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So begins the founding principles of the Olympic Movement, exalting a philosophy that reaches far beyond the simple endeavour of sport for the sake of physical prowess as the *Citius, Altius, Fortius* motto of the Olympic Games might at first glance portray. The founding principles of the philosophy of Olympism are presented in their complete form below:

Taken from The Olympic Charter (http://www.olympic.org/Documents/olympic_charter_en.pdf)

1. Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.

2. The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.

3. The Olympic Movement is the concerted, organised, universal and permanent action, carried out under the supreme authority of the IOC, of all individuals and entities who are inspired by the values of Olympism. It covers the five continents. It reaches its peak with the bringing together of the world's athletes at the great sports festival, the Olympic Games. Its symbol is five interlaced rings.

4. The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play. The organisation, administration and management of sport must be controlled by independent sports organisations.

5. Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement.

6. Belonging to the Olympic Movement requires compliance with the Olympic Charter and recognition by the IOC.

"*Ravaged by war and disease deprived and marginalised much of the world's population can benefit from the role sport plays in building a safe more prosperous and peaceful society. Let's open our team to refugees across the globe and share the joy of sport!*" Jacques Rogge, IOC President

Olympic Projects

It could be argued, fairly easily, that the Olympic Games, and elite sport in general, can offer an exciting, entertaining, diverting and lucrative spectacle, exalting the physical benefits of sports participation to every spectator. What might not be so evident to the casual spectator, however, is the way in which sport can be used to develop the moral character of an individual who participates in it. This central claim of Olympism is put forth in this case study, introducing the reader to the concept of Olympism, the philosophies that pre-existed it, and the ways in which the Olympic Movement is seeking to expound the virtues of such a concept in pragmatic terms, principally via the application of developmental projects across the globe in war torn and famine ravaged areas.

Foundations of the Olympic Spirit

Many theories expound the virtue of sport as a means of building character. One can observe the words of Pierre de Coubertin himself, in his consideration of his founding ideals of the spirit of Olympism as the foundational reason for his wish to revive the Olympic Games from antiquity:

The important thing in life is not victory but combat; it is not to have vanquished but to have fought well.

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Acropolis at Athens

A strong proponent of the amateur ethos, de Coubertin clearly viewed sport as a means of developing character, rather than in the adoption of a win at all costs mentality

His references to fighting might well have been literal. As a boy, de Coubertin participated in rowing, boxing and fencing. A fan of British novels for boys (most likely the *Boys of the Empire* and the highly popular *Boys Own Annual* and *Boys Own Paper*), de Coubertin came to expound the virtue of sport and physical education as a builder of character. Indeed, de Coubertin partially attributed his country's humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War to the poor standard of physical education and health possessed by his fellow Frenchmen at the time of war. This culminated in his belief that the French educational system was too heavily intellectual and desperately lacking in terms of physical education, a feature that he observed to be so evident in British public school education at the time (a view possibly strengthened in his eyes, at that time, by the size and apparent strength of the British Empire which might have suggested to him that the British pedagogic model was working well).

So we can observe ourselves that de Coubertin's will to revive the Ancient Games appeared to derive largely from pedagogic motives, and was based very much on a British model of character development via participation in sport.

To understand this concept in more detail, it is first important to consider the intellectual movements associated with the use of sport as a means of character development, and as a preparation for war and leadership.

The Boys Own Ethos: A Brief History of the 'Sport Builds Character' Movement

Often accused of imperialistic jingoism, the Boys Own Paper, launched in 1879, nevertheless retained a positive, moral and ethical outlook in its representation of childhood morality, a strong work ethic, and other Christian values. The publication remained a favourite for many generations and attracted notable writers such as W.G. Grace (who contributed to several issues), alongside literary greats Arthur Conan Doyle, Jules Verne and R.M. Ballantyne. It is no surprise that Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Scout Movement (that itself expounded similar virtues of physical education), was also a regular contributor. Most stories were set in British public schools, which might partially have contributed to de Coubertin's strong appreciation for the British public school model of sport as a site for the development of moral virtue.

The *Boys Own* ethos might be most strongly conceptualised as a proponent of Muscular Christianity and Athleticism. These concepts will be presented shortly, following a brief consideration of the movements upon which they were based.
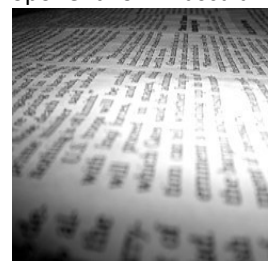

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From the 1700's to the Olympic Games

Interestingly, the sport of boxing dominates early consideration of the use of sport in the development of character (particularly interesting to an Olympic scholar, as de Coubertin participated in amateur boxing himself, as a youth). For example, Mendoza (1789, p.1) identified the self-control required for one to become both a champion and a gentleman. Boxing was viewed to 'infuse strength, hardiness, courage and honour' (Brown 1757, p.87-88). It addressed 'true and manly courage' that was 'determined by self-control, consideration and ultimately compassion' (Downing, 2008).

