

ETHICS AND SPORTS (ETHICS BY KVIRIN VASILJ, 1917-2005)

DRAŽENKO TOMIĆ
The College of Education
University of Zagreb
Croatia

ABSTRACT

With the affirmation of professional sports in the past century as well as the rise of a voluminous entertainment industry related to it, sport ethics has come to be not only a fertile terrain for testing and developing philosophical notions and theories, but also a foremost point of contact between philosophy, civil institutions, and the society at large. In this article we discuss about ethics and sport. Ethical principles we perceive like that do Kvirin Vasilj (1917-2005), Croatian philosopher and intellectual. Those ethical principles we applied to the sport. Intention to make a link between termini as ethics and sports are, the most revolve in one's mind are negative (non-ethics) feedback such as doping, bribes, corruptions and profits motivated with just one goal – triumph and victory. Contemporary sport is permanent under ethics enquiring temptation because of utilitaristic admission. Sport presents risk, like economy interlacing in the name of triumph no matter of the consequences and in the same time resource of politics propaganda on international level.

Key words: ethics, ethical principles, sport, Kvirin Vasilj

INTRODUCTION

Man strives for well-being and happiness out of psychological necessity, but man's greatest purpose surpasses inner happiness, beatitude and well-being. Therefore man can never realize his being to the full. This is evident in sports as well. Sports are an expression of man's desire to achieve excellence and the expanding of his possibilities. The task of ethics is to place these endeavours within a framework so that man can maintain his humanity despite all challenges put before him by technological achievement or his own drives.

METHODS AND RESULTS

The article consists of two parts. The first expounds ethics as understood in the philosophy of Kvirin Vasilj, the task of ethics and the transcendental groundwork for the moral law. The moral law is illustrated in its most general form. In the second section the connection between ethics and sports is sought with respect to conclusions presented.

It has been established that moral law in its most general form has repercussions on man's entire life and on sports also. To be an athlete means primarily to be a human being. If this awareness exists, then only fair play will predominate in sports, and sports will be an activity through which human beings are elevated and connected.

ETHICS AND THE MORAL LAW

By defining ethics as the *science of human activity and precepts for the realization of human activity* (Vasilj, 1972, 14) Kvirin Vasilj apparently leaves aside other aspects of ethics, such as: the classification of diverse moral attitudes and tradition under the aspects of sociology, psychology or logic (descriptive ethics); the analysis of moral premises and speech about morality (meta-ethics); scientific objectivation of that which is considered good and evil (Čehok, 1996, 6) and assigns to ethics a (normative) task, namely, to determine the goal of human life, but also the way in which to achieve this goal. Naturally, Vasilj understands that ethics always proceeds from knowledge already gained (in this respect it is turned to the past), but ethics primarily *qualifies the human will to act in a reasonable manner* and thus it is directed toward that which is yet to be (the future). The purpose of ethics is to determine what human reality *should be like*.

Kvirin Vasilj defines moral law as "... a general law on human activity which at the same time is able to contribute internal harmony to human acts, either in the human individual as a person for himself, or in human society..." (Vasilj, 1972, 8). Thus, the task of moral law in the thought of Kvirin Vasilj is 1) to qualify the human will to act in a reasonable manner and 2) to guide and create harmony regarding social activity.

The moral law in its fundamental expression has not been granted to man in an immediate way. The precondition for an understanding of the law is some sort of knowledge of man and the world. Thus, man does not create the basic moral principles of human acts, but rather he discovers them, establishes them and adopts them. Human understanding of distinct ethical principles advances gradually, is purified and expanded. In this way the human mind corrects and perfects itself. To proclaim that certain insights of the human mind at any period in history are absolute law means to preclude beforehand any advancement of the human mind in regard to understanding its greatest purpose and the precepts for fulfilling this purpose. (Vasilj, 1972, 131; Vasilj, 1978, 68-70; Vasilj, 1984, 40, Juka, 2000, 190)

Vasilj's key argument is that the true value of the moral law proceeds from man's transcendental purpose. Man's transcendental purpose has been outlined by some Being-of-itself (God), and man necessarily strives toward it, be it in the form of creative love or creative justice.

