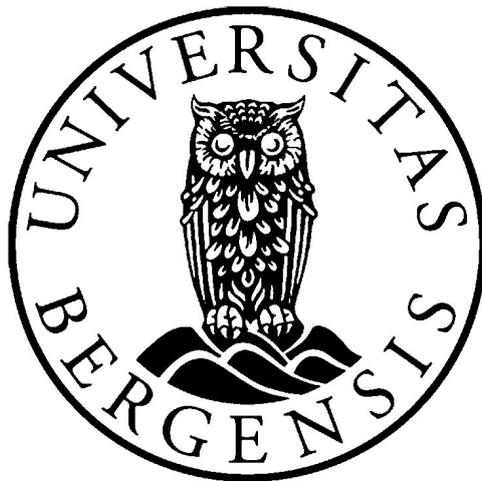


Truth above the Clouds:

Narrative Truth and Competitive Writing in Mount Everest Literature

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Abstract

Denne oppgaven undersøker konkurrerende litteratur om Mount Everest, og viser hvordan ulike fjellklatrere prøver å overbevise om at deres versjon av opplevelsene er den rette. Det som kjennetegner denne sjangeren er at litteraturen preges av svar og motsvar mellom forfattere. Gjennom sammenligning av Sir Edmund Hillary sin bok *High Adventure: The True Story of the First Ascent of Everest* (1955) og *Tiger of the Snows* (1955), forfattet av Tenzing Norgay, vises det hvordan forestillinger om sannhet blir skrevet gjennom forfatterne sine beretninger om bestigningen av Mount Everest. Klatrerne hadde ikke like oppfatninger om hvordan de egentlig nådde toppen, og suksessen ved å nå toppen av Mount Everest har påvirket dem forskjellig. Ulikhetene viser seg gjennom deres kulturelle forskjeller og deres annerledes metoder å dokumentere på. Det samme gjelder også bøkene som ble publisert etter en av de største katastrofene på Mount Everest, da to ekspedisjoner satt fast ved toppen av fjellet under en storm. *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster* (1999), forfattet av journalist Jon Krakauer, og Anatoli Boukreev sin bok *The Climb: Tragic Ambitions on Everest* (2002), skrevet i samarbeid med G. Weston DeWalt, skildrer hendelsene som skjedde under stormen. Krakauer og Boukreev er uenige om hva som faktisk skjedde, noe som resulterte i en skriftlig kappestrid for å komme nærmere sannheten. Denne konkurransen førte til en ny tradisjon innenfor opplevelsessjangeren ("the travel/adventure genre"), hvor ikke-forfattere også kan bidra med meningsfullt materiale.

Kapittel 1 tar for seg den skriftlige kampen mellom Hillary og Norgay, og hvordan deres ulike syn på visse hendelser fører til konkurranse for å overbevise leseren om at deres bok beretter den eneste sannheten. Handlingen i disse bøkene finner sted i høyden, hvor det er mangel på oksygen. Dette er problematisk med hensyn til hukommelse og dokumentasjon, som igjen ser ut til å skape et større behov for å overbevise leseren om at deres beretning er den mest autentiske. Kapittel 2 omhandler bøkene til Krakauer og Boukreev, hvor tragedien de ble utsatt for påvirker tekstene deres, noe som fører til en konkurranse om hvem av dem som husker rett. Påvirkningen av tragedien fører til at etterordet i bøkene har en annen form enn hovedteksten, den endrer seg fra saklig til personlig.

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Introduction

Straddling the top of the world, one foot in China and the other in Nepal, I cleared the ice from my oxygen mask, hunched a shoulder against the wind, and stared absently down at the vastness of Tibet. I understood on some dim, detached level that the sweep of earth beneath my feet was a spectacular sight. 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. (Krakauer 4)

The words above are some of the first one encounter in Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air*, describing his state of mind when he reached the tallest peak on earth, Mount Everest. At first glance it appears as a simple description of the top, but at further investigation a deeper meaning reveals itself behind the words: a persuasive technique to draw the reader in right from the very beginning. A phenomenon found in modern Mount Everest literature is the trend of starting the book at the top – literally: at the summit of Mount Everest. Krakauer uses this technique as a persuasive tool in order to engage the reader in the narrative from the beginning, and thus start the persuasion of the author's narrative truth.

In order to understand when the need for narrative truth began in this kind of literature one needs to look back at the first known summiting. Climbing Mount Everest has been many a climber's dream ever since its discovery in 1852 (Krakauer 12). Since its first successful ascent in 1953, many climbers have had the privilege of reaching the summit and living to tell the tale. When New Zealander Sir Edmund Hillary heard that the British were planning an expedition to the tallest mountain on earth in 1950, he wanted to join the adventure. Hillary was finally invited to join the summit bid for the top after three years and two unsuccessful expeditions. Going where no men had gone before, Hillary and his climbing partner, Tenzing Norgay, stepped on top of the world on May 29, 1953 at approximately 11:30 am. Instant fame followed, intertwining their names with the mountain forever. What followed their climb was each mountaineer's account of the event. Sir Edmund Hillary released his

version of the ascent two years later in *High Adventure: The True Story of the First Ascent of Everest* (1955), while Tenzing Norgay released an alternate account later that same year, *Tiger of the Snows* (1955), from his point of view, as a corrective version, thus commencing the battle for narrative truth.

The tradition of climbing Mount Everest and then writing about it kept going throughout the years and in particular the climbing season of 1996. By now it was more common to go on Everest expeditions and in 1996 this was the case when many climbers attempted to summit on the same day, but with disastrous results. By this time hundreds of climbers had reached Mount Everest's summit, and this year three commercial expeditions were caught in a deadly storm on May 10, in the so-called Death Zone (above 8000 meters, where the body starts to shut down and deteriorate) – resulting in the deadliest year of Mount Everest's history up until that point in time. Various accounts appeared in print about the truth of what actually occurred that day, written by journalist Jon Krakauer, guide Anatoli Bourkeev, and others all battling for narrative truth.

The competition that is present in mountaineering literature is playing out over and over again, starting with a race to the top of the mountain, then again between the authors and their narrative versions of the summiting. This competition leads to a tension between the historical truth of the event and the difficulty of putting it on paper, which is further problematized with the low oxygen levels on the mountain. Most of the narratives discussed in this thesis are first person narratives, which can be an issue as these are non-fiction texts. The authors attempt to claim the authority of their version of the event as the correct one, which is illustrated in their individual experience of the event that in turn shapes the narrative. These multiple truths revive the competition that is present on the expedition, which leads to a battle for narrative truth that is identifiable in both structure and language.

In this thesis I will explore four travel/adventure books where the main event is climbing the tallest mountain on earth, Sir Edmund Hillary's *High Adventure: the True Story of the First Ascent of Everest* (1955), Tenzing Norgay's *Tiger of the Snows* (1955), Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Everest Disaster* (1997) and Anatoli Boukreev's *The Climb: Tragic Ambitions on Everest* (1998). I will argue that the authors establish their textual authority by attempting to convince the reader of narrative truth by means of memory, which when questioned leads to competitive writing, and lastly collaborative efforts that poses a problem with regard

to memory, all the while engaging in the adventure story tradition. Differing views of the first known summiting in 1953 illustrate that with different cultures come contrasting relationships to memory and truth, thus resulting in competitive narratives. This competitive tradition continues throughout the years when the Everest disaster of 1996 resulted in contradicting narratives about the event. Boukreev challenging Krakauer's memory leads to an altered text influenced by trauma, which is presented in the form of a postscript.

This thesis will be in chronological order; therefore I will start with a chapter discussing the literature from the first summiting in 1953. My thesis's main concern will be with an exploration of these competitive mountaineering narratives and in what way they are competing for narrative truth. In the first chapter I will analyze the texts to explore the persuasive strategies used, as well as how memory works in this kind of mountaineering literature and how it relates to competitive writing. I will also examine how the authors' origin influences the authors' narrative style and technique. This will give my thesis the framework it needs to analyze the techniques used to convey narrative truth. The following chapter about the great storm in 1996 will be structured in the same manner with an additional section about how the trauma of such a disaster affects the writing. My manner of answering the questions posed will rely on a comparison of the texts as well as pointing to places in the text where it is self-aware and where the text is manipulating the reader in a particular way.

The word *authority* has many meanings; the *Oxford English Dictionary* gives at least 8 different definitions, and for my purpose I have chosen the following: "The power to influence others, especially because of one's commanding manner or one's recognized knowledge about something" as well as "The confidence resulting from personal expertise". These definitions are helpful in this thesis because they speak to the power that comes with experience, whether it is literary or practical experience. The narratives illustrate that there is variation in the authors I have chosen, variation with regards to literary experience and climbing experience that is, and it is an important aspect that plays a central part in their persuasive and narrative ability. The two last key terms in my argument are *competition* and *collaboration*, these words can be quite contradictory, which is why it is so interesting. One meaning: the activity of striving to gain or win something by defeating or establishing superiority over others, with the other one meaning to work with someone to produce something (OED). This is interesting because while Boukreev and Norgay are engaging in a

battle of truth, their written works are results of collaborative efforts with other authors: all works being written in co-authorship with an experienced writer. A closer analysis of this fact will illustrate what effect this will have on the persuasive elements of the text, working in collaboration while still competing in a battle of truth.

First I would like to give a brief summary of the history of the genre in which these books belong. Mountaineering literature is a largely unexplored genre and looking at this genre in a particular way still leaves much to examine. I will therefore also give a brief summary of mountaineering literary history, specifically of Mount Everest, to put the books I have chosen in a broader perspective.

Travel/Adventure Literature

Tales of adventure and travel literature have always been popular. People have hungered for tales of the unknown and this it seems is credited to, according to Andrea White, authors “of imagination and literary skill” (8). These writers have seen new worlds and new lands for themselves and given these places life through their writing. One of the genre’s starting points seems to lay with the persons who did the actual traveling. In *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, Tim Youngs writes that documentation played an important role: “English merchants and mariners had long been instructed to keep careful records of their movements, to direct travellers who would follow in their footsteps and fill in the gaps of geographical knowledge” (Youngs 17). Extensive written documentation allowed readers to take part in the expansion of the empire from their own homes, thus discovering new places as well as parts of themselves.

With new and improved ways to travel came of course new travel literature. According to Youngs, Christopher Columbus’ first voyage to America had an enormous impact on travel writing, giving the genre a new beginning:

The greatest impact of the New World of America on English writing in the early sixteenth century is seen in Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516), in which the fictional traveller, Raphael Hythloday, is said to have journeyed with Amerigo Vespucci to the New World. Like a handful of later fictional texts, *Utopia* then became a foundation for subsequent travel writing, influencing the form of both expectations and reports. (Youngs 3)

Following this impact, the most important element in travel writing became truthfulness or rather how one came upon truthfulness – meaning eyewitness accounts. Distinguishing fact from fiction became crucial to many readers, even in the travel fiction that appeared (Youngs 4).

With the turn of the twentieth century followed a flow of popularity in travel writing, mainly thanks to exploration of new places. An example of this is the race to the poles, with its many tales of danger and heroism. This new popularity influenced literary writers to do traveling of their own, which led to travel writing becoming travel *literature* and was therefore taken more seriously. This in turn led to travel writing gaining new prestige because of the author's standing (Youngs 7).

Travel literature can and has appeared in many different formats during the years, be it a letter, a guidebook, a diary or a journal. However, the format used by far the most frequently is the simple narrative. Though first person narratives are often used, this is not a necessity. Common traits of the simple narrative are that the narrator often supplies the reader with dates, names and descriptions of places (Adams 44). The genre of travel writing is one that is always in transformation and as the ways of travel change, so does the travel writing. The world has become a much smaller place since the beginning of the genre and as such authors need to thrill the readers in a different manner than before. Travel writing was a way of informing the public of new and foreign places, the author acting as a guide for the reader, taking them on a literary journey to something new and exiting that the reader had never experienced before. Modern travel writing authors face a challenge in this respect, where readers are simply a click away on the Internet to read, see and listen to foreign places. The authors have to compete with other media and as such face a challenge. Though this is not true for Hillary and Norgay, Krakauer and Boukreev faced this challenge, one of Boukreev's clients even supplied daily updates from Everest to a website during the expedition. This is where the topic of my thesis can explain why travel literature is still popular today when people are more likely to jump on a plane to a foreign place than to read about it. In this next section I will present the tradition of Mount Everest literature and why these books contribute to a travel writing tradition that has to compete for an audience in a modern world.

The History and Literature of Mount Everest

The tallest mountain on earth, named in 1865 after Sir George Everest (a surveyor general of the area), stands tall in the Himalayan region between Nepal and Tibet. Even though the local people have known about this mountain for much longer than the rest of the world (known to the locals as Jomolungma or Chomolungma), it was the British who first wanted to conquer it. In his book *Above the Snow Line: Mountaineering Sketches Between 1870 and 1880*, (1885) the surgeon and mountaineer Clinton Thomas Dent suggested for the first time in writing that it was possible to climb Mount Everest. With a recorded height of 8848 meters, the cruising altitude of a Boeing 747 aircraft, this certainly seemed a daunting task at the time. The British climbers George Mallory and Andrew Irvine carried out the first real attempt on the mountain in 1924. They were last spotted 245 vertical meters below the summit and never seen again, making the pair one of the biggest mysteries in mountaineering history. Their disappearance led to many authors writing about their expedition, speculating whether they reached the summit or not. Thus, the literature of Mount Everest began. Among the first books published were *George Leigh Mallory: A Memoir* (1927), written by Mallory's climbing companion David Pye. Literature about the 1924 expedition is still written today, like Wade Davis' *Into the Silence: The Great War, Mallory and the Conquest of Everest* (2011).

Though attempts would be made on the mountain in the 1930s, it was not until the 1950s and the first successful ascent that first-person accounts of the entire journey would be published. As stated earlier, Sir Edmund Hillary's *High Adventure* and Tenzing Norgay's *Tiger of the Snows* (both released in 1955) are the first personal narratives of the summiting of Everest, causing a new trend in mountaineering literature. Their books allowed the public the opportunity to go along on the journey with them, taking part in the climb thanks to Hillary and Norgay's narrative ability. The leader of the expedition, John Hunt, released his version of the climb in 1953. *The Conquest of Everest* (1953) includes a chapter written by Hillary concerning the summiting (because Hunt did not summit with them). I have chosen Hillary and Norgay's books, as well as Hillary's chapter in *The Conquest of Everest*, to illustrate how texts that portray the same event, but disagree with each other in the narrative, show persuasive techniques in competitive writing. Hillary and Tenzing's books illustrate different cultures, different narratives of the event and most

importantly, different ways of competing for narrative truth. Mapping out these differences, both thematically and formal, will bring to light the tension that is present between the authors and their respective cultures.

The trend of climbing Mount Everest and then writing a personal account of the experience continued throughout the years, most notably with the Italian Reinhold Messner's account *The Crystal Horizon: Everest – the First Solo Ascent* (1989). In this book Messner tells his readers about the first solo ascent of Everest without the use of supplemental oxygen. Since the commercialization of Everest, numerous accounts have appeared from climbers and amateur climbers, established authors and non-authors. It is this trend that has led to this thesis and more accurately a closer look at the great storm in 1996, when two expeditions were trapped near the summit during a storm with no way to get down from the mountain. Following this event numerous literary accounts were released and I have chosen the ones that are connected to each other by their disagreements over the event. The books from the great storm in 1996 represent a different kind of summiting (or summit attempt) of the mountain, where the competition is not only present in the narratives, but in the race to the top as well. These competitive narratives started out with journalist Jon Krakauer writing his personal account of the disaster, *Into Thin Air* (1997), causing professional mountaineer Anatoli Boureev to write the book *The Climb* (1998) in response. These narratives are competitive in a different way than the narratives from the first summiting in that these narratives have been influenced by trauma and disaster, as well as the fact that the battle for narrative truth took course over several editions.

These narratives illustrate the competitiveness within a genre where persuasive techniques are imperative to the author in order to establish narrative truth. The season of 1996 marked a change in the literature of Mount Everest when the commercialization of the mountain became a bigger part of the controversy of what happened. The demand to climb the mountain by amateur climbers caused a queue to the summit, resulting in the deadliest season up until that point. This marked a shift in the literature of Mount Everest where the focus moved from exploration to the authors competing for readers in regard to convincing them of the truth in their narratives. Books similar to the ones released after the 1996 disaster are still written and released today, for example about the tragic death of the young Brit David Sharp in the climbing season of 2006, where many accounts appeared in writing about what had

happened and the cause of his death, such as Nick Heil's *Dark Summit: the True Story of Everest's most Controversial Season* (2008).

Many things have influenced the literature of Mount Everest, such as thrills, heroism, morality and technical themes. The politics surrounding the mountain in the countries in which it lies are also an important influence in Mount Everest literature. Foreigners have not always been welcome into Nepal, as for example the first two British expeditions of the fifties who were not granted access and had to attempt the summit from the Tibetan side. The climbing of the mountain is the groundwork for these accounts to build their narrative upon, brick by brick. Therefore, it is an important element in the narrative from which side the climbing begins. Both the scenery and the nature of the mountain are vastly different on each side, with different dangers. As a result the narrative changes according to which side is climbed, as told in John Hunt's book *The Conquest of Everest* (1953) where the differences of the two sides are prominent. Outside factors such as the fact that Mount Everest has been climbed many times by now play an important role in the narratives. As a result the narratives react accordingly and they are no longer an exploration of new territory for mankind, but rather thrilling stories of adventure. Other influences such as technical advances and special situations like the great storm of 1996 and the controversy of the 2006 season also play a role.

I have found that there is a lack of research and analysis of this small niche in the genre and this thesis will make a new contribution to the field. What little literary criticism that does exist, mostly concerns itself with issues such as environmentalism, morality, imperialism, identity, masculinity and feminism. An example of such criticism is Peter L. Bayer's *Imperial Ascent: Mountaineering, Masculinity, and Empire* (2003) where he compares several mountaineering books to illustrate how every ascent is tied to dominant masculinity and imperial ideology. As one book reviewer writes, the book sets out to "analyze how mountaineering expeditions have been used to define, promote, and challenge certain characterizations of the imperial and the masculine" (Toliver 97). Using books such as John Hunt's *The Conquest of Everest* (1953), Tenzing Norgay's *Tiger of the Snows* (1955), and Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air* (1997), Bayer tries to illustrate mountaineering's relation to empire and the masculine (Toliver 100).

Another example of Mount Everest literary criticism is Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy's *Why Climbing Matters* (2008) which has an environmental approach. He

is not solely concerned with Mount Everest, but he does raise some interesting points and questions. MacCarthy proposes to divide climbing narratives into three categories: conquest, caretaking and connection. McCarthy provides different genres within mountaineering literature which influences the way in which one would read a mountaineering book. McCarthy's approach illustrates that it is possible for my research to also have the same result, meaning influencing the way one reads these books.

I am going to be building on literary criticism of Mount Everest literature but in a different way than what has been done before. My approach will explore the competing narratives of Mount Everest literature and which persuasive strategies are used, as well as how they are used to convey narrative truth and how memory influences the narratives and how memory impacts the competitive writing that is present in these texts. The competitive writing that occurs following the summiting illustrates the way literary persuasive tools are used and how a text can work to convey narrative truth. Finding what these literary tools are and how they work within the text can show how narrative truth is conveyed in competitive writing.

