Commercialisation and Mount Everest in the Twentieth Century
Peter H. Hansen
in Rethinking Geographical Explorations in Extreme Environments.
edited by Marco Armiero, Roberta Biasillo, Stefano Morosini. Routledge, 2023, 144-156.

9 Commercialisation and Mount Everest in the twentieth century[1]

Peter H. Hansen

Mount Everest between climbing and commerce

"Everest: Climbers' Challenge or Commercial Venture?" asked the cover of the *Daily Telegraph Magazine* on 16 April 1971. The magazine was touting a story about an international Everest expedition with "thirty men and one woman" from 12 nations, a massive BBC film crew, and publishing agreements in ten countries. The *Daily Telegraph* surveyed a wide-ranging debate about Everest's commercialisation. Eric Shipton, Joe Brown, and Ian McNaught Davis criticised the introduction of publicity and "Big Business" into climbing, though some form of commercialism was considered inevitable by Don Whillans, a professional climber who made his living as a mountaineer. Chris Brasher argued that the affluence of the 1950s had enabled working-class climbers to break through a class barrier, and now climbers in the 1970s could break through a nationalist barrier. To stir the pot further, the article asked a series of rhetorical questions: "Is the International [Everest Expedition] taking risks purely in the name of climbing? Are they filming a climb – or climbing to make a film? Is it a mountaineering adventure? Or a marketing enterprise?"[2]

Climbing Mount Everest has long been *both* climbers' challenge *and* commercial venture. The either/or proposition creates a false opposition that reflects a common, though problematic, way of talking about Everest and commercialisation more generally. More recent criticism of commercialisation on Everest has followed this pattern, often influenced by Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air* (1996), which blamed commercial teams for deaths in a storm. Climbing and commerce have always been intertwined, and placing them in opposition has led to unattainable expectations among climbers and vacuous analyses by commentators. The conditions of geographical exploration in modern times do not involve unsullied environments set apart from commerce, society, or marketing. Simplistic narratives that either exploration or mountaineering declined with the onset of commercialisation – before a state of grace, afterwards corrupted – conceal earlier forms of commercialisation and obscure the role of Sherpas, Nepalis, Tibetans, women, and other partners throughout these years.

Imperialism and nationalism justified the risks of dying while climbing in the Himalayas during the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. If nationalism

DOI: 10.4324/9781003095965-10

no longer provided a convincing rationale for mountaineering or exploration in extreme environments, as Brasher suggested in 1971, what replaced it? Brasher had participated in international climbing expeditions, and transnational collaborations appealed to many during periods of thaw in the Cold War.[3] Some climbers, like Reinhold Messner, replaced nationalism with individualism. After climbing Everest without supplemental oxygen in an Austrian expedition in 1978, Messner, a German-speaking Italian from the south Tyrol, renounced nationalism by declaring at a rally: "I am my own homeland, and this handkerchief is my flag."[4] The financial rewards enjoyed by Messner and a few other professional mountaineers have been substantial. The temptation exists to echo the headline writers of the *Daily Telegraph* and draw a contrast between the earlier eras when brave climbers surmounted challenges with new ages of individualism and commercial ventures on Everest.

This temptation should be resisted. The commercialisation of Everest has been going on for more than a century, though recent debates have distinctive features. Since the first ascent in 1953, Everest has been climbed about 10,000 times, with 9,000 ascents since the year 2000.[5] Recent crowding on the mountain has exceeded earlier expectations. The masculine heroism of climbers has been called into question as more people, especially women and formerly underrepresented groups, climb Everest and as high-altitude workers in the Himalayas assert more control over the mountain, even cancelling ascents in some years.[6]

Games that climbers play have multiplied over the last 50 years, as new styles of climbing are preferred by one group or another. Sherry Ortner persuasively argued that twentieth-century Himalayan mountaineering was a "serious game" of competing masculinities, in which Sherpas have their own agendas and exercise their own agency. The western counterculture of the 1960s problematised the military-style hypermasculinity of the earlier Everest climbers and enabled Sherpas to press for more egalitarian relations and for women to question gender norms. Mark Liechty also notes that "what tourists view as a quest is for Nepalis an industry."[7] Commercial tourism and trekking developed rapidly in the 1970s as the result of deliberate efforts by the Nepali government to rebrand Nepal as a site for adventure tourism. Mountaineering, tourism, and the commercialisation of Everest in Nepal and China have been the result of continuing cross-cultural interactions.

