

TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION OF
PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT
HIGH HOPES

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Abstract

English title: **Towards a better understanding and application of Physical Education and Sport – HIGH HOPES.**

Česky název: **Snaha o lepší porozumění a užití Telesní Výchovy a Sportu – VELKÉ NADĚJE.**

The reality is that Physical Education is mainly focused on competitive and professional level. This understanding is not only harmful for the field of Physical Education, but also for our society as a whole. In this Diploma Thesis I propose a “treatment”, which in my opinion will contribute to the improvement of Physical Education. Despite the fact that our society is competitive, I suggest elimination of contests, rewards and records. Physical Education deserves to be more natural, which means to be playful. Physical Education can contribute to better societies and the only way is to attract people towards it and make them play. If we can somehow change the system of Physical Education a little bit to bring it to the forefront or centre of our lives, then we will be able to talk about “prevention” of problems, which is more effective.

Key-words: Playful Sport • Physical Education • Definitions of Sport • Criticism of contemporary Sport.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this Diploma Thesis to my **parents** for their support and understanding and to my amazing friend **Euro**, for his teaching, inspiration, patience and faith.

I declare that I wrote this Diploma Thesis on my own and that I used only books and articles that are mention in the references.

In Prague, 25/03/2008



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Introduction

We live already in the year 2008 with many doctors and scientists all over the planet. As Kevin Spacey puts it, “how many doctors are in this planet?”¹ How many times will we talk again and again about “treatments” or findings of solutions to various problems? Sport Philosophers, Sport Sociologists and Sport Educators year by year talk about mistakes and corrections, but without resolutions. External rewards influence our actions; and Physical Education, the field of our life that can give us health and happiness, is turned into business administration, workouts and illness. The change of Physical Education nowadays leads to problems which sport psychologists, medical scientists, politicians, economists, etc. are all engaged in finding so-called “treatments” for the consequences of this change. Many people have exploited Sport Education for other purposes than health, peace, socialization and happiness. Over-exercise programs despite that they are unhealthy, are planned to be practice from living beings. The involvement of money in Physical Education has diminished its importance.

In the following chapters I will try to let you understand what Physical Education means to me, I will bring to the surface some very important parameters, which I consider wrong and I will propose some changes, which will lead to the improvement of sport field. Physical Education is a word, which has several meanings; positive but negative as well. Some people have understand it as a vehicle to health and happiness; but some other have misunderstand it and exploited it for other purposes; such us richness, glory and beauty. When we love and believe in something, it makes us see it from different perspectives! Some call it passion; I call it *real love*! Through the years I have seen much of what I love (Physical Education) to be humiliated. On the other hand, I also experience it as one of the greatest educational skills of our history.

¹ Film *K-Pax*, Scene 5, *K-PAX* (2001) is a mystery and/or sci-fi drama about a mental patient who claims he is an alien. During his treatment, the patient/alien, Prot, demonstrates an outlook on life that ultimately proves inspirational for his fellow patients and especially for his psychiatrist.

My Story

When I was a child (five years old) my parents asked me what I would like to do in my life. I, spontaneous as always, answered with one word, *sport*. From then on, for more than ten years I was an athlete in the sport of gymnastics in a local private club (in Larnaca city – Cyprus). I trained every day for several hours and enjoyed going there a lot to learn new skills and have fun with my teacher and friends. As I remember, every time when competition was approaching, stress made me feel sick. Despite that phenomenon, I managed to be one of the best athletes at my age, not only in local, but at the national level as well. Several times, I was rewarded as champion in various disciplines. My best one was national champion in floor exercises.

By growing up, I realized that something was going wrong in the whole process of training and competition. Although, I was enjoying it, at the age of sixteen I had to decide whether I should continue or drop out. As long as I could remember, I loved play. I used to play a little bit with my friends at school and at the gym. On the one hand, it was not enough and on the other hand the older I got the more workouts I had to do. Therefore, I decided to drop out and have more fun with my friends. I wanted to practice more types of sports; to learn about other activities (paint, music, graphic arts) and find other virtues of myself.

Soccer was my second love and I taught myself how to play it. By that time, I had realized that not only did I love gymnastics and soccer but almost every sport that I was practicing. I had the opportunity to practice various sport games like basketball, volleyball, and handball during my childhood.

After graduating from school, I had a small break in my life; my worst experience. I had to serve for twenty-seven months in the military forces. Later, when I was free again, I faced a second period that I should decide what to do in my life. I was born in the Republic of Cyprus, in which physical activity and sport are not the favorite activities of the majority of the inhabitants. Therefore, I had to choose; whether to be occupied with some activity/art other than sport; or to stay in sport and do nothing (in Cyprus the opportunities in PE and Sport are rare). At first, I tried to work at the airport but I was not satisfied (it lasted only a couple of months). After that disappointment I had the first desire to return in to sport. I tried to enter the Sport University in Greece but I failed in the entrance examination (caused by the theory part – I was not a very good student then; I

graduated high school on the second attempt of the final examination). By coincidence I managed to gain entrance into another faculty; the faculty of Food Technology. My family and friends persuaded me to study in this field. Because of the potential entrance of Cyprus into the European Union, this occupation would have really good opportunities. Another reason was that I was (and I am) interested in healthy nutrition and the science of Food Technology has relation with this topic. So, I spent two years at Thessalonica (Greece), partying, and having fun. But I realized that it was not a serious life. Therefore, I dropped out and I returned back home (Cyprus).

At this time I did not have much self-confidence (as to return to sport), so I decided to work as a graphic designer (which I had practiced since I was 14 years old) and I took over the enterprise of my father, a printing press company. Although I was working hard, my mind was always focused on and dreaming of sport and I never stopped being physically active. I was running; I was walking; I was riding my bike; I was hiking in the nature; I was swimming; but loneliness was my “companion”; people from my own country considered me “crazy” or a “strange person”. In the Republic of Cyprus, I was feeling so alone.

The year of 2003 was very critical for me. At the beginning of the year I decided to improve the quality of the enterprise; from the point of view of equipment, and services. My first investment was a professional computer, which value was 4000 Euro. Then I decided to improve my knowledge around the art of typography. I attended 36 hours of graphic design’s seminar and traveled to England to visit one of the biggest exhibitions about printing equipment. At the end of the year came a critical moment. I bought a present, value 40,000 Euro for myself (a secondhand printing machine). By coincidence at the beginning of the year 2004, the economy of Cyprus was really bad. For about two months I had almost no work to do and no profit for living as well. I was in dept and actually I was sitting and admiring my new “toy”. That period of time caused me to rethink my future. My thoughts about being an important person in Physical Education and Sport were at their maximum. Therefore, I had no motivation to continue working at the printing factory.

I decided to love myself more and fulfill my life’s dreams with all that would give me happiness. With no fear of the debt and all the consequences, I closed the door of the enterprise (metaphorically here). The next move was the consideration of what exactly to do and how. The purpose, of course, was to return to sport. With the help of my friend, Euro, I took the responsibility to improve my self-confidence. The first step was to stay as

much as possible at home, accompanied by Euro and work at it. A good move was the purchase of the book *Η Δύναμη είναι μέσα σου* (The Power is within you, Hay, 1991), which gave me the first sign towards taking the big step. Through this book I learned about the psychologist Turner and his amazing book *Γεννήθηκες για να Πετύχεις* (Born to succeed, 1994). He gave me the power and the courage to follow my conscious. I *signed a five-year contract* with myself, which stated that, “in five years I will be an important person in Physical Education and Sport”. As I remember, I read that book three or four times then.

My confidence was at its maximum, but still, I was confused about what exactly to do. I decided to try my luck with soccer. I began to exercise more often to improve my aerobic capacity. At the beginning of the summer 2004 I had the courage to take part in the trials for the soccer team *Αθλητική Ένωση Κίτιον* (Athletic United of Kition, first category in Cyprus soccer league). The team comes from the city where I was born and in a big surprise to my friends, I showed up the week of the trials. I failed to be accepted to the team, but the experience will always be in my mind.

Then, followed the second period of serious thinking about my future. For a couple of months, with Euro, I spent a lot of time of thinking. We sat on the balcony of my apartment every night, watching my “star” to call me, as to follow it. Accompanying us was Bob Marley, who was singing “...don’t worry about a thing, cause every little thing gonna be all right” in his song “Three little birds”; and Pink Floyd with their song “Dogs” and the lyric “...you have to strike when the moment is right without thinking...”

One sunny afternoon I was drinking my frappe (cold Greek coffee) at a beach bar and admiring the infinite open/high sea when my very good friend Andreas called me and asked if I needed company. I said, “Yes, why not”; anyways I had not come into contact with another human being in long time. Our main topic of conversation was my future, for which I was somehow blind. He, as a third person, had “clearer” thoughts than me. Therefore, he asked me “why do not you study Physical Education and Sport? You like it. It is your dream and it is never too late”. That was the solution to the question of what to do, but where? In the following minutes he mentioned a friend of his, who studied Political Science in the Czech Republic and he asked me if I would like some further information about the country and its study system and curriculum. I replied, “No, it is ok. It is not necessary to ask him more details. I made my decision to move to the Czech Republic where I would study as well”. The only thing that I wanted to know was if the inhabitants

were dog friendly. I was so happy and I could not hide it. I was reborn. I had been in “hell” and I jumped to “heaven”. That evening, as usual I had a drink on my balcony and I was watching the stars with Euro. At the same time I was dreaming (with open eyes) of my life, after the return to sport. Pictures (of me in sport) were coming one by one in my mind. For a moment I woke up, turned my head to Euro, who was lying next to me, and without any hesitation I asked him, “What do you think! It sounds like a really good idea! Do not you think so?” With his philosophical look, he just gave me a smile and shook his tail. By doing so he gave me the final, green light, to stop dreaming and be happy.

The next day, I began my research about the faculty of Physical Education and Sport of Charles University in Prague. I contacted the faculty and I arranged my study application. Since that day I was and I still am “flying” from happiness. Everywhere that it happened to be, I was talking about my decision and how happy I was. The only “problem” was my English language abilities. I had stopped learning the language at the age of 15. And since then I had not used it often, therefore, I had forgotten many details in grammar and my vocabulary was limited as well. I thought that it would be a good idea to start reading by myself some books in English. But it was not enough, so I asked a friend’s mother if she could help me. She taught me some basic tricks in grammar and she helped me to remember some other things as well. After some lessons I felt ready to study in English.

I sold my new car; I gave everything that I did not need anymore to my friends. I said goodbye to my family and my friends and I promised them that I would never forget them; that I would not be far away and that I would visit them as often as possible. My decision was settled. Despite my love of them, I knew that this was my life and what was right for myself at that moment. One reason that drove me in this difficult decision (to live abroad) was “culture shock”. Although I was born and grew up in this exotic island; through years of considerations, I found out that I did not belong there. I am really proud that I am Cypriot and of the history of my country, but I have to admit that modern Cypriot culture does not inspire me so much. Another reason is the big love of self. As the individual that I am (read more in chapter 3.3), I want to have quality in my life. Therefore, after the “huge shaking” that I felt in my own country; where my family and the very good and unique friends that I have live; I was “thirsty” to meet new cultures and find the one that fits with my character, personality and life style. And so the Czech Republic was my next destination.

I took the flight to the ideal city of Prague. Of course, I was not expecting that in Prague I would be welcome from the very first day. After a couple of months, my amazing friend, Euro, arrived at Ruzyne (Prague's international airport). From that moment a huge difference happened in my daily life. Czech people, who are famous all around Europe for their love of dogs, welcomed me into their community. Everywhere I was walking with him, I was meeting other humans with their dogs; while the dogs were playing, I had the opportunity to socialize with the people. A phenomenon that made me begin to feel at "home"! In the Czech Republic from the point of view of being physical active, I met several "fellow travellers". Loneliness disappeared.

Four years after my decision to make a big change in my life, I am now planning to graduate by the middle of May 2008. I kept my promise (to myself) and I will be a Physical Education and Sport teacher. I am one of the happiest people on the planet Earth. I found myself and lead him toward total happiness. Since the big decision, my actions have been completely spontaneous; an inner force drives my thoughts. I discovered the purpose of my existence and all that you will read in the following chapters I will do my best as to make them reality.



All years that I was out of the field of sport helped me to see it from different perspectives. I observed it and analyzed it so much that I realized that something has been going wrong. I was wondering how this happened and why the quality of it year by year is diminishing (in my opinion). During my research, observations, readings and cogitations, I realized that Physical Education has been misunderstood. The return to Physical Education gives me the opportunity to "treat the wound". One part of my life is devoted to Physical Education, which is one of my biggest loves. I have the rest of my life to play sports, teach Physical Education and contribute to its improvement and improvisation. My consciousness that led me to the Czech Republic and the final year of my studies, will be the vehicle for me as to fulfil my goal, which is total happiness of self. To get there I must reach some other goals, and one of them is to realize a new vision of Physical Education; a vision of Physical Education that nurtures the whole being, our society and our life.

WHAT IS SPORT AND HOW SPORT SHOULD BE REALIZED

2.1. Body experience and the social role of sport

Physical Education has several meanings in our society. In the following chapter I will define how I understand it. First, in my opinion, with sport we can meet and experience our body in such a way that in other parts of our life could be more difficult to do so. In addition, the social role of Physical Education is very important to our ontogeny.

The answer to the question “how could our body and society benefit from Physical Education?” could be at the same time very simple and with a few words, but also very complicated, which needs demanding statements and hundreds of words, for its verification. K. Heinemann (in Reinhard, 1994: 15-20) stated that one definition alone is not able to describe the reality of sport, and he divides sport in four categories:

- The expressive sports model that emphasizes “fun”, “joy”, “play” and “participation” and which tries to remove or minimize the elements of performance and competition (see more in the chapter 2.3).

- The competition-oriented sports model, which emphasizes the values of competition, performance and victory (see more at chapter 3.2).

- The commercial sports model, where sport turns into a “media event”.

- The functionalist sports model, which regards sport as a means of fulfilling a number of different functions such as sport for health, sport as catharsis (purification), sport as an educator, sport for integration, sport for national identification.

K. Heinemann models are very simple and understandable, but in my opinion the combination of competitive and commercial models would be more correct, because in professional sport we can meet both phenomena. Competition is the target of professional athletes, sport clubs, coaches and sport managements, that has as the main aim money and fame; which is “a piece of paper” and “being on the spot light”, that commercializes sport through media. H. Eichberg (in Reinhard, 1994: 15-20) brings a triallistic model with which I agree:

- Sport for performance and achievement
- Sport for health and fitness

- Sport and body experience

Here I would like to combine more Eichberg's and Reinhard's, models and bring my own model, which is as follows: *Sport is part of our education, our recreation, health, fitness (body and mind), body experience and our socialization.*

As you can observe I have erased completely the notion "sport for performance and achievement" for reasons, which I will try to discuss as persuasively as possible in the following text.



Reinhard (1994: 16) stated that there are so many varieties of sport that one could just as well choose six different dimensions such as:

- Competition dimension
- Social dimension
- Health dimension
- Expressive dimension
- Green dimension
- Eastern dimension

But because it will be difficult to develop a mutual dynamic between them and in order to understand a dynamic connection and a historical tendency, he concluded in two dimensions of sport, the "Individual level" and the "Socio-historical level".



Individual level

The object of sport and body culture is described through a dialectical interplay between performance and body experience. Through sport we meet our body and we come into unity with it. We understand its function, how we breathe and how our limbs move. Also sport gives us the opportunity to get experience with this wonderful planet in which we live.

When we swim in the sea and the salty water touches us, it massages our body. When our eyes explore the underwater world, they see the beauty of the sand moving from the waves, the amazing paints from the reflection of the sun on the water, the plants dancing in the rhythm of nature and the various other living creatures, each of them swimming in different styles next to us.

On the way to the mountain, by hiking through the wild beauty of nature, the excitement to get to our destination increases and gives us energy or even fear of being a small point in comparison with the power of nature. At the same time we respect it and we become cautious. When we rock climb and our palms touch the warm or cold rock, they feel the changes on the shape of the surface and with every movement from every different posture we can see nature from different perspectives. To reach the top and feel safe according to a natural climber is the greatest nature experience.

When we run in the park or to the countryside in the vast forest, and the wind comes in contact with our face and every other nagged part of our body; our eyes watch and admire the beauty of the peripheral environment. If we are a little bit creative, we jump on fallen trees; we climb on them and try to keep balance on them as to improve our neuromuscular coordination. If we want to be more brave, we take off our shoes and run barefoot and that is the best moment when we become one with nature, we feel it underneath our feet exactly how it is natural, to massage us and at the same time to remind us who and what we are; animals of the human kind and part of the planet earth.

Of course when we talk about sport in this context, we mean “movement”. By juggling a ball with a partner, nonverbal communication² comes to the surface. Our bodies “speak” between each other. The language of the body is a means of communicating and understanding the surrounding world. Also one can gain body experience by identifying with other bodies, and more simply one can get body experience by watching other people's bodies, by understanding them or being amused by the creative use of the body (Reinhard, 1994: 2). Stories are enormously powerful, but language is not the only way to have a voice. Forencich (2006: 146) writes that we can tell our stories in thousands of ways, through sport, art, music, crafts, career and relationships. He continues and states that physical movement is one of our most fundamental forms of expression. Many people choose movement to tell their story and for them physical movement says, “This is who I am”. Sport is an opportunity not simply to achieve victory, but to express one’s personality.

Sport gives us the opportunity to meet more our body. Systematic physical activity provides different situations that our body has to face. Imagine how many different

² Nonverbal communication (NVC) is the process of transmitting messages without spoken words, sometimes called body language; messages can be communicated through facial expressions; gestures; gaze; and posture. Many include the space we use around us; object communication includes clothing, hairstyles, adornment, shoes, and other communicative props, or even architecture; symbols and info graphics; prosodic features of speech such as intonation and stress and other paralinguistic features of speech such as voice quality, emotion and speaking style. (Wikipedia. Nonverbal communication).

physical activities exist nowadays. Very briefly I will mention some of them: walking, running, swimming, climbing, cycling, skiing, skateboarding, inline skating, snow boarding, and juggling. In each of them we have to act differently, but with the same body and mind. Each of the above physical activities has to be performed in different environments and intensities. Therefore, we face different manipulation of our body and by doing so we meet our body from different perspectives and on different surfaces and environment. In addition, if we are physically active, there is the possibility of an accident. Therefore, we have to take care of and treat our body (of course with the assistant of medical doctors if necessary). We know our body better than anyone else; we know where and how much is painful. And we can look after it as well.

