

8. Representation

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Cultural historians study the change of human civilization over time. They focus on people's beliefs, rituals, ideas, identity, social norms, institutions, and materials, with particular attention to the meanings of that culture's elements (Hutton 1981). Cultural historians before World War II focused on high culture, but thereafter, because of the influence of cultural anthropology, they began to study popular culture, that include every day experiences and artifacts that express mass values and attitudes. Since the late 1960s, scholars have studied sport's interaction with high and low culture, and also sport as an independent element of culture with s symbolic acts, representation, and struggle over meaning of sport's myths and realities.

American cultural historians have relied heavily on anthropologist Clifford Geertz's concept of "thick description," a process of studying and contextualizing human behavior. This was modeled by his analysis of the cultural significance of Balinese cock fighting which he called "deep play," that illuminated the network of social relationships in that traditional society (Geertz 1973). This process encouraged historians to study the sporting world and individual sports as cultural texts. A new trend that soon followed was an emphasis on memory as a cultural historical category, followed by the "linguistic turn" in the 1980s that emphasized the importance of language, a perspective in far greater vogue in Europe than the US. Cultural scholars outside North America are far more reliant on theory, particularly the polyschematic analyses of Michel Foucault, along with advocates of the visual and audio turns.

Culturally minded sport historians employ cultural analysis as a window through which to understand the broader society. They are concerned about such matters as race, ethnicity and gender, employment of science and technology to enhance performance, the formation of identity for fans and team supporters, cultural diplomacy, and sports myths that influence and shape behavior (Arcangeli 2012; Burke 2004; Cook et al 2008).

This essay will examine some major trends in the cultural analysis of sport. We will begin with the literary turn, specifically the influence of adult fiction on our understanding of sport as a cultural institution, followed by an analysis of the role of music, and then the visual turn, with particular attention to cinema.

Sporting Fiction

The United States

Serious American fiction in the period 1920-1945 rarely employed sport in their narratives, and almost never focused the entire story on a sporting topic, which reflected the negative attitudes of sophisticated authors and critics to sport. The main exceptions were ardent sportsmen and Nobel laureates Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner. This view changed after the war when sport became an increasingly prominent subject among the sport minded literati. They realized that sport was a suitable subject for literature because it offered many opportunities to explore fundamental and contradictory American values (Oriard 1982: 53). I suspect they were also impressed by the growing success of sports movies, including *National Velvet* (1944), based on Enid Bagnold's juvenile novel (1935).

Literary critic Christian Messenger divides the twentieth century sports novel into three categories, beginning with the ritual sports hero who sought mastery over nature, himself, an animal, or another person in a natural arena," the individual sports hero, and the team sports hero.ⁱ The ritual sports hero going back to James Fenimore Cooper's Natty Bumppo. Such heroes represented anti-modernism, and were pretty much gone by 1960 (Messenger 1990: 29-30). He is a solitary, Adamic figure seeking self-knowledge in the wilderness, striving only for himself, while renouncing public pressures and public rewards (Segal 1983: 33).

Faulkner admired huntsmen like his character Ike McCaslin, who turns down his rights to the family plantation to live in the woods in “The Bear” (1935). There he learned such important traits as humility, courage, responsibility, compassion, and independence.

Hemingway was probably more into sports than any major American writer, and 43 of his 49 short stories were about sports. His oeuvre began with fisherman Nick Adams in “Big Two-Hearted River” (1925) and largely ended with Santiago of *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), Santiago went 87 days with no catch, but like his hero, Joe DiMaggio, a fisherman’s son, will never give up. Santiago perseveres, hooking a huge Marlin that took three days to land, but sharks ravage his prize, leaving him with nothing but his dignity and pride.

Hemingway was very interested in bull fighting, discussed in *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and his non-fiction *Death in the Afternoon* (1932). Hemingway knew that “the bullfight is not a sport in the Anglo-Saxon sense of the word, that is, it is not an equal contest. . . . Rather it is a tragedy; the death of the bull. . . , in which there is danger for the man but certain death for the animal”(Hemingway 1932: 22).

