

**U. PORTO**



**FACULDADE DE DESPORTO**  
**UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO**

## **Physical Education and Aesthetic-Ethical Education**

Comprehensive analysis based on the contribution of teachers and researchers  
in the fields of aesthetics, ethics, sport sciences and physical education

Dissertation submitted to the doctoral examination  
in Sport Sciences in accordance to the regulations  
under Decree-law nº 74/2006 from the 24<sup>th</sup> March

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Porto, 2015

## **CATALOGUE RECORD:**

**Ávila da Costa, L. (2015).** Physical Education and Aesthetic-Ethical Education. Comprehensive analysis based on the contribution of teachers and researchers in the fields of aesthetics, ethics, sport sciences and physical education. Porto: L. Ávila da Costa. Doctoral Thesis in Sport Sciences submitted to the Faculty of Sport of the University of Porto.

Keywords: SPORT, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AESTHETICS, ETHICS, AESTHETIC-ETHICS.

In memory of Professor Paulo Cunha e Silva, who has left us too early but who remains in the memory of whoever met him, and in every work in this academic field that he dared to found and create, with courage, irreverence and a very rare enlightened spirit.



The author of this study has been granted a doctoral scholarship financed by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia – FCT (Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology) (SFRH / BD / 79884 / 2011).





## Acknowledgements

For You who look at me even when I forget You, who take care of me when I am not aware, who enlighten my life and fulfil it while I exhaust and empty myself in each step of it.

Yes! For You! Because it is the intuition of Your presence that leads me to search for meaning in every little thing and every experience. And, above all, because in an incomprehensible act of love You offer me, day after day, the company of good people who enlarge my small heart.

I will never be able to thank You or them, with justice and dignity, for enriching and enlighten my life so much.

I here leave some lines, as a gesture of thankfulness, which represent what I really offer you - dear Felipe, dear parents, grandparents, brothers and nephews, my whole family, my friends, my mentors and research/work colleagues - which is not just this thesis and my working days, but mainly my daily struggle to honour this life, thus trying to honour the huge Gift of your presence:

### Honrar La Vida - Mercedes Sosa

No! Permanecer y transcurrir  
No es perdurar, no es existir  
Ni honrar la vida!

Hay tantas maneras de no ser  
Tanta conciencia sin saber  
Adormecida

Merecer la vida, no es callar y consentir  
Tantas injusticias repetidas  
Es una virtud, es dignidad  
Y es la actitud de identidad  
Más definida!

Eso de durar y transcurrir  
No nos da derecho a presumir  
Porque no es lo mismo que vivir  
Honrar la vida!

### Honouring Life - Mercedes Sosa

No! Remaining and going by  
It isn't enduring; neither existing  
Nor honouring life!

There are many ways of not being  
So much conscience unknowingly  
Dormant

Deserving life isn't shutting up and allowing  
So much unfairness  
It's virtue, it's dignity  
And it's the most defined  
Identity attitude!

That enduring and going by  
Gives us no right to brag  
Because it isn't the same living than  
Honouring life!

No! Permanecer y transcurrir  
No siempre quiere sugerir  
Honrar la vida!

Hay tanta pequeña vanidad  
En nuestra tonta humanidad  
Enceguecida

Merecer la vida es erguirse vertical  
Más allá del mal, de las caídas  
Es igual que darle a la verdad  
Y a nuestra propia libertad,  
La bienvenida!

Eso de durar y transcurrir  
No nos da derecho a presumir  
Porque no es lo mismo que vivir  
Honrar la vida!

No! Remaining and going by  
Not always wants to arise  
Honouring life!

There's so many little vanities  
On our stupid humanity  
Blinded

Deserving life is standing tall  
Far-off the evil, of failures  
It's like giving the truth  
And our own freedom,  
Which is so welcomed!

That enduring and going by  
Gives us no right to brag  
Because it isn't the same living than  
Honouring life!

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## ABSTRACT

The research in the fields of sport's aesthetics and ethics has been shown a significant growth in the last decades, being the ethics of sports, reflected on the significant number of scientific and academic publications in this field, the main subject of concern between philosophers of sport. Traditionally studied separately, it has not been yet explored enough how aesthetics and ethics relate to each other in sports, and even less its concrete repercussions in a pedagogical approach to sports, especially in physical education. The premise that education through sports in general, and physical education in particular, are important elements in the global education of children and young people is theoretical and generally accepted. Considering aspects of this subject that go far beyond its more functional and hygienist criteria, the purpose of this work is to understand the potentialities of physical education as a vehicle for the development of aesthetic-ethical education in students. We started with an analysis of the existing literature in the context of aesthetics in general, aesthetics of sport, ethics in general and ethics of sport, in order to increase the knowledge regarding the state-of-the-art in these domains opening the way for the consideration of an aesthetic-ethics of sports and physical education. The qualitative research, with a hermeneutic and phenomenological approach, assumed a descriptive and exploratory character, due to the conducting of nineteen semi-structured interviews with experienced teachers and researchers from the fields of aesthetics, ethics, sports sciences and physical education. These interviews were submitted to a thematic analysis and discussion of its content, in which we could conclude that sport has a relevant axiological role in the education of students' sensibility, for both aesthetic and ethical values. It also allowed us to conclude that a relevant part of the physical education content with aesthetic potential has a strong ethical nature and vice-versa, thus legitimizing the explicit pedagogical approach of an aesthetics-ethics of physical education. Such approach demands for the understanding of some internal elements of sport's experience with a particular pedagogical relevance, such the understanding of the beauty-good-clean triad, and the educational aesthetic-ethical emphasis that can be given to specific sporting experiences, such as vulnerability, affection, identity and competition, in which, overextending the purposes of the mere development of motor and functional competence, we can promote the flourishing of students' sensibility to the aesthetic-ethical experience of sport, and through it, of the world and life.

**Keywords: SPORTS, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AESTHETICS, ETHICS, AESTHETIC-ETHICS.**



## RESUMO

A investigação no campo da estética e da ética do desporto demonstrou nas últimas décadas um forte crescimento, assumindo a ética, contudo, um maior protagonismo e volume nas publicações científicas dedicadas à filosofia do desporto. Abordadas, por tradição, separadamente, são escassos os estudos que aprofundam a relação entre estética e ética no desporto, verificando-se uma grande incipiência ao nível da sua repercussão e investimento num olhar pedagógico sobre o desporto e, especialmente, sobre a educação física.

A premissa de que a educação pelo desporto em geral e a educação física em particular constituem elementos importantes na formação integral de crianças e jovens é, teórica e globalmente aceite. Considerando aspetos da disciplina que extrapolam os seus critérios funcionais e higienistas, o objetivo deste trabalho foi compreender as potencialidades da educação física enquanto veículo de uma educação estético-ética dos alunos. Partiu-se de uma análise da literatura nos âmbitos da estética, da ética, e da estética e ética do desporto, para se ampliar os conhecimentos relativos ao estado da arte nestes domínios e equacionar uma estético-ética do desporto e da educação física. A pesquisa, de natureza qualitativa, com uma abordagem hermenêutica e fenomenológica, assumiu um carácter descritivo e exploratório, pela realização de dezanove entrevistas semiestruturadas a professores e investigadores experientes nos campos da estética, da ética, das ciências do desporto e da educação física. Da análise, interpretação e discussão temática do conteúdo das entrevistas concluiu-se que o desporto possui um importante papel pedagógico no desenvolvimento da sensibilidade dos alunos aos valores estéticos e éticos. Concluímos também que parte relevante do conteúdo da educação física com potencial estético possui uma forte natureza ética e vice-versa, legitimando assim o tratamento pedagógico de uma estético-ética da educação física, que por apelar a elementos centrais e essenciais à natureza desta disciplina, não pode ser negligenciada. Tal tratamento requer a compreensão de elementos internos da realidade desportiva com especial pertinência pedagógica, nomeadamente a compreensão da tríade belo-bom-limpo, e a atribuição de enfoque educativo estético-ético a experiências específicas da prática desportiva, como a vulnerabilidade, a afetividade, a identidade e a competição, que, extrapolando os propósitos de desenvolvimento de uma competência meramente motora e funcional, permitem promover no aluno o florescimento da sua sensibilidade à experiência estético-ética do desporto, e através dela, do mundo e da vida.

**Palavras-chave: DESPORTO, EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA, ESTÉTICA, ÉTICA, ESTETICO-ÉTICA.**



## **ABBREVIATIONS**

OSS0- Outside Sport Sciences Test Interviewee

OSS1 - Outside Sport Sciences First Interviewee

OSS2 - Outside Sport Sciences Second Interviewee

OSS3 - Outside Sport Sciences Third Interviewee

OSS4 - Outside Sport Sciences Fourth Interviewee

OSS5 - Outside Sport Sciences Fifth Interviewee

OSS6 - Outside Sport Sciences Sixth Interviewee

ISS0 – Inside Sport Sciences Test Interviewee

ISS1 - Inside Sport Sciences First Interviewee

ISS2 – Inside Sport Sciences Second Interviewee

ISS3 – Inside Sport Sciences Third Interviewee

ISS4 – Inside Sport Sciences Fourth Interviewee

ISS5 – Inside Sport Sciences Fifth Interviewee

ISS6 – Inside Sport Sciences Sixth Interviewee

PET0 – Physical Education Teacher Test Interviewee

PET1 – Physical Education Teacher First Interviewee

PET2 – Physical Education Teacher Second Interviewee

PET3 – Physical Education Teacher Third Interviewee

PET4 – Physical Education Teacher Fourth Interviewee

PET5 – Physical Education Teacher Fifth Interviewee



## **CHAPTER I - General Introduction**

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*“We hope that when we miss rigour, we have spirit, and when we miss spirit, we have rigour. Those who have spirit achieve rigour, but the contrary is not true, because in that case philosophy without spirit is nothing.”*

(João Ricardo Moderno, 2006, p. 20)

The search for the aesthetic nature of sport, within sport's philosophy specific literature, reveals in its history diverse and scattered arguments in which we can find several paths of discussion, namely, the comparisons between sports and arts (Aspin, 1983; Frayssinet, 1968; Osterhoudt, 1991), the consideration of the athletes as artists and the analysis of sport's performance as a kind of artistic performance (Kovich, 1971; Kuntz, 1985; Lowe, 1977), the role of the spectator and the athlete in sport's aesthetic experience (Langsley, 1996; Mumford, 2011) the presence of aesthetic elements, such as drama, *mimesis*, and symbolic communication in sports movements and environments (Best, 1988; Boxill, 1988; Costa, 1990; Kreft, 2012; Masterson, 1983; Wertz, 1985), and the searching for elements and categories which characterize and found a specific field that justifies the name of aesthetics of sport (Cunha e Silva, 1999; Lacerda, 2002; Whiting and Masterson, 1974).

The significant wide-ranging map of research subjects and interests in this field of study, consequently produces some difficulties in the understanding of the meaning of an aesthetics of sports. And this difficulties are related to the challenge of identifying and defining the meaning of aesthetics itself, in general, due to its comprehensive, polymorphic and polysemic nature. Every debate on sport aesthetics, even inside a community with a high level of expertise, usually starts with a broad spectrum of questions and doubts on what aesthetics is, in fact.

Such a challenge turns wider when we consider sport's aesthetics in an educational point of view. That is when the ethics intersection appears to be unavoidable, because the education of an aesthetic sensibility is, more than everything, an education of sensing, reasoning, thinking, interpreting and judging the world (Rousseau, 2007).

In the 21st century sport's environment and culture, which is regarded by the achievement of increasingly superhuman performances, by the use of artificial means to increase the performance, through doping or other equivalent strategies, and by the fanaticism that we sometimes find in hooliganisms, for instance, it is important to question ourselves of which sport we aim to have, to support, to appreciate, and to teach, and which forms of looking and living sports matches to our educational view of it. In short, the main question that concerns us and that has concerned several sports philosophers in the last decades (e.g. Dixon, 2003; Fraleigh, 2003; Hardman, 2009; Jones, 2010; Morgan, 2004; Russel, 1999, 2007; Simon, 2000; Torres, 2009, 2012) is, in an interpretativist language, to try to find the best version or interpretation of sport and setting the internal criteria that should ground it, so we can transmit it to the next generations. And this task is unfeasible if we ignore the intersection between aesthetics and ethics of sport (Torres, 2012).

There is a visible discomfort in the approach of axiological fields such as aesthetics and ethics because, according to Eldridge (2005), it is hard for philosophical communities to comfortably deal with study objects that are not included in clearly defined spheres, as if we consider objective facts on the one side, and aspects such as taste and idiosyncrasies on the other.

Research in the field of sports aesthetics and ethics, performed with comprehensive and interpretative methods, places every researcher in a paradoxical and delicate vulnerable situation. Cunha e Silva stated that daring to interpret in scientific research means "putting ourselves in the territory of conflict and disclosing our weapons to the enemy." (Cunha e Silva, 1999, p.18). The positivist tradition usually leads common researchers to search for universal and objective theories on the object of study. The same cannot be sought by the sports philosopher or the human sciences researcher, in general, whose capacity of accepting the vulnerability of its situation is unavoidable and to who is required a special scientific humbleness (Eco, 2010).

The difficulty of analysing an object of study that means so much to us, that deeply touches us, that is almost part of us, and that thus assumes a subjective

nature (not in the common and superfluous meaning of the word, that makes it random, but in its deepest meaning, that mutually affects the subject and the object because it is deeply associated to their relation) means assuming risks. Both the subject and the object ignore how they will be affected. This vulnerability has driven away and frequently drives away researchers. This is why research in this field is often delayed and deficient, when compared to subjects that are more positivist and objective (Bento, 2011). Because, in this case, the subject is not only *in front of* the object, he *is with* the object, he is in interaction, and he is also part of that interaction, which is so many times resistant to exhaustive verbal representation and consubstantiation (Lessard-Hébert, Goyette and Boutin, 2010).

However, it is comforting and encouraging to consider that, in this case, researcher's reality is not only the studied aspect but also its own enthusiasm, intuition, and involvement, thus enlarging both the understanding field and its complexity (Sousa Santos, 2002). Therefore, will emerge "(...) *an enlarged knowledge, more formative than informative, both in the contemplation and in the transformation of the world, that creates, instead of destroying, the social skill of non-scientists, a knowledge that is emotionally involved in the enlargement and deepening of «human conversion», as seen by Dewey and Rorty.*" (Sousa Santos, 2002, p.134).

By its nature, and since this thesis aims to reveal and understand the potentialities of physical education as a vehicle for the development of an aesthetic-ethical education in students, we consider it is closely related to the substance of this type of knowledge postulated by Sousa Santos (2002).

From the formal point of view, the thesis is presented under the approval of the Faculty of Sport's ethic committee and according to the norms and guidelines for writing and presenting dissertations and reports (FADEUP, 2009), following, in terms of structure, the Scandinavian Model, considering the sequential composition of scientific articles published and submitted to journals with peer reviewing. As a consequence of the adoption of this model, the bibliographic

references are presented according to the publication guidelines of each journal and at the end of each chapter or article.

Even though it is constituted by several articles submitted and/or published in different journals, **this research, that in its essence aims a fundamental unity, has as its main purpose, and transversally to all articles, the understanding of physical education as a vehicle for an aesthetic-ethical education of the student.**

The humanistic nature of the approached content has, thus, required the use of phenomenological, hermeneutic, comprehensive and interpretative methods. For this reason, the methodology that is transversally used in all the written and published articles is based on the analysis, interpretation and debate of two types of available resources or data: those presented in literature, that is to say, the state-of-the-art (which accounts for the three first articles of this thesis); and those that result from nineteen conversations between the researchers and individuals with close and private relation with the subject (which account for the four last articles of this thesis). The interviewees were organised in three groups which represent the three main point of views or starting points under the theme. Namely: teachers/researchers outside sports sciences whose work is centred on aesthetics, ethics and philosophy of education; teachers/researchers within sports sciences whose work reveals concerns with aesthetics and ethics of sport; and physical education teachers who enable us the access to a practical knowledge emerged from their experience in reality.

To all the interviewees were presented the main goals of the work, as well as the nature of their anonymous and confidential participation and, therefore, they all declared to participate in a free and informed way.

## General organisation of the thesis

This thesis comprises five chapters.

The **first chapter** consists on the present general introduction of the thesis that aims to frame the general subject of this doctoral work, its meanings, aims, challenges and difficulties, as well as its essential constitutive organisation.

The **second chapter** consists on the group of three articles that constitute the literature review. Namely:

- The first article, entitled *“Sport and circularity between aesthetics and ethics”* whose aim was to introduce the literature review. The main purpose of this article was to understand the circular interdependency between aesthetics and ethics based on three main questions: what are the main values of sports that call for an aesthetic-ethics and what is their relationship?; What is the relationship between feeling and thinking in the aesthetic experience of sport?; Which aesthetic-ethical meanings can we find in sport as a result of the relation between sport’s gesture form and content?.

- The second article, entitled *“Educação física, estética e ética. Um ensaio sobre as possibilidades de desenvolvimento curricular das componentes estéticas e éticas na educação física”* (*“Physical education, aesthetics and ethics. An essay on the possibilities of the curricular development of the aesthetic and ethical aspects of physical education”*) developed the literature review. The main objective of this article was to try to understand to what extent aesthetics and ethics are considered at the level of the objectives and competences to be developed by students, based on the analysis of curricular contents of the elementary education levels considered in the national programme of physical education teaching in Portugal.

- The third article, aimed to be an epilogue of the literature review stage and is entitled *“Physical education as an aesthetic-ethical educational project”*. The central objective of this article was to clarify to which extent an aesthetic-ethical approach of sport in physical education can contribute to the development of

students' sensibility at four related levels - epistemic, aesthetic, ethic and social - thus contributing to their aesthetic-ethical education.

The **third chapter** consists on empirical studies, gathering the group of four articles which resulted from a hermeneutic analysis of the data collected both in literature and the interviews. Namely:

- The fourth article, which begins the analysis and debate of the interviews is entitled "*On the aesthetic potential of sports and physical education*"; the purpose of this article was to deepen how aesthetics is internal and central to sports experience, and which elements of sports and physical education lived experiences can be relevant in the promotion and development of the aesthetic sensibility of students.

- The fifth article, is included in the development of the analysis, interpretation and debate of the interviews and is entitled "*Re-envisioning the ethical potential of physical education*"; the purpose of this article was to explore to what extent ethics education through sport should overextend the functional, constituent and regulatory dimensions of sport's ethics.

- The sixth article, which approaches the conclusion of the analysis and debate of the interviews, is entitled "*On the aesthetic-ethic elements of sport*" and its main purpose was to develop an argumentation that, unlike the binary logic between aesthetics and ethics that has been used in the study of sports, systematize elements of an aesthetic-ethics of sport based on what we call the beauty-good-clean triad and the antinomies between *winning ugly* and *loosing beautifully*.

- And, the seventh and last article, which concludes the stage of analysis and debate of the interviews is entitled "Educação Física: possibilidades de uma educação estético-ética". This last article had as its main purpose revealing the main aesthetic-ethical elements of physical education, thus contributing for the aesthetic-ethical education of students' sensibility with relevance and applicability not only in sports but, above all, in life.

The **fourth chapter** is a conclusive chapter that introduces not only the conclusions of each article but that also aims to make a conclusive reflexion of

the doctoral process as a whole, over five years of work, as well as of the impact that this process had in the way of being, thinking and living of the author, as a researcher and as a person, regarding sport, education through sport, and life.

The **fifth chapter** consists on the appendix which include the interview script.

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## **CHAPTER II – Literature Review**

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## **Sport and circularity between aesthetics and ethics**

Gagliardini, M.L.; McNamee, M. J. and Lacerda, T. O. (2012). Sport and circularity between aesthetics and ethics. *Revista Portuguesa de Ciências do Desporto* [Portuguese Journal of Sports Sciences], 12 (supl.), 99-103.

([http://www.fade.up.pt/rpcd/\\_arquivo/RPCD\\_2012\\_Supl.pdf](http://www.fade.up.pt/rpcd/_arquivo/RPCD_2012_Supl.pdf))

### **Abstract:**

As a global phenomenon, sport is a complex reality that can be contemplated from multiple perspectives. The way we live out the diversity of sport's experiences has an important impact on how we experience life itself. Better understanding of the complexity of sport's experience, therefore, may reveal ways of pursuing a more full and authentic life <sup>(9, 17)</sup>. This knowledge of sport can be enriched not merely through ethical thought, but also from an aesthetic viewpoint.

Yet the study of aesthetics is not limited to the art field and can be applied in various contexts, including the context of sport <sup>(8)</sup>. In the same way, ethics does not only refer to justice, rules or even fair play - although these are dominant matters of this field of study <sup>(13)</sup>.

One might think that the full enjoyment of sport will only be related to aesthetic matters, with reference to beauty or attractiveness. Yet, the internal goods or qualities of sport, showed by the quality of sport's performances, and also the ability to recognize and understand these goods, are often critical factors on sport's enjoyment experience. In this way of thinking, sport contains itself an aesthetic-ethical circularity that is worthy of exploration.

We offer a critical reflection about this circularity, particularly in relation to the alleged circularity between the values of goodness and beauty, the interplay between feeling and thinking sportively, as well as the interplay between form and content of the sports' gestures.

**Key-words:** Sport, Aesthetics, Ethics

## Introduction

Sport is an universal and longstanding reality which provides a large and diverse kind of experiences having, therefore, a complex and open ended nature. Viewing sport from an aesthetic perspective is not simply to adopt a new point of view, but is at the same time also another way of being in the world <sup>(8)</sup>. This interaction between the way we experience sport and the way we experience life itself and the world opens the way for an ethical appreciation of the aesthetic approach to sport.

Quite, how to capture this sporting experience defies easy explanation. Bento illustrates this difficulty when he asserts:

*"When people ask me why I go to the stadium, what attracts me in a football match, I confess that I feel extremely embarrassed, not by the simplicity of the question, relevant and legitimate, but rather by the complexity and length of the answer, which being long is not a proper answer, and being too short is not also adequate, being reductive. I am looking for something that escapes me through my fingers without, however, knowing how to define it concretely."* (1, p.63).

Thus, if looking to sport through an aesthetic perspective is already complex, adding to that perspective an ethical lens, further complicates matters. How can we try to achieve this dual perspective?

It is widely agreed that there is, in sport's reality, some kind of value or values with a global and longstanding appeal or power: *"Most of people enjoy and suffer, in different ways, with sport's issues, because they willingly engage with it and with pleasure."* (17, p.15). Yet, similarly to what happens in art, this kind of convocation is realized in multiple ways, producing what Umberto Eco calls the dialogue between the work of art and the open possibilities of its interpretation <sup>(6)</sup>. This openness in the understanding of the value of sport is far from consensual – that's why people differ in their appreciation of sports, teams or players. In this way, sport's appreciation is cloaked in an apparent dichotomy being at one and the same time an experience that is both global and shared, but also particular and subjectively lived <sup>(7)</sup>.

An approach to sport of this kind, might lead us to think of sporting experience as a predominantly aesthetic problematic, because of the role aesthetic values assume on sport's appreciation, making it more attractive or susceptible to the criteria of taste. Nevertheless, without a reference to some ethical aspects of sport, such as the nature and the role of its internal goods, the understanding of the aesthetic dimension of sport can be compromised. Or so, we will attempt to argue in this paper.

It is not our intention to postulate that aesthetics and ethical appreciation and experience in sport are indistinguishable, rather to articulate an account of their interdependence. That is why we chose to use the "circularity" notion, to express a mutual implication, unlike an eventual fusion or reciprocal suppression, meaning that they are not only related, but also they circularly lead to each other and we can't know which has primacy. This circularity, can be found in three particular directions that are worthy of exploration: Which sporting values appeal our aesthetic-ethical standards, and what is their relationship?; What is the interpenetration between feeling and thinking in relation to an aesthetic-ethical appreciation of sport?; Which meanings can we find in sport, through the relation between form and content of sport's gestures?.

### **Circularity between beauty and goodness in sport**

There always is, in the relation with sport, the search for some kind of value or values that satisfy, for better or worse, our individual expectations. We assist, practice, talk, study, and dedicate time to sport, because we see in it some kind of goodness that appeals us.

For Torres <sup>(17)</sup>, among others, this valuation can assume an externalist or internalist character. It is externalist if what make us to engage with sport are its external consequences, such as the organic benefits for health, or even the moral and social values it can promote. In such a vein, sport is a mere intermediary or instrument to achieve other goods beyond sport's experience itself. It is internalist if what we look for in sport are its internal goods, that is, its own structure and

experience, its standards of excellence, providing or not the external goods referred above.

The aesthetic value of sport assumes, according to some authors, tangible manifestations, such as the search for standards of excellence, the intimacy between audience and performer, intensity, spontaneity, and playfulness <sup>(14)</sup>, the “interaction between collaborators and opposites, the permanent adaptation, (re)adaptation and combination of movements, the struggle to overcome the built difficulties by opponents, the strategies of partnership and complicity with team partners, the experience of overcome self-limitations and game’s difficulties.” <sup>(10)</sup>, but also the appreciation of technical levels, the choices and tactical options which leads to plays, the effectiveness and economy of gestures, and the permanent communicative environment <sup>(9)</sup>. Masterson <sup>(12)</sup>, for example, argues that art is created in sport when performers’ actions show the sublimity of human competence where we can see some aesthetic elements such as individual and group movements, attack and defense, counterattack, rhythm, color, composition, elegance, style, grace, power and economy. According to Boxill <sup>(2)</sup>, categories such as competition and victory associate to transcendence and overcoming categories to exalt the aesthetic potential of sport, in the same way that rules’ inherent principles provides a framework to understand the excellence of performance.

We know that the above referred categories demand for an aesthetic and ethical consideration that goes beyond the mere appreciation of pure beauty or regulated goods or justice, respectively, stating, then, aspects that in some way can contribute to the elevation of the aesthetic and ethical content of sport, which we can call beauty or goodness, if we have a comprehensive understanding of it.

Thus, even though, in one hand, it may be widely agreed the identification of some kind of beauty and goodness in relation to the afore mentioned categories, making them elements particularly attractive in sport, on the other hand, the identification of specific aesthetic or ethical characteristics of each one of those categories is not straightforward. Aspects of objects or experiences such as intensity, color, rhythm, grace, style, elegance, movements’ combination,

playability, adaptation and re-adaptation, movements, power - can be identified as aesthetic, since they can provide a more immediate appreciation of beauty, or ugliness, or unity, discordance and so on, in sport. In the same way, the struggle to overcome obstacles, the partnership strategies and complicity, the transcendence and overcoming of self's and others' limitations, the ability to freely make decisions and tactical choices, the competition, and the challenge - refer to ethical dimensions of sports experience, since in some way they are related to performance's and sportsperson's struggles, toward to some kind of a notion of the good in sport. Yet, this type of categorization is open to dispute.

Can not the playfulness, the composition, the style, or the power of sports' performances assume an ethical dimension, contributing for the elevation of performance's quality, and for the standards of excellence of some sporting activity? Cannot also the competition or the struggle to overcome difficulties be important factors on the beauty of sporting performance in the same way they are for the ethical dimension?

This discussion becomes even more significant if we take aspects whose nature cannot be precisely defined or exclusively categorized as aesthetic or ethical. In this context, we wonder about aspects such as the interaction between collaborators and opponents, technical skills, communication, victory and defeat, demand for standards of excellence, intimacy between audience and performer, spontaneity, categories that can assume a so deeply aesthetic character as much as ethical.

This does not mean that aesthetics and the ethical considerations are totally dependent in sporting contexts, and much less they are indistinct from each other, but it does mean that it is a pertinent and inescapable task to try to deeply understand their apparent relation.

## **The circularity between feeling and thinking: body-mind consubstantiality**

*O Homem é o ser que conhece como é o ser que ama* <sup>(3)</sup>

*Men is the being who knows as he is the being who loves* <sup>(3)</sup>

Because sporting's experience resides in particular living bodies, it is usually taken as predominantly physical. It is not a coincidence that we call "physical education" to the discipline aimed to teach sport, or "physical activity" to sustain an individual's regular sporting practice.

The contemporary body experience tends to divide the body in relation to its senses, polarizing them, and separating them from mind and its attributes. This polarization of sensory experience is, moreover, analogous to the fragmentation to which thought has been submitted.

Given sports' nature, the assignment of a protagonist role to the body is immediate or intuitive. And in fact, the «bodily» dimension is distinctive and essential in sport. Nevertheless, to consider the sporting body as mere physicality is to invite conceptual difficulties of a reductionist kind when it comes to understanding as corporeality more fully.

The complexity of sport's experience, as well as the aesthetic involvement conveyed by it, demands the complementarity of the senses, as an indispensable condition of the harmonious performance of human faculties, providing, from the unity of sensibility and mind, the knowledge of and living within sport's universe. That is why, in a football game for example, we do not only see the opposing contestant making a goal against our team, but we also feel it while they pass through us as we try unsuccessfully to stop them. That unity is also experienced as we listen to their victory screams after the subsequent goal. Our understanding is a felt one, not simply a cognitively understood one.

When in movement, the sporting body begins a particular relation in the world, affecting it and being affected by it, occupying it and simultaneously welcoming

it. It inaugurates not only an anthropology sustained on the body and mind union, but also the aesthetic experience of the world which is individually felt. That feeling is also a relational and communicative experience, whether it is with the audience if we're in a stadium, or with nature, if we are running at the park, or even with different materials, spaces and contexts if we are in the pentathlon. At first, it can be a relationship with the «self», promoting singularity. But also it is a relationship with the «other» - the others that I am, and the other that the world is as well, being consequently, an open door to otherness and to self-polymorphism, by the unlimited possibilities of one being, such as being in movement or standing, being dynamic or static, being lonely or in relation to others.

Approaching the development of a moving body and, therefore, a body that needs to adapt itself to exterior conditions, or a body who transgresses his *place*, sport allows the person to occupy and even to transform himself into another *places* (new and different, which becomes his new *place*), re-dimensioning the idea of *place* itself into a plural and relational level <sup>(4)</sup>. According to this idea, the sporting body, as an explorer and an occupant of new *places*, expresses a particular body-mind relationship, as well as a relation between the «self» and the world, emerging as a privileged field of knowledge by the possibility of belonging and habiting new shapes, new *places*, and by welcoming the person on the completeness of his corporeality, on a circularity between feeling and thinking. Thus, crossing his frontiers and his *place*, the sporting body is also an available body to the *other*, a body who is predisposed to action, daring to “Outrar” (using the Fernando Pessoa’s Portuguese verb, which although may not be understood or mean something different in English, intent to mean in Portuguese “othering”, that is, transform himself, being the other, and being the world).

And being in the world surpasses by far the mere physicality of being, in the same way that it goes beyond the mere addition of feeling’s and thinking’s faculties which, being circularly related, produce a new and superior way of being in the world. For this reason, being corporeality in sport is to be sensitively thinking and reflectively body on a complex unity.

Paradoxically, sport is often seen as sculptor of the body. It is pertinent that we also understand it however as a sculptor of soul through the body and of the body through soul. Understood thus, sport animates the body, giving to it a metaphysical dimension (on the etymological meaning of the word soul - «anima») and embodying the soul, bonding them on what Pereira calls thinking/creating/living/knowing in consubstantiality of human capabilities <sup>(15)</sup>.

Therefore, the aesthetic experience offered by sport's experience allows access to a knowledge of sport which is experienced and lived, and not only contemplated, because it is felt, thought, and embodied, crossing the boundaries of the thinking / knowing *about* sport giving way to thinking / living *in* sport. In the image of what Jaspers <sup>(cit. by 16)</sup> describes in relation to art, we can say that only the thinking / living in sport enables man, through intuition, to guide his looking for transcendence, building himself in an aesthetic and ethic way by the conciliation between sensibility and rationality, logic and affection, on the development of what Pereira calls a «lived-felt-body» <sup>(15)</sup>.

### **On the circularity between sportive gesture's form and content: inseparability between process and purpose**

There are important elements of sport that cannot be reached by those who contemplate only its appearance. From this point of view, sport would be nothing more than empty and innocuous sequences of movements <sup>(5)</sup>. There always are in sport's behaviors specific meanings, that can be expressed in the intentionality of movements, since in the specific field of performance, athletes always have a technical, tactical, psychological, strategic or even spiritual intention in their acts. Only in this way we can solve the typical problems of each sport that we voluntarily play. Thus, in the same way that sport's beauty needs a meaning, being more than empty gestures or hollow appearances, sport purposes and intentions need human bodies to express themselves and being aesthetically perceived.

It is no coincidence that we hear a lot of times spectators exclaim “How beautiful!” to mention a well performed situation in sport. In the same way, the ugliness seems to contaminate the ethical value of performances <sup>(11)</sup>, since contrary to art – where ugly may be aesthetically valued, and the unshaped, the abject, the repulsive, the disgusting, etc., attract artists, critics and audience – in sport this valuation is hard to make sense of. It’s because of this that we hear in the stadium remarks such “What ugly/dreadful play!”, when some player acts unfairly, or chooses the palpably wrong option, or fails to exploit an obvious opening to their advantage. For example, if a gymnast performs a new triple somersault with a new movement, never seen before, the huge potential aesthetic impact of that moment can be, for sure, compromised by the feeling of deception, if we know that he only did that, because he has put a spring under the floorboard. Maybe this would not be a problem if we were in a circus. But sport demands for a congruence between the appearance of performances and its meanings.

Therefore, the aesthetic appreciation of sport seems to have a strong ethical character showed in the peculiar interaction between form and content of the sporting gesture. Thus, the enjoyment of beauty in sport involves not only the sensitive capture of a visible idea of beauty, but also requires an understanding of the meanings that such idea can represent. Similarly, the experience of the ugly in sport shows this particular relationship between form and content in sport’s experience that reveals itself, in this way, as aesthetic-ethical.

In an exploratory study about ugliness in sport <sup>(11)</sup>, 225 undergraduate and master degree Portuguese students of sport and physical education were asked about the contribution of some concepts regarding “the ugly of sport”. From this study emerged, almost unanimously, “cheating”, “doping”, “lack of fair play” and “violence” as the biggest contributors to ugliness in sports. Having these notions a strong ethical connotation, it is evident that something which can be taken as ugly in sport is not only perceived by the senses as ugly, but also needs to be understood as such through its underlying meanings. Thus, it was really interesting to observe that it is not enough to present a “negative” concept, associated to “negative” feelings, to find concepts which contribute for the aesthetic experience of ugliness, since concepts like “pain”, “effort” and

“suffering” did not get any type of consensus between interviewers, not being considered under the aspect of ugliness in sport. This intuition from the Portuguese students justifies and confirms why we can find incredibly beautiful Derek Redmond’s performance in the Olympics of 1992 while, probably against Olympic formal rules, he limped, with the help of his father, until the goal of his running, stating some of the great Olympic values, such as overcoming, resilience, never give up, and so on, even not having the expected results.

The consideration of these aspects highlights the need for beauty in sport to be contemplated through the beauty and also the goodness of human behaviors, reflecting not only the visible character of experience, but also, and circularly, its symbolic dimension <sup>(15)</sup>.

Thus, the added meaning to sport’s body gesture and the reciprocal corporality given to sport’s purposes and intentions, allows a complex inscription of corporality on thought and of thought on corporality which enriches so much the aesthetic-ethical value of sport.

In this way we can understand that sport becomes an evidence of the complexity of human experience, which is circularly physical and symbolical.<sup>1</sup>

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## **Educação Física, Estética e Ética: um ensaio sobre as possibilidades de desenvolvimento curricular das componentes estéticas e éticas na educação física**

Gagliardini Graça M.L. and Lacerda T.O. (2012) Educação Física, Estética e Ética. Um ensaio sobre as possibilidades de desenvolvimento curricular das componentes estéticas e éticas na educação física. *Revista Mineira de Educação Física* (Edição Especial), 243–253. [Physical Education, Aesthetics and Ethics. An essay about curricular development possibilities of aesthetic and ethic contents in physical education. Minas Gerais Physical Education Review 1(Special edition): 243-253].

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### **Resumo**

A educação física possui, segundo Carreiro da Costa (1987), uma importante potencialidade de transmissão de valores estéticos e éticos. Contudo estes são, na atualidade, âmbitos de investigação em desporto pouco explorados, ou mesmo negligenciados (Bento, 2011). Para aprofundar esta problemática, procedemos a uma análise do currículo português de educação física para o ensino básico, ao nível das competências essenciais, gerais e específicas, procurando identificar todos os aspetos que remetem para o universo da estética e da ética, analisando também, por meio de um paralelismo com as disciplinas inseridas na educação artística, quais as componentes estéticas e éticas que a disciplina de educação física, pela sua natureza, pode e deve potenciar.

