



Editorial

Agon: A Short History of Contest in Sport

Authors' contribution:

A) conception and design
of the study

B) acquisition of data

C) analysis and interpretation
of data

D) manuscript preparation

E) obtaining funding

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Introduction

Sometime ago Olav Ballisager and I were sharing memories about our involvement in institutionalizing a field of sport studies and research in the 80's in Denmark. One event turned out to be a very remarkable and promising one. It took place in July in 1980 at Gerlev folk high school of sport. More than 200 persons were gathered to rediscover their bodies in modern dance together with outstanding American instructors like Judith Chaffe, Adrienne Hawkins and Betty Toman. Occasionally, there were also opportunities for learning about body and movement in cultural, philosophical and educational perspectives with excellent American researchers like John W. Loy, Susan Birrell, the English-born Alan G. Ingham, Seymour Kleinman and the Australian-born John Cheffers.

All that was put together by Olav Ballisager, a Danish gym teacher with creative ideas of challenging traditional ways of doing gymnastics and sports. *The Institute of Scandinavian Physical Culture* (ISPC) was inaugurated at this memorable event in Gerlev, and the ISPC existed as a private operator in about 25 years with exchange programs for scholars and students from many parts of the world. In 1997 the ISPC was somehow revived as part of a new program of sport studies at Aarhus University located in Aarhus, Denmark.

When we were talking about people involved throughout all these years, one person caught our attention especially, namely John W. Loy who are among the pioneers in establishing the field of sport sociology back in the 60s and 70s.¹ We had learned about his efforts through "Sport, Culture, and Society" from 1969, a reader on the sociology of sport edited with Gerald S. Kenyon. (Loy & Kenyon, 1969). Loy wrote, among other things, about the nature of sport and Kenyon about a conceptual model for characterizing physical activity. Their knowledge and viewpoints were albeit American also relevant for the rising debate on sport and society in Denmark in the 70s characterized by conflicts between an elite-oriented sport movement and a popular or mass-oriented movement of gymnastics and sports in a broader sense, between "lex sportiva" and politization of sport.

¹ On the 50th anniversary of the *International Sociology of Sport* (ISSA) and *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* (IRSS), whose founding editor-in-chief was Andrzej Wohl, key foundational scholar in the sociology of sport John W. Loy (2015) assesses the development of the field by focusing on larger questions of theory and methodological tactics.



Photo 1. At Gerlev folk high school of sport, July 1980

From the left: Alan G. Ingham, Judith Chaffe, John Cheffers, Adriene Hawkins, Seymour Kleinman, Betty Toman, John W. Loy and Susan Birrell

Source: archive of the author.

In 1984 Olav Ballisager edited a book on “Sport and Agon” dealing with the environments as well as the inner life of sports (Ballisager, 1984). Loy was among the contributors. However, the book did not receive any great attention compared to, for example, a book on the history of gymnastics and sports entitled “The Struggle for the Body” written by Ove Korsgaard (1982), the principal of Gerlev folk high school of sport. It was apparently not possible to be a critical and curly mind and, at the same time, show some understanding of agonistic efforts in the world of sport.

Korsgaard (1986; 2018) developed subsequently a “Grundtvigian” concept of struggle named “circular motion” as a Nordic variant of agon², whilst Claus Bøje (2002), a cultural politician, launched an educational variant of struggle, which side by side with play, dance and contemplation became a renewed mission for Gerlev folk high school of sport.

Thus, I asked Ballisager: What do you think about agon today?

Without answering directly, he referred to an unpublished paper by John W. Loy with W. Robert Morford as co-author on “The Agon Motif: Redux. A Study of the Contest Element in Sport”. After having read it I thought it deserved a publication, although it was presented as a conference paper back in 2009, and the co-author Robert Morford in the meantime was deceased.

The publication of this excellent paper is now realized in a special issue of *Physical Culture and Sport. Studies and Research* on “The Agon Motif” including also an introduction by Roland Renson, and commentaries by Olav Ballisager, R. Scott Kretchmar and myself as well as a perspectival article on physical culture by Jerzy Kosiewicz.

² The German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744 - 1803) was also interested in circular motion (German “*Kreisbewegung*”).

The Agon Motif-paper was presented at a symposium on 12 June 2009 on "Homo Movens: International symposium on movement culture" at the occasion of Roland Renson's "rite of passage" to the emeritus status at the KU Leuven. In his introduction, Renson is trying to clarify the concepts of "movement culture" and "ludodiversity", which he often had the chance to discuss with John Loy personally. Renson consider sport as an anachronistic and ethnocentric term, both from a diachronic and from a cross-cultural perspective. Therefore, we should, rather, look at sport in a broader perspective of movement culture embracing not only contests, but exercise, performance, acrobatics/dance, play and games. Renson is particularly a spokesman for play and games and has coined a term of "ludodiversity" in order to raise our awareness for safeguarding this cultural heritage of "endangered movement species".

In the keynote on "The Agon Motif: Redux" John W. Loy and Robert Morford is arguing, that the contest element of modern sport has its ancient roots in the "agon" of early Greek life. They begin with an overview of the material and historical continuities in the social development of sport, followed by a discussion of their suppositions regarding the original linkage of sport and war in terms of what they call the agon motif, and conclude with speculations about residuals of the agon motif in modern sport. They argue it is important to recognize that notwithstanding of the many transitions and transformations in the social development of sport since the agon of Homeric and Hellenic Greek cultures there are notable, long-standing, material and historical continuities in the structure of sport and the ethos of agonal contests.

Loy and Morford emphasizes a close link to the cult of masculinity and masculine domination in the Western world, since the primary avenues of pursuing the agon motif through war and sport are two of the most highly and rigidly "gendered" activities in the history of humankind. They suggest that the most fundamental dynamic of the agon motif as well as the most enduring residual of the agon motif in modern sport is the pursuit of prestige, honor and excellence through physical prowess. The ethical framework of archaic (heroic) agon represents the epitome of a morality of honor and an ethics of virtue and offers a largely unfamiliar picture from a contemporary viewpoint of winning and losing in sport.

Olav Ballisager offers in his commentary to the agon motif some old Nordic examples on games – possibly with an agonal element. Then he is focusing on moral and character in order to identify some sort or a vestige of agon and revisit physical culture in terms of "idræt", an old Nordic word for athletics and sport. Finally, he asks if there is – atavistic or not – in the modern world any glimpse of agonal behavior to be found and appreciated within the three realms or categories, which could be pillars of a physical education program: Nature, combat/competition and aesthetics.

R. Scott Kretchmar attempts in his commentary to do two things—first, he identifies implications of some conceptual distinctions, and second, he points out normative questions raised by the Loy/Morford analysis. Kretchmar finds it worthwhile to differentiate clearly between tests and contests. If the historical and sociocultural spotlight were turned on sporting "tests" rather than "contests", that is, on trying to solve physically demanding problems well rather than trying to solve them better than at least one other party, then another story than the agonal account could be told. War would probably no longer serve as the best historical and prehistorical analogue for sport. Rather, it might be hunting. Then, Kretchmar adds, that, on one hand, modern competitive sport is far less violent and, therefore, far more defensible today than it was previously. On the other hand, joy in playing is often sacrificed on the altar of any number of extrinsic rewards. Success, even gained by questionable means, replaces skill-based and virtue-generated achievement. This threatens the connection endorsed by MacIntyre between practices and virtues.

Finally, I am in my commentary asking: How is it possible to somehow maintain a vestige of ancient agon in terms of the pursuit of honor, whilst dignity has replaced honor as the ground on which an individual's legal status rests in modernity? I take the German social-philosopher Axel Honneth (1995) as a prime example of spelling out the replacement of honor with dignity in what he names "the struggle for recognition". However, in a historical perspective it looks like, that dignity can be understood as a distribution of honor rather than as

an oppositional concept of honor. Recognition should not only be conceptualized at the categorical level, but also understood in terms of “comparative recognition”, which sorts members of a group into an intra-group hierarchy based on their relative merits and, thereby, pave the way for self-esteem.

Furthermore, Honneth (2008) develops his concept of recognition to a two-level one by including a primordial recognition in terms of a fundamental practical engagement with the world, prior to the subject-object dichotomy, and based upon his former concept of basic self-confidence in terms of love and friendship. This approach opens for grounding honor in the mimetic faculty at the inter-corporeal level, which has been rather neglected in policy and social research because of its non-epistemic and pre-reflective existential significance across conflictual interests. It is a kind of elementary responsiveness, which always and necessarily contains an element of involuntary openness or devotedness in the bodily-affective sphere. Therefore, I suggest taking mimesis into account besides considering honor and dignity in modern sport.

As Renson stresses in his introduction, sport is only a part of what he names “movement culture”. Others like Henning Eichberg (2009) have focused on “body culture” (German “*Körperkultur*”) or like Alan G. Ingham (1997) on “physical culture” as a general concept for institutionalized forms of movement³. The main contested viewpoint is how to deal with and conceptualize the human body in movement in practice and theory. From an objective point of view bodies are just objects in motion, which are measurable in terms of results in sports and sport sciences or, in a broader sense, kinesiology. However, from a participant point of view, bodies are (also) felt and subjects of movement and perception. Modern dance is a prime example of how to cultivate the body in this concrete instance. Therefore, we need to address modern sport and dance in a wider cultural perspective, as Jerzy Kosiewicz argues in his article on “Championing Physical Cultural Sciences”⁴.

“Physical culture” is the general concept for what is going on at the Polish universities of physical education and, therefore, it is important to notice the meaning of the term “physical culture” associated primarily (referring to the etymology of the word “culture”) with “*colo, -ere*” of the human body – that is, with cultivating and taking care of human “*physis*” – obviously in the context of social and natural environment, as Kosiewicz is proclaiming. If or when the social and biological sciences struggle with each other for hegemony, then a historical perspective is much needed in order to understand the underpinnings for this struggle in a world embracing a host of different physical cultural practices and a gentle selection of relevant scientific disciplines or “principalities”.

Thus, Kosiewicz shares his thorough insight in the history and theory of science related to physical culture and points out, that the Russian term “*fizkultura*”, which was introduced after the 1917 October Revolution as a socialist propaganda concept, is in fact not a forerunner in the field. It was earlier introduced by the Polish statesman Jozef Pilsudski in 1914, who according to Kosiewicz became acquainted with the term “physical culture” in London, where at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century a magazine entitled “Physical Culture” was accessible. It was published since 1899 in USA by Bernard MacFadden, who was a body-builder by vocation, an expert in principles of healthy nutrition and a proponent of natural methods of healing. The first issue of the “MacFadden’s Encyclopedia of Physical Culture” with a naturalist, biological and medical character was published as early as in 1911 and contributed heavily to the popularization of the term “physical culture” in USA and other English-speaking countries.

³ Ingham (1997) offers the following, value-referenced, focus statement for the Department of Physical Culture Studies (DPCS): “*The DPCS consists of cross- and inter-disciplinary studies of practices in physical culture (e.g. movement activities, exercise, nutrition, training, enculturation, recreational and representational sport) which critically assess and promote programs that focus upon the intersections of physical activities, health behaviors, and movement-related lifestyle choices*”, p. 165.

⁴ The article is a revised version of J. Kosiewicz (2010). Social and Biological Context of Physical Culture and Sport. *Physical Culture and Sport. Studies and Research* L, pp. 5-31.

In philosophy, naturalism is the idea or belief that only natural laws and forces operate in the world. That is, if this viewpoint is (becoming) supreme in physical culture and education, then there is no longer room for neither active human subjects nor the cultivation of the human body, nor a role for the social sciences and humanities. We will stay back without any human open-mindedness and inclination to make sense of physical culture, because, as Kosiewicz underlines, what matters in cultural reflection (in the field of physical culture) concerning, for example, sports activity is not movement as such – as a purely physical phenomenon – but only such a form of movement which has been attributed with conventionalized social values of symbolic and autotelic character.

Acknowledgements

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The Agon Motif and the Concept of Movement Culture

Authors' contribution:

- A) conception and design of the study
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- C) analysis and interpretation of data
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ABSTRACT

At a symposium on 12 June 2009 on "Homo Movens: International symposium on movement culture" at the occasion of my 'rite of passage' to the emeritus status at the KU Leuven, John W. Loy, co-authored by W. Robert Morford, presented a paper on "The agon motif: A study of the contest element in sport". I am very glad that this excellent paper will finally be published as it was not included in "The making of sport history: Disciplines, identities and the historiography of sport" (Delheye 2014), which appeared five years later as a so called "...crystallization of the international symposium." (p. XVII). Moreover, some of these contributions were severely criticized by Allen Guttmann (2014).

In this introduction, I will try to clarify the concepts of 'ludodiversity' and 'movement culture', which I have often had the chance to discuss with John Loy personally. We did – of course – not always agree but this kind of 'joking relationship' with John Loy was and still is for me a "... joy forever"!

ludodiversity, movement culture, homo movens, agon motif

KEYWORDS

Continuity and change

Our bodies are made for movement: humans are therefore to be considered as 'homobiles'. Throughout history (based on written records) and even throughout prehistory (based on archaeological evidence) humankind has been involved in a wide variety of movement activities. This stability or continuity in our cultural movement behavior is explained by our physical movement capacities such as strength, speed, flexibility, balance, endurance, coordination etc., which have not changed a single bit ever since humans have evolved to Homo Sapiens Sapiens. We are indeed made of exactly the same "...muscle and blood, skin and bone ..." as our predecessors.

If today we can run, jump, throw, fight, dance or engage in all kinds of play or games, our ancestors could do the same. Nevertheless, archaeologists and historians have clearly shown how the movement activities of each epoch vary considerably, according to the specific emphasis laid on either playful, competitive, performance orientated or expressive forms of movement. Human movement forms are thus a specific *text* or content, which is shaped in a specific socio-cultural *context*. That is why they have changed considerably throughout time.

Ludodiversity

‘Continuity’ and ‘change’ also applies to the rich diversity of movement forms which appears from cross-cultural comparisons. Anthropologists have documented both the great similarities as well as the wide variation in the movement forms of different ethnic groups and cultures. In analogy to the ‘biodiversity’ concept, I have proposed the concept of ‘ludodiversity’ in order to raise our awareness for safeguarding this cultural heritage of ‘endangered movement species’ (Renson, 2004; 2016).

Sport can be considered as an anachronistic and ethnocentric term, both from a diachronic and from a cross-cultural perspective. Sport refers to a rather recent modern and typical Western cultural product, which has been exported and imported worldwide. Imposing this concept of sport on periods of the past or on other non-Western cultures may be considered as a form of anachronism on the one hand and of cultural imperialism on the other hand. Some postmodernist sport sociologists have therefore proposed the more value-free term and concept of ‘body culture’, but in my opinion ‘movement culture’ is a more adequate denominator.

Movement culture

The concept of movement culture encompasses four spheres of activities, which are historical and cultural universals, elements shared by all groups of people throughout time and place. Physical exercises are part of the ‘instrumental’ physical culture sphere of Homo Exercens. Physical contests are part of the ‘competitive’ sphere of Homo Agonizans. Movement games belong to the ‘ludic’ play sphere of Homo Ludens’. Acrobatics and dances are part of the ‘expressive’ performance sphere of Homo Exhibens. The ‘model of Homo Movens’ shows how these four spheres are all intertwined and how ‘sport’ occupies a central position, where the four spheres overlap each other (Renson, 2000).

Here follows a concise overview of the four major components of the components, starting with the ‘instrumental’ sphere and then rotating anticlockwise (like in track athletics) to the three other ones.

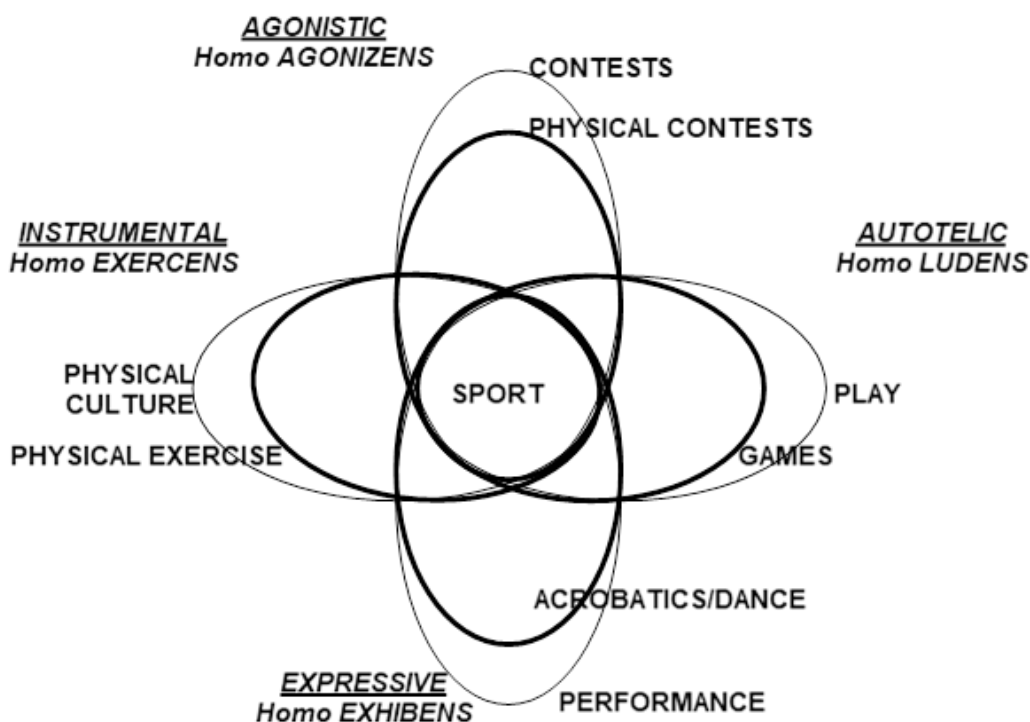


Figure 1: The concept of movement culture
Source: Renson, 2000.

There exists an abundant literature on the ‘instrumental’ domain of physical culture through the physical education tradition in the Western world. Roberta Park (2014) has given an excellent overview of the – sometimes Platonic – relationship between the historiography of physical education and the historiography of sport. Dance, acrobatics and other forms of public performances are the ‘expressive’ sphere of Homo Exhibens. They are cultural universals but they vary widely in their appearance and cultural meaning (Royce, 1977; Hanna, 1987).

The Dutch scholar Johan Huizinga was the academic trailblazer for the study of ‘autotelic’ play (play for its own sake) with his *Homo Ludens* (1938) of which the original Dutch subtitle was: “*Essay to define the play-element of culture.*” I have tried to point out how the German (1944), French (1951) and English translation (1955) of his critical essay have struggled with the fact that there is no equivalent term for the English concept of ‘game’ in Dutch, German nor French and that his work was not intended as an essay on play in culture, but as an essay on the playful (creative) element of culture (Renson, 2003; 2009).

Allen Guttmann (1978, p. 6) stated that Huizinga’s *Homo Ludens* is seriously flawed by his inclusion of legal contests and even warfare under the rubric of play and also Brian Sutton-Smith, in his remarkable book “*The ambiguity of play*” (1997, p. 79), has criticized that Huizinga has idealized certain kinds of contest play.

For all this, the present article by John W. Loy and W. Robert Morford offers an intriguing insight in the ‘agonistic’ element of movement culture, not to be confused with gratuitous play. John Loy and Graham Hesketh (1995) had already dedicated an extensive analysis of *Competitive play on the plains: an analysis of games and warfare among native American warrior societies 1800-1850*, and I was very honored when Loy presented the topic during the international symposium in Leuven in 2009. Finally, justice has been served by publishing the Loy-Morford paper in its original form.

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The Agon Motif: Redux. A Study of the Contest Element in Sport¹

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ABSTRACT

The contest element of modern sport has its ancient roots in the “agon” of early Greek life. We begin with an overview of the material and historical continuities in the social development of sport, followed by a discussion of our suppositions regarding the original linkage of sport and war in terms of what we call “the agon motif”, and conclude with speculations about residuals of the agon motif in modern sport. We argue it is important to recognize that notwithstanding of the many transitions and transformations in the social development of sport since the agon of Homeric and Hellenic Greek cultures there are notable, long-standing, material and historical continuities in the structure of sport and the ethos of agonal contests. To better depict the relationships between the concepts of sport and contest, we highlight these vestiges of agon. We employ the phrase “the agon motif” to embrace both the concept of “agon” and the concept of “aethlos”. In a structural sense the agon motif refers to the overall properties, processes, and products of agonal competition, including contestants, spectators, battle grounds, sporting venues, festivals and spectacles, prizes and award ceremonies. Whereas, in an ideational sense, the agon motif refers to the ethos of chivalric competition associated with the pursuit of prestige (status-honor) and the active quest to achieve excellence (bodily and moral) through physical prowess in agonal contests wherein individuals place their reputation, moral character, and at times, their very lives at stake. There is a close link to the cult of masculinity and masculine domination in the Western world, since the primary avenues of pursuing the agon motif through war and sport are two of the most highly and rigidly “gendered” activities in the history of humankind. We suggest that the most fundamental dynamic of the agon motif as well as the most enduring residual of the agon motif in modern sport is the pursuit of prestige, honor and excellence through physical prowess. The ethical framework of archaic (heroic) agon represents the epitome of a morality of honor and an ethics of virtue and offers a largely unfamiliar picture from a contemporary viewpoint of winning and losing in sport.

KEYWORDS

agon, war, sport, contest, honor

¹ Paper prepared for presentation at “Homo Movens”: International Symposium on Movement Culture, Leuven, Belgium, 12 June 2009. Previous examinations of various dimensions of the agon motif by the first author include: Loy (1984), Loy & Hesketh (1984), Loy, Andrews & Hesketh (1992), Slowickowski & Loy (1993), Loy (1995), Loy & Hesketh (1995), Chick, Miracle, & Loy (1996), Chick, Loy, & Miracle (1997), Chick & Loy (2001), Loy, Hesketh, & Chick (2003), and Loy (2007).

With reference to Professor Renson's master model of "movement culture"², our assigned task is to explicate the relationship between the concepts of "sport" and "contest". We begin our explication by noting that in his model Professor Renson indicates that sport is linked to play and games in terms of its autotelic dimension with the focus on Homo Ludens; whereas, sport is linked to contest in terms of its agonistic dimension with the focus on Homo Agonizans. His model implies that while play, game, contest and sport are related, they are not synonymous.

Contrarily, Johan Huizinga, in his treatise "Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture" ([1938], 1955)³, views play, game, and contest as part and parcel of the same phenomena. He asserts that: "The agon in Greek life⁴, or the contest anywhere else in the world, bears all the formal characteristics of play" (1955, p. 31). He also contends that: "The contest has all the formal and most of the functional features of a game" (1955, p. 48).

Huizinga is, however, rather ambivalent about the concept of sport. On the one hand, he recognizes that sports are often international contests and points out that "contest means play" and that "there is no sufficient reason to deny any contest whatsoever the character of play" (1955, p. 76). On the other hand, he proclaims that modern sport is virtually devoid of any element of play. To quote him at length on this issue:

"The ability of modern social techniques to stage mass demonstrations with maximum of outward show in the field of athletics does not alter the fact that neither the Olympics nor the organized sports of American Universities nor the loudly trumpeted international contests, have, in the smallest degree, raised sport to the level of a culture-creating activity. However, important it may be for the players or spectators, it remains sterile. The old play-factor has undergone almost complete atrophy" (1955, p. 198).

Given the highly increased commercialization, professionalization, and rationalization of all forms of sport since Huizinga's initial observations over seventy years ago, we hesitate to take issue with him⁵. Nevertheless, we agree with Professor Renson that play, game, sport and contest while related, are not synonymous; and we argue that all forms of contemporary sport possess varying degrees of ludic elements, including at times spontaneous patterns of play (cf. Loy, 1968; Ingham & Loy, 1973; Loy, 1978; Loy & Coakley 2007). We do side, however, with Huizinga in claiming that the contest element of modern sport has its ancient roots in the agon of early Greek life.

A limited ludic lexicon⁶

Sport studies scholars likely agree that the realm of sporting semantics is a linguistic quagmire with everyone speaking their own version of sportugese. But to better inform you of our personal frame of reference we set forth the following definitions of play, game, sport and contest in a limited ludic lexicon.

² See Renson's introduction to this special issue on "The Agon Motif" and also his "Safeguarding Ludodiversity: Chances and Challenges in the Promotion and Protection of Traditional Movement Culture" (Renson 2004)

³ The first author possesses a hardcover copy of the first original Dutch edition of *Homo Ludens* which was purchased in a bookstore in Leuven some years ago.

⁴ A scholarly and aesthetic overview of multiple forms of agon in ancient Greek culture is Kaltsas (2004) who edits a beautiful volume produced by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and the National Archaeological Museum of Athens in conjunction with the Athens Olympic Games. See also Gouldner (1965), Morford & Clark (1976), Pappas (1999), and Zuchora (1983).

⁵ For example, we can't conceive what Huizinga might say about a university football coach receiving a salary of 4.4 million dollars (University of Southern California, 2008), or a university basketball coach receiving a salary of 4.1 million dollars (University of Kentucky, 2009).

⁶ This section of the paper draws heavily upon Loy & Coakley (2007).

1. "Play" is a voluntary, expressive activity, which is uncertain and unproductive; characterized by spontaneity, pretense and non-linearity, which focuses on process rather than product, and which can be initiated and terminated at will;
2. "Games" are playful contests whose outcome is determined by physical skill, strategy or chance, employed singly or in combination⁷;
3. "Sport" is an embodied, structured, goal-oriented, competitive, contest based, ludic physical activity requiring the demonstration of physical prowess;
4. "Ludic" refers to any play-like element of games, sports, or contests;
5. "Physical prowess" denotes the display of athletic ability in terms of varying degrees of skill (accuracy and coordination), strength, speed, and stamina (endurance);
6. "Contest" succinctly defined represents 'a reciprocal competitive activity for non-reciprocal outcomes' (Scarry, 1985). More comprehensively defined, a *contest* is a competitive activity characterized by two or more sides, having agreed-upon-rules, criteria for determining the winner, with a zero-sum outcome wherein the winner(s) takes all;
7. "Agonal contests" are contests involving physical competition and the demonstration of personal prowess;
8. Most contests are not sport, not all agonal contests are sport, but all "sporting contests" are agonal contests that can be classified into three broad categories. First, there are individual sports that we label "self-testing sports" involving solitary struggles against an animate object (e.g., a bull fight); or an inanimate object of nature such as a mountain peak or rock wall; or against an abstract standard (e.g., solo attempts to set a world record in an around-the-world balloon, boat, or plane race). Second, there are team sports involving two sides with two or more participants per side that we refer to as "agonistic games" such as baseball, basketball, football, ice hockey, soccer, volleyball and doubles teams in various racquet sports such as badminton, racquet ball, squash, and tennis. Third, there are sport forms representing struggles for supremacy between two individual opponents that we identify as "sporting matches" (e.g., boxing, fencing, and wrestling). Here we follow Paul Weiss who states:
"It will make for clarity, I think, if 'contest,' taken by itself, is reserved for those cases in which individuals struggle with one another, and if 'game,' particularly in the area of athletics, is reserved for those cases in which there is team play, or where men act as representatives" (1969, p. 100).

We also accept Weiss' premise that:

"Contests, whether they occur by themselves or in games, usually pivot about the performance of individuals demonstrating their relative superiority in five areas -- speed, endurance, strength, accuracy, and coordination" (1969, p. 100)⁸.

The preceding definitions provide the following typology of ludic activities⁹ and the basis of our counter argument to Huizinga that play, games and contest are synonymous.

1. "Non-play contests" (e.g., deadly fights, total wars),
2. "Non-contest play" (e.g., drama, humor, music)¹⁰,
3. "Playful contests" (e.g., charades, puzzles, riddles),

⁷ See Roberts & Sutton-Smith (1962).

⁸ There are a number of notable sport forms that represent multiple contests, as for example, biathlons, triathlons, pentathlons, and decathlons. Perhaps the most complex system of sporting contests is stage races in professional cycling such as the Tour de France comprised of all forms of sporting contests identified above and pivoting about the five areas of physical performance identified by Weiss (1969)

⁹ See Birrell (1978) for a related typology.

¹⁰ There are, of course, competitive forms of these activities as well.

4. "Agonal contests" (e.g., duels, heroic/feudal wars, combat sports),
5. "Non-sport games" (e.g., bridge, checkers, chess),
6. "Agonistic games" (e.g., basketball, ice hockey, soccer),
7. "Self-testing sports" (e.g., solo rock climbs, bull fighting),
8. "Sporting matches" (e.g., boxing, fencing, wrestling).

Admittedly, our definitions and typology of ludic activities may more appropriately apply to contemporary sports characteristic of modern industrial societies; and they likely do not do full justice to the hundreds of different sports, or the continually emerging new sport forms, or the unique traditional folk-sports found in diverse cultures throughout the world.

We also readily acknowledge that sports in the Western world have undergone numerous transitions and many major transformations (Ingham & Loy, 1993) as a consequence of the macro-sociological process of "sportification" and its underlying processes of rationalization, democratization, legitimation, and globalization (Loy & Coakley, 2007). Yet, we argue it is important to recognize that notwithstanding of the many transitions and transformations in the social development of sport since the agon of Homeric and Hellenic Greek cultures there are notable, long-standing, material and historical continuities in the structure of sport and the ethos of agonal contests. To better depict the relationships between the concepts of sport and contest, we highlight these vestiges of agon. We begin with an overview of the material and historical continuities in the social development of sport, followed by a discussion of our suppositions regarding the original linkage of sport and war in terms of what we call the agon motif, and conclude with speculations about residuals of the agon motif in modern sport.