The commercialisation of mountaineering should be understood along a continuum. As Ortner and Liechty suggest, some forms of commercialisation are not external imports but indigenous strategies for development, in which Sherpas or Nepalis pursue their own agendas to tap into global modernity. Ironically, some critics of commercialisation on Everest have been among its greatest beneficiaries. Yet the anarchic individualism of many elite mountaineers makes it difficult for them to locate their activity in a wider context. Debates about commercialisation on Everest also highlight disparities of risk and inequalities of wealth.[8] Everest is not alone in raising such issues, but its position as the world's highest mountain has amplified voices that are less often heard in global debates over the legacies of colonialism and the consequences of globalisation.

Mountaineering has been commercial from the beginning, no matter the starting date. In the Alps, the guides of Chamonix and other places in the Alps escorted visitors through the mountains by the mid-eighteenth century. Visitors such as Marc-Théodore Bourrit and Horace-Bénédict de Saussure collaborated with these guides to create panoramic views from the mountain top that illustrate the summit position of the autonomous individual who dominates nature.[9] The infrastructure for commercial Alpine tourism expanded rapidly throughout the nineteenth century as mountain climbing became a popular pastime. Alpine clubs across Europe were instrumental in building the network of huts, paths, and guides, often as deliberate steps in local economic and social development in the Alps, just as has happened more recently in the Himalayas.[10]

Everest's commercialisation has taken multiple forms across this longer history. This chapter highlights several episodes in Everest's commercialisation, from early mapping to expedition films of the 1920s, the commercialisation of climbing paraphernalia in the 1950s, and the mass-market commercialisation of Everest in the last 50 years. Periods of imperial exploration and nationalist mountaineering were *also* commercial and serve as examples of the continuum of commercialisation and varieties of capitalism on Everest.

The 'discovery' of Chomolungma

Chomolungma, as the peak is known in Tibet and China, was mapped for the Kang-xi emperor and appeared on Manchu and European maps during the eighteenth century.[11] A century later, British and Indian surveyors identified Peak XV as the highest in the world and assigned the name "Mount Everest" by imperial prerogative in the 1850s. Trigonometrical surveys from India are often filed under the 'discovery' of the Himalayas but are better understood as the commodification and incorporation of mountain spaces into the knowledge networks of a chartered monopoly, the East India Company. The measuring, mapping, and naming of Mt Everest are examples of commercialisation and its forms of knowledge. The surveying of mountains, taming of rivers, and study of the meteorology of the monsoon were undertaken by the company state and became instruments of imperial and later national governance in India. The record keepers of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India laboured mightily in the nineteenth century to transform external perceptions of its role from a commercial enterprise to scientific endeavour.[12]

In the 1920s, the earliest Mount Everest expeditions were also commercial ventures. British climbers and explorers received permission to approach the mountain from Tibet as part of a commercial bargain in 1921. The government of Tibet traded access to Chomolungma-Everest in exchange for British weapons during periods of military conflicts with China. As bargaining chips in diplomacy, Everest climbing permits became a commodity, and so they have remained. British Everest expeditions in the 1920s and 1930s were funded by government subsidy, commercial endorsements, and selling the media rights. London newspapers or British filmmakers paid most of the cost in exchange for exclusive rights

to publish news and official dispatches or make films about the expedition. Manufacturers donated equipment in exchange for testimonials. Subsidies came in the form of paid leave for officers or gifts-in-kind from the British military and government of India. Put another way, the Indian taxpayers of the British Raj paid part of the cost of the British expeditions in the 1920s and 1930s. The first commercial Everest expedition should be dated to 1924, when John Noel's Explorer's Films Limited paid 80% of the cost of the expedition on which George Mallory and Andrew Irvine disappeared near the summit.[13]

Why did Mallory join the first Everest expeditions and keep coming back? Mallory was persuaded by a friend to join the team because the "Everest label" would open doors beyond his career as a schoolmaster.[14] In 1923, Mallory was on a paid lecture tour through Britain and the United States when he told the *New York Times* that Everest should be climbed "because it's there." Mallory toured to pay his way and raise money for the expedition, and his remarks highlighted the rising costs to reach higher elevations much like a fundraising appeal.[15] Mallory had become a professional mountaineer, supporting himself on the lecture circuit, though he was not the first, and many more would follow.

In 1925, John Noel's film, *The Epic of Everest*, was screened in London with a group of "dancing lamas" whose performances offended officials in Tibet and caused the cancellation of Everest expeditions for nearly a decade. The commercialisation of Everest put the Tibetans in a position to critique Noel's film and stop British ascents of the mountain. The closing intertitles of *The Epic of Everest* describe the mountain as Chomolungma, Goddess Mother of the World. The continuing use of this translation is itself an artefact of the commercialisation of Everest by this film. Alternate translations exist, and the preference for this one was established by Noel's intercultural dialogue with his local informants and his choices in the editing and release of this film.

