

144 - THE GAMES OF ORDINARY PASSIONS IN ASCENSIONAL EMOTIONS THE IMAGINARY SOCIAL WORLD OF CLIMBERS

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Reflecting upon the Climbing Adventure

Today, people consider mountain climbing to be an adventure sport. Its enthusiasts feel enormous pleasure in climbing tortuous paths that lead to the top of sumptuous mountains. This pleasure is experienced by climbers through their senses; it is an opportunity to observe nature from a privileged angle, with a taste for challenge and the desire to discover new forms of movement, being close to risks and challenging the wrath of the mountain gods. These are situations that present themselves as enticements of this sport, as confirmed by the research of Costa (2000).

Climbers pursue original challenges, always on the lookout for new locations to practice; they dream they are in places where few human beings have had the opportunity to plant their feet, paths with a high degree of difficulty. Reaching these hitherto unvisited places is the self-realization of these men of action; the mountains represent efforts to be made by these contemporary heroes, efforts which are accompanied by the intense pleasure of conquering something which offers resistance.

This practice is successively procured by those who are attempting to give new meaning to their lifestyles, for it offers them what they need: the pleasure of creating and dominating this new space as each hitherto unventured path is climbed, the novelties that present themselves at each step of the climb just as the dangers of these paths present themselves as an adventure and represent a factor which raises a doubt as to what they will encounter at each move, plus the pleasure of excelling, causing them to experience strong emotions, where the fear of death is present at every moment.

Different tribes of climbers dispute the most varied forms of getting to the top of the high mountains. Merely getting to the highest spot is no longer enough; the climber needs to get there by the most difficult path. Climbing the highest mountains with the help of an oxygen mask and tank is no longer of interest to a climbing team that, seeking greater adventure, climbs without the help of extra oxygen, just as decreasing the time it takes to get to the top has also become a source of desire for the adventure climber.

During mountain climbing, various emotions are expanded, which makes enthusiasts want to be there. Climbers go through difficulties unique to this type of sport; in some situations, they get so close to the borderline between life and death, that merely walking this line can cause a series of accidents that leave permanent wounds. However, after overcoming these challenges, the climber returns to the mountain slopes, demonstrating adventurous behavior, conveying enchantment for the call of adventure and the satisfaction of transforming this attitude into cyclic moments, making this act a path toward transcendence.

Climbs provide participants with vertiginous experiences that seem to trigger the search for this sport.

The studies of Costa (2000) confirm the experience of dizziness as essential to risk sports, this being a bodily sensation that consists of an attempt to dissipate reality.

This sensation is felt through the fear of falling down the mountain. Anguish and pleasure intermingle.

Costa (2000) states that "vertigo and uncertainty temper the lives and expand the desire of adventurers" (p. 102).

To post-modern, 21st century man, climbing presents a value that is part of his life. He reaffirms himself as a person, challenges himself, returns to nature, climbs, reencounters himself on the mountain and returns reborn. The routine man dies climbing while the creative, daring, courageous man is reborn, taking back to his daily life every experience of his adventure. After experiencing the mountain, he goes on to see the world in a new way, exacerbates his senses and goes on to value all moments of his "new" life.

Problem Forming and Study Proposal

Human evolution and the appearance of new technologies have led man to lead his life differently from his ancestors who had more direct contact with nature; today, the man who lives in large urban centers works and seeks to amuse himself in his free time through various activities, including sports.

In some of these sports activities, risk and uncertainties are present; enthusiasts of these modalities take them quite seriously, despite their recreational nature. Risks are a constant for climbers, furnished by unexpected factors (avalanches, cold, large holes, etc.) or by intrinsic factors (lack of ability to overcome obstacles, physical conditioning deficiencies, etc.). Upon facing these risks, the able climber may involuntarily encounter death, never to return to living with other human beings.

The experience of being close to death causes climbers to experience imaginary situations of surpassing limits.

