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## BODY AND SPORTS IN THE PERIOD OF MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE

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### ABSTRACT

Human; Since then, attitudes and perceptions towards his body showed positive or negative changes due to various reasons. While the human body was ornamented and pampered in some periods, in some periods it was considered as a malevolent object to be purified by being restricted and starved. The medieval period was also a period in which negative feelings and thoughts were developed against the human body. In the Renaissance period, positive thoughts develop against the bed. The proportions of the human body have been drawn by important figures of the period such as Dürer and Leonardo Da Vinci. The aim of this study, the determine perception of body and sport in European society during the Middle Ages and Renaissance period. In this study, a screening method was used. At the end of the study, In the Middle Ages it was determined that body and sport were cursed and sinful in the western society. Besides, In the Renaissance period, it was determined that positive developments in body sensibility and sport perception in western society.

**Keywords:** Medieval, Renaissance, Body and Sport.

## INTRODUCTION

When Antiquity which was named as Ancient Greece was observed generally, it can be seen that body was canonized and blessed extremely. In Ancient Greece, architects and artists drew the human body as naked on several things. Olympic games which were held between B.C. 776 and A.D. 394 years proved that human body had a sacred meaning (Şişman, 2006: 20-21). Greeks made physical and spiritual education together which purposed to lead human to perfection. Ecclesiastics played an important role in developing Gymnastics in Ancient Greece. According to Ecclesiastics; gymnastic is required to train body to Thank Gods and shape it the way they like (Afyon and Tunç, 1997: 31-32).

In ancient Greece considered exercise as a means in order to have an aesthetic and excellent body. Therefore they included exercise in their education programmes. Greeks handed their casual work load over slaves and made an effort to improve their cultures and bodies (Gillet, 1975: 25-26). In Ancient Greece people used to worship the beauty. Therefore they gave an importance to exercise that contributes to beautify their bodies (Aşir, 1938: 6). One of the most important patterns exposing the importance given to exercise in Ancient Greece was the thought of Aristoteles. Aristoteles described the importance of exercise as "Physical education should come first than spiritual education. Physical education should be right after basic needs and mindfulness education should come after all of these. We train our habits for mind, and train body for spirits" (Davidson, 2008: 183).

## METHOD

This research were structured within the frame of qualitative research models and different methods were used as well. Research was carried out with "general survey model" which aims to identify a case happened or existed in the past or happening now the way it used to be or the way it is now, and "historical research method" which evaluated through searching related publications and resources by researcher with the purpose of learning what was happening and the developments of incidents happened in the past (Arılı & Nazik, 2004).

Historical research method consist of investigating, interpreting and translating (if it is in a foreign language) the books, reports, files, unpublished files, reports in archives, things, and finding out, reading, investigating and recording related to every record, report, things, tools etc (Arıkan, 1995).

## Body

Perceptions and attitudes of human towards their body have shown several changes in positive or negative way because of several reasons. Sometimes human body was blessed by make-up and spoiled, and considered as an object sometimes should be sentenced to restrict and starve. (Martı, 2011: 234).

Human history is a history of interventions of ideologies, politics and religions to human body. All of these forces have struggled to gain dominance on human bodies because of different reasons (Okumuş, 2011: 51).

Approaching the body in a historical frame means mainly to re-fictionalise living human from flesh and bone and challenging against natural forces, technical investments, and types of feelings (Corbin ve ark, 2008: 7).

Body which is an existence resource of a human have always become a subject to researches, thoughts and meanings. Body phenomenon is so important in humankind history that there were a lot of descriptions related to interpretations and descriptions related to body in celestial and noncelestial resources. Many disciplines like philosophy; interested in body subject.

As a result of this interest, many fields like physiognomy, personology, characterology, pathognomy, physical education and body sociology were born (Okumuş, 2011: 45).

Body, has been carrying a lot of internal inconstancy because of multiple socio-ecological periods intercepting over it. If these periods will ever transform, body will also be transforming or adopting or end being existed. Total of performative activities that are open for using the body in a certain time and certain place, are not independent from technological, physical, sociological, and economical contexts. Symbolic practices existed in community also shape the body. As a result of this every mobbing towards dominant representative systems of the body, also directly directed to bodily practices (Harvey, 2008: 127).

