

THE IMPACT OF PYTHAGORAS' SPORT SUPERSTITIONS ON CONTEMPORANEITY

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Abstract

This paper aims at drawing the attention of the specialists in the field of sports and physical education on a controversial and very up-to-date subject, that of Pythagoras' teachings and superstitions in today's contemporary sport, on the issues of body and soul, colours, and the importance of numbers

Keywords: Pythagoras' teachings, sports superstitions, competitions, rituals, beliefs;

1. Preliminaries

The present paper aims at discussing the relation between what is known about Pythagoras (approx. 582-500 BC) and superstitions in today's sport. (Pythagoras said there were three types of people participating in the Olympics: athletes participating for glory, merchants selling their products, and spectators enjoying the show) [5, p. 266-276], from a symbolic perspective (the chromatic symbol of the red colour in the Latin *symbolum* may be interpreted as something that stands for something else, our lucky stone is coral or mother-of-pearl, to which one adds the red colour and the contorted shape of the branches; coral casts away the evil eye, stops bleeding, and acts as a lucky charm, a piece of jewellery, also being a common comparison for the colour of lips).

The gestural language of superstition may be analysed in point of name, dream, success, fate (incantation, narrative about the nation), destiny, appearances from political and ideological lucky charms (on flags and colours, elements which become emblems, in advertisements) .

More often than not, athletes' superstitions secretly control the participants' wins and losses. And ancient sentence of Pythagoras' said that the parts which need to be controlled by man are: "the belly, sleep, desires of the flesh , anger", since according to the metempsychosis theory, on the scale of nature man is the first being, as he has reason/*nous*, while the lowest level belongs to plants with vegetative soul; if the soul can be reincarnated into animals and plants, that is a punishment [7]. In order not to open the box of secrets, we are going to discuss our relation to these special images of verbal and chromatic nature of the gestural component in superstitions.

The co-author as former competition gymnast, sport teacher and aerobics trainer (*Pythagoras considered men and women as philosophically equal, which was not the case in Greece, her name places her under the bears' totem, which means a strong personality, a reserved character, introverted but not shy, with active and passive stages*), is spiritually detached, carefully controls her diet, tries to sleep before contests and keeps apparently friendly relationships with her future opponents (if she is in another country, she maintains her astronomically accurate sleeping schedule, says counting prayers to fall asleep, only eats vegetables and dairy products) and accesses certain superstitions/ pre-judgements on a corpus of beliefs in good and evil spirits, omens, fatidic numbers and other remnants of animism and magic: invocations, songs, exorcism (she always wears a ring with four silver petals found at a competition where she was successful).

The co-author, as the manager of the national athletics team, used to be asked by the coaches of the professional athletes not to attend the finals of international competitions, on the grounds that his presence would "jinx" the athletes' success by the evil eye. From a different perspective, the coaches of the national team were quite pleased with his managerial activity.

What remained from Pythagoras and is present in almost all today's athletes, is the need to get to the top by faith, cautiousness, balance, all commendable qualities [6], as *the justice of competition depends on fact and word, the mortal man needs thought compared to perishable fortune, to accept the oath* , and a superstition (there is no competition match start without the circle assembly and the initial shout *Go, L.P.S.!*) makes you happy, self-confident, god-like.

Engaging in competition is the same, even if a tribe wear strings of red shells and bracelets of white shells, or a lady wears a diamond necklace (*I never take off my lucky ring, even if it may bother me in my ribbon exercises in artistic gymnastics*), and sports emulation is based on a ritual with operational mechanisms / superstitions, in which each item of clothing is true to its own nature (*the Greeks had male beauty competitions in the Panathenians and Theseans*), and even today a contest of sacred or ludic nature is marked by means of the colour of the equipment (*although it was compulsory to wear a standard suit required by the contest regulations, certain gymnasts used to sprinkle it with holy water*).