By combining all the above-mentioned actions during sport, as a result we get performance. A process which influences and changes the surroundings as well as provides opportunities for self-realization and self-affirmation has two dimensions, the one is related to society and the social surroundings and the other is of importance for the individual (Reinhard, 1994: 2).



Socio-historical level

Throughout history the culture of body and movement are culturally specific and have been part of annual festivals, wedding festivities, and triumphs for victorious generals etc. Movement activities can be understood as integral part of social life. Since we learned how to move our body in the rhythm of music, very often we like to take part in public events for dancing. For example, have you ever been at a music festival? To dance the whole weekend and move around and between thousands of unknown “flat mates”³; is something amazing. So many people with extremely different life styles, in two days come together for the sake of the same hobbies; music and movement. A band is on the scene and the drummers play music for the audience, which is a ritual of a large bodily performance to the individual, and at the same time a performance that is a basis for body experience; here is the moment, that dancers and drummers become fused into a unity.

Body experience is connected with the personal experience in sport and nowadays we can see several reasons for doing sport. Many people consider “health” as the main

³ We live in one world, one planet, and I consider it, as one “flat” with billions “flat mates”. Which are animals of the human kind, other animals, sea world, trees, plants, flowers etc...

motive for going in for sport. According to Heinemann's (in Reinhard, 1994: 4) examination, over 67% of the participants in sports associations and commercial fitness clubs and dance studios want to do something for their health. Some others consider psychical balance/well-being and enjoyment of the movement/vitality as the most dominant motives. Nothing can compare to the joy and pleasure during the moment of performing a movement or even after as well. To me, each moment that I move every single part of my body, gives me the joy of creation and recreation. It gives me the feeling of doing something productive and the same time contributing to the form of structures of society. To play with a football for several minutes on our body, many words come at the out world, and here the joy of doing and the pleasure of seeing come into unity with socialization.

The importance of taking part in sport at all levels is well illustrated by Montelione & Davis (in Standeven, Hardman and Fisher, 1990: 120): "Sport serves as a socializing agent in every society. The advantages of participating in sport are many, but two stand out. First, the skills learned on the playing field allow both disabled and able-bodied individuals to function better as part of a team, a necessary skill in any society. Second, sport achievements help the able-bodied population to see past the disability and recognize the ability of a person of being sporting..." It does not matter what level of performance we can achieve. Only the participation in sport is enough; we are all human of the same kind and no discrimination "fits" in sport. Participation gives the opportunity to every one to explore her/his body and the same time to be part of the society.



Let us take as an example the meaning of sport in Nigeria (in Akindutire, 1992). Many Colleges and the Universities in Nigeria are taking sport seriously as an image-making process. It is believed that sport is very important to a society and permeates nearly every important aspect of life. It affects the behaviour of human beings and institutions as they form the total social and cultural complex of the society (Bucher in Akindutire, 1992). It is also the observation of Loy and Kenyon (in Akindutire, 1992) that sport is a social phenomenon and a social process, which is an integral part of culture. With 250 ethnic groups having different languages, dialects and cultures in Nigeria, it is most probably that suspicions and disagreements could be common features in the country, especially in the political scene. However, despite the diverse cultural differences among the many ethnic groups in Nigeria, sport is a unifying factor mainly used to promote the cultures, social

interactions and enhance national prestige during the sport festivals usually organized in the country (Ogunbiyi in Akindutire, 1992). For instance, traditional music and dance are part of Yoruba culture, which involve both subtly rhythmic movement, and complex acrobatic display of skills. The fundamental movements involved in the various musical displays have some carry over value to sporting activities. As highlighted by Akindutire (1992), during the festival, the heavy spear and fishing nets are thrown with such accuracy as to hit the appropriate targets. The hold, the carriage and the release of the spear, which ultimately involve all the rudiments of javelin throwing, no doubt, pave the way for good participation in the event in later life. Similarly, the throwing of the fishing net, displayed in typical discus-releasing fashion (the swing and chest thrust) has yielded, in no small measure, suitable carry-over value for good performance in the discus event by the people. Sport constitutes the Nigerian culture in all its different forms. It is an important means of community identification, integration and pattern maintenance of the culture. In Nigeria, sport has been used as a means of selecting a leader for the age group, and also used as a means of socialization, not only for the actual participants but also for representative members of such system. People consider sport as an expression of that socio-cultural system in which it occurs. In Nigeria, sport is not only taken as a part-time or recreational resort, but it is taken as a cultural norm that borders on the modes of feeling, believing and thinking of the people (Akindutire, 1992: 27-32).

2.2. European Sports Charter

European Sports Charter defines sport as follows: “all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels” (Council of Europe, 2001) and sets out the following:

1. To enable every individual to participate in sport and notably:

- To ensure that all young people have the opportunity to receive Physical Education instruction and the opportunity to acquire basic sports skills.

- To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to take part in sport and physical recreation in a safe and healthy environment and, in co-operation with the appropriate sports organizations.

- To ensure that everyone with the interest and ability should have the opportunity to improve their standard of performance in sport and reach levels of personal achievement and/or publicly recognized levels of excellence.

2. To protect and develop the moral and ethical bases of sport, and the human dignity and safety of those involved in sport, by safeguarding sport, sportsmen and women from exploitation from political, commercial and financial gain, and from practices that are abusive or debasing, including the abuse of drugs and the sexual harassment and abuse, particularly of children, young people and women (Council of Europe, 2001: 2)

On one hand I will agree and support the majority of the statements that have been mentioned in the European Sports Charter, but on the other hand there are some specific statements in it that contribute against the world of sport. For the beginning let us talk about the “positive” aspects that I find in it:



• Positive aspects

All forms of Physical activity: To define any physical activity as “sport”, movement should contribute in it. Our body has been created to move, and as I have mentioned and I will repeat later, sport gives us this opportunity. It does not matter what the intensity of the activity or the percentage of heart rate is; if the purpose is to move and give the opportunity to our body to be alive, yes for me it is “sport”. Do activities like “washing the car”, “gardening” etc., considered as sport? Yes, if have performed in such a way that the moment of movement, our body express its creativity. For example, a sunny

Sunday morning I woke up. I thought that it was a perfect day for washing my car. I turned on the radio to my favourite frequency. Later I threw some water on the car, start dancing and at the same time brushing the car with soap. After a while a friend showed up and we both danced together, passing the sponge every once and a while to each other using some “basketball” tricks. The whole situation continues for an hour and the result is a fresh washed car and two bodies full of energy (as usual after any physical activity) ready, after the warm up for a basketball game in my back yard. Well as you see a boring activity, as it is for a lot of people, became a joyful moment, full of movement, for both of us. In the same way, various other physical activities could be characterized as sport. The most important content is movement, which involves us, as a whole. If it is planned in this way, joy will accompany the moment of movement.



Casual or organized physical activity: “Any physical activity can be casual or organized by governmental or private institutions” (Council of Europe, 2001). Nowadays, any time, all over the world you can meet this phenomenon. Friends play soccer (modification of soccer that we know from professional sport) in the park. Or they play “mini soccer” game as part of organized league by the local municipality. Here I would like to emphasize the importance of promoting participation, recreation, joy and pleasure, as the main aim of the participants. Very often I observe people to be influenced by the “passion of winning”, and act very barbarian for the sake of it. According to the European Sports Charter participation in organized sport is encouraged: “The role of the public authorities is primarily complementary to the action of the sports movement. Therefore, close co-operation with non-governmental sports organizations is essential in order to ensure the fulfilment of the aims of this Charter, including where necessary the establishment of machinery for the development and co-ordination of sport. The development of the voluntary ethos and movement in sport shall be encouraged, particularly through support for the work of voluntary sports organizations...” (Council of Europe, 2001: 4).

In my opinion, in this section, the European council should give more emphasis to the casual participation. What I mean is not only to support the building of facilities and to help the authorities with equipment, but to develop and promote a better ideology to the public about “being physically active”, as well. In some countries the fact of “Sport for all”

is just “fantasy”. It has become more socio-economic class based and the primary focus is on elite sport. As Macintosh (in Standeven, Hardman and Fisher, 1990: 113) stated, “sport and physical activity for all has all been ignored in the rush to develop a core of elite athletes”. A fact that is very common in some European countries nowadays.

A lot of people have the idea that to be physically active you should be an “athlete”. A term that derives from the Greek words *athlos* (contest) and *athlon* (prize) (Guttman, 1978: 5) and its meaning influences our modern society. To be in sport, for them means to be an athlete, which will win the contest and get a prize. So these people avoid being physically active because they have never thought their selves of being a “top elite athlete”. In contrast the recreational nature of the root of the word sport, *disport* and *disporter*, means to “carry away”. To be physically active (and at the same time sport woman/man) we carry away the pressure of the everyday life, in a recreational activity. Gibson (1993: 50) stated that sport and athletics (professional sport) are radically different types of human activity (see more in chapter 3). So to promote the meaning of the word “sport” (physical activity) would be one more step to improvisation of the Charter. As educators and motivators (PE teachers and everyone who is responsible of promoting sport education) our role is to help people fall in love with the subject at hand, whatever it happens to be. To fall in love with movement, fall in love with physicality, and fall in love with play. Fall in love with knowledge; fall in love with health, vitality and pleasure (Forencich, 2003: 154).



Physical fitness and mental well-being: Hippocrates, long time ago stated that “if we could give every individual the right amount of nourishment and exercise, not too little and not too much, we would have found the safest way to health” (in Forencich, 2003: 131). Everyone of course knows some of the physiological benefits, of being physically active: increase blood circulation, lower heart rate, better stamina, stronger bones, stronger immunity system, more oxygen consumption, more vital body in older ages, extending life span, increase body temperature⁴ etc. With few words physical movement is one of our most fundamental forms of expression, which can be immune-enhancing and health

⁴ Increase body temperature has also the advantage of saving electrical or gas energy; we create our own “personal heating” and by doing so during the cold winter days and nights you feel comfortable by eliminating the use of heating energy and the same time protecting the nature.

promoting (Forencich, 2003: 146). Being a physically active body and also have a well-being mind. Relax our mind, forget any stressful situation from the daily life, clear our mind and be happy. In consideration with the above mentioned, I suppose the importance of physical activity in our life, is obvious.



No discrimination: “No discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status, shall be permitted in the access to sports facilities or to sports activities. Measures shall be taken to ensure that all citizens have opportunities to take part in sport and, where necessary, additional measures shall be taken aimed at enabling both young gifted people, but also disadvantaged or disabled individuals or groups to be able to exercise such opportunities effectively... appropriate steps should be taken by the owners of sports facilities to enable disadvantaged persons including those with physical or mental disabilities to have access to such facilities” (Council of Europe, 2001: 4).

Life is for everyone; everyone has the same rights (not only among human beings but also among other beings and most of all among nature). Sport is a “sub-world” in the “whole-world” and simultaneously has the same life style; like our life out of sport function with the same way sport does. We are different, each of us is unique but we are equal. Like Alex has the opportunity to kick and pass the ball, so Nick has too. Like me I can play and smile, so Euro has too. It does not matter what abilities has each of us. Even if for some reasons, someone is physical or mental disable, has the right to play sport. If our skin colour is different; if we are female or male; if we believe in different religion; and final if we are children, adults or older people; we should have the same possibilities in sport. There exist so many different physical activities, which I am quite sure that exist one for everyone. A few words about the topic but with wide meaning!



Respect Nature: is the most that we can do to it; we have been created from it; we are nature; we are part of it; we live in it. We know very well that it is stronger than us and that we cannot go against it. Yes we have the opportunity to be physically active in the nature and also to build so many facilities on its ground, but we should increase our awareness in relation to nature. The 10th article of European Sports Charter is very clear

about this purpose and states: “Ensuring and improving people's physical, social and mental well-being from one generation to the next requires that sporting activities including those in urban, open country and water areas be adjusted to the planet's limited resources and be carried out in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and balanced management of the environment. These include: taking account of nature and environmental values in the physical planning and building of sport facilities; supporting and stimulating sports organizations in their efforts to conserve nature and the environment; increasing people's knowledge and awareness of the relations between sport and sustainable development and their understanding of nature” (Council of Europe, 2001: 4).



Socio-cultural development: “...ensure that sport is an integral part of socio-cultural development...” (Council of Europe, 2001: 13). Participation in organized or casual sport events is opening up of new social relations. According to Uslaner (in Papp and Prisztoka, 1995: 375) “sports build social capital because they build self-confidence and teach respect for rules...Sports widen our social contact”. Some other authors stated that, “Sports can teach. Sports can shape. Sports can unify. Sports can comfort. Sports can uplift” (Gough, in Papp and Prisztoka, 1995: 375), or “Sports teach young people to become independent, self controlled, resolute, responsible, and communal in their outlook” (Papp and Prisztoka, 1995: 375). Elias (1971) and Mandell (1984) emphasize that sport is an activity that involves building of character through social cooperation in “English sport”. (in Seippel, 2006: 174)

Having a dog as best friend is a very good opportunity to be physically active. A lot of people who like to be physically active also have the need for companionship and a dog is the best friend to fulfil both needs. In addition to teaching us to be physically active every day, s/he shows us what play really is. S/he also helps us to be social. For instance you go for a walk together, suddenly s/he meets another dog and they start playing. You find the opportunity to socialize with her/his human partner for a while. This occasion can be faced several times every day, every week, every month etc; the result is, making new “friends” unconscious and simultaneous to be socialized through physical activity.

As a Physical Education and Sport’s teacher, I admire the way that some young people like to socially interact. Skateboarders meet every day (usually in the same place) to socialize with each other and at the same time to be physically active. For hours they

perform their unique movements on the board and they do not hesitate to teach their peers. Some other groups like to meet and “juggle” with various objects (balls, sticks, ropes etc.). I have seen the phenomenon also in parks of trying slack line (walking on rope, which is handled among trees). They climb on trees, swing and remember their origin; which is monkeys. They become natural again and at the same time they socialize more through physical activity (see more in chapter 2.1).



Fair Play: Only among human beings, have I seen the phenomenon that we should emphasize, Fair Play. In my opinion, all educated human beings we can determine “good” from “bad”. The problem is that various “temptations”, like money, sex and glory lead us to the wrong action and the necessity of emphasizing Fair Play. I think that, what we need is to improve our self-control. The term Fair Play is promoted, “very well” presently by every sport association, but is not kept in action by many “athletes” and not only (see more chapter 3). European Sports Charter defines it as follow: “Fair play is much more than playing within the rules. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing within the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. ...Fair play is a positive concept...” (Council of Europe, 2001: 15).

Also the Charter emphasizes the responsibility of government, sport organization and individuals, which influence and promote sporting experiences for children and young people. But do we really understand the meaning of Fair Play; or do we just have the symbol of it on our equipment and clothes? (See more in chapter 3.3).



Children are our future: “We should have as priority their health, safety and welfare and ensure that such considerations come before vicarious achievement, or the reputation of the school, club, or coach or parent.

- To provide a sporting experience for a child that encourages a life-long commitment to health related physical activity.

- To avoid treating children as simply small adults but to be aware of the physical and psychological changes that occur during maturation and how these affect sporting performance.

- To avoid placing expectations on a child unrelated to her or his capacity to meet them.

- To make the enjoyment of the participant a priority and never place undue pressure which impinges on the rights of the child to choose to participate.

- To take as much interest in the less talented as in the talented.

- To encourage young children to devise their own games with their own rules, to take on the roles of coach, official and referee in addition to participant.

- To devise their own incentives and sanctions for fair or unfair play; and to take personal responsibility for their actions.

- To provide the child and young person and child's family with as much information as possible to ensure awareness of the potential risks and attractions of reaching levels of high performance” (Council of Europe, 2001).

- In addition we should not take the right of play, from children (see more in chapter 3.2)

All of the above mentioned, are written in the European Sport Charter, but it seems that they are not taken into consideration by many authorities. I have seen the phenomenon of creating a “10 year old adult” through sport. A coach trying to discipline the body of his “boy” also creates a character in the personality of the children that of course does not fit him. In my opinion, for a child to think already about money, race, and competition and “beating the opponent” is something unacceptable. The use of children, for our external/material needs, shows exactly what “disgusting” human beings we are, and how much more we can be (see more chapter 3). Sport on the other hand is so “simpleminded” like children of the age of 5, who can never develop such a personality like the example above. Children imitate adult’s actions; therefore it is our responsibility to show the right example (see more in chapter 3.4)



- **Negative aspects**

There is so much positive content, in the European Charter of Sport, for which I am happy about and also satisfied about their existence. But there are some negative contents that are stronger and as I mentioned above contribute against sport. In Cyprus is a saying which states: “small but strong”, which in our case means that despite the fact that the negative aspects contribute only a small percentage of the Charter, their role in general is stronger and at the same time harmful.

Competition at all levels: "...obtaining results in competition at all level" (Council of Europe, 2001: 1). We need to be careful about this aspect of sport. On one hand they support "sport for all" and on the other hand "the concept that sport is for athletes, competitions, winning, results and awards". They should understand that in sport the most important thing is participation and to have fun, not workouts and boredom. Among others, in the Charter is written: "...the practice of sport at higher levels shall be supported and encouraged in appropriate and specific ways... the support will cover such areas as talent identification and counselling; ...support for athletes who reveal exceptional sporting qualities; ...helping clubs to provide appropriate structures and competitive outlets; the organization and management of professionally organized sport shall be promoted through appropriate competent..." (Council of Europe, 2001: 8-9). I agree with the fact that through competence we can develop our selves; but we should be careful about this notion. If we put some standards to our selves to overcome, yes improvement will be achieved. But if our goal is to be better than our fellows and as to achieve it we should fight them and beat them, decline in society is developed.

Here I would like to specify more the meaning of the above underling phases (which they have been underlined for the needs of the author):

- **Sport at higher levels:** To me it looks like they distinct professional sport and sport for all. Top elite athletes with excellence in their quality (from a performance point of view) should produce high performance as to fulfil the requirements of professional sport. High-level performance is awarded nowadays in sport, and according to the European Sports Charter it should be promoted. In my opinion, we like to create different groups of people, with different ideas and beliefs. By doing so, "dispute" between two groups, which belong in the same field, is very possible. In our case (sport), on the one hand is the group of professional sport and on the other hand is the group that supports sport for all. I love sport, and therefore I would like to propose, the unification of the two groups. Professional sport should be more joyful and healthier (because according to me it is not), with other motives than money and glory. On the other hand, sport for all should be more supported by all authorities, and be promoted for the sake of healthier and more civilized nations.

