

## Sports Education Facing Globalizing Capitalism

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The present historical shift and the social and cultural changes that are carving out their way to the future do not today enhance theological tension, intellectual vitality, or revolutionary consciousness, nor practices of resistance of the kind that characterized the class struggle of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. The constitution of the MacWorld that is the arena of "the risk society"<sup>1</sup> is taking place in face of its victims, who are at the same time also its strongest and most devoted agents. The change in the function, representation, and consumption of sport, sports education, and physical education faces little, if any, resistance. This should not be understood as a failure of physical educators or of the active and passive participants in sports in the present globalizing process. Consumers and producers alike, whether armchair TV supporters of Real Madrid football club, media "experts", or interviewers, do not as a rule resist or offer any critical alternative. By and large they enthusiastically support, cooperate with, and even idolizing this development. What we face here is the instrumentalization of sports education and the reification of sport as part of human life deteriorating into its natural, mythical, and objective dimensions; human life becomes part of a mechanical-"natural" continuum. A moment of the Same. The human subject betrays its otherness and is about to be swallowed by thingness. This historical triumphant cannibalism of the object consuming the subject is paralleled and enhanced by rapid erosion in the western master signifiers and ideals of control and order, of certainty and security, which were so central to modernity. A

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<sup>1</sup> Ulrich Beck, *World Risk Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999.

new world order, a new economy, and a new kind of capitalism are being formed,<sup>2</sup> and the apparatuses of representation and cultural production are, accordingly, offering a new kind of sport and a new kind of sports education.

According to the supporters of globalizing capitalism, these developments open new horizons for creativity, multiculturalism, and tolerance.<sup>3</sup> The present function of sport and sports education within this framework is assumed to be part of the opening of new possibilities for creative life for the individual and part of supplying more pleasure to the public through free, individual choice. This reality is presented as part of a development of which another dimension is the demolition of traditional hierarchies, objectivist yardsticks, authorities, exclusivity in representation of "the truth" and of education in line of the hegemonic class, ideology, ruler, or tradition.

According to the supporters of the ideology of globalizing capitalism these new developments represent the establishment of a new world order. This new world order offers us a new kind of cosmopolitanism, a new international morality,<sup>4</sup> a new kind of world memory,<sup>5</sup> of post-national communitarianism that is founded on global risk<sup>6</sup> and global pleasures in the form of activities and symbolic participation that enhance consumption of cultural products and competitive, healthy self-realization. In a way, life becomes a totalistic realization of "sport"; sport, in this particular realization, becomes a symbolic manifestation of the truth of the present historical moment.

More than offering a new agenda I try to locate the horizons of the present perversion of sport. This text is not neutral. It does not make do with critical reconstruction. It explicitly strives to identify potential possibilities for transcending

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<sup>2</sup> Ulrich Beck, *World Risk Society*, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ulrich Beck, *What is Globalization?* Cambridge: Polity Press 2003, p. 86.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Levy and Natan Szneider, "The institutionalization of cosmopolitan morality", *Journal of Human Rights*, 3: 2 (2004), pp. 143-157.

<sup>6</sup> Beck, *ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

the present borders of the cultural politics of “sport”. In this sense it is of vital importance for us to differentiate between the mission of sport – and that which is referred to by this telos, and the reality of “sport”, its practices, production, representation, and consumption in present-day globalizing capitalism. Globalizing capitalism and its culture industry are the actual arena where both theories and practices of “physical education” take place, parallel to the education for and consumption of competitive sport, as well as the philosophical frameworks which make possible the conceptual field for these theories and practices.

In this sense philosophy of sports education will be presented here in its historical-social-cultural contexts, to enable us to reach the gates of the fundamental problematic of the philosophy of sports education in its wider sense. If we follow this road we may perhaps come closer to the possibility of challenging philosophy of sports education’s abandonment of its mission. Such an Odyssey cannot avoid storming the closed gate on which these questions are inscribed: What is the mission of sport, if at all it has such an aim? What are the manipulations for ensuring the forgetfulness of the essence of the mission of sports education? What are the practices which ensure the trivialization, banalization, and ridiculousness of these questions? And what are the powers, interests, dynamics, and ontological signs which they serve, hide, and unveil?

Even when trying harder and harder, philosophy of sport will not succeed in totally disconnecting the ties between its response to the call of the question of the mission of sports education and the enigma of the aim of human Life in a post-modern era. But does the human have any “aim” at all? And even if human Life has a purpose and meaning – is there any open way to reach it, and even to explicitly articulate it in a public sphere? Is it perhaps the essence of human Life that its mission not be given,

nor offer itself articulated, nor be theoretically accessible? Is it possible that when true to itself it will offer mere silence or its negation? As self-negation and absence, could the meaning of Life also be revealed as an anchor of freedom, calling humans to face bravely indeterminacy, endless openness, and alienation? Is it possible that at the same time it is also an abyss between the regimes of production and consumption of representations of the given facts – and worthy life? From the viewpoint of Diasporic philosophy<sup>7</sup> we can ask: is it possible that a Messianic moment will appear, in which, or, from which, the question of the aim of Life will burst in, or at least the presence of the closing horizons and the forgetfulness of the question of Life's aim and meaning will rise, again, in the form of a young, vital readiness for a call to be ecstatically responded to? Is it possible that at a certain historical moment a renewed human vitality will become a reality in face of questions such as, "Do humans still have a mission, yardsticks, and meaningful imperatives? Is it possible that within a Diasporic perspective the closure of the truths of globalizing capitalism, as manifested in reified sport, will be challenged?" And more specifically: "Is it possible that instead of struggling to reclaim its former place as an important moment in preparing the human's readiness to face the question of her destiny, sport will contribute to a nomadic, Diasporic, existence, that will enhance a more mature humanity?" This question is not disconnected from the possibilities of overcoming normalizing education and opening the gate for counter-education. Here I will try to probe the possibility that it is imperative that the philosophy of sports counter-education become part of this Diasporic transcendence. Modest as our aim in this elaboration might be, it still represents a commitment to worthy life, love, creativity, and solidarity. But in face of globalizing capitalism and its culture industry we should

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<sup>7</sup> Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, *Toward Diasporic Education*, Tel Aviv: Resling, 2004 (in Hebrew).

explicitly ask this: Is there still openness and meaning in post-modern conditions for genuine Diasporic life, for counter-education, and for Love of Life?

Responding to these challenges precedes, yet does not cancel, the questions which attract sports theoreticians who are so busy today meeting the demands of globalizing capitalism and ask – mostly within an instrumentalist orientation, "What are the best ways for improving physical fitness of young and older producers-consumers in technologically highly advanced Western societies?" Sometimes they are attracted even to philosophical questions whose instrumental orientation is less evident. Here they ask: "Why is it important to raise the standards of fitness?" Or "Where should western society concentrate its care and efforts and in light of what principles?" "What is the proper education needed for advancing the decision makers in the field of sport?" Or even "What kind of education is needed to produce a more just and/or rational distribution of efforts and funds in sports, which today confronts the imperatives of globalizing capitalism and the truths of the symbols and passions of the post-modern 'spirit'?" Another important set of questions is of the kind of legitimacy of approval/disapproval of drug-use in sports, or in diverting efforts and capital in favor of sports activities which, while less popular or commercially successful, contain unique manifestations of the sporting spirit. From time to time even fundamental questions for the philosophy of sport, such as "What is fairness in a post-modern era?" Or even "Is there today a sports 'achievement' that is justifiable in itself and for itself, regardless of its rating or of the bottom line in the bank account?" Still, even on the rare occasions when such questions are raised they are disconnected from the eternal questions of the philosophy, meaning and aim of Life, as well as from actual social realities.

