

DO DESPORTO ON SPORTS

theoria vs praxis

Edited by Constantino Pereira Martins

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FUNDAÇÃO DO DESPORTO
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Vida vivida, vida pensada

In memory of Professor Sílvio Lima and Mestre Moniz Pereira

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Dedicatória

Ao Professor Manuel Sérgio
que com ele reaprendi que um amigo é um tesouro.

E que durante a sua prelecção em Novembro de 2020, ecoou em mim a seguinte frase:
o homem é uma nuvem com raiz.

Ao meu filho Guilherme,
luz dos meus dias.

A estranha arte da vida

*O mundo grita vitória
e nós embalados
gritamos com ele
das bancadas alheios
à arte de saber perder;
a única sabedoria da vida.*

*E é como esconder
e enterrar maus poemas
sob os escombros
de má prosa académica.*

*E é como
ser viajante da lua
sob um mundo solar.*

AGRADECIMENTOS AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Nuno Ferro, remembering the years we shared.

In that same exercise of memory, I reminisce and bring to mind all the sports and mates with whom I have shared training, playing, pain, laughter, sweat, and all the joys of sport. In different stages of life, in different settings, in different countries. But from them all, I must thank my first coach José Carlos Vidal Pereira that gave me Basketball. Since our club no longer exists, old times will go on with those shared hoop memories on top of empty ruins.

To underline the crucial role that the *Fundação do Desporto* (Sport Foundation) played in making possible the existence of this book, and in particular to Doutor Paulo Marcolino for his trust.

Last but not the least, Professor Mário Santiago de Carvalho, Scientific Coordinator of *IEF* in Coimbra University, for the support, receptivity and welcoming through the years I have collaborated with the Institute of Philosophical Studies in Coimbra.

This book would not have been possible without the financial support of the FCT Foundation regarding my study and time.

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Apresentação

Overture

International Conference – Sport: theory and practice

University of Coimbra, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Institute for Philosophy Studies, 20-21 November 2020

Sport development will only be achieved with the commitment and participation of all areas of knowledge and science. It will be from the contribution of a wide consortium of sciences that we can reach a better place for Sport in society.

Philosophy has so much to give... From the conceptual analysis and examination of Sport's main issues, or its related practices, not to mention helping us to understand the nature and purposes of Sport, not only in the past, but specially nowadays, reclaiming for Sport the insights from various fields whether in relation to practice or institutions, but also helping us to create a substantive and comprehensive interpretation of this human practice with an inherently self-critical and intellectual conception, Sport Philosophy is one determinant science.

Sport development can earn a lot from the intellectual progress that can be given by Sport Philosophy. The Sport examination from one Philosophic perspective, from its different fields like Aesthetics, Epistemology, Ethics, Logic, Metaphysics, Philosophy of rules, Philosophy of science, Social and political philosophy, are crucial to understand and replace Sport in Society.

The appliance of the Sport Philosophy endeavors to national and international Sports Policy development is one of the most significant accomplishments.

Therefore, the association of the Sport Foundation, Portugal to this international conference on Sport Philosophy is obvious, not only because of its nature, a Foundation with a philanthropic mission, but also because it is one of our major concerns and goals to contribute for Sport development.

The thematic is of highest relevance and less exploited, compared with other fields on Sport. The link between Philosophy, Academy (University) and Sport is particularly important to the Sport universe. Thus, it is an honor and a privilege for the Sport Foundation, Portugal to support this international conference. Thank you to all experts and specially to the Institute for Philosophy Studies of the University of Coimbra for the outstanding work well done!



Paulo Marcolino

CEO - Sport Foundation, Portugal

Conferência Internacional - Desporto: teoria e prática.

Universidade de Coimbra, Faculdade de Letras, Instituto de Estudos Filosóficos, 20-21 de novembro de 2020

O desenvolvimento do Desporto só será uma realidade com o compromisso e participação de todas as áreas do conhecimento e da ciência. Será a partir da contribuição de um amplo consórcio de ciências que poderemos almejar um lugar melhor para o Desporto na sociedade.

A Filosofia tem muito a oferecer ... A Filosofia do Desporto é mesmo uma ciência determinante - a partir da (i) análise conceptual e do (ii) exame às principais questões que o Desporto encerra, ou as práticas com este conexas, auxiliando-nos a (iii) compreender a natureza e os propósitos do próprio Desporto, exame esse efetuado não apenas ao passado e herança do Desporto, mas especialmente ao seu significado nos nossos dias, (iv) resgatando para o Desporto as suas valências em vários campos, quer em relação à prática bem como às instituições, mas também (v) contribuindo para conceber uma interpretação substantiva e abrangente desta prática humana, com base numa conceção inerentemente autocrítica e intelectual.

O desenvolvimento do Desporto pode ganhar muito com o progresso intelectual que pode ser proporcionado pela Filosofia do Desporto. O exame ao Desporto desde uma perspectiva Filosófica, nos seus diferentes campos como a Estética, Epistemologia, Ética, Lógica, Metafísica, Filosofia das regras, Filosofia da ciência ou Filosofia social e política, são cruciais para compreender e reposicionar o Desporto na Sociedade.

A aplicação dos conhecimentos emanados pela Filosofia do Desporto ao desenvolvimento de Políticas para o Desporto, tanto ao nível nacional como internacional, é uma das conquistas mais significativas.

Deste modo, a associação da Fundação do Desporto a esta conferência internacional de Filosofia aplicada a esta atividade social e cultural (o Desporto), é óbvia. Não só pela sua natureza - uma Fundação com missão filantrópica - mas também porque é uma das nossas grandes preocupações e objetivos contribuir para o desenvolvimento do Desporto.

A temática é da maior relevância e pouco explorada, se comparada com outras áreas introduzidas no Desporto. A conjugação entre Filosofia, Academia (Universidade) e Desporto é particularmente importante para o universo desportivo. Deste modo, é uma honra e um privilégio para a Fundação do Desporto participar e apoiar esta conferência internacional. Agradecemos a todos os especialistas e em especial ao Instituto de Estudos Filosóficos da Universidade de Coimbra o excelente trabalho desenvolvido!



Paulo Marcolino

Diretor Executivo – Fundação do Desporto



Mário Santiago de Carvalho
Universidade de Coimbra

**Do Desporto/On Sports
Theory vs. Praxis?**

Nos dias 20 e 21 de Novembro de 2020, sob a chancela do “Plano Nacional de Ética no Desporto” e numa parceria da “Fundação do Desporto”, do “Comité Olímpico de Portugal”, do “Instituto Português do Desporto e Juventude”, e da “Faculdade de Ciências do Desporto e Educação Física” da Universidade de Coimbra, a Unidade de Investigação & Desenvolvimento “Instituto de Estudos Filosóficos” (IEF) da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra promoveu o Colóquio Internacional *Sports, Theory vs. Praxis?* Concretizando uma iniciativa original e tempestiva de Constantino Pereira Martins, membro do IEF, em colaboração com Matti Tainio, o evento foi realizado por via telemática, dadas as circunstâncias pandémicas.

Integrando os textos de algumas das participações no evento, surge agora este oportuno volume. Associa-se à publicação a “Fundação do Desporto”, entidade que, nesta ocasião, o IEF saúda e à qual agradece.

Poderia, à primeira vista, parecer bizarro que um instituto superior de investigação em filosofia acolhesse uma iniciativa sobre desporto. Pelo menos três razões justificaram este auspicioso apoio. Na sua história, o IEF orgulha-se de poder contar com as reflexões filosóficas pioneiras do Prof. Sílvio Lima (1904-1993), que cruzaram o desporto, em várias das suas modalidades, com múltiplas áreas da cultura humana. Desassombradamente, por vezes, para a sua época, Lima deixou-nos páginas cuja actualidade não esmoreceu sobre temas e problemas como o desporto feminino, a individualização no desporto, a sua função regeneradora e integradora para o delinquente, a

necessidade da institucionalização da medicina desportiva, a necessidade da regulação jurídica da atividade desportiva, ou a relação do desporto com a economia e a política.¹ Obrigá-va-nos a fidelidade ao seu legado e apraz-nos reconhecer que alguns dos textos a seguir revisitam o pensamento daquele professor de Coimbra.

Em segundo lugar, o entusiasta acolhimento na origem desta publicação explica-se pela relação sensível que o IEF tem com a história da filosofia. Desde os primórdios que a filosofia comparece como o jogo da necessidade de elevar à consciência crítica aquilo mesmo que todos os seres humanos crepuscularmente sabem. Se o IEF abraçou a missão de estimular o pensamento e a conceptualização filosóficas, também em língua portuguesa, e a recuperação, o aprofundamento e divulgação internacional de todo o património filosófico relevante, como poderíamos ficar indiferentes à dimensão e à atenção à natureza do desporto inaugurada por filósofos matriciais como Platão, Aristóteles ou Tomás de Aquino?² Em todos eles o desporto comparece como uma componente essencial da educação humana, a que o célebre “ser humano atleta” (*virum athletam*) de Agostinho de Hipona³ deu uma amplitude e circularidade inusitadas. Quer dizer-se: antes de ser uma questão biomecânica, ir mais depressa, mais alto e mais longe (*citius, altius, longius*) é igualmente o próprio motivo da transcendência pensado enquanto acto segundo ou disposição (*héxis*) daquela segunda natureza que permite a autêntica elevação do Homem à categoria do humano. Anteriormente ao pensamento sobre o jogo, por parte de Heidegger, Gadamer, Eugen Fink, Wittgenstein ou Derrida⁴, já o cardeal-jogador Nicolau de Cusa, assimilando a metáfora do jogo da bola côncava (*de ludo globi*) à perspectiva epistemológica e à antropológica holística do “círculo” de Platão, que ecoa no *virum athletam*, reivindicava para o “homo ludens” o horizonte do “homo viator”. Uma absoluta atenção àquela dimensão em que, mediante várias declinações do corpo, o jogo interpreta a harmonia rítmica da vida, restabelece o equilíbrio, é gerador de vida, de alegria e de nova energia, há-de sempre carecer da urgente captação do eixo do infinito que estrutura o desporto.

Enfim, a terceira razão prende-se com o facto de o IEF poder voltar a cumprir uma das suas prioritárias missões. Referimo-nos à problemática do cuidado na sua intersecção com todos os domínios da filosofia. Assim, ao lado dos campos tradicionais como a ontologia, a metafísica, a ética e a estética, a política e a sociedade, a lógica e a argumentação, a ciência e a antropologia, a hermenêutica e a religião, a publicação desta obra assinala uma primeira incursão na área do desporto enquanto objecto de cuidado, reflexivo antes de mais. Convenhamos que a filosofia do

¹ Pedro Falcão, *Sílvio Lima e o desporto*, Coimbra, 2010. As *Obras Completas* de Sílvio Lima foram editadas pela Fund. Calouste Gulbenkian (Lisboa 2002), ao cuidado de José Ferreira da Silva.

² Cf. H. Reid, *Athletics and Philosophy in the Ancient World*, New York, 2011, pp. 26-80.

³ Stº Agostinho de Hipona, *De Civ. Dei* 14, 9; cf. R.S. Kretchmar, M. Dyreson, M. Llewellyn, and J. Gleaves (eds.), *History and Philosophy of Sport and Physical Activity*, Champaign, Il., 2017, pp. 93-120.

⁴ Cf. J. Mª André, *Jogo, Corpo e Teatro*, Coimbra, 2016, pp. 11-74.

desporto nas suas expressões mais atuais, articula-se com muitos dos – senão com todos os – campos acabados de elencar. Mas o cuidado reflexivo concita-nos hoje em dia para novas problemáticas, quais o desportivismo, a violência, o fanatismo, o feminismo, a deficiência física, a fragilidade ou, enfim, o sempre constante melhoramento desportivo que busca vencer esta última. Mais uma vez se assinala com acutilância o eixo do infinito acima aludido conferindo novo rosto e reiterado horizonte à nova filosofia do desporto. É ademais conhecido como alguns daqueles tópicos comparecem em publicações tão actuais e importantes como *The Routledge Ethics and Sport Book Series* ou o *Fair Play: Journal of Philosophy, Ethics and Sports Law*.

Os textos a seguir publicados registam e dialogam maioritariamente com as novas problemáticas e cobrem domínios tão distintos como, entre outros, a escalada ou o futebol, a arbitragem ou o culturismo sem contudo se eximirem a perspectivas mais densamente filosóficas. No fim de contas, assinalam de forma inconcussa um modo possível de o IEF responder às problemáticas integrantes da nova “filosofia do desporto”.

Gostaríamos de poder asseverar que a presente publicação configurará uma emulação do IEF, na sua própria esfera e oportunidade, embora, ao que de mais actual se vem pensando no âmbito da nova filosofia do desporto. Caberá, evidentemente, aos leitores ajuizar se tal deveras será o caso. Necessariamente, isso só pode acontecer pela ponderação e apreciação de cada um dos textos aqui publicados, pagando o devido óbulo à relevância, especificidade ou originalidade de cada deles mediante leitura disciplinada e atenta. Se isso suceder, e na medida em que acontecer, terá o IEF exemplarmente cumprido uma missão mais. Será, por isso, de elementar justiça que, ao editor deste volume, Constantino Pereira Martins, também pelo seu entusiasmo, seja dado o testemunho do nosso vivo agradecimento.

Mário Santiago de Carvalho
Professor Catedrático
Coordenador Científico do IEF

FOREWORD

PREFÁCIO

1. Ethics and Sport: (Into) the heart of darkness

In our time is probably undisputed and obvious the importance of sports. All the benefits and virtues of sport related to health, the care of the self, mental hygiene, the friendship, the list is endless and well known for most of the people. Overtime it has developed into a gigantic and profitable industry and is now a relevant part of both national and global economies. But still, it seems to be a latent prejudice surrounding sports regarding the use of time, a sort of minority role, a secondary and dismissible part of our lives. In the present pandemic days where we witness silhouettes of panic and irrationality that remind us the need of courage in hard times and to share light in dark days, where health and surviving has become the center of our lives, many scholars discuss the value of action, specifically sports, in a scenario of catastrophe. It seems that situations of emergency tend to force to the surface the most important things, what really matters. Thus, and maybe unexpectedly for many, we are bound to recognize the value of things that usually we disregarded. In this case the vital importance of Sports. But also, the obvious conviction that we are all connected, that we are all in the same boat. That much beyond the social and sports phenomenon are the bonds that unite us. And Sport is fortunately and commonly recognized as one of those ties. What doesn't seem so consensual are the relations between thought and sports, or theory and praxis in general. It seems that theory has become a distant relative that we bare to entertain, has praxis emerges as a single and independent event, and theory more and more outcasted. In the obsession for results that made forget and now rediscover the importance of processes, we propose to discuss theory and praxis, or better, theory vs. praxis. Revisiting the Kantian provocation on the expression "*that might be right in theory, but it won't work in practice*", we are faced today with a more vulgar perception "*that's just theory!*" meaning a distant, boring and romantic sort of relation with reality, reinforcing an hegemonic practical vision of reality associated with money as the final judge and mission of life. This poor fact implies a divorce, a split that we would like to open for questioning. In fact, we intend to depart from the Kantian perplexity inquiry as a nuclear paradigm, in order to develop a vast set of examination regarding Sports at the crossroad of theory and praxis. Thus, our general goal is rather simple and daring: to challenge thinking about this complex relation in the various fields of Sport, theoretical or more pragmatic, deductive or inductive, or both at the same

time. We will be presenting contributions that open new theoretical perspectives to Sport, contemporary and historical concepts, and human practice in the context of Philosophy of Sport. This book aims to be a proposal to think the relationship between Philosophy and Sport but also in the dialogue with different approaches and academic disciplines or practices. Taking different subjects, based in a logic of *spring-concepts* that intend to promote interdisciplinarity, one of the main focuses intended, beyond the structuring dichotomy between theory and practice, is the question of values and Ethics, but also the multiple relations between sports and body, time, movement, beauty, performance, health and other topics that constitute the transdisciplinary richness of this collection of texts. Thus, we could not intend to carry out the impossible task of introducing Ethics, and the consequences of its oblivion, alongside with general philosophy, in our culture. Erasing part of a civilization's lessons necessarily implies, sooner or later, having to go back to studying and learning them. But the relationship of thought and science in relation to history has always been complicated. Maybe it's easier to show the absence of ethics that puts us face to face with the animal world, with the law of the fittest and with the principle of survival. It is perhaps within, and with, this negative background that it becomes simpler to talk about ethics today, and especially for our youth who consider all this matters of great annoyance and distaste. Perhaps the easiest way to remember something, and its importance, is precisely when we are missing those things we take for granted, in the space of its absence. The heart of darkness is always more visible when evil and dark times reigns unchallenged and unchecked, under the silent revolt of the eyes, in the mute mouths of suffering, in the white blank of memory that is spread in the long corridors of history. Sport can be like the Olympic flame, as a beam that shines in dark nights, the ideal that is carried as a civilizational value, and passed on, hand in hand. Sport as culture, following Professor Manuel Sérgio with his own personal example of joy of thought and the generosity of sharing ideas, that still believes from the top of his 89 years that our task is to learn from one another. Let's remind the words of Dylan Thomas:

Do not go gentle into that good night,

Old age should burn and rave at close of day.

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,

Because their words had forked no lightning they

Do not go gentle into that good night.

*Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

*Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.*

*Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

*And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

2. Ethics and Sport: axiological pillars

The point of departure will be a mix hybrid between academic and philosophical remarks and an intimate phenomenological notebook on and of my personal experience in sports. It aims to be a synthesis of my two passions, since both Philosophy and Sports were always present in my life. The Philosophy of Sport in Portugal is, in a *strictus sensus* philosophical framework, very residual. This fact didn't prevent that wonderful scholars, like Sílvio Lima or Manuel Sérgio, from having philosophical production and a recent significant influence over athletes and Portuguese coaches. And has everybody knows, the Portuguese are the Japanese of Europe. This translates and resonates, besides a long historical relation, also in a mutual love for nature, simplicity, family, tradition, honor and humbleness. Of course, this could also be the great lessons of sports. Not

lessons that one could learn from reading a book, but lessons that one learns on the field, lessons inscribed in the body. What I bring here for the reader are the lessons of my personal life in Sports, from all the Sports that I have played, that I have tried to play or that I just admire watching. But also, from the big and small things that I have learned from my colleagues, my coaches, in the field or in the streets, inland or in the ocean, with the joys or the sadness's. Having said that, let's move on from this short declaration of principles to the presentation of the methodological approach that we aspire here. Negatively, one must say that we won't be dealing here with global questions of Sport in general. We won't address its value in terms of political upbuilding citizenship, the tolerance and the learning process of respecting the other, on the extremely vital capacity of putting ourselves in another one's shoes, or also the extraordinary health benefits among others. To be brief: what we are aiming here is to understand the main pillars from the athlete point of view. Coaches can be also included in general, but the athlete is the heart and the center of Sport. The body and flesh that is invested and tattooed, in each generation, by the spirit of Sport. What we will try to focus here are the foundations that any and every athlete and sportsman will, somehow, some day in some form, must confront himself with.

So how do these profound values form such foundational implications?

First of all, a quick note on the notion of *Foundation*. These forms are close to paradigms. or a meta-form of paradigm, since it could aggregate different paradigms. They are the bedrock of our culture, a part of the root from where we grow. One could say that there are different types of paradigms, but that line would take us too much time to present a typology of foundational processes, since they merge with an historical imperative. Secondly, we will follow and pursuit an axiological approach in search for a sort of *material a priori* structure of what we consider to be the heart of the sport values. And thirdly, the necessity to underline the values that imply extreme conditions that force a position, a radical choice by the athlete. And the choice is at the heart of Ethics. The problem with choice is that it has an absolute rule. No matter what, time is finite, choices are endless. You have to make up your mind, since even the negative extreme positions are choices (when you don't choose, or indecision). Choice is mandatory, a fixed structure of life. A metaphysical and ethical fatality. To be synthetic, whether it is inside the area of axiology of sports, applied ethics or ethics of sport, our inquiry is about what spirit animates sport. What constitutes that spirit? Departing from sports axiology in identifying the main axis that allow sport performance, avoiding however the discussion over the hyper complex zones from a conceptual point of view, we will try to isolate the main elements, the values sustaining the essential spirit of sport, trying to overcome: 1) first, the fact that in the present we are facing a public media polarity

between the *undervalued and the overvalued*, where we can witness the strange unbalance, a sort of mediatic idolatry ecstasy, where for example Cristiano Ronaldo can get more broadcasting coverage than probably badminton, table tennis and dressage combined, and; 2) second, the choice inside values between variables and invariables of sport.

This introduction intends to think the sport phenomenon also within the tension between art and game, trying to establish general determinations around problematic structures in a brief, but systematic, approach to the Philosophy of Sport and Ethics. Thus, we will try to understand some founding values in the light of the notions of: a) Effort, b) exhaustion, c) overcoming, and finally, d) beauty.

3. *Effort*

One of the basic elements that serve as the backbone for understanding the sport phenomenon. We all plainly see how clear this means. Without effort it is virtually impossible to progress in sport, or in any other area of life for that matter. That's ground zero from where we all depart. Every athlete knows this beyond or before words. It's more than an *a priori* structural statement, it's an *evidence*. You have to spit your guts out sometimes and keep on pushing all the time. Effort is that core value that moves you towards your goals, to the finishing line, to that dream, it is that *praxis* routine that builds your performance every day of training. Effort is that drive that makes you overcome defeat, the worst moments, failure or broken spirit. From this conceptual and practical evidence basis, we can try to grasp the subsequent derivations. A brief attempt at a possible typology, in order of importance, would have to contemplate:

1) ***Effort in general terms: force and focus.*** What sort of force is effort?

We are dealing here with a mysterious inner force, an inner contract of resolution. It's a bit complicated to grasp and firmly define it positively, it's much easier to find it in its negative forms of depression, etc. The melancholia is on the contrary that opposite form of effort since its installed in the field of boredom and existential fatigue.

So, perhaps the wise thing to do would be to translate the value of effort, and the pertinence of its necessary derivations, through the analysis of the notions of focus, concentration, and determination. The resolvment that one needs to keep moving.

Effort as a mental discipline, in the sense of maintaining the *principle of consistency* regarding sports performance and achievements, in the upbuilding of toughness, dedication and commitment. And isn't that one of the key questions in Sports? How to keep athletes motivated, or even better,

how to achieve regular and consistent results?

2) **Effort and multiplicity**: this means we would have to revisit derivative concepts like: Persistence and resilience, endurance, determination, the strength of commitment, ethical engagement, other correlated areas such as Psychology, Sociology, History, Medicine, etc;

3) **Effort and superlative**: that means Sacrifice. How difficult it is to grasp even briefly this central concept. From its theological roots, to anthropology, to the recent status of neglected value in this new era of immediate pleasure and rewards, it's hard to talk about a forgotten value in our time (although we must pay tribute to the extraordinary work of René Girard). Sacrifice, as a superlative form, evokes the plasticity and elasticity of the notion of limit. When facing the limits usually we can push them further away (and discover after that what we think we couldn't take, actually we can do and more). Pushing the limits is one of the most beautiful characteristics of the human existence. A sort of wonder that born out of the desert. Miracles often are born out of the dark abyss depths of despair. Sometimes you need to touch the bottom to get back up to the surface. And everyone, at same point, will have to face their own demons.

In conclusion, two brief final notes on the value of effort:

a) *first, regarding **mental strength and the dark side of the force***: the body-mind problem. Maintaining the motivation, enthusiasm, focus and belief are sometimes hard to achieve. One must learn how to deal with the negative sources like anxiety, distractions, nervousness and jitters, social pressure, etc, in order to control and focus on the task, the challenge, the game, the dream, or just the training exercise in hand. That brings to light the question of willpower and determination;

b) *second, **the here and now, into the zone, into the void***. That *here and now* that the sport effort embodies, present a close encounter to the focus that practices like zen-budhism also clearly understand, a practice of attention, a flow similar to flying, to glide over a landscape.

In our days, these feeling, and sensation is being widely advertised by new areas like mindfulness, diverse thecnics of meditations, or as a global widespread cultural fact like yoga. Of course, the ultimate challenge would be to balance effort and effortless. It won't be possible to go into more depth in this matter, but all that I would like to say is present in the Japanese poetic tradition of the Haiku. That perfect focus and attention to the little gesture, to the simplicity and astonishment

between the micro and the macro, between the miniscule and the divine that inhabits all around us. The Japanese haiku is a door to the humility and grace of being alive.

Although the *here and now*, that is so hard to grasp conceptually, and to express into a rational discourse and linguistic logic, has a simple and immediate form in Sports: sweat. Sweating is a sort of cry of the body (alongside crying that is also water), sweating is the visible translation of a physical catharsis. A human body shining, covered in the water of sweating playing a sport, is the most perfect vision of effort, and sometimes, maybe even an effortless effort (a state of superior pure intuition, close to the Japanese *satori*).

4. Exhaustion

By enlarging the notion of abandonment/surrender, the here and now (*hic et nunc*) of the effort, that expresses itself as transpiration, that kind of global crying of the body, we will logically encounter fatigue. Exhaustion as a sports *catharsis* already implies both pain and pleasure. Sacrifice and discipline as foundational values demand of effort this form of surrender as liberation, and exorcism from the drives of life and death that demands the overcoming of limits. Of course, one could hesitate between the consideration of taking exhaustion not as a value but as a natural consequence of effort. Why should we consider exhaustion as a core value? Because exhaustion is the ultimate, unequivocal proof of effort. Reaching the limit is part of the process. Not being the end of the process, it's a mean. But you really do have to reach it. And once you've reach it, you will find things. Things about the limit but also about yourself. So, you have to embrace exhaustion as a friend. *No pain, no gain*. as the saying goes.

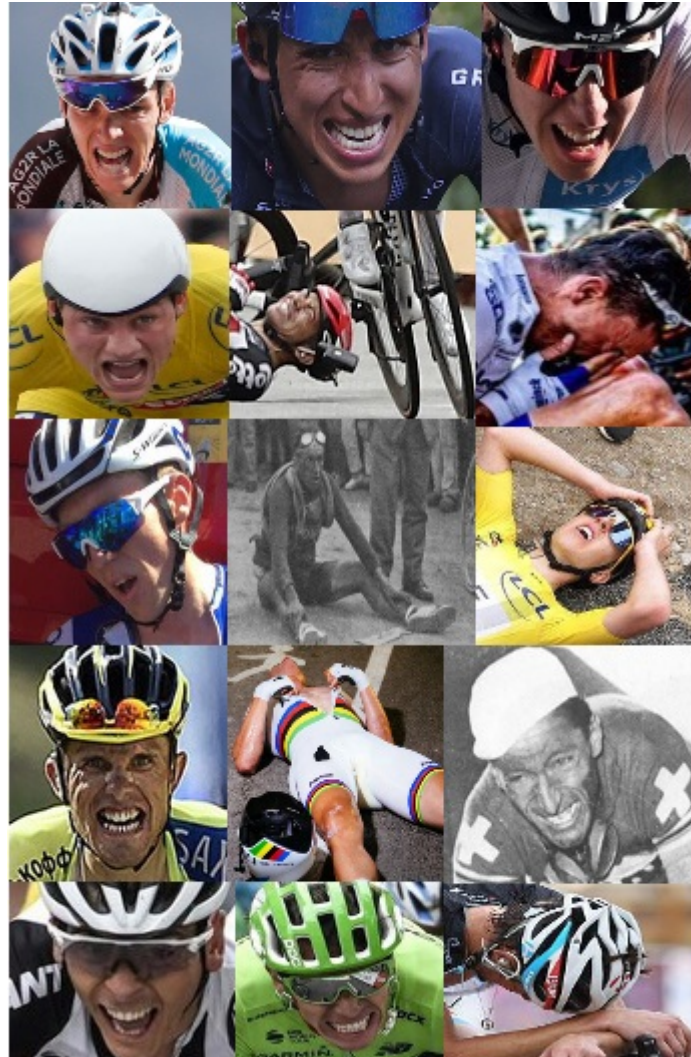
Let's quickly review this threefold concept in its:

1) Theoretical value of exhaustion. There is an internal logic to sports, or to any game or play in general. This means to underline the idea of *abandonment/surrender* to the game, that rescues the general principle (structuring internal logic of the game) that the game is played and at the same time plays us. There is an absolute characteristic in this *immediate* (ambiguous territory between instinct and reflection) nature that we could call a *vital flux*. Signifying that when you surrender to the game, your total focus is there, it's in tune, you inhabit a sort of flux, a sort of flow. (***flux – flow***). Gadamer also thought about the notion of play/game in relation to Aesthetics, but fundamentally as a key figure that incorporates hermeneutics, and it occurs as a movement, but with an *intrinsic seriousness* (who doesn't take the game seriously spoils the game);

2) Practical value of exhaustion. There is nothing like exhaustion to exhibit the extensive dialectical problematic of pain and pleasure. We usually tend to associate exhaustion with suffering. In our contemporary world it has really sadistic silhouettes that are connected to depression, burn out, etc. But when it comes to sports, exhaustion is part of the game. Especially when we are thinking about training. Because it's in training that you realize your weaknesses and strengths, that you sacrifice so many things, but at the same time the immense pleasure and reward of all you learn and correct, what you improve, and at the end of the training session that good feeling of freedom of exhaustion, the lightness and the happiness you experience (all this factors must not divert our attention to all the risks involved: the risk of injuries, of fatigue, etc). There is a fatal difference between facing the limits and the extreme or facing disrespectfully the abyss. The overtraining, for example, is the lack of respect for the absolute need of balance, of rest, of not obsessing, in short, everything has its own time. And time is almost all we are. All the lessons we learn need time too. Time to digest, to assimilate and sediment inside us, to become oneself. Jean Piaget knew this perfectly. The fatigue in sport is a real issue. Physically, but also mentally and emotionally. This topic surely vast and complex integrates questions related to sports medicine, and we must now leave it for further occasions and discussions;

3) Mystical value of exhaustion. Probably the most hidden part of exhaustion, the least elaborated and studied, but simultaneously the most interesting and profound. There is an endless power of *catharsis* in the exhaustion process. But moreover, there is also an exorcism involved. For those more skeptical and pragmatic this might seem a very unusual approach to sports. But regardless of our ideological backgrounds, the mystical side of sport is a reality. Whether a player is a religious person or either a coach has some particular lucky charm or ritual to avoid the misfortune and bad luck, or so many more infinite examples, beside all that we must highlight the mystical territory in sport as an intrinsically part of it. It's a possible no man's land, but once you have entered it you can't ignore it. When you go beyond a certain frontier of exhaustion, how can you keep moving on, moving forward? Strangely enough, it's through your inner strengths. This means facing and exorcising your fears, ghosts, ruins, rage, pain and suffering. It's an inner battle. A sort of profound purge by the root, to your core. One could argue that an athlete is also pushed by training, habit, hope, light and faith. That is also true. But that is the favorable wind, but in the dark, and when you are surrounded by mirrors, one must spit the truth, spit your guts, spit the heavyweight that pushes you down and drowns you. And in those cases, the face is truly the window of the soul. You can watch this during a marathon, or at the finish line of an athletic race. At any given point, you must face your dark passenger.

4.1 Breaking point: shadows and dust. Take a deep breathe into the big dive. The value of exhaustion is beyond . But it's also a surface, a face. The mask of pain of the athletes it's the most beautiful picture of the concept. I once imagined a short film just with those faces. A failed film is like an invisible ruin. The mask of pain during the race, after the race. The draining and relief. The finish. Diving in time as a loss of the notion of time. *Atlas of pain I:*



4.2 Finish line: the Lazarus effect. The *finish line* paradigm: we are always alone. In the end, it's you against you. And in the finish line that comes up again. Beyond the poker face. Images of redemption and survival. In a brief moment, all that time behind you is squeezed into that brief moment. Histories. Personal histories of resilience and overcoming, from gutter to glitter, *lixo e luxa*. To be synthetic, my hypothesis for a mystical side of sport is rather simple:

Every great athlete has to go through a process of exhaustion, death and resurrection⁵.

I once imagined a short film just with those bodies, laying down by the finish line. A failed film is like an invisible ruin. *Atlas of pain2*:



⁵ Since talking about the mystical would takes us in a long journey, let us stop at this point with the affirmation of sport as a mix hybrid of passion-purge, excess and balance (from *akrasia* to *ataraxia*, and other dispositional determinations of various order). Finally, before ending this topic, just to state the relative insufficiency of words when we enter what truly matters. This insufficiency is also the vital force and importance of poetry. Pindar, *Pythian 11*.

5. Overcoming

5.1 Thinking about this key concept draws a series of physical and mental consequences that are established within Ethics, but also as the central nucleus of sports practice. Knowing the limits and overcoming them is no easy task. Let's try to quickly map the main questions:

1) Overcoming (general terms). Main engine of all sport fields. No doubt about it. The philosophical tradition in this matter is quite considerable. From Aristotle to Kant, from Nietzsche to Freud, it has been a central issue in thinking about Ethics, action and will. Overcoming is a maximum expression of willpower. It would be certainly too long and impossible to trace all the theoretical background on this matter. One thing is certain: it's a fundamental value. Especially regarding positions, situations or events where you must act. And act here and now.

When you overcome something its sort of implied that it wasn't easy. Overcoming is understood here as an exorcism battle in the exhaustion arena, but its extendible to all other landscapes and scenarios. The exhaustion space is a territory of chaos. It demands overtaking or surrender. One must fight to survive the dizziness, the vertigo. It's a very close atmosphere to the one the artist also faces. It's a dangerous period. Nietzsche understood this very clearly: *when you look into the abyss the abyss looks right back at you. Inside you.* The worst thing it could happen is to freeze. To be hypnotized by the abyss. It takes courage to move, to react. Freud also saw this battle between a pulsion of death and life, between *Eros* and *Thanatos*, Nietzsche sees Apollo and Dionysus. Plato and Socrates saw a black and white horse. The history of philosophy is full of this dual figures, dichotomies and binomial combinations that represent and express this battle inside every one of us. But the battle is not the end. Overcoming it is the next vital step. Overcoming the limits. The spirit and the will to win. And the one who wins must be starving. In Portuguese there is a popular expression for this: *ganha quem tem mais alma*, meaning the spirit of victory. But there is a part of overcoming that goes beyond this. Overcoming not in the sense of superiority, greatness, subdue or overpower. It has to do with *excellence*. And excellence is a process, a search. We must not confuse it with the pressure of perfection. Or overcome desire, ego and obsession of winning even. Overcoming is another word for excellence. To overcome is to excel. To surpass the inner *agon*. It's a quest, a search or a tension towards perfection, but ultimately, towards wisdom, *phronesis* and *eudaimonia*;

2) Overcoming as Excellence. Since this is probably one infinite topic of discussion and debate in the Philosophy of Sports, lets systematically present some important sub-derivations and silhouettes of overcoming as:

2.1) Yūshū (iushiu). In Japanese culture a movement towards perfectionism. A sort of perfect gesture, precise and harmonious. Possible folds and sub determinations for deeper understanding: *Mushin, shugyō, Haiku;*

2.2) Kusala. Also in the eastern tradition, Buddhist reading, in the ethic dialectical sphere of good and evil, and the progress of the existence towards perfection, moral stairway and constructive path;

2.3) Arête. In the western tradition, from Aristotle to Nietzsche, either through the willpower of extreme metamorphosis beyond-human or a golden middle way, excellence as always been in the center of western thought. But it is in proximity with the eastern view in the sense of a moral and ethical hermeneutic approach, *i.e.*, the interpretation of excellence (*arête*) is differentiated from perfection (*technê*) besides its natural communication possibilities. But it diverges since excellence is understood here as the superation and transcendence of the strict point of view of the technical execution (*technê*), its excessive to that point of view. In brief, in the conceptual trilogy that we could constitute to analyze sports in general (*arête- technê – epistêmê*), both wisdom and excellence would be at the top of the ladder;

2.4) Virtue. In the philosophical and Christian religious tradition in a sense of ethics virtue. In a more pragmatical approach one could say its related to an old idea of *warrior-athlete*. There is a poetic access to the notion through Nietzsche or Pindar, but in concrete terms the equation is *training-repetition-perfectioning*. And of course, enduring this *threefold process*. Enduring is another way to overcome and a path to excellence. To transcend the pain and suffering. That's why heroes and role models are so important: through their example drawing the lines, the challenges and the limits, we behold the impossible-possible, the eager to excel and surpass, etc. The imitation and admiration in sports is crucial to the process of learning and developing athletes. *We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit.* Never give up, never surrender. You got to show heart. You must be hungry. Arête as excellence it's not the or one perfect performance, it's the fight and the process to get there, to the highest levels where values and ideals are part of your breathing and the way you move your body. It's the pursuit of excellence, the drive that always drawn to the impossible, into the unknown. To overcome, to transcend, to dare;

2.3) Overcoming as courage (Risk and the value of courage). The question of courage can be divided in relation to its central point: courage of action and courage of thought. There are a few men, few, as we will see later, who seem to accumulate this double dimension. They are exemplary cases and therefore rare. It is a problem that has been thought of since the origin of our culture and which is linked, beyond the military frontier, to a philosophical but also an ethical and moral question. The problem of courage is, in a sense, a false problem. He is nullified by the very act of courage itself. And this is linked to time. It is only a hesitation that is resolved in the moment. But negatively, the problem of postponement, procrastination, can be posed internally. What does it mean to postpone? Not having the courage to solve? Or being hostage to laziness? Thus, the problem unfolds positively, for example in relation to the act of greater or lesser courage and in the debate of military awards of recognition, and negatively in relation to what is not brave. What seems simple may not be so, that is, we are faced with the essential ambivalence of courage and cowardice. In this regard, director John Ford tells us of this ambivalence in the discussion about whether courage is innate or acquired, saying that his wildest and most fearless acts were always those of a coward trying to prove that he was not, but deep down he knew he was a coward. Courage has an umbilical relationship to fear. Why? Because it is an absolute problem that works on the edge of survival, and a radical affirmation of the solid structure of life: either kill or die. On the battlefield this is most evident. The issue of courage from the military point of view, besides being innate or trained, is realized. And it's not just individual. But the question of courage does not end with the military life. It has to do with life. All life.

And when life pulls us to the ropes, we have to spit the truth.

If we want to live, life demands courage from us. This may be due to the fact that to courage may also belong that strange virtue of supporting and enduring one's life. But there are different times in life, biologically speaking. But what does this have to do with courage?

This is the fact that courage is generally associated with youth. This existential stage where we seem to be capable of everything, where momentum and courage reign. We are invincible when we are young. But that is not quite so. In the philosophical debate, the question is related to virtue, but also to the difficulty of identifying more or less courageous acts in relation to another virtue: prudence. And maturity, unlike youth, has more to do with prudence. The strength of youth seems to contrast with more mature prevention, with experience, anticipation and restraint. Don't confuse courage with foolishness, such as the drunken courage that is just the lack of vision of the danger by chemical effect. There is a natural relationship between youth and courage. The courage of the young man is his vital passion, and his fearless being has to do with this confidence of his

condition. This does not mean that someone more mature cannot be brave. What is problematized here is the relationship between courage and prudence, in terms of virtue, and ultimately the understanding of the value of a courageous act. This act of courage can be greater when you risk more. The risk is already within the logic of courage. Courage has to do with overtaking. Of risk, of fear, of probabilities. Abandonment to the game. Blind abandonment. Decided at that moment. Which is different from considering putting yourself at risk or deciding to do so. It is evident that the debate about the virtue of courage is different from the analysis of a courageous act, but they cannot be far apart. That is why we speak of virtue and excellence. Excellence is the confrontation of the impossible. We are afraid of what escapes our measure. Courage is about disproportion.

Holiness sanctity is the disproportion of courage. And it implies sacrifice, readiness and fortitude. The fortitude is the root of courage. It is born of an inner force. But also, for love of neighbor, love for others. This relationship to others often allows us to see in a courageous act the forgetting of oneself. In heroicity, unlike cowardice, no one is left behind. Morally determined by the circumstances of risk, pressure and altruism, paradoxically it is these same indicators that attest to the fact that courage goes beyond moral duties. It is almost impossible to determine the decision-making process and rational process of courageous decision-making. The absence of weighting, or instant weighting, implies the unique character of each situation. The lonely character of this is transversal to all times, but in wartime it becomes more visible. Beyond all possible mythologies and idealizations, the war hero already presupposes an excessive dose of courage. In a scenario of destruction and death, we can only imagine what kind of character will inhabit those superior gestures that defy all odds. If these gestures go beyond the moral boundaries of exceptionality, they leave a trace of inspiration in common viewers. It is admiration for the impossible that inspires. Inspires ordinary courage in relation to the extraordinary. And in fact, it may not be in exceptional circumstances like war. The hero as a rare case, or courage as the common element of humanity, always causes astonishment when it happens in the most adverse situations, such as illness. The disease bears witness to this relation of the problem of courage to experiences of pain and endurance, showing how much courage there is to sacrifice. If we think about cases of long-term disease fighting, we can get a glimpse of the fortitude and courage that exists in these people. Then an act of courage becomes an attitude of courage. This is also why we spoke earlier about the relation of courage to life as a whole. From this existential perspective we see courage in relation to fear and anxiety. And life is made out of fear and courage. In the ontological relation to the anxiety and despair of human nature, courage allows overcoming and overcoming as self-affirmation. It is given as overcoming. Also, of oneself.

2.4) Overcoming as emotion. That immediate sensation of raw energy flowing through you, the feeling of achievement, electrifying goosebumps, the ecstatic pleasure that overwhelms you.

6. Beauty

Finally, we will face the question of the beautiful and the sublime in relation to sport. What are the implications of this particular type of game? Is there room for such a consideration in the current context of quantification of the functionalist and pragmatic approach? Can we think outside of statistics and rescue creativity? We will see in what sense, and extent, the notion of beauty is vital for the development of the sports phenomenon. This movement of the game, or play, is an attempt to leave the absolute point of view of subjectivity (pleasure) as transcendent to the subject-object scheme. The game, in its relation to the work of art, opens the world and, paradoxically, as a movement, it is dominant, similar to a ritual. The analogy between artwork and game will allow Gadamer to construct an interpretation of the Human Sciences, and more specifically of hermeneutics, considering aesthetic experience not only a mode of experience, but the *essence* of experience itself. The game as movement, a process that takes place in the being-between, shows the aesthetic experience as an experience of openness and transformation of the subject. This *abandonment of/to the game*, Gadamer intuition in this movement of the game, as pendulum movement is, in some way, the proper structure of the understanding that will be sought here between rule and exception. This pendularity could be condensed in:

a) **Beauty and the particular: towards sublime.**

a.1) *General taxonomy.* In this systematic approach one could say that the pendulum is between variation and distinction between three different stages:

1. **recreation**, or concerning pleasure;
2. **improvisation**, or intermediate stage in which technique is surpassed;
3. **creation**, or a superior stage where the game itself is recreated.

a.2) Particular derivations.

a.2.1 Beauty and inspiration: the player's creativity in the moment of decision, or in that key moment of the game when the pressure was stifling, this space of individuality is non-negotiable, and despite being in the athlete's hand, it is also in the fate of his destiny as randomness. A passionate mix of beauty, inspiration and chance. Luck is part of the game;

a.2.2 Of uniqueness and singularity: the power of example. Michael Jordan, Maradona, and so many other countless leading athletes in their own peculiar form. The notion of particular and extraordinary also relates to simplicity (exceptional players apply to them the three general stages: recreation, improvisation and creation. That's why is sometimes visible in these players the fun and inner child while playing). But let's stress and pinpoint one of the greatest paradoxes in sport: there is no individuality without the collective, even in individual sports;

a.2.3 The beauty of sport is based on creativity, which means a specific dialectic of beauty in the **s p o r t i n g** **a r e n a** :
a) *understanding of the rules*; b) *breaking the rules*, and c) *overcoming the rules* (the impossible accomplished, the incredible and unexpected). The genius establishes new rules, new goals to surpass. The uniqueness of the athlete-genius reveals that exceeding the rules means going beyond genetics, strategy, intelligence, emotions, contingency. It means understanding, interpretation, experimentalism, risk taking, clarity and vision;

a.2.4 The beauty of sport is its immediacy. Pure thinking in motion. Thinking body. No explanations, just silent, instantaneous demonstrations and execution. Live and direct. From the player's eye to the spectator's eye. An umbilical bond, sharing something primitive.

b) Beauty as redemption.

Beauty as redemption, after a game or training, fair and light exhaustion, come to terms with yourself. The transfigurative power of beauty, transformative and revealing (as we have seen before in the *Atlas of pain 1-2*, the redemption comes in the end, and in the end, all is clear). From the most nihilistic possibilities interpreted as transformation and metamorphosis, or from the more theological *exegesis* as redemption and salvation, beauty is present. Also, in the intersection

between aesthetics and ethics as virtue, or in its metaphysical version where beauty is salvation;

c) **Beauty and hypnosis: inhabiting the sublime.** There is a sort of magic and enchantment in beauty no great thinker or artist could ever dissect completely. This mysterious quality is perhaps what keeps us under its spell. It's a sort of unexpected that assails us, maybe to haunt or everyday platitude. This unexpected could be interpreted as:

c1) Poetic beauty. Following Tyrtaeus or Pindar in the revealing of a material moving beauty. Body and *Kinesis*, forging and endeavor of the sublime. It probably arises when the game is transfigured, changing the rules, and going beyond the limits, in the end, it inaugurated a new game within the game being played. But with grace. This is also what allows the evolution of the game. From the new learning of the new generations with the great geniuses, through innovation and inspiration, leadership and example (common perplexity: "*I've never seen anything like this, I didn't know that this was possible*", etc.). In a nutshell: it's a filigree relationship between aesthetics and knowledge (example: when you know more about the game, the more you appreciate its aesthetics and vice versa);

c2) **Poetic beauty and beyond.** Three brief examples:

1) the poetic beauty of the movement and suspension. The sublime of the movement would be its stop, as Zeno well saw;

2) another possibility would be to verify a proximity to a moral code such as *Bushido*. This would allow us to reveal the hidden and submerged relation between the athlete and the warrior;

3) the poetic beauty of intuition, beyond and before words. *Satori*. A state of intuition, superior to the common athlete or sportsman, that would reveal fluidity and communion with the world. A superior stage of the game and art, where the air is thin and rare.

7. Sports and ethics: the rebirth of virtue beyond entertainment

Whatever the approach might be, its undeniable the understanding of sports as a performative and transformative power. That position in our society is also a great responsibility for all those involved in the sports world. To conclude this compact dissertation on the foundational values in sports, I would like to propose some brief notes about the values we must not forget. Or just simply highlight some of the conditions we should embrace when we think and act on sports, and all its virtuous qualities.

7.1 Pleasure.

Someone is playing basketball alone. The sound of the ball in the floor, the rebounds, the sound of the net when it's a perfect shot. Sports in itself, self-sufficient, is a source of inspiration. You and your sports, doing what you love. Even when it hurts. Looking at all the main concepts we have confronted till now maybe there is one lacking in evidence and relevance: the joy of sports. The sunny side and happiness of the sweating body, mirror of all the drops running down your face. The passion of sports, playing with enthusiasm, performing with pleasure. Not just winning, but the actual delight in the game, to overcome, to repeat, to learn, to seize the day. From all the range and palette of values from resilience to resistance, there is one ultimate that is engraved in every heart: never give up. We all know that: from weekend runners to high performance athlete, the pressure and challenge, to surrender to that limit, or that vision of limit, and to struggle for one more second, one more round, one more meter. To endure. We can do all the historical research but in the last chapter those will be the words and ideas at the finish line. All heroes, anonymous and famous, all idols, will know suffering and joy, injuries and celebrations, but at the end of the line, the horizon, the limit, you and your limit. And you will have to surrender to that limit one day. You have to deliver that syntony, flux, mental strength, guts, there are a lot of names for that. Surrender to the game is accepting the fundamental dialectics of pain and pleasure, of sacrifice, the will reveal the game as an autonomous value. In our time there are a lot of concepts that try to mask this simple and evident truth. They call it adrenaline, pleasure, dopamine, moments of decompression

leisure, quality time, caring for oneself, etc. That limit that is simultaneously a horizon but also a wall, a mirror, a path. From pain to joy, from resolution to crisis, it's what you love that will save you in the end. Sports is an affirmation of life, a testimony of love for life. Sport as happiness. The happiness of movement, of autonomy, which unfortunately we so often only enjoy and contemplate when we are sick or old, due to incapacity. Its clearer in those moments where we can no longer have one of the best things in life. The last coronavirus prohibitions showed us precisely that.

7.2 Duty and values

There is an ongoing battle in our time between leisure, hosted by boredom, and freedom and truth, hosted by the human nature. It's a tricky guerilla warfare most of the time fueled by the dictatorship of the political correctness and all the make-up that it involves in so many areas of our social life. Because that would be a gigantic problem to address, I would prefer to humbly point out some footnotes to the ethical dimension:

- 1) no one denies the intrinsic value of the interpretation of sport as leisure. Besides health as a fundamental principle of our society, we have all the uncountable benefits of sport, physical and mental. But rather than leisure, I would propose lightness. There is an evident weight in our daily life. Maybe we could just imagine the lightness of seeing our idol play, simpler times, observing and admiring the grace and inspiration of someone playing or even ourselves playing, that throw us back mainly to our childhood or teenage years. Maybe that's just too naivety. But maybe we could still remember that joy that derives from simplicity, from the lightness of beauty, not from the rush to status;
- 2) truth and sports. Example: the affection of the fan and the club. As one of the few remaining spaces of unequivocal truth in society. You've got that shirt, you're from that club, and you can't be at the same from other. And it is visible to others who you are at that moment. The adept is one of the last places of *pharresia*, and without apologizing for it;
- 3) ethics and sports. The rebirth of virtue towards an ethic of exhaustion, overcoming and care. Surrender to the game, focus of the mind, care of the athlete (coach, family, organization, of himself);

4) face the possibility of sport containing in itself a sort of spirituality. This agonistic perspective means to assume a relation to religiosity, either internal or external, which reminds us of an old Greek connection between good and beauty;

5) sport and values. To develop a healthy space for a Philosophy of luck. This means to flee from the totalitarian idea of absolute control of the game and its variables. It's a humility lesson to always bear in mind: chance is a fundamental element of sport. All champions know how they depended on that lucky star in that game, or in that play. We can also see it by the misfortunes of the other. Either way, it's always good to remind that factor (alongside a possible general taxonomy of analysis based on: elements, factors, models, paradigms, foundations);

6) sports and reification. To surpass the body-machine paradigm and to place alongside the strive for victory also the care for the athlete. And to underline the person in its totality means that they must be perceived more than pure objects and merchandise. Maybe we should, or could, tax greed.

7.3 New ethical horizons and challenges

Trying to draw the upcoming challenges and paradigms is relatively easy since our culture is mainly based upon the idea of confrontation. This signifies that we have a dialectical matrix, as Kuhn so elegantly showed us, towards a logic of survival of the innovation or conservation of the old. Our only real problem is towards the idea of new, and what it could mean as an illusion. When its real, it's the only real thing one should fight for. The power of attraction it encloses always brings us towards the brink of a crisis. That's probably one the most famous quotes in Philosophy. So, I would bet that someone, somewhere, is going to outline an ethical crisis. But our culture is only about that. Not just ethical. Western culture is based on the notion of crisis. It has assumed different forms, in different areas, but it's always the same nuclear systematic logic. In sports, today, we have an ethical crisis. That's absolutely true. The problem is the dimensions it took. The dilemma is that in the battle between Sports-art and Sports-industry, one could lose track of the emergency of the cyberpolitical and cultural shock that is upon us. There is a small window in *e-games* where we can start to glimpse some of the new problems arriving at our doorstep. Sports and transhumanism, the cyborg paradigm and the enhancement challenge, are just some of the ideas we can anticipate with tremendous consequences on the sports world, its future, and it's the fusion with technology. But between past and future, one could say that the new challenges will probably face the four pillars we have discussed.

At this time, remembering our four core values, one could conclude that these different elements are probably only one movement that link different parts, maybe these different ingredients are just different steps of a climbing towards uniqueness. Maybe it's just a single breathing. Maybe all this argumentation could resonate as a humble description of a training session. Anyway, and apart from this parallel final note, we tried to establish a differentiated and segmented treatment of these factors but also to promote for their unified and co-dependent understanding. Our ambition is, however, to summarize this point in the synthesis of the consideration regarding the notions of risk and the value of courage. If these values are connected and somehow mixed all together, we could draw two final lines: immanence and transcendence. This pendularity is accompanied by the threefold paradigm of sport: *body-mind-soul*. If the body and mind are in the realm of knowledge, we must not forget the importance and virtue of wisdom. Old words, forgotten words, that are probably out of fashion. But here is the conclusion that probably will never fade away, the inner value of sport that we would like to pay our final tribute: *the healing power of Sport*.

Caldas da Rainha, September of 2021

Non erit vobis in Deum non erit vobis in gratia Dei

I.

CORPO-SABER

BODY-KNOWLEDGE

1. *Manuel SÉRGIO*

A crença gera biologia

O Prof. José Antunes de Sousa, quando ambos lecionávamos (e, para lecionar, estudávamos) no Instituto Piaget, em Almada, muitas vezes me acompanhou em diálogos vários sobre um desporto de perfil humanista, onde o facciosismo clubista não cabe – um desporto que fomente o civismo e a cidadania e portanto se transforme num espaço privilegiado de socialização e de integração. E terminava a sua colaboração, nos meus trabalhos, com uma frase que não esqueço: “A crença gera biologia”. Relembro, neste momento, o Konrad Lorenz que distinguia no Desporto uma inigualável forma ritual de luta, que nos ensina a dominar, a humanizar o que, em nós, é instintivamente violento. Não há competição desportiva que, para ser verdadeiramente desportiva, não se afirme, pela competição, por uma vontade imparável de vitória, mas... com normas, com regras, com ética. São precisamente estas normas, estas regras, esta ética, que fazem do Desporto uma indispensável pedagogia. A combatividade, a agressividade, no Desporto, só se justificam, quando reguladas, quando eticamente responsáveis. Daí, que possamos escrever, sem medo de errar, que o Desporto tem, como poucas outras atividades sociais, uma indiscutível missão civilizadora, começando pelo ensino de uma linguagem de não violência. O desenvolvimento do Desporto, designadamente o de alta competição, ou de alto rendimento, supõe planeamento e gestão, organização e produtividade e ainda medidas integradas e especialistas, interessados numa tarefa comum. Ora, tudo isto recusa, dispensa, exclui a violência, a desordem, o caos. O Desporto é um jogo competitivo e portanto uma práxis que não pode deixar nunca de perder a sua condição lúdica, o seu espírito lúdico. Por isso, porque é jogo e não é guerra, ganhar ou perder, no Desporto, exige um clima de respeito mútuo, pois que os que ganharam e os que perderam foram iguais, no esforço, no pundonor, na vontade de vencer.

Um estudioso, como o Prof. Sílvio Lima, escreveu, na década de 30 do século passado, que “o verdadeiro desporto não é para ser fruído como espetáculo senão de quando em quando e à maneira helénica, pura, cultural. Quem considera o desporto uma disciplina formadora do homem, isto é, quem faz do desporto um método pedagógico, maiêutico, humanístico, sentirá sempre um arrepio invencível (um **sacer horror**) por todo o exibicionismo. Há um pudor, uma frágil pudicícia desportiva, que importa defender” (**Desportismo Profissional**, Editorial Inquérito, Lisboa, p. 40). Confesso o meu pecado: no Desporto, sempre fui mais espectador do que ator. Em rapaz, as Salésias foram a minha “segunda casa”, mas sem nunca pisar a relva do primeiro campo relvado do

País. O futebol, o basquetebol, o andebol, o rãguebi nunca os pratiquei, como jogador federado. Mas sempre alegremente os acompanhei, desde criança, ao lado do meu saudoso Pai, para aplaudir os atletas de camisola azul e cruz ao peito. Nesses recuados anos (se bem me lembro) os treinos eram trissemanais; a preparação física poderia assim sintetizar-se: corridas à volta do campo e um pouco de Ling, para completar; e, no “treino de conjunto”, já se topavam treinadores taticamente engenhosos. Só que o profissionalismo ainda não se implantara e, tecnologicamente, nada havia ainda de significativo. Sim, havia de facto um “amor à camisola” que morreu, anos depois, quase definitivamente. Mas era pouco, muito pouco, diante do que hoje prescreve a metodologia do treino desportivo e a própria medicina desportiva e as exigências, de rigor extremo, do profissionalismo no futebol. E, assim, com este panorama como ponto de partida, o futebol que eu contemplava, embevecido, nas Salésias, não poderia ter o ritmo, a intensidade, a força do futebol atual.

Hoje, ganha quem tem os melhores jogadores, os melhores treinadores, a melhor organização e... sabe o que faz e porque faz! Chega a ser uma crença, inteiramente necessária à coesão do grupo. Já num dos meus anteriores artigos eu citei Bruce H. Lipton autor do livro **The Biology of Belief** (tradução portuguesa da Sinais de Fogo, Lisboa, 2015). Volto a ele: “A ciência revelada neste livro define o modo como as crenças controlam o comportamento e a actividade genética e, conseqüentemente, o desenvolvimento das nossas vidas” (p. 243). Há valores em que se torna absolutamente indispensável acreditar, se queremos uma sociedade mais humana. O meu Amigo, Doutor Pedro Abreu, professor de engenharia informática da Universidade de Coimbra, teve a gentileza de facultar-me uma entrevista de Nuccio Ordine, professor, filósofo e crítico literário italiano, especialista em Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), um dos mais conhecidos filósofos do Renascimento, onde colhi o seguinte: “Temos gente superespecializada e que perdeu o sentido geral e global do saber. Hoje, as escolas e as universidades preparam os alunos para seguirem uma especialização e isso é perigoso, porque as escolas e as universidades não proporcionam uma cultura geral. Einstein já dizia que a especialização pode matar a curiosidade e esta está na base do avanço da ciência e da tecnologia. Por exemplo, a atual diretora do CERN (o laboratório europeu de física de partículas) é uma italiana, Fabíola Gianotti, que fez estudos clássicos, aprendeu piano durante dez anos e é, simultaneamente, uma especialista em Física de renome mundial. Os maiores arquitetos italianos, como Renzo Piano, fizeram estudos clássicos. Uma cultura geral de base é absolutamente indispensável a qualquer especialista”. No meu modesto entender, é indispensável porque sem prévia revolução das mentalidades não há revolução científica...

Sou tentado a folhear, de novo, a entrevista de Nuccio Ordine: “O que vemos na City, em Londres, no centro financeiro britânico, são pessoas de grande elasticidade mental, pessoas que vêm dos estudos clássicos ou da filosofia, porque compreendem melhor o mundo do que os especialistas em economia e programação”. Para mim, as escolas e as universidades não devem ensinar aos

alunos “generalidades”, ou um confuso sincretismo, ou um maçudo enciclopedismo, mas os princípios estruturantes, ou fundantes, do saber. Qualquer especialidade nasce de um tempo e de um espaço; tem a sua individualidade histórica; deverá exercer-se criticamente, para esclarecer o sentido e a significação da sua prática. Todos estes grandes setores pedem bem mais do que é habitual fazer-se, numa prática profissional. Numa palavra só: pedem “cultura”, que se concretiza na crença e na vivência de determinados valores. Sem iniciação ao pensar, não há ciência. A formação universitária será absolutamente lacunar, se ensinar uma ciência que não é cultura, se esquecer os valores que humanizam a própria vida. Recordo o Gilles Deleuze de **L’Image-Mouvement**: “Os grandes autores de cinema são comparáveis não só a pintores, a arquitetos, a músicos, mas também a pensadores”. E Jean-Luc Godard, em **Jean Luc-Godard par Jean Luc-Godard** (Ed. de Minuit, Paris, 1983) esclarece: “Há muitas maneiras de fazer filmes. Como Jean Renoir e Robert Bresson, que fazem também música. Como Serge Eisenstein, que fazia também pintura. Como Stroheim, que também escrevia novelas faladas, nos anos do cinema mudo. E como Rossellini que faz simplesmente filosofia” (p. 238). Enfim, para saber de cinema, é preciso saber mais do que cinema. Em tudo, há um perfil cultural, que é preciso descobrir, para entender o conhecimento científico, para nos entendermos a nós mesmos e ao mundo onde somos. Em tudo, há valores, para além das ciências, em que é preciso acreditar e que até podem tornar mais forte e consciente do seu valor uma equipa de futebol.

2. Manuel SÉRGIO

A Filosofia da Libertação e a alta competição desportiva

Posso começar com palavras do escritor português Vergílio Ferreira: “Mais forte que as razões é a sem-razão da razão que nos abala e domina” (**Invocação ao meu Corpo**, Livraria Bertrand, Lisboa, 1978, p. 31). Enrique Dussel, argentino, talvez o filósofo mais representativo da “filosofia da libertação” diz, repetidas vezes, que esta filosofia é herdeira do Maio de 68 e da crítica heideggeriana, e da teoria crítica e ainda da filosofia de Emmanuel Lévinas. E escreve que, muito antes da exploração do trabalhador europeu, que Marx denunciou e estudou, já na América Latina o negro e o índio eram escravizados pelos colonizadores europeus, os quais corporizavam a razão eurocêntrica, machista, pedagogicamente dominadora, culturalmente manipuladora, religiosamente fetichista. Para Lévinas (1906-1996) a ética substitui a metafísica, a ética é a “filosofia primeira” e a ética surge, principalmente, na minha relação vivida com o Outro, entendido como sujeito e não como objeto! Mas, para que paulatinamente se implante “uma ilimitada comunidade de comunicação de pessoas que se reconhecem reciprocamente como iguais”, interessa, no entender de Dussel, que se comece por uma ética do discurso, nos mais variados locais da sociedade. É evidente que, para um administrador ou um gestor de um órgão da Comunicação Social, o mundo será entrevisto naturalmente pelo prisma dos negócios, dado que, para ele, no mundo todo, as pessoas não passam de agentes económicos, compradores ou vendedores. O desporto, por seu turno, encontra-se inserido em pleno sistema capitalista. Com efeito, os clubes desportivos funcionam como firmas comerciais que entre si competem, no mercado das várias competições. Por isso, o atleta de altos rendimentos é um novo tipo de trabalhador que vende a um patrão a sua força de trabalho. O amadorismo, na alta competição, acabou...

Quais são os grandes mitos da sociedade burguesa? Em primeiro lugar, a competitividade económica que se apresenta, num sentido metafísico, como qualquer coisa de eterno, superior ao tempo e à história. O desporto, claramente, reproduz e multiplica este mito. Em segundo lugar, a hierarquia resultante dos desempenhos, nas competições, onde os clubes mais ricos se apoderam dos lugares cimeiros, ajudando assim a uma interiorização das relações de produção capitalista. Cria-se assim um mundo tão desigual, que os clubes mais pobres praticamente não existem. Toda a atenção se concentra, nos desempenhos do Real Madrid, do Barcelona, do PSG, do Bayern de Munique, do Manchester United, do Liverpool, do Chelsea e, em Portugal, do Benfica e do Porto e do Sporting (e mais exemplos

poderiam aqui invocar-se). Em Portugal, por exemplo, os programas televisivos ditos desportivos ocupam-se principalmente dos “três grandes”. E dos jogadores dos “três grandes”. Recordo, neste passo, o jogador Sócrates que, nas manifestações anti-ditadura, no Brasil, lançava ao ar, pelo microfone, a seguinte mensagem: “Ganhar ou perder, mas sempre com democracia”. Se numa democracia “tudo é para todos”, nada é menos democrático do que uma competição onde os jogadores de certos clubes têm condições de toda a ordem e em abundância, a que não podem chegar os jogadores dos clubes que... “lutam pela sobrevivência”. Para Huizinga, no seu celeberrimo **Homo Ludens**, qualquer jogo, ou competição desportiva (cito de cor) “vão para além dos limites das atividades puramente físicas e biológicas. Têm uma função significativa, ou seja, têm um sentido”. Se bem que haja “consciências vigilantes” que mantêm o espírito crítico, mesmo no seio das grandes competições desportivas, a esmagadora maioria das pessoas dão ao desporto uma significação social: a vitória de qualquer maneira e a qualquer preço, como o fazem e pensam muitos dos elementos da classe dominante, nas suas instituições bancárias e nas suas fábricas e nos seus comércios, etc., etc., que afanosamente, ansiosamente procuram o lucro, também de qualquer maneira e a qualquer preço.

E assim um certo tipo de sociedade se vai reproduzindo e multiplicando! Na Escola, quando se hipervaloriza, no desporto, a educação unicamente física sobre a formação integral, a disciplina sobre o espírito crítico, a instrução sobre a cultura e se esconde que a saúde não decorre tão-só de meia-dúzia de saltos e corridas, mas de uma sociedade totalmente outra, também se concorre ao estabelecimento, à solidificação da ideologia dominante ou até ao anúncio da ideologia típica de Estados totalitários, que tendem imediatamente a destruir e absorver qualquer assomo de contestação ou de crítica. Na Alemanha de Hitler, onde o Direito assentava na força, no sangue e na raça, e onde se elevou, a princípio absoluto, o direito vital de um povo, com desprezo absoluto dos direitos vitais dos outros povos – na Alemanha de Hitler, o espetáculo desportivo alcançou um indesmentível progresso. Só que o desporto era asfíxiado pelo abraço protetor da tutela, que fazia da prática desportiva mais um espaço de manipulação, de exploração, de alienação e até de propaganda da ideologia nazi. O culto do sensacionalismo, a ambição da riqueza e o orgulho de ser o primeiro em proezas físicas tão-só atentam, indiscutivelmente, contra os mais autênticos valores morais, contra os mais autênticos valores democráticos. Conheço, com alguma minúcia, o que se passa nos maiores clubes portugueses, por generosidade de alguns dirigentes e treinadores de futebol. Desde há vinte ou trinta anos, o desporto, mormente o chamado “desporto-rei”, o futebol, passou a figurar no roteiro de grandes capitalistas, o que significa que nele encontraram um espaço privilegiado para a

implementação das suas convicções.

E, num sistema económico-político onde são reduzidíssimas as vias de mobilidade social ascendente, o desporto de altíssima competição é, para tanto, uma via aberta às crianças e aos rapazes, superdotados, filhos de famílias pobres. Nos jogos de futebol de iniciados, juvenis e juniores, descortina-se um espetáculo, ao lado do espetáculo que nos relvados se movimenta: as ordens, os gritos, os improperios dos pais dos “jovens jogadores” que já antevêem nos seus filhos a “salvação” da família, como o Cristiano Ronaldo o foi da sua. Pena é, digo eu, que seja o futebol a única via de “salvação” das suas famílias! A profissionalização dos jovens futebolistas, neste caso, reflete (e julgo estar a escrever, com discrição e prudência) declarada injustiça social. De facto, continua a ser difícil, neste contexto económico-financeiro, que o desporto se transforme num humanismo planetário, respeitador do vínculo indissolúvel entre a unidade e a diversidade humanas!... Falta-nos agora uma “ética do discurso” que, em Enrique Dussel (cfr. **Ética de la liberación en la edad de la globalización y de la exclusión**, Trotta, Madrid, 1998) supõe que, num diálogo, notícia ou estudo, quaisquer que eles sejam, se verifiquem certos pressupostos: a pretensão de inteligibilidade; a pretensão de verdade; a pretensão de utilização dos meios que melhor podem conduzir à verdade; a pretensão de indesmentível honestidade de processos. Só assim, segundo Dussel, é possível constituir “uma ilimitada comunidade de comunicação de pessoas que se reconhecem reciprocamente como iguais” (idem, *ibidem*, p. 420). Ou seja, no desporto, há outros problemas que uma “ética do discurso” exige se salientem e apontem, para além da tática, dos erros dos árbitros e da brotoeja de rancores que afligem alguns dirigentes do futebol.