- **Talent identification:** Discrimination, which means unfair treatment of persons. According to talent scouts, if you do not have the special abilities to reach "high performance" and bring profit to them and all the others, which benefit from the "result", you have no right to be in sport. As you read in the previous section, everyone should have

the right to exercise any sport. European Sports Charter, supports the idea, but for some strange reason supports the notion of discrimination, as well. We should be more consistent in our statements. If we believe in “sport for all” we should mean it and put our faith in it, as well. By supporting two different notions in the same section it is like we try “to make a hole in the water”; it is like we are doing nothing.

- **Competitive outlets:** They produce machines that try to do something better than others, win and be of course more attractive because they are worth more. This is the meaning of the word “competitive” in the dictionary. One of the meanings, of the word “outlet” is “a market which provides goods or services for purchasers”. Sport is not business (despite that in reality it is), therefore, we do not need any competitive goods or services. We need services, which have the form of pedagogy. So many people like to be physically active, but they have no idea, what it is. One could argue that through marketing we could increase interest in sport. In addition, I would like to state that only if our goal is non-profit, it could be more effective.

- **Professionally sport shall be promoted through appropriate competent:** First, we create the battle area and then the soldiers; or a little bit more suitable analogy in our case, which is sport, first creation of “arenas” and then “gladiators”. In professional sport nowadays arenas are all over the world. Athletes should train themselves and be prepared to “fight” and win the competition. As we read in the title of the section, professional sport is characterized by conflict. The same characteristics exist in our modern societies and their influence is obvious in sport as well. Achievement for better social position leads our life and the result is tired bodies and frustrated minds. In my opinion it is more effective if we promote “peace” rather than “war” in the form of co-operation rather than competition.

If we want the European Sports Charter to be more effective we should do something to make it more exact. In my opinion, this period of time is like building up the bridge during the day and during the night tearing it down. When we have the benefit of something, immediately we forget our purpose and we become “pawns”, like chess pieces of the lowest value that can move one square forward at a time and simultaneously be used for the advantage of the people who belong to a “higher social position”. This is the humiliation that sport faces nowadays. I find it more natural to be full of quality; which is what is missing from sport nowadays (see more in chapter 3). If we encourage everyone to play soccer and then eliminate the access to fields for recreational play by charging high fees such that only professional teams can afford the fields, at the same time we eliminate

access to physical activity, only to a part of the population. In addition, the gross inequalities created by overpaying professional athletes, and everyone else is used to support those inequalities from the people who make the clothes in the factories to the poor kids who steal to have them. This is a small sample of our modern society and sport world as well. As I mentioned above quality is missing. According to me quality can bring equality, and through sport we can support this notion. If all people have the same treatment and possibilities in physical activity, as you will read later, it can contribute in more civilized societies.

2.3. Playful sport

In my opinion, it is very important to promote play in sport. Very often, we forget about it, we are becoming “adults” and suddenly we erase play from our life, because according to our modern society, play is an immature activity. Forencich’s (2003: 6) statement is very clear: “Play is by far the most under-rated and frequently-ignored element in human Physical Education today. We are so busy doing grim, technically-advanced warrior workouts that we have lost sight of the fundamentals, including those simple movements that give us pleasure...play is not only permissible, but its vital, not only for the health of our bodies, but also for our communication and our culture as a whole”. As Volkwein (1991: 11-19) stated, sport in contrast with everyday reality, is autonomous and allows for experiences, movements forms and contents by *playing*. Of course we can not say the same for the majority of the professional sport and Physical Education, in which play is reduced, caused by the exaggeration of the value of efficiency and the exploitation of the commercial possibilities in sport (Schmitz, 1974: 30-32) and of course as Volkwein (1991: 11-19) puts it, is alien to playful sport.

Playful sport emphasizes the pursuit of excellence without losing sight of the enjoyment of the human movements. Its emphasis is on gaining pleasure and enjoying oneself (Volkwein, 1991: 11-19). For example, have you ever observed other animals and how they play? Monkeys race each other by jumping from tree to tree. Dogs run all over the park for pleasure; they bring back each apparatus that we (their team-mates) throw to them; if you pretend that you are also quadruped, s/he will love it, jump on you laugh and most of all they will play. My dog, Euro, in addition likes to hold woods with his teeth and resist my effort to take it away; also likes hiding, sliding and chasing games, which many humans (adults) do not. I observed that if for any reason we do not meet any other dog to play during our walk, he is very sad. This fact gives me to understand how much important is play for us.

Other excellent explorers of play are human animals, children. Give them freedom, opportunities to experience, to explore and they (human children) are able to search and discover themselves by playing. Kids know what fun is and what is boring; their bodies are wired for play (Forencich, 2003: 60). One of the principles in children’s Physical Education is play. Is not necessary to over plan it and write down so many rules so as to regulate each moment of freedom. Sport by it self is enough, get a ball, call up a couple of friends, set up the goalpost, the court and start playing “soccer” (modification of soccer;

not the soccer that is played in professional sport). Get swimwear, goggles go to the nearest beach or swimming pool, jump in the water and start playing with it.

Marcuse (in Volkwein, 1991: 11-19) stated that play impulse is the vehicle of liberation... (and) the manifestation of an existence without fear and anxiety, and thus the manifestation of freedom it self. Me, I prefer to define sport “play”. Play is a symbolic activity bringing a feeling of “spontaneity”, “freedom”, and deliberate decision with an activity that has an end in itself, so that its result does not create any utility values. Sport is positive, independent and primary. On the other hand workout is negative, dependent and derivative. Sport is an activity, which is played by everyone, all over the world. In exception the regulative sports, which follow the Darwinian theory⁵ (Norton and Olds: 2001). Sport is based on our evolution of movement, we play soccer, we play during our running tour through the park, we play in the water, we play on the rock, we play riding the bike etc. As you have read the word “play” is written several times, as to show I realize that is what sport is! It is natural, derived from deep within our bodies and gives us a profound sense of joy. It is part of our total educational experience, like in ancient Greece. Some people because of its authenticity they consider it frivolous, unproductive, and selfish as to be part of a physical activity, a fact that is a sign of pathology. Be free from every regulation, give us the opportunity to feel the movement, and develop our personality as the individuals that we are (but as part of the whole).

Play gives us the opportunity to use our imagination and creativity; a fact that is missing from many people in our modern society. Through playful sport we can develop this attitude. Play is permissible, is vital, for the health of our individuals bodies and for our communities and culture as a whole. Playful sport teaches us how to do it and as Forencich (2003: 7) puts it “it is time to grow down”. Live ourselves free and enjoy the moment of sporting. Here I would like to emphasize the importance of playful sport, in children’s world as well. As professional sports have risen to prominence, play has now been largely replaced by being spectators of sport. Today’s kids have little time for spontaneous play. Important after-school play sessions have disappeared. If we do not teach children how to play, they are not going to be playing when they get older. But if we

⁵ “...Over the course of the past century it has become increasingly difficult to find athletes of the size and shape required to compete successfully at the highest level. Sport is Darwinian in that only the ‘fittest’ reach the highest level of participation. Not every physical characteristic could be expected to play a role in this selection process, but two that are important and for which substantial data assemblies exist, are height and mass...”

teach children what play is, how to play and to want to play, the result will be adults with the necessity to play and a more civilized society.

The cosmetic orientation in sport has a bad influence in the notion of sport. Many people believe that sport exist only for losing weight and being fit (from an appearance point of view). Forencich (2003: 32) writes that the tyranny of appearance affects our lives in many ways. It distorts our self-esteem, our relationships with one another and changes the way we exercise. It takes us away from play and joyous movement. He continues and states that on the other hand when we are interested in play, we seek out vigorous, diverse and dynamic movements that bounce and swing on the edge of instability. We look for moves that are slightly unpredictable in their outcome, moves that entail a certain degree of risk. Here I would like to repeat the fact that when we are kids we have no fear of play. We play, we explore and at the same time we take risk. Our interest is to learn new things through play. In playful sport the same happens when we face a risky situation. For example, many people are afraid to jump into the water (swimming pool). The joyous result of catching a ball in the air the moment one jumps; jumping through a hula-hoop; jumping over obstacles; making funny and creative jumps; or even group jumps; can help to get over this fear.

Another problem with sport (especially professional sport) is that it tends to extinguish our sense of play, when practised in high level of intensity. I practised several sports and every time that I was asked to perform in high intensity, I felt very strange. I felt that I was losing something. In time I discovered that I was losing play. Play is free. When we play we are relaxed. Our mind is free to feel and enjoy the moment of sporting. The result is not only pleasure but to be attracted to the activity, as well. When we perform in high intensity we lose the sensation of the movement. And if we have a bad experience from sport (like high intensity) we will give up on games and movement.

As I mentioned before, kids are very good explorers of play; their bodies are wired for play. When I was a gymnast I found it really boring during the period when we had to start strength training (at the age of 15). I found it more interesting and more joyous riding a skateboard than a weight machine. I preferred bouncy and wild movements than the monotonous repetitions in the gym. I hated (and I still do) stationary bikes; I preferred (like nowadays) my real bike that I can ride around in the fresh air. I wanted games with risk, with adventure. If I could practise any physical activity with fun I did not want to stop. Playful sport has all the above virtues and much more. Therefore, if every sport class is designed to be fun, people will keep doing it.

Some people state that when we are at our job, we should work as to get the job done. We can observe the same phenomenon in the fitness world (in gyms which sport is used for cosmetic reasons). Forencich (2003: 204) writes that in today's fitness world, this pro-work, anti-play orientation approaches is a clinically significant psychosocial disorder. All that matters in the fitness world is to get the job done. Whose dream is the perfect, Apollonian body⁶ or the wrong interpretation of Aphrodite⁷'s body (her body has nothing in common with the image that a lot of women have nowadays), should begin workouts in a gym. The instructions that they get are to perform repetitions in sets. To me these workouts are boring; I suppose to many other people as well. Therefore, if we want fitness (here I mean a healthy body and a well-being mind) we can reach our goal with playful sport as well. Because play is not only intrinsically valuable for a complete and fulfilling life, it also helps us get the job done. Play not only makes us happier people, it also makes us more productive workers. In other words, play is not only fun, it is functional too (Forencich, 2003: 204).

Here I would like to talk about some of the benefits of physical play, that Forencich (2003: 204-207) writes:

- The benefits of play are both broad and deep; broad in the sense that a playful attitude can give us pleasure across a wide range of activities and interests, deep in the sense that play can be truly profound.

- On a physical level, all the well-established benefits of exercise also come to us with physical play. We have heard the list by now: increased cardiopulmonary function, improved strength and endurance, greater flexibility, coordination and balance. Whatever exercise gives us, play can also give us.

- Play can give us many of the benefits of laborious exercise, but it can also give us something that most workouts cannot; a sense of joy and elation.

- The other wonderful thing about play is that it levels out our social hierarchies as it makes Physical Education more egalitarian. Success in play is a personal judgement call; no one can rank our performance, no one can claim alpha status as the "most playful" and no one can put us down. There can be no MVP (Most Valuable Player), no top 10, no Hall of Fame. We get to make the call on the quality of our own experience. If we are having fun, we are doing it right.

⁶ Related to Apollo the god in Greek mythology; the god of prophecy, sunlight, music and healing. Literary means very handsome young man.

⁷ In Greek mythology, the goddess of love and beauty. Her mother/native country is Cyprus.

- Play cannot be measured, broken down or analyzed (subjective). There can be no stats or spreadsheets, no Olympic finals in play, no standings, no rankings. Fun is in the body and the spirit of the player, not in the eyes of the judges or on the faces of stopwatches. There can be no standards, no qualification rounds, no eliminations; just experiences.

- The power of play lies in the fact that it gives us instant pleasurable feedback. We play because it feels good and because it feels good, we want to play more. We do not do it because we should do it; we do it because we want to do it. The activity itself contains its own reward.

In addition Forencich (2006: 197) writes the virtues of wild play, which is the play in nature, without any rules for proper form. It has no standards for performance, no eliminations, no judges and no test scores. We learn with our whole bodies-mind, muscle and sensation working together in synchrony. Aside from the obvious benefits such as fresh air and exercise, wild play offers children and adults a host of qualities that are profoundly meaningful:

- Wild play is authentic personal creation. Because it is spontaneous and self-directed, wild play is also highly engaging.

- Children who practise wild play learn with their bodies and their minds simultaneously. They learn by exercising their bodies and imagination in tandem.

- Wild play is closely allied with the spirit of exploration.

- Since it is free, wild play also gives players the opportunity to express themselves as they choose; this is their chance to have a voice. They can speak their minds and express their emotions freely.

- Wild play also gives us a chance to practise divergent, lateral-thinking skills. By conjuring up a wide range of possible explanations, we generate hypotheses that we can test for validity or simply enjoy on their own merits.

- As wild play gives us an opportunity for authentic engagement with the world, it also deepens our appreciation of nature and develops our primal inclination towards biophilia (friend of life). Outdoor play teaches us not only that the wild earth is generally safe, but that it is incredibly rich and fascinating as well.

With the above mentioned benefits of physical play in mind, I would like to add the necessity of transforming professional sport into play as well. In my opinion play is the most missing “ingredient” in professional sport. Professional sport is the most widely known field of sport. We hear about it on the radio, we talk about it everyday, we read

about it in newspapers and magazines and we watch it on television. In my opinion the mistake is that the core of the topic is workouts, achievement and external rewards. About sport and its benefits as far I remember I have not heard; even less about play. Play is an important element of sport, which emphasizes joyful exuberance and pleasure in motion; and we ignore it. Forencich (2006: 9) writes that exuberance is the psycho spiritual branch, our joyful enthusiasm. It is creative, curious and playful. It seeks adventure, novelty and movement of all descriptions. Athletes, sport women/men and every living creature on the planet earth, who practise movement, do so from both spiritual and physical aspects. Therefore we should give emphasis to both. If we concentrate only on tissue, as standard health-and-fitness prescription, we neglect the spirit. If we concentrate only on spirit, we miss out essential physicality (Forencich, 2006: 11).

I think that the problem derives from our modern culture. We emphasize external rewards in our life and we forget ourselves. What we need is to create a new kind of culture that honours movement, exuberance, play, health and broad-based physicality (Forencich, 2006: 22). Thus we need to create a new way of life, which will be physically authentic, vigorous and vibrant. Play is natural and maybe came to the surface millions of years ago. Nowadays despite the fact that we have been socialized and developed so many educational skills we ignore play and some times we erase it from our life. Sport is not an exception in this habit. Our philosophy as Sport Education's teachers should be "Play and Just enjoy it". Forencich (2006: 52) writes that if we would teach chimps, we should give them a movement program that is consistent with their heritage and their life in a wild environment. We need to give them a diversity of activity, moderately vigorous, moderately frequent and moderately sustained, to enrich their environment with forest-like branches for climbing, toys that bounce and partners to play with. To give them some stimulation several times a day to keep their activity levels high and then we will get result. Forencich's example with chimps to me looks like a sign to promote playful sport. In my experience thus far as PE teacher, I promote play and joyous activities and I use any way to do so. The result is amazing. It is my greatest satisfaction to see the happy faces of my students at play in their environment, which is playful movement. I give them every toy that I have in my disposition and they are able to play the whole day.

Another instrument that I try to promote through my PE lessons is sensation, which according to Forencich (2006: 63) produces health. He continues and writes that the way that we absorb sensory information has a profound impact on our physical experience. Touch is one of the sensations that we can get through physical activity. Forencich (2006:

68) writes that whether it comes through massage, sports, labour or sex, touch is enormously powerful for health. A steady flow of tactile input keeps us in direct contact with the physical world; it keeps us grounded, anchored and integrated. By maintaining a tangible relationship with the physical world, we get a constant reminder of our somatic identity, of who we are. Tactile sensation brings focus and attention directly to the here and now. In addition, it promotes movement, either towards some pleasant stimulus or away from a noxious one. Therefore, I promote tactile sensation so as to keep the motivation to move. I ask from them to massage each other and to perform some elements while they handle their arms together (in couples or groups).

In the future, if students would like to, I will include hiking as one of the main activities in the sport curriculum. Hiking is a perfect activity in this respect because it is so intensely tactile. We get to feel the rocky trail, the dirt in our socks, the sweat on our brow. Hearing, taste and smell can be awakened from outdoor experience. We get to smell the trees and plants along the trail, the moldy, wet earth along the river. After a long walk, we also get to promote our sense of taste. At the same time, we give our exhausted auditory system a rest from the beating that it is taking in the noisy urban environment (Forencich, 2006: 67). Playful sport in this respect should be promoted in nature; something that is missing from our modern society. High tech gyms, swimming pools and fields take the role of nature. It would be more effective if the class took place in a peaceful environment. Our bodies want contact with plants, animals, rolling terrain and open sky. We need to smell the land, touch the dirt with our bare feet, feel the textures of plants, see the movements of the other animals, and feel the wind on our faces. In a sense, we need to be massaged by the natural world. Our bodies crave this contact (Forencich, 2006:103).

As an educator and motivator, I try to help people to fall in love with the subject of sport. I do my best as to make them to fall in love with movement, physicality, with play, with knowledge, with health, vitality and pleasure. The key element toward my goal is playful sport. I teach my students new movements through play and give them every opportunity to explore any possibility. By doing so they repeat it over and over and they enjoy the sensation. I give them the freedom to use their imagination because if we can get our mind out ahead of our body, we move with greater power, endurance and effectiveness. In other words, if we imagine what to do, our body knows what to do. For example, in swimming if we imagine that our arms are necessary as to move more effectively we will use them. I ask them which parts of their bodies could be useful; they think, imagine and they try any possibility. In rock climbing prior to roping up the base of

the route, the experienced climber examines the climb in detail and looks for the sequence of movement that seems most plausible. S/he maps the entire route in this fashion, imagining every reach and step (Forencich, 2006: 162). In addition he writes that another powerful quality of the physical imagination is that it offers intrinsic motivation. When we craft a joyful, playful and powerful physical muse, we draw ourselves deeper into a meaningful experience.

Forencich (2006: 200) stated that supervised play is really no play at all. Kids see play as increasingly regimented, dominated and “domesticated” by adults. Obviously, the vast majority of this adult supervision is well intentioned, but all the same, supervision changes the nature of childhood play dramatically. Therefore, when I teach, I always participate and play with my students even when I give them free time. This notion gives them the feeling of freedom. Except that I have the opportunity to come closer, and be friends with them, I create a really joyous environment. I observed that they really like it. It is important for their teacher to be one with them and have fun as a team, not as a “master” and a “slave”. Like other animals we play more when we are well fed, warm, safe and comfortable; therefore, kids as well.