Climbing risks take the climber to the borderline between existence and extinction, which seems to be the goal of climbers. Treading this line causes them fear and dizziness, flooding the body with an absorbing pleasure, taking the climber to ecstasy, seemingly making him "hooked" on these situations. It is common for risk sport enthusiasts to suffer accidents or to see themselves in high risk situations and not be intimidated by them, returning to practicing the activity as soon as they get over the shock.

For this reason, we intend to dive into the symbolic universe of sensations experienced by climbers, seeking to find clues that reveal the subjective realities of these men of action.

Problem

What sensations are present in the imaginary world of climbers that is set in motion by an emotional process caused by dizziness?

Methodological Strategies

The practice of mountain climbing provides the actor of this adventure with the experience of situations of risk, fear and pleasure, which offers us a number of opportunities to use methodological strategies, aiming at grasping distinct aspects

1- Mafezoli (2000) uses the concept of tribe to describe groups that form in modern society. Recent neo-tribalism or group forming of complex societies has the goal of sharing passions and feelings. Costa (2000), in the book *Sports of Adventure and Risk in the Mountains*, understands that tribes are small, organized groups whose members eventually get linked due to common interests. Solidarity is revived between these mini-groups and similar people meet, having the same desires and immediate concerns (p. 8).

2- During high mountain climbing, the lungs can fill themselves with fluids that can become pulmonary edema; cerebral edema can also occur, where the brain swells, leading to an intense headache. In very low temperatures, ulcers can occur due to the freezing of the tissues, mainly at the extremities such as the ears, nose, fingers and toes, causing permanent damage to the tissue and requiring amputation. Ashcroft (2001) tells the story of Beck Weathers who, during a climb up Everest in May of 1996, lost his right forearm, all of his left fingers and his nose, demonstrating just how dangerous this type of sport is.

3- The media recently showed a climber in the US who got his arm stuck in a crevice. Climbing alone, he had no way to find help to get himself out of this situation. Seeing that if were to continue stuck to the rock he would die, he found himself forced to amputate his arm with a pocket knife; in his first interview, still in the hospital bed, he manifested the desire to go back to climbing, demonstrating adventurous behavior, which characterizes the will to be in the mountains despite all the drawbacks.

present in the community of adventure sport enthusiasts.

This study was conducted through a qualitative study of an interpretive, ethnographic nature. We understand that there exists an active relationship between the subject and the world around him, i.e., an interdependence between subject and surrounding object, creating a dynamic relationship, an indissoluble link between individual subjectivity and the objective world.

An individual's actions before society are impregnated with beliefs, values, ideologies, sentiments, perceptions, subjectivity and socio-historical conditioning; as such, his behavior consists of feelings rich in meanings.

The qualitative research supports itself on social data established in communication processes, aiming to unveil the occult order in individuals' discourses.

Ferreira and Costa (2003) deduce that in "studies of modern societies, it becomes necessary to explore the invisible that exists within the real, that which has force, which impels, but which is found in other instances of knowledge" (p. 22).

The sample group was composed of ten climbers, whose ages varied from 17 to 47 years, all Brazilian, with distinct experience in different climbing modalities; this experience varied from seventeen months to twenty seven years of contact with climbing, which facilitated getting to know the imaginary world of these social actors in diverse modalities. The projective technique of idea association was used in this study and the results were considered through the analysis of the discourse based on Orlandi (2001).

The following methods were adopted to gather the data:

a) The climbers were invited to participate in the study via semi-structured interviews that were recorded and later fully transcribed; interviewers were careful to be as loyal as possible to the questions.

b) In order to comprehend a climber's "universe", the projective technique of free association was used, whereby we sought, through cue words, to find singularities in the fantasy world of climbing enthusiasts.

This technique used in psychoanalysis seeks to identify mental associations that facilitate delving deep into the subject's subjective world. The technique investigates clues in the responses to better understand the social imaginary world that emerges in mountain climbing activities, clues that will help to conduct this research.

