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On the relationship between sport and dream

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ABSTRACT

Sport and dream have more in common than one would generally think. The author develops on the basis of a psychological analysis of the long distance run as well as of the deep snow skiing, the thesis that sporting actions are able to put us into a mental-state analog to the dream-state. The sporting actions in the waking state are regulated by the mechanisms of the dream for a short time. The transformation of the mental-state demonstrates how it can come to the experience of happy moments in sport.

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Simply graceful motion

Sport has a great appeal. Sport activities have fascinated mankind since the beginning of time. Today, sport has become a global issue and generates enthusiasm throughout the world. A few figures are enough to demonstrate the fascination surrounding this phenomenon. The 1998 Football World Cup in France attracted a total of 23.49 million spectators in Germany alone, reflecting a market share of 70%. Outstanding sport events like Football World Cup Finals draw more than 2 billion spectators to the TV screen. Furthermore, an average of 10 to 12 million people follow Formula One races regularly on TV. But exotic sport disciplines seem to appeal to our spirits as well the World Amateur Championship in Latin-American Dancing, for example, reached 1.6 million viewers-slightly more than the French Open Tennis Final between Moja and Corretja (1.59 million) and somewhat less than the curling competition between Canada and Denmark during the 1998 Olympic Games.[1] If one looks at the "extrinsic" form of the various sport disciplines from a more detached perspective, the first thing one notices is the often striking banality of the game. In football, 22 men endeavour to put "something round into something square", whereby they are only allowed to kick the round thing with their legs.[2] In handball it is just the opposite. Kicking the ball with one's feet is strictly against the rules of the game. In addition, everything in handball is a bit smaller, e.g. the ball, the goal and the play-

1 All the data refer to viewers in the whole of Germany. Source: UFA (1998) and Marlovits & Mai (1998).

2 This is also the title of Schümann's new book (2001) about the history of the Bundesliga in Germany "Das Runde muß in das Eckige" ("The round thing goes in the square thing").

ing area. Nevertheless, the aim here is the same: to get the round thing into the square thing. In the case of basketball, the challenge is to drop the ball into the frame. Here the frame is something round which is only just big enough for the ball being played to fit into.

In all three sport disciplines the aim is to manoevre a round ball, while complying with specific game rules, into a target area which is marked by a frame. Other sport disciplines, too, from a simplified perspective, reveal themselves as banal activities. Downhill skiing is about getting "downhill" fast; in slalom skiing, sticks present obstacles to be avoided on the way down into the valley. In Formula One, racing cars drive as fast as possible round circular or oval courses. The Nascar Series in North America reduces the already quite modest "variety" of curves in Formula One racing down to a simple oval form. Here, everything revolves around the simple concept of racing round in circles.

And yet, there is something in these simple movements which can keep us spellbound. Moreover, our interest is not satisfied just by watching. On the contrary, we are just as fascinated by the active exercising of sport-specific movements. Football is a passion, as Günther Netzer once claimed. Apparently there is more to sport than the banal motions would lead one to believe. Whether we just watch it or take an active part in it, the banal-but-graceful motions of sport move our souls.

Sport and dream

But what has sport to do with dream? A small digression will lead us to the answer. According to morphological psychology, we enter into various states of mind while dealing with reality. Two basic types can be defined:

In addition to the familiar daytime-state of behaviour and experience there is a kind of dreamstate in which psychological relationships are arranged in a strangely different way. We dream strange and incomprehensible things. In his interpretation of dreams, Freud views dreams as psychologically relevant phenomena and thus refers to exactly this relationship. Picking up on Freud's developments in psychology, Salber (1997) characterises the situation as follows: "The special thing about the dream-state is our astonishment – we are spellbound by transformation. This dream-state sustains itself by abandoning certain abutments. No certainty, no decisiveness, no command of a unifying explanation, no power to change the sphere of influence physically."