Chapter 1: The First Summiting – Memory and Competitive Writing

Introduction

In 1953 Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay reached the world highest mountain, Mount Everest, about a 100 years in the making since its discovery in 1852 (to westerners). Following the climb Hillary first wrote a chapter in expedition leader John Hunt's book *The Conquest of Everest*, then went on to write his own narrative in 1955 in *High Adventure*. Norgay wrote his book *Tiger of the Snows* in 1955 as a corrective version to Hillary's narrative. From Hillary's first telling of the summiting in 1953 in John Hunt's book *The Conquest of Everest* to his own book *High Adventure* in 1955, Hillary's narrative changes in subtle ways and therefore Hillary's memory must have altered as well. Omitting certain things that he previously included in his narrative emphasizes the importance of memory in these kinds of texts. When narrating real life events from one's own life that person's memory is the key to depicting the truth of the event. It is up to the authors to convince the audience of their narrative truth and thus competitive writing becomes an imperative part of the narratives. Taking a closer look at certain parts of the narratives where they explicitly interact with each other will reveal how these narratives engage in a battle for narrative truth. Less oxygen near the top of the mountain impact the climbers' memory and documentation of the event becomes both problematic and important. An analysis of the narratives' language and structure reveals that both emotion and influence affects the narrative and impacts the tone of the narrative. The narrative's main source is memory and as such there is a greater need of persuasion than in other narratives, solved in this case by the competition present in the narratives.

Memory

Memory is the means that makes these narratives a possibility, it is what makes them work and it is the main tool an author can use in competitive mountaineering literature. As Olney writes, memory, language and emotion are all linked together (347), and these tools are imperative in competitive writing, working together in a tangled relationship adding to each other's strength. All three tools are prominent in Hillary and Norgay's texts, especially when they interact with each other. Let us start with the first tool: memory.

Memory is the tool the author employs as the basis for his entire text; needless to say it is essential to making the text work as a convincing piece of literature. Antonio Damasio writes that “Present continuously becomes the past, and by the time we take stock of it we are in another present, consumed with planning the future. . . . The present is never here. We are hopelessly late for consciousness. “ (Damasio 240). Damasio’s view of the past and of memory is important to mountaineering literature because it illustrates a key point that is unique to this genre. Present becomes the past; it becomes a memory that has to be recalled in order for the author to narrate the event. In this case and in this particular genre there is a problem with this manner of writing because there is about a third less oxygen on the summit of Everest making the easiest task difficult to perform. A lot of scientific research has been conducted on Mount Everest regarding the effects of less oxygen on the human being. In the article “Science in the ‘Death Zone’” (Proffitt 2005) researchers set out to discover how the body copes with a lack of oxygen. Whereas the article “Fusion-io and Memory Champion Welson Dellis Tackle Mount Everest in Climb for Memory” (2013) attempts to discover “The effects of altitude on mental performance to help develop a better understanding of memory” (Close-Up Media), which is relevant for this thesis with regard to the link between physical performance and memory.

Hillary illustrates the effects of less oxygen on the brain when he suddenly notices the difference less oxygen can make on basic motor skills.

My camera was still hanging open on my chest so I decided to put it safely away. But my fingers seemed to have grown doubly clumsy. With slow and fumbling movements, I closed the camera and did up the leather case. I suddenly realized that I was being affected by the lack of oxygen – it was nearly ten minutes now since I’d taken my set off. I quickly checked the gauges on our bottles – 1,450.lb. pressure; roughly 350 litres of oxygen; nearly two hours’ endurance at three litres a minute. It wasn’t much, but it would have to do. I hastily put my set on and turned on the oxygen. I felt better immediately. (Hillary 229)

Hillary is obviously surprised when he realizes the effect oxygen can have when performing the seemingly simple task of putting his camera back inside its case. Hillary experiences the lack of oxygen affecting his motor skills, his movements

becomes sluggish and prolonged. This is directly linked to the brain where signals take longer to take effect in the high altitude, which in turn affects the memory when cognitive functions becomes impaired. Reduced motor skill function is the visible sign of low oxygen levels; it is the outer sign that is noticeable on the actual climb. Impaired memory, however is the hidden effect of low oxygen levels that only makes itself known at a later time. As Damasio writes, “the present continuously becomes the past” (339), therefore Hillary was already in his past when this event happened and thus attempting to recall it a year later to be written down and turned into a book becomes problematic. As such, Hillary’s documentation becomes imperative for the persuasive quality of his narrative. Documented sources give the audience something solid to hold on to as evidence of the event; it is a manner in which documentation of memory becomes possible. By writing down the event immediately after it occurred or as it is occurring eliminates, to some extent, the need for memory and as such it can be used as a powerful tool in competing narratives as a source for the text. Several times in *High Adventure* Hillary refers to a journal in which he writes sometimes in his tent at night, as well as several letters exchanged between him and the expedition leader, John Hunt. These written “memories” from the expedition combined with the pictures Hillary captured at the summit that he included in his book works as source material and documentation for the climb.

By comparing Norgay’s form of documentation in *Tiger of the Snows* to Hillary’s, one could argue that Hillary’s documentation is more convincing because Norgay was in fact illiterate and thus was not able to document the journey along the way. This fact should however not downplay Norgay’s credibility as it is evident in the text that he is much aware of his memory by switching from past tense to present tense in his narration. As for example when he defies Hillary’s narrative:

Hillary got up safely to the top of the rock and then held the rope while I came after.

Here again I must be honest and say that I do not feel his account, as told in *The Conquest of Everest*, is wholly accurate. (Norgay 245)

When Norgay calls Hillary out on what Norgay believes is an unfair telling of his abilities he switches from a language of past tense to the present tense. This switching of tenses indicates that Norgay is aware that he is stating an opinion of Hillary that

stems from the present, thus what comes before is of the past – a memory that he is recalling and translating on to paper.

As mentioned earlier Hillary comes from a culture where he is able to document his memories, whereas Norgay did not - Norgay comes from a little village called Tengboche in the Khumbu region of northeastern Nepal near the mountains, miles away from modern technology. The Sherpa language native to this village does not appear in written form and therefore are there no records of Norgay's early life. Norgay explains in the beginning of *Tiger of the Snows*:

The Sherpa language, which is my native one, has no written form, and therefore no records. Also, in our original home we kept time by the Tibetan calendar, and because of these things the facts and dates in my early life are sometimes uncertain. For my mountain career I could, unfortunately, keep no diaries, so for expeditions where a book was not written I am not always sure how to spell the names of the friends I have climbed with. (Norgay 5)

The lack of records and ability to write brings up the problem of documented sources from the expedition – Norgay did not have the ability to write down his memory immediately after it occurred or as it occurred, as Hillary did. However, when Norgay is the one to bring up this fact he acknowledges that it can be problematic with no documented sources and that he as a result has to rely on his memory. By acknowledging this fact Norgay illustrates that he is aware of the problem that may arise. It is ingrained in Norgay to only rely on his memory and it is fixed in his Sherpa culture. If this is compared to the Western culture where Hillary is from, where there are more tools available to document memory and there is less need for memory, the need to remember is less important.

Norgay shows extreme tolerance for high altitude during the narrative, as most Sherpas do, thus Norgay is stronger and can stand more in high altitude than Hillary. Climbing mountains is ingrained in Norgay's body, thus his memory is that of the body – it is a bodily memory. His memories stem from his actions rather than his mind. Comparing this fact to Hillary's situation indicates that the lack of oxygen affects Hillary more with regard to memory because his memory lies in his mind rather than in his actions. Norgay, however, is not dependent on documenting his actions because they are ingrained in his body and not his mind. By Norgay stating

that he could keep no diaries, “so for expeditions where a book was not written I am not always sure how to spell the names of the friends I have climbed with” (Norgay 5), Norgay implies that he read (or more likely, having someone read it to him) or at least was familiar with books concerning the climb. Therefore Norgay also makes sure that he has done all he can to get the most accurate description of the expedition he can. This reading illustrates that even though Norgay does not have any documented, written sources of his own, he is still willing to use the ones that are available to him and as a result empower his narrative – he has taken all accounts into consideration before writing his own. Hillary needs more help in recalling his memories because he is not used to relying on his own powers of memory, whereas Norgay has always had to remember without outside help - thus making his memory more reliable.

Memory is personal and memory is unique to each person. It is something that cannot be translated from one person to another, only told by the person owning the memory and therefore it can be difficult to adapt to other forms than the one form occurring in the mind. This is not a problem for Hillary since he is the author of his own book; he is the one who is translating the thoughts into written form and thus making it more likely to be more accurate. Norgay, however, faces a problem in this regard: *Tiger of the Snows* is not written in the same language as Norgay’s memory, the book is not even written solely by him but in collaboration with the American author James Ramsey Ullman. Ullman being both a writer and a mountaineer certainly helped him understand Norgay better, but the fact remains that they are still from two completely different cultures and thus difficulties in understanding each other will most likely arise.

Norgay mentions only his collaboration with Ullman collaboration once in the book, towards the end. Here, Norgay speaks of the process in getting the book written:

Since I could not write it myself a collaborator was needed, and at first it seemed to me best that he be Indian. The United Press, whose contract with me included the rights to a book, wanted a westerner, because they thought he would write it more suitably for a worldwide audience. (284)

Norgay faces the challenge of choosing the right author for the job while trying to satisfy himself as well as the publishing company. He continues on to write that the person does not matter, but that,

It *was* important that I be able to tell my own story, simply and honestly, without either causing or feeling embarrassment (...) In the end, however, arrangements were made with the American novelist and mountaineering writer, James Ramsey Ullman, and in the spring of 1954 he came to Darjeeling to work with me. (285)

From what little Norgay mentions of the process of choosing a collaborative author it seems as if both him and the publishing company were pacified. Though a man of many languages, Norgay must have run into some trouble having a native language completely different from that of Ullman. Ullman addresses this problem in the book's introduction:

For the heavier going we had the help of his devoted friend-assistant-interpreter, Rabindranath Mitra. But Tenzing's own English is by now remarkably good, and he was able to tell much of his story without the benefit of translation (...) Tenzing says what he truly thinks and feels – whether he is speaking of his fellow-men, of mountains or of his religious faith. (xvi)

According to this explanation of the writing process it seems as though it went smoothly, but it brings me to my next question: How do Norgay's memories translate into another language? As previously stated, memory is personal and memory is unique to each person. Memory usually operates in language and images, thus Norgay's memory would have been in his native Sherpa language and not in English which the book is written in. To answer the question it is important to inspect the language and structure of the narrative. In *Tiger of the Snows* the narrative is told as a story of adventure with Norgay's interruptions of present opinions that works as a reminder that this is in fact a real life narrated event, concerning real people.

Norgay uses few words of remembrance (remember, recall, recollect, etc.) in his narrative. Norgay makes sure that the narrative appears more reliable because the reader is not reminded of the narrative being something the author needed to recall

from memory in order to write. Norgay is audacious in his narrative when he interrupts the narrative with his present opinions on his portrayal in *The Conquest of Everest*. These interruptions illustrate that Norgay is confident in his narrative and that he is not afraid to remind the reader that in order to write the narrative he had to rely on his memory, attempting to be accurate. Norgay's confidence as well as his language, or rather a lack of language illustrating the main source as memory, demonstrates that the narrative is more trustworthy, at least as far as Norgay's credibility goes.

The structures of the narratives indicate how the authors' memories work and often what the author believes to be imperative in the narrative, which leads to emotion:

Emotions are essential to the creation of a memory because they organize it, establishing its relative importance in a sequence of events much as a sense of time and order is essential for a memory to be considered a memory, and not a thought or a vision at some particular instant, unrelated to past events.

(Rosenfield 72)

"Emotions are essential to the creation of memory" Rosenfield writes, meaning that how one feels indelibly shapes how individual memories form. Taking a look at the structure of the narratives and in what particular order in which the memories are presented can reveal which memory is prominent in the authors mind and what theme in the narrative is imperative to them. Comparing the structure of the two narratives exposes their emotion of their memory and comparing the beginning of each book will reveal what the author remembers best. Hillary's book begins as follows:

I was sixteen before I ever saw a mountain. My father's rapidly expanding bee business had occupied all my holidays, and I'd learned to do a full size job before I entered my teens. But in the winter of 1935 I'd saved a little money and I was allowed to join a School Ski-ing Party to Ruapehu – one of our large New Zealand volcanoes. I was in the Lower Sixth Form at the time – a tall, bony, clumsy-looking youth, far from being the brightest lad in the class; and I don't think I'd been more than fifty miles outside of Auckland. I'd heard glowing tales from the other boys about ski-ing holidays, but it didn't mean a

great deal to me – all I wanted was a chance to see the world. (Hillary, *High Adventure*, 1)

Hillary decides to open his beginning with the origin of his interest in the mountains – a skiing trip to Ruapehu. This start is focused solely on him and his interest. This focus illustrates what the main theme of Hillary's memory is when writing his book – himself. This theme continues throughout the book and Hillary reveals this theme from the beginning to the reader, promising them a story about one man's adventures and his amazing feat of reaching the world's tallest mountain.

Comparing Hillary's opening to Norgay's shows the very prominent difference between the two, as well as the difference in culture these two books represent. Norgay opens his narrative with a brief look at the final moments before they were about to attempt the last summit bid, an event that he later comes back to in the narrative.

Many times I think of that morning at Camp Nine. We had spent the night there, Hillary and I, in our little tent at almost 28,000 feet, which is the highest that men have ever slept. It has been a cold night. Hillary's boots are frozen, and we are almost frozen too. But now in the gray light, when we creep from the tent, there is almost no wind. The sky is clear and still. And that is good.

(3)

This opening represents the main theme that is prominent throughout the entire book and the goal of the book – to promote equality. The opening in *Tiger of the Snows* illustrates the theme of equality perfectly when the passage moves from using the personal pronoun "I" to the first person plural "we": "Many times *I* think of that morning at Camp Nine. *We* had spent the night there(...)" (my italics). This illustrates that for Norgay it is most important that this was an endeavor *they* set out to accomplish together as a *team*. The openings of the two books exemplify the difference in culture between the two authors, Hillary's representing one of the western culture where self-focus often is prominent and Norgay's representing the eastern culture where equality and comradeship in the Sherpa culture is important. This difference in culture is again illustrated with how Hillary and Norgay treat memory. Hillary relies on himself to document his memory. He comes from a culture

where technology is everywhere and this eliminates to some extent the need for partners to help you remember, as is illustrated by Hillary not contacting Norgay for his input on the expedition for *High Adventure*. Norgay however, is from a culture where comradeship and partners are everything, a culture where they rely on others to recall as is illustrated in Norgay making himself familiar with books published about the expeditions.

Memory is limited and it depends on many internal factors, but more importantly – it can be influenced by many external factors. Memory is something that is only formed after time has passed, there are therefore many factors other than the actual event that could come in to play when recalling a memory. Memory depends on the person it is concerning and according to Olney the limits of memory are:

(...) the distinctive province, the rich terrain, of memory with all its wondrous recollections and imaginings, its errors and confusions, its failures and overcompensation for failure, its capacity for transformation, distortion, ordering and reordering. *This* is where memory does what it does, and what it does is to constitute nothing less than what we – each of us – are. (Olney 340)

As Olney indicates, memory is the self and the I, it is what makes a person and as such it can be influenced and transformed by internal and external factors as all people can be. As stated earlier, Hillary's narrative changes from his chapter in *The Conquest of Everest* in 1953 to his narrative in *High Adventure* in 1955. Hillary omits an explanation of the Sherpas lacking all technology in *High Adventure* that were present in *The Conquest of Everest*. Hillary seems to have been influenced by external or internal factors, one can only speculate what these might be – perhaps he realized or someone pointed out to him that he was not representing Norgay in the best light – either way, the narrative changed and thus Hillary's memory have been influenced by external factors.

Norgay wrote only one book on the ascent of Everest and thus his narrative has not altered, but it is clear that he has been influenced by external factors. As stated, memory is personal and as such it always involves the deepest kind of emotional involvement (Olney 373). Norgay has been emotionally influenced in his narrative and this is illustrated when Norgay explicitly calls Hillary out on what

Norgay believes are narrative mistakes. In these instances Norgay's emotion becomes involved and it influenced the way in which he views the event. By Norgay explicitly calling Hillary out on his narrative mistakes, Norgay illustrates that he is aware that his emotion is influencing his memory and in turn the reader becomes aware of it as well. When so much of a book relies on memory it is up to the authors to convince the reader of their narrative truth and that their memory is reliable, this is where competitive writing comes into play.

Competitive Writing

Hillary and Norgay are engaging in a battle for narrative truth with their competing narratives of the first ascent of Mount Everest. Hillary is actively taking part in this competition with the way in which he represents himself and Norgay. He is making it seem as though he is from a highly technological and modern world where anything is possible while representing Norgay the complete opposite way, with a life “completely devoid of mechanical and scientific gadgets” (Hillary, *High Adventure*, 164). It must not be overlooked that *Tiger of the Snows* has been out of print for many years while *High Adventure* was recently published in 2003 with a 50th anniversary addition. This illustrates the lack of equality between the western and eastern culture and it is what Norgay was trying to change in his narrative.

Norgay is actively trying to avoid the competition, which is exemplified in his narrative when he attempts to lay to rest the competitive rumors and the mystery of who got to the top first. Norgay does not want it to be a mystery about the first summiting and he does not want it to increase the cultural gap that he experienced once the expedition was over:

Why can we not know the truth? . . . Very well: now they will know the truth. Everest is too great, too precious, for anything but the truth.

A little bellow the summit Hillary and I stopped. We looked up. Then we went on. The rope that joined us was thirty feet long, but I held most of it in loops in my hand, so that there was only about six feet between us. I was not thinking of “first” and “second”. I did not say to myself, “there is a golden apple up there. I will push Hillary aside and run for it.” We went on slowly, steadily. And then we were there. Hillary stepped on top first. And I stepped up after him. (248)

This passage shows what Norgay is attempting to escape, but does not manage to. For Norgay the competition is not part of the mountain and it is not a part of the climbing of the mountain. Norgay tries to dispel this fact and the fact that the competitive aspect of the climbing appears afterwards when other people come into play. He acknowledges that most people would have thought of this as a competition and as such he illustrates awareness of the need for truth in this matter. Norgay is aware that this is a battle for truth when he writes in the passage below that, “(...) I owe more to Everest – and to the truth” (248), but the competition does not appear in the climbing, but in the writing.

To illustrate the competitive writing that occurs between these mountain climbers I have chosen take a closer look at the places in the texts where they explicitly interact with each other and where the authors discuss each other, as I believe this best illustrates the competition that is present in the narratives.

