

PHYSICAL CULTURE BETWEEN RATIONALISM AND THEOANTHROPOCENTRISM

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SUMMARY

Physical culture with the man in its centre has always been an integral part of social events and troubles in various times and ages. Regardless the need to adjust its theory and practice to the given requirements and social circumstances of the time it has always been stretched between rationalism and theanthropos-centrism. *Rationalism* and its right wing *the Enlightenment* had formed deep furrows in the area of physical culture, (too) since the age of Pythagoras, Epicurus, Plato and later Origen and the Neoplatonists and Descartes' "*I think, therefore I am*". The great Njegoš made a clear judgement of the general effects of Rationalism in his work *The Ray of the Microcosm*: "You, Pythagoras and you, Epicurus, ... You have degraded a being a man." Indeed, only a glimpse at today's events and the development of sport and physical exercise is enough to prove his words to be true.

On the other hand, theanthropos-centrism with its theory and practice bring back hope that *not all is lost, when everything is lost* (R.P. Nogo). *Theanthropos-centrism* or, God-man centrism as it can be called, approaches man with Love and belief that physical exercises is divine food for the human being. And that the food is given to him so that he can master the good as gifted from the Creator, to stand firm, get strong and divinized.

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Therefore, we can say that Rationalism and Thanthropos-centrism are two views of and two approaches to man (even) in modern times. Behind the first one there is ***pride*** whereas behind the second one there is ***Love***. It is up to man himself to choose his way.

Key words: physical exercise, Enlightenment, culture

INTRODUCTION

All the ages we have left behind, each of them on its own and all together, show that physical culture in general was integrated in cultures and civilizations that characterized those ages. Physical culture with man in its focus has been and remained since the ancient times until today both an integral part of and a companion to social events and troubles, following their ascending and descending pathways and offering man physical exercise not only as a need but also for fun.

The division between dietetics and agonistics as two completely different approaches to physical exercising has remained with little variations from ancient Athens to modern times. In the meanwhile some other approaches and variations have appeared between these two completely different concepts of physical exercise but they have remained end points up to day. Therefore, the division between ***dietetics*** – physical exercising in general for the health benefits and ***agonistics*** – sports for better results is still present.

The history of civilizations and cultures including the history of physical culture indicates that the social relationships which characterized the ages placed various aims and challenges to physical culture. It was clearly felt and noticed in the 19th century and turbulent changes which took place in Europe. It was then when the idea of great utilitarianism of physical exercise was structured not only in practice but also in theory.

This was particularly reflected in the need to:

- a) Strong young people through physical exercise to enable them to fight for the conquering and defending oriented ideas present at that time, and
- b) Use sport to facilitate the removal of boundaries and allow the flow of capital.

Physical culture¹ has always been stretched between rationalism and theanthropocentrism regardless the need to adjust its theory and practice to the given requirements and social circumstances in particular times. Formally positioned between them but essentially almost completely on the side of rationalism it struggled to put *ratio* on top of its theory and practice. It was clearly reflected in its approaches of ethnocentrism and egocentrism and also in the theory of anthropocentrism in the late 20th century.

Unfortunately, this tendency to rationalism has been present since the ancient times.

Rationalism and its right wing *the Enlightenment* had formed deep furrows in the field of physical culture (too) since the age of Pythagoras, Epicurus, Plato and later Origen and the Neoplatonists and Descartes' "I think, therefore I am". The great Njegoš made a clear judgement of the global effects of the work of rationalists in his work *The Ray of the Microcosm*: "You, Pythagoras, and you, Epicurus, ... You have degraded being of man." Indeed, only a glimpse at today's events and the development of sports and physical exercise is enough to prove his words to be true.

Sport is no longer just a *structured system of body exercises of agonistic nature developed to improve a person in order to achieve the best sports results* (Živanović, N.) but also a highly professionalized activity where a sports achievement is used as a market product which has its price. Once used by capitalists as a tool for making profit, sport has become a power which utilizes capitalist neoliberal business principles for its own profit. The word power is not an exaggeration because the Olympic Committee, the FIFA and some other international sports federations are indeed powerful. As a reminder, their rules come before any national regulations and rules whereas it is no use wasting words on huge profit they make.

In addition, physical exercise of dietetics nature which is also highly professionalized with excellent marketing coverage applies the rules developed and improved in sports for making profit. It uses idolatry to attract clients who want to follow their idols. By doing so they do not exercise for their own sake and do not find exercising nutritious food for their being but they exercise to shape their bodies to match up to the one(s) they see in their idols.

¹ The term physical culture is used as the latest of the terms. Of course, the terms used to describe the concept included in the term of physical culture were different at different times: gymnastics, body exercise, sport ...

