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The Body and Technology

A Contribution to the Bioethical Debate on Sport

Abstract

The differences between the image of top athletes in history and those today could meet at the intersection between cyborg theory and sport studies. The reconceptualisation of athletes could at first be viewed as a shift from the “natural” to the “artificial”. Throughout history top athletes have always been considered to be somehow unnatural, and have always been celebrated as heroes who have overcome the boundaries of their natural bodies. Today’s sports events have been attracting more viewers than ever before, and tough competition has been raising the very standards of competition. High attendance sports are already freak shows; whether from the comfort of their homes or from the grandstands, it is difficult for sport supporters to imagine themselves sculpting such a super-muscular body with super-fast reflexes. Old-fashioned blood, sweat and tears are still present somewhere, although they are incorporated into the advanced achievements of the modern techno-culture. A number of the issues raised from this perspective have found room for discussion in the relatively new pluri-perspectival approach to the challenges of the biotechnological era – in bioethics.

*Bioethics offers a platform for a dialogue on the key questions of today’s world, a dialogue that surpasses disciplinary, expert, historical and cultural positions. However, any such discourse is facing a pluralism of approaches and methodological barriers, and presupposes the existence of adequate theoretical grounds. This paper highlights only some of the problem points that plastically outline the insufficiencies of the existing mono-perspectively guided conceptions in the field of sport. Accordingly, the authoress emphasises only some of the symptoms that point to the disorientedness of everyday life, which is portrayed in sport in a rather peculiar way: the fragility of the ethical positions contained in the concepts of the “spirit of sport” and fair play in facing the developments of science and technology, the objectification of the body, and an increase in the people’s interest in high-risk activities. The authoress views these traits as signs of the need to transcend the until recently prevalent reductionistic and mono-perspectival approaches, which the distinctive bioethical approach can indeed do.**

Key words

sport, bioethics, body, technology, ethics, pluri-perspectivism

Today’s world is dominated by the mass media – one can travel to all the corners of the planet both visually and physically, and globalisation from the political and economic has become a trendy movement. Such influences are also discernible in sport. Being the best in one’s own village is now insufficient; one must also be the best in the global village. While the number of competi-

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tors is counted in thousands and tens of thousands, victory is determined by the tenth and hundredth part of a second. The developmental achievements of technology are the measure of the achievement of the human body. The attendant industry that has been growing around the competitors, supporters, audience and recreationists would have almost certainly been inconceivable at the grandstands of the most highly frequented ancient arenas, and the share of women in today's sport would have most definitely astounded all sport followers less than a century ago.

The ideas of pushing forward the barriers of both the body and mind, of transcending the limits of human abilities, and clear support for exceptional, above-average results come across as the bright spots of sport, which can also inspire social life in general. With sport we experience a fully private sense of progression, as well as an ecstatic collective feeling of pride. "Some people talk about football as if it were life and death itself, but it is much more serious than that".¹ Top athletes are public figures – examples, role models, prototypes. John Hoberman claims: "Even in the age of space travel, the athlete is a more charismatic figure than the astronaut, although it is the latter who endures the more demanding training regimen and who makes history in a way no athlete can hope to emulate."² Today's sport involves the cultural resources of society in entirely novel ways: sports events are followed by the media,³ troops of reporters write columns of Homeric grandeur, participation in sports competitions has become a political issue, museums of sport are being opened, and the "sporty style" enjoys the status of a fashion substyle equivalent to the others.

On the other hand, motivational sports slogans are met by unfavourable contexts dominated by control, supervision and restrictions, which are particularly evident in today's world of increased possibilities. Today's sport, as the consequence of our desire to shape our free time in a meaningful way, only seemingly bears the characteristics of a game, i.e. it only appears not to be laden with external functions and goals.⁴ The aspects of sport as game and an individual's freely chosen commitment to partake in a sports activity are the precondition for the relative autonomy of the field of sport in relation to the general level of community organisation. However, the aforesaid properties of sport render sports activities models that plastically mirror the general social relations, which cannot be found in the other domains of human activity. Naturally, sport is socially conditioned, and it is in this sense that it reflects the current mechanisms operative in society. Yet, at the same time sport also represents a specific field of privacy, integrity and autonomy.

In this sense, the field of sport offers entirely distinct insight into the questions provoked by the latest possibilities of the biotechnological era. I shall attempt to single out some of the fields within the theories of sport that, each in its own way, appear to be indicative of "the state of body and mind" today. (I) In competitive sports, the pluralism of ethical positions in the theoretical foundations of sport is reconciled by the concept of *fair play*, which has been shown to be fragile before the challenges of scientific and technological progress. (II) The solution offered in an attempt to harmonise the "new" and the "old" is a further step in objectifying the body – its technological enhancement with the purpose of improving its natural givens. Having been subordinated in the mind-body dualism, the body has advanced to now being a desirable means of creating a better and improved person. (III) The pace of the latest possibilities of improvement has been much faster than the pace of the existing ethical apparatuses that study them. Contemporary man has been enjoying all the benefits that this historical moment has to offer, although

aware that many of these introduce attributes that go undetected by the radar of ethical reflection. What hides beneath the surface of our rational doubts are deep-set fears of unknown risk.⁵ In this sense, I shall lastly examine the increasing popularity of so-called high-risk sports drawing on S. Lyng and his work on edgework.

