Sella's art bridges two eras. Behind him lay the main current of European Romanticism, a sensibility that celebrated the sublime majesty of nature. No photographer before or since has better expressed the Romantics' reverence for mountain grandeur than he. His mountains are nothing less than epic and stupendous, the abode of spirits and gods. But ahead of Sella lay Modernism, which, even as he trekked Karakoram glaciers, was being born in France. Modernists in photography would soon focus on the barest essentials of "the thing itself" (to use Edward Weston's term). Sella uncannily anticipated this trend with spare, clean compositions celebrating air, snow, rock—and form.

Nowhere is Sella's blend of romanticism and modernism better articulated than in the cover image of Siniolchun. As an expression of sheer "mountain-ness," the shot is incredibly perfect Modernism. Yet Sella also made the mountain seem like a goddess wrapped in bridal tule, romantic as she could possibly be. As David Brower says in the book's introduction, no mountain should be allowed to be that beautiful.

How is it that mountains can carry such symbolic intensity? How do they become the abode of dream and fantasy, of otherworldly kingdoms buried inside the human mind? There is no answer, of course. But curator Wendy Watson comes up with an intriguing notion in her essay. Playing with C.G. Jung's idea of the collective unconscious, she suggests that Sella tapped into an "optical unconscious" through a convergence of technical craft and inner spirituality.

One of the most exceptional landscape images this reviewer has ever seen shows Sella standing on the Baltoro Glacier. His camera stares simultaneously at the peaks above Urdukas and a cave plunging through unknowable depths within the ice. Sella has become a kind of Orpheus, traveling both in the conscious world and in the infinite underworld. That picture alone justified Sella's lifetime of visual exploration.

We are fortunate to partake of that odyssey in this astounding book, an essential volume for any lover of mountain imagery.

JAMES BALOG

*Patagonia: Images of a Wild Land.* David Neilson. Emerald, Australia: Snowgum Press, 1999. Color and black-and-white photos. 96 pages. $37.50.

Australian photographer David Neilson's *Patagonia: Images of a Wild Land* is a large-format book containing 43 color and 18 black-and-white plates. These images were culled from photos accumulated during three visits he made to Patagonia in the 1970s. Essays on the exploration, climbing and natural history of Patagonia, along with three memoirs from his journeys, accompany the photos.

Through narrative and photos, Neilson takes us to Tierra del Fuego (not properly in Patagonia), the Paine region, the Fitz Roy/Cerro Torre area, the Southern Patagonia Icecap and a remote valley adjacent to the Northern Patagonia Icecap. Neilson traces the exploration of these lands by Europeans, beginning with Magellan's epic voyage of discovery. Magellan is said to have bestowed the name "Patagonia" on the native peoples he encountered, though the origin of the word is unclear. As Neilson points out, these people were eventually exterminated. Though not exhaustive, Neilson also sketches out an overview of the climbing history of each area. He recounts in detail Maestri and Egger's climb on Cerro Torre, offering up the rarely voiced opinion that Maestri is telling the truth.

The scope of this book is one of its virtues. While most visitors to Patagonia limit themselves to the eastern sides of the Fitz Roy and Paine areas, Neilson has ventured into the heart

of the matter, most notably on a voyage in 1977 and 1978 that began in Scotland on a sailboat. Neilson and his comrades sailed to Tierra del Fuego for a climbing interlude, then continued up the coast of Chile to an obscure fiord from which three of them launched out across the Southern Patagonia Icecap to traverse east to the Fitz Roy area. The view from out on the icecap looking east toward the clustered and improbable western aspects of Cerro Torre, Fitz Roy, et al, is one of the great transcendent vistas on this planet.

Neilson's personal stories come from an already bygone era. In 1974, the year of Neilson's first visit, the ice-sheathed spires of Patagonia were still shrouded in an aura of almost mystic impregnability: Cerro Torre had maybe been climbed twice, the west face only first climbed that year. Any endeavor in these storm-swept mountains and icefields was regarded to be an adventure at the ends of the earth. Though Tierra del Fuego and the fiords of Chile may still not be popular destinations, time and familiarity have stolen some of the magic. The busy village of El Chalten that now sits at the road head below Fitz Roy (where 25 years ago there was only a ranger's cabin) notwithstanding, not all change is bad. Neilson's most potentially deadly episode was when he and his friends were arrested by the Argentine army in the bad old days of the military junta for an illegal border crossing out on the icecap.

A good bit of the mountain photography we see from Patagonia comes from climbers standing outside their tent or while on the go. A portion of the photos in this book fall into this category, and they have their own authenticity because of that. But Neilson was in Patagonia with a photographer's eye, and we are treated to photos that are crafted, taken with a photographer's patience and tenacity to find that perfect perspective and moment. Familiar vistas are revisited as well as far more esoteric images of remote fiords, valleys, mountain- and icescapes. Patagonia is not necessarily all harsh and edgy; a soft light can suffuse at times. Neilson has not ignored this, nor the wildlife.

Patagonia is things extreme, near earth's end, where outworldly landscapes are made manifest and primal forces remain unbridled. Some of this Patagonian essence can be experienced vicariously: Neilson's 25,000 words and 61 plates do a superb job of conveying it. However (and I suspect Neilson might agree with this), there is a dimension to Patagonia, more so than any other place I've been, that can only be experienced viscerally. There is nothing like standing out in the middle of the icecap as a big Patagonian storm powers up to full throttle. This you have to go feel for yourself.

MICHAEL BEARZI

*Sherman Exposed: Slightly Censored Climbing Stories.* John Sherman. Seattle: Mountaineers Books, 1999. 238 pages. $24.95.

Here we have John Sherman's collected articles—30 of them, almost all written during the 1990s and most having first appeared in *Climbing* magazine. The book is organized into four parts: the first is a mock self-interview titled "A Brief History of Vermin." The second part is called "Verm's World," collected articles from the column of the same name that ran in *Climbing* from 1995-'99. These are not organized chronologically but in general categories of "history, ethics, approaches to the sport, and general satire." Part three is organized by Place ("life has been one extended road trip for me"). And part four is "Characters." Sherman has added brief introductions and afterwords to most of the pieces, commenting on their origins, timeliness and the editorial battles fought on their behalf, all of which