The relation between sacred space, oath, clothing and contest does not require proof, as it is common knowledge that an important place in justice is held by the togue and wig worn by judges, as these specific clothes are a

recognition sign of ancient jurists [2]; like the state coordinates and plans the order apparently visible in competitions, and it also resorts to the army to defend itself against the attack of other states, thus presupposing a permanent order, both regular and irregular, so does superstition resort to language and weapon-type objects (ironised under the form of the *love feast* where the drink is offered in the *weapon-glass*, but accepted under the form of *swords*, under which a real oath is taken, as these *rapiers* are real, not imaginary *gladiæ*).

Both the official, and the secret society resort to superstitions, but ornaments in sports imitate official decorative art, sometimes with an addition of superstitions, often *kitsch* or caricaturised ones, sometimes even similar or synonymous with identical official structures. But a gesture in sport superstitions is individual and secret, introduced as a counter-attack, by the state's invasion of sport, and thus annihilating secret superstitions and transforming sport society into a discrete society [4].

In the sporting space the affective dimension requires engagement and insight, which become a means of knowledge/ comprehension, a societal code, in the sense that in a sporting society the will represents an immeasurable energy/ *energeia*, which is actually time/ *kronos* and place/ *topos* conditioned, since divine causality may condition the future by granting pleasure.

That is why athletes possess a spiritual sight, a mind's eye, a psychological revelation, which is actualised in the physical and spiritual dimensions of the external environment, parts which motivate mystical knowledge, and body liberation in the athletes' superstitions [1, p. 105-123], through the *adrenalin* and *serotonin* secreted as a result of physical exercise.

Superstition is an important part of sport, together with the bio-psycho-pedagogical process of sport training.

Getting out of oneself and overcoming one's limitations by acknowledging reality communicate the relation of the athletes with the ideal state; to those who take part in an activity superior to animals, sport is intense living, a ritual, socialisation, self-education, war, theatre, self-introduction/ *aloga*; by exercise the soul gives up what is linked to the perishable body and manages to have a good living through the body's progress ("Top athletes are also affected by superstition. For instance, the American Tiger Woods, considered by many the best golf player in history, is obsessed with the colour red, and is convinced that it is lucky for him. Consequently, on the final day of a golf tournament he always wears a red T-shirt") [8].

Today's man also assumes an unusual body, different or similar to the city's. Plural worlds are a measure for both the over endowed, and the sub-human.

The triumph of the imaginary in superstitions shows that when the athlete is rebuilt as a man, equal to the world of gods, the element of *the Other* represents an ideological category, a mental revolution. By sport superstition, a social art and science, therapeutic structures occur in the behaviour of the human body, by the stimuli which are consanguineous, atypical, and typical, allowing cooperation in existence, in the family, in society (the idea of superstition as an inner language remains important, a language which is not immediately decipherable, possibly interpretable with the help of a specialist, and which is related to the irrational and corporal logic, superstitions, pertaining to the biological organisation of the human body).

The athletes' superstition, by its apparent resemblance to the dramatic genre, presupposes dependence, provides balance in the world of human factors, social factors and the interactions between them, by reaching the goals and operations, the technical variables in a system of roles and sets.

The athletes' superstition operates on a daily basis (it frees people from the fear of death, it aids in transforming and disguising the body by modifying the soul); the athletes' superstition provides a magical secret relation of simultaneous fear and excitement, helping the body, the apparent *master of sport language*, the athletes' superstition contains a mythical support (*the relation with the language of supernatural beings*) and an artistic support (*means of inserting the superstition's topos into the space of interpreting success*); the athletes' superstition is also observed at the level of images created by numbers, gestures, and words, with archaic and collective meaning and alluding to metonymies, part for the whole, metaphors, similes, comparison, repetition and symbols, condensing and mimicking the perceivable by means of the unperceivable ("Another great American athlete, the basketball player Michael Jordan used to have a superstition related to clothes, i.e. he used to wear his college shorts underneath the official NBA equipment. And he continued to do so all through his professional career") [8].