A century later, Royal Geographical Society Enterprises, the commercial arm of the society, sells reproductions of the photographs from the early Everest expeditions. This is a contemporary reminder of the continuing commercial exploitation of the geographical exploration of Everest and other extreme environments. Commercialisation through sponsorship by the Royal Geographical Society, National Geographic Society, and other societies has been severely underestimated. Rachel Gross observes of Everest expeditions that "sponsorship is, in fact, marketing," and this was true before the strategy of sponsors shifted from public relations to paid advertising in the second half of the twentieth century.[16] Continuities across the twentieth century suggest that the contrast between 'exploratory' and 'commercial' climbing has been exaggerated in the history of mountaineering and other expeditions in extreme environments.

The first ascent of Everest by a British team in 1953 took place in a national/commercial nexus at the end of empire and height of the Cold War. The iconic photograph taken by Edmund Hillary of Tenzing Norgay on the summit holding aloft the flags of Britain, India, Nepal, and the United Nations circulated widely. After intense debates over who stepped on the summit first, Tenzing and Hillary were each celebrated as national heroes in multiple nation states.

In later decades, images of Tenzing, Hillary, and Everest appeared on postage stamps and currency, with Hillary's youthful face on New Zealand's five-dollar bill. The use of these images in infinitely replicable series such as stamps or currency is a sign of the commercial exploitation of nationalism by the nation state.[17] This pattern was repeated by other national teams on Everest and other Himalayan peaks.

The Mount Everest Foundation and commercial sponsorship

For several decades after 1953, British mountaineering was underwritten by the financial success of the first ascent. Profits from Everest books, films, and lectures in 1953 were placed in a trust, the Mount Everest Foundation; reinvested; and ploughed back into later climbing expeditions. The cost of the British first ascent of Kanchenjunga in 1955 and the ascent of Annapurna in 1970 were both fully paid by the Mount Everest Foundation.[18] In other words, the commercialisation of Everest in 1953 funded British mountaineering in the Himalayas into the 1970s and has continued to subsidise climbing teams through smaller grants.

The search for commercial sponsorship expanded in the 1950s and took on increasing importance in the 1970s. Take Rolex, for example. Rolex had sponsored Himalayan expeditions since the 1930s and presented watches to the 1953 Everest team. Hillary appeared frequently in Rolex advertising, initially with Tenzing and later on his own or with Messner, as further adventures kept Hillary in the public eye. Hillary and Tenzing's sons and grandsons have continued this sponsorship into later generations.

Rolex is an example of the commercialisation of paraphernalia, to adopt the terminology of scholars of commercialisation and lifestyle sports.[19] Paraphernalia commercialisation refers to the production and marketing of climbing or sports equipment and has been distinguished from two other kinds: movement commercialisation, that is, specialty enterprises located within and dedicated to serving the climbing community, and finally mass-market commercialisation, when mainstream businesses use the aura of mountaineering to sell products to non-climbers as well as climbers. These are heuristic categories that co-exist with one another, not stages of development. By the 1960s, the movement commercialisation of climbing and the mass-market promotion of Everest were entrenched and lucrative sources of income for some climbers.[20]

The expansion of the outdoor industry, mountaineering paraphernalia, and commercial sponsorship continued to develop alongside Everest expeditions in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1963, the huge American Mount Everest Expedition (AMEE) was organised as a commercial enterprise. Jim Whittaker, the first American to reach the summit of Everest, worked for and later became the CEO of Recreational Equipment Incorporated, an excellent example of movement commercialisation of climbing and outdoor recreation.[21] The *Wall Street Journal* noted with some satisfaction that the AMEE was, literally, a corporation (tax-exempt, non-profit). Costing over $400,000, the AMEE represented the largest party to climb any mountain and combined scientific research with the climbing efforts.[22]

Mass-market commercialisation and mega-expeditions continued into the 1970s, and many of the arguments offered in later debates about the commercialisation of climbing took shape in these years. It is tempting to identify this discursive change – the development of certain kinds of critique of commercialisation – with a shift in practice from national to international, or siege to 'alpine'-style, expeditions. Once again, national expeditions were already commercial before 1970, and perhaps for that very reason, national teams remained the predominant mode for organising and marketing Everest ascents throughout the 1980s and the end of the Cold War.