Analysis of the discourse (Orlandi, 2001) was used with the intent of delving into the clues present in the enthusiasts' discourses by way of interpreting the semi-structured interviews, examining clues that were useful for comprehending the climbing phenomenon and the social actors' subjectivity, extracting singularities from each discourse and penetrating the text to find meanings in that which is and which is not said, in the patent and latent meanings.

Anthropology of the Emotions

When men use mountain climbing as a form of giving their lives a different direction, they well know that they will face a series of situations that will modify their way of seeing the world in a certain way; the huge, rock "walls" of the mountains offer what they are looking for: transformative situations which cause their bodies strong feelings. These emotions present themselves as excited and rapid mental states, representing moments of joy, fear, sadness, etc.

Ferraz (2002), in the book *What the Body Can Do*, says that "at the end of the 21st century Nietzsche already had identified, in modern man, an urgent need for constant stimulation and external excitement" (p. 166).

Men seeking the mountains are in search of emotions they do not find in their daily lives; only the specificities presented by these imponent elevations, with their considerable amount of obstacles, are what provide unique emotions to adventure hunters.

To the eyes of those who don't appreciate this type of activity, risking one's life to feel these emotions appears to be madness, since the mountain presents itself as an unsurpassable and treacherous being; they do not show the slightest bit of courage or will to face the adversities presented by mountains. Stocker e Hegeman (2002), dissenting on this topic, state that "the emotions can be understood only if we comprehend the worlds of the people who feel them, and that the comprehension of such worlds demands understanding their emotional universe" (p. 35).

The vision of a mountain can have different characteristics depending upon the interests of each individual; for some, the mountain can be an enormous source of pleasure, while for others, it can be seen as a great obstacle, since they may wish to merely cross it.

The emotions, along with the various reactions that comprise them, represent the basic mechanisms of homeostasis; fear is a component that saves lives. Through fear, man retreats from the unsurpassable or executes more cautious movements to overcome a challenge.

Damasio (2004), in the book "The Search for Espinosa", states that "the perspective of suffering and death puts at risk the homeostatic process of those that confront them. The search for self-preservation and well being responds to this compromise as an attempt to avoid the inevitable and, as such, return to equilibrium" (p. 282).

Each actor responds emotionally, with distinct reactions; however, all emotions are the result of a long history of evolutionary adjustments and are part of bio-regulatory mechanisms whose main function is survival.

Mira and Lopez (2003) say that fear is part of the life of every human being; with it, "our life becomes animated and lively as it allows itself to be penetrated by the anguish of fear" (p. 7).

The human organism is endowed with strategies that "switch themselves on" when there is a sensation of fear; a regulating of the inner body occurs in such a way that it can resolve the situation with more efficient action, since the body prepares itself by sending a more intense blood flow to the most necessitated organs, or even altering the heartbeat, increasing the strength of the members most in need of it, etc., making it possible to escape from the situation through the emotions that were felt and internalized by the organism.

Summing up, emotions are a part of homeostatic regulation, being "called upon" for the conservation of the being, whose threats of deterioration or pain are present and are able to carry it on to tragic consequences. These emotions, however, mobilize certain aspects of the human psyche that are placed in the ghosts present in the culture of origin.

Presentation of the Results

Through the climbers' discourses, we can verify that dizziness plays a crucial role for all of those who regularly practice climbing. It is while feeling fear that vertigo manifests itself, normally during a moment of great danger to the climber, a moment in which one's physical integrity is shaken up. In the case that he is able to get out of this situation unharmed, the climber's body is flooded with an enormous sensation of pleasure. This pleasure is felt for only a few seconds, yet it is sufficient for him to seek other high-risk situations where he can once again have his body "invaded" by dizziness and, through his adventurous spirit, once again overcome this situation in order to again feel the so greatly sought pleasure. Farias (2004), speaking of the sense of enchantment climbing gives him, says that "when one overcomes seemingly impossible obstacles", he sees his body "inundated" with immensely pleasing sensations. It seems that at this moment the climber breaks away from the objective world, penetrating a new dimension beyond human comprehension, where only those who have the courage to challenge the risks of climbing can rise and enjoy this feeling of rare, yet penetrating, pleasure.

