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The Great Divide: **Sport Climbing versus Adventure Climbing**

As with many activities, the development of mountaineering has not occurred in a serial organic manner. There have been periods of articulation interspersed with periods of disjuncture. Disjunctural moments include ascents of such danger or difficulty that they open up a whole new realm of possibilities for the sport: the emergence of rock and ice climbing as distinct activities; and disputes over the legitimacy of certain types of equipment and techniques. Each of these changes has been accommodated in a process of negotiation among climbers because the sport has been free of rule-making bodies for much of its history. However, a recent change appears to be of a different order of magnitude and has provoked a serious rift in the climbing world. A combination of a new 'French style' of climbing (involving enormous difficulty but little risk), and the acceptance of formal competitions, has resulted in a form of climbing now widely known as sport climbing. In order to distinguish it from more traditional forms of the sport which entail a higher level of risk (at the cost, to a certain extent, of the highest levels of difficulty), those traditional forms have been termed 'adventure climbing.'

In a period of time that is neatly framed by two Hollywood productions— *The Eiger Sanction* and *Cliffhanger*—a series of multiple determinations (each a necessary, but not a sufficient condition to bring about the observed changes, and each interdependent) has served to make the sport far more popular and far more high profile than it has ever been. These include: the emergence of formal competitions; the development of the spectacular and extremely photogenic French style of climbing: a major growth in the numbers of participants; a huge increase in commercial involvement and sponsorship (involved in every aspect of the sport from the production of equipment and clothing to commercial expeditions, and including the involvement of corporations who just wish to use the image of climbing): the production of climbing ideas (*a la* ski videos); an expansion in the size, number, production quality, and circulation of climbing magazines: the development of climbing web sites; and the development of artificial climbing walls. It is in this context that 'the great divide' has occurred.

Using notions of the power to define and determine the form and meaning of sport (as in for example, Bourdieu's, Gruneau's, and Williams' derivations from Gramsci's approach to hegemony) of 'dominant,' 'residual' and 'emergent' forms of culture. I examine the rift between sport climbing and adventure climbing, and the accommodations and incorporations that occur at such disjunctural moments. It is not yet clear whether the more traditional and anarchic forms of climbing will become completely residual, as the emergent/incorporated 'sport climbing', becomes dominant; or whether sport climbing will be accommodated within the older traditions of the sport. I suggest, however, that, despite the apparent theoretical inevitability of the former, the latter seems to be a more likely resolution.