The critique of commercialisation

Everest expeditions in the 1970s had many of the features that are often associated with the later critique of commercialisation since the 1990s. Consider these examples:

- In 1973, an Italian Everest expedition led by the climber and polar explorer Guido Monzino, scion of a supermarket fortune, included a huge team of 60 members and more than 100 Sherpas, lavish accommodations, and helicopters that took gear above the icefall.[23]
- In 1975, Barclays Bank was principal sponsor of the British expedition to the Southwest Face of Everest. Expedition tents, rather than climber's parkas, had Barclays' logos since the climbers did not want to look like race car drivers. Barclays donated £141,000 but recouped most of its investment through book royalties and selling other rights, so its net outlay was only £20,000.[24]
- Also 1975, Junko Tabei, first woman to climb Everest, was sponsored by a Tokyo newspaper and Japanese television network. Known as the "Everest mother," she said the attention and responsibility were overwhelming. After the ascent, she did not seek corporate funding again. "If I accept sponsorship, then climbing the mountain is not my own experience," she said later. "It's like working for the company."[25]
- In 1976, the American Bicentennial Expedition was launched by a group of lawyers, doctors, and professors, along with several professional climbers. Their budget was over $200,000 and funded mostly by CBS television.[26]
- Messner paid for his place on an Austrian expedition in 1978 and had multiple sponsorship deals. After his Everest ascents without oxygen in 1978 and alone in 1980, his endorsements and royalties from books and merchandise funded a successful career as a professional mountaineer and explorer.[27]
- The Chinese-Japanese expedition on the Chinese side of Everest in 1980 included 60 climbers and a dozen reporters and had an estimated cost over £800,000.[28]

The income earned by Messner and a few others was exceptional and only possible because Everest appealed to a mass-market audience. In later years, few climbers could hope to earn similar amounts from climbing. In 1988, a spokesman

for Rolex explained their sponsorship strategy by noting the "disappearance" of potentially important discoveries and "there is only one Everest."[29]

The expansion of access and reduction in reputational as well as financial rewards since the 1990s have been felt keenly as a loss by some climbers. At a forum on Everest in 2014, the prominent American climber Conrad Anker said that as a young man, he was in awe of Doug Scott's ascent of Everest's Southwest Face: "Now, [when] I go to Yosemite, they're like, 'dude, you've climbed Everest, you're not worthy anymore.' So, it is like this big change around, where it has become far more commercial."[30]

Controversies over commercial expeditions and deaths on Everest in the 1990s and 2000s are well known and related in articles, films, television, and books with titles like *Dark Summit*.[31] Crowds lined the ropes, climbers were left to die, and garbage piled up.[32] Climbers pay from $40,000 to $110,000 to climb on a route with camps, cooks, and fixed ropes from Base Camp to the summit. According to Messner, the prepared routes on Everest have changed the mountain fundamentally. The standard route via the South Col in Nepal was no longer "wilderness," he said, but "piste alpinism" that follows a groomed ski trail or via ferrata prepared by Sherpas.

> But piste alpinism is tourism. What is tourism? Tourism is an activity where the organizer is preparing your stay in a way that is quite safe and secure. . . . But alpinism, classical, traditional alpinism is beginning where tourism is finishing.[33]

The twenty-first-century Everest

Climbers often place alpinism and tourism in opposition, but this rhetorical move once again obscures the connections between alpinism and adventure tourism and mystifies the claims that climbers make for their own modernity through mountaineering.[34] Not even the earliest Everest climbers arrived in an uninhabited, pristine wilderness outside of time and history. From a longer perspective, the trouble with "traditional alpinism" is also the trouble with wilderness: "it reproduces the very values its devotees seek to reject."[35] Alpinism on Everest and elsewhere was and is a form of tourism that cannot disentangle climbers from the relationships they bring with them or the societies they encounter. For Messner, though, climbing Everest has become banal and has nothing to do with alpinism. "People don't climb Hillary's Everest or my Everest. They climb another mountain, even if it is geologically the same."[36]

By the first quarter of the twenty-first century, nostalgia for this earlier Everest ("Hillary's Everest or my Everest") is being challenged by Sherpas and others in Nepal who balance the risk of death with the income from climbing differently than some visitors.[37] Though western perspectives on Everest have been challenged for years in the Himalayas and elsewhere,[38] the demands of Sherpas and Nepalis have become increasingly vocal in the last decade, especially during the "Everest brawl" of 2013, an icefall avalanche in 2014, the Nepal earthquake in

2015, and the repeated closures of the mountain after some of these events and the coronavirus pandemic.

