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Forging a New Paradigm: On the Structure of the Interdisciplinary and its application (Part 2)

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Abstract

This article has three sections. In section one, I define my terms which leads to an outline of what this New Paradigm is. In section two, I develop this paradigm and suggest a visualization of it, a structure as it were. This will assist in a more thorough understanding of such a paradigm. Theoretical speculations and modelling aside or rather avoiding a “purely” philosophical bias, I then apply this model to an example culled from art and aesthetics, yet involving, in line with this New Paradigm, other disciplines

such as science and sport in order to exemplify or perhaps prove my argument, by virtue of the “mixture” or interdisciplinary framework as applied to several different variables. This section forms the bulk of the article as such an application concretizes the theoretical framework in specific ways so that the reader will ascertain the usefulness of such a venture, which in turn ought to spur and spawn future research.

Keywords: Art, Science, Aesthetics, Sport, Idealism

1. “Sketching” the framework

The New Paradigm I will argue for is the necessary interrelatedness of knowledge and experience, which at the same time elides an absolute description of reality. This is not simply a case of the limitations of our knowledge and experience or one’s partial grasp of reality, but that the very fact that, to borrow a metaphor¹ from physics, light behaves not simply as a particle, a discrete something, but also flows and vibrates as a wave; it is, as it were spread out and imprecise. It is this nature of nature that precludes a total grasp or elides definitive analysis and understanding. Yet one may experience this interrelatedness or oneness, in the same way our senses cojoin in say the experience of eating a meal, even if one sense (or discipline within the field of knowledge) may be dominant at any one time.

The central argument of this article on which such a paradigm hinges is that the various branches of what is aptly called the “body of knowledge” – and notwithstanding the evolution and development of this organism, if you will – is that each such discipline is both independent and inter-dependent.

Insofar as each such branch is independent, each discipline is marked by its own internal coherence or form. It exists as a seemingly self-sufficient, robust system and can be understood in its own terms. In this sense it constitutes a language. Now, a language has a syntax and semantics and can be learnt, developed and operates as a system of signification. It is based upon rules; its own internal logic (which could be otherwise) and forms a cultural game, that is to say one may apply Wittgenstein’s notion here, namely that it is integral to a “form of life” and that its meaning is in its use.

Insofar as each such branch is inter-dependent, one cannot simply understand the form (of knowledge, of a language...) without reference to something else, whether it is a world; another language; other disciplines or branches of knowledge; other systems of knowing and acting in the context of a certain “form of life”. A game is only a game, insofar as there is that which is not a game. Ideas, definitions and so on are therefore necessarily inter-dependent in order for there to be a system of signification, even in the instance of one dealing with polar, dualistic oppositions.

¹ Metaphor is a useful concept in the context of this article. Rather than our ability to say what *x is*, what reality really is, and pinpoint a discrete particle with definite properties, the very fluid nature of reality, its wave-function precludes exact description (and knowledge). At best, then one can say what something is like or akin to or approximates – and metaphorical description is the very mechanism by which one can do so. It also allows the borrowing on one system/language/discipline and applying that in another domain or branch of knowledge which is “exactly” what I so conjecture and argue for.

Let me make both notions of independence and interdependence less abstract and provide a few examples to strengthen this point: One can “do” history of art or say, pure mathematics without reference to anything outside the system. In the former case, I might analyze the formal changes and shifts in style over a period of time and discern the development of such styles within a given period. I may attribute a certain meaning to these shifts in technique and thus establish a picture of stylistic innovations over time and place, depending on the focus of such a study. In the latter case, I can multiply an unknown variable with the same variable and add the exponents without any reference to what these equations or sums so refer; it is simply a formal game that follows its own inherent logic or grammar.

One can take any discipline and follow the same reasoning – one simply follows the dictates of its own principles and “does it” accordingly, without any such connecting to other domains. History is history. Politics is politics. Biology is biology and so on. Its meaning is not simply tautological or redundant or simply a formal game bereft of meaning, for within its own ambit of principles, axioms and analysis, one accrues knowledge within that domain and so progress is made. Indeed, in simpler terms: a cricket game, say a test match is self-enclosed game over 5 days that may be experienced on its own merit – and perhaps in relating to the history of cricket, certainly its rules – without any care or reference to anything beyond or outside those perhaps glorious five days, if one were so inclined.

