



VALUES OF A SIGN IN THE THEORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF PHYSICAL CULTURE IN MATIĆ' WORK

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SUMMARY

The 80th anniversary of the birth of dr Milivoje Matic is a trigger for a reassessment of his contribution to physical culture. By individually analysing Matic's contributions in each of his works between 1961 and 1998, we come to the conclusion that in some of his publications exist sparks of "philosophical fragments", which are necessary for comprehending the author's belief that Matic has made it possible to discuss a possibility of a philosophical aspect and a constitution of the philosophy of physical culture in our country. M. Matic gives pointers which signify an event which would be prognostic on a permanent progress in our profession, in the context of education as a whole, domestically and abroad.

In this discussion, the topic of Matic's contribution to the analysis of physical education in the philosophy of physical culture, and in the context of the sign of direction in the domestic education reform, the domestic physical education reform should be observed and analysed from the aspect of transversal connections which repeatedly link deliberation of the theory and practice of physical education.

Key words: sign, progress, theory of physical culture, phylosophy of physical culture

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INTRODUCTION

Professor dr Milivoje Matic is again present at the department, which is both his and ours. It is not his first time here, but it is special. These days we mark the 80th anniversary of the birth of Milivoje Matic and a few years from his passing. After the passing of one of the biggest names in our profession, the years have felt a bit empty and confusing, but we have carried on. However, this is no longer an epoch which Matic has left us. There are very few successors of, or opponents, or even the goals he had aspired to until the last moment. However, the need to retell and analyze written work left to us by professor Matic is undoubtedly increasing daily. The professor has, with his, first and foremost, fruitful expert work and also his early passing, succeeded in leaving an embryo of that which he had strived for all his life. An interesting question is: whom has he left as his successors? Are those young students, future professors of physical education, coaches, his former students or even his colleagues? No exact answer can be given to this question.

When my esteemed colleague prof. dr Bozo Bokan gave me a call in early December and asked me whether I wanted to take part in commemorating the birth of prof. dr Milivoje Matic at Physical education theory and methodics department, I accepted the invitation with great pleasure, but also with great personal obligation to stand up to Matic's gratitude and his observation. I quote:

"My dear colleague Kebin

While listening to your presentation on 11th July 1999, one of my expert "hesitations" has turned into two new insights: (1) not only do some of my texts (apparently) contain some of what is considered to be philosophy, but also (2) it becomes obvious that you are not incompetent to give your judgement on the matter – a discovery that makes me particularly happy, considering the standard interests of our colleagues, or their (mostly) sporadic need to "peek out" beyond their (so called "narrow") fields of expertise.

signed 20th July 2000. Milivoje Matic

Why am I pointing out this particular Matic's opinion about myself? In a special monograph titled MILIVOJE BACA MATIC, subtitled Occasional research and accounts of life and work of dr Milivoje Matic, a professor at Faculty of physical education, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, year 2000, among all – encompassing, expert and, first and foremost, noble contributions, mine was also printed, titled INDICATIONS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY IN MATIC'S WORKS.

So as not to cite what my colleagues and myself have written in aforementioned monograph, I will try to shed some light on certain important facts of Matic's work which have the meaning of the VALUE OF A SIGN, which I obtained by re-reading of all his published works, which are currently in my library.

A SIGN OF DIRECTION IN CREATION OF NEW PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULA

Our education time severely lacks breathing space. Domestic education reforms, as well as in the rest of the world, are either already ongoing or are being prepared. Our reform of physical education curricula has been worked on for a few years already.

Due to the recent development of critical thinking in physical culture and physical education being reduced to "experts' presentations" of restricting application of common practices in teaching, and unsatisfactory effects of teaching itself, innovations consisted in their joint rejection. That somber mood is becoming widespread (making a fertile ground for irrationality), which leads to regression in terms of expertise and ideas. Sometimes it even results in mocking cynicism or excessive sentimentality, a halt in philosophy of expert idea of physical culture and physical education theory, irrational attacks on all kinds of existing, not yet overcome mechanisms. Plans become short term, physical education in schools – inefficient.