Resumo assim o que já escrevi, nesta crónica, até agora: **o futebol é mais do que futebol**. E poderia escrever também: **o desporto é mais do que desporto**. Para nós, os que aceitamos a revolução científica, donde nasce a Ciência da Motricidade Humana, não há jogo, há pessoas que jogam; não há chutos, há pessoas que chutam, não há fintas, há pessoas que fintam. Se eu não compreender as pessoas que fintam e chutam e jogam, não entenderei nunca, nem os chutos, nem as fintas, nem os jogos. No desporto, como uma das especialidades da motricidade humana, é nas ciências sociais e humanas (ou hermenêutico-humanas, no pensar de Habermas) que nos situamos. Os chamados “professores de educação física” são especialistas em humanidade, não são fisiologistas (aliás, há um curso de fisiologia, que não se confunde com qualquer curso de educação física). Para nós, os que aceitamos a revolução científica, donde nasce a Ciência da Motricidade Humana (CMH), o desporto é sempre um pretexto para falarmos do ser humano e de uma sociedade mais solidária, mais fraterna, mais justa. Na Escola, deverá ensinar-se aos alunos da disciplina de

educação física que a saúde não se alcança unicamente com meia-dúzia de saltos e corridas, mas com uma sociedade totalmente outra. O professor de educação física não deverá ocupar-se tão só das qualidades físicas dos seus alunos, mas da formação integral de todos eles... sem partidarizar, mas politizando! Costumo definir a motricidade humana como **o movimento intencional e em equipa da transcendência**. "Da transcendência?" perguntarão, com incontido espanto, alguns dos meus leitores...

O que se pretende dizer, aqui, com a palavra transcendência? Numa sociedade como a nossa, onde a lógica prevalecente é a do "crescimento pelo crescimento", pode confundir-se transcendência com "ter mais". Ora, na CMH, o movimento intencional da transcendência é... para "ser mais". Eu sei que para **ser** é preciso um certo **ter** mas é, sobre o mais, o "ser mais" que se pretende alcançar. Na CMH, o **ter** encontra-se ao serviço do **ser**. Na CMH, a transcendência não se limita à economia e às finanças, nem à política. A transcendência é um problema principalmente filosófico e religioso. A nossa civilização ocidental tem vivido do postulado da primazia da razão, onde o espírito se reduz à inteligência, à tecnociência, aos critérios puramente económicos e onde se põem de lado, como não razoáveis, ou não científicas, a poesia, o gratuito, a fé, o amor. Importa, por isso, transcender e transcendermos, pois que o ser humano não se limita ao "eu penso", também crê e espera e ama. E é precisamente ao crer, ao esperar e ao amar que ele rejeita qualquer espécie de determinismo e desfataliza o tempo e a história. A CMH é movimento intencional, em direção a um novo humanismo, através do desporto, do jogo desportivo, dança, ergonomia, reabilitação, motricidade infantil. O desporto, o fenómeno cultural de maior magia no mundo contemporâneo, tem de ser um pretexto para falarmos de um novo tempo, de um novo mundo, de uma história nova, a que chegaremos através da transcendência, através da superação dos nossos limites físicos, intelectuais, morais, espirituais. Tudo isto exige também um novo treino desportivo, onde a periodização não seja apenas "tática", mas "antropológica e tática". Antes de cada um dos treinos, o treinador deve levantar dentro de si esta pergunta: "Qual o tipo de homem que eu quero que nasça do treino que vou liderar?". Sem homens de qualidade, de excelência, a tática não resulta. Na CMH, pela transcendência, o homem (e a mulher) não é um ser resignado, fatalista. Ele define-se, acima do mais, pelo seu futuro, pelos seus possíveis, por uma certa ideia de Absoluto, fim e princípio da história.

3. Alfredo TEIXEIRA

Declinações do sagrado desportivo

O sagrado, no sentido em que as ciências humanas o declinam é uma construção moderna. Esta forma de mapear o «objeto» sagrado, aproxima-se da epistemologia de Michel Foucault, na medida em que este procurava mostrar, por exemplo, que a loucura ou a delinquência são construções do pensamento, num determinado momento histórico (Foucault 1961). Enquanto «objeto» moderno, a noção de sagrado acompanha a crítica e a erosão da religião (Carrier 2005, 30-40, 92-99). Pode dizer-se que, com a entrada num tempo pós-metafísico, seguindo a expressão de Sloterdijk (2000, 23), as instituições, as narrativas e os símbolos religiosos viram diminuída a sua capacidade de condensar o impulso de transcendência e a definição do seu sentido. Este contexto cultural favoreceu a possibilidade de se considerar a própria atividade de simbolização sagrada, ou sacralizante, como objeto autónomo. Os exemplos abundam no domínio das sacralidades políticas, das mitologias que sustentam as diferentes formas de comunalização humana, das linguagens estéticas acerca da significação espiritual do mundo, das práticas desportivas enquanto modalidade moderna de realização e ultrapassagem de si, etc. A morfologia do sagrado, nas suas múltiplas declinações, apresenta-se, assim como parte da episteme moderna. Neste breve texto, apresentam-se vias de correlação entre o *homo sacer* e o *homo ludens*.

O sagrado não morre, desloca-se

A discussão acerca das remodelações modernas do sagrado e do religioso habitou, de forma profusa, o discurso socioantropológico, no final do século XX. Depois de se terem multiplicado, nas ciências sociais, os discursos sobre a secularização, muitos estavam então mais interessados nos hibridismos que punham em causa as leituras da modernidade a partir da lógica de separação entre a esfera religiosa e a secular. Os debates sobre secularidades religiosas ou sacralidades seculares acabaram por favorecer a centralidade do sagrado como objeto da episteme moderna. Neste domínio, foi particularmente importante o axioma de Roger Bastide, segundo o qual, o sagrado não morre, desloca-se (Bastide 1968, 69).

O historiador Michel Meslin observou que, em línguas como o iraniano, o grego e o latim, o vocabulário do sagrado se desdobra numa dupla face, negativa e positiva (Meslin 1988, 66). É

sagrado o que está imbuído da presença de entidades transcendentais, mas também é sagrado o que está interdito, de forma corrente, aos seres humanos. Nesta perspectiva, sagrado é bifronte, com uma face positiva e outra negativa. A análise das linguagens revela certas constantes: o carácter santo, sagrado, conotado por formas adjetivas, define uma força exuberante, fecundante, capaz de trazer a vida, de fazer surgir as produções da natureza, mas também as interdições que visam a sua proteção. Como sublinha o historiador, este rasto linguístico mostra que a integridade física é protegida por diferentes produções simbólicas que visam salvaguardar o seu valor. Assim, nessa morfologia nativa do sagrado, o que assegura a continuidade da vida e interdita o que a pode ameaçar apresenta-se como «estrutura estruturante», no sentido bourdieusiano (Bourdieu 1980, 88-89).

A influente antropologia do sagrado de Mircea Eliade (1971) está entre as propostas que mais destaque deu a esta indagação. Na sua leitura, a construção de um quadro de referências, que permite a organização das culturas, é a principal função do sagrado. Nenhuma cultura dispensa a referência, por exemplo, a acontecimentos fundadores. A identificação das fronteiras simbólicas de uma cultura depende da constituição de um quadro referencial que permite aos indivíduos esse mapear da existência. Observe-se a metáfora da navegação. Como saber onde se está, de onde se vem, para onde ir, se não há referências? Foi a constituição de uma grelha de meridianos e paralelos que permitiu, de forma rigorosa, atribuir referências a todos os pontos do espaço geográfico, relacioná-los e estabelecer entre eles itinerários. Mas para isso, foi necessário instituir um *ponto 0* – o meridiano de Greenwich. A esses acontecimentos que instituíram o quadro de referência para as culturas, Eliade chamou hierofanias – como a etimologia indica, manifestações do sagrado. Trata-se de acontecimentos que pelo seu carácter extraordinário rompem a homogeneidade do espaço e reorganizam o tempo, através da instituição de um ponto de referência — *axis mundi* (o eixo do mundo), segundo Mircea Eliade.

A ascendência durkheimiana das teorias modernas do sagrado está particularmente presente em José A. Prades, autor de um dos estudos mais importantes sobre a teoria da religião de Durkheim: *Persistence et métamorphose du sacré* (1987). Trata-se de uma perspectiva que procura encontrar uma taxionomia para as «deslocações do sagrado». Procura-se um quadro heurístico que permita perceber a vida religiosa de forma múltipla: uma estrutura da experiência, expressa numa pluralidade das formas do sagrado, que se desdobram historicamente sob o signo da persistência e da metamorfose. José Prades propôs uma tríplice caracterização desta pluriformidade: a «nomo-religião», a «quasi-religião» e a «para-religião», categorias que visam constituir um quadro de leitura das diferentes modulações do sagrado, que vão desde a identificação de uma forma de sagrado considerado como tal num dado sistema cultural, até às formas paralelas ou mesmo opostas à nomo-religião, passando por outras formas próximas quanto à natureza e à função (Prades 1987,

117s).

Na década seguinte, este interesse concentrou-se bastante na discussão sobre as religiões seculares (ou religiosidades seculares). Nos trabalhos do antropólogo Albert Piette, descobre-se um programa de investigação sobre as homologias que aproximam as atividades socialmente reconhecidas como seculares ou religiosas. Essas homologias, na sua proposta, resumem-se a três substratos: representação de uma realidade transcendente; sacralização de pessoas, de ideias ou objetos; existência de complexo mítico-ritual ou, pelo menos, afinidades com a linguagem ritual, quanto às formas de comunicação e transmissão (Piette 1993, 4-5). Este conjunto heurístico pretende, sobretudo, dar conta dos hibridismos próprios das múltiplas modernidades, compreender os processos de fragmentação do *habitus* religioso na região euro-atlântica e a sua disseminação na esfera secular. Albert Piette perseguiu uma metodologia que possibilitasse uma apreensão das modalidades concretas dessas transferências e das figuras de religiosidade que dão testemunho desse hibridismo. Confrontado com uma certa inflação categorial, Albert Piette restringe o conceito de religiosidade a essas formas concretas de presença de elementos religiosos no secular sob o signo da oscilação, mapeando as modalidades de penetração da religiosidade nas atividades seculares (Piette 1993, 40-41).

A proposta deste antropólogo, mais do que um modelo ideal-típico das modalidades de penetração do religioso na esfera secular, pretende ser o ponto de partida para a elaboração de uma grelha de registo etnográfico que ponha em destaque diferentes dinâmicas socioantropológicas: a presença de uma estrutura religiosa no campo secular; o empréstimo seletivo de uma forma religiosa de organização vertida num projeto secular (os significados religiosos que são formalmente transferidos para esfera secular recebem um conteúdo novo); a utilização do sistema classificativo religioso num contexto secular; o desenvolvimento de um projeto religioso explícito em torno de uma temática secular, e no contexto de uma atividade secular; a usurpação e anexação de um conteúdo religioso tradicional aos valores políticos; a transposição comportamental de elementos da atividade religiosa para o campo secular; a analogia de funcionamento, que se pode relacionar com a experiência de absolutização de um determinado valor.

A antropologia de Georges Bataille sublinhou o facto de, no quadro da experiência moderna, se estar perante a descoberta paradoxal de uma imanência que se torna sagrada, o trânsito do profano para a esfera da transcendência. Na perspetiva de Bataille, através desta «profanação», o ser humano tem a possibilidade de aceder ao seu estado original imanente, experimentar o sagrado – trata-se já não apenas da natureza, mas da natureza transfigurada (Bataille 1973, 61-63, 70).

No caso da antropologia do jogo e do desporto, de Roger Caillois (1958), deve assinalar-se o facto de a sua ótica privilegiar, também, este efeito propriamente sacralizante: a instituição de um tempo e um espaço separados, que emblematizam valores partilhados. Na procura de uma categorização dos diferentes tipos de jogo, Caillois tende a situar os desportos na tipologia do *Agôn* – a competição, portanto. Ou seja, a sua atenção parece centrar-se mais na «prova desportiva» do que na prática desportiva como tal. Hoje, não parece claro que esse instinto de competição seja universal na atividade desportiva (Haumesser 2008). Caillois não dá suficiente importância a duas invariáveis do desporto, enquanto jogo: por um lado, a centralidade da nossa relação com o mundo e com outros através do corpo; por outro, o esforço físico, o dispêndio de energia, a disciplina e treino do corpo, o movimento em ordem a uma transcendência.

Estas vias exploratórias encontraram um sonoro eco no âmbito dos estudos sobre as culturas desportivas, nas últimas décadas do século XX. Desde logo, nas leituras dos Jogos Olímpicos enquanto officio solene que celebra a civilização do respeito mútuo entre os povos, segundo uma moralidade que cultiva o gosto pela competição, o sentido do esforço, a solidariedade e a abnegação. Seguindo um quadro de análise durkheimiano, a ritualização do espírito olímpico responderia à necessidade de novas cerimónias que alimentem o «fogo ardente» que sustenta as representações coletivas (Piette 1993, 66-69; Mellor & Shilling 1998, 297-302). Noutros casos, dá-se atenção aos jogos de substituições: fala-se dos estádios como catedrais de betão, onde a multidão experimenta a fusão comunal, exprime o seu encantamento diante de seres excepcionais, e se desfigura o «pagão» inimigo. Nesse contexto proliferaram as metáforas religiosas (Teixeira 2004, 145-149): o espaço separado, o sacrifício, o milagre, a transgressão, a *lectio* matinal de jornais e revistas especializados, os relatos de feitos desportivos inigualáveis, os mártires, a iconografia devocional, os «vendilhões do templo», etc. Tornou-se, assim, preponderante, uma leitura do desporto moderno como dramatização de representações coletivas, nas quais a glória desportiva, como representação da excelência humana, fabrica uma super-humanidade à medida do indivíduo comum, favorecendo o culto da exceção, o espírito de competição e o gosto pela *performance* espetacular (Ehrenberg 1991, 66-69). Parte destas observações, dando corpo aos discursos sobre a sacralidade desportiva, permaneceu refém das analogias, sem a disponibilidade para pensar as homologias estruturais. Apoiadas em diversas leituras da fenomenologia do sagrado, as ciências sociais usaram as vias da analogia para estabelecer nexos entre o desporto e o sagrado, mas, preponderantemente, numa perspectiva funcional. Neste ensaio, interessa perseguir as homologias estruturais, perspectiva epistémica em que se procura identificar os substratos simbólicos que interseccionam diferentes domínios sociais.

Dom e vocação

O esquema do «dom» e da «vocação» está particularmente arraigado nas narrativas acerca da vida artística – podem observar-se, desse ponto de vista, correlações com a vida religiosa no quadro da experiência judaica e cristã. O «dom» e o «talento» preenchem os imaginários que traduzem a percepção do ato artístico, sublinhando o seu carácter aleatório e indecifrável (Menger 2004, 104; Mauger 2006, 238) – como uma possessão. A crença no talento aproxima a construção do valor desportivo de outras formas de construção de valor, como a virtuosidade artística (Wagner 2004). Este regime simbólico da «vocação» está na base da linguagem da predestinação que habita o mito do campeão incriado (Lefèvre 2010, 47). A narrativa vocacional apela ao sentimento de que se «foi feito» para aquilo - «está-lhe no sangue...». É esta alquimia que transforma uma atividade profissional em mística, apelando a uma reserva de experiência que não pode ser deduzida do corpo de conhecimentos e práticas adquiridas (Heinich 2005, 19).

Nicolas Lefèvre, nos seus estudos sobre o ciclismo em França, procurou desvelar o processo social pelo qual o jovem ciclista constrói a percepção de que é «dotado», condição para a interiorização de que o seu destino é a carreira desportiva. A partir do conjunto de entrevistas que realizou, descobriu-se que tal interiorização não é uma revelação súbita. É um processo de conversão. Nos resultados do seu estudo, torna-se patente, a força determinante de uma herança familiar, na qual se enraíza a percepção de que a carreira desportiva desempenha um papel de mobilidade social ascendente. A maior parte dos seus entrevistados reconhece-se como herdeira de uma cultura de ciclismo com origem na família. É clara a participação dos pais nas primeiras etapas de incorporação do *habitus* desportivo, por vezes com um enorme dispêndio económico, mas vivido segundo uma lógica moral de «obrigação». A esse dom, os filhos responderão com o reconhecimento de que metas alcançadas dão continuidade ao sacrifício dos ascendentes. Neste contexto familiar, a primeira metamorfose passa pelo reconhecimento de que todos os constrangimentos que o treino desportivo carrega têm um valor redentor, são legitimados pela necessidade de oferecer as oportunidades necessárias de desenvolvimento ao «ser» do jovem desportista. Assim, o desejo de ascendência social pode facilmente transformar-se em sentimento de dádiva. Tenha-se em conta que, com frequência, o próprio estilo de vida familiar sofre um amplo processo de aculturação, reconfigurando-se segundo as exigências da cultura desportiva (Lefèvre 2010, 55-57).

De acordo com os resultados da investigação de Nicolas Lefèvre, as instituições desportivas, como clubes e federações desempenham uma função de outro tipo, mais ligada aos processos de seleção,

garantindo, por essa via, o acesso ao seu próprio capital simbólico. No trabalho de construção social desta crença desportiva, as instituições reforçam as culturas familiares a partir de dispositivos que facilitam a perceção deste processo como eleição. Os circuitos de observação e seleção de jovens desportistas produzem fronteiras e classificações, integrando num círculo de sacralidade os que acedem a essa via de profissionalização. Mas, para além destes contextos formais de integração e distinção, a investigação de Lefèvre mostrou que os circuitos de reconhecimento informal são, também, decisivos. O *feedback* que envolve o jovem ciclista – encorajando, felicitando, comparando, etc. – participam na construção da crença na vocação desportiva, por vezes, contrapondo à vocação desportiva a perceção de um futuro de poucas oportunidades, se centrado numa trajetória de escolarização (Lefèvre 2010, 59-65). O valor atlético resulta, pois, de um duplo movimento: a performance desportiva e o trabalho social de reconhecimento. A condição própria de ser «separado», corporalizando os valores partilhados e celebrando um destino de eleição, resulta de operações próprias da simbólica do *homo sacer*.

A ascese e a tarefa infinita da perfeição

A comunhão entre a prática «física» e a exercitação «espiritual» é particularmente discernível quando determinadas práticas corporais se querem legitimar no campo do ordenamento desportivo. Este cenário de legitimação assume uma particular pertinência em formas de exercitação física que não fazem parte de uma certa heterodoxia desportiva ou têm uma menor aceitabilidade social. Nesta perspetiva, é interessante retomar os resultados das pesquisas de Alan M. Klein (1993), de David M. Halperin (1997) e de Pascal Duret (2005) sobre as práticas de *Body-building*. Neste contexto, é importante reter que, assim que os atores sentem a necessidade de suportar as suas práticas na ordem da legitimidade desportiva, os discursos acerca de uma espiritualização das práticas corporais emergem, sob a figura central da ascese, código acelerador desse processo de legitimação e uma das «estruturas estruturantes» que mais aproxima as culturas desportivas do fenómeno religioso.

Nessa via de legitimação, os praticantes de *Body-building* sublinham que a atividade requer tanto ou mais esforço e disciplina que as outras práticas socialmente inscritas no campo desportivo - no sentido bourdieusiano do termo (Defrance 1995). Como afirma um dos informantes, no estudo de Pascal Duret (2005, 48-50): «Isto dos músculos não é como a farpela, não se compra». Assim, a moral que legitima a prática é a moral do esforço. A condição corporal é o suporte da realização/ultrapassagem de si. De alguma forma, descobre-se nos discursos dos praticantes de

Body-building o *ethos* da luta contra o corpo. Mas o objeto da disciplina não é, em última análise, o músculo, mas a vontade. Daí, o forte investimento numa regra de vida. Aliás, a falta de firmeza muscular é, de alguma forma, o signo da depravação ou fragilidade morais. E a expulsão das secreções (como o suor) e das gorduras é veículo de purificação – assim se remodelam estereótipos arcaicos relativos à dicotomia religiosa «puro/impuro» (Douglas 1966).

As autorrepresentações, neste domínio de práticas corporais, são eminentemente modernas, uma vez que a busca potencialmente «infinita» de níveis mais avançados de *design* e performatividade muscular está ao serviço da realização do *self*. Esse «infinito» joga-se no intervalo entre um programa de não resignação e a impossibilidade de definição última do corpo perfeito – a única transcendência é a tarefa infinita da perfeição (Wittgenstein 1998, 328). As práticas de musculação, e as materialidades que as acompanham, permitem colocar entre parêntesis esse tempo da vulnerabilidade e do fracasso, num movimento que se poderia caracterizar como «saída de si» (relativa ao quotidiano) e desenho de um outro «eu possível» (cf. Kaufmann, 2005; Duret, 2005, 51) – o paradoxo de uma transcendência autocentrada.

É por isso que leitura das transações entre o fenómeno religioso e a simbolização desportiva encontra na mediação ascética um laboratório eficaz. A proposta teológica de Hans-Christoph Askani (2008) revela-se, aqui, muito sugestiva. A ascese interrompe a dinâmica dos consumos, das trocas, do entesouramento, é sempre exercício e renúncia: exercício, porque se intensificam comportamentos que estariam muito mais diluídos no resto do tempo; renúncia, porque se exige a privação de práticas, relações ou objetos que são comuns no quotidiano. Mesmo sendo uma renúncia voluntária, a ascese tem, assim, uma marca de negatividade (abnegação) transformadora. A ascese mantém uma particular relação com a morte (mortificação). A ascese antecipa simbolicamente a morte, para a integrar na vida. A ascese não deseja a morte. Enfrenta-a, não há distância, expulsando-a da vida, mas num corpo a corpo, dominando e orientando o desejo com as armas da disciplina. Num último traço de caracterização, note-se que o distanciamento, face ao regime ordinário da vida, próprio da ascese, visa a sinalização de um mundo «por vir» ou um mundo a restaurar. A ascese pode ser, assim, uma teoria da ação humana – seja ela mais religiosa (dir-se-ia excêntrica, aberta a um «para-além» da experiência do mundo), seja ela mais próxima do que Luc Ferry chamou o humanismo do Homem-Deus – uma transcendência que se absolutiza na realização de si (Ferry 1995).

O reencantamento do mundo

Práticas como o *trekking* ou o *hiking* práticas mobilizam um particular interesse pela caminhada no corpo a corpo com a natureza, nos trilhos mapeiam diferentes territórios (cf. Le Breton 2000, 121-146; 2012, 115-127). Também aí se identifica essa operação simbólica de sacralização, que opera um corte com a mesmidade dos quotidianos. Mesmo quando o território é densamente urbano, as condições da prática da caminhada constroem uma modalidade nova de fruição do território (Ingold & Vergunst, eds. 2008).

A prática da caminhada aproxima-se daquela qualidade primeira que Simmel reconheceu na experiência da «aventura» – o afastamento em relação ao contexto geral da vida (Simmel 2019, 69-83). Mas, nessa qualidade, a caminhada pode também compreender-se como exercício espiritual, precisamente na medida em que se exige a vivência de um «intervalo» e uma «tomada de distância». Essas são duas vias necessárias à vivência do que se imagina e deseja como essencial, na descoberta de uma interioridade existencial (Le Breton 2000, 147-168) – não se está, pois, longe dos resultados esperados por diversas disciplinas centradas no corpo a corpo com mundo, que se ensaiam no terreno das tradições religiosas.

Certos caminhadores vivem a nostalgia do contacto com a nudez do mundo ou a resistência a uma cultura de imobilidade e fechamento urbano à diversidade do meio. A caminhada é, assim, vivida como experiência de liberdade – esta condição descobre-se, frequentemente, no discurso dos peregrinos que frequentam territórios ainda não explorados. A experiência de caminhada, enquanto rutura com o tempo metrificado pelo trabalho, é uma experiência da gratuidade e uma experiência sensorial total. A lentidão descreve a condição temporal da caminhada. O corpo e o desejo do caminhante são a métrica do tempo – o mundo é convertido às proporções do corpo humano. Essa particular experiência do mundo-tempo e do mundo-corpo faz da caminhada um ensaio silencioso de reencantamento, no âmbito do qual se relativiza a ordem normalizada do quotidiano tecnológico, produtivo e funcionalizado (Le Breton 2000, 26-34).

O silêncio pode ser um dos marcadores mais distintivos da experiência da caminhada. O silêncio é aqui uma fronteira entre a espessura do som do mundo e a construção de algo que se concebe como uma zona de interioridade humana. Neste caso, o mais sensorial é também o mais interior. O mais superficial pode ser o mais profundo. O caminhante toma os trilhos secundários para descobrir o espetáculo do mundo sem o tumulto parasita do quotidiano. Dessa experiência, fará uma reserva de significado, uma força interior para retornar ao seu habitat ordinário. O silêncio povoou de

diferentes formas a nossa geografia: o campo, o mosteiro, o campanário, ou o silêncio do jardim (Le Breton, 1999a; 2000, 50-57; 2012, 146-150). Na experiência da caminhada, o meio torna-se, ele próprio, o santuário. A metaforização do discurso, neste contexto, pode conduzir à compreensão da caminhada como uma forma de monaquismo ou eremitismo. Tal como o claustro pode ser o símbolo de uma abertura para o divino, também o trilho pode ser representado como uma brecha no mundo, que o abre para a transcendência (Teixeira 2019, 108-109).

A perspectiva de Frédéric Gros ensaia uma interpretação diferente, procurando mostrar que a marcha é isenta de disciplina, ascese ou busca de si (Gros 2009, 12-19; 246). Na sua interpretação, a marcha não é um exercício de identidade. Caminhar não é ir ao encontro de si, mas despojar-se de si, num ato de redução – ser apenas um corpo que caminha. Na sua ótica, esse corte com o quotidiano, que outros sublinham também, é uma rutura com o nome, a profissão, as obrigações correntes, uma vez que apenas os meios próprios de locomoção se revelam necessários, numa prática em que, no êxtase do corpo, se avança sem se sentir. Resta, no entanto, a pergunta sobre se esta espécie de experiência do vazio de si, por meio da marcha, não é ainda uma forma de exercitação espiritual. As práticas corporais associadas a certas vivências místicas encontram, precisamente, numa determinada mediação corporal, o limiar que conduz ao esvaziamento de si, ao serviço de diferentes programas espirituais – purificação, desposseção, libertação, saída de si.

A corporização do pensamento

A menor atenção dada à espiritualidade no universo da prática desportiva, decorre em parte, do facto de, nas manifestações emocionais dos desportistas, imperar a expressividade não verbal e corporal. O seu microcosmo não favorece a verbalização do vivido. Tanto os modos de organização, como os procedimentos pedagógicos, passando pelos modelos de treino e liderança, não favorecem outras formas de expressão emocional. A expressão da interioridade do *performer* desportista é chamada a realizar-se exaustivamente num *habitus* motriz que traduz, essencialmente, numa moral do esforço e da repetição. Há, portanto, um forte investimento na ordem do fazer e no plano da normatividade da execução motriz, com uma débil associação ao universo dos imaginários e das representações. O quotidiano desportivo privilegia o gesto demonstrativo, os indicadores externos de eficácia ou perda. Daí resultam dificuldades quanto à vivência desportiva como acontecimento linguageiro, decorrentes de uma forte compressão do mundo interior (Bilard 2005; Lévêque 2014).

No entanto, o desporto como exercício espiritual apresenta-se como um dos substratos que melhor caracteriza essa forma de habitar o mundo. A filosofia antiga, sabemos, é, ela própria, lida como

um exercício espiritual, na medida em que visava a transformação dos modos de viver. Mas as práticas corporais faziam parte, na Grécia antiga, dessa exercitação espiritual. Na filosofia platónica, o corpo pode ser um obstáculo à busca da verdade. Mas é certo que a filosofia do corpo, em Platão, é um pouco mais ambígua. Em «O Banquete», o corpo é também o lugar do desejo amoroso da beleza. E, na «República», evoca-se a necessidade da ginástica para a educação dos guardas da cidade. Em termos gerais, na Antiguidade clássica, as práticas do corpo podem ser vistas como exercitação espiritual das vias de melhoramento de si. Alguns filósofos eram, eles próprios, praticantes de atividades desportivas (Pavie 2012).

No terreno das modernas espiritualidades religiosas, torna-se inevitável pensar as possíveis correlações com os «exercícios espirituais» de Inácio de Loyola (1491-1556). Neste caso, a exercitação envolve o estabelecimento de uma relação entre orientador e orientado. Dá-se, assim, uma forte ênfase ao treino orientado. A experiência espiritual, neste contexto, não se apresenta marcada pela profusão disruptiva do excesso, mas por uma «maneira de proceder». Os «exercícios» fornecem um conjunto de regras e práticas relativas à vida espiritual, sem que esta seja propriamente descrita – como se a relação entre o crente e Deus fosse uma história silenciosa. A exercitação espiritual apresenta-se como uma trajetória, de um ponto de partida até uma meta. Assim os procedimentos assentam na decisão de iniciar a viagem e desejar a meta. É, portanto, uma disciplina do desejo, que exige uma rutura inicial e a constante revisão do que pode ser melhorado. Nesta gramática do desejo, a vontade é o motor que permite inscrever a vida numa determinada ordem – nesse sentido, uma gramática próxima das vivências que descrevem o treino desportivo (Certeau 2005, 239-248).

A observação do desporto, a partir do ângulo da exercitação espiritual, encontra uma particular pertinência no caso das práticas desportivas intensas e extremas. Contrastando com o modelo plotiniano, no qual a existência depende de uma fuga do corpo, a perspetiva que aqui se testa procura observar em que medida a regularidade e a intensidade da exercitação física podem tornar-se uma modalidade de corporização do pensamento (Wellard, ed. 2016; Amsterdam *et al.* 2017). No caso do desporto de alto rendimento, como se exprime esta consciência? Balaudé (2008, 155s) resume em quatro os eixos de caracterização: a consciência do excesso, na vivência dos próprios limites; a consciência de um confronto consigo próprio (pôr-se à prova), visando a maximização da energia disponível; a intensificação da experiência de si, nos seus limites (princípio hiperbólico), enquanto forma em movimento; na medida em que o desporto inclui dimensões de competitividade (princípio agonístico), a reflexividade da consciência exprime-se, também, como consciência da alteridade, contexto em que o corpo do outro em movimento é, ao mesmo tempo, semelhante e concorrente.

A integração do corpo no pensamento é conhecimento somático de si. Está em linha, pois, com o ideal socrático «conhece-te a ti mesmo». O «espiritual» pode ser, neste contexto, um novo conhecimento de si, um conhecimento somático de si, em ordem a uma transformação holística de si. O «corpo espiritual», que está em causa na prática desportiva, renuncia, pois, a qualquer dualização. Do ponto de vista socioantropológico aproximamo-nos da perspectiva de Pierre Bourdieu. Na ótica do sociólogo, o que se representa na cultura sob a forma mais espiritual ou imaterial (*état d'âme*) compreende-se a partir da sua inscrição na materialidade social de uma estrutura (*état de corps*). A proposta que aqui se apresenta não é totalmente boudieusiana, mas aproxima-se da ideia de que aquilo que se afigura mais físico, mais corpóreo, pode ser o lugar de inscrição mais decisivo do que se compreende como espiritual (Bourdieu 1982, 130). As interpretações disponíveis sobre as culturas desportivas que se desenvolveram, em particular, a partir do século XIX, sublinham este elemento místico do desporto por outra via. A performance desportiva é pensada como uma via moderna de musculação moral do indivíduo. Tratava-se não só de uma moral de elevação virtuosa do indivíduo, mas também de uma moral de regeneração social. A educação física ganhou lugar na construção da ideia de saúde nacional, como prática de disciplina do corpo, de regulação dos tempos livres, barreira à degenerescência dos costumes, escape para os impulsos sexuais e para a violência recalcada, numa ascese capaz de dar ao indivíduo o domínio de si próprio, expressão da melhor forma de integração social (Ehrenberg 1991, 71-74).

Epílogo

Na prática desportiva, o pensamento torna-se respiração (*pneuma, spiritus*) - perspectiva que se pode aproximar da filosofia do desporto de Manuel Sérgio, nessa valorização da consciência motriz. Já em 1974, em «Para uma nova dimensão do desporto», sublinhava que o desporto deveria ser compreendido como humanização do movimento (Sérgio 2016a). Em «Alguns olhares sobre o corpo», o filósofo apontava: «O corpo não é só exterioridade, nem é só biologia. O *Pensador* de Rodin, por exemplo, revela que a interioridade ressalta da exterioridade corpórea. O corpo é simultaneamente exterioridade e interioridade» (Sérgio 2004, 26). Para Manuel Sérgio, no desporto encontramos o essencial da pergunta sobre o humano, definido a partir da sua orientação para a transcendência. Assim se exprime em «Desporto em palavras»: «Quem somos nós? O desporto dá-nos a resposta. Seres de relação e em permanente relação. Visando a superação, ou a transcendência. No meu modesto entender, o desporto é um dos aspetos do movimento intencional, e em equipa, da

transcendência (a motricidade humana)» (Sérgio 2016b, 167). Trata-se de uma perspectiva sobre o humano inacabado, na qual o desporto se revela uma disciplina do «tornar-se» (2017, 53). Na filosofia de Manuel Sérgio – que se evoca como corolário deste ensaio – trata-se, pois, de pensar o desporto a partir de uma nova episteme: a motricidade humana, como movimento intencional e solidário da transcendência (Sérgio 2019, Palma 2020). Apoiado no pensamento de Teilhard Chardin, o filósofo Manuel Sérgio inscreve a prática desportiva num itinerário de transformação, ordenado à noosfera (Sérgio 2019, 109-112). O desporto é, assim, uma manifestação da vida do espírito.

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II.

CORPO-VERTICAL
VERTICAL-BODY

Solo climbing: a descriptive and normative approach*

Introduction

"The few traces of chalk left by the group that preceded me give me comfort. They are proof that we are using the same holds and that I am probably doing the same moves. I feel part of the family. I feel on the same level. I feel like a climber." These words are from Christophe Moulin to describe his "first solo" (Chappaz, 2016). Moulin, later known for his solo North Face winter climbs, feels the need to underline the identity of the gestures and *medium* of the soloist with that of the roped climber during his ascent because he faces, as a solo climber, contrasting reactions: from the fierce rejection to the silent admiration, the kinship of the solo with other climbing practices raises questions. Moulin concludes: "I just know that I touched something sacred. Sacred because it hit me right in the heart. Sacred also because it destabilizes the intimate beliefs of everyone. I also know that for this one thing, one can be ready to die and, me especially, ready to live." (291)

In a few pages, Moulin describes the ambiguous situation of the solo within the other types of climbing practices (bouldering, sport climbing and traditional climbing), which the presence of the rope or the relative height are supposed to guarantee non-lethal. How to describe a practice such as solo climbing, which is both a sport performance and a risk that can lead to death?

We propose an approach that draws on anthropology, philosophy and decision theory. We must first distinguish *solo climbing* from other types of climbing, and the so-called *free solo* from *rope solo*, in order to identify what is its specificity. A first anthropological approach aims to make the socio-history of its practitioners and their successes. This first analysis nevertheless calls into question about the normativity intrinsic to the practice of a sport: Moulin's account clearly underlines the repeated rejection of free solo by other climbers and mountaineers. Their use of belaying and safety techniques leads them to categorize solo climbing as "deviant" (Becker, 1973),

* Our thanks go to Megan Lubetkin who carefully reviewed this paper.

which entails a proven mortal risk⁶. The integration of solo climbing into the various types of climbing practices questions in that the absence of a rope seems to refer to the accomplishment of the activity in its greatest purity, as much as to a deviant form of practice, which frees itself from the safety standards in use in all other types of climbing. Even if the risk of death is not zero for belayed practices, risk-taking, exposing oneself to death, is deliberate in solo and seems to be constitutive of it. Is the decision-making and the structure of the practice that soloing implies therefore, specific, or more accurately irreducible to those deployed in bouldering and insured climbing? Is the deliberate taking of mortal risks a constituent part of soloing? The practice of soloing thus oscillates between a positive norm (a practice manifesting greater freedom⁷) and a negative one (the absence of a safety standard that makes it non-standard).

Nevertheless, as we shall see, the claim of the soloists concerns a constantly calculated and renegotiated relationship with the risks. Is solo really a deviant practice, given that the question of risk control concerns many sports in natural situations? The endangerment does not necessarily concern only the means used, but is part of a set of parameters. An approach nourished by the conceptual tools associated with decision theory should help to analyze the specificity of the risk-taking induced by the practice of free solo.

If we distinguish between the damage incurred and the probability of its occurrence (Ghersén, 2015), we have the means to propose a reading grid for the decision process of a solo. The risk is maximal (death, here is the great difference with other types of practices, even if mountaineering would be closer to soloing in that regard), but the probability of occurrence is based on the training and psychological state of the climber. This specificity and its verification at the level of the decision process elaborated by the actors themselves⁸ help to explain the ambiguous position of soloing within the different climbing practices. It is because the soloist faces a proven lethal risk that its relationship to risk radicalizes the question of the practitioner's control. It is this double specificity that establishes solo as marginal in regard to belayed practices as well as it reveals a pure form of climbing, displaying the norm of technical mastery that it supposes.

⁶ Among the fatal accidents were those of Austin Howell and Ken Anderson in 2019 after a fall of about 20 meters. Ken Anderson was a trad, free solo climber. He did not use any protective equipment on the pitch where he fell, considered easy for his level, when a hold broke.

⁷ The term *solo* has musical resonances since it also refers to an important dimension of performance. The modal piece *So what?* by Miles Davis, named after a common expression of the famous trumpeter, is emblematic of the art of the solo performed by great musicians: this modal theme based on two chords (of which the fourth chord, made up of a stack of three fourths and a third, has since been called the "so what" chord), shifted by just a semitone in the bridge, gives free rein to the development of the dorian mode. The great freedom taken by the musician imposes precisely the constraint of showing the structure of the piece. *So what?* marks a departure from Charlie Parker's and Dizzie Gillespie's bebop, which relies on the reinterpretation of the theme on a chord grid in Anatole, or blues, and which explores the different tones related to the harmony of the piece while remaining in tonal context.

⁸ The authors are all three climbers and mountaineers, and admit to being involved in exposed, or committed climbing. However, they do not all practice free solo climbing, which leads to a reflection on the use of the rope being the standard in mountaineering as well as in lead climbing. In this sense, a three-way writing process involving practitioners and non-practitioners allows for both a participatory anthropology and an attempt to avoid the affective or confirmation bias linked to the survey (Elias Norbert, 1983).

The analysis of the commitment in a practice which poses an absolute risk must thus allow the three authors of this article not only to reveal an intelligence of the practice immanent to the actors themselves, but to show that this scheme of intelligibility deeply subverts the framework of any technical, praxis-based control. By taking an absolute risk, the soloist exhibits, by bypassing it, how sports performance and the decision making implied by it standardly suppose self-evaluation of their capacities by the practitioner and the distinction between means and ends.

This article begins by clarifying the specificity of solo climbing in relation to other forms of climbing, by spelling out a typology of practices. Historicizing the distinctive characteristics of solo climbing from an anthropological point of view then allows us to highlight the theoretical problems it entails: the type of mastery implied by mortal risk-taking and the qualification of a practice that deviates from the standard of belayed and secure climbing. It is the identification of the intelligence immanent to the actors and to the praxis that they deploy, backed by the conceptual contribution of the economic theory of decision and philosophical normative inquiry, that will permit to answer them.

I. Typology and socio-historical description

Free solo, rope solo, *highballs* and securing the practice

Mountaineers - and especially climbers - usually make their ascents in groups. Thanks to a set of tools -rope, carabiners, quickdraws, cams, pitons, harness, and belay device-, the "insurance chain", they can secure their progress and thus stop a possible fall (Ghersen, 2015, p. 60, note 38). In reference to the rope, which is the vital link and the material symbol of this insurance chain, a group of climbers is called a *rope party*⁹. In contrast, the term of Italian origin *solo* usually refers to the absence of a partner. There are two forms of soloing: *rope soloing*, which involves the use of a belay device (often self-braking), a rope and anchor points to protect oneself against a possible fall; and *free soloing*, which implies to shun any means of protection. The practice of self-belaying (rope solo) is used in the winter in the Mont Blanc massif, as well as in the Dawn Wall routes in Yosemite¹⁰. The pathway of the king of the Belgians Albert 1st, who died during a rope solo climb

⁹ The vast majority of climbers in lead climbing, *i.e.* over a height making spotting insufficient to be safe, rope up. This reminds that we are describing a practice that tends to only concern "high level" players, without automatically referring to the status of professional athletes; see Olivier Deconinck and Eric Fontaine (2005), or to the training book "Escalade pour tous" (Renoux, Brézot *et al.*, 2017) to describe roped up climbing as it is generally practiced.

¹⁰ It is still in use currently. See in this regard Charles Dubouloz's ascent of Les Drus in the winter of 2021: https://alpinemag.fr/solo-face-nord-dru-dubouloz/?fbclid=IwAR2NOVph8HxQXlBq_J9jq7_CmjYvD1AtJoyCipd-uN4XKf9StJSwPzOz6yw (page accessed on March 18, 2021).

on the cliffs of Marche les Dames in 1934¹¹, can also be noted.

This paper aims to analyze the practice of free solo, hereinafter referred as *solo*. This means climbing a route in mountaineering or on a climbing cliff without a belay device, but also high boulders called *highballs*. In fact, when bouldering, which has been practiced in Fontainebleau since the 19th century, is done without rope, its democratized form is practiced at a safe distance from the ground and makes use of shock-absorbing mats (called *crashpads*) and a spotter, whose role is to guide and cushion the fall. On these boulders, where the progression without rope rarely exceeds 6 meters (20 ft.), if a badly controlled fall can certainly lead to serious injuries, it does not cause the death of the climber. The tall boulders in the United States, such as those in the Buttermilks sector near Bishop, California, for example, are twice as high as those in Fontainebleau, making the fall truly dangerous. Securing with a spotter and a crashpad, as just described, becomes impracticable in this context. In descriptive terms, the specific difference of *solo* climbing seems to be the absence of a physical configuration (height of the boulder) or mechanical configuration (use of equipment) which is equivalent to a guaranteed control of the risk, whatever the climber's ability to make the ascent. On a normative level, the characteristic of *soloing* refers to skills which are entirely the responsibility of the person climbing, without any possible reliance on the equipment or another person.

Mastery and sports performance

The solo thus raises the question of the mastery of the gesture. Does the characteristic of soloing consist in the deployment of specific means, or rather the risk-taking and exposure? A seasoned climber has solved most of the questions of low-level climbers, and will not need to address them. In this sense, the reduction of risks such soloists are able to implement refers to practices and techniques of the body (Mauss, 1934). Training (such as dance or circus, for example) involves skills transfers between varied practices, and in particular, in the case of climbing, between psychomotor practices, via intraspecific transfers (for example placing one's feet high) or interspecific transfers (related to proprioception, in the context of climbing) (Parlebas and Dugas, 2005). As for soloing, this comes down to the mastery of gesture: soloing pushes to its paroxysm the idea of mastery of one's gestures, of repetition, by putting one's life at stake in the case of a bad realization, which depends on these precise psychomotor capacities. On the other hand, the more psychological dimension of mastery, what is called "mental", already present in mountaineering and

¹¹ King Albert practiced mountaineering with guides, and achieved important ascents like the crossing of the Drus. To justify his mountaineering and rope solo practices, which he refused to make public, he put forward the tranquility provided by frequenting the Alps and mountaineering, in comparison with his obligations.

climbing¹², is exacerbated by soloing because of the lethal risk.

The term "commitment", which is recurrent in mountaineering and climbing practices, therefore seems particularly appropriate to address the issue of soloing. This notion¹³ seems to be implemented by all forms of climbing practice: it simply consists in underlining the risk-taking, the active participation, on a mental and physical level, in the activity: stating that a passage demands "commitment", or is "exposed", highlights, for example, that the equipment in place does not make it possible to avoid obligatory gestures, a risk of falling that is significantly more demanding or straining for the climber. In the case of solo climbing, precisely because of the absence of technical equipment as a mediation between the gestural skills themselves and the risk of falling, the commitment is total, and out of the norm compared to other types of climbing.

Nevertheless, the mortality rate among professional and high altitude climbers in general, more than just solo climbers, remains relatively high, in summer as well as in winter. That is, if soloing is carried out under certain conditions of training and awareness, it is not necessarily more dangerous than many other sports that are often considered safer. We find the declension of this term of commitment in an abundant literature criticizing the asepticization of climbing, such as that of Messner who rejects securing climbing through the use of bolts¹⁴ (Messner, 2020).

The promotion of commitment, of mastery rather than cancellation of risk by technical means, which are opposed to aseptic forms of climbing, should not obviate a dimension common to solo climbing, as to other forms of climbing: that of sport performance. The successful accomplishment of an activity under constraints and perceived as difficult is seen as an achievement, a manifestation of athletic skills. In this particular case, the greater risk-taking involved in solo climbing compared to other types of climbing is a factor that further enhances the success of its practitioners: the value of the mastery of movement is in a way exalted by the perception of the incurred risk by the practitioners as well as by third parties, and this is perceived as exceptional. Media coverage of solo climbing is also a good indication of this valorization: at the same time, in addition to the movie *La vie au bout des doigts (Life at your Fingertips)*, which contributed to Patrick Edlinger's fame and to the recognition of climbing in France, another film

¹² See Arno Ilgner's *The Rock Warriors Way*, which favors mental training as the main condition of climbing skills improvement (Ilgner, 1995).

¹³ Commitment is a polysemic term since it refers to risk-taking as well as political, social (Defalvard, 2015: 65), or organizational (Saint-Michel and Wielhorski, 2011) commitment. In so-called outdoor practices, commitment is a term used by guides to refer to the dangerousness of an itinerary. It is also found in the rating system for the difficulty of ski touring, where the rating is explicit: "3.3 E1" designates a slope located generally within 30 degrees of declivity, but close to 40 degrees. E1 means in this context a low commitment: there is no risk to fall. High commitment figures are *de facto* generally associated with the steepest slopes. In climbing, we can take the example of the British grading system, which systematically evaluates the commitment, through the length, the difficulty to send the route (achieve the ascent in respect to the ethical constraints) and the danger (the adjectival grade, e.g. E1-11) and the technical grade, which rates the most difficult movement of the route intrinsically, without considering the fall (3c and so on).

¹⁴ Bolts, or expanding pitons, are anchoring points consisting of a metal rod and a plate with an eye in which a carabiner can be hung. The plate is attached to the rod which is inserted into a pre-drilled hole.

broadcast on French television and shot in 1984 helped to convey a positive image of solo climbing. Shot by Nicolas Philibert, *Dans la face ouest des Drus* retraced Christophe Profit's ascent on June 30, 1982 of the Directe Américaine on the W face of the Drus¹⁵. These documentaries add a new media dimension to solo climbing¹⁶.

The origins and development of free solo

After emphasizing the common points and differences to identify the specificity of solo climbing within the various climbing practices, we now investigate the historical development of solo climbing, particularly with regards to the ascent of multi-pitch routes.¹⁷ Roping up and, more broadly, the use of a rope were not the norm in the early days of mountaineering: Roger Frison Roche recounts in his *Histoire de l'alpinisme* a period of mountaineering when no rope was used. The pioneering and minimalist approach of Paccard and Balmat is opposed in this respect to the very well-publicized ascent of the scholar Horace Benedict de Saussure, who was to follow shortly after the first on Mont Blanc. By this first description of belaying and gain in confidence, traveler and the guides are opposed. On the engravings of the 19th century, the alpine walks on Mont Blanc are not always roped up. The stick is the main tool used to secure the progression: it is seen as a guardrail held by experienced alpinists. Josias Simler mentions in 1633 its use by the first guides helping clients to cross the Alpine passes (quoted in Hoibian, 2000). However, one can hardly speak of free solo to refer to the practice of these first climbers since there is no claim to free from a secured form of mountaineering.

The rope then became the norm, even after it broke on the descent of the first successful ascent of the Matterhorn on July 14, 1865, causing a fatal accident. Emil Zsigmondy, promoter of mountaineering without a guide and who died on the Meije at the age of 24, wrote (published in 1886 after his death): "You must first probe the terrain with the ice axe; if it breaks through, the

¹⁵ Here is Philibert's description: "the ascent of the famous "90-meter dihedral" was soon to give its full dimension to his exploit... I see Christophe again in the middle of this passage of frightening severity, uniformly smooth and sloping, split in the middle by a narrow crack. He may have 800 meters of void under his soles, but it doesn't seem to bother him, he follows the movements with great precision. But suddenly he stops, hesitates, looks for his holds... He tries again and again, but no! Decidedly, it does not pass! Quickly, he can't stay like that! Quickly, quickly, he won't last long! [...] Those three minutes lasted a century! Later, during the editing, I had to insist a lot to include this sequence in the film. Christophe was not keen. He was afraid that it would tarnish his "image"."

¹⁶ The appearance of women among the best climbers has also contributed to undoing the gender prism that is so deeply rooted in climbing practices, although the gendered dimension is not necessarily absent for climbers. Catherine Destivelle, who climbed the Drus solo, noted, for example, that the fact of being a woman was commonly emphasized (*Montagnes*, August-September 1997, p. 34.)

¹⁷ Routes of several rope lengths (pitches), connecting multiple belays, unlike single-pitch routes, not requiring the party's second to join the leader to resume the ascent.

danger is imminent and you must move away. The cracks that run parallel to the edge of the ledge are a harbinger of a coming collapse. The surest safeguard against falls of this kind is a rope, and a long one; the greater the space between people attached to the same rope, the less risk of several people walking on a mined spot¹⁸. Although Zsigmondy and Mummery¹⁹ defended a committed form of mountaineering, in autonomy and without a guide, their use of the rope was nevertheless aimed at making climbing safer: is the absence of a rope, which means shunning a risk-reducing factor, the object of a deliberate and asserted decision in the case of solo climbing?

Debates about the right means to use in climbing has continued throughout the history of mountaineering, and the solo is defined in this sense particularly through the approaches that oppose it. The Italian guide Tita Piaz (1879-1948), nicknamed "the devil of the Dolomites", reported that at the beginning of the twentieth century, a certain Garbari had a wooden pole hoisted up the Campanile Basso to force his way up the last unconquered wall (Piaz, 1999: 99). Piaz also recalled the use of rope throws and grappling hooks in the nineteenth century by Georg Winkler (1869-1888). Similar maneuvers were also described by the pioneer climber and winner of the Matterhorn, the Barre des Ecrins and the Aiguille Verte, Edward Whymper (1840-1911). The use of etriers or aiders (webbing ladders) since the 1950's, and the use of double ropes to make pendulum movements for example, also helped define aid climbing.

In his narratives, Piaz also highlights his relationship to the gear through various episodes: in particular, he describes the fall of a client whose hands are sawed off by the rope and who threatens to bring down their party. As the client is dazed by the fall, Piaz stages a monologue with "the void" in the absence of an answer (Piaz, 1999: 219). The rope also appears when he tells of taking his fiancée and future wife up the Winkler Tower. During this ascent, she hung for a moment in the void from the Winklerriss, and he reported that he hesitated to throw himself into the void to share her fate, which he believed to be lost, because of the lack of strength of his rope (Piaz, 1999: 68). Piaz thus promotes the use of the rope and pitons against the practice of soloing, in the name of a sometimes life-saving gain in safety.

Opposed to the figure of Tita Piaz is that of the Austrian Paul Preuss, the first mountaineer to openly claim to be a solo climber. Born in 1886, he died at the age of twenty-seven on October 3, 1913, at the north corner of the Manndlkogel, in the Gosaukamm. Promoting his own practice and ethics, he was responding to the already widespread use of the rope²⁰ and opposing Tita Piaz in a friendly quarrel. Preuss marks, in that, the origin of the integral solo. The approach he represents

¹⁸ At the time of Zsigmondy's death on the South Face of the Meije in 1885, the indignation of the Alpine Journal also defended the interests of the local community; what was perceived as deviant practice at the time was not solo climbing, but mountaineering without a guide: "When one does without guides, amateur adventurers must be excessively cautious, [. ...] but no impartial person can doubt for a moment that [...] as soon as the limits of prudence have been exceeded, it's been sentenced" (*The Alpine Journal Record of Mountain Adventure*, Vol. 12, n° 89, August 1885).

¹⁹ Cf. *infra*.

²⁰ See section II. 1.

will serve as a model for the great climbers who claim to be soloists, or at least for the commitment of which the solo is the ultimate form, such as Riccardo Cassin and Reinhold Messner for example.

The solo finds its current conclusion in the exploits of Hansjorg Auer on the *Pesce* route at the Marmolada in the Dolomites, Ueli Steck on the Eiger in the Swiss Valais, or Alex Honnold in Yosemite and Mexico. These names end the story of the solo for now. Alex Honnold definitely contributed to its knowledge with the film *Free solo* by Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin, first prize at the Oscars academy awards and the Batfa awards in 2019. Two of these three mountaineers and climbers have lost their lives in recent years, not soloing, but in the mountains (Ueli Steck fell on the slopes of Nuptse, and Hansjorg Auer was the victim of an avalanche). Other names have illustrated it before them since the 1970s and 1980s: Patrick Berhault, Alain Ghersen, Antoine le Menestrel, etc. The latter climbed an 8a route, *Revelations*, in 1985 (Peak District). Antoine le Menestrel's performance questions the customs, given that it is generally established among free soloists that their performances are done at a level well below their maximum level of belayed climbing. This could not have been the case in Antoine le Menestrel's crossing of *Revelations*, since this route was at the top of the difficulties climbed at that time, the first eighth degree routes dating from the 1980s (the seventh degree defined by Jean-Claude Droyer and Reinhold Messner was made official in 1977 with Droyer's ascents; Aubel, 2005).

II. Between deviant practice and "purity" of the performance

The practice of soloing has a history, which has followed the progression and transformation of climbing and mountaineering. In this sense, it is appropriate to look at the technical and social elements that have accompanied it, as well as the personalities of the soloists who have led these debates or quarrels about the manner and the means. By developing a specific ethic that is different from other types of climbing, does soloing constitute a deviant practice or, which would be consistent with its claim to greater purity, an exception that constitutes a norm underlying the other disciplines?

The quarrel of the pitons and the case of Paul Preuss

Various elements have introduced a problematic around the use of pitons.²¹ It is necessary to recall how some people considered that pitons deviated from what should be the practice's standard, as altering the ethical approach: their use corrupts the status of the sport mountaineer in the sense that Preuss understood it. The figure of Paul Preuss and the so-called "pitons quarrel" should allow us to re-examine the precise link between mountaineering and soloing, and what establishes the solo climber in an ambiguous position in relation to the whole practice of climbing, marked by increasing security and technologization. Contemporary to the appearance of the first pitons, Preuss opposed them in his mountaineering practice on the basis of a very rigorous ethic that limits the use of equipment to cases of vital necessity, refusing to substitute the use of technology for the technical and physical skills of the mountaineer. Although primarily addressed to the practice of mountaineering, Paul Preuss' ethics contextualizes and underlines the voluntary deprivation of safety technology that characterizes soloing in an essential way.

He was preceded by Eugen Guido Lammer, even if the latter was mainly involved in glacier climbing in Austria (and in long routes with two-person ropes), while Preuss practiced a number of aerial climbs, especially in the Dolomites. Eugen Guido Lammer, a German mountaineer who defended a committed climbing style, which he described in the book *The Fountain of Youth*, proclaimed himself "liberated". However, he did not claim to be a free soloist, since he had emancipated himself from his guides but had not abandoned the logic of roping up²². The closer link between practices and death is then obvious, with solo climbing playing its role as the constitutive exception. For Michel Mestre, the general behavior of Lammer and his contemporaries refers to "the acceptance, even the wish, of death"²³. He describes: "Danger and death are inherent components of mountaineering, but caution, safety, and belaying coexist with these notions, and if mountaineers sought death that much as an element of accomplishment, they would not belay. And even for those for whom the only acceptable practice was free climbing pushed to the maximum (the Viennese school, Preuss, the specialists of the integral solo), there is always a moment when renunciation intervenes: otherwise it is the fall, but without it having any other meaning than

²¹ A piton is a metal rod with a hole in the head to attach a carabiner, which is hammered into cracks or weak points in the rock to make an anchor point.

²² Here is how he explains his approach: "During my long career as a mountaineer, it was a principle never to be accompanied by a guide, and it was only with reluctance that I accepted a companion who was equivalent to a guide for me. So I hardly know the impressions of one who feels assured and protected, and I particularly envy Kugy and his friendships of admirable constancy that bind him to his faithful guides Komac or Croux." (Messner, 2000).

²³ We emphasize that the literature of Lammer and his contemporaries was recuperated, as Michel Mestre has shown, within the Nazi ideology.

technical error." Still, Mestre contrasts the approach of the German-speaking mountaineers of the 1920s with the post-World War II evolution of mountaineering toward greater safety (Mestre, 2003). In this sense, we understand that if there is a condemnation of soloing, it is more generally that of an attitude towards voluntary endangerment and risk control, which leads to the dissociation of the ideas of commitment and mortifying practice²⁴.

Following Mestre's analysis, lethal danger and the tendency to secure oneself are two essential features of mountaineering. How can we understand the exclusion of the means of securing, so significant in the history of climbing, by the ethics of the solo? Soloing deviates from a mixed standard, which combines both apprehension of danger and securing, and therefore manifestly increases the lethal risk. Does this mean that soloing tends to be identified with a deviant practice? Or rather a constitutive exception that radicalizes one of the two components, the mortal risk? It is a question of defining what relationship to risk the solo develops, in order to justify its relationship to other types of climbing and its perception as a minority practice within the community.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Guido Rey, Tita Piazz, Paul Preuss, Angelo Dibona and a few others established in the Dolomites a form of mountaineering that Rey defined as "acrobatic". The Austrian Paul Preuss was the pioneer of solo, as an extreme form of free climbing²⁵, before Reinhold Messner or Patrick Edlinger²⁶. Preuss tackles the question, and is perhaps the first to attempt to theorize it. Technology presents a problem, which must be dealt with pragmatically. For most, it popularizes privileged spaces. But for Preuss, who seemed to feel invincible, as can be seen in his writings, too much equipment is a way of lowering himself, of no longer being a climber. If the practice of solo climbing is not always explicitly valued in his accounts, the rejection of the safest means of protection is explicit. As Reinhold Messner and Alain Ghersen point out, Paul Preuss expresses this state of mind in particular through the fact that for him, it is "self-limitation" that "expresses the power of the artist" (Messner, 2000: 45-46; Ghersen, 2016: 58) Reinhold Messner has highlighted Paul Preuss' example: inspired by his minimalist ethos, he extends it, in his latest work, to the rejection of expansion pitons²⁷ (Messner, 2020: 114-115).

The case of Paul Preuss allows us to problematize the idea of a purity of climbing practice that would be implemented specifically by free solo. In this sense, Reinhold Messner relates how

²⁴ See III, 1.

²⁵ As opposed to aid climbing, which allows the use of additional gear (hooks, etriers, ascenders) to make upward progress and not only belay or passively enhancing the precision (climbing shoes, chalk or kneepad).

²⁶ For example, Preuss climbed the Cima Piccolissima di Lavaredo in 1911, the smallest of the three peaks, a particularly difficult route that required a high level of technical mastery, particularly of the opposition method.

²⁷ The first solo climbs on the most difficult routes in the Alps, such as the Philipp-Flamm dihedral on the northwest face of the Civetta in the Dolomites, or the north face of the Droites in Chamonix, are carried out in a self-belayed solo using classic pitons. Messner summarizes this technophobic practice, which takes Preuss as its model, as follows: "a principle that can be summed up in four letters: ABCD". He then lists: "A for 'no artificial oxygen', so no oxygen cylinders; B for 'no bolts', so no expanding pitons; C for 'no communication', and D for 'no drugs'. These are my rules for mountaineering."

Preuss mentioned pitons, which were then becoming popular among climbers²⁸, in 1911 in an article published in the *Deutsche Alpenzeitung*. The quarrel between him and Tita Piaž, as friendly and nuanced as it was passionate, was really the beginning of the polemic on the use of belay devices. He said: "The use of pitons, and all safety systems, including abseiling (whether as the only means of successful climbing or as an accessory in the course of climbing) are, in my opinion, criticizable and unjustifiable 'artificial means', both from the point of view of mountaineering and from that of sport." (Piaž, 1999: 169)

Preuss thus formulates a clear opposition here, distinguishing between artificial means and the climber's intrinsic capacity. It is an ideal of autonomy that Preuss defends: dependence on technology corrupts the practice of sport²⁹. Paul Preuss used the term sport, an English term dating from 1828, to which is also attached the notion of *fair play*, designating the respect of certain pre-established and courteous rules. If *fair play* generally implies a relationship to the opponent team in a collective sport, the use of equipment in Preuss' mountaineering is in a sense not *fair play*. You don't rise to the top if you use belaying. You show your fear, your lack of confidence. Furthermore, one betrays the purity of the wilderness: "Far be it from me to preach for the abolition of belaying devices in rock passages; no reasonable climber would dispute their value for the vast majority of the mountain and nature loving public. But for the mountaineer or the sport climber, it is the reverse stance that seems important to me, in short: belaying with pitons, abseiling or any other rope maneuvers are, in my opinion, artificial means which are therefore reprehensible and should not be allowed." (Messner, 2000: 62) Alain Ghersen wonders for his part: "some have refused this progress, sometimes in a radical way, considering that it came to irremediably taint the essential postulate of the commitment." (Ghersen, 2015: 57). We understand here that the opposition between the climbers' mastery and the technological evolution will durably shape the practice of climbing and mountaineering. It is in this context that Ghersen introduces a nuance about the choices of Paul Preuss: "Was Preuss an enlightened reactionary or a visionary temple keeper? In reality, he was not opposed to the piton but rather to its systematic use, as one of his six principles attests: the piton is kept in reserve for a case of distress; it is not the basic element of a technique." (Ghersen, 2015: 60). The use of technology should only be a last resort; it can never be a substitute for gestural mastery for the sole purpose of climbing peaks.

Furthermore, Preuss denounces the elimination of uncertainty in the route by the systematic installation of pitons: it is then sufficient to follow the anchor points during one's progress as one

²⁸ The guide Tiapa Langevin recalled that a piton had already been planted at La Meije in the Massif des Écrins by Emil Zsigmondy's Austrian rope party in the 1880s, at a place called "la dalle des Autrichiens" (interview by Jean-Baptiste Duez with Tiapa Langevin, June 2006).

²⁹ Cf. Ghersen 2016, p. 57, the author also makes the connection to the Romantic and Rationalist movements respectively, as tackled just below.

would follow a high mountain guide. Such a denunciation of mountaineers accompanied by guides was in the air at the turn of the century. It was made by Albert F. Mummery, an English mountaineer who died at the age of 40 on Nanga Parbat in 1895, who attacked, as Emil Zsigmondy had done before him, mountaineers who used guides to claim races that were too hard for them (Mummery, 1995 [1934]: 238; quoted in Ghersen, 2016: 54).

Another justification for the limited use of artificial means, of which pitons are the paradigm, is based on the gestures of fully autonomous climbing. Preuss' claim overlaps with the distinction between free and aid climbing. Free climbing means that one progresses by belaying oneself, but without using any anchor points to help oneself. Aid climbing, on the other hand, refers to the fact of using artificial elements during the progression: by "pulling on the nail" (*i.e.* on the piton or on the expanding piton) or by holding on to a "pedal" (*i.e.* a sling fixed to the piton), or, finally, by using a rope ladder placed on the anchor point. Messner quotes Paul Preuss as saying: "With the help of pitons and rope, one 'makes' the most bizarre and improbable passages. On the smoothest walls, one imitates the pendulum of the clock and it is with such acrobatics that one conquers mountains." (Messner: 2000). The pitons thus authorize "absurd" gestures that distort the approach to climbing.

The criticism of very counter-intuitive and, in a sense, unsightly passages, is partly related to the way climbing was built as a communion with nature and on the relationship with a wild environment.

Proximity to nature and associated uses: Between romanticism and rationalism, a different relationship to progress

From then on, Preuss's technophobic position³⁰ logically leads to the question of a return to nature that the practice of mountaineering or climbing in natural environments induces. It can be found throughout the history of these sports and free solo would in that sense embody a kind of freedom and communion with nature. It brings up in a radical way the question of an interaction between nature and culture by removing any mediation between the climber, and the rock and the landscapes to which climbing gives access. Technique is reduced to the minimum of a body technique, without the intervention of further gear. This is evident in the various solos of P. Edlinger in Buoux, filmed in *La Vie au bout des doigts*, where Jean-Paul Janssen's direction emphasizes a form of purity and simplicity in this practice³¹; an idea also taken up in *Ballade à Devil's Tower*

³⁰ Ghersen 2016, p. 57, also makes the connection to the Romantic and Rationalist movements respectively.

³¹ We see Patrick Edlinger, naked and living in a van, praising the merits of being satisfied with a sandwich and a glass of water.

(1992), where Catherine Destivelle is presented as free and untamable. An alternative way of life, in harmony with nature, eager to take risks and politically at odds with the State, has been claimed by different generations of climbers in Yosemite Park, whose conflicts with the park rangers are well rendered in the film *Valley Uprising* (2014). We thus find in the discourses held by the soloists themselves a notion of authenticity that goes with a form of rupture with the social state. Risk-taking is not heroized for its morbid aspect, but rather as a form of return to a more natural state and an authentic simplicity emerges from the soloist figures presented in these films.

However, free solo seems at the same time to implement a form of control over nature - the ambiguity is real. From a socio-cultural point of view, there is a tension between an ideal based on the romantic sublime and a rationalist necessity that the solo crystallizes in an exacerbated way. In fact, both the return to nature and the subtraction from the social state that mountaineering achieves come into tension with the technical mastery that it presupposes (Ghersén 2015: 62-66). The soloist wants to establish an immediate relationship with their environment, to feel free and in a form of harmony with the spectacle of the walls; therein lies its romantic character, which enters into opposition with the modern promises of a mastery of nature through progress. But he also wishes to "confront" nature, to be able to tame the obstacles that the summits represent, at first sight insurmountable. Of course, this fight must be carried out with fair and limited means (in the sense of *fair play*), but the fact remains that in this sense free solo is fully in line with the Promethean hopes inherited from the Enlightenment, according to which the human being, through their rational mind, will be able to master nature.

In this sense, the history of mountaineering, and *a fortiori* of solo climbing, bears witness to a complex relationship with progress. Indeed, the dialectic between technological advances and alpinistic achievements attests to a logic of rationalization at work in this practice. It sees its culmination, after the abandonment of hemp ropes and pitons, in the trivialization of the fall with the birth of sport climbing on bolts, belayed and safe, in the second half of the 20th century. The question of progress was the subject of many debates, including the piton quarrel mentioned above. The figure of Preuss is enlightening in that he emphasizes that the self-limitation of the use of progression and safety equipment, far from marking a pure return to nature, is on the contrary a guarantee of greater mastery and the true mark of progress. It serves as a sort of proof-test of the skill that allows one to take a route.

Two polarities have emerged in the wake of these debates regarding the relationship to progress. On the one hand, so-called sport climbing, in its democratized form where the fall is commonplace and safe; on the other, mountaineering and more "committed" forms of climbing, such as trad climbing or solo climbing, characterized by a measured, self-limited relationship to technology and the promotion of an ethic regarding the means used to achieve one's ends. We often

speak of "style" to designate the different approaches (winter climbing, alpine style, solo, etc.), as if to emphasize an almost aesthetic approach. The performance dimension inherent in free solo invites us to assimilate it to a sport, but it remains that mountaineering, and by extension free solo, escapes this categorization, because of the radical commitment and risk-taking required. It is therefore in particular the total mastery of the gesture that such a commitment requires and its intrinsic link to the mortal risk that we will analyze in a final stage.

III. Pragmatics of solo risk taking

Free solo, quite different from a blind return to a proximity with nature, advocates a total commitment which, in order not to tip over into tragedy, implies an absolute mastery. The resulting praxis, by mixing ends and means, shakes the standard reference points of practical rationality. Finally, in opposition to the figure of "practical wisdom" (*phronēsis*) in Aristotle, the soloist operates a normative transgression proper to adventure. How can we think of the commitment to a solo ascent or the risk-taking that marks the beginning of an adventure if, precisely, it implies in an essential way the indeterminate in the form of the unforeseen?

Mastery in the service of total commitment

The tension between romantic desocialization and Promethean mastery can be found in the very praxis and decisional schema that the solo brings into play: the accounts and testimonies that come out of it oscillate between impulsive risk-taking and compulsive planning. We can thus oppose the figure of Chrisophe Moulin, quoted in the introduction, and Alex Honnold. The first undertook his first solo ascents above the Alpe du Lauzet hut out of an irrepressible desire to climb. The ideas that came to him at the moment, not when he was planning the undertaking, but during the approach walk that led him to the foot of the wall, are revealing in this respect: "We'll see, I said to myself throughout the approach. If I don't feel it, I'll go back down, one can always go back down". The best indication of the absence of planning resides precisely in the disproof that experience brings, the effective realization of the desire just formulated as it is already realized: "Contrary to my theoretical certainties, it appears to me now very complicated to come down from there easily". The only solution that is imposed consists in the effort, the constraint, the "violence" that the soloist imposes on himself to succeed in the perilous passage (Chappaz, 2016 : 285-288). Everything suggests that the sheer temerity and irreversibility of the ordeal, that is, the fact of

having placed himself in an inevitable situation, allows Moulin to pass.