Material and historical continuities in the social development of sport

"While their boundaries have been constantly pressed at the margins, we may glimpse in today's sports some sense of our most ancient humanity" by examining the material culture of sport as evidenced by "the artifacts of the arena, the field, and the court" (Hardy, Loy, & Booth, 2009). Prominent categories of such material sporting artifacts include:

1. "Playing equipment" (e.g., balls, clubs, racquets);
2. "Sporting facilities" (e.g., arenas, courts, fields, pools, rings, rinks, tracks);
3. "Training equipment and sport medicine technology" (e.g., treadmills, heart rate monitors, weight lifting equipment);
4. "Sportswear" (worn by players, coaches, band members, cheer leaders, fans);
5. "Sporting prizes" (e.g., certificates, medals, ribbons, trophies);
6. "Symbolic sporting artifacts" (e.g., colors, flags, mascots, pennants);
7. "Performance measurement technology" (e.g., stop watches, laser beams);
8. "Sporting detritus" (e.g., discarded ticket stubs, betting slips);
9. "Sporting Memorabilia" (collections of any of the above).

These material sporting artifacts significantly reflect historical "continuities of thought, behavior, and meaning in sports that cross temporal or spatial boundaries" (Hardy, Loy, & Booth, 2009).

Stephen Hardy, with reference to Fernand Braudel's (1980) notion of "long duree" and Raymond Williams's (1977) notion of "residual", calls these historical continuities "long residuals" and specifically identifies six long residuals deemed most characteristic of the Western world of sport:

1. "Agon" - the core contest between opposing individuals and/or teams.
2. "Craft" - the skills, practices and technologies required to achieve at the agon.
3. "Gambling" - the wagering on the outcome of agon and what drives much of the passion surrounding sport.

4. "Eros" - the sexual attraction of agonic bodies.
5. "Community" - the ways in which both athletes and spectators create bonds and bridges that simultaneously link and separate groups through shared sporting passions.
6. "Framing" - the tendency to surround the agon with frames of spectacle and festival, each of which contains elements of the other residual practices. (Hardy, Loy, & Booth, 2009).

We wish to slightly modify Hardy's list of six long residuals in two ways. First, we propose adding the long residual of "sporting records" to the list (cf. e.g., Guttmann, 1978). Secondly, we suggest viewing his concept of "framing" as "agon" and his concept of "agon" as "aethlos". Here we follow Thomas F. Scanlon's (1983) etymological analysis of the vocabulary of competition in classical Greek society¹¹. With respect to agon he states:

"Contexts of the word in early Greek epics suggest that it is a term for a contest place together with the necessary elements for competition, spectators, competitors, and prizes" (1983, p. 154).

We think that Scanlon's depiction of "agon" denotes Hardy's notion of "framing" rather well. Moreover, it connotes Huizinga's concept of agon/contest given his premise that: "It is quite impossible to separate the contest as a cultural function from the complex 'play-festival-rite'" (1955, p. 31). In turn, we think that Scanlon is correct in identifying the term "aethlos" as denoting contest *per se*, signifying "strenuous, competitive activity for a goal" (1983, p. 158).

The agon motif

We employ the phrase "the agon motif" to embrace both the concept of "agon" and the concept of "aethlos". In a structural sense the agon motif refers to the overall properties, processes, and products of agonal competition, including contestants, spectators, battle grounds, sporting venues, festivals and spectacles, prizes and award ceremonies. Whereas, in an ideational sense, the agon motif refers to the ethos of chivalric competition associated with the pursuit of prestige (status-honor) and the active quest to achieve excellence (bodily and moral) through physical prowess in agonal contests wherein individuals place their reputation, moral character, and at times, their very lives at stake.

Four basic themes underlie the agon motif:

1. An intense spirit of rivalry and competition;
2. A strong stress on individualism;
3. An extreme emphasis on the personal pursuit of fame, glory, and honor; and
4. The risk of death, fear of failure and communal humiliation.

The essence of what we term "the agon motif" is captured in the following observations of Huizinga (1955, p. 63):

"From the life of childhood right up to the highest achievements of civilization one of the strongest incentives to perfection, both individual and social, is the desire to be praised and honoured for one's excellence. In praising another each praises himself. We want the satisfaction of having done something well. Doing something well means doing it better than others. In order to excel one must prove one's excellence; in order to merit recognition, merit must be made manifest. Competition serves to give proof of superiority."

¹¹ For additional etymological analyses of the vocabulary of competition in Greek society see Cairns (1993), Dickson (1988), Kaltsas (2004), Kirk (1964), Ong (1981), and Rose ([1922] 1985).

Huizinga demonstrates that many diverse forms of competition provide contexts for showing superiority. However, he places, in particular, importance on what we call agonal contests as proving grounds for making merit manifest.

Paradigmatic examples of agonal contests are most evident in archaic ("heroic") societies and archetypal aristocratic warrior societies. Within these agonal social systems,

"war activity offered the most prestigious avenue for displaying prowess but, since it was limited to contests with 'out-group members' or members of another tribe, athletic contests offered an acceptable substitute for displaying prowess between members of the same tribe or 'in-group'" (Morford & Clark, 1976, p. 164).

War and sport as agonal contests

Scanlon (1983, p. 158) well notes that: "Both 'agon' and 'aethlos' have military associations which naturally arise from their apparently similar forms of conflict"; but he contends that they "are ultimately only metaphorically connected, since military strife is not for prizes but for the lives of men". His contention resonates with Elaine Scarry's (1985, p. 88) premises that "war is in its formal structure a contest" and "the central activity of war is injuring". There is little debate that the objective of most forms of warfare is in Scarry's terms to "out-injure" one's opponents. And given the horrors of modern warfare against terrorism there is little doubt that viewing the structure of war as a contest similar to the structure of sport as a contest is troubling to many.

However, military writers recognize that historically there were limited forms of warfare where indeed the aim was to achieve personal fame, glory and honor; and to obtain worthy prizes (both symbolic and material). We cite two typologies of warfare in support of this observation. First, we refer to Sue Mansfield's work "The Gestalts of War" (1982) wherein she identifies four basic modes or cultures of war; namely, the:

1. "Ritual warfare" of horticultural societies;
2. "Political warfare" of peasant-based societies;
3. "Heroic warfare" of aristocratic feudal warrior societies; and
4. "Total warfare" of modern industrial societies.

With respect to "heroic warfare" Mansfield (1982, p. 108) notes that:

"if one accepts that the point of battle is to demonstrate individual prowess and bravery under conditions of extreme physical stress, then the strategy of these aristocratic warriors becomes perfectly logical. The prearranged but uncontrolled and unconcentrated broad-front battle plan was designed to give each warrior a relatively equal chance to display his capabilities and win the prize of honor."

She also recognizes the chivalric nature of what she calls "heroic warfare", pointing out that:

"So long as you are in combat, you do not give or ask for quarter. But once you have subdued such an enemy, you treat him like a gentleman, who has honored you by putting up a good fight. Prisoners in this type of warfare are seldom killed. And the distinction between combatants and noncombatants is maintained" (Keen, 1982, p. 64).

Or as Morris Janowitz (1960, p. 216) states in the case of the modern professional soldier:

"Military honor is both a means and an end. The code of honor specifies how an officer ought to behave, but to be 'honorable' is an objective to be achieved for its own right"¹².

Another typology of warfare is given by Hans Speier (1941) who proposes that three pure types of war are distinguishable:

1. "Absolute war",
2. "Instrumental war", and
3. "Agonistic fighting".

These forms of war are oriented, respectively, toward "annihilation", "advantage", and "glory".

"Absolute war is unrestricted and unregulated war, agonistic fighting is regulated according to norms, and instrumental war may or may not be restricted, according to considerations of expediency" (Speier, 1941, p. 445).

Speier's typology of war is based on "the social definition of the enemy" rather than according to "causes." Moreover, he makes clear that his identified types of war are "ideal-types" in a Weberian sense and, thus, "no actual war ever coincides with one of the pure types" (Speier, 1941, p. 453).

Speier's conception of "agonistic fighting" is nearly identical with Mansfield's notion of "heroic warfare" in terms of both its objectives and chivalric nature. As clearly spelled out by Speier: the agonistic fight, as we know it from ancient Greek culture and, also, from other cultures, is not oriented toward the destruction of the enemy, although his death may, of course, ensue. Nor is it directed toward the acquisition of wealth or other useful ends. It is fought for a prize, i.e., for a symbolic value attached to victory (glory).

"Each agonistic fight is a contest between opponents who delight in measuring their strength according to certain rules of the "game." The opponents participate in a common culture or respect common cultural values even if they are representative of different power structures. It is these common bonds which make the contest possible. These regulations reside in respect for values which none of the opponents can be said to control. The values (customs, laws, codes of honor, etc.) transcend the conflict" (Speier, 1941, p. 451).

More significantly, Speier, with credit accorded Huizinga, emphasizes the play and ritual quality of agonistic war as follows:

"The agonistic fight has the qualities of play, with its freedom, its rules, and its dissociation from useful action. But it is not only, or at least need not be only, a "good" fight -- a playful, vital contest. Certain plays are, as symbolic performances, closely related to religious rites. The agonistic fight, too, may be a sacred play -- a ritual in which use is made of controlled force in order to determine justice, which ordinarily cannot be determined by force. Victory then is a fateful, symbolic revelation of justice, provided that the sacred rules according to which justice has to be sought were meticulously respected. The regulations in agonistic fighting are not rooted in expediency as are the restrictions possibly imposed upon instrumental war. Rather they have the quality of norms" (Speier, 1941, p. 451).

In brief, Mansfield's heroic warfare and Speier's agonistic fighting constitute what we call agonal war. Thus, for sake of simplicity and purposes of discussion here we create a dichotomy between agonal and non-agonal war¹³.

¹² It is interesting to note how many of the mottos and core values of military institutions and units in the United States use the term "honor." For example, the motto of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point is *Duty, Honor, Country*"; while the core values of the U.S Marine Corps are *Honor, Courage, Commitment*.

¹³ The major transformations of the agon motif result from the development of monopolies of organized violence. Three stages of development may be distinguished: (a) monopoly of adult males; (b) monopoly of specialists, the warriors; and (c) monopoly of nation-states (after, SISWO, 1997). Today an *"asymmetric or 'fourth-generation' warfare pits a nation-state against an enemy who is everywhere and no-where; who has no flag, no uniformed army, no capital city, no*

Non-agonal war includes all the other types of war discussed by Manfield and Speier. As indicated in Table 1, agonal and non-agonal war can be clearly distinguished in terms of four sets of features, namely:

1. Goals and objectives,
2. Types of combatants,
3. Means and modes of combat, and
4. Aftermath of battle.

Table 1. Distinguishing features of agonal and non-agonal war

Features	Agonal War	Non-Agonal War
<i>Goals and objectives</i>	Quest for personal fame, glory and honor Acquisition of spoils	Destruction or subjugation of enemy Acquisition of territory
<i>Types of combatants</i>	Aristocratic Warriors Collective agreement or commitment to the cause Bound by honor code to limit lethal impact Individual identity and status displayed	Army of soldiers Command and duty through military hierarchy No limit of lethal impact Total War Impersonal warfare Masked identities
<i>Means and modes</i>	Dependence on personal prowess and skill Individualized weapons Face-to face, hand-to-hand combat Maximize risk to self	Dependence on military arsenal Mechanized weaponry Massed formations, impersonal combat Minimize risk to self
<i>Aftermath of battle</i>	Impermanent impact Limited killing Ransom settlement possible under oath Death anticipated and ritually prepared for	Permanent impact Mass killing Prisoners of war and occupation forces Death not contemplated Occurs due to bad luck

Source: Own studies.

In summary, within aristocratic warrior societies characterized by the agon motif, sport and war constitute agonal contests sharing similar structural features and a similar set of rules as outlined below¹⁴.

Characteristics of agonal contests

Agonal contests constitute:

1. Zero-sum games,
2. Between peers,
3. Restricted to time and place,
4. Having limited objectives,
5. Conducted according to norms and rules of fair play,
6. Requiring physical prowess,

ascertainable geography" (Raban, 2004, p. 25). And perhaps we are beginning see indicates of a fifth-generation warfare pitting drones and robots of one set of opponents against another in a kind of "virtual warfare."

¹⁴ This is especially true in the case of so-called "combat sports" both ancient and modern.

7. Reflecting ritualized violence,
8. Providing tests of moral character and public proof of moral worth, and
9. Offering a means of determining social rank, recognizing excellence, and according honor.

Rules of agonal contests

Alvin Gouldner (1965, pp. 48-49), in his sociological study of the Hellenic world, views Greek society, in general, as a contest system. He notes that fame can be won in a variety of specific contests, including war and athletic competition, but that in all cases agonistic peers comply with a set of agreed upon standards and rules which we paraphrase as follows:

1. The goal of the contest is to win more individual honor and public prestige than other contestants;
2. Honor and prestige are won by means of personal prowess;
3. The amount of honor won and prestige obtained depends upon:
 - a) the importance of the contest to all members of a heroic society;
 - b) the importance of the contest to the particular peer group of participants;
 - c) the status and ability of opposing contestants;
 - d) the degree of difficulty associated with a given form of competition;
 - e) the value of the prizes (symbolic or material) to be gained in victory or lost in defeat; and
 - f) the value of the stakes that the contestants risk and the extent of the risk to which they are subjected.

Vestiges of the agon motif in modern sport

Two major premises underlie our view of the relationship between the agon motif and the contest element of sport. First, we assert that within modern sport vestiges of the structural dimension of the agon motif are reflected in the material and historical continuities of the social development of sport and in the characteristics and rules of agonal contests.

For example, the application of the preceding rules and characteristics of agonal contests is well illustrated in the context of the modern Olympic Games:

1. An Olympic Gold Medal represents one of the most prestigious prizes in all of sport,
2. The status and ability of opposing contestants is amongst the highest in all of sport,
3. The Games are of utmost importance to the contestants because they can establish their relative ranking in the world, and
4. The Games are of importance to nation-states as they held to reflect national character and moral superiority (cf., e.g., Loy, 1981).

Secondly, we contend that within modern sport vestiges of the ideational dimension of the agon motif reflect in varying degrees and kind three enduring residuals of agonal competition:

1. The pursuit of excellence, honor and prestige;
2. Concern with character, heroism, and moral development; and
3. Codes of honor, male bonding, and manliness.

Sport historians may well prove us wrong concerning our suppositions and speculations about these enduring residuals of the agon motif but let us highlight what we mean by each to further our explication of the contest element of modern sport¹⁵.

First among equals: the pursuit of excellence

We suggest that the most fundamental dynamic of the agon motif and, also, the most enduring residual of the agon motif in modern sport is the pursuit of prestige, honor and excellence through physical prowess. It is noteworthy that the study of prestige and honor is a long standing concern of anthropologists and sociologists.

For example,

1. Goode (1978, p. vii) proclaims that: "The foundation of social life rests in part on the universal need for respect, esteem, approval and honor";
2. Speier (1969, p. 97) states: "Honor, implicitly or explicitly paid, is a basic phenomenon of man's social existence";
3. Goldschmidt (1992, p. 31) writes: "The idea of prestige, the recognition of individual merit, is the very soul of the social order"; and
4. Hatch (1989, p. 341) observes: "The topic of social honor -- or prestige, esteem, standing, distinction - is perennial in the social sciences".

Perhaps not surprisingly, social scientists are far from consistent in their definitions of the several concepts of social status. Moreover, they vary in their views as to whether concepts such as esteem, prestige, honor, and distinction represent personal attributes, social qualities, resources or rewards.

Following the lead of Goldschmidt (1992), we argue that prestige and related concepts are sources of motivation as illustrated by examining the origins of pursuit of prestige through physical prowess in agonal contests in the context of the aristocratic ideal in ancient Greece. As Walter Donlan (1980, p. 23) states the case:

"We may sum up the Homeric aristocratic ideal by saying that worth or excellence, arete, was conceived of in the physical sphere almost exclusively, most specifically in terms of prowess as a warrior. The aim of the high-status warrior was public recognition of his ability. The Homeric proto-aristocrat endlessly competed with his fellows for prestige (kydos, time), with the goal of being recognized as "best" (aristos); his greatest fear was failure and its accompanying communal humiliation."

Given the lack of consensus as to the similarities and differences among prestige, distinction, esteem, excellence, and honor we present a heuristic model of status-honor motivation in Table 2, schematically arranging these related concepts in a Maslow-like typology in a hierarchical manner as interrelated but specific sources of motivation.

We cannot, of course, give a full account of our motivational model at this point, but simply highlight each specific source of motivation in terms of the agon motif.

¹⁵ Sport historians could also assist in providing evidence to support our suppositions. No offense intended but to cite a quotation brought to our attention by Professor Renson: "Sociology is history with the hard work left out, history is sociology with the brains left out" (Macrae, 1991, p. 204).

Table 2. A typology of status-honor motivation

Status-Honor	Motivation
Affect Hunger	Desire for Sensual Pleasure
Self-Esteem	Desire for Emotional Security
Prestige	Desire for Social Recognition
Honor	Desire for Earned Respect
Excellence	Desire for Distinction
Legendary Status	Desire for Immortality

Source: Own studies.

Affect hunger (desire for sensual pleasure)

What some call affect hunger (e.g., Goldschmidt, 1992) and others call sensual gratification or sense pleasure (e.g., Campbell, 1984) is likely the primordial basis of all forms of motivation. Infant primates, human and non-human, seek tactile stimulation and satisfaction of hunger and social/emotional response. And humans of all ages seek many types of sensual gratification. One of the great appeals of agonal competition is that it provides a wide variety of sensual pleasures from bodily stimulations to the thrills of victory.

Michael Balint (1959, p. 23) in describing the major characteristic attitudes associated with the excitement of thrills underscores the sensual pleasures often experienced in agonal competition:

“(a) some amount of conscious fear, or at least an awareness of real external danger; (b) a voluntary and intentional exposing of oneself to this external danger and to the fear aroused by it; (c) while having the more or less confident hope that the fear can be tolerated and mastered, the danger will pass, and that one will be able to return unharmed to safety. This mixture of fear, pleasure, and confident hope in the face of external danger is what constitutes the fundamental element of ‘thrills’.”

We note in passing that sensual gratification resulting from thrills is especially characteristic of sports involving what Caillois (1961, p. 23) calls *vertigo* "which consist of an attempt to momentarily destroy the stability of perception and inflict a kind of voluptuous panic upon an otherwise lucid mind".

A, sometimes, overlooked aspect of agonal competition is the aesthetic nature of sense pleasure provided athletes and spectators alike. The athlete in many sporting contests like the performing artist "must produce a final, instantaneous and temporal image of the world as embodied in the score without error, with full mastery of highly developed technical means of performance, and with sufficient warmth, spontaneity, and freshness to induce an audience to suspend its awareness of all other worlds but the world framed by the score and created by the performance" (Bensman & Lilienfeld, 1973, p. 61).

Self-esteem (desire for emotional security)

Robert N. Campbell (1984, p. xi) proclaims that: "Virtually all of our human behavior springs from two motives: our desire for self-esteem and/or our desire for sense pleasure". Self-esteem has a large emotional basis as evidenced by the insecurity and anxiety of individuals with low self-esteem. Thus, a search for self-esteem is at the same time a seeking for emotional security. The self-esteem motive is viewed by some as universal to humankind.

For example, Ernest Becker (1971, pp. 67-68) proposes the Principle of Self-Esteem Maintenance, positing that "a person's entire life (is) animated by the artificial symbolism of self-worth; almost all of his time is devoted to the protection, maintenance, and aggrandizement of the symbolic edifice of self-esteem". Becker (1968, pp. 328-29) claims that his proposition is a "universal principle for human action akin to gravitation in the physical

sciences"; and he states that it "explains the most disparate life styles as variations around the single theme of self-esteem maintenance".

Prestige (desire for social recognition)

There are, of course, many cultural avenues open to individuals for establishing and maintaining self-esteem. But from the perspective of biosocial anthropology, Jerome H. Barkow (1975, p. 555) makes a convincing case that: "The major strategy for the maintenance of self-esteem is the pursuit of prestige". Certainly, within the context of sport the pursuit of prestige is a major strategy for the maintenance of self-esteem for athletes and spectators alike¹⁶.

The great desire for public social recognition through prestige processes is clearly evidenced by the plethora of symbolic awards in the sporting world such as medals, prizes, ribbons, trophies, certificates and honorary offices. These symbolic awards are accorded by a variety of ranking systems in nearly all sports at all levels of competition. Indeed, it is difficult to think of any other institutionalized sphere of activity that is so finely differentiated or as strongly stratified as that of modern sport.

On the one hand, sports are often explicitly stratified for the manifest purposes of denoting levels of competition, experience, skill and/or age and gender categories. On the other hand, such forms of stratification implicitly connote status hierarchies and prestige rankings. Five examples are given to illustrate this observation.

First, higher weight classes in boxing, wrestling, and weightlifting are accorded greater prestige than lower ones. Second, the many belt categories in the various martial arts reflect colorful and overt displays of status levels and individual prestige rankings. Third, certain events in track and field such as the 100 meter sprint, decathlon, and 1500 meter run are viewed as more prestigious than other events such as 50 meter walk, hammer throw or steeplechase. Fourth, European soccer divisions and North American inter-collegiate athletic conferences constitute well established prestige hierarchies. Fifth, similarly in the specific American case, divisions of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the annual press rankings for nearly all college and university sports clearly denote status rankings - not to mention the annual press "all-sports" rankings for the best in men's and women's collegiate sports.

The pursuit of prestige and desire for social recognition is clearly reflected in the medal count of nations in the Olympic Games, in the achievement of world records in any sport, the most career victories by an individual or team, and the most wins of prestigious events such as the so-called "Grand Slams" of professional golf and tennis.

Admittedly in contemporary professional sports the most finely graded prestige rankings are the annual lists of money winners in bowling, golf and tennis. While these rankings are based on material rewards they nevertheless have symbolic significance. For example, Curtis Strange when he became the first professional golfer to earn one-million dollars in a season in 1988 remarked: "The money is nice, but that's not what I play for ... when I get in contention to win, the money is the farthest thing from my mind. I play for the trophies. If I get those, the money will come" (Staff, 1988, p. 2C). Similarly, in going for the money title on the PGA Senior Tour in 1989, Orville Moody commented: "I'd really like to win the money title (but) it isn't the money. It's just the competition. When you get this close to being No. 1, well, you just want to finish on top" (Hershey, 1989, p. 4C).

In sum, the pursuit of prestige and the desire for social recognition are sources of human motivation, but they also serve as a means of celebrating heroes and as a means of social control. As shown by William J. Goode (1978, pp. 156-171), symbolic awards:

¹⁶ Spectators experience "vicarious success" and can "bask in reflected glory" - the so-called BIRG phenomenon.

1. Sift and evaluate the participants, and thus furnish information about how each individual ranks in his or her area of achievement;
2. Indicate that one's talents are worthy of respect;
3. Provide proof that one has achieved a certain level of performance;
4. Greatly influence the future careers of the individuals who receive them;
5. Are public announcements that attract a far wider audience than just the winners;
6. Give prestige to achievements that seem so outstanding that not honoring them is to deny some supposed values of society;
7. Give prestige primarily to activities that do not pay off very well materially; and last, but not least;
8. Enhance the social identify of both individuals and groups.

Goode's analysis suggests that the processes and products associated with the pursuit of prestige are closely connected to those related to the pursuit of honor¹⁷.

Honor (desire for respect)

Whereas the pursuit of prestige is largely focused on obtaining social recognition from the public-at-large, the pursuit of honor is largely focused on achieving respect from one's immediate sporting and contesting peers. Significant signs of peer respect in the context of team sports are being elected a team captain or selected as the most valuable player (MVP) on the team. Wider peer respect is indicated by being selected as MVP for one's division or national sport; and added respect is garnered by achieving the most MVP awards in a decade or within a specific sport. Given the fact that captaincy and MVP awards are often given by third parties in the sporting world today, rather than by fellow competitors per se, the pursuit of honor in modern sport is only a mere vestige of ancient agon.

Three basic tenets of heroic honor underlie ancient agonal systems:

(a) "the object of all agonal strife was honor"; (b) "honor consisted in being recognized and honored for superiority"; and (c) "an individual could only become honorable by earning honor through personal achievement in contest situations" (Morford & Clark, 1976).

A warrior's honor was his most important possession and the loss of it brought shame to himself, his family and to his clan. A warrior's actions were judged by his peers. Brilliant performances in the practices of warfare, fighting and athletic feats earned one the praise of one's peers whose own experiences in these practices gave them the intuitive standards of their judgments in assessing the merits of a given feat. Within heroic society: "honor is conferred by one's peers and without honor a man is without worth" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 125).

The importance of the peerage then, was its authority over recognition and bestowal of honor which was the objective of all agonal struggle, and the single most prized possession of each warrior-athlete. The drive and desire to possess such honor among one's peers led each individual to do his utmost to conform to the requirements, obligations and expectations underlying the agonal system. As Donlan (1980, p. 4) observes in the context of Homeric warfare:

"The Homeric hero in war was inspired by a single purpose: to win personal glory and honor (time, kydos) for himself by means of valorous deeds performed on the field of battle. Accordingly, the goal of every activity, practically without exception, was the recognition of self by peers as a good warrior."

Similarly, Finley (1965, p. 19) stresses the single mindedness of the heroic warrior in ancient Greece, noting that:

¹⁷ A recently published history of honor in the Western world is Bowman (2007).

“Everything pivoted on a single element of honor and virtue: strength, bravery, physical courage, prowess. Conversely, there was no weakness, no unheroic trait, but one, and that was cowardice and the consequent failure to pursue heroic goals.”

Agonal systems are honor and shame cultures. Within the cultural context of these systems honor and virtue are typically viewed as one and the same. Thus, the pursuit of honor and desire for peer respect is closely connected to the quest for excellence and the desire for distinction and both sets of pursuits and desires serve as primary sources of motivation in agonal systems.

Excellence (desire for distinction)

Philosophers of sport have long noted the import of the quest for excellence and desire for distinction as motivational forces in athletic competition. James W. Keating (1965, p. 429) proclaims that: "The very essence of athletic endeavor lies in the pursuit of excellence through victory in the contest". While Paul Weiss (1969, p. 7) exclaims that: "Young men are attracted to athletics because it offers them the most promising means of becoming excellent". And Hans Lenk (1981, p. 97), himself an Olympic gold medalist, posits that:

"Athletic achievements ... offer flair-full and adventurous opportunities for gaining distinction in a basically conformed society, which nevertheless emphasizes individual values"¹⁸.

Importantly, as Speier (1969, pp. 81-82) points out:

"Honor always attaches to what is held to be excellent"; and "from the fact honor is derived from a concept of excellence it is inevitable that the process of honoring creates hierarchical distinctions".

Similarly, Finley (1965, p. 126) notes:

"It is the nature of honor that it must be exclusive, or at least hierarchic. When everyone attains equal honor, then there is no honor for anyone."

The most outstanding warrior-athletes, who possessed great personal prowess, courage and ambition, desired distinction and sought to be "first among equals" (*primus inter pares*) by achieving the highest forms of excellence, both physical and moral. The "competitive instinct" as Huizinga (1955, p. 50) points out, "is not in the first place a desire for power or the will to dominate. The primary thing is the desire to excel others, to be the first and to be honoured for that". His proclamation is echoed by Young (1984, p. 76), who attests: "In (the) quest for distinction through excellence we find the driving force behind Greek athletics".

The obsession to be first among equals is a predominate theme of both ancient and modern sport. Reflections of the theme in ancient Greek athletics are the inscriptions carved in stone depicting the feats of legendary athletes of the time; as for instance, the inscribed boasts of a pancratiast, who was the champion of all the Panhellenic Games (i.e., Olympic, Pythian, Isthmean, and Nemean Games):

"I won all the contests in which my name was entered, defeating everyone. I issued no challenge nor was there anyone who dared issue a challenge to me. I was never in a tie match, never forfeited a bout, never protested a decision, never walked out of a contest nor entered a contest in order to please a king, nor did I ever win a fight that was started again, but in all contests in which I entered I won the crown right there and in that skamma, and I always qualified in the preliminaries." (Inscrizioni Agonistiche Greche, 1987, p. 79).

In ancient Greece an Olympic victory was the pinnacle of success in athletic competition. And today, although the Olympic Games have undergone a marked transformation from an ancient, sacred festival to a modern, secular spectacle, they still constitute the most important and prestigious form of multisport competition in the

¹⁸ See also S. Kiesling (1982), *The Shell Game -- Reflections on Rowing the Pursuit of Excellence*.

world; and they provide ready examples of the pursuit of excellence, the desire for distinction and the drive to be first among equals.

The desire of modern Olympians to achieve distinction is illustrated by the following quotations from Olympic champions. Olga Connolly, the discus gold medalist in the 1956 Olympics, expressed her feelings of victory in stating:

“Standing on the top of the Olympic victory stand is like stretching one's body to the top of the world. It is a moment where the individual man or woman gets introduced to the whole planet. It is a moment that is his or hers alone” (Staff, 1984a, p. 11).

Vince Matthews expressed his sentiments about winning the gold medal in the 400-meter race in the 1972 Olympics as follows:

"Twenty years from now, I can look at this medal and say 'I was the best quarter-miler in the world on that day.' If you don't think that's important you don't know what's inside an athlete's soul" (Staff, 1984b, p. 31).

In sum, the modern Olympic athlete, like the Homeric warrior-athlete, adheres to the main tenets of agonal competition, namely: In order to excel one must prove one's excellence by demonstrated superiority of one's physical prowess; involvement in competition serves to give proof of superiority; and engagement in agonal contests is the major form of competition for displaying physical prowess and demonstrating superiority.

We propose that the "quest for excellence" inherent in the agon motif can be conceptualized as a three-step process, namely:

1. “Preparing to be the best” by learning to excel by engaging in youthful play-fighting and athletic activities;
2. “Competing with the best” by testing oneself in the course of competing against one's immediate peers;
3. “Winning against the best” by risking defeat while achieving victory against the best of one's peers.
4. This three-step process leads to a fourth, final outcome stage, namely:
5. *Being the best* by receiving from one's peers that acknowledgment that one is first among equals, the best of the best.