Brandolin (2004) says that he "feels pleasure out of feeling fear; it gives more flavor to the adventure; it's when I feel myself more of a hero". (personal statement)

During this state, we can verify the need for a constant search, on the part of enthusiasts, to climb harder and harder places, places with greater degrees of difficulty, where the possibility of falling is always present. The search for and finding of these places is glory in the lives of these climbers. Uncertainty and fear must be present at every moment; only in this way can they satisfy their search for vertiginous sensations.

Ferreira, in a personal statement (2004), seems to decipher this search very well when he says: "the hundredths of a second before a "vacca" are indescribable in terms of fear". Soon thereafter, speaking of an extremely pleasing situation, he continues: "the same situations that cause me fear are the ones that provide the most pleasure". This fear-pleasure dichotomy is what excites and makes climbers always seek the moment of extreme pleasure.

Final Considerations

Modern man is forced to live closed in; the apparent safety and comfort of modern life makes him live this way. The comfort of the lair, with all the facilities that new technologies offer, benefits this new manner of living. It is no longer necessary to leave home to get to know new places as our ancestors did, facing the unknown in search of new discoveries. Man merely turns on the television set or accesses the internet in order to "travel" all over the planet, getting to know relatively unexplored places. It is no longer necessary to go out in search of food and face uncertainties and the fury of animals; one needs only to phone the supermarket and food is quickly delivered at home.

The increase in urban violence necessitates the search for safer places to live and the creation of closed condos with all the guarantees new technologies can offer, routine facts in the life of contemporary man.

However, this forced immobility, which life offers, proved to be unsatisfactory to part of the world's population. These men who move against the flow of civilization are in the process of searching, a search which becomes constant, where limits are established beyond the normal limits and, as these pre-established limits are overcome, others are created. This search is aimed at itself; it is a search that proposes to strengthen one's inner self.

In a certain way, practicing sports in nature makes men live like their ancestors did, in direct contact with nature, and in a certain way seeking to experience the same situations that were experienced by their forefathers, interfering with contemporary lifestyles in which one is obliged by the circumstances to be a mere spectator of existence.

The practice of climbing presents itself as a game in which, at every moment, the player is at liberty to face the challenges of nature and of the dragons that inhabit his inner mind, to confront them and to be able to decide which is the best stratagem for a just battle in which both man and nature can be victorious.

Since man is not complete, he seeks transcendence, where he can live fully, have the power of decision over the destiny of his life and be capable of hunting down new sensations, so rare in modern man's life, factors limited by barriers presented by daily life.

Mountain climbing offers these sensations that ordinary, daily life does not offer.

For this reason, there is an ever-growing search for the practice of these sports, also known as adventure sports.

The fear of falling, the facing of nature's forces and the lack of knowledge of little explored spaces provide enthusiasts with that which they seek: the insecurity of the climb. At this moment, they encounter that which nature offers to be explored, challenge the enigmas of the mountains and feel themselves a part of this greater force which is nature.

When the climber stands before a dangerous situation, where homeostasis is threatened, he temporarily feels that his body loses stability and equilibrium, provoking a conflict in his consciousness. His body is inundated with a sensation of terror and panic. He experiences dizziness and has the sensation that everything around him is going to collapse, taking him along with it. Nonetheless, if he is able to successfully overcome the dangerous situation, he is dominated by immense pleasure. At this moment, he joins forces with nature and gets to know his inner self better.

The sensation of dizziness causes the climber a feeling of fear; however, this sensation induces him to seek other mountains so that he can once again have the sensation of vertigo. A climber is not content in merely going up the mountain without seeing his body "inundated" with this vertiginous feeling, which becomes the main motive for his search to climb.

Coming out victorious over the moment of dizziness provides a feeling of rebirth to a "new life", a life full of risks and strong emotions, yet full of pleasure.