Sport and values

Camus noted that the context in which he really learned ethics was that of sport.⁶ The relationship between ethics and sport is far deeper than the level of relationship between morality and human activity, since the inherent characteristics of sport generate ethical questions. As physical activity deriving from social systems that promote the spirit of competition, sport is both a competition guided by rules and a system that ranks human bodies according to their respective performance. In respect of its conception, context and values, today's sport – besides its accentuated aspiration after success – differs enormously from sport as it once was.⁷ Focusing on the value attributes of today's sport, what we leave behind are illusions of their linear development.

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Mary Midgley, "The Game Game", *Philosophy*, vol. 49 (1974), p. 231. The authoress starts her famous text precisely with this statement by Bill Shankly, manager of the Liverpool Football Club.

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John Hoberman, *Mortal Engines: The Science of Performance and the Dehumanization of Sport*, p. 62.

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50.3% of the citizens of the European Union follow sport on television, 17.4% on radio, and one third of all Internet searches pertain to sport and entertainment. *Europeans' participation in cultural activities*, http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_158_en.pdf.

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The relationship between game and sport is a topic of many layers, which – although fascinating and philosophically stimulating – exceeds the framework of this paper.

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The simplest thing would be to call this fear anxiety, yet, the way I see it, the latter is characterised by a paralysed state of mind. Accordingly, I consider it more appropriate to examine this feeling from the perspective of standing in awe of the unknown, which most probably represents the most basic driving force behind human curiosity institutionalised in science or religion, for instance.

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Jan Boxill, *Sport Ethics: An Anthology*, Blackwell Publishing, p. 15; Robert L. Simon, "Internalism and Internal Values in Sport",

in: William J. Morgan (ed.), *Ethics in Sport*, 2nd edition, p. 35. During his studies, Camus actively played sports and was most fond of football. He played as goalkeeper until he had to give up playing due to illness. Football fans claim that "[a]ll that I know most surely about morality and obligations, I owe to football" (Kevin Moore, *Museums and Popular Culture*, Leicester University Press, London 1997, p. 125, from: www.museion.gu.se).

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In the widest sense of the word, it can be said that sport is as old as man. Sports activities existed in all the eras and cultures as part of everyday life. The theory of the unity of mind and body implied that physical activity could psychologically and intellectually gratify. Furthermore, one could experience a sense of gratification precisely because physical activity lacks an external purpose. The strengthening of the concept of the mind-body dualism, the increasing influence of the Church and the development of industrial society are also turning points in both one's relation to the body and our understanding of sport. Value determinants have been changing according to the conceptual shifts. Our time is characterised by the institutionalisation of sports activities, as well as by a significant shift in our value system. As a result, a number of authors maintain that sport had not existed prior to the Industrial Revolution. For the purposes of this paper, I shall take the term *sport* to mean *today's sport*, fully respecting all the differences that distinguish it from the meanings ascribed to it throughout history.

R. Simon analyses the relationship between values and sport on two levels.⁸ Externalism denies that sport is the source of specific values, and claims that what sport does is simply mirror the values present within the social context. Some externalists tone down the above attitude in some measure, claiming that sport primarily strengthens the values promoted in society and culture, and that it affects their acceptance in a specific way. Internalism, on the other hand, underlines the autonomy of sport as a social activity that functions according to its very own values, which can either be in accord or discord with the widely accepted social values.

The conceptual opposition of these two standpoints has attracted the attention of many authors. Externalists identify sport as manifestations of both the dominant and suppressed characteristics issuing from the social context, most frequently basing their view on the parallels between the social system and widely accepted sports activities, or analysing the processes of work and their mirroring in one's motivation for extra-work activities and their choice. The strained causality between production processes and sport facilitates a smooth (and often debatable) omitting of all historical, cultural, political, social and even productional differences. On the other hand, advocating the value – and not just value – autonomy of sport in relation to the social context is just as problematic. It is not difficult to understand where the questionability of the aforesaid two opposed positions comes from. The special status of sport is the consequence of its detachedness from *real* life, the uncommonness of some (or most) sport activities, their evident triviality, as well as a number of inconvenient moral standards according to which its participants function. Outside the world of sport a number of its rules, regulations and accepted moral actions would most certainly be met by significant resistance, if not even by widespread public condemnation. Yet, on sports fields, such morally disputable actions live an entirely legitimate life of their own. Externalists view this as a confirmation of their “thesis on continuity” – i.e. the existence of both declared and suppressed mechanisms of the way society functions – while internalists use it to substantiate their “separation thesis”⁹ on the autonomy of moral values within the field of sport. The separation of moral actions in sport and their value disharmony with social actions has led to the thesis that sports ethics is founded on an internal, specific morality which is closely connected with the idea of athletic competition.¹⁰ Yet, how grounded is it to talk of values in actions whose nature is first and foremost competitive?