On the contrary, the film *Free Solo* stages the tireless (belayed) repetition of the El Cap Free Rider route's ascent and the meticulous organization by Alex Honnold in order to achieve the first free solo ascent of the route. Even if some scenes of the film underline the human fallibility of which Honnold is not exempt, the whole film and the heroization of the performance end up stressing that it is a faultless control and a planned preparation which ensure the success. The difficulty of reconciling the fatal risk with a romantic relationship and the failure of a first attempt (which allows one to question the possibility of fear to which success leaves apparently no room) only serve to emphasize that it is by setting aside these external difficulties that total concentration on the intrinsic performance, apart from its context, can be achieved. When the film reports that it was indeed a sickly shyness that compelled Honnold to take his first steps in the practice - dispensing with the need to seek a partner - it is only to better emphasize that the American now makes it the fruit of a calculated choice.

We can thus distinguish different practices and so different approaches to soloing. On the one hand, the more spontaneous solo, less prepared, which implies a call for height, a desire to climb (Moulin), and a more instinctive confidence in the gestures, which are not choreographed. This pushes one to be in a level of climbing that is not right at the border of the grade accessible to the climber: a margin is necessary to feel a sufficient ease and not to let the fear invade you. This figure seems to represent a passionate, irresistible solo: the climber's act resonates with the solitude of the mountain and implies a form of communion with nature. In this sense, this approach can be seen as an "irrational" negation of planning and technique and a direct contact with death. On the other hand, there is another type, which has been matured for a long time, requires preparation, often specific training, and obliges one to identify the itinerary in advance and to work meticulously on the most delicate passages. This is the case for solos on sport climbing cliffs (cf. *Le Ménéstrel* above), or in high level routes (cf. Edlinger). Alex Honnold's accomplishment, as summarized by *Free solo*, would mark the culmination of this second model. In a sense, it would be a return of the extremely rational individual, who certainly puts their life on the line, but aims at the most total control of their environment.

However, these two practices are in fact only two sides of the same coin. They are reconciled around the notion of commitment and the apology of mastery that follows from it. Commitment, according to Alain Ghersen, is a common thread throughout the history of mountaineering, because it "transcends all the eras of practice [...] and is repeatedly defended by practitioners, against all odds, as a true principle from which one must never derogate" (Ghersen, 2015: 88-89). By pledging their own life to each of their movements, the soloist, whether in a spontaneous or planned process, makes the irreversible character of an alpine ascent manifest.

Jankelevitch's analysis of the "adventure of death" in *L'aventure, L'ennui et le sérieux* (*Adventure, Boredom, Seriousness*, 1963) is enlightening in this respect. He defines adventure as a mixture between *seriousness* and *play*, and makes commitment the characteristic of seriousness. The adventurous would be both *inside* and *outside*. Inside because adventure, to go beyond simple play, must *commit* the actor and include a part of seriousness; it mixes with the necessities of life itself and *commits* its actor beyond a simple leisure with non-existent stakes. But if the adventure only commits, then it is not, because it would only be a new copy of daily life where each decision implicates entirely its agent without any possible detachment; in that the adventurer must also be outside, sufficiently *disengaged*. It is from this balance that adventure emerges. From there, Jankelevitch categorizes adventures according to the prevalence of either play or seriousness. Thus, in the mortal adventure, "one is more inside than outside", "seriousness prevails over play" (Jankélévitch, [1963] 2017: 19). In the light of this definition, the soloist would be an adventurer who wishes to narrow the already narrow ridge of any mortal adventure to the maximum: their commitment is total and their proximity to death very close, but a part of play must remain so that their adventure does not turn into tragedy. From this stems a need for mastery, without which such a risk would be more like a disguised suicide than an adventure with a promise of tomorrow³².

Indeed, the irreversibility of the outcome first of all makes the question of technical mastery more acute (in the form of a "margin" that the climber guarantees, even in the case of an unexpected difficulty, Moulin can improvise on the basis of the gestural repertoire at his disposal, or of training to the utmost of his ability with a view to perfect execution for Honnold). Furthermore, a common matrix of the two archetypes of the soloist we have outlined is that they radicalize the climber's and mountaineer's relationship to risk. Soloists recognize the singular, unique character of their gesture, and put death as a counterpart to a bad realization. Their claim thus concerns a constantly calculated and renegotiated relationship with risks. The analysis of "risk" in mountaineering found in *Risk and Mountaineering*, which distinguishes between the damage incurred and the probability of its occurrence, makes it possible to propose a reading grid capable of accounting for the specificity of the decision to solo: the risk is maximal in that it is lethal, but the probability of its occurrence is based on the training and the psychological state of the climber. If the soloist lacks mastery (technical or mental), they cease to be sufficiently detached from their action and fall into tragedy. Jankelevitch warns that the deadly adventure is never safe from this reversal if seriousness comes to prevail to the point of excluding the game: "the vicissitudes and dramatic twists and turns of the adventure [then invade] the whole of existence" (Jankélévitch, [1963] 2017 : 19)³³.

³² While a suspicion of a suicidal bent is often formulated against soloists, a clear distinction must be made: while the latter formulates a project with a hope of return and aftermath, the truly suicidal lives without hope of tomorrow or projection into the future (see Ghersen, 2016: 119).

³³ We can cite as an illustration the distinction drawn by Alex Honnold in his Ted Talk in October 2018 between two of his solo achievements: one on Half Dome and the other on El Capitan, two walls in Yosemite Valley. During the first, he

This total commitment fascinates as much as it escapes the classical norms of understanding. If such a voluntary questioning of one's own life can be experienced as an authentic adventure by its protagonist, it often remains perceived by a lay public as the instantiation of a form of irrational madness. To account for this radical choice, we must first understand the normative transgression that it operates in the standard decision-making scheme.

The "irrational" free soloist?

Whether planned or spontaneous, soloing implies a calculation of risks and a fine control of gestures. This practice, like mountaineering, by involving a direct confrontation with death - which could be avoided -, however cannot be accommodated within the classic normative framework of rationality developed by decision theory.

Indeed, there is an apparent opposition between the mountaineer, whose irrational romanticism would push him to put his life at risk in order to reach the heights, and the rational modern man, who is expected to use his knowledge to preserve himself as much as possible. Such an opposition is enlightened by the concept of rationality as developed by contemporary decision theory and more generally economics. Risk is seen as a means to an end. The standard theory of choice under uncertainty, known as expected utility theory - initiated by the seminal works of von Neuman and Morgenstern (1944) and Savage (1954) - formalizes this idea. An individual chooses between different actions whose final outcome is undetermined. This uncertainty is represented by a probability distribution on the final consequences. An action is then evaluated by combining these probabilities and the utility attached to the potential outcomes. This theoretical framework involves a form of consequentialism: the events possibly induced by an action are the only ones relevant for the assessment of choices and they are combined with probabilities. By its very foundations, it does not allow risk to be targeted for its own sake³⁴. Although the attitudes of *risk loving* or *risk seeking* can be represented, they only describe an agent who, for a given outcome, prefers to obtain it via a risky process rather than a non-risky one. In other words, there is no room for a "procedural" utility, but only for a consequentialist utility.

However, the mountaineer, like the gambler, finds pleasure in the mere act of taking a risk in order to achieve an end. Marschak (1950) actually used the example of mountain climbers to

tells how, when fear overwhelmed him, his climb became dramatic and extremely uncomfortable. On the contrary, during the second one, he kept a total control of his ascent.

³⁴ See Le Menestrel (2001) for an extensive discussion of this inherent flaw in standard decision theory. The argument is as follows: the characteristic of an object that designates whether it was obtained by a random (hence risky) or deterministic (non-risky) process cannot be combined with probabilities.

illustrate a behavior that violates rational requirements of the expected utility framework³⁵. This apparent irrationality only reflects the impossibility of considering as "rational" a risk-taking (in this case a potential risk of death) that would be required to attribute value to an achievement. In other words, because mountaineering involves a confusion between means and ends, the classical framework of rationality cannot accommodate it. Indeed, once mountaineering in its modern (or "sporting" in Preuss' sense) form was born, "it is the beginning of a *mise en abyme* where a game within a game is included, where reaching the highest point remains necessary while becoming insufficient" (Ghersen, 2016 : 52). As Ghersen points out, this has resulted in a range of new practices, each one involving a specific set of means used to climb. Among these practices is free solo. In this sense, free solo is only a continuum, even a logical declension, of the practice of mountaineering.

The soloist, far from being a suicidal maniac, radicalizes the search for risk. While the mountaineer could still be perceived as an agent who rationally balances the inevitable potential dangers with their objectives, the soloist makes *manifest* the risk as a primary motive of their action. They commit their own life as a counterpart of each of their movements. They therefore push to its limits an ethic of sobriety by limiting to the maximum the gear that is used. Through their total commitment and this extreme norm, they make it salient that an ascent is worth as much by its end as by its means.

In roped up climbing, an important part of the skills acquired by practitioners is their ability to calculate and then reduce the risks to their irreducible part. The soloist, by their absolute exposure, incurs an avoidable risk. For this very reason, while for a lay audience solo climbing is often a source of admiration (as shown by the fascination generated by movies such as *La Vie au Bout des Doigts* or *Free Solo*), among the community of climbers it can on the contrary be disturbing; as if the soloist's refusal to secure their climbing was too extreme. But as a result of this total commitment, they must deploy all their skills, not only to manage the dangers common to roped up climbers (weather, time, rock falls, etc.), but also to constantly evaluate their (physical and mental) ability to cross difficult parts without any means of belaying. Do these two attitudes reveal irreconcilable relationships to risk?

³⁵ The precise passage is quoted by Le Menestrel (2001).

Deviant practice and normative transgression

The specificity of the decision of a solo consists in questioning the very practical framework of any decision making. It is necessary to explain it by the fact that this praxis defies, not only the standard formalization of decision making, but even the mode of acquisition of any practical skill. Aristotle elaborates an explanation of the human capacity to regulate an ordered practice. The model he develops makes explicit the kind of normative transgression that free solo induces.

Practical wisdom, or prudence (φρόνησις³⁶) is a type of excellence, or virtue that consists in a capacity for action, a modification of the character by habit. Practical wisdom that concerns particulars requires experience that knows them, which time alone, spent in confronting them, guarantees. Aristotle thus describes an example of ethical virtues, which consist in a mediation (μεσότης), a middle way, difficult to find in that it is always relative to a contingent situation (Book II), and of which practical wisdom, an intellectual virtue, will prove to be like the condition of possibility.

"So, to get angry is within the reach of everyone and easy, as to give money and spend it; but to do it to the right person, in the right measure, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way, is not within the reach of everyone, nor is it easy."³⁷

The human ability to confront the variability of situations is based on a plasticity that allows the long frequentation of this multiplicity of accidents to produce the capacity to respond in an adapted way. The acquisition of this capacity is therefore circular: it is only by acting virtuously that it is possible to become virtuous. The "prudent" man manages to determine the particular means that make possible the unique instantiation of a general norm. Prudence is that acquired disposition which allows one to deliberate well on what to do. The virtuous end is posed, the goal is to act well, the choice concerns the particular means to implement it. In an analogous way, the soloist would like to top up the route alive (which already appears as a simplistic if not wrong formulation of their purpose). Human being has this capacity to adapt their conduct to events by taking into account particular circumstances in order to achieve what is appropriate, just as training must enable the climber to move with rectitude. Does free solo constitute a decision-making capacity, a physical and technical skill that can be thought of on the model of an accumulative acquisition and an adapted

³⁶ The translation by "practical wisdom" is probably, from an Aristotelian point of view, more correct. Nevertheless, "prudence" allows us to use the derived adjective more easily and, in our perspective, allows us to identify the paradigmatic norm of a "prudent practice".

³⁷ οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὸ μὲν ὀργισθῆναι παντὸς καὶ ῥάδιον, καὶ τὸ δοῦναι ἀργύριον καὶ δαπανῆσαι· τὸ δ' ἕ καὶ ὄσον καὶ ὅτε καὶ οὐ ἕνεκα καὶ ὥς, οὐκέτι παντὸς οὐδὲ ῥάδιον, *Nicomachean Ethics*, II, 10, 1109a23, our translation.

duplication? To say that the purpose of climbing is understood as the implementation of an adaptability to the unique and contingent situation by storing experiences, is to reduce the climber's skill to knowing how to react according to their past experience of similar situations.

What the detour through decision theory makes explicit is the transgression, through a risk-taking that is absolute, of any rational decision framework. Soloing does not constitute a peak in irrationality (it is precisely a regulated gesture and a set of practical decisions that allow success), but because it implies a confusion between means and ends, it escapes the standard framework of rationality. This is exactly what makes Aristotelian "prudence" (practical wisdom) unable to account for the practice of free solo to the end. The prudent individual manifests this quality only when facing novelty. But what the exercise of prudence supposes is the possible reconduction of any new situation to the whole of past experiences: it is these that put the prudent person in a position to react appropriately. It is indeed a question of a "possible adequacy between what they encounter and their capacities to overcome or thwart it"³⁸. By deliberately exposing themselves to absolute risk, the soloist operates a *mise en abyme* of this initial commensurability: it is this very initial premise that their risk-taking calls into question. It is not a question of experimenting if the new situation that presents itself will be comparable to all those that precede it (insofar as the practical skill that responds to it results from this past experience), but rather of testing the initial premise that makes them commensurable by finding the risk in an absolute form. In this, we can say that the prudent climber, in the Aristotelian sense, is indeed the one who uses the rope: Aristotelian prudence describes this existential posture which does not deny the novelty of what happens, but starts from the principle that we always have the possibility of comparing it to what we already know. In climbing, it is the rope that guarantees this commensurability: the bad choice I make always benefits me, always benefits my competence insofar as it gives me an additional experience. In this respect, the trivialization of the fall and the logic of training which assumes the absence of lethal risk bring down the practice of climbing to prudential issues.

Taking up Jankelevitch's analysis of adventure, the contradictory impossibility of being "outside and inside" takes up the characteristics that we have begun to identify in order to define free solo³⁹: its practice is both deviant in relation to other types of climbing, but at the same time a constitutive exception by the radicalization of the risk that necessarily remains non-zero. In relation to the praxis that any rational decision puts in place, the exposure to risk specific to free solo

³⁸ Ghersen, 2016 : 160, who speaks of a Nietzschean "*mise en abyme*". We take up his formulation in terms of "normative transgression".

³⁹ Jankélévitch's reference (2017: 9-10) to the notion of rules of the market or the Stock Exchange to make the difference between the adventurer and the adventurous is in this respect revealing. What is in question is indeed a transgression such as to make any statistical reasoning impossible. "Adventurism [is] simply a means to an end" (p. 10) when true adventure risks ends and means for free (by "playing") but by committing the most serious of stakes, one's life.

subverts it by bringing into play an absolute risk, but this transgression radicalizes what is at stake in the decision and escapes its frame of reference by making this very frame the stake of the risk. Jankélévitch formulates this form of contradiction, him also, in term of a *mise en abyme* (2017 : 11):

"Adventure is linked to this time of time that we call the future and whose essential character is to be indeterminate, because it is the enigmatic empire of possibilities and depends on my freedom"

The idea of a "time of time" underlines the impossibility of reducing the initial risk-taking to a simple statistical decision.

The analysis of the decisional and praxis schema implemented by the soloist makes it possible to answer the ambiguity which places the solo between deviant practice and "purity" of the practice (radicalization of the essence of climbing). If the practice of soloing constitutes a *maximum* in the risk-taking constitutive of any form of climbing, one could say that its opposite *extremum* does not play as a constitutive exception. It is the figure of "precautionism" that Alain Ghersen sketches (2016: 15): a logic of sanitization of the practice would culminate in zero risk, achievable simply by a total ban on the practice. This comparison between two extremes in risk-taking is revealing. More than a deviant practice, which, by deviating from the norm, refers to it, soloing acts as a constitutive exception of climbing practices. It exacerbates the risk-taking that is inevitable in any ascent. This exposure radicalizes the issue of psychological, technical and physical mastery that constitutes the purpose of climbing, and that securitization makes it possible to reduce to a prudential practice. Free solo does not therefore refer as much to a new norm, as to a form of extrapolation revealing the standard framework.

If it is a deviant form with regard to the safe and secured practice of sport climbing, it induces recourse to the analytical tools developed by the sociology of deviance (Becker, 1963, Merton, 1949, Saint-Martin, 2013). These are particularly useful for understanding how soloing transgresses the norm of safety present in the dominant practice of climbing; a transgression that can motivate a negative perception of soloing and its rejection. Howard Becker reminds us that "social norms define situations and the modes of behavior appropriate to them. " (Becker, 1963: 220). Through this framework, we analyze the deviance embodied by the solo as the result of a collective action, in the sense that a subgroup of the climbing community makes manifest, by departing from it, a prevailing norm. This action works towards a "demystification" of the new practice - in this case soloing - and of existing norms. Depending on the degree to which the rest of the community approves of the questioning of the norm, the deviant practice ranges from acceptance to radical rejection: these issues are clearly visible in the history of soloing. As a deviant form with regard to the standard framework, and referring to the community of climbers that constitutes a "highly integrated social group", it has participated in the construction of the dialectic

of this framework, given that the mastery of the uncertain character of natural spaces remains a question common to all the practices that take place there.

The articulation of a descriptive and normative approach to solo requires a reminder of the relative nature of the notion of deviance. The theory of deviance and the moral problems that Becker talks about refer in this sense to the concept of community. The example of jazz taken by Becker shows that the milieu of jazz musicians, themselves considered as deprived, qualifies, in the reverse, the dominant norm as such, in that the "normals" or "square"⁴⁰ do not understand anything about this practice which constitutes an elaborated and structured system (Becker, 1963: 198). In a similar way, the rejection of the solo by non-specialists in the discipline can be turned around: the qualification of deviance results from a lack of understanding of free solo, and therefore from a way of "deviating" from the norm it enacts.

Conclusion

Soloing, which is sometimes perceived as a deviant practice in relation to the "normal" level of safety, thus plays the role of a constitutive exception, which moreover reveals that there are two irreconcilable directions in climbing. On the one hand, there is a logic linked to high-level competition and aseptic practice. This is linked to the deployment of means, within a prudential logic. On the other hand, we can compare the practice of solo with that of high mountain climbing to a certain extent. Their approach refers to an absolute risk-taking, which constitutes an exception to the rationalist scheme of decision making. But are these two schools, two irreconcilable practices of climbing, or are they irreducible components of any ascent? It seems that each climbing movement re-enacts this compromise, and aims to rule on this dispute: what prevails over the need for security or, on the contrary, the taste for adventure? An understanding of the practice by the actors themselves sheds light in this sense on their relationship to this activity. The purpose of the actors sheds light in this sense on the practices of climbing and mountaineering, which cannot

⁴⁰ "The system of beliefs about what musicians are and what audiences are is summed up in a word used by musicians to refer to outsiders--"square." It is used as a noun and as an adjective, denoting both a kind of person and a quality of behavior and objects. The term refers to the kind of person who is the opposite of all the musician is, or should be, and a way of thinking, feeling, and behaving (with its expression in material objects) which is the opposite of that valued by musicians." (Becker [1966] 1973: 85). It is also interesting to note that Becker also uses the notion of commitment: "the process of commitment through which the "normal" person becomes progressively involved in conventional institutions and behavior. In speaking of commitment, I refer to the process through which several kinds of interests become bound up with carrying out certain lines of behavior to which they seem formally extraneous". The difference with commitment in climbing consists in the fact that the climber who commits is not extraneous to the behaviour or the practice: the use of the term characterizes a more punctual situation, that of significantly more difficult and exposed passages of a route. But we could use the meaning defined by Becker to describe the way in which the punctual commitment during a climb reflects a more general commitment to the practice of soloing itself.

be understood in a totally univocal way.

The history of the great mountaineers who do or do not engage in solo climbing points to the systematic nature of this discussion. The structural opposition between Piazz, who preferred an insured approach to the practice, and his friend Paul Preuss, who advocated the non-use of the belay devices that existed at the time, highlights the fact that this problematic informs the point of view of the actors themselves with regard to the practice of solo climbing. The prudential logic is characterized in this sense in "normal" practices linked to roping and institutionalized competitions, while mountaineering, at least to some extent, in its modern form, is opposed to it. Alain Ghersen puts it this way: "Becoming what one is through a chosen ordeal where one's physical integrity is put at stake." (Ghersen, 2016: 66). In this sense, if the perception of free solo, shaped by the history of practices that we have reconstructed, consists in part in qualifying it as a deviant radicalization of the practice, it is because it takes up, a fortiori, the reproach opposed to mountaineering as a morbid pathology of an individual who "does not know what he is doing" (Ghersen, 2016: 16). Precisely, our study demonstrates that, although this does not make it any less dangerous, solo climbing is done with the knowledge of its practitioners: the intelligence of the practice implemented by the actors themselves constitutes the solo as a constitutive exception of climbing practices by radicalizing the type of commitment implemented by any ascent, any exposure of the self⁴¹. Even the most "prudent" climbing practices cannot eliminate all taste for adventure. In its minimal form, the adventure remains in the indeterminacy with which the climber is confronted, any accomplishment of the gesture comes to be confronted with it.

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⁴¹ Alain Ghersen puts it this way: "Becoming what one is through a chosen ordeal where one's physical integrity is put at stake." (Ghersen, 2016: 66).

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5. Christopher NORRIS

Sport, Craft or Technique?: the case of competitive aeromodelling

I. ‘Technological Sport’: a hybrid and its history

This essay brings together a good many longstanding interests, one of which goes back to my early teens although the others are somewhat more recent. Philosophy of sport has not up to now been among them until now, I have to say, although my preparatory reading-around has convinced me that it does have significant links with topics that have occupied my interest for quite some time. More specifically, I want to put the case that recent developments in philosophy and critical theory – among them deconstruction and emergent ideas in cognitive science and philosophy of mind – have a bearing not only on general questions with regard to the nature of sport but also on one particular (as I deem it) sporting activity that might be considered a marginal candidate or a flat non-contender for such status. This will therefore be an essay fairly heavy on the theory/philosophy side but with the aim of questioning – ‘problematizing’, in the jargon – some entrenched attitudes that have tended to invest the category ‘sport’ with a range of heavily value-laden and in some ways prejudicial attributes.

To this end I shall take that take that particular case and show – in good deconstructionist fashion – that its marginality is not so much a matter of its standing apart from other sports that properly, plainly, or naturally merit the name but rather something that it shares to a degree with other fully-recognised sports. However, lest this be thought just another tiresome show of deconstructive ingenuity, let me say that the issue with respect to what constitutes a genuine sport as opposed to a false (say overly prosthetic or technology-driven) contender for the title is one that goes deep into prevailing conceptions of the paradigmatically human (Hoberman 1992; Jonas 1974). It can thus be seen to touch upon issues – among them issues in neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and ethics – of a far from trivial or merely paradox-mongering character (Norris 2010). At the same time I should not want this piece to get so philosophically top-heavy as to lose touch with that motivating impulse of straightforward delight in the exercise of jointly bodily and mental skills that is surely a *sine qua non* of all sporting pursuits, including (I shall claim) the activity in question. Yet if over-earnestness is always a risk in contexts like this then so is the opposite or

reactive attitude that thinks to shield such pleasurable pursuits from the dead hand of solemn philosophical enquiry. What applies elsewhere to arts like poetry and music is just as applicable here and all the more so, one would think, to the extent that sport is in general the kind of activity that yields fairly robust pleasures and is therefore unlikely to lose its appeal under pressure from analytic scrutiny. So long as the pursuit is sufficiently rewarding it will suffer no damage from the fumbling efforts of heavy-handed commentary while its active participants might just benefit – in terms of heightened awareness and powers of concentrated mental-physical focus – from the attention of other more perceptive, acute, and (even) philosophically informed discussants.

The ancient interest – actually a full-scale obsession and one that has never waned despite any number of distractions along the way – is in the building and flying of model aeroplanes. More specifically, I have a fascination with control-line aircraft of the kind that you don't so often see nowadays (since people tend to go for the more obviously versatile and techno-glamorous radio-controlled types) but which were immensely popular from the 1950s through to (roughly) the mid-1980s (Moulton 1972; Musciano 1976). What I want to say about aeromodelling and its arguable status as a sport, rather than (primarily) a craft or (spare me this!) a 'hobby', will have to do mainly with control-line flying, since that's where I have the most hands-on experience as well as, I hope, the strongest case to make in philosophic terms. (For some typically dispiriting remarks on the 'hobby ideology' see Adorno [2005] 190-91.) However I should explain at the outset that, radio-control models aside, the only other genus is that of free-flight models which – as the name suggests – are not subject to any kind of pilot-control (as distinct from highly sophisticated pre-set onboard tweaks and adjustments) once they have left the launcher's hand. Please note that I say 'genus' rather than 'species' because there are several sub-disciplines or sub-types of model and competitive activity involved in the case of both control-line and free-flight genera. On the free-flight side there are gliders, rubber-powered ('wind-up') aircraft, and those propelled by miniature two-stroke internal-combustion-engines (Dilly 1975). In each case the competitive aim is to achieve maximum total flight duration under certain closely specified restrictions that have often been tightened up over the years as performance levels have steadily improved through refinements of design, technological development, and acquired practical expertise. These are set out and subject to revision from time to time by the worldwide governing body, the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), which has jurisdiction over all internationally recognised competitive classes in full-size and model aviation alike. At a national level there are various other classes and events that likewise have their rules and regulations periodically reviewed by governing bodies like the British Model Flying Association (BMFA).

Indeed it is something of a feather in the wind as concerns our topic that this title replaced the original Society of Model Aeronautical Engineers (SMAE) by approval of a decent majority –

though not without a good number of dissenting voices whose objections rumble on to this day – at their AGM in 1987. The change occurred partly, no doubt, through a wish to shed that original, rather quaint appellation but also in token of the gradual shift from a basically craft-oriented discipline to one that had developed an increasingly sport-like as well as technologically geared-up competitive edge. At present, after much discussion and despite some resistance both within and beyond the aeromodelling community, the preferred designation is that of ‘technological sport’. This hybrid category might seem to stretch rather nicely around the case in hand except for lingering worries amongst the more craft-oriented flyers that it underplays the role of design and constructional expertise in achieving competitive success. Besides, there is the feeling amongst some in the wider sporting world that model-flying doesn’t qualify for sporting status of any kind by reason of its simply not requiring enough in the way of physical fitness or bodily skill. The former objection is further reinforced by the fact that classification as a sport has resulted in the scrapping – again for international-class events only – of the ‘builder-of-the-model’ rule, that is, the requirement that competitors vouch for their having had at least a large hand in constructing any model entered under their name. So the issue is by no means closed, whether as a matter of consensus within or agreement outside that community. Moreover it is an issue of particular interest on a number of distinctly philosophical grounds, among them the question of just where and how any line should be drawn between powers or capacities integral to the human agent and powers or capacities acquired through the use of various prosthetic performance-enhancing devices.

Here as elsewhere we have to do with a range of techniques for taking best advantage of rules and restrictions that may start out as a means of keeping performance within manageable limits but which then provide a spur to further, more intensive efforts and (often) to some breakthrough stage of advance. In free-flight events the rules concern such requirements as maximum (or minimum) flying-surface area, length of towing line in the case of gliders, maximum weight of rubber in the case of rubber-driven craft, and engine capacity as well as length of engine-run (currently down to four seconds) for international-class power models. In the latter case especially flyers have developed a whole range of techniques and mechanical devices of great sophistication – and requiring great engineering skill – in order to achieve the best possible results under such restrictive conditions. Most significant here is the concentration of resources on that particular class of engine – the 2.5 c.c. two-stroke unit – that became standard for a good many international-class events some fifty years ago and which has therefore attracted by far the most intensive investment in terms of design, research and development (Billinton 1983; Krause 1996). Indeed these engines (at least the types specialised for use in free-flight power and control-line speed competition) are nowadays producing outputs in the range of 2.00 brake horse power (i.e., 800 bhp per litre capacity) at something in excess of 40,000 rpm airborne.

So free-flight places large demands on its practitioners as regards certain technical skills and also the ability – partly acquired or developed but doubtless to some extent a matter of native-intuitive endowment – to take best advantage of ambient physical conditions. That is to say, it involves a sensitive awareness of complex relations between temperature, wind direction and strength, likelihood of thermals (upwardly mobile currents of warm air that can greatly increase flight duration), and so forth. At any rate I hope to convince you that on one fairly uncontentious definition of ‘sport’ – as an activity that involves testing one’s physical-mental capacities or skills against the kinds of challenge posed by certain clearly specified rules, restrictions, or obstacles – there is a *prima facie* case for deeming it to constitute a sport (Suits 2005). However there are other criteria commonly adduced in this connection which might seem to count decidedly against that claim. One, and no doubt the most obvious, is that model-flying doesn’t seem to involve the sorts of physical or bodily attainment – strength, speed, endurance, muscular control, coordination, balance, precision of aim, dexterity of hand or feet, along with the cardio-vascular fitness to achieve some punctual combination of these – that most often mark out the truly accomplished sportsperson. Indeed, the competition class (currently not much flown) which comes closest to satisfying these demands is that which involves the humble chuck-glider, basically a small solid-balsa airframe which the modeller trims (i.e., makes fine adjustments to the centre of gravity, angles of incidence and flying surfaces) for optimal performance and then throws as hard as possible and in just the right way for the aircraft to roll off the top of its climb and enter a stable glide. Still the objection will probably be raised that although this event gives a clear competitive advantage to anyone possessing a superior degree of muscular strength, control, balance, dexterity, accuracy of aim, etc., still the outcome will depend on other factors quite aside from bodily fitness. These will have to do on the one hand with the model’s performance potential – its aerodynamic traits and capacity to make the very most of a relatively simple design – and on the other with factors (like wind strength and thermal activity) beyond the competitor’s power to control.

All the same – and I do want to emphasise this point – there is a good deal of complex interaction here between the flyer’s various modes of bodily involvement in building, trimming, and launching the model, as likewise between the flyer and those manifold subtly related aspects of their physical environment that in turn feed back into their handling of the model and its flight patterns (Simmons 1996). Moreover, any ruling against the ‘sport’ designation on grounds of the model’s playing so crucial an outcome-determining role can be countered by remarking that the same applies in some degree to a great many fully accredited sports that involve the use of more-or-less sophisticated equipment. Cycling offers a particularly apt comparison since it involves such a finely attuned reciprocal dependence between rider and machine, or physical fitness as a matter of peak bodily form and fitness-for-purpose as a peak achievement in terms of engineering and design. This

rejoinder can be pressed home by pointing out that some recognised sports – among them javelin, shot-putting, and pole-vaulting along with all the rowing, ice-skating, skiing, and other such events – likewise involve a crucial reliance on cutting-edge technology or at least on equipment of the utmost design sophistication and engineering quality. Beyond that they require, again like model-flying, a fine sensitivity to ambient conditions or a need to make adequate allowance for the way that any slight change in those conditions (e.g., a switch of wind force or direction or a shift in some aquatic flow-pattern) can decisively affect the outcome.

Thus there seems good *prima facie* warrant for the claim that at least certain classes of competitive aeromodelling are properly categorised as sports according to widely-accepted criteria or – to phrase it more circumspectly at this stage – that their exclusion would raise serious questions as regards the standing of other activities that are commonly granted that title.

II. A prime contender: control-line speed

Where the case can be made with greatest confidence is, I shall argue, with regard to control-line flying in its four main disciplines or sub-branches. These are distinguished partly according to the kinds of skill or pilot-aptitude involved, and partly according to the flight characteristics displayed by the model under certain specified conditions and in response to certain types of challenge (Moulton 1976; Musciano 1976). Three of them – stunt (or aerobatics), team-racing, and combat – have their own distinct claims to sporting status on the grounds, respectively, of extreme pilot skill and physical precision, extreme rapidity and closeness of co-ordination between pilot and pit-man/mechanic, and extreme (at times almost unbelievable) quickness of response and tactical manoeuvre on the combat flyer's part. However it is the fourth, control-line speed, that I shall take as a test-case here since it is at once the most demanding on competitors in certain respects and the discipline that creates greatest problems for anyone seeking to advance its claims to the status of a fully-fledged sport. That is to say, of all the competition classes this is the one that brings together all those physical-mental skills and aptitudes mentioned above while also (problematically) involving maximal reliance on equipment – notably specialist airframes and highly-tuned engines – that might seem to pose real difficulties in that regard.

For speed flyers the object, quite simply, is to cover a set distance in as short a time as possible, the time being measured by stopwatch (or nowadays electronically) and the distance calculated as a product of the line-length (i.e., the circle radius) and the number of laps completed. Engine capacities cover a wide range but here again the greatest development efforts have been focused on the 2.5 c.c. class for international (FAI-regulated or sponsored) events. Speeds in this category are currently somewhat in excess of 200 m.p.h. and the regulation line-length just over

fifty feet so it may well be imagined – or found out readily enough through a Google search under ‘control-line FAI speed record’ – how much this requires in the way of pilot endurance, agility and skill. For FAI events control is achieved via two steel lines attached to a handle and, in the model, to a bell-crank which then communicates up-and-down movement via a push-rod to an elevator surface on the tail-plane. Other (non-international) classes permit a more mechanically complex system that involves the conveyance of torsional movement from a high-ratio geared handle down a single line, and thereby significantly cuts the amount of additional induced drag. However this has the disadvantage of producing a slightly delayed response and thus requires split-second anticipative action on the pilot’s part.

I think – despite the above-mentioned problem – that there is a very strong case to be made for this class of model-flying as a sport in no very stretched, problematical, or attenuated sense of that term. Indeed, it is a sense that should commend itself to philosophers as capturing a good many basic features of the genus ‘sport’ and the activity of aeromodelling alike, and hence as providing a characterization that has a fair claim to definitional adequacy if not definitive status. Thus we need to recognise that the meaning of ‘sport’ – more aptly, its range of application – will be subject to periodic change under the influence of various social, cultural, historical, and (not least) techno-scientific factors. Still this need not be thought to require a downright relativist conclusion to the effect that ‘sport’ just is what most people nowadays or various people in different cultures and at other times happen to have meant by that word. Nor does it entail a last-ditch retreat to the Wittgensteinian notion that ‘family resemblance’ or some non-determinable space of overlap between such different usages is the closest we can get to a viable account of the concept and its scope of coverage (Wittgenstein 1958, Sections 65-70). As Bernard Suits convincingly argues, we can carry on using the term ‘sport’ in such a way as to count certain activities in and rule certain other activities out even though it might not meet every condition laid down by purists or terminological sticklers (Suits 2004, 2005). In the case of aeromodelling – more specifically, control-line speed – these latter would include advocates of an uncompromising physical-fitness approach along with those who would lay chief stress on the bodily-mental autonomy or self-sufficiency of sporting pursuits. Both parties would see it as accordant with their principles to prohibit all reliance on advances in the way of materials technology, engineering skills, or suchlike presumptively extraneous factors. However, as I have said, they would quickly run into problems of a slippery-slope kind when challenged to uphold either of these objections in the face of so many comparable instances from other, fully accepted sporting activities that routinely draw upon advances of just that type in their quest for ever higher standards of performance.

Here again the synergy of flyer and model has a great deal in common with that of cyclist and cycle, or yachtsman and yacht, or archer and bow, or indeed any participant in any sport that

involves certain associated items of equipment. In each case competitive success depends crucially on achieving the best possible match between mental and physical as well as between the human and the non-human physical domains. There is a brilliant passage on Samuel Beckett by the American critic Hugh Kenner where he calls to remembrance a Belgian racing cyclist named Godeau and suggests, not implausibly, that Beckett's tragi-comic conception of the human predicament is that of the 'Cartesian centaur' (Kenner 1973: 86). This he depicts as a poor forked creature – like the rider precariously perched on his cycle – condemned to exist in the hybrid state of a mind forever attached to a body yet forever unable to comprehend or reconcile itself to that state. Thus for Kenner, and maybe for Beckett, if cycling (and competitive cycling in particular) has a wider philosophical or existential import then this has to do not at all with the intimate union of mind and body or human beings and their physical environment but rather with that typecast Cartesian idea of the mind as thoroughly out-of-place in the body and the human (mind and body alike) as equally out-of-place in the 'external' world. It is a pretty conceit and a fine piece of writing on Kenner's part. All the same, as perhaps even he would admit off the record, it is a downright absurd (as well as doctrinally absurdist) distortion of the *figure humaine* that finds so apt and striking an image in the person of the racing cyclist. After all it is hard to think of an activity that more perfectly exemplifies the interactive nature – indeed the absolute inseparability – of body and mind. Nor is there any adequate reason – no reason apart from a range of more-or-less deep-laid prejudices – to accept cycling as a genuine sport in so far as it constitutes a standing rebuttal of Kenner's arcane literary fancy whilst withholding that title from the kind of jointly physical, mental, environmentally responsive, and superbly coordinated activity that typifies model-flying at its best.

Nevertheless some will argue that it should not be so considered because it involves far more in the way of craftsmanship, technology, and design expertise – and correspondingly less in the way of physical skill, strength, or endurance – than even those activities (like cycling or yachting) where the issue has been decided in favour of a 'sport' designation but where there might yet remain some lingering doubt on that score. My answer here would be simply to repeat that these are all (aeromodelling included) examples of the human interactive and competitive involvement with a physical world – with its inducements, challenges, resistances, obstacles, feedback loops, openings for creative transformation, and so forth – which constitute 'sport' on any reasonably open and non-dogmatic understanding of the term. No doubt it will be further objected that in this case the challenges and checks involve what is basically a technological, hence non-sport-like dialectic between, on the one hand, that sequence of continuous though sometimes quite dramatic advances in design or engineering and, on the other, those various new rules and restrictions periodically introduced so as to put a brake on the escalating standards of performance (speed in control-line or duration in free-flight) brought about by such developments. On the face of it this does constitute a

sizeable difference between competitive aeromodelling and those sporting activities that constitute – or are apt to be taken as – paradigm instances of the kind. These latter might include track events, ball-games (some of them), and all trials of strength, endurance, or physical fitness and dexterity that involve minimal reliance on sophisticated items of equipment. Yet here again it needs saying that this is a difference of degree rather than kind, and that the above-mentioned sorts of event have all of them been subject to controversy on grounds of the supposedly unfair advantage enjoyed by some competitors as a result of their deploying technologically more advanced items of footgear, swimwear, or other such ancillary items (Magdalinski 2008)).

No doubt there is something very suspect about arguments that take the difficulty (even impossibility) of drawing a definitive cut-off-point on some scale between proper and non-proper instances of *x* as sufficient reason for treating the distinction as altogether void and *x* as purely a product of linguistic or cultural definition. After all, it is through arguments of just that kind – those that demand a standard of conceptual precision or clear-cut bivalent logic in contexts where no such standard applies and then go on to impugn the very notion of logical validity – that irrationalists and relativists from the ancient Greeks down have typically pressed their case (Norris 1997). However I have no wish to exploit this particular sceptical ruse and would indeed wish to place the maximum possible distance between my position and any such revival of age-old relativist themes. Thus the undecidability in question here is not a matter of some merely speculative play with the notion of radical doubt but rather a matter of the historically, socially, culturally, and (above all in this context) physically and materially situated way that sport has increasingly embraced various kinds of technological advance to the point where they have become something like second nature. These developments have indeed brought us to a stage where any well-informed judge might be hard-put to say how the line should be drawn between permissible and impermissible modes of performance-enhancement, or at just what point it becomes not so much a question of enhancing some existent physical capacity or skill but rather of effecting a qualitative change, that is, a transformation in the scope and limits of attainable performance.

This is just the sort of issue that is nowadays most likely to break out at high-level sporting events where some new technological advance – like the swimsuit material recently devised as a means of reducing friction and channelling muscular energy – will often give rise to fierce dispute. Thus the new technology will tend to be seen by some (its beneficiaries) as merely a means of exploiting their own abilities to better, more potential-realising effect while to others it will look like an unfair because strongly performance-boosting use of unequally distributed high-tech resources (Loland 2001: 41-106).

III. Humanity in question: nature, culture, technology

My purpose in drawing these comparisons is not to deny that there is a difference between the sort of advantage or competitive edge that may be gained, say, by control-line speed flyers with access to the very latest engine technology and the advantage gained by swimmers having use of the new swimwear material. Nor is it to deny that these cases may raise different issues when it comes to considering what should or should not count as a legitimate (sportingly acceptable) enhancement of existing skills, capacities, or talents. Rather it is to make the point that in confronting all cases of this kind – cases where a question arises as to the extent of advanced instrumentation compatible with sport's remaining an arena of human competitive activity as distinct from a competitively-driven branch of applied science – there will always be some room for doubt concerning the justificatory grounds for drawing any such line. More specifically, the attempt to draw it will always involve a certain pre-given conception of the human which in turn presupposes (most often without very much in the way of supporting argument) a certain conception of what belongs beyond or outside the properly, authentically, or naturally human sphere.

Here again I should not wish to be taken as recommending an anything-goes policy or suggesting that the category 'sport' be expanded to the point where it encompasses every form of competitive endeavour no matter how remote from the exercise of physical capacities or skills and no matter how far it relies on other, e.g., techno-scientific achievements that would fall outside the category 'sport' by any sensible criterion. On the other hand I do want to say that this category is closely bound up with another, that of the human or the natural-human, which has long been a topic of deep, indeed obsessive concern amongst philosophers, theologians, moralists (especially), and of course anthropologists. What they have been at great pains to establish – as shown very pointedly by Giorgio Agamben in his book *The Open* – is the intrinsic difference of kind or nature that sets human beings apart from everything non-human, whether in terms of the human *versus* the 'merely' animal, the vital *versus* the mechanical, the ensouled *versus* the non-ensouled, or the possessors *versus* the non-possessors of reason (Agamben 2004). For present purposes it is chiefly the 'mechanical', i.e., the technologically enhanced or transformed that is most often up for exclusion, while its opposite (the vital) stands in for all the values that were once taken to distinguish human beings from everything else in the world. Thus sport – or a certain prevailing idea of what constitutes a proper or natural as distinct from an artificially enhanced (or corrupted) version of it – comes to serve as something like the last redoubt of a humanist ethos premised on the classical ideal of a consummate union between body and mind. That is, it stands proxy for a long-lost state of perfected physical-mental attunement untouched by the various wrenching dichotomies that have

left their mark on other aspects of life under present-day conditions.

However that idea is as shaky in historical and philosophic terms as all those other nostalgic and basically conservative myths that involve what T.S. Eliot famously called a ‘dissociation of sensibility’. In Eliot’s literary-critical version of the tale that phrase referred to a cultural disaster that supposedly overtook English poetry and culture some time around the middle of the seventeenth century (just the time of the English Civil War, as it happens) and put asunder the ideal unity of intellect and feeling – or thought and emotion – that had characterised the work of Shakespeare, the metaphysical poets, the Jacobean dramatists, and their fortunate contemporaries (Eliot 1964). His was just one variant of a theme that has been common enough across genres or disciplines ranging all the way from sociology, anthropology, and historiography to ethics, aesthetics, and cultural theory. Philosophically speaking its most influential articulation has no doubt been through the strain of markedly conservative ethical thought propounded with greatest vigour and often lugubrious relish by Alasdair MacIntyre (MacIntyre 1984; see especially Chapter 6: 62-78). This is the notion of our nowadays inhabiting a world of post-lapsarian moral chaos devoid of all those orienting values, commitments and communally shared beliefs that once (more specifically: for the ancient Greeks) provided a sure compass in matters of ethical choice and conduct. However these ideas are of specialist or academic interest only when compared with the depth and extent of popular investment in – or identification with – that idealised conception of sport that requires the constant policing of its bounds (especially the line between human physique and its prosthetic or techno-scientific enhancement) so as to ensure fair play. Nor is it hard to recognise, in the periodic outbreaks of public concern on this score, the same kind of sometimes phobic anxiety that had long tended to characterise the treatment of other such strenuously defended but inherently shifting or contestable boundaries. Among them are those between nature and culture, *physis* and *tekhne*, the vital and the mechanical, or that which belongs to human beings in virtue of their proper (humanly intrinsic) powers, talents, or physical capacities and that which pertains to them only in virtue of some strictly supplementary or adventitious technological aid.

Here it is tempting to invoke Jacques Derrida’s well-known demonstration, in *Of Grammatology*, of the way that such value-laden binary distinctions – cases where the one term is taken to possess a natural pre-eminence or superiority *vis-à-vis* the other – will often turn out to call their own premises into question through a deviant ‘logic of supplementarity’ that works to complicate, challenge, and subvert the express order of priority (Derrida 1976). Thus, in Derrida’s reading of Rousseau, there occurs a regular twist of logico-semantic implication whereby a whole range of (supposedly) derivative, artificial, otiose, unnatural, corrupting, degraded, decadent, or other such merely ‘supplementary’ items are found to function as necessary adjuncts – as ‘supplements’ in the other, positive or palliative sense of the word – since without them the

(supposedly) autonomous, integral, or self-sufficient entity to which they stand in that (supposedly) inferior relation would itself be found lacking in some crucial respect. Chief among these binaries is that which opposes nature to culture, with the former term always presumed to possess a self-evident (indeed definitional) priority not only in virtue of its having come first temporally but also – an article of faith for Rousseau – by reason of its inherent superiority over anything merely cultural.

Thus the basic nature/culture opposition spawns a series of precise structural analogues whereby the good (small-scale, organic, or ‘primitive’) society is set against its decadent, modern, ‘civilised’ counterpart; or pure melody taken as music’s earliest, hence most spontaneous and natural form of expression, in contrast to its modern, contrapuntal, harmonically ‘advanced’ forms; or speech (oral discourse) treated as the mode of utterance closest to the animating sources of human expressive intent when compared with the alien, intrusive, and hence ‘unnatural’ medium of writing. There is no room here for a full-scale exposition of the arguments – combining meticulous close-reading with immanent critique – by which Derrida shows these binaries to self-deconstruct or manifest a ubiquitous ‘logic of supplementarity’ which first seems to invert that presumed order of priority and then (as its further implications unfold) to prevent any strictly decidable verdict as to which term has conceptual pride of place. For present purposes my point is simply that any such appeal to the supposed naturalness of certain as opposed to certain other (prosthethically-assisted or technologically-enhanced) claimants to the title ‘sport’ is sure to encounter problem cases which require a reconsideration of those categories. This goes to reinforce the message of Agamben’s *The Open*, namely that all attempts to shore up a privileged conception of ‘the human’ – from whatever standpoint religious or secular, ethical or anthropological, *a priori* or evidence-based – will at some point come up against a counter-instance or a case that cannot be decided one way or the other and which hence constitutes a definite exception to the discriminatory norm.

I have brought up these arguments from Derrida and Agamben not just by way of theoretical armour but rather as pointing to a real and currently pressing instability in our categorization of some sports as genuine (= natural) and others as technologically assisted to an excessive degree and therefore as excluded from the category ‘sport’ in any proper, ‘naturally’ acceptable sense of the term. To repeat: my point is not (any more than Derrida’s) that the distinctions concerned should be deconstructed in the vulgar and non-Derridean sense ‘exploded, discredited, shown up as so many false or ideologically-motivated pseudo-distinctions’ but rather to suggest that they merit re-examination in light of what he has shown to be their always contestable normative status. And again, lest this point be misconstrued in the way that has become such a depressing staple of its Anglophone reception-history: a deconstructive analysis as brought to bear on the issue ‘what constitutes a proper application of the concept “sport”?’ should in no way be thought of as emptying that concept of all normative content, or as opening the way for its application to whatever activity

anyone might wish to promote or re-define in such merely honorific terms. On the contrary: as Derrida has often been at pains to insist (and, more importantly, to bear out through textual close-readings of exemplary precision and rigour) the contestability of this and kindred distinctions is just what marks them as subject to normative, i.e., reasoned critical-evaluative appraisal since it is only by way of their openness to such treatment that they can properly claim that status (Norris 2000a).

In the case of sport this means that there will always be disputed, marginal, problematic, anomalous, or presently undecidable instances but also – as against the misinformed ‘anything goes’ travesty of deconstruction – that those instances will call for a careful re-thinking of the substantive as well as definitional issues involved. Thus any responsible address to the latter will entail some consequent change to the former, that is, some more-or-less radical adjustment to our sense of what sport actually *is* or our working idea of what sets it apart from those various other practices – art, craft, science, technique, non-sport game, pastime, hobby, leisure activity – that might lay claim to that title. It is not only the cardinal nature/culture distinction, as treated by thinkers from Rousseau to Lévi-Strauss, that Derrida shows to exhibit this character of undecidability or openness to contestation just so long as the challenge is mounted by way of a detailed critical engagement. The same applies to other such value-laden binaries, among them that between the instrumental (or directly purposive) and the pure, disinterested exercise of reason which plays a central role in Kant’s conceptions of ethics and aesthetics alike. This has its analogue in the idea of sport as involving the pursuit of certain jointly physical and mental ideals that in turn require a measure of self-abnegation or detachment from the mere desire to excel as a matter of private-individual achievement. What Derrida shows to striking effect about Kant’s doctrine of the faculties is how crucially it depends upon maintaining a firm categorical line between the pure and the impure whether with regard to beauty (in aesthetics), the moral will (in ethics), or the quest for knowledge (in the natural, human, or formal sciences) (Derrida 1987). Moreover – as his reading also very pointedly brings out – that line proves strictly impossible to draw since subject to all manner of infractions, doublings, illicit border-crossings, or undecidable cases which cannot be said to fall distinctly on either side of it.

Aesthetics plays a cardinal role in Kant’s system since it offers the paradigm case (or so he maintains) of a perfectly disinterested exercise of judgment such as should properly be called forth by examples of ‘pure’ as distinct from ‘adherent’ beauty. These are instances which – at least on his own submission – fully satisfy the requirement that appreciation not be tainted by any admixture of aesthetically extraneous motives, purposes, or palpable designs on the receptive subject (Kant 1978). It seems to me that this deconstructive approach very definitely has its place in questioning the kinds of purist attitude sometimes adopted concerning the issue as to what should or should not be admitted under the rubric ‘sport’. Thus Derrida’s adroit demonstration of the problems that beset

Kant's discourse on beauty – and, beyond that, Kant's implicit use of it as a touchstone for distinguishing pure from applied or instrumental modes of reasoning – might well be extended to the discourse on sport that seeks to mark it off from certain other activities by reason of their not coming up to its own, self-exemplified requirements for a legitimate instance of the kind. More specifically: that discourse trades on a range of presumptively area-specific terms – 'craft', 'art', 'technique', 'method', 'skill', 'expertise', etc. – that are taken to occupy various regions more or less contiguous to the area marked 'sport' but also definitively set apart from it on account of their not meeting those same requirements.

Such is the widely-held belief that technological progress in its various forms, from streamlined swimsuits to the latest stage of miniature two-stroke model engine development, must surely belong outside the domain of sport since despite drawing upon human ingenuity it none the less constitutes a definite breach of that intimate union between body and mind that typifies the sporting ideal. However this notion runs up against some sizeable problems, chief among them (as I have said) the impossibility of drawing a non-arbitrary line at some point on the scale of increasing technological refinement. And again – closely connected with that – there is the lack of any principled or adequate justification for placing a limit on the extent to which the exercise of human conceptual-creative-inventive powers can or should intervene to enhance physical performance.

IV. Technics, sport, and the 'extended mind'

Hence the particular relevance, in this context, of Derrida's deconstructive readings of Rousseau and Kant. Between them – and especially when taken in conjunction with other work such as his writings on Lévi-Strauss concerning the contrast of 'primitive' *bricoleur* and 'sophisticated' *ingénieur*, or his reflections on Heidegger and the 'question of technology' – they serve to emphasise the inherent questionability of several distinctions that can often be found doing service in the sorts of case typically put forward by advocates or opponents of some candidate for the status 'sport' (Derrida 1978 and 1991). These include the nature/culture, physical/mental, human/non-human, pure/impure, proper/non-proper, and (most specifically) the self-sufficient or integral in bodily-motor terms *versus* the prosthetic or technologically-assisted. This latter category then becomes a point of contestation – sometimes very much in the public eye – as concerns any practice (any new candidate or new development in a recognised sport) which relies so far on the aid of advanced prosthetic or other such performance-boosting devices as to challenge both hitherto existing standards of achievement and hitherto prevailing conceptions of sport *vis-à-vis* conceptions of the properly or naturally human (Magdalinski 2008).

My point, to repeat, is that these two conceptions (and the sorts of challenge to which they are periodically exposed) are very closely bound up together since sport is one of those touchstone categories that play a central role in communal perceptions of the human, the natural, the proper, and – as very often comes to fore whenever such debates arise – the ethically or socially acceptable. Thus it is hardly surprising that disagreements should run so deep, or that moral passions should run so high, when it is an issue of just how far we are at liberty to redefine the concept ‘sport’ or just how willing we should be to stretch it around some technologically dependent advance in human (or quasi-human) levels of achievement. What makes this question all the more pressing is the extent to which philosophers, or some of them, are nowadays calling into doubt not only the old Cartesian-dualist idea of the mind as an immaterial ghost in a bodily machine but also the more tenacious belief – upheld by a good many otherwise fervent anti-Cartesians – that since mind and body are strictly inseparable therefore we can and should continue to think of mind-states, along with their neuro-physical correlates, as transpiring altogether inside the skin of this or that individual (for a vigorous critique of such thinking see Clark 2008, especially 3-29; also Crane 2003). Such is still the thesis defended by internalists or those, like Jerry Fodor, who see no reason (and certainly no reason having to do with the advent of new, e.g., prosthetic, sensory-motor or virtual-reality technologies) to revise our common-sense view of minds as identified with certain individuals whose brains are the locus of whatever thoughts, feelings, moods, memories, or modes of experience they undergo (Fodor 2008).

Of course these thinkers would happily concede that there exist ancillary tools or implements – ranging all the way from pencils and notebooks to laptop computers and the internet – whereby individual minds can more or less drastically extend their powers of recollection, their aptitude for various forms of mathematical or logical reasoning, and even their capacities for inventive thinking about certain well-defined topics. However, as Fodor insists with his customary brio, this doesn’t mean going along with the ‘extended mind’ hypothesis in its stronger form, namely the idea that Descartes got it wrong not only about the mind/body split but also (together with a great many present-day anti-Cartesians) about mindedness as a feature of human beings that by very definition pertains to a realm of internal, i.e., ‘in-the-head’ thoughts, mental contents, or representations. For those who espouse this thesis it is merely a residual Cartesian prejudice that prevents us from acknowledging what should otherwise be clear on a moment’s reflection, namely the twofold fact of experience that minds reach out into the world and that the world reaches in and engages minds through the agency of various tools and devices which then become constituent parts of the human mode of being-in-the-world. One doesn’t need to be a paid-up Heideggerian in order to reject any version of that old subject/object or ‘interface’ notion that has plagued epistemology from Descartes down, and which will find its quietus – so they argue – only when common-sense

perceptions and beliefs catch up with this strong anti-dualist chapter of current philosophic thought. For Fodor, on the contrary, it is self-evident on philosophic as well as intuitive or common-sense grounds that even if our perceptual-cognitive powers can often be prosthetically enhanced through a variety of extra-bodily means still there is a difference – a crucial difference – between those goings-on that transpire within our skulls or, at any rate, within the bounds of our central-to-peripheral nervous system and those that occur outside or beyond that epistemically distinctive domain (Fodor 2009). If the distinctiveness in question stops well short of downright first-person epistemic privilege then this seems to be not so much a sign of Fodor's wishing to repudiate every last trace of that Cartesian heritage as of his having to make some concession, however small, to the prevailing philosophic wisdom that will have absolutely no truck with such ideas.

Yet it is the same widespread consensus – or a willingness to press its conclusions a stage farther – that has given rise to the 'extended mind' hypothesis as a means of even more thoroughly endorsing the anti-Cartesian, anti-dualist, anti-first-person-privilege line of thought. If one accepts the mind-brain identity thesis at full strength – rather than falling back to some compromise notion such as that of mind as 'emergent from' or 'supervenient upon' brain, or again, that of Davidsonian 'anomalous monism' as a formula that tries to have it both ways – then one is likely to find attractive the idea of taking this physicalist argument the extra step (Norris 2010). For one result of taking it will be to undermine or at least greatly complicate the distinction between bodily prostheses like heart pacemakers, artificial limbs, or replacement joints which do clearly count as 'extensions' of the physical organisms to which they are appended and mental prostheses like (pen-and-paper) notebooks, diaries, laptops, (electronic) notebooks, internet search-engines, and kindred items which some would regard as laying no legitimate claim to count as 'extensions' (in that strong, integral or non-supplementary sense) of the human mind. Indeed, what we are looking at here is another and particularly striking instance of that 'logic of supplementarity' that Derrida finds everywhere at work in the writings of Rousseau, and which – as we have seen – provided the matrix for his deconstructive readings of numerous philosophic texts. Thus the effect of raising this question as concerns the presumed 'supplementary' (i.e., not-properly-mental) character of various items devised for the purpose of sensory, perceptual, cognitive, or intellectual enhancement will be to bring us to the point – like Rousseau as Derrida reads him – of perforce entertaining an alternative possibility, namely that these are 'supplements' not in the degraded or pejorative sense but rather in the palliative sense 'what is required to compensate or make good an existing deficit'.

Moreover this reversal of logical polarities has a markedly destabilizing effect on the larger categorical framework within which that question first arose, i.e., the basic dualist framework where mind and body are still very often conceived as involving distinct modes of existence whatever the customary protestations to contrary effect. Just as monism nowadays very often comes with a whole

range of caveats and concessionary clauses attached – among them, as we have seen, some that lean far toward a dualist conception – so likewise the rearguard defenders of dualism tend to retreat from a substance-dualist to a property-dualist approach and thence to some yet more elaborately qualified or hedged-around version of the claim (Norris 2010). The result is something highly reminiscent of Hegel’s night in which all cows are black, since at times when reading current debates on this topic – especially those that invoke ideas like supervenience or emergent properties – one is hard to put to say whether one is encountering a genuine monism struggling to find adequate expression against the weight of received (‘common-sense’ as well as philosophical) prejudice or else an ultra-qualified variant of dualism that dare not quite speak its name. However there are no such qualms to be found amongst subscribers to the ‘extended mind’ hypothesis. For it is just their point to push the anti-Cartesian case as hard as possible by asking us to consider the human mind not only as through-and-through consubstantial with the human brain/body but also as fully participating – discovering its own enhanced powers and capacities – in those various prosthetic devices that would count as ‘mere’ supplements (i.e., as strictly adventitious or non-integral) on any but a thoroughgoing monist-physicalist outlook (Clark 2008). At all events this would seem to be the case unless someone cared to maintain the contrary thesis and argue for the kind of panpsychist doctrine that would have absolutely everything – brains, bodies, devices, physical environment – to be manifestations of a ubiquitous mind-stuff that creates the semblance of our physical world and all its furniture. If such is the alternative then it might well seem that a theory involving the extension of a physically embodied mind through various likewise physical-mental prostheses is far preferable to a theory that involves such a far-gone idealist metaphysics.

Of course such notions have long been doing the rounds, not only amongst outright advocates – the radical idealists from Berkeley down – but also, in less drastic form, amongst a great company of epistemologists who inherit something of the same mentalist bias as part of their (however briskly disavowed) Cartesian legacy (Norris 2010). Indeed, as I have said, it is always liable to crop up when philosophers address the ‘problem of knowledge’ as if that problem could be addressed only by invoking some version of the interface idea, namely that any solution to it must involve the bridging of that gap between mind and world or subject and object that has been such a bugbear of epistemology throughout its modern history (Norris 2000b, 2005). If the extended-mind hypothesis gains ground and can be seen to have the argumentative upper hand over objectors like Fodor then it will also bid fair to place this whole debate on a different and altogether more promising track. Beyond that, it brings a new perspective to the issue as regards certain contenders for the title ‘sport’ – aeromodelling among them – which some would rule out on account of their involving too much in the way of craft, construction, technological refinement, or applied theoretical knowledge and too little in the way of bodily fitness or physical skills and attainments.

What needs re-thinking in light of that hypothesis is precisely the question of where the dividing-line falls or how we should put up a principled as distinct from ad hoc or preferential case for granting or withholding such status. That is to say, any philosophic theory that questions the putative boundary between mind and body, mind and world, or mind-body and the range of devices for extending their jointly operative powers of acting in and on that world will ipso facto require some correspondent shift in the prevailing conception of just what constitutes a genuine ‘sport’. More specifically: it asks us to re-consider the degree to which certain typecast ‘mental’ powers and capacities may in fact be inextricably bound up with a range of physical-bodily skills and aptitudes that cannot be exercised in the absence of intelligent or – at the highest competitive level – intellectual-creative endeavour. Thus we might be hard-put to withhold the title from a discipline like control-line speed flying which requires both a high degree of physical fitness to keep up with the rapidly rotating model and an extreme rapidity of mental-physical response to keep it in level flight. Beyond that – and by no means falling squarely on the ‘other’, non-sport side of the line – there is the consummate union of theory and practice required to design and construct models that achieve optimal performance within the limits imposed by various factors such as engine power, aerodynamic drag, or limitations of material strength. Nor should these latter considerations be set aside as irrelevant or strictly off-limits as concerns our present discussion. For that exclusionary gesture must seem decidedly premature given the lack of any adequate or non-question-begging criterion to distinguish those aspects of aeromodelling that lay some claim to sporting status from those that belong to its constructive or technical, i.e., its design-craft-engineering dimension.

V. Mind, body and the supplement of technics

Of course it could yet be objected that the analogy with cycling or rowing doesn’t stand up since in those cases it is the sportsperson who puts in the requisite physical effort and whose skill, fitness and energy levels play a chief role in securing competitive success. This would hold as a matter of plain self-evidence – or so it might seem – whatever the degree of technical expertise involved in designing and producing the various items of equipment to convert that effort into usable propulsive force of the most effective and well-directed kind. In which case, contrastingly, the outcome of an event like control-line speed would be dependent on a non-human energy-source (the engine) along with a range of closely related ancillary equipment which clearly removed it from the category ‘sport’ by substituting artificial or mechanical for natural or bodily means. However this argument breaks down on the instance of motorised racing events (cars or bikes) where this requirement of ‘man the mover’ is plainly unfulfilled, not to mention other recognised sports – such as archery – where the equipment concerned is less obviously high-tech or cutting-edge but where new materials

(e.g., advanced carbon-fibre formulations) may have a crucial performance-raising impact. I cannot see that there is any genuine, non-prejudicial ground for holding that these cases are different in kind – or even different in degree – from the role of the engine (the flyer-tuned, very often flyer-designed and flyer-constructed) engine as used in control-line speed events.

My own most vivid memory in this connection is of the American speed flyer Bill Wisniewski who came to the 1966 control-line World Championships as a favourite to win – having done so in spectacular form the previous year – and amidst widely-circulated rumours of some even more spectacular new development in engine design and technology. His first flight was therefore witnessed by a large number of rival flyers, especially those from the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and other Eastern-Bloc countries who had up to then very often led the field owing mainly – or so it seemed under Western eyes – to their receiving large amounts of state-sponsored research-and-development funding. These witnesses were pleased and amused to see Wisniewski's model putter around the first few circuits with the engine audibly way off-tune and the model's airspeed far below even the least competitive rivals. However some eight seconds or so into his flight there was a sudden, to the onlookers wholly unexpected and quite extraordinary burst of power which must have amounted to an rpm (revolutions-per-minute) increase from around 20,000 to around 32,000 and a breakthrough in engine technology like nothing before that time. What explained this phenomenon – having been kept very much under wraps until that climactic moment – was Wisniewski's introduction of the twin conical tuned-length exhaust pipe system which came on song when the engine reached a certain critical rpm, i.e., when the model's airspeed allowed the propeller to rotate with greatly reduced air resistance. At this point, having hitherto forced the engine to operate at far subnormal efficiency, the pipe suddenly began to exert a supercharging effect brought about by utilizing the first (negative) pressure wave to scavenge residual exhaust gases from the previous combustion stroke and the second (positive) wave to re-inject any remnant of the fresh fuel-and-air charge that might otherwise have been sucked out through the open exhaust port.

Lack of space – and a due regard for the character of this journal – prevents me from going any further into the technical-theoretical details of Wisniewski's innovation, despite its standing out in my memory as a signal event and very likely a factor in my having spent a good deal of time defending a causal-realist approach to issues in philosophy of science (Norris 1997, 2004). Still a chief motive for writing this piece has been to challenge the standard assumption that certain kinds of jointly theoretical, technological, and hands-on practical expertise should be thought of as having no place – at any rate only a marginal or strictly subsidiary place – in those activities that properly qualify for acceptance under the heading 'sport'. What I have sought to bring out is the highly problematical character of any attempt to draw the line against inclusion of aeromodelling (or

certain aeromodelling disciplines) within that category since to do so is to make a number of highly prejudicial and, on philosophic grounds, highly debatable assumptions. Beyond that, I have argued the need for judgments of this sort to go by way of a well-informed engagement with philosophical debates concerning the mind/body relationship or, as that topic is more likely to be formulated nowadays, the extent to which conferral or denial of sports status to some activity should turn on the ascription to it of primarily physical or mental predicates. If one thing has emerged from the extended-mind hypothesis and, more generally, from the recent convergence between philosophy of mind, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience it is the fact that such distinctions cannot any longer be taken for granted. Indeed, whatever its folk-psychological or ‘common-sense’ appeal, the idea that mind can be conceived as in any way distinct from the body will encounter resistance from anyone who has registered those problems with Cartesian dualism that were already quite apparent to some of Descartes’ more discerning epistolary critics and commentators (Descartes 2000).

It is a good while now since Gilbert Ryle first proposed that we could best set about banishing the Cartesian dualist ghost from the machine by the simple expedient of giving up talk of quasi-entities like ‘mind’, ‘thought’, or ‘intelligence’ and replacing them with adverbial modifiers such as ‘mindfully’, ‘thoughtfully’, or ‘intelligently’ (Ryle 1949). These could then be applied to a whole diverse range of human performances, from the kinds of practical or hands-on activity that seem to rely mainly on ‘knowing-how’ to the kinds of relatively abstract, theoretical, or intellectual-creative activity that Ryle found epitomised in Rodin’s sculpture of *Le Penseur* (Ryle 1979). The benefit of this in philosophic terms would be to wean us off that bad old myth of the disembodied ghost-like mind while also pointing up the sheer variety of human occupations that can be performed well or badly, and hence merit ascription or withholding of the above-mentioned adverbs. Of course the myth goes back far beyond Descartes and has its origin – at least as concerns the Western philosophical tradition – in the ancient Greek prejudice that favoured intellectual above practical pursuits, or that valued the contemplative life above the life of action and (especially) the life devoted to ‘merely’ practical or artisan work. Indeed there is a seldom used yet pointedly relevant adjective – ‘banausic’ – that captures exactly the attitude of patrician disdain evinced by a culture that endorses this habitual low valuation of practical skills as opposed to the presumptively superior reward of intellectual or contemplative pursuits. Its sources and history have been strikingly narrated by the Frankfurt-School critical theorist Alfred Sohn-Rethel, and its latter-day effects – not least its role in the decline of British inventive and manufacturing prowess – chronicled by various economic and cultural historians (Sohn-Rethel 1977).

What is puzzling, in appearance at least, is the fact that this prejudice somehow went along with that Greek ideal of the body beautiful or cult of physical perfection that found its acme in the Olympian ethos of sport as a self-sufficient activity, one that should remain so far as possible non-

reliant on prosthetic means of performance-optimisation. Yet this is not after all such a paradox since the desire to conserve such a notion of purebred physical-bodily achievement and keep it categorically (or hygienically) apart from any hybrid pursuit involving the use of extra-bodily devices or supplements is really just a flipside version of that other Cartesian prejudice that strives to envisage a realm of purely mental goings-on un beholden to the kinds of physical condition, whether enabling or restrictive, that might otherwise raise doubts concerning its autonomous status. Where they converge is on the idea that mind and body are alike threatened by any infraction of their sovereign domains such as that which results from an augmenting of mental or physical powers by the illicit recourse to extraneous devices and techniques. Thus, despite the exalting rhetoric of healthy mind in healthy body, there is a kind of displaced dualism at work in this desire to place strict limits on the scope for any augmentation of bodily powers by artificial-prosthetic, that is to say, idea-based, conceptually developed, or design-oriented means. Mind and body would then stand equally in need of protection from that which is felt to impugn their autonomy by promising (or threatening) to come from outside – from a hybrid realm neither bodily nor mental as properly, naturally understood – and yet provide the basis for a mode of enhanced interactive exercise beyond anything attainable on their unaided joint account.