In the social circumstances where it seems that any different approach (also) to physical exercise is not likely a poet appears and with his line *not everything has failed, when everything has failed* (R.P. Nogo) prompts thinking that it may be time to return to ourselves and to our personality. And remember the theory of theanthropocentrism as a confirmation of the poet's words.

Theoanthropocentrism with its theory and practice brings back hope that *Theoanthropocentrism* or *God-man centrism*, as it can also be called, approaches man with Love and belief that physical exercise is nutritious food for a human being. And, that food is given to him so that he can master the good as given from the Creator, to stand firm, get strong and divinized. On the way back to one's unique and unrepeatable personality a *Teacher*² who embeds knowledge through his advice, example and love encourages everybody he works with to turn to physical exercising.³

Physical exercising can help man fight the *New Age* which is pulling him into a new addiction.⁴ This addiction, manifested in the virtual world he is indulged in, is fatal for man's personality. That way the "freedom" of this world has turned into a *virtual prison* with bars firmly blocking the way out. This is why we see physical exercise as a wide open door leading out of the casemate of the New Age. Therefore, physical exercise is not only nutritious food but also a blessing from the Creator. The role of our Teacher is essential in achieving this.

RATIONALISM AS A FORCED FRAMEWORK

A long history of structuring the idea proposed by Protagoras⁵ that *off all things the measure is man* through to Descartes' *suspicion* to Kant's *criticism* has

² Just as there is a clear quality difference among artisans defining ones as *masters* and others as *Masters* (with a capital "M"), there is also a difference among teachers. They can also be called *a teacher* and *a Teacher*. The difference is not only in the first capital letter but also in the fact that the capital letter indicates great skill and even greater Love they carry with them. This is where the capital letter comes from.

³ Father Paisios advised parents and professors how to teach their children: "He who gives advice, builds with one hand. He who gives advice and example, builds with two hands." (Father Paisios, Lessons. Volume 1. The Saint Stephen's Monastery, Vranje, 2011, page 247).

⁴ In addition to drugs, alcohol and tobacco new technology (mobile phones and computers) is a new problem. Virtual world where the addicted to those new "gadgets" live locks the man up in his individuality and separates him from his personality and the life with his family.

⁵ Protagoras (486-411 BC) a Sophist, a Presocratic. His well-known dicta: (1) **Of all the things the measure is man** with every single man having his individual truths, and (2) **Of all the things the measure is man**, of the things that are, that they are, of the things that are not, that they are not had an influence on many philosophers who "searched for" truth.

reached us (also) thanks to Nietzsche's *superman* and the famous exclamation of Maxim Gorky: *Man – it has a proud ring!* This all together has made rationalism⁶ raise ratio, our reason to a very high level and proudly occupied the area of physical culture as well. Of course, it is ratio in the function of ideological background for the *New Age* where everything is allowed.

This very idea – *everything is allowed to me* including rejection of the second half of the same message that Paul the Apostle⁷ sent to a weakened man – *but not everything is beneficial*, has become a prevailing thought. The ratio of a new age man has rejected Christian ethics together with God thus losing its support. That fact, which many are not even aware of, has penetrated deep into our profession. And without Christian ethics it (our profession) cannot serve man to whom it is completely turned and who it strives to raise and strengthen.

Ratio and the mentioned – *everything is allowed to me* is felt in every aspect of physical culture – in physical education, sports and recreation though not to the same degree. Sports leads in that sense although other areas try to keep pace.

In sports, the result is not just the only quality and measure of success but also a quality which has grown into a postulate – *win or die*. Postulates are not something to be discussed, and the same is with the sports postulate. It is unquestionable and the winners podium with its consoling places (the second place and the third place) is the only measure of any sports event. Being aware that money is the only purpose of doing sports and that winning is the only chance to get it ratio helps cloud actual values and purpose of sports.

Therefore, it is no wonder that even the youngest children when asked: "Why do you practice (for example) football?" answer: "To earn money as Ronaldo." They do not say a word about spending time with friends who like the same sport. And how would they think about it at all with their parents expecting achievements from them. Most parents get their children involved with junior teams of various clubs not to help enhance their physical and social development but to satisfy their own interests. If they have to pay high membership fees, they expect a return.

⁶ Rationalism relies on reason, ratio, as "a principal quality and a supreme measure of value of a belief or practice." (Source: PROSVETA Short Encyclopedia, Ed. 4, Prosveta, Beograd, 1986). It is commonly used as a synonym for enlightenment, which indicates that anyone of different opinion represents an unprogressive and a minor subject.