Hemingway was also fascinated by boxers, who Messenger considers the last natural heroes because of their atavistic behavior but they clearly are also individual heroes, dependent upon themselves in the moral equivalent of combat. Hemingway admires the amateur athlete Robert Cohn, in *The Sun Also Rises*, despite his religion, because he boxed and became a champion at Princeton to prove his manliness and counter anti-Semitism.

Messenger identifies two major themes in boxing novels: the boxer as predator and prey; and the conflict between youth and age (Messenger 105). The later is exemplified by Bruno “Lefty” Bicek, a young Polish American in Nelson Algren’s *Never Come Morning* (1942), who wants to escape the slums, and in novels and films like *Rocky* (1975) when much of the tale

revolves around the boxer and his trainer. One of the most important novels that dealt with the theme of predator and prey was James Jones' *From Here to Eternity* (1951), a National Book Award winner, that examined the dilemmas facing Private Robert Prewitt, a career soldier and former boxer serving in 1941 Hawaii.

The natural hero was supplanted in the 1950s by school and professional team sport heroes. The former was a post-Civil War development, when according to Eric Segal, "battlefield carnage is sublimated into noble (but not fatal) strife on the playing field." It began with Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), and the juvenile heroes of Gilbert Patten's Frank Merriwell and Frank Johnson's Dink Stovey, culminating with the 24 volume "Chip Hilton" series (1948-1966, 2002) by Claire Bee, the Hall of Fame Long Island University basketball coach. John R. Tunis was an outstanding author of 23 boys' books that stressed confidence in them to learn fairness, courtesy, respect, compassion, and kindness gained through discipline, perseverance, and learning from defeat (Epstein 1987: 50-56).

Messenger argues that F. Scott Fitzgerald had a very strong ambivalence to the school sports hero. He originally worshipped the athletic aristocrat in his early short stories and his first novel, *This Other Side of Paradise*, but subsequently loathed young men like former Yale football stars Tom Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and Dick Diver in *Tender is the Night* (1934), who are ultimately failures as adults. (Segal 33).

Novelists often wrote about great high school or college athletes who failed to accomplish much in the long run, like Irwin Shaw's protagonist in *The Eighty Yard Run* (1941) Erich Segal also points to Robert Lowell's "Waking in the Blue," where the poet looks at one of his fellow inmates in the sanitarium: "I grin at 'Stanley/ now sunk in his sixties, once a Harvard

all-American fullback, (if such were possible!) . . . more cut off from words than a seal” (Segal 33).

Oriard considers the athlete-hero a representative man, “ a symbol of youth and joy and the love of play. . .an expression of the excessive privileges and responsibilities we give to a few despite our insistence on the equality of all,” embodying much that is both the best and worst in America, celebrating excellence and soaring aspirations(Oriard 1982: 68) Oriard rates John Updike’s *Rabbit Run* (1960) as the best novel dealing with an ex- athlete. Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom is a 26 year old former athlete trapped by an unsatisfactory marriage and a job selling kitchen gadgets, seeking to define “an essential paradox in the American character” (Oriard: 161). He tries to recapture his stardom by playing golf, but only occasionally achieves excellence. Updike wrote three more Angstrom novels, including *Rabbit Redux* (1971), by which time he was a pathetic, dependent, childlike figure.

One successful novel about high school sports in an unusual setting is Chaim Potok’s *The Chosen* (1967), a study of the clash between tradition to modernity and assimilation. The plot begins in 1944 with a ball game between two Orthodox yeshivas, starring Danny Saunders, son of a Hasidic rabbi. Playing baseball for him is a big step outside of his highly traditional, all encompassing religious culture. He will eventually move away from his community (Fox 2002).

The third, and most popular paradigm encompasses professional team sports heroes. They typically have to learn how to fit into the squad without losing their individual identity in a conflict with authority. These icons often become anti-heroes through a forced or voluntary personal rebellion when cut or benched or belittled as a “loser.” The outcome could be physical

suffering or economic manipulation, *or* the player might gain self-knowledge, leading to rebellion or a renewed drive for heroism (Messenger 16-18).

