Research Article

Spirituality infrastructure: Notes for Analysing Arantzazu's Ecosystem

Infraestructura de la espiritualidad: Notas para analizar el ecosistema de Arantzazu

Asier Amezaga[1]* and Onintza Etxebeste[2]

[1] University of the Basque Country, Deparment of Sociology and Social Work, Sarriena, 48940, Leioa, Bizkaia, Spain.

[2] Mondragon University, Faculty of Humanities and Education Sciences, Dorleta, 20540, Eskoriatza, Gipuzkoa, Spain.

*Correspondence: asier.amezaga@ehu.eus

Abstract: This article sets out to approach spirituality as cultural substratum in the enclave of the Arantzazu Sanctuary (Gipuzkoa, Basque Country) through the counterintuitive notion of infrastructure. Through four vastly different scenes, it aims to illustrate how Arantzazu, as an ecosystem, infrastructures spirituality, exploring this from a historical perspective, as well as looking to its social deployment. In the first scene, the apparition of the Virgin is the precipitating event that enrols an initial group of actors to her flanks. This inaugural event was followed by three others, in which spirituality was to be articulated in different but equally effective ways: the development, in the 1960s, of a laboratory for the production of language and community; the renovation of the basilica and the processes of emptying entailed in the realization of sculptor Jorge Oteiza's project; and finally, the international mountain marathon Aizkorri-Zegama that takes place in the vicinity of the sanctuary.

Keywords: sociology of culture; actor-network theory; religion; arts; architecture; landscape; sport.

Resumen: Este artículo pretende abordar la espiritualidad como sustrato cultural en el enclave del Santuario de Arantzazu (Gipuzkoa, País Vasco) a través de la noción contraintuitiva de infraestructura. Por medio de cuatro enfoques muy diferentes, se pretende ilustrar Arantzazu, como ecosistema e infraestructura de espiritualidad, explorando ésta desde una perspectiva histórica, así como atendiendo a su despliegue social. En el primer enfoque, la aparición de la Virgen es el acontecimiento precipitante que articula a un primer grupo de actores a sus flancos. A este acontecimiento inaugural le siguen otros tres, en los que la espiritualidad se articulará de formas diferentes, pero igualmente eficaces: el desarrollo, en los años sesenta, de un laboratorio de producción de lenguaje y comunidad; la renovación de la basílica y los procesos de vaciado que conlleva la realización del proyecto del escultor Jorge Oteiza; y, por último, la maratón internacional de montaña Aizkorri-Zegama que tiene lugar en las inmediaciones del santuario.

Palabras clave: sociología de la cultura; teoría del actor-red; religión; arte; arquitectura; paisaje; deporte.

1. Introduction

This article proposes using the concept of infrastructure to address the spiritual experiences commonly associated with a broad set of knowledges (religion, aesthetics, politics, culture, and sport). To do so, we trace the different dimensions of spirituality which - in keeping with this sprawl of knowledges - are plural, and which share the particularity of being experienced in relation to the specific characteristics of an ecosystem. To this end, the article focuses in on a place, the sanctuary of Arantzazu and its surroundings, and on the apparition, ascension and ecstasy plots that make up Arantzazu's spiritual chronotope. These three plots are communicating vessels with space-time configurations that point to a beyond experienced in the form of excess or transcendence. Yet, in the present article, our concern is with tracing the links to the way a heterogeneous network of actors infrastructure this phenomenon.

Of all the religious infrastructure in Durkheim's classical approach to magic, the totem aroused most interest. Like the totem, sets of religious/civil emblems such as flags, crucifixes or images of the Virgin are conferred power by the community, which the individual experiences as an excess that transcends them. This component, that exceeds the materiality of the object, is experienced as a spirit, as a component with a life of its own. It appears in the object but transcends the object. Thus, for the spirit to be invoked by an object, the object must first be (over)charged with this excess of energy. From this perspective, objects of worship and spiritual experience ultimately rely on the energy the community bestows through public rituals. The spirit is the experience of society as excess:

> "Thus placed at centre stage, it becomes representative. To that image the felt emotions attach themselves, for it is the only concrete object to which they can attach themselves. The image goes on calling forth and recalling those emotions even after the assembly is over. Engraved on the cult implements, on the sides of rocks, on shields, and so forth, it lives beyond the gathering. By means of it, the emotions felt are kept perpetually alive and fresh. It is as though the image provoked them directly. Imputing the emotions to the image is all the more natural because, being common to the group, they can only be related to a thing that is equally common to all. Only the totemic emblem meets this condition. By definition, it is common to all. During the ceremony, all eyes are upon it. Although the generations change, the image remains the same. It is the abiding element of social life. So the mysterious forces with which men feel in touch seem to emanate from it, and thus we understand how men were led to conceive them in the form of the animate or inanimate being that gives the clan its name" (Durkheim, 1995, p. 222).

We understand infrastructure as a form of social mediation operating like Durkheim's totem. In addition, it incorporates the technical-material dimension (often overlooked in sociological perspectives) which allows spirituality to be experienced in different ways, as well as on new grounds. If under a Durkheimian conceptualization it is the community that produces an excess that charges the object through rituals, in our approach it is the collective of (human and non-human) actors assembled through translations that form the network which produces the excess. The energies unleashed in these assemblies, which, as we shall see, are becoming more and more sophisticated, are neither created nor destroyed: they are transformed.

Table 1. Approaches to spirituality from the sociology of the social and the sociology of associations.

	Totem	Infrastructure
Origin	the community through rituals	the collective through translations
Depositary	object, emblem	network, experience
Type of Sociology	of the social	of associations

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In this article we analyse the different forms apparitions of the spirit of Arantzazu take. If we were to adopt the sociology of the social that Durkheim proposes and inaugurates, our attention would be on the transmutation of the community into a body through ritual – either directly at the ceremony, or in a deferred way through the energies infused into the objects. However, we intend to approach it through the sociology of associations (Latour, 2005). This means that religious apparition can be understood as an assembly in which a collective of human and non-human actors infrastructures a set of religious experiences.

From the sociology of the social, the role of the Franciscan community in safeguarding the figure of the Virgin and vivifying her through liturgies is evident. Using this approach, the most manifest aspects of religiosity can be understood from different human communities, primarily the monks living in the monastery and the pilgrims. However, we believe that the mystique of place includes other infrastructural dimensions that go beyond community liturgies. The sociology of associations calls our attention to other actors. There is no doubt that the Franciscan community, which we could perhaps understand as a coarser network, with more intricate functions, roles, and relationships, forms an inertia (Becker, 1995). This inertia also operates in association with other non-human actors in a way that is in fact in line with Franciscan doctrine itself, which is prone to a sort of "symmetrical anthropology" (Latour, 1993) avant la lettre. This grants the status of siblings to non-humans, as can be seen in the references to sister moon, brother sun, brother wolf, and sister death, in the writings of St. Francis. Far from being limited to human spiritual experience, spirituality cannot be separated from the set of landscape and architectural elements surrounding it. From the sociology of associations, we trace the networks of actors that infrastructure the apparition, ascension and ecstasy that take place in Arantzazu through the analysis of four cases.

To transfer this infrastructural perspective to the spirit, we draw on Bakhtin's chronotope concept (Bakhtin, 1990). The chronotope is the way in which space and time are articulated in the novel; the chronotope is a kind of infrastructure with literary effects. Here it is the spiritual effects of forms of infrastructure that we are to analyse. Drawing on Bakhtin's chronotope appears doubly justified. Firstly, as Bakhtin himself points out, apparition in religion is a chronotope analogous to the encounter in the Greek novel he analyses. And secondly, because the chronotope allows us to consider the connection between the plot of a story and the infrastructure that configures it. Thus, it allows us to shift the plots to the infrastructure complex that produces the encounter or, in this case, the apparition. Infrastructure can thus be understood as closer to a verb than a noun: the apparition of the Virgin is infrastructured by the assembly of actors we analyse below.

