

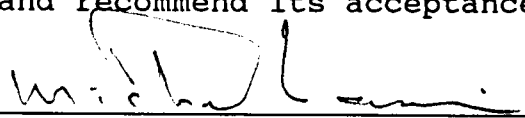
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William J. Morgan, Major Professor

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SPORT, LIBERALISM, AND TECHNICAL RATIONALITY:
A CRITIQUE.

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Samantha J. Harley
August, 1991

In memory of

Paula E. Fraser

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Finally, to Dr. William J. Morgan, my major professor,

I cannot find my own words to express my respect and thanks,
so if you don't object, I shall borrow some:

No printed word nor spoken plea,
can teach young minds what people should be,
nor all the books on all the shelves,
but what our teachers are themselves.

(Anon).

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was twofold: the first was to suggest that technical rationality, or instrumental reason, is the leading culprit behind the degradation of sport in contemporary liberal capitalist society. It reorders the goals, logic and rationality of sport away from its internal standards and goods, onto external instrumental standards and goods. This reorientation has resulted in the degradation of the standards of excellence of the life of the athlete, a life constituted by the willing acceptance of gratuitous difficulties.

The second purpose of this study was to focus on the effect of technical rationality on liberal democracy's ability to maintain a diverse society. It was argued that liberal society has allowed the goals and rationality of the market to seep into social practices like sport, to the extent that these practices all speak the same language of external goods. The result has been that liberal society is unable to offer the kind of diversity that it prides itself on. To reverse this anti-pluralistic trend, it was suggested that practitioners ought to locate democratically a consensus on the contingent ideals of their practice, and artfully re-draw the social map so as to protect sport from undue market influence. Practitioner generated protection

was argued to further both the ideals and goals of social practices, and the diversity that liberal society prides itself on offering.

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But there is nothing wrong with liberal democracy, nor with the philosophers who have tried to enlarge its scope. There is only something wrong with the attempt to see their efforts as failures to achieve something which they were not trying to achieve - a demonstration of the "objective" superiority of our way of life over all other alternatives. There is, in short, nothing wrong with the hopes of the Enlightenment, the hopes which created the Western democracies. The value of the ideals of the Enlightenment is, for us pragmatists, just the value of some of the institutions and practices which they have created. (52: p.16)

INTRODUCTION

THE RATIONALIZATION AND DEGRADATION OF CONTEMPORARY SPORT

The purpose of this study is twofold: 1) to suggest that technology, or rationalization, is the leading culprit behind the degradation of sport in contemporary Western society, and 2) to show how liberal democratic society is obligated, by its own tenets, to intervene to ensure the protection of the social practice of sport from technological rationalization.

To understand how technology plays a central role in the degradation of sport, it is necessary to define technology and to trace its role in contemporary Western society. Heidegger's (19) analysis is insightful on this point. He identifies what he calls "the essence of technology" as an "ordering" of thoughts, based on the notion of efficiency as the criterion to which all else is subsumed (19: p. 17). To illustrate this notion, consider a can and a can opener. For Heidegger, technology is the manner of thinking that created the can and can opener. Both these devices represent the idea of efficiency. The can represents a means of storing and transporting food stuffs conveniently, safely and with minimum loss of goods. The can opener represents a means of opening the can quickly and easily. The key concept in this example is a means-ends ordering. Food storage is an end and the can is a means.

Freeing the can's contents is the end, and the can opener is a means. In this example it is the goal of preparing food more efficiently that led to the invention of these devices.

Although this explanation is simplified, it nonetheless serves to identify what Heidegger calls the essence of technology. He labels this essence "ordering", and considers it to be the fundamental characteristic of modern technology. Thus when Heidegger states that the essence of technology is "nothing technological," he means that it is not the technological device itself, but rather the manner of thinking in an efficient, means-ends ordered way that constitutes technology (19: p. 23).

It is important to recognize the broad scope in which technological thinking plays a significant role; for it has manifested itself in ways other than simply improvements in technological hardware. As Habermas points out (18), social structures are themselves saturated by technological thinking. Bureaucratic bodies, for example, concern themselves with efficient administration. In this respect, institutions such as governments, universities and the like also manifest the technological attitude of rationalization.

Heidegger's reduction of technical thinking to efficient ordering highlights a recurring theme in the contemporary literature. In the debates and discussions of the state of Western society, Habermas (18), Borgmann (3), MacIntyre (36) and others, ground their analyses on the

transformation of society from a "traditional" to a technically "rational" one. Habermas identifies this shift in terms of the change of legitimating systems constituted by "mythical, religious or metaphysical interpretations of reality" to new legitimation systems based upon purposive-rational action. These new legitimation systems are governed by technical rules and strategies, and empirical and analytic knowledge (18: pp. 91,92). This shift represents a significant change in way of thinking which most analysts have called the "Enlightenment".

The Enlightenment has been characterized as "an intellectual and cultural revolution" that broke through religious superstition and ancient dogma (3: p. 35). Traditional forms of legitimation have been replaced by "rationality" with the aim of understanding and controlling nature. The outcome of this shift was expected to be a happier and safer life, one freed from hunger and cold and general hardships.

Among my aims is to describe the effect this shift to technical legitimation has had on social practices in liberal democratic society, specifically in terms of social practices like sport. I understand a social practice in the precise sense that MacIntyre has defined it.

(A)ny coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to

achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved are systematically extended. (36: p. 187)

Sport is one such social practice, and perhaps one of the most conspicuous, which possesses its own stock of internal goods. The most distinct of its internal goods is the willing acceptance of gratuitous difficulty just so that it makes the activity possible. Goods are called "internal" for two reasons: they can only be attained by participating in the practice in question, and secondly because they can only be "identified and recognized by the experience of participating in the practice in question." (36: pp. 188,189) Further, there are two kinds of internal goods: the excellence of the product, for example an excellent score in a game of golf, and the good of a certain kind of life, for example a golfer living out the life, to a greater or lesser extent, of a golfer (36: pp. 189,190). The exercise of the virtues: courage, patience, honesty and so on, are identified by MacIntyre as necessary for the attainment of such internal goods.

One of my central concerns is to understand how technical rationality has undermined the social practice of sport. In this regard, I will rely principally on the analyses of two theorists: Albert Borgmann's theory of technological devices, and Alasdair MacIntyre's discussion of the complex relationship between social practices and social institutions.

Borgmann and MacIntyre discuss the way in which focal things and practices, and social practices such as sport have been degraded by a shift to rational society. Borgmann discusses this degradation from the angle of technological hardware, or "devices". Specifically, he is concerned with the negative effects that such devices have had on our lives by "disburdening" and "disengaging" us from matters of ultimate concern that command our attention and vitality.

MacIntyre's analysis illustrates how social structures themselves are implicated in the degradation of sport. While institutions are required to sustain social practices, and they deal in goods that are external to their practice, they frequently lose sight of the internal goods of the practice that they are trying to sustain because of their own technical, administrative character. MacIntyre explains that when this occurs, the practice itself is compromised.

Both MacIntyre and Borgmann identify ways in which social practices have been undermined. Although locating this loss from different angles, their analysis has a common denominator. Each has attributed sport's degradation or corruption to an overriding concern for efficiency, which as I have previously explained, is the essence of technological rationality (19). It is this notion of efficiency that is insensitive to any distinction between internal and external goods.

I will not advance the suggested, but false thesis that

the destruction of technology is required in order to make possible the flourishing of social practices like sport. Indeed Borgmann and MacIntyre recognise the benefits that technical rationality has brought us. Borgmann, in particular, notes that it has freed us for participation in those practices of our choosing, and that it can heighten the "radiance" of these focal concerns. MacIntyre, in turn, notes the role that institutions perform by sustaining social practices through organization. While Borgmann suggests that we carefully shelter those practices that are of ultimate concern to us, that we want to burden and engage ourselves with, from technological rationalization processes, MacIntyre argues that institutions should reorient themselves to further the goals of the practice, and not the goals of fame, fortune and the like.

While I will in large measure agree with MacIntyre's and Borgmann's analysis of, and solutions to, the degradation of sport and kindred social practices, I will endeavour to provide a framework with which to intervene legitimately in the conduct of such practices in a liberal democratic society. I will argue that a liberal democratic society, which by definition is committed to pluralism, ought to safeguard the integrity of social practices in order to preserve a greater range of opportunities for its citizens. By so doing, social practices will be able to serve the wide interests of those citizens who decide to

take them up.

While liberal democratic society defines itself by its commitment to pluralism, it has largely failed to recognize that the corruption to social practices like sport amounts to a significant loss to this pluralism. As such, I will argue that liberal democracy should commit itself to the preservation of social practices in order to safeguard its commitment to pluralism.

My inquiry will be divided into four chapters. Chapter I will be concerned with Albert Borgmann's theory of technological devices and focal practices, and Alasdair MacIntyre's theory of social practices and institutions. I will present their theories on the degradation of focal and social practices, and examine their respective solutions to this degradation. Chapter II will illustrate the degradation of contemporary sport by technical rationality as it is embodied in capitalist society. In Chapter III I will argue that within a liberal democracy there exists strong grounds for legitimate interference in social practices. Interference will help ensure a return to a pluralistic society if the instrumental goals inherent in a capitalist economy are confined to the marketplace, thereby keeping capitalist goals from corrupting social practices like sport. The concluding chapter will summarize this investigation and emphasize that the availability of internal goods in social practices such as sport

characterizes a way of life superior to the one dimensional character of contemporary capitalist liberal democracy.

Thus it will be concluded that not only is the integrity of practices such as sport at stake, but the very integrity of liberal democratic society itself.

CHAPTER I

IDEOLOGY OF TECHNOLOGY

The Enlightenment marked a dramatic, significant shift in the history of the West, bringing a fundamental change in the way individuals determine what is politically legitimate. While prior to the Enlightenment period, political legitimation was founded upon traditional, religious and mythical belief systems, after the Enlightenment, legitimation was constituted by technical rationality. This concept of rationality, often called instrumental or subjective reason, is composed of mathematical and scientific approaches to reality that have been extended to the realm of human actions. In such instances, the means utilized are subject to precise determination; they are simply questions of fact. The end, in contrast, remains practical and "definitely given", unable to be rationally resolved because of its value-laden nature. In other words, the end is something that lies beyond the process of debate (21: pp. 65-66; 40: pp. 5-7).

In this chapter I will illustrate this transition by presenting Jurgen Habermas' examination of the shift in legitimating systems and emphasize the dominant position that technical rationality has assumed in contemporary Western society. I will then present Albert Borgmann's and Alasdair MacIntyre's theories on the effect of this shift

to, and overwhelming acceptance of, technical rationality, in particular its effect on social practices like sport. Borgmann and MacIntyre argue that technical rationality has degraded our social practices and both propose that we ought to safeguard such practices from the effects of this shift in legitimating systems.

TECHNICAL RATIONALITY

In his essay "Technology and Science as Ideology" (18), Habermas distinguishes between pre-Enlightenment and Enlightenment rationality by marking off two general types of rational action: "Purposive-Rational Action" that is technical or instrumental by nature, and "Interaction" that is communicative or institutional by nature. He believes that it is the division between these two types of action that is a key to understanding the two different notions of rationality.

