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## **BASIC RESEARCH CATEGORIES IN THE SEM(E)IOTICS OF SPORT**

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### SUMMARY

The basis of the proposed research method in philosophy and semiotics of sport is C. S. Peirce's pragmatism, especially his study of signs, and in particular his account of the concept of the sign as triadic and relational (sign-object-interpretant). The application of Peirce's semeiotic concepts affords possibilities for discerning a continuity between sport and the whole cultural sphere of meaning, due to seeing a sports event as a sign process, the full interpretation of which lies outside sport itself.

The manifestations of the existence of sport are sporting events, which through being meaningful become attractive for the participants of culture. Each element of a sports competition, from details of contestants' outfits, such as colour, to the choice of the country organising the Olympic Games, is a logically unnecessary sign, demanding interpretation, which is a continuous process (synechological), being founded on the previous sign processes (semioses) and relating to the previous meanings (signs), which have been created both during other sporting events and outside sport.

**Key words:** semiotics, philosophy of sport, Peirce

The manifestation of the existence of contemporary sport are *sporting events*, the attraction of which is closely connected with their *meaning* in the sphere of culture, society or the country. Individual matches are meaningful, as well as prolonged tournaments, which often awaken widespread interest long before they start, and excite hopes exceeding sport understood in any narrow aspect.<sup>1</sup>

In the present article I propose a hypothesis that sport, through its differently defined forms, provides a formal system of signs which are filled in by real meanings only in a

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<sup>1</sup> In 2011 a good example of a particularly intense influence of sport on different spheres of culture, economy and social life in Poland is the UEFA European Football Championship, organised in 2012 by the Polish and Ukrainian governments. Euro 2012 has become a virtual engine of change in the Polish infrastructure, especially with the construction of roads and highways and the multitude of other investments (stadiums, railway stations, etc.).

particular cultural context, through concrete sporting events. Thanks to this, apart from appealing to dedicated fans, sport may be interesting and pragmatically useful to politicians, clergy, artists, scientists and to varying degrees is available to all other participants of culture. Broadly understood, sport is a carrier of positive axiological values, representing patriotism, honour, pride, success, noble competition, physical activity, sexual attractiveness, and additionally providing hedonistic entertainment. It also happens, however, that it may symbolise negative phenomena, such as greed, brutality, hooliganism (the problem of so-called stadium hooligans), lack of respect for the principle of fair play, politics, and so on. In any case, sport provides signs binding into sign-relations any other “values” transferred in the sphere of culture (global, these days), which due to signs of this type can be more attractive in perception or more easily interpreted.

Each element of a given sports competition, from the details of sports kits, such as their colour, to the choice of the country hosting mass events such as the Olympic Games, is a sign that requires interpretation, which is a continuous process (synechism<sup>2</sup>), such that each sign is founded on the previous sign processes (semioses) and referring to previous meanings (signs). Essentially, calling a given activity a “sports competition” is already a process of interpretation, in which the conventional behaviours of “contestants” are interpreted as “competition”, while the codified frames of this competition define a given sport.

In considering the semiotic quality of contemporary sport, it is methodologically efficient to create and apply categories such as *sem(e)iotic cut-off* and *sem(e)iotic chains*<sup>3</sup> categories placing the interpretation of sports events in the broader context of their meaning, and their effect in the sphere of meanings of culture. It will also be methodologically useful to divide sports into *performing* sports and *contesting* sports, based on the meaning of a sporting event and the achieved result for the people taking part in it, as well as the spectators and sports fans. Contesting sports are usually individual sports where the greatest success is beating the world record. The essence of performing sports, usually team sports, lies in the uniqueness of a given sporting event among culturally meaningful processes. The distinction between contesting and performing sports is not founded in the formal regulations ruling the course of a given sport (such as the rules of a given sport), but on the cultural meaning of the sporting event itself, or on the meaning of the achieved results, and thus is a semiotic criterion. Research categories created on the basis of Peirce’s sem(e)iotics enable the investigation of phenomena existing in modern sport which are sometimes marginalised or whose occurrence is not rational, for example the toleration of refereeing mistakes which could be avoided by supporting the work of the referee with modern technologies.