In my opinion, play begins in the body and it involves into movement. We might be playing with all of our objects and tools and sounds that we can hear, but if we do not actually move, we are missing the best part. In some years it is probable that video games will be defined as sport, like in the case of chess. In couple of decades, the couch sedentary life will be the most popular physical activity of our children. But if we move our body is reborn; endorphins hormones are released during movement and make us feel good. Epicurus (in Forencich, 2006: 252) stated that “we must exercise ourselves in the things which bring happiness, since, if that be present, we have everything”. Except of the importance of moving, we should have as purpose long term exercise (I mean physical activities that people will be practice through their whole life). Here comes the necessity of playful sport, which gives us movement practices that are fun and interesting enough. As Forencich (2006: 256) writes with this philosophy, people will continue to practice regular movement, not for any extrinsic reward, but because it offers intrinsic payoffs. If it is fun, people will keep on doing it.

As physical educators, we will be most effective when we emphasize the intrinsic motivations and pleasures of joyful movement. Of course, for this model to work, coaches and teachers have to actually demonstrate the pleasures that they are trying to awaken in their students. It makes no sense to speak of the intrinsic joys of movement if we do not

feel them. If we do not find human movement intrinsically fascinating, we are in the wrong field. But if we are walking the talk and enjoying movement for its own sake, students will get the idea.

2.4. Pedagogy

Sport can be characterized as a “school” or even better as “part of school of life”. When a child comes into life, unknown, s/he must learn how to behave, how to act, how to move, as to be part of the big family that we call “society”. Sport education can be characterized as affecting total personality, which consists not only from “muscles” (movement) but also from the “mind” (thinking, behaving and improving our personality). After our birth we start thinking much more than when we were the fetus. We watch all living beings around us, how they are moving and we imitate them. At the beginning we move our arms and later we decide to walk, to run, to jump, to climb, to swim, to ride our bike etc. Here comes the necessity of Physical Education teacher. S/he has knowledge about the field and s/he can advise us how to use our imagination and creativity as to move more spontaneous and more effective. For example, if we want to learn writing or painting, do we take a pencil and start doing so? No, we experience at the beginning by ourselves and then teachers advise us how to do it better. The same in sport, we learn by ourselves how to walk, run, jump, ride a bike, kick the ball etc., because many people do so in our environment, so we want to imitate them. Then a PE teacher can teach us some more movements, some more “tricks”, which we can use the same moment, at any time. In other words, we need to learn what is primal (natural - e.g. movement), practical (effective – e.g. enough quantity of movement, which can bring positive results) and playful (joyous – e.g. a physical active day with friends in nature) sport. If we are well educated from our PE teacher we will be able to apply these virtues in or out of sport life as well. Our life is a game, which needs imagination and creativity as to be played. For a strange reason, many people after their childhood stop imagining the positive. When we are children our imagination is working all the time. We imagine how the world could be (accordant to our needs) and we act accordingly. For example, when I was a kid I imagined a mini soccer field at my neighbourhood. The next days with my friends I made that image a reality. In the same way many kids are inspired by their thoughts, they go on a creative binge, growing, playing, drawing, singing and imaging. In contrast, when we are adults this affluence is becoming shorter by the time. Possibilities for achievement diminish and we become more “realistic”. Our perceptions of affluence change and we may even come to see ourselves as impoverished, whatever the reality. When this happens, we scale back our dreams; our creativity plummets (Forencich, 2006: 204). Sport as “pedagogue” can teach us to not stop dreaming and creating. For example, we dream of being at the top of the climbing rock; we imagine and we create the route as to do so. The same could happen in

our life. We dream our goal, which could be happiness. We imagine our steps and we create our route to it.



Learn a lot, get all around ideas/styles of movement/ways of life and thinking and use them anywhere, is what I am saying, to myself. For example, running is an activity that is practised by many people. Running consists of cyclic movements that repeat again and again. Therefore, to many people it results in monotonous and boring movement. Think about going for running and using as well, other activities. Exercises that improve our neuromuscular coordination; for example, almost in every park there is a playground, therefore to walk on some ropes our purpose is done. The use of upper extremities during running is diminished; climbing and swinging on some trees during the active rest period could be very useful. Similar activities with running are walking, fast walking, walking backward, and sometimes with closed eyes. I suggest that the use of all these exercises will diminish monotony. Using a broad range of skills and knowledge in sport is more effective. The same can apply in other sport activities as well; the result will be more joyous activity, which will attract more people. With this notion we can apply similar principles in our out of sport life. We can include a wide range of activities daily; and by doing so we can give more color and interest into our life.



Through our ontogenesis, we live different stages of our life and step-by-step we develop our personality, which is also an aim of sport education. If we have been taught to move more effectively and in different occasions (with different level of danger or difficulty) – rock climbing, we can learn also how to see ourselves from other perspectives; we improve our self-esteem and we persuade ourselves, who is able to face and overcome any situation in our life. By reaching new goals, our self-confidence grows up. Putting new goals, give us the opportunity to meet unknown situations, face them and use our creativity (and improve it) us to overcome them.

If we like to be physically active, in my opinion, we should know more about the process. We should know and understand that we should stop when feel pain. We should know that we need a rest. We should have knowledge about nutrition (here I would like to emphasize also the importance of healthy organic food – chemical foods are poisons, and

every food that is packed in plastic cover to me is chemical). These “principles” of sporting, can help us to improve our self-control.

Playing provides an environment for acquiring culturally valued, personal-social attitudes and all what is learned in the physical activity setting, and we can transfer it to other spheres of life. It is a mirror of our wide life, which if we see it as a game that can be played, we can achieve the unachievable. If every one of us understands that sport as pedagogy plays important role in our life, the result will be a better and wiser society.



Sport education can teach us a lot more than we thought. For instant we can learn that balance is not a single quality but it is a combination of sensitivity, speed and strength. In fact, we can say that balance is a communication skill, among central nervous system, proprioceptors and muscular system (Forencich, 2003: 171). With respect to this theory we can see our life with the same way. Our life is sensitive; we are humans and not machines, therefore we need rest. We can arrange our life as to be smoother. Stress makes our life to be in hurry and at the same time too wild. We live one life (I cannot say about after death life, because I did not experienced it yet) and the time goes really fast. Therefore, we should exploit every opportunity. As to accomplish our purpose we need a lot of strength; which will come with in us. Achievement of it will harmonize our life and make it more joyous.



Another important aspect of sport pedagogy is to understand the necessity of playful sport, and that it is a barometer of environmental and cultural health. Burghardt’s “surplus resource theory” of animal play (in Forencich, 2006: 202), states that animals of all kind, play more when they are well fed, warm, safe and comfortable. Therefore, if we observe a “nation”/ “group of people” to play, we can understand also that their “society”/ “community” is plenitude. Therefore, we can even estimate the quality of an animal’s habitat by looking at the frequency of play behaviours.

Forencich (2003: 210) writes that play prepares the nervous system for sophisticated movements and can thus increase our skill in any activity. If practiced in the proper proportion, we can use play to increase our performance across a whole host of disciplines. The more we can build our neurological familiarity through play, the better our

work performance will ultimately be. In this way, we can actually use play as part of intentional strategy to improve individual and organizational performance in just about any endeavour. Result of promoting playful sport will be the improvisation of the quality of our society. First, we will start to play more in sport. Then, we should transfer our play behaviour to our out of sport life. We will start to feel more relaxed; we will enjoy more our life and feel more comfortable.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE SYSTEM

3.1. Ancient mistakes from my perspective

At the beginning let us talk briefly about the origin of sport or physical activity. The reason is that I would like to go back to the past and find out if from the beginning something was wrong or we, the modern society changed our authenticity. I shall also compare and show some similarities and differences as well, between “yesterday” and “today”. In the following chapter, all about history of sport that I will mention are taken from the web side: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_sport.

The history of sport probably extends as far back as the existence of people as purposive beings. Physical activity was a useful way for people to increase their mastery of nature and the environment. The history of sport can teach us a great deal about social changes and about the nature of sport itself. Prehistoric findings, up to 30,000 years old, provide evidence of ritual archery and other ritual activities as well.

Individual sports, such as wrestling and archery, were practiced worldwide since ancient times. Sport was increasingly organized and regulated from the time of the Ancient Olympics up to the present century. Activities necessary for food, survival, but also for recreation, became “regulated” activities done for pleasure or “competition” on an increasing scale. Here we can underline the first similarities with present sport; regulations and competitions showed up thousands years ago, and they raise the question, “are they both in our nature?” I would say no; we just created regulations as to be able to compete and then to abuse the result. I know very well that rules and regulations keep us away from chaos, but sometimes their used is exaggerated. Some people take advance of their hierarchical position in society. A game consists of rules; therefore the good educated player is responsible for her/his actions. Regulations could be part of organization and planning of an activity, but some people (usually politicians) use their function for their own profit.

One of the main “regulations” was and is, “to do something better than others or win something”, which with one word means “competition”. Me, personally I find the requirement of competition unnecessary. For example, in some sport games two opposite teams are a prerequisite. They should be present there and play the same game at the same time. After a period of time of playing and enjoyment; satisfaction in both teams brings the end. In my opinion, competition diminishes the quality of sport, by keeping under its

control the actions of the players (sport women/men). For example, professional soccer is more a strategy game than sport. Their purpose is how to trick the opponent with various tactics, and not how to entertain the crowd. I love to play soccer but to watch professional soccer game, no! I find it boring. The purpose of the game is kick, pass the ball, perform some nice tricks with it, and score. Sometimes during a soccer match we watch twenty-two players to run only at the same position for ninety minutes; and a ball to be tormented at the middle of the field. The final result is a boring game of strategy, without goal. All these caused by competition and its legitimacy.



In ancient Egypt, monuments to the Pharaohs indicate that a range of sports were well developed and regulated several thousands of years ago, including swimming, fishing, javelin throwing, high jump and wrestling. Again, the nature of the sports popular at the time suggests close correspondence with everyday non-sporting activities. In China 2000 BC people developed sport activities closely related to the production, work, war and entertainment of the time. As we see always we were including sport in our every day life as to escape from routine; for recreation and health reasons. But also we used sport as to develop productive warriors who can work hard. The aim I would say of nowadays “sport training”. Get a kid 5 years old, discipline her/him, adapt her/his body to function in a specific manner, and after 15 years you will have the machine that you were dreaming of as “coach“. If something goes wrong, suddenly we forget our girls/boys and ignore their existence. What about their soul and personality? (See more in chapter 3.2) We never see inside them, we avoid quality, because quantity is what matters in our modern society.



A wide range of sports was already in operation at the time of the ancient Greeks. Wrestling, running, boxing, chariot racing, javelin and discus throwing were prevalent, and there were ball games for children and adults. The military culture of Greece had an influence on the development of the sports of the country. The Olympic Games were held every four years in Ancient Greece. In the noble Grecian ideal, victory at the Games was much sought after and was rewarded with an olive branch. Winners at the Games were often received with much honour throughout Greece and were often granted large sums of

money, particularly in their hometowns. The Games were held not simply as a sporting event, but as a celebration of individual excellence, cultural and artistic variety, and a showplace for architectural and sculptural innovation. Fundamentally, it was a time of gratitude and respect for the Gods of the Greek religion. A time of truce was declared during the Olympic Games (see more later), as military actions and public executions were suspended. This was to enable people to congregate peacefully and to compete in a civilized and respectful atmosphere.

Again we meet here the influence of discipline in sport through military; to become a “warrior” who will be able to achieve “victory”, and be rewarded with the huge amount of money; cases that exist also in modern professional sports. On the other hand the ancient Greeks were organizing and taking part in Olympic Games or other games or festival to respect and thank their gods; and during the period of the Games peace was prerequisite element. A fact that in 21st century is non existent; usually extrinsic reasons are the motivation of the participants (in professional sport). And peace is a phenomenon that disappears. At the same time that the Olympic games, world championships and every other kind of sport event is taking place, somewhere else countries are divided by force, military forces of the most developed countries kill people, terrorists explode themselves while they are among thousands of fellow men, rebels turn kids into natural killers etc... And the worse thing that we can see everyday is the “indirect killing” of our neighbour, our brothers; and all of these things take place for the sake of a piece of paper, a piece of ground, religions, politics and every other difference, either real or imaginary, from which our modern society creates suffering.

Here, we meet one very important difference between yesterday and today. We are talking about peace, but in practise it does not exist. Nowadays the development of technology (in military equipment), make the occasion of peace very difficult. Access to criminality is very easy. If you want to kill someone, the only that you have to do is to “push the button”. Therefore, it is very difficult to maintain world peace. Money, religion and politics drive people to take sometimes very stupid actions. In our case (sport), therefore, is very difficult to speak about peaceful congregation of people during the Olympic Games, for example. In schools, history class teachers admire ancient times for these reasons (in the Republic of Cyprus at least). But many politicians, who are the main responsible for maintaining peaceful societies, do nothing. Their own profit and competition is more important.



In Rome there were four types of sport events: ludi (chariot racing, equestrian sports, boxing), munera (gladiatorial sports and wild beast shows), Greek-style athletics (foot race, pentathlon), and recreation sports which were (apparently) not professional, such as ludi pilae (ball games).

“Arenas” and “gladiators”⁸ derive from ancient Rome and exist all over the world of sport nowadays; and also the recognition of differences, between professional sports and sport for recreation started thousands years ago. Gladiators were professional fighters in ancient Rome who fought against each other or other wild animals (like lions), and condemned criminals, sometimes to the death, for the entertainment of spectators. These fights took place in arenas (the word “arena” means sand, a reference to the thick layer of sand on the floor for the purpose of soaking up the blood) in many cities from the Roman Republic period through the Roman Empire. Gladiator fights took place in amphitheatres (like the Colosseum) during the afternoon of a full day event. These events were carefully and precisely planned by an organizer (editor) on behalf of the emperor. Like today, the games had ticket scalpers or Ticket touts (Locarii, people who buy up seats and sell them on at an inflated price). During gladiator combat, it was preferable for gladiators not to kill each other; technically, they were slaves, but they also often had years of intensive training and therefore were quite valuable. Gladiators could have been prisoners of war, slaves or criminals condemned to gladiator schools (ad ludum gladiatorium). There were also a number of volunteer gladiators (auctoratus). These were either sons of prominent men perhaps looking for a radical change, poor men attracted by the potential for fame or relinquishing themselves from poverty, or even men with a monetary purpose. Left-handed Gladiators were popular and a rare novelty, their fights were always advertised as a special event. As with modern sport “lefty” fencers, tennis players and other sportsmen. Future gladiators (novicius) upon entering a gladiator school swore an oath (sacramentum) giving their lives to the gods of the underworld and vowing to accept, without protest, humiliation by any means. Volunteers also signed a contract (auctoramentum) with a gladiator manager (lanista) stating how often they were to perform, which weapons they would use, and how much they would earn. Prospective also went under a physical examination by a doctor to determine if they were both physically capable of the rigorous training and aesthetically pleasing. Once accepted the novitiate, usually had his debts forgiven and was given a sign up fee. For as long as he was a Gladiator he was well fed and received high

⁸ The word comes from gladius, the Latin word for a short sword used by legionaries and some gladiators.

quality medical care. Training was under teachers called “Doctores” and involved the learning of a series of “numbers”, which were broken down into various phases much as a play is a series of acts broken down into scenes. Gladiators would even be taught how to “die correctly” (Wikipedia.Gladiator, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gladiator>).

In ancient Rome arenas and gladiators were one of the most popular activities and entertainment. Nowadays, a similar structure has modern professional sport. Arenas/stadiums and gladiators/athletes are everywhere. Here I would like to state that, *if we would like to call our species socialized; then we should behave accordingly as well*. We live in 21st century and it suppose that we can live peacefully, but by having two opposite teams to “fight” each other in the field and two opposite groups of fans to “fight” each other out of the field, we act against the notion of society.



In Medieval times, many modern sports trace their roots back to the local games of the rural working class. Games such as the Shrovetide football matches across much of Europe, caid⁹ in Ireland and hurling¹⁰ from Cornwall to Ireland often had few rules and were violent and chaotic. Prize fighting also emerged in 17th century in England, with the first rules (the London Prize Ring rules) established in 1743. In contrast, the game of Calcio Fiorentino, in Florence, Italy, was originally reserved for the aristocracy. The aristocracy would also favour sports as patrons.

Violent and chaotic is the atmosphere that exists in many professional sports nowadays. For example and in respect to all people who like rugby (or any other contact professional sport game), to me is an example of this violent attitude. This troop of “cannibals” hit each other deliberately, in a chaotic atmosphere. This situation has nothing to differ from the middle ages. “Fight and get the prize” is one of the slogans, not only in rugby but also in many other professional sports. This act approves the characterization of sport from Italians as “patron”¹¹. On the one hand they give them the freedom to act as they like and on the other hand they try to regulate and control them. What I mean here is that the games by themselves sometimes allow many kinds of cannibalism. If some of the players exaggerate, they have to “pay the cost”. It would be more effective, in my opinion if athletes were well educated that violence and cheating were something bad.

⁹ Caid was the name given to various ancient and traditional Irish football games.

¹⁰ An Irish field sport resembling hockey and lacrosse that is played with broad sticks and a leather ball that is passed from player to player through the air.

¹¹ A slave master in ancient Rome who freed a slave but retained some rights over her or him.



Now closer to our days, at the end of 18th and beginning of 19th centuries, a number of English Public Schools, introduced sports for their pupils, particularly variants of football. These were described at the time as "innocent and lawful", certainly in comparison with the rural games. With the coming of the Industrial Revolution and the movement of the population from the country to the cities, the rural games moved to the new urban centres and came under the influence of the "middle and upper classes". The rising influence of the upper class also produced an emphasis of the amateur, and the spirit of "fair play". The industrial revolution also brought with it increasing mobility, and created the opportunity to compete with each other.

The influence of the middle and upper classes in sport it is a phenomenon that we meet in modern sport. The majority of the sports need money as to be practiced, but also if you are "top elite athlete" the same time you can be member of "upper social economic class". Promoting of competition has continued during this time of period. On the other hand movement for pleasure and fair was born as well, through an activity, which is "innocent" (that is how I see sport). Sport cannot harm anyone; our actions make it dangerous.

3.2. “Welcome to the machine”

“...Welcome my son, welcome to the machine.
What did you dream?
It is all right we told you what to dream.
You dreamed of a big star,
He played a mean guitar,
He always ate in the Steak Bar.
He loved to drive in his Jaguar.
So welcome to the Machine...”