The actions and achievements of athletes, ancient and modern, illustrate what we have labeled as the processes and products of agon, and they offer support for Campbell's (1984, p. xi, p. 304) "First Law of Human Behavior: Each human organism seeks to maintain or increase its sense of its own excellence". But for truly exceptional athletes another motivational principle may be at work; namely, the desire for immortality and quest to be the very best for all-time.

Legendary status-honor (desire for immortality)

Becker (1968, 1971) in his early work held that self-esteem is the dominant motive of humankind and the principle of self-esteem maintenance is the sole law of human motivation. But in his later writings Becker (1973, 1975) proposed the more encompassing principle of "immortality-striving." As summarized by Scimecca (1979, p. 65): "This principle holds that every individual seeks immortality and identifies with an ideology of self-expression which he believes give him immortality".

According to Becker, "fear of death" is the unconscious causal force of immortality-striving. While the universality of Becker's principle may be a moot matter, it seems applicable to the Greek contest system of the Homeric and Hellenic eras. For instance, Alvin Gouldner (1965, p. 366) notes that it is "in the Greek resentment of death that we glimpse a frustrated aim of major magnitude -- the desire for immortality". He further notes that:

“The Greek desire for immortality had commonly to be repressed, for insofar as they traditionally associated immortality with the gods and insofar as they feared that those seeking to emulate the gods will be punished for their hybris, the wish to be immortal could hardly be given open expression. It had to be masked, even from the self, for thoughts were known to the gods” (Gouldner, 1965, p. 367).

The most overt expressions of the desire for immortality occurred in agonal contests as the desire for honor was so great within the Greek contest system that individuals would defy death in efforts to attain long-lasting fame. Outside of the bull ring there are few contest elements in modern sport that even begin to reflect the quest for honor and deep desire for immortality shown by Homeric hero-warriors and Hellenic warrior-athletes. However, exceptional athletes occasionally express their motivation to achieve legendary status and their motivation reveals a degree of desire for immortality. Legendary status is given to those athletes who establish an enduring degree of superiority in their sporting successes; and/or who establish particularly priority through their performance of an original and noteworthy athletic feat.

Most top-class athletes only achieve fleeting fame as their sporting success has a rather short half-life. There are, however, a small minority of elite athletes whose superior performances assure them legendary status. One has only to think of the Olympians of unforgettable achievement, as for example: Jim Thorpe, Paavo Nurmi, Mildred (Babe) Didrikson, Jesse Owens, Fanny Blankers-Koen, Emil Zatopek, Wilma Rudolph, Al Oerter, Bob Beamon, Jackie Joyner, Carl Lewis, Vasily Alekseyev, Teofilo Stevenson, and Michael Phelps. We honor exceptional memorable athletes by making them our folk-heroes; and we give them immortality by casting their statues in bronze, enshrining them in sporting halls of fame, or paying homage by retiring their playing uniform or jersey number (cf. e.g., Staff, 1992, p. 10C).

Athletes like scientists often achieve their legendary status by establishing priority which gives them lasting fame. The scientist who is first to publish a significant scientific discovery wins the trial race for a Nobel Prize; and the athlete who is first to set a remarkable record is listed on the honor roll of sport forever. For example, nearly everyone knows that Sir Roger Bannister was the first man to break the four-minute mile, but who can name all of the runners that have since broken his record many times over? Similarly, the fact that Mt. Everest has been climbed by hundreds of individuals does not detract from Sir Edmund Hilary's honor of being the first individual to scale the highest mountain in the world.

The human need to set records may be in danger of becoming commonplace as evidenced by the nearly yearly publications of expanded editions of the “Guinness Book of World Records.” But given the principle of immortality-striving and the quest for excellence in sport, record setting will likely continue at an unprecedented pace. As Allen Guttmann (1978, p. 55) suggests, record setting “is a uniquely modern form of immortality”. Or as Trippett (1980, p. 88) states: “The obsession with setting records is finally inextricable from the human determination to rise above the past”. The record is significant for immortality striving as it “underscores extraordinary performances, promotes self-comparisons, and links past performances to contemporary and future ones” (Schmitt & Leonard, 1986, p. 1095).

Although record setting is the main means of attaining legendary status and achieving a degree of sporting immortality, an athlete may also acquire long lasting fame by perfecting a unique skill that is named in his or her honor - not unlike a scientific law being named after its discoverer. For example, we have the inventive techniques and skills such as the Fosbury Flop in the high jump; the Axel, Salchow, Lutz and Walley in ice figure skating; and a variety of named moves in gymnastics, including the: Valzez (floor exercise), Shurlock (pommel horse), Koste (rings), Kasamatsu (valuting), Healy Twirl (parallel bars), Stalder (horizontal bars), Korbut (balance beam), and Comaneci (uneven parallel bars).

Yet another way of obtaining legendary status in sport is by outstanding “upsets.” For example, the 1980 U.S. Olympic Ice Hockey Team will always remain famous in the minds of Americans for having upset the heavily

avored Russian team and winning the gold medal. And few Olympians will forget the then anonymous Billy Mills, a Native American U.S. Marine, who at the 1964 Tokyo Games became the first American to win the 10.000 meter run after recovering from a bad stumble in the last lap of the race (cf., Bloom, 1991).

In summary, the striving for immortality is clearly revealed in the world of sport. In one of the few sociological studies of the subject, Raymond L. Schmitt and Wilbert M. Leonard II (1986, pp. 1088-90) conceptualize what they term the "postself" as "the concern of a person with the presentation of his or her self in history". Their analysis shows how "the social world of sport facilitates the postself by providing occasions, settings, and processes through which its participants can be remembered, eulogized, and endeared".

Where the action is: Character contests and moral worth

The pursuit of excellence and the desire for distinction of aristocratic warrior-athletes while overtly demonstrated in the physical sphere of death defying deeds in martial and sporting combat also covertly reflect the quest for *moral excellence* and serve as the foundation for the cult of the hero and the development of heroic/moral careers in the Western world.

The heroic in everyday life

The heroic life stands apart from everyday life. As Mike Featherstone (1992, p. 159) expresses the contrast:

"If everyday life is usually associated with the mundane, taken-for-granted, common-sense routines which sustain and maintain the fabric of our daily lives, then the heroic life points to the opposite qualities. Here we think of extraordinary deeds, virtuosity, courage, endurance, and the capacity to attain distinction."

Sir Maurice Bowra (1957, pp. 20-21) captures the core of the heroic life when, in the course of describing what he calls "the Greek experience," he declares: "The essence of the heroic outlook is 'the pursuit of honor through action'" [marks ours]. By action Bowra had in mind the contests and struggles of physical prowess among peers that the ancient Greeks called *agon*. But his concept of action carries the modern connotations of the term given by Goffman (1967, p. 194) that it "is to be found whenever the individual knowingly takes consequential chances perceived as avoidable". He points out that:

"Ordinarily, action will not be found during the week-day work routine at home or on the job. For here chance-takings tend to be organized out, and such as remain are not obviously voluntary" (Goffman, 1967, pp. 194-195).

With respect to vestiges of *agon* it is interesting that Goffman suggests that action can be found in war and sport. For example, he mentions "the soldier's calling" and cites "commercialized competitive sport" and "non-spectator risky sports" as contexts where action is.

Character and moral careers

Whether ancient or modern, agonal contests such as war and sport are the epitome of risk-taking situations and, thus, represent what Goffman (1967) calls "character contests", or moral games, in which contestants' character and virtues are subjected to social evaluation by both peer groups and third-parties. And in the course of agonal competition participants establish, maintain, and enhance heroic and "moral careers"¹⁹. These expressive careers are comprised:

¹⁹ Erving Goffman first formulated the concept of "moral career" a half-century ago (1959, p. 123; 1961, p. 128).

"of the stages of acquisition or loss of honor and the respect due from other people as one passes through various systems of hazards characteristic of different social worlds" (Harre, Clarke, & De Carlo, 1985, p. 147).

A typology of career stages over the life cycle with a comparison of human careers, moral careers, and heroic careers is given in Table 3²⁰.

Table 3. A typology of career stages over the life cycle

Human careers	Moral careers	Heroic careers
Childhood training	Character Formation	Becoming brave
Career launching	Character Testing	Being brave
Career establishment	Character Confirmation	Bravery in Battle
Career enhancement	Character Distinction	Bravest of the Brave
Career maintenance	Character Maturation	Legendary hero

Source: Own studies.

Although not mutually exclusive in an institutional or organizational context, it remains useful to distinguish between occupational or practical careers, and expressive or moral careers. For example, within professional sports were occupational careers described in terms of skill, training and performance; and we also find moral careers denoting the identity and status reaffirmation by their peers. The relationship between career stages and moral development in the life cycles of agonal contestants is illustrated in Table 4²¹.

Table 4. Moral careers and the life cycles of agonal contestants

Career stages	Career training	Career establishment	Career maintenance	Career enhancement
Prescriptions and Proscriptions	Personal requirements	Social regulations	Agonal standards	Status satisfactions
Activities and accolades	Preparation and training	Contests and combat	Victory and defeat	Fame or shame
Quest for excellence	Becoming the best	Beating the best	Being the best	Best of the best
Peer review	Among ones peers	Between ones peers	Before ones peers	By ones peers
Social stratification	Role differentiation	Role ranking	Role evaluation	Role rewarding
Moral development	Character formation	Character testing	Character confirmation	Character achievement

Source: Own studies.

The key aspect of a moral career, in general, and of a heroic career in particular, is that it develops and displays "character". "It creates in others the idea that a particular person has attributes and attitudes of a certain worth" (Harre, Clarke, & De Carlo, 1985, p. 147). In turn, the most distinctive feature of character is that it is comprised

²⁰ The sequence of career development in the left hand column is adapted from Goldschmidt (1992).

²¹ This table is a modified version of one given by Loy & Hesketh (1984).

of moral attributes (“virtues”) that bear upon the management of “fateful events”. Fateful events are character generating as they entail risk, danger, and acts of valor.

“Attributes of moral character are established only in risk-taking situations: before we are ready to impute to a person a quality of character, he must be seen as voluntarily putting something on the line” (Scott 1968, p. 25).

As Bowra (1957, p. 21) depicts the Homeric warrior-hero: “He courts danger gladly because it gives him the best opportunity of showing what stuff he is made”.

In a contemporary context, Goffman (1967) cites several properties of character (moral attributes or virtues if you will) that bear upon the management of fateful events inherent in agon competition. These include:

1. “Courage” - “the capacity to envisage immediate danger and yet proceed with the course of action that brings the danger on” (Goffman, 1967, p. 218)²²;
2. “Gameness” - “the capacity to stick to a line of activity and to continue to pour all effort into it regardless of set-backs, pain, or fatigue, and this not because of some brute insensitivity but because of inner will and determination” (Goffman, 1967, pp. 218-219);
3. “Integrity” - “the propensity to resist temptation in situations where there would be much profit and some impunity in departing momentarily from moral standards” (Goffman, 1967, p. 219); and
4. “Composure” - “self-control, self-possession, or poise” (Goffman, 1967, p. 222)²³. Goffman (1967, p. 227) lists a half dozen different dimensions of composure and notes that: “Composure in all its different dimensions has traditionally been associated with the aristocratic ethic”.

More significantly, Goffman (1967, p. 209) acknowledges that “action in our Western culture seems to belong to the cult of masculinity”.

Virtue through violence: Codes of honor and martial masculinity

It is, of course, not surprising that what Bowra and Goffman call “action” is closely linked to the cult of masculinity and masculine domination in the Western world. Since the primary avenues of pursuing the agon motif through “war” and “sport” are two of the most highly and rigidly “gendered” activities in the history of humankind. Even today war and sport remain rather exclusive male enclaves. Women have limited combat roles in the military and females have yet to achieve gender equality in the Olympics in terms of participants, sporting events, or membership in the IOC (see Loy, McLachlan, & Booth, 2009). Historically, war and sport as male preserves is associated with “total institutions” and “fratriarchies.”

Total institutions and fratriarchies

Goffman (1957, p. 44; 1961, p. 203) defines total institutions as those “whose encompassing characteristics go beyond the institutional norm, to the point of effectively barring social intercourse with the outside world”. Examples of total institutions related to agon are military “boot camps”, military academies, military bases, hunting lodges, sport academies, athletic dormitories, and professional football training camps. As Goffman (1961, p. 12) points out: “The total institution is a social hybrid, part residential community, part formal organization; therein lies its special sociological interest”.

²² For contemporary accounts of why courage matters in everyday life see McCain (2004) and Rachels (1993).

²³ Examples from the Olympic Games of the display of character and the moral attributes listed by Goffman are given in Loy (1981).

Total institutions, or what Harre (1979, p. 314) calls “closed institutions”, share two sets of distinguishing features:

1. "Rituals of depersonalization in which in the extreme all traces of a previous moral career of an individual are wiped away"; and
2. "A system of hazards in the course of which reputation can be gained or lost". Although the majority of total institutions are overtly engaged in instrumental activities, they nevertheless provide social contexts for expressive activities related to character display and the development of moral careers. Indeed, as Harre (1979, p. 315) states:

“All things being equal, an institution will develop in such a way that its expressive aspects – that is the apparatus for the development of moral careers – will become more and more dominant in the determination of individual action in that institution.”

Agonal total institutions associated with war and sport are typically comprised of fratriarchies, i.e., fraternal interest groups which are age graded, competitive, peer based, segmentally bonded, and which share a code of honor. Fratriarchies are the epitome of male bonding and comradeship. And agonal fratriarchies, in particular, constitute "brothers-in-arms". Their authority is the rule of the brotherhood and they foster male domination in at least three ways:

“They bring men together, they keep men together, and they put women down. In short, they develop male bonding, maintain sex segregation, and generate an ideology of male supremacy” (Loy, 1995, p.267).

Thus, agonal fratriarchies play a major role in creating cults of masculinity, and in establishing different degrees and forms of masculine domination.

Stages of organized violence and forms of martial masculinity

The monopolization of war and sport by men serves to define masculinity and is often linked to honor. As Leo Braudy (2005, p. 56) points out:

“In theory, honor is an internalized code of personal behavior, whose principles partake of spiritual truth. But it is armed combat that turns this individual honor into a social fact by its display in the presence of others, and it is preeminently in war that men make themselves men in the eyes of other men and in their own.”

In a related manner, but in more stringent terms, Barbara Ehrenreich (1997, p. 129) in her analysis of the 'origins and history of the passions of war' discusses war as ‘a rough male sport’, proclaims the following connection between war and masculinity:

“Men make war for many reasons, but one of the most recurring ones is to establish that they are in fact, "real men." Warfare and aggressive masculinity have been, in other words, mutually reinforcing cultural enterprises. War-making requires warriors, that is, "real men," and the making of warriors requires war. Thus, war becomes a solution to what Margaret Mead termed "the recurrent problem of civilization," which is "to define the male role satisfactorily enough.”

Although Ehrenreich's (1997, p. 129) acknowledges that "there is no compelling biological or 'natural' reason why men have so exclusively starred in the drama of war", she fails to acknowledge that the construction of hegemonic masculinity is

"a social struggle going on in a complex and ideological and political field, in which there is a continuing process of mobilization, marginalization, contestation, resistance, and subordination" (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985, p. 589).

Specifically, with respect to agonal competition we suggest that the emergence and transformation of agon is directly related to stages of organized violence; and, in turn, different types of hegemonic masculinity and ideals of manhood and manliness, are associated with different stages and forms of agon.

Although it is very much a simplification, we propose that there are three basic forms of agon related to the following stages of organized violence:

1. "The Emergence of Agon": first occurring in rank-order societies in which tribal bands of hunter-warriors obtained a monopoly of weapons and organized violence became the proprietary rights of adult males. They insured their monopolistic control of weapons and warfare through a variety of initiation rites and social taboos which excluded women from participation in agonal pursuits.
2. "The Dominance of Agon": resulting from organized violence becoming the monopoly of elite specialists, i.e., warrior-heroes. This stage is associated of with feudal/military agrarian societies.
3. "The Residue of Agon": beginning when relative autonomous warrior elites were forced to yield their monopoly on weapons and control of violence to state organizations. This process began with early state formation and has continued to our contemporary period of late capitalism.

Over the course of the social development of agon there appeared several different forms of agon, major changes in codes of honor, and new constructions of hegemonic martial and athletic masculinities. We schematically summarize the forms of agon and types of masculinity as related to specific social formations in Table 5²⁴.

Table 5. A typology of agon, masculinity, and social formations

Forms of Agon	Types of Masculinity	Social Formations
Archaic Agon	Epic Masculinity	Homeric Warriors and Spartan Soldiers
Feudal Agon	Chivalric Masculinity	Medieval Knights and Feudal Samurai
Tribal Agon	Neo-epic Masculinity	Bedouins & Masai and Plains Indian Warriors
Modern Agon	Neo-chivalric Masculinity	Victorian Sportsmen and WWI Fighter Pilots
Anomalous Agon	Hyper Masculinity	Roman Gladiators
Atavistic Agon	Neo-Hyper Masculinity	"Extreme" Fighters

Source: Own studies.

The decline of agonism

Morford and Clark (1976, p. 187) argue that: "Without adequate avenues for its expression, the agonal lifestyle virtually disappeared in the fifteenth century". They recognize, however, that "the agonal motif reappears from time to time, in some instances manifested by large segments within a society and in other instances manifested by isolated individuals within a nonagonal society". Examples of the remnants of pure agon are the duels among European nobility of the 16th to 19th centuries, the bare knuckle boxing of 19th century pugilists, the warfare of Plains Indian warrior societies of the pre-reservation era, and last but not least, the last great cavalry battles and the first great air battles of World War I.

In large measure the decline of agonism results from the state control of violence and the social determinants associated with early, mature and late capitalism. And it reflects what Norbert Elias (1994) has formulated as

²⁴ We have borrowed the terms epic and chivalric masculinities from Doyle (1989, pp. 27-33).

"the civilizing process"; as for example, the transition from warriors-knights, to couriers, to officers and gentlemen.

With respect to the social development of modern sport, factors undergoing change in the transitional phase of agon to post agon include:

1. Increase in number of avenues for status achievement and pursuit of prestige;
2. Replacement of peers in the evaluation process by non-performing officials and members of the mass media;
3. Reduced value of intrinsic rewards and exponential increase in the value attached to extrinsic rewards;
4. Reduction of risk (especially risk of death) in agonal contests;
5. Reduced role of contesting antagonists in favor of coaches, promoters, sponsors, etc.; and
6. Decline in spontaneity of action regarding schedules, venues, training, etc.

In our post-agonal, post-modern society, only a handful of individuals and groups seek to display agonal drives collectively mobilized within the law. Agonal behavior is only sanctioned for legitimately recognized groups and subcultures, as for example, certain military units and selected sports. For the most part we are left with competitive activities representing "symbolic" agon, or pseudo-agon, staged as ritual agonal contests serving to entertain spectators and perhaps reinforcing certain cultural values. These typically glorify individual violent action, past military victories, and feed spectator/viewer fantasies.

Further, these ritualistic agonal contests are dominated by non-peers who allot praise or blame according to superficial and non-agonal criteria (e.g., the score in a contest). More often than not, the central role played by honor and its enhancement and protection through agonal action has been, over time, replaced by the single minded pursuit of celebrity fame and financial fortune as the dominant theme of agonal strife.

In sum, the post agonal stage is one in which an agonal lifestyle is outside the social nexus of society. For instance, the agonal code of conduct finds expression in the attitudes and behaviors of rebels from society-at-large whose exaggerated and misplaced sense of honor is usually in conflict with the mainstream values of their society. Those who persist in attempting to adhere to such agonal lifestyles include para-military groups, street gangs, and mafia like organizations. These anti-social groups are mostly excluded from society as a whole and may even be part of the criminal fringe.

Ironically, even as traditional agonal values are eclipsed from daily life a number of society's institutions continue to recognize their commercial important, especially the universal appeal of heroic values for the entertainment of a vast public unable to live up to the traditional expectations of agon created for them by movie makers, fiction and comic book writers.

Finally, and perhaps to counteract the boredom and mundane flatness of everyday life in a non-agonal welfare state, a variety of extreme type sports are constantly being spawned in response to a widespread quest for personal achievement and acclaim. These sports range from a multiplicity of 'hi-tec' board sports to X-Games, gladiator contests and extreme fighting, to Red Neck Olympics and so on. These often daring and risk laden pursuits are typically in defiance of institutional control and the state's protective umbrella (e.g., rescue and medivac teams). As a poster advertising extreme outdoor sports equipment reads: "Out here, lawyers don't take care of negligence -- undertakers do!"

To be sure, under highly controlled conditions, some individuals live modified agonal lives as athletes where risk and peer recognition are still important factors. But such specific and bounded recognition has little or no meaning throughout the larger society to the realities of which the individual athlete must return after "playing" at agon.

Further, the athlete's personal life and conduct is also largely unrelated to his sporting conduct. The usual peer bestowed rewards of acknowledged excellence, reputation and personal integrity may mean little to an

individual athlete in contrast to the boundless quantity of external, extrinsic rewards; especially monetary gain so readily available through sport organizations and various secondary institutions such as the media and marketing agencies.

However, when all is said and done, notwithstanding the distortion and attenuation of agonal values and lifestyle, chivalry will not die and we continue to look to agonal virtues as valued residuals from earlier historical eras -- heritages if you will of ideals of courage, character, heroism, masculinity, fair play, and moral worth. As MacIntyre (2007, p. 130) records: "We are what the past has made us, and we cannot eradicate our relationship with the heroic society of the past."

The heroic thread

In MacIntyre's view, the virtues repeatedly cataloged in epic form, provided part of the moral scriptures, so to speak, for much later periods in history, even though the social structures were vastly altered. In his words (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 166):

"The memory of heroic society is present in Western tradition which I am identifying twice over: once as the background to the fifth and fourth century Athenian society and once again in the background of the high middle ages. It is this double presence which makes the moral standpoint of heroic society a necessary starting point for moral reflection within the tradition with which we are concerned".

To this MacIntyre might have added the Victorian tradition which drew on both earlier traditions to become the thrice over memory in laying the foundation for elements of contest and moral practices in sport. And for good measure we add to this lineage of agon, heroism and masculinity, the notion that modern revival of the Olympic Games in a unique and distorted fashion draws upon all three traditions. Let us highlight these four fibers of what we call "the heroic thread".

Classical Greek society

We have said much about the origins of the agon motif in ancient, classical Greek culture. But let us summarize the nature of character and social structure in terms of MacIntyre's analysis of virtues of Homeric and Athenian societies. He notes at the outset of his study of moral theory that: "the exercise of ... heroic virtues ... requires both a particular kind of human being and a particular kind of social structure" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 126). He is speaking, of course, about the Homeric warrior-hero and the social structure of what he calls heroic society. His basic thesis is that "the understanding of heroic society -- whether it ever existed or not -- is thus a necessary part of the understanding of classical society and its successors" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 121).

In outlining the relationships between the virtues of heroic society and fifth and fourth century Athenian society MacIntyre focuses on the central concept of "agon". He acknowledges that there existed different views of the nature of virtue and rival lists of cardinal virtues in classical Greek society, but states "that nonetheless the city-state and the *agon* provide the shared contexts in which the virtues are to be exercised" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 138).

MacIntyre (2007) goes on to set forth his own moral theory in terms of an Aristotelian triad of virtues, practices, and institutions:

1. "A "virtue" is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods" (p. 191).
2. A "practice" refers to "any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized" (p. 187). MacIntyre takes

care to note that: "A practice involves standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of goods" (p. 190).

3. "External goods" (e.g., land, money, power) "have always some individual's property and possession" and typically if someone has more external goods, others have less (p. 190). "External goods are therefore characteristically objects of competition in which there must be losers as well as winners" (p. 190). Whereas, "internal goods" like distinction, excellence, honor, arete "are indeed the outcome of competition to excel, but it is characteristic of them that their achievement is good for the whole community who participate in the practice" (pp. 190-191).
4. "Social institutions" are comprised of the social networks and social structures that both enable and constrain practices. MacIntyre points out that: "institutions are characteristically and necessarily concerned with ... external goods" (p. 194). And because institutions are involved in both acquiring and distributing money and material goods, and because they are structured in terms of power and status, they are subject to corruption. MacIntyre records that without virtues "practices could not resist the corrupting power of institutions" (p. 194).

We schematically summarize MacIntyre's triad of heroic social structure in Table 6, as specifically related to agonal competition in heroic societies. And in Table 7 we show what we perceive to be the relationships between character and social structure in agonal systems in general.

Table 6. Social structure of heroic society

VALUED VIRTUES	AGONAL PRACTICES	SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS
Personal qualities shared by all members in defining relationships between peers in the pursuit of excellence. COURAGE	Sets of coherent, complex, socially established cooperative activities that legitimate the quest for excellence. STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE	The social networks that both enable & constrain the agonal practices sustaining the quest for excellence. KINSHIP ORDER
FIDELITY	OBEDIENCE TO RULES	Focus on family and clan SPIRITUAL ORDER
FORTITUDE	GOAL ACHIEVEMENT	Including games & sports associated with festivals and funeral contests ECONOMIC ORDER
GENEROSITY	Obtaining both internal and external goods INTERNAL GOODS	Rank Order and Feudal/Military Agrarian Societies POLITICAL ORDER
JUSTICE	E.g., arête, distinction, honor and prestige EXTERNAL GOODS	Emphasis on community and warrior aristocracies MILITARY ORDER
	E.g., power, privilege, and prosperity	Emphasis on Elite Warrior-Heroes

Source: own studies.

Table 7. Character and social structure of agonal social systems

Heroic Attributes	Structural Attributes	Character Attributes
Heroic Qualities	Virtues	Moral Character
Heroic Actions	Practices	Moral Career
Cultural Hero Systems	Institutions	Moral Order

Source: Own studies.

Feudal society

Maria Ossowska, in her seminal work, “Social Determinants of Moral Ideas” (1972, p. 131), writes that:

“although some historians have cast doubt on the similarities between the ethos of Homer's warriors and the medieval knights, we are entitled to expect analogies because in both cases we are dealing with the way of life of a privileged class whose main activity is fighting.”

Indeed, the primary agonal practice was the same in both Heroic and Feudal societies, namely, warfare; and both societies emphasized sport and hunting as secondary agonal practices.

Importantly, Homeric warriors and medieval knights both ascribed to tough, martial ethical systems which valorized the achievement of virtue through violence with their emphasis on the classic virtues of valor (prowess), loyalty (fidelity), and generosity (largess). Most significantly, in expressing their particular forms of martial masculinity, both Homeric warriors and medieval knights held to ethical systems based on the supreme cardinal virtue of honor.

As eloquently summarized by Michael Ignatieff (1998, p. 117) for aristocratic warrior societies in general:

“As ethical systems, they were primarily concerned with establishing the rules of combat and defining the system of moral etiquette by which warriors judged themselves to be worthy of mutual respect. Warrior's honor implied an idea of war as a moral theater in which one displayed one's manly virtues in public. To fight with honor was to fight without fear, without hesitation, and, by implication without duplicity. The codes acknowledged the moral paradox of combat: that those who fight each other bravely will be bound together in mutual respect; and that if they perish at each other's hand, they will be brothers in death.”

Or in the words of Ossowska (1972, p. 135), “the code of fair play which was binding in a fight between two nobles originated in pride, respect for the adversary due to class solidarity, and an attitude of play.”

The special significance of honor for medieval knights per se is highlighted by Richard W. Kaeuper (2001, pp. 129-130) in his study of “Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe”:

“Prowess and honor are closely linked in the knights' minds, for the practice of the one produces the other ... Honor is the veritable currency of chivalric life, the glittering reward earned by the valorous as a result of their exertions, their hazarding of their bodies. It is worth more than life itself.”

Kaeuper's observations echo Huizinga's view of war as a noble game of honor; and they support Malcolm Vale's characterization of wars as ennobling “because they test a man's worth in conditions of extreme personal danger” (Vale, 1981, p. 30).

Notwithstanding substantial parallels and similarities between Homeric warriors and medieval knights, there were major differences in the nature of their virtues, agonal practices, and the social institutions that both enabled and constrained their agonal practices. Medieval society in general has been typically viewed as comprised of three main social orders or estates:

1. The “oratores” comprised of all members of the clergy;
2. The “laboratories” represented by the variety of laborers; and

3. "Bellatores" or "pugnatores" consisting of all ranks of knightly warriors.

These three social orders strongly influenced, and in turn were strongly influenced by, the promulgation of the unique ethical system of "chivalry" which according to Maurice Keen "essentially was the secular code of honor of a martially oriented aristocracy" (Keen, 1984, p. 252). In addition to emphasizing the classic martial virtues listed above, chivalry stressed non-martial virtues such as chastity, courtesy, faith, humility and piety.

Moreover, chivalry gave new meaning to the key virtue of "loyalty". For a Homeric warrior loyalty meant fidelity to comrades, clan and community; whereas, for a medieval knight loyalty implied faithfulness to three very different claimants: "God, his eternal master; his liege lord, who was his master while on earth; and the mistress of his heart, the lady to whom he had sworn his love" (Baker, 2003, p. 57). Thus, loyalty for a medieval knight brought conflicting demands as he sought to fulfill the obligations of three less than compatible ethical subsystems:

1. An ethic of Christian service to the Church,
2. An ethic of faithful service to a lord, and
3. An amorous ethic of service to a lady.

Strikingly, the amorous ethic of service to a lady was incorporated into the sporting and athletic agonal practices of the tournament (teams of knights) and the joust (single combat) in a twofold manner. On the one hand, in the course of competition in tournaments and jousts, knights could express their courtly love for their chosen lady through attention and adoration. On the other hand, noble women attending these venues acted as judges of knightly behavior.

