THE FOOT AND THE BALL (The Psycho-Philosophical perspective of the game)

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ABSTRACT

The most popular game on the face of the earth “Football” has a starting resemblance with life. The game shares the essence with the living. No wonder the popularity is manifested simply because humanity shares plenty with the specifics of the game. An effort is hereby made to visualise life with the help of the game.

KEYWORDS

Football, Life, Existence, Dualism, Phenomenon, Matter, spirit.

INTRODUCTION

Football as a game goes much beyond the common perception of it being a sport and eventually entertainment. At a metaphysical level, the role of the players, referee, viewers and the coach resemble that of the entities defines in our scriptures.

The eastern and western philosophies are full of citation that can have congruence with these entities and when perceived from the eyes of a philosopher, the game throws light on how we lead our day to day lives. The struggles and the conflicts of life as such manifests in various forms in the game.

DISCUSSIONS

The world today will witness the greatest wars of competitive sports on the soil of the demography that recorded violent revolutions in the annals of history.

The Foot and the Ball represents a long-standing philosophy, both of the east and the west.

The Foot kicks the Ball into the Goalpost.

Going back several thousand years, the man struggled with channelizing aggression. The aggression in the personality manifested itself into fights and wars that did considerable damage to the existence. Wise men developed a way to channelize this aggression in a healthy form so that civilisation not only is saved from a lot of miseries but also the minds be kept occupied constructively. Sports thus evolved.

Now coming to the eastern philosophy, Football represents the Dualism. The Purusha and the Prakruti. The Matter and the Spirit, the Objectivity and the Subjectivity.

The Foot is a subjective phenomenon while the Ball is Objective in nature. The Foot manipulated the Ball and the game draws a result which is the scorecard or the goals scored. The manoeuvring by the Foot is a subjective phenomenon and is immeasurable and is a widely perceptive process. The quality of the game is the result of this
handling of Ball by the Foot. The subjectivity of the game lies in the passing the ball, dodging the opponent and control of the ball. But it is only the Ball going into the Goalpost measured, and hence the Ball becomes objective in nature. Life is the movement and handling but achievements are Goals scored. It is not necessary that the best game played wins the match so we find that the best of the efforts need not fruit results.

As the Prakruti dances for the Purusha, so the Ball dances for the Foot. The right action or the ‘Karma’ lies in ‘selfless efforts’ without expecting the results, as cited in Bhagwatgita, the players too should play the game becoming honourably victorious and need not aspire to win. Winning a game may be incidental as we have enough evidence that the best teams lose.

The duality of the Vedas also reflects in the game. Techniques are nothing but rituals. The coaches, who are the Gurus, master the methods and practices and try to incorporate the same in their game as we do in life practising religion. The techniques are only the means to an end. We have carefully separated the Foot from the Ball till now. The Vedanta would take the liberty of merging the two resulting in the essence of the game. Those who relish the essence of the game are not concerned with who wins the game.

Now the Ball that goes into the Post is termed as Goal just like Child who bags a seat into an IIT is called a Creditable Engineer. The education takes a back seat when results become the “Sadhya”.

Coming to Buddhism, the Foot thinks that it is the one that has pushed the ball into the post. It births a doer and that is what creates stress in the players' mind. The ownership of the Goal is claimed by the player whereas the Ball has its destiny. The Buddha here becomes instrumental in challenging the perception of the observer. Players are worshipped and not the game. We create Gods and build Temples to accommodate them. Clubs and Nations thus evolve. The viewers thus start fighting with each other and wars are redefined.

Coming to western philosophy, the fittest shall survive. To be deemed as fit, the best foot is trained to place the ball and fetches the best price. Existentialism is now confined to the playfield and we convert the life into a battlefield. The referee is no longer a Guru who is to be obeyed but a Judge who is to be challenged. And then we create higher Courts to overrule the lower courts.

Objectivism promotes playing for the self and the player with the highest number of Goals is awarded. Kant would bring in some metaphysical element and leave the scoring during a Shoot-out to destiny. This gets reflected on the faces of the Coaches during the Shoot out when the best players fail to score and one wins not by their efforts but by the failures of the others.

Head Heart conflict starts when you witness a wonderful goal by the opposite team which ends into your losing. Tears roll down substantiating emotions of the viewers and sentiments that drive your ideological aspirations. The rational Western mind concludes that Pain is inevitable and misery is a choice.

The Ball as personified humans, keep on getting hit by Foot as personified Life. Adam Scott will question ‘Who brought whom?”, The Foot hits the Ball or the Ball hits the Foot?

Eventually, this whole circus becomes entertainment, just like ‘life’ becomes one for a mortal human.

The World cup will end today but the Game will continue forever.

CONCLUSIONS

The emotions and strategy make the game. The players and the viewers make the game. The game ends with the winners and the losers but the life goes on and awaits the net game. The observer separates himself from the observed and all the circus starts. Till one realises that the observer is the observed, the nature of the game, i.e. life changes. The entertainment converts into the meaning once the entities merge and one is born.
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Inputs from various learned men and women in my earlier life, subconsciously contributed to my evolvement and naming them individually over here would be practically difficult. I feel that consciousness had arranged for us to meet so that the bigger purpose of life would be fulfilled. I surrender my 'self' to that consciousness which not only brought people in my life but spirits a swell embodied and personified as humans too.

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