This infrastructure plots ascents, including those of pilgrims. We are talking about a sanctuary located in Oñate, Gipuzkoa, 700m above sea level, perched on a precipice between the Aloña and Aizkorri massifs (Villasante, 1964, pp. 7-8). Its visiting pilgrims include churchgoers, there to attend Sunday mass or weddings: hikers preparing to climb Aizkorri, the highest peak in Gipuzkoa; ramblers, content to reach the Urbia fields; Zegama-Aizkorri mountain marathon spectators, making their way to the Sancti Spiritu climb; and the specialists and citizens attending meetings at the ArantzazuLab centre. In short, this infrastructure plots apparitions: those of the Virgin on the altarpiece or in the figures on sale in souvenir shops, of the first snowfalls, and of the apostles. This infrastructure plots the ecstasy of the runner, the traveller, the tourist, and the contemporary art enthusiast.

The present article aims to draw on all this infrastructure as articulated around the spirit of Arantzazu, without establishing religious transcendence as a condicio sine qua non; but rather, remaining open to socio-technical deployment, to the logistical prodigy of these "apparitions." To this end, four scenarios are analysed. In the first scenario, the Virgin can be seen like a totem that enrols a group of actors, including Franciscans and pilgrims, but also roads, footwear, and maps. In the second, Arantzazu is viewed as a laboratory of language production and design, and thus of community and identity. We turn to Oteiza's controversial apostles in the third, which

allows us to approach the paradoxical infrastructure of emptying. Lastly, we consider the Aizkorri-Zegama mountain marathon which passes close to the sanctuary and enables us to consider the role of footwear and the race profile in the ecstasy of the runners, among other things.

2. The spirit of the Virgin: an ever-widening network of actors

Although the spirit as a phenomenon is infrastructured by a heterogeneous network of actors, the distribution of protagonism is far from even in this narrative: some actors take on leading roles; others adopt secondary, yet necessary ones; while the actions of others remain invisible, or rather, hidden from view, stashed in black boxes no-one has bothered looking into. The Virgin of Arantzazu, incarnated through her figurine, is, undoubtedly, the first big actor we come across. This happens through different primary and secondary translation mechanisms that make the figurine the main agent within a wide network of actors (Callon, 1986). The primary mechanisms are those that pertain to the collective construction of the object, in which the intervention of different (human and non-human) actors mould the object, shape it, and link it to other places. The apparition of the Virgin as an event would thus pave the way for the construction, maintenance, and mobilisation of that object. The secondary mechanisms are the ones involved in the process of attributing a set of actions to the object, so that, although these actions are sustained by a more extensive network of actors, agency is fundamentally attributed to that specific actor-object. Miracles are a clear example of this attribution process whereby the agency attributed to the Virgin resolves the hiatus in a disconnected set of actions.

The collective construction of the object can be traced in the chronicles written by Esteban de Garibay in the 16th century. The Virgin is linked to the name Arantzazu because of how shocked the shepherd Rodrigo Baltzategi was by her appearance in 1469. Guided by the sound of bells, the shepherd found himself before the figurine of the Virgin in a hawthorn tree, "Arantzan zu?" [You in the hawthorn tree?] the shepherd asked, appearing more surprised by the place than by the apparition itself. The question about her location points precisely to the indexical character of the apparition: the apparition points to a place. Toponymy tells us otherwise, that it is in fact the characteristics of the place itself that give her the name, thus "Arantzazu" would refer to a place full of thorns (Villasante, 1964, pp. 21-24). Either because of toponymy or legend, the apparition of the Virgin has an indexical character: it points to a place, a steep place with a sheer drop over a precipice full of thorns. It is said that, as the Virgin had appeared in such an inhospitable place, an attempt was made to relocate the figurine to a more accessible one, but it disappeared from the new location only to reappear back in the original spot (Villasante, 1964, p. 21).

The testimony of the shepherd, the sound of bells, the hawthorn tree, the figurine, and the name are articulated and unified in the legend, the account of the apparition of the Virgin. And their actions extend beyond this, through the secondary mechanisms of attribution. The community of Franciscans, the different pilgrimages and the paths opened by them, and the hermitage built around them, are the channels used by these processes of attribution. The figurine of a Virgin barely 36cm tall, is gradually joined by an increasingly broad heterogeneous set of actors who enable the attribution of agency:

> "Inexplicably halted shipwrecks, furious storms suddenly tamed, corpses brought back to life, fires sparing select areas, crippled limb recoveries, swift reprieves from deadly diseases, terrifying diabolical possessions averted: a stupendous range of all the varied prodigies that enamel the most spectacular chapters in the history of Christian piety came together at Arantzazu to mark its relevance and the Virgin Mary's wish for a unique cult to take shape on this inaccessible mountain." (Anasagasti, 1975, p. 38).

