

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Matthew A. Masucci entitled "Playing With Stories: Sporting Narratives and the Deliberation of Moral Questions." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

Joy T. DeSensi

Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Barbara Thayer-Bacon

Leslee Fisher

John Hardwig

Accepted for the Council:

Anne Mayhew

Vice Chancellor and
Dean of Graduate Studies

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

PLAYING WITH STORIES:
SPORTING NARRATIVES AND THE DELIBERATION OF MORAL
QUESTIONS

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Matthew A. Masucci
May, 2005

Copyright © 2005 by Matthew A. Masucci
All rights reserved.

DEDICATION

Questa dissertazione è dedicata alla mia famiglia.
(This dissertation is dedicated to my family)

Michael J. Masucci (1932-1994)
Daniel J. Masucci (1965-2003)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the members of my committee, Dr. Leslee Fisher, Dr. Barbra Thayer-Bacon, and Dr. John Hardwig, for their insightful comments and helpful suggestions throughout the course of this project. A special note of appreciation is reserved for my former major professor, Dr. Bill Morgan, whose scholarship, intellect, and guidance, has been and will continue to be deeply cherished.

In general, I would like to thank the department of cultural studies at the University of Tennessee for having the prescience to offer such an eclectic, stimulating, and deeply rewarding series of courses. In particular, I wish to acknowledge Dr. Handle Wright, who taught me to never cease ‘making the familiar strange’ and Dr. Steve Pope, who has given me countless hours of his time, talent, and insight. Of course, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the work of Dr. Hilde Nelson and the stimulating narrative ethics seminar she facilitated, where many of these ideas were encouraged and codified.

An *extraordinary* note of appreciation must be reserved for Dr. Joy DeSensi, who has been incredibly encouraging, for fostering an environment that has allowed me to expand the boundaries of my thinking. Moreover, her willingness to take over as the director of my dissertation exemplifies her selfless dedication to both her students and to the program in general. Without her tireless support, wise council, and critical eye, this project would have never been completed. *Grazie, Dr. D!*

Special mention goes to my former fellow graduate student, office-mate, and collaborator, Dr. Adam Renner: It has been a pleasure “wrestling with the angles.” An exceptional note of gratitude must go out to my partner in crime, Dr. Ted Butryn. Not only has Ted been a great supporter, but he has also helped me to ‘keep it real’ and remain (relatively) sane in a truly insane world. With out a doubt, Ted is my *intercontinental heavy-weight champion!*

Outside the insular world of academia, are many friends and supporters whose contributions to this effort have been hard to quantify but equally important nonetheless. Many thanks to: Mike Robson and Dana Kish, Will Geoghegan, Mark Munafo, Jeff Greenwood, Chris Hinds, Jay and Ursula Sandefur, and the crews from Salisbury, Auburn, Athens/Dayton, Knoxville, and San José – you know who you are!

In addition, I would like to acknowledge the special support of three dear companions; Buster, Chuckey and Sid. Their unwavering dedication to sleep, toys, and food, has, at times, been my only solace and joy.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge Sarah Gregg, without whom *my story* would be incomplete.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the relationship between sporting narratives and morality. More specifically, I investigate how people can draw upon sporting experiences, as expressed in narrative form, to help shape and inform their moral choices. Moreover, I argue that reflecting on sporting experiences in a particular way can have a profoundly valuable impact on our moral choices, thus, helping to improve us morally. In addition, I argue that sporting narratives play a crucial moral role due, in large part, to their pervasiveness and accessibility. Drawing from, and expanding on, the practical tradition of narrative ethics, and expanding upon Nelson's (2001) conception of the narrative counterstory, I introduce two types of morally valuable sporting stories; *sport as autobiography* and *sport as reflexive narrative*. I also demonstrate how each type of sporting story can lead one to make morally estimable choices. I introduce the philosophical concepts of the *moral conduit* and *moral mobility* in order to reconcile a narrow conception of acceptable texts that one may utilize for moral purposes. In addition, I examine four case studies that highlight the morally salient features of the two types of sporting stories I introduce. Lastly, I draw conclusions, make practical recommendations and suggest directions for future research.

PREFACE

My interest in this project has been sparked by two important considerations. First, that philosophical investigations relating to moral questions have often failed to recognize the impact, both positive and negative, that popular activities, and sporting activities in particular, can have on an individual's moral decision making processes. Secondly, that employing a hybridized version of *narrative ethics*, one that accommodates sporting stories, can help to integrate alternative philosophical perspectives as they relate to moral questions. What I mean when I say I incorporate a “hybridized version” of narrative ethics is that I am purposively (but certainly not seamlessly!) grafting elements of moral philosophy and narrative ethics with elements of both critical sport studies and cultural studies and thus expanding the boundaries of each. Accordingly, my views have been fundamentally informed by work in several academic areas including, sport philosophy, narrative ethics, critical sport studies, cultural studies, and sport psychology.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Tension in Applied Ethics and Moral Philosophy	2
Sporting Narratives and Every-day Moral Deliberation	6
Ride to live, live to ride: A brief autobiographical journey	11
Overview of This Project	26
II. NARRATIVE ETHICS AND SPORT-AS-TEXT: MAKING THE CASE	28
Trends in Narrative Discourse	29
Narrative Ethics	34
Sport as Narrative	43
III. MORAL FEATURES OF SPORTING NARRATIVES	50
A Cultural Studies Informed Narrative Ethics	50
Moral Sporting Narratives: Like and Unlike Narrative Ethics	53
Nussbaum: philosophy and literature	54
Rorty and moral perception	58
DePaul: balance and refinement	62
Difficulties with Narrative Approaches	65
Nelson: The Counterstory as an Alternative Narrative Representation	69
IV. SPORT AS AUTOBIOGRAPHY: TWO CASE STUDIES	74
Autobiography, Identity, and Sport: General Contours	75
The moral self	79
The moral conduit	88
Case Study: Lance Armstrong	92
Case Study: Tosha Tsang	99
Lessons Learned	104
V. SPORT AS REFLEXIVE NARRATIVE: TWO CASE STUDIES	106
Sport as Reflexive Narrative	106
Moral mobility	110
Case Study: Billie Jean King vs. Bobby Riggs	111
Case Study: Hassiba Boulmerka	114
Lessons Learned	117
VI. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS	118
Future Directions and Practical Projects	121
Qualitative research projects	121

Pedagogical possibilities: Activating sport as autobiography	122
Sport as reflexive narrative and critical media literacy	125
REFERENCES	127
VITA	139

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

While there has been a growing body of philosophical literature that addresses the intersection between sport and morality (see for example, Morgan, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2002, 2003; Davis, 2003; Lowland, 2001) there have been far fewer works that explore if and how sport participation influences moral deliberations. Indeed, like their mainstream disciplinary counterparts, sport philosophers often rely on abstract theoretical constructs and hypothetical scenarios to present and support their arguments. While this method of investigation has its merits, I would argue that it has not shed significant light on *whether or how people incorporate sporting experiences into their lived day to day moral deliberations*. Rather than address the possibility that agents do incorporate their sporting experiences, among other things, into a larger moral decision-making framework, many sport philosophers have simply looked at particular moral dilemmas, using performance enhancing drugs for example, and applied a theoretical analysis vis-à-vis existing philosophical frameworks (see Holowchak, 2000 for example).

By contrast, the question I am interested in (do one's sporting experiences, broadly defined, impact moral decisions?) is a practical one. The answer to this question is better illuminated by investigating the actions and experiences of people within the context of their particular social, cultural and historical settings or what Meyers (2004) calls "the communitarian social self" (p. 291). In her view, the communitarian social self takes up moral concerns by, "underscoring the fact that

moral subjects are socialized or enculturated” (p. 291). Moreover and importantly for my purposes, Meyers suggests that, “to become competent moral subjects, individuals must acquire a stock of cultural values, attitudes and interpretive frameworks and learn how to use these resources to understand and negotiate social relations” (p. 291).

In the balance of this dissertation I argue that considering sport in narrative terms is among the best ways to access these actions and social experiences as they relate to moral deliberations. Moreover, following Nelson (1997, 2001) and Meyers (2004) I argue that narratives in general and sporting narratives construed as an important type of narrative, can help to address some of the long standing divides within the realm of moral philosophy especial as it relates to the articulation of the moral subject or moral actor.

Tension in Applied Ethics and Moral Philosophy

The rationale to incorporate narrative into a moral or ethical decision making framework, is arguably the attempt to reconcile longstanding disagreements about both what persons count as moral subjects and how those subjects, in fact, make moral decisions or deliberations. In order to more strongly assert the efficacy of narratives to do moral work, it will be important to demonstrate how (I believe) narrative, broadly considered, helps to bridge the vexing problem of universal versus particular (and often relative) moral justification. To address this central issue, I’ll rely on a critical sport studies variation of narrative ethics. Prior to explicating this

notion however, it is important to situate this project within the context of moral philosophy in general and practical ethics in particular.

I have suggested that this inquiry is informed, in part, by a practical or applied ethics perspective. That statement might suggest that there is a particular orthodoxy to the method that philosophers use when looking at moral questions from a practical ethics perspective; this however, is not the case. In fact, practical ethics as a discipline is dogged by the same tension that has confounded moral philosophers for years; namely the tension between universal principals of “right” moral actions on the one hand and the (above mentioned) individuality of moral choice that emphasize, “moral tradition, experience, and particular circumstances” (Beauchamp, 2003, p. 7) on the other.

Beauchamp (2003) explores this problem of “method and justification” (p. 7) in practical ethics and develops two useful explanatory models. The first model that Beauchamp highlights corresponds to the above mentioned ‘universal principal of right actions.’ He calls this model the *top-down model*. The top-down model of moral justification in applied ethics according to Beauchamp, asserts that “pre-existing general norms are applied to new situations” (p. 7). Our moral judgments, on this view, even in situations we have never encountered before, are guided by larger “covering principals” (p. 7). These general moral rules, *one should not kill* for example, guide our actions in any situation where taking the life of another may be a possibility. While this system of moral decision making may be plausible in relatively unambiguous situations, it is clear that many moral judgments are decidedly ambiguous. Moreover, general principals of ethical conduct often give way to

“traditional practices, institutional rules, and case judgments” (Beauchamp, 2003, p.8).

In contrast to the top-down model of moral justification is the *bottom-up model*. As the name might suggest, this model focuses, not on general principals and theories, but rather on how practical decisions are made. The bottom-up model, according to Beauchamp, “take(s) seriously the idea that ethical decisions make use of existing social agreements and practices, insight-producing novel cases, and comparative case analysis as the starting-point from which we commonly make moral decisions” (p. 8-9). The bottom-up perspective clearly draws from both pragmatist and particularism standpoints. Moral and ethical decisions, and indeed this branch of practical ethics, rely more on a consensus of thought about a particularly vexing moral issue. Thus, only after dealing with many agonizing cases is a society able to permit and classify as justifiable, actions that would have been expressly forbidden heretofore.

It is this second sense of moral justification that interests me and has informed my thinking about sporting narratives and moral efficacy. Moral justification based on the relative contingency of one’s experiences is certainly not new to sport philosophers. Morgan (2003) and others have convincingly argued for the context specificity of moral inquiry and moral choice while making important claims about the moral features of particular local and perhaps national social communities. I am in agreement with this non-universalistic perspective especially in the sense that there seem to be ample instances of conflicting moral perspective on a number of issues. Where does the “infinite regress of justification” (Beauchamp, 2003, p. 10) end?

Each appeal to a guiding or covering principal requires a higher level justification. Where does the justification end and how do we quantify that final justification?

One key feature of moral inquiry from a practical ethical position, is the idea that many people do not employ specific philosophical frameworks or think in abstract philosophical terms when making moral choices. Often, it is the *moral philosopher* who provides a theoretical framework to make sense of moral actions, real or hypothesized. While practical ethics also seeks to provide theoretical explanations for moral actions, it does so by investigating “real world” interactions and decisions. That is, of course not to say that moral philosophers do not and have not examined ‘real-world’ moral dilemmas, but rather that they often seem to eschew the agents’ narrative as an important constituent of the meaning-making of moral issues. The result, all too often, is for philosophers to produce the hypothetical counter example, and while useful in moving a complex philosophical argument forwards, says precious little about the lived moral considerations of regular folk.

By contrast, a practical ethical approach often resonates with moral agents since the moral questions they explore are the same moral questions they face in their everyday life. In this sense, it becomes critical to ask, what, in a person’s complex and often fractured experience, is relevant to their overall moral decision-making framework. This is the specific question I focus on in my consideration of sport as stories people tell and reflect upon.

Implicit in this suggestion that sporting narratives can do moral work, is the recognition that, narratives themselves are indeed crucial in the expression and

formulation of both identity and moral questions; a claim that I support throughout the entirety of this project.

Sporting Narratives and Every-day Moral Deliberation

One of the assignments required of the students I taught in a class at the University of Tennessee called, *Sport in American Society*, was to write a ‘critical sport autobiography’. An important aim of the assignment was to challenge the students to articulate the meaning and importance of sports in their lives. A further aim of the assignment was for each student to pay particular attention to issues of access (to particular sporting opportunities) and support for their sporting choices. Over the ensuing semesters and later at San Jose State University where a similar assignment was required for a class called, *Sport in America*, it has become evident that, for some students, the impact of sport, broadly defined, has indeed been profound and life altering. For many of the students, the assignment provides an opportunity to look beyond the common-sense articulations about the value of sport and explore, in a more profound and critical way, how sport has informed and shaped who they are and who they would like to be.

Reflecting on a similar class assignment, Liberti (2004), argues for the value of utilizing these so-called “narratives of self” (p. 190). Liberti claims that, “the storytelling characteristics of these narratives [of self] privilege the author’s voice as a way to more fully investigate the complexities of the social world” (p. 190). For Liberti, the assignment offers an opportunity for her students to wrestle with the theories introduced in class and attempt to weave them into their self narrative; not in

an explicit way but rather, as Liberti says, “I wanted to read theory between the lines of text where their voices held prominence” (p. 192). I argue the stronger, yet related claim throughout this paper, that these stories of self, among other kinds of stories, help to shape and guide one’s moral deliberations. Moreover, as one of the practical strategies I elaborate on in Chapter 6, the exploration of moral issues in student authored sport autobiographies (or autoethnography) could prove quite fruitful.

Many white students at the University of Tennessee, for example, indicated that the experience of participating in sports with black athletes, in the often racially polarized South, helped to challenge their assumptions and stereotypes about African-Americans in general and, perhaps more importantly, provide an experiential reality that could be appealed to when beginning to challenge family members who maintained an overtly (or covertly) racist perspective. In addition, many of the students claimed to have continued to maintain lasting friendships with their teammates well beyond the scope of athletic contests.

While the notion that sports can bridge the ‘racial divide’ seems trite and woefully (and problematically) naïve, the fact remains that many of the students’ narrative of self seemed to address this very issue. Moreover, several students’ autobiographies (importantly) hinted at more complex and nuanced understanding of racial dynamics of participation with people from different racial or cultural backgrounds. One student in particular, reasoned that while sport can indeed provide a location to temporarily set aside racial differences, it’s what happens when the stadium lights are turned off that is perhaps infinitely more important. The veneer of equality on the field is shattered with a quick drive through the downtown of the

major southern city where this student lived; a city where the divide between the have and have-nots seemed to be significantly, though certainly not exclusively, mediated by race.

For this student in particular, it was important to stay vigilant about the reality of racial inequality and to his potential perpetuation of that inequality especially if he patted himself on the back for having ‘dealt with his racial’ issues because he played on an interracial high school football team.

Many of the African American students expressed a similar experience of reformation of expectations as it related to their white teammates. In these particular instances, the students’ participation in sport helped to transcend certain problematic ideas the white students held regarding the black students and vice versa. Of course, many of the black students also reflected on how their sporting experiences only served to retrench their understanding of how “stacked” the system is against them and that while accomplishments on the field were met with praise and modest accolades, once the playing days were over, their “utility” was greatly diminished.

In these cases, I would suggest that, for certain students; sport has helped them to *hold significantly more enlightened moral perspectives* in that these sporting experiences seemed to provide a kind of *moral conduit* to the recognition of marked and unmarked prejudice. I will elaborate on the concept of the moral conduit below, but for now, it will be sufficient to say that I am advocating a position that recognizes the multiplicity of elements that go into the moral decision making process.

Moreover, as I argue in the following chapters, the notion of the moral conduit that I

am suggesting also serves to “democratize” the ways that many narrative ethicists have addressed the idea of using stories to inform moral philosophical deliberations.

As concrete “every-day” examples of sporting narrative and moral deliberation, it is certainly instructive to relate the morally relevant autobiographies of these students. Indeed, the numerous examples I found embedded in the student papers helped me to better articulate the importance and positive moral influence of sport in my own life story, and thus situate myself in the larger project.

Of course, it would be naïve (and indeed problematic) to overlook the countless examples of morally questionable practices found within the world of athletic participation. The academic journals are rightly bursting with an abundance of critical articles interrogating the intersection of sport and the perpetuation of a number of troubling social injustices. Racial tension and prejudice, homophobia, gender inequality, class discrimination, essentialization of ethnic groups, and ableism, to name a few of these injustices, are and should continue to be at the forefront of the scholarly work being done in the academic space of sport studies. By carefully keeping these issues sharply in focus, and while not naively extolling the oft cited mantra that ‘sport builds character’, I will examine in a nuanced way, the intricacies of sport and identity formation on the one hand and how a moral agent can view sport as cultural text as through the lens of narrative ethics on the other.

With that said, I am in no way overlooking the negative implication of sport, nor am I advocating an uncritical representation of sport participation as a paragon of virtue. However, in the final analysis, I think it can be enlightening to investigate the stories of those who *do* claim that sport has provided a particular purchase on certain

larger social phenomenon on the one hand and on one's moral deliberations on the other. Considering both the popularity and impact of sport in North American and global contexts and the rates of participation at all levels of sport in these locations, it seems worthwhile to dig a little deeper into this issue.

What follows is a brief account and discussion of my own sporting experiences. By providing an account of my "sporting narrative" I hope to accomplish several goals. First, I hope that this brief account foreshadows the methodology of the case studies that follow in this dissertation. When talking about the efficacy of stories for moral purposes, it seems to me that the vehicle of the story (as presented in the case studies) provides a logical if not powerful example of practice and theory. Second, it is my aim to sketch out the contours of what a practical application of evaluating sporting narratives (in this case, *sport as autobiography*, as introduced above) for moral purposes looks like. It is perhaps important to mention that my conception of 'moral purposes' is deliberately broad and decidedly agent-referential. In this way, following the bottom-up particularist ethical perspective that Beauchamp (2003) has articulated, a moral agent may more usefully define what constitutes a moral deliberation. In this way, while moral issues can be notoriously difficult to pin down, often upon reflection, a person 'knows it when they see it.'¹ Moreover, with this autobiography, I aim to demonstrate, by example, the ways in which autobiographies can be deployed for moral purposes without excessive theorizing. This purpose is important if, as I claim throughout the

¹ Mimicking (though not unproblematically) Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's famous concurring opinion in a 1964 obscenity trial that revolved around definitions of pornography.

balance of this dissertation, sport stories can carry moral weight in the same way as certain literature has been argued to. One brings more, or less, of their analytical tools to the dissection of their story, yet, as I argue, we depend on stories to frame moral questions nonetheless. A final purpose of incorporating my autobiographical sport story, is to emphasize, as I do in Chapter 4, that one need not be a world class athlete in order to incorporate these experiences, among others, into a moral decision making framework.

Ride to live, live to ride.²A brief autobiographical journey.

I have been active in some type of sport since I was a young boy. From soccer and wrestling in my youth, to cross country, football and wrestling in high school, to rugby and bicycle racing in college, and bicycle racing at the master's level today. So, it seems fair to say, that sport and physical activity (in one form or another) have been a central part of my life. While I have participated in sport at many different levels, I did not think seriously about the meaning of my participation until I entered graduate school at Ohio University in the fall of 1989.

The significance of this ongoing process of reflection cannot be overstated. Buttressed, no doubt, by my first experience living away from home, my participation in sport began to take on new, and decidedly more profound, importance. But, in order to make sense of this reckoning, it will be important to recognize the life-context in which it took place.

² This motto is often associated with Harley-Davidson motorcycle owners however, it seems fitting to appropriate the slogan and apply it to my experience with bicycles.

Until my early and later adulthood, my participation in sports, while never coerced, did not seem to be completely within the scope of my control. By this I mean that my participation in sports were, upon reflection, profoundly linked to the participation of similar sports by my two older brothers. As the last of four children, it is not surprising, I suppose, that I revered my older brothers and sister, and looked to their lead in matters of athletic participation. As youngsters, we three boys³ were encouraged to participate in a variety of informal and organized sports. When I was 4 years old, our family moved from my birth city of Champaign, Illinois to the small rural town of Salisbury, Maryland on Maryland's Eastern Shore. But this tale of displacement is actually (and importantly) *once-removed* as my parents grew up, met, married and had my three siblings in upstate New York.

It is important to note that both of my parents grew up in variously in-tact Italian/American families. My father's family was perhaps more "assimilated" than my mother's family even though the ties to the homeland were deep for each. My paternal grandfather arrived from Italy with no English language skills and even less material wealth. My father's mother was born in Italy and moved to the US while very young. Upon meeting at the boarding house that my paternal great-great grandparent's operated, my grandmother taught my grandfather how to read and write in English. They eventually got married and moved to the upstate New York village of Canastota where my grandfather got a job working for the railroad. Canastota is a small rural town about 30 miles outside of Syracuse. The town is home to a large

³ It is important to note that my sister was seldom encouraged to participate. Her involvement in extracurricular activities was centered on music and dance. This clearly gendered 'segregation' is important in my gender role formation but space prohibits a deeper explication at this time.

Italian/American population. In the past, it was an important stop along the Erie canal as well as a major east-coast center for onion production. Interestingly enough, today Canastota is the home to the international boxing hall of fame, no doubt due to the fact that two former world title holders, Carmen Basillio and Billy Backus (Basillio's nephew) both hailed from the town of 5,000 residents.

My mother grew up in the village of Solvay, which is essentially an urban "neighborhood" in the shadow of the city of Syracuse. My grandmother on my mother's side was born in America but soon moved back to Italy while still an infant. At age 21, she moved back to the United States after realizing that, by virtue of her birth, she was indeed a naturalized citizen. My maternal grandfather immigrated to the United States when he was 18. He was from a desperately poor family in Italy and, following the lead of other family members, thought he would have a better chance at scraping out a living in the US. He immigrated to the United States in the early 1900's and initially settled with family members in Chicago, Illinois. Interestingly enough, both of my maternal grandparents grew up only a few miles from each other in Italy so it did not come as much of a surprise when the idea began to be voiced that my grandmother should "meet" my grandfather when she arrived from Italy several years after his arrival.

In what was basically an "arranged marriage", my grandparents were introduced and married very quickly. In Solvay, unlike in Canastota, one was much more likely to find in-tact ethnic enclaves. From Russian, to Polish, to Irish, and Italian, the neighborhoods of each group were immediately distinct from each other. Even today, to take a trip around the village, the ethnic legacy is readily apparent. In

the Irish section of town, for example, the traffic signal on top of Tipperary Hill has the green signal at the top rather than the traditional red signal as the red signal on top was thought to represent the British oppression in Ireland. In fact, there is even a sculpture to commemorate the early residents who threw rocks at the signal when the city would try to correct this transgressive act.

