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Professor Andrzej Pawłucki, a distinguished philosopher and physical culture educator is an author of numerous publications, appreciated both in Poland and abroad. The publisher’s note tells us that his latest monograph, *Pedagogia olimpijska. Homo physicus* (*Olympic Pedagogy. Homo physicus*), is the third part of a trilogy, whose previous components were the books entitled *Nauki o kulturze fizycznej* (*Physical Culture Studies*) (2015) and *Sport, asceza, miłość* (*Sport, Asceticism, Love*) (2019). The Author undertook an ambitious task of creating a pioneer work showing in an original way the value of the Olympics and the need of multi-degree Olympic education. He has fulfilled the aforesaid task in an excellent way.

The first chapter refers to the period of the pandemic during which the book was written. The time of the most intense, forced isolation had a very negative impact on most people’s health and well-being; it also evoked a certain longing for participation in competitions. Lack of possibility to experience sports emotions live let many spectators really appreciate the value of sport. Andrzej

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Pawłucki defines that time as a state of limbo, where the will to develop one's body weakens and a man degenerates physically. People become the epidemic's prisoners, unable to vent out their internal tension. The Author describes online education during a long school lockdown stating rightly that "lack of action is lack of existence" (p. 38), hoping at the same time that pandemic isolation is not irrevocable and losses can be compensated for. Likewise, his reflections on the nature of a bodybuilder's functioning are interesting as he describes that sports-person as "a prisoner at his own request" (p. 38).

Two following chapters are an intriguing story about cultural origins (frequent references to religions) and multifaceted social identity of *homo physicus* – an individual devoted to physical culture. This identity is shaped by training, previously taking a form of war practice (the Author gives many examples), as well as by everyday choices. However, Pawłucki remarks that "a warrior is not morally equal to another warrior" (p. 95) and *homo physicus*, being a defender of the right cause, shall constitute *alter ego* of a homicidal soldier" (p. 96) (in this extract we find an interesting analysis of fascist Germany). Historical examples also evoke the knight figure. Other aspects discussed in that part are, for example, cultural context, physical work over one's corporality, the role of a coach, participation in various groups, play, institutionalization, morality, friendship, law and sports customs, respect, justice. The Author draws our attention to ethical issues (natural law), skillfully directing his narration at contemporary sport. At the same time, he describes numerous absurdities and distortions of an ideal of fair competition, like in a sub-chapter entitled *Oszustwo transseksualistów* (*Transsexuals' Cheat*) devoted to the presence of transsexualism in sport. These reflections become part of the image of events we have been dealing with for a long time now; as, like in other areas of life, also in sport, the forces of "progress" fight with the forces of "reaction". The aforesaid monograph clearly calls for sport free from ideological pressure which we keep experiencing with growing intensity.

The next chapter is devoted to Himalayan mountaineering, an area beyond the mainstream of sports rivalry. Pawłucki explains the difference between the Olympics and Himalayan mountaineering, writing about the origins and philosophy of both movements. A Himalayan mountaineer "exists beyond communitarian society" (p. 210), becoming not a sports-person but a climber of mountain peaks, an extremist in a certain sense of the word, and even "a poor wretch" ("they make their nearest and dearest worry and head towards inertia or premature death" (p. 210). Triumph is always paid with high risk of death. The Author emphasises that although a Himalayan mountaineer is clearly alienated, they still care about morality of dignity. It is illustrated with contrasting examples (Aleister Crowley, Denis Urubko).

In the fifth chapter of *Pedagogia olimpijska (Olympic Pedagogy)*, Pawłucki draws the reader's attention to the matter of Olympic Truce, conducting an analysis based on his own experiences and historical context. It refers to selected Olympic Games, showing "the limits of their causality in achieving social peace" (p. 228), and hence the utopia of international cooperation. There is a very valuable analysis of insincere policy (in the context of particular Olympic Games) of the Soviet Union, the country which used the Olympics "to widen the area of influence pertaining to the ideology of international socialism" (p. 232). The Author presents his path to understanding the spirit of the Olympics, recalling inspiring publications of researchers such as Zbigniew Krawczyk or Andrzej Tyszka. He discusses the issue of amateur and professional sport as well as the question of dangers of liberalism. What is particularly essential, he calls for introducing Olympic pedagogy into education by creating an institution of mouseion (where students could get immersed into Olympic reality), gymnasium (acting and intellectual stage) and stadium (place of fair competition) as the space of Olympic pedagogy. These institutions could serve as a place of an efficient process of cultural initiation.

