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Discussion: Olympism?  
 Olympic Education?


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## Fair vs Temple

## Pierre de Coubertin

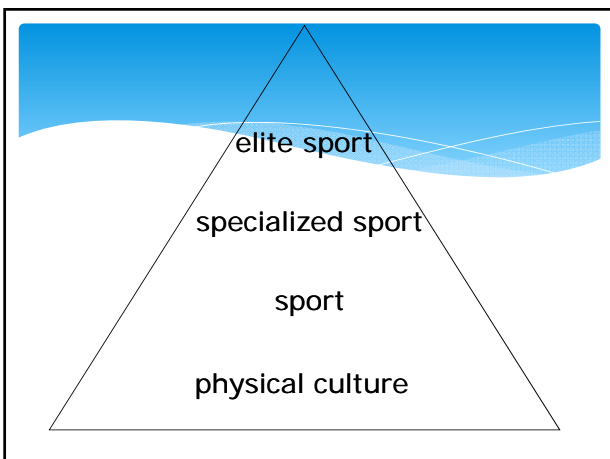
- \* Father of modern Olympism
- \* Education through sport – Olympic Education
- \* Aim to spread physical education and to use it for moral education, eurythmy, joy



1863-1937

"For every hundred who engage in physical culture, fifty must engage in sports. For every fifty who engage in sports, twenty must specialize. For every twenty who specialize, five must be capable of astonishing feats."

Coubertin, *The Thoughts of Athletes*, 1918  
 Coubertin, *Olympia*, 1929




## Sport and Olympic Sport

**not every kind of sport practice = Olympism**

Sport championships: = competitive sport  
 Olympic Games: = competitive sport

... but Olympism is more than that??



## Two Kinds of Sport

\* Spirit of  
Olympism



\* Olympic  
Games

\* Mere Participation in  
Sport Competition  
("vulgar")



\* World  
Championships

## Pierre de Coubertin

"Fair or temple – sportsmen must make their choice; they cannot expect to frequent both one and the other ... let them choose."

**De Coubertin**

*Speech at the Opening of the Olympic Congress at  
the City Hall of Prague*

May 29, 1925

## Two Kinds of Sport

Olympism



Temple



Sport competition



Fair (market)



## Fair – market



## FAIR - characteristics

- \* vulgar competition
- \* tough struggle
- \* defeating others
- \* egoism
- \* greediness
- \* endless progress
- \* development of a set of skills

***citius, altius, fortius***

## FAIR - values

- \* victory (success)
- \* profit (rewards)
- \* self-assertion
- \* self-confirmation

## FAIR - consequences

- \* sadness and frustration
- \* failure to respect opponents
- \* animosity towards opponents
- \* violence against oneself and/or others
- \* pushing the rules of the game and cheating
- \* taking performance enhancing drugs ...

## Pierre de Coubertin

“Unbridled competition entails grave risks to the Spirit of fair play, gives occasions of blameworthy acts to the commission, engenders a lamentable atmosphere of jealousy, envy, vanity, and mistrust. This can be seen in all branches of activity, and athletic life cannot escape from it.”

(De Coubertin, *Why I Revived the Olympic Games*, 1908)

## Existential perspective

- \* Our tendency to sustain “our own being”
- \* Adopting prevailing values
- \* Not “our own” though – we take over values from society = **inauthentic**

## TEMPLE



Picture from Elia Delaporta:  
*Pheidias' Workshop and The Statue of Zeus at Olympia*

## TEMPLE - characteristics

- \* regulated (limited) competition
- \* by deeper understanding of what sport and human life are about:
  - doing sport *with* others
  - sharing of experiences
  - improving the whole of the self

## TEMPLE - values

- \* understanding the self and others
- \* respect for the self and others
- \* friendship with other athletes
- \* regular joyful participation
- \* seeking excellence
- \* balance and harmony

## TEMPLE – consequences

- \* necessity to try to understand the self  
(the whole of ourselves and through it also others)
- \* and to understand sport
- \* and to practice sport on the basis of this understanding
- \* searching
- \* not repeating ('Das Man'), but creating and re-creating

## Existential perspective

- \* Self-understanding is the basis of how we will live
- \* Self-understanding taken from one's own experience
- \* Living in accordance with who we are (as humans)  
= **authentically**



**FAIR?**

**TEMPLE?**

**Necessity to make a choice...**

### Acknowledgement:

Irena Martinková (2012)  
Fair or Temple: Two Possibilities for Olympic Sport,  
*Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, 6:2, 166-182

### 1. PE vs Exercise (physical activity; health? sport?)

(The 'Education' question)

### 2. Olympic Education vs Olympic Promotion

(Olympic vs Olympism??)

