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O Movimento Olímpico, a cobertura dos média e o cinema (1970 - 1985)

The Olympic Movement, Media Coverage and Film (1970 - 1985)

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palavras-chave

Movimento Olímpico, Jogos Olímpicos, Olimpíada, Munique. Montreal, Moscovo, Los Angeles, Pierre de Coubertin, amadorismo, profissionalismo, juramento, os anos 70, os anos 80, desporto, média, televisão, filme, cinema, patrocínio

resumo

Esta tese aborda os Jogos Olímpicos de Verão da era moderna e analisa alterações específicas que ocorreram desde que Pierre de Coubertin reintroduziu os Jogos Olímpicos em 1896. Centra-se no período entre 1970 e 1985, mais concretamente os Jogos Olímpicos de Verão de Munique (1972), Montreal (1976), Moscovo (1980) e Los Angeles (1984), visto que esta época trouxe alterações substanciais à era Coubertin. Alguns dos ideias olímpicos foram desafiadas, ou seja, a política mundial afectou negativamente todos estes Jogos e a entrada de patrocinadores privados em paralelo com o desenvolvimento da televisão marcaram uma nova dimensão para o mundo do desporto. Os média, intimamente ligados desde sempre ao desporto, proporcionaram a plataforma para a entrada do desporto na cultura geral, especialmente desde o contributo da televisão e a possibilidade de transmissão em directo a nível mundial. O desporto emergiu com outras formas de entretenimento e originou mega eventos com todos os seus respectivos aspectos positivos e negativos. Neste trabalho, a análise de filmagens permitiu mostrar o carácter transitório do período seleccionado e criar uma base para realizar uma investigação mais aprofundada da gestão do desporto, ética e a respectiva prática de negócios.

keywords

Olympic Movement, Olympic Games, Olympiad, Munich, Montreal, Moscow, Los Angeles, Pierre de Coubertin, amateurism, professionalism, oath, 1970s, 1980s, sport, media, television, film, cinema, sponsoring

abstract

This thesis deals with the Olympic Summer Games of the modern era and analyses selected changes that occurred since Pierre de Coubertin re-initiated the Olympic Games in 1894. The focus lies in the period between 1970 and 1985, with the Olympic Summer Games in Munich (1972), Montreal (1976), Moscow (1980) and Los Angeles (1984), because this time brought substantial change to Coubertin's heritage: Some of the Olympic ideals were challenged, world political affairs affected all of these Games negatively and the entry of private sponsorship and the parallel development of television marked a new dimension for the whole world of sports. The media, always intimately connected with sport, provided a platform for the penetration of sport into the wider culture; especially since the contribution of television and the possibility of broadcasting live and worldwide. Sport has merged with other forms of entertainment and generated mega-events with all their positive and negative aspects. In this work, film analysis and historical examination show the transitional character of the selected period and establish a basis for conducting further investigation in sports management, ethics and business practice.

Índice / Contents

o júri	II
acknowledgements	III
resumo	IV
abstract	V
Índice / Contents	VI
Ilustrações / List of Figures.....	VII
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The Olympic Ideal – history and background	7
1.1 Pierre de Coubertin's idea(l)s	9
1.2 Competition.....	11
1.3 Fair play.....	13
1.4 Cult of the body and the athletic ideal	16
1.5 Symbols and rites	18
1.6 Amateurism and Shamateurism	22
Chapter 2: Olympic events and controversies (1970–1985).....	29
2.1 The period and its events	31
2.2 Olympic Summer Games in Munich, 1972	33
2.3 Olympic Summer Games in Montreal, 1976.....	38
2.4 Olympic Summer Games in Moscow, 1980	41
2.5 Olympic Summer Games in Los Angeles, 1984	44
Chapter 3: The Mediatisation of Sport.....	51
Chapter 4: Movies on Olympic Themes	67
4.1 <i>Animalympics</i> (1980)	69
4.2 <i>Chariots of Fire</i> (1981)	90
4.3 <i>Munich</i> (2005) and Munich in 1972.....	108
Conclusion	119
Works Cited.....	129
Filmography	136

Ilustrações / List of Figures

Figure 1: The Olympic rings, drawn by Pierre de Coubertin in 1914.....	20
Figure 2: The three visual symbols of the modern Olympic Games.	21
Figure 3: The logo of the Munich Games 1972.....	34
Figure 4: Montreal's logo for the Olympic Games	40
Figure 5: Official emblem of the Moscow Olympics 1980.....	43
Figure 6: Los Angeles' logo for the Olympic Games	44
Figure 7: Caricature of the Olympics.....	47
Figure 8: Schema of the satellite transmission of the Olympic Games 1964 in Tokyo	57
Figure 9: Schema of the satellite transmission of the Olympic Games 1968 in Mexico	58
Figure 10: John Mark with Olympic Fire, July 29, 1948.....	91
Figure 11: First streaker at Olympic Games: M. LeDuc	114
Figure 12: Mark Roberts, streaking during the Beijing Olympics, with advertising on his body	115
Screenshot 1: Radiograph of Tushenko's early training.....	76
Screenshot 2: Tushenko's coach fears her rating	77
Screenshot 3: Kwakimoto as one of many Asian ducks.....	78
Screenshot 4: Turnell on various spoofed glossy covers	79
Screenshot 5: Photo finish of the 100-meter dash.....	84
Screenshot 6: Olympic paw print and ZOO broadcaster logo.....	86
Screenshot 7: Antique amphora displaying a saurian	87
Screenshot 8: Athletic footwear from the industrial age.....	88
Screenshot 9: The American Olympic team arrives in France	93
Screenshot 10: Eric Liddell preaches.....	95
Screenshot 11: Harold Abrahams lost a race against Eric Liddell	100
Screenshot 12: Famous running scene with Vangelis' music	107
Screenshot 13: Avner leaves the scene with the WTC in the back	112

Introduction

Consider these figures. Athens in 1896: the first Olympic Games of the modern era. 241 participants from 14 nations competing and around 50.000 spectators watching the opening ceremony in the stadium. Global television audience: zero, obviously. Now, Beijing 2008: the 29th Olympic Summer Games of the modern era. Over 11.000 participants from 204 nations competing and around 90.000 spectators inside the "Bird's Nest" stadium during each of the opening and closing ceremonies. Estimated global television audience: several hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

These numbers made the hearts of athletes and media network chiefs beat faster. Sport has developed into an entertainment sector that occupies prime-time slots on major television networks. It has become a market with multi-million dollar turnovers and millions of spectators in stadiums and arenas, as well as in front of their television screens. But it is not only the Olympic Games that has entered the global mass market and that vast business interests are directed towards. There are also FIFA Football World Cups, UEFA Champion's League Wednesdays, NFL Super Bowl Sundays, Formula 1 races, World Golf Championships and many more big sports events, that are getting bigger with every passing year. The significance and international scale of sport in our culture has increased tremendously.

But how did this all come to take place? Nowadays, sport is almost omnipresent in our culture, because of the willing participation of the media. During an event like the Olympic Games the international media scene seems to have little other focus than on sport and it is then hard to avoid the enthusiastic coverage of national and international achievements. The 'sportification' of our wider culture is a result of sport's development from a niche product and a mere instrument of healthy activity into an asset that, simply put, entertains the masses

and also provides new jobs in various sectors and markets. Vice versa, the wider culture has also influenced the forms that sport and sports organisation has taken.

The appeal of a thesis that deals with the Olympic Games, sports and media arose from personal interests in these matters and the perception that a connection between the sports market and the media business is multi-faceted. As sport and media were already present in my professional background, and hopefully will be in my future as well, the decision to deal with this topic was easily made. The emphasis of this thesis is placed on the Olympic Games, especially the Summer Games between 1970 and 1985, because of the interesting political and social developments that occurred during this time. The Olympic ideal, to engage in sports 'for the love of the game', I will argue, degraded continuously during this particular period of time and the 'love of the game' turned for many into 'love of fame' and big money. The aspects of sponsorship, big money investment, professionalism and politics are the factors that marked and drove these developments.

Chapter 1, "The Olympic Ideal – history and background", presents important information and facts to bring the descriptions and analyses that follow into historical context. This presentation includes Pierre de Coubertin's motivation for re-initiating the Olympic Games in 1894, the ideals he imposed on the Olympic Games of the modern era, his early form of marketing and branding and an evaluation of the easily conflict-prone development of the amateur question. This is given in a certain detail to provide necessary background information for the appraisal of the Olympic Summer Games of the period under review and as preparation for consideration of future media involvement.

The second chapter then provides a short and concise overview of the political and world affairs taking place during the period reviewed in this

thesis. This outline prepares the subsections that follow, which deal with the Olympic Summer Games in Munich (1972), in Montreal (1976), in Moscow (1980) and in Los Angeles (1984). The 3 first named will be identified as Summer Olympics with unique and noticeable problems. The Games in Los Angeles were the first ones to be staged without government financing and even made a profit, thanks to private sponsorship.

Chapter 3 is devoted to processes involved in the mediatisation of sports, namely it gives a historic idea of media development since the first Olympic Games of the modern era, with emphasis on the development since the age of television. The subsequent chapter provides a short introduction to the sport film genre to lead over to the analysed films in Chapter 4. This last chapter and central section of the thesis will then show various aspects of the explored issues as they have been realised on film. The feature films considered are *Animalympics* (USA, 1980), *Chariots of Fire* (UK, 1981) and *Munich* (USA, 2005).

In this thesis, I want to argue that adjustments to the Olympic Games and its rules have been made constantly over the last 100 or so years but the period reviewed here represents a fairly wholesale transformation of the Olympic Games and its ideals, which is connected with the burgeoning television market, rising professionalism and the entry of both sponsorship and political hostilities into the world of sports.

Chapter 1

The Olympic Ideal – history and background

1.1 Pierre de Coubertin's idea(I)s

According to one of the numerous legends about the origin of the Olympic Games, the Greek god Zeus founded the Olympic Games to celebrate his own greatness and strength. Greek nationals praised Zeus and honoured him and so began the history of the only ceremonial that had persisted for not less than 1200 years, held every four years until the war between Romans and Greeks destroyed the ancient Olympic Games and its cradle, Olympia. The ancient Olympics were abolished when, "in 393 AD, the Christian emperor Theodosius I forbade the celebration of pagan cults, which included the Games."¹

Baron Pierre de Coubertin, a humanist, pedagogue and journalist, re-established the Olympic Games in 1894, after 1500 years, because he highly valued the idea of competing on a sports ground instead of fighting wars: "I should not be displeased to see opposing armies call for a short halt to the fighting in order to hold an upright and courteous session of physical Games."²

He wanted the modern Olympic Games to become a platform for "international friendship and better cooperation among nations."³ The Olympic Games should be a spur to replacing national pride with a universal cosmopolitanism. He wanted the original mentality, the Corinthian ideal, of the Olympics to be resurrected and carried on. His dream was an "athlete-centered Olympics with competition for the joy of competition."⁴ As education had always been one of his greatest interests, he searched for new ways to integrate sports into an educational system, because he believed that "permanent and

¹ *The Olympic Games in Antiquity*, 2nd ed. (The Olympic Museum, 2007): 13.

² Pierre de Coubertin, "The Fundamentals of the Philosophy of the Modern Olympics," *Bulletin du Comité International Olympique*.56 (1956).

³ Harvey Frommer, *Olympic Controversies* (New York et al.: Franklin Watts, 1987): 12.

⁴ Frommer, *Olympic Controversies*: 16.

excessive fatigue derived essentially from physical weakness, intellectual dullness, and moral degradation."⁵ After his successful transformation and reformation of the French educational system, which confronted him with many challenges and obstacles, his next goal was the restoration of the Olympic Games as an international institution.

But for Coubertin it was not only about the Olympic Games themselves. He also felt a responsibility to advocate sportsmanship and sport as a source of physical and mental well-being. He wanted to transfer the ideals of fair play and competition within rules to social life. So it was not his only goal to let ambitious sportsmen benefit from his re-establishment of the Olympics, but also the wider society. The idealist Coubertin wanted his own brand of 'Olympisme' to be understood. The term 'Olympism' plays a central role in Coubertin's understanding of the peaceful celebration of physical competition. It was he who coined this expression.

⁵ Georges Rioux, "Pierre de Coubertin's Revelation," *Pierre de Coubertin 1863-1973: Olympism - Selected Writings*, ed. Norbert Müller (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2000): 28.

1.2 Competition

Coubertin had clear ideas about the organisation of the modern Olympic Games: It has to be "manly sports" and therefore he demanded that no women were allowed to take part in the sporting competitions of the new era, as was the case in the ancient Olympic Games as well. Coubertin says: "In our view, this feminine semi-Olympiad is impractical, uninteresting, ungainly, and, I do not hesitate to add, improper."⁶ Contrary to Coubertin's wishes, women were first allowed to participate in the Olympic Games in Paris in 1900, but only in tennis and golf.⁷ Since then, the number of women participating in the Olympic Games has gone on increasing, but the struggle women faced to become athletes in the Olympic competitions, equally well accepted as male athletes, turned out to be a cause of much strife and prolonged discussion. Even in 1931, only 6 years before Coubertin's death, he officially stated his "refusal to allow women to take part at the same meetings as men."⁸

The other ideal he envisaged was the combination of sports, therefore physical workout, with art and thought, mental exercise. Artistic competitions had been part of the Olympic Games from 1912 until 1948. They were divided in five categories: Architecture, sculpture, paintings and graphic art, literature and music. After the Olympic Summer Games in London, "the art competitions were formally replaced by art exhibitions of a national character."⁹ The reasons for this replacement are not entirely clear, as some sources say it was the

⁶ Pierre de Coubertin, "The Women at the Olympic Games," *Pierre de Coubertin 1863-1937: Olympism - Selected Writings*, ed. Norbert Müller (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2000): 711.

⁷ *Olympic Factsheet #3: Olympic Milestones* (British Olympic Association, 2007): 1.

⁸ Pierre de Coubertin, "The Charter of Sports Reform," *Official Bulletin of the International Olympic Committee*, vol. 17 (International Olympic Committee, 1931).

consequence of protests against possible art pieces being submitted by professionals, rather than amateurs, and others see the motivation in the lack of time and financial/personal resources to continue the artistic competitions in parallel to the sports competitions. Regardless of the exact decisive factor, Pierre de Coubertin bewailed the cancellation – not least because he took part in the literature competition in 1912, submitted work under his "pseudonym Hohrod and Eschbach [and] won the gold medal in the literature event with his 'Ode to Sport'."¹⁰ It is quite conceivable, that Coubertin's participation provided the reason for the later cancellation due to suspected insider influence.

Despite the questions of eligibility, Pierre de Coubertin designed the competitions to follow the three key values of the Olympic movement: excellence, in the sense of giving one's best, making progress and striving for the victory; friendship, as a result of and as foundation for an international meeting and finally respect, which includes respect for others, respect for the Olympic Movement and, as the emphasis lay in sport, respect for the rules and fair play.

⁹ Douglas A. Brown, *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* X (2001): 99.

¹⁰ "The Muses' Pentathlon," *Olympic Review*.222/223.

1.3 Fair play

Another feature that represents the Olympic Ideal is the Olympic Oath. Athletes and judges in ancient Olympia had to stand in front of a statue of Zeus, because the games were held to honour him, and swear an oath to obey the rules. Pierre de Coubertin resurrected the practise of swearing an oath just as he resurrected the ancient Olympic Games, therefore we see another close connection between antiquity and modernity.

But the resurrection of the oath was not only made because of the admiration for Greek history. It is a common belief that the Jim Thorpe incident of the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm¹¹ initiated or accelerated the implementation of an oath. Initiated in Antwerp in 1920, the Olympic Oath was sworn by one athlete to represent all participating sportsmen, in this case by Victor Boin, a Belgian fencer. One might conclude that the choice of a fencer probably was Coubertin's, because he had a high regard for the sport of fencing, practised it personally¹² and having a fencer as the first athlete to pledge the oath emphasised Coubertin's hopes for it. Boin spoke the following promise during the opening ceremony:

We swear that we will take part in the Olympic Games in loyal competition respecting the regulations which govern them, and desirous of participating in them in the true spirit of sportsmanship for the honour of our country and for the glory of sport.

Coubertin hoped that the oath would remind the athletes of their duty, their chivalry and their commitment to the international festival of peace and the celebrations of youth. From his point of view, the oath

¹¹ cf. page 24

¹² cf. Heinz Harder, *Unternehmen Olympia - Mustermesse Pseudoreligion Ersatzkrieg* (Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1970): 19.

was the only easily practicable strategy to deal with the perceived problem of seemingly professionals engaging in the amateur Olympics, but of course a few words by one athlete out of thousands participating could not guarantee universal chivalry. Details about the long-running issue of amateurism will be given in chapter 1.6. One issue that should be cleared up at this point, before analysing the development of the Olympic oath, is the fact that Pierre de Coubertin certainly defended his idea of the amateur being the only true athlete at the Olympic Games, but in his later years, he denied having inserted the amateur ideal into the oath:

I have been reproached often, and always unjustly, for the supposed hypocrisy of the Olympic Oath. But read for yourself that oath of which I am the proud and happy creator and tell me where you find in it any requirement that athletes present in the stadium have an absolute amateur status that I am the first to regard as impossible. In the oath I ask for one thing only: Sporting loyalty.¹³

The Olympic Oath has undergone several changes throughout the history of the modern Olympic Games. The word "swear" was changed to "promise" and to remove nationalism from the Olympic Games, "honour of our county" was changed to "honour of the team" in the early 1960s and first spoken in the Winter Games of Innsbruck, in 1964.¹⁴ The most recent update was made in 1999, when the IOC added the passage about doping and drugs to keep up with the times. Today's oath lets an athlete of the host country hold the Olympic flag during the opening ceremony and say:

In the name of all the competitors I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, committing ourselves to a sport without doping and without

¹³ Pierre de Coubertin quoted in Flor Isava Fonseca, "What counts is the athlete," *Olympic Review*.267 (1990).

drugs, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams.¹⁵

Since 1972, the judges, represented by one judge from the host nation, also swear upon the Olympic flag to show their impartiality and freedom from corruption.

The most recently published Olympic Charter, in force as from July 7 2007, does not include any reference to an Olympic oath or vow, which is to be made by the sportsmen or judges. It only urges the IOC members to swear an oath to fulfil their duty as a representative of the Olympic Movement/the Olympic Committee.¹⁶ This omission of the allusion to the oath results from an organisational change, because since the Olympic Charter of 2004, many bye-laws and amendments have been left out of the charter and published elsewhere. In the case of the Olympic oath, one now needs to research the IOC Protocol Guide, which includes all detailed information about the protocol to follow during the opening and closing ceremonies and so on.

The early versions of the athletes' oath did not include a reference to drugs, as mentioned above. Even though the IOC only added this reference in 1999, the use of drugs to enhance the body's performance during the Olympic Games was far from unknown before then. Olympic track and field athletes were reported using drugs in 1904 already and it took until the 1960s to officially ban the use of stimulants and then initiate the drug testing now used by international sports federations.¹⁷

¹⁴ Nina K. Pappas, "The Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games," *Olympic Review*.165 (1981): 448.

¹⁵ *Olympic Factsheet #4: Olympic Protocol* (British Olympic Association, 2007): 8.

¹⁶ cf. *Olympic Charter* (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2007).

¹⁷ cf. Lewis Donohew, David Helm and John Haas, "Drugs and (Len) Bias on the Sports Page," *Media, Sports, and Society*, ed. Lawrence A. Wenner (Sage Publications, 1989): 227-229.

1.4 Cult of the body and the athletic ideal

Interviewed in 1930, Pierre de Coubertin described Olympism as "the religion of energy, the cultivation of intense will developed through the practice of manly sports, based on proper hygiene and public spiritedness, surrounded with art and thought."¹⁸ His view of Olympic education reveals that he sees it based simultaneously "on the cult of effort and the cult of eurhythmmy – and consequently of the love of excess combined with the love of moderation."¹⁹ That means that he loves to see things in balance: the cult of effort as something which requires power and eurhythmmy, elegance and aesthetics. Furthermore, love of excess as one extreme and the moderation as its counterpart. Pierre de Coubertin contradicted himself by encouraging young people to strive for the maximum and on the other hand by "prescribing participation in sport with the disinterested attitude of the English gentleman amateur."²⁰

To try to impose a regime of strict moderation on all athletes is to be a Utopian. Sportsmen need to know that they are free to commit 'certain excesses' if they desire to do so. This is why they have been given the motto: *Citius, Altius, Fortius*. — ever quicker, higher, stronger — the motto of men who dare to aspire to break records!²¹

I would argue that Coubertin was certainly not a supporter of the winning-at-all-costs mentality, but for sport as something important in life, as the source of physical and mental power and as a way to give of one's best. For Coubertin, sport was essential in life and this essential

¹⁸ Norbert Müller, "Coubertin's Olympism," *Pierre de Coubertin 1863-1937: Olympism - Selected Writings*, ed. Norbert Müller (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2000): 44.

¹⁹ Müller, "Coubertin's Olympism,": 44.

²⁰ Robert K. Barney and Klaus V. Meier eds., *Pierre de Coubertin's Ideology of Olympism from the Perspective of the History of Ideas*: Centre for Olympic Studies.

force should now resurrect peace and harmony among the nations. But historian John Lucas describes:

[Coubertin] was never able to distinguish between the Olympic Movement as a new twentieth century humanistic "sport for all"-movement and the movement behind "the world's most important competitive, and therefore, exclusive sporting event" - the Olympic Games.²²

Coubertin's athletic ideal strove to combine everything in one. Especially the before-mentioned principles of hygiene, art and thought are a sign of a predominant attitude in early 1900's aristocratic life, in which these values were important. This coincides with the upcoming presence of eugenic studies in social engineering, the studies about achieving near faultless bodies and minds. Even though eugenic researches and experiments were and are controversial matters, the negative attitude towards them did not become an orthodoxy until their espousal by Nazi-Germany and its ill-natured attempt to establish a so-called master race.