“Welcome to the Machine”, Album: Wish You Were Here, Pink Floyd, 1975

Show me the money...! That is how Tom Cruise was shouting in the movie Jerry Maguire¹². A scene that represents the reality of nowadays top elite sport. In the world of *professional sports or serious sports (how they like to call it)*, the main motive and aim that drive “athletes” to excel in sports is money. The commercialization of professional sport is alien to the activity as such. Sport is used as a means to an end, for making profit, in which the pursuit of excellence becomes the pursuit of financial well being (Volkwein, 1999: 2). The importance of victory, glory and of course, richness, shifts the emphasis in sport from the appreciation of the performance and the pure joy of the movement itself to material gain. Volkwein (1999: 3) stated that: “also the spirit of play in sport ceases when the value of efficiency is exaggerated, which is promoted through the rationalization of techniques in sport. Play is no longer essential to sport; sport indeed is reduced to another form of ‘business’ where values of work, such as efficiency, control and production dominate the activity”. I agree definitely and also I would like to state that this fact dehumanizes athletes and reduces their bodies to *machines* (see more later).



¹² Jerry Maguire remains famous due to memorable quotes, including “Show me the money!” (Shouted repeatedly in a phone exchange between Rod Tidwell and Jerry Maguire). The movie: Jerry Maguire (Cruise) works for Sports Management International, a company that manages the careers of present and future professional athletes...! Release date(s): December 13, 1996.

The reason that I have mentioned Gladiators in previous text (their history, origin and training) is that I would like to show you how very similar it is to nowadays “professional sport”. Although we live in 21st century in *top elite* sport they still *train* and *compete* with the same old fashion and conservative style. From sociological point of view “culture” identified with “civilization” and contrasts with “nature”; a state, which means that we are not part of nature. In a conversation that I had with a sociologist, she defined culture as follows – “culture is what differentiates us from animals” not from other animals. And may ask what we are! Like it or not we are animals. Biologist, Frank Forencich (2003: 65-68) describes very well the fact: “...We are kin with every other striding, crawling, squirming, flying and swimming thing on the planet...we are flesh and blood creatures living in a biological world...our physiology is unique in some details, but is substantially identical to other mammals and primates; we have a 98% genetic overlap with chimps and bonobo...not only is it correct to describe ourselves as animals, it is also correct to describe ourselves as hominids; a hominid is simply erect-walking primate...by calling ourselves hominids, we continually refresh our memory of our origins and keep ourselves in context; this orientation shapes our health and fitness behaviours and keep them congruent with our history...”.

What other animals would treat themselves like we do? We put humans in exercise laboratories, study them for a few years and extract precise lessons for how we ought to conduct our training programs (Forencich, 2003: 56). Forencich (2003: 80) continues, and writes that we train humans as if they were extreme habitat specialists. We put them in climate-controlled gyms and studios with perfectly level floors or on obsessively groomed athletics fields. We feed them ultra-precise combinations of refined substances at precise intervals. We have even taken to housing marathon runners in pressurized dwellings that allow them to “sleep high and train low”. Then we train them to perform a perfect and extremely narrow range of specialized movement that, in many cases, does not occur anywhere else except the gym or the sporting arena. This is like taking a dog or a coyote and training them to perform on one kind of terrain, at one temperature and with a single style of movement. We created many kinds of activities that contribute to profit and treat our selves as machines. In the case of professional sport, we began thousands years ago by creating these cosmetic “arenas” and developed “gladiators” to fight each other; direct then and indirect nowadays for our entertainment. Sport training nowadays is similar to ancient methods, as to develop the potential “machines”. One of the major processes of training is discipline, which according to Foucault (1975: 137) is the method that made possible the

meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility. Disciplinary methods started already in the 16th century in monasteries, armies and workshops. But in the course of the 17th and 21st centuries became general formulas of *domination*. Foucault (1975: 138) continues and writes that, “By doing so the human body enter a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it...discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an aptitude, a ‘capacity’, which it seeks to increase. On the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection”. Exactly the same purpose is to be found in sport training; to discipline the bodies of athletes to reach high performance on one hand and diminish their real potential by erasing play. Interval training, high altitude training, fartlek training, power training, speed training are some of the methods that they use in professional sport as to discipline their bodies. At the beginning of their career athletes (as kids) start learning simple elements, which contribute to the whole technique (this is one of the teaching steps in didactics of sport). By the time the complexity increase and comes on the surface the procedure that we call “exercise”. Foucault (1975: 161) writes, “Exercise is the technique by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different, but always graduated”. In my opinion that is boring; I have to admit it. When we repeat the same element, the result is monotony. Even if we love what we are doing, there are moments when we are filled with boredom, caused by monotony.

Accompanying sport training came a lot of medical scientists to the “party” as to make the potential more accurate. Examinations from exercise physiologies are fundamental elements of a training session. Precise measurements of their bodies function, confirm my characterization that *athletes are guinea pigs*. Exercise Biomechanics scientist brake down the movement in elements. Exactly the same, they were doing, during the course of 18th and 19th century in hospitals. The position of the body, limbs, and articulations is defined. As Foucault (1975: 152) writes, to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude, and duration; their order of succession is prescribed. The main aim of the above scientific procedures is to maximize efficiency. The *gladiator* whose body has been trained to function part by part for particular operations must in turn form an element in a mechanism at another level and as result the body is constituted as a part of multi segmental machine (Foucault, 1975: 163).



With the characterization of *athletes as machines* fits very well also *athletes are pets*¹³; which has the same meaning but different name. What I mean is that machines are made from humans as to produce their needs; and pets have been trained from humans as to perform for their pleasure or other purposes. Therefore, we can characterize athletes also machines, but pets as well. According to Bale (2004: 77) also sporting animals can be read as pets, including human animals. Training is a procedure, which we use as to dominate animals, children and athletes. Very often a coach or trainers' zeal drives in excess training; an occasion that leads to discipline, for the training to be effective. It is not the athlete who decides what to do, how to do it, and how much should do. The freedom of choice diminishes, in that case; and as Bale (2004: 79) puts it whatever the motivation, it is difficult to see how the athlete is anything but a pet. Let us take as example the cases of some athletes that show us how the characterization of pet fits to them. I suppose that you remember the Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson, who was given steroids by his coach Charlie Francis. As a result of it, he was disqualified after having won the 100 metres at the 1982 Seoul Olympics. He was treated like a pet, which had misbehaved when sent out to perform. The publicity surrounding this event made it all the more poignant – one human being deceived by another (Bale, 2004: 82). Cerruty (in Bale, 2004: 85) argued that athletes should run like other animals, him self-demonstrating horse-like running styles. Bale (2004: 85) continues and writes that such animal imageries may be much more malign than those noted above. Ben Johnson he was defined in relation to other animals. For example, he was “doctored...like a racehorse”, a “caged wild animal”, “a trapped animal”. The case also of the Greeks sprinters Katerina Thanou and Konstantinou Kenteri at the 2004 Athens Olympics it is a pure example. They had the opportunity to run in their own country (in which Olympic Games have born), in front of 80,000 spectators, who would support and sing for them; but they were persuaded by their coach to take steroids during the preparation period. When WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) asked urine's samples, as part of doping control, they refused to do so and they left the Olympic village by motorbike and then a sequence of mysterious facts and statements followed (Pound, 2004: 15). Both examples show us, that very often someone else chooses and decides for

¹³ A pet is a zoological version of the garden. Many animals are commonly thought of as pets. Human power is exercised over them to extent that they may become dependent in their owners. We train them to respond to our commands; we train them to perform tricks; we shout, “Go” and they do so.

the athletes. In sports, writes Chris Shilling (in Bale, 2004: 85) “the body is seen as a complex machine whose performance can be enhanced and which can break down and be repaired, just like any other machines. Athletes may become the ultimate pets when they no longer think for themselves”. Sport has become an *industry* and its definition is: *the market in which the product* (athletes, games etc.) *offered to its buyers* (coaches, trainers, clubs owners)...! (Knowledge from my studies). Athletes do not have to think or to do anything for themselves anymore; only to provide a willing, obedient body, which their sponsors’ clothes dress, are enough. The athletic body is subordinated by the power of technology, the natural body becoming superfluous. It is fitted with high-tech shoes, covered with aerodynamically designed clothing, shaved for speed, invaded by diuretics, hormones, high-calorie food and vitamins, pure blood and numerous drugs. The natural body disappears and its ownership becomes ambiguous. The power of the coach, buttressed by medical science and by the ideology of achievement sport, converts the athlete into a pet (Blame, 2004: 91). They are trained to feel no pain and perform above their biological maximum for the sake of money.



As David Seamon notes, such routine body-practices are difficult to break or modify because of the strength of the attachment people have to them. Athletes, for whom sport is their life, often forget that life could be otherwise (in Blame, 2004: 90). Coaches, medical scientists, sport managers, club owners, sponsors, very simply forget that athletes are living beings. Living beings of the human kind, which like the rest of living beings on this planet, have soul¹⁴. The major disease today in professional sport can be considered the *loss of the soul*. The quality of their life has disappeared. In relation with bodily actions, the question of acting without feelings, without meaning comes. In which Zeno (in Scaltsas and Mason, 2002: 205-206) stated that “disease of the soul is most similar to an unsettled state of the body”. Although sport remains one of the best schools of life (Giulianotti, 2003: 355-369) and despite that sport should be an integral part of every

¹⁴ The soul, according to many religious and philosophical traditions, is a self-aware ethereal substance, particular to a unique living being. In these traditions, the soul is thought to incorporate the inner essence of each living being and to be the true basis for sentience. Aristotle defines the soul as the core essence of a being. More precisely, he defines the soul as the “first activity” of a living body, which is a state or a potential for actual, or “second activity”. He regards the soul not as the product of the physiological conditions of the body but as the truth of the body, the substance in which only the bodily conditions gain their real meaning (Aristotle, 2004). Zeno of Citium (in Scaltsas and Mason, 2002: 191-192) intends, that the motion aroused in a bodily part from a thing impinging upon it from without is transmitted to the command-centre of the soul so that the animal perceives.

child's education every day we watch battles in every sport. My question to a professional coach: "Do athletes continue education, even after puberty?" the answer was: "Who cares about education in front of the huge salaries!" According to Horkheimer and Adorno (in Csepregi, 1999: 14) despite the increasing importance given today to Physical Education and training, the body remains a corpse, a dead-thing, and an object of possession. Professional athletes are thus commonly assumed to value economic remuneration most, rather than the love of the game or some other intangible, romanticized inclination (Mccann, 2004). Elite sport has become so similar to work that we should no longer consider it to have similarities to a leisure activity (Garrigou, 2006). Our soul is ourselves. When we are young children our soul is shining in our face. Our actions are spontaneous, real and creative. The equilibrium between soul and body is so precisely kept in balance (unconscious), so *peace is written, as sign, on our forehead*. The problem of the majority of the athletes is that by mysterious reason the sign of being *pure* and *natural* human is erased. The desire to beat the opponent, to be famous, to get the glory and the huge amounts of money, somehow disturb the equilibrium between soul and body. The soul was forgotten somewhere to the past, the body very soon got tired and the result is an abyss.



There are so many negative parameters in top elite sport, but it seems that the majority of those responsible in sport field do not care about it. Neidhardt (in Hägele, 1994: 7-14) stated that a high international level of achievement has forced increasing professionalization in sport. Hägele continues; at the same time, busy competition schedules and frequent training – often several times a day (particularly in the case of children and young people) – have brought athletes closer and closer to the biological limits of their capacity. The excess training, in relation with drug abuses, doping; can be characterized as transgression; which according to Hägele (1994: 7-14) destroys the identity of sport as shaped by Olympic ideals and thus destroy sport's inner unity.

Production of *wild gladiators* continues unrestrainedly; although they know what it means for a human to race against other humans and, more importantly, to race against the clock, *serious sport* focus on the time it takes to cover a distance rather than the distance covered in a given time (Guttman, 1978: 2). The main aim of most of the top elite sports is who will achieve first the end line. To run faster; to swim faster; to bike faster; to be the strongest; to perform as much or more precise some elements; to be the best team; defines the purpose of "serious sport". So much training as to be ready for the race; so many

competitions as to be first; so many, that we can not say anymore that is healthy to be an athlete. The medical philosopher Galen stated that “beneath their mass of flesh and blood their souls are stifled as in a sea of mud... They have not health nor have they beauty. Even those who are naturally well proportioned become fat and bloated: their faces are often shapeless and unsightly owing to the wounds received in boxing and in the pankration. They lose their eyes and their teeth and their limbs are strained” (Galen in Guttman, 1978: 37). The same occasion we can meet in modern era; in many contact sports athletes loose their teeth and their limbs are strained. The last three years I had the opportunity to live among professional athletes. Several times I observed *tiredness* in their eyes; *death* on their bodies. A “friend” of mine once was so tired that he could not walk. I told him “Give a break to yourself man, you need it”. He replied to me with eyes full of tears “I cannot man, I have to work, otherwise I will not be the first”. The following days we were talking generally and he accepted the fact that something was going wrong with the system. More specific he said: “Very often we are stupid, but business is business, you know!” Whose fault is the above result? On the one hand I would say, it is a fault of bureaucratic organization of professional sport; which decides the rules and administers the complicated system of professional sports. This complicated system of professional sport forces athletes into excessive training and competition, which is the only instrument to success. On the other hand, athletes have their own mind, therefore are able to choose their life; the exception being children who are used by parents and coaches. Athletes in top elite sport have some aims; like rich high performance, win the trophy and be the best. Martínková (2006: 31-33) writes that aims always have meaning for us that make us move towards them. They motivate us, they put us in motion, and they are our motors. She continues and writes that in sports, there can be found two kinds of aims, as some are taken from society and some are inherent to the sport activity itself. These that are taken from society can be called external aims/goals that are followed in sports and may be diverse, they entail health and fitness, relaxation, self-development, socialization, prestige, and popularity or profit. Aims that are inherent to the sport activity itself can be called internal aims/goals. For example, scoring a goal or a point, overcoming a limit or gaining points in a good performance or performing as well as possible. Professional athletes are driven from aims, which can be counterproductive, and prevent them from performing well and being joyous and fully immersed in the moment of doing (Martínková, 2006: 41). On the other hand if we observe children when they play, they have no aim, they just do it.

In professional sport as I mentioned above “athletes” are driven by aims, which are result of numbers. Guttman (1978: 49) stated that we live in world of numbers. We measure time as to see who will come faster to the end (e.g. running). We set up an interval scale and a panel of judges and then take the arithmetic mean of their subjective evaluations (e.g. sport gymnastic). We keep gradually tables as to see which team or individual collect more points (e.g. soccer league or triathlon). Combining the impulse to quantification with the desire to win, to excel, to be the best – the result is the concept of the record; which in our modern sense is the marvellous abstraction that permits competition not only among those gathered together on the field of sport but also among them and others distant in time and space (Guttman, 1978: 51). Of course we keep books of records, as to remember the triumphs and employee athletes, coaches, trainers, medical scientists, whose purpose will be to break the record. Therefore they are becoming machines and they forget their origin and primary function, which are natural, movement and play. They simply refuse their nature.

“...You were mother nature’s son,
Some one to whom I could relate,
Your needle and your damage done
Remain a sordid twist of fate...”

“To say Goodbye”, Album: Meds, Placebo, 2006



One of the principles when *teaching kids in sport* (in sport training it is called, *working with kids*) is *play*. Of course, it is only in theory, because in practice it is everything else but play. All the time I am observing the phenomenon of *workout*, even with kids. All these exercises and conditioning programs that they use with kids are not fun at all. They are sheer labour, that is why we call them workouts (Forencich, 2003: 60). Professional sport (but in some cases even in school PE and in non-professional sport) nowadays teaches kids what competition is; and that the purpose is to beat the opponent with any cause. “Fight or flight” or “all or nothing”, are some of the slogans that you can hear in the locker-rooms among kids. Several times, kids of the age of 7, asking me all the time if it is a race; or they exercise and compare if are faster or better, rather than enjoy their moment of play. May I ask you how many of all kids whom start sporting in *serious*

sport will continue after the age of 18? The answer is: Not so many. I will give you some simple examples as to make my statement more persuasive: Once I was observing a swimming class. A girl showed up for first time, as I understood. The teaching program that followed was unpleasant for the young lady. It was so boring and hard for her that after 15 minutes she quit doing anything and started crying. My conclusion is that this girl will never try again to swim, because her experience taught her that swimming is a hard activity that is not for her. Another example, from swimming again, is two girls, who were swimmers as athletes. After some time they decided to drop out because as they thought swimming had no future for them. Studies followed (in other field) and after some years they just watched (and they still do) swimming on television. For my question “Why they do not continue swimming for recreation and health reasons”; the answer was “What are you talking about, we were practicing (work) so many hours per day, and now we will go only for an hour, and for fun?” In both examples the method of *workout* taught them that physical activity is not fun, but work, which means it is boring, it is not play. Forencich (2003: 40) stated, “The problem begins with the children’s athletic programs... ‘Studies show that an alarming 70% of the approximately 20 million children who participate in organized out-of-school athletic programs will quit by the age of thirteen because of unpleasant sport experiences’...!” (See more in sub-chapter 3.4).

We should support children’s rights not to neglect them. To meet the rising expectations of spectators require, improved and more sophisticated preparation of athletes. Children are some of the first victims of this new trend, with sports trainers no longer asking how sports could benefit children but rather how children could benefit “sport”; or them. Many rights of children are of direct relevance to children practicing sports. According to Paolo (1999: 3) they are:

- The right to non-discrimination,
- The principle that the best interests of the child should always be a primary consideration.
- The right to be provided appropriate direction and guidance.
- The right to development.
- The right not to be separated from her/his parents.
- The right of the child to have her/his opinions duly taken into account in all decision affecting her/him.
- Freedoms of expression and of association.
- Protection from abuse and neglect and other forms of violence

- The right to health.
- The right to education.
- The right to rest, leisure, recreation and cultural activities.
- The right to be protected from economic exploitation
- The right to be protected from illegal drugs.
- The right to be protected from sexual exploitation.
- The right to be protected from abduction, trafficking and sale.
- The right to be protected from other forms of exploitation.
- The right to benefit from rehabilitation care,
- And finally I would like to add: the right to play.

