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## **ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF SPORT by M. McNamee and W. J. Morgan (eds.)<sup>1</sup>**

After more than forty years of organised and institutionalised philosophy of sport, the establishment of *Philosophic Society for the Study of Sport* (PSSS) in 1972 (today International Association for the Philosophy of Sport – IAPS), and several pioneering symposiums the same year (Munich, Brockport New York, Ontario, and again New York), the discipline deserved its first broad overview edition. Mike McNamee and Bill Morgan, two of the most prominent, distinguished and influential scholars in the field, carriers and promoters of the discipline and its academic strivings, not only in Great Britain (McNamee) and North America (Morgan), but in global terms as well, are the most obvious and in fact unerring choice for being an editors of this edition. I assume that every scholar dealing with sportphilosophy has welcomed this unique edition with acclamation. It is a requisite introspection of the discipline, seeming to have a crucial role in the further development of the discipline for several reasons.

Firstly, it acknowledges research areas which connect sports philosophy with the history of philosophy *per se*, at the same time recognising historical authorities such as Aristotle, Descartes, Kant and Heidegger. Secondly, it gathers many important scholars within the discipline and appoints to the relevant and indispensable literature in the specific branches and thematic fields of philosophy of sport. Finally, it establishes clear contours and division of the discipline, pointing out the significant topics and discussions. In that way, the book is the most solid stronghold, either in entering into the discipline and getting the basic information and orientation or in opening up the discipline for future development.

The content of the book is divided into three large sections with the historical introduction at the beginning: 1) “Philosophical approaches to

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<sup>1</sup> First publication of review: *Synthesis philosophica* 47, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2019), pp. 484-486. Reprinted here by permission and courtesy of the author and the Editorial Board of the journal *Synthesis philosophica*.

the conceptualization of sport” and 2) “Philosophical theories and sport” are bringing sport into the domain of different specific philosophical disciplines like ethics, epistemology and philosophy of mind, while 3) “Key issues and themes in the philosophy of sport” are putting the light on different vital problems in modern sport.

In the first part, four “approaches or strategies for developing a theory of sport” (22) or “normative theories” of sport (35) are considered. More precisely, conceptions of formalism (S. Kretchmar), internalism (B. Simon), conventionalism (B. Morgan), and “institutional theory of sport” (McFee).

In the second part, thirteen prominent scholars are revealing different ways that general philosophical tradition is and can be related to sports. On the one hand, sport was considered from the perspectives of philosophical disciplines like aesthetics (Edgar), bioethics (Camporesi), epistemology (Borge), eastern philosophy (Ilundáin-Agurruza and Hata), ethics (McNamee), philosophy of mind (Davis), religion and theology (Twietmeyer), philosophy of law (Russell), and metaphysics (Mumford). On the other hand, the sport was related to various philosophical traditions and theories such as existential philosophy (Aggerholm), philosophical feminism (Howe), phenomenology (Martínková), pragmatism (Kaag), and it was confronted with radical critical theories (Kreft).

In the third part, ‘key’ issues and topics in sport were presented, overviewed and debated. Topics of competition (Gaffney), disability and Paralympics (Edwards and McNamee), doping and anti-doping (Murray), fair play (Loland), genetics and athletic enhancements (Brown), Olympism (Reid), coaching (Fry), spectatorship (Jones), commercialization (Walsh), and technology (R. B. and V. Møller) raise significant interest and challenge, occupying the attention of large amount of sport-philosophers for decades. Structure of the book is clear, precise and transparent, while contours are made plausibly and logically. It starts with the historical overview, followed by the chapter with the considerations of the dominant conceptions and understandings of sport, and the chapter with the rich theoretical presentation of the most important branches of sport-philosophy, while it ends with the chapter providing the discussion about the problems that caught most of the attention of sport philosophers, perceived as the most important. The authors are notable scholars that made numerous contributions to the discipline and are a competent and relevant choice for the field, topic or theory they present.

However, besides deserved praising, there is a place for a few critical notes as well. In general, it seems to me that the problem with such editions is threefold: firstly, the problem of omission of authors that one might find inevitable; secondly, issue of homogeneity because of the divers spectre of topics brought together; and finally, a task of achieving the proper balance between different discourses and argumentations of many authors. While the second and third is almost impossible to avoid to a certain degree, I will focus on the first and *bona fide* point out what is missing or could be added in new editions.

A separate chapter dedicated to the fundamental problem of the definition(s) of sport seems to be missing in the edition, with the special attention to the work of B. H. Suits in that regard. Mumford said something about it in the chapter on ‘metaphysics and sport’, but not nearly enough. With his definitions and understandings of game, play and sport, Suits has deeply influenced the discipline. It seems to me that the whole philosophy of sport is to a certain extent ‘suitsan’, built or leaning on his work, regardless if one supports his positions or disagrees with him, and does not discern his importance or relevance.

Additionally, we also need a clear answer from the editors to the second fundamental question – what is the philosophy of sport as a discipline and where is its place in a larger scheme. Even though the book per se is the answer to that, I believe that the question deserves an explicit and precise answer. This could be easily done in the editor’s foreword, which is surprisingly missing. Such an introductory article would be very helpful, but not as a necessary ‘glue’ (Stoll, 2016) between the articles and chapters, rather to point out the contours and explanations about the understandings of what is the philosophy of sport and why such divisions were used.

‘Historical introduction in the philosophy of sport’ I find very helpful. Moreover, it seems to be *condicio sine qua non* for entering the sports-philosophy realm. Every scholar should be able to understand and value the roots and foundations of the discipline, as well as its tradition and development, to be able to participate and contribute properly. In addition, every discipline should investigate its origins and starting point, detect and underlain crucial footholds, as well as its historical development. However, ‘introduction’ could have been done in a more detailed and consecrate manner, especially regarding the events in 1972. After all, to borrow from Morgan, philosophy of sport is its own history. Thus, this shouldn’t be (just) the introduction, but the first part of a book dealing with the origins and history of the discipline.

Furthermore, despite the short overview in the 'historical introduction' on establishing of the philosophy of sport 'in the rest of the world', a relevant inspection of the literature in 'other languages' would be expected as well. There is a large amount of none-English bibliographical efforts in sports-philosophy published around the globe that should be considered and included in the literature and future editions.

Finally, a glossary of the most important terms would be of big help, especially for new readers and their first contact *with* and the introduction *to* the philosophy of sport. It seems to me that a separate book chapter in encyclopedia/textbook manner providing precise, objective and general definition, description or understanding, including different dominant views, would make the book even more approachable and conceivable.

It seems to me that *Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Sport* will have a central role in teaching sport-philosophy, even though it is not a textbook, but far more than that – a compulsory piece of literature, essential reading and a primary source in teaching and understanding philosophy of sport.

We should thank the editors for the enormous and successful job they have done for all of the involved in the philosophy of sport. Their superb conversance in and deep knowledge *of* the field enabled them to come up with precise and plausible divisions and contours, as well as a careful and accurate selection of the key issues of the discipline. That, combined with their reputation and authority, resulted in bringing together an impressive amount of the most prominent scholars and leading figures of the different areas within the discipline. Through this comprehensive compendium, they provided the whole community and interested public with the basic information *about* and orientation *in* the discipline. Moreover, they gave us a strong and plausible foothold, as well as the starting point for almost every future philosophical discussion *in* and *of* (contemporary) sport.

I will conclude with acknowledging that *Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Sport* is the capital edition in the field of philosophy of sport and it provides deep foundations and strongholds for future development. It will become (if it isn't already) one of the most referential points and the most visible landmarks in the history of discipline.