Habermas argues that these two types of action are decidedly different because they are based on fundamentally different approaches to the world. Purposive-rational action is governed by technical rules and facts and remains objective to those individuals who act according to it. As he states,

Because this sort of rationality extends to the correct choice among strategies, the appropriate application of technologies, and the efficient establishment of systems (with presupposed aims in given situations), it removes the total social framework of interests in which strategies are chosen, technologies applied, and

systems established, from the scope of reflection and rational reconstruction. Moreover, this rationality extends only to relations of possible technical control and therefore requires a type of action that implies domination, whether of nature or society. (18: p. 82)

In contrast, interaction is governed by norms reached through group consensus and thus is intersubjective in nature. The existence of traditional societies depended on the maintenance of an interactive legitimation system based on "mythical, religious or metaphysical interpretations of reality- cosmic as well as social-as a whole" (18: p. 95).

Habermas argued that technical rationality directly threatened social interaction by encroaching upon and usurping its traditional, institutional forms of legitimation. The dominant way to evaluate and judge appropriate action in any given situation was now according to standards of technical rationality. The success of this new system was closely tied to the promise of the Enlightenment; the promise to free humans from oppressive burdens. Technical rationality was seen as the means to achieve this goal.

The seepage of purposive-rational action into the cultural and practical aspects of life has occurred to the extent that only technical questions concerned with the utilization of efficient means are debated. This has the direct result of crowding out social questions concerned with the final end of life, in particular, questions about the nature of the good life.

This transition to a technically based rational society has brought significant social change in its wake. I now want to examine some of the more significant of these social changes by considering Albert Borgmann's discussion of technological devices, focal things and practices, and Alasdair MacIntyre's discussion of social practices, institutions and virtues. Both authors emphasize the increasing dominance of purposive rationality in our contemporary social lives. In particular, both speak to the degrading effect that it has had on our focal things and practices by destroying their point and function, and on social practices by reorienting their point and function from internal to external goods.

BORGSMANN'S THEORY OF TECHNICAL DEVICES AND FOCAL PRACTICES

In Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life, Borgmann distinguishes the nuances of our technological society by locating and illustrating those aspects that have freed us from toil, and those that have further imprisoned us. I want to focus on these two distinct features of technological rationalization.

The Promise of Technology

Borgmann argues that the commonly accepted idea of the good life is closely tied up in what he calls the "promise of technology" (3; 4; 5). Its promise is to liberate us

from "the curses of famine, sickness, and ignorance," to make our life more "comfortable with the riches of the world, and do all this in the systematic and powerful way that modern science opens up." (5: p. 12) By vowing to "bring the forces of nature and culture under control", releasing "us from misery and toil", technological rationalization promised "to enrich our lives" (3: p. 41). Borgmann explains that modern life is based upon this promise, so much so that we are scarcely aware of it (3: p. 40).

Technological rationalization provided the blueprint with which to approach and solve common adversities. It enabled the creation of technological devices; mechanisms for heating one's home, producing food more efficiently and so on. These devices contributed to the easing of hardships like cold and hunger, and therewith they liberated humans from burden and toil. This, in turn, helped to create a positive view of technology.

However, Borgmann is concerned with the path that this promise has taken Western civilization. In particular, he is distressed by the effect of technological rationalization on our focal practices; those activities that engage us in great depth and that can act as central, unifying points in our life. The large scale loss of focal practices at the hands of the dominating role of technical rationalization, he argues, constitutes a significant loss of freedom and

happiness. He questions, therefore, the validity of technology's promise to liberate us from toil, from unhappiness. His analysis turns to the notion of devices and disburdenment in order to precisely determine the effect that technology has had on our lives.

The "Thing"

It is Borgmann's distinction between the "thing" and the "device" that helps to bring his idea of "burdenment" to the fore. The "thing" is an object, for example a wood stove, that makes demands on us: concentration, effort or skill etc., while still easing the procurement of an end or good, in this case warmth.

... a stove used to furnish more than mere warmth. It was a **focus**, a hearth, a place that gathered the work and leisure of a family and gave the house a center. Its coldness marked the morning, and the spreading of its warmth the beginning of the day. It assigned to the different family members tasks that defined their place in the household. The mother built the fire, the children kept the fire box filled, and the father cut the firewood. It provided for the entire family a regular and bodily engagement with rhythm of the seasons that was woven together of the threat of cold and the solace of warmth, the smell of wood smoke, the exertion of sawing and of carrying, the teaching of skills, and the fidelity to daily tasks. (3: pp. 41-42)

Not only does a thing make a demand on us but it requires that we engage ourselves with the task in order to bring about the end. Indeed, it is the object itself that commands our attention, requiring that we exercise the relevant skills to the extent that the experience of the thing itself, can draw us back to engage in activity with

it. "A thing, in the sense that I want to use it, is inseparable from its context, namely, its world, and from our commerce with the thing and its world, namely, engagement." (3: p. 41) The result is that the "thing", in contrast to the "device", requires "burdenment".

The "Device"

The device is described by Borgmann as the paradigm of technological practice; it is the most common manifestation of technology in Western society. Its aim is to ensure that commodities, as opposed to things, are made fully available (3: p. 43). Specifically, a device is something that eases or simplifies the completion of a task by demanding little if any effort, skill or initiative on the part of the practitioner. Thus the device has the effect of disburdening one of concern and effort in bringing about a specific state of affairs:

Goods that are available to us enrich our lives and, if they are technologically available, they do so without imposing burdens on us. Something is available to us in this sense if it has been rendered instantaneous, ubiquitous, safe and easy.(3: p. 41)

Disburdenment occurs via machinery usually hidden from one's view. The 'best' devices are those most able to disburden us. In most instances this means that they are smaller, faster, better hidden etc., and they provide us with the commodity we seek. Borgmann characterizes the primary character of a commodity as "consumably available

with...technological machinery as their basis and with the disengagement and distraction as their consequences." (3: p. 259, no.5) The notion of a commodity is important to Borgmann because a device's point and function is to render commodities available, and commodities are those things produced in a ubiquitous, safe and easy fashion. A technological object that fulfills these criteria is a "device".

Borgmann is concerned with the effect that devices are having on the richness of our lives. He considers burdenment, at least up to some threshold point, to be a positive experience because through it we are challenged and tested and required to engage ourselves within the activity at hand. Furthermore, he argues that engagement marks a 'thing' off from a 'device'. Here he is referring to the quality of the relationship that a 'thing' demands from an individual. Borgmann provides a number of examples that clearly illustrate this notion of burdenment and engagement and clarify the difference between devices and things.

The central heating plant provides the commodity called "warmth". In the past, warmth was a difficult thing to attain, it required hard work, effort, risk, and time. Now a switch of a thermostat provides us with controlled warmth. Thus procurement of warmth is no longer a demanding, skillful task as it is delivered to us easily and mindlessly. The result being that the central heating

system has **"disburdened"** us. In contrast, the "pre-technological" version of warmth, the wood stove, is an example of a "thing". Although the wood stove is "technology", it is not a "device," because its warmth is not available in a ubiquitous fashion but is acquired only with delay, difficulty and effort. The tasks embedded in the procurement of warmth, those that revolved around the seasons, the richness of family life and such, and that constitute its "burdening" of us, are the keys to why the wood stove enriched ones life instead of leaving one feeling empty and lacking meaning. As Borgmann explains, the "thing" is inseparable from its context; its world, and from our engagement with that thing. "The experience of a thing is always and also a bodily and social engagement with the thing's world. In calling forth a manifold engagement, a thing necessarily provides more than one commodity." (3: p. 41)

A "thing" possesses a direct relationship between the means and ends; between the tasks carried out and the "rich harmonies that result" (33: p. 21). The "thing" (wood stove) "has a world gathering force. It serves to focus and illuminate our involvement with the social and natural environment." (33: p. 21). In contrast, the device involves a separation of means and ends (3: p. 43-44). The means (heating machinery) are concealed from us while the end (warmth) is prominent. It is here that we return to the

promise of technology. Although devices have disburdened us from hunger and disease and we are able to fly to the moon, and talk business with people on the other side of the world, Borgmann argues that there remains a pervasive feeling of dissatisfaction with our world of devices. People's happiness appears to decrease as technological affluence increases (3: p. 124) and in fact technology now seems unable to meet its promise of supplying the good life.

To further illustrate his point, and to clarify what he means in reference to happiness, Borgmann uses Robert Farrar Capon's The Supper of the Lamb, a story that revolves around the focal concern of "the great meal".

The great meal, the long session as Capon calls it, where the guests are thoughtfully invited, the table has been carefully set, where the food is the culmination of tradition, patience, and skill and the presence of the earth's most delectable textures and tastes, where there is an invocation of divinity at the beginning and memorable conversation throughout. (3: p. 202)

The idea of a "focal concern" or "focal thing" is central to Borgmann's thesis on contemporary technological society. Focal things or concerns are those activities that possess a "world gathering force", they center our lives about a particular concern, they provide a focus to our lives. Borgmann compares the fast food junkie's interest and concern for food with the interest and concern manifested in Capon's meal. Where Capon is concerned with the "acquisition of skills, the fidelity to a daily discipline, the broadening of sensibility, the profound

interaction of human beings, and the preservation and development of tradition," the fast food junkie is not (3: p. 214). Instead, the junkie is interested in quickly satisfying hunger and shows little concern for the quality of the food other than, perhaps, the amount of ketchup on the hamburger and the crispness of the fries. There exists a vast difference in the quality or the richness of the two meals, and it is these traits that Borgmann brings together "under the heading of engagement." (3: p. 214)

Borgmann argues that activities come to possess the quality of engagement when they burden us, when they make demands on our faculties to the extent that we become engaged within that activity. Engagement within a focal practice is that kind of quality of experience that draws one back to the activity. It is in this way that focal concerns can act as lights to which we are drawn. Indeed, to be engaged within an activity is the "good life" for Borgmann.

The good life, then, is one of engagement, and engagement is variously realized by various people. Engagement would not only harmonize the variety among people but also within the life of one person....Capon finds it not only in the culture of the table but also in music. (3: p. 214)

Borgmann discusses a variety of focal concerns including sport, music, and the culture of the table. We can expand his list to include pursuits such as philosophy, physics or literature, and more 'pragmatic' activities such as carpentry, architecture and so on. Virtually any

activity can hold within it the necessary qualities (the tradition, standards of excellence and so on), to engage us and to act as a focal or central point in one's life, so long as that activity is able to engage one.

Focal Practices

To succeed in safeguarding focal things from technological diremption into means and end, Borgmann argues that they must be embodied within a human practice; "focal things require a practice for their welfare." (3: p. 200). It appears from his discussion that this is where focal things are placed in their context. The practice adds to the focal thing, for example, a meal is no longer just a meal, but table manners, seating arrangements, the signpost of significant happenings throughout the year and in one's life (birthdays, anniversaries, family gatherings, deaths etc). In other words there exists a social tradition with standards, norms and the like. In this way the practice embodies the thing into something other and greater than itself.

Furthermore, Borgmann goes on to say that if a practice is not going to "degenerate into an empty and perhaps deadening ritual" then it must have a focal thing at its center. The focal thing empowers the practice by enabling its participants to make a commitment to that practice, and it is commitment that will save both the thing

and the practice from degradation by technology. That is, it is only by commitment to one's focus in life that its participants will make the effort to continue engaging within it and carry the tradition forward.

Technological rationalization has, according to Borgmann, made a decisive impact on our focal things and practices. We have searched for machineries that are functionally equivalent to the end that a focal thing procures because such machinery renders that end "more instantaneously, ubiquitously, more assuredly and easily" (3: p. 202). The cost of this shift to efficiency has been to disburden us from potentially meaningful, unique and significant activities that may constitute an ultimate concern in our lives, a life by which we are prepared to order the choices we make and the actions we take into a unified whole.

