

The Essence of Sport and Tourism—Commonplace and Philosophical Interpretation

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The paper is aimed at presentation of the two basic ways of human cognition, which have been used for ages to get to the essence of the human phenomenon of sport and tourism. The first of them is connected mainly with the commonplace standpoint on sport, which is considerably more popular and known by modern people than the second—the philosophical one. The latter is usually used as a point of departure for objective, methodical, and purposeful attempts at getting to the very essence of sport through systematic research, various ideological disputes, various publications, etc. Hence the basic aim of the paper is an attempt at answering the question: *which of the abovementioned ways—if any—leads to the final explanation of the essence of sport and tourism?* It requires however further philosophical research, further comparative studies, detailed systematic analyses, etc., and the presented paper is only an initial contribution to them.

Keywords: sport, tourism, philosophy essence, man

Introduction

This article is based on my personal sports experience.

Thanks to practicing various sports disciplines, especially rugby, I won the title of team champion and twice the title of vice-champion of Poland in junior rugby at the age of 17, 18, and 19.

Practicing high-performance sport in youth and continuing amateur sport in practice and theory to this day, it allowed me, throughout my entire life (61 years), to never be seriously ill, not suffer any tragic accident, not break a single bone, not be operated on or hospitalized in a hospital, etc. A sporty lifestyle allows me to eat normally, without a special diet, lose weight constantly or support the body with advertised drugs, vitamins, probiotics, prebiotics, or other stimulants.

Of course, the state of our health depends not only on whether or not we play sports. It depends to a large extent on our genetic conditions of an individual organism, the natural immunity of the immune system and, perhaps most importantly, a person's happy fate.

However, even with a greater or lesser disability of our body or adversities, without an active lifestyle, healthy eating, taking fresh air, etc., we can neither enjoy the good state of our physical and mental health, nor be properly satisfied with a happy course of our life, for example, winning the Polish team champion veterans rugby at the age of around 60 (exactly in May 2016).

It is for these very brief reasons that this article was created.

The Essence of Sport

Sport has been one of the most important phenomena in human history for a long time (Mylik, 2014). Its phenomenal career probably began with coming into being of the first human¹ (Bazyłow, 1981; Lipoński, 2012; Bednarski & Całka, 1987; Michalik, 1993; Wroczyński, 1985). Hence, it seems to be as old as the homo sapiens themselves, whose history also includes the history of their sports achievements to date. So as soon as man appeared in this world, people naturally began to satisfy their natural life needs, also in the field known today as sports.² Sport has therefore developed with the progress of human civilization, reaching the present level of civilization and a diverse cultural, social, scientific, etc. dimension, both in practical and theoretical terms. Today, it can gather almost half of the humanity in front of televisions during the Olympic Games or other popular sports competitions.³

It cannot be ruled out that in the near future, with the incredibly fast progress of science, technological development, or expansion of IT, sports competitions will be held, for example, as F1 space ship races on the starry route of the Milky Way, or the first sports Olympics of cosmonauts will take place on some of the planets

¹ Literature referring both to history of very sport as well as to general history is so extensive today that—according to one of contemporary historiographers Ludwik Bazyłow (1915-1985)—*no selective moves help anymore, it is not known at all*. Bazyłow L., (1981) *Historia powszechna 1789-1918, Książka i Wiedza*, Warszawa, p. 975. Hence compendious literature on that subject, because of practical and research-related reasons, can and should be generally divided into so-called old literature and new literature. In Poland, for example, the newest study on the history of sport is Wojciech Lipoński's (2012) monumental *Historia sportu/History of sport*, (1987), PWN, Warszawa, p. 768. Collective review works, like *Mala encyklopedia sportu/Small Encyclopedia of Sport*, (1987), vol. 1-2, Wydawnictwo Sport i Turystyka, Warszawa or *Kronika sportu/Sport Chronicle*, Wydawnictwo Kronika, Warszawa 1993, are also recommended. Cf. also other kinds of Polish authors' works—as, say, Ryszarda Wroczyński's (1985) *Powszechne dzieje wychowania fizycznego i sportu/General History of Physical Education and Sport*, 2nd extended edition, Wydawnictwo Narodowe im. Ossolińskich Wrocław, p. 409. There you can also find bibliographies of specialist literature on the subject.

