

# Football, Art and Resistance: A dialogical reading of football as art and emancipation

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## Abstract

This work focuses on analysing aesthetic-sporting phenomena from a political perspective. To do so, it uses approaches from Marxism and critical theory, in principle, to elucidate the relationship between sporting act and aesthetic fact so that, later, the micro-practices of sports can be analysed from the French critical thought of G. Deleuze as phenomena of resistance (cultural or not) of the sporting activity. The analysis presented here attempts to correlate a philosophical conceptual approach, a historical sociological account of sports practices and facts, as well as a journalistic collection of eventualities and characters that outline, from their mere daily practices, exercises of resistance to the alienation of capital represented both in sport and in the culture that passes through (their) bodies generating beauty and Thanatos.

**Keywords:** Critical Theory, Football, Art, Resistance, Capitalism-Colonialism.

## Fútbol, Arte y Resistencia: una lectura dialógica del futbol como arte y emancipación

### Resumen

Este trabajo se concentra analizar fenómenos estético-deportivos desde una óptica política de los mismos. Para esto, utiliza abordajes propios del marxismo y de la teoría crítica, en principio, para dilucidar la relación entre acto deportivo y hecho estético para que, luego, pueda analizarse desde el pensamiento crítico francés de G. Deleuze las microprácticas deportivas como fenómenos de resistencia (cultural o no) del quehacer deportivo. El análisis que se presenta aquí intenta correlacionar un abordaje conceptual filosófico, un recuento histórico sociológico de prácticas y hechos deportivos, así como una recolección periodística de eventualidades y personajes que esbozan, desde sus meras prácticas cotidianas, ejercicios de resistencia ante la alienación del capital representado tanto en el deporte como en la cultura que atraviesa (sus) cuerpos generando belleza y *tánatos*.

**Palabras clave:** Teoría Crítica, Fútbol, Arte, Resistencia, Capitalismo-Colonialismo.

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# Football, Art and Resistance: A dialogical reading of football as art and emancipation

*In memory of María Inés Giraldo Botero, my grandmother, who while I was writing these pages was struggling between life and death in a hospital in the city of Bogota.*

Football, as a global, cultural, social and sporting phenomenon, has been studied from different perspectives and in different historical moments: For example, the role of culture and race in the French team during the World Cup 1998 (Dubois, 2010), the role of political parties and social classes in the emergence and subsequent establishment of football championships and clubs in Latin America (Elsey, 2012) (Elsey, 2009). It has been also studied under aesthetics paradigms, but “the fields of the aesthetics of sports in general, and the aesthetics of football, in particular, are not yet academically well-beaten paths-”<sup>1</sup> (Steffen, Murray, & Margrethe, 2015, p. 94). However, here I seek to contribute to the debate on the relationship between aesthetics and football, but also, I ask about how the categories of alienation and resistance are related to football practice at a global level. This article develops as follows: First of all, I will try to outline, from a Marxist perspective, how football can be understood as an artistic practice. Secondly, I would like to understand how is possible to perceive a different<sup>2</sup> form of alienation in football and, thirdly how, in various situations, resistance practices can be evidenced both by cultural as well as political. This paper does not focus on political expressions as hooligans nor alienation expressed in market exchange of players nor the already typical class

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<sup>1</sup> And Steffen Murray & Margrethe (2015) continue: “Furthermore, if one looks to mainstream aesthetics, which has typically concentrated its efforts on theorizing about art (that is, in relation to painting, sculpture, literature, film and so on), one finds that there is no general consensus as to the extension of aesthetics, what the aesthetic experience is, and how to relate the realm of aesthetics to the other spheres of human existence, such as ethics” (p. 94).

<sup>2</sup> I will not concentrate, here, on this essay, on the typical left-Marxist analysis of football where the common places of analysis are centred on the exploitation of football players as workers.

analysis of sports, but it concentrates on some other political expressions as resistance to Thanatos impulse (*Trieb*)<sup>3</sup>.

While some of the currents of Marxism have been interested in investigating and analysing the most concrete political phenomena such as State theory (Stalin, 1924), party theory, and economic-political theory (Kautsky, 1899), while discrediting the emergence of new units of analysis as culture or art are, other currents emerged and consolidated themselves in the study of those units of analysis: a good example is the profound discussion between Theodor Adorno and Georg Lukács as regards socialist realism, but also the study of the relationship between Mass Media and Society (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2002), and the relationship between life impulse (*Eros*) and death impulse (*Thanatos*) in the advanced industrial society (Marcuse, 1978) (Marcuse, 1966).