From this perspective, sport seems to be the opposite of dreaming. In sport, we would say, decisiveness, command and influence to change and determine things are dominant aspects. For sportsmen and sportswomen, indecisiveness or unachievability represent "a horror". Decisive action is very evident among professional sportsmen, sportswomen and trainers. The limits of the achievable are extended by every possible means available, even the use of the ritualistic incantanations of so-called motivation trainers.

In view of what we have already said, it may be surprising that we now propose the following hypothesis: sport can put us into a mental state which is related to the dream-state – despite all the differences. The similarities and differences will be explained and analysed in greater detail below. Our hope is to arrive at a deeper understanding of the characteristic state which can be induced by practising sport.

We will use two examples to clarify what we mean with the ”sport-state”, in terms of the features by which it can be described and where the specific quality of its structure as a form of the everyday-state can be seen. Firstly, a condensed, idealised description of a study of skiing in deep powder snow will be presented (Marlovits 2000). The second example will deal with the theme "long-distance running". Here, the focus will be on an individual case study, using a longer sequence from an interview regarding events and experiences during a run through the woods. Subsequently, both decriptions will serve as the basic material

from which, in several stages, the definition of the sport-state and its relationship to the dream-state will be developed.

Method

Methodologically, the investigations were based on a qualitive approach. For each group of themes, 12 psychological in-depth interviews and 12 experiential descriptions were conducted and analysed according to the evaluation principles of morphological psychology (Fitzek 1999; Marlovits, 2000). In the course of the investigations, one particular problem arose which will be mentioned separately here. If one encourages an interviewee to describe his or her sport activity, one usually receives a description of the activity strongly oriented to the course of action. It seems to be almost impossible to get more experiential descriptions out of the interviewee. The mere attempt to elicit what is going on inside a pedestrian's head seems to bring description as a method to "insurmountable limits" (Schönhammer, 1991, 226). For this reason, Schönhammer recommends collecting the data *retrospectively*, i.e. detached from the act of the sport activity. The psychological in-depth interview represents such an approach. It was therefore possible through extended interviews lasting over two hours to get an insight into the sportman's or woman's emotions.

Deep snow skiing

At the beginning you stand in front of the white, glistening deep snow slope. It seems to be absolutely "untouched"3 and "virginal", just waiting to be skied on, to be "taken". You notice a slight feeling of excitement. You glide with an attentive eye over the smooth and glistening surface, trying to anticipate the path of the first swings, just like a glance down to the end of the slope strives to hold on to an inner picture of the general direction of the descent. You search for landmarks such as rocks and hilltops, to make the slope more familiar and to allow you to divide up the various sections and to get oriented.

With a sudden movement, you turn the skis towards the valley and you start moving. You engage the first two or three metres cautiously, using your legs to feel the snow's condition. Gently you press the skis in a good middle position into the soft surface, it gives way and you wait for the springy response of the deep snow layer. This tells you how wet or powdery the snow is, and how easy or difficult it can be skied. Then an inner "ready and hop" begins, expressed in a first, still cautious swing in which you pulp the skis to raise them from the deep snow. Scarcely out of the snow, the skis sink back into the ground again, this time on the other side. The skis now push decisively and powerfully into the white glitter, throwing the first plumes of powder snow up towards your body. You set the next swing, now decisively and with a feeling of security, of almost complete trust in the snow's capacity to bear your weight. The snow cushions the forceful submergence softly and with a slight delay, letting you know exactly how deep you can penetrate it, at which depth it provides grip and with gentle resilience leads you back up and out of it again.

As you progressively gain confidence, the swings change from the initial hestitation into a momentous movement downwards. You are wrapped and enshrouded in plumes of snow, soft as velvet and glittering. With every up and down, every to and fro of each individual swing, your spirit is filled with a lightness which spreads out until it totally engulfs you. Only this swing counts and after that the next one. With each swing the rhythm of your motions intensifies and you begin increasingly to abandon yourself to the rhythm. You experience yourself in the here and now, you are completely present. And suddenly, without you knowing from where or how, the sensation of floating and lightness intensifies into a feeling of joyous freedom which floods through your whole body. "It's not me doing the skiing, I am being skied, although I am setting each swing myself." You are completely up and down and to and fro, carried by the rhythm of the swings, saturated with a feeling of

3 "..." quotations represent - unless marked otherwise - original citations from the interviews, translated from German into English.

joyous freedom. This moment is something you want to hold on to, but you can't.