Yet, there is another way to see knowledge and experience; one which recognizes the necessary unity and inter-relatedness of knowledge, of things. It would appear perhaps more “messy”; on the other hand, it can also yield knowledge and is necessarily a part of each such game, system, language or branch of knowledge at the same time.

If one piers into the “story of art” (to borrow from Gombrich), then one will notice that the unfolding of such a story is not simply a tour de force of stylistic and formal innovations and developments, an arts-for-arts’ sake formalist account, but the mixture of “other”² information, such as the artist’s psychology; the historical period of time in terms of its politics, economics, religious outlook, philosophy and so on and so forth in a “dance” that then confers meaning on the art-object and the personality of the artist. That is to say, aesthetic and extra-aesthetic descriptions apply, neither cancelling the other, yet neither description sufficient in nor of itself. Similarly, mathematics

does not simply “stand alone” as pure logic or a formal game but is enmeshed in physics and other sciences; follows a history that in turn is co-joined with a very human world, a social order of sorts from whence the fruits of mathematics were born, and it may be argued is relativized according, within a milieu and certain social and cultural conventions and so on. Such an acknowledgement which I have but briefly outlined can and does factor into to all disciplines within the ambit of knowledge and knowledge claim, now one discipline dominant, now another, yet all-inclusive of the “other”, just as one cannot get a foreground without the concomitant background, as it were.

2. Visualizing the structure of the interdisciplinary New Paradigm

2.1 Theoretical formulation

What I am proposing is not another discipline (that would just beget yet another and so on and so forth), but rather a theoretical framework in which all disciplines form a coherent unity, even as they develop within themselves and in relation or as overlapping with other disciplines, far and wide, deep and superficial. This then is not a “Theory of Everything” (so named T.O.E. in physics) lodged within a particular discipline for such an explanation is still within the formal language or form of that discipline and therefore even though in a reductive manner it may claim supremacy as the basis for all others - in the sense that one might argue that physics leads to chemistry which in turn leads to the life sciences and then at the other end of the spectrum moves towards the humanities – it is expressed and understood within and as physics and therefore cannot contain a world-picture. It is a separate discipline, even as it may act as a back-bone for all the others.

Thus, what I am describing is merely like a set that is not a set. The interdisciplinary New Paradigm – the phrase itself implying a distinct and limited entity – is itself not subject to any other set language/form/discipline. It is rather an idea that supervenes within and above the manifestation of knowledge under any one or several or connected branches (of knowledge). It is “new” in the sense that it offers the possibility of oneness and unity, rather than divide, separation, and specialization.

It is holistic, rather than analytical; it is applicable to all domains while itself not being a domain. Yet for all its esoteric non-specificity and definition, it has pragmatic value and a contribution to offer. It not so much fills a gap but creates a gap. In metaphorical terms all systems/languages/ forms/ branches of knowledge are then contained therein, which itself allows the very enmeshing of such forms to take place. Yet it is not just a “messy muck” but has both analytical and specialist attributes. With such a concept, one can do research that is indeed interdisciplinary and allows anything to be matched and compared drawing likenesses and connections between seemingly separate research fields. In this way, both new knowledge emerges as well as a deeper appreciation for unity, rather than, or perhaps amidst apparent fragmentation. I am not simply giving another “Kantian” predisposition, an inherent axiomatic structure of the mind or brain; rather I humbly claim that the Interdisciplinary New Paradigm is even more foundational. It is the need to unify. The need to *see* the big picture. A vision, perhaps of infinity or at least the unity of separate entities, like an abstract device such as a number that enables things to be counted or related. Or like the

² The idea of the “other” as in the “other” of language or that which is beyond the interdependent terms of the text in the Derridean sense, substantiates my argument, wherein, on the one hand language acts as a closed field, and yet on the other, admits an “other”, an “other of...”, a reference if you like. The “language turn” is the equivalent in philosophy of my contention that all branches of knowledge are interdependent while reality itself cannot be accurately known (the old epistemological conundrum). The New Paradigm then, in a sense may be subverted, in that there is no ultimate paradigm (no dominant field of knowledge, language, form...), only a shifting “wave”, an indescribable reality that one might metaphorically allude to or hint at, and pragmatically manipulate, while the source of qualia is unknown. Kant then made a brilliant distinction between the noumena and the phenomena.

fusion made by Einstein that links – against the prevailing traditions – both the concept of time and space.

