

Technocratic Fetishism

The great passion for a complex sport such as golf can make many golfers fall into a crazy race for self-improvement. The pursuit of perfection often gives birth to two different kinds of players:

- The *climbers*, whose natural love for the game is highly blurred and hacked by the dream of personal success or other unknown reasons: prestige and popularity among the other club members, the obsession for the score, the harassing thought of new irons or the best ball on the market... Moreover the pure pleasure of playing is – just by definition – an “absolute beauty”, a true “artistic activity” in the Kantian meaning of these terms (*absolute* = unbound, free from ulterior motives);
- The *questers*, those who have thirst for knowledge, those who want to comprehend the mechanics of the world 'round them, those who are never self-satisfied and do not accept the current situation or the “once and for all” fixed systems, those who reject the “precise measurements”, the golf magazine's revealed truths or the pro's “ipse dixit”.

The “researcher-golfer” basically wants to leave an impression of himself into the things besides him, he doesn't want to understand reality just to govern it, but to *feel closer* to it instead. Here it really comes in handy that wonderful image of the *artisan* written by Karl Marx: according to Marx the craftsman has the ability to “spiritualize” the matter that he produces because he puts part of himself into his artworks. The poor factory worker, the employee, the labourer all cannot recognise themselves into the product of their work – since it comes from slavery and not from a free artistic expression – and so they all feel **alienated**, unfamiliar with their own activity and hostile to the society (rank differences). That's the exact same way many people deal with their golf equipment.

Often the “climber” is a technocrat: he places total faith toward progress and everything that is apparently well assorted, standardised, quantified hence awfully MEASURABLE!

However our ancestors used to place on the same level of importance both the so called “humanistic sciences” and the “technical sciences”: among the “trivium” and “quadrivium” disciplines Literature, Philosophy and Theology were evaluated the same way as Maths and Physics, because technical studies were considered as valid and respectable “instruments” of the humanistic thought. It is almost essential to understand that it cannot be any kind of scientific progress without an interior impulse, a human passion pulling the ropes of the “raft of wisdom”, a true **sympathy** which connects the investigator to the object of his studies (*syn-pathos* = mutual emotion) – that is *feeling*! In fact Einstein himself wouldn't have formulated a single theory if he hadn't been moved by intuition, faith and love for his own work.

Golf evolves under our own eyes through the apparent shape of angles, ball flights, shot distances,

lofts and flexibilities: they're all more than useful instruments and they constitute that foolproof structure called "Exact Science"...

... but we must take into consideration that WE mortal men – very imperfect and faulty beings – we are the creators and "exploiters" of science, we have that "**stupid vice**" (*quot. by Cesare Pavese*) to hide our own errors behind it and then, once more, we become slaves of that same "Power of the Reason" we used to break the chains of ignorance and the boundaries of our nature. It's not just a case that Horkheimer and Adorno (in their book "*Dialectic of Enlightenment*" 1947) recognized a *secularization process* where "the rationality overrules the intentions" with horrible consequences (see Auschwitz).

Believing that golf only depends on the technical precision of balls and clubs or that modern lessons with video-analysis constitute the top of didactic evolution... well all that is just a **TECHNOCRATIC FETICH** (that's the same way Marx defined the capitalistic habit of goods accumulation as "commodity fetishism").

Thus there's in act a process of *global alienation*, a collective enslavement to the technological and cultural industry, a process transmitted with friendly appearance (commercials and advertisements) but whose aim is to "standardize" and make everyone "democratically/sportsmanly equal" more on the 18th green... rather than on the 1th tee!

Fair competition or death of the Romanticism? Isn't it a deep and almost prodigious **act of thought** that allows us to concentrate, into a *single athletic motion*, the entire complexity the golf swing – and sometimes this sort of "acquired feeling" also tell us where, how and why the ball shall fly even before striking it, doesn't it?

Walter Benjamin talked about a flawless puppet which was able to defeat any opponent on a chess battle (it was the power of scientific knowledge), but that "robot" was secretly driven by an *horrible dwarf* behind him (Theology).

It's not easy to be "mountain winds" – just as Nietzsche said – to always aim at high targets and never fall down, but the true "researcher" (the *quester*) will go ahead in his voyage, and even if he doesn't see the goal and he won't reach the land (too far away?) he actually needs to find it and will strive for it: the *feel* that governs *mechanics*, a sort of faith present in any kind of people, even an atheist like me.

– Jonathan Calsolaro