**Palavras-Chave:** educação física, estética, ética

### **Abstract**

Physical Education has, according to Carreiro da Costa (1987), an important task of aesthetic and ethical values' transmission. However these investigation fields are not much explored in our days, and sometimes they are fully ignored (Bento, 2011). In order to a deeper understanding of this problem, we made an analysis of physical education Portuguese programs, between the first and the ninth grade, its main and specific competences, trying to identify every aspect possibly

linked with the aesthetic and ethical issues. Also through a search of possible parallelisms with artistic education subjects, we tried to recognize what are the aesthetic and ethic components that physical education, by its nature, can and should promote and develop in students.

**Key-words:** physical education, aesthetics, ethics.

### **Introdução, Objetivo e Métodos**

Quando pensamos em educação, a questão mais primária que devemos colocar-nos é «Que homem cumpre formar em cada homem?», sendo que aquilo que conseguimos responder a esta pergunta deve constituir os pilares fundamentais da atuação de qualquer professor, escola ou sistema educacional. Deste modo, quando falamos em educação, queiramos ou não, falamos da criação da forma humana, isto é, de um processo eminentemente humanizador (Bento, 2004).

Para Santos (1982), educar consiste em dar um mundo a alguém que não o tem, «imundando-o» e conferindo-lhe a possibilidade de construção do seu próprio mundo. Numa perspetiva pluridimensional da educação, o professor ou educador assume um papel fundamental na tarefa de proporcionar uma formação alargada – um «mundo» – e acompanhar o crescimento dos alunos rumo ao ser pessoa, sendo (Patrício, 1996).

Destarte, a educação trata não apenas da transmissão de um conhecimento instrutivo, mas sobretudo da formação da pessoa humana pelo legado de uma escala de valores que se pretende ser refletida e conscientemente interiorizada (Werneck 1991).

Ao professor de educação física, coloca-se então a seguinte questão: que valores podem ser transmitidos pela disciplina de educação física que contribuam positivamente para este processo de humanização?

Para Lacerda (2002), o desporto constitui um intermediário cultural relevante, capaz de iniciar o indivíduo na sociabilidade, na moralidade e na beleza, como finalidade da mais elevada educação, permitindo-lhe comportar-se de maneira

livre e desinteressada ao assumir um novo modo de estar no mundo, que contempla os valores hedonísticos, estéticos, éticos, lógicos e práticos dos quais está impregnado.

Segundo Bento (2011), apesar de a investigação em desporto ter vindo a negligenciar os âmbitos da estética e da ética, por força da necessidade de construção de pilares científicos que priorizaram outros âmbitos de investigação, nomeadamente áreas mais relacionadas com as questões da saúde, olhar o desporto pela perspectiva estética e ética é um exercício de enorme pertinência, necessidade e aplicabilidade. Para este autor, “O desporto carece de perguntas que o interroguem fora da polarização do preto ou branco, do pró ou contra” (Bento, 1995, p.270). O desporto necessita, então, de ver contempladas questões que se colocam frequente e insistentemente a quem lhe procura outras abordagens (Lacerda, 2002), nomeadamente a abordagem da estética e da ética.

Procurando dar início à procura de respostas para tais inquietações, o objetivo central deste trabalho é compreender em que medida a estética e a ética são contempladas ao nível das competências a desenvolver nos níveis de ensino básico previstas no currículo nacional do ensino da educação física em Portugal. Para dar resposta a este objetivo, o percurso metodológico definido assenta numa análise documental do currículo nacional do ensino básico, ao nível das competências gerais e específicas a desenvolver, procurando identificar todos os sinais que remetem para o universo da estética e da ética, quer na disciplina de educação física, quer, e com o objetivo de uma reflexão comparativa e compreensiva, nas disciplinas inseridas na educação artística (expressão plástica e educação visual; expressão e educação musical; expressão dramática/teatro; expressão físico-motora/dança). A análise foca-se apenas no ensino básico dado ter em vista uma delimitação mais concreta do problema de investigação, bem como pelo facto de este ser o único nível de estudos onde quer a educação física, quer a educação artística são de obrigatoriedade curricular para todos os alunos, viabilizando também, deste modo, o próprio processo de comparação. Seguidamente, e porque o mundo, segundo Sousa Santos (1987), bem como a lógica científica pós-moderna, é comunicação,

procedeu-se a uma reflexão, em forma de ensaio, sobre as possibilidades de desenvolvimento curricular das componentes estéticas e éticas na educação física, através da triangulação, comunicação e confronto dos dados provenientes da análise documental com o ponto de vista de autores/investigadores que se têm debruçado sobre a temática.

Procurámos então, através da delimitação do objetivo central e do estabelecimento do percurso metodológico, dar resposta às seguintes questões de partida: Quais os conteúdos curriculares da educação física em Portugal, ao nível das competências essenciais, que remetem para a educação estética e ética?; Qual a relevância que assumem no contexto do currículo global?; Que aspetos curriculares, ao nível das competências essenciais, estão presentes no currículo das disciplinas de educação artística e são passíveis de aplicação também na educação física?; Que outros aspetos específicos da educação física podem promover a educação estética e ética e que não se encontram atualmente no currículo nacional?

### **Estética, ética e educação física: que competências?**

Em consonância com a perspetiva intrinsecamente axiológica de educação sobre a qual temos vindo a discorrer neste artigo, o currículo nacional português para o ensino básico estabelece competências gerais e específicas a alcançar até ao final deste nível de ensino, estando elas referenciadas a um conjunto de princípios e valores gerais, nos quais as dimensões estética e ética são até alvo de uma referência concreta, nomeadamente, “O desenvolvimento do sentido de apreciação estética do mundo” e “A valorização das dimensões relacionais da aprendizagem e dos princípios éticos que regulam o relacionamento com o saber e com os outros” (Ministério da Educação, 2011, p.15). Pretende-se, de acordo com o programa, que os alunos desenvolvam neste nível de ensino, através de todas as disciplinas e atividades curriculares, a autonomia, a responsabilidade e demais virtudes como o esforço, a persistência, o respeito pelos outros e a iniciativa, aspetos que remetem para a dimensão ética da educação, bem como a criatividade, a utilização de diferentes tipos de linguagem em função das

exigências da realidade e a plasticidade, dimensões que invocam competências estéticas, sendo também referidos a capacidade de observação da realidade e, do mesmo modo, o espírito crítico e de questionamento, que permita a construção autónoma de ideias e princípios próprios, que convocam valores situados nas fronteiras e relações entre a estética e a ética.

Contudo, é conferida a cada disciplina ou atividade curricular o desenvolvimento destas competências gerais através da sua intervenção específica. Deste modo, tão importante como analisar os objetivos e princípios gerais do currículo português, é descodificar de que modo especificamente a educação física e, por análise comparada, as disciplinas de educação artística, pelo seu desenvolvimento curricular específico, lhes pretendem dar resposta.

Uma análise ao currículo nacional do ensino básico português, concretamente no que diz respeito às competências essenciais e objetivos a desenvolver através da educação física, imediatamente nos desperta para o destaque e relevo que a qualidade de vida, numa perspetiva de saúde, bem-estar, aptidão física, higiene e segurança, assume. No conjunto de finalidades estipuladas, como seria de esperar em função da especificidade da disciplina em questão, encontramos repetidamente referido o melhoramento da aptidão física pelo desenvolvimento das capacidades físicas, o desenvolvimento multilateral, a aprendizagem das diferentes atividades físicas com particular enfoque nas questões técnicas, táticas, regulamentares e organizativas, sendo desejável que todas as situações de aprendizagem proporcionem que “todos os alunos tenham o máximo tempo de atividade motora significativa e especificamente orientada para o alcance das competências.” (Ministério da Educação, 2011, p. 223).

Estas são, sem dúvida, particularidades que a educação física pode oferecer no processo de educação das crianças e jovens. Tendo como objeto central de ensino o desporto, a educação física representa uma disciplina privilegiada para o desenvolvimento de competências motoras que podem ter um enorme impacto na saúde e na literacia e cultura desportivas. No entanto, e procurando ultrapassar uma perspetiva exclusivamente tecnicista e higienista da educação física, que embora «física», por ser «educação», extrapola os limites do mero

físico, continua a ser necessário que comecemos a olhar para o desporto enquanto “artefacto para a beleza e elevação do corpo, um espaço de criação e apresentação, de receção e fruição de arte, quer como praticante, quer como espectador.” (Bento, 2007 p. 17). Para tal, há outras competências não menos relevantes a considerar no ensino da educação física, mas... que competências?

Para Lacerda (2004), a educação estética através do desporto permite desenvolver capacidades como o ver, o ouvir, não apenas de modo sensorial, mas pela invocação de competências subjetivas no âmbito da afetividade, abrindo portas às possibilidades de interpretação e experienciação global do desporto. Estas competências, embora presentes no currículo nacional de educação física circunscrevem-se quase exclusivamente, pelo menos de modo explícito, às atividades físicas expressivas, nomeadamente a dança, pelo desenvolvimento das capacidades técnicas, de expressividade, interpretação e composição: “As situações de exploração do movimento são típicas da dança, em que os alunos, individualmente ou em grupo, combinam movimentos locomotores e não locomotores, segundo determinado ritmo (musical ou outro), e em que o aspeto expressivo tem um relevo fundamental.” (Ministério da Educação, 2011).

Será, portanto, pertinente questionarmo-nos se apenas as atividades expressivas, no alargado espectro de atividades desportivas a ensinar na escola, revela tais potencialidades.

Por exemplo, Moderno (1998) equipara os atributos estéticos do futebol a uma obra de arte, afirmando que um golo não se reduz à forma final da imagem da bola a entrar na baliza, mas é desenhada e criada, como numa pintura, possuindo toda a imprevisibilidade de um jogo coletivo e aberto que nos capta a atenção e envolve o espírito.

No contexto da educação física, não são apenas as atividades rítmicas ou expressivas, como as danças, que despoletam a experiência estética pelo desporto.

Aspin (1974, cit. por Kirk, 1984) refere que o desporto, em geral, por manifestar padrões e qualidades estéticos, é objeto de experiência estética, evocando respostas em termos emocionais que ocorrem em concordância com certos modelos ou critérios de excelência. Estas respostas podem refletir-se, por exemplo, ao nível do prazer e do gosto na realização das atividades desportivas. No entanto, no currículo nacional, encontramos a referência ao gosto enquanto instrumento que contribui para a adoção de uma prática regular de atividade física e de um estilo de vida saudável: “Promover o gosto pela prática regular das atividades físicas e aprofundar a compreensão da sua importância como fatores de saúde (...)” (Ministério da Educação, 2011, p. 220). Também a referência ao prazer é apendiculada aos âmbitos do relacionamento interpessoal, não estando diretamente conectada com a experiência da realização desportiva *per se*: “O relacionamento interpessoal e de grupo assume importância vital (...) A qualidade deste relacionamento é uma das preocupações representada nos objetivos (...) assenta na promoção da autonomia (...) associando-se não só à melhoria da qualidade das prestações (...) mas também ao clima relacional favorável ao aperfeiçoamento pessoal e ao prazer (...)” (Ministério da Educação, 2011, p.220).

Deste modo, apesar de serem aspetos mencionados, ainda que de modo escasso, as respostas emocionais como o prazer e o gosto, quando referidos, são instrumentalizados ou secundarizados, face a objetivos aparentemente mais centrais ou relevantes, nomeadamente, a adoção de um estilo de vida saudável e a melhoria do relacionamento interpessoal, não se percebendo claramente, deste modo, a sua dimensão autotélica. Se por um lado não questionamos a relevância do gosto e do prazer para a persecução de qualquer objetivo, sendo a questão da saúde e da educação em sociedade aspetos de enorme relevância nos dias de hoje, controvertemo-nos acerca da potencialidade da educação física enquanto proporcionadora de uma experiência estética onde a fruição, o gosto, o prazer, possuem pertinência e justificação própria.

Thomas (1972, cit. por Osterhoudt, 1991) sintetiza alguns traços da experiência estética no desporto, nomeadamente, a intenção de atingir níveis de excelência, a participação livre e voluntária, o uso extraordinário do tempo e do espaço, a

afetividade, subjetividade, espontaneidade, a autenticidade, bem como o alto nível de mestria do executante.

Ao analisarmos o currículo nacional de educação física encontramos competências e finalidades que expressam alguns pontos de interface entre a estética e a ética.

A procura pela superação, a transcendência das limitações próprias e a busca da excelência e da perfeição, ainda que sempre referenciadas às possibilidades de cada aluno, como refere o currículo nacional do ensino básico (Ministério da Educação, 2011), podem também ser contemplados enquanto competências a desenvolver no quadro de uma formação estética e eticamente significativa. A perfeição/correção da realização desportiva, aliada à beleza da sua expressão, confere ao homem a abertura a uma infinidade de possibilidades de conhecimento, pondo a nu e convidando-o a cultivar o que nele falta, numa busca permanente de formas novas e superiores, melhor realizadas e mais bonitas (Bento, 2004).

Deste modo, podemos descobrir na dimensão ética da educação um campo de extrapolação da mera justiça desportiva regulamentar, do fair-play, da segurança e da higiene – principal tónica da ética do desporto referida no currículo nacional (Ministério da Educação, 2011) - pelos valores de excelência, procura pelo bem realizar do desporto, pela perfeição, pela superação e transcendência, do mesmo modo que podemos encontrar na dimensão estética uma extrapolação da mera aparência do gesto desportivo, associado apenas às atividades expressivas, encontrando na diversidade de atividades desportivas a desenvolver na escola, sentidos e significados tão profundos quanto subjetivos e singulares.

Segundo Constantino (2007), o desporto é um meio de expressão e afirmação de identidades sociais e culturais. É possível identificar no currículo português de educação física a promoção da construção do eu individual e coletivo, da solidariedade e consciência cívica, e do desenvolvimento de personalidades capazes de participar de modo autónomo, livre e responsável na sociedade (Ministério da Educação, 2011). Ora tais aspetos convocam, por um lado, o

constructo individual e social de uma hierarquia de valores, remetendo para a potencialidade de formação ética que a educação pelo desporto possui e, simultaneamente, a formação de identidades subjetivas e autênticas, abrindo portas à heterogeneidade, à diversidade e à criatividade, aspetos que remetem para a dimensão estética do desporto. Para Sobrinho Simões (*in* Maciel, 2008), uma das consequências negativas da globalização é a homogeneização das crianças, por exemplo, através da comunicação social e das brincadeiras cada vez mais pré-formatadas a que são submetidas. Ora a educação física, pelo alargado espectro de atividades que propõe, bem como pela diversidade de situações e contextos de aprendizagem que permite criar, assume um papel de relevo na promoção e desenvolvimento das competências supracitadas.

### **Educação estética e ética: o olhar plural da educação física que extrapola as fronteiras da educação artística**

A questão da educação estética e da sua interface com a ética é densamente contemplada no currículo português de educação artística, ao nível das competências essenciais a desenvolver (Ministério da Educação, 2011).

Apesar de ser possível observar no programa de educação física a alusão à operacionalização de aspetos que remetem para a educação estética e ética, como aliás é explicitado nos pontos anteriores deste trabalho, estas dimensões apresentam, contudo, um maior e mais alargado campo de potencialidades no desenvolvimento curricular da disciplina. Grande parte dos conteúdos relativos à educação estética e ética através da educação artística contemplados no currículo nacional são merecedores da nossa atenção, nomeadamente no que diz respeito à sua pertinente aplicabilidade na educação física.

Para Lacerda (2002), o estudo da estética não se reduz ao campo da arte e pode ser contemplado em diversos contextos, nomeadamente, o contexto do desporto. Paralelamente, o específico campo da ética não se refere apenas à necessidade de adoção de comportamentos cívicos em sociedade, às questões

da justiça, das regras e leis, da verdade desportiva ou do *fair-play* – não obstante estes serem temas relevantes do seu âmbito de estudo (Meindberg, 1990).

Deste modo, a linguagem e os princípios da estética e da ética aplicados à educação artística – não sendo exclusivos da arte – possuem uma enorme aplicabilidade no contexto da educação física. A leitura dos primeiros parágrafos do capítulo das competências essenciais no currículo nacional do ensino básico de educação artística transparecem-no de modo evidente: “As artes são elementos indispensáveis no desenvolvimento da expressão pessoal, social e cultural do aluno. São formas de saber que articulam imaginação, razão e emoção. Elas perpassam as vidas das pessoas, trazendo novas perspectivas, formas e densidades ao ambiente e à sociedade em que se vive.”; “A vivência artística influencia o modo como se aprende, como se comunica e como se interpretam os significados do quotidiano. Desta forma contribui para o desenvolvimento de diferentes competências e reflete-se no modo como se pensa, no que se pensa e no que se produz com o pensamento.”; “As artes permitem participar em desafios coletivos e pessoais que contribuem para a construção da identidade pessoal e social (...) (Ministério da Educação, 2011, p. 149).

Pela experiência global que oferece, integrando corpo, alma, espírito, razão, emoção, subjetividade, individualidade, coletividade, a educação física permite ao indivíduo pensar, agir e viver em rede de sentidos, proporcionando-lhe não só a aprendizagem de relação consigo mesmo em todas as suas dimensões, como também com o outro, com o espaço, a sociedade, o mundo, aquilo que Pereira denomina de «pensar/laborar/viver/conhecer em consubstancialidade» (Pereira, 2006, p.43) e que o currículo nacional do ensino básico para a educação artística define como a competência de pôr em ação “capacidades afetivas, cognitivas, cinestésicas (...) e a “interação de múltiplas inteligências.” (Ministério da Educação, 2011, p.150). Trata-se, portanto, de um processo de formação que extrapola largamente as questões meramente físicas ou corporais de desenvolvimento da aptidão física para a saúde e qualidade de vida, representando para além disso, um contexto privilegiado de desenvolvimento da sensibilidade e cultura estética e ética, fundamentais para a construção da

singularidade de cada pessoa, fomentando “a comunicação de cada um com o seu íntimo (...) um melhor *sentimento de si* (...)” alargando e redimensionando a singularidade de cada um (Lacerda, 2004, p.7).

De acordo com o programa nacional, as competências artísticas, e nós acrescentaríamos as competências desportivas, “São um território de prazer, um espaço de liberdade, de vivência lúdica (...) um terreno de partilha de sentimentos, emoções e conhecimentos (...) facilitam as interações sociais e culturais (...)” (Ministério da Educação, 2011, p.150).

No entanto, a pessoa esteticamente instruída, não é apenas aquela com capacidade de falar de certos objetos ou situações de um determinado modo, de descrevê-los ou comentá-los, mas sim aquela que, na realidade, possui uma capacidade para neles experimentar, compreender e participar (Collinson, 1973, cit. por Arnold, 1988). Qualquer situação de aprendizagem jogada, realizada, experienciada em educação física assume a enorme relevância de atribuir ao indivíduo capacidades de observação, compreensão, contemplação, reflexão, juízo crítico e expressão exponencialmente enriquecidas. Deste modo, na educação pelo desporto, como na educação artística, é fundamental a procura de desenvolvimento das capacidades de: “Mobilizar todos os sentidos na perceção do mundo envolvente”, “Interagir com os outros sem perder a individualidade e a autenticidade”, “Ser capaz de se pronunciar criticamente em relação à sua produção e à dos outros”, “Relacionar-se emotivamente com a obra de arte (...)” – ou neste caso o objeto desportivo – “(...) manifestando preferências para além dos aspetos técnicos e conceptuais”, “Desenvolver a motricidade na utilização de diferentes técnicas”, “Valorizar a expressão espontânea”, “Procurar soluções originais, diversificadas, alternativas para os problemas”, “Escolher técnicas e instrumentos com intensão expressiva”, “Participar em momentos de improvisação no processo de criação artística” (Ministério da Educação, 2011, p. 153 -154) – ou de criação desportiva no caso da educação física.

## Considerações Finais

A identificação de potencialidades estéticas e éticas em contexto de educação pelo desporto, não obstante ser um passo importante para a discussão da problemática, não faz justiça à necessidade da sua contemplação mais concreta nos currículos nacionais da disciplina e, sobretudo, à sua eventual operacionalização na educação física. Para tal é indispensável que, identificada a problemática, se possa partir para a construção de pilares que sustentem a sua sistematização.

Porque tradicionalmente a educação estética e ética se encontra associada à educação artística, olhar para os princípios orientadores desta área disciplinar, confere à investigação destes âmbitos no contexto das ciências do desporto e educação física, um enorme e muito rico espectro de conteúdos a explorar. São eles: as competências específicas de «Fruição-contemplação», «Produção-criação» e «Reflexão-interpretação» sistematizadas no programa de educação visual (Ministério da Educação, 2011, p.157), bem como as de «Interpretação e comunicação», «Criação e experimentação», «Perceção sonora e musical», «Culturas musicais nos contextos», definidas no programa de educação musical (Ministério da Educação, 2011, p.170), ou também as capacidades de exploração das possibilidades expressivas do corpo, voz, espaço e objetos, da improvisação, da experimentação da expressão dramática, da construção do gosto pessoal no seio de uma diversidade de referências, da implementação de hábitos de fruição, explicitadas no programa de expressão dramática/teatro (Ministério da Educação, 2011, p. 179), e finalmente, pelo desenvolvimento de experiências na área da interpretação, da composição, da observação e discussão, finalidades estabelecidas para a dança (Ministério da Educação, 2011, p.186).

Não queremos com isto afirmar que a dimensão estética e ética na educação pelo desporto possui uma aplicação à imagem, ou semelhante, à da educação artística, mas, pelo contrário, que uma visão abrangente daquilo que pode ser a educação física enquanto veículo de educação estética e ética, requer processos de investigação pluridisciplinares que extrapolem fronteiras individuais do objeto

desportivo e permitam a comunicação entre as diferentes e importantes fontes de conhecimento e informação.

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## **Physical education as an aesthetic-ethical educational project**

Ávila da Costa, L.; McNamee, M.J.; Lacerda, T. O. (2015). Physical education as an aesthetic-ethical educational project. *European Physical Education Review*, 21(2), 162-175

(<http://epe.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/10/24/1356336X14555297.full.pdf>)

### **Abstract**

Commencing with a discussion of the various conceptions of education for the development of humanity, this essay articulates four essential vectors of educational processes – epistemic, ethical, aesthetic, and political, as they are instantiated in Physical Education. Drawing on philosophical literature, it is argued that the sporting activities that typically comprise physical educational curricula can afford opportunities to experience and to open the athletic self to epistemic, political and especially aesthetic notions, and not merely ethical ones, as recent scholarship has tended to focus on. This essay explores the four vectors in the context of the modern urban self.

**Keywords:** Physical education, aesthetics, ethics

### **Introduction**

Relatively little recent philosophical work has penetrated the Physical Education profession by contrast with other disciplines such as psychology, sociology and pedagogy. What has been discussed has often focused on issues of educational status (Green, 1998; Kirk, 1992, 2013) or justification (Carr, 1979, 1997; McNamee, 1998; 2005). Earlier work had focused on aesthetic (Carlisle, 1974) and epistemic issues (e.g. Carr, 1979, 1997), specifically relating to the nature of practical knowledge, though a minor resurgence has been noted of late (Hopsicker, 2009; Stolz, 2013). In this essay, starting from a historical thesis regarding the classical educational aim to develop happiness, goodness and nobility, we argue that physical education has an important axiological role in the development of children and youth, where aesthetic and ethical values also have significance. We discuss how these two fields can be materially related in physical education curricula. We offer a critical reflection that starts with a

reference to education as a cultural intermediary for humanization and then explore physical education as an aesthetic–ethical educational project, concerning the development of human sensibility through sport in four different, but related, levels: epistemic, aesthetic, ethic and social. Finally we develop the idea of the relational experience with the modern world, understood as one that treats the person as a lived-felt-body, overcoming the mere intellectual transmission of knowledge, in the search for a pedagogy founded on the construction of global citizens.

### **Education as humanization: four essential vectors**

For Beresford (1994), education is a cultural process intended to humanize the learner. Etymologically, culture has its source in the Latin term *colere*, which means ‘to cultivate’. Even though this term was traditionally associated with agricultural activities, a more comprehensive notion of culture is associated with the development of humans’ formation and their relationship with the world. Through culture we learn how to question, engage in dialogue, and understand and explain sets of signs and symbols concerning how humans relate to themselves and the world.

According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1982), educating means giving a world to those who lack it, ‘worldizing’ them so to speak, and providing learners with the possibility to create their own world. Thus, educating humankind means providing it with the required elements for ‘worldizing’ humanity in the quest to achieve a significant human form of being in the world. This consideration makes us understand that man is ‘per-fect’, in the etymological meaning of the expression<sup>1</sup>. This is, unfinished, an improvable state that can be developed in order to reach its *telos*, its perfected form or goal. In addition, this idea requires an educational approach as a relational experience with the world, not only rationally and intellectually, but holistically human. This means considering man as a lived-felt-body, extrapolating the mere transmission of knowledge, in the quest for a po(i)etic<sup>2</sup> pedagogy, based in the construction of the whole person (Pereira, 2006).

Thus, the main question associated with education is the characterization of human form; that is: what kind of person is it desirable to form in each human learner? This is an extremely difficult question since the quest for an answer necessarily draws on fundamental ontological and existential questions: what does it mean to be a human being? What is humanity? How do we create humanity in human beings? And, somewhat paradoxically, if humanity is not merely a biological label but a desirable human quality (Williams, 1995) what forms ought this humanity to take in the face of global cultural diversity?

Savater (1998: 29) tries to explain this paradox, noting that “We are born as human beings, but that is not enough: we need to become one”. Savater believes we are the only species that needs to live a process in order to really become who we are – humans. While this may sound distinctly postmodern, it is worth noting that Kant (1996: 15) himself expresses the same view when he says “Man can only become man by education. He is merely what education makes of him”.

Education must consider the basic anthropological fact that human beings are not merely comprised of reason, but also emotions, will and sensibility (Bento, 2012; McNamee, 2008; Taylor, 1989). Likewise, our encounter with reality, with the world, is not comprised of different and distinct modes, e.g. aesthetic, epistemic, ethical, moral, social, and so on, but a holistic interpenetration of all these modes (Torres, 2012). Thus, the complexity of the relatively unified or fragmentary shape of these dimensions must be considered in forming a pedagogical programme that might achieve an overarching educational aim of global humanity.

Considering education as an anthropological project intended to help man “(...) to build him/ herself as an individual and person, to build its autonomy based in the understanding of himself, the others and the world” (Matos, 2012: 160), we discover an axiological important role. In this sense, Werneck (1991) claims that education cannot be limited to the transmission of instructive knowledge; it must be also associated to the transmission and generation of a range of values that should be reflected on and more or less consciously acquired. This position is associated with critiques of the conservative/liberal educational lexis, whose

mode of communication is essentially either transmissional or liberational, respectively<sup>3</sup>.

Associated to these values we find in Schiller's *Letters about the aesthetic education of man* (1994) the reference to aesthetic and ethical values, where the former are consistently associated with education for human happiness and moral nobility, suggesting an aesthetic and ethical educational connection that we consider worth exploring as a social pedagogical mode.

Thus, for Severino (2002), education consists of the integration the aforementioned modes of being. Specifically it entails the development of sensibility in what he describes as four essential vectors: (i) the education of epistemic sensibility through the search of knowledge of reality, understanding this as resulting from the completeness of human capacities (thinking and feeling, rationality and corporeality); (ii) the education of ethical sensibility, seeking to develop autonomy, freedom and responsibility; (iii) the education of aesthetic sensibility, trying to develop the capacity for appreciation, contemplation, enjoyment and aesthetic judgement of reality; and (iv) the education of political sensibility (social consciousness) to form citizens properly dedicated to *polis*<sup>4</sup>, to society and creation of common awareness, by promoting harmonious relationships among ourselves, others and the world.

How might the activities that comprise the physical educational curriculum be conceived and implemented in ways? We focus on this problem in the following sections.

### **Physical education and the development of epistemic sensibility**

Beyond providing informational content by transmitting knowledge, teaching also requires the provision of adequate tools and opportunities to access a deeper reality and its understanding in autonomous and responsible ways. As such, Torres (2011) says that the main entry for the development of knowledge is the experience of reality, instead of the mere kind of knowledge we receive in an instructional mode, and so, knowledge requires establishing intimate, mutual and valid correspondences between the knowledgeable person and the object of

knowledge (Torres, 2011). This means that learning processes require a network of corporal and social senses and potentials, not only intellectual capabilities (Pereira, 2009).

Physical education typically has its main focus in the development of motor skills. For example, a Portuguese national curriculum study shows the main focus is devoted to essential motoric skills in physical education programmes. The dominant approach is largely related to physical efficiency and health, hygiene and safety (Gagliardini Graça and Lacerda, 2012). This is in keeping with traditional curricular critiques of sport education and physical education in the United Kingdom (Kirk, 1984) and the United States of America (Siedentop, 1986).

Theoretical knowledge of human movement has a substantial basis in motor learning, motor control and biomechanics research. Though these domains of knowledge occupy a significant space in international research contexts for sports, they are often extremely difficult to apply in sports and physical education learning contexts. This difficulty comes from the fact that most of this research is done in highly controlled laboratory environments, ignoring the knowing movers' point of view. Thus it is often extremely difficult and even inappropriate to apply their insights into the messy contexts of a physical education class or a sport's training session (Nyberg, 2014). Also, according to Nyberg, research on comprehensive learning and teaching games and motor skills, frequently separate, at least linguistically, physical skills from the concept of knowledge, emphasizing mind–body and theory–practice dualisms, by the usage of notions such as “declarative knowledge”, “procedure knowledge”, “strategic knowledge”, distinguishing them from “technique or movement execution” (Nyberg, 2014, p. 75).

Put simply in physical education, we can consider two different types of knowledge: theoretical and discursive knowledge, that is, ‘knowing that’; and practical and embodied knowledge, or ‘knowing how’ (Ryle, 1949). The latter corresponds to a pre-discursive, embodied, incarnated knowledge, specific to the student or athlete (Breivik, 2014; Torres, 2011). Acquired through experience, through practice, reinforcing the skills inherent to each activity, it can sometimes become

unconscious or even difficult to explain skilled performance in a theoretical way (Torres, 2011). This point was captured long ago by Michael Polanyi in his work on tacit knowledge (1974) and is often summarized in the pithy remark that 'we know more than we can tell'. More recently, Hopsicker (2009) has developed this line of reasoning in relation to sports participation. It is by learning the 'knowing how' that people develop capacities to provide creative and intuitive answers to the unpredictable constraints of each sport. Thus, the aesthetic experience resulting from the relation with sports is composed of an integrated mediation that results from an emotional and rational process that enables learning by enabling the development of sense and meaning through sporting experience (Gumbrecht, 2007).

Knowledge and contents communication through sports has a specific language where form and meaning are phenomenologically indivisible (Reid, 1974). The aesthetic aspect of a specific rugby team's defensive organization or flow of an offensive move is inexpressible in exhaustive linguistic terms. This is why most (perhaps all) teachers and coaches resort to practical examples, analogies and metaphors to guide their learners. These indirect modes are essential parts of their pedagogical toolkit, and are essential in order to convey the information they need to. Playing basketball, bouncing on the trampoline, climbing, or running, means feeling, understanding, being and living through these sports and through the aesthetic/kinesthetic awareness and perception of their forms and meanings, thus enabling an embodied and corporeal knowledge. Therefore, physical education can be considered to foster epistemic development through sensibility: it provides access to the awareness of sports reality through its unique words, forms and meanings that cannot be totally expressed or translated linguistically. For Reid (1974), this incorporation of sense and meanings corresponds to a unique and irreplaceable type of knowledge of reality, which is frequently neglected in education due to a limited conception of knowledge that in turn reduces experience to common verbal language and conventional symbols. While it is true that many of the dominant theoretical forms of knowledge (in matters such as mathematics, sciences, history, and so on) can more easily be verbally explained, conveying information through words, symbols,

concepts or propositions, knowledge of sports' reality more fully, by contrast, requires an alternative approach. This prerogative should not be taken to infer that the value of 'doing' or 'experiencing' is exclusive to physical education classes. Neither is it evident that verbal communication is unimportant. We should give priority to '*knowing how*' in sports because of its specific and holistic characteristics. But even if we believe that sport is directly related to corporeal action, this does not mean that it cannot (or should not) be debated, explained and subject to critical reflection by conceptual intersubjective dialogue (among students, and between students and pedagogues – teacher or coach). In fact, this can be an important evaluation tool for the pedagogue, since sports contents and meanings are learnt both at a behavioral and a conceptual level – the two are inter-related. The capacity that student have to conceptually express and reflect their own and their peers' performances can reinforce the knowledge that the teacher has about the learning process, in addition to being an interesting element of verbal communication within the classroom. In this sense Reid (1974) says, after Kant, that knowledge through concrete and immediate experience – without any conceptualization – is destined to bring about a form of blindness, and that conceptualization, without an affirmation in concrete experience, is condemned to emptiness (Reid, 1974). Therefore, according to Torres (2011), sport experience has a peculiar unity between corporeality and intellect, what is often these days referred to as the 'embodied mind', in and through which thinking and actions are active and continuous processes; they are involved in the whole sport experience. This is one of the main values of sports world that physical education can and should emphasize.

Therefore, physical education must address this need and promote teaching–learning processes based on concrete direct confrontation with felt-experiences of the kind that comprise education in sports and athletic activities.

### **Physical education and the development of ethical sensibility**

When we discuss education, whether or not in the contexts of physical education, the ethical aspect is clearly evident, since it contributes to human growth and, doing so, requires a strong sense of axiological hierarchy, where ethical values

have the main importance (Queirós and Silva, 2012). Ethics is, by definition, the branch of philosophy that deals with praise and blame, good and evil, right and wrong, and so on. Generally speaking, it also deals with the aim of a distinctively human life and the ways to reach it (Russ, 2000). The application of this discipline to sports is traditionally associated with sports justice (the standards and rules of each sport that regulate the sportspersons' conduct), fair play, or even the scope of sports' truth (McNamee, 2010).

Goodness in sports can be analyzed considering sport itself (or each sports' activity) and the subjects (whether practitioners or observers), bearing in mind these different elements are often inter-related and have symbiotic influences. A pedagogical consideration of sports, and particularly physical education, requires this mutual logic that includes, according to Torres (2011), three base principles that relate individuals (among them and with sports) that good practitioners (i.e. those engaged in the practices of sports: athletes, coaches, pedagogues, teachers) cannot ignore. Good practitioners not only accept but also respect and adopt the rules of the sport they practice, recognizing its importance for sports justice, for the performance's quality and for sport itself. In addition, good practitioners strive to achieve the highest possible performance level and promote sporting excellence by trying to overcome their own and others' previous limits in order to achieve better results, albeit within the means accepted by the sports and its best traditions (McNamee, 2008, 2012). Finally, good sportspersons intentionally abstain from unreasonably harming others, respecting the principle of no maleficence (non-harm) (Torres, 2011). Also, Russell (2011) argues that sport has a moral potential illuminator, materialized in a genuine and honest struggle for excellence that requires a deep respect for ethical values, such as equality, tolerance, and justice, where competitors strive in order to discover weaknesses and strengths in themselves and their opponents.

Thus emerge three sporting pedagogical vectors that simultaneously contribute to the good of students and sport: 1) the role of physical education in the development of students' sensibility and respect for internal goods and constitutive characteristics of each sport (Brown, 1984; McNamee, 1995;

Morgan, 1987); 2) the cultivation of responsibility to provide learning contexts that promote overcoming, and the athletic perfectionism in students in terms of their sporting performance; and 3) the cultivation of responsibility to promote in students, by means of sports pedagogical experience, respect of self and others, and for the integrity of and through sporting activities.

Why is it necessary to respect the nature of sport? What is the meaning of respecting its internal goods and rules if it is an entertaining and metaphoric experience without application or validity in real life? And, particularly regarding the aesthetic viewpoint, can we not consider that this attitude inhibits a freer, more open aesthetic experience?

Amândio Graça (2012) opens the way to one answer to these questions when defending the view that, in sports, it is exactly through “the ways of seduction, through the meanings awareness, also through the experience of delight, that something that is not compulsory becomes indispensable and a priority; when something that is superfluous and free proves to be useful and enriching.” (Graça, 2012: 109).

Hence, physical education is no longer a context where it is only necessary to keep students *‘happy and busy’* with random activities. In physical education classes students must have access to specific activities where they can experience different feelings, from joy and satisfaction to doubts and frustration, that result from sport’s senses and meanings, and that contribute not only to a more global and complete aesthetic experience but also to a more real experience, propitious to be transposed more generally to the learner’s everyday life.

Physical education can also give students the experience of moral discernment and action through interaction and communication possibilities, both with the world and with others included in sport cultural environments (Hirama et al., 2012). To this extent, as in life, dilemmas resulting from the need to give an answer to the pragmatic motives and objectives of each sport in contrast with the available tools and processes, as well as the constraints of each sport, require an ethic prioritization of motivations, actions, and behaviors. This ethical prioritization must include the necessary respect for the integrity of every person

involved in the activity, even above the desire for victory or individual success.