The so-called "Everest brawl" broke out after three European climbers insulted a group of high-altitude workers fixing ropes on Everest. The European climbers, led by Simone Moro, asserted a right to roam freely in the mountains, calling their effort the "NO(2) Limits Everest Expedition." These climbers "feel that Everest – just like every mountain – should be open to all, anytime."[39] While climbing on the regular Everest route to acclimatise, they literally and figuratively stepped over the line, cursing at the Sherpas who were preparing fixed ropes, which led to a violent scuffle in a climbing camp.[40] Though the "brawl" should have demonstrated that mountains are *not* spaces without limits, where anyone can do as they please, the global media coverage fell into colonial stereotypes and critiques of commercialisation. Yet the conflict was not a clash between commercial Sherpas and "adventure" climbers unencumbered by commerce but rather an encounter of multiple forms of commercial mountaineering that are mutually interdependent.

After years of quiet suffering and deference helping visitors to achieve glorious first ascents, Nepalis complained in 2013 that they were tired of the disrespect and arrogance of western climbers and guides. "As a Nepali-owned outfitter," wrote Sumit Joshi of Himalayan Ascent, "we often hear our western outfitter friends acknowledge that the skilled Sherpa climbers deserve more. But what are they actually willing to give more of? More money? More benefits? More fame? Perhaps they should start with more respect."[41] Tashi Sherpa, a member of the rope-fixing team in the altercation, complained that Sherpas risked their lives but did not get any credit. "Even in documentary films like *Into Thin Air* and *Everest*, you don't get to see Sherpas. We have been left out." Sherpas benefited from mountaineering, but so had "whites" and the Nepali government. Relations were still good, "but this incident was waiting to happen, and it will happen again as long as Sherpas are humiliated."[42]

On 18 April 2014, a block of ice detached from the West Shoulder of Everest, and an avalanche fell on the climbing route in the Khumbu Icefall just above Everest Base Camp. The avalanche killed 16 Nepali high-altitude workers, then Everest's deadliest single disaster. After rescues of the injured and recovery of the dead, three victims remained buried in the ice. Sherpas refused to climb over the bodies of their colleagues and demanded better insurance, higher compensation for victim's families, and more respect from expedition operators and the Nepali government. Film crews that had planned to broadcast stunts on the mountain instead recorded these debates. The documentary *Sherpa* follows Phurba Tashi, a 21-time Everest summitteer and climbing leader for Himalayan Experience, a European expedition operator, back to his village where his family fears for his safety and anguishes over his return to the mountain. While watching his sons, Phurba remarks: "There are no other opportunities for Sherpas. Mountaineering is where we can make the most money. Everyone needs money, so we go on pretending that it's safe."[43]

A year later, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake on 25 April 2015, caused the deaths of almost 9,000 people in Nepal. The earthquake set off an avalanche that swept

directly into Everest Base Camp with the force of an enormous bomb, killing at least 21 people.[44] Climbing was cancelled without protest. The 2015 earthquake opened the eyes of some climbers to the precarity of everyday life in Nepal. The first-world bubble around Everest was recognised after the earthquake with awkwardness, as if for the first time: "Even as we have been climbing their mountains, we've been living in a different world."[45] Disparities of wealth had been visible for years, but the earthquake ruptured a complacency that looked upward toward the summits but lacked the peripheral vision to see the conditions of life in Nepal.

Crowds returned to Everest within a few years, with nearly 700 ascents in 2017, more than 800 in 2018, and almost 900 in 2019, from both sides of the mountain. "2019 will go down as the year Everest finally broke," declared one commentator, reflecting on 11 deaths, accusations of fraud, and large crowds of climbers.[46] Guiding companies multiplied on Everest, and Nepali outfitters offered cheaper options. In 2019, about 80% of the climbers were with Nepali firms and 20% with foreign expedition operators, a reversal of the ratio only five years earlier.[47] Indians outnumbered Americans as the largest nationality for Everest climbers and were represented disproportionately among recent deaths.[48] Some established operators complained that local firms were targeting the Indian and Chinese markets with low-priced ascents. In 2019, unsettled weather created a brief period of several days to reach the top, and the scene of climbers waiting back-to-back in lines on the summit ridge was captured in a viral photograph.[49]

The climber who photographed these lines heading for the summit was Nirmal Purja Pun Magar, a Nepali climber and former soldier in the Gurkhas and UK special forces. Nirmal Purja was climbing Everest for *Project Possible*, an effort to ascend all the world's 14 highest peaks in less than seven months. "Securing the financial partners was clearly going to be an additional mountain to climb," his website noted. A UK-based GoFundMe page raised £121,000, and he mortgaged his house and potentially his future. After early successes, Bremont, a British maker of luxury watches founded in 2002, acquired the naming rights to the project. Others like Red Bull signed Purja to sponsorships with further success.