Due to those reasons, the purpose of expert symposia of physical culture pedagogues, especially since the year 1997, as well as efforts of experts in Republic board for physical education reform, constituted in 1998, is the continuation of critical (perhaps also creative) thinking in earlier, more prestigious periods in our profession. The aim of these symposia was to widen the research field, to open a new area of cultural communication, where the movement of experts' energy would be free. We could talk about a global view of the issues – a new, unlimited view, a new culture of physical culture and possibilities of implementing something that is more modern into our cultural, historical and authentic foundations.

These two notions (new and unlimited) haven't appeared suddenly, since huge efforts have been invested (some of our theoreticians have struggled with those their whole lives: see the works of Polic, Sepa, Leskosek, Berkovic, Matic, Ber, Zdanjski, Arunovic, Bokan, Ban D., Radojevic, Kebin, Visnjic, Zivanovic, Madic, Ivanic and others). I would especially like to accentuate Matic's contributions to the theory, who were always considered as professional guidelines by all members of the Board for reform of physical education curricula. The attempts to

completely change them, made by some so-called innovators, were doomed to fail. The need to build upon them, however, still exists.

THE QUESTION OF THE PRESENT – A SIGN IN MATIC’S THEORY RESEARCH

A question which seems to appear often in the works of Matic, is a question of the present, the contemporary: what is happening today? What is happening now? Also, what is “today”, in which we all exist and which designates the moment of things are being written. That is not a simple matter: what can, in current situation, cause a certain philosophical type decision? Is a question about the essence of reality related to determining a certain element of present which needs to be recognized, distinguished from and discovered among all others? What is worth contemplating about in the scope of the present?

In a nutshell, it seems to me that the thing that pops up in numerous Matic’s works, the question of the present as a philosophical phenomenon, which encompasses the philosopher who talks about it. This shows us that a philosopher’s questions about his or her affiliation with that present will no longer be a question about him being a part of a teaching or a tradition; it will no longer be a simple question of him being a part of a defined “we”, a kind of “we” that is related to a cultural entity specific to his or her own contemporariness.

That exact “we” becomes food for thought to every expert in physical culture and education, confirming the inability of those experts to avoid this reexamination of their particular belonging to the “we”. The philosophy of physical culture as a problematisation of a single contemporariness, as well as the expert’s reexamination of the contemporariness he belongs to and in relative to which he has to determine himself, could determine the philosophy of physical culture as a discourse of and about modernity.

Simply speaking, the question of modernity has, in classic culture, been asked from two standpoints: the standpoint of antics and the standpoint of modernity; whether it was a question of authority that should be accepted or rejected (which authority to accept, which role model to follow, etc.), whether in the shape (albeit, connected to the previous one) of value comparison; are the Old ones better than the Modern ones? Are we in the process of decadence? We see an indication of a new way of asking questions of modernity not being (longitudinal) continuation of the Old ones, but what could be called “sheerness” in relation to its own contemporariness, on one hand, to find one’s proper place in it, and on the other hand, to articulate its sense, thereby finally determining the aspect of action one is able to perform within that contemporariness.

Which is my contemporariness? What is the meaning of that contemporariness? What am I doing when I talk about that contemporariness? It seems to me that this is the essence of this new reexamination of modernity.

This is merely a guideline for research and should be examined further. We should research genealogy, not so much of modernity notion itself, but rather of modernity as a question. In any case, if I take Matic's texts as a moment when this question emerges, it goes without saying that he too is a part of a broad historical process which should be considered.

Questions which present themselves are: is there a constant progress of the human species? Is there a constant progress of some theory of physical culture? Is there a philosophy of physical culture and physical education? It should be investigated whether there is a cause of that progress. If that possibility has been established, we should demonstrate that the cause does work, and for that purpose, find an event which shows that the cause is indeed active. All in all, determining the cause will always determine only the possible consequences, and will be determinable only by the event's existence.