But focusing on and admiring well-trained, toned and healthy bodies in itself is not objectionable. In fact it relates to the Greek cult of the body, which Coubertin admired and saw as another heritage of the ancient Olympic Games he wished to recover. The aestheticism of athletes is one central aspect in the feature film *Chariots of Fire*, which is a sports movie about two athletes competing in running disciplines at the Olympic Summer Games in Paris, in 1924.²³

²¹ Coubertin, "The Fundamentals of the Philosophy of the Modern Olympics," 53.

²² John A. Lucas cited in *Pierre de Coubertin's Ideology of Olympism from the Perspective of the History of Ideas*.

²³ cf. chapter 4.2.

1.5 Symbols and rites

First and foremost I would like to point out, that the Olympic Movement makes a heavy investment in the symbolic, in "symbols and rites", even though they are not wholly tangible in some cases. The Olympic Movement is not a symbol of the Games per se, but represents every member and every activity connected with the modern Olympics.

Coubertin understood that it is important to have something that unites the participants, besides the Olympic spirit and the Olympic movement's ideals. He selected a motto and a symbol to create a kind of early corporate identity for the Olympic Movement. He applied an early form of concept marketing: He created a brand! In the early stages of the era of the modern Olympic Games this brand was more or less eye-catching, a symbol to represent, to remember and to unite.

But sponsorship gained ground and marketing and merchandising grew. One of the very important factors of this development is the relationship between media and sports, which will be explored in more detail in chapter 3. Nowadays the International Olympic Committee (IOC) does not need to ask someone to print the Olympic logo on a poster to advertise and promote the Games – Nowadays companies pay big money to be allowed to print the logo on their products and identify their company with the Olympics, even though the company might not have (and indeed usually does not have) anything to do with sports.²⁴

The most ancient Olympic motto, which Coubertin adopted in 1894, was originally used by a Dominican priest, Henri Didon, on a school sport event at which Coubertin was present. From then on, Coubertin used

²⁴ cf. chapter 2.5

the three word slogan "Citius, altius, fortius", meaning "Faster, higher, stronger".²⁵

In 1914, Coubertin came up with a symbol that should represent the new era of the Games: A white flag with five interlaced rings on it, with the white standing for purity taking up the major part of the flag's design. These first rings were drawn by Coubertin himself and do not only represent the five continents of the world, as is commonly understood nowadays. Coubertin's intention was to represent the national flags of every country, without exception, through their colours:

The blue and the yellow of Sweden, the blue and white of Greece, the tricolour flags of France, England and the United States, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Hungary, and the yellow and red of Spain are included, as are the innovative flags of Brazil and Australia, and those of the ancient Japan and modern China. This truly is an international symbol.²⁶ [My translation]

Coubertin therefore gave importance to the background of the five rings, the white. The specific choice of Sweden, Greece, France, the US and England to describe the intended use of the flag's colours results from the fact that these were the first countries hosting the modern Olympic Summer Games between 1896 and 1914. The Olympic rings of today however were first presented on a flag at the Olympics in Antwerp in 1920.

²⁵ Norbert Müller, ed., *Pierre de Coubertin 1863-1937: Olympism - Selected Writings* (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2000): 585.

²⁶ Pierre de Coubertin, "L'emblème et le drapeau de 1914," *Revue Olympique*.92 (1913): 119.

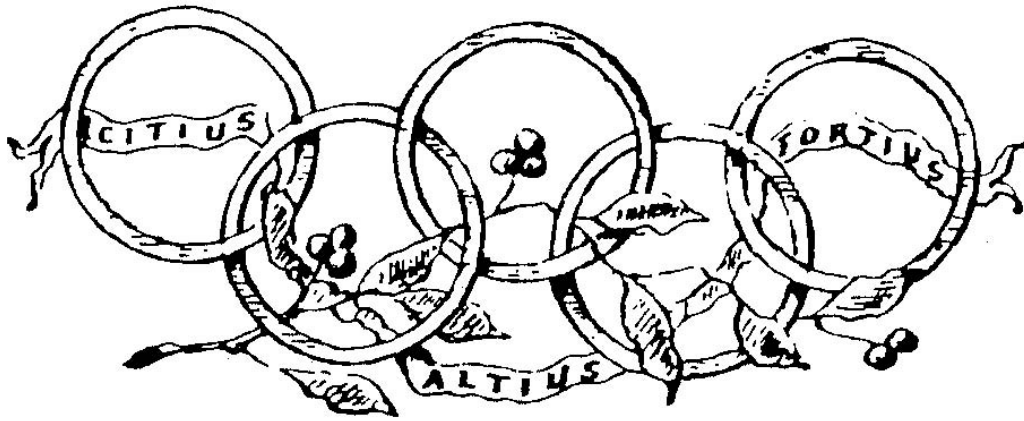


Figure 1: The Olympic rings, drawn by Pierre de Coubertin in 1914; Source: *Pierre de Coubertin 1863-1973: Olympism - Selected Writings*, 2000: 595.

Coubertin highly valued the festivals connected with the Olympic Games, namely the opening and closing ceremonies, the proclamation of the victors and the use of symbols and rites such as the Olympic flag, the rings and pledge of the Olympic oath, because he believed that "sport, which must bring joy, can do so only when it wears festive clothing."²⁷

The Olympic motto and the Olympic flag, as recognisable and memorable symbols, are completed by the Olympic flame, which first appeared at the Olympic Games in 1928, although the Olympic torch relay from Olympia, in Greece, to the city that hosts the Olympic Games, was first conducted in 1936, in Berlin. The fire is always lit in Olympia, with the help of sunrays concentrated by a parabolic mirror. This rite of igniting the fire with the power of nature guarantees the purity of it.²⁸ Carl Diem, who initiated the first torch relay to Germany, thought of it as a method to inform the people along the torch's relay route about the upcoming Olympic event. This is, again, an adopted aspect of the heritage of the ancient Olympic Games.

²⁷ Müller, "Coubertin's Olympism," 42.

²⁸ *The Olympic Flame and Torch Relay*, 2nd ed. (The Olympic Museum, 2007): 2.

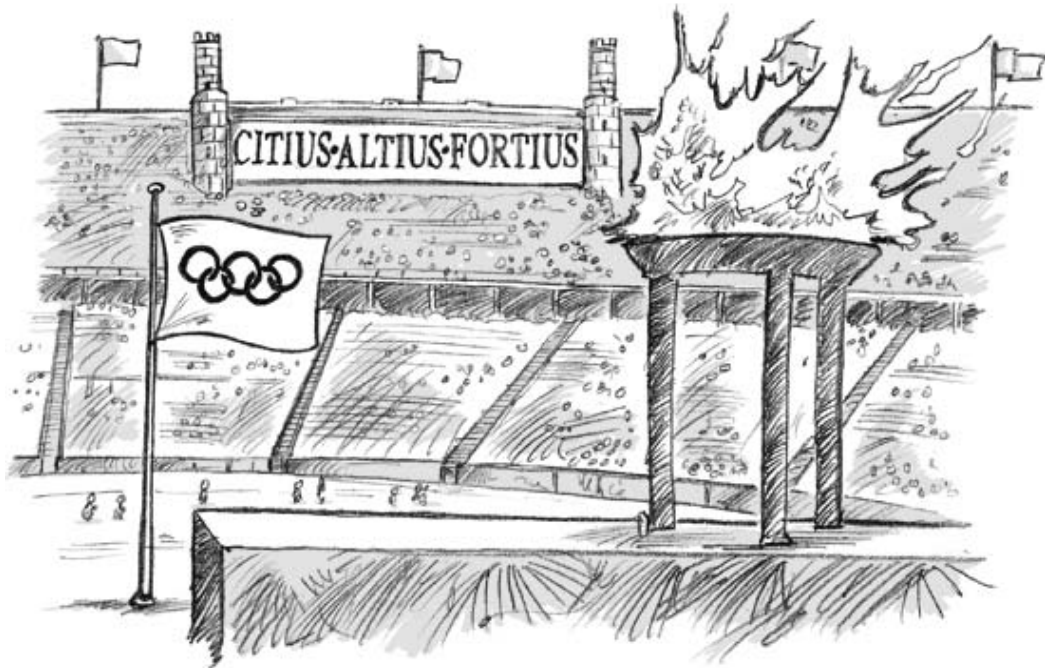


Figure 2: The three visual symbols of the modern Olympic Games; Source: *The Olympic Symbols*. 2nd ed: The Olympic Museum, 2007.: 2.

The before-mentioned festivities were one source for the later development of extended media coverage, because the opening ceremonies in particular attracted many people. Even audiences not especially interested in sporting competitions were affected by the beauty and charm of the Olympic spectacle. Nowadays it turns out that an opening ceremony of the Olympic Games attracts more spectators than the Games itself – in the stadiums and in front of TV screens.²⁹

²⁹ cf. Ron Palenski, "International Understanding through Sport," *The Olympic Movement and the Mass Media*, ed. Fékrou Kidane (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee): 166.

1.6 Amateurism and Shamateurism

Several problems have arisen over the years about the nature of the rules governing the Olympics. The more obvious ones concern the use of stimulants to enhance the body's performance or the use of other items regarded as not fair. But one issue, which has an important bearing on fairness, has always created a lot of contention among athletes, the sports federations, officials and spectators: amateurism. The declarations made during the first Olympic Congress in Paris in 1894, when the Olympic Games of the new era was established, did not explicitly define what an amateur was, but Pierre de Coubertin was aware of the fact that the issue of amateurism was central to the Olympic Games and he therefore advanced the cause of dealing with this topic immediately at the outset of the modern Olympics. The following translated excerpts from the *Charter of Amateurism* from 1902³⁰ are a reproduction of the resolutions regarding amateurism, which were adopted at the Founding Congress in 1894. They served to outline the main difficulties, which occurred regarding the amateur question, and propose acceptable resolutions for problems:

I. The following should be considered an amateur athlete:

Any individual who has never participated in a competition open to all comers, nor competed for cash prize of any amount of money regardless of its source, specifically from admissions to the field – or with professionals – who has never been, at any time in his life, a teacher or paid instructor in physical exercise. [...] Any infraction of the rules of amateurism shall result in disqualification of the amateur.

VI. The tendency in all sports, without exception, is toward pure amateurism, since there is no permanent motive in any sport to legitimize cash prizes; for the time being, however, the general

definition of the amateur will not apply to horse racing, shooting and yachting.

VII. One cannot be an amateur in one sport and a professional in another.

Even a cursory analysis of these paragraphs leads to the following conclusions: Paragraph I of the Amateur Charter seems to be rather clear in the given formulation, but it leaves room for doubts whether for example a person who practices a sport excessively and on a daily basis is more an amateur than someone who teaches a sport from time to time. Paragraph VI states unambiguously, that cash prizes are unacceptable in amateur sport, but excludes three sports, which are famously the province of the upper classes. A member of the congress, Mr. Todd, challenged this preceding paragraph:

[Todd] insisted that the argument that some sports incur higher costs was worthless. Why would wealthy individuals be excepted from observing on a large scale what those who are less well-off are required to observe on a small scale? The nature of amateurism does not change according to the fortunes of individuals, and to earn money while shooting clay pigeons is an infraction of its law.³¹

This comprehensible criticism of the paragraph remained without (immediate) effects. Paragraph VII underlines the generalised antipathy and resentment against any form of professionalism.

This presented choice of the *Charter of Amateurism* marks the beginning of the effort to pin down rules of amateurism. The IOC wanted to improve the rules, but struggled to find suitable common ground. In 1909 it decided to send questionnaires to sporting

³⁰ Pierre de Coubertin, "La Charte de l'Amateurisme," *Revue Olympique*.5 (1902).

³¹ Coubertin, "La Charte de l'Amateurisme." translated in Müller, ed., *Olympism - Selected Writings*: 638.

federations and societies to obtain their opinion on amateurism and afterwards homogenise them into clearer amateur rules. The received answers were evaluated and some of the proposals appealed to the IOC officials, but all this did not lead to an immediate effect and the existing regulations were maintained for the time being. One reason for keeping the regulations in force were possible conflicts with the international sports federations who would eventually need to change their national regulations about the eligibility of athletes at short notice and the IOC wanted to avoid this.³² The wait-and-see attitude of the IOC, which I would like to identify as ineptness, resulted in the first amateur scandal of the Olympic Games, also known as the Thorpe affair. The American athlete Jim Thorpe was disqualified by his own country's federation one year after the Olympic Games in Stockholm. Even though he had participated in the Olympics as a track and field athlete, he had earned money from playing professional baseball some years before. In 1982 the IOC forgave Thorpe – although he had died years before. These apologies, seen in retrospective, are reminiscent of apologies made for war transgressions; the need to say something is met, but these can only be hollow words regarding the harm done.

Nevertheless, the issue of amateurism remained a destabilising one, even after the Thorpe affair, which should have served to formulate finally the amateur rules once it had exposed an anomaly that entailed a disqualification. Regardless of minor attempts to establish a definite amateur rule during the Olympic Congress in Paris, 1914, and the Olympic Congress in Prague, 1925, the situation did not change significantly after 1913. Professional sportsmen were not welcome, but their identification as such remained difficult if not impossible.

³² cf. Müller, ed., *Olympism - Selected Writings*: 640-643.

The next significant phase regarding the determination of amateur status began after World War II with the awareness of so-called Shamateurism, a neologism of the terms sham and amateurism. The phrase Shamateurism describes the practice of paying *de facto* professional players through backdoor methods, to maintain their amateur status. This practice was widespread during this time and there were various ways of carrying it out: Communistic nations, in this case the former Soviet Union (USSR) and the German Democratic Republic (DDR), enforced their state-financed athletic programs in which people were allowed to develop sporting excellence full-time while they were part of the national armed forces or state owned companies. Heinz Harder presents facts and numbers showing that the methods coming from these communistic regimes were something "that surpasses all previous beliefs."³³ [My translation]

USSR's intensive training of athletes, mostly in disciplines which were neglected by the USA to gain ground more easily and quickly, was strictly organized by the government. When the expected success was not reached, Moscow combined the set sporting goals with professional ones. The USSR athletes should not be too exhausted from sports anymore, but also have a second occupation – but they also had to fulfil the regime's guidelines in professional ways. Soviet sportsmen began to be more interested in their given job opportunity and neglected the sport. In this case, USSR government simply dismissed the athlete and worker and found someone new. Moscow spent 15 billion Russian Roubles on their sports programme in 1947, because "in the USSR, sport is highly worthy of support, similar to the aerospace industry."³⁴ [My translation] This is evidence for the view that everything was about national prestige. It was certainly not about the prestige of an individual, but rather the prestige of the nation, the regime and the

³³ Harder, *Unternehmen Olympia*: 131.

³⁴ Harder, *Unternehmen Olympia*: 135.

form of government. Former USSR General Gromov, president of Moscow's sport commission, explained his understanding of the amateur rule and the USSR's interpretation of it as follows: "A professional sportsman is someone who establishes the value of the reward before the start. There is no professional sport in the USSR. The money paid after the victory is the well-deserved wage."³⁵ [My translation] On the one hand his explanation follows the rule of paragraph VI, because sports men are paid afterwards, but on the other, it is doubtless that this explanation is only a rationalisation for the predominant practice of Shamateurism.

The East German government copied the USSR's procedures and therefore inherited their problems as well. But soon after, Harder outlines, the DDR system integrated athletes into businesses with extra-arranged positions for athletes. DDR athletes also had to fulfil their sporting and professional duties. As long as they followed the rules given by the government, they were treated like upper-class individuals, but as soon as their performances dropped, they were ostracised of the system and almost treated like criminals. The national system thus allowed the DDR to apply a carrot and stick policy more effectively than any other nation and this was reflected in successful Olympic results out of all proportion to the size of the population.

The British system, to enhance their chances for Olympic victories and the resulting prestige, was privileges for students of British colleges and universities, because the students "were neither dependent on support nor on economic advantages by victories."³⁶ [My translation] That increased British chances in sports like rowing, fencing and other upper-class sports reasonably well. But Harder also explains, that the last

³⁵ Harder, *Unternehmen Olympia*: 134.

³⁶ Harder, *Unternehmen Olympia*: 126.

British Olympic medal in football, won in 1912, is simply explained by the fact that the professional clubs placed all good young players under contracts and that clearly ruled them out of amateur status. Nowadays the British model for financing its sport involves lottery money from the lottery company that is franchised by the state. This means that the money "to reward sporting excellence" is taken directly from citizens who, by playing the lottery, long for the big money themselves, but have a close-to-zero chance of being a winner, unlike the athletes they subsidise.

The US American state sports system was very similar to the British. American athletes start their training in schools already and throughout college and university. Pupils and students identify themselves with their educational institution. If the students were successful in high school sports, for example, they have the chance to receive a scholarship for college, provided that they keep on playing in college. The young athletes are thereafter trained by professional coaches.

Finally, in 1974 the IOC removed the word "amateurism" from their Charter and therefore a new way of dealing with this issue had been found, although the decision to remove the terms amateur and amateurism was only an abandonment of the struggle. The issue was actually never solved satisfactorily and professionalism was therefore accepted by default.

In 1981, the IOC allowed the national sports federations to let professionals compete under their flag. Therefore, finally, the IOC abandoned its ideal of amateur sports and sport 'for the love of the game'. Of course they would not admit it in such clear terms, but *de facto* the IOC had to align its rules for the Games with the prevailing social reality. The Olympic Movement had to dismiss the ideal of

Olympic sports being entirely carried out by amateurs 'for the love of the game'. The abandonment was a necessary step in times of the aggressive commercialisation of the Games. Sport became a commodity put up to market and was sold to the highest bidder. The dismissal of the amateur rule and the penetration of developing broadcasting technologies led to an immense development in terms of sponsorships, advertising contracts, broadcasting rights and other issues related to sport as business. In other words, this was probably the start of the Olympic Games becoming at first professional in spirit and then later the puppet of big business interests.

Chapter 2

Olympic events and controversies (1970–1985)

2.1 The period and its events

The period between 1970 and 1985 was a turbulent time in world affairs and much more went on than just in sport, but the sport during these years deserves special attention, because many events, decisions and developments were influenced by the overheated political background. This will be reviewed in the chapters dedicated to the individual Olympic Games. This period is a clearly transitional one. The Olympics seemed to have lost its way during the 1970s: Munich became the stage for a high-profile terror attack against the Israelis and Montreal was the scene of major financial miscalculation, owing to the growing trend of gigantism and mismanagement. The 1980s were the turning point. Even though world political affairs led to boycotts of the Games in Moscow and Los Angeles, at least the Los Angeles Games were a qualified success – not only in terms of public audience, sports and advertising, but also in terms of revenue.

This paragraph should point out some significant stages in political world affairs, but remain a short and simple overview only: Two entities present throughout the whole period reviewed and which should be considered are the Cold War and the ongoing violence in the Middle East.

The early 1970s marked the peak of violence in the Northern Ireland conflict with the so-called Bloody Sunday and Bloody Friday. Meanwhile, the 1st Oil Crisis took place in 1973, also known as the oil embargo, when the OPEC nations reduced the oil exportation as a protest against the handling of the Yom-Kippur war. The crisis led to a hyperinflation in the west.

The 2nd Oil Crisis in 1979 was a result of the revolution in Iran and the beginning of the Iraq-Iran War. These factors led to a breakdown of oil

production and uncertainties about oil imports in the west. The Iraq-Iran War endured until 1988 and was an Iraqi attempt to gain control of the region at the Persian Gulf with its oil sources, initiated by the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein.

This war happened at the same time as the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan (1979 until 1989). After the shift in governmental power to the Marxist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and its attempt to enforce a policy following the Soviet model, Soviet military needed to put down the Afghan rebellion, which was supported by international help, against the new government. But this operation ended in a situation referred to as "Moscow's Vietnam."³⁷

The US Vietnam war was drawing to an ignominious end in 1975 after 16 years, leaving reams of casualties on each side and a large federal budget deficit.

America's anti-communistic policy also remained after Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1981. His first presidency was, among other things, characterized by military build-up. But Regan is also regarded as the initiator of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) with the USSR to advance disarmament and to end the Cold War at some point, which finally happened in 1990.

Another American involvement was needed in 1982 during the Falkland War. America was allied to Argentina and Great Britain, who both longed for American help, but the USA had to support the British side if they did not want to be punished for not proceeding after the rules of the NATO collective self-defence case. Great Britain, by this time governed by Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party, thanked America for its support by aligning the national policy according to the USA relating to NATO decisions and Libya.

³⁷ Henning Sietz, "Der Krieg, der nicht zu gewinnen war," *Die Zeit* 2001.

2.2 Olympic Summer Games in Munich, 1972

The Olympic Summer Games in Munich were called "the severe Games" and "the friendly Games". Germany applied for these Games precisely because of its nationalistic past. The organisers wanted to show the world that Germany had changed since the end of World War II and that it was capable of hosting an event that embodied international peace, cosmopolitanism and fair play. Munich won the competition for hosting the Games against Detroit, Montreal and Madrid and won the voting by a clear margin. The German news magazine *Spiegel* described the situation after the pro-Munich decision in 1966 as follows:

Ostracised by half of the world, respected without love by the other half, at odds within its partitioned own country, the Germans prepare themselves after Tuesday last week to host a festival of reconciliation for the world: The Olympic Games.³⁸ [My translation]

Germany still suffered from the international view that a newly staged Olympic Games in Germany would not be a good idea. But in fact, this perception is only based on a recollection of the Nazi regime and the political incidents that happened after the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936. Pierre de Coubertin commented after the Berlin Olympic Games that "the Berlin Games had lived up to his highest ideals. [...] [He] went beyond praise of the Nazi organisation of the Games."³⁹ To sum up the topic "1936": Every nation then and now tried to use the Olympic Games in their cities and countries as national advertisements. Every government tries to impress the world with fabulous opening ceremonies, wonderful new built Olympic Villages, sports sites and other buildings and, last but not least, with perfect organisation. The only difference in 1936 is what happened in Germany afterwards – Adolf

³⁸ "Sie haben uns," *Der Spiegel* 2.5.1966: 33.

