167 - THE HANG-GLIDER FLIGHT PLAYFUL CULTURE

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INTRODUCTION

The hang-glider, as well as the paraglider, is an aircraft that, to keep itself on the air depends on the pilot's technical ability and the nature forces action. In spite of presenting differences in the gliding rate, in the steering way performed by the pilot and in the frame composition, the hang-glider and the paraglider share the same aerodynamic principles. Both are used in hang-gliding practice, however, in order to facilitate the understanding of this study, we will broach only the matters inherent to hang-glider flight practice.

A hang-glider may have its frame completely manufactured with aluminum tubes or present a small part composed by fiberglass or carbon. This frame is completely coated with Dacron, which is a very resistant fabric used to make sails. They weigh on an average from 28 to 35 kg, and their length, closed, is on an average, from five to six meters, open, their span reaches on an average to twelve meters, and they can be mounted and dismounted with relative easiness and be transported on top of an automobile. In order to control it in flight, the pilot moves the weight of his/her body in relation to the center of gravity of the wing that, depending on the model, can reach the speed of up to 120 km/h. As for the performance, it may be high or low and, as for the usefulness, it can be used for leisure, work or competition.

This work has as its objective to situate the practice of the hang-glider flight in the universe of games, identifying the playful aspects present in this practice. For that we have analyzed articles and interviews found in a magazine specialized in hang-gliding. It is an exploratory descriptive study, with qualitative approach. The articles and discourses of the interviews of the magazines Air from number 01 to 15 were examined under the form of content analysis (Bardin, 1974).

THE PLAYFULNESS

Children's games and plays do not make sense anymore for the adult who lives in a society in which only the productive things are important. However, what to do with the unproductive time? In order to fulfill this distressing emptiness caused by the daily monotony of work, it comes up in the adult the need of an activity that can provide him/her pleasure, an alternative and playful activity, which is different from the leisure options offered by society. Flying by a hang-glider is an activity full of adventure, calculated risk and uncertainty, essential requirements to satisfy that alternative need of playfulness presented by the adult. That risk is assuaged with the practice training, the development of technique and the acquisition of safety equipment. The uncertainty, the adventure essential fuel, resides in the fact that, even with the whole safety apparatus obtained with the development of this sport, the possibility of an accident is real.

According to Costa (1999), every sporting and leisure practice in nature is associated to risk and uncertainty. Some people practice it in a playful way, strictly calculating their probabilities, playing with the challenge of the existence itself. It is the case of those adventure and calculated risk sports. The experience acquired in action and the acquisition of techniques minimizes the possibilities of accidents and includes them in a field where they can be controlled by the actors. But it is the uncertainty that seems to challenge them.

The hang-glider flight may be accomplished with different purposes, in the most several ways and with several types of equipment. Depending on the pilot's objective, the hang-glider can be slower or faster, making possible a simpler or more technical landing. The way how the pilot of this sport will perform the flight will depend on his/her technical level and on the equipment, which should always be in agreement with the desired purpose. If the pilot has as his/her purpose to compete in official championships, his/her technical level should be good and his/her equipment of high performance. That equipment type can also be used by those people that do no intend to take part in championships, just want to overcome records or even their own limits. On the other hand if the purpose is to perform tandem flights, besides presenting a good technical level, that pilot should use low performance equipment. That equipment type is also used by newly graduated pilots or by those who do not intend to enjoy of the evolution that the flight equipment offers, opting by safety to the detriment of performance.

We understand that the hang-glider flight can provide a series of sensations that are not common in our day by day and these sensations are coming from playful moments, which somehow take hold of the pilot during the flight. However, there are some moments in that practice in which the playfulness does not come up. In other words, the playfulness is not present in every flight type, not in all of the moments of that practice.

Bousquet (1984) states that whatever it is the definition of the playful concept, the adjective playful would not be applied in a permanent way to an activity type. There is not a specifically playful activity, but a playful attitude that can follow several activities.