Major League Baseball (MLB) received negligible literary attention during the inter-war era, when most baseball fiction was written by hacks, humorists, sportswriters, or authors of juvenile books. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) was not a baseball novel, and only briefly discusses the recent Black Sox Scandal. Jay Gatsby's mentor, Jewish gangster Meyer Wolfsheim, was widely believed to have fixed the 1919 World Series. Nick Carraway, Gatsby's buddy believes such an attack on America's national pastime is unthinkable, but Gatsby assures him that it certainly could happen. Why isn't he in jail? Gatsby responds vaguely, "They can't get him, old sport. He's a smart man" (78). As Fitzgerald scholar Robert Johnson, Jr. points out, "*The Great Gatsby* and the Black Sox scandal both stand today as enduring symbols of the American Dream gone awry" (Johnson 2002: 43).

The novel that made baseball a topic for the literati was Bernard Malamud's *The Natural* (1952) (Messenger: 335-36), which had all the appurtenances of a serious novel with symbolism, mythology, allusions to Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, plus an in-depth analysis of American mores. According to scholar Allen Guttman, "Malamud realized that baseball was the perfect vehicle for an American version of a universal myth (Guttman 1998: 247).

Malamud's protagonist, Roy Hobbs, is a phenomenal teenage pitcher on his way for a tryout in 1924 with the Cubs, but was shot by the mysterious Harriet Bird, and disappears. He reappears 15 years later, seemingly from nowhere, an obscure, but sensational batter to play for New York Knights manager Pop Fisher, a name reminiscent of the fisher king, whose impotence has made the ball field an infertile wasteland (Guttman 246). Roy brings with him his special

bat “Wonderboy,” reminiscent of Excalibur, suggestive of Roy’s batting potency. . He strikes a home run off the right field facade that burst the lights, creating fireworks, leading to three days of rain, representing Roy’s power to bring life to his dismal team (Shmoop Editorial Team, 2008).

Hobbs seeks success, redemption, a sense of belonging, and transcendence of human vices, but he is materialistic, prey to temptation, and ultimately chooses the wrong goals and the wrong woman, conniving with gamblers to lose the final game of the season. Messenger argues that Hobbs striking out in his last at-bet means he must begin a new cycle of suffering. He has cut himself off from the past and cannot return home, the goal of every batsman (Messenger 337).

One year later, academician Mark Harris wrote the first of his four Henry Wiggins novels, *The Southpaw* (1953). The initial volume recounts the teenager’s successful rookie season with the New York Mammoths when he discovers that his heroes are merely human beings, the owners are ruthless capitalists, and sportswriters were liars (Harris 1990).

Harris’s second novel, *Bang the Drum Slowly* (1956) continues with Wiggins, now a star pitcher and insurance salesman. He becomes obsessed with the welfare of substitute catcher Bruce Pearson, a naive, uneducated southerner, constantly belittled by his teammate. Bruce’s health is declining, and Henry sends him to the Mayo Clinic, which reports back that Bruce is fatally ill. Henry devotes the season to enabling Bruce to be the best player he can be and to end his life with dignity. Wiggins is the only player at the funeral, stunned at the lack of respect shown a fallen player by his “teammates” (Cochran 1987:153).

The next major baseball novel was Robert Coover’s *The Universal Baseball Association, Inc: J. Henry Waugh Prop.*(1968), a highly regarded “black comic” novel that bounces back-

and-forth between the real world and the fantasy world of 56 seasons Henry made up by playing with dice. Coover turns American life into a game writing an allegory in “which the myth of baseball, religion, and the American dream area all called into question” (Collins 2013: 31)

The most ambitious book on baseball is Philip Roth’s immodestly titled *The Great American Novel* (1973). “Through baseball,” Roth wrote, “I came to understand and experience patriotism in its tender and humane aspects. . .without the reek of saintly zeal. . . .The game “was a kind of secular church that reached into every class and region of the nation and bound us together in common concerns, loyalties, rituals, enthusiasms, and antagonisms” (Roth 1973)

The Great American Novel is a satirical narration of the demise of the Patriot League, once the third major league, whose records were erased by the House Committee on UnAmerican Activities. Roth found in baseball a way to dramatize the struggle between the benign national myth that a great power prefers to perpetuate and its relentlessly, very nearly insidious reality.” (Roth 1985: 89-90) Roth uses baseball as a model for other forms of myth making, ridiculing patriotism as the national religion, attacking conscious efforts to create myths, and disparaging anti-radicalism in American politics.