The last chapter is devoted to the question of a political aspect of Olympic Games, where the Author pays a lot of attention to various aspects of ancient Olympic Games, including their researchers, addresses the question of Olympic Truce, Olympia's political character and politicization of Greek runners – exceptionally resilient bearers of good news such as Pheidippides and other "heroic unknown soldiers" (p. 282). Oftentimes, the Author also refers to our contemporary times only to conclude, "Since the reign of king Iphitos to the times of de Coubertin, politics and Olympics have gone hand in hand" (p. 286). It is completed by Pawłucki's very interesting and vivid memories concerning the political character of sport at the times of communist dictatorship, precious remarks on the violent nature of liberalism, threats of *gender* ideology in sport and remarks on republicanism (republic as "a state of communitarian good and social solidarity") (p. 303) and monarchism ("in monarchy there are resources of cultural capital") (p. 306).

One can feel concern about the future of sport and the world emanating from the book pages (among all, "pathologies triggered by gender ideology" p. 308), but a careful reader shall also discern the Author's hope like sunbeams breaking through the dark sky. We get assured that sport can still be the source of physical and moral beauty, that it can bring comfort and inspiration. An Olympian's goal is the renewal of the world via fulfilling moral tasks. They are to introduce peace and call for the culture of friendship. One should just bear in mind to stay faithful to their cultural traditions. It is helpful to draw from noble sources, appropriate education and to avoid evil and stupidity ("How fantastic it

is that I can run. It is useful in running away from evil, and even more when one runs away from idiocracy and useful idiots” p. 312).

One should also pay attention to historical themes presented by the Author as they constitute a perfectly presented background of the conducted analysis. It lets us see more or less known events from the history of sport in a new light. The discussion includes, among all, the activity of Pierre de Coubertin, the character of particular Olympic Games, for example, the ones of 1956 (the famous water-polo match between Hungary and the USSR), and the ones of 1980 or 1984; there are sports heroes both from ancient times and more contemporary ones, e.g. Spiridon Luis, Jim Thorpe, Irena Szewińska or Leszek Blanik. The text is enriched, which is very precious, with educative, personal stories from the Author’s past, referring to particular moments of Polish history. It makes the narrative widespread and full-blooded. Personally, I really appreciate the extract in which Andrzej Pawłucki, as a young lecturer, boldly calls for recognition of Florian Znaniński, a distinguished scientist sentenced to oblivion by communists. The Author’s school memories about lack of any reference to Olympic Games (their history but also their rich heritage, namely Olympic poetry) in contemporary school curriculum (“In Polish secondary schools the Olympics were relegated to the zone of oblivion,” p. 230) are also thought-provoking. How relevant is the appeal to give the Olympian philosophy its due place at school! What is important is the fact that Pawłucki also refers to the latest history, emphasizing the potential and role of the Olympics in our times full of uncertainty, marked by Russia-induced war with Ukraine and a widely-understood crisis.

The book abounds with numerous statements that give the reader a lot of food for thought even if they are taken out of context. Let us quote some of them: “An Olympian is the opposite of a communist” (p. 234), “communism is responsible for evil in sport” (p. 257), “socialism is anti-culture” (p. 295), “in case of sport, dictatorship of equality has begun to liberalise morality” (p. 244), “liberalism as an antithesis of the Olympics is antihuman” (p. 246), “the modern Olympics are a realistic philosophy of moral comfort” (p. 254), “the Olympics are a realistic philosophy, they are not, in any event, an intellectual illusion” (p. 258), “Olympic sport creates order” (p. 256), “body immortality is not the man’s destiny, but in their mortal life corporeal nature is known to them and ascribed to them...” (p. 314); and last but not least “he who makes love the reason of their existence as *homo physicus* is wise” (p. 119).

Concluding, *Olympic Pedagogy* is an exceptionally valuable publication, written with great flair, making the reader familiar with an intellectually complex nature of physical culture. Doubtlessly, it is a powerful call for changes regarding the way the philosophy of the Olympics is perceived and propagated. Apart from its unquestionable factual value, it is worth paying attention to the Author’s exceptional erudition (which is not so frequent in case of contemporary scientific

publications), which makes the reading process a real pleasure. The monograph should attract the attention of representatives of all the disciplines dealing with physical culture, sportspersons, and, above all, future and present sports educators, including coaches and teachers. The publication shall be also of interest to sport lovers looking for something more than merely entertainment and wishing to broaden their horizons. It is a book that might make one change their perception of various aspects of physical culture, making them its more aware beneficiaries. Thus, let us hope the book will be translated into English so that foreign readers can get acquainted with it as well.