

The Development Thread and Research Hot Spots of Western Sports Philosophy

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Abstract: The Western is the birthplace of sports philosophy, and many of its theoretical viewpoints have important reference significance and practical value for the development of Chinese sports philosophy. This article uses qualitative research methods to carefully comb and compare the development context, main research hotspots and development trends of Western sports philosophy. The study found that the study of Western sports philosophy began in the 1920s, gradually entered a period of prosperity after the 1950s, and was in a stable period at the beginning of the 21st century. The current research is in a multi-level and multi-disciplinary interdisciplinary research state. The naturalism, realism, empiricism, analytical philosophy, phenomenology, deontology, consequentialism and virtue ethics are widely used in sports research.

Keywords: sports philosophy, development thread, research hotspots

1. Introduction

The philosophy of sports is a science that reveals the nature of sports and its development laws based on philosophy and sports disciplines and practices. It is a theoretical system that unifies scientific sports outlook, sports epistemology, and sports scientific methodology. Sports philosophy is the product of the combination of sports practice and sports science under the modernization and application of philosophy. The philosophy of sports originated in North America in the 1920s and appeared in Western Europe and East Asian countries one after another. China's systematic research on sports philosophy and the establishment of courses began in the 1980s. Up to now, the research of western sports philosophy has been quite comprehensive and in-depth. It leads the future development direction of sports philosophy. General research on it is beneficial to the construction of the theoretical system of Chinese sports philosophy and the construction and optimization of the Chinese sports humanities.

2. The development thread of western sports philosophy research

The West has a long history of philosophical thinking about sports, at least it can be traced back to the Isthmus Games in ancient Greece where Plato set foot in the early days and the "Utopia" ruled by his philosopher king. Plato believes that gymnastics should be an important content of early education; physical training contains virtue content, which is conducive to the coordination of human body, morality and soul [1]. In fact, the philosophy of sports comes from the philosophy, epistemology and moral philosophy of the relationship between thought and behavior. Although the early philosophers occasionally discussed sports, as far as the specialized sports philosophy research is concerned, it is believed that the research of western sports philosophy has gone through three stages.

It was initially the research stage of sports philosophy based on the philosophy of education (from the 1920s to the early 1950s). The important symbol of sports philosophy as a special study is the publication of "Principles of Sports" by Jesse Williams in the United States in 1927. The publication of the book made Williams the most influential sports philosopher at the time. His optimism and ambition for sports philosophy in the book attracted a large number of followers. "Principles of Sports" has been issued eight editions, affecting at least two generations [2]. Influential works of this period include Clark Hetherington's "Sports School Curriculum (1922)", Wood and Rosalind Cassidy's "New Sports (1927)", Elmer Burley's "Sports Philosophy (1927)", Huizinga's "Playing Man: A Study of the Game Elements in Culture (1934)", Charles Mc Cloy's "The Philosophical Foundation of Sports (1940)" and

Nash's "Sports: Explanation and Purpose (1948)", etc.

This period is called the research stage of sports philosophy based on educational philosophy. The main reason is that the research results of this stage are based on the theory of educational philosophy, and the research paradigms and methods have not escaped from the stereotypes of educational philosophy. In the second half of the 19th century, a historic public education movement took place in the United States. Dewey's "School and Society" had a profound impact on American education [3]. It is believed that in all social environments, schools are most suitable for children. This concept simply expresses the appeal of naturalism and enhances people's understanding of the meaning of play, dance, and games for human growth. People began to think about the role of sports in maintaining physical health. Sports scholars began to analyze and explain the instrumental value of sports on the basis of education. Just because the philosophy of sports originated from the philosophy of education, Scott Krichima believes that the philosophy of sports can be traced back to 1875 when American schools began to offer "activity, games, and health" courses.