The density of these networks could be called into question, or the degree to which they extend beyond the story or legend, but they always refer to one place, to one figure. In the following sections we turn to the inertias that make this apparition possible and pre-configure,

in turn, a chain of new appearances, which in this article come to constitute a concatenation of cultural innovations.

3. Production laboratories: encounters in the third space

Arantzazu's infrastructure played a decisive role in the deployment of Basque culture under Franco, especially in the development of standardised Basque (known as euskara batua) (Torrealdai & Murua, 2009; Zuazo, 2005). Arantzazu worked like a laboratory: testing and producing prototypes of the standard language. Like with Pasteur's laboratory, it took three moves for Arantzazu to be able to function as a lever and shift culture in a different direction (Latour, 1983). Arantzazu captured the interests of language and culture activists, writers, and linguists (1); it operated as a means of language growth and development (2); and it launched the standard language in a whole set of publications and educational programmes (3).

Firstly, Arantzazu captured the interests of language activists by becoming one of the main refuges from repression under Franco. Religious orders were among the few civic organisations that enjoyed any autonomy under National Catholicism. Moreover, in the case of the Franciscans of Arantzazu, as they were not associated with the losing side in the war - which some other Orders were – they had more room to manoeuvre (Itçaina, 2007). The fact that Basque was confined there allowed both the language, and the interest in it as a code for communication within that environment, to thrive. The enclave in which it was located and the way it recruited novices led to the establishment of a Basque-speaking community. It also boasted an archive and a library that stored, organised, and processed different speech acts. These were the centres of calculation (Latour & Hermant, 1999) with incessant inscription production, a necessary step on the way to a written language.

Secondly, a growth medium was formed there; it was a suitable breeding ground. Tellingly, the poetry collection dedicated to the Virgin of Arantzazu, Arantzazu, euskal sinesmenen poema (Mitxelena, 1949), which helped chart several of the episodes mentioned in this article, was, in fact, one of the first books published in Basque after the Civil War. The collection was written by the Franciscan monk Salbatore Mitxelena, illustrated by a monk who had also painted the stained-glass window of the basilica, Xabier Álvarez de Eulate, and published by the Order itself. Produced in the laboratory of Arantzazu, copies of the book spread and so did its semiotics, and it was soon interpreted as an allegory for Basque people and culture. In fact, Franco's censorship forbade the publication of the entire third part of the collection (Torrealdai, 2003). A few years later, when cultural activity in Basque was beginning to take off, the Bilbao poet, Gabriel Aresti, withdrew to Arantzazu for some days to write the poetry collection Maldan behera (Aresti, 1960), which is considered a pioneer work in standard Basque. In the collection he narrates the descent of a prophet into hell: if we are sticking to Latour's laboratory narrative, this could be understood as the displacement of the language from its environment of growth to the city.

The fact is that Arantzazu is, once again, the lever that enables transcendental cultural innovation. The innovation was transcendental, not in the religious sense of the term, but rather because it entailed the spread of a language, largely produced there, to the whole country. The Arantzazu's Franciscan publishing house was instrumental here: in addition to publishing Mitxelena's book, it was one of the main platforms that helped circumvent Franco's censorship. There the Franciscans founded Jakin, a journal published in Basque. Initially concerned with matters of theology and philosophy, the journal had to develop a suitable code to deal with these subjects, and consequently became one of the most productive avenues for the development of a scientific, learned register for the Basque language. But above all, Arantzazu is remembered for hosting the Congress of the Academy of the Basque Language in the year 1968 (a year that was iconic for culture and its innovations) when the foundations of the Basque language were laid down. At that Congress controversial decisions were made, which pitted two generations of writers and linguists against each other. The then president of the Academy opened it by praising the Virgin, citing her miracles that pacified the Oñaz and Gamboa bands centuries ago, and

praying that a beneficial agreement would emerge from that meeting (Manuel Lekuona in Euskaltzaindia, 1968, p. 141).