Hitler was responsible for this and he also was the iconic figure of the Berlin Olympic Games and Munich became the centre of German nationalism during World War II. I argue that this connection was decisive in shedding a negative light on Germany as a whole. But, now, these were the Olympics of the GDR, not of all Germany – they were an Olympics to highlight the reconstruction and the prosperity of a West Germany. By implication, they reflected the closed and secretive nature of the DDR, the GDR's political rival and a sports powerhouse. In addition, the GDR also won the bidding for the Football World Cup in 1974 and became host of that event for the second time after 1954.

The Games of the XX Olympiad were to be in Munich, despite all the criticism, and "they were the largest yet, setting records in all categories, with 195 events and 7.173 athletes [1.059 women, 6.075 men] from 121 nations."⁴⁰ A variety of 23 different sports were presented, with archery and handball re-included and the water sports whitewater, canoeing and kayaking introduced for the first time.



Munich1972

Figure 3: The logo of the Munich Games 1972; Source: Olympic Museum Collection, Available: http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/past/index_uk.asp?OLGT=1&OLGY=1972

³⁹ W.J. Murray, "France, Coubertin and the Nazi Olympics: The Response," *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 1 (1992): 46.

⁴⁰ *Munich 1972: Games of the XX Olympiad*, International Olympic Committee, Available: http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/past/index_uk.asp?OLGT=1&OLGY=1972, Accessed: 3.2.2009.

The logo of the Games represents a crown of rays of light, a design symbolizing the spirit of the Munich Games - light, freshness and generosity. Otl Aicher created this logo and his project was chosen out of 2.332 entries.

The Games were rather successful in their diplomatic and organisational efforts, sportive achievements and in creating colourful and comfortable surroundings for the events. Everything went according to plan, until one night in September: On September 5th 1972, a group of 8 Palestinian terrorist invaded the apartments of the Israeli wrestling team in the Olympic village, took them as hostages and killed them during a complex fight at a Munich military air force base, after a 21-hour siege and stand-off.

The political background for this deed is complex, but in essence boils down to the following important facts: Many Palestinians were cast out of Jordan by Israeli forces in 1970. Many angered refugees formed resistance groups during Arafat's governmental period. The men who attacked the Israeli team were part of one of these groups, an extreme left wing group, called Black September. Abu-Sharif, one of the attackers, said later: "Basically, [our revenge] was a psychological thing."⁴¹ Abu Daoud, initiator of the Munich terrorist attacks and leader of Black September, outlined one facet that also angered the Palestinians: "At that time, I was not interested in sports. Palestine wanted to take part in the Olympics, but it was declined. On the contrary, the Israelis were allowed to take part."⁴² There are no official documents to prove or disprove that the Palestinians were officially refused to take part. The only certainty is that they did not take part.

⁴¹ *Der Olympia-Mord: München '72 – Die wahre Geschichte*, dir. Sebastian Dehnhardt and Uli Weidenbach, ZDF Enterprises, 2006. 00:20:10

⁴² *Der Olympia-Mord*, 00:03:35

The attack was therefore symbolic of Palestinian displacement and disenfranchisement.

Another political aspect that influenced the ending was the fact that neither German armed forces nor Israeli anti-terror squads were allowed to act, because German demilitarising laws forbade the operation of its own army inside the country and also forbade the operation of other countries' forces on German soil. Bruno Merk, chief of the crisis management group, admitted, "everything was improvised"⁴³ during the attempt to rescue the hostages. Germany did not yet have an anti-terror squad. It was only established after and because of the tragedy during the Olympic Games, in April 1973. This special task force, GSG 9, tried to replicate the Munich scenario during a training session and was successful in eliminating the terrorists and rescuing the Israelis. On the one hand, this consequence was positive, because Germany could rely on a skilled task force from then on, but on the other hand it fortified the voices of people who had been against the Olympic Games in Munich, with the justification that Germany was not yet ready for such a big task.

Despite all the repeated reproaches and the requests to cancel the Games on the day after the incidents, the IOC decided not to cancel. During an official funeral service in the Munich Olympic stadium on September 6th, Avery Brundage, the IOC president at that time, declared, "the games must go on!"⁴⁴ Critics argue that this was the beginning of the true commercialisation of the Olympic Games. The decision was highly debated, but the IOC decided not to bow to the terrorists, or even to terrorism as a whole. Joachim Fuchsberger, the stadium announcer during the Games, described the situation:

⁴³ *Der Olympia-Mord*, 00:53:30

⁴⁴ *Der Olympia-Mord*, 00:55:44

We put our hearts and souls in it and then they just shot our souls. There is no scale to indicate the euphoria about the beauty of the opening ceremony and the tragedy, the grief and the horror about the assault and the deaths of so many people in the process.⁴⁵ [My translation]

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the handling of the siege in the Olympic village, this was the first of the world-shaking exploitations of the Olympic Games as a stage on which to publicise a political cause. The Black Panthers' salute in Mexico 1968 was trivial, compared to what happened in Munich.

⁴⁵ *Der Olympia-Mord*, 00:55:22

2.3 Olympic Summer Games in Montreal, 1976

The Games of the XXI Olympiad were awarded to Montreal, which bid against Moscow and Los Angeles. Both, Moscow and Los Angeles, were said to have more sports and infrastructural facilities already built, but the IOC decided on Montreal, even though not in the first round of voting, which Moscow won by 28 to 25 votes, with Los Angeles getting 17. The second voting round tipped the scales along predictable Cold War lines: Los Angeles votes largely went one way, Moscow stayed at 28 votes again, and Montreal got 41.⁴⁶

The major reason the IOC made this decision was because of Montreal's Mayor Jean Drapeau. While bidding for the Games Drapeau impressed the IOC delegates with a flamboyant and elaborate presentation. He promised that the Montreal Olympics would be self-financing and 'modest'. He estimated that the cost would not exceed \$250 million.⁴⁷

Wright furthermore explains that the overall cost for the Games in Montreal added up to \$1.42 billion! The revenue for tickets, television rights, etc. brought in approximately \$420 million and that meant a deficit of around \$1 billion for Montreal and its citizens. The costs exploded due to gigantic projects, which Drapeau wanted to have realised, and a disproportionately expensive architect for a stadium that was not even completely finished for the opening ceremony. Lord Killanin, the IOC president at this time, faced a difficult task to decide whether to leave the Games in Montreal or go to another host city that already had facilities or could build them quickly without suffering from the strikes and delays, etc. such as occurred in Montreal. Teheran, which did not suffer from the inflation, and Düsseldorf offered to take

⁴⁶ *Past Olympic host City Elections*, GamesBids.com, Available: <<http://www.gamesbids.com/eng/past.html>>, Accessed: 9.11.2008.

⁴⁷ George Wright, "The political Economy of the Montreal Olympic Games," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*.2 (1978): 14.

Montreal's place.⁴⁸ By this time, even the Quebec provincial government used the word crisis to describe the situation – they did not see any chance for these Games to become self-financing, as Drapeau had announced, and the completion of the Olympic sites was at stake as well. Victor Goldbloom was appointed as chief of the earlier established Olympic Installation Board, by the end of 1975. He managed to set new schedules, set priorities in construction plans and finally, the basic needs were met in time to host the Games. But all in all, Pierre Fortin, a University of Montreal economics professor, "claims that the Olympic Games will cost every Canadian \$11, every Quebecer \$100, and every Montrealer \$267."⁴⁹

In addition to the financial problems, the Games in Canada were the first Games in the postwar period to struggle with a boycott. As a protest against Apartheid, 21 African nations flew back to their home countries, even before the Games had begun. Tanzania initiated this boycott as a reaction to New Zealand's rugby team, which had toured in South Africa, despite an agreement that forbade them to compete with the South Africans, and was then allowed to participate in the Games of the XXI Olympiad. Even though rugby was not even an Olympic discipline at this time, it has been cancelled as Olympic discipline in 1924, the IOC did not impose sanctions on these African countries. Furthermore, another complex problem overshadowed the Games:

Taiwan insisted on being called the Republic of China and to fly the Nationalist Chinese flag during the Games. But Canada, owing to her diplomatic and economic ties with the People's Republic of China, refused to allow that to occur. Canada also refused to allow the entry of any Taiwanese athletes into the country unless a compromise could be worked out. [...] Despite IOC negotiations, no compromise that was

⁴⁸ cf. Ulrich Kaiser, "Rettung für Olympia," *Die Zeit* 31.1.1975.

⁴⁹ Wright, "The political Economy of the Montreal Olympic Games," 17.

suitable to both Canada and Taiwan was reached. In protest, Taiwan withdrew from the Games.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, the official IOC homepage states that 92 nations competed in the Games, represented by 6.084 athletes - 1.260 women and 4.824 men. The audience had the chance to see 24 different sports.



Montréal 1976

Figure 4: Montreal's logo for the Olympic Games; Source: Olympic Museum Collection, Available: http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/past/index_uk.asp?OLGT=1&OLGY=1976

[The logo] is made up of the Olympic rings mounted on an Olympic podium, which is also the graphic interpretation of the letter M, the initial of Montreal. In the centre, the athletics track, the focal point of the Games. This emblem invokes the universal fraternity offered by the Olympic Ideal, as well as the glory of the winners, the gallant spirit of their battles and the accession of Montreal to the rank of Olympic city.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Wright, "The political Economy of the Montreal Olympic Games," 13.

⁵¹ *Montreal 1976: Games of the XI Olympiad*, International Olympic Committee, Available: http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/past/index_uk.asp?OLGT=1&OLGY=1976, Accessed: 3.2.2009.

2.4 Olympic Summer Games in Moscow, 1980

Moscow had a rather uncomplicated and unexciting route to becoming host of the Games of the XXII Olympiad, because there were only Los Angeles and Moscow prepared to bid for the Games – two cities from the two superpower countries. Due to the exploding costs and the manifold troubles, which came with the preceding Olympics, they were probably the only possibilities left as potential bidders: both being mighty in political power and finance. And Moscow and Los Angeles had launched bids before and had not resigned because of the problems mentioned. Moscow won the voting against Los Angeles in the first voting round: 29 pro-Moscow votes to 20 LA votes.⁵² The Games in Moscow were not only the first Olympic Games hosted by a communist country, but were also the first to be hosted by a so-called totalitarian state after Berlin 1936.

The Soviet Union promised to authorize the acceptance of all teams to the Olympics from states with international Olympic recognition. This guarantee was made in reaction to Canada's refusal to permit athletes from Taiwan. This decision was a highly explosive one, because of the political relations between the communist nations, the Soviet Union and China, and also because China had just been recently welcomed by the IOC to take part in the Olympic Movement. Both countries, China and Taiwan, were then officially recognised by the IOC, but the Chinese government wanted to represent all Taiwanese and Chinese athletes joined under the flag of a "Chinese Taiwan Olympic Committee". Taiwan declined and the IOC, tired of Taiwan's escapades, deleted Taiwan from the list of recognised nations and decreed that there can only be a team

⁵² *Past Olympic host City Elections.*

representing the Chinese mainland.⁵³ The political tension between China and the Soviet Union did not come to an end.

But the problems Moscow had to face did not only concern China and Taiwan. The massive boycott of the Games resulted from the Soviet's invasion in Afghanistan in late 1979. The result was a catastrophe for the Olympic Movement: There were only 80 teams present at the Games, the second lowest number after Melbourne, 1956. 65 nations boycotted these Olympic Games, including the "big nations" USA, West Germany, China. Great Britain left the decision to the athletes and many took the chance to go to Moscow.⁵⁴ As Kanin writes:

The boycott did not do anything to get Soviet troops out of Afghanistan - no one ever said it would - but it did provide a medium for appropriate public expression of the deterioration of superpower relations. To this observer it also provided evidence that the political competition inherent in the Olympic system is as interesting as the athletic contests.⁵⁵

Lord Killanin ended his presidency directly after the Olympic Games in Montreal and then came the next IOC president and the third of the period under review: Juan Antonio Samaranch was elected IOC president in 1980 and he remained in office until 2001. "He tried to give a new direction to the Olympic Movement which was badly shaken by the political difficulties of the XXII Olympiad."⁵⁶ Interviewed after the Moscow Olympics, Samaranch said: "This would not have happened to

⁵³ David B Kanin, "The Olympic Boycott in diplomatic Context," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*.4 (1980): 1.

⁵⁴ Christopher J. Peter and Katja Iken, "Der chinesische Bumerang," *einestages: Zeitgeschichte auf Spiegel Online*, 20.4.2008.

⁵⁵ Kanin, "The Olympic Boycott in diplomatic Context," 23.

⁵⁶ *Juan Antonio Samaranch*, International Olympic Committee, Available: <http://www.olympic.org/uk/organisation/ioc/presidents/samaranch_uk.asp>, Accessed: 13.4.2009.

me as President"⁵⁷ and one can only speculate if he means that he would not have resigned/given up like Killanin, after the presidency of two complicated Games, or if Samaranch refers to the boycott of the Moscow Games, which would not have happened, if he had been president of the IOC. If he meant to refer to the latter, then his first challenge lay just ahead of him: The Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1984.



Figure 5: Official emblem of the Moscow Olympics 1980; Source: Olympic Museum Collection, Available: http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/past/index_uk.asp?OLGT=1&OLGY=1980

Above the Olympic rings we find parallel lines in the shape of a pyramid, and a five pointed star, which serves as a reminder of the flag of the Kremlin.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Juan Antonio Samaranch cited in Hennes Henn, "The Olympic Truce," *The Olympic Movement and the Mass Media*, ed. Fékrou Kidane (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 1996): 97.

⁵⁸ *Moscow 1980: Games of the XXII Olympiad*, International Olympic Committee, Available: http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/past/index_uk.asp?OLGT=1&OLGY=1980, Accessed: 3.2.2009.

2.5 Olympic Summer Games in Los Angeles, 1984

Fortunately, the numbers of nations taking part in the Games of the XXIII Olympiad rose again: 140 nations, represented by 6.829 athletes, 1.566 women and 5.263 men. This is a new record in participation. New sport disciplines introduced were the women's marathon, rhythmic gymnastics, synchronised swimming and the women's cycling road race.⁵⁹ Los Angeles was the only city to bid for the hosting of these Games. There was no voting needed.⁶⁰



Figure 6: Los Angeles' logo for the Olympic Games; Source: Olympic Museum Collection, Available: http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/past/index_uk.asp?OLGT=1&OLGY=1984

The star is a universal symbol of the highest aspirations of mankind, the horizontal bars portray the speed with which the contestants pursue the excellence, while the repetition of the star shape connotes the spirit of competition between equally outstanding physical forms. The symbol colours - blue, white and red - were in part chosen for their traditional significance in the awarding of prizes for first, second and third place.⁶¹

They of course also represent the colours of the American national flag. America is known for its admiration of the Star-Spangled Banner and its

⁵⁹ *Los Angeles 1984: Games of the XXIII Olympiad*, International Olympic Committee, Available:

<http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/past/index_uk.asp?OLGT=1&OLGY=1984>, Accessed: 3.2.2009.

⁶⁰ *Past Olympic host City Elections*.

practice of parading it whenever possible. This national pride was therefore a major topic of the opening ceremony, which was "a statement of the strength of American ideals, ever stronger in the face of Soviet disruption. Allying Hollywood showbiz flair with American political rhetoric and ideology."⁶² America staged the ceremonies for these Olympic Games to demonstrate what they believed to be Western political, commercial and cultural superiority.

The conception of both shows, opening and closing ceremony, was based on the demonstration of technology and especially space motifs were used: The rocket man flying onto the main field, the audience holding flashlights to appear as sparkling stars during the night while a space ships flies in and later on some kind of alien appears on stage and delivers a moral speech about the Olympic ideal in America and Los Angeles in particular. The reference to space technology is a slap in the face for the USSR, because America's governmental space programme accomplished many and more successful missions than the USSR's. So it is not only that America won the race to the moon and excelled in space exploration, but now they also made fun of Moscow. All this packed into a Hollywood-like scenario with a lot of light, sound and music, colours and military brass bands and even pop idol Lionel Ritchie. Even the commentator of an official IOC video about the closing ceremony states: "[The] show begins, as only the Americans know how." 93.000 people filled the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum for each ceremony.

In revenge for the Western boycott of the Moscow Games in 1980, many Eastern countries now boycotted the Games in Los Angeles. The paltry reason given for not participating was the lack of security for the

⁶¹ *Los Angeles 1984: Games of the XXIII Olympiad.*

⁶² Alan Tomlinson, "Olympic spectacle: opening ceremonies and some paradoxes of globalization," *Media, Culture & Society* 18 (1996): 585.

athletes. The spectators' and athletes' security was one of the main objects for the American organisers and they spent "a record budget of \$55 million, and [had] a total of 17.000 men [on the ground] as well as 80 helicopters flying in the sky above Los Angeles."⁶³ But, as stated before, the Americans were still able to break the record for participating nations.

As the Los Angeles Games were the first since 1896 to be staged without government financing, the organisers depended heavily on existing facilities and corporate sponsors. Although criticised at the time, the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games became the model for future Games, particularly after it was revealed that they had produced a profit of US\$ 223 million.⁶⁴

The Games were then and are still widely known as the "Hamburger Olympics". The famous fast-food company McDonald's sponsored the construction of the swimming pool and also launched a big promotional campaign called "If the U.S. wins, you win!" The campaign granted free burgers, beverages and fries for every medal won by America. Due to the boycott by the USSR and other Eastern Bloc countries, America did not face strong competition in many of the disciplines and won numerous medals: 83 gold, 63 silver and 30 bronze.⁶⁵ The promotion surely contributed to McDonald's publicity.

⁶³ *Los Angeles 1984 - Quick hits*, 2008, Available: <<http://proxy.espn.go.com/oly/summer08/fanguide/history?year=1984&type=anecdote>>, Accessed: 16.4.2009.

⁶⁴ *Los Angeles 1984: Games of the XXIII Olympiad*.

⁶⁵ *Los Angeles 1984: Games of the XXIII Olympiad*.

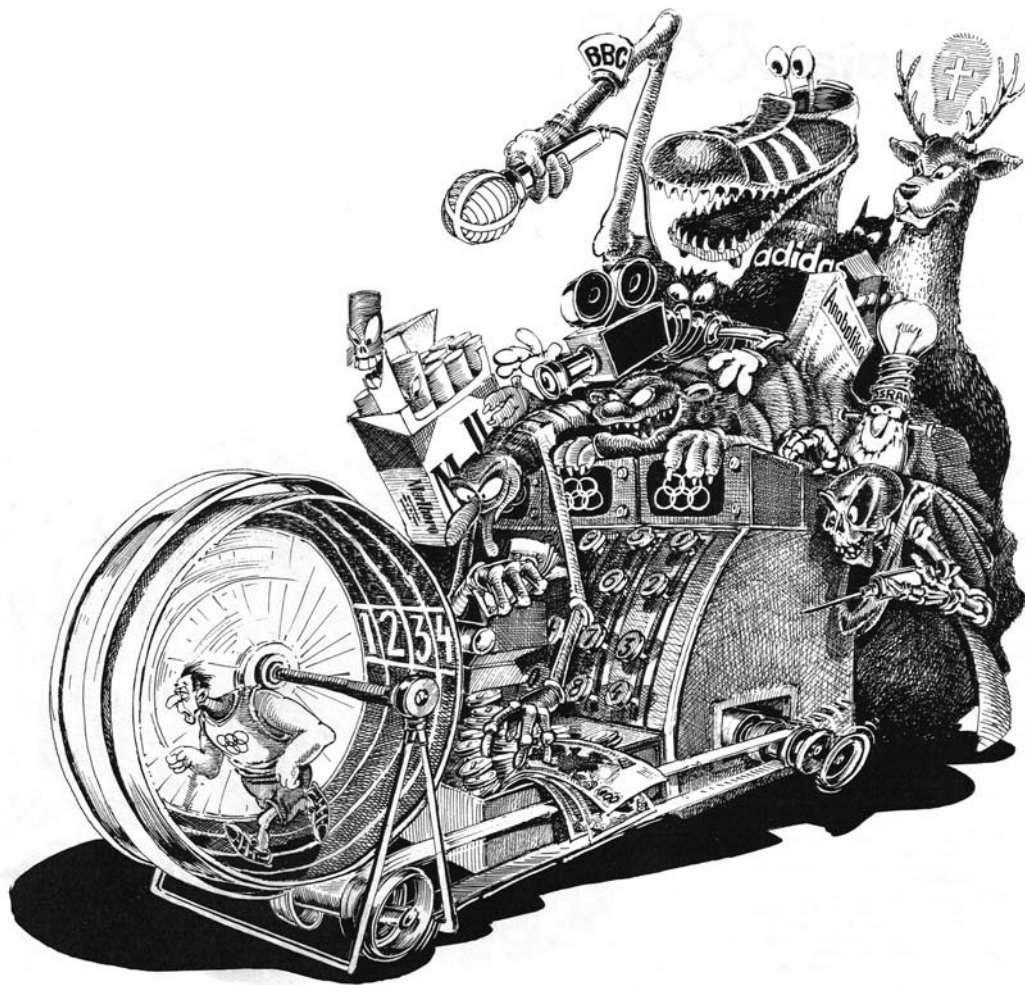


Figure 7: Caricature of the Olympics; Source: Lienen, Ewald, et al., eds. *Oh!Lympia: Sport, Politik, Lust und Frust; ein Bilderlesebuch*. Vol. 1. Berlin: Elefanten Press, 1983.: 204f

But the era of Olympic sponsors and merchandising in the name of the five rings had just begun. Sponsors like McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Mercedes, Kodak and so on bought themselves into the Olympic family and make huge profits by the connection of their brand name with the Olympic Games. After the partnership between Mercedes Benz and the IOC was settled, Mercedes placed 30 limousines at the IOC's exclusive disposal. Samaranch said: "Together, the Olympic rings and Mercedes' star build up an unbeatable connection."⁶⁶ [My translation] But there

⁶⁶ Juan Antonio Samaranch cited in Andrew Jennings, *Das Olympia-Kartell: Die schäbige Wahrheit hinter den fünf Ringen* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1996): 56.

arise major doubts about the sense of these partnerships in relation to sport. McDonald's, Mercedes and most of the other sponsors are unrelated to sport. One might argue that Mercedes is part of motor racing (not allowed in the Olympics) and that McDonald's occasionally offers a healthy salad, but this is not the intention that should stand behind a morality, health and fitness-based sponsorship. But as David Miller says it correctly: "Agents do an honest, legitimate job, but they are in business of marketing, not morality."⁶⁷ Since the beginning of this newly emerged advertising and exclusive rights period, the suspicions against the IOC members grew, as the general audience suspected revenues in exorbitant sums but did not see any social benefit accruing to the public coming with it. Nancy Beffa, an American producer, offered the public her idea about how to spend the money better:

It would be refreshing yet outrageously pleasant news to hear a Committee say that they will take 10 million dollars from their Opening ceremonies budget and donate it to the Olympic Aid or the Olympic Solidarity program. [...] In terms of entertainment, is it really necessary to spend at least 20 million dollars on Opening Ceremonies?⁶⁸

I argue that Beffa certainly is correct with the statement about an opening ceremony that could cost less and would most probably still be impressive. What I consider more crucial is the presentation of the IOC members and the publication of numbers and sums of money, which are almost impossible to comprehend for the general public. I agree with Bud Greenspan, president of Cappy productions, that the media shapes the views of the audience and has to be careful about the way it makes its presentation. Even though I do also think that the following IOC presentation is not entirely untrue:

⁶⁷ David Miller, "The last Olympic ideal," *The Olympic Movement and the Mass Media*, ed. Fékrou Kidane (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 1996): 133.