### **Physical education and the development of aesthetic sensibility**

Historically, there have been few opportunities to learn emotional sensibilities in other disciplines of the school curricula, other than the traditional arts. Paradoxically, this opportunity to cultivate the emotional facet of experience is not always considered as an added value in physical education classes (Gagliardini Graça and Lacerda, 2012). Considering that, traditionally, aesthetics deals with questions related to the judgement of taste, sensibility to beauty and ugliness, and other categories related to the subjective capacity to experience reality, there are some difficulties in testing and applying it pedagogically (Edgar, 2013). This is due to the difficulty in objectivizing, synthesizing or generalizing aesthetic experience in and through sport and physical education. Specifically, the process of identifying its pedagogical contributions is complicated, in contrast to the teacher's concrete interventions when engaged in skill development or when attempting to enhance physical capacities such as speed, strength, or stamina. Moreover, when particularly considering its application to physical education, the vastly diverse set of activities makes it extremely difficult to make responsible aesthetic generalizations (Carlisle, 1974).

A further problem related to a tradition of sport's aesthetic approaches in physical education classes is the reduction of the objectivization/materialization of the human body, which highlights aspects related to shape, appearance or its utilitarian approach (Queirós and Silva, 2012). In fact, this phenomenon occurs in line with the objectivization/materialization of the aesthetic approach to sports, which only tends to consider and analyze its shape and surface, ignoring its contents, senses and meanings (Gagliardini Graça and Lacerda, 2011). This is witnessed most clearly in sports such as gymnastics, diving or trampolining – what Best (1978) referred to as “aesthetic” or “non-purposive” sports – since these kind of sports, where the corporal appearance of the performance is central, are more often referred on the aesthetics of sport discourses.

Considering these difficulties there are two possible attitudes: either we turn our backs on the issue and ignore the importance of the subject, thinking it is nigh on

impossible to approach; or we try to understand it by deepening our comprehension of the activity. We attempt the latter approach here. Both traditionally and contemporaneously, the heterogeneous value of sports and physical activity is often occluded by their potential to develop positive effects for health and well-being, or at least the amelioration of the negative effects of sedentariness and poor diet. This is a problem for the recognition of sport value: it exploits sport and physical education under the dominant instrumental, scientific – mainly anatomical and physiological – terminology and methodologies. It is imperative to recognize, identify, and celebrate, the inherent value of sport practices such that it goes beyond its organic effects, exploring the importance of the pedagogical perspectives including and beyond its corporeal qualities (McNamee, 1994).

Thus, physical activities that are something more than a therapeutic product for healing or preventing diseases and illnesses must be taught, contemplated, and experienced in terms of their inner goods and by the particular experiences they provide (Kretchmar, 2000; Loland, 2006; Torres, 2011).

In this sense, it is fundamental to learn to love sports and physical education and to learn to appreciate the sensibility for its aesthetic content, nothing else than the result of the full and faithful experience of its inner goods.

How is it possible to achieve this aim when the main purpose of sport is normally described as purely practical and pragmatic? That is, how is it possible to achieve success through processes that respect a rigid system of rules (Reid, 1974)? Is the individual structure of each sport aesthetic itself, or do the processes that result from its practice lead to aesthetic values in a random way? For Reid (1974) this distinction is crucial. But is this not a false question?

If each sport's nature is largely determined by its internal structure (which includes both norms and regulations), and considering that this structure markedly limits the development of processes that lead to success, to victory and to the pragmatic aim of sport, is it not legitimate to say that this internal structure is responsible for the aesthetic manifestation of each sport, making it attractive and an object that is experienced, contemplated and enjoyed by human beings? Is not success the result of the process that leads to it, but that

it may take various forms? What is the logical argument underpinning the idea that success, the result of sporting activities, is random or independent from preceding processes?

These questions force us to consider whether educating learners towards a sensibility and sensitivity of aesthetic values in physical education corresponds to a dimension that is missing in many (perhaps most?) sports classes. Might it be antithetical to the dominant modes of self-identity of sport pedagogues and physical education teachers?

In contrast, we maintain that it results from a pedagogy faithful to the inherent characteristics of the activities of sports themselves, though their pattern is neither uniform, nor equal in pedagogical potential. This is perhaps the most important point that Best (1988) made in his analytical distinction between aesthetic and purposive sports. Any human activity may be viewed in terms of aesthetic qualities (both as performer or spectator), but this recognition does not entail that they are equally positioned to afford growth in aesthetic sensibility. That much said, a dance lesson in the hands of a narrowly focused rugby or football coach is less likely to afford aesthetic development than an ice hockey lesson led by an expert with an eye to the beauty of defensive and offensive patterns. How, then, might we best proceed?

One might think that sport's structure, rules and regulations restrict the aesthetic action in sports by limiting players' freedom. However, as Reid (1974) points out, in sports persons are free to express themselves in terms of movements and expressive behaviors as long as they respect its functioning.

Best (1988) draws on Kant's metaphysics to express the same point regarding artistic creativity: "The light dove, in free flight cutting through the air the resistance of which it feels, could get the idea that it could do even better in airless space." (Kant, 1999: 129). Of course, the friction experienced by the dove is the very precondition of flight. Analogously, then, sport's rules enable creativity, without them there is no freedom but mere anarchy and meaninglessness.

Thus, these different forms of expression enabled by the rule and normative structures and cultures afford the potential for the development and display of

aesthetic sensibility. For this reason Lacerda (2004) observes that seeing, listening, discovering, knowing, interpreting, experiencing and creating in sport requires cultivation; sports can be open to a teaching domain that leads to learning and continually invites us to re-envision teachers' roles in this learning process. But who will do the inviting? Without a developed vocabulary, aesthetic education is unlikely to inspire learners into the world of aesthetic sensibility. Perhaps this plea is not entirely without hope. Some teachers will need opening up to this new vista, others will merely need to rephrase or displace older technicist vocabularies with pedagogical attention that promote a learning context that promotes aesthetic values and sensibility development at different levels, namely through contemplation, empathy, understanding, fascination and experiencing/experimentation/creation (Björn Funch, apud Barros Marques and Fróis, 1999). This re-linguaging (as opposed to reskilling) can help to overcome the mere and often alienated perspective of sports, meeting the development of affectivity and sensibility in lived and intimately and personally perceived sports' experience (Lacerda, Gagliardini Graça and Pereira, 2012).

Finding the language here that learners can identify with will be a key challenge, but not an impossible one. One has only to think of the way that alternative sports such as parkour, skate-boarding, and snowboarding – with their attention on personal style and expressive capacities – have challenged dominant traditional sports cultures to know that this is possible too in formal physical education. This reveals one possibility then for the focused development of aesthetic sensibilities by choosing movement forms that lend themselves to aesthetic modes – whether in terms of content and skill, or the social narratives surrounding them.

Another way may entail shifting focus within traditional activities in which aesthetic elements are not central. This way of approaching and teaching sport reveals a balance between the two extreme attitudes characterized by Mumford (2012): the “partisan” (fanatic) who only takes profit from sport's pragmatic and self-promoting quantitative result; and the “purist,” whose aesthetic approach to sport is relatively independent from their personal motivations and results. As such, physical education has a prerogative to provide students a sporting

aesthetic sensibility that simultaneously respects its nature, purposes, and pragmatic aims while promoting enjoyment and satisfaction.

The teaching and realization of sport should not focus solely in a technical and tactical sport instrumentalization. Rather it should also emphasize, awaken and deepen the aesthetic aspects of the activity that simultaneously leads to lifelong enjoyment, to a dialogue with ourselves, with others, and with nature; to the development of creativity and to the exercise of freedom as a humanizing experience.

### **Physical education and the development of sensibility to political values (social awareness)**

The experience of corporeality through the harmonious complementarity between body and mind, feeling and thinking, and – more widely located – in a network of human capacities and potentialities, makes physical education a particularly valuable educational vehicle where humans can be seen in their wholeness (Lacerda et al., 2012). Thus, in this discipline different dimensions of human capabilities (physical, intellectual, emotional, and so on) are welcome and find their *commonplaces* in cultures around the globe, unified in their diversity. Bento and Constantino (2007: 27) put the point well: “Sport is the cultural artefact of excellence, created by our civilization to correspond to the desire of instituting the body as an instrument of socialization of principles and values that improve and qualify person and life”. This approximation to *commonplaces* of sports is not only related to individual processes for creating meaningful identities between body and soul, or even between the polymorphic possibilities of self-consciousness. On the contrary, according to Lacerda (2002), it initiates the human being in the encounter with the other, in sociability, in ethic and aesthetic ways, considering that the best education enables persons freely to behave in an intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivated ways. After Bento (1990), this process is not built in the void, or in the ephemeral, nor ought it be artificially added to sports by means of pedagogical motivations. It results precisely from the realization of sports’ essential meanings, functions, inherent principles, and objectives, and that in

itself promotes otherness by looking for a perfect realization of its requirements, whether they are technical, tactical, strategic, psychological or biological.

Physical education requires a special and intensive occupation of places and spaces, where each of us lives and encounters others, their places, and their particular ways of living. In this sense, if physical education is a welcoming place, it must be not only a place for the appropriation of space, but also one that affords students a creative and fecund experience that promotes the subjective and intersubjective convergence of human potentialities, as well a collaborative dialogue between its actors.

If it is true that the world is becoming increasingly urban, to pedagogically think about sportspersons, in their human condition, inevitably leads us to think in the dominant sporting space, the urban condition (Pereira, 2009), where humans must be inhabitants of the *polis*, that is, *politikos*<sup>5</sup>.

A philosophical consideration of the modern human condition, as predominantly an urban condition, necessarily leads to the concept of education for diversity, of a harmonious and responsive coexistence between identity and otherness in the 21st century's global *polis*. We each have our different ways of being. We are very different between ourselves, and between ourselves and others. Therefore, we only create an open consciousness of ourselves when we do the same regarding others. This is particularly important in sport where, for instance, in handball or basketball, we can identify our skills and put them into practice from the moment we start interacting with others and this reveals our possibilities. We could think that this only applies to collective sports, but the pedagogical approach of individual modalities at school reveals that it is not true. The new approaches in gymnastics - training by event/apparatus or teaching students spotting methods (hand spotting) – where collaboration plays a crucial role in the process of teaching - learning this modality through physical education, are good examples.

If one of the main characteristics of postmodern behavior is the theoretical and practical worship, in ideology and customs, of narcissism and the decadence of the autoscopic emphasis (Savater, 2008), then the loss of the common is also frequently expressed by a generalized particularism that replaces the notion of

common good by occasional solidarities among groups, or specific situations, threatening real multiculturalism. The notion of otherness is worthy of critical exploration beyond the space permitted here: it opens infinite possibilities in education, and these can be found precisely when we break the isolation of the self – even if this self is partly comprised by the collective or group – and when we open ourselves to the diversity of the ‘other’, of the world. By contrast, if like Gonçalves (2009) we consider the plural identity of persons and groups, and the recognition of cultural difference as a major value of modernity, then the biggest challenge is no longer the need of dialogue with the ‘other’, which despite everything seems quite consensual. Rather, it is ‘how’ that dialogue can occur to promote the strengthening of social ties in the *polis*, fighting against exclusion by finding mechanisms to promote integration, social reconstruction, and the configuration of new forms of solidarity for the common good.

For Pereira (2009), experiencing space, spatializing, can convey the meaning of giving to the other, of opening the space to the other, of living and promoting otherness. In learning contexts such as the afforded by physical education, based on the continuous need of exercising motor skill in the relationship between persons (which is not only physical, and also expressed by a unique corporeality) represent an important and valuable instrument for creating social identities and new ways of living that harmoniously, considering the development of a self-identity, respect and care for the other. This type of relationship is frequently expressed in sports through the variety of dynamics between cooperation and opposition that it includes. Consequently, we can find in physical education what Pereira describes as “thinking society in contemporaneity”, that is, progressively learning to live side by side with difference (Pereira, 2009). Physical education thus conceived, we conclude, still has important ethical and aesthetic goals, concerning social and cultural relationships that can help students grow as persons in the realization of human possibilities.

## Notes

1. The Latin prefix ‘per’ means ‘movement’, ‘through’. Thus, the word ‘per-fect’ refers to the process of doing, the path we have to follow to become who we are or to become who we

should become.

2. Po(i)etic is a special term for Pereira, that attempts to express education as a poetic and creative process, since the word 'poetry' itself has its origins in the term 'poiesis', which means to make, to create.

3. Regarding the critique of transmissional modes of education (Kleinig, 1983); and in relation to sport and physical education (McNamee, 1998).

4. Polis (plural, poleis) is the Greek word for city-state, the basic political entity.

5. Politikos is a Greek word that means a citizen that is pro-active and participates in polis life, in society and in the community.

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## **CHAPTER III – Results, Interpretation and Discussion**

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## **On the aesthetic potential of sports and physical education**

Ávila da Costa, L.; McNamee, M. J.; Lacerda, T. O. (2016). On the aesthetic potential of sports and physical education.

(Accepted for publication in *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of 2016 titled "Hermeneutics and Sport")

### **Abstract**

Even though there is a general presence of aesthetics in school curricula in Portugal and most of western countries, both at the level of terminology and at the level of choice and definition of contents, objectives and skills to be developed, the approach to sports and physical education potential for the development of aesthetic education of students still does not seem to be a reality in the agenda of this subject. Moreover, it is not transversal in terms of its different didactic contents (Gagliardini Graça and Lacerda, 2012).

In order to explore its relevance, the aim of this work was to deepen how aesthetics is internal and central to sports experience, and which elements of sports and physical education lived experiences can be relevant in the promotion and development of the aesthetic sensibility of students.

We propose the deepening of the subject in an hermeneutical approach, confronting the content collected in nineteen interviews that enabled the analysis and discussion of viewpoints of representative subjects among those that are the main players in the consideration of an aesthetic education through sport, namely physical education teachers and researchers in the context of aesthetics, philosophy and sports sciences. With the information gathered and after its processing, we have prepared a hermeneutic and argumentative analysis on some of the aesthetic elements of sport and physical education which can help us to understand and consider how internal to sports' experience aesthetic is, and what aesthetic elements of sport's experience can and should be taken into account in an aesthetic educational point of view of physical education.

**Key-words:** aesthetics; sports; physical education; aesthetic education.

## 1. Introduction

The difficulty of understanding the meaning of sport aesthetics is related to the difficulty in identifying and defining the meaning of aesthetics itself, in general, due to its comprehensiveness, polymorphy and polysemy. It is very rare that any debate on sport aesthetics, even inside a community with a high level of expertise, does not start with a broad spectrum of questions and doubts on what is in fact aesthetics.

Considering it as an area normally described as the theory of beauty, taste or the philosophical discipline of art, the extension and coverage of its approaches and definitions persuades our thoughts in the sense of the platonic idea that beauty - and, we could think, aesthetics - is a “difficult” subject. In fact, the definition of aesthetics has not been consensual throughout history, and still is not today (Bayer, 1978).

Concerning sport aesthetics, literature includes relevant works that gather extensive and detailed analysis on the elements and categories that support it<sup>2</sup>. It is not our purpose in this paper to enlarge or deepen the massive enumeration of those aesthetic categories or elements of sport, because more than redundant would be probably impossible to do it in complete, general and broad ways. We rather chose **to search for those elements that help to question and consider how internal and essential aesthetics is to sports, and which educational consequences this consideration can bring with it.**

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<sup>2</sup> See for example: Aspin, D. (1983). Creativity in sport, movement and physical education. In Hans Lenk (ed.), *Topical problems of sport philosophy*, pp. 185-202. Schorndorf: Verlag Karl Hofmann; Cordner, C. (1995). Differences between sport and art. In William J. Morgan & Klaus V. Meier (eds.), *Philosophic inquiry of sport* (second edition), pp. 407-414. Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc.; Hemphill, D. (1995). Revisioning sport spectatorism. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, (XXII), pp. 48-60; Kuntz, P. (1985). Aesthetics applies to sports as well as to the arts. In David L. Vanderwerken & Spencer K. Wertz (eds.), *Sport inside out*, pp. 492-509. Fort worth: Texas Christian University Press; Lacerda, T. O. (2002). *Elementos para a construção de uma Estética do Desporto (Elements for the construction of a Sports Aesthetic)*. Porto: T. O. Lacerda. Doctoral thesis submitted to the Faculty of Sports' Science and Physical Education of the University of Porto; Masterson, D. (1983). Sport, theatre and art in performance. In Hans Lenk (ed.), *Topical problems of sport philosophy*, pp. 169-183. Schorndorf: Verlag Karl Hofmann; Moderno, J. R (1998). Estética do futebol. *PRAXIS da Educação Física e dos Desportos*, (vol.I, nº 2), pp. 51-60; Sumanik, I.; Stoll, S. (1989). A philosophic model to discuss the relationship of sport to art. *Sport Science Review*, Champaign: n. 12, p. 20-25; Takacs, F. (1989). Sport aesthetics and its categories. *Sport Science Review*, n.12, 27-41; Witt, G. (1989). The world of sport – A world of aesthetic values. *Sport Science Review*, n.12: 10-15; among others.

If sports can promote aesthetic experiences, and if physical education has a role on the development of the aesthetic sensibility of students, so important to a global education (Patrício, 1993) – as it seems to aspire when we look at most of western physical education programs, even though not that much in *praxis*, where this seems to be conveyed only to dance and rhythmic activities – then we need to deepen the aesthetic potential and criteria of several sporting activities, and to search ways of taking it in account in physical education classes in a more wide and concrete means.

Due to its nature, a research of this kind asks for a hermeneutical, not essentialist but phenomenological approach of the subject, one that enables its clarification or interpretative deepening. Thus, an interpretative journey on the debate of sports aesthetics is not a choice. It is an unavoidable path, since the access we have to the subject comes from the representation and description of reality by the individuals involved in the phenomena (who give to reality its thoughts, meanings and senses), which simultaneously leads to its interest and intersubjective point of discussion. Hence the need - or even the obligation - of interpretation (Innerarity, 2009).

We propose, then, the deepening of the subject in an hermeneutical approach, confronting the content collected in 19 interviews that enabled the analysis and discussion of viewpoints of representative subjects among those that are the main players in an aesthetic education through sport, namely physical education teachers and researchers in the context of aesthetics, philosophy and sports sciences. With the information gathered and after its processing, we prepared a hermeneutic and argumentative analysis on some of the main aspects that enable the understanding of physical education as a vehicle for aesthetic education through sport.

The 19 interviews were conducted with three different groups of individuals that, considering their relationship with aesthetics, with sports and with physical education, can make different contributions and complement the study problem. These were: a) “Outside Sport Sciences”, teachers/researchers from the areas of aesthetic education outside sport sciences, who work in areas in which this

subject has long been approached (art, philosophy, theatre, music, dance, etc.) referred to as OSS; b) “Inside Sport Sciences”, teacher/researchers inside sport sciences whose work reveal aesthetic concerns in the context of pedagogy and education through sport, referred to as ISS; c) “Physical Education Teachers”, physical education teachers can then provide a more focused and practical look on how these dimensions are implemented in physical education classes, referred to as PET. In order to guarantee the anonymity of their discourses, the quotes included throughout the text are identified with these acronyms, so that it is possible to recognize the group from which they come but with a random numerical order.

Crossing the existent information provided by the literature in the field with our study group points of view we could associate and merge some aesthetic elements of sport which can somehow explain how internal to sports aesthetic is, and how an aesthetic approach of sport’s experience can have pedagogical interests.

When we tried to understand what our interviewees considered aesthetics of sport is about, their answers showed an effort that is more hermeneutical and phenomenological than epistemological. That is to say, they preferred to identify examples in their world where it can or cannot be found, identify practical or empirical contexts and situations where it can be experienced, rather than provide a descriptive, analytical or essentialist definition on what aesthetics is.

Returning to the previous question about aesthetic concepts, our interviewees described it as at the same time impulse and result of an affective relationship with something, integrating and welcoming the dramatic/poetic sense of our affective relationship with the world and with world things (OSS0 OSS1; OSS5; ISS3). Thus, on the one side, it evades from the exclusive belonging to the appreciation capacities of the subject and, on the other, from the object qualities, which makes it difficult to identify its wandering place. So, it is a mutual demonstration of a *continuum* that results from the assessment interplay between subject, appreciator or experimenter and the object, with its qualities and characteristics (OSS6; Eco, 1965; Lacerda, 2002). This interaction results in an

embodiment or materialization of thoughts, ideas, emotions, feelings or experiences that, based on sensible and rational guidelines, extrapolates them according to the execution interest, expression or interpretation of the subject, leading to a heterodox meta-reality that largely surpasses the causality limits of sensory real appearance (OSS0, ISS1). Thus, aesthetics concerns what we generally call sensorial areas, such as seeing, listening, touching but, mainly, through these to the processes of significance of human experience that lead to metaphysic elements such as feeling, drama, quest for meaning, coherence, search for the good, etc., aspects that comprise the path between sensorial expression to the meaning and interpretation of life and the experiences that comprise it and affect our sensibility (ISS6).

Centering now on the aesthetics of sport, the focus of this paper, a short common sense conversation and a more detailed analysis of the literature in the field, underlines a trend for the dominance of discourses on sport aesthetics around three central aspects: i) comparisons with art; ii) concerns regarding the human body; iii) a certain aestheticism that overvalues the appearance and the ornaments that can be found in sports environments, whether or not these are related to body, movement, spaces, material or events and sport settings. One of the aspects that justifies our work lies on the fact that the content of the studied subjects, as well as the interviews conducted, point to an approach that considers sports aesthetics in other directions. This point of view that also points to a different look over sport itself is focused on the attention given to aspects that are beyond the visible and outward form of sport and refer to the awareness and understanding of its meanings and contents, regarding the role aesthetic elements play in our understanding, involvement and relation with sports, and specially in an educational perspective.

We have then, following the advice of our interviewees, tried to overcome the cosmetics and the superficial side of sport appearance, in order to deeply explore its aesthetic meanings, following a pathway that leads us to an understanding of sport that, moving from the form of the appearance to the form of experience/existence is plural and contextual (OSS1). It is in this sense that some of our interviewees reinforce what has already been said by Best (1988a; 1988b)

and Wertz (1988), that the aesthetic contemplation of sport, as well as that of art, cannot be focused on an out of context analysis of its forms and gestures, moving away from the understanding of its content and internal structure. If that were the case, football teams would hire jugglers to guarantee a more intense show as, in their words, *“some ball jugglers are much better than many football players.”*<sup>3</sup> (ISS0, p.41). Also a physical education teacher states: *“I do not see aesthetics only related to ornaments, a beautiful outfit or a beautiful hairstyle ...I prefer to look to movement storylines than to its appearance.”* (PET1, p.2).

In this sense, movement seems to acquire, on the one hand, a visible and physical character, and on the other hand a sensitive and understandable character that is also supra-visible or metaphysical. This idea meets what ISS3 stresses when he states that, by looking to sport gestures, to the body in action, we capture much more than fragmented parts of the skin, muscles, bones or ligaments. What catches our attention in sport performance is, precisely, the extrapolation of those physical aspects that invite us to take part in an expressive, communicative, unitary, non-fragmented and, thus, continuous universe.

While trying to identify the aesthetic elements of sport that are most valued by our study group in pedagogical terms, we were challenged by the interviewees to, besides appointing the aesthetic elements of art, sports or the world, that are in fact largely changeable, rather try to understand in each moment which are the elements that enhance and enrich our view in terms of sports pedagogical potential. This enrichment does not necessarily have to be pleasant or positive, neither intellectually explainable nor describable. What we expect from an aesthetic world is that, by combining beautiful and ugly, clear and ambiguous, complex or simple, fascinating or boring elements, we enrich the content of the affective experience with the world and, in this case with sport.

In this sense, more than defining precepts and canons on beauty or art, we increasingly see that the aesthetic effort focuses its action mainly towards deconstruction and not towards normalization: aesthetics “has an independent

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<sup>3</sup> See for example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqrSK5t9MVU>

life, such as thought”, and thus it is constantly at the forefront of critical judgment of each era” (Bayer, 1978, p. 44).

Starting from and accepting the idea that art and sport<sup>4</sup> have different aesthetic natures and that, besides the symptomatic exclusivity that common sense assigns to art, as far as aesthetics is concerned, we can state that sports can be analysed under the same aesthetic view (as this is also possible for the sunset, the rain, the maternal relationship, war, fire or any other natural or cultural aspect submitted to the contemplative human look) and that view is also critical and deconstructive (OSS0; OSS1; OSS3; OSS5).

For the elements of our study group from outside sport sciences, art and sport are, therefore, cultural aspects with an interesting deconstruct potentiality considering the accepted stereotypes, ideas and paradigms, in which the openness to innovation seems to be an unavoidable prerequisite. However, this idea goes against the largely constitutive nature of rules and norms in the field of sport.

How is it, then, possible that an activity that is highly normative, such as sport, can claim to be considered as deconstructive? In arts, as in sport, the break with the canons and innovation do not emerge from vacuum. It results from the basic principles that work as the support for non-canonical, innovative, personal and even ambiguous realizations. For instance, and the same happens in arts, when an artist defines himself as a painter, he self-imposes a series of rules, for instance bidimensionality, space, materials, instruments and techniques and then he can seek for a realization that surpasses the constitutive nature of painting (OSS0). In the field of sport, the sportsperson also submits himself to the constitutive norms of his sporting discipline, in terms of equipment, spaces, time, practical structure, etc. However, there is room for each one to express himself in a more or less differentiating and innovative way (ISS4; ISS6).

Thus, the aesthetic process primarily seems to require access to a structure that is known and dominated, so that it enables the later appearance of surprise and

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<sup>4</sup> Even though we consider this is an interesting debate, the aim of this work is not to thoroughly explore the debate over the differences and similarities between art and sport in terms of aesthetics. We consider that besides overextending the scope of the analysis we wanted in this work, the aesthetic legitimation of sport or the aesthetics associated to any human reality is independent from that debate and it has already been widely demonstrated in the specific literature of this field.

the meeting with unknown elements that are not initially dominated (OSS0). This is how, sometimes, the norm does not apply and reality surprises and enriches us with the appearance of new and unrepeatable styles of exceptional and innovative performances, within the existing and well-defined practices (Lacerda, 2007). It is also through the same procedure, even though at a different level, that new practices and sporting disciplines appear, based on movements and techniques that are already known and dominated but that, at the same time, are changed and adapted to fit new aims and goals, for instance parkour, sandboard, slackline or tchoukball.

According to the huge range of types of sports activities, can we state that aesthetics is, then, something transversal to all sports? Is it equally applied for different sports? Do all sports hold the aesthetic elements as something deeply internal to its nature and experience? What is the role of aesthetics in our understanding and our relation with sports, and what are the pedagogical consequences of taking it in account on physical education classes? These are questions we will try to explore on the next chapters of this paper through discussion in two main chapters: the first chapter on the aesthetics as an internal element of sports experience, and then, a second chapter that covers the pedagogical potential of physical education by taking in account in a more conscious way, the aesthetic experience of sport as a clue to an aesthetic attitude toward the world.

## **2. Aesthetics as an internal element of sports experience**

Several sport's philosophers have already considered and debated about some sport's elements capability of turning sporting experience as an aesthetic experience (Lacerda 2002). For some of them, these aesthetic elements are the main and profound motivation that leads the sportspersons to be part of sport's contexts (Luisolo, 1997; Witt, 1989; Wertz, 1988).

Deepening this questioning, we have tried to explore near our study group how relevant and central aesthetics is to understanding sport's nature. Is it, then, possible to understand sport neglecting its aesthetic dimension?

*“Our sport experience is always also an aesthetic experience. I believe it is impossible to understand sport ignoring its aesthetic dimension. Maybe the clear understanding, the intention and the obvious presence of that aspect are not always consciously present. Sometimes it is present in such a way that we don't even notice...but it is there! In my opinion, it is impossible to live a sport experience without being influenced by it.”* (ISS1, p.13).

We found within our interviewees the general idea that sport has an aesthetic nature which is essential and inescapable. As such, for most of the elements of our study group, if we do not consider the aesthetic nature of sport we compromise and prevent sport itself, because we are ignoring a central and structural aspect. For these interviewees that commitment could be compared to an attempt of trying to understand navigation without knowing the rules and tides behaviour. Is this possible? Maybe it is, but it is certainly not desirable or credible. Thus, aesthetics does not seem to represent an external element that we can add to sport's experience, but appears to be something inherent to it. Considering it, to what extent or in which ways, does aesthetics contribute to the understanding of sports?

Aesthetic view enables us to interpret sport in such a way that considers how Man lives, plays, enjoys life and learns (ISS2). Therefore, it promotes the exploration and construction of a meta-discourse on the essential nature of sport, its bases and purposes, in addition to its pragmatic, immediate, functional, hygienist or therapeutic justifications (ISS2; ISS5).

Due to the input that it gives to sport, the aesthetic approach also provides a better understanding of ourselves, our sensibility, our deepest expectations and ideals, what touches us and what touches us in the interaction with the world. Even a sportsperson or coach that expresses his convictions saying he gives no relevance to the aesthetic side of sport, in some way he does it, even if unconsciously (ISS2; ISS3): it can be by the way he tries to give form to the

performance, the way he works which in fact is the expression of the way he values sport's aesthetics, and how he is involved or is driven by it.

It is also through the aesthetic analysis that we can understand the reasons why, as human beings, we go to stadiums, love sports and feel so attracted to a good competition or sporting challenge (ISS6; PET2). Why are we so much attracted by the clarification of our competences by testing them? Why are we so much attracted for trying to understand things that touch our senses and our sensibility? What do these attractions reveal about our nature? There is something in testing us that captivates human nature and aesthetics can help to explain it: *"We like the way they feel, we like the way we experience it, we like the dramatic difficulty that the test provides: «Can I do this?», «Can't I?» . And so a good test presents us with what I call a delicious opposition of 'maybe I can do it but maybe I can't'."* (...) *"Embedded within the test I see a two-level aesthetics. One is the drama of the difficulty, the story line, the testing venture, the testing project from the beginning to the end. We are starting to swim across a long body of water and... can we make it? (...) But the other part is to ask «why water?», «why swimming?», «why doing it that way?» . And for better or worse we are embodied creatures and we like to feel the water in our skin, we like the feeling of power and moving through water, with a good kick and a good arm stroke."* (ISS6, p.3). Obviously, the criteria that characterises the way we aesthetically assess sports are different and not always universal. They strongly depend on how we interpret its structure and values.

Torres (2014) considers two special types of attitudes that lead to an aesthetic experience of sport in two different directions: the internal and the external one. An internalist attitude assumes that each sport has its own internal spirit, with its own aims and purposes that shapes its aesthetic expression. According to this line of thought, performances which adversely affect this spirit, also deplete the aesthetic value of sport. In its turn, the externalist attitude is based on the idea that sport is not an independent source of values and, thus, any performance that falls within the limits of customs and traditions and accepts the consequences of the rules imposed is ethically and aesthetically acceptable as it is also the expression of contextually accepted values (Torres, 2014).

The impact of these different attitudes can be seen, for instance, in the way an internalist can repudiate a strategic foul if he considers it depletes the aesthetic-ethic content of the game while, for the same foul, an externalist makes a positive assessment in terms of the aesthetic interest it added to the game (ISS4).

If aesthetics is something inherent to sports and an internalist attitude necessarily considers it, then, it makes sense to ask ourselves about the internal elements of sports that provide this markedly aesthetic nature.

However, it may not seem prudent to talk about the aesthetic value of sport in general if we consider that it simultaneously includes boxing, chess and formula one racing, as well as horse-riding, surf, rugby, jogging or trekking (OSS1). For our interviewees, even though the variety of existing sports seems to make it impossible to make general aesthetic considerations that can be applied to all sports, an interesting part of the aesthetic potential of sport clearly comes from this element: the diversity that constitutes it and that, consequently, can achieve a wide variety of sensitivities and accept the subjectivity of human aesthetic appreciation.

Within our study group we found the general idea that not all sports have the same aesthetic potential and diversity is not only an important aesthetic element of sport in general but also within each sport. The distinction between sports according to their aesthetic potential has been largely discussed by different authors that have studied sport aesthetics and this is why we can find the traditional designation of *aesthetic sports* (Best, 1988b; Cordner, 1995; Marques, 1990; Parry, 1989;). Nowadays, our study group follows this distinction and holds that the aesthetic possibilities of a sport seem to depend on the range and diversity of movements it includes. Thus, for example, considering weightlifting has a limited range of movements and techniques it seems to have a shorter aesthetic potential than football which includes techniques that require different body parts and different forms as well as a huge variety of movements and tactical geometries of teams that largely extend the possibilities in terms of movements, thus increasing the aesthetic value of that sport (OSS6; Lacerda, 2007). Consequently, the aesthetic interest of sport is highly dependent on the comprehensiveness and complexity of its movements. So, the less diverse and

more linear are the techniques, the shorter is the aesthetic interest of a sport: *“I think all sports have a mixture [between aesthetics and purposes] and so it is a continuum where there are different degrees. But I would say that weight lifting, for instance, has less aesthetic value than gymnastics.”* (OSS6, p.3).

How can these differences be analysed? How can we try to make an aesthetic analysis of sport, carefully envisaging its differences? One of our interviewees helps us to settle this question: *“When I talk about sport I include martial arts, dance, I include a recreational approach, and it does not have to be competition sport. I mean the activity and movement within the sport environment which enables to experience the world in interesting ways.”* (OSS3, p.3).

The concept of sport includes a huge diversity of activities that makes it extremely difficult to define. Besides that, each sport has its own internal nature and structure that results from traditions, culture, habits, values, norms, practices, techniques and gestures (OSS3). Thus, the aesthetic expectation of Man regarding any sport, depends on the specific aesthetic criteria that makes sense for that sport in particular. In the specific literature we find the idea that the relevance and importance of aesthetics in the different sports activities requires the contextualization, interpretation and differentiation (Best, 1988a, 1988b; Boxill, 1988; Kirk, 1984; Kupfer, 1988; Lacerda, 2002; Marques, 1990; Wertz, 1988). It would be childish to think that the criteria that assesses the aesthetic nature of a gymnastics movement are the same of a tactical-technical rugby movement. This happens because its senses, aims, logics and purposes are also different and it is grounded on the idea that sport aesthetics depends on the understanding, incorporation and respect of those senses (ISS0; ISS1; ISS2; ISS5; ISS6; PET0; PET1; PET2; PET3; PET4; PET5). One of our interviewees clearly exemplifies this point of view: *“The aesthetics of a rhythmic gymnastics competition (...) has nothing to do with football aesthetics. But, does this mean football has no aesthetics? It has, but it has to be interpreted in a different way.”* (ISS0, p.3). If from a gymnast we can expect lightness, grace and delicacy, from the football player we expect weight, strength and aggressiveness (Lacerda, 2002). If a dance piece stimulates us to focus our attention more on line movements, football also invites us to enjoy the tactical geometry of teams. And

these elements do not provide a higher or lower aesthetic potential, they only represent a contextualised and particularly relevant aesthetic value. Besides that, for sports in which the main reward is the efficiency and effectiveness of sports gestures, the harmony and the fluidity of movements are not sufficiently satisfactory criteria, as stressed one of our interviewees: *“Sports have different aesthetic criteria. For instance, in football the movement itself has a small meaning if it is not effective. But in rhythmic gymnastics or synchronized swimming a unique gesture has an effective meaning – like in dance, if you want another example. So, even though all sports have aesthetic potential, in my point of view there are different aspects between them all, that make them interesting and object of interpretation in different ways. (..) You can think a player has a very beautiful style, you can appreciate that but then, if he is not efficient, everything changes.”* (OSS3, p.4).

Even the aesthetic criteria that are transversally valued and assessed do not have the same importance for a global contemplation of the aesthetic object (OSS0; ISS0). Thus, if in some sports mastering the technique is crucially important, in others it can be minimised by the higher importance that other aspects can have, such as creativity or innovation in the aesthetic production or even the transgressive use of materials or spaces (OSS6; ISS2). In gymnastics a split jump requires a perfect coordination between take off, elevation, legs separation, perfect alignment between upper and lower limbs and landing, characteristics that define the aesthetic value of that gesture. By contrast, a football kick does not always have to be performed with the inside part of the foot or with the supporting foot in a predefined angle regarding the kicking foot, we often see outside-foot shots or backheel shots that are aesthetically highly valued.

Is it possible, though, to explore and expose here some of the main elements suggested by our study group as essential and transversal to sports, despite all the specific and different aesthetic criteria between them?