The closure of Everest during the coronavirus pandemic once again emphasised Nepal's dependence on mountaineering and other forms of adventure tourism.[50] Policies requiring experience on other peaks and other technical changes to the Everest industry will not end debates over commercialisation. The intensity of these debates in recent years has less to do with climbing policies than with the extremes of wealth and poverty and contests for control over Everest and how these have become politically relevant.

The day Nirmal Purja summitted and photographed the line on Everest – 22 May 2019 – a total of 222 climbers reached the summit, including 133 from Nepal, 27 from India, 27 from China, and 35 from all other countries combined.[51] That year Nepalis made 57% of all ascents of Everest. Incentives to reach the summit are considerable. High-altitude workers earn more in two months on Everest than the average income in Nepal for a year, yet their earnings remain a fraction of what western guides are paid for the same work. By contrast, western guides and climbers are from some of the wealthiest countries in the world, even if they are

not the wealthiest clients paying the highest fees. Recently, some Indian climbers on Everest came from families of modest means.[52] Disparities of wealth between climbers and guides, including those from India and China, are common in Himalayan mountaineering.

These disparities gained salience as Nepalis have asserted control over climbing on Everest. They have asserted control because the prosperity and well-being of their communities depends on Everest's continued commercialisation. If commercialisation has a long history on Everest, so too does the avoidance of calling it by name, a reluctance once associated with imperial or nationalist points of view. Disparities of wealth did not start with globalisation, and they will not be reduced or overcome by pretending that the Himalayas are simply the Alps with higher elevations. There is no going back to an age that never was, no position "outside" the continuum of commercialisation on Everest or elsewhere.

Everest and the world's highest peaks remain climbers' challenges as well as commercial ventures. "THE IMPOSSIBLE IS MADE POSSIBLE" read the headline of Nirmal Purja's announcement that an all-Nepali team of ten climbers made the first winter ascent of K2 in January 2021. This ascent was heralded as completion of one of the "last" great climbing challenges. This all-caps headline could be transformed into an historical explanation by appending the phrase ". . . BY THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF MOUNT EVEREST." Nine of the ten Nepali climbers were Sherpas who had started their climbing careers as porters, developing and honing their climbing skills to an elite level on Everest. Their collective achievement on K2 was the culmination of developments on Everest and other peaks across the long twentieth century. These climbers were aware of the significance of this moment in a longer history. When they neared the top, "the whole team waited 10m below the summit to form a group then stepped onto the summit together whilst singing our Nepalese National Anthem."[53]

Notes

1 The author is grateful for the support of the Durham University Institute of Advanced Study and for comments at Durham's Hatfield College and the conference on geographical exploration in Milan.
2 I. Rowan, "A Summit Bathed in Publicity", *Daily Telegraph Magazine*, 16 April 1971.
3 John H.C. Hunt and Christopher Brasher, *The Red Snows: An Account of the British Caucasus Expedition, 1958* (London: Hutchinson, 1960); Carolin F. Roeder, *European Mountaineers between East and West: A Transnational History of Alpinism in the Twentieth Century* (Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, 2017); Ilaria Scaglia, *The Emotions of Internationalism: Feeling International Cooperation in the Alps in the Interwar Period* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).
4 Maurice Isserman and Stewart A. Weaver, *Fallen Giants: A History of Himalayan Mountaineering from the Age of Empire to the Age of Extremes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 435.
5 Richard Salisbury, *The Himalayan Database* (2020), www.himalayandatabase.com/, last access 10 December 2021.
6 Julie Rak, *False Summit: Gender in Mountaineering Nonfiction* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021).