With the last swing, which softly finds its end in the deep snow, an enthusiastic cry of joy starts to develop, finding its way into the air, abandoning any kind of noble reserve. With a single glance back at the trail you have left behind you and its regular rhythm, you emerge from your total immersion in the motion and see, proudly but now with detachment, the visible rhythm as "my track".

Long-distance running

A woman, 28 years old, who runs four times a week (3x90min.;1x120min.) describes her typical behaviour and experiences before, during and after a run. Completely loaded down with the ballast of her working day, she first of all tries to "switch off" by turning on the TV. But this doesn't seem to be an effective means, for most of the time "things still keep on spinning round in my head". The decision to go for a run and, especially, to change her clothes is the real turning point. Out of her work clothes, "now it's time for my running gear, my lovely, comfortable running gear".

The run begins. She leaves the house, and for a while passes through canyon-like streets. Then she dives into the forest, experiencing this as pure liberation. There is a self-evident understanding when she meets other runners. They greet each other with a discrete nod, sometimes also with a non-committal "Hello". She feels a bond with the other runners, as if they were a "community", one in which there are almost no differences, in which professions are irrelevant, because all of them "are basically in the same state" as her. "We are all more or less on the same level."

At the start, because of all the inner tension, she usually runs too fast. Losing her breath forces her to slacken her pace. Gaining self-control she re-focuses on herself, her breathing and her pace. "At the beginning, it is usually hard, because you are mentally still somewhere else." As the run continues, the conditions change. The distance to the ballast of her daily life increases. "And just when you realise that you have found your rhythm and are running at a particular pace that feels good, and that your breathing is coming naturally and you are starting to sweat, you reach the point where you are a bit more involved in the nature around you and less in your own thoughts. Then comes the point where you can start thinking about other things as well. Previous runs, childhood memories start coming up, or future plans and situations where you may have been surrounded by nature, where it was also very nice. And then you just run and run."

Lost in thought for most of the time, she keeps on running. Only occasionally is she distracted from this state by other runners, or by a feeling of tiredness or other physical sensations. But this does not mean that she remains distracted. On the contrary, these brief impressions lead to new topics which "pass through your head" and characterise the running until the next distraction comes along.

This aimless state of going-with-the-flow sometimes intensifies into the experience of a moment of pure joy. "Then I also try to get to the point where I can say: I am right here and not at work anymore. Work is in the past and I am right here in this present moment. And if you really manage to get to this point, you feel a kind of joy, when you really manage to be completely in the moment, in the present, or the greatest moment is when you stop thinking altogether. Even if it is only for three seconds. That's really the best of all."

Once she has experienced this moment of joy, various directions of experience may follow. Sometimes, the old thoughts come back to mind, but with the difference that she now has "a bit more distance" to the thoughts that burdened her before. "Depending on how much stress I have been under, I need at least two hours of running to get rid of it all completely. Otherwise one and a half hours." At the end, she runs home, satisfied, looking forward to a shower and proud of herself at having accomplished the distance, feeling "dead tired, really sweaty and very good".

The imminent

It is clear from these two examples – and the runner even says it explicitly – how the

mental state changes during sport activity. Sometimes quickly, but always fundamentally. In both deep snow skiing and long-distance running a mental transition can develop, intensify and culminate in a moment of joy. Past and future are connected with the here and now (momentarisation). Our preoccupation with ourselves and our daily lives disappears, sometimes completely, for a moment, "Even if it is only for three seconds. That's really the best of all." The "abutments", the forces of the working day, which determine, restrict and pressurise our actions, lose their influence. They are neutralised – just like the runner herself – in the physical sensation of a harmonious, total motion.