I would like to begin with a question: Were some Marxist or critical thinkers who started to do what we do today known as the sociology of sport? To prove it is not the main point of this paper but let us get close to some interesting facts on this subject: One of the first works which begin the investigation of sports was Heinz Risse's thesis *Soziologie des Sports* in 1921 (Lüschen 2006), thesis which was supervised by Theodor Adorno, who also supervised Bero Rigauer's work *Sport und Arbeit* (Dunning 1999). Also, as Professor Gerardo Orellana mentions, "Almost in parallel came the work published by a group of French sociologists known as *Partisans* (1972) (among whom Jean-Marie Brohm points out). Both Rigauer's work and that of *Partisans* constitute the precedent that establishes an interpretation of sport from the Marxist perspective" (Orellana 2012).

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<sup>3</sup> For Thanatos impulse I understand that the subject has an appetite towards the state of total tranquillity, towards the cessation of stimulation and activity, a desire to return to the initial inorganic state, that is, towards non-existence: Death here is not understood just as corporal decease but is considered here as a destructive impulse that prevails in the capitalist system and that distort and dismay human dignity, nature and humanity in general. For further development of Thanatos refer to Paulina Corsi's article *Aproximación preliminar al concepto de pulsión de muerte en Freud* (Corsi, 2002) and of Thanatos in Capitalism to Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*.

Concerning on the field which is being investigated here, in the Frankfurt School there is a great distrust of what has been termed “mass culture” (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2002), but this essay will not focus on understanding sport and football in its dimension as a mass culture but will focus on the “micro” moments found in the development of sport: the role of players, teams coaches and so on, and how these actors can recreate and represent utopian, emancipatory and resistance movements and moments.

### **The historical and social question of football**

Football is both the biggest global game “-measured by the number of those playing in and watching the sport at various levels – and surely the largest sporting spectacle on earth” (Steffen, Murray, & Margrethe, 2015). However, despite this support and contemporary world fame of this sport, its origin is not pretty clear. Although the beginning of football as it is known today, date back to 1863 in England -the founding year of The Football Association-, this sport has its origins several centuries in the past: particularly in the British Isles during the Middle Age, Particularly, in Midlothian, Scotland, there are records of annual female games of some variant of football dating from the 1790s. Due to a large number of different regulations present in the United Kingdom; that allowed or prohibited the use of violence or certain clothing, in 1848 representatives of different English schools held a series of meetings to create the Cambridge football code, a code that would inspire the creation of the rules of football. Thus, in 1863 in the city of London, the first rules of football became official.

Some years later began the regional tournaments, and the continent that started earlier its local championship was South America. During 1910 the Centennial Cup of May Revolution would become the oldest South American tournament in history. The tournament served as the ancestor of the future South American Soccer Championship of the South American Football Confederation, which would be played for the first time in 1916. The Asian continent would hold

its official tournament two years after the founding of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), in 1956. The first edition of the Asian Cup of 1956 was held in Hong Kong with the participation of 7 of the 12 associations Affiliates. In parallel, the African Cup of Nations had its first edition in 1957.

The first tournament organized by the African Football Confederation was attended by Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan (South Africa had been disqualified by apartheid). Paradoxically, despite having been the region where the first football association originated, and where the first regulations and tournaments originated, after the creation of UEFA in 1954, the completion of a European tournament had to wait until 1960, when the first edition of the European Nations Cup was held. On the other hand, Concacaf held its tournament in 1963.

Previously, before the merger of the CCCF -Central America and the Caribbean- and the NAFC (North America), these organizations played the CCCF Cup, since 1941, and the NAFC Cup, since 1947. Finally, starting in 1973, after the founding of the Oceania Football Confederation in 1966, the OFC Nations Cup, the maximum event in Oceania football, would take place. On the other hand, concerning the world cups, the incursion of FIFA<sup>4</sup> in the Olympic Games since 1924, motivated the creation of a tournament of its own. Thus, in 1928, in Amsterdam, the holding of a World Cup was approved every four years. In 1930 the first soccer World Cup was held in Uruguay. Unfortunately, this global event has never been held in Oceania or Africa and will be held, soon and for the first time, in the Middle East.