2.2 Diagrammatic explanation

Consider a single discipline. We can represent that as a point. “Within” this point are all the details of that discipline. It is sub-divided in several ways as the discipline grows and evolves and develops.

In order for it to *be*, it has to be defined in relation to something else (another discipline), that is to say A is A and A is not not A, or B. Once there are two such imaginary “points”, then there is the basis for our conceptual line. For there to be a line or extension, there must be the concept of space, two dimensions. In this sense, though the points are initially defined as distinct, they are related. They form a line. A line in space. The line can be considered horizontal, the points are of equal value in plane. Or they can be drawn vertical, in which case one is said to be foundational and the other a result of the first. In this sense, space implicates time, a “before” and “after”, for to speak of change and development and relationships, is to speak of a sequence and process; matter, space, and time are in motion. One might call it the relationship, dialectic, or oscillation between a positive and negative charge, to draw an analogy or metaphor culled from say physics or chemistry. Since there is some notion, the imaginary line itself is not simply either horizontal or vertical but may bend and contort and flow in various ways. One might summon the image of a Pollock “drip painting” to visualize such a dynamic. Such an image follows our simple line of two points that begets enumerable more such points and thence lines and so a complex interaction can assume form within the plane (or canvas surface – to continue the metaphor).

Yet there are many “steps” before a complex web of seeming chaos. A line leads to 3 points, a triangle; four point implicates the square, and this iteration continues so that one gets the basic Platonic -like shapes. Then, a third dimension is added so that there is not simply height and width, but also volume or three dimensions. The form it takes can be visualized as chemical bonding and crystalline structures, yet this is so only by way of analogy. The exercise of which I am describing refers to a conceptual realm that can be applied across and between and within disciplines, that is to say, the organic body of knowledge, if you will.

Returning to the initial *point*, one might also envisage a particular discipline as a circle in which are contained further details (circles) and that once again, it is, because it is not something else (another discipline). Paradoxically, in that separation, they are connected, that is to say, the circles overlap (*or bond*). In this hypothetical image, a line barely exists for constituted by circles or points, it is but a useful fiction or mode. The image approximates, just as the visual sense of seeing is a partial description of a thing and requires the other senses as well as the assimilation of qualia in terms of rational systems of thought: categorizing; naming; counting and understanding processes and so on.

To render this less abstract, I can draw from exemplar cases in various domains or disciplines: In physics, one might say particles are “pulled together” via the strong force; in cosmological terms masses are attracted via gravity; in chemistry, the charges create bonded structures; in the life sciences, organic bodies “eat”, “replicate”, dispose of waste and so on – and in the humanities one can speak of the *overlap* of say art and history, which one might then call

“the history of art” and so on.

The upshot of all this is the inter-relatedness of all such branches of knowledge. The humanities and the sciences as the apparent furthest end of the spectrum or line or form or body of knowledge, are connected insofar as science is necessarily human science, not so much that reality “in itself”, but our mediation structures³, namely our means of understanding it (reality), limited by our senses, categories of thought or methods and perhaps, whether the cup of coffee this morning has rendered me alert enough to pen this down.

With these images and abstractions in mind, I will now develop a practical example of how this interdisciplinary nexus can be applied. This will substantiate my argument and convey one way wherein aesthetics; art history; science and sport – apparently disparate and unrelated fields (points or circles) – might be connected. If this is sound, then indeed one can see the explanatory and pragmatic power of the idea that I propose. Admittedly, even if valid, this is but one example and “purists” may dissent and argue for the formal coherence and separation of fields of knowledge; that this isolated example is random, a chance event – and that in the main, one cannot confuse A and B. Fiction is fiction. Nonfiction is non-fiction. My idea (somewhat) equates fiction and non-fiction and that sounds non-sensical. Yet, on close inspection it is not. As the poet is wont to say, reality *is* a dream. And the physicist might quip, some particles appear to not exist and do not even possess mass.