The meanings which body have is quite related to community and communal structure. Connell, stated that the body carries a community which doesn't give meanings but receiving them. In other words, the thing which gives meaning to male body is not a biological masculinity, but the public description of it (Tekin, 2011: 527-528).

Elias, evaluated the body as a continuing sociological process and an incomplete biological process. Elias defines that civilization process has a great influences on human body also he associated the civilization of bodies with public civilization and he added that this was an eternal process. The interactions in individuals' bodies, exist where social phenomenons are intensive (Nazlı, 2009: 62-63).

Mauss identified the body as a first and natural tool or means of human. Physical body of human has itself is shaped by community and culture. As the community produces informations related to how to use the bodies of humans some sort of body use technic has emerged. Body techniques have three important characteristics. First of all these; they have technical appearance as they were generated through specific body movements. Second; they are traditional because they were acquired and learned through educational and training tools. Finally they are so productive in the manner of serving for an absolute purpose or function (Nazlı, 2009: 62).

### Physical Education and Sports in Medieval Ages

Different dates are proposed related to medieval age. Generally medieval age is between 476 (dissolution of West Rome Empire and The conquest of Istanbul) 1453. But some researcher do not accept this period reflects medieval age and they suggested that medieval age started with "Milano rescript" which Saint Constantin published in 313 and rescript of Saint Theodosius published in 380 (Şentürk, 2007).

Tugcu, defined that Medieval age started in A.D. 384 as "Bordeaux Consul". This consul; condemned Priscillianus Archbishop of Avila, and Euchrotia and her two students who shared the same ideas with him to death, this execution was approved by Emperor Maximus and these four people were roasted alive. Church had started a terror which will last for a thousand year with this execution of Priscillianus (Tuğcu, 2000: 207). Mediavel age involves a period of time when a lot of political, social, economical and religious incidents and dominated the humanbeing history, and when cultures and civilizations were generated. Some of the most important incidents in Medieval age can be counted as rise and spreading of Christianity, intercontinental immigrations, and as a result of these immigrations; Division of Rome Empire in two, and then collapsing of West Rome Nation, where Continental Europe had become a scene for new generations as a result of immigration of tribes and rise of Muslim religion (Bedirhan, 2012). Christianity rised in this age, influenced negatively sports understanding.

One of the best way of understanding medieval sports culture, is to understand the importance that Christianity give to the human body. As Christianity has seen Earth and Religion as a two contrary conceptions, they paved a way for thinking negatively against everything which were earthly. As a result of this negative thought raised; the thoughts of Christians towards human body were negatively affected. Because human body was earthborn object. Because of this body always tried to push a person into earthly things and secularize people. So this negative thought related to human body caused to rise of ascetism thought (Canatan, 2011: 203).

Body, was described as a quantitative harmony of body parts. So human body was recorded with flat geometrical forms and body came down to a schematic presentation. In mediavel age Christianity human body was considered as a source of sin. And as a contrary to this negative thought body was counted as a temple of holy spirit and the idea of "spirit was superior than body" thought placed in minds (Kesim and Kar, 2010: 180).

As an addition to this mindset in social subconscious; a fear of the first sin was admiring women body. In order to relieve of these fears, it was decided to take control of sexuality of women. Because of this reason, the thought of wearing suitable dresses fitting to that age were rised. Thus, women received their innocence back (Tseelon, 2002: 22-23).

In Christianity; humankind made a big mistake by doing original sin. With this sin, humankind condemned in unhappiness on earth. Therefore, in Christian belief; earth meant a prison. According to Christianity the matter of human is to get out of this world (Canatan, 2011: 202). Therefore in Christianity spirit is important than body. In order to get free, and rise a spirit should sacrifice the body. This thought was commonly agreed in Church in medieval age and thus priesthood was institutionalized. The thought of humankind needed to suffer and save their spirits became a common thought. Because of this common thought; crucifixion ceremonies and temple life became common. In Christianity one of the most important reasons related to these negative attitudes towards body emerged from the original sin discipline. According to this discipline Devil or Evil were thought to be inside of body. According to this every human is the devil of themselves and they can only save themselves by controlling their bodies (Şişman, 2006: 23). Because of physical and mental conflict, tendency to cover the body was used as a means to press the interest into body and direct this interest towards spirit. This case caused to divert the interest in naked body to dressed ones. As a result dressing and makeups came under the influence of The Church (Tseelon, 2002: 31). In Medieval communities female body was cursed as; "When female raised doubts about their innocence by following the fashion with their nakedness their sins become doubled, because in this case not only they sin against their shame but also they cause others to sin" (Tseelon, 2002: 24).