Borgmann weighs the benefits of this increase in efficiency against the loss of focal concerns in our society, and while he does not want to return to pre-Enlightenment times he suggests not only that we guard these focal things from degradation by rationalization but that we recognize them in their context. As he argues,

If...we guard focal things in their depth and integrity, then, to see them fully and truly, we must see them in context. Things that are deprived of their context become ambiguous. The letter "a" by itself means nothing in particular. In the context of "table" it conveys or helps to convey a more definite meaning. But "table" in turn can mean many things. It means something more powerful in the text of Capon's book

where he speaks of "The Vesting of the Table." But that text must finally be seen in the context and texture of the world. To say that something becomes ambiguous is to say that it is made to say less, little, or nothing. Thus to elaborate the context of focal events is to grant them their proper eloquence. (3: p. 202)

So the device simultaneously disengages us as it disburdens us, thereby depriving us of an engagement with a thing, freeing us from social ties and the like. It is in this way that the promise of technology has failed us. It does not secure for us the good life because, as Borgmann insists, the good life is one of engagement (3: pp. 210, 214). Instead, we have been imprisoned by the domination of rationality at the expense of meaningful social relationships and engaging activities.

According to Borgmann then, the technological apparatus need not be dismantled, as some critics have suggested, but simply put to more intelligent use. Instead of technology providing both the means and the ends of life, that is, the efficient means AND the end the device procures, our focal concerns and practices should provide the ends for which we exist.¹

Borgmann also acknowledges that technological devices themselves can facilitate our engagement in focal practices. That is, technology can be used as merely the means to the attainment of our focal concerns, and to a meaningful engagement with them. The acoustic guitar, for example, is

¹ Of course some of these focal practices and things will have been technologized out of existence.

able to facilitate the engagement of music creation whilst the light "A" frame back pack facilitates one's engagement in a hike to the mountain tops. One can be engaged by both activities yet it is the "A" frame and the acoustic guitar that facilitate this engagement. By acknowledging this, Borgmann shows that he does not want to return to pre-Enlightenment times, but is arguing that we question the role of technological rationality and evaluate the way in which technology can bring us liberation and enrichment. It is not by the overwhelming free reign of technology but by careful consideration of situations in which disburdenment is appropriate and when it is not - when engagement with practices or things is properly called for, that the real promise of technology realizes itself.

Borgmann also discusses a more indirect manner by which the technological environment can heighten the radiance of our focal practices. Given that our lives are frequently rushed, scattered, and strained, filled with boring labor and the consumption of devices, technology can provide a backdrop to which focal things can be compared. For example, when we do set aside the time to invite our guests, set the table and perhaps spend days planning and preparing the actual meal, we can be struck by the stark contrast it provides to our normal rushed, fast food, or even twenty-minute cooking time meals. Thus focal things and practices can act almost like smelling salts and awaken us to a

different reality when they are situated within the technological environment.

Borgmann's position on focal things can be summarized as follows,

They are concrete, tangible, and deep, admitting of no functional equivalents; they have a tradition, structure, and rhythm of their own. They are unprocurable and finally beyond our control. They engage us in the fullness of our capacities. And they thrive in the technological setting. A focal practice, generally, is the resolute and regular dedication to a focal thing. It sponsors discipline and skill which are exercised in a unity of achievement and enjoyment, of mind, body, and the world, of myself and others, in a social union. (3: p. 219)

Such a shift in perspective, from devices to things, brings questions of ultimate concern back into significance. The ends in life are no longer fixed as givens but are up for debate. Technological innovation is no longer seen as both the means and end of life. Borgmann believes the 'thing' provides this means-end solution that shifts the paradigm of technology to its rightful and appropriate sphere.

A reform of the paradigm (of technology) is even less, of course, a dismantling of technology or of the technological universe. It is rather the recognition and restraint of the paradigm. To restrain the paradigm is to restrict it to its proper sphere. Its proper sphere is the background or periphery of focal things and practices. Technology so reformed is no longer the characteristic and dominant way in which we take up with reality; rather it is a way of proceeding that we follow at certain times and up to a point, one that is left behind when we reach the threshold of our focal and final concerns. (3: p. 220; My brackets)

In summary, the "liberation" provided by technology succeeded in freeing us from drudgery and toil. It has also

encased us within a range of activities that lack full meaning and significance. The predictable result is that our quality of life, our happiness, has not proceeded along the path mapped out by the Enlightenment. This decrease in happiness is due, Borgmann argues, to the loss of focal practices at the hands of technological disburdenment.

To attain a higher quality of life, one not measured solely by the standards of technological devices, Borgmann argues that we identify those activities where disburdenment is appropriate and allow technology to fulfill its liberating role in disengaging us from them. However, it must not reduce the range and the depth of focal activities from our horizon. By making this qualitative distinction we will be enabled to participate in a genuinely wide range of activities of our choosing as a result of protecting meaningful, significant human activity. Focal concerns constitute this category of activity as they allow for the experience of engagement and because they perform an orienting role by capturing our attention and imagination.

SOCIAL PRACTICES, GOODS, VIRTUES & INSTITUTIONS

Alasdair MacIntyre's analysis of social practices and social institutions provides us with a clear characterization of those features that are intrinsic to a social practice and those features that are socially and contingently attached to such practices.

Social Practices

In After Virtue, MacIntyre distinguishes between a social practice and a social institution. By a social practice he means

any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved are systematically extended. (36: p. 187)

MacIntyre identifies activities as diverse as chess, football, architecture, farming, physics, chemistry, biology, painting and music (36: p. 187) as examples of social practices. Turnip planting, for example, is not a social practice because it is not a "complex form of socially established activity".

MacIntyre argues that there are "goods internal" to a social practice. These "goods" are called internal for two reasons, they can only be attained by participating in a particular social practice and secondly because they can only be recognized and identified by participation within the practice (36: p. 188). By this he means that each social practice is made up of unique characteristics that help define that practice. The only way that one can experience these goods is to partake of that practice. For example, there are certain skills, forms of judgement and feelings associated with playing a musical instrument. Only

through such an experience can one experience those internal goods identified with the social practice that is music.

MacIntyre delineates two kinds of internal goods. The first is the excellence of the product itself (36: p. 188). A score of 64 for a round of 18 holes of golf or, the excellence of the Mona Lisa or the 1812 Overture. In this sense, MacIntyre is referring to the actual standards that are achieved within the practice, and to understand these standards one must be cognizant of the history of that practice.

The second kind of internal good is the good of a certain kind of life. The social practice of chess is an example where the internal goods of chess can act as a powerful force in one's life.

(There may be a) time when the child will find in those goods specific to chess, in the achievement of a certain highly particular kind of analytical skill, strategic imagination and competitive intensity,...reasons...not just for winning on a particular occasion, but for trying to excel in whatever way the game of chess demands. (36: p. 188)

These internal goods may appeal to an individual so much that one chooses to live out one's life as "a chess player", or as an athlete, a musician, a writer and so on. An individual may order their actions and choices according to this 'life'. MacIntyre explains that this "good" may only be temporary, and that any judgement upon this life, "these goods", "requires at the very least the kind of competence that is only to be acquired either as a (chess player) or as

someone willing to learn systematically what the (chess player) has to teach." (36: p. 190)

MacIntyre's position on social practices then, is that each practice is constituted by its own stock of internal goods that are unique to that practice. While attempting to attain the standards of excellence of the practice, one may realize these internal goods. MacIntyre's stance on social practices is captured in the following statement;

A practice involves standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of goods. To enter into a practice is to accept the authority of those standards and the inadequacy of my own performance as judged by them. It is to subject my own attitudes, choices, preferences and tastes to the standards which currently and partially define the practice. Practices...have a history: games, sciences and arts all have histories. Thus the standards are not immune from criticism, but nonetheless we cannot be initiated into a practice without accepting the authority of the best standards realized so far. (36: p. 190)

MacIntyre's description of social practices and their internal goods constitutes the core of his discussion, yet it is only half of his analysis. The remainder revolves about social institutions that surround and sustain social practices, and external goods, or those goods that institutions deal in.

External Goods

MacIntyre distinguishes internal goods from "external" goods. External goods are externally and contingently attached to practices. They include fame, status, prestige

and money, all of which can be achieved in alternative fashions. Hence the achievement of external goods is not solely reliant on participation in a certain practice. For example, a person racing a sailboat may only be sailing to win because of the money that awaits the victor. Yet sailing is not the only way of securing money. Furthermore, since external goods are material in nature, they are frequently the object of competition. The more external goods one possesses, the less is available for others. In contrast, internal goods are not the object of competition; where the achievement of internal goods is "a good for the whole community who participate in the practice", MacIntyre argues that external goods are not. "So when...W.G. Grace advanced the art of batting in cricket in a quite new way" his "achievement enriched the whole relevant community." (36: pp. 190, 191)

MacIntyre argues that exercise of the virtues is necessary if one is to attain internal goods, but virtues are incidental and even hinder the attainment of external goods. It is to his notion of virtues that I now turn.

Virtues

It is with respect to the attainment of internal goods that MacIntyre locates the "point and function" of the virtues (36: p. 201). He describes a virtue as, "an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which

tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods." (36: p. 191) Virtues such as courage, honesty, justice, patience, grace and the like are qualities that allow one to attain internal goods. Social practices require that we subordinate ourselves to the standards of excellence of the practice; the standards set by those have come before us, those who shaped the direction that the practice has taken. To attain these internal goods by striving to achieve excellent standards, one necessarily must possess and exercise virtuous qualities like justice, honesty and courage. MacIntyre argues that if one does not, then internal goods are "barred to us" (36: p. 191). MacIntyre states that a practices internal goods

can only be achieved by subordinating ourselves within the practice in our relationship to other practitioners. We have to learn to recognize what is due to whom; we have to be prepared to take whatever self-endangering risks are demanded along the way; and we have to listen carefully to what we are told about our own inadequacies and to reply with the same carefulness for the facts. In other words we have to accept as necessary components of any practice with internal goods and standards of excellence the virtues of justice, courage and honesty. For not to accept these, to be willing to cheat,...so far bars us from achieving the standards of excellence or the goods internal to the practice that it renders the practice pointless except as a device for achieving external goods. (36: p. 191)

Without the relevant virtues, we are unable to enter into the type of relationship with the practice and its standards of excellence that will allow us to achieve its internal goods. Thus where the virtues flourish so to may practices,

but in cultures where the virtues are not held in esteem and do not flourish, the integrity of social practices are compromised.

From this perspective, a social practice is not just a repository of technical skills; for the ends that the technical skills serve "are transformed and enriched by these extensions of human powers and by that regard for its own internal goods which are partially definitive of each particular social practice." (36: p. 193) So a practice is more than the improvement of specific technical skills.

Institutions

As stated above, MacIntyre contrasts social practices with social institutions. Where chess is a practice, chess clubs are its institution. In the same manner, universities, hospitals, and laboratories are institutions of the practices of physics and medicine. Whilst practices are concerned with internal goods, institutions necessarily deal with external goods. Institutions acquire money and material goods and "are structured in terms of power and status, and they distribute money, power and status as rewards." (36: p. 194)

Institutions perform the role of sustaining practices, as MacIntyre states "...no practices can survive for any length of time unsustained by institutions." (36: p. 194) Indeed, without institutions, social practices would "suffer

terribly" (56: p. 275). But a problem arises.