3. One possible application: “Mixing” art, aesthetics, science and sport

Observation 1: Morality in relation to art and sport (read: science)

In this brief section, I will outline how art and sport (read: science) are not clearly initiators of moral directives or simply used by other more powerful institutions. I derive the concept of “idolisation”, a word that conveys the struggle between on the one hand the desire for that which is higher, more ideal and at the same time fixating on those very ideals, defending them come what may, which may reflect an unyielding and implacable world view (and this may even apply to a particular aesthetic or in the case of science, one gets the notion of scientism).

That struggle might lead to consider art and sport as most free and beneficial to society if a-moral. The reason art may be shocking or in its less severe form simply original, is that we assume art to be the vehicle for moral truth. Certain behaviors in art or sport (read: science) for that matter

³ It is useful at this juncture to make the distinction between “lights” (light) and “vessels” (matter). The light is the “in itself”, the point of origin, while the “vessel” is our mode of apprehending it or categorizing it in some or other way or form or language or discipline. The point is that the New Paradigm of the interdisciplinary suggests that the light is one and infinite, while the vessels are of perhaps finite measure. Since the vessel “houses” the light, each vessel (discipline) still is essentially that light, though as distinct forms, may appear different. *Our lens is limited, while the light is not*. Yet such a distinction is necessary for the purposes of definition. Essentially what my argument points to is the dissolution of the vessel/s and the perception of light. Of course, this is an impossibility and simply a logical and imaginary hypothesis.

would not be tolerated; how much more so in life proper? However, art (and sport, science...) are marked by an ongoing aesthetic revision and thus by implication, no clear moral standard. Similarly, sport (read: science) as a puppet of consumer culture and politics often loses any naïve ethical truth (in fact the more so through its apparent political sterility).

The institutional realities of art and sport recognizes that indeed art and sport (read: science) are a reflection of these extraaesthetic designs, namely philosophical, religious and political concerns which have moral implications. The upshot is the ideals of political regimes end up usually prescribing what kind of art is acceptable and the form that sport (read: science) should take and in the process art and sport (read: science) become less than ideal, and simply a reflection of a philosophical and political system. In other words: both art and sport (read: science) are a platform for moral ideals that may reflect an overarching political dispensation or may be a site for a critique of those ideals or neither (as a self-enclosed game).

However, art and sport, intentionally or not, reflects a moral concern. For example: Minimalism reflected a positivist philosophical ideal and critiques that in its emptiness (Bell 2007). In sport, Jessie Owens's success at the Berlin Olympics of 1936 reflected that racial discrimination is unjustified. Science is seen as universal and above relative cultural norms, though such a view can be taken to task. In such cases, one could argue that art and sport (read: science) as culture does have something pertinent to say about ethical issues, that it is not simply a puppet or pawn in a larger philosophical and a political super-structure, but at the same time one should be advised not to idealize art and sport (read: science).

Moreover, it is here argued that a healthy skepticism mitigates the human propensity towards "final" truths and moral prescriptions which we tend to idolize and venerate in the name of some ideal. This tendency to find a stable form or image and thus restrict the "light" with the appeal to a set of ideals, I dub "idolisation". This begs the question as to whether there can have a moral agenda that permeates art and sport. (read: science) in the first place. Historically and based on theoretical perspectives the answer has been affirmative, but the consequences often dire, so that the very notion of "the moral" is not necessarily tenable as an ideal in either art or sport (read: science). In saying that I have projected a moral imperative, which should not be idealized. It may seem obvious to assert that art and sport (read: science) both have something to do with politics and the moral standards of a given society. But this need not be that clear as it is precisely the argument that art and sport (read: science) carry a meaning that is not merely institutional and political (national and transnational) that we carve a space for the "beautiful", the ineffable or the personal "untouched" by the social. In this sense, they are modalities of aesthetic, bodily "play". Idealization (aesthetics) and ideology (extra-aesthetic) nevertheless seem to interplay, and it is not clear how to negotiate that borderline. We are left with an existential abyss. Or we consign art and sport to that of an idyllic realm, an imaginative construction, which is the concern of the following section.