That was briefly resumé oft the history of football and its “bureaucratic” development until now. But what happens with football players, referees, or fans? In the case of football players, for example, “the neighbourhood envies him: the

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<sup>4</sup> The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) was founded on May 21, 1904 in response to the need to create an international association to regulate the participation of players in different clubs at the same time, “the mutual recognition of expulsions issued by other associations and the organization of matches based on the Rules of the Game of the Football Association”. For further information, we recommend consulting <https://www.fifa.com/about-fifa/who-we-are/history/index.html>

professional player has been saved from the factory, or the office, he is paid to have fun, the lottery was taken out" (Galeano, 1995, p. 16). But is he truly paid to have fun? He must win, the entrepreneurs buy it, lend it, sell it, and he always agrees to get more fame and more money. Thus, he trains for whole days to be at the highest performance and to enjoy a better life, but he always leaves aside the pleasure of having a ball on his feet for pleasure and not for money. But, besides, a "productive worker", as the market understands, has the possibility of being employed until the age of 60, however, in football, the player can become old at thirty years of age, and that is because "muscles get tired early [...] or before the end if a ball strikes him badly, or bad luck bursts a muscle, or a kick breaks a bone of those who have no fix" (Galeano, 1995, p. 16).

Thus, it is not in vain that, as Brenda Elsey (2012) expressed in her text *Citizens and Sportsmen*, "the social question" was linked to football: on the one hand there were the dominant economic classes that founded clubs -for example in Chile- that sought to maintain Chilean race; clubs that were run from the dominant parties (in Latin America commonly liberal and conservative parties), and on the other side were the working-class clubs. The working-class clubs saw in soccer an option of relationship and recreation among the workers, they understood the football as a form of expression and entertainment that separated them from their usual activities, while the clubs belonging to the ruling classes saw football as a solution to some of the "habits of the workers"; namely, alcoholism or "the deterioration of the bodies of men due to electric light or travel on trains, which were assumed to disrupt natural rhythms" (Elsey, 2012, p. 21).

In this way, after a short review of football's history and some sociological approaches to football players, is possible to focus on the main point of this article: the relationship aesthetics and football, and the explanation of how the categories of alienation and resistance are related to football practice.

### Football as a form of art

Football, like any other activity, requires preparation, training, sacrifices, but it also requires, like art, technique, and talent. Someone can work out plenty of time to practice and play football and he/she can be an amateur football player or even, perhaps, a professional player lower league, but lacking talent no one can become a great or authentic football player<sup>5</sup>. Something similar happens in art: There are recognised or authentic artists; the great artists are who have based their success on talent<sup>6</sup>. Rembrandt, Goya, Obregon, Picasso, were talented artists. "Talent is part of nature, it is also possible to express oneself in the following way: *genius is the innate disposition of the mind (ingenium) by means of which nature gives rule to art*" (Kant, 1913, p. 307)<sup>7</sup>. The first approximation between art and sport can be understood as follows: artists and athletes require abilities, practice, dedication. This can be considered as a sphere of pre-praxis, proper to the subject and society -since not everyone has the possibility of accessing certain fields of training or specialisation in both the artistic and sports fields-.

Similarly, it could be said that both art and sport share a commonplace in their praxis. Beyond the pre-construction of the artwork, beyond the preparation for the match, the artist and the football player express his/her spirit in a play, either in concrete material creation or in an abstract symbolic move. Moreover, in their praxis, players and artists think and do not think as long as they believe; They think because there is a conscientious detail in their creation - whether in matters of colour, of those who mark whom, of the form -, but they do not think because of their talent: they let

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<sup>5</sup> In this way sports - at a certain moment - achieves the elimination of social classes and appeal to universalized humanity; That is, species being.

<sup>6</sup> Here will be plausible to talk about the commodification of arts and sports as Dino Numerato does in his essay "Who Says "No to Modern Football? Italian Supporters, Reflexivity, and Neo-Liberalism". (Numerato, 2015), but, without obviating this phenomenon, I would like to concentrate here in the relationship between arts and sports.