Language, dress, and community activities were reasonably separate and the necessity of interacting with the “Americans” was rather limited. The community, in my mom’s case the Italian community, provided everything one needed to get by. The value of assimilation in my mother’s family was rather small compared to my father’s upbringing. My mother, and to a lesser degree her older brothers, served as the intermediary between the “American” world and that of the Italian residents of Solvay.

So, the move(s) from Syracuse to Champaign to Salisbury served to sublimate in a particular way, the “importance” of ethnic identity in my family. While both my mother and father were comfortable living, working and socializing within the relatively intact Italian/American communities of their upbringing, my father always, even if it remained unspoken, thought that his *Italianess* would “hold him back” (especially in the world of higher education) in an inexplicable way. While the choice to move was not easy, it was always represented as a grand opportunity and thus, mythologized. What remained unconsidered, as one might expect, is how this shift would play out on the identities and identifications of my parent’s children. In other words, while the expectation to understand the nuanced particularities of our

Italian/American ethnicity were never lessened, the *context* for that understanding was only accessed in fleeting moments on our pilgrimages to upstate New York.

The reason this ethnicity-disconnect is so figural, in my mind, is that it helped to cement a gnawing drive to “fit in.” This drive would lead me to follow rather than lead...because, in retrospect, I felt in-between two worlds: One I did not fully belong to and one I was not fully accepted by.

Of course there were just enough remnants of ethnic identity to be roundly ostracized in the small community of Salisbury where crabbing, oyster tonging, and raising chickens was a way of life for generations of Eastern Shore residents. Having a grandma visit who didn’t speak a whole lot of English, being Catholic, and persistently (and stubbornly) calling white sandwich bread (such as Wonder) “American bread” probably didn’t do us any favors either!

One of my early memories of our relocation was the excitement surrounding our new house, and more importantly in my four-year-old mind, the accompanying “huge” corner lot on which it was situated! Indeed, as the years passed, our yard became the default neighborhood multipurpose field of play. From freeze-tag and Frisbee to basketball, softball, soccer and even a makeshift skateboard park, our backyard was the center of physical activity for several blocks.

As mentioned previously, as the fourth of four children (with a span of only five and a half years between us) I suppose it was not unusual that I looked to emulate my siblings in most activities, with physical activity being no exception. While I was content to follow in the sporting footsteps of my older brothers and to a lesser degree my older sister, it was not until college that I had a “crisis of conscience” about my

unreflective adherence to the athletic path laid before me by my next oldest sibling.

Up to this point in my athletic endeavors, I had simply participated in the sports that my brothers had.

My participation in wrestling, in hindsight, seemed to be the most representative of this long-standing pattern. As a result of my two older brothers' participation and relative success in high school wrestling, I joined a county program in jr. high. Spurred on by the successes of my two brothers, I wanted to emulate their accomplishments, both on and off the mat. It was evident to me that wrestling provided an opportunity for both of my brothers to gain modest acceptance in the more popular echelons of high school; this was no small feat as my family were ethnic and religious "outsiders" in our predominantly W.A.S.P. community. More than anything, I wanted to belong to this new community and to avoid the difficulties fitting in that my siblings had endured. This assimilation, however, would come at a cost, as I would eventually discover.

At first, my participation in wrestling was exciting. I had some modest success in the county program and went on to make the Varsity team and "letter" in my freshman year in high school – no small feat for an insecure and scrawny 120 lb. young man who sported huge tinted glasses and an even larger "ethnic afro!" However, simply belonging to the team was of great importance to me. In fact, it was becoming clear to me that the social element of wrestling far outstripped my interest in the sport in general, and my desire to compete to win in particular. This revelation was but one thing that differentiated my participation in wrestling, and to a large degree sport up to this point, from my brothers.

My brother Dan, for example, was becoming somewhat of a local legend for his ability to pull out a victory from the jaws of defeat on the mats of the local tournaments. In fact, the home-town crowds at the regional wrestling matches fully expected him to win no matter the score as the end of the third period neared. Down by points on his opponent more often than not, my brother had a unique ability to pull off that “one big move” and thus vanquish his opponent. Upon realizing that this approach was more “strategic” than haphazard, the crowd would begin to chant “*money-move, money-move, money-move*” as the match drew to a close. True to form, and almost without exception, Dan would initiate some gracefully acrobatic maneuver that, not only caught his opponent off guard, but scored enough points to either “decision” or “pin” his rival.

Of course, as the younger brother trying to follow in these admittedly big footsteps, this legacy was anything but great! In fact, to make matters “worse” my sister, while no star athlete, was accomplished in any number of other areas including music, dance, and academics. My sister Michele, for example, would go on to graduate from her undergraduate institution in two years and earn her PhD by age 24. As if this tradition of academic excellence was not enough, my brother Paul (with relatively little fanfare compared to Michele) graduated with a degree in Mathematics in three years...what’s an underachiever to do!?

At that impressionable time, these accomplishments, as great as they may have been, objectively were not without a cost. At the risk of being blunt, my two oldest siblings were more a part of the fringe of the social order in high school than right smack dab in the middle of the “cool” clique. On the other hand, Dan’s

transformation from angry outsider who used to regularly get into altercations after school, to reluctantly accepted jock “hero” seemed to be a more promising template for me to follow. To add fuel to the fire, Dan’s participation in both wrestling and football were in direct opposition to my father’s wishes...which of course made these choices seem monumentally more enviable.

So, as it turned out, with neither prior experience, nor a fundamental understanding of the game, I signed up for football in the summer preceding my sophomore year in high school in order to emulate the person I most looked up to in the world: my brother Dan. Being reasonably athletic and in good shape from youth-league soccer, wrestling, and cross country the year before, I handled the physical rigors of two-a-day practices with relative ease. Learning the “fundamentals” of a proper stance, blocking technique, and tackling form, were also quickly absorbed, no doubt, in part to the countless hours of drilling wrestling moves in the county program as well as in my freshman year of high school. With the *minor* exception that I had no idea about the larger strategies of the game of football, things were going pretty well! Another thing that became evident to me was the fact that most of the “cool” people in high school, played football. You can bet that that had a far greater appeal than any “x’s” or “o’s” the coach could scrawl on the chalkboard!

The good feeling about my newfound “passion” for the mysterious game of football ended rather abruptly one sweltering August evening: the first day of full contact affectionately known as “hitting practice”...

One would think that a horribly snapped tibia and fibula (think Joe Thiesman here) would be enough to keep any reasonably intelligent person who never played an

organized game of football in their life to give up on the sport...but you would be wrong. Not only did I go on to play football the following two years, but in the Fall of the year that I broke my leg I returned to the wrestling mat only to break my collarbone in my first match back! As traumatic as this might seem, to me it was emblematic of how important it was becoming to be considered “popular” as my passion for both of these sports had suffered a serious blow (no pun intended).

Not surprisingly, as a result of being on the team(s), I was experiencing a level of popularity that my siblings could not fathom yet I still looked up to my brother Dan as the template of how to fit in and be accepted by one's peers. Unfortunately for me (and tragically for my brother Dan), part of the blueprint of fitting in on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, world headquarters of Purdue chickens, was to party...hard. If I thought I could gain acceptance by playing sports, then I could gain serious insider status if I hung out with and drank with the “really popular” kids at my school.

And so it began; my focus on both sports and school were certainly overshadowed by my interest (and enthusiasm) in socializing. As one might expect, male sport teams seemed to be a veritable haven for those with similar “interests.” Of course you don't get the luxury of hindsight and, therefore, it was impossible to recognize how potentially destructive my behavior could be. For awhile (through the first several years of college), the *subculture of partying* - for lack of a better way to describe it - was far more important than any character building lesson a coach could teach – the irony was not lost on me. But the influence of the lifestyle, coupled with my utter unreflective admiration of my older brother Dan would lead to a series of

choices that eventually helped me to see beyond the myopic scope of my social choices.

When I went to college (in Salisbury, living at home), I once again followed in my brother's footsteps and joined the wrestling team. Dan was beginning to achieve some collegiate success (he would eventually place in the top-five at the Division III national championships) and, despite my festering near-hatred of the sport, I began going to practice. It was clear to me that my heart was not in it and in fact, I began to dread the end of the day as it meant slogging through *another* practice! After one particularly brutal practice I came home dejected and tossed my gear down on the floor in disgust. My mother, who was sitting at the kitchen table, asked what was wrong and I proceeded to explain how much I hated wrestling practice and that my heart just was not in it. To my astonishment (at the time) she replied, "Well, Matt, why don't you quit if it is unsatisfying?" Huh?? I had an epiphany right there in our kitchen. "Quit?!" Wow, the idea *did* sound rather appealing...but wouldn't that mean that I was a quitter? It didn't matter, the proverbial weight had been lifted and I never looked back. The significance was rather profound, because, not only had I quit the team, in a very subtle yet meaningful way I had made a decision that was, for once, in *my* best interest. Yet I had participated in some kind of organized sport since I was in grade school so the thought of not practicing, while liberating on the one hand, was disconcerting on the other. With this notion in the back of my mind, I made a significant break with any of my siblings and went out for the rugby team at Salisbury State.

The sport of rugby was fascinating to me, quick, graceful and aggressive...seems I was training my entire life for this sport with a combination of soccer, football, and wrestling. The problem that while I enjoyed learning the nuances of the game of Rugby and was beginning to achieve some success being named to the "A" side my first season, I was very uncomfortable with the expected social involvement that seemed to be as much a part of the tradition of rugby as the game itself. On the surface, it would seem that I would be a "natural" for the social aspects of the rugby team consider the primacy of drinking within the landscape of the rugby subculture, but there was something decidedly unsettling about the expectations of team member as well as the reputation the team had on campus. It was decidedly unflattering at best, and in retrospect, extremely homophobic, misogynistic, and destructive at worst. So with little fanfare, I began to extract myself from the rugby community.

As I reflect back on my rugby experience, it is clear to me that my participation on the team was necessarily at odds with my larger belief system even if at the time I did not have the theoretical or critical language to best articulate (and problematize) the negative messages about masculinity that were being communicated within the rugby subculture. Importantly, for my own personal development, the disenchantment and subsequent disengagement with rugby lead me to explore my athletic options which in turn lead me, in a rather circuitous way, to bicycles.

I received my first bicycle when I was 18 years old as a high school graduation present. Oddly enough, I had never owned a bicycle before that late date;

rather I had been the ‘benefactor’ of various hand-me-down bikes along the way. With three older siblings, I suppose it didn’t make much sense to buy another bicycle – or so my parents thought. All the more reason that I cherished my jet black Schwinn beach cruiser! Growing up in a coastal town about 25 miles from Ocean City, Maryland the beach style influenced a great deal, from dress, to slang, to athletic and social activities so needless to say the cool-factor of the Schwinn cruiser (sans chain guard, of course!) was at a premium...that is until my first official bicycle got stolen. What I didn’t know at the time that I have just begun to unravel over the past several years is the importance of that larceny; it would be rather figural to my story.

Having spent the summer between high school and college tossing pizzas on the O.C. boardwalk, I figured I would go into my freshman year with a few dollars in my hand. With the theft of my beloved cruiser, however, I was left with a decision to make. Spend what little money I had to replace my cruiser (a relatively inexpensive proposition) or, taking after my brother Paul who had just purchased a beautiful Peugeot French racing bicycle, spend every last dime I had in order to acquire an entry level racing bicycle. I opted for the later and \$450.00 dollars later I was the proud owner of a brilliant blue and yellow Trek 12-speed racing bicycle!

At first, I was happy to just have a bicycle after my cruiser was stolen, but after some time, I began to pay more attention to the heretofore unknown world of professional bike racing. In addition, I began to ride my bicycle for “fitness” rather than simple utility. I vividly remember my first serious ride. When I returned, I begged my father to measure the distance in the car and he was more than happy to oblige. 13 miles - What an accomplishment, I thought at the time. I was beginning to

consider myself a *serious* bike rider. My older brother Paul, with whom I had a close relationship, also had a nice bike at the time. He was riding more seriously and in fact, had entered a few local races by that point. While I'm sure his increased participation influenced me to continue riding, my newly discovered awareness for the sport was due, in large part, to the success of American Greg LeMond on the European racing circuit.

1986 was a watershed year for American cycling. It was the first year an American racer, Greg LeMond, had won the grueling Tour de France. Raced over three weeks and covering more than 2,000 miles the Tour is arguably one of the most difficult sporting events on the planet. I remember being glued to the (minimal) television coverage of the race absorbing as much information as possible about pacelines, domestiques, time trials, stages, and feed zones. It was as if I had finally found a sporting interest that was exciting and that seemed to match my interests and abilities. I had caught the cycling bug and was on a crash course to make up for lost time by scouring the bicycling magazines, studying the mail order catalogs and committing the information on prices, and component weights to memory.

More importantly, however, was the growing interest and excitement I was developing *through* riding my bike, now up to 20-30 miles through the countryside with ease. Moreover, I was beginning to see myself through the lens of a bike rider; *as a bike rider*. While I would not become "serious" about riding for several years, I found it very exciting to consider myself part of the cycling subculture in a way I had never felt in my previous sport experiences. Road bike racing in Salisbury Maryland in the mid to late 1980's was a relatively novel endeavour and part of the

excitement of my new-found interest in bicycles, I'm certain, was the fact that it was a sport outside of the mainstream. In contrast to the fact that I never felt truly accepted in the community, I felt a tremendous pride in being part of what I considered to be an exclusive group of 'serious' cyclists. Riding, it seemed to me, legitimated my outsider status but on my terms and within the boundaries of an activity that I both enjoyed, and would eventually become quite proficient at (and locally recognized for).

As my interest level and ability began to grow, my commitment to cycling grew as well. In this sense, it is with quite a bit of clarity that I recognized that the benefits of my interest in the obscure (in America at least) sport of bicycle racing extended beyond the excitement of unleashing an explosive sprint at the end of a hard-fought 60 mile road race. Indeed, the change has been far more lasting and one that seemed in stark contrast to my previous "dedication" to self-destructive socializing.

The moment was almost epiphanic. I had been training all summer and had been participating, with some success, in local cycling events around the region. I had eventually purchased a lightweight Cannondale bicycle and was beginning to take the sport seriously. However, on the eve of one of the big racing events of the summer, I decided to accompany some friends to a favorite beach spot: Trader Lee's Beer Garden! In summers past, I had been a regular at the outdoor beach party and, in fact, had roomed with two of the bartenders that worked there. Trader Lee's was an Ocean City institution. It was an outdoor beach party held within a fenced-in structure. The only beverages served at Trader Lee's were beer and for the brave

among the crowd, Maddog 20/20-a 'fortified wine product' - which amounted to a 36 proof flavored wine. On previous outings to this notorious gathering which took place on Saturday nights during the high-intensity summer season, the question was not if you would drink, but rather how much. However, on this particular pre-race occasion I reluctantly agreed to join my friends and did something that was unheralded at the time: refrain from joining in the festivities.

Buoyed (at first) by my new-found dedication to cycling and my unwillingness to compromise my chances in Sunday's race, I remained drink-free in an increasingly intoxicating crowd. What was immediately evident to me was how *out of place* I felt and how simultaneously *uncomfortable* I made others feel simply by my casual non-participation. As the night wore on, I began to see for the first time with unprecedented clarity the destructive nature of the lifestyle that my fellow college students and I took for granted. From verbal and physical confrontations, to alcohol poisoning, to a blatant violation of personal boundaries, the behavior was nothing short of shocking. I started to feel very uncomfortable on the one hand as the odd-duck yet on the other hand, I felt completely empowered by my ability, as facilitated by my commitment to cycling, to simply choose not to participate in the problematic behavior of the beach party. I became annoyed, at first by the idiotic actions of the crowd in general and of my friends in particular, but the disappointment quickly turned inward as I began to clearly recognize that I was choosing to let this form of socialization profoundly define who I was. I was at a crossroads. I don't remember how I did in the race the next day and in the end, it really does not matter. What I will always remember is the feeling of anxiety over knowingly making a

series of unpopular decisions that would certainly serve to alienate me from one set of friends, yet open me up in an important way to another.

The transition from the “follower” of my past is certainly not one that would take place on a particular summer night in West Ocean City, but in fact that transition is an ongoing process of reflection, reflexive introspection and facing up to hard truths about one’s foibles, biases, and privileges– but it is a process that, for me at least, is and has been significantly intertwined with my love of cycling and my patent desire to become in all its simplicity and elegance: better.

Overview of This Project

In the next chapter, I offer a brief overview of narrative ethics, explaining what it is and how it differs from other ethical approaches. Further, I will show that sport can be treated and interpreted as stories and, therefore, read, following the narrative ethics position, as possible moral vehicles. In Chapter 3, I specifically highlight what kind of moral work sporting narratives can do by paying attention to the work of prominent narrative ethicists. Further, I lean on Nelson’s (2001) concept of the counterstory to work past many of the criticisms of these narrative positions. Moreover, I will answer the objection that sporting narratives are too simple and unsophisticated to do any significant moral work. I briefly In Chapter 4 and 5, I explain what I mean by a sporting narrative and introduce two different types of sporting narratives; *sport as autobiography* and *sport as reflexive narrative*. What’s more, I look at two particular case studies for each type of narrative, and focus on how each throws light on our moral life. In the final chapter, I sketch out a model for

the utilization of sport stories for moral ends as applied in a practical setting as well as offer some conclusions and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

NARRATIVE ETHICS AND SPORT-AS-TEXT: MAKING THE CASE

Scholars from disciplines as diverse as sport studies, practical ethics, education and psychology have begun to consider the value of exploring narrative, in its various forms, as an important window on people's attempt to come to grips with their lived experiences. Recently, for example, the traditionally quantitative disciplines of athletic training (Pittney & Parker, 2002) and (to a lesser degree) the emerging interdisciplinary field of sport science (Hunger & Thiele, 2000; Stelter, Sparks, & Hunger, 2003), and sport psychology (Stean & Roberts, 1992; Krane, Anderson, & Stean, 1997; Streat, 1998) have made implicit calls for research utilizing qualitative methodologies. This shift in recognition of non-quantitative research paradigms is significant in that it represents a tacit understanding that "stories" (at least) in terms of qualitative interviews, thickly described ethnographies, participant observation, and autoethnographies, provide a unique insight into the meaning of various social phenomena for any number of social actors. Moreover, the recognition, through research (as codified in both subject and method) of sporting practices serves to legitimate⁴ the value of exploring the meaning of sport from an individual, cultural, and societal perspective.

The turn to narrative, however, has not been without its share of difficulties. As has been the case with various paradigm shifts (e.g., the quantitative to qualitative shift in the social sciences for instance), the academic wrangling over acceptable

⁴ An ongoing 'battle' in the sport studies disciplines.

criteria for both subject and method is certainly a contentious matter. Maxwell (2004), for example, argues that the reemergence of a more scientifically based research (and the subsequent appeal to “science” as a measure of, worth, rigor, and validity) has challenged the value of qualitative research on the one hand, and pushed qualitative researcher to feel compelled to demonstrate a sufficiently scientific orientation while potentially abandoning, or at least sublimating, certain important qualitative perspectives. To be fair, Maxwell also argues that the tendency for qualitative researchers to essentialize scientific research has seemingly perpetuated the chasm between the two branches of inquiry (2004). But my intent here is not to rehash this controversy, but rather to put narrative ethics to use to explore the moral potential of popular forms of culture like sport.

In this chapter, I make the case that sporting narratives are ethically valuable and, therefore, worth investigating. Moreover, I wish to expand the *type* of stories that narrative ethicists have typically culled as valuable for moral purposes. But the task of expanding the boundaries of narrative ethics and integrating sport stories requires first that I say something about the emerging trends in narrative discourse in general, and about narrative ethics in particular.

Trends in Narrative Discourse

As Hayden White (1986) provocatively claims in his book, *The Content of the Form*, “to raise the question of the nature of narrative is to invite reflection on the very nature of culture and, possibly, even on the nature of humanity itself” (p. 1). Indeed, as White and others have endeavored to wrestle with the “relationship

between narrative discourse and historical representation” (p. ix) what has become evident over the past 20 or so years is the increasing academic attention focused on *stories*. Moreover, as Bochner (2001) in arguing for the value of qualitative research that utilizes a narrative approach observed:

The narrative turn moves from a singular, monolithic conception of social science toward a pluralism that promotes multiple forms of representation and research: away from facts and toward meanings; away from master narratives and toward local stories: away from idolizing categorical thought and abstracted theory and toward embracing the values of irony, emotionality, and activism; away from assuming the stance of disinterested spectator and toward assuming the posture of a feeling, embodied, and vulnerable observer; away from writing essays and toward telling stories. (2001, pp. 134-135)

However, the recognition that profound human meaning can be crafted and expressed through narrative discourse has become a battleground for shifting epistemological arguments. This debate on the value of investigating narratives is not, of course, limited to the disciplines of sport studies or philosophy. In fact, there seems to be a ‘narrative turn’ conversation in many academic disciplines.

Educationists like Maxine Green (1995), Carol Witherell (1991), and Nel Noddings (1998), for example, have vigorously advocated for an educational perspective that takes seriously the lives, expressed through narrative and dialogue, of both the teacher and student.

Educational philosopher Nel Noddings (1998), for instance, suggests that stories can be used as the “starting point for critical thinking and the philosophical

study of morality and ethics” (p. 163). She advocates that the careful integration of particular stories within the curriculum can help to foster critical (and moral) thinking in general. Moreover, Noddings argues for “their [stories] episodic use-the use of particular stories to encourage self-examination and reflection on a specific social or ethical issue” (p. 163). While Noddings goes on to say that the use of stories for moral and ethical purposes is not a new phenomenon, indeed the adaptation of stories for moral, religious, or educational purposes has a long history.

The move toward narrative research in education (as in other fields) was not without its own set of problems, however, as Blumenreich (2004) suggests. She argues that the rise of interest in narrative inquiry in the field of education in the past several decades, is a decided “reaction against positivism” (p. 78). She goes on to argue that, “narrative researchers began to feel that positivistic education research, with its aspirations to being ‘scientific’, was elitist because it treated the informants as mere objects of investigation” (p. 78). So, in the same way that qualitative research in general has been a reaction against positivistic paradigms, narrative research itself was undergoing scrutiny from within with the theoretical intervention of poststructuralist thinking (Blumenreich, 2004).

Likewise, literary critics, sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists, among others have defended the value of studying narratives against a host of detractors. Moreover, each of the (above mentioned) disciplines have assimilated a narrative approach into both the subject and method of research. Unfortunately, the arguments for or against the value of narrative may have less to do with good

scholarship and more to do with “territorial marking”⁵. As the academy becomes (slowly) diversified, alternative theoretical perspectives have been posited. The interventions by women, people of color, gay, lesbian and transgendered people, and the multitude of others who constitute "social difference", have expanded/exploded the boundaries of academic discourse. Make no mistake however, these seemingly benign theoretical forays have had very real political implications both within and outside the university. Often the stamp of approval by the larger academy is hard to come by, thus rendering a great deal of innovative and vibrant work as marginal⁶.

