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Editorial

PLAY-SPORT CULTURE

Milan Hosta 

University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)

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*What of fatherland! Thither striveth our helm where our children's land is! Thitherwards, stormier
than the sea, stormeth our great longing!*

*"Why so hard!" said to the diamond one day the charcoal; "are we then not near relatives?" Why so
soft? O my brethren; thus do I ask you: are ye then not my brethren? Why so soft, so submissive and
yielding? Why is there so much negation and abnegation in your hearts? Why is there so little fate in
your looks?*

Old and New Tables, Nietzsche: Thus spake Zarathustra

Abstract

Our intention in this paper is to shortly address some of the basic categories that determine the paradigm of sport culture as we know it. We do believe that by understanding these basic categories the changes of prevailing sport paradigm, which is without any shame revealing all the pathologies of modern man, can be made. The call for active reflection and indirect careful intervention into sport is loud enough to recognize the stormy times that the presence has put in front of sport. Such active reflection demands from us to travel into the field which was for long time neglected by sport theoreticians, and only a couple of mochicans has shown courage to step beyond usual. Above all, as long as sport is trapped by quasi-academics, politics, economics and other ideologists nothing much will happen. Therefore we are calling upon those who value human being above the sport, learner above the curriculum, and are setting liveliness of life before depressing statistics. We are calling upon those who care for the child within and the children in front of us.

Keywords: *principle, paradigm, sport, culture*



Corresponding author. Faculty of Sport. University of Ljubljana. Gortanova, 22. 1000. Ljubljana, Slovenia.

E-mail: milan.hosta@fsp.uni-lj.si

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1. ACTIVE PRINCIPLE

Every human community can be defined by certain paradigms. These paradigms work as the most substantial patterns that direct key relations among members of community and to nature as well. Sport as we know it from Anglo-American and European culture mostly incorporates the paradigm of progress, growth, awards the winning side, and is inferior to institution, which governs, standardize and colonize it in order to keep the power position of leading socio-political structures. Sport toward which we will devote further reflection in this paper is somehow almost the opposite. The only thing in common is that it is about the form of physical culture that we call sport. Our focus, intention and structure are completely different from usual understanding of sport.

1.1 Changing the paradigm

First change, which should be regarded very seriously, is that we took things in our own hands now. No more can we blindly accept what our cultural legacy and valued centres of power are offering to us. The environment in which we are must not be seen as static and conceptualized as something given in advance and self-understood. Any environment is a result of relations among subjects and/or objects that are in it, and is further always set in even larger environment that defines its meaning as a whole. The environment is therefore inherently relating space, where the subject is always active partaker of the structure and intention. We need to internalize the approach that says that environment in which we find ourselves is not found but made. With the sole presence of children and teachers the place where we do sport instantly becomes different. We can modify such place further by changing the technology and equipment which enable us to actively approach in creation of movement-game environment that transcends into the safe world of play where the child is the main acteur. If we manage to do this well, we then face the world, which is - by experiencing the whole - holografically impressed into child. Such experience reveals the connatural way of living, where we cannot exist without considering personal and natural restraints, and where communication with every partaker (subjects and objects) is of high importance. In this sense the child is open to everything that surrounds him/her, and this is the way of spreading oneself further and deeper into the environment. This is the way to accept the surroundings as part of itself and respectively actively interweave in network of relations and therefore changing the network alone. In this moment the ethics of our concept is firmly placed; it is about responsible acceptance of ourselves and the environment together with all possible relations, that has emerged by our entering into the play-ground.

1.2 Experiential quality

We have been talking shortly about paradigm of progress, growth and awarding as outer motivation, and now we will turn to paradigm of experiential quality, which derives from active understanding approach. If the first paradigm is a subject of constant growth and narrow task-motoric specialization, we can now turn to psiho-motoric literacy and versatility where the focus is on the approach to oneself and others (on method) and not on in advanced given motoric structure (remedy, tool). We are talking about functionality which has no hindrances going beyond tradition, since this is the only way to outgrow the rigid sport-related movement patterns. No longer are we interested in sport as an institution that forms the rules of the practice in order to enable standardized circumstances according to which

competition is possible. We are now interested in sport not as competition but as playful movement into which we can consciously dive in order to constantly and actively reapproach the movement-game structure by which we allow the children to co-create the playful environment according to their powers and interests. This is the core element of new play-sport culture, which reflects an ecological principle and is as physical activity of primal interest in education for sustainable living. Active principle further demands that both, child and teacher, being as planners and co-creators of play environment, do have well developed practical sense.