(The 'Values' question)

## PE vs Exercise (physical activity; sport?)

- \* Driven by politics of health, with no educational content.
- \* No enduring strategy - keeps changing according to the govt. (creates confusion)
- \* Also we have corporate providers who want to present their idea of what is PE (exercise for health)
- \* Also: once they get their foot in the door, the OE 'business' becomes privatised, public money is spent on private profit.
- \* Olympic knowledge gets colonised by business operators for future private profits. (Nick will take his website/roadshow to try to sell to Rio).
- \* And, of course, their motive/agenda is commercial, not necessarily what we (?) would call 'educational'.

## The 'Education' question

- \* So we have to ask the 'education' question: is this 'educative'?
- \* So ... what is 'education'?

## The 'Education' question

- \* So we have to ask the 'education' question: is this 'educative'?
- \* (Put the 'ed' back into Phys Ed)
- \* Developing people - to be educated, virtuous, and critical consumers of PE and sport (and Olympism)
- \* Not just teaching skills - but what is the meaning of the physical in people's lives?
- \* Not just techniques, technology and science, but all aspects of movement culture – a balance between science/humanities/culture
- \* A socio-critical model: psychology and sociology and critical constructivism. (Only then can you/they identify social relations, power, inequalities, injustice, etc.)
- \* So what do we want? Skilled movers, capable, empowered, open to possibilities, extended options, choice, life enrichment, hope, etc.
- \* Helping them to become critical consumers of PE/Sport so that they can be empowered through developed decision-making

## Olympic Promotion vs Olympic Education

## Olympic Promotion vs Olympic Education

- \* (Values Promotion vs Values Education – e.g. health)
- \* Marketing to consumers vs developing rationality and critical consciousness.
- \* enquiry-based and reflective; critical thought, challenging existing practice, examining assumptions
- \* ensuring that ethical, political, cultural issues and dimensions are explored and critically examined

## Olympic vs Olympism

## Olympic vs Olympism

- \* De Coubertin proposes that Olympism is the core, not the Olympics.
- \* Olympic Education has become 'ideological inscription'? (Lenski critique)
- \* Olympism Education requires a Critical Analysis Process (Culpan - beyond critique to social action)

## Excellence Friendship Respect?

- \* What are 'the Olympic Values'?

## Excellence Friendship Respect?

- \* What are 'the Olympic Values'?
- \* 'Excellence Friendship Respect' - a dilution?

## Quantities vs Qualities

- \* - numbers of people 'touched' or 'inspired' by ... - numbers of Olympic lessons taught, etc.
- \* This is a 'new media' effect.
- \* marketing techniques are used for 'sign-up' (bribes, or access refusal)
- \* once 27,000 schools have signed up to the website, you have control:
- \* one short email per month keeps contact with all of them at zero cost
- \* 'evidence' that you are 'inspiring'
- \* absolute control of messages coming from the centre
- \* the ultimate in top-down communications (whilst professing otherwise)
- \* no need to involve educators, except as conveyors of your message

## 'New Media' – do they do anything 'new'? (or just old things more quickly?)

Much-vaunted 'benefits' (e.g. ?? – networking, group-working, political protest, democratisation, 'citizen journalism' ...)

But what about the disbenefits:

- ~ much more efficient organisation of terrorism (flashmobs)
- ~ much wider availability of hard pornography (rape/snuff)
- ~ facilitation of child sex abuse (anonymous grooming)
- ~ cyber-bullying (even leading to suicide)
- ~ privacy invasion (wide circulation of private material)
- ~ tool of political repression (Yahoo in China)
- ~ no (academic) quality control – publish what you like!  
(wonderful for liars, cheats, charlatans, frauds, loonies)

## OCOG approach to Olympic Education

Website plus 'new media'?

Is that IT?

## Co-optation vs Contribution

- \* Piggy-backing on already-existing expertise vs Capacity Development
- \* Podium - make a list!
- \* Get Set: sign them up!
- \* Parasitic, not Developmental
- \* Exploitation vs Commitment
  
- \* No 'network' of educators, no briefing, training, workshops,
- \* The 'message' is tightly controlled from a central source.

## NOC vs NOA

- \* According to the Olympic Charter, this is the (first?) duty of the NOC - to see to the development of OE

However, ...

- \* 1. this provision has been watered down in recent editions ...
- \* 2. Many NOCs are now closing their 'troublesome' NOAs

## Conclusion:

Is there anything we can do about this?

## Conclusion:

- \* Olympic Education has to be taken out of the hands of the IOC and those NOCs who have failed.
- \* Olympic Education is the new organising principle and rallying cry for a re-theorised and re-invigorated PE system (and national curriculum)
- \* And for extra-curricular initiatives (e.g. Segundo Tiempo)