It is for exactly the above mentioned retrenchment that I argue the “turn toward narrative” is and has been crucial since meaning is profoundly constructed, reconstructed, and *deconstructed* by the stories we tell about ourselves, others, and the world we inhabit. Through stories, we are better able to engage in a constructive dialogue about alternative perspectives and ways of knowing. Furthermore, in arguing for the value of examining narratives in his book, *Interpretive Interactionism*, Denzin (2001) states:

Everything we study is contained within a storied or narrative representation. The self is a narrative production. There is no separation between self and society. Material social conditions, discourses, and narrative practices interweave to shape the self and its many identities. Narrative’s double duty is complex, and self and society are storied productions (pp. 58-59).

⁵ I use this term purposively as it conveys a particular masculinist response to the encroachment of competing "ways of knowing".

⁶ While space prohibits an in-depth exploration of these dynamics, I think it important to recognize and name the intellectual "othering" that often creates barriers to alternative, non-mainstream perspectives.

So for Denzin and other social scientists, narratives offer rich sites for the excavation of the motives and actions of both the community and of the individual at one and the same time.

Similarly, Butryn and Masucci (2003), in their investigation of Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong, have articulated the value of this “reorientation toward narrative inquiry” (p. 126), as it relates to examining the experiences of athletes and go on to claim that:

By investigating the stories that athletes tell about themselves, researchers have been better able to understand the actions, motives, and conflicting identifications that impact and form an athlete’s experience. Critical narrative approaches have helped sport studies researchers begin to make sense of the implications of “managing” multiple identifications against more traditional social expectations. Furthermore, narrative research that foregrounds the athlete’s perspective, interpretation and evaluation of their own experiences, has helped to facilitate a reconsideration of seemingly common-sense ideas about technology, masculinity, race, class, ability and sexual orientation. (pp. 126-127)

Moreover, the power of stories, and *counterstories* as Nelson (2001) has suggested, can help to reconceptualize the taken-for-granted assumptions about relationships of power, for instance. With these transformative considerations in mind, I will return to a discussion of counterstories in Chapter 4 as I feel they can be a great help in arguing for certain types of stories; these are stories that help to recast the oppressed as “respectworthy moral agents” (Nelson, 2001, p. 7) But now I will

turn my attention to the relatively new discourse of narrative ethics. As I have stated in the preface, this project represents an attempt to meld elements from across various academic disciplines however; the foundation of this project owes considerable recognition to the possibilities stimulated by this emerging ethical paradigm.

Narrative Ethics

Narrative ethics as an ethical approach has begun to garner attention in a small but vibrant body of literature that has begun to emerge over the past few decades (Nelson, 2001). While there is no agreed upon definition of narrative ethics, nor any one academic discipline that can lay claim to it, many scholars concur that a central tenant of narrative ethics is the idea that narratives “figure importantly into the moral life” (Nelson 2001, p. 36). Moreover as Nelson elaborates, narrative ethics, “accords a central role to stories” (p. 36). But what does it mean to say that narratives figure into the moral life? Nelson (1997, 2001) claims that, from a philosophical perspective, it often means assigning moral significance to stories, not simply as examples or illustrations (although these are legitimate uses of stories for moral purposes as well as for narrative ethics), but rather as a “necessary means to some moral end” (p. 36). For example, Martha Nussbaum, whose position I will later examine, is interested in exploring the role of “artistically sophisticated fiction in developing moral perception” (Nelson, 2001, p. 37). The important point here is that for narrative ethicists, morality is often tied inextricably to stories. While I am sympathetic to Nelson’s position that stories are *necessary* to achieve some moral

end, I argue below, that if stories in general can be morally uplifting, sport stories ought to be included among the kind of stories culled for moral purposes. To be sure, both Nelson (1997, 2001) and Murray (1997) suggest multiple uses of stories for moral purposes and it is this trajectory I pursue throughout the remainder of this dissertation.

Murray (1997) also suggests that narratives have significant moral value. He contrasts the way that certain narratives are utilized for moral purposes on the one hand and twentieth-century "propositional" moral philosophy on the other. It is clear to see the inherent tension between many more traditional ethical philosophical systems, founded on a set of irrefutable logical propositions, and an ethical system instantiated on certain iterations of narrative ethics that can seem relativistic due to their context specificity. However, according to Murray and other narrative ethicists, the lived experiences of moral agents are complex and nearly impossible to reduce to a universal (Kantian) moral calculus. What is ironic, according to Murray (and I concur), is that many of these "propositional ethicists" rely significantly on stories and narrative examples to buttress their arguments, seemingly acknowledging the usefulness of the narrative genre to help frame and articulate moral questions.

Murray (1997) goes on to articulate four possible answers to the question "what is narrative ethics?" (p. 6). The first answer Murray gives is that narratives can be used as "moral education" (p. 6). By this, Murray explains that often the stories we are told (as children) are meant to shape and mold us in particularly moral ways. Many kinds of stories, in this view, are like the "propositionlike maxims that we are given as children" (p. 6) such as, 'do not kill' for example. Many people, Murray

reasons, learn much of what they know about morality from these types of narratives. While the former point does not seem particularly controversial, detractors have claimed that these stories, while important for getting at moral and ethical content, are not content in and of themselves but rather heuristic devices designed to “represent the content of morality” (p. 7) in a memorable way.

Propositional ethicists who may be sympathetic to Murray’s idea that stories can be used for moral education purposes share a concern that these stories in and of themselves, are not necessarily an “essential element” (p. 7) as he claims when sketching out the detractor’s view. However, in addressing this charge, Murray posits suggests that, it is crucial to “give narrative(s) an important substantive role in ethics” (p. 7).

The second answer to the question posited by Murray about the nature of narrative ethics, and one that directly addresses the issue he raised concerning the substantive role of narrative in ethical discourse is “narrative as moral methodology” (p. 7-8). This perspective, says Murray, is important in many types of practical ethical applications such as bioethics (Murray’s field of expertise). Often called casuistry, this ‘method’ involves, “case-centered moral reasoning” (p. 8). Narratives as represented in case stories are important, says Murray, in developing moral reasoning. The salient feature of casuistry based ethical systems is that they are not dependent on propositional moral logic to define right and wrong, but rather, the moral value is to be found within the interpretation of the story itself and thus open to change. Or, as Murray summarizes, “the moral content, that is, resides in the case; the propositions we draw from it are interpretations of the content” (p. 8). Moreover,

as Jonsen and Toulmin (1988) point out, the crux of the “moral experience” (p. 314) does not lie in general moral rules and principles but rather in the:

(W)isdom that comes from seeing how the ideas behind those rules work out in the course of people’s lives: in particular, seeing more exactly what is involved in insisting on (or waiving) this or that rule in one or another set of circumstances. (p. 314)

The third answer to the question, “what is narrative ethics” posited by Murray is, “narrative as an appropriate form of moral discourse” (p. 9). Here he is interested in positioning narratives, or more correctly, certain types of narratives philosophers use, within the landscape of moral philosophy itself. Moral philosophy is done to a greater or lesser degree with stories. Some of the stories are hypothetical, that is to say that they are conventions created by the philosopher usually to “highlight some proposition about ethics” (p. 10). Unlike the narrative in moral method, these stories simply serve as a way to put meat on the bones of the propositional frameworks that the ethicist is articulating. But the stories themselves are not content rich, that is to say, the power of these stories is in that they (interestingly and ironically) demonstrate what the propositions are supposed to show clearly! By contrast, a second type of narrative is often deployed by moral theorists. The purpose of these stories, according to Murray, is that they are intended to, “set up, motivate, [and] show the necessity of the approach taken by the theorist” (p. 10). Similarly, Murray asserts that Martha Nussbaum’s work uses narrative to help sharpen moral perceptions and thus “enrich our moral discourse” (p. 13).

The last response to the question first posed by Murray, what is narrative ethics?, attempts to come to terms with the use of narratives in moral justification. In this view, Murray claims that we rely, not on moral propositions to make informed moral judgments, but rather on a more “nuanced and complex” (p. 14) understanding of what we consider to be right and wrong or good and bad. What, he asks, are the “sources of confident knowledge about morality?” (p. 14). It is this instantiation of narratives for moral purposes that are most intriguing to me for this project. In explaining the role of stories and narrative in the realm of moral knowledge, he makes use of the metaphors of a web and a tapestry. The web, Murray explains, is not a perfect structure and is, perhaps made up of many threads of many different sizes, yet, the web when constructed, seems to do (to a greater or lesser degree) what it was intended to do. The tapestry is an even more vivid metaphor as it relates to the use of stories for moral purpose. A tapestry literally is a depiction of many images that, “taken together, tell stories” (p.14). Stories, in this sense, are part of the larger tapestry and depict, among other things, “good lives and bad lives, human flourishing and its contrary” (p. 14). Indeed, as Murray indicates, a significant and reliable amount of moral knowledge comes to us in the form of stories: stories of kindness, of cruelty, of upliftment, and of unspeakable horrors.

But these stories, when woven into a larger cultural tapestry, says Murray, play an important role in defining, refining, and reframing how we consider certain moral issues. By scrutinizing the stories that are prominent in our society, we often can look at the “worn and ugly threads” (p. 15) that might be best removed from the tapestry as they seem to obfuscate the larger beauty of work. Put in practical terms,

these stories allow us to identify how we have arrived at a particular position on a given moral issue. I'll discuss the Bobby Riggs/ Billie Jean King match in greater detail in Chapter 5, for reading that sporting story allows one to identify the "ugly thread" of gender inequality for example.

If the reader is still left wondering, what is narrative ethics and how is it "done", it is likely because narrative ethicists themselves do not share one particular vision. Rather, as I have alluded to above, there are a number of things that ethicists do which draw from narrative work. It would, of course be prohibitive to examine all of the claims that narrativist's have made; however, it will be helpful to look at the way that one philosopher, Martha Nussbaum, has suggested using literature for moral purposes. In *Love's Knowledge* (1990), Nussbaum presents a comprehensive collection of essays that explore the limits of ethical work that literature can do. Nussbaum, who proclaims a long and intimate relationship to works of fiction, was disenchanted with the relative lack of attention that philosophers had paid to the profound ethical questions being illuminated by certain works of literature. Nussbaum's central thesis revolves around two claims "about the writer's art that seem worth investigating" (1990, p.4).

The first claim has to do with the form and content of any carefully written text. Nussbaum asserts that there is, "an organic connection between its form and its content. Certain thoughts and ideas, a certain sense of life, reach toward expression in writing that has a certain shape and form, that uses certain structures, certain terms" (pp. 4-5). In other words, for Nussbaum, the ideas in a work of literature are *necessarily* bound to the textual expression of those ideas. Writing that is well done,

says Nussbaum, cannot be paraphrased in a "very different form and style", lest it surrender the power to express the same conception. The second, and more important claim for her larger project, is concerned with the unique ability of the narrative artist "to express certain human truths" (p. 5). Moreover, Nussbaum (1990) makes the stronger declaration, with respect to certain elements of human life, that the terms of the novelist's art are, "alert winged creatures, perceiving where the blunt terms of ordinary speech or abstract theoretical discourse, are blind, acute where they are obtuse, winged where they are dull and heavy" (p. 5).

So for Nussbaum, there is an important connection to be made between the literary text and certain profound moral questions. In fact, says Nussbaum, "a literary narrative of a certain sort is the only type of text that can state them [relevant portions of human life] fully and fittingly, without contradiction" (p. 7). The sum of these two claims is that literary narratives are better-suited than philosophical treatises to investigate, articulate, and *accentuate* certain important ethical questions. It is one thing to say that literature highlights significant moral questions and another thing to say that reading certain literature can be morally efficacious.

The reader moves beyond the domain of philosophical discourse by "allowing the author of the work to direct one's attention to the rich and subtle particulars of the narrative-the moral, intellectual, emotional, and social nuances" (Nelson, 2001, p.37). It is in this way that the reader can see what is "morally at issue". Moreover, having refined one's perceptions of what is at stake morally, through the careful guidance of a skilled author, one "can respond to actual others in her own life not merely adequately but excellently" (Nelson 2001 p. 38). In Nussbaum's words, the reader

becomes “finely aware and richly responsible” (Nussbaum, 1990, p.148). Hopefully, the general contours of Nussbaum’s narrative ethics are starting to materialize. To sum up, (1) novels get at moral questions that have often been overlooked in philosophical discourse; (2) a competent author can direct the reader’s attention to morally relevant issues; (3) the attuned reader, upon having her or his perceptions honed, will be better able to act responsibly since she or he will be more “aware” of complex ethical dimensions of one’s interactions. A further benefit of reading well written literature is that it allows one the opportunity to push beyond the limits of one’s experience in effect broadening his or her moral horizons. Moreover, the author is able to acutely articulate and scrutinize the salient moral features of a situation or relationship in ways that are typically not possible in everyday life. In other words, as Nelson sums up:

If we ourselves are to attain the moral virtuosity that consists in choosing exactly the right response to another, we need to see these choices modeled by particular characters in particular settings, in the kind of detail that lets us appreciate how easy it is to miss something crucial, how hard it is to get it right. (2001, p. 38)

Nussbaum is exclusively interested in the moral issues that are elaborated in novels. However, she admits that other genres may prove appropriate so long as they give sufficient attention to particularity and emotion and “so long as they involve their readers in relevant activities of searching and feeling, especially feeling concerning their own possibilities” (1990 p. 46).

In *Love's Knowledge*, Nussbaum (1990) also takes the analytical ethicists to task. Nussbaum claims that the style of modern Anglo-American philosophy, "is correct, scientific, abstract, hygienically pallid, a style that seemed to be regarded as a kind of all-purpose solvent in which philosophical issues of any kind at all could be efficiently disentangled, any and all conclusions neatly disengaged" (p.19). Nussbaum, by contrast, suggests that narratives (and sophisticated literature in particular) are better able to capture the subtle and crucial nuances of moral deliberants. Moreover, the fact that lives are lived and conceived in terms of a narrative structure, says Nussbaum, is a strong case against the antiseptic and analytical view of morality argued for by many philosophers. Of course, Nussbaum's work in narrative ethics does not reflect the diversity of positions within the discourse; indeed many (myself included) take issue with the considerable amount of "cultural capital" one must possess to benefit from the moral influence of the sort of high-brow literature that she recommends. This criticism aside, an important implication of Nussbaum's work in particular and narrative approaches to ethics in general is the recognition that our moral choices and actions are influenced and shaped by stories.

Carl Elliot (1999) expands on Nussbaum's critique of "traditional" moral philosophy by appealing to Wittgenstein. For Elliot, Wittgenstein's move away from a view of "language" as pictured reality to the idea that language is an "altogether messier and more complex affair" (p. 123), gives credence to a narrative approach to moral philosophy. It is a mistake, Elliot continues, for "philosophers to try to systematize language or to provide some kind of philosophical foundation upon

which language can be founded” (p. 134). Though Elliot is talking about the philosophy of language, he argues that moral philosophy is similarly messy. In other words, the attempt to reduce ethics to universal philosophical principles (often represented in propositional analytic formulas) is a mistake since the lived experiences of moral agents is unique and colored by a multitude of experiences that are not captured by such abstract principles. The moral life, concludes Elliot, is best interrogated by the use of literary narrative. As I suggest below, an expanded rendering of “narrative”, one that includes, among other things, sporting stories, can only add to the richness of the kind of moral approach that Elliot has advanced.

Sport as Narrative

There is a rich tradition of telling sporting stories in our culture, from local sporting myths to the valorization of certain athletes and the demonizing of others, in various newspaper, book, magazine, radio, television, and virtual accounts. Indeed, as Michael Oriard claims in his 1993 book, *Reading Football*, “it seems obvious that every sporting season tells a story to its various fans: tale of hopes fulfilled or disappointed, of adversity overcome or unsurmounted, of aging heroics or youthful folly or sheer luck triumphant...the numerous plots are familiar” (p. 23). It is clear that sport figures importantly *in* and *as* narratives. Moreover, paying close attention to sporting narratives can often reveal insights into larger social and cultural meanings. As Joseph Gusfield (2000) has suggested, “considering sports as a form of art, as telling and acting out stories within its own specific form, enables us to consider the elements that operate in creating meaning” (p.70).

Is there something special about sports in contrast to other activities that lend it particularly to the narrative form? It seems a matter of common sense to suggest that sports are different in some significant ways from other activities. In fact, it is the utter familiarity and popularity of sport, I would suggest, that often renders serious academic study marginal at best. Indeed, as John Greenway observed in 1985, "it is easy for academics to dismiss sport as an "obsession", but when one hundred million watched the Super Bowl between the Steelers and the Rams while only seventy-three million voted in the presidential election, even the most skeptical student of culture has to admit something important is going on" (p. 55). Taking my cue from a cultural studies perspective that advocates not only the study of popular culture but also the insistence on *making the familiar strange*, I maintain that undertaking a critical academic exploration of sport is paramount if we wish to better understanding our culture, and the moral choices of its inhabitants. In many ways, it is the simultaneous familiarity and separateness from the everyday that make sports compelling.

I am in favor of a *popular* understanding of sport as a unique activity, in contrast to everyday, often mundane, activities. Sports, in this view are differentiated from other activities in important ways by time, space and action for example. Sporting activities often occur in specific locations, whether they take place on fields, courts or in pools that are created expressly for athletic activities or whether sporting activities occur in "secular spaces"⁷ adapted and/or adopted for sporting exploits.

⁷ The allusion to religiosity here is purposeful, as there is a growing discourse surrounding the intersection of sport and religion; however space prohibits a lengthy treatment. For a useful introduction of the

The fact that we must go to the stadium, tennis court, or the closed off streets of a downtown for a bike race, emphasize that “this activity is out of the ordinary” in many significant ways. The understanding of temporality will play an important role in the conceptualization of sports as, not only unique, but also *as uniquely represented* through story. Time plays a similar role in the differentiation of sporting activities from the everyday. Time is often dramatically reframed and reconfigured in sporting events⁸.

Consider that the 100-meter dash is regularly decided by less than 1/100 of a second. By contrast, a basketball team down by 2 points in the fourth quarter with 10 seconds on the clock is said to have "all the time in the world". Of course, it is possible to simply (and accurately) make the case that time and space are always relative, as in the split-second reaction that results in a fatal car crash or a near miss; the difference is that while many people experience time and place/space in a multitude of ways, sports *purposefully* embodies a setting that is generally unattainable in day-to-day activities. Moreover, it is exactly these “non-secular” qualities that distinguish sports activities from other more commonplace events and, for many people, make them so alluring. In any event, what seems clear is that engaging in sporting activities, whether as a participant or as a spectator, has the capacity to suspend the ordinary. That is not to say that certain characteristics commonly associated with sport do not seep into the secular world. In fact, many

religious dynamic of sport, see Charles Prebish, (1993). *Religion and Sport: The Meeting of the Sacred and Profane*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

⁸ It is important to note that both spectators and participants can profoundly experience the spatial/temporal/behavioral idiosyncrasies of sports. This point will be crucial in arguing for the move from action to narrative.

supporters *and* detractors of sport argue just this case. The notion of competition for example, depending on one's view, can be assessed in this way. On the one hand, many believe that the spirit of competitiveness that helps the athlete achieve particular goals can also be beneficial in the business or political world. On the other hand, there are those who feel that the intense win at all cost ethos so prevalent in contemporary sport can have damaging consequences when applied in the non-sport settings. Regardless of one's perspective, it is apparent that reflecting on either the positive or the dubious "value" of sport can and often does create a dialogue on morally significant questions: an issue I will revisit in the following chapter.

Birrell and McDonald (2000) similarly make a strong case for "reading" sport, sporting personalities, and media representations of sport as texts in their book, *Reading sport: Critical essays on power and representation*. In explaining the methodological focus of their edited collection, Birrell and McDonald suggest that:

Everyone with any interest in sport "reads" sport in some way. For over a century we have had a daily site for the production of sport narratives called the sports page, and that central site has been joined over the years by television and radio broadcasts and commentary, the increasingly popular genre of autobiographies of sporting figures, novels and films set in sport settings, web sites devoted to all forms of sport information and dialogue, and of course scholarly analyses of the world of sport. (p. 10)

According to Birrell and McDonald, reading popular culture "products" including sport, is something that many people always-already engage in to a greater or lesser degree of sophistication. The "familiarity" of popular sporting narratives is

what gives Birrell and McDonald's approach its thrust. Of course, Birrell and McDonald advocate for a particular kind of critical reading in order to reveal the cultural meanings "that circulate within narratives of particular incidents or celebrities" (2000, p. 11). Importantly for Birrell and McDonald's project, as well as for the present project, the desire to discover the one "true" reading is elusive at best and highly problematic at worst since the multiplicity of meaning, whether from a cultural or from a moral perspective, can be characterized as a socially bound construction; this is a hallmark of postmodern/poststructuralist interpretation to be sure. Nonetheless, following Birrell and McDonald, (1999, 2000) I explore the value of, "conceptualizing particular sporting events or celebrities as "text" and offer "readings" of those texts" (2000, p. 3).

However, while I am interested in "reading sport critically" (Birrell & McDonald, 1999) thereby, "producing...narratives infused with resistant political possibilities" (p. 283), I am particularly interested in foregrounding how sporting narratives help to inform moral choices. For while *critical textual interpretations* of sport can and do offer insight into the articulation of multiple and competing power vectors in sporting narratives, they often do not take into account that one's actions and moral deliberations may in fact be *profoundly influenced* by how these stories become synthesized into a person's larger narrative-of-self. The sort of textual interpretation that Birrell and McDonald do suggest, however, has been important in the way in which I have formulated my notion of reading particular sporting events and reflecting on the moral messages that they may contain. I call this type of

narrative *sport as reflexive narrative* and will explore the moral work that reading these kinds of texts can do in Chapter 5.

I am interested, as well, in investigating how, and in what ways, sport figure into who we (and others) see ourselves as, on the one hand, and how we come to incorporate these sport stories-of-self into our moral deliberations. The larger question, then, has to do importantly, with identity formation, autobiography, and moral questions. The position that I will argue for below, has been informed in a significant way by the emerging trends in sociology and anthropology as well as critical sport studies. Increasingly, scholars from each of these disciplines have advocated for the value of exploring stories of self, for a variety of meanings. Bochner (2001) for example, extols the virtues of narrative research and suggests that, among other things, narratives of self can become quite empowering for the narrator. Frank (1995) also argues for the efficacy of autobiographical accounts of the self in advocating for illness narratives that help to reframe the patient (both privately and publicly) as active, engaged, and empowered in care decisions from the more traditional orientation of victim of disease (p. xi). Lance Armstrong's autobiography, which I will elaborate on in Chapter 4, is a good example of the "power" of utilizing autobiography to reframe illness. One importance difference, as I have been suggesting, is that sport figures into that redescription in both subtle and profound ways.

A special edition of the *Sociology of Sport Journal: Imagining Sociological Narratives* (2000, volume 17, number1) has been important to, not only my project, but as an important marker of the narrative trends within the field of sport sociology.

The work in this special volume, as well as in several important texts that have recently been published⁹, help to illuminate the promise that narrative discourses have in the investigation of human meaning and sport and movement study. In the introduction, Denison and Rinehart (2000) outline the changing landscape in sport sociology and the ways in which a continued reevaluation of the importance and usefulness of narratives and narrative research will result in expanding our knowledge about the world of sport and physical activity. They claim that:

The shift into personal experience narratives, storied accounts, or ethnographic fiction requires a highly complex and complicated conceptual shift in the way one approaches subjects and topics. It requires a shift in sensibilities-perhaps even world view-that we believe should affect every decision the researcher makes about the study all the way from the germ of an idea to the field to the text. (Denison & Reinhart, 2000, p. 3)

I suggest that while the narrative reframing of sport studies research paradigms may, in fact, be quite a daunting task as Denison and Reinhart have rightly suggested, *that people do make sense out of themselves and their actions in their social worlds in and through stories* is, I contend, quite common. Perhaps (owing to the stranglehold of positivistic methods of inquire) the new turn toward narrative is just a reflection of this notion...that we have suspected all along.

