

WLC 2016 : World LUMEN Congress. Logos Universality Mentality Education Novelty 2016 |
LUMEN 15th Anniversary Edition

The Idea of Olympism: About the Necessity and Possibility of Correction

Veaceslav Manolachi^{a*}

* Corresponding author: *Veaceslav Manolachi, anticamerausefs@mail.ru*

^aProfessor PhD. Hab., The State University of Physical Education and Sports from Republic of Moldova

Abstract

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2016.09.69>

The philosophical-culturological consideration of the problem “sport and the idea of Olympism” is carried out. The ideas on the problem of Coubertin, which are reflected in the Olympic Character, are analyzed. It is revealed that the idea of Olympism of P. de Coubertin and the idea of ancient Olympism are not identical, and the latter, in particular, is more metaphysically grounded. It is shown that in accordance with the view of ancient Greeks, Olympism is the philosophy of agonistic (competitive) life, and the agon itself is treated as a basic principle of cosmological and social relations as well, and the Olympic sport reproduces this principle, and in this case there is an emphasis on the opposition and unity of those basics, which make up the foundation of agonistic process. It is stated that in philosophy of the modern period the competitiveness is also considered as a universal and internally contradictory social relationship, as an event, which constantly accompanies the fact of self-awareness and self-realization, in which two human strives are realized: individualization and participation. It is shown that primary important task, which is connected with the development of the modern sport and modernization of the concept of Olympism, is the upheaval to the qualitatively new level of world-outlook competence of the coach and sportsman and on this basis-reorganization of the system of the Olympic education.

© 2016 Published by Future Academy www.FutureAcademy.org.uk

Keywords: Philosophy of sport; Philosophy of Olympism; Creative heritage of P. de Coubertin; agony; Ancient sport; Modern sport.



1. Introduction

The opinion regarding the necessity of realizing and even revising the Olympic idea is permanently specified in the contemporary literature (Jerdem, 1992; Boulongnt, 1994; Leiper, 1980; Shaddad, 1997). The main argument that the authors present is the fact that, at present, both sport as social life in general essentially differs from those of 100 years ago when P. de Coubertin formulated this idea. The today world is called postmodernist. It is a special world. It doubts, and in some cases absolutely established, many of the ideas now regarded classics, traditional, pluralism and centrism representing the essential principles of its life.

The Olympic idea is a classic one, with roots in the Ancient Greek culture. The sport's idea, looks somewhat archaic. With its tendency towards a definitive precision in evaluating the result and towards a uniformity of competitions rules, with the binding nature of finality and rigid regulation of man's lifestyle that practice a certain kind of sport, it does not look alike with a postmodernist phenomenon.

Which is in fact the role of sport in contemporary culture and which are its historical perspectives? These problems are complex and at the same time actual. The sport's scope itself expects the necessity of their classification. The situation does not look favorable. The assessments of sport, as we know, are already divergent at the level of its socio-cultural potential characteristics generalized to the maximum.

Should be sport considered something good or bad? There are different opinions regarding its positive and negative effects. Some insist on the negative effects *E. Fromm* claims about the Olympic Games that these ones are "a dirty compound of advertising and business" (Fromm, 1986).

2. The research methodology

The research methodology which I applied has been selected in order to respond to the main specific requirements of an ascertaining study. The methodological system consisted of: method of specialty bibliography analysis; method of systematic observation and method of activity products analysis.

I. Heizing mentions that sport is a "absolutely useless skill, which does not enrich the soul" (Hejzinga, 1992). The real sociological researches often strength this point of view. Some of them insist on its positive effects. In this context, it must be mentioned, first of all, the Olympic Charter, "Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced overall the qualities of body, the will and the spirit" (Olimpijskaja hartija (v dejstvii s 7 ijulja 2007 g.)). Undoubtedly, it is a fiery idea.

So, there are different opinions we would say even diametrically opposed. Obviously these opinions are based on different ideas. The evident arguments were empirically determined as: doping, vulgar commercialization, egotism and the athlete's aggression is the basis for the first opinion.

Your contribution will be used to improve translation quality and can be anonymously displayed to the users. The intuition (and, should be emphasized especially the intuition because these theses have not been conceptual analyzed) that sport immanently involves "a balanced wholly " is the basis for the second opinion. What finally is obtained? Like in other cases, similar, in life, the opinion based on

empirical evident facts looks more convincing. P. de Coubertin looks, for these reasons, a romantic, a naive dreamer. However P. de Coubertin's intuition is profound and true enough, but what it discovers, we will emphasize this fact once again, it is not greatly theoretically specified. We will notice that in this situation, it does not solve the problem neither the reasoning (although generally looks more realistic), according to which the sport has a "dual character" can be both good and bad - depending on the circumstances.