What we are speaking of here is a ‘supplement’ very much in the twofold Derridean sense of (1) a mere accessory or strictly inessential (even undesirable or corrupting) addition which none the less turns out to be (2) a necessary means or strictly indispensable resource for making good some otherwise crucial deficit (Derrida 1976). This contradiction which Derrida finds most strikingly exemplified in the writings of Rousseau is also conjured up by the idea that sport requires a constant patrolling of its borders and vigilant exclusion of anything that belongs outside or beyond those borders. For it is a basic component of such thinking – as in Rousseau’s discussion of topics ranging from history, politics and civil society to language, music, educational theory, and sexual relations – that an appeal to nature or a reference back to the natural, original, uncorrupted state of human existence *simply must* function as the source and ground of all evaluative judgments in the socio-cultural-political-ethical-aesthetic spheres. Nature alone is deemed capable of setting the normative standard by which cultural developments have to be assessed and, most often, found all the more grievously wanting in so far as they have been marked by a process of ever-increasing refinement and hence by an ever-increasing distance from their origin in the various modes of authentic (natural) civic, linguistic, musical, and sexual expression. That this is a logically impossible thesis – that such developments are cultural by very definition and therefore cannot be held accountable to nature, in whatever (as it turns out) highly contestable or downright contradictory sense of that term – is Derrida’s chief point in his reading of Rousseau. It is also the source of those deep-laid problems and paradoxes which generate the deviant, non-classical, but none the less rigorously

demonstrated logic – as Derrida terms it, the ‘logic of supplementarity’ – whereby Rousseau’s discourse is constantly brought up against its own self-subverting implications, or forced to say something totally at odds with what he manifestly wants, intends, or purports to say. (See also Haack 1974.)

VI. Defining ‘sport’: realism without essentialism

It seems to me that the question ‘What properly counts as a sport?’, and more to the present point ‘Should certain branches of aeromodelling so count?’, might usefully be viewed in light of these larger philosophical questions regarding the status of certain very often taken-for-granted yet far from self-evidently valid categorical distinctions. Among them – to take the most prominent instances discussed here – are those between ‘physical’ and ‘mental’, ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’, ‘bodily’ and ‘prosthetic’, and – if we are mindful of Agamben’s address to this most ethically sensitive of topics – human and non-human.

Perhaps I should stress that this is not at all to relativize the category ‘sport’ in such a way that it would then be open to any amount of pragmatic redefinition in response to whatever new means of improved performance or competitive advantage might turn up in the course of further development. Nor is it to claim, absurdly, that the term ‘sport’ can properly apply to any activity – no matter how great the preponderance of mental over physical or technology-driven over bodily-skill-based aptitudes and talents – just so long as that activity involves some element of individual or team competition. The gist of my argument has been deconstructive rather than postmodernist, to draw on a distinction that I have argued at length elsewhere (Norris 2000a). It has put the case for certain disciplines of model-flying as involving a complex interplay of ‘physical’ and ‘mental’ attributes – including extreme alertness to various aspects of the model’s performance in relation to both its design features and the ambient conditions under which these can best be realized – that fully justifies the appellation ‘sport’. A postmodernist approach, in so far as the term has any distinct meaning, would most likely throw definitional caution to the winds and invite us to think of such normative categories as open to a process of endless re-contextualization in response to changing cultural values and ideas of what ‘naturally’ or ‘properly’ falls under that description. A deconstructive approach, on the other hand, would invite us to reconsider that issue of propriety – of just how far and in just what respects a shift of sense should be thought of as entailing a *consequent and arguably justified* shift of reference – through close engagement with issues germane to the particular practice concerned.

In our case, the relevant practice is that of competitive aeromodelling and the relevant category that of sport conceived as by very definition involving a component of physical fitness or

bodily (sensory-motor) skill but also as finding room for a range of aptitudes – strategic, inventive, adaptive, creative, skilful at combining a respect for rules with a way of turning them shrewdly to advantage – which would normally be taken as belonging on the ‘mental’ side of the old Cartesian dualism. The fallacy of such thinking becomes evident if one considers how grossly out of place is the mind/body distinction when applied to any sport except those (if any) that require nothing more than the exercise of sheer brute strength or the kind of staying-power that comes of shutting down one’s conscious awareness of the pain or physical suffering involved. That is, any adequate philosophy of sport will be strongly placed to bring out the absurdity – indeed the conceptual impossibility – of upholding that physical/mental distinction. Beyond that it would pose a real challenge even to scaled-down versions thereof, such as might appeal to Davidson’s notion of ‘anomalous monism’ or to Wittgenstein’s notion of mental and physical predicates as having their role in different, perhaps incommensurable language-games (Davidson 1980; Wittgenstein 1958: Sections 65-66). Indeed one likely rejoinder to this currently widespread way of thinking is that ‘games’ (sports included) are not, as Wittgenstein would have it, so many and so utterly diverse in character that the word ‘game’ cannot be defined except through the vague and distinction-blurring appeal to ‘family resemblance’ (Wittgenstein 1958: Sections 65-70; Suits 2005). Indeed the metaphor of language-games – despite protests to contrary effect by his fideist disciples – serves chiefly to promote the cultural-relativist idea of reference as wholly determined by sense and sense as determined (in so far as that word retains any valid application) by the range of historical, social, communal, and linguistic contexts within which it plays some more-or-less agreed upon signifying role (Norris 2004). Granted, any change in those ambient cultural conditions may indeed bring about a shift of sense which itself then produces a corresponding shift – perhaps a decisive transformation – in the referential bearing of certain terms. However this process is by no means so opaque – so devoid of rational, explanatory, or justificatory warrant – as to leave us finally with no option save the recourse to Wittgenstein’s idea of communally sanctioned language-games along with their associated ‘forms of life’.

Over the past three decades there has been a good deal of work – mainly in philosophical semantics and philosophy of science – which has sought to develop a more metaphysically robust alternative to the ‘old’ Frege-Russell descriptivist idea that ‘sense determines reference’ and thus block the slide toward forms of conventionalist, constructivist, or sceptical-relativist thinking. On this account the reference of certain terms (proper names and natural-kind terms especially) is fixed by an inaugural act of designation, or ‘baptism’, and thereafter holds firm despite and across any subsequent shifts – no matter how drastic or far-reaching – in the historically evolving currency of knowledge (Kripke 1972; Putnam 1975; Schwartz [ed.] 1977). In brief, this work has to do with the mechanism by which an adequate stability of reference may be conserved even in cases – such as

Kuhnian ‘revolutionary’ paradigm-shifts – where the sense of some given referring expression (i.e., the range of descriptive attributes identified with it) has undergone some radical change through the advent of a new theoretical framework. What it helps to explain is how we can achieve knowledge of the growth of scientific knowledge or grasp just why those revolutions came about despite what would otherwise present itself to us as a sequence of sharply discontinuous epochs or seismic ruptures in the history of usage exhibited by this or that term. The same goes for sport, or for members of that particular sub-set of the category ‘game’ that meet the criteria for classification as sport. Here again we are not reduced to a version of the ‘strong’-contextualist doctrine whereby the term would bear whatever range of senses happened to accord with current cultural norms, and these would infallibly (since non-falsifiably) pick out whatever activities counted as falling under the relevant description. Quite simply, there is no characterization of sport – or none with any claim to constitute a well-informed, open-minded yet discriminate usage of the term – which could press that far in a cultural-relativist or strong-descriptivist direction.

Thus we are here speaking of ‘real’ rather than ‘nominal’ definitions, in the sense of those terms assigned by the scholastic philosophers and lately revived by proponents of the ‘new’ theory of reference. That we can do so – *pace* the large company of Wittgensteinians, post-structuralists, neo-pragmatists, ‘strong’-descriptivists, and sundry other naysayers – without thereby committing ourselves to a full-scale metaphysical doctrine of real essences is a claim central to any such case for the relative or partial stability of terms and their referential bearing across and despite certain periodic shifts in their currency of usage (Norris 2004). This is why, as Suits maintains, we can take the term ‘sport’ to have a reasonably well-defined sense and context of application, i.e., the sphere of physically accomplished achievement against some given range of standards, benchmarks, rules, obstacles, rival competitors, or self-imposed checks and challenges (Suits 2005). Here it is worth noting that a whole growth-industry of misconceived debate has grown up around Wittgenstein’s failure to grasp how rules might have something more than a conventional force in deciding what should qualify as a ‘game’, or in specifying just those proper (as distinct from illicit, rule-breaking, or game-abandoning) ‘moves’ that belong to the game in question (Wittgenstein 1958: Sections 185-243). It is the same crucial distinction – i.e., between ways of carrying on that accord or that fail to accord with the valid, truth-preservative conduct of rational discourse in various contexts – which is likewise apt to disappear from view when philosophers or cultural theorists talk about language-games and communal life-forms. A collective, communally sanctioned decision to include tiddly-winks or indeed chess among the range of accredited sports would constitute a gross infraction of the rule that sets certain limits to the proper or legitimate (not merely conventional) usage of that term. Physicality is an integral or strictly indispensable component of the category ‘sport’ which places it apart from other activities that may well require an equal measure of

demanding, strenuous, or highly-skilled involvement on the agent's part but where the challenge in question has to do mainly with the exercise of intellectual or rational-calculative rather than bodily-physical powers and resources.

Nor does this involve any last-ditch retreat to Cartesian dualism, or the idea that anything pertaining to the realm of bodily actions, properties, or predicates must *ipso facto* be excluded from that of mental (conscious or reflective) experience. One thing we should have learned from Ryle – along with later developments in neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and philosophy of mind – is that we need not cling to that dualist paradigm in order to retain the distinction between doing things thoughtfully, attentively, shrewdly, strategically, intelligently, etc., and doing them stupidly (i.e., minus all those other adverbial qualifiers). This point has significant implications for the issue as to what properly belongs to the category 'sport', since judgments of this sort always have to do with a certain real or perceived relationship between the physical-bodily and the mental-psychological-cognitive components of the activity in question. There are, I think, two main reasons for the current growth of interest – as witnessed no doubt by my having written and your having read this essay – in philosophical debates concerning its valid application that would not have seemed remotely interesting, let alone urgent to earlier generations of philosophers, let alone sports participants. First is the increased recognition – in wider cultural as well as more specialist philosophical terms – of just how difficult it is to draw any clear or definitive line between the physical and the mental components of any human activity, especially in cases where the agent is performing at or close to the limits of presently attainable speed, strength, endurance, grace, or pinpoint accuracy (Beamish and Ritchie 2006). Second, and closely related to that, is the extent to which new technological developments have likewise created new possibilities of a close or strictly indissoluble tie between human physical-mental resources and those various prosthetic devices that must – whatever our principled view of the matter – affect our sense of what constitutes bodily integrity or boundedness.

No doubt it is possible to exaggerate the impact of such developments for dramatic effect or in some notional radical cause, as seems to be the case with certain cultural theorists who would have us celebrate every sign of transgression or border-crossing between the human and the non-, post-, or trans-human. (For a range of more or less critical philosophic views, see Bostrom and Savulescu [eds.] 2009.) Still there is no denying the import of such questions for many of the practices, disciplines and (not least) sporting endeavours through which human beings have tended to define their sense of individual and collective identity. It is on these grounds, I have argued, that certain branches of competitive aeromodelling – as distinct from other, less physically-mentally demanding pursuits – have a strong claim to count as legitimate sports on any reckoning duly attentive to this range of pertinent considerations.

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III.

CORPO-HORIZONTAL
HORIZONTAL-BODY

6. João Tiago LIMA

Desporto e arbitragem ou o poder ontológico da regra

Sílvio Lima é considerado por muitos o primeiro filósofo do desporto português. De facto, num período relativamente escasso da sua carreira (entre 1937 e 1943, sensivelmente) como professor e sobretudo como ensaísta, dedicou a esta actividade uma atenção que, pelo menos entre nós, era inédita naquele tempo.

Segundo Sílvio Lima, no desporto, «o gorila transmuta-se no *cidadão*, a selva faz-se *burgo*, o caos dá lugar à *ordem*, a força bruta dá lugar à *lei*» (Lima, 2002: 956). Entendido como magnífico exercício de humanização, o desporto é, como diríamos hoje, um modo de educar para a cidadania. Mas, no entender do antigo professor da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, tal só sucede caso não se esqueça uma outra das suas teses principais: «o desporto é, estruturalmente, mais uma actividade *espiritual* que corporal; o desporto encerra, acima de tudo e em tudo, uma *alma*» (Lima, 2002: 971).

Claro que Sílvio Lima não ignora que, enquanto fenómeno multidimensional, o desporto também implica certas perversões, a maior das quais decorre daquilo a que chama esportarismo e que é a principal causa do desporto profissional, prática que, do seu ponto de vista, destrói a essência do desporto. Sem querer com isto dizer que as teses de Sílvio Lima são incontestáveis – de resto, noutra ocasião (Lima, 2016: 101-120), já tive a oportunidade de defender o desporto profissional contra a perspectiva explanada pelo autor de *Desporto, Jogo e Arte* –, julgo que muitos dos malefícios do esportarismo se vieram a agudizar com o tempo, o que confere ao seu diagnóstico feito nos anos 30 e 40 do século passado uma feição quase profetizante. Numa palavra, poderei dizer que, para Sílvio Lima, o desporto deixa de fazer sentido caso não contribua para a humanização do desportista. Não por acaso Sílvio Lima revolta-se contra ideias como aquela que associa o desportista ao animal, precisamente porque tal associação sublinha nele, no desportista entenda-se, apenas o seu valor biológico ou físico. Nesse sentido, poder-se-á também dizer que o pensamento desportivo de Sílvio Lima não raras vezes cai num hoje dificilmente compreensível antropocentrismo, quando não incorre noutras tantas ocasiões num certo falocentrismo – é o caso quando usa expressões como o desporto *viriliza* o desportista – mesmo se, desde o seu primeiro livro dedicado ao tema, defenda a imprescindibilidade da participação das mulheres no desporto.

Yves Vargas chamou a atenção para a dimensão ontológica da lei no desporto. Ao contrário do que se passa na comunidade humana em geral, em que a infracção da lei não elimina, por si só, os vínculos sociais, no desporto, a lei ou a regra é garantia absoluta de sobrevivência. Sem lei, não há desporto. Ou melhor, o desporto não admite estados de excepção. Dito isto, é fácil perceber a importância das relações que o desporto, na sua multiplicidade de vertentes, mantém com a arbitragem.

Não é inútil frisar esta multiplicidade de vertentes pois há uma quase infinita variedade de situações que faz com que cada modalidade desportiva tenha uma forma de arbitragem específica. No limite, há desportos, como o ténis por exemplo, em que é possível competir sem a presença de uma figura humana que arbitre o jogo. Para além disso, outros desportos há, como o rugby, em que é impossível haver competição sem um árbitro que regule as acções dos jogadores. No ténis, de facto, os regulamentos prevêm a situação de não haver um árbitro disponível para dirigir um encontro numa competição. Claro que essa não é a situação desejável, mas o simples facto de se prever a situação de, mesmo sem árbitro, o jogo se disputar revela uma possibilidade – porventura inexistente ou improvável noutros desportos – de os jogadores se auto-regularem no cumprimento das leis da modalidade. Aliás, em Portugal, a maior parte das competições de ténis disputadas desenrolam-se precisamente sem que uma pessoa represente esse papel de árbitro. Os regulamentos determinam, de resto, de que modo os jogadores se devem comportar face a situações de dúvida ou de conflito de perspectivas. Por exemplo, se um dos competidores considerar que uma bola, enviada por si, com a sua raquete, bateu dentro dos limites do campo do oponente, enquanto o adversário sustentar o ponto de vista contrário, prevalece a opinião do jogador que se encontra do mesmo lado da rede do ponto exacto em que a bola tocou no solo. Ou seja, é possível jogar ténis de competição com os encontros a serem arbitrados pelos próprios jogadores. Mas tal é possível apenas porque as regras assim o prevêm, sendo que estas são condição indispensável para haver competição desportiva.

Por que motivo se criou a regra? Ou seja, por que motivo se faz depender da regra a competição desportiva? A resposta é, a bem dizer, simples e tem a ver com a garantia de igualdade de oportunidades entre os competidores. Consideremos uma regra bem conhecida, até porque tem um fundamento comum em quase todas as modalidades desportivas, e que consiste na obrigação de, a dada altura, os intervenientes no jogo mudarem de lado do campo em que estão a competir. Por exemplo, no futebol, ao intervalo as duas equipas trocam de baliza, passando a defender aquela que visavam atacar na primeira parte e vice-versa. Esta regra visa, como é evidente, proporcionar às duas equipas uma situação o mais semelhante possível, procurando assim minimizar o efeito de factores externos ao jogo, como por exemplo o vento ou a posição do sol. Ou seja, procura-se que o resultado do jogo não seja influenciado – ou melhor, que seja influenciado o menos possível – por

razões que não tenham a ver com os méritos técnicos, físicos e táticos dos oponentes em competição. Daí o ritual da escolha do campo que antecede os jogos de futebol, durante o qual o árbitro lança uma moeda ao ar para determinar qual o capitão de equipa tem o privilégio de escolher o campo no qual iniciará o jogo. Após o intervalo, procede-se à mudança de campo de cada uma das equipas.

Se dizemos que a regra e o desporto mantêm uma relação indissociável, isso não significa, como é possível observar todos os dias, que as regras e sobretudo o modo como estas são aplicadas não sejam como de discórdia. Muito pelo contrário. Casos há até em que as discussões acerca do desporto se confundem com as polémicas sobre decisões de arbitragem, ou seja, sobre o modo como as regras são fiscalizadas e aplicadas. Claro que o número e a intensidade desses debates variam em função dos contextos em que se realizam. No futebol e em Portugal, as discussões em torno da arbitragem parecem ser quase permanentes, de tal modo que somos levados a pensar que nem sempre as entidades responsáveis pela modalidade estão muito interessadas em diminuir os decibéis do volume da gritaria das contendidas. Se compararmos com o rugby, por exemplo – e a comparação tem interesse, desde logo, em virtude dos antecedentes comuns de ambos os desportos –, observamos que o respeito, dentro e fora do campo, pelas decisões de arbitragem é indiscutivelmente superior, entre os membros da comunidade da bola oval, em relação ao que se passa no chamado desporto-rei. Tal não sucede por acaso e tem a ver também, mas não só, com o modo como as regras estão escritas. Por exemplo, no rugby, há sanções técnicas (equipa recua dez metros ou o árbitro assinala ensaio de penalidade) para punir comportamentos anti-disciplinares (jogador discute decisão do árbitro ou jogador impede à margem da lei que o adversário marque ensaio), situação que não se verifica no futebol em que, muitas vezes, a infracção da regra se vem a revelar compensadora em termos dos objectivos do jogador ou da equipa que a pratica.

É óbvio que quanto mais discussões houver em torno da arbitragem menos evidente se torna o mérito dos vencedores, elemento essencial na definição da própria competição desportiva. Costumo citar a frase de Sílvio Lima segundo a qual, «o desportista baseia o seu prestígio, ou fundamenta os seus méritos, não sobre privilégios de *casta*, de *herança* ou de *riqueza*, mas sobre autênticas, irrefragáveis qualidades pessoais, adquiridas laboriosamente mercê dum esforço individual, livre, paciente e disciplinado» (Lima, 2002: 951). Por outras palavras, um atleta ou uma equipa vence uma competição em virtude das suas autênticas e irrefragáveis qualidades que são numericamente traduzidas no resultado final. E eis aqui outra característica decisiva do desporto: no final da competição, não podem (ou, pelo menos, não devem) restar dúvidas acerca do escalonamento hierárquico dos competidores. Ou seja, o mérito dos vencedores deve ser traduzido com uma legibilidade total. Ora, se há uma contestação relativamente ao modo como a competição se processou, o princípio meritocrático do desporto pode ficar ferido de morte. Essa contestação não

tem sempre a ver com a arbitragem, pois por vezes atribui-se à contingência aleatória do destino o resultado da competição. Nessas ocasiões, fala-se da sorte ou da falta dela para justificar um resultado desportivo menos favorável. Mas a verdade é que, de uma certa maneira, em alguns desportos a sorte tem um peso superior em relação ao que sucede noutros. Continuando com a comparação entre o rugby e o futebol, podemos dizer que, no primeiro caso, raras são as ocasiões em que um jogo é decidido por contingências aleatórias do acaso, ao passo que o mesmo se não verifica no futebol em que o resultado de um jogo pode variar em função de uma bola bater no poste e entrar ou não na baliza adversária. Essa aleatoriedade talvez seja, aliás, uma das razões para o fascínio exercido pelo futebol e para a sua incrível popularidade. Por isso, no futebol é frequente falar-se em resultados *injustos* querendo com isto dizer-se que uma equipa ganhou sem ter feito o suficiente para o *merecer*. Só que, como é evidente, este ponto de vista tende a ser irrecusavelmente subjectivo pois, sobretudo em jogos equilibrados, os adversários tendem a valorizar o seu próprio desempenho desportivo e, deste modo, a considerar como mais *justo* um desfecho que favorecesse as suas cores.

A noção de justiça também é convocada quando se contesta o papel da arbitragem na competição. Neste caso, o que estaria em causa seria a falta de imparcialidade daqueles que têm por função fiscalizar e aplicar as regras do jogo. Não desconheço que existem casos provados de corrupção na arbitragem desportiva. Simplesmente volto a sublinhar a ideia de que as discussões em torno deste assunto variam em função dos contextos e sobretudo das modalidades desportivas. Terá isso a ver apenas com as regras dos diferentes jogos? Consideremos de novo o futebol e o rugby e partamos do princípio – para mim, em termos gerais irrefutável – de que no segundo desporto há maior respeito pelas decisões da arbitragem. Será mais fácil arbitrar um jogo de rugby? Ou, se se preferir, as decisões do árbitro no rugby serão menos subjectivas e, por isso, menos passíveis de uma diversidade de interpretações? Julgo que não. Pelo contrário. A natureza das regras do rugby confere ao árbitro um maior poder sobre o desenrolar dos acontecimentos. Veja-se, por exemplo, o que sucede com a chamada lei da vantagem, criada precisamente para evitar o benefício do infractor. No rugby, o árbitro dispõe de uma margem para interpretar e aplicar a lei da vantagem que, do meu ponto de vista, é muito mais ampla do que aquilo que se observa no futebol. Ora, daqui não decorre que, no rugby, as decisões do árbitro sejam mais discutidas do que no futebol. Tentemos perceber porquê a partir da análise de um curioso livro de Teotónio Lima, treinador de basquetebol e estudioso do fenómeno desportivo, sobre a arbitragem e que tem o título provocador *Fora o Árbitro!*

Editado em 1982, *Fora o Árbitro* mantém alguma actualidade, apesar das transformações pelas quais passou o desporto e também a arbitragem. É o caso da introdução dos meios audiovisuais para auxílio da tarefa do árbitro. Mas gostaria de centrar a minha atenção no que resistiu ao

tempo do livro de Teotónio Lima. Segundo o autor, “ser árbitro é estar metido numa fornalha para onde todos deitam lenham, em especial aqueles que mais intensamente vivem o fenómeno de identificação com as equipas e que os leva a dizer no final do encontro: ganhámos, perdemos ou empatámos (Lima, 1982: 20). Ou seja, a contestação do papel do árbitro radica naquilo a que gosto de chamar *o ponto de vista do espectador*. Este ponto de vista contamina também dirigentes, treinadores, jogadores e até meios de comunicação social no que ao seu comportamento diz respeito. É que, mais do que adeptos das respectivas equipas, estes intervenientes no fenómeno desportivo deveriam ser amantes da modalidade desportiva que escolheram. Tal como ocorre, aliás, com os árbitros já que, e cito o livro de Teotónio Lima, “ser árbitro, ser membro de uma equipa de arbitragem, é ser antes de mais adepto convicto da modalidade escolhida; é ser um conhecedor profundo das regras” (Lima, 1982: 22). Ora, esta diferença parece-me crucial. Uma coisa, de facto, consiste em ser adepto de uma das equipas em confronto e outra, bem diferente, é ser adepto do jogo. Neste último caso, é possível observar o acontecimento desportivo sem experienciar aquilo a que, noutro contexto, chamei *percepção competitiva* (Lima, 2016: 43-67) e é isso que se pede a um árbitro ou a uma equipa de arbitragem.

Dir-se-á que o desporto é, antes de mais, um fenómeno apaixonante e que, no limite, é impossível observá-lo de uma forma fria e objectiva. De acordo. Simplesmente o árbitro envolve-se na sua tarefa com um fim distinto do dos atletas em competição. Trata-se de, no caso do árbitro, de contribuir para que o jogo flua da melhor maneira, com o menor número de atropelos às regras e sobretudo ao espírito do jogo que for possível. Claro que, ao perseguir este propósito, o árbitro entra muitas vezes em *conflito* com os *interesses* dos jogadores e dos adeptos das equipas que estão sobretudo preocupados com o resultado do jogo e para quem tudo corre bem desde que a sua equipa saia vencedora do confronto.

Teotónio Lima ajuda-nos a perceber o que aqui está em causa ao sublinhar que “o jogador tem uma percepção do jogo completamente oposta à do árbitro” (Lima, 1982: 50). E a explicação vem logo a seguir. “*O jogador sente o jogo* com a intensidade de um participante activo profundamente interessado no resultado; *o árbitro vê o jogo* sem nele participar, ainda que dirija e controle as acções que determinam esse resultado” (Lima, 1982: 50). A formulação do autor parece-me especialmente certa. Repare-se que as acções do árbitro não determinam o resultado do jogo. Ele limita-se a dirigir e a controlar as acções realizadas pelos jogadores que, essas sim, determinam o resultado. Não faz por isso sentido, pelo menos a partir desta perspectiva, pensar-se ou, pior ainda, afirmar-se que o árbitro *tirou* ou *deu* a vitória a um dos participantes na competição. O árbitro, representante oficial da lei – elemento imprescindível ao jogo – *não joga*. É, pelo contrário, condição de possibilidade do jogo, devendo ser respeitado como tal por todos os intervenientes no fenómeno desportivo: jogadores, treinadores, dirigentes, adeptos e *media*. Mas, acima de tudo, o

árbitro tem de saber respeitar a sua própria função, preparando-se devidamente para ela através do treino físico e técnico, bem como da investigação sobre o próprio jogo de que escolheu ser um verdadeiro juiz desportivo.

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The interpassive roar: the canned spectators of lock-down

1. Introduction

What this paper sets out to do is to introduce a new concept into the field of sports philosophy, and that is the idea of the *interpassive* spectator. It essentially comes out of the period of restrictions on cultural events that have come into place this year. What happened in response to stringent health measures in wider society was that elite sporting events were increasingly held behind closed doors. This made for an awkward view for football fans: while the sport was purportedly the same as before, we would now hear the “barking” and gnawing of players and coaches, while behind them tens of thousands of seats stood empty.

Broadcasters sought to bridge the gap between televised sports as we knew it, and this new, lock-down version. What we will consider in this paper is the phenomenon we will call “canned spectators,” that is pre-recorded sounds of large audiences who in an edited way respond to live, televised sports events. We are particularly interested in elite football, and our examples are from Germany and England.

From the outset we will reject *two* interpretations of this new state of affairs, one of which is a critical approach, roughly derived from the Frankfurt school, while the other is affirmative, celebrating this novel, simulated world. As for the first of them, there has been a long-standing critique of televised sports in general on the grounds that it renders spectators passive. We will call this the “passification theory” of sports (see, e.g., Bourdieu, 1988, p. 160). Instead of getting the population to exercise and get fit, we hear, sport on television turns us into passive consumers, and alienates us from our own bodies, from true pleasure, and from actual practice. While there might be some sense to this general view of mass consumption, its overly moralising tone reduces audiences to mindless dupes and deprives us of our ability to think and act.

Second, there is an affirmative stance on the mass-media, inaugurated by philosophers like Jean Baudrillard, which celebrates the superficiality of representation, and rejects that there is any deeper, more authentic meaning to representations. However, what we will show here is that what this approach misses out on is the *specific ways* in which the mass media generates reality.

What the phenomenon of “canned spectators” brings to the fore is a logic that, while still relatively obscure, has received increasing scrutiny from cultural theorists such as Robert Pfaller and Slavoj Žižek in the last years. This is the logic of *interpassivity*. Our question now is: what is the interpassive?

2. Interpassivity

The interpassive football game is a game that doesn't require anything from those who watch it; in fact, a televised sports spectacle of this kind doesn't require viewers at all: it is already completed, or, to put it in the words of Robert Pfaller, the interpassive work is already, prior to its “consumption,” *more than* complete.

The thesis is simple: we have been accustomed to *interactivity* in arts, popular culture, and in the media. An interactive work is an object that demands your activity in order for it to be complete. An installation of this kind, say, can only be properly appreciated by an observer who actively walks through it, enabling her or him to perceive its many sides. Similarly, in popular culture let us take a certain development in computer gaming to exemplify interactivity: those of us old enough to remember the beginnings of interactive video games will recall the great leap forward that occurred when gamers were involved in the story. For instance, the computer game “The Hobbit” enabled gamers to not only imagine that they were one of Tolkien's characters; they could also manipulate the characters' movement in fictional space, and speak on their behalf (Megler and Mitchell, 1982). In other words, the game could only be completed with the active participation of gamers. The mass media quickly picked up on the commercial potential of this logic: for decades the predominant slogan in newsrooms was to “activate” readers through polls, games and commentary fields on websites. Clearly, through this kind of activation the audience would be more compelled to get involved and to consume more of the media product.

Interpassivity is quite the opposite of this: not only is no activity required on the side of the viewer, but also, and equally important, no *passivity* has to be added. The spectator not only does not have to do anything, he or she also does not even have to *observe*. Is it so, we may ask, that interpassivity exemplifies a strictly *post-modern* logic? The idea here would be that both interactivity and interpassivity can emerge at the culmination of a modernist culture of mass-consumption, and that the interpassive can only arrive on the heels of the interactive. However, as both Pfaller and Slavoj Žižek point out, not only is interpassivity deeply intertwined with its more prominent double, interactivity, but it also has ancient roots.

To show the diachronic unfolding of interpassivity, Pfaller turns to the ritual function of this logic. Take, he says, the academic who copies hundreds of pages from a book they have found at a university library. While knowing full well that she or he may never find time to read the copies, this is a scholar who nevertheless receives a deep sense of satisfaction already as they leave the library with their copies. As Pfaller notes,

what the intellectuals do (usually without knowing it) is to act as if the Xerox machine were reading the text. They literally play reading by means of the machine: the light of attention, as it were, is shed on every page, one after the other, in a linear consecution; slowly the machine “looks” at every line, and every page. (Pfaller 2003, 2)

What we receive is a form of satisfaction from the *figurative* act. It is as if the machine reads in our place, allowing us to remain passive while our task is completed.

To Sigmund Freud this kind of figurativity is typical of magic action (1919, 4). In Haitian voodoo, for instance, piercing a doll with needles attains the full value of a real killing. This ancient ritual has its complete analogy in the modern university library: Xeroxing an unread book replaces the real act of intellectual labour. However, Pfaller notes that there is a key distinction between the so-called savage ritual and our contemporary parallel act, and this distinction is that “only the savage is *aware* of the fact that he is practising magic[; t]he civilized, on the contrary, is not” (Pfaller, 2003).

In an essay on canned laughter, Slavoj Žižek pointed out that this phenomenon on television shares much of the same ritual structure with our examples thus far (2003). We arrive home from the office, turn on the television and sink down in our chair, numbed by tiredness. The characters on the screen perform their comedy, but instead of making an actual audience laugh, they trigger a recorded laughter machine, the device known as *canned laughter*, which tells us that enjoyment is now taking place. As Žižek notes, this kind of “objective enjoyment” allows us to remain passive -- to rest -- and thus releases us from the incessant cultural injunction to ceaselessly “enjoy”: the television enjoys for us.¹

3. Lock-down sports

Is it not a very similar logic we find in the domain of mass-mediated sports? First, we have actual sports practice, our own bodies moving around according to certain acquired schematas in order to achieve what Bernard Suits referred to as a “specific achievable state of affairs,” the game’s “desired end” (1995). We then have our own *memory* of our past actions, activated when we

participate as spectators at live performance. Here we are allowed to enjoy the memory of our past striving to achieve the game's "desired end" by cheering on *our* team, celebrating each success and mourning every loss. What we have, then, at this second stage is what we will refer to as a form of mediated *interaction*: spectators are *roused* to engage in the game, to loudly voice their opinions, their sympathies and their antipathies. Crucially, a live game's desired "specific state of affairs" can *only be achieved* when audiences are activated.

It is when we arrive at the *third* stage that we begin to go beyond the logic of interactivity. Here, we no longer engage the actual memory of our practice as sports people or spectators; at this stage the audience is no longer live, it has been *canned*. The curious situation with lock-down was that successively spectators were banned from elite sports events, leaving the enormity of stadiums glaringly empty. Even though the world class sports performances was in some key sense the same as when audiences had been present, their context had been crucially altered. The sense that the mediated game was moving beyond interactivity was evident from claims that the empty stands demonstrated a crucial *lack* to the game. It was as if the game could only be complete with spectators present (see, e.g., the perspective of Arsene Wenger in Lawrence, 2020).

Broadcasters gradually realised that they could cover over this lack by introducing canned spectators. Essentially, from mid-May German and, later, UK broadcasters used "piped-in crowd noise" to cover over "players and coaches barking at each other" (Brewin, 2020). To one journalist, "the sound of the crowd, faked as it might be, added a warmly familiar ambience" to the game. The system was approved by the Premier League and set up so that it seemed as if the canned spectators responded to events on the pitch. For instance, during a game from Bundesliga between Borussia Dortmund and Hertha Berlin we receive these sound impressions:

As Dortmund's Emre Can stepped from defence to clear up some first-half danger, he was the recipient of applause, and when Hertha's defender Dedryck Boyata appeared to have handled in the penalty area, the "fans" bayed for VAR before booing when the claim was denied by the officials. (*ibid.*)

As it turns out the technology is largely derived from computer games. The corporate game manufacturer EA Sports had produced 13 hours of chants, howls, 'oohs' and 'aahs' that is mixed by a sound engineer with live audio, the barks of players and coaches, to altogether simulate the noise of a game played before thousands of fans (Wiggins, 2020). While some have complained that the lock-down solution creates a "fake" impression of a real game, others have celebrated the "simulacra," the novel kind of hyper-reality, generated by canned spectators (Keh, 2020).

4. The “danger”

What both these responses fail to grasp is the interpassive effect accommodated by lock-down technology. While, in the previous stages of mediation, audiences was roused to participate, and the game could only, in a crucial sense, be complete with the activity of spectators, in its present incarnation audiences are no longer required to engage in order for the game to complete itself. What we have here is a *complete cycle* of production, mediation and reception that is fully established without any collaboration from the home viewer. The effect is very similar to that of canned laughter: after a long, tiresome day at work we sink down in our chair to watch a Premier League game. However, instead of sounds from a live audience we are treated to an automated response from spectators, a kind of noise that tells us that enjoyment is objectively taking place. We no longer have to enjoy; the television, the mass-mediated sports phenomenon, enjoys for us.

Now, wherein resides the “danger” in all this? Crucially, our position here is that a critique of canned spectator sounds on the ground that it is fake does not go *far enough*. It is *not enough* to claim that the phenomenon of canned spectators is just another instance of an increasingly alienating media environment, a global fix that renders us passive, and so on. While interactivity has been an answer to this kind of criticism, we now know the limits of this kind of response. On the other hand, when academics inspired by Baudrillard celebrate the abandonment of authenticity and the hyper-reality of lock-down sports, they miss out on a key effect of interpassivity.

The point here is that canned spectators do not deprive us of our activity, but of our *passivity*. When the TV set enjoys on our behalf, what is in peril is precisely our ability to *passively enjoy*. When the mediated event enjoys for us, we are becoming prepared for a kind of “mindless frenetic activity” (Žižek, 2003). that can only solidify our alienation from our own embodied memory.

Notes

1. We are sometimes pulled out of our complacency when we reflect on this phenomenon: shouldn't we be uneasy with canned laughter? After all, how can we allow a *machine* to laugh on our behalf? With time, this cultural effect quickly becomes naturalised, thus allowing our innermost emotions, our enjoyment, to be what Žižek calls “radically externalised” (2003).[↗](#)

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8. *Wladimir de Castro Rodrigues DIAS*

A Champions League e a origem de uma identidade supranacional europeia

Introdução

O estudo da identidade é um fenômeno tipicamente atual. Até estes tempos, aos quais se chamará de pós-modernos, o conceito de identidade não provocava muita incerteza. Porém, como assinalado por Zygmunt Bauman, estes são tempos líquidos, nos quais “o ‘pertencimento’ e a ‘identidade’ não têm a solidez de uma rocha, não são garantidos para toda a vida, são bastante negociáveis e revogáveis” (Bauman, 2017, p. 17). Adiciona o autor que “poucos de nós [...] são capazes de evitar a passagem por mais de uma ‘comunidade de ideias e princípios’” (Bauman, p. 19).

Desde as últimas décadas do século XX, existe uma nova concepção da questão identitária, cujos limites se tornam mais indefinidos. Não se está mais próximo do entendimento iluminista a que se refere o sociólogo Stuart Hall. As identidades não se baseiam no indivíduo consciente e dotado de razão. Tampouco se pode manter a ideia sociológica clássica, que indica que as identidades são construídas a partir da interação do indivíduo com “pessoas importantes para ele” e que, ademais, aponta que todos nascem com uma identidade pré-definida, que é moldada pelo meio em que vivem (Hall, 2019).

Hoje, trabalha-se com outro ponto de vista. Entende-se que não é possível falar em uma identidade fixa, imutável. Dessa forma, o indivíduo pode assumir várias identidades em momentos distintos de sua vida. Anthony Giddens (1991, p. 11) explica que “à medida que áreas diferentes do globo são postas em interconexão umas com as outras, ondas de transformação social atingem virtualmente toda a superfície da Terra”.

Uma das implicações mais concretas desse processo é o questionamento das identidades nacionais. A título de exemplo, um indivíduo pode viver no Brasil, mas conhecer a cultura, digamos, da Espanha, identificar-se com ela, e escolher, voluntariamente, aplicá-la à própria vida. O desenvolvimento das referidas conexões globais permite esse tipo de situação. Para além disso, outros processos se aproveitaram da aludida onda de transformação social e se consolidaram. A afirmação da União Europeia (UE) pode ser estudada diante desse contexto. Na Europa, há evidência da existência de um sentido de unidade que, de certa forma, conecta os indivíduos nela inseridos em torno de uma ideia de povo, permitindo que se fale em uma suposta “identidade

supranacional”.

Na pós-modernidade, aos símbolos típicos do estado-nação, tais como território, idioma, hinos e bandeiras, somam-se, na fixação dessa nova identidade, inúmeras outras questões, como o feminismo, movimentos por igualdade de direitos das populações negras e do coletivo LGBT, além de outros, cuja influência não escapa ao esporte. Não há muito espaço mais para o que Hall caracteriza com os cinco elementos formadores de uma identidade cultural nacional: a “narrativa da nação”, a “ênfase nas origens”, a “invenção da tradição”, o “mito fundacional” e a ideia de um “povo original” (Hall, 2019, pp. 31-33). Está-se, pois, em um tempo de movimento em que “as identidades nacionais estão em declínio, mas novas identidades — híbridas — estão tomando seu lugar” (Hall, p. 40).

Parece elementar concluir pela existência de uma identidade europeia supranacional, entretanto, o que ela seria? “O que significa ser europeu, num continente colorido não apenas pelas culturas de suas antigas colônias, mas também pelas culturas americanas e agora pelas japonesas?” (Robins, 1991, como citado em Hall, 2019, p. 50).

Antes de refletir sobre a UEFA Champions League (UCL), é impossível deixar de falar sobre alguns aspectos. Há uma completa e complexa interconexão entre os temas. O que se pensa, por exemplo, acerca dos efeitos do acórdão Bosman, em termos de futebol e de identidade europeia? Esta decisão judicial permitiu aos futebolistas de nacionalidades europeias a dispersão, sem fronteiras, pelos países-membro da UE. Em pouco tempo, equipes espanholas, ou inglesas, por exemplo, passaram a ter plantéis quase inteiramente estrangeiros — ou praticamente europeus —, somando-se a eles alguns sul-americanos, asiáticos e africanos, dentre os quais, alguns cidadãos europeus.

Da mesma forma, no contexto da UCL, o torcedor já não se dedica apenas à adoração de seus ídolos nacionais. E, ademais, a competição permitiu o nascimento de rivalidades de trespassam as fronteiras nacionais. Liverpool e Milan, um clube inglês e outro italiano, respectivamente, finalistas da competição em 2004-05 e 2006-07, constituem um exemplo claro. Assim também explicam Alexander Brand e Arne Niemann:

Nesse sentido, pode não ser trivial que torcedores alemães apoiem jogadores holandeses e os aceitem como “um deles” ou, como comentou um colega, pode ser mais relevante para um partidário do Liverpool o que sucede ao Barcelona do que o que está passando em Stoke-on-Trent. Gradualmente, as mudanças de padrões de percepção também podem ser indicativos de uma emergente identidade coletiva europeia, ao menos a europeização de tais identidades, baseadas em práticas culturais e da vida (Brand & Niemann, 2012, p. 5)

Diante de tudo o que foi apontado, não há dúvidas de que o tema tem importância e merece atenção. E, como não poderia ser diferente, o estudo tem um viés multidisciplinar, sendo, evidentemente, uma investigação vinculada às Ciências Sociais, que utiliza uma metodologia qualitativa, baseada no paradigma interpretativo.

Dessa forma, analisa-se uma grande quantidade de bibliografia, passando por construções sociológicas, filosóficas e do campo comunicacional, para compreender como a identidade supranacional europeia se insere no espaço público da UE; a forma como a UCL contribui, na incessante e histórica busca pelo seu fortalecimento. Isso em tempos em que a vagueza de uma forte identidade e sentimento de pertencimento se apresentam poderosos, oferecendo margem à ascensão de movimentos nacionalistas, alguns de caráter fascista, e de perigosos antagonistas da defesa dos direitos humanos.

O esporte é um campo integrador, reflete a sociedade e pode ser utilizado como ferramenta útil à consecução de fins específicos. A UE não tem na UEFA uma entidade que reproduz, fielmente, sua realidade. Para concluir isso, basta explorar exemplos simples, como o fato de que a UE possui 28 estados-membro e a UEFA quase o dobro, 55. Não obstante, as duas nasceram a partir de um mesmo contexto e guardam similitudes na forma como se apresentam ao mundo. Tal fica claro através da postura que as entidades adotam frente à defesa da dignidade da pessoa humana. Trata-se de um princípio central da UE, que pode ser encontrado no artigo F do Tratado de Maastricht (que institui a UE). Nele, resta afirmado que os objetivos da dita união são, entre outros, o respeito aos “direitos fundamentais tal como os garante a Convenção Europeia de Salvaguarda dos Direitos do Homem e das Liberdades Fundamentais, assinada em Roma, em 4 de novembro de 1950” (UE, 1992). Por sua vez, a UEFA informa em seu sítio na *web* que, “através do lema RESPECT, a responsabilidade social da UEFA se esforça em promover o desenvolvimento sustentável de todos os aspectos do futebol em cooperação com as outras partes interessadas” (UEFA, 2019).

É bem verdade que nem sempre as entidades caminharam juntas, como aclara García (2007). Todavia, nas questões fundamentais, têm trabalhado com o mesmo fim, consoante o referido autor assinala:

Em dezembro de 1995, o presidente da UEFA, Lennart Johansson, considerou que a UE estava tentando “matar as equipes de futebol europeias”. O comissário Karel van Miert contestou: “Se eles [UEFA] querem guerra, a terão”. Doze anos depois, as coisas mudaram; UEFA e a Comissão Europeia uniram forças para celebrar o quinquagésimo aniversário do Tratado de Roma (Comissão Europeia 2007a), o Parlamento Europeu apoia a UEFA como órgão reitor para proteger o futuro do futebol (Parlamento Europeu 2007), e a UEFA descreve sua relação

com a UE como “crucial” para a organização (García, 2007, p. 202).

Sendo assim, debate-se o contexto do pós-guerra, dando ênfase ao desenvolvimento de organismos como UE e UEFA para concluir qual seria o papel da Champions League na formação da referida “identidade supranacional europeia”. Paralelamente, busca-se uma compreensão ampla sobre o estudo das identidades, seus conceitos e a correspondente evolução deles; compreender o impacto do contexto do pós-guerra no processo de desenvolvimento da identidade supranacional europeia; a possibilidade, ou não, de coexistência de duas identidades, uma de cariz nacional e outra supranacional; o papel do esporte no referido processo; e a importância de organismos como UE e UEFA.

Para tanto, o estudo se viabiliza através de uma metodologia qualitativa ou construtivista. Isso porque, conforme argumenta Pereira Coutinho (2014, p. 16), em diálogo com Flick, os investigadores das ciências sociais perceberam que o paradigma positivista é pouco operacional, ou mesmo incapaz, de resolver problemas típicos das Ciências Sociais ou Humanas. Quer dizer que, nesse caso, não seria coerente o uso de métodos tradicionais, positivistas, utilizados nas investigações de ciências de cariz objetivo:

Estamos todos influenciados por nossa história e contexto cultural, os quais moldam nossa visão do mundo, as forças de criação e o significado da verdade. Com frequência, essas suposições subjacentes acerca do mundo são inconscientes e dadas por garantidas. O construtivismo é um paradigma de investigação que nega a existência de uma realidade objetiva, “afirmando em seu lugar que as realidades são construções sociais da mente e que existem tantas construções quantos sejam os indivíduos (embora, claramente, muitas construções sejam compartilhadas)” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 43, como citados em Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006, p. 26)

Fica claro que nesse tipo de investigação se “valoriza o papel do investigador/construtor do conhecimento” (Pereira Coutinho, 2014, p. 17). O que se tenta é “compreender o mundo complexo vivido desde o ponto de vista de quem o vive” (Mertens, 1998, p. 11). Dessa forma, trabalha-se com a ideia de “fusão de horizontes”, conforme o investigador utiliza suas concepções, seu ponto de partida, em constante choque com outras perspectivas produzidas durante a investigação a partir do contato com os horizontes “dos outros” (Mertens, p. 19).

Portanto, uma investigação que busca compreender conceitos como identidade, identidade nacional, identidade supranacional, e outras questões, direta ou indiretamente relacionadas com essas ideias, nunca será objetiva, ou capaz de dar uma resposta unívoca e universal à hipótese

proposta.

2. A identidade

O Dicionario de la Real Academia Española revela que identidade é um “conjunto de traços próprios de um indivíduo, ou de uma coletividade, que os caracterizam frente aos demais [...] Consciência que uma pessoa tem de ser ela mesma e distinta das demais [...] Feito de ser alguém ou algo igual ao que é suposto ou buscado” (Diccionario de la Real Academia Española, 2019). Obviamente, resulta insuficiente a interpretação literal ou gramatical, pelo que se busca na Sociologia uma descrição mais clara do conceito. Tal ciência, em sua conceituação clássica, oferecia uma explicação bem acabada:

A identidade é formada na “interação” entre o “eu” e a sociedade. O sujeito ainda tem um núcleo ou essência interior que é o “eu real”, mas esse é formado e modificado num diálogo contínuo com os mundos culturais “exteriores” e as identidades que esses mundos oferecem [...] a idade, então, costura (ou, para usar uma metáfora médica, “sutura”) o sujeito à estrutura. Estabiliza tanto os sujeitos quanto os mundos culturais que eles habitam, tornando ambos reciprocamente mais unificados e predizíveis. (Hall, 2019, p. 11)

Nesse sentido, o historiador Eric Hobsbawm aponta a identidade territorial com a principal para o homem do século XX. Evidentemente, a questão se baseia no fato de que esse foi o primeiro século em que se reconheceu todo o mundo a partir de estados nacionais e o primeiro em que se perceberam ondas de nacionalismo extremo, como foi o caso dos movimentos nazifascistas (Viuda-Serrano, 2014). A percepção de Bauman caminha no mesmo sentido:

A identidade nacional [...] nunca foi como as outras identidades. Diferentemente delas, que não exigiam adesão inequívoca e fidelidade exclusiva, a identidade nacional não reconhecia competidores, muito menos opositores. Cuidadosamente construída pelo Estado e suas forças [...] objetivava o direito monopolista de traçar a fronteira entre “nós” e “eles” (Bauman, 2017, p. 28)

Não obstante, os perversos resultados da experiência nacionalista, combinados com o desenvolvimento das novas tecnologias, levaram algumas partes do mundo a seguir por outro caminho depois da Segunda Guerra Mundial. Ao menos em tese, não era mais possível seguir falando de um “nós” e de um “eles”, como grupos de pessoas distintos e que competem entre si mesmos. A concepção do pós-guerra mudou. Passou-se a se falar em cooperação, queda de fronteiras e, claro, em direitos humanos, como valores universais (Szucko, 2018). Isso ocorreu,

sobretudo, na Europa Ocidental e, pouco a pouco, em partes da Europa Oriental, que se uniriam ao redor da UE, posteriormente.

O conjunto básico de valores europeus formado pela história espiritual e política do continente está claro. Consiste em respeitar as liberdades únicas do ser humano e da humanidade, seus direitos e sua dignidade; o princípio de solidariedade; o Estado de direito e a igualdade ante a lei; a proteção das minorias; as instituições democráticas; a separação entre os poderes legislativo, executivo e judicial; o pluralismo político, o respeito da propriedade e da empresa privadas; uma economia de mercado, e a promoção da sociedade civil (Havel, 2000, p. 3)

A experiência de um mundo que não se fecha no Estado nacional foi ampliada, através dos fenômenos da globalização, o que, para Bauman (2017, p. 34), “significa que o Estado não tem mais o poder ou o desejo de manter uma união sólida e inabalável com a nação”. Isso passou a entregar ao sujeito um mundo “total”, com a possibilidade, mais do que nunca, de se colocar em contato com muito mais culturas, conhecimentos, e, evidentemente, identidades. O homem que chega ao final do século XX, sobretudo o que vive o período posterior à Queda do Muro de Berlim e o conseqüente término da Guerra Fria, não leva consigo mais a identidade nacional como ponto crucial de sua existência — não permanece exposto a uma única identidade. Como resultado, os estudiosos avançam até um novo conceito.

Conforme dito na introdução deste trabalho, “poucos de nós [homens pós-modernos] [...] são capazes de evitar a passagem por mais de uma ‘comunidade de ideias e princípios’” e isso fica claríssimo quando as pessoas passam a ter, em suas mãos, a possibilidade de se comunicarem com outras a milhares de quilômetros; quando todo o mundo pode consumir produtos fabricados nos lugares mais remotos; no momento em que viajar é uma possibilidade mais barata e factível — em termos de Europa, quando oficialmente deixam de existir fronteiras entre os países membros de uma organização a eles comum, a UE.

Isso permite a ascensão de identidades que têm a territorialidade como ponto de partida, mas vão muito além dela. A afirmação de uma identidade que se caracteriza justamente por sua pluralidade permite que o indivíduo se possa perceber como alguém com múltiplas facetas. Sentir-se europeu passa a ser possível sem que haja prejuízo à condição nacional de cada um. Se faz viável a coexistência destes tipos de identidade. A razão é que não se centra a ideia em um “não somos o mesmo porque temos costumes diferentes”, mas em um “somos diferentes, mas, essencialmente, somos o mesmo”. Habermas (1997, p. 283) esclarece que não apenas em características étnico-culturais comuns se baseia a identidade de uma nação, mas, também, no exercício ativo de seus

direitos democráticos de participação e de comunicação.

Em síntese, o século XXI, a pós-modernidade, oferece as condições para que se fortaleça uma identidade de cariz supranacional do tipo da que propõe a UE, protegendo os direitos humanos, sobretudo. Esta identidade se comunica com as outras identidades justamente por sua capacidade de inclusão e aceitação da diferença. Entretanto, sofre muitas vezes por ser percebida junto a outras questões com peso, como a economia, o que é facilmente perceptível a partir do *Eurobarómetro* de 2019⁴². O documento revela que 33% das pessoas entrevistadas afirmaram ter dúvidas quando pensam na UE. Todavia, 28% indicaram ter esperança, e 27% confiança. É importante destacar que os países em que há mais dúvidas são alguns dos que convivem com mais problemas nos últimos anos. Os tchecos, envoltos em uma crise política; os gregos, em crise econômica; e os holandeses que também passam por um momento de indeterminação política, com o crescimento da influência de movimentos de extrema-direita⁴³, são os que mais duvidam.

Esse diagnóstico já havia sido feito por Bauman e representa o principal obstáculo no caminho à afirmação da identidade europeia:

O que se segue, ao contrário da opinião generalizada, é um renascimento, ou mesmo uma vingança póstuma, do nacionalismo — uma busca desesperada, embora vã, por alternativas de solução local para problemas gerados globalmente. (Bauman, 2017, p. 66)

Não obstante, o autor segue crendo que, para que o mundo chegue a um ponto de funcionamento mais razoável e efetivo, preservando os direitos humanos e os interesses comuns a todos os povos, é necessário ir além das identidades supranacionais, chegando a um ponto em que se possa falar de identidades a nível mundial ou “ao nível da humanidade” (Bauman, p. 95).

a. A ausência de identidades fixas, a dignidade humana e a identidade supranacional na pós-modernidade

Tendo em conta as definições feitas por Bauman (2017) e Hall (2019), é possível determinar que, na era da pós-modernidade, a identidade é um tema central de estudo para as mais diversas áreas do conhecimento. Nestes tempos, as escalas territoriais se entrelaçam, aproximando as pessoas. É fácil, por exemplo, saber como se comportam, simultaneamente, o mundo da moda em Milão, as finanças em Frankfurt, ou a música pop nos Estados Unidos. Aliás, a proximidade totalizante se torna a temática da identidade crucial, porque as pessoas não necessitam mais se

⁴²Report: “Flash Eurobarometer – Emotions and political engagement towards the EU” (disponível em <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2019/emotions-and-political-engagement-towards-the-eu/report/en-flash-2019.pdf>)

⁴³“Dutch Eurosceptics dream of united front to roll back EU” (disponível em <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/20/dutch-eurosceptics-dream-of-united-front-to-roll-back-eu>).

definir conforme sua cultura, os valores locais de onde vivem, etc. A liquidez do mundo permite que a sociedade se mantenha em constante movimento, não se limitando a uma identidade apenas.

Não se fala de fatores fixos constituintes de uma identidade. Apesar disso, conclui-se que a referida fluidez carrega consigo uma questão problemática: a dificuldade de encontrar o sentido de pertencimento. O mundo oferece tantas oportunidades, soluções, possibilidades que, ao final, não garante nenhuma. Indaga Hall (2019, p. 13) que “os modos de vida colocados em ação pela modernidade nos livraram, de uma forma bastante inédita, de todos os tipos tradicionais de ordem social”.

Tal feito pode ser percebido partindo de diferentes perspectivas. Efetivamente, o indivíduo fica “livre” para viver como queira. Por outro lado, tal liberdade, combinada com certa incerteza acerca de questões como o desenvolvimento socioeconômico, pode se transformar em vazio — e um vazio perigoso e manipulável. Quando fala do regime de Viktor Orbán, na Hungria, a filósofa Agnes Heller (2019) aponta para o fato de que:

Se os velhos partidos desmoronam e novas formações sem tradição surgem do nada; se os tiranos podem ser eleitos uma e outra vez pela maioria; se a riqueza é redistribuída ao contrário, o que move as pessoas? A resposta é simples: a ideologia combinada com políticas da identidade.

Fica claro que a pós-modernidade sofre com a fragilização do sentimento de pertença e que a política, com frequência, utiliza-se disso. Assim, pode-se chegar a um ponto chave: a identidade se move na direção do que oferece um lugar cômodo e seguro, permeado por pessoas que dividem os mesmos ideais — ou que pensam assim. Nesse sentido, o contexto permite que se projete a ascensão de qualquer identidade, baseada em uma questão central: a oferta do sentimento de pertença.

A análise que se faz acerca da formação e desenvolvimento de uma identidade supranacional europeia passa por todas estas questões. Como é possível atingir as pessoas, permitindo sua inclusão? A ideia soa bem, mas não se apresenta razoável no plano do real. Já não se fala apenas em nacionalidade e costumes, por exemplo. Essas são questões de nível estatal e, como dito, não são mais estruturas condicionantes de uma identidade. O projeto europeu, que nasce depois da Segunda Guerra Mundial, traz, todavia, as bases de uma identidade múltipla. Seu ponto final é a formação da União Europeia.

Porém, como assinala Pereira Coutinho (2012, p. 201), não se pode pensar em “uma comunidade política homogênea subjacente, animada por vínculos identitários de pertencimento e solidariedade”, especialmente com alguns Estados cada vez mais falidos, o que permite a ascensão de grupos políticos liderados por pessoas como a do citado Viktor Orbán ou de Recep Tayyip

Erdogan, na Turquia. Por outro lado, Jürgen Habermas (1997) trabalha outro conceito: quando se pensa em uma identidade política e cultural compartilhada, como é o caso de uma identidade supranacional, deve-se falar de um suposto “patriotismo constitucional”, que apenas reflita a ideia da dignidade humana como parâmetro fundamental. Ele vê na Europa um potencial político capaz de permitir uma participação política dos povos que não se baseia na nacionalidade ou em critérios étnicos, senão no reconhecimento de que o outro existe, pode ser diferente, mas carrega um traço comum: sua dignidade enquanto ser humano.

Pode parecer um vínculo frágil, mas não deve ser considerado assim, na medida em que, assume-se, nada teria um poder de inclusão tão grande quanto um espaço público que respeite as diferenças, a partir dessa unidade continental. A identidade supranacional europeia “não tem porque se definir ou se construir contra as identidades nacionais, mas com elas e por elas, na medida em que a diversidade é algo que ganhamos” (Cubel, 2016, p. 12).

Apesar disso, em muitos aspectos a UE tenta replicar os processos tipicamente nacionais: tem sua própria bandeira, um hino, uma moeda e outros símbolos. Por outro lado, também se desconecta disso para dar vida, por exemplo, ao Acordo Schengen, que oferece aos europeus vindos de seus países membros a possibilidade do livre trânsito por seus territórios. Quer dizer, garante aos povos seu espaço, independentemente de outros fatores. O que importa é ser europeu, sempre tendo em conta que o europeu a que se faz referência aqui é o cidadão nacional de um estado membro da UE.

A identidade nacional não compete com a identidade supranacional, elas trabalham em níveis distintos (Troitino, 2013). “Ter uma identidade europeia não força as pessoas a escolher entre sua nação e a Europa” (Viuda-Serrano, 2014, p. 23). Isso necessita ser mais bem trabalhado, a UE não pode ser vista como concorrência aos Estados, mas como algo que se encontra em outro nível, contra o qual não se compete. Poucos exemplos poderiam integrar melhor a questão do que o da UEFA Champions League, já que se trata de um torneio continental que não toma a importância dos campeonatos nacionais, mas convive com eles, harmonicamente.

Como aduz Capistrano Ferreira (2014, p. 369), “o objetivo do modelo crítico-reconstrutivo é investir em processos dialógicos e diatópicos, onde o conflito intersubjetivo-moral assume a arena dos debates sociais e das formações individuais presentes na tarefa de ‘reconhecer-se-no-outro’”.

b. O papel do esporte na construção de uma identidade

Parte importante do desenvolvimento de uma identidade é a geração de um sentimento de pertença, como já assinalado. Para tanto, ainda que pareça uma concepção anacrônica, os símbolos são úteis. Nesse sentido, o esporte se revela como um dos mais importantes, como enfatiza Viuda-Serrano (2014, p. 26):

[O esporte é] Um instrumento de transmissão de cultura que reflete os valores básicos do marco cultural em que se desenvolve”, uma ferramenta básica para a inculcação de princípios e ideias. O Tratado de Amsterdã revelou, já em 1998, “a importância social do esporte, e, em particular, sua função na hora de forjar uma identidade e de unir as pessoas”.

Ainda que não tenha sido gerada a partir da UE, a UEFA Champions League (até 1992 “Taça dos Clubes Campeões Europeus”) traz consigo características que permitem que se refira a ela como parte importante do processo de desenvolvimento do sentimento europeu. O contexto de sua fundação, os anos 1950, o período do pós-guerra, é o mesmo em que se passa a trabalhar as questões de uma identidade supranacional europeia, baseada no conceito da preservação da dignidade humana.

A UCL, além disso, está em harmonia com o ideal de Olimpismo, que emerge desde a segunda metade do século XIX. Começa-se a se falar em um “esporte moderno”, com a codificação de regras e a importância fundacional de Pierre de Coubertin, através do renascimento dos Jogos Olímpicos. O futebol é normatizado nessa época. O esporte assume um lugar definitivo na formação das identidades e isso, como relata Caspistegui (2012), pouco variou conforme o século XX transcorreu, chegando-se à pós-modernidade:

De qualquer forma, as características do esporte e sua relação com as identidades seguiram sendo muito similares às dos momentos iniciais [fim do século XIX]. Tanto a capacidade de integração e identidade que proporciona, como a paradoxal modernidade defensiva que, em muitas ocasiões se manifestava, mantiveram-se nas décadas seguintes à Guerra. O esporte se assumia já como tarefa fundamental dos estados, não no sentido totalitário, mas na recomendação para a prática e na disponibilização de recursos para esta. Isto reforçava o caráter moderno do esporte, associado à criação de sociedades de bem-estar e a capacidade de integração e convivência entre comunidades. Os níveis de prática esportiva eram considerados indicadores confiáveis do grau de progresso de uma sociedade. Seu papel, como instrumento de relação entre Estados já não assumia os denegridos modelos militaristas, mas um componente pacifista, uma extensão das práticas de fair play à convivência internacional. Por último, este tempo mostrou o auge do esporte espetáculo, o que seguiu sendo utilizado como instrumento de coesão ou reivindicação nacional, além de implicar sua inserção nas tendências globalizadoras, com um esporte universalizado em seus grandes acontecimentos, com o intercâmbio frequente de

jogadores com uma abrumadora lógica econômica (Caspistegui, 2012, p. 26)

O mesmo autor cita exemplos em que o esporte foi tão forte na estrutura de uma sociedade que possibilitou seu uso contra as forças políticas. É mencionado o caso do Spartak, de Moscou, que acabou por ser chamado de “time do povo moscovita”, em oposição clara a outras equipes como eram os casos do Dínamo, vinculado à polícia secreta soviética, ou o CSKA, à polícia local. Dentro do estádio, a animosidade traduzida por cânticos como “morte à polícia” passou como mera característica da veia competitiva inerente ao esporte de alto rendimento. No entanto, em casos como esse, o esporte traduziu, claramente, sua capacidade de gerar integração em comunidade, contra um “inimigo” comum, neste caso forças da repressão estatal.

O espírito do momento em que a Europa passou a se compreender como uma “quase-totalidade” cooperativa refletiu a ideia da UEFA — fundada em 1954. Ainda que tenha nascido da necessidade de competição, de afirmação de um campeão continental, a UCL teve, desde o início, um forte caráter identitário europeu. Isso é algo facilmente compreensível: se não sou europeu, não preciso disputar uma competição que me outorgue um título de superioridade continental. Houve um movimento para que a competição surgisse — não sendo baseado em uma identidade nacional, mas em outra, supranacional — mesmo que fosse, ainda, algo incipiente.

A ideia da formação da Taça dos Clubes Campeões da Europa não foi a de uma disputa feroz para ver qual país era prevalente e, portanto, o melhor, titular de uma superioridade identitária intangível e derivada da supremacia de um povo, no que concerne às suas virtudes físicas, culturais e morais. O intuito era, simplesmente, o de fomentar uma competição em que ganhar é importante, claro, mas não como prova da força e da preponderância de um povo por sobre os outros, mas por seu natural caráter competitivo e como instrumento de integração e espetáculo: “O futebol é, também, uma prática social que cria laços horizontais em torno de uma paixão comum [...] sem um ‘eles’ não há ponto em celebrar o ‘nós’” (Dietschy, Ranc e Sonntag, 2009, p.134). A respeito das diferenças entre as equipes em disputa, sempre se soube que o torneio era disputado pela elite, pelos melhores do mundo.

3. A UEFA Champions League: o grande torneio esportivo da Europa

A Champions League foi criada em 1955, a partir de uma série de partidas amistosas realizadas pelo Wolverhampton, em 1954. O clube inglês havia conquistado seu campeonato nacional e, como novidade, acabava de instalar refletores no estádio Molineux. Desse modo, para testar suas novas luzes e arrecadar fundos para pagar pelas instalações, convidou uma série de equipes de todo o mundo a jogar em sua casa, oponentes como Racing Club de Avellaneda, Celtic, Spartak Moscou, Budapest Hónved e Maccabi Tel Aviv. Depois de vencer os temidos magiares do

Hónved, muitos dos quais integraram a seleção vice-campeã do mundo em 1954, a imprensa britânica proclamou os *Wolves* o melhor time do mundo. A ideia não era de todo absurda, já que não havia meio de se fazer uma competição com as melhores equipes.

Com efeito, rapidamente se iniciou uma forte repercussão por toda a Europa, que ressoou, sem surpresa, mais forte na França. O editor do diário *L'Equipe*, Gabriel Hanot (que também fora jogador da seleção francesa), começou uma cruzada contra a autoproclamação feita pelos ingleses. Todavia, não apenas desejava provocar os britânicos, ou, simplesmente, tomar-lhes o título autoproclamado, havia pensado em uma forma de estabelecer, legitimamente, ao menos qual seria o melhor time europeu.

Junto a outros jornalistas que haviam viajado pela América do Sul, vindo a conhecer um torneio chamado Campeonato Sul-Americano de Campeões (precursor da Copa Libertadores da América), começaram a difundir a ideia de uma nova competição. Hanot ficou com a fama por ter dito a célebre frase:

Antes que nós declaremos que o Wolverhampton é invencível, o deixe ir a Moscou e Budapeste. E há outros clubes renomados internacionalmente: Milan e Real Madrid, para falar de dois. Uma copa mundial de clubes, ou pelo menos uma Europeia – maior, mais significativa e mais prestigiosa que a Copa Mitropa e mais original que um torneio para seleções. (Trivela, 2014)

Em 1955, nasceu a Taça dos Clubes Campeões Europeus. Nela, todos os times campeões nacionais europeus poderiam se enfrentar e, ao final, constatar-se-ia qual era o melhor time do continente.

O surgimento do torneio provocou uma série de mudanças na lógica do futebol europeu. Ganhar o título nacional sempre havia sido importante, mas, agora, com a abertura de outro espaço, mais amplo e competitivo, tomou outras proporções. Começaram a ser vividas as famosas noites europeias, datas em que toda uma cidade, talvez até um país, parava para ver seu representante enfrentar o seu homólogo de outra nação. O sucesso foi total, permitiu o nascimento de rivalidades internacionais, provocou novas sensações no mundo esportivo — o conhecimento de outros jogadores, outras formas de se praticar o futebol —, e acabou por integrar todo o continente em torno de uma causa esportiva.

As provas disso são múltiplas e incontestáveis. Um exemplo claro foi apresentado por uma reportagem da edição do diário catalão *Mundo Deportivo*, em 28 de maio de 1975, às vésperas da decisão da final entre Leeds United e Bayern de Munique, a 20ª da história:

Indiscutivelmente, a Taça dos Clubes Campeões Europeus veio cobrir uma lacuna competitiva de primeira linha no mundo do futebol e trouxe uma dose de prestígio

e glória inesquecíveis para a história do mais popular dos esportes do mundo [...] Poucas experiências como esta revitalizaram, projetaram, internacionalizando e engrandecendo um esporte. O eco popular foi, por assim dizer, imediato, especialmente por parte das torcidas dos países fundadores da competição: Espanha, França, Portugal e Itália. Muito rapidamente, o apoio popular conquistaria o futebol do norte e do leste da Europa e as massas de Glasgow e Amsterdã respondem com a mesma exaltação que as latinas. A Taça dos Clubes Campeões Europeus, em 20 anos, e através de 1.113 encontros, praticamente não conhece um estádio vazio, e, se pode calcular, em 33 milhões o número de torcedores que testemunharam as inolvidáveis páginas de sua história (Mundo Deportivo, 1975).