The universe of the hang-glider pilots is quite diversified. There are those ones who prefer the competition, those ones who prefer to fly for leisure and the ones who use the flight as a work tool, as for instance, pilots who work with tandem flight. For these ones, flying is a way of earning money providing the other ones a risk sensation with safety. The tandem flight may be a moment where the playfulness is present but that will depend on the passenger's attitude, not on the pilot's. However, there is one occasion in which the tandem flight may be playful for both the pilot and the passenger. It is when it stops being a job and becomes a challenge, an adventure, as in the attempt of breaking a distance record (cross country tandem fly).

The official championships are moments in which the pilots improve and develop their techniques. The more developed is the pilot's technique, the higher will be his/her chance to savor the hang-glider flight playful side, accomplishing good flights, breaking records or obtaining success in several competitions. A competition can be full of playful moments, as well as it can frustrate the pilots because of their absence. Different from a flight for leisure where the pilot flies in the direction that he/she wants, in a competition the destination to be followed during a test (direction that the pilots should fly), is decided by the organizing team of the event minutes before its beginning. Those decisions are oftentimes mistaken, causing the pilots to fly in adverse flight conditions, whereas in the direction opposite to the test, the conditions for the flight are excellent. As a result, some pilots insist on continuing in the test, some of them land prematurely, others complete the test partially and, there are those ones that for considering the test stressful, abandon it and make their own flight (destination), preferring the playfulness in opposition to the seriousness offered by the competition.

The cross country test is a clear example of how much the hang-glider flight can be playful. The cross country is a competition where the pilot chooses, by himself/herself, the takeoff time and the flight direction, with the purpose of traveling the largest possible distance in kilometers, using the thermal currents. This activity is full of adventure, challenge, demanding from the pilot a contact with nature all the time, a disconnection from the real world and the daily problems, an encounter with the playfulness in the best sense that the word can represent.

We can see that the accomplishment of a hang-glider flight does not guarantee that activity is being playful by itself. So that this flight becomes a playful activity, the pilot should let himself/herself be involved, take hold of the playful spirit that the moment provides.

FLYING BY HANG-GLIDER: ADULTS` GAMES

For Barreau (1991), playing is the best shared thing of the world. One can play everywhere and it does not matter with what. Everything - an object, a word or the body - can become the improvised or habitual support of the playful activity.

In order to situate the hang-glider flight in the universe of games, we will use the classification presented by Caillois (1990) that, in his work, Games and Men, proposes four different modalities of games: competition (agôn), luck (alea), simulacrum (mimicry), and vertigo (ilinx). These four modalities are divided into two antagonistic poles: a more spontaneous one (or primitive) - the paidia - and the other a more ruled one - the ludus. The *paidia* leads to improvisation, expansion, playfulness, amusement, day-dream, spontaneity. Now the *ludus* represents a type of *paidia* training. It leads to the rigid subordination of the rules, the disciplinarity. The hang-glider flight is a sport that is characterized by using the calculated risk and the adventure in the attempt of searching for the vertigo that, however, is the main component of the ilinx games modality. That vertigo can be present in the several moments of the hang-glider flight practice: the dive into the emptiness accomplished by the pilot after takeoff, the safety loss sensation that the soil provides, the impact caused by the upward and downward currents in the entrance or exit of a thermal, in the constant circular movement accomplished to be kept inside the thermal upward zone and in the final approach for landing, bring anguish and pleasure to the pilot. This sporting practice is also included in the ludus that, as Caillois states (1990), in its cultural form, encompasses all of the radical sports modalities that extol speed, adrenalin, the obliteration of reason by total concentration in the action, as for instance: sports that involve challenge, survival and vertigo.