To my mind, it is of vital importance to address these challenges in the most concrete manner, but without disconnecting them from the possibilities/limitations of the utopian quest and mission of sports counter-education.

The ridiculing, banalizing, perverting, or abandoning of the central questions of sports education – as is so common in today's philosophy of sport – is not a mere coincidence. It has an economic value and makes an important contribution to collectivism and other forms of de-humanization. This is the synthesis between the central drives of the world of Jihad and the MacWorld.<sup>8</sup> Counter-philosophy of sport should offer not a gate to joining this coalition but a gate to Diasporic life in face of its apparent triumph. This Diasporic alternative does not necessarily search for a theoretical "home-coming", for the constitution of a social earthly Garden of Eden, or for the pleasurable quasi-creative deconstruction of solidarities, values and calls for edifying self-constitution. As a Diasporic human existential, philosophical, and political alternative<sup>9</sup> it does not necessarily retreat into relativism, cynicism, or anti-solidarian de-territorialization of the self. As suggested by the example of sports counter-education, it can also offer new kinds of solidarity, intersubjectivity, responsibility to the body and to the cosmos, and new possibilities for the spirit.

Today it is impossible to seriously challenge the post-modern globalizing condition, unless as part of a general struggle for change in existential, cultural, and political realities. Such a struggle is a utopia. As a utopia it opposes present realms of self-evidence, which form the current existential, conceptual, political, and aesthetic horizons. But, who is the one who is today mighty enough to dispute present rational manifestations of globalizing capitalism, or fight the imperatives of post-modern technological advancement? Nevertheless, I claim, even in the era of “the end of

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<sup>8</sup> Slavoj Zizek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, Tel Aviv: Resling, 2002, p. 158 (in Hebrew).

philosophy”, and even if deconstructed or transformed, these questions are not completely castrated by the system. The struggle for transcendence, I insist, is still possible, even if only in a negative, nomadic, manner – and this should be the great mission of Diasporic-oriented sports counter-education in the post-modern era.

Sports counter-education has today a special challenge, in face of the culture clash between Western and non-Western civilizations, embedded with the divisions imposed by capitalistic globalization (which do not fit the above dichotomy). Capitalistic globalization itself is woven and differentiated by local processes, and their contingent, hybrid and temporary collective and individual realities.

At the same time, for the MacWorld, for the Jihad world, as well as for their coalitions, most of the veiled violences that facilitate and reproduce the post-industrial order of things remain unproblematized. This is so even when it is woven, like in the 2001 UN conference in Durban (South Africa), with religious violence, ethnocentric policies, racial, cultural, and other discriminations and counter-discriminations. These form the “I” and on a certain level the conditions, representations, and threats of "nature" of which the human soul and body are parts. They constitute the human body as a political site, and capitalize the powers of the spirit and the body for further mystification of Life, while hiding ecological threats to the earth, health risks for the human body, and reified human relations as precondition for today's self-perception and re-positioning of men and women who compete for "success", power, pleasure, and recognition. The counter-violence of the Third World's victims, when articulated in queer, feminist, anti-globalizing, post-colonialist, Islamic fundamentalist, and other rhetoric, challenge this order, while being part and parcel of the post-modern condition. Paradoxically, they contribute to the strengthening of unrestrained market-

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<sup>9</sup> Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, *Toward Diasporic Education*, p. 14 .

oriented policies on the one hand, and empower the invisibility of normalizing violences on the other. The sublimation and de-sublimation of the MacWorld and the Jihad world parallels (as Adorno already understood) a perverse pact between the superego and the id at the expense of the reflective "I". The fruits of these violences produce and reproduce the unreflective representations of human "fitness" and adaptability, within the de-humanized consciousness and body. As such they present the true nature of normalizing education and serve ecological, moral, and other threats to the very existence of the human world in a global scale.

In globalizing capitalism these violences ensure the construction of the human as a successful producer/consumer, even as a post-colonialist anti-globalizing, feminist, or "green" activist. It prepares humanity for its supreme sporting realization: "successful" adaptation and eating the fruits of "fitness" in the market as a perfect producer-consumer.<sup>10</sup> It prepares, represents, justifies and offers an ornamentalization of a totalistic arena, which inherits past religious ecstatic experiences and promises quasi-transcendence and a deceiving telos. Fundamentalist religious alternatives will challenge this direction and offer an alternative totalistic "spiritual" dehumanization. Central to the framework of this alternative is overcoming or destroying the body of one's self. Sometimes, as in the case of Iranian Khomeinism, it will accept and integrate the world's sports industry. In other cases, such as the Jewish ultra-orthodox community, any compromise with the secular world is flatly refused. Yet disciplining the body and mind in accordance with the imperatives of normalizing education will always unite the various conflicting fundamentalist alternatives. In Western and non-Western societies, which were completely overwhelmed by the logic of the capitalist production and consumption, traditional sports activity and its symbols where

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<sup>10</sup> Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, *Destroying the Other's Collective Memory*, New York: Peter Lang, 2003, p. 143.

overtaken by this logic; a process of incorporation, which includes physical education and education for competitive sport, and its rational consumption. The relevant theories concerning today's sport are recruited to veil the transformation of sport as sacred work into "sport", and to ensure the furthering reification and virtualization of Love of Life and its immanent freedom. By functioning efficiently on this level they contribute in a most sophisticated manner to the transformation of "sport" into an unproblematic, reified, part of current capitalist culture industry, within which body, nature, and creativity become mere instrument, function, or commodity. The human body and spirit abandon their connections to nature on the one hand, and to the telos of spiritual edification on the other. The virtual reality of the advanced capitalist human conditions offers a victory of the abstract, dehumanized, "home-returning" project over the Diasporic alternative, while presenting a quasi-nomadic "alternative" in which post-modern Life, in all its spheres, becomes a totalistic realization of the idea of sport.

The Olympic Games, which, according to tradition, began in 776 BC, testifies to the presence in the classical Greek world of the essence of the ideal of sport. It is a religious essence in a pre-institutionalized sense. The religious essence of the sports ideal and its transcendental mission were realized also in a formed, symbolic manner, as a formal declaration of the Olympic Games as a practice in honor of the Olympic Zeus. The first of the five days of the Olympic games, as organized in 472 BC, was wholly devoted to sacrificing and other sacred practices. The competitions were meant to call the spirit. They were intended to manifest the human spirit in its directedness to the excellent, to the superb, to the holy. Sport was, for the Greeks, a sacred practice. This is why only after the competitors took their vow and pledged allegiance to the supreme ideals of this human-Olympic event could they participate

in the various competitions, which officially began on the second day. The last of the Olympic days was again devoted to sacrifices, to declaring the winners and crowning them with garlands of olive branches. In the Platonic state, gymnastics and life in light of the ideal of sport are preconditions for the edification of the philosopher-king and for the constitution of the ideal state.

In other words, the essence of sport, prior to its transformation into a commodity, is transcendental. When true to itself, the transcendental dimension of sport is individualistic-oriented while reuniting the human with other humans and with the cosmos in all its richness, diversity, and infinite openness. It can, of course, betray its telos and abandon both its individualistic and cosmic dimensions, while offering a deceiving individualistic agenda (in the form of sports "stars" as a commodity where the "stars" themselves act in their personal life as a fabrication of their public representation). It can, in parallel, also offer a deceiving cosmopolitan ideal in the form of a symbol, a representation, which is a mere sign in the commodity market that has lost its relation to nature and to genuine human interests, potential, and glory.

