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SPORT AND PHILOSOPHY

Sport in the Light of the Philosophy of Play

The answer to the question what is play can be reached in the following ways: by analyzing the concrete totality of the epoch, which means by determining play as a concrete social (historical) phenomenon; on the basis of the dominant ideological model; and on the basis of general human ideals which enable the creation of a vision of future and thus the establishment of a critical distance both to the social reality and to the governing normative vault. Basically, we have two principal approaches: play as the reproduction of the existing world and an (apparent) escape from it, and play as a critical, change-oriented relation to the existing world and the creation of a new world. It should be noted that the subject matter of the philosophy of play are not only the conceptions which explicitly deal with play, but also the philosophical considerations which enable the formation of its fundamental concepts.

The philosophy of play does not reach a concept of play on the basis of historical, sociological and philosophical analyses, but on the basis of the governing evaluative model which is of an ideological and propagandist character. It tries to determine the concept of play by enumerating the characteristics of the existing plays and through their synthesis, or by establishing an ideal of play which appears as the project of what should be. The concept of play becomes a suprahistorical criterion for determining play, which means that play is not a concrete social (historical) phenomenon, but a phenomenon *sui generis*. It becomes a means for conserving the existing world, which leads to an uncritical relation to the existing plays which are an explicit or tacit starting point for determining its essence. The characteristics attributed to play become an ideological mask for obtaining a «humanist» legitimacy for the relations which, by their nature, are a radical form of man's dehumanization and denaturalization. In order to stop the fight for an authentic human world, human ideals are utilized in the creation of a «humanist» veil for an inhuman world – which is proclaimed «happiness». Play becomes a projection of the desired on the advertising banner of capitalism which eliminates man's need to fight for a new world. Determination of the concept of play is conditioned by the endeavour to build a world «parallel» to the world of misery, accepted by people as the «oasis of happiness» (Fink). The philosophy of play does not search for the truth; it creates a false picture of the phenomena which, by their nature, are opposed to the proclaimed humanist ideals.

Its role is similar to that of religion: to convince people that the «world of happiness» is possible on the grounds of and as opposed to the «world of concern», and to bring man into a specific mental state in which he loses interest in the fundamental existential questions and becomes the victim of his subconscious. However, play is not an illusory world, like Christian «paradise» which exists solely in people's heads; it is a constituent part of a real world where people should find a possibility of satisfying their desires. Even those social phenomena are proclaimed «play» which, like sport and war, are a «pure» incarnation of the fundamental principles of the existing world: the Social Darwinist principle *bellum omnium contra omnes* and the absolutized principle of quantitatively measurable performance shaped in the Olympic maxim *citius, altius, fortius*. What distinguishes play from other areas of life is that man becomes involved in it «with his free will» - «spontaneously» accepting the given rules.

Two conceptions predominate in the philosophy of play. The first is monistic: play is a phenomenon in which in the real or ideal form the structure of the existing world is expressed. The second is dualistic: social reality is divided into the «world of concern», dominated by labour, and the «world of happiness», dominated by play. In both cases, play is an instrument for defending the existing world: either as preparation for the existing life or as an (apparent) escape from everyday life. The philosophy of play claims that play is purposeless and that it is an end in itself, in order to instrumentalize play as an exclusive political means of the ruling class for the protection of its strategic interests. A «purposeless» play becomes the production of the existing world. Hence the question is not raised of play as a concrete social phenomenon, nor of the origin and nature of norms which make its framework. Instead of a critical mind, apriorism, on which dogmatic-mythological conscious is based, becomes the foundation of the relation to play. This also applies to the relation to sport. Sport is highly valued as something expressing the highest human aspirations and becomes a mythological phenomenon. As far as the thesis that sport «does not have a political character» is concerned, it corresponds to the conception that sport is a «purposeless activity» which, just like play, is an «end in itself». We are dealing with an endeavour to conceal the fact that sport is the incarnation of the ruling values in a condensed ideological form, and as such is the most important means for drawing people into the spiritual orbit of capitalism. Hence the theory of the amateur («good») sport and professional («bad») sport gives rise to false dilemmas. It is precisely the amateur sport which, with its «moral dimension», most successfully integrates man into the existing world since it removes the moralistic critical distance that appears in relation to the professional sport. It destroys the critical relation to the ruling relations and values and creates a positive character and positive conscious. It becomes «normal» for children, from the early age, to be categorized according to their gender; to be divided in groups engaged in mutual struggle; to regard physical injuries and killings as a normal element of life; to adopt the ever

increasing performance as the criterion for determining human value; that it is not intelligence, but physical strength, which is to secure man a position in society... Hence «spontaneity» in sport is its most harmful dimension: young people automatically adopt the ruling values which make the grounds for their human self-knowledge. That the distinction made between the amateur and professional sports is but a deception can be seen from the attribute «supreme», which is repeatedly ascribed to professional sport, thus clearly suggesting that professional sport represents the highest value-related challenge for amateur sport.

Reduction of the existing world to an abstract «world of concern» is the starting point for reducing play to an abstract «oasis of happiness». The playing space is free from anything that comes from the «world of concern» and becomes an idealized projection of a «happy world», where anyone can fulfil their suppressed desires. The philosophy of play seeks to construct the concept of play according to an ideological model of «reality» in which play is the projection of unrealized humanism. The concept of play is reached by determining man's position in the «world of concern» and by trying to direct his discontent not towards the elimination of the causes of misery, but towards the «satisfaction» found in the given spaces of «happiness». Play becomes the compensation for a deprived humanity and an instrument for man's incorporation into the existing world: the relation to play is the projection of the relation to the ruling order. At the same time, «happiness» is determined by the nature of the relations and values denoted by the term «play». Thus we move in a *circulus vitiosus*: first, «happiness» is the essential attribute of play only for «play» to become the essential attribute of happiness. To define play means to create the ever more convincing humanist masks for social relations and values which are proclaimed «play», whereas the linguistic virtuosity expresses the unwillingness to determine the concept of play as a concrete social (historical) phenomenon. The instrumentalization of humanist ideals («freedom», «beauty», «happiness», «peace», etc.) in creating a false picture of play ultimately serves to crush the visionary conscious which strives to create a world in which these ideals will be achieved.

The question of play only apparently lies in the sphere of mind. The philosophy of play does not address the mind; it is reduced to an illusory rhetoric which directs man's pursuit of happiness to the activities that serve to reinforce the increasingly precarious foundations of the ruling order. It creates linguistic whirls in which man's pursuit of a clear critical attitude to the ruling order and of a guiding idea in the creation of a new world are to disappear. Today, the philosophy of play comes down to doing the snow job over the ever deeper abyss and to the mind's (self) annihilation. Instead of philosophical argumentation, we deal with psychological manipulation: philosophy of play becomes the «art of seduction» (Nietzsche). It is mystifying and escapist, and its nature is determined by the destructive character of the ruling order which makes it not only anti-libertarian but also anti-existential. Most importantly, the relation to play predetermines man's

relation to the existing world. To accept play as the «world of happiness», where the ruling relations and values are reproduced in a «playing» form, means to accept the world of misery and renounce any fight for freedom. Hence in play (sport) the dominant upbringing is through living the existing life, to which corresponds upbringing without education, and this means that acquiring a positive character precedes the development of positive conscious. The philosophy of play crushes the idea of the world in which interpersonal relations, labour, learning, family, art and other creative activities can make man happy. The nature of the philosophy of play conditions the nature of its relation to play: it does not seek to change the existing world, but to perpetuate it by creating an «oasis of happiness» which is to enhance the illusion that in the existing world man can attain his original humanity and be happy. This is the main reason why the philosophy of play has not reached the ideal of libertarian play: the philosophy of play clashes with the philosophy of freedom. In spite of its attempts to pin man down to the existing world, the philosophy of play *volens nolens* indicates that the capitalist world is an incorrigible world of misery and that it cannot destroy man's visionary conscious and his will to create a humane world. At the same time, it indicates that the only thing that can make man happy is not the present way of life and the ruling values, but the realization of true human ideals, which are opposed to the existing world.

In the philosophy of play, two anthropological views prevail. According to the first, man is an «evil» (or «the banal»/Huizinga) being while play is a means for holding his nature under control; according to the second, man is a «good» being while play is the expression of his need for «happiness» and «socializing». Both conceptions depart from play as an indisputable normative vault which must be accepted unquestioningly if play is to proceed. Instead of emphasizing man's playing (libertarian-creative) nature, the emphasis is placed on the observance of the given rules. Play cannot be man's authentic need; it is an enforced pattern of behaviour, which becomes a means for pinning man down to the existing world and destroying the visionary mind. Even when appealing to the «human nature», the philosophy of play does not think of man but of the ruling order: «human nature» is determined by the nature of the ruling order. Hence play is possible only as a repressive normative framework intended to defend society against man. Whatever the starting point of examination, the conclusion is always the same: the ruling order is indisputable and eternal. Just as in antiquity and Christianity, man becomes the plaything of the ruling order.

The theory of sport finds the philosophical foundation of sport in the philosophy of play: the philosophy of sport becomes the philosophy of play. It is an area which appropriated the criteria for determining the true nature of play and became a prism through which the nature of sport can be perceived. The philosophy of play «draws» sport under its wing by way of three phenomena: first is a (unhistorical) competition (anthropology); second is the repressive normative vault under which the competition proceeds (*fair-play*, as well as «sports

esthetics» in which «perfection» becomes a substitute for freedom, the form of play corresponds to the form of life, etc.); third is «progress» based on the absolutized principle of quantitatively measurable performance («philosophy of performance») shaped in the maxim *citius, altius, fortius*.

For the philosophy of play sport is not a phenomenon the nature of which is determined by the nature of the concrete totality of the epoch in which it appeared, but by the nature of man as an abstract «competitive being» which is the incarnation of the ruling spirit of the existing world. It does not have a sociological, but an anthropological starting point. It is based on the conception according to which man is, by his nature, an «aggressive being» and play is a form of civilized channeling of human aggressiveness. «Good» is not a human characteristic; it is a characteristic of play which prevents the originally «evil» human nature from jeopardizing the survival of society. The philosophy of play does not regard sport as man's authentic creative (playing) activity, and thus as an interpersonal relation, but as an institution. Sport cannot be a form of the direct creation of the community of free people; it rather lifts a barrier between people which is not to be crossed. «Brotherhood is for angels!» - claims Pierre de Coubertin, reducing man to the model of «citizen» who is more like a trained beast. Sport deals with the guiding ideas of the French Revolution on which modern humanism is based – the humanism shaped in the «rights of man» (*droits de l'homme*) and «rights of the citizen» (*droits de citoyen*). «Freedom» becomes the right to escape from reality; «equality» becomes a formal right as it is based on the «right of might»; «brotherhood» comes down to unquestioning observation of norms that are to perpetuate an order based on the principle *homo homini lupus*.

