



# Bioethics and Sport

## Introductory

Forty-seven years since the institutionalisation of the philosophy of sport and its global growth, Croatia and the region of South-East Europe can finally welcome a special journal issue dedicated to the bioethics of sport. Here, the usage and understanding of the term *bioethics of sport* are twofold. On the one hand, it denotes a specialised field of the philosophy of sport or its sub-discipline, and on the other hand, a part of bioethics in general, but not only in narrow terms of bio-medical ethics, rather in the broader terms of European bioethics<sup>1</sup> rooted in philosophical (European) tradition and history.

## *Philosophy, Ethics and Bioethics of Sport – the Origins*

If we take a look into the history of philosophical reflection and the consideration of sport and/or games of competitive physical activities, it seems that one can distinguish three large historical periods of the philosophy of sport, which I shall call: 1) ‘Antique Period’; 2) ‘Pre-disciplinary Period’, and 3) ‘Disciplinary Period’.

In the ‘Antique Period’, we can detect ‘sports-like activities’ already in the literary work of Homer (and Pindar a few centuries later) and description of different events such as ceremonies, funerals, and celebrations, where the competitive games were taking place. During the same period, the Ancient Olympics started in 776 b.c. What marks the events mentioned above is a strong concurrent expression of *agon* or competitiveness, and honouring the gods. On the other hand, among the philosophers of the period, Plato and Aristotle stand out. Plato is the first philosopher and sportsman (professional wrestler) at the same time, and his name, suggesting that he had ‘broad shoulders’, is sports-like, given to him by his coach.<sup>2</sup> His born name was Aristocles. In his works *Lysid*, *Republic*, and *Laws*, Plato gave significant attention to “virtue-based gymnastics”<sup>3</sup> and to the ways of achieving the *areté*, virtue or the excellence based on wisdom.<sup>4</sup> Gymnastics practised in places called *pal-*

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Amir Muzur: »European Bioethics: A New History Guaranteeing a New Future«, *Socijalna ekologija* 26 (2017) 1–2, pp. 61–70.

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Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Tiziano Dorandi (ed.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2013.

3  
Heather Reid, »Athletic Beauty in Classical Greece: A Philosophical View«, *Journal*

*of the Philosophy of Sport* 39 (2012) 2, pp. 281–297, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00948705.2012.725900>.

4  
H. Reid, »Athletic Beauty in Classical Greece: A Philosophical View«; Andrew M. Holowchak, Heather L. Reid, *Aretism. An Ancient Sports Philosophy for the Modern Sports World*, Lexington Books, Lanham – Plymouth 2013.

*estre* had great importance in education, where achieving *kalos kagathos* (*kalokagathia*) was both the ethical and aesthetical ideal of education. Dissimilarly, Aristotle talked much less about physical and ‘sports-like-activities’, impairing its importance. In his works *Rhetoric*, *Politics*, and *Nicomachean Ethics*, he considered them mostly as a part of the educational system, where he pointed out *pentathlon* athletes as the ideal of excellence in the physical sense.

In the ‘Pre-disciplinary Period’, we can distinct ‘history of philosophy’ and ‘history of the theory of sport’ in relation and relevance to the philosophy of sport. ‘History of Philosophy’ in the ‘post-antique’ period offers many opportunities for considering sport-philosophy in two important ways. On the one hand, sport-philosophers can extract (and they did in a certain amount) parts in the work of many important philosophers like R. Descartes, I. Kant, G. W. F. Hegel, M. Heidegger, F. Nietzsche, K. Marx, J. S. Mill, J. Ortega y Gasset, and J. Habermas. On the other hand, some of the philosophers were dealing with the topics tightly connected and relevant for sport-philosophy, like the consideration of sport (K. Jaspers), game and play (E. Fink, L. Wittgenstein), or a specific modern sport like skiing or football (J. P. Sartre). In ‘Theory of Sport’ or ‘embryonic period’,<sup>5</sup> from the (late) 19th century until late 1960’s, physical educationists and sport theoreticians like J. C. Warren, G. Santayana, H. Slusher, and E. Metheny started to ask metaphysical questions about sport, its role and purpose, which lead to establishing the genuine, separate and specific branch of philosophy – philosophy of sport. Here, Paul Weiss’ book *Sport – A Philosophical Inquiry* from 1969 stands like a bridge from the pre-disciplinary shore towards the disciplinary. Even more, through his influence, reputation and leading role in American philosophical circles, Paul Weiss made significant efforts in helping philosophy of sport to establish itself as an autonomous discipline.