The victory imperative and the spirit of sport

Competitive sport cannot function without competitions, and competitions are regulated by clear rules. It seems that we should not have any doubts in the ethical valorisation of the activities relating to sport: it is clear what is and what is not acceptable, when we play by the rules, and when we are subject to moral judgement. Victory is a motivational and not a moral guideline. Being the best means being the best within the prescribed rules. Moreover, the constitutive regulations¹¹ of sport promote even some less efficient paths to victory: for example, skiers would be much faster down the slope if they did not have to meander between the flags. The concept of fair play is the central principle of moral judgment in sport. The internal logic of sport conceives of fair play as using only the allowed means of achieving victory. Fair play resolves our doubts about value and competition – if you do not play fair and by the rules you are not a participant equal to your competitors and your possible victory is considered to be invalid; moreover, you are not honoured but condemned.

Fair play, as the ethical backbone of the competitive element in sport, is but one segment of what is widely referred to as *the spirit of sport*, proclaimed the unique platform for the shaping of a specific “package” of values: “ethics; fair play and honesty; health; excellence in performance; character and education; fun and joy; teamwork; dedication and commitment; respect for rules and laws; respect for oneself and other participants; courage; and community and solidarity.”¹² Thus, within the competitive environment of sport values do exist and their preservation is the very ethical signature of each and every success in sport worth admiring. Top achievement is victory if it is obtained in the spirit of sport. Only then is it truly honoured as “the celebration of the human spirit, body and mind”.¹³ The complex combination of the elements of the “spirit of sport” also represents perhaps the final barrier to the challenges of the contemporary biotechnological era. The *scientification* of sport has happened regardless, and the limits will continue to be pushed in the future. Is this truly the end of sport and whatever happened to the preservation of the “spirit of sport” – are questions that transcend the very field they have originated from.

The body, technology, sport

The scientification of sport presents a serious challenge to the concept of the “spirit of sport”. The field of sport acts as a magnifier for our insight into the abstruse problems introduced by science and technology, particularly in respect of the questions of the body and the possibilities of manipulating it. Once the dwelling of the soul (at least transitorily), then the dark realm of lowly desires, today the body has been “awakened”, brought back to “consciousness” and is now the object of our care and attention – it is a material befitting all improvements. Cosmetic surgery has been steadily gaining in popularity and represents an efficient way of improving one’s natural givens. It has democratised beauty. Baudrillard observes that in America the cult of the body is an “achieved utopia” and that physical beauty is today created by plastic surgeons.¹⁴ Today we can all choose a desired body at “the self-service store of styles” (T. Polemus). However, the increasingly greater possibilities of manipulating the body render our sense of insecurity concerning the body, what it actually is, what is natural on it and what can become of it – increas-

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Robert L. Simon, “Internalism and Internal Values in Sport”, in: William J. Morgan (ed.), *Ethics in Sport*, 2nd edition, p. 35.

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J. S. Russell, “Broad Internalism and the Moral Foundations of Sport”, in: William J. Morgan (ed.), *Ethics in Sport*, 2nd edition, p. 52.

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Robert L. Simon, “Internalism and Internal Values in Sport”, p. 36.

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The constitutive and regulative rules of sport follow Kant’s categorisation, which many authors interested in defining the internal mechanisms of sport draw on. Cf.: Sigmund Loland, *Fair Play in Sport: A Moral Norm System*.

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Masami Sekine & Takayuki Hata, “The Crisis of Modern Sport and the Dimension of Achievement for its Conquest”, *International Journal of Sport and Health Science*, vol. 2 (2004), p. 180.

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Ibid. Cf.: “Clean sport is the celebration of the human spirit, body, and mind. It is what we call the ‘Spirit of Sport’ and it is characterized by health, fair play, honesty, respect for self and others, courage, and dedication.” WADA NewsItem, <http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/files/43036/11297341155WADANewsItem.doc/WADANewsItem.doc>.

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J. Baudrillard, *America*, Verso 1989.

ingly deeper. The Cartesian dream of the human body as a machine has never been more achievable than today.