Due to the technique improvement, the appearance of more sophisticated equipment and the concern with safety, the hang-glider flight develops and assumes organized forms of competitions that, in the classification of the games is named as *agôn*. That game form is demonstrated in the hang-glider flight, when pilots who present a good technical level dispute a championship, participate in a cross country challenging their own limits, trying to overcome records. It can also be manifested, in inexperienced or occasional pilots when they dispute the longest permanence in the air, the strongest thermal current or the best landing.

THE PLAYFULNESS VISION BY HANG-GLIDER PILOTS

The game in its concept makes reference to toys, entertainment, exercise or recreational pastime subject to certain rules or combinations, in other words, something that people meet to spend time in a pleasant way, without any commitment. The game is linked to the playfulness, once the playfulness also makes reference to the game itself as being something entertaining, something where there is the play (Chalita, 2005).

We observe in the hang-glider pilots' conversation the constant presence of expressions that identify the hang-glider flight as an activity that is used with the clear objective of searching for playfulness. Expressions such as "flight Disneyland", "my toy", "play in a thermal" or "a play is going on", are common in the conversation of the players of this sport. Fernandes (1999), when referring to the hang-glider as an expensive and sophisticated little toy to make the flying dream come true, states that: "the greatest difference between men and boys is the price and the size of their toys", that reveals the playful contents of its activity.

Knauer (2006) continues declaring that, for the adventurer the pleasure is in the difficulty, in the unlikeliness, in the irrationality. The fun is to make a great play out of the challenge, where in order to have fun it is necessary to leave the routine, face the fear, and take risks. Looking for the end of that play is the great prize that is at stake.

Hang-glider pilots, who have a high technical level, believe that the good flights and the playfulness moments become more present starting from the practice valorization and the theoretical knowledge acquisition on the technique. According to them, the high level offered by the competitions would have great influence in the development of that technique and the higher risk control by the pilot. That fact is easily observed in the leisure moments, when skilled pilots, who participate in competitions, and inexperienced or occasional pilots share the same space. The skilled pilots' performance is higher than the inexperienced or occasional pilots`. As consequence, the possibility of the playful moment will be closer to the skilled pilot than to the inexperienced or occasional pilot who, for having a less refined technique can land before the proper time, frustrating his/her possibilities to enjoy these playful moments. On the other hand, these same competitions, which improve the technique, are full of rules and seriousness and, in certain moments they manifest contrary to the freedom spirit that the flight provides, imposing obligations and annulling the playfulness that could be in this activity. For the pilots who use the flight as work tool, accomplishing tandem flights, flying would be compared to a "transport of passengers", the playfulness does not contemplate them in those circumstances.

Knauer (2006) identifies the dissatisfaction regarding hang-glider tandem flight through an interview granted by this sport pioneer of in Brazil: "maybe for not agreeing with some things that today permeate the hang-gliding, as for instance, the commercial use of the sport, Luiz Cláudio compares São Conrado ramp to a taxi stand, where the pilots wait for the "passengers" searching for emotion."

Bousquet (1984) emphasizes the importance of making distinction between game and attitude or playful spirit. For her, every game that is called as a game is not forcibly playful; there are activities that are not called as a game and that can be impregnated of playful spirit. Nothing is always automatically playful and, reciprocally, every situation can be approached with playful spirit.

CONCLUSION

Based on the speeches of those magazines, we can conclude that flying by hang-glider is an activity that provides a freedom sensation, a rescue of spontaneity, a pleasure in the playful sense. It is a game full of adventure that looks for the vertigo exposing the pilot to a calculated risk, in which there is the possibility of occurrence of accidents, however, it considerably decreases with practice, development of techniques and safety equipment.

We have also concluded that flying by hang-glider becomes a game from the moment in which the pilot surrenders himself/herself to the adventure and starts to interact with the nature. An interaction where the pilot's body plays with the hang-glider, with thermal currents, with gravity, with the calculated risk sensation or with uncertainty, finding as final product of that game, the pleasure of challenge, vertigo or simply the playfulness.