Observation 2: Of imagination and fantasy

Art and sport (read: science) consist in the imaginative construction of "another world". They require a certain

pretending and "make-believe". We recognize that in a certain sense they are not real: the drama is staged or "framed" in a particular way. In both art and sport (read: science) we praise the expression of an inner conviction well-articulated which has the effect of enveloping the audience in creating a memorable experience (in science, this could be the experience of mass, consumer culture, that is science in action in the form of technologies of the day). This may be achieved through imagination where a lateral, creative solution to a problem may be expressed. In the same way that an artist will develop a unique technique in order to elucidate a concept and feeling, a sportsperson (read: scientist) may show vision and ingenuity in a particular play, which articulates a subtle nuance to the game: it provides for an imaginative realization and requires an imaginative kind of vision. It is often attended with curiosity and joy.

Welsch (2005:14) ^[5] argues that this "dramatic realization" or lateral, creative solution in sport "can display all the dramatic traits of human existence", that is, the human condition. That sport is drama without a script may be poetic, but perhaps at times it is even more artistic than some of the arts, for example the performing arts, which are completely dependent on a script, choreography or a composition. While "in sport...the drama is due to the event alone. The freedom and event character of sport's production of meaning is eminently artistic" (Welsch 2005:14) ^[5]. One might describe science with a similar narrative, that is to say as a creative unfolding of events in history.

My intention here is not to assess whether in fact sport is art or science, art. I wish simply to draw the reader's attention to the fact that in all three being ideals in varying degrees and in specific ways through being imaginative, there is a common theme that underlies them. This I have suggested entails a redefining of arts' boundaries and the consequent aestheticization of the everyday, in this case, of sport, as well as scientific discovery and method, in articulating an aesthetic ideal. Although sport (read: science) may be considered as real-life drama and in the case of science, *about* nature, they are still a category of make-believe. We recognize it as but a game or as a diversion (even if it may be a profession). It is thus at a remove from the vicissitudes of life itself, even as it may act as a bridge (or metaphorical illustration) of values that are deemed pertinent to life. In the same way, art is said to represent (re-present) or comment on life.

Sport (read: science) is generally imaginative as it is as distant from life as is art, even as, perhaps similarly to art, it developed from life and is symbolic in that it developed from types of aggressive action in ordinary life, but now the struggle is raised to the level of imagination. As Santayana puts it: "sport is a liberal form of war stripped from its compulsions and malignity" (in Welsch 2005:10) ^[5]. For example: Why constantly drive at high speed or shoot unreal pigeons that will not be for food? And the stage for example, like the sporting field is separated from "everyday" life as neither actor nor sportsperson "attack" the other beyond this arena. They are imaginative. Similarly, scientific investigation is a game whereby nature is penetrated for deeper meanings and patterns.

Yet that is not to say they do not apply in some way to some kind of ethical system. In the dialectic between the imaginative and the moral, life itself is played out. In other

words, the joy, creativity and celebration and also often the pain and defeat experienced in these activities highlight the coincidence of the real (its moral value and meaning in life) and the unreal (an a-moral, fantasy dimension). Art and sport (read: science) in some measure both determine aspects of life and represent lifeworld's.

Now that we have defined the ideal in relation to art, extended that definition to analyze sport (read: science) as an aesthetic ideal and then made two common-sense observations with regard to art and sport (read: science), we can ask whether, if all this data is in some way valid, we can apply a reading of art aesthetics to the domain of sport and perhaps extend our understanding of sports aesthetics. I believe we can and Walter Schmid (2012) ^[4] suggests a Kantian theory of sport, which I then reapply to my argument that both art and sport reflect ethical and imaginative modalities. The appellation sport (read: science) still obtains and will be applied to this reading of sport. Such a code, that is – sport (read: science) – is not simply denoted as “sport *and* science” for that does not suggest that when one is present, the other appears absent; neither do I want to suggest that both sport and art are simply equated or obtain at the same time. Thus, the formulae argue in favor of the co-existence of the two, without equated them or placing them within the same frame of reference.