Institutions, by their very nature, tend to corrupt the practices that they sustain because of the priority they place upon external goods. The result is that the internal goods of the practice are accorded less importance than are external goods. Institutions, which sustain practices, are then in the position where they can further the goals of the practice or they can pursue their own goals, using the practice as a means to attain external goods. MacIntyre states that this occurs to the extent,

that institutions and practices characteristically form a single causal order in which the ideals and the creativity of the practice are always vulnerable to the acquisitiveness of the institution, in which the cooperative care for common goods of the practice is always vulnerable to the competitiveness of the institution. In this context the essential function of the virtues is clear. Without them, without justice, courage and truthfulness, practices could not resist the corrupting power of institutions. (36: p. 194)

MacIntyre's example of the chess-playing child can now be fully presented. The child actually has little desire to play chess, but because the child has few means of attaining candy, the child is enticed to participate in chess because candy is offered as a reward for victory.

I therefore tell the child that if the child will play chess with me once a week I will give the child 50 cents worth of candy; moreover I tell the child that I will always play in such a way that it will be difficult, but not impossible, for the child to win and that if the child wins, the child will receive an extra 50 cents worth of candy. Thus motivated the child plays to win. Notice however that, so long as it is the candy alone which provides the child with a good reason for playing chess, the child has no reason not to cheat and every reason to cheat, provided he or she could do so

successfully. (36: p. 188)

Here the external goods attainable as a result of participating in chess are considered more important to the child than are the internal goods of chess. Similarly, where financial matters, status, media coverage and the like are valued, encouraged and upheld by an institution, then we can expect to see corruption of that social practice by that institution. Thus the social practice becomes merely an instrument to the attainment of external goods.

For the ability of a practice to retain its integrity will depend on the way in which the virtues can be and are exercised in sustaining the institutional forms which are the social bearers of the practice. The integrity of a practice causally requires the exercise of the virtues by at least some of the individuals who embody it in their activities; and conversely the corruption of institutions is always in part at least an effect of the vices. (36: p. 195)

Conclusion

Technological rationalization is not only manifested in technological devices the likes of which Borgmann has discussed, but also in social structures such as that advanced in MacIntyre's thesis on institutions. I now want to take a closer look at the way in which Borgmann and MacIntyre's thesis enrich and compliment each other.

FOCAL AND SOCIAL PRACTICES, AND STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Borgmann explains that engagement within a practice means that one is necessarily burdened. Although there is some ambiguity inherent in his position (in particular, when does burdenment become so great that it moves beyond engagement in the positive sense he means, and into something more like drudgery?), there remains a significant richness that in and of itself tends to characterize the quality of an experience that he is trying to convey. On the other hand, MacIntyre presents a more precise and clear discussion of social practices and institutions that enables us to, among other things, mark off various features of contemporary social practices. It is through an integration of these two positions, I shall argue, that one can get a sense of how social practices can act as focal points in one's life.

Borgmann identifies burdenment as that state in which demands are made on our skill, strength or attention (3: p. 42) to the extent that we are "engaged" in the activity at hand. In contrast, disburdenment occurs when the activity makes no such demands. It is this notion of an activity making demands on one's faculties that is an important element in both a full understanding of social and focal practices, and in clarifying the degree to which individuals exercise the virtues.

When actively engaged in a social practice that offers

genuine standards of excellence, one can find that achievement of the practices goals and internal goods places demands on one's skill, strength, courage, patience, attention and the like. It is through facing these challenges and tests that one can be burdened and engaged by the social practice.

MacIntyre's discussion of the virtues is particularly relevant in these cases. Not only do the virtues enable one to remain focused on internal as opposed external goods, but to pursue a practice's standards of excellence when one is burdened by that practice, necessarily means that one must exercise virtues such as courage, patience, honesty, and trust, for without these one is unable to rise and meet the challenges posed by the practice.

In contrast, when the standards of excellence have declined and the practice no longer presents tasks and goals whose achievement remains both difficult and ambiguous, then it is likely that the practice will cease to burden and to engage one. One need not, therefore, exercise virtuous qualities because the demands made by the practice are no longer exacting.

The difference then, between a social practice that has standards of excellence and one that does not, is a qualitative one. It revolves around the notion of burdenment within a practice, and it is best captured by Borgmann's description of a focal practice. In other words,

while MacIntyre's analysis precisely accounts for social practices, Borgmann's analysis and description of focal practices picks out, and richly describes, the dimension of burdenment, and the experience of engagement that can be found in a social practice. When a social practice possesses this quality it can act as a focal, or "ultimate" concern for an individual. Engagement, then, refers to the specific quality of experience that a degraded social practice does not necessarily offer its participants when there has been a decline in the standards of excellence of the social practice.

Borgmann would argue that this state of affairs indicates that the participants are less likely to be burdened by the social practice, resulting in its inability to act as a focal point in one's life. It will not capture the attention, energy and passion of the participant. The problem, of course, is that these are some of the qualities that not only draw one back to a given practice, but that help ensure the integrity of the practice by encouraging commitment to it, and not to external, instrumental goals.

The distinguishing criterion then, is that the tasks of the social practice need to be demanding; it needs to have genuine standards of excellence. Thus a focal practice, as Borgmann intends it, specifies a qualitatively different experience, one that a social practice may not offer when its standards have been compromised. Furthermore, this

qualitative difference is important in pin-pointing exactly when it is that the virtues are exercised. They are not necessarily exercised in any significant way in those social practices that have had their standards of excellence compromised, because such practices do not necessarily make demands on an individual; they do not always burden one.

In summary, the key to whether an individual is engaged by a social practice, or is required to exercise the virtues within the practice, is that the practice be able to offer standards of excellence at which to aim. These standards revolve about the two kinds of internal goods as specified by MacIntyre: the existence of excellent objective standards,² and secondly, the existence of examples of the excellence of a particular way of life.³ Without such standards participants will not be burdened and engaged by the social practice, and will not be required to exercise the virtues in order to attain the internal goods of the practice.

The significance of this point is clear. Both Borgmann and MacIntyre are concerned about the corruption of practices, particularly their reorientation away from the goals inherent to a given practice. This corruption, I argue, is significantly tied to the degradation of the

² Such as fast times, high scores, great paintings and music compositions.

³ For example, the life of the athlete, the musician, the painter, the scholar.

standards of excellence of the practice. To return sport, art, music, education and other social practices to their uncompromised state, in which they are oriented towards goals that further the aims of the practice, requires among other things, that the practice's standards of excellence must be upheld.

It is to the corruption of the standards of excellence of the social practice of sport that I now turn. I am particularly concerned with the corruption, by technical rationality, of the excellence of a particular way of life. I will argue that the attempt to attain capitalist goals has caused the decline in the standards of excellence of the way of life of the athlete; a life characterized by the willing acceptance of gratuitous difficulty.

CHAPTER II

THE CORRUPTION OF SPORT

The purpose of Chapter II will be to argue that the dominant⁴ way contemporary sport is valued today is according to the instrumental uses it serves. This valuation occurs as a result of the leading role assumed by technological rationality, or purposive-rational action. The result, I shall argue, is that sport becomes just another site where purposive-rational action rules; such that it is able to offer very little that is unlike the world of work or everyday life. Furthermore, I will specify the degrading effect that such an instrumental outlook can have on sport when it destroys the attitude that one willingly accepts gratuitous difficulties, the very difficulties that make sport possible. I will then tie this to Alasdair MacIntyre's notion of the excellence of the way of a life, and argue that the standards of this internal good have been seriously compromised.

In this discussion, I will rely heavily on MacIntyre's analysis of social practices and social institutions. His analysis distinguishes between those qualities that are inherent to social practices like sport and those that are

⁴ "Dominant" here refers to the most characteristic and highly identified form of contemporary sport. This position does not hold that it is the exclusive way of participating in sport, only the most typical.

socially and culturally contingent. In other words, he characterizes those features that are intrinsic to a social practice and those institutionalized features that are attached to it owing to acculturation and the like. Bernard Suits' analysis of the constitutive features of games will lay out more fully those features that make up the social practice of sport.

MacIntyre's analysis will show that the existing corruption of social institutions, and consequently the corruption of social practices by these institutions, is the result of a dominating emphasis on the technological attitude of rationalization. In particular, institutional emphasis on instrumental rationality has degraded the practice of sport by reorienting it away from its internal goals, to external goals such as the attainment of money and fame. This has occurred to the extent that nothing intelligible is thought to be going on in sport unless it is oriented towards such goals, and it is this approach towards sport, I will argue, that has degraded it. Before embarking on this discussion, I will first characterize a distinction made by Marx between activities that are inherently instrumental and those that are not, in order to highlight the important distinction that exists between these two spheres of human activity. By clearly distinguishing instrumental from non-instrumental activities, one is able to identify the point and function of activities like sport

as being inherently "useless".

THE REALM OF NECESSITY AND THE REALM OF FREEDOM

Marx separated off what he called the realm of necessity from the realm of freedom.

...the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production....Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with the realm of necessity as its basis. (39: pp. 819, 820).

The point and function of the realm of necessity is to produce the goods and services that are necessary for the economic and material conditions of life. Thus the realm of necessity is useful through and through (39: p. 818). Work is the paradigm example of useful activity; its point and function lies in the goods it produces. Habermas' description of purposive-rational action characterizes actions of this type, that is, the utilization of efficient means to attain a given end.

The realm of freedom, by contrast (activities such as sport, music and art), does not have an external or instrumental purpose built into it; the activities that constitute this realm are essentially useless. The realm of freedom, therefore, is set against the realm of necessity (or the world of work). Activities that have no external purpose built into them are ends in themselves; the

experience of engaging in such activities is considered sufficient reward for participation.

Suits explains that instrumental activities bring about their own extinction because they are "self-defeating in principle" (58: p. 8). This is because the achievement of the goal of an instrumental activity means that activity need no longer be performed. Preventative medicine is one such example in which the elimination of disease means the practice of preventative medicine ceases. Similarly, if one achieves the goal of work; the satisfaction of human needs, then work would no longer be a necessary activity.

A rational society understands that work is a prudential activity. After achieving the goals of survival, work would cease and participation in intrinsically pleasurable pursuits would begin. In other words, time that had been spent working, would be filled with activities from the realm of freedom. "...the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases....Beyond it begins the realm of freedom...." (39: p. 820).

Both Marx and Suits agree that work's purpose should be to attain the material goods necessary for human survival. It should then be replaced by activities that are ends in themselves, that are free from the ties of labor. For Suits, understanding this is an "indispensable first step on the path to wisdom..." (58: p. 8).

Capitalist Work

Through clarifying the relationship between the realms of necessity and freedom in Marx's conception of a rational socialist society, the role that sport, and other 'free' activities actually performs in a not so rational capitalist society can be better discerned. To achieve this we need to unpack the actual role work performs in our society, and this can be done by locating the telling differences between precapitalist and present day capitalist work practices.

Precapitalist and capitalist modes of production.

Traditional, precapitalist modes of production featured hierarchical structures much like those found in contemporary capitalism. However, the precapitalist hierarchy can be distinguished "according to a rigid master-journeyman-apprentice hierarchy....(T)he man at the top was, like the man at the bottom, a producer. The master worked along with his apprentice rather than simply telling him what to do." (38: p. 288) In contrast, the capitalist system broke production down into small, discrete parts, leaving the worker without knowledge of the entire production process or the skill to enter into production on their own. According to Marglin, this occurred to ensure the existence of a growing number of 'middle men' between the production and the eventual sale of the goods. This secured a role for the capitalist as owner and controller of

the means of production. It is the capitalist, therefore, who became the beneficiary of any surplus value produced.⁵

Marglin points out that increased efficiency in the workplace, which occurred in the shift to capitalist production, is to be explained in terms of the consolidation of power over a workforce that consisted of increasing numbers of wage laborers. In other words, increasing levels of efficiency occurred for social not technical reasons; specifically, as a means of increasing social control. Marglin argues that this occurred to help ensure that capitalist's would accumulate a larger slice of the economic 'pie'. He summarizes his position as follows:

1. The capitalist division of labor...was the result of...an organization which guaranteed to the entrepreneur an essential role in the production process, as integrator of the separate efforts of his workers into a marketable product.