<sup>7</sup> And Kant continues: "Whatever this definition is, whether it is merely arbitrary or appropriate or not to the concept with which the word genius is usually linked [...] can nevertheless be demonstrated in advance that, according to the meaning of the word adopted here, the fine arts must necessarily be considered the arts of genius" (Kant, 1913, p. 307).



themselves be carried in their praxis by what they feel, by what their Animal spirits - as René Descartes refers to what we know today as nervous system -, in conclusion, by his talent. Thus, both the plastic artist, the filmmaker, the sportsman and the literary have a moment in their praxis that corresponds to their training, to what they have learned; Either in an institute or empirically, and another time that corresponds with his talent, with his imagination.

Knowing that this first proposal of the relationship between art and sport is scarce, I start from a question to see the relation between art and sport: how can be understood football as an artistic fact? Commonly, when a game is observed, when someone talks about a team or a player, they are qualified as good or bad, and with it has already been done an aesthetic judgment. A criterion has been expressed; expressed not only in terms of speech but also of the thought that comes from an objective judgment:

When football is written and talked about, questions related to aesthetic properties, aesthetic experience and aesthetic judgement are typically evoked. For example, phrases entailing an aesthetic evaluation [or judgment], such as talk of 'beautiful play,' 'ugly style,' 'dramatic win' [...] are widely used in discussion and criticism of football. This special issue addresses the phenomenon of football from an aesthetic point of view [...] and tries to understand what the aesthetics of football might amount to (Steffen, Murray, & Margrethe, 2015, p. 95).

Let us go back in 1995 to Wembley Stadium in London, to a game between the English national team and the Colombian national team. When René Higuita, "allowing an overhit cross from Jamie Redknapp to loop over his shoulder [he], on his goal-line, prevented the ball entering the net by leaping forwards and, in mid-air, batting it away with his gymnastically raised heels, striking it somewhere close to the back of his neck, the announcers and commentators could only express: *Goodness, have you ever seen like that in your life from a goalkeeper? That is quite the most*

remarkable piece of goalkeeping that I have ever seen. Extraordinary piece of work by Higuita". Now, in contrast, imagine someone arrives for the first time to the National Museum of Rome. He or she goes to a room and finds The Discobolus of Myron. He or she first feels a different atmosphere, of inattention, and then, he or she fixes his attention on this sculpture: a man with a disc in his right hand, ready to throw it. Thanks to its movement, people can appreciate the firmness and accuracy of its muscles, of its bones. However, what makes this old-fashioned sculpture a work of art? Some will say its resemblance to human nature (its *mimesis of human anatomy*), others will say that it is the reflection of the spirit of the model and the artist that achieve consummate in a piece outside themselves<sup>8</sup>, or others will refer to the artistic technique to carve the marble based in a bronze.

Something similar could be said about the *Higuita's Scorpion*: we entered the mythical Wembley Stadium and saw a different, quasi-sacred atmosphere. We find a man jumping with his legs over his neck, something very similar to the movement made by a scorpion with its sting when it intends to attack. We see how the handling of the body, the technique, the experience, and the spirit of a man is reflected in a moment, in a photo, in an image that remained for history. But does happen the same within Higuita's Scorpion and the Discobolus? Both of them make some reactions at the spectator, both of them show some human states from different epochs and some different anatomies, but they both are based on sports: one is just the registration of that moment; the condensation of the moment in sculpture, while the other is the moment itself.

There also are another class of aesthetically pleasurable performances where actors or performers do not rely on the guidance of another artist but are acting spontaneously.

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<sup>8</sup> Hegel, for example, will agree with this position: "The artistic beauty, however, is engendered by the spirit, and only for that reason is it superior to nature [...] what now means superior here is the spiritual, the true, in such a way that what is, is only insofar as he takes part in this superiority of his, that that and that which is, owns him through the superior. The natural beauty is a reflection of the spirit; as an incomplete model of the spiritual (Hegel, 1970, p. 14).

The star performers in ice hockey, cricket, football, and sports generally, are valued as much for their elegance in action as their run-making and goal-getting ability. Sports commentators use the terms of aesthetic appraisal as freely as do art critics: footballers are described as “intuitive artist”, “inspired clowns”, and there is the general run of good solid craftsmen (Saw, 1961, p. 28).

Thus, it could be said that for both art and sport, when “consumption is detached from its primitive rudeness and loses its immediate character [...] it has, as an instinct, the object as a mediator. The necessities that you experience of that object is created by the perception of it, the object of art [...] creates an audience capable of understanding art and enjoying the beauty. Therefore, production generates not only an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object” (Marx and Engels 2009, p. 89), or in more concrete words: the artist, like the player, does not play<sup>9</sup> only for himself/herself, does not play only for spectators or experts, but also re-creates himself/herself as an actor, as a painter, as a player, as an artist in front of his/her object.