² Specialist literature from the field of philosophy of sport—similarly as that on history of sport—is so extensive and differentiated that it cannot be unambiguously or systematically interpreted. Hence it remains unknown to a considerable degree. However, regarding practical reasons, it is worth being divided into the Polish and the foreign-language bibliography. Polish-language bibliography is dominated by works of authors connected with Polish Academies of Physical Education. The situation abroad is similar—philosophical classics of sport are usually scholars working in local sports institutes of centres of national and international character. Conclusively—when you look for specialist literature concerning particular sport-related subject firstly you should go through collections of libraries of national and foreign tertiary sports schools.

³ First proved Olympic games took place in 776 B.C. They were played usually every 4 years in Olimpia in ancient Greece. In 393 B.C. it was played there for the last time. Then people have almost forgotten that event for centuries; they were remembered again in Renaissance. First records of ancient Olympics are found in the documents of such Renaissance writers, as Matteo Palmieri (1406-1475), Hans Sachs (1494-1576), and Thomas Kyd (1558-1594). First come back of the Olympic idea was in XIX century, when in 1833 in Sweden first Olympic Society was established. It is that organization, which gave the idea of organizing one year later Scandinavian Games to memorize the ancient Olympic Games. They took place for the first time on 14th July 1834 in Ramlösa in Sweden and two years later they managed to organize second and the last games of that type. Fortunately this Scandinavian idea of raising the ancient Greek Olympics took over a rich Greek philanthropist and veteran of Greek-Turkish wars, Evangelos Zappas (1800-1865). Thanks to his generosity since 1859 in Greece, every 4 years Olympic gymnastics games took place. Finally they managed to play only 3 modern Greek games in 1859, 1870, and 1875. They were—like the Scandinavian ones-national, because only Greeks took part in it. At the same time archaeological works were conducted in Olimpia and it made the world more interested in ancient culture and—as a result—it increased a modern idea of raising the Olympic Games. First person, who demanded organizing the Games international was a Frenchman, Pascal Grousset (1846-1909) in 1888. A modern idea of Olympics found many imitators and fans. A main propagator was a French baron, Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937). It was his initiative to call in June 1894 in Paris an international congress for raising the Olympic Games with 79 delegates and 2,000 guests from different parts of the world. As a result of this convention, a motion was carried on 23rd June 1894 of formal establishment of Olympic Games of modern era. To realize this aim, an International Olympic Committee was set. It consisted at first of 15 representatives of 15 countries, that took part in that historically first session of French congress. First president of the Committee was Greek, Demetrius Vikelas (1835-1908), who convinced the chairmen to run the first Olympic Games in Greece rather than in Paris, France, as it was in the beginning mentioned. That's why the first summer Olympic Games took place in Athens in 1896 and first winter Olympic Games in Chamonix in 1924. Then however, from 1896 to 1925 a president of the International Olympic Committee was baron de Coubertin and it is then, when the world's era of modern Olympic activity started.

of the Solar System.⁴

This is the history of the sport of yesterday, today, and the future in a nutshell. I have written many scientific and popular works about the history of sport⁵ (Mylik, 2010, pp. 75-92; Kosiewicz, 2005, p. 462; Caysa, 1997).

The phenomenon of sport apparently lies in the nature of the human being themselves. Each of us demands a daily dose of sport that is appropriate for us in order to maintain the constant physical condition of our body, achieve the highest physical fitness of its members, maintain a proper psychophysical balance, etc. That is why in ourselves we should find the final explanation for the formation of all human inclinations to active or passive practice of sport in general. In human nature there is also the essence of all kinds of psychophysical conditions which naturally strive to achieve full harmony between the human body and the human spirit. In human nature one must also look for the main causes of the possibility and impossibility of all sports struggles, both with oneself and with others⁶ (Mylik, 2010, pp. 75-92; Caysa, 1997; Kosiewicz, 2005, p. 462). Finally, people have the ability to predict the future effects of their actions concerning the realization of the entire human physical culture, etc.

In connection with the above, fundamental philosophical questions arise, namely: what is the essence of sport? Is there a possibility and sense of sports improvement in us? etc.