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<sup>2</sup> The conception of synechism understood as proposed in the present article comes from Charles Sanders Peirce (CSP) (1839–1914), who writes “I have proposed to make *synechism* mean the tendency to regard everything as continuous” (Peirce, 1998, p. 1). Also in the fragment CP 1.172 we read: “... synechism [...] the doctrine that all that exists is continuous.” CP is an acronym for *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* ... (Peirce, 1931–35, 1958), the most popular edition of fragments of this author’s writings.

<sup>3</sup> The spelling of the categories with (e) underlines the rooting of a given term or conception in *semeiotics*, that is the study of signs (semiotics) created and systematically developed by C. S. Peirce. The use of the term semeiotic serves to stress the innovatory propositions of Peirce and especially to distinguish them from the semiology developed on the basis of the European linguistic conceptions of F. de Saussure or R. Barthes. I want to stress here that my adoption of “semeiotic” as my methodological basis is not a form of criticism of any other semiotic or semiological conception.

According to Peirce's sem(e)iotics, a sign is a relation of three correlates: a sign (representamen, Firstness), the subject of a sign – i.e. an object (Secondness), and an interpretant (Thirdness). Let us stress that a triadic sign relation does not reify a sign as an existing entity in the perceptible world – an interpretant might be imaginary, or *in futuro* (CP 2.92). Thus, everything can be a sign or be interpreted as being in a sign relation.

“A *Sign*, or *Representamen*, is a First which stands in such a genuine triadic relation to a Second, called its *Object*, as to be capable of determining a Third, called its *Interpretant*, to assume the same triadic relation to its Object in which it stands itself to the same Object. The triadic relation is *genuine*, that is its three members are bound together by it in a way that does not consist in any complexus of dyadic relations. That is the reason the Interpretant, or Third, cannot stand in a mere dyadic relation to the Object, but must stand in such a relation to it as the Representamen itself does. Nor can the triadic relation in which the Third stands be merely similar to that in which the First stands, for this would make the relation of the Third to the First a degenerate Secondness merely. The Third must indeed stand in such a relation, and thus must be capable of determining a Third of its own; but besides that, it must have a second triadic relation in which the Representamen, or rather the relation thereof to its Object, shall be its own (the Third's) Object, and must be capable of determining a Third to this relation. All this must equally be true of the Third's Thirds and so on endlessly; and this, and more, is involved in the familiar idea of a Sign; and as the term Representamen is here used, nothing more is implied. A *Sign* is a Representamen with a mental Interpretant. Possibly there may be Representamens that are not Signs. Thus, if a sunflower, in turning towards the sun, becomes by that very act fully capable, without further condition, of reproducing a sunflower which turns in precisely corresponding ways toward the sun, and of doing so with the same reproductive power, the sunflower would become a Representamen of the sun. But *thought* is the chief, if not the only, mode of representation.” (CP 2.274)

There are no entities that are “natural” signs *per se*, as the carrier of sign is not simultaneously its own interpretant. “Of course, nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign” (CP 2.308). The process of constituting signs is called *semiosis*. Interpretation, or actual creation of a sign as a triadic relation, is a process made by an interpreter, i.e. a mind using signs.

“But a sign is not a sign unless it translates itself into another sign in which it is more fully developed. Thought requires achievement for its own development, and without this development it is nothing. Thought must live and grow in incessant new and higher translations, or it proves itself not to be genuine thought.” (CP 5.594)

*Firstness* of a sign relation is a *sign* or a *representamen*<sup>4</sup>, “As it is in itself, a sign is either of the nature of an appearance, when I call it a *qualisign*; or secondly, it is an individual object or event, when I call it a *sinsign* (...); or thirdly, it is of the nature of a general type, when I call it a *legisign*” (CP 8.334). As an effect, *legisignum* is embodied by so called *replicas* which are individual specimens of sign, or *sinsignum* signs.