The apparent safety of modern life is an illusion. Just being alive is already a risk. As Costa (2000) understands it, "life is a concrete risk; safety is imaginary: we only get a glimpse of it due to the feeling of insecurity. Security, in itself, is illusory". (p. 204)

For these reasons, sports practiced in nature, and especially climbing, are important to molding a new generation of men. They learn to face life in a concrete manner, become more self-confident, look at nature in a new way, believe they are part of that environment, choose the mountain as a friend and inexhaustible source of pleasure and become courageous and daring men, for only in this way will they be apt to face the uncertainties of modern life.

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**THE GAMES OF ORDINARY PASSIONS IN ASCENSIONAL EMOTIONS
THE IMAGINARY SOCIAL WORLD OF CLIMBERS**

ABSTRACT

The goal of this study is to identify the sensations manifested by the emotions of mountain climbing enthusiasts in their discourses.

When a man is on the mountain slopes, he seeks pleasing sensations; however, to obtain these sensations, he breaks the rules of survival, seeking, as near as possible, to walk the line between life and death; getting close to this line is the ecstasy of every mountain adventurer; it is on the threshold of this limit that he is able to interact with his inner self. With the intent of understanding the subjective world of climbers, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted, seeking, by interpreting the climbers' discourses, useful clues for comprehending the climbing phenomenon, as well as the psychology of these social performers, extracting singularities from each discourse and digging deep into the text to discover meanings in what was and was not said, patent and latent meanings. Free association of ideas, via cue words Climb, Top, Fear, Pleasure, Frustration, Death, Life, Mountain, Nature and Height was also used. We based the interpretation of the results on the analysis of the discourse in Eni Orlandi (2001).

The results point to dizziness as the main incentive to climbing, since it precedes the so greatly sought pleasure; we verified that, upon finding themselves in risk situations that threaten their physical integrity, climbers' bodies are invaded by a sensation of vertigo; however, once beyond this moment of anguish, the climber feels himself comfortably out of danger while his body is flooded with a grand, yet rapid, sensation of extreme pleasure. Keywords: Sport, Climbing, Emotions.

RÉSUMÉ

**LES JEUX DES PASSIONS ORDINAIRES DANS LES ÉMOTIONS ASCENSIONNELLES.
L'IMAGINAIRE SOCIAL DES ASCENSIONNISTES**

Cette recherche a l'objectif d'identifier les sens que l'émotion assume dans les discours des pratiquants des escalades. Quand l'homme se trouve aux pentes d'une montagne, il cherche des sensations de plaisir, mais pour obtenir ces sensations il viole les règles de survivance, il essaye d'arriver le plus près possible de la ligne qui sépare la vie de la mort, s'approcher de cette ligne c'est l'extase pour n'importe quel aventurier de la montagne, c'est dans cette limite qu'il peut interagir avec son moi.

Dans l'intention de comprendre la subjectivité des ascensionnistes, on a fait dix interviews semi-structurées pour essayer de trouver dans les discours des pratiquants, à travers l'interprétation des pistes utiles à la compréhension du phénomène escalade, aussi bien que la subjectivité des acteurs sociaux, pour extraire de chaque discours des singularités, et pénétrer dans le texte, et trouver des sens dans le dit et le non-dit, dans les sens patents et dans les sens latents. On a utilisé aussi l'association libre des idées, à travers les mots inducteurs Monter, Sommet, Peur, Plaisir, Frustration, Mort, Vie, Montagne, Nature et Hauteur. On a fondé l'interprétation des résultats dans l'analyse de discours d'Eni Orlandi (2001).

Les résultats montrent comme principal inducteur des escalades le vertige, puisqu'il précède la recherche du plaisir, on a vérifié que lorsque les pratiquants des escalades se trouvent en situation de risque, l'intégrité physique menacée leur corps est envahi par la sensation de vertige, mais en dépassant ce moment d'angoisse, le pratiquant de l'escalade se sent confortable hors du danger, e sent son organisme « inondé » d'une grande mais rapide sensation de plaisir extrême.