The dominant view in the philosophy of play is that «play» involves a repressive normative pattern and a conflict that does not question the existing world, including a conflict that involves infliction of physical injuries and killings. According to the criteria of the bourgeois theory, life-and-death struggle falls into the category of play, while war represents the supreme form of play. In that context, the ancient Olympic Games, where killing one's opponent was legal and legitimate, represent «play». The same applies to gladiator's fights, chivalrous tournaments, as well as to boxing (and other bloody sports) which is called a «noble art». For the bourgeois theory, sport is a “peaceful” form of warfare where war is waged not with weapons, but with bodies and combative skill. Readiness to kill and capacity for killing represent the most important features of a «player»: man's right to life is subordinated to the right of the ruling order to survival. The philosophy of play emphasizes the «competitive» character of play, but by that it means the fight for pre-eminence and dominance, and not the fight for freedom, social justice, equality, for establishing interpersonal relations based on mutual respect and tolerance. Play is free from everything that enables man to realize his creative-libertarian nature.

The question of play has become a special part of esthetics. As far as sport is concerned, the indisputable criterion for determining «beauty» is victory

through an ever better result (record). Play which, in itself, as a human skill, does not contribute to the achievement of the ultimate effect, is superfluous and thus meaningless. The bodies of sportsmen, deformed to monstrous proportions, become the highest form in which sports esthetics is realized. Sports «spectacles» are similar in that sense. They are primitive circus shows, which are highly valued in the context of glorifying victory and record, which means in the context of the Social Darwinist and progressistic principle on which the existing world is based. The task of the «beautiful» is to obtain cultural legitimacy for sport by way of «polishing», which means by way of a decorative esthetics the nature of which is conditioned by the nature of the governing relations.

Between the philosophy of play and sport the relation is established without the mediation of the «theory of physical culture», an area larger in scope than sport, which is guided by the principles which enable a critical distance to sport. Philosophers who write on sport usually do not distinguish between sport and physical culture and reach conclusions which have nothing to do either with sport or with physical culture. Huizinga, Caillois, Fink, Lasch, Horkheimer, Sartre, Bloch – do not speak of physical culture and, in that context, of sport but, departing from their philosophical conceptions, have an immediate relation to sport. Their views are similar to Coubertin's notion that sport is physical culture in the true sense of that word and that between sport and physical culture only theoretical differences can be established. Regarding sport as physical culture leads to the sterilization of critical and change-oriented potentials of physical culture and to physical culture being turned into a veil that is to give sport a «cultural» aureole. Sport encloses man within the spiritual vault of a civilization based on Social Darwinism and progressism; physical culture offers a possibility of establishing a humanist critical distance to the existing world and of creating a new world. There is no doubt that civil society opened space for the development of free bodily activities, but that libertarian impulse, by way of sport and other forms of repressive «physical culture» and «physical education», has become its direct opposite: «free physical activism» becomes a systematic confrontation with the emancipatory legacy of physical culture which, with the Hellenic spiritual legacy, philanthropic and dancing movement, as well as with the aristocratic principles of physical culture, appeared as part of national cultures. A distinction should be made between free physical activism as an unrestrained development of man's authentic needs and abilities – as man's unalienable right – and sport as an institutional incarnation of the basic principles of the ruling order in its «pure» form and thus as a given pattern of behaviour. In the former case, we deal with physical activism oriented towards the creation of a world «suited» to man, through the development of his creative powers; in the latter case, we deal with the protection and development of the established order through the creation of a loyal and usable citizen (subject). In Modern Age, man has acquired self-conscious as a playing being in the context of acquiring self-conscious as the builder of society and creator of his own world: the right to play becomes the right to freedom and

happiness. Play is considered as the highest form of man's realization as a universal creative being of freedom and as the most immediate form of the creation of society as a human community: life becomes play. In view of this, the relation between sport and art, and in that context the relation between sport and artistic contests, can effectively be examined.

The philosophy of play abolishes sport as a concrete historical phenomenon and by way of humanist phrases transfers it into the mythological sphere. The attempts to proclaim sport the phenomenon *sui generis* result in the theory which ignores the comparative method when it comes to the analysis of modern, ancient and medieval «sport». It rather uses the linear approach according to which the conclusion is made that «modern sport» represents the «restoration of ancient sport», and that modern Olympic Games are the reincarnation of the «immortal spirit of antiquity». The philosophy of play treats the «greatest sports events» and «the most important sports personalities» in a similar way. Thus, Pierre de Coubertin, the official «father» of modern Olympism, is not a historical, but a mythological character. The same applies to the Olympic Games: they are not a concrete historical phenomenon, but are a mythological form in which the ruling values appear, and as such are a «festivity of spring». It should be noted here that only a concrete historical consideration of a phenomenon, meaning the tendency (dialectic) of its development – what it becomes, offers a possibility to grasp its essence. Sport is not a suprahistorical, but is a capitalist competition, which in its original form («Equal chances!», «Competition generates quality!») represents the ideology of liberal capitalism. In monopolistic capitalism, ruled by the principle «Destroy the competition!», sport, as the «cult of the existing world» (Coubertin), has become a means for crushing the emancipatory legacy of liberalism and destroying man as a cultural (historical) and natural being.

The academic thought took trouble to divide the relation to sport into separate fields of interest in order to «better explain» the nature of sport. It became possible only when sport developed into a complex and special (not separate) social phenomenon. The «theory of sport» became possible when sport became a field where the principles of competition (fight) and performance (record-mania) were enthroned in a «pure» form, and when their institutional (normative, organizational, functional) framework was shaped. The «sociology of sport» is developing as a positivist area, free from «value-based prejudices» (according to the theses that «sport has nothing to do with politics»), which is concerned with the «examination of social facts». The «history of sport» becomes a linear (unhistorical) way of presenting the «historical development of sport». The emergence and development of sport is not seen within a concrete historical totality, but in the context of an abstract «development of sport» which is reduced to the description of certain («sports») phenomena from the past. With sport being taken out of history, the main categories of sport, manipulated by the sports theory in order to obtain the character of universality and eternity for the principle of performance, become «objectivized» and mythologized. The «philosophy of

sport» becomes the philosophical basis for the principles *bellum omnium contra omnes* and *citius, altius, fortius* – on which the ruling order is founded. In the structuralist version, sport is reduced to a «subsystem of society», and man to a «sportsman». Interpersonal relations are given by the structure and functional logic of the ruling order. Hence the basic presupposition for a «communal» life is the respect for the established (given) rules, and not the respect for man. Besides the above mentioned fields, new fields are being created (within esthetics, anthropology, pedagogy, philosophy...) which are engaged in further dividing the «field of interest», accompanied regularly by their own respective «method of investigation» (in order to obtain the legitimacy of the «scientific» and «philosophical»), leading to a further deconstruction of sport as a complex and integral phenomenon. Since the sports theory reduced man and society to the «object of investigation», this approach is clearly only completing the labyrinth where every attempt is lost to attain man's libertarian and creative being from which comes a critical, change-oriented relation to the existing world, and man's need to create an authentic human world. The basis of the sports theory is a conflict with the critical mind and apriorism which becomes the foundation of authoritarianism in the political and spiritual spheres. The world is conceived phenomenologically: it is a given, while the relation to the world is positivistic. An unhistorical relation is being established towards the past: the «contact» with it is being made through romanticized myths. Instead of a libertarian, reigns a dogmatic-mythological conscious.

Sport absolutizes the progressistic logic which, based on the Social Darwinist laws, becomes a fatal power alienated from man and destroys the very possibility of creating a *novum*. At the same time, man in sport becomes instrumentalized, by way of a fanaticized (self) destructive conscious, not only as a working force, but also as a working tool and the object of processing (raw material). The philosophy of sport (play) completely ignores the existential risk carried by the domination of the absolutized principle of competition and performance. The annihilation of interpersonal relations, which means of society as a community of emancipated people, involves the annihilation of the body and nature. Sport is not a form in which man's playing being is manifested; it is a form in which man becomes alienated from his playing being, and a form of his degeneration.

The playing forms in the pre-capitalist period enabled the unity of man with his natural being, and man's integration in the community by way of higher values which were of a spiritual (religious, ritual, symbolic, social, national, cultural...) character. Sport renounces the emancipatory heritage of traditional forms of physical culture and thus the bodily motion which strives to unify man and nature and develop interpersonal relations. The «development of human powers» through sport has become a systematic destruction of man's creative powers; the «fight for freedom» through sport leads man astray and contributes to the further development of destructive processes: «activating masses» by way of

sport means establishing control over people in their «free (leisure) time» and the creation of massive idiocy... The «playing technique» has become a means for man's mutilation and the creation of hordes of modern Frankensteins; sportsmen have become gladiators («martial arts»), circus players («games») and stuntmen (car races and other sports with a «high risk»); trainers – slave drivers; instructors of «physical education» - body mechanics; sports physicians – modern Mengelles ; «mass sport» - mass bodily consumer activism; nature – consumer space, meaning commodity suited to the «consumer taste» dictated by the entertaining industry, producers of sports equipment, tourism... As far as the relation between genders is concerned, sport is one of the most important bastions of militant sexism. In sports pedagogy, women are reduced to «lower beings», and in sports practice, the most vulgar insults on women's account have become the most important way of «motivating» sportsmen to prove their «machismo». It has become clear that all attempts to influence the developments in sport without challenging the ruling orders are meaningless. It is confirmed also by the fate of the so called «second road» («*Der zweite Weg*») in the development of sport in (Western) Germany – described by Bero Rigauer in his book «*Sport and Labour*» («*Sport und Arbeit*») – who tried to «humanize» sport by way of a hopeless voluntarism. The movement failed to «humanize» sport, but succeeded in leading the critical mind astray. The dominant tendency in the «development» of sport indicates the dominant tendency in the «development» of contemporary world: instead of creating possibilities of «leaping from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom» (Engels), capitalism destroys the germ of *novum* created in the civil society and makes man increasingly dependent on the increasingly threatened living environment. Sport crushes not only culture, but life itself.

The attempts of bourgeois theorists to justify the atrocious massacres on sports fields with the help of statistical data on the mortality rate in other social fields, suggest that sport is not the space of «freedom and happiness», as they claim it to be, but is the constituent element of the increasingly cruel everyday life. If we bear in mind that the basic aim of the ideologues of capitalism is to preserve sport as a means for preserving the established order, it becomes clearer why they continue to glorify sport. The increasing level of violence and the ever bigger risk of losing life in sports «offer an opportunity» for man to «get used» to the growing violence and death in society. The ever bloodier and riskier sport is man's compensation for the ever bloodier and riskier life in a world where everything is in the service of profit. Having in view the prevailing tendency in the development of society and sport, it is clear that the bourgeois criticism of sport, as well as its proposals for changes, are a futile activity the ultimate aim of which is not to deal with «negative sides» of sport, but with the critical mind that strives to deal with the causes of man's manipulation and destruction – which means the protection of the established order. The way in which bourgeois theorists discuss Olympism serves to provide a «scientific» and «philosophical» foundation of the Olympic myth, which becomes the basis for establishing a «critical» distance to «negative

phenomena» in sport, and not to sport as an institution: the criteria for determining the «true sport» are the original principles of capitalism. The established «development of sport» has finally made the bourgeois theory of sport meaningless, as well as the criticism of sport that seeks to «humanize» it or in some other ways preserve it as an institution. Sport has become the driving engine of capitalist reproduction in a «pure» sense and as such the industry of death.