2. Likewise, the origin and success of the factory lay not in technological superiority, but in the substitution of the capitalist's for the worker's control of the work process and the quantity of output, in the change in the workman's choice from one of how much to work and produce, based on the relative preferences for leisure and goods, to one of whether or not to work at all, which of course is hardly a choice.

3. The social function of hierarchical control of production is to provide for the accumulation of capital....(38: p. 287)

It is the desire for the accumulation of surplus value

⁵ Surplus value, more generally known as profit, is that capital which remains above and beyond the costs of producing, distributing and marketing a particular good or product. The capitalists, who own the means of production, are the beneficiaries of this surplus.

that guides the structure of the work process. As explained, increasing efficiency was adopted in order to achieve this goal. Contemporary capitalist work practices are therefore not guided directly by the principle of satisfying human needs but by the principle of continuous generation and accumulation of surplus value. Surplus value is now the guide as to how and when work occurs, what is and is not produced, and so on. The end result is that technical efficiency in the work place is subject to alteration in the name of **capitalism's** demand for maximum profit.

Held states:

We live in a society dominated by the capitalist mode of production. It is a society based on exchange, a commodity society. Products are manufactured **primarily** for their realization as value and profit, and not for their capacity to satisfy human wants and desires. (21: p. 41)

This shift in goals, from the satisfaction of human needs to the generation of profit in contemporary capitalism, has brought about a system of production that is both irrational and inefficient. It is irrational because it is not sensible; it keeps people working more than is needed to satisfy human needs and therefore allows them less time to enjoy activities from the realm of freedom. It is inefficient because it does not adopt the most efficient work practices that are available.

The relationship between the realm of necessity, work as a prudential activity, and the realm of freedom, as

outlined by Marx and Suits, is an unfulfilled and denied ideal in contemporary capitalist society. Marx's and Suits's reflections on how work and non-work ought to be organized provides an alternative to current work practices; those that view surplus value as a priority and not human needs. The creation of surplus value often conflicts with the goal of satisfying human needs because it is in the capitalist's best interests to create continuously new, or perceived needs in order to maintain consumption, and thereby the generation of surplus value at a high level.

It appears then, that the capitalist goal of creating surplus value has superseded the initial goal of the Enlightenment; that the pursuit of profit has corrupted the belief that technological rationality would bring the reward of liberation. Although 'efficiency' is still the *modus operandi*, technical rationality is now implemented only when it facilitates the attainment of capitalist goals. The issue therefore, is not efficiency *per se*, but the efficiency of the **capitalist system**. If this is the case then 'liberation' in contemporary capitalist society can be defined as the free flow of consumer goods. Marglin's argument, that efficiency aimed at the generation of profit is implemented for reasons of social control, appears just as appropriate to contemporary modes of capitalist production.

To summarize the argument presented to this point, two

distinctly different spheres of human activity exist, which are distinguished according to whether their point and function is instrumental or non-instrumental in nature. The amount of time that each of these realms (the necessary and the free) is given depends on, among other things, whether work is performed in a prudential manner. In contemporary capitalism, work is clearly not prudential. The ratio of work to play, therefore, is heavily weighted on the work side of the scale. This ratio is made even worse in a liberal democratic society, as I shall argue later, by the invasion of capitalist, instrumental goals into those activities that constitute the realm of freedom. Social practices such as sport are currently participated in, and valued for their instrumental purposes, particularly as a means to attain external goods such as fame and fortune. Thus I shall argue that the ideology of instrumentalism has seeped into those activities that on Marx's account makeup the realm of freedom (useless activities). Before directly discussing the dominance of instrumentalism in the social practice of sport, I will first characterize sport as a social practice, giving special emphasis to its formal or internal logic.

SPORT AS A SOCIAL PRACTICE

As I discussed in Chapter I, MacIntyre distinguishes between a social practice and a social institution. A social practice is a complex and coherent form of cooperative, socially established activity. As a result of trying to attain the standards of excellence of that practice, one may realize the goods that are internal to that practice. Such goods can only be experienced, recognized, realized, understood, and judged by those who partake of, and seek the standards of excellence of, that particular practice (36: p. 187-191).

Bernard Suits has provided a cogent analysis of the distinguishing features of sport in The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia.⁶ His work is especially valuable because it accounts for the particular internal, or formal, logic that is unique to sport, and that inheres in its constitutive rules. Suits arrives at the following definition:

...to play a game⁷ is to engage in activity directed towards bringing about a specific state of affairs, using only means permitted by rules, where the rules

⁶ I am by no means attempting to outline all of the internal goods of sport, indeed Suits himself does not attempt this. Rather, he locates the four necessary and conjunctively sufficient conditions that account for some x to be an instance of game.

⁷ For the purpose of this study, the definition of a 'game' can be considered synonymous with the term 'sport'. However, for a comprehensive and most recent discussion of the difference between sport and game, see (41).

prohibit more efficient in favor of less efficient means, and where such rules are accepted just because they make possible such activity. (58: p. 34)

Suits coins the term "constitutive" to denote the type of rules that limit the means used to attain the goal of the game, for example in basketball it is to put the ball through the hoop. This goal can also be achieved independently of the game. The constitutive rules limit the most efficient means available for the attainment of this goal, in favor of less efficient means. The acceptance of restricted means is necessary if the game is to occur; it makes the game possible.

Rugby is a particularly clear illustration of the formal logic of sport in which, while attempting to move the ball forward to cross the goal line (the goal), the participants must pass the ball backwards (means specified by the constitutive rules). It would seem that there is something inherently strange about this game. If one wanted to move a ball from point A to point B, why not drive it there in a car, or even better, fly it by helicopter? But the gamesperson accepts the prohibition of these means because without them, not only is the game rendered unintelligible, but it ceases to exist.

Suits's characterization locates one very important internal good of sport; its formal logic that one willingly accepts less efficient means to bring about a goal. Importantly, there need not be any other reason for

accepting these limitations other than because such acceptance makes the game possible; it brings the game into existence. Indeed, it can be concluded that it is the "backwardness" of rugby that makes it such a "good" game, and a clear illustration of sport's formal logic.

To accept willingly such gratuitous difficulty is to submit oneself to the rationality inherent in the practice of sport. In other words, it is to abide by the logic that constitutes sport. This acceptance is part of what it means to live the life of the athlete, and it is here that we can identify MacIntyre's notion of the good of a certain kind of life. In order to strive towards the standards of excellence in sport, and in order to understand and judge the practice of sport, one must accept the game defining difficulties, and participate in the practice. In other words, one must accept gratuitous obstacles in order to experience the process of attempting to achieve the goal of a particular sport.

Part of what is required to attain these standards of excellence is the exercise of technical skills. For example, although it is correct to say that one must adopt inefficient means in one's efforts to achieve the goal of a game, it is also correct to say that one tries to be as efficient as possible while still limiting oneself to these diminished means. In other words, one adopts the most technically correct means available within the parameters of

the game.

However, sport is by no means simply an activity that requires the performance of technical skills to achieve its goal. For when one attempts to attain the standards of excellence of a sporting practice, "human powers to achieve excellence, and the human conceptions of the ends and goods involved are systematically extended." (36: p. 187)

MacIntyre states that tic tac toe is not a social practice, while chess is. His reason for saying so is presumably that tic tac toe is not a complex enough activity that extends human conceptions and standards of excellence in the requisite way. There is more to the social practice of sport therefore, than its formal characteristics and internal logic as outlined by Suits. In other words, the possession of features that lie beyond the exercise of technical skill enables one to categorize tic tac toe as a game but not as a social practice, and that explains why chess is both a social practice and a game.

Chess is a more difficult or complex activity, demanding more of the participant than tic tac toe. To meet successfully these demands requires that one exercise not only a greater degree of technical skill but also the relevant virtues such as justice, courage, honesty and judgment. Christopher Lasch provides an eloquent description of the way in which judgment is exercised, in different social practices. As he points out,

Whether the frame of reference is music, sports, medicine, or warfare, judgment implies a sense of timing and proportion, a feeling for the relations between the parts and the whole, a painstaking attention to detail which is nevertheless careful not to let details obscure the larger outlines of a performance, a willingness to improvise if necessary, an ability to combine spontaneous feeling with disciplined forethought, a kind of controlled exuberance, and most important and elusive of all, an ability to communicate the inner meaning of an activity to others so that they become vicarious participants (28: p. 68).

MacIntyre argues that to achieve standards of excellence and internal goods in any social practice requires that one exercise the virtues of courage, honesty and justice (36: p. 191). In this way the internal goods of sport extend beyond Suits' analysis of the formal logic of sport. The virtues allow one to live the life of the athlete by accepting the inefficient processes in sport and they allow one to attain internal goods like knowledge and motor skill.

Sport, therefore, not only possesses a unique internal logic, but it also requires, as any social practice does, the exercise of judgement and knowledge, the reliance on courage, the use of principles of justice and fair play. These are the virtues that enable one to attain the internal goods and standards of excellence of the practice.

Social Institutions and Sport

Social institutions, which sustain social practices like sport, deal in external goods such as money and status. These goods may be attained by participating in social

practices, however, such attainment may have little if anything to do with reaching the standards of excellence of any particular practice. In other words, external goods are not unique to, or dependent upon a social practice in the way that internal goods are. Thus while sport and many other social practices offer the opportunity of attaining external goods, social practices like sport offer their own unique set or stock of internal goods that can only be attained in that practice. Jeffrey Stout provides a rich and very clear description of social practices and institutions and their respective goods:

You can of course win prestige, status, and money by participating well in a genuine social practice like chess. But you can also achieve such goods by cheating at chess (if you don't get caught) or by participating in some other form of activity. Such goods are therefore external to chess. The goods that Kasparov has achieved and I have not, cannot be identified without employing the language of chess. Kasparov couldn't have achieved them by cheating at chess, and he couldn't have achieved them by becoming an excellent architect. The prestige Kasparov has won by playing chess can be won in other ways. Kasparov could not have achieved goods internal to chess, however, without playing chess, subjecting himself to its rules, and eventually acquiring qualities that enable him to satisfy its standards of performance. (56: pp. 267, 268)

A crucial point to be gleaned from MacIntyre's work, as clearly delineated by Stout, is that there are characteristics that actually constitute a social practice like chess. The other characteristics, such as money and fame, are not necessary for the practice's existence, that is, they do not constitute the practice qua practice. Thus

these features (external goods) are socially contingent to the practice, and so their presence varies through time and across cultural traditions. Seeing the role and the effects of both these aspects at one and the same time is what Stout calls "stereoscopic" vision, "one which brings social practices and institutions, internal and external goods, into focus at the same time." (56: p. 279) Recognizing the two distinctly different spheres in contemporary society; practices with their internal goods, and institutions with their external goods, is important if we are to understand, criticize and protect our practices and institutions from forces that affect the constitutive features and rationality that signify and mark off each practice as unique and separate from other social practices and activities.