Ultimately, the Congress succeeded in promoting the unification of written Basque, but a strong controversy arose over the inclusion of the letter "H." The "H," a silent letter for most Basque users, but present in the Labourd literary tradition, which was to be recovered, drove a wedge between two generations of writers. The new generation of secular, progressive writers, who considered written language the most crucial factor for development, were up against the old, rather conservative, generation of religious writers and linguists who were devoted to the development of dialectal varieties and their use in oral communication (Amezaga, 2019). The Franciscans took the younger generation's side.

All this points to an infrastructure that could elevate language, understanding the elevation of language to involve enabling a wider range of users to participate in it. In this sense, Arantzazu provided the infrastructure for the "H," a mute signifier, to spread as if it were the spirit of the standardised language. It has also become a reminder of the sanctuary which is shaped like an "H." Jorge Oteiza, figurehead of the next cultural innovation which, in our story, was to infrastructure the spirit of Arantzazu, was among those not in favour of the unified language established at that Congress. Nevertheless, ironically, in his sketches of the apostles, the shape of an "H" can also be perceived (Badiola 2015, p. 2) in the basic infrastructure of his aesthetic proposal.

Figure 1. Picture of the current sanctuary's front view.

Source: Arantzazuko Santutegia (n.d.). Courtesy of Arantzazu Journal.

4. Stones and emptying

The 36cm figurine that appeared before the shepherd deployed an infrastructure that involved an ever wider and more heterogeneous group of actors, a network that amplified her gravitational force. This gravitational force, which resulted in an ever-growing community and ever-increasing pilgrimages, prompted the Order to launch a call for bids for an enlargement of the basilica. The sanctuary complex extension had to meet two conditions. Firstly, it had to facilitate road access to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims. Secondly, the figurine of the Virgin had to be set in the exact place she had appeared (she had told the shepherd that it was there and nowhere else that he should build the place of worship) which meant that the base had to be extended over the cliff so that the church would be at the same level as the convent. These functional criteria prevailed. It seems the panel was tipped in favour of Laorga and Sániz de Oiza's proposal because of the solutions they suggested. This was despite the fact that its modernist character, which the Franciscans liked, cannot have been to the taste of the architects who took part in the jury, who were more historicist in their orientation (Gonzalez de Durana, 2003, pp. 28-40).

The preliminary project presented by Laorga and Sáinz de Oiza was meant to blend into the landscape of Arantzazu, with the crags and ravines of the place, which is why they brought in a

hawthorn tree carved out of limestone as the most prominent element of the new construction (Sáinz de Oiza in Anasagasti, 1975, p. 93). Thus, the new basilica becomes a repetition of the apparition of the Virgin to the shepherd, the apparition made into architectural and sculptural infrastructure. To build on this, other artistic elements were brought in, including the altarpiece by Pascual de Lara; the stained-glass windows by the friar Xabier Eulate, who also illustrated Mitxelena's book; the doors by Eduardo Chillida; the crypt by Nestor Basterretxea; and the group of apostles by Jorge Oteiza (Anasagasti, 1975, p. 95). The latter's work sparked huge controversy. The ecclesiastical authorities ordered the works to be stopped, arguing that they lacked religiosity, an interpretation that seems to have been motivated by the fact that the proposal could hardly be considered to follow the conventions of "Spanish national art" (Ugarte, 1996, p. 141). Although work was finally resumed, Oteiza's apostles were left abandoned in a ditch at the side of the road (Olano, 1993, p. 42), until 1968, 14 years later, when the authorities changed their minds.

While the apostles were in that roadside ditch, Oteiza published the book Quousque tándem...! (Oteiza, 1963), which, as its subtitle indicates, is an essay on the interpretation of the Basque soul, linking the artistic avant-gardes with a reinterpretation of the Basque Neolithic past. Oteiza's negative aesthetics proposes emptying (aska) as the operation that produces states of grace in religion, freedom in politics, and beauty in aesthetics. Arantzazu artwork operates through emptying, both through its role as artistic infrastructure and through its spiritual effects. It works by emptying out marble to sculpt the body of the apostles and emptying the frieze between the apostles and the Pietà, while, at the same time, deploying spiritual emptying (Zulaika, 2003, pp. 29-33). The stones thus produce three forms of emptying that enlist a wider range of actors.