In the 18th Century, boxing was seen as a quintessentially British activity that addressed the need to create good leaders, soldiers and sailors (Brown 1757, 71-87). The Duke of Wellington described the Battle of Waterloo to Viscount Beresford using boxing as a metaphor (Ford 1971, p.121), further extending a general sports metaphor by famously stating that '*the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton*'. The poet Lord Byron took boxing lessons from John Jackson, a renowned 'gentleman boxer', who was vocal in his belief that boxing provided an antidote to the enervating effects of modern life. Byron believed that boxing alleviated his general feeling of boredom and melancholy, symptoms thought to be common of an over refined sensibility, a condition associated with the upper classes (Porter 2004, p.455 in Downing, 2008). The gentleman boxer was thought to be both polite and manly (Downing, 2008), qualities deemed valuable to counter the effeminising 'culture of sensibility' associated with the time (Ford 1979, p.9).

Muscular Christianity

The historic use of boxing and other sports in the development of character in formal education can be traced back to the Muscular Christianity movement of the 1800's, which has exerted a defining impact on the development of modern amateur sport. It has been suggested (Watson, Weird and Friend, 2005) that a revival of many of its ideals could act as an important corrective to the negative influences so pervasive in sport today.

The basic premise of Victorian Muscular Christianity was that participation in sport could contribute to the development of Christian morality, physical fitness and a 'manly' character (a clear feature of the *Boys Own* publications that de Coubertin was so fond of). A significant number of the Protestant elite of the time advocated the use of sport and exercise to promote the harmonious development of mind, body and spirit (Hall, 1994). Interestingly, the link between sport and religion can actually be traced back to the New Testament, where St.Paul used athletic metaphors to describe the challenges of life (1 Corinthians 6:19; 9:24-25; and 2 Timothy. 4: 7)). The term *Muscular Christianity* was adopted in the 1850's to portray the characteristics of the central characters in the novels of Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) and Thomas Hughes (1822-1896). The origin of the phrase itself can be traced to a review of Kingsley's *Two Years Ago* (1857), although Kingsley abhorred the secular nature of such a term. Hughes then used the concept in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) and *Tom Brown at Oxford* (1861), to convey the athleticism central to his novels.

The philosophical lineage of Kingsley's Muscular Christianity derived from Plato and his concept of *thumos* which he interpreted as the primal manly force of sex, morality and fighting. Due to the influence of Plato's mind-body dualism formed in Kingsley's mind as a result of his Cambridge University classics education, he then developed his ideas into a doctrine of social action and reform. As an exponent of Christian Socialism, Kingsley, Hughes and their Christian Socialist peers were opposed to class-based social injustices, and sought to intervene in social ills via educational and moral change, via the creation of social benefits and through the formation of character. Sports participation, including boxing, was seen as one method of achieving such aims.

Athleticism

The father of athleticism, Thomas Arnold, (Headmaster of Rugby school, 1828-1843) did not view sport as the dominant vehicle for the development of character, but more for the provision of moral education. The ideology of athleticism, in the context of formal education,

can be seen as a merging of the ideals of muscular Christianity with specific conceptualisations of social Darwinism, and subsequently became a central tenet of the British public school model of education (often referred to as the Arnoldian Ethic). By the 1860's, sport in public schools was used as both a means of building character and of social control and it was believed that discipline could be taught just as effectively on the sports field as it could be in the classroom.

OLYMPISM IN ACTION

The spirit of Olympism is not simply conceptual: the IOC have translated this ethos into concrete initiatives on a regional, national and global basis. The many initiatives identified here illustrate the way in which the Olympic community have used sport to combat poverty, to fight HIV and AIDS, to bridge cultural and ethnic divides, to contribute to the economy, to reinforce social integration and identity building for marginalised groups (such as street children and child soldiers), and in the advocation of healthy lifestyles.

The IOC "Sports for Hope" project

The "Sports for Hope" project provides young people in developing countries with sports facilities, so that sport can be integrated into their lives, and so that these youths can learn about the spirit of Olympism. A pilot project is currently running successfully in Lusaka, Zambia, where $10.3m has been assigned to the development of a multisport facility that will meet the needs of both community and elite sport. All facilities designed and funded by this initiative will comprise outdoor and indoor sports facilities: *'With these Olympic Sports for Hope centres, athletes, young people and communities in developing countries will have the same opportunities as their peers in developed countries to practise sport and be educated on the values of Olympism'* -IOC President Jacques Rogge.