Let us think, also for an instance, at the moment of re-creation: it can be understood as a continuous movement in art and the sport because, while the artist shapes his spirit in his creation, this creation also leaves a mark on the artist. Let us look at concrete examples in football: there are goals, moves or celebrations that, although created and executed by a specific player or team, the play marked the life of a player; an example would be the Olympic goal of Marcos Coll:

I sought to focus well as it did in America<sup>10</sup> and Bucaramanga<sup>11</sup> to continue discounting because remember that we lost [against the Soviet Union] 4-1 and finished 4-4. [...] At 76 years of age, he acknowledges that this fact

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<sup>9</sup> The German verb *Spielen* is the best way to emphasize the character of the artist as a player, as a person who is on stage and play, creates and recreates its object.

<sup>10</sup> América de Cali is one of the most important football clubs in Colombia.

<sup>11</sup> Bucaramanga is a Colombian football club.

changed him for the life he lives in Barranquilla, today. Similarly, he regrets that FIFA has not yet had the detail of making a humble tribute to him for being the author of the only Olympic goal in the 19 football world cups that go since 1930 but, at the same time, he is happy because in Barranquilla they have 50 years recognising that historic 1962 (Herrera, 2017).

Also, is Wayne Rooney's bicycle kick goal against Manchester City: "For decades, people will remember the fact that they were in the game where Wayne Rooney scored that goal ... When you see a goal like that, Mancini said [Manchester City manager at the time], you can only applaud" (Draper 2017), "I have not seen anything like it, that's for sure, Ferguson [Red Devils coach at the time] I cannot remember a better goal at Old Trafford" (Wayne Rooney's goal the best I have ever seen, says Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson, 2011). On the other hand, by Ricardo Ciciliano against Medellin in Bogotá, Colombia; "It was pure logic, rights always throw it on the right side of the goalkeeper [...] my grandfather died the day [before the game], and I think he was the one who closed the penalty and added three points," said Ciciliano at the end of the match" (Molina, 2017). Then, as we can see, those goals or moves have changed footballer's life; these goals or movements were the maximum expressions of the players' spirit, but, in turn, managed to recreate the image of the player for himself and the rest of the world.

### **Art and sports in Marxism**

Through Marx's work, there is a great concern on the part of the author on the question of aesthetics - the role of the work of art - whether in the Holy Family, in German ideology or the Manuscripts of Economics and Philosophy of 1844, Marx questions the place of art -and of artists- in both advanced industrial society and communist society. Thus, someone can say that for Marx the role of artists in any society is extremely important because if the Marxians we had to define a certain type or the characteristic that makes a human being a human is, in a great measure,

its ability to create -Homo Faber-, but the humanity sets his spirit into two types of objects: a first object that seeks to satisfy humanized natural necessities, and second objects that seek to satisfy new humanized necessities -such as aesthetic necessity- (Sánchez Vásquez, 2013).

Much of Marx's work focuses on the criticism of conditions and the realisation of humanity who performs objects arranged for the satisfaction of humanised natural necessities -workers, proletarians- but his work touches only tangentially the role and development of who realises the objects arranged to supply the aesthetic necessity. The role that Marx gives to art is that of the realisation of the spirit, but "In order to develop a more spiritually free "people", they must no longer be slaves to their physical needs, no longer be serfs of the body. Above all, they must have time to create and enjoy spiritually." (Marx and Engels, 1968, p. 478).

Also, it can be said that football has been seen in different ways: when it is understood as a practice has been seen as a being peacemaker social problems and wars: "using his fame as a tool for social change Drogba decided to act to save his country by appealing to politicians, warring factions and his own people for peace [...] After Didier Drogba helped the Ivory Coast team qualify for the 2006 World Cup, he challenged President Gbagbo to end the civil war. He made a desperate plea to the combatants, asking them to lay down their arms, a plea which was answered with a cease-fire after five years of civil war" (Didier Drogba and the Ivorian civil war, 2017). When viewed in a global business environment is categorised to make money quickly, or at least it has been understood in recent years since the emergence of so-called modern football: "the adjective «modern» in the slogan does not refer to the sociological idea of modernity in contrast to traditional societies. Instead, its meaning is related to every day and lay usage. Translated into a sociological vocabulary, "modern" football is late-modern, globalised, and deeply entrenched within the media/sports production complex. Simultaneously, "modern" football has increasingly become an object of reflexive discourses deconstructing these neoliberal and global encroachments" (Numerato, 2015, p. 124). - but from the

individual-social sphere can be understood to get ahead, as a way to be happy, to shape their spirit, rebellion, freedom, but also as a form of exploitation: football at the individual level it can also be seen as a way of *going to unwanted*, as a form of alienation.

