



The “sporting spirit”: Agonism and its acceptations (XI, n. 1, 2020)

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In the contemporary age, sport is analysed from different scientific perspectives (e.g.: philosophy, sociology, education, ethics and political science). Although common sense considers physical exercise as a means of improving psychological and physical well-being, in the social imaginary sport is also a metaphor which describes life and some of its most important turning points: as a matter of fact, we often say “Hurry up, it is the last-mile” when someone is getting a difficult job done. On the contrary when people are involved in activities or projects, we can use expressions such as “We have to play the game”, or “Play with team spirit”. It is clear that this kind of spirit characterises not only the sport system, but also our everyday life: we can define it as agonism or “competitiveness”.

Therefore, “competitiveness” is a contemporary keyword: in this regards, it can be interpreted in many ways and also analysed in suspicious terms. For example, we can read George Orwell’s point of view; in 1945 he wrote an articles on the *Tribune*, an English newspaper, referring to a football match between an English team and a Russian one, Dinamo: “Now that the brief visit of the Dynamo football team has come to an end, it is possible to say publicly what many thinking people were saying privately before the Dynamos ever arrived. That is, that sport is an unfailing cause of ill-will, and that if such a visit as this had any effect at all on Anglo-Soviet relations, it could only be to make them slightly worse than before”. Orwell had a critical position about the “sporting spirit” and, at the end of his contribute, he observes: “I am always amazed when I hear people saying that sport creates goodwill between the nations, and that if only the common peoples of the world could meet one another at football or cricket, they would have no inclination to meet on the battlefield. Even if one didn't know from concrete examples (the 1936 Olympic Games, for instance) that international sporting contests lead to orgies of hatred, one could deduce it from general principles”.

As can be seen, competitiveness can foster a debate between two different positions: on the one hand, there are its supporters, who underline its potential role in testing human abilities; on the other hand, there are some critics who stress its excesses.

More generally, what are the contemporary social and political forms of competitiveness? And, on the contrary, what kind of competitiveness can we foster, in order to build a trained society and a “good” competition?

The aim of this call for papers (*Lessico di Etica pubblica* – XI, n.1; 2020), is to analyse this concept of competitiveness, which can be interpreted as a danger for social unity or as a resource for public debates and a means to personal and collective development.

Essays on the following themes are expected:

- Philosophy and sport: how does the sporting metaphor characterize society and its anthropological vision?
- Social philosophy: social competition, its implications and critics;
- Political philosophy: is it possible a peaceful coexistence in a competitive society?
- Ethics and Education: competitiveness as a model of human education and the pedagogical premise of sporting practises;
- Education: sporting competitiveness as a pedagogical model and its risks;

All essays must deal with the issue of competitiveness, with a special regard to its social and political role and to its pedagogical and ethics implications.

All articles must be submitted no later than 30th April 2020, in a form already prepared for blind review procedures. Texts in Italian are accepted; they must conform to the editorial guidelines that can be found at the following address: <http://www.eticapubblica.it/>

The maximum allowed length is between 25.000 and 35.000 characters (that also include footnotes and an abstract of max. 150 words to be written both in English and Italian).

Please submit your essay here:

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