⁷ Paul the Apostle, The First Letter to the Corinthians: "*I am allowed to do anything but not everything is beneficial; but I don't allow anything to control me.*" (1st Cor. 6, 12).

This is how the circle within the specified framework of rationalism wraps up, with any movement allowed inside it but not outside it where it gets sanctioned immediately. Where money is *the measure of everything*, there comes ratio to justify any attempt to make it. In addition, ratio serves to eliminate ethical doubts and Christian ethics in particular. It can bring disproportion into an already harmonized system of (particularly) professional and high-level sports. The fact that millions of athletes are actually slaves exploited to their limits⁸ is no concern of anyone because sport is a business. And there is no place for ethics in a business which has embraced Darwin's "survival of the fittest" theory.

The cruel sports reality can also be felt even in lower sports segments. Amateur sports and even school sports are infected by *the philosophy* of professional sports. Here, the exclamation – everything is allowed to me can be found with increasing frequency. And everyone within the specified framework of rationalism, prompted by aggressive marketing strategy, makes efforts to get hold of at least "scraps" that fall off the table of professional sports.

In addition, the specified framework of rationalism can be seen in physical recreation and even in physical education that is, school sports.

Physical recreation⁹ as a field of physical culture also attempts to adopt the organizational structure and the aims of sports. Thus, this field of physical culture is also adapting to the specified framework of rationalism. The aim of physical exercising is gradually shifting from the man's well-being to the "well-being" against the man. The man is offered physical exercise not only as a kind of nutrient required by his body but more and more frequently as a tool for approaching the "life and work" of new idols. ***The cult of the body*** is thus growing into an ideal to which everything, even a personality, is sacrificed and endowed. The individual unlike the person fits into the specified framework of rationalism. In new fitness centers with their numerous "machines" for exercising¹⁰ individualism is encouraged and developed whereas ratio with all the help of marketing "persuades" man that it is the only right and appropriate thing to do now days.

⁸ A wide-spread story is that only the first 100 ATP tennis players can make living from tennis though in reality the list is as short as the first twenty ranked. All other players serve to withdraw or deposit funds of those doing business in tennis: from manufacturers of sports equipment through to organizers of prestigious tennis tournaments.

⁹ Physical recreation is an area of physical culture which is also frequently called: recreation, sports recreation, sport for all.

¹⁰ It would be more appropriate to say that a man who is exercising on those machines makes friends with the machines, contacts the machines and not the persons who are exercising next to him.

School sports¹¹ shows the increasing tendency to sports rather than to school and what it implies – education and training. It also occasionally expresses its wish to get closer to the new properties of sports – profit, professionalism and the result as a prerequisite of professionalism rather than to the previous attributes of sports – training, socialization, well-being. Even a glance at the composition of school teams competing on the Republic level can confirm this finding. Children from junior teams of sport clubs prevail.

The right of those children who are already engaged in the training process to compete in their school teams is certainly not denied, but what is the role of teachers and educators in such situation? What about medals those children win? How to present them at school?

Those are the issues which have long been applying pressure on school sports and are increasing, particularly when problems on competitions occur, which happens more and more frequently. “Fortunately”, our ratio helps find the way out of the moral dilemma and fit the reality into the general New Age trend – the result is important. And this is enough.

THEOANTHROPOCENTRISM AS A SOURCE

The Theanthropocentrism approach as one of the approaches to the development of physical culture¹² was given its final form by the end of the 20th century. It was a forced response within our profession to any obvious harmful effects of rationalism and its derivative positivism.

Contrary to the prevailing attitude – everything is allowed to me with the warning that not everything is beneficial ignored, the approach of theanthropocentrism proposed a concept with the emphasis on the second half of the message from Paul the Apostle. Yes, everything is allowed but not everything is beneficial. With the emphasis on the second half – not everything is beneficial Teachers are encouraged to see a person not an individual in others – a student, an athlete, an amateur. And to remember that physical exercising is the

¹¹ School sports is a part of physical education both in terms of its meaning and its essence. The very meaning of the term *Sports in schools* certainly implies different aims and objects. A significant argument over the term for this important element of physical education took place in Serbia in the late 20th century. Fortunately, the opinion that the term *school sports* was more relevant and better reflecting its aims and objects within physical education prevailed.

¹² Theories of the development of physical culture that is, physical education and sports are: biocentrism, ethnocentrism, egocentrism, anthropocentrism and theanthropocentrism. See: Nenad Živanović, On Physical Education in *The History of Physical Education in Europe*, pages 3-19 for more details.

most nutritious food needed not only by a person's bodily being. Physical exercising is not only characterized by the extent and intensity of exercising but also by emotional relation to physical exercising.