What does the P. de Coubertin's intuition show and those who share their honest opinion (not only in the work interest)? Generally, the sport presupposes harmony. Let us analyze the motive activity. Its achievement holds a special regime of interaction of the athlete with the environment. This is the overcome (confrontation) of the environment and obedience to it, and the collaboration with environment, but also the competition. It is no doubt a truth, but P. de Coubertin was based in his conceptions, primarily on intuition regarding other interaction that usually is analyzed in terms of content as athlete interaction with the enemy, namely in this case the sport situation often is presented as disadvantage. The tendency towards personal success is treated in sport and in a particular reasonably extent as one indisputably principle. It is difficult to consider the harmony a basic phenomenon, to discover the equilibrium postulated in the Olympic Charter, so it is difficult to support the opinion of P. de Coubertin and his followers about sports.

Starting from those specified earlier, it must be given attention to the educational activities in sport. As such, it certainly is achieved and in some cases it turns out to be quite productive if it will be taken into account the evolutions results of athletes in competitions, but in reality, it has an insignificant link with the idea of Olympism and, in this regard, it is less effective.

We also mention that the insufficient general- theoretical elaboration of the Olympism concept acts as a factor that reduces the work results of propagation the Olympic knowledge.

Is it possible a conceptual argumentation of P. de Coubertin's opinion? Of course, we think it is possible. In any case, it can be called the direction in which is rationally to submit these efforts. For understandable reasons, we can only state some general judgments on this subject. Sport is, first of all, a competitive activity that is why the main attention to the analysis should be focused on the issue of the itself human competition essence, but exactly this aspect is ignored by researchers. The competition should be analyzed as one of the universal social relations (Vizitej, 2006). It is an indispensable element of the act of man self-consciousness, which always implies a confrontation, a comparison of the individual with another individual and a result evaluation of this confrontation.

Here are some assertions of some famous personalities. I. Kant stated that "Humanity is a compared egocentrism" (Kant, 1965b); W. Dilthey considers "that only in comparison with others I realize the individual of me; I realize only what differs me from other" (Kant, 1965a); J.-P. Sartre said: "To achieve a certain truth about oneself, I have to go through a truth about the other; another is necessary for my existence; as well as for my consciousness" (Sartre, 1989) etc.

Self-consciousness is always a self-affirmation, a self-realization of personality (it "is not a determination, it is an interested self-presentation") (Habermas, 1991). And finally, the main aspect that often remains without attention. The self-realization is an internal contradictory situation. In this case, two basic tendencies of human meet and mutually mediate: the first is to highlight, to

individualize, and the second one - in taking root in the community with which the human is identified, to feel part of this community. This circumstance is noted by many well-known authors. E. Fromm stated: "The paradox of human existence is the fact that man seeks at the same time approach and independence, unity with others and keeping its own particularities and uniqueness" (Fromm, 1993). P. Tillich: "The Ego Self-affirmation as an individual Ego always involves the assertion of that force of the existence in which the ego participates, the ego is stated as a participant in the force of a group, a movement, the world essences, the existence in self (...). The Individualization and co-participation are correlative" (Tillih, 1995) etc.

What does still mean to take root, to identify, to co-participate? It means to support the principle according to that the community lives. The Kant's categorical imperative not by accident namely returns us towards this issue: "It only proceeds in accordance with that maximum of which the observance could cause you a desire that this one to become a general law" (Kristeva, 2003, p. 260). Accordingly, when I respect in my behavior the indicated imperative "general law", namely the principle that real unites, is the community, then self-realization is truly complete and truthful and then the essence of this self-realization consists in self-realization by itself in the community as a force that defends the indicated principle, and this is at the same time, the achievement by myself, my moral debt towards the community. "Choose me and I will create the universe," said J.-P. Sartre (1989).

Human self-affirmation formula, which is about the present paper, is printed sustainably on the deep basis of human existence. But this formula, in most real life situations, is not done with all possible certainty, in a clear and complete way. Sport forwards this clear and concise formula, it gives to the man the possibility of going through a critical situation of its existence, in which he exists as a reflective moral being. He produces the clash between the two trends *with a maximum acuity*, brings in a state of complete determination the life situation on which base it was rooted the given interaction. It follows a productive, creative self-affirmation, and therefore devoid of coercion, free but at the same time it is necessary to remain within the limits of rules of conduct clearly marked and controllable publicly, the observance of which must be unconditional – this is the sport formula. On the one hand, there is a maximum regulatory in terms of unambiguity and strictness, and on the other - the maximum desire to win, touching odds of exaltation (up to tend to ignore any regulation). It is obviously a very tense ethics situation.