O movimento europeu em torno de uma competição tampouco se restringiu aos estádios. No relvado, quase tudo poderia acontecer, mas, fora dele, não. Fomentou-se a ideia de integração continental, e um conceito de *fair play*. Um caso dessa natureza foi visto em 1988. Depois de uma partida eliminatória entre os holandeses do PSV Eindhoven e os franceses do Bordeaux, o defensor neerlandês Ronald Koeman foi punido por elogiar, publicamente, uma entrada dura de um de seus companheiros em Jean Tigana, que fez o francês perder parte considerável da disputa. Não era aceitável que se estimulasse a violência. Isso feria os princípios da competição e, como um todo, a ideia de cooperação que se tentava fortalecer na Europa.

a. A evolução da competição: que Europa joga a Champions?

A referida reportagem do *Mundo Deportivo* afirmava, em 1975, que as portas para uma mudança no formato da Taça dos Clubes Campeões Europeus estavam fechadas, a partir de seu êxito. Não obstante, a competição acabava descartando um grande número de equipes da mais alta qualidade, já que cada país contava apenas com um representante por edição, o campeão nacional vigente. Pouco a pouco, as pressões para uma mudança começaram a crescer. Não custa imaginar o motivo; basta pensar em casos como o do grande Johan Cruyff, que, em seu período como jogador do Barcelona (cinco anos), disputou apenas uma edição do certame continental.

Apesar disso, o formato original permitia, com muito mais facilidade, que equipes de centros futebolísticos menores e com orçamentos inferiores rivalizassem com os times mais poderosos dos países econômica e tradicionalmente mais fortes no citado esporte. Mesmo que tenham sido poucos os campeões “inesperados”, foi possível ver Panathinaikos, Malmö e Club Brugge chegando às finais, e equipes como Steaua Bucareste e Estrela Vermelha de Belgrado confirmando conquistas. Todas as partidas eram eliminatórias, não havia fase de grupos; tudo podia

acontecer em dois encontros decisivos.

Mas a ausência de equipes poderosíssimas, e que apenas reforçaram sua pujança nos anos que foram se passando, começou a pressionar a UEFA até um ponto em que não foi possível evitar uma mudança decisiva. Na temporada 1991-92, passou a ser disputada uma fase de grupos depois de duas fases eliminatórias, o que diminuiu as hipóteses de uma surpresa, com uma sequência de seis partidas. Ainda assim, a mudança fatal ocorreria em 1997-98, quando se admitiu a presença de mais de um time de oito ligas nacionais: de Alemanha, Inglaterra, França, Holanda, Itália, Portugal, Espanha e Turquia. Os times menores passaram a jogar tudo nas primeiras eliminatórias, enquanto os de maior êxito os esperavam na fase de grupos:

Desde o início dos anos 1990, houve grande pressão na UEFA por grupos europeus de meios de comunicação e por equipes das maiores cidades da Europa, para que se expandisse a competição. Como resultado, a UEFA ampliou a Taça dos Clubes Campeões Europeus para a edição de 1991-92, para incluir um formato de liga, passando a se chamar UEFA Champions League. Esse formato de liga foi, posteriormente, expandido em 1997, para que o vice-campeão de certas ligas nacionais participasse e, depois, em 1999, para que esses países (Inglaterra, França, Alemanha, Itália e Espanha), com bastante êxito esportivo (e audiências televisivas) pudessem entrar com o terceiro e até o quarto colocados de suas ligas domésticas (King, 2003, p. 423)

Não é difícil concluir que equipes dos países menos fortes futebolística e economicamente não jogaram muito mais vezes o torneio. Isso gera uma pergunta: seguem vigentes os princípios iniciais da competição? Uma pergunta como essa não é tão simples de se responder, porque o cenário mudou radicalmente também em outros aspectos. De antemão, pode-se adiantar que os melhores jogadores dos países mais débeis seguem atuando na competição. Também se pode dizer que as audiências não param de crescer. Em 2017-18, foi registrada a maior média de público de todos os tempos, com um total médio de 45.834 espectadores nos estádios.⁴⁴

Faz-se necessário falar de uma nova concepção de competição europeia. Hoje, a Champions League não é o mesmo torneio de 1955, mas segue sendo um dos principais símbolos da Europa, e, talvez em razão dessas mudanças, reforce o poder de uma identidade europeia. Atualmente, por exemplo, existem torcedores dos principais times do mundo por todas as partes. Há pessoas que seguem um clube porque ele tem um jogador de seu país, ou com passagem por um clube de seu país. O futebol mudou. A poucas equipes se pode atribuir, nestes tempos, a manutenção de uma identidade através dos tempos.

⁴⁴O sítio eletrônico da UEFA confirma esses dados, podendo ser acessado em: <https://www.uefa.com/uefachampionsleague/news/newsid=2555966.html?iv=true>

Quando o treinador Pep Guardiola vai do Barcelona ao Bayern de Munique, ou, a seguir, ao Manchester City, leva consigo as marcas de uma identidade, supostamente, catalã e forma novas identidades europeias, quando intercambia sua cultura com a dos alemães ou dos ingleses. E, leve-se em conta, a propósito, que a identidade catalã, no que tange ao futebol, é presumida, porque a forma como o futebol é concebido em Barcelona foi construída, em grande medida, por holandeses, Rinus Michels e Johan Cruyff, resultado de um processo que se iniciou por um inglês, Vic Buckingham, quando este treinou o Ajax, em 1964. Dietschy, Ranc e Sonntag (2009, p. 135) falam também sobre a questão, destacando o entrelaçamento cultural verificado na Europa:

Ainda que muitos observadores corretamente deplorem a ausência de uma esfera pública europeia genuína, em razão da ausência de um *demos* europeu, pode-se dizer que as copas europeias obtiveram êxito na criação de um público europeu que não é apenas a justaposição dos públicos nacionais, mas que também desenvolveu uma atitude curiosa por conhecer a cultura dos outros europeus, mesmo que seja apenas a cultura futebolística.

Adicionalmente, cabe observar quanto aos tradicionais torcedores dos times gigantes da Europa, que as mudanças de formato também ofereceram outro nível de interação entre os adeptos de clubes de outros países, mesmo que muitas vezes de forma brutal e violenta. King (2003) estudou a influência do dito fenômeno europeu no caso do Manchester United, e analisou as mudanças que foram produzidas.

O desenvolvimento do futebol europeu de clubes nos anos 1990, obviamente, proporcionou a estes torcedores a oportunidade de viver a Europa mais frequentemente [...] As partidas como visitante permitiram a esses torcedores estar muitos dias juntos, em uma desconhecida e, potencialmente, excitante cidade na qual as celebrações podem ser estendidas [...] Richard Kurt notou que os torcedores do Manchester United desenvolveram o início de uma rivalidade violenta com torcedores de outros times, como com os da Juventus [...] Significativamente, para alguns fãs nessa rede, a extensão da viagem europeia significou que eles se familiarizaram com certas cidades da Europa [...] Essa familiaridade com a Europa é significativa porque pode, potencialmente, participar no desenvolvimento de uma identidade europeia supranacional, em que estes fanáticos do United realmente começam a perceber a si mesmos como principalmente europeus, ao invés de britânicos (King, 2003, p. 425)

Atualmente, a competição assumiu uma forma completamente diferente da original. O lado econômico tomou proporções aparentemente irreversíveis, mas segue sendo possível ver algo em comum, um sentido de Europa. Talvez seja mais restrito, talvez não. Mas existe. E não parece que o formato atual vá seguir vigente por muito tempo, já que foi confirmada a intenção da UEFA de criar uma Superliga Europeia. Há uma identidade supranacional ganhando força, a questão é saber a quem afetará e quem ficará à margem desse fenômeno.

b. A UE e o acórdão Bosman

Como já se adiantou, os melhores jogadores da Europa (e do mundo) seguem atuando na UCL. Como é possível? Uma das principais medidas tomadas pela UE nos últimos anos, com o objetivo de aumentar a integração dos povos da referida união foi a formalização do livre tráfico de trabalhadores provenientes dos países-membros da UE por toda a área coberta pelo organismo. No entanto, isso não era aplicável ao futebol em que se convivia com sérias restrições à presença de estrangeiros nos times.

Jean-Marc Bosman desafiou essa determinação. Em 1990, o futebolista belga finalizou seu contrato com o RFC Liège, depois de rechaçar a renovação. Os franceses do USL Dunkerque haviam manifestado interesse no jogador e as partes chegaram a um acordo. No entanto, os times envolvidos não conseguiram pactuar o pagamento de uma indenização pela transferência, que foi bloqueada. Naquela época, mesmo que não mais tivesse contrato com uma equipe, o jogador permanecia “preso” ao clube de origem, que poderia exigir o pagamento de uma compensação para permitir sua saída, liberando-o de seu vínculo esportivo.

Bosman buscou amparo no Tribunal de Justiça da União Europeia. Abrigado pela legislação europeia, obteve ganho de causa, após alguns anos. Reconheceu-se, então, que mesmo no âmbito do futebol, nenhum empregador pode ter algum tipo de posse sobre um empregado. Criou-se um precedente que mudou, para sempre, o rumo do futebol europeu. Caíram restrições à presença de atletas estrangeiros procedentes de países-membro da EU dentro deles próprios. E se acabou a necessidade de pagamento de indenização ao clube antecedente, após o final do vínculo contratual entre ele e o atleta em questão.

Logicamente, os times economicamente mais poderosos fizeram negócios às custas dos demais. Quase todo jogador de alto nível seguiu para os principais clubes da Europa, em especial de Espanha, Inglaterra, Alemanha e Itália. Até os times tradicionais de países como Portugal, França e Holanda sofreram enorme prejuízo, sem conseguir competir com os salários oferecidos pelas potências europeias. O desequilíbrio esportivo aumentou, o futebol europeu se globalizou, e foi gerada uma certa uniformidade, com muitos times passando a conviver com a multiculturalidade. Um dos primeiros impactos evidentes foi o “Barcelona holandês”, treinado por Louis van Gaal a

partir do final dos anos 1990, e que levou à Catalunha jogadores como os irmãos De Boer, Patrick Kluivert, Michael Reiziger, Phillip Cocu, Ruud Hesp ou Boudewijn Zenden.

Inicialmente, o Acórdão Bosman colocou a UE e a UEFA em confronto. Depois da decisão, a Comissão Europeia notificou tanto a FIFA quanto a UEFA a respeito da necessidade, compulsória, de que os organismos propusessem reformas no que dizia respeito às regulamentações de transferências.

Não obstante, nos últimos anos o diálogo foi restabelecido e as organizações vêm trabalhando em conjunto (García, 2007). Hoje, o que se pode perceber é um contexto em que os times europeus dos países proeminentes são, em sua maioria, multiculturais, e isso não é um problema. É habitual, por exemplo, ver bandeiras dos mais diversos países nas arquibancadas dos estádios de futebol desses países. O processo de europeização, de afirmação de uma identidade que vai além da nacional, como esclarece Viuda-Serrano (2014), não ocorreu em um sentido único:

Essa europeização se produz em dois sentidos: como resultado da legislação e a tomada de decisões a nível da UE, e em relação com onde, como, porquê e até que ponto a integração europeia e a governança a nível comunitário precipitam a mudança doméstica na área do futebol

O caso Bosman acabou sendo apenas um feito a mais dentro de uma contextualização que vem sendo construída desde os anos 1950. Sem a regulamentação do espaço público europeu (no âmbito da UE), o belga não teria conseguido a vitória nos tribunais. Não é difícil pensar que, caso o jogador não tivesse tido a iniciativa de judicializar seu interesse, outro o teria feito não muito tempo depois. O cenário para tanto já estava desenhado. O sentido de cidadania e de identidade europeia já existia.

c. O Brexit e a concorrência da Premier League

Ainda que o contexto da UE revele a indiscutível existência de uma identidade europeia e a Champions League se tenha consolidado como instrumento de afirmação da dita identidade, pode-se afirmar que a união não é tão forte como se poderia pensar. Tome-se o caso do Reino Unido (RU). Desde o princípio, o dito estado foi firme em sua posição de ingressar na UE em certos temas, permanecendo à margem de outros. O melhor exemplo talvez seja o que vem do fato de que nunca renunciou à sua própria moeda, a Libra Esterlina, que tem sido, ao longo dos anos, mais valorizada que o Euro.

O sentimento de pertencimento à Europa sempre foi diferente no Reino Unido. Carl, Dennison e Evans (2019) tentam explicar as razões que levaram ao Brexit, o referendo efetivado em junho de 2016, em que a maioria dos cidadãos do RU decidiu que havia chegado o momento de

deixar a UE:

A primeira explicação atribui o resultado dos efeitos de uma campanha de curto prazo; a segunda cita a desigualdade econômica e as políticas de austeridade fiscal; a terceira invoca os chamados “perdedores da globalização”; e a quarta aponta os valores autoritários dos que votaram pela saída (Carl, Dennison e Evans, 2019, p. 2)

De uma forma ou de outra, não há como escapar ao fato de que o projeto europeu ainda não atingiu, plenamente, seus objetivos. Nesse sentido, o elemento identitário, apareceu de modos diversos nos discursos. Variou no contexto do Reino Unido, verificando-se, por exemplo, perspectivas diferentes ao norte e ao sul da Inglaterra, na Escócia, na capital Londres, entre cidades de maior ou menor extensão e população. Pode não ter sido preponderante, mas teve papel importante sobre o referendo.

As preocupações tradicionais sobre a soberania e os benefícios econômicos de ser membro eram importantes, mas igualmente importantes eram as preocupações de identidade relacionadas com o impacto da imigração e a integração europeia na identidade cultural da Grã Bretanha (Hobolt, 2016, p. 1271)

O contexto do Brexit revela outro fato incontestável: a ideia de que a identidade supranacional europeia atua em outro nível em face das identidades nacionais não se verificou com suficiente força no Reino Unido. Existe ali uma sensação de que o fortalecimento da relação entre o RU e a Europa significaria a debilidade do sentido identitário nacional, o que conduz, dentre outros temas, à questão da imigração. Antes do Brexit, como se pode supor, havia um tratamento diferenciado em face dos imigrantes europeus, que possuíam facilidade para entrar no território do Reino Unido, quando comparados a pessoas de outras partes do mundo. Hoje, a ideia é permitir apenas a entrada de mão de obra com muita qualificação, algo similar à prática efetuada frente aos estrangeiros não europeus no caso do futebol⁴⁵.

Percebe-se que a identidade europeia se assentou de maneira desigual na região, ainda que a situação que se verifica no futebol seja mais ambivalente. Como ficou demonstrado anteriormente, existe um forte sentido de identidade dos torcedores do futebol inglês com as competições europeias, em especial a UCL. O exemplo oferecido por King (2003) não deixa lugar a dúvidas de que esse é o caso. Inclusive, a pujança da Premier League também aponta uma questão relevante: o futebol inglês depende do futebol europeu ou é o contrário que se verifica?

⁴⁵É necessário um *work permit*, baseado em critérios estabelecidos pelo Ministério do Interior.

Em termos econômicos, não é difícil concluir o tamanho do impacto que os times ingleses possuem. Segundo um estudo feito pela empresa Deloitte, “os resultados financeiros da temporada 2016-17 confirmaram a posição da Premier League inglesa como líder do mercado, com receita recorde” (Deloitte, 2018). Apesar disso, a edição do estudo lançada em 2019 revelou que “com a falta de aumentos substanciais da Premier League para o próximo ciclo de contratações, é possível que vejamos outros clubes das outras cinco grandes ligas que comecem a reduzir a brecha a respeito de seus homólogos ingleses” (Deloitte, 2019).

Certo é que, ainda que o domínio econômico da Premier League sobre outras ligas seja uma realidade, isoladamente, os times ingleses ainda ficam abaixo de Real Madrid e Barcelona e, exceção feita ao Manchester United, também do Bayern de Munique. Por outro lado, se considerarmos os 20 clubes europeus com mais receitas, os resultados apontam uma devastadora vantagem da Premier: nove deles são ingleses.

Não obstante, ainda que nove equipes das 20 com mais receitas pertençam ao Reino Unido (segundo dados do citado estudo de 2019), por uma questão de regulamento, só quatro estiveram na fase de grupos da edição 2018-19, da competição continental. A representatividade da UCL segue sendo alta. Esportivamente, a competição europeia preserva seu status e mantém uma forte conexão identitária com os times da Premier League. Talvez, uma importante prova disso venha do fato de que, em 2019, a final foi disputada por Liverpool (que já havia sido finalista em 2018) e Tottenham, com trajetórias que não deixam margem às dúvidas sobre o esforço empregado pelos ingleses nas noites europeias.

Outro exemplo inquestionável é o do Manchester United. O time foi eliminado da UCL 2018-19 nas quartas de finais, perdendo para o Barcelona, que impôs um preço altíssimo sobre as entradas dos torcedores ingleses, para a partida disputada na Catalunha. Diante dessa situação, o clube inglês informou que, ainda que seus bilhetes custem, normalmente, 75 libras, havia tomado a “difícil decisão de cobrar dos torcedores do Barcelona, pela partida de ida em Old Trafford, a mesma quantia que o Barcelona está cobrando do time visitante [102 libras]”. Depois, os responsáveis explicaram o motivo: “Usaremos as receitas adicionais obtidas para pagar nosso operativo de viagem, pagando a diferença de preço de 27 libras para cada um de nossos torcedores na viagem” (Sport Bible, 2019). O clube deu uma mostra evidente do peso que a participação em uma competição europeia tem para si e seus torcedores.

Não há dúvidas de que, Brexit à parte, o futebol segue conectando o Reino Unido à Europa.

4. Conclusões

Ao final do estudo, pode-se afirmar alguns pontos importantes para responder adequadamente a hipótese inicialmente formulada. Seria a Champions League um marco que possibilitou o desenvolvimento de uma identidade supranacional europeia? Como quase tudo que se estuda nos campos das Ciências Sociais, não há resposta exata, mas há indícios suficientes de que a UCL teve uma importância crucial no dito processo, atuando como facilitador do impulso rumo à formação da citada identidade.

Pode-se dizer que, com o pós-guerra, o avanço dos processos de globalização, o desenvolvimento de novas tecnologias, e o fim da Guerra Fria, a Europa Ocidental enfrentou uma realidade que já não se regia pelas lógicas verificadas até então. Se o final do século XIX, e o início do XX, confirmou a ascensão dos Estados nacionais, fortalecendo a ideia de uma identidade nacional, de princípios comuns entre um mesmo povo, traduzindo-se na noção de um “nós” em contraposição a um “eles”, momento em que as identidades nacionais se elevaram ao ponto de se poder falar em nacionalismos (não confundir identidade nacional e nacionalismo), no pós-guerra, o período da reconstrução europeia trouxe consigo outro contexto. Não era mais cabível falar somente em uma identidade nacional, sobretudo em uma que se opunha à do outro.

Enfatizando os direitos humanos e a dignidade da pessoa humana, começou-se a verificar um movimento de integração continental. Difundiu-se a ideia de cooperação entre nações, até o ponto de se reconhecer a existência de um espaço público comum aos distintos Estados. Evidentemente, enquanto se convivia com a Guerra Fria, tal processo acabou por se desenrolar maioritariamente na Europa Ocidental. Verificou-se a evolução de um sentimento de pertencimento mais amplo do que o nacional. Passou-se a falar de uma identidade europeia, naturalmente de caráter supranacional, e que não se apresenta como oposição às identidades europeias, atuando em outro nível.

Não obstante, esse processo não se fez possível apenas em referência ao que se passava na Europa. O avanço da globalização terminou por modificar, profundamente, o sentido de identidade que se difundiu no século XX, mundo afora. Em pouco tempo, os povos se aproximaram de tal forma que o sentimento de pertença deixou de estar ligado simplesmente à comunidade física, à localidade em que o indivíduo está inserido. A identidade deixou de ser percebida como algo único, totalizante. Percebeu-se que era possível que alguém se reconhecesse em várias identidades e não apenas isso; também se notou que a mudança de identidade durante o curso da vida era um fenômeno viável e que, de fato, ocorria. Dessa forma, sentir-se europeu se tornou algo muito menos conflituoso, já que o cidadão poderia se perceber como membro de uma comunidade de princípios nacionais e supranacionais, sem que as identidades se anulassem mutuamente. A formação da União

Europeia foi o marco final nesse sentido, para poder afirmar que existe uma identidade europeia.

Embora a UE tenha trazido consigo uma série de símbolos, tais como sua própria bandeira, hino, moeda, mesmo antes da sua existência já havia outros elementos a prefigurar uma identidade supranacional. É o contexto da criação da Taça dos Clubes Campeões Europeus, sobre um sentido de busca de cooperação, integração e ampliação dos espaços públicos europeus. Esse acontecimento se confirmou como um ponto de inflexão na evolução do continente. Além do lado competitivo inerente ao esporte, a competição ofereceu uma nova oportunidade de os povos europeus se colocarem em contato. Ao menos no contexto esportivo, passou-se a conhecer melhor o que se acontecia em outras partes do continente, os adeptos passaram a nutrir maior curiosidade a respeito dos jogadores de outros países, em face das distintas formas de se praticar o esporte. Em definitivo, ofereceu-se um contato mais direto com o outro, e isto fomentou o interesse pelo que se passava no resto dos países europeus. Demonstra-se, pois, a relevância do esporte e de organismos, como UE e UEFA, para a afirmação da identidade supranacional europeia.

A pós-modernidade oferece novas perspectivas de reflexão a respeito do fenômeno futebolístico europeu. As mudanças do formato do torneio, admitindo mais equipes de um certo grupo de países, a livre circulação de futebolistas dos países-membro da EU, e a ampliação da influência de fatores econômicos sobre o esporte mudaram a relação dos povos europeus com o futebol e entre eles. No entanto, não parece adequado medir a mudança em termos de “bom” e “mau”, mas de “diferente”. A curiosidade global pela UCL segue crescendo, em que pese o fato de que as mudanças de regras acabaram por diminuir as possibilidades de equipes “da periferia do continente” de participar na UCL.

A UE também mudou, admitindo novos membros e estreitando laços com a Europa Oriental. Existe uma crise manifesta em seu seio, exemplificada, com perfeição, pelo Brexit. Em muitos países, há desconfiança em relação à comunidade europeia. Não obstante, isso não é simplesmente uma questão de identidade supranacional, mas de outros fatores, sobretudo econômicos e migratórios. Há que se falar também em uma sensação de vazio identitário, ante um contexto de muitas possibilidades e incertezas que justifica, em parte, o crescimento de movimentos de ultradireita em vários países, a maioria deles claramente contrários à União Europeia e favoráveis ao nacionalismo excludente. Apesar disso, pode-se constatar um espaço público europeu e uma identidade supranacional nem sempre evidentes, independentemente da existência da UE ou da UCL. Contudo, essa identidade tem nelas duas âncoras que ajudam no processo de identificação do caráter europeu que se verifica em todo o continente.

Finalmente, pode-se concluir, alcançando-se o objetivo principal, que a UCL é resultado de todo um contexto que favoreceu o surgimento e consolidação de uma identidade supranacional europeia. Não é a causa principal, trata-se de uma componente de todo um contexto convergente no

sentido do desenvolvimento da referida identidade. A competição vem atuando como símbolo da referida identidade supranacional. Houve mudanças. Mas nem mesmo o Brexit conseguiu diminuir, até os dias atuais, a importância da UEFA Champions League para o continente.

5. Referências

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IV.

CORPO-DIAGONAL

DAIGONAL-BODY

Autonomy in the Context of Decision-Making Dilemmas

Introduction

An increasing number of empirical studies show that supporting player autonomy, as a coaching style, has many benefits, such as helping with injury prevention (Chan and Hagger, 2012; Hagger and Chatzisarantis, 2009), increasing effort and motivation, increasing communication, and improving player engagement (Conroy and Coatsworth, 2007; de Souza and Oslin, 2008; Occhino, Mallett, Rynne, and Carlisle, 2014).

Supporting autonomy means moving away from viewing players as rule followers, to viewing them as rule setters. It means moving away from structuring player performance by abundant instructions, to a view where players make autonomous individual and collective decisions to achieve their goals. These moves take away frameworks which structure performance and provide a point of reference for performance evaluation.

As such, supporting player autonomy creates new concerns and challenges. The concern is that supporting autonomy may lead to chaos (Ancona and Isaacs, 2019; Clark, 2019). The challenge is that the apparent permissiveness associated with supporting autonomy complicates performance evaluation (Reeve, 2009): how can players' performance be evaluated while they are permitted to make autonomous decisions?

Our aim here is to show that when we understand the notion of autonomy correctly, it becomes clear that supporting player autonomy does not necessarily lead to chaos or create problems for player evaluation. We discuss the advantages of autonomy-supporting programs particularly in the context of decision-making dilemmas which athletes frequently face.

Two dimensions of performance evaluation: moral and athletic

A range of objectives and values at the individual, team, club, and societal levels motivate the performance of professional athletes. These objectives and values include things such as scoring the most number of goals, winning tournaments, promoting a fair and inclusive culture, promoting

social health, aesthetic experiences, fan enjoyment, and financial and economic benefits. Here we focus on two important types of incentives which motivate athletes' performance: moral and athletic.

Moral motivations pertain to the impacts of individuals' behaviours on the rights and wellbeing of others and themselves. Examples of morally harmful or morally positive behaviours are: harassing a player when they make a mistake, disrespecting the referee, promoting gender equality, or enforcing a heat policy.

Athletic motivations are defined here in a narrow sense as those which are purely about achieving athletic success. These motivations are linked to performance objectives, such as winning the match or achieving a personal record. Athletic motivations are not morally relevant. This does not mean that they are *immoral* (i.e., morally wrong), rather that they are *morally neutral*. What motivates a soccer goalkeeper's decision to jump to the right or the left to attempt to save a penalty shot is often a purely athletic concern. Saving a penalty shot results in an athletic advantage for the goalkeeper and for their team.

Athletic and moral objectives and values are also used for evaluating players' performance. A player who is expected or aims to score the most number of goals in a season will receive a positive evaluation in relation to this objective if they score more goals than other players. A player who wants to act as a role model will receive a negative evaluation in relation to this value if they show disrespectful behaviour towards opponents.

Win-at-what-cost dilemmas and performance dilemmas

Most actions and decisions can be evaluated from both moral and athletic perspectives. When both evaluations are taken into account, sometimes moral values and athletic objectives require the same behaviours to be performed. For example, respecting officials is a positive behaviour from both moral and athletic points of view. Disrespecting officials is not only morally wrong, it can also lead to penalties, which would work against the athletic objective of winning.

However, sometimes moral values and athletic objectives demand different behaviours, and create *win-at-what-cost dilemmas*. Win-at-what-cost dilemmas involve conflicts between the moral codes of the sport and athletic objectives. From an athletic standpoint, a certain behaviour can increase the chance of superior performance (e.g., winning), but from the perspective of the moral codes of the sport, that behaviour may be dubious or blatantly wrong. The use of banned drugs or the use of sandpaper in a game of cricket to roughen one side of the ball are examples of cases in which the moral codes of the sport and athletic objectives conflict, and create win-at-what-cost dilemmas.

Nevertheless, dilemmas are not always created between moral codes on one side and athletic excellence on the other side. It is possible that athletic objectives conflict with each other and create *performance dilemmas*. When a soccer team is about to lose a match by one goal and the team has won a corner kick, the goalkeeper can decide whether they want to move forward into the opposition team's 18-yard box to assist the team to score, or to stay back and make sure the team does not concede another goal. The offensive and defensive objectives create a performance dilemma for the goalkeeper in that promoting one objective can jeopardize the achievement of the other.

Athletic evaluation of performance

Athletic evaluations of actions and decisions are achieved through assessing their impacts on the higher order performance objectives of the team. At the professional level, one of the most important objectives is winning. To make the win more likely, coaches design and use strategies and tactics to define the role of players, or in other words, "impose" specific functions on players (Soltanzadeh and Mooney, 2018). "Imposed functions" restrict players' autonomy. They are in the form of instructions which athletes are expected to follow. But these instructions provide a framework against which player performance can be evaluated. If players' performance behaviours match the instructions, they will be praised, and if they deviate from the instructions, they can be subject to criticism.

However, performance evaluation becomes less straightforward when players make autonomous decisions. This is because imposed functions are not there to be utilized for the sake of performance evaluation. Autonomous decision making is required in situations where instructions are removed, or are insufficient, unclear, or contradictory. In such cases, players need to interpret their function (Soltanzadeh and Mooney, 2018). For example, a player's function may be predominantly shaped by marking an opposition player. But suddenly the player may find themselves faced with a loose ball and an empty space forward. Here the existing instructions may be insufficient or unclear. So the player needs to interpret their function and make decisions that can be beneficial for the team. They need to decide whether to continue to mark their player or move forward to launch an attack.

The degree to which a player is required to utilise "interpreted functions" depends also on the dynamics of the sports code. American football (NFL), for instance, can be more instruction-based compared to Australian rules football (AFL) because the NFL is less dynamic and players' movements are more linear. AFL players more frequently need to interpret their functions, because the player distribution on the field and the ball movement are much more complex and varied

compared to the NFL. As such, AFL players are more likely to face situations not covered by instructions. Another factor is the pool of players. NFL teams have a larger pool of players, which allows them to have highly specialized positional and tactical functions. The smaller player pool of AFL teams means there will be fewer specialized players, and the existing players need to be more rounded. For example, every AFL player needs to have the skill to pass the ball, but very few NFL players need to have such a skill.

Interpreted functions are evaluated in a similar way to imposed functions; namely, in relation to their effectiveness and contextual efficiency to bring about team objectives. The question is whether the decision making was justified and whether it helped the team to achieve its objectives. In justifying and evaluating an action, the achievement of lower order objectives can be abandoned if the action can directly fulfill a higher order objective. In the previous example of the defensive soccer player who faces a loose ball and an empty space forward, if the situation is assessed to be low risk, it can be justified for the player to let go of their defensive role and instead launch an attack to achieve the higher order objective of creating chances and scoring.

In reality, many situations require players to interpret their functions. Even when abundant instructions are given, some unpredicted situations will lead to performance dilemmas, requiring players to make independent decisions. But how can players make better decisions when they face performance dilemmas? And what should coaches and managers do to prepare players for independent decision making in face of such dilemmas? We believe that supporting player autonomy is crucial for addressing decision-making dilemmas. To substantiate this claim, we need to develop a working definition of autonomy.

Autonomy and autonomy-supporting programs

Autonomy is one of the most fundamental concepts in moral philosophy. It can be used to explain the difference between humans and other animal species, and it is argued to be a necessary condition for bearing rights and responsibilities (Kant, 1788; Griffin, 2009). Autonomy refers to self-regulation and self-determination, and is defined as the ability to comprehend and react to reasons (Li, 2007; Mackenzie, 2008; Wolf, 1990).

Comprehension and (re-)action are two key concepts in the definition of autonomy. Hence, two conditions need to be met for an individual to be able to self-regulate, or in other words, be autonomous. The first condition is freedom and the ability to act, and the second is the comprehension of reasons that can motivate actions.

The first condition requires the autonomous person to be free from external constraints and restrictions. Restrictions can be as tight as physically preventing a person from moving around, or

as loose as asking them to follow a set of instructions. The more (strict) restrictions posed on a person, the less free that person will be.

Players are always restricted by the rules that define the sport in which they participate. A basketball game, for example, has rules that govern the game and constrain the movements of basketball players. These rules are constitutive of the game and make it a game of basketball, rather than, say, a game of football (Searle, 1995). However, coaches often impose additional restrictions on players. These restrictions are often communicated through direct instructions. They constitute players' "positional" and "tactical" functions (Soltanzadeh and Mooney, 2018), and specify players' performance duties, such as marking an opposition player.

The first condition of autonomy is met when coaches minimize players' reliance on imposed functions. This can be done by minimizing direct instructions in order to create an environment for players to rely on their interpreted functions. The fewer the number of direct instructions, the more autonomy can be promoted, and the more players will need to rely on their interpreted functions. This method of supporting autonomy was famously utilised by Steve Kerr during the Golden State Warriors' match against the Phoenix Suns in the 2017-18 NBA season, where Kerr took a backseat and allowed his players to handle coaching duties themselves.

However, promoting autonomy should not be understood merely as minimizing constraints and endorsing players' independent decisions. The second condition also needs to be met for actions to be meaningfully autonomous. The second condition requires individuals to be reflective of higher order goals and reasons which justify their actions. Individuals can fully practice their autonomy if they understand reasons which make an action permissible or necessary. Autonomy underpins individual self-governance. For an individual to govern themselves and their behaviour, in addition to being free from constraints, they need to understand the choices which they make.

The second condition of autonomy can be harder to achieve than the first one. The ability to reflect and reason are qualities which players cannot obtain overnight. To be autonomous, players need to develop situational awareness and understand their team objectives and their role in relation to those objectives. Promoting player autonomy in this sense requires structure, education, and engagement, which are essential qualities for becoming better decision-makers (Sheldon and Watson, 2011).

The second condition of autonomy, therefore, can be used to respond to the concern that supporting autonomy may lead to randomness and chaos. An autonomous behaviour, similar to a random behaviour, requires freedom from restraints. However, an unrestrained behaviour can lead to chaos when players do not have a sufficient understanding of *why* they should be performing one action rather than another. The second condition of autonomy prevents this conclusion. Truly autonomous players are equipped with conceptual frameworks for comprehension of individual

functions and team objectives. Such frameworks make them better decision makers in situations when direct instructions are removed, or are insufficient, unclear, or contradictory, as is the case with performance dilemmas. Therefore, supporting player autonomy is crucial for addressing performance dilemmas.

Different educational methods can be used to improve players' understanding of the game, and make them more reflective of the reasons which justify performance behaviours. It is important to accept decision-making errors and use "teachable moments" for open and non-judgmental discussions (Camire, Forneris, Trudel, and Bernard, 2011; Vella, Oades, and Crowe, 2011). Other recommendations include process-focused praises, such as verbal encouragement (Coatsworth and Conroy, 2009), facilitating reflective practice, and showing interest for, and actively seeking, players' inputs by encouraging them to share their ideas during video analysis sessions (Whitehead, Copley, Huntley, Miles, Quayle, and Knowles, 2016). Using small sided conditioned games is also shown to promote player autonomy and a player-centred coaching style (Souza and Oslin, 2008). These games recreate specific game conditions and ask players to engage in problem solving activities to play out specific tactics. They promote the development of tactical knowledge and advance the decision-making abilities of players (*ibid.*).

Any educational method to support autonomy can be accompanied by what is known as "scaffolding". Scaffolding consists of the coach controlling those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner's capacity, thus permitting them to concentrate on elements that are within their reach (Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1976). In other words, scaffolding requires starting from activities which are highly regulated and then removing constraints step by step, based on the learners' comprehension level. Each scaffolded activity, therefore, serves two purposes: a short term goal of solving the challenge presented in the activity, and a long term goal of providing the basis for autonomous learning of the individual (Holton and Clarke, 2007).

In summary, many situations during a game require players to rely on their interpreted functions. To help athletes become better decision makers, their autonomy needs to be supported. Autonomy requires freedom as well as understanding reasons which justify actions. Any autonomy-supporting program requires reducing constraints and educating players about individual functions and team objectives so that they can understand the reasons for their own actions.

Moral evaluation of performance

So far our discussions have been focused on athletic behaviours and the importance of supporting autonomy to address performance dilemmas. For the rest of this paper, we expand this conclusion to moral evaluations of behaviour.

What sources of moral judgment can be used to evaluate athletes' behaviour? When we say an athlete has done something wrong or praiseworthy, what frameworks can we use to justify this judgment? Overall, there are three main sources of moral evaluation of athletes' behaviour: the moral codes of the sport, universal ethical theories, and cultural norms and values.

The moral codes of the sport are rules that organizational and regulatory bodies design and expect all athletes and coaches to follow. These codes are designed to make the competition fair, protect athletes' health and wellbeing, and promote respectful and professional relationships. These codes often have legal and disciplinary components to them. Violating any of the rules can result in financial penalties, if not also in (temporary) ban, for the violators.

Penalties, however, can be applied only if the regulatory bodies find evidence of the violations. The disciplinary component of the moral codes is of no use in guiding athletes to act morally if athletes manage to conceal their violations from regulatory authorities. Although winning by cheating is considered to be wrong, this line of reasoning has led to many violations, such as those in cycling in the 1990's and 2000's, those by the Russian athletes prior to the 2016 summer Olympics, the ball tampering activities in cricket, and diving in association football. This raises the question that if one can cheat, keep it concealed, and win, why should one not do so?

Intuitively, if an athlete wins by cheating without being caught, they still have not acted morally. So, there must be other moral frameworks which can justify why winning by cheating is wrong. Two other main sources of moral judgments include ethical theories (e.g., consequentialism, deontology, virtue ethics, contractualism) and cultural norms and values. Unlike moral codes of the sport, ethical theories and cultural norms and values do not have disciplinary legal components to them. As such, they may be perceived as less action-guiding as the moral codes of the sport.

Ethical theories, as products of philosophers' observations, thought experiments, and logical arguments, are normatively independent of any sport, although some have argued that players have moral obligations to follow the rules of the sport (Fraleigh, 1982; McFee, 2004). Nonetheless, the contents of ethical principles are sport-neutral. For example, according to ethical theories, harming others is morally wrong. The fact that harm may be done during conventional contact sports does not make it less wrong - although some other morally relevant factors (for example, players' (implicit) consent to be exposed to a level of harm as a result of playing the sport) may outweigh the wrongness of some harmful actions and make them permissible.

Cultural norms and values are unwritten rules which can guide athletes' actions and be used to morally evaluate their performance (Loland, 2002). In road cycling, for example, it is implicitly considered unfair for the leading group to 'attack' and create a gap when a number of cyclists had to stop due to a crash. This value of respect shapes cyclists' performance behaviours and can be used to morally evaluate their decision and actions. During stage 19 of the 2015 Tour de France, for

example, a number of critics and cyclists, including the leader of the general classification, Chris Froome, appealed to these unwritten norms to criticize Vincenzo Nibali for launching an attack when Froome had to briefly stop due to a mechanical issue.

Unlike ethical theories, cultural norms and values are not necessarily universal. Each society, each sport, and each team has its own values and promotes some virtues over others. Some sports have a divergence between the rules of the game and acceptable standards of fair play such as professional fouls towards the end of a basketball match as an accepted part of the game (Papineau, 2017), in contrast to professional fouls in Rugby League which are more heavily penalised. Moreover, the culture that is promoted in one league may be different from another league, even if they both play the same sport. For example, if a basketballer in the NBA displayed flamboyant and confident attitudes towards their performance, they may be seen as honest and acutely aware of their talents. But if the same behaviour was seen in the NBL in Australia, the public may brand that behaviour as shameless.

Cultural norms and values make up a separate source of moral judgments compared to the moral codes of the sport and universal ethical theories. Cultural values are not always reducible to, and may contradict universal ethical theories (Morgan, 1994). In extreme cases, practices which shape cultural norms may also contradict legal codes. This can happen when coaches use objectionable attitudes which can create problematic cultures within a team. The culture of sexism and abuse set by the trainers of the Dutch national gymnastics women's team which resulted in the suspension of the coaches is an example of such conflicts.

Win-at-what-cost dilemmas

Win-at-what-cost dilemmas refer to situations which involve a clash between moral codes of the sport and performance objectives. Examples of win-at-what-cost dilemmas include deciding between following the rules of the sport and using unfair methods to gain athletic advantage. The unfair methods may be in different forms, such as using performance enhancing drugs, banned equipment (such as, using sandpaper on a cricket ball), or deceiving the referee (for example, by touching the ball with one's hands in a game of association football).

In addition to the moral codes of the sport, other sources of moral judgment can also clash with the urge to win. Consider universal ethical theories. Ethical principles require individuals to not inflict harm on others. However, players appeal to tactical fouls in order to prevent the opposition from scoring. Some fouls are dangerous and put the opposition at great long-term injury risk; yet at the same time, they may be the only way of stopping the opposition. Despite the fact that from the perspective of the game rules, in some situations it makes sense to commit the foul to

one's advantage, an ethicist may argue otherwise. It can be argued that the foul is morally wrong due to the great risk that it imposes on the opposition player⁴⁶. The risk can impact the player's wellbeing beyond the context of the professional sport. Furthermore, social norms and values may also forbid a player from committing a dangerous foul. A team culture may promote the value of respect. Putting the opposition at great risk of harm is a disrespectful behaviour. Depending on how strong the culture of respect runs within a team, a player may be discouraged from committing the foul.

It is important to note that such conflicts between athletic objectives and moral values are not 'rare anomalies'. When we become aware of different sources of moral evaluation of players and the impacts which rules, tactics, equipment, conditions, or outfits can have on performance objectives, we realize that such ethical issues are prevalent in sports.

Moreover, although win-at-what-cost dilemmas often concern athletes, other relevant social groups, such as, coaches, officials, and organizers can all be involved in conflicts between the athletic performance, rules of the game, ethical theories, and cultural norms and values. Consider these tennis-related examples taken from one season only. In 2018, the French Tennis Federation announced that Serena Williams could not compete in her 2018 catsuit attire at the French Open in the future as it "disrespects" the sport and the tournament. During the 2018 US Open, while some male players benefited from taking their shirts off on the court to cool down in between the sets, the French female tennis player, Alize Cornet was given a code violation for changing her back-to-front top on the court. In the same tournament, while Nick Kyrgios was a set and a break down in his second round match, the chair umpire climbed down his seat to have a one on one conversation with Kyrgios. Kyrgios went on to win that match, but the umpire's act, according to some, was an encouragement talk.

Considering the ubiquity and the complexity of win-at-what-cost dilemmas, particularly from athletes' perspectives, what approaches can be taken to address these dilemmas? In general, two main approaches can be adopted to address win-at-what-cost dilemmas: one relies on restricting athletes' autonomy and the other on supporting it. Before examining these two approaches, some parallels need to be drawn between athletic and moral evaluations of performance.

⁴⁶While this topic is outside the scope of this paper, it should be acknowledged that the ethics of tactical fouls has been discussed by a number of authors, and is now considered as an established research question in the ethical discussions of professional sports. See for example (Fraleigh, 1982) for arguments against tactical fouls, and (Simon, 2005) for a summary of different positions and in defence of tactical fouls at least in some situations.

Parallels between athletic and moral evaluations of performance

Parallels can be drawn between different sources of moral and athletic evaluations from the perspective of their impacts on player autonomy. The impact of the moral codes of the sport on players' moral decision making is similar to the impact of coaches' tactical instructions on guiding players' athletic decision making. Moral codes of the sport, similar to coaches' tactical instructions, are explicitly expressed and imposed on athletes by higher authorities. They both restrict player autonomy as they impact the first condition of autonomy, namely, freedom from external constraints and restrictions. The potential penalties of violating codes of the sport or coaches' instructions do not leave any decision-making room for players.

On the other hand, the impact of ethical theories and cultural norms and values on players' moral decision making is similar to the impact of educational programs on their athletic decision making. As discussed, educational programs can enrich players' understanding of athletic reasons and help them become better decision makers at times when coaches' direct instructions are absent or insufficient. Similarly, educational programs in ethical theories and cultural values can enrich players' moral understanding and help them become better decision makers at times when the moral codes of the sport are absent or insufficient. Athletic and moral educational programs both support player autonomy through promoting the second condition of autonomy: they help players comprehend reasons which can justify performance and moral decisions.

Two approaches to address win-at-what-cost dilemmas

The first approach to address win-at-what-cost dilemmas highlights the importance of following rules and regulations. This is done by making sure that athletes are aware of what is acceptable and what is prohibited according to the rules. Further instructions can clarify ambiguities which may result from clashes between the moral codes of the sport and athletic objectives, and specify the guidelines which athletes are expected to follow. To reinforce this approach, disciplinary measures can also be taken against violators, so that potential penalties can work as an additional deterrent to breaking the rules.

While highlighting legal and regulatory obligations is useful for shaping athletes' behaviour, this approach has a number of shortcomings and problems. Firstly, the sole emphasis on following rules and regulations can lead to "legalism". Legalism is the idea which equates morally acceptable behaviour with compliance with rules and regulations. According to legalism, all one needs to do to behave morally is to stay legally protected. However, there are two ways to protect oneself from

legal charges: one is actually acting within the rules, and the other is violating the rules, yet making sure that one does not get caught for violating the rules. If in our decision making we only focus on legal protection, then the second option is as defensible as the first. In other words, in a legalistic framework, it is justified if we design methods, technologies, and institutions to violate the rules, yet keep our activities secret to protect ourselves from legal charges.

This line of reasoning is against our moral intuitions as it neglects other sources of moral evaluation. As mentioned earlier, ethical theories and cultural norms and values can also be used to evaluate an individual's decision making and behaviour. The legalistic framework reduces morality to law and legal protection and ignores others. This itself creates a few problems. First, it entails that there is nothing wrong with winning by cheating if one can keep it concealed or use some mechanisms to convince others that they did not do anything wrong. Second, it assumes that rules and regulations are always perfect. However, there are many examples of existing rules which may be morally objectionable. Consider the first tennis example described in the previous section. The French Open organizers made a rule to ban catsuits during tennis tournaments, like the one worn by Serena Williams in 2018. However, one can argue that players should be allowed to wear clothes which do not give them unfair competitive advantages, yet help them to perform their best. Moreover, it can be argued that the catsuit can reduce the risk of clot formation, which can be a genuine medical concern during the postpartum period.

Additionally, reducing morality to rules and regulations cannot explain changes which are often made to regulations and the moral codes of the sport. New substances are being added to, or removed from, the ban list; some forms of tackles that used to be acceptable are now considered to be too dangerous; the rules regarding acceptable equipment and suits have been prone to change; and so forth. But changes which are made to regulations and the moral codes need to themselves be justified by other sources of moral judgment. If we believe that the only source of normative judgments is what is written in the rules, we cannot justify changes which are made to rules.

Fourth, unlike what is assumed in this first approach, rules and regulations do not always make decisions transparent, as the application of rules can itself be problematic. As McFee (2004) has shown, rules can have subjective elements which can obfuscate their application and interpretation. In Australian rules football, for example, the rules around the boundary throw-in depend on what is perceived to be the intention of the last player who touches the ball before the ball bounces out of the playing field. To take advantage, players attempt to make it appear as if they did not intentionally force the ball out of bounds. This can create ambiguities on whether the umpire needs to perform a boundary throw-in or a penalty should be awarded to the opposition team.

The final objection to this approach, which addresses win-at-what-cost dilemmas by highlighting the importance of following rules and the moral codes of the sport, is a logical one.

This approach falsely assumes that regulations can be extended to cover all cases. It assumes that for each situation there can be an explicit guideline which points out to the right action. However, the idea that rules can be modified and expanded to deal with all situations is a misconception (McFee, 2004). There are an infinite number of cases which involve clashes between different objectives and values. And it is practically impossible to devise a rule for each case.

Therefore, we need to search for an alternative approach to address the win-at-what-cost dilemmas. The approach which limits players' autonomy by emphasizing rules and regulations is insufficient, if not misleading.

The alternative approach which we need to take to help individuals address the win-at-what-cost dilemmas is to support their autonomy through education. Educational programs to support individuals' autonomy in reacting to win-at-what-cost dilemmas should not be limited to reiterating the moral codes of the sport in the form of existing rules and regulations. Such educational programs would only reinforce the legalistic mindset. Instead, educational programs need to also highlight the significance of other sources of moral evaluations, such as ethical theories and cultural norms and values. In this way, individuals will comprehend the rationales behind the existing moral codes of the sport, and will be equipped with other frameworks which they can appeal to when facing decision making dilemmas.

Parallels can be drawn here again between performance dilemmas and win-at-what-cost dilemmas. Players face performance dilemmas in situations during a game where coaches' instructions are insufficient, unclear, or contradictory. These situations are bound to happen as instructions cannot cover every possible situation which can unfold during a match. Moreover, humans have a limited working memory, and when the number of instructions increases, it becomes more likely for players to forget or misremember some of them. When facing performance dilemmas, players need to interpret their function. To address performance dilemmas and to help players interpret their function, player autonomy needs to be supported through removing constraints and providing educational programs which increase their understanding of team objectives and the dynamics of the game.

Similar points can be made about win-at-what-cost dilemmas: win-at-what-cost dilemmas arise when the moral codes of the sport and athletic objectives conflict. These dilemmas are also bound to happen as many prohibited actions can lead to performance superiority. When facing win-at-what-cost dilemmas, players need to make decisions based on their understanding of moral values and athletic objectives. To address these dilemmas, we need to support individuals' autonomy through educational programs. Such programs can help athletes to make justifiable decisions in cases where the moral codes of the sport are unclear, insufficient, or in direct conflict with other norms derived from ethical theories and cultural and social values.

Conclusion

In the introduction of this paper, we outlined some concerns and challenges which are associated with supporting player autonomy. The concern is that supporting autonomy can lead to random decision making and create chaos. And the respective challenge is that autonomous decision making creates problems for performance evaluation. We are now ready to provide clear answers to these concerns and challenges.

Considering that one of the important features of autonomous actions is understanding reasons which justify actions, random decision making and chaos are more likely to happen when players have *not* practiced their autonomy and have *not* received sufficient education. In the absence of educational programs which support player autonomy through improving their knowledge of the game, players are less likely to make justifiable decisions in the face of performance and win-at-what-cost dilemmas. So, it is not the case that *supporting* autonomy leads to random decision making and creates chaos. On the contrary, performance dilemmas and win-at-what-cost dilemmas are bound to happen. If we wish for better and more educated decision making in the face of these dilemmas, then we *should* support player autonomy.

Moreover, supporting autonomy does not necessarily create a challenge for performance evaluation. In education, a link is often drawn between assessments, course outcomes, and the content. If educators, for instance, want to assess learners on their mathematical or historical knowledge, they need to provide learning opportunities for students (Bresciani, Gardener and Hikmott, 2010; Churchill, 2011). It is unreasonable to assess students' mathematical or historical knowledge without providing them with the relevant education.

Coaching is also a pedagogical activity (Jones, 2004 and 2007), and players' decisions in the face of performance dilemmas and win-at-what-cost dilemmas are similar to students' decisions in the face of mathematical or historical questions. It is unreasonable to expect players to become better decision makers in the face of performance and win-at-what-cost dilemmas without providing them with any educational program. It is also unreasonable to evaluate players' performance and hold them responsible when they never receive any form of education which can help them with decision making. Educational programs which are used to promote individuals' autonomy, therefore, lay the foundations of the evaluation of autonomous decisions made by individuals. When individuals receive education, then we can reasonably hold them accountable for their decisions.

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10. *Joe HIGGINS*

Scripts in Sport: what makes a sporting great?

1. Introduction

Jack Colback is an exceptional football player. Amongst the millions of people who participate in football worldwide, Jack is one of the few who has succeeded in playing at a professional level. Not only this, he has made 178 appearances in the English Premier League, which is often claimed to be the best football league in the world, and has even received a call-up to play for the English national team.⁴⁷

In spite of these impressive credentials, few people outside of the UK will have any idea who Jack Colback is. Indeed, even within the UK, there are many fans of the Premier League who will struggle to remember him. This is no slight on Jack's character or talent; it is simply a common occurrence for many professional sportspersons. Becoming a professional sportsperson is undoubtedly a great achievement, but it does not guarantee success in terms of renowned performances or trophies or accolades. The truth is that despite the enormous global popularity of sports such as football (along with the likes of basketball, rugby, American football, baseball, cricket and tennis), there are very few players who are talented enough to become widely admired and professionally rewarded.

The strange thing is, arguably, that some sportspersons *do* become widely admired and rewarded, so much so that they become 'household names' and, in some circumstances, secure positions as cultural icons. To achieve such levels of fame, sportspersons need to stand out from even the highest echelons of talent and statistics; that is to say, even within the rarefied world of exceptional sporting performances, there are an elite few who separate themselves from the rest as truly extraordinary. I am referring, here, to the likes of Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, Muhammed Ali, Pelé and Serena Williams – players who have such special abilities and achieve so much that they transcend the confines of their given sports and become internationally and historically renowned for their talent.

The key question is why this should be the case; that is, how do certain sportspersons so emphatically outperform others across their careers? In other words, what exactly makes a 'sporting

⁴⁷Unfortunately for Jack, he had to withdraw from the England squad after his call-up due to a calf injury.

great'?

This paper will answer this question by defending the claim that we are able to distinguish truly great sportspersons because of their unique ability to re-write 'scripts' – the scope of action possibilities – within their chosen sporting domain. The defence will unfold across four sections:

6. Firstly, reasons to reject existing accounts of sporting greatness will briefly be presented.

7. Two interconnected prerequisites to sporting greatness will then be considered:

(a). sporting 'greats' are biologically and culturally predisposed towards achieving sporting excellence. This amounts to a kind of 'sporting facticity', wherein there is congruence between the requirements of a given sport and an individual's biogenetic and socio-cultural development.

(b). a unique sense of self, in terms of (i). unusually fixated self-projection, such that all actions are undergirded by the horizon of achieving greatness within their specific sporting domain, and (ii). indefatigable self-belief, such that minor and major setbacks are sublimated into the overall projected narrative of (i). Together, (i) and (ii) manifest as a burning desire and drive for success within a given sporting field.

8. The concept of 'scripts' within sport will be elucidated, with reference to phenomenology and critical social theory.

9. The final section will expound on the manner in which scripts are re-written by sporting greats.

2. Existing Accounts of Sporting Greatness

Existing accounts of sporting genius tend to fall into one of two camps:

(I). Great sportspersons achieve an exceptional level of performance fluency through the *procedural automatisisation* of successful actions. According to this view, dominated by psychological literature, specialists in a given sport can bypass the employment of 'higher' cognitive processes whilst performing, so that they can execute complex actions without rationalising schematic needs of the action context through attentional control (Beilock and Carr, 2001), explicit following of rules (Fitts, 1964), or suppressive imagery (Beilock, Afremow, Rabe and Carr, 2001).

(II). Great sportspersons exhibit exceptional levels of desired traits such as creativity (Lacerda and Mumford, 2010; Campos, 2014), artistry (Wertz, 1985) and (rational) risk-

taking (Hopsicker, 2011). According to this view, greatness emerges through the extension of commonly held traits into new levels of successful performance.

The issue with both of these views is, primarily, a lack of clarity. For instance, with regards to (I), the importance of procedural automatising of actions is, for some, that it allows experts to relinquish taxing cognitive processing in favour of smoothly attuned embodied responses that have been cultivated through years of practice (e.g. Dreyfus (1992), Schmidt & Wrisberg (2004)). For others, the importance comes in the form of simply redirecting cognitive effort to other areas, such as picking up relevant perceptual cues (Mann, Williams, Ward and Janelle, 2007) or considering one's repertoire of problem-solving 'plays' (French and McPherson, 1999). Others, still, argue against the implication that automatising one's actions equates to automatising the cognitive processes involved in such actions. Fridland (2014), for example, claims that experts employ a kind of operative cognitive control by parsing fluid embodied motor routines into smaller segments and thereby maintaining the potential for flexibility and variation. Through this expert segmentation of automatised bodily routines, one can lithely adapt one's activity to the unique needs of present performance. Arguably, this aligns with the familiar concept of being 'in the zone' or experiencing 'flow' (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2002) whilst performing certain actions to a high standard, in the sense that one achieves adjustable bodily attunement to the needs of the action context, but one does so in a concentrated manner rather than through some form of relaxed 'mindlessness' (cf. Dreyfus, 2007).

Even through this brief survey of stances, it is evident that there is notable diversity with respect to the cognitive and bodily particulars of what exactly becomes 'automatised', and to what degree this happens, when great sportspersons perform to an exceptional level. Moreover, one could reasonably question the prior conditions that facilitate such procedural automatising – that is, are there social, physiological and/or cognitive prerequisites, and, if so, what are they – as well as the extent to which it is a unique trait as opposed to a simple spectrum-based ability that is shared from novices through to sporting greats.

With regards to (II), we find similar difficulties to the above. Specifically, there is once again an issue of vagueness in the sense that it is hard to pin down, in anything other than an arbitrary manner, exactly what is meant by 'creativity', 'artistry' or 'risk-taking'. This issue is compounded once one considers the diversity of sporting contexts; for instance, the creativity, artistry and risk-taking involved in gymnastics or synchronised swimming is surely not the same as that involved in boxing or rugby. Moreover, it is questionable whether a singular trait should be isolated as the wellspring of sporting genius, rather than several traits being exercised and combined in order to achieve success in the myriad ways that it may be required in different situations. Lastly, one may

doubt the precise manifestation of a singular sporting trait such as creativity: does it facilitate other performance traits?; does it have prerequisites?; how is it applied to the unfolding dynamics and demands of sport?

Any academic account of sporting greatness thus seems beset by ambiguity. What immediately becomes apparent from even the briefest of considerations of existing theories is that there is a tension between claiming that ‘greatness’ merely emerges as a refined culmination of skills that are possessed by all other sporting participants – what one could call a *developmental* theory of sporting greatness – and claiming that there is some kind of ‘special ingredient’ that makes one truly great – what one could call a *functional* theory of sporting greatness. In the outlines presented above, proponents of (I) tend to rely more on the former of these theories, while proponents of (II) rely more on the latter. However, neither stance provides true clarity on either the functionality of sporting greatness – that is, what a sporting great actually does to set them apart – or the development of sporting greatness – how what a sporting great does is cultivated.

What is needed is a fresh approach: one that eschews narrow focus on psychological abilities or isolated agential qualities in favour of contextual sensitivity to performance across a life history and within a given sporting domain.

3. Prerequisites to Sporting Greatness

Whilst there is no denying that sporting greats, as experts in their fields, perform psychologically in a manner that differs notably from other players (Moran, 1996; Heppe et al., 2016)⁴⁸, as well as displaying a range of important traits that others may lack (DeVenzio, 1997; Lorenz et al., 2013), it is misguided to focus on any of these too heavily. In this section, I put forward two interconnected aspects of sporting performance that are prerequisites to greatness. However, in keeping with preceding arguments, the suggestion is not that these two prerequisites are logically necessary for greatness; rather, the point is that these qualities are often overlooked and, once properly attended to, they act as premises for the claim that sporting greatness is encapsulated by the re-writing of sporting scripts (section 5).⁴⁹

Outlining these prerequisites thus not only adds a novel dimension to extant theories of sporting greatness, but also refines the debate in a contextually sensitive direction that has applicability to any performer within any sporting domain.

⁴⁸See Swann, Moran and Piggott (2015) for the view that it is often psychological idiosyncrasies that distinguish many elite athletes from other performers.

⁴⁹In other words, I am not suggesting that the account of sporting greatness presented here is the *only* way in which greatness may develop and manifest. The account does, however, capture the development and functionality of iconic ‘greats’ such as Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, Muhammed Ali, Pelé, Serena Williams and many others.

The first prerequisite is that sporting greatness harbours the biological and cultural dispositions that are needed to yield success within a given sport. Individual sports have specific physiological demands that not every person is able to meet: for example, rugby players require weight and muscularity (King, Hills and Blundell, 2005) whilst long-distance runners benefit biomechanically from thin bone structure and large aerobic capacity (Barnes and Kilding, 2015). At the same time, cultural factors can be highly relevant to the development of an individual's sporting prowess: for instance, becoming an expert skier requires the availability and means of accessing a wide range of resources, including an appropriate natural environment (i.e. ideally, one with snow); in a similar vein of reasoning, one needs space and time, along with resources, to become an expert golfer. This may initially seem like a somewhat trivial claim that borders on being tautological: there is obviously no denying that, in order to golf successfully, one needs access to the game of golf.

However, to take this trivial view would be mistaken. The notion of being biologically and culturally disposed to achieve within a sporting domain encroaches upon a key existential insight; namely, Sheets-Johnstone's (2009) concept of *existential fit*, which suggests that, phylogenetically and ontogenetically, there is harmony between one's mode of living and one's environmentally embedded physical presence. To exemplify this, consider that humans inhabit a certain 'way of life' due to unique characteristics such as bipedalism, abstract thought, genuine language and intricate social relations, all of which engender uniquely anthropic 'worlds' that further cultivate human characteristics. In other words, one's evolved physical presence permits certain modes of living and these modes of living then canalise one's evolved physical presence (ibid., p.231-232). If one suffers from severe mental or physical disability, then there is a certain sense in which one is "out of joint with life" (ibid., p.232) – a fact borne out by the difficulties such persons may face with everyday living – whilst persons who are physically and mentally able can, for the most part,⁵⁰ seamlessly live through a world that 'fits' their natural ontogenesis. When we consider the development of sportspersons, there is something akin to this occurring, wherein physiological maturation and cultural surroundings harmonise with general requirements and one's personal progress with respect to sporting performance. To assert that being biologically and culturally disposed to succeed within a given sport is a prerequisite to sporting greatness is thus more than having appropriate access to a sport; rather, it is inhabiting a specific mode of living that affords the possibilities of sporting success, with this inhabiting reciprocally cultivating the physicality, skills, thought processes and training that are necessary for sporting success in a certain domain.

Such apposite 'fit' between an individual and the requirements of a given sport can be categorised as a kind of *sporting facticity*: the largely intractable conditions of one's existence that

⁵⁰There are numerous complex questions surrounding the extent to which one's world does in fact 'fit' one's ontogenetic presence, particularly with respect to historically embedded oligarchical societies and the difficulties faced by persons of specific genders or ethnicities in many places across the globe. However, to consider such existential divergences would extend beyond the scope of this paper.

disclose the possibilities of sporting development and, ultimately, success (cf. Sartre (1962) on *facticity* in a more general sense). Elsewhere, it has been elucidated as the developmental aspect of *performative fit*, which is “the differential expression of viable ways of succeeding in a given sport” (Higgins, 2018, p.309). These viable options for success emerge only as a consequence of the congruence between, on the one hand, requisite biological and cultural conditions, and, on the other hand, agential engagement with such conditions. Importantly, for sporting greats, this congruence enables a process of positive feedback wherein an individual’s living through appropriate conditions further channels her physical and psychological development towards sporting success, which furthers the individual’s desire to engage with appropriate conditions, and so on. Throughout the trajectory of a sporting great’s life, one will therefore find a mutually reinforcing harmony between circumstances, opportunities, choices and the demands of a given sport.

Of course, such ‘harmony’ may not always be one of unchallenged agreeability: it is likely that certain biological and/or cultural obstacles will need to be conquered in order for true greatness to be reached. For example, the likes of Diego Maradona, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo all had to develop through relatively impoverished backgrounds and slight physical statures in order to become superb footballers. Similarly, Usain Bolt had to overcome his inability to burst out of starting blocks with the same dynamism as his competitors due to his unusual height (for a sprinter). From a broad cultural perspective, Tiger Woods had to face racial discrimination in his journey to the pinnacle of golf and, from a sporting cultural perspective, Roger Federer had to overcome the prominent serve & volley tactics of competitors in order to prove that baseline play could be more successful. The point is that each of these sportspersons became great, in part, *because of* these obstacles, rather than in spite of them. This exemplifies the idea that their individual trajectories ‘fit’ the demands that their respective sports required in order for them to achieve greatness.

With this notion of channelling adversity, as an aspect of sporting facticity, in order to succeed, one is brought to the cusp of the second prerequisite of sporting greatness. This second prerequisite, which is latent throughout the preceding discussion, is the notion that although certain persons are potentiated for greatness through conditions of sporting facticity, they must also act appropriately on these conditions so as to initiate the kind of mutually reinforcing positive feedback that is mentioned above. Specifically, sporting greats must have unusually fixated self-projection and the self-belief to continue to act on this self-projection at all times.

With respect to the former quality, consider that each and every act in daily life belongs to a phenomenological “totality of involvements” (Heidegger, 1962, p.231). What is meant by this is that the everyday world is encountered as structured by a conceptually prior network of meaning that tapers towards a horizon of intelligibility (Dreyfus, 1992). So, for example, one may hit a tennis

ball *with* a tennis racquet, *within* the context of a tennis match, *in order to* win a point, which aims *toward* winning the match, *for the sake of* being a successful tennis player (cf. Wheeler, 2005, p.147). This illustrates how even a mundane sporting act engenders an entire network of meaningful relations, with the italicised phrases representing the referential links that are, generally, brought forth implicitly. More importantly, every act implicates a referential link towards some form of self-projection, such as '*for the sake of* being a successful tennis player' in the above description. No matter what the situation, every action entails a relation to being *for-the-sake-of*- 'x', where 'x' is some form of self-projection, such as *for-the-sake-of-being-a-professional*, *-a-partner*, *-a-parent*, *-a-friend*, *-a-woman*, *-a-man*, or *-a-good-person*. For sporting greats, I believe that this self-projection is unusually fixated; that is, whereas most people may act in reference to numerous forms of self-projection, sporting greats envelop almost all life events in the conceptual structure of being *for-the-sake-of-being-a-successful-sportsperson* (within whatever sporting domain is relevant). In other words, for the sporting great, almost every decision and action is filtered through the lens of meaning derived from one's own ambition. Considering the wide scope of everyday activities throughout the course of a life-time, this will frequently be an implicit process, but one that is a conceptual ballast for a sporting great's unfolding existence.

Naturally, as noted earlier, such fixated self-projection will not be without obstacles, hence the complementary claim that sporting greats harbour indefatigable self-belief. This self-belief allows for minor and major setbacks to be sublimated into the overall projected narrative of achieving success in a given sporting domain. Think, for instance, of the dedication to training, tactical analyses, commitment to rehabilitation from injury and personal sacrifices that sporting greats almost unanimously undertake at some point in their lives, with this often accompanied by awareness of how such actions will manifest within the narrative of one's career. Of course, it is not *only* sporting greats that make such choices – even some amateur players may have similar ambition and dedication, along with making similar sacrifices – nor is it a straightforward endorsement of the need for mental toughness (Sheard, 2010) in order to achieve sporting greatness. Rather, the notion of self-belief-motivated self-projection only carries theoretical weight when properly contextualised alongside the prior prerequisite of appropriate sporting facticity. It is through the connection of the two prerequisites that robust groundwork is laid for sporting greatness to be achieved.

4. What is a 'Sporting Script'?

In order for the aforementioned prerequisites to occupy a place of deeper theoretical meaning, one must appreciate how they act as premises for the re-writing of 'sporting scripts'. By 'sporting scripts', I am referring to the unwritten 'rules' of a sport that are implicitly followed from both practical and psychological perspectives. These 'rules' encompass sportsmanlike conduct, physical routines and practices, and established tactics. To give just a few simple examples:

- *sportsmanlike conduct*: in tennis, table tennis, volleyball and badminton, it is not against formal rules to perform off-putting movements whilst waiting to receive an opponent's serve. However, to do so would go against general adherence to positive sportsmanship. Similarly, there is no official ruling in many sports that one should shake hands with one's opponent at the beginning or end of a match, yet players typically extend such cordiality to one another even within great rivalries.

- *physical routines and practices*: footballers rarely use their thigh when playing, despite it being an easy and effective way to cushion, 'trap' or pass a ball. Tennis players rarely serve underarm, even though it can be a useful means of catching one's opponent off-guard. In track races, athletes rarely run 'from the front', even though this can be a powerful approach to racing. There are tactical explanations for each of these, but the point is that the overwhelming majority of players rarely consider such explanations; rather, they implicitly follow the routines and practices that dominate each sport. In other words, there are specific styles of play that are entrenched within each sport and which are fulfilled by almost all players without any awareness that alternatives are viable – perhaps even preferable – in specific situations.

- *established tactics*: in keeping with the above, there are also tactical styles that dominate each sport at any given time. Serve & volley play in tennis throughout the 1990s would be one such example, as would the use of a defensive sweeper in football throughout much of the 1960s and 1970s. Nowadays, 'baseline tactics' are favoured in tennis and the use of an attacking 'front three' is the favoured formation in football. Yet again, the point is that most players (and coaches) adhere to these styles without considering the fact that some other tactical approach may benefit them or their team.