Martial and sporting masculinities are performative masculinities if you will, and as such they demand an audience, but not just any audience will do. As Braudy (2005, p. 57) points out: "As there is no honor to be gleaned from defeating someone outside the honor system, there is no praise to be cherished from the wrong audience"; and more specifically, he observes that: "A large portion of the audience for ... displays of literary knighthood and chivalry, in life as well as literature, were women". But over time the romance element of the tournament became such an overriding concern that tournaments became increasingly "artificial" and less and less "agonal" (Huizinga, 1954; Vale, 1981, pp. 64-65).

While the tournaments and jousts of the 14th and 15th centuries were largely reflections of symbolic or pseudo-agonal, the tournaments and jousts of the 12th and 13th centuries had a close connection with warfare. In fact, many fell little short of actual warfare. For example, Vale (1981, p. 87) reports that: "At a tournament at Neuss in 1241 over eighty knights are said to have died, many of them, apparently suffocated in their armour in the dust and heat."

Such slaughter aside, tournaments and jousts fulfilled a number of important functions: they provided training for battle and an outlet for martial fervor between wars; they offered landless and poor knights the opportunity to gain prestige and to attract the patronage of a wealthy noble; they provided the chance for economic game through the capture and ransoming of opponents; and they offered great opportunities for social networking in the large gatherings of a host of influential individuals. And "above all, because they drew men together from far afield, they served as points of diffusion for chivalrous culture and for chivalrous standards" (Vale, 1981, p. 100).

The great popularity of tournaments and jousts were a source of concern for both the Church and the Monarchy. Both kings and popes issued official declarations of prohibitions against these agonal practices. Liege lords did not like to see the mass destruction of men and horses in sporting contests as they constituted a depletion of key resources for forthcoming wars. And laymen and high churchmen alike did not approve of either primary or secondary agonal practices as they reflected ancient pagan virtues; promoted pride, pomp and circumstance; and drew inspiration from a pre-Christian past. Accordingly, the individualistic outlook and relative high degree

of autonomy of nomadic knights were a threat to Monarchy and Church alike. But both institutions achieved uneasy truces with knighthood.

With respect to nobility knights ranked lowest on the ladder of social status but through social mobility achieved through success at agonal practices often became members of the higher nobility. Also noteworthy is the fact that:

“As the perception of masculinity developed in relation to war in the Middle Ages, 'knight' was the bridge between the otherwise separable contradictory categories of 'noble' and 'warrior'” (Braudy, 2005, p. 71).

With respect to the Church it co-opted knights as “soldiers of Christ” in “the army of God” for fighting the Crusades and established the religious-martial orders of the Knights Templar, the Knights Hospitalers, the Teutonic Knights, and the Knights of Calatrava. In addition, the Church assumed authority for both the first and final stages of the moral careers of knights. Specifically, it established the policy of Christianizing knighthood by sanctifying the ceremony of knighting and by offering the reward of Christian salvation for martial service to God.

The scales of honor of achievement in agonal practices in Feudal society serve to illustrate the paths of both social mobility and moral careers of knights in action. Maurice Keen (1984, pp. 12-13), citing from the medieval writings of Geoffrey de Charny, outlines achievements and paths of honor as follows:

“Young men at arms who distinguish themselves in the joust deserve praise, he says, but those who distinguish themselves in the tourney deserve higher praise ... These in turn must give way before those who have won honor in war, for war is a graver business and more honourable 'and passes all other manner of arms'. Those who have served with distinction in wars in their own lands are to be honoured, but still more to be honoured are those who have seen service in 'distant and strange countries' ... The best men of all will be those who have advanced from one honour to the next.”

The outstanding exemplar of such a moral career is William Marshall, the knight of knights (Painter 1933; Duby 1985). He was born sometime around 1145 as the fourth son of an English baron of middling rank. He received sponsorship and served his apprenticeship as page and squire under the Count of Tankerville; and as a result of courageous conduct was dubbed a knight at age 18. Following great success at war, tournaments, and jousts alike he attained the rank of Earl and served as a Regent of England before his death in 1219. As expressed by Maurice Keen in his review of the biography of William Marshall by Georges Duby:

“Thus, William built a distinguished reputation, on his loyalty and on his skill and valor in combat, and also on his generosity, for of his own prizes he kept nothing, distributing largess recklessly among his companions” (Keen, 1986, p 39).

In the course of the later Middle Ages the combined results of changing technology of warfare, the increased power of kings and courts, and the efforts of the Church to “modify facets of the heroic cult to suits its own purposes” served to “effectively harness the individual knight's martial capabilities” and, thus, closed the “avenues for the expression of an agonal lifestyle which virtually disappeared in the fifteenth century” (Morford & Clark, 1976, pp. 186-187).

Victorian society

Through rose colored glasses members of Victorian society looked back to both classical Greek society and medieval society for inspiration and ideals of moral character and conduct. As Jenkins' (1981) illustrates in his book “The Victorians and Ancient Greece”, members of Victorian society expressed a reawakened interest in the archaeology, art and literature of ancient Greece. But as he also illustrates, they “adapted their interests in

Hellenic subjects to conform to their own categories of thought culture, and morality" (Morford & McIntosh, 1993, p. 54). Similarly, Turner (1981, p. 8) points out in his study of "The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain": "Across the Western world Victorian authors and readers were determined to find the Greeks as much as possible like themselves and to rationalize away fundamental differences".

Likewise, members of Victorian society adapted medieval notions of honor and chivalry to their own interests; as indicated in Ferguson's (1960) analysis of "The Indian Summer of English Chivalry" and Girouard's (1981) examination of "The Return to Camelot". Once again, however, the Victorians selected only those qualities of chivalry that they admired and then adapted them to their own use. Nowhere did this remodeled code find greater expression than in sport: "Being a sportsman, being a gentleman and being chivalrous were totally overlapping concepts" (Girouard, 1981, p. 238).

The adaptations of the classical Greek and medieval heroic traditions were united in the ideals held by educators in the public schools of England. For example:

"In the formulation of Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby from 1828 to 1842, the goal was 'the body of a Greek and the soul of a Christian knight' -- a manliness that would reinvigorate the depleted national moral stock" (Braudy, 2005, p. 340).

Or as Richard Holt (1989, pp. 89-90) nicely expresses the matter:

"The Victorian public school was the forcing-house of a new kind of masculinity in which the distinguishing characteristics of the male sex were not intellectual or genital but physical and moral".

In a like manner, Mangan (1996, p. 28) writes:

"The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century gentleman was essentially the product of the public school and its obsession with games and the games-fields as the heart of the curriculum, the source of masculine virtue and the instrument of imperial domination".

The importance of the public schools for generating ideals of hegemonic masculinity in Victorian society (see Chandos, 1984; Holt, 1989; Mangan, 1981; Simon & Bradley, 1975) was supported and reinforced by the educational philosophy and games playing of the colleges of the Oxbridge universities as described by Paul R. Deslandes (2005) in his book "Oxbridge Men -British Masculinities and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850-1920".

It is evident in the works just cited that in Victorian society public schools and colleges of Oxbridge universities were very much total or closed institutions housing athletic patriarchies. Moreover, the muscular moral manliness associated with public schools and Oxbridge universities during the Victorian era were viewed as reflections of the emergence of the movement of muscular Christianity. For instance, Sandiford (1983, p. 305) maintains that:

"most of the Victorian educators, in fact, became ardent apostles of the creed known as muscular Christianity, which dominated late Victorian philosophy".

But as Mangan (1996, p. 30) demonstrates there was yet another influential school of thought, the Darwin realists, "who embraced 'muscularity' as a moral ideal but were not greatly exercised if it lacked a religious component". The relative influence of the two schools of "muscularity" is a moot matter, but in combination they promulgated the view that games form character.

Character formation through games playing was directed at developing the "gentleman amateur" As Holt (1989, p. 98) has summarized:

"Amateurs were gentlemen of the middle and upper classes who played sports that were often also enjoyed by the common people -- athletics, rowing, or cricket, for example -- but who played these and other games in a special way".

For example, not only was fair play emphasized in terms of abiding by the rules, but more importantly "abiding by what was generally understood to be the 'spirit of the game'" (Holt, 1989, p. 98), referring to the manner in which the game was played. Further, as Holt points out, "sport had not only to be played in good spirit, it had to be played with style" (Holt, 1989, p. 99). Playing in good spirit and with style reflect the properties of character that Goffman (1967, pp. 218-227) calls "integrity" (and related component of gallantry) and "composure" (and related dimensions of poise, calmness, and dignity).

Although spirit and style could be expressed by amateur gentlemen in the context of all team sports, they were key characteristics of the play of amateur gentlemen in the game of cricket. While cricket was popular with all segments of society, including working-class boys as well as laborers and artisans, middle and upper-class participants in the game maintained their rigid class distinctions in so small part by their special spirit and style of play²⁵. Their display of character on the field did much to foster the ideals of British masculinity and concepts of the proper English gentlemen. As Sandiford (1983, p. 303) stresses:

"Cricket was much more than just another game to the Victorians. They glorified it, indeed, as a perfect system of ethics and morals which embodied all that was most noble in the Anglo-Saxon character. They prized it as a national symbol, perhaps because -- so far as they could tell -- it was an exclusively English creation unsullied by oriental or European influences. In an extremely xenophobic age, the Victorians came to regard cricket as further proof of their cultural supremacy".

He even goes so far as to suggest that:

"The Victorians revived the mediaeval concept of the chivalrous knight and emerged with the notion of the Christian cricketer" (Sandiford, 1983, p. 305).

However, caught-up in a neo-romantic view of adulation for the medieval troubadour's ideal model of chivalrous knight errantly, the Victorians overlooked the simple fact that chivalry was at best only a thin veneer and, in reality, largely unsuccessful in controlling the contentious behavior of the medieval knight. The chivalrous gentlemanly ethos of the Victorians downplayed as vulgar three important aspects of agonal behavior; namely, assertiveness, competitiveness, extreme individualism and self-interest. Instead, they emphasized fair play, unselfishness, modesty, magnanimity in victory and disinterestedness.

The most fundamental difference in the contest element of sport in Victorian society in contrast to agonal competitions in classical Greek and medieval societies were the quite different meanings Victorians attached to the concept of honor. For Homeric warriors and medieval knights virtue or honor was achieved and vindicated through physical violence²⁶. Whereas for the Victorian gentleman, honor was derived from respect due to social rank and the accompanying right to precedence.

Related to the very different meanings attached to the concept of honor in Victorian society in contrast to classical Greek and medieval societies is the fact that the primary avenue for pursuit of the agon motif by Victorian gentlemen was through games and sport, whereas for Homeric warriors and feudal knights it was through dueling and warfare. Therefore,

"in many ways the athlete is both a fraudulent and a paradigmatic version of the warrior, with all the pure moves of combat but little of the fear, chaos, and death" (Braudy, 2005, p. 343).

However, sports were viewed as model of military discipline and an important means for developing young officers for service in the British Empire. In brief, "sport as an instrument of social control was the precursor of

²⁵ See Holt's (1989, p. 107) discussion of how cricket could uniquely combine gentlemen-amateurs and lower-class professionals on the same team but with rigid class distinctions on and off the field.

²⁶As Pitt-Rivers states in his discussion of honour and social status: "The ultimate vindication of honour lies in physical violence" (1974, p. 29).

sport as moralistic imperial masculinity" (Mangan, 1996, p. 33). And the legacy of the Victorian linkage of sport, military and patriotism was to be found in combat in World War I. Braudy (2005, p. 342) points out that

"in the first conscriptions of whole British football teams would go to war together, banded in the same regiment"; and remarks that "the war that finally came was in some way thought to resemble a game, a version perhaps of the 'great game' of empire".

While it may be stretching matters to think in any way of World War I as a game, or "great game", the legacy of chivalry was found in the first combat fights in the air. Factual examples of air chivalry in World War I are given by Piert Hein Meijering (1988) in his book "Signed with their Honor (Air Chivalry during the Two World Wars)".

With respect to the British involvement in air combat, the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) attempted to attract the best and the brightest for service in their branch of the military and, thus, typically recruited Victorian gentlemen/sportsmen from the public schools and Oxbridge universities. In their account of the British experience of the war in the air, 1914-1918, Steel and Hart (1997, p. 241) cite the following account of a lieutenant in the RFC who reflects on air chivalry as follows:

"There was undoubtedly a sense of chivalry in the air. We did not feel that we were shooting at men. We did not want to kill men; we were really trying to shoot down the machines. Our enemies were not the men in the machines, our enemies were the machines themselves. It was a case of our machine is better than yours and let's down yours. Almost like a game of ninepins. A game of skill, a game in which we pitted ourselves against them and they pitted themselves against us – each to prove the better man".

This account supports Meijering's assertion that "there certainly was a strong bond that united the flyers of all nations"; and "like the medieval knights, they belonged to a small, international brotherhood" (Meijering, 1988, p. 23).

But when all is said and done, the influence of Victorian codes of chivalry, honor, and fair play had little impact on conduct in combat in World War I in comparison with their large, initial impact on the revival of the modern Olympic Games.

Olympism - a frail and frayed fiber of the heroic thread

If Victorians looked back and viewed classical Greek and medieval societies through rose colored glasses, then it is fair to say the founding father of the modern Olympic Games, Baron de Coubertin, looked back and viewed classical Greek, medieval and Victorian societies through distorted lenses. He looked back on the ancient Olympic Games as a model but in so doing idealized Greek athletic practices to the extent of ignoring the intense rivalry and aggressive self-assertion that underlay the Greek agonal system.

Similarly overlooked by de Coubertin was the fact that, even very early in the history of the ancient Olympics, the internal rewards of arête, excellence and honor achieved within a peer base agonal structure had already given way to an emphasis on external rewards based on goods and money conferred by a pseudo-agonal spectatorship readily identifying with the ceremonial agon.

De Coubertin also took a long look on what he perceived to be the gentlemanly and chivalrous conduct of Victorian sport. But while the Victorian gentleman saw chivalrous conduct in sport as a means of distancing himself from the worker and eventually the professional, de Coubertin saw in the concept of chivalry a means of protecting the moral purity of sport. For example, in his opening remarks before the 1894 Paris Congress, he said:

“Firstly, it is necessary to preserve the noble and chivalrous character which distinguished athletes in the past, in order that it may continue effectively to play the same admirable part in the education of the modern world as the Greek masters assigned it” (Diem, 1967).

In point of fact, these Greek masters may have been none other than those games' masters who were behind the athleticism of the English public schools that de Coubertin admired so much. An athleticism saddled by the gentlemanly ethic that Gilmour (1981) in his volume “The Idea of the Gentleman in the English Novel” described as the “elevation of respectability and good form over talent, energy and imagination”.

In his model for the modern Olympic Games and his focus on chivalrous conduct de Coubertin even invoked memories of knights jousting before noble ladies; as for example, in stating his gendered rationale that:

“We feel that the Olympic Games must be reserved for men ... we have tried and must continue to try to achieve the following definition: the solemn and periodic exaltation of male athleticism with internationalism as a base, loyalty as a means, art for its setting, and female applause as reward” (Gerber, 1974, pp. 137-138).

Given our outline of de Coubertin's viewpoints, we are led to conclude that Mangan (1996, p. 34) is correct in his depiction of de Coubertin as “a man of aristocratic prejudice, historical misconception and utopian idealism”.

Moreover, given de Coubertin's efforts to perpetuate an anomalous admixture of defunct aristocratic ideology, historical inaccuracies and religious like worship of the chivalrous amateur, it is ironic that today's modern Olympic (professional) athlete has more competitive virtues in common with classical warrior-athlete of the past than the Victorian gentleman/amateur athlete as we highlight in Table 8.

However, we must recognize the elements of moral philosophy providing the foundation underlying the ethical frameworks of agonal competition within classical Greek, medieval and Victorian societies are very different from those of contemporary society, in general, and Olympic competition in particular.

Table 8. Characteristics competitive qualities

VICTORIAN (Amateur Athlete)	MODERN (Professional Athlete)
Altruistic	Ambitious
Larger Cause	Personal Cause
Disinterest	Self-Interest
Magnanimous	Assertive
Non-Contentious	Highly Contentious
Modest	Boastful
Good Form / Fair Play	Personal Success

Source: own studies

In brief, the aristocratic moralities and ethical codes associated with the agonal competition of Homeric warriors, medieval knights and Victorian amateur athletes represent moralities of honor and ethics of virtues; whereas the underlying ethical systems of contemporary sport represent moralities of deliberation and ethics of right action.

On the one hand,

1. "honor moralities exemplify moral orders in which the assessment of persons is the primary moral activity" (Harre, 1984, p. 236); and
2. ethics of virtue ask: "What traits of character make one a good person?" (Rachels, 1993, p. 160).

On the other hand,

1. ethics of right action ask: “What is the right thing to do?” (Rachels, 1993, p. 160); and
2. moralities of deliberation ask: "What should I (you, they) do?" (Harre, 1984, p. 236).

In the context of agonal competition, moralities of honor and ethics of virtues encompass both the spirit and style of play. "We might say that to be a hero or gentleman is not just to live according to the code, but to live up to it" (Harre, 1984, p. 237)²⁷.

The ethical framework of archaic (heroic) agon represents the epitome of a morality of honor and an ethics of virtue and offers a largely unfamiliar picture from a contemporary viewpoint of winning and losing. As MacIntyre (2007, p. 137) illustrates the philosophical importance of ancient agon:

"Consider now the place of agon, the contest, in classical Greek society. The Homeric epics are narratives which recount a series of contests. In the Illiad the character of these contests is gradually transformed until it is acknowledged in the confrontation between Achilles and Priam that to win is also to lose and that in face of death winning and losing no longer divide. This is the first great enunciation of moral truth in Greek culture".

Thus, to conclude with MacIntyre (2007, p. 128), let us accept that:

"our games, like our wars, are descendants of the Homeric agon and yet are as different as they are in key part because the concepts of winning and losing have so different a place in our culture".

Personal postscript

I retired eighteen years ago in December 2000 as Dean of the School of Physical Education at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. During the first nine years of my retirement I remained semi-active with two or three annual publications and giving invited lectures and seminars in Europe and Asia. But in 2009 I concluded that I had gone by my "professional used by date" and accordingly submitted my last two papers for publication and had no plans for further speaking engagements.

However, I could not turn down an invitation to present a paper at the "Homo Movens" international symposium on movement culture in June 2009 in Belgium. It gave me the opportunity to honor the retirement of my good friend Professor Roland Renson from the Katholic University of Leuven, to reunite with my former coauthors Douglas Booth and Garry Chick, and to interact with such notable scholars as Bart Van Reusel, Richard Holt and Patricia Vertinsky. Most importantly it gave me a last-minute chance to partially replay an intellectual debt to my long-time friend and fellow collaborator Robert Morford.

On the one hand, I am both greatly surprised and greatly honored that my paper is being published ten years after my conference presentation. On the other hand, I am embarrassed that it was/is only a working draft needing revisions and additions, and, thus not in final form for publication. Indeed, I wrote the draft of the paper in a very hurried two-week period prior to the conference in Leuven. Unfortunately, my coauthor contracted cancer and died in Mexico in 2012 and I lost my desire to revise the paper or to pursue the topic of agon any further. But I am sincerely thankful and most appreciative of the efforts of my very good Danish friends Olav Ballisager and Ejgil Jespersen for the belated publication of my "Agon Redux" paper.

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²⁷ As Brandt (1983, p. 28) notes: "A sense of honor is a sense that there are standards that one must live up to, even at the cost of one's personal happiness, even at the cost of one's life."

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Agon Lost – or in Disguise? A Commentary

Authors' contribution:

- A) conception and design of the study
- B) acquisition of data
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ABSTRACT

Thanks to John W. Loy one of the recurrent themes in Institute of Scandinavian Physical Culture (ISPC) was “agon“. First, I offer some old Nordic examples on games – possibly with an agonal element. Then I focus on moral and character in order to identify some sort or a vestige of agon and revisit physical culture in terms of “idræt”, an old Nordic word for athletics and sport. Finally, I ask if there is – atavistic or not – in the modern world any glimpse of agonal behavior to be found and appreciated within the three realms or categories, which could be pillars of a physical education program: Nature, combat/competition and aesthetics. Would Edmund Hillary, Nelson Mandela and Pussy Riot qualify into a renewed, more general perception of agon?

KEYWORDS

agon, ball games, physical culture, physical education

In the late 1970s I applied to the Danish Minister of Cultural Affairs, Niels Matthiasen, for a grant to invite North American scholars in sport science – in particular sport sociology and phenomenology – and instructors in modern dance. At that time both areas were quite new in research and teaching in Denmark. The funding was granted and the program of *Institute of Scandinavian Physical Culture* (ISPC) was founded. The ISPC exchange program operated in about 25 years and scholars and graduate students from many parts of the world took part. Programs were also held in Iceland, Norway, USA and Canada.

John W. Loy was a member of the pioneering group that visited Denmark in 1980 – and was a contributor throughout the existence of ISPC. Other participants from the early days were: Alan G. Ingham, Robert Morford, Seymour Kleinman, Hal Lawson, Susan Birrell, and John Cheffers. The dance instructors from the initial days were: Betty Toman, Adrienne Hawkins, Judith Chaffee and Christian Polos. The editor of this special issue on The Agon Motif, Ejgil Jespersen, was also an appreciated participant of the program all years.

One of the recurrent themes was “agon” thanks to Loy’s persistent efforts to dig deeper into the phenomenon, and we were also interested in possible universals in the field of physical culture. I proposed that about a dozen physical engagements are shared by all human beings (random order): 1. Being part of a “feed chain”. 2. Being part of “propagation”. 3. Being part in building and enjoying “a dwelling”. 4. “Dying”. 5. Partaking in a form of “communication”, language. 6. “Playing”. 7. “Worshipping”, metaphysics. 8. Enjoying and/or performing “music and dance”. 9. “Hygiene”. 10. “Aesthetics”. 11. “Rivalry”, competition (Ballisager & Damkjær, 2003).

To this rough listing I would like to add: “Humor” and “storytelling”. However, I must admit that those two significant human characteristics do not always include physical engagements. When sharing those thoughts, I am often met by the question: What about the “protection of territory”? – Yes and no. Certainly the recognition of the right of property is evident in many parts of the world.

Nevertheless, with reference to the Loy and Morford paper on “The Agon Motif”, it is of interest to note that when it comes to the arenas for the display of agon it is often in locations where the right of property is not conclusive. Many tribes on the American plains acknowledged that (mother) earth cannot be owned by man. As the air we breathe the earth is universal to all. Certainly, looking into the future, there seems to be no doubt that the protection of property – even “land-grabbing” – will together with the strive for safe water be intensified in many parts of the world.

Agon lost?

In an anthology on “Agon” I edited (Ballisager, 1984), an Icelandic researcher, Thorsteinn Einarsson and I are presenting two Nordic tales about fatal play – possibly with an agonal motif involved.



Illustration 1. Two “Golden Horns”

Source: Ballisager, 1984.

The above illustration is from an engraving in the top circuit of one of the two “Golden Horns” found in Gallehus in Southern Jutland, Denmark, in 1639. The origins of the horns have later been stated being from the 4th to 5th century and were probably used for drinking rituals. Our interpretation of the illustration is that two persons – one at each side – are passing a ball between them. They are, however, taking lethal risks – a teaser, probably the devil itself is interfering! The devil is proving itself with a well-known sign of Lucifer – the hoofs. How real, lethal, the game was cannot be known for sure. Nonetheless, deviations of the game are known from many places in the world and certainly throughout the Nordic history as well as variations of the game is still performed in many recent days’ school yards.

Another illustration below shows a more advanced deviation of the game. It is from the 13th century and belongs to one of the “Icelandic Sagas”. The two players have more balls in their hands and traveling in the air between them. The center player is probably a woman with her skirt taken up in her belt. The small interfering creature, in this case with claw like feet, is in close contact with the players. The presence of a third person is advancing the game indicating a fatal outcome for the loser: The executer with his ax!



Illustration 2. Icelandic Sagas

Source: Ballisager, 1984.

The reviewing of these examples from the Nordic past is to underline that variabilities of combat-games have been a part of our heritage throughout many centuries. In the light of available, recent research as presented by Loy and Morford in this issue it provokes the questions: Are these and related memorabilia illustrations mirroring genuine, deadly games or are they fictive reflections? Do the illustrations imitate the context and atmosphere of agonal Nordic societies often spoken about as “The Viking Period”? Furthermore, is it unquestionable that the (Nordic) agonal era ended with the vigorously fighting Vikings?

Loy and Morford (2019) state that most agonal societies disappeared with the disruptions of the cultures of the plains Indians in North America, the samurais, the Nordic Vikings, the Medieval Knights and other warrior civilizations. A little window is opened though:

To be sure, under highly controlled conditions, some individuals live modified agonal lives as athletes where risk and peer recognition are still important factors. But such specific and bounded recognition has little or no meaning throughout the larger society and the realities of which society the individual athlete must return after “playing” at agon (Loy and Morford, 2019, p. 31)

Moral and character - an atavistic possibility

Throughout works on agon by Loy and colleagues the development and display of “moral” and “character” is front and center. But where does moral and character come from? Is it something divine? Is it a particular kind of moral and character gradually being built through learning situations and the support of peer groups and culminating in the appearance of the supreme agonal fighter? Or is there “something” before that, something to build on? Are we given a hint in the book “Gangster” by Lorenzo Carcaterra (2001, p. 36): “Gangsters, if they are shaped by anyone at all, are chiseled by the women in their early lives.”

From agon-researchers like Loy we have learned that agon tends to exclude females, but we should be aware that rare work has been done on e.g. the Amazons (Wilde, 1999). Where does agonal behavior rank on a scale of ethics? Is the elite agonal fighter an unquestionable good person? Or is the reason for the decline and disappearance of agon – if that is the comprehensive case – simply that it has been overruled by civil law, humanistic thoughts and behavior?

On the other hand, it can be suggested that agon culture is not solely anachronistic; there are still values and practices to be learned from it. In the present Loy and Morford work a little opening is offered in table 5: A typology of agon, masculinity, and social formations. Under the listing: “Forms of Agon” is in the bottom of the figure: “Atavistic” Agon. In the same bottom line the “Type of masculinity” is stated: “Neo-Hyper”

Masculinity, and the “Social Formation”: “Extreme” Fighters. In a recent publication the historian Margaret MacMillan (2015, p. 153) discuss:

“What is it that makes some people more daring than others? Launch themselves into the atmosphere – or into space; climb mountains or squeeze into dark caverns under the earth; risk their lives in extreme sports?”

MacMillan is suggesting some answers – amongst them that the environment plays a big role and that of “the characteristics that risk-takers share, we almost invariably find curiosity.” Later in the same chapter:

“Sometimes people take risks because honor demands it or because they are unwilling or unable to contemplate alternatives” (MacMillan, 2015, p. 162).

Before including a reappearance of agon into any common curriculum the classical characteristics of agon must of course be modified or changed. Thus, how far can we go in a transformation process and still be able to identify an element of agon?

Physical Culture and “idræt”

The notion of “Physical Culture” I met when visiting the Soviet Union in the late 1960s and later in the 80s and also after the revolt in Russia in the 90s was – here in simplified terms – including almost any physical shape or engagement that involved manpower: Sport, art, design, architecture, military, health programs and much more. In center was the conditioning of the body and availability to perform. In later Russian periods these segments have been much more refined along with the change of times and the impact of technology in particular.

With this learning from past decades in memory I still appreciate the panoramic view of seeing all human, physical engagement as a general sign “in” and “of” a society. When taking responsibility for physical education programs I did, however, diversify and define the magnitude of engagements. In my work an important framing was: “Physical Culture as play, game, sport – and dance”.

On a short historical note, it can be of interest once again reviewing the old Nordic word for athletics – or with a modern word sport – which is “idræt”. The good reason for making this little etymological detour in a text about agon is that the word essentially means striving, “id”, toward being the best: “drott”, “id-drott” – now a days in Danish spelled “idræt”. Thus, idræt developed overlapping with the activities the Vikings enjoyed on their tours and on home turf. All in all, it gives sense observing idræt as a part of the general physical culture – and even asking if it includes or should include a survival of an agonal element.

Agonal bodies in disguise?

Along with the change and disappearance of numerous bodily expressions other physical expressions are established, and lives are more and more lived in a virtual world – in the mind. Looking through a macro filter constituted by the realms of nature, combat and aesthetics I will finally search traces of agon in society more generally. Can elements of agon be found in civil societies as such? Out of multiple options I have selected three examples – one from each category of nature, combat/competition and aesthetics. When presenting the examples from these domains, which I consider as the main pillars of a physical education program, we should have the essential agonal values in mind (extracts from the Loy & Morford paper): Character, moral, contest, individualism, peer group appreciation, prestige, honor through action, bravery, courage, generosity, modesty, pursuit of excellence, integrity, composure.

In the following matching I will keep open for discussion the influence of “violence” in some form. I will also take into account the role of expressing “humor” and likewise include “the female” in the capability for expressing a (contemporary) form of agon.

Nature

When Edmund Hillary on May 29th, 1953, woke up in the tent on Mt. Everest together with Sherpa Tenzing Norgay he realized that he had forgotten his boots outside. They were stiff frozen and he had to spend the first two precious hours of the day warming them. The small camp was 348 meters from the peak. Compared to his mates Hillary was late in growth. He did, however, eventually mature to being 195 centimeters, and in early life he became a very skilled out-door person and later mountaineer.

Edmund Hillary became one of the first two persons to visit both poles of the earth. He mastered a number of other skills: Being a pilot, expedition leader, philosopher of nature and a moralist – he even was a competent boxer and bee-keeper.

Hillary became part of a global network and received honor and fame from around the globe. He was, however, modest about his performances – a fact Norgay underlined when he was interviewed about the two of them standing on the ice-tip of the world. The now famous picture of Norgay was taken by Hillary, and the Sherpa explained that when he offered to take Edmund Hillary's picture – he shook his head in refusal.