Academic sport psychology usually looks for answers to questions of the effect of sport activity[4] on the psyche on a psychophysiological level ("endorphine hypothesis") or in terms of personality psychology. It tends to ignore the transformation of the current state of behaviour and experience. And thus the question goes unanswered as to how a simple movement like a long and monotonous run can have such influence on the complexity of a state of mind.

Let us continue with our description of the phenomenon. Everything becomes easier, even the movements themselves (the swinging and the running). In addition, through performance of the movement the action becomes simplified and centred on one single context. Oppositional tendencies are – once the skiing or running is going well – neutralised for a short time. One feels that one is in a sort of harmonious motion, directly connected with the world. "It comes closer to you, you get closer to it." Distinct borders to the world around one lose their clarity.

"Imminent" refers to a remodelling of experience towards a reduction of difference (simplification, momentarisation). Self and the world come closer together. Physical movement is accompanied by a sensitive experiencing and understanding of the world. Analytical thinking and perception are gradually excluded from this "imminent" state of mind. Only by loosening the structure of the established can a different quality (of flow) evolve in the mental state. If the simplification and reduction of the difference between the world and self is successful, then the seconds in which this is accomplished are the "best of all". They bring joy.

Temporary neutralisation of resistance

In a second step, we can now deal more closely with the structural order and relativity of the sport state of mind. In deep snow skiing, the skier faces the deep snow slope. The skier even actually explicitly acknowledges the "oppositionality" of the slope by taking in landmarks (trees, hilltops and rocks) as orientation points. The testing nature of the first swings is also based on the oppositional nature of the snow and its condition (soft, hard, wet, dry). In running, it is breathing difficulties, the ballast of the working day, tired legs, or impressions of the surroundings which may be experienced as something in opposition to the "community of direction" (Straus, 1956). Salber characterises daily working life in terms of its "abutments", which are there to stabilise our actions and decisions. But if they burden us more than they stabilise us, they become a nuisance. We want to get rid of them by running away or skiing away for a short while. But the abutments of our daily working lives cannot be cleared away for long. Indeed we need them, since they also represent the condition for the opportunity to change ourselves into something new. It is the abutments themselves which give our spirits the chance to feel where they are right now, in what state they are, and what they are driven by.

Sport, then, is how we take action against the resistance of the oppositional.

4 Cf. in this respect the survey article on the current state of research of endurance sport by Stoll (2001). Cf. also the descriptions of the influence of sport motions on the psychological state of mind in the publications of Allmer (1995), Aufmuth (1986), Cath, Kahn & Cobb (1980), Csikszentmihaly (1985; 1995), Schönhammer (1991), Semler (1994), von Weizsäcker (1968).

Our runner, at least, says as much. At the beginning of the run, this resistance opposes with all its might one's attempt to get started. This is why getting started is sometimes so hard. The listlessness experienced at this point probably results from the fact that, if one decides to run, the comfort of the resistance, and the supportive orientation it provides, must be abandoned. Everyone knows that feeling of indecisive to-ing and fro-ing between wanting to run and not being in the mood for running. The first thing that has to be abandoned when the decision to run is taken is the stability and orientation provided by the abutments of daily working life.

As our female runner says in the interview, getting started with the run is often very hard. But as the run gets going, the effort slowly changes into something different. With every step, the ballast of the working day is put at a greater distance. With every step one claims a part of the oppositional and puts it through a transition into the co-existent. This development is primarily evident in physical moments. Breathing stops being a struggle, it "comes naturally". One starts to sweat. One runs at a steady pace and so finds one's rhythm.