But what do we understand for alienation? It is when work and its products assume an existence separate from man, his will, and his planning. The product is foreign or strange and independent to the worker; it does not belong to the worker, and he or she cannot use it for his satisfaction but belongs to the bourgeois<sup>12</sup> who usually benefits from its sale. In this sense, workers do not have a clear perception of what they produce.

Let us think, first, on an ordinary day of a player. As we saw before, what does he/she do every day, every week, before, during and after the game? The answer is simple: the player prepares; either physically or mentally, the player prepares him/herself and guides all his days around the date where all his work will be represented, the day of the match. The football player, as the artist, is judged, for the beauty of his game, for his fineness, but he is also judged by his results, by his goals, the more goals he scores, the more he will be required “the appropriation of the object [, of this work of art,] appears so much as alienation that the more objects the worker produces, the less he can own and the more he comes under the control of his product, capital.” (Marx, 1968, p. 512), that is why he becomes a slave to his quality, his technique, of what was, is, and can become.

Thus, players are faced with practice and feel eerie, feel strange: are alienated. It is alienated because of his object; his/her creation is no longer proper to him or his/her colleagues, but it belongs to the members of the club, the press, the world-business. Their goals, their plays, good or bad, no longer are supported only on themselves, their colleagues or their coach, but fall on specialists,

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<sup>12</sup> I propose to understand here bourgeois as boards of directors that own teams, boards of directors or owners of media or television networks, or sponsoring companies because of Marx’ dialectical proposal of ruled *-beherrschten-* and rulers *-herrschen-*.

tion trial specialists! who will be in charge of doing “what they know best”, to do for which they receive money: to judge and to distance more and more the objective work of a being that has shaped its spirit in her.

Here I will try to explain some of these aspects of the footballer's individual life, his relationship with the global business entity called modern football, with alienation and phenomena of resistance.

### **Resistance practices in football**

The Frankfurt school, on the other hand, does give an emancipatory character to art, not mechanically or directly, but it does manage to identify two emancipatory dimensions - one clearer than the other - of art: the dimension of clearly ideological and partisan expression - what was called in the Soviet-era socialist realism - and the dimension of the description of social pathologies. Marcuse explains that for him the Marxist orthodoxy of art can be understood as “I understand the interpretation of the quality and truth of a work of art in terms of the totality of the prevailing relations of production. [...] this interpretation holds that the work of art represents the interests and world outlook of particular social classes in a more or less accurate manner” (Marcuse, 1978, p. ix).

Marcuse also argues that the authentic revolutionary work of art is presented, posed and developed when “by virtue of the aesthetic transformation, it represents, in the exemplary fate of individuals, the prevailing unfreedom and the rebelling forces, thus breaking through the mystified (and petrified) social reality, and opening the horizon of change (liberation)” (Marcuse, 1978, p. xi). That means, that the authentic work of art must represent the lack of social freedom, which can be represented in alienation, economic dependence, war between various sectors of the population, violence, etc., so that the work of art, therefore, represents reality while denouncing , and it is how, according to Adorno, “art becomes social by its opposition to society, and it occupies this position only as autonomous art” (Adorno,

1997, p. 225) What is social in art is its immanent movement against society, not its manifest opinions" (Adorno, 1997, p. 227).