The superstition of athletes in various fields, in different countries, with different religious denominations, races and political beliefs, becomes an inner exaltation with a mysterious type of rhetoric, whose arguments are found in Pythagoras, even if the system is different now: *rejections, requests, categories, sub-categories,; religions; target audience: publicity and sales; publishing; hierarchies; advice on behaviour, diet; affiliations; secret societies; privileges; motives; sources; advertising, clothing, conveying; team; relations: to nature, to culture elements, to economic strategies, to Internet strategies, to political strategies, to bets, to strategies: banks, vice defence, drugs* [3].

The body language continues by gestures, posture, position and distance maintained. This is a means of achieving non-verbal communication. In modern studies, non-verbal language means that *homo sapiens* is dominated not only by biological laws, but also by perspicuous intuitions. Inborn in the non-verbal signal, the desire to extend the protection provided by superstition to clothing is seen as strengthening these basic communicational gestures in competitions.

The relation between names and numbers is already present in Pythagoras' writings, as he was the one who placed a number and a sound at the foundation of the world. As a signal, in superstition the perceivable is linked to the

unperceivable and issued with the intent to communicate with the athlete, the opponents, the coach, the audience or the result, with or without intention in the *corpus subtilis*.

The signal of superstition derives from cosmic life and ends in terrestrial life; in the life of minerals, plants and beings, superstition bestows a numerical, artistically expressible rhythm, and rhythm is perceived periodicity. Dynamically, by conversation, or statically by architecture, the rhythm of superstition means symmetry among us. The existential rhythm appears as placed under a star, permanently relatable to the athlete by superstition. The colours, sounds and letters in the athlete's preferences are connected to the following numbers, which provide a possible explanation to individual destiny ("Serena Williams, the former world leader of women's tennis, lost the 2008 "Roland Garros" finals, but she knows why: she hadn't tied her shoelaces right, bounced the ball five times, had a spare robe, or brought the shower sandals on to the court.") [8].

It is our purpose here to prove that if we grouped this information under the name traditions, customs, relations, we could have a unanimous agreement, as all these superstitions have been around for centuries in oral form, operating as various means of evincing personality through figures and winnings; at least now there are three of us, the authors and a reader!

There are many common elements in athletes' superstitions and other types of socialisation; what remains important in the structure of superstition is related to the need to psychologically control fear before a competition; good results are psychologically fixed by means of details related to a positively perceived tradition, superstition allows for a position of encouragement, even if it is a shared superstition, like the one referring to a clover we wear around the finger (Eve is said to have kept it from Paradise).

2. Conclusions

A superstition is a ritual, that athletes assume, according to the faith in victory (in the past the salt superstition meant the dependence on a rare expensive food), the soul is supported by this superstition, a broken mirror along the history of psychology, only now the superstition is globalised and spread via the Internet, not by knowledge of the unwritten work of Pythagoras.

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THE PLACE AND IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY IN PIP FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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Abstract

Customized individual plan (PIP) for people with disabilities is both an effective way of structuring teamwork through physical and psychological recovery of the person concerned and monitoring the results that may be obtained in each subject. In this context, including it (PIP) in kinetic therapy rehabilitation segment is a way for our study developed in "Sunshine" Association Iernut, Mures to quantify the beneficial results of this action regarding optimizing the quality of life of beneficiaries. The present study has been developed during March 2014-February 2015 on a subject with Down syndrome. Based on the diagnose received from DGASPC (having a confidential status), Customized individual plan (PIP) was made, having the following action methods: physical recovery by kinetic therapy, mental recovery by psychological. The results obtained in this study, the "Sunshine" Association from Iernut, Mures County, can be a viable alternative for people with disabilities for the purposes of recovery and their reintegration into society. To be emphasized that such an approach and attitude determines social-structural changes, so the recipient is part of the reference group and not only, "Sunshine" standing by his side.

Keywords: kinetic therapy, beneficiary, PIP, disability