The application of stereoscopic vision is what enables one to clarify arguments that have been presented by leftist theorists of sport, such as Brohm (8), Rigauer (49) and Hoch (23), and those of mainstream conservative and liberal theorists such as Huizinga (25) and Novak (45). Each of these analysts lacked stereoscopic vision and because of this, they have failed to grasp the separate role that institutions and social practices perform.

Leftists criticize sport because they believe it to be a mirror reflection of capitalist work systems that are repressive and alienating in nature, and that function according to competitive, disciplined, bureaucratized,

authoritative systems of organization. Work and sport, they argue, are both predicated on the performance or achievement principle, which leads to the dehumanization of its participants. Sport, therefore, encourages conformity to existing social norms and conventions because it constantly reinforces existing social patterns and stabilizes social injustices. These critics, however, have failed to see sports internal logic and internal goods. Instead, their 'monovision' has focused only on institutionalized features of sport; those effects that ground the social practice of sport in the existing social reality.

By contrast, the traditionalists have approached sport with its internal characteristics in mind focusing on the freedom that sport can offer its participants. They have argued that sport, as non-work, is playful in origin, non-serious, and separated off from ordinary life. These critics, however, have largely failed to see and integrate the very real pressures that exist on sport from the external institutional sphere, the pressures documented by leftists theorists. The end result is that these two disparate groups have presented two monoscopic views of sport and thus both have provided incomplete accounts of the social practice of sport in contemporary capitalist society.

In contrast, MacIntyre's analysis succeeds in locating and distinguishing the logic of social practices and the logic of social institutions and thus distinguishes between

those qualities that are inherent to sport with those that are socially and culturally dependent.

In short, the internal goods of sport separate or mark it off from other social practices. However, and as I shall argue next, the dominant goal of participation in sport has been reoriented from a non-instrumental to an instrumental one. The result is that sport has had its point and function switched from a useless to a useful activity. It is to this shift that I now turn.

INSTRUMENTALISM AND SPORT

As intimated above, instrumental rationality has been applied to spheres of life that are not inherently about the production of material and economic goods; to spheres that do not fit into Marx's definition of the realm of necessity. The result is that activities such as sport, music and art, have had their point and function switched from the goals inherent in the realm of freedom to the goals applied to the realm of necessity. This shift means that free activities now replicate the realm of necessity.

Sport and Capitalism

Specifically, it is the interaction between sport and instrumental reason embodied in contemporary capitalism that has defined the 'dominant moment' of sport. The dominant moment is the most common way of conceiving of a social

practice; the ordinary and normal way that obscures alternative conceptions or treatments of the practice.

As a result of the power they hold in generating images of and about the practice they sustain, and in shaping the rules that guide the conduct of the practice, institutions play a major role in a practices "normalization", in defining its dominant moment. In other words, institutions formalize and codify a dominant way of thinking and treating a social practice such as sport. In advanced capitalism this image is clearly one that conforms to instrumental capitalist goals; those goals aimed at the generation of external goods.

One way to get at this 'moment' is to examine the influence of the market in contemporary capitalism. Specifically, it is helpful to look at the market's influence on activities that lie outside a liberal society's notion of the economic 'sphere'. This conception of a 'sphere' is based upon the belief that liberty is gained by the "separation", or marking off, of the various aspects of social life. For example the church is separated from the state to ensure, among other things, individual religious freedom (51: p. 257).

In relation to the economic sphere, Walzer argues that sites for the generation of surplus value; the quest for commodities, money, fame and so on, have expanded beyond the production and sale of goods required for human survival,

and into spheres of human activity that have little if anything to do with economic or financial matters (61). Walzer concludes from this that "we suffer from an abuse of market power" (61: p. 315) because the "walls" that separated economic matters from other areas of human activity have become 'porous'. The result is that economic concerns have informed social practices such as sport, activities whose internal goods and logic have little if anything to do with economic matters.

Walzer argues that this state of affairs is problematic because wealth constitutes power (61: p. 318). Importantly, this power translates into institutional control, which is then directed towards the attainment of external goods. In other words, the institution focuses its primary attention on financial gain at the expense of the goals of the practice; those revolving about its internal logic and internal goods.

Market forces, therefore, have seeped into social practices in something that resembles osmosis. They have continued relatively unchecked, regardless of where they have gained a foothold, and sport is most clearly one such location where institutional aims reflect the priority placed in external goods. The result is that these forces perform a significant role in practices as diverse as music, medicine, education, art and of course sport, because the institutions surrounding these practices have redirected the

aims of the practice away from internal goods and standards of excellence, to the generation of money and fame.

This fetish for external goods constitutes a dominant moment of sport in which an instrumentalist attitude abounds. It has occurred to the extent that this notion of sport has become its dominant ethos. D'Agostino, perhaps unknowingly, captures this fact when he states,

Most habitual spectators would find a game of basketball in which no rule-prohibited actions were performed an extremely strange game of basketball.... We can explain the perceived "strangeness" of such a game only when we take into account the prevailing ethos of basketball, according to which all sorts of rule-violating behavior is, in fact, "acceptable." (11: p. 70, 71).

D'Agostino's statement is in reference not only to instances of body contact in basketball which, formally speaking, is against the rules, or to accidental rule violations, but also to those instances in which players deliberately break a rule in the attempt to gain an advantage in the game. For example, the "technical" or "team" foul represents one kind of technically determined rule violation carried out if the advantage gained is believed to be greater than the penalty awarded if caught. In such cases rules become merely technical guides as to what actions are permissible in a game. When it is in the best interests of the participant, that is, when a rule violation serves an instrumental purpose like the attainment of external goods, then these rules are broken. Similarly, Alt (1) explains that rules have lost their normative force because they are no longer

grounded in the ethos of fair play, instead they are simply technical specifications. He argues that increased instances of cheating and violence in sport can be explained because of,

...a crisis of the moral athlete and team, signifying the triumph of the commoditised worker oriented toward money and winning. Running throughout...is a crisis of justice, a loss of the rules of fair play as a mediator of conduct. The crisis of fair play on the part of both spectators and athletes signifies the triumph of instrumental norms oriented toward winning rather than toward rightness or goodness. (1: p. 97)

What this boils down to then is an ethos of instrumentality. This has occurred to such a degree that nothing intelligible is thought to be going on in sport unless it is seen to be serving these instrumental capitalist purposes; the attainment of external goods such as money and fame.

Radical Instrumentalism

However, this dominant moment of sport is particularly problematic. It conforms to Suits' characterization of "radical instrumentalism", in which "games are...conceived as having their instrumental goals built into them...as essentially instruments for the achievement of prelusory goals". This occurs to the extent that pursuing and attaining an external goal overrides obedience to the rules of the game (58: p. 147). The pursuance of external goods, in other words, becomes the main reason for an individual's participation and actions in sport, and this occurs because sport's point and function is thought to be inseparable from

the quest for external goods.

Suits explains that such a notion is an incomprehensible account of game playing: This "view of games (is) self-defeating, for excessive dedication to the attainment of prelusory goals has the effect of destroying the games in which those goals figure." (58: p. 147). That is, the internal logic of sport requires that one willingly accept the limited means in attaining the goal of the game as specified by the constitutive rules; for example in rugby the ball must be passed backwards. This state of affairs conflicts with the goal of a radical instrumentalist, however, because game rules place gratuitous obstacles in one's path that hinder not only the achievement of the game's goal, but also the attainment of the radical instrumentalist's goal.

It is far more rational (logical) for the radical instrumentalist to adopt means that are efficient, in order to increase the likelihood that the instrumental goal will be attained. Thus the limits that define a sport like rugby are bypassed whenever it is technically feasible to do so; whenever it serves the external goal of the participant.

What you have here is a dominant moment of sport that makes the intelligibility of the game contingent on destroying its internal intelligibility. Where gratuitous difficulties make games possible, the dominant moment conceives of game obstacles as negative barriers or

restrictions to the attainment of external goods, instead of as barriers that make the game activity possible. It is in the best interest of the radical instrumentalist therefore, to subvert these inefficient processes that constitute the game.⁸ In doing so, the very logic that constitutes this social practice is nullified.

STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE AND THE WAY OF A LIFE

The dominant moment of sport paradoxically renders games unintelligible by making them socially intelligible. This phenomenon directly relates to MacIntyre's notion of the excellence of a way of life. He characterizes this as one of only two types of good internal to social practices (the other being the excellence of objective standards). Significantly, this way of life is largely defined by the athlete's willing acceptance of gratuitous difficulty. The standards of this internal good, however, have largely declined, indeed they have been rendered obsolete, as a result of the instrumental path in which institutions have steered practices.

Thus, it is this second internal good that the radical

⁸ Suits explains that a cheat tries to maintain the illusion that no cheating is occurring for otherwise it would render one's actions useless. Similarly, one reason the liar is able to lie successfully is that most people expect that this person is telling the truth (p.46). In other words, in most cases it is in the best interests of the radical instrumentalist to maintain the illusion that the constitutive rules and the gratuitous difficulties that define sport are being followed.

instrumentalist has attacked to the extent that it has virtually ceased to exist. Part of what it is to live the life of the athlete; to experience those features that constitute this unique social practice, is to be as excellent as one can be while attempting to reach goals that are understood to be non-ultimate, employing a balanced perspective of the lengths utilized to attain the goal. The radical instrumentalist, however, destroys the game itself when the pursuit of gratuitous difficulties in sport becomes a secondary, incidental concern. As Stout avers, "Sports...are hardly an exception to the rule. Indeed, it has become tiresome to hear complaints about how drugs, money, and status now threaten to dominate goods internal to the practice of sports at all levels of participation." (56: p. 276)

There is a quality to Stout's statement that provides insight beyond simply the notion that external goods threaten internal goods. The use of drugs in sport, for example, anabolic steroids and amphetamines, are not external goods in and of themselves, however they reflect the instrumental means that athletes adopt in an attempt to secure "success" in the sports contest. Such drug use constitutes the destruction of what the relevant moral community perceives to be the excellence of the way of life of the athlete; that one accepts the rules of the game that set up limits as to what one is permitted to do.

The use of banned techniques and substances, the intentional breaking of rules and so on, all reflect the current state of the social practice of sport, guided towards securing external goals that are believed to be inseparable from the practices aims.

Dellatre presents a section of an interview with Bobby Jones. Jones was a champion golfer, and one known for calling penalty strokes on himself.

'One thing more, Bobby. There is a lot of interest in those penalty strokes you have called on yourself. At St. Louis and Brookline and at Worchester-they say that one cost you the championship-and the one at Scioto, in that awful round of 79 when the ball moved on the green-' Bobby held up a warning hand. 'That is absolutely nothing to talk about,' he said, 'and you are not to write about it. There is only one way to play this game.' (cited in 12: pp. 273, 274).

This "one way" of playing the game does not constitute an anti-pluralist attitude. Rather, Jones clearly means that in order to play a game one must abide by the rules of that game. There are, of course, many ways to play a game while still adhering to the game rules. This passage has the effect of switching one's perspective away from what constitutes a powerful dominant sporting moment, to a notion of sport that may strike one as 'correct' yet as 'abnormal'. It is a concept of sport that remains immune from instrumental capitalist goals; it is concerned with the internal goods and standards of golf, those that constitute sports point and function.

Summary

In this chapter I have argued that the dominant conception of the point and function of sport is that it is an instrumental or useful activity. This moment has been guided by institutional instrumental capitalist goals; external goods such as money and fame. This instrumental outlook, guided by technical, or means end rationality, has proceeded to such an extent that it has become 'radical' and, paradoxically, normal. The result for sport is that its internal logic has been seriously compromised, and concomitantly so to have the standards of excellence of the way of life of the athlete; those standards exemplified by Bobby Jones.