In that age, if a woman like any colour, any makeup, any hair style and any dress meant that she never tried to improve the virtue which she had. As beauty products exposed a great hubris, a woman who tried to make herself more beautiful than she appeared counted as one with Lucifer. Challenging the appearance which God gave to human and what is worse trying to make it better was a big hubris. This case was perceived as trying to challenge earth rules given by God (Duby and Perrot, 2005: 95). In medieval age there was a belief that The Church was the unique representative of God on Earth. The Church, filled the contents related to spirit/body, male/female, good deed/sin by adding life/death conceptions. In order to secure the rules related to society where they would like to build an absolute authority on, they made death more important and valuable than living. A mortal body was seen as down than immortal spirit. In this point of view, body was seen as a prison for spirit. Death became the unique meaning of living. In order to not harm the eternity of spirit lusts and desires must be excluded and should be prepared for death. An important characteristic of death, was pointing out that body is worthless and not to throw the book at people related to maintenance of the body (Nazlı, 2009: 4).

Medieval age caused a lot of negative effects on body culture. With the start of medieval age sports understanding of ancient Greece went under the wrecking ball. With dominance of Christianity, ecclesiastics, regarded sports as unnecessary and characterised sports as an indication of paganism. In this age, Tertullianus prominent person of Church, had stated that "sports was a job of Satan" (Göçer, 1975). In medieval Europe not only body beauty not wellcomed, but also physical trainings were looked down on. In the period of 14th Louis physical trainings were overthrown. Exercise was announced as a sin by Ecclesiastics in that age. Once French government used to give orders related to wash bodies in rivers and seas. If a person was caught washing his/her body in river or sea, they used to get imprisoned.

If a children was caught with the same action, he or she used get whipped (Tarcan, 1932: 43). It would not be true if sports was completely despised. Because knighthood institution had a great place in that age. And everybody could not be a Knight randomly. Only Aristocrats could become a Knight (Tazegül, 2017). Knights used tor ide horses, swim, shoot arrows, climb ropes (Göçer, 1975).

Christianism emerged in Medieval Europe had developed a negative point of view towards sports. One of the biggest reasons of this accordin to Christianism body should suffer to free the spirits. That is why everything which used to make body more beautiful was counted as sin. Especially sports was perceived a big sin as well. Because sports make human body better and aesthetical by training it. One of the most important factors that Christianism showed a bad attitudes toward sports; was that sports was important in Ancient Greece. Because Ancient Greece was pagan. Beacue of this reason Christian community who had Monotheism considered sports as a negative thing and a loss of time.

### **Physical Education and Sports in Rennaisence Age**

Rennaisence is a word to describe the transition to modern world from medieval age. Rennaisence is a revolution emerged by being influenced by efforts of reconstructions of ancient monuments, drawings, and architecture. Rennaisence is a result of human mind which is evolving (Sulku, 2016). Rennaisence was born in Italy in XV. Century and spreaded all over the Europe in XVI. Century. Rennaisence means reborn and a movement of innovation in culture and arts. Rennaisence artists brought a light to Ancient and Rome culture and arts. The Church had lost its power and arts got over of Church (Şenses, 2015). As a result of examining the scripts belonged to Ancient Greece it was understood that how sports was important in Ancient ages. Therefore many philosophers evaluated sports in several ways and made efforts for development of sports. The best way of being able to understand the sports culture in Rennaisence age was to understand the importance given to body.