It is, therefore, not sufficient to follow a teleological thread which makes progress happen; from within history, an event should be isolated, that will have the significance of a sign.

A sign of what? A sign of existence of a cause, a permanent cause which has lead the human kind on the path of progress throughout our entire history. A permanent cause which must be demonstrated to have been, still is, and will continue to be an active agent in the future. Therefore, the event which will enable us to determine whether progress exists will be a sign "rememorativum, demonstrativum, prognosticum". It is necessary for the sign to demonstrate it has always existed (it is a sign which reminds us), to demonstrate that things happen in the same manner at the moment; it is an indicator which, finally, shows us that it will always happen in that manner (**a prognostic sign**). That way we can be certain the cause which makes progress possible has not been active in one specific moment, but that it guarantees an overall aspiration of the human kind as a whole to move in the direction of progress. Here is a question: is there an event going on around us which could qualify as "rememorativum, demonstrativum, prognosticum" for all the constant progress which carries the whole human kind?

After reading Matic, we can conclude – yes. Yes, an event exists which would be prognostic for the permanent progress of our profession in the context of the entire education, both domestic and abroad.

A CRITIQUE OF TEACHING THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN MATIC'S WORKS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE FUTURE - A PROGNOSTIC SIGN

The aim of our experts' efforts are to bring the structure of our education, as well as its quality, up to par with other developed countries and the documents of European institutions which deal with school systems and development of education in the world. However, the awareness of the need to introduce changes into education, in the function of monitoring of world events, is a privilege of those who possess creative ideas and the power to bring them to fruition. Systemic analyses and constant efforts in searching for improvements are the most important prerequisites for achieving better results and success. These analyses include, among other things:

- research of pedagogic practices by scientific and expert institutions;
- research of more recent theoretical insights into development processes, domestic and abroad;
- research of standards and conditions necessary for realization of teaching practice;
- research of the reports coming from supervision service;
- observations of teachers, principals and expert associates in primary and high schools;
- research related to more recent insights into European dimension in the area of education;
- improving laws related to the application of physical education curriculum in schools;
- creating conditions of information services in the processes of practicing and improvement of all physical education processes in schools;
- improving conditions for teachers' constant professional perfecting;

In the context of this approach, amendments to physical education curricula are understood to be an integral part of social transformation; therefore, they should also express important changes of the entire educational policy. That will cause significant changes in the goals, norms and structure of physical culture system in the country. The idea of changes and reforms of physical education programmes, as well as the new conceptual approach, constitute "the middle road". It has the goal of maintaining the existing system and attempting to introduce some of the possible, radical changes. Those are the basic options in

education planning (besides “the third road”, which represents a gradual approach to a new transformation). Has Matic been writing about all of these subjects? Yes. But, has he given a theoretical frame for the approach to all of them? YES.

GOING TOWARDS SOLVING THEORETIC AND PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

Previously listed suggestions, present in Matic’s works, are emphasized in order to approach the problems which physical education experts should solve as a part of the reform.

Which problems shall we single out as the most important ones, what causes them and

how can they be solved? I would look back to our theory, i.e. the theory of physical education.

“Theories can, strictly speaking, be differentiated by being related, in their structure, to a possible liberation or not”.¹ Every theory interested in liberation and constituted with emancipatory interest, must aspire to a double reflection: about its origin and its application. Regarding the theory of teaching and practice of physical education, my critical approach to its reevaluation may have, above all, three aspects.

The first aspect is a necessary analysis of the society and faithfulness to sociocultural research of moments in which programme bases were made, on which this theory of physical education has been founded, as well as the need to consider differentiating theoretical, technical and political issues and knowledge offered in such a theory.