In later reflections Edmund Hillary stated that he somehow regretted adding to the pattern of climbing the highest mountains of the world. He replicated over the impact of waste and wearing down of nature and gave his support to cleaning up actions. He also engaged in philanthropic and humanitarian programs around the world.

In World War II Hillary joined the RNZAF (Royal New Zealand Air Force) as a navigator and acted in numerous missions. Later in life he became a politician and supporter of the New Zealand labor party. He became a keen writer and received numerous recognitions – most notable the “Commander's Cross of the Order Merit”, which he wore at a visit in Warsaw in 2004. Sir Edmund Hillary died in 2008 (Krakauer 1997; and Wikipedia).

Combat:

When on trial in 1964 Nelson Mandela made his own final statement. A short extraction from the end of the five hours long speech:

“I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die” (Meredith, 2005, p. 127).

On June 12th, 1964, Mandela, forty-five years old, was sentenced to life imprisonment and put on the ferry to the penitentiary on Robben Island. Numerous times Mandela had set his life at risk. Before being put in jail he was a strong force in the “African National Committee” (ANC), and had flirtations with the communist party and a new organization: “Umkhonto we Sizwe” – meaning “Spear of the Nation” – and believed at a time that violent means could not be avoided:

“When all channels of peaceful protests had been barred from us, (that) the decision was made to embark on violent forms of political struggle” (Meredith, 2005, p. 126).

The months until he was captured Nelson Mandela were hunted in numerous ways. His life was imprinted with fight and violence. His upbringing was in a very modest village, but in spite of all odds he made his way through schools and became a lawyer. Besides succeeding academically at university Mandela became an elite sportsman and excelled in boxing and track and field, a fact that helped him in prison enduring physical assaults and torture and keeping up his fate and spirit.

From prison Nelson Mandela managed staying in contact with the outside world, and sympathy for his struggle for democracy spread. In 1982 the government eventually decided to move him to a prison on the mainland.

During the growing tensions and economic crises in the mid-eighties Mandela persisted in opening for a dialogue with the government and president P. W. Botha. However, Mandela underlined:

“He was not interested in his own release unless it was part of a package of measures that included the lifting of the ban on the ANC” (Meredith, 2005, p. 433).

A meeting with Botha was finally set for July 5th, 1989. It became a kind of courtesy call, but Mandela maintained his generosity when reflecting: “charming man. The thing that impressed me was that he poured the tea.” (Meredith, 2005, p. 434). Six weeks later Botha resigned and in September his successor F.W. de Klerk was appointed.

February 11th, 1990, Nelson Mandela eventually walked through the prison doors as a free man. In spite of the many years in captivity he was very reluctant speaking about himself.

“Not once did he express bitterness towards the white community for his ordeal, only against the system they imposed” (Meredith, 2005, p. 437).

After 27 years in prison the personal integrity of Nelson Mandela remained profound. Even when receiving the “Nobel Peace Prize” together with his opponent de Klerk he maintained his posture: “I needed him. Whether I like him or not is irrelevant. I need him” (Meredith, 2005, p. 439).

Aesthetics:

Nadesjda Tolokonnikova, Marija Alohkhina and Jekatarina Samutsevitj are the names, however, better known as the key actors in “Pussy Riot”. The Russian trio enjoys close backup by 20-25 devotees and a growing attention from around the world.

The means of the group is music, drama, humor, provocations and gender and with a special ability to attract world attention by picking particular venues for their performances. As individuals and as a group they have endured numerous threats and suffered imprisonment and other forms of punishment. However, the biggest risk-taking seems to be their ways of self-exposure and general criticism of social control and norms. Individually and as a group they have often suffered official social expelling. The relative size of the forces in play is striking – a kind of David and Goliath circumstance. The call for democracy and women’s rights are in center focus and the alliance between politics and the church is heavily questioned (Wikipedia 2018).

Four members of the group were present in the playing field in connection with the final game in Moscow between France and Croatia at “the 2018 World Cup”. Before getting arrested one member of Pussy Riot had a “double high five” with the smiling France forward Kylian Mbappé, a picture that travelled around the world. In association with the event the group stated that their aim was:

“Free all political prisoners, stop illegal arrests at public rallies, allow political competition in the country, and stop fabricating criminal cases and jailing people on remand for no reason” (Warshaw, 2018).

Prior to the World Cup event the group had attracted world attention in connection with the Sochi Winter Olympics, where members of the group also were arrested. Since then several global organizations have stated concern – among others: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, International Federation for Human Rights and European Convention on Human Rights. These organizations were joined by distinct personalities like Barak Obama and Hillary Clinton.

Pussy Riot’s performances can either be called dissident art or political action that engages art forms, Tolokonnikova has stated. Other group concerns include health care, and the centralization of power, and the group supports autonomy and grass-roots organizing. Unquestionably the means of the group are physical and aesthetic and with a high degree of risk taking. The motivation is to be found in a balance between personal recognition and peer group attention in forming a tool for better conditions for fellow citizens in general.

Would these three examples qualify into a renewed, more general perception of agon?

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Why a Focus on Sporting Tests Would Reveal an Alternate Story and Raise Ethical Questions about Agon: A Commentary

Authors' contribution:

- A) conception and design of the study
- B) acquisition of data
- C) analysis and interpretation of data
- D) manuscript preparation
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ABSTRACT

Loy and Morford focus on “agon” as an important window through which to understand human life and development. Competition in war and sport was culturally significant then, and it is culturally significant today, albeit in modified forms. In this commentary, I attempt to do two things – first, identify implications of some conceptual distinctions, and second, point out normative questions raised by the Loy/Morford analysis. I find it worthwhile to differentiate clearly between tests and contests. If the historical and sociocultural spotlight were turned on sporting “tests” rather than “contests”, that is, on trying to solve physically demanding problems well rather than trying to solve them better than at least one other party, then another story than the agonal account could be told. War would probably no longer serve as the best historical and prehistorical analogue for sport. Rather, it might be hunting. I add, that, on one hand, competitive sport is far less violent and, therefore, far more defensible today than it was previously. On the other hand, joy in playing is often sacrificed on the altar of any number of extrinsic rewards. Success, even gained by questionable means, replaces skill-based and virtue-generated achievement. This threatens the connection endorsed by MacIntyre between practices and virtues.

agon, test, contest, play, virtue

KEYWORDS

It is a pleasure and honor to have an opportunity to react to the Loy/Morford analysis of agon. They have produced an ambitious and rich description of our human fascination with contest, one that extends from the Homeric Greeks to modern times. It is a story of commonalities and differences. The authors hypothesize that one can find threads of similarity across the ages and thus too “vestiges” or “residuals” of early forms of agon in today’s post-agonal sporting world.

These threads, they argue, can be identified by noting common “properties, processes, and products of agonal competition,” as well as “continuities in ... [its] ethos” (Loy & Morford 2019, p. 53). Motif themes of intense rivalry, individualism, personal glory, and risks associated with failure are traced from their most robust appearance in archaic, warrior societies to their lesser instantiations in modern sport.

Among the most important residuals of agonal activity in today's play, according to the authors, are the pursuit of excellence and honor through physical prowess, concerns with character and moral development, and codes of honor related to male identity and bonding. These three themes serve to structure the main body of the essay and inform the authors' chronology of sport.

Loy and Morford trace their interest of agon to a pair of well-known scholars. The first is Johann Huizinga (1938/1950) who identified the contest as one of two principle resources for play.¹ The "festal contest," he argued, is a foundational form of play because it provides "a feeling of tension, joy, and consciousness that is 'different' from 'ordinary' life" (Huizinga, 1950, p. 28).

The second scholar is ethicist Alasdair MacIntyre ([1981]1984) who was interested in Homeric Greece and agon because they provided exemplars for his neo-Aristotelian defense of virtue ethics. Contest and its associated values related to excellence, MacIntyre noted, cannot be separated from the virtues that allow such excellences to flourish. In other words, what is right (virtuous behavior) cannot be determined apart from what is good (excellences displayed by the competitive warrior).

Both resources provide Loy and Morford with sufficient reason to focus on agon as an important window through which to understand human life and development. Competition in war and sport was culturally significant then, and it is culturally significant today, albeit in modified forms.

I will be reacting to this thesis from perspectives generated by my own academic training in philosophy. In the short space allotted to this commentary, I attempt to do two things – first, identify implications of some conceptual distinctions, and second, point out normative questions raised by the Loy/Morford analysis. These comments will be far more suggestive than definitive. However, I trust they will demonstrate the fruits of multidisciplinary discourse – in this case between historian-sociologists, on the one hand, and a philosopher, on the other.

Conceptual distinctions and the alternate stories they generate

Loy and Morford provide definitions at the start of their essay while admitting they are entering a "linguistic quagmire." Different things are called sport. Different definitions of contest can be found in the literature. Because of this, Loy and Morford need to tell readers, by providing operational definitions, what *they* mean by these terms.

Some philosophers would raise a cautionary flag at this point because, on their view, this is not simply a linguistic problem (though it is certainly that too). Rather it is more fundamentally a conceptual problem. When individuals do not perceive important differences, for instance, between A and B, they are inclined to call them the same thing. This happens in the English language when we say, "I love you." Different kinds of love are similar ... but also different. Susan loves ice cream, her dog, her sister, and her significant other but not in the same way. Thus, for the sake of clarity, additional verbs would appear to be needed. Interestingly, some non-English lexicons have them.² In short then, conceptual clarity should help us avoid linguistic quagmires.

Loy and Morford cannot be sidetracked by conceptual analyses. That would involve them in a different project and result in a different paper. For their purposes, they need to identify a cultural phenomenon, define it, and proceed to see how it varies across time and circumstance. This is precisely what they do. A contest, they say, is "a competitive activity characterized by two or more sides, having agreed-upon-rules, criteria for determining the winner, with a zero-sum outcome wherein the winner(s) takes all" (p. 12). They are interested in agonal or

¹ The second form of play is representational in nature, the play of the potlach or religious festival. The participant is carried away from ordinary life by the power of the ceremony, by ecstatic dance, by "wearing the mask."

² The Greek language, for example, has four terms for love: *eros* (romantic love), *storge* (family love), *philia* (brotherly love) and *agape* (unconditional love). It has yet additional terms for liking or appreciating someone or something.

physical forms of competition where the display of physical prowess is at stake. Agonal contests stand, therefore, as one type of sport.

Loy and Morford mention a second type of sport, a self-testing variety, and cite solo rock climbing and bull fighting as examples. Here is where conceptual confusion can raise its problematic head. Are such self-testing activities competitive or not? In a solo rock climb, are there zero-sum winners and losers? Do Loy and Morford want to include such self-testing activities in their analysis of agon or not?

It is difficult to say. They clearly identify self-testing sports as one species of “agonal contests”, along with “agonistic games” (e.g. basketball, football) and “sporting matches” (e.g., boxing, wrestling) (Loy & Morford, 2019, p. 55). Yet they cite agreement with Paul Weiss who argues that contests require displays of relative superiority in such areas as speed, accuracy, and coordination. It is difficult to understand how a mountain (the “opponent” of the climber) can meet these conditions. How could a mountain show superior speed, accuracy, or any physical attribute for that matter? Accordingly, any claims of zero-sum victory by the mountain would seem to be more metaphorical than literal. It would be more accurate to say the climber failed the “test” provided by the mountain. Self-testing may well be a very different thing than competitive striving.

Many years ago, I wrote about the distinction between tests and contests, between problem solving per se, and one of its variations – competitive problem solving (Kretchmar, 1975). Tests and contests, I argued, are analytically distinct and experientially unique. A person can be in a test (golfing alone, trying to solve a Sudoku puzzle) and not be in a contest (golfing to beat at least one other person or entering a Sudoku tournament). However, one cannot be in a contest without also facing a test. Contests, in other words, are logically dependent on tests.

This is so because contesting presupposes the ability to show difference in the direction of superiority. Such differences are dependent on possibilities for variable success. Tests perform that function.

A pseudo-test that is too easy would not work for a contest because everybody would score the same – say, a perfect 100. Without an ability to show difference, a contest could not get off the ground. Likewise, a pseudo-test that is too hard would be useless for agonal purposes because once again, everyone would score the same – a frustrating 0. Thus, it is the challenge that is not too hard and not too easy – that is, a genuine test and the kind typically offered by golf, tennis, baseball – and war – that allows for the display of disparate skills and degrees of success. Test scores vary, thus permitting the declaration of a winner and loser.

The analytic difference between tests and contests can be further clarified by noting that competitors actually get two results at the end of a contest. First, they receive the zero-sum competitive result. They won, lost, or tied. Second, they receive a non-competitive, non-zero-sum test score. They played well, sort of well, about average, poorly, and so on. Playing well, of course, enhances chances for victory, but it does not guarantee it. The opposite can be said for playing poorly. It decreases chances for victory, but it does not require it. In sum, contest results and test scores are two different things.

This all-too-brief metaphysical exercise allows us to raise a couple of questions. What if the historical and sociocultural spotlight were turned on sporting “tests” rather than “contests”, that is, on trying to solve physically demanding problems well rather than trying to solve them better than at least one other party? What story could be told then, and in what ways would it diverge from the agonal or competitive story told by Loy and Morford?

War would probably no longer serve as the best historical and prehistorical analogue for sport. Rather, it might be hunting (Carroll, 2000). Hunting is a physical test that results in variable test results, various levels of passing or failing. One is not, strictly speaking, in a contest with an animal.³ Moreover, many hunting skills and virtues

³ It could be argued that hunting confrontations with animals or climbing confrontations with steep cliffs are contests against these obstacles, interactions that produce winners or losers. However, one cannot literally compete with a bear because the bear is not taking the same test as the hunter. The results of skillful avoidance (for the bear) and skillful tracking

track nicely onto current sporting activities - hitting targets, displaying strength and endurance, exhibiting the virtues of courage, perseverance, and (on group hunts) teamwork.

It is also likely that the values at stake in testing would be shaped differently than those found in agonal activity. Merit would accrue to those who get the right answer or a good answer, not necessarily a better answer than someone else.⁴ Test norms and the experiences of others rather than contest results could be used to determine the meaning of a test score.

Let us imagine that I am a newcomer to bowling and, on my first visit to the alleys, rolled a 120. Understandably, I am not sure what that score means. I consult norms for my age group and discuss my results with others. I discover I bowled much like other neophytes. I discover that anything approaching excellence has eluded me, at least so far. I will need to practice and improve if I am to be honored as an outstanding bowler. Importantly, I learn all this without entering a contest.

Philosopher Bernard Suits (2014) privileged tests over contests. He argued that the human need to act competently is more fundamental to human well-being than any desire for competitively-gained superiority and honor. Suits claimed that human beings flourish most regularly when facing challenges for which the deployment of their skills is required.

When confronted with good problems, he wrote, we are not bored. We have something interesting to do. Suits concluded we love tests so much that, when technological progress removes many natural challenges, we invent artificial difficulties. We call them games. Of course, we can use games competitively, but that is a secondary decision and, on Suits analysis, a location of derivative value. The primary thing is the game, the challenge, the test.⁵

Consistent with Darwin's laws of natural selection, the primary storyline for humans (indeed all plants and animals) is one of adapting to the environment and solving the problems it presents. Some of these survival problems result in battles and contests, but at base level and most regularly they are tests.⁶ Those who are able to pass tests successfully live long enough to pass on their genes. These survivors provide their offspring with phenotypes (physical traits, attitudes, potential virtues) that make for good test taking and good test scores. Human beings then are arguably the best test-takers and problem-solvers on the face of the planet. We are also pretty good competitive problem solvers too, as Loy and Morford have so well documented, but that is a different story – at least in part.

Normative judgments and value implications of the agonal story

Loy and Morford's analysis is replete with descriptive analyses of a variety of values. These include states of affairs or experiences called non-moral values, such things as enjoyment, success, heroism, competence, and the like. The authors also detail moral values or character traits, motives, and virtues such as honesty, fortitude,

and killing (for the hunter) are incommensurate and thus too incomparable. Consequently, it is more accurate to say that the bear provides a variable test for the hunter. For further analysis on the nature of competition, see Kretchmar (2014).

⁴ This distinction is crucial for MacIntyre's analyses of practice excellences. Excellences as parents, teachers, researchers, or soldiers are fundamentally *testing* competencies. Excellence may also be shown via competitive activity, but this is not required.

⁵ Some tests, traditionally called by physical educators "closed games," are not dependent on other players for encountering the testing problem. Golf, bowling, and archery would be included in this category. Other tests, called "open games," include both fixed environmental and variable challenges, the latter provided by "opponents." This is a misnomer, because such individuals serve two functions—testing and, optionally, contesting services. Testing services are provided in scrimmage situations where one side facilitates the other sides' testing activity.

⁶ Darwin's ([1872]1936) theory of natural selection places considerable emphasis on contest or "survival of the fittest." However, he also describes this mechanism more broadly. At bottom, survival is dependent on passing tests provided by evolving external factors. In some cases, scarcity (e.g., gaining access to females) produces fighting and competition. In other cases (e.g., attempting to survive in hostile climatic conditions) one is simply facing a potentially lethal test.

and justice as well as duties such as fair play. Loy and Morford carefully show how both kinds of values – both the non-moral and moral varieties – change from robustly agonal societies in Ancient Greece to what they identify as our current post-agonal world.

Philosophers are interested in this kind of saga because it raises many normative questions. Some of them speak to moral progress. Has this evolution of moral and non-moral value moved in a positive direction? Do we fight in more civilized ways today than we did in yesteryear? What counts as moral progress, and can it be measured? Stephen Pinker (2011), for one, has attempted to answer these questions. He argued that, ethically speaking, we are better now than we were in ages past.

“Believe it or not—and I know that most people do not—violence has declined over long stretches of time, and today we may be living in the most peaceable era in our species’ existence. The decline, to be sure, has not been smooth; it has not brought violence down to zero; and it is not guaranteed to continue. But it is an unmistakable development, visible on scales from millennia to years, from the waging of wars to the spanking of children” (Pinker, 2011, p. xxi).

This question of moral progress is important because competition is thought by some to be morally problematic. (See, e.g., Kohn, 1992). Winners produce losers. Higher rankings generate lower rankings. The honor accorded to those who win most often is not available to those on the lower rungs of the competitive ladder. The prestige enjoyed by elite athletes is unattainable by lesser contestants with more pedestrian skills. Therefore, it might be better to cooperate than compete, collaborate than fight with one another, focus on rising together commensurate with our diverse faculties than promote and celebrate one rising above the other.

Loy and Morford’s analyses provide evidence for both moral degradation and progress. They agree with Huizinga that sport is less playful today than it was in the 18th century, a period believed by Huizinga ([1919] 1999) to best exemplify the interpenetration of culture and play. Crass extrinsic purposes and win-at-all cost attitudes have replaced lighter and more fun-filled intrinsically-valued engagements with sport. On the other hand, Loy and Morford show sport is more symbolic today than it was in Homeric times. As a consequence, it is safer, more fully rule-governed, more genteel, less war-like.

This latter fact would count as moral progress on Pinker’s criteria. Sport, in general, is far less violent today than it was, for instance, in feudal societies. Jousting is not likely to make a comeback in the 21st century.⁷ Research on head injuries in football is causing many to re-evaluate the merits of this activity, especially for children. Thus, Pinker may be right. On some grounds, competitive sport is far more defensible today than it was previously.

However as noted, the erosion of the play spirit in contemporary win-at-all-costs sport could be regarded as moral regress. (See, e.g. Feezell, 2013; Schmitz, 1988.) Joy in playing is sacrificed on the altar of any number of extrinsic rewards. This also threatens the connection endorsed by MacIntyre between practices and virtues. For those pursuing external sporting goods, the “fact” of winning trumps the “quality” of the victory. Finding loopholes in rules is often considered “good strategy” or “smart play” by those who carry such instrumental attitudes onto the sporting pitch. Success, even gained by questionable means, replaces skill-based and virtue-generated achievement.

Final conclusions about the moral status of competitive activities are difficult to draw. This is the case for reasons that are clearly featured in the analysis by Loy and Morford. The cultural and historical context of sport affects how it is conducted, what it means to its participants, what values it promotes, and overall, whether it might elevate or degrade the culture in which it exists. Many philosophers of sport (see, e.g., Simon et al., 2015;

⁷ Gottschall (2015) provides a provocative account of our human (but particularly male) fascination with dangerous forms of combat, specifically in what are now called the Mixed Martial Arts or MMA. Gottschall acknowledges that these fights sometimes “end in tragedy.” However, they still allow individuals to “work out conflicts” while minimizing “carnage and social chaos.”

Kretchmar, 2012; McFee, 2004) argue that competition can be good, mutually edifying, even used to strengthen the moral fiber of its participants.⁸ But they are also quick to admit that such optimistic outcomes depend on a variety of factors, ranging from political and institutional influences to individual creativity and personal initiatives that serve to shape the competitive experience.

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⁸ The classic apologetic for competition was provided by Simon et al. (2015) who described the competitive venture as a “mutual quest for excellence.” “Mutuality” and shared benefits are key elements in his defense. Kretchmar (2012) provided an alternate defense that emphasizes the zero-sum quality of competition and thus, provides a different account of mutuality. McFee (2004) has written about the merits (and demerits) of competitive sport as a potentially useful moral laboratory.



Outline of Mimesis, Honor and Dignity in Modern Sport: A Commentary

Authors' contribution:

- A) conception and design of the study
- B) acquisition of data
- C) analysis and interpretation of data
- D) manuscript preparation
- E) obtaining funding

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ABSTRACT

When reading the masterpiece about “The Agon Motif” by John W. Loy and W. Robert Morford (2019), I was struck by their recurrent reference to the pursuit of honor in agonal sport contests, as it has become common sense to replace honor with dignity in modernity. I take the German social-philosopher Axel Honneth (1995) as a prime example of spelling out the replacement of honor with dignity in what he names “the struggle for recognition”. In a historical perspective, however, it looks like, that dignity can be understood as a distribution of honor rather than as an oppositional concept of honor. Recognition should not only be conceptualized at the categorical level, but also understood in terms of ‘comparative recognition’, which sorts members of a group into an intra-group hierarchy based on their relative merits and, thereby, pave the way for self-esteem (Mark, 2014). Furthermore, Honneth (2008) develops his concept of recognition to a two-level one by including a primordial recognition in terms of mimesis based upon his former concept of basic self-confidence. It is a kind of elementary responsiveness, which always and necessarily contains an element of involuntary openness or devotedness in the bodily-affective sphere. Therefore, I suggest taking mimesis as the precondition of honor into account and understanding dignity as a distribution of honor in the institution of modern sport.

KEYWORDS

sport, honor, dignity, recognition, mimesis

When reading the masterpiece about the Agon motifs by John W. Loy and W. Robert Morford (2019), I was struck by their recurrent reference to the pursuit of honor in agonal sport contests. They write – under the headline: “First among equals” (lat. “*primus inter pares*”) – that

“the pursuit of honor and desire for peer respect is closely connected to the quest for excellence and the desire for distinction and both sets of pursuits and desires serve as primary sources of motivation in agonal systems” (Loy & Morford, 2019, p. 23).

Here they look at the pursuit of honor at the athlete group-level among peers as equals within a given sport, but, then, when associating status-honor motivation also with a desire for immortality, they leave the peer-group level in favor of a spectator and media mediated perspective:

“We honor exceptional memorable athletes by making them our folk-heroes; and we give them immortality by casting their statues in bronze, enshrining them in sporting halls of fame, or paying homage by retiring their playing uniform or jersey number” (Loy & Morford, 2019, p. 25)

In what follows, I wonder how it may be possible to somehow maintain a vestige of ancient agon in terms of the pursuit of honor in modern sport, whilst dignity has replaced honor as the ground on which an individual's legal status rests in modernity? I take the German social-philosopher Axel Honneth (1995) as a prime example of spelling out the replacement of honor with dignity in what he names "the struggle for recognition".

In a historical perspective, however, it looks like, that dignity can be understood as a distribution of honor rather than as an oppositional concept of self-respect. It must be acknowledged, that recognition should not only be conceptualized at the categorical level, as Honneth is doing in the starting point. Recognition should also be understood in terms of "comparative recognition", which sorts members of a group into an intra-group hierarchy based on their relative merits and, thereby, pave the way for self-esteem (Mark, 2014). That is, honor is both spread and differentiated in modern society.

Furthermore, Honneth (2008) develops his concept of recognition to a two-level one by including a primordial recognition in terms of mimesis and based upon his former concept of basic self-confidence in terms of love and friendship. It is a kind of elementary responsiveness, which always and necessarily contains an element of involuntary openness or devotedness in the bodily-affective sphere.

Therefore, I suggest taking mimesis as the precondition of honor into account besides understanding dignity as a distribution of honor in the institution of modern sport.

From honor to dignity

According to prominent social theorists like Peter L. Berger, Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth, there is an undisputed transition from honor to dignity: Positional honor of aristocratic origin has been replaced by equal dignity in modernity. Taylor (1992, p. 27), for example, distinguishes between two changes that together have made the modern preoccupation with identity and recognition inevitable:

"The first is the collapse of social hierarchies, which used to be the basis for honor. I am using honor in the ancien régime sense in which it is intrinsically linked to inequalities. For some to have honor in this sense, it is essential that not everyone has it. This is the sense in which Montesquieu uses it in his description of monarchy. Honor is intrinsically a matter of 'préférences'.

As against this notion of honor, we have the modern notion of dignity, now used in a universalist and egalitarian sense, where we talk of the inherent 'dignity of human beings', or of citizen dignity. The underlying premise here is that everyone shares in it. It is obvious that this concept of dignity is the only one compatible with a democratic society, and that it was inevitable that the old concept of honor was superseded."

Likewise, Honneth (1995, p. 115) speaks of the universalization of "honor" into "dignity", developing the point in terms of legal recognition. Formerly based on one's rank or standing, legal recognition is now premised on the assumption of the moral autonomy of all humans, and is therefore governed by a norm of equality:

"With the uncoupling of individual rights-claims from the ascription of social status, a general principle of equality emerges for the first time, which henceforth requires of every legal order that it allow no exceptions and privileges".

However, when going back to key figures in the wake of modernity, the way from honor to dignity was not that simple, and we need to question the one-way traffic model of honor and dignity – at the least in case of dueling.

Points of honor in dueling

The conditions for the good life and human flourishing were object for keen studies in the period of transition to modernity. Some like Rousseau were looking back to a state of nature, when criticizing the current process

of socialization in which the competitive way of relating to others and the struggle for esteem in the public sphere reduces humans to “specters and phantoms” (Rousseau, [1762] 1968, p. 17).

Others were in opposition to Rousseau’s retrospective approach and argued instead prospectively like Hegel, whose focus was to realize true human characteristics in the end state of historical progress. But common to the two camps was a critique of the prevailing concept of honor of aristocratic origin as, for example, practiced in dueling on life and death.

Dueling was one of the most important practices for the maintenance of aristocratic honor, at the moments of transition to modernity, primarily in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe as well as in USA and elsewhere (Kiernan, 1988; Holland, 2003). According to LaVaque-Manty (2009, pp. 54-55) dueling over “points of honor” has several key features:

1. Dueling is a form of proof – like “trial by combat”, the earliest Western precursor to dueling
2. Points of honor are personal matters, even if they involve collectives like the kin or estate
3. Dueling is necessarily extralegal
4. Dueling is highly ritualized

Rousseau noticed sarcastically how potential duelers were considering the various risks before engaging in a duel: “In this age of enlightenment, everyone knows how to calculate to the penny the worth of his honor and his life”, but he also noticed a “shocking opposition” between the incentives of honor and law (cited in LaVaque-Manty, 2009, pp. 66, 72).

The emerging civil society with a space for extralegal politics seems in the case of honor to become a power factor alongside of the new state formation and the market. It became strikingly clear, that the struggle for the state’s monopoly over violence and the outlawing of dueling was not an easy matter.

Kant, the enlightenment philosopher par excellence, went beyond the opposition of honor and law and tried to connect his abstract rhetoric of equal dignity with the worship of honor in the current public opinion.

In 1794, the new “Civil Code of the Prussian States” specified that a dueler who killed his opponent would be tried for murder or manslaughter and sentenced to death if convicted. Kant was a critic of this statute on behalf of the points of honor.

According to Kant the death penalty must be imposed for the wrongful killing of another, but there are two exceptional cases:

“There are (...) two crimes of death, with regard to which it still remains doubtful whether legislation is also authorized to impose the death penalty” (Kant, [1797] 1996, 6, pp. 335-6).

These two crimes are 1) a mother’s killing her child born out of wedlock and 2) an insulted officer’s killing the insulting fellow officer in a duel. Kant thinks that killing in these two cases cannot be punished by the highest authority with the death penalty, and that killing of the child and of the fellow officer cannot even be called murder (“*homicidium dolosum*”). The reason is that the act occurred reluctantly.

The reluctantly committed act (“*action invita*”), a concept that comes from Aristotle’s “*operatio mixta*” (mixed action), is not fully imputed and puts us somehow in an inter-world between a state of nature and freedom. Achenwall states:

“A reluctantly committed act is an act, whose opposite the actor would prefer if he did not fear that a [great] evil would arise from the alternative act” (cit. in Byrd & Hrutschka, 2010, p. 230).

That means, that an act of killing in our two special cases is neither murder nor manslaughter, neither an action on the personal level nor a happening at the level of things. Kant suggests that the mother and the officer are left in a state of nature, entitled to do what they must, because of the law’s inability to protect what is at stake for the agents – namely honor, and because the demands of honor to what they are subject compete with the

demands of law – in repeating Rousseau’s observation of a “shocking opposition” between the incentives of honor and law. The problem is:

“Legislation cannot remove the disgrace of an illegitimate birth any more than it can wipe away the stain of suspicion of cowardice from a subordinate officer who fails to respond to a humiliating affront with a force of his own rising above fear of death” (Kant, [1797] 1996, 6, p. 336).

The legally protected interests in conflict are the victim’s life and the actor’s honor, whereby Kant acknowledge – provisionally - the concept of honor prevailing at his time. But Kant also calls for a change in public opinion, which would make special treatment of these cases obsolete.