The emptying takes place within, the sculptures stir within the stone and the sculptor releases the apostles, first from the marble that imprisoned them, and then from the ditch where the authorities had abandoned them. The two acts of liberation must have been driven by the same impulse to empty, to deploy. In the lengthy polemic he engaged with in the press at the time, Oteiza confessed that he could not be sure that the stones had not moved within their stones and pointed out how the ironwork of the façade was left waiting for the apostles (Oteiza, 2007, p. 300). This form of emptying, this flight from the anthropomorphic figure, involved allowing the non-human actors and materiality itself to express itself. The sculptor - far from appearing as their spokesperson – seems to be a sort of facilitator of the public materiality that "appears" in Arantzazu, in the way Hannah Arendt described irruption into the public sphere as a kind of apparition (Tavani, 2013).

The emptying also takes place between. This is beautifully illustrated through the composition distributing the apostles and the Pietà, which was located in the upper part of the basilica's façade. While sketches in the initial phases of the project envisaged distinct types of depictions (Gonzalez de Durana, 2003, 34-43), in the end it was a plain concrete wall that separated the Pietà from the apostles. In the guided tours, visitors are told that when someone had asked Oteiza why he had left the wall without anything on it, he firmly replied, "I have not left the wall WITHOUT ANYTHING, I have left it WITH NOTHING."[1] The productive character of nothingness is anchored in Oteiza's negative aesthetics, for which he used the term "huts" because it means both pure and empty in Basque (Zulaika, 2003). Emptiness is that which enables the relationship between the elements. When defending the inclusion of the statues of the apostles to the Diocese, Oteiza referred to the organic relationship between architecture, sculpture, and landscape. The façade is not only between the apostles and the Pietà, but it also mediates with the surrounding landscape, which can express itself (only) WITH (the) NOTHING (López-Bahut, 2013).

Lastly, the emptying is produced out of the stones. The statuary challenges visitors to engage. The façade of the basilica, together with the landscape, is the part that attracts most

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[1] He also put this idea in writing on the conclusive stage of his work (Jorge Oteiza in Echeverria Plazaola, 2008, p. 269).

attention. The absorbed gaze of the shepherd on the apparition of the Virgin is transmuted into the equally absorbed gaze of the pilgrim in front of the nothingness that has appeared. The apostles are also joined by those observers who, usually in groups, act as spokespersons for them, and explain or speculate on why there are 14 not 12 of them, or on how they were abandoned in a ditch for 14 years. The statuary, eyes and mouths all wide open, open dialogues with the visitors. But it happens the other way around too: the statues also act as spokespersons for diverse groups. This is the case of the Pietà, whose image flooded the villages of the Basque Country to speak out against the death of a demonstrator at the hands of the police in 1976 (Goicoechea, 2018).

The hollows of the stones thus enable new interpretations, and the spirit itself dwells within them, open to reinterpretations which also constitute opportunities for re-apparition. The stones thus become infrastructure of the different spirits that animate them. The enlargement of the basilica was not just a matter of emptying space so that a greater number of pilgrims and churchgoers could visit. The text of the Franciscans' commission referred to a neutral infrastructure. However, Oteiza saw the spirit of the text to be a "great cultural elevator dreamed of by Father Lete [Provincial of the Franciscans] for our people, between earth and heaven" (Jorge Oteiza in Echeverria Plazaola, 2008, p. 128).

5. The Spirit of Zegama

Joseba Zulaika, in his ethnography on Basque violence, describes the pilgrimage of ascent from Oñati to Arantzazu as one of the key sites where religious devotion and political activism became intermingled. In fact, he points out how one of the (harshly repressed) propaganda actions carried out by ETA in 1968 – the very year the apostles left the ditch behind them to appear on the façade – allowed a transference of sacredness to take place: the simultaneous experience of political activism and religious devotion lived by the pilgrims on the ascent. In fact, this semiotic displacement allows Zulaika to explain the link between the religious ascent, the mountaineer and the ascensional slogan of Basque nationalism "Gora Euskadi Askatuta!" [Long live free Euskadi!] (Zulaika, 1988, pp. 254-259).