Starting from the aesthetic contemplation of sport, there is an element easily and generally valued, which is the need of a *continuum*, that is to say, doing something feasible, viable, that is developed in time and space; an aspect that our interviewees named as *playability* (not only as a reference to the game, but

to any sporting activity that must remain doable, workable and debatable, in a permanent suspense between dispute and imbalance, difficulty and overcoming). The main aim of creating a set of rules and unnecessary and artificial obstacles that constitute sports, is making the game possible. In order to have interest and sense, the game must be playable. The playable composition of sport depends on the commitment, dedication and serious involvement of sportspeople in their activities (ISS1). It is the playability that attracts and catches the sportsperson, leading him to continue (Huizinga, 2003; Suits, 2005). Obviously, we cannot deny that there are also other aspects that attract us towards sports practice, such as the improvement of the physical condition, the improvement of physical health, losing weight, etc... But here sport works as a kind of medication and its character becomes more therapeutic than ludic (OSS6). Thus, for our interviewees the ludic dimension is the one that most strengthens the aesthetic nature of sports experience.

One of the aspects that is usually associated to the notion of playability is the «flow». The sports movement flow is responsible for guaranteeing unity, globality and continuity (OSS3). The state of involvement and immersion that makes the binomial subject-activity a *continuum*, described by Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990), can be seen in the sports motor gesture when this ceases to be the sum of the biomechanical movements made by the sportsperson and becomes part of him and, thus, has a concrete sports meaning/reading. This is how race, associated to the approach to the barrier, blocking, the transformation of horizontal speed in a vertical movement, surpassing the barrier and the fall or landing, are no longer isolated and incomprehensible movements and become a specific and sequential unit, full of meaning: high jump (ISS0; PET5). The sensation of continuity, the connection of gestures in a fluid meaningful way is, then, a relevant aesthetic element of the sport experience that combines the *playability* element with the *flow* element. This is what Dewey describes as the fulfilment and consummation moment, that is to say, when different parts of the experience are likely to become a unit of meaning (Dewey, 1934).

Playability also depends on the tension and competition of a sport or a game<sup>5</sup>. There is broad consensus among our interviewees that the activity is more playable, and thus aesthetically more interesting, when there is a similar capacity to play it. This requires that a game is neither simply balanced (static) nor simply dynamic in the sense of the extreme incapacity of neutralization of one team over the other. Thus, it requires finding a dynamic point of balance that preserves the tension between the opponents.

For one of the sport sciences researcher from our study group, there is a tension between drama and accuracy that is part of the essentially aesthetic nature of sport, as has also been stressed by Kreft: “(...) playing a game can be attractive only if it is not too easy and simple to achieve its purpose” (Kreft, 2012, p.225). This is why when children try a game that is too unbalanced, they tend to switch teams or change the rules in order to try to find that tension that is internal to the aesthetic interest of their experience. Also in formal and competition sports we find this quest, when in sailing and golf the final scores are always indexed to handicaps that make the competition more balanced and interesting (ISS6). Therefore, this search for a tension between drama and accuracy, where other things than the absolute result are important but also an uncertain, interpretable, relative and contextual narrative, is consistent with what Kretchmar (2015) named the *aesthetic version of sports*. The fourth model of his theory on a plural internalism considering sport, a vision that considers the existence of sport’s own internal spirit that is, at the same time, plural and that must be constantly sought and respected.

Therefore, the difficulty of practice seems to be important for the aesthetic interest of a sport, as long as it does not compromise its playability, that is to say, its feasibility.

It is this tension element that, according to some interviewees, leads the sportsperson to a broader spectrum of aesthetic elements, which includes not only what is pleasant and bright, but also what is unpleasant and painful (ISS2,

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<sup>5</sup> The use we make of the notion of game includes not only sport practices traditionally defined as games, but also all those that have a structure and own set of, formal or informal, rules that we have to follow to promote our performance. Thus, we include sports such as swimming, gymnastics, dance and even practices that are not so institutionalised as jogging or trekking.

ISS3, PET4, PET5). Without recognizing that spectrum and contrasts among its elements, the aesthetic assessment is threatened by the lack of benchmarks and comparisons. Negative feelings such as exhaustion, tiredness, pain or sacrifice, even if they represent obstacles to the flow, also provide aesthetic meaning to the performance, result, success and victory, as they include the overcoming element. The overcoming of difficulties that result from reality, an aesthetic element largely identified by our interviewees, only becomes possible when we consider the use and enjoyment of the painful and difficult side and, sometimes, undesirable in sport. This overcoming experience leads to higher states of aesthetic relationship with the reality. It also foresees or suggests an aesthetic experience of the unlimited or the sublime, described by Kant, produced by “the feeling of a momentary check to the vital forces (...) does not so much involve positive pleasure as admiration or respect, i. e., merits the name of a negative pleasure.” (Kant, 1998, p.138).

Our interviewees consider that there are levels for the overcoming of the difficulties that lead us to consider that sport has something transcendent and unlimited.

In this sense, taking part in a sports activity always requires entering a journey of overcoming, in which the starting point is ourselves, but the desired arrival point can assume different forms, namely an improvement of our personal mark, the comparison to the other, to the mark, to the record or to the absolute (OSS1). Overcoming is, then, the path for the quest of a platonic or Hegelian absolute that always seems to escape or run away, which is why the overcoming process is exponential and potentially infinite. Other interviewees support this point of view stating that, by encouraging the exercise of human abilities to the limit of his capacities, sports are mainly based in aesthetical aspects. There is something explicitly aesthetic in carrying out our abilities to the maximum of our capacities (OSS6). This exercise is not possible without a powerful motivation to improve the performance and even to achieve victory. As Boxill (1988) had already said, for one of our interviewees, the final result is not central for the aesthetic potential of sport but the motivation of athletes and teams to achieve victory is: *“Although I am a purist I absolutely want teams to be motivated by victory. (...) I find it*

*annoying if you can feel an athlete is just showing off and not seriously trying to win. (...) For me the aesthetic experience means fighting for victory. To do that, players have to push themselves to get over their comfort zone. They have to push their body to their limits, to run as fast as they can, to jump as high as they can, they have to kick as accurately as they can. In that quest for victory those beautiful physical attributes get displayed. (...) The competition for victory is a precondition for sports' aesthetics"* (OSS6, pp.8-9).

Fighting for overcoming our capacities frequently requires, both in sports and in life, the disposition of entering in areas of uncertainty regarding our competence, that is to say, accepting to take risks (OSS0)

The participation in a sporting activity that, according to Suits (2005), creates the need to solve artificial problems, also requires running risks, which are also artificial. The importance of risk as an attractive aspect of modern human experience, discussed by Giddens (1999) and Lipovetsky (1989), is also important for the analysis of sport's aesthetic experience. The unpredictable and open nature of sport and, thus, the risk of failure or success have, according to our interviewees, a high aesthetic potential that, in real circumstances - not artificial ones - would be limited or would not make any sense (OSS6). This is why actions that aim to delude, mislead or even deceive the opponent within the ethical boundaries of rules and good manners of sport are, unlike what happens in normal life, not only acceptable but desirable for the aesthetic interest of sports (ISS0). There is a certain level of childishness and irresponsibility which is common amongst successful sports people who, in turn, usually reveal to be capable of facing and assuming important risks, who are prepared for unpredictable challenges of reality as some sort of super-man complex (ISS2). This recreational, spontaneous and almost childish component that, as argued by Huizinga (2003), is being lost with the growing professionalization of sport as "(...) it becomes a thing *sui generis*: neither play nor earnest." (p. 221). It is an element of interest and aesthetic assessment of sport and sportspeople.

Thus, joining a sport activity seems to require a deliberate and voluntary submission to a vulnerable human condition - the unpredictable, the unknown, the undominable, failure, mistake, deceive, unpredictability, lack of transparency

of the others involved, namely opponents (OSS5; ISS0). Callois has also postulated that this submission to the vulnerable conditions is, besides that, free and deliberate: "We only play if we want and when we want. This means that the game is a free activity. Besides that, it is an uncertain activity. (...) By definition, in ability games the players run the risk of failing the move, a threat of defeat and without this the game would be no fun (...)." (Caillois, 1990, p.27).

Therefore, vulnerability seems to provide intensity and aesthetic interest to sport's activity that, as an aesthetic experience does not affect our sensibility, only in a hedonistic sense but also in terms of fragility, pain, unpleasure, sacrifice, loss and failure (Feezell, 2013). We could think that in the non-recreational, no metaphoric "real life", as well as in sports, that voluntary exposure would, apparently, make no sense since its consequences would also be real, non-recreational and non-metaphoric and thus, too serious. However, we see that different life experiences that are highly intense and with strong meaning and aesthetic content, have this vulnerability element, from which we do not run away and that in fact we seek: consider, for instance, maternity/paternity, conjugal and fraternal love, solidarity, compassion, volunteering, dedication to a professional activity or human undertakings that have impact on society and on other realities that require a human condition that is necessarily vulnerable.

Since sports are not only constituted by *agon*, but also by *alea*, vulnerability is something inescapable (ISS2; Callois, 1990). All sportspeople, no matter how competent they are, voluntarily agree to submit to this random variable. A very competent gymnast can fail on the parallel bars for reasons that he cannot control, in the same way a goalkeeper can be deceived, without any responsibility, by circumstantial constraints, such as the wind or other players, which unintentionally change the ball's trajectory.

There is a certain aesthetic potential in the unpredictable, the unforeseen, the unknown, in what we cannot explain but only confirm (ISS0). Examples of this include goals that result from long shots, or when a tennis player who is in a defensive and inferior position manages to place the ball out of the opponent's reach and thus scores a point that reverses the game (ISS1). Maybe this is the reason why some of us have already lived the experience of, while spectators,

supporting the weaker player or the weaker team since, somehow, we recognise aesthetic interest in the unpredictable, the illogic, the unforeseeable, the paradox and the intriguing.

This doesn't mean we naturally have an attraction to weakness and defeat, but otherwise, we tend to value human struggle to do better performances (OSS1, ISS5).

If we know that the result or the final product is essential for the sports experience, because it enables to find the sense or direction for its purpose even if, often, it is not numerically measurable, we also know that the experience that leads to it is frequently based on failure. The higher willingness for unsuccessful experience seems to be not only a requirement for the acceptance of the internal spirit of sport, but also one of the elements that contribute, based on the sporting experience, to an aesthetic attitude towards life. In sports and life alike, the development of the ability to adapt to the unpredictable and uncontrollable constraints of reality, uses human vulnerability as a lever for happiness. The vulnerability experience of failure and underachievement makes it possible to change, improve, develop, work and flourish something that we can indeed control: ourselves (Feezell, 2013). This is why some of our interviewees state that sports is for losers, even if its purpose is success and victory. According to them, only those that are prepared in most of their sporting experiences, will understand the deep sense that this failure has for the development of the aesthetic internal nature of sports. If there were not hundreds of athletes that, trying their best, submit themselves to failure in a marathon, we would never be able to recognise the aesthetic value of the winner's performance.

However, this value is only recognised when it is threatened, that is to say, if a relevant part of the losing athletes were not candidates to be winners, the acknowledgement of the aesthetic value of the performance would be lost, both for winners and losers (ISS1). This would not be feasible since the fight for victory is one of the main elements of the commitment to sports (ISS1; ISS3). The same is valid for the uncertainty of the result: *“Normally, when things are aesthetically higher, when there are higher levels of performance, this means greater opportunity for success. Normally those who play more beautifully win, but*

*fortunately that does not always happen since this is one of the attractive aspects in sport: uncertainty.” (PET2, p.10).*

In an externalist view, an athlete or an artist that achieves no results, does not seem to exist in the visible external point of view. It is an internalist view that covers more deeply the complexities of sports internal experience, such as art and its values and that, thus, embraces and considers the personal experience of “being in a journey” and not only “being in destiny”; a journey that is often built based on frustration and failure experiences (OSS0).

However, an interpretation of sports aesthetics that does not consider the need for efficiency and success, i.e. its tactical and technical criteria, is externalist. It goes against the key elements of sport internal spirit: the fight for victory. The internalist attitude combines the permanent desire and fight for victory with the acceptance and acknowledgment of failure, without compromising the meaning of the experience (OSS0; ISS2).

Since the application of performance, efficiency and effectiveness criteria can and has to contribute to an internalist aesthetic view of sport, the internal aesthetic nature of sport also seems to depend on the technical quality as an efficiency criteria: *“The greater the technic, the more intense will the aesthetic character [of a gesture] be. And we feel that. The observer feels that, the participant feels it much more. What are the moves that the participant admires? He prefers those that have such a high technical level that guarantees aesthetically strong movements.” (OSS1, p. 37).*

For the majority of our interviewees there seems to be a relationship of dependency between the aesthetic interest of sport and the implementation of the technical criteria. Technique seems to be the foundation not only of aesthetics but also of efficiency and victory, and each sport has its internal aesthetic-technical patterns: *“Maybe it is not possible to have beautiful performance in swimming without swimming well, considering that we enjoy someone who swims quickly but also with a beautiful style. If someone has a beautiful style but drowns, does not move...It is not the same.” (OSS3, pp. 4-5).*

Therefore, in order to understand this relationship we have to overcome the common-place of aesthetics as a simple decorative or ornamental element of

reality that could even distract or divert the athlete from his role and his mission in the context of an internalist involvement with sports. By contrast, we suggest a different and more informed look, one that learns and considers the internal value of sports and, thus, that contributes and enriches its meanings and purposes (ISS2): “If we talk about technique without mentioning an aesthetic aspect, we talk about practice in a restrictive way.” (ISS4, p.2).

When a sportsperson or musician does not master the technique, that limitation will always limit his aesthetical possibilities (OSS2). For this interviewee, technique has to serve aesthetics and, to achieve that, it has to be as much involved as possible in order to enhance its possibilities (OSS2).

Thus, we find in the universe of the aesthetic experience of sport, these elements with an important pedagogical potential, since it combines the formal, pragmatic and functional logic of sport with its non-immediate interests, supra-normative structure and values and beyond its formal quantitative result. The aesthetic look to sports combines, then, the visible appearance of human gestures and movements with the need of deepen their meanings and senses, what can be extremely interesting and pertinent in an aesthetic educational approach of sports.

### **3. From the aesthetic experience of sport to its potential on the aesthetic experience of the world**

As a result of the difficulty in approaching aesthetics, our interviewees tried to avoid using the term «aesthetics» individually and they often used notions such as «aesthetic value» and mainly «aesthetic experience» to explore the subject in a more practical and tangible manner and to ensure debate legitimacy. This avoidance, which is also frequently found in the specific literature, was also present in our interviews in which, to refer the aesthetic side of sport interviewees frequently referred the aesthetic attitude and experience of sports which from an educational point of view refers to an aesthetic attitude and experience towards life.

The aesthetic experience is often explained by world and life realities that puts the person in a usually free, uninterested and ludic appreciation, surprise or

admiration position, no matter if it is positive or negative (Dufrenne, 2008; Lacerda, 2002; Luvisolo, 1997; Witt, 1989; Pita, 1999; ISS2). This kind of experience overcomes the material and temporal limits of the contact with the world, moving the subject through moments of pleasure, fear, attraction, repulse, courage or anxiety to different states, moments or places of extra-sensorial or supra-sensorial nature that overcome the frontiers of space and time where the sport experience takes place (OSS6; ISS1). Besides that, this is a type of experience that seems to be justified in itself, i.e., it is free from utility bonds, functionality or the instrumental purpose and allows Man to be led by and get lost in the experience without necessarily having to define an immediate sense (ISS3).

Thus, aesthetics does not seem so difficult to interpret when we think about human experience, particularly when we think about this specific part of human experience that embodies it: the sensitive or affective experience. Through the aesthetic experience, subject and object overcome the strict epistemological relationship, getting involved, caring, finding themselves and establishing a mutual and affective relationship. If we think of sport as a vehicle for aesthetic education, title of this work, this is a crucial aspect: the development of a unique sensitivity against the apathy and indifference towards the world.

According to some elements of our study group, the aesthetic experience has two essential requirements: on the one hand, a subject that materialises the necessarily aesthetic attitude (Arnold, 1997; Dziemidok, 1986; OSS6), i.e., that according to the words of one of our interviewees (PET0, p.1) “captures the value of the thing” and, on the other hand, the “thing” itself that can be a material object, an artefact, an event, a thing, a doing or an experience (ISS4; OSS6).

This aesthetic attitude requires being before the thing that goes beyond a simple observer attitude and, as such, requires commitment and dedication to reality at first hand (OSS1; ISS1; ISS3). This excludes the defensive attitude of someone that, submitting himself to the non-domain and non-control, gets involved and lets himself be driven creating room for a more intense, significant and enriching experience (OSS1). Education through sport represents an excellent opportunity in this field since it provides a context in which it is indispensable to be and to

learn through that involvement, in a full and complete commitment to the sport reality. This aesthetic experience can take different forms in different moments or different levels of confront with reality.

An experience like this, does not only start with the physical contact with reality, in space and time, but it requires a dramatic relationship between a thought way of thinking and a reflexive way of feeling (OSS5; ISS1). Besides that, our personal life stories, our expectations, our past experiences and pre-concepts about the aesthetic object we are facing, contribute to the creation of a pre-moment of experience through the sensations, emotions and feelings they create and that then determine its development. Thus, we could say that there is a pre-meeting with sport reality that surpasses the boundaries of space and time in a physical education lesson and that the teacher should take into consideration: the previous experience the student had with the subject under study.

But for most of our interviewees, the aesthetic experience usually incorporates the need of interpretation of lived experiences. Aesthetic interpretation is being considered, in fact, throughout art lines of thought, a pre-requirement for the aesthetic experience. Notwithstanding, for one of our interviewees from the aesthetic field, aesthetics, before being understandable (in a more verbal or linguistic sense) is to be experienced and this represents the first moment or level of aesthetic experience that does not necessarily have to be overcome or surpassed in certain types of experiences (OSS3). Some examples of this are, at a very basic level, experiences or feelings of like, dislike, appreciation, attraction or rejection in which we test our body, our sensitivity and our intuition at very basic levels but not less enriching. We all identify with this type of experience if we remember the *lightness* we felt the first time we entered a swimming pool or the *purity* we felt with the smell of wet grass while running in the park or even the soft wind hitting our faces during a cycle training by the sea.

Thus, we identify, in the stage of sports aesthetics that is related to experience, an element that is worth exploring and taken into account in the context of physical education as a vehicle of aesthetic experience: pleasure.

The pleasure that arises from the aesthetic experience of sport is often hard to describe and express and most of the times does not allow us to say much more

than that “something feels good”, “something works”, the pleasure (or also displeasure) that we anticipate in affective or sensitive terms (OSS3). Sometimes we realise it is the fluidity or flow of the skin touching the water during a swim stroke (OSS3) or the wind touching our faces when we roller skate at high speed which makes us feel free (OSS5), when we feel fulfilled by the performance or, sometimes, the simple fact that, as spectators, we share with the performer sensations that we have not felt at first hand but that we live through observation. It is in this sense that sport is an arena where Man feels free to experience aesthetic pleasure through the corporal experience of the other, and the same happens with physical education, as a result (OSS6). For instance, when as spectator, or as a colleague during a physical education lesson, the student observes and finds room to express himself through emotions with the fineness, elegance, agility and flow of a sport activity that he knows is difficult and demanding he is interpreting its exceptional meaning (OSS3; OSS5). By contrast, the aesthetic experience is not always that easy to identify and sometimes we can only identify fruition levels that are not possible to be verbalised. In this case experience simply “is”, despite the absence of “insight” or phenomenological explainable relationships (OSS3).

However, part of the intensity of the aesthetic experience is only achieved after a, sometimes persistent, process of exploration and interpretation of reality (OSS2): *“We can read a poem without clearly understanding what we are reading and we can be touched. And then, we can read it again and stop at every word, every line, analyse, get a deeper understanding and then feel more or less touched. Or, sometimes, after one or two years, we hear or read it again and since we already knew it, we feel deeply touched.”* (OSS2, p. 6). Thus, the aesthetic experience can include, and it often does, a phenomenological process of apprehension, exteriorisation, reflection and questioning of the reality that in a different stage, after the first contact with the aesthetic object, enables greater maturity, enlargement of the understanding, assignment of meaning or even a revision of conceptions and ideas regarding that experience (OSS5). Our interviewees argue that, the deepest, most sincere and “digested” is the experience, the more intensely it is registered in our lives in a significant and long

lasting way (OSS2). However, to ensure that this decision process of rendering meaning is really aesthetic, it must consider and have in mind the first aesthetic moment that consists of sensations and emotions, otherwise there is a risk of jeopardising the aesthetic nature of the experience, making it a purely rhetoric, descriptive, narrative or deliberative process (OSS3; ISS1).

Besides the definition of its different moments or levels, as it has also been referred in the literature (Arnold, 1997; Coelho, 2014; Fernandes and Lacerda 2010; Kuntz, 1985; Lacerda, 2002), it is important to distinguish the different start plans/points that are possible in the aesthetic experience and that despite being complementary, are completely different in their nature: the experience at first hand, i.e., as a subject active/participant in the aesthetic artefact, or the experience in the second person, the one who externally observes and lives the experience (OSS3; OSS5; OSS6; ISS1; ISS2). The first has access to a kinaesthetic dimension of the experience and the second, does not. This changes the character of the lived aesthetic experience (OSS3).

While a spectator searches for entertainment, the athlete seeks performance, a teacher looks for training, a student searches knowledge, a judge/referee seeks justice and law enforcement and a coach looks for the materialisation of his technical-tactical ideals.

The way we look to reality and what we value in it is highly affected by the roles we assume and, thus, by what we are prepared to contemplate. Each teacher, for example, first values the dimensions and characteristics of the theoretical aesthetic models he has studied and learnt and, then, those he has experienced and chosen as, in his point of view, they are close to his taste criteria. Also the sportsperson, the student and other participants in the sport reality face similar process (PET2).

The idea that the aesthetic experience justifies itself is old and so it does not depend on any purpose or aim then itself (Bayer, 1978). Something that is not clear for us (and apparently neither for our interviewees) is if the existence of other purposes in the action, no matter if they are practical, pragmatic, sensitive, emotional, etc., prevent the aesthetic experience. This means questioning if the tactical purposes of a coach, the aims of efficiency of a player, the passionate

purposes of a spectator or the legal purposes of a judge or referee compromise their aesthetic experience during a sports event.

There is a primary and immediate aesthetic experience that may be inescapable for the different players in the sport experience (OSS6): *“Suppose you score a goal and you immediately get a sense that you have done something beautiful, then you could have almost a kind of involuntary aesthetic experience. So even though your purpose is not to be beautiful or produce beauty, if you have been involved in that experience maybe you are able to start having an aesthetic experience.”* (OSS6, p.5).

One of the physical education teacher from our study group reinforces the idea that has already been stated by Lacerda (2002; 2014) that the sense of purpose does not prevent or compromise the aesthetic experience of the athlete/sportsperson during his performance (PET1). In fact it promotes and enhances it by shaping the internal characteristics of that discipline: *“We only have to watch an NBA game! For the player, a throw or a dunk are part of the aesthetic experience (...). He could do it in a thousand ways, but he chooses the one that gives him most pleasure. Players have pleasure in what they do, a gymnast gets pleasure from his movements, the coordination of all movements. At rhythmic gymnastics, for example, the manipulation of the pieces of apparatus is directly related to the aesthetic experience of the movement.”* (PET1, p.2).

In this sense, for most of our interviewees, if sport was just a question of purpose, product and result, sportspeople would not dedicate themselves in such a creative way to the execution of their performance. Likewise, spectators would not be willing to go to stadiums and halls and it would be enough for them to see the final result, in the media, after the sports event.

However, in physical education we find room for the development of the aesthetic sensitivity at these different levels thanks to the different roles that are possible during a lesson: the direct participant of the activity (which in some team sports requires the capacity of observation and analysis during the performance), the observer, the referee, the judge, the coach or helper, the team captain, the media reporter, etc., with the conviction that the diversity of roles enlarges, enhances

and multiples the aesthetic experience promoted in the context of physical education thanks to the variety of purposes involved.

Another aspect that limits the nature of the aesthetic experience of sport, and that should be taken into account when we want to promote the aesthetic sensitivity through physical education, is associated to the relationship and type of relation that the subject has with the object. The assessment and the aesthetic experience of a sport is inevitably conditioned by the subject involved in that sport. According to most of our interviewees, their sensitivity, their background and relationship with sport, their knowledge and experience are very important elements for the intensity of the aesthetic assessment that the subject makes from sports (Kirk, 1984; Lacerda, 2002): *"I can say that a coat is nice knowing nothing of fashion, just by looking and considering what is beautiful to me, what pleases me. This is a more basic form of appreciation. Here it is not the same. I am assuming the role of someone who knows something about sport. When I make a comment like that I mean that the beauty associated to the action has given me pleasure, it was beautiful."* (PET2, p.6). This question becomes very clear when, as a gymnastics coach, one of our interviewees realises how some spectators that view his competition are not properly informed which, according to him, prevents and compromises some crucial aspects of the aesthetic appreciation of this discipline (ISS0): *"In artistic gymnastics, when athletes make a mortal jump [some members of the public] start to scream «Goal!». They watch rhythmic gymnastics but they cannot understand it."* (ISS0, p.4).

As has already been stated by Witt (1989) and Takács (1989), the aesthetic appreciation of a sport event is also strongly conditioned by the affective involvement of the subject and, thus, we tend to consider more aesthetic those sports with which we have more connection or are socially or culturally linked (OSS3): for a Portuguese, *"A game that we could describe as lacking interest or meaning can become very interesting when, for instance, the Portuguese national team is playing, or if a Portuguese tennis player is playing at Wimbledon. Suddenly the game becomes much more interesting. As this makes you feel interested. There is an emotional connection."* (OSS3, p.9).

By contrast, Mumford distinguishes two types of relationship with sports that totally condition the viability of the aesthetic appreciation: purists and partisans (Mumford, 2012). According to this author, the first do not care so much of the result of the sport, the victory or defeat, the athletes, teams or clubs since the only thing that matters for them is the aesthetic nature of that sport; the second are totally separated from the aesthetic experience since their relationship with the club, team or athletes is the desire for victory which forces them into a partial, biased and incomplete view/appreciation of the aesthetic elements of the game. Overall, our interviewees did not agree with this analysis as they considered there is a rich intermediate area that includes both attitudes. For most of our interviewees, there is a very large spectrum between these two extremes that includes subjects (namely most of our interviewees) that combine their emotional link with sport, sportspeople, teams, show and simultaneously their capacity to recognize the aesthetic value and potential of movements even when they are performed by opponents, sportspeople or teams with which we feel no affinity: *“The general public [between the purist and the fanatic] is missing in that analysis, since it does not belong to neither of the groups. (...) But the purist has an aesthetic appreciation that is also purist, i.e., it is based on his perspective and not in the common spectator’s perspective. I am particularly interested, in this situation, in what is common, the ordinary citizen, and the ordinary spectator.”* (OSS5, p. 24).

Besides that, our interviewees also suggest other type of distinction: involved and separated (and, again, all the large spectrum of attitudes that lie between both extremes). The first have a relationship that is consistent with the sport they appreciate, eventually because they also practice it, they have learnt it or have experienced and lived it intensely; the second inadvertently get contact with the concerned sport and they appreciate the visible side of the sport gesture without necessarily understanding its purposes, senses or aims. We recognise an epistemic sensitivity in the first, a level of expertise and special affinity regarding the sport with which they deal that results in higher interest, motivation, attraction, commitment and aesthetic capacity that lacks or is more limited in the second (OSS5; OSS6).

In short, we can argue that, nowadays, the diversity of existing sport practices reveals an unlimited range of complexity and intensity levels of the aesthetic relationship itself with those practices. In the aesthetic relationship with sport, as in any other aesthetic relationship, there is a permanent and mutual retro fit between reason and emotion, between feeling and thinking, between experiencing and understanding. The depth of the relationship directly depends from the complexity of the concerned experience. However, part of the aesthetic interest of sport comes precisely from the contemplation and integration of this large spectrum of experience typologies, from the most simple to the most complex, that includes both the irrationality of a certain level of aesthetic experience, as well as the construction of a more trained, informed and reflexive view/feeling/experience (OSS0).

#### **4. Final Considerations**

Considering that there are so many aspects that diversify and multiply the aesthetic experience of sport, thus making its analysis more difficult, we still consider it is crucial to continue looking for its explanation, description and understanding. The growing consciousness of the internal aesthetic nature of sport increasingly reinforces the need of taking it into consideration, mainly when we think about education through sports.

We know that each human being lives the world in his own way and with his experiences contributes with a unique fingerprint. We also know that this assumption applies to the aesthetic experience no matter if it is in terms of arts, sport or any other human activity.

Sport, as well as the way it is lived, is the image and aesthetic manifestation of the identity and characteristic of each country and each culture (OSS0). At the Olympic Games, for instance, we can often identify examples of the American diversity and multiculturalism, the oriental discipline, the seriousness and toughness of central Europe, the eastern plasticity and the Latin creativity. But we also know that, even considering these aspects, we all have different point of

views and all generalisations influence the, sometimes erroneous, cultural stereotypes.

Notwithstanding, we humans tend to have similar aesthetic answers before similar objects and events and this tendency must also be considered in an education through sport (OSS6; ISS5). There is a kind of convergence that justifies the sense of getting together and debating the aesthetic value of things and trying to promote it through physical education. Otherwise, that is to say, if this was totally accidental, this type of debate would make no sense and would lead to no relevant conclusion. It is this universal trend, included in the natural subjective divergence that provides sense and meaning to the agreement or disagreement regarding the elements and the aesthetic experiences of the world (OSS6). There is a subjective universality of the judgment of taste which provides pertinence and validity (Kant, 1998). It is based on this assumption that we reinforce our trust that it is worth studying, exploring and promoting the practice of sports aesthetics. For instance, in gymnastics, we all tend to agree that an aesthetically well achieved handstand requires perfect alignment of body parts, gluteus and abdominal contraction, perfect extension of upper limbs, etc... These aspects constitute a quite consensual aesthetic reference - which also corresponds to efficiency and meaning patterns - within the gymnastics lovers community, no matter how diverse are the handstands that are considered as aesthetically more valuable.

With the development of an aesthetic sensitivity in sport we are contributing, not only for a better understanding and learning of its most internal aspects, but also for a better understanding of ourselves, our affective relationship with the world (OSS5).

In sports, as well as in arts, an experience that is only limited to the measurable and functional part of the performance is not enough, and it is precisely in this aspect that is based the relevance of the aesthetic view over reality and, in this case, over sport and physical education. Seemingly, for a contemporary experience of sport, the canonical, traditional and structural definitions are not enough and it is urgent to search for the prevalence of more open and emotional, singular and divergent principles.

If sport's reality is so many times referred as an image of the values of each society, also can be stated that the way we interpret, live and teach sports can promote certain ways and attitudes towards the world, namely the aesthetic attitude which can have a so significant impact in every human way of being in the world.

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## **Re-envisioning the ethical potential of physical education**

Ávila da Costa, L.; McNamee, M. J.; Lacerda, T. O. (2016). Re-envisioning the ethical potential of physical education. (Accepted for publication in *Recerca*, in its next issue entitled "Ética del deporte. Los desafíos del deporte del siglo XXI")

### **Abstract**

Sports occupy an interesting ethical space from a pedagogic point of view, being included in physical education curricula in most Western countries. The approach of physical education to sports as vehicle for ethical education is too limited when it is restricted to their minimal functional, constitutive and regulatory goals. This essay's aim is to argue the extent to which the ethical potential of physical education can embrace more than functional purposes, or whether that will be neglected in terms of limited educational aspirations. We present data from nineteen exploratory interviews with experienced philosophy, sports and physical education researchers and teachers, from six different nations, concerning the ethical potentiality of physical education. We highlight five ethical themes: (i) the regulatory and normative structure of sports; (ii) the spirit of sports and its internal values; (iii) the right playing/doing of sports; (iv) the overcoming in sports; and (v) sports as an opportunity for a supererogatory ethics as fertile ground for future operationalization of the potential of physical education for ethical education through sports.

**Key-words: sport, ethics, physical education.**

### **Resumen**

El deporte ocupa un interesante espacio ético desde un punto de vista pedagógico, integrándose en los *curricula* de educación física en la mayoría de países occidentales. El planteamiento de la educación física como vehículo de la educación ética es limitado cuando restringido a sus objetivos mínimos funcionales, constitutivos y regulatorios. El objetivo de este estudio es discutir si el potencial ético de la educación física puede ir más allá de los propósitos funcionales, que considerados aisladamente constituyen un desperdicio de la

experiencia pedagógica del deporte. Para conseguirlo, presentamos datos de diecinueve entrevistas exploratorias con experimentados investigadores y profesores de filosofía, deporte y educación física relacionadas con las potencialidades éticas de la educación física. La muestra incluye individuos de seis diferentes nacionalidades, cuyo trabajo demuestra preocupaciones con el tema. La argumentación resulta de cinco temáticas principales: (i) Estructura normativa y regulativa del deporte; (ii) El espíritu del deporte y sus valores internos; (iii) El bien hacer deportivo; (iv) La superación deportiva; (v) El deporte como oportunidad de una ética supererogatoria como contexto fértil para la concretización del potencial ético de una educación deportiva.

**Palabras llave: deporte, ética, educación física.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ethics is a contested terrain in general, and specifically in the contexts of sports. Not uncommonly, and often in the case of the interviews conducted in this study, “ethics” is referred to as a discipline or field of philosophy that concerns the study and reasoning of normative appraisal of values and practices that drive human actions towards the common good. Many scholars, from various modern and postmodern traditions, have already defined ethics as the quest for the good life with and for the good of others (Ricoeur, 1990). Thus, the consideration of the ethics of physical education and sports exists within the frame of human coexistence oriented towards the good, individual and collective, that requires a human experience that is lived in a free, responsible, and fair way, exhibiting sufficient degrees of solidarity or communal living. This is the sense outlined long ago by Aristotle in his account of living well (Aristotle, 2009).

Modern scholarship in ethics is rooted in three key areas, namely the ethics of virtues whose focus is the personal quality of individuals and how they should be aimed towards the good (MacIntyre, 2007); the ethics of duty (deontology) that is related to the criteria and rules frameworks, more or less universal and paradigmatic, that should guide individuals in acting according rightly; and the

consequential-practical (typically utilitarian) mode through which individuals exercise their reason to discern the optimal way of acting before ethical problems with a precise, specific, contextual and localized storyline (OSS3, ISS2, ISS6. PET2). The specific approach of sports in the light of these three main family of ethical theories (utilitarian or consequentialism; duty or deontological; and virtue-ethical), resulted in several works produced by sports philosophers that debated issues such as justice, integrity, responsibility and respect between players, the rules and norms for a healthy coexistence in sports, the problem of cheating, doping and medical intervention with the intent of artificially improving the performance, violence, racism, exclusion, inequality, and so on. (McNamee, 2007). In this sense, sports ethics has, in recent decades, proved to be an area of strong scholarly growth, mastering most part of the works dedicated to sports philosophy (McNamee and Parry, 1998; McNamee, 2010, McNamee and Morgan, 2015; Torres, 2014).

Considering that there are many relevant works that set the foundation of sports ethics<sup>6</sup>, this study arises not with the intention to exhaust the subject, but in order to get together specific arguments on sport's ethics which underwrite the ethic potential of physical education. Considering this paper as a part of a broader study in the aesthetic-ethics relations within physical education (Ávila da Costa, McNamee and Lacerda, 2015a), we focus here only on the ethical elements of this relation. The purpose of the present study, within that framework and based on our research group's aims, concerns the identification of some ethical subjects of sports, beyond their regulatory, constitutive and functional aspects, that may have relevance for a broader ethical consideration of physical education.

To this end we identify and discuss these subjects in 19 semi-structured and exploratory interviews that enabled the data collection, analysis and discussion of viewpoints of representative subjects among those that are the main players in aesthetic education through sports, namely, experienced teachers and researchers in the context of ethics, philosophy, sports science and physical

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<sup>6</sup> See for example: Boxill, J. (ed) (2002) *Ethics and Sport*, Oxford: Blackwell; Galasso, P.J. (Ed.) (1988) *Philosophy of Sport and Physical Activity Issues and Concepts*, Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press; Loland, S. (2002) *Fair Play in Sport: A Moral Norm System*, London: Routledge; Morgan, W.J. (2000) *Ethics in Sport*, Illinois: Human Kinetics; Simon, R.L. (1991) *Fair Play: Sports, Values, and Society*, Colorado: Westview Press; McNamee, M. J. & Parry, S. J. (Eds.) (1998) *Ethics and Sport*, London, Routledge; McNamee, M. J. & Parry, S. J. (Eds.) (1998) *Ethics and Sport*, London, Routledge.

education, from six different nationalities in Western countries. We conducted a hermeneutic analysis on some of the main aspects as they enable the understanding of physical education as a vehicle for ethical education through sports.