‘Disciplinary or Philosophy of Sport Period’ started in 1972. It seems that sublimation of the academic strivings of many scholars dealing with philosophical considerations of sport happened in 1972. It started in January with Pre-Olympic symposium in Munich (Germany) initiated by Hans Lenk, followed by three symposiums induced by Warren Fraleigh in Brockport (NY, USA) in February, Ontario (Canada) in May and again in Brockport in October, just to end in December with the establishing of *Philosophic Society for the Study of Sport* – PSSS (since 1999 called *International Association for the Philosophy of Sport* – IAPS). The year later PSSS started to publish *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, which gave the scholars a place for the development of specialised discourse, debate and arguments, and in a way, ended the process of becoming the discipline of its own.

The ethics of sport started to gain more attention in the 1980’s, especially after Warren Fraleigh published *Right Actions in Sport. Ethics for Contestants* in 1984. The book is a sort of landmark in the development of sport-philosophy and even more the ethics of sport as its special branch. Discussion about doping and other kinds of enhancements started in the same period and later became recognised as a bioethical topic<sup>6</sup> together with gender and genetics issues in sport<sup>7</sup> biomedical technologies, health, disability, and trans- and post-humanism.<sup>8</sup> Ethics of sport continued to develop and since the 1990’s became a dominant and most vibrant part of the philosophy of sport.<sup>9</sup>

Bioethics of sport, on the other hand, was recognised as a distinct field of sport-philosophy in 2015 and the capital edition of *Routledge Handbook of*

*the Philosophy of Sport*.<sup>10</sup> It seems that bioethics of sport is becoming a more and more important and vibrant field where cases of great significance for the future and integrity of sport are being considered, reflected and resolved. In *Bioethics, Genetics and Sport*, Camporesi and McNamee superbly demonstrated just what kind of cases and issues are we dealing with, from individual cases of Oscar Pistorius, Markus Rehm and Caster Semenya, to the problems of new informed consent, new categorisation in sport, gene testing and doping.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Croatia and South-East Europe***

History of philosophical thought about the sport in Croatia is very short and indigent. Besides the few efforts to introduce and instigate the philosophy of sport, mostly by Ivana Zagorac from the *Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb, Croatia*,<sup>12</sup> and except for the volume dedicated to the ethics and sport in *JAHR – European Journal of Bioethics*, edited by Morana Brkljačić Žagrović and Igor Eterović,<sup>13</sup> work on the philosophy of sport is almost non-existing. The next important step was made in 2017, when the *Research Committee for Bioethics and Sport* within the *Centre of Excellence for Integrative Bioethics at Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb* was established, under the initiative of Matija Mato Škerbić from the *University Department for Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb, Croatia*.<sup>14</sup> He was the first to receive the doctorate in the field of philosophy of sport at the *Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb*. Hence, the development of the philosophy of sport in Croatia is tightly connected to the larger bioethical and philosophical movement and their societies. Today, the *Research Committee*

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Robert G. Osterhoudt (ed.), *The Philosophy of Sport. A Collection of Original Essays*, Springfield, IL, Thomas 1973, p. ix.

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Thomas H. Murray, »Sports, Bioethics of«, in: Warren T. Reich (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Bioethics. 2nd Edition*, Macmillan Reference USA, New York 1995.

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Angela J. Schneider, »Sports, Bioethics of«, in: Stephen G. Post (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Bioethics. 3rd Edition*, Macmillan Reference USA, New York 2004, pp. 2461–2468.

8

Andy Miah, »Sports«, in: Henke ten Have (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Global Bioethics*, Springer 2016, pp. 2666–2676.

9

Mike McNamee, William J. Morgan, *Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Sport*, Routledge, London – New York 2015.

10

Silvia Camporesi, »Bioethics and Sport«, in: Mike McNamee, William John Morgan (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of the Philoso-*

*phy of Sport*, Routledge, London – New York 2015, pp. 81–97.

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Silvia Camporesi, Mike McNamee, *Bioethics, Genetics and Sport*, Routledge, London 2018.

12

Ivana Zagorac (ed.), »Filozofija slobodnoga vremena i športa« [»Philosophy of Leisure and Sport«], *Filozofska istraživanja* 29 (2009) 2; Ivana Zagorac (ed.), »Filozofija sporta« [»Philosophy of Sport«], *Metodički ogledi* 19 (2012) 1; Ivana Zagorac (ed.), *O sportu drugačije. Humanistički aspekti sporta [On Sport Differently: Humanistic Aspects of Sport]*, Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, Zagreb 2014.