When true to its essence and telos, sport represents the impetus of Love of Life. As Love of Life it raises the human from lower levels of existence to her supreme goal within the forms of constant self-elevation. This kind of self-elevation is actualized as a self-overcoming that is also a form of self-constitution. Self-overcoming, we should bear in mind, for the Greeks was unimaginable to actualize within the closedness of one's self; it was conceived as determined by responding a heavenly call. This call was conceived as differing substantially from the drives, calls, and reactions of the self: it is a transcendental call, to which the proper response is the human's worthiest practice in a cosmos in which he becomes a citizen in his home. But while it was institutionalized and conceived as potentially important for civil life

within the framework of the hegemonic order, sport, like philosophy, carried also a Diasporic potential. It was a potential estrangement from the world of facts. It contained the potential for a refusal to see contingent order and the limits of the body and spirits as having the last word: it incubated the imperative of overcoming the governing facts and the limits of the body and spirits in the name of a transcendental call, a potential which contained an immanent Utopian message and an alternative to the telos set by hegemonic normalized education.

Facing this ultimate-potentially Diasporic and autonomous essence of sport, Christianity, which conquered Latin Europe during the early middle ages, had to overcome, restrain, or transform the Love of Life, non-religious happiness, and the practice and ideal of sport. Naturally, therefore, Emperor Theodosius I cancelled the Olympic Games in AD 393.

*Imitatio Christi* and the ideal of being a genuine diviner were supposed to dictate the only legitimate Diasporic way to worthy life and transcendence. It refused to tolerate any educational competition. However, all the prohibitions, restrictions and control did not succeed in completely blocking the manifestations of the essence of the ideal of sport, even if only in restricted, partial, or sublimated ways: it survived even when the human body and earthly life in general were conceived as a jail for the God-loving spirit or as an invitation to hubris, or to devoting oneself to the lower manifestations of life in this world.

The practices realized in the courts of earls, dukes, and kings, however, opened new gates to aesthetization of knightly ideals and to both physical and sports education, which became legitimate as it was integrated into the Christian tradition. Religious myths and well institutionalized traditions brought it to the level of a convincing illusion of an ethical ideal, a synthesis which in the renaissance reached its

peak. For example, Juan Louis Vivas, a Spanish scholar who was a distinguished teacher in many of western cultural centers in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, understood that his quest for a Christian peace and for spiritual elevation must find a proper legitimate space for sport too. It was not to be solely preparatory practice for military achievements, but an important stage in the spiritual elevation of the human. He even constructed a philosophical-ethical framework for private practice.<sup>11</sup> It is important, however, not to confuse the Church's willingness to accept some sports practices, as part of a process of their being swallowed by Christian-oriented politics, with its principal rejection of the essence of the ideal of sport. The Church was not mistaken in identifying a dangerous competition here for the soul and telos of the spirit of the human being.

According to Saint Augustine one should sharply distinguish between the human body, which has not only a living soul but also "a life-giving spirit", and the "animal bodies", which "are not souls".<sup>12</sup> The human being, according to this conception, is essentially a heavenly creature, not because of but in spite of his earth-made body. According to this doctrine "the first man, was 'of the earth, earthly', and he was made as a 'living soul', not a 'life-living spirit'; that condition was reversed for him after he had merited it by obedience".<sup>13</sup> After the Fall the life-giving spirit which raised Christ from the dead ensures also that it "'will bring to life your mortal bodies also, through the indwelling of his Spirit in you.' The body will thus be related to the life-giving spirit as it is now to the living soul".<sup>14</sup> The very possibility of this appearance, living

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<sup>11</sup> Juan Luis Vives, "Linguae latinae exercitatio", in Peter McIntoch, *Fair Play-Ethics in Sport and Education*, London: Heinemann 1979, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, translated by Henry Bettenson, London: Penguin Books, 1984, p. 356.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 536-537.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 537.

in light of the possibility of resurrection, opens the gate to happiness and joy within the horizons of spiritual life, true religious life, which separate humans from other creatures. It is the mission of the Church to guide humans to this dimension of human life; to overcome earthly joy and happiness, pleasure and bodily strivings, which turn the human body and soul to be drawn into the vanity of daily life and its infinite meaninglessness. This is why it was so important for this striving in Christianity to overcome what it conceived as quasi-love and quasi-spirituality, which were considered especially dangerous enemies.

Modernity positioned human subjectivity and the ideal of being a citizen of this world in the center – in secular philosophical and political terms. Accordingly, treatment of the ideal of the sport again changed dramatically. In modernity, sport as an experience of the body, the soul, and the spirit was conceived as containing potential joy, solidarity, and "healthy" love. As such it reflected and contributed to the historical loss of ground by the Church in terms of its spiritual capital and its relevance to daily life, compared with its former hegemony over the interpretation and realization of the worthy way of life towards true love, happiness, and transcendence.

Modernity, however, initiated a dynamic that ultimately challenged its own foundations and telos. On many fronts of the innovations, such as capitalism, in individualistic-oriented humanistic education, criticism, and sports, it deconstructed not only the dogmatic institutionalization of spirit, but exiled Spirit itself. It dissolved not only the possibilities of the kind of transcendence it wanted to overcome: it eliminated the very quest for transcendence and the possibilities for overcoming mere thingness and pleasurable meaninglessness as a human "home". This fate did not spare the transcendental dimension of sport itself; a dimension which was part and parcel of the ideal of sport in the classical era, during the middle ages, and in the

renaissance, preceding its transformation into "sport" and before its gaining popular fame; before arresting the creative and solidaristic potentials of sport as Love of Life and as a unification of improvisation and training, self-constitution and attunement to the richness of the cosmos, of the body and spirit, of the unification of aesthetic form, the roots of natural life strivings, moral imperatives and cultural standards. But even if the birth of "sport" signifies the exile of the edifying idea of sport, its end does not end its existence and does not terminate its immanent self-negation.

The ideal of sport, which is centered in modern sport as an important human involvement, values highly its psychic and even spiritual aspects, and certainly is not content with its physical manifestations. As such it still realizes a quest for transcendence. But in modernity the soul, the *anima*, inherits the former preeminence of the Spirit. The telos of progress which is cherished by modernity is no longer conditioned or sanctioned in or by obedience to the gods or love of God, but rather in seriousness towards the ideal of healthy humanity and the love of human life and its telos in this world. The glory of humanity in this world as its "home" is conceived here as a value and humanity as a reality in light of which sports education in its broader sense is undecided between emphasizing physical fitness in its popular contexts and the devotion to education towards success in competitive sports and its consumption, which fertilizes "stars" as a commodity, displayed by sportsmen, media heroes, businessmen and politicians.

Modernity spreads the ideal of sport with great generosity across all fields of the public arena as a relevant guide for a model-behavior, and its educational functioning is similar to that of the knight and the monk in the middle ages. It was accepted in many abundant ways in modern realities of public life as a relevant manifestation of the good conduct, or *arete*. An expression such as "in this manner be a sport, still

contains the commitment to overcome instrumentalism or egoism and mere purposeness. And as such it retains a relation to high-flying or self-overcoming, which a modern human should realize. "Be a gentleman!" or "Be a sport!" further develops and cherishes its roots in the classic ideal of human elevation as manifested in the Socratic concept of *arete* or Machiavelli's concept of *virtu*. It departs from the Christian ideal of *imitatio Christi* and the chivalrous ideal of total commitment to honor and justice by emphasizing, instead, human solidarity and love of life as a realization of absolute love overcoming the displays of the Pleasure Principle. This historical shift reflects the modern centrality of the anti-Diasporic humanistic-oriented ideal of universal emancipation. This project is anchored in the concept of "the human spirit", as manifested in the Olympic Games. Here people from as many as possible different countries, classes, races, sexes, and cultures ideally (and at times actually) overcome that which divides them and is unique to them, and reestablish, together, the world as an earthly Garden of Eden. This anti-Diasporic concept of human life, creativity, and solidaritarian self-constitution is realized also in the charter of the Olympic Movement.