A Kantian theory of sport

In the *Journal of Philosophy of Sport*, work has already begun in expanding the field of everyday aesthetics. That is, specifically within the domain of sport. The method for doing so is precisely the task I have set myself: applying art aesthetics, in this case that of Kant, to an understanding of sport and sport theory. In this section, I will develop the argument that art aesthetics may be useful in extending sports aesthetics (or at least discerning confluences between them) by applying Kantian theories of beauty to sport. I will evaluate and interpret Schmid's (2012) ^[4] application of Kant with reference to my observations as set out above, namely sport, like art as moral training and as imaginative. This allows me to further develop the proposition that both art and sport are ideals, given the fact that the imaginative is precisely the realm of the mind as in philosophical idealism and the moral is concerned with a vision of ideal behavior within a certain context. In addition, one could argue that the moral is concerned with life-issues or extra-aesthetic concerns, whereas the imaginative is concerned with the medium of expression, its aesthetic import. The oscillation therefore between the imaginative and moral hitherto described reflects the complementary pairing of aesthetics and extra-aesthetics itself. Such an analysis, it is found may equally apply to science, so that I shall reference science as a substitution with sport within the reading of Kant that I now put forward. Such a nuance allows one to see our cultural games and pursuits as bearing similarities, perhaps divined from the root game, arguably so, namely art.

I take as my point of departure Schmid's (2012: 107-110) ^[4] outline of Kant's theory of beauty. Specifically, in summary fashion such a theory involves beauty as being without interest or disinterestedness, that is, one appreciates beauty for its own sake. Secondly, that we expect others to agree with one's valuations of beauty; one would claim universal assent; thirdly, that the formal harmony is critical and appears necessary, and lastly that this elicits pleasure in the viewer that is both sensual and abstract. I concur with

Schmid's (2012) ^[4] project to apply this to an analysis of sport, though I have done so with my own objectives in mind, namely to “mix” such an application with science as well.

Corresponding to the four points above, one may interpret sport (read: science) in the following way: Sport (read: science) is defined as a playing of the game for no external interests, other than the goals within the game itself. It is an ideal realm in which the only real object may be joy in the game itself. One submits to the “logic” of the game, only so that one may transcend the senselessness in other areas of one's life. In other words: one plays the game for the game itself, which one may argue results in sports' (read: sciences') aesthetic appeal. Secondly, athletic volitional experience aims at universality. This is so in that the player/scientist is trying to achieve ideal, for example the perfect “shot” or perfect “run” or ideal “equation” and so on which everyone would seek to accomplish (Schmid 2012) ^[4]. This of course only makes sense within the context of the game played. But unlike other actions, like building a bridge or selling a product and so on, the outcome is not the chief goal (Schmid 2012) ^[4] – certainly the case in the pure sciences. They are freely chosen by the player that plays the game. In this sense, the striving after perfection in sport (read: science), its intrinsic value is shared as an aesthetic ideal (for example: even when one's opponent wins, one can appreciate as player and fan alike the exhibition of a fantastic move). Thirdly, the performance itself is the end goal just as in art, where the appearance or form is the end goal. It is a making real of the ideal. In the words of Schmid (2012:111) ^[4] “whereas the aesthetic subject grasps the aesthetic object as presenting itself as a pure form for cognitive enjoyment, the sporting agent intends her action as a pure form of volitional achievement”. Science can be construed similarly as thought in action, as it were.