⁶⁸ Nancy Beffa, "The athlete's parade," *The Olympic Movement and the Mass Media*, ed. Fékrou Kidane (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 1996): 34.

To the average spectator the International Olympic Committee is a group of aged men who make an appearance every four years at the Olympics... attend magnificent dinners, are driven to and fro in luxurious limousines... and if there is a cocktail party that interferes with their attending an Olympic event, be assured there'll be a close to 100 percent choice seats empty at the venue. Nothing could be farther from the truth. But that is how the press observes them... a group of men (and some women) who belong to the most exclusive private club in the world, with perks that are usually reserved for royalty. This image is unfair and untrue.⁶⁹

This presentation of sceptical views onto the IOC members in the public is an allusion to the gigantism that finds its way into the Olympic Movement, expressed through increasing sums of money, and the difficulty to rationalise these for the audience. It is not a comment about corruption with IOC member votes, bribery or other accusations made.

⁶⁹ Bud Greenspan, "Good news doesn't sell," *The Olympic Movement and the Mass Media*, ed. Fékrou Kidane (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 1996): 24.

Chapter 3

The Mediatisation of Sport

During the renewal of the Olympic Games in the modern era after 1894, as is obvious, there were no television networks and no radio stations involved in the news-dissemination business. The first American magazine, for example, dedicated to sport, came out in the late 1820s. Great Britain already had a well-established sport magazine culture, because its beginnings go back to the 1790s.⁷⁰ The 1880s and 1890s were marked by ever-rapider industrialisation, immigration and urbanisation, which helped to create a wide interest in sport media coverage. Technological innovations reduced the costs of printing newspapers and the before-mentioned urbanisation developed into an enormous market.⁷¹ Journalists published news about the formation of the International Olympic Committee, the Olympic Games and everything around the spectacle was covered in international newspapers. Pierre de Coubertin noticed that this alliance of his beloved creation and the press was vitally important, already at this stage of synthesis in 1894, when he said during the Paris Congress: "We are rebels, and that is why the press, which has always supported beneficial revolutions, has understood and helped us. In passing, let me thank the press wholeheartedly for this support."⁷² Coubertin makes mention of supporters of the Olympic idea as "rebels", because he sees that all of them are relearning from the ancient Greeks that man consist of three parts (body, mind and character) and not of body and mind only, as was thought in the Middle Ages. This idea is, according to him, a revolutionary one:

The Greek heritage is so vast, Gentlemen, that all those in the modern world who have conceived of physical exercise in one of its many

⁷⁰ Robert W. McChesney, "Media Made Sport: A History of Sports Coverage in the United States," *Media, Sports, and Society*, ed. Lawrence A. Wenner (Sage Publications, 1989): 50.

⁷¹ cf. McChesney, "Media Made Sport,": 52-53.

⁷² Pierre de Coubertin, "Speech at the closing Banquet of the Congress of Paris 1894," *Pierre de Coubertin 1863-1937: Olympism - Selected Writings*, ed. Norbert Müller (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2000): 532.

aspects have legitimately been able to lay claim on Greece, which embraces them all. [...] [Since] the Middle Ages, the qualities of the body have been rather discredited, and they have been dissociated from the qualities of the mind. In recent times, bodily characteristics have been allowed to serve the mind, but they are still treated as slaves. Every day, they are made to feel their dependence and inferiority. This has been an enormous mistake, the scientific and social consequences of which are, so to speak, impossible to calculate. In the end, Gentlemen, man is not made up of two parts, the body and the mind. There are three: body, mind and character. Character is not formed by the mind, it is formed above all by the body. That is what the ancients knew, and that is what we are relearning painfully.⁷³

The 1920s mark a time that is commonly said to have been a "Golden Age of Sports" (in America) and McChesney also credits these years with the emergence of sports journalism as a distinctive genre.⁷⁴ He states:

The 1920s was also a watershed decade for the sport-mass media relationship because of the emergence of radio broadcasting. [...] Yet as much as sport contributed to popularize radio, radio contributed even more to the popularity of sport; it opened new vistas for millions who had never had access to a major sporting event in the past. The emergence of broadcasting continued the nationalisation of sport.⁷⁵

Sport historian Benjamin Rader underlines the belief that "nothing before or since – not even the cool waves of television – created quite the same hot romance between sport and the public as the newspapers in the 1920s."⁷⁶ He bases his evaluation on the fact that American newspapers in the 1920s dedicated about one fourth of their editorial

⁷³ Coubertin, "Speech at the closing Banquet of the Congress of Paris 1894."

⁷⁴ McChesney, "Media Made Sport," : 54-57.

⁷⁵ McChesney, "Media Made Sport," : 59.

⁷⁶ Benjamin Rader cited in McChesney, "Media Made Sport," : 57.

coverage to sport and one was simply not able to avoid enthusiastic sports coverage. Perhaps the quality and quantity peak of radio broadcasting was reached in the late 1940s and early 1950s,

as the networks broadcasted all major national sport events and, furthermore, most professional baseball and major college football teams had contracts either with broadcasters or, more likely at this point in time, directly with the advertisers.⁷⁷

After the first national television outside broadcast was realized in 1948 during the London Summer Olympics, a new stage of information transmission had arrived, even though television sets were not yet very common in private households, because England still suffered from the aftermath of World War II and there was rationing of food and other necessary goods. There were simply more important problems to take care of than having a TV at home. "Only 80.000 homes in Britain could receive the signal and the BBC paid what was for them the colossal sum of one thousand guineas (less than \$5.000 at the time) for the TV rights to the Games."⁷⁸ But still, this first visual broadcasting brought television coverage to an audience outside the stadiums and venues, allowing them to experience the Olympic without being in the stadiums and venues – either because they were too far away from London, or because they did not have the money to view in person the event in the stadiums.

The Radio Industries Council estimate that at the time of the Olympic Games there were 80.000 television sets installed—largely, of course, in private houses. [...] The majority of these viewers were, of course, situated within fifty miles of London [...] [and] the British Radio Industry had organised viewing-rooms in the competitors' training

⁷⁷ McChesney, "Media Made Sport," : 60.

⁷⁸ Taylor Downing, "A historical perspective," *The Olympic Movement and the Mass Media*, eds. Fékrou Kidane, Sylvie Espagnac and Armanda Pingree, 26,1 ed., Olympic message (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 1996): 27f.

camps in the London area.⁷⁹

This "not being there, but still taking part-phenomenon" is significant for the further role of the TV. It was the installation of submarine communications cables, which brought the possibility of transmitting TV signals delayed between countries and continents. The market for magazines had to change after the emergence of television. General magazines on sport were not in demand any more and the magazine industries began to focus on ever more specific sporting domains and so brought out niche products in track and field, golf, motor sports, etc.⁸⁰

And then the first geo-stationary satellites were launched at the beginning of the 1960s, namely the satellite "Telstar", which provided the opportunity to broadcast TV material from the USA to Europe. What had been a media revolution back then is normal today, because many more geo-stationary telecommunication satellites, which make it possible to be connected to virtually every spot on earth, now surround our globe.

The first worldwide coverage of an Olympic event took place in 1960 in Rome. According to the official Olympic Movement website, over 100 television channels broadcast live as well as presenting recorded material. CBS paid \$394.000 for the privilege of showing the Games.⁸¹ The worldwide coverage raised the problem of different time zones: Rome is, for example, between six and nine hours ahead of time in the USA. There was therefore no possibility of coverage for the USA in

⁷⁹ *The Official Report of the Organising Committee for the XIV Olympiad London 1948* (London: The Organising Committee for the XIV Olympiad London 1948, 1948).

⁸⁰ cf. Jürgen Schwier and Thorsten Schauerte, "Sport und Massenmedien," *sport-goes-media.de: Zur Mediatisierung des Sports*, eds. Bernd Strauß, Michael Kolb and Martin Lames (Schorndorf: Hofmann, 2002): 42.

prime time slots. Commonly Europe prime time ends up being around midday in America, which means that most of the desired audience has already gone to work. But as most of the competitions were held during the day, recorded material was then re-broadcasted in the USA and other countries at a convenient time for their respective mass audiences.

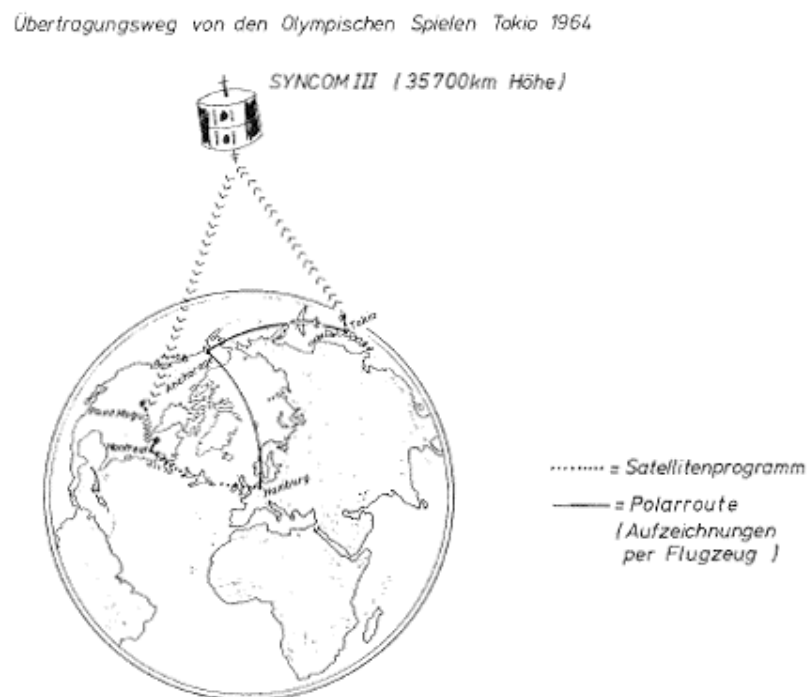


Figure 8: Schema of the satellite transmission of the Olympic Games 1964 in Tokyo;
 Source: *Sport im Fernsehen*, 1975: 198

Some of the 1964 Tokyo Olympic events were broadcast via satellite for the first time.⁸² Japan made a great effort to satisfy both colour TV viewers and audiences with black and white TV sets, especially as it had a powerful emerging electronics industries of its own to promote, and was desperately trying to overcome the pejorative associations of the 'Made in Japan' label. Even though the respective broadcasters were not

⁸¹ Stan Greenberg, *The 1948 London Olympics Gallery*, BBC, Available: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/olympics_1948_gallery_07.shtml, Accessed: 19.4.2009.

⁸² Figure 8

able to transmit the whole Olympics, it was regarded as a great success and a great step forward and the Tokyo Games were to be remembered as the 'TV Olympics'.

The 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico brought the first worldwide Olympic live broadcast in colour. During this event, the question of prime time broadcasting was again difficult. However, live events in Mexico, during daytime, reached at least Europe during a reasonably acceptable time in the evening.

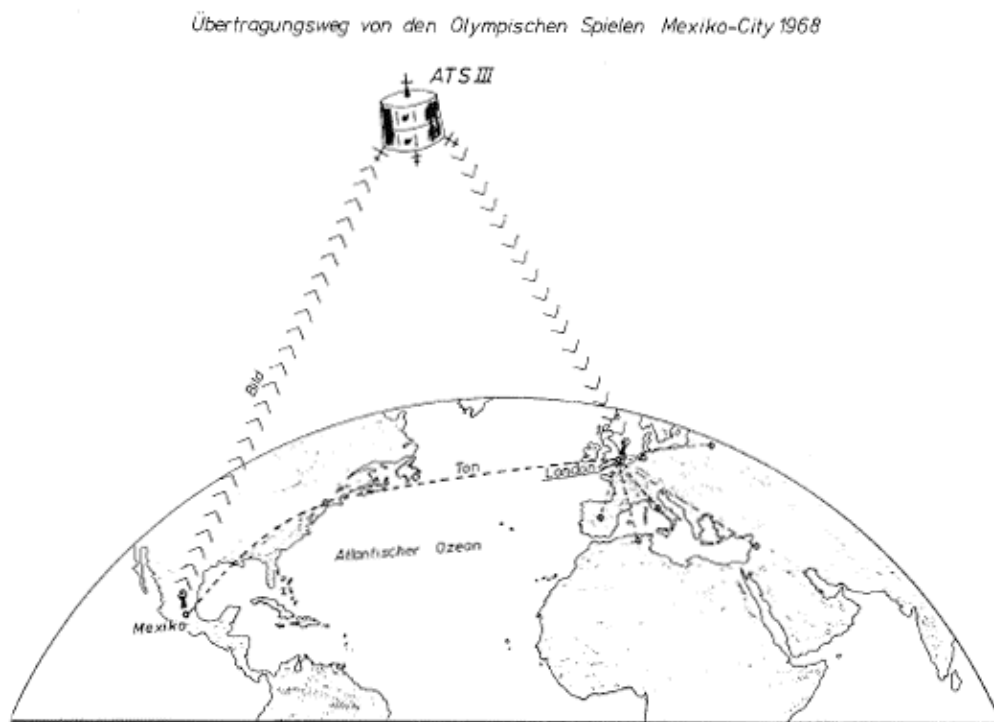


Figure 9: Schema of the satellite transmission of the Olympic Games 1968 in Mexico;
Source: *Sport im Fernsehen*, 1975: 200

The two leading public broadcasters in Germany, ARD and ZDF, spent 1.200.000 DM [ca. 600.000 Euro] in overall costs to broadcast the 1968 Olympic Games of Mexico City.⁸³

⁸³ Josef Hackforth, *Sport im Fernsehen*, Dialog der Gesellschaft, ed. Winfried B. Lerg (Münster: Regensberg Verlag, 1975): 170.

The American broadcaster ABC paid 5 million US\$ to broadcast the 1986 Olympics and is said to be the entity which took the Olympics "from relative anonymity to the premiere sporting event telecast every four years"⁸⁴ by being pioneer in incorporating new technologies and techniques to televise sports, most notable of which were the instant replay and the use of slow motion. These techniques had been pioneered by ABC in their exceptionally popular ratings-topping Monday-night coverage of American Pro-Football. The Summer Olympics in Munich, 1972, was also committed to the commercial project of television broadcasting in general. But the tragic occurrence of the hostage drama marked another turning point in the history of sports media. Not for the first time, but exceptionally effectively in this case, the TV broadcasting of a peaceful sportive event was used by terrorists to air their political grievances – worldwide, live and in colour. The worldwide media became a political instrument and the Olympics were a prominent platform for seizing its attention. Lord Killanin, IOC president from 1972 to 1980, reported during an IOC Session just before the Summer Games in Moscow:

The so-called 'giganticism' of the Olympic Games has been a result of their success but in the future serious consideration must be given to the size and cost of the Games and the increasing technical demands, whether for sports or communications. Although the media have greatly contributed to the spread and popularity of the Olympic Games, the extensive coverage given has frequently been seized upon as a platform for those who wish to use the Games for political demonstrations.⁸⁵

In the 1980s, several cable TV networks began to emerge and aimed at targeting more specific sports audiences. One early American example

⁸⁴ McChesney, "Media Made Sport," : 63.

⁸⁵ Michael Morris, 3rd Baron Killanin, "Remarks by Lord Killanin," *Olympic Review*.154 (1980): 408.

to name is ESPN, which was created to broadcast sports 24 hours a day – the American appetite for sports in particular seemed insatiable.

Aside from the technical development of the media coverage of the modern Olympic Games, the aspect of amateurism and professionalism as two competing systems became more intense with the increased injection of money into sport. The original idea of bringing sport to a wide audience to bring joy into people's lives and keep them fit for work turned into the elevation of highly specialised and talented athletes who came to earn rather exorbitant sums of money. In some ways, the situation can be compared to the theatre business, with its amateur and professional actors. Intense media attention has the effect of converting most activities into a branch of highly capitalised entertainment.

This new money was mostly paid by sponsors and advertisers who wanted their own products to be associated with sports performance, and therefore promoted and shown everywhere in the world. Due to the constantly increasing possibilities of media technology and broadcasting, the market for this kind of advertising has become greater and greater. And the media has become the most important factor in delivering this information - nowadays transmitting it around the globe in a split-second. The mass transmission of sporting events for commercial gain has become the most important driver of change in sports organisation, innovation in rules and equipment and increased audiences in stadia and at home, pushing sport inexorably towards full-blown professionalism. Robert V. Bellamy makes the point well: "Television could survive without professional sports, but professional sports could not exist in their present form without television monies."⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Robert V. Bellamy, Jr., "Professional Sports Organisation: Media Strategies," *Media, Sports, and Society*, ed. Lawrence A. Wenner (Sage Publications, 1989): 120.

And it is, apart from the desire to be entertained, often national pride that brings people to watch sport on TV. The coverage of an event as gigantic as the Olympic Games can only be financed if the audience is willing to watch it and the particular broadcasters need to focus on their respective national personalities and maximise the air time accordingly, otherwise it is not considered interesting. This is clearly a development contrary to Pierre de Coubertin's initial motive for re-establishing the Olympic Games. He wanted the games to be an agent for replacing narrow national pride with a universal cosmopolitanism.⁸⁷ This is a noteworthy discrepancy. One might cite here the quote, slightly adapted, from Michael Real: [Sport] is not *like* business, it *is* business.⁸⁸

Business is the perhaps right concept to lead us to the film industry, because sport did not only become big on TV, as live event and as recorded news material, it also entered (and entertained in) the cinemas. "The parallels between the movie theatre and the sports arena are obvious. The fascination of the medium of moving pictures for the non-moving audience is basically as old as the medium itself."⁸⁹ [My translation]

The sports film has developed into its own genre, even though this topic is sometimes debated as a matter of just how much sport a sports film must contain to be a sports film and not a drama, a musical, etc. with only a touch of the sporting in it (cf. MGM's 1949 *Take Me out to the Ball Game* directed by Busby Berkeley and starring Gene Kelly). Early non-fictional sport films appeared with the popularity of cinema screenings of the great heavyweight boxing matches of the first 3

⁸⁷ cf. page 9

⁸⁸ Michael R. Real, "Super Bowl: Mythic Spectacle," *Journal of Communication*. Winter (1973): 40.

⁸⁹ Wulff cited in Gottlieb Florschütz, *Sport in Film und Fernsehen: Zwischen Infotainment und Spektakel* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag, 2005): 34.

decades of 20th century. Another type of film emerged in the 1930s, for example, with Lenie Riefenstahl's two-part movie about the beauty and aesthetics of the human body in the sport collective, *Festival of the Nations* and *Festival of Beauty*, filmed during the Olympic Summer Games in Munich in 1936. These two films are still highly regarded for their technical advancement and elaborate artistic skill. Critics say that since 1936, nobody ever produced a film with such a rich aesthetic and such expression of grace, until *Chariots of Fire* (1981). Riefenstahl's film about the athletic ideal and the beauty of the human body, as highly regarded as it is, suffers however from historical developments after the film was made. In retrospect, one cannot help seeing the film as part propaganda for Adolf Hitler's political ideas on eugenics and as an instrument of mobilisation of the masses for the war.⁹⁰

Aside from wrestling and boxing films of the 20s and 30s associated with actor Wallace Beery, the sports genre film emerged especially in the 1950s and 1960s. This coincides with the maturing years of television broadcasting and the establishment of sport coverage on TV. The upcoming new filming technologies, as mentioned before, like slow-motion etc. also contribute to the formation of this rather new genre. Florschütz describes four different narrative paradigms in sport films:

- The underdog's triumph
- The rise and fall of sportsmen
- The fall and the comeback
- The dismantling of a sport star

Furthermore, Florschütz differentiates sub-genres in sport film, which are defined by the amount and dominance of sport in the film. I would argue that it is not easy to distinguish between these sub-genres:

⁹⁰ cf. Florschütz, *Sport in Film und Fernsehen*: 140.