On the other hand, Marcuse argues that one of the problems of orthodox Marxism was the annulment of the subjectivity of the individual thanks to the massification of the community and society, which has generated some disinterest and displacement of people in the project of human emancipation, since these were not seen as part, nor reflected, of the revolutionary process. There was no inspiration to and with the subjectivity, so Marcuse and Adorno will emphasize that "the need for radical change must be rooted in the subjectivity of individuals themselves, in their intelligence and their passions, their drives and their goals" (Marcuse, 1978, p. 3), so that "[t]he experience of art as that of its truth or untruth is more than subjective experience: It is the irruption of objectivity into subjective consciousness" (Adorno, 1997, p. 245), but not only in the social sphere, since it applied only in the social sphere would give "the reductionistic concept of consciousness which brackets the particular content of individual consciousness and, with it, the subjective potential for revolution" (Marcuse, 1978, p. 4). Thus, we focus on the pursuit of human freedom, emphasising subjectivity as well as objectivity: "[t]he transcendence of immediate reality shatters the reified objectivity of established social relations and opens a new dimension of experience: rebirth of the rebellious subjectivity" (Marcuse, 1978, p. 7).

At this point, after the brief explanation that has just been offered, it can be inferred that football can be understood as a form of art, and, moreover, that art can lead to humanity, even to a form of emancipation. Let us recall the distinction between political emancipation and human emancipation that Marx offers in *On the Jewish Question*: the political emancipation refers to the emancipation of the State from a given doctrine and its realization as a true, but, "The limit of political emancipation immediately appears in the fact that the state can free itself from a barrier without man being truly free from it, that the state can be a free state without man being a free man" (Marx and Engels, 1981, p. 353). On the other hand, human



emancipation is the *real* liberation of people, where he is truly free in his praxis, in his thinking and in his life: the individual expression of *self-existence* (*sein für sich*) where he/she gives a liberation (Marx and Engels, 1977) of what someone is at a given time and of what someone can become -contemporaneously we can understand the *self-existence* as what it has been termed as a critical attitude (Marx and Engels, 1977, pp. 180 - 181) -. However, we separate, in this analysis, from the Marxian understanding of human emancipation: “when the real individual human being takes the abstract citizen back into himself and as an individual human being in his empirical life, in his individual work, in his individual relationships, has become a species being, only when man has recognized and organized his “forces propres” as social forces and therefore no longer separates the social force from himself in the form of political force, only then is human emancipation accomplished” (Marx, 1981, p. 370). We disclaim this proposal because we are aware that human emancipation, as Marx propounds it, is not realizable through the artistic practices present in football, so we will focus in a micro way of understanding emancipation: resistance<sup>13</sup>.

But how can exert an act of resistance in football? or wrote it another way: how has been exerting the resistance phenomenon in a sport like a football? This is where we focus at this point. For the development of the concept of resistance, we will focus on what the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze offers us about this concept, but he never presented an exact definition of this concept, so we will try to reconstruct from some of his works and of his interview published posthumously called. *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*.

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<sup>13</sup> Even if it is not the purpose of this essay to explain the relation between emancipation and resistance, it is fundamental to explain that resistance is a great refusal to something, i.e. Capitalism, patriarchy, in conclusion, to any type of domination.

On the other hand, emancipation is a movement, a “moving and creating principle” [present in] Hegel’s philosophy (Marx, 1961, p. 176). Thus, unless these forms of resistance became forms of emancipation, which develop and consist on new human relations, they will find almost nothing except the gesture of a Great Refusal (Marcuse, 1964). It means, while resistance is just a great refusal, an action or defending position, emancipation is the liberation of what is being resisted against to.

We can start with the question that arises Deleuze. *L'Abécédaire* along the section called *R of resistance* *R* "to create is to resist?" (Deleuze, 1988-1989). In the case of the philosopher, who has the role of creating concepts, someone could easily affirm that to create is to resist. But why is it true? Because the philosopher focuses on combating hegemonic thinking by developing concepts, by questioning, bringing to judgment common places, what has been termed as normal, as the ordinary. Thus, the philosopher is that counterhegemonic that, through rhizomes, networks, and mechanisms, focuses him/herself on recreating a combative thought, often clandestine, thinking against the dominant: is the one who resists in his words, in his writings, against whom he has tried to totalize and co-opt the Whole: "Can we say that you, Felix, Foucault, form networks of concepts, as networks of resistance, as a war machine against a thought Dominant or against common places? Yes, why not? It would be very good if it were true, it would be very good" (Deleuze, 1988-1989). But it just concerned about the philosophy and the philosophers, but what about the artists and the athletes?

"A painter, a musician, does not create concepts, creates something else; then, [...] we should find other words" (Deleuze, 1988-1989): the artist creates life, or, rather, liberates life; creates distinct possible worlds from what he/she sees, what he/she feels, what he/she is immersed in: "the artist is the one who releases a life, a powerful life, a life that is more than personal, that is not life itself" (Deleuze, 1988-1989). The artist is the one who can produce a *devenir*, a kind of utopia in some life that is not his/her own, a perception that something is wrong, that something fails.

