

ART DEMONSTRATES THAT FOOTBALL IS *METASTASIZED*, AND GIVES IT REFUGE

SUMMARY

This article presents an analysis of the characteristics of football as depicted in the bestselling novel *Metastaze* (Metastases) (2006) by Alen Bović and in its two subsequent adaptations – the play *Metastaze* (Metastases) directed by Boris Svrtan and the film *Metastaze* (Metastases) directed by Branko Schmidt. Football as it appears in these three pieces is *metastasized*: it is deviant and in fact undergoes so many significant changes that it no longer has much in common with the original game. Artistic reality is seen as corresponding to social reality, and reasons for the metastasized nature of football are found on both levels. Based on the proposed analysis of *Metastaze* and a comparative analysis of descriptions of football in other books, plays and films in Croatia and abroad a hypothesis is put forward whereby *art* offers *evidence* as to the metastasized nature of football. A greater challenge still is to establish whether art might, at the same time, provide refuge to the metastasized football, revitalizing its aesthetic and ethical dimension. Given the scope of these claims, the arguments in the article are based on a wide array of texts and authors ranging from literary criticism, anthropology of games and sociology of sport to semiotics, cultural studies and aesthetics.

Key words: football, art, literature, game, aesthetics, ethics, metastases