Importantly, the implicit nature of the above examples extends to their underlying cognitive processes: as intimated, it is not just that sportspersons abide by general styles of plays, they

generally do so without even conceiving of alternatives. Cognition and accompanying actions are encapsulated by ‘ways of playing’ that are deeply entrenched within each sport, channelling performances down typical avenues. Moreover, the above are simple sporting examples of a phenomenon that extends across normal life, which is to say that quotidian behaviour, along with underlying cognitive processes, generally occurs on ‘scripted’ lines.

Support for this claim can be drawn from both phenomenology and social critical theory. Phenomenologically, it is common to refer to the presence of pre-existing social structures, in the form of institutions and social norms that pervade and condition human behaviour (Dreyfus, 1992; Giddens, 1976; Heidegger, 1962; Steiner & Stewart, 2009). Consequent to the existence of such structures, humans can be said to be *heteronomous*, tacitly abiding by predominantly ‘external’ norms – that is, norms that are generated and maintained through communal interactions, rather than within the brain of any single individual – that elevate behaviour from mere physical movements to actions with attached social meaning and responsibilities (Steiner & Stewart, 2009, p.529). Heteronomy of this kind does not just normatively condition behaviour in the form of constraining conditions, but is also the resource for encountering new action possibilities, in that conformist or iconoclastic behaviours alike depend on engagement with the social structures of involved parties. Heteronomy is thus seen as an extension of “a conception of autonomy that is dependent on various figures of otherness” (Kaplan, 2003, p.113), in virtue of the world appearing as possibilities or conditions that are enveloped in an immersing network of self-and-other-generated normative structures.

Luhmann (2012) and Steiner & Stewart (2009) describe human language as an example of such heteronomous structuring, in that “[e]ach of us can only actually engage in the activity of speaking because there is “always already” the normative social structure of a shared “language”” (Steiner & Stewart, 2009, p.533). Language is thus not a ‘social tool’ purely in virtue of allowing communication, but also in the sense that it is generated and maintained by agential communities in a manner that is specific to them and largely independent of any isolated individual. Analogous to this use of language, but less obvious in its manifestation, Dreyfus (1992) describes how there are normative structures conditioning how far individuals stand apart from one another during conversations. In North Africa, for example, distance-standing practices result in individuals generally standing closer together than people do across Scandinavia (*ibid.*, p.18). This is clearly not something that is deliberated about under normal conditions; rather, it is due to implicit conforming to norms that modulate the appropriate distance to stand from someone. And these norms are specifically moulded across every circumstance, being relevant to culture and to the persons involved (so that, for instance, it is in general normatively appropriate to stand closer to a lover than to a stranger). As further consolidation, consider that, in most Western countries, a greeting between

friends will perhaps involve a hug, handshake or kiss, as this is what is expected due to the cultural embeddedness in normative structures of greeting practices. In certain Arab social circles, on the other hand, an amiable greeting may involve one individual sniffing another (Wheeler, 2005). Practices can thus vary vastly both within and across cultures, but the uniting factor is that they are always relative to some enveloping normative structure.

In a manner that maintains consistency with these views, Haslanger (2020) argues that everyday navigation of the social world requires individuals to “already participate [in] forms of interaction that enable us to make plausible interpretive hypotheses about others” (p.11). Her social critique contends that there is reciprocity between cultural creation and “mindshaping” (Zawidzki, 2013), which is the cultural canalisation of individual cognition so that agents display similar behaviours in similar situations (Haslanger 2020). Individuals generate and maintain social structures, which, simultaneously, constitute individual cognition and agency. In this way, humans are moulded to think and behave in certain ways within certain circumstances, thereby producing ‘scripts’ through which life manifests.

As stated earlier, this view incorporates the sporting world: each sport has ‘scripts’ that mould individual thoughts and actions, with these actions reciprocally generating and moulding scripts.

5. Sporting Greats and the Re-writing of Scripts

The reciprocal relationship between individual actions and canalising cultural ‘scripts’ is typically one of positive reinforcement: individuals implicitly adhere to scripted practices, routines, tactics and plays, with such adherence further embedding the proliferation of (and social adherence to) the recited scripts.⁵¹ As stated at the outset, the central claim of this paper is that sporting greats stand apart from others in virtue of ‘re-writing’ sporting scripts. This re-writing leads to the performance of unpredictable actions that surprise and amaze opponents, pundits and fans in such a way that all those interested in a sport re-envisage how it can be played.

Before outlining this process of re-writing scripts, two potential caveats need to be swiftly addressed. Firstly, the claim is neither that re-writing scripts simply amounts to creativity, nor that sporting greats are the only persons who ever act outside of the scope of typical practices, routines, tactics and plays within a given sport. As we will see shortly, the uniqueness of sporting greatness

⁵¹In football, for example, a full-back defending against a left-winger who is right-footed will follow the ‘script’ of positioning herself such that the winger is forced ‘down the line’, rather than being able to cut inside onto his favoured foot. In tennis, players ubiquitously hit second serves with less power and more topspin ‘kick’ than first serves as this provides much greater margin for error. In cycling, riders wanting to conserve energy will jostle for more central positions in the peloton as the air resistance is significantly diminished (Blocken et al., 2018). As noted, such ‘scripts’ are generally followed by well-trained sportspersons in a habitual manner without any deliberative consideration of alternatives.

lies in purposefully reconceptualising the very parameters within which a sport unfolds, relying, in part, on the prerequisites of sporting facticity and fixated self-projection (see section 3). Secondly, the re-writing of sporting scripts inevitably also takes place in a gradual manner through technological, organisational and social innovations (Tjønndal, 2018), but these innovations occur at the cultural level of ‘scripts’, rather than an individual transformation of possibilities that permeates culture.

For sporting greats, there is a *transcendent* quality to performances, whereas all other persons predominantly adhere to structural constraints. Consider Merleau-Ponty’s description of subjectivity: “I am a psychological and historical structure, and have received, with existence, a manner of existing, a style. All my actions and thoughts stand in relation to this structure” (2013, p.529). Whilst relation to such structure is a necessary condition of existence, sporting greats do not implicitly conform to this pre-existing structure as other do. Instead, they transcend the given ‘style of existence’, not only fashioning their *own* form of action from this socio-cognitive-historical bedrock of sporting scripts, but, in doing so, altering the structural bedrock that others engage with.

Some examples can help to punctuate this claim. Think, for instance, of how Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo are continually re-shaping what is statistically possible within the career of a professional footballer, or the manner in which these two players have risen to such prominence that they have had entire teams organised simply to get the best out of them individually (with this latter point also applying to greats such as Pelé and Maradona, and Jordan and James in basketball). In tennis, Roger Federer is largely responsible for transforming the standard mode of play from serve & volley tactics to baseline play, and he is also responsible for bringing to prominence new shot options such as the ‘tweener’ or ‘sneak attack by Roger (SABR)’. Before Federer’s existence, few persons would have conceived of, let alone executed, such plays as viable tennis practices (see Higgins (2018) for more on this). To give another tennis example that incorporates wider sporting context, Serena Williams has re-written common expectations regarding how often one needs to play in tournaments in order to still be ‘match fit’ enough to succeed. In each case, there is a moulding of hitherto unarticulated possibilities such that the scope of viable (contextualised) performance actions is transformed. And sporting greats only access and create such sporting viability due to the combination of their sporting facticity and self-projection with standard characteristics of sporting professionalism (e.g. expert tactical understanding, physical prowess, determination, creativity, etc.).

In general, then, distinguishing sporting greats relies on the manner in which they transcend the normative structures of their sport in order to cultivate new possibilities for action. This may be done through specific sporting acts, such as Federer’s use of the ‘tweener’ or ‘SABR’ (or Johan

Cruyff's 'turn', Dick Fosbury's 'flop', or Simone Bile's crouched double salto backwards with triple screw), or a career-wide accumulation of previously unreached statistics. In either case, there is a disruption of the flow of scripted actions, with sporting greats creating junctures at which new openings for behaviour enter the 'collective consciousness' of all those considered with a sport.

Importantly, such new possibilities for action must be *viable*, in the sense that they encapsulate sporting success, and *purposeful*, in that the performed action(s) must be intended as such (and therefore not a mere 'fluke'). Moreover, the re-writing of scripts will carry more force if incorporated into career-wide *consistency* of exceptional performance, which necessitates the prerequisites discussed in section 3. This brings career longevity to the fore: the more frequently that a person redefines sporting possibilities with moments of brilliance, the greater the importance that is attached to this person's every sporting act. If, for instance, an individual continually performs acts of exceptionalness that achieve sporting success, as is the case with iconic greats such as Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, Muhammed Ali, Pelé, Federer and Serena Williams, then the ongoing actions of these persons come to shape the very context of a sport itself – of what is possible in a given situation or how and to what extent norms can be stretched or changed. To continue with the metaphor of scripts, one could say that sporting greats become the authors of a sport's contextual history in terms of how it is played.

6. Conclusion: greatness unmasked

To be 'great', then, is not to simply be an exceptional expert, nor is it to possess some magical quality. Rather, it is a contextually cultivated mode of sporting existence, ambitiously projecting oneself into realms of greatness from the backdrop of one's biophysical and social environment, and subsequently realising this greatness through parametrical transformation of the normative structure of one's sport. In this way, the social attribution of greatness can be theoretically accounted for in a holistic manner that incorporates developmental trajectory and functionality of performance. Only by appreciating this contextual holism can one recognise (and theorise) the manner in which sporting greats are able to successfully 're-write' the scripts of sport, uncovering new avenues for success and fashioning new trends that irrevocably alter the structure of a sport and, simultaneously, human history.

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11. Daniel O'SHIEL

Body and World Fluidity: An Introductory Phenomenology to Being a Sportsperson

Introduction

This chapter provides an introductory phenomenology to being a sportsperson by characterizing it as the quintessential type of 'body and world fluidity', with three main dimensions for phenomenological analysis, description and application. It presents and argues for these three dimensions – the bodily, psychological and social – because a phenomenology of sport has never really been established and could thereby benefit from a set framework on which to build, expand and nuance. The chapter therefore seeks to establish some basic phenomenological elements to being a sportsperson in order to foster further theory, discussion and application.

The chapter is broken up into five main sections. The first will give a very brief and selective review of some of the most relevant strides already made in the philosophy and phenomenology of sport over the years, as well as highlight some of the literature's gaps and main shortcomings. The bulk of the paper then presents the introductory phenomenology to being a sportsperson, broken up into three main dimensions which are all however intertwined in everyday reality and experience. First, the second section outlines sport as a highly specialized and attuned form of perception, where an exemplary use of the 'lived body' (*Leib* in German) in a particular formatted world is always at the core. Sport as unparalleled knowhow, as opposed to knowing that, will also be presented here, particularly in the context of development through practice and training. This will lead to the second dimension (section three), namely the more psychological, where discipline, training, competition, teamwork, emotion and other predominant factors and traits will also be outlined and described. The last dimension (section four) will then consider the broader social and cultural significance of sport, not just from the side of professional athletes but also from the side of amateurs and billions of fans. I aim for a balanced if short appraisal regarding some of the advantages of sport (e.g. physical and mental health), as well as some of its potential dangers and pitfalls (e.g. addiction and tribalism) if followed in more radical, obsessive or even impassioned manners. The chapter will finish with some final remarks based on the analyses, particularly considering (post-)Covid times and the place – and absence – of sport therein, as well as factoring

in the upcoming possible future domination of a new phenomenological breed of sport, esports.

All levels of analysis are necessary if we are to get a much-needed theoretical basis for understanding the main experiences, mechanics and values in sport. Moreover, I believe a descriptive phenomenological approach should strike the right balance between theory on one side, and applying this to concrete cases, phenomena and experiences on the other. All of this is especially relevant right now as we still undergo sporting restrictions and “live” sports without fans due to Covid-19, as it shines an even sharper spotlight on sport’s absolutely essential physical, psychological and societal place in many of our lives, and what we are missing in these months and years.

The main method and referencing style of this chapter will be rather general, in that I will use my expertise in phenomenology to outline and assemble what I see to be the main useful phenomenological concepts and insights to apply to sport, without focusing on any particular phenomenologist per se, although my sources will of course be made clear when required. Thus, although there are sometimes massive differences between various phenomenologists, perhaps even basic ones, I will focus on some of the concepts and insights which they all more or less agree upon, or which can at least be taken up and applied in a useful general manner. This is because this is a work of applied phenomenology, where the subject matter (viz. being a sportsperson) is ultimately more significant than the origin, theory and nuance of the concepts themselves.

1. A Very Brief and Selective Review of Some Philosophy and Phenomenology of Sport

The philosophy of sport field as we know it today initially arose out of classical analyses of other related concepts, not least play, games and bodily movement and consciousness, among which was Huizinga’s seminal 1938 book *Homo Ludens* (2016; see also: Feezell, 2013, pp. 1-28; Lunt and Dyreson, 2014, p. 29). It was then in the 1960s that the philosophy of sport became an ‘independent field of study’ (Torres, 2014, p. 1), with many different theories created and debated (see: Reid, 2012; Simon, 2014), from more analytic ones and types of ‘formalism’ (see: Kretchmar, 2014; also: Simon, 2014, p. 85), to insights and discussions of the more continental variety (see: Moe, 2014). Quite early on the domain gained some publicity and even had a televised symposium in the US in 1972 (Torres, 2014, p. 9). The philosophy of sport has thus been varied over the years, spanning the supposed philosophical divide and also ranging from highly general and abstract theories to very specific characterizations or debates with regard to particular sports or issues (e.g. doping and cheating). Nevertheless, what is also clear is that, barring a rather sustained flurry in the first half of the 2010s, the philosophy of sport has never cemented itself as an established subdomain, with the

theory, insights, discoveries and debates remaining rather sporadic, with one pair of commentators (Lunt and Dyreson, 2014, pp. 31-32) even claiming it is only because of some basic philosophical interest in human movement that philosophy of sport just about ‘resists extinction with a hardy fortitude’ (id.: 32) from the immense pressure exerted by more popular and reductionistic natural and hard sciences.

With regard to the most pertinent insights and debates coming from the philosophy of sport, there have been extremely interesting accounts providing a quite detailed aesthetics (Edgar, 2013a; Mumford, 2014) and hermeneutics (Edgar, 2013b) of the subject matter. In these accounts, phenomenologically significant ideas such as Goodman’s notion of ‘worldmaking’ (see: Krein, 2008; Edgar, 2013b, pp. 141 and 162); sport as an aesthetic spectacle, attitude of framing or even a ‘non-reality’ (Edgar, 2013a, pp. 80 and 94; and 2013b, p. 155); issues of finitude, skill and chance (Edgar, 2013b, p. 161); and the essential nature of sport as a contest (see: *ibid.*, p. 162; also: Mumford, 2012, chs. 10 and 14) are all explored in quite some depth. Mumford’s book (2012) also touches upon crucial issues of drama, collective emotion and allegiance in *watching* sport, which will also be of significance here. Feezell’s book (2013) for its part provides in-depth analyses of a good number of the possibly more damaging sides to playing and watching sports, for instance the dangers of unhappiness and failure in partaking in or following sport (see: Feezell, 2013, p/ 29), which is a side to sport theory that has been underemphasized and underinvestigated, and it will also be addressed a little here too. Lastly, philosophically and phenomenologically pertinent ideas like the difference between knowing that and knowing how (Breivik, 2014); the difference between immanent bodily self-consciousness and being ‘in the zone’ as opposed to more explicitly reflective and cerebral states (see: Vannatta, 2008, p. 64); sport aesthetics and even ethics as on a scale between partisanship and purism (Mumford, 2012, chs. 2-3; Feezell, 2013, pp. 73-74); and even how hypercapitalistic structures are increasingly corrupting sport (Morgan, 2014) are all significant issues to which I hope to modestly contribute to varying degrees by providing a tripartite phenomenological framework.

As for the phenomenology of sport, there has been a fair deal of work too, although substantially less given it is a subdomain. There have even been repeated calls for more sustained efforts (Hockey and Allen-Collinson, 2007; Allen-Collinson, 2009), but they have not really materialized. Even when larger dedicated works have appeared (Martínková and Parry (eds.), 2012), a lot of the focus has either been on the nature of phenomenology itself more than it applied to sport; or the points of application have been hyperfocused (for instance: Aggerholm, Jespersen and Ronglan, 2012; Breivik, 2012; Vannatta, 2012).

There have of course been some very good insights here too along the way. Pertinent concepts from Husserl (Müller, 2012; Vannatta, 2008), Heidegger (Hogeveen, 2012; Martínková,

2012; Müller, 2012), Sartre (Culbertson, 2012) and Merleau-Ponty (Breivik, 2014, p. 204; Hockey and Allen-Collinson, 2007, p. 117; Hogeveen, 2012; Standal and Moe, 2012) have all been picked up upon and employed, and indeed I will be using and building upon a number of these here. Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2007, p. 120) also emphasize the role of the senses, including the intriguing centrality of respiration in sport. McLaughlin and Torres (2012) highlight the importance of intersubjectivity and horizontality in playing sport, and these elements are ones which I will emphasize here as well.

Generally though, too often the insights get bogged down in, or are sidelined by, discussions of theory and methodology, and thereby forego keeping an eye on the prize of capturing the actual phenomenological texture to being a sportsperson or fan. Vannatta (2008) has probably provided the most foundational but also applicable account to date by taking up Husserl's powerful and complex notion of 'passive synthesis', showing how it operates in play and sport, where knowhow, bodily instinct and learning, and habit in a lived dynamic with reflection and other more cerebral aspects all come to the fore.

I cannot of course cover all of these interesting issues and insights sufficiently in one chapter. Nevertheless, I think an introductory phenomenology to being a sportsperson which is neither steeped in the technicalities of a particular phenomenologist, nor overfocused on a particular aspect or sport, would be a good contribution to a number of these themes in the literature, and could even help systematize them a bit more. It will be a rather tricky balancing act, but one I now attempt through a three-level phenomenological analysis regarding the nature of being (and often watching) a sportsperson, first on the immediate bodily (perceptual) level (section two); then the psychological and reflective (section three); and finally the more social and cultural (section four).

2. First Dimension: Sport as a Specialized and (Highly) Attuned Form of Perception

I am taking 'sport' in a wide sense from the most basic amateur pastimes and gatherings all the way up to the higher echelons of the professional ranks. Even though this is my – and I think a commonsense – understanding of sport, I think it is particularly in the professional ranks where it comes through as a highly specialized and attuned form of *perception*.

In phenomenology, perception is contrasted with many different types of conscious experience, not least imagination. Imagination can be taken in a very broad sense, ranging from memories to even being involved in our perceptions (see: O'Shiel, 2019). However, when taken in the narrower technical sense of 'phantasy' (e.g. imagining a unicorn), as Husserl famously did ([1898-1925] 2005), it is in direct contrast with perception. In a nutshell, phantasy (so imagination in the narrow

sense) is about unrealities of the mind, whereas perceptions are about realities of the world and its bodies.

Accepting this distinction at face value, although any athlete might use phantasy to imagine certain sporting scenarios and the like, perhaps even in-game, given the physics-based nature of all traditional sports it is safe to say it is primarily about perception from this perspective. I would even go as far to say that sport is actually one of the quintessential forms of perception, due to its multisensorial complexity, its immanence and anchorage in the living, active body (*Leib*), along with its many objects and intersubjective intricacies. It is, then, regardless of the particular sport, one of the most complete ways to experience physical reality in a certain arrangement, as well as our own bodies and physical capacities in relation to this arrangement. Indeed, it is perhaps only on a par with the perceptual richness of sex and food in our cultures and relationships.

Phenomenologically there are whole worlds to cover here. I wish to highlight some of the most salient perceptual features of sport from a classical phenomenological – i.e. Husserl to Merleau-Ponty – perspective. In a nutshell, sport is essentially perceptual with regard to the physical self (lived body); a particular formatted physical world (‘worldmaking’ – see: Edgar, 2013b, pp. 140-143; Krein, 2008); and others (opponents and teammates).

First of all, although perception in general and by definition makes use of all the senses, sports train and refine them to levels where particular people end up being able to do a few things with their body (catch a ball, hit a ball, run a certain distance) in such specialized and attuned ways that they at times appear superhuman and heroic. In phenomenology this can be explained through a distinction between two types of ‘bodies’, namely between *Körper* and *Leibe*. The first involves physical bodies in all their basic physics and mechanics obeying natural laws, and sportspeople certainly need an intuitive knowledge of this, as do we all. On top of this, though, as living individual beings there also comes our immediate and first-hand experience of our own bodies, which phenomenology names, stemming from Husserl ([1918-1926] 2001, p. 584), the ‘lived body’ perspective. This immediate first-hand perspective we all live and breathe every day automatically gives us direct access to the whole world of perceptual bodies, living (e.g. teammates and opponents) and not (e.g. a ball). Being a sportsperson at bottom involves being able to use your lived body to various degrees of proficiency within the format and rules of the particular sport – a kind of ‘embodied learning’ as Standal and Moe (2012) emphasize with reference to Merleau-Ponty. Starting with natural gifts and talents you are given genetically (e.g. a certain height), training and dedication is a whole process of honing and developing one’s lived body in order to become an exemplary tool or medium of the chosen sport, and thus it is an expert or specialized form of *Zuhandenheit* (‘ready-to-handness’), to use one of Heidegger’s famous concepts from *Being and Time* ([1927] 2012; see also: Hogeveen, 2012). This can range all the way from a casual

hobby and form of exercise to the realms of elite athletes who can achieve things with their lived bodies that no one has ever done before (e.g. a world record), and might never do again. Here Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'intertwinement' (see: [1964] 1968: 130-155) also seems to ring very true, where the perfect athlete's whole psychophysiological being ('flesh' in Merleau-Ponty's terms) must be experienced as in quite perfect harmony and unison with a set physical environment. Such apexes are only even possible through a complex dynamic of gradually learning through imitation and instruction; rule following and trial and error; and also more explicit thoughts and reflections. To be proficient the capacities have to seep into your lived body to the extent that they become second or even first nature, as indeed some top athletes think they were simply born to kick a football, shoot hoops, or climb a mountain on a bike. Generally this is a dynamic which in philosophy is characterized not only by a Heideggerian distinction between *Zuhandenheit* and *Vorhandenheit* ('present-at-handness', i.e. more objective knowledge and cognition), but also more generally between knowing how (more bodily and habitual) and knowing that (more propositional and reflective). In today's sporting industries, the latter is a massive element in that athletes study opponents, their own techniques, wins and losses, and basically strive to improve or remain at the top through all means necessary, including statistical and data analyses of every facet of the sport and its performances (see also: Beivik, 2014). At the end of the day though, for the athlete it comes down the moment itself, for you (and your team) to perform and execute what you have dedicated your whole living body to learn, be and do.

While training might involve active imagination, as well as theory and propositional knowledge (i.e. knowing that), from this perspective sport engagement is primarily, on the most immediate experiential level at least, a special type of developed knowhow that is honed through hours and whole lifetimes of practice and improvement – including of course moments or whole stretches of reflection and more cognitive bits of knowledge and insight. Sport is thus one of the pinnacles of bodily knowledge and expertise in an immediately lived, perceptual manner. Indeed, for those few who reach the top, they can become so adept and masterful at their craft that they are significantly ahead of even their nearest competitors. Moreover, generally one can be so in the perceptual zone in one's sporting activity that there are reports of everything passing by as if in slow motion, perhaps because one has reached heights and levels of fluidity that hardly anyone ever has before – a kind of ultimate bodily inspiration and rapture if you will, which can be a sheer joy to watch and must be quite divine to live.

This brings in another key phenomenological dynamic in this immediate lived dimension, one that has already been touched upon in some of the literature (McLaughlin and Torres, 2012). Much sport is very fast-paced, and even when it is not it is highly considered, precise, skilful and technical. All sports use props of some kind, even if it is merely one's own body, and one has to

become adept at using these elements and objects with intrinsic reference to the rules of the game and the formats and realities of the course, field or whatever. Thus, until rather recently (i.e. esports – more on this in the last section), sport has always been a kind of formatted perception in the sense that our physical and phenomenal reality is given extra rules, obstacles or objects to be used and overcome in certain ways.

Reality always has an inherent horizontality, which again is another key concept from Husserl (for instance: [1918-1926] 2001, p. 56; see also: McLaughlin and Torres, 2012). In a nutshell, this states that there are always spatial and temporal horizons to every single perceptual experience and act, whether they be ‘inner’ spatial horizons of always being able to inspect objects in more detail (e.g. looking closer); or ‘outer’ as in the fact that perceptual experiences continue endlessly both spatially and temporally – there is always more to see and come. This horizontality is in the very structure of all perception. What is interesting about sport is that it usually formats or limits this boundless horizontality. An NBA basketball game is 48 minutes long; a pitch has clear lines where play can occur; and the precision needed in some sports (examples: NFL, golf, shooting) is of such a meticulousness both spatially and/or temporally that it can befuddle the mind. Thus the inherent horizontality of perception is precisely manipulated, restricted or otherwise formatted in sport so as to make the bodily situation challenging and exciting, both for those who play and watch.

Finally, you also always have opponents and often teammates. This adds another crucial element to the immediate experience of any sport, the intersubjective element, where one either has to battle with oneself in order to set the best time and beat all others (e.g. a time trial); or one concurrently races with others in the heat of battle (e.g. a race); or you and yours take on another group in order to outdo them in an orchestrated opposed exchange. The techniques and theories of any sport here explode to infinity. What remains on this basic level is that one’s bodily connectivity and fluency in the sport is also always being constantly compared with one’s opponents, and/or complemented by one’s teammates. Indeed, legendary teams throughout the history of sport (e.g. the Brazil soccer team of the 1960s) have been so famous thanks to their almost preternatural ability to know exactly where their teammates might be, and also sense precisely and immediately what is required in order to attain the crucial competitive advantage in order to achieve one’s goal, which moreover is often executed in an aesthetically beautiful or even artistic (see: Edgar, 2013a) way. This too, in the heat of the moment, must happen in a highly attuned manner, although it of course is only possible after countless hours of training and perfection. In this manner, on top of an exemplary body and world fluidity in a certain challenging perceptual scenario, team sports also strive after perfect intersubjective fluidity on the perceptual level as well.

In sum, then, being a sportsperson in the most immediate dimension (perception) is a paradigmatic case of body and world fluidity, usually including others (opponents and teammates),

which perfects certain formatted types of perception and bodily activity through one's own skill, training, execution and also teamwork.

3. Second Dimension: Key Psychological Elements

Of course, with humans along with the physical is always the mental; in everyday experiential reality these are indivisible. Even further, the very concept of 'lived body' (*Leib*) implies a psychically active, inherently 'intertwined' (Merleau-Ponty, [1964] 1968, pp. 130-155) form of life, engaging with its environment in particular ways. However, these 'ways' are so immanent in the most immediate bodily and perceptual dimension (the preceding section) that they usually lack the more explicitly mental tonality of more personal and psychological reflections and cognitions.

On the other hand, there are many sports (e.g. tennis, golf, boxing even), if not the majority, where the 'mental side' is as if not more important than the physical. It is all about 'the top two inches' one sometimes hears, i.e. the brain and mind; you can have all the ability, skill and talent in the world, but if the 'top two inches' are not 'on it' the rest can become rather inconsequential, at least in the top professional ranks. Taking this into account, one may say that the two, the physical and the mental, absolutely need each other and are in a constant dynamic throughout any sporting activity, and they can only really be separated through theoretical analysis.

To go into a bit more detail, there are certain aspects which are definitely nearly always intertwined with your actual performance, like confidence in your ability; or the well-known phenomena of momentum, ascendancy and shifts in competition; or even the history of stats and records that individual athletes or teams might try to block out regarding a certain opponent, so as not to take anything for granted in the actual game ('one point or game at a time'). Interesting again here would be moments of more explicit thought or reflection (like a tennis player deciding where and how to serve; or a soccer player deciding on a spot for a penalty), and how this relates to the actual action (the serve; the penalty) as well as the bigger context (match point; to win the World Cup) and how this latter can affect the other elements. Methods and theories can vary enormously, but generally when an athlete is 'in the zone' (see: Vannatta, 2008, p. 64) everything seems to flow with an almost detached supremacy. This perspective, a popular one, insinuates that 'thinking too much' in those moments is precisely when one buckles to the pressure.

On top of this basic psychophysical dynamic, I can also name a few general psychological categories and traits which are the most significant when it comes to developing, improving and perfecting one's sporting craft.

First of all are discipline and training. From the most casual sportsperson to the most serious and dedicated, all have to practice or train at least a bit. When this becomes professional it takes over one's whole life, right down to what you eat and when and how you sleep. It thus takes great resolve, dedication and sacrifice, which includes great mental strength too. Athletes indeed often talk about 'all the hard work finally paying off', dreams 'coming true' and the like. This also comes with social rhetoric, as in always respecting and not underestimating your opponent, being a gracious winner and loser, giving modest interviews and saying 'the right things' and so on – all elements go into an ethos of a proper and professional sportsperson, an exemplary character and even a role model (cf. Feezell, 2013, pp. 131-154; Mumford, 2012, ch. 11), and indeed many teams and individuals now employ sports psychologists to help with all of this and more.

The second main element, related to this, is competition and the drive and will to win. Many of the most notable elite sportspeople (e.g. Tom Brady) are noted to have had an almost obsessive competitive streak from a very early age, which drives them to train harder, practice more and generally go to lengths few or literally no one else would, eventually allowing them to finish top of their particular domain for a while, or even for years. Sport is about hierarchies and winning by definition, and the momentous narratives which come therefrom, from Sunday League to Super Bowls. Those at the summit usually have a mental drive and resolve to win and be the best at nearly all (legitimate) costs. When this is achieved for those select few, a powerful legacy is created. It is, in a way, one way to reach relative immortality within human life and history (as is having children, works of art, books and the like) – in short be inscribed in the register of human achievement and culture.

Coupled with this comes teamwork and cooperation, even for individual athletes. Indeed, especially nowadays there is no such thing as an individual sportsperson; they all have teams, from tennis stars like Nadal to elite gymnasts like Biles. Sport is thus inherently social and about teamwork, teamwork which however seeks precisely to beat other opponents and teams. It thus takes great mental cooperation and organization between all the various working parts and people, which can become aesthetically beautiful to watch once perfected. In team sports in particular all individuals are so in sync because of, as we have seen, an interbodily world fluidity where understanding and interchange is often in quite perfect harmony. In a sense, in these moments they are not even individuals anymore but perhaps a supreme kind of *Mitsein* ('being-with') – another Heideggerian concept ([1927] 2012).

Another major psychological category to highlight in sport is emotion, both for the particular sportsperson, their teammates and opponents, as well as for the wider social audiences, which can often be global (more on this in the next section). First of all, it is clear that sport and bodily activity are generally crucial for the emotional wellbeing for billions of people, both partaking and

watching. However, emotional attachments to particular athletes and teams can also become so strong and even obsessive it can be highly restrictive and damaging too (e.g. hatred of a rival team and all its people), fostering a kind of strong ‘us versus them’ mentality which can even contaminate your and your family’s whole life (e.g. a Newcastle F.C. fan who refuses have anything red and white (= Sunderland, the fierce local rivals) in the house). Here as it is usually the case with emotion, it is wise to harness the ones which are person- and community-building and fight off the ones which are wantonly hostile and destructive. This is a tricky issue, because both playing and watching sport can be seen as a case of sublimation where aggressive tendencies are put to socially acceptable use, at least most of the time. However, it is precisely when emotion and aggression boil over that the sport and one’s relation to it can devolve into damaging and abusive behaviours and a more general disrepute.

From the standpoint of the athletes at professional level, there are interesting avenues to investigate further here too, from one potential theory which says emotions get in the way of optimum performance, in that some of the top athletes (e.g. Serena Williams) even speak of a ‘dead eye’ feeling in crucial moments where all emotions vanish and the scene becomes as if detached, and yet one remains or even becomes immanently and hyperconcentrated with emotion only exploding on triumph; to another perspective or way of performing where emotions (e.g. anger at an error) are actually used to drive, fuel and improve your performance. Within sport you often have these two main characters generally too, including the narrative of contest and (bitter) rivalry constructed from them. This is often used in order to engage spectators even more by upping the tension and even the hostility. Indeed, throughout the history of sport there have been tales between fire and ice; goodness versus evil; those who play by the rules and those who do not; the experienced and boring winning machine versus the young, passionate and talented upstart. A classical example here would be the longstanding tennis rivalry between the cold ‘Iceman’ Björn Borg, and the passionate renegade John McEnroe. Both were extremely talented as well as the fact that they were quite equally matched, even though they approached their craft in very different ways, both stylistically and emotionally.

There is a whole world of psychological factors to consider in sport. However, these I believe are the main ones and make a good start. In a way sport can consume the whole psyche, from temporarily in a moment, to even the whole of your life. Indeed, depression after the highs of major triumphs in an illustrious career is quite common for the few people who have been to the summit, with it described as a kind of addictive euphoria like no other. This addictive nature to sport is even well-known in amateur ranks, where people go to ever-greater lengths for that newer challenge and ever-more ultimate endorphin or dopamine ‘rush’, which can actually unbalance one’s body chemistry quite severely. This pattern has been jumped upon by capitalist markets nowadays too,

where many people now simply consume more energy in order to burn and build up more in a kind of strange addictive circle, from ‘gym rats’ to ultramarathons.

Professional moments of triumph must feel especially sublime. However, it can relatively cheapen the rest of one’s life thereafter, where one can not only become almost psychologically stuck (fixated) in one’s own legacy or moment – not only in one’s own mind but also in the minds of others; it can also leave one’s body (and even one’s mind) quite broken. Even fans might harken back to glory days and years. There is much more needed here in order to understand the complex phenomenological psychology of being a sportsperson and fan before, during and after the highs and lows, because although it can create extremely strong bonds and senses of allegiance (see: Mumford, 2012, ch. 13) and pride; and although it can format identities (see: *ibid.*) across whole nations or cultures in positive ways (national wonders and celebrations – e.g. the US’s 1980 4-3 ice hockey ‘Miracle on Ice’ victory against the USSR), it can do this in quite surprisingly powerfully negative ways (national traumas – e.g. Brazil’s 7-1 loss to Germany at their home 2014 World Cup semi-final) as well. It is to this wider social and cultural dimension we now turn.

4. Third Dimension: The Social and Cultural Significance of Sport

The third and last main dimension of sport I wish to highlight and mark for further (phenomenological) study is one that has already come up a bit in the previous section, namely some of its key social and cultural aspects.

First of all, sports and exercise activities are of clear and crucial health benefits, and moreover bring whole communities, nations and even large swathes of the human world together, whether through performance, spectating or both. Top and even local sportspeople are often highly respected in our societies, and some (e.g. Pelé, Maradona, Messi) are absolutely revered by their supporters. There is a combative and even gladiatorial trope to sport that is ingrained into its narrative, structure and history, as well as our own psyches and emotions. Rivalries are often local, longstanding, very bitter and even violent (e.g. soccer hooliganism), with many tales of glorious victories over the old enemy, and also grave injustices. There are ‘I was there’ moments of victory which go down in fan folklore, and there are also genuine mournings and depressions after particularly difficult or dramatic losses. In this manner, sporting events not only knit whole groups and societies together, they are often a part of the local or national identity as well, for better *and* worse. Nowadays, the hypercapitalistic nature of most professional sports can hardly be understated either, with some (Morgan, 2014) claiming this is eroding the very nature and beauty of sport, including its honest and loyal fandom. Many sports are now global branding commodities, with absolutely everything

monetized. Here it might not any longer be about winning or losing for the skill or the glory for those in (financial) control, but simply because this makes good business sense by making more money through sometimes astronomical TV rights contracts, sponsorship deals and merchandise sales. Certain sports are indeed colossal industries now, with economies more powerful than some countries. The Olympics, for instance, often nearly bankrupts and/or alienates a host city – but it is still often gambled upon and sought, not least because it remains such a special privilege to host one of the oldest and most globally watched sporting spectacles.

In moderation or even not in moderation, sport can give one highs and lows that are on a par with some of the best and worst moments of your life, whether as a participant or a fan. The buzz of being idolized by thousands if not millions of people must be an unparalleled one. However, as I have also briefly touched upon, many also live the rest of their lives in great physical discomfort for those glorious five, ten or fifteen years at their peak, and thus it still often remains highly gladiatorial and quite an ultimate sacrifice. I would go even further and maintain that many top athletes are still gladiators in a certain sense. Some still die in the actual sport (examples: cyclists, racing drivers and boxers), and if not many of the high-impact variety (soccer, rugby, NFL) have broken bodies, and even minds, afterwards. It is in this sense a great sacrifice, the massive paychecks of the top sportspeople notwithstanding, because one can end up living in great pain, discomfort or even with hugely debilitating mental conditions (e.g. early dementia) for the rest of one's life. Indeed, concussion is now a major issue in many sports, with new and varyingly successful protocols in soccer, rugby and the NFL. Moreover, boxing has the unfortunate mantle where concussion is the *goal* of the contest, and not just a side effect. Thus sport, for all its health benefits, can also create major health challenges to serious participants in the long term, and some literally risk their whole future life when stepping onto the field, into a race car, or the ring.

These sacrifices might all be worth it if you end up winning. However, the fact is most do not and cannot by definition. Although most sportspeople triumph now and then, consistently doing it at a top level is rare ether indeed. This is why victors, and especially consistently dominant ones at the top levels, are so respected and revered, because they have to all intents and purposes defied all the odds by triumphing where 99.9999...% have not. Considering this, senses of failure and loss must actually predominate in most participants, because while there can only be one winner, there must by definition always be many losers (see: Feezell, 2013, p. 42). Is one victory worth a hundred or thousand defeats? Perhaps; perhaps even the *potential* for glory outweighs the repeated actual failures and pains. Hope is a niggly and delusive thing, for one can always in theory do better next time. Considering this, on amateur levels especially, surely sport is still just about fun for the most part? This optimism notwithstanding, loss, failure and many types of vulnerability (see: *ibid.*, pp. 45-48) – even on amateur levels – need to be considered and weighed more, including the long-term

physical and mental effects of putting your whole mind and body on the line time after time.

There are of course a good number of people who do not enjoy participating in or watching sport at all. Nonetheless, for many it is an essential part of life, practicing, playing, coming together, following and supporting. Being a fan can be a family and even a regional or national tradition where, if emotions run high (as they often do) and along with the narratives, on top of great community building there are also dangers of rivalries and tribalism that can sometimes get out of hand and lead to actual physical and psychological damage and abuse. Indeed, it is all-too-common now for professional athletes to be abhorrently abused online after a perceived error, even by their own purported “fans”. In this manner, sociologically and culturally sport is clearly a part of what makes many if not all of us human; but like with many human interests and behaviours, it has its darker and well as its brighter aspects, where the inhuman and hateful also still raise their heads way too often.

Ultimately, sports as spectacles in human physical excellence and skill pull on much that is amazing and admirable about our species, not least how we use our lived bodies, teamwork and world fluidity to enact scenarios and build narratives that are often hardly imaginable or repeatable. They are thus kinds of never-ending soap operas of intrigue and skill and a key fabric of any human society, for enjoyment and entertainment, to learn skills, and to vent and sublimate stress and aggression. However, almost in the same stroke they can also get out of hand, foster negative emotion, behaviours and destructive tribalism, and there are therefore channels for obsession, addiction and abuse that must be guarded against and studied further.

5. Final Remarks: (Post-)Covid Times and eSport

The discussion of sport in our societies and cultures is especially relevant right now as many of us still undergo significant sporting restrictions due to Covid-19. This shines an even sharper spotlight on sport’s absolutely essential physical, psychological and societal place, and what we have been missing in these months. Watching sport virtually while locked down has also provided solace and some outlets beyond our walls, albeit usually without real crowds and thus more imaginary and less glorious fanfare. Indeed, all kinds of athletes and amateurs have not been allowed to take part in their sports as they usually would, plus the fact that many professional events have been cancelled, postponed or adapted, often with small or no crowds. This made much of sport a more individual, lonely and even a digital spectacle rather than partaking in a live, societal event with raw unchanneled and unmediated emotion. It also meant the usual physical and mental health benefits were restricted or even stymied altogether. Here though too things changed and adapted, with

artificial crowd noise and new camera and virtual technologies showing the ever-increasing technological elements coming into sport. And beyond mere Covid-19, along with the growing use of data analytics in tactics there are now wider economic and even ethical issues coming to the fore, with some sports teams and organizations becoming so popular and wealthy that they are now, as I have already noted, more like corporations and businesses than just a place for healthy competition and entertainment.

What is more, esports is already a quite massive domain and activity, with many competitions and professional gamers who can make thousands or even millions of dollars often at an incredibly young age. eSport is especially significant because although the second and third dimensions outlined here might be able to be transposed with little difficulty, the nature of esports with reference perception is much more complex, and could even challenge ‘the very meaning of sport’ (Edgar, 2017, p. 153). Indeed, in most esports you only use a small portion of your body (mainly one’s hands), and although it requires a lot of agility and stamina in certain respects, it does not demand the overall peak physical and bodily fitness of most classical sports. This is because, crucially, the medium is inherently through screens or other virtual devices, so one’s actual body is not as involved as in a classical sporting activity and is rather a mere means used to control an avatar in a game. According to phenomenological theory (see: O’Shiel 2019), this makes esports of a different experiential structure, certainly not straightforward perception and rather a more transcendent type of virtual experience, where you compete and win on a transcendent, digital plane. Thus esports are of a different phenomenological structure even for the competitors, meaning they are not ultimately about the perceptual in any traditional phenomenological sense, and are most likely more of the imaginary structure and type of experience, in that the ultimate objects are digital and thus transcend many of the basic laws of immanent organic perception (see: *ibid.*). This could change a lot for the nature of sport and competition going forward, and therefore needs a lot more philosophical and phenomenological investigation too (see also: Edgar, 2017; van Hilvoorde, 2018).

Considering these last points, a comprehensive theory and phenomenology of sport, its people and fans would need to take in all of these factors if it is to provide the full complexity and nuance of sport in our lives, as well as note and pay attention to how many factors and dynamics are in constant development. eSport also raises a whole phenomenological paradigm shift from the perceptual to the virtual or imaginary, and so this is a domain that needs to be investigated a lot more within philosophy as well as other domains (psychology, sociology), especially considering it is most popular among younger people. Generally we have seen that sport is absolutely central to so many of us in so many fundamental dimensions. Finally, the digital age is revolutionizing not only how (in)active we are, but also perhaps the very nature and medium of sport itself.

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V.

CORPO-ABERTO

OPEN-BODY

12. Isabel Fontbona MOLA

The Masquerade of Identity Built through Bodybuilding: Hiding Somatophobia

Introduction

This paper is part of an ongoing project. It weaves together research from different branches of knowledge, fieldwork that has been carried out through medical visits and psychological therapy sessions, and personal reflections about bodily modifications as they are related to the sport of bodybuilding. Its framework is due in part to the help of medical professionals,⁵² to whom I am indebted for their support, help, knowledge, time, and interest.

It should be noted that in developing this research, I have sought to establish connections between my artistic projects and my sports career. But I am also hoping to explore the masquerade of athletic identity, which has allowed me to hide some pathological behaviors of my own. Being aware of this, I wanted to illuminate these dark and destructive behaviors for others. I want to give voice to one of the issues that makes me feel uncomfortable—my body—and to talk about how I treat it under the auspices of athletic training and nutrition. Unmasking and facing these challenges might then be a tool to help people who are on a similar path to think about how these same issues may affect them on a personal level.

This investigation, which will take place over the course of a year, will take different forms of expression. The first is this present essay, which outlines the project's intentions and details some of the theoretical, autoethnographic, and medical ideas underlying it. At the end of the research phase, this essay will be followed by a future publication that outlines the conclusions, or at least some reflections, about this year of research. Both of the essays are intended to play a role in the development of a future exhibition that will document the project. I also plan to collect a book of photographs and reflective texts that document the changes my body undergoes through two years of training. In fact, all of this material is a work of art that has been carried out in collaboration with the photographer Sergi Pérez between February 8, 2019, and February 8, 2021, entitled *TRANSMOGRIFICATION. Between Carving and Bulking. Destroying an Evanescent Body Searching for Self-Identity*.⁵³

⁵² I have decided to use only the initials of these medical professionals in order to avoid generating controversy or any professional problems for them.

⁵³ See the attached material where some of the images from the piece are presented (Appendix 1).

Methodology

The methodology used in the development of this article is drawn from an array of disciplines. First, in terms of visualizing the evident consequences that I am referring to, I will treat myself as a case study using the medical control tests that I am currently undergoing. These include tests for hormonal disorders (the fields of gynecology and endocrinology) and eating disorders (the field of psychology). Using a psychological perspective, other phenomena will be analyzed and considered as well, including the burnout phenomenon and the process of identity construction through a malleable body.

This project also has an artistic component. It will be supported by the photographic documentation⁵⁴ of the changes my body has undergone and by reflective texts that explore the relationship between my physical condition and my feelings about it.

My methodology is also informed by research in fields including sports sciences, sociology, qualitative studies, philosophy, performance art, and gender studies. It also draws heavily from the field of medicine, including research on mental disorders, psychology, gynecology, endocrinology, eating disorders (especially anorexia and body dysmorphia), body image, exercise addiction, and behavioral addictions.

Procedure: Embodied Knowledge—Autoethnographic Voice

Many previous studies have focused on the possibilities that bodybuilding can offer in terms of questioning and challenging the binary fundamentals of gender. Previous studies, including the work of Bartky 1990, Moore 1997, Guthrie & Castelnuovo 1998, Weseley 2001, Bolin & Granskog 2003, Locks & Richardson 2011, Bolin 2012, Bunsell 2014, McTavish 2015, Threadcraft 2016, Scheller 2017, have also focused on bodybuilding's possibilities as a tool for female empowerment.

Even though these issues certainly underlie this current research, this essay is not primarily focused on questions along these lines. The primary goal of this essay is to unmask and shed light on a problem by using a peculiar approach—a deep, violently honest personal gaze that is reinforced by medical support.

In this current essay, I speak from my own experience with the practice of bodybuilding, detailing my involvement with it and also giving voice to the various feelings I have experienced in this process. In line with some of the major tenets of feminist theory, this study's approach employs medical research to help establish a solid background of knowledge, but it does so from a

⁵⁴ Please note that this refers again to the piece titled *TRANSMOGRIFICATION*.

perspective that also uses personal experience as a source for establishing a solid epistemological foundation. In this way, I argue that in order to overcome a “rigid and exclusionary discourse” (Stone-Mediatore, 2016: 934), we must employ a new “privileged” discourse of knowledge from different hierarchies that includes personal experiences. This approach allows us to broaden our epistemological framework and include perspectives that have historically been ignored, silenced, or even marginalized. As Stone-Mediatore (2016, p. 934) notes in her paraphrase of Razack’s argument, “the experience of the world . . . is not admitted into dominant knowledge paradigms (Razack, 1998, p. 36).” And as Donna Haraway notes in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*:

There are many places from which to look at reality. It is not encoded and still, waiting only to be read. The world is not raw material for humanization. Knowledge will always be partial and situated depending on the perspective through which we look at it. (Haraway, 1991)

By voicing these personal experiences, this essay aims to overcome a perspective that has used a hegemonic masculine gaze as the exclusive tool for creating a patriarchal epistemology. This epistemology has been reinforced through systems of power that have sustained it over many generations. It has become solidified as the only valid base of knowledge, which has left no room for the perspectives of other cultures, other forms of embodiment, other genders, and other knowledge positions. Speaking from one’s own experience gives voice to knowledge that resides outside this hetero-patriarchal norm, which allows that knowledge to become more nuanced and complete.

It is evident, however, that presenting research with this kind of autoethnographic approach poses certain problems and difficulties. As Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner highlight:

The self-questioning autoethnography demands is extremely difficult . . . is confronting things about yourself that are less flattering . . . honest autoethnographic exploration generates a lot of fears and doubts—and emotional pain. Just when you think you can’t stand the pain anymore, well, that’s when the real work has only begun. Then there’s the vulnerability of revealing yourself, not being able to take back what you’ve written or having any control over how readers interpret it. It’s hard not to feel your life is being critiqued as well as your work. It can be humiliating. (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 738)

Medical Engagement/Dialogue

As stated previously, this personal approach, in which the embodied experience is taken as an element of study, has also been subjected to clinical analyses from different perspectives. F. M. and I. I. have informed the study from a gynecological and endocrinological perspective, and J. P, N. G.,

and M. B. have provided insights in terms of the study's psychological and emotional elements. Weaving these different voices together creates a synergy that makes it possible to establish bridges between medicine and knowledge; it helps raise awareness while simultaneously allowing for reflexive self-questioning about the very process of identity construction as it occurs in the field of sports.

I opted to include this dialogue with medicine because even though I practice bodybuilding with a high level of passion and involvement, every time I reach the post-competition phase, where I should allow myself time and space to recover from the intense training and dieting process, I place myself in a continuous state of contradiction, discomfort, doubt, and tension regarding my own identity. I adopt certain behaviors and establish an internal dialogue about my body's own struggles. By attempting to understand these feelings, or at least several of the facets of my polyhedral body, I hope to be able to reach a certain understanding of myself and the particular identity I build through my own practice.

It is also important to give voice to one of the possible effects—hypothalamic amenorrhea—of participating in the field of competitive sports as a woman.⁵⁵ Amenorrhea is a problem that exists with many ambiguities and multiple possible causes.

Ultimately, researching the relationship between obsessive disorders and the cult of the body and its image (body image) has allowed me to become more aware of the fact that even though I passionately enjoy the practice of bodybuilding, it also profoundly conditions me, my daily life, and my decision-making. For example, I easily have let myself get carried away by my own tendency toward social isolation of which Sam Fussell speaks, mentioning it as the life of a “solitary pilgrim” (1991).

I loved the iron not for its offering of community, but for its promise of solitude, for the chance to escape from everyone and everything . . . But this shell that I created . . . (t)he physical palisades and escarpments of my own body served as a rocky boundary that permitted no passage, no hint of a deeper self—a self I couldn't bear (Fussell, 1991, p. 155, 248)

The long path of physical preparation, a practice marked by total discipline, loneliness, and in many cases, social isolation, can also facilitate the reproduction of other disorders,⁵⁶ including eating disorders, simply because there is no outside gaze that can detect them. Bodybuilding is about having control—controlling the body's boundaries, controlling food consumption, and controlling exercise plans (which can easily veer into overtraining). While you are engaged in it, it can also lead to an unhealthy rhythm of physical, mental, and emotional wear and tear that includes sleep

⁵⁵ The term *amenorrhea* refers to the loss of menstruation or its late appearance. We will analyze the problem, as well as its possible causes and effects, later on.

⁵⁶ In many cases, pathologies such as bigorexia or muscle dysmorphophobia are also derived from this practice; it also has some similarities with anorexia or other eating disorders.

deprivation and living in a constant state of stress. Despite the empowering promise of building an “armor” of muscles, the process of modifying the body so it can break its original biological form can end up working against practitioners over time, especially when the practice is taken to the extreme. Bodybuilding can place the practitioner in an ambiguous space between the freedom to “create” by modifying our body’s nature and a form of slavery that can lead to self-destruction. By modifying the flesh, we can end up destroying ourselves.

Somatophobia*⁵⁷—*Somatic Symptom Disorder

Since the inception of philosophy as a separate and self-contained discipline in ancient Greece, philosophy has established itself on the foundations of a profound *somatophobia* (Grosz, 1994, p. 5)

As it is used in the current study, the term *somatophobia* is taken from the sociologist Elizabeth V. Spelman (1982), who identified it in contexts involving social pressure, situations that demand control over the body, and especially in cases where the body to which it refers to is the body of a woman who is located within a social framework.

In the medical field, somatophobia is also known as one of the facets of somatic symptom disorder, or the pronounced concern for one’s physical appearance, which can lead to obsessive behaviors and anxiety. Thus, somatophobia can also be related to these problems, pushing them into a more pathological framework.

Due to the psychosocial qualities of weight conditioning, this contemptuous, dissatisfied relationship with the body is often present, and it can manifest in broad strokes in feelings of anxiety that can cause a person to feel like they will never be able to do enough to reach a certain ideal. As Wendell notes:

Everyone is subjected to cultural pressure to deny bodily weaknesses to dread old age, to feel ashamed of and responsible for their distance from the ideals, and to objectify their own bodies at the expense of subjective bodily awareness. These pressures foster a desire to gain/maintain control of our bodies; conversely, the myth that we can control our bodies encourage us to strive to meet body ideals. (Wendell, 1996, p. 91)

Bodybuilding: An Aesthetic Corporeal Practice in a Consumer Society

Bodybuilding’s primary goal involves the transformation of the body with the intention of attaining a physique in accordance with a chosen competitive category’s “ideal.” Participants achieve this

⁵⁷ Fear of the body.

physique through a rigid diet, organized training, and supplementation practices (natural or chemical). These elements vary case-by-case due to the particularities of each athlete (including their metabolism, current shape, and history of injuries), the strategies and knowledge of their coach, their time of preparation, and other factors.

Through a Foucauldian lens, we can easily see how bodybuilding is a clear example of a disciplinary practice used to create “docile bodies.” The practice of bodybuilding requires a total commitment to discipline, the engine that allows the practitioner to experience certain bodily changes by following strict regulatory guidelines.

As I mentioned previously, discipline as well as dedication are intensely involved in this practice. Bodybuilding requires the participant to be in constant control of their day-to-day activities, fragmenting time into periods of 3 to 4 hours for eating, training, exertion, pain, and possible injuries. The focus on bodily transformation means that the building material, the body, must go through different phases to attain the ultimately desired goal, the ideal that moves the participant to undergo intense bodily modifications that amount to metamorphosis.

Through repetitive discipline, social forms gradually permeate and overpower individual ways of perception and expression. Through repetition, bodies are disciplined and controlled, becoming economically utile and provocative. (Fernandes, 2005, p. 51)

The primary goal of this practice is actually an aesthetic one—it’s not about hitting a particular physical mark—which means that while a participant is attempting to achieve a certain goal, they often end up losing sight of the ethical ideals that the sport’s origins promoted. Asking bodies to extend beyond the boundaries of human biology causes athletes to engage in unethical behaviors that are reinforced by an “anything goes” mindset as they attempt to reach an extreme ideal. Some athletes have even established relationships with the world of entertainment, including the circus, and they are often portrayed as types of heroes or gods—who are viewed as more valuable than conventional athletes—who are on display.

Bodybuilding thus has become a mass media show, asking its practitioners to transform themselves into objects of consumption (consumer bodies), objects that fulfill the desires and vicarious projections of a viewing audience. This means that many participants are forced to opt for chemical support (performance and image enhancing drugs, or PIEDs) to push their own limits and get closer to that so-called “heroic” image (Vallet, 2016, pp. 63–64).

The bodies of bodybuilders have become one of the clearest examples of our present moment, in which our consumer society places demands on our consumer bodies/commodity bodies/object bodies, underscoring a deeper yearning to become something unattainable or to reach an ideal.

As Foucault (1979) points out, relations of power and control occur within a social framework through the constant scrutiny of our bodies in the eyes of the other who ends up conditioning and shaping our identity. It is this relationship of control, inextricably linked with the other, in which we all participate and in which many aspects of our identity are constructed. This is particularly true of our bodies and how they are sculpted according to some normalized ideal. Deviating from that norm, and feeling dissonant with it, can lead to the development of obsessive self-image behaviors that are aimed at reversing or changing one's biologically assumed bodily condition.

As Baudrillard notes, "In a total turnabout, the body becomes that menacing object which has to be watched over, reduced and mortified for 'aesthetic' ends" (Baudrillard 1998, p. 142). With this in mind, the body in our society becomes a sign of social prestige. The desire to have a body that is more or less close to the ideal of beauty puts us within a dynamic of constant competition; it's one of constant tensions, demands, and controlling glances. Within this framework, our body becomes an object with narcissistic connotations, for, as Baudrillard suggests, "the individual has to take himself as object, as the finest of objects, as the most precious exchange material, for an economic process of profit generation to be established at the level of the deconstructed body, of deconstructed sexuality" (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 135).

Thus, the bodies of bodybuilding athletes are a clear example of the value that resides in this social dynamic. They are bodies that are equated to heroes and/or demigods. They are considered beautiful (depending, of course, on the sport discipline and the category we are referring to), and they reflect the ideals of beauty and health as they are linked to sport. But is that really so?

As I intend to demonstrate, and in my own experience, the answer to this question is no. On stage, bodybuilders smile, showing their bodies in their most ideal state, with beautiful, defined muscular constructions. Their bodies are seemingly healthy, but what lies behind them are numerous maneuvers and practices that may be questionable in terms of their health benefits. As we can deduct from the precepts of Guillaume Vallet (2014), "Looking good does not mean you are in a good health condition."

Body modification can be seen as a liberatory act that can reverse the natural material with which we start in life; in the words of Mazano-Parisoli, "shaping our body is the equivalent of shaping our lives" (2001, p. 221). But we must be aware of the social pressure that is placed on our bodies, as well as the means we use to carry these modificatory practices out, as many of them can end up leading to pathological behaviors.

As we will see later, the fact that competitive bodybuilding's primary goal is the achievement of a very specific body—an aesthetic result—it can not only lead to unethical decision-making, but it can also lead to pathological eating behaviors and body image disorders. The

problem is that in a society like ours, where this constructivism takes place through bodies that are attempting to reach an ideal, trends such as strict diets and compulsive training become normalized, which gives rise to docile bodies, even when those practices lead to pathological disorders such as exercise addiction and eating disorders (Marzano-Parisoli, 2001, p. 217).

Athletic Identity (Bodybuilding) as a Constructed Identity

We know that our identity is a result of how we construct ourselves in a bodily sphere. But what happens when these boundaries of our bodies change and oscillate? As Vallet notes, “transformation of the body means transformation of the self” (Vallet, 2014, p. 213).

Having the ability to modify the body is apparently an attractive proposition, an act that may seem liberating to many people. Having our identity rely on the construction of our body may be an attempt at finding some stability within this freedom, of pushing ourselves beyond the “body boundaries” we were born with by modifying them.

Certainly, however, when one sculpts a body at will, the expectations of stability disappear. There is no such “safety anchor” (Vallet, 2014) in the flesh. The body is changing. And as such, what happens to our identity then?

The fluidity involved in setting our own bodily boundaries has personally made me feel uncomfortable and lost. This is true not only in terms of the discomfort I feel about the shape of my own body, but also in terms of the dialogue I establish with myself about my own identity when I seek it through matters of my body. These feelings have led me to wonder if this discomfort is a matter of gender, sexual orientation, or some other nuance, but locating my identity in an ever changing body has generated a peculiar kind of internal dialogue that has made me feel uncomfortable, or even anxious.

If my identity is my body, I do not know who I am. I am not the extremely ripped competition’s body, but I do not identify with my current body, a body which is the result of this restricted process, a body that fights against the guidelines that I pushed it to attain. A body that fights against myself. I am constantly fighting against my body, against my mind, against myself. I am torn between the competition’s body and between the result of that: a reactionary body. I do not know who I am. (Fontbona, 2019)

Placing our identity within fleeting, changing, and malleable borders pushes us into an absurd dynamic of perpetual dissatisfaction, of “Never enough.” As Vallet writes, “This could be a source of relative frustration and even alienation” (2014, p. 216). It is a dynamic, then, that is more typical of slavery—in relation to the image of one’s body—than of liberation. It is also a dynamic that allows us to see connections between bodybuilding and the myth of Sisyphus.

In bodybuilding, like in Sisyphus' myth the end has no end: when you reach a level, you do not have to stop, because you tend to think that you can always do better and because you fear to lose your results . . . obsession of the body is common for more than 75% of our population . . . there is an alienation dimension with body consumption, meaning that the body can be beyond control of the bodybuilder.

The obsessive side of bodybuilding can first entail risky behaviors.

(Vallet, 2014, p. 214)

The Ambivalence of Athletic Identity: Between Power and Submission, Between Narcissism and Slavery

Linked to a whole socioeconomic system . . . consumption of the body could both give sense to a person, giving her freedom, as well as destroying if the whole life depends on such consumption. (Vallet, 2014, p. 213)

Building one's identity through sport within a society that rewards discipline, restraint, and control over bodily forms can lead to disastrous consequences. With Greek mythology in mind, particularly the lives of the Greek heroes, one recalls the ideals that were promoted by their idyllic bodies, which, through the fact of their physical beauty, bore and reflected virtue; they resided just one step below the gods.

In many ways, this is similar to today's athletes. The expectations that were placed on the old heroes are also expected of them. Through their training, they reach beyond the ordinary, pushing themselves beyond human biological limits. And in sports that are more closely linked to the practice and modification of the body, such as bodybuilding, it is not just a matter of reaching personal goals, but of displaying the sculpted body matter that gives testament to those gains and their results.

Within the framework of competitive sports, this constant desire to improve can foster commitment and dedication, but it can also lead to obsession. This dynamic can very quickly move away from a balanced perspective to one marked by *hybris*. In line with Hill et al. (2015), and taking competitive athletes as a focal point of analysis, within this dynamic of constant improvement, athletes can easily fall into obsessive behaviors in their day-to-day lives, presenting with a rigid mentality and a sense of constant dissatisfaction. This pressure and control is certainly mentally exhausting, and it can, in many cases, lead to anxiety disorders (Hill et. al., 2015: pp. 237, 238, 245).

As Perine points out (as cited in Vallet), the central role played by the gaze in the framework of bodybuilding gives the bodybuilder a permanent frustration which he

(she, or they) has to deal with . . . he (she, or they) wants to improve his (her, or their) body to reach the ideal body of the sport: maximum muscle mass, minimal fat, and water levels, and symmetry and equilibrium of the different muscles (Perine, 2010). (Vallet 2014, p. 211)

This dynamic of perpetual dissatisfaction more closely aligns with the myth of Sisyphus rather than the myth of Narcissus, which focuses on an infatuation with the image of oneself. Despite the time that is spent on the object-body in bodybuilding, there is a Sisyphean quality of condemnation about the practice. It involves constant work to modify, to change, to improve, and it is never enough. One is faced with permanent feelings of dissatisfaction, or, as Perine phrases it, “permanent frustration.” As Juza and Momcilovic also note:

There’s an anxiety of not being successful and a frustration in thinking, “it will never be permanent, I can never reach my goal.” So, it’s a very ambivalent logic and despite what people may think it’s not entirely narcissistic behaviour.⁵⁸ (Juza & Momcilovic, 2019, 02:50–03:44 min.)

It is in this controversial dialogue that I decided to develop the performance *Corporeal Turbulences: Between the Absurdity and Resistance*⁵⁹ to reflect in relation to these dynamics.

In any case, within contemporary consumer society, bodies are rewarded or penalized, even now, based on current ideals. Those changing ideals are culturally and historically dependent, but they ultimately govern this reward-punishment regime.

As I have already outlined, achieving this socially evaluated and consecrated body can lead to numerous negative behaviors. When this process occurs under the aegis of sports competition, however, these same behaviors can be a badge of honor, and the participant’s obsession can easily be masked and “justified.”

It is true, however, that even outside of this “justification,” contemporary Western society still tends to reward female bodies that are thin with a certain athletic tone (though not overly muscular) and male bodies that are corpulent and muscular, which continues to promote a binary separation between the two.

Within this binary, woman may use rigorous diets to lose weight, engage in obsessive behavior, and attempt to control their corporeal boundaries. Likewise, in cases involving male bodybuilders, pressure to alter the body’s image can occur when a participant remains unconvinced that he has attained enough muscle matter. This type of thinking can be associated with muscle dysmorphia or bigorexia.

And in some cases, this process—which was originally intended to help break through this duality, empowering women’s bodies and helping them subvert historical assumptions that have consistently portrayed the female body as weak—can also lead to a new form of slavery, or, as

⁵⁸ Translation and transcription provided by the subtitles of the same TV channel

⁵⁹ Link provided to visualize the piece. See Fontbona (2020).

Naomi Wolf observes, a dynamic that echoes the use of the iron maiden in the Middle Ages.

The modern version into whose trap women fall, either unintentionally or voluntarily, has the same rigidity and cruelty, as well as its euphemistic decoration. Contemporary culture directs attention to the image of the Iron Maiden, whilst censoring the face and body of real women. (Wolf, 2002)

Starting the Collaborative Journey with the Medical Team

Due to the pathology I have been suffering from since 2012, I have been regularly monitored by medical professionals in the field of gynecology and endocrinology. I have an ample amount of medical information about myself, including blood analyses, densitometric data, and gynecological ultrasounds. It is only recently, however, that I have resumed my sessions with therapists, and I have done so primarily as a way to complete this project. Given this fact, the content in this section of the research project is still at a very early stage of development, and I need more time to distill research material from it.

As I stated earlier, my primary goal is to carry out a psychological follow-up with these therapists according to a regular schedule I establish with each of them individually. The approach is designed to shed light on different aspects of behaviors that are considered pathological or that may lead to pathological behavior, in order to understand the reason for their appearance and the way that I manage them. By exploring these darker elements, it will also allow us to understand my reasoning behind the construction of my identity.

Understanding the Athletic Identity Constructed from the Pathological Face:

Triangulation of Psychologist Glances⁶⁰

Putting Light on Patterns of Eating Behavior —N. G.

Becoming aware of the difficulty of locating oneself in the face of bodily metamorphosis.
Choosing for Social Isolation. —J. P.

Awareness of overtraining, eternal self-demand, embodying burnout—

Difficulty listening to the body, ignoring warning signs of burnout. —M. B.

No one prepares you for what happens next—for how crap you feel in the weeks after competition. When you've got nothing to aim for . . . you've got no immediate goals, no

⁶⁰ To the extent that this section is under development, I have chosen to mention the three study vertices which will be developed throughout the research.

daily structure—you kinda feel a bit lost. You look in the mirror and you look pale, fat and bloated . . . you just feel sad and generally unmotivated. (Bunsell, 2013, p. 149)

Brief Contextual Note about the Parallels between Bodybuilding and Eating Disorders (Anorexia Nervosa) or Body Image (Muscle Dysmorphia)⁶¹

Anorexia

Eating, like training, for the bodybuilder is a constant process of self-monitoring, tied always to a search for new and improved practices. (Mansfield-McGin, 1993, p. 52)

The fact that bodybuilding’s ultimate goal is the construction of a very specific physique “with a strong emphasis on leanness and appearance” (Walberg & Johnston, 1991, p. 35), and the fact that the pressure of *somatophobia* continues to loom largely over the process (especially in the case of women), the sport of bodily modification can easily lead to dangerous and pathological behaviors related to diet and to the sport itself. These pathological behaviors achieve a certain kind of harmony through the use of obsessive behaviors by people with anorexia who exhibit a “preoccupation with eating and body fat, as exemplified by some of the eating behavior questions such as claimed to be ‘terrified of becoming fat’ or ‘being obsessed with food.’” (Walberg & Johnston, 1991, p. 35). In many cases, in addition to dietary restrictions, this behavior can involve increases in the level of exercise (in order to burn calories) and the use of “diet pills, diuretics, vomiting (or laxative abuse) for weight loss” (Walberg & Johnston, 1991 pp. 35–36).

Subjecting the body to the discipline of bodybuilding⁶¹ causes one to end up subjecting it to the parameters of obsessive improvement. When thinking about the body, and especially about ways to treat it, it also involves the body’s objectification (Bordo, 2003).

Similar to the case of the anorexic girl or woman, the female bodybuilder exhibits a similar drive to control her life. Though there are different motivations underlying the behavior, the practices are essentially the same. Unfortunately, because we have normalized behaviors like adhering to diets and controlling our bodies—which have become recurring social trends—the fact that these behaviors can lead to pathological extremes is often difficult to contemplate. As Fisher states, “to be considered a ‘normal’ female, one must be ‘at war’ with her body, constantly dieting to ‘ward off’ unwanted fat and obsessively focusing on one’s body” (Fisher, 1997, p. 154).

⁶¹ For an extended overview of muscle dysmorphia, anorexia nervosa, and their relationship to sport, see Olivardia (2001), Foster et al. (2014), Lopez-Cuautle et al. (2016), Murray et al. (2012, 2013), Rosen-Ramírez (1998), Torres Saura et al. (2013), and Davis & Scott Robertson (2000), Young et al. 2013.

Muscle Dysmorphia and Bigorexia

Similar to this dynamic that involves feelings of “never being enough” that are taken to the extreme, we can also draw certain parallels with muscle dysmorphia, popularly known as bigorexia.