Sport is, in essence, not only honest athletic competition, it is equally *athletic and honest competition* (which requires a maximum spiritual and physical tension forces). In sport *is very difficult to carry the garland*, to be the first; in sport it is very difficult *to be worthy to be called first*. Namely hence results the moral value and grandeur of any participant in the competition, if he tends to win according to its possibilities and acts honestly. Since the days of ancient Greece the winner in sports is the truest, the most complete winner. In Greece he is not simply the best athlete and but also the best Greek. This fact is emphasized, for example, by K. Jaspers (1991). Through his victory, the winner confirmed what the basis of community life is, he has strengthened its unity and is supported by the community and by the gods as a *hero*, the one who defeated fate and will not be forgotten by the community because it will always remain a factor of existence.

What about now? A careful analysis shows that despite doping and other aspects of the sport, he is still perceived, to a considerable extent, the same, even if the overall situation is now alarming. The winner of nowadays is not simply the best athlete, he is the one designated in the most honest and objective (more objective than, for example, in politics or business) way as the winner. This aspect always runs out of control, fact that largely determines our unusual enthusiasm caused by the victory of the winner. No matter how cynical we would program life today on the Olympic ideals and ethical standards of life in general, our admiration for victory in a fair competition is maintained, given that it is fueled by the deepest potencies of human existence itself. *I. Heizing* is right when he affirms: "The competition is traditionally considered (and we add our admiration causes - V.M.) virtue in itself, the presence of honesty" (1992, p. 131). P. de Coubertin, the "Ode to Sport", emphasizes rightly: "three times sweeter is the victory won in a fair fight" (Isaev, 1998, p. 226).

Note that this enthusiasm takes in this case, and another circumstance: we admire *the high harmony with the environment*, which is accessible to athletes and is observed always behind his effectively actions. We also note that the theme of this harmony is one of the most important in the East, so the sport is undoubtedly a sphere that intersects the basic cultural traditions of East and West.

Nowadays, the sport is called, as in ancient Greece, to bring in balance the *philia* and *eris* - love and hate, which pierces the whole culture Greek and largely contemporary Western (and, generally, already not only the Western one) - a competitive, agonistic culture. The sport demonstrates that human self-assertion, in its true and is only possible variant, is possible not only as an ethically creative act, as an act in which community life and I confirm this affirmation perceive as a moral duty.

What is therefore Olympism? One can say that it is a philosophy of life, which implemented the idea of human self-affirmation as a morally creative act, which implies a balanced unit of trends towards individualization and complicity and, on its base, the joint of all bodily, volitional, intellectual virtues. Athlete (as well as the coach and official from the sports domain) who is not fully aware of the socio-cultural significance of sport, in fact ends up as a man who lost his sense of reality and who inevitably lose much of his existential energy specific for its professional activity. It should be noted that if the athlete does not consider the rules and principles of human relations under which work is organized his activity as being of great *importance and value*, if he is not inspired by them, the rules will have for him, inevitably, a role of subjugation, of handcuff his creative manifestations, which creates difficulties in executing qualitative the competitive actions. If the rules are perceived by sports *enthusiastically*, then they become a factor and a form of free auto-manifestation.

Considering the facts mentioned above it follows that sport is not only, by its social significance a sphere of human activity simply asked to demonstrate cases of noble and of high moral behavior, which ensures the necessarily true affirmation of a man; sport is an activity in which man is subjected to tests on its ability to achieve such an assertion in a very severe situation, and sometimes absolutely unfavorable for him. Sport is the sphere in which man fights for truth, finds (or not), but simply lives and works in conditions where the truth is achieved guaranteed.

Olympism is a philosophy of life, which involves extensive work to create and sustain a situation in which human self-realization is possible in its true form. Mostly, important events of this struggle currently exist in sports team games - football, hockey, etc. Athlete's attitude regarding the principle of

honest struggle, which, in general, it is understood, can be very different, emerges and proves more pronounced, obviously, to be open for the viewer perception and empathy. Nowadays sport is called to demonstrate the human victories, and defeats in the difficult situation of human self-affirmation.