The first article in this charter states: "Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of the effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles".<sup>15</sup> The second article states: "The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity".<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "The Olympic Charter", [http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en\\_report\\_122.pdf](http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en_report_122.pdf) (3.11.2004, p. 10).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

The common essence as exemplified in the modernistic orientation of sport education stems from the notion that humanity has a "spirit" or manifests a unique "spirit" or "essence". One of its better manifestations is the ideal of sport, along with other displays such as art and science, and sacred rights such as freedom. As one can clearly see in the charter of the Olympic Movement, the philosophical foundation of modern sports education in its broader sense represents the anti-Diasporic nature of Enlightenment. It represents identification with the pre-assumptions of modern science and with a positive Utopia that frames Enlightenment's social philosophy: homocentric-rationalized, Life might and should become a worthy "home" for the humans. It might and it should realize this telos while overcoming the horizons set by tradition and the abyss, dangers, and myths imposed by religious redemptive-Diasporic calls for transcending this world and its pleasures/temptations/pain. Overcoming the monotheistic "home-returning" project was here of vital importance philosophically. This was so in the sense of establishing universal human reason as an alternative to the omnipotence and infinite goodness and wisdom of God; in the sense of constituting an existential alternative to the love of God as a guiding telos for the human in its way of transcending his bodily and earthly needs, aspirations, and limitations; and in the sense of overcoming the monotheistic promise of a redemptive relation between the human's exile in this world of flesh, meaninglessness, loneliness, violence, and suffering, and total, universal, as well as individual salvation. This monotheistic tradition offered a Diasporic perspective that made possible education for a redemptive existence within the framework of the "home-returning" project. By offering the homocentric project Enlightenment was anti-Diasporic and critical in its essence. As such, it offered an alternative, earthly, positive alternative by educating for the humanization of the world and its constitution as a worthy, stable, secured,

beautiful, rational, just "home". It never challenged the philosophical, existential and political assumptions of "home", truth, or the quest for truth and worthy, aesthetic, life.

The anti-Diasporic philosophical assumptions of modern sport as represented by the Olympic Charter represent its Enlightened commitment to the religion of humanity, as manifested in the positivistic religion of the kind of Saint-Simon or Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, and V.I. Lenin, a religion which secularizes and further develops traditional religious myths that Christianity reproduced so successfully until modernity.

As an ideal, sport worked its way even in medieval times. It was accepted after being domesticated and instrumentalized by Christian communities and theologies – as well as other, non-Christian ones. Still, the main trend insisted on emphasizing the dangers immanent in sports education. They did all in their power to expose it as an agent of the body and of the natural life forces, endangering the "home-returning" project that promised salvation via transcendence by overcoming the natural dimensions of Life and Love of Life. Love of God and edification promised an alternative "home" to that promised by the ideal of sport, of science, and of rationalized, worldly pleasures. The religious relations between being exiled in this world and redemption allowed meaningful Life and love that offered happiness and meaning even in face of pain, aporia, and solitude. The monotheistic "home-returning" project was committed to suppress and overcome these anti-Diasporic dimensions of Life, such as those propagated by the sports ideal: human self-love and earthly ideals, such as freedom, creativity, joyous effort, and fairness. Secular ideals, including the ideal of the essence of sport, were rightly conceived by the guardians of Christian dogma or Jewish tradition as a challenge to traditional Godly supremacy and

a threat to the "home-returning" project. Philosophy of sport, from this point of view, constitutes a special kind of negation of the quest for truth and surrendering to true love; and as such, sport is a hindrance to true happiness in humans' realization of their spiritual dimension since it is a specially dangerous form of humans' self-love and domestication in a sinful, spiritless, world.

The sports experience and the earthly joy it offers attain the summit of the human's self-idolization instead of surrendering to the true God. In many respects they are worse even than adultery. The main challenge to the modern ideal of sport, however, did not come from a religious revival. It came from a very different source, and its influence was internalized and realized within sports activity itself. It represented a different source of energy: the quest for domestication of the earth, the body and soul, and even mystery, danger, beauty, and the quest for truth. Establishing home-centric Life as a secularized, earthly, Garden of Eden is very different from the "home-returning" project, which insisted on transcending the body and mind in light of love of God and his imperatives. It is, however, closer to this project than to the negative utopia or the anti-monotheistic, "Gnostic", Diasporic philosophy that overcomes all promises of truth, valid values, moral education, positive creativity and peaceful, comforting, guiding, consensus.

Modern nationalism found rich and diverse ways to secure the surrendering of not only sports activity but even of sports ideals themselves. Here I do not refer mainly to "political influences on the sportive activity and the Olympic movement", as some do.<sup>17</sup> I shall bypass central issues such as the politics of sport – for all their importance – and I restrict myself to the representation of the essence of the ideals of

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<sup>17</sup> Winnifrith Tom, "Playing the game: morality versus leisure", in *The Philosophy of Leisure*, New York: St. Martin's Press 1989, pp. 149-150.

sport as part of the modernization process; I shall refer, if only briefly, to nation building, to the culmination of ethnocentric creativity, and to the culmination of national militarism. At times as a rival, but normally as a partner to the same process, the logic of capitalism co-opted (NICHES) sports activity. The army, industry, school, and the media integrated the sports ideal and activity to ensure that they be incorporated in the national project. Sport became of special importance for strengthening the system and for veiling and internalizing its violences in ever more sophisticated ways, along with chauvinism, local folklore, and pride/frustration within the various developments of capitalist glocalization. How does sport function today, as a part of globalizing capitalism?

According to Ulrich Beck,

the peculiarity of the present, and future, globalization process lies in the empirically ascertainable scale, destiny and stability of regional-global relationship networks and their self-definition through the mass media, as well as of social spaces and the image-flows at a cultural, political, economic and military level...

What is new is not only the everyday life and interaction across national frontiers, in dense networks with a high degree of mutual dependence and obligation. New too, is the self-perception of this transnationality (in the mass media, consumption or tourism); new is the 'placeless' of community, labor and capital; new are the awareness of global economic dangers and the corresponding areas of action.<sup>18</sup>

Glocalization is another part of the same development, in which the local identities, folklore, ethnocentrism, traditions, and modes of creativity and self-definition are

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<sup>18</sup> Ulrich Beck, *What is Globalization?* Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, p. 12.

integrated into the same process. Glocalization manifests more clearly also the loss, the "must", and the inequalities that are rationalized and imposed by globalization as an unavoidable world-wide restratification. Within this development, sport is presented globally and it is celebrated by universal rules, standards, strivings, and ways of consumption.

At the same time, however, sport as a global commodity is manufactured and consumed locally, serving and representing both ethnocentrism and false universalism in the form of globalization. It is of vital importance for sport's success as a worldwide commodity to function in the service of local passions and as a manifestation of the negation of the otherness of the Other. Without local rivalries, hate, and chauvinism, the worldwide reception and production of sport would not have been so successful. The glocalization of the production and consumption of sport makes possible the hidden educational agenda that sport serves so well, namely the successful activating and veiling of the violences of normalization; of controlling the hegemonic representation and consumption apparatuses, interests, powers and philosophical pre-assumptions of advancing capitalism. As such it strengthens the relevance and the vitality of self-inflicted dehumanization processes, while uniting the powers of the deepest instincts and strivings of the individual with the collective consciousness and standardized behavior: the human becomes part of the local crowd, the lonely consumer with his TV set that is connected to the universal "we", and to the forgetfulness of his responsibility to constitute his own aims, standards and creativity. He becomes a mere producer-consumer in a world where deconstruction, irrelevance, or exile is the faith of modern master signifiers and ideals, on the one hand, and authentic solidarity, creativity and love become coopted and transformed by the system, on the other.