The governing «theory of physical culture» gives a distorted picture of sport in its attempt to give it a «humanist» aureole. It departs from an idealized picture of a «good sport» in its criticism of a «bad sport» (professionalism). Instead of becoming the starting point for a criticism of sport as anticulture, “physical culture” is obtaining «cultural» legitimacy for sport and creating a mythological picture of an «genuine sport». In that context appears the thesis that sport «has lost the playing content» it used to have as the carrier of «cultural tradition» (Lasch). An impression is being made that sport in its original sense is a superb humanist activity. At the same time, every possibility is abolished of the confrontation between the emancipatory legacy of modern society, based on Rousseau's pedagogical doctrine (*homo homini homo*) and humanist Hellenistic legacy (above all, the principle of *kalokagathia*), and sport, based on Hobbes' philosophy (*homo homini lupus*) and the positivist idea of progress which is of a mechanistic and quantitative character (*citius, altius, fortius*). The «pacifistic tendency» of sport is reduced to averting «human aggressiveness» from the political (class, libertarian) space to the sporting space and «civilizing» sport by way of the ruling (repressive) evaluative vault (disciplining of man). Instead of fighting for a genuine physical culture, developed on the bases of the development of man's playing being, the «theory of physical culture» creates an idealized picture of the ruling principles on which sport, as a concrete historical (social) phenomenon, is based.

The relation of the philosophy of play to sport should be seen in the context of the current tendency in the development of the world, which means in the context of the globalizing and totalizing process of man's dehumanization (decultivation) and technicization (denaturalization). In that context, the question arises as to the philosophy of play being «outdated», and thus also the theory of sport based on it. The philosophy of play is reduced to the creation of a «humanist» mask for the destructive capitalist barbarism, while the theory of sport has become the *camera obscura* in which philosophical postulates are turned into the tools for obtaining a «philosophical» legitimacy for the sports theory and practice. Discussion about play serves as a means for creating such a form of mediation between man and world, which ultimately means between people, which annihilates every possibility of overcoming the existing order. The philosophy of play (sport) is one of the «distorting mirrors» of the ruling ideology, in which man can see only «his» distorted image. The point is in destroying the «distorting mirrors» and in man becoming a mirror of humanness to another man.

Eugen Fink: Play as a «Symbol of the World»

Fink considers play the basic existential phenomenon that exists independently of man, who has but one possibility, that of «everyday acquaintance with play». (1) The world is not the playing space of man as a libertarian being and the creator of this world, it is the playing space of a man alienated from the world, which means that man is reduced to the playing thing of the ruling order, which is the given and on which he does not and cannot have any influence whatsoever. Play has the characteristics of a cosmic phenomenon and proceeds in the form of strife between the heavens (*mundus intelligibilis*) and earth (*mundus sensibilis*) and is projected into man – who is reduced to the object of play and as such is the battlefield. This conflict does not change man's position in the existing world: it is given and unchangeable. When giving to the existing world a cosmic dimension, Fink does not depart from cosmic laws, like Nietzsche, but elevates the principles underlying the existing world to a super worldly, which means a super historical, level. Man is abolished as a historical and social being and reduced to the «in worldly» dimension, while the world is reduced to an abstraction. In Fink's world, there is no struggle between freedom and non-freedom, good and bad, old and new: play abolishes the dialectic of history and provides a framework for changes, which means that there is no historical development of mankind and, in that context, crucial social changes. Everything proceeds at the same (un) historical level, which gives the impression that the existing plays have always existed. Fink excludes from history man's fight for survival and freedom, but does not question the existing world as a product of that fight, and consequently, he does not question plays, which he proclaims the phenomenon *sui generis*. Play is not the realization of man's playing being and the creation of new spiritual space, but is a form by which the ruling order plays with man. Instead of man being a (specific) cosmic being, play, which incarnates the ruling relations, becomes a cosmic phenomenon. When Fink speaks of cosmos, he does not have in mind the cosmic space nor man's limitless creative capabilities, but the capitalist world. By proclaiming play a cosmic phenomenon, Fink puts an end to all man's endeavours to step out of the existing world and create a new one. To be in play means to be completely integrated into the existing world. Play becomes a playing form of the world proceedings and a form of its (self) reflexion.

Fink does conceive of play departing from man's playing being, that is, from his potential creative capabilities, but reaches the concept of play by listing the features of the existing plays, which are a condensed ideological incarnation of the ruling relations and values. Hence play is not determined according to man's playing being, but according to play being a normative cage with phenomenological foundation and ethical and esthetic justification. As such, it becomes an abstract phenomenon by way of which the nature of man and society

is determined. Fink: «Every man knows of play from his own life, he gained with it and about it experience, he knows the behaviour of his fellow men in play, he knows the countless forms of play, he knows the public plays, circus mass plays, play for fun, children's play and adults' play, somewhat more strenuous, less easy and less attractive – everybody also knows the elements of play in the field of labour and politics, in the relation between genders, the elements of play in almost all fields of culture.» (2) Without a critical relation to the existing plays and without distinguishing between false and genuine play, Fink proclaims all social phenomena which are denoted by the term «play» a «symbol of the world». The existing plays become an unchanging form of the existence of play as a «symbol of the world» - in which man exists and on which he cannot exert any influence. Play is not a concrete historical phenomenon, it is a suprahistorical given; it does not involve man's relation to the existing world, but is a «free» way of blending into that world – play becomes playing of the existing life; it is not the ideal of a human world that should be striven for, the projection of man's unrealized playing being and the basis for a critical relation to the non-playing world; it is a «symbol» of an inhuman world, where man's playing nature is being suppressed and degenerated. It is not surprising that Fink discards every attempt at reaching the concept of play through the relation to labour: «Every time when play is interpreted in opposition to labour or generally a serious realization of life, we are dealing with the most superficial conception of play which nevertheless is predominant in our everyday life.» (3) According to Fink, Habermas's and Plessner's criticism of sport as the «duplication of the world of labour», is not acceptable, since in labour Fink also finds «elements of play», which means that labour does not deprive sport of its playing content. The relation of Fink's phenomenological conception to play corresponds to the relation of the philosophy of play to sport: sport is not a concrete historical phenomenon, but is a phenomenon *sui generis* and as such is a «symbol of the (existing) world».

The basic purpose of Fink's philosophy of play is to obtain a playing character for the existing world, which means to prove that in the existing world man can realize his playing being and be happy. Hence Fink does not seek to explain the nature of the existing plays as concrete social phenomena, but seeks to make a convincing picture of play as the «oasis of happiness». The concept of play appears in an idealized normative sphere, but Fink's «oasis of happiness» is not an illusory world, like Schiller's «esthetic state»; it is rather a playing manifestation of a non-playing world. The «oasis of happiness» becomes an apparent escape from reality into an illusory world where in another (spectacular) form appear relations and values on which the «world of concern» is based. It is not a product of man's creative practice, but is a space where man, fleeing from the world of misery and pursuing freedom and meaning of life, unreservedly surrenders to the basic principles of capitalist society shaped in «play». In Fink's words, play «resembles an 'oasis' of happiness which had come to the desert of our pursuit of happiness and our Tantalian quest. Play carries us away. When playing, we are, for

a while, relieved of life's pandemonium – as if transferred to another star where life appears to be easier, livelier, happier.» (4) Play is a «symbol» of the existing world of misery, and not an expression of aspirations to a happier world, especially not the symbol of a happier world. What at first sight looks like a criticism of the ruling order is actually an apparent criticism, once you realize that it is meant to protect the established world and that the offered «play» is but a condensed form of the dominant spirit and, in that sense, the given. The active powers, alienated from man through play, become an independent force which (apparently) pulls man out of the existing world of «concern» in order to take him to the «oasis of happiness». The picture of play as the «oasis of happiness» becomes convincing as against the existing world of misery. It is a sphere parallel to life and man, wishing to leave the increasingly gloomy «world of concern», only has to step into the «oasis of happiness», where everything he strives for is conserved: happiness, beauty, freedom... Play «plays with the serious», and thus just lets off the steam of unreadiness to face the ruling order.

The bourgeois theory itself unwillingly discloses the true nature of play, by disclosing the true nature of capitalism: it is a hopeless world of misery. It is precisely this world that is *raison d' être* of play as the «oasis of happiness»: «free play» is the reflexion of the world of non-freedom and as such is a «reward» to an oppressed man for his stoical endurance of misery to which he is constantly exposed – and reinforcement of the bulwark of the world of misery. Fink does not aspire to a happy man, but seeks to subdue the discontent of an unhappy man by offering him an illusory space of happiness. «Play carries us away», «life appears to be easier»: play becomes a spiritual drug. Fink does not speak of the nature of play, but of the nature of man's relation to play, which is but a projection of man's relation to the world. The purpose of his theory is to turn «play» into an appealing illusory world that is to draw man away from the fight for abolishing the existing world of misery, which is but a playing form in which the ruling values and relations appear. The attempts to institutionalize play as the world of «freedom» and «happiness» correspond to the attempts to institutionalize the existing world of non-freedom and unhappiness. Play becomes a «spontaneous» form of man's blending into the existing world and thus is the highest form of servitude to the existing order. Play as the «oasis of happiness» indicates the true nature of the capitalist world: it is a desert of unhappiness. Fink's «oasis of happiness» in the desert of everyday misery is but a mirage.

One of the most fatal intentions of Fink's philosophy is his dealing with faith in a better (new) world and visionary imagination. Instead of developing on the basis of a critical and change-oriented conscious, imagination develops on the basis of a positivist conscious and becomes an instrument for creating the illusion of the ruling forms of play as the «oasis of happiness». Fink replaces the visionary conscious with daydreaming: «But for adults, play is a magical oasis, a dreamy place of peace on a restless road and continuous escapism.» (5) Instead of freedom, Fink offers man an escape. Jean Cocteau says on that: «Was it not our

epoch that invented the word escape. However, the only way to escape from oneself is precisely to let ourselves be conquered.» (6) Fink does not speak of man's concrete position in society and, in that context, of his relation to play and position in it. Freedom in play appears as «free» escape from a world where space for man is decreasing. To «free» man by way of play means to free man from freedom. Basically, play is not a manifestation of freedom, but hopeless cry of a desperate man. The main characteristic of «freedom» becomes a possibility of choosing an (apparent) escape from reality into one of the ever richer forms of the «world of happiness» created by the entertainment industry. Capitalist «democracy» abolished the Christian «paradise» and created an illusory world where the basic values of the present world are being reproduced and critical and change-oriented conscious is being destroyed. The city, that ghetto of capitalism, has become the main place for organizing spectacular «entertaining» manifestations, which are supposed to draw people out of their solitary dens and offer them an opportunity for «socializing». It is interesting that Fink is not concerned about the fact that in sport one is «entitled» to inflict physical injuries and kill; that there exist sex segregation and institutionalized degradation of women to «lower beings»; that there is an increasing and monstrous abuse of children, characterized by the principle of «early selection» which involves physical and mental mutilation of children – and corresponds to the existing division of labour and the creation of specialty-idiots... Sport is a (spectacular) symbol of the existing world and the most authentic manifestation of its being. It is the playing of the capitalist way of life and, in that sense, a voluntary «playing» with forces that determine man's destiny. Hence murder becomes a legal and legitimate element of sports play.