This can be seen in football in different aspects, the first is the creation of possible lives: remember the life of Ronaldinho, who, just to become who he was, only to become a world reference, he created life; he did create illusions of possible *devenirs* in his compatriots, in the immigrants, in the badly denominated countries of the third world. Ronaldo de Assis Moreira, better known as Ronaldinho, for example, it is recalled his first forays into football and the origins of life grew up in

a relatively poor and laborious neighbourhood youth teams of Ronaldinho had to settle for fields of improvised play.

Thus, Ronaldinho ingress into football and took his first steps in a successful sports career, but, above all, faced the economic, social, and cultural difficulties of a large sector of the Brazilian population. Thanks to his talent, his artistic training and deployment could he, together with his manager -his brother Roberto- and with the motivation which was given by his father -Joao- managed to resist, and even surpass, all these very conditions of a sector of Brazilian's society plunged into poverty, inequality and necessity. It was art, his art, that managed to become a professional player in the Brazilian football team Gremio de Porto Alegre, who became world champion in 2002 with his national team -Brazil-, and, also who he became the best player in the world -with the award of the *Golden ball*- in 2005.

In addition to this, Ronaldinho became a *devenir*, became a utopia, became an example, an aspiration; so, Neymar showed his famous bow in a party that played the Santos team from Brazil, where Neymar was playing at that time, and Atletico Mineiro's team, with Ronaldinho. Although the case of Neymar is quite different from that Ronaldinho's since the circumstances of his youth and his development were not surrounded by poverty and inequality, Neymar became as a Ronaldinho in another way: as a Ronaldinho, as a paradigm, a *possible devenir*, for future generations.

Let us think for a moment about a character from a novel; "As bad as it ends, a novel character has integrated itself [...] is a kind of giant, is an exaggeration with respect to life, but it is not an exaggeration with respect to art. Art is the production of such exaggerations. And by its very existence it is already resistance" (Deleuze, 1988-1989). Thus, Ronaldinho was and is resistance, for his exaggeration in playing football, for his exaggeration in humility and human quality, and also for influencing the lives of some people who, without getting to know him at an early age, were conceived *next* themselves as *Ronaldinho*.

Things as those happened all around the world: Things as Francesco Totti's fidelity to the AS Roma team, who fitting against the contemporary commodification of football decided to remain with the love of his life -The AS Roma team- instead of earning a larger amount of money than the one he earned in the Roma team, just because for Totti "fidelity is already a victory for [him]" (Cortijo, 2016). As he said when he retired from football: "you are and always will be in my life. [...] I am happy and proud to have given 28 years of my love for Roma. I love you" (Retiring Roma legend Francesco Totti: I am not ready to say it is over, 2017). Things as Dani Alves' proposal to Eric Abidal: he "wanted to give [him] his liver but it couldn't be because it would have hurt the Brazil right-back's ability to play" (Eric Abidal says Dani Alves offered him part of his liver for transplant, 2013).

He -Alves- preferred to be faithful of his team's motto *Mes que un Club* -more than a club- and tried him to donate his liver to his teammate -the French footballer Eric Abidal-, even knowing that his sports career would end at that time. Fighting against the main characteristic of capitalism - selfishness - showed us another phenomenon of resistance; And taught us that football, which any sport, can be an example and continuation of struggles and changes that are lived in the social reality, that these artistic, cultural and social practices can be a counter-hegemonic phenomenon to the stark reality that lives the contemporary world today.

Thus, we can begin to observe how, in a certain way, we can understand soccer as an art form. Either by the preparation and talent present in their players, by the similarities between the appreciation that can be given to sculpture and a play like "*the scorpion*". In addition, to see how football and its players can present themselves as phenomena of becoming or resistance for ordinary people, and how their dances and haircuts exemplify resistance phenomena to the profile of capitalism to involve us in a one-dimensional society that delegitimizes the *minor cultures*<sup>14</sup> or the possibility of social ascent, we can contribute to the understanding

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<sup>14</sup> This term is related to what Deleuze and Guattari (1986) understand as a "Minor Literature".

that has started to be given to football and sport as an aesthetic, social and artistic phenomenon.

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