7 Mark Liechty, *Far Out: Countercultural Seekers and the Tourist Encounter in Nepal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017); Sherry B. Ortner, *Life and Death on Mt. Everest: Sherpas and Himalayan Mountaineering* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
8 Esther Bott, "Big Mountain, Big Name: Globalised Relations of Risk in Himalayan Mountaineering", *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 7, no. 4 (2009): 287–301. doi:10.1080/14766820903521785.
9 Peter H. Hansen, *The Summits of Modern Man: Mountaineering after the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).
10 Ben Anderson, *Cities, Mountains and Being Modern in Fin-de-Siècle England and Germany* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); Peter H. Hansen, "Partners: Guides and Sherpas in the Alps and Himalayas, 1850s-1950s", in *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel*, eds. Ján Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés (London: Reaktion, 1999), 210–231; Tait Keller, *Apostles of the Alps: Mountaineering and Nation Building in Germany and Austria, 1860–1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).
11 Sidney Gerald Burrard, *Mount Everest and Its Tibetan Names: A Review of Sir Sven Hedin's Book* (Dehra Dun: Geodetic Branch Office, Survey of India, 1931); Sven A. Hedin, *Mount Everest Och Andra Asiatiska Problem* (Stockholm: A. Bonner, 1922).
12 Sunil S. Amrith, *Unruly Waters: How Mountain Rivers and Monsoons Have Shaped South Asia's History* (New York: Basic Books, 2018); Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765–1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).
13 Peter H. Hansen, "The Dancing Lamas of Everest: Cinema, Orientalism, and Anglo-Tibetan Relations in the 1920s", *The American Historical Review the American Historical Review* 101, no. 3 (1996): 712. doi:10.1086/ahr/101.3.712.
14 Peter Gillman and Leni Gillman, *The Wildest Dream: Mallory, His Life and Conflicting Passions* (London: Headline, 2001), 171.
15 "Climbing Mount Everest Is Work for Supermen", *New York Times*, 18 March 1923.
16 Rachel S. Gross, "Logos on Everest: Commercial Sponsorship of American Expeditions, 1950–2000", *Enterprise & Society* (2020): 1–36. doi:10.1017/eso.2020.31.
17 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991); Peter H. Hansen, "Confetti of Empire: The Conquest of Everest in Nepal, India, Britain, and New Zealand", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 2 (2000): 307–332. doi:10.1017/S0010417500002486.
18 T. Barcham, *The Modernisation of Elite British Mountaineering: Entrepreneurship, Commercialisation and the Career Climber, 1953–2000* (Doctoral dissertation, De Montfort University, 2018), http://hdl.handle.net/2086/16546.
19 Bob Edwards and Ugo Corte, "Commercialization and Lifestyle Sport: Lessons from 20 Years of Freestyle BMX in Pro-Town, USA", *Sport in Society Sport in Society* 13, no. 7–8 (2010): 1135–1151. doi:10.1080/17430431003780070.
20 Joseph E. Taylor, *Pilgrims of the Vertical: Yosemite Rock Climbers and Nature at Risk* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).
21 Harvey Manning, *REI: 50 Years of Climbing together: The REI Story* ([Seattle]: REI, 1988).
22 Philip W. Clements, *Science in an Extreme Environment: The 1963 American Mount Everest Expedition* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018); Vanessa Heggie, *Higher and Colder: A History of Extreme Physiology and Exploration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