The ethnographic description of the processions of the Virgin in which religious fervour merged with political zeal allowed Joseba Zulaika to point to the transfer between the Marian religious beliefs of Arantzazu and the political beliefs of ETA. If, in this case, the same rite made it possible to establish a continuity in belief, and to shift from Marian to nationalist affect, the infrastructure that has been patching itself up since the apparition of the Virgin also enables other forms of spirituality and their corresponding transfers of sacredness.

Since 2002, Zegama, a village in Gipuzkoa with a population of just 1,500 inhabitants, has become the infrastructure for the emblematic Aizkorri-Zegama mountain marathon. The inhabitants, their roads, and even their homes become infrastructure to support the runners both logistically and emotionally (Rodríguez, 2022). "Zegama is Zegama" is the tautological phrase used by the famous mountain runner Killian Jornet (2019) to describe the experience of competing in this race: here again, the spirit is an indexical infrastructure, pointing to a place. Yet, conversely, calling the race the thing that put Zegama "on the map" is already clichéd.

The Sancti Spiritu ascent is one of the most emblematic parts of the race. Numerous videos capture this moment and the latest issue of Kiss the mountain the magazine opted to include several stills from that moment. Throughout the runners' hard climb, two attitudes, which are often alternated, can be discerned as they are deployed for the crowds thronging at the side-lines. The first is a serious attitude, the runner looks down at the ground, focusing on their feet to concentrate on the climb. In the second, the runner smiles and raises their eyes to the sky, often with their arms in the air, thus engaging the affect of the audience whose attention is focused on the apparition of the runner. Looking up at the volunteers who stand at the refreshment points, the infrastructure of the race, to receive a bottle of water or a wet sponge to refresh themselves, forms part of the first attitude. The second involves smiling at the volunteer and thanking them.

To cover both attitudes, Kiss the Mountain magazine chose "euphoria" as the headline for this issue dedicated to mountain running:

> "The word euphoria, "εὐφορία," of Greek origin, means the strength to keep going, referring to the ability to bear suffering and adversity. Euphoria is also a feeling of well-being or joy that manifests itself to the outside world. These two seemingly quite distinct meanings bizarrely both manifest themselves in the ascent of Sancti Spiritu, in Zegama Aizkorri, the finish line we chose for the cover photograph of this issue." (Kiss the Mountain, 2022).

Figure 1. Photographs of the Sancti Spiritu ascent at the 2022 Aizkorri-Zegama marathon.

Source: Black Coffee Studio, 2022, pp. 20-21. Courtesy of @blackcoffee.studio and @kissthemountain.

Euphoria used to keep going on the ascent, euphoria to enjoy the ascent: the euphoria of the crowds and of the runners. Durkheim's sociology of religion would allow us to interpret this moment as a sort of somatization of the affect that is released in the collective of runners and spectators who co-participate in the climb. However, in line with the proposal outlined in this article, we maintain that the effervescence of the moment and the place is infrastructured by the race itself; that it also stems from the affect of other infrastructural components that take the runner to that point. While it is true that the crowds form an infrastructure, a "pasillo" [passageway] that carries the runner "en bolandas" [in the air] (Salomon Spain, 2019), it is also the shoes themselves and the mountain profile that allows the runner to get there. A form of techno-doping takes place in secular ascents. And it is this that makes their deployment possible and plausible. It took on other forms in the past, but they were not so apparent, or were not made so apparent.

If the race were to be identified with a totem, that totem would undoubtedly be the race profile, the image of which reappears non-stop throughout the races. This is because the profile is part of the race's central infrastructure, a reference point to economize on energy and affect. What is more, as it pays to go light and avoid the distraction of getting out maps, the company Calcasport offer runners easy-to-apply transfer tattoos of the race profiles. Runners can thus incarnate the map itself, as if it were a temporary, removable stigma. This is, yet again, an

infrastructure that points to another place, but in so doing it also gives directions on how to reach that place.