Although arguments against this attainment of the ideal form within sports games (read: science) in terms of a Kantian approach may be countered by the idea that sport (read: science) is just about winning and vanquishing one's opponent or the inherent competitiveness in science, Kant would possibly maintain that this need not be the case. Kant's theory of beauty may be applied to an appreciation of sport's (read: science's) creative and aesthetic dimension. Consequently, sporting experience and scientific investigation amounts to joy in performance and what it may represent as a sporting/scientific achievement, more significantly than for simply winning a bet or for financial reward and the like. It is debatable whether this ideal is realized at present. I think though one would concede that sport (read: science) results in pleasurable effects, both physically and mentally. This one could prove through scientific analysis of the effects of sport in terms of health generally, though excessive sport could be harmful. Now this Kantian ideal as applied to sport may be evaluated accordingly with a view to extending the argument that sport (read: science), derived from considerations within the sphere of art theory, is an imaginative construction with moral implications. To substantiate this view in regard to disinterestedness, I would say that it is precisely sports' (read: sciences') tenuous connection to the “real”, its merely apparent practicality that marks it as an imaginative construction. It is a temporary world fixed within parameters of time established by the game itself. Within these limitations, the significance of human exchange takes on

proportions “larger than life”; it may serve as a training ground for the acting out of moral prerogatives. Such a realm offers us a way to conceptualize our moral experience and moral life. Cultural life is such that these dramatic contexts provide a “stage” where we appear as moral actors. Sport is one such context where we can know and express moral sentiments (adapted from Schmid 2012) ^[4]. I maintain science function similarly. It is an ideal, albeit imaginative setting in which life is reflected.

In terms of universality, one may observe that the individual at the pinnacle of his/her sport (read: science), even if part of a team, captures the imagination of the public. Consequently, the sporting and scientific “idol” is believed to possess superior moral fiber. In supporting the sporting icon paradoxically, a Kantian theory of sport does not emphasize the desire for victory and domination. One may say the same about a scientist that has contributed to knowledge about the world. Guyer argues that this may lend a reading of sport such that excellent sports are in time; they can be described as “happenings”. They are also “happenings” out of time, as unreal and not part of “history”. Yet when this “happening” is sufficiently strong in time (and strangely beyond it), it may become a memory, personally and collectively, not only as a part of culture, but part of what we call history - as with scientific achievements. Such “actions” constitute forms of natural self-perfection comparable to artistic achievements: they “...belong to the realm of human culture or rational-natural development (Bildung) and constitute an apparent externalization of man as a noumenal being and culmination of nature” (Guyer 1993:116).

Sport (read: science) appears to carry with its Kant’s ideals of rational, free, moral action as a form of play that includes freedom, achievement and mutual respect. In this sense, sport (read: science) appears to have universal value. In terms of form manifested as action, Kant (1952 [1790]) ^[3] emphasized both the lack of goal directedness of action (“free beauty”) and that the aesthetic judgement is subordinate to ideals of excellence and mastery (“dependent beauty”) (Schmid 2012) ^[4]. I would like to suggest that this Kantian dichotomy is a useful way of conceptualizing the aesthetics of sport as well as scientific exploration. That is, that such experiences are paradoxical, revealing, on the one hand, a directed action, making the imagination a “reality”. On the other hand, the participant or the viewer is swept by the aesthetic play and loses intention to some degree. In this sense, the “real” is the imagined or the ideal. The participant and/or viewer are transported to another dimension, and forgets the troubles of life.

So, on the one hand, the act is highly defined, formed and rational (for example it is open to analysis, comparison and categorization). On the other hand, the absorption in the “play” (as participant or viewer) is not so conscious. Kant’s dichotomy between free (subconscious) and dependent beauty (directed action) thus becomes a useful way to conceptualize the imaginative and formal aesthetics of sport (read: science). At the same time, the moral is that which negotiates the ideal (the imaginative realm of rules) with the real (form). One might say that to act in accord with the rules of the game is an example of moral action. It implies what one ought to do, that is, formal mastery, which is the quintessence of a moral imperative. In this sense, I believe that on the whole sport, art and science as a practice is good.

This value-judgement was made on the basis that both science and sport is art-like, art being ideally concerned with world-bettering. Or so I believe.