For Fink, children's play represents the model of play that is to be sought. Fink: «Children's happiness, the blessedness of their play is short-lived, during one period of our time when we have time, as we do not know anything about time yet, we do not see in now what has already been, what is no-more and not-yet, when we live in an unconsciously deep presence, carried away by life's torrents, when we do not recognize the current rushing to our end. Pure presence of childhood is the time of play. Is it only a child that plays genuinely and in the right way?» (7) What age are we talking about here? Starting from Fink's conception, we can conclude that the younger the child, the closer he is to a genuine play. However, what about Fink's view that «as long as one plays and understands the meaning of play, one remains bound by the rules» - which is a *conditio sine qua non* of play? Man must be aware of what play is and is not – if he is to voluntarily choose play. In that context, it is necessary for man to be aware of himself as a playing being, which means to have a libertarian self-conscious and a developed esthetic sense. A child is not aware of himself as a playing being; he is not aware of the meaning of play and its rules and thus does not choose play as a free man. Instead of freedom, we deal with «spontaneity» which reproduces the existing life, its symbols and value models. The play of girls and boys is an immediate expression of sex

segregation established in society. At the same time, children's play is the projection of the desired and in that context a compensational mechanism. Play is reduced to miming the «idols» that are the incarnation of the ruling values. Sports play is a typical example. In his imagination, a child becomes that what he is deprived of in life, but children's imagination does not offer a possibility of creating a new world, it is reduced to daydreaming. In children's play the governing spirit is repeatedly manifested and children absorb it uncritically; in play, children are «spontaneously» and completely integrated into the existing world.

Instead of considering the play of «adults» in a philosophical and sociological context, Fink considers it in a psychological context. Fink: «It appears that life of adults does not have too much enthusiasm; their plays are too often merely routine techniques of having fun and result from boredom. Adults are rarely capable of playing spontaneously.» **(8)** Fink refers to the plays of adults as to «routine techniques of having fun» - which suggests that play is not a phenomenon *sui generis* and that the nature of play is directly conditioned by the nature of «technical civilization», which is but another expression for contemporary capitalism. In that context, Fink shows that the possibility of play is conditioned by the «general human condition» and man's «ability» of «playing spontaneously». Unfortunately, he does not come to the obvious conclusions. A non-playing man cannot play: there is no genuine play without a genuine playing motive and without man's «ability» to «play spontaneously». A «subjective» experience of play presupposes man's critical relation to play which appears under the illusory veil of the «oasis of happiness», «freedom», and the like. The normative and the real are blended in order to prevent the establishment of a critical distance to the existing plays and attain the concept of genuine play in the context of the development of critical, change-oriented conscious. Fink, like Gadamer, departs from man who is deprived of everything that enables him to be a free libertarian being. That is why he attaches such importance to children's play. Man is pushed into «play», which is the given space of illusory «happiness», and as such is a projected way of letting off the steam of non-freedom that does not allow man to attain his creative-libertarian being and question the ruling order. Play does not create the possibility of realizing man's (suppressed) playing being (Eros, the creative, imagination...), but represents the «relief» of the burden of life.

Fink takes play out of the concrete historical (social) context and it becomes a phenomenon *sui generis* which determines its own rules. Fink: «Furthermore, play is characterized by the observance of rules. What restrains man's selfwilledness in play is not nature or its resistance to human endeavours, it is not the opposition of his fellow player as in the field of governing; play sets its own obstacles and restraints – it complies with the rules it sets itself. Players are tied to the rules of play, whether it is a match, cards or children's play. «Rules» can be abolished, new ones can be introduced; but as long as play and playing are understood reasonably, one remains bound by the rules.» **(9)** Fink does not make

from the normative projection of play the starting point for criticizing the existing «plays», but an ideological mask which is to obtain a «playing» legitimacy for the social relations which are proclaimed «play». Play is not a repressive normative vault that is to keep the «aggressive animal nature» under control, as it is in Caillois, it makes «life easier», «forms a transient, only earthly solution», «salvation from the hard burden of survival». **(10)** Fink turns man's concrete discontent with the existing world into an abstract discontent with an abstract world. The expression «hard burden of survival» serves to Fink as a means for concealing the inhuman and destructive character of capitalist civilization and sterilizing a critical and change-oriented relation to it. In addition, the «salvation from the hard burden of survival» can be a motivation for play only for those who carry the burden of life, and not for those who transferred their burden onto the back of the oppressed working class. It is obvious that Fink's play is not of a libertarian, but of a compensatory and pacifying (depolitizing) character, which means of a manipulative (instrumental) and class nature. In Fink's philosophy, play does not appear as against the world of injustice and non-freedom, but as against the «world of concern»: master and slave are placed at the same «playing» level. Play becomes a «supraclass» phenomenon and as such a means for man's integration into the ruling (class) order. It is no accident that one of the main tasks of the philosophy of play is to convince man of the possibility of freedom in a world of non-freedom. Play becomes a synonym of freedom, while the need for freedom becomes the need for play. Instead of striving for a world of freedom, man is to «willingly» opt for play which is a «pure» incarnation of the ruling relations and values on which the world of misery and non-freedom is based. Hence the largest part of the discussion about play comes down to obtaining the playing legitimacy for the relations which, essentially, have nothing in common with freedom, and to creating the illusion of play as «happiness» and «freedom», relying on the ever deeper hopelessness of man and his «need» to escape from it. «Uncertainty» as the basis of free play and freedom in play is but an illusion, as it is based on a certainty that cannot be questioned: man is the playing thing of the ruling order. It is most obvious in sport. Man can (apparently) win or lose, but he remains pinned down to the existing world of non-freedom: the order always wins – man is always the loser. In play as «illusion» is expressed not only the real world but also the real man to whom play is the compensation for his unrealized humanity. This is something Fink could have realized in analysing the rules of play, especially the rules of sport which is dominated by the Social Darwinist principle *bellum omnium contra omnes* and the absolutized principle of quantitatively measurable performance expressed in the maxim *citius, altius, fortius*. Fink is right in the most important thing: the ruling playing forms are the authentic symbols of the existing world. They do not offer a possibility of a libertarian or of a genuine (free) human play. It is no accident that the stadium has become the most important cult venue of contemporary world, and that sport has become the concrete essence of a concrete world.

In spite of arguing that man is to relate to sport without the mediation of science and technique, Fink unreservedly accepts even those plays that represent the triumph of «technical civilization» over man and deal with his playing being. Fink criticizes «technicization» which, as a result of the «industrial expansion», will more and more penetrate the domain of individual disposition and will produce the «industrially made patterns of life»; **(11)** he strongly argues against the world «dominated by clock, chronometers, time-machines which are technically precise» and where «the human race has less and less time for real festivities», which means for play. **(12)** It is precisely sport, based on the absolutized principle *citius, altius, fortius*, which is the incarnation of «technical civilization». This is, indeed, the starting point of Habermas and Plessner in their criticism of sport as «duplication of the world of labour». It is most expressed in the field in which phenomenology has a prominent role: in language. Sports language most directly expresses the essence of sport: it expresses not only man's dehumanization, but also his technicization (robotization). In a broader sense, sports language covers also the theory of sport, with indisputable domination of a technocratic mind. Sport, as the incarnation of the positive philosophy and the cult of the existing world, perfectly fits into Fink's cosmos. Since «Fink's entire philosophy relies on the identity of world and play», **(13)** sport, as the incarnation of the ruling relations and values in a pure form, represents the most authentic play, more precisely, the most authentic playing form in which the existing world appears. If we bear in mind the basic intention of Fink's philosophy, it is not surprising that Fink does not distinguish between «circences performances», as he calls mass sports manifestations, and «theatrical performances». **(14)** In this way Fink gives “cultural” legitimacy to sport. According to Fink's view of sport, the stadium which, considering its looks and purpose, is one of the most authentic spaces of «technical civilization», corresponds to the theatre. Unlike phenomenology, which is concerned with (philosophical) description of the phenomena of pure conscious, in sport a dehumanised science and technique become the basis for the relation to reality. Sport belongs to the sphere of a technocratic way of thinking, mythological conscious, instrumentalized phanaticism and mysticism produced in a technical way. Man's relation to the existing world based on reason is abolished as well as the possibility of creating the reasonable projection of a new world. There is an activism guided by the idea of «progress» that is of a destructive and fatalistic character. In sport, the given is not thought: subjective «relation» to the world is reduced to its being experienced through mutilated senses that enable us to register only those impressions which can arouse «negative» responses in man to the ruling order. Coubertin's maxim “the old Greeks were little given to contemplation, even less bookish» is dominant, and it becomes a cover-up for the oppressive and conquering activism of the ruling class and for the submissive behaviour of the oppressed. Sport is the «overcoming» of Comte's positivism: instead of a positive conscious, there is an explosive physical (muscular) strength and ruthless combative character (*mens*

fervida in corpore lacertoso/Coubertin) on which the corresponding positive conscious is perched. Between reality and man there is no conscious mediation; instead, man behaves «spontaneously» and lives a life based on the principles *bellum omnium contra omnes* and *citius, altius, fortius*. Instead of aspiring to values (ideas) that create a possibility of overcoming the existing world, man blends into the existing world by way of an unreasonable agonal physical activism. The stadium, as the space completely dominated by positivist one-mindedness, is the most authentic playing space of the existing world: it represents the modern pagan temple where man's libertarian dignity is being destroyed and man is being inseminated by the ruling Social Darwinist and progressistic spirit.

Fink's theory does not give a possibility of attaining the notion of genuine play and confronting the dominant plays either from the aspect of transcendental values or from those created in modern society, the values which enable man to step out from the existing world and realize his playing (libertarian-creative) being. In modern society, man made such possibilities of creating a new world that make his life essentially different from that of his ancestors. The same goes for play: from being a privilege of the ruling classes, play has become man's right and potentially the most authentic form of human (self) assertion. Fink's approach to play, labour, love, prevents us from realizing their emancipatory possibilities that make the basis for establishing a critical and change-oriented relation to the existing world. Play, according to Fink, «is separate from all futuristic proceedings of life. It cannot fit into the complex architecture of purpose, it does not proceed for the 'ultimate end', it is not, as our activity usually is, disturbed and confused by a deep uncertainty in our account of happiness.» (15) He continues: «Play is not for a future blessing, it is already «happiness» in its own right, it is extracted from the otherwise general «futurism», it is a happy presence, an unintended fulfilment. It does not mean, however, that it has, within itself, moments of tension as, for example, in all competitive games, but play does not transcend itself, it remains within itself with all its thrill, with a whole scale of its excitements, with the scheme of play's workings.» (16) In the end Fink concludes: «Play does not have any «purpose», it does not serve to anything. (...) A true player plays only for the purpose of playing.» (17) The purpose of Fink's «purposeless» play, which is not oriented towards the «future», is to strengthen the ramparts of the existing world and tear down the idea of a future world where man will realize his playing being. Fink, under a different rhetoric banner, has the same standpoint as the ideologues of sport: Coubertin, Diem, Krockow, Lasch, Lenk, Guttmann, Dunning ... The existing plays are an instrument for stopping the objective possibilities of freedom from becoming real possibilities of man's liberation – by destroying the critical conscious and changing practice of the oppressed.