Sport documentation or sportumentary
Films with sportsmen as main plot (e.g. *Rocky*)
Sport documentation drama
Sport movies with feature film elements
Feature films with sportive elements

Although the above-mentioned sub-genres are present throughout the whole of sports movie history, the appearance of the narrative structures mentioned above signifies their breaking into the mainstream of general cinema history: By the end of the 1960s and throughout the 1970s, socio-critical feature films were wide-spread. This tendency of critical films survived into the 1980s and 1990s, but changed thematically in the sense of the reason for the negativity. It has been the lack of money as a result of the 1930s world financial crisis, masquerading as a front for Vietnam era malaise, in *They shoot horses, don't they?* (USA, 1969), but more recent movies often pick out drugs as the central cause of disquiet, for example, in *Finish Line* (USA, 1989) or *Any Given Sunday* (USA, 1999).

Another predominant topic in the 1980s and 1990s films is the presentation of spectacular declines, of fallen sporting heroes. This tendency derives in part from the present tabloidisation in TV sports coverage. It is connected to the attitude that "good news doesn't sell". A very fine example of this is Scorsese's *Raging Bull* (USA, 1980). The next step in the development of sport films is the progress towards a kind of advertising medium in the late 1990s, says Florschütz. Feature films like Spike Lee's *He got Game* (USA, 1998) are said to appear like promotional videos which propagate the view of the athlete as an advertising vehicle, as a commodity, and not as an individual that struggles and fights for victory.

As outlined before, sports-themed films do not only appear merely as such, they also are part of a blend of genre. The film can be either dominated by a sporting topic, with for example melodrama as an important element, or a non-sporting genre can construct its main plot, with sport as just a facet of it.

A famous example for the latter are dance movies like *Dirty Dancing* (USA, 1987), *Flashdance* (USA, 1982) or *Saturday Night Fever* (USA, 1977). *Dirty Dancing's* foremost topic is a love story, *Flashdance's* a struggle to find one's identity and role in life and *Saturday Night fever* foremost portrays the life of New York adolescents and their culture. Even though the sport in these films is just a means to an end, they quickly gained a cult status around the world and made dancing schools flourish and caused a wave of disco cult. Therefore, these dance movies extend Wulff's former quote in the sense that these movies are not only fascinating for the audiences, they also led to action after seeing it. Watching sport on television has activated men and women to practise sport more regularly.

Racing movies, like *Speedway* (USA, 1968), and movies that focus on equestrian sport, like *National Velvet* (USA, 1944) also often combine love stories with sport as a second leitmotif. The difference from the just mentioned dance movies lies in the differentiation of audience. I argue that the dance movies are attractive for both sexes and led to a general desire to practice this sport/activity. But love stories in racing movies might be more appealing for men and equestrian movies to women. And even if the desire is aroused through watching the movies, both of these sports, motor racing and horse riding, are neither easy to practise nor to finance.

The films analysed in chapter 4 all make significant reference to the "Olympics". As this thesis seeks to outline the changing face of the modern era Olympic Games and the role of the media along with it, the analysis of feature films as representations of the Games should therefore make a useful contribution to the discussion of the period reviewed. This contribution will take the form of detail analysis of *Animalympics* and *Chariots of Fire* and a wider analysis of *Munich*. All three chosen films differ from each other in form and degree of dominance of sporting content - to suggest a variety of possibilities in films on the Olympic Games in connection with the period surveyed.

Animalympics (USA, 1980) is an animated Olympic spoof, which comments on recent developments in the world of sport and the Olympic sporting world in particular. The film picks up several ideas concerning the Olympic movement and either presents them as positive or caricatures problems and criticises topical developments, for example, the use of drugs or Shamateurism. *Animalympics* was produced within the period reviewed as the result of an ambitious producer's wish to create an animated movie about animals competing in the Olympic Games, with the intention to earn sufficient revenues to finance his next, even more ambitious project, *Tron*. Therefore, apart from the production within the time-frame of this thesis and the connection to the Olympics, *Animalympics* also represents an attempt to enter the upcoming market for articles/products related to the Olympic Games.

Chariots of Fire (UK, 1981) is also produced within the period proposed for discussion, but it is set back in 1924. The representation of the runners Eric Liddell and Harold M. Abrahams during their preparation for and the competition in the Olympic Summer Games in Paris can be interpreted as an attempt to revive the innocence and chivalry of the early modern era Olympics. As the 1970s and early 1980s were a time

when the Olympic ideal and Pierre de Coubertin's concepts seemed to come under severe pressure, this film shows sport in a pleasing aesthetic light and promotes its glory at a time of incipient financial disasters, boycotts and drug problems.

Even though *Munich* (USA, 2005) is not a sport movie in the sense of having sporting activities as the centre of attention, it cannot be ignored in the development of this thesis as it is directly connected to one of the Olympic Summer Games of the period conducted, Munich 1972. However, it has to be noted that *Munich* was not produced during the period in question; it is about this period and about the time between September 1972 and an unspecified day in 1973. Besides this fact, the justification for including this motion picture in the thesis is the fact that it portrays the link between sport, media and politics as no other film has done before.

Chapter 4

Movies on Olympic Themes

4.1 *Animalympics* (1980)

The feature-long animation movie *Animalympics* is the only animated cartoon analysed in this thesis, but it is worth considering, as it is closely connected to the Olympic Summer Games of the XXII Olympiad in Moscow. The director Steven Lisberger, best known for the world's first computer animated feature film *Tron*, actually wanted to produce an animated movie with animals competing in some kind of Olympic competition, which parodies the real Olympics, and bring it to theatrical release around the time of the Games. Lisberger received a grant of 10.000 US-Dollars from the American Film Institute in 1978 and started to produce a seven-minute short movie of the intended style in his own Lisberger Studios. He was then able to sell his idea to the American broadcaster NBC, who commissioned Lisberger to produce two half-hour animated films – one that concentrates on animals competing in the Winter Olympics and one for the Summer Olympics. Lisberger produced 7077 feet⁹¹ "with over 50.000 hand-inked and painted individual cels."⁹² One special effect he used and tested extensively during *Animalympics* to use in for his film *Tron* was "backlight animation, in which light was shown through a specialized filter through each frame to create extraordinarily vibrant coloured light effects."⁹³

NBC bought the rights for the Olympic broadcasts in 1980 for 80 million US Dollars⁹⁴ and planned to air the two features during their live coverage of the Games. This plan worked out for the Olympic Winter Games of Lake Placid and the related animated film *Animalympics: Winter Games*. But due to the invasion of Soviet troops in Afghanistan

⁹¹ *Animalympics* (Barber Rose International Films Ltd., 1979).

⁹² *Animalympics*.

⁹³ Tim Dirks, *Milestones in Film History: Greatest Visual and Special Effects and Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI)*, American Movie Classics, LLC, Available: <<http://www.filmsite.org/visualeffects11.html>>, Accessed: 29.3.2009.

⁹⁴ Downing, "The Olympic Movement and the Mass Media," : 28.

and America's boycott of the following Olympic Summer Games in Moscow, NBC cancelled its summer coverage and with it the airing of the second *Animalympics* part. Luckily, NBC had an insurance contract with Lloyd's and this company "was the eventual loser, paying NBC almost 90 percent of that fee after NBC filed a claim on an insurance package."⁹⁵

This cancellation of the *Animalympics*' airing had a strong influence on Lisberger's professional development, because he and his partner, the theatrical producer Donald Kushner, hoped to finance their future project *Tron* independently with the revenues from *Animalympics*.⁹⁶ Lisberger decided to combine both *Animalympics* parts into one feature film and bring it to the cinemas, but he could not find a distributor for it, which I argue is the result of the politically prudent dismissive attitude towards anything that was connected to Moscow or the Olympic Games and therefore the financial risk was too great for distributors. The edited 78-minute feature film was then aired on cable TV channels and later on distributed on VHS in the USA and various other countries – it is not absolutely certain when the final version was released for the first time, because various sources refer to *Animalympics*, the feature film length movie, but actually only consider *Animalympics: Winter Games* in their information. This leads to a discrepancy between referenced release dates in 1980 and 1983. As I am not able to clarify this, I will further on refer to 1980 as the release date, because both parts, *Animalympics: Winter Games* and *Animalympics: Summer Games*, were produced by 1980, albeit maybe yet not finally edited into the final *Animalympics* VHS release version.

⁹⁵ *Moscow 1980 - Quick hits*, 2008, Available: <<http://proxy.espn.go.com/oly/summer08/fanguide/history?year=1980&type=anecdote>>, Accessed: 16.4.2009.

⁹⁶ Wayne Carlson, *Tron*, 2003, Available: <<http://design.osu.edu/carlson/history/tron.html>>, Accessed: 15.3.2009.

One criticism *Animalympics* has to face is the lack of depth in the film. The shown sporting competitions are short takes on the events with only superficial coverage. The only maintained theme, which reoccurs again and again, is the 3.500km marathon during the 14 days of the Olympics. The movie does not have an elaborate plot but this might be a consequence of the editing to one single film and the related cuts between summer sport and winter sport events, which give the impression of constantly meandering without a clear path.

Animalympics never made it to the cinemas and remained a rather obscure cartoon movie, but it established a worldwide fan community through the Internet, which Graham Gouldman calls "a sort of underground interest in it."⁹⁷ On the one hand, *Animalympics* enthusiasts share their childhood-memories of the film, which fixes the age of these enthusiasts at around 30 to 40. But mostly, older aficionados remember the film for its soundtrack, because Graham Gouldman, bassist of the famous rock band 10CC, wrote, arranged, performed and composed it. The band 10CC had its biggest hits in the 1970s and the commitment of Gouldman meant the assurance of good quality music and a peg to hang the publicity of the film on. An *Animalympics'* press kit classifies the movie as "an animated musical fantasy" and this underlines the importance of music throughout the film. The officially released soundtrack consists of 10 songs and 7 of these 10 songs are presented within the movie as if they were music videos for a music TV channel. This music video style coincides with the beginning of music TV channels, notably MTV, in the early 1980s. These musical elements of the movie are fully integrated as part of the film narrative and fit into the whole presentation. The total length of the

⁹⁷ Will Harris, *A Chat with Graham Gouldman*, 2007, Bullz-Eye.com, Available: <http://www.bullz-eye.com/music/interviews/2007/graham_gouldman.htm>, Accessed: 1.2.2009.

animated music videos adds up to 17:12 minutes, within the film's total length of 78 minutes.

The combination of music(al) and cartoons is a very successful one nowadays: Disney's *The Lion King* with music by Elton John, *Tarzan* with Phil Collins or *Pocahontas* and its songs by Vanessa Williams among others, prove that the popularity of and enthusiasm for animated musicals is high. The just mentioned movies belong to a group of movies which can be said to accompany people through their life, because they often watched these movies many times as kids and will watch them again with their own kids when they became adults. I argue that this is exactly the case with *Animalympics* and the cited "underground interest". Even though the film did not get a lot of commercial support, it spread around the world on VHS and on TV channels and remained a collector's item. The fan cult about this movie even initiated rumours on the Internet about a possible new *Animalympics* release under the Walt Disney Company's management in 2010. An email inquiry I made about this matter remained unanswered until now.

In addition to the music, the voice-overs for the characters are important as well. 4 persons voiced all animal characters: Gilda Radner from NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, Billy Crystal from ABC, Michael Fremer and Harry Shearer (now of *The Simpsons*), also from *Saturday Night Live*, gave every single voice a distinguishing feature and unique touch. Every talking character has an accent, which makes it possible to determine its origin from listening to him/her speaking English, e.g. René Fromage speaking with a French intonation, Kurt Wuffner with a German one and Tatyana Tushenko sounds as if she is a character from Eastern Bloc. The given accents help to make the animal characters even more human than they already appear because of the way they

walk, move and participate in an organized sports competition – they have become highly anthropomorphised animals.⁹⁸

The use of animated anthropomorphic animals is, on the one hand, a method to attract children, because talking and upright walking animals are *per se* interesting and especially if they are drawn lovingly like in *Animalympics*. But this is evidently the freedom of the producer of an animated cartoon movie. The animated characters here are omnipotent, virtual bodies, able to perform moves and actions that are not necessarily subjects to the laws of physics and the same applies to the character's surroundings. Steven Lisberger says:

Modern technology is allowing us to fully realise unprecedented visual and comedic adventure. I want to use this technology to generate dimensional worlds and contemporary fantasies.⁹⁹

Nevertheless, the movie does not deal in childlike characteristics to attract its audience. Even though the film surely attracts younger audiences, I argue that it is not merely a children's film. Children might like the animals and the caricatured manner of sportive activities, but I doubt that they would understand the satirical intention behind the various accents spoken and the social critique this spoof expresses on several levels. In animation films like that of Halas and Batchelor's version of *Animal Farm* (1955), political criticism is often expressed by the help of animal characters, because in general animated

anthropomorphic beasts are racially and ethnically neutral (and therefore universally acceptable) in a way that human figures cannot be. [...] The preponderance of animal fables, biographies, and burlesques in the entertainment and educational media we produce for our children is a real phenomenon. It embodies an unspoken believe –

⁹⁸ Martin Gray, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, York Handbooks (Moonbeam, 1988): 20.

⁹⁹ *Animalympics*.

and a message to children – that animals are good and innocent, whereas human beings are darker and more dubious creatures [...] until childhood and innocence have started drawing to a close.¹⁰⁰

I want to argue that Steven Lisberger and his team underpin *Animalympics* with several criticisms of political influences, Olympic organisation and commercialisation and to do this they employ various representations of racial and cultural stereotypes. Lisberger is quoted in an *Animalympics* press kit as saying:

I have to believe that as a filmmaker I can create metaphors for human experience, metaphors that do not demand the intrusion of human violence. Current animation allows me to explore those metaphors in a way unavailable through any other medium and to emphasise the visual.¹⁰¹

Criticism of the communist political structures are expressed through the presentation of two animal characters: Tatyana Tushenko, "the lovely Eurasian sable-gymnast, [who was] spotted by her government for her natural abilities [and] Asian cult hero duck Bruce Kwakimoto, practitioner of the martial arts of No Can Do."¹⁰² Tatyana, a weasel from Siberia, explains in an interview that, where she comes from, everybody starts to train at an early age, but she works even harder than other athletes.¹⁰³ Tatyana says that she is always working, at weekends, on vacation and in school and her only other interest was to collect trophies. The shown radiograph is a humorous interpretation of her mentioned young age, but this entire representation of Tatyana hints at the state-controlled and state-aided methods of training, which caused

¹⁰⁰ Matt Cartmill, "The Bambi Syndrome," *A View to Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature through History*, 2nd ed. (Harvard University Press, 1996): 188.

¹⁰¹ *Animalympics*.

¹⁰² *Animalympics*.

¹⁰³ Screenshot 1

many publicly expressed doubts about Shamateurism¹⁰⁴ and the eligibility of athletes for the Olympic competitions. Her representation also aims to criticise the widely used practice of Eastern Bloc countries to rather drill young children from an early age and through adolescence with hard training methods and austerity for the sake of the country's glory. This becomes more obvious through young Tatyana's suppressed happiness on the winners' rostrum after her 10.0-rated victory when she briefly applauds and celebrates before falling back into a strict body posture that reminds of a military muster. Miguel de Moragas of the Olympic Study Centre states that "[a]chieving fourth or fifth position in the Olympic Games [...] etc., may be taken as a national failure."¹⁰⁵ I imagine that the character of Tatyana Tushenko is an allusion to Olga Korbut (USSR), who was known for her flexibility in floor gymnastics, and Nadia Comaneci (Romania), the youngest and most successful gymnast in Olympic competitions. "After the 1976 Games, [Comaneci] was named a Hero of Socialist Labour by her country."¹⁰⁶

The reporter's comment, from the off, states that it is Tushenko's formula to be a potential superstar from birth and therefore she is subsidised by the government.

¹⁰⁴ cf. chapter 1.6

¹⁰⁵ Miguel de Moragas, "Television, sport and the Olympic Movement," *The Olympic Movement and the Mass Media*, eds. Fékrou Kidane, Sylvie Espagnac and Armanda Pingree, 26,1 ed., Olympic message (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 1996): 80.

¹⁰⁶ *Nadia Comănechi*, 2009, Encyclopædia Britannica Online, Available: <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/127253/Nadia-Comaneci>>, Accessed: 22.4.2009.



Screenshot 1: Radiograph of Tushenko's early training; Source: *Animalympics*, 00:07:27

Another hint as to the communistic manner of sporting training and its conduct is the short illustration of the bear Bruno Ursakov, Tatyana Tushenko's coach. He is shown with a noose around his neck¹⁰⁷, shivering in fear of Tatyana's score being less than 10.0. This image is an exaggerated way of expressing the pressure to succeed, built up by the government, but it implies that a bad result or defeat had vocational consequences for all those involved.¹⁰⁸

Another mention of Eastern athletes in combination with possible Shamateurism is the case of Ludmilla Steponyatova and her husband Ivan Disventsky, both elephants. They are said to raise the suspicion of professionalism, as they both are top-class athletes and work in a circus as artists when they do not compete in championships or similar events. According to the then valid IOC regulations in the Olympic charter, this

¹⁰⁷ Screenshot 2

¹⁰⁸ cf. page 26

circumstance could have led to disqualification.



Screenshot 2: Tushenko's coach fears her rating; Source: *Animalympics*, 00:09:29

The other mentioned critical picture given is the introduction of Asia's gymnast duck Bruce Kwakimoto, who is based loosely on deceased Kung Fu star Bruce Lee and late Japanese pro-wrestler Shinya Hashimoto. Kwakimoto is a pun on quack (duck sound) and Hashimoto (a Japanese surname). Kwakimoto is said to be "a kind of guy who stands out in any crowd"¹⁰⁹ and is shown in an Asian metro station among many other ducks, all looking exactly identical.¹¹⁰ This is an allusion to Asian uniformity and the non-individualistic cultures of the east. The stereotype idea of uniformity, homogeneity and governmental manipulation is deeply rooted in many until today, because the reports about violations of civil rights, censorship and prosecutions by the state do not abate. Although this is a rather strong interpretation of the picture that is shown for three seconds on screen, I stick to the

¹⁰⁹ *Animalympics*, dir. Steven Lisberger, Warner Home Video, 1980. 00:10:32

¹¹⁰ Screenshot 3

argument that this representation is meant as criticism against alien culture, in this particular situation from America's point of view.



Screenshot 3: Kwakimoto as one of many Asian ducks; Source: *Animalympics*, 00:10:30

Another aspect critiqued by the movie is commercialisation, which was also a dominant theme during the 1980s. Steven Lisberger stages his comment in the form of Dorrie Turnell, a flamingo ice-skater, Bolt Jenkins, a crocodile and track and field athlete, both from North America, and African Kit Mambo's marathon trainer Mamo Ululu. All three characters are involved in commercialisation through merchandising and publicity.

Dorrie Turnell is a young ice-skating talent already, who has won the junior championship and succeeds in the Olympic competition as well. Her portrait is on the front pages of magazines¹¹¹ and reporter Barbara Warblers says: "the public can't get enough of this girl."¹¹²

¹¹¹ Screenshot 4

¹¹² *Animalympics*, 00:17:56

She also appears in TV commercials for shampoo and has her own merchandising articles, like a musical box with her as a rotary doll. On top of it all she has a manager, Robert Pigwood, a pig and most probably spoof of Robert Stigwood, an Australian impresario and agent of the Bee Gees, who had had enormous success with *Saturday Night Fever* in 1978. Pigwood's statement about Dorrie was recorded in a dark and shabby office with him smoking a cigar:

She's a great property. Dorrie has a certain child-like quality that gives a wide audience appeal. I'm gonna make a fortune... ehm... I mean, Dorrie is gonna make a wealthy growing when this is all over with.¹¹³
[My transcription]



Screenshot 4: Turnell on various spoofed glossy covers; Source: *Animalympics*, 00:17:55

Pigwood's statement about Turnell being a property describes an athlete's treatment as a commodity and not as a sportsperson to achieve a maximisation of benefit with publicity and merchandising.

¹¹³ *Animalympics*, 00:18:14

Even though *Animalympics* is only a cartoon movie, the relation between the broadcasting media, the sport and the advertising business is hinted at: sport seems to be the ideal liaison between the two media markets, audiences and advertising businesses.¹¹⁴ And the often-mentioned difficulty to bear the hype as an athlete is underlined by Dorrie Turnell's wistful statement: "Sometimes I long for the simplicity of my younger days [sigh]."¹¹⁵ In retrospective, one might relate Dorrie Turnell to Nancy Kerrigan, the adored American ice-skating talent. It is worth mentioning, that Tonya Harding initiated the later attack, against Kerrigan. Both ice-skaters represented the USA and Tonya Harding seemingly developed a mad 'winning-at-all-costs' mentality, which led to one of very few cases of evil cheating within the same team.

Another critical presentation is made through Bolt Jenkins, a crocodile, which made its way from the bottom of the North American plumbing system onto the track and field grounds of Pawprint Stadium. His character lives out the American Dream, from rags to riches. Howard Nixon sees a positive connection between this dream and sport: "Sport seems to be an ideal vehicle for understanding the pursuit of the American Dream [...] because achievement and success are so openly and explicitly emphasized in sport."¹¹⁶ The interesting notion here is that Bolt Jenkins is described (somewhat parodically) as an idol for all young athletes, because "he started his life as a handbag, was told he'd never walk again"¹¹⁷ and then, inspired by a ZOO broadcast, started to train and work for a better life until he finally won the gold medal at the first *Animalympics*. Bolt Jenkins' story from rags to riches would be a consistently positive one, were it not for the commercial aspect,

¹¹⁴ cf. Schwier and Schauerte, "Sport und Massenmedien," 43.

¹¹⁵ *Animalympics*, 00:18:35

¹¹⁶ Howard L. Nixon, II, *Sport and the American Dream* (New York: Leisure Press, 1984): 10.