The betrayal of its own Enlightened ideals is not new to sports education. >From its very beginning sports activity became – already within the framework of the modern nation-building project, establishing national ethos, and constituting effective colonization of the Other – a central element of the effort of the modern system to create, represent, and consume the modern body and soul and to create the healthy-conquering national "we". The development of eugenics, and the wide-scale jailing, castrating, and killing of mentally-ill, handicapped, and "just" poor all over the West, not solely in Nazi Germany, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, were part and parcel of the process that facilitated the centrality of domesticated sport in current culture industry. However, sports ideals such as readiness for and joy in prolonged effort, self-overcoming, and the quest for a "record" were not solely important in dramatic collective and sometimes militaristic contexts. They were even more important in forming the capitalistic normality – in its democratic and totalitarian contexts alike.

Within this process, ideals such as fairness, joy and happiness, which are bounded to the modern concept of sporting solidarity, are limited to the borders of the collective. Its vitality is directed to the Other as chauvinism, and to the frustrated, unfulfilled, standardized, and normalized self as self-hate and hero worship; being content in drawing one's self in the "fan", celebrating one's *pater familias*, or "stars". Note, however, that these practices dialectically clash with other, humanist-oriented practices that are realized in modern sport. This dialectical praxis reflects the philosophical origins of sport.

Modern sports education is founded on a philosophical ground that has been destructed in the post-modern era, by developments that globalizing capitalism and today's sports education manifest in such a dramatic manner. The modern era made

possible the relevance of universalist-oriented non-instrumental philosophical categories that were supposed to be realized by sports education, enhancing free play, peaceful competition, equality, fairness, and Love of Life, serving no higher values and no ultra-human telos. Even if within the horizons of the politics of sports, this philosophy actually was used as a cover for legitimizing violence and colonization.

At the same time, it is true that sports education in its wider sense actually opened the gates to solidarity among individuals from diverse economic, social, religious, and racial backgrounds. Within the framework of modern sport and its educational ideals, from time to time men and women devoted to running away from themselves by realizing the modern ideal of sport actually in a mechanical, abstract manner met as equals. They do so regardless of, and at times in conscious opposition to "their" asymmetrical backgrounds in terms of ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion, race, and gender. This is part of modern Western reality in different respects and levels, both as athletes and as "fans".

Nevertheless, in both cases this happened as a fragile, temporary, threatened, manipulated, exceptional moment, only to serve, ultimately, the interests of big business, militarism, and the self-disciplined human; the kind of human that will become the agent and the victim of global capitalism which is the supreme articulation of the purpose principle, that can flourish solely on the fertile ground of the human's self-forgetfulness and in her being swallowed by disciplinary powers of activization that pre-set the human's telos in the service of the totality of the aimless immanence. Normally, this quasi-realization of the sports ideal served the competition drive and the violent manifestations of the purpose-principle, namely the negation of the pleasure principle. In the service of this sublimation of the inner violence in the service of greater exterior instrumentalization of life, under the umbrella of modern

sports education men and women were driven to ever greater identification with "their" heroes and ethnocentric-oriented collectives, while being part of a reification process that further de-humanized and strengthened the achievements of other normalizing educational apparatuses. One of them is the promise of empowering marginalized collectives and individuals who have not many other sources for pride, hope, visibility, acknowledgement and empowerment. But at the same time, popular physical education also contributes to modern democratization of the society and has functioned as an important element in the transformation of modern societies and cultures. We may ask, however, what is the role of sport in this process, and where does it lead modern societies before their entrance into the era of globalizing capitalism?

The process of sport's serving for the standardization and productivization of modern societies was part of a more general effort of forming the modern human and her strengthening not against, but rather for the empowering of manipulating social behavior in accordance with the needs of instrumental reason, the industrial revolution, and the nation state. It made a special contribution to changing military requirements, which emphasized the need for ever more individual innovation, improvisation, enterprise, cooperation, and total devotion to "the aim" pre-set by "the rules of the game" in all spheres of life. This is because the advancement of modern military techniques could no longer be accomplished by past blind, sheer obedience.

In its explicit and implicit versions modern sports education was central to both the advancement of industry and the sophistication of national ethnocentrist violences. It was instrumental for developing and empowering character, and skills such as

punctuality, productivity, endurance, and self-commitment.<sup>19</sup> It promoted treating not only the natural world and the social sphere but even the inner nature and the otherness of Being as an object of manipulation. Every manifestation of Life, and even the body itself, was consumed in the service of the advancement of the rationalization and instrumentalization of the world. Vividness itself was called to realize itself in a reductionist manner that demolished its uniqueness and its otherness. Everything was supposed to be reduced to a mere function. Sport was no exception.

At the same time, however, central ideals and values of modern philosophy of sports education, such as freedom and self-edification, were dialectically, even if only potentially, also subversive and oppositional. This is due to their erotic dimension, a potential transcendence, and universalism, which being unavoidable was oppositional to the world of facts and the specific manipulations in the historical settings where they were realized.

Even in face of manipulative modern national standardization, and in face of the near omnipotence of the capitalist logic realized in all levels and dimensions of life (and sometime a bitter strife enhances the two), modern philosophy of sports education still maintained its relation with the humanist tradition and the mission of edifying humanity in a solidaristic, universalistic manner that dialectically was still connected to the Love of Life, erotic play of the self with nature and with the not-yet-oppressed human potentials; edification of the deepest strivings in their infinite connections to the richness of nature in an ethical yet ecstatic relation to the moment and to the infinity of the Other. In this sense modern philosophy of sport offers transcendence in – not from – the immanence of Being. It negates in the most

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<sup>19</sup> Max Horkheimer, "Neue soziale Verhaltensmuster [Zur Soziologie des Sports]", in *Gesammelte Schriften* VIII., Frankfurt a. Main: Fischer 1985, p. 222.

concrete manner the pre-assumptions and the ideals of the redemptive-Diasporic religious project of "home-returning" by overcoming nature, body, earthly love and sublunary creative pleasure of the kind offered by modern philosophy of sport.

This is what grounds modern solidarity among people sharing a common sports activity. Their solidarity, ultimately, symbolizes total commitment to this world as a worthy, pleasurable "home", where play, competition, and togetherness de-territorialize human existence into a renewed intimacy with worldly Life, the collective, and the consensual dogmas and standards. The walls of this "home" are ideally not made of bricks, which were made of a violent molding that prevents transcending critique and subversion. The powers of this "home" ensure the protection and reproduction of the self-evidence as well as the impotence of criticizing the representation apparatuses and the other violences that make possible the borders between "we" and "they", good and bad, relevant and irrelevant, true and false.<sup>20</sup> Only after the constitution and the securing of these walls is it possible for these violences to establish the self-evidence and the promise of a humanist-oriented pleasurable, playful and harmonious coexistence of the body and soul in their balanced relations with themselves, with the Other, and with the world. This is the modern ideal gate to equality, freedom, and solidarity among all humanity. As such, modern sport becomes an important philosophical and existential element for any peace education which takes its mission seriously.<sup>21</sup>

Such a practice has specific and concrete existential, philosophical, and political manifestations, as one could see in 1936 Berlin Olympic Games on the eve of the Second World War. A humanist philosophy of sports education, with a strong commitment to world peace and anti-ethnocentrism, could not at the same time also

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<sup>20</sup> Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, *Destroying the Other's Collective Memory*, p. 16.

work for anti-dogmatism and for subverting human self-forgetfulness. Such an orientation is a constant threat and a serious challenge both to ethnocentric trends and to the capitalist logic that made modern sport possible from the very beginning. Historically it turned out that both ethnocentrism and advanced capitalism managed successfully to swallow and control both the subversive potentials and genuine humanizing aspirations of modern sport.

