Coubertin’s humanism facing post-humanist visions and ambitions
- Implications for the future of the Olympic Games -

Otto J. SCHANTZ

schantz@uni-koblenz.de

Governance

Kυβερνάω
Steer, guide, direct, govern,

Need of Objectives, Visions

Short- (Agenda 2020)
Mid-, and long-term
Towards Post-humanism?

- Humanism
- Olympism
- Sport
- Medialization
- Commercialization
- Professionalization
- NBIC sciences
- Cyborgization
- Post-humanism
- Amateurism
- Harmonious Education
Olympism

- “Attitude de vie” (Coubertin)
- “Protophilosophy”
- “Process philosophy” (da Costa 2006; cf. Hegel; Whitehead)
- “empty form” (MacAloon 1995; 1996)
- “concept valise” (baggage concept)
- “Concept – conceptions” (Rawls 1999; Hart 1994)
- „Interpretationskonstrukt“ (construct open to interpretation; Lenk 1978)

vagueness  ➔  Success of the Olympic movement
Contours / principles of Coubertin’s Olympism

- Harmonious education
- Sport as a tool
- Adapted to the needs of the time
- Humanist ideas (existentialist)
- Seeking the improvement of humankind
Types of humanism

1. Humanism “takes man as an end and as the supreme value” (Sartre 2007 [1945], p. 51).

2. H. “never consider man as an end, because man is constantly in the making” (p. 52). “constantly seeking a goal outside of himself in the form of liberation, or of some special achievement, that man will realize himself as truly human” (p. 53).
Eternal progress

- Roman Stoicism
  - “O quam contempta res est homo, nisi supra humana se erexerit” (Seneca)

- Quattrocento humanism
  - Pico della Mirandola; Marsilio Ficino etc.

- Enlightenment
  - Modernity

CITUS – ALTIUS – FORTIUS
Elevation, improvement of the human being
Improvement of humanity in Coubertin’s times

- Education
  - exercise, training,
  - personal effort
  - Hygiene

- Eugenics, Biopolitics
  - Eugenic functions of sport and hygiene
  - Lamarckian perspective of the evolution (transmission of physical capacities acquired by sport and hygiene to future generations)

Use of drugs was rather hazardous and uncertain
We have entered an era in that biotechnology will change our world more than any past technological revolution.

(cf. Rifkin, 1998)

On the way towards post-humanism
A post-human is “a being that has at least one posthuman capacity.”

A post-human capacity is “a general central capacity greatly exceeding the maximum attainable by any current human being without recourse to new technological means” (Bostrom 2008, p. 107).
Inevitability of post-human enhancement in sports

Convergence of NBIC technologies
Growing acceptance of enhancement

Logic of sport: Citius altius fortius
Totalization of sport (Heinilä 1982)

Financial interests, economical stakes
nationalism/national pride
Existing technologies

- **Reproduction**
  - Embryo selection by preimplantation (genetic diagnosis)
  - In vitro generated gametes
  - Cytoplasmic transfer

- **Physical enhancement:**
  - doping and performance-enhancing drugs
  - surgery, laser
  - Prosthetics, exoskeletons
  - implants (e.g. pacemaker, magnetic implants), organ replacement

- **Intellectual enhancement**
  - Nootropics, drugs, neurostimulation devices, supplements, nutraceuticals, and functional foods
  - Computers, cell phones, Internet, technological devices that enhance the human condition
Emerging enhancement technologies

- Human genetic engineering
- Neural implants
- Nanomedicine
- Brain–computer interface
- Neurotechnologies
- Cyberware
- Gene therapy
Signs of change

16 May 2015. Markus Rehm jumped 8.29 m

French documentary alleges that micro-doping can beat ABP
May 5, 2015 | Andy Brown

NATURE | NEWS 22 April 2015
Chinese scientists genetically modify human embryos
Rumours of germline modification prove true — and look set to reignite an ethical debate.
Doping control as moral raison d'être

- Olympism
- Sport
- Humanism[s]
- Anti-doping fight
- Amateurism
  - Harmonious Education
- Medialization
  - Commercialization
  - Professionalization
- Post-humanism
- NBIC sciences
  - Cyborgization
Future of doping control in sport

- Manifold possibilities to enhance sport performances
- Growing public acceptance of enhancement

- Control is going to be impossible
  - Invasion of privacy
  - Exploding costs
Human – post-human

The boundaries between
- human - trans-/post-human
- therapy - enhancement
- natural - artificial

are fuzzy and contingent (time, culture)
Future of sport

Risks of the enhancement race:

- Personality - Autonomy
  - Alienated cyborgs
- Social Justice
  - Widening gap between poor and rich countries
- Social cohesion
  - Widening gap between
    - Average citizen and Olympian
    - Sport for all and elite sport
- Human nature?
Solutions for the Olympic games?

Coubertin’s general principles
- Harmonious development
- Pendulum Principle
- Principle of adaptation to the needs of the time
## Future of the Olympic Games

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Competition - Cooperation

2014

- 112 disputes
- 89 non-violent crises
- 177 violent crises
- 25 limited wars
- 21 wars

A total of 424 political conflicts worldwide

(Institute for international conflict research in Heidelberg, 2015, 15)
A World of growing conflicts

GLOBAL CONFLICTS OF LOW, MEDIUM AND HIGH INTENSITY 1945 TO 2014

(Institute for international conflict research in Heidelberg, 2015, 15)
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Future directions

- Celebrate Humanity and its diversity!

- Perhaps we should optimize sports for 21st century humans not humans for 19th century sports!