Combating poverty and identity building for marginalised groups

The IOC refugee camp initiatives

In 1996, the IOC, the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and relevant NOC's combined forces in the provision of sports projects for refugee camps and resettlement areas (there are currently approximately 20m refugees across the globe). The sports projects involve the provision of basic sports equipment and basic recreational activities to refugees. The projects also aim to use sport to facilitate dialogue, interaction and cultural understanding between refugees and local populations where the refugee camps are based. The '*Giving is Winning'* campaign, launched in 2004 in the run-up to the Athens Games, is a direct descendent of the IOC-UNHCR coalition. Over 10,000 items of sports clothing were donated by NOC's, athletes, sports federations and other Olympic stakeholders, then distributed (by the UNHCR) to various refugee camps across 14 countries.

In May 2009, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) hosted its first Forum on Sport, Peace and Development at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne.

The event brought together over 250 representatives from National Olympic Committees (NOCs), International Sports Federations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Olympic cities and academic institutions, the United Nations, UNESCO, World Trade Organization, World Health Organization, UNICEF, UNHabitat, the Red Cross, Olympic Solidarity and the IOC, and many others.

Safe play areas for Azerbaijan's young people

The IOC work with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to clear outdoor sports areas of landmines. One such project was undertaken in 2005 in the Nagory Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, where up to 3,500 children now benefit from the opportunity to use a safe sporting and play area.

'Many young refugees spend years languishing in bleak camps around the world. For them, the

gift of sportswear associated with famous athletes from across the Olympic spectrum is a tremendous morale-booster – a sign that the outside world does still care' - Antonio Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Supporting major humanitarian crises

The IOC (in collaboration with relevant NOC's) also provides ad-hoc support to populations affected by war, natural disasters and other major catastrophes, via the donation of first aid and sports equipment. A recent and notable example was the provision of humanitarian supplies (tents, blankets, buckets, soap and sandals) to war-torn areas of Darfur, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Human rights protestors have, however, protested against the right to award China the rights to host the Beijing Games owing to China's perceived role in the Darfur conflict, which raises an interesting conceptual debate about Olympic aid to the region.

> "A few months after the black September that reduced our country to ashes, a football match took place. A soccer field with goal posts but no nets, with pot holes five times the size of a ball visible every where, saw a huge crowd gathering to watch their elected spectacle. The atmosphere cleared from then on. The country became alive and veered to a new direction. It was the magic of sport in action." *Joao Viegas Carrascallao, President of the National Olympic Committee of Timor*

Reinforcing social integration and identity building for marginalised groups

In February 2009, the IOC and UN-HABITAT joined forces to develop social integration projects to combat youth poverty through sport, specifically focusing on youth empowerment through sport, and in the provision of community-based sport in secondary towns and slums (notably, young people constitute 50% of slum populations).

'*Through this collaboration, the IOC and UN-HABITAT will focus on the urban poor: millions of people, particularly children in the slums, for whom sport can bring escapism and hope*' - IOC President Jacques Rogge.

Fighting HIV and AIDS

Since 2004, the IOC has been prominent in its efforts to combat HIV and AIDS via educational programmes and advocacy campaigns. The IOC works in conjunction with UNAIDS, the Red Cross, UNICEF and other local partners to identify ways in which sport can be used in the fight against the disease. Examples include lectures and the distribution of free condoms in Brazil, the Commonwealth Sports Development Programme-partnered Caribbean Healthy Lifestyle Project for Caribbean Youth (which includes education on HIV/AIDS), development of a sports manual in conjunction with the Lesotho Red Cross, educational seminars in Myanmar and Papua New Guinea, and a Toolkit for HIV & AIDS Prevention through Sport (designed specifically for members of the sports community).

Criticisms of Olympism

Moral criticisms of the Olympic Movement must, of course, be acknowledged. For example, one might consider the refusal of an Olympic host country to abide by the rules of the Olympic Truce, as was the case when the Russian Federation and Georgia engaged in armed conflict over the disputed region of South Ossetia whilst the Beijing Games were taking place. The role of China, hosts to the Beijing Games in 2008, in the Darfur conflict (and subsequent humanitarian crisis) must also be considered.

Furthermore, there are claims of human rights violations in the history of planning provisions effected by host cities of the Games, such as the 'forced evictions' of individuals living in Olympic development zones (evicted so that Olympic structures could be built). Employee rights have also been called in to question by allegations of child labour being used to develop Olympic merchandise (Beijing 2008), and of the poor treatment of workers involved in construction for the Games (Athens, 2004: a number of workers died amidst concerns over adequate health & safety provisions). The deaths of hundreds of Mexican protestors in the run-up to the 1968 Games, the decision to ignore

discriminatory treatment of Jews in the run-up to the Berlin Olympics and the decision not to halt the Munich Games in 1972 following the massacre of 11 Jewish Israeli athletes are further examples of Olympic history that could be debated on moral grounds.

FIND OUT MORE

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The Olympics website
www.olympic.org

The Olympic Charter
http://www.olympic.org/Documents/olympic_charter_en.pdf