

Nietzsche and the European Sport Model - Managing the Passion for Competition

Gustavo Silva, Pires, Portugal, gustavopires@netcabo.pt

Carlos Colaço, Colaço, Portugal

José Pinto, Correia, Portugal

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Abstract

Introduction

The idea of "agôn" conceptualized as fair and noble competition has a central place in the Friedrich Nietzsche (1884-1900) thinking. He wrote about the nature of human existence, beginning with the struggle for survival, and envisioning the building of success and excellence, which the Greeks named "arête".

In the present paper we will undertake a close reading of Nietzsche work, exploring the nature of strife, how this strife channels itself into cultural forms, and how these forms according with Nietzsche's thinking should organize a new paradigm for the "European Sport Model (ESM)".

Methods

Nietzsche started the development of a research method which he named "genealogical". Its application was done later by means of what the philosopher called "transvaluation of all values in the sense of humankind overcoming", and conceptualized by the binomial good/evil.

From a hermeneutic point of view an action can only assume a corresponding meaning if it is considered in relation to other meaningful events (Gadamer, 2005).

These interrelated meanings are analogous to language, since we understand the meaning of a word in contrast to other words within a field of contrasts. The significance of the word "sport", in a "genealogical" point of view, is much richer than the simple designation of the corresponding activity. Insofar, the "ESM" to have any precise and adequate meaning must comprehend the field of the practice of sport from its interior, consisting rather in an understanding of the phenomena than in an explanation of it.

In our study we develop a hermeneutic approach considering Nietzsche's philosophy about struggle and the literature concerning the "ESM" presented namely by the "Independent European Sport Review" (2006) and the "white Paper on Sport".

Development

The characteristics of the ESM are: (1) corporative, (2) pyramidal, (3) pedagogical, (4) nationalist, (5) standardized, (6) of open competitive leagues, and (7) integrating a vertical structure of social values. We analyse the meanings of the "ESM" according with the following items: (1) Natural Law, (2), Super-Man, (3) Power Need, (4) Dionysius vs Apollo, (5) Eris, (6) Socrates Demonian, (7) Ostracism Principle, (8) Eternal Return, (9) Good and Evil, (10) State, (11) Democracy, (12) Europe.

(3.1) Concerning "natural law" in "Competition on Homer", Nietzsche establishes from the beginning a relation between nature and culture.

(3.2) In what concerns the "super-man" the "ESM" stresses the moral of the weak that denies life.

(3.3) Nietzsche considers the "power need" as an esthetical principle that determinates the creative force for new values.

(3.4) Relating "Dionysius Vs Apollo", the organization of sports practices in the "ESM", which is translated in standardization of rules and procedures in modern sports, has provoked a rupture between manual work and intellectual work, between the poet and the philosopher, in synthesis between the "Eros" and the "Logos".

(3.5) With the "Good Eris" from Hesiod, Nietzsche refuses the abyssms of hate and "ius belis" that by their arrogance of triumph gave free rule to the manifestation of the pre-Homeric violence.

(3.6) In "Socrates Demonian", Nietzsche asserts that the there defined Socrates concept of rationality subverts the system, turning the instincts critical and the conscience creative.

(3.7) With the "Ostracism Principle" that establishes natural limits to the competition are created on the contrary the necessary conditions to have competition without those limits.

(3.8) The "Eternal Return" defines that the world passes indefinitely by the alternatives of creation and destruction, happiness and suffering, good and evil.

(3.9) The opposition "Good/Evil" in Nietzsche develops the need to surpass the "slave's moral".

(3.10) The "State" in Nietzsche characterizes the decadence, as cause and in the measure that It slaves the thinking.

(3.11) Positioning Nietzsche in accordance with democracy is a "moral imperative", after more than an hundred years of wrong interpretations and malevolence.

(3.12) Relating to "Europe", Nietzsche leaves us in "The Gay Science" the conditions through which Europe will turn itself more artistic.

Conclusion

Crossing over the Nietzschean 12 categories with the seven characteristics of ESM we came to the conclusion that the system evolution points hypothetically to a configuration which has the following attributes: (1) under a market economy, (2)

network-based, (3) of entertainment industry, (4) "clubist-centered", (5) of variable geometry, and (6) integrating a vertical structure of economic values.

As a consequence, the entire "ESM dynamics", from sports education to entertainment industry, has to idealise the competition model according to the post-modern society that Nietzsche is nowadays fairly considered a precursor.

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