¹¹⁷ *Animalympics*, 00:20:13

immediately after his success: After jumping over the high jump bar he actually falls to earth, bounces off the mat and a TV trick technique immediately assembles a kitchen around him and he lands seated at the table, promoting "Toasted Gecko Flakes" cereals, "the breakfast for chimps".¹¹⁸ This commercial, leaving aside its jokey promise to be a product for chimps/champs, is another indication of the tightly connected worlds of sport, media and business promotion.

Yet another facet of the Americanism in *Animalympics* is the weightlifting competition. The elephant Ivan Disventsky and Wilhelm Cvet, a bull, compete to become the strongest man of the Olympics. But this competition is not staged as a sporting event; rather its style is a mixture of beauty contest and Academy Award ceremony. Fittingly, the former Miss Pedigree North America, Brenda Springer, is the moderator for this event: "The beautiful people have gathered here [in the Hippodrome] this evening for the glamour and the allure of the international weight lifting." Mele, a schnauzer, spoof of the Brazilian football star Pelé, is chosen as co-commentator for the gala soirée: "Before the night is through, the first Mister Heavyweight will be crowned." A possible background for the style of presentation with its elision of strength and beauty could be the film *Pumping Iron* (USA, 1977) and the emergence of fitness studios, like Gold's Gym. This contributes to the obsession with the beauty craze in the West, and accounts for the appearance of bodybuilding stars like *Pumping Iron's* Arnold Schwarzenegger and Lou Ferrigno in the popular filmed entertainment of the 1980s.

The last example for a connection between these branches is Kit Mambo's coach Mamo Ululu who is devastated by the fact that Kit and

¹¹⁸ *Animalympics*, 00:23:06

René cross the finish line together, after running the marathon against each other. Ululu calculated fame and fortune for the winner of the prestigious event and expected his charge to win the race. When Barbara Warblers interviews Ululu after Kit and René's victory of love, he answers:

I had it all planned! Kit Mambo track shoes, Kit Mambo dolls, Kit Mambo vitamins. A lifetime of training and she throws it all away! For what?!¹¹⁹
[My transcription]

It was to become a threat to sport that the athlete's entire entourage's personal and economical advancement would be placed above the athlete's achievement or well-being – an occurrence so common as to become the storyline of the film *Jerry Maguire* about sports agents.

One aspect that is largely omitted is a reference to drugs or any other performance-enhancing means. I argue that this is the case, because this Olympic spoof is an animated film, appealing to children in the first instance and therefore it also assumes its responsibility to educate, within a certain limited range of realism. A representation of an athlete using illegal substances would not fit into the concept of the movie, but Toulouse LaTrac's parenthetical note about possible blood tests serves as evidence that the film does not avoid the topic entirely. René Fromage's marathon coach LaTrac quarrels with Mamo Ululu about the marathon lead achieved and says: "Incidentally, I'm calling for blood tests after this race! I've heard rumours of catnip"¹²⁰ while pulling a box of catnip out of Ululu's coat's pocket.

But *Animalympics* does not only criticise the world of sports with its organisational features and worrying developments, Steven Lisberger

¹¹⁹ *Animalympics*, 01:13:40

¹²⁰ *Animalympics*, 00:48:12

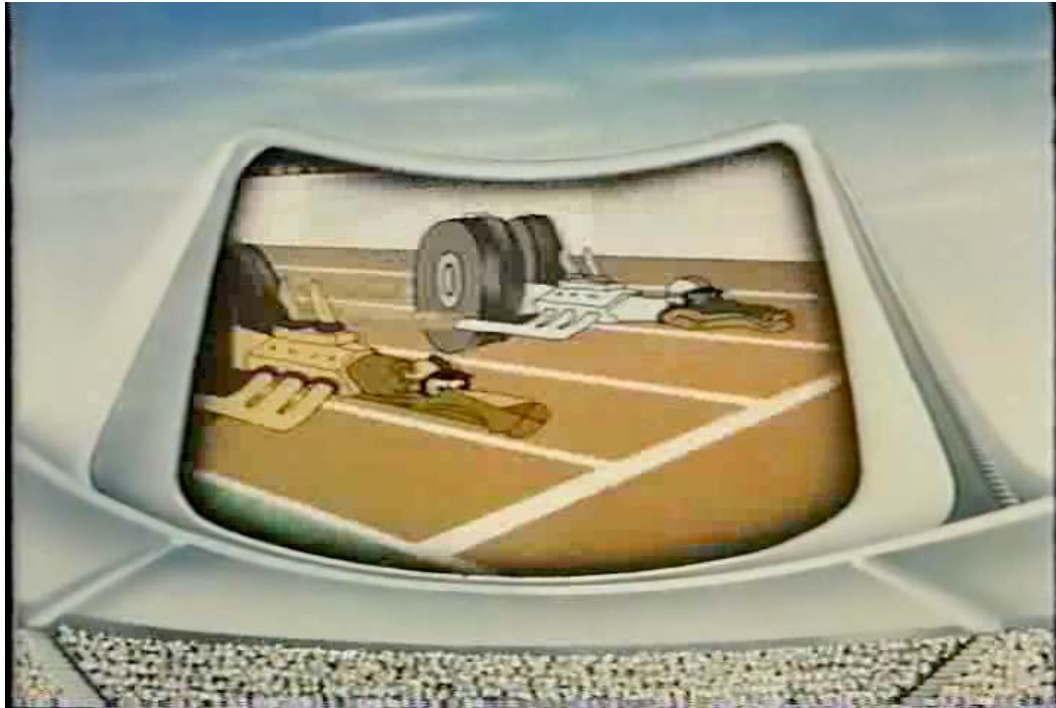
also points out the positive features of an event like the Olympic Games. For example, and as mentioned just before, the love of two sporting rivals who race against each other as favourites in an event could be counted consistent with Coubertin's ideals, were it not for the prohibition on different sexes competing in the same events except in equestrian sports.

Another positive representation is realised in the 100-meter dash, which is arranged as if it was a motor speed race. The main characters in this event are Bolt Jenkins, the crocodile and an African big cat named Kip Ngogo. The athletes wear racing suits and the whole scenario is accompanied by engine sounds, oilcans and stapled tyres. Fittingly, the co-moderator of this event is Jackie Fuelit. Jackie Fuelit is a spoof on the British triple world champion Jackie Stewart, copying Stewart's famous clothing and hat. But it could certainly also be a spoof of Austrian Niki Lauda, triple Formula 1 champion, according to the Austrian accent of Jackie Fuelit.

The athletes transform themselves into imaginative racing cars after the start and finish the race in a record time of 1.06 seconds, which is approximately a tenth of the real time needed by human runners. The winner of this race has to be determined by an analysis with a photo finish camera¹²¹ and Bolt Jenkins wins. But Jenkins does not accept his victory and hands over the gold medal to Kip Ngogo: "I can't accept this gold medal. I mean... he was better than me! Hey Kip, here, you should get this. I mean... I mean..."¹²²

¹²¹ Screenshot 5

¹²² *Animalympics*, 00:28:24



Screenshot 5: Photo finish of the 100-meter dash; Source: *Animalympics*, 00:28:18

This scene is replayed and described as "great sportsmanship personified by Bolt Jenkins"¹²³ during the final summary of the first Animalympics. The American athlete waives his triumph and grants it to the African, which is interesting because of the general political relationship between the USA and Africa. Looked at from today's perspective, it reminds the viewer of a similar situation from the film *Chariots of Fire*. Lord Lindsay, the rightful competitor in the 400-meter race, steps down to allow Eric Liddell to win a gold medal and says: "I've already got my medal. [...] A pleasure, old chap. Just to see you run."¹²⁴ Both circumstances hint at the idea of chivalry and peace among sportsmen, proclaimed by Pierre de Coubertin.¹²⁵

Other references to the real, human Olympic world are found in the event of fencing: Count Maurice Boar Deaux, a snobbish boar, is said to

¹²³ *Animalympics*, 01:14:28

¹²⁴ *Chariots of Fire*, dir. Hugh Hudson, Warner Home Video, 1980. 01:31:07

¹²⁵ cf. page 13

be the favourite against Duke Charolas, a Eurasian flying squirrel. Bor Deaux defeated Charolas, but loses his gold medal in an unwanted and unscheduled competition against the elegant Contessa, an eagle, who entered the fencing hall to avenge Duke Charolas: "Well darling, shall we make it a tooth for a tooth or an eye for an eye?"¹²⁶ The crowd cheers for Contessa and Bor Deaux is struck out of the register. The important aspect in this representation is the choice of names and the character's appearance as French aristocrats. This relates to the fact that fencing began in the Olympic Games as a sport not accessible to everyone, because it requires certain expensive equipment and was predominant in upper-class societies.¹²⁷ Furthermore, the Contessa illustrates a modern version of Robin Hood, as she avenges the weak, but with sporting means and wit:

Count Boar Deaux: You will never fence again!

The Contessa: You've never fenced before!¹²⁸

A further connection is the motto of the competing continents of these first Games: "Farther, faster, furrier"¹²⁹, which is an adaptation of the original "citius, altius, fortius", but obviously also turned into the animal context by using the adjective "furrier".

Another similarity to the real Olympic Games is the fetishising of ritual and ceremonial: the bearing of the torch through all the continents, the production of an opening ceremony and the extinguishing of the Olympic flame at the end of the Games. A sleeping dragon, that spits fire while breathing, lights the torch on Mount Animalympics, and it is then carried on land and on water by various animals until the flame is lit inside Pawprint Stadium. The major of Animal Olympic Island declares the Games open with a rather exceptional statement but the

¹²⁶ *Animalympics*, 01:10:13

¹²⁷ cf. page 26

¹²⁸ *Animalympics*, 01:09:50

¹²⁹ *Animalympics*, 00:01:30

general allusion to official Olympic protocol is perceptible: "Eh, eeh, let the bird fly!"¹³⁰ The torch is a symbol equally present in the real and the imagined Olympic surroundings. The other recurring symbol is the five Olympic rings: The five rings of the paw print are the symbol of world peace through animal athletics.¹³¹



Screenshot 6: Olympic paw print and ZOO broadcaster logo; Source: *Animalympics*, 00:02:02

Steven Lisberger intensifies the connection of the Animalympics to the self-consciousness and bombast of the human Olympic Games by creating a museum, which displays items from the "Animal Athletics Archives". One exhibit shows a black, Greek amphora that shows a saurian in sporting poses¹³² and another interesting specimen is the collection of athletic footwear used down throughout the centuries, with examples from the stone age, the dark ages, the baroque age, the industrial age¹³³ and the present space age. Despite the shoe from the

¹³⁰ *Animalympics*, 00:05:05

¹³¹ Screenshot 6

¹³² Screenshot 7

¹³³ Screenshot 8

space age, which looks very similar to a modern running shoe, none of the displayed shoes could plausibly qualify as sports gear.



Screenshot 7: Antique amphora displaying a saurian; Source: *Animalympics*, 00:55:28

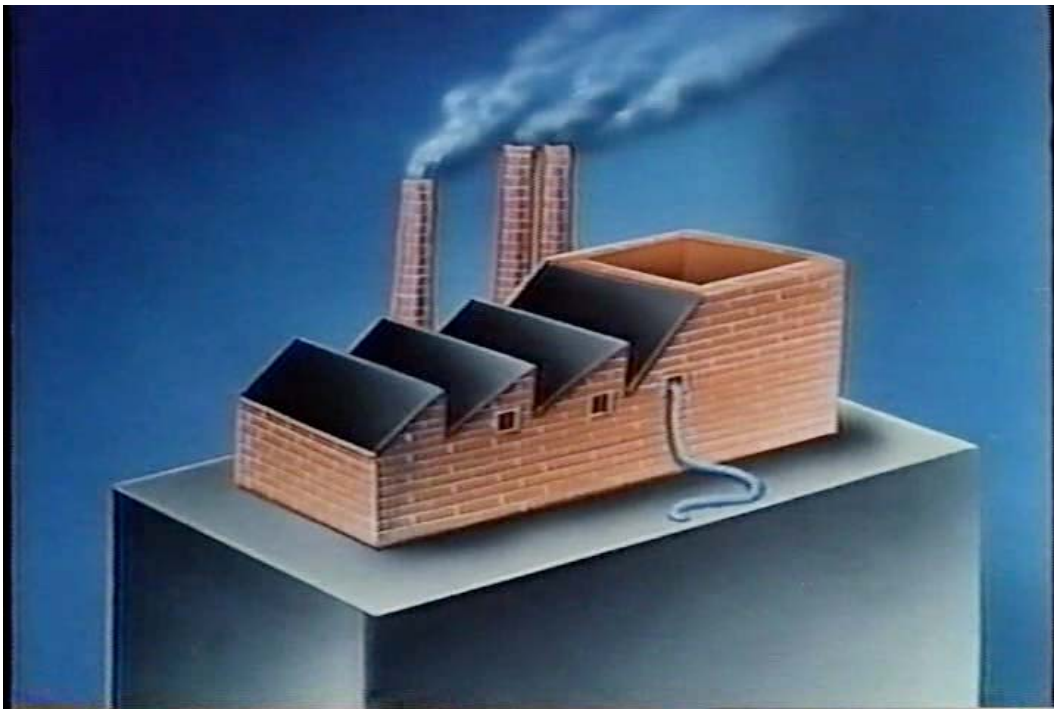
Mentioning the space age, I finally propose to discuss the important role of the broadcaster, ZOO (Zee, Oh Oh), "the network that brings out the beast in sports."¹³⁴ The whole film is arranged as a live broadcast of the first Animalympics, transmitted "live, via satellite"¹³⁵ and with the help of "precision teamwork of herds of dedicated animals working behind the scenes."¹³⁶ Lisberger not only makes this film a spoof of the Olympic Games, but also satirises modern television broadcasts and their self-importance. With an "up-close-and-personal" style of reporting, like the ABC network is said to use, the four main commentators of the Animalympics are:

The ostrich interviewer Barbara Warblers, a play on Barbara Walters, a famous interviewer of politicians and later a sports reporter. The ostrich

¹³⁴ *Animalympics*, 00:02:05

¹³⁵ *Animalympics*, 00:01:44

has the function of being very close to the live action and she leaves the impression as if she would love to stop the marathon runners during the race to ask questions. Barbara Walters is also live at the scene, directly near the athletes, to report up-close-and-personal for the television audience. To give her another humoristic touch, Walters has a speech defect, as an interviewer (!), which finds its expression in her name for example – when she says "Barbara Walters" it sounds more like "Baabaa Waabaa".



Screenshot 8: Athletic footwear from the industrial age; Source: *Animalympics*, 00:56:06

The turkey sports reporter Rugs Turkell is a play on Howard Cosell. Leonard Shapiro, a Washington Post staff writer, characterised Cosell after his death in 1995: "Cosell was arguably the best-known and most controversial sports broadcaster in the history of the medium [...] He was a lightning rod for criticism."¹³⁷ And this described "love to hate" aspect is exactly Rugs Turkell's manner of reporting in *Animalympics*. "I

¹³⁶ *Animalympics*, 01:14:46

¹³⁷ Leonard Shapiro, "Howard Cosell dies at 77," *Washington Post* 24.4.1995.

am bringing you... me... and [...]" is the egocentric standard welcome to viewers of the Animalympics disciplines he reports about.

The other two members of the reporter's team are the anchor turtle Henry Hummel and the female poodle sports correspondent Brenda Springer.

Furthermore, every single sporting event has its own fanfare and fancy animated clip including specific sound to announce the upcoming event. ZOO also works with the techniques of fading, slow-motion, interpretations of finishing line pictures, replays and so on and so forth. The whole movie is a comic reproduction of a real live-event broadcast. Technically speaking and also regarding the non-sportive facets of the event: background information on the athletes, a helicopter tour (in a helicopter in the shape of a dragonfly) to examine Animal Olympic Island, the presentation of the facilities for the athletes, etc. The adaptation from the real world is well done in this respect, as ZOO is not only broadcaster for the sporting disciplines, but blows up its coverage to puff itself and put itself and its methods at the very centre of the dramatic events it disseminates.

4.2 *Chariots of Fire* (1981)

Chariots of Fire brings back the gentlemanly ideal of the Olympics at a time when the Olympic ideal, with its maxim "the important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part"¹³⁸ seems to have come under enormous pressure. Audiences in 1981 recognised that the ideal was on the verge of collapse. The movie was produced in 1980 seemingly as an attempt to bring back the glorious days of sport when the concept of winning at all costs was not so dominant and political interference influenced the sport less than it seemed to in the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. Although these elements are far from absent from the film, it offers an implicit contrast between the 1980 boycott as heated reaction to a political conflict and the rather more serene 1924 Olympic Games in Paris, which are represented in the movie. *Chariots of Fire* does not under-represent the importance of a winning mentality, but here it is driven by moral strength and training, discipline and absolute will ("The sky is the limit"¹³⁹) and not by dishonest practices. It contrasts Eric Lidell with his religious ideals against Harold Abrahams's crypto-professionalism, his will to win with the help of hard training and competent advice.

Just to put the film in movie history context, it has been ranked 19th in the list of favourite British films of the 20th century, conducted by the British Film Institute (BFI) in 1999.¹⁴⁰ *Chariots of Fire* was made by Goldcrest Films and released in March 1981 in the UK by Twentieth Century Fox and in September 1981 in the USA by The Ladd Company and first broadcasted on TV in the USA in 1984 on CBS television, the

¹³⁸ Figure 10

¹³⁹ *Chariots of Fire*, 00:24:33

¹⁴⁰ *The BFI 100: A selection of the favourite British films of the 20th century*, 6.7.2006 1999, British Film Institute, Available: <<http://www.bfi.org.uk/features/bfi100/11-20.html>>, Accessed: 3.9.2008.

parent company of Viacom Inc.¹⁴¹ It has a running time of 124 minutes. Hugh Hudson, the director, created his most successful film with *Chariots of Fire*. The same applies to Collin Welland, its screenwriter. David Puttnam, its producer, won the Oscar for Best Picture during the Academy Awards of 1982 for *Chariots of Fire* and he was subsequently invited to become the Head of Columbia Studios on the basis of his success with Goldcrest's roster of films.



Figure 10: John Mark with Olympic Fire, July 29, 1948; Source: Bettmann/Corbis, Available: <http://pro.corbis.com>, photo: BE079898

Chariots of Fire had been nominated for seven Academy Awards and won four, including Best Picture, Best Music, Best Writing and Best Costume Design. Britain celebrated these won Academy awards exuberantly at the time. The British film industry experienced a renaissance in the 1980s, which have also been called the Thatcher

¹⁴¹ *Company Credits for Chariots of Fire*, Internet Movie Database, Available: <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0082158/companycredits>>, Accessed: 27.3.2009.

years.¹⁴² *Chariots of Fire* is one of the many movies, which emerged during these Thatcher years and it attracted the audiences with its representation of what it meant to be British, which, I argue, is a positive one in this case. This stands in contrast to British reality in the 1980s. Margaret Thatcher, as newly elected Prime Minister in 1979, evoked controversy because of her governmental plans and, as Elsaesser argues, the movies emerging from the Thatcher years are said to be "scathingly anti-Thatcher".¹⁴³ Considering this, it is remarkable "that during the decade, more British [tv funded films] films were made than at any time since the 1950s, or at least more British films attracted international awards and coverage."¹⁴⁴

David Puttnam came across many obstacles when trying to find funding for his idea of a film about two runners at the Olympic Summer Games in 1924. Margaret Hinxman, a journalist, supposed that the movie's potential was not obvious to the investors, because "it has no name stars in it, its subject was sport, above all, it was too British"¹⁴⁵ and British films do not have the reputation of becoming easily internationally successful. *Chariots of Fire* is a British movie, "despite that fact that it was financed largely from non-British money."¹⁴⁶ Contrary to Elsaesser's idea of Puttnam's movie being somehow against Margaret Thatcher, I argue that politics in general and criticism of her in particular are not dominant in *Chariots of Fire* and this might be seen as one reason why it became so successful.

Furthermore, it has to be noted that the film was planned out to be attractive for American audiences from the beginning. To mention just a short example: The American Olympic team is the only one that is shown during the arrival in Paris and the British team sees the news

¹⁴² Thomas Elsaesser, *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005): 255.

¹⁴³ Elsaesser, *Face to Face with Hollywood*: 260.

¹⁴⁴ Elsaesser, *Face to Face with Hollywood*: 255.

¹⁴⁵ Elsaesser, *Face to Face with Hollywood*: 261.

about "the American champions"¹⁴⁷ arrival in the cinema. There are no other important nations in this film, except for the British and the US Americans. Other indicators for the film being made attractive for American audiences will be mentioned throughout this analysis.



Screenshot 9: The American Olympic team arrives in France; Source: *Chariots of Fire*, 01:17:22

The representations of Scotsman Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams, an upper class Jew, are based on true stories. These two competitors, united under the banner of the United Kingdom, ran in sprints during the Olympic Summer Games in Paris 1924. *Chariots of Fire* is an adaptation of these real events, but some changes have been made in the movie for the sake of dramatic effects and to simplify the narration. One of these changes is Eric Liddell's knowledge about the 100 metres sprint heats taking place on Sundays. According to Sir Arthur Marshall, Eric Liddell decided "early in 1924 [...] to concentrate on the 400 metres

¹⁴⁶ Geoff Mayer, *Guide to British Cinema* (Westport: Greenwood, 2003): 63.

¹⁴⁷ *Chariots of Fire*, 01:17:49

and, because of his religious principles, would not compete in the Olympic 100 metres as first heats were always run on Sunday."¹⁴⁸ The representation in the movie shows that Liddell gets to know about the schedule only at the moment he boards the ship to Paris.