⁹ See especially, Sparkes (2002) *Telling tales in sport and physical activity*, and Denison, J. & Markula, P. (Eds.) (2003). *Moving writing: Crafting movement in sport research* for a comprehensive overview of the trends in narrative discourse in the academic space of sport studies.

CHAPTER III

MORAL FEATURES OF SPORTING NARRATIVES

Having argued that 1) narratives figure into the moral life and thus constitute a legitimate form of ethical inquiry, and 2) that sport is particularly well suited to the narrative genre, I turn my attention to the moral work that sporting narratives do. In addition, I answer the claims of certain “elitists” who may well argue that while sporting narrative can do *some* moral work they are not complex or nuanced enough to do the same kind of moral work as “sophisticated literature” including the works of James, Proust, and Beckett, for example. However, before explicating the way in which sporting narratives can work in moral ways, I would like to say a little about the nexus of this project.

A Cultural Studies Informed Narrative Ethics

It is important to mention that my version of *sporting narrative ethics* is not intended to be a strict adaptation of either the various forms of narrative ethics I have outlined in Chapter 2 and later in this chapter, or, following Birrell and McDonald (1999, 2000), the close reading of sporting “texts” that has been practiced in the discipline of critical sport studies. My intent, rather, is to appropriate significant elements of each “method” and deploy them in a way that, perhaps, allows for a more nuanced understanding of morality, sport, and textuality that lies at the frontier of these seemingly divergent disciplinary perspectives. With this *interdisciplinary* perspective in mind, I recognize that these are potentially tumultuous and uneasy

academic alliances, yet I believe the value of such an exploration helps to shed a little light on the question at hand. Moreover, cultural studies, as a discipline that has historically excavated and explored popular cultural phenomena, provides a valuable example of how a community of scholars can argue for (and validate) a more collaborative, innovative, and hybridized theoretical perspective in the pursuit of academic projects (Wright, 1996, 2004). Indeed, the intervention of narrative ethics within moral philosophy (and bioethics particularly) and the subsequent inclusion of sporting stories within narrative ethics similarly represent an innovative and important hybrid discourse, as well as a valuable device in the exploration of moral actions and meaning. While I am not suggesting that narrative ethics itself represent a fusion of philosophy and cultural studies, I would argue that my inclusion of sporting stories within the domain of narrative ethics *has been significantly influenced by cultural studies*.

By moving away from the complex and technical language of moral philosophy, narrative ethics has the potential to democratize ethical discourse. That is not to say that moral questions are approached in a less sophisticated way, but rather through a less sophisticated medium and thus are potentially considered in an altogether different light. Many narrative ethicists including Martha Nussbaum (1990), Richard Rorty (1989) and Michael DePaul (1993) for example, argue that attentive reading of refined literature¹⁰ helps one to expand their moral horizons. While this view can be seen as an alternative to the 'propositional' model of moral philosophy, I would argue that the moral world is *not necessarily any more accessible*

¹⁰ Reading "refined" literature is not the only type of narrative method advocated by these scholars, but it does figure importantly in to a significant number of narrative approaches.

by reading Henry James, for example, then pouring over the works of John Stuart Mill, or certainly the work of Immanuel Kant! Sporting narratives, I argue, on the other hand, represent profound cultural accessibility, yet also instantiate stories of sufficient enough depth to do moral work.

Sport¹¹, from the perspective of the spectator, participant, or critic has become ubiquitous in American culture. Educators, board members, and activists use sporting metaphors to bolster their positions. In fact, in the recent 2004 presidential race, both candidates appeared in interviews the eve of the election on the television sports programming leader, ESPN, exploring any number of sport related questions. A quick glance at the local newspaper or television news broadcast reveals that a significant portion of each of these media outlets is dedicated to sports coverage (Coakley, 2001, p.9). Sport, for better or worse, represents a significant and lasting cultural form. Given the emphasis of sports in our cultural, however, there remains a limited academic exploration of the intricacies of this form of popular culture. Moreover, as I stated in the introduction, even less attention has been paid to the intersection between sport and morality.

Sociology, anthropology, psychology, education and philosophy have sub-fields devoted to the study of sport, however, though, these areas of work has remained relatively obscure and peripheral. Cultural studies on the other hand, as a hybrid academic discipline whose devotés are profoundly interested in both popular to forge these new theoretical and political alliances. The inter/anti-disiplinarity that forms of culture as well as issues of social justice, provides a fertile academic space is

¹¹ Here I am advocating a broad definition of the word "sport" to include organized and unorganized physical activity, elite-level athletes, and "arm-chair quarterbacks".

sustained by a cultural studies discourse is the sort of alliance I have in mind when bringing together narrative ethics and sport. In arguing for integrating sporting narratives into the realm of ethics, I am drawing from a cultural studies perspective to make a three-fold claim: 1) That sport as a popular cultural phenomena ought to be taken up seriously in the academy, 2) the narratives that some people tell about themselves, others, and the world they live in are profoundly impacted by and through sport and, 3) that sporting activities, recast and interpolated in narrative form influence and impact people's moral decisions.

Before I explore the ways in which sport stories can be used for moral purposes explicitly, it is useful to clarify what I mean by *sport stories* in the first place. By sport stories, I am talking about two separate yet related concepts. First, I am claiming that sport and athletic activities can be seen as an important part of the story that people tell about themselves, I'll call this notion *sport as autobiography*. Second, is the idea that *particular* sporting events, for viewers and participants alike, can be understood as *stories that can be read* and have moral relevance, I'll call this notion *sport as reflexive text*. I expand on each of these concepts in chapters 4 and 5 respectively, but it is important to clarify this distinction ahead of that discussion.

Moral Sporting Narratives: Like and Unlike Narrative Ethics

In saying that sporting narratives can do moral work, I am acknowledging the important contributions of the narrative ethics positions outlined in Chapter 2. Nonetheless, it is important to articulate what kind of moral work sporting narratives can do. Following Nelson (2001), narrativists have claimed:

That stories of one kind or another are required: (1) to teach us our duties, (2) to guide morally good action, (3) to motivate morally good action, (4) to justify action on moral grounds, (5) to cultivate our moral sensibilities, (6) to enhance our moral perception, (7) to make actions or persons morally intelligible, and (8) to reinvent ourselves as better persons. (Nelson 2001, p. 36)

I, too, am interested in the moral efficacy of sporting stories and in particular I focus on how such stories can guide morally good actions, motivate morally good action, enhance moral perception, and help to reframe (vis-à-vis the narrative counterstory) the perspectives of those who hold back potential others from fulfilling their full moral agency.

I'll start my exploration of the utility of deploying sporting narratives by examining the positions of narrative ethicists' like Martha Nussbaum, Richard Rorty, and Michael DePaul who have each in turn, argued for the value of reading certain literary works in order to enhance moral perception among other things. I'll highlight the salient features of each of these positions and show how they can both be adopted to sporting narratives and how sporting narratives can expand on and address the particular flaws of these respective positions.

Nussbaum: philosophy and literature.

I begin with Nussbaum for two reasons. First, in suggesting that a careful reading of certain literary texts can heighten moral awareness, Nussbaum is one of the foremost proponents of an influential, if not elitist, brand of narrative ethics. Second, I consider Nussbaum's literary approach in order to contrast it with a less highbrow

narrative approach, one that draws moral inspiration from sport and other popular cultural forms.

Nussbaum (1990) claims that the novel works in a moral way because it “places us in a position that is both like and unlike the positions that we occupy in life” (p. 48): Like positions in life, she insists, because we become emotionally involved with the characters in the novel. Unlike positions in life, in that we are free from the “distortions that frequently impede our real-life deliberations” (p. 48). In other words, a well crafted novel allows the reader to become emotionally immersed in the story without being detracted by the hustle and bustle of daily life. The singular focus on the nuances of the story, through the act of reading, is what draws in and holds our attention. Likewise, a carefully written novel can nudge our rapt attention to issues of moral import but, perhaps, only if those moral issues were embedded in the story by the author in the first place. In the case of Henry James, for example, Nussbaum (1990) makes it clear that James’ intent, as expressed in his lengthy prefaces, is precisely to highlight certain moral issues experienced by the characters. While this literary method certainly has its advantages, namely carefully focusing the attention of the reader to issues of moral significance, I believe that sporting narratives can work in a similar, though less contrived (and thus, perhaps, in a more accessible) way.

I am arguing that sport narratives (both autobiographical and reflexive) have a compelling element that makes them unlike works of fiction. That element, as articulated by Wiland (2003) in his discussion of the value of autobiography for moral inquiry, has to do with the fact that the experiences of the narrative actually

occurred, whereas in fictive representations, the events (while highly suggestive often) are fabricated to a greater or lesser degree. As Wiland (2003) claims:

Narratives in general impart, directly and indirectly, moral lessons to the reader, lessons that the careful and sensitive reader will often appropriate. But autobiographies also have the peculiar feature of explicitly recounting the author's own experiences. So the reader of the autobiography is not only inclined to accept these moral lessons upon reading the work. She, unlike the reader of fiction, also discovers that someone who has undergone those experiences has come to hold these moral lessons. Thus the reader of autobiography can consider whether someone who has undergone the experiences the author's writing recounts is likely to have acquired a more accurate sense of the relative importance of the benefits and harms the narrative deals with. (p. 195)

How can *viewing* certain sporting events (one kind of sport narrative that I advocate for) attune one's moral perceptions, or at least highlight issues of moral importance? As spectators, we often become emotionally involved with the characters (or players). We can empathize with their decisions and actions because we have felt similar human emotions ourselves. Similarly, we can step back from the actions performed on the playing fields and in the arenas and assess their moral import. In fact, it is the detachment of sport from the everyday that gives us the (unusual) opportunity to survey what is taking place before us in much the same way that literary works do. So, following Nussbaum then, I am claiming that sporting narratives can help to illuminate issues of moral significance. That is to say, sporting

narratives can acutely focus the attention of the “reader” in such a way as to highlight the subtle moral questions bound up in the narrative itself, thereby helping the reader to become “finely aware and richly responsible” (p. 148).

Sport can be viewed in explicitly narrative terms at both the personal as well as the public level. The relative uniformity of time and space provide a backdrop against which sporting events unfold. Contrary to the mundane actions of everyday life, which seldom result in categorical resolution, sporting events usually end with an obvious finale.¹² Further, sporting events are often culturally situated in a way that highlights more of the historical and social contexts as a result, perhaps, of the laser-like scrutiny that the events tend to get from the medial and popular press. The example of Billie Jean King which I will fully articulate in Chapter 5, hints at this notion of historicity. The structure of sporting events seems to echo that of a literary drama, replete with the subplots of tragedy and comedy, hero and villain. In many sporting events (and this is of course facilitated by the commentator), the ‘story’ unfolds before our very eyes. Often the stories take on familiar tropes of the cultures in which they are acted out, thus buttressing the master narratives that can be found lying about (Nelson, 1997, 2001) in our contemporary culture. Indeed, as Denzin (2001) suggests, “[N]arratives of the self, as temporal constructions, are anchored in local institutional cultures and their interpretive practices” (p. 59). In this sense, the unique characteristics of sporting activities, especially time and space, allow the participant and the spectator to focus intently on the event from start to finish, thus

¹² That is not to say that one’s lived experiences are less story-like than a sporting event per se’ but rather, that as a result of the ‘compression of time’, (that is, the temporality *of* the event) that these events perhaps are more easily ‘read’ than the totality of one’s life-story. On the other hand, as I suggest in chapter 4, sporting autobiographies are certainly ‘readable’ for moral purposes.

allowing for the prospect of ‘reading’ any number of possible outcomes into the event. In many ways, the fact that the totality of the event or activity can be reflected on at once gives credence to the notion that sport can and does operate as a literary narrative does. Moreover, as Nelson demonstrates (1997, 2001) these stories, while certainly embedded within the larger cultural plots, can also serve to challenge those (larger cultural plots) assumptive perspectives, and thereby help to reframe in an important sense, the discourse on morality in the first place.

So, following the trend in narrative discourse in general, and in critical sport studies in particular, I want to suggest that sporting events can, in fact, be ‘read’ in the same way that Nussbaum has argued sophisticated fiction can be read, that is, in order to refine the moral perceptions of the reader. In Chapter 5, I will highlight two case studies to further illustrate just how this reading works.

Rorty and moral perception.

Richard Rorty is similarly interested in the role that narratives can play in the life of the reader. In *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989), Rorty focuses his attention on two initiatives: reducing the cruelty in our society and institutions, and creating oneself on one’s own terms rather than accept on other’s terms (Nelson, 2001). While Rorty acknowledges the validity of each of these endeavors, he holds that the two are wholly incommensurable; it is not possible, he claims, to ‘hold the two in a single vision’ (Rorty, 1993, p. 147). Moreover, he contends, “The vocabulary of self-creation is necessarily private, unshared, unsuited to argument. The vocabulary of justice is necessarily public and shared, a medium for argumentative exchange” (Rorty 1989, p. xiv).

Rorty's insistence that the public and private spheres are incommensurable does not diminish his utilization of literature in each project, albeit for different purposes. Rorty's view is predicated on the idea that all that we know about a person or persons is based on the contingent history of that person's life, rather than some true facts about the nature of human beings. In other words, not only does Rorty reject the idea that there are universal metaphysical truths *out there*; he rejects the idea that persons *in here* are best explained by some appeal to the *facts* of human nature. This view lends itself to the autobiographical self narratives that I explore in Chapter 4.

This position has important ramifications for Rorty's dual tasks of self-creation and the abjuration of public cruelty (and subsequently how Rorty sees stories fitting into this project). In the first instance, that of self-creation, Rorty claims that we should be "ironists". Ironists according to Rorty, "substitute a tissue of contingent relations, a web which stretches backward and forward through past and future time, for a formal, unified, present, self-containing substance, something capable of being seen steadily and whole" (1989, p. 41). Since there is no overarching intrinsic nature, it is incumbent on each individual to be in charge of the descriptions of themselves paying close attention to their individual history as well as to the idea that each redescription of oneself cannot ever 'get it right'. These ironic self-redescriptions involve looking for what Rorty calls one's final vocabulary. The problem is that prior descriptions (final vocabularies) of a person might tether someone to the wrong language-game and therefore turn him or her into the wrong kind of human being – the kind of human being for whom the abjuration of cruelty is *not* the most important

thing, presumably, though he is at pains to adequately explain why that must be the case (Rorty, 1989). At any rate, the irony rests with the idea that, while a person continually seeks to find his or her final vocabulary, that person is also aware of a contingent history which implies that no final vocabulary can ever really be final, in the sense that Rorty speaks of, since all descriptions are socially constructed in the first place.

It is here that Rorty advocates paying close attention to particular literary works. Rorty maintains that these works of fiction can help by playing vocabularies off one another. Nelson (2001) provides a clear account of what Rorty has in mind:

By redescribing their pasts and their present situation in terms of the new final vocabularies that literary critics have created, and then comparing the results with alternative redescriptions that use final vocabularies of alternative critics, Rorty claims, ironists hope to make the best selves for themselves that they possibly can (Rorty 1989, p. 80). The ironist who, to take one of Rorty's examples, reads *Remembrance of Things Past* can look to Proust/Marcel as a moral advisor who will help her to do what he did-to free himself from other people's descriptions of him (pp. 80-81). Or she can try on Nietzsche's final vocabulary, or that of any other literary critic who gives her a language that is better than the one she is using. (Nelson 2001, p. 49)

Moreover, Nelson (2001) concludes that the, "project of self-invention thus revolves around two narrative acts. The first is to read sophisticated literature, and the second is to use that literature as a guide to retelling one's own story" (p. 49).

Rorty also proposes the use of novels for the second of his projects, that of eliminating cruelty. However, while the ironist uses the works of literary critics to aid in the redescription in oneself, the *liberal* (as Rorty refers to those who view cruelty as the worst thing that one can do) turn to stories that help us see how our public social practices can make us cruel. Books, in Rorty's conception, whether for public or private use, should aim at a new final vocabulary. These books, Rorty insists, while relatively few in numbers are the ones that make the biggest difference in the long run (Rorty 1989, p. 143).

In the end, it is clear that, for Rorty, books play an important role in the lives of the individual and society at large. Individuals intent on self-creation are well served by particular works that help them to learn new vocabularies that, "permit the exercise of personal excellence" (Nelson 2001, p. 48) and thereby help people to describe themselves in their own terms. Like Nussbaum, Rorty advocates reading *certain* narrative works that help to broadly refine one's moral perceptions, thus allowing one to describe oneself in their own final vocabulary.

In many ways, the personal redescription that Rorty speaks of can be found both in the private and public spheres and in autobiographical and reflexive sporting narratives correspondingly. Sporting narratives can also be read in a way that helps to introduce new vocabularies in both the public sphere, thus leading to vigorous civic debate, and again in the private sphere, leading to the reexamination of one's 'final vocabulary.' Sport as reflexive text seems to work in both of these instances, in my view, in the way that Rorty explains. Often, for example, a particular sporting event will capture the public attention in such a way that upon deeper examination, our

public perceptions are challenged (at least) and perhaps altered in some fundamental way. As I explain in chapter 5, the story of Algerian distance runner, Hassiba Bulmerka, provides a good example of how viewing a sport performance as a narrative text can yield a public debate on the issue of gender equality for example. Reading and reframing the meaning of the championship performances of Bulmerka, as Rorty has suggested one can do with literature, may help a society to recognize and establish a dialogue about public practices that are seemingly cruel. This same example, however can also work to reframe the private aim of self-creation that Rorty suggests by allowing an individual to view seemingly incommensurable positions (the fundamentalist Muslim code of *purdah* for example) with Algerian nationalistic pride engendered by Bulmerka's many victories. Once viewed in this way, a person is perhaps able to integrate this heretofore untenable personal position (that Muslim women should not compete in athletic contests for example) with a reconciled and thus importantly redescribed final vocabulary – to use Rorty's term. While there has been considerable debate in the sport philosophy literature (see Roberts, 1998 and Morgan, 2000a) as to the relative value placed on Rorty's public/private distinction, what remains consistent and for my purposes extremely meaningful, is the value that stories have in helping to wrangle with moral and ethical dilemmas no matter how (historically and contextually) contingent.

DePaul: balance and refinement.

In his book *Balance and Refinement* (1993) DePaul offers an alternative to more traditional coherentist views of moral beliefs. In summing up DePaul's project,

and laying out the coherentist view that DePaul is arguing to modify, Tappolet (1998) remarks:

These days, most of those who are optimistic about moral knowledge and moral justification or warrant are coherentists. More precisely, they follow John Rawls in claiming that the appropriate method for arriving at moral beliefs is that which aims at wide reflective equilibrium -- a state in which particular and general moral beliefs plus other sorts of beliefs such as philosophical ones form a coherent whole -- by eliminating conflict in favour of the beliefs which are more strongly held. In a nutshell, DePaul's thesis is that such a picture is guilty of overlooking the importance of moral experiences, a shortcoming the method he proposes, that is the method of balance and refinement, seeks to correct. (1998, p.473)

While DePaul himself is sympathetic to a Rawlsian reflective equilibrium methodology, he nonetheless contends that:

The version of coherentism I propose deviates from the intellectualist conception in both recognizing the significant role of life experiences and experiences with literature, theater, and film in moral inquiry and allowing for revisions of moral beliefs that are not required either to cohere with other standing moral, philosophical or empirical beliefs or by the acquisition of new empirical information. (DePaul 1993, p. 10)

He goes on to explain that his method, that of balance and refinement, (as opposed to either foundationalist or intellectual coherentist methodologies) is significantly different even though it may seem to offer a “minor variant” of the coherent method

of moral inquest. “While there is an obvious place for argument, explanation, and theory construction”, DePaul argues, “there is also a prominent place for literature, music, and art and for philosophical reflections on these” (1993, p. 10).

What role does literature have in moral inquiry according to DePaul?

Drawing on Nussbaum, DePaul similarly supposes that reading the right kinds of novels can help to better develop a person’s faculty of moral judgment. In DePaul’s view, one “significant function of literature it to supply the kind of experience that is needed to develop a person’s faculty of moral judgment” (1993, p. 205). DePaul asserts that people need training and guidance to make more informed moral discriminations. Certain books (as well as plays and works of art) offer important avenues for people to hone their moral perceptions. For DePaul, particular novels have advantageous characteristics that make them extremely well suited to the purpose of moral refinement. First, they highlight complex situations that require intense moral judgment, situations that may not occur very often in a person’s life. Second, novels can allow for a kind of emotional distance that a person often cannot escape when they do find themselves in a complicated moral situation that require complicated moral judgments. In this way, says DePaul, one can sufficiently, “minimize the effects of personal bias and clouding of judgment” (1993, p. 205). Thirdly, situations described in novels, while often more intricate than those described in philosophical literature, are not as elaborate as real moral situations and thus are more readily grasped. What's more, the author of the story has already lead the reader to pay attention to particular matters through the use of certain literary devices such as plot, character development, and other “framing devices”(1993, p.

205-206). As a result of the author's guidance and partial interpretation of the scenario, "a novel...provides an example that might help a person to see how to sort out the salient features of a real-life situation..." (p. 205).

I am partial to DePaul's adaptation of a narrative approach to ethics at least in the sense that he is more willing to allow for the incorporation of non-literary forms of narratives that can read for the purpose of enhancing moral perception and refining moral discrimination. While he does not state it explicitly, he may be willing to concede that certain sporting narratives can, in fact, focus our attention to important moral issues and therefore influence one's moral judgment. On the other hand, after reading the work of each of these theorists, what seems apparent is, for each, the *best path* for the enhancement of moral perception rests within the reading of particularly sophisticated literature. Even DePaul, who is seemingly more open to the possibility of allowing for certain non-literature texts to be evaluated for moral purposes, seems to eschew more popular form of culture for the same purpose. These versions of a narrative approach to ethics, in my view, have some important limitations that non-literary narrative approaches help to overcome.

Difficulties with Narrative Approaches

For DePaul, Nussbaum and Rorty, the idea of appealing to the careful reading of certain texts plays a central role in their methodological approach to the examination of moral questions. However, while the notion of refining moral perception (and the subsequent fine-tuning of one actions) in this decidedly ordinary way may move away from the abstract approaches advanced by many moral theorists,

the narrative approaches to ethics furnished by Nussbaum, Rorty, and DePaul are not without problems. In *Love's Knowledge*, as I have outlined above, Nussbaum (1990) argues that a person can develop moral perception through the careful reading of particular literary works. She claims that by reading “alert winged” novels, a person can make oneself the kind of person “on whom nothing is lost” (Nussbaum 1990, p. 149). In short, Nussbaum argues for the value and usefulness of reading the works of James, Proust, Dickens and the like. As Nelson points out, one problem with Nussbaum’s approach “...has to do with the social privilege that must be enjoyed by any narrative agent using Nussbaum’s approach” (Nelson 2001, p. 50). In short, Nussbaum’s approach is elitist in that it takes a particular kind of privilege (both social *and* moral) to access the subtle moral refinements suggested by certain works of fiction. My argument mirrors that of educationists and others who have convincingly argued against the literary (or philosophical for that matter) *cannon* in general education courses on university campuses, for example. For Nussbaum, as for Rorty (and to a significant extent DePaul), the proposition that one should read *sophisticated literature* assumes that one would choose to immerse themselves in these literary works if they had cultural access to them. Furthermore, for a great number of people, “the material conditions, institutions, training, and experiences that would allow serious fiction to enter their lives are simply not available” (Nelson 2001, p. 50). Moreover, why are these works of fiction the only narrative works that have been suggested? Is it because other kinds of narratives lack the ability to direct one’s attention in an appropriately moral way? As I have been arguing thus far, I don’t believe so.

