

# An Olympic Education: From Athletic Colonization to International Harmony

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## Introduction

Since Pierre de Coubertin, the father of the modern Olympic Games, first recognized the value of using sport to reform France's educational system in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Anglo-American "cult of sport" has been used by many educational reformers from the Western world to infuse a sense of moral quality into education. The historically prominent (and most controversial) vehicle responsible for the spread of this cult was on the backs of British colonialists and American missionaries during the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s; however, the most popular vehicle has been the Olympic Games. Unlike the colonialists, the spirit of the Olympic Games is founded on the celebration of all humanity. Renewed every four years, the Olympics create convenient opportunities for different host countries to incorporate the pillars of Olympism (as well as the cult of sport) into their educational curriculum.

The constant emphasis on the noble humanitarian values of Olympism including peace, equality, fair play, and international friendship, and the simultaneous downplaying of its political nature has enabled Olympic educational initiatives to escape the critical eye of many scholars. Given the plethora of studies conducted on the impacts of sport during the British and American colonial eras, it is surprising that the current body of sports studies literature, including Olympic studies, includes a disproportionately low amount of research investigating the socio-cultural and socio-political impacts of the Olympic Games. Consequently, the literature presents an incongruent image of modern sport. On the one hand, modern sport is associated with the darker side of Western civilization (colonization and cultural imperialism); while, on the other hand, it is associated with the most hopeful and beautiful aspects of Internationalism (Olympism). This very tension between the two faces of sport sets the premise of this paper.

As the Olympics and Olympic Education continue to be diffused around the world, it becomes even more important that, alongside the celebration of a universal human spirit, its curriculum encourages cultural autonomy, cultural diversity, and self-determination among its many participating nations. Additionally, because international sport has become nearly synonymous with modernity and development (and, to a degree, with Westernization), it is even more critical to ensure the method of its incorporation into educational systems is not a subtle manifestation of cultural imperialism by the West. This paper attempts to address both of these issues with a preliminary investigation on the cultural impacts that modern sport and the Olympic Games have had on non-Western and minority communities through mass educational movements.

In particular, this paper places Coubertin's educational vision into the larger discourse on sport and colonialism in order to determine which aspects of Olympic Education are exemplary models for international educational reform, and which aspects are simply less-threatening forms of cultural domination that should be modified. The paper's second section situates the Olympics and Olympic Education within the context of colonialism. The subsequent section goes back to describe Coubertin's original goals of educational reform through sport in its own historic context. The fourth section returns to using a colonial lens and demonstrating how present-day Olympic Education tends towards neo-imperialism. The paper concludes with a discussion on how future Olympic Education programs might be improved so that they may move beyond their historical colonial associations and towards a future of true internationalism.

### Coubertin, the Olympic Games and the Colonial State

For many sport historians, the age of Western imperialism laid the foundations for an intellectual playground, as well as an abundance of research on colonial and postcolonial sport. Although a comprehensive discussion of this literature is beyond the purview of this paper, it is necessary to point out that these studies have begun to illuminate how sport has produced a myriad of postcolonial sporting phenomena that we have normalized into our day-to-day experiences.

One of these phenomena is modern international sport itself. According to John Bale and Mike Cronin, modern sport is a legacy of colonialism. It is a product of the implantation of sport by Western colonizers into societies all over the globe in an effort to civilize the "savages" in the image of the Englishman.<sup>1</sup> Bale and Cronin argue that although "modern sport may serve to promote the modern postcolonial state, they initially served as a form of colonial social control."<sup>2</sup> Through sport, colonialists could first train the body and then capture the mind. Eric Anderson explains further:

*Societies employ ritual to transmit the symbolic codes of the dominant culture to ensure the reproduction of that culture and to secure the position of the ruling class. Sport serves as a significant means by which a state can socialize its citizens into common norms and values by boosting pride in the nation by providing citizens with common displays of patriotism. Sport, then, becomes a site for rituals that are reproduced from one generation to the next.<sup>3</sup>*

Rituals, symbolic codes, patriotism, and the reproduction of culture across generations—these elements of sport, which have all been misused in the past by colonialists, raise questions about another postcolonial sporting phenomenon: the modern Olympic Games.