*Secondness*, or the object of a sign, can be any entity, including an element of extra-sign (empirical) reality, and is then a *dynamic object*, or an *object in itself*. This type of object exists autonomously with no regard to any knowledge about it expressed in

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<sup>4</sup> Depending on the context Peirce used the name “sign” for the whole triadic relation or for its first element.

signs. The knowledge of the existence of a dynamic object results from the existence of the sign which refers to it – it is also an assumption of the existence of extra-sign reality, which is a generator of certain classes of signs. The dynamic object is available to cognition only through a *direct object*. It determines signs and is not subject to shaping by signs relating to it. A *direct object*, on the other hand, is an *object as it is represented* and is entirely dependent on the dynamic object. A dynamic object is not entirely and finally represented in every respect by a sign or signs. Therefore there is an indefinite number of signs, which can have the same dynamic (real) object, as there is not a finite number of signs fully representing their dynamic object. In a methodological sense it means that each possible representation of extra-sign reality can be infinitely developed through further signs, relating to it. This gives a clear basis for creating the category of *sem(e)iotic chains*, which, while having the same object, develop parallel and independent interpretations.

*Thirdness*, or an interpretant, is another sign, and the whole process of semiosis attempts to establish increasingly more general interpretants binding a sign (representamen) to its object, which results in the constitution of a triadic relation. The possibility of interpretation is a necessary condition of an object being a sign. An interpretant is in a similar relationship to the Second as the First, and by this reason it can become the First of a different triadic relation for the same Second. An important differentiation made by Peirce in the context of the person of an interpreter or a real semiosis is the distinction between *immediate interpretant*, *dynamic interpretant* and *final interpretant*<sup>5</sup>. It is interesting that, in the broad understanding of the notion of a sign, an interpretation appearing at a given moment, or, more precisely, an interpretant, does not have to be another sign. An interpretation can be made on the level of action, experience or emotion. It does not mean, however, that a sign (representamen) which evoked a basically random effect on an interpreter, was called because of this effect an authentic sign (a triadic relation was made with a logically necessary interpretant). The name of an authentic sign refers only to the objects which constitute it and are in a triadic relation with it.

Peirce's sem(e)iotic propositions are located in the field of logic (theory of relations) and scientific methodology, whereas de Saussure's semiological propositions are in linguistics and psychology. Characteristic for sem(e)iotics is the assumption that a sign is a *triadic relation*, which means that nothing is a sign unless it enters into a relation with its *interpretant*, i.e. until it is interpreted as a sign. Each of the elements of a sign can be a self-standing sign in itself, demanding further interpretation. The process of interpretation is continuous, as an *interpretant* of a given sign is also a sign, or another triadic relation which can undergo further interpretations. This type of relational construction of a sign ensures interpretative continuity (synechism) which is clearly shown in the rational thinking processes where, for example, terms (signs) are defined (developed through other signs) and their definitions undergo further clarification or are changed under the influence of new facts which are *represented* by subsequent signs. A sign relation is divided triadically, which as a consequence leads to the generation of a series of formal classes of signs. A basic differentiation divides signs into icons, indexes and symbols, i.e. signs, the interpretation of which is based on the similarity of a sign to its

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<sup>5</sup> For a more precise elucidation on the types of interpretants, see Peirce, 1977, pp. 109–111.

object, an existential bond with it, or a quasi-necessary relation created through reasoning (interpretation). For the philosophy and semiotics of sport it is significant that Peirce allows not only conceptual or intellectual interpretation but also emotional and energetic interpretation (Peirce, 1998, pp. 421–433), which is primary and in this sense necessary before a further interpretative process may take place. This means that all reactions, such as commotion, joy, clapping and cheering are in the semiotic sense an interpretation of a given sporting event.

Adopting a semiotic research perspective in the sphere of philosophical reflection on sport enables the preservation of interpretative continuity, from interpretants in the form of emotional and energetic reaction, to interpretants as intellectual notions represented by professional comments and analyses, as well as the utterances of fans, politicians, clergymen, etc. The pleasure and entertainment provided by sport, which appear whilst taking part in or watching a sports competition, do not exhaust the sense and meaning of modern sport, which means that depriving a sports event of its cultural context may prevent its deeper interpretation.