1.3 Practical sense

Paraphrasing Hocart² we can say that the time has passed, when sport ceased to be just practice. The cognitive capabilities of the human are limited in time and space, subjectively and objectively. We are in the world consciously only to a certain extent; as needed in a given moment or as engaged we are, and as it is in our power (will). To know might mean to be able to identify or describe and explain something, or to have the same experience as the one we are trying to understand. Our everyday life is primarily experienced as the place for actual and possible actions, and only secondly as an object of our thoughts. We are now facing the challenge of bridging the gap mentioned, where Bourdie's (2002: 139) *practical sense* might show us a way:

“There exists the time of science, which is not the time of practice. [...] The science is possible only in relation to time, which is contrary to practice. Science wants to overlook time in order to detemporalize practice. The one who is involved in the game, seized within, does not conform to what he sees, but to what he fore-sees (pre-voir, sees in advance in directly perceived presence).”

It is believed that with the aid of scientific-logical reasoning, based on the principles of formal logic, man will – ever faster and more successfully – change the stock of knowledge of everyday life, a life based primarily on the rules of 'common sense'. Man tends towards the explanation of a practice, its generalization, ordering, systematization and rational explanation. This, however, is already a transition from concrete life to the abstract, from practice to theory, from lived to reflected or to discursive consciousness. And this is exactly the point, we believe, where attention should be placed in order to develop a theory of sport; the gap between the lived and the reflective, and between practice and theory. Regarding this gap, an important paradigmatic change is occurring; scientific positivism is being transformed into, or perhaps more accurately, being replaced by, the science of perspective (Jošt, Hosta, 2004).

² Hocart in Bourdie (2002: 62): “It has been for a long time since man stopped just to live, and began to think life.”

1.4 The world of play and sense for play

With the intention of theoretical contextualization of development of new play-sport culture we, among other things, need to address ideological approach of the educator. First, an educator must be aware of practical sense and its development and implementation. This practical sense consists from pedagogic intuition, which is responsively directed into future, and at the same moment feign firmly rooted in the presence, here and now in the practice itself. Pedagogic intuition is conscious of learning environment being able to change it according to one's will as well. And this very well is in harmony with the will of kids, because it is rooted in practical sense, and therefore no projection of educators' perspective onto kids is possible. Practical sense is enabling the educator to grasp the meaning of the play in kids' way, therefore being able to dive into the world of play and finally take the position of the harmonizing element, which is needed only to guarantee the safety of the play and to take care that everyone is included.

1.5 Towards a new play-sport culture

The key for the assertion of practical pedagogical sense is the emancipation of the new play-sport culture from the institutional dictatorship. Practice demands immediate response, and it is expected that educators poses a sense for kids' play. In sport this would mean that sportsperson has to play according to the rules of the game, and in our case this means that the rules, if we regard them as only a framework and tool, can be changed instantly, if so needed. Learning environment asks from all the partakers (subjects) constant readiness to adopt, adjust and change, including technology, remedies and rules (objects). It is not about setting up the environment first, that would serve us for further orientation. In the sole moment of orientation we simultaneously create environment from which we orient ourselves. We cannot have one without another, and none of both happens before the other. The world in new play-sport culture is not ready-made and cannot be – like we are used in *McDonald's* society – warmed and digested without any awareness. Our concept presupposes that people enter the relations in responsible manner, conscious of the fact that world, even if this is only a world of play, is co-created by everyone. This is the *raison d'être* for their responsibility, where actions are taken only when interests, abilities and capabilities of others are considered. If this is the base, then the next pedagogical step leads to cooperation and peer to peer education for the purpose of helping those who are not yet familiar with the learning environment up to their potentials. Namely, the sense for material and social space becomes a matter of everyone, and with the progress of one, the whole benefits as well. If we want that a new play-sport culture to truly flourish, then our perception of space, of ourselves and of movement has to always be set within the context of common environment, which is nondivisible and cannot be put together from many abstract elements. If as pedagogues that prepare the children for the world out-there we accept our political responsibilities, then we can say that with new play-sport culture we influence the change from liberal-individual and atomistic towards the communitarian and holistic perception of social environment.