Historically, it turned out that modern philosophy of sports education found itself powerless or irrelevant in its engagement with these challenges. How are we to explain this impotency in the best case, and joining its rival in the worst? Before we try to offer an answer maybe we should ask: Why is it that modern sport did not even come close to the achievements of traditional religion or modern art in terms of resisting the modern world of facts and passions of which it is at the same time a part? Why did sport, along with music, become a modern religion of the masses, a "home" that offers standardization, domestication, and human self-forgetfulness in the level of passions, morality, consciousness, aesthetic, politics and economics in their deepest forms of realization?

Modern philosophy of sports education did not come to grips with the role of sport in modern capitalistic and totalitarian realities. It did not problematize its essence. It did not study the relations between sport and time. It did not question the relation between sport and imagination on the one hand, and sport and internalized violence on the other. And it certainly did not search for the critical, subvertive, and anti-hegemonic transcending dimensions of a sports counter-education, or for an alternative to what the West called for so many centuries "sport".

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<sup>21</sup> Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, "Philosophy of peace education in a postmodern era", *Educational Theory* 51: 3 (Summer 2001), pp. 315-336.

Modern sports education forgot its mission to transcend itself and to overcome the world of facts, fears, and consensus, and it betrayed the dialectics of its own existence: it did not try to understand that its mission is to offer a kind of sports education that will challenge normalizing physical education on the one hand, and education for competitive (individual and collective) sport and its representation, distribution, and consumption on the other. It did not meet the historic expectation/possibility of modernity: to offer humanity a kind of education that will contain more than sports ideals and practices in the limited sense, but also conceptions and practices of reflection, resistance, creative improvisation and self-discipline, as well as challenging the existing social-cultural context within which sports activity is situated. It did not critically reconstruct the relation between sports activity, the politics of the representation apparatuses, and the general historical-social-cultural context. In short, it did not offer sports counter-education.

The political dimension of sport within the framework of a genuine counter-education, however, requires consciousness and praxis which will challenge the hegemonic politics of representation and the power structure that it serves and reflects. What we are faced with here is the need for resistance to sports activity and theorizing sport as an object for manipulation in the service of abandoning eros, creativity, and genuine relation to the human depths and the "exterior" nature and making mere life the aim of Life.

In other words, it means nothing less than a challenge to the abyss that Western thought since Plato, and surely since Descartes, constituted between the human subject and the world of objects, between the body and mind, between the intellect and the passions, between voice and movement, between praxis and imagination, between the moment and eternity. Reestablishing a non-naive intimacy to the body

and to the cosmos, without being swallowed by it or sinking into nirvana, calls for a Diasporic alternative not solely towards one's self-consciousness and its theories, symbols and forms but towards one's abysses and bodily pre-formulated forms of existence.

Actually, it means a non-instrumental, playful philosophy of holistic life that reconnects humanity to the truths of the Gnosis; an erotic seriousness and creative bodily poesis turned into intersubjectivity which is in a sense Diasporic in this world: which is in the deepest sense a representation of *the totally other*. And as such it challenges not only the quest for truth and the values of traditional societies and normalizing education. It also overcomes, in a playful, creative, loving, manner, the modern process of instrumentalization of the relation towards the Other, treating her as some-thing and not as some-one.

As such sports education is so much connected through play and creativity to Love of Life. It is a concrete negative Utopia. Against all the facts of modern reality and the techno-scientific world, in opposition to the self-evidence of reified life and instrumentalized eros, it is committed to offer not only a bodily-poetic negation of these facts but also a concrete alternative to the modern transformation of love, imagination, time, and pleasure.

As a negative Utopia it is Messianism without a Messiah. Yet historically, modern sport did not realize its potentials as a negative utopia and became part and parcel of a modern positive Utopia. It did not respond to the challenge of dialectically realizing a possible erotic, Dionysian, Diasporic, stand towards life as an abyss, as a danger, as a nomadic endless deterritorialization and transformation. The Diasporic philosophy has many negative aspects and realizations, but as a dialectical theory and human existence it has also "positive" aspects of which sport, when true to itself, is one of its

supreme manifestations. It offers playful, anti-violent competitive edification of body-spirit relations. It signifies refusal to be swallowed by the call for nirvana on the one hand and for the victory of the Same of the given facts, consensus and violent "victories" of the self-satisfied conqueror on the other. Modern sports education, however, did not insist on its otherness in face of the new forms of standardization and "spiritualization" which this abandonment facilitated in terms of mythical-rational-fashioned consumption of pleasures in a process within which human relations themselves, not only the cultural representations, are being totally reified. It is a development within which the instrumentalization of knowledge, the reification of human relations, and the new forms of consumption of cultural products become essential parts of a process of standardization of life and their return to the continuum of the thingness, of the Same. Why did modern philosophy of sports education fail to be true to its Diasporic mission?<sup>22</sup>

It failed because it cannot be true to itself (regardless of its "success") unless it becomes philosophically independent and politically antagonistic to its context – alienation that it feared to develop. Surely it did not develop alienation into a negative utopia within the framework of counter-education that will offer Diasporic sports counter-education. Its becoming sports counter-education, and developing its moral and political implications, would transform sport on the spot.

Still today, the moment sports education neglects its oppositional politics it becomes instantly and everywhere overwhelmed by totalitarianism, capitalism, and ethnocentric national ideologies. It becomes their loyal servant, even when maintaining a deceitful mirage of political neutrality or internationalism.

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<sup>22</sup> Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, *Toward Diasporic Education*, pp. 139-150.

Critical thinkers such as Max Horkheimer already noticed the actual role of sports in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup> Its social function is to enhance the depoliticization of the individual in the public sphere; to contribute to the exile of spirit and the possibilities for transcendence; to improve the function of those involved in the production and consumption, and to enhance the efficiency, of promised and realized pleasure as a dormitory drug for the populous. A special contribution is here reserved to the media.

The media represent and distribute “sport” and the promised pleasure arising from this ecstatic orgy. In a certain sense it is the media which produce or make possible “sport” as part of the same process that produces the customers and the fashions of the consumption of sport. The media are a vital part of a culture industry which domesticates-infantilizes-amuses its customers/producers and ensures a productive anti-eroticism. This anti-eroticism, which is made possible by the pleasure machine of which modern sport is part, allows a transformation into the essence of Love of Life and into real possibilities for solidarity, joy, and a happy attitude to the body, to nature, and to creative togetherness that will overcome "sport".

It is especially clear in competitive sport and in the education for the unreflective popular consumption of the ideal of mere (pleasurable) life as the aim of life where being drawn in the empty “I” is enabled. It ensures disregard of the otherness of the Other<sup>24</sup> and blindness to the totally otherness of Life as danger and as a challenge. It enhances the constitution of a post-modern human who is completely drawn into the subjective pleasure of humans deprived of their individuality, which celebrates a false ecstatic catharsis. It sinks into the abstract "I" that functions as an agent of the "we".

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<sup>23</sup> Horkheimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-234.

After being emptied of messianic rhythm, and fully committed to disregard transcendence, the quasi-erotic or fully standardized human is swallowed by the Same; it becomes part of a meaningless continuum. Within this surrender to immanence and abandonment of the transcending utopian axis of Love of Life, the human crumbles into thingness.<sup>25</sup> It retreats to become part of the immanence as if the world has become its "home"; not as a retreat to a pre-cultural unity with the cosmos. It is much more a flight into the heart of the "progress" of the techno-scientific world; a retreat into the psychological, philosophical, cultural, and social "home" that instrumental reason establishes as a sophistication of the anti-human progress of the anti-Diasporic project of establishing a earthly Garden of Eden. Globalism today is further developing and glorifying this historical project.