CHAPTER III

LIBERAL SOCIETY, PLURALISM AND TECHNICAL RATIONALITY

Technical rationality, as embodied within a capitalist economy, has reduced the range and depth of our social practices to the extent that our society can now be described as 'one dimensional'. This one dimensionality characterizes a distinct decrease in the diversity of opportunities available for individuals to undertake.

What is problematic about this is that liberal democratic cultures are defined by their commitment to pluralism. This position is guided by the belief that there is no one notion of the good life to which everyone need or will agree on, so the present reduction in the diversity of social practices runs counter to liberal democracy's desire to offer its citizens a genuinely wide range of opportunities from which to choose.

If liberal democratic society is to honor its founding principles, then it needs to make a commitment towards ensuring that instrumental capitalist goals are limited, as far as this is possible, to the market. In other words, to offer a truly diverse range of opportunities, liberal democratic cultures ought to ensure that standards of technically rational behavior, aimed at the generation of external goods, do not determine the manner in which all our social practices are conducted. Political action dedicated

to this end would result in social practices, like sport, being guided on their own terms, by their own rational standards and not those of the market and its standards of instrumental rationality.

LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND PLURALISM

Liberal democratic society aims to provide a culture in which the economic, political and legal framework enable individuals to hold "widely different and incompatible conceptions of the good life", while enabling them "to live together peaceably within the same society, enjoying the same political status and engaging in the same economic relationships" (35: p. 336). Liberal culture, in other words, is concerned not to encourage one overriding conception of the good, preferring instead to promote diversity.

This position is tied to the fact that a liberal democratic regime is anti-foundationalist to the core. Its beliefs are independent of philosophical and metaphysical belief systems pertaining to models of universal or transcendental conceptions of objective truth and the good life (48: p. 223). The rationale for a rejection of overall conceptions of the good life is a practical one. Because there is no objective truth, and thus no objective good life, citizens of a liberal democracy will have come to their own understanding and notion of their own good life,

and this results in a diversity of preferences. As a consequence, Rorty argues that "reflective equilibrium is all we need try for - there is no natural order of justification of beliefs, no predestined outline for argument to trace." (51: p. 271) This is a liberalism that bases itself on the contingency of human endeavors and human communities, recognizing that both are socially and historically created and recreated.

Because it does not subscribe to universalist accounts of the good life, truth, or justice, liberal society offers "a way of strengthening liberal institutions", by promoting tolerance, freedom and diversity (50: p. 57). MacIntyre describes this position as 'liberalism as a tradition', as he explains,

A tradition of enquiry is more than a coherent movement of thought. It is such a movement in the course of which those engaging in that movement become aware of it and of its direction and in self-aware fashion attempt to engage in its debates and to carry its enquiries forward (35: p. 326).

Furthermore, liberal society recognizes a wide range of "compartmentalized spheres", each distinct from one another in the kind of life it offers, for example: the family, church, politics, education, sport, music, economics, science and so on. It argues that separating spheres from one another, the most well known being the separation of church and state, generates new options, new possibilities, new liberties. This separation constitutes a significant measure by which liberal society takes steps to ensure

diversity. In particular, there are two ways that this compartmentalization can further diversity.

The first is that it separates individuals from one another, and from social institutions, allowing them to pursue their own individual perfection. The second way is that it enables each sphere to operate independently of all other spheres, enabling them to function according to their own distinctive logic and to pursue their own internal goods (61).

Liberal democratic society has predominantly been concerned with the first notion of diversity, arguing that freedom is generated by "leaving the individual alone". The separation of spheres is an important way to achieve this. Liberal society has largely overlooked, however, the degree and manner in which a social practice itself can generate a significant degree of freedom by enabling an individual to pursue a variety of preferences that can only be undertaken within a social practice (61; 62). It is this second path to diversity that I will discuss in this chapter.

Social Practices, Spheres and Diversity

Social practices have the potential to enrich and diversify liberal culture. Walzer (61; 62), MacIntyre (35; 36) and Stout (56; 57), argue that each practice can provide a host of new opportunities and experiences, contingent on the fact that each social practice contains a number of

internal goods that can only be achieved by participating in a particular social practice. No two practices offer exactly the same collection of goods indeed, this is exactly why we can distinguish the university from the hospital, or more precisely, education from medicine.

The art of separation, or compartmentalization, was explained in Chapter II to be a distinctly liberal way of ensuring that the aims, standards and rationality of one practice, do not infiltrate and influence the aims, standards and rationality of another practice. In other words, when the "walls" around each practice are maintained, outside influence is limited. This maintains diversity by enabling each social practice to further its own goals and follow its own logic, resulting in more freedom and liberty for those individuals who choose to participate in a social practice.

Separation, therefore, serves the liberal goal of pluralism by providing the political, economic and social structure necessary to enable social practices to be left to their own devices, enabling each to offer to all those who care to sample its fruits, the specific and unique forms of life it represents. The choice to participate in any social practice, therefore, is a choice that brings with it a new experience, constituting an important way in which liberal society can maintain pluralism.

Using MacIntyre's thick description of social practices

and social institutions as our backdrop, both the virtues and the vices of a liberal democracy are more clearly identifiable. Social practices constitute one important aspect of a diverse society, with the separation of each of these practices: religion, politics, athletics, or art, acting as a key in upholding the integrity of not only each practice, as was argued in Chapter II, but also the diversity of opportunity to be found within liberal culture. The separation of each sphere, therefore, is important not only for the protection of individual liberty by freeing one from overbearing social institutions, but also by freeing one to operate within social practices that are unencumbered by these same institutions.

The Seepage of Technical Rationality

In Chapter II I argued that technical rationality, as embodied within a capitalist economy, has seeped into the social practice of sport causing sporting goals to be usurped by the instrumental goals of the market. I want to argue here that liberal society currently manifests this sort of seepage into more than just the social practice of sport. The separation around the market has weakened so much that liberal society has a systemic problem; the goods and goals of the economic sphere have infiltrated and dominated the goods and goals of all other spheres, such that liberal culture has taken on a one-dimensional quality.

In other words, what has happened to sport is happening to all other social practices, and this stems from the domination of institutions over practices, as Lasch and Stout indicate,

...the university provides a home for scholarship, but it also corrupts scholarship by subjecting it to standards of productivity derived from the marketplace, just as it corrupts instruction by reducing it to the standard units used to measure academic progress and achievement--courses, grades, and cumulative grade point averages. (28: p. 69)

...medical care in our society tends increasingly to be dominated by the modes of interaction and patterns of thought characteristic of the market and the bureaucracies, where goods external to medical care reign. Without the marketplace and the bureaucracies, the practice would undoubtedly suffer terribly. With them, it tends to be overwhelmed by goods and roles alien to its **telos** of caring for the sick....It is an uneasy relationship between our social practices and our institutions that many of the most deeply felt problems of our society lie. The same pattern shows up nearly everywhere--not only in medicine but also in other practices....(56: pp. 274, 275, 276)

When the imperatives of the market cross virtually all boundaries, then liberal society is reduced from a thriving, rich, multifaceted culture, to a stultifying, one-dimensional and instrumentally dominated society. It is not only recognized by the domination of the standards and goods of the market, but it is also rendered internally intelligible because of the controlling role that the market has been allowed to perform.

This state of affairs presents a distinct problem for liberal culture. It is society, a tradition, founded on the belief that people will be diverse and will freely choose a

wide range of experiences. This belief, however, is contrasted with the reality of there being very little true difference to speak of. The very heart of liberal democracy is lost, therefore, when it ceases to recognize that social practices constitute one important source of a diverse society, and when it ceases to protect each of these spheres from infiltration and domination by other spheres.

Accordingly, interference with the current conduct of social practices and social institutions is justified in order to bring liberal society in line with its own tenets; as a society that conceives its job to be one that both enables, and administers, a richly diverse society. It is, therefore, a logical matter of ensuring that liberal democratic society works in ways that are consistent with its own premises. Working at "the liberal art of separation", which entails the implementation of political, legal, economic, and social restraints to maintain the walls around each sphere, is a significant means by which the liberal goal of diversity can be achieved. It is to a discussion of some key issues pertaining to how to alter the status quo of social practices and institutions that I turn. The key issue throughout, I believe, is acknowledging, and celebrating in the fact that social practices are indeed social.

Social Goods

Social practices are traditions in their own right. All are subject to questioning and debate by those who are engaged within them, in a self-aware attempt to guide their progress, and to carry the practice forward (35: p. 326). All the members of the relevant community perform a role in this process, one of the most identifiable of these is through the normative judgements made of and about the practice. These decisions help shape the path the practice will take.

As they develop into a tradition, practices are guided by the individuals and groups involved within them, all who share in the goods the practice offers. In fact, to talk of a social practice presupposes that one is dealing with something that is shared, that has goods to which a number of individuals are affiliated, and whose practitioners have collectively created and recreated the practice, carrying the tradition of excellence and experience forward.

One important aspect of this shared notion is that a social practice requires that one subordinate oneself to the standards within the practice, standards set by those who have come before one. In this way social practices present objective standards to which one's "attitudes, choices, preferences and tastes", as well as the goods and standards achieved in the practice, can be compared and evaluated. This objective status removes the subjectivist and emotivist

nature of social interaction and judgement, as success in a practice is not the result of satisfying self-justifying preferences, instead it involves the comparison of oneself to the standards of excellence of each practice (36: p. 190).

The notion that a social practice is reducible to the interests of the individuals who comprise it, is particularly identifiable with those who use the practice for their own devices, frequently altering the goals, and reformulating the conceptions of and about the practice, and this approach is most obviously occupied by the radical instrumentalists. As I discussed in Chapter II, these individuals are unable to separate the external, instrumental goals that have been attributed to a social practice, from those goals that are inherent to each practice, and it is this attitude towards social practices like sport, that constitutes their dominant moment.

Given this notion of social practices, that requires one to accept the existence of internal goods, and the presence of standards of excellence that have been set by those who have come before one (those that help shape and carry the practice forward), it seems that the practitioners of a practice should themselves be the ones who collectively guide the practice towards its conceived telos. The practitioners are more likely to be aware of the intricacies, history, tradition, standards of excellence,

internal goods, debates and inquiry of each practice than any other group of people, and importantly, it is the practitioners who possess a sense of the telos of their practice. They will have been captivated by the practice, drawn back to it again and again because of the experiences they have had within it and, accordingly, they are the ones most likely to be committed to protecting the practice from external, corrupting influences.

DEMOCRATIC CONSENSUS

If it is accepted that those versed in the intricacies of the practice are the best qualified to further the practice's goals, then what means can these practitioners use that best serve to guide the practice to its conceived telos? I believe the answer to this problem must recognize the social character and the tradition of a practice, and, I believe Michael Lavin (32), in his paper on the regulation of drug use in sport, provides the general outlines to an answer to this question.

To begin, he agrees that activities such as sport and education are activities that have shared ideals and standards and that those involved within each practice should work to regulate the conduct of others involved, in order to further the ideals, or the telos, of each practice. He states,

...I maintain that universities may impose requirements that reasonably work to secure that ideal (of the best

means for achieving the ideal of an educated citizen). If a current ideal of competitive sports exists, it could serve to justify regulation in much the same way that the ideal of an educated citizen serves to justify a university's general education requirements. The ideal rationalizes, without mandating, specific regulations or requirements. (32: p. 40. My brackets)

Lavin argues that interference (for example, the regulation of drug use in sport) should be aimed at the achievement of the current ideal, or telos, of each practice. In presenting this position, he recognizes that each practice has no one ideal that remains etched in stone, timeless and omnipotent. In contrast, Bob Simon presents **the** ideal of sport as a "mutual quest for excellence", a notion that he believes is timeless, and strong enough to legitimize regulation of sport (54: p. 295). Lavin, in contrast to Simon therefore, presents a notion of social practices that comprehends their social contingency; social practices are not designed to follow a predetermined path.