Rhythmic movement has its own special role in the generation of the imminent state of mind. It becomes the means to a unity of feeling and motion (Marlovits 2001), or to a “state beyond-subject-and-object” (Heubach 1986, 165). This can also be seen in deep snow skiing. At the beginning, skier and slope stand in opposition to each other, then become unified through the rhythmic swings. The world loses its resistant oppositionality. This is evident in the fact that, while skiing downhill, the landmarks of the slope which were picked out at the beginning for orientation lose their importance. And at the same time, the subjectively perceived self loses its prominence. This is most obvious in the experience of a change from an active to a passive role. "It's not me doing the skiing, I am being skied", just like in a dream.

For our female long-distance runner, the moment of greatest intensity arises when she stops "thinking", i.e. when thinking as recognition, as a form of documentation, of determination and categorisation is reduced in its function or becomes temporarily ineffective. Paradoxically, one is doing the running and "is being run" at the same time. Through such a change, the entire relationship between self and the world alters. According to Straus, what is happening is a transition from a gnostic to an emotive mode.

In the transition of mode to the emotive, the objective is robbed of its oppositionality and becomes co-existent. This is very evident when the runner talks about "lovely, comfortable running gear". The clothing's material properties alone encourage her to make a particular change to her state of mind. Even if the running shoes pinch here or there at the start of the run, they soon mould like a second skin and lose their otherness as the run progresses. As far as they permit, they are included in the development of the experience, and the change in the state of mind can be charted against the diminishing degree of their oppositionality. The condition for being able to change and modulate the state of mind is mental flexibility itself. Spirit is motion (Salber 1983).

Soul stretching – motion as a way to the imminent

Sport activities provide the spirit with a means to change itself. If, before doing sport, one feels "down" or flattened by "daily ballast", once the sport activity begins one's mental state changes to a new quality. "After running I always feel good". The total modulation and (hands-on) manipulation of the state of mind is a promise, although in the context of the constraints and strictures of disagreeable daily working life it is first experienced as a temptation. The time between starting and finishing sport is a temporary world of wilfulness. A temporary world with a will of its own but also a world in which one is – thoroughly wilfully – preoccupied with oneself. "I always make time for my runs, no matter what happens". Deep snow skiing becomes a

moment of wonderful experience in which self and the world are in harmonious motion. Like in a daydream, many single moments relate to each other in an extraordinary way. Things are so harmonious that one could literally "take off".

This is also reported in the descriptions of deep snow skiing and long-distance running. The world, the otherness, which was previously perceived as oppositional is transformed, through the rhythmic perpetuation of body movements, into a mutual order, a co-existence. Rhythm plays a key role in both examples, becoming a medium for the soul. It is through rhythm that the specific state of the imminent develops.[5] In deep snow skiing, one abandons oneself totally to the swinging movement, which, together with the deep snow slope above, becomes a single, unified force. In the case of running, a greater space develops beyond one's own sphere of influence, one in which the oncoming world, in the form of other runners, can be experienced as "community". The oppositionality of the world is, so to speak, "run off". Self and the world become one through the motion without the self being completely dissolved. Here, the imminent state of mind consists of "self" and "other" at the same time, but in such a way that the other is experienced as a sort of nice brotherliness.

The constant repetition of the same movement (rhythmicisation) also confronts the constraints and partiality of our finite temporary world with the quality of the infinite moment, which is often characterised as a moment of joy. This might make it easier to understand the obsessiveness to which many are driven by their chosen sport discipline. Isn't joy the thing we are all chasing after?

Command and subordination

This brings us to the final step in our argumentation. Here, the question concerns the forms through which one can generate these moments of joy. It has already been made clear several times that the imminent state of mind is something which is brought into being, which is produced. The deep snow skiing and long-distance running examples show that something must exist to provide the spirit with a framework of action. Here, command over the action is of great importance. In deep snow skiing, the framework is created through command over the swinging movement through the snow (only good skiers dare to ski in deep snow). In the case of running, the temporary world takes its framework from knowledge of the routes one can use for the run. "I know every single root along my circuit." The simplicity of the running movement automatically provides one with command. The key factor in both examples is the framework of the action, which provides the state of mind with enough space to unfold. This happens through the perpetuated motion, which helps to transform one state of mind into another. This is evident in the deep snow skiing example when the skiing changes from cautious, testing motions into a confident flow. In running, the transition comes when one finds one's own rhythm and all the images start to flow through one's mind.