Thus, Kant is, rather, considered a key figure in a modern transition from social and political systems based on honor to those based on dignity, where “honor” is understood as a hierarchical measure of social value, and “dignity” is understood as the inherent and equal worth of every individual.

Kantian dignity is also traditionally characterized in terms of “autonomy”, that is, the idea to treat people as autonomous individuals able to choose their destiny.

However, it is worth remembering, that the concept of dignity should not only be conceptualized in the “usual” Kantian sense as a principle of law, but also as Kant himself acknowledged as a principle of morality establishing a much closer relationship among honor and dignity than is commonly assumed.

Waldron (2009, p. 22) stresses even that dignity has always denoted rank by referring to the “Oxford English Dictionary” giving as its second meaning for the term “dignity” as “honorable or high estate, position, or estimation; honor; degree of estimation, rank” and its third “an honorable office, rank, or title; a high official or titular position.”

In addition, the relationship in dueling presupposed equality between the duelers and offered opportunities of a noble action of self-defense of one’s honor, where death was preferable to disgrace. Becoming “first to survive” in dueling was life-affirming in a very literal sense. But, of course, when violent acts should be kept within rule of law, extra-legal dueling was facing an end in favor of a more peaceful albeit competitive relationship with bodies in struggle for honor, as we know it in modern sport. It is also important to add, that the Kantian concept of honor is a “masculine” one, and that it presupposes that there are women in need of protection (LaVaquer-Manty, 2009, p. 70).

The social institution of modern sport takes place in civil networks, which in practicing the extra-legal “lex sportive” is not unlike dueling. Therefore, we need to take a closer look at the ethical life in civil society.

Comparative recognition

The universal respect for the autonomy and dignity of person is only one out of three features of “The Struggle for Recognition”, which Honneth (1995) unfolded. Side by side with rights and self-respect he featured basic self-confidence in terms of love and friendship as well as solidarity and self-esteem in civil networks of shared values.

His central focus was (and is) “Gesellschaftskritik”, and, therefore, he was originally mostly occupied with legally institutionalized rights to self-respect and “Sittlichkeit”, a sort of ethical life involving a sense of what it is that makes one special, unique and particular, and, thereby, fostering self-esteem. Making a difference must, according to Honneth, be something valuable for his or her contribution to the common good:

“To the extent to which every member of a society is in a position to esteem himself or herself, one can speak of a state of societal solidarity” (Honneth, 1995, p. 129).

Thus, the quest for self-esteem in doing something better than others should be associated with solidarity and mutual recognition in a communitarian sense of particularity rather than doing something for one’s or its own sake. In other words, one’s doings should be community-based in a horizontal manner upholding the value of

equity and not fall back in pre-modern notions of verticality and hierarchy associated with inegalitarian and estate-based honor.

However, in “The Struggle for Recognition” Honneth is largely dealing with a restricted understanding of mutual recognition encompassing all members of (disadvantaged) communities, since he ignores the fact, that members of a group or community are often sorted into an inter-group hierarchy based on their relative merits – a circumstance labelled “comparative recognition” by Mark (2014, p. 16):

“Because honor is comparative, it puts members of the same group into competition with one another, making recognition conflicts endemic to honor societies”.

The shift from archaic honor to modern recognition turns out alternately in this bipartite analysis of recognition and honor. The great equalization should be understood to encompass all members of given communities in society, whereas the competition for comparative recognition, formerly contained within the distinct social strata of hierarchical societies, now likewise, comes to encompass all members of society (Mark, 2014). These parallel processes are making full-fledged recognition for all members of society to a short supply. Comparative recognition is rather reviving honor for the winners as well as the talented and selected few.

We know this problem very well within the world of sport organized in specific sport associations on the global level with their respective ranks of honor based upon orderly performance and individual quest for peer-respect and public reputation. If personal recognition in sport continues to depend on comparisons with others, and honor is a scarce good, then “Sport for All” is in principle not attainable in any sense of honor.

Nevertheless, “Sport for All” is part of Pierre de Coubertin’s thoughts of Olympism (Coubertin, 1967, see also Jespersen 1988), and sport as a human right is heralded among the Olympic principles by IOC (2017) as well as by UNESCO (1978). The Olympic ideology is clearly up to modern date of universalism, and sometimes the Olympic Games are even primarily thought as an instrument for the popularization of sports. This line of sport thinking is supported at the political level at least among the wealthy nations around the globe, while they at the same time are struggling for success at the global competitive sport arena.

The question that remains is why the modern norms of individual recognition in sport are frequently not met. Do we have to give up the basic agonal structure of winning and losing in sport? Or should we just be better in facing death, where winning and losing no longer divide, so we – finally - can honor everyone’s performative legacy? Good as well as bad people?

Primordial recognition

Honneth (2008) is, likewise, aware of the problems of inequality and made a renewed effort of diagnosing the ills of society, when he took up an old idea of reification in a new perspective. The term “reification” of social relations in capitalism was coined by Georg Lúkacs in a book on “History and Class Consciousness” published in 1925 and understood as “Verdinglichung” (German), literally “making into a thing”.

Honneth (2008) reformulates the concept of reification as “distorted human praxis”, where an objectifying attitude is reigning as superior and threatens the primordial affective world-engagement, that is, if cognition is stripped of its sense of “primordial recognition”, then we have lost our affective attachment to self, world and others.

With his notion of “primordial recognition” Honneth is coming back to basic self-confidence in love and friendship and expanding this sort of recognition to a general, basic one. Varga (2010) is following this distinction of primordial recognition from usual forms of recognition up by highlighting Honneth’s two-level account of recognition.

In this context there is not space for a thoroughly examination and discussion of primordial recognition as an authentic form of human praxis. I will just focus on one dimension of primordial recognition, namely mimesis, which is particularly relevant for understanding the precondition of honor.

Mimesis as the precondition of honor

Honneth (2008, p. 17) refers from the onset in his study on “reification” to the founders of the Frankfurt school of social theory and philosophy, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, who in “The Dialectics of Enlightenment” says: “All reification is a forgetting”, and to Ludwig Wittgenstein, who in “On Certainty” says: “Knowledge is in the end based on acknowledgment”. That means, we should not forget about our predecessors in the history of knowledge as well as our emotional ties with other human beings.

An example from the current research in autism spectrum disorder can lead us on the trail of a possible pathological outcome of a reification of our lives.

One way to approach the growing propagation of autism spectrum disorder is to trace the origin of autistic behavior back to cognitive deficits related to disturbances in the child’s abilities to think and speak. This is not Honneth’s way of understanding autism (see also He & Jespersen 2015). He refers instead to other autism researchers, which attribute the decisive cause to the child’s lack of receptiveness to the emotional presence of attachment figures. If the child structurally is prevented from emotionally identifying with a concrete second person, then there is a risk for developing an autism spectrum disorder.

“An autistic infant thus isn’t ‘mentally blind’ due to cognitive deficit, but rather because it is in the first instance emotionally blind” (Honneth, 2008, p. 44).

This observation reminds Honneth about Adorno, who traces the rising human mind to an early imitation of a loved figure of attachment.

“Indeed, he states in a well-known aphorism from Minima Moralia that a person doesn’t become a person until he or she imitates other persons. Immediately afterward he writes that this kind of imitation constitutes the ‘archetype of love’” (Honneth, 2008, p. 44).

Honneth is arguing that if we are forgetting our original connection of our thought to an object of desire – a beloved person or thing – then we are paving the way for an inhuman and cruel “reification”, where other persons are only becoming perceived as physical objects.

The mimetic faculty became gradually repressed in human history through the subject’s domination over nature itself. Therefore, the subject’s domination of otherness may only be avoided, if we reinstall a mimetic relation in our way of thinking.

The ability to take the perspective of the other is crucial for our way of living and striving together also in the world of sport. If we are becoming exclusively oriented towards the sweetness of victory because of the honor it implies, then sheer power is coming to the fore at the expense of not only playing the game, but also and more importantly of the primordial recognition and admiration of a beloved and honorable role model.

We may in the course of our practices be so extremely focused on winning that we forget paying attention to other motives and aims, which originally moved us to take up a sport. Imitation and identification processes in sport and elsewhere are taking place on an affective level from body to body, which underlie all cognitive and practical activities. While imitation involves specific and obvious aspects of the behavior of the model, identification means that the apprentice comes not only to act but also to feel and think as if he was the model. Thus, identification is not restricted to obvious behavior, but includes the attitudes, tastes, intentions etc. of the model (Jespersen, 1993).

It is a sympathetic understanding, where the act of taking another’s perspective requires an antecedent form of recognition that according to Honneth (2008, pp. 45, 152)

“cannot be grasped in purely cognitive or epistemic concepts, as it always and necessarily contains an element of involuntary openness, devotedness, or love. (...)”

Normatively substantial forms of recognition such as are embodied in social institutions of traditional honor, modern love, or equal law, represent (...) various manners in which the existential scheme gets ‘filled out’ historically.”

Thereby an institutional order is stabilized and maintained, which is somehow out of date with a fluid knowledge society. Sport is, thereby, possibly serving as an institutional alternative to disruptions in modernity. The question is if identity is linked to institutional roles or not. In his renowned article “On the obsolescence of the concept of honor”, Berger (1970, p. 343) is stressing, that modern consciousness, in its conception of the self, tends toward a curious a-historicity.

“In a world of honor, identity is firmly linked to the past through the reiterated performance of prototypical acts. In a world of dignity, history is the succession of mystifications from which the individual must free himself to attain ‘authenticity’”.

When emphasizing the affective, non-epistemic and pre-cognitive character of our attachments to loved figures and the associated existential significance in the world of sport and elsewhere, we should, of course, be aware of the non-normative character of this relation to the world as a whole. We are primarily dealing with “background practices” (Dreyfus, 2017), which lie prior to the subject-object dichotomy and outside normative considerations.

If we want to exercise a counterweight to the widespread cognitive-instrumental way of seeing the world and counteract the reification of social relations and the world’s phenomena at large, then we must, however, take these background practices into account as the ground of morality. Thus, Honneth is stressing, that it is only when our reflexive thoughts lose consciousness of their origin in emotional ties and the mimetic faculty, that a polar opposition of conceptual thought and empathetic engagement is construed and, thereby, paving the way of a reigning and pathologizing reification.

That is why we should not only avoid a crude distinction between honor and dignity in modernity but also be aware of the precondition of honor in mimesis in the institution of modern sport.

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- A) conception and design of the study
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ABSTRACT

The term “physical culture” is, first of all, associated (referring to the etymology of the word “culture” from the Latin “colo,-ere”, meaning “to cultivate”, “to inhabit” or “to honor”) with cultivation and taking care of the human “physis” – obviously in the context of social and natural environment. What matters in physical cultural reflection is not movement as such – as a purely physical phenomenon – but only such a form of movement which has been cultivated and attributed with conventionalized social values of symbolic and autotelic character. Biological sciences connected with the human being are traditionally – after MacFadden, among others – counted among physical cultural sciences. Because of the bodily foundations of human physical activity, they perform a significant cognitive function: they describe natural foundations of special forms of movement, but they are not offering knowledge of cultural character. As there are no values in the human being’s nature, the biological sciences within the institutional field of physical culture can with their separate methodological and theoretical assumptions only offer an auxiliary, supportive function. Physical cultural sciences are primarily dealing with the significant relations between humans in physical cultural practices, with knowledge of an axiological (ethical and aesthetical) and social (philosophical, sociological, pedagogical, historical or political) character. The alleged superiority of biological sciences within physical cultural sciences and the connected marginalization of the humanities – which constitute, after all, a necessary and hence an unquestionable foundation for cultural studies – is, therefore, a clear challenge in the institutional field of physical culture.

KEYWORDS

physical culture, sport, biological sciences, the humanities, physical cultural sciences

The terms “physical culture” and “sport” are interpreted in multiple ways. Sometimes – in a context of justification – they are understood as synonyms, whereas on other occasions they are presented as terms of different, sometimes even considerably different, content.

Using an association referring to philosophy and – even more – to the sociology of culture, one can proclaim that the term “physical culture” is, first of all, associated, referring to the etymology of the word “culture” from the Latin “colo,-ere”, meaning “to cultivate”, “to inhabit” or “to honor”, with cultivation and taking care of the human “physis” – obviously in the context of social and natural environment.

This refers to actions concerning the body, activities of autotelic character (constituting aims in themselves) focused mainly on culturally determined physical fitness (of non-professional character, which means in that case that it is not connected with material benefits), on aesthetics of the body and somatic health, also taking into account relations with the mind and social influences. Sport can be treated as a cultural phenomenon making use of outstanding and sublimated qualities of the human subject in order to achieve aims of pragmatic,

measurable and discretionary character, which are inspired by and rooted in the context of social expectations. This refers to projected tasks, aspirations – that is, to the process aimed at their realization and to results achieved for that reason. They result, however, not so much from pragmatic needs, but rather from cultural ones¹.

What is important in that respect – as well as in the other forms of physical culture – is the cultural context of the linked influence of social expectations and of aspirations which are mediated by accepted and historically, geographically, ethnically, politically, religiously or ideologically determined conventions regulating and consolidating existing patterns of behavior. The aim of those conventions is also the stimulation of creative activity, as well as popularization, nurturing and sublimation of the existing tradition, which is more or less spectacular and more or less mature in its identity.

Sport according to that interpretation – unlike other forms of physical culture – is associated solely with highly competitive, professional, spectacular or Olympic sport².

¹ Qualities of sport are discussed more extensively in Kosiewicz, J. (2004b). *The Universals of Sport – from Realism to Nominalism*. In D. Macura, M. Hosta (Eds.), *Philosophy of Sport and Other Essays*. Ljubljana: Faculty of Sport, University of Ljubljana.

² In the main text the notion of sport is discussed in an abbreviated way in order to adjust it to the central thought, to the content of the argument. In literature on the subject there are many more interpretations. For example, I can quote a description characteristic for sport social sciences, which is presented by D. Malcolm (2008, pp. 238-239) referring to A. Guttmann (2004), B.D. McPherson (1989) and N. Elias and E. Dunning (1986). He proclaims that it is common practice for the term ‘sport’ to be used interchangeably with the terms ‘play and games’, whereas he is of the opinion that these are different notions, in spite of the fact that attempts at defining sport usually refer to qualities of play and games. Malcolm writes – referring to Guttmann – that the most general form among the non-utilitarian forms of activity of physical and mental character is the category of play. It has strictly autotelic – and not instrumental – qualities. It refers neither to health-oriented aims, nor to personal development, nor to physical or mental fitness, nor to earning for a living. That means, for example, that school and extra-school physical education or professional sport are not forms of play.

Play – as Malcolm proclaims after Guttmann – can come into existence in a spontaneous or an organized way. If play has organized character, we are dealing with a game. A game can be based on competition (competitive game) or take place without it (non-competitive game). The term refers to various activities – competition (like popular pole-vault competitions), fight, contest, strictly physical rivalry (like in contact- and non-contact sports) and intellectual rivalry (I would like to add that it can also have mixed character).

However, Malcolm, who presents Guttmann’s views, is of the opinion that, in spite of the fact that indubitably there is an intellectual component in sport, its character is determined by physical effort, which is immanently integrated into its structure (except of chess and bridge as a sport) and which is based on specific bodily fitness and developed skills. However, the above-mentioned rivalry – in contrast to real fight or war – is based on playful game. It takes place in a joyful way. It has also qualities which are characteristic for play – autotelic values.

Guttmann creates a very general and, simultaneously, one-sided definition of sport, which passes over traits of highly qualified, highly competitive, professional, Olympic or spectacular sport. He proclaims that sport can be defined as an activity including competition, fight or contest of organized character, rivalry including elements of joyful game and play of non-utilitarian character, where physical competences (conditions) took precedence over intellectual ones. “Sports can be defined as organized contests of a playful, non-utilitarian character in which the physical demands outweigh the intellectual components” (Malcolm, 2008, p. 238).

That definition comes from 1978, from the first edition of Guttmann’s book. It is probably the reason why sport was saturated there with autotelic qualities characteristic for past times, for Coubertin and his followers. They negated professional sport treated in a utilitarian, instrumental way – that is, as a means for other non-sport aims.

Malcolm presents also McPherson and his co-authors’ interpretation of sport. They distinguish the four most important qualities in it. A significant criterion enabling the evaluation of how advanced a given sport is and what its level of competences and its level of structuration are. A proper structure (formal assumptions) is significant for sport even in its informal forms. It is necessary, for example, for children’s street or backyard football, or for playing baseball in a park. In those and in other cases the course of the game is determined by some rules which are known and accepted by its participants. That type of sport has a low level of formal structure. A higher level of structuration is characteristic, for example, for the Football World Cup. Its preparation and course are strictly controlled by great bureaucratic sport and non-sporting institutions, which are established, among other things, to do that based upon rigorous rules which have been accepted earlier.

By the way, currently the term “sport” is understood only in such a way in USA. It does not refer to any other form of practical activity (Pfister, 2007). Meanwhile, the term “physical culture” has been sought rehabilitated there notably by Ingham (1997) and recently on a global, English-speaking level through “Routledge Handbook of Physical Cultural Studies” (Silk, Andrews & Thorpe, 2017). Earlier, the term “physical culture” has mostly been acknowledged in Western European countries as well as in countries of Central and Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union and today's Russia, but originally it was invented by MacFadden in USA.

MacFadden – physical culture and scientism

The term “physical culture” was used as early as the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, but mainly in USA. It is assumed that it was introduced there by Bernard MacFadden, who was a body-builder by vocation, an expert in principles of healthy nutrition and a proponent of natural methods of healing. This is proved by “Physical Culture”, which he published since 1899 (Piątkowska, 2006, p. 83;

The second significant quality of sport is the fact that it is goal-oriented on variously understood success. It depends on criteria which – similarly to the criteria for failure – are usually clearly defined.

The third characteristic feature of sport is rivalry between concrete athletes or teams, whereas the fourth quality is, in their opinion, its ludic character. They maintain that sport is ludic, which implies – according to them – that sport includes also qualities characteristic for play and game. They justify it in an etymological way, because the term ‘ludic’ comes from the Latin ‘ludus’, which means play or game. Summing up, it can be proclaimed that sport, according to McPherson and his co-authors, is a structured, competitive form of game, which is teleologically oriented on success.

In the above-mentioned definitions it is possible to notice cultural messages which are implicitly rooted in them. It is confirmed by N. Elias and E. Dunning (1986), who point out that contemporary sport refers to patterns of competitive physical activities, which appeared in Britain and Ireland in the 17th and the 18th centuries. It is also possible to point to different understanding of similarities and differences between play, game and sport. For example, G. Tomc discusses these notions referring to B. Suits and K.V. Meier’s viewpoint and presenting – in opposition to them – his own understanding of these terms. He proclaims that “For Bernard Suits, sport may or may not be play (if it is involuntary or extrinsically motivated, it is in his opinion not play) may or may not be game (he distinguishes sport games in which rules are the crux of the matter, like soccer; from sport performances, in which ideals are essential and to be approximated, like gymnastics). For Klaus V. Meier sports may or may not be play (as in Suits) but are necessarily games (they require physical skill by participants pursuing the goal of the game), although all games are not sport (for example chess or poker)” (Tomc, 2008, p. 9).

Then Tomc – considering qualities of play, game and sport, and then relations between them, taking into account performances, rituals and experimentation, comes to the conclusion that there are:

1. Games (in which parallel world of pretense is created by players trying to approximate an ideal skill, for example a physical skill in sport),
2. Performances (in which a parallel word of pretense is created by players trying to approximate an ideal representation of life, for example an aesthetical production),
3. Rituals (in which a parallel world of pretense is created by players trying to approximate ideal behavior for example an aesthetical production) and
4. Experimentation (in which a parallel world of pretense is created by players trying to approximate ideal classification of the world, for example scientific research).

It follows from our theoretical perspective that

1. All sports are either games or performances,
2. All games and performances are not sport,
3. But all games and performances are forms of playing.” (Tomc, 2008, p. 9).

I present two quotations – and not their discussion – because Tomc presents Suits and Meier’s viewpoints – as well as his own – in a highly essential way. Hence their synthetic interpretation could deform their content. What is significant in that case are also original expressions. By the way, such a type of formal solution is permissible also in notes or stage directions constituting marginal currents of considerations in their relation towards the central statement. Treating Tomc’s considerations as the context for an analysis of S. R. Kretchmar’s views included in the paper presented during the conference of the International Association for the Philosophy of Sport in Seattle (August 2009), entitled “Do Games Require Artificial Problems That are Neither Too Hard Nor Too Easy?”, it is possible to notice that reservations about Suits’ conception presented by the outstanding Slovenian sociologist can be referred – to some degree – to the paper of the American philosopher of sport.

www.bernarmacfadden.com). Popularization of the term in USA and other English-speaking countries was especially furthered by the extensive - and often reissued - 5-volume "MacFadden's Encyclopedia of Physical Culture (by MacFadden assisted by Specialist in the Application of Natural Methods of Healing)", which had naturalist, biological and medical character. I refer here to its seventh issue, which was published in New York by Hammond Press W.B. Conkey Company Chicago in 1926 (the first issue comes from 1911).

The presentation of problems connected with physical culture were - according to MacFadden - very influential, because MacFadden, over 2915 pages of his "Encyclopedia", included in the field of physical culture (today we would say: in the field of physical cultural sciences) everything that the popular and the medical viewpoint associated with that term at that time. This refers to issues connected with maintaining health, causes of illnesses and anatomy (vol. 1), with nutrition, diet, individual and team training as such, and with women's training. MacFadden characterized also dance (vol. 2) as an art and a form of exercise and fitness, vocal culture, beauty and activities aimed at highlighting and maintaining it, medical tests on an empty stomach, biomechanical medical tests, hydrotherapy, medical qualities of fasting, principles of first aid in danger and after accidents, painkillers and medicines for chronic ailments (vol. 3), illnesses and their general traits and symptoms (vol. 4), reproduction and development of the human being, physiological foundations of sexuality and marriage, the female reproductive system, women's illnesses, pregnancy and childhood, the baby's health and proper birth, the male reproductive organs, the male reproductive system disorders, masculinity and fatherhood (vol. 5, MacFadden, 1926).

MacFadden, the initiator and the editor of that great encyclopedic undertaking, dedicated to physical culture, did not, however, offer much place of manifestations of activity constituting an aim in itself or of aspirations and results of strictly cultural qualities. MacFadden focused his attention mainly on creating a medical, physiological, biological and, more widely, a natural scientific context of justification connected with physical activity of the human organism, as well as on the innovative considerations in the field of theory of sport at that time. Admittedly, MacFadden paid some attention to dance, vocalism and care for beauty, but he did not consider those issues - as well as others - in the context of cultural studies, as the term 'physical culture' requires.

Issues, views, hypotheses and theories which were attributed to the notion of physical culture reflected a scientific character of the former scholars - especially from the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. Natural sciences - as the only manifestation and guarantor of scientific rationality and valuable cognition - and their supposed almost unlimited possibilities were apotheosized at that time, and the significance of the humanities and of social sciences (including philosophy and newly appeared psychology and sociology) was diminished on the basis of materialism, and also treated as anti-philosophy (Kofakowski, 2000, p. 19), of evolutionism, naturalism, positivism and, especially, scientism (Pearson, 2004; Cameron, 1979), which was an extreme variant of positivism.

The humanities and social sciences were treated as non-scientific and metaphysical, and it was proclaimed that they could only have some significance for scientific knowledge if they reflected the natural sciences. (By the way, mathematics - according to scientism - had only an auxiliary value in its relation to natural sciences). That highly simplified view was promoted by, among others, A. Bain, K. Pearson and F. Engels. It was also proclaimed on these grounds - too optimistically - that with the help of specialized sciences of empirical orientation, and especially of natural ones, the basic cognitive problems will be completely solved (Kofakowski, 2000, p. 18).

Proponents of the scientific world view created - similarly to MacFadden and his followers - contexts of justification of physical activity from the area of widely understood sport based upon medicine and sciences - especially those connected with human biology. Physicians and natural scientists were those who justified positive influence of physical activity of autotelic qualities on the individual's development and health, on stimulation and proper course of physiological processes, on basal metabolism, development of the bone, joint

and muscular structure (in other words: the motor, biomechanical system), the vascular system, the lymphatic system, the neural system, the hormonal system, the sexual system, etc.

It was attempted, in a way which was innovative at that time to make people participate in sport – that is, physical education, physical recreation and amateur, highly competitive and even professional sport. The innovative character of those attempts consisted of referring to the newest achievements of medicine, human biology and related sciences, as well as to principles of nutrition, dietetics and, especially, to natural ways of healing and supporting the human organism while explaining that autotelic movement activity from the field of physical culture (understood in the current way). Into the field of interest were also introduced those issues which have strictly cultural – that is, non-biological – character: dance, something which would today be called vocalism, cosmetology and other activities aimed at maintenance and enrichment of bodily beauty.

The above-mentioned scientific interpretation lacked a general methodological perspective concerning classification of types of sciences. Hence there was no awareness of qualities of disciplines constituting physical cultural sciences and definitions of their content-related and formal ranges. This led to chaos in the field of interest of science studies and to confusion between various types of sciences which – from the viewpoint of general methodology and specialized methodologies – have different foundations; disciplines which in the content-related and methodological sense are included in current physical cultural sciences.

This initiated a cognitive dissonance concerning the following questions:

1. Do cultural sciences contain natural sciences with the included biological sciences?
2. Or are they disciplines subordinated to natural science and biology?
3. Or are cultural sciences and natural sciences – including biological sciences (which also concern medicine: illness and health) – autonomous towards each other?

It was – and still is – a problem which is difficult to solve, although not for methodological and content-related reasons, but because the problem seems to be too easy in that respect: it is easy to prove that cultural sciences are not natural sciences and that physical cultural sciences deal with those non-artistic, cultural forms of movement which have autotelic, axiological and symbolic character.

Medical – and, more generally, biological sciences; and even more generally, natural sciences – constitute, shortly speaking, foundations for research connected with functions of the organism and its physical effort, with its changes, development, temporary and lasting dysfunctions.

The difficulty consists of the fact that MacFadden's conception of physical culture – and, especially, of connected specialized disciplines – has become established in research and teaching institutions dealing with education of PE teachers, coaches, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, specialists in the fields of tourism and recreation and managers of various ranks within physical culture. It has become established among university graduates who are active in the fields they have been educated in and who are often employed in autonomous research institutions and tertiary education.

What is especially important in that respect is the quantitative growth and qualitative development of teaching and research personnel in units, departments or institutes of natural scientific provenance. The above-mentioned workers are those who especially contribute to the consolidation of the myth about the superiority of natural sciences in perception of phenomena from the field of physical culture – what is understandable taking into account MacFadden's tradition. That myth is also supported by persons connected with the theory of sport (theory and practice of special sports), who are predominately interested in biotechnological research effects supporting the human (and not only human) organism in its striving for success in sport.

Admittedly, MacFadden – and his followers – called autotelic physical activity physical culture, but he referred almost the whole context of justification to natural sciences, human biology and medicine (this happened – as I have already partly mentioned above – because of the scientific research fashion which was obligatory at that time in the wake of the third positivism (in other words: neo-positivism, the Vienna Circle, scientific empiricism,

logical empiricism) coming into power in the 1920s. This fashion avoided the human, social – and hence cultural – theoretical background practice. Admittedly, the term “physical culture” includes a cultural element, but, nevertheless, the notion was treated in a scientific way. There were attempts to enforce cognitive reflection concerning physical culture in a natural scientific way.

For example, movement rehabilitation – in other words, physiotherapy – could be easily placed in such (that is, understood in MacFadden’s way) physical culture, whereas some “orthodox” representatives of sport sciences refrained from placing it in the field of sciences, which are associated with physiotherapy. They did so because they were (and perhaps still are) of the opinion that rehabilitation, similarly to tourism and movement recreation, goes beyond the identity of sport sciences and has no connection with highly competitive sport. Sport-for-all is not sport for them but movement recreation, while tourism is a manifestation of an economical interest which – according to the above-mentioned orthodox researchers – should be placed in the area of interest of universities and disciplines dealing with the concerned activities.

Extending that digression, it can be added that physiotherapy (movement rehabilitation), although it belongs to MacFadden’s conception of physical culture, cannot be included – from the viewpoint of cultural studies, of traditional and contemporary reflection on culture – in the realm of culture as understood in a symbolical, axiological and autotelic way. It belongs neither to the humanities, nor to social sciences, because it is rooted in medicine, biological sciences, natural sciences. It can be placed as a major element in those research/teaching institutions where, in accordance with their tradition, there are departments considering movement, physical effort, its physiological symptoms in the light of biology, medicine or natural sciences. Moreover, physiotherapy as a major, content-related and formal basis of a university institute or department, strengthens considerably the status of a given university within the tertiary education system regarding teaching, research and structural issues, or in the field of competition between universities.

Coming back to the main issue of considerations, it is worth emphasizing that the cognitive aim of scientism had a too reductionist character, and scientism quickly became marginalized in the realm of philosophy. In the case of neo-positivism, the rejection of scientism was promoted by the very founders of the Vienna Circle, with R. Carnap as the leader. They concluded, that limitation of the conception of science and of the connected research to natural sciences, physicalism, mathematics and logic (Reinchenbach, 1936) was an obvious mistake. MacFadden’s fundamentalism supported by scientism and the third positivism had and still has - in spite of the philosophical (that is, strictly cognitive) failure and in spite of lack of content-related justification - a considerable influence on the reception of phenomena and the vision of physical cultural sciences, especially among representatives of biological sciences.