Control over one's own body creates ample room for significant manipulation in the development of one's (bodily) identity. Wasteful consumerism also uses the body as a material for the moulding of the desired self-image, transforming it into a performance tool. The traditional "subduing of the body", indicated – first and foremost – through the Christian tradition, has erupted into its very opposite. Bodiliness has become a project, a form of physical goods and a stock we market. The boundaries between the natural and social are blurred; the questions of biological processes, of giving birth and dying are questions of social debates and political decisions. The growing insecurity concerning the naturalness of the body, induced by the possibilities of almost limitlessly reshaping it – even from the time and state of pre-bodiliness – places both the body and bodiliness into an entire novel context. If we interpret the body within the context of nature and if we understand it to be the self-sprouted result of genetic lottery, then the fears of the possibilities of technological interventions into the very foundations of naturalness are justified. Yet, the body is not only natural but also – naturally – cultivated in a way and already removed from nature. Although the technologisation of both nature and the human body can be derived from the cultivation of the same in an almost undetected way, this would, nevertheless, be a leap that could mean a change of the underlying cornerstones of *humanitas*. Culture has been adopting nature while re-defining it via social constructions and classifications. Technology has been adopting nature via alienation and has been re-constructing it as an object. The latter also implies creating, programming and improving the human body – its complete objectification. One of the possible future projections of the grand finale of this scenario sees the humankind as a self-created and consciously evolved new species.

The technological means of modifying our biological inheritance, coupled with the social conditions that facilitate such transformations, has resulted in a wide array of techniques of potentiating the desires attributes. Enhancement technologies target at improving both the mental and the physical characteristics beyond the frames of what we would consider sufficient for a "normal" life. Countless techniques of enhancing the body and mind are already accessible. What attracts attention is the question of the fine line between accepted and forbidden techniques. In the field of sport this line is traced by the concept of the spirit of sport and the theoretical platform of fair play. For many, this is the final line of defence of humanism against biotechnological *infection*, the outcomes of its possible re-constitutions of which are uncertain. Others consider it to be susceptible to change and adaptation. If we act morally when we act by the rules, then we change the rules so as to remain moral.¹⁵

The basic instrument that achieves the goals of competitive sport is the athlete him/herself. Their bodies are the key factor in setting up the path to victory. Intensive trainings at a very young age, practising moves up to the point of body robotisation, subjection to pain, risking injuries – the body is instrumentalised, denied, alienated and transformed into a product.¹⁶

Within the competitive environment of sport, its participants are being classified, excluded, eliminated and selected on the basis of their achievements. They enter into a peculiar love-hate relationship with their own bodies; their bodies are goods, both a means and an end, they make demands and seek sacrifices, and can experience pain and pleasure simultaneously. "Pleasure asceticism" offers the values of elitism, abstinence, discipline and depriva-

tion, which are the very connective tissue of our society. Winning against the competition, winning against the adversary, overcoming oneself and one's limits, winning against the weather conditions, winning for one's country... In the name of victory, in the name of the nation, in the name of exceeding the limits, in the name of exiting the anonymity of the world of work..., competitive sport is a place that tests the limits of human abilities, as well as the balance between body and mind, and that pushes the limits, a place that exposes facts about the human nature and the possibilities of man. Nevertheless, it has been long since the time when ordinary people could identify with top athletes and turn their sports achievements into motivation for their own activities. Pushing the limits, the imperative of setting a record and the competition that has expanded from one's own village to the population of the global village as a whole oppose all forms of mediocrity. We do not have to look far to find examples of top athletes who owe their achievements, at least in some measure, to some *error* of nature, the game of genes and a winning end result of the "genetic lottery". John Hoberman starts his book with a discussion of the domination of black athletes in general,¹⁷ who are, according to many, at a biological advantage, which manifests itself primarily through the biological traits of their bones and muscles, insignificant from the perspective of biology yet consequential, it seems, from the perspective of top sport. I do not wish to even slightly diminish the importance of training, practice and significant self-sacrifice¹⁸ preceding the achievement of results, yet the fact that some individuals have the ability to achieve more due to the gene game, nevertheless, remains a fact.

Technology presents us and our offspring with the possibility of being amongst such athletes. It does not set the ultimate course of development, but simply widens our range of choices. People remain moral agents, and their decisions are followed by consequences that continue to require responsibility.

N. Bostrom and R. Roache¹⁹ distinguish between bioconservatives and transhumanists, providing a fascinating pro-transhumanistic overview of the distinction between therapy and enhancement, and the typical areas that frequently house opposing standpoints. Their conclusion is that there are no valid reasons for either resisting or rejecting the application of all technologi-

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Andy Miah suggests that the competent sports authorities accept the fact of the development of technology and its entering the field of sport, and announce that we have entered a transitional stage. This stage implies having to re-examine the existing laws on doping and their harmonisation with the applications of technology outside sport. Andy Miah, *Genetically Modified Athletes: Biomedical Ethics, Gene Doping and Sport*, Routledge 2004.

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Michel Caillat, "Fair play and the competitive spirit – fading sport ideals – The Competitive World of Sport", UNESCO Courier, Dec. 1992, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1310/is_1992_Dec/ai_13522626/pg_3.