Eric Rolfe Greenberg’s *The Celebrant* (1983) was rated by literary scholar Eric Solomon rated as the finest baseball novel ever (Solomon 1998: 256). It is a historical sports novel, taking place in the early 1900s. The protagonist is Jackie Kapinski, a Jewish immigrant, ring designer, and an assimilating baseball fan, infatuated with New York Giants star pitcher and Christian gentleman, Christy Mathewson. This tale of acculturation focuses on the American loss of Eden, the fall of innocence, the burden of being a hero, and the enticements that taint success (Messenger: 258).

August Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Fences* (1987) is one of the few serious plays about baseball. He challenges the ideology of baseball and the American dream through his protagonist, Troy Maxon, a former Negro League star. He is a 53 year-old garbage collector who believes blacks were born with two strikes against them. Critic Susan Koprince explains that Wilson created a "subversive narrative" that shows that the myths of baseball "must ultimately make room for a new and revolutionary mythos: that of the defiant African American" (Koprince 2000:357).

British Sports Fiction

Despite the great tradition of the English novel, British authors have shied away from sporting topics, perhaps out of a misplaced sense of snobbery. There were only two outstanding works on sport. Alan Sillitoe's short story "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner" (1959), is the best known work of British sport fiction, largely because of the 1962 film of the same name. Smith is a poor Nottingham teenager arrested for petty theft and sent to a prison school for rehabilitation. He is a promising athlete, and the governor pushes him into cross country racing, hoping success in the big meet against a prestigious public school would normalize Smith, give him status, and elevate the borstal's prestige. Smith easily takes the lead in the five-mile event, but when he nears the finish line, he stops running to defy his school's repressive administrators. John Bale (2008) argues that Sillitoe sees sport as a form of oppression that should be contested

David Story, a former professional rugby league player, author of *The Changing Room* (1971), won the MacMillan Fiction Award for *This Sporting Life* (1960), a short novel about a coal mining rugby player in Wakefield, recruited by a local club after he displayed his

aggressiveness in an evening brawl. He makes the team, but is portrayed as never more than a great ape, vulnerable to the ravages of time. (Hutchings 1987: 35).

The Hockey Literature of Canada

Canadian novelists who write about sport nearly all write about hockey, the national sport, although William Patrick Kinsella's *Shoeless Joe* (1982), adapted as the movie *Field of Dreams* (1989), is the most prominent sports book by a Canadian. There have been over 100 Anglo-Canadian hockey novels published since the 1990s, virtually all by Anglo men, raising questions about Francophones and females identifying with the sport. Jason Blake (2010) and Michael Buma (2012) both see hockey as an excellent point through which to study Canadian culture. Blake's *Canadian Hockey Literature* argues that the sport so saturates local life that it is second only to sex when it comes to marketing. Blake focuses on five central themes: nationhood, the hockey dream, violence, national identity, and family. He sees hockey as a symbol of Canadian nationhood, useful for unifying a diverse nation and as a social force in shaping family life. Buma's thesis is that hockey novels typically reinforce traditional versions of Canadian masculinity (tough, northern, and white) and the place of the sport in Canadian identity as an expression of national character.

Film and Sport

There were nearly 600 sports films produced in the United States (Pearson et al 2008) from 1930 to 1995 involving 21 sports, primarily boxing, football, auto racing and baseball.. Over 90 percent that dealt with sport history were male biographies that fit Hollywood's requirement that it operate within "the traditional American mythology." They emphasized achievement through individual hard work over teamwork and fair play (Baker 1998: 221).

Bruce Babington (1987) reported that there were at least 446 boxing films produced by the mid 1980s, including over 200 by 1915. Filming fights was much easier to produce than other major sport because the contests took place inside a confined ring. Boxing had a dramatic story to tell about impoverished men who became pugilists to escape the inner city and the physicality and brutality of the sport, along with the underworld involvement in the sport, and the post-boxing struggles of men who had their brains mashed in. Aaron Baker found there were about 80 films about baseball and football in the interwar era, virtually none of which were memorable. Then between 1941 and 1970 there were merely 34 Hollywood productions about baseball, football and basketball. Fourteen were dramas, and the rest were comedies, musicals, and fantasies (Nolan 2009: 254).