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Morana Brkljačić Žagrović, Igor Eterović (eds.), »Ethics of Sport«, *JAHR* 2 (2011) 1.

14

Matija Mato Škerbić (ed.), *1st International Conference Ethics, Bioethics and Sport*, Croatian Philosophical Society, Zagreb 2018.

for *Bioethics and Sport* gathers scholars from Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia, but it also intends to gather researchers from the wider region of South-East Europe. The aim is to build and develop a regional community that will be connected to other researchers in the specialised fields like EAPS (*European Association for the Philosophy of Sport*), IAPS, or in different countries like Czech Republic, France, Germany, Spain and others. In that regard, two conferences were held with scholars from Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, and Bulgaria, strengthened with sports-philosophers from Canada, Czech Republic, France, Japan, United Kingdom, and the United States of America.<sup>15</sup> Keynote speaker at the *1st International Conference Ethics, Bioethics and Sport* (ICEBS) was one of the leading global authorities of sports-philosophy William John Morgan from *University of Southern California* (USA), while during the *2nd ICEBS* keynote speakers were Mike McNamee from *Swansea University* (Wales, UK), leading global sports-bioethicist, and the bard of sports philosophical movement Jim Parry from *Charles University in Prague* (Czech Republic). Next step in igniting the regional scholars will be the organisation of the 48th IAPS Annual Conference in Split, Croatia during September 2020 by the same committee, in collaboration with the *Faculty of Kinesiology of the University of Split* in Split.

### ***Why the Journal Volume on Bioethics and Sport?***

The fair question here is – why starting with bioethics of sport and not the philosophy of sport in more general or ethics of sport in a more particular sense? It seems that there are three answers to that. Firstly, it is the most logical thing to do in the context of strong bioethical movement in Croatia, with many scholars involved in different areas of this wide field. Secondly, Croatian bioethicists base bioethics on the rich and long (Eurocentric) history of philosophy on the one hand, and on the other hand, European bioethics (Muzur, 2017) that is leaning on the work of Fritz Jahr who was, as far as we know, the first one to use the term bioethics (*Bio-Ethik*) already in 1926,<sup>16</sup> and understandings of Van Rensselaer Potter.<sup>17</sup> Finally, and most importantly, it seems that bioethical issues in sport are central in recent sports-philosophical investigations, not just challenging our understandings about sport, but putting in question the sport *per se*. The recent cases of doping scandals in Russia, gender case of Caster Semenya, or the huge debate about genetics and sport are just underlining the point.

This volume of journal *Synthesis Philosophica* gathered the papers presented at the *1st International Conference Ethics, Bioethics and Sport*, held in Zagreb and Varaždin, Croatia on 23rd and 24th of April 2018. The basic intention was to shed some light on the most prominent bioethical issues in the modern sport, introduce a broad understanding of its thematic spectre with *bios* or *life* as the most distinctive feature, and instigate scholars in the specific interdisciplinary dialogue and research.

Thus, in this volume, 11 scholars in 9 papers are dealing with several most interesting and current problems of contemporary sports, trying to seize a part of the larger sports-bioethical scope. Specifically, the volume is going from more theoretical issues, such as the definitions of sport and its normative status (Morgan) and Kant's ethics (Kreft), towards concrete and practical bio-ethical topics in sport like the issue of women participation in sports (Maskalan), neuroethics (Erhardt) and genetics (Petranović, Erhardt, Škerbić, Jermen, Korać), mountaineering (Eterović), ethical issues

of health and wellbeing of young elite athletes (Zurc), and strategic fouling (Imbrišević), while it ends with the consideration of the place of bioethics of sport in a larger frame of the philosophy of sport (Škerbić).

**Matija Mato Škerbić**

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M. M. Škerbić (ed.), *1st International Conference Ethics, Bioethics and Sport*; Matija Mato Škerbić (ed.), *2nd International Conference Ethics, Bioethics and Sport*, Croatian Bioethics Society, Zagreb 2019.

16

Rolf Löther, »Evolution der Biosphäre und Ethik«, in: Eve-Marie Engels, Thomas Juncker, Michael Weingarten (eds.), *Ethik der*

*Biowissenschaften: Geschichte und Theorie – Beiträge zur 6. Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Theorie der Biologie (DGGTB) in Tübingen 1997*, Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, Berlin 1997.

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Van Rensselaer Potter, *Bioethics: Bridge to the Future*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs 1971.