In Rennaisence age, body represented an ideal pattern. Philosophers like Da Vinci and Dürer, proportioned the human body. Lines in the faces were divided into parts with golden ratio. And while doing this, simple methods had been used. In this age, Da Vinci revealed 26 different body components. According to that, vertical distance between under of chin and nostrils should be equal to one of three of altitude of face. Distance between nostrils and eyelashes should be equal to the between of top line of eyelashes and hair bulbs. Female body was also expressed additionally. These were three White (skin, hands, teeth), three red (lips, cheeks, nails), and three blacks (eyes, eyelashes, eyebrows). Ideal body in Rennaisence should be fitted to 7-9-3 rules (Kesim ve Kar, 2010: 180-181). Body had been identified as (1.618) golden ratio like stated in Ancient Greece. In the word suggesting that the parts which beauty consisted of were depended on body ratio "Big Theory" was reached to perfection (Eco, 2006: 214).

Through the Rennaisence movement began in Italy, positive attitudes and opinions were developed against human body. Through these thoughts, negative body image emerged in Ancient ages had started to disappear.

One of the most important characteristic of beauty perception emerged through Renaissance was that it was secular. On that sense, Renaissance was contrary to medieval age from body perception concept point of view (Şişman, 2006: 24; Duby ve Perrot, 2005a: 100). In the age of enlightenment the change in community had also affected women.

In this age, makeup which women applied on their face was a mandatory indicator of social level. Paints used to make makeup, became a visible parts of body. Makeups and luxury dressings became an symbol of wealth and class. Cosmetics became an essential accessory for women. A smart-dressed women feel herself as naked without it (Duby and Perrot, 2005a: 68).

Therefore Renaissance women had used cosmetic products and gave importance to her hair style. Women always painted their hairs in Red-like blonde. And used jewels appropriate to the rules (Eco, 2006: 196).

In this age, women skin was aimed to be marble White. White was a colour representing cleanness for women. Having a White skin became the indicator of a high social class.

For men, dark colours had been preferred. While Cosmetic books were telling men how to paint their beards, telling women how to make their hair White first and golden afterwards (Duby and Perrot, 2005a: 67). Renaissance gave the beauty to its dignity showing that wellness had been an external and visible indicator of beauty. Afterwards beauty, became an indicator of moral character and social status. In this age beauty became a mandatory thing. Ugliness was composed with evil (Duby and Perrot, 2005a: 63).

In Renaissance age, destroying the negative thoughts related to body paved a way for positive thinking against sports. In parallel with excluding negative thoughts from minds, physical education which was counted as sin in medieval age, became popular in Renaissance. Many philosophers pointed out the advantages of physical education.

One of the Outstanding humanists; Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405-1464), always used to underline the importance of physical education, and supported every kind of physical exercise. Enea Silvio Piccolomini was assigned as Papa with in the title of II. Pius. Italian Doctor who approached Antique Greek understanding from Medical view, Hieronymus Mercurialis, read a book under the name of "De Arte Gymnastica". In his book, he mentioned about positive effects of exercise on respiratory system (McIntosh, 1984; Alpman, 1972: 189-190).

In addition Mercurialis divided sports into three groups as health, military and competition. The first philosopher Mercurialis who made this division, ignores competitive sports and described it in wrong way (Alpman, 1972: 189-190).

Martin Luther (1483-1546) The Pioneer of opposition against Catholic Church, German monk, theologian, University Professor, and father of Protestantism, defended that trainings like wrestling, jumping had health protective effects and Knight trainings should spread in larger masses. (Alpman, 1972: 191). Johann Ludwig

Vives (1492-1540) Spanish Philosopher who was against Scholastic thought stated that children over fifteen years should do exercises like walking, running, wrestling, shooting, and ball games in his book "De Tradentis Disciplinis" (1531) (Alpman, 1972: 190).

French Ecclesiastic and Doctor François Rabelais (1483-1553) and German philosophers Johannes Bugenhagen (1485-1558) and Joachim Camerarius (1500-1574) recommended to give a place for physical exercise in the education of children and young people (Çakır, 2014: 81).

François Rabelais (1494-1553) one of French Humanists, stated in his novel "Gargantua" that Gargantua who was a young Sir, used to do physical exercise right after three hour class.

According to Rabelais, men should be physically prepared physically for wars (Yamak, 2009).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau who is one of the most important names of Renaissance age, stated in his book "Emile" that physical exercises contributed physical and mental wellness to body (Rousseau, 1966).