A cursory look at this issue might suggest that it is a matter so simple and obvious that you do not need to think about it at all or prove it too much, especially since not from today, but from time immemorial, we have observed an endless process of development of the phenomenon of human sport. With all this, there is no indication of any kind of its decline, but rather the opposite—it has been experiencing a period of real prosperity for at least the last two centuries, which seems to be the best answer to the above questions, possible doubts, or suggestions that have appeared in this respect.

However, again, the matter is not as simple and obvious as it may seem on the surface. It is about basic reasons (real foundations) and ultimate possibilities (appropriate limits) for the improvement of the human body and spirit, i.e. finding the right key (pattern) to the gates of the entire human physical culture.

Sports can be viewed from all sorts of points of view that provide an infinite amount of relevant sports information. Hence, sport can be viewed generally from the philosophical and the non-philosophical point of view.

From the non-philosophical point of view the phenomenon of sport is studied by all non-philosophical

⁴ Enormous professional literature came into being which doesn't seem to have end, when we take into account only new works of universal history, politics, economics, literature, art, science etc., that came into existence. Doubtfulness arises if it is possible to fully describe history of transformation of human civilization in 19th century.

⁵ More exhaustive discussion of the topic can be found in M. Mylik's paper *Historiozoficzne aspekty powstania i rozwoju fenomenu sportu i turystyki / Historiographical Aspects of Origin and Development of the Phenomenon of Sport and Tourism*, published in the collective work *Nauki społeczne wobec sportu współczesnego / Social Sciences—Attitude towards Contemporary Sport*, scientific eds.: Jerzy Kosiewicz, Paweł Bany, Monika Piątkowska, Jolanta Żyśko, (2010) Wydawnictwo BK Warszawa, pp. 75-92. Cf. also Volker Caysa, (1997) *Sportphilosophie*, Leipzig; Jerzy Kosiewicz, (2005), *Filozoficzne aspekty kultury fizycznej i sportu / Philosophical Aspects of Physical Culture and Sport*, Wydawnictwo BK, Warszawa, p. 462. Ibid. cross-sectional bibliographies of specialist literature on the subject.

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sciences, i.e. natural, social, artistic ones, etc. They all show important information about sport from the point of view of the formal subject of their research. The results of their research (of non-philosophical sciences) are sometimes very fruitful and necessary, but they are always limited to their individual subject of formal research. From this methodological point of view, they cannot encompass the whole human in their sporting essence (Mylik, 1997, p. 240).

Only philosophy, which comprehends the human being in the complex way, is able to present the essence of human sports development—both from the bodily and the spiritual side. The psychophysical development of the human being, also in the field of sports, allows individual philosophical disciplines to relate to the human phenomenon of sport, since sport in its essence is a harmonious development of human sports struggle with oneself and with others in order to meet all natural human needs in the form of systematic movement, natural biological growth, shaping the beauty of the body and spirit, protection of physical and mental health, traveling, etc.

Due to the fact that each of us is different, there is a different essence of sport in each of us related to our individual psychophysical nature, unique cognitive nature, different sense of beauty, various moral and social values, etc.

Because every person is different, each of us needs an individual sports program and an individual, personal trainer to complete it. The best coach for each of us is ourselves, because everyone knows themselves best. However, as a result of human defects, an individual, personal trainer is often needed in order to realize all human sports possibilities, the talents which each of us has due to our individual physical, mental, social, cultural and other conditions.

The Essence of Tourism

The same applies to the philosophical essence of tourism, which was also one of the most important phenomena of human life. The spectacular career of tourism probably began with coming into existence of the first human being. Hence, it seems to be as old as sport itself, whose history includes also the history of all its tourist achievements to date, known today as the field or culture of tourism (Mylik, 2014).

Thus, tourism has developed in various undiscovered ways under the influence of many centuries of civilization progress of humankind, while the latter has been reaching its current level of civilization, a diverse cultural dimension, a multi-dimensional social aspect, a multi-subject scientific dimension, etc.

Hence, tourism was, is and, hopefully, will continue to be something extremely important in the lives of each of us, since it can mobilize our natural predispositions to set new tourist routes on land, in ocean depths, or in the skies for ourselves and for others. It inspires man to create the most varied forms of human traveling in terms of place, time, and space.

As a result, tourism makes not only individual human beings but even masses of people gathering in crowds move both over the Earth's crust and in space.