The second is the period of systems research (approximately from the 1950s to the mid-1960s). To be precise, the research of sports philosophy in the previous period was more of a study of education. People only regarded sports as a form and part of general education. By the 1950s, sports scholars began to use Brubaker's "Modern Educational Philosophy (1950)" and Butler's "Four Philosophies" to construct the content and form of their sports philosophy research, but they still did not completely divorce from the educational philosophy shadow [4]. However, people began to ask systemic questions such as "Are competition and games compatible? If so, how are they compatible?" "What is the realist attitude towards games and competition?" Eugen Herrigel "Archery Art and Zen (1953)", Davis' "The Philosophical Process of Sports (1961)", Elwood Craig's "Philosophical Sports (1963)" and Zeigler's "The Philosophical Basis of Physical, Health and Recreation Education (1964)" etc. marked the entry of this new era in the study of sports philosophy [5]. These works began to discuss the relationship between the body and the soul, and applied Plato, Aristotle, Kant and others' philosophical thoughts, theory of value, epistemology, and metaphysical theories individually or comprehensively into their discussions. This period is called the period of systematic research because the "system" at that time refers to a certain philosophical school of thought, such as idealism, realism, naturalism, etc. The research on sports philosophy in this period mostly stayed on certain a description of different genres or a comparison of different genres. David and Zeigler have extensively used and discussed pure naturalism, empiricism, realism and idealism in their works.

The last is the discipline research phase (from the mid-1960s to the present). At this stage, people began to use philosophy as a tool to explore the relationship between competitive sports, games and human development, freedom, happiness and realization. Compared with the previous two stages, this stage is no longer from science but from philosophy to find basic clues to carry out research. Scholars believe that it is not enough to just borrow and use previous philosophical theories to carry out research. Sports philosophy research needs new breakthroughs. Methe-ny's "The Connotation of Movement in Sports and Dance (1965)" and "Motion and Meaning (1968)", Slusher's "People, Sports and Existence (1967)", Hans Lenk's "Sociological Philosophy of Sports (1969)", Weiss's "Sports: A Philosophical Exploration (1969)", etc. are the representative works of this period. Messonni is an extreme holismist. Her main interest is to regard sports as a way to recognize and express human wisdom and the weird personal experience of various forms of sports [6]. Weiss has made a significant contribution to the study of sports philosophy as a sub-discipline of philosophy. Slasser was greatly influenced by European existentialism. He used the theory of existentialism to investigate the value of competitive sports to people's authenticity, freedom, and responsibility. His works involve the theoretical viewpoints of Heidegger, Sartre and Jaspers. From the 1970s to the present, the research of Western sports philosophy has entered a highly prosperous state, which can truly be called "a hundred schools of thought contend and a hundred flowers bloom". Papers on sports philosophy are as brilliant as stars; various sports philosophy monographs are published for the first time; theoretical research is more in-depth and comprehensive. Important theories during this period include McFee's research on the rules and values of sports; Rus-sel, Dixon, and Morgan's research on sports' moral realism and moral anti-realism; Mac-Namee's research on doping and human behavior Intensified research on ethical issues; Loland, Boxill, etc. on fair competition; Perry on sports violence; Simon on sports internalism and intrinsic value, etc. [7-8]. In the recent period, under the influence of analytic philosophy, there has been a sports philosophy research group in the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia on the European continent that use local languages to conduct research. They have created popular terms for sports philosophy such as "physical culture philosophy". "Sports Cultural Philosophy" and "Philosophical Kindred Anthropology" etc.

3. Hot issues in the study of western sports philosophy

3.1 Sports norm theory

The theory of sports norms involves sports as a classic topic of humanities and social sciences, that is, the issue of sports and value. Loland believes that normative theory includes at least instrumentalism, skill improvement theory, and player theory [9]. Instrumentalists deny that competitive sports is a unique source of value, and believe that competitive sports only helps people strengthen the existing values in social culture and make the participants of competitive sports recognize those values; competitive sports is only a mirror, and its function is to reflect the entire society value that has been discovered by mankind. Sports is just a tool to realize religious, social, political and other values. The theory of skill improvement believes that competitive sports continuously improves human physical skills through the training and competition of athletes. The theory of athletes believes that competitive sports has its own intrinsic value, which can cultivate the moral qualities of athletes and realize moral goodness.

3.2 Constructivist theory

Morgan is the chief representative of constructivism. He believes that competitive sports are activities constructed by sports rules. What methods are used in the game, which behaviors are legitimate, and how to win in the game are all determined by appropriate rules. The same rules construct the same sports. If someone does not play the game in the manner prescribed by the rules, then he may be playing another sport. Considering that it is inevitable that some people violate the rules during the game, constructivism divides sports rules into two types. One is to set the rules of sports events, called constructive rules. For example, human beings did not originally play basketball, and adopted a series of basketball rules created a basketball game. The other is the normative rules. The function of this rule is to punish the offenders so as to restrain the players from fouling. Fouls cause the interruption of the game, and the normative rules can restore the game to a normal state.