The three texts interact with each other when it comes to certain events in the narrative. One such instance is the disagreement about the oxygen sets that occurred during the final summit bid, where Hillary claimed that he helped Norgay with his set and Norgay in turn claimed that they helped each other. In this section from Hillary’s chapter in *The Conquest of Everest* Hillary comes to Norgay’s defense while at the same time making sure that the reader is aware that it was he who saved Norgay. Hillary starts by describing the event:

(...)I noted that Tenzing, who had been going quite well, had suddenly slowed up considerably and seemed to be breathing with difficulty. The Sherpas had little idea of the workings of an oxygen set and from past experience I immediately suspected his oxygen supply. I noticed that hanging from the exhaust tube of his oxygen mask were icicles, and on closer examination found that this tube, some two inches in diameter, was completely blocked with ice. (Hillary, *The Conquest of Everest*, 203)

In this passage Hillary describes what state he found Norgay in when he noticed that Norgay’s pace had slowed down considerably. In this passage it seems as though Hillary intended to persuade the reader of his good judgment and reasoning by defusing a potentially life threatening situation. However, the opposite occurs when

he provides an explanation as to why Norgay did not mend the problem himself by stating that “The Sherpas had little idea of the workings of an oxygen set” (203). Hillary believes that there is a need for such an explanation when, instead of satisfying the reader’s needs, it works as an indicator to reveal Hillary’s true colors. By including this explanation Hillary exposes his true feelings of the other culture to the audience, that his culture is better and more advanced than the Sherpa culture. Hillary ignores the fact that Norgay had experience with oxygen equipment from his previous expedition the year before with the Swiss and makes the whole ordeal about himself when he writes that it was only he who noticed the problem arising. Hillary gives himself exaggerated importance and power in this passage when he makes it seem as though he was the only one aware of the problem as well as the only one solving it. This creates a tone of arrogance in the narrative that in turn does not appear convincing.

In the sentence following the passage discussed above Hillary explains how he solved the problem:

I was able to clear it out and gave him much needed relief. On checking my own set I found that the same thing was occurring, though it had not reached the stage to have caused me any discomfort. From then on I kept a much closer check on this problem. (Hillary, *The Conquest of Everest*, 203)

In the first sentence of this passage Hillary gives the impression that it was he and only he, who saved them. By stating that “I was able to clear it out and gave him much needed relief” (203), Hillary indicates that it was he who gave Norgay the relief. This creates a tone in the narrative that appears to be in favor of Hillary and he keeps this going for the rest of this passage. In the last sentence Hillary makes it clear that it was up to him to keep an eye on the oxygen predicament by saying that it was “I” who kept an eye on the situation and this eliminates to some extent equality between the two climbers. This is emphasized when Hillary describes his own situation as not as bad as Norgay’s, illustrating that he is not on the same level as Norgay and that he can detect a problem, solve it and prevent it from happening again, which Hillary takes full credit for. At closer examination of the sentences in the passage it is revealed that Hillary remains the main subject in all sentences, even in the two first sentences when Norgay is mentioned. Here Norgay functions as the

grammatical object in both sentences emphasizing again Hillary's opinion of the work divided between the two climbers. By making Norgay the grammatical object of the sentences and himself the grammatical subject, Hillary instills in the reader the fact that it was he who did most of the work and that Hillary had to save Norgay.

Norgay reacts to this exact passage in his book *Tiger of the Snows*, when he addresses the lack of equality prominent in Hillary's chapter in *The Conquest of Everest*. In Norgay's response to Hillary, Norgay emphasizes that they solved the trouble with the oxygen as a team:

But every so often, as had happened all the way, we would have trouble breathing and have to stop and clear away the ice that kept forming in the tubes of our oxygen sets. In regard to this, I must say in all honesty that I do not think Hillary is quite fair in the story he later told, indicating that I had more trouble than he with breathing and that without his help I might have been in serious difficulty. In my opinion our difficulties were about the same – and luckily never too great – and we each helped and were helped by the other in equal measure. (Norgay 244)

In this passage Norgay describes how he experienced the trouble with the oxygen, how it happened and how they dealt with the trouble. Norgay disagrees with Hillary's narrative and in this passage Norgay attempts to appeal to the reader's emotion. A close reading of the passage reveals a deeper meaning aimed to elicit sympathy behind the use of personal pronouns. Notice that in parts of the first sentence Norgay uses the pronoun "we" and the determiner "our": "(...) *we* would have trouble breathing and have to stop and clear away the ice that kept forming in the tubes of *our* oxygen sets" (my italics/244), to indicate that the situation they found themselves in was on both their shoulders, the "blame", so to speak, lay on them both. However, when Norgay writes his opinion on the way in which Hillary portrayed the situation in *The Conquest of Everest*, Norgay switches to the personal pronoun "I" and "he", even singling Hillary out by his name. By doing so Norgay is distancing himself from Hillary and at the same time emphasizing that their narrative versions of the event are separate, as well as creating sympathy for himself in the narrative because he makes it clear that he was not portrayed fairly by Hillary. Norgay indicates to the reader that Hillary's narrative is not to be taken as the only truth.

Norgay turns back to his original point, that this was a team effort, in the last sentence of the passage when he goes back to using the determiner “our” and the pronoun “we”. Here, Norgay makes his point clear that both in equal measure experienced the problem with the oxygen and that it was solved by both with equal effort. Norgay starts out the last sentence saying that “In my opinion *our* difficulties were about the same (...)” (my italics/244) and moves from a personal pronoun to a determiner to illustrate that both climbers have possession of the event and the following actions. By using “our” Norgay wants to indicate the equality that the climbers should share but he does not feel he received in Hillary’s narrative in *The Conquest of Everest*.

Two years after Hillary’s narrative was published in *The Conquest of Everest* another description of the event by Hillary was published. In this passage from towards the end of *High Adventure*, Hillary manipulates the narrative, to work in his favor by omitting certain information and by changing certain words from his previous description. The passages are placed side by side below for the best illustration:

From <i>The Conquest of Everest</i> :	From <i>High Adventure</i>
<p>(...)I noted that Tenzing, who had been going quite well, had suddenly slowed up considerably and seemed to be breathing with difficulty. <i>The Sherpas had little idea of the workings of an oxygen set and from past experience I immediately suspected his oxygen supply.</i> I noticed that hanging from the exhaust tube of his oxygen mask were icicles, and on closer examination found that this tube, some two inches in diameter, was completely blocked with ice. (My italics/Hillary, <i>The</i></p>	<p>As he came down to me I realized there was something wrong with him. I had been so absorbed in the technical problems of the ridge that I hadn’t thought much about Tenzing, except for a vague feeling that he seemed to move along the steps with unnecessary slowness. But now it was quite obvious that he was not only moving extremely slowly, but he was breathing quickly and with difficulty and was in considerable distress. (Hillary, <i>High Adventure</i>, 221).</p>

In the passage from *High Adventure* Hillary describes the event the way he experienced it, but there is a piece missing. When this passage is compared to the one he wrote in 1953 in *The Conquest of Everest* it becomes clear that Hillary has omitted the explanation in defense of Norgay's actions from this narrative, meaning the part about Norgay's lack of knowledge about oxygen sets (see italics in quote). This omission changes the tone of the narrative from one in Hillary's favor to the opposite. Hillary's narrative is mostly self-centered as he alludes to in the author's preface: "Inevitably many of my companions are hardly mentioned, merely because they didn't happen to be doing the same job as myself" (Hillary, Preface), and this does not change in this passage. Though the explanation is omitted, Hillary has instead included harsher descriptions than he did in 1953, including: "(...)there was something wrong with him", "(...)unnecessary slowness" and "(...) was in considerable distress". These descriptions boost the opinion of Hillary and make him out to be the smarter one of the two by saving his weak companion. However, these descriptions prompt an emotional response in the reader, making the reader question why there is a need for such harsh descriptions of Norgay. Whenever Norgay is described in the passage it is in a negative sense and this illustrates the self-focus that is a prominent theme throughout Hillary's entire text. What Hillary intended to be an illustration of his superiority turns into a sympathetic response in the reader for Norgay and thus changing the tone of the narrative to one not favorable to Hillary.

Hillary omitted the explanation of Norgay's lack of knowledge of the oxygen set from the passage about the oxygen trouble, but he does, however, include such a defense, though it is given much earlier in his narrative and it is more descriptive. About sixty pages earlier Hillary writes in *High Adventure*:

But the Sherpas, whose life in the main is a simple one completely devoid of mechanical and scientific gadgets, cannot understand the complicated operations of an oxygen set. It is always necessary to prepare the set for them, to connect up the necessary tubes, to turn it on, and in fact to make sure that it is working at all. Even Tenzing was no exception to this. (Hillary, *High Adventure*, 264)

In this passage Hillary gives a more thorough explanation than in *The Conquest of Everest*. Though the fact that Hillary chose to provide this explanation about sixty pages before the problem with the oxygen is described creates a certain tone in the narrative. It ensures that the reader is aware from the beginning of Hillary's patronizing ways. Perhaps Hillary intended it to ensure his place as the hero of the story. However, it only works as an expansion of his previous explanation in *The Conquest of Everest*, as well as an expansion of his self-focused ways. By stating that the Sherpas "cannot understand the complicated operations of an oxygen set", Hillary creates the tone that he is the hero with the technological knowledge and the Sherpas (including Norgay) are too simple for this knowledge.

Hillary portrays himself as the smart one saving the situation, as is illustrated in the passage following his description of the oxygen trouble in *High Adventure*:

I immediately suspected his oxygen set and helped him down on to the ledge so that I could examine it. The first thing I noticed was that from the outlet of his face-mask there were hanging some long icicles. I looked at it more closely and found that the outlet tube – about two inches in diameter – was almost completely blocked with ice. This was preventing Tenzing from exhaling freely and must have made it extremely unpleasant for him.

Fortunately the outlet tube was made of rubber and by manipulating this with my hand I was able to release all the ice and let it fall out. The valves started operating and Tenzing was given immediate relief. (Hillary, *High Adventure*, 222)

In this passage Hillary provides the reader with an explanation as to how he handled the situation. Notice that in this passage Hillary employs the personal pronoun "I" in each sentence, except for when describing Norgay's level of comfort, and is therefore making sure that the reader's attention is focused on him. Thus it is possible for the reader to be swayed to Hillary's version where it appears as if Hillary saved the situation and Norgay stood idly by, letting Hillary tend to the problems that arose. However, this contradicts with Norgay's narration of the event where he claims, "(...) we each helped and were helped by the other in equal measure" (Norgay 244). Norgay brings up the word "equal" in this context again, a concept that is lacking in

Hillary's narrative. Norgay brings humanity and fairness that Hillary leaves out in descriptions of events like this. Even though Hillary attempts to manipulate the reader to his favor, Norgay appeals to emotion in a much different sense than Hillary by appealing to equality.

Hillary portrayed Norgay unfairly even before his own narrative was released. Before both Hillary and Norgay's books were published, the expedition leader Sir John Hunt wrote his own account of the event, *The Conquest of Everest*, which as previously stated was published in 1953, two years prior to Hillary and Norgay's books. Since Hunt never actually climbed to the summit himself, it was Hillary who wrote the chapter regarding the final successful summit attempt. In this chapter Hillary tells of the last obstacle before the summit, the narrow gap between a rock wall and an ice cornice, which would later be given the name *The Hillary Step*. Here, Hillary describes what occurred after he had reached the top of the Hillary Step:

For a few moments I lay regaining my breath and for the first time really felt the fierce determination that nothing could stop our reaching the top. I took a firm stance on the ledge and signaled to Tenzing to come on up. As I heaved hard on the rope Tenzing wiggled his way up the crack and finally collapsed exhausted at the top like a giant fish when it has just been hauled from the sea after a terrible struggle. (Hillary, *The Conquest of Everest*, 204)

Hillary tells of how he helped Norgay up the step, with what seems to be great strength on his part. The description of this event paints quite the picture in the reader's mind; comparing Norgay's climbing to that of a fish is a very harsh way to speak of Norgay's ability. The image planted in the reader's mind is not one favorable to Norgay, but to Hillary and his climbing ability. In that particular sentence Hillary strays from objectivity and his opinion becomes prominent. His language and use of simile in the figurative language of "like a giant fish when it has just been hauled from the sea after a terrible struggle" creates an entirely different tone in the narrative, a tone not favorable to Norgay. With this language Hillary sets himself up as the hero of the story, promoting individuality over teamwork.

Hillary as the hero is further reflected in the construction of sentences in this passage. By taking a closer look at how each of these three sentences is constructed it becomes clear that Hillary remains the main subject in all sentences except one, in

fact the one clause where Norgay is the subject: “(...) Tenzing wiggled his way up the crack and finally collapsed exhausted (...)” does not show Norgay in the best light. Hillary writes that “I lay”, “I took” and “I heaved”, thus making himself the subject in almost each sentence immediately followed by a verb describing his action, and as a result Hillary makes sure that the reader is focused on him. This technique works in Hillary’s favor because the focus is kept on him and therefore appears more convincing. Hillary relies on the reader to draw the correct conclusions. However, the last sentence in this section can serve as a contradiction to what Hillary wants to persuade of. Comparing Norgay to a giant fish is not a favorable comparison for Norgay and thus the question of Hillary’s reason for such a harsh description arises when Hilary claims that they summited together. Later Hillary writes that “A few more whacks of the ice-axe, a few very weary steps, and we were on the summit of Everest” (*High Adventure*, 226); in this sentence both Hillary and Norgay are the subject, which implies that Hillary meant that they made it to the summit together. Norgay strengthens this argument in his book, *Tiger of The Snows*, where he corresponds to Hillary’s description.

In 1955 Norgay’s book depicting the first ascent of Mount Everest was released, to tell his story and as a corrective response to Hillary’s chapter in John Hunt’s *The Conquest of Everest*. Though Norgay is not engaging in a literary competition in regards to his awareness of it, he is subconsciously engaging in a battle for narrative truth when he explicitly calls Hillary out on his narrative errors by referring to him in the third person singular constantly in this passage. Towards the end of the book Norgay tells of the same event discussed in the previous paragraph, *The Hillary Step*. Here, Norgay reflects on the way he was depicted in Hillary’s telling of the event:

Here again I must be honest and say that I do not feel his account, as told in *The Conquest of Everest*, is wholly accurate. For one thing, he has written that this gap up the rock wall was about forty feet high, but in my judgment it was little more than fifteen. Also, he gives the impression that it was only he who really climbed it on his own, and that he practically pulled me, so that I ‘finally collapsed exhausted at the top, like a giant fish when it has just been hauled from the sea after a terrible struggle’. Since then I have heard plenty about that ‘fish,’ and I admit I do not like it. For it is the plain truth that no one

has pulled or hauled me up the gap. I climbed it myself, just as Hillary had done; and if he was protecting me with the rope while I was doing it, this was no more than I had done for him. (Norgay 245)

In this passage Norgay simply describes the event as he experienced it and he explicitly calls Hillary out on the mistakes that Norgay believed he made in his narrative. Norgay appeals to a “plain truth”, with regard to his climbing of the step, claiming that it is plain truth that he climbed the step himself. The “plain truth” is reflected in this passage in how Norgay explicitly calls Hillary out on his narrative mistakes using the subject of the sentence to illustrate how this was a team effort, rather than Hillary pulling Norgay up the step like Hillary wrote. In the last sentence of the passage Norgay writes that “(...)and if he was protecting me with the rope while I was doing it, this was no more than I had done for him” (245). In this single sentence Norgay is trading the position of power with regard to subject between the two climbers. Starting out with Hillary in the power position, illustrated by Hillary protecting Norgay, but this power shifts at the end of the sentence where the power is transferred to Norgay, illustrated by “I” doing the same for Hillary. This kind of power shift in the sentence reflects the equality that Norgay tries to convey in his narrative, by using the subject of the sentence to establish both climbers as equals – an indicator that they both have the same amount of power, both in the power of their literary narrative and in their climbing ability.

In this next quote from Norgay’s book, following right after the one discussed above, Norgay reflects on the event, how it has affected him and why he chose to call Hillary out on his narrative mistake:

In speaking of this I must make one thing very plain. Hillary is my friend. He is a fine climber and a fine man, and I am proud to have gone with him to the top of Everest. But I do feel that in his story of our final climb he is not quite fair to me; that all the way through he indicates that when things went well it was his doing and when things went badly it was mine. For this is simply not true. Nowhere do I make the suggestion that I could have climbed Everest by myself; and I do not think Hillary should suggest that he could have, or that I could not have done it without his help. All the way up and down we helped,

and were helped by, each other – and that was the way it should be. But we were not leader and led. We were partners. (Norgay 245)

Again in this passage the words “plain” and “fair” are used, stating that he must “make on thing very plain”. By repeating the word “plain” he emphasizes how strongly he feels about the subject and passes this feeling to the reader, making it clear that this is very important to him. The use of the word “plain” means in this sense that the truth is simple and that it is to him as well. Norgay indicates that he means the truth to be simple – to be what it is and that he believes it should be so for Hillary as well. Norgay wants the truth to come out. Norgay also uses a variation of the word “truth” again later in this passage, stating that it “is simply not true” that he was to blame when things went badly and Hillary’s credit when things went well. This repetitive use of a variation of the word “truth” reflects back to Norgay’s appeal to the “plain truth” discussed in the previous paragraph, reminding the reader once again that he is calling Hillary out on his mistakes. In this manner Norgay makes it clear to the reader that he is passionate about this subject and by repeating certain words, he accomplishes his goal of conveying his feelings on the matter.

If we take a look at the two passages discussed in the two previous paragraphs together, you will notice that Norgay only uses Hillary’s name three times in the passages, mainly referring to him in the third person singular. Norgay repeats this pattern, in fact using “him” or “he” as many as fifteen times in the two passages. This creates a certain tone of distance in the narrative, transferring Norgay’s feelings on the subject on to the reader. By mainly mentioning Hillary in the third person, Norgay creates a distance between the reader and Hillary, making it easier for the reader to believe in Norgay’s narrative truth. The repetitive use of the third person singular works to drive this point home with the reader and thus there is a greater chance of persuasion.

The passages end on a gentle tone, serving to convince the reader of Norgay’s credibility. At the end of the passage he concludes that they climbed Everest as a unit – as partners. The first person singular is substituted with the first person plural – “we”. Ending with the line “we were partners” (245). The use of “we” in this last part concludes his argument; he does not suggest he could have climbed Everest by himself, like Hillary seems to suggest and he claims that it was a team effort that could not have been accomplished climbing solo. As such Norgay delivers his final

argument of the passage by ending it with a “we” instead of the “I” he began with, illustrating the purpose of the passage, that the climbing of Everest cannot be accomplished alone, with equal parts hardship and struggle on both ends.

In this last passage Norgay reveals his opinion of Hillary, when he steps back to comment on his personal relationship with Hillary stating, “He is a fine climber and a fine man” (Norgay 245). The repetitive use of the word “fine” serves both to describe Hillary’s professional ability as a climber as well as his personal character. By clarifying that he is fond of Hillary he creates a certain quality of respect in the narrative, convincing the reader of his truthfulness by acknowledging his general attitude towards Hillary. Repetition of words is a persuasive tool that conveys to the reader the passion felt by the author. If the meaning behind the words used is felt so strong in the author that he has to use it more than once, it is clear that it is not a coincidence, it is deliberate and that there is truth behind it. Norgay further illustrates this, and further plays on the emotional appeal, by stating in the next sentence that he is “proud” to have climbed Everest with Hillary: “I am proud to have gone with him to the top of Everest” (245). The OED defines proud as “feeling deep pleasure or satisfaction (...)”. Thus Norgay emphasizes the emotional appeal by using such a powerful word. It comes across in this passage that pride is important to Norgay and it is something that is even clearer in Hillary’s *High Adventure*, where pride comes forth in every aspect of the book. Norgay wants to share in this pride by stating that he is proud to have climbed with Hillary and he in turn establishes that he deserves credit too, that this was a team effort and therefore the pride in the accomplishment should be shared. As a result Norgay’s narrative appears more convincing with regard to narrative truth by choosing the word “proud” and all it entails.