Rorty and DePaul also advocate reading particular novels that are arguably elitist. As with the work of Nussbaum, an important question remains; who gets to pick the kinds of novels that can be useful in the process of either moral refinement or ironic self-creation? On both accounts, the books that these theorists highlight are particularly “sophisticated” by most standards. The selections that Nussbaum, Rorty and DePaul have in mind seem to be picked from a ‘classic liberal arts cannon’ and as such, seem to benefit those with significant social privilege. The charge of elitism in the methodologies described above can have significant consequences on the status of persons as full moral agents. While Nussbaum, Rorty, and DePaul all proclaim to advance moral and social theories that seek to ameliorate social injustice, it seems ironic that their methods do not appear to be welcoming to all but the well-bred and well-read intellectual. Moreover, if narrative ethics represents an important intervention in the more traditional (and arguably more complex) propositional ethics approaches and one of those advances is that the new narrative approach tends to be more comprehensible than traditional philosophical approaches, then there seems to be a serious paradox in suggesting Proust and James, whose work is difficult to understand in the most educated circles.

What are we to make of persons who do not attend to the kinds of sophisticated literature that is championed by Nussbaum and the like (with or without social privilege)? Are they granted partial status as moral agents on these views? Is their potentiality for moral refinement in some way stunted or corrupted? Of course I do not want to argue that people who possess significantly less ‘cultural capital’ could not and do not have the intellectual ability to apprehend the complex

moral nuance of ‘alert winged novels’; rather, I want to ask: why should these types of novels be insisted upon in the first place? One could, in this sense, argue for the moral efficacy of attaining a particular ‘classics’ based education, rather than gleaning any useful moral lessons from particular literary works. This elitist position is troubling at best.

I argue, contrary to Nussbaum, Rorty and others, that the path to moral refinement need not be accessible primarily (or secondarily) through the reading and understanding of ‘great works of fiction’ (Nussbaum 1990, p. 148). Rather, I would suggest that an individual can and does make use of many different kinds of *moral conduits*, or pathways that can help her achieve a heightened sense of moral awareness (I will expand the idea of the moral conduit below). Further, in chapter 5, I introduce the concept of moral mobility that expands on the notion of the moral conduit by recognizing, not only that people utilize a variety of moral pathways, but that those who do deliberate moral issues in non-traditional (philosophical) ways need not be excluded from the realm of moral agency.¹³

In the next two chapters, I argue that sporting narratives, when included in the realm of perception-refining stories can figure importantly into the moral life. Moreover, I will present two case studies for each type of sporting narrative I am suggesting in order to better demonstrate how the approach I advocate takes the salient features of the (above mentioned) narrative approaches and expands upon their

¹³ By saying that persons have not been included in the realm of moral agency, I am not suggesting that moral philosophers don’t acknowledge their existence of course, but simply that by predicating a system on the reading of certain sophisticated literature on the one hand, or having a comprehensive understanding of propositional moral systems on the other, that the unintended consequence seems to leave many folks outside of the sphere of consideration *by* moral philosophers; a prospect I find troubling.

obvious shortcomings. However, before moving on to these discussions, I would like to revisit Nelson's (2001) notion of the narrative counterstory as I think utilizing a version of this approach, as related to the two types of sport narratives I have been arguing for, can help to circumvent several of the shortcomings of the aforementioned narrative approaches.

Nelson: The Counterstory as Alternative Narrative Representation

In arguing for the usefulness of narrative counterstories, Nelson (2001) has claimed that, persons have the possibility of repairing identities damaged by the prevailing, and often marginalizing, stories of our culture. Simply put, the narrative counterstory is a story that is told, in contrast to a master narrative, by one who is experiencing oppression. The point in telling the counterstory, then, is to repair the damage that has been done to a person by the oppressive message that the master narrative sends. Furthermore, according to Nelson, successful counterstories help the agent to alter her oppressors' perceptions of her (2001).

A second and equally important outcome of the successful counterstory is that it can help the oppressed agent alter her perception of herself. In the sense that oppression can infiltrate the oppressed person's consciousness, she or he can unwittingly become complicitous in her or his own oppression. According to Nelson (2001):

By helping a person with an infiltrated consciousness to change her self-understanding, counterstories permit the agent to put greater trust in her own moral worth. If the counterstory moves her to see herself as a competent

moral agent, she will be less willing to accept others' oppressive valuations of her, and this too allows her to exercise her agency more freely. (p. 7-8)

In short, the successful narrative counterstory can fulfill two aims: that of recognition by one's oppressor and that of allowing the oppressed agent to overcome their infiltrated consciousness and recognize themselves in the full capacity of their agency.

Moreover, deploying counterstories offer a lowbrow alternative to the narrative ethics perspective suggested by Nussbaum (1999) and the like, in that the telling of a counterstory need not be dependant on the *literary acumen* of the narrator, but rather on the success or failure of their story to dislodge the more oppressive meanings that are bound up in the master narrative. The counterstory is keyed to the larger cultural master narratives, as they relate to illness or gender as I'll suggest below, yet seek to articulate those stores in fundamentally redescriptive ways.

So what is a master narrative and how can telling counterstories help to undo the possible oppressive messages that they engender? According to Nelson (2001) master narratives are, "the stories found lying about in our culture" (p. 6) that serve as summaries of socially shared understandings. Nelson goes on to explain that:

Master narratives are often archetypal, consisting of stock plots and readily recognizable character types, and we use them not only to make sense of our experiences (Nisbett and Ross 1980) but also to justify what we do (MacIntyre 1984). As the repositories of common norms, master narratives exercise a certain authority over our moral imaginations and play a role in informing our moral intuitions. (p. 6)

While not exclusively oppressive, master narratives often figure prominently in the ways in which people in groups with relatively less social empowerment have been considered by those with greater degrees of agency. As Nelson (2001) notes, relating how identity is constructed, in part, by narrative; “I claimed that the stock plots and readily recognizable character types of master narratives characterize *groups* of peoples in certain ways, thereby cultivating and maintaining norms for the behavior of the people who belong to these groups, and weighting the ways others will or won’t tend to see them” (p. 106). In other words, if, for example, the stories about women’s participation in sport are ones that have been historically subordinated to the archetypal cultural stories (master narratives) about men’s heroic sporting triumphs, they can serve to perpetuate men’s understanding of their ‘ownership’ of sport on the one hand, and to justify the overt and covert practices that have helped to thwart women’s attempts at equity in the world of sport on the other. Of equal importance is the message that is sent by these master narratives to women about sport participation. While not, of course, forbidden, the acceptability of participation in sport by women (and particular sports especially) is often less enthusiastic encouraged, and often downright banned. Therefore, it is possible to conceive of the scenario where girls and young women simply do not have an interest in sport participation (despite its many documented benefits) since there are, and certainly were, relatively few master narratives that foregrounded that acceptable reality. So, how does one combat the potentially agency diminishing messages communicated through many of these oppressive master narratives? This is where Nelson’s (1995, 2001) idea of the narrative counterstory comes in.

“The counterstory” says Nelson (2001), “positions itself against a number of master narratives...” (p. 6). Counterstories work in two steps. The first step, “is to identify the fragments of master narratives that have gone into the construction of and oppressive identity, noting how these fragments misrepresent persons...and situations” (p. 7). The second step is to:

Retell the story about the person or the group to which the person belongs in such a way as to make visible the morally relevant details that the master narratives suppressed. If the retelling is successful, the group members will stand revealed as respectable agents. (Nelson 2001, p. 7)

By telling an effective counterstory, one that resists the oppressive master narratives, the person is able to resist the “evil of diminished moral agency” (Nelson 2001, p. 7). Furthermore, if the dominant group is sufficiently persuaded by the counterstory and sees the oppressed group as full moral agents, they may be less likely to “deprive them of the opportunities to enjoy valuable roles, relationships, and goods” (p. 7).

Besides the aim of telling counterstories in order to reclaim one’s subordinated moral status against oppressive master narratives, a secondary aim of the counterstory, argues Nelson (2001) is to “alter, where necessary, an oppressed person’s perception of *herself*” (p. 7). This is important says Nelson, because “oppression often infiltrates a person’s consciousness, so that she comes to operate, from her own point of view, as here oppressors want her to, rating herself as they rate her (p. 7). So the stakes of telling a convincing counterstory are high because the more likely a person is to see themselves as a competent “moral agent” (p. 7) the less likely they may be to accept others’ oppressive valuations of her” (p. 7).

In the following case studies, there are many instances where the subplot of the story is, in a significant way, just the type of counterstory that I have been talking about. I will argue that, while each type of sporting story presented can be put to good use for moral ends as it relates to increasing moral perception or motivating morally good actions, they can also be deployed as counterstories thereby helping to reframe both oppressive master narratives (and those who benefit from them) as well as the infiltrated consciousness' of moral agents who themselves are oppressed by the limiting master narratives.

CHAPTER IV

SPORT AS AUTOBIOGRAPHY: TWO CASE STUDIES

In this chapter, I present two case studies in order to demonstrate the moral efficacy of sport as autobiography. It will, of course be incumbent on me to make the case that these self-told stories are, in fact morally relevant to each respective author. In choosing these stories to utilize, it is evident that both Lance Armstrong and Tosha Tsang are world class athletes. However, one need not be a professional athlete to importantly frame his or her identity in and through participation in sport, as my personal narrative in the introduction has suggested. In fact, I would argue that since many people *do*, in part, define themselves in terms of their athletic experiences and subsequently draw on those experiences for moral purposes, it only helps to bolster the claim that people utilize any number of *moral conduits* (a concept that I elaborate on below) to help motivate and guide morally good actions. Further, the ubiquity of sport and sport participation (presented elsewhere in this project) suggests that the level of success one achieves at sport does not necessarily correlate with the importance that sport has on framing one's self-told-narrative, though it seems plausible that one who engaged in sport as a career, for instance, may encounter issues particular to that social reality that the casual or competitive (but not elite) athlete may not. However, it is important to note, more because of what it says about the public *and academic* consumption of sport than about what it says about potential research results, that much of the scholarly work conducted by sport studies researchers still seems to focus on the elite athlete.

Autobiography, Identity and Sport: General Contours

Over the past several decades, sport studies scholars (see Birrell and McDonald, 1999, 2000, for example) have chartered important contributions to the discourse surrounding questions of identity. In the wake the postmodern intervention, universalistic explanations have often been rendered obsolete. Lather (1991), for example, argues that postmodernism and poststructuralism have been instrumental in setting “up procedures to continuously demystify the realities we create, to fight the tendencies for our categories to congeal” (p. 13). Consequently, even historically taken for granted ideas such as ‘human nature’ have been abandoned or at least seriously challenged (Rorty, 1989). Socio-historical contingency has replaced scientific certainty in both subject and method, thereby dislodging scientific reason as the primary tool for truth excavation. Not surprisingly, in this postmodern climate, the notion of identity has undergone a significant reconceptualization. Indeed, much of the recent sport studies work on identity is consistent with the post-modern notion of fractured and multiple identities (Fuss, 1995). The significance of disarticulating the enlightenment notion of a ‘core self’ can not be underestimated. Challenging the prevailing theoretical and research paradigms, with their emphasis on quantification, resulted in, among other things, crucial interventions from diverse (and consistently marginalized) groups of scholars, including but not limited to, feminist, anti-racist, gay, lesbian, and trans-gendered persons. By opening the door to the recognition of a multiplicity of *identifications* that make up one’s identity, and eschewing the tendency to conceptualize identity as monolithic (and *essentializable*), a critical new direction in the social sciences was born.

This new *moment* in qualitative research, as Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2000) have identified it, is often characterized by an increasing uncertainty or perceived inability to adequately describe social reality. (Marcus and Fischer, 1986). In this sense, it was not just the subject (those under investigation by researchers) but the method of representation of those inquiries that was also at issue. This moment in qualitative research is often regarded as the *crisis of representation* (Sparkes, 2002).

As Denzin and Lincoln explain:

New models of truth, method, and representation were sought....Critical, feminist, and epistemologies of color now competed for attention in this arena. Issues such as validity, reliability, and objectivity, previously believed settled, were once more problematic. Pattern and interpretive theories, as opposed to casual, linear theories, were now more common, as writers continued to challenge older models for truth and meaning. (2000, p. 16)

As a challenge to the old methods of representation, new perspectives of representation in sport studies research began to emerge, including what Denzin and Lincoln (2000) refer to as postexperimental writers who, “seek to connect their writing to the needs of a free and democratic society” (p.17). Moreover, as they continue hinting at the push toward the exploration of issues of moral significance, “the demands of a moral and sacred qualitative social science are actively explored by a host of new writers from many different disciplines” (p. 17).

The push for the exploration of one’s story of self (Sparkes, 2002 and Bochner, 2001) has informed an important insights into the motivations and actions of people even while recognizing, following Butler (1991), that identity and/or

particular identifications are not always positive, but rather contested, negotiated and often hegemonic.

Moreover, in sport studies research as well, this important reorientation toward narrative inquiry has similarly emerged with the rise of post-modernist thought. In general, narrative research has been a powerful tool in examining the lives of athletes (Denison, 1996; Denison & Rinehart, 2000; Duncan, 1998; Foley, 1992; McDonald & Birrell, 1999; Sparks, 1999, 2000, 2002). By looking at the stories that athletes tell about themselves, researchers are better able to understand the actions, motives, and conflicting identifications that impact an athlete's lived experience. A central tenant of the wave of new critical sport studies research is the assertion that most human meaning is a social construction, thus fluid, changeable and non-fixed. While this perspective has been important in better articulating the experience of athletes, especially those athletes who have been historically marginalized within mainstream culture, the expectations of long-standing yet historically contingent social roles remain. Critical narrative approaches help sport studies researchers begin to make sense of the implications of 'managing' multiple (and contested) identifications against more traditional social expectations. Furthermore, narrative research that foregrounds the athlete's perspective, interpretation and evaluation of their own experiences, helps to facilitate a reconsideration of previously common-sense ideas about, for example, gender, technology, masculinity, race, class, ability, sexual orientation, and the body, to name but a few.

Despite the penetrating insights gained through narrative research, there remains a lack of critical philosophical work that incorporates the discourse on the social (and necessarily contingent) construction of identity on the one hand, with research on the moral judgments and actions of athletes in general and of socially marginalized athletes in particular on the other. Heretofore, there seems to be a limited number of studies that have combined the methodologies of sociology, philosophy, and psychology (respectively), in order to capture the complexity and richness of the issue of moral deliberation.

Of course, there has been ample work in the field of applied sport psychology that investigates moral development of athletes or issues of fair play and ethical choice making especially as it relates to children and moral development (Stuart, 2003; Gibbons & Ebbeck, 1995; Bredemeier, 1993). Fisher and Bredemeier (2000), for example, explored the moral orientations of professional female bodybuilders and how those orientations impacted moral choices when thinking about moral dilemmas.

To be sure, there is a great opportunity to do collaborative and innovative research across disciplinary borders as it relates to questions of moral development and moral reasoning and while it seems presumptuous at best to claim that any research method could fully enlighten the process of moral deliberation, the interdisciplinary and hybridized theory and practice which, as I described in Chapter 1, is the hallmark of cultural studies, offers some promising new directions for the present inquiry. More specifically, I have argued that the utilization of sporting narratives and critical sport autobiography discourses can help to reframe old research questions thus ‘making the familiar strange’.

Much of this work is underway in the transdisciplinary space of sport studies (Sparkes, 2002; Denison & Rinehart, 2000). As I have suggested, sport studies scholars have taken up the examination (and production) of autobiography (also referred to as autoethnography in qualitative research) in order to explore any number of issues related to sporting practices. As Sparkes (2002) articulates, stories of the self have been utilized to examine among other things, “issues relating to body-self relationships over time, identity construction, gender, sexuality, aging, impairment, disability, race, and ethnicity” (p. 79).

The moral self

So what counts as a ‘moral self’ in the first place and how do autobiographies help one to enrich and expand this self? Nelson’s (2001) perspective helps to shed light on this question and point in the direction that I am suggesting. Stories, in Nelson’s view, can be self-definitional in addition to being nonmoral, morally weak, or morally strong (p. 15). A story of strong moral self definition is one that demonstrates a “kind of moral competence” (p. 15). Drawing from Walker (1987) Nelson argues, as do I, against universalistic moral theories that hand down prescriptive requirement of persons in certain situations, without regard for the particular circumstances. In contrast, Nelson (2001) suggests that:

There are identity-constitutive features of a moral agent’s life that can give content to the particular ways in which this particular agent may or may not act... This agent might have commitments or priorities that differ from another agent in a similar situation... In deliberating about what we ought to do, the agent reviews her personal history, weighs the particulars of her past in terms

of more general moral values, and discerns or constructs a course of action that expresses a commitment to those particulars. (p. 16)

Moreover, says Nelson, a person creates a “moral track record” (p. 16) that seems to set him or her on a particular path of moral choice-making. Reflecting on one’s personal history (or autobiography) helps to explain who one is, while thinking about future actions and moral commitments, requires a person to look ahead to decide where she or he wants to go (Nelson, 2001). In any case, “strong moral self-definition...allows certain individuating features of the person’s life to matter in ways that aren’t universally generalizable but remain specific to that person and so contribute to her identity” (p. 16).

This is the sense I have been advocating for, by suggesting that the incorporation of sport and sport autobiography into the matrix of events and identity-constituting actions be included into the history that one contemplates when making important or minor moral decisions. The point that is important, from Nelson, is that the weight one gives to how a particular experience will be folded into their future moral choice making framework, is predicated on the way that that persons integrate that, or any, experience into their larger narrative self.

Tappan (1999) similarly argues for a more expanded view of what constitutes a “moral self” (p. 117). His view is centered on the perspective that most, “theoretical and empirical work on the moral self” (p. 117) has been from an explicitly “psychological” perspective. This perspective, claims Tappan, has centered on internal psychological functioning as the main characteristic of what constitutes an individual or, more importantly for my purposes, one’s moral “identity” (p. 117).

However, Tappan suggests that while important insights about the moral self have certainly been gleaned from this psychological perspective, steadfastly focusing on the internal cognitive process alone, perhaps, paints only part of the picture of the moral self. Thus, Tappan advocates an approach that can, “appreciate and acknowledge the role that social, relational, and discursive processes play in the formation of moral identity (p. 118). Tappan, however, is leery of assigning too much weight to either the purely psychological account of the moral self *or* the purely social account of the moral self; rather, he suggests an alternative, dialogical perspective that seeks to obviate what he sees as the shortcomings of each position. Further, in explicating this dialogical perspective on the moral self, Tappan points toward the value of using autobiographies and life histories as an integral part of this process. Writing an autobiography is important, says Tappan (1999), because:

It enables an author to write and rewrite both his moral life and his moral self, autobiographies necessarily entail a process of self-interpretation that is a critical aspect of identity and self-understanding. Most important, however, this is not an interpretive process that focuses on inner thoughts and feelings. Rather, it focuses on cultural tools and ideological resources—specifically, words, language, and forms of discourse—that comprise the texts that the author, himself, has fashioned vis-à-vis his life. (Tappan, 1999, p. 129).

Tappan goes on to suggest that the autobiography not only helps one to frame oneself as a moral agent through introspection, but within and against the complex social *tapestry*, (to borrow Murray’s (1998) instructive metaphor again) of one’s life.

Autobiographies provide, “the clearest evidence we have” as Tappan says (p. 129) of the level to which moral selfhood-identity is a mediated action that helps to show, to ourselves and others, who we are and what we value. From a dialogical perspective, Tappan (1999) concludes the process of rhetorical action and persuasion that we and other autobiographers engage in, “differs in degree, but not in kind, *from the process of identity formation and transformation we all undertake, as we seek to act and interact, in morally meaningful ways, with others with whom we live and share our world*” (pp. 129-130, emphasis added).

Hardwig (1998) rightly points out that one of the main arguments against focusing exclusively on autobiography for moral purposes (in bioethics) seems to be the likelihood that an individual will either tell a partial story about themselves, or not have enough insight into his or her motivations and actions to accurately relate a cogent story of self. Hardwig, however, offers an important amendment to the notion of self told autobiography, which seems to echo Tappan’s (1999) position, by suggesting that it is important to, “acknowledge that an autobiography is only *one* account of a life” (p. 61). Hardwig’s suggestion for the pursuit of a “more complex view of narrative” (p. 62) seems to me to be an important contribution. This perspective demands that we ‘fact-check’ our story at least in the sense that we have an awareness that we are not (seemingly paradoxically) the *only* author of our story and, as Tappan (1999) has suggested too, the story of ourselves that has the most moral efficacy is the one told within, not beyond our web of potential co-authors; those whose stories help to inform and shape how we see ourselves.

While Hardwig is mostly concerned with medical practitioners listening to the larger story of the person's self-told narrative (rather than the patient's singular perspective), some of the underlying concepts are of help in identifying how I am conceiving of utilizing sport autobiography in this project. In my view, the carefully conceived autobiographer (and, given the postmodern shadings of this project, I do not believe there is one singular narrative that could accurately capture that experience) is a person who, as Hardwig claims, "has long participated in a complex, multiperson process, listening to many different accounts of her dreams, fears, plans, actions, activities, and past" (p. 62).

Similarly, I am arguing that people often come to understand themselves in and through the sporting stories that they tell about themselves *and that others* (and this is similar to Tappan's notion of co-authors) *tell about them*, thereby integrating implicitly or explicitly those experiences and sporting identifications into one's life-story. If one accepts the contention that significant experiences, including sporting experiences, can become important features of how people come to see themselves (and perhaps of how others see them as well), and that people often conceive of their identity in the narrative form (as I will explain below), it is plausible to suggest that, when interpreted in an autobiographical way, one's sporting experiences can shed significant light on moral deliberations (as my autobiography and the case studies below will show), and indeed how one construes themselves, following Tappan (1999), as a moral self. First, however, I will sketch out the position that people's identities are significantly constituted in the narrative genre, thereby allowing one's story to be told and read for moral purposes. In other words, I

am advocating that the notion of *text* be expanded to include the personal (non-literate) autobiographical self.