Mots-clés : Sport, Escalade, Émotions.

RESUMEN

**LOS JUEGOS DE LAS PASIONES COMUNES EN LAS EMOCIONES ASCENSIONALES
EL IMAGINARIO SOCIAL DE LOS ESCALADORES**

El objetivo de esta investigación es identificar los sentidos que la emoción asume en los discursos de los practicantes de escaladas.

Cuando el hombre se encuentre en la pendiente de la montaña, él busca sensaciones de placer, pero para obtener tales sensaciones él viola reglas de supervivencia, busca llegar al más próximo posible de la línea que separa la vida de la muerte, llegar próximo de esa línea es el éxtasis para todo aventurero de las montañas, es en el límite de esa separación que él llega a obtener la interacción con su ego. Con la intención de comprender la subjetividad de los escaladores, se realizaron diez entrevistas semiestructuradas buscando en los discursos de los practicantes, por medio de interpretación pistas útiles para la comprensión del fenómeno de la escalada, bien como la subjetividad de los actores sociales extrayendo de cada discurso singularidades, penetrando en el texto, encontrando sentidos en aquello que fue dicho y en lo que no fue dicho, en los sentidos patents y en los latentes. Se utilizó también la asociación libre de ideas, a través de palabras inductoras Escalar, Cima, Miedo, Placer, Frustración, Muerte, Vida, Montaña, Naturaleza y Altitud. Basamos la interpretación de los resultados en el análisis del discurso de Eni Orlandi (2001).

Los resultados muestran como principal inductor de las escaladas el vértigo, pues él precede el placer, verificamos que cuando los escaladores se encuentran en situación de riesgo, con la integridad física amenazada, su cuerpo es invadido por la sensación de vértigo, pero cuando ultrapasan ese momento de angustia, y se sienten confortablemente fuera de peligro, los escaladores tienen su organismo "inundado" por una gran sensación, aunque rápida, de extremo placer.

Palabras-clave: Deporte, Escalada, Emociones.

**OS JOGOS DAS PAIXÕES ORDINÁRIAS NAS EMOÇÕES ASCENSIONAIS.
O IMAGINÁRIO SOCIAL DOS ESCALADORES**

RESUMO

Essa pesquisa tem como objetivo identificar quais os sentidos que a emoções assume nos discursos dos praticantes de escaladas.

Quando o homem está nas encostas da montanha o ele procura sensações prazerosas, porém para obter essas sensações ele transgredir regras de sobrevivência, busca chegar o mais próximo possível da linha divisória da vida com a morte, chegar próximo dessa linha é o éxtase para todo aventureiro das montanhas, é no limiar dessa divisória que ele consegue interagir com o seu eu interior.

Tendo como intenção entender a subjetividade dos escaladores, foram realizadas dez entrevistas semi-estruturadas buscando nos discursos dos praticantes, por meio de interpretação, pistas úteis na compreensão do fenômeno escalada, assim como a subjetividade dos atores sociais, extraindo de cada discurso singularidades, penetrando no texto, encontrando sentidos no que foi dito e no que não foi dito, nos sentidos patents e nos latentes. Sendo utilizado também a associação livre de idéias, através de palavras indutoras Escalar, Topo, Medo, Prazer, Frustração, Morte, Vida, Montanha, Natureza e Altura. Fundamentamos a interpretação dos resultados na análise do discurso em Eni Orlandi (2001).

Os resultados apontam como principal inductor das escaladas a vertigem, já que ela precede ao tão procurado prazer, verificamos que os escaladores ao se encontrarem em situações de risco, com a integridade física ameaçada, o seu corpo é invadido pela sensação de vertigem, porém ao ultrapassar este momento de angustia, e o escalador sente-se confortavelmente fora do perigo, tem o seu organismo "inundado" por uma grande porém rápida sensação de extremo prazer. Palavras-chaves: Esporte, Escalada, Emoções.