According to the American Psychological Association, *muscle dysmorphia* is defined as follows:

a form of body dysmorphia characterized by chronic dissatisfaction with one’s muscularity and the perception that one’s body is inadequate and undesirable, although objective observers would disagree with such an assessment. This condition often leads to excessive exercising, steroid abuse, and eating disorders. It is typically found in males, especially bodybuilders. Also called bigorexia; reverse anorexia. (American Psychological Association, 2021)

This dissatisfaction and frustration with one’s own body causes the person suffering from this disorder to develop a toxic rhythm of extreme workouts and rigid dieting that aims to improve the current body shape because it is not perceived as being muscular or big enough. As Pope et al. (1997) suggest, it becomes a pathology when it ends up interfering with social activities by prioritizing training, when it leads to the avoidance of showing the body, or when it prioritizes strategies for generating changes in the body—often using chemical supplements, but also through intense training, even if one is injured—regardless of the costs. This pathology also has emotional effects, which in some cases can lead to anxiety and depression.

Some Possible Consequences of the Road Built through This Competitive Demand

My voice always emerges out of my own experience. When I shed light on the health consequences I have experienced personally, I do so from the perspective of someone who practices natural bodybuilding. Despite being dedicated to the practice of natural bodybuilding (free of PIEDs), some female athletes in this sport practice may experience changes to their skin that are very similar to those experienced by athletes who use anabolic-androgenic steroids. This includes effects that are considered to involve the “masculinization” of some features, including the appearance of facial hair (hirsutism) and the appearance of facial acne.⁶²

From my experience, after a long period of preparation, around one and a half or two years, and being aware that you have pushed your body in different ways, you know what makes

⁶² Roldán Martín et al. (2015) talk about these effects as a result of a hormonal alteration in relation to androgens, known as “hyperandrogism.” For more on the concept of hyperandrogenism, the factors that lead to its emergence, and its possible consequences, see Roldán Martín et al. (2015).

your body react against these restrictions. In my case, I started training when I was sixteen. But it was when I started my preparation, more seriously, following the guidelines from my former coach, when I was twenty-four, that my body started to react in an extreme way. From the beginning, I stopped having my period, in some cases that is normal. There are a lot of female athletes or gymnasts who also stop menstruating because of their rigorous diet and also, because of the overtraining. This problem is called amenorrhea, and it is common among different sports women, and also in women with unhealthy behaviors like anorexia. It happens because our biology detects an alarm, this stress situation —overtraining and lack of food—and our “system” considers that it is unsustainable to keep going on with our genetical predisposition, to give birth. So, as an alarm mechanism, it avoids the possibility of getting pregnant.

After this most stressful time, after the competition, in the recovery process, most athletes regain their weight, and their period also returns. But not always. In my case, despite not taking any kind of chemical supplement like hormones, anabolic steroids, or any other kind of substances, seven years since my first serious preparation, I still have amenorrhea. I have experienced different phases in my life regarding the physical preparation, and I have tried to do the post-competition phase as well as possible in order to recover it, but it never happens.⁶³ I try to gain weight and recover my fat levels, but it does not affect that area. Some doctor suggested I should take birth-control pills in order to recover my period, but I rejected taking them. (Fontbona, 2019)

The Female Athlete TRIAD

López-Cáceres (2011) defines the female athlete triad as follows:

The female athlete triad is defined as the interrelations among the energetic availability, the menstrual function and the bone mineral density, and can cause severe clinical consequences as eating disorders (ED), functional hypothalamic amenorrhea and osteoporosis. (p. 1462)

The succession of these phenomena is due to the mixture of different factors. Primarily, it is due to putting the body through intense exercise, which creates an energy deficit. Sustained over time, this can cause alterations in the gonadal axis, which results in menstrual disorders and hypoestrogenism.

It is well-known that the strenuous exercise involved in bodybuilding training can have

⁶³ After writing this article, I was able to regain my period for a short period of time. This was due to weight gain; from the time of a competition in November 2017 to when the menstruation returned in February 2019, I gained thirty kilograms. I also regained more normalized stress levels in terms of my lifestyle. Nevertheless, I eventually lost my period again, returning to an amenorrheic state that was still ongoing as of May 31, 2021.

various effects on one's menstrual cycle. These alterations are different in each case. They can depend on a number of factors, including the sports practice (it tends to be more frequent in runners, swimmers, and ballet dancers (De Souza et al., 1994; Sentamans, 2008)); the volume and intensity of training and the rate at which they increase (De Souza et al., 1994, p. 195); the training person's physical condition; their genetical predisposition (which account for menstrual irregularities in their cycle if they exist); their physical and psychological stress (De Souza et al., 1994; Sentamans, 2008); nutritional deficits in diet; and the decrease of body fat.

There is an accumulating body of knowledge that associates intense exercise training with a broad spectrum of menstrual cycle alterations: luteal insufficiency in cycles of normal length, shortened luteal phases, menstrual irregularity, anovulation, and amenorrhea.⁶⁴ (De Souza et al., 1994, pp. 185–186)

This menstrual dysfunction, or amenorrhea, can cause fertility and reproductive problems, which are usually temporary, but it can also cause other risky and irreversible problems like osteoporosis⁶⁵ (which is very conditioned by decreasing levels of estrogen hormones) and cardiovascular disease (De Souza et al., 1994, pp. 185–186).

In an amenorrheic state, when the body is constantly subjected to an intense training regimen, the bones can be in a less-than-optimal situation, which can lead to osteopenia or osteoporosis, where fractures become more likely.

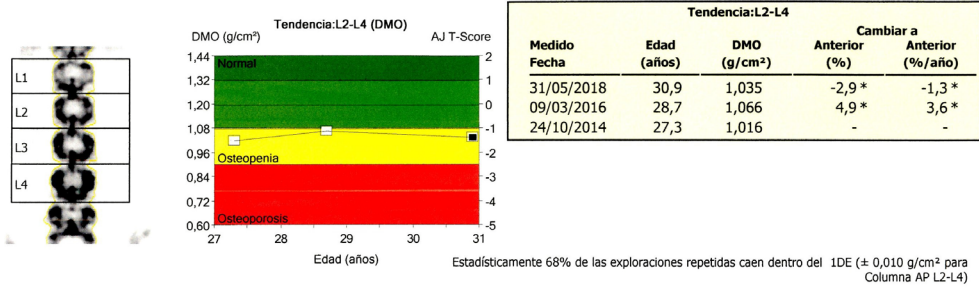
In fact, as we can see in the image below, which comes from a 2018 densitometric reading, I have personally been diagnosed with lumbar osteopenia due to this dysfunction.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ To learn more about amenorrhea, see De Souza et al. (1994), Fiszlejder (2009), and Fritz-Speroff, 2011.

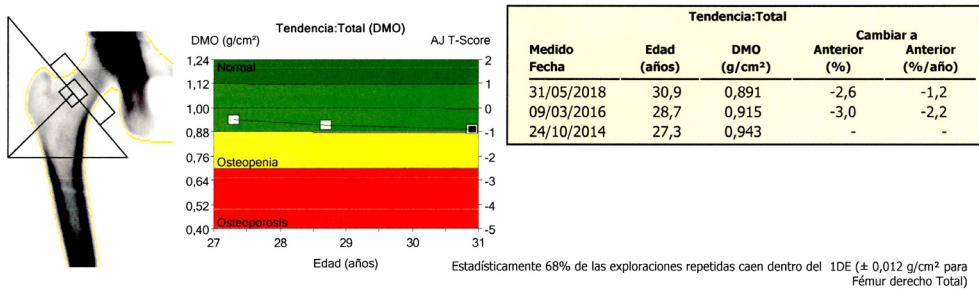
⁶⁵ Decreasing bone density.

⁶⁶ I am currently undergoing another densitometry procedure to assess the current state of my bone density.

Paciente:	FONTBONA MOLA, ISABEL	ID del paciente:	218934
Fecha de nacimiento:	08/06/1987 30,9 años	Médico tratante:	DR. LOPEZ
Estatura / Peso:	166,0 cm 59,0 kg	Medido:	31/05/2018 15:32:48 (12,20)
Sexo / Origen étnico:	Mujer Blanco	Analizado:	31/05/2018 16:23:47 (12,20)



Esta imagen no es para diagnóstico



Esta imagen no es para diagnóstico

I. Fontbona densitometry showing osteopenia. May 31, 2018

Nutritional deficits can also lead to energy drain. As Warren (1990) explains, an “imbalance between elevated energy expenditure and inadequate energy intake may modify the endocrine status of some athletes, resulting in menstrual dysfunction” (cited in De Souza et al. (1994: 196)). It is for this reason that parallels can easily be drawn between athletes who are conditioned by a very restrictive diet and women/girls who are of menstruating age but who suffer from eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia. In both cases, there are consequences to menstrual function due to alterations in the hypothalamic mechanism (the inhibition of the pituitary hypothalamus (De Souza et al., 1994; Sentamans, 2008)), which usually lead to amenorrhea.

So far, the gynecologists and endocrinologists I have worked with over the last 9 years that I have experienced amenorrhea have all recommended that I use contraceptive pills as an aid to reverse amenorrhea’s effects. Because these pills can be used to correct a lack of estrogen, they may possibly help reverse deficiencies that are present. Personally, I have always rejected this solution because I do not want to take any type of hormone. But I have also rejected contraceptive pills because I see amenorrhea as the visible answer to a problem. Taking pills would only mask the problem without addressing its root source (although, it is not completely certain that taking the pills would, in fact, recover the period).

On my last visit (May 18, 2021) carried out with Dr. F. M. (DX), a specialist in endocrinological gynecology, and especially to amenorrhea pathology, she provided me with one of the most honest and harsh assessments of my problem:

Recovering the menstruation if there is no reproductive intention may not be essential, but avoiding the greatest risk of the consequences of not having it. It is necessary to protect the bone from loss of bone density through estrogen and to protect the uterus with progesterone. . . Recovering the period in a case like yours would require something deeper than hormonal treatment, to recover your basic ovarian function would require a total break with your lifestyle (virtual visit, 18.05.2021, with Dr. F. M. (DX))

Women who suffer from the female athlete triad sometimes experience fatigue, anemia, depression, bone fractures due to stress, a decreased ability to concentrate, an intolerance to cold temperatures, hypothermia, the loss of color in the feet and hands, sore throat, tooth enamel erosion, distension, abdominal pain, constipation, dry skin, edema in the face and extremities, dizziness, bradycardia, hypotension, chest pain, and many other symptoms (Carreira 2019).

López-Cáceres (2011, pp. 1468–1470) points out some of the possible risk factors that can lead to this state. The rigid personality of the perfectionist, which is often found in athletes, is relevant here, along with a sense of bodily dissatisfaction. In cases where the athlete has participated in the world of professional/competitive sport from an early age, they can easily fall into this state. It is also true that athletes in certain sports are more likely to experience this pathology than others; this is especially true of those athletes who participate in endurance sports or those sports where it is advantageous to possess a body in a prepubescent condition. In these sports, increases in the volume and/or intensity of physical activity is often accompanied by dietary restrictions and the use of weight-loss methods, including, among other effects, taking diuretics and laxatives, vomiting, intermittent fasting, fluid restriction, the use of weight loss pills, and exercising to an exhausting level.

Other Alterations Experienced: Hormonal Alterations and Their Effects

Curiously, in my case, despite being an athlete dedicated to the practice of natural bodybuilding—which means I do not use any chemical supplements—some of the consequences I have experienced are very similar to the consequences experienced by bodybuilders who use anabolic-androgenic steroids, particularly in terms of those side effects that are considered to be a product of “masculinization,” such as the appearance of facial hair (hirsutism) and the appearance of facial acne.



Visible effects of hormonal imbalance. Facial Acne. Photographer: Sergi Pérez.
December 2020

In this continual quest of bodily modification and control, there have been setbacks, such as the menstrual disorders I have discussed previously. But with the intention of being able to sustain this status, there are also other consequences, or other mechanisms that I have personally adopted, that I have tried to analyze from a certain distance (though that is difficult to locate when I am still reproducing these patterns) in order to be aware of them.

For example, because I am in a constant state of both physical and mental stress, I constantly suffer from lack of sleep. I normally train 2 hours a day, 7 days a week, so I am only able to sleep for about 4 hours each day. This means sleep cannot perform its main function, which involves restoration—that is, releasing growth hormones, one of the main factors in the reparative process. That puts me in a permanent state of alertness that my body detects and responds to through different means, including headaches, fatigue, exhaustion (for example, waking up at 4:30 a.m. every day), an irritable or depressed mood, and different hormonal imbalances, like amenorrhea, that are conditioned by that.⁶⁷ This also does not take into account the consequences of sustained stress over time, especially as it is related to the use of cortisol. As Kippel and Blackstien (2019) point out, “chronically elevated cortisol levels destroy muscle fibers, suppress immunity, affect memory and concentration, weaken bone mineral density and contribute to cancer.”

In the process of preparing for competition, there are times when one’s health is not the main priority. Instead, more focus is placed on strategies that will surprise the body, rather than dealing with concerns about whether what one is doing is healthy. Particularly in the final weeks leading up to competition, I have often experienced effects including “feeling very cold, very dry skin, lack or diminished ability to sweat during exercise, hair loss, irregular menses, constipation, unexplained

⁶⁷ To know more about the relationship between stress and amenorrhea, see Genazzani et. al. (2016).

fatigue, depression and poor concentration” (Kippel & Blackstien, 2019), effects that are all related to thyroid gland alterations.

Future Research

Is Athletic Identity a construction more in tune with the Hercules’ muscles or should it be better associated with the Achilles Heel weakness? (Brewer et al., 1993)

Given the early state of this project, I believe that I still need about a year of research before I can reach strong conclusions about it. I believe it is appropriate to continue with medical appointments in order to weave together, using different perspectives, a more kaleidoscopic analysis of this darker side of sports practice in the field of competition, placing special emphasis on the process of identity construction that occurs through the experience.

Although the health consequences are obvious, on a personal level, I still think that on balance, constructing my identity through the practice of bodybuilding has given me more than it has taken away. I am well aware that I should closely monitor the consequences of amenorrhea sustained over time and how its expression evolves, both in terms of its visible and invisible effects. From the very first appearance of my amenorrhea, I have also refused to use any medication, and I will definitely need to assess what I will do along these lines over the next year.

In turn, I am also aware of the risks involved in becoming addicted to this practice. My identity has been shaped through bodybuilding since the age of 16 (I am currently almost 34), and much of my life has been determined by my relationship to the sport and how I perform it on a social level. As highlighted by Brewer et al. (1993, p. 239), “the rigorous demands of training and competition often require competitive athletes to narrow their external activities.” There are sacrifices and costs, beyond the health effects, of participating in bodybuilding when it is constructed in this way.

I think about my day-to-day activities based on my sports practice. I organize my weeks and days by prioritizing training and by distributing work and other social obligations (though I often avoid them) so they do not interfere with my training regimen. As Baudrillard notes:

the body is then subjected to a labour of investment (solicitude, obsession) which, once the myth of liberation that act as cover is peeled away, doubtless represents a more profoundly alienated labour than the exploitation of the body as labour power. (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 132)

From my experience, I still believe that the identity I have built through the practice of bodybuilding lies in the ambiguity of two terrains—between the absurd and the resistance to it (or empowerment), between narcissism and Sisyphean discourse, between the strength of Hercules and

the weakness of the Achilles heel. And in line with Fisher (1997, p. 135):

Ultimately, bodybuilding is a context fraught with contradictions, compromises, and tensions that are often excluded between mainstream and marginalized femininities; bodybuilding empowers and at the same time enslaves women.

Pieces of the Broken Mirror⁶⁸

Mirror, mirror . . . What price beauty? What beauty do you see? “She does not see her beauty.” . . . But can one ever see beauty through a distorted mirror?

—Marcia Ann Gillespie

“Mirror Mirror” (Weitz 2003)

I have often felt repulsed in relation to my body, and I have damaged it in different ways. Within the framework of sport, this exhaustion and abuse is often justified through an emphasis on discipline and the need to prepare for a competition. This is even more pronounced in the sport of bodybuilding, where this discipline guides the transformation process. Everything is scheduled and controlled to determine very specific and premeditated changes, as if the body were a sculpture. In this control, I feel comfortable . . .

Why do I have this somewhat destructive relationship with my body?

Being aware of this internal dialogue, I have attempted in this exploration to more fully understand my identity. It is not a question of gender identity or sexual orientation, but it is true that there is still something in me that leads me to a certain identity conflict that I am seeking to resolve through my artistic research.

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⁶⁸ This synchronicity between a fragmented identity built through body modification and the reading of the fragments that come from a broken mirror is a relationship that has been explored and analyzed by other authors, artists, and even athletes, including Francesca Steele (2019). See Steele (2019)

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Appendix: Embodied Pathologies

Appendix 1: *TRANSMOGRIFICATION. Between Carving and Bulking. Destroying an Evanescent Body Searching for Self-Identity*



Transmogrification. Between Carving and Bulking. Destroying an Evanescent Body searching for Self-Identity.
February 2019 – February 2021. Isa Fontbona and Sergi Pérez (photographer)
Selection (left to right): 2019 February 08; 2019 April 24; 2020 February 28; 2020 November 04.



Transmogrification. Between Carving and Bulking. Destroying an Evanescent Body searching for Self-Identity.
February 2019 – February 2021. Isa Fontbona and Sergi Pérez (photographer)
Selection (left to right): 2019 February 08; 2020 January 30; 2020 September 18; 2020 December 03



Transmogrification. Between Carving and Bulking. Destroying an Evanescent Body searching for Self-Identity.
February 2019 – February 2021. Isa Fontbona and Sergi Pérez (photographer)
Selection (left to right): 2019 March 22; 2020 January 30; 2020 October 02; 2020 December 03.



Transmogrification. Between Carving and Bulking. Destroying an Evanescent Body searching for Self-Identity.
February 2019 – February 2021. Isa Fontbona and Sergi Pérez (photographer)
Selection (left to right): 2019 June 14; 2020 January 30; 2020 October 02; 2020 December 03.

Appendix 2: Body Reflections

June 2018, 54kg (119 lbs.)–February 2019, 84 kg (185 lbs.)

Done on purpose, but in any case, it was turbulent and painful.



*Pre-contest body (dehydration and extreme low-fat levels)
Photographer: Buddy Schwellinger. November 2017, Bordeaux (France).*

Gaining weight, I recovered my period. I had lost it (amenorrhea) for almost eight years due to the frantic pace of my life, the rigor on my diet, and the intense level of training, but especially because of the mental stress that resulted from the pressure I imposed on myself. In fact, maybe I didn't want to get my period back either, because I hadn't felt the slightest interest in feeling "feminine" for years. For years, I had built a wall around my emotions, which made that interest in femininity totally dispensable. I preferred instead to compose a set of goals and fight alone to achieve them, depending solely on my own effort and discipline.

Trying to avoid being emotionally conditioned with a simple balance number, I spent more than a year without weighing myself. When I faced this fact again, and I realized how many kilos (pounds) I had gained: 30kg (66lbs). Despite having done it so premeditatedly and focused on my ultimate goal: to go on stage to compete again and to show up a better version, I felt disgusted, hating what I had done and what my body had turned into, and in a way, what I had turned into myself. That's why I was going step-by-step through the reverse process, cutting food in the diet,

changing the training system. Everything I was doing was in the aim of polishing the material I had obtained. That's when I felt most in my comfort zone.

I become aware of this; it makes me angry to continue being so conditioned to a simple number, the number coming from the scales; as well as to the limits of my flesh. I don't like the fact that what I feel is emotionally determined by the fluctuations in my body, the dimensions it occupies, the weight it has.

It baffles me to locate my identity in my body because it is constantly changing. I don't feel like it's even that half anorectic body (assumed in my last competitive experimentation carried out by myself as my own coach), but neither is that body resulting in months of recovery and growth. I'm not any of both extremes, but I don't know what nuance to place myself. Maybe I'm all of them . . . "I am change." It's disconcerting.

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13. *Cláudio Alexandre S. CARVALHO****Therapeutic intervention in high-performance sport. A philosophical inquiry.**

1. The benefits of sporting practice in health, well-being and longevity have long been recognized⁶⁹, but sometimes, particularly in high-performance sports, its high loads and continuous pressures require a distinction between the “health through sports” and what the sport physician Richard Rost termed “health in spite of sports” (1994).

Physical, mental and spiritual probations and suffering seem to be inherent to high-performance sports and a condition for their exceptional achievements (*e.g.* Wilms 2016). Injuries and strains such as motivational stress are accounted for in training regimes and competition, as in the wider structure and environment of professional organizations. Sports psychiatry, psychology and counselling have become partners to (when not part of) sporting organizations, aiming for the prevention, rehabilitation and optimization of the athletes’ conditions (Begel 2000; Markser 2011). However, in some cases the therapeutic medium has no linear nor quick solutions, leading to the discovery and treatment of new (and unforeseen) problems as a condition for effective relief and capacitation of the sportsperson.

The demands and the commitment required by therapeutic intervention are frequently experienced by the sporting organization as strange to its internal logic and processes of optimization and competing. This may happen in the treatment of somatic trauma, particularly in cases where there are pressures to make (therapeutic) ends meet, for instance in order to participate in events where the “stakes are high”, even accepting health risks and later complications (Polsky 1998)⁷⁰, or when *restitutio ad integrum* is impossible⁷¹.

However, due to the non-trivial nature of the problems and the uncertain development and outcome of interventions, cases where athletes experience existential or mental suffering, crises that

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Moderate sporting practice is estimated to increase life expectancy in about two to four years (Reimers *et al.* 2012). Based on a similar calculation, M. Seligman hypothesized that “[p]erhaps God does not subtract the time spent exercising from your allotted time on earth” (1994: 193).

⁷⁰This is the case for instance in the resort to invasive methods, for instance the resort to infiltrations, requiring informed consent (Orchard 2001).

⁷¹Sim (1980) provided a summary of the problem of divided loyalties in sport’s medicine.

culminate in the inability to compete, are significantly more complex. In the last decades, there has been a growing attention to the incidence of mental problems and dysfunctions in sports (Gouttebarga *et al.* 2019), frequently raised by cases where renowned elite athletes, for years accustomed to strict regimes including the conciliation of sporting practice with academic duties and the intense exposure in the media, succumb to mental problems. As a result, there is an undisputed growth and improvement of resources aiming the monitoring, referral and assistance of athletes (and former athletes) experiencing mental problems. However, the allotment of therapeutic resources for assessment and improvement of athletes' mental illness and dysfunction are still object of various resistances and even mistrust, defensive attitudes that may be shared by anyone that takes part in sport's culture, including athletes struggling with those problems. There are structural reasons for these attitudes. Therapeutic work may touch on latent conflicts of the organization, sometimes demanding its evaluation and even restructuring (Hays 2010), at the managerial level, including, among others, executive, human resources and coaching departments. At the same time, the athlete's admission of difficulties is frequently experienced as evidence of the group's failure to assist or support her. Additionally the exploration of personal suffering as it occurs in dialogue-based forms of therapy, may be stigmatized as self-indulgent, even when there are various indications that this may be the best way to relieve come to terms with dysfunction. These three aspects may explain why only in recent years has the attention to mental health in sports surpassed the priority given to its intrinsic values and goals, *ie* an orientation for the optimization of performance and/or results (Glick, Newmark & Reardon 2013)⁷².

Athletes, clubs and federations want to be sure that therapeutic interventions acknowledge the context and goals that differentiate high-performance sport, integrating the ability to cope with the demands and burdens required for higher achievements. Depending on indicators and sensitivity used in monitoring athlete's mental issues, programs that attempt to trivialize a therapeutic approach may be experienced as an intrusion on the sporting ethos and the complex process building of the sport's persona, a Trojan horse which, supported in external indicators of wellbeing, imposes a pervasive regime which weakens or at least softens a hard build character oriented by higher goals.

The public is perplexed when consecrated athletes of the stature of Michael Phelps or Simone Biles, renowned by their superhuman accomplishments confess to have experienced mental ordeals associated with the competition. As if those accomplishments and the financial and social gains that came with them, should grant a sense of personal harmony with spheres, immune with to the feeling that something has been lost along the way, the sense of purposelessness, or the building up of renewed anxieties to stay on top. Since their biography is decisively moulded by sporting practice,

⁷²Major changes are taking place which revise the primacy of winning at all costs and the overwhelming duality success / failure. A prime example is the "Mentally Fit Helpline". Part of the Athlete365 project (<https://olympics.com/athlete365/mentally-fit/>) created by the IOC in 2020, it provided an unprecedented support to athletes' which experience mental problems during and after the Tokyo Olympiads.

even when mental problems are originated in factors external to the context of training and competition, they are always moulded by those demands which (not necessarily but) frequently aggravate them leading to identity and motivational issues. In the present work we consider forms of psychotherapy that rely on the patient's (or client's) performative and ethical role in the treatment process, aiming a transformation that necessarily involves the discovery and mobilization of resources of the larger sporting environment.

Therapeutic procedures offer a different (and necessary) perspective on the conditions of commitment of the sportsperson with the organization (Baron *et al.* 2013; Kühnle 2017) and common goals, prevalent in the more demanding periods of great competitions, most notably at the peak of the Olympic cycle. In recent years, instead of being considered the sole responsibility of the athlete, therapy has been frequently integrated in the latter's responsibilities towards the athletes, particularly regarding their integrity, information and privacy as patients (Waddington & Roderick 2002).

This particular intersection between sport's organization and therapeutic system constitute an important sector of the "moral laboratory" of sports⁷³, touching on issues such as the management of privacy, the autonomy of the patient, the resort to doping and the pervasiveness of enhancement technics. These problems cut across the internalist and externalist views of sport. They present some of the consequences of its inner and constitutive logic (and values), but also its insertion in a society which conditions that activity, most notably politically, economically, but also medically and, as we will see, therapeutically.

Demanding the interruption or weakening of sports as a perfecting practice of self-determination⁷⁴, disturbing its space and routines, therapy constitutes as a special system of observation of the sports organization. Directly or indirectly, the approach to the athlete's experience will entail the consideration of larger tensions of contemporary sports: avocational vs vocational conceptions of purpose and excellence; authentic involvement in sports vs market values⁷⁵; love of the game vs primacy of winning; ideal health vs overachievement. Resisting a critical approach that privileges one of these sides, we hold that therapeutic work induces a path of

⁷³In his most recent book, William J. Morgan recovered this idea specifying that by it he does not intend to highlight sporting organization as the ultimate realm of moral rectitude, but the acknowledgement that "sport remains one of the few places left in contemporary society where people's moral resolve is challenged rather than assumed, where the easy and comforting presumption that most of us can be relied on to do the right thing when it really matters—because at bottom we are all basically good people—is put to the test rather than passed off as a given" (2020: 2).

⁷⁴Considering the question of "What Makes Athletic Excellence Good", Morgan argued that "sports, and kindred perfectionist practices, are valuable because they affirm our freedom to shape and contour social practices suited to our specific self-determination, and to find sources of meaning and intrinsic value that make life worth living in the first place" (2011).

⁷⁵"I will claim that nothing short of breaking the dominance of money over sport is likely to change appreciably the present day culture of sport. This will not require that we forbid the market from operating in sport at all, but that we significantly curtail its influence, in short, that we learn to appreciate the value of sport not the (market) price it is able to fetch." (Morgan 2010).

clarification of those tensions, through the acknowledgement of the bifacial nature of motives.

An alternative route for this inquiry would consist in diagnosing a widespread commercialization of sports practice and achievements, leading to a informalization of its inherent spirituality, and consequently on the role of therapy as a compensation for shallow and mundane commitments. However, the “somatization of ascetism” (Sloterdijk 2009, pp. 133 ff) we witness in elite sport, is far from the ordinary achievements, bearing the heaviness of a vertical tension.

That burden is aggravated in environments where sports appear as a national goal. Adapting Clausewitz’ aphorism, in such circumstances sports is considered the “continuation of politics by other means” (Xu 2006), pivotal in the reinforcement of the imaginary traits of collective identity and achievement. But philothimy is also pervasive in amateur competitive practice, something that seems to be confirmed by the dissemination of consumption of drugs and the recourse to enhancement technologies as ways to further improve one’s capacities. These evidences may be a hard blow to those that consider amateur practice to be the last bastion of the ideal of sports, with the individual abandonment to the autonomy of the game, exempted from doping, cheating and foul play. But at the same time, along with the social reproduction of some objectionable “examples” displayed through the media, amateur resort to those practices results from a pressure to win or overcome the limits. While unfair and unlawful, the resource to doping reflects not only the widespread chemicalization of society, but also a ruthless drive to achievements that is inherent to competition. In these conditions, an equilibrium between the recognition of the technological dimension of man and an always difficult regulation of the access to those techniques is required⁷⁶. This will also include an (always provisory) determination of what counts as admissible techniques of therapy and enhancement.

2.

Commitment and fitness of its members have since long been a recurrent worry of various organizations, leading to the adoption of various technics and programs to prevent, identify and correct signs of disease or demotivation. Those diseases are sometimes related to the vertical tension of a certain exceptional performance. In the emblematic case of *acedia* within the monastic setting, it concerns a professional hazard, a dizziness regarding the heights to which the “athlete of the spirit”⁷⁷ is summoned.

⁷⁶In this context, D. Macauley (1999) highlighted the contrast between the objective nature of norms inherent to sports games and the uncertainty that surround ethical regulation: “When the quantitative world of sport meets the qualitative world of medical ethics, confusion reigns. The world of sport would like us to apply absolute rules to qualitative variables and is frustrated by our collective indecision” (p. 293).

⁷⁷Resorting to Saint Paul’s sporting metaphor in *Corinthians* 9:24-26.

As “total institutions”, the first monastic organizations required from their members a cut with the attachments of their former life. Internal hierarchy and division of functions imposed a complete moral and religious conversion of their member’s personality. At the same time, they were the first to understand how dispositional conditions -distress or depression-, could become contagious, spreading among their members. Therefore, they developed technologies to identify, segregate and treat those affected. Dialogue and conferences but also transparent confession of one’s difficulties, might provide the spiritual father or counsellor with a more apt form of control, turning it understandable and providing a sense of orientation, still conceived as a horizontal scaffolding that prepares for the higher (Carvalho 2021). In some cases, particularly in the Jesuit enterprise, the temperaments were taken into account in order to adapt individual aptitudes and character traits to specific tasks, but also to capacitate to the “service”⁷⁸, beginning with the induced awareness of one’s passions and debilities that should be counteracted (Carvalho 2021b). Here it is important to note that these were conditions associated with the particular achievements expected by the individual, in exceptional conditions of stress, clearly separated from those of ordinary society⁷⁹.

Some of those diagnostic, prophylactic, and healing techniques were adapted in a completely new field of practice. Therapy, particularly psychoanalysis, requires that its own members go through treatment in order to become practitioners. However, constituting a differentiated system specialized in psychic “work”, therapeutic offers are directed to clients outside the therapeutic organization. Although they constitute themselves as service, therapeutic interventions imply a suspension of everyday life, requiring a certain level of socialization and adaptation to particular tasks. Some therapeutic offers, such as the major forms of psychoanalysis, aim for a complete transformation of the personality structure. Others, as it occurs in variants of system therapy, aim for the resolution of a precise problem or dysfunction, resembling psycho-pedagogical intervention, where the client must acquire new competences. In both cases, therapeutic encounter implies a neutralization of the influence of outsiders that stimulates reflexion on duties and expectations⁸⁰.

3.

In classical Greece, sports played an important role in the integral formation of the citizen, as an exercise moved by the good and the beauty, including the healthy. As part of the Paideia, Gymnastics training was separated from the excess of Olympics and the eco that resonates backwards “faster, higher, stronger”. At the same time, we may highlight a contrast between

⁷⁸In accordance with the fourth vow introduced by the Society of Jesus.

⁷⁹In early modernity, similar hazards are identified in the lives of princes, scholars and artists, and organizational provisions and guidance will become evident.

⁸⁰Since Horkheimer’s *Studien über Autorität und Familie* (1936), critical theory and sociology of culture, come to recognize the subversive role of therapy, particularly psychoanalysis, on the family and bourgeois values.

medieval instituted practices of competition based on the code of honour and the normative regulation and sportsmanship of the modern games (Elias 2008)⁸¹. This is reflected not only in the preparation and commitment of competitors, involved in a now metaphorical life and death struggle, but also the comprehensive role of referees, organizations and the identificatory mechanisms of spectators and fans.

Moved by a positivist mentality firmly disapproved by Coubertin, sports medicine goes back to the renaissance of modern sports. The involvement of new disciplines in sports therapy is evidence of a kind of intervention that is no longer confined to a reinstating of original physical and mental condition of the athlete (a *restitutio ad integrum*), but aims to higher forms of sporting and personal improvement. In this context, a differentiated system developed a communication medium sensitive to psychic distress and communicative dysfunctions.

The organization may prepare its members to ‘open lines of communication’, providing support related to the more obvious stressors, identifying signs of distress and promoting self-care. As it happens in other social systems, most notably in the family, the members of the organization may be able to resolve things on their own, providing friendship, moral support and guidance, eventually reducing the pressures of accomplishment (anxiety) including the impact of frustrations. The similarity with family communication is not casual. High-performance sports demand a deep commitment, with long and regular periods of interaction, oriented by demanding tasks and shared goals. In some cases, this may involve a complete conversion of one’s character. In these conditions, all the aspects of the athlete’s personality become relevant for the organization’s communication. This intensity, which in most cases begins at a very young ages, fosters deep relations of interdependency substantiated in surrogate forms of parental and fraternal bounding. The colleagues and the staff of the sport organization may certainly provide help for difficulties of adaptation or self-questioning. This remains a prerogative of the trainer which is entrusted with the formation of the athlete’s competitive character and will⁸². Here, we must not minimize the transference dimensions at play in the relation of training as a space of reciprocal projection of expectations⁸³.

⁸¹Here we must be cautious, since N. Elias larger theory on the civilizing process promotes an excessive contrast between violent disputes considered “crude” manifestation of the primal passions of love and hate and the “sportization” of competition, initially under the power of the state, holder of the monopoly of violence, and latter under the regulations of national federations. For the problems of discontinuity Elias’ thesis, especially those concerning the display (and concept) of violence, see v.g. Loudcher (2020).

⁸²Something propitiated by an asymmetric relation where the trainer provides a “secure sense of above and below” (Sloterdijk 2009, p. 94).

⁸³In the Tokyo Olympiads, the world witnessed German judoka Martyna Trajdos being shaken and slapped by her coach before entering competition. The episode occasioned multiple condemnations on the resort to such violent methods. The 32-year-old athlete stated that she had required such action in order to be awake for the combat: “Don’t worry. It makes me awake”. From the outside, the act was condemned as an intolerable form of conditioning that could not be justified by the sporting goals. This is only a glimpse of a particular logic of trust and motivation between trainer and trainee that might seem irrational from the outside.

In some cases, despite the comrade's help, the problem or dysfunction persist, sometimes reinforcing primary and gains⁸⁴ associated with the symptoms of a condition to which both the subject and the closest ones are normally oblivious. Given this inability to access and confront blockages or conflicts, help may be needed from an external and independent source, substantiated in the figure of the therapist or counsellor. Nonetheless, significant others are frequently credited with important role in the course of therapeutic programs.

Even with the reduction of the spectre of stigmatization, there remains a certain resistance or immune response to such interventions, also within the world of sports. This is understandable, since they are associated with demands that distance sporting practice from the unconditional commitment with the exceptional, working as a confirmation that it became reduced to a job among others, equating the sportsman's vocation with that of a regular "homme de metier" (Caillois 1967, p. 36)⁸⁵. This pervasiveness of therapeutic discourses, horizontal supports or dependencies that soften a deeper inner commitment with the higher team goals, may vary across societies, cultures and sporting practices (McEwen & Young, 2011)⁸⁶.

Therapists may be added to that large group of sporting assistants that Sloterdijk called the "indispensable parasites of sport" (2009, p. 158)⁸⁷. This parasitic dimension of therapy does not concern a regular dependency, but the fact that its processes must escape the immune resistances of the system of reference (the client), "feed" themselves on its blockages and purposes, thereby diagnosing and treating them. In this case, the articulation of the client's complain always concerns the operative principles of sporting organizations and its semantics of performativity. In order to circumvent these personal and organizational resistances, their exclusion as parasite, therapy has been trying to transcend a complementary or assisting role, reframing itself as a trivial part sporting processes. However, unless their programs annul themselves entirely in the service of the partial goals of sports, in case of which they would no longer be required, the tension remains.

⁸⁴Primary gains of the disease refer how its symptoms, albeit distressing, suppress or defuse other problems, such as confronting a problem or conflict. Secondary gains of a disease are the social advantages associated with the symptoms or the conformity to the role of patient, eventually contributing to their reinforcement. This distinction was first conceptualized by Freud in his writings "Zur Einleitung der Behandlung" (1913).

⁸⁵This results from the transition from sport as the occasion of pure expenditure to the professional game of "hommes de metier", a specialization.

⁸⁶The culture of risk acceptance, with the discarding of pain and injuries, may lead athletes, federations and fans to normalize various health problems. In some cases, cultural change can only be achieved through regulation and institutional sensitization that raises awareness of the impact on health. See, for instance, Murray *et al.* (2015) on the general acceptance of concussions in various sports.

⁸⁷Sloterdijk was referring to all the supporting functions necessary to the renaissance of modern Olympism.

4.

We are dealing here with the therapeutic tension regarding the commitment to the athlete's problem and aspirations and the goals of the organization. Those interests overlap, but the tension between the self-fulfilment of the athlete and the optimization of performance may require a precarious balance. The divergent goals between therapy and sports are sometimes present in the approach to physical trauma, but are made more evident still in mental problems like burnout or depression, where there is a frequent overlap of personal and professional motives that became a source of distress. At the same time, the approach to these problems is marked by a higher uncertainty regarding the magnitude of the problem, its causes and the possible modes of treatment.

Therapeutic interventions face the non-transparency of internal states, compensating it with a transformative form of asymmetric communication that is prolonged through time, not only in therapy but also in education (Luhmann 1991, pp. 26-7). Therapeutic communication proceeds through recursions to the original problem(s) and key-themes brought to the sessions. Instead of an inability to translate its theoretical assumptions regarding human healing, the medium's "structural technological deficit" (Luhmann 1979, p. 347), is a consequence of the therapeutic refusal to trivialize or control the patient. Although behavioural and bodily indications may be taken into account, there is no direct access to the mental or existential problem and this must be constructed through insights and reflections gained in therapeutic work. This requires a certain division of the speaking patient, only taking place after an always transitory suspension of defence mechanisms. The interpretation of the client's "speech" favours the observation of hidden aspects of the present problem, revealing unconscious traumas, blockages or unresolved conflicts. At the same time, and this is particularly determinant in this context, the normative expectations of her roles shall also be accounted. Therefore, therapy aims to favour the openness of oneself, examining one's desires and commitments, as part of an integration of dissociated parts of the personality and/or conflicts, both of which frequently related with the sporting organization.

The main problem is that, in various therapeutic models, intervention entails a negative or phase, occasioning new problems in the revaluation of one's path and the rediscovery of oneself (e.g. Carvalho 2019, pp. 152-155). Additionally, therapeutic disclosures or insights may touch on sensitive issues concerning the organization, presenting a burden on key people insider and outside the structure. In sum, under conditions of high uncertainty, the costs of change may prevent the steps to improvement, be it through rationalization or, as it is generally the case in therapy, through the work of accommodation (Luhmann 2019, pp. 39-40).

In the course of therapy, an organization may not only acknowledge signs of mental distress or illness on its members, consider how these menace its vitality and image, and, in exceptional cases,

undertake (or promote) an examination on if and how it contributed to those dysfunctions.

These approaches are congruent with the psychoanalytic setting, but constructivist forms of therapy, no longer committed with predetermined forms of individual adjustment, stimulate a more direct reassessment of the client's duties towards the sporting organization. Therapeutic dialogue over the desires, commitments and goals of the patient, may enable a reflexion over emotions and deep seated beliefs in the relation with others and in individual interpretation of normative schemes. Second-order observation gathers the characteristics of that transformative practice of dialogue taking place in the therapeutic medium.

Immediate losses may result in latter consistent rewards. Therapy can be a longer path to (re)embrace sporting competition as an overwhelming practice. Such work of the examination of one's goals assume an extraordinary relevance in career transitions from athlete to manager or executive roles or the discovery and acceptance of a "less heroic existence" (Gumbrecht 2005, p. 161)⁸⁸. At the same time, it may present an alternative path for the athlete's recovery of what the Olympic athlete Pablo Morales termed the "special feeling of getting lost in focused intensity" (Gumbrecht 2009, p. 439)⁸⁹.

5.

In view of the moral conflicts and interests of the sportsman and the organization, a question arises. Is it conceivable something like a therapy not just supported or sponsored by the sporting organization, but also guided by its needs? This question transcends the contractual conditions of insurances or the protocols of administration of health. In sports, this is relevant for in various cases where the best therapeutic interest of the athlete is (or may become along therapy) at odds with the purposes of the organization. The concession to such interests would put at risk the bioethical principles of healthcare. We may say that ideally the therapist is attached to the client by a pact of mutual trust and deontological safeguards (under the principles of autonomy, benevolence, confidentiality, equality...). From this point of view, therapy must be guided by the needs and expectations of client, although these may include a (re)articulation of the scheme of expectations of the organization. At this point, the evolution of coaching practices is relevant. Since its first emergence in sporting practice, coaching evolved for a pervasive model of guidance, regulating virtually every aspect of experience and behaviour (Gori & Le Coz 2007, pp. 73-75), gradually

⁸⁸Gumbrecht presented this problem alluding to Maradona and predicting that his death would "result from of his inability to transition into a less heroic existence" (2005: 161).

⁸⁹According to Gumbrecht, an analogy can be established between the involvement in sporting practice and the disinterested character of aesthetic experience. Such re-enchantment of the world is induced by the epiphany of a substantial mode of appearance, distinct from abstract modes of representation, and whose intensity is absent from ordinary activities.

“replacing its sporting rhetoric with the warlike lexicon of classic capitalism” (Le Coz 2015, p. 35).

With its return to sports, coaching tends to reduce or suppress the problems of the client (here, the athlete), promoting an exclusive focus on the sporting tasks and goals. Even constructivist therapies, whose pragmatic assumptions are closer to coaching techniques, consider optimization of performance (and the use of external suggestion) only after a clarification of the client’s problems and a discussion of the consequences of a given plan of treatment. Imposing a fusion between the personal and the professional, coaching tends to neutralize the role of the athlete in her self-actualization. Even under the banner of Carl Rogers’ humanist psychology and the mantra of non-directive intervention, coaching, as a kind of lighter and briefer therapy, conceals mechanisms of conformity (Le Coz 2015). Emotions like sadness or anxiety are considered mere dysfunctions to be corrected; they are psychologized and abstracted from their relation to the social environment. In this sense “melancholy is no more than a depression that puts the subject out of order” whose reset can be attained by “psychotropics, CBT or neurologic stimulations” (Gori & Le Coz 2007, p. 76)⁹⁰. Critical attitudes towards the organization or colleagues shall be pre-emptively suppressed as part of the programs for emotional management.

Although recognizing the need to constant adaptation to emerging challenges, these models of coaching reinforce a fusion between the psychological and the social personality of the athlete. Instead of a mutual clarification of the bifacial nature of organizational norms and duties, something required by a therapeutic approach, they propel a strict adherence to the objective indicators of accomplishment.

Similar forms of mental conditioning for conformity can obstruct understanding and treatment of individual and organizational dysfunctions. At the same time, they normalize decisions that privilege immediate or short-term gains, insensible to the damages they may cause. Consider for instance the problem of confidentiality. Can this be breached with the transmission of information on the athlete’s “diagnose” or problem to the organization? Is the strategic manipulation of such data in order to obtain competitive gain admissible? Normalizing the treatment of the athlete as a means to an ever-changing goal erases her own motivational sources and the ability to reconstruct her own drive. Suppressing dissonant or conflictual views, such organizational culture dilutes responsibility of the relevant actors, and seems prone to accept immoral means to achieve sporting success or profit, as long as these remain hidden (or disguised) from legal authorities and the general public.

⁹⁰In this sense, therapy can be distinguished from coaching as the recovery of physical (and pharmacological) treatments differs from performance-enhancement drugs (PED) or noxious interventions like glucocorticosteroid infiltrations.

Conclusion

Sports and therapy are different mediums for shaping existence through the practice of oneself, supposing the acceptance of a recursive conditioning of the will and effort, as forms of self-actualization⁹¹. It is in that sense that they are conceptually distinct from external modes of improvement, even when these affect the inner capacities of the individual, through chemical, biotechnical and surgical technics. In this sense, therapy may appear as more than a hindrance on the organizational pressures for sporting achievements. If it remains faithful to its ethical imperatives, respecting and fostering the athlete's singularity and autonomy, it can be assumed as a partner in sport's resistance to the increasing "externalization" of sporting capacities⁹², under the pressures of market, politics or entertainment media⁹³.

Due to its independent and transient observation of the system's failures and virtues, therapy will certainly participate in different battles at the crossroads of the future of sport. Its main challenge will consist in finding the equilibrium between two institutional roles. On one of the extremes it will abide to a "religion of health", which, among other distortions, will lead to a medicalization of forms of excessive effort and dedication, praising the balance between the athlete's sport performance and her other roles. On the other, much by virtue of the return of coaching technics to their original domain, submitted to various institutional pressures, therapy risks reducing the sportsperson ethical role in treatment or conform it to external parameters, modes of optimization that take place not with the athlete but in spite of the athlete.

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⁹¹Sloterdijk sustains that "in the practising life of the spiritual-ascetic, virtuosic or athletic type, the agent has a self-improving influence on themselves via the direct route of daily training" (Sloterdijk 2009, p. 587).

⁹²"A glance at the most recent effects of the enhancement industry operating worldwide - with its departments of plastic surgery, fitness management, wellness service and systemic doping - retroactively suggests that the exercises of the moderns had possibly only ever aimed for the perfect externalization of 'concern for oneself' and the avoidance of the subject in the definition of its fitness status" (Sloterdijk 2009, p. 530).

⁹³In a more pessimist tone, Gori and Le Coz consider that "it is simply because its ludic dimension has been reduced under the influence of the growing power of the coaches that sports can no longer hide that its essence fundamentally capitalist" (2007, p. 74).

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VI.

CORPO-TEMPO

BODY-TIME

On the Playful Attitude in Sport

1. Conceptions of Play

There is an extensive spectrum of literature among various disciplines that deals with the phenomenon of play.⁹⁴ The most well-known are Johan Huizinga's (1938) monograph, *Homo Ludens*, and Roger Caillois' (1958) *Man, Play and Games*, which noted the importance of play to life. Since it could be argued that play is somewhat natural for humans⁹⁵ and that it is a constant category in the history of mankind, it is not surprising that the debate regarding this phenomenon has very deep roots. Play is a primal activity: it is preconscious and preverbal - it arises out of ancient biological structures that existed before our consciousness or our ability to speak (Brown, 2009). Ryall, Russell, and MacLean (2013) state that play is a vital component of the social life and well-being of both children and adults and Hackett (2013) claims that in playing, we come to know our limitations and potentialities and, consequently, come to know ourselves.

Among other well-known authors that have paid attention to play are, Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Schiller, Nietzsche, Collingwood, Freud, Winnicott, Fink, Piaget, Sartre, Sutton-Smith, Suits, Meier, Kretchmar, Gadamer, and Eichberg. That play has been discussed from philosophical, anthropological, psychological, pedagogical, sociological, and biological perspectives demonstrates its ubiquitousness.

Nevertheless, Kretchmar (2007) argues play is typically overrated. His thesis is that it is games that tell us more about our distinctive humanity than does play and draws upon three arguments in support: 1) play is more primitive than games – it is accessible to lesser animals and comes first in terms of evolution and childhood development; 2) games require more impressive intellectual operations than play and are therefore suitable only for higher animals such as human beings; 3) games are artefacts, conventions, and thus first cousins of art, literature, and other forms of culture. Play, on the other hand, he argues, exists and thrives with or without culture. Nevertheless, despite Kretchmar's assertions, there is something particular about play that deserves further investigation, and this is in relation to the part it plays in the notion of good sport and games.

⁹⁴Some parts of our research were already published elsewhere (Mareš & Ryall 2021). Here we build on our previous text and offer a slightly different perspective on the topic.

⁹⁵This assertion is based on Huizinga's conception of man as *homo ludens*. For Huizinga (2014), play is natural not only for humans, but for other animals as well, since it is older than culture.

There are three approaches that can be taken to understanding the concept of play. Eichberg (2016, 2019) takes an anti-analytic approach which avoids the stress and contradiction of formal delimitation, which he calls a differential phenomenology. It is based on the observation that people play in very different ways, and they practice many different forms of play. Roots of this approach can be found in Wittgenstein's theory of family resemblances that stresses the importance of similarities rather than common denominators, or necessary and sufficient conditions that enable us to define particular concepts. According to this Wittgensteinian perspective, play is undefinable because there is no observable essence to it. As Wittgenstein noted (1958, §66),

'...look and see whether there is anything common to all. – For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that... And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.'

In contrast, analytic philosophers, such as Bernard Suits (1977, p. 124) argue that play can be categorically defined. The metaphysical background behind this approach is that there is a correspondence between our language and reality. By 'looking at and seeing' the reality, we may observe that the entities constituting it differ and that our language is a suitable tool to conceptualize and differentiate them. Suits offers the following analytic definition:

'x is playing if and only if x has made a temporary reallocation to autotelic activities of resources primarily committed to instrumental purposes.'

Perhaps a medium between these two contrasting approaches to definition is Randolph Feezell's (2010) typology of play. He distinguishes five separate approaches: 1) play as behaviour or activity; 2) play as motive, attitude or state of mind; 3) play as form or structure; 4) play as meaningful experience; 5) play as an ontologically distinctive phenomenon. His analysis, as he states, generates a pluralist, non-reductive account of play. This does not suggest that there are no constraints on what we call play. It rather suggests that play is a rich phenomenon that can be grasped only if we take into account its multiple dimensions and not simply if we identify with just one of its dimensions. In the most recent contribution, Felix Lebed (2021) applies qualitative content analysis to the relevant 20th century texts devoted to philosophical discussions on human play, and identifies nine main philosophical themes: partial escape from routine reality, freedom, autotelicity, play as a kind of being, imagination, exaggeration, temporality, discovery, and relocation. Instead of Feezell's (2010) five approaches to play, Lebed holds a different, however in many respects compatible, view and seeks three specific disciplinary definitions: philosophical, psychological, and anthropological. Taking the philosophical discussion as the 'higher account', he (2021, 118) proposes a philosophic definition of play: *'Human play is a causally linked – partial, temporary, and emergent – escape from routine reality to free diverting 'being-there' that occurs in a fragile imagined and/or specially*

*constructed spatial-time realm.*⁹⁶

Our area of interest in this paper is the `attitudinal` (psychological) and partly `experiential` (psychological/anthropological) dimensions of play, with respect to their philosophical connotations. Authors use different terms to capture this particular dimension, such as `stance`, `attitude`, `mindset`, `state of mind`, `mode` or `quality`. We prefer the term `attitude` because it describes something more stable than a momentary state of affairs (such as `mindset` or `state of mind`). According to Roochnik (1975, p. 39), an attitude is a way of thinking about things, a mental disposition and an orientation towards the world although he also argues that a stance is more deeply rooted: *'A stance goes beyond the intellect to the body and the spirit, and becomes a mode of being-toward-the-world.'* It permeates all aspects of being human. For the sake of simplicity, we will refer to the term `attitude` to encompass both attitude and Roochnik's term `stance`.

2. Play's Relationship to Sport

Playful attitude relates directly to sport and has a potential to enhance it. The relationship between play and sport is not easy to describe.⁹⁷ As scholars have noted, sport is not synonymous with play (Carlson 2011). Some authors (such as Harvey in Svoboda, 2019; or Guttmann, 2004) suggest that sport is a specific form of play. Others think that sport (at least in some of its forms) is not a form of play. For instance, Suits (1988, p. 9) argues that games and performances of the Olympics are not autotelic but instead are instrumental activities, since playing the game is not the primary payoff the players are seeking. He criticizes the focus on getting the medal instead of playing for the pleasure of the game. Arguably this is incorrect since there are many motivations for competing at an Olympic Games. However, we can agree with Suits that a single-minded focus on winning a medal is not consistent with playing. According to Kohn (in Ryall, Russell, and MacLean, 2013, p. 28), play and competition are incompatible. Since sport naturally involves competition, it is not compatible with play. His thesis is that if a player is trying to win, he is not engaged in true play. However, it seems that winning is compatible with play and game-playing. In the case of game-playing, winning is deeply rooted in the structure of the activity. In the case of play, the focus is rather on the process than on the ending. Nevertheless, both categories may function together. We can imagine that in a sporting game such as ice hockey, a player is oriented towards the game itself (i.e. is playing) and wants to win at the same time (tries to fulfil the goal of the activity of game). Feezell (in Ryall, Russell, and MacLean, 2013, p. 29) suggests that to say that play cannot be `goal-oriented` reduces it to frolic.

⁹⁶Another distinction between the dimensions of play (and also between the dimensions of games) can be found in Henricks (2015) or Carlson (2011).

⁹⁷A brief summary of the major approaches and theses offers Ch. Carlson in the chapter *A Three-Pointer: Revisiting Three Crucial Issues in the „Tricky Triad“ of Play, Games, and Sport* (in Klein, 2017).

Kretchmar (2007, p. 3) notes play and games (sports) relate to one another in a variety of ways: *'A game...can be encountered as autotelic (an end in itself)..., or not. Consequently, some games are conducted in the play spirit, and some are not. Play...includes games and sport but also far transcends them.'* Kretchmar's (in Parry, Nesti, and Watson, 2011, p. 187) solution to the problem of the complexity of intentionalities regarding play and work experiences is that play and work are complementary phenomena that exhibit greater or lesser degrees of intrinsic satisfaction. Although play exhibits more intrinsic satisfaction than work, that does not exclude the intrinsic from work or the extrinsic from play. Carlson (in Klein, 2017, p. 18) summarizes Kretchmar's position in the following way: *'Professional athletes are engaged in a complementary pair of play~work that is an ever-changing mixture of the two phenomena.'*

Although sport has some undisputable elements of play that are inherently present in the activity (such as time and space seclusion or non-seriousness and arbitrariness), it seems to be an activity that does not necessarily have to be engaged in playfully. Roochnik (1975) asserts that while sport seems to be the field in which we are commonly said to be playing, it is not sure whether participants are actually playing. Sport is an area where play can very likely surface, but as Roochnik states, it need not and often does not. Play therefore plays a role of possibility. It can be actualized in sport, but this actualization is rather a product of participants' intentions than an automatic and necessary setting.

Huizinga (2014, p. 197) points out that since the last quarter of the 19th century, sport has been taken more and more seriously. This is evidenced in the increased codification of rules of sport and in the emphasis on records and measurable achievements, and the corresponding investment in measurement and officiating technology. This increasing systematization and regimentation of sport means a pure play-quality is inevitably lost. Huizinga (2014, p. 197) speaks mainly about professionals: *'The spirit of a professional is no longer a true play-spirit; it is lacking in spontaneity and carelessness.'* He also points out that in modern social life sport occupies a place alongside and apart from the cultural process.⁹⁸ If we reflect on modern sport, it seems that it does not occupy a place apart from the cultural processes, but rather constitutes them. On the other hand, Huizinga is correct in noting that current sport (even the youth sport), with its emphasis on high level performances, results, and a constant pressure on improvement, is in conflict with the natural playfulness and playful attitude. Similarly, Roochnik notes that the play element in sport is not inevitable, but is rather a potentiality that need to be actualized. We maintain that actualizing the play possibility in sport is a beneficial and an important part of a good sport.

Several authors from the philosophy of sport have highlighted the importance of a playful

⁹⁸Huizinga's idea (2014, p. 197-198) is that the great competitions in archaic cultures had always formed part of the sacred festivals and were indispensable as health and happiness-bringing activities. Huizinga thinks that sport has become profane and lost the role of culture-creating activity.

attitude in sport. Meier (1988) characterizes play based upon the orientation, demeanor, or stance of the participant. He argues that sport and games may or may not be play but if they are play (i.e. pursued voluntarily and for intrinsic reasons), both activities are somehow enriched. Meier (1980, p. 30) states that the realm of play offers opportunities to explore alternative modes of awareness, to develop insights and knowledge of new modes of being, and to explore radically different possibilities: *'During moments of intense, vivid, and individuating engagement made available in play, the individual is provided with numerous occasions to recover himself and to attain a new and more perceptive sense of his own unique, personal existence.'* Similarly, Schneider (2001) sees a connection between play and sport, although it is a connection at the ethical rather than metaphysical level. The play attitude, as she calls it, should be adopted to sport because such an attitude grounds fair play and respect for the rules of sport. This suggests a normative aspect to the playful attitude which is reflected by Reid's (2012) belief that whilst play isn't always sport and sport isn't always play, when play is a part of sport, it makes it better. Reid speaks about the connection between voluntariness and the quality of the sport experience, emphasizing the extraordinariness of play, and appreciating the ideal of autotelicity⁹⁹ and fun element of play. She points to the absorbing nature of play that might lead into the 'flow' experience, especially in sport performed at the highest levels. Henricks (2015, p. 29) also speaks about the zest for playing that perhaps keeps the player engaged when others have grown tired or quit. This point suggests that play as disposition or attitude has a significant role in activities that require regular exercise, e.g. professional sport. It could even be argued that in order to play sport professionally with enthusiasm for a long period of time, it is necessary to have playful attitude in order to overcome challenges that the activity presents. The benefits of having a playful attitude in relation to games underlines Morgan's (2008) statement that the only way to fully tap the intrinsic good of games is to play them. This concept of playing means that a player accepts the rules of the game because of the love of the challenge they pose.

In the following section, we offer a far deeper analysis of the playful attitude than has been previously provided, and a more precise definition as to what the playful attitude is. This will ultimately help to answer questions about the value of sport and how sport ought to be played.

⁹⁹Reid however admits that our motivations for entering into sport are often mixed and can be directed at other extrinsic goals.

3. Defining the Playful Attitude

The notion of play as a specific type of attitude or stance has been discussed quite extensively, especially within the philosophy of sport literature (e.g. Feezell, 2010; Roochnik, 1975; Hyland, 1980). Here we identify seven elements that underpin a playful attitude before providing a more concise definition.

To start, a playful attitude is a product of an intentional and voluntary choice; it cannot be coerced. In general, we think that voluntariness and freedom are categories typical for entering play and being playful. Huizinga (2014, 8) asserts that play is free, it is in fact freedom. Caillois (2001, p. 7) states that one plays only if and when one wishes to. Moreover, players should not only have a freedom to start play, but also to stop (Hackett in Ryall, Russell, and MacLean, 2013, p. 124): *'... to truly play one must also be able to stop playing.'* These actions are not randomly occurring activities but are performed intentionally (Schmid, 2009; Carlson, 2011) and reflect the reasons that a person has for acting. Henricks (2015, p. 28) considers play, at least to some degree, to be a product of conscious choice: *'To some extent play becomes play only when the participants declare it to be so.'*

The second feature of a playful attitude is 'responsive openness'. Among the first authors who dealt with this dimension of playful attitude is D. A. Hyland (1974, 1977, 1980). He suggests an understanding of play as a stance or orientation which human beings take from time to time toward the world and their fellow humans. This stance is characterized in the following passage (1980, p. 88):

'When we play, we seem to have a certain orientation toward those with whom we play, toward our play equipment if there be such, toward time, space, indeed toward the world, which is distinctive. It is a mode of comportment toward things, a mode of being-in-the-world which, although not utterly peculiar, is nevertheless different from our mode of comportment when we consider ourselves not to be playing.'

This stance is more primordial than a psychological state or a behavioral response to certain stimuli. Hyland (1977, p. 37) states that *'... it is a way of comporting ourselves toward the world, a way of taking the world, of being in the world, and so most fundamentally, a mode of being'*. It has a structure of "responsive openness", which can be characterized as a way of being open to our surroundings and being capable to respond adequately to that openness. Since we can be open and responsive in many different ways, this stance is rather a matter of degree than an independent category. This stance is also an intentional choice of being in a certain open and responsive way in the world. If we consider humans as relational, incomplete beings, searching for otherness in order to be complete, it could be argued that the play stance is natural for us. Hyland (1977) suggests that there are certain activities, namely sports like basketball or skiing, which are more conducive to

taking the play stance than others, such as fighting a war or standing in an unemployment line. However, earlier in his writings (Hyland, 1974) he suggests that this stance might well be encouraged not only in play, but also in other dimensions of life as well.

The concept of responsive openness described by Hyland can be seen as an opposition to a 'fixed' state of mind. According to Dweck (2016), there are two dominant mindsets that people use to structure the self and guide their behaviour: a 'fixed mindset' (according to which personality and reality are conceived as static), and a growth mindset (according to which personality and reality can change and develop). These mindsets can be seen as two possible attitudes, in the way individuals conceive of themselves and the world of which they are a part. Dweck emphasizes a growth mindset, because it is an active approach toward the world, and leads to effort and motivation for action. If we compare her approach with Hyland's conception of responsive openness, it seems clear that there is a link between being open and responsive and between being oriented toward development and new possibilities: people with a growth mindset tend to embrace challenges rather than avoid them. They also learn from criticism rather than ignore useful feedback and seem to be interested in the activity that they do and want to achieve the most from it.

From this responsiveness and openness, comes the third characteristic, the experience of immersion; the sense we often have in play of being totally involved in the activity. According to Roochnik (1975, p. 41), immersion characterizes play: it is a mode of being, '*a way of comporting oneself, a way of approaching and extending oneself to the world*'. If playing is a type of being in the world, then playing sport is a specific type of being in the game. This concept suggests being totally involved with the activity, without being distracted from things external to playing a game. Taken from a different perspective, the psychologist Duda (in Thomson, 2010) speaks about the focus on a specific task or on mastering of a specific action. Similarly, Rubin, Fein, and Vandenberg (1983) see play as a disposition, a pattern of attentiveness, readiness, or psychological commitment that orients the behaviour. These concepts are in some ways similar to what we call 'being in the game', although we do not want to reduce the playful attitude to a psychological category. We rather claim that it is a phenomenological category. It should also be noted that the concept of 'being in the game' does not necessarily imply feeling the game or having game intelligence. These are dispositions of the talented or effectively working players.

The fourth characteristic is connected with play's unique temporality and spatiality. Roochnik (1975, p. 39) considers the play stance to be a mode of being-toward-the-world. It is paradoxically, concretized fluidity: '*It is movement; continual, unharassed going.*' He states that play is characterized by a kind of secludedness, which involves limited, arbitrary, and all absorbing temporal and spatial dimensions. When we play, we are fully involved in the situation. This involvement will give rise to a unique world of distinctive temporality and spatiality (1975, p. 40):

'Play is full commitment of body and spirit to the activity; it is an immersion in the world that is here and now...' Play provides for a unity of past, present, and future, and it is out of this unity that the fluidity and harmony of genuine human experience emerges: *'...when the player's attention is given somewhere other than the moment (to the scoreboard or to tomorrow's sport page for example) his fluidity is lost and his playing will suffer... A good player is always open to the best possibilities that the future holds...if the experienced basketball player...sees a person cutting to the basket he will pass him the ball, not to where the man is, but to where the man will be... He is in the present toward the future.'* Vannatta (2008) also notes that playing is internally related to anticipation of the future: *'...we anticipate and "know" the near future when we play sports'*. Moreover, playing athletes have pre-reflective access to passive syntheses, which accounts for the spontaneity, continuity, and anticipation. Roochnik also suggests that this player is in the past, since the many practice sessions and previous games have brought him to this moment where he can effectively make the lead pass. In play, the possibility for a unity of past, present, and future is actualized and the harmony restored.

The fifth aspect of the playful attitude refers to an intrinsic motivation to perform the activity. Intrinsic motivation can be defined as: *'...the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence. When intrinsically motivated a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external prods, pressures, or rewards.'* (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 56)

Meier (1980) argued that play is an autotelic activity that is carried out for intrinsic reasons. In contrast, if any activity is pursued involuntarily or engaged in for predominantly extrinsic reasons, it is not a play form, but is rather an instrumental activity; as such, it is often contrasted with play as work. However, as some have noted, the concept of autotelicity is problematic (Schmid 2011, Kretchmar in Parry, Nesti, and Watson, 2011). Schmid (2009, 2011) maintains that autotelicity is a static and an unobtainable ideal. He offers a new account of play based on intrinsic reasons. Here Schmid draws from Meier's account of play, which he characterizes as the intrinsic reasons account of autotelicity. This agent-centred account characterizes the intrinsicality of autotelic activities as an intensional property of the action which is grounded in the agent's motivating reasons (2009, p. 245): *'Autotelic play is intrinsically valuable because it is intrinsically motivated action; that is, action executed for intrinsic reasons.'* In this, play is a mode of performing actions rather than a type of action (Schneider 2001).

Following Self-determination theory (SDT), Schmid (2011, p. 158-161) asserts that these intrinsic reasons are found in the activity's satisfaction of the agent's innate psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.¹⁰⁰ He also suggests that reasons may change from intrinsic

¹⁰⁰Based on the observations of Decy and Ryan, Schmid (2011, p. 158, 161) maintains that SDT is a theory about people's initiation and maintenance of goal-directed behaviours and is based on the premise that

to extrinsic due to the change in personal and social contexts. Similarly, they may change from extrinsic to intrinsic through a process of internalization. Like Meier, Schmid characterizes play to be a voluntarily pursued, satisfying activity that one will continue to pursue for purely intrinsic reasons. Unlike Meier however, Schmid (2011, p. 161) emphasizes the complexity of our motivation to do certain activities and believes that it is possible to be playing even with this mixture of motivations: *'Cases in which an agent has mixed motivations do not rule out the possibility that the agent is playing.'* For Schmid, a person plays when he perceives himself as playing (to a greater degree than not) and when his goal aspirations are those that tend to produce more satisfaction and well-being than not. What matters is whether a player has the correct set of motivating reasons, which he may have in both sport and non-sport contexts. A similar approach was provided by Feezell (2010), who states that if an activity is enjoyed, attitudinally recognized as not 'real life', and is intrinsically attractive, regardless of other motives, then this activity may be characterized as play.

The sixth characteristic is capriciousness in choosing play actions. Playing itself and having playful attitude does not involve 'raw' rational calculation, but rather consists of a fluid invention of play solutions at a pre-conscious level. Holding a playful attitude is in opposition to making conscious and active rational judgments. This claim is supported by Vannatta (2008, p. 65), who asserts that it involves a fluid and continuous activity generated by passive synthesis at a lower level. Following Husserl's phenomenology, Vannatta (2008, p. 67) characterizes this concept as the prepredicative and prejudicative experience, which takes place ontologically before active judgments. Similarly, Hyland (1990, p. 96) suggests that an athlete who makes active judgments is a beginner, e.g. in tennis: approach the net, keep your racket head up, follow the ball to your racket. The nature of play actions was well described by Collingwood. While having playful attitude, people are somewhat capricious. Collingwood (in Wertz, 2003) suggests that a person makes choices in play capriciously, that is without conscious reason, but rather out of habit or spontaneously. A capricious choice is when an agent is conscious of no reason for which he or she chooses. Instead of calculating rationally the outcome, an agent simply and immediately chooses without any reflexive consciousness – it is all pre-reflexive consciousness (2003, p. 163): *'A voluntary act such as a golf shot is not preceded by a decision to do it; it begins with a decision to do it.'* In playful attitude, thinking is involved in selecting strategy and in analysing the situation, but where capriciousness appears is in the performance or execution of the play once the decision has been made. The intention is therefore somehow converted into the performance itself.