Football matches between the national teams of England and Germany are a good example of sports events which are widely discussed and which possess a particular *meaning* for fans in the world. The 27 June 2010 match in 1/8 finals of FIFA WORLD CUP SOUTH AFRICA is memorable, among other events, for a mistake made by the referee, who did not acknowledge the “goal” by Lampard that would have brought England level in the first half, while Germany were winning 2–1. Immediately after England’s defeat by 4–1, discussions started which went back for arguments as far as 1966, focusing on the inadequacy of refereeing methods in relation to the cultural importance of such a sports event as a match between England and Germany. Refereeing mistakes in football are nothing new, so more interesting is the lack of *fair play* on the part of the German team. Assuming, naturally, that during half-time they learned why the goal, which unquestionably had been scored by an Englishman, was not accepted, they could have fixed the referee’s mistake by letting the English score a goal. It would not be the first case of applying the rule of *fair play* in the form of letting one’s opponents score a goal. For example, Ajax did this in the 2006 match with Cambuur Leeuwarden, after Ajax accidentally scored a goal during a momentary break in the match, while a Cambuur player was lying on the grass and could not stand up. Was there any discussion of a potential fair play gesture by the Germans in the media? If there was any, it was marginal, which shows what importance is given by them to values which are not translatable into money in the modern world of big stadium sport. In Poland the match was contemporary to the debate between candidates in the presidential election, which was reflected in the semioses of Polish politicians, who interpreted the results of the debate using utterances (signs) concerning the result of the England–Germany match. It would be hard to find a more graphic example of the semiotic influence of sport on modern culture.

A consequence of the methodology adopted in the present article is the distinction between formal and meaningful aspects of sport. The “same” football event (as far as the rules followed by the players show), as a concrete sporting event, is filled with content – on one hand resulting from the semioses generated before (not only in the sphere of sport), and on the other hand initiating and modifying through its course and its result the sign processes which appear as its consequence and which, in turn, will influence the *meaning*

of future matches (synechism). An example of this type of process is the meaning that matches between German and English teams have during important sports competitions.

A *sem(e)iotic cut-off* is a category describing an interpretative departure from a real (dynamic) object which has initiated certain sign processes. During a sporting event the object of signs is both the competitors and, to no lesser extent, the results achieved by them as a material and necessary basis of all classifications and successes. Usually the result, or actually its *meaning*, undergoes the process of being removed and substituted by other elements (other immediate sign objects) in subsequent triadic relations. If during the competition any spectacular or surprising events and results take place, then, with time, interpretations appear in the sphere of culture, in which the meaning of the actual result ceases to be important (having undergone further interpretations) and is substituted by the sign of the contestant being the winner or a champion, or a general sign of success or a dramatic failure. What were the *results* that ensured the success of the most commonly known and recognised sports champions? Many of the people who sincerely admire the successes of outstanding sportspeople probably either never knew or forgot the actual results, since they are rarely an object of signs of prolonged semioses.

This is a process of *sem(e)iotic cut-off*, thanks to which we Poles immediately recognise Adam Małysz, Rober Kubica, Justyna Kowalczyk and others, giving their *successes* an appropriate meaning, whilst nevertheless ignorant of (cut off from) the exact figures of the results, and perhaps also from the time and places of the achievement of those successes, i.e. real dynamic objects. Similarly, sporting events during which the first generation of “championship semioses” occurred, cease to undergo subsequent interpretations. Sem(e)iotic cut-off occurs at an early stage of the creation of *sem(e)iotic chains*, and is common, as it enables the transference of signs generated during sporting events into other spheres of culture. In the language of methodology adopted here, the cut means the change of the *object* of triadic relationships from the result (or other material elements of a sporting event) to subsequent signs, which are its *interpretations* (sign interpretants). Thus, after the cut, a sportsperson becomes a separately functioning sign of success in culture (or instead of “success”, substitute any other value, especially commercial ones with a precisely defined pecuniary “value” for advertisers).

So *sem(e)iotic chains* are a research category in the sphere of philosophy of sport, which are possible to define only thanks to the triadicity and synechism of Peirce’s sem(e)iotic. They are interpretative processes in which subsequently appearing signs have as their constituting elements signs generated thanks to previous interpretations. The building of *sem(e)iotic chains* is a temporary and indeterminate process. The competition of a sportsman or a team undergoes direct emotional and energetic interpretation during a given sporting event. But this is merely an introduction to the functioning of the phenomena of sport in the sphere of the meanings of culture, as in subsequent stages the interpretation is usually notional and intellectual. In this sense, a constituting element of a sporting event are sem(e)iotic chains freely created by direct spectators and later by all users of signs (usually already after *sem(e)iotic cut-off*). The only formal (weak) condition of building sem(e)iotic chains is the introduction of elements of previous sign relations, which referred to given sporting events, into subsequent generations of signs.