In this anti-transcendentalism, sport becomes a form of mere satisfaction of pre-socially organized drives, which are in opposition to the quest for happiness, which traditionally within the framework of Diasporic philosophy were called upon in light of the absence of truth: an invitation to Love of Life. The logic of capitalism in the age of globalism is committed to anti-Diasporic normalizing education. It realizes its anti-Diasporic commitment in glorifying and enriching the quasi-ecstatic immanence and deconstructing or ridiculing transcendence. And so it works efficiently for the standardization of each and every sports "experience" as a poesis – and its function is mere commodified "experience", favoring "diversity" and catharsis while exiling the otherness of individuals, things, and the not-yet instrumentalized erotic and poetic manifestations of Being.

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<sup>24</sup> Immanuel Levinas, "Is ontology fundamental?", in Adrian T. Peperzk, Simon Chritchley and Robert Bernasconi (eds.), *Immanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> Immanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, translated by Alphonso Lingis, Dordrecht: Maetinus Nijhoff Publishers 1987, p. 51.

The sports "experience" in the form of physical education and as education for the consumption of competitive sport transforms happiness into "pleasure". It connects the id with the normalized dimensions of the super-ego. Happiness, play, creativity, improvisation, and love are stripped of their otherness, of their subversive, Diasporic, horizons, that allow the call for transcendence; they are repositioned as a recycled part of the immanence of globalizing capitalism and its logic. Eros is repositioned in all its glory in this historical moment – after its domestication, in the service of Thanatus.

Under the rule of the logic of capitalism and the philosophical and existential horizons of the immanence it enforces, Love is replaced by wonder and astonishment; and it is the astonished "I", not solely her admired "star", who becomes an object, a mere thing, a sign that functions with no telos, will, or truth in the immanence of the system. As a particle of the abstracted humans who become "fans" or as a market-made/represented athlete, the "I" functions as a mere symbol. A symbol, which has been totally commodified. The otherness of the "I" is forgotten, abandoned, or ridiculed in a manner that ensures its insignificance exactly at the moment when it works as a false signifier. The "I" is constituted and initiated by the representation apparatuses, and functions as a reaction. Even in the most intimate experiences she imitates her celebrated public representations. In the absence of the ideal of the autonomous subject, grand individuals are celebrated however, actualizing the absence of a genuine public sphere is ensured, and anti-Diasporic self-evidence gains the upper hand. How ironic it is that this reality is so close to the Utopia of Gilles Deleuze, who, in the name of nomadism and rhizomatic existence, offers us the telos of an all-becoming. An all-becoming which is synonymous with a cosmic perception, or with the total disappearance of the subject. Following Mainlaender and the other most

radical figures of philosophical pessimism, for him this is the ultimate aim of all becoming.

The insistence on "flexibility", "hybridists", "nomadism", and endless identities to be purchased, consumed, replaced, and recycled celebrates "the individual free choice" on the ruins of genuine freedom and of the true autonomous human subject. There is no freedom in the immanence, or gates to transcendence. Only as such can globalizing capitalism give life the possibilities of "authentic" "experience" for the football fans of Real Madrid; not before extracting each of the individuals from her individuality, from her otherness, from her Diasporic orientation. Today, here, and only here, within this process there is a kind of nomadism that makes possible hope and emotional compensation for otherwise insignificant, standardized, de-humanized consumers of the sports industry; reified humans who are led to find in their consumption of "sport" the only or one of the only routs for their true self. This is how normalizing education works. Of special importance here is the process of subjectification.<sup>26</sup> Modern sports industry acts as an apparatus of normalizing education in the sense that it produces the self-evidence as poiesis and facilitates the productivization and standardization of the energies of a false individuality; as part of a development which creates, preserves and enhances collective celebrated self-forgetfulness. Fashions, standards, commodities, producers and consumers are fabricated within the same process and are all leveled down to mere manifestations of the Same.

A vital element of the immanence of the present historical moment is the need for a false, deceiving, impression of a Dionysian outburst, ecstatic creativity, and

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<sup>26</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations – 1972-1990*, translated by Martin Joughhin, New York: Columbia University Press 1995, p. 113.

cathartic consumption of cultural products as a purifying excitement. Here sport plays a special role in the production of this illusion of dynamism within the framework of a totalistic immanence. The sports industry as a vital part of present-day normalizing education contributes to ensuring the success of the present unchallenged negation of Life, the exile of creativity, and the subversion of Love. This, in settling for the present order; identifies with the governing facts. In the form of sports fans, humans are willingly being swallowed by the system – taking up a predetermined position in a dynamic, complex field of power relations within which the possibilities of function, reaction, learning, and change are pre-set and impose temptations, rewards, and sanctions. Within the horizons of global capitalism it means that the process of subjectification of the subject is actualized by the subject's own becoming a devoted consumer of sports, even if only in a fragmented islet of freedom and joy in front of her TV set, throwing herself into self-forgetfulness; becoming a total consumer, while enjoying freedom of choice, and actualizing herself in realizing her identification with the "stars" or the "achievement", or "beautiful play", even if only for a fraction of a second; imposing a halt on the continuum of routine, oppression, and meaninglessness; yet never unconditionally: only as a devoted agent of the same system and as its self-negating, entertained, victim.<sup>27</sup>

In advanced capitalist societies sports education (in its broader sense) offers a seemingly "different", "individual", and "free" attention, listening, and gaze; a playful, pleasurable celebration of creativity, pleasure and togetherness are being celebrated. This illusion of the "free", "different", "individual" gaze and listening is also connected to another important illusion: the illusion of a different sphere of events, a freer existence within the present order of things. This illusion, which sport helps to

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<sup>27</sup> Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, London: Methuen, 1987.

enhance, plays a central role and makes a special contribution to the negation of Love of Life while ensuring the pleasurable, quasi-transcending, forgetfulness of this negation. Here sport takes part in a comprehensive effort to eradicate and abandon the memory of Love of Life by enhancing of the devotion to the logic of the present order and empowering the efficiency of the apparatuses which are structurally committed to veil the violences of the hegemonic system. It is done by advancing new forms of collectivism, further developing the subjectification processes and cultivating the pleasures which it offers its victims in ever more direct, sublimated, and "democratic" forms of satisfaction.

Modern sport, at the same time, is obliged to hide its true mission: it hides its role in the modern transformation of Love of Life and exchange of the erotic or religious quest for happiness for the drive for ever more pleasurable standardized satisfaction in the form of a quasi-ecstatic sports violence. Self-forgetfulness plays the part of individual erotic transcendence or of collective catharsis. In other words, its quasi-transcendental and false-edifying dimensions serve to hide its role in deconstructing genuine transcendence and Diasporic religiosity. But what is it that makes sports education (in its broadest sense) philosophically, existentially, and politically so relevant and effective? The resemblance to Love of Life. The resemblance of reified joy to happiness. It is exactly the physicality, the immediacy and the "authenticity" of the enthusiastic sporting experience in all its forms that makes sport so suitable and effective in ensuring the invisibility of the violences of the normality of the present order of things. The quasi-Dionysian energies enhanced by "sport" and "the sporting experience" make a most valuable contribution to the forgetting of the exile of Spirit and the invisibility of its forgetting. Each new "authentic" burst of hysteria contributes substantially to this capitalist-organized perverted catharsis.

As part of modern culture industry, sports education in its broader sense is not centered on schools or sport organizations; nor is it activated by the sportsmen, experts, media stars, and so forth. Far more, it is made possible by the cultural logic of capitalism, which makes possible, constitutes, and manipulates these "stars", events" and "experiences" by its control of reality and its representation apparatuses. The logic of present-day capitalism constitutes an implicit, informal, philosophy of sports education, which is in direct conflict with the formal, acknowledged, and hallowed ideals and values of modern philosophy of education, as articulated in texts such as the constitutive charter of the Olympic Movement.