It is through intensification of command of the swings and the running that a change in mode arises which paradoxically inverts itself into subordination. The turbulence of the transformational reality experiences a sort of treatment through the sport activity. By intensifying a skill and pushing it to its extremes, a new form of behaviour and experience is opened up which primarily consists of a simplification or a reduction of the state of mind to a less complex structure. Heubach (1986) calls it a partial, temporary regression or a "re-totalisation of the mind". Blothner (1993,89) is referring to such a concept in his analysis of the "moment of joy" when he typifies it as a special "transition to the whole". In sport

5 Erikson (1961,74) has already pointed out the significance of rhythm as a medium which creates unity and order. Its contrary, identity-dissolving effect has been elaborated by Rene Spitz (1924) in his analysis of rhythm.

this happens, strangely, through an increase of what characterises the essence of sport activity, namely command.

Perhaps this sheds a new light on the so-called "baser instincts" which are always referred to to characterise those counterproductive feelings of listlessness and lack of motivation which work against a desire to go, for example, for a run. At first glance it would seems as if one merely wanted to avoid all the effort and torment, preferring, say, to stay in bed longer in the morning. But a closer look reveals that there is something else going on. The runner is afraid of giving up the cultivated daytime state of mind for the sake of a "regressive" form of the imminent. What one is trying to avoid is not so much the hardship of the run itself, but the de-cultivational effort which is needed to modulate the state of mind towards the imminent. Ironically, it is those "baser instincts" in their biological bipolarity which keeps a sharp eye on the degree of cultivation achieved.

Sport, dream and Freud

At the end of our deliberations, we return to the question of the interplay of day-sport-dream. Freud sees dreams as an entirely valid act of the soul with a meaning of their own. The mind never stop moving. It goes on being busy with itself even when we are asleep. The stuff our dreams are made of consists of unfinished business, the residues of daily life and infantile desires, the "evergreens" of our souls. From this, Freud (1900) elaborated the thesis of the wish-fulfilment tendency of dreams. Infantile desires are presented in dreams as if they were fulfilled. Because they process the residues of the day's experiences, dreams are somewhat like a recycling plant of the soul.

Now we can ascribe similar qualities to sport and its influence on our souls. Certainly, many sportsmen and sportswomen report a physical sense of well-being which arises during or at the latest after sport activities. Although one is physically exhausted, one feels elated. For example, after a longer run, our female runner feels "dead tired, really sweaty and very good". In sport, an effect can arise similar to that which happens in dreams, but under different mental conditions. In dreams, we do not notice the re-totalisation process. Without analysis, the deeper meaning of our dreams usually remains hidden. In running, this happens in a quality of perception which is directly focused on the physical. Our example of the female runner shows how the residues of the day (ballast, job) are processed and treated. But this does not happen in an analogous way to our daily state of mind, through getting down to things, keeping at them or asserting one's will. On the contrary, we let go, we stop, we allow things to happen – all characteristics which are more related to dreaming or to daydreaming.

Moreover, in some behaviour patterns of sportsmen and sportswomen a tendency can clearly be identified towards wanting to fulfil infantile wishes like omnipotence, eradication and sibling rivalry. In contrast to dreams, sport presents these things in concrete rather than imaginary images. Instead of a secondary processing which, in dreams, recurrently reprocesses things which are too obvious, sport applies rules which must be obeyed by all. These regulate infantile notions in a way that facilitates partial fulfilment under cultivated conditions. At the same time they are also guilty of a bit of "distortion" – they present sport activities in such a way that on first inspection there seem to be almost no signs of anything disreputable. If one observes the body language of footballers when they celebrate a goal, one could identify homosexual like patterns of behaviour which one would otherwise place in other settings. One can see the same sort of thing in some forms of passion for sport which are characterised by self torture or obsessive involvement. Like in dreams, evoking the imminent state of mind makes partial regression possible.