According to Czech psychologists Slepíčka, Hošek and Hátlová (2009, p. 54-56), there are humans naturally coordinate their actions to foster their growth toward a more unified sense of self (autonomy), better understanding of the world around them (competence), and better social integration (relatedness). Examples of extrinsic reasons are wealth, fame, or personal image. Examples of intrinsic reasons are personal growth or personal enjoyment.

multiple types of thinking in sport, such as operational/action thinking, tactical thinking, personal-perspective thinking, or team thinking. Because sport is often fast and players must choose the actions quickly, they use 'cognitive maps' which are certain kinds of learned formulas that players might use automatically in a given situation. Although there is a certain kind of thinking when immersed in play, it is more autonomous and preconscious rather than a conscious rational calculation. This type of thinking enables the other characteristics such as freedom, flow and spatiality. According to Bukač (2014, p. 38), in play situations a player decides consciously and operantly. When he is under pressure he acts intuitively, emotionally and often instinctively. Too much rational thought, conscious analysis and control of the movement structure often leads to stiffness and awkwardness (Thomen, 2010). Vannatta (2008, p. 64), similarly, states that the defining trait of the miracle of playing is its thoughtlessness and being not 'normally' conscious: *'once you are overly conscious of the act, you stumble. In this light, playing can be said to be "unconscious".'*

The final characteristic of a playful attitude can be found in positive personal states and dispositions, such as curiosity, energy, enthusiasm, creativity, spontaneity, and anticipation; and a desire to experience fun and enjoyment. These personal states and dispositions will most likely differ based on the particular sport and the level of performing the sport. For example, in sports like javelin throw or lifting, there is no state of anticipation (except in the sense of a predicted outcome), but there may be a state of enthusiasm and feeling energetic. On the other hand, in team sports like basketball or football, such states and dispositions will more likely be present. It should also be noted that fun and pleasure/enjoyment are compatible with seriousness and concentration. Even though play activities can be defined as trivial due to their inefficient means, to play them well requires an attitude of seriousness. Feezell (2010) calls this 'serious nonseriousness'. This can be contrasted with extreme seriousness or over-competitiveness, a critique of which can be found, for example, in Huizinga. Lieberman (1977) emphasise the dispositions of curiosity, energy, enthusiasm, and engaging with otherness in creative, spontaneous ways. This could also be described as a specific type of looking at the world, in which people may see many situations as play opportunities when others may see those same settings as occasions for drudgery or routine. This view is shared by Hanne Rasmussen, head of the Lego Foundation, who claims that a playful state of mind is one in which people are open to new ideas, try different things and are in a positive flow.¹⁰¹ Schmid (2011, p. 158) states that play activities are thought to be fun, pleasurable, or satisfying.

A playful attitude is learned and developed rather than fixed. Even though humans are

¹⁰¹ See https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/mar/15/children-learn-play-age-eight-lego?fbclid=IwAR3S3FxB_x0VNG0QAcVMgpczczxWI3tWP0dYcoHOZJt2BKZzMRmZod49bfg. Retrieved July 8th 2019.

inherently playful creatures, developing a playful attitude throughout life requires cultivation and encouragement. This habituation consists in developing a positive mindset, in practicing concentration and the ability to respond to the situational possibilities, in discovering the inner richness of the activity, and in 'diving/immersing' oneself into the activity.¹⁰²

Closely related to the 'attitudinal' dimension of play is play as a specific type of experience. This is a direct product of playful attitude and participation in play activities. This special quality of experience is called 'flow', 'being in the zone', and 'sublime' (Czikszentmihalyi, 1991; Douillard, 1994; Ryall, 2016). It could be argued that these experiences are a consequence of being in the game. In this, the playful attitude can be understood as an intermediate stage between normal living and euphoric flowing. Several authors focused on the experiential dimension of play. Roochnik (1975, 36) describes play in the following way: '*...play is a quality of activity; it is a vibrant experience that each one of us has had at some time or another.*' He (1975, p. 40) argues that play is not an illusion, but a deepening of the experience of the world which is at hand at the present moment. Similarly, Meier (1980, p. 31) mentions that play may be heralded as a singularly fulfilled, liberating experience, through which man opens doors normally closed, alters his habitual modes of perception, views the naked simplicity of the world and entities within it, and inaugurates processes and actions of creative and novel transformation. Special attention to the experiential dimension of play was given by Jirásek (2001). He describes play as one of the dimensions of intense experiencing. It is an actualization of one of the possible worlds into the reality of a person that is playing.

3.1 Summary Definition of the Playful Attitude

Based on the aforementioned descriptions of the attitudinal and experiential dimensions of play we now offer a summary of the characteristic features of what we call the playful attitude.

Summary characteristics:

- 1) Intentional and voluntary choice – it cannot be coerced;

¹⁰²Problems arise when we consider activities that are generally viewed as morally bad. For example, is it possible to have this stance (in our case attitude) when killing someone? Or whilst cheating or making fun of the opponent? This is an area of debate amongst scholars and has been explored by Henning Eichberg in his notion of 'dark play'. We agree that a playful attitude generally denotes a moral good, but admit it can be used in activities that are considered morally bad. So whilst the playful attitude itself is of moral worth, there is not a contingent link between the attitude and the activity. In other words, playful attitude is a good thing to possess, but it doesn't necessarily lead to good actions, i.e. there is no connective relationship between the moral worth of the attitude and the action that results from it.

- 2) Responsive openness – being open to the play world and adequately respond to the situations and possibilities;
- 3) Being in the game - attentiveness and readiness towards the activity, characterized by immersion in the activity itself, when a player is somehow absorbed by the activity;
- 4) Specific perception of time and space – past, present, future are experienced together;
- 5) Intrinsic motivation to perform the activity – a person is guided by intrinsic reasons to do the activity;
- 6) Capriciousness in choosing play actions – it does not involve ‘raw’ rational calculation, but rather consist in a fluid invention of play solutions;
- 7) Positive personal states and dispositions, such as curiosity, energy, enthusiasm, creativity, spontaneity, and anticipation; experiencing fun and pleasure/enjoyment.

Summary definition of the playful attitude:

‘An intentional, voluntarily chosen way to be open and responsive to the play situation; to be intrinsically motivated, to be in the ‘game’, that is attentive towards, and immersed in the activity in its own space and time, and to experience it as pleasurable; to be capricious in the choice of play action; and to operate through the mode of positive mental states and dispositions, such as curiosity, energy, enthusiasm, creativity, spontaneity, and anticipation.’

3.2 Playful Attitude vs. Suits’ Lusory Attitude

The playful attitude may seem similar to Suits’s lusory attitude. However, they are not the same and neither can be explained with simple recourse to the other. Suits considers the lusory attitude to be a necessary part of playing a game. He defines it (Suits, 1973, in Morgan 2007, p. 13) as *‘the knowing acceptance of constitutive rules just so the activity made possible by such acceptance can occur’*. Ryall (2016, p. 20) characterizes the lusory attitude in a following way: *‘...conscious awareness that one is involved in playing a game and the tacit acceptance of its rules.’* Suits (2014) considers the lusory attitude to be an explanatory element. It explains that curious state of affairs wherein one adopts rules which require him to employ worse rather than better means for reaching an end. It is a constitutive, necessary category for playing a game and for playing a sport.¹⁰³ In *The Grasshopper* (2014, ch. 13), Suits is clear that the lusory attitude not to be confused with stances

¹⁰³For more details about conditions for playing a game see Schwengerer’s article *‘An Epistemic Condition for Playing a Game’* (2018). He argues that the condition does not require personal knowledge (and acceptance) of all goals and means, but merely enough epistemic access that the goal and permissible means can guide one’s behaviour safely enough.

required for play (Kretchmar, 2019, p. 285). Whereas personal play motives may differ, all the players (i.e. both professionals and amateurs), in Suits' view, embrace the lusory attitude (Suits, 2014, p. 157): *'For although professionals and amateurs admittedly have different attitudes towards the games they play, they have the same attitude towards the rules of those games...'*

The playful attitude, on the other hand, is a phenomenological concept rather than a formal category concerned primarily with rules. It is connected with the activity and player in a more complex way. Unlike Suits' lusory attitude, it is not necessary for sport – it can exist in a sporting situation and may be beneficial, but it does not have to be. Nevertheless, the playful attitude has a potential to enrich the activity itself. According to Morgan (2008, p. 139), when games (and arguably sports as well) are played, then and only then can their intrinsic goodness be realized. The difference between the lusory attitude and the playful attitude can be illustrated by Morgan's delineation: *'... instead of accepting the rules just so the activity made possible by them can occur, which is all that the lusory attitude requires of those intent on pursuing games, one would accept them because of the love of the challenge they pose...'*

We claim that being part of good sport requires something richer and deeper than Suits' lusory attitude. To play games truly means to play them with a playful attitude.

3.3 Playful Attitude vs. Gamification

A further difference between the lusory attitude and a playful one can be seen via the concept of gamification. Hurych (2021) describes gamification as a process of adding games or game-like elements to some activity in order to encourage participation.¹⁰⁴ Adding game-like elements means that gamification involves transforming an activity into a “game” by adopting the lusory attitude. Kretchmar (2008) states we may turn certain activities into games by introducing challenges, artificial constitutive rules, and by applying the lusory attitude to them.¹⁰⁵ He sees humans as creatures that enjoy artificial challenges. Kretchmar follows Suits and his conception of lusory attitude, but unlike him, he broadens the sphere of games.¹⁰⁶ He states (2008, p. 143): *'when we fully realize the power of the lusory attitude,... we find gaming activities in any number of conventional and unconventional places.'* A game is an artificial or conventional problem. The lusory attitude specifically values challenges produced by manufactured difficulties for their own

¹⁰⁴Hurych (2021, p. 54) further distinguishes between gamification and sportification. In a simplified explanation, he proposes that while gamification means adding game-like elements and principles in the non-game sphere, sportification means adding sport-like elements and principles in the non-sportive sphere.

¹⁰⁵Kretchmar later (2019) modifies his view on games and eliminates Suits' stipulation that games have at least one constitutive rule. In doing so, he put more emphasis on the lusory attitude and broadens the sphere of games and their possible creation.

¹⁰⁶Kretchmar thinks that more activities deserve to be identified as games than Suits was willing to admit. He specifically mentions performances like diving, ice skating, or gymnastics.

sake. There are activities that are games per se, because they involve artificial challenges that are specified by the constitutive rules. However, by employing artificial challenges to any activity and by accepting these challenges (i.e. accepting the rules), we may turn this activity into a game. Kretchmar (2008, p. 150-153) states that the lusory attitude enriches routine events or potentially tedious work-like activities with additional meaning. It is a necessary part of games and it stimulates the creation of bona fide games. It artificially creates value, uncertainty, or unpredictability by introducing unnecessary hurdles and stimulates difficulty of a certain activity. He speaks about gratuitous valuation (assigning extra worth to a certain activity) and gratuitous variation (introducing factors that increase uncertainty, unpredictability, and interest) as two potential ways how to “game up” life.

Having a playful attitude and ‘being in the game’, unlike gamification through the lusory attitude, does not involve creating artificial challenges, difficulties, or values. When having a playful attitude, a player is concerned with the activity itself, he is attentive, open and responsive, and is ideally within the flow of the game. It is possible to game up a certain kind of activity and have a playful attitude in it. What is not possible is to identify a playful attitude with gamification or to reduce one to another. Carlson (2011, p. 78-79) notes that a play stance and gaming attitude are distinct but compatible. They have a life of their own, but they also overlap, specifically in game playing. The play attitude is autotelic and fully self-sufficient. The lusory attitude, on the other hand, involves searching for challenges and solving unnecessary problems.

Conclusion

This paper attempts to capture the attitudinal dimension of play and show its place and relevance in sport. Further investigation into these attitudinal and experiential dimensions of play would be worthwhile to provide greater evidence of the direct impact on athletes and coaches who arguably would benefit from it in their sporting lives and careers.

It seems clear that this type of attitude is not the only one possible.¹⁰⁷ Successful players may be positive, win oriented, aggressive, negative (pessimistic), responsible (caring for the team), or renounced.¹⁰⁸ Athletes may hold a mixture of attitudes within one particular moment. Being a good athlete, both in moral and performative sense, requires more than a playful attitude, but rather a proper mixture of several attitudes that emerge in the proper order at the right time. This raises the question whether a playful attitude is compatible with these other attitudes. On one hand, it seems that yes with some - serious, hard-working, win oriented, attentive, or fair play. On the other hand,

¹⁰⁷Reversal theory in sport psychology and a deeper look into the metamotivational states of an athlete may be useful. See for example Kerr (2001).

¹⁰⁸These are the attitudes that junior ice hockey players of the České Budějovice hockey club (Czech Republic) mentioned during the seminars between November 2019 and January 2020.

not with some - only win oriented, pessimistic/negative, or too aggressive. Moreover, some might object that there is a time and place to be playful. In which contexts or situations is playful attitude not suitable (or even not possible)?¹⁰⁹

Looking at the playful attitude from the psychological and sociological perspective, we may ask how specifically it is influenced by personality, age, family and culture. A deepening question is what does it mean to be in the game consciously? What kind of consciousness we have when we play? Another pressing point is the question how does transition between playful attitude and experiencing 'flow'/'being in the zone'/'sublime' actually happen?

The definition of the playful attitude that we have outlined offers a holistic perspective that was missing in the previous literature, in particular, bringing together elements of play including openness, responsiveness, capriciousness and creativity. This account also provides a demonstration of the importance of the playful attitude to good sport, and a good life more generally. We would be happy to see more interdisciplinary research into this topic in the near future.

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¹⁰⁹According to Carlson (2011, 80), play as an attitude is inseparable from play activities. This suggests that it might not be possible to have playful attitude (at least in its pure form) in activities that lack play structure. It also seems that it is rather difficult to have playful attitude when a person is under a lot of pressure.

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15. Nancy KANE

All My Bones: Jewish Physical Education in New York City, 1880-1924

In pursuit of opportunities and freedom from repression in Europe and Russia, waves of Jewish immigrants settled in New York City by the millions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the early to mid-19th century, many Jewish immigrants had previously come from Germany and were well-established and prosperous by the time immigrants from Eastern Europe and Russia, escaping pogroms in their home villages, emigrated to the United States. The violent pogroms followed the assassination of Tsar Alexander II of Russia in 1881, an act that was blamed on a Jewish conspiracy (Gems, 2014). Whereas the Jews of German descent tended to live uptown in relative luxury, their newly arrived impoverished coreligionists crowded into tenements on New York's Lower East Side, where cramped and often unhealthy living conditions were the norm. Often uneducated, unable to speak English, and unskilled, the newly arrived Jews of Eastern Europe (Ashkenazim) tended to be seen by the German Jews as a poor representatives of Judaic culture and heritage, though the disconnect between the two groups may have had more to do with the length of residency in the United States than with any particular cultural tensions (Klapper, 2001).

Efforts to Americanize and ameliorate the plight of the poorly educated and unhealthy new immigrants were often initiated by their uptown brethren, through the establishment of educational initiatives, settlement houses, vocational schools, homes for young women, health and nutrition programs, and recreational programming. Since the Lower East Side was also the home of immigrants from Ireland, Italy, and myriad other locations (including Black people who had been in the neighborhood or migrated North following the Civil War), many of these projects helped Jews and non-Jews alike, even in cases where practices and religious observances were overtly Jewish in nature.

However, for the purposes of the present study, the focus is limited to the experiences of the Jewish population in Manhattan, one of the five boroughs in New York City. The time frame of 1880 to 1924 reflects the period of greatest influx of Eastern European and Russian Jews, from the era of pogroms beginning in 1880 to the 1924 Immigration Act, which severely curtailed the number of immigrants to the United States. Coincidentally, it was after World War I that many of the Ashkenazic Jews and their children began to move out of the Lower East Side and into other

neighborhoods, boroughs, and/or suburbs. The experiences of professional Jewish athletes have been well-documented in other sources (Borish, 1999; Dorinson, 2014; Greenspoon, 2012; Gurock, 2005; Gurock, 2006; Postal, Silver, & Silver, 1965; Reiss, 1985).

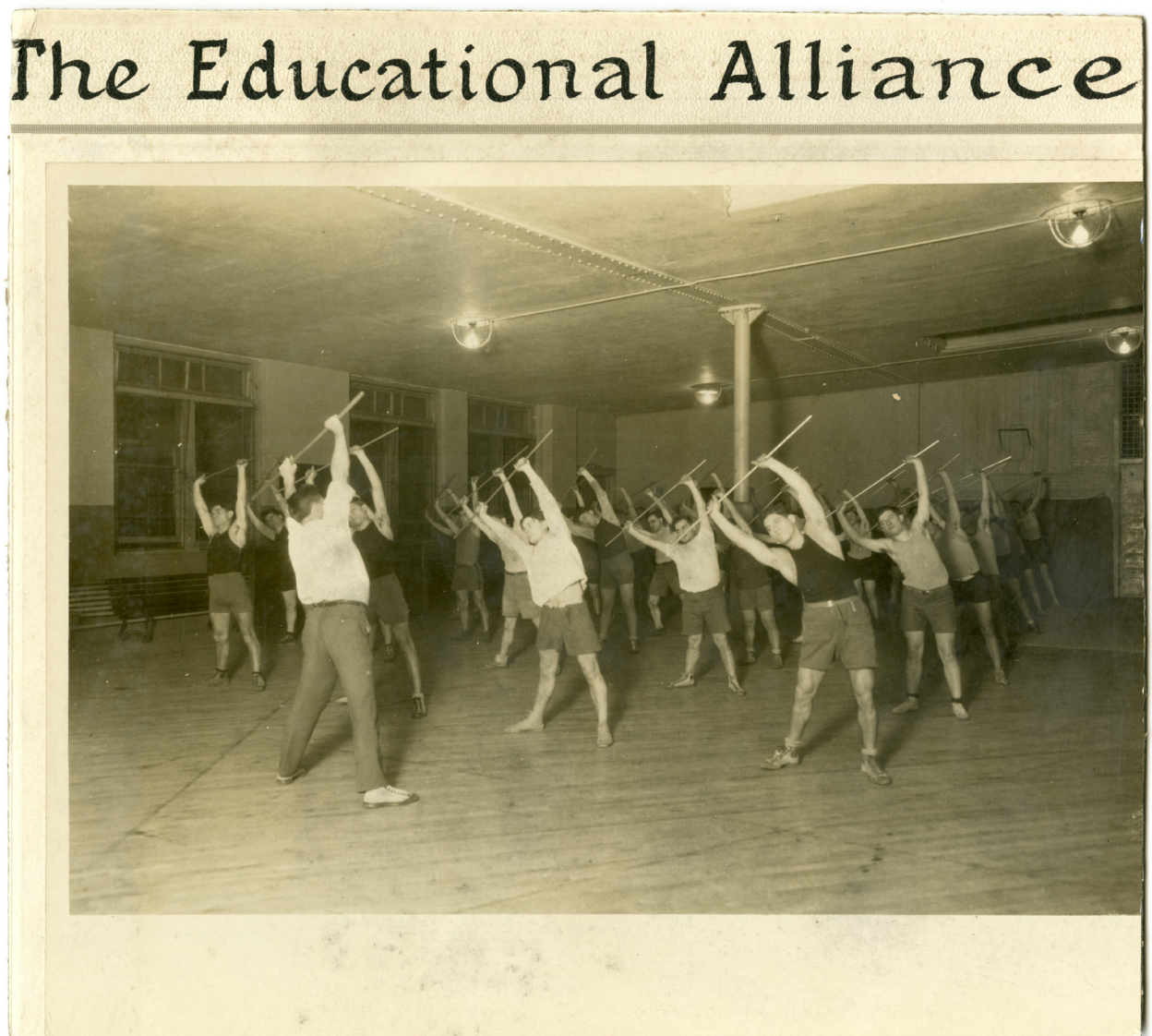


Figure 1. *Physical Education Class Using Light Gymnastics Wands. From the Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York.*

Physical education, recreation, and fitness were important components of the overall effort to help immigrants assimilate into American culture, as was participation in athletics from scholastic to amateur to professional sports. Depending on the type of Judaism one practiced (and how assiduously teachings were followed), athletes could face conflicts with sporting schedules in non-Jewish leagues. In traditionalist families, objections might be raised if an athlete wanted to become a boxer, for example, because intentionally harming another human being for sport could violate religious teachings. There were also risks of ethical challenges due to gambling, emphasis on individual (rather than collective) achievement, and temptation to pursue victory at any cost. Still, Jewish boxers were a dominant force during this time period, and Jewish intercity league

sports flourished in basketball, for example. Doubtless there were many in the community who were aghast at the streamlined one-piece bathing suits worn by Jewish female swimmers, who were setting records and sweeping competitions.

Clearly, sports were seen as a means to assimilation, and efforts to counteract the contemporary stereotype of Jews as hollow-chested, bookish, timid, and physically weak or unhealthy achieved significant success during the era in question. It is fair, then, to ask whether there are Jewish teachings and traditions that were preserved in praxis to encourage healthy, robust lifestyles while negotiating transition to the adopted culture. There were many different perspectives on this question, all of which call for historical as well as philosophical explanations. An overview of some of these perspectives will serve as an introduction to this topic, though the orchard from which these fruits are taken has many more trees waiting patiently for harvest.

The People Saw and Shook

While Jews are known as “people of the Book,” that which is read is not truly lived until it is put into practice. One of the fundamental forms of movement in some forms of Judaism is the *shokeling* movement that happens during prayer, in which the body sways, bows, and dips as an active form of worship. Children are taught to do this with reference to the Torah: “the people saw and shook” (Exodus, 20:15), and as King David urged, “Serve G-d with fear, rejoice with trembling” (Psalm 3:11).

The scholarly tradition of Judaism, it must be noted, involves not only the reading of such texts, but then also the *interpretations* of those texts in centuries of rabbinic knowledge passed from generation to generation. Often the meanings are allegorical or otherwise hidden, leading to a plethora of possible insights. Therefore, while neither the Mishnah nor the Talmud specifically address *shokeling* and there are numerous conjectures as to its origins, various Talmudic sources make oblique references to the practice as it evolved during the Talmudic era, possibly as early as the 7th century, and persisted into the post-Talmudic era (Becher, Talmudic Era and Post-Talmudic Era, 2015). Among these conjectures involves a Talmudic admonition to divide one’s activity into thirds during the day, sitting, standing, and walking (b.Ketub.111a), which has been associated with the verse, “All of my bones shall proclaim” and continues “G-d who is like You” (Psalm 35:10) referring to embodied prayer and awareness of G-d throughout one’s day. In Halachic literature, movement during prayer is sometimes encouraged, sometimes discouraged. Sephardim and Jews in some geographic areas (Yemen, for example) did not *shokel*, but Hasidic Jews maintained the practice, as did the Ashkenaz (Becher, 2015).

Beginning with the understanding that prayerful movement, consciousness of posture, and

kinesthetic awareness are not only acceptable, but also directly encouraged in some forms of Judaism (including that of the Ashkenazim who emigrated to the United States in the late 1800s), there are links between health, fitness, and Jewish values that have been promulgated by rabbis and scholars for centuries (Becher, 2015; Cohen, 1949a; Cohen, 1949b; Greenberg, 2021, Hirsch, 1975; & Schechter, 2021). *Sh'mirat haguf*, literally, guarding one's body, is one of 613 mitzvot (commandments) in Jewish tradition. However, since the ancient time of Herod's gymnasia - which Segal (1987) indicates was seen as scandalous by many contemporary Jews due to the Hellenistic habit of nude training, paganism, and frivolous nature - that mitzvah is usually tempered by the motivation of fitness in order to achieve the work of spiritual efforts, rather than dedication to professional sport and body building for the sake of individual athletic supremacy or aesthetic body sculpting (Brenner, 2006). The classical justification for exercise nevertheless reflects a degree of the Greek philosophical notion of *kalokagathia* (a balance of mind, body, and spirit, related to *aretē*, meaning excellence or virtue) and Juvenal's *mens sana in corpore sano* (sound mind in a sound body) (Bucher, 1973).

On the other hand, in the 20th century, the Orthodox Rav Kook (Ashkenazi chief Rabbi Abraham HaCohen Kook of Palestine, 1865-1935) encouraged competitive sports as part of physical education with the yeshivah, partly because he saw the need for the balancing of the Torah with one's physical nature, and partly because his Zionist viewpoint called for a form of what Europeans Max Nordau (1849-1923) and Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) had earlier called "muscular Judaism," in which physical strength building becomes, in itself, a form of worship. Kook wrote, "When Jewish children will be strong, sound, and healthy, the air of the world will become holy and pure" (Wolf, 2021, para. 17; Yaron, 1991).

Jewish Values of Health and Fitness

Non-Orthodox Jews in the broader community may not have valued exercise to that extent, but would have still been aware of many references in the Torah and in subsequent writings that praised physical abilities and encouraged healthful lifestyles (Becher, 2015; Greenberg, 2015; Michaelson, 2021). Old Testament references to archery, running, belt-wrestling, weightlifting, riding, stone slinging, fencing, javelin, jumping, various ball games, and swimming are cast in a favorable light, while hunting for sport is not (Kotteck, 1996; Postal, Silver, & Silver, 1965). From the late 1800s through the mid-20th century, Jewish and non-Jewish sports historians like Krampe (1881) scoured the Pentateuch for justifications for physical exercise, with mixed levels of understanding often due to linguistic and cultural barriers of the emic/etic variety. However, there is

no denying that the references to physical strength and skill exist in the Torah (Solomon, 1973), as well as oblique adjurations such as that found in D'varim (Deuteronomy) 4:9, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently," and also 4:15, "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves."

The Talmud (whether one considers the Palestinian or the Babylonian version) consists of categories of discussions, including the *Halachah* (which may be translated as "walking" in the sense of walking the path of Judaism) and its complement, the *Haggadah* ("narration"). Both elements contribute to Jewish understanding of the Torah's relevance to every aspect of life, including physical life (Cohen, 1949b). In the Talmud, there are at least 38 quotations that reference "Greco-Roman gymnastics, beauty and strength, dance, gymnastics [sic], agility and recreation" (Alouf, 1973, p. 39). Among these are the aforementioned *sh'mirat haguf* (care of the body), which includes instructions on hygiene, nutrition, exercise, and rest. As corollaries, the mitzvah *pikuach nefesh* (saving life) and the mitzvah *safek pikuach nefesh* (preserving life) are also cited as reasons to care for one's wellbeing (Solomon, 1973). It is important to note that these instructions carry ethical overtones in the moral implications of one's physical actions. That aspect of the Talmud impinges upon the notion of competitive athletics in addition to one's personal ethics. For example, as Cohen (1949a) observes in a chapter entitled *The Physical Life*:

[T]he body is equally answerable with the soul for the manner in which a man conducts himself in his lifetime. One reacts on the other. A vicious soul will corrupt the body, and a diseased body cannot be the effective instrument through which a pure soul can function. (p. 238)

This sentiment is echoed by Hirsch (1975), exhorting the faithful to "watch over the good of one's own spirit and mind, realizing correctly that the bodily powers are the external conditional basis thereof" (p. 298). Consideration of the ethical implications of competition in Jewish teachings had a direct impact on the development of Jewish athletic leagues in Manhattan, as will be shown below.

Cohen (1949a) notes the Talmudic recommendation that "A man should teach his child to swim (Kid. 29a)" (p. 243). However, in his explication of IV Chukim 429, Hirsch goes much further in scope:

Use that which is permitted wisely for the strengthening and preservation of your body, so that it remains an efficient instrument for the fulfilling of your life's mission. If you indulge in pleasures in this way, then your physical activities also become a service of God. But if your body is to remain a healthy instrument, avoid everything that might destroy it, and take up everything into your way of life which brings it health and strength. (p. 301)

Put another way, as we read in Midrash Samuel 4, Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiva compare a man to a tree: "He requires tender treatment and attention to his body to make it flourish and keep it in

good health” (Rossel, 2011, p. 318).

This same Rabbi Akiva (also known as Akiba) supported Bar Kochba, who led an army in opposition to ancient Rome’s oppression of the Jewish people. It was one of Akiba’s disciples, Simeon ben Yochai, who hid from the Romans with his son Eleazer in a cave for thirteen years, studying the Torah and other scrolls. They were fed by Simeon’s students, disguised as hunters, until they emerged after the Romans were defeated on a day known as Lag Bo-Omer. In remembrance of that event, a traditional springtime Scholar’s Festival is held annually on that day, complete with hikes, dancing, races, outdoor games, archery, and picnics (Goldman, 1958).

Lag Bo-Omer stands out in the Jewish calendar for its celebration of the physical and its recreational aspects. For many Jews, that day is an exception: time is limited, and that kind of self-indulgence takes time from Torah study and other responsibilities. There are many who do not heed the recommendation of Maimonides (Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon) in his *Sefer Mada, De’ot* (rules of personal development) that one “should engage one’s body and exert oneself in a sweat-producing task each morning” (Maimonides, *De’ot* Chap. 4, section 2, para. 4).

These few examples illuminate some of the Judaic teachings in support of health and fitness. Of course, not all Jews follow all teachings in the same ways, and certainly non-Jews worldwide also have physical education and recreation beliefs and traditions. However, from these instances we can surmise that the stereotype of the weak, sickly, sedentary Jewish scholar – at any age, and of any gender – meets neither the literature of the Torah, nor Talmudic precepts, nor rabbinical teachings urging Jews to care for their bodies as well as their minds and spiritual lives. Having gathered these fruits of wisdom, it is possible to see how their praxis in the context of Jewish fitness, recreation, and sport opportunities in Manhattan during the latter 19th and early 20th centuries.

German Jewish Private Clubs and Philanthropic Institutions

Before the pogroms of the late 1800s initiated the flight of Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia to the United States, Jewish immigrants from German-speaking countries established themselves in New York City, particularly from approximately 1820 to 1880. Fleeing widespread post-Napoleonic war poverty and repressive anti-Jewish regulations, tens of thousands of individuals and families arrived in ports on the U. S. Eastern seaboard (Glanz, 1970; Sachar, 2021). They viewed sports and participation in recreational leisure activities in their new country as a means of assimilation, acceptance, and social status. However, they were often discouraged or barred from social and sporting clubs in Manhattan on the basis of their religion.

Consequently, Jews formed their own recreational and social associations, such as the

Harmonie Club of the City of New York, which was established in 1852 and required that its members be of German descent. As its name implies, members sang together, but they also sponsored oratorical events. Among recreational activities, they had a bowling alley in the basement and enjoyed golf outings. Theirs was a club exemplar of the German notion of *Bildung*, or secular education and self-education, rather than strictly religious study.

Over half a century later, the City Athletic Club, opened in 1909 specifically for Jewish men with bowling alleys, billiards, a swimming pool, a running track, a gymnasium, a Turkish bath, social and reading spaces, squash courts, a barber shop, and dining rooms. Plans for a suburban facility for yachting, tennis, and athletics had been announced in 1908. Samuel Guggenheim (philanthropist and treasurer of the Public Schools Athletic League) leased the Manhattan building, and Frederick Lewisohn was already in talks with the AAU regarding membership (“Athletic Rival for New York A. C.,” 1908). All facilities and comforts that could support physical culture and, according to their Constitution, “encourage all manly sports” were provided (American Jewish Historical Society, n.d.). The luxury of this uptown club served a more established clientele than did the more egalitarian associations already in operation.

In 1874, the New York Young Men’s Hebrew Association (YMHA) was founded, but physical fitness and athletic activities were not prominently featured in its programming until the 1890s (Sclar, 2014). In the meantime, though, the influx of destitute, malnourished, and unassimilated Eastern European and Russian Jews into the Lower East Side caused concerns among the uptown (German) Jews about rates of juvenile delinquency, prostitution, and squalid, unhealthy living conditions among the more newly-arrived tenement dwellers (E. S. Sampson & J. Boyarin, personal communication, March 22, 2021). Vice was not only a problem for those crowded, impoverished neighborhoods: when the perpetrators were Jewish, it reflected badly on the entire Jewish community. During the 1890s, solutions in the forms of settlement houses, *Landsmanshaften* (mutual aid societies for *landsliet*, or people from the same community of origin), trade schools, homes for working women, parks and playgrounds, athletic clubs and leagues, and more were often (though not exclusively) funded by German Jewish benefactors.

Institutions such as the Hebrew Technical School for Girls, which began in 1881, taught garment trade classes, administrative skills such as typing and bookkeeping, English, and domestic skills. They also included physical education classes, referred to as physical culture (Borish, 1999; Klapper, 2001). A residential school founded by the Belgian Baroness de Hirsch and German immigrant philanthropist Oscar Solomon Straus, known as the Clara de Hirsch Home for Working Girls, was founded in May of 1897 and served mostly Jewish women with trade school classes, domestic training, physical exercise, outings, camp vacations, and dances. The mission of the Clara de Hirsch home was to “improve [the girls’] mental, moral and physical condition, and train them

for self-support” (Friedman, 2009). Historically speaking, the inclusion of physical conditioning for women in educational settings was for the purposes of health and vigor for childbearing and motherhood rather than for development of athletic prowess. The same was not necessarily true of men’s participation in physical activities.



Figure 2. *Stretching in Mens’ Physical Education Class. From the Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York.*

In an era in which robust physicality was seen as a sign of masculinity, societal pressure to engage in physical exercise caused Jewish immigrants to begin to advocate for the inclusion of athletics and gymnastic equipment in the YMHA, which formed the Atlas Athletic Club in 1898 under the auspices of the larger YMHA (Kugelmass, 2006; My Jewish Learning, 2021; Sclar, 2014). In Europe that year, the Bar Kochba Jewish Gymnastics Association of Berlin was founded in part to “restore the elasticity lost to the Jewish body – to make it fresh and vigorous, agile and strong” (Wildmann, 2006, p. 29). Also that year, at the Second Zionist Congress in Basel, Max Nordau coined the term “muscle Jew” (Muskeljude), which has sometimes been compared to the muscular Christianity that influenced 19th century British sports as well as the YMCAs on both

sides of the Atlantic. In terms of the European Jewish gymnastics clubs such as Bar Kochba, the “muscle Jew” referred to a “smooth and balanced musculature meant to reflect a balanced physical and psychic whole” and connotes aesthetic values in line with Jewish values and *sh’mirat haguf* (Wildmann, 2006, pp. 34-35). Nordau’s Zionist tendencies were not, however, a predominant influence on the physical activity classes in the Lower East Side settlement houses (Eisen, 1999; E. S. Sampson & J. Boyarin, personal communication, March 22, 2021).

Perhaps more relevant to the Ashkenazim of Manhattan were the words of a prominent Russian rabbi named Israel Mayer ha-Kohen Kagan, who wrote in 1893:

Do not study overmuch. Man must preserve the body so that it is not weakened, so that it does not fall ill, and for that it is crucial to rest and relax, to breathe fresh air. A walk should be taken toward evening, or sit at home and rest. When possible, a swim in the river is good for strengthening the body. (Gurock, 2006, pp. 196-197)

Kagan may have had Ecclesiastes 12:12 in mind, “studying much is a weariness of the flesh,” when he wrote that. Despite Kagan’s later discouragement of emigration and the failure of his words to have immediate impact in the scholastic environs of the *yeshiva*, his enduring belief in physical fitness found application in the new world in community centers that served Jews and non-Jews alike.



Figure 3. *Spatial Awareness With Levels in a Boys’ Physical Education Class. From the Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York.*

The Jews who funded and formed clubs, associations, and initiatives to help others were engaged in a form of philanthropy known in Judaism as *Tzedakah*, in which contributions of time,

compassion, efforts, and wisdom are meant to build trusting relationships. The wealthy uptown Germans would have been raised with the Jewish tradition of using a *pushke* (a charity box) at home or in the synagogue would have been instilled in them from childhood. DeGroot (n.d.) explains the purpose of such charity as follows: “to sustain the Jewish people, to enhance the Jewish life and to strengthen the Jewish community for today and the future,” even though many of their charitable foundations in Manhattan served Jew and non-Jews (para.1).

The Settlement Houses

With the scarcity of open space for recreation in the Lower East Side, youngsters turned to the streets, rooftops, paved areas, and the piers as playgrounds and congregated in candy shops to talk about sporting news, such as the success of Jewish boxers (Howe, 1976; Hardy, 1981). Games like stickball were played, with garbage cans substituting for bases (Postal, Silver, & Silver, 1965). Eisen (1991) recognizes the importance of health, hygiene, education, sports, play, and recreational opportunities in the efforts of the neighborhood settlement houses, where immigrants could gain confidence and learn American customs, but also mentions that physical activities allowed people (especially women) a measure of self-expression, with newfound freedom through physical activity. Beyond the physical aspects, settlement houses met the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs of new immigrants.

Jewish social activists demonstrated the Hebrew Mishnaic concept of *tikkun olam*, (world repair). The phrase, *l'taken olam b'malchut shaddai*, is recited at the end of each liturgical service in the prayer *Aleinu* to remind Jews to work to repair and perfect the world (Noparstak, n.d.). One such activist, Lillian Wald, began working with the poor in the Lower East Side's Henry Street in 1893, and with the help of philanthropist Jacob Schiff, by 1902 she opened a gymnasium and the Henry Street Settlement back yard as a playground for neighborhood youth. Far from being seen as *bitul Torah*, a frivolous waste of time better spent in study of the Torah, the supervised, safe, and social environment of the settlement house encouraged physical activity along with other classes and programs to help immigrants assimilate quickly into American culture. In 1898, working with Parks Commissioner Charles Stover (who had been a founder of the more Protestant University Settlement House) and photographer Jacob Riis (an evangelical Christian), she established the Outdoor Recreation League to create parks and playgrounds (Carnes, 2019; Filiaci, 2016; Henry Street Settlement, 2021). Their efforts at environmental reforms presaged the work of Luther Gulick and the founding of the Playground Association of America. In the early 20th century, parks used by immigrants included Seward Park, Jackson Park, Hamilton Fish Park, and Williamsburg Bridge, according to Howe (1976).



Figure 4. *Balance and Stretching in Older Girls' Physical Education Class. From the Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York.*

In 1889, three social welfare agencies headed by German Jews created the Educational Alliance, a settlement house expressly intended to facilitate the Americanization of recent Jewish immigrants (Borish, 1999). The Hebrew Free School, the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA), and the Aguilar Free Library Association combined into an institution featuring classes in English, arts, literature, and physical culture. A rooftop garden for relaxing social activities was a highlight. For the first 25 years of its existence, German and English were the only languages allowed there; Yiddish was specifically unwelcome by design (E. S. Sampson & J. Boyarin, personal communication, March 22, 2021). Near the end of her life, philanthropist and progressive education leader Julia Richman (1855-1912) urged the use of the gymnasium by adolescent and teen girls as an alternative to vice-ridden sources of amusement (Borish, 1999).



Figure 5. Men's Educational Alliance Basketball Team, 1904-1905. From the Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York.

The Edgies, as they were known in the neighborhood, believed fitness classes and sports experiences to be a vital part of acculturation. Borish (1999) notes that the Alliance's *Physical Work* (1895) reveals that "competent instructors have been engaged both for the male and female classes, and now both young men and young women and children receive the benefits of well-regulated physical exercise," and that the Women's Section had activities including "free developing exercises, marching, fancy steps and work with bells, wands, clubs, balls, hops, horse rings, rope and jumping" in a way that encouraged participation rather than competition (p. 245). The Alliance summer camp, later known as Surprise Lake Camp, opened in 1902, beginning with baseball games, swimming and boating in two-week sessions, with George Schoening of the YMHA serving as the athletic director when the Alliance merged its camp with that of the YMHA in 1911 (Holman, n.d.).



Figure 6. *Young Girls in Physical Education Class. From the Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York.*

The Educational Alliance's emphasis on acculturation was not without controversy, however. The attitudes of the older settlers in Manhattan toward new arrivals dripped with a condescending attitude that did not go unnoticed by the Edgies. Howe (1976) quotes the Alliance's *First Annual Report* regarding its attitude toward athletics and downtown Jews: "Our coreligionists are often charged with lack of physical courage and repugnance to physical work. Nothing will more effectively remove this than athletic training" (p. 231).

Stuyvesant Neighborhood House would eventually merge with the Educational Alliance in 1951, but beginning in 1919 it served a mixture of Slavic and Jewish residents (E. S. Sampson & J. Boyarin, personal communication, March 22, 2021). Their newsletter of March/April 1919 (Vol. 1 (2 & 3)), *The Stuyvesant Neighbor*, lists a female "graduate gym teacher" as "Instructress of Girls' Gymnasium Classes," (p. 2) who taught girls marching, games, and basket-ball [*sic*] (p. 4). A supervised Athletic Association was formed to coordinate use of the gymnasium for males and females and to arrange for dances to be held there.

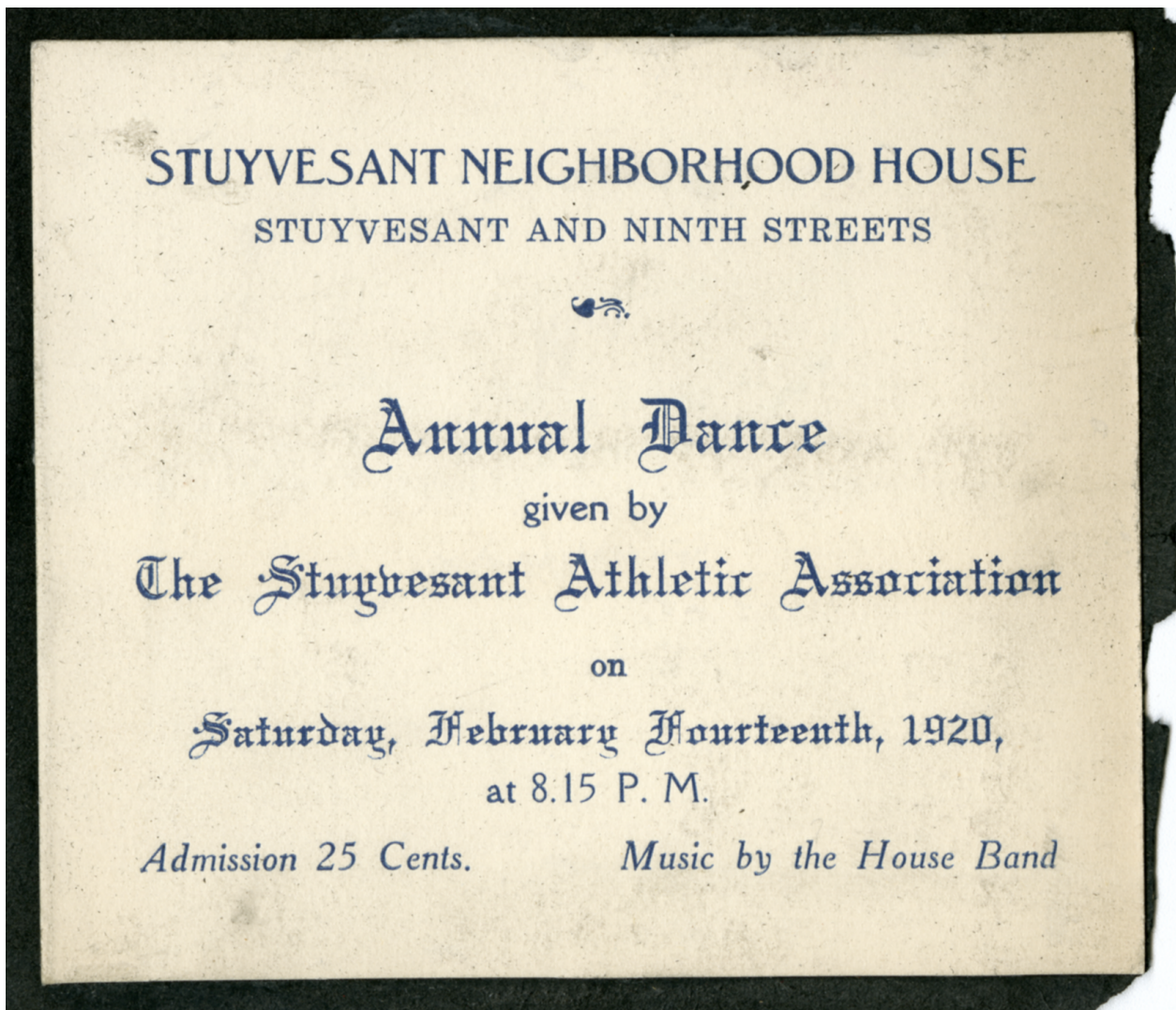


Figure 7. *Announcement of a Dance at a Stuyvesant Neighborhood House, 1920. From the Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York.*

A wide variety of interests were served by clubs for educational, cultural, and recreational outings. Hiking along the Palisades with games such as “fox-and-hare” was promoted (p. 5), but dances were the most popular events at the House. Dances were not only regular Wednesday evening occurrences, but also often followed basketball games or coincided with other events and holidays. The November 1921 newsletter (Vol. 3(1)) indicates that sometimes instruction was offered at the dances during the early years of Stuyvesant by the staff dance teacher, Katherine Lee Grable, who also taught social dancing on Monday evenings in 1921 (p. 2).

Association Sports and Physical Education: Opportunities and Challenges

The indomitable Julia Richman had organized the Ladies Auxiliary of the New York YMHA in 1888, which led to the 1903 opening of the YWHA uptown on Lexington Avenue under Bella Unterberg. Unlike the YMHA, the YWHA included sports and physical education classes from its inception, along with the promotion of assimilation, domestic classes, and helping immigrants and working-class women adjust to American society. In 1911, time was allotted “to apparatus work, jumping, and folk dancing, and Thursday evening to basket ball, athletic games and drills” (Borish, 1999, p. 248). A new YWHA building on West 110th Street, opened in 1914, had a swimming pool, gym, and tennis courts in its rooftop garden. The YWHA even had a Country House and later a summer camp in the Westchester County suburbs of New York City, where tennis and other outdoor sports and recreational activities were provided. Meanwhile, the YMHA continued its role in community-based physical education at the newer location on 92nd Street.

Despite its uptown location, the 1901 opening of the 92nd Street Y drew young men from the Lower East Side. Its intramural programs, including basketball, expanded beyond their walls with competitions against settlement house teams and other YMCA and YMHAs. However, philosophical differences created conflict there in the early 1900s. The 1901 team captain, George Hyman, tried to keep his players focused on sportsmanship and fair play. His work, with the approval of the YMHA administration, which maintained an idealistic view of the place of basketball in Jewish life and manly development. Sclar (2014) details the friction at the YMHA between amateur ideals and the competitive (not to say professional) attitude toward athletics:

The importance of keeping the game clean and without “rough playing” was essential to the belief that basketball should impart correct values and behavior when played according to its original intentions. As an instructional game, basketball was intended to teach self-control and cooperative team play, while competitiveness was simply a means to accomplish these ends and not an end unto itself. The clean play of amateur basketball ensured that the game would remain free from the taint of professionalism, which physical educators believed inevitably led to detrimental behaviors such as gambling, disrespect toward officials and opponents, and – the most destructive force of all – victory for its own sake. (pp. 98-99)

The intention of the YMHA administration as articulated by its superintendent, William Mitchell, may have been to preserve in the wider YMHA its traditional Jewish community values (physical exercise with an emphasis on individual development and character-building), while acknowledging

the place of the Atlas Athletic Club as an attractive, competitive substructure providing an alternative to the sports clubs from which Jews were banned (Sclar, 2014). However, the reality of competitive sports went far beyond Mitchell's 1908 expression of hope that the YMHA would eventually "see some of our own boys take a prominent part in athletic competition and thus disprove that our own people do not give proper attention to physical development" (American Jewish Historical Society, 1999, p. 294). Historically, the worst fears regarding basketball, gambling, and challenges to Jewish sports ethics were eventually realized in the mid-20th century with the City College of New York point-shaving scandal of 1951, back when basketball was still known as a Jewish game (Gems, 2014).

The YMHA's Atlas Club evolved with the 1912 creation of the YMHA Athletic League (also known as the Metropolitan YMHA league) for New York City area YMHAs, and more importance was given to the remunerative possibilities basketball afforded, which supported other sports including boxing, handball, and swimming programs but maintained Jewish calendar restrictions on Sabbath competitions. Nevertheless, by 1915, YMHA President Felix Warburg found it necessary to address concerns to physical director George Schoening that some members had formed the separate Manhattan Club and used the YMHA for Saturday competitive basketball, in direct opposition to the express will of the YMHA Board of Directors. Warburg reminded Schoening of the need to teach and promulgate "the ethics of sport . . . rather than the muscles alone" (Sclar, 2014, p. 105).

Finally, in 1922, the YMHA Athletic Committee explicitly ruled that any member who played a professional sport would be forbidden to play that same sport in the YMHA gymnasium. That same year, the Jewish Welfare Board (which had taken over the YMHAs and YWHAs and later merged into the Jewish Community Center (JCC) organization) called for universal physical education and attention to sportsmanship and fair play as opposed to elite athletics, in order to promote a more well-rounded Jewish exemplar of morality, intelligence, and spiritual development (Borish, 1999; Sclar, 2014).



Figure 8. *Educational Alliance Physical Education Class for Older Girls. From the Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York.*

Note: Middies and bloomers were popularly worn for girls' physical education classes during this era, and allowed for modesty and unrestricted range of movement.

In the for-profit world of physical activity, the dance halls of the Lower East Side held great appeal for the Jewish youth of the Golden Age. According to Howe (1976), by 1907 there were 31 dance halls in one 90-block area of the Lower East Side. In *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917), a semi-autobiographical novel by Abraham Cahan set in that district, Levinsky's friend Max Margolis encourages him to learn to dance, and Levinsky goes to a dance-hall. Cahan's description of his first experience there likely echoes the wonder with which other Jewish immigrants first encountered American social dance customs:

It was in the large ballroom of the establishment in question that I saw a "modern" dance for the first time in my life. It produced a bewitching effect on me. Here were highly respectable young women who would let men encircle their waists, each resting her arm on her partner's shoulder, and then go spinning and hopping with him, with a frank relish of the physical excitement in which they were joined. As I watched one of these girls I seemed to see her

surrender much of her womanly reserve. I knew that the dance - an ordinary waltz - was considered highly proper, yet her pose and his struck me as a public confession of unseemly mutual interest. I almost blushed for her. (p. 140)

It is worth noting that the protagonist of Cahan's earlier novel, *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto* (1896) displayed a great interest in baseball and boxing, believing that understanding them would make him less of a greenhorn. Cahan (1909) used his position as editor in chief of the *Jewish Daily Forward* (also known as the *Forward*) to have baseball explained in Yiddish to its readers to aid their understanding of American culture.

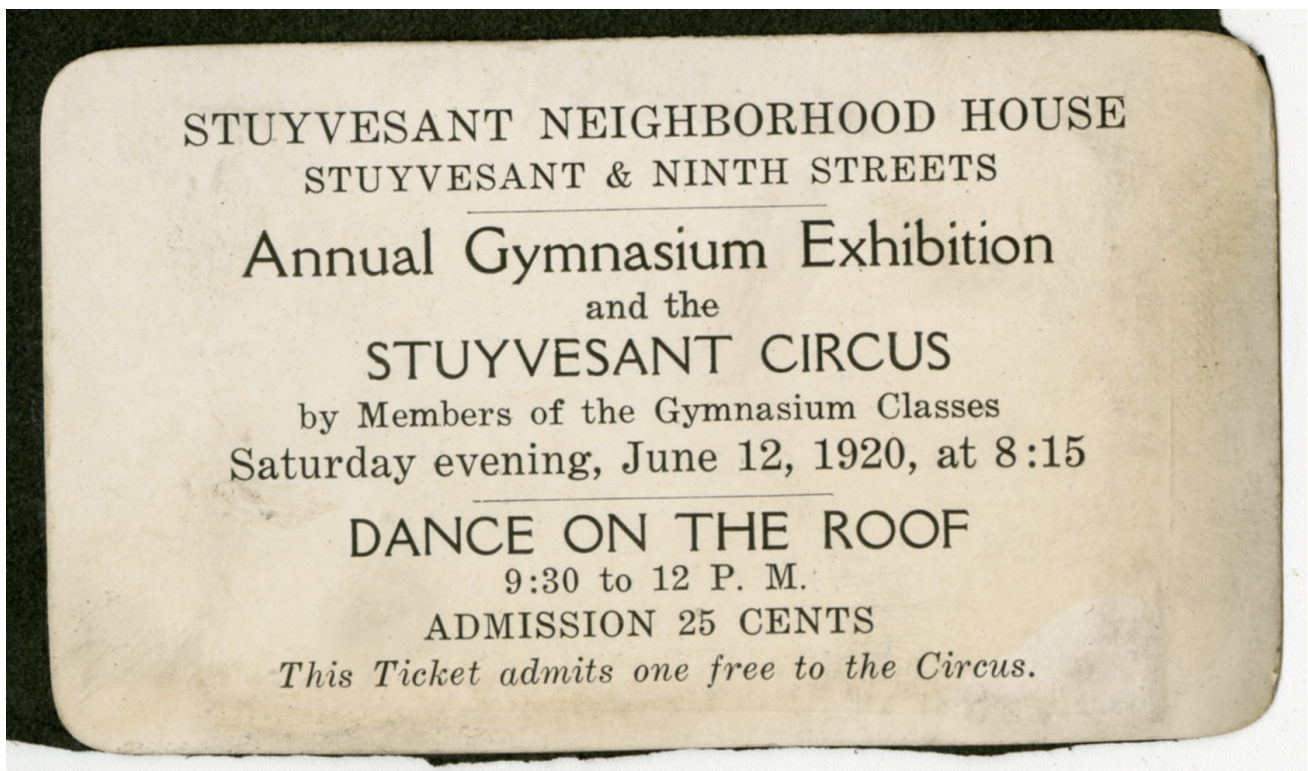


Figure 9. *Dances at Stuyvesant Neighborhood House Were Often Combined With Other Events. From the Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York.*

The Torah's references to dance (e.g., II Samuel, 6:14, "And David danced with all his might before the Lord") may have lent some religious justification to dancing, but attendance at the dance halls was more likely to be seen as risky given their history of prostitution and the "unbridled Coney Island and Haymarket dances" taught there (Howe, 1976, p. 210). On the other hand, the halls could be rented for weddings and balls, and along with settlement house dances, the popularity of social dance gave recreation, exercise, and social interaction to all ages, although at Henry Street, Lillian Wald forbid the new ragtime dances (Eisen, 1991). Jewish wedding dances celebrate life and the hope for a happy and fruitful marriage, and even the most Orthodox sects traditionally celebrate marriages with song and dance, per Talmudic and rabbinic instruction (Friedland, 1985/1986; Ingber, 1985/1986).

Jewish Physical Education and Sport: The Progressive Era

Assimilation into American society meant, for many Jewish immigrants, attendance at public schools. Participation in sports and physical culture was part of that education, and when school was not in session, many students enjoyed recreational activities and sports at both Christian and Jewish settlement houses. While it is true that Jewish youth, particularly males, would often attend supplementary schools to attain Jewish standards of learning in Torah and Talmud studies if they attended public schools, the supplementary schools did not require attendance every day of the week. There were still opportunities for supervised and unsupervised recreational activities.

The first yeshiva in the United States, Etz Chaim (1886), did not provide younger students with physical education or sports, but when a New York State law enacted in 1916 required all students to receive physical training (which could include marching), yeshivas allowed a small amount of time for recess, physical education, and organized sports or games (Folts, 1996; Gurock, 2006).

The Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary (1909) and the New York Bureau of Jewish Education (1910) were early leaders in professional education preparation. The respective heads of these institutions, Lithuanian immigrant Mordecai M. Kaplan (1881-1983) and Samson Benderly (1876-1944), both encouraged sports activities; in fact, Kaplan was a boxer in public school as a teen and at one time hoped to play football for Columbia University, and Benderly was trained as a physician (Gurock, 2006; Scult, 1986). Benderly established programs using the *Ivrit be-Ivrit* method, in which Hebrew language was used for holiday celebrations using music and dance, physical exercises were led in Hebrew, and designated areas for recreation and play were created. Kaplan later became known for Reconstructionist Judaism and the idea of the synagogue-center (sometimes referred to as shul with a pool), where religious observances and study were balanced with arts, dance, sports, and exercise programs (Gurock, 2006; Scheinerman, n.d.).

In 1915, the Talmudical Academy created a more secular learning environment (oriented toward native-born Jews) with American Orthodox faculty under the guidance of Bernard Revel, president of the Rabbinical College of America, which later became Yeshiva University. Under the leadership of principal and tennis enthusiast Shelley Safir, athletic activities and games were a point of pride for the school, even though space limitations in their building forced them to use public parks for outdoor activities. He hired licensed physical educators and appears to have followed the mitzvah, *sh'mirat haguf*, in encouraging students to look to their physical health as well as their scholarship (Gurock, 2006).

In terms of collegiate sports, the Jewish scholar-athlete could be found at Columbia University in players like Moses Henry Epstein, the first known Jew of intercollegiate football and Maclyn Baker, an All-American and AAU All-American standout in basketball who had grown up playing rag ball basketball in the streets with garbage cans for baskets. In some cases, players were asked to change their names in exchange for professional contracts, as happened to high school baseball catcher Arthur O. Cohen of the Hebrew Technical Institute in 1904 (he refused) (Postal, Silver, & Silver, 1965).

Prejudice against Jewish athletes was, of course, not a circumstance unique to collegiate sports in the early years of the 20th century: boxers from the Lower East Side ghetto were known to adopt Celtic names in order to hide their participation in the sport from their families, although the sport was undeniably popular in New York City's Jewish neighborhoods. Still, the mitvot of *pikuach nefesh* and *safek pikuach nefesh* could be cited as precepts urging Jews to refrain from causing physical harm for sport. Boxing was also rife with gambling, which is frowned upon in Judaism (Greenberg, 2010). There was, however, good reason for the study of boxing to promote self-confidence and self-defense in the youth of the Lower East Side, and programs to meet this demand were developed by many associations and community centers, including Henry Street Settlement and the Educational Alliance (Gems, 2014). Pugilistic skills could also benefit Jewish fighters who went into military training and honed those skills with the help of the Jewish Welfare Board's military support division, and who served in defense of their adopted country, thereby increasing respect and acceptance in American society for themselves and their brethren (Norwood, 2009).

The End of an Era

Eisen (1999) outlined the importance of Jewish physical fitness and sport as the interplay between historical factors (e.g., the emergence of modern sport in the late 1800s, urbanization, industrialization), social factors (e.g., socio-political emancipation, the rise of political and racial anti-Semitism, economic empowerment of Jews, and – for some – the rise of political Zionism) in combination with the rise of the Olympic movement and its ideals, the rise of modern sport, and the gradual transformation of many Jews into communities based more in ethnocultural connections than in religious practice (p. 230). Noting the stereotypes surrounding Jewish sports history in general, Eisen (1999) echoes remarks by Ross (1966), Reiss (1998), and Zeigler (1977) divulging that those authors had been advised that there is little to no basis for the study of Judaism in sport: “The fact that religious philosophies and attitudes have something to do with how we view and administer our leisure activities through history is one of the best-kept secrets of modern sport

scholarship” (p. 231).

In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge signed the Immigration Act, or Johnson-Reed Act, which included the Asian Exclusion Act and the National Origins Act. After generations of Jewish immigration and prolonged efforts at assimilation, the 1924 legislation specifically aimed to “preserve the ideal of U. S. homogeneity,” according to the Office of the Historian of the U. S. Department of State (n.d., Immigration Quotas section, para. 6). After its enactment, the State Department referred to the 1890 U. S. national census records of origin, and only two percent of the population of any given country would henceforth be allowed to immigrate. A revision in 1927 adjusted the allowed number to 150,000 from each nation per year, decreasing annual immigration by more than 50% (Posner, 2019).

The history of New York’s Jews and their physical activities may have been overshadowed by their intellectual gifts; however, it is undeniable that a plethora of opportunities for fitness education, athletics, and physical culture was provided to and by them during the era from 1880-1924. These activities fulfilled Jewish mitzvot for self-care as well as for charitable giving and social work. Whether in pursuit of upward social and economic mobility, Americanization, or personal well-being, they were fulfilling the commandments of the Torah, the Talmud, and the Mishnah. By dint of careful study and interpretation of their religious writings, Jews were able to work toward a balance of mind, body, and spirit despite the hardships of immigrant life. The guidance of their religious precepts was part of their adaptive lives, to varying degrees, and their physical experiences in fitness-related activities, athletics, sports, and recreation were also an expression of their Judaic heritage.

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photo credit : Anass Errihani



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Emeritus Professor in Philosophy at Cardiff University. In his early career he taught English Literature, then moved to Philosophy *via* literary theory, and has now moved back toward creative writing. He has published widely on the topic of deconstruction and is the author of more than thirty books on aspects of philosophy, literature, politics, the history of ideas, and music. More recently he has turned to writing poetry in various genres, among them – unusually – that of the philosophical verse-essay. His collections include *The Cardinal's Dog* (2014), *The Winnowing Fan* (2015), *For the Tempus-Fugitives* (2017), *The Matter of Rhyme* (2018), *A Partial Truth* (2019), *Socrates at Verse* (2020), and *As Knowing Goes* (2021). He has also published two collections of political-satirical verse, *The Trouble with Monsters* (2018) and *The Folded Lie* (2019). He lives in Swansea (Wales) with his wife Valerie and is active in left-wing political movements.



João Tiago Lima

Professor Auxiliar com Agregação no Departamento de Filosofia da Universidade de Évora e é Membro Integrado do Centro de Investigação de Ciência Política (CICP). As suas áreas preferenciais de investigação são a filosofia contemporânea, o pensamento filosófico português e a filosofia do desporto. Publicou e editou vários livros, tendo sido responsável pela edição das *Obras Completas* de Eduardo Lourenço (Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian). Obras principais: *O Fogo do Espírito. Desporto, Olimpismo e Ética* (2007), *Existência e Filosofia. O ensaísmo de Eduardo Lourenço* (2008), *Falar Sempre de Outra Coisa – Ensaios sobre Eduardo Lourenço* (2013), *Estética e Desporto* (2016) e *Jogar Sem Bola – Literatura, Filosofia e Futebol* (2018).



Torgeir Fjeld

Head of the Ereignis Center for Philosophy and the Arts. He is the author of *Perversion's Beyond* (Atropos Press, 2019), *Rock Philosophy* (Vernon Press, 2018), and *dressage and illusio* (SNP, 2016), and serves as Editor-in-Chief of *Inscriptions*. His areas of interest include desire, mediatisation and releasement.



Wladimir de Castro Rodrigues Dias

Graduado em Direito pela PUC Minas, pós-graduando em Direito Esportivo e Negócios no Centro de Direito Internacional (CEDIN), titulado no *Máster Propio en Periodismo Deportivo*, junto à Universidad CEU-San Pablo, em parceria com a Escuela de Periodismo y Comunicación de Unidad Editorial, e mestre em Ciências da Comunicação, pela Universidade do Minho.



Sadjad Soltanzadeh

International award-winning researcher in philosophy and ethics of technology at the Asser Institute, University of Amsterdam. Sadjad has a multidisciplinary background in mechanical engineering, philosophy, and education and has experienced diverse workplace and academic environments in Iran, the Netherlands, and Australia. Sadjad has been collaborating with the Australian Institute of Sport, Netball Australia, and Athletics Australia since 2013. At the centre of this collaboration lie questions of performance evaluation, player selection, and player autonomy.



Mitchell Mooney

He began his professional career as a PhD student at the Essendon Football Club in 2009. He progressed to full time employment at the Australian Institute of Sport in 2011 as a performance analyst and was promoted to a senior performance analyst in 2014. He has worked with international programs including Rowing and Netball. Mitchell has been the performance analyst for the Australian Netball Diamonds from 2013 to 2020 (Including two Commonwealth Games and two World Cups) and has worked at two Olympic Games in a performance analysis service team both through the AIS (London 2012) and the AOC as an associated team member (Rio de Janeiro 2016). Mitchell has also published over 15 original works and was an adjunct fellow at Australian Catholic University. Currently, Mitchell works as a Pathways research and data lead at Athletics Australia.



Joe Higgins

PhD in Philosophy in 2017 from the University of St. Andrews. His research lies at the intersection of phenomenology and cognitive science and he has published articles addressing the existential modality of being human, cognising in the we-mode, biosocial selfhood, the social dimension of minimal selfhood, and the philosophy of sporting genius. He is currently researching the importance of philosophy in educational and mental health settings. Joe teaches Philosophy and Mathematics in the North-east of England.



Daniel O'Shiel

Postdoctoral researcher and teacher in philosophy, most recently working for FONDECYT at the Instituto de Filosofía, Universidad Diego Portales, in Santiago, Chile. His expertise is in phenomenology and existentialism, although more broadly speaking he is interested in many themes from philosophical anthropology, including the nature of many basic modes of experience (not least perception, imagination, emotion and value), philosophy of technology, philosophy and literature, environmental philosophy and feminism. O'Shiel has published on various themes throughout phenomenology and philosophical anthropology, not least philosophy of emotion and imagination, and had his first book, *Sartre and Magic. Being, Emotion and Philosophy*, appear with Bloomsbury Academic in 2019. His latest project was a three-year one that will explicate the natures of perception, phantasy and 'image-consciousness' (*Bildbewusstsein*) as found in the works of Husserl, Fink and Sartre. It will then challenge this theory through a dynamic notion of virtuality, and apply the findings to concrete cases in social media, online gaming and various virtual, augmented and mixed reality (VR, AR and MR respectively) technologies.



Isabel Fontbona

Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Art History at the University of Girona (Spain). She has a B.A. in Philosophy, a B.A. in Art History, and an M.A. in Humanities Research. She is currently completing her dissertation on the artistic and gendered interventions enabled by female and trans bodybuilding practices. The foundations of her research come from the fields of gender studies, sociology, art theory, philosophy, queer theory, body modification, and sports. Her dissertation involves the theorizing of body identity, representation, performance, and gender issues. She also gives lectures and gives performative conference presentations about her research in academic contexts both in Europe and internationally.

She has taught classes internationally at L-Università ta' Malta, Malta; Leuphana University, Lüneburg, Germany, and also at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, where she developed her doctoral research during a four-month stay.

Fontbona is a natural bodybuilding competitor –competed in seven physique competition, being vice world champion in 2017 in this context, among other success during 2014 to the present – and a performance artist too. Her artistic work merges all these facets into the same coin: her research and her sports career. She explores this malleability of the body with her own skin, through bodybuilding, in order to question the binary categorization regarding gender distinction, as well as the social pressure which conditioned the physique. In some cases, during her performances she challenge herself to the limits of the endurance of her body. The concept of vulnerability is a relevant point explored through her artworks.

In her performances, text usually plays a relevant role. In fact, this characteristic was what pushed her performative-conferences into the frame of art 'per se'.



Cláudio Alexandre S. Carvalho

Doctor in Philosophy (University of Coimbra, 2012), in the field of Ethics and Political Philosophy, with a thesis devoted to the study of the concepts of kinship and gender in the transition to modern society, with incidence in Hegel and contemporary interpretations of Lacan, Judith Butler and Niklas Luhmann. From 2006 to 2015, he was a member of the Institute of Philosophical Studies (former LIF – Language, Interpretation & Philosophy) at the Department of Philosophy, Communication and Information at the University of Coimbra. After finishing his PhD, he has been devoted to the study of the philosophical bases of psychotherapy, delving into Systems Theory and Cognitive Science. He worked as an Assistant Professor at UBI - University of Beira Interior teaching in the fields of medical ethics and political philosophy. He is currently a Researcher at the Institute of Philosophy (University of Porto), on the research group “Aesthetics, Politics & Knowledge”, with a postdoctoral fellowship of the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT). His research project aims at understanding the constitution of the therapeutic medium of modern society, attending to the scientific, social and political contexts.



Lukáš Mareš

Lukáš Mareš is a PhD. student of philosophy at the University of South Bohemia. His research focuses on the philosophy of sport, philosophical practice, and sport psychology. He is particularly interested in the role of sport in a good life. Beside his pursuits in academia, Lukáš works as a mental coach and a philosophical consultant. His clients are athletes from various sports. He also works with their parents, coaches, and clubs.



Emily Ryall

Emily Ryall is an Associate Professor in Applied Philosophy at the University of Gloucestershire, UK. Her main area of expertise is in the philosophy of sport, in addition to an interest in broader ethical and conceptual issues. She is on the editorial board of the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* and has published work in peer-reviewed journals and edited collections as well as sole authored books.



Nancy Kane

Teaches kinesiology at the State University of New York, College at Cortland (USA). Her research interests include the study of justice and equity for transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming athletes. She is the former Editor-in-Chief of the peer-reviewed *National Dance Society Journal*, and she serves as Vice President of the Lloyd Shaw Foundation for the preservation and transmission of traditional music and dance. She holds advanced degrees in exercise science and dance studies.

Kane is a member of the International Society for the History of Physical Education and Sport (ISHPES) and the International Association for the Philosophy of Sport (IAPS). She is the author of *History and Philosophy of Physical Education and Sport* (Cognella, 2020). With a career spanning more than three decades in exercise science and performing arts, she has taught ethics, movement analysis, stage combat, kinesiology, dance, film, and theatre classes in the U.S. and Europe.

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