This change allows the director, Hugh Hudson, to intensify the portrayal of Liddell's faith and his will to live his life according to God's law. Liddell draws his athletic strength from his faith and is strongly supported by his father: "Don't compromise. Compromises are the language of the devil. [...] Run in God's name and let the world stand back and wonder."¹⁴⁹ The Flying Scotsman Liddell even takes it a step further. He starts to combine his love for God with his passion for running. He becomes a guest speaker in church services and also preaches at running spectacles. Liddell captivates his audience speaking on the track, by comparing faith to running in a race, to such an extent, that the audience stands soaking wet from heavy rain but does not dare to move, speak or look for shelter. The people around him are staring at him and as soon as Liddell talks about Jesus and his insight that the power comes from within, the sun makes its way through the clouds and the whole scene is flooded with bright sunlight.¹⁵⁰ This scene seems to be so unnaturally staged as to emphasize the presented power of religion and faith in an extraordinary person's life.

But it is important to mention, that Eric Liddell's faith is a way of keeping sport within proportion. He sees sport and running as something that he likes, he is good at and he certainly sees his chances to win races with his ability. But running is only one part of his life and not everything. He is the amateur, who practises the sport for the love

¹⁴⁸ cf. Arthur Marshall, *Recollections on Eric Liddell*, Eric Liddell Centre Ltd., Available: <<http://content.ericliddell.org/ericliddell/recollections/content/arthur>>, Accessed: 20.9.2008.

¹⁴⁹ *Chariots of Fire*, 00:24:40

¹⁵⁰ Screenshot 10

of it. On the contrary, Harold Abrahams sees running as the only thing in his life. He needs to win to justify his existence and there is nothing else that could provide him with any self-affirmation of this kind. Abrahams is an early exemplar of grinding professionalism. This representation of the upcoming professionalism is highly topical in the Olympic world in the early 1980s, as the IOC finally decided to delete the rule of amateurism from the Olympic Charter.¹⁵¹



Screenshot 10: Eric Liddell preaches; Source: *Chariots of Fire*, 00:25:50

Eric Liddell is presented as a man who lives his life after God's rules and is devoted to his law, but he does not impose this on others. When he decided that he could not run on the Sabbath, he does not ask his team do refrain from so doing. The evidence for his liberality is given before, when Liddell, his family and his best friend Sandy leave a church after the Mass:

¹⁵¹ cf. page 27

Mr. Liddell: There's one right, one wrong, one absolute ruler.
Sandy: A dictator, you mean.
Mr. Liddell: Aye, but a benign, loving dictator.
Sandy: So much for your freedom of choice.
Eric Lidell: You've still got a choice, Sandy. Nobody's forcing you to follow it.¹⁵²

Chariots of Fire partly concentrates on religion as the source of success and, in the following example, failure as well. Even though Eric Liddell does not expect his team mates to quit the heats on the Sunday, the filmic presentation of this particular Sunday leaves the audience with the impression of a greater power that controls the running athletes' skills: Eric Liddell preaches a sermon in the Church of Scotland in Paris, reading Isaiah chapter 40. Hugh Hudson decided to work with cross-cuts between the church and the Olympic stadium, to suggest simultaneity, showing athletes running in the qualifying heats and finals as well. When the camera cuts to the stadium, Liddell's voice is still audible from off-screen, mixed with the audience's cheers. A typical slow Vangelis sound with synthesizer, trumpets and a choir-like backing plays as soon as the cheers fade out. All representations of races with British participation show British defeats, athletes falling, but not a single victory – all filmed in slow motion. A representation of the British defeats would lead to an assumption that all of them probably had a bad day and their opponents were simply better, but in combination with Eric Liddell's refusal to run on the Sunday, the enormous headlines he made with his decision and the preaching about having patience with the lord to "mount up with wings, as eagles" suggest the possible conclusion that these defeats were no coincidence.

¹⁵² *Chariots of Fire*, 00:22:10

There is another important fact to consider in relation to the defeats just presented: Aubrey Montague (Nicholas Farrell) is one of the British athletes losing his race. Actually, Montague was planned to be a major character of the film, too, alongside Liddell and Abrahams. But Montague is the character that loses and losing does not attract the American audience. Therefore, many scenes with him were cut out. This is another hint at the preparation of *Chariots of Fire* for the American market. Furthermore, a different way of seeing the scene described above is as an attempt to increase the popularity of this film in the 'American Bible Belt'.

Chariots of Fire is filled with religious references and I would argue that this is also a link to the Olympic Games outside the movie's narrative. The modern Olympic Games have certain rituals and symbols, like the Olympic flag and the torch. The Games even have a fixed schedule for opening ceremonies and closing ceremonies with a protocol to follow. This reminds one of the ceremonies of a church service with protocol and order, a certain structure that repeats itself everywhere on the planet, wherever the Games take place. Taking a closer look at the opening ceremonies, apart from the symbols and rituals discussed before, the atmosphere also reminds one of a religious gathering: It all has an air of sanctity, peace and understanding, expressed by choirs, brass bands, dancers and the like.

The movie deals with spiritual issues in relation to sport. A further interpretation can be that this is the case because faith and religion are considered to be helpful in our darkest hours, to give shelter in troubled times – And as identified before, the movie was made in a time when the world of sports was shaken by several incidents: For example boycotts and the exclusion of nations from the Olympic Games as well as being made not long after the Munich massacre. Even the film's

narrative takes place shortly after the end of the 1st World War, with a clear memory of that event. *Chariots of Fire* starts and ends with a funeral scene, which is a stylistic element to technically encircle and thematically introduce death from the very beginning – the death of the Corinthian spirit dies with (and arguable in) Harold Abrahams, the Jew who only lived for the sport and for the victory. This burial scene also offers the perception of a religious dimension throughout the movie, right from the beginning. The funeral scene at the end of the film includes a peculiarity of the choir singing "Jerusalem" to honour Harold Abrahams. The movie does not clarify if Abrahams ever converted to Christian belief, because the funeral seems to be held in a Christian church. A scroll also tells us that Eric Liddell died during the 2nd World War working as a missionary in China.

Chariots of Fire does not entirely leave out political conflicts; it mentions them in the form of aristocratic ideas and anti-Semitic attitudes towards Harold Abrahams, for example. An example for this is the scene in which Aubrey Montague and Harold Abrahams arrive at Caius College in Cambridge in 1919. The porter treats Abrahams rather disrespectful by calling him "lad" and teasing him for not having fought in World War I. When Abrahams has left the scene, the porter comments on Abrahams's name to identify him as non-Christian. The addressed Montague is slightly embarrassed. Nevertheless, the porter also treats Montague rather improperly by calling him "son" and asking to repeat his name by saying "what", instead of "pardon" or similar. Therefore, I would argue, the porter may condescend to Abrahams as a Jew, but as a freshman in Caius College all arriving students get some of this disagreeable treatment.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ *Chariots of Fire*, 00:07:00

The same misunderstanding occurs during a conversation between the head of Caius College, the Master of Trinity, and Harold Abrahams, but here it is rather more culpable. Abrahams is accused of training under the supervision of a professional trainer, Sam Mussabini, and that his "aim is to win at all costs". Abrahams confirms that Mussabini is his trainer but declares that he is an amateur, and he aims "to win within the rules".¹⁵⁴ But Abrahams is not as affected by the accusation of being a professional, so much as what he thinks has to do with his being Jewish. The character of Harold M. Abrahams is deeply sensitive about his Jewish background and the film shows him to be justified in this. His behaviour leads to the assumption that he regards every remark about his person as an attack against his being Jewish. He expresses his motivation by using the hyperbolic expression to "take them all and run them off their feet."¹⁵⁵ The following dialogue between Abrahams and Sybil (Alice Krige) represents Harold's attitude on running and losing, albeit losing is not an option for him:

Sybil: If you can't take a beating, it's for the best.

Harold: [aggressive] I don't run to take beatings! I run to win. If I can't win, I won't run.

Sybil: [educational] If you don't run, you can't win.

Abrahams's doubts become even stronger just before the 100-meter race during the Olympic Summer Games in Paris, 1924. While Abrahams is massaged by Mussabini, Aubrey Montague listens to Abrahams's monologue:

Now, in one hour's time, I'll be out there again. I'll raise my eyes and look down that corridor, four feet wide with ten lonely seconds to justify my whole existence. But will I? [nearly crying] Aubrey, I've known the fear of losing. But now I'm almost too frightened to win.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ *Chariots of Fire*, 01:05:55

¹⁵⁵ *Chariots of Fire*, 00:30:30

¹⁵⁶ *Chariots of Fire*, 01:38:18



Screenshot 11: Harold Abrahams lost a race against Eric Liddell; Source: *Chariots of Fire*, 00:49:48

Harold philosophises that this particular, prestigious 100-meter race means everything to him, as Lord Lindsay expected before, that "for Harold it is a matter of life and death". But he sees this race not only as a personal challenge as an Olympic athlete, but also as a challenge against all criticism he has had to face. Because this scene is a climactic one in the development of one of the main characters, technical and dramatic aspects is noteworthy:

The walk-in of the athletes into the stadium is accompanied by a brass band tune and filmed in slow motion from a low angle to create a feeling of amazement and grandeur and to underline the importance of a 100-meter dash during the Olympics, as the Olympics' blue ribbon event. Further evidence for the grandeur of competition at highest level are for example the privilege of being welcomed by the highest officials present, the Prince of Wales and a small entourage in this case: The

camera cuts to the six finalists lined up on the infield, with the main characters Paddock, Scholz and Abrahams at the end of the athletes' line-up. Lord Birkenhead, as presenter, the Prince of Wales and others congratulate everyone. The Prince's words to Abrahams are: "Do your best. That's all we can expect."

Repeatedly used slow motion techniques underline the athletes' pent-up power and grace while preparing for the race, digging foot holes and waiting for the release through the starter's gunshot. Close-ups of single body parts even emphasise this. The dedication with which the athletes compete in this race is expressed by their concentration of powers before the start, the running on the spot and the focus onto the track as a corridor.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, the great endeavours the athletes make are visible in their faces during the warm-up and the race. They run with grimaces on their faces resulting from great effort. In the end, Abrahams convulses himself with overstrain.

The justification for inserting this close analysis of the scene lies within my argument, that this scene represents nearly everything important in the movie. It is the climax of Harold Abrahams's struggle with himself. He does not run for pleasure, he runs to win, he runs to fight back against anti-Semites and he runs to justify his existence, as he calls it. And this 100-meter sprint final during the Olympic Summer Games is a pure distillation into 10 seconds of everything he values and has lived for. In short, it is a ringing endorsement of professionalism, focus and the striving for excellence.

In the narrative, the actual victory of Abrahams was not taken for granted, which makes his victory in the 100-meter sprint more climactic

¹⁵⁷ cf. page 101

than Eric Liddell's 400-meter race afterwards. Abrahams lost a race against Liddell long before, also had lost his 200-meters final during the Games, and seemed so weak an hour before the race, that it would not have been a big surprise if he had lost. But according to the historical facts, no less than the desire to create a happy end for a movie like *Chariots of Fire*, his victory was achieved. Furthermore, the described scene has a length of 7 minutes and 21 seconds, with 1 minute and 20 seconds used for the actual race and its flashbacks. The scene represents a 100-meter race that, in reality, is through in about 10 seconds and therefore it represents a moment of joy, artificially attenuated by technical means.

Another aspect worth mentioning is the representation of aristocracy in combination with sport. Hudson introduces several male characters of high rank, such as the master of Caius College, the Prince of Wales, Lord Birkenhead and others. I already mentioned Harold Abrahams's tetchy interpretation of accusations against his professional trainer¹⁵⁸, which is combined with the detail that the privileged gentlemen often use the words "lad", "son" and "boy" to address the athletes. This is, from my point of view, a minor appreciation of what the athletes do for the glory of the nation and this glory is what the upper class longs for. I do not want to play down the fact that Lord Birkenhead offered Eric Liddell to talk to the French officials to possibly rearrange the date for the heat on Sunday, but as this favour was not realized, Eric Liddell had to defend himself in front of "the committee". Especially against the Prince of Wales who insisted on the importance of "king first and God after" when trying to persuade Liddell. Only George Andre (Yves Beneyton) defends Liddell's position by talking to Birkenhead: "The lad, as you call him, is a true man of principle and a true athlete."¹⁵⁹ He

¹⁵⁸ cf. page 99

¹⁵⁹ *Chariots of Fire*, 01:32:12

seems to be the only official not judging Liddell's decision to follow the teachings of his faith and underlines Liddell's attitude as a true amateur.

In addition to this, the gentlemen then congratulate themselves for making the right decisions after the races were won – The master of Caius College drinks to Abrahams's victory and says: "Just as I expected". I argue, that this is a parallel to the modern world of sports, only on a smaller scale. Birkenhead's offer to reschedule the heat shows that the outcome of sport may be greatly affected by background factors or because of political reasons and/or other ties, as Birkenhead's statement proves: "I'm not without a certain pull and we fought in the war together. They do owe us something." The aristocratic deciders in this film represent to some extent the general audience's suspicion of men in suits, deciding the sport's fate from smoke-filled backrooms.

But actually, *Chariots of Fire* offers an ambiguous representation of aristocracy and class. On the one hand, it critiques the smug position of high-ranking men who seemingly decide things as they like to and on the other hand the team of British athletes consists of men from different class backgrounds who form an affable group. Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams represent relatively ordinary men, but Lord Lindsay, for example, certainly is a man of higher class. But the film does not comment intensively on this. The representation of the past is, as far as I understand it, not as distinctively oppressive as it might have been (the game of cricket at that time would have been played by two groups of men referred to as 'gentlemen' and 'players', reflecting in simple class binary terms their backgrounds), because the athletes' class-affiliation is hinted at, but not elaborated on. I can see two possible explanations for this: It could be a matter of simplifying the film and therefore making it more attractive for American audiences, or it could

also be a glossing over to put the athletes' performance and attitude towards sport in the foreground, especially Liddell and Abrahams's.

It is also worthwhile taking another look at the question of the amateur athlete Abrahams and the professional trainer Mussabini at this point. I already mentioned the discussion from Abrahams's point of view¹⁶⁰, but it is also worth considering the presentation of Mussabini's training methods in comparison to the training of the American athletes¹⁶¹, which none of the British officials criticised as too professional, even though the American training session is combined with dynamic, nearly aggressive music, accompanied by military-like drill and several men in suits with megaphones, stop-watches and stretching aids. The grounds for accusing Abrahams are never really given. What is important dramatically is that Abrahams seems isolated and an underdog against the system (when in truth there was very little system), as if Sam Mussabini were his only companion and ally.

In fact, Sam Mussabini and Harold Abrahams share their status as "loners"¹⁶² and as aliens within British society. Abrahams, the Jew, and Mussabini, the Italian/Arab trainer. Both had something to prove: Abrahams had to prove that he can win through dedication and Mussabini wanted to proof to himself that he can make someone win:

Do you know who you won for out there today? Us! You and old Sam Mussabini. I've waited 30 bloody years for this. Harold! It means the world to me, this, you know.¹⁶³

Sam Mussabini sees the victory as theirs and not as a victory for the nation or any other higher good. That Sam is old and tired and despised, also drinks and smokes, allows us to block out the array of

¹⁶⁰ cf. page 99

¹⁶¹ *Chariots of Fire*, 01:18:36

¹⁶² *Chariots of Fire*, 01:50:20

¹⁶³ *Chariots of Fire*, 01:50:42

modern trainers, nutritionists, publicists, agents and other ancillary sports professionals he has subsequently morphed into.

One aspect I would like to mention in the analysis of *Chariots of Fire* is the important role played by the score, the music. I already mentioned its function of creating certain powerful atmospherics during the racing scenes, but the fact alone that music, entirely produced with technical equipment, such as synthesisers, was so successful in winning an Oscar is noteworthy. Raphael Preston, a sound engineer who worked with Vangelis on this score, said:

Chariots Of Fire was the first synthesizer score to win an Oscar. That showed that Hollywood had recognised synthesizer music as something of real artistic value; it paved the way for a whole generation of composers, and established a new approach to film music.¹⁶⁴

Vangelis nowadays is known for a variety of soundtracks with religious-patriotic overtones, e.g. in *Bladerunner* or *1492 – Conquest of Paradise*, but the score to *Chariots of Fire* was the only composition to win an Academy Award (1982). I argue that this upcoming symbiosis between film, music and television contributed to the popularity of *Chariots of Fire* and Vangelis' music, because the song "Titles", Vangelis and *Chariots of Fire* were associated with each other. And the combination of film plot and music video clip achieved a multiplier effect. It is not surprising to learn that Hugh Hudson, like a lot of younger British film directors, came to film directing from the world of advertising.

As mentioned before in relation to the use of slow motion, filming technique is central to the success of this film. Every staged race, before and during the Games of the VIII Olympiad, is shown in slow motion. Probably the most famous scene of *Chariots of Fire* is the

training of the British athletes at the shoreline in Broadstairs, Kent, (originally filmed in West Sands, St. Andrews) when the whole team runs along the sea¹⁶⁵, filmed in slow motion, of course, and with Vangelis' song "Titles" completing the scene. This combination of grave and patriotic instrumental music and the aesthetic movements of "the most powerful athletic force"¹⁶⁶ underlines the force of the image and the artistic approach used. The baggy clothing and anachronistic sense of pleasure and fellowship (as opposed to the more mercenary spirit of team-building found today) makes the scene so compelling. This is a deliberate harking back to Pierre de Coubertin's understanding of the athletic ideal and the cult of the body, as described in chapter 1.4.

Furthermore, this beach running scene is a flashback cut. It is one of the movie's structuring principles to work with flashbacks, as it is a presentation of memories. The film's narrative shape can be represented in a relatively simple series of temporal and spatial jumps:

Funeral scene in London – 1978

Running on the beach in Kent – 1924

Caius College in Cambridge – 1919

Scottish Highlands – 1920

Athletic Meeting in Scotland – 1923

Olympic Games in Paris – 1924

Funeral Scene in London – 1978

Running on the beach in Kent – 1924

¹⁶⁴ Rapahel Preston "Inside the Synth Lab" in Sound on Sound, November 1997

¹⁶⁵ Screenshot 12

¹⁶⁶ *Chariots of Fire*, 01:12:08



Screenshot 12: Famous running scene with Vangelis' music; Source: *Chariots of Fire*, 00:02:50

This means that the movie includes a total time span of 59 years. I see this large span of time as further evidence for the idea of its trying to resurrect former ideals and manners for the 1980s, as mentioned on page 90. Otherwise, the director, Hugh Hudson, could have touched on Abrahams' death as a text on screen or by a minor character mentioning it, but he decided to emphasise the fact that Abrahams' death happened so shortly before the production of the movie by depicting his funeral ceremony.

4.3 *Munich* (2005) and Munich in 1972

Even though *Munich* is not a sports movie in the sense of having sporting activities at the centre of attention, it cannot be ignored in the development of this thesis as it is directly connected with one of the Olympic Summer Games of the period under review. However, it has to be noted that *Munich* was not produced during the period in question, but it is about this period and about the time between September 1972 and an unspecified day in 1973. Besides this fact, the justification for including this motion picture in the thesis is the fact that it portrays the link between sport, media and politics as no other film had done before.

The feature film *Munich* was directed by Steven Spielberg, one of the most successful, if not the most successful, film directors of the last three decades. He produced the epic movie *Munich* on location in Hungary, on the isle of Malta, in Paris and in New York City and the film was first released in the USA and Canada on 23 December 2005. Europe received the movie at the end of January/beginning of February 2006. At 164 minutes length, *Munich* is the longest of the films in this thesis. The Motion Picture Association of America's film-rating system rated *Munich* an R movie, justified with strong graphic violence, some sexual content, nudity and language. This rating underlines its classification as a non-sports movie in general.

Although the title *Munich* suggests a movie about the events of the 20th Olympic Games in Munich in 1972, this is only one side of the story. The movie's tagline offers a more detailed explanation: "The world was watching in 1972 as 11 Israeli athletes were murdered at the Munich Olympics. This is the story of what happened next." Spielberg and his film crew used original media archive material of the incidents in

September 1972 and they also shot some of the significant scenes again, with the help of documentary material, but the major part of the movie deals with the so-called "Operation Wrath of God", the Israeli retaliation for what happened in Munich.

The description in chapter 3 already suggests that the Olympic Games had become bigger and that the media was an initiating factor in this. The overblown TV event has the potential to become a stage for the politically motivated. The interesting notion of this film regarding this thesis is the importance of the media during the attempt to liberate the Israeli hostages from the Olympic village on the one hand and the new dimension of sport and also terrorism as instant media event on the other.

During the hostage situation, the Olympic village in Munich became a televised village as soon as the media was informed about the terrorist act. Video cameras, photo cameras and reporters were everywhere and surrounded the area. Dan Shilon, an Israeli journalist, recalls:

It was a kind of a bizarre, surrealistic situation, in which we journalists surrounded the event with every possible camera. There were endless cameras around the Olympic village. It was a great story to many television stations and the media around the world. I mean it was the climax of the Olympic Games, such an event. And perhaps even some of the stations took a very cynical approach to this, saying 'Wow! What an audience we'll get now!'¹⁶⁷ [My Transcription]

Every movement of the hostages, the terrorists and of the police forces was recorded and, in this case unfortunately, broadcast to a worldwide audience. The fact that the terrorists were able to receive the television broadcast of the events outside foiled the police's plan to lay siege to the apartment with the hostages in building 31. *Munich* uses the original

¹⁶⁷ *Der Olympia-Mord*, 00:47:06

footage and shows both the originally filmed material and the reporters interviewing and cameras filming. The journalists' interest in this incident was so enormous that the masses of reporters and technicians even blocked the police forces on their way to Munich's military airbase Föstenfeldbruck, where the Palestinian kidnapping ended so unfortunately after hours of uncoordinated conflict. The power of the media during the confrontation of Munich 1972 was not incidental, at least not according to the given statement of the Palestinian terrorist nicknamed Issa to Walther Tröger, the major in charge of the Olympic village. Tröger recalls:

I said 'What are you doing?' and [Issa] said 'we are sorry for you. You made good Olympic Games, but offered us a showcase and we have to use a showcase in order to show our possibilities to so many millions or even billions of people in the world who are watching your Olympic Games.'¹⁶⁸ [My transcription]

Issa was the leader of the Palestinian terrorist squad and his conversation with Walther Tröger shows the core concept of the attacker's strategy. They wanted to spread their concern as far and as wide as possible and the organisation of the so-called 'Civil Games' and 'Serene Olympics' of Munich - without policemen in the Olympic village and the sport sites but only civil security guards - made it easier for them to reach their targets. According to Black September's member Al Gashey, the Black September squad in Munich had no order to kill, but were forced to, when things started to go wrong.¹⁶⁹ The publicity went wrong in the case of Black September. Those who stage acts of violence to get media attention are often forced to pursue distorted objectives when things get out of hand as they inevitably do under such pressure.