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John Hoberman, *Mortal Engines: The Science of Performance and the Dehumanization of Sport*, pp. 33–35.

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"... [G]enetic dependence does not exclude environmental influences. A highly heritable phenotype does not mean that it is predetermined, but training can exert its profound effect only within the fixed limits of heredity. Though genes and training may set the physiologic limit, it is behavioral and other factors that determine the ultimate frontiers of human performance." Klissouras Vassilis, "The nature and nurture of human performance", *European Journal of Sport Science* 2, vol. 1 (June 2001), pp. 1–10.

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Nick Bostrom & Rebecca Roache, "Ethical Issues in Human Enhancement", <http://www.nickbostrom.com/ethics/human-enhancement.pdf>.

cal breakthroughs that can enhance people (their bodies, minds and general abilities). Transgressing the limit after which we endanger others is the only restriction on our free choice. Accordingly, there are no any obstacles to the interventions into genetic structures with the purpose of selecting the best children, provided that the highest principle must always be the best interest and future welfare of the resulting children.²⁰ Leaving aside the possible controversies provoked by such attitudes, I shall centre on the proclaimed autonomy of decision-making concerning the application of the existing and prospective human enhancement technologies. Indeed, it can be said that what we wish to have is just a slightly enhanced bone or muscle structure, that there are people whom nature endowed such structure and that such traits are not harmful for our health. Our autonomy is measured by the freedom of the choices we make and exercise, and the above choice is unlikely to have negative consequences for the rest of society. So why would we be sceptical about the possibility of exercising choices of this type?

Torbjörn Tännsjö²¹ wonders why we honour top athletes by celebrating the successes they have achieved not all by themselves, since such successes are also the result of plain luck and a good mix of genes. Should we not have more respect for those who have consciously undergone certain treatments in order to become more successful, and who, correspondingly, truly deserve to have their successes considered the outcome of their efforts? Why would we not admire the physical constitution that someone has chosen and that helped someone achieve something with it? Tännsjö further explains that, by doing so, we can, naturally, also admire the scientists whose work has facilitated such changes. His stance is the extreme variant of the transhumanistic position. The radicalness of his proposal does not require firmer grounds than the ones implied, although it does attract the attention of scientists, athletes and the general public.

Discussing these questions within the field of sport, which attracts the interest of the masses, provides an example of resolving such and similar questions in the other fields of human activity. On the other hand, the relative autonomy of the field of sport disallows the exact transferral of its values to the much wider social context. On the one hand, the issues of body treatment transcend the field of sport, in which they can be examined in a potentiated social variant, while on the other, the way that the ethics of sport relates to the social context is much looser. With respect to the aforesaid, all the adjustments of the judgment criteria in sport are the result of consensus within the field itself. Nevertheless, the ethical assessments of the ways in which bodies are treated in sport cannot not have impact on the wider context, since – ultimately – we all have bodies regardless of how we feel about sport. Naturally, there are many such examples, and bioethical discussions abound with the same. One such example is *in vitro* fertilisation. Although it is a legally accepted medical practice, we can all speak out against the creation of children via artificial insemination, and can claim that we would never resort to such procedures. We could be just as judgemental about the pushing of limits in sport and the entirely legal entrance of the genetically modified into the world of sport competitions. The widely discussed field of the dividing line between medical therapy and human enhancement aims at creating the possibilities of choice and an equal treatment within all the fields of human activity. Yet, if – for a brief moment – we forget about the procedures and focus on their products, why do we still have problems with equating the above two procedures in the ethical sense? The difference between the two does not lie in the means but in the end. Genetic interventions with the purpose of creating enhanced athletes render them a special group which is entered programmatically. This

also puts an end to our last self-delusion that effort, hard work and practice lead to the very top. Getting motivated by the successes of others in sport to set and achieve our goals – regardless of whether these goals fall within or without the field of sport – also becomes a mission impossible, since such high achievers have been designed at meetings between bioengineers, medical professionals and intermediary companies on the one hand, and future parents on the other.

It is highly possible that we would not be able to ask questions of this type without the theoretical grounds prepared in advance on the legacy of the Baconian and Cartesian traditions. The questions of the influence of technology on enhancing one's abilities and thus achievements are particularly plastic in the fields that reflect the concept of the mind-body dualism more than others. The detachedness of the human body from human existence lies at the very core of modern science. Nature is defined, researched and finally controlled; the objectification of nature is also the objectification of the body. There has been a shift in positions in respect of the very concept of person – from the position of personalism to positions which are contextually defined by empiricism or functionalism.²² The dehumanising nature of technological “humanisation” cannot simply be calculated into a cost-benefit analysis. Plessner's distinction between “being a body” and “having a body” has today been gaining in currency: the fine line between the nature that we are and the qualifications that we attribute to ourselves has been dissolving. Brown states that “it is worth noting that there are few other experiences in life outside of sports where the distinction between being a person and having bodies seems so fatuous.”²³ This might just be an entirely sufficient reason for the defence of the human body against its ultimate objectification.