However, I do not think that, the majority of “adults”, who are involved in professional sport, takes all the above-mentioned in consideration. Paolo (1999: 3-10) among others stated that many trainers still perceive child athletes the same way they look at adults. But children are not miniaturized adults, they are essence in perpetual physical and psychological development and therefore often vulnerable. To bring an athlete to the perfection required to qualify for the Olympic Games, child athletes must begin to train soon after they learn to walk. Young champions, besides their own natural will to play and win, are also obliged to perform to satisfy adults’ ambitions and desires for financial rewards. In addition to learning sporting skills, young champions also need to keep focused on their appearance and beauty; this is particularly difficult, as both do not necessarily go together (result is eating disorders). Many coaches still emphasize quantity instead of quality; the risks of such an approach are well known: young athletes, even extremely gifted ones, suffer mental burnout or become chronically injured. Motivation is a key element, although it is often neglected; the sad consequence is that young athletes who were pushed too hard by adults quit sports often with serious emotional or physical problems. In most countries of the world, labour laws and regulations do not allow children to work below a certain age. But in the case of a ten-year-old child who trains six to eight hours a day, six days a week, for which s/he might receive some money, nobody questions if this practice is a form of child “labour” likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. Children and adolescents are usually more easy to manipulate than adults; therefore, it is quite tempting for trainers, in whom young athletes have put all their trust, to abuse them by pushing them to take performance-enhancing

medicines that are illegal pretending they are simply vitamins, and most likely harmful to the child's health. Here I would like to emphasize the meaning of illegal drugs. What exactly means illegal and legal? Why so many chemical supplements are legal? We know very well that also are performance enhanced and the same time chemicals. However, their effect should be stronger as to be considered illegal; just like the case of "smoking cigarette" and "smoke to joint" – marijuana.

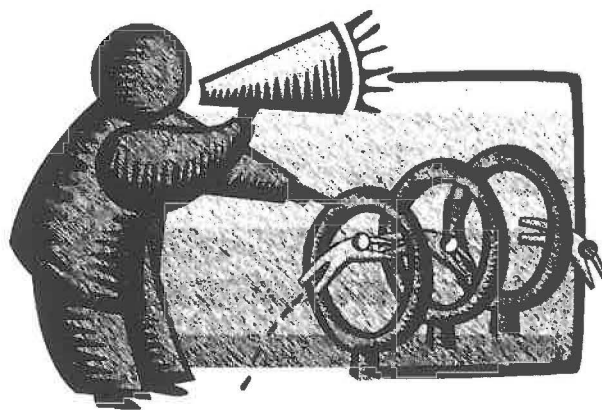
Very few sports are completely free from the influence of money; the most popular sports draw such enormous financial interests that young children are also affected by this phenomenon. Sponsors or sports clubs invest huge amounts of money into very young athletes might be harmful to these children; it will certainly increase the pressure on the child's performance and, in the case of failure, heighten the sense of abandonment and isolation as sponsors lose interest. The trade and commercialization of young athletes is a tough business often ruled by greedy intermediaries or managers. They offer an amount of money to the family as to get kids away from their family. Most of them will fail, and will sometimes not even be provided the money to return home. Children are in the eyes of many traders: commodities to be traded with no regard for their human development. They might even be victims of a contemporary form of slavery. Top athletes devote all their energy and concentration to their training programmes; how can they also manage the pressure of school and maintain acceptable grade levels, a situation which is difficult for most children? Parents going into debt to pay their child's sports training is not an exceptional situation; it is a problematic one when it increases the pressure on the child to perform, and creates guilt feelings when s/he does not succeed. Sport should be more about fun and less about scores for young children; but parents do not always share this innocent motivation; in the adult world, winning is often more important than how you play the game. Parents urge to win can be a stressful situation for young athletes. Sport is generally a wonderful activity for the development of the child; but the perversions of the competition, especially the practice of intensive training, can turn the qualities of sports into human rights violations.

I have the opportunity to be close to them, watch them and observe them almost everyday. When I see a coach to behave to kids as if they were slaves; to enter the locker room and see all around the room, drugs and any other performance enhanced supplements; and lastly to watch all these boring workouts, I do not think that children's rights are taken into consideration. Who authorized these so call "adults" to abuse and treat

kids like they do? The answer is, money! Why have kids (not only) lost the right of play nowadays? The answer is, because competition reigns all around us!



The strangest phenomenon in professional sport is that *play* is only principle in theory when you teach kids. Very often specialization in sport begins at the age of 6; therefore at the age of ten someone is ready for workouts. The result is that children at the age of 12, they do not know or they forgot what play is. This is caused by the main aim of training, which as I mentioned above is *achievement*; that comes the critical day of *competition*. The *competitive outlets*, which are taught every day during training, are meant to produce machines that try to do something better than others, to win and to be more attractive because they or the others think they are worth more. But if someone has not the required physical abilities s/he has to face discrimination; an unfair treatment, because according to talent scouts, they do not have the special abilities to reach *high performance* and bring profit to them and all the others, which benefit from the result. Professionally organized sport then, is promoted through appropriate competition. In this environment there is no place for *play*; and *workout* has the priority. That is why our life has become so boring and without any meaning other than material. We prefer to work and get rich rather than to play. We throw our life in the garbage, rather than enjoy it. We prefer to work, plan how to *beat* the opponent and sacrifice the beauty of play, for the sake of an illusion (money, glory etc), than to have fun in sport.



Every day the mass media speaks and writes about the phenomenon of *violence in sport*¹⁵. Last summer I took part in a seminar organized by sport sociologists. One of the seminar's topics was *violence in sport*. The main question from all participants was "How did it happen that we face so much violence in sport, from fans point of view?" Exactly that moment I was wondering if they were blind. I mean can they not see that *professional sport* by itself teaches competitiveness? As a teenager I found it *cool* to be part of a sports fan club. I know very well that all this violence comes from inside the field. The competitiveness that *athletes*, coaches, trainers, club owners demonstrate in the court of play, influence fans and drives them to hooliganism. We are human beings and we influence each other (Turner, 1994). Therefore we should see the "other side of the coin". If we know what causes all this violence why do not we change it? If *competitiveness* that demonstrated in the field can influence the spectators as well, why we do not erase it from sport? In my opinion this could be the treatment not only with violence but also to other "diseases" from which both sports and society in general suffer.



All that has been mentioned above happens for the sake of money; which is one of the main motives of top elite sport. Moreover the characterization as *top elite sport*, define its meaning. Elite means a small group of people within a larger group who have more power, social standing, wealth or talent than the rest of the group. Therefore, I guess that they call *professional sport*, *top elite sport* for the same reasons. *Gladiators* that are more talented, privileged, and highly trained than the rest; and they deserve reward of course for their achievement; and money is usually the best one. I am not saying that they should not get paid, it is their profession; but why millions and billions of euro? What to do with it; to buy the moon? Professional sport has become one of the most lubricious works. Sport is

¹⁵ "Violence in sports can result in chaotic brawls, both by athletes and by spectators. They may involve beer bottles, sinks from stadiums, improvised stabbing utensils, stadium seats, and whatever else may be found on hand. In sports, which are inherently violent, violence, which goes beyond what is permitted by the rules sometimes, occurs. Competitive sports, such as football, basketball, and baseball may involve aggressive tactics, but actual violence is considered to fall outside the boundaries of good sportsmanship. Violence in sports may include threats or physical harm and may be carried out by athletes, coaches, fans, spectators, or the parents of young athletes. George Orwell once made the observation, 'Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words, it is war minus the shooting'. Fans may resort to violence to express loyalty to a team, to release frustration with a team's performance, or to intimidate opponents. Violence may also be related to nationalism or as an outlet for underlying social tensions. It is often alcohol-related." (Violence in sports, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence_in_sports#Fan_violence).

not an escape from the world of work anymore, but rather an exact structural and functional parallel to the world of work. Sport does not offer compensation for the frustrations of alienated labour in capitalist society. It reduces the luckless athlete and spectator into a second world of work more authoritarian and repressive and less meaningful than the economic sphere itself. Capitalist society is essentially achievement-oriented and competitive and sports present to us the purest model of that society. That does not mean that in socialistic society the situation is better. In a socialistic society sports are an element in national security and economic productivity. To maintain inhabitants physical fitness through callisthenics and sports, raise the level of industrial output and contribute to the defence of socialist society is one of the strategies of socialistic regimes (Guttman, 1978: 63-69). As we see in any political regime one of the purposes of the governments is profit through sport. And that is just what is wrong with *serious sport*. The commercialization of sport has humiliated it.

“...Money, it is a crime.
Share it fairly but do not take a slice of my pie.
Money, so they say
Is the root of all evil today.
But if you ask for a raise its no surprise that they are
giving none away...”

“Money”, Album: The Dark Side of the Moon, Pink Floyd, 1973

Unfortunately this is reality; in which modern professional sports’ main goal is making money. But in my opinion there is another side of the world of sport. I see sport as one of the most qualitative arts in our modern societies and of course not for money. I see it as an activity that drives us away from the everyday stress of work and contribute to healthier nations. As I have mentioned in the first chapter sport is nothing else than pedagogy, joy, pleasure and most of all is play.

2.2. Misunderstanding of Olympic Games

I consider the Olympic Games the greatest moment of every *sport woman/man* (I am not saying *athlete*, for reasons that I mentioned in previous chapter). Every one of us has come into this world for a purpose; and for each purpose exists a great moment. Therefore, as well for every *lover of sport* on this planet whose greatest *hobby* is the *art of sport*. To take part in the Olympic Games, at the same time, you *are in the heaven*; which means your personal pleasure comes to its maximum. You can characterize yourself at that moment as *one of the gods of Olympus*. Here I would like to repeat that *to take part* would give you all this satisfaction. The most important thing is to be part of a creative *festival*, which will contribute in a better, healthier and more creative society; a qualitative and simple festival (just like deserve to sport). Moreover, to emphasize the role of sport in world development, international understanding, peaceful co-existence, and social and moral education, is what the social philosophy of Olympism states. (in Girginov and Parry, 2005: 2).

Thousands of years ago ancient Greeks invented a *festival* as part of a major religious festival honouring Zeus, the chief Greek god. In modern era *Olympism* defined by Pierre de Coubertin as a philosophy of life that focuses on balance of mind, body, and spirit (in Toohey and VealLos, 2000: 1). The first words of the Olympic Charter (in Girginov and Parry, 2005: 3) testify simply the nature and goals of Olympism. Among others is written: “Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principle. The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play”.



Unfortunately, on the other hand “modern Olympic Games” have become the most luxurious event all over the world. No “gods” and no entertainment are in consideration. Pounds (2004) repeatedly write, that the rest of the sport events are for entertainment and for commercial reasons, but Olympic Games are not. In my opinion neither have the Olympic Games escaped commercialization. First, in order to take part you have to be a

top elite athlete. Which means you have to have more power, social standing, to have “wealth”/“health” and the most important to be more talented. In my opinion none of the athletes that take part in the Olympic Games is healthy. After so much preparation and excess effort, they are becoming chronically bodily and mentally tired. By abusing so many drugs, chemical nutrition supplements, eating disorders are becoming addictive to them, to me it looks like an illness. In addition, as to be completely a member of “high-class society” (rich social group) they get expensive rewards, which have the shape of *money*.

Second, all authorized persons, who are responsible for the organization of the games, should of course also be members of high-class society. At the beginning of the 20th century, they should have enough money as to pay their expenses for travelling and staying in four-star hotels. Nowadays, the International Olympic Committee has enough money to pay for their expensive lifestyles which include wearing expensive clothes, living in big villas, driving luxurious cars, smoking Havana’s cigars, and having reserve suites in Hotel Pallas in Lausanne.

Thirdly, the games, themselves should present magnificent opening and closing ceremonies and should take place in huge luxurious *arenas* (which very often after the Games are not useful). They spend so much money and so much effort only for *cosmetic reasons*. The result is to give the impression to the majority of the inhabitants of the planet Earth that *Physical Education and Olympic Games*, belong only to *part* of the whole population. They have become so important, from political regimes and economic point of view that several acts, that do not belong in sport, took part last century and continue until nowadays and who knows what will follow (see more later).

Eichberg (1984: 2-7) stated the following configurationally characteristics of Olympic sports, which among others, have been discussed in the sociological and historiography literature:

- A certain form of competition and fighting leading to aggression and brutality, often compared with the capitalist principle of competition,
- The production of results and their subsequent improvement, subordinating the joy of human movement in itself; this has been compared to the industrial capitalist (and state monopolist) focus on production growth,

- The quantification of results, corresponding to the quantification of educational achievement, intelligence quotient, gross national product, etc.; this depends on a reduction of the complexity of human achievements and human life,

- The production of elites and hierarchies, of artificial inequality instead of democratic solidarity,

- The functional fragmentation and parcelling of space in sport, shaping sport monocultures, standardized sport facilities, separating sport and non-sport activities, men and women, old and young, classes of high and low achievement,

- The fragmentation of time in sport in accordance with the separation of work and leisure, advancing industrial exploitation and hindering human autonomy and the wholeness of life.

Eichberg continues that such patterns are by no means; or desirable for all the peoples in the world. The games have led to consequences, which are visible as excesses in world-class sport today:

- Aggression and brutality as systematic means in elite sport,

- Chemical manipulation of athletes, especially of women athletes,

- Professional training of children, who are unable to defend their rights and interests,

- Construction and standardization of highly specialized top sport facilities, which are so expensive that most of the nations of Africa, Asia and Indian-Latin America are excluded from holding Olympics or contests at the Olympic level,

- Scientification of top-level sport, so that the individual achievement of the athlete is disappearing behind the achievement of the whole apparatus trainers, medical personnel, managers, equipment producers, chemistry experts, etc.; this competition of complex systems has been called the totalization of sport.

Olympic sport thus is neither self-evident, nor natural, nor necessary for all peoples. It is socially and culturally relative, tied to a specific historical-cultural formation whose dominance is no longer generally accepted. Coubertin (2000c: 546) supports discrimination in sport and writes: “that it is the rule now that no one can take part in the Games other than as a representative of his own country”. As we know, to take part in the Games, someone should be able to reach high performance, and by doing so to represent her/his country as well. Coubertin (2000c: 543) states that the Olympic Games are *something else* from any other variety of athletic competition. First I will disagree with Coubertin; in my opinion the Games have nothing, as to distinguish them from other

athletic events. They promote the same wrong notion and sometimes are becoming much worse. Secondly I would like to argue that the Games should not differ from any other athletic event and in addition to support both the correct concept of Olympism, which is participation and to have fun. As Coubertin (2000c: 544) writes when he re-established the Olympic Games as a supreme consecration of the cult of athletics practised in the purest spirit of true sport, proudly, joyfully and loyally. Olympic sport should deny the separation of body and soul. They should be directed against the fixation on results, on quantified sports data and records, results that are hindering the inner experience of the body. As Coubertin (2000c: 542) writes Olympic Games are in no way comparable to the cultivation of rare plants. Are one of the cornerstones of progress and health for the youth of our day, which in my opinion total health is achieved by harmonizing our life.



Olympic Games nowadays have taken mainly political regime and economic form. Several circumstances during the modern Olympic Games show, that is not a peaceful festival for the sake of *joy of participation*. It has become so important for political and economic reasons, and they have been exploited by politicians and terrorists, so as to gain their benefits. Some members of IOC (International Olympic Committee) agree with the phenomenon. Pounds (2004: 108) stated that “if the Olympic Games were not considered important or they do not attract the interest of world, no one would deal with them; if it were not an event of world scope, no one would give importance for who participates in them and who no or why”.

Pound (2004: 107-132) writes that in 1936 Olympic Games, Adolph Hitler and the Nazis party tightened their ringer round Germany and the prosecutions against the Jews began to take dimensions. The Nazis exploited the Games, as to promote their propaganda; and to spread their policy, idea and doctrine. Several times the Russian regime asked for extra protection for its athletes; with the fear that are in danger. Here I would like to state that in sport the only danger that exists is that of the case of an accident or injury or in some, rare cases the risk of death. Since 1956, boycott became fashion and then, two events took place that became the base of political exploitation of the games as medium of protestation. The military forces of Britain, France and Israel occupied the Suez Canal, and this led to the retirement of Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq from Olympic Games. Afterwards the invasion of Soviet Union in Hungary, three countries - Holland, Spain and Switzerland -

did something proportional. In Rome (1960) Taiwan participated with the name “Formosa” as the result of political arguments with People’s Republic of China. Indubitably, the difficult moment in the history of modern Olympic Games was the terrorist attack against the Israel’s team in the Olympic games 1972 in the Munich. The invasion Soviet in the Afghanistan, in December 1979, almost six months before the beginning of the Olympic in Moscow led to the boycott of the Games from the Americans, Canadians (and many other), therefore preventing thousands of athletes to take part to the Games. The Soviet Union announced their decision to not participate in the Games on 8 May 1984, precisely the day where reached the Olympic flame in United States of America. In Seoul (1988) some countries did not take part in the Games also for political regimes reasons. The political leaders, in their effort to punish the country that organizes the Games, finally punish the innocent athletes, to whom they deny the possibility of participating in them. Since then, we did not face any other political boycott (who knows what will show up in the future). The case is that the name of Olympic Games has tarnished. The “pure art of sport” has turned to political regimes event.

It cannot be different in the case of IOC; while from the 115 members of it, only 15 are athletes. The rest are as follows: 15 represent the International Athletic Federations (IFS), the 15 National Olympic Committees (NOCs), while 70 are elected for their personal characteristics and do not belong in some sport team. These 70 independent members are, usually, important personalities of the countries from which they emanate and are not essential involved in sport (Pound, 2004: 214). The elections in IOC are similar like political election, which the candidates fight for the votes of their members. “Fights” between candidates or their supporters are a common phenomenon (Pound, 2004). Most of them “work” for her/his benefit; for economic and social status reasons.



If we take into consideration the enormous pecuniary sums that are needed for the preparation, and all the duration of the games, rightly we can give them the name *High Class Games*. IOC has established a program (the Olympic program), which became one of the most successful marketing programs all around the world, and costs a lot of millions of Euro. Sponsors have the responsibility of giving many millions to IOC and to use the

emblem of Olympic Games (the five rings¹⁶) for advertisement purposes. Olympic Games have been commercialized and some members of IOC are proud of this fact. Pound (2004: 181) stated that, he is “enthusiastic partisan of the commercial dimension that the games took, and that without the sponsors, the sport, as we know it today, cannot exist”. I disagree absolutely with Pound; sport has nothing to do with money. The quality of sport has its basis in chastity, movement, joy, pleasure and play; something completely different from the world of money, which bases is work and corruptness.

Up to 2.5,000,000,000 Euro is spent by some television channels, in order to win the competition of television rights for the Olympic Games only in United States of America. Smaller amounts but, of course millions, IOC receives from the TV channels of the rest continents. I suppose you have created an image about how much money is traded for the Olympics. Pound (2004: 210) calls it “product; the rich economic agreements that IOC contracts, increase its influence and allow to settle better its product: the Olympic Games”.