The Olympics have seldom been filtered through a postcolonial lens. Yet, when the two are put together, the Olympics slide easily into a postcolonial framework. For example, the rituals reenacted at the site of ancient Olympia and during the Opening Ceremonies, the codes enlaced in the Olympic symbols, and the patriotism that cultivates nationalism within each participating country's athletes and spectators, all lend themselves to the reproduction of Olympic culture every four years and to the dominance of the governing bodies of modern sport.

In addition, two other socio-historical factors further associate the Olympics with a colonial past: 1) Coubertin's own colonial beliefs about sport and the "uncivilized," and 2) European cultural guardianship of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Olympic Games, and Olympic symbols. These factors are entirely incompatible with the humanitarian spirit and educational vision of Olympism. With regard to the first factor, Coubertin encouraged colonialists to continue in their efforts to bring sport to the "uncivilized," even when colonialists began to publicly voice their concern that "a victory by the dominated race over the dominating race" in sport "pose[d] a threat" to the colonial state. French colonialists at the time were worried that a victory "could be exploited by local opinion as encouragement for rebellion."<sup>4</sup> Yet, Coubertin, believing in the power of sport, responded that if the colonialists did not conquer the "natives" first, then "the natives [might] end up organizing on their own"—which would be bad news for "those who direct[ed] them."<sup>5</sup>

Coubertin was an ardent supporter of the benefits that an "athletic civilization" would have on lifting "primitive" peoples into civilization. He believed that the beauty of sport lay in the fact that "they [sport] are so deeply human that they are fitting for the conditions of man from his semi-savage to his ultra-civilized state."<sup>6</sup> To Coubertin, sport formed "the necessary basis of civilization," bringing with it a "system [of] codified regulations and comparative results" to all who participated.<sup>7</sup> The Olympic Games, then, were the ultimate civilizing machine.

The second factor that links the Olympic Games to a colonial past deals with the way in which the IOC situated itself in the world. First of all, despite Coubertin's intentions—whether imperialist or not—of giving sport and the Olympics to people across the colonial world, the "universality" of the Games was limited to participation only. At the administrative level, the IOC was heavily guarded by its Western European members. The IOC did not take on international members—other than the token few—until the 1950s, and even more so in the 1990s.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, hosting of the Olympic Games was nearly dominated by Europe. When Tokyo first placed its bid to host the 1940 Olympics, they were met with much resistance by members of the IOC, many of whom were afraid to give up control of the Games to a non-European country that "knew nothing of the rules and traditions of the IOC."<sup>9</sup> And thirdly, Olympic symbols, rituals, and mottoes were practically all created in the early years after the establishment of the modern Games in reflection of Western values, images, and philosophy. Recall Anderson's statement about how a dominant culture could ensure the reproduction of its own culture and position in society by means of the symbolic codes it employed in the socialization of its citizens. With this in mind, it is hard to ignore the coincidence of Coubertin's beliefs about sport, the IOC's European cultural superiority, and the spread of the Olympic Games to all corners of the globe.

Given these elements of a colonial past, how, then, does the IOC reconcile using sport to teach character education, moral education, and the values of Olympism today? How does it justify teaching "universal" humanistic values when its tool once threatened the cultural and political autonomy of countless numbers of societies around the world? A closer look at Coubertin's original goals of educational reform would be of great benefit at this time, especially to help situate his educational philosophy within the popular and emerging ideologies of his time. The following discussion on Coubertin's vision offers a brief account of the educational foundations of the Olympic Games that sheds some light on the positive potential of its modern-day programs.

### **Coubertin's Postcolonial Vision**

Pierre de Coubertin was first an educator, and second, a beacon of Olympism. In his native France, Coubertin witnessed a growing problem in the French educational system and noted that the source lay in "an error in public opinion." In a speech given in 1887, he said that "the [French] public held

that secondary schools were institutions intended to correct bad character, [which was] a detestable notion that [could] only serve to make a school into a correctional institution and consequently, a rotten place for the honest children who happen to be there."<sup>10</sup> "Education must be a preface to life," he said. If "the man will be free; the child must be so also."<sup>11</sup>

During his travels to England in the 1880s, Coubertin observed an educational system at work that he believed could offer a promising solution to the French educational system. That system was founded by the Reverend Thomas Arnold, former Headmaster of Rugby School, from whom Coubertin received much of his inspiration. In Arnold's England, "freedom and sports" were at the center of a boy's education, capable of instilling in him moral and social qualities that no other form of education could.<sup>12</sup> Like Arnold, Coubertin believed that education was not about forming "slaves," but rather about preparing young boys to become "free-minded" and "self-governing" men.<sup>13</sup> Arnold's system of including sport in the curriculum provided just the right environment to transform boys into men. This system simultaneously championed an educational approach that included 1) a psychological education that transferred authority and responsibility directly to the child, 2) a moral education that taught the value of decision making, and 3) a physical education that "entrusted the discovery of the secrets of wisdom to sport."<sup>14</sup>