23 Walt Unsworth, *Everest: The Mountaineering History* (Seattle, WA and London: Mountaineers; Bâton Wicks, 2001).
24 Thomas Barcham, "Commercial Sponsorship in Mountaineering: A Case Study of the 1975 British Everest Expedition", *Sport in History* 33, no. 3 (2013): 333–352. doi:10.1080/17460263.2013.826435.
25 Junko Tabei and Helen Y. Rolfe, *Honouring High Places: The Mountain Life of Junko Tabei*, trans. Y. Hiraki and R. Holtved (Victoria: Rocky Mountain Books, 2017); Robert Horn, "No Mountain Too High for Her: Junko Tabei Defied Japanese Views of Women to Become an Expert Climber", *Sports Illustrated* (29 April 1996), https://vault.si.com/vault/1996/04/29/no-mountain-too-high-for-her-junko-tabei-defied-japanese-views-of-women-to-become-an-expert-climber, last access 10 December 2021.
26 Rick Ridgeway, *The Boldest Dream: The Story of Twelve Who Climbed Mount Everest* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979).
27 Ronald Faux, *High Ambition: A Biography of Reinhold Messner* (London: Gollancz, 1982).
28 Unsworth, *Everest*.
29 Gross, "Logos on Everest"; M. Cannell, "Pitching the Big Trip: Explorers Spend More Time Raising Money Than Spending It", *New York Times Magazine*, 12 June 1988.
30 Sustainable Summits, dir., "Everest Knot Panel Discussion", in *Sustainable Summits Initiative* (2014), https://youtu.be/DgbKAl4C3rI, last access 10 December 2021.
31 Nick Heil, *Dark Summit: The True Story of Everest's Most Controversial Season* (New York: Henry Holt, 2008); Jon Krakauer, *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster* (New York: Villard, 1997).
32 Elizabeth Mazzolini, *The Everest Effect: Nature, Culture, Ideology* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2016).
33 Luke Bauer, *Reinhold Messner Speaks at Outdoor Retailer* (2012), https://web.archive.org/web/20160824232148/http://inclined.americanalpineclub.org/2012/02/reinhold-messner-at-outdoor-retailer/, last access 10 December 2021.
34 Hansen, *The Summit of Modern Man*; Paul A. Beedie and Simon Hudson, "Emergence of Mountain-Based Adventure Tourism", *Annals of Tourism Research* 30, no. 3 (2003): 625–643. doi:10.1016/S0160-7383(03)00043-4.
35 William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness", *New York Times Magazine*, 13 August 1995, www.nytimes.com/1995/08/13/magazine/the-trouble-with-wilderness.html, last access 10 December 2021.
36 Stefan Nestler, "Messner: 'First Ascent a Magic Moment of Mountaineering'", 29 May 2013, www.dw.com/en/messner-first-ascent-a-magic-moment-of-mountaineering/a-16844185, last access 10 December 2021.
37 Young Hoon Oh, "Dying Differently: Sherpa and Korean Mountaineers on Everest", *Minnesota Review* 90 (2018): 100–113. doi:10.1215/00265667-4391560.
38 Peter H. Hansen, "Tenzing's Two Wrist-Watches: The Conquest of Everest and Late Imperial Culture in Britain 1921–1953", *Past & Present* 157 (1997): 159–177. doi:10.1093/past/157.1.159.
39 Freddie Wilkinson, "Attack on Mount Everest", *Men's Journal*, 4 June 2013, www.mensjournal.com/features/attack-on-mount-everest-20130614/, last access 10 December 2021.
40 *Machtkampf am Everest Sherpas, Bergsteiger und die blutige Eskalation eines Konflikts* (Malik, 2013).
41 S. Joshi, *A Comment on the Brawl Incident* (5 May 2013, 10 AM), https://web.archive.org/web/20140216131937/https:/himalayanascent.com/live-blog/140-a-comment-on-the-brawl-incident-05-05-13-10am-.html, last access 10 December 2021.
42 Deepak Adhikari, "The Everest Brawl: A Sherpa's Tale", *Outside Online* (13 August 2012), www.outsideonline.com/1929351/everest-brawl-sherpas-tale?page=all, last access 10 December 2021.

43 Jennifer Peedom, dir., "Sherpa: Trouble on Everest", in *Australia: Screen Australia* (Australia: Universal Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2015).
44 Dave Hahn and J.J. Justman, "Mt. Everest Expedition: Dave Hahn Details the Days Events as the Team Arrives Base Camp", *RMI Expeditions* (27 April 2015), www.rmiguides.com/blog/2015/04/27/mt._everest_expedition_dave_hahn_details_the_days_events_as_the_team_arrive, last access 10 December 2021.
45 Freddie Wilkinson, "Who Controls Nepal's Helicopters?", *Foreign Policy* (2 May 2015), https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/05/02/nepal-helicopters-earthquake-relief-everest/, last access 10 December 2021.
46 Alan Arnette, "Everest 2019: Season Summary the Year Everest Broke" (2019), www.alanarnette.com/blog/2019/06/07/everest-2019-season-summary-the-year-everest-broke/, last access 10 December.
47 Abhirup Roy and Gopal Sharma, "Summit Fever: Everest's Budget Climbing Boom Puts Indians Most at Risk", *Reuters* (31 May 2019), www.reuters.com/article/us-nepal-everest-indians-idUSKCN1T10OD, last access 10 December 2021.
48 J. Branch, "Deliverance from 27,000 Feet", *New York Times*, 19 December 2017, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/12/18/sports/everest-deaths.html, last access 10 December 2021; Rajan Pokhrel, "Congestion Didn't Cause Everest Deaths", *Himalayan Times*, 5 June 2019, https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/congestion-didnt-cause-everest-deaths/, last access 10 December 2021.
49 Svati Kristen Narula, "Yes, This Photo from Everest Is Real", *Outside Online* (23 May 2019), www.outsideonline.com/2397164/everest-summit-traffic-jam, last access 10 December 2021.
50 Sanjay K. Nepal, "Adventure Travel and Tourism after COVID-19: Business as Usual or Opportunity to Reset?", *Tourism Geographies* 22, no. 3 (2020): 646–650. doi:10.1080/14616688.2020.1760926.
51 Salisbury, *The Himalayan Database*.
52 Branch, "Deliverance from 27,000 Feet".
53 Nirmal Purja [nimsdai], "The Impossible Is Made Possible!", #K2winter: History Made for Mankind, History Made for Nepal! [Instagram], 16 January 2021, accessed 19 January 2021, www.instagram.com/p/CKGyyPDBNL-/, last access 10 December 2021.