Vittorino da Feltre (1378- 1446) an Italian humanist, bore the cost of education of Francisco Gonzaga's son in 1423. Feltre had added dance, horsemanship, fencing, swimming, wrestling, archery, ball games, and Knight training on other activities. In short period of time other children come to this school and school took the name of "La Casa Giocosa". Depending on this, physical education was given place in other school as well (Williams, 1964).

Petrus Paulus Vergerius, expressed that wars required physical endurance as military skills and for this reason he recommended that male children should have endurance from early ages (Hackensmith, 1966).

Cardinal Eneas de Piccolomini (1404-1464) ; wrote an essay named "Children Education" . Papa II. Pius stated that womenlike style physical education" might lead to brattiness by expressing that things were going wrong in physical exercises in Palace. For this reason, he added that young individuals should deal with difficult exercise in open air, feed themselves in simplest way and gain endurance through this (Yamak, 2009).

Swiss Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) in his essay he overemphasized on physical exercise and he drew attention in wrestling and fencing in preparation process for military (Leonard, 1947).

British Humanist John Milton (1608-1674) in his book "Tractate on Education", associated exercises mental education. In the model school designed for children of Aristocrats, youngs between 12-21 age live together just like youngs living in Sparta and deal with physical exercises. According to Milton, this system will keep youngs healthy, strong and agile. In addition this system as physical exercise would have positive effects on physical development and growing, youngs raised with this system, would be more brave and reckless. Youngs used to train before 2 hours of dinner, first of all on foot and on horse (if their ages are suitable for it), they used to train on trooper training methods and deal with basic military activities (Yamak, 2009). Michel de

Montaigne (1533-1592) adopted training method which associated physical education and mental education and suggested that only training spirit (mental) would be inadequate, also body should be trained. According to Montaigne, this training that approaches body and spirit in hollistic way, should prepare youngs for dangers, climate changes. They aimed to raise stronger, agile youngs instead of sedentary young people (Williams, 1964).

While Joachim Camerarius (1500-1574), applied physical education activities in gymnasium which he had founded in Nürnberg City, from 1526, and Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1671) a Czech pedagogue, who had books named *Didaktika Magna (Great Education, Teaching Method)*, and *Orbis Pictus (World with Picture)* builded a school in Saros-Patak city after the invitation of Hungarian Prince in 1650, and he gave placed to gymnastics and physical games even he wanted them obligatory to pass classes (Yamak, 2009).

Physical education became an important part of education with "*Philanthropinum*" in Dessau by Johann Bernhard Basedow in 1774, "*Schnepfenthal Educational Institute*" in Schnepfenthal near by Gotha by Christian Gotthilf Salzmann in 1784. In this school, military based physical education courses were give (Williams, 1964).

Gerhard Ulrich Anton Vieth (1763-1836) brought in gymnastics a scientific qualification, and he published "Body Encyclopedia Essay". Vieth who approached body structure with regard to mechanical and movement aspect, classified movement according to parts of the body; Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) developed a movement system based on joint abilities of human body and considered Gymnastics as a moral development means and body beauty (Alpman, 1972).

## RESULTS

As a result, in medieval age, sports had started to regress in Europe, and it was revealed that Christianity had been shown as biggest effect caused to this regression. Because according to Christianity belief, what important was freeing the spirit. In order to set spirit free, body needed to suffer and be despised. Therefore, everything that used to make body beautiful was despised and identified as a sin. As Christian ecclesiastics had negative thoughts towards sports had effected sports negatively. With the beginning of Renaissance period, Body became an important thing like it was in Ancient Greece. In this period, scientists who investigated the scripts of Ancient Greece understood how sports was important in Human Life. Some Philosophers in Renaissance period used to approach sports with regard to health, and some philosophers had seen sports as a mean to raise strong military members. In addition, some philosophers had considered sports as a part of character training.

As a result of literature research, There was no any study found that directly involved body and sports. Therefore, it was suggested that this study can make a contribution for further studies.

### Recommendations

- Physical Education and Sports can be discussed out of Medieval Age and Renaissance Period in different researches
- Religion and Body, Religion and Sports subjects can be studied in Medieval and Renaissance age in different researches.
- Religion and Body, Religion and Sports subjects can be studied out Medieval and Renaissance age in different researches.
- Effect of sports on body perception can be studied in further studies.

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