Phenomenology's call for displacing the focus from the objective scientific knowledge to the subjective of the conscious (Husserl's «radical intuitionism», «transcendental pure conscious» and the like) cannot be separated from the psychological sphere. Hence the method of phenomenological description of pure

conscious uses verbal juggling that is close to the Christian and Nietzsche's «art of seduction». If we add to this Heidegger's view that «language is the home of being», it is clear that phenomenology opens a possibility of building a «house neither on heaven nor on earth»: «pure conscious» becomes an abstract, which means an empty, conscious. Instead of striving to reach the truth, expressions are being coined full with arbitrary concepts. We deal with a conservation of the world by way of the absolutized given which appears in the form of phenomena that become the content of transcendental «pure» conscious. Basically, the ruling relations and values are projected into certain ideas that acquire a cosmic dimension. «Labour», «play», «love» - acquire the status of superhuman (suprahistorical) entities and become a new firmament which deifies the ruling order. Play, as the «oasis of happiness», takes the role of the Christian «paradise» and becomes a way of dealing with the idea of future and man's belief that he can create a humane world. Just as the empty theological verbalism is a form of sterilizing man's spiritual being, so phenomenology is a philosophical form of destroying the critical and change-oriented mind. The alleged «profusion of language», which is the mirror in which being is to see its reflexion, is but an ideological curtain that hides not only the existing world of injustice, but also the road leading to new worlds. Man's critical, change-oriented activism is being abolished, and thinking becomes an instrument by which the abstract being, through empty linguistic expressions, attains itself: the description of being by means of language becomes a form of its self reflexion. A discourse of play becomes part of a big play of conquering the human spirit and preventing man from directing his discontent to eradicating the causes of non-freedom. Fink's play as the «symbol of the world» expresses an endeavour to create a new superhuman structure of the world, a new Olympus with new gods: phenomenology becomes theology. The fatal character of Fink's philosophy becomes obvious when we have in mind that it gives a playing legitimacy to a world ruled by destruction. Becoming and perishing of the world does not proceed any more at an indisputable existential level. The world faces its final disappearance. Play is nearing the end.

Jean-Paul Sartre: Play as the Road to Being

Sartre: «Play, like Kierkegaard's irony, releases subjectivity. What indeed is play if not an activity whose real purpose is man, for which man sets the rules and which can have consequences only according to the existing rules? Once a man realizes he is free and once he wants to use this freedom, whatever his accompanying anxiety might be, his activity is play: he is indeed its first principle; through it, he dodges his naturalized nature; he himself sets the value and rules for his acts and agrees to play only according to the rules he himself set and

determined. Hence, in one sense, there is ‘little reality’ in the world. That is why it looks as if the man who plays, who tends to show himself as being free in his action, can by no means be interested in *owning* a being in the world. The end he strives for, through sports or miming or plays in the real sense of that word, is to attain himself as one certain being, precisely the being that is in question in his being.» (18)

For Sartre, play is not the expression of the concrete totality of an epoch, but is the expression of the free choice of an individual, who «freely» makes the rules. The question of freedom is reduced to man's immediate relation to himself and to the world – without the mediation of all those things that make him a social being and condition not only his concrete (non) freedom in the world, but also his conception of freedom and thus his conception of himself as the being of freedom. Man acquires «freedom» by ceasing to be a concrete historical and social being. Freedom in conscious (conscious freedom) as a concrete possibility of real freedom (liberation) of man involves conscious of the nature of non-freedom, which means conscious of (genuine) freedom. The question of freedom is always a concrete historical question. Libertarian self-conscious of the ancient man is essentially different from modern man's libertarian self-conscious. The nature of capitalism (tendency of its development) conditions the nature of the question of freedom. Today, to pose the question of freedom means to pose the question of the survival of mankind, the latter question being based on the objective possibilities of the creation of a new world and man's capabilities to create this new world based on these possibilities. Sartre also does not realize that the question of freedom has become the existential question *par excellence*.

Sartre points out that play «releases subjectivity», but he does not ask himself of the nature of «subjectivity»: is it an apparent or authentic human subjectivity. In a world of non-freedom, where man is exposed to oppression from an early age, which systematically mutilates his playing being, he cannot realize his human personality in a human way. Sport, as the most authentic capitalist play, is a typical example. It does not offer a possibility of «releasing subjectivity»; it is part of reality and as such a repressive «objectivity». In sport, man not only does not «attain himself as one certain being», he becomes completely alienated from himself as a natural, social and cultural being. In it, “subjectivity” is «released» by depriving man of subjectivity and reducing him to the reproduction of the ruling relations and values. In Sartre, man's playing being is an abstraction and as such is something that is independent of the existing world where man came and where he lives. However, the playing being is a product of concrete social conditions. Man is born in a diseased world and has a mutilated and degenerated playing being, and this is precisely what prevents him from freely opting for and creating play. How spontaneously can man, who lives, from an early age, in the conditions where only victory by achieving an ever better result offers a possibility of gaining respect, relate to other people when play is created in opposition to the principle of elimination? Why is the «subjectivity» of men dominated by aversion to women

and directs them to plays dominated by fight and not by cooperation and tolerance? With his «spontaneous» choice of play, man actually chooses the existing plays which are a «free» expression of the ruling values and relations and which, under the cover of «freedom», draw man into the world from which he is trying to escape. In Sartre, there is neither genuine, nor libertarian play, since there is no conflict between man's original playing being that strives for freedom and the existing playing forms. He proclaims the existing plays, in which he includes sport, a playing challenge sought by man's original playing being, «overlooking» the fact that the prevailing plays are a manifest form of the ruling relations and values and as such an imposed pattern of behaviour – which has become the most efficient way of man's integration into the order of non-freedom. In his discussion of play, he does not criticize the existing plays, which derive from the existing world and are opposed to freedom, but legitimizes them as «freedom».

Sartre claims that once man realizes his freedom and wants to use it, «his activity is play»: opting for play means opting for freedom and thus is the matter of personal decision (Kierkegaard's «either-or»). First of all, the very opting for play presupposes non-freedom: in a world of freedom, man does not opt for freedom, but spontaneously manifests it and experiences it. Sport is not the expression of a rational intentionality (freedom), as is play in Sartre; it is the expression of an irrational capitalist intentionality. This is the context in which we should differentiate between the result as a human achievement and record which is the market value of a result and is the measure of man's alienation from himself as well as the measure of his (self) destruction. In sport, there is no intentionality that strives for what is not yet – without which, according to Sartre, there is no freedom. He pins man down to the existing world and blends him into the being in itself (*l'être en soi*), which abolishes the possibility of man's relation to the existing world and thus the attainment of the being for itself (*l'être pour soi*). The true intentionality is the pursuit of freedom. This is dominant in Schiller's «playing impulse»: it is an impulse for freedom. Libertarian intentionality involves freedom from the existing world and the creation of a new world, which means a libertarian play that suggests that man is «more» than that to which he is reduced in the existing world – and this is possible only in the context of a political practice aimed at the creation of a new world. Without that, play disappears in the nothingness of everyday life and becomes opposed to the basic human intention: to be free. It is all about plays based on the motion of man towards another man, on the development of creative powers, man's esthetic being, with which the playing skill (not playing technique) is developed, as well as visionary imagination, etc.

While in Sartre liberation is man's individual act, in libertarian play liberation is a social (class) act, which means that it is about the elimination of relations which force man to behave like a slave, or deprive him of libertarian self-consciousness. Liberation of man as an individual and as a social (class) being go hand in hand. At the same time, Sartre does not distinguish between free opting for play,

which is a conscious intentional act, and free play. Free play involves the affirmation of human freedom in a concrete life, and not an escape from it into a (apparent) personal freedom. There is no «free play» in the world of non-freedom: it is but a playing form of letting off the steam of non-freedom and thus is an illusion of play. Sartre claims: «The end he strives for, through sports or miming or plays in the real sense of that word, is to attain himself as one certain being, the being that is in question in his being.» (19) Man strives «through sports» to «attain himself as one certain being, the being that is in question in his being», but through sport, as the capitalistically degenerated play, he becomes alienated from himself and «freely» blends into the ruling order – from which he is trying to escape. Being-in-itself becomes being-for-itself by way of the ruling order, which obtains its expression in sport. «Self» is conditioned by the ruling order, which means that it is the self of the order, and only apparently the self of man. Man in sport is already appropriated by the ruling order. The way in which man «is to attain himself as one certain being» is reduced to the conflict with one's own human individuality, and thus with freedom. Sport is not a road leading man to being; it leads him to the nothingness of everyday existence. Coubertin is clear: Olympism is the «cult of the existing world», which means that sport is a means of its deification. Sport is a form of capitalist totalizing of the world and thus deals not only with the emancipatory heritage of civil society, but also with the traditional forms of physical culture. Thus, martial arts, which are part of feudal physical culture in the Far East (karate, judo, etc.), are deprived of their cultural (religious) essence and are reduced to a dehumanized technique of fight. Sport is not based on humanism, but on a «technical civilization». It does not develop man's creative powers and does not cultivate human relations; it is rather that people, in the form of «sportsmen», become instrumentalized for the purpose of achieving inhuman ends in an inhuman (capitalist) way, which leads to man being degenerated as a biological and human being.

If Sartre's relation to play is viewed as determination of formal conditions of play, it is of a reductionist character. If man is to be able to play he must have: conscious of himself as a playing being and of play as a free activity; a developed esthetic being; he must have playing skill and an appropriate playing body; he must be able to organize himself in a playing community of emancipated individuals and create rules observed by all... Since Sartre distinguishes between being-in-itself and being-for-itself, according to his conception, spontaneous opting for play involves freedom which does not come spontaneously from man's playing being, but presupposes conscious of oneself as a free being and free opting (decision) for play.