Since man exists ultimately because of a Being-in-itself, it is clear that he is to love God above all other beings, and since each human being's metaphysical purpose is equally sublime, man is dutibound to love his neighbour as himself. Thus, the moral law in its most sublime form states: *Love God above all else and your neighbour as yourself!* (Vasilj, 1972, 66, 119; Vasilj, 1994, 23-24; Vasilj 1987, 118-119, Vasilj Zagreb, 1996, 198-200)

ETHICS AND SPORTS

Sports is the cultivation of physical capabilities, their testing and bringing to perfection through games and competition. (HOL, 1996, 930) Should we approach sports from the anthropological point of view, then we may see them as an essential part of our cultivated human needs and desires, unique human creativity bearing civilizational attributes. It is fitting that sports be accessible to all regardless of age, race and sex, sexual orientation, faith, nationality, social status, political and other convictions. (ZoS, I, 1, 3) From the philosophical-ethical viewpoint two features of sports are of importance - its bioethical and cultural characteristics. (Temkov, 2009, 438-439)

To bring ethics and sports into a closer relationship often means to give sports a negative connotation and to imply that the unethical aspects of sports will be highlighted: doping, corruption, brokerage, aggressive marketing, predominance of certain sports, inappropriate phenomena accompanying sports (fistfights, insults, bad behaviour...). (Brkljačić, 2007, 231)

Sports have a positive effect not only on the state of one's health, but also involve a series of concurrent, but no less important, effects (educational, social, culturological, pedagogical and other functions of sports). Fair play is rooted and is developed in sports as one of the most outstanding values in sports and moral norms. (Temkov, 2009, 440) „A good athlete values sports, values the game, keeps the rules and plays fairly for he has come to realize that this is the only way to play a good game and to give a good performance and also guarantees „feeling good“ after the game. Without a doubt sports builds character. This occurs through one's developing a responsible attitude toward training sessions, respect for one's trainer and one's colleagues, strenuous training programmes, renunciation, psychological and physical exertion.“ (Brkljačić, 2007, 232; Sekulić, 2011, 302)

In time top athletes become vulnerable and sickly modern gladiators. It is understood that a physician responsible for the health care needs of a healthy or injured athlete will undertake all means necessary to protect his health and, at the same time of course, to help him to achieve optimal results in athletic competition. Ethical qualms arise in cases when the physician does not treat the athlete professionally, but rather places the interests of the club ahead of the athlete's, that is, when the athlete for any reason wants to achieve top physical form despite injuries and consequences of inadequate medical treatment. (Brkljačić, 2007, 231) Involvement in some sports has become a greater health risk than non-participation itself in physical activity and sports (extreme endurance athletic disciplines, motor sport competitions, the martial arts in which the goal is the actual, not the symbolic, destruction of the opponent). (Sekulić, 2011, 304)

Using performance drugs is also a form of risk to the health for the one who uses them. Moreover, physical performance is enhanced unfairly and in a biologically unjustifiable manner, thus the user gains an advantage over his opponent. (Sekulić, 2011, 305) Athletes must not take illicit doping agents. The trainer, authorized physician and other persons involved in sports are not permitted to give an athlete illicit doping agents, neither to compel nor to encourage the athlete to take them. Athletes are required to submit to drug control tests. (ZoS, IX, 72, 1-4).

Contemporary sports are constantly subjected to ethical enquiry and testing and also to the utilitarian test. Sports may become a propaganda medium in international politics. Competition to host major international sports events demonstrates this. Athletes can become fighters for the prestige of their country-nation. (Brkljačić, 2007, 232-233). Sports has become a war without arms, and the goal is – money. (Sekulić, 2011, 303)

A frightening dilemma of an ethical-social nature becomes evident at the instant when a top athlete ceases to be a record-breaker and must descend from his throne. One can notice a threefold transformation: first, the importance of his physical life and his scope of activity is diminished and there is no more physical exertion; then, his spiritual world undergoes a change which brings about an identity crisis (becomes a normal, private person, no longer under the scrutiny of the public) and ultimately a change in his work environment awaits him which now demands a new mode of activation. A transposition of authority occurs. (Brkljačić, 2007, 233)

CONCLUSION

This paper begs the basic question: Should one succeed at all costs? On the one hand we have success and all that it entails, on the other hand, one's health and moral principles. What is more important – to be a good person or to be a good athlete? It is our conviction that we need to develop maximum awareness of the fact that the human person must have priority in the mind of the other, that our own freedom extends only as far as the freedom of the other, and that a person goes on living even after enjoying a few years of fame. Ethics in sports sets limits, and these should be given some thought. Elimination of these opens the broad path to various manipulations in one's own life and in the lives of others.

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