On the other hand, when the hang-glider flight becomes a job, as it is the case of the tandem flight or the case of pilots who take part in championships, the characteristic of the game for amusing is lost, giving place to the seriousness to the commitment, totally depreciating the power of playfulness coming from the game. In the case of tandem flight, the responsibility for safety and for the passenger's pleasure is placed in first place. As for the competitive pilot, the search for results or break of a record oftentimes turns the activity so serious that the playful moment is impaired.

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THE HANG-GLIDER FLIGHT PLAYFUL CULTURE

SUMMARY: this work has as its objective to situate the practice of the hang-glider flight in the universe of games, identifying the playful aspects present in this practice. For that we have analyzed articles and interviews found in a magazine specialized in hang-gliding. It is an exploratory descriptive study, with qualitative approach. The articles and discourses of the interviews of the magazines Air from number 01 to 15 were examined under the form of content analysis (Bardin, 1974). Based on the speeches of those magazines, we can conclude that flying by hang-glider it is an activity that provides a freedom sensation, a rescue of spontaneity, a pleasure in the playful sense. It is a game full of adventure that looks for the vertigo exposing the pilot to a calculated risk.

Key-words: free flight, game, sport in the nature.

LA CULTURE LUDIQUE DU VOL EN DELTA PLANE

RÉSUMÉ : ce travail a pour objectif de situer la pratique du vol en delta plane dans l'univers des jeux, en identifiant les aspects ludiques présents dans cette pratique. Pour cela nous avons analysé des articles et des entrevues trouvés dans une revue spécialisée en vol libre. Il s'agit d'une étude descriptive exploratrice, à abordage qualitatif. Les articles et les discours des entrevues des revues Air du numéro 01 au numéro 15 ont été examinés sous la forme d'analyse de contenu (Bardin, 1974). Basé sur les discours de ces magasins, nous pouvons conclure que volant en delta plane c'est une activité qui fournit une sensation de liberté, une délivrance de spontanéité, un plaisir dans le sens ludique. C'est un jeux complètement de l'aventure qui recherche le vertigo exposant le pilote à un risque calculé.

Mots-clés: vol libre, jeux, sport dans la nature.

LA CULTURA LÚDICA DEL VUELO DE ALA DELTA

RESUMEN: este trabajo tiene como objetivo situar la práctica del vuelo de ala delta en el universo de los juegos, identificando los aspectos lúdicos presentes en esta práctica. Para eso analizamos artículos y entrevistas encontrados en una revista especializada en vuelo libre. Se trata de un estudio descriptivo exploratorio, con abordaje cualitativa. Fueron examinados sobre la forma de análisis de contenido (Bardin, 1974) los artículos y los discursos de las entrevistas de las revistas Air del número 01 al 15. De acuerdo con los discursos de esos artículos y entrevistas, podemos concluir que volar en ala delta es una actividad que proporciona una sensación de la libertad, un rescate de la espontaneidad, un placer en el sentido lúdico. Es un juego por completo de la aventura que busca el vértigo que expone el piloto a un riesgo calculado.

Palabras-clave: vuelo libre, juego, deporte en la naturaleza.

A CULTURA LÚDICA DO VÔO DE ASA DELTA

RESUMO: este trabalho tem como objetivo situar a prática do vôo de asa delta no universo dos jogos, identificando os aspectos lúdicos presentes nesta prática. Para isso analisamos artigos e entrevistas encontrados em uma revista especializada em vôo livre. Trata-se de um estudo descritivo exploratório, com abordagem qualitativa. Foram examinados sob a forma de análise de conteúdo (Bardin, 1974) os artigos e os discursos das entrevistas das revistas Air do número 01 ao 15. Podemos concluir, a partir dessa análise, que voar de asa delta é uma atividade que proporciona uma sensação de liberdade, um resgate da espontaneidade, um prazer no sentido lúdico. Além de tudo, é um jogo repleto de aventura que busca a vertigem expondo o praticante a um risco calculado.

Palavras-chave: vôo livre, jogo, esporte na natureza.