It is not excluded that, with the incredibly fast progress of science, technological development, or expansion of IT, in the near future tourism may develop not only on Earth but also in the entire universe.

This is briefly the history of the tourism field of yesterday, today, and the future. There are many scientific

works on this subject and even more popular science works in the specialist literature on this topic.⁷

Thus, the phenomenon of tourism, like the phenomenon of sport, is in the human nature as such. The nature of each of us usually demands an appropriate dose of tourism, which is conceived as a specific form of not only physical effort, but also some kind of mental rest. As the human physical body requires a daily dose of physical effort, our tourist nature also wants an appropriate dose of tourist rest in order to harmoniously maintain psychophysical health, raise intellectual abilities, designate new forms of natural beauty, maintain the moral standards we set for ourselves, religious values, ideological slogans, etc.

That is why we should find the ultimate explanation of the natural foundations and purpose of the phenomenon of tourism. It is also in human nature to look for the essence, development, and purpose of all our inclinations to actively or passively practice individual and collective tourism. Finally, human nature includes the essence of our tourist nature in terms of the drive to travel around the world, the irresistible desire to explore everything, dream all tourist dreams, etc.

Thanks to the tourist nature understood in this way, we also gain a certain kind of harmony between the body and the human spirit. Traveler nature is also the main cause of possibility or impossibility of tourism, that is, of all our personal and social tourist struggles, both with ourselves and with others. Finally, it is in our tourist nature that we have the ability to predict most of the effects of our actions concerning the realization of the entire human tourism culture throughout all (past and future) ages of humanity.

In connection with the above, fundamental philosophical questions arise, namely: *what is the essence of tourism? Does a possibility and sense of tourism exist in ourselves on the individual and social level?* etc.

A cursory look at the above questions might suggest that this is an obvious matter that needs no consideration or proof at all—the more so that not from today but since time immemorial we have observed the endless process of development of the phenomenon of human movement around the world. Moreover, nothing indicates any decline in tourism, at most its inhibition as a result of wars, natural disasters, or plagues.

Historical experience shows that the opposite is true. Namely, tourism has been going through a period of real prosperity for at least the last two centuries, which seems to be the best answer to the above questions, possible doubts, or any problems appearing in the specialist literature on this topic.

However, again, the matter is not as simple and obvious as it may seem on the surface. It is about the fundamental reasons (real foundations) and the ultimate possibilities (appropriate limits) for tourism improvement, i.e. finding the right key (pattern) to the gates of the entire human tourist civilization.

Hence, tourism can be viewed from various points of view, which usually provide an infinite amount of significant information about it. As a result, the phenomenon of tourism can be considered, generally speaking, from the philosophical and non-philosophical point of view.

From the non-philosophical point of view, almost all non-philosophical sciences can study tourism. They

⁷ The literature on the philosophy of sport and tourism is so vast and varied in the sports scientific world that it is impossible to elaborate on it or systematically describe it. Therefore, it remains largely unknown. However, for practical reasons, it should be generally divided into Polish and foreign-language bibliography. For example specialist literature from the field of philosophy of sport—similarly as that on history of sport—is so extensive and differentiated that it cannot be unambiguously or systematically interpreted. Hence it remains unknown to a considerable degree. However, regarding practical reasons, it is worth being divided into the Polish and the foreign-language bibliography. Polish-language bibliography is dominated by works of authors connected with Polish Academies of Physical Education. The situation abroad is similar—philosophical classics of sport are usually scholars working in local sports institutes of centres of national and international character. Conclusively—when you look for specialist literature concerning particular sport-related subject firstly you should go through collections of libraries of national and foreign tertiary sports schools.

all reveal countless relevant pieces of information about tourism from the point of view of their own formal subjects, methods, and goals of their research. The results of their research (of non-philosophical sciences) are usually relevant and necessary, but they are always limited to their individual formal subjects, methods, and purpose of research. Therefore, they cannot cover, for example, the whole person in his/her essential (philosophical) tourist nature, but only in certain (accidental) methodological aspects of their tourism research.

On the other hand, philosophy, essentially describing the whole human being, is able to provide the essence of the tourist development of both an individual and entire human societies. Philosophy does this regarding both the bodily and the spiritual aspect of every human nature. Human psychophysical development, which also belongs to the field of tourism, allows particular philosophical disciplines to relate in a significant way to the human phenomenon of travelling.