The environment in which we teach in the way proposed here, has to be understood in terms of habitus. Habitus can be regarded as organism that has grown out of relations in the group in certain space and time that this group occupies. Habitus is the materialization of all such relations, of everything that individuals (subjects and objects) bring into this environment, and historical experiences as well. The structure that we are setting up in the new play-sport

culture enables such habitus where the development of new sport paradigm is possible. With no hesitation and no violence such habitus automatically set aside those elements of old paradigm, which we no longer want to reproduce.

2. NEW PLAY-SPORT CULTURE

2.1 New identities and perspectives

The power of bodily identity that is by nature primary, is manifested in what one learns as body. This knowledge, according to Bourdieu, is not something that one can display for others to be seen as knowledge, but it is what someone actually is. In our habitus this knowledge is transferred from child to child not being raised on the level of discursive reality. Children are mimicking each other. They are not following some ideal forms imposed by scientific modeling that sport science is producing through the statistics and biomechanical findings. Here the children are finding their own way as given by the body. We are speaking about natural sense for movement, which in no way can be expressed beyond biomechanical and other biological limitations. For this reason it is characteristic for new play-sport culture to change the perspective from subject that uses tools and remedies to the one where the same tools and remedies offer the answer of how they will be used, and how to efficiently handle them. This is the way of opening into space where tools and other things around us become the extensions of our body. And with very extensions of our body we create new play-sport worlds where we can experience prereflective somatic wisdom and most intimate, often subconscious, connections with the whole.

While such habitus is of very fragile nature, and we do not want it to be exposed on discursive level, we avoid to measure children by ruler. Like Jews are saying: we measure the one who is dead – for coffin. Like [Horkheimer and Adorno](#) are saying (2002), manipulators of the body are those who measure others with the eye of the coffin maker, and are disclosed when they launch the result. With the result they label people as long, short, heavy, strong etc. and their interest is directed only to rationalized care for health. Many teachers of PE are trapped in this paradigm of total measuring and care for health, which is certainly the outcome of their miseducation and strong cultural influence of economic-political social order. It is no wonder that a simple walk has become movement, eating has become caloric intake and sport has become a life-style diet like chemical process of corporal regeneration.

Now a new learning environment enables us to set up a habitus, where there is no room for measuring, more concrete, we do not measure by ruler but by the intensity of experience. There is no room for chemical processes of regeneration and re-creation since we talk about deep engagement in play-sport activity. We are released in the world of play and we are present bodily to the extent where all borders are gone, where all subjects and objects become potential extensions of one's body in a way where everything becomes one huge relation – responsible relation of oneness/community/habitus. One of the aims of education is that the child is actively released in relation with itself and others, and is aware of its role within the whole exactly through the sense for the whole. We believe that this is the way to internalize (it is already in the body by its nature, but is often overridden by culture of consuming) the ecological code of sustainability. This code connects all apparently individual parts into one relation, and set up all relations and relationships into relation of the whole.

2.2 Openness of the body

Primacy of movement is a basic principle present everywhere, and has no known limitation. We can actually find movement in every solid rock, not to mention the fast movement of thoughts on the other hand. We propose that this is the manner in which we approach and understand also our being and acting. The limits of our body are not equal to the limits of skin or clothes. Our body is extending in space and space is deeply reaching into our bodies. If nothing else, with every breath we take, we are closer to one another since we breathe the same air. In a new play-sport culture we chose to think in paradigm of having an inner and outer body. Inner body is the one usually regarded as our own body, our flesh and bones literally being limited by skin. This body is a specific form that is of crucial meaning for our being. An outer body is everything else around us. This is the only way to be in peace with the whole and accept the responsibility that is in our powers. That brings us to the approach guided by following world-outlook offered by Maitland (1995: 29): “The limits of my body are not limitations where I cease to exist. These are only limitations at which I begin to be.”

2.3 Play as trust in life

Key point for play-sport culture to flourish is therefore trust. Trust in oneself and others to the point where we can be relaxed and playfully released into co-creation of play environment. This way we allow our bodies to intuitively suggest how to learn new movements and how to constantly and responsibly setting up the relation of the whole. We enable that partners, remedies, or tools become our second nature, and so open ourselves for oneness. There is no place for division of body and mind, no place for *awareness of* that is setting the opposite. It is about awareness of self and environment in which we are present and which we create. This is awareness of the relation, which is always ethically rooted in the context of the whole. Care for the whole is finally providing us with substantial ethical ground in new play-sport culture. And this care, deriving from the love of life, is nothing else than existed socio-ecological orientation in globalised world.

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