The illusion of control

The rationalistic cost-benefit equation bearing the signature of transhumanism fails to embrace the element of uncertainty as to the consequences of interventions into the very fundamentals of a person. The field of sport figures as a fascinating magnifying glass, which unveils entirely specific and intuitive ways of manipulating our fears of an altered future. High-risk sports activities are all too frequently advertised as activities that will “truly make you feel alive”. Such activities have been flourishing simultaneously with society's attempts to reduce the risks involved in everyday life. Today's cars are much safer, preventive medicine is far more efficient (we can be treated even before we become ill), bank systems are increasingly advanced, and health care and safety at work are now a legal obligation. On the other hand, in the sphere of our privacy, we are witnesses to a massive increase in the popularity of

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Ibid., pp. 24–25.

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Torbjörn Tännsjö, “Genetic engineering and elitism in sport”, in: Claudio Marcello Tamburrini & Torbjörn Tännsjö (eds.), *Genetic Technology and Sport: Ethical Questions*, Routledge 2005, pp. 57–68.

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Cf.: Laura Palazzani, “The Concept of Person between Bioethics and Biolaw”, in: Ante Čović & Thomas Sören Hoffmann (eds.),

Bioethik und kulturelle Pluralität. Die sudosteuropäische Perspektive, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin 2005, pp. 113–123.

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Masami Sekine, Takayuki Hata, “The Crisis of Modern Sport and the Dimension of Achievement for its Conquest”, *International Journal of Sport and Health Science*, vol. 2 (2004), p. 185.

activities such as parachuting, scuba diving, paragliding, rock climbing, etc. The inconsistency between the public efforts to reduce the risks of injury and death, and the private desire to increase these risks is most certainly worth our attention.

Stephen Lyng has been tackling so-called “edgework” (he borrowed the neologism from Hunter S. Thompson), defining it as those activities that involve a clearly perceptible threat to the physical and mental integrity of individuals. The “edge” is the dividing line between life and death, consciousness and unconsciousness, common sense and insanity, awareness of order in both man and his/her environment and awareness of disorder.²⁴ The common trait of all “edgework” is that its participants test and improve their skill at maintaining control in situations that border on absolute chaos, i.e. in situations that most people would judge to be insurmountable. According to Lyng, the particular appeal of such activities issues from having control over situations that are an unpredictable combination of skill and coincidence, and the illusion of control (Lang, 1975) is the underlying impulse to take action on the edge. Although the levels of safety in dealing with our everyday lives have been steadily growing, some new dangers have emerged: threats of global destruction, threats from biotechnological weapons, the possibility that entire national economic systems might fail, falling into a new economic crisis, etc. This list could easily be expanded with a general feeling of lack of privacy, a deep-rooted feeling of the supremacy of the system over the individual and the annihilation of individuality. Thus, the increase in the security measures of society influences the strengthening of one’s instincts for survival in society in a seemingly contradictory way. And considering that the risks we are exposed to lie outside our power of choice, the sole thing we can do is create the illusion of control by creating our very own “microcosm of risks”. Langer claims that people are prone to view themselves as causes, even in situations they have no control or influence over. What is present in sport in particular is a combination of coincidence and skill, which is vital for its outcome, meaning that sport also teems with mechanisms of creating the illusion of control.

We produce risks while working out a compensation plan. Having inherited the legitimacy of the master of progress, science is equally called upon to talk of application risks. The demystification of scientific rationality has unveiled the looseness of the ties between the production of scientific achievements and the responsibility associated with their application. Risk, thus, transcends the framework of scientific experiments in strictly controlled environments, and has been gaining in general interest. Disturbing events, such as wars and natural disasters, were just as terrifying for pre-industrial humankind as they are today. However, the impact of once localised human activities is today global; while natural disasters were once regarded as either the game of fate or the wrath of God, today the ability to manipulate natural processes is attributed to the humankind itself. The biotechnological era has been distributing its latest achievements to society unequally, although their consequences are measured globally. “Poverty reflects hierarchy and smog democracy” (Beck, 1992).

Although scientists may never succeed in answering the questions about the very beginning of life, about that very first impulse that stimulates cell division and the building of DNA molecules, they, nevertheless, already possess ample technological tools to play the game of Creation. Social forms have adjusted their corrective factors in order to – at least seemingly – harmoniously participate in risk calculation. But the question of the future is ungraspable for the utilitarian calculation. The underlying premise of science today suf-

fers from an existential fever – justified doubt needs no solid proof. Doubt, of course, does not imply necessity. After the narcissistic wrongs done by Darwin and Copernicus who destroyed our anthropocentric and geocentric world-views, as stated by Habermas, perhaps we could also get used to a new decentralisation: the subjection of life and the body to biotechnology.²⁵ One such step would be adjusting the boundaries between the accepted and unaccepted in order that our latest activities may remain morally unquestionable. The vast array of biotechnological possibilities poses not only difficult moral questions, but also questions of a different kind. Contemporary science cannot provide a satisfactory answer to the question of the conflict between partial and global problems.²⁶ The latest possibilities demand discussion of the accurate understanding of life form as such, and philosophers have no more excuses for leaving these controversial questions in the hands of bioscientists and engineers alone. One possible framework for a dialogue that surpasses all disciplinary, expert, historical and cultural positions is to be found in bioethics.