In suggesting that physical activities and sport experiences can be seen as part of a person's self-authored story, I am also building on certain claims of MacIntyre (1984), Schechtman (1996), Denzin (2000, 2001) and Tappan's (1999). In her 1996 book, *The Constitution of Selves*, Mayra Schechtman claims that, "a person creates his identity by forming an autobiographical narrative-a story of his life" (1996, p. 93). Schechtman goes on to explain that her so called view of *self-constitution* helps to explain "our intuitions about the relationship between personal identity and survival, moral responsibility, self-interested concern and compensation (1996, p. 93). Importantly, for Schechtman, one's story has to make sense in a particular way. In other words, as Schechtman argues, self-constitution necessarily follows a narrative form and, as a result, renders one's actions comprehensible. Moreover, Schechtman argues a person's autobiography must be intelligible and that the narrator must be able to explain actions and beliefs in terms of explicit and implicit self-narratives. What I find compelling in Schechtman's notion, and what I am emphasizing in this dissertation, is the idea that people form important understandings of themselves in and through the stories that they tell about themselves and that these understandings inform one's actions morally in important ways. The ability to reflect on these notions of self in moral terms informs one's sense of moral identity, or, that is, "one's enduring sense of oneself as a moral person", (p. 117) as Tappen (1999) claims.

MacIntyre (1984) also argues that lives are lived and made sense of in a narrative form. According to MacIntyre, "it is because we all live out narratives in our

lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of narratives that we live out that the form of narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others” (1984, p. 212). Furthermore, as MacIntyre goes on to say, one’s personal identity is constituted by the “unity of the character which the unity of narrative requires” (p.116). So for MacIntyre, a person’s actions can only be rendered intelligible in terms of the cohesive story of that person’s life. Of course, many of the conclusions of both Schechtman and Macintyre have come under fire and have been challenged on a number of grounds. For instance, many postmodern oriented narratologists would take issue with MacIntyre’s insistence that lives are *lived* in narrative form and thus imply working towards a conclusion or *telos*, in his case to achieve “the good life for man” (1984, pp. 218-219). I am also critical of MacIntyre’s dependence on the ‘master narrative’ as the narratological backdrop against which our stories and moral actions make sense. Following the postmodern and poststructuralist perspectives on claims of universality, I am not sure one can say with any certainty, as I believe MacIntyre does, that our stories of self need be necessarily matched up against the archetypal master narratives in the pursuit of a good life. That said, I am also wary of assigning too much weight to the contingency (and potential slide into a particular kind of relativism that it seems to entail) of a strict postmodern/deconstructive perspective. A consistent critique of the postmodern *intervention* within the academy has been that it offers virtually no defense to the charges of relativism. As critics have pointed out, the endless deconstruction of the notions of “narrative” or “identity”, for example, leave little room upon which to ground action. Thus, while I am sympathetic to the general contours of the (postmodern) deconstruction of the

seemingly common-sense, yet socially contingent, definitions of gender or race, for example¹⁴, I side with Spivak, who has claimed that, “deconstruction cannot found a political program of any kind” (as quoted in Landry & MacLean, 1996, p. 6). In other words, deconstruction as a purely theoretical endeavor seems to lack the kind of temporal and cultural fixedness that I argue for in the interpretation of sporting narratives and sporting autobiography. In this sense, I want to suggest that the sporting narratives one invokes, interprets, (re)constructs, and has reflected back by others, are similarly shifting and negotiable, yet help to inform moral choices nonetheless when framed within the social fabric of their making. Regardless, it is important to recognize, as Atkinson (1997) and Hardwig (1998) point out, that even these *subjective* interpretations (of self and others) take place within a particular material and cultural context. Moreover, as Coffey & Atkinson (1996) have suggested, even though the “biographical events” of a story may be unique to an individual, “they are structured according to socially shared conventions of reportage” (p. 61).

The view that our actions help to make up a more or less coherent story that we tell about ourselves is important for my purposes here. If one accepts the notion that experiences can be crucial in how people see themselves on the one hand, and how one might incorporate, reflect, and act on those experiences in the future on the other, then the experience of physical activity and sport ought to be included, without much resistance by academics I would suspect, in the *plot* of one’s autobiography. In other words, how people see themselves can be impacted by their experiences,

¹⁴ Particularly as these theories can be utilized to mark social difference and thus serve to perpetuate oppression.

including their engagement with sport. While it seems almost trite to suggest that a person's experiences impact and color their moral decisions, it is the implicit foundation of both virtue and particularistic ethics¹⁵.

As Sparkes (2004), drawing from Smith and Watson (2001) reminds us, by expanding on the work of both autobiographical studies and sociology, the body has increasingly been conceptualized as a "site for autobiographical knowledge, as well as a textual surface on which a person's life is inscribed" (p. 398). Further, for Smith and Watson (2001), the body is a site of autobiographical knowledge because memory itself is embodied, "and life narrative is a site of embodied knowledge because autobiographical narrators are embodied subjects. Life narrative inextricably links memory, subjectivity, and the materiality of the body..." (p. 36). In other words, in many respects, the body itself, and to a significant degree, sport and physical activity, inform, in a profound way, one's sense of self and one's epistemological and ethical framework. In this sense, acknowledging the multiplicity of ways that people come to frame moral questions and the variety of texts, including *the body as text* that people seem to integrate into their complex stories, I have been arguing that the narrow conception of some narrative ethicists have overlooked important moral pathways that agents do seem to utilize when framing moral questions and making moral choices. I call this notion of variable moral pathways, the moral conduit.

¹⁵ For an in-depth treatment of particularist (or situational) ethics, see: Ulrik Kihlbom's (2000) Guidance and Justification in Particularistic Ethics. *Bioethics*, 14; 287-309

The moral conduit

A conduit can be thought of a means of transmitting or passing something. In the case of a moral understanding, the concept of the conduit is an important metaphor for several reasons. Most importantly, the notion of a moral conduit allows for the recognition of a multiplicity of paths to moral reasoning. In fact, the connotation of a ‘conduit’ suggests that the appropriate channel will, in fact be employed. In the case of sporting narratives, I am simply assuming that many people have a more (or at least equally) intimate relationship with athletics and physical activities than with reading the ‘right kinds’ of novels that have been suggested by some narrative ethicists, including Nussbaum and Rorty. In a sense, some people may actually have a *clearer understanding* of certain moral issues *through* sport as autobiography or at least their understanding may be facilitated through an experience of viewing particular sport as narrative texts.

The moral conduit view pulls together strains from both Schechtman (1996) and Walker (1987). From Schechtman, I am taking the idea that a person’s life experiences are central to the kinds of moral decisions they will make. She calls this view that of narrative self-constitution. Schechtman explains:

According to the narrative self-constitution view, the difference between persons and other individuals lies in how they organize their experiences, and hence their lives. At the core of this view is the assertion that individuals constitute themselves as persons by coming to think of themselves as persisting subjects who have had experiences in the past and will continue to have experiences in the future...Some...individuals weave stories of their

lives, and it is their doing so which makes them persons. On this view a person's identity is constituted by the content of her self-narrative, and the traits, actions, and experiences included in it are, by virtue of that inclusion, hers. (1996, p.94)

Unlike Schechtman, however, I do not hinge moral agency on telling the 'right' kinds of stories, rather only that the storyteller seems to incorporate her experience (including athletic experiences) in her self-narrative. That is not to say that telling morally dubious stories about oneself would not have potentially negative implications on one's actions, but rather, that the stories that one tells do not have to line up (ala virtue ethics) with a kind of *a priori* notion of the good life. I am advocating for far more social contextuality in my version of morality.

From Walker (1987) I am appropriating a version of her moral particularity thesis (MPT). Walker claims that, "there are identity constituting structures and features of an agent's life which can give particular content to the agent's moral position" (Walker 1987, p.171). In this way, Walker wants to claim that the moral choices one makes are bound up in the actions and experiences that one has had in the past and therefore guide her actions along a continuum of possible choices given her life-history. In other words, the particulars of a person's life are the things that she draws on to make moral decisions. Similarly, the idea of a moral-conduit recognizes that an array of experiences may be drawn upon (including sport and athletic activities) in order to help to fine tune her moral decision-making.

It seems to be the case that there are different ways in which individuals may develop moral acuity. I liken the connection that someone makes to a type of

narrative story (literature, or cinema, or sporting event) to the image of an old time telephone switchboard. The operator can choose a multitude of connections via plugging and unplugging any number of connections on the switchboard, but in the end one connection just seems clearer than the others do. That is, the person is confronted with less static.

To go back to my notion of the variable effectiveness of particular kinds of narratives to do moral work, it is of crucial importance to place a person within the context of her or his own life story. MacIntyre (1984), Schectman (1996), and Rorty (1989) all recognize the significance of situating the person in the context of their own story.

For example, if my story is that of an upper-class, well-read childhood, replete with boarding school pedigree, there is much higher likelihood (perhaps simply due to exposure of like-minded literature?) that I will pick up on the subtleties and moral messages that Nussbaum speaks about in the works of Henry James. On the other hand, if I grew up in a working-class neighborhood and never attended or graduated from college, I may have a greater likelihood of connecting some notion of the morally good life through my experience of particular (but altogether different) kinds of movies or literary works. But what is interesting here is that both people may point to sport, and its figural importance in that agent's life and incorporate it into the story that they tell about themselves. Furthermore, it seems as though sport seen as a narrative text can move beyond some of the boundaries of race, gender, and class. I will expand on this idea of *moral mobility* in the sport as reflexive narrative section below.

Seeing sport in this way, it seems possible to avoid the elitism that is embodied by the work of Nussbaum, Rorty (and perhaps Schechtman) that I have suggested elsewhere in this project. Why are the moral possibilities of narrative only available through particular kinds of text (literary, for example)? This is not to say that ‘anything goes’ so far as the narrative-carrying-moral-weight is concerned, but rather that, expanding the *range* of stories to be employed by Nussbaum’s method would make sense, given people’s various stances to the openness of particular kinds of narratives; precisely the kinds of narratives that ‘make sense’ given that person’s complex life-narrative.

With these contours in mind, I would like to turn my attention to two case studies, that of Lance Armstrong and Tosha Tsang, that help to illustrate the notion of sport as autobiography for moral purposes. These stories, I believe, work on several different levels and help to highlight the main concepts of: the moral conduit (allowing for non-elite morally illuminating pathways), sport as autobiography (demonstrating how one integrates sporting experiences, both self-told and externally reflected, into their identity and story of self) and lastly, how both Tsang and Armstrong seem to reflect on those self-told stories in the process of moral deliberation or, at least, in some important moral way. Last, I consider the ideas that Nelson (2001) has contributed about the narrative counterstory and argue that both Armstrong and Tsang’s stories could be thought of as sport-infused counterstories that have the benefit of reframing master narratives, of the weakness of illness in Armstrong’s case and of capitulating to the prevailing gender logic in Tsang’s, that have been, arguably, oppressive and limiting.

Case Study: Lance Armstrong

Consider first the case of six-time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong. Armstrong overcame testicular cancer and staged one of the most remarkable comebacks in contemporary sport (Butryn & Masucci, 2003; Sparkes, 2004). His best selling autobiographies, *It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life* (2000), and *Every Second Counts* (2003) explore the experience of Armstrong's illness, recovery and return to cycling's top-ranks. Sparkes (2004) succinctly lays the foundation for Armstrong's story when he summarizes:

In 1996, Lance Armstrong was one of the top-ranked cyclists in the world. In the same year, he was also diagnosed with stage 4 testicular cancer that had spread to his brain and lungs, giving him below a 40% chance of survival. Less than 3 years after being diagnosed, having undergone surgery to remove a testicle, and following chemotherapy treatment, brain surgery, and the subsequent remission of the disease, Armstrong won the Tour de France in 1999. (p. 397)

To be sure, as Butryn and Masucci (2003) have suggested, Armstrong's remarkable recovery from cancer and subsequent victory in the 1999 (and following 5 consecutive) Tour de France was, "perhaps the most astonishing comeback in contemporary sport history" (p. 124).

Armstrong's case furnishes a dramatic example of how a person's experience of sport not only serves to frame an important part of his or her life-story, but importantly seems to help frame important moral issues. I will detail several instances in Armstrong's story-of-self where sport and his illness as mediated through

his relationship with sport clearly figure importantly into his moral deliberations, particularly as these reflections guide and motivate morally good actions or, at the very least, a certain reflexivity about his journey from a brash, self-centered professional athlete to a willing ambassador and beacon of hope for those living with or surviving cancer. I'll return to Armstrong's narrative below, but it is important to situate his particular story, especially as it relates to moral issues, within the larger context of so-called illness narratives.

Armstrong's story of overcoming great odds to 'defeat' cancer echo the discourse on illness narrative(s) often associated with Arthur Frank. As a cancer survivor and a trained philosopher and sociologist, Frank has written extensively on the moral and ethical implications of illness narratives (1995, 1997, 2000, 2002). Frank asserts that, "illness is an occasion for autobiography, and memoirs of illness present openings to ethical ways of living" (2000, p. 135). While Frank's perspective focuses exclusively on illness, rather than sport, it is still useful to explore how and in what ways articulating the self through the lens of illness helps to inform one's moral self. Moreover, as I take up below, and as articulated by Sparkes (2004), Armstrong's story is intimately tied to the intersection of his sporting body and his illness body as reflected in his autobiography. It is rather difficult to separate Armstrong's story from his experience of having cancer. Clearly, that experience has almost created bifurcated understanding of self; pre-cancer Armstrong and post-cancer Armstrong. The interesting and underlying identification, which is significantly challenged by the encroachment of the cancer, is Armstrong's understanding of himself as athlete. As Armstrong (2000) states:

There are two Lance Armstrongs, pre-cancer and post. Everybody's favorite question is 'How did cancer change you?' The real question is how did it not change me. I left my house on October 2, 1996, as one person and came home another....I returned a different person. In a way the old me did die, and I was given a second chance...Even my body is different, because during the chemo-therapy I lost all the muscle I had ever built up, and even when I recovered, it didn't come back in the same way. (p. 4)

But this transformation could have only been possible, in an important way, because of Armstrong's intimate identification as an athlete. Yet, even as the illness shakes Armstrong identity as an athlete, it is exactly that (athletic) identification that he draws on in order to help make sense of his new reality as a cancer patient and eventual survivor. Armstrong 'attacks' the illness with the same intensity as he had once attacked the roads of Europe in route to becoming the youngest world road racing champion in cycling history (Armstrong, 2000; Butryn & Masucci, 2003).

As Armstrong (2000) articulates:

The physical pain of cancer didn't bother me so much, because I was used to it. In fact, if I didn't suffer, I'd feel cheated. The more I thought about it, the more cancer began to seem like a race to me. Only the destination had changed. They shared grueling physical aspects, as well as a dependence on time, and progress reports every interval, with checkpoints and a slavish reliance on numbers and blood tests. (p. 89)

So for Armstrong, the acceptance and confrontation of cancer is intimately tied to his understanding of himself as an athlete, and as such, it becomes just one of the series

of challenges he has overcome on the road to athletic success. Moreover, as Sparkes (2004) reminds us, Armstrong is able to tolerate the harsh demands of his cancer treatment, in part, because of his self-told story of the suffering demanded of an athlete in the professional cycling ranks. Sparkes claims that, for Armstrong “medical compliance demands a disciplined and dominating body that Armstrong has constructed over the years in sport” (p. 413). It is this very juxtaposition that begins to inform Armstrong’s awareness of his dual role as athlete and as cancer fighter and survivor. Indeed, it is his athletic public self that seems to be the catalyst, in part, for his emergence as an important figure in the world of cancer survivorship. Yet, his internal recognition that, as a notable athlete, who fights and beats cancer, his obligations are starting to lie increasingly beyond winning his next race and promoting his main corporate sponsors, but as an emissary of survivorship itself, or, as his doctor so eloquently puts it in Armstrong’s autobiography, “the obligation of the cured” (p. 154).

It is exactly Armstrong’s paradoxical relationship to himself as an athlete that gives him the capacity to move beyond those, oftentimes, indulgent and selfish pursuits. His reckoning of himself as someone with a potentially fatal illness, serves to provide the backdrop against which he begins to see himself in both a bigger and smaller context-bigger in that he has begun to realize the obligation he has as a high-profile athlete and cancer survivor, and smaller because he is faced with his own mortality and the existential questioning about one’s place in the larger scheme of things that often goes with that realization. As Armstrong (2000) notes, “my illness

was humbling and starkly revealing, and it forced me to survey my life with an unforgiving eye” (p. 4). He goes on to say:

One definition of “human” is as follows: *characteristics of people as opposed to God or animals or machines, especially susceptible to weakness, and therefore showing the qualities of man.* Athletes don’t tend to think of themselves in these terms; they’re too busy cultivating the aura of invincibility to admit to being fearful, weak, defenseless, vulnerable, or fallible, and for that reason neither are they kind, considerate, merciful, benign, lenient, or forgiving to themselves or anyone else around them. But as I sat in my house alone that first night [after being diagnosed with cancer], it was humbling to be so scared. More than that, it was humanizing. (pp. 73-74)

While Armstrong clearly seems to have integrated his sporting self into his identity, he is now confronted with challenging the less-than-positive elements of that identity as they seem to be in stark contrast to the larger obligations revealed in and through his bout with cancer. While I have been arguing all along that sporting narrative, and in this particular case, sport as autobiography, can be integrated into one’s identity and *leaned on* for moral purposes, it is just as significant to grapple with when and where those sporting identifications seem to have the opposite outcome inasmuch as Armstrong must now come to terms with the fact that prior to cancer, his concern for others (a moral issue to be sure) seemed marginal at best. Moreover, Armstrong, upon this realization, must figure out a way to reconcile those old ways of being an athlete with his new responsibility as a cancer survivor. Invariably, Armstrong’s sporting self undergoes a change as well. While still focused

on racing his bike at the highest levels (post-cancer), he also reflects that, “I believe I have an obligation to make something more out of my life than before, and help my fellow human beings who are dealing with the disease” (p. 274).

While it is clear that the intersection of Armstrong’s illness and his conception of himself as a professional bike racer, as recounted in his autobiography, have impacted him in important ways, how does it do moral work of some kind? It is here that Nelson’s idea of his counterstory can help us to contextualize Armstrong’s narrative in moral terms. Recall that the narrative counterstory does two things: it helps to reframe oppressive master narratives and it can help to reconstitute the infiltrated consciousness of those deemed as less than full moral agents by the oppressive master narratives. I argue that Armstrong’s autobiography has elements of each of these intended outcomes.

In saying that Armstrong’s¹⁶ autobiography can be construed as a master narrative challenging counterstory, I am thinking about the ways in which his illness narrative at first succumbs to the usual cultural understandings of powerlessness in the face of the disease, or, at least, of the silence that often accompanies a diagnosis of cancer. Armstrong, as well, is forced to confront the convoluted messages about masculinity that are told and re-told through, not only sporting master narratives, but other stories of male courage and strength as well. Ironically, by embracing those powerful cultural messages or, more likely, by not reflecting on their domination, Armstrong shrugs off the very overt early warning signs of testicular cancer, thereby

¹⁶ I recognize the fact that Armstrong himself benefits from significant levels of social privilege, yet, as his story relates to larger disempowering stories of illness and of cancer particularly, I find it compelling nonetheless.

elevating the risk of incurability by a significant measure. As Sparkes (2004) reflects, “Armstrong’s autobiography and how he interprets events in his life are shaped and constrained by a number of dominant narratives that operate within Western cultures in relation to individualism, [and] heroic masculinity...” (p. 422). So Armstrong’s story, while situated alongside these dominant stories of masculinity, and illness, can help to reframe the public discourse on both in an important way. On the one hand, by vocalizing the ‘stubbornness’ of men to eschew the obvious symptoms of testicular cancer, Armstrong’s autobiography can, in some small way, serve to challenge the negative consequences of a strict adherence to traditional masculine roles. Again, as Sparkes (2004) notes, “Armstrong’s autobiography, as a narrative map, therefore, provides one way of interpreting, experiencing, and responding to serious illness” (p. 423). In this sense, Armstrong’s illness/sporting narrative perhaps provides important inroads into the reclamation of agency, empowerment, and respect for those who have cancer, on the one hand, and a redescription of the limiting master narratives vis-à-vis challenging traditional gender role expectations as it relates to sickness, on the other.

But, Armstrong’s autobiography can be seen to work in the second way that Nelson (2001) speaks of as well. What becomes evident when reading Armstrong’s autobiography is that he himself seems to undergo a metamorphosis; one which serves to (again) challenge egocentric and arguably other-alienating singular pursuit of sporting goals, with the recognition that one ought to take one’s responsibilities to other fellow human beings more seriously. Armstrong (2000, 2003) articulates that, faced with one’s own mortality, things become reprioritized. The single-minded

pursuit of winning bicycle races, while obviously still important to Armstrong, yield to the recognition that, to continue living in a vacuum and without regard for the circumstances of others, is simply, irresponsible.

In this way, it is possible to interpret Armstrong's autobiography through the lens of the counterstory and demonstrate how Armstrong is able to challenge the messages that are communicated via certain master narratives as they relate to issues of masculinity and sport, for example. While Nelson (2001) does not directly address the possibility of an autobiographical redescription of one with considerably more social privilege-she focuses on those who have been historically marginalized by the master narratives-it seems fruitful to explore, as the self-told story of Armstrong does, the possibility of reexamining one's own privileges *through* a type of counterstory (that is predicated on both sport and illness) that help one to reflexively examine and reintegrate more caring and respectful reckoning and treatment of others as a result.

Case Study: Tosha Tsang

Tosha Tsang (2000) also provides a striking account of what I mean by sport as autobiography. According to Sparkes (2002), "Tsang allows both herself and her audience to explore a variety of nuanced ways of knowing oneself in and through sport-for example, as a women, as an academic, and as a heterosexual Chinese-Anglo feminist" (p. 80). Tsang writes about how her experiences as an elite level rower have helped to articulate her identity in significant ways:

Using the narrative form I create a space for a variety of my voices to emerge-including both my academic and my athletic voices. Narrative also allows me

to show how different stories-stories of gender and racialization-are told, while exploring my identity and how the multiplicity of stories mirrors the hybridity or ambiguity of identity. (Tsang 2000, p. 44)

She convincingly argues for the usefulness of narrative as a form to represent her “experiences of identity within high-performance sport” (p. 45). Moreover, Tsang uses her personal reflective “self-narrative” (p. 45), to weave together her sport experiences with what she calls her “sense-making” stories which, as she continues:

Are the stories I tell myself and others to explain some of the meanings of my experiences. I explore the usefulness of narrative form by experimenting with narratives of self and, through autobiographical accounts, tell my own stories of identity within high-performance sport. (Tsang 2000, p. 45)

Tsang also suggests that narrative representations of research can serve the useful function of democratizing the findings in ways that are more accessible to the non-academic. She goes on to propose, following Richardson (1995) that if, “narrative is the primary way through which humans organize their experiences into temporally meaningful episodes” (2000, p. 45), then research written in the narrative form could be more accessible to, the participant (whose experience is told in narrative form), the others who many not have access to research written in a more formal (scientific) style, and lastly, to those who may not have the theoretical framework to understand more formal academic research but, “who could interact with the material in a different way-in a storied way” (p. 45).¹⁷

¹⁷ I find it important that I have been similarly arguing for a shift in the acceptable narratives that some philosophers have been suggesting for examination with a narrative ethics approach. At the very least,

Tsang's account helps to illustrate the way that people often synthesize their life experiences in terms of sport in morally significant ways. Moreover, for Tsang, as for Armstrong, it is apparent that reflecting on her athletic experience helped hone her ability to perceive and make sense of potentially complex moral questions, including questions of gender, identity, race, ethnicity and the like.