The 19 interviews were conducted with three different groups of individuals that, considering their relationship with ethics, with sport and with physical education, can make different contributions and complement the problem under study. These were: a) “Outside Sport Sciences”: teachers/researchers from the areas of ethical education outside sports sciences referred to as OSS; b) “Inside Sport Sciences”: teacher/researchers inside sports sciences whose work reveals ethical concerns in the context of pedagogy and education through sports, referred to as IIS; c) “Physical Education Teachers”, physical education teachers that who provided a more focused and practical look on how these dimensions are implemented in physical education lessons, referred to as PET. In order to guarantee the anonymity of their discourses, the quotes included throughout the text are identified with these acronyms, in order to recognise the group from which they come and with a random numerical order.

It is not the purpose of this work to include or exhaust every possible relevant issue for an ethics of sports in general in an educational point of view which, indeed would be impossible. More specifically, our purpose was to debate some specific ethical potentialities of physical education based on the narrative of our interviewees, were they have stressed what are particularly important and relevant ideas for physical education that might enrich this quest for well-living in sports and that can, thus, propose ways or means of living well.

Besides the permanent feeling of difficulty in handling ethical ambiguities, and also the need for coherence and completeness that are normally associated with normative theories such as ethics embodies, this subject seems not prove an obstacle to dialogue among either common citizens nor the participants. Everyone seems to have a view on ethical matters even if only a few are capable of theorizing or even systemically evaluating them. In contrast to what happens with aesthetics (Ávila da Costa, McNamee and Lacerda, 2015b), these ethically

focused interviewees discussed the subject in a fearless, fluid and spontaneous way: «*Ethics....that part is probably easier to debate than aesthetics. At least for me!*» (PET0, p.16). This is because, for OSS2, even though it is a subject that not all of us study is one that we all face daily. And, thus, the approach to ethics proposed in this study, taking into consideration the academic background of most of the subjects in the study group, as well as that of the researchers involved assumes a more functional, hermeneutic and interpretative nature than theoretical, descriptive, normative or analytic. This leads us to generate perceptions that may not be generalizable in their content. That is to say, based on what has been widely included in literature, we aim to understand what is nowadays considered relevant for daily life ethics in the quotidian contexts of physical education.

Thus, our framework draws on many of the elements of sports ethics in the context of physical education, as a subject with ethical potentialities that can and should be used in the pedagogical sense: the regulatory and normative structure of sports; the spirit of sports and its internal values; the right playing/doing of sports; the overcoming in sports; sports as an opportunity for a supererogatory ethics.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ETHICAL EDUCATION THROUGH SPORTS**

In the course of the study we tried to understand, together with our interviewees, the role that ethics has in sports and the importance of ethics in understanding sports and physical education.

Since the Greek educational model, the essential substantiation of sports is deeply ethical, in the sense that it leads Man to search for the *aretē*, understood as human excellence or perfection. Pestalozzi (2009) advocated the pedagogical importance of exercising the will, coordinating the intellectual and moral education of subjects for which sports can greatly contribute. ISS5 supports these tendencies, arguing that sports is a vehicle for the education of will, against a contemporary logic of a hedonistic and painless ethic (Lipovetsky, 2010) saying: «*I think there is no other justification for sports. Teaching sports or physical*

*education is only justified in two ways. The first is that (...), the reference that human beings are artistic, that become human as they acquire that art, the arete, from which they are born naked, deprived, as they are born without doing, due to the neoteny in the body, feelings, values, etc... (...) The second justification, for me, is still the education of the will, explained by the substantiation of Pestalozzi's corporal exercises that aim the moral. (...) At a time of painless ethics, (...) sports is clearly a pedagogy of will since it leads us to do things that make us sweat, it is necessary to train and practice to acquire competence, to learn what we don't know.» (ISS5, p.4).*

In our interviews, however, OSS5, ISS4, ISS5 and PET0 add that ethics is not only the ground to consider these goals. In sport, ethical considerations on the one hand, lead to the practical configuration of normative, constitutive and regulatory structures that make sports practicable: *«For instance, if suddenly football had no rules it would not be football and it would be a bit more difficult...what are they doing? Where are they going?»* (PET0, p.18). On the other hand ethics it is constitutive of the identity or essence and sense of any sport.

Moreover, OSS6 and ISS1 agree with what had already been stated by Morgan, that the awareness of the ethical nature of sports and how central it is, requires from the subject a deep knowledge and involvement with sports (Morgan, 2007). It would be difficult, according to these interviewees, that someone deeply involved in sports is not immersed in its ethical nature, even if in an unconscious way: *«You can ignore it if you haven't thought about it, but it is a bit like aesthetics. The more you look and the more you learn about it, the more you will see the aesthetic values. The same happens with ethics.»* (OSS6, p.7); *«(...) I think that people are not aware of that but they act according to some values such as not hurting others and so one, respecting the rules, playing in a fair way, etc... (...) I think that even those persons that cheat this aspect, that try to cause damage, that play in a violent way, that use other means...even those persons are aware that they are contravening, that they are ignoring what would be correct.... what they are expected to do.»* (ISS1, p.13).

In this way, when they are asked about the possibility of understanding sports ignoring the ethical dimension, our interviewees were unanimous in stating that for any quest in the understanding of sports, ignoring the ethical dimension may be possible, but nevertheless represents an artificial way of approaching sports, impoverished, limited and lacking what is essential in, or partly constitutive of, its identity.

Nevertheless, if one aims at a specific ethical pedagogy of sport, one must be aware that it is permanently conditioned by the social reality that pedagogues and learners are dealing with: «*You can't understand ethics in the abstract. (...) And so, situating ourselves in a meaningful storyline is a fundamental step for the understanding of the right, that is, behavioural ethics.*» (ISS6, p.5). Thus, for example, an ethics of sports has boundaries and critical aspects that are different from art ethics. If, in sports, the aspiration of an ethical experience in its different levels is apparently common and foreseeable, the same does not happen with art which frequently claims for the independency and the transgression of any axiological framework; this kind of autonomy also supports claims for its being amoral (OSS0). That is to say, art is not intended to be moralised and its frequently transgressive nature is also revealed in the domain of an ethics of transgression, shock, rejection and rupture with values, independently from their positive or negative, universal or particular nature (OSS0).

With this we do not mean to say that art does not have either more or less ethical reference, but only that it is different from sports in a special way, with a permanent questioning and confrontation with the axiological benchmarks of each era and their ethical criteria often iterating between universality and particularity. Nowadays, art is characterised by personal values that can naturally trigger critical and conflicting reactions that are sometimes ethical in character, but this does not constitute any threaten to the development of its space and place in our world<sup>7</sup>. Such ethical transgression - as an artistic or aesthetical value - is open to question and always debatable, rejected and accepted, by different interviewees (OSS0, OSS1).

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<sup>7</sup> An example of this openness of the art world to works with a highly debatable and ethical content that is open to criticism is the exhibition by Guillermo Vargas Jiménez, entitled "Exposición nº1", in Nicaragua where, for a long period of time, he tied up and displayed a starving dog.

This does not happen in sports, at least not this way, where the normative and regulatory structure present stricter and more tightly. The formal or constitutive rules (Reddiford, 1993), are defined and the ethical paradigm seems to require minimal universality criteria, that are reproduced in the practices of physical education. This means that, even if ethical transgression is frequent and relevant in sports world, it is not accepted in such a ready way as in art. Thus, in sports, ethical particularism, sometimes even relativism, is generally considered as a problem to overcome or solve (OSS0, OSS1, OSS3).

For OSS3 and OSS6, grounding the debate on ethics in the context of a polarity between universality and relativism embodies a too simplistic dichotomisation of ethics: *«You can have a bit of both sides. (...) There is an adequate answer that changes according to time, situations and people, in particular. (...) You cannot simply apply the rules from top to bottom and say that this answers everything. It is always necessary to interpret the situation, the motivations, the consequences and so on. (OSS3, p.8); (...) It is not an entirely subjective experience, but it is not simply objectivism. If there were no human being there perceiving the world, I don't think there would be ethical values. It is a mutual manifestation of the object of ethical evaluation and human perceiver.» (OSS6, p.6).*

For OSS2, the ethical patterns and the concepts of right and goodness, depends on the internal characteristics of the reality we experience. Thus, *«In music, I think that the ethics of each style is different. There are great difference in the ethics behind jazz, for example, and classic or popular music. One person plays guitar in a totally different way depending on the music styles. The way he plays, how he holds the guitar, the way he approaches the music is totally different. In classical music we are much more formal and this determines many things, not only how we dress on stage (...), but also how we approach the written music. In popular music or jazz there is much more freedom of interpretation. In classical music there are also requirements related to a certain ethics that we must respect to a certain degree and that defines the shades. (...) The way entertaining music faces a musical score would be considered wrong, for us, classics.» (OSS2, pp.3,4).*

This means that the ethical consideration of reality is not abstract or blind, it requires a deep understanding of the nature and internal structure of the object under consideration. The same happens in physical education when we define the set of sports contents (knowledge, skill, rules, etc) that will be taught. The ethical criteria of a basketball game are, obviously, different from those of a rugby game.

Considering the aim of this study was to investigate the ethical nature or aspects of sports as a pedagogical tool in physical education, we propose a more specific approach to the most relevant ethical elements and criteria that characterise sports. If, for instance in a sport such as basketball, defensive actions forbid, both from the cultural and regulatory point of view, great physical contact with the opponent, in rugby, the tackle is a compulsory technical gesture and, thus, the ethical legitimacy of that technical gesture that can, somehow, physically attack those involved, is highly different in both realities (PET0).

In the quest for a more specific ethics applied to sports, more specifically to physical education, we discussed what we considered to be the key elements for an ethical debate on physical education, that is to say, the main discussion of the threads of identity within pedagogical sports. Despite the broad boundaries of this subject, we attempt to map the contours of ethical concern in sports, as a key element in terms of: a) the regulatory and normative structure of sports; b) the spirit of sports and its internal values; c) the right playing/doing at sports; d) the overcoming in sports; and e) sports as an opportunity for a supererogatory ethics (ie one over above compliance with ethical duties).

#### a) THE REGULATORY AND NORMATIVE STRUCTURE OF SPORTS

Sports represent a highly regulated social reality. Each sport has a set of constituent and regulatory norms that characterises it and provide its identity (Torres, 2011). Normally this structure corresponds to one of the first contents that are provided when we wish to teach any sports in physical education lessons. Thus, it is an artificial reality, consisting of artificial criteria and norms that create

unnecessary obstacles, deliberately invented and handled by man, to answer his desire to meet that challenge or take a test (Suits, 2005).

*«While Suits says that sports creates artificial problems, for me sports itself “is” a great artificial problem that we have created to make life interesting.»* (OSS3, pp. 8-9). The creation of a symbolic conflict that becomes a practical conflict requires that the human relationship assumes itself as an ethical relationship (ISS2). For this reason, the participation in a sports activity requires the previous acceptance of the entry into an ethical universe: *«And the reason we face these unnecessary obstacles is so that sport can be played, and so if you are not going to obey the rules it is almost as you are opting to be out of sport.»* (OSS6, p.7).

The setting of rules in sports is mainly related to the type of challenge that man wishes to face and, also, to the way he wants to answer it. What is the challenge? How ought we to overcome it? Which criteria are used to provide answers to that challenge? Do we wish to challenge ourselves individually or in group? Do we wish to compare our answer with that of our counterparts? The answers to these questions will then result in the type of sports activity in which, for example in a physical education lesson, we decide to take part, as well as to create an opportunity of making sports a place of concrete evidences of our virtue (ISS6). In the type of education of sports that is mainly functional, namely in the context of a physical education lesson, these are, however, questions answered and provided to students. Sport activities are selected and pre-determined in (eg) the national curricula and presented to students along with its most frequent norms, regulations and techniques and skills.

In contrast to this didactic, ISS1 in line with Meakin (1986; 1990) and McNamee, (1992) suggests the importance of creating a space in physical education lessons for raising questions of this nature with students in order to promote a greater awareness and participation in the ethical activities in which they take part. This way, regulations are not something that is only externally imposed, they can be internally incorporated and become the result of a choice. Thus, for instance, if the student chooses an activity whose challenge entails the impossibility of individually carrying the ball, he knows and accepts that he is not going to play football or basketball but that he can choose volleyball, for example. The same

way that if part of the challenge corresponds to including physical contact with the opponent, the tolerance of the student for accepting a one-to-one battle will be higher in sports such as handball or rugby. According to the interviewees, when we ask students to think about these questions, we are necessarily promoting a more deliberate and involved attitude with the ethical content in classroom activities, thus making greater advances in terms of ethical education.

#### b) THE SPIRIT OF SPORTS AND ITS INTERNAL VALUES

But if the creation and regulation of sports arise only from rules that are explicitly described, then the ethical debate would be much more straightforward, simple and objective than it seems. There is something endlessly debatable in the ethical dimension of sports that in turn leads the quest for the good in this field to become prominent and often without definitive answers, in the reflection and discussion by its main social players. This ethical element that goes beyond explicit regulatory and normative criteria, that generates further complexity in our understanding of the ethical nature of sports is, entitled “the spirit of sports and its internal values” (Simon, 2000) and emerges with the intention of searching for a better and more enriching way of living sports, with a better interpretation and not only considering the minimum criteria that make it possible (ISS4, ISS5). Without contemplating this spirit that is mainly ethical, there is a negligence of sport itself and of aspects of its nature that are essential. (OSS3, OSS6, ISS1, ISS2, ISS4, ISS5, ISS6, PET0, PET1, PET2, PET3, PET4, PET5).

As an example, OSS3 refers that even within the explicit set of regulatory and constituent norms, some are more central than others and must be respected in order not to deprive that sport from its characteristics: *«Football rules have changed a lot throughout the years, for example the offside. It is still football and rules continue to change. Some rules are more basic and central. If you decide that in football you cannot use the feet anymore, unless you are the goalkeeper, then you are totally changing the nature of the game. You can keep calling it football, but it will be a different version of football. (...) you must be aware that, even though you use the same name, it is not the same activity.»* (OSS3, p.10).

Nevertheless, it is possible to identify ethical aspects that are common across sports and that go far beyond its explicitly normative dimension. The notion of fair play is a good example and this subject constantly arises in physical education lessons (ISS1, ISS2, ISS4, ISS6).

For instance, for ISS1, «*the idea that we can live collectively, even if we have different views (...) and we can share the same world.*» (ISS1, p.19) is crucial to the spirit of sports, especially when considered as a vehicle for an ethical education. This supra-regulatory understanding, and independent from the different roles and point of views that we have, seems to be part of an internal spirit of the verbally inexplicit sport, and it can then set the basis for extremely rich learning situations during physical education lessons: «*I think that for us, in the field of sports, the ideal would be that one day we could play without a referee, isn't it?*» (ISS1, p.19); «*(...) [In a game], if we could ensure that everybody raised their hand when there is a foul, we would contribute for justice and for fairplay.*» (ISS5, p.7). This is why physical education lessons, in contrast to what happens in more strictly regulated competition contexts, where regulatory aspects are stricter, are a valuable space for the promotion of this spirit that, in a certain way, results from the legal and regulatory understanding of sports.

In recreational sports, from which we can learn lessons for educational contexts, there is even a tendency to break some regulations in order to promote the internal values of sports. For instance, in handicapping contestants, or when we create teams with different numbers of elements, contrary to the normal regulations, we artificially create balance in the confrontation and dispute so that it is real and has potential for growth through challenge of sufficiently similar capabilities: «*The fundamental idea is that the sports relationship requires treating people with equality and trying to ensure that it is a relationship of equals. Equals does not mean that they are equal, it means they have the same dignity, the same credit and thus they can have an equal treatment.*» (ISS2, p.8). In this sense, sports ethics in physical education is a highly relational concept and provides references and norms on how we relate to our counterparts, creating what we can call a social ethics, where the displacement of ourselves and

otherness, that is to say, the sensitivity and availability in relation to the place/role of the other, are crucial (OSS3, OSS5, ISS1, ISS3).

This equitably-conditioned environment calls for another internal and common value of sports, the idea of mutual commitment (ISS3). The idea of a mutual search for excellence via competition (Simon, Torres and Hager, 2015) is, for our interviewees, a non- or supra-regulatory ethical requirement of sports that requires specific pedagogical commitment: an engagement where teachers and learners deploy all their skills, strengths and energy to their maximum capacity. There is something deeply ethical in this full dedication to sports challenge that human beings can make and think about and that, besides that, reflects the consideration of the other (opponent, teammate) as someone that deserves that mutuality of commitment and dedication (PET0). Hence, there is a mutual logic in the ethical requirement of commitment, without which, even if we comply with all the regulations, we can disrespect the other or the sport itself in which we engage. One interviewee captures this mutuality with particular insight: «(...) *since when we try to do better, we also enable the others to do their best. We create room so that the other can offer his best and vice versa.*» (ISS3, p.15).

In competitive sports the levels of commitment are normally associated to the competitive needs of that moment. This means that the maximum commitment may not be necessary when the aim of winning does not require that effort. In physical education, where we often realise that students' performance is very weak due to their limited sports literacy, the mutual value of this commitment of showing the best performance of each one and, mainly, the best group performance, is pedagogically priceless.

### c) THE RIGHT PLAYING/DOING OF SPORTS

When we think about ethics, especially in common sense conversations, we often run the risk of finding moral perspectives on the notion of good in sports. Sports goodness includes, but is not limited to, fair play, justice, and the kindness of players' actions and character. There is an essential aspect in sports goodness that is related to more technical, tactical and/or pragmatic aspects of sports

performance that lead to an adjustment of the gesture to the requirements of each moment, which we call the right playing/doing of sports (ISS2): «*For me, when I am watching [sports], of whatever kind, it is important that gestures are well performed.*» (ISS0, p. 15). The right performing of sports gesture is not only related to the technical criteria, it also includes the ethical dimension that should be pedagogically analysed more in depth in physical education. In this sense, for ISS5, the right playing/doing is an essential aspect of sports ethics since normally the sportsmen that most break rules and do not respect the sports' spirit are usually the technically less skilled professionals, which have a shorter range of legitimate tools to reach their objectives: «*The improvement of the gesture is important because of ethics, for example. The best we teach the gesture, the less players need to cheat or use violence to reach their ends, since they acquire tools that enable them to reach them in a legal way.*» (ISS5, p. 14).

Normally, the good playing of sports is thought to require the correct performance of the technical movements, the correct use of sport materials, their functionality, a concern for efficiency and effectiveness, and are based on standardised criteria even those criteria can be altered from standard competitive forms to those more apt to the teachers pedagogical goals (OSS0).

Thus, the technical domain is the support and the basis of any right (ie rule-observing) playing/doing, whether it is sportive, artistic, technological or mechanical (OSS0). In this sense, we can find here a link between ethics and technique that can be relevant for an ethical interpretation of sports teaching through physical education, since technical competences enable the sportsman to overcome the challenges created by sports.

It would be too simplistic, therefore, to say that for an ethical concern in physical education it is only necessary to respect its normative structure and its internal structure, since the respect for the rules and the maximum commitment and good will of students is not enough. For our interviewees it is essential that, besides the incorporation of normative criteria and a committed mutuality, there is also the serious work of learning technical and tactical knowledge that are specific of each sport and without which not only the technical aspect would be jeopardised, but also the ethical considerations.

#### d) OVERCOMING IN SPORTS

For OSS3, sports is an arena for “human betterment” (Hämäläinen, 2014) at different levels. When they submit themselves to a sports challenge, sportspersons voluntarily embark upon a path of personal and/or collective improvement, challenging themselves, the others, or a result/record: «*The sportsman (sic) has an interesting problem - no matter if they are opponents, or a very difficult wave, for a surfer - and he managed with his skills and right-doing to overcome himself, to achieve something unexpected.*» (OSS3, p.12). This overcoming notion is not only a practical one, but it has a symbolic meaning too. When overcoming a sports challenge, individuals (more or less self-consciously) wander a path of personal growth and overcoming (Lacerda and Mumford, 2010). Yet for ISS0 and ISS6, this dimension of sports overcoming is not always straightforward or easy to judge, and the ethical nature of the sports challenge changes considerably according to both practical and formal criteria of that specific challenge. For instance, the overcoming capacity and the capacity of performing at the best of his ability for a student in gymnastics, as it is an individual activity and not performed simultaneously with opponents, is totally different of that of the student that takes part in a relay race and that can permanently compare and adjust his performance, in real time, according to the performance of his opponents. In this case, the student can decide not to do his best, in case something below is enough for succeeding. This raises ethical questions related to each one’s duty of performing his skills at their highest level and, at the same time, the right that each one has to manage their own efforts (ISS0).

Moreover ISS6 reports that the ethical value of competition, simultaneous with the performance of others – parallel and shared tests (Kretchmar, 1975) - cannot be compared to that of non-simultaneous competitions, where one performs alone or against our previous results, since: «*(...) my historical self, the person who performed yesterday and run in two hours and twenty two minutes does not have the chance to try harder against myself today. So it is the same thing as you swimming against an historical record and if you finish one minute shorter time*

*you can say «I won, I beat», because you beat the record. But who did you beat? Because the person who did that record didn't have the chance to adjust a strategy or to know that you are a little bit ahead of them.» (ISS6, p.4).*

These aspects raise relevant questions related to the fairness of sports challenge, the merit of the overcoming process and its didactic utility.

Thus, competition constitutes an important part of the ethical dimension of sports. For PET2, the commitment to ethics becomes increasingly more difficult the higher the competitive level is, and the higher the number of other aspects that are considered beyond sports entertainment and the mere aspects of winning or losing. The dominance of the competitive aspect of sports often compromises its ethical experience, according to OSS5, PET4 and PET5, since it is also necessary to learn to compete, including the value of the fight for victory and success in its correspondent axiological hierarchical place.

Equally, OSS5 and PET5 argue that sports must be a place of inclusion and that, often, particularly at high level, it becomes just the opposite, a place of exclusion: *«It is essential that people respect each other's differences. As it is also important to respect our skills, doing our best.» (PET5, p.6).* Also for PET4 the selection process of athletes in school-age (children and young people) contributes to the marginalisation of those that are less skilled for the benefit of the absolute value of performance.

When we speak of physical education, these questions should not be raised in this linear way, since it should be a place from all and for each individual, where in this aspect we can make the difference.

PET5 adds that the non-acceptance of the weakness of others' performances, mainly in an educational context, is more serious in ethical terms than accidentally breaking some of the strictly regulated rules: *«(...) [the ethical attitude in sports] also depends on understanding that the others fail independently of complying or not with the rules. (...) The misunderstanding of others' fails is a lack of respect in ethical terms, because as human beings we all fail.» (PET5, p, 5).*

Thus, physical education, as a space for the teaching of sports that is loosened from the shackles of competition-dominated or supremacy-performance, is then

an excellent place for learning situations and different performance criteria that increasingly value the ethical content. Here the pedagogues strives more for the inclusion of all than for a blind achievement of numerical results, as already stressed by Manuel Sérgio: «The transcendence and overcoming (namely in group, team, community) of what we are, towards what we should be: this is the sense of sports!» (Sérgio, 2014, p.80).

#### e) SPORT AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A SUPEREROGATORY ETHICS

As argued so far, in sports as in life, ethical problems are not solved always by the respect for and compliance with all regulations. «*We cannot reduce sports ethics to rules. (...) Ethics includes the idea of supererogatory, when someone goes beyond his duties. And this is what we most admire.*» (OSS3, p.10).

An important part of the ethical experience and sports spirit, is based on the experience of a supererogatory ethics, that is to say, an ethics that goes beyond formal requirements of right conduct (Feinberg, 1968; Feldman, 1986). As pointed out by OSS1: «*(...) because the rule has a very limited scope of action. (...) It is the administrative aspect. I can follow the rules but, for example, be unpleasant to my opponent ...(...). Thus, ethics is not at all limited to the compliance with the rules nor to their existence.*» (OSS1, p.15).

It is broadly consensual in the totality of our interviewees that there is a fundamental ethics not limited to rules and regulations. This ethical space is unregulated not merely because it is difficult so to do, but rather because its values depend properly on the fact that they are not imposed<sup>8</sup>: «*It sometimes happens in cycling. Someone has a flat tyre and we can try to run away or wait while his tire is changed. We do not have to wait. And there isn't any ethical norm that says that. And it would be impossible to define procedures for each situation. We have to interpret. And then there are things that ethically cannot be requested. They are beyond what we should do. But they have ethical value! They can be appreciated, we can say that it was morally and aesthetically beautiful. But I think*

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<sup>8</sup> See another interesting example in this field, when the athlete Iván Fernández Anaya refused to take advantage from the runner that was ahead of him when this one stopped before the finishing line thinking he had already crossed it: [http://elpais.com/elpais/2012/12/19/inenglish/1355928581\\_856388.html](http://elpais.com/elpais/2012/12/19/inenglish/1355928581_856388.html)

*it is dangerous to try to put that down in writing, because that is when we see an aesthetically more boring side of sports, in which we want to foresee all situations and control every element.»* (OSS3, p.10).

According to ISS1, the strong regulatory nature of sports can promote something that can be considered to be very dangerous because its ethical dimension: the fulfilment of ethical criteria only because they are externally imposed and not because they are internal and part of our convictions: *«The higher the competition in terms of performance, the more rules it has up to the smallest details, with the aim of finding increasingly thorough assessment methods. There we find a relation between ethics and law. Law tries that sports remains in an ethical relation between participants, that it has the regulatory aspect (which is not necessarily ethical) and it can even frequently lead to strategic behaviours that may be questioned from the point of view of sports virtue. It is possible to take advantage or profit from a situation that, at first, had the aim of punishing but that was then taken as an advantage.»* (ISS2, p.7).

In its turn, rather than imposing a normative structure with well-defined, strictly applied rules enforcing only minimum limits, a supererogatory ethics is transformative because it makes us think, reflect, and interpret the world and ourselves in a more holistic way, promoting ways of being that are built and grown internally. Physical education lessons seem to be a privileged space for this experience (OSS3). OSS5 and ISS0 reinforce this idea, adding that what is imposed by the law, that is just equitable and faire, even being good, is not enough for us. This is why there is something especially interesting and attractive in an ethics that extrapolates the mere duty and that sports promotes with the idea of *fair play*: *«For instance, when one player is about to score a goal and offers that goal (...) to a team-mate (...) or to the player who plays less time or that is still in an integration process in the team [or class] (...) I think this is a demonstration of an ethical value...»* (PET0, p.17).

The notion of *fair play* includes the active participant in the ethical process, providing a great opportunity for exercising his freedom, his consciousness and autonomy in the process of thinking/building the ethical universe of practice that just extrapolates the minimum requirements, the duty, the fair and the equitable.

(ISS1, PET4, PET5). It is through this notion that we can understand the distinction between the rule and the spirit of the game (Simon, Torres and Hager, 2015): «*We can abide the rules of the game by the limit and have tricky tactics, throw ourselves on the floor, kick the ball out of play...*» (ISS2, p.10); «*In many occasions I can enter a game and respect all the rules but without respecting the other, because I don't recognise him as someone that can create challenges...*» (ISS3, p.15).

An equally interesting aspect in applying the notion of the supererogatory ethics to sports and physical education is that, as it is not descriptive nor explicitly defined, it is tacitly created and negotiated between the participants: «*There is always a negotiation in every game. Teams enter the game and start to analyse one another: how are we going to play this game? Will we play clean or dirty? This relationship is developed through a dialog and events reveal that.*» (ISS2, p.11).

Sports, and more specifically the physical education lesson, is then an arena of opportunities where man can exercise and communicate this supererogatory or meta-ethics, in which he is highly qualified, an ethics that leads to overcoming and transcendence, that extrapolates law and duty requirements, that overcomes justice and equity, that makes us think beyond the minimum limits, and an ethics that is not ordinary: «*Sports is also a place where man can transcend himself... I think that this attitude leads him to make a difference.*» (PET0, p.20).

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

*«Sports should do good and in order to do good it (sic) has to be linked to the idea of good.» (ISS5, p.7).*

Ethics appears in sports when there is also a need of preservation, defence and mainly persecution of its essential nature and of places, functions or roles of its participants (ISS6). This need is even more urgent when we consider a sports education through physical education that is based on the idea that sports is a

fertile ground that contributes to a meaningful life (Feezell, 2013; McNamee, 2008; Reid, 2010).

No matter how arguable, variable and apparently intangible the nature of sports may be, largely due to the huge diversity of forms it assumes (different sports and practices) and the different contexts where it is performed (competition/high-performance, entertainment, teaching, training) there is an idea of sports that constitutes its identity and before which we feel the need of a truthful relationship: *«A key question in sports is the existence of a relation of truth, not in the sense of an absolute truth but a relationship that is genuine in terms of the respect for an idea of the sports practice. Virtue appears in sports because it always challenges and places people in competition, and there are two sides in a competition that try to obtain a favourable result. This result involves a conflict of interests. And in this relation of conflict of interest, in order to promote a truthful relationship, honesty and courage have to stand out (...), the respect for the opponent, the recognition of the opponent, that is to say, seeing the opponent as equal.»* (ISS2, p.6).

In the pedagogical context of physical education we can, thus, conclude that an interesting part of the ethical potential of sports, as stated by our interviewees, is based on the didactic contemplation, treatment and use of the ethical vector presented here, namely, the regulatory and normative structure of sports; the spirit of sports and its internal values; the right playing/doing of sports; the overcoming in sports; and sports as an opportunity for a supererogatory ethics. These are not, as we have seen, external or optional elements to add to physical education classes, but intrinsic features of sports' contents that can and should be treated and promoted in physical education classes by an ethical pedagogical lens.

Notwithstanding that our purpose was to identify, according to the main concerns of our study group, a relevant start point for promoting sports ethics in a physical education lesson that goes beyond the legal, regulatory and functionalist boundaries of the teaching of sports in this class, based on the idea that "universal values, linked and associated to effort and sweating, help to create different and unique persons and individuals, in terms of body and soul, spirit and

mind, ways of feeling and thinking, understanding and assessing.” (Bento, 2010). We conclude, however, that the ethical potential of sports is not limited to these technical aspects and that, naturally, some relevant aspects of sports ethics in general have yet to be systematically exploited.

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## On the aesthetic-ethic elements of sport

Ávila da Costa, L.; McNamee, M. J.; Lacerda, T. O. (2016). On the aesthetic-ethic elements of sport.

(To be submitted to the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*)

### Abstract

Traditionally, research in the field of sport's philosophy has approached aesthetic and ethical issues independently, with relatively few exceptions (Edgar, 2011; Mumford; 2013). In the main anthologies in the field of sports philosophy, there is an already consolidated positioning confirming their independence and the greater preponderance of ethics over aesthetics (McNamee and Morgan, 2015; Torres, 2012).

Somewhat in contrast, in sport's environments we often find elements that frequently blend and relate the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of sport's experience (Gagliardini Graça, McNamee and Lacerda, 2012). In the quest better to understand those relations and intersections, we have created in this study an argumentative route that starts from the perspectives of individuals who can, by their relation with the subject, help us to explore, interpret and give sense to some aesthetic elements of sport that are incomprehensible without a reference to ethics, as well as of the ethical elements of sports, whose understanding refers to aesthetic arguments, displaying a dramatic dimension of sport's reality that we refer to as aesthetic-ethical.

Analysing and deepening, in an hermeneutical way, the discourses included in exploratory semi-structured interviews, with a study group that includes nineteen teachers/researchers from the fields of aesthetics, ethics, sport's sciences and physical education, the aim of this work was to develop an argumentation that, unlike the binary logic between aesthetics and ethics that has been used in the study of sports, systematize elements of an aesthetic-ethics of sport based on what we call, by the suggestion of our interviewees arguments, the beauty-good-clean triad and the antinomies between *winning ugly* and *losing beautifully*.

**Keywords:** aesthetics, ethics, aesthetic-ethics of sports

## Introduction

The consideration of sport as a reality that has both an aesthetic and ethical content is, similarly to the truth proclaimed in the sepulchral sentence by La Palice<sup>9</sup>, an idea accepted by common sense in general and widely included in literature. Nevertheless, it requires a more detailed reading. With this statement it is not our intention to say that it represents a wrong reading of sport. On the contrary, the aim is to argue that it requires further study and attention since, as we will try to show in this work, part of the analysis of sport's aesthetics content is jeopardised without an ethical reference, likewise part of the ethical content of sports requires an aesthetic reference.

According to Torres, in his comprehensive analysis of several volumes of the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, of the *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* and the main anthologies in the field of sports philosophy, there is an already consolidated positioning in the research of this subject that separates the aesthetic and ethical approaches and that there are largely more works dedicated to ethics than to aesthetics (Torres, 2012). The persistently separated approach of ethics and aesthetics in the field of art's philosophy, called by Marcia Eaton as the "*separatist mistake*" (2001, p.57), is also common in sports philosophy. However, it represents a wrong approach that leads to a poor understanding of these areas and of sport itself.

In order to search for some answers to this problem, the main purpose of this article is to explore and deepen the elements and arguments that, based on a hermeneutic approach of the subject, legitimate the introduction of an aesthetic-ethics of sports. In order to pursue this purpose, there is an interpretative analysis of the discourses of a study group comprising nineteen elements that, thanks to their different backgrounds, reciprocally clarify and complement themselves in this subject. They are: a) "Outside Sport Sciences", teachers/researchers from

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<sup>9</sup> In the sepulchral sentence "*S'il n'était pas mort il ferait envie*" (If he wasn't dead, he would be still envied), the tradition says that one reader split the word "envie", which means "jealousy", becoming "en vie", that is to say, "in life". This changed a flattering expression into what we nowadays call the La Palice truth, since it is obvious and consensual (naturally most of us agree that those who are not dead are still in life).

the areas of ethics and aesthetics outside sports sciences (art, philosophy, theatre, music, dance, etc.) referred to as OSS; b) “Inside Sport Sciences”, teachers/researchers inside sports sciences whose work reveals ethical and aesthetic concerns in the context of pedagogy and education through sports, referred to as ISS; c) “Physical Education Teachers”, that can provide a more focused and practical perspective on the relevance of a pedagogical approach of sport’s aesthetics and ethics, referred to as PET. In order to guarantee the anonymity of their discourses, the quotes included throughout the text are identified with these acronyms, in order to recognise the group from which they come but with a random numerical identification.

In the sport of the 21st century which is characterised by the achievement of performances that are increasingly superhuman, using artificial means to increase the performance, through doping or other equivalent strategies and that is also characterised by the fanaticism that we sometimes find in hooliganisms, for instance, it is important to question ourselves about which sport we aim to have and support and which forms of looking and living sports correspond to our view. In short, the main question that concerns us and that has concerned several sports philosophers in the last decades (e.g. Dixon, 2003; Fraleigh, 2003; Hardman, 2009; Jones, 2010; Morgan, 2004; Russel, 1999, 2007; Simon, 2000; Torres, 2009, 2012) is, in an interpretativist language, like finding the best version or interpretation of sport and setting the internal criteria that should ground it.

From the debate raised in this work, like Torres (2012) we argue that an important part of the dramatic interest of sport is based precisely in the way we live, integrate and experience the aesthetic-ethical relation, since the same sport’s moment can have totally different and even opposite aesthetic readings whether or not we consider its ethical nature. This is what one of our interviewees argues when he says: *“For instance, think about Armstrong in the Tour de France and the doping. Before he confessed and before the suspects of his using of drugs we used to say «so beautiful!». But once he admits that he has cheated, suddenly that beautiful victory becomes ugly. The action is the same. However, once we know that he has used methods that he shouldn’t, that he has broken the rules, this affects the result, even afterwards. The same happens with a work of art*

*when we find out that it has been faked. Suddenly it has no value. You say that it is not that beautiful, you see no value.”* (OSS3, p.15).

Thus, there is an intersection area between the two fields in sport that requires an approach and without which its understanding becomes impoverished, or even jeopardised, as declared by one of the elements of our study group: *“I think there are overlapping areas. Yes, there is an ethical and an aesthetic sphere, this overlap can make some sport moments better than others.”* (ISS4, p.7). Without this integralist approximation between the aesthetic and ethical content, the search for an interpretation of sport that respects its main values, its specific purposes, its internal spirit and nature, its basic laws and its best version, the understanding of sports itself remains incomprehensible (Torres, 2012), because, as argued by Simon (2000), we do not understand the main reasons that give sports its regulatory and constitutive structure, that is to say, its internal purposes and aims.

If, for most of our interviewees, the aesthetic-ethical relation in sports is not compulsory, even though it is possible and desirable since it guarantees a better version/interpretation of each sports, for a different group of interviewees this relation is not only desirable but it is in fact unavoidable for sport’s reality. For this second group, and according to Torres (2012), the way of being, the attitude we have and how we experience a sport event corresponds both to aesthetic and ethical criteria, since it reveals aspects that are not only related to taste and style, but also ways of being and behaving with ethical and moral implications in the actors, in the structural arrangement of the sport itself and in the communities that live it. This does not mean, though, that to reach any definitive conclusion in this respect is an easy task.