It is interesting however that in the next sentence Norgay turns back to his previous manner of naming Hillary (first person singular). Stating that “I do feel that in his story of our final climb he is not quite fair to me; that all the way through he indicates that when things went well it was his doing and when things went badly it was mine” (Norgay 245), and the tone is instantly transformed back to the defense of his actions and his pursuit for narrative truth. He is quite direct in his way of phrasing it: “in his story”, “not quite fair to me”, here the text explicitly interacts with Hillary’s chapter in *The Conquest of Everest*, calling Hillary out on what Norgay believes to be his narrative errors. This further works as a persuasive tool for Norgay and the reader becomes more engaged when this direct approach of explicitly calling Hillary out on

his mistakes are employed, making no mistake what Norgay is accusing Hillary of doing.

In the corresponding passage in Hillary's *High Adventure* the event is told differently than how Norgay narrates it. Though it is phrased a bit differently in his book, than in the chapter in *The Conquest of Everest*, there is still a clear tone of Hillary helping Norgay and that he could not have gotten up the step without Hillary's help. This is illustrated in the following passage from towards the end of *High Adventure*:

He moved into the crack and I gathered in the rope and took some of his weight. Then he, in turn, commenced to struggle and jam and force his way up until I was able to pull him to safety – gasping for breath. (225)

The way in which Hillary describes the event, by choosing words such as “I gathered” and “I was able” illustrates his opinion of what happened. This conveys that Hillary is of the opinion of him doing most of the work. By choosing the first person “I” the text becomes more about Hillary and his work than about the collaboration and teamwork that Norgay writes about. Notice that the sentences in this passage always start out with Norgay functioning as the subject (he) and then Hillary takes over and becomes the subject (I) to save Norgay. This appears in both sentences and serves to illustrate Hillary's opinion of their actions, that Hillary was the leader and Norgay was the led, who needed the most help during the climb. Here, Hillary is mainly concerned with himself and what, according to him, actually happened. He simply narrates the event as he experienced it. The way in which Hillary describes the result of climbing the step is very much in favor of himself. However, when it is compared to Norgay's corresponding passage Hillary's narrative appears less convincing. In this passage Hillary appeals to reason simply stating the facts as he experienced the event. By using short sentences to get the point across and long descriptions of technical equipment, a no-nonsense attitude becomes prominent where much is put on the reader to understand what is going on.

Conclusion

Fascination regarding the world's tallest mountain will always be present, as will the competition that surrounds the mountain, both in the climbing of it and in the writing

about it. The mountain's height will always remain a problematic part of writing about a climb the author has achieved because of the low oxygen levels near the top. When narrating real life events about ascents of Mount Everest memory becomes a key factor in documentation and evidence of the event. The low oxygen levels make this task problematic and as such there is a greater need than in other genres to be convincing of the main source of documentation – memory. The need for reliable memory is illustrated in the writing where Hillary and Norgay represent to different kinds of memory: an individual memory and a joined memory. Hillary's memory is not dependent on other people because he comes from a culture where there are tools to aid memory staying in tact and this comes forth in his texts and in the construction of his narrative. Thus Hillary is not aware of the fact that there is a competition apparent in their narratives since he is of the belief that he is from the dominant culture that holds all the knowledge. Norgay's memory is that of a joined memory with his people and companions because he comes from a culture where there is a much greater need of memory (his people being illiterate), therefore making Norgay's memory that of the body which is the ultimate tool when climbing Everest.

Norgay engages in a competition for truth by making it plain that he is not represented well in Hillary's narratives and by correcting the narrative mistakes he believes Hillary made. These narratives show differing views of the same event, competing for narrative truth while facing issues of low oxygen levels, memory and different worldviews. The narratives represent the need for equality, but more than that, the difference in the Eastern and Western culture. The narratives illustrate through language, structure and memory how the two cultures, represented by Hillary and Norgay, compete for narrative truth all the while promoting themes of individuality vs. teamwork and equality vs. fairness.

As the technology changes with the times so does the manner of climbing the mountain, allowing more inexperienced and different types of people to attempt a climb of Everest. These circumstances give more climbers turned authors, after ascending Everest, the opportunity to shed new light on low oxygen levels, memory and competitive writing, as well as other issues occurring with the times. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 2: The Great Storm – Memory and Trauma

Introduction

43 years has passed since the first known summiting of the world's tallest mountain to the 1996 season and what is regarded as one of Everest's greatest disasters: in the climbing season of 1996 three expeditions found themselves on the top of the world when an unpredictable storm headed their way. Expedition guide Neil Beidleman described the situation as "being lost in a bottle of milk" (Weathers 47). With three expeditions attempting to reach the summit on the same day, traffic jams ensued on the Hillary Step, leading to long queues where climbers stood still losing heat, energy and bottled oxygen. On May 10, 1996 eight climbers died on Mount Everest, causing the climbing community and the world to question what really happened on the mountain on that day to have caused such tragedy – why did the storm go unnoticed? Who is to blame for the lives lost? Questions such as these were raised around the world and the need to answer them was felt by many of the climbers.

Adventure Consultants expedition member and reporter Jon Krakauer chose to tackle these questions in his book *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster* (1997). In his narrative Krakauer brings awareness to important topics, as well as questioning the actions of his fellow climbers. Guide Anatoli Boukreev from the Mountain Madness expedition was one of the climbers questioned who felt that he had been poorly represented in *Into Thin Air*. To answer the allegations raised against him in Krakauer's narrative Boukreev collaborated with author G. Weston DeWalt to write a direct response to *Into Thin Air*. This resulted in *The Climb: Tragic Ambitions on Everest* (1998) which reads as a corrective version of the Everest disaster.

After the publication of *The Climb* Krakauer felt great pressure to give a response to Boukreev because he had challenged the accuracy of Krakauer's account in his narrative. Krakauer felt he had an obligation to his readers to give a response to Boukreev in order to not mislead his readers and to not appear as if he was agreeing to what Boukreev had written. The illustrated second edition of *Into Thin Air* published in 1998 includes an addendum where Krakauer defended the accuracy and integrity of *Into Thin Air* by pointing out some of the misrepresentations in Boukreev's *The Climb*. Sadly, Anatoli Boukreev died on Christmas Day in 1997 in an avalanche on

Everest's neighboring mountain Annapurna, so it fell to DeWalt to write his defense. Thus, the third edition of *The Climb* published in 1999 included an "Everest Update" in the last section of the book. This update was a direct response to Jon Krakauer's addendum in defense of Boukreev's actions on Everest, as well as a defense DeWalt's research in writing *The Climb*. Upon reading this update Krakauer responded with a new, third edition of *Into Thin Air* in November 1999 that included a postscript – an extended version of the addendum from 1998 – which is the response that this thesis will discuss. Other climbers from the Everest disaster wanted to share their version of events, including Adventure Consultants expedition member Beck Weathers, who was "left for dead" on the South Col (right below the summit at 7900 meters) by teammates who considered him dead after laying in the snow for about 12 hours. Weathers made a miraculous recovery and his book *Left For Dead: My Journey Home from Everest* (2000) sheds light on the ethics of high altitude climbing. The renowned mountaineer David Breashears tells of the struggles of a high altitude rescue in *High Exposure: An Enduring Passion for Everest and Unforgiving Places* (1999), when he and his team aided the effort to get Weathers off the mountain alive. In order to make it easier to follow the discussion, I have included a timeline of the books (month included when possible):

1997	First edition of <i>Into Thin Air</i> by Jon Krakauer
July, 1998	First edition of <i>The Climb</i> by Anatoli Boukreev and G. Weston DeWalt
November, 1998	Second edition of <i>Into Thin Air</i> with "Addendum" by Jon Krakauer
June, 1999	Third edition of <i>The Climb</i> with "Everest Update: A Response to Jon Krakauer" by Anatoli Boukreev and G. Weston DeWalt
October, 1999	Third edition of <i>Into Thin Air</i> with "Postscript" by Jon Krakauer

Like the 1953 British expedition, the competition of the 1996 disaster occurs both in the climbing and in the writing. The competition in the climbing is exemplified in the race for the summit between the Adventure Consultants expedition and the Mountain Madness expedition. Memory is still a key factor in these narratives, like Hillary and Norgay's narratives from 1955, but this time memory is

not influenced by success, but by disaster and the consequences of such an event. Memory and the questioning of it leads to competition. Climber A writes a book, climber B reads it and does not agree with the narrative. As a result climber B writes a corrective book of the event and in turn competes for narrative truth and the successful convincing of the readers with his corrective narrative. While there is still a need to establish credibility with regards to competition by using memory, there is also blame being placed for lives lost. However, the narratives are about more than finding someone to blame; the narratives are about the people climbing and what drives them. When faced with death, as one is during a climb on Everest, what keeps the climber going is imperative as little separates the climbers who get safely up and down the mountain from the climbers who sit down for a rest, only to never get up again. The narratives reveal the most basic of human instincts – the need for survival. Krakauer and Boukreev's narratives tell a story of human endurance, heroism and morality in high altitude which is documented by their memory and this in turn leads to a competition for credibility and narrative truth. This chapter is going to explore Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air* and Anatoli Boukreev's *The Climb* with regards to memory's role in the narratives, how memory and trauma are linked, and lastly how this alters the text to one of competitiveness. Starting with an explanation of how the mountain has changed, which is necessary in order to fully comprehend the narratives.

How has Climbing Mount Everest Changed Since 1953?

It is important to take a closer look at how the mountaineering environment on Everest has changed in order to understand the narratives discussed in this chapter. In 1953 Mount Everest was still a somewhat undiscovered mountain, so the first summiting by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay was innovative and revolutionary for the mountaineering community. The climbing of the mountain was a journey of exploration where the climbers had to find their own route to the top and had to assess each potentially dangerous situation on their own. During the time between the 1953 expedition and the 1996 disaster vast changes had occurred on the mountain: a route from the Tibetan side of the mountain had been established and climbed, the first woman had reached the summit, the first solo ascent without use of supplemental oxygen had been achieved and most notably the rich Texan Dick Bass became the first to “pay his way to the top”. This opened up the notion that with

enough money anyone could climb Everest and thus began the commercialization of Mount Everest. Well-established climbers started professional businesses to guide amateur climbers to the top of the world, to great criticism from Hillary (Krakauer 39). The innovator of this business was Rob Hall, the Adventure Consultants main guide to Krakauer's expedition, who started his business in the early 1990's. By this time climbing Everest was not considered to be just for the elite anymore since it had become common for amateur climbers to reach the summit.

Needless to say, with so many people climbing the mountain the climate of Everest changed. Pollution had become a major problem at Everest by this time: old tents, used oxygen canisters, human feces and dead bodies littered the mountain. It is in this climate that the two expeditions discussed in this chapter made their way toward the top of Everest. News of Everest to the public was not what it once used to be and in 1953 the whole world awed at the news that the top of the world had been conquered (the news first delivered to Queen Elizabeth II for her coronation), whereas in 1996 a deathly disaster had to occur in order for Mount Everest to make the headlines.

The commercialization of Everest, meaning businesses making a profit for guiding inexperienced climbers to the summit, brought new dangers to the mountain. Competition between expeditions was steep and though Rob Hall (Adventure Consultants leader) and Scott Fischer (Mountain Madness leader) called themselves friends, they competed for both clients and dates for the summit bid. This is exemplified with the battle for reporter, Jon Krakauer, whom both expeditions wanted to guide. Having a reporter on the expedition who would write a story about the hopefully successful expedition would be great advertisement for both expeditions, but in the end Adventure Consultants and Rob Hall won over Krakauer with a much cheaper fee. On average a client on a guided expedition would have to pay sums up to \$60 000 to be allowed to join. Krakauer in comparison only had to pay for his climbing permit (about \$10 000) to the Nepalese government. Having lost Krakauer, Mountain Madness and Scott Fischer acquired socialite and reporter Sandy Hill Pittman instead. Therefore was a successful summiting crucial in order to gain the best advertisement for his business and both Sherpas and guides were told to get Pittman to the summit by any means necessary. Scott Fischer had acquired Anatoli Boukreev, a well-known and experienced Russian mountaineer to help guide the clients in order to ensure a successful expedition. Boukreev would play a crucial part

in the disaster, both as the rescuer of four clients and as what many believe a contributor to the disaster. Jon Krakauer and Anatoli Boukreev would be among the lucky survivors to write books about the disaster that unfolded in May 10, 1996.

The Authors and Selected Works

Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air* uses a different tactic for the beginning of the narrative than the narratives from the first ascent. Krakauer starts his narrative right in the action, so to speak, telling the readers of his first experience of the top of the world:

Straddling the top of the world, one foot in China and the other in Nepal, I cleared the ice from my oxygen mask, hunched a shoulder against the wind, and stared absently down at the vastness of Tibet. I understood on some dim, detached level that the sweep of earth beneath my feet was a spectacular sight. 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. (Krakauer 1999, 4)

By starting his narrative on the top, using the technique of *in medias res*, Krakauer gives a little taste of what is to come and it works as foreshadowing as there is clearly something wrong when Krakauer does not experience any joy at making it to the top. The sentence: "I understood on some dim, detached level that the sweep of earth beneath my feet was a spectacular sight," indicates that there is something wrong with Krakauer's mind, that a lack of oxygen could be to blame for his mind not working properly. The last sentence ensures that the notion of something being wrong is clear. The fact that Krakauer "just couldn't summon the energy to care" is an indication that something is not as it should be. To not be able to summon energy illustrates the toll it takes on the body to make it to the top of the world. Krakauer is only able to focus on the cold and his tired body (Krakauer 1999, 4) and that fact works as a demonstration of the hardship it is and the hardship that is to come. This passage contains a lot of information: that Krakauer made it to the summit, that he does not experience joy about making it, and that he was exhausted, among other things. This beginning sets the tone for the rest of the narrative as it promises a suspenseful and dangerous tale of

climbing. Using *in medias res* makes it more likely to hook the reader from the very beginning and keeping their interest for the rest of the narrative.

Krakauer also employs a foreshadowing technique which is exemplified at the end of this first chapter where Krakauer gives a clue as to what is going to take place further on in the narrative:

Four hundred vertical feet above, where the summit was still washed in bright sunlight under an immaculate cobalt sky, my compadres dallied to memorialize their arrival at the apex of the planet, unfurling flags and snapping photos, using up precious ticks of the clock. None of them imagined that a horrible ordeal was drawing nigh. Nobody suspected that by the end of that long day, every minute would matter. (Krakauer 1999, 10)

Krakauer having made it to the South Summit (100 meters below the summit) made an observation of his fellow climbers, having at that time no idea of what was to come. This passage works as foreshadowing to a disaster that is to be narrated later in the book. Note that Krakauer withholds the information of what the “horrible ordeal” is, creating suspense in the narrative. Krakauer uses the technique of foreshadowing in order to establish written credibility in his narrative by keeping his readers interested for more.

Krakauer is not a professional climber, therefore he relies on his professional ability as an author instead and he starts this from the very beginning. One of the first pages one encounters when opening the books is the page that lists the author’s accomplishments. Like many modern books, both fiction and non-fiction, before the title page this page is where the author’s other works are listed. On this page in *Into Thin Air* six book titles are mentioned: “Jon Krakauer is the author of *Eiger Dreams*, *Into the Wild*, *Into Thin Air*, *Under the Banner of Heaven*, and *Where Men Win Glory*, and is the editor of the Modern Library Exploration series” (seventh unnumbered page). Krakauer is an accomplished author and already from this page is it clear that his credibility in relation to his profession is sound. By starting the book in this manner Krakauer establishes his authority as an author first, before he attempts to convince the reader of his mountaineering skills. This technique reveals that Krakauer is first and foremost an author and thus he employs this device to establish a written credibility over mountaineering credibility.

Krakauer continues employing his ability as an author in his narrative to establish his credibility and he uses other authors of mountaineering to do it. He also keeps the technique of foreshadowing going throughout the narrative by his use of epigraphs - quotes by a respected mountaineer or adventurer at the beginning of each chapter. The quotes at the beginning of each chapter foreshadow the topic of the chapter to come. The quotes are always relevant and from a book related to mountaineering or exploration; for example this quote from the beginning of chapter 8 “Camp One”, presented exactly as in the book:

I doubt if anyone would claim to enjoy life at high altitudes – enjoy, that is, in the ordinary sense of the word. There is a certain grim satisfaction to be derived from struggling upwards, however slowly; but the bulk of one’s time is necessarily spent in the extreme squalor of a high camp, when even this solace is lacking. Smoking is impossible; eating tends to make one vomit; the necessity of reducing weight to a bare minimum forbids the importation of literature beyond that supplied by the labels on tins of food; sardine oil, condensed milk and treacle spill themselves all over the place; except for the briefest moments, during which one is usually in a mood for aesthetic enjoyment, there is nothing to look at but the bleak confusion inside the tent and the scaly, bearded countenance of one’s companion – fortunately the noise of the wind usually drowns out his stuffy breathing; worst of all is the feeling of complete helplessness and inability to deal with any emergency that might arise. I used to try to console myself with the thought that a year ago I would have been thrilled by the very idea of taking part in our present adventure, a prospect that had then seemed like an impossible dream; but altitude has the same effect on the mind as upon the body, one’s intellect becomes dull and unresponsive, and my only desire was to finish the wretched job and get down to a more seasonable clime.

Eric Shipton
Upon That Mountains

(Krakauer 1999, 128)

This quote from mountaineer and author Eric Shipton's book *Upon That Mountain* (1956) is quite long and it explains interesting facts about life in high altitude. Eric Shipton was one of the pioneers of Everest in the 1930s and he was the one to bring Tenzing Norgay along on his first expedition to Mount Everest (Norgay 38). The chapter this quote is included in is called "Camp One" and Eric Shipton's quote is a perfect introduction to the chapter and to what it is like being at the altitude in Camp One. This quote also works to build credibility for Krakauer as he emphasizes that he is in the company of the great mountaineering authors and that he is taking part in a great literary tradition. The quotes at the beginning of each chapter also serve as a reminder of the fact that Krakauer is by profession an author, that he is aware of it and he uses it to his advantage in terms of credibility. Krakauer gives no information about when Eric Shipton's quote is from, but it is not necessary because as one reads on it becomes clear that life in high altitude has not changed.