As Coubertin's campaign for educational reform developed further, he began to see more clearly how sport and physical education could be an excellent means to an end. In a lecture given in 1888, Coubertin voiced three expectations he had gained: The first was that sport would bring balance back into the lives of the younger generation. The second was that sport would "rid youth of temptations" by providing a "field of enthusiasm," a "healthy sense of fatigue," and the appeasement of the senses and the imagination. And the third expectation was that sport would transform outdated educational institutions into modern learning houses that taught responsibility, character, and conduct, creating human beings rather than "twenty-one-year-old children."<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, Coubertin believed that sport would lead to the reformation of the individual, which would then lead to the reformation of entire societies. This philosophy would later serve as the cornerstone for Olympism and Olympic Education.

Olympism, as defined by Coubertin, is the collection of the values and principles that contribute to the improvement of mankind and are developed through participation in sport.<sup>16</sup> Coubertin saw Olympism as a philosophy aimed at peace and international education. With the growing influence of Internationalism and a desire for peace among nations, Coubertin soon recognized the need to establish "permanent factories" of Olympism around the globe. While the Olympic Games became the globalizing agent for his educational aspirations and the Olympic Movement became his global network, Olympic Education became the vehicle, the permanent factories, for the timeless perpetuation of the values underlying Olympism.<sup>17</sup>

Coubertin envisioned Olympic Education as a "multidisciplinary educational project" that featured: 1) the harmonious development of the entire human being (mind, body, and will), 2) the striving for human perfection through high performance, 3) the voluntary adherence and respect for ethical principles (such as fair play and equality), 4) the facilitation of peace and goodwill between nations vis-à-vis the nurturing of respect and tolerance between individuals, and 5) the emancipation of the individual through sport.<sup>18</sup> On top of all that, Olympic Education taught an Internationalism that encouraged a non-chauvinistic nationalism, which Coubertin believed was necessary to facilitate international peace, respect, and mutual understanding.

In the end, Coubertin's vision—although synthesized during a time of colonialism—moved beyond the tenants of colonialism and cultural imperialism and towards a hopeful revelation of an international community bound together in peace and solidarity by the joys of participating in

sport. "To ask people to love one another is merely a form of childishness. To ask them to respect each other is not utopian, but in order to respect each other they must first know each other."<sup>19</sup> These words by Coubertin set the stage for a century of Olympic Education, as well as a century of educational ambiguity.

### **Olympic Education Today: Blurring of the Postcolonial**

Perhaps where Coubertin faltered in his vision was the fact that he did not define a curriculum for Olympic Education, nor did he describe a specific pedagogical approach to teaching Olympism through physical education. When reading his works, there is an underlying stream of vagueness behind his anecdotes of just how participation in rowing, gymnastics, boxing, or even ice skating leads an individual to an educational experience in morality. As a result, educators around the world have initiated their own versions of "Olympic" education for the purposes of their own moral educational reforms. After Coubertin's death in 1937, the (mis)appropriation of his ideals by educators further transformed Olympic Education into the programs we have today, some of which have not always led to the realization of his original vision. Fortunately, these divergences have not entirely diminished the educational potential of Olympism.

Formal Olympic Education programs were not the official responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (OCOG) until the Montreal Games in 1976.<sup>20</sup> Before that, Olympic Education initiatives consisted primarily of isolated, post-hoc activities that were usually associated with the Olympics cultural programs, such as hosting Olympic Youth Camps and art competitions for students. After 1976, Olympic Education programs took on greater importance for OCOGs as they became a major component of Olympic legacy creation. By the 1984 Los Angeles Games, Olympic Education had seemingly found its place, re-focusing on long-lasting educational and cultural impact that could sustain interest and involvement beyond the Games. Programs began to shift their objectives from simply informing about the Games to educating youth about Olympism through values—or so it seemed.

It is at this point where values re-enter the picture that we return our discussion on Olympic Education and its trajectory from colonialism towards neo-imperialism. When using a postcolonial lens, one could argue that today's Olympic Education programs have not moved beyond colonialism; but rather, have simply blurred the lines of the postcolonial.