The second aspect of critical reevaluation of the physical education teaching theory and practice demands a clear relationship to its creators, i.e. their overall findings, as well as their interests in the moment of creation of the teaching theory and practice.

The third aspect has a methodological character. We can consider by which actions the researched practice has emerged from that theory, i.e. what scientific results were obtained and have they confirmed or disproved the value of the theory.

¹ *Jirgen Habermas TEORIJA | PRAKSA* Socijalnofilozofske studije Bigz, 1980. str.5

The consequences of this reexamination may be:

1. restoration of the existing theory;
2. its renaissance or
3. its reconstruction or
4. a complete rejection and a construction of a completely new theory.

Intellectual, esthetic, moral, ethical and physical education in our schools is most often individually and institutionally corrupt. It is twisted by its declarative character, instead of critically evaluating the things which have been said and done. If a constitution would take place of our new teaching theory and practice of physical education, a revision of our curricula would certainly take place, along with critical selection and application of new and fresher potentials, which are present in foreign countries' theories. At this point we must point out the need to reread all Matic's written works, where, undoubtedly, exist more than adequate guidelines to the way of a complete analytical approach to physical education theory and practice in our country. Furthermore, we should strongly emphasize the efforts of prof. dr Boza Bokan from the faculty for sport and physical education in Belgrade, who has, during the last few years, provided us with extraordinarily valuable theoretical contributions to these issues, as well as contributions from members of expert commissions for the reform of physical education and education in general.

CONCLUSION

After individually analysing every Matic's contribution to physical culture in all of his works 1961-1998, I can conclude that in some of them exist sparks of "philosophical particles" necessary for understanding the agreement that Matic has significantly contributed to the conversation about the possibility of philosophical view and constitution of philosophy of physical culture in our country. It is certain that a single general philosophy of physical culture would possess Matic's understanding/interpretation (of what), which was conceived on the basis of socio - philosophical and above all humane anthropological views. Immune to deviations to the "ultra-left" and "ultra-right", to those with dogmatic-Marxist, as well as anarchoid leanings, equally adverse to activistic euphoria and theoretical resignation, true to his emancipatory inclinations, but not a prisoner of the freedom cult. Matic was predestined to have a realistic view of man's relations in his spiritual and sociocultural environment. He is systematic, reasonable and nuanced in his view of modern age.

However, I should point out that, above all, there is a lack of clarity regarding status of the branch itself. Namely, while theory texts unequivocally reveal Matic's fundamental ideo-theoretical, expert and scientific position, he is still not fully determined about an issue of branch status of the philosophy of physical culture. In a long line of his expert observations, Matic demonstrates his awareness of the difficulties regarding philosophical and theoretical foundation of the programme of firmly consistent physical culture theory, which must be built on reliable foundations of well-established scientific and social resources, in order to have "the role of a specific 'crystallisation' of professional knowledge, professional thoughts in overall physical culture – not to say its 'highest truth' or an 'expert catechesis' of sorts".²

I link my critical attitude to a notion of crisis which grips countries in transition, as well as our country, its comprehension and solution. Because only when general societal strategical determinations appear, it is possible to stop the separation of theory and practice. Only then the standpoint of critics can count on a unity of theoretical and practical mind, a theoretical insight and practical actions.

When discussing the topic of Matic's contribution to the analysis of physical education in the philosophy of physical culture, and in the context of the sign of direction in the domestic education reform, the domestic physical education reform should be observed and analysed from the aspect of transversal connections which repeatedly link deliberation of the theory and practice of physical education.

Modern theoreticians' opinion about scientific and political significance of the decision theory is that systems of values can no longer be considered stable for long periods of time. One's wishes depend on what one can make possible, while at the same time, what should be made possible depends on one's wishes. Aims and functions of usefulness are by no means independent factors. They are in correlation with the extent of the decision making. Conception about values can be manipulated within wide borders. In the view of the insecurity of future alternative developments, the desire establish inflexible decision making models which give long term strategy, is hopeless.