The development of the theory of theanthropocentrism was partly a response to the ideas found in theology (ecumenism) and sociology (from the rule of law through to "the Bologna process"). Those new trends were described by Father Paisios¹³ (at the end of the 20th century):

"The European mind spreads the idea that even spiritual matters can come into the Common Market."

Indeed, the wish to fit everything in the framework of rationalism is increasingly reflected in the regulations at the level of the European Union. However, just as one cannot find a person in those regulations, so too a man's personality cannot be found in sports in terms of its European concept of physical culture. An individual and individualism as one of the desirable thoughts in the New Ager are instead insisted on.

This is why the Theory of theanthropocentrism insists on the person and prompts reasoning that physical exercise is nutritious food for every single man. Here, it should be noted that in his mature creative and research period even Olof Astrand himself, as one of the most outstanding world experts, rejected his studies and results of the studies. Fortunately for our profession, Olaf Astrand turned to a person in man and recommended physical activity – exercising at least 30 minutes a day in the most suitable form and schedule at a particular time. The benefits of physical activity – exercising recognized by Olaf Astrand raise hope that it is never too late to wake up and look at reality with eyes wide open.

And the reality implies that every man is a unique and unrepeatable person and not just a tiny lonely individual atom wondering around virtual space. The reality also shows that it is time to recognize the fact that freedom has its roots in our obligation to see that other people are persons. And, according to Solzhenitsyn, to see freedom *as a self-sacrifice for the sake of others*.

Theanthropocentrism both as a theory and a practice is based on the following simple principles:

- **Freedom** – in a constant synergy with duties and self-giving to others;
- **Physical exercise** – as nutritious food for a human being;

¹³ Father Paisios, ... page 352.

- **The Teacher** – who can see a person in another man.

These three simple principles, each on its own and all the three together, represent the light of theanthropocentrism whereas theanthropocentrism itself is the *source* in our profession.

HOW TO KEEP ON?

A long and turbulent history of human society indicates that man has always been under the influence of various philosophies and various social relationships. Democracy and freedom, justice and right to freedom of choice were talked about as early as the age of slavery. All the different views of man and his personality were also reflected in our profession, physical culture that is physical education and sports.

In the times we have left behind the idea of man – *off all things the measure is man*, mostly dominated physical culture as well. Most approaches to the development of physical culture, each of which treated man in its own way, are based on this idea. However, they all have one common characteristic: they all consider man as an individual. Contrary to ethnocentrism, egocentrism and anthropocentrism which treat man as an individual theanthropocentrism and partly biocentrism recognize man as a person. Those very different views of man make a distinction between them.

Rationalism that is, *the enlightenment* as it is very often called has a quite aggressive attitude towards any other different opinion. Rationalism supported by the enlightenment as a very important movement of the 18th century but also of the following centuries highly praised ratio, and man as well. The man who was raised so high forgot who and what he was, became arrogant and started to claim available opportunities. Therefore he disliked any people of different opinion and considered them unenlightened and old-fashinsned but also dangerous for the peace they found with their ratio.

Rationalism in physical culture has structured its view of man and his need for physical exercise. Carefully directed by various marketing campaigns ratio has structured the idea of the necessity of developing cults as well as respect and acceptance of cults. Thus: **the cult of body, the cult of sports result and the cult of profit** have become beacons of light for many people not only in sports and physical education but also in filling in virtual time the modern world encounters.

All this is, of course, supported by man's drive for narcissism, exhibitionism and even body sale.¹⁴

In addition, *positivism* as one of the rationalism derivate had a significant impact on research in physical education and sports. Fortunately, Karl Popper contributed with his works in philosophy to lower and gradually terminate the wave of positivism.

Contrary to the ideas which rationalism and all its derivate offered to man theanthropocentrism offers something completely different. Instead of the perception of man as *the measure of all things* theanthropocentrism proposed the perception of *a God-man as the measure of all things*. Because man can become accomplished and worthy of the name only in the union with God.

This can be seen in physical culture through its relation to man and his need for physical exercising as nutritious food. And without this nutritious food man would not be able to survive and in our age in particular. A quick glance at the impact of technology on man's life is enough to understand how serious the current situation is. *The New Age* including new technologies surrounds man with its virtual reality. It makes man feel like a part of the community but it is actually just a shadow of real life like shadows in Plato's allegory of the cave.¹⁵

Theoanthropocentrism as a theory and practice of physical culture offers a completely different approach to physical exercising. A significant support was provided by Olaf Astrand, an internationally recognized expert, who realized *the benefits of physical exercising as nutritious food for man*.