Krakauer does not refer directly back to the quote or its author Eric Shipton. However, he does so indirectly by describing a situation close to what Shipton described of high altitude living:

At 21,300 feet, Camp Two consisted of some 120 tents scattered across the bare rocks of the lateral moraine along the glacier's edge. The altitude here manifested itself as a malicious force, making me feel as though I were afflicted with a raging red-wine hangover. Too miserable to eat or even read, for the next two days I mostly lay in my tent with my head in my hands, trying to exert myself as little as possible. (Krakauer 1999, 134)

This description works as a reminder of the quote by Shipton in the beginning of the chapter and as such Krakauer evokes his written credibility – he is taking part in a great literary tradition. By describing a similar situation to that of Shipton, Krakauer reminds the reader of previous literature of Everest and that he belongs in the same category. In this passage from *Into Thin Air* Krakauer uses very vivid language; as for instance the description to the altitude as a "malicious force". This description creates an image of the altitude as a creature, thus personifying the altitude to some extent. In this description the altitude intends to do harm, it has a will of malice that is a constant danger to the climbers and it illustrates Krakauer's talent with the written word. Krakauer does not mention the quote or Shipton directly because this is his time

to tell of his experience. Though he does acknowledge that he is in the company of the great mountaineering authors, this is his time to “shine” and thus direct reminders of other mountaineering authors is not desired. Krakauer’s vivid language and foreshadowing techniques work to create very descriptive language that takes the reader on a journey with Krakauer.

Eric Shipton’s quote from *Upon That Mountain* is quite long and the quote in itself can be interpreted as a metaphor for the way time works at high altitude. The length of the quote is an illustration of how time seems to be drawn out and how time can fast forward on the mountain - Mount Everest does not abide to the man made concept of time. The quote is a reminder that on a place where time is everything, a matter of life and death, man cannot control it. The quote is long, taking up one and a half pages in the narrative, and it takes a bit of time to read it. This works as a metaphor for time on Mount Everest because the mountain will take time from the climber as it pleases. When it comes to the structure of the quote it is of a different nature than that of Krakauer’s narrative. The quote is presented in a plain manner with no introduction. The date of the quote is missing, which is peculiar because Krakauer constantly keeps track of the dates of his journey in the beginning of each chapter. In this chapter (chapter eight), for instance, the title reads as follows:

CAMP ONE

APRIL 16, 1996 – 10,500 FEET

This comparison reveals that though time is important to keep track of the narrative, it is not necessary for the quote because of its timeless themes, as discussed previously. The style of writing differs from Krakauer’s style in that the sentences are very long, with a tendency to use commas instead of a full stop. This is a technique of a different time and style of writing and as such this is an indication of the time that has passed since the quote was written. Though much is still the same regarding climbing Mount Everest, the way in which one reports the climbing has changed; both in writing style and documentation methods.

Anatoli Boukreev’s book *The Climb* reads in a different way than Krakauer’s *Into Thin Air*. Where *Into Thin Air* reads as a suspenseful novel of adventure, Boukreev’s *The Climb* reads as a technical investigation into a disaster to uncover what really took place. Another different feature from *Into Thin Air* is that Boukreev’s

book is written in collaboration with writer and documentary filmmaker G. Weston DeWalt. This creates an entirely different tone in the narrative as Boukreev and DeWalt take turns narrating the events. However, it is DeWalt who works as the dominating narrative voice, as his narrative takes up most of the space and since he dedicates parts of his narrative to comment on Boukreev's passages. In order to understand who is narrating which part, the book employs different fonts for each author. DeWalt narrates in the third person while Boukreev narrates in the first person. I will also be employing the tactic of employing different fonts when quoting from *The Climb* to avoid confusion about whom the quote is from. This example from chapter 2, "The Everest Invitation", where Boukreev tells of how he was first approached about guiding for the Mountain Madness expedition, illustrates how the dynamic between the two authors works in the narrative (presented exactly as in the book). "Calibri" font for Boukreev and "Times New Roman" for DeWalt:

Scott talked a lot about Everest, and then we began to discuss high altitude guiding and how it was different from his experiences at lower altitudes. He said he was interested in more than just Everest; he had big plans for the future, for all 8000ers. He was giving thought to a commercial K2 expedition. A lot of Americans were interested, he said. "I would need some good guides, maybe six, maybe Russians who were willing to take the risk, because there aren't many Americans who could do it."

K2, though it is "only" the second highest mountain in the world, is generally regarded as the most dangerous of the 8000ers. Because of its pyramidal mass, the hardest climbing is done on its flanks at the highest elevations; it is one of the great high-altitude challenges. The difficulties of its routes and the dramatic stories, too many of them tragic, about the attempts to make its summit were well-known by Fischer. In fact, as Boukreev knew, Fischer had been a player in one of the most dramatic of those stories. (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 20)

The distinction between the two passages is clear in their different writing style, Boukreev (the first passage) writing from first person perspective about his personal

experience in meeting Scott Fischer to discuss guiding. His passage is presented in a different font than DeWalt's and this is not explained in the narrative; thus they rely on the reader to understand for themselves who is narrating. DeWalt's passages function as the voice that drives the plot along and to explain the various mountaineering terms that Boukreev uses. This is illustrated in the passages exemplified above where DeWalt takes it upon himself to explain what K2 is and why it is so significant to plan a commercial expedition there. DeWalt employs the language of an outside perspective, of someone who is not a mountaineer, by using few mountaineering terms and keeping the language layperson friendly. He is the omniscient presence in the narrative that appears to know all. However, this dynamic between the authors disrupts the flow of the text in that one constantly has to read different styles of writing. The text is also interrupted often by the use of footnotes to supply additional information. This disrupts the flow of the text because one has to constantly stop reading the narrative in order to bring in all the information provided. As a result the text appears poorly put together and it does not promote written credibility because of its unusual structure.

It is easy to understand who is narrating what from the different use of fonts in the text. However, there is a section in the book where Boukreev holds the narrative voice for the entire chapter, "The Rescue Transcript". In this chapter DeWalt interviews Boukreev concerning the rescue of three stranded clients and DeWalt introduces the chapter as follows:

The events from that point, as remembered by Boukreev, were dictated to his coauthor, Weston DeWalt, within days after his arrival in the United States from Nepal. In the interest of maintaining his voice and the immediacy of the events he experienced, his words as spoken in English and without the benefit of an interpreter are presented here. They are interrupted only for clarification. (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 183)

DeWalt has been the omniscient narrator throughout the book, until this point where he makes himself known. However, he speaks of himself in the third person, introducing himself as if he was not himself but a different person. This is interesting because the reader is aware of DeWalt narrating sections in the book since he introduces himself in the prologue. It would have been natural to speak of himself in

the first person, and when he does not it creates a formal tone in the narrative. This works as an introduction to the formal and serious nature of what is to come.

DeWalt describes this section as an opportunity for Boukreev to maintain “his voice”, which is an interesting way to put it as “maintaining” implies that Boukreev’s voice should continue on the same level as previously. However, Boukreev’s voice is presented in broken English and is at times unclear; as a result DeWalt has to break in with questions and commentary in order to clarify. Boukreev’s answers are characterized by grammatical errors, with many words missing from the sentences, like for instance: “Neil go inside tent with crampon” (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 184). This sentence lacks both the correct form of the verb as well as determiners before the nouns. While the purpose of this section was to appear more authentic and to maintain “his voice”, the opposite happens when this is compared to Boukreev’s narrative style in the rest of the book. It is clear that other sections of Boukreev’s narration has been edited, and this leaves the question of how much has been edited and translated to suit the purpose of the text? The vastly different narrative styles create doubt regarding the authenticity of the narrative up until that point. When Boukreev’s narrative style changes so vastly within the book, his “voice” is not “maintained”, but altered because the tone of the narrative changes as well. The answers Boukreev supplies can at times be difficult to understand because of the grammatical errors and repetitive answers. Even so, it appears more authentic when one only focuses on this section, because of the unedited writing, but when compared to the rest of the narrative that authenticity falls away to suspicion.

The Climb carries a focus of mountaineering experience from the very beginning. This might be obvious from the title of the book; however when it is compared to Krakauer’s focus on his writing experience it is revealed that Boukreev relies on his experience as a climber to gain credibility. Comparing the page of the author’s accomplishments in *Into Thin Air* to the same page in *The Climb* (third edition, 1999) illustrates that Boukreev has chosen a different tactic of credibility because he relies on his experience of his many years as a mountaineer. The text reads as follows:

ANATOLI BOUKREEV was one of the world’s foremost high-altitude mountaineers. Twenty-one times he went to the summit of the world’s highest

mountains. For his heroic actions on Mount Everest in May 1996 he was awarded the American Alpine Club's highest honour, the David A. Sowles Memorial Award. He died in an avalanche in 1997 while attempting a winter assault on Annapurna in Nepal.

G. WESTON DEWALT is a writer and documentary filmmaker. (First unnumbered page)

As this passage demonstrates, Boukreev clearly relies on his mountaineering experience to gain credibility. However, this passage also plays upon emotion from the very beginning. The first sentence uses the past tense to describe Boukreev, indicating that he is no longer alive and it is confirmed in the last sentence of the passage. This creates the emotion of empathy and sympathy when reading it, giving the impression that this piece of literature is the last chance to hear from Boukreev and his last words regarding the disaster to the public. The vagueness in DeWalt's description indicates that he perhaps lacks experience in the literature department; when compared to Krakauer's experience it does not add to his credibility. Instead of other works listed, it is explained that DeWalt is "a writer". This description is very vague as "a writer" can mean anything regarding the typing of letters on a page. Further research revealed that no other books than *The Climb* is credited to his name, thus the description "a writer" actually highlights his lack of experience and does nothing for his credibility.

The first chapter of *The Climb* continues building mountaineering credibility, though the beginning starts in a vague manner with no indication that this book's purpose is to tell Boukreev's story. Unlike *Into Thin Air*, *The Climb* does not start right in the action, but in a more symbolic manner:

A star, one that didn't belong, appeared in the night sky over the Himalaya in March 1996. For several consecutive days the star had been moving over the mountains, its trailing tail fanning into the darkness. The "star" was the comet Hyakutake. It was the beginning of the spring season on Mount Everest (8,848 m), that interval of time between the decline of winter and the coming of the summer monsoons when, historically, expeditions to Everest have been most successful, and Hyakutake's stellar trespass was considered an ominous sign

by the Sherpas in whose villages the cosmic smear was a matter of concern and conversation. (DeWalt 1, 1999)

The language of this beginning is different from that of the rest of the narrative. Here, the language resembles that of a novel with vague information of what the book is going to deal with. It is structured as an upside-down pyramid, starting with a wide subject and then narrowing it down to the theme of the book. The “star” in this introduction is a symbol for the pending disaster that is about to befall Everest and the description that the “star” is “one that didn’t belong” is a criticism of the overcrowding of Everest and the amateur climbers that do not belong. DeWalt takes the opportunity to make his disapproval of the commercialization of Everest known. This is referred to later in the narrative when Boukreev makes his opinion clear that if you are unable to climb without hand hold-guiding you have no right to be on the mountain, let alone try for the summit (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 107).

The remainder of the first chapter is peculiar in that there seems to be no link to Boukreev at all except for on the last page. This creates confusion because other people are mentioned (Henry Todd and Kami Noru Sherpa) that appear to have no relevance to the story. On the last page of this chapter Boukreev is brought in as a guide to help Fischer ensure success:

Boukreev, thirty-eight, a native of Russia and resident of Almaty, Kazakhstan, was considered one of the world’s foremost high-altitude mountain climbers. By spring 1996 he had climbed seven of the most challenging of the globe’s 8,000ers (some of them more than once), and all of those he had climbed without the use of supplementary oxygen. (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 12)

The quote above works to build credibility for the narrative. DeWalt relies on Boukreev’s impressive mountaineering record to gain authority in the events about to be told. This is emphasized with the wording of the quote. The words “one of the world’s foremost high-altitude mountain climbers” shows what message DeWalt wants to deliver – Boukreev knows what he is doing, and that the rest of the narrative is read with the correct perspective. The past tense is again used; this continues the emotion of empathy and sympathy in the narrative and it serves as a reminder again of the fact that this offers the last chance to read Boukreev’s words.

Anatoli Boukreev continues using different tactics to gain credibility in order for his narrative to be convincing. As previously stated, Boukreev uses his mountaineering experience to gain credibility and he does this in his narrative by including other stories of his success in the mountains. The epilogue “The Return to Everest” is dedicated to Boukreev’s successful ascent of Everest the year following the disaster, as well as his ascents in 1996 besides Everest. In this chapter Boukreev tells of how he would have organized an Everest expedition, righting Scott Fischer’s wrongs, so to speak. The chapter works to emphasize Boukreev’s talent and expertise as a mountaineer, especially when you learn that he successfully climbed three 8000 meter peaks in 1996 alone: “Returning to Nepal, on September 2, 1996, Boukreev, alone, without the use of supplementary oxygen, summited Cho Oyo (8,201 meters) and on October 9 summited Shisha Pangma (North Summit) (8,008 meters)” (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 230). The details that Boukreev did it “alone” and without “supplementary oxygen” ensure that the reader is aware of how impressive these feats are. Boukreev’s credibility appears convincing, but is mountaineering credibility enough when faced with memory as the main source for documentation to the narrative? This will be discussed in the next section.

Both Krakauer and Boukreev use a writing style that is unique to the genre. Techniques of foreshadowing and *in medias res* are among the methods employed in order to establish a convincing narrative. However, both narratives are based on the author’s memory and that of others, and when that memory is questioned it becomes traumatic for the author (Krakauer) because he has to relive and reanalyze the traumatic events that took place. The result is a different kind of text that is presented in the postscripts, where the nature of the text turns purely competitive. This will be explored in the next sections.

Memory

Memory is essential to any mountaineering narrative that portrays real life events; this was true in the first ascent in 1953 and it is still as essential in the climbing disaster of 1996. The importance of documenting the events as they happen in order to remember them at a later time has changed in the manner of documentation. In 1953 fewer means of documentation were available than in 1996, when new mediums had entered the scene. New technology added new means of documenting memory, such as video cameras, better picture cameras, voice recorders, computers and the Internet. Reporter

Sandy Hill Pittman on the Mountain Madness expedition worked on a live feed of the climb on her employer's website. Along with better means of documentation, the mountaineering equipment had also improved, meaning that the climbers no longer had to experiment with the equipment, saving both energy and time. In 1953, the oxygen canisters, clothes and boots were very much an innovation and Hillary and Tenzing had to figure out the use of them by themselves. By in 1996, the equipment was well established in its use in mountaineering environments. This relates to memory because it gives the climbers more freedom to focus on documentation of memory, as well as giving them better supplemental oxygen which improves the mind in high altitude.

The influence on the narratives has changed. In 1953 the success of the summiting impacted the climbers' writing, and in 1996 however, the disaster that occurred led to trauma for certain climbers and in turn impacted their writing. During the first ascent in 1953 there were only Hillary and Norgay's memories to rely on, while in the disaster of 1996 there were about forty climbers on the top half of the mountain whose memories add to the telling of the event. This becomes problematic when these memories do not agree on what happened and how it happened. This brings me to my next argument: one person's memory is not enough to establish credibility and to use as a source for the narrative, thus discovering the truth in several memories is problematic and challenging.

Memory is Krakauer and Boukreev's main source of documentation, but unlike in 1953 there were more people on the mountain than just the two of them. Therefore are there more perspectives and more memories to work with as documentation. In order to establish credibility for narrative truth one must take into account the other climbers' memories and perspectives, otherwise the truth represented would not appear believable. Though it is necessary to include these memories, it can also be problematic. When working with more memories describing a disaster in high altitude, the memories are unlikely to coincide and filtering the truth from these memories is challenging. Both Krakauer and Boukreev/DeWalt address this issue each in their different ways in the beginning of their narratives. However, Krakauer acknowledges the trouble that may arise when working with memory, while Boukreev/DeWalt does not. This is illustrated in Krakauer's introduction where he writes,

The staggering unreliability of the human mind at high altitude made the research problematic. To avoid relying excessively on my own perceptions, I interviewed most of the protagonists at great length and on multiple occasions. When possible I also corroborated detail with radio logs maintained by people at Base Camp, where clear thought wasn't in such short supply. (Krakauer 1999, xvii)

In this passage Krakauer acknowledges the fact that his memory alone is not enough to narrate the disaster in the most truthful manner possible. This passage works as a reminder of the severity of climbing this mountain. By using the noun “unreliability” to describe the human mind Krakauer emphasizes the fact that the amount of oxygen on the top half of the mountain can be dangerous compared to the lower half of the mountain; and that it impacts the memory as well when later trying to recall. This is further emphasized in the passage when comparing the first sentence and the last, starting the passage with “unreliability of the human mind” and ending it with “clear thought”. This brings to light the variable stages the mind goes through when climbing Everest and the different thought processes a climber goes through.

Krakauer illustrates with his language and word choice that he is aware of the problems of working with more memories. By using the word “perceptions” to describe his own memory he indicates his awareness of his not necessarily being the only story to tell and he makes sure to get as accurate a picture as he can by interviewing “protagonists”. This word choice gives the indication that the key people of the disaster were involved, seeing as the word means “the main figure or one of the most prominent figures in a situation” (OED), not just members of the expedition he was a part of. Krakauer adds that he spoke with the “protagonists” on “multiple occasions” and acknowledges the need for more than one meeting and therefore making sure that their memories had not changed. When Krakauer uses this kind of language he sets the tone for the rest of the narrative. This is especially indicated by his use of the word “protagonists” which is really a noun that is used in relation to fiction, meaning the main character(s) in the novel. Using this word in this context is peculiar when the event in question actually happened and it sets up the tone for the rest of the narrative in terms of the narrative reading as a novel.

If Krakauer's passage is compared to the author's note in *The Climb* it is clear that DeWalt is not as concerned with others' memories; this is indicated in the vague language used:

Five days after the Everest tragedy of May 10, 1996, nine climbers sat in a circle at the Mountain Madness Everest Base Camp and recorded their thoughts and memories. Many of the details and some of the quotes in this book are drawn from those recorded recollections. Anatoli Boukreev, a participant in the taped "debriefing," has drawn upon that source and wishes to thank everyone who participated. Their attempts at truth-telling and self-reflections have added considerably to the historical record. (DeWalt, author's note)

In this passage at the very beginning of the book co-author DeWalt reveals an advantage over Krakauer in terms of memory: the narrative is based on a recording of climbers' retelling of the tragedy just five days after it happened. This reduces the problem of changing memories or memories being influenced by outside factors. Boukreev had a solid source of documentation for the memories of his fellow climbers and a transcript of the debriefing is even included in the back of *The Climb*.

When taking a closer look at the wording of DeWalt's author's note it is clear that DeWalt is quite vague in his wording which leads to certain questions. For instance, DeWalt mentions nine climbers and it is unclear as to who these climbers are. This leaves room for the reader to assume whom they were and it can be misleading, giving the impression that a wide variety of climbers from the disaster were represented. By not specifying whom the "nine climbers" were, DeWalt makes the argument appear convincing because it leaves room to assume that both expeditions were represented, when in fact only the Mountain Madness expedition was present at the debriefing (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 304). When taking a look at the debriefing it becomes clear that the "nine climbers" are all from the Mountain Madness expedition, which indicates that the Boukreev and DeWalt only got one side of the story when doing their research for the narrative. When this is compared to Krakauer's introduction it seems as though Krakauer did a more thorough job in his research, as he interviewed "most of the protagonists at great length" (Krakauer xvii), as he put it. At further reading it is revealed that climbers from both expeditions had

been interviewed in preparation for *Into Thin Air*. This leaves questions as to how accurate the account of the disaster in *The Climb* really is.