This Rittel's message warns us, in a way, that, while setting up strategic tenets of physical education curricula, we should not be slaves to certain demands which have existed here for many decades and are being reintroduced.

² Matic, M: Opšta teorija fizičke kulture, Beograd, FFV. str. 13

I therefore believe that every direction of a theory and values contained in it, belong to their own epoch. Regrettable as it may be, Matic's struggle for the values of physical education and physical culture is, in practice, losing ground. Have the Matic's time and his struggle come to a close? I would say no, but new writers and those who uphold his vision, are facing new challenges. Those new challenges will include writing what Matic has begun, THE INTRODUCTION INTO THE HISTORY OF PHYSICAL CULTURE, ethics of physical culture, aesthetics of physical culture, axiology of physical culture. It is this kind of fundamental research that we are missing today in our profession. Matic made good progress, which we can establish by reading his prognostic work. So, in which direction to go after Matic, in a world without Matic? First, let us not become Matic's epigons, but critically minded researchers. A competition has been opened for publications. I expect entries to be presented in the year 2016 on this kind of gathering, as a component of this department's work. A compulsory item on the agenda: EXPERT DISCUSSIONS ON A GIVEN TOPIC. Topic: complete works of Milivoje Matic. Editor: Faculty of sport and physical education, University of Belgrade, 2016.

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ВРЕДНОСТИ ЗНАКА У ТЕОРИЈИ И ФИЛОЗОФИЈИ ФИЗИЧКЕ КУЛТУРЕ У МАТИЋЕВОМ ОПУСУ

САЖЕТАК

Повод за поновно анализирање доприноса физичкој култури у нас је 80. година од рођења др Миливоја Матића. Анализирајући појединачно Матићев допринос физичкој култури у сваком његовом раду од 1961. године до 1998. год. долази се до закључка да се у појединим радовима налазе и искре „филозофских мрвица“ неопходне за разумевање ауторовог уверења да је Матић у знатној мери учинио да се може говорити о могућности филозофског погледа и конституисања филозофије физичке културе код нас .М. Матић даје смернице које су знакови да постоји догађање које би било прогностичко за стални напредак наше струке у контексту целокупног образовања код нас и у свету.

У овој расправи, Матићев допринос промишљању физичког васпитања у контексту филозофије физичке културе и у контексту знака правца реформе у образовању – реформе наставе физичког васпитања код нас , треба сагледати и анализирати пре свега са аспекта попречних веза које вишеструко повезују разматрање теорије и праксе физичког васпитања.

Кључне речи: знак,напредак, теорија физичке културе, филозофија физичке културе

ЗНАЧЕНИЕ ПРИЗНАКА В ТЕОРИИ И ФИЛОСОФИИ ФИЗИЧЕСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ В ТРУДАХ МАТИЧА

АННОТАЦИЯ

80-я годовщина со дня рождения доктора Милюя Матича стала спусковым механизмом для переоценки его вклада в развитие физической культуры. Отдельно анализируя вклад Матича в каждой из его работ в период между 1961 и 1998 годами, мы приходим к выводу, что в некоторых его публикациях существуют искры “философских фрагментов”, которые необходимы для понимания творчества автора: Матич сделал возможным обсуждение философского аспекта и сущности философии физической культуры в нашей стране. М. Матич выводит признаки, указывающие на факты, свидетельствующие о постоянном прогрессе в нашей профессии, в контексте образования в целом, как внутри страны, так и за рубежом.

В этой дискуссии, тема вклада Матича в анализ физического воспитания в философии физической культуры в контексте признаков происходящей реформы образования, отечественного физического воспитания должна быть отмечена и проанализирована в аспекте поперечных связей, на которые постоянно ссылаются при обсуждении вопросов теории и практики физического воспитания.

Ключевые слова: признак, прогресс, теория физической культуры, философия физической культуры.

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