

THE IDEA OF OLYMPISM, PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPT ABOUT THE WORLD

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Abstract: *The idea of Olympism correlated with the idea of sport, has now a global character, which, according to the analysed conditions, is very important. The insufficient general and theoretical elaboration of the Olympism concept acts as a factor that reduces the results of the work to spread the Olympic knowledge. Sport is, in essence, not only an honest athletic competition, it is equally and an athletic competition of honesty. Despite doping and other aspects of the sport, it is still perceived, to a considerable extent, the same, even if the overall situation is now alarming. The winner of today is not simply the best athlete, he is the one designated in the most honest and objective way. Today, the sport is called, as in ancient Greece, to bring a balance to philia and eris - love and hate, which pierces the whole Greek culture and, largely, the contemporary Western one - a competitive culture, agonistic.*

Key words: *Olympism, philosophical view, sport, self-affirmation, athlete.*

1. Introduction

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 who practice a certain kind of sport, it does not look alike with a postmodernist phenomenon.

Currently the idea of Olympism related with the sport idea, has a global character, which, according to the analyzed conditions, is very important. Historically the Olympism, in its primary alternative, is manifested as a philosophy of life and culture in Ancient Greece, and is one of

the main ideas of the properly occident mentality.

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

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that these ones are "a dirty compound of advertising and business" [3, p.166]. I. Heizing mentions that sport is an "absolutely useless skill, which does not enrich the soul" [7, p.233]. 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" [15, p.9]. Undoubtedly, it is a fiery idea.

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.

The ancient Olympism implies the human aspiration to self-affirmation, firstly towards the *Exterior Absolute*, of the Cosmos one. This is an agonistic struggle with destiny, death, and Greek is willing to measure sense and the justness of each agonistic confrontations, even of the most ordinary, with the confrontation truth between these extremes. (F.Nietsche: „Greek has only a one question: how much does generally the life cost?” [2]).

In Greece, the sport is perceived as a social activity in which the principles of agonality philosophy are embodied more precisely, unitary and visible. In this situation, the sport is not only an agonistic manifestation, but a high case of agonality, and the Olympic is a man who possesses an important social status – mythological hero status: an all-powerful human, but earthling, in this way faced towards imminent defeat in an utmost important

competition for him. And human behavior towards this imminence determines his degree of heroism.

Therefore, the Greek self-assertion has a marked exterior character. However, consistently achieving in this way, inevitably it is placed, towards Cosmos, which is presented as an immensity and that in fact is a Universal reality, which totally involves substance, is current and includes (as further -as more) the human being himself. Therefore, it is no longer perceived as something externally predominant. The more the Greek gets closer towards extreme situation, the Cosmos becomes more opened, as an exterior Absolute, essentially as a Divinity. Therefore, the ulterior self-assertion, in its traditional form (for Greek), acquires in this way, a confused character.

A cardinal change of strategy: not the conquest of Absolute, but worship, kneeling in front of him represents the external self-assertion and should be replaced with the inner one, that is, essentially, the Christian self-assertion. However there is a paradox in the Christian self-assertion. It is known that Christian prayer begins with penitence, self-humiliation, but, along its performing, it requires to human high volitive efforts. Therefore it stimulates their development and manifestation in the conditions of distancing by the Absolute (it should be noted that this is generally the basic feature of human existence in Western culture), but the achievement of volitive qualities is inevitable and, in a greater extent, gains an external-practical character.

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 human competition essence, but exactly this aspect is ignored by researchers. The competition should be analyzed as one of the universal social relations [19]. 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” [12, p. 28]; W. Dilthey considers „that only in comparison with others I realize the individual of me; I realize only what differs me from other [11, p.133]; 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 myself consciousness” [16, p.336] etc.

Self-consciousness is always a self-affirmation, a self-realization of personality (it “is not a determination, it is an interested self-presentation” [5, p.200]). 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.

Sport is, in essence, not only honest athletic competition, it is equally *athletic and honesty 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 [9]. 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, and 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" [7, p. 131]. P. de Coubertin, the "Ode to Sport", emphasizes rightly: „three times sweeter is the victory won in a fair fight” [8, p.226].

We note that this enthusiasm relates, in this case, and to 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 highlight 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 that 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 for sure.

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 honesty 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” [13].

This statement largely reveals the socio-cultural specifics and especially the momentousness of sports games. Contemporary cultural situation (post-modern) 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” (Haidiger M. [6]), 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.

Sport, by its own, really *has possibilities to successfully represent the idea of Olympism* and to be a factor for its accelerating in contemporary human conscience [19]. Sport is an activity in which it is presented with maximum concentration, a model of human self-assertion in the fullness of its essential components: body, mind, spirit. Sport accurately reproduces the situation of agonistic human existence, emphatically marking the key moments of it. Sport also highlights conjugation and possible mutual

transfers of the components mentioned above: it is the aspiration updated by external success - *antique* element; it is the principle of *honest rivalry*, predetermined in imperative way and done consistently, fact that ensures to human being the possibility of inner self-affirmation, even in the situation of an external defeat - *Christian* element; finally, the sport activity requires a *harmony*, a harmony between human being and the environment, obtaining and maintaining, by the human being, of *dynamic meditation states*, which is a prerequisite for ensuring high productivity of athletic actions – this is the *oriental* element. Thus, the sport is able to ensure to human being a high competence in terms of *worldview conception*, which, in the current situation remains a prerequisite rather than a possibility of achievement. Currently, the development of sport in general has a predominantly spontaneous character. Despite his apparent simplicity, conceptually it is not understood enough. So far, he has not got the self-consciousness in the due measure and has not found place on a large scale from spiritual point of view. (K. Jaspers: „Spiritual reality is achieved only by the one who knows himself” [15, p. 121]).

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