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Tijelo i tehnologija

Prilog bioetičkoj raspravi o sportu

Sažetak

Razlika između prikaza vrhunskog sportaša nekad i danas možda se najbolje očitava u točki susreta kiborg-teorije i studija o sportu. Rekonceptualizacija pojma 'sportaš' u tome se smislu otvara kao pomak od 'prirodnoga' ka 'umjetnom'. Tijekom ljudske povijesti vrhunski sportaši uvijek su bili doživljavani kao na određeni način 'ne-prirodni' i slavljani kao heroji koji su nadvladali granice svojih prirodnih tijela. Današnji sportski događaji privlače više gledatelja nego ikada ranije, a oštra konkurencija podiže i same standarde i kriterije natjecanja. Sportovi koji privlače mase gledatelja već su odavno predstave 'nakaza'; gledateljima na stadionima ili pred televizorom u udobnosti njihovih domova gotovo je nemoguće zamisliti da bi i sami ikad mogli postići tako super-mišićavo tijelo sa super-brzim refleksima. Staromodni krv, znoj i suze još su uvijek negdje prisutni, iako inkorporirani u napredna dostignuća moderne tehnokulture. Mnštvo pitanja koja proizlaze iz takve perspektive pronašla su svoje mjesto za raspravu u relativno novom pluriperspektivnom pristupu izazovima biotehnološkog doba – bioetici.

Bioetika nudi platformu za dijalog o bitnim pitanjima današnjice, dijalog koji nadrađa disciplinarnu, stručnu, historijsku i kulturološku poziciju. Takav diskurs suočava se, međutim, sa pluralizmom u pristupima kao i metodološkim barijerama te pretpostavlja stvaranje odgovarajuće teorijske podloge. Ovaj rad će izdvojiti samo neke problemske točke koje u području sporta plastično očitavaju nedostatnosti postojećih monoperspektivno orijentiranih koncepcija. U tome smislu, naglasit će se samo neki simptomi koji ukazuju na dezorijentiranost svakodnevnog življenja, a koji se na osoban način prikazuju u sportu: krhkost etičkih pozicija sadržanih u konceptima »duha sporta« i fair playa u sučeljavanju sa znanstveno-tehničkim napretkom, objektivacija tijela, te porast interesa za aktivnostima visokog rizika. U ovome radu navedena obilježja razumijevaju se kao znakovi potrebe za nadilaženjem redukcionističkih i monoperspektivnih pristupa, donedavno dominantnih, a koje osobit bioetički pristup ima mogućnosti nadići.

Ključne riječi

sport, bioetika, tijelo, tehnologija, etika, pluriperspektivizam

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H. S. Thompson, who coined "edgework", gives an interesting commentary in his explanation of the word, stating that this dividing line can also be arrived at in other ways, such as when a workaholic reaches the very edge of reason (S. Lyng, "Živjeti na rubu", *Treći program hrvatskoga radija* 42 (1993), pp. 95–96).

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J. Habermas, *Budućnost ljudske prirode (The Future of Human Nature)*, Naklada Breza, Zagreb 2006.

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I. Cifrić, *Bioetička ekumena (Bioethical Ecumene)*, Pergamena, Zagreb 2007.

Ivana Zagorac

Körper und Technologie

Beitrag zur bioethischen Sportdebatte

Zusammenfassung

Der Unterschied zwischen einem Spitzensportler früher und heute tritt an den Berührungspunkten zwischen der Kyborg-Theorie und verschiedenen Sportstudien am deutlichsten zutage. Eine Rekonzeptualisierung des Begriffs ‚Sportler‘ erweist sich demnach als eine Sinnerweiterung von ‚natürlich‘ zu ‚künstlich‘. Im Laufe der Geschichte wurden Spitzensportler stets als irgendwie ‚un-natürlich‘ empfunden und als Helden gefeiert, die die Beschränkungen ihres natürlichen Körpers überwand. Sportveranstaltungen ziehen heute mehr Zuschauer in ihren Bann, als dies früher jemals der Fall war, und durch die scharfe Konkurrenz werden auch die Standards und Kriterien von Sportwettkämpfen angehoben. Vor einem Massenpublikum stattfindende Sportveranstaltungen haben sich schon längst zu Freak Shows gewandelt, bei denen den Zuschauern in den Stadien oder vor den Bildschirmen zu Hause unvorstellbar ist, dass sie je selbst einen so muskulösen Körper mit superschnellen Reflexen besitzen könnten. Das alte Schlagwort von „Blut, Schweiß und Tränen“ besteht auch weiterhin, wenn auch eingebunden in die zukunftssträchtigen Errungenschaften der modernen Techno-Kultur. Die vielzähligen Fragen, die sich aus einer solchen Perspektive ergeben, haben in einem relativ neuen Zugang zu den Herausforderungen des biotechnologischen Zeitalters ihre Plattform gefunden – in der Bioethik.