The last sentence in DeWalt's author's note: "Their attempts at truth-telling and self-reflections have added considerably to the historical record," reveals several important factors about the narrative. First, the use of the word "attempt" illustrates that DeWalt is aware that this retelling of the disaster is only a bid for truth, not the actual truth. DeWalt acknowledges the need for a clarification that Boukreev is aware of the fact that though the memories were recorded soon after the disaster, outside factors as well as low oxygen levels can distort and give false memory. Second, naming the debriefing as a part of a "historical record" is interesting seeing as this was written shortly after the disaster. DeWalt indicates with this wording that this narrative can be used as a historical source about the disaster. This sets the tone for the rest of the narrative in that it indicates how the text should be read, as a factual text about the Everest disaster.

Krakauer's introduction in *Into Thin Air* and DeWalt's author's note in *The Climb* are among the first passages of text one encounters when opening the book and these passages set the tone for the remainder of the narratives. The fact that both authors choose to involve memory from the very start illustrates the importance of memory's role in these narratives. However, the memory that these authors use to write their narratives is influenced by a disaster and as a result that memory becomes influenced by trauma. This alters the way in which the narratives are interpreted, to a text that is competitive in nature because the text in turn alters form.

Trauma

The disaster that both climbers experienced can be viewed as a source of trauma. Visser defines trauma as "the memory of an overwhelming, unassimilable and violent wounding directly incurred as a first-hand experience in order to differentiate it from secondary or vicarious traumatization" (7). Trauma originates from an experience that a person, the climbers in our case, has endured personally. Trauma theory does not define trauma as the actual event but as what comes after:

As the subject of study in trauma theory, then, "trauma" refers not so much to the traumatic event as to the traumatic aftermath, the post-traumatic stage.

Trauma thus denotes the recurrence or repetition of the stressor event through memory (...). (Visser 272)

This is certainly true for Krakauer and Boukreev who experienced trauma over life and death, which is an overwhelming experience to be sure and had to employ their traumatic aftermath of the disaster in order to write their narratives. Trauma theory is a large field in academia, in relation to themes of both memory and narrative.

Geoffrey A. Hartman considers the link between traumatic knowledge and literary studies, claiming that trauma theory “derives mainly from psychoanalytic sources, though it is strongly affected by literary practice” (537). Both Krakauer and Boukreev experienced a traumatic event, but as Berger puts it: “trauma is not simply another word for disaster” (4), it is also a manner of interpreting the trauma that is experienced and in this case its origin was a disaster. Since both Krakauer and Boukreev wrote books about their experience and the main source for the narratives is memory, trauma in this case will be interpreted in light of memory. Krakauer and Boukreev’s memory of the traumatic event has been transformed in to a literary text and as such the origin of the text (trauma) is detectable in the language and in the need to find someone to blame. Examining specific instances in the narratives and writing styles in the postscripts will reveal how trauma has influenced the authors and their texts.

Irene Vesser has done work on trauma theory and postcolonial literary studies where she discusses whether trauma theory can effectively be “postcolonialized”. Vesser comes to the conclusion that in order to apply trauma theory to postcolonial literature the narratives need to involve a reorientation to forward-looking plots, in order to process the trauma instead of dwelling in melancholy (Visser 279). Like Visser, even though Krakauer’s narrative mainly portrays the past, *Into Thin Air* also works as a way for Krakauer to look forward and a way to process the trauma he has experienced - catharsis. When Boukreev interrupts this healing process where Krakauer uses his narrative and uninterrupted writing process to achieve a catharsis of sorts, Krakauer is forced to look back at the original trauma instead of moving forward. The postscripts are the result of this traumatic influence, where the influence leads to a different kind of text than the original narratives. Even though competition is present in the narratives, the main focus is still on mountaineering and what occurred during the disaster. The postscript exhibits traumatic aspects which is

illustrated in the altered writing style to one of only competitive writing, meaning the authors now battle for truth and end up criticizing each other's authorial ability.

Critics have differentiated memory into two categories, traumatic memory and narrative memory. Theorist Ewald Mengel explains that it is important to make a distinction between the two because they are very different in nature. According to Mengel the difference between traumatic memory and narrative memory (interpreted in light of psychoanalysis), "lies in the degree of consciousness and control with which the traumatic event can be recollected" (144). This relates to Krakauer and Boukreev with the influence of the disaster that they experienced. As previously stated, the narratives from 1953 were influenced by the success of the summiting, while the narratives of 1996 were influenced by the tragedy that occurred high on the mountain. The traumatic experience of taking part in a disaster influences the memory and when that memory is used as the main source to write a book about the event it is possible to divide memory into two categories: narrative memory and traumatic memory.

Narrative memory can be objective in that it is recalled at will and the focus of the memory can suit the purpose of the text. However, because of its practicality in recalling it at will, narrative memory can also be manipulated a certain way in order to fit the purpose of a narrative. Narrative memory can concern itself with an event, other people or the self. Traumatic memory is much different in that it is mainly focused on the self. A different writing style and structure demonstrates the fact that when Krakauer's healing process was interrupted by Boukreev, he was forced to more thoroughly analyze his memories and as a result Krakauer was forced to recall events he was trying to move on from. This act of recalling becomes traumatic, and not cathartic as was Krakauer's original intention with his narrative. Krakauer's honesty is challenged and this is traumatic for him because he now has to question the honesty he thought he could rely on. Though Krakauer's memory is not precisely traumatic, it is important to make the distinction between narrative and traumatic memory because the cathartic power of Krakauer's original narrative has turned traumatic with the postscripts in that old wounds are reopened for Krakauer. The postscript written by DeWalt in *The Climb* is mainly based on narrative memory because he was not present in the disaster and his memories originate from his research for the book and its results. Narrative memory is demonstrated in the language that is used in the

postscript, where it is clear that DeWalt is not influenced by the memories of others and that he had no emotional connection to that memory.

Krakauer's narrative has been written by the use of his narrative memory of the event. This is reflected in *Into Thin Air* where the narrative works as a way to deal with the traumatic memory Krakauer was left with after the disaster. Krakauer explains this in his introduction where he explains his decision to write the book soon after the disaster against advice telling him to do otherwise:

Several authors and editors I respected counseled me not to write the book as quickly as I did; they urged me to wait two or three years and put some distance between me and the expedition in order to gain some crucial perspective. Their advice was sounds [sic.], but in the end I ignored it – mostly because what happened on the mountain was gnawing my guts out. I thought that writing the book might purge Everest from my life.

It hasn't, of course. Moreover, I agree that readers are often poorly served when an author writes as an act of catharsis, as I have done here. But I hoped something would be gained by spilling my soul in the calamity's immediate aftermath, in the roil and torment of the moment. I wanted my account to have a raw, ruthless sort of honesty that seemed in danger of leaching away with the passage of time and the dissipation of anguish.
(Krakauer xvii)

Several factors are revealed in this passage with regard to trauma. Krakauer wanted to write this book in order to rid himself of his trauma and he wanted to use the truth (or “a raw, ruthless sort of honesty”) to achieve it, only it did not work as he states above. Krakauer uses the word “catharsis” to describe this process, which is interesting because of its association to the classic genre of the tragic play. The Aristotelian notion of catharsis is

Generally understood to refer to the ‘cleansing’ effect of watching (or reading) a tragedy and to involve the combination of two kinds of emotion (pity and fear). The cathartic effects of watching (or reading) are linked to the peculiar fact that tragedy can give pleasure. (Bennett 111)

Krakauer did not intend for his readers to experience catharsis, but for himself. The “cleansing” effect was supposed to be his way of putting the disaster behind him and for him to deal with what happened through this book. “Catharsis” is usually associated with the emotions pity and fear, according to Bennett, and as such it is expected to elicit that kind of emotion when reading this narrative. But when Krakauer uses the term “catharsis” in this kind of narrative the effect can be different and in this case it works as foreshadowing to what is going to be narrated later in the book.

Krakauer experienced a traumatic event and his main source for his narrative, *Into Thin Air*, is memory. But what happens when someone challenges that memory that is used in the narrative as a therapeutic way to deal with the tragedy? The narrative Krakauer wrote was supposed to be his way of moving on from the disaster, but Boukreev challenged it by going against Krakauer’s truth of certain events in the narrative. The result of such an action is certainly traumatic for the first author and this challenging leads to a fierce competition for narrative truth between the authors. A competition not just for truth, but for the right memory.

Initially, Boukreev’s reason for wanting to write a book about the disaster was much the same as Krakauer’s, “He was trying to understand what he had just been through.” (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, xvii) But it seemed as though it was coauthor DeWalt who made the final push to convince Boukreev to put his memory on to the written page. Boukreev was under the impression that he was presented in a negative light in Krakauer’s *Into Thin Air*. There were particularly three instances that Boukreev took offense of and Krakauer seemed mainly critical of: Boukreev climbing without supplemental oxygen, the plan of early descent and the actual early descent. By criticizing these three instances Krakauer gave Boukreev extra incentive to write his narrative and thus the competition for narrative truth began.

Competing for Narrative Truth

Krakauer’s *Into Thin Air* is a personal account of the disaster and as such he portrayed the events and persons as he saw them, backed up by interviews of key players involved in the disaster. Krakauer’s main source for his narrative is memory and when that memory is questioned it becomes traumatic for him. When Boukreev first came upon a copy of *Into Thin Air* he could not fathom why he was presented in such a negative light. Boukreev was viewed as one of the world’s most renowned and

talented climbers and many in the field reacted to the manner in which Krakauer portrayed Boukreev. Boukreev took offence of three instances in particular: when Krakauer criticized that Boukreev did not use supplemental oxygen on summit day, Krakauer did not believe there was a plan for Boukreev to descend ahead of his clients, and finally Boukreev's actual descent from the summit ahead of his clients. The fact that these memories are traumatic for Krakauer is present in his need to find someone to blame, that someone being Boukreev, for at least some of the failures that were made on the expedition and for Boukreev in his need to defend himself against the blame. Krakauer criticizes Boukreev for these instances directly in the narrative and his language is very direct in a manner that leaves no room for misunderstanding. Krakauer singles Boukreev out by name and he strengthens his argument by using other climbers' memories who were present as a source in addition to his own memory.

Krakauer is of the opinion that to guide a commercial expedition without the use of supplemental oxygen is both unethical and dangerous. He makes this clear early on in the narrative when he discusses Rob Hall's (Adventure Consultants expedition leader) policies regarding use of supplemental oxygen - that every guide is to employ it. Krakauer does not mention Boukreev explicitly regarding this matter however, until chapter twelve, "Camp Three". While waiting for Sherpas to fix ropes on the South Summit, Krakauer notices that Boukreev is the only guide that is not using supplemental oxygen. Boukreev answers this observation in *The Climb* where he employs a different tactic than Krakauer in order to defend his actions. The passages are presented side by side in order to compare:

<p>Krakauer:</p> <p>I noticed that Boukreev, like Lopsang, wasn't using supplemental oxygen. Although the Russian has summited Everest twice before without gas, and Lopsang thrice, I was surprised Fischer had given them permission to guide the peak without it, which didn't seem to be</p>	<p>Boukreev:</p> <p>I agreed with Neil and said I thought it was a reasonable decision, and I offered him the canister of oxygen I was carrying. I was feeling well acclimatized and strong, and I knew I would be okay to go ahead. My original intention had been to leave the oxygen and retrieve it on my</p>
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<p>in the clients' best interest (...)</p> <p>It turned out that he had departed Camp Four carrying both a backpack and an oxygen bottle; he later told me that he didn't intend to use the gas, he wanted to have a bottle handy in the event that "his power was low" and he needed it higher on the peak. Upon reaching the Balcony, however, he jettisoned the pack and gave his oxygen canister, mask, and regulator to Beidleman to carry for him. Because Boukreev wasn't breathing supplemental oxygen, he had apparently decided to strip his load down to the bare minimum to gain every possible advantage in the appallingly thin air. (Krakauer 227, 1999)</p>	<p>descent, but when I considered we were running a little late and Neil was going to be doing hard work, I offered it to him and he accepted it. (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 138)</p>
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The beginning of Krakauer's passage shows that he did not fully blame Boukreev for his lack of supplemental oxygen, but his guide Fischer who had the final say on the matter. However, Krakauer's use of certain words indicates that he places some blame on Boukreev. Krakauer employs the word "jettisoned" to describe Boukreev's action of leaving behind his pack and supplemental oxygen. The word has negative connotations and the meaning of discarding something that is no longer wanted (OED). The use of "jettisoned" will then create a negative tone towards Boukreev, which is further emphasized with Krakauer's claim that Beidleman (a fellow guide) had to carry the pack and oxygen for Boukreev. Krakauer's need for blame is further emphasized in the last sentence of the passage where he states that Boukreev stripped down to the bare minimum in order to "gain every possible advantage". This claim is a criticism of Boukreev's professionalism as a guide. The guide's job is to make sure the clients are safe, and for Krakauer to imply that Boukreev failed to bring with him crucial gear, so that Boukreev himself had "every possible advantage", is a serious accusation. This leads to a negative tone towards Boukreev in the narrative, making it seem as though he could be regarded as a contributor to the disaster.

Comparing Krakauer's passage to Boukreev's demonstrates that Boukreev uses a different writing style in order to defend his actions. This is especially apparent in his wording. Where Krakauer uses the word "jettisoned", Boukreev employs the word "offered" to describe the same action. "Offered" has positive connotations and it indicates that Beidleman had a choice of whether to accept or reject the offer as well as an indication that Boukreev is being helpful and generous. The word is used twice in the passage in order to emphasize that this was a choice for Beidleman, not something that was forced upon him. Boukreev employs the opposite writing technique than Krakauer, using only verbs with positive connotations. This creates a positive tone in the narrative and takes the focus away from placing blame.

Krakauer takes the position of offence in the lower part of his passage. The focus remains on Boukreev's faults throughout the last part of the passage and Krakauer does this by making Boukreev the subject of each sentence. The position of offence is employed in order to keep focus away from Krakauer, keep it on Boukreev and create a negative tone in the narrative regarding him. By comparing Krakauer's position to Boukreev's it shows that Boukreev does the opposite: taking the defensive position. However, he keeps this position in a subtle manner, not making his position obvious. Boukreev keeps the focus on himself as well by using the first person and by keeping the position of subject in every sentence. By being in the position of subject in every sentence, Boukreev refrains from going on the offence and "attacking" Krakauer back. Boukreev keeps the focus on himself, simply stating what occurred according to him. Boukreev holds the defensive position by being subtle about it and keeping to his story.

Krakauer continues this negative tone where Boukreev is concerned throughout the narrative, but he later employs other climbers' memories in order to strengthen his argument. This is especially true when it comes to the fact that Boukreev descended from the summit ahead of his clients. Here, Krakauer employs other climber's memories and even Boukreev's own memory to support his claim. In his narrative, Krakauer dedicates an entire chapter to depict Boukreev on the summit, his descent and his rescue effort afterwards. Boukreev does the same, dedicating an entire chapter to portraying the summiting and the descent. The chapter is even named after the need for a defense of Krakauer's claim: "Decision and Descent" (Boukreev and Dewalt 1999, 151). These words are a direct link to Krakauer because it was

precisely the decision to descend ahead of his clients that Krakauer criticizes in his narrative (presented side by side in order to compare):

<p>Krakauer</p> <p>Indeed, by 5:00 P.M., while his teammates were still struggling down through the clouds at 28,000 feet, Boukreev was already in his tent resting and drinking tea. Experienced guides would later question his decision to descend so far ahead of his clients – extremely unorthodox behavior for a guide. One of the clients from that group has nothing but contempt for Boukreev, insisting that when it mattered most, the guide “cut and ran.”</p> <p>Anatoli had left the summit around 2:00 P.M. and quickly became entangled in the traffic jam at the Hillary Step. As soon as the mob dispersed he moved very rapidly down the Southeast Ridge without waiting for any clients – despite telling Fischer atop the Step that he would be going down with Martin Adams. Boukreev thereby arrived at Camp Four well before the brunt of the storm. (Krakauer 1999, 265)</p>	<p>Boukreev:</p> <p>I spoke with Scott while he was resting after climbing the Hillary Step. When I asked how he was feeling, he said he was tired, that the ascent had been difficult for him.</p> <p>When I met Scott, my intuition was telling me that the most logical thing for me to do was to descend to Camp IV as quickly as possible, to stand by in case our descending climbers needed to be resupplied with oxygen, and also, to prepare hot tea and warm drinks. Again, I felt confident in my strength and knew that if I descended rapidly, I could do this if necessary. From Camp IV I would have a clear view of the climbing route to the South Col and could observe developing problems.</p> <p>This intuition I expressed to Scott, and he listened to my ideas. He saw our situation in the same way and we agreed that I should go down. Again, I surveyed the weather, and I saw no immediate cause for concern. (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 154)</p>
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At the very beginning of this passage Krakauer employs comparison of certain words to emphasize the severity of Boukreev's actions. Krakauer describes Boukreev's teammates as "struggling" down the mountain while Boukreev is described as "resting" in his tent. These words are presented immediately after one another, in the same sentence, creating a comparison between the teammates and Boukreev. To be "struggling" and "resting" are two opposites and by using these contrasting words Krakauer emphasizes the gravity of Boukreev's actions and again brings back a negative tone where Boukreev is concerned.

Krakauer uses other climbers in order to strengthen his argument. Krakauer has little credibility where mountaineering is concerned, this being his first time climbing in high altitude. As such, Krakauer uses other climbers to gain mountaineering credibility. He does this by using his already established ability as an author. Notice how Krakauer makes sure the reader is aware of him employing accomplished climbers to strengthen his argument. Krakauer states in the beginning of this passage that "experienced guides would later question his decision" (256), the word "experienced" ensures that this is competent and respected guides' opinions. Krakauer is not alone in his view of Boukreev and by using other climbers' opinions to back his own, his argument is strengthened. Krakauer continues on the same path in the next sentence where he states that "one of the clients from that group has nothing but contempt for Boukreev". Krakauer now takes his argument to a more personal level. It is no longer unknown random guides who strengthen Krakauer's argument, but an individual and actual client that Boukreev left behind on his descent. The fact that the client is anonymous does not matter as the point is still made. This makes the argument more relatable and personal, as one of Boukreev's own clients, a person that Boukreev was supposed to be responsible for, agrees with Krakauer. By using other climbers to strengthen his argument, Krakauer ensures that he is not alone in his opinion and that he is not alone in his need to place blame on Boukreev.

Boukreev continues in the same fashion as before by keeping the focus on himself and only portraying what happened according to him. In this particular passage he repeats the word "again" twice to emphasize that he in fact was confident in his actions and that he has expressed this on several occasions. It is interesting however that Boukreev uses the same word to describe his ascent as Krakauer, but with two very different meanings. Both authors use the word "rapidly" to describe Boukreev's descent. Krakauer uses it to describe the manner in which Boukreev

descended from the summit, while Boukreev uses it to explain his ability as a professional climber. The difference is small, but where Krakauer uses it as criticism, Boukreev uses it to his advantage and to strengthen his credibility as a professional climber. Boukreev took a word that Krakauer used negatively and turned it positive.