Recently, scholars in the fields of education and sport studies have begun to comment on the shortcomings of educational initiatives associated with the Games. In 2004, Helen Jefferson Lenskyj asserted that Olympic Education has become overly commercialized and overrun by Olympic sponsors and stakeholders.<sup>21</sup> Instead of receiving a culturally appropriate form of values or character education, Olympic Education "socializ[es] children to become global consumers."<sup>22</sup> According to her, the corporate takeover of the Games has not only taken place on the athletic fields, but has also entered the classroom under the guise of educational initiatives. The danger of this is not only the corporatization of Olympic Education, but also the colonization of children's minds through the normalization of the "symbolic codes" of Western capitalist culture.<sup>23</sup> The consequences of this form of subconscious cultural imperialism are no different from when colonialists were directly replacing indigenous norms with their own.

Moreover, because programs are too closely associated with the reproduction of a consumerist culture, Lenskyj argues that, as a result, the curriculum is too decontextualized and dehistoricized, and based too much on superficial facts and deceptively "potted histories" of the Olympic Games. Being committed to ulterior motives, Olympic Education offers no opportunity for children to critically

engage with material on or about the Olympics; but rather seeks to preserve the Olympic Games under virtuous light.<sup>24</sup>

Scholars have also demonstrated how the current curriculum is overly biased towards Western values, preventing non-Western expressions of identity and morality to come forward. For example, when referring to the fair play pedagogy in Olympic Education, Deanna Binder notes that existing educational strategies are based on the Anglo-American moral development model developed by Jean Piaget and later by Lawrence Kohlberg.<sup>25</sup> This model, however, overly “emphasizes the cognitive processes involved in moral reasoning, an approach that has its roots in the principled ethics of Kant and the ideals of Plato.”<sup>26</sup> It does not explore emotional, narrative, or imaginative processes of morality that stem from alternative cultural paradigms; and, consequently, becomes narrow in scope and narrow in outreach. It becomes too abstract and too focused on rules, principles and penalties, ignoring the “lived experiences and moral conflicts of real people in real situations.”<sup>27</sup> Although Olympic Education has incorporated the ideals of fair play into its curriculum as a “universal” theme of Olympism, in the end its pedagogy is actually quite culturally biased towards the West.

Furthermore, Jim Parry once mentioned that the Olympic virtue of the pursuit of excellence—although seemingly universal—actually overstates the Western image of the honorable “Greek warrior” (and perhaps also the noble “Christian athlete”).<sup>28</sup> This athlete-warrior strives after the Greek concept of *arête*: “distinction, duty, excellence, fame, glorious deeds, goodness, greatness, heroism, valor and virtue.”<sup>29</sup> Coubertin, himself a steadfast advocate of Western individualism, believed that “the Olympiads were restored for the rare and solemn glorification of the individual male athlete,” and that team-centered sports—although acceptable for periodic amusement and recreation—were harmful to the development of the individual.<sup>30</sup> Although today’s Olympic Games do allow women to participate and the program does include team sport, the “spirit” of the Games is still highly modeled after Western individualism.

This spirit, captured in the three mottos of the Olympic Games—*Citius, Altius, Fortius* (“Faster, Higher, Stronger”), *Athletae proprium est se ipsum noscere, ducere et vincere* (“It is the athlete’s duty and essence to know, to lead, and to conquer himself”), and *Mens fervida in corpore lacertoso* (“An ardent mind in a well-trained body”)—is what informs much of today’s curriculum.<sup>31</sup> Although quite noble in their intentions to inspire individuals to excellence, these mottos and images blur the distinction between inspiration and cultural domination. The emphasis on glorifying the individual marginalizes those cultures that see the world in more relational, group-oriented terms, and diminishes the inherent value of learning from team-oriented activities. Consequently, achieving excellence as a group becomes a secondary honor to achieving excellence as an individual.