The greatest discomfort in the approach of axiological fields such as aesthetics and ethics is, according to Eldridge (2005), the difficulty that philosophical communities have in comfortably dealing with study objects that are not included in clearly defined spheres, as if we consider objective facts on the one side, and aspects such as taste and idiosyncrasies on the other. In this sense, we find in the speech of one of our elements outside sports science the idea that the

aesthetic dimension of sport constitutes an aspect of sport's nature that is too subordinated to the personal and individual assessment of the subject that experiences it and, thus, it requires the alienation from the ethical nature of the object (sports, game or event) whether it is good, bad, a win or a defeat, fair or unfair. For this interviewee, aesthetics generally accepts situations of violence, horror, ugliness and anti-ethics according to the options, expectations and sensibility of the subject and, in this case, sport is not an exception. But curiously and paradoxically he concluded: *“As a citizen I can say that a game is not aesthetic if it is not ethical or that it is not ethical if it is not aesthetic. (...). What is hooliganism? It means subverting all the ethics of sports. (...) That is their supreme ecstasy. (...) Obviously, I personally disagree with that. (...) In my opinion, as the civilised citizen that I want to be, I think that in practice they [aesthetics and ethics] are interrelated, in fact it is not possible to consider an aesthetically pleasant and satisfactory game without a very strong ethical consideration.”* (OSS1, pp.22-24).

Thus, for our interviewees, considering the possibility of having aesthetic pleasure with a sport that neglects ethics is feasible as a theoretical exercise or as a contemplation in the third person, even though it is an unlikely experience in person since the internal aspects and properties of sports are lived in first-hand and learnt perceptually, cognitively, kinaesthetically and sensitively, thus constituting what we could call a unitary aesthetic-ethical experience (Torres, 2012). Starting out with the idea that all elements of our study group, due to their closer or more distant involvement with sports, search for a sports experience that looks for its best versions, we find in their testimonies evidences of this unitary aesthetic-ethical attitudes towards sports: *“(...) in my opinion there are some ways of understanding life and sports, that improve it and make it more interesting and relevant in our lives. Thus, I think that sport also gives us an opportunity of understanding and improving ourselves (...).”* (OSS3, p.9); *“(...) What I argue is that in order to enable an interpretative approach to have more integrity, it is necessary to look at sports from an aesthetic-ethical complex. Even though these two aspects are distinguishable, they are equivalent and influence one another.”* (ISS4, p.3).

So, there is something in sport, in its internal nature, in its properties, aims and intrinsic characteristics that legitimates a reflection that includes aesthetic-ethical judgments. However, it is not positioned, in fact as any judgment in the field of ethics and aesthetics and according to Eldridge (2005), at the margin of the multiplicity of contextual, historical, cultural and even individual considerations they are subject to, not even a certain level of objective and universal application that is normally applied to judgment's formulations.

In order to try to understand the nature of the aesthetic-ethical dimension of sport we tried to debate with our interviewees the sense of this influences that can be expressed from aesthetics to ethics or from ethics to aesthetics.

Even though this apparently occurs in a bidirectional way, the perception of a prominence of aesthetics or ethics in this retro fit is all the more promoted the higher the sensibility and the involvement of the subjects in each area. Our involvement and the way our sensibility reacts to the apprehension of an object is an essential part of the aesthetic-ethical judgements that we make regarding its nature, predominance, usefulness and aim (Levinson, 1998). Thus, teachers/researchers who essentially focus their work in the domain of sport's aesthetics have identified it as the driving force of this relation and vice-versa as it is for instance outlined in the following statements of our interviewees: *"(...) when there is mutual respect or even respect for the dynamics of the game or the activity itself, there is greater potential for aesthetic elements, so that movements are valued or highlighted. (...) I think ethics assumes a bigger dimension"* (ISS3, p.17); *"(...) the world's destiny is what the Greeks call the «areté», that can be literally translated as art, or in a more philosophical sense, as excellence. It was the unit, the harmonious synthesis, the technique, a certain level of technicality, the ethics, the aesthetics, the performances, the virtue, the excellence, the magnitude, the magnificence...etc... It is in this sense that aesthetics is the culmination of all that with the embedded ethics."* (ISS5, p.1).

Thus, trying to better understand the nature of the relation between the aesthetic-ethical elements of sports, we have built an argumentative route that deals with aesthetics-ethics as a dramatic dimension of sports which constitutes an

alternative to the binary and functionalist logic that we usually find. This argumentation that starts with the analysis of the circularity or the retro fit of the aesthetic and ethical elements of sport also explores some aesthetic-ethical elements that are materialised in what we call the *beauty-good-clean triad*, as well as in the antinomies of winning ugly and losing beautifully.

### **Aesthetics-ethics: a dramatic dimension of sport that is alternative to its binary logic**

#### *Circularity or the retro fit of the aesthetic and ethical elements of sports*

The dynamics of the relations of proximity and distance between aesthetics and ethics reveals an important dramatic dimension of the human experience that is also reflected on sports. Human experience, as well as the sports experience, means action, process, path, route - which etymologically leads to the notion of drama - with all that is certain and uncertain, predictable and unpredictable, expected and unexpected, pleasant or repulsive that it can include (Kreft, 2012).

There is a unit that is built in the routes that go from aesthetics to ethics and that do not only include positive, easy and light values from these domains. If aesthetics is not only related to the *bright*, the *light*, the *soft* or the pleasant and if it can be discovered through tougher, harder, painful, ugly, tragic or horrific experiences, ethics also includes a spectrum of experiences that go from the fair to the unfair, from good to bad, from violence to affection. Overcoming a dichotomist outlook regarding these domains enables us to look at the overall of sport's experience, which includes victory and defeat, justice and injustice, ecstasy and frustration, delight and suffering, and to understand how the dramatic experience of human life, itself, integrates and combines what seems irreconcilable in abstract, as it is referred by one of the elements outside sports sciences: *"There are some models and archetypes that still prevail in the 21st century and that create difficulties. When we talk about aesthetics it seems that we are talking more about cosmetics or beautiful things... When we talk about*

*ethics we are talking about good or bad behaviours, right? That is not the true. That is a narrowing view, it is limiting. I can think that I should respect that culture and I know I should, but for some reason I may be incapable. This does not make me less human. This is about paths, efforts and learnings...*" (OSS5, p.18).

These pathways also allow us to understand that part of the dramatic nature of the aesthetic-ethical relation is associated to its cultural and civilizational dimension (Eldridge, 2005). The aesthetic criteria, as well as ethical criteria, are shaped according to times, ages, societies and the same happens with the relation between aesthetics and ethics (Bayer, 1978). For one of our interviewees, for example, sport's records and results are becoming so inhuman and intangible that ethical violations such as doping are becoming less and less surprising and scandalous, stunning less contemporary societies: *"If we say that Mark Spitz wan all the medals and he was doped, in that time it would be different, it would have a different relevance...(...) Finding, nowadays, that Spitz doped himself would be a bigger surprise and would have greater impact than if one day we come to discover that Michael Phelps used drugs."* (OSS1, p.26). This decreasing of sensibility regarding ethical criteria as a consequence of trying to achieve super-human performance is also visible in the *Sherpas* case, at the Everest, who risk their own physical integrity and life to enable others to achieve sport's success, as referred by another element of our study group: *"Do you know the Sherpas, they are the natives who help mountain climbers going up. In the last years 70 died. And many other became paralysed or were so severely injured that now they can't do anything. Here you can find a very interesting ethical tension between the European or Western mountain climbers and the Japanese, people that come from the outside with their money to go up, that pay and local people really suffer severe consequences to help them achieve their sport's goal, their purpose. So, they give them a way of life, but at what price?"* (OSS3, p.15).

These two examples are revealing of how «pure aesthetics», without any reference to ethics can have consequence not only to our sensibility for reading and judging the ethical content of sports but also our aesthetic sensibility. If we were all aware that certain levels of performance were unreachable without the

use of illicit artificial methods or without disrespecting the physical integrity or other human beings' life, would we have the same interest, desire and attraction?

Considering the impact that an aesthetic-ethical consideration can have in our way of looking sports, it seems to us that more important than seeing that there is an aesthetic-ethical relation in sport is looking for the understanding of their shapes, forms and specific directions to which they relate and feed, the contaminations and boundaries they create to one another and the potentialities they offer to each other. Between the classical approaches that defined affinities between the values of beauty, good and truth (Bayer, 1978; Beardsley and Hospers, 1990; Huisman, 1994), the medieval currents that attributed theological senses to the idea of beauty and to the representation of the world in art as a divine image (Bayer, 1978; Eco, 1995; Panofsky, 1994; Souriau, 1970), a modern aesthetic rationalism, namely Cartesian, that associated the beauty to the truth (Bayer, 1993) simultaneously emerging a progressive subjectivation of the aesthetic world to contemporaneity (Bayer 1978; Franzini, 1999; Huisman, 1994; Souriau, 1970), the approximations and distances between aesthetics and ethics are varied and countless the same way the definition of the primacy of one regarding the other remains ranging and debatable until today.

For one of ours interviewees, a fine arts researcher, our ethical principles always limit our aesthetic experience the same way our aesthetic sensibility can have a strong power in our ethical criteria and he gave us two examples: *"In the case of sports (..) sometimes, as it happens in arts, the aesthetic interests are opposed to our ethical values, because if the value of perfection, the achievement of results overlaps, becomes more present, certainly the ethical values loose importance and become secondary (...). Lance Armstrong is an example of that."* (OSS0, p.25); By contrast, also *"The aesthetics can be compromised if the ethical values are also very present. For instance, one person that is conditioned by a very strong morality will certainly have difficulties in compromising certain ethical principles or in searching for its transgression. For example, I had a student that was profoundly catholic. All the work he developed was based on religion. This is not a problem, but for him certain types of accomplishments were impossible, even if they were interesting he would never do it because his moral principles*

*prevented him from doing it. (...) Let's say that when we want to achieve success in what we want to do or when the work has to answer a certain function, only some aspects of aesthetics are used. The rule can be one of them. Thus, aesthetics can also be affected.*" (OSS0, p. 25).

For most of our interviewees there is a clear and evident aesthetic-ethical contamination effect in sports and its casual origin is not easy to identify. If on the one hand *"an excellent point in basketball in which the player illegally supported himself on the other's shoulder loses its aesthetic value because it resulted from an ethical flaw."* (OSS1, p.25), on the other hand, the sense, the aim, the quality, the effectiveness, the efficiency and the relevance of sport's gesture can be compromised when its realisation is not searched with perfection, excellence, fluidity and harmony: *"A fluid gesture and perfectly choreographed corresponds to an increased performance of that technical gesture"* (OSS1, p. 26), likewise a sportsman that has a more diversified, creative and enlarged set of answers potentially has a greater successful response capacity with a wider range of situations and problems put to him (ISS0).

By voluntarily integrating a universe of proof and challenge before unnecessary obstacles (Suits, 2005), the subject defines a particular relation with the world, both aesthetic and ethical, that affects him and that is affected, occupying and hosting him, in a process that is simultaneous and circular (Gagliardini, McNamee and Lacerda, 2012).

Thus, it is important to clarify that in the debate of this aesthetic-ethic retro fit, if any of these dimensions and, specifically in the case of sports, holds primacy over the other. Can the ethical consideration of sport legitimately contaminate or limit the aesthetics, because this one has more relevance regarding the other or vice-versa? Even though one element inside sports sciences considers that in sports the ethic is apparently more consciously present in the debate of its main players, another interviewee outside the sports sciences suggests that the aesthetic-ethical relation in sports is simultaneous and circular: *"Circular because none comes first. There is no leading role, no protagonist of the film. Circular not in the sense of a closed circle, it can be in a spiral. When I say circular I mean*

*simultaneous, in simultaneity.*” (OSS5, p.25). According to this interviewee, the aesthetic-ethical attitude in sports requires a deep involvement and engagement with the world that simultaneously and in a circular way integrates an attitude of respect and esteem: *“There is a relation of simultaneity between esteem and respect. How can I show respect without showing esteem, so to say? Esteem has a lot to do with respect and respect with esteem.”* (OSS5, p.25).

Also, another element from the study group stated that, in a first analysis, it can seem that ethics has an axiological primacy over aesthetics, since it is fundamental for the balance of any human relation, while the aesthetic function is related to adding value and meaning to these same relations and thus, it is not so indispensable or essential. However, the same interviewee adds: *“... But then aesthetics has a dimension that is not only about adding because it is crucial for our existence! And our existence is defined by that meaning, by the value we attribute to things, by what is fundamental for our identity. (...) so the aesthetic dimension can have much more value than originally thought.”* (ISS2, p.16). The power that aesthetics has can be seen, for instance, when the own rules of a sports challenge are broken, changed, adapted or developed in order to increase its aesthetic meaning: *“(...) there is a very powerful aesthetics working here. And that is because we like the drama involved in those contests, we like the drama of a game coming down to the last minute in baseball for example, and the last minute in soccer, and when we can't tell who is going to prevail. It is exciting, as you know. It's lovely, it's delicious. So we violate rules in a sense that would allow equitized comparison in favour of rules that provide the drama. And I think that is a perfectly valid thing to do and our ancestors used to do this over and over again. So we figure out ways to make it exciting, dramatically. That is a very clear way in which aesthetics shapes our contesting rules.”* (ISS6, p.8).

Other interviewees also reinforce this connection and state that the contextualisation of ethics is always a pre-condition for the appreciation of aesthetics. That is to say, a movement cannot be aesthetically appreciated without the ethical understanding of its senses, shapes and aims, likewise its ethical understanding creates the basis for the aesthetic appreciation: *“It may be very beautiful seeing a goal keeper stretch to make a save (...) but not a soldier*

*jumping for his life, jumping over an exploding bomb, even if his body can have exactly the same extended shape as the body of the goalkeeper; I think it is appropriate to take aesthetic pleasure from the goalkeeper, but it would not be appropriate to take aesthetic pleasure watching the soldier jumping for his life.”* (OSS6, p.11). And, in this sense, for the elements of our study group that belong to the sub-group of physical education teachers, a sports performance that is perfectly performed from the technical point of view loses its aesthetic value if it is, in anyway, permeated by anti-ethical attitudes. Likewise, the ethical behaviour towards sports requires searching for the best possible performance according to the technical criteria and, consequently, the aesthetic criteria of the concerned activity. For these interviewees, in an aesthetic experience the ethical attracts and enhances the aesthetic value and, the same way, the anti-ethical creates repulsion and withdraws the aesthetic interest.

Thus, the aesthetic-ethical retro fit of sports suggests a view over sports reality that is alternative to the binary logic normally associated to it, between good and evil, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly. The alternative view reveals the interdependent relation between the aesthetic criteria of a sport and its essential and constitutive logic, that is to say, its meaning, aim or its final purposes that naturally refer to its ethical nature (Gagliardini Graça, McNamee and Lacerda, 2012).

But what are we referring to when we invoke these senses and aims?

The aims of sports largely overcome the objective and pragmatic purposes of each sports realisation, like abiding to certain technical and functional criteria that result in scores or results (ISS1). There is an anthropological motivation that leads us to test our motor skills in sporting terms and thus test our competence (Kretchmar, 2013). Thus, this purposes work as an inspiration, analogy or suggestion of another essential aim of sports, the sports humanisation and its flourishing that largely overcomes the binary logic of the winning or losing: *“Sometimes I do not care who wins or loses, I am interested in the experience, I care that my team plays in a certain way, that it plays fiercely, respecting the rules, that it creates a show that teaches us things about life. This is what I*

*consider most important, what sport teaches us and how enriches our life. (...) the show ends, the game ends but our life goes on and it is in life where we can absorb that [what we experience in sports].”* (ISS1, p.15).

This way of being in sports, that Kretchmar (2015) fits in his aesthetic model of sports involvement, we dare to call aesthetic-ethical. By opposition or by contrast to a merely pragmatic and utilitarian approach, as well as a view disconnected from the objective and formal purposes of a sports, an aesthetic-ethical way of being, thus, overcomes the spatial-temporal barriers of sports' realisation in order to have some type of impact in enriching the person's life, standing in an intermediate stage between sports utilitarianism and hedonism (PET0). This impact does not necessarily have to be beautiful or pleasant: *“When Maradona scored a goal with his hand, that hand goal, what does it teach us about life? It teaches that there is a bad side of life, how it is possible to cheat things, isn't it? This has a tremendous impact that impresses me. (...) Losing a game isn't really a problem, the problem is how we win and lose and what we learn with that.”* (ISS1, p.15). Thus, there is a taste of victory or defeat that remains in life after the spatial-temporal borders of sports' realisation and that does not always have a direct and linear relation with the pragmatically measurable result of these same realisations (PET0, ISS1).

How can we, then, with so many variables and nuances, characterise the aesthetic-ethical content of sports?

In the conviction that this type of approach contents that are so slippery requires, according to Nussbaum (1990, p.49) a “self-conscious about its own lack of completeness”, we did not miss, however, the opportunity for our interviewees to consider this type of approach, whose lack would represent a greater damage for the understanding of sport as a place of aesthetic-ethical experience.

Challenged by our study group we will continue to develop the analysis about the aesthetic-ethic content of sport on some common expressions and concepts frequently used in daily experience of sport's aesthetics and ethics elements, which we summarize as the *beauty-good-clean triad*, and in *the antinomies of winning ugly and losing beautifully*.

### *The beauty-good-clean triad*

For most of the elements in our study group the aesthetic-ethical content of sport can be analysed through a comprehensive set of elements that constitute the beauty-good-clean triad of sport's experience. This triad is, according to our interviewees, easy to verify with an empirical approach by the actors in sports and it is present in common terminology of sports' universe with expressions such as *beautiful game*, *good performance* or *clean game*. These expressions are frequently interrelated or even confused, representing however different levels of realization and general satisfaction regarding sport's experience.

Notwithstanding, for the study group, the different elements of this triad express different levels of aesthetic-ethical satisfaction regarding sports, something that is worth being analysed.

Thus, in a more elementary level we consider the *clean game*. The clean game has an aesthetic-ethical nature insofar as it is related to a sport's realisation that respects the main criteria of justice, fairness, compliance with the regulations, respect between the actors, fair play, in short, elements of human nature that are generally labelled as ethic or even moral. However, the expression of cleanliness associated to sports contexts is also often associated to a sensible side, even sensorial, but also emotional and aesthetic. In the belief of St Thomas Aquinas, clarity and luminosity were beauty conditions that are somehow related to the idea of cleanliness (Beardsley e Hospers, 1990). Part of the sense of using the notion of cleanliness in the ethical content already suggests this unavoidable aesthetic-ethical relation of human experience, as it reveals our corporeity and the role of senses in our sensibility towards the world and life that we experience: *"I think that at a basic level, ethics is built through emotions. And the aspect of clean and dirty is related to basic body reactions."* (OSS3, p.13). It is in this sense that the experience of the phenomenal body, explained by Merleau-Ponty (2006), is an experience of someone who does not only passively perceive the world but that looks at it, feels it and sees in it as an expressive and symbolic world. Thus, we need the body not only to perceive but mainly to understand, to read, to interpret, to decode, and to communicate the (and with!) the world (OSS0, OSS1,

OSS3, OSS5, ISS6). We feel, see, smell and touch cleanliness and, in this sense, an anti-ethical event has the power to create repulsion, dislike or repugnance at intellectual or moral levels as well as emotional and sensible. Thus, the *clean game* is clean, transparent likewise athletes that are subject to anti-doping analysis, for instance, are considered *clean* if they are within the limits of legality. Therefore, cleanliness has minimum requirements from the point of view of the aesthetic-ethical interest and value of a sport's realisation.

For our interviewees, the *clean game* or *performance* does not necessarily require the presence of the good or beautiful element but it is a pre-condition for its appearance.

A second level of the aesthetic-ethical experience can be presented through the expression *good game*. The concept of good applied to the sports realisation assumes a manifestation that is clearly ethical, thus requiring not only the respect for basic ethical principles but that also add value and quality to the experience, in the sense of the functional doing good and of a meritocratic logic (OSS3, ISS2). In this sense, the *good game* necessarily includes in its nature the *clean game*, because we cannot accept the good in sports if it is not clean, that is to say, fair, truthful and loyal to the spirit and rules of the game, equitable or legal. However, the clean does not fulfil all the requirements of the good and, therefore, besides being fair, a *good game* has to be well performed according to the technical, tactical, pragmatic and even aesthetic criteria (Colás, 2012). Since it normally includes high levels of technical quality execution, thus requiring a balanced and fiercely fight between sportsmen with similar performance levels, the *good game* is also more attractive and interesting from the aesthetic point of view than merely a *clean game*, it includes elements that enable us to characterise it as a second level of the aesthetic-ethical experience in sports (ISS1, ISS2, PET1, PET2, PET3).

Even though necessarily interesting, the *good game/good performance* does not inevitably require the presence of exceptionally beautiful or transcendent elements, laying in between the idea of a *clean game* and a *beautiful game* as stated by OSS2 and OSS3: "(...) *these would be important games like finals in*

*world cups where there is so much at stake, so much money and it is so important for each country to win that they play in a very defensive way without taking risks. Sometimes there aren't even goals and all is decided on penalties, the winning team may indeed be very happy with the result but this is not the same as a beautiful game, with emotion, where athletes take risks and make more exciting moves." (OSS2, p.9); "So, the good game is when you see satisfaction. Which is different, for instance, from a beautiful game. I think there is satisfaction but it goes beyond it." (OSS3, p.14).*

A third level of the aesthetic-ethical experience, that for our interviewees represents the maximum expression of a global involvement with sports, according to the terminology that has been used so far, can be described by the notion of *beautiful game/beautiful performance*. The notion of beautiful, in the day-to-day terminology is sometimes referred to as "nice", that immediately inspires aesthetic elaborations, and that also seems to require ethical criteria including the notions of *clean* and *good*: *"It was well played, the players had a good performance, it was clean, it was honest. I think it is all at the same time, so there it is, the aesthetic-ethical dimension comes in. It is not enough to be nice. Imagine that the players are great, those that I like, that seem to dance while playing, like the Brazilian football style, but who are naughty with harsh tackling and who are always committing fouls? No one says it was a beautiful game. Because they did not have a proper behaviour." (OSS5, p.20).*

The experience of the beautiful, in this sense, corresponds to a valuable way of living that is enriched and overextended by facing reality experiencing it (Dewey, 2005). This way, the *beautiful* in sports largely overextends the aesthetic frontiers as it seems to provide a holistic intensity to the experience that requires the presence not only of the clean and the good but also of elements that, having different difficulty levels, largely overcome the foreseeable (ISS3, PET 4, PET5): *"So, in my opinion, a beautiful game is the game of transcendence." (ISS1, p.19).*

Therefore, the beautiful sport's experience is not only the beautiful or the interesting, it combines outstanding performances that touch perfection and infinity (the historicity) with high levels of expressiveness and emotional

involvement, thus revealing transcending levels of fulfilment and satisfaction, enriched by elements that, rationally, are difficult to express (OSS2, PET0). This aesthetic-ethical involvement in sports is driven, according to Kretchmar (2005), by the desire of testifying or acting in a drama, experiencing a narrative coherence with symbolic meanings, satisfying our own interests as well as those of the observers and letting oneself be led by a significant and mythical history as, sometimes, sports can be.

To sum up, we could express the interdependency relation between the different elements of the triad in the following image, suggested by one of our interviewees (OSS6):

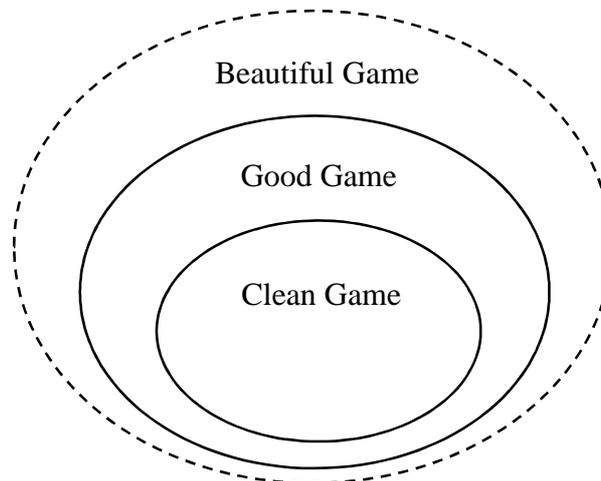


Image 1: The beauty-good-clean aesthetic-ethical triad.

### *The antinomies of winning ugly and loosing beautifully*

However, there are also other expressions that are frequently used in sport's context and that, apparently, can contradict the sense of this triad, what we call the antinomies of *winning ugly* and *loosing beautifully*. Now, if as we have just argued, the beautiful represents the maximum expression of a sports realisation not only in the sense of fulfilling the minimum ethical criteria (clean), as well as competence, efficiency and performative quality from the technical and tactical point of view (good), and besides that it has the potential to surprise the subject with magical and extraordinary moments, how can this lead to inefficiency, to

defeat and to failure? Likewise, how can a performative experience in sports classified as ugly, weak in terms of quality or anti-ethical and that therefore does not fulfil the criteria for a holistically attractive realisation, lead to success and victory? This problem has been raised and debated by the interviewees.

It is largely accepted within the study group that sometimes we *lose beautifully* or *win ugly*. But, what is the meaning of these expressions? Is there any relation between the beauty and victory or defeat?

*Loosing beautifully* and *winning ugly* can have two types of interpretations.

A sportsman can reveal levels of immersion, commitment, respect and dedication in the activity in which he participates and, even though, he may not have the capacity/competence to overcome the challenges created by the activity with success. Thus it is possible to say that someone *lost beautifully*, since he lost honestly, showing the best possible version of his performance according to his capacities. The same way we can say that a sportsman *won ugly* if his victory resulted from uncommitted performances, with a weak performative level, negligent or even disrespectful regarding the internal values of that sport or of the action actors: “*It can be winning with arrogance, despising the opponent or playing less beautifully.*” (OSS2, p.9).

By contrast, some interviewees stated that a sportsman or a team can effectively present exceptional performance levels and, even though, due to random reasons and circumstances, be unable to deliver satisfactory results (*losing beautifully*), likewise sometimes with weak exhibitions sportsmen and teams can achieve victory (*win ugly*).

Callois (1990) explained and debated the possibilities of this unexpected element in ludic activities through the development of the *alea* idea that grants the games the dubiousness regarding the outcome.

This uncertainty, characterised by its random and unpredictable elements, constitutes an important contribution for the aesthetic-ethical interest of sports. These are, however, the same elements that create the opportunity that not

always the final result of a sport's activity linearly reflects the performance level performed through results such as victory or failure (ISS4, ISS6, PET1, PET2).

OSS6 and ISS6 argue that this aspect does not compromise the natural association between a performance with high aesthetic-ethical value and a well-succeeded result. For this interviewees the difference between sports activities and random activities (like tossing a coin to see if we get heads or tails) is that, notwithstanding the presence of the random element in the first, normally, performances with high aesthetic-ethical value frequently lead to favourable results thus increasing the chances of succeeding, the same way that performances with a weak aesthetic-ethical content normally lead to more unfavourable results because in sports, instead of totally random activities, "It is necessary to learn to navigate in an ocean of uncertainties, through islands of certainties." (Morin, 2007, p.19). The exceptions that confirm this rule can, still, happen and thus appear paradoxal expressions like *losing beautifully* and *winning ugly*.

### **Final considerations**

Considering the presence of aesthetic and ethical elements that influence each other and that contaminate sports, the argumentation in this article aimed to collect elements that illuminate, support and justify the hypothesis of a sport's aesthetic-ethics.

The assumption that part of the aesthetic content of sports remains incomprehensible without the reference to ethical elements, as well as that part of the ethical content remains incomplete without allusions to aesthetics enabled us to search for points of interface between these two dimensions in the quest for filling the gap left by the "separatist mistake" (Eaton, 2001) which led to a type of research that traditionally separated these two dimensions in sports philosophy (Torres, 2012).

A free approach of the idea of a supremacy of any of these two dimensions at sports enabled us to conclude that, considering that as aesthetics affects ethics

and ethics contaminates aesthetics, the origin of this causal link in sports is not easy to identify or define and it seems to be circular and to reflect the own dramatic experience of men in sports, as well as in life (Kreft, 2012).

By presenting an alternative way of being in sports, that is neither dichotomous nor binary, in these article we concluded that the experience of an aesthetic-ethics in sports is plural and diverse, integrating different levels of experience that influence each other but that are also distinguished and assume different importance in different contexts, leading to the beauty-good-clean triad and the antinomies of *winning ugly* and *loosing beautifully*.

The configuration of this triad, as well as of the associated antinomies explain an important part of the balance between the *agon* and the *alea* (Callois, 1990; Huizinga, 2003) which give sports its huge aesthetic-ethical attractability.

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## Educação Física: possibilidades de uma educação estético-ética

Ávila da Costa, L.; McNamee, M. J.; Lacerda, T. O. (2016). Educação Física: possibilidades de uma educação estético-ética.

Submitted to *Revista Brasileira de Educação Física e Esporte*, from the University of São Paulo)

### RESUMO

A aproximação à estética e à ética na investigação em filosofia do desporto tem por hábito abordar estas duas áreas filosóficas de forma distinta, separada e independente, sendo dada preponderância, por norma, aos trabalhos do âmbito da ética, que em volume marcam uma presença consideravelmente superior nas principais revistas internacionais deste campo de estudo. Estando o potencial pedagógico estético e ético do desporto amplamente descrito na literatura, o **objetivo** deste estudo prende-se com a procura das zonas de interface destes âmbitos numa abordagem estético-ética da educação física. O **percurso metodológico** seguido para a persecução deste objetivo integrou a recolha, análise e discussão, a partir de uma perspectiva hermenêutica e fenomenológica, dos discursos contidos em entrevistas semi-estruturadas de carácter exploratório, realizadas a um grupo de estudo que compreendeu dezanove professores/investigadores nas áreas da estética, da ética, do desporto e da educação física. O confronto do conteúdo proveniente das entrevistas com as reflexões já disponíveis sobre a temática na literatura permitiu-nos obter como **resultado** um roteiro argumentativo que explora o especial papel da educação física e a relevância da corporeidade na educação da sensibilidade estético-ética dos alunos no seu percurso escolar. Nas **conclusões** deste roteiro foram particularmente enfatizados quatro elementos com potencialidade estético-ética que contribuem para uma estético-ética do desporto recuperadora da unidade da experiência processo-produto no desporto. Esses elementos, que podem ser transportados do desporto para a vida no caminho do florescimento humano, foram a vulnerabilidade, a afetividade, a identidade e a competição.

**Palavras-chave:** Desporto, Educação Física, Estética, Ética, Estético-ética.

## **ABSTRACT**

The approach to aesthetics and ethics in sports' philosophy research usually approaches these two fields of philosophy in a distinct, separate and independent way. Normally greater prominence is given to works in the field of ethics and that can be found in a considerably greater number in the main international journals in this field of study. Considering the aesthetic and ethical potential of sports, largely described in the literature, the **purpose** of this study is to search for areas of intersection of these fields in an aesthetic-ethical approach of physical education. The **methodological framework** followed in the pursuit of this purpose included the collecting, analysis and debate based on a hermeneutical and phenomenological perspective of the discourses included in nineteen exploratory semi-structured interviews, with a study group that included teachers/researchers from the areas of aesthetics, ethics, sports and physical education. The confrontation of the content of these interviews with the reflections that were already available in literature enabled us to get as a **result** an argumentative route that explores the special role of physical education and the relevance of corporeity in the education of the aesthetic-ethical sensibility of students during their educational path. In the **conclusions** of this route a special emphasis was given to four elements with aesthetic-ethical potential that contribute to an aesthetic-ethics of sport, which recovers the unit of the process-product experience in sports. These elements are the vulnerability, the affection, the identity and the competition, and can be brought from sports into life in the human flourishing route.

**Key-Words: Sport, Physical Education, Aesthetics, Ethics, Aesthetic-Ethics.**

## INTRODUÇÃO

A cultura anglo-saxónica reconhece no desporto, por tradição e de forma explícita na literatura específica da área, um importante valor pedagógico estético e ético, nos processos formativos de crianças e jovens<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16</sup>. Vemos contudo, pelo menos em Portugal, uma progressiva desvalorização da disciplina de educação física nas escolas, quer pela gradual redução do seu tempo letivo, quer pela redução de qualquer impacto desta disciplina nas classificações médias finais letivas dos estudantes do ensino secundário, bem como no seu acesso ao ensino superior. Este aspeto contribui para que se encare com frequência a aula de educação física enquanto mero espaço de entretenimento e lazer e não, necessariamente, de aprendizagem. No entanto, o desporto, e a natureza distinta desta disciplina relativamente à restante oferta escolar, apresenta um especial potencial pedagógico de virtualidades insubstituíveis<sup>17,18</sup>.

Grande parte dos professores de educação física, que diariamente se encontram no terreno, testemunham uma predisposição natural da maioria das crianças para esta disciplina, por lidar com essa realidade de atração universal que é o desporto. Essa predisposição, que não pode ser desperdiçada, é muitas vezes defraudada devido a uma hipertrofia da educação cognitiva dos alunos no seu percurso escolar, a par da negligência de uma educação mais holística que a educação física, e até a educação artística, podem proporcionar<sup>13</sup>.

Assim, o objetivo principal da nossa pesquisa consistiu em aprofundar os elementos centrais desta natureza especial da educação física que nos ajudassem a compreendê-la e operacionalizá-la como veículo de uma educação mais holística e completa na qual, segundo argumentamos, os elementos estético-éticos assumem particular interesse. Para dar resposta a tal inquietação, recorreremos ao apoio de um grupo de estudo composto por dezanove sujeitos que, pelo seu envolvimento particular com o ensino e a investigação nos âmbitos da estética, da ética, do desporto e da educação física, contribuíram para a iluminação do problema de forma específica e complementar. Este grupo de estudo, submetido a entrevistas semi-estruturadas

de caráter exploratório, foi organizado em três sub-grupos distintos, designadamente: a) “Outside Sport Sciences”, professores/investigadores dos âmbitos da educação estética e ética fora das ciências do desporto, que trabalhem em áreas onde esta temática seja já tratada desde há muito tempo (arte, filosofia, teatro, música, dança, etc), designados ao longo do texto por OSS; b) “Inside Sport Sciences”, professores/investigadores dentro das ciências do desporto cujo trabalho demonstre preocupações estéticas e éticas no âmbito da pedagogia e da educação pelo desporto, designados ao longo do texto por ISS; c) “Physical Education Teachers”, professores de educação física, que nos possam conceder um olhar mais aplicado e prático sobre o modo de concretização destas dimensões nas aulas de educação física na escola, designados ao longo do texto por PET. Tendo em vista a manutenção do anonimato dos seus discursos, as citações a eles feitas ao longo do texto estão identificadas com estas três siglas, para reconhecer o grupo de onde provêm, e com uma ordem numérica aleatória. O conteúdo destas entrevistas, que foi integralmente gravado, transcrito e alvo de tratamento e análise, permitiu a construção hermenêutica e fenomenológica de um roteiro reflexivo e argumentativo em torno da temática.

Deste modo, a introdução à problemática sobre o especial papel da educação física na promoção de valores estéticos e éticos é verificada não apenas em pontuais trabalhos de investigação nos domínios pedagógicos, mas também e sobretudo no dia-a-dia dos professores de educação física<sup>16</sup>. Concordantemente, para os professores de educação física do nosso grupo de estudo há quatro peculiaridades da disciplina de educação física que a tornam uma oportunidade especial de desenvolvimento estético-ético dos alunos: *“Primeiro é a única disciplina onde em termos motores os alunos se podem revelar de forma explícita. Segundo ocorre num espaço que não é o espaço confinado de uma sala de aula. Terceiro implica movimento [dentro desse espaço]. Quarto é talvez a única aula em que o aluno não pode estar a fazer de conta que está a participar, algo que acontece nas outras aulas. (...) Numa aula de educação física ninguém se encosta. É impossível (...) estar em pausa, sentado, a dizer que sim com a cabeça e a pensar noutra coisa, sem ouvir nada.”*

(PET3, p.10). Isto significa que não só a amplitude do espaço e a necessidade de nele convivermos impõe exigências particulares de respeito e responsabilidade na partilha desse mesmo espaço entre os intervenientes, como também o envolvimento integral dos alunos na expressão de todas as suas capacidades os coloca numa situação de maior exposição, transparência e vulnerabilidade, que as restantes disciplinas não conseguem proporcionar. Deste modo os processos de ensino/aprendizagem não se dão apenas verbal ou linguisticamente, mas são corporal e holisticamente experienciados. Abrem-se, assim, as portas a um modelo de educação pluridimensional, cuja inspiração remete para o modelo da *paideia* grega que, por não ter apenas como alvo pedagógico o desenvolvimento da mente, da virtude e do caráter, mas também, e de forma indivisível, da sensibilidade, da corporeidade e dos sentidos, remete para uma educação estético-ética<sup>18</sup> (PET3).