Infrastructure can also be used for business. In fact, the race is sponsored by Salomon, a running shoe and clothing brand, whose ZoomX Zegama model, in addition to taking the name of the mountain marathon town, includes the race profile on the side, as an unmistakable sign of affiliation to the totem.

The famous runner Killian Jornet has also designed his own running shoes for marathons. Months after winning the Zegama race, where he set a new record, he beat the legendary Ultra Trail du Montblanc mountain race record, breaking the 20-hour barrier for 171km with over 10,000m of elevation gain (Arribas, 2022). The records Jornet set were flabbergasting, earning him the nickname "The Extraterrestrial" from the French press. Equally surprising was the fact that it took him a single pair of trainers to run over 1,300km, with victories in the Zegama, Hardrock, Sierre-Zina, Geiranger and Mont Blanc mountain races, when runners usually wear out one or two pairs of shoes in each of these. These shoes were the second of the Kjerag prototypes manufactured by Camper and designed by Jornet himself. "Empty" pockets in the shoes fill with air when pressed against the ground, so they become lighter, increasing running performance; and the materials used for the sole and upper trainer are especially resistant to chafing and wear from contact with rocks. The trainers were specifically designed for Jornet's use and physiognomy (Scaliter, 2022). Kilian "The Extraterrestrial" Jornet lands every stride in every race in a custom-made vacuum spaceship.

6. Conclusions

In this article we tried to address the infrastructural dimension of the spiritual through the analysis of several cases associated with place. The findings presented here operate through accumulation, since the understanding of spirituality as linked to infrastructure proposed here is nothing if not cumulative: the infrastructure forms different layers that envelop the place. Spirituality can only be recognized from its effects, like in the image we present below, where place infrastructures different ascensional forms of ecstasy or calvary. The image of a Franciscan at the foot of a cross from the Arantzazu poetry collection, the Pietà from the façade of the new basilica, and an Aizkorri-Zegama runner on the Sancti Spiritu "passageway" are the effects of spirituality promoted by different infrastructural displays. It would be remiss to believe that some forms of spirituality do not require infrastructure, and that those that do, lack spirituality. As can be seen in the mobilization of the village of Zegama, which literally, due to its small size, becomes infrastructure mobilized entirely for a race, the logistical and the emotional go hand in hand. And perhaps this is the main cultural innovation.

Figure 3. The spiritual effects of infrastructure in three images.

Source: Ribera, 1644; Arantzazuko Santutegia, n.d.; Black Coffee Studio, 2022, pp. 20-21. Courtesy of Arantzazu Journal, @blackcoffee.studio, @kissthemountain.

The term ascension is loaded with polysemy in all the cases discussed, and yet it consistently refers to one component that is central to our analysis: the set of infrastructure that prescribe specific modes of ascent. Infrastructure becomes inseparable from the place to which it points – the Sancti Spiritu "passageway" for the runners, the roads, and the "elevator to heaven" or the basilica as a whole – and this enables the recurrence of a set of experiences that we can identify with the spirit of Arantzazu. In fact, as we pointed out earlier, "Franciscan spirituality" pays attention to the material. Not only that, Franciscanism conducts a sort of materialist inversion when, through attending to the "lesser," it establishes a relationship of equality between humans and non-humans. It could be said that, without intending to do so, it advocates for a symmetrical anthropology by granting all God's creatures the condition of "brothers and sisters." What is to stop us thinking that infrastructure could be that levelling notion that makes it possible to imagine diverse ways of articulating spirituality?

The notion of infrastructure is a membrane that has let us get in touch with a form of the beyond. A membrane that, due to its liminality, operates as a sort of threshold. In the wake of this first contact, we intend to dive deeper into the analysis of this concept, but to do so, we will have to build our own infrastructure. The radar, which another article in this issue invokes (Abad & González, 2022) also appears a fitting idea here in order to point to the type of sensitivity required for an investigation of these characteristics, since it is a matter of constructing research infrastructure – from field notes to images, interventions, and objects – that are assembled to allow themselves to be affected by place. An investigation perhaps closer to spiritualism – or even, dare we say it, spiritism — than to detached scientific observation.

Aknowledgement

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