If man with his knowledge and Love climbs so high as to have a better view, then he will easily see a man as the person – unique and unrepeatable. And the person, fragile and delicate, woven from love can also see persons in other people. This is not just a phrase but a true which can be realized only after man has stepped away, intentionally or accidentally, from high technology and his "smart" telephone.

Physical exercising can help with this.

When we draw parallels between the ideas of rationalism and theanthropocentrism and their views of man it can be said that – rationalism and

¹⁴ See: Nenad Živanović, *The Apology of Physical Exercise* for details. Panoptikum, Niš, 2011 for details.

¹⁵ Photos of young people, which can also be found on the Internet, taken in museums, restaurants, parks, ... show that although they are together every single of them is preoccupied with their "smart" phones! They do not talk, they do not notice others around them because they have "moved" into their virtual world.

theoanthropocentrism are two different views of and approaches to man in modern times. The first one relies on **pride** and the latter one relies on **Love**.

It is up to man himself to choose his way.

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ФИЗИЧКА КУЛТУРА ИЗМЕЂУ РАЦИОНАЛИЗМА И ТЕОАНТРОПОЦЕНТРИЗМА

САЖЕТАК

Физичка култура, са човеком у свом средишту, била је и остала део и пратилац друштвених прилика и неприлика у различитим временима и епохама. Без обзира на потребу да своју теорију и праксу прилагођава (за)датим захтевима времена и друштвених прилика у тим временима, увек је била разапета између рационализма и теоантропоцентризма. Још од времена Питагоре, Епикура, Платона, касније Оригена и неоплатониста, и Декартовог „Мислим, дакле постојим“, рационализам и његово десно крило просветитељство орали су дубоке бразде (и) у пољу физичке културе. О резултату свеопштег деловања рационалиста велики Његош је у својој *Лучи микроkozма* дао јасну оцену: „Питагоре и ти, Епикуре, ... Ви сте људско име унизили.“ Заиста, довољан је и летимичан поглед на данашња дешавања и развојни пут спорта и физичког вежбања, па да се уверимо у истинитост ових речи.

А са друге стране, теоантропоцентризам својом теоријом и праксом враћа наду да *није све пропало, кад пропало све је* (Р. П. Ного). *Теоантропоцентризам*, или Богочовекоцентризам, како би још могао да се именује, човеку прилази с Љубављу и знањем да је физичка вежба благодатна храна бићу човека. И да му је та храна дата како би могао да овлада добрима, од Свестворитеља дариваним, да се учврсти, оснажи и обожи.

Зато можемо да кажемо да су рационализам и теoантропоцентризам два погледа и два приступа човеку (и) у савременом добу. Иза првог стоји *гордост*, иза другог *Љубав*. На човеку је да изабере пут којим ће ићи.

Кључне речи: физичка вежба, просветитељство, култура

ФИЗИЧЕСКАЯ КУЛЬТУРА МЕЖДУ РАЦИОНАЛИЗМОМ И АНТРОПОЦЕНТРИЗМОМ

АННОТАЦИЯ

Физическая культура с человеком в ее центре всегда была неотъемлемой частью общественных событий и бед в разные времена и эпохи. Несмотря на необходимость адаптации своей теории и практики к заданным требованиям и социальным обстоятельствам определенного времени, она всегда была натянута между рационализмом и теантропос-центризмом. Рационализм и его правое крыло – Просвещение, сформировало глубокие направления в области физической культуры, (тоже) начиная с эпохи Пифагора, Эпикура, Платона, а затем Оригена и Неоплатонистов и Декарта "я думаю, поэтому я есть". Великий Негош в своем труде "Луч микромира" ясно оценил общие последствия рационализма: "Вы, Пифагор и Вы, Эпикур ... У вас унижен человек». Действительно, достаточно лишь мельком взглянуть на сегодняшние события и развитие спорта и физических упражнений, чтобы доказать правдивость этих слов.

С другой стороны, антропоцентризм с его теорией и практикой возвращает надежду на то, что не все потеряно, когда все потеряно (Р.П.Ного). Теантропосцентризм или Богочеловеческий центризм, как его можно назвать, приближается к человеку с любовью и верой в то, что физические упражнения являются Божественной пищей для человека и что пища дана ему, чтобы он мог овладеть добром, подаренным Творцом, твердо стоять, становиться сильным и божественным.

Поэтому можно сказать, что рационализм и антропоцентризм-это два взгляда и два подхода к человеку (также) в наше время. За первым стоит гордость, за вторым-любовь. Человек сам должен выбрать свой путь.

Ключевые слова: физические упражнения, просвещение, культура.

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