Neste sentido, é necessário que a educação física se afirme e, indo para além das preocupações técnicas, assuma a responsabilidade do desenvolvimento de uma consciência estético-ética nos alunos, pelo desenvolvimento de competências não apenas motoras, mas também críticas, expressivas, contemplativas e criativas (ISS3). Porque, ao contrário da maioria das disciplinas escolares, trata do corpo como da mente, dos músculos como do raciocínio, da coordenação como da reflexão, da destreza motora como da perspicácia mental, da competência como da verdade de cada um, esta disciplina proporciona que os alunos desenvolvam a sua sensibilidade de forma holística e integral, na qual estética e ética se fundem e contaminam (PET1).

Enquanto espaço de aprendizagem onde a globalidade da pessoa está sempre atuante e é sempre relevante, o conteúdo desportivo proporciona um espaço pedagógico especial que põe a descoberto a importância da corporeidade na relação com o mundo e na aprendizagem humana<sup>19</sup> (OSS1). A decrescente preponderância dada a esta disciplina em termos de espaço letivo nas escolas, pese embora o reconhecimento da sua pertinência na formação integral dos alunos, faz emergir a primazia do pensamento numa cultura tipicamente ocidental que ainda não leva a sério a indivisibilidade da pessoa no seu corpo e mente (OSS5).

Para alguns dos elementos do nosso grupo de estudo, um processo de ensino-aprendizagem é tanto mais eficaz e evoluído quanto mais integra a nossa natureza corpórea. Os nossos entrevistados corroboram assim a ideia Merleau-Pontyana de ênfase da experiência corporal como criadora de sentidos da existência humana no mundo, sugerindo então que é pela corporeidade que melhor aprendemos, porque simplesmente somos corpóreos<sup>20</sup>: *“Our very categories, our conceptual categories, are shaped by movement of life as embodied creatures, like grabbing, or touching, and so forth. Our minds, our thinking, our conceptual categories did not come from nowhere. That came from our embodied historical evolutionary existence. (...) we are embodied and our thought processes show the footprint of that embodiment any time we open our mouths, any time we reflect or think.”* (ISS6, pp. 10-11).

Despojando o pensamento da sua pretensão de soberania, a aprendizagem a partir da experiência corporal transforma o mero ato gnoseológico de conhecer o objeto de estudo, neste caso o desporto, numa experiência estético-ética da corporeidade, que é experiência de reconhecimento não só desse objeto, mas e sobretudo de nós mesmos (ISS3). A cartografia do movimento corporal no desporto põe, deste modo, a descoberto, não apenas a configuração dos lugares e desse movimento, mas sobretudo a relação entre corpo e lugar, revelando o quanto a experiência dos lugares nos afeta e nos constrói<sup>21</sup>: *“A relação estético-ética rompe com a estrutura sujeito-objeto porque não se propõe a descrever nem a classificar, mas a experienciar. (...) O ethos da aprendizagem estabelece-se na relação e não apenas nos polos da relação [sujeito e objeto] (...).”* (OSS5, p.11).

Esta experiência estético-ética da corporeidade permite um caminho inverso de aprendizagem, no qual não são referenciais ou normativos externos que se impõem à aprendizagem corporal, mas uma corporeidade que, se a testarmos, explorarmos, ouvirmos e acolhermos, em si nos revela, ensina e, sobretudo, proporciona, uma experiência pedagógica corpórea estético-ética (ISS3): *“Eu assim escuto o meu corpo: «o que dói?», «o que dá prazer?», «como é que o meu corpo responde às atividades?».* Aprendo assim as minhas próprias respostas corporais e o seu significado em mim: a respiração, o calor, a

*intensidade com que me envolvo na atividade.*” (ISS3, p.25). Este parece ser também o objetivo dos artistas Douglas Gordon e Philippe Parreno, com o filme “*Zidane a Twenty-First-Century Portrait*”<sup>10</sup>, que pelo retrato do atleta na sua prática, revelado a partir de ângulos altamente focados na sua individualidade, procura convocar e sensibilizar o espetador para o permanente diálogo entre fisicalidade e pensamento, bem como pela escuta dos principais sinais vitais da corporeidade.

Neste sentido, o desporto é uma arena de eleição para a descoberta de conhecimentos, capacidades e potências às quais não teríamos acesso se não pusessemos a nossa corporeidade à prova, desenvolvendo a sensibilidade para a escutar, o que pode até significar, em determinadas circunstâncias, aceder ao sublime (OSS0, ISS3): “*A mim interessa-me um aspeto específico do sublime, que é a relação entre o conhecimento que temos, o conhecimento que o nosso corpo vai adquirindo, o nosso inconsciente, o consciente também, mas que apenas se manifesta em determinadas condições especiais. E o desporto pode ser um bom exemplo disso, porque promove a superação de barreiras em nós que, em condições normais, não conseguiríamos atingir, mas que, em condições especiais de prova, parece que vamos mais longe do que seria imaginável. Ou seja, há um processo de esforço e de dor que nos leva a atingir coisas que nos ultrapassam, mas que fazem parte de nós. Então eu penso que isso é sublime, inatingido, e está dentro de nós e é por isso que tem interesse, porque é arrancado de dentro de nós e reconstruído a partir da experiência.*” (OSS0, p.44);

Procurando penetrar as potencialidades estético-éticas do desporto enquanto principal conteúdo da educação física, a reflexão sobre as zonas de entrecruzamento estético e ético nesta disciplina confluíu em argumentos em torno do desenvolvimento da sensibilidade do aluno através de uma experiência da corporeidade que permanece unitária entre processo e produto. Neste sentido a análise hermenêutica e fenomenológica da temática, cuja concretização se encontra explicada de forma mais detalhada no capítulo da metodologia, a partir dos discursos contidos nas entrevistas e o seu confronto com as reflexões já

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<sup>10</sup> Ver “*Zidane a Twenty-First-Century Portrait*” em: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5EharkjNBc>

disponíveis sobre a temática na literatura, conduziu-nos a este itinerário argumentativo que aprofunda a pertinência da educação física e a relevância da corporeidade na educação da sensibilidade dos alunos no seu percurso escolar. Resultaram desta análise quatro elementos com potencialidade estético-ética que contribuem para uma estético-ética do desporto que recupera a unidade da experiência processo-produto: a vulnerabilidade, a afetividade, a identidade e a competição.

## **MÉTODO**

A recolha de informação útil a uma abordagem hermenêutica e fenomenológica que colabore com o objetivo principal deste trabalho, isto é, uma perspetivação e compreensão da educação física enquanto veículo de uma estético-ética do desporto requer, pela sua natureza, de percursos metodológicos de natureza qualitativa, que nos ajudem a compreender de que forma os principais atores sociais envolvidos neste problema de investigação refletem e configuram a sua própria realidade. Deste modo, procurando ir de encontro ao problema de investigação e realizar uma análise suficientemente compreensiva e indutiva do objeto de estudo<sup>22</sup>, o instrumento elegido para melhor aproveitar as potencialidades do nosso grupo de estudo, materializou-se na entrevista semi-estruturada de carácter exploratório, sendo a informação resultante da mesma tratada pelo método de análise temática de conteúdo<sup>23</sup>.

O processo de elaboração da entrevista passou por diferentes fases e foi submetida a validação, quer ao nível da construção, quer ao nível do conteúdo, por um grupo de três investigadores com experiência na utilização deste tipo de instrumentos. Primeiramente foi elaborada uma versão piloto que teve uma aplicação-teste em indivíduos com características semelhantes ao grupo de participantes no estudo e, a partir do seu resultado e após os ajustamentos necessários, essa versão do roteiro da entrevista foi submetida a análise e colmatação de lacunas, até se chegar à versão final. De seguida a entrevista foi submetida a validação por investigadores com experiência na utilização deste

tipo de instrumento, para que finalmente pudesse ser aplicada ao grupo de estudo.

Porque não possuímos, nesta área de investigação ainda emergente, um mapeamento conceptual definido, e para que ele possa emergir como resultado deste trabalho, as categorias foram definidas tematicamente *a posteriori*, e consubstancializadas na organização temática do artigo e nos elementos estético-éticos explorados.

Dado que no contexto do grupo de estudo incluímos indivíduos de quatro principais áreas distintas (ciências do desporto, filosofia, letras, belas artes e música), muito embora o guião base da entrevista seja idêntico para todo o grupo, houve, todavia, margem para alguma especificidade no modo de abordar determinadas questões que foram de encontro àquele que é o contributo específico de cada um dos diferentes olhares sobre a problemática. Procurou-se assim dar espaço a que os entrevistados informassem o problema de pesquisa de modo concreto e específico, tendo em vista uma recolha de dados mais rica e útil. Deste modo foi nossa pretensão conseguir um equilíbrio entre uma relativa homogeneidade do grupo de estudo, que permitiu uma verdadeira triangulação e comparação da informação, mas simultaneamente uma significativa heterogeneidade que possibilitasse e conduzisse a uma abordagem suficientemente alargada e completa da temática.

### Participantes

O grupo de estudo foi escolhido através de um critério específico, isto é, a representação dos principais atores sociais responsáveis<sup>24</sup> por uma possível aplicação de uma formação estética e ética pelo desporto. Assim o grupo de participantes foi constituído por 19 entrevistados: 6 professores de educação física; 7 professores universitários da área das ciências do desporto que desenvolvam investigação nos âmbitos da estética, da ética e da pedagogia do desporto; 6 professores universitários de outras áreas que não as ciências do desporto (filosofia, letras, belas artes e música) que desenvolvam investigação

nos âmbitos da estética, da ética e da pedagogia. Porque consideramos que a temática abordada poderá ter aplicabilidade universal, o grupo de estudo reunido foi internacional, tendo em vista a pluriculturalidade pretendida.

### Recolha e análise preliminar dos dados

A recolha e análise dos dados foram processos acompanhados e paralelos, permitindo-nos uma permanente comparação, triangulação e interpretação da informação, tornando todo o processo de análise mais sólido, autêntico e consistente<sup>25,26,27</sup>. Contudo, para que essa triangulação pudesse ser mais eficaz e umas entrevistas pudessem informar as seguintes (havendo uma evolução do processo de reunião do conteúdo do geral para o particular), elas foram realizadas de acordo com uma ordem específica sendo primeiro realizadas as entrevistas aos sujeitos de outras áreas que não as ciências do desporto, seguidamente aos professores e investigadores da área das ciências do desporto e por fim aos professores de educação física.

Além de todas as entrevistas terem sido realizadas em locais de conforto para os intervenientes (suas casas, locais de trabalho ou outros sugeridos pelos mesmos), com o objetivo de obtenção de testemunhos genuínos, o papel do entrevistador foi permanentemente empenhar-se na construção de um ambiente favorável, ouvindo atentamente e conduzindo a entrevista adiante.

As entrevistas foram integralmente gravadas e transcritas, para posterior análise. Nesta análise que, por força do conteúdo em causa, foi temática<sup>28</sup>, após leitura repetida e extensiva do conteúdo das entrevistas foram concretizados dois primeiros passos fundamentais:

- a) A identificação e divisão do conteúdo em unidades de significado<sup>29</sup>
- b) A identificação de características comuns a essas unidades de significado, emergindo assim as principais categorias a serem analisadas<sup>29,30,31</sup>

Foi com base nesta organização preliminar do conteúdo que se procedeu à análise e discussão do mesmo, tendo em vista o melhor aproveitamento possível da informação para a sistematização dos frutos essenciais desta investigação.

Porque o mundo é, segundo Sousa Santos<sup>32</sup>, comunicação, sendo-o também a lógica científica pós moderna, através da triangulação entre o conteúdo disponível na literatura específica da área e a informação proveniente das entrevistas realizadas, precedeu-se a uma análise e discussão crítica, interpretativa e compreensiva da temática de investigação, pela comunicação entre as diferentes fontes de informação.

Todo o trabalho e respetivos procedimentos metodológicos foram submetidos à avaliação, análise e aprovação do Comité de Ética da Faculdade de Desporto da Universidade do Porto.

## **RESULTADOS E DISCUSSÃO**

### **Educar a sensibilidade pela experiência unitária processo-produto**

“Sentir é sentir-se a si mesmo ao reflexionar, fruir a sensação do seu próprio estado como sentimento sentido. Experiência de si sempre iniciada e sempre inesperada, é também uma consideração e apreciação inédita do objeto, que desperta e mantém ativa a imaginação. Ambos, sujeito e objeto, aliados no duplo alargamento que constitui a genuína essência do estético – um alargamento de representação do objeto (bem como do sujeito) que está sem dúvida compreendido no juízo de gosto.”<sup>33</sup>

(Veríssimo Serrão, 2007, pp.39-40).

Há uma atitude pedagógica sobre a educação física, porventura a predominante, que revela as preocupações típicas de um olhar externo sobre o desporto e, sobretudo, sobre o aluno: *“Cada vez mais o nosso olhar sob nós mesmos tem partido de fora, de uma forma de avaliação externa. Eu acho que a educação física, com o conteúdo que já existe, o elemento da cultura corporal, permite*

*recuperar um pouco da nossa sensibilidade, da possibilidade de olhar para nós mesmos e para o outro a partir dessa corporeidade partilhada, sem necessariamente recorrermos a equipamentos materiais de avaliação, como os que agora estão tanto na moda. A ideia de que eu consigo perceber e ser sensível à dor do outro a partir da minha própria dor, da minha própria experiência de dor, por exemplo, é de extremo interesse pedagógico. Para isso é necessário que eu recupere essa capacidade de ouvir e me identificar com o outro.”* (ISS3, p.24). Esta experiência social e partilhada descrita por Dewey<sup>34</sup> em relação à arte parece apresentar também uma importante aplicabilidade à educação física, uma vez que a interação provocada pelas atividades desportivas possibilita aos intervenientes, a partir da sua própria experiência individual, a ampliação e o enriquecimento de uma sensibilidade que é construída de forma partilhada.

Partindo da premissa que o desenvolvimento de uma sensibilidade estético-ética perante o desporto constitui um relevante elemento não só de alargamento ou ampliação do pensar, compreender, viver e experienciar o desporto e a vida, mas sobretudo como mobilizador e disponibilizador da aprendizagem<sup>35,36</sup>, urge procurar desvelar formas concretas de o tornar realizável (OSS5): *“Podemos confirmar muita coisa, podemos mobilizar-nos para conhecer muita coisa friamente. E o resultado é diferente do que quando nos mobilizamos porque nos afetou e nos tocou. Não é por acaso que os jovens ou os estudantes, de um modo geral, têm melhores resultados naquilo que apreciam. Nas disciplinas que gostam mais.”* (OSS5, p.23); *“As a physical educator and coach I think the more important venture is to allow our children to experience aesthetic and ethic excitement in our domain.”* (ISS6, p.13).

Deste modo, há perguntas que se impõem. Como educar a sensibilidade através e no desporto? Que competências estético-éticas pretendemos desenvolver nos alunos? Que conteúdos da educação física podem responder a estas inquietações?

É consensual no seio do nosso grupo de estudo que a sensibilidade estético-ética se aprende e se educa. Um olhar sobre a educação física que a equacione

como um projeto estético-ético requer, contudo, níveis elevados de envolvimento, engajamento e conhecimento da realidade que se experiencia, de modo a que a pessoa se encontre disponível para os estímulos pedagógicos aos quais é submetida<sup>37</sup>: *“O despertar da sensibilidade para as suas possibilidades é qualquer coisa que tem de ser treinada. Uma pessoa pode saber tudo sobre bons vinhos, e até estudar o assunto... mas tem de experienciar! Tem de desenvolver o gosto e o paladar...”* (ISS2, p.19).

Para um dos nossos entrevistados do ramo artístico, uma educação estético-ética é feita por fases que, contudo, tem que respeitar a natureza global daquilo que se ensina, e exemplifica a sua metodologia no campo do ensino superior da música: *“Primeiro o aluno precisa de informação, precisa saber determinadas coisas sobre o tema (...) sobre o compositor, e perceber também o contexto histórico. Depois há toda uma série de aspetos que têm a ver com a própria interpretação que são, por exemplo, questões físicas, motoras, questões de sonoridade, de ritmo, de sucessão. Toda uma série de aspetos que são necessários trabalhar separadamente, mas que ao mesmo tempo não podem funcionar desligados, têm que funcionar em conjunto. O nosso papel é depois mostrar ao aluno como estes elementos todos podem ser integrados. Por isso é importante dar o exemplo, mostrar. (...) E, para além disso, é necessário que o aluno desenvolva sentido crítico. Que consiga ouvir o que fez e criticar.”* (OSS2, p. 11-12).

Vários dos professores de educação física que integram o grupo de estudo reforçam a importância da observação para construção de uma sensibilidade estético-ética que, segundo Lacerda<sup>38</sup>, não passa apenas por proporcionar momentos de visualização, mas de uma verdadeira educação do olhar, pela qual o aluno observa, analisa, expressa, discute, a sua ação e a dos outros, formulando critérios próprios, autónomos e livres de juízo de gosto, desenvolvendo o sentido crítico, a capacidade de construir ideias e imagens próprias e fundamentá-las: *“Quando estou a ver um aluno a correr, gosto de o ver a correr bem e preocupo-me com a amplitude da passada, com os movimentos dos braços, não me preocupo só se ele vai correr muito. (...) Mas*

*isto tem que ser trabalhado, transmitido e desenvolvido nos alunos também.”* (PET1, p.12).

Deste modo o aluno não devia terminar a sua escolaridade sem lhe terem sido dadas oportunidades na educação física de desenvolver competências estético-éticas como “... *de criar, compor, avaliar e apreciar... e ter essa noção, portanto, ser capaz de produzir e ser capaz de apreciar, de ver o que os outros fizeram e discutir.”* (ISS2, p.22). Assim, o desenvolvimento do sentido crítico perante as realizações desportivas, requer que se extraíam significados mais ricos a um simples movimento ou ação motora do que os meramente funcionais: “*Un passe de voleibol, por ejemplo. Puedes describirlo de manera funcional y biomecânica, para hacerlo bien. Pero luego creo también que se puede interntar enseñarles a apreciar el movimiento, el buen movimiento, de una manera kinestética.”* (OSS3, p.18).

### **Elementos com potencialidade estético-ética**

Como perceber então quais os elementos na educação física que, pela sua contaminação recíproca, podem evidenciar potencialidades para uma educação estético-ética pelo desporto?

A investigação no campo da filosofia do desporto, além de tradicionalmente abordar as questões estéticas e éticas separadamente, parece revelar, nas últimas décadas, uma preocupação marcadamente superior com a ética do que com a estética, dado que a quantidade de publicações e artigos em revistas e antologias na filosofia do desporto dedicados à ética se verificam expressamente superiores<sup>39</sup>. Neste sentido, na consideração de uma estético-ética da educação física sobressaem com mais facilidade os elementos de conteúdo ético que contaminam a experiência estética na aula. Assim, por exemplo, é fácil e consensual reconhecer que, quando um aluno mais apto num conteúdo se empenha em integrar os seus colegas menos aptos, ajudando-os e trabalhando em equipa, a perceção estética desse momento ou performance parece ficar enriquecida, pela perceção generalizada de uma beleza moral e interesse ético

do momento (PET4). O inverso, isto é, a percepção de uma contaminação que a estética pode exercer sobre o conteúdo ético da experiência pedagógica é, aparentemente, mais difícil (ISS0). Mas precisamente por ser mais difícil e, porventura, menos comum ou menos tratado, parece-nos que este sentido da retroalimentação estético-ética se apresenta de extrema relevância e merecedor de tratamento, por ser também mais inovador.

Dos elementos que se enquadram no universo estético-ético da educação física sobressai um denominador comum e transversal: a preponderância e valorização do processo, da realização, além do seu produto ou resultado final. Este discurso vai de encontro à ideia de que no desporto não é apenas o produto das habilidades que está em causa, mas o próprio Homem na sua experiência e performance corpórea global, no modo como enfrenta os desafios que lhe são colocados e também, naturalmente, no modo como vive, experiencia e atribui sentido ao próprio resultado<sup>36, 40, 41</sup>.

Deste modo foram identificados pelos entrevistados quatro elementos com uma especial potencialidade estético-ética a ser considerados e abordados na educação física, nos quais a recuperação da experiência unitária processo-produto surge como denominador comum. São eles: a vulnerabilidade, a afetividade, a identidade e a competição.

### **Vulnerabilidade**

Por permitir espaços amplos de expressão corporal e convocar a atuação da pessoa na sua globalidade, através de uma particular exposição da corporeidade, a educação física pode contrariar a lógica carcerária, prisional e disciplinar em que, segundo Foucault<sup>42</sup>, as escolas modernas se transformaram. Requerendo uma intervenção corporal holística, através de uma particular exposição da corporeidade, esta disciplina coloca o aluno, contudo, numa posição de especial vulnerabilidade, transformando o corpo num palco cénico vulnerável à lei e aos constrangimentos do espaço e da realidade (OSS0, OSS5). A abertura à imprevisibilidade e ao risco que grande parte das situações de

aprendizagem desportiva impõem, exige do aluno a aceitação, em tempo real, da dúvida sobre a sua capacidade de resposta aos desafios desportivos que lhe são colocados. Esta dúvida permanente sobre o desfecho das atividades e da performance é, segundo a maioria dos nossos entrevistados, um elemento que confere ao desporto em geral um enorme interesse estético e motivacional, na medida em que coloca os indivíduos amarrados ao momento desportivo em permanente suspense e expectativa. Contudo, a condição vulnerável do desportista ou aluno não enriquece apenas o valor estético da experiência, mas também e de forma circular o seu valor ético<sup>43</sup>. É a aceitação de uma condição frágil que tanto interesse estético traz à performance, que exige do aluno não só a humildade para reconhecer e consentir com essa condição, como a retidão de atuação nos momentos em que tal vulnerabilidade o exponha ao fracasso, à derrota e à inferioridade. Funciona também, além disso como motor da luta pelo aperfeiçoamento e melhoria das capacidades e competências do aluno ou desportista, sendo a consciência das nossas limitações o que nos faz procurar superá-las (ISS5).

O desporto, e concretamente a educação física, permite desta forma uma experiência de aprendizagem em mundo que ultrapassa os limites do descritível, do verbalizável, do pensável, do dizível e do previsível. Neste sentido, possibilita a descoberta de outros sentidos que não apenas o de receber conteúdos de aprendizagem, mas expondo-se, dando-se/concedendo-se vulneravelmente à experiência, também o de viver os acontecimentos sentidos em si e aprender a partir daquilo que nos sucede, nos acontece, que nos toca, que nos afeta e, por isso, nos mobiliza (OSS5). Um corpo vulnerável à experiência é, então, um corpo mais predisposto à aprendizagem, à transformação e ao aperfeiçoamento<sup>42</sup>, podendo neste campo a educação física cumprir um papel que lhe é insubstituível e do qual não se pode furtar.

Neste sentido, a aula de educação física coloca o sujeito entre o treinado e o imprevisível, o planeado e o genuíno, revelando-lhe aspetos da sua forma de estar em mundo que de outro modo permanecem ocultos (ISS3): *“No jogo, em alguns momentos, a gente se perde e se comporta ou fala coisas que a gente*

*previamente não elaborou e surgem frases como «Ah! Não sei de onde isso surgiu!», «Não sei como eu fiz isso!».*” (ISS3, p.9).

A disponibilidade para uma aprendizagem na corporeidade que rompa com a postura meramente gnoseológica entre sujeito (aluno) e objeto (conteúdo da aprendizagem) conduz necessariamente à promoção de um tipo de conhecimento involuntário que advém, então, desta exposição à vulnerabilidade: *“O que eu acho interessante, no caso das artes é que com a introdução do corpo, com a apresentação pública do corpo nas artes, fez-se uma outra coisa que foi perceber que há conhecimentos involuntários que podem ser também apresentados. Ou seja, o artista enquanto performer não era o simples ator que reproduzia um determinado texto, era alguém que intervinha num determinado momento, estava vulnerável aos fatores que iriam acontecer, portanto, havia coisas que iriam aparecer que ele não dominava, e isso levava a um conhecimento novo.”* (OSS0, p.39). Ora no desporto não há uma introdução da corporeidade, porque esta representa uma pré-condição incontornável. Ela não é introduzida, mas simplesmente pré-existe. O caminho a percorrer entre a *Zona do Desenvolvimento Atual* e a *Zona do Próximo Desenvolvimento*<sup>44</sup>, corresponde então ao processo que vai do possuir/dominar ao experienciar, acolher, incorporar, sentir e viver o conteúdo desportivo, colocando o sujeito nessa mesma exposição ao incerto, ao imprevisível e, desta forma, a uma condição de aprendizagem vulnerável e de descoberta. Em tal exposição o aluno permite-se à aprendizagem de se deixar conduzir pelo contexto e pelos outros, abrindo-se a um diálogo que transcende as fronteiras daquilo que conhece e domina: *“Parte do interesse da ideia de risco no desporto prende-se com a possibilidade de você sair da sua zona de conforto e olhar em volta; de você questionar não só o seu próprio corpo, o seu próprio desempenho, as suas próprias convicções... mas integrar outros elementos que não domina tanto assim...”* (ISS3, p.6).

Transgredir os limites da segurança e do domínio, numa ludicidade entre o sério e o não sério permite, deste modo, que fatores como a emotividade, a ambiguidade e a vulnerabilidade possam emergir e sobressair<sup>45</sup>. Toda a experiência pedagógica torna-se, então, mais humana, considerando o aluno não apenas como um executante, mas como um experienciador (OSS0): *“ [Às*

*vezes é preciso] meter areia na engrenagem. (...) Provocarmos uma rutura, não para descarrilar, mas para abrir outras possibilidades e patamares da experiência. (...) Percebendo, por exemplo, como é que a parte emocional pode ser estimulada e ser geradora de conhecimento.” (OSS0, p.33).*

Em suma, o surgimento de experiências pedagógicas que abram espaço à vulnerabilidade, no desporto como na vida, perante o não domínio, o erro e até o fracasso são, para os nossos entrevistados, de extrema importância: *“No es un fin en si mismo, sino que es un medio para aprender, Y se debe utilizar también el valor de fallar, que creo que no se aprecia suficientemente. (...) Hay veces que perdidas, que faltas de éxito, nos enseñan más de nosotros mismos que ganar o dominar.” (OSS3, p.21).* É neste sentido que uma pedagogia da educação física que assegure a devida ênfase e preponderância à completude da experiência, concedendo preponderância ao processo, por oposição à supremacia do produto e do resultado, contribui para uma vivência estético-ética, e por isso mais significativa e enriquecida, do desporto.

### **Afetividade**

O conhecimento empírico mostra-nos que o desporto tende a ser um fenómeno de atratividade universal, mas o que não nos revela com clareza é quais os motivos que conduzem a esta afetação da sensibilidade humana perante o desporto. A teoria de Feezell<sup>43</sup> é que o que prende o Homem ao desporto, mais do que as formas ou produtos da sua prática, é o significativo (meaningful) envolvimento que consegue proporcionar entre sujeito e atividade e entre sujeitos, o que por sua vez, contribui para uma vida significativa (meaningfull life).

Para a maioria dos nossos entrevistados, é a ligação afetiva com o desporto que mantém os indivíduos na prática desportiva ao longo da vida. Nesse sentido, o gosto pelo desporto também é algo que se aprende e, conseqüentemente, que se ensina ou proporciona pedagogicamente (OSS3).

O envolvimento/engajamento com as atividades desportivas ofertadas na aula de educação física é um dos elementos estéticos com enorme capacidade de

contaminação do conteúdo ético do desporto. Tendemos a gostar e envolver-nos nas atividades nas quais sabemos que somos competentes e somos tanto mais competentes quanto mais nos envolvemos (ISS2): *“Acho que faltam experiências de sucesso nas aulas de educação física.”* (ISS3, p.30). Deste modo a afetividade com que o aluno se engaja no clima da aula, na situação de aprendizagem, na modalidade desportiva em causa, expressa não só um potencial enriquecimento do conteúdo estético da sua performance, mas também da construção da sua competência e do seu compromisso de superação individual e coletiva na atividade.

Um dos elementos do nosso grupo de estudo sustenta-se na noção de liberdade corporal (embodied freedom) de Merleau-Ponty<sup>20</sup> para explicar a importância de, na educação física, conseguirmos proporcionar que todos os alunos vivam a experiência da competência em corporeidade, isto é, de ser e poder em corpo. A capacidade de se apresentar e expressar corporalmente, de resolver problemas do ambiente a partir de competências corporais e das possibilidades estético-éticas do espaço e do contexto, é algo ao qual a educação física não se pode furtar. Em suma, todo o caminho que vai da inadaptação e desconforto corporal relativamente aos desafios colocados até ao sentimento de liberdade que advém da exploração, experimentação e aquisição de competência, que leva o aluno a sentir e pensar: *“I feel free in this environment.”* (ISS6, p.15).

E o primeiro e mais crítico ambiente em que o aluno se envolve é precisamente corpo: através de uma experiência corporal vivida e sentida encontramos formas de *“darmos aos nossos alunos noções que se transportam para o quotidiano, como o aprendermos a ser em corpo e a gostarmos daquilo que somos. Há alunos que se relacionam mal com o seu corpo e isso tem consequências para a vida. Contribuirmos para resolver isto é fundamental.”* (PET5, p.11).

Integrando, então, a componente afetiva, a realização desportiva deixa de representar o mero cumprimento de critérios de eficácia predeterminados, mas a construção de experiências e processos significativos que contribuem para a construção do gosto pelas várias modalidades desportivas. Aprendendo o conteúdo desportivo, o aluno não aprende apenas como fazer algo (uma tarefa,

uma técnica ou uma atividade), mas desenvolve formas novas e específicas de perceber o mundo e a sua forma própria de estar no mundo a partir da realidade que experiencia e aprende<sup>46</sup>. Desta forma, em circunstâncias especiais às quais o desporto é propício, podemos estimular nos alunos um tipo de pensamento executante que, transpondo as fronteiras do mero produto verbalizável da aprendizagem, explora os meandros de uma experiência desportiva vivida, sentida, comprometida (OSS1).

Este é, portanto, mais um campo onde a estética pode contaminar positivamente a ética do desporto, uma vez que sem a ligação afetiva com o desporto este envolvimento numa nova forma de estar e perceber o mundo perde a oportunidade de emergir: *“É a estética que traz à ética a noção de virtude. Se não houver essa noção de virtude, há o mero cumprimento do dever. Tem que haver necessariamente essa relação afetiva (...) porque podemos-nos comportar bem eticamente por interesses mesquinhos... (...) ou até por questões estratégicas, por exemplo cumprimentar o adversário para dar uma boa impressão ao árbitro [e o gesto não ser genuíno].”* (ISS2, p.15).

Para alguns dos nossos entrevistados, deste modo, na educação física o aluno acede a um tipo de conhecimento que não se limita ao «*knowing that*» nem tão pouco ao «*knowing how*», mas que pode atingir o principal foco de qualquer projeto pedagógico, o «*knowing to be*», isto é, uma forma de ser e estar em desporto que se possa transpor para a vida: *“Hay cosas que hay que hacerlos sentir; no es como entender de manera intelectual una ecuación o una fórmula lógica; sino que hay que sentir y entenderlo de una manera vivencial, corporal, sensorial.”* (OSS3, p.16). Assim, se noutras disciplinas escolares o aluno se pode colocar frente ao objeto ou problema de forma distanciada, nas situações de aprendizagem da educação física o aluno não se encontra *perante* os problemas, mas *nos* problemas e, por isso, o processo pedagógico não dispensa um envolvimento mais forte e integral do aluno na atividade (ISS2).

Esse envolvimento consolida-se na relação afetiva, na paixão pelo desporto, no deleite e na dor que daí decorrem, na vivência sentimental das aprendizagens

desportivas. Estar apaixonado pelo desporto é já uma forma de estar apaixonado pela vida e de cultivar um modo sensível de experienciar o mundo.

## **Identidade**

Se, numa pedagogia contemporânea, procuramos este envolvimento mais intenso e global do aluno, devendo por isso aprofundar e desenvolver aquilo que é individual, singular, interior e identitário de cada um<sup>47,48,49,50</sup>, surge a necessidade premente de transposição da lógica funcionalista e produtivista com que ensinamos desporto, abrindo portas à apreciação estético-ética não apenas dos seus resultados e critérios funcionais numericamente mensuráveis, mas também das formas como eles são construídos e produzidos, isto é, os seus processos (OSS0, OSS1).

Urge, portanto, uma educação física que ponha a descoberto a singularidade e a identidade com que diferentes alunos podem realizar a mesma tarefa, para que descubram não só a natureza de cada modalidade ou atividade desportiva, mas também e sobretudo, a natureza da sua própria corporeidade, isto é, da sua forma própria de viver, expressar e interpretar a corporalidade e os desafios motrizes que lhes são colocados<sup>51</sup>.

Neste sentido, por exemplo, obedecendo aos critérios técnicos elementares de uma sequência gímnica, o reconhecimento e valorização da diferença e da autenticidade com que cada aluno expressa e vive a sua corporeidade, deve ser descoberto, desenvolvido e promovido em situações de aprendizagem que privilegiem a velocidade e presteza de uns, mas também a serenidade e imperturbabilidade de outros; a potência e o vigor de uns, mas também a leveza e ligeireza de outros, de acordo com aquele que é o estilo e forma de ser e estar em corpo no desporto e na vida (OSS5).

Deste modo, para assegurar a qualidade da experiência desportiva não chega promover no aluno competências de virtuosidade técnica ou de execução, mas também equilibrá-las com capacidades conceptuais, críticas e reflexivas, que contribuam para a formação de cidadãos que não são máquinas, que se

questionam, que tomam iniciativa e que agem a partir da sua própria história, das suas emoções, ideias, convicções, liberdade e autonomia (OSS0). Neste sentido, não importa apenas o que o aluno faz ou produz, mas também a forma como observa e ajuíza com sentido crítico a realidade<sup>52</sup>, bem como aquilo que ele é e se constrói através da experiência do fazer desportivo, e como se expressa no que faz e produz (OSS3). Assim, o exercício desportivo permite ao aluno *“(...) a possibilidade de trabalhar tanto uma técnica ou movimento ao ponto de não ser mais apenas um conjunto de movimentos com um objetivo pragmático, mas passar a ter uma vida própria, imprimindo-lhe um estilo único, que é o seu (...) porque os gestos e os movimentos não dizem apenas do belo, ou do que pode ser belo, mas dizem também de uma mensagem, de uma vivência, de uma implicação sensível única, da sensibilidade que está para além da manifestação exterior de beleza.”* (OSS5, p.3).

Este exercício interpretativo da experiência desportiva apresenta-se como um importante fator na promoção do autoconhecimento, da singularidade e da identidade de cada um, para além do conhecimento do próprio corpo, na medida em que contribui para que o aluno perceba como o «ser em desporto» nos fala de nós, de formas muito sensíveis e intuitivas (ISS3, PET1, PET4): *“É interessante que a gente perceba quem somos pelas formas como reagimos e atuamos frente aos outros e frente aos desafios desportivos, e que tomemos consciência de que não estamos prontos ou acabados, que não existe necessariamente um «eu» genuíno e acabado dentro de nós, porque a gente se elabora constantemente, a gente tem oportunidade de elaboração, a gente vai se mostrar a cada momento com essas elaborações.”* (ISS3, p.10).

Há, por isso, competências de observação, análise, diálogo, discussão da performance própria e dos pares que podem ganhar espaço na aula de educação física e contribuir amplamente para uma educação do olhar, e da reflexão e do diálogo intersubjetivo estético-ético, pelo reconhecimento da identidade e singularidade de cada um<sup>52</sup> (PET0; PET4): *“Eu faço as avaliações em grupo, portanto os estudantes expõem-se e têm que se expressar perante toda a turma, para que sejam capazes de ver o que fazem, mas também de ouvir os outros*

*falar sobre o que fazem. E só com isso já consigo uma grande dinâmica de pensamento da turma.” (OSS0, p.34).*

Comunicar as qualidades da performance, própria e dos companheiros, não se esgota num exercício reducionista de enunciação do que está bem e do que está mal, do que é bonito e do que é feio (o que nos situaria demasiado perto de uma atitude produtivista), mas requer a elaboração de juízos de valor estético e ético, fundados no conhecimento objectivo, subjectivo e inter-subjetivo do desporto (reconhecendo-o como um lugar habitado pela alteridade), o que configura o espaço da autonomia, da contingência, da particularidade, do arbitrário.

## **Competição**

A competição é afirmada, com frequência, não só como elemento chave essencial e predominante para a compreensão do desporto, sejam quais forem as formas da sua consideração, mas também para a compreensão do mundo e da sua história evolutiva. Para Gilbert<sup>53</sup>, o problema da lente competitiva com que consideramos o mundo e, em particular, o universo desportivo, é que representa quase sempre um cenário que proporciona muito mais derrotados do que vencedores, sendo por isso, uma lente mais exclusiva do que inclusiva.