Emotional and energetic signs created during a sporting event, in the further process of interpretation, always have a pragmatic effect, which is mainly notional and intellectual

or semiospherical (for example, the Internet)<sup>6</sup>. Semioses, the dynamic development of which can be observed on the Internet, are clearly *cut off* from the material sphere of a sporting event and function autonomously as *sem(e)iotic chains* developing freely into various interpretative directions. However, the higher the generative capacity (generativity) of a given sporting event, the deeper its interpretative intermediation. The pragmatic effects of this type of process are signs binding in relations with the elements of signs which usually refer loosely to sporting events. Thus, theoretically, going back in the process of semioses – finding previous interpretants – it should be possible to reach the first generation of signs, which bound their objects (dynamic) – the empirical elements of a given sporting event – into a meaningful (interpreted) relation. Despite considerable interpretative freedom, ensured by different classes of signs, an interpretation which does not refer to the signs generated during a given sporting event, can result in breaking the links of the *sem(e)iotic chain*. Then, generally speaking, the interpretation changes the object of the sign from the sphere of sport into any other sphere. This is seen particularly well in semioses unfolded by politicians, for whom representamens (Firstness in a triadic relation) from the sphere of sport serve to attract attention to objects (Secondness) and interpretants (Thirdness) which have nothing in common with sport but do have something in common with, for example, patriotism or with the politician's religious values.

At its basis, the *sem(e)iotic* differentiation into *performing* and *contesting* sports is founded in the *meaning* of the course of the competition or the *meaning* of the result achieved by a contestant. This differentiation serves, among others, to explain certain phenomena existing in modern sport, for instance the toleration of spectacular refereeing mistakes in football, whilst officials' judgements in athletics, e.g. the 100 metres run, are scientifically precise as far as measuring is concerned, and exclude any decisions that could be marred by human fallibility of perception. Surprisingly, attempts at modernising refereeing in football meet with at first sight incomprehensible resistance on the part of governing bodies. Grasping the reason for this situation is possible in the sphere of semiotics if we take into account the *meaning* of the uniqueness of certain sporting events, such as World Cup finals or European Championship finals. In performing sports, all attempts to repeat sports events are impossible because of the uniqueness of the factors constituting a given sporting event, and even the theoretical assumption that the World Cup final could be repeated due to complaints of one of the teams deprives the final of its uniqueness and so being "live" at the stadium loses importance. The very fact of *being* at the final match is *more significant* than how many goals were scored. In the case of contesting sport the result is *significant* and in case of doubts concerning its correctness it is nullified and the contestants make another trial.

*Performing* sports are usually sporting competition or contact sports and martial arts. A significant result of such a type of a sporting event can take three values: conclusion (victory or failure) or lack of conclusion (a draw). In a football match, like in other team sports, the most important achievement is defeating the rival and not scoring a record number of goals

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<sup>6</sup> The Internet is a sphere where sign relations function and its material base, such as an appliance allowing access to it (a computer), is not important. In this sense the Internet is a sign sphere, or a semiosphere, a sphere of meanings and not of material entities. The Internet does not transfer material objects but meanings and their interpretations in the form of other signs. Similarly, the meaning of the content of a book is not connected with its material base, which is a given printed copy of it.

or points. World Cup Finals, where only one goal is scored in a play-off, picks the winner as surely as a match where eleven goals are scored. The number of goals or the style of the game has a meaning as far as spectacular nature and further semiotic processes are concerned, especially the processes initiated in the milieu of people professionally connected with sport, but is insignificant as far as picking the winner is concerned. In team sports, records have a statistical character, e.g. a given team has not lost a match for several games, always wins in their own stadium, etc. Faultless refereeing and full adherence to the rules of the game is not an absolute requirement in performing sports, as a scrupulous intervention of a referee influences negatively the dynamics of the game, e.g. additionally lengthening it and stopping the industriously worked out opportunities to score a goal, i.e. potentially picking the winner.