Today it is wrong to separate this informal philosophy of sports education – which is extremely relevant and effective – from the education propagated in the other channels of normalizing education such as MTV, McDonalds, CNN, and the Internet.

And yet, within and against these borders, a subversive-critical potential is still preserved in the explicit philosophy of sports education. The locus of this subversive and critical potential is the current reality of modern sports organizations. Note that this critical potential of modern philosophy of sports education is immanent in the essence of sport. This is precisely because sport, in its essence, contains self-negation: while part of the given physical, social, and cultural reality, it also represents a concrete actualized relation to the promise of emancipation from the given facts; a promise of love of bodily, natural connections to not-yet controlled and manipulated human experiences; a promise of Life as overcoming the present horizons; a promise for joy and happiness that is simultaneously connected to the spontaneous, improvised and physical – and to the disciplined will, responsibility and creativity. It is so close to the poetic attitude to Life. The human potential for solidarity is here realized within the framework of self-constitution and elevation which unites the body and the soul,

the human and the cosmic, the cultural and the natural, the spontaneous and the disciplined self, in a creative synthesis that offers transcendence. This kind of promise for transcendence is modern, enlightened, and anti-Diasporic too, in the sense that it offers humanistic horizons within which it is possible to struggle for the constitution of social and cultural life as an earthly Garden of Eden. Here, ultimately, systematic efforts of individuals and collectives are to establish non-mechanistic and non-purely intellectual creation, self-constitution, joy, and peaceful intersubjectivity. It is important, however, to note that already here, in this refusal of the "home-returning" projects, the concept of "home" and its philosophical pre-assumptions are preserved. For all the importance of critique and social transformation, this project is still connected to the promise of a positive Utopia of peace education, humanist-oriented civil and democratic education, and the quest for an alternative to God or universal reason that was deconstructed by late modernity and globalizing capitalism.

In the field of sports, counter-education in the age of global capitalism should proceed from the tradition of critical theory and humanist-oriented sport and peace-education potentials towards Diasporic philosophy as a worthy tradition for today's counter-education. If true to itself, this project cannot but be part of a more general project which challenges the essence and various aspects of normalizing education; an effort which is not to be separated from a concrete action: existential, philosophical, and political involvement to change reality. It is a struggle. A struggle which cannot be reduced to challenging the productivity of present representation and reproduction apparatuses.

A Diasporic-oriented counter-education in the field of sports will treat seriously the humanistic transition and the critical potentials of sports education. Special attention will be given here to the edifying elements of critique of the hegemonic

sports industry. At the same time, however, the alternative of solidarity, joy, and non-instrumental efforts of the body and soul, of the individual and the partners, actualizes the utopian struggle as an opposition to hegemonic standards, ideals and practices.

And yet, Diasporic-oriented counter-education in the field of sports cannot be content with such aims and achievements. If true to itself, it should struggle to overcome this positive utopia of a humanist alternative and offer a serious response to the possibility of a negative utopia. The Diasporic negative utopia of sports counter-education has also "positive" dimensions and it shares humanist-oriented critical sports education. At the same time, however, it negates the optimistic vision of a humanizing sports education within the framework of a positive utopia of enforcing a worthier sports education.

The Diasporic refusal to see the historical moment and its hegemonic power relations and factual tendencies as a "home" to be domesticated, or as a deterritorialized "home" to be inhabited in light of a worthier positive Utopia, differs substantially from the alternative view of sports education that critical pedagogy might offer us in its best moments. Counter-education, when true to itself, must be Diasporic. This is because if true to itself, counter-education must challenge any theoretical, ideological, or political "home", any master signifier, dogma, or ethnocentrism as manifestations of the Same, of the thingness of Being, which human beings are called to guard and transcend.<sup>28</sup> "Counter-education, in this sense, must be at once Messianic and negative at any cost. This means that it cannot satisfy itself even with identification with the negation of self-evident, with the resistance to the

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<sup>28</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962, p. 234.

ethnocentrism of the oppressed, and it cannot identify itself with the 'worthier' violences they actualize against their own 'internal' and 'external' Others".<sup>29</sup>

Diasporic philosophy offers present-day counter-education a radical alternative to hegemonic concepts of Life, transcendence, subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, and agency, and to praxis. It also offers an alternative view of the relations between nature and culture, mind and body, the individual and society.

Sports counter-education here should simultaneously offer a dialectical view of transcending the present horizons that are imposed by global capitalism; dialectics here should present radical negation that is not abstract; a negative Utopia that does not abandon Love. As such it is a sign for the possibility of a radical change in relation to the cosmos, to the body, and to consciousness as a normalizing "home".

The move from abstract, mechanistic, and dogmatic "critique" into Diasporic existence and Diasporic-oriented sports counter-education might become a manifestation of Love of Life; a celebration of the body, of play, of improvisation, and a togetherness with the otherness of the Other, while edifying the nomadic way of existence.

Global capitalism is not a mere closure. It does not exhaust itself in fabricating false images of universalism, individualism, improvisation, and free choice: it also opens new possibilities for a Diasporic existence that need not become a mere intellectual message. In the form of counter-education, the relevance of today's Diasporic philosophy calls for concrete and specific fields of becoming, of self-constitution, of transcendence, and of Love of Life and togetherness. As such it challenges both the traditional philosophical and existential dichotomy between the subject and the object, the body and the mind, exile and redemption; it challenges also

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<sup>29</sup> Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, "Critical theory, critical pedagogy, and the possibility of counter-education", in

the post-modern "solution" as manifested in current global capitalism. Sports counter-education might become one of the fields of manifesting Diasporic existence in the most concrete manner. It might offer a creation that is not merely an intellectual project. Nor is it mere bodily experience. It is a creation that does not satisfy itself in an individualized, de-politicized self-edification. A creation that unites body and soul, the individual, the community and the cosmos, the passions and the conscious, and that transcends the abyss of subject-object dichotomies without abandoning dialectical thought, imagination and creation. Sports counter-education might signify a possibility for a creation that transcends "critique" into a rich, nomadic, Diasporic existence. Diasporic existence is not of the kind of the "home-returning" projects within the monotheistic religions (and secularized political theologies) that promised solutions and salvation. Counter-education here offers an alternative Diasporic philosophy, which opens the gate to a possible alternative existence: Diasporic existence while insisting on utopian negation also rearticulates intimacy between the aesthetic, ethic, intellectual and political dimensions of life as a manifestation of creative Love. Diasporic Love is of the kind Plato refers to in the Symposium:

On the birthday of Aphrodite there was a feast of the gods...When the feast was over, Penia or Poverty, as the manner is on such occasions, came about the doors to beg. Now Plenty, who was the worse for nectar...went into the garden of Zeus and fell into a heavy sleep; and Poverty considering her own straitened circumstances, plotted to have a child by him, and accordingly they lay down at his side and conceived love... And as his parentage is, so also are his fortunes. In the first place he is always poor, and anything but tender and fair, as the many imagine him; and he is rough and squalid, and has no shoes,

nor a house to dwell in; on the bare earth exposed he lies under the open heaven, in the streets, or at the doors of houses, taking his rest; and like his mother he is always in distress. Like his father...he is always plotting against the fair and good; he is bold, enterprising, strong, a mighty hunter, always weaving some intrigue or other, keen in the pursuit of wisdom, fertile in resources; a philosopher at all times... He is by nature neither mortal nor immortal, but alive and flourishing at one moment when he is in plenty, and dead at another moment, and again alive by reason of his father's nature.<sup>30</sup>

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York, Peter Lang, 2003, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Plato, "Symposium", in *The Works of Plato*, translated by Benjamin Jowett, New York, 1927, p. 162.