Scientism and skepticism concerning natural sciences

Rejection of scientism and the discussed form of positivism as a source of theoretical inspiration of statements about qualities of physical culture and the connected sciences was mainly contributed to by development of gnoseological skepticism, especially that referring to natural sciences, which took place in the 20th century. After a massive, materialistic and positivistic (especially in the form of scientific empiricism) attack on cognitive values of the humanities (in other words: of social sciences; By the way, I treat economy as a social science, but as a science which is not included in the humanities), there appeared a strong tendency which was firmly rooted in the philosophy of science, general methodology and science studies, and which negated necessity and universality (as Kant would call it) – that is, indisputability – of research achievements of natural sciences.

The humanities were attributed with metaphysical qualities – that is, qualities abstracting from sensations, and hence supposedly “unworthy” of knowledge of reality – that is, of nature – although some of them (or some of their significant areas) had no intention of referring to nature. Natural sciences were, on the other hand, accused

– and that accusation have not been withdrawn – of unreliability and impossibility of giving an account of nature and, consequentially, of explaining and understanding what nature is, cognition of its real organic and non-organic properties. It, however, turned out that anti-inductive criticism of cognition based on empirical sensations (which makes them different from introspective experiences) aroused not only humility towards potentials of research a posteriori, but also highlighted the fact that its result is, as a matter of fact, pure metaphysics – that is, such statements about physical beings which admittedly refer to them, but which do not really present (describe, explain) their real state. Hence it is difficult to settle when we get to know something real about nature – that is, when we get to know the so-called truth about the being. Nowadays natural sciences are in a sense like symptomatic medicine. Some manifestations of some reasons are perceived, sensually experienced by us, but after all there is nothing sure to be told about the source and qualities of those reasons. What is proclaimed by us is solely pure metaphysics. Hence making natural sciences the main content-related and methodological foundation of statements about cultural phenomena, including those about physical culture, seems also to be a misunderstanding.

At the beginning of the 20th century a reference to assumptions of the forgotten 18th century anti-induction took place. Once it was proclaimed by D. Hume (1947, 1963, 1974), who – on the grounds of his radical empiricism – challenged sensual experience as a method leading to certain knowledge. He supported in that respect, among others, ancient sceptics, including representatives of the Platonic Academy who were criticized by Aurelius Augustine.

Hume maintained that there is nothing certain to be told about the natural world based upon the senses. Empirical research is not ample in that respect. Neither statements about special cause and effect relations, nor about substance in general and special substances, nor about forces influencing them are empirical statements. According to Hume, they are only *a priori* statements (that is, such which are independent of experience), which only seemingly refer to empirical knowledge (Hume, 1947, pp. 67-77). There is nothing certain to be told about empirical reception of matter, because sensual cognition takes place within the human subject. It does not go beyond the subject. The human being refers only to sensual data which come into being in his receptors. Hence there is nothing sure he can ascertain about stimuli or material sources of those stimuli. He takes a stance only on his own sensations – not on the external world, because subjective sensations are something different than objective qualities of the external material world, of nature.

Moreover – as a matter of fact – the subject, according to Hume, does not proclaim his opinions based upon sensual data, but only based upon ideas which come into being in his mind and which are only abstract copies of those data (so they are not the same thing as sensations). They are associated based upon inborn associative skills which are typical for the human mind and have cause and effect, spatial and temporal character. This is the basis on which the human being creates his images, views, opinions, representations concerning the material world on. However, he can never find out to what a degree those internal subjective representations are in accordance with the perceived reality or if they are in accordance with it at all. There are no criteria for this. Moreover, the subjective image of the external world, of nature, is something different than material nature.

At the beginning of the 20th century L. Nelson – the founder of the Goettingen School – which, besides the Badanian School and the Marburg School, was the third neo-Kantian stream (Nelson, 1994; Kosiewicz, 1995, pp. 301-303) – aroused justified pessimism referring also to empirical natural sciences (called – after I. Kant (1971, 1984, 1986) – a posteriori sciences, as well as inductive sciences – that is, those based on empirical knowledge). Thus, Nelson's criticism of the theory of cognition follows a beaten agnostic track marked out by ancient skeptics and he somehow confirms on his way the sensibility of Hume's criticism concerning truthfulness of cognition and possibility of building a theory of cognition – that is, sensibility of criticism based, among others, on anti-induction. The Berlin philosopher, by referring to traditional gnoseological skepticism, creates – by consolidating negation of or skepticism about possibility of any sensible method and theory of cognition – solid foundations for various forms of contemporary methodological and epistemological

anarchism. If cognition (as *episteme*) is impossible to be justified with a theory of cognition (epistemology), you should agree with Feyerabend's *anything goes* – with his total anarchism presented in “*Against the Method*” (Feyerabend, 1970) and in other works.

What is, however, important, is not so much the above-mentioned conclusion from Nelson's epistemological research, but the way leading to it, the arguments, the context of justification. His thought was original and innovative in his time, whereas beyond the historical perspective, from a current perspective, after L. Fleck (who expressed doubt in epistemological value of the notion of objective reality which is to be independent from experience, and of the empirically defined scientific fact, which is treated as an objective event or objective state of affairs), after K. Popper, T. Kuhn, I. Lakatos and P. Feyerabend, it is not significant for philosophy anymore. Too late it was rescued from oblivion. Nevertheless, it is impossible to question its greatness.

Nelson points out that epistemology proclaiming necessity of building a theory of cognition is impossible for three basic reasons:

1. It cannot justify objective validity and truthfulness of cognition anyhow,
2. It is a mistake to assume a necessity of justification of cognition in general and of any particular cognition;
3. An assumption concerning necessity of justification is logically contradictory and contrary to psychological facts (Nelson, 1994, pp. 143-145).

Thus, Nelson assumes in his theory of cognition – in a preemptive and *a priori* way – an assumption negating a possibility of its creation. He introduces into the theory of cognition a new level of agnosticism – including agnosticism concerning natural sciences. He does not negate, however, cognition as such, because possibility of cognition is the basic and irreducible fact (and what is a problem is not the possibility of cognition but rather the possibility of a mistake – of false cognition), but he questions the validity of its justification. If no justification of cognition is valid and objective, the very cognition is neither valid, nor objective, because it is impossible to create any proper and reliable criteria of cognition – like, among others, criteria of absolute and non-relative truthfulness – or any sensible conventionalism which would resist falsification for some time, which means time significant from the viewpoint of building and functioning of a smaller or a greater cognitive paradigm. For that reason, all cognition is doubtful.

Nelson widens Hume's agnosticism – which points to the inadequacy of cognition (because of subjective immanence) in its relation to the perceived external world – with the impossibility of building a proper justifying theory. Hence, he not only widens that agnosticism, he also strengthens it. He does not attack objectivity of the very cognition directly, but he negates its validity and thus challenges not so much the sense but rather the possibility of building proper research procedures, assumptions, methodological criteria which would allow the assumption that cognition is certain. Thus, he constructs a negation of cognition in a different way than traditional skeptics – he does not refer to the very *episteme* (he does not question its cognitive qualities at once), but he only points out that it is impossible to justify its validity. If it is impossible to create any certain foundations for epistemology, this means that cognition as the certain, basic, irreducible fact (for example in the form of Descartes's *cogito*) cannot take place. Hence such a standpoint leads to radical and universal agnosticism challenging the possibility of cognition (including cognition based on sensual, empirical perception).

Gnoseological doubt about empiricism of natural sciences is characteristic also for P. Duhem (1904, 1906) and H. Poincaré's (1908, 1911) conventionalism. The latter became the most famous in the field of conventionalism. He assumed – shortly speaking – that while considering material reality (this refers also to formal sciences and the humanities) we work on theoretical and methodological assumptions which were made earlier or we introduce new assumptions based on the principle of a social

agreement – in other words: of a convention – characteristic for scientists' milieu. Effects of that research also have qualities of a convention, if they are in conformity with the established conventions. Those convention are

sometimes utterly transformed, they are subject to a scientific revolution and they are replaced by new ones. Conceptions and theories describing and explaining the sensual world are – from the viewpoint of conventionalism – so far from and, simultaneously, so close to empirical reality, as opinions about nature in Hume’s sceptical reflections about *induction*.

T. Kuhn (1968) maintains in his paradigmatic or anti-accumulative theory of scientific revolutions that science – including natural sciences – develop within assumed, smaller or greater paradigms, which have a smaller or a greater historical range (like, for example, the whole age or of a revivalist crisis), a smaller or a greater content-related range of research (like, for example, characteristic for all Renaissance sciences or focusing only on the Copernican revolution). The paradigm includes hypotheses, laws, theories and sciences, and the connected methodological assumptions from the fields of specialized methodologies and general methodology. Kuhn is of the opinion that the whole scientific knowledge – including natural sciences (or solely natural sciences, or only their part) – sometimes undergoes complete breakdown and rejection. After that, building and development of knowledge on sensual reality begins until the moment of exhaustion of intellectual resources and of developmental potential of a given paradigm. Cognitive value of natural sciences is strictly connected with theoretical and methodological conventions characteristic for a given paradigm. Its basic property is changeability and relativity of findings of empirical natural sciences. From the viewpoint of anti-accumulation, natural sciences never lead to certain and final knowledge.

I. Lakatos (1990, 1995) admittedly confirms Kuhn’s cognitive conclusions, but he says that scientific revolutions rarely take place. Changeability concerning contents and methods takes place in a gradual way. A radical and complete break with previous opinions seldom takes place. There is a correspondence in the field of selected research problems and issues, categories and notions. Admittedly there appear new solutions, but the previous ones are defended against radical rejection by a hard core and a protective zone composed of hypotheses which can be changed while maintaining primary assumptions included in the hard core of a theory which is an element of a given natural science. This does not mean, however, that values included in hard cores of scientific theories are lasting and final. Introducing a conception of a hard core of a theory and of a protective zone made of hypotheses is to warn against creation of a science without reliable content-related and methodological foundations, against creation of *ad hoc* hypotheses as well as registering laws and theories referring to them. Just such (too often) manifestations of activity on the grounds of natural sciences must be falsified as quickly as possible. This does not mean, however, that the rest of manifestations of activity in the field of natural sciences must provide us with certain knowledge. By the way, it is possible to see that Lakatos modifies Poppers and Kuhn’s views in his works in the field of the philosophy of natural sciences to a considerable degree.

Methodological anarchism, according to P. Feyerabend’s interpretation (1970, 1979), also challenges cognitive abilities of both past and present natural sciences. This refers to specialized methodologies of all sciences. Feyerabend proclaims utter chaos and anarchism in that respect. It is the reason why statements characteristic for art, literature, religion or from the field of common-sense knowledge have the same cognitive value. Hence natural sciences – similarly to the whole science and sources of knowledge of other kinds – are unreliable.

Feyerabend’s views should be taken note of as one of the possible standpoints, but they should also be rejected as too radical, because, against Feyerabend, I am of the opinion that methodologies based on assumptions of formal sciences (logic and mathematics) are not a proof of complete cognitive anarchism and nihilism. I think, however, that – in spite of reliable formal foundations – they can lead to deepening of ignorance about real qualities of nature around us and of the cosmos. They can do it mainly because of continuous changeability of assumptions, principles, instruments characteristic for methodologies of various specialized sciences (Kosiewicz, 1996). Results achieved thanks to their application can be temporarily recognized, they can generate and increase social prestige. However, they do not lead to (and probably will never lead to) final research findings, scientific laws and theories. Those results are changeable, relative and ostensible in the

cognitive sense because of theoretical and methodological conventions which are approved here and now, and which are the starting point for empirical research.

Regarding that issue, I am of the opinion that specialized methodologies – their application – do not bring us closer to a reliable view of reality, to cognizing it such as it is. Taking that into account, it can be assumed that specialized methodologies of natural sciences, similarly to general methodology (which is referred to by them) are both a form and a manifestation of agnosticism. They contribute to ostensible creation of certain knowledge, of apparently reliable ideographic and nomothetic approaches to knowledge; they camouflage ignorance. They are engaged in covering and apparent uncovering of that which anyway will never be cognized – explained and understood – by natural sciences.

Retreat from scientism was strengthened by self-negation of the Vienna Circle's physicalist assumptions, and with anti-induction, hypotheses-making, fallibilism, anti-accumulation, methodological anarchism and agnosticism. Natural sciences became a proof of deepening skepticism – that is, of a crisis concerning cognition and the theory of cognition (the distinction inspired by Kant's distinction between *episteme* and epistemology). The conception supporting the need of looking for a theoretical and methodological background for physical cultural sciences based upon the humanities and social sciences had been challenged for decades. Finally, a qualitative jump, which K. Lorenz calls fulguration, happened, since it turned out that – contrary to earlier assumptions – the main theoretical foundation of physical cultural sciences are cultural studies and their axiological background.

The fact that the term 'physical culture', including the world 'culture', has been adopted had numerous implications, when the fashion for scientism and positivism – and, especially, scientific empiricism – had passed. A reorientation – that is, a retreat from MacFadden's conception of physical culture, which was indirectly based on Carnap's naturalistic-empiricist reductionism, took place on the grounds of physical cultural sciences. There was a turn towards many-sidedness and multi-dimensionality of research, which treated cognitive values of inquiries from the field of the humanities, social sciences and cultural studies – that is, those which were described by scientism and neo-positivism as metaphysically-based research – with special attention. It was universally concluded that no assumption from the field of methodology and of axiology as a philosophical discipline could legitimize any evaluation of science on the grounds of science studies, any creation of any hierarchy of scientific disciplines. Specialized methodologies cannot be reduced to any common gnoseological denominator which would include universal categories constituting a basis for objective claims concerning a higher or a lower position of special sciences in their possible hierarchy. Such a denominator – that is, such a basis – cannot be created even by general methodology, because it is autonomous in its relation towards specialized methodologies, which are partly mediated by it.

The notion of physical culture in Poland and other European countries

A considerable role in shaping physical culture was played in Poland by J. Piłsudski – a leader of the national liberation movement and the most outstanding figure of pre-war Poland. In 1914 – to emphasize specific qualities of methods of shaping soldiers' fitness – he introduced the term "physical culture", which he used also later (Hądzulek, et al., 1998, p. 16; 2009, pp. 5-6). He wanted "the issue of physical culture and strength of the young generation to be solved by general educational work" (ibid., Wieroński, 1937, p. 91).

It seems to me that Piłsudski used the discussed term rather rarely (Hądzulek, 1998; Piłsudski, 1999; Dudek, 2005). This is proved by his numerous written statements. The greatest attention is paid by him to physical education and sport there. They all have an occasional, trite, official, not very deep and demanding character. The term "physical culture" appeared there only in a common-sense context and without a definition which could explain its meaning. Neither was it synonymous with the term "physical education". It results from the above-mentioned quotation that Piłsudski and others could then understand physical culture as an effect of some

unspecified “educational work” as such – that is, of physical education in the context of other forms of school and extra-school education. The name was not considered from the viewpoint of cultural studies. Nevertheless, it was popularized in pre-war Poland.

Probably Piłsudski became acquainted with the term “physical culture” as early as in London, where at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century the above-mentioned magazine of MacFadden’s “Physical Culture”, was accessible. Application of that term was surely contributed by “MacFadden’s Encyclopedia...”, which was popular in English-speaking countries.

In 1929 Piłsudski created the Central Institute of Physical Education in Warsaw – an institution of military character – which in 1936, after the death of the founder, was named after him. In 1929, just after the institute was opened, it started to be called the Polish university of physical culture (“Przegląd Sportowy”, 1929, p. 3).

Since 1937 the magazine “Wychowanie Fizyczne”/“Physical Education”/ – deriving its origin from “Ruch”/“Movement”/ magazine – had the subtitle “A Monthly Magazine Dedicated to Physical Culture Issues”. “Ruch” emphasized the need to develop the body and “Wychowanie Fizyczne” started to emphasize the notion of physical culture in the theoretical and practical sense (Demel, 2006, pp. 1- 3). In the period between the World Wars there was also founded the “Kultura Fizyczna”/“Physical Culture”/ publishing house, which published 3 magazines: “Sport Polski”/“Polish Sport”/, “Sport Szkolny”/“School Sport” and “Wychowanie Fizyczne”/“Physical Education”/. Since 1937 until the outbreak of World War II it was led by W. Humen (Hądzelek, 2006, p. 9).

The notion of “physical culture” became popular in some Western European countries. After the 1917 October Revolution it was popularized in Germany by “Arbeiter Turn und Sportbewegung” – that is, by the Workers’ Gymnastic-Sports Movement (Piątkowska, 2006). The term “physical culture” was also assimilated by Russia and the Soviet Union in the form of the term “fizkultura” (“*fizicheskaya kultura*”). This is proved by the first handbook in the field of physical culture published in the Soviet Union in 1925 (Dupperon, 1925). After World War II the term was accepted by the Soviet Union’s satellite countries³. It was saturated with ideological traits

³ Establishment of theories of physical culture in the countries of Eastern Europe was especially strongly influenced by conceptions born in the Soviet Union. L.P. Matvyeyeff distinguished three stages of establishment of that field. The first stage took place – in his opinion – in the period between the 1920s and the 1940s, the second between the 1940s and the 1960s and the third in the 1970s and the 1980s. Matvyeyeff described that theory in a laconic way as a unification of the theory of physical education and the theory of sport. Simultaneously he understood it, being less or more aware of it, in pedagogical and praxeological terms. It refers to education and teaching people and improving athletes’ qualifications.

Matvyeyeff (as well as other Soviet theoreticians), while discussing phenomena from the field of physical culture, treats sport issues separately, because he writes about “physical culture and sport” and treats sport as an autonomous phenomenon. On the other hand, when he discusses the notion of the theory of physical culture, he includes the theory of sport – as a phenomenon which is integrally connected with physical culture and which is associated by him with physical education – into its field of interest. He proclaimed also that the theory of physical culture “is an integrated system of knowledge about the essence of physical culture (...) and, first of all, of knowledge about development and social formation of personality, as well as concerning the optimal development of human vital forces in the system of educational factors” (Matvyeyeff, 1984, p. 22). The issues of the theory of sport, which concern formation of personality, human vital forces, improvement of health, are also included into the field of interest of the theory of physical culture in Matvyeyeff’s definition (although he does not declare it openly).

Matvyeyeff, by emphasizing the significance and need of development of the human individual’s various traits and qualities, of his/her self-realization and self-affirmation in the socialist system, tried to draw attention to autotelic character of physical culture. He treated neither it, nor the human being as a means for ideological aims (Matvyeyeff, 1980, 1983).

Another viewpoint on the role and function of physical culture was presented by J. Merhautowa and P. Joachimstaler from Czechoslovakia. They treated physical culture and its theory mainly in an instrumental way, as a means to class and political ends connected with the political system of the state. This is a significant difference, because it points out that development of the theory of physical education in Czechoslovakia did not take place according to the above-mentioned authors’ declaration. They highlighted the pioneering character and the leading role of Soviet ideology – as well as the considerably analogical character of the process of formation and development of the theory of physical education in the Soviet Union and in Czechoslovakia.

aimed at consolidation of the socialist system. In that role of a propaganda instrument it, unfortunately, also appeared in science (Godlewski, 2005).

However, after political transformations it became a purely cognitive and practical category in Poland, and it meant something different than in its Soviet interpretation. Namely, the term ‘physical culture’, aside from many other elements, included also highly competitive (professional, Olympic, spectacular) sport, while in the Soviet interpretation the above-mentioned notion of sport had been placed outside physical culture, because sport was treated as a special phenomenon which was made different from other forms of physical activity by its spectacular character. Sport was treated as a special phenomenon which is made different from other forms of physical activity by its popularity, interest from the newspapers and the electronic media (Kosiewicz, 2005). In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe – and especially in Poland – ideological traits of the notion of physical culture have been neutralized, rejected. The stress – similarly to earlier and later elsewhere – has been

Unlike the case of the prototype, they put special stress on the necessity of consolidation of ideological and political functions of physical culture as a realm influencing systemic foundations of the state. Matvyeyeff, on the other hand, wrote about autotelic qualities of physical culture, about the need for the individual’s development and improvement by the means of physical culture – which was to be systemically connected with socialism – and of a theory which refers to it. However, a demand of that kind could not be realized in a totalitarian state (Kosiewicz, 1986, p. 109).

The Czechoslovakian authors described the discussed discipline as “a synthetic, scientific theory of physical culture”, created on the basis of theoretical and methodological principles of scientific materialism. They treated physical culture as an overall social system characterized by a unity of ideological, scientific and methodological, program-related, normative and organizational foundations of physical culture and sports activity of the population of the whole country (Merhautowa, & Joachimstaler, 1984; Kosiewicz, 1986, p. 109).

In a similar way the discussed field was presented also by theoreticians from the German Democratic Republic. They described the theory of physical culture as “the Marxist-Leninist theory of socialist physical culture”. They proclaimed that it had developed in the GDR on the basis of “collected philosophical and theoretical, historical and sociological materials and making significant use of scientific achievements of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries” (Sieger, Neidhard, 1984; Kosiewicz, 1986, pp. 109-110).

W. Sieger and H. Neidhard understood the discussed theory as, for example, “a complex system of knowledge about the essence of physical culture as such, and about the essence of more important factors and regularities in development of socialist physical culture, which is organically connected with the socialist vision of life”.

By the way, Czechoslovakian authors – J. Merhautowa, F. Joachimstaler, W. Cechak – also perceived the influence of Western European philosophical and sociological conceptions on the theory of physical culture. They thought – because of the above-mentioned influence – it is possible to distinguish at least three groups of conceptions of the discussed theory.

The first group was to be constituted by existentialist and phenomenological interpretations, which treat physical culture as “flippant” activity aimed mainly at play. It especially refers – in their opinion – to such authors as C. Lenkaj, A. Jughen and J. Loy (Kosiewicz, 1986, p. 113).

The second group of conceptions was associated with the so-called “compensation theory”. Their authors – according to the Czechoslovakian theoreticians – treated development of physical culture as development of a specific substitute mechanism which facilitates adjustment to demands of contemporary civilization and technology – that is, to phenomena which clearly outdistance slow evolution of natural environment and the human organism. There appeared in those conceptions views of a naturalistic character which especially emphasize the human being’s biological nature and his connection with environment, which were proclaimed by K. Lorenz and H. Plessner.

A third set of conceptions refers to assumptions of the Frankfurt School, whose founders paid attention to “technocratic” and “manipulative” functions of the state in the process of development of society. For example, S. Guldenpfenning highlighted ideological and political aspects of physical culture and maintained that they should be treated as manifestations of a specific realm of politics and researched by means of appropriate theoretical and methodological instruments characteristic for political science (Merhautowa, Joachimstaler & Cechak, 1984; Kosiewicz, 1986, p. 114).

The views of the Czechoslovakian theoreticians of physical culture prove the existence of a special cognitive duality and of a strong dependence on the internal totalitarian system and the connected state ideology. On the one hand, they glorified – as a result of political compulsion – non-scientific Marxist ideological assumptions on the grounds of the theory of physical education, which mainly supported maintaining power by the communist government. On the other hand, they perceived free development of philosophy and sociology in the West, and their influence on various manifestations of culture – including physical culture. They had, however, to criticize it as a phenomenon proving real political entanglement (in contrast to that what they allegedly experienced in their own country), arguing untruthfully that Western scientific achievements are a proof of false consciousness.

placed on its essential foundation, the factual context of justification of its qualities. The fact that terms such as culture, theatre, cinema, religion, society, politics or sport and physical culture were used by propaganda in the Soviet Union, and that during its existence they were saturated with negative qualities – which meant that my colleagues from Central and Eastern Europe associate them with ideological compulsion and political oppression – does not mean that they have lost objective values attributed to them and that they should be removed from the cognitive discourse – as is demanded in the case of the term “physical culture”.

In Polish literature, apart from the behavioural⁴, relational-subjective⁵, axiological⁶ and holistic⁷ interpretation

⁴ Z. Krawczyk formulated an evaluating definition of physical culture, which presents – after Antonina Kłoskowska (1980; 1981) – an anthropological and cultural, sociocentric and behavioral viewpoint. Namely, he maintains that “Physical culture is a relatively integrated and established system of behaviors in the field of care of physical development, movement fitness, health, bodily beauty, human physical perfection and expression, which take place according to patterns which are obligatory in a given community, as well as results of those behaviors” (Krawczyk, 1979, pp. 14-15; Kosiewicz, 1986, pp. 133-136). The author, in the commentary about the content of the above-mentioned expression, also draws attention to aesthetic values, “supernormal” fitness and expression of the human body which is released and developed by highly competitive sport, and mainly by spectacular sports. The above-mentioned definition of culture is close to assumptions of socio-behaviorism which – referring *a priori* to inborn inclinations and interests of the educated – pay little attention to their analysis and treat success of acculturation, socialization and education as dependent mainly on introduction of the individual into a definite socio-cultural environment.

That definition is, however – in my opinion – too reductionist. It does not take into account – because of the source of inspiration and the assumed viewpoint – spiritual values cooperating in creation of manifestations of physical (not only bodily, but also material) culture. Neither does it take into account its influence as a factor giving a chance of versatile personal development, unlike the currently dominating model, which focused mainly on intellectual improvement.

⁵ The psycho-behavioral character of Krawczyk’s definition neutralizes in a sense A. Wohl’s statement of relational-personalistic, secular and, simultaneously, Marxist character. He proclaims that physical culture cooperates in creation of spiritual values, that it interweaves both with spiritual culture and with material (bodily) culture in the closest way, and that the development of physical culture is aimed at versatile formation of the human personality in the existing conditions of social life, which have been created by the entirety of social relations (Wohl, 1968, p. 21; Kosiewicz, 1986, pp. 134-135). In the final fragment of the last sentence Wohl refers to one of the theses on Feuerbach by K. Marx. He turns attention to social relations, which play a significant role in formation of the personality and of culture (including physical culture). Their significance during formation of mental health and the personality is especially emphasized by culturalists from the fields of neo-psychoanalysis and humanistic psychiatry – and especially E. Fromm, who came from the Frankfurt School and was one of its co-founders. He emphasized their significance in an orthodox Marxist way.

⁶ According to Maciej Demel – a pedagogue, a physician and outstanding theoretician of physical education, the author of the Polish version of health-oriented education and the pedagogy of health – “Physical culture includes all those values which are connected with the human physical form and physical functioning, both according to his own subjective experience and according to the socially objectivized perception. Those values – to say it in the most general way – refer to health, the body build and posture, immunity, function, fitness, beauty. Analogously to other cultural values, they have dynamic character and they shape human views and attitudes” (Demel, 1972, p. 72). He creates a definition characterized by an axiological orientation, which is oriented on cultural – not biological – values.

⁷ According to the interpretation proposed by me (that is, the author of the presented text), physical culture constitutes a set of forms of social consciousness which function in praxis of the society – forms which integrate and consolidate the union between knowledge (and patterns), on the one hand, and behaviors (and their results), on the other. They constitute a basis for harmonious development of versatile, mature personality and health in the physical, mental and relational (that is, social) dimension. This is about development, where a special place is occupied not only by spiritual values, but also by care, projection and the connected, dynamic and directed process of transformations aimed at the human being’s physical perfection – that is, among others, the body build, posture and aesthetics, fitness, function and physical immunity. Physical culture, according to that interpretation, is not only a set of forms and symbols existing in social consciousness and, in particular, individuals’ psyches, but also material facts, like – for example – sports facilities and the connected architecture of places destined for sports games (like in ancient Olympia), which are interpreted in the light of axiology, cultural and symbolic values.

Thus, physical culture is the entirety of mankind’s or of some society’s achievements in the ideal, the material and the relational sphere – achievements created in general historical development or in a given age, and which – in a given environment – are both means and results of physical culture and personal culture of individuals belonging to that environment.

Those achievements – speaking in the most general way – are a set of existential facts constituting internal and external reality; that is, all understandings of those facts and expressions of those understandings in various artistic (like *e.g.* literary

of the notion of “physical culture”, there is also found an additive definition – that is, by enumeration of its main components. In that case it is supposed to include highly competitive sport, mass sport, sport-for-all, amateur sport, school sport, sport of the disabled, physical education, games and plays, movement recreation, highly competitive tourism, pilgrimage tourism and recreational forms of tourism.

In Scandinavian countries the notion “physical culture” did not have – and does not have – any ideological context connected with political conditions (Breivik, 2009, pp. 313–314; Faarlund, 1993; Kvaløy Soetereng, 1993). Similarly, in the United States and other English-speaking countries before World War II, it has been used in a cognitive meaning. A similar viewpoint is presented also by H. Eichberg (1998, 2004, 2009), who has popularized the notion of “body culture” nowadays. It has a similar content to the notion of “somatic culture”, which was promoted and rejected in Poland several years ago⁸.

For example, in Norway or in Germany, in spite of the fact that significance of physical culture is perceived and defined there, the terms “sport” and “sport sciences” are consistently used on the grounds of science and academic teaching. It is proved, among other things, by the names of the local universities dealing with the discussed fields of activities, such as e.g. the *Norwegian School of Sport Sciences* in Oslo and the *Deutsche Sporthochschule* in Cologne.

Multiform character of the notion of sport

A division of sport in general into highly competitive (Olympic, amateur, professional) sport and sport for all

ones, plastic ones, architectonical ones), philosophical, scientific, technical, technological versions, as well as in a form of social institutions, such as the Olympic movement, federations, ministries, clubs, etc. Physical culture also includes material creations of strictly utilitarian character which are necessary for participation in its various forms – that is, necessary for interpretation of activity in its field in axio-normative, symbolic terms. It refers, among others, to various objects, such as equipment which is necessary for sport for all, highly competitive sport, tourism or physical education. Physical culture is created by all the above-mentioned elements, which are socially created, processed, adopted and handed over.