A *performing* sports event is a unique act, which occurs irrevocably. If a competition has taken place in the presence of hundreds of millions of spectators, it is hard to expect that this type of a sporting event will be made invalid and the winner deprived of his victory. The accent of *meaning* is moved from the truth of the achieved result to the *act of occurring* of a sporting event, sanctioned through the decisions of a referee. The deepest sense is granted to performing sporting events by their uniqueness and finality resulting from the unrepeatability of place, time and result.

*Contesting* sports (mostly individual) apply strictly scientific methods to the evaluation of the course of the competition, and the conditions of a competition resemble a scientific experiment, in which factors deciding the result achieved are strictly controlled. Special attention is paid to the organism of a contestant, because during the competition human physicality is contested. Each record, preceded by years of strenuous training, removes a previously established limit to efficiency in a given sport, consequently suggesting that the limit of our bodily abilities has not been finally established, and therefore cognized.

Is there, then, a limit to our physicality, the consequences of which would be perceivable in cultural semioses? So far, contesting sports disprove it. Beating a record, even by a fraction of a second, is culturally *meaningful*, even when it is not in any way spectacular. For example, a race in which an existing record is beaten by hundredths of a second, may not differ in any way from the previous record (in terms of human perceptual abilities). A competitor who arrives hundredths of a second before his rivals is not distinguished by anything that could be perceived as a special “winner trait”. Nevertheless, the meaning and the pragmatic effect of being a record holder is qualitatively different from that of any lower place finish. Scientific certainty, the purpose of which is to minimize the possibility of making a mistake, as well as generally to decide what the competitors’ ranking should be, excludes the human official in the process of taking decisions. The judge or referee, with his or her imperfect perception, becomes a controller of the formal correctness of the course of a competition; however it is not he who picks the winner, but electronic measuring appliances, the reading of which is sanctioned more by the lack of protest on the part of a referee than by a creative act of will.

In a metaphysical sense, contesting sports are a manifestation of dissent to the determinism of the world, the symptom of which could be the a priori assumption of the existence of ultimate limits of the possibilities of the human body. Contesting sports prove that there is a physical freedom, which manifests itself in the record-beating results achieved by the sportspeople.

Let us look at two examples that clearly illustrate the phenomena described in the present article. In the 1986 World Cup quarter-finals in Mexico, Diego Armando Maradona, while simulating to be heading the ball, directed it into the goal with his hand. The referee

accepted the goal, Argentina won the match, and as a result proceeded to the next round of the competition. “La mano de Dios” (the Hand of God) is a sign recognisable not only by the fans especially interested in the history of football, but probably also by other participants of culture, in which football is an important sport. The interpretation of Maradona’s behaviour can vary radically, including considering a competitor as a symbol of behaviour diametrically different from *fair play*. In what way does the *sem(e)iotic cut-off* happen here? Let us try to answer two questions, which should be simple for football fans: Who was Argentina’s opponent? What was the result of the match? Or even: who won the world championship during that year? It would be interesting to compare the number of people who heard about Maradona’s hand with the number of people knowing the answer to at least one of the above stated questions.

After his gold-winning pole vault on 30th July 1980, a Polish Olympic champion and world record holder presented a gesture to the Olympic spectators in Moscow, which started semioses dynamically developing in all spheres of culture. The recognisability of “Kozakiewicz’s gesture” as a fact of culture is proved by the commercial frequently broadcast in the Polish media in 2006 and 2007, the main theme of which is the famous Moscow gesture. In the commercial, twenty-six years after the event, during something which looks like a press conference, Kozakiewicz is asked by the audience to repeat his famous gesture. At the first attempt, he cannot do so because of a pain, but after taking the advertised product, he can do it. A spectator-interpreter has the impression that all the audience have gathered just to take part in the Polish Olympic champion’s presentation of the famous gesture. Unfortunately, it is not clear why and at whom the gesture in the commercial is made. Probably the makers of the commercial assumed that Kozakiewicz’s gesture has freed itself in such a way that it does not require any additional context. The gesture has become *sem(e)iotically cut off* the Olympic games and functions as a fully autonomous sign with an open interpretative context.