Krakauer continues using other climbers' memories, but this time he goes to the source. Krakauer employs the same technique as Boukreev when he uses Boukreev's own words against him in the next passage. Here Krakauer attempts to come to some sort of conclusion as to why Boukreev descended ahead of his clients:

After the expedition, when I asked Anatoli why he had hurried down ahead of his group, he handed me the transcript of an interview he'd given a few days previously to *Men's Journal* through a Russian interpreter. Boukreev told me that he'd read the transcript and confirmed its accuracy. Reading it on the spot, I quickly came to a series of questions about the descent, to which he replied:

I stayed [on the summit] for about an hour. . . . It is very cold, naturally, it takes your strength. . . . My position was that I would not be good if I stood around freezing, waiting. I would be more useful if I returned to Camp Four in order to be able to take oxygen up to the returning climbers or to go up to help them if some became weak during the descent. . . . If you are immobile at that altitude you lose strength in the cold, and then you are unable to do anything.

Boukreev's susceptibility to the cold was doubtless greatly exacerbated by the fact that he wasn't using supplemental oxygen; in the absence of gas he simply couldn't stop to wait for slow clients on the summit ridge without courting frostbite and hypothermia. For whatever reason, he raced down ahead of the group – which in fact has been his pattern throughout the entire expedition, as Fischer's final letters and phone calls from Base Camp to Seattle made clear. (Krakauer 1999, 266)

Krakauer's need for blame is further exemplified in this passage where the evidence presented is Boukreev's own words to Krakauer. By using Boukreev's own words as evidence Krakauer creates a convincing argument. When Boukreev has admitted that

he would not be useful waiting on the summit, the narrative's tone turns favorable towards Krakauer's argument. Krakauer comments on Boukreev's quote as well, reminding the reader of Boukreev's previous faults. Krakauer repeats the fact that Boukreev was not using supplemental oxygen and uses it to attempt to explain why Boukreev descended ahead of his clients. By reminding the readers of this fact Krakauer creates an even more negative tone where Boukreev is concerned, further strengthening his argument that Boukreev is to blame to a certain extent.

After Krakauer supplied the explanation as to why Boukreev descended ahead of his clients Krakauer takes a confusing turn. Krakauer writes: "for whatever reason, he raced down ahead of the group" (266), this is peculiar because Krakauer supplied a very plausible reason in the sentence just before this one. Krakauer keeps this negative tone going in the next sentence where he states that this "has been his pattern throughout the entire expedition" (266), a serious accusation. Krakauer, again, attacks Boukreev's professional ability and does not take into account Boukreev's different climbing philosophy and his different culture. Krakauer backs this argument by stating its source, which appears convincing. However, when Krakauer employs statements such as this, it takes the focus away from the factual argument and turns it into a personal one. This is an indication that trauma has influenced Krakauer's writing.

Boukreev does not answer the serious accusation that his pattern was to race down ahead of his clients throughout the expedition, in the narrative. However, DeWalt takes it upon himself to defend Boukreev's actions in the postscript. This is where the trauma that Krakauer experienced comes to light. When Krakauer was forced to reanalyze certain events of the disaster for the postscript, his memory became largely influenced by trauma. This is detectable in his personal language, the structure of the text and the fact that the text becomes purely competitive in nature. The narrative alters from a retelling of a disaster with slight influence from trauma, to a traumatic text on Krakauer's part. This is identifiable in that the reader discovers an "affective and cognitive appreciation of the effects of trauma" (Villone 10). The results of trauma come to light in the postscript where the two authors engage in a written "shouting match" for truth. The effects of trauma take a long time to uncover (Villone 10) and this is true for *Into Thin Air* where the reader has to get to the very end, the postscript, in order to discover and understand the trauma that influenced the book.

In order to avoid confusion I will again include a timeline of the books, where the books featuring the postscripts I will discuss is underlined:

1997	First edition of <i>Into Thin Air</i> by Jon Krakauer
July, 1998	First edition of <i>The Climb</i> by Anatoli Boukreev
November, 1998	Second edition of <i>Into Thin Air</i> with “Addendum” by Jon Krakauer
June, 1999	<u>Third edition of <i>The Climb</i> with “Everest Update: A Response to Jon Krakauer” by Anatoli Boukreev and Weston DeWalt</u>
October, 1999	<u>Third edition of <i>Into Thin Air</i> with “Postscript” by Jon Krakauer</u>

As illustrated in the timeline Krakauer’s postscript and DeWalt’s response face different mediums of influence: Boukreev and DeWalt being influenced by the 1998 *Into Thin Air* addendum, and Krakauer being influenced by Boukreev and DeWalt’s 1999 response. Also, the narrative in *The Climb* was written in collaboration with both Boukreev and DeWalt, in the postscript however it is just DeWalt writing, as it was written and released after Boukreev’s death. These facts create subtle changes in the writing that contributes to the competitive tone that is present in the text.

The changes that occurred in the postscript are prominent from the very beginning as well as the competition that is dominating in these texts. DeWalt begins the competition by using the headline of the postscript to engage Krakauer in a battle for truth. The headline reads as follows: “EVEREST UPDATE: A RESPONSE TO JON KRAKAUER” (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 261). By singling out Krakauer by name DeWalt initiates the competition and initiates the first change from the narrative – this text takes a personal tone, where Krakauer’s character comes into question, not his actions. Krakauer on the other hand takes a different route, but also one that is personal. Krakauer simply names his postscript for what it is: “Postscript” (Krakauer 1999, 364), and moves immediately on to the matter at hand. On the first page Krakauer acknowledges that there is a need for a response, that he takes part in the competition for truth and that it has turned personal.

Krakauer employs specific descriptions to demonstrate that this is no longer about stating facts, but about personal character and professionalism. On the first page of Krakauer’s postscript this is illustrated, when Krakauer makes sure to emphasize

that his criticism in the postscript is directed towards DeWalt – not Boukreev (presented exactly as in the postscript):

DeWalt – who oversaw the research, wrote The Climb, and has assumed the role of Boukreev’s spokesman – undertook the derogation of Into Thin Air with notable energy and enthusiasm. He has tirelessly expressed his view of my book – and my character – in print and radio interviews, on the Internet, and in personal letters to family members of those who died on the mountain. (Krakauer 1999, 364)

By naming DeWalt specifically, Krakauer ensures that the reader is aware of his criticism strictly being towards DeWalt and his professionalism, and not Boukreev. The use of the word “derogation” in order to describe DeWalt’s relation to *Into Thin Air* illustrates the personal aspect that has joined the argument. The word meaning, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, “The perception or treatment of someone or something as being of little worth,” illustrates that Krakauer is under the opinion that DeWalt regards *Into Thin Air* as being of little worth, which in this instance translated to *Into Thin Air* not being regarded as a trustworthy account of the disaster. The word works as an indication that Krakauer feels as though DeWalt has attacked his character and his integrity, as he states in the next sentence. By using such descriptions, Krakauer demonstrates that this text is no longer about stating facts, but a matter of opinion as well as personal character and professionalism.

The beginning of Krakauer’s postscript is written in italics, as illustrated above, and this written tool alters the text in a subtle way. Employing the use italics in a text gives the impression that something is different or special about that piece of the text. It is no different for the passage illustrated above. The use of italics in Krakauer’s beginning makes it seem as though the message is unofficial and not a part of his overall argument. The tone of the beginning of the postscript is very personal and as such the use of the italics is an indication that it is intended as an unofficial part of the argument, but one that is necessary to make. It becomes clear in this beginning that Krakauer feels the need to explain and defend himself and his action in writing a postscript. This is another change from the narrative where an explanation is provided, but not one that is defensive, and it is an indication that the nature of the text has changed to a competitive one.

The final sentence of the introduction in the postscript serves to illustrate that Krakauer is taking part in the personal arguments as well. Prior to this sentence Krakauer has explained why he has written a postscript in response to DeWalt and briefly explained DeWalt's postscript in the latest edition of *The Climb*, and the sentence is as follows: "*This latest screed from DeWalt inspired me to write the postscript that follows*" (Krakauer 1999, 367). The word that stands out as a personal criticism towards DeWalt in this sentence is "screed". According to the Oxford English Dictionary "screed" is defined as a piece of writing, typically regarded as tedious. By using this word Krakauer illustrates his opinion of DeWalt's postscript and in turn he criticizes DeWalt's professional ability as an author. The use of the word "screed" shows that Krakauer is on the same level as DeWalt and that he too views the other's work as being of little worth.

When examining both postscripts as a whole it becomes clear that each author employs certain techniques in order to question the other's argument. The text is no longer about telling a personal account of a disaster or about attempting to convince the reader of said account by gaining credibility. In the postscripts, the text's focus has altered from gaining credibility to discrediting the other's argument. The authors employ different techniques, both from each other and from what they have previously written in the narratives. The main difference in their techniques, which will be discussed in the following section, is that while Krakauer employs the postscript to strengthen his arguments, take a closer look at the evidence and further analyze the situation, DeWalt uses the postscript to defend himself and Boukreev against Krakauer's arguments, and attack Krakauer with accusations of his own.

The most prominent technique that DeWalt employs in order to discredit Krakauer's argument is the manner in which the postscript is divided. The structure of the chapter is peculiar in that it illustrates a clear influence from Krakauer's arguments. DeWalt's postscript is divided into 8 different passages, named after Krakauer's main arguments and criticisms: "THE 'ERRORS'", "INTERVIEWS", "THE DEBRIEFING TAPES", "FACT-CHECKING", "OXYGEN USE", "THE BROMET STATEMENT", "IN-CAMP SHERPA ARGUMENT", and lastly, "DESCENT AHEAD OF CLIENTS" (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 275-295). The structure of the postscript initiates the competition between DeWalt and Krakauer in that DeWalt acknowledges that there is a need to give answers to the questions and accusations raised against him and Boukreev. DeWalt illustrates this need by

structuring his response as answers to Krakauer's accusations. This tactic shows that DeWalt is not afraid to meet Krakauer head-to-head, and it gives the text a serious tone where the matter at hand is met in the same fashion that it was given – with no nonsense.

Though DeWalt attempts to discredit Krakauer's main arguments, he does not appear convincing because of the manner in which he has chosen to write and present his arguments. DeWalt's arguments fall short when he demonstrates a certain manipulation of the text in order for it to appear in his favor. The most obvious illustration of this is found on page 375, the one instance in the postscript where he admits to Krakauer being correct. On this page, DeWalt has dedicated a section to defend the "errors" that Krakauer points out in *The Climb*. DeWalt argues that these errors are simply instances in *The Climb* that Krakauer has taken issue with. But DeWalt and Boukreev were in fact wrong about one of these instances: the location of Andy Harris' ice axe. This instance reported Krakauer correctly and is an important piece of information regarding Andy Harris's death, with great consequences to his family. However, DeWalt attempts to hide this truth by the use of a footnote which can easily be overlooked. By not including this fact in the actual text, DeWalt gives the reader the opportunity to miss vital information that can alter the reader's view of the errors.

DeWalt was even accused by Krakauer of manipulating a quote from Fischer's publicist Jane Bromet, where his source is a letter from Bromet herself stating that fact. DeWalt presents several conversations with Bromet, where he gives no information as to how these conversations were recorded. This gives the impression that the conversations were documented in DeWalt's memory, which as this thesis attempts to illustrate, is often not a reliable source. DeWalt goes on to take the competition outside of the original authors when he commences an argument against Bromet and why he did not edit the quote from her. This comes across as a futile attempt to sway the reader; however, the fact of the matter is that the source (Bromet) is not in agreement with DeWalt in the end. The fact that DeWalt has no intention of removing the quote from *The Climb* turns the argument against him and in favor of Krakauer. This lessens DeWalt's credibility and this leaves the reader open for doubt regarding his arguments.

DeWalt's argument is further weakened when he presents contradicting evidence that leaves confusion in its wake. While defending why DeWalt and

Boukreev failed to interview key climbers of the disaster, DeWalt states that he and Boukreev always intended *The Climb* to be a personal account (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 276). This can be viewed as a contradictory statement when over half of *The Climb* is written in DeWalt's voice and in his commentary. It seems peculiar to base an argument on this statement when nowhere in *The Climb* is this argument made up until that point. The fact that DeWalt's voice is so domineering in the narrative proves that this in fact is not a personal account but an account of the disaster with personal input from Boukreev and DeWalt's own interpretation of what occurred. Using an argument that turns out to be contradictory does not give the effect that DeWalt most likely intended; instead it leaves the reader confused as to what DeWalt is actually attempting to explain, and as such DeWalt's attempt to engage in the competitive writing that is present in these postscripts falls short.

DeWalt takes to using a different technique than what he had previously used. In the postscript DeWalt employs quotes from other authors to strengthen and justify his arguments. He does this in two ways: first from other authors that have no relation to the disaster, and second, from Boukreev's fellow clients/climbers who were present during the disaster. The beginning of the postscript starts with this quote:

I believe that there are at least intersubjective criteria to tell if an interpretation is a bad one, in the very sense in which we are sure that. . . Marco Polo did not really see unicorns.

-UMBERTO ECO,

Serendipities: Language and Lunacy (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 271)

The quote is presented without an introduction and explanation. Even so, the quote works well in this setting and it serves as an illustration as to why it is necessary to respond to Krakauer's claims. By using a quote from an author not related to the disaster DeWalt demonstrates that he is aware of research on related fields and that he has explored other fields in order to strengthen his argument. This in turns gives the postscript itself a stronger basis for argument and it appears more convincing. The quote also serves to illustrate that DeWalt is being influenced by Krakauer's tactic of using quotes by other authors in order to gain credibility. As a result of this influence

DeWalt's argument becomes less convincing because he had to employ Krakauer's techniques instead of using his own methods.

DeWalt continues employing quotes from other authors and climbers in his postscript. However, when he uses quotes from Boukreev's fellow climbers, the result is much different than what Krakauer achieved when doing the same. Under the title "OXYGEN USE" DeWalt introduces his argument by presenting three quotes from climbers Charlotte Fox, Sandy Hill Pittman and Jon Krakauer:

It doesn't bother me that some of our Sherpas and guides did not use oxygen. They had enough experience at altitude to know their limitations. These are exceptional people.

-CHARLOTTE FOX,

Mountain Madness climber-client, "A Time to Live, a Time to Die," *The American Alpine Journal*, 1997

From my perspective, if Anatoli had done anything *different* that day. . . the outcome would have been different. I think that every single action he took that day was in the best interest of his clients. . . .Oxygen is fine, but when it runs out, you hit a wall.

-SANDY HILL (PITTMAN),

Mountain Madness climber-client, quoted in Dwight Garner, "Coming Down," *Salon*, August 3, 1998

At a conservative flow rate of two liters per minute, each bottle [of oxygen] would last between five and six hours. By 4:00 or 5:00 P.M., everyone's gas would be gone. . . .The risk of dying would skyrocket.

-JON KRAKAUER,

Adventure Consultants climber-client,
Into Thin Air
(Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 279)

These quotes are intended to strengthen DeWalt's argument that the general consensus is not that guiding without supplemental oxygen is immoral and dangerous, as Krakauer argues. At closer examination it is revealed that only Charlotte Fox's quote accomplished this goal. Fox explicitly states that "it doesn't bother me that some of our Sherpas and guides did not use oxygen." The casual tone of the statement serves to ensure it's meaning that guiding without supplemental oxygen is normal and help strengthen DeWalt's argument. The two remaining quotes however, depend on how one interprets them and in which context. Sandy Hill Pittman contemplates Boukreev's actions, stating that "the outcome would have been different" were he to have "done anything different". Hill puts emphasis on "different" by using it twice. However, she does not emphasize whether the different outcome would be positive or negative. Seeing as there is no context provided, there is no way to know what she really meant.

As it is with Fox's quote, no context is provided for Krakauer's quote either. In fact, Krakauer's quote is taken out of context from its original intent, in order to suit DeWalt's purpose. The quote in question is from page 219 of *Into Thin Air* where Krakauer introduces Hall's plan of fixing ropes before the clients' attempt the summit. Hall wanted the ropes fixed before the clients began their attempt because their time was precious with only so much bottled oxygen to go on. When DeWalt omits this context it makes it seem as though Krakauer believes that using bottled oxygen is dangerous, thus completely altering Krakauer's meaning. When this quote is taken out of context and put into an entirely different one it creates doubt and makes one question the other quotes as well. The quotes do not explicitly endorse guiding without supplemental oxygen. They imply that when the supplemental oxygen runs out you would be left in trouble, but few would guide Mount Everest with the intent of running out of supplemental oxygen. With these quotes DeWalt has taken to employing Krakauer's technique of strengthening his argument with other climbers' memory. But it does not leave the same result. Instead it serves as a reminder of DeWalt's lack of authorial experience when compared to how Krakauer employs it. The quotes are not mentioned again in this section, which might have altered the result, as more context could have been given, and thus their impact is lost in the lack of incorporation and the content of the quotes' relevance.

DeWalt's response leaves the reader with more questions than answers. DeWalt's manipulation of the text, confusing quotes and contradicting arguments

contributes to the confusion the reader is left with. However, DeWalt has one advantage that Krakauer does not possess – Boukreev’s untimely death. DeWalt writes passionately about Boukreev’s death, and most prominently as his reason for writing the postscript:

To ignore Krakauer, I realized, would be to betray a trust. I had promised Anatoli that I would do what needed to be done if one day he would not come home. A response, I thought, was necessary. (Boukreev and DeWalt 1999, 270)

This passage elicits sympathy from the reader when they are reminded that Boukreev is not here to defend himself against Krakauer’s accusations. The word “necessary” illustrates that DeWalt felt it his duty to give one final defense in Boukreev’s stead. The serious tone of “trust” shows its gravity and illustrates DeWalt’s sense of responsibility and bond with Boukreev. The serious tone emphasizes the fact that Boukreev does not have the opportunity to defend himself anymore, thus making it seem as though Krakauer is attacking a man who is no longer able to give a response.

Krakauer employs different techniques than DeWalt and he does this from the very beginning of his postscript. Krakauer starts his argument by demonstrating his investigative abilities as a journalist. He does this by leading with example as he explains the process of writing *Into Thin Air*. At the same time, Krakauer points out DeWalt’s lacking investigative abilities. According to Krakauer, DeWalt failed to interview certain climbers in preparation for *The Climb*, and he states as much in the beginning of his postscript: “Perhaps it’s merely coincidence, but most of the people DeWalt chose not to contact have been critical of Boukreev’s actions on Everest” (Krakauer 1999, 386). The word that is important in this sentence is “chose”. With this word Krakauer implies that DeWalt had a choice when it comes to interviewing certain climbers and that he did not bother to do it. This creates a negative tone where DeWalt is concerned and it adds suspicion to DeWalt’s integrity.

Krakauer attempts to discredit DeWalt and his lack of mountaineering experience when he points to the fact that DeWalt has never been anywhere near the mountains of Nepal (Krakauer 1999, 370). This is a reminder that Krakauer was in fact present during the disaster and that DeWalt was not. DeWalt is an observer from afar, commenting on what he perceived took place through someone else’s memory.