The basis for the above holistic conception of physical culture is constituted by a synthesis of J. Kmita and Antonina Kłoskowska’s theories of culture, and elaborating premises which underlie Z. Krawczyk, M. Demel and A. Wohl’s definitions of physical culture. In the accepted interpretation the behavioral viewpoint, which is characteristic for Kłoskowska’s sociological definition of culture, has been widened. In contrast to Kmita’s theory, attention has also been paid to material – and not only to mental – determinants of culture. That understanding of physical culture also takes into account the significance of messages of personalistic character recommending care of development and improvement of personality. It brings it closer to the demands of the axiologically and holistically understood theory of physical culture according to its normative interpretation and to the ideals characteristic for education in physical culture as a practical discipline, as well as to philosophical and pedagogical sources from the sphere of reflection belonging to pedagogy of culture. It also pays attention to the world of values implying some activities depending on norms or patterns, the world prone to influence of subjective criteria of values, which are externalized and shaped in relations subject – object and subject – subject.

⁸ The term “somatic culture” (in other words: bodily culture) was promoted in the field of physical cultural sciences by Z. Krawczyk, who treated it as synonymous with the term ‘physical culture’ and used both terms interchangeably. Popularization of that viewpoint has been especially contributed to by A. Pawłucki and Z. Dziubiński. The latter applies Krawczyk’s conception as a theoretical and research instrument replacing only the term ‘physical culture’ with ‘somatic culture’. I think that using the expression somatic (bodily) culture, originating from the word ‘soma’, as synonymous with the term ‘physical culture’ is somehow inadvisable, because those notions have – as I suppose – different ranges of meaning which only partly overlap with each other. For example, physical culture does not include such bodily phenomena as: intestinal movement activity (peristalsis), physiology, the vascular system, the lymphatic system, the urinary system or the neural system movement activities – that is, those phenomena which have purely biological – and not cultural – qualities in the genetic, organic, structural and functional sense. Thus, the notion of ‘somatic culture’ goes beyond a purely cultural range of problems. From that viewpoint the notion of somatic culture is somehow contradictory, because culture excludes non-cultural biological phenomena which are independent from it. It can internally refer to them, but culture is something different than nature – such as it is suggested and justified by Krawczyk (1970) in his book “Natura, kultura, sport” /“Nature, culture, sport”/.

is applied in many Western European countries – although not always consistently and not always on the basis of the same definitions. In Polish literature it is also possible to find different interpretations of that issue.

L.O. Amusa from the Centre for Biokinetics, Recreation and Sport Science of the University of Venda (Thohoyandou in South Africa) distinguishes three levels of sports activity. Amusa (2009) refers to mass sport (that is – in his opinion – sport for all), amateur sport and professional sport (that is, highly competitive sport).

The first of them – that is, mass sport – is treated by the African author as synonymous with sport for all. It is also identified by him with popular sport understood as common sport. The term refers to physical activity of various, more or less fit groups, strata or social classes.

Amateur sport – according to Amusa – is a proof of love of sport and its praise. It is based on the assumption that that type of sport is a good of anthropological-social character, that it exerts a positive influence, that it shapes and develops the human body, that influences social relations and the individual's socialization in a positive and desirable way. A significant element of the above-mentioned praise is the fact that no material gain is “associated with ‘true amateur’ sports” (Amusa, 2009, p. 4, 105), that it has autotelic – and not instrumental – qualities. Hence, he points out – something I do not agree with – that material goods connected with sports activity are not very valuable.

Professional sport, on the other hand, is described by the African theoretician as such a form of activity, which squeezes primarily playful activity into the format of sport as earning a living. Expectations in this field require a high level of professionalization aimed at success in rivalry (Amusa, 2009, pp. 4-5).

A similar division into professional sport, highly competitive amateur sport (like basketball matches of the USA university league, which is independent from the National Basketball Association, but which provides it with athletes) and recreation sport was presented (independently from Amusa) by M. McNamee and A. Bloodworth (2009, pp. 18-19) during the conference of the British Philosophy of Sport Association in Dundee. The division of sport which is proposed by them is acceptable – it does not inspire any essential reservations⁹. It seems, however, that any form of authentic amateur sport can be included to sport for all.

The last sentence – because of the verb “can” which it includes – informs, however, about some doubt connected with the problem if it is possible always and everywhere, in every particular case to apply the general quantifier to the discussed form of sport. It refers, among others, to the above-mentioned university basketball league, because that form of sport can also be treated as sport which does not have a completely amateur character, but which certainly – in spite of a high level of competences – is not fully professional yet. That form of sport can be also described as highly competitive amateurism to make it distinct from professional sport, which is a highly competitive activity by nature. Amateur sport, on the other hand, is usually not a highly competitive phenomenon.

There is, however, a special manifestation of amateur sport which can be regarded as a non- authentic – that is, deformed, faked – one. It is sport which was, as a matter of fact, a masked form of professional sport. It was an axiologically deformed, hybrid form of sport, which ideologically united contradictory values and assumptions and which was promoted in the socialist countries, where it was impossible from the viewpoint of the existing laws to practice sport as a profession. Hence, that amateur sport pursued on the highest level was, as a matter of fact, camouflaged professional sport. Athletes were fictitiously employed in the police, army, offices, state-owned companies, steel mills or mines. They got permanent wages, grants and bonuses. Instead of doing work connected with their employment – based on other alleged professional qualifications – they participated in training and training camps, as well as in various matches, games and championships.

For example, allegedly amateur Soviet ice-hockey national teams defeated the Canada and the USA teams

⁹ In the abstract of M. McNamee's and A. Bloodworth's conference paper there is no fragment concerning the division of sport which is proposed by them.

composed of the most outstanding professionals of the time. Allegedly amateur teams and representatives of other socialist countries won in the World, European and other continental championships. Surprisingly, this remained in accordance with the ideology of the then version of Olympism. After World War II it was accepted and supported by all the IOC's presidents who had to deal with that phenomenon – including Avery Brundage and Juan Antonio Samaranch. By the way, the latter contributed to awarding Moscow (1980) and Beijing (2008) organization of the controversial Olympic Games.

Taking into account the fact that the above-mentioned athletes were not obliged by contracts or legal regulations characteristic for professional sport, they could not be regarded – from the viewpoint of administrative law – as professionals in the formal sense. The sport they dealt with was – from the viewpoint of the above-mentioned law – not fully professional sport. In spite of that, regarding their skills, they were the equals of champion professional athletes and teams, or even surpassed them.

To conclude, it can be proclaimed that – independently from professional and not fully professional sport – sport for all includes both high-level amateur sport (which sometimes is not fully amateur sport) and low-level amateur sport. In that sense it is related to, or – a possibility preferred by me as the author of the paper – includes mass sport and common sport.

In the times of the People's Republic of Poland (before 1989) the government and the Communist Party authorities aspired to promote sport (or, in other words, physical culture) as a mass phenomenon. It was a highly positive aim. The content of mass sport – that is, fitness-related and health-related aims – would be described from the present-day viewpoint as typical for sport for all. Since the socialist countries were very poor, their governments lacked financial means and other resources (personnel, competences, facilities) for realization of that important – for culture, civilization, fitness and health – undertaking. Hence acts of abuse and perversion took place.

This – and not the idea of popularization of physical culture of recreational character – was also the main reason why promotion of mass sport was given up both in the theoretical and the practical dimension. The terms “social masses” – and, especially, “mass sport” – sometimes aroused almost allergic reactions, negative associations with the political context of reification of the individual and of the so-called social masses, and of instrumentalization of mass sport. However, the above-mentioned terms – with the connected notions and theoretical constructions of strictly cognitive character – should be regarded independently from current, more or less negative sentiments and associations connected with a temporary political context.

A term, a category or a notion connected with mass character and referred to sport or culture (mass culture) should not have any non-cognitive, emotive assumptions and contexts of justification. Otherwise we also have to deal with ideologization, moralization and promotion of definite political assumptions on the ground of scientific research. This is the way – as I suppose – mass sport is treated by Maciej Demel. For him it is synonymous with “mass physical culture”. That mass character does not arouse any negative associations in the discussed author. For Demel it means “universal” sanitation of life, a school of character, health and fitness, because the arsenal of its means goes beyond sport and even beyond movement exercises (Demel, 1972, p. 72). As we can see, the notion of mass sport means for Demel the same as the notion of common sport.

L.O. Asmusa, on the other hand, who is free of associations and experiences concerning the socialist ideology, understands mass sport as synonymous with sport for all. He also identifies both terms with popular sport, understood also as common sport.

By the way, in the sociology of culture there is the commonly used term “mass culture”. Monographs about it could fill whole libraries. Nobody has hit upon an idea to postpone the word “mass” which is included in it, whereas, for example, in Poland – because of negative political and ideological sentiments – the term “mass sport” (and especially the word “mass”) are marginalized and replaced with the term “common sport”. By the way, from the present-day viewpoint mass sport – similarly to common sport – can be described (although it is

not necessary) as a typical form and one of the manifestations of sport for all.

In Norway the term mass sport is commonly used. It was discussed by, among others, Gunnar Breivik (2009a) during a plenary session of the 14th Annual Congress of the European College of Sport Science (Oslo, 24-27 June 2009). He pointed out that it is the opposite of elite sport, and that mass sport is connected with, among other things, “jogging, hiking, eastern martial arts, fitness and lifestyle sport” (Breivik, 2009a, p. 543) – that is, with movement recreation, which is known also as sport for all.

Common sport can be understood in at least five ways.

Firstly, the term concerns popularization of sport in every form – both in the theoretical and the practical sense. It refers to, “inter alia”, professional sport and sport for all, active sport and passive sport.

Secondly, the term “common sport” concerns popularization of various particular sports in urban and rural environment, among adults and the old, among children and youth in primary, secondary and tertiary schools and with the help of extra-school educational and non-educational institutions, in clubs, community centers, in the army, etc.

Thirdly, the term “common sport” can be treated as synonymous with sport for all. The state and the connected institutions and organizations should aspire for such popularization of sport to make it accessible for all, regardless of age, sex, the level of physical and mental fitness, social background and financial resources (Kosiewicz, 2006, pp. 9-11).

The fourth interpretation, referring to the above-mentioned Demel’s opinion, points out that the term “common sport” can be understood as synonymous with the term “mass sport”.

The fifth interpretation proclaims that if we assume – like in the fourth interpretation – that the terms “common sport” and “mass sport” are (taking into account the above-mentioned Breivik’s viewpoint) synonymous, then we can proclaim that common sport is the opposite of elite sport.

The last – that is, the sixth interpretation – has the least particular character. It is a manifestation (it refers to Amusa) of an extended viewpoint pointing out that the term “common sport” can be treated as synonymous with the terms “mass sport”, “sport for all” and “popular sport”.

Relations between the notions of sport and physical culture

In some recent work (monographs, collective works, papers) and public statements I maintained that sport as such can be divided into highly competitive (spectacular, professional, Olympic) sport and sport for all. The latter includes all other forms of sport of autotelic character, that is such as the above-mentioned lowly competitive forms of sport as well as other manifestations of activity from the field of physical recreation – such as *e.g.* active movement relaxation in the form of games and play, hiking, fishing, mushroom picking, recreational forms of tourism – which in many cases are not connected with any form of rivalry. I was of the opinion, that the above-mentioned categories of sport – that is, highly competitive sport and sport for all – create a unity which can be also called physical culture.

Nowadays, in contrast to this outdated viewpoint, I assume (for the first time) that the notion of sport (including the notions of professional – spectacular, highly competitive, Olympic – sport and the notion of sport for all, and the connected notion of sport sciences), cannot be synonymous with the notion of physical culture and the connected notion of physical cultural sciences, because the cited pairs of notions have different ranges of meaning.

The notion of sport (and hence the notion of sport sciences) does not include that field of activity which can be called physiotherapy (or movement rehabilitation). It concerns that part of a given physiotherapy which is mainly focused on restoration of lost, regressed, deformed fitness with the help of forms of movement which are worked out by specialists and adapted to various limitations.

Neither the realm of the above-mentioned sport (and of the connected sciences) include, among others, various and sublime forms of massage (excluding sports massage). This also refers to tattooing applied, among other reasons, for:

- a) utilitarian reasons – for example, for military reasons to scare off the enemy, as in the case of the Maoris, the New Zealand aboriginal people,
- b) in order to emphasize a different subcultural identity of individuals in prisons, criminals at large, sports fans, hooligans – as well as social stratification in their groups,
- c) for aesthetic reasons concerning beautification of the body.

Neither of the above-mentioned notions (and of the connected sciences) include issues referring to bodily paintings, cosmetology and cosmetics or plastic surgery operations taking into account bodily needs of archaic warriors, athletes, fans, persons striving for the optimal aesthetic effect and patients.

A part of the above-mentioned phenomena and activities of strictly cultural character (and placed beyond sport) – this refers to the highlighted range of physiotherapy and massage – is included in physical culture, whereas all of them – those attributed to physical culture and those which are not attributed to it – belong to a wider notion of body culture and to the connected cognitive reflection.

From among the three above-mentioned notions (sport, physical culture, body culture) the one with the narrowest range is the notion of sport together with sport sciences. A notion wider than that is the notion of physical culture and the connected notion of physical culture sciences, which includes – apart from various forms of sport – also the abovementioned manifestations of movement therapy or non-medical, non-erotic forms of massage.

The notion of body culture (and cognitive reflection referring to it) goes well beyond the range of the notion of sport (and sport sciences) and the notion of physical culture (and physical cultural sciences). It includes all sport and non-sporting phenomena, activities, theories and forms of scientific and non-scientific reflection referring to culturally determined aspects of the human body. It is such a wide notion that issues concerning physical culture (and sport connected with it) which are placed as part of body culture undergo considerable marginalization in it and lose their autonomy to a considerable degree.

Taking into account limitations concerning the notion of sport (and of the connected sciences) as well as difficulties concerning defining the notion of body culture – as well as the vague and ambiguous character of the notion and of the researched subject of body culture (Eichberg, 2009), it seems that the most suitable – from the identity-related and cultural viewpoint – for a package of issues characterized in that paper and the concerning field of research seems to be the notion of physical culture (and of the connected sciences).

It results from the above considerations that the notions of body culture (and of its counterpart: somatic culture), of the physical culture and sport can be variously defined in autonomous, mutually overlapping and coinciding ways. Relations taking place between them are, however, ambiguous. They arouse constant interest and will provoke argument between both theoreticians and practitioners of sport or physical culture. That phenomenon – that is, never-ending defining of ranges of terms, categories or notions – is characteristic for the humanities and for cultural studies.

In some European countries there are also applied equivalents of the notions which are discussed above and in the footnotes. It refers to the science of man in motion, human motion sciences, exercise sciences, physical activity sciences, sciences of physical education, antropokinetics, homokinetics, kinesiology (Bouchard, 1976, pp. 10-21), gymnology, kinanthropomotrics, physical movement activity, cultural human movement (Renson, 2009), “*Bewegungskultur*” (that is, movement culture) (Grössing, 1993) or kinanthropology (Jirásek, 2005). They focus their attention on the notion of movement and on scientific reflection referring to it. They all have numerous good points justifying their application as well as bad points. Hence, they have their proponents and opponents, similarly to those whom I have paid greater attention. Considering it in a detailed way could only

confirm this to a greater or a smaller degree. It would not help to decide definitively which of all the above-mentioned terms (and others which have not been mentioned) – and notions which are referred to – is the most suitable. This also applies to possible new terms, which can deepen and widen knowledge in the field of the discussed issues and phenomena, turn attention to their new aspects or inspire new viewpoints. It will contribute, however, to terminological pluralism.

I am, however, of the opinion that the most suitable category, term, notion describing the area of research which is characterized in the paper is physical culture. It is not – as the term and the notion – free of flaws, similarly to the other pointed out or possible new terms referring to the complex and complicated set of theoretical and practical issues, which are impossible to be included by one relevant name, category or term. The notion of physical culture constitutes, however – in my opinion – the most central and suitable name, which is rooted in the tradition of the discussed issues from the end of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th centuries. It emphasizes in the most accurate way cultural qualities of various forms of sport, of forms of physical activity which are close to them and of the connected cognitive reflection.

Even when it is assumed that no consistent distinction is made between the notion of sport, the notion of physical culture, the notion of body culture and other above-mentioned terms, it does not mean that juxtaposing such terms with each other is a proof of content-related negligence. For example, there are overlapping terms in titles of many magazines, such as “Physical Culture and Sport. Studies and Research” (Kosiewicz, 2008), “Kultura i Społeczeństwo” (“Culture and Society”), “Wychowanie Fizyczne i Sport” (“Physical Education and Sport”) or “Sport, Ethics and Philosophy”. It is commonly known that culture is a function, an effect of social activities; that physical education, including elements of sport (sport – and especially school sport – should also pay attention to children’s and youth’s education), is their core element. On the other hand, ethics, which is a significant part of culture and education (including also physical activity), is also understood as one of main branches of philosophy, similarly as aesthetics and axiology.

The last of them constitutes – from the viewpoint of philosophy – the basis, the source, the sense and the essence of all aspects of cultural evaluation.

The above-mentioned mutually overlapping and merging notions found in physical cultural sciences are characterized by elasticity taking into account various terminological options, theories and contexts of justification. Such elasticity is typical for the humanities (and the humanities are, after all, the basis for cultural studies). The above-mentioned variety enables permanent exploration – deepening, modification and creation of new (more or less valuable) original viewpoints, hypotheses, theories and even of separate disciplines, branches and sciences – which are not, however, emancipated from knowledge concerning physical culture.

Do natural sciences include physical cultural sciences?

Can physical cultural sciences be treated as natural sciences? Can they be placed in the field of disciplines connected with health science of medical character? Can they be regarded and evaluated mainly from the viewpoint of biological sciences and – in a wider perspective – from the viewpoint of natural sciences?

Unfortunately, the physical cultural sciences could be – and, as has turned out on the basis of the latest decision by the *Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education*, they can again be – regarded from that viewpoint. It is an enforced practice of many-years standing, which is obviously contradictory with assumptions and principles of general methodology and specialized methodologies, and which, paradoxically, is applied in Poland in all schools connected – to varying degrees – with widely understood physical culture, as well as in the *Ministry of Science and Higher Education*.

In Poland there is a surprising formal and functional ambivalence concerning the discussed notions – that is, physical culture and sport. On scientific grounds the notion of physical culture is more emphasized than the notion of sport, because in the field of health sciences there is distinguished an area called physical cultural

sciences. Admittedly – referring to foreign (including English-language) literature – the term “sport sciences” is also more and more often used in Poland, but the latter notion has not achieved, however, such a formal status as the notion of physical cultural sciences.

On the other hand, in the functional sense – concerning public administration – the current situation is different, because the notion of sport has been more emphasized in the government’s practice than the notion of physical culture for many years. That notion – because of the range of their practical interests – was taken into account in the names of such ministries as, for example, the Ministry of Sport, the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Ministry of Sport and Tourism. By the way, earlier – that is, before 1989 – there were ministries which had physical culture in their names. Nowadays, however, it is the notion of sport and practical activity connected with sport which are emphasized on the administrative level. In my opinion, this is an unnatural move, because even in that case we are dealing with physical culture where various forms of sport are included. That culture is popularized with the help of various forms of highly competitive, amateur, common, school and mass sport, with sport for all or with highly competitive as well as recreational forms of tourism.

A trend which is found in many Western countries points out that a unification can take place (although it is not necessary), and that not only the ministry of sport, but sport sciences (as a synonym of physical cultural sciences) will be formally and officially sanctioned. Admittedly the name will be changed, but the content, sense and range of the researched problems will not be changed, because they will concern the above-mentioned widely understood physical culture. Sport is a cultural phenomenon. Hence, I suggest maintaining the notion which openly emphasizes the cultural character of the discussed field of research – namely, the notion of physical cultural sciences. Nowadays, however, there is a duality in the government, because in the ministry dealing with science the notion of physical culture is emphasized, and in the ministry connected with organization and management of the discussed physical culture the notion of sport is emphasized. It is not known whether that dualism is going to disappear and how that formal and content-related problem will be resolved.

A special dichotomy – however, of another kind – appears in English-language literature, which is popularized also in the region of South East Asia and the Pacific. It concerns sport science and sport studies. The first notion refers to research activities in the field of sport sciences, and the second is associated with education – that is, with university studies, subjects which are learned and passed by students. They include significant elements of what D. Malcolm (2008) calls sport sciences. Sport studies are based on a curriculum referring especially to handbooks, which first and foremost constitute introduction into generalized, popularized (that is, simplified) effects of many-years’ and varied research. Regardless of that interpretation, sport studies can be also understood as studies of (that is, research on) sport and their (theoretical) effects¹⁰, similarly to – to some degree – sport philosophy, sport sociology or sport psychology (Malcolm, 2008, p. XII, Coakley & Dunning, 2000, Dunning, 2002, pp. 211- 238; Gratton & Taylor, 2000).

Both with their current and with their possible future names the above-mentioned branches of knowledge and teaching are certainly included – in my opinion – in the field of cultural studies; that is, of the humanities, which are treated in that text as a synonym for social sciences. A possible modification of their names would change nothing in that respect. They are not health sciences in the medical sense. Neither they are biological, nor natural sciences. They should not be included by them. For that reason, regardless of the abovementioned trend, I am

¹⁰ By the way, there can appear some disputable comments or interpretations referring both to the notion of studies and to the notion of research concerning their ranges as well as mutual relations. Namely, proponents of empirical – and, especially, natural, sciences are of the opinion that, unlike those in the humanities, their inquiries are just typical research, whereas the term “studies” – also in their opinion – is reserved solely for the humanities of strictly theoretical character, like philosophy, history, non-empirical sociology, psychology or pedagogy. On the other hand, representatives of the humanities think that their exploratory activities can be called both “studies” and “research”, because – regardless of the name and from the viewpoint of general methodology – they conduct theoretical research typical for those disciplines, which often, although not necessarily, has empirical character and which can be correctly called both of the above-mentioned names.

inclined to suggest another form of unification – namely, reverting to such names of ministries which include physical culture. It would correspond – in a strict and unambiguous way – with the notion of physical cultural sciences.

Cultural studies deal with such issues which go beyond nature. By the way, according to what L. Feuerbach proclaims about theology, everything in the field of the humanities is a creation – is rooted in man’s abilities. He writes that

“the real content of theology is anthropology, that there is no difference between predicates of the divine and the human being, and – what is a consequence – between the divine subject and the human being; that they are identical, because everywhere where – as it happens in theology – predicates express not accidental qualities, features, but the essence of a subject, there is no difference between the subject and the predicative, and the predicate can be put in place of the subject” (Feuerbach, 1959, p. 24).

If theology, according to that interpretation, is treated as anthropology, that means that culture is also the fruit of activity, of anthropological reflection. That case refers, of course, to the philosophy of religion and to philosophical anthropology of one of the first German critics of Hegel’s views – to considerations on human qualities and abilities which are not rooted in biological (or natural) sciences, but in the humanities. According to that interpretation, both culture and theology (which is a significant part of culture) are – from the viewpoint of the final and the most significant cause – an effect of supernatural, mental (rational, emotive and volitional) qualities of the human being, which are subject neither to content-related, nor to methodological judgments from the viewpoint of assumptions of natural sciences.

It is obvious that the basis for the human subject’s cultural activity is his physical, bodily, natural background. It does not result from that, however, that cognitive reflection concerning human cultural activity can be included in natural sciences. Similarly (or in a supplementing, specifying way), it can be remarked that the final condition for human activity in the field of formal sciences (from the viewpoint of psychologism, and not of anti-psychologism or, for example, idealistic realism) is – as it was mentioned above – his physical, bodily, natural existence. It does not imply the conclusion that the discussed sciences (like, for example, mathematics) can be included in natural sciences. Neither does it justify the conclusion that final determinants of creativity or other forms of cultural activity (and mathematics) should be looked for by means of, for example, genetic research.

K. Fasting is of the opinion that culture has been often strongly influenced by the human being’s biological conditions. It refers also to manifestations of physical culture, such as “participation in leisure time activities and sport”. They depend not only on social determinants, but also on age, sex, race or disability (Fasting, 2009, p. 108). It does not mean, however, that the sources of culture should be looked for in nature, that they are biologically or genetically determined, as in assumptions of Freud’s psychoanalysis.

By the way, his view pointing to culture as a source of suffering – the view that organically determined libidinal energy is the only and primary source of culture – has been rejected (Freud, 1967, 1975, 1982, 1995). Biological factors only influence various forms of culture but do not create it. It comes into being in social relations and it influences them. It influences also symbolic and axio-creative perception, as well as establishment of human corporeity, manifestations of sexuality, forms of physical activity.

Biological sciences connected with the human being are traditionally – after MacFadden, among others – counted among physical cultural sciences. Because of the bodily foundations of human physical activity, they perform – shortly speaking – a significant cognitive function: they describe natural foundations of special forms of movement. In spite of the fact that knowledge in that respect is extremely important for multiform human activity in the field of physical culture, biological sciences are not offering knowledge of cultural character. From the formal (that is, institutional) viewpoint they are strictly connected with cultural studies, but they have

separate methodological and theoretical assumptions.

Knowledge of that type is focused on the human organism and not on effects of mental, axio-creative, symbolic activity of the human being entangled in social relations. It includes auxiliary data which support practical – that is, in that case, physical, bodily – activity. Its reception of axiological (ethical and aesthetical), social (philosophical, sociological, pedagogical, historical – universal or strictly defined referring *e.g.* to art and literature with the connected theories – or political) character is dealt with by the humanities (in other words: social sciences) constituting an immanent and the fundamental – and hence the most important – part of cultural studies. The alleged superiority of natural (biological in that case) sciences within physical cultural sciences and the connected marginalization of the humanities – which constitute, after all, a necessary and hence an unquestionable foundation for cultural studies, their essence and objectivization – is, euphemistically speaking, a clear challenge in the institutional field of physical culture.

The above-mentioned exaltation and aspirations for superiority, as well as a deepening and more and more aggressive marginalization of the humanities (understood in that paper as a synonym for social sciences) in the field of physical cultural sciences may lead to the separation of biological sciences.

Its result can be, among others, the foundation of some department, institute or unit which would be separate from universities of physical education existing in Poland. Thus, that more or less academic (or non-academic) institution could be called, for example, the institute of biological determinants of physical effort (or, more shortly, the institute of biology of effort). Physiology dealing with sport is commonly called the physiology of sport. Representatives of biological sciences dealing with sport proclaim that there is not distinguished such a notion as the physiology of sport as a specific sub-discipline in physiology as such. What is distinguished is only the physiology of effort which – shortly speaking – focuses its attention on research into the human organism before, during and after effort. The organism of the human being – similarly to that of other living creatures – is in its internal connections, mediations and entanglements (not only from L. von Bertalanffy's viewpoint (1973) only a purely biological, non-cultural functional structure, which does not generate any values by itself.

In the formal and content-related sense the title of the magazine from the so-called Philadelphian List – “*Biology of Sport*” – which has a so-called impact factor – can be treated similarly to the notion of the physiology of sport. In its title there are included both a content-related and a formal mistake. Sport is a cultural – and not an organic – phenomenon. Hence it is not subject to biological research. Biology (that is, its representatives) can research effort which is associated with all organic elements accompanying it, but it can never research cultural relations. Biology (or, according to a wider interpretation, natural sciences) has no relevant research instrument to do that.

Sport as a cultural phenomenon should not be regarded from the perspective of biological cognitive instruments, because sport is considered first of all (in the fundamental, necessary and unconditional way) from the viewpoint of values which are attributed to some conventionalized behaviors based on principles, regulations, rules and norms, which are objectively (*e.g.* physically) measurable, discretionary (aesthetical, ethical) and take into account many more various axio-normative themes – and which are not results of the physiological-structural way of functioning of the human subject. What matters in cultural reflection (in the field of physical culture) concerning sport activity is not movement as such – as a purely physical phenomenon – but only such a form of movement which has been attributed with conventionalized social values of symbolic and autotelic character.

Concluding considerations on the above-mentioned magazine, it can be stated that – in my opinion – it could be entitled “*Sport and Biology of Effort*”. Such a title would highlight the autonomy of the notions and a possible narrow range of their overlapping cognitive inquiries, which would be connected solely with biological analysis, description and explanation of specific kinds of movement – that is, those forms of movement which are characteristic for special sports. The proposed title would not refer, on the other hand, to sport in general – that is, sport according to its holistic cultural interpretation. By the way, ‘sport as such is only a notion, it is an

abstract expression. There exist only particular sports, special forms of sports activity.

Moreover, it should be emphasized – in accordance with assumptions of epistemology, axiology, general methodology and specialized methodologies, science studies, the philosophy of science, the philosophy of empirical sciences and the philosophy of nature – that there are no values in nature. This can be attributed to it during ideography or a nomothetic move, what is an obvious methodological mistake. Attributing nature with values was called “a naturalist fallacy” by D. Hume. It is a fallacy which had been unconsciously made until his times (and which was also made later, when his views were forgotten for some time – that is, until the 20th century) by philosophers and other representatives of science. Description and explanation of researched reality should be objective – that is, free of emotive qualities, autotelic and instrumental ones, to such a degree as it is possible (Hume, 1963; Hołówka, 1981).

When taking into account the above-mentioned considerations, it can be added that all biological sciences dealing with issues connected with the human organism (such as anatomy, biophysics, biochemistry or biomechanics) are, in the methodological and the content-related sense, in a similar situation to the discussed physiology of effort – they do not consider the human being in the above-mentioned categories of values, from the viewpoint of axiology.

Since the biological sciences are placed outside cultural studies, they are not and cannot be characteristic, typical representatives of those studies. This also applies to their place in physical cultural sciences. They perform in those sciences only an auxiliary, supporting function – in a similar way (although not in the same sense) as, for example, a team of technical workers of various trades in their relation to artists of a theatre.

Admittedly in big theatres (for example, in *Teatr Wielki* in Warsaw) the number of those technical workers can be greater than the number of artists, but that does not mean that they should have teleological, qualitative and functional superiority, that artistic aspirations should be subordinated to tasks and aims of other professional groups. There is the opposite situation in that case. The artists – actors, singers, dancers, musicians, theatre directors, choreographers and stage designers – are those who decide in a given institution about its artistic character. Other, non-artistic workers should support the realization of their plans and put them into practice because they are employed in order to support art – and not to subordinate it to other non-artistic aims.

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