Tsang's narrative of her experience gives the reader a keen look into the complicated negotiation of gender role expectations, homophobia, nationalism, identity, and identification that are bound up in her sporting experience. Clearly, an important part of the story that Tsang tells about herself has to do with her experience as an elite-level rower. Furthermore, her autobiographical reflections on that experience have profoundly informed her moral decisions. For example, Tsang's decision *not* to shave her legs, as she recounts in one vignette, represents a significant resistance to the cultural expectation that woman should acquiesce to the "North American beauty standard" (p. 49). In addition, her "(in)action" interrupts 'common sense' notions of femininity and gender. While these decisions are obviously and outwardly political, one gets a sense when reading her account that the decision also has profound intersubjective significance.

The *story* of Tsang's "Hairy Legs" is noteworthy for the reader, as a profoundly insightful interpretation of cultural values and norms, but importantly for Tsang herself as she struggles with the negotiation of multiple-selves and the deliberations and actions that are tied together through those self-identifications.

Moreover, Tsang has to struggle with conflicted feelings and actions towards her

it seems to corroborate the value, in both the social science and in philosophy, of reexamining the ways in which questions are investigated and articulated.

female teammates, most of whom sport clean-shaven legs. The story Tsang tells, “is based on an incident in which one of her teammates in the Canadian National Rowing team half-jokingly asks Tsang if she is going to shave her legs before the Olympics” (Sparkes 2002, pp. 80-81). As Tsang goes on to explain, the moment has multiple meanings for her. On the one hand, it is very much a story about gender, and as I have said above, about conforming to a socially constructed beauty standard, while on the other hand, it is a story of “association” (Tsang 2000, p. 49) with the Canadian National team and being the ‘right’ kind of ambassadors. As Tsang (2001) reflects:

What we do (and look like) reflects back on our country, on other Canadians.

We are representatives of our country and as (female) athletes, we are expected to conduct ourselves accordingly (be feminine, shave our legs).

Some may feel the pressure of this message more strongly than others and circulate it to those of us who do not appear to “hear” it” (p. 49).

Importantly, Tsang’s story works as exactly the kind of counterstory that Nelson has described, because Tsang’s decision to reject the conformity of the shaved-leg-beauty-standard seems to disrupt the prevalent master narratives about gender, femininity, and conformity. Moreover, Tsang’s conversation with a fellow teammate regarding the issue of her non-shaved legs also provides an opportunity to reframe that team member’s ‘infiltrated’ and internalized compliance with the arbitrary gender ‘norms’. In recounting that conversation, Tsang (2001) says:

I press her further, and the conversation spins of into a rare non-rowing discussion on the topic of conformity and standards and rules of society. It is a glimpse of some of the differences (heterogeneity) between us that get

veneered under the identity of elite athlete (homogenizing) that we are usually organized/subsumed under. (p. 49)

Sport as autobiography, in the sense I have been advocating, can be read (by Tsang) and also works to shape *her* moral framework as it relates to her conscious decision (despite the possibly divisive consequences for team cohesion) not to shave her legs. This overt decision is a moral one in that it most certainly allows for Tsang to exercise her moral agency, as Nelson (2001) has suggested, in ways that challenge master narratives. By ‘telling’ her story (or letting her hairy legs tell a story for her), Tsang seems to legitimate the important component of her identity as a rower, a woman, and a member of the national team. In this sense, Tsang casts off the identity that others would have her conform to, and thus, becomes a more freely acting moral agent herself. Importantly, her decision to not-shave her legs does not, in turn, end up being oppressive to others in its own right, as that outcome would seem to be inconsistent with the very premise of the value of counterstories.

Nelson (2001) outlines three ways that counterstories resist oppressive master narrative; refusal, repudiation, and contestation (pp. 170-172). Tsang’s leg-shaving decision seems to fall into the later, more persuasive, category of *contestation*. According to Nelson (2001), contestations of the oppressive master narratives are predicated on the, “self-understanding generated by their counterstory for the political purpose of challenging, in the public domain, the dominant perception of the subgroup” (p. 171). Tsang’s seemingly individual act, then, has far-reaching implications since the act demands to be contrasted to the dominant reading of feminine beauty, for example. In this particular case, Tsang’s refusal to acquiesce to

that standard seems to get at the very point of the counterstory in the first place since, as Nelson claims, “the point of the counterstory is to repair systematically the damage done to identity from both the first-person and the dominant perspective” (p. 171).

For Tsang, her team members and for the larger public, the arguably ‘selfish’ choice to resist larger cultural expectation is far from singularly political. Indeed, as Nelson (2001) reminds us, the real value of telling counterstories lies in the possibility that, “damaged identities can be narratively repaired” and as she concludes, help us to reflect on and contribute to, “our understanding of the role of stories in our moral lives” (pp. 187-188).

Lessons Learned

Armstrong and Tsang’s stories offer useful examples of the sense in which I am talking about sport as autobiography. Sport participation can be incorporated in the complex intersection of identity-forming experiences within the life of the participant. As such, it seems possible that one’s moral perceptions could be significantly impacted by that participation. In addition, morally good actions may be guided and motivated by these stories and their incorporation into one’s autobiography.

That is not to say that one’s moral perceptions could not be clouded by their sport experiences (and subsequent reflection on them), but the same could be said of even the most sophisticated literature. For while reading and reflecting on appropriately complex literature *can* be morally edifying, it is also possible for the reader to develop an affinity with morally dubious characters. I have also argued

for the importance of recognizing how sport as autobiography can be representative of what I have called a moral conduit. As you will recall, the notion of the moral conduit is presented in direct opposition to the suggestions of Nussbaum, Rorty, and others who claim that moral choice is best honed by paying attention to the nuanced moral deliberations of characters in the decidedly “high-culture” world of classic literature.

By contrast, the recognition that both Armstrong, and Tsang’s self-articulated sport stories have served as useful moral reflections, only serves to support the idea that multiple paths to moral deliberation are in fact incorporated into one’s moral choice-making framework. Moreover, the utility of recognizing sport stories particularly is that they are seemingly far more accessible than sophisticated literature and therefore serve to “democratize” the paths of moral deliberation.

Lastly, I think a strong case can be made for seeing how sport autobiographies can often be set against moral-agency-stripping master narratives, especially as they relate to reframing one’s own infiltrated consciousness, thus, establishing the autobiographer as full and complete moral agent and one who, says Nelson (2001) may be more likely to act in the interest of good, as a result of that moral reclamation.

CHAPTER V

SPORT AS REFLEXIVE NARRATIVE: TWO CASE STUDIES

In this chapter, I present two case studies, Billie Jean King vs. Bobby Riggs and the Algerian distance runner Hassiba Boulmerka, that help to illustrate a second type of sport narrative-reflexive narrative-that, I argue, can be read for moral meanings. The moral significance of reflecting on sport as reflexive narrative has to do with the potential moral impact of viewing particular sporting events. While, it seems that the media is bursting with images of morally deplorable actions perpetrated by many high-profile athletes, I am not claiming that any and all sporting events can ‘do moral work’, rather I am simply claiming that if some sporting event, when viewed, can be construed as having greater moral significance by and individual or, in some cases, more generally, then those texts ought to be included alongside the texts often pointed to by narrative ethicists as having something important to say about the moral world. So, here again, I am arguing in favor of expanding the limits of what constitutes a morally edifying story (for the reader) by supplementing, not only the *kind* of story that can be read, but the moral agent that perhaps benefits from that expanded rendering of an appropriate story.

Sport as Reflexive Narrative

Sport as reflexive narrative centers on one’s experience of viewing a particular kind of sporting event and subsequently reflecting on the morally edifying themes that can be drawn from that reflection. I call this type of narrative *reflexive*

because this term conveys the openness of the viewer to alternative readings of the event and the willingness to incorporate these readings into his or her moral framework in some way. Following Nelson (2001), for example, as I will introduce below, certain sporting events when read reflexively, can illuminate important moral issues—the fair treatment of historically marginalized people, for example. In addition, I draw on elements from Birrell and McDonald (1999, 2000) as well as Hochstetler (2003) in claiming that certain sporting events can be read as texts, on the one hand, and reflected upon and integrated into one’s moral constellation on the other.

Birrell and McDonald (1999, 2000) have made important contributions to the academic discipline of critical sport studies. In 1999, they introduced a methodology for interrogating power called *reading sport critically*, which sought to outline a critical analytical strategy as well as lay out the theoretical and epistemological issues that make up their method’s foundation (McDonald and Birrell, 1999 p. 283). An important insight that McDonald and Birrell’s methodology hinges on, has to do with the recognition that an increasing number of critical sport analyses seem to conceptualize particular sporting events or celebrities as texts and “offer a reading of those texts” (p. 283). This shift to interpret non-literary cultural forms *as texts* is significant, as they say:

Because it ties sport scholars to other critical scholars in terms of the theoretical and methodological choices we make as cultural critics. And we find the analyses themselves compelling because they concern the popular yet deceptively innocent cultural form of sport. Thus they offer insight into how

to connect seemingly discreet incidents and events that are generated within the world of sport to the larger social world. (p. 283)

By drawing from poststructuralist and postmodern readings of narrative, McDonald and Birrell embrace the possibility of multiple meanings of sporting events, or particular celebrities. However, their critique (and mine) is not interested in simply offering an endless deconstructive redescription of those events to the point of meaninglessness; rather they state quite clearly that the purpose of their work is to engage these texts with an eye toward laying bare the power structures that are at work and embedded within a *critical read* of the events. Moreover, and important for my conception of sport as reflexive narrative, they:

Advocate reading sport critically as a methodology for uncovering, foregrounding, and producing counter-narratives, that is, alternative accounts of particular incidents and celebrities that have been decentered, obscured, and dismissed by hegemonic forces. Counter-narratives are narratives infused with resistant political possibilities. (p. 295)

So for McDonald and Birrell, as well as for Nelson, one important reason to pay attention to stories, whether articulated as ‘oppressive master narratives’ or as embodied in the seemingly trivial Tonya Hardin-Nancy Kerrigan saga, is because a careful read of these narratives allows for a politically and morally potent counter-read, and subsequent counternarrative that serves to empower and mobilize. These are the contours I have in mind when suggesting that sport can be both read as text, and read for moral meaning.

Hochstetler (2003) also offers a useful perspective on reading sport for moral purposes. He, too, is convinced of the integral role that stories play in our lives and suggests that we learn important lessons through stories. Undoubtedly, he submits, “we learn through these stories...about beliefs and ideas, good and evil” (p. 1). Hochstetler is interested in the ways in which certain sport stories can be used as educative tools for moral purposes by utilizing a virtue ethics perspective whereby morally estimable choices stand out as exemplars and, he goes on, sporting stories that uphold these virtuous acts ought to be aspired to. Of interest to me in this perspective, however, is Hochstetler’s notion that, following Noddings (1993), stories can be used, “to frame moral issues” (p. 9). He goes on to say that, narratives can highlight common moral issues in sport.

What is important about Hochstetler’s position, for my project, is that he too recognizes that sport narratives can help to frame moral issues and draw our attention to them in important ways, perhaps, that other forms of moral discourse cannot. Take the BALCO doping scandal, for instance. While it may be fair to say that the use of performance enhancing drugs by athletes sheds a morally dubious light on sport in general, it is also accurate to say that the issue (or issues similar to it) would receive little or no attention if not for being framed by the sport discourses surrounding drug usage. While I’ll beg off a discussion of the doping issue for now, I would like to say a few words about the idea that sport narrative can be seen to democratize moral agency to one degree or another. I call this notion moral mobility.

Moral mobility

Another important feature of seeing sport-as-stories is embodied in the concept of moral mobility. As I stated above, moral mobility has to do with the utilization of sporting narratives by a wide variety of people across gender, race, ethnicity and class. This concept is really an extension and outcome of acknowledging the existence of different moral conduits in narrative ethics. On this view, if one accepts sporting narratives as appropriate instances of moral refinement (as a valuable moral conduit), then one must also allow for the possibility of welcoming more people into the ranks of the morally refinable. In other words, moral mobility has to do with the shift in the categorization of persons as full moral agents in light of potential refinement of moral perception. While it may seem intuitive that most persons (on many accounts of morality) are accorded full status as moral agents, I simply point out that ethicists like Nussbaum and Rorty simply do not address the moral status of anyone other than the sophisticated reader. Is this an oversight on their part? I should hope so considering their proclaimed commitment to addressing issues of social justice. However, I think that it is significant to explore *what is not said* as well as what is.

Moral mobility then, has two key features, both of which deal with the recognition of full moral agency (both by the moral philosophers and by those with significant social privilege). The first has to do with the general cultural feature of the experience of sport. While it is true that there will be a large array of experiences that people from different social locations will have access to, I argue that sport as autobiography and sport as narrative text move across these socially constructed

boundaries. Insofar as people from different backgrounds and experiences participate in similar sport activities, the activities serve as a common moral conduit, allowing them to use the sport narrative to similar ends. In other words, since both an African-American woman and a well-off white man typically view sport as an important aspect of the story they tell about themselves, it is possible to say that each has equal access to the utilization of that mode of moral refinement. This is in contrast to Nussbaum, who would say that only those with a certain level of moral and intellectual acumen would be able to use James to their advantage.

A second and equally important feature of the concept of moral-mobility has to do with the recognition of those from other social locations as a result of employing sporting narratives. This aspect of moral mobility has more to do with the result of seeing sport as narrative text. We can turn to the King/Riggs match again to see an example of this feature of moral-mobility. It is conceivable that a man watching the match might have a different moral perception of woman after watching King defeat Riggs. He might then use this revelation to alter his moral framework with respect to his sexist attitudes towards woman. Similarly, a woman might view the match and have her consciousness raised in such a way as to alter her unknowing acquiescence to sexist treatment. In both instances, there is a significant kind of shifting of the way one person sees the other.

Case Study: Billie Jean King vs. Bobby Riggs

Take the 1973 tennis match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs, for example. In summarizing the larger social implications, Rader (1996) claims that the

match, “became a dramatic focal point for both the woman’s struggle for greater opportunity in sport and for the feminist movement in general” (p. 309). Reflecting on Riggs’ death in 1995, Billie Jean King remembers the moment she realized that she was going to have to play him:

I walked down the aisle of the plane with lockjaw, because I knew I would have to play him. All of the implications of the match flashed through my mind: It would be for Title IX legislation and the women’s movement and all of the inequalities women felt so deeply (King, 1996, p. 118).

In an 1998 interview with *Newsweek* magazine, when asked what was going through her mind just before the match, King, again demonstrating an understanding of the larger implications of the match responded, “Well, as I sat in the locker room waiting to vomit, I kept thinking this was not about a tennis match, this was about social change. I had to win. It was life or death” (Starr, p. 90)

Regardless of the fact that Riggs was known as a hustler, the match took on a significance that was much greater than the simple outcome of the game. I want to suggest that it is possible to view the match as a symbolic challenge to the white, heterosexual, middle-class patriarchy and to its morally superior underpinnings. Viewing the match in this way, as a story that challenges the traditional values of the cultural time and place, may help the “reader” of this text alter her or his beliefs and actions.

The match, was not only a spectacle but, as Spencer (2000) explains, a popular one;

In a match played at the Houston Astrodome before an estimated crowd of 30,472, King beat Riggs decisively in straight sets (6-4, 6-3, 6-3). In addition to playing before the largest live audience ever to witness a tennis match, the contest was telecast worldwide. Gallagher (1973) reported that overnight Trenex ratings indicated that 48,000,000 Americans watched while ABC garnered an estimated 52% of the viewing audience. (p. 386)

These staggering figures serve to frame popularity of, not only sport, but of the novel idea (at the time) of a women competing at the same level as a (albeit much older) man. However, lest we think that these particular issues have been laid to rest, one only needs to reflect on the comments of several golfers, including Vijay Singh¹⁸ on the PGA tour when Anika Sorenstam was given an opportunity to play in a men's tournament to realize, that these issues are, perhaps as relevant today, as they were almost 30 years ago.

Borrowing from Nelson (2001) once more, the King-Riggs match could certainly be read as having the potential to dislodge, in a very public way, the many standing traditional and cultural stories about male superiority and female subordination. Moreover, and especially because the backdrop was a sporting event, that message was amplified since sport has been seen as an important (and revered) male domain (English, 1978). So, the match had the possibility of redescribing female strength and ability, in quite an accessible, yet no less profound way, and thus, framing the public discourse on (full) moral agency in a meaningful way.

¹⁸ In an interview with the Associated Press, Singh said that he would withdraw if paired with Sorenstam at the tournament, and moreover, she did not belong in a men's tournament in the first place.

This “reading” of the Riggs vs. King Tennis match (as a reflexive sporting narrative) reveals how the story serves as a counternarrative to the unmarked construction of gender. In this way, the Riggs/King match helps to dis-articulate the idea that men are the ‘natural’ athletic superiors to women. This undermining of the taken-for-granted dominant/subordinate gender role expectations of men and woman (respectively) can help to reframe moral possibilities and subsequent actions. All that is required of the “reader” here, to reiterate, is that they are open to differentiated readings of the match and that this alternative reading impact the refinement of one’s moral perception and deliberation.

In this sense, it is possible that a male viewer of that match could be moved to re-evaluate both his privilege as a man (in a patriarchal society) as well as the potentiality of woman in a more general sense. Of course, this claim is predicated on several things. First, that the male viewer is appropriately attuned to the complex issues at hand in the event. Second, that the viewer is alert and aware enough to see the event as the final chapter of a much larger and more complicated story, e.g. the culmination of feminist claims about societal inequalities in the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) period of the 1970’s, and the eradication of sexist practices in the work place, among other concerns. As Spencer (2000) relates, “whether it led to symbolic or real effects...King’s victory made it safe to be a feminist” (p. 387).

Case Study: Hassiba Boulmerka

Hassiba Boulmerka’s story provides another example of narrative as reflexive text for which I have been arguing. Boulmerka’s athletic credentials place her among

the elite middle-distance runners of the early 1990's. As Hargreaves (2000) explains, "In the 1988 All-Africa Games, Boulmerka won both the 800-and 1500-meter races, and she became the first Algerian woman to win a World Athletic Championships title when she took the 1500 meters in Tokyo in 1991" (p. 61) and was the 1992 Olympic Gold Medal winner. However, as Morgan describes:

(Her) extraordinary athletic accomplishments were at first widely hailed by her fellow Algerians, despite her clear violation of the strict Muslim code of purdah (which decrees, among other things, that women be covered from head to toe in public), but were later scorned by a vocal and increasingly influential group of fundamentalist Muslims. (1998, p. 346).

Indeed, even though her accomplishments were hailed at the time in Algeria, those accolades would be short-lived. While her fellow World's gold medal winner in the 1500 meter men's race would continue to be treated as a national hero, Boulmerka, according to Hargreaves (2000):

Quickly became the target of condemnation for militant Muslims (characterized as the 'more faithful'), who were encouraged by a strengthening of Islamism. In mosques throughout the country, fundamentalist imams who were affiliated to the Front Islamique di Salut (FIS) pronounced a kofr – a public disavowal of Boulmerka. The object of their condemnation was her body – they argued that because she ran in shorts and vest in public, she had broken the rules of the Qu'ran (pp. 61-62)

Witnessing Boulmerka's performance in the 1992 Olympics can be seen and understood as the kind of story that can impact the moral outlook of the viewer. As in the case of the tennis match between Riggs and King, those who were following the 'story' of Boulmerka's struggles, perhaps, seem to benefit particularly from this kind of in-depth reading. However, for those who paid close attention (especially her fellow Algerians, both male and female) to the larger 'plot' of the story, e.g. the political unrest in Algeria coupled with the resistance of some women to the code of *purdah*, it can be argued that the climax of the story (in this case, Boulmerka's dedication of her gold medal to the assassinated former president of her country) indeed has the potential to help refine the moral acuity of some onlookers.

If one takes seriously the idea of sport as reflexive narrative, it is possible to recast Boulmerka's story in a significantly transformative light. Seen in this way, Boulmerka's accomplishments offer both Algerian men and woman an alternative view of what it means to be a Muslim, one rich in moral possibility. Boulmerka herself understands the larger implications of her "story." Reflecting on the added pressure of being a top contender for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, Boulmerka remarks that she has:

Become a representative of all Algeria and of young woman in particular. I've gotten so many letters wishing me courage. Often they ask for a photo, but when I send one, I mustn't write my name on the envelope if it is to get there (quoted in Moore, 1992, p.54).

It is clear from her comments that many Algerian women have come to "read" the story of Boulmerka's success as transcending athletic accomplishment. Many Muslim

women view her success as a direct challenge to conservative Islamic doctrine. Moreover, Boulmerka's story represents a potential reconciliation of conservative and more progressive iterations of the Islamic faith. In fact, in reflecting on her gold medal in the 1500 meters at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Algerian runner Nouria Merah-Benida said, "It's for the Arab woman so that they can develop like the other woman of the world" (Williams, *Guardian* 2/10/00 as quoted in Hargreaves 2000, p.64), a sentiment perhaps not possible had it not been for the groundbreaking performance of Boulmerka in 1992.

Lessons Learned

The stories of both King and Boulmerka serve as important examples of what I mean by suggesting that particular sporting events, and in some cases, certain athletes' careers in general as in the case of Boulmerka, can be read as moral narratives. Moreover, the power of these narratives lies in the fact that they have been instrumental in helping to frame important moral issues as well as potentially helping to challenge oppressive conceptions about gender and ideology. I argued that sport in general, and these narratives in particular have been effective, in part, because of the popularity of sport as a popular cultural form. By contrast, for example, the messages about refinement of moral perceptions that authors like Nussbaum and Rorty have advocated for, seem rather limited in their intended audience, and as such, appear to be elitist, on the one hand, and moral-agency-excluding on the other.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

I have argued that narratives do figure importantly into the moral life of people. Additionally, I have suggested that investigating moral deliberation processes of people through the instrument of narrative ethics can indeed yield significantly enhanced understanding of human behavior. Moreover, I have pressed for the acceptance and evaluation of sporting narratives-broadly defined-within the domain of acceptable moral scholarship.

A larger aim of this project has been to challenge the theoretical assumptions posited by narrative ethicists like Nussbaum, Rorty, and others. The flaw of these authors' positions, in my view, is that they rely on a narrow, and arguably elitist, 'vehicle' for the enhancement of moral deliberation. That vehicle, the so called high-culture literary novel, I have argued, seems to benefit only those exposed to such sophisticated literature. My implicit question, therefore, has been: Can people who neither read, nor have been exposed to such sophisticated literature utilize 'alternative' narratives for moral ends?

In order to best answer that question, my position has been to expand the discourse of narrative ethics, in much the way that Nelson (1997, 2001) suggests by allowing for the democratization (and the recognition in the philosophical literature of the legitimacy) of the pathways - or moral conduits- that agents utilize in their moral deliberations. I have further argued that these moral conduits need not be predicated on sophisticated literature, but rather are often accessed through alternative narrative

perspectives. Due in part to the accessibility of sport experiences, and in part to the inclusion of alternative definitions of what constitutes a narrative, as represented in sociology and critical sport studies, I suggest that sporting stories as articulated in two different forms ought to be included (by moral philosophers and individuals alike) as important conduits to moral deliberations. Building on the increasing turn toward narrative in the social sciences and critical sport studies, I have suggested two types of sporting narratives that can be read for moral purposes; I have called these narratives respectively, sport as autobiography and sport as reflexive narrative. While my suggestion that the purpose of reading narratives with an eye toward moral ends is not novel, I have drawn considerably from the discourse of narrative ethics for this perspective, still the types of stories (namely sporting narrative) I have suggested perhaps blurs the boundaries of a more ridged iteration of that important turn in ethical scholarship.

