

## **From Playgrounds to Games – A Short *Technikgeschichte* of Climbing Mountains in Real-Life and Video Games**

### **Abstract for the conference „Berg und Subjekt. Subjektivierung im Kontext (un-)zeitgemäßer Konstellationen von Körper – Raum – Diskurs“**

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This paper shows how the act of mountain climbing has been represented in video games throughout their technological history and elaborates on the process of remediation of mountains as games in video games. I argue that climbing in video games experienced the same technological processes and progressions as its real-life counterpart. It is possible, therefore, to claim that the conquering of real life and digital mountains has been a joint effort that ultimately turned the mountain into a game in and of itself.

To show this development from the mountain as conquered playground to the mountain as game, this paper begins by tracing changes in real-life climbing over time: from a free-floating paidic activity on mountains regarded as playgrounds to more structured climbing experiences with pre-planned trails and grades and to the differentiation of climbing activities. A next step parallels this development with the evolution of climbing in video games, from early depictions of mountains as unclimbable obstacles to early climbing-centered video games, and today's technological top-notch virtual reality experiences. Offering several exemplary case studies of video games, this paper traces the technological evolution of mountain as games. It asks how video games remediate mountains as games and how this remediation, in turn, changes the perception and functionality of mountains.

Examining the rich history of representation, ludification, and remediation of mountains, this paper demonstrates that acts of alpinist conquest in video games – like real-life climbing – have only been possible because of technological advancements.

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