Die Bioethik bietet ein Diskussionsforum für die wichtigsten uns heute bewegenden Fragen, für einen Dialog, der über disziplin- und fachgebundene, historische und kulturologische Positionen hinausgeht. Ein solcher Diskurs sieht sich jedoch sowohl in den unterschiedlichen Ansätzen als auch in den methodologischen Barrieren mit einem Pluralismus konfrontiert und erfordert als Voraussetzung eine entsprechende theoretische Grundlage. In diesem Artikel werden nur einige Problempunkte hervorgehoben, die sich im Bereich des Sports infolge der Unzulänglichkeiten der bestehenden monoperspektivisch orientierten Konzeptionen auf eine plastische Weise abzeichnen. In diesem Sinne verweist die Verfasserin auf einige wenige Symptome, die auf eigentümliche Weise im Sport zum Vorschein kommen und die Desorientiertheit im Alltag sichtbar machen: Gemeint ist die Fragilität ethischer Positionen, die in den Konzepten von „Sportsgeist“ und Fairplay enthalten sind und sich gegen den wissenschaftlich-technischen Fortschritt, die Verobjektierung des Körpers und ein gesteigertes Interesse an risikoreichen Aktivitäten behaupten müssen. In der vorliegenden Arbeit werden die angeführten Merkmale als Zeichen des Bedürfnisses verstanden, die bis vor kurzem noch vorherrschenden, reduktionistischen und monoperspektivischen Ansätze zu überwinden, zumal mithilfe der Bioethik, der diesbezüglich besonders gute Chancen nachgesagt werden.

Schlüsselbegriffe

Sport, Bioethik, Körper, Technologie, Ethik, Pluriperspektivismus

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Corps et technologie

Contribution au débat bioéthique sur le sport

Résumé

La différence entre la représentation d'un sportif de haut niveau, telle qu'elle a pu l'être par le passé et telle qu'elle est aujourd'hui, se précise peut-être le mieux au carrefour des théories du cyborg et du sport. La reconceptualisation de la notion de « sportif » évolue dans le sens du « naturel » vers « l'artificiel ». Au cours de l'histoire humaine, les sportifs de haut niveau ont toujours été perçus comme, dans une certaine mesure, « non naturels » et ont été célébrés comme des héros dépassant les limites de leur propre corps. Les événements sportifs actuels attirent plus de spectateurs que jamais, et dans le même temps, la concurrence acharnée relève les niveaux et les critères des compétitions. Les sports attirant des spectateurs en masse sont depuis longtemps des « foires aux monstres ». Qu'ils soient dans les stades ou confortablement assis devant leur petit écran, les spectateurs ont du mal à imaginer avoir un jour eux-mêmes un corps aussi musclé avec des superréflexes. La notion démodée de souffrance à base de sang, de

sueur et de larmes est désormais présente comme partie prenante des performances de la technoculture moderne. Nombre de questions qui découlent de cette perspective ont trouvé un terrain de débat dans une relativement nouvelle approche, pluriperspectiviste, des défis de l'époque biotechnologique : la bioéthique.

La bioéthique offre une base au dialogue sur les questions essentielles du monde actuel : un dialogue qui surmonte les positions sectorielles, historiques et culturelles. Cependant, un tel discours se trouve confronté au pluralisme des approches comme aux barrières méthodologiques et requiert la création d'un appui théorique adéquat. Cette étude ne mettra en exergue que quelques-uns des points problématiques qui, dans le domaine du sport, mettent en relief les défauts des conceptions monoperspectivistes existantes. Dans ce sens, ne seront soulignés que quelques symptômes de la désorientation de la vie quotidienne apparaissant de manière particulière dans le sport : la fragilité des positions éthiques incombant aux concepts de « l'esprit du sport » et du « fair-play » face au progrès scientifique et technique, l'objectivation du corps, l'intérêt accru pour des activités à risque. Ces caractéristiques sont considérées comme les signes d'un besoin de supplanter les approches réductrices et monoperspectivistes, jusqu'à présent dominantes, que l'approche particulière de la bioéthique a la capacité de surmonter.

Mots-clés

sport, bioéthique, corps, technologie, éthique, pluriperspectivisme