Can you imagine how much Africa or any other under-developed continent or country could be helped? Olympic Games are supposed to bring peace and health all around the world. In opposition to this ideal, members of IOC enjoy their profit in luxurious hotels, and living in the *false* life of money and sponsors fight their *brothers* for the sake of colored paper.



We live in a competitive society, which as a whole unconsciously leads to the formation of such Games. There are some groups of people who do not like to be competitive, but they like to work as a team; as a whole; as a society. My friend Pamela once said: “Competitive society has come to an end, therefore if we want to continue living, more co-operation is prerequisite. We should become one with nature again, otherwise we will destroy ourselves”. Olympic Games with the form that they have nowadays neglect a big part of our society. As Physical Education and Sport teacher, I

¹⁶ The emblem of the Olympic Games is composed of five interlocking rings (blue, yellow, black, green, and red respectively) on a white field. This was originally designed in 1913 by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games. Upon its initial introduction, de Coubertin stated the following in the August, 1913 edition of *Revue Olympique*: ‘The emblem chosen to illustrate and represent the world Congress of 1914 ... five intertwined rings in different colors - blue, yellow, black, green, red - are placed on the white field of the paper. These five rings represent the five parts of the world which now are won over to Olympism and willing to accept healthy competition’.
Olympic symbols, (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympic_symbols#Olympic_emblem).

would like to contribute to the development of our society. I want to teach not only physical skills, but ethical virtues as well. I have in consideration the “political power” that the IOC has, to which I do not want to defy; and also that would be very difficult to change the character of the Games. Therefore, in the future I will try to create new Games, which probably will not have the name Olympic. The reason is that, if a company has a name, according to a written law (at least in Cyprus), no other company can have the same name. Therefore, from the moment that the Games are considered “a company” from many members of IOC, I cannot name other Games with the same name (despite that they will not have the form of company). In the following paragraphs I will describe you an idea; a dream, that in my opinion will contribute toward a civilized society. In the future I will experiment with all these (read later) and much more and with the experiences that I will have, so that I am able to defend more my proposal.

The Games will be a Festival, with the whole meaning of the word, which is: *a period of celebration of a series of performances and other cultural events*. They will not take place every year, because that would result in routine, which is boring. Therefore, in my opinion every five years will be the best time of period. I suggest the number five for the simple reason of the five continents in which we live. However, with the exception that the Festival should take place the same time of year in every country individually; and according to the climate conditions and the inner political scene of each country. For example, when in Europe is winter, in Australia is summer, therefore during summer time of period is more suitable for the summer Festival. The same principle can be used for the winter Festival. The place that the festival will take place will be close to nature without interference and destruction of it.

Another difference will be the content of the Festival. First, we know that each country has different level of sport education; therefore, in each *festival*, physical activities that are popular in each country will be contributed by it. For example if in a country sport games, dance, water sports, swimming, running, walking, juggling, and outdoor activities are popular among the majority of the population (more than 90%), these physical activities will be the content.

Of course there should be some limitation about the participation. As I mentioned above I would find it more beautiful if the Festival take part near nature. Therefore, if we allow to every inhabitant to take part, we are able to destroy it; we are billions of people that interested in sport and will be a chaotic situation. There should exist a limitation to the number of participants and every person who would like to take part should write a small

essay. The topic of it will be different every five years. For example could be: “My motives that drive me to Sport” or “What Sport means to me”. By doing so Festival by Festival we will develop the correct attitude toward Sport (attitude which in my opinion is correct). This entrance limitation it will be not a test. On the other hand it will allow the people, who really love and believe in sporting to take part; and on the other hand to teach some others that have different motives the correct ones, and to do so later. Each person will be allowed to take part only once, so as to give the opportunity to someone else in the next Festival to do so. Of course there would be physical activities for every age group, as to give the opportunity to every individual who would like to take part, to do so through her/his whole life. Participants will have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills (for their own entertainment), but to learn new skills as well. Here, in the participation part, we can face a small “problem”: “Who will choose the participants?” Of course personalities who have the same believes like I do; but “How we know that in the future they will not exploit their position?” In that case there will be a written regulation, which will state that: “In the case of the exploitation of the Festival, for other reasons than health, socialization and recreation of the nations, their organization should stop and rethink their concept and contents”. By doing and having in mind the mistakes of the present Olympic Games, we will avoid any exploitation and at the same time improve their effectiveness.

As a Festival that will be of course, in my opinion *live music* it will be necessary “ingredients”. Dancing teachers, the same time will teach all volunteers the beauty of dance and movement. The same will take part in other scenes. For example basketball teachers will teach various skills and organize games; swimming teachers will teach the joy of moving in the water and have fun in it. Crowds of people will run in the forest and have the opportunity to learn some new skill (during their running tour); climbing teachers will teach rock climbing, but on trees as well; others will teach juggling etc. New physical activities that lots of people like will be added. The result will be the attraction of more people to the *festival* and *physical activity*. In addition, as I mentioned above, each country will organize the “festival” according to the economic conditions of the nation; so extra expenses will be avoided. Each participant should give a small amount to the organizers as to pay the organization expenses and to take care of nature after the end of the Festival.

In another scene of the Festival, some theoretical lessons will take part. One of them will be the teaching of Fair Play (in sport but in life as well). Content of the lesson will be as follows:

a) Respect yourself as the most important person on this planet. We live in the “whole” (society-read later), but we should not forget ourselves. The only person that can give real happiness to us is ourselves; and only we, as persons, we can give real happiness to ourselves. As you will read later, at the same time we should not harm the whole, but contribute to it. However if we live to make everybody else happy there will be more happiness, nevertheless if nobody looks after her/his best self-interest nobody will be able to get that happiness. My experiences have taught me; that a more harmonious life needs also to *give*, but also to *get*. If we give love, we should get as well; if we give friendship, we should get as well; if we give kindness, we should get as well; if we give knowledge, we should get as well. By doing so, at the same time we will contribute to the whole and keep a “shield” in front of ourselves. In this occasion we should be careful, because there exist some extremities. On the one hand there are the individuals that live only for their own benefit. (They are able to “kill” their brothers if it is necessary.) This could be characterized as the disease of capitalism. On the other hand there are the individuals that live only for the whole. They give only, and the result will be a person without any fuel (energy), who will be desperate and asking why. These individuals, in some cases, like to follow the flow than to go out of it and find their loosened personality, and return back to it and contribute to the whole. In my opinion it will be more beneficial for us and for our society if we keep an intermediate attitude.

Reid (2002: 139-163) writes that to be thoughtful, care and respect her/himself, involves individual concern of happiness, based on a thoughtful view of a meaningful life. It means living up to the standards we set for our self and being the kind of person we want to be. Sport requires so many decisions about personal conduct, and it is an excellent place to develop an exercise of ethical self-respect. For a self-respecting sport woman/man, goals correspond to personal values. The issue is less winning than being a winner, less the medal itself than being the kind of person who could win the medal cleanly. The real goal is developing virtues that lead to a thriving, happy life. To stop thinking of virtue in terms of personal sacrifice and begin thinking of personal happiness. Be a good person by being a good sport woman/man.

The best-conceived vision of happiness and the most laudable and realistic goals mean nothing without the motivation to put these ideas into action. This is the job of the spirited part of the soul, or in terms that are more familiar: the heart. Motivation comes from concern; what you care about you will do. Aristotle (in Reid, 2002) reasoned that the excellences of all things are found in their unique function. Therefore, since reason

separates humans from the rest of animals, our excellence (and happiness) must lie in the exercise of reason. Just as our personalized vision of happiness can push us to train on cold rainy mornings, that same vision should motivate us to act rightly. Like bodily health, health of the soul depends on action. We should not forget our families, friends and relationships in order to pursue our dreams. We must distinguish external appearances from internal reality. It is not enough to fulfill the image of standing on the Olympic podium of our dreams; we have to be the person we hoped to be on the inside, too. We should understand that focusing too much on instrumental goods such as money, glory, or medals threatens to damage our ultimate end: happiness. Therefore, patience, planning and endurance required for athletic success should be applied to the longest race of all: life.

Aristotle (in Reid, 2002) believed that we could condition our souls to do the right thing, just as we condition our bodies to hard training. He described the process of turning theory into action as a practical syllogism. We begin with a universal good, apply it to the particular situation at hand, and derive a maxim or personal call to action. However, sports do not build character, sport people build character by constantly acting according to their heads. To take as example the challenges and trials we face in sport, because prepare us for the challenges and trials we face in life. Life and sport need “guts”. Having “guts” means having appetites that follow the commands of the head. Having the guts to follow our head, to both enthusiastically pursue and revise goals where appropriate, is what courage in sport and life is all about. Sport persons must put sport in the service of improving themselves rather than putting themselves in the service of sport. It is hard to imagine a happy life in which the only goals and achievement are athletic; athletic that as goal has money and glory. Even the money and glory of sport lose their value in a life without meaning. Sport offers us so many chances to discover our selves, our freedom and our potential. We should take advantage of this virtue that sport gives us.

b) Sport persons have duty to respect others’ humanity, and also understand and respect the particular relationships involved and the purpose of the activity. From a moral point of view, duty is understood as how we should behave towards others. Reid (2002: 165-182) writes that the golden rule *do unto others as you would have them to unto you* must be memorized very well in our mind and carry in sport and life as well. The deep beauty of the golden rule is that if followed appropriately, it will promote social harmony while respecting individual values. Basic levels of any moral system are to respect our self and others as well. To respect others demands basic consideration for the other person as promoted by the Golden rule; an appreciation of the particular relationship involved; and

an understanding of the purpose of the activity and what is expected within it. Starting point for the ethical behavior towards others in sport is an understanding of the nature of athletic relationships. All in the *field of play* we are friends.

In some sport games (e.g. soccer) we should understand that we are not playing alone. We play as a group of friends with another group of friends. This is one of the greatest benefit of sport; the opportunity to work with others as a team. Good teams do not suppress individuals, they make them better. However, players who detract the team by slacking off personally or dragging their teammates down abuse the teammate relationship. Since we are team players, we are obligated to make our teammates play better. The secret of great team players is not individual skill, but the ability to perform better in harmony with and out of obligation to the team. Individuals have to care about giving all for the team. Once this is achieved, teammates will be inspired to perform better as well.

Sport persons, relationships with their teachers are based, fundamentally, on a shared desire for team success. If we are mature enough, we should be aware of overtraining. Therefore, sacrifice and try more is excess. Both should know the limits of human abilities. If in this case a child takes the place of sport woman/man; the responsibility absolutely belongs to the teacher; who should teach the student when she/he should stop exercise and in general what self-control is. If we are teachers not only should we be aware of the phenomenon of over exercise but against doping as well.

c) In sport respect our culture or community means, “respect the game”. Respect the game, first, means respecting its constitutive rule and norms. Also respecting a sport means, considering the collective good of all who play it and preserving the goods that make it worthwhile.

Respecting the rules makes a worthwhile activity possible for everyone. All games have some rules. Participants agree to those rules just by playing a sport. As I mentioned in previous chapter, I think that all educated human beings know what is right and what is wrong. If you like to cheat, it is antithetical to sport. Reid (2002: 185-205) writes that cheating and cheaters are cancer to sport; they are not a natural part of it and must be controlled and removed to maintain the sport’s health. If they want to harm themselves, it is their problem and their responsibility. However, they do not have the right to *harm* others and the game. Becoming part of any sport involves more than learning its written rules. It involves initiation into a culture with its own history, lore and ethos. Sport has its own culture of happiness and pleasure and not of victory. Competitiveness leads to cheating even with one way, even with other, and therefore diminishes sport’s culture.

Sport is a social practice, and should be respected for the interest in any sport, and respect it means preserve its internal goods (internal motivations). If we are practitioners of any sport, we know very well how very important are these goods. We love it and it has meanings to us. Therefore, our duty is to protect it. To recognize and affirm the internal goods of one's sport, and use them as a basis for criticism of one's own behavior as well as that of other sport people, sport teachers, officials, and institutions. We must honor the customs and traditions of our sport, and take responsibility for changes in that culture. Getting clear about those, internal goods, and acting accordingly will help our pursuit of meaningful lives and preserve what is good in the sports we love.

Unfortunately, reality in modern Olympic Games shows and promotes something exactly opposite from my example. As we know, many people like to cheat others. The structure of the Games and their tendency force them to want to cheat and be the best. By abusing drugs (illegal and legal), first, athletes do not respect themselves. They act against their nature and they try to perform above their biological abilities. Second, they do not respect other human beings that they like to be pure. They cheat them and at the same times ignore their existence. Third, they "work" in a game without following the important norms. Therefore, they humiliate the "art of play". All this takes place in Olympic Games nowadays for the sake of *external goods*. Modern Olympic Games do not contribute to the development of our society. On the other hand, they contribute to its malfunction; and every wrong act that happens in the field of play is distributed out of it.



The small example and dream that I described above will be my greatest satisfaction to see it in the future reality; which will be focus on Olympism, the philosophy of Pierre de Coubertin is:

- Not just the elite athlete, but also everyone;
- Not just a truce period, but also the whole of life;
- Not just competition and winning, but the values of participation and co-operation;
- Not just sport as an activity, but also as a formative and developmental influence contributing to desirable characteristics of individual personality and social life (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 2).

My dream is a *Festival* that will *teach* people that sport is play for fun and enjoyment and not making money, and that with devotion to the task at hand the reward will take care of itself. A philosophy that will create international amity and good will, thus will lead to a happier and more peaceful world (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 9).

3.4. “La Mala Educación” - Bad Education

The art of teaching takes place in sport as well. Physical Education is as old as education. Indeed, it is arguable that the first education attempted was Physical Education, and the justification for any education, what ever its form, was to facilitate the survival of the clan, be it family or extended. Over time scholars found that the benefits that can be achieved through physical activity can be summarized in general categories and arguments for Physical Education include discussions of health, skill development, character, and fun (Laker, 2003: 1). Sport has a variety of functions for different segments of society and therefore different meanings to those different populations. Very few people have this in mind. Even Physical Education and Sport teachers (in school and clubs) very often forget it.

Thus far, in my life, I have had the opportunity to be a student at school and at a sport faculty as well. As a child, I liked playing and found a good opportunity in the Physical Education and Sport lessons for this purpose; despite that, many teachers did not give us the time to play. Nowadays, after so many years, I still love play. However, I have been disappointed with the whole system of teaching Physical Education and Sport. Unfortunately for some children, the experience of sport is not always positive and can come to mean that of being exposed to failure, and may lead to a complete lack of enthusiasm and enjoyment (Lake, 2002: 4). As student at the sport faculty, I have observed very few teachers that use *play and joy* as their main “weapons”. They ignore its powerfulness and promote the wrong notion of sport.

On the other hand, the purpose of schools and universities is to promote the benefits of sport and active lifestyle and teach the right meaning of sport, which is enjoyment; the motivation of many recreational participants. Joy in movement, joy in the surroundings and shared joy in shared company are powerful motivators in encouraging and maintaining sporting participation. That is, that enjoyment has to be at the heart of the process if continued participation is to be a realistic aim (Lake, 2002: 5).



A study in England in 1990's investigated young peoples' opinion about participation in sport (in MacPhail, Kirk and Eley, 2003: 57-70). The study sought the advice of young sports leaders on what can be done to facilitate young people's

involvement in sport. The study used group interviews (Nominal Group Technique) with over 600, 14–18-year-olds, to elicit responses to a single question: “What can be done to help young people participate in sport?” The focus has been young sports leaders’ advice on how we might facilitate youth sport participation. They suggested that while we know much about young people’s dispositions towards and perceptions of sport from sociological and psychological research, we have seldom listened to the voices of young people on the policy issue of facilitating sport participation. The responses received from over 600 young women and men in seven towns and cities across England are comprehensive, including a broad sweep of issues relating to climate and conditions.

Young people typically claim that lack of enjoyment coupled with parental or coach pressure, lack of time, no friends attending the sport, few opportunities and the need for greater encouragement are the major reasons for non-participation or drop-out. The participants in the pilot study encountered no problems in responding to the question with the most frequent responses including, *having fun*, *to get fitter* and *to socialize*. These were social aspects, encouragement and inclusivity. In relation to social aspects, the young people referred to the need for friendly competition, making friends and meeting people. In relation to encouragement, responses referred to encouragement from teachers, family, coaches, and giving positive feedback and reinforcement. By far the majority of the statements in this category revolved around the area of making sport inclusive to all abilities. This finding is consistent with Mason’s study where it is reported that “Being left out because you are not good enough” was the aspect of sport participation which children minded most about (in MacPhail, Kirk and Eley, 2003). Mason reported that, “a sense of failure could be very de-motivating, particularly if children are aware that their performance is much worse than that of other children” (in MacPhail, Kirk and Eley, 2003). A study by Treasure (in MacPhail, Kirk and Eley, 2003) examined children’s perception of the motivational climate in PE classes. He found that students who perceived a climate that emphasized high performance and focused on ability reported a negative attitude to PE and feelings of boredom. However, students who perceived a climate, which deemphasized ability and performance but concentrated on participation and effort, reported a positive attitude and feelings of satisfaction and enjoyment.

The literature provides strong evidence to suggest that for young people, a motivational climate that fosters “hard work” (I would say play for a long time) and improvement is more conducive to continued participation than a climate based solely on winning. The many statements about inclusiveness sends a clear message to sport

deliverers that young people are not satisfied with what they see as an inappropriate adult concern for results and performance. It also conveys the common sense view that youth sport participation cannot increase while the climate encourages exclusion through overzealous competition.

One way the young people suggested pathways could be improved was through organized events, with the *notion of festival* being a prominent and important attraction for many young people. The young people highlighted a need for more curriculum time in PE, and increased opportunities to play sport at lunchtimes and after school. Some of the statements recorded by young people included: *more Physical Education lessons, more time for sport in school* and *more extracurricular sport*. Related to this point about curriculum time, some young people also mentioned the need for a higher ratio of PE teachers to students, reflecting a perception that some classes may be too large.

On the second point, there were many statements about provision of a wider range of sports by schools and greater choice for young people. Statements from the young people included: *introduce more sports in schools; schools should organize more activities and wider range of activities in school*. While the school of which they took part in gave some children a choice, others complained that they did not have enough choice. Some felt they were pushed into doing activities that they were not able to do or were not happy doing (in MacPhail, Kirk and Eley, 2003). Jackson and Nesti state that sports practice is creating strategies that consider all elements of the community in the planning process and report that: "New ideas to improve understanding of community [sporting] needs, have had to be developed" (in MacPhail, Kirk and Eley, 2003).