3.3 Internalism theory

"Internalism" is based on the sports characteristics composed of contract, habits, rules, principles and other elements as the core content, revealing the intrinsic value and intrinsic virtue of competitive sports. Intrinsicists believe that, relative to society, competitive sports has a strong autonomy. Competitive sports itself has a value different from the mainstream value in social culture. Morgan believes in his "Left-wing Theory of Competitive Sports" that competitive sports has "gratuitous logic", which not only reflects or strengthens the mainstream value in society, but also has its own intrinsic value. Drew Hyland also believes that "the function of competitive sports is not only to act as a mirror reflecting external social values, in fact it can subvert them [10]." The intrinsic value of competitive sports lies in that it provides a fair and open competition model. This model cultivates people's moral qualities of observing the rules, caring for others, respecting opponents, and fighting stubbornly, creating a competitive virtue that is different from other social values. Honor and money in competitive sports are only external values.

3.4 Fair play theory

Western sports philosophy has a lot of discussions on fair play, and works on fair play are not uncommon. Among them, the works of Simon and McNami are particularly prominent. Simon's "Fair Play: Sports Ethics" has been released in 2004. The second edition, the theory of fair play emphasizes the importance of abiding by the rules, and requires all participants to obey the constructive rules without discrimination, so as to realize the rule of competitive sports. Simon believes that the primary value of sports competition is not to win, but to meet the challenges of valuable opponents. A good game requires the cooperation of evenly matched opponents. Competitiveness is the two sides showing each other's excellence [11]. Therefore, for sports competition, winning is neither necessary nor sufficient, competitive sports is the common pursuit of excellence by both sides of the competition. Competitive sports contains intrinsic values such as respecting the opponent, following the rules, and pursuing excellence. Taking illegal drugs and using deceptive methods and discriminatory regulations are completely contrary to the inherent virtues of competitive sports.

3.5 Justice theory in competitive sports

The research on the justice of sports in the West is divided into three levels. The first is at the micro level, that is, using justice theory to discuss specific issues in competitive sports. Parker believes that improving performance in athletics through genetic reinforcement goes against the purpose of sports and the requirements of justice. The research results of Melvin and Bryant, etc. show that an increased sense of fairness and justice can reduce the occurrence of sports violence and aggressive behavior. The second is the meso level: that is, to use the theory of justice to study the competitive sports system and the development of competitive sports [12]. Mathony, Daniel, and Warren believe that sports management and training contain organizational justice content. Brooks and Althouse discussed the social justice issues of college competitive sports in their monographs. The third is the macro level: that is, to study the impact of competitive sports on social justice. Wachter believes that there is a trend that sports ethics will become a model of democracy and justice in social life. Peter J. Arnold believes that competitive sports, like science and medicine, is a valuable practice with moral content. The ethical qualities of justice, honesty, and courage can help achieve goals on the one hand, and protect them from the erosion of external interests. Schinke and Stephanie Hanrahan believe that competitive sports can enhance group and community harmony and social justice.

4. Conclusion

The research on western sports philosophy is very lively, but the research on sports philosophy in China is difficult, and the comprehensive research on sports philosophy still stays in the 1980s. To this day, Chinese sports philosophy has not formed mainstream schools and authoritative scholars. Institutional obstacles, lack of talents or other reasons can never become a permanent excuse for the backward development of Chinese sports philosophy. Currently, researchers in Western sports philosophy worry that the hegemony of natural sciences and biological sciences will lead to the marginalization of a few sports subjects, such as sports history, sports philosophy, and sports theology. Therefore, sports philosophers must not only continue to work in the traditional field of sports, but also form cross-studies with other social sciences and humanities. Human beings can't be dominated by science and technology only. Although sports and sports research have scientific and technological trends, in order to maintain the healthy and comprehensive development of human beings and prevent people from being overly alienated in the process of evolution, whether in Western or Eastern countries, sports the study of philosophy is more important than ever before.

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