It comes from the fact that human tourism in its essence is harmonious development of human beings struggling in this field with themselves and with other people. They do it in order to meet all their natural tourist needs in terms of systematic movement, biological growth, shaping beauty of the body and the spirit, protection of physical and mental health, freedom to travel in time, place or circumstances, etc.

However, due to the fact that each of us is different, each of us has their individual, unique, and personal essence of tourism, which is related to our individual psychophysical nature, unique cognitive nature, specific axiology of values, specific aesthetic sense, specific attitude to society, economy, politics, religion, etc.⁸

Because everyone is different, each of us needs an individual tourist program. To implement it, they need an individual tourist guide (sometimes even an entire travel agency). However—ultimately—the best tourist guide (travel agency) is each of us themselves. We know ourselves best and therefore we know what is the best for us and what we want to realize in our tourist nature.

However, as a result of human imperfection, often in the form of a lack of time, a lack of adequate experience or insufficient knowledge of the tourist industry, an individual, personal tourist guide usually becomes necessary to realize all human travel possibilities, natural talents which each of us has in ourselves due to our own individual determinants of psychophysical, social, cultural, religious, or other character.

Thus, tourism and sport have a lot in common, because they come from the same human inside. They are based on the same rational, volitional, and emotional powers of every human being. They are driven by the same

⁸ It is commonly believed, that the oldest religious pilgrimages are also first kind of trips for tourism, which was done in biblical times by the chosen of Jahwe, done also in the times of Mahomet (570-632), when believers of Allah started to go on pilgrimages to Mekka and Medina, continued to our times by the religious Buddhists, who go to many Buddhist temples, ascetic Hindus, who wash themselves in holy waters of the Ganges river or Christians missionaries, who preach a Gospel to people on the whole world. Trips for tourism also take place in the ancient Egypt, where people travel to take part in the religious and public holidays. At that occasion those “tourists” could see not only nature by the Nile River, but also sightsee—see the whole Egyptian civilization, especially the pyramids. Religious aims were a dominant in the trips taken by the ancient Greeks, who we usually go to well-known even today oracles in Delphos or to the temple of Zeus in Olimpia. In ancient Hellada, contrary to an ancient Rome, roads weren’t built, so the most of those “trips for tourism” of Greeks of that time was by the sea. In the Empire instead a huge net of roads and inns was created and safety of the travelers was set by the law regulations. Romans were also travelling for health and relax to such resorts of the empire as Baden, Baile, Herculane, Vichy, Baiae, Neapol, Capri, Bath, Puteoli, and others. In Middle Ages, there was a sudden stagnation in tourism. Mai travels had a pilgrimage character. Christians of that time usually travelled to Rome, to the Holy Land, or to the grave of St Jacob the apostle to Santiago de Compostela. Ancient Arabs instead were taking such trips to trade. We may also say about “science tourism” in case of young European students of different nationality, who, like Poles, Czechs, or Germans, were going to study in foreign medieval universities in Italy or France. We cannot also forget an influence on medieval tourism of expeditions of travelers like Marco Polo (1254-1324), who went up to China, Francesco Petrarka (1304-1374), known for his travels across Provencal Alps, or Muhammad ibn Battuta (1304-1377), travelling around Asia, Africa, and Europe. Since XIV and XV century starts era of great geographical discoveries, which creates main understanding of the world’s touristic movement.

needs to satisfy our cognitive powers and vital forces, to realize life plans, to fulfill dreams, to chase happiness, etc.

On the other hand, sport and tourism are different regarding the individual human nature of each of us, because each of us has a unique human personality, which has its own personal reasons, different ways of acting or methods of achieving its own sports and tourist goals. These goals are determined not only by the unique nature of each of us, but also by a different human nature, uniquely realizing its own life needs, creative plans, travel dreams, etc.

In short, everyone is a unique athlete and a unique tourist in one person.

In such a form, both sport and tourism become not only a natural life need of every human being but also a real art of being realizing one's own individual life plans, personal artistic passions or ways of creating the beauty of the fate of every person's life and, consequently, of entire societies and all human nations throughout all the ages of humankind.

Summing up, you can only wish yourself and others the best possible life realization of both human natures both in sport and in tourism.

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