Sartre contributes to the creation of the illusion that sport is a phenomenon *sui generis* and as such is a value-neutral phenomenon; that opting for sport is a free choice; and that sport offers a possibility of realizing freedom. In sport, it is not man who determines the playing rules; it is rather that sport represents an institutionalized normative (value) model which incarnates the principles on which

capitalism is based – and which must be unconditionally accepted if sporting play is to proceed. Sport is the authentic capitalist play, which means the playing form of a life based on Social Darwinism and the absolutized principle of quantitatively measurable performance. «Free opting for sport» is not free, nor is it opting for freedom. What man actually strives for, what he sees in sport and expects from it is one thing, and it is quite another thing what sport is as a concrete social phenomenon and, in that context, how real the possibility it offers for satisfying genuine human needs is and what social consequences it has. Man's «subjective relation» to sport is based on the illusion that sport is «freedom» - the illusion imposed by the ruling ideology. Man «voluntarily» goes to the stadium and sees it as the place of «freedom». Unlike concentration camps, where man is aware of his being a slave and pursues freedom, at the stadium, man thinks that he is «executing freedom», while he is actually letting off the steam of non-freedom in a space which is the contemporary concentration camp. One of the basic tasks of sport is to prevent people from becoming aware of their slavery status and of the possibility of a free world – if they fight for it. Sport is the appropriation of (potentially) free time by the ruling order and degeneration of man's (potentially) libertarian spirit. The stadium symbolizes man's complete and final enclosure in the spiritual horizon of capitalism and thus is a modern pagan temple where, in the form of «sports competitions», man offers as a sacrifice his libertarian dignity and faith in a just world. By way of sport, potentially free physical activism turns into man's submission to the ruling order and the production of the ruling relations according to the principles *bellum omnium contra omnes* and *citius, altius, fortius*. Sartre does not speak of running, jumping, skiing, as man's freely chosen activities, but of «sports» in which the original physical activism is degenerated through institutional physical activism, which is the incarnation of the ruling relations and values. Sport is running, jumping, swimming, skiing degenerated in the capitalist way, just as the sporting body is the human body degenerated in the capitalist way. Sports pedagogy is not dominated by humanization, but by disciplining and mutilation of the body (character). Instead of enjoying the physical as a spiritual (creative) movement, sport deals with the body. Sport does not develop man's esthetic being, but creates sado-masochistic character. The so called «thumping condition» is a masochistic ritual which, ultimately, comes down to man's (self) destruction: sport is not based on the principle of the «optimal», but on the principle of the «greater effort». In sport, the most important thing is to «master» the nausea that comes from over fatigue and pain – which is a normal reaction of the body struggling to keep its vital functions. Victory over one's opponent involves «victory» over one's own body.

Sports space is a manifest form of the capitalist totalizing of the world. It has no historical, cultural, esthetic or ecological dimension, but is reduced to a «competitive» space and as such is an object that is to be mastered, used and destroyed. Sports spaces have become the fields of death where everything is in the service of the absolutized principle of performance (profit). In antiquity, people

struggled for victory, but they did not struggle against nature. The same applies to the Renaissance, the aristocratic physical culture, as well as to the Enlightenment and philanthropic doctrines. Unlike antiquity, where man as *physis* is part of the cosmic whole, in modern times man, by way of instrumentalized science and technique, appears as the «master and owner of nature» (*maître et possesseur de la nature*/ Descartes). The increasingly faster motion through space, based on technological advances as mastered and (ab) used powers of nature, is becoming the capitalist way of achieving «victory over nature», which above all means victory over the body as man's immediate nature. The “sportivization” of the natural environment is one of the most radical forms of the capitalist degeneration of nature. Man's relation to nature is mediated by the principle of competition and the absolutized principle of performance, which have turned into the principles of domination and destruction. In his relation to nature, the sportsman seeks to cover in the shortest possible time the largest possible space which is already «appropriated» by being reduced to the «sports track», which means that natural space is degraded to a technical (capitalistically objectivized) space. There are no symbols which express the quality that enables a human «appropriation» of space. Running, jumping and swimming are reduced to a technical relation to nature as a «competitive» space. Moving through nature becomes a technical moving, while body becomes the machine. Measuring instruments «replace» man's esthetic being. In ski jumping, the jump is not a libertarian and esthetic challenge, which means the expression of man's true powers, but is reduced to the technique of jumping and flying the purpose of which is the longest possible jump and record. On ski slopes we see the movements of a technicized body by way of technicized tools and technicized skill in a technicized space. Bodily movement becomes a targeted and rational activity in which man does not recognize himself as a natural and human being, but as a (self-destructive) mechanism. As far as «mountaineering feats» are concerned, climbing a mountain is becoming its «conquering», while reaching the summit is the «victory over the mountain». To «stick the victorious flag» represents the ritual branding of nature which symbolizes its appropriation and submission. The logic of submission through «victory» becomes the totalizing capitalist principle of the relation towards man and nature and it is fully expressed in sport. In «consumer society», capitalism robs man of natural space and turns it into a consumer space, reducing man's «free» physical activism to a consumer activism.

Sports time, dominated by strivings for the highest performance (record) in the shortest possible time, expresses the rule of capitalist timing over man. The ever faster movement involves the ever more intense deprivation of humanity and man's being turned into a capitalistically instrumentalized machine: life time of capitalism becomes death time of man. Sports activity is not an authentic physical (human) need; it is a destructive repression over the body according to the ruling value and existential pattern of movement which is conditioned by the rhythm of life imposing the ever faster cycles of capitalist reproduction. Speed is not

important as the expression of the development of human powers, but as a symbolic indication of the developing power of the ruling order. Records, measured in seconds, the tenths and hundredths of seconds, have an abstract value for man. At the same time, a record is not only the measure of man's alienation from himself; it is the measure of man's alienation from nature and the measure of the destruction of his own natural being. As far as «playing» sports are concerned, the meaning of one of the most important principles, «attack is the best defence», is to reduce the moving space of the opponent by a dynamic motion, so that he makes a mistake, that is, to stop him from successfully realizing the attack. Space is «diminished» by the speed of movement and dynamic actions by which it is «covered». A war strategy is in place here: the meaning of «diminishing» space is to make the «opponents» squat in a small «maneuvering space», which means to reduce their freedom of action. It can be seen in the example of basketball: from the given playing space of the opponent teams, we have come to «total pressing», ruled by the principle «attack is the best defence». The dynamic of motion leads to the «diminishing» of the «playing» space, not only as the diminishing of the space of freedom and imagination, but also as the diminishing of the existential space, which means the mutilation of the natural being and playing capacities. Instead of increasing the possibilities of individual expression and the development of play as the development of playing skills and interpersonal relations, we deal with our own playing possibilities and capacities, which leads to the domination of an aggressive and mutilated body and sado-(self) destructive character. The libertarian-creative playing skill is being replaced by the playing technique reduced to the destruction of man's playing being. The final result is the «development of play» with the ever smaller room for personal initiative, esthetics, personality and playing originality. As play becomes more «developed», the sports collective is less and less a community of people and more a group of robotized gladiators and circus performers.

Sartre's view of functionality of a sports team is interesting. Sartre: « ... the fundamental characteristic of an organized group is that all of them (functions) are mutually conditioned and mutually guaranteed by the mediation of the common *praxis* in progress. Starting from this point, each function becomes the meaning of another function if it is itself marked by praxis and each of them contains another one in its practical activity. It is particularly clear in coherent and narrow small groups, such as a sports team, in which every movement of a player, *taken in its functional differentiation*, is decoded in the very movement it provokes in another co-player, as a differentiated function, through a practical field determined by the action of the group and depending on all other movements. (Here, in the footnote, Sartre adds: «In fact, in one football game, due to the presence of the opponent team, everything is even more complex. The positive mutuality between co-players is closely related to the negative and antagonistic mutuality. However, this complexity by no means changes our problem.») For this particular goal keeper, or this particular center-forward player, mediation is but a playing ground if the

common *praxis* has made it one common and practical reality that is to be occupied, run across, with a variable coefficient of usability and resistance. Every actual reorganisation of a team on the playground constitutes a certain player *through the very playground* as *functionally situated* (in relation to the ball, to the opponent in front of him, etc.) However, the moment he accepts this space-time situation and overcomes it by way of his *praxis* (according to his function), the common situation of the whole team is thereby *mutually* changed. For a spectator, to understand a match is precisely to understand, as a constant totalization, based on the known aim, the functional and singularized specifications of mediated mutuality.» (20) Sartre sees the functionality of a sports group and proceedings on the sports field as an autonomous phenomenon and in a technical way. A sport does not have an autonomous functionality and the meaning of sport exceeds the functionality given by Sartre. The specific character of sport, as the incarnation of the spirit of capitalism and as the paramount political tool of the bourgeoisie for ensuring the strategic interests of capitalism, conditions its specific functionality. This is what determines man's relation to his own body (doping, suicidal training), and to the opponent (instrumentalized violence). Sport, as a war waged with the players' bodies, is the manifestation of a life based on Social Darwinism. In it, killings, infliction of physical injuries, abuse of children, etc., are legalized. A sports group is an institutionalized violent group: it uses violence as the legal means of combat. Hence the militaristic structure of a sports group. At the same time, functionality in sport is conditioned by the rules of play dictated by the needs of show-business. Sportsmen are tools of show-business for producing a sports spectacle (sports commodity). This determines their appearance and behaviour. The relations between players are mediated by the logic of show-business, and they are inconspicuous for an «ordinary» viewer who is blinded by the need to vent the accumulated discontent and find a compensation for his futile life. From a means for promoting the «progressive» nature of capitalism, sport has turned into a gladiator-circus spectacle. Everything serves to the creation of a glamorous spectacle which becomes a spiritual drug that is to enable man to «escape» from the ever gloomier social reality. Sport is a spectacular form in which the ruling relations are turned into commodities on the market of show-business, and in which the essence of capitalism appears without its «democratic» and «humanistic» mask. Sportsmen produce the ruling relations and ruling values, which means the existing world and a (mutilated) man suitable to that world. A sports team is the institution of a repressive character and it is only apparently based on voluntariness. It is a tool for achieving inhuman needs, a peculiar (ideological) police unit of the ruling regime with a special assignment: to destroy the critical mind of those deprived of their rights and create a mass idiocy. A sports team has a working functionality which is typical of the production site: everyone does his part of the job, the common task being the production of a sports spectacle. The real job of a sportsman is to attract the audience, to provide TV commercials and TV programmes – and thus to realize profit for the owners.

Sports group is a surrogate of a social group. It is not pervaded by brotherhood, but by ruthless rivalry. To fight for a place on the team means to fight for survival on the labour market in sports show-business. For a sportsman, the success of his team is important only in so long as it provides an opportunity for making money. The relations on the team develop on invisible threads based on private interests of the players, on the relation between players and coach, between players and owner of the club, etc. Thanks to the fact that man in sport is not only the labour force, but also the labour tool and the object of processing; that victory is achieved by eliminating the «opponent»; that the dominant principle is not that of the optimal but the principle of «greater effort» (*citius, altius, fortius*) – instead of the working ethics, we deal with the (self) destructive fanaticism which corresponds to the absolutized principle of the ever bigger profit. The club is a legal and economic entity, an institutionalized form realizing the functioning of the team, regulating the ownership and realizing profit. It is a sports enterprise, and thus the working plant, whereas the main activity of the club is to turn the playing of the team into the gain of the owner. As far as «supporters» are concerned, they have become the tool for producing the «spectacle» and as such are moving props which create the «atmosphere» that is to obtain for the match a «fatal» dimension, and to the owners a successful sale of billboards and TV broadcasts.