This brings us to further forms of processing of dreams (dream-work). In Freud's view, these include, in addition to the already-mentioned secondary processing, primarily processes of compression, relocation and

representation in images. All of these are subconscious forms of processing of preconscious thoughts. As the analysis of deep snow skiing and long-distance running shows, relocation (of the rhythm) and compression (of everything into a unified motion) are clearly discernable in the processing of the oppositional through the rhythmic motion. The entire mental transformational reality is shifted to a rhythmic movement and is compressed therein. This provides the soul with free space in which a moment of joy or an image can develop which – for example while running or dreaming – arises and then disappears again. Interestingly, in sport, the hallucinatory space of the mind is created through movement, whereas, as we all know, in dreams this is achieved through deactivation of the motoric system.

Day- sport- dream

If we look at sport activities under the aspect of shaping behaviour and experience, peculiarities of a transitionary state of mind emerge. In the recurrent steps of a run, a transition is developed from here to there. At the same time, this rhythm first creates an inbetween (the steps), a transition.

Not only dreams, but also sport must be understood as an separate state of mind with a meaning of its own. Like dreams, sport puts us into a different (but not oppositional) world. The states of mind of dreams and sport have that momentary imminence of experience in common. Just as one experiences oneself imminently in a dream, self-experience in sport is imminent and direct (realisation, momentarisation).

As the analysis of both forms of movement investigated have shown, experience is intensified in the soul, taking it to the extremes and simplifying it at the same time. Salber speaks of such an intensification in relation to the characterisation of dream processes: "Dreams shape the turbulence of transformational reality through intensification of its moving images. Intensification is extremism and simplification" (1997,73). Or elsewhere: "The dream state favours the intensification tendencies of the soul" (74). Disambiguity and undifferentiation are forms of simplification which were used, at the beginning, to characterised the imminent state of mind. The state of mind takes on extreme qualities under intoxication or in moments of pure joy. One could almost speak of a "triumph of the subconscious" (Schulte, 2001,98).

A further common feature shared by the states of mind of dreams and sport can be observed in the characteristic of dissolution of resistance. As we have demonstrated, movement makes "becoming imminent" possible. Former resistance dissolves in the (rhythmic) motion and is transformed into co-existence. The quality of the oppositional is explicitly characterized by Salber as constitutive to dreams. As already mentioned, he characterises daily working life in terms of abutments. The dream state distinguishes itself by "switching off many familiar daytime abutments. ... As soon as we start relying more on these abutments and dealing with the intensifications in other ways, the dream-state stops being able to sustain itself and transforms into other (daytime) states." (1997, 78) States of mind in dream and sport share a similar basic structure; the avenues of access differ. For the dream-state, it is through deactivation of the motoric system. For the sport-state, it is through acceleration of the motoric system achieved by means of rhythmic motion.

Dreams put the mind into a state over which it has no command; "no distinct meaning, no decisiveness, no security, no tangible way of changing the situation" (Salber, 1997, 74) are available to the dreamer. The daytime-state seduces us with the exact opposite: having power, being purposeful, being able to change things, being or making sure of things, clear units of meaning. This is why a dream seems like a "miraculous thing" from the perspective of the daytime-state.

The beauty of the imminent state of mind generated by sport is that, paradoxically, it creates conditions in the daytime-state

which normally apply in the dream-state. And, to emphasise the strangeness of this construct even more, this is accomplished through intensification of the very medium which is normally seen as the most reliable form of maintaining command, namely sport-specific activity. This might explain the large number of reports by runners about daydream-like states of mind during long runs.

This construct draws our attention to a further psychological function of sport. Through modulation of the mind towards a daydream-like state, it helps our spirits to overcome transitional problems. Each night the mind faces the task of abandoning its strategies of maintaining command so that we can sleep. Sport activities manage to achieve this in the context of the daytime-state, and the paradox is that they do this by increasing command. ■

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