In terms of international outreach, Michael Byaruhanga Kadoodooba points out how assumptions made by the IOC actually reproduce former colonial thinking. For example, most Olympic Education programs classify Africa as one country, ignoring its many unique individual nations each with their own politics, economics, culture, traditions, values, and languages. Kadoodooba writes that “Africa, as a continent, is too wide and diverse to say that nations, let alone tribes, should have the same traditional values and attitudes toward sports.”<sup>32</sup> When designing curriculum, then, we must be conscious of the fact that “different societies within Africa have different values for sports.”<sup>33</sup> A curriculum that lumps all of Africa together is bound to be unsuccessful because it would be irrelevant and far removed from the realities of a local community. For example, the country-specific challenges and obstacles found in South Africa are drastically different from those found in Sudan or Burkina Faso, and, again, entirely different from those faced by countries in Latin America or Asia. If the IOC and educators merely view “Africa” as an Olympic-lacking “nation” to be enlightened by Olympic Educa-

tion, the Olympic Movement becomes no different from what former colonial powers were doing with sport in the late-1800s to the mid-1900s.

In the cases described above, the blurring of the postcolonial lies in the fact that Olympic Education programs today appear to be entirely removed from the colonial framework in which the modern Olympics was reborn. After all, we do live in the *post*-colonial world. Yet, when we examine the nature of Olympic Education, we can see that in reality, the colonial tendencies of yesterday are still interlaced in the purpose, foundations and values of Olympic Education today. These colonial tendencies are born from the preoccupation of educating *about* the Olympic Games (and, consequently, its Western history, Western mottos and Western images), rather than on using the Olympics as an opportunity to educate each other about one another. When Olympic Education is framed under the noble light of the values of Olympism, it becomes even more difficult to see where the line is drawn between neo-imperialism and humanitarianism.

In the end, the paradigm in which Olympic Education sits has moved very little from the days when Coubertin first sought to give the Games to those who he believed lacked Olympism. Today, Olympic Education still introduces Olympism as a culturally superior ideology that must be given to people, rather than unearthed from within. Based on this historical trajectory, we are led to ask whether it is the (tragic) fate of Olympic Education to remain trapped in its colonial past, or whether there is a way to move beyond it.

### **International Olympic Education: Going Beyond Neo-imperialism**

Despite its shortcomings, Olympic Education, and the Olympic Games itself, has enormous potential to become a positive social force in our world today. No other event can compete with the Olympics in terms of the international breadth in which it reaches; and very few educational programs can have such universal appeal as Olympic Education programs do. Therefore, it becomes even more important that Olympic Education moves beyond neo-imperialism and begins to level the playing field for the world's cultures by including and promoting indigenous games and values alongside modern sport. Keeping the colonial perspective in mind, how can international educators and Olympic scholars reform Olympic Education so that it is situated within a culturally appropriate paradigm that does not compromise the values of Olympism?

Already, Olympic Education has begun to move in the right direction. Since the Nagano Winter Olympics in 1998, all but the Athens 2004 Games have implemented the "One School, One Country" program which seeks to pair schools in the host country with sister schools in other participating countries.<sup>34</sup> The goal of this program is aimed at increasing familiarity with and knowledge about different cultures, as well as providing opportunities for cultural exchange and international friendship. Although the incorporation of this international component allows Olympic Education to begin to rid itself of its neo-imperialist, Eurocentric trappings, it is not enough to reform Olympic Education entirely.

The next step for Olympic Education is the internationalization of its programs along two other dimensions. The first is its content. Norbert Müller notes that Coubertin strove for a multi-*disciplinary* educational project; however, given today's state of globalization and internationalism, there is even greater need for Olympic Education to be a multi-*cultural* educational project. Multiculturalism and the cross-cultural appropriateness of Olympic Education is perhaps the IOC's greatest challenge, because it requires first and foremost the redefining of Olympic values in the context of globalization, and second, the better balancing of the local and the global. People must be able to engage with the "universal" principles of Olympism on their own cultural terms. Only in this way can Olympism and

the Olympic Games truly fulfill its purpose of improving mankind, celebrating humanity and appreciating the human spirit. In terms of education, curriculum must be revised so that on the one hand it better reflects the diversity of its participants; while on the other hand, it becomes specifically relevant and meaningful for individual audiences by addressing local educational needs, drawing upon local knowledge, expressing cultural values, and highlighting traditional sport.

The second dimension that must be internationalized is the design and diffusion of Olympic Education curriculum. One of the principles of Olympism is the friendship and goodwill between nations as represented by the interrelations of its peoples and symbolized by the interconnected Olympic rings. In keeping with this theme of interconnectivity, Olympic Education curriculum should be the product of a collaborative effort by educators from across the Olympic globe, rather than the isolated efforts of the individual OCOGs and their stakeholders. Previous Olympic Education programs were locally-created, locally-targeted and locally-based; and, as a result, could not effectively appeal to an international audience, let alone become long-lasting in impact.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, international cooperation at the design level will not only help transform Olympic Education into a more representative, relevant, continuous and consistent international education; but it will also ensure that its diffusion is based along voluntary horizontal networks, rather than on top-down, vertical lines of institutions.