In terms of pleasure, one might argue that Kant’s idea that to perceive aesthetic beauty is to see it as it is meant to be seen. This principle can also apply to sport (read: science). One could say that to do it “just right” in sport resembles to make it “look right” in art and aesthetics. From the fan’s (viewer’s) perspective, this culminates in appreciating and enjoying the performance. This right action is marked by a harmony of will and one’s bodily nature in reaching for perfection. This takes place within a community of sportspersons and scientists; it is part and parcel of the moral society of the game. In striving for the ideal (in art, science, in sport...) one concretizes the abstraction of ethical “rightness” into a physical act or object. Together, the community of sports pursues a kind of “virtuous happiness” (Schmid 2012) ^[4]. Sport (read: science) may promote equality and ethical norms; in fact, often moral education and socialization occurs first within the context of sport and learning basic science. For those who play in the Kantian manner, such ideals may indeed be realized. Kant’s philosophy of aesthetic beauty lends itself to an appreciation of sport (read: science) where love of the game, freedom within the game and interpersonal community is emphasized.

One could thus argue that aesthetics offers us a valuable way of assessing various cultural expressions without the trappings of objectification and quantification, that is, aesthetic awareness gives rise to multiple aesthetic form/meaning, rather than a singular meaning. Using Kant, often thought of as positivist, to extend our understanding/application of the aesthetic, is I believe a valuable direction to take if we are to understand the aesthetics of sport (read: science) particularly in relation to an art aesthetic tradition that has something to offer it.

4. Conclusion

This article is concerned with defining aesthetic idealism as it applies to art, sport, and science. Here it was briefly argued that “the moral” as an ideal has been rather misused and that consequently one should maintain a skepticism regarding the ethical as it pertains to art, science, and sport. However, the last statement is itself a moral injunction or ideal and consequently, perhaps an a-moral position vis-à-vis art, science and sport should be held, considering the dismal failings of overarching political philosophies and their “lumping” together of the arts, sciences, and sport to serve extra-aesthetic ends. We might then consign art and sport (read: science) to the imaginative without a “moral truth” or a prescriptive aesthetic ideal. It is perhaps in the dialectic or at least, the vacillation between “the moral” and the imaginative that art and sport (read: science) develop and specifically, develop an ongoing aesthetic ideal, even in dismissing such a notion.

Finally, having argued for an understanding of sport (read: science) by applying a traditional art concept such as idealization including the critique of this presumed ideal, I evaluated Schmid’s Kantian theory of sport to extend my observations concerning art and sport as both imaginative and as engendering moral ideals. Accordingly, and in agreement with Schmid (2012) ^[4], Kant might have seen sport and in terms of my objectives, science too, as an ideal,

suggesting a confluence with the ideals of art. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which art and sport (read: science) simply reveal in some or other form what can be described as struggle. I have referred to this as a tension between aesthetic and extra-aesthetic dimensions. This may also be clarified through the disjunction between an/the ideal and the symbol thereof.

This then shows or argues for an overlap between such variables as aesthetics; art; sport and science and such a “mixing” in defined as one instance of the New Paradigm, an inter-disciplinary paradigm shift wherein knowledge is perceived as unified, as one. Such a vision “allows” for deeper explanatory scope which perhaps amplifies the “observations” that such “relational thinking” conjures.

5. A Qualifying Note

Notwithstanding, my argument regarding a unifying and connecting stratum – a New Paradigm – that suggests the “mixing” and interdisciplinary nature of all things and all modes of comprehension, this is not a totalizing and ultimate system of thought. For the “epistemological unity” is itself and necessarily predicated on difference, singularity, identity, separation, and divide.

Just as each person is an individual; each thing a thing; A is A and not not A or B and so on, so individuals, things, languages, branches of knowledge and words form a separate and not an inter-related dimension of being. Even though such entities are not simple and are composed of parts, nevertheless it is a singular, separate, and individual identity.

In conclusion then, my argument entails a necessary dualism: on the one hand there is separation and divide, each entity being/language/discipline and so on unrelated to the next and a world in itself and each such entity forms part of a larger whole which in academia vacates a space for the so-named inter-disciplinary.

Thus, this note should be considered in conjunction with my project – at once seeking oneness and at the same time, the impossibility of such a task, that each “thing” is one and separate in itself, identical to itself and unlike any other “thing”. In this respect, the vessel, the body is singular – an individual instantiation of the light – while the light itself pervades all things.

6. References

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