From this starting point, Lavin argues that this current core of ideals helps to explain, for example, the consensus existing on drug regulation in sport. His position holds that regulation of educational requirements, or of drug use, is acceptable because it helps to secure the current consensus of the ideal of that particular practice.

The aim, however, is to establish a democratic consensus, and to regulate in accordance with it, otherwise regulation will appear as the whimsical imposition of values, alien to those involved within the practice. Lavin

identifies three criteria that need to be met for the consensus to be democratic. There must be the invocation of a pervasive opinion, from widespread and diverse interest groups. Actions or incidents that evoke a "visceral dislike" are indications that actions in the practice run against the current core ideals of the practice.

Furthermore, democratic regulation should respect the history or tradition of the practice, so that longstanding actions within the practice are not prohibited without due consideration to the role they perform. Finally, a democratic consensus assumes that the current ideal of a social practice is a morally permissible one (32: p. 41).

The position outlined by Michael Lavin is similar to the one held by Michael Walzer. Walzer's case is made in reference to the liberal art of separation, a process he wants turned over to the practitioners of each sphere within liberal society. As he explains,

To focus on institutions, practices, and relationships is to shift the location of agency, to socialize the art of separation. Believers, scholars, workers, and parents establish and guard the lines-and then the citizens as a body do so, through the political process. Liberalism passes definitely into democratic socialism when the map of society is socially determined. (61: p. 328)

Democratic socialism is a system that recognizes the social contingency of society, and places social practices back into the hands of their followers, to regulate democratically in a manner that guides the practice towards its currently conceived ideal.

The significant difference, for our purposes, between democratic liberalism and democratic socialism, is that democratic socialism sets out to place social practices into the hands of their practitioners, and this is done for the sake of a liberal ideal; diversity through wide ranging options that are distinctly different.

The Protection of Sport

Given the analysis presented to this point, it is not inaccurate to conclude that liberal democratic society has myopically construed the constitutive features of a diverse culture. Although it recognizes that the compartmentalization of spheres enables individuals to pursue their own private perfection, it has neglected to recognize the diverse opportunities that social practices offer. Yet, liberal society is based upon grand principles; principles like freedom, tolerance, and diversity, and these are surely ideals worth pursuing.

I have argued that social practices make up one important aspect of the liberal ideal; practices that are socially, not individually constituted. Furthermore, I have discussed the case for protection of such practices, so as to enable their progress towards their democratically conceived telos, that is, a consensus on the provisional, contextual (56: p. 238) end that the practice aims to achieve. And I suggested that those versed in the

intricacies of the practice are the best qualified to help determine this telos, and guide the practice, resisting the external, often corrupting, influences of the market in a capitalist economy. I will now briefly discuss this process as it relates to the reform of sport.

As intimated above, the end sought here is the protection of sport from the corrupting influence of the market. Protection of this type requires the "artful" separation of sport and the market. If this process is to be successful, it must be knowledgeable about sport, about its inner workings and basic ideals, and it must be knowledgeable about its institutional setting, and its inner workings (61: p. 328).

This information provides the tool that enables the collective drawing of the line around sport, a line that is artfully sketched and guarded with the practical wisdom of those who have an informed sense of the practice's social goods and telos. This sort of knowledge, judgement and understanding is possessed not by a privileged powerful few, but by sporting practitioners, those who are well versed in its intricate details, debates and history. They can democratically locate a consensus on the contingent ideals of their practice, and then collectively construct the walls that will limit the markets ability to reorder these internally determined goals, or to hinder the practice's ability to attain its telos. This is what Walzer means when

he states that "The art of separation is a popular, not an esoteric, art." (61: p. 328).

With a similar claim in mind, Horkheimer makes the following astute observation about sport and the influence of external instrumental aims, when he states,

It has often been said that sport should not become an aim, but should remain an instrument. To me the first idea seems right and the second one wrong. As long as it is only an instrument, and consciously recognized as such, it may be used in the service of profit, politics, egotism or just as a pastime. Whether it serves health is, in my view, problematic. But all these ends, whether good or problematic, will destroy sport if they are allowed to dominate it totally, will prevent it being an expression of freedom. In this respect sport is like art, literature and philosophy, and all the springs of the productive imagination. To preserve its freedom, to allow it to make its own decisions and dictate its own regulations, in spite of all the powerful influences from outside, seems to be the historic task of all those who are seriously concerned with sport (24: p. 391; My emphasis).

Without using MacIntyrean language, Horkheimer's analysis clearly achieves the same type of distinction that MacIntyre presented with his institution/practice idiom. Horkheimer singles out both the internal features of sport, and the external instrumental influences that have been attached to it. The dissimilarity of the logic and goods of sport, compared with its institutions, is what gives sport its autonomy from the market, and in turn, it is this autonomy that constitutes sport's freedom.

To protect sport (to defend its freedom) from external instrumental influences, Horkheimer calls on all "those who are seriously concerned" with maintaining sports integrity

and freedom, to take steps that will preserve its internal decision making and regulating processes. Practitioner's possess the resources for this type of protection, which will enable sporting goals to be furthered, instead of the goals of the "powerful influences from outside"; the market.

Horkheimer's approach to social reform parallels Stout's description of stereoscopic social criticism (56: p. 280), in which the recognition and consideration of both social practices and their institutions, and internal and external goods, occurs at one and the same time. Keeping one eye trained on internal goods, and the other on external goods, enables a focus that is on those "features of our society that make people care about it, the features that hold out some hope for transformation from within" (56: p. 281), and at the very same time, on the external forces that threaten to undermine these social goods. Such a broad perspective enables one to understand and describe both the internal and external forces of sport.

What this sort of stereoscopic criticism provides is what Rorty calls a "redescription" of our liberal practices and institutions. As he explains, it is "not to offer a defense of them against their enemies; it is more like refurnishing a house than like propping it up or placing barricades around it." (50: pp. 44-45). The first step towards protecting the social practice of sport is the achievement of an accurate redescription of it, one that

takes account of both its social goods and its institutions, and of the conflicts and tensions that arise between the two. Furthermore, once identified, the contingent telos of sport acts as a guide towards which practitioners can steer it, safeguarding its internal decision making and regulating ability by limiting the outside influences that have a tendency to gain control and reorder the practices aims and goals. Limiting this sort of corrupting influence will not only sustain the integrity of the social practice of sport, but it will also enable liberal society to offer the kind of cultural diversity that it currently purports to offer.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has investigated the effect of Enlightenment, technical rationality on contemporary sport in liberal democratic capitalist culture. In particular, it has taken issue with the corrupting influence of technological rationalization on the social practice of sport, and with the reduction in diversity that is its result.

In Chapter I it was explained that technical rationality, or purposive-rational action, has taken on an increasingly dominant role since the Enlightenment period. This type of rationality emphasizes 'ordering' or 'efficiency', where the means to be utilized are carefully appraised to determine the most efficient way of attaining a given end; an end that is not itself subject to appraisal. The role of this sort of rationality has steadily increased, usurping the more traditional, mythical and religious frameworks of rationality.

To illustrate the effects of this shift to technical rationality, Albert Borgmann's theory of technical devices and focal practices, and Alasdair MacIntyre's theory of social practices and social institutions were presented. Borgmann argued that technical ordering has been applied to the generation of technical devices with the aim of securing

human liberation. Technical rationality also brought the destruction of what Borgmann called 'focal things and practices'; those activities that engage us in great depth and that can act as central, unifying points in our life. Borgmann argued that their loss constitutes a significant decrease in human freedom and happiness, such that technical rationality has actually failed to deliver on its promise of providing human liberation.

Borgmann suggested that if we are to protect our focal practices, those that meaningfully enrich and diversify our lives and act as ends to which we orient our choices and actions, then we ought to identify those occasions where technical rationality does liberate us from toil, without destroying our focal things and practices. We should then limit technology's influence to these situations. By achieving this end, technological rationality can fulfill its promise of providing liberation from burden and toil, thereby freeing people to engage more fully in practices.

Alasdair MacIntyre distinguished between social practices and social institutions; social practices are complex forms of socially cooperative activity, while institutions surround and sustain these social practices. MacIntyre argued that means-end rationality has been adopted in institutional social structures, in their pursuit of external goods such as money and fame. The recurring problem has been that social institutions have lost sight of

the internal goods of the practice they are trying to sustain, those goods that mark each practice off as a unique enterprise. When institutions concern themselves with goods external to the practice, they reorient the practice towards these external goods, and this frequently results in the corruption of the internal goods, goals and rationality of the social practice.

The degradation of the social practice of sport was the major focus in Chapter II. The view that external, instrumental goals (such as the attainment of money and fame) are inseparable from the games in which they figure, constitutes the dominant moment of contemporary sport, a conception that conforms to Suits' notion of 'radical instrumentalism'. Such an instrumental attitude towards sport has manifested itself in the intentional utilization of means that are more efficient than the game rules permit. Rule violations of this form, were argued to be representative of the destruction of the internal logic of sport, which requires one to willingly accept gratuitous difficulties just so that the activity is made possible.

The destruction of sports internal logic was argued to be particularly problematic because it paradoxically renders game participation unintelligible by making game participation socially intelligible. That is, while a radically instrumental attitude actually destroys the internal, gratuitous, logic that defines sport, it also

renders sport socially comprehensible because of the dominant emphasis on the attainment on external, instrumental goals. Furthermore, this approach to sport not only renders game participation difficult, but it has also resulted in a reduction in the standards of excellence of sporting forms of life, a life characterized by the willing acceptance of game-defining obstacles. It was argued that this is the basis of the current degradation of the social practice of sport, due in significant part to the domination of technical rationality in capitalist society.

Chapter III focused on the effect of technical rationality on liberal democracy's ability to maintain a diverse society. It was argued that liberal society has allowed the goals of the economic sphere to seep into social practices, such that the goals and standards of the market have transformed the goals and standards of these social practices. The result of this seepage has been the reorientation of social practices away from their internally determined goods, standards, and logic, towards the attainment of the goods, standards and logic of the capitalist marketplace. Because these social practices all speak the same language of external goods, liberal society has been unable to offer the kind of diversity on which it prides itself. To reverse this anti-pluralistic trend, it was suggested that practitioners ought to democratically locate a consensus on the contingent ideals of their

practice, and artfully re-draw the social map so as to protect sport from undue market influence. Practitioner generated protection will not only further the ideals and goals of individual social practices, but it will also increase the diversity of opportunity that liberal society prides itself on offering.

Whether it be the pursuit of individual freedom through private focal concerns, or the pursuit of socially defined goods in social forms of cooperative activity, focal and social practices have the potential to offer unique and diverse experiences. If we continue to allow the goals of the capitalist marketplace to dictate the path that these practices take, then we may soon be left with a selection of practices that are, for all intents and purposes, merely mirror reflections of the economic sphere. The resurrection of these practices is neither too late, nor out of our hands. To salvage them, and with them we salvage the integrity of liberal democratic culture, we need to question the role of technical rationality, and rule its dominating influence out of those spheres of our life in which it has ceased to perform a liberating role.

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