These minor suggestions—albeit massive in scope and implementation—help move Olympic Education one more step towards becoming a truly international form of education, and eliminates questions of colonialism and neo-imperialism. Instead of Olympic Education initiatives acting like an external (imperial) force that comes in, educates a local population about the Games and values of Olympism, and then leaves, the suggested changes help turn Olympic Education into an international force that incorporates, expands and enriches itself while enriching the communities it touches. It encourages a form of education that is cooperative, mutual, sustainable, and harmonious. And, it facilitates a level of interconnectivity between individuals and nations that prevents colonial-like relations from (re-)forming.

### Concluding Remarks

This paper has framed Olympic Education in a colonial context in order to illuminate the legacy of its irreversible colonial past in spite of its educational vision of international harmony. This paper has shown that Olympic Education in its present form has lost ties with Coubertin's original call for educational reform through physical education. Instead, it has become a program that oftentimes teaches "values" that are not easily translatable or applicable to all societies. It has become a tool of neo-imperialism disguised under the cloak of internationalism, democracy and the humanitarian cause for peace and mutual understanding.

Nonetheless, it is not just the educational aspect that emits these neo-imperialist tendencies. Over the years, the Olympic Games have become a "language" spoken by international superpowers, as well as an international stage on which individual nations can shine. As early as the 1940s, countries, including those outside of Western Europe, began to recognize the significance of hosting or participating in the Games. Japan, for example, realized that by hosting the Olympics, they could demonstrate to the world that they, too, should be counted as a rising superpower—as was also the case for South Korea in the 1980s and now for China in the new millennia.<sup>36</sup> But what happened to Japan in the 1940s is what happens to many non-Western, indigenous or minority groups around the world when confronting modern international sport. Whether it is whole nation-states or pockets of society, these groups are forced to adopt the language of international sport if they want to have a voice in the international arena, even if it is irrelevant to their immediate development needs. In this process of

neo-imperialism, traditional games fade away, local culture becomes secondary to Western pop culture, and the power relations of the colonial era are replayed at a subtler level.

But is this really cultural imperialism? Are the shortcomings of Olympic Education really an indication of a continuing legacy of the colonial origins of the Olympic Games? What if non-Western societies choose to be a part of a Western-originated movement? Does this mean that they are unaware victims of the colonization of their minds? Alan Guttman warns scholars not to be too quick in pointing fingers at cultural imperialism.<sup>37</sup> He reminds us that cultures are never static, and, quoting Edward Said, says that “the history of all cultures is the history of cultural borrowings.”<sup>38</sup> He goes on to point out: “If it is ethnocentrically arrogant to assume—as many nineteenth century missionaries did and as many twentieth-century ‘development experts’ still do—that premodern sports are primitive vestiges of culturally inferior modes of social organization, it is no less arrogant for Western critics to insist that non-Western peoples are wrong to prefer modern sports to traditional ones.”<sup>39</sup>

Guttman suggests that the cultural evolution of a society in an interconnected world presupposes the incorporation or the adaptation of cultural forms from the outside. Perhaps, then, we must also begin to consider the “emancipatory potential” of sport, and that societies can be resilient, adaptive, and transformative in the way that they adopt modern sport without falling victim to neo-imperialism. After all, the literature on sport and colonialism also highlights that after decades, sometimes even centuries of cultural oppression, the colonized began to resist colonization using the very tool that had been used to tame them: sport.

Perhaps, then, what Coubertin actually failed to foresee in 1896 was the level of international participation that the Olympic Games would involve (the Olympics has more participating nations now than the United Nations), and the degree of globalization, multiculturalism, and interdependence that the world would experience over one hundred years later. This oversight, along with an undefined curriculum for Olympic Education, may have resulted in a huge cultural and pedagogical gap that Olympic Education must now race to catch up with. What appear to be neo-imperialist undertones may actually be growing pains of an evolving postcolonial institution. Given enough time, Olympic Education could become the most effective international tool for character development, values education, and cultural exchange.

