

Olympic Researcher

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ABSTRACT

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"Faster, Higher, Stronger". With these words Pierre de Coubertin would summarize the Olympic spirit. And, in a simpler, but no less noble way he would add: "The most important is not to win, but to take part!"

The world had recently a chance to remember these sayings upon the occasion of the Olympic and Para-Olympic Games in Beijing. We were offered beautiful images that, certainly, we will not forget: that fraction of a second that resulted in a new record, a jump that seemed impossible, but ended with full grace and lightness, individual strivings, team-work, overcoming of physical and psychological limits... All were recorded in history with a medal or worldwide acknowledgment. To the audiences, it was a spectacle. To the athletes, the crowning of a training routine demanding intense effort and devotion.

What is the stimulus that leads an athlete to devote him- or herself in such an integral way, to overcome limits, pain, habits, to sacrifice his or her social life, in the search of perfection? Certainly, ego has a part. But also, the unexplainable pleasure of meeting challenges, together with the indescribable pleasure of overcoming them. This the reason why we usually associate athletes to heroes, i.e. models of dedication and self-improvement, up to the point we share in the pride of our favorite when he or she wins.

However, an athlete isolated from his or her medium is meaningless. We can only acknowledge his or her merit by comparison to his or her peers, excelling in exactly a same modality. In the context of the wide diversity of modalities, the notion of an isolated hero fades in the face of a community of athletes. It is perhaps in this way that de Coubertin's words are to be understood. The Olympic spirit is not represented by the number of medals, the records broken; it does not belong exclusively to elite athletes. Conversely, it is open to all humankind, to stimulate striving to overcome limits, meet challenges and attain personal and collective aims. Within this spirit, we are all athletes, even those who have not yet discovered what their particular skills and talents are. This includes also researchers!

Who is the researcher that has never lost one night sleep striving to solve a scientific puzzle? What mysterious force is that which impels a researcher to devote many years to his or her research subject, even when it does not appear clearly or well defined, sacrificing his or her social life, health and leisure? To overcome older notions, break paradigms, establish new models – all is a part of the daily routine of those devoted to science. The Large Hadron Collider, the largest particle accelerator ever built, has just entered in operation, after two decades of planning and construction. And it brought with it an interesting, even paradoxical

issue. Results obtained with LHC may demolish several current theories and notions regarding the structure of matter, including some that underlay its original project. An example of team-work, devotion, striving and overcoming, fitting to heroes.

I admit that only very rarely a researcher is worldwide acknowledged as a hero. Even while remaining anonymous, society at large will benefit from his or her studies. However, just as an athlete, a researcher isolated from his or her community is meaningless. His or her merit is acknowledged when his or her work is available to his or her peers.

Science is similar to sports: our training gyms are laboratories and research facilities; press coverage is supplied by scientific journals. And also, regarding the diversity of areas and fields, we shift our focus from the single researcher to the scientific community. Analogously, we can speak of a “scientific spirit” able to motivate scientists to meet challenges, pose and solve new problems, refine notions and technologies.

Some researchers like to practice sports, and some athletes are interested in science. The Olympic and scientific spirits share some common traits. Both researchers and athletes are motivated when challenged. And the same mysterious power, unexplainable pleasure and indescribable rewards apply to both.

Researchers are also athletes, because these notions overlap from the perspective of goals. As athletes, researchers paraphrase de Coubertin’s words: “most energetic, most accurate, most complete”. Regarding society, as long as it is the scientific community, rather than an isolated researcher what is

meaningful, “the most important is not to win, but to take part”, as an effort to reshape society itself.

Challenges are important, as they orientate our effort towards a common goal. The scientific community related to High Dilutions Research cannot afford not to take part. In this context, IJHDR proposes some challenges to readers, not in order to exhaust research subjects, but to stimulate the search for specific answers.

A first challenge is related to current environmental problems. It is believed that HDs might have potential benefit, particularly in Agriculture and Veterinary. However, rather than beliefs, our community must show positive results, make suggestions and develop and improve technologies.

A second issue is the oscillatory behavior reported on studies on dilution-dependence. Some researchers believe that this phenomenon can only be observed in biological models. However, it would be expected to observe these oscillations also in non-biological experiments, such as the physical-chemical ones.

Finally, the third challenge concerns the hypothesis proposing an electromagnetic nature for information. Generation, transmission, amplification and storage of information are relevant issues, which still must be well described and reproduced.

Let us appeal to the Olympic and scientific spirit to meet these challenges. Instead of medals, papers or awards, we will earn that kind of reward that only Olympic researchers might hope for.

"[Full text with bibliography and figures]"

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