I further argue that including sporting narratives, particularly sport as autobiography and sport as reflexive narrative into the methods in operation by narrative ethicists cannot only better capture the ways that people deliberate over moral decisions, but that it insists that those who do in fact refine moral perceptions in this way can no longer be excluded as full moral agents.

I have also introduced the concepts of *the moral conduit*, which allows for any number of possible pathways to refinement and deliberation of moral questions and the idea of moral mobility, which claims that, if one allows for multiple means of perception refinement, one has to allow for the inclusion of those who utilize these means as full moral agents.

Moreover, I make the stronger claim that sporting narratives, when included in the larger context of narratives for moral purposes, can have the additional result of *democratizing* the methods of inclusion that many narratives ethicists have suggested, by allowing more moral pathways to be recognized. Further, I have suggested the *pluralization* of moral frameworks to include those agents who seek moral recognition through sports narratives since they must be recognized as capable moral agents, even if they do not utilize elitist approaches for moral refinement, for example.

Lastly, I have argued in favor of recognizing the ability of certain sport narratives to be construed as counter narratives which have the desired effect of recognizing the moral worth of an agent in two important ways. First, the sport stories that one tells (or reads) can offset oppressive messages bound up in the larger meaning-making-cultural stories called master narratives. The cases of Boulmerka and King offer good examples of sport-hued reflexive narratives that can be understood to reframe oppressive cultural tales told about strong athletic women in the male dominated world of sport. Second, Armstrong and Tsang's stories can be construed as narrative counterstories that have the desired effect of reframing the perspective of the storyteller in important and fundamental ways, thereby reclaiming moral agency and, perhaps, allowing one to act in morally estimable ways as a result. For Tsang, resisting the oppressive master narrative of the limiting and restrictive gender expectations allows her to exercise her agency as a woman (through sport and other areas) in a broader and more robust way. For Armstrong, ironically, his illness empowers him in spite of the fact that cancer has undermined the significant cultural

privilege of both his sporting accomplishments and his status as a white, heterosexual man. Moreover, for Armstrong, his autobiographical story which traces the intersection divergence and reintegration of his sporting and sick bodies, results in the dissolution of the selfish and egotistical sporting personality, and emergence of a tireless ambassador for the cancer community. This later outcome of the counterstory jibes well with my concept of sport as autobiography and clearly trades on the idea that the stories we tell ourselves and others have significant moral bearing on who we see ourselves to be and how we are perceived by others.

Future Directions and Practical Projects

Qualitative research projects

This project lays the theoretical foundation for continued practical work in moral psychology and critical sport studies. For example, building on the work of Fisher and Bredmeier (2000), Hartung (2001) and others, future scholarship might include a qualitative study, utilizing ethnographic, in-depth interview methodologies, autoethnography, or fictional representations (Sparkes, 2002) that explore the degree to which people draw from their sporting experiences when making moral decisions. While there has been a considerable amount of work in the sport studies literature that looks at issues of identity formation and sport, for example, there is relatively little (outside the realm of developmental psychology perhaps) that explores the ways in which moral choice and the sporting self are bound together. I envision a rich interdisciplinary project that brings together the perspectives, concepts, theories, and

methodologies of the various scholarly areas to better illuminate many of the key issues I have raised throughout this dissertation.

Moreover, drawing from the recent trends in narrative research in sport studies and the social sciences in general, and following the work of Sparkes (2002) and Denison & Markula (2003), the intersection of sport and the moral world could be explored through any number of innovative and revealing new methodologies, including, as Bochner & Ellis (1999) provocatively suggest; poetry, short stories, memoirs, plays, conversation, dances, novels, and performances as well as more the more traditional (yet often contested) forms of qualitative research, including autoethnography and ethnographic fiction. In fact, Tosha Tsang's autoethnography (that I explored in chapter 4) was the result of a call for papers for a special issue of the *Sociology of Sport Journal*¹⁹ which asked contributors to push the boundaries of the sociological imagination to *tell stories of sport*. Lastly, I envision the new frontier of qualitative research that, not only challenges the methodological assumptions of the past, but blurs the boundaries of both subject matter and disciplinary orthodoxies as well, thereby allowing for a rich and complex understanding of the intersection of discourses that help to illuminate the human experience.

Pedagogical possibilities: Activating sport as autobiography

As an instructor, I have witnessed the pedagogical possibilities of the sport autobiography as a transformative and insightful assignment that helps students to define and reflect upon issues of moral significance through the reflective space of sport participation. Following the work of scholars like Liberti (2004), Denison &

¹⁹ See the special volume: Imagining sociological narratives. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 17 (2000).

Markula (2003), Sparks (2002), and Foley (2002), I would recommend the use of personal reflective journals or papers that are geared toward excavating the morally relevant content often bound up in one's sporting experience. Liberti's (2004) Sociology of Sport writing assignment (*narratives of the self*), for example, utilized a combination critical pedagogy and cultural studies in order to facilitate a more reflexive and critical understanding of the meaning and potential reevaluation of one's sport experiences. This method seems to have the potential to challenge the students to reflect upon the impact, both positive and negative, that sport has on their understanding of who they are. In relating the value of the critical autobiography assignment for the purpose of examining sociological issues, Liberti (2004) concludes:

[I]t is to our benefit to ask students to engage in critical autobiography in the work we do with them. If we desire to encourage students (and ourselves) to think and act more expansively, deeply, and creatively about their (our) own movement experiences and those of others, we are served by encouraging multiple ways of understanding people's involvement in sport and physical activity. This should be the goal even if these methods challenge our students' (and our) sensibilities about knowledge and inquiry. (Liberti 2004, p. 205)

I recommend expanding on a similar assignment, perhaps in a Philosophy of Sport class, which seeks, not to illuminate *sociological* theory, (though an immersion into theories that concentrate on issues of power, gender, class, and sexual orientation might be of significant value) but rather philosophical and moral ideas. In this way,

students would be empowered to articulate, in their own words, the ways in which moral issues and perhaps moral decisions have depended on (in some substantive way) the participation, and indeed, the integration of those experiences, whether primary or tertiary, into who they see themselves as, and how they choose to make particular decisions. Further, the sport/moral autobiography would certainly offer a space to explore the notion of a counterstory in both senses that I have talked about in this dissertation. That is, with the possibility of challenging the ways in which certain culturally transmitted stories seem to perpetuate the subjugation of the less empowered by those with power. I argue that, similarly to both Armstrong's autobiography, and to a lesser extent, my own brief story, *those who benefit* from particular privileges in society, may be able to utilize the sport/moral autobiography as an introspective and reflexive space to confront and challenge the (often) previously unexamined social dominance they profit from.

It may be obvious, but worth noting nonetheless, that I have not been advocating that the sporting experiences that are integrated into one's complex identity are the only experiences that one draws upon when making a moral decision, but rather that by focusing (via the critical sport autobiography) attention of that integration both students and teachers alike are able to illuminate if and how that mechanism operates. So, in effect, the assignment serves as a practical instantiation of a constitutive element of a moral agent's deliberation process, a process, I have been arguing all along, that while in operation undetected (and often in the background), is in operation nonetheless.

Sport as reflexive narrative and critical media literacy

Lastly, another example of a practical application of the ideas I have presented in this dissertation have to do with the activation of critical media literacy tools (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Yasso 2002) for the apprehension of moral themes. Borrowing from the disciplinary space of critical media studies, sport studies, and critical pedagogy, I suggest the close reading of particular media texts for moral content. This perspective expands on the ideas I sketched out in chapter 6 as it relates to “reading” sporting events like the King v. Riggs tennis match or the Black Power salute of Carlos & Smith at the 1968 Olympics. My idea here is to introduce students to formal sociological and philosophical theory that will help to frame the images they see on the television screen (and in film) in decidedly moral ways.

Critical media literacy, say Alvermann & Hagood (2000), can do many things and has been framed by many academic perspectives, for instance:

From a cultural studies perspective, critical media literacy is concerned with how society and politics are structured and work to one's advantage or disadvantage and how issues of ideology, bodies, power, and gender produce various cultural artifacts. From a postmodern perspective, critical media literacy pertains to how individuals take up cultural texts differently, depending on their interests and positioning in various social and historical contexts. Finally, from a feminist pedagogical perspective, critical media literacy focuses on how popular culture texts function to produce certain relations of power and gendered identities that students may learn to use or resist as part of their everyday school experiences. (p. 195).

I have argued that one can interrogate the popular media representations/texts of particular sporting events (or perhaps certain sport films) for the larger moral themes that are often embedded within them. Moreover, by encouraging students to hone their critical media skills, it is possible, for example, to engage them in a philosophical dialogue on a number of moral and ethical issues.

I teach a freshman seminar, for example, called *Moving Pictures: The Critical Examination of Sport and Culture in Popular Film*. According to the syllabus, the aim of the course is to:

Critically examine the representation of sport and culture in popular film.

Particular attention will be paid to how sport, as a form of popular culture is produced, represented and, ultimately, consumed. Moreover, the course will examine how dominant ideologies are both perpetuated and resisted in popular sport movies. A larger aim of the course is to understand (and perhaps resist!), the power of the movies to shape, represent, and reproduce our social reality through the development of media literacy skills. (Masucci, 2004)

Moreover, by utilizing the images found in popular culture, it is, perhaps, possible to teach sophisticated philosophical ideas in a more accessible manner, thus contributing, in an important way, to the possible reflection, redescription, and/or reclamation of one's full moral self.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

- Alvermann, D., & Hagood, M. (2000). Critical media literacy: Research, theory, and practice in 'new times'. *Journal of Educational Research*, 93, 193-206.
- Armstrong, L. (with S. Jenkins). (2003). *Every second counts*. New York: Broadway Books.
- Armstrong, L. (with S. Jenkins). (2000). *It's not about the bike: My journey back to life*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- Atkinson, P. (1997). Narrative turn or blind alley?. *Qualitative Health Research*, 7 (3), 325-343.
- Bandy, S., & Darden, A. (Eds.). (1999). *Crossing boundaries: An international anthology of women's experiences in sport*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Press.
- Beauchamp, T. (2003). The nature of applied ethics. In R. Frey & C. Wellman (eds.) *A companion to applied ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Birell, S., & McDonald, M. G. (Eds.) (1999). *Reading sport: Critical essays of power and representation*. Boston: Northwestern University Press.
- Blumenreich, M. (2004). Avoiding the pitfalls of 'conventional' narrative research: Using poststructural theory to guide the creation of narratives of children with HIV. *Qualitative Research*, 4 (1), 77-90.
- Bochner, A. (2001). Narratives' virtues. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7 (2), 131-157.
- Bochner, A., & Ellis, C. (1999). Which way do you turn? *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 28, 485-495.

- Bredemeier, B. (1994). Children's moral reasoning and their assertive, aggressive, and submissive tendencies in sport. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 16, 1-14.
- Butler, J. (1991). Imitation and gender insubordination. In Diana Fuss (ed.) *Inside/out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*. New York: Routledge.
- Butryn, T. & Masucci, M. (2003). It's not about the book: A cyborg counternarrative of Lance Armstrong. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 27 (2), 124-144.
- Coffey, A. & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making Sense of Qualitative Data*. London: Sage.
- Davis, P. (2003). Burke, Moral Realism, and the View From Within Practices. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 30, (2), 117-132.
- Denison, J. (1996). Sport narrative. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2, 351-362.
- Denison, J., & Rinehart, R. (2000). Introduction: Imagining sociological narratives. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 17, 1-4.
- Denison, J. & Markula, P. (Eds.) (2003). *Moving writing: Crafting movement in sport research*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (1994). Introduction. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-17). London: Sage.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2000). Introduction. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 1-29). London: Sage.
- DePaul, M. (1993). *Balance and Refinement: Beyond Coherence Methods of Moral Inquiry*. London: Routledge.
- Dravecky, D. (1996). Love. *The American Enterprise; Washington*. Jul/Aug.

- Drew, J. (1999). Cultural Composition: Stuart Hall on Ethnicity and the Discursive Turn. In Gary Olson & Lynn Worsham (eds.) *Race, Rhetoric, and the Postcolonial*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Duncan, M. C. (1998). Stories we tell about ourselves. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 15, 95-108.
- English, J. (1978). Sex Equality in Sports. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 7, 269-277.
- Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (119-161). New York, N.Y.: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Fisher, L. & Bredmeier, B. (2000). Caring about injustice: The moral self-perceptions of professional female bodybuilders. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 22, 327-344.
- Foley, D. (1992). "Making the familiar strange: Writing critical sports narratives". *Sociology of Sport Journal* 9, 36-47.
- Frank, A.W. (1995). *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, illness, and ethics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Frank, A.W. (1997). Enacting illness stories: When, what, and why. In H. Nelson (ed.), *Stories and their limits: Narrative approaches to bioethics* (pp. 31-49). New York: Routledge.
- Frank, A. W. (2000). Illness and autobiographical work: Dialogue as narrative destabilization. *Qualitative Sociology*, 23 (1), 135-156.

- Frank, A. (2002). Why study people's stories? The dialogical ethics of narrative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1 (1), Article 6.
- Retrieved 10/8/2004 from <http://www.ualberta.ca/~ijqm/>
- Fuss, D. (1995). *Identification Papers*. New York: Routledge.
- Gibbons, S. & Ebbeck, V. (1995). Fair play for kids: Effects on the moral development of children in physical education. *Research Quarterly for Exercise & Sport*, 66, 247-256
- Greene, M. (Ed.). (1995). *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Greenway, J. (1985). "Ritual and Narrative in the Sport Spectacular". *Journal of Popular Culture* 17, 55-63.
- Gusfield, J. (2000). Sport as story: Form and Content in athletics. *Society*, 37 (4), 63-70.
- Hardwig, J. (1998). Autobiography, biography, and narrative ethics. In H. L. Nelson (Ed.), *Stories and their limits: Narrative approaches to bioethics*. London: Routledge.
- Hargreaves, J. (2000). *Heroines of Sport: The politics of difference and identity*. London: Routledge.
- Hartung, E. (2001). *Moral choice in sport and daily life*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston University.
- Hesford, W. (1999). *Framing Identities: Autobiography and the Politics of Pedagogy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Hochstetler, D. (2003). *Moral exemplars in sport: Using narratives to enhance moral education*. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Association for the Philosophy of Sport, Cheltenham, UK.
- Holowchak, A. (2000). "Aretism" and Pharmacological Ergogenic Aids in Sports: Taking a Shot at the Use of Steroids. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 27, (1), 35-51.
- Howe, L. (2003). Athletics, embodiment, and the appropriation of the self. *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 17 (2), 92-107.
- Hunger, I. & Thiele, J. (2002, January). Qualitative research in sport science [25 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Fourm: Qualitative Social [On-line Journal]*, 1(1). Available at: <http://qualitative-research.net/fqs> [Date of access: March, 16, 2004].
- Jonsen, A. R., & Toulmin, T. S. (1988). *The abuse of casuistry: A history of moral reasononing*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Krane, V. , Anderson, M. B., & Strean, W. B. (1997). Issues of qualitative research methods and presentation. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 19, 213-218.
- Kihlbom, U. (2000) Guidance and Justification in Particularistic Ethics. *Bioethics*, 14; 287-309
- King, B. J. (1995, November 6). My Favorite Chauvinist. *Sports Illustrated*, 83, 118.
- Landry, D. & MacLean, G. (1996). (Eds.). *The Spivak Reader*. New York: Routledge.

- Lather, P. (1991). *Getting Smart*. London: Routledge.
- Levine, P. (1998). *Living without philosophy: On narrative, rhetoric, and morality*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Liberti, R. (2004). "Forbidden Narratives": Exploring the use of student narratives of self in a graduate sport sociology course. *Quest*, 56, 190-207.
- Lowland, S. (2001). *Fair play in sport: A moral norm system (ethics and sport)*. London: Routledge.
- MacIntyre, A. (1984). *After Virture: A Study in Moral Theory*. 2d ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Marcus, J., & Fischer, M. (Eds.). (1986). *Anthropology as cultural critique*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McDonald, M. & Birrell, S. (1999). Reading sport critically: A methodology for interrogating power. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 16, 283-300.
- Maxwell, J. (2004). Reemergent scientism, postmodernism, and dialogue across differences. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10 (1), 35-42.
- Meyers, D. T. (2004). Narrative and moral life. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Setting the moral compass: Essays by women philosophers*. (pp. xxx-xxx). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Morgan, W. (2002). Social criticism as moral criticism: a Habermasian take on sports. *Journal of sport and social issues*, 26, (3) 281-299
- Morgan, W. (2003). Why the "view from nowhere" gets us nowhere in our moral considerations of sports. *Journal of the philosophy of sport*, 30 (1), 51-67.

- Morgan, W. (2000a). Are sports more so private or public practices?: A critical look at some recent Rortian interpretations of sport. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 27 (1), 17-35.
- Morgan, W. (2000b). Sports as the moral discourse of nations. In Tannsjo, T. (ed.), *Values in sport: elitism, nationalism, gender equality and the scientific manufacture of winners*. London ; New York, E & F Spon, 59-73.
- Morgan, W. (1999). Patriotic sports and the moral making of nations. *Journal of the philosophy of sport*, 26 50-67.
- Morgan, W. (1998). Hassiba Boulmerka and Islamic Green: International Sports, Cultural Differences, and Their Postmodern Interpretations. In G. Rail (Ed.), *Sport and Postmodern Times* (pp. 345-365). Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Moore, K. (1992, August 3). A scream and a prayer. *Sports Illustrated*, 77, pp. 46-61.
- Mostern, K. (1999). *Autobiography and Black Identity Politics: Racialization in Twentieth-Century America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Murry, T. (1997). What do we mean by “Narrative Ethics”? In H. L. Nelson (Ed.), *Stories and their limits: Narrative approaches to bioethics*. London: Routledge.
- Nelson, H. L. (1995). Resistance and insubordination. *Hypatia*, 10 (2), 23-40.
- Nelson, H. L. (Ed.). (1997). *Stories and their limits: Narrative approaches to bioethics*. New York: Routledge.

- Nelson, H. L. (2001). *Injured Identities, Narrative Repair*. Ithica: Cornell University Press.
- Noddings, N. (1998). Ethics and the imagination. In W. Ayers & J. Miller (Eds.), *A light in dark times: Maxine Greene and the unfinished conversation* (pp. 159-169). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (1990). *Love's knowledge: Essays on philosophy and literature*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Oriard, M. (1993). *Reading football: How the popular press created an American spectacle*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Pitney, P. & Parker, J. (2002). Qualitative research applications in athletic training. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 37, (4) 168-173.
- Rader, B. (1996). *American sports: From the age of folk games to the age of televised sports*. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Robert, T. (1997). "It's just not cricket" Rorty and unfamiliar movements: History of metaphors in a sporting practice. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*. 24, 67-78.
- Rorty, R. (1989). *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rorty, R. (1992). Trotsky and the wild orchids. *Common Knowledge* 1, no. 3 (Winter): 140-153.
- Schechtman, M. (1996). *The constitution of selves*. Ithica: Cornell University Press.

- Smith, S., & Watson, J. (2001). *Reading autobiography: A guide for interpreting life narrative*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Sparkes, A. C. (1999). Exploring body narratives. *Sport, Education, and Society*, 4, 17-30.
- Sparkes, A. C. (2000). Autoethnography and narratives of self: Reflections on criteria in action. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 17, 21-43.
- Sparkes, A. C. (2002). *Telling tales in sport and physical activity: A qualitative journey*. Champaign: Human Kinetics.
- Sparkes, A. C. (2004). Bodies, narratives, selves, and autobiography: The Example of Lance Armstrong. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 28 (4), 397-428.
- Spencer, N. (2000). Reading between the lines: A discursive analysis of the Billie Jean King vs. Bobby Riggs "Battle of the Sexes". *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 17, 386-402.
- Starr, M. (1998, September 21). The battle of the sexes. *Newsweek*, 132, 90.
- Stelter, R., Sparks, A., & Hunger, I. (2003, February). Qualitative research in sport science-An introduction [11 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Fourm: Qualitative Social [On-line Journal]*, 4(1).
Available at: <http://qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/1-03/1-03hrsg-e.htm>
[Date of access: March, 16, 2004].
- Stean, W. B. (1998). Possibilities for qualitative research in Sport Psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, 12, 333-345.
- Stean, W. B., Roberts, G. C. (1992). Future directions in applied sport psychology research. *The Sport Psychologist*, 6, 55-65.

- Stuart, M. (2003). Moral issues in sport: The child's perspective. *Research Quarterly for Exercise & Sport* 74, 445-455.
- Tappan, M. (1999). Authoring a moral self: A dialogical perspective. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 12, 117-131.
- Tappolet, C. (1998). [Review of the book *Balance and Refinement. Beyond Coherence Methods of Moral Inquiry*] *Mind*, 107, 473-8.
- Tsang, T. (2000). Let me tell you a story: A narrative exploration of identity in high-performance sport. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 17, 44-59.
- Walker, M. U. (1987). Moral particularity. *Metaphilosophy* 18, no. 3/4: 171-185.
- White, H. (1987). *The content of the form: Narrative discourse and historical representation*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Wiland, E. (2003). Stories, autobiographies, and moral inquiry. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 34 (2), 188-198.
- Witherell, C., & Noddings, N. (Eds.). (1991). *Stories lives tell: Narrative and dialogue in education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wright, H. (1996). How (not) to define cultural studies in five minutes, under pressure. *University of Tennessee College of Education Summer Newsletter*. Summer, 14-15.
- Wright, H. & Maton, K (2004). Cultural studies and education: From Birmingham origin to Glocal presence. *Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies*, 26, (2/3), 73-89
- Wortham, S. (2001). *Narratives in action: A strategy for research and analysis*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Yosso, T. (2002). Critical race media literacy: Challenging deficit discourse about Chicanas/os. *Journal of Popular Film & Television* 30, (1), 52-62.

VITA

Matthew A. Masucci was born the fourth of four children to Laura DeGilio Masucci and Michael Joseph Masucci in Champaign, Illinois on May 16, 1967. After moving to Salisbury, Maryland at age 4, he attended Pinehurst elementary school, Bennett Jr. High, and graduated from James M. Bennett Sr. High School in 1985. While in high school, Matt was elected freshman and sophomore class president and participated in several sports including wrestling, football, cross-country and track.

Upon completion of high school, Matt attended Salisbury State College/University and graduated in 1989 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Studies and a minor in both Philosophy and Psychology. Matt continued his studies at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio in the department of Philosophy where he served as a teaching associate and a graduate student representative. In 1994, Matt earned a Master's of Arts degree in Philosophy from Ohio University. In 1998, he was admitted to the doctoral program in Education (with a concentration in cultural studies) at the University of Tennessee and served as a teaching associate in the department. Matt is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education, with a concentration in Sport Studies, and hopes to complete his degree in May 2005.

From 2002-2004 Matt was a lecturer at San José State University in the department of Kinesiology and taught a range of classes including, "Sport in America", "Diversity, Health, and Stress", and "Graduate Research Methods in Kinesiology". Matt's current research interests focus on sporting narratives and moral choice, sport and identity, and service learning for social justice.

Apart from his academic interests, Matt has raced both road and mountain bicycles at the amateur level for many years and is currently learning the nuances of track bike racing at Hellyer Park Velodrome in San José, California.