Sports games actually admit actions that refines and in accordance with the rules, and their limits, and even, to some extent, in violation of the rules. One of the classics of postmodern philosophy, I. Kristeva talks about contemporary culture tend toward a certain type of experimentation: in some cases, with some control, it offers the possibility of a "free play of denial" (Kristeva, 2003).

This statement largely reveals the socio-cultural specifics and especially the momentousness of sports games. Contemporary cultural situation (postmodern) is one in which acts the "ethics of creation" and not, as previously, "ethics code". Man's situation in this case is such that virtually any act committed, he must ensure the possibility of achievements not only respecting existing rules, but, above all, determining that space of social life, where the ethical standards are possible, in which they act efficaciously.

So, is it nowadays the idea of Olympism actual? What is, today, the social significance of sport, which manifests itself as the bearer of this idea? Under a radical pluralism and therefore a maximum atomization of society, in the situation when the man is forced "to base all on himself" (Heidegger, 1998), he often cannot achieve complete self-realization and loses its courage, the sport appears as a sphere of activity in which man proves to be returned to the truth of his existence, which is that man needs in every act of his self-affirmation again and again, to reproduce, to revive the ancestral element of moral life, namely to do what the lack of which causes to the post modernity, mysteriously, but the more far, the more obvious, sadness and suffering.

Sport needs a new ideology. It must realize the mission that was called to exercise in contemporary culture, to recognize and to ascribe this process consistency and yield. The athlete needs a fundamental training regarding the concept about world, in which no moral-volitional training nor psychological cannot become, in contemporary terms, quite effective.

References

- Boulongnt, Y. (1994). Pierre Coubertin's Multicultural Olympism. In: IOA. Report of the 33rd Session. IOC, - P. 87-94.
- Fromm, J. (1986). *Imet' ili byt'?* Moskva: Progress, - 238 s.
- Fromm, J. (1993). *Chelovek dlja samogo sebja. Vvedenie v psihologiju jetiki. V: Psihoanaliz i jetika.* Moskva: Respublik, - S. 19-191.
- Habermas, J. (1991). *Ponjatie individual'nosti. V: O chelovecheskom v cheloveke.* Moskva: Politizdat, - S. 195-206.
- Heidegger, M. (1988). *Evropejskij nihilizm. V: Problema cheloveka v Zapadnoj filosofii.* Moskva: Progress, - S. 261-313.
- Hejzinga, J. (1992). *Homo ludens. V teni zavtrashnego dnja.* Moskva: Progress, - 343 s.
- Isaev, A.A. (1998). *Olimpijcy sredi nas.* Moskva: FiS, - S. 225-227.
- Jaspers, K. (1991). *Smysl i naznachenie istorii.* Moskva: Politizdat, - 527 s.
- Jerem, S. (1992). *Olimpijskie igry i novyj mirovoj porjadok. V: Mezhdunarodnyj sport i olimpijskoe dvizhenie. Vyp. 5.* Moskva: COONTI-FiS, - S. 14-23.
- Kant, I. (1965a). *Osnovy metafiziki npravstvennosti. T.4. Ch.1.* Moskva: Mysl', - S. 219-310.
- Kant, I. (1965b). *Ob iznachal'no zlom v chelovecheskoj prirode. T.4. Ch.2.* Moskva: Mysl', - S. 5-58.
- Kristeva, Ju. (2003). *Novejsnij filosofskij slovar'.* Minsk: Knizhnyj Dom, - 1280 s.
- Leiper, J.M. (1980). *The Olympic ideal – is it valid today as a philosophical basis of the Olympic games? Review,* International Council of Sport and Physical Education, 3, 27-30.

Olimpijskaja hartija (v dejstvii s 7 ijulja 2007 g.). Lozanna/Shvejcarija: MOK, 2007.- 46 s.

Sartr, Zh.-P. (1989). Jekzistencializm – jeto gumanizm. Moskva: Politizdat. S. - 336-3

Shaddad, K.H. (1997). Values, Aims and Reality of Today's Modern Olympic Games "A Call for the Return of the Term Amateur and the Rejection of the Olympic Motto". IOA. Report of the 35th Session. IOC, p. 48-50.

Tillih, P. (1995). Muzhestvo byt'. V: Izbrannoe: Teologija kul'tury. Moskva: Jurist, - S. 7-131.

Vizitej, N. (2006). Kurs lekcij po sociologija sporta. Moskva: Fizkul'tura i sport, - 328 s.