Thus, from the moment of showing this gesture in Moscow there sprang numerous *sem(e)iotic chains* in parallel development. In 1980, the behaviour of the pole vaulter was a direct reaction to whistles from a part of the audience after he had performed the vault that gave him the gold Olympic medal and set a new world record. In addition, which was especially important in this context, he won first place over the spectators’ favourite, Konstantin Volkov. During the course of the sporting event emotional interpretants appeared in the behaviour of both the audience and the sportsman. In one of the possible scenarios, for an external observer, the gesture was an *interpretant*, the *representamen* was the sounds coming from the stands, and the *object of the sign* was the antipathy to the Polish contestant. This gesture itself did not have, and obviously still does not have, any connection with sport, otherwise than through a connection with Kozakiewicz. In no semioses known to me does it convey a liking towards the people at whom it is directed; quite the opposite, in fact. Today the socio-political context has lost its intensity, but Kozakiewicz’s gesture still functions in culture and in semioses pertaining to sport, politics, and mass culture of the so-called communist era, and many other contexts.

Thus we can see that an analysis of sporting events in categories grounded in C. S. Peirce’s *sem(e)iotics* leads to a deep understanding of mechanisms evoking the increase in popularity and cultural meaning of sport throughout the last several decades. Semiotics can also contribute to the elucidation of the genesis of phenomena which seem to contradict the essence of sporting competition in the spirit of noble competition, and yet

are more and more connected with sporting events (e.g. commercialising sport, making it a political business, the behaviour of so-called pseudo-fans, etc.) The modern treatment of sport only as entertainment which takes place and has its end in the stadium, reflects only to a small extent the actual scale of the meanings (semiotics) and the effects (pragmatism) which are generated by sport in broadly understood culture.

Sporting events generate signs, the interpretation of which is conditioned, above all, culturally, which justifies creating and applying methodological categories based on semiotics. The 42,195 metres run, if *sem(e)iotically cut* from the sphere of European culture, becomes incomprehensible – we have to understand it as a “Marathon”. However, lack of logical necessity in the interpretation of sports signs dissolves their meaning, whilst at the same time constituting their enormous power, since it enables unlimited expansion in the future, filling sport with new meanings. An example of this that we can see today is the dynamic development of so-called e-sports, which are introducing into our deliberations on sport new kinds of “sports” and models of “sportspeople”, who for the sake of keeping “form” train tens of hours per week in front of a computer screen.

Sport, through the range of different sports and possible realisations of sporting events, offers a rich choice of *representamens* (signs, the First correlates of triadic sign relations) and the whole range of customary *interpretants*, with particularly well developed emotional and energetic interpretation, which provides intense hedonistic entertainment. Naturally, sporting events allow for subsequent levels of conceptual and intellectual *interpretation* leading into all spheres of culture, politics, religion, as well as into science and philosophy.

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#### ZÁKLADNÍ VÝZKUMNÉ KATEGORIE V SEM(E)IOTICE SPORTU

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SOUHRN

Základem navržené výzkumné metody ve filosofii a semiotice sportu je pragmatismus C. S. Peirce, zvláště jeho studium znaků (signs), konkrétně jeho výklad pojmu znaku jakožto triadického a relačního (znak–předmět–interpretant). Aplikace Peirceových semeiotických konceptů umožňuje rozlišit kontinuitu mezi sportem a celou

kulturní sférou významu díky pojetí sportovní akce jako znakového procesu, jehož celková interpretace leží mimo sport. Manifestací existence sportu jsou sportovní akce, které svým významem přitahují účastníky. Každý element sportovní soutěže, od detailů dresů soupeřících, jako například barva, k výběru země, která bude organizovat Olympijské hry, je nahodilým znakem, vyžadující interpretaci, jež je kontinuálním (synechologickým) procesem založeným na předchozích znakových procesech (semioses) a vztahujícím se k předchozím významům (znakům), které byly vytvořeny během jiných sportovních i mimosportovních akcí.

**Klíčová slova:** semiotika, filosofie sportu, Peirce

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