¹⁶⁸ *Ein Tag im September*, dir. Kevin Macdonald, Concorde Home Entertainment, 1999. 00:37:40

¹⁶⁹ *Ein Tag im September*, 00:22:55

The organizers of the Munich Olympics designed the Games to be open and accessible and to make the Nazi Olympic Games of 1936 a distant memory and to cast a positive light on Germany. Tony Kushner recalls: "I remember a lot of anger in America and especially a great deal of rage that the situation had been blown so badly."¹⁷⁰ This anger is surely also related to the fact that the, probably over-involved in the course of this event, media broadcast the information about all hostages being safe, even though this information was not true and had to be revised at around 3:00h on the morning of September 6th.

As the director Steven Spielberg himself is of Jewish descent, I would argue that the production of *Munich* probably had some special significance for him, even though he was born in America and therefore has a more distant perspective on the incidents. His screenplay writer, playwright Tony Kushner, is also a Jew living in America and according to interviews both of them gave, they argued and discussed a lot how to represent the incident and its aftermath. The long historical conflict between Israel and Palestine is a series of violence and counter-violence, a result of a combat between oppressors and oppressed and a result of deep-seated rivalry on both sides. This thesis does not seek to comment on historical and political acts and is far from judging political actions, but we can hardly ignore the pro-Israel image given in the movie *Munich*. Even though the film has this pro-Israeli image, it also represents the complexity of the Arab-Israeli conflict and Spielberg does not simply break down the conflict into a 'good guys, bad guys' scenario.

What began in 1972 with the television broadcasts of every move made by Black September and the German police, increased over the years to

¹⁷⁰ *Revisiting Munich: Steven Spielberg Explores a Definite Moment in History*, Universal Studios, Available: <<http://www.munichmovie.com>>, Accessed: 9.11.2008.

a media system in which millions have seen the Twin Towers in New York collapse – live, of course. The incidents during the Olympic Summer Games in 1972 and the film *Munich* clearly form a bridge between the zero hour of international terrorism in Munich 1972¹⁷¹ and the terrorist acts of 9/11 in 2001. Even though Hollywood cinema in general tries to avoid being political or making statements about political decisions, I would argue that the production of *Munich* with its terrorist plot is anything but random at this time, after the World Trade Centre had been attacked. The filmic realisation of the similarity between the terrorist acts in 1972 and the terrorist acts in 2001 is made clearly at the end of the movie, after the character Avner parts from Ephraim and walks home again. While walking, he looks over to his right at the World Trade Centre and even after he has left the frame, New York's skyline remains for a few seconds before a fade to black.



Screenshot 13: Avner leaves the scene with the WTC in the back; Source: *Munich*, 02:29:51

Besides becoming a stage for politically motivated messages, the media interest in big sports events also increased the motivation of streakers

¹⁷¹ *Der Olympia-Mord*, 00:53:58

and other crankish self-advertisers to appear during a broadcast. The beginnings of streaking being a phenomenon for the wider public began in America in the 1970s, parallel to the rise of television. Although, the 'tradition of streaking' arose on university campuses:

In the American imaginary of the early 1970s, the campus had become a dangerously politicized space, ground zero for the Generation Gap and a place that increasingly appeared to threaten established gender and racial hierarchies with the rise of feminism and civil rights. [...] Streaking emerged as a national media event at an interesting juncture in political and collegiate history.¹⁷²

Even though streaking in public places like campuses or public streets aroused public interest, the streaking at public sport events with media participation offered a much bigger audience. Especially in sports like cricket, which can have the tendency to become static and long-drawn-out, streakers were a welcomed distraction:

Photographic evidence of crowd reaction invariably shows thousands of smiling faces, glad for a distraction. Many find it the perfect protest against the growing corporatisation and corruption of sport. Others think it's the best giggle since McEnroe stopped playing tennis, or since John Daly got back on the wagon.¹⁷³

¹⁷² Bill Kirkpatrick, *'It Beats Rocks and Tear Gas': Streaking and Cultural Politics in the Post-Vietnam Era*, 2008, Available: <<http://www.billkirkpatrick.net/streakingjpc.doc>>, Accessed: 23.4.2009.

¹⁷³ *Streaking and Sport*, 2000, Available: <<http://www.streakerama.com/streakingandsport.htm>>, Accessed: 23.4.2009.



Figure 11: First streaker at Olympic Games: M. LeDuc; Source: Lynn Ball, The Ottawa Citizen, Available: http://coolopolis.blogspot.com/2008_02_01_archive.html

The first streaker at the Olympic Games was Michael LeDuc, who ran across the pitch during the closing ceremony in Montreal's Olympic Stadium in 1976. But what started as a rather funny insertion during a game caused problems for the television media, especially in America. The rising number of streakers during sport events led TV broadcasters to show off-pitch pictures during stalker scenes on the pitch – because of the fear of any kind of uncontrolled transmitted message on the one hand and for the nudity on major networks on the other. A recent example of 'celebrity nudity' during a sports event that caused lively discussions and changes for the major television networks was the Super Bowl XXXVIII halftime show with Justin Timberlake helping Janet Jackson to reveal a breast (the so-called "wardrobe malfunction"). "Thousands of viewers rang to complain. One woman, Tennessee

banker Terri Carlin, even filed a class action lawsuit claiming millions of dollars in compensation."¹⁷⁴

Another reason for not showing streaking action is the wish to discourage further streakers by denying them the wanted attention. But newspapers very often still publish photographs of these unplanned interludes. Nowadays, in times of the Internet, the streakers become walking bill-boards, recently, especially for gambling websites.¹⁷⁵ Even though television maybe manages to avoid broadcasting a streaker's interference with the event, very often allies or the employer of the streaker sit in the audience and film his/her action to post it on the Internet.



Figure 12: Mark Roberts, streaking during the Beijing Olympics, with advertising on his body; Source: David Hecker, AFP/GettyImages, Available: <<http://www.gettyimages.com>>, photo: #82507843

Furthermore, streaking reveals another problem arising during big sport events: A person is able to enter a zone, which is reserved for the

¹⁷⁴ "American TV pushes nudity off the schedule," *Taipei Times* 16.2.2004.

athletes and officials. No fence, security guards group or House Rule¹⁷⁶ actually prevents them from streaking. Security has become a big issue, even though streakers seem to be a rather harmless intrusion.

But the fear of terrorist attacks, as happened in Munich 1972, during major sport events, such as World Championships, Olympic Games or similar, is now enormous. The organisers of the respective events are obsessed with security measures.

Let us dwell on the most recent Olympic Summer Games in Beijing for a moment: the torch relay, for example, was escorted by security guards in official Beijing Olympics track suits, but they were not comparable to the civilian dressed policemen during the 1972 Olympics. "The men in blue were members of a Chinese military elite unit, [...] whom Sebastian Coe, Chief of the London 2012 Organising Committee, described as 'goons'."¹⁷⁷ [My translation] In terms of publicity, the torch relay preceding the Beijing Olympics was a disaster for the organisers, because of the massive anti-China and pro-Tibet protests along the relay route on the one hand and because of the successful attempts of protestors to actively disturb the torch relay with actions and assaults on the travelling Olympic flame. These actions led to interference of the 'blue men' and national police forces, which, broadcast all around the world, provoked outcries against the brutality and strength with which the security guards reacted. The IOC decided just recently to cancel further international torch relays and to limit the future relays to the host country - It would make it "easier for the organisers and the host governments to control everything", said Gilbert Felli, a director of the IOC.¹⁷⁸ The attacks during the torch relay again increased the fear of attacks during the following Olympic Games. But it is not only the fear

¹⁷⁵ Figure 12

¹⁷⁶ *House Rules*, 2008, Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad.

¹⁷⁷ Thomas Schmoll, "Hüter der Flamme: Mysteriöse Männer in Blau," *Berliner Morgenpost* 11.4.2008.

of a mere attack of the Games, athletes, audiences, but the concern that the host country's/government's/people's image would suffer. As Hans Dieter-Krebs from Deutsche Welle Radio puts it: "The media have made sport great and indispensable, but at the same time vulnerable and controversial."¹⁷⁹

The latest demonstration for this occurred in March 2009 in Pakistan, when terrorists attacked the Sri Lankan cricket team in their bus on the way to a match against Pakistan. Six Pakistani policemen and a driver died, seven Sri Lankan cricketers were injured and the media was at the scene to report live, before the shooting had ended. "The sport's world governing body, the International Cricket Council, last month decided not to hold the 2009 Champions Trophy in Pakistan due to safety worries."¹⁸⁰ Pakistani cricket was already suffering from serious security concerns, but now the future of the country's role in cricket sport, and most probably other (sporting) events, too, is at stake. Some organized political radical groups like to show their audacity, like they did in the USA on 9/11, and there is no better effect created than by pushing the sentimental buttons of the public and the administration.

Ironically, media proliferation, particularly [in] the 24/7 television news channels, has increased the intensity and probability of such dramatic high-profile attacks, say analysts. Terrorism thrives in the media spotlight which terrorists successfully attracted in Mumbai last November and now with the Lahore attack.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ cf. "IOC will keinen internationalen Fackellauf mehr," *Der Tagesspiegel* 27.3.2009.

¹⁷⁹ Hans-Dieter Krebs, "Independent Journalism," *The Olympic Movement and the Mass Media*, ed. Fékrou Kidane (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 1996): 55.

¹⁸⁰ *Gunmen shoot Sri Lanka cricketers*, 3.3.2009, BBC, Available: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7920260.stm>, Accessed: 23.4.2009.

¹⁸¹ Beena Sarwar, *Terrorists aim for Destabilisation, Media Attention*, 4.3.2009, Inter Press Service, Available: <<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=45961>>, Accessed: 23.4.2009.

The Sri Lankan cricket team has been the victim of a "cowardly terrorist attack"¹⁸², very similar to the Israeli wrestling team and its coaches, being made victims in 1972. In a metaphorical sense, one can also include discriminated against Jewish athlete Harold M. Abrahams and his coach Sam Mussabini in this group. All these sportsmen fell victim to wider interests more powerful than themselves. The Sri Lankan cricketers wanted to show good will and play in Pakistan (substituting at the last minute the Australian team which had refused to tour for security reasons), as it was their profession and out of sub-continental loyalty.¹⁸³ The Israeli wrestling team were going along with the theme of renewal and reconciliation simply by being in Germany at that time and Abrahams and Mussabini marked the beginning of professionalism in a time when it was not allowed and when professionalism was the only hope for athletes born into less privileged circumstances.

¹⁸² Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse quoted in *Gunmen shoot Sri Lanka cricketers*.

¹⁸³ cf. Sri Lanka's vice captain Sangakkara in *Lahore Test scrapped after attack*, 3.3.2009, BBC, Available: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/cricket/7920306.stm>>, Accessed: 23.4.2009.

Conclusion

The preceding thesis related the historical re-initiation of the Olympic Games by Pierre de Coubertin to the influence of the different media accompanying it and the changes that began with the input of private sponsorship money. I argued that the period under review was a transitional one and that the Olympic Games and its related organisational features were influenced by many new and powerful factors.

The analysis made clear that the Olympic Games and its rules have been adjusted constantly, by examining one of the core ideals, if not **the** core ideal that Pierre de Coubertin championed: Amateurism. The insecurities and discussions about this principle began with its introduction during the Olympic Congress in 1894 and prevailed for nearly 100 years, before the IOC decided to abandon it as unsustainable and delete the amateur rule from the Olympic Charter. This alteration of principle was in no sense voluntarily, but a necessary step to retain credibility. The decreasing number of high-class amateur athletes, or more precisely, the significantly increased number of professional athletes forced the International Olympic Committee to take action to keep up with the developments of the age. As shown earlier, the feature film *Chariots of Fire* underlines the dilemma of the two competing ideologies and furthermore it is an aestheticisation of sportive competition. The setting of the film's story, in the time around 1924, additionally contributes to the impression that the Olympic Games and its reputation had been badly damaged by events in the late 1970s and the early 80s. Hugh Hudson's decision to set the film back in time suggests an attempt to revive the sport from a time in which it seemingly had fewer problems, than during the period of the film's production. But it has to be noted, that the presentation of class in this film does not entirely conform to social reality. The film has a subtext of declining class privilege but it is rather ambiguous about this. Hudson

simplified the issue of class differences to concentrate on the representation of the decline of amateurism and emergence of professionalism. In sum, this means that even though the film rather neglects a thorough critique of societal hierarchies, its relevance for this thesis was still evident through the handling of the amateur question at a time when this matter was highly topical, and as a reinforcement of Pierre de Coubertin's romanticised view onto the Olympics. These two themes presented in the film correspond to the findings of my historical research into the early ideologies at work in the Olympic and confirm their importance.

However, it was not only the amateur issue that caused problems for the Olympic Games. The first three Olympic Summer Games of the period under review turned out to be three extremely problematic Games, for three different reasons and in every case the reasons were related to politics: The Games of the XX Olympiad in Munich 1972 became the stage of a cowardly attack on an Israeli wrestling team by Black September's Palestinian terrorists. This unworthy climax to the 'Serene Games' was broadcast worldwide and the incidents that happened in Munich have been the forerunner of many facets of Olympic organisation we now take for granted during the modern Olympic Games, notably the costly and elevated levels of security. It is not only since 9/11 that organisers of big events have become obsessed with security – much that is now normative is on account of Munich 1972. Terrorists and, in the following years, also some less violent trouble-makers, have appeared during big sporting events to use the media's presence as a communication platform for their own causes. The feature film *Munich*, in combination with the documentaries *Der Olympia-Mord: München '72 - Die wahre Geschichte* and *Ein Tag im September*, are the most obvious examples of how precisely this came to occur, which is obviously closely connected to the presence of the

world's media. Even though *Munich* is mainly a thriller and should in no way be considered a documentary, the movie contributes to this thesis. The complexity of the Arab-Israeli conflict presented stands for the political world pressing in upon the Olympic Games in Munich and also provides an important sub-text post 9/11, when the film was produced. The importance of the media, present and broadcasting live in both particular incidents, was immense. *Munich* picks up this aspect and therefore underlines the impossibility of sport going on independently of wider political influences.

Furthermore, the Games of Montreal 1976 and Moscow 1980 also suffered from higher (many would argue unacceptably high) levels of politicisation. The Montreal Games struggled with hyperinflation and its impact after the Oil Crisis. The gigantic construction projects affected the government's resources strongly and statistics even indicated that every Montrealer had to pay additional taxes to bail out the Games. In addition to this, some of the planned buildings were not completed until the opening ceremony. Some projects needed to be cancelled entirely and the whole success of the Summer Games in Montreal was in jeopardy up to and during the Games. Apart from the crucial financial difficulties besetting it, the Montreal Games were overshadowed by the first boycott of the period reviewed. 21 African nations left the Olympic Games before the opening ceremony as a protest against apartheid.

The following Games in Moscow had to bear the political consequences that arose from the Soviet invasion into Afghanistan, when 65 nations boycotted the Games as a protest against the USSR's military action. The boycotting nations were predominantly western – the broad affiliations of the Cold War were in this way reconfirmed. The other major incident, concerning Taiwan and China not being willing to be represented by one common flag, was largely eclipsed by the boycotts.

Nevertheless, I should like to point out, that, in contrast to my pre-thesis thinking, I have been able to identify much more political interference in the Olympic Games than I had imagined there was. It was not only the specific period reviewed that had to put up with control. Politics and the Olympics had never been unconnected. Especially *Chariots of Fire* offered some new insights into aristocratic assumptions and class prejudice in connection with sport in the early days of the modern Olympics era. Furthermore, *Munich* served to highlight the connection the sweeping Middle-East Conflict has had since the period reviewed until the present. Pierre de Coubertin's wish for the Olympic Games to be able to bring war to a halt still remains a charming delusion to this day.

The remaining movie, *Animalympics*, offers an ironic commentary on many, if not all, of the noteworthy incidents of the Olympic Games and its surroundings. In so far as it is a sports cartoon and a parody, *Animalympics* comments on the amateur issue, fair play, drugs, the media's presence and much more. Even though it is a cartoon, primarily designed to appeal to children, the film touches on the above-mentioned subjects with an enjoyable mixture of humour and seriousness and inevitably from a recognisably American vantage-point. Although *Animalympics* only appeared by coincidence in the form in which it has been reviewed, it nevertheless makes pertinent observations on the perilous state of the Olympic ideal in the period reviewed. The humorous barbs about ZOO's methods of live coverage contribute to expose the already dominant role of the media in sport.

This subject of the power of the media connected to the Olympic Games of the modern era is a central aspect of this thesis. The development from newspaper reports, magazines, radio to television coverage and, nowadays, the Internet has tracked the development of the Olympic

Games. This thesis showed how the media has adjusted itself to sports, for example the magazine business that had to accommodate readers' demands. But especially how television contributed to sports appreciation when it brought out new techniques to make sport on television more attractive (slow-motion, etc) and, in the beginning, made it possible for the first time to televise sports that were not limited to a static and confined boxing ring but needed equipment to cover the whole match area, such as football, track and field, horse-racing and many others.

Sport reformed and developed itself, with the help of the various kinds of media, to a phenomenon accessible to and interesting for the masses. Regular attendance at a stadium or the collective watching in sports bars became a part of society's culture. Especially in team sports, great exposure has encouraged people to identify themselves with a club and follow the news and events about it. But at times when almost all media make sport accessible worldwide, the fan-base has become virtual, loyalty has become vicarious. To remain with the example of football: a fan of a top football team does not necessarily have to live near the club's city to follow the events. Television, most commonly pay-tv channels, and the Internet make it possible to take an active part in supporting your club. This is why clubs like Manchester United and Liverpool have extensive supporters' clubs in the Far East. Some of the clubs have even initiated their own Internet radio channels to report the games live and make the reports accessible worldwide. The Internet benefits from being a cross-media medium.

Apart from film, television is the medium that has drawn most of the attention in this thesis and it also is the medium that invites further research upon conclusion of my work, because of its relation to sponsoring/advertisements and their wider role in society. I would like

to point out further possibilities for continuing research, with this dissertation as a starting-point:

An interesting facet to take up would be the development of women's role in the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games. As I have already hinted, the participation of women was initially unwelcome at the Olympic Games and there is still a discrepancy in the numbers of men and women competing nowadays. The period reviewed in the thesis is connected with the so-called second wave of feminism and it is noticeable that the number of female participants has increased greatly, especially since the 1970s. The political pressure applied by women's groups and the representation of women in the (sports) media could be a suitable subject for future analysis.

The thesis already draws a few connections between the entry of sponsorship into the world of sports and the role of the media, but the circulation of money in this market and its impact is a huge field of analysis. The period reviewed in this thesis alone represents a decent introduction to the topic, as it is the beginning of the Olympic Games financed without governmental support, represented by the Games in Los Angeles in 1984. My reason for citing marketing and sponsorship as further issues of interest results from recent developments seen in Germany: The humorous allusion to the Olympic Games in Los Angeles as the "Hamburger Olympics" and the Atlanta Games as "the Coca Cola Olympics" has become a reality in Germany in the selling-off of rights to stadiums' names, for example. Football stadiums with long lasting traditions have been renamed from, for example, "Westfalenstadion" to "Signal Iduna Park", as the result of a big national insurance company entering the sport market. Newly built football stadiums in Germany are very often immediately branded: "Allianz Arena" (insurance company), "Volkswagen Arena" (automobile), or "LTU Arena" (airline). In addition to the introduction of the sponsor's names, which are mostly unrelated

to (the) sport, the changes of names also suggest new usages of the stadiums: But the "Signal Iduna Park" is not a park to walk around and have a picnic in; it is merely a football stadium. German stadiums labelled with the term "arena" very often imply the multifunctional possibilities to use the stadiums for football and concerts, for example. Therefore, apart from the certainly interesting analysis of figures and numbers related to marketing revenues, the question of further development in rebranding and sponsoring could be interesting. But is there the possibility that "Olympic Stadiums" in the host cities will have sponsors' names at some point? Will it happen that the Games will officially become the "Hamburger Olympics" or "Coca-Cola Games"?

In summary I would like to point out that the importance of this thesis lies in the establishment of a basis for further investigation in sports management, ethics and business practice. These can lead in the direction of gender studies or marketing affairs, as just mentioned. Further study of sports films is also possible: the sporting film biography, for example, like the two films of the life of Steve Prefontaine, Munich's most famous running underachiever, as well as a linguistic analysis of how sporting language is entering our everyday culture and even our political discourse. The 'sportification' of our wider culture has certainly increased and sport and its mega events have gained in importance.

The final statement of this thesis should be some re-evaluation of Pierre de Coubertin's initiation of the Olympic Games of the modern era. He certainly revived the antique Olympic Games and brought them into a more modern context, but my impression, after the research I have conducted and evaluation I have made of it, is, that the truly modern Olympics were born in the period surveyed by the thesis. The official entry of professionalism, the extraneous forces of international politics

and private business and the important role of the media lead into a whole new era of the Olympic Games. Pierre de Coubertin's romanticised view of the Olympics, as noble as it was and is, was not able to keep sport wholly insulated from either the wider political concerns of its national participants, nor from other cultural agents like powerful media. All attempts to keep it so insulated can only ever be partially successful and are certain to be challenged. With big money and constant media attention came the cheating and the gamesmanship, which sports administrators now have to contend with.

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