Another research in UK (Dagkas and Stathi, 2007) shows that adolescents from lower socioeconomic groups participate less in sport, and they suffer poor health and have a lower life expectancy. This emphasizes the importance of increasing participation levels of all students to ensure a healthy standard is achieved across society. School and recreational programmes should be designed and funded to enhance adolescents' participation (Dagkas and Stathi, 2007). Programs should be designed in such a way that kids from all social classes are able to take part. As you will read later, there exist several physical activities that do not need so much money in order to be practiced. Therefore, schools and Physical Education teachers should support the process. Encouragement from PE teachers in involvement is important. Teachers' guidance and expertise help to

maintain the involvement in sporting activities within school, by explaining the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, healthy living and physical activity. To improve the quality of PE and school sport in deprived areas since school could be the only setting in which some students experience physical activity. PE and school sport should provide a diversity of activities to meet the needs and interests of students by establishing better links with sports/leisure and community clubs (Dagkas and Stathi, 2007). Establishing better links between school and community and encouraging better planning and design of localities to become more activity friendly could enhance motivating teaching and coaching climate for children.



On the one hand, school sport and Physical Education are defined by a commonly held perception. Physical Education means playing sport. Physical Education and sport are instrumental in promoting personal and social characteristics such as fairness, cooperation, independence and teamwork. As Mountakis (2001: 95) writes Physical Education wants to develop all three domains of the pupils, that is, psychomotor, affective and cognitive, since education as a whole aims at developing those three domains or more simply, it aims at the fulfillment of the aim of education. The aim is to facilitate the development and socialization of the personality of every human being and by doing so to develop a more civilized society.

On the other hand, very often school sport refers either to an organized competitive contest between groups of pupils within a school, as in house or tutor group matches, or between schools in the form of representative teams. Very often, I have seen the phenomenon of training/workout in school. Physical Education teachers influenced by top-level sport practices and adopt those practices in some cases in their Physical Education lessons in their schools (Mountakis, 2001: 92). For example teachers ask and expect the pupils to run a specific distance in time or swim in time. Discrimination is involved in school sport as well. Kids, who are not so skillful, do not have the abilities or take more time to understand movement patterns, are not taken into consideration by the teachers. As a student, I did not like the boring running around the field, but neither the prohibition to play some sports. As Physical Education and Sport teacher, I still do not like this old fashion curriculum. The result of all above mentioned, is the *escape* of pupils from physical activity. How many pupils do you think will like sport as it is presented nowadays? Not so many I would say! Children like *cool* activities. They like video games;

smoking cigarette at the back yard; chatting between each other, listening to music and so many other activities.

Physical Education and Sport classes can also be *cool*. The question is: How? If we remember our childhood, we will find the answer. The difficult part is that we forget all dreams that we had and we are in a hurry to *jump* in adult's world. We forget ourselves for the sake of culture and prohibit to the child inside us to play. Therefore, to rethink our previous life is one of the "medicines" to our "disease". Because the world changes from generation to generation, we should also take in consideration the life style of the today's children. Moreover, ask them what attracts them.



Within cultures, there are sub-cultures, like skateboarders, surfers etc. These smaller groupings of individuals also share systems of values and meanings, which develop their clear and separate identities. The distinct nature of language, appearance and actions is what binds the fabric of sub-cultures together and makes them strong in their separateness and individuality (Laker, 2002: 2-3). Skateboarding it is a very *cool* activity for teenagers (to me as well). However, society considers it as an activity for rebels. We live in the world of services and bureaucracy, so physical activity has no place in it. In no school Physical Education and Sports curriculum, I have seen skateboarding to be part of it. In my opinion and from my experience pupils would love it. Physical Education and Sport will give them the opportunity to learn and to practice their favorite physical activity and most of all to be *cool*.

Another similar activity is juggling, which some girls (boys as well) will find really creative and joyful. Organize a small trip to the park and teach them how to manipulate with various objects. At the same time, try to climb on some trees and walk on a slack-line (rope, tided between two trees). Visit the playground (which for some strange reason is only for kids under the age of 16) and let them explore for themselves. After a couple of hours let them return to the school to continue their day relaxed and peaceful. Teach them how to come in contact with each other. Oftedal (2007: 79) stated that close human contact results in people feeling about themselves and makes them happy. Kaltenbrunner (in Oftedal, 2007) writes about contact dancing: "A lot of contact dancers feel that through contact improvisation they gain insight into themselves, emotional maturity and are able to integrate the contact principles into their daily live. It is possible to train both mental and physical flexibility and strength". Creating games will help with the development of their

imagination and creativity. Oftedal (2007: 82) writes that the more active the participants are in the creative process, the better they will learn from it and the more they will have an intrinsic motivation to reach the goal of the play. Including aerobic, inline skating, dancing, climbing, performing some funny gymnastic exercises to the park, hiking, playing full water activities and so many other activities that children will find *cool*, will contribute at the improvement of Physical Education and Sport class in school.

Mountakis (2001: 97) states that compulsory education has to introduce pupils to a variety of worthwhile activities. This is called the principle of *breadth*'. According to this principle the younger, the pupils are the more activities they have to be introduced to without attempting to go deeply into any subject. In this way, it is argued, their individual inclinations will be fostered and their needs and their interests will be fulfilled. Applying this general principle to PE, pupils should be introduced to a variety of sporting activities because through those various activities, their individual inclinations will be fostered and their needs for, and interests in, movement will be developed.

All activities can also be accompanied by *music*. Teenagers during their free time in school and after school like to meet with friends and listen to music. They are, diehard music fans (me as well). Here are few of the most common music benefits during exercise (Silence, 2006):

- **It promotes dissociation:** When totally absorbed in music, our focus changes from what our body is experiencing to the external sounds we are hearing. This situation leads us into a state in which we ignore negative feelings of fatigue and focus on the pleasurable feelings you get from following the rhythm of the music. Here I would like to make Silence's statement more understandable. When we exercise first we face a moment (dead point) in which transformation from anaerobic to aerobic exercise occurs. In this moment we feel tired, which is physiological. Many people also give up early their exercise program because of physiological fatigue, which caused by energy deficiency, but also from wrong exercise program. Therefore, music can help to overcome physiological fatigues by simply being a motivator.

- **It acts as a performance aid:** Whether we need to step things up or cool down, music can help us achieve both. Energizing, fast music can inject us with vigor. Slow, mellow music can lead to a state of deep relaxation. Depending on our goals and what we need most, we can use music to achieve it.

- **It enhances movement flow:** If we select the ideal tempo of music for the exercises we are doing, we can actually heighten the flow of our exercises. When we are in harmony with the music, exercise seems smoother and more motivating.

- **It helps with motivation:** This goes right to the core of every motivation. If we hear music we like, we are more likely to return and do the activity again. Listening to songs that we enjoy increases exercise adherence, thus leading to fitness gains over time.

Therefore, if pupils listen to their favorite music, Physical Education and Sport class, it will be probably their favorite class in school. By doing so they will realize sport as an activity full of fun and they will include it in after school life. In school, we socialize children as to be ready for the future. They are our future. If we dream and wish a better tomorrow, we should do something for its improvisation. Physical Education and Sport class have the ability to promote it; therefore, we should use its “power”.

Here, I would like to mention some principles that I consider very important when teaching Physical Education and Sport:

- **The principle of play:** With playing, we are able to do any activity for hours and hours. Play gives freedom and pleasure in the activity and promotes creativity. Children especially know very well its powerful function. Therefore, the major time of the class should be contributed by play.

- **Good relation with students:** We have to be friends with them. With the whole meaning of the word, which is: *Somebody who has a close personal relationship of mutual affection and trust with another*. Lots of teachers find this approach not effective, because as they claim, we should be discipline to them. I disagree absolutely with this approach. Thus far in my short career as a physical education and sport teacher the opposite has proven true to me.

- **Do not pretend that we are superior:** They will hate the class and us as well. All creatures in this planet we are *unique*, we are all *different* (from needs, habits, actions, thinking point of view), *but we are all equal*.

- **Create an atmosphere that is different than in schools and families:** No one likes to be “pet”; to be controlled; and trained by others. Bale (2004: 77) states that kids, animals and athletes are pets. Because “adults”, humans and coaches impose power to them as to train them and exploit them for profit or pleasure. I agree with him. Kids behaviors controlled by adults; they should behave in such a way that is correct and its

rewards are some gifts. Animals such as dogs, taught to sit, raise their legs or walk on two as to entertain us and get some cookies as reward. Coaches, medical doctors etc, control athlete's life, and their reward is, *prize*. Therefore, *a sense of freedom* is a very good approach. Despite that is part of school's curriculum should be different and the same time *cool* to students. Difficult parameters in this section are: first the pedagogy that they get from their families. As far as I am PE teacher, my opinion is that some kids have bad behavior, caused from their parents' pedagogy. Second, to allow six- or seven-year-olds or even older complete freedom of choice, without prior instruction in skill and safety would be dangerous for both students and teacher.

- **Do not forget that to the past we were also “pets”:** We were also children and we faced behaviors from adults that remind us of a dictator. Why to make the same mistakes?

- **Play as well with them:** Show them how it is, how it affects us. One of the teaching processes in sport is demonstration. Therefore, if I tell you that we fly, you will believe me? No! However, if I show you? In addition if a PE teacher is active during her/his class, this helps the class to keep flowing and helps in building good relation between teacher and pupils.

- **We should have the desire to teach and not to train:** The main aim in sport is to teach skills, develop personality toward a better society and not to develop abilities. To develop the character and personality are more beneficial to our society than to be fast.

- **Listen to their ideas:** They are also human beings. As every creature on this planet, students have their own unique way of thinking and imagination. To give them the opportunity to express themselves and feel that they are really members of the group, this will be appreciated. In addition we can learn from our students. As I repeated several times we are equal, therefore we socialize each other.

- **Life is not only sport:** Talk with them about other activities, which contribute to our culture and encourage them to discover some other hidden skills themselves. As I mentioned in previous chapter the worst result could a sport-woman/man with no education.

- **The aim is to improve Physical Educations and promote its real concept:** Game, recreation, satisfaction and the pedagogical character of Physical Education are more important than competition, money and glory.



Here, I would like to add my own experience, which concerns the participation in sport. During a swimming competition, which was organized from a private club, parents' behavior, attract my interest for observation. What I have observed was incredible. Parents who volunteered to help the organization were responsible for the not necessary time keeping. While they were keeping the time of other children, they were shouting, *go little get them* (for their child who was swimming in the next lane). They were *bending* with the parents next to them, whose swimmer will finish first. Other parents were so satisfied, and proud that, their child finished first. All the above mentioned, in a *pleasurable* atmosphere for the parents. The whole atmosphere from "adults" has transferred to the kids, which will grow up with the notion of competition and winning, not participation and with possibility to drop out because of bad experiences.

On another occasion there were some parents who forced their children to learn and to improve as fast as possible. A student of mine, is asking me in every class to tell to her mother that she swims well and that she does it correct as well. The reason is her mother told her that she is not doing it correctly and she also pressures her to be the best. Some other parents exploit the free time that I give to the kids at the end of each class and they force their children to swim as far as they can for their satisfaction. I use free time at the end of each class, first as indirect cool down and second because the last activity that students will do is the one that they will remember very well. That is why should be well planned; and my purpose is to teach them what free play is and to motivate them to play.

We are wondering why more students get away from sport year by year. If they find it boring and not interesting, they will look for other activities, which will attract their interest more. The right promotion of sport should start from Physical Education and Sport class in school, and in and out of school clubs as well. Our purpose should be the improvement of our society. By teaching children the correct meaning of Physical Education, is one step to our goal. The conservative teaching of Physical Education in school and in private clubs is boring to many children. We should create and offer them activities and atmosphere that they like. My best evaluation is when students approach me without any hesitation and express their feelings as follow: *Nio, we really like to have the class with you, your class is really fun; Your class is cool, we wish as all PE teachers be the same; Already we finish? That is pity. We had fun. We are looking forward for the next class; that was a really relaxing class, I loved it.* A saying states, that *from children and from crazy you will learn the truth!* Therefore, let us listen to their voices.



Another mistake, with respect to PE teachers, is unprofessional attitude to PE class in school. For me, Sport Education is an important branch of our whole education. Sport Education is a complex process that needs big attention. I cannot stand the fact that in many schools the PE class is taught from any other teacher than PE teacher. On one hand, I support experiential learning and maybe someone has the experiences, but in my opinion it is not enough. They do not have the same knowledge about the topic; they do not sacrifice any of their daily time for the planning of the class or to improve their knowledge; and the most important they are not interested in the subject. On the other hand, our society demands from everyone, who would like to continue her/his life in teaching PE, to study and get a certification, but in many schools anyone with no certification of PE can teach the class. With this notion everyone is able to teach any subject, only because they have some experiences; therefore studies should not be necessary! There are so many PE teachers that would love to teach in school, but this phenomenon forbids them to do so; and at the same time it takes from them the right to earn a living. Many school curriculums consider Physical Education unnecessary; therefore they neglect the importance of the subject. In some countries even the Ministry of Education give the right to the schools to treat PE like that. In my opinion this notion should stop, and give the opportunity to PE teachers, who are specialized in the subject to teach their knowledge. Many PE teachers devote a big part of their life to sport education; therefore they and Sport Education deserve better treatment.



As to follow and adopt the above recommendations we should begin by changing the teaching process of Physical Education and sport teachers. The concept of many sport faculties is professional sport. They focus on developing top athletes, strong workers and machines that they can perform at their maximum. From my experience, less than five per cent of the teachers (of practical subjects) at the sport faculty that I study use “play”. Training is the word that surrounds teachers and students (future PE teachers). Even discrimination exists among all participants. This phenomenon states that if you do not have the abilities for high performance, it is not allowed to continue study and then to work. Several times, I met colleagues of mine “crying” from disappointment and

frustration. Sometimes the demanded requirements to graduate from a sport faculty, act against sport. *You have to train hard, you have to work more* otherwise you are out. The notion of professional sport influences sport faculties, which at the end do not educate students to be teachers, but produce “machines” which will serve the wrong concept of sport.

The last three years I did not have very pleasurable experiences during my studies. I had to face the stress of competition, which is *time* and *performance*. Somehow, I managed to fulfill the requirements of all practical subjects, but the *wounds* of bad experiences are still engraved in my memory. The boredom of training escorted me several times my attempt to be a qualified PE teacher. Therefore, I disagree with this notion of training and performance. First, sport faculties should accept their students according to their interest to the subject of sport; should educate students how to teach sport through play and enjoyment. That will be the beginning toward a new concept of sport. As Physical Education and Sport teachers, we are responsible for educating people; therefore, we should be well educated as well.

Conclusion

As you have read in the above chapters, I am one of those people who do not stop dreaming. I described to you what sport means to me; and what I find wrong with the whole system. All humans we are equal, and at the same time we are different. Therefore, we have different perspectives about every occasion in our life. This is the beauty of our world. So many different opinions/ideas/thoughts come together to form the whole/society. We socialize with each other peacefully and for the sake of a better future. That is why I shared with you my thoughts and dreams, which concern Physical Education and Sport. In addition I would like to present this Diploma Thesis in video version as well. But unfortunately because of the lack of time and material I cannot present it at the present time, but in the near future I will do so as to give more color to my creation. With the video version¹⁷ my goal will be more understandable and with your cooperation it will give to our life more quality; more color.

Physical Education offers us so many chances to discover our freedom, our potential and ourselves. We should take advantage of this virtue that sport gives us. We were born with ourselves; we live with ourselves; therefore we deserve this treatment. We live in a world, which very often we do not know; sometimes not at all! We just live it, allowing the routine of daily life to lead our life. Throughout our existence we have struggled for survival in a harsh physical environment. A recognizable semblance of victory has been won over difficult surroundings, but somehow we have not been able to remove the insecurity evident in our attempt to live together constructively and peacefully. If we allow ourselves to see each part of our life, from different perspectives, the result could be amazing. Each of us see every occasion with different perspective; therefore, our cooperation will be essential.

In Physical Education the over emphasis on competition, winning, material rewards and looking good and the subsequent under emphasis in the joy of sport activity has resulted in decreased participation in sports overall; and this has consequences to not only our personal health and well being but by extension to our social, political, economic health and well beings. When we over emphasize competition, winning, looking good, this leads to exclusion of the many to benefit the few.

¹⁷ For more information about the video version contact Nio by e-mail at: niostudione@yahoo.com.

As Physical Education and Sport teacher, I have the right to create a different Sport Education's notion, than "fight" for my beliefs, which probably will cause me troubles. By creating a new notion, which has emphasis to the joy of movement, play and interaction with nature, starting with children and extending into adults' world, we will create an overall healthier and more balanced society. It will be beneficial to the overall health of nations.

I devote a part of my life to Physical Education and my love of it is my fuel. I have the courage and all the above mentioned proposals, I would like to see them one day reality. As I wrote in my short biography, I am not dreaming anymore, I have begun to live my reality. Therefore, I would like to close this essay with the HIGH HOPES that one more of my dreams will become true and that in the future, our children and our descendants will enjoy the virtues of it.

Finally, I would like to share with you the lyrics of the song of Pink Floyd, High Hopes and the very descriptive comment about it: *A common man from a small village, comes to city life, enters the marathon where everyone is rushing fast to get something. Something that they believe is success; something that they believe is their ultimate goal. Man's desires never dies and he keeps on rushing towards that something leaving behind everything else that was pleasurable to him before. When he reaches that something and looks back he realizes that he has killed many things for that one thing.*

Beyond the horizon of the place we lived when we were young
In a world of magnets and miracles
Our thoughts strayed constantly and without boundary
The ringing of the division bell had begun
Along the long road and on down the causeway
Do they still meet there by the cut?
There was a ragged band that followed in our footsteps
Running before time took our dreams away
Leaving the myriad small creatures trying to tie us to the ground
To a life consumed by slow decay

The grass was greener
The light was brighter
With friends surrounded
The nights of wonder

Looking beyond the embers of bridges glowing behind us
To a glimpse of how green it was on the other side
Steps taken forwards but sleepwalking back again
Dragged by the force of some inner tide
At a higher altitude with flag unfurled
We reached the dizzy heights of that dreamed of world

Encumbered forever by desire and ambition
There is a hunger still unsatisfied
Our weary eyes still stray to the horizon
Though down this road we have been so many times
The grass was greener
The light was brighter
The taste was sweeter
The nights of wonder
With friends surrounded
The dawn mist glowing
The water flowing
The endless river

Forever and ever
"Hey, is that Charlie? yes... Hello Charlie... great"

"High Hopes", Album: The Division Bell, 30 March 1994, Pink Floyd

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