Sport is not based on reason nor does it offer a possibility for people to assert themselves as human beings, which is but another obstacle that stops being-in-itself from becoming being-for-itself. The «audience» does not relate to the game rationally, nor does it ask for rational explanations. The fanaticism of «supporters» comes from their hopeless social position. They are people without illusions and visions. A sports spectacle is an institutionalized deception which pushes the oppressed into an ever deeper nothingness. It opens the Pandora's box of the subconscious only to pour out the discontent accumulated in everyday life. Hence sport is dominated by an increasingly ruthless violence: it serves to compensate the «spectator» for his increasingly ruthless life and acquires an anthropological image and character. The discontent of the oppressed is directed to the «opponent»: a sportsman is thrown into the arena and becomes a scapegoat. A typical example of this replacement of opponents occurs in boxing and other «combative» (bloody) sports: the true opponent (owner/capitalist) places before one oppressed another oppressed so that they can fight between themselves – and turns that into a spectacle which enables him to earn money and ensure the stability of the ruling order. The basic task of the media before a match is to create the impression that we are directly threatened by the «opponent team». «They have come to take our points!» - What a provocation for those who have been deprived of everything: of work, healthy life, happiness, future... «They have come to beat us!» - What a nightmare for those who experience nothing but defeat in their everyday life...

In spite of his misconceptions, in his «*Critique of the Dialectical Mind*», speaking of Kierkegaard and Kafka, Sartre comes to the conclusion that indicates

the essence of the problem: «It was already Kierkegaard who thought that every victory is suspicious as it diverts man from himself. Kafka takes over this Christian theme, in his *Diary*, in which some truth can be found, as in the world of alienation a winner does not recognize himself in his victory and becomes its slave.» (21) The same is true of sport, which represents one of the most radical forms of human alienation in capitalism, whereas victory here appears in the form of record as the «supreme» form of man's dehumanization (denaturalization). The bigger «star» a sportsman is, the less human he is.

Roger Caillois: Play as an Escape

In the bourgeois theory, play can be only that behaviour which reflects the structure of the existing world and does not question that world. Caillois's view that «play has no purpose other than itself» (22) is almost equivalent in meaning with the famous maxim «sport has nothing to do with politics». Play is taken out of history; it becomes the phenomenon *sui generis* and obtains meaning independently of society and human existence in it. Hence Caillois is not interested in how play appears and how its rules are formed, what they express and what possibilities they offer to man: «There is no reason whatsoever for them to be just as they are and not different», says Caillois. (23) By reducing play to the given which cannot be questioned, Caillois has made from play a suprahistorical concept to which all historical forms of play, expressing the concrete totality of the epoch in which they appeared, are submitted. In that way he abolished them as concrete historical phenomena, but he also abolished the possibility of making a difference between an apparent play and genuine play. Caillois, like Huizinga, tries to obtain for play the legitimacy of the cultural and ensure eternity to all he proclaims play: play is determined by the behaviour proclaimed play. In addition, in Caillois's classification of plays every human behaviour defined as «play» has some of the elements which constitute the concept of play. Thus war becomes «play» in spite of the fact that, apart from conflicts and rules, it contradicts all other characteristics of play. Caillois's «purposeless» play is not just a «pure» expression of the ruling relations and values; it is a means for creating an illusory vault that is to prevent man from creating the idea of a just world and fighting for its realization: it deals with utopia.

For Caillois, play is an area that is to enable man an (illusory) escape from the «world of concern» to the «world of happiness». The development of the existing plays in the existing world becomes the creation of a «parallel» world creating an illusory freedom. «Happiness» becomes possible – in the existing world of unhappiness. Play becomes a playing form of escape from the world and letting off the steam of non-freedom – and man's reconciliation to the existing world of non-freedom. Basically, it is about preventing the discontent with an

uncertain and humiliating life from being directed towards the struggle against the causes of misery, which means against the ruling order: play becomes a way of preserving the world of misery. It is only an apparent duplication of the world: in it, as an «oasis of happiness», the ruling relations appear in the playing form – under the aureole of «happiness», «freedom», «spontaneity»... Play becomes the earthly substitute of “paradise”, while the philosophy of play (sport) becomes modern theology: instead of argumenats, we are dealing with an illusory, «humanistic» empty talk. Basically, it is not man who plays, but the ruling spirit plays with man. In antiquity and Christianity man is the “Gods' toy”; today, man is the toy of capital, while the world is its (global) playing ground. Man «willingly» opts for play and hides behind the ruling values which are the basis of his devaluation. A typical example is gambling, or “lottery” - as it is called in a «more civilized way». It is the authentic picture of a world where the production of social goods is separated from their appropriation and where man's life is in the hands of a power alienated from man and incarnated in money.

The existing plays, which are a condensed incarnation of the spirit of capitalism, become the starting point for determining the essence of play, and this becomes the starting point for determining man's (playing) nature. At the same time, by way of play man does not express his human dignity as an independent individual, he strives to become «someone» and thus acquire social affirmation. Instead of striving to change the existing world of misery and create a world in his own human image, the only one in which he can be happy, man seeks happiness in play which is but a form incarnating the ruling relations and values of a world from which man strives to escape. Under the cover of «escape» from the «world of concern» man's need for freedom and happiness is directed to the area which is the incarnation of the fundamental principles of the existing world – which bring about the everyday misery. Instead of changing the world, man is to change himself; instead of adapting the world to himself, man is to adapt to the existing world. Sport also is a place ruled by «democratic non-freedom» (Marcuse) which is characteristic of technical (capitalist) «progress». **(24)**

For Caillois, play is not a way of developing interpersonal relations and creating a community of emancipated and creative individuals; it is rather a means for intensifying the institutional repression over man which is to protect society (the ruling order) from the «evil» human nature. Caillois: «If the principles of plays really correspond to strong instincts (competition, pursuit of happiness, disguise, dizziness), then it is quite understandable that they can be satisfied only in ideal and limited conditions, those proposed by the rules of play. If they were left to themselves, unrestrained and destructive like all instincts are, those elementary impulses would only have fatal consequences. Plays discipline instincts and impose on them institutional existence. At the moment they can offer them an explicit and limited satisfaction, they educate them, fertilize them, and immunize their soul from their contagiousness. At the same time, they enable them to contribute to a noble enrichment and establishment of cultural styles.» **(25)** And

he continues: «Outside the arena, after the final gong, begins the true distortion of *agon*, which is most widespread of all. It appears in every resistance which is not restrained any more by the strict spirit of play. So, free competition is but one of the laws of nature. It finds in society its original brutality the moment it finds a free pass through the web of moral, social and legal obstacles, which, as in play, represent restrictions and conventions. It is precisely the reason why a furious, ruthless ambition, whatever its manifestation may be, which does not respect the rules of play, and it means fair-play, is to be disclosed as a fatal distortion which thus in certain cases leads to the starting position. Nothing, indeed, better shows the civilizatory role of play than the obstacles it usually puts before the natural greed. It is accepted that a good player is the one who can accept, with indifference and at least apparent cold bloodedness, a bad outcome even of the most persistent endeavours or loss of the incredibly high stakes. The decision of the referee, even unjust, is in principle accepted. The distortion of *agon* begins when the referee and his decision are no longer recognized.» (26) In order to justify the repressive institutions of capitalist society, Caillois reduces man to the beast to which he ascribes «greed», proclaiming the «limitless competition», which is «one of the laws of nature», the *spiritus movens* of social life. The ruling laws of capitalism become the laws of nature, while the pathological psychological prophyte of the members of parasitic classes becomes the «nature» of the animal. Caillois does not differentiate between man's aggression which springs from his active, impulse-based relation to the environment that enables him to survive – and man's apparent «need» for violence over other men and for killings. At the same time, man is repeatedly reduced to a bloodthirsty beast, in spite of the fact that man's animal ancestor is not the wolf, but chimpanzee. Blinded by the endeavour to deal with libertarian aspirations of the oppressed at all costs and preserve the class order, Caillois «overlooks» what every village boy knows: wolf does not have a need to kill sheep, but to satisfy its hunger. If a wolf were provided with sufficient quantity of fresh meat at the edge of the forest, it would never come to the village to kill sheep. A beast kills its victim to feed itself; man does not kill another man to satisfy his hunger but to realize certain interests: killing is an instrumental and not an immediate existential (instinctive) activity. War does not stem from man's need to kill; it is a means for realizing political and economic ends of those who do not take an active part in it, but pull strings from the shadow. Thyssen, Krupp, Hitler, Ribbentrop, Himmler – they did not kill anyone. The same applies to anthropologists who argue that man is by his nature a «killer»: it is always «someone else», above all «working masses», who the ruling exploiting classes turn into «cannon fodder» (Bloch) in order to fulfil their interests. In boxing, man does not have a need to hurt and kill another man: «fame» (escape from anonymity) and money are the driving forces that induce man to storm at his opponent. Likewise, the animal does not have an instrumental and utilitarian relation to its body. It does not reduce its body to the tool for achieving a «record» - at the cost of its own destruction. In addition, the animal is

not «greedy» as is the case with man degenerated in the capitalist way. It does not strive to seize and accumulate wealth that would be used for accumulating even more wealth (which in class society gives you the ruling power), as is the case with the bourgeois, on which Coubertin's «utilitarian pedagogy» is based. Caillois «forgets» that the animal world has been in existence much longer than mankind in spite of the animalistic «greed», in spite of the effects of the law of «limitless competition» and without any repressive institutions. Furthermore, animals also «play», and they are not restricted by the given norms, but by their instinctive nature which stops them from hurting one another, the fact pointed also by Huizinga. Animals do not have «destructive instincts»; they tend to satisfy their primary needs in a way that does not threaten the survival of the living world. Speaking of man's «animal» nature, Caillois, like Huizinga, does not say that the primary animal drive is the drive for freedom. A need for freedom is the most important drive which man «inherited» from his animal ancestors. Caillois's theory, in contrast to its basic political intention, indicates that man is by his nature a libertarian being and that he opts for play because he has a need to get rid of everyday bonds: a need for play is a need for freedom from the capitalist world. Caillois does not associate play with the manifestation of man's erotic, especially not creative, nature, which involves closeness between people. Man «inherited» from his animal ancestors (biological) life-creation ability (procreation) – on which an animal's need of another animal and its motion towards another animal is founded and which is the basis of their «playing» impulse. It is manifested in the «need for pretending», for calling etc., which is all a «love call», or love (fore) play preceding mating, and this suggests that the animal is far more noble than a petty bourgeois, whose erotic nature was degenerated by capitalism and who reduces his «partner» to the object of sexual abuse and incubator. Man's vital need of another man, which is of a creative character and by which the animal life-creation ability (procreation) is overcome, is the basis of sociability, which means of man's motion towards another man. It is the basis of human «goodness» that involves freedom, life-creation and sociability.

