

# COMMUNICATION IN THE WESTERN CIVILIZATION

A man once said - *if you cannot understand Motion, you cannot know about Nature*. This man was Greek, a philosopher named Aristotle. And then Galileo and others followed this principle and studied obsessively the motion of different bodies to offer to our knowledge an ensemble of rules that help our understanding of Nature and of our own nature. In sports, especially at the Olympic Games, we see women and men trying to achieve, by the motion of their bodies, a better resolution each time to attain perfection. And it is exactly the same purpose that animates the work of women and men of culture - through the motion of their minds, shouldn't we also say - their souls? They achieve, for our delight, scores of music, paintings and sculptures, essays and poems, etc... I speak about motion, because motion is a kind of an ontological concept that defines life and the essence of the human nature. Philosophers, scientists, poets, creators of all fields of arts, athletes and sportsmen, commit themselves to the same aim, through the continuous search in each of their specific ground of activity. That aim is to go far beyond the surface of our beings and try to touch the "amagus" of the being. Or then, in different words, to approach a certain light that will be focused on our "self", the light that illuminates the somber sides of our mysterious life. To give a sense to our steps. To invent or to re-invent the ideal place to host life and to be hosted in life. To provide us with the tools that may

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confirm that to be human is to be a whole entity, a body and a spirit, a duo that has to be in permanent dialogue, in that search of completion. To fight against the impression of a lack is to fulfil the "more" that we long for.

As the world is ruled by politicians, and as politicians seem to be ruled by economists and finance people, sports and culture happen to be more and more considered as a *divertimento* for the rulers. In sports, professionally established, there are areas regarded more interesting than others, when - as with football, golf, tennis and boxing - money, real money, is generated and the business spirit of the modern enterprises, with the excitement of the financing engineerings, is practised. To those areas, politicians pay more attention and do get involved in a different way than a *divertimento*. The media talk non-stop about those areas, particularly football, once television needs and commercial budgets have reshaped, in the

last decade, the approach of this sport. Politicians long to be non-stop in the media. With culture, the *divertimento* reaches its highest evaluation. Artists and creators are fine decor pieces for the electoral campaigns, they give good image to the candidates. They sing and dance, they write poems and novels, they make films, they contribute to shape our dreams, etc... and a politician cannot be far from the shining and the glamour of the artists. They are then useful to reflect their own image.

Artists and sports stars always make good press and good photos. But according to the rulers of the world, when "real politics" start working, they become useless, just pieces of a *divertimento*. And that is why sports and culture happen to be confined to a sort of a "ghetto" in the world of communication.

Newspapers, television stations,

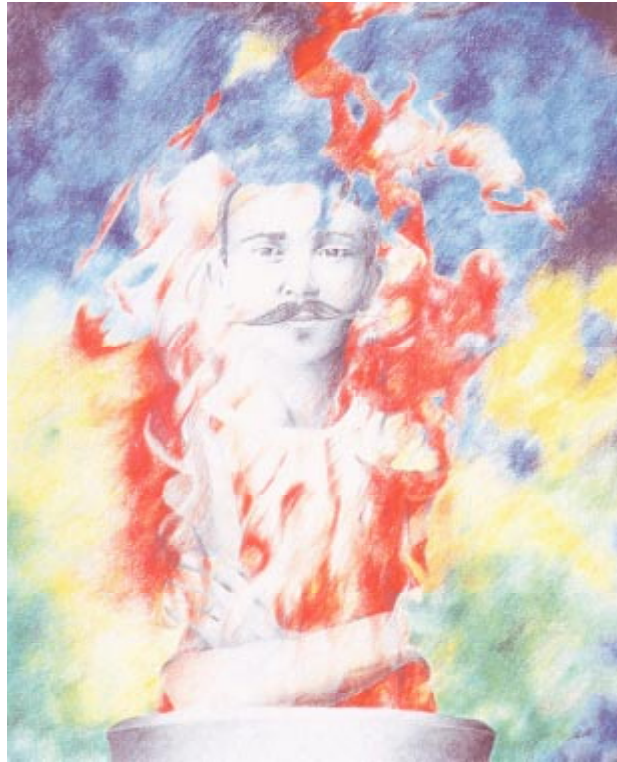


"Untitled" by Jean-Blaise Evequoz (Swiss fencer).

# Art and Sport

radio stations, they follow this principle of allocating areas for sport and culture in special slots. This is where the prejudice starts. Because if the essence of sports and of culture is the search of perfection and excellence, then those who rule the world should grant to the field of sports and of culture a kind of mirror stage, permanently *en scène*, as a background curtain for their own moves. For all moves. The education system and the media should do the same. But that is not the case, as we all know.

Apart from this external prejudice, there is also the internal prejudice. The one that floats inside the two worlds. The one that makes the family of sports and the family of culture become two distinctive families. Ancient Greeks were the only ones to achieve the understanding of the two sides of the human being. And therefore to praise in both worlds - the world of philosophers, artists, scientists and the world of the Olympic athletes the same excellence of the human being. The monotheism of the Catholic religion, with the hate and the fear of the pecaminous body, and then the Illuminism, worshipping *la raison* succeeded in separating, sometimes with dramatic expressions, those who live for the body (world of sports) and those who live for the mind (world of culture). And, in our western civilization, we can witness daily the gap and the borders that separate the territory of an intellectual from the territory of a sportsman.



"Inspiration de Coubertin" by Liston Bochette  
(bobsledder and Puerto Rican athlete).

In the present day, we hear that with the technological progress, our societies have to be prepared for a progressive reduction of our period of work. That means - for various reasons, that the western civilization is entering a new phase, the phase where the time of *otium* will be more and more dominant than the time of *negotium*. And *otium* is the noble territory of human activity in sports and culture. Therefore, if "times are gonna change", as the song of the sixties sharply predicted, the collective and individual effort, for the benefit of our future, has to consider the social, political and economical re-evaluation of the importance of culture and sports.

I sincerely believe that these two fields will deal many of the main cards of tomorrow's universal development and progress and I also believe that, before the two worlds

realize that they are the two sides of the global lighthouse of Humankind, there will be little hope for women and men to experience the joy of smelling the exciting *parfum* of being more than a simple body and a mind. Because by searching for excellence they shall understand how they can become better human beings and how much more they ought to demand to those who rule the world for the benefit of the living. A poet was once asked where paradise was. He said: "There, where the body listens to the tic-tat of the heart, the run of the mind and the shivering of the soul. "

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"Off the Blocks" by Lori Norwood  
(American pentathlete).