Krakauer turns what can be called DeWalt's objective (because he has not been affected by the disaster) standpoint against him. In this case, there is no advantage to taking the objective position, because first-hand memory is much more convincing than second-hand, even though it can be problematic as I have argued.

Another of Krakauer's techniques that elicits sympathy in the reader is the fact that he tries to supply explanations as to why DeWalt did not do a certain thing or why Boukreev did do a certain thing. This is illustrated when Krakauer discusses Boukreev's descent ahead of clients and his reason for doing it:

The crux of the matter wasn't fatigue, moreover: it was the cold. The importance of bottled oxygen in warding off exhaustion, altitude sickness, and murky thinking at extreme altitudes is generally understood. What is much less widely known is that oxygen plays an equally important, if not greater, role in staving off the crippling effects of cold at high altitude" (Karkauer 1999, 382).

This creates a tone of sympathy in the text as it proves that Krakauer has attempted to view the argument from the other's perspective. Krakauer's knowledge on the subject is illustrated as well as his understanding of why Boukreev descended as early as he did. This technique is further demonstrated when Krakauer explains that before he decided to write this postscript, he tried to help DeWalt by making known the errors in *The Climb* by letter. This shows that Krakauer was willing to take the high road, so to speak. But when nothing came of it, and the errors still remained in the new editions, Krakauer had no choice but to defend himself and correct the errors in his own postscript. DeWalt forced him into writing the postscript when he did not correct the errors Krakauer had pointed out by letter.

Krakauer closely analyzes DeWalt's tactics in DeWalt's response, and as a result the emotion of guilt comes forth. Krakauer analyzes specific situations in which Boukreev plays a main part, according to what Krakauer believed happened based on the evidence he has gathered. He then points to the way in which DeWalt depicted these situations and the consequences of that depiction. Krakauer explains that DeWalt's depiction of certain events can be traumatizing for the survivors of the disaster and the family that are left behind by those who never came home:

Such indifference is vexing to those of us who were transformed by the disaster, and are still consumed with trying to sort out what really happened up there. Andy Harris's family certainly does not consider the matter of where his ice ax was found to be an inconsequential detail. (Krakauer 1999, 370).

The quote indicates that though the disaster is over, its consequences are certainly not. In turn, these words bring guilt upon DeWalt, as his false (according to Krakauer) depictions create further trauma for those involved in the disaster and the ones they left behind. By using the subject "us" Krakauer places himself in the community of climbers, and makes it known that he was among the victims of the disaster. The verbs "transformed" and "consumed," suggest the trauma of both the event itself and the process of remembering the event. Krakauer brings the consequences of DeWalt's errors to light and in turn plays on the emotion of guilt, as DeWalt's actions had great impact on the family left behind by the dead.

The biggest difference between Krakauer and DeWalt's postscripts is that Krakauer attempts to establish peace. At the end of the postscript Krakauer presents a small biography of Boukreev where he tells of his life and his many respected mountaineering accomplishments. He ends the postscript by depicting a meeting that took place between him and Boukreev where their friendship appeared to be on the mend. By finishing his postscript with a hopeful yet melancholy tone (because of Boukreev's death), Krakauer makes sure that the competition and fight for truth between him and Boukreev is not all that the reader will remember and be left with, thus ending the book on a (somewhat) positive tone. Krakauer is, more importantly, making a distinction between Boukreev and DeWalt, between mountaineer and author. This distinction insulates Krakauer from the accusations raised by DeWalt that Krakauer is slandering the dead. Which is why it is so important to analyze the distinction between mountaineer (Boukreev) and his hired writer (DeWalt), as done previously in this chapter.

Conclusion

Memory plays a key role in both Krakauer's *Into Thin Air* and Boukreev/ DeWalt's *The Climb*. As the main source of documentation for the narratives it becomes problematic when memory is influenced by the high altitude of mountaineering and

by trauma. The disaster that took place in May 1996 was a traumatic experience for the climbers and this is illustrated in their narratives. The influence of high altitude and trauma leads to a competition for narrative truth that both authors engage in, both in the narrative and especially in the postscripts, where the text itself alters form as a consequence. Comparing Krakauer and Boukreev's narratives to Hillary and Norgay's narratives of the 1950s show that the influence has altered from one of success to one of disaster. As a result Krakauer and Boukreev's narratives are about more than a simple retelling of the event – blame is placed for lives lost.

Both authors engage in a battle for narrative truth, and they start by creating credibility in the narrative. Seeing as Krakauer is not a professional climber, he relies on his professional ability as an author. He manages this by using the text itself and certain writing techniques: *in medias res*, foreshadowing, quotes from other authors, vivid language, and metaphors. Boukreev and DeWalt on the other hand put Boukreev's mountaineering ability to use in order to gain credibility. *The Climb* is written in collaboration with amateur filmmaker G. Weston DeWalt, where DeWalt is the dominating voice that drives the plot along, with personal input along the way from Boukreev. The result is a poorly put together text that makes it obvious that neither voice has much experience in the profession of writing.

There are more individuals' memories to work with this time around than in the narratives from the first summiting. The importance of incorporating those memories is illustrated in Krakauer's language when he acknowledges that it can be problematic and that his own memory is not enough. DeWalt has an advantage over Krakauer in this regard because he has a recording of climbers from the Mountain Madness expedition retelling the event just five days later. The danger is reduced of memory changing or being influenced. It is problematic that only one side of the story is represented (Mountain Madness expedition members), which is questionable where accuracy is concerned because only one side of the story is represented.

Krakauer and Boukreev's memory has been influenced by trauma and as such it is detectable both in the language of the narrative and in Krakauer's need to find someone to blame. Krakauer used *Into Thin Air* as catharsis, but Boukreev interrupts this healing process when he challenges Krakauer's memory and his honesty, forcing Krakauer to further analyze his memory. Boukreev's challenge of Krakauer's memory

is traumatic for Krakauer and it is illustrated in his postscript where the text alters form from the original narrative. Krakauer uses the postscript to strengthen and reanalyze his arguments from the narratives, as well as analyzing DeWalt's main arguments, discredit the arguments, while still attempting to understand Boukreev's actions, illustrating that Boukreev's challenge has forced Krakauer to further analyze the events, his memory, and conclude with making clear DeWalt's errors. DeWalt on the other hand turns his arguments from factual statements to personal attacks on Krakauer's character. His manipulation of the text, contradicting evidence and quotes which fail to serve their purpose, creates confusion and as a result does not appear convincing.

Both Krakauer and Boukreev experienced traumatic events, and when that event is put to paper and the main source is memory, a mountaineering narrative is the result. Memory and trauma put together in a text that is based on real events create intriguing source material which I believe is still much unexplored as these texts give a rare view into a dangerous profession/hobby and its results.

Conclusion

Here in my book I shall not exaggerate or twist, but only tell things honestly as I saw them, with no complaints or resentment. Everest is too big for that; climbing Everest too great and precious. I shall tell only the truth, and the truth is that such differences that arose between British and Asian were as nothing to the bond that held us together. (Norgay 9)

The overall theme for this thesis has been truth and the competitiveness that occurs in pursuit of the truth. Tenzing Norgay was perhaps the first to write about truth in relation to Mount Everest and his reasoning for it is particular to him in that he owes the truth to Everest and no one else. The same cannot be said about the climbers/authors from the disaster of 1996 where the truth led to trauma. The lack of oxygen and physical strain on the body during a climb of Mount Everest makes deciphering the truth of the experience problematic, especially when climbers who experienced the same event do not agree on the truth of what occurred. The two chapters of this thesis have revealed different kinds of truth and different relationships with truth. Hillary's *High Adventure* and Norgay's *Tiger of the Snows* illustrate the different relationship two completely opposite cultures can present in writing. Hillary's relationship to truth is dependent on technology in order to prove it, as well as his individual manner of narrating the truth. Norgay on the other hand represents a truth that is based on a bodily memory, it is a truth that is remembered and preserved by way of physical activity. The two narratives from the 1996 disaster represent a truth that is very much competitive in nature, where the goal of the narratives is to convince someone of their truthfulness. Krakauer's *Into Thin Air* may have started out as a telling of what he believed to be the truth, but when Boukreev's *The Climb* challenged that truth, a fierce competition commenced as illustrated in the postscript, where the text turned personal instead of factual, thus illustrating the influence of trauma. The matter of narrative truth in Mount Everest literature is worthy of attention because it offers a new perspective on the adventure genre. Real-life events and the matter of life and death situations give the importance of truth a new meaning, as its consequences are crucial.

My purpose in this thesis has been to explore the genre of mountaineering literature, specifically Mount Everest literature, in relation to narrative truth, and to answer the question: in what way do the authors/climbers (Hillary, Norgay, Krakauer and Boukreev) convince the reader of their narrative truth, while establishing their textual authority? This question also compels a discussion regarding influence, as what influences the author is paramount to how their narrative truth is perceived. I compare Hillary's *High Adventure* and Norgay's *Tiger of the Snows*, how their different cultures influence their writing with regard to truth, as well as external and internal factors that occur when climbing the tallest mountain on earth. I then go on to discuss the narratives from the disaster on Mount Everest in 1996, where a comparison of Krakauer's *Into Thin Air* and Boukreev's *The Climb* resulted in a discussion of memory, competitive writing and trauma.

The first chapter of my thesis is concerned with the two first narratives, *High Adventure* by Sir Edmund Hillary, and *Tiger of the Snows* by Tenzing Norgay, beginning with a brief introduction of the two books and the themes that are very much present in the narratives. I argue that their differing views of the truth of certain events of the summiting lead to competitive writing in order to persuade the reader of their narrative truth. The fact that the plot of these narratives took place in high altitude is problematic with relation to documentation and memory, thus creating a greater need for convincing truth telling.

Memory is first discussed in this chapter and I have found that memory plays an imperative role in these kinds of narratives. It is the basis for the narratives and their main source for the event that is narrated. Memory is noteworthy in these narratives because of the low oxygen levels that are the reality when climbing Mount Everest. As a result of less oxygen to the brain the climbers' memory become impaired, a challenge that other narratives of the adventure genre does not face. As such, documentation is a key factor in this kind of mountaineering literature, and as illustrated in the first chapter, Hillary and Norgay employ different methods in this regard. Hillary keeps diaries and photographs, whereas Norgay did not have that possibility and had to use his body memory, where the body stores the memories as opposed to just the mind, to document the event. Hillary is from a culture of technology where the need to remember is less prominent, and in comparison Norgay is from a culture with no written language and with almost no technology, thus

leaving him with a bodily memory that is ingrained in his mind and a part of his culture.

The chapter continues with a closer look at the collaborative efforts between co-authors Tenzing Norgay and James Ramsey Ullman. This relationship is problematic because Norgay's memory has to be translated into another language. A closer look at Norgay's narrative reveals that their collaboration works well and that he is not afraid to remind the reader that his main source is memory. This indicates that Norgay has no ulterior motive, that he simply wants to narrate the truth and as a result the narrative appears convincing. Furthermore, through an analysis of the beginning of the narratives I illustrate that the opposing themes of these books are individuality and equality. Where Hillary represents individuality by always keeping the focus on himself in the narrative, Norgay promotes equality by way of using the subject "we" in the most significant passages to signify that this achievement was carried out by them both.

I go on to prove that competitive writing comes into play because of the emotional influences on the authors, when Hillary's story altered in subtle ways from his chapter in John Hunt's book *The Conquest of Everest* (1953) to his own book *High Adventure* (1955). Through a closer look at passages that explicitly interact with each other in the two narratives, I have shown that where Hillary promotes himself and what he believed to be his superior culture, Norgay attempts to clarify the truth of the event and what actually happened according to him – a partnership of climbers, where both climbers struggled and succeeded in equal measure. Norgay calling Hillary out on his narrative mistakes carries out this battle for truth, and the result are narratives where Norgay focuses on the equality between the two, and Hillary degrading Norgay's climbing and technological ability.

The second chapter of this thesis sets out to explore the narratives of the 1996 Everest disaster. In this chapter the matter of influence has changed to one of disaster rather than success. As I have illustrated, this has led to trauma which is identifiable in the texts when Boukreev challenged the truth of Krakauer's depiction, which in turn has led to competition in the form of the postscripts.

The chapter starts out with an explanation of how climbing Mount Everest has changed since the first summiting in 1953, proving that the narratives have in turn altered to fit the manner in which the mountain is climbed. I introduce Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air* and Anatoli Boukreev's *The Climb*, illustrating their tactic for gaining

credibility, which is present from the beginning. Since Krakauer is not a professional climber, I have identified that he relies on his professional ability as an author in order to gain credibility, which he does through the technique of *in medias res*, foreshadowing, and quotes from other authors. Boukreev on the other hand is not a professional author, as is illustrated by his collaboration with writer G. Weston DeWalt. For this reason, Boukreev relies instead on his professional ability as a climber and mountain guide, by making known his many accomplishments as a climber.

Further on I illustrate that the collaboration between Boukreev and DeWalt is not a good one in that the result the reader is left with is a fragmented document that does not create a satisfied reading experience. The claim that *The Climb* is a personal account of the Mount Everest disaster is a bit far fetched as to how the text is put together. The way in which DeWalt dominates the narrative makes the text appear as an investigation of what took place on Everest in 1996 from DeWalt's perspective with personal input from Boukreev instead of a personal account by Boukreev. The use of footnotes and different writing styles for each author leaves the reader with a text that lacks fluidity and is therefore unappealing to read. A closer analysis of the chapter "The Rescue Transcript" reveals that it is problematic to rely on the truthfulness of the rest of the narrative because of the inconsistency of editing. Meaning that "The Rescue Transcript" is written without editing and as result the chapter is full of grammatical errors, words are missing from sentences, among other things. When this is compared to the rest of the narrative where Boukreev's parts appear perfect with regards to grammar, it leaves the question: how much has been edited to suit the purpose of the text? This does not leave the reader convinced and thus results in lacking written credibility.

Memory is still an important element and it is still the main source for the authors' narrative. However, this time there are more memories to work with and therefore is not one person's memory enough anymore to create a convincing narrative. Krakauer acknowledges this need, and through his language he illustrates the trouble with working with more memories. He solves this problem by using the memories of the "protagonists" of the disaster, which appears very convincing because he has attempted to acquire every side of the story, even Boukreev's. When this is compared to DeWalt's tactic of only interviewing climbers from Boukreev's own expedition, Krakauer appears more assuring. DeWalt's vague language where he

fails to name his interviewees proves that he is not as concerned with gathering memory from all sides and that he fails to acknowledge the reader's intelligence in this regard, which leads to questions of how accurate *The Climb* really is.

As I have illustrated in this chapter, their memory is influenced by the disaster that Krakauer and Boukreev experienced. This is especially true for Krakauer who wrote his narrative with a basis in his own memory, and because he intended for the book to be cathartic. When Boukreev disrupted this process of healing by questioning Krakauer's memory and narrative, Krakauer's text alters form (in the postscript) to one that is competitive in nature. However, it is important to clarify that Krakauer is not attacking Boukreev, but DeWalt's professional ability as an author. The trauma that influenced the postscripts is exemplified in the different kind of text that is presented, where as I have shown, the text becomes more about personal attacks on the other author's ability, than a matter of truth. Factual arguments turn into attacks on the other's professional ability and their lack of authorial ability, thus illustrating that the influence of trauma has led the authors astray from their original intent.

The final part of chapter two is titled "Competing for Narrative Truth" and sets out to identify and analyze the specific passages of the narrative as well as the postscripts where competitive writing and the influence of trauma is present. I have proved that Krakauer's trauma is identifiable in his need for someone to blame and in his negative tone towards Boukreev in the narrative, where Boukreev responds by turning the negative tone into a positive one. Krakauer takes the position of offence, while Boukreev takes the defensive position by not attacking Krakauer directly back. Krakauer continues using other people's memory and quotes from other climbers in order to strengthen his argument and this is especially convincing when he uses quotes from Boukreev.

In the postscripts of *Into Thin Air* and *The Climb* the argument has altered from a factual one, as in the narratives, to one that attacks both personal character and professionalism. I have illustrated that Krakauer is influenced by trauma by the manner in which he attacks DeWalt's professional ability, instead of stating the facts as he experienced them, as he did in his narrative. Krakauer presents a convincing argument when he points to the consequences of DeWalt's faulty statements (according to Krakauer), and thus he illustrates that these narratives go beyond the writing and that their impact is very real. DeWalt on the other hand presents arguments and evidence that are contradicting, as well as quotes that do not

necessarily have the meaning that he intended. This leaves the reader with more questions than answers, and results in a text that is unconvincing and questionable to the reader.

The guiding principle for my thesis is narrative truth, and as such I am left with how important the theme of truth is in these kinds of narratives as its consequences can be grave. Truth has been the element that promoted reading the adventure genre, both old and new. Readers wanted to learn of new lands and territory through the author's narrative and this is still true for Mount Everest literature. Readers took part in the first known summiting of Everest in 1955, and they got to quench their curiosity about the biggest disaster in Mount Everest history up until that time, with Krakauer and Boukreev's narratives. However, when those narratives are not in agreement about what took place, it exposes the futility of establishing a master narrative of the past, and as such Mount Everest literature is a great source for competing narratives with regard to truth.

I briefly touched upon other authors of Mount Everest literature in my introduction and in chapter two and they serve as an avenue for which to possibly do further research. The most notable author is Beck Weather and his narrative *Left for Dead: My Journey Home from Everest* (2000), which functions both as Mount Everest literature and as an autobiography. A comparison of *Left for Dead* and Norgay's *Tiger of the Snows* (which is also an autobiography) can demonstrate that thematic similarities are present in these narratives sharing the same genre of autobiography, even though they are written in different times of mountaineering. Mount Everest literature as autobiography is a different form of the adventure story that can demonstrate new trends in the genre.

The discussion of the first summiting in 1955 has shown that the travel/adventure story includes important themes of individuality and equality. Hillary and Norgay represent two different cultures that meet based on a shared goal of reaching the top of the world, but clash when the summiting is put to paper. The consequences of this battle for narrative truth result in Norgay being represented poorly which influences the way in which the rest of the world views him, and Hillary being forever remembered as part of the mountain's history. Though narratives from 1955 and 1996 share several thematic similarities, the notion of morality in mountaineering impacts the 1996 narratives and illustrate that the modern adventure

story can have great consequences as they depict death and blame in different manners than other genres.

These mountaineering narratives take part in the travel/adventure story tradition, but also create a tradition of their own. Most writers of Mount Everest literature did not start out as authors (Krakauer being the exception) and only decided to turn to that profession after their climb. In most cases that narrative is the only piece of literature they write or in the only genre they write. Many of the narratives are written in collaboration with an author, leading to question if these climbers (Norgay and Boukreev) can in fact be called authors? Mount Everest literature is a great genre to explore this question within. If in fact one cannot call these climbers “authors”, one can claim that they contribute to a new tradition within the travel/adventure genre, where adventurers/climbers turn to experienced and professional authors in order to tell their story. Other adventurers/climbers, such as Hillary, turn to the profession of authorship themselves and write their own depiction of the summiting. The result of this trend is that non-professional authors, or climbers turned writers, bring new material to the tradition as well as creating their own tradition within the travel/adventure genre. These non-professional authors influence how travel/adventure stories are written as well as who can contribute to the genre, thus proving their influence in the literary world.

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