If Caillois's theory were true, the main task of trainers would be to suppress the aggression in their players. Instead, the main problem of trainers, especially in periods of competition, is how to keep their players motivated for competition (combat). In order to make players assault the opponents, trainers use the most perfidious forms of manipulation that question the player's dignity as a «man». At the same time, the player who is not capable of «charging at his opponent», will not only be called a «coward», «woman» or «gay», he will, in the eyes of his trainer, become a «traitor», as he is not willing to fulfil the requirement set by sport, which is a victory at all costs. It should be noted here that in sport man does not experience other players as people, but as «opponents», «struggling for a place under the sun». Just as killing an «enemy» in a war is a legal and legitimate means for achieving victory, so is the killing and hurting one's «opponent» in sport a legal and legitimate means for achieving the ultimate end.

Instead of a love of freedom and man, in sport, just as in war, we are dealing with a ruthless «victorious spirit» of the sportsman who has become a robotized (capitalistically mutated) beast – whose aggressiveness is not his inherent quality, but is an instrument for realizing inhuman ends. The instrumentalization of aggression by the sportsman presupposes the instrumentalization of man by the ruling order. The same applies to man's relation to his own body: man's (self) destruction in sport corresponds to the destruction of man (living world) by capital. Sport is dominated by the spirit of capitalist destruction based on the absolutized principle of performance – which is unknown in the animal world, or in «primitive» peoples who live in unity with nature. The absurdity of anthropology (whose «best minds» regularly come from Christian churches), which reduces man to the beast, can be seen when its arguments about human nature are confronted with the Christian doctrine of the nature of man. Where does man's «animal nature» come from when it is «created by God» and «in God's image»? How come that bourgeois anthropologists, as the leading figures of Christian churches, do not recommend prayers to people in order to suppress their «aggressiveness», but offer them instead bloody gladiator's spectacles the cruelty of which exceeds everything that can be found in the animal world? To make the hypocrisy even bigger, they proclaim bloody sports spectacles (as well as killing animals for fun, chivalrous tournaments and war) «play», which means an area where man is supposed to experience «happiness»! Horkheimer also justifies boxing by man's need to vent his aggression. Why does that have to be achieved through physical injuries inflicted on the «opponent» and killings? Why cannot man express his «aggression» by hitting a sack, through physical exercises, work and the activities that can help him develop his creative powers? There is also the question of why boxing fights are performed publicly and turned into a spectacle, which means that murderous violence is being glorified? Why is boxing proclaimed, by bourgeois theorists of sport, «noble skill», and war has become the «best test of a man's maturity» - if murderous aggression is condemned?

Sport does not suppress but contributes to the development of aggressive behaviour and its glorification, which only confirms the truth that sport is the incarnation of the ruling relations and creation of a man suited to the ruling order. Violence is not inherent to human nature; it has an instrumental character and serves for achieving inhuman needs. To hit one's opponent is not a human need; it is a means for achieving victory, which means to ensure existence and affirmation by way of the ruling value model. Victory is achieved through ever more «efficient» blows at the opponent, which means through ever more efficient bodily injuries. Hence the main intention of boxers is to «knock out» the opponent, meaning to cause brain damage which blocks consciousness and bodily reactions and frequently has fatal consequences. If a boxer evades blows, and tries not to strike his opponent, the referee stops the fight and asks them to strike blows. If the boxer who has been reprimanded continues to avoid blows, he will be disqualified. Boxing is an example which illustrates that sport is the incarnation of the spirit of

ruling relations in a «pure» sense, and that fight for victory by eliminating the opponent is the governing life principle of capitalism which is of a totalitarian character.

If man is by his nature an «aggressive being», why does he look for «entertainment» in play with its repressive normative vault that deals with man's original (aggressive) nature? If we consistently follow Caillois's anthropological conception and his view that play is a way of keeping man's animal nature under institutional control, opting for play cannot be «voluntary», let alone «spontaneous», but is rather repressive. However, even according to Caillois's theory, man is not discontented because he cannot realize his destructive instincts and greed, but because of the imposed obligations, wherefrom follows constant anxiety, uncertainty, fear, need to «forget» about his everyday life and escape from obligations. Strivings for play become man's psychological reaction to everyday life pervaded with «concern». Hence Caillois does not offer man play as a space where he will be able to give vent to his «aggressive» nature, but creates an illusion that play is a space where man can realize his suppressed humanity and thus experience «happiness». Speaking of play, Caillois concludes: «It exists only where players want to play and where they do play, even if it is the most tiring and highly exhausting play, wishing to have fun and forget about their worries and get away from everyday life.» (27) Play is not a means for eliminating the causes of discontent; it is a spiritual drug which is to block pain created in man by everyday life – which does not enable him to realize his human potentials. It is an illusory escape since in the «world of play» the ruling relations and principles of the established world of «unhappiness» appear in a playing form. An unfree man is offered «happiness» in the form of a new cage which is regarded as the place of «happiness».

Adorno's analysis of running throws light on the nature of play and of man's need to get away from capitalist nothingness from another angle: «Running through streets looks like horror. It is an already imitated collapse of the victim in its attempt to avoid disaster... (...) The habit of the body to walk as if it is something normal comes from good old times. It was the bourgeois way of not moving away from one spot: physical demythologization, free from the constraints of hierarchical walking, from traveling without roof over one's head, escape without the soul. Man's dignity lay in the right to walk, to a rhythm which was not imposed on the body by commands or intimidation. Walking, roaming, were ways of spending your private time, a heritage of feudal strolls in the nineteenth century. With the liberal century, walking died, even there where there were no cars. The youth movement which felt those tendencies with a doubtless mechanism, declared war to parental Sunday excursions and replaced them with voluntary enforced marches and called them the medieval journey, while the model of Ford was already awaiting it. Maybe in the cult of technical speed, just as in sport, the impulse is hiding to master the horror of running, by diverting it from one's own body and at the same time by overcoming it independently and masterly: the

triumph of the mile counter ritually abates the fear of the chased. But, if you shout to a man: «run», be it a child who should fetch to his mother the purse she had left on the first floor, or a prisoner who is ordered to run by the escorts as an excuse to kill him, then the archaic violence, which otherwise quietly steers every step, becomes loud. » **(28)** The «horror of running» springs from the fear that one will lag behind, in a muddy pond beside the road. In capitalism, the worst of curses is to be a «loser». Everyone strives to capture the rhythm of life, conditioned by the ever growing speed of capital reproduction. No one knows anyone else. No one speaks to anyone else. You can either run or disappear. Just as a well-trained dog follows its master, so a mentally retarded (petty) bourgeois strives in his jogging-trance to follow the increasing rhythm of pulsing of capitalist reproduction which mercilessly rejects all those who cannot follow its dynamic. Running becomes one of the («spontaneous») manifestations of the struggle for survival, a way of gaining confidence which becomes indispensable in the increasingly ruthless «life game». At the same time, «sports» running is the rationalization of one's fear of disappearing through the mechanism of quantification which is the landmark in the desert of hopelessness, and which creates the impression that escape is actually just a movement forward and thus an «achievement» that gives meaning to life.

«Mass sport» has become a form of mass escape from social reality, a way of taking advantage of the new (consumer) possibilities (in petty bourgeois, it is the confirmation of his «status») which enable man an escape to nature. By «freely engaging in sport» man buys the illusion of «freedom», which is to enable him to endure life in which he is deprived of the possibility of being human. It is all about finding the «island of salvation», escaping beyond the real life. «Mass sport» far more successfully sterilizes man's critical and change-oriented conscious than passive enjoyment in sports spectacles. When watching sport, man is just a passive participant in a show (reduced to a roaring mass), while in «mass sport» he becomes the bearer of sports activity. It is about a concrete challenge (fight with nature, mastering space, fatigue, one's own body, etc), and meeting the challenge is experienced by man as the confirmation of his own values. With fewer and fewer possibilities of realizing his true human powers in his everyday life, man is becoming more and more tempted by this challenge. In addition, the illusion of freedom is experienced in the open more strongly than on the stadiums, where man is surrounded by a fence, «security guards» on horsebacks, police dogs... Equally important is the fact that gaining freedom by «conquering nature» is one of the most important motifs used by the ideologues of capitalism in building myths of their «heroes», as if human freedom was threatened by nature and not by capitalism which destroys man and nature. The symbol of the «free man» becomes a bold lone runner, who «bravely» pushes his way through wilderness. The freedom gained is measured in kilometers of the covered space, obstacles that have been overcome, and at the same time man is reduced in society to the labour-consumer tool of capital. Potential libertarian-creative energy is directed to a pseudo-activity which cannot cause a change in social relations and man's position

in society. Obviously, it is one more form of compensatory activism that enables man an (illusory) escape from responsibility for the survival of mankind, as well as for the risks carried by the fight against the suicidal capitalist tyranny.

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Notes

- (1) Eugen Fink, Osnovni fenomeni ljudskog postojanja, 293.p. Nolit, Beograd, 1984.
- (2) Ibid, 293.p.
- (3) Ibid, 294.p.
- (4) Eugen Fink, Oaza sreće, 15.p. "Revija", Osijek, 1979.
- (5) Eugen Fink, Oaza sreće, 16.p.
- (6) Жан Кокто, Дневник непознатог, "Видици", 3-4 1981. Cursive Ж.К.
- (7) Eugen Fink, Osnovni fenomeni ljudskog postojanja, 294, 295.p.
- (8) Eugen Fink, Oaza sreće, Ibid, 10.p.
- (9) Eugen Fink, Osnovni fenomeni ljudskog postojanja, 298.p.
- (10) Eugen Fink, Oaza sreće, 23.p.
- (11) Eugen Fink, Osnovni fenomeni ljudskog postojanja, 337.p.
- (12) Compare : Fink, Osnovni fenomeni ljudskog postojanja, 340.p.
- (13) Милан Узелац, Филозофија игре, 71.p.
- (14) Compare : Eugen Fink, Osnovni fenomeni ljudskog postojanja, 334.p.
- (15) Eugen Fink, Oaza sreće, 14.p.
- (16) Eugen Fink, Osnovni fenomeni ljudskog postojanja, 296.p.
- (17) Ibid, 297.p.
- (18) Žan-Pol Sartr, Биће и нишавило, II том, 568.p. Nolit, Bgd, 1983. Cursive Ž-P.S.
- (19) Ibid,
- (20) Žan-Pol Sartr, Kritika dijalektičkog uma, 2.knj. 465.p. Nolit, Bgd, Cursive Ž-P.S.
- (21) Ibid, I књига, 17.p.
- (22) Rože Kajoа, Igre i ljudi, 35.p. Nolit, Beograd, 1979.
- (23) Ibid, 35.p.
- (24) Herbert Marcuse, Čovjek jedne dimenzije, 21.p. V. Masleša, Sarajevo, 1968.
- (25) Ibid, 82.p.
- (26) Ibid, 74.p.
- (27) Ibid, 34.p.
- (28) Theodor W.Adorno, Minima moralia, 160, 161.p. V. Masleša, Sarajevo, 1987.

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