I. The purpose of this study

- to show
  - how Coubertin describes the relationship between nature and his Sports of Combat
- to consider
  - the background of Coubertin’s descriptions

  - by focusing on swimming
  - on mountain climbing

II. Classifications of sports by Coubertin

The Classification of sports in 1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports of Balance</th>
<th>Sports of Combat</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rowing</td>
<td>fencing</td>
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<tr>
<td>skating</td>
<td>tennis</td>
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<td>handball</td>
<td>water polo</td>
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<td>swimming</td>
<td>nature</td>
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<td>air gymnastics</td>
<td>mountain climbing</td>
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<tr>
<td>ball games</td>
<td>water polo</td>
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<tr>
<td>ice-cycling</td>
<td>skating</td>
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<td>toboggan</td>
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III-A. Coubertin’s evaluation

- essential sports
  - in the Olympic movement
  - in Coubertin’s perception of sport
  - swimming
    - Olympic Progra from the 1st Games of 1896
    - Gymnastique untlale: one of the abilities
      - (Revue des deux mondes, 1901)
      - (Revue des deux mondes, 1902)
    - “read and swim” is to count as being human
      - (Revue des deux mondes, 1901)
  - mountain climbing
    - the Olympic award for the best ascent
      - expressed in the first Congress of 1894
      - (Mémoires Olympiques, 1895)
      - a general program in the plan of the 1908 Olympic Games
      - (Projet financier de la IVème Olympiade à Rome, 1906)
      - the mountain climbing medal 1924
      - (Mémoires Olympiques, 1932)

III-B. Descriptions of sports by Coubertin

- did not write about
  - the skill of each sport
  - the method for instructing sports
- wrote about
  - the psychological explanations of sports
    - Coubertin called “sport psychology”
      - (Revue des deux mondes, 1900)
      - (Note sur l’éducation publique, 1901)

  “Une vague qui l’(nageur)’étouffe, une crampe qui le paralyse, un courant qui l’entraîne et aussitôt le voisinage du danger, qui en somme, il rétrécit de toutes parts, se révèlera à lui avec une intensité pour lasser des traces.” (Revue des deux mondes, 1902)

Quotations about swimming

1. “If he is suffocated by a wave, paralyzed by cramp or carried away by a current, the swimmer may have such an intense awareness of the presence of danger gripping him from all sides that he may not emerge unscathed.” (Revue des deux mondes, 1902)

2. “Swimming is a combat with a hostile element which ultimately can not be overcome... The force of waves no doubt brings about a more moving spectacle, but no matter how gentle and calm the wave motions are, they can never remove from this sport the combative character which is the essence and the charm of it.” (Revue des deux mondes, 1901. Note sur l’éducation publique, 1901)

3. “... you have the right to avoid, when you swim, the anguish of an eddy or a too violent current.” (Figaro, 1902)

4. “I knew good swimmers who experienced such a sudden and intense ‘vision’ of liquid depth amassed beneath them that they might well have lost the power to move...” (Figaro, 1902)

III-B-1. Swimming

Swimming is a fight against
- the force of waves
- the eddy
- the violent current
- the illusion of liquid depth

- Coubertin’s eyes on swimmer’s fear
  - Hostile elements of nature affect the swimmer’s mentality

III-B-2. Mountain climbing

“Mountain climbing is truly a combat sport”

- Alpinists “challenge the mountain in a genuine battle”
  - the huge rocks
  - the endless snowy slopes, the dense fogs
  - the deep crevasses, the avalanches

- “A mountain will make an alpinist feel giddy, and will knock him down by the north wind and the cold; and he only overcomes these obstacles by a manly combination of very well-employed energy, desirable self-control, and firm prudence. Certainly this is a battle and one of the most modern sort, such as is won not by ardor but by strategy.” (Revue des deux mondes, 1900. Note sur l’éducation publique, 1901)

- Coubertin focuses his attention on
  - the intelligence of the alpinist
  - the strategy to overcome the hostile elements of nature
IV. A débrouillard and Sports of Combat

- débrouillard
  - young man who is self-sufficient in any situation
    - (Figaro, 1902. Gymnastique utilitaire, 1905)
  - in mixture of balance and combat (Excelsior, 1914)
    * enlivened by physical quality and psycho-moral quality

- Sports of Combat
  - “have a kind of intrinsic value in boy’s development.”
  - prepare human beings for the offensive and defensive qualities which are necessary in modern society.
  - “in the struggle for life” (Gymnastique utilitaire, 1905)
  - Olympic Congress (Lausanne, 1913)
    - psychological studies about each sport: continuity from 1900
    - necessity for distinguishing between sports which develop balance and sports which prepare for combat. (Excelsior, 1914)

- “...all humans are dedicated to the battle against some events, their fellows, and life... According to their temperament and their inclination, they will bring offensive and defensive qualities into the battle.” (Excelsior, 1914)

V. What is a Sport?

- Sport
  - “the attitude in which it is put into practice, the spirit which animates it, and the soul which makes a human being”
  - fortifies the character of human being
  - develops la musculature morale de l’homme
  - can set a human cultivating “the effort for effort” and going for “the obstacles”
    - (Revue des deux mondes, 1900. Note sur l’éducation publique, 1901)

In Conclusion

- Coubertin: Nature and Sports of Combat
  - not to conquer nature
  - but to fight against nature

- Background of descriptions:
  - pedagogical idea
    * all humans dedicate their lives to battles in the modern society
    * necessity to draw out combative qualities

- Physical and psychological efforts in Sports of Combat
  - stimulate the moral and intellectual development of human being