Perante o problema do papel da competição na melhoria e desenvolvimento humano, bem como a sua centralidade na compreensão do desporto, alguns filósofos do desporto defendem a consideração da competição como cooperativa, numa procura mutualista pela melhoria e excelência entre os competidores<sup>54,55</sup>. Isto é, apresentando-se reciprocamente ao seu mais alto nível, os competidores colaboram mutuamente na melhoria entre si, numa atitude mais cooperativa do que exclusiva ou marginalizadora, permitindo um olhar mais compreensivo e não absoluto sobre o resultado e os critérios de sucesso desportivo.

A procura por outros critérios de sucesso ou excelência que vão para além do resultado competitivo tem o poder de desviar o aluno da primazia do ganhar acima de tudo, despertando-o para o interesse estético da realização, do

processo, da fruição e da recriação (OSS0 e OSS1). Este aspeto não só contribui para uma experiência estética não linear (ou binária) e mais plural, como contribui para uma lógica ética muito mais integradora e inclusiva do que marginalizadora e exclusiva nas aulas de educação física: *“Porque a excelência [e a primazia do resultado] pode excluir. (...) É muitas vezes um mecanismo de exclusão. E o desporto na escola quer ser inclusivo ou exclusivo?”* (OSS5, p.42). Este olhar para a competição e para os critérios de sucesso no desporto escolar abre a possibilidade, por exemplo, de não só o aluno que faz o *Teste de Cooper* no melhor tempo da turma possuir reconhecimento, mas também aquele que, durante a corrida, incentivou os seus colegas a continuar até ao fim e dar o seu melhor, quase funcionando como um *«pacer»* dos seus colegas, ainda que este esforço piore o seu tempo final da corrida.

Com isto não se pretende empequenecer o valor do ganhar e do perder, ou impor uma supremacia do processo relativamente ao produto. Se se reconhece o papel educativo do desporto, então a competição (e consequentemente a questão da vitória e da derrota) tem que ser levada a sério e preparada com cuidado: *“Ganhar ou perder numa competição é aquilo que pode vir a acontecer, logo uma competição só é genuína quando isto está em cima da mesa.”* (ISS2, p. 28). No entanto este elemento assume por vezes maior preponderância do que a que deveria: *“O próprio professor às vezes coloca essa ênfase, perguntando sempre «quanto ficou o jogo? Quanto você correu?». (...) Mas se a ênfase do discurso do professor for na qualidade – no como correu, no que se pode melhorar, no como se sentiu – ou seja aspetos qualitativos da atividade, pode mudar um pouco a forma como se vive ou se vê essa questão da competição.”* (ISS3, p. 31).

Mais do que atribuir à competição uma natureza final ou última, é importante olhar para este elemento como um meio de superação e transcendência global, coletiva e mutualista (OSS3, ISS3): *“Às vezes a competição é apenas uma espécie de combustível (...) um motor para que procuremos fazer melhor”* (OSS0, p.26); *“Es algo que te motiva (...) porque eso es lo que me permite correr más y más. (...) Es innegable, cuando yo estoy compitiendo contra un amigo me esfuerzo más, a veces. Pero para mí no es el ganar por sí mismo, sino que*

*me pide esse esfuerzo mismo que busco. Entonces para mí la cosa sería darle la vuelta a cómo entendemos a nivel educativo la competición para decir que esta no es el fin sino es el medio.”* (OSS3, p.20).

Neste sentido, para os nossos entrevistados, este olhar mutualista sob a competição une muito mais os intervenientes (competidores) do que os separa, porque empenhando-se em oferecer à competição o melhor das suas competências, os alunos trabalham naquilo que Simon<sup>54</sup> define como a mútua procura pela excelência através do desafio competitivo. E é por este motivo que o desporto é uma pedagogia do trato humano, na medida em que o aluno ou o desportista só compete com quem reconhece ser merecedor do seu máximo empenho e competência, com quem se disponibiliza a reconhecer, aceitar e descobrir nas suas capacidades e limitações (ISS5, PET0).

Desta forma, o elemento competitivo que surge como forma de atribuir interesse estético e atratividade ao momento desportivo funciona também como contaminador ético fundamental ao mútuo reconhecimento e florescimento de cada um e de todos os intervenientes (OSS5, ISS4), porque *“É quando enfrentamos a competição e as dificuldades de superação que procuramos formas mais criativas de ir mais longe.”* (PET2, p.17).

Num mundo competitivo, a competição proporcionada nas aulas de educação física pode, assim, não só impulsionar o interesse estético e motivacional das situações de aprendizagem, mas sobretudo, e a partir desse elemento, promover a aprendizagem de uma forma estético-ética de estar no desporto e na vida (PET4).

## **Conclusões**

*“The purpose of sport is not producing winners (...) but to be part of something beautiful by pushing their bodies.”* (OSS6, p.13).

A consideração da educação física enquanto veículo de educação estético-ética pretende que, através da educação, se desenvolva um modo de estar no desporto que evolua para um modo de estar na vida, verdadeiramente conciliador entre a *forma* e o *ser* e, por isso, construtor de uma *forma de ser* alicerçada numa estético-ética que se transporta do desporto para o dia-a-dia<sup>2</sup> (OSS5).

Bento<sup>35</sup> evidencia que a herança humanista e iluminista que esteve outrora na base da educação física que herdámos e que colocava o homem no centro do ideal educativo foi substituída pelo paradigma produtivista das sociedades industrializadas que privilegia o fazer/produzir ao ser. Perante tal paradigma, no desporto e na vida, em que o valor do *fazer* assume primazia, urge compreender que o *fazer* não preenche as possibilidades da educação física, como não o faz, de resto, relativamente a nenhuma disciplina: “(...) *a matemática não esgota as possibilidades da matemática. E nunca vai esgotar. Como a língua portuguesa nunca vai esgotar. A literatura nunca vai esgotar. São tudo instrumentos para dar sentido a uma existência, tão enriquecida e humanizada, para poder viver no mundo.*” (ISS1, p.41).

A introdução de uma estético-ética na educação física não requer, contudo, uma mudança ou adição de conteúdos, mas uma mudança na forma como encaramos e trabalhamos os conteúdos e, por isso, uma mudança de paradigma que equacione a relação unitária entre processo e produto, quer no desporto, quer na vida. Neste sentido, “*Centrar a atenção no processo, e não apenas no resultado, é fundamental. O resultado [no voleibol] é a bola cair dentro do campo adversário, tocar no chão. É uma coisa tão binária quanto isto. Mas há mil formas de isto acontecer (...).*” (OSS1, p.33).

Romper com a lógica meramente funcionalista, binária e determinista com que se encara o conteúdo desportivo permite, então, enriquecê-lo com elementos e significados mais profundos, como a diversidade de formas que o gesto desportivo pode assumir, a criatividade, a singularidade, o prazer, a fruição, o desafio, a descoberta (OSS1).

Colocando o aluno à prova num alargado leque de atividades desportivas, a partir de uma particular exposição e vulnerabilidade corporal, mais do que o desenvolvimento das suas competências motoras e funcionais, a educação física proporciona aos alunos a sua capacidade de adaptação, de auto e hétero conhecimento, de aceitação e superação, em campos que saem fora da sua zona de conforto e principal competência, e nos quais a aprendizagem pode ser muito pertinente (ISS2): *“For example, since I am not very tall, I could never be a high level basketball player and I don’t have the physical ability to do it, but there is something beautiful and profound in me being able to exercise my own abilities to their maximum. (...) That can be a beautiful experience for me: to be aware of my physical embodiment and my physical causal powers.”* (OSS6, p. 13). Então, o valor das tarefas da aula não está apenas em cumpri-las ou no seu resultado ou utilidade, mas sobretudo nas possibilidades de envolvimento, aperfeiçoamento, florescimento, crescimento e libertação que elas proporcionam ao aluno (ISS3, ISS4). É nessa medida que um grupo alargado dos nosso entrevistados defende que a riqueza na noção de aperfeiçoamento ou excelência em causa na educação física deve ser considerada muito mais como a arte de viver vulnerável, dando o melhor de si próprio, em caminho de desenvolvimento e melhoramento, do que uma meta, fim/resultado produtivo abstrato ou numericamente mensurável.

A exposição voluntária a estes contextos de vulnerabilidade em prol do potencial transformador que o desporto possui, requerem, contudo, não só a aceitação de tal exposição, mas uma implicação mais íntima e sensível dos alunos, na sua corporeidade, com as matérias de ensino e com o ambiente da aula. Desta forma, ao invés de descorporalizado, meramente observado, assistido e distanciadamente considerado, o desporto é intensamente experienciado<sup>56</sup>. Assim, é a afetividade do aluno com o clima, com os conteúdos e com os intervenientes da aula, que possibilita esta experiência unitária entre processo e produto, de onde sobressaem não apenas os resultados ou frutos mensuráveis da performance, mas sobretudo a qualidade do seu desenvolvimento e a entrega vulnerável aos seus constrangimentos (OSS5).

Por isso, um olhar estético-ético sobre a educação física representa também um olhar estético-ético sobre o aluno, que faz emergir os seus valores e potencialidades internas, a sua identidade e singularidade, para além das suas capacidades produtivas, funcionalistas ou consumistas (ISS4, PET0).

Neste sentido, a redução da experiência desportiva ao binómio vitória/derrota é, antes de mais, desinteressante e aborrecida, pelo que um enriquecimento estético-ético da experiência desportiva pode permitir um maior e mais pertinente sentido ao elemento competitivo: *“Estamos realmente obsesionados com la victoria. Y esa es una narrativa deportiva muy simple, muy aburrida para mí. (...) Entonces para mí hay criterios éticos e estéticos que encuentro mucho más enriquecedores (...) en el que el sentido es que lo que hay que inculcar no es la victoria del equipo en si misma, sino lo que has aprendido al jugar hoy. Por qué te ha importado, por qué no. Por qué has disfrutado y por qué no has disfrutado. No quiere decir que no quieras ganar! Pero la cosa es que tú no quieres ganar si no es de cierta manera, si no es con cierto jugar.”* (OSS3, p.19).

É, aliás, responsabilidade do sistema educativo contrariar a lógica binária, predominantemente económica, da sociedade dos nossos dias, que é, antes de mais, inestética, e perante a qual a educação física pode assumir um papel relevante (OSS2, OSS5).

Poderíamos pensar que descentrar a experiência desportiva do seu resultado final vai contra a essência do próprio desporto, que contém na sua natureza constitutiva esta forma de mensuração. Contudo esta questão fica desmistificada, quando o que propomos não é a negação do lado funcional e pragmático do desporto, do seu resultado, mas a quebra da sua primazia exclusiva pelo seu enriquecimento, para que não seja apenas binário, mas possa ser pluriforme, recuperando o sentido da experiência global e unitária entre processo e produto (OSS1, OSS2).

Em suma, integrando estes elementos estético-éticos, designadamente, a vulnerabilidade, a afetividade, a identidade e a competição, a educação física apresenta-se como uma incubadora natural de experiências estético-éticas, cujo potencial pode ser desperdiçado se não for concretamente contemplado de

forma explícita na organização curricular da disciplina (ISS4, PET1 e PET3): *“Me parece que lo más apropiado es que eso esté formalizado, que esté sistematizado y que haya objetivos claros en función de estos valores estéticos y éticos en la enseñanza.”* (ISS4, p.8).

Para vários dos elementos do nosso grupo de estudo, se por um lado o que não está explicitamente descrito na organização curricular dificilmente será didaticamente tratado e abordado, por outro lado, há elementos do universo estético-ético que simplesmente se sentem e experienciam e são de difícil expressão verbal, confirmando a ideia de Wittgenstein de que o que pode ser mostrado não pode ser dito<sup>57</sup>.

O que se propõe, então, não consiste numa mudança de conteúdos, mas antes numa reorientação do foco da ação pedagógica para o sujeito (aluno), encarando e tratando o objeto (a matéria) como experiência potenciadora do seu florescimento (PET0, PET1).

Este florescimento só é possível se encarmos a educação, como defende Savater<sup>58</sup>, não apenas a partir de critérios de utilidade, mas sobretudo de critérios de felicidade. Tais critérios requerem que o aluno para além de marcar/ganhar, aprenda a se entregar e construir; para além de ver/constatar, aprenda a observar e ajuizar; para além de fazer/executar, aprenda a experienciar, refletir e atribuir significado; e através deste exercício conquistar novas formas e mais livres de relacionamento com o desporto e com a vida (ISS2, ISS4).

Nesta perspetiva construtiva, quando considerado veículo e oportunidade de florescimento humano, o desporto proporciona uma experiência estético-ética não apenas de superação e melhoramento pessoal, de atingimento de marcas ou *records* numericamente mensuráveis, mas também e, sobretudo, de libertação humana (PET0, PET1). De veículo para o aperfeiçoamento transforma-se, sobretudo, em experiência libertadora das amarras dicotómicas entre o almejar e o alcançar, o processo e o produto, onde a principal questão deixa de ser binária, para ser o que, através da experiência desportiva, do processo, se aprende sobre nós mesmos e nos faz crescer coletivamente<sup>53</sup>. Neste sentido encontramos na educação física uma forma holística de educação,

mais transformadora, que considera o aluno não apenas como executante motor de atividades a quem lhe cabe apenas cumprir, mas também como alguém que, a partir das suas realizações, procura melhores versões de si e dos outros, aprende a entusiasmar-se com o sucesso e sofrer com os fracassos, enriquecendo a experiência de forma mais reflexiva, crítica e inquieta, aquilo que alguns dos nossos entrevistados definem como o aprender a ser no mundo e em caminho, em construção.

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## **CHAPTER IV – General Conclusions and Final Considerations**

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*“In philosophy, a good thesis is never the end of the story.”*

(Hoyningen-Huene, 2010, p.12).

Fairy frequently a good friend calls my attention to the need of learning in life what he calls the *art of living in the meanwhile*. Maybe due to my background, with a personal and academic path where I have been forced to set extremely well-defined starting points, pathways and arrival points, this capacity for an active wait that creates no anxiety, even though we rarely achieve an absolute and final reading of reality, does not come easy to get and accept. For me, it is certainly very difficult.

In five years of work many things change. First of all, we change. And, the way we look at our work also changes. Expectations, enthusiasms, objectives and motivations change. World possibilities enlarge and we diminish ourselves before it.

I entered this route with the innocent pretension of fully understanding physical education possibilities - and education through sport in general - as a vehicle for an aesthetic-ethical education. I naively believed that it was possible to demarcate the aesthetic and the ethic contents of sport, as well as their interfaces, as an educational vehicle, in the quest for the definition of an aesthetic-ethics of sport that could be applied in a pedagogical context.

Nowadays, I understand that we are often too busy in delimiting the borders between right and wrong, good and evil, truth and lie and, with no exception, between beauty and ugly. We often ignore how these notions can be much clearer and interesting when we commit ourselves to contemplate and deepen the pathways around it, that is to say, human flourishing itineraries, Man's hope and his paths, acceptance and forgiveness, dedication, failure and fight, concepts that are more variable, more unstable but less blocking than absolute concepts.

Reflections on sport's aesthetics usually get polarised, namely as far as the body is concerned, either in the sense of a rigid quest for the stereotype of sport's body (which abides certain measures, weights, sizes, volumes, proportions,

capacities/skills) or in the paternalist and condescending sense of promoting the acceptance of the individual body independently from any of its shape and its forms. Thus, in any of these ways, we escape from the deepness associated to the visible body, or the visible flesh, and the invisible content it comprises, according to Merleau-Ponty (1968).

Is it possible that, after these five years of work, we can assume a more balanced position?

The idea that we have to work the body does not necessarily imply or require the exaltation of a corporal stereotype and it can (and should!) assume and accept different forms. Likewise, the acceptance of ourselves, the acceptance of our body, should not lead to the conformism of those who do not build what they aim to be and what they consider desirable, healthy and satisfactory.

It is the same as the idea that our character in terms of uprightness, goodness and justice does not necessarily imply that we all have to be saints or heroes, with similar personalities and characters. However, we also know that the acceptance of our weaknesses and flaws should not prevent the struggle associated to human flourishing.

Maybe here we are still too much related to shapes, losing the essential of their contents based on a more deep idea of being in corporeality that allows “turning the body into a philosophic object and the spirit into a biological object (...) a body that renews and intertwines itself with the destroyed and renewed knowledge mesh.” (Cunha e Silva, 1999, p.22).

It is in this sense that aesthetics and ethics are mutually interdependent. It is also in this sense that an aesthetic-ethics of sport is not merely a look over sport but also over life, over the *being* in sport, a place where Man walks and flourishes, learns to *live in the meanwhile* and, in between, builds what he is (acceptance) and what he aims to be (edification): Man. As a whole. As a path.

Being aware that this thesis is far from the end of the story of physical education as a vehicle for an aesthetic education, assuming itself as one further step in the pathway for its flourishing, we here summarise the main conclusions of this

doctoral work, based on the conclusions of the included articles, expecting them, in their openness and intriguing nature, to be an incitement for further investigations in this field.

By introducing the idea of aesthetics-ethics circularity, the first article enabled us to conclude that a full experience of sports reality requires not only the intensity of the aesthetic elements, such as beauty or the pleasure of gestures and performances and the way they are linked to the preferences of individuals, but also ethical aspects, from which the first are reciprocally and circularly dependent, as the quest for a good execution, for the improvement and for the development and growing of participants. This circularity is materialized in a reciprocal interdependence between the values of good and beauty in sport, an experience of global corporeality that offers to thinking the extra value of feeling, and to feeling the complementarity of thinking. This circularity provides then on the form of sport's gesture a growth that is promoted by the integration of its symbolic meaning, and to the content of the sports gesture the special possibility of perception through its sensitive manifestation.

As a proposal for a critical analysis of curricular contents of elementary education levels in Portugal, namely regarding the aesthetic-ethical dimensions, the second article enabled us to conclude that there is not only a preference but almost an exclusivity of sport's technical and hygienist dimension in the curricular objectives of physical education as a subject which is almost exclusively focused on the motor development, on physical skills and on health education. Even though scarce, there are in school programs references to a part of physical education content that has some aesthetic potentialities, namely the development of expressiveness and singularity. However, it is associated to expressive activities such as dance, a very small part of sport's content that is permeable to an aesthetic consideration. It is also possible to find, more significantly, the presence of ethical concerns in physical education curricular programmes, even though they are still extremely related to general ideas of regulatory justice, fair play, safety and hygiene that whatsoever do not exhaust the ethical content of sports. Notwithstanding, this second study has revealed that there are elements in sports experience that call for an aesthetic-ethical development of the student because

they promote “the communication of each one with their intimacy (...) a better *feeling of himself (...)*” widening and resizing the singularity of each one (Lacerda, 2004, p.7), requiring not only motor skills but also cognitive, affective and kinaesthetic.

Since it enables a global experience where body, soul, spirit, reason, emotion, subjectivity, individuality, collectivism, are blended and tested, this second study tried to enhance how physical education enables the person to think, act and live in a network of feelings, thus promoting not only the relation with himself in all his dimensions, but also with the other, with space, with society, with the world. In short, what Pereira calls «think/work/live/know in consubstantiality» and that would deserve a specific pedagogical approach in the national curricula of the subject as it happens in subjects that have an artistic nature (Pereira, 2006, p.43).

Launching the approach of physical education as an aesthetic-ethical educational project, the third article enabled us to conclude that physical education has a relevant axiological role in the education of students’ sensibility for both aesthetic and ethical values. The inputs for the development of this sensibility, which is mainly humanising, are materialised in an aesthetic-ethical education which is based in four fundamental axiological vectors: epistemic, aesthetic, ethic and social (Severino, 2002). Thus, the achievement of an aesthetic-ethical education of students through physical education requires the teacher to consider the student has an “embodied mind” and a “minded body” and that it is in this integration of human powers that we find the manifestation of the aesthetics sensibility of the student and where lies all sport’s communication (Torres, 2012). As in any communicative process, the appearance of conflicts is unavoidable and they invoke ethical and social skills. It is in this communicative process with itself, with the other and with the surrounding space that aesthetics-ethics emerges, initiating the human being in the encounter with the world from its corporeality, which is no longer individual but global (Lacerda, 2002).

Based on the hermeneutical debate of the content of interviews carried out during this doctoral project, the fourth article enabled us to conclude that aesthetics is an element that is so internal to sport’s nature that, without its understanding and

inclusion, an education through physical education would be widely compromised. Notwithstanding, the diversity of variables and plans that multiply the possibilities of an aesthetic experience in sports, according to the different roles that the subject can assume (Arnold, 1997; Coelho, 2014; Fernandes, 2008; Kuntz, 1985; Lacerda, 2002), as well as to the need of its contextualisation and differentiation according to the different types of sports that are considered (Best, 1988a, 1988b; Boxill, 1988; Kirk, 1984; Kupfer, 1988; Lacerda, 2002; Marques, 1990; Wertz, 1988), lead us to conclude that any attempt of analysis and understanding of aesthetic content of sport's experience is widely complex and compound. However, in this article we took the Kantian idea that there is a common human tendency for subjective universality in terms of taste (Kant, 1998) to search for aesthetic elements of sport's experience that can and should be taken into account in a pedagogical aesthetic perspective of physical education. Also found in sport's gesture, this tendency justifies, concludes and argues the relevance, the validity and the application of specific aesthetic criteria to sport's gestures and experiences, that should be taken into account in the pedagogical approach of the contents that are taught in physical education.

The fifth article is dedicated to the consideration that education through sports in physical education is an arena that is fruitful for the construction of ethical values that contribute for a significant life (Feezell, 2013; McNamee, 2008; Reid, 2010). This study enabled us to conclude that part of the ethical content of sports, identified by our study group as important and worthy of pedagogical treatment in a physical education lesson is associated to five general intervention vectors. Namely: the regulatory and normative structure of sports; the spirit of sport and its internal values; the good and right playing/doing at sports; the overcoming in sports; and sport as an opportunity for a supererogatory ethics.

Considering the possibilities of an aesthetics-ethics of sports, the sixth article enabled us to conclude that part of the aesthetic content of sport remains incomprehensible without ethical references, likewise part of the ethical content of sport remains illegible without aesthetic references. The origin of this aesthetic-ethical or ethical-aesthetic contamination is not easy to identify and does not always assume the same shapes. Thus, we consider it simultaneous and circular

as an alternative to a binary and linear approach in our way of looking at sport, which gives primacy to one of these fields.

Starting with examples that reveal the existence of aesthetic-ethical elements in sport's experiences, using the beautiful-good-clean triad, as well as the paradoxes of *winning ugly* and *loosing beautifully*, we thus suggest the approach of these elements, arguing that they have a transformative power in the *being in sport* but mainly in the *being in the world*.

In the seventh and last article we also conclude that the special role that physical education has at school, since it requires a wide participation of human potentialities, not only intellectual but also physical, motor, sensitive and affective, represents a crucial opportunity of pedagogically supporting the break with binary, functional, pragmatic and simplistic paradigms of victory and defeat, success and failure which is, before all else, uninteresting from the aesthetic-ethical point of view.

This study enabled to conclude that, physical education can and should promote not only motor skills but also the human flourishing and the development of an education of sensibility, highlighting aesthetic-ethical elements with pedagogical, feasible and operational potential, and for which the teacher's intervention is crucial. Accordingly, the main aesthetic-ethical elements explored were: vulnerability, through which the student transgresses the limits of certainty and surety to expose himself to unpredictable constraints and to the influence that sporting experience can build in himself; affection, through which the student learns how to freely relate and engage with sporting experiences and its internal goods, with the others involved and with himself; identity, by considering not only the functional, pragmatic and depersonalized sporting activities criteria, but also to concede space to what each individual can bring to pedagogical contexts and to what he can learn about himself and the others through it; and finally competition, where the student learns how to deal with victory and defeat, success and failure, and though what he can discover a mutualist way of searching for excellence.

To close this doctoral thesis, while being aware of how it is a first step in the aesthetic-ethic journey of physical education, disquiet us to reflect on what research doors turned open to future work, and how rich and valuable would be if they have continuity.

Therefore, it would be worth of future investigation to deepen on the aesthetic-ethical content of each sport and physical activity, searching for specific elements capable of emerging from different kinds of sports movements, practices and cultures. An effort like this would help us not only to clarify if there is a variable aesthetic-ethical potential between activities, turning some of them more or less pertinent or imperative in an aesthetic-ethical consideration of sports, but also to explore the specific contribution that different sport subjects can give to this purpose.

During the entire research path some questions remained permanent, and it would be very enlightening if someday we can answer them as a result of a specific research dedication: are teachers themselves sensible to the pedagogical potential of an aesthetic-ethics of sport? Are they being academically and professionally prepared to these concerns? Is there a work to do in teachers' education regarding the aesthetic-ethical potential of physical education?

Concluding that the aesthetic-ethic content is part of the internal value of sport, a more specific and expert pedagogical work is needed, regarding the definition and systematization of the aesthetic-ethical content that can and should be considered in a more explicit and implicit ways in physical education curricula, which needs the definition of concrete objectives, competences and evaluation criteria.

There are also some tests to be made in practical contexts, in terms on how to operationalise this, how to make it work and to apply the aesthetic-ethical contents of sports in physical education, in each activity, in each learning situation.

We finish this work, then, with a clear consciousness that it is not the end of the story, simultaneously wishing to be useful in future attempts to progress in this field of study, hopefully with the help of research colleagues whose knowledge and competence can bridge and fill the empty areas we have left opened.

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## **CHAPTER V – Appendix**



## Interview Script

To ensure the interview questions are constantly oriented to objectives and research questions, the development of the interview script is made with a permanent confrontation between each other:

Main objective: To contribute to the understanding of education through sport in school, from the complementarity of aesthetic and ethic education in physical education.

Main research questions:

- a) What is the interviewees' perspective regarding the meaning and relevance of the consideration of sport as a vehicle for aesthetic and ethic education?
- b) What settings emerge in the interviewees' thinking regarding ethic and aesthetic education through physical education, and how it can contribute to a better understanding of these axiological dimensions (aesthetic and ethic) in physical education?
- c) How can this research allow us to unveil a conceptual mapping capable of guiding the operationalization of ethic and aesthetic education through physical education?

Considering the depth and complexity of the addressed subjects of this interview, when inviting the interviewees, we will explain and contextualize the research matters and questions to them, informing them, as well, about the sequence of themes and ideas we pretend to discuss in our talk. This approach will be made through the following content:

To further explain the context of my work, I plan to interview three groups of interviewees (refer in which group the interviewee is included):

- 1) Teachers/Researchers in the fields of aesthetics, ethics and education, outside sport sciences areas, who work in fields where this subjects are also studied (art, philosophy, theatre, music, dance, etc.).
- 2) Teachers/Researchers inside sport sciences fields whose research shows some kind of aesthetic and ethical concerns regarding physical education and sports pedagogy.
- 3) Physical education teachers, who can give us a more applied, practical and concrete point of view, regarding the operationalization of these dimensions in physical education classes at school.

In the interview I intend to start in a more open and inclusive way, exploring the meaning of aesthetics and ethics and its application to sport (what it is, to what it refers to, how it can be showed and applied). Having more clear what we are talking about, and converge in terms of language, we will talk about the intersection between aesthetics and ethics in sport in general (if there is some or not, why, and how), and then in education through sport (in physical education) particularly. In the final phase of the interview, we will try to explore a little bit more the practical aspects of these matters, from curricular orientations of physical education, to the possibilities of organizing learning contexts, situations and exercises which promote and include aesthetic and ethic dimensions in the pedagogical consideration of physical education classes.

Question	Sub-Questions	Key Concepts that should be approached during the interview	Research Question to which refers
<b>1st Part</b>			
1 – To begin our talk, we would like to ask you to explain us what is aesthetics for you, or what is your conception of aesthetics?	(This is an introductory question that is supposed to be open, to guide us later regarding the interviewee's key concepts, language and ideas about aesthetics)	<b><u>Aesthetics</u></b> <b>. <i>Aesthetic Categories that can be applied to sport</i></b> - Beauty - Perfection - Sublime - Elegance - Grace - Harmony - Rhythm - Color - Composition - Style - Balance - Dynamic - Movement - Intensity - Spontaneity - Creativity - Playfulness - Unpredictability - Power - Excellence - Overcoming - Transcendence - Strength - Speed	a)
2 – What is the aesthetics of sport* about, or to what it refers to?	- In what it can be shown? - Why? - Can you give me some concrete and applied examples of it?  - Is it possible to understand sport ignoring the aesthetic dimension of it? [If NOT, why? What is there in the aesthetic dimension which helps the comprehension of sport? If it is possible, then why? Is it something accidental? Not so essential? What can it be more essential than this? (Competition, victory, defeat, cooperation, opposition, result). Is it something that matters to all sports?]		a)
3 – Which aesthetic values or qualities	- Why? How do these values are shown?		. <b><i>Aspects that contribute/circumscribe the aesthetic approach of sport</i></b>

<p>occurs to you when you think about sport*?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you consider some other aesthetic value(s) besides the value of beauty in sport*? Which?</li> <li>- How can these values be shown? Can you give me some concrete and applied examples of it?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aesthetic Education</li> <li>- Body-Movement (morphology/plasticity)</li> <li>- Gesture</li> <li>- Corporeality</li> <li>- Emotions</li> <li>- Feelings / Sensibility</li> <li>- Context (environment/sports/equipment/materials)</li> <li>- Victory / Defeat</li> <li>- Cooperation / Opposition</li> </ul>	
<p>4 – Introducing now the ethic field, we would also like to know what is ethics for you, or what is your conception of ethics?</p>	<p>(This is an introductory question that is supposed to be open, to guide us later regarding the interviewee's key concepts, language and ideas about ethics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Competition</li> <li>- Interaction</li> <li>- Adaptation</li> <li>- Technique / Tactics</li> <li>- Process / Product</li> <li>- Quantification</li> <li>- Freedom / Limits</li> </ul>	a)
<p>5 – What is the ethics of sport* about, or to what it refers to?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In what it can be shown?</li> <li>- Why?</li> <li>- Can you give me some concrete and applied examples of it?</li> </ul> <p>- Is it possible to understand sport ignoring the ethic dimension of it? [If NOT, why? What is there in the ethic dimension which helps the comprehension of sport? If it is possible, then why? Is it something accidental? Not so essential? What can it be more essential than this? (Competition, victory, defeat, cooperation, opposition, result). Is it something that matters to all sports?]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Efficiency</li> <li>- Effectiveness</li> <li>- Competence</li> <li>- Economy</li> <li>- Communication</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Ethics</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good</li> <li>- Justice</li> <li>- Rules / Norms / Regulations (fulfillment/Breach)</li> <li>- Finality</li> <li>- Signification</li> <li>- Meaning</li> <li>- Well played – Quality</li> <li>- Good Game – Beautiful Game</li> <li>- Ethic education</li> <li>- Responsibility</li> <li>- Equity</li> <li>- Respect</li> </ul>	a)

	- What is the role of ethics in the achieving of sport's purposes?	- Conviviality - Common (common good) - Otherness - Singularity - Fair-play - Cooperation - Acceptance - Behaviors of integration - Solidarity - Tolerance - Consideration - Unity of feeling/thinking, body-mind - Affection - Transcendence - Overcoming - Suffering - Spirit of sacrifice - Doping - Cheating - Violence	
6 – Which ethic values occurs to you when you think about sport*?	- Why? How do these values are shown? - Do you consider some other ethic value(s) besides the value of good in sport*? Which? - How can these values be shown? Can you give me some concrete and applied examples of it?		a)b)
7a) – We would like to have your opinion about an expression we hear frequently in the end of a game (no matter the different sports, is usual to hear this type of comments). That expression is: “It was a beautiful game”, or “It was a beautiful performance. What does it means, in your opinion, these kinds of statements?	- Are there models or standards of beauty in sport? Sport has to obey them? Or in other hand, starting from the knowledge of those models, to produce something different?  - Why? How?	<b><u>Aesthetic-Ethic</u></b> - Aesthetic-ethic education - Beauty-Good - Feeling-thinking (Sensibility/Reason) - Form-Content (Process/Product) - Primacy of any of it over the other? - Two way relationship? - Circular relation?	a)b)

7b) – There is another expression we frequently hear in sport contexts, at least in latin languages, as Portuguese and Spanish for example. That expression is: “It was a clean game”. Do you have any suggestion about what it can be the meaning of this notion of cleanness?

7c) – How do you read another expression, also frequently heard in sport contexts, that is: “It was a good game”, or “It was a good performance”? What is, in your opinion, a good game, or a good performance?

<p>7d) Now that we talked about your aesthetic and ethic conceptions, we would like to ask you if you see any type of relation between these two dimensions in sport*?</p> <p>7e) There is also other expressions we would like you to comment, like “to lose beautifully” and “to win ugly”. How do you read these kinds of statements?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can, in this relation, any of these dimensions exert some kind of primacy over the other?</li> <li>- Which one?</li> <li>- Why?</li>   <li>- What is the relevance of this relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport itself</li> <li>• Physical Education</li> <li>• The student</li> <li>• The teacher / coach</li> <li>• The Public / spectators</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
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**2nd Part**

<p>8a) – Lets now try to orient these themes of aesthetics and ethics to pedagogical domain. Do you think it can be interesting for children and youths education, to include teachings that promote the knowledge in aesthetic and ethical domains?</p> <p>8b) – What role has education in the recognition and the sensibility to sport's aesthetics and ethics*? Is this only recognized by who has education in these fields?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are, in your opinion, the most proper or amenable pedagogical contexts to provide an aesthetic and ethic education?</li> <li>- What are the disciplines at school which can better provide this aesthetic and ethical education?</li> <li>- What is the role of aesthetics and ethics in a pedagogical look over sport*?</li> <li>- What is the role of aesthetics and ethics in physical education*?</li> <li>- What issues can affect this look?</li> </ul> <p>(What we pretend with these questions is to understand how can the consideration of the aesthetic and the ethic dimensions be present in a pedagogical perspective of sport* and, concretely, in physical education*?)</p>		b)c)
<p>9a) – Do you think it would be interesting or important to consider aesthetic and ethic dimensions in physical education*, at a curricular organization level?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Should this consideration be present in an implicit or explicit way on physical education curricular programs?</li> <li>- What is there in physical education curricular programs that refer to an aesthetic and ethic education?</li> <li>- Which aesthetic and ethic competences can be developed in</li> </ul>		b)c)

<p>9b) – What do you think about the consideration of these dimensions (the aesthetic and the ethic) in physical education* at more practical level in classes?</p> <p>9c) Where, or in which situations, in concrete, aesthetics can appear in physical education classes?</p>	<p>students at physical education classes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- And why is this important? Can you give me concrete examples that show its contribute?</li> <li>- Should this consideration be explicit and direct in physical education classes or, on the other hand, it should be naturally present, in an implicit way, without having to be necessarily approached in an explicit way?</li> <li>- Do you think this consideration depends on the teacher's choices (concerning the teaching matters, and the way of teaching them)? How?</li> <li>- Can you give me concrete examples of exercises, or learning situations, where you think this can be achieved?</li> </ul> <p>Concerning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contents. Sports (traditional ones/alternative ones); aesthetic ones/non aesthetic ones).</li> <li>- Learning situations / Exercises</li> <li>- Ways of organizing classes and learning situations/exercises.</li> <li>- Ways of evaluation of competences</li> </ul>		
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9d) Where, or in which situations, in concrete, ethics can appear in physical education classes?

- Teaching pedagogical strategies

What is the role of the teaching of the technique (and the tactics) in the aesthetic education of students? How should it be worked and approached?

What is the aesthetic meaning of the «excellence» notion? What does it mean the searching for «excellence» in physical education? How can it be worked?

Concerning:

- Contents. Sports (traditional ones/alternative ones); aesthetic ones/non aesthetic ones).
- Learning situations / Exercises
- Ways of organizing classes and learning situations/exercises.
- Ways of evaluation of competences
- Teaching pedagogical strategies

What is the role of «competition» factor in ethical education of students? How should it be worked and approached?

What is the ethic meaning of the «success» notion? What does it mean the searching for success in physical education classes? How should it be worked?

9e) "Winning or losing is all sport, because what matters is to participate?"	- What pedagogical consequences this motto can have?		
10 – Is there anything or any idea you would like to add to this interview before we finish it?			b)c)

\* When the interview is applied to interviewees outside sport sciences' fields, these questions may also be referred to their area of intervention (philosophy, fine arts, music, etc..), questioning them, however, in relation to sport and physical education too.

Note: The interview is divided into two main parts (1<sup>st</sup> part and 2<sup>nd</sup> part). The first part concerns to a more theoretical and conceptual approach to the research topics, and the second one to a more applied and practical approach. This separation was done to give some leeway to the interviewer regarding the investment to make in each of these parts, concerning the interviewees' thoughts, interests and concerns. In this way it is possible to better avail the specific contribution each respondent has to give, balancing, thus, two fundamental aspects: the time of the interview and quantity of content / the quality of useful and effective content to the research.