever potential there is for meaning beyond subcultural definitions depends on the climber's representation. In paying for the chance for participation in an expedition, climbers lose the authority and ability to represent their experiences as unique. Instead, the historical frameworks of domination continue to exert influence over the goal and the style of ascent.

Having one version of success becomes a problem with the expansion of the mountaineering industry into high-altitude Himalayan guiding. Companies try to sell climbers the dream of the summit through providing them a place in mountaineering's history. Like their predecessors, of whom they have read in the dominant accounts, these climbers use the same frameworks to justify reaching the summit because there are no other opportunities for meaning. Herzog's definitions become the norm. The expectation of the summit becomes linked to greater reward, which can encourage guides and clients to take unnecessary risks in attempting to conform to a monolithic representation. The actions taken by the expedition companies on May 10, 1996, demonstrate the influence that this expectation

has on the ascent and what means are used to reach the summit. Innovations in ascent style or additional significance from a unique experience on the mountain are arrested by the routines of siege climbing and a focus on the goal.

Other than attempting an ascent in a different fashion than the initial route, few opportunities for distinction from the dominant representation exist. Attempts at alpine style, such as by Bonington's team or Watson and Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz on the final portion of Annapurna, offer one challenge to the dominant frameworks. However, the author's authority in the account still influences how these attempts are represented, which can lessen their significance. Other frameworks can be applied to the expedition, but as long as the goal of the summit remains constant there is a reinforcement of the conventional view of the expedition. Blum's attempt at a feminist ascent soon became compromised through the traditional definition of victory, as the representation of the expedition to the subculture became more important than personal satisfaction.

An episode of the narrative which introduces a challenge to the dominant representation is the disaster, which traditionally occurs on the descent. The potential for disaster is an omnipresent fact in these expeditions, yet this aspect receives little attention for much of the account. In focusing on the goal of the summit, even seasoned climbers familiar with the environment's danger disregard disaster. As the result of a confrontation with the dynamic mountain landscape, the disaster interrupts the teleological focus of the narrative and demands a different response from the climber. Martial rhetoric, which emphasizes heroic action and suffering on the mountain, has little to offer climbers when the goal has been reached and the disaster occurs on the descent. This can be seen in the accounts of Boukreev

and Krakauer, neither of whom are able to justify their actions during the night of May 10 either to themselves or to the general public.

Increasingly, it is this audience to which mountaineers must appeal for funding, as along with the expansion of the high-altitude guiding industry, mountaineering is being represented in most media outlets. Krakauer's expedition featured two other reporters along with him. One, Sandy Hill Pittman, was intending to broadcast a live web transmission from Everest's summit. As well, David Breashears, who Krakauer partially blames for the current industry in the Himalayas but who aided in the rescues after the night of May 10, was on Everest to film and star in an IMAX movie charting a climber's progress up to the summit. In the 'post-modern' era of climbing, representation in media outlets beyond the expedition account have become more common and expected. With a dwindling amount of sponsorship dollars available and climbers being able to purchase the services to get them to the summit, media exposure through the internet, film, television, and magazines seems to be the next avenue for representation.

There is a sense that the "circus" of climbing will continue, and that it has already spread beyond the confines of Everest's base camp. K2, the second-tallest mountain in the world and by far the most difficult, has in recent years been the focus of an increasing number of expeditions. In early August of 2008 11 climbers were killed in an avalanche which occurred on an upper section of the mountain where congestion is likely, similar to the Hillary Step. While commercial expeditions have not reached K2's base camp, that there were over eighteen climbers on the summit at one time indicates the further expansion of the mountaineering industry. While to date some 3000 people have reached Everest's summit,

barely 300 have reached the top of K2; and climbers are five times as likely to die on the descent. Yet this disaster has led one critic to write that

If the trend following the Everest 1996 disaster is any indication, [K2] will become only more popular. On Everest, better forecasting and route setting have staved off another day as catastrophic as the one 12 years ago—though not the annual parade of stunts, films, and record attempts. But on a mountain as unrelenting as K2, little can be done to lessen the danger of 30 climbers rushing the summit. That much is simple.

(Kodas)

It seems that even experienced mountaineers are subject to the same pressures as guided clients were ten years ago. This indicates that the traditional goals of mountaineering have remained even if the mountains attempted have changed. But instead of considering the implications of the frameworks to support these expeditions, the mountaineering subculture seems more concerned with those methods of ascent than a climber's justifications.

Mountaineering historians Maurice Isserman and Steward Weaver write that the modern representation in films and on the internet demonstrates that “a lot has happened to the world, and to mountaineering since Mallory's time - and not all of it for the better” (452). In a similar judgement, Walther Kirchner appended a postscript to his 1950 article “Mind, Mountain, and History” in 1994 which bemoans that the romantic, heroic perception of mountains belongs to another age. These statements, which blanket the last sixty years of mountaineering, seem cloaked with the same nostalgia with which Krakauer introduced his own disdain of the present era. There is a sense of decline, as if mountaineering has become easier, and in doing so, has lost some component which made those historic ascents more vital and significant. Certainly the challenges are different today, as mountaineers have superior

equipment at their disposal as well as knowledge of the terrain. But even as these historians lament the passing of one era, they still seem to reinforce those negative aspects of past accounts. In using Mallory's name to connote an era of climbing, they reinforce the importance of a nationalistic aim of the expedition, the military framework used to structure it, and the importance of striving for the summit.

If mountaineering has become mechanical thanks to equipment and knowledge, then these innovations contrasted with the subculture's conventions, result in confusion about mountaineering in the 21st century. The goal of the ascent is still valued, but the means to achieve it are discounted. How to reconcile the two aspects of the ascent is a challenge which climbers must resolve for themselves during the course of the activity, and, if they choose, to write about it, through their representation. The account can do so, but it may have to change yet again through other processes. If the inclusion of elements such as diaries is not enough to change the dominant representation of mountaineering, then authors may begin using other formats, such as web pages, to represent their experiences.

The old accounts can continue to inspire ascents both original and derivative, but as the industry becomes more stabilized in the economy, the activity of mountaineering has a chance to become more dynamic. Through accounts which disregard the past frameworks in favor of personal meaning and satisfaction, the summit can begin to signify something other than victory. The mountain can signify something other than an enemy. And mountaineering can be more than conquering.

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