By examining Olympic Education through a postcolonial lens, we have gained the advantage of identifying the less than obvious aspects of Olympic Education that should be improved upon, modified, re-conceptualized, or discarded in order to better fit our context of an interconnected, multicultural, global society. An educational curriculum that works toward internationalism will enable the Olympic Movement to become enriched with the experiences of all the people represented by the five Olympic rings. Once the infrastructure of Olympic Education has been reformed to represent a diversity of voices, modern sport will become that space for cultural evolution rather than for cultural domination; and the Olympic Games will act as a bridge towards a united humanity rather than a mask hiding a dark past. Olympic Education must face up to the challenges of multiculturalism, globalization, and internationalism. Only then can it go beyond its colonial past, and become the source of international education that Coubertin once envisioned.

## Endnotes

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- 3 Eric D. Anderson, "Using the Master's Tools: Resisting Colonization through Colonial Sports," *The International Journal of the History of Sports* 23, no. 2 (2006), 260.
- 4 Pierre de Coubertin, "Athletic Colonization," in *Olympism: Selected Writings*, ed. Norbert Müller (Lausanne: Comité International Olympique, 2000), 703.
- 5 Ibid., 704.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 When the IOC was created, there were zero members from Africa and Asia. In 1954, African membership went up to two members and Asian membership went up to 10. By 1993, African membership was at 16 members and Asian membership at 15. See Table 6.1 in Alan Guttmann, *Games & Empire: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 133.
- 9 Count Baillet-Latour, cited in Sandra Collins, "Conflicts of 1930s Japanese Olympic Diplomacy in Universalizing the Olympic Movement," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 23, no. 7 (2006), 1136.
- 10 Pierre de Coubertin, "English Education," in *Olympism: Selected Writings*, 107-08.
- 11 Ibid., 110.
- 12 For a detailed account of Coubertin's observations, see Part II in "English Education," in *Olympism: Selected Writings*, 108-14.
- 13 Pierre de Coubertin, "Athletics and Gymnastics," in *Olympism: Selected Writings*, 139.
- 14 Norbert Müller, Introduction to "English Education," in *Olympism: Selected Writings*, 105.
- 15 Pierre de Coubertin, "The Cure for Overworking," in *Olympism: Selected Writings*, 68.
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- 24 Lenskyj, "Olympic Education Inc." See also Deanna Binder, "Challenges and Models for Successful Olympic Education Initiatives at the Grassroots Level," *Olympic Perspectives*, Symposium Proceedings, Third International Symposium for Olympic Research, October 1996, 245-52.
- 25 Binder, "Beyond Rules: Implications of Current Curriculum Theory for a New Pedagogy of Fair Play," 2000 Pre-Olympic Congress, Brisbane, Australia, September 2000; <http://www.deannabinder.com/documents/Brisbane2000PreOlympicCongressBeyondRules-Paper.pdf>.
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- 27 Ibid., 6. See also Binder, "Teaching Olympism in Schools: Olympic Education as a focus on Values Education," University Lecture on the Olympics, Centre d'Estudis Olímpics, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2004, <http://olympicstudies.uab.es/lec/pdf/binder.pdf>.
- 28 Jim Parry, "Physical Education as Olympic Education," *European Physical Education Review* 4, no. 2 (1998), 153-67.
- 29 Ibid., 160.
- 30 Coubertin, "Forty Years of Olympism" and "Athletic Colonization," *Olympism: Selected Writings*, 746 and 704.
- 31 Coubertin, "New Mottoes," *Olympism: Selected Writings*, 591.

- 32 Michael Byaruhanga Kadoodooba, "Implications for Olympic Education and Training through Olympism in Africa," Paper presented at the 1997 Congress "Coubertin et l'Olympisme. Questions pour l'avenir;" <http://www.coubertin.ch/pdf/PDF-Dateien/129-Kadoodooba.pdf>, 236
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Ibid. The Athens Games also had an international component; however, it was limited to simply translating their educational curriculum into four different languages.
- 35 Cerezuela, et al., "Olympic Education Program."
- 36 Collins, "Conflicts of 1930s Japanese Olympic Diplomacy." See also David R. Black and Shona Bezanson, "The Olympic Games, Human Rights and Democratization: Lessons from Seoul and Implications for Beijing," *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 7 (2004), 1250.
- 37 Guttmann, *Games & Empire*.
- 38 Ibid., 184.
- 39 Ibid., 187.