Since the 1990s, American motion pictures about sport, primarily baseball or football, have ranged from feature films to documentaries, and dealt with such issues as class, politics, race relations, hooliganism, sexism, disability, and the impact of religion. Film industries elsewhere also focus on their primary sports. European sports films focus on soccer, Bollywood on cricket and field hockey, and Hong Kong on the martial arts.

Sports films dealing with historic events are by definition historical, but historian Robert Rosenstone points out that sport films are also historical documents that stressed the viewpoints of the screen writer, director, and producer. Sports films typically focus on the star's athletic performances, and his/her goals and points of view. As Rosenstone explains, they portray the past while looking back in time through present concerns, providing "the audience with a 'moral message and (usually) a feeling of uplift'" (Rosenstone 1995, 3, 55).

Baker's *Contesting Identities: Sports in American Film* (2006) explores the cinematic representations of sports and athletes over time, in relation to socially constructed identities of

class, gender, and race. He finds that cinema since the 1970s exhibited certain simplistic and recurrent traits, such as pairing constraining attributes like competition and sportsmanship; winning and sportsmanship; and individual excellence and team effort. These films gave attention to male minorities exercising agency, but rarely to strong women (xxiii-xxiv). Their directors typically portrayed sport as a site of cultural divergence that reproduces dominant cultural values while simultaneously eradicating conflicts arising when several of these values opposed each other.

Baker found that film makers encouraged audiences to identify with protagonists whose individual situations caused visible positive results through hard work and natural talent. The typical hero was a clean cut young man who endorsed traditional values and lived life with a bit of childlike behavior (181-182), though increasingly the hero will question and critique the existing dominant representation of athletic heroes. These actors often will achieve transcendence through their physical activity.

Basketball Films

Basketball films were a minor genre until the 1980s. The first significant Hollywood productions were *The Harlem Globetrotters* (1951) and *Go, Man, Go* (1954), both featuring African American actors. In 1971 in the era of student rebellion, Jack Nicholson produced, directed, and co-wrote *Drive, He Said*. Collegiate All-American Hector Bloom, a sure-fire NBA first draft choice, is a rebel living on the fringes of the drug culture and student radicalism, who constantly fights with his coach.

The most important historic basketball film is *Hoosiers* (1986), based on Milan H.S. (enrollment 161) that won the Indiana state championship in 1954. The film is a nostalgic allegory about a rough, tough big-city basketball coach who learns the importance of teamwork

and community in a small Indiana town. Winning the state title, a popular convention in sports films, reestablishes a moral order rewarding the hard work and determination of the underdog team and its coaches (Baker 1998: 220).

Baker argues since the mid 1980s, feature films like *White Men Can't Jump* (1992), *Above the Rim* (1994), *Space Jam* (1996), and *He Got Game* (1998), offered a representation of a black style of basketball drawn from the NBA that reinforced the racial status quo, while reaffirming the values of whiteness as dominant. bell hooks felt that the overemphasis on black athletes' individual exceptionalism contributes to a "spirit of defeat and hopelessness" among lower class blacks, convincing them they could only get rich by success in sports. Baker agrees with writer John Edgar Wideman that the NBA sold to white audiences what journalist Nelson George calls a "Black [athletic] aesthetic that fits traditional positions about identity in African American society. One perspective is that Michael Jordan's creative improvisation comes from jazz and other elements of black culture. This has considerable crossover appeal, and proves to many observers that blacks have access to the American dream. But there is also the less optimistic view of the hyper masculine menace depicted by powerful men like Charles Barkley and various "gangsta" players (2003, 31-32).

Boxing in the Movies

Boxing films began to earn serious recognition with *The Champ* (1931), the story of a worn-hearted father who dies in the ring trying to earn money to raise his son. Then came *Kid Galahad* (1937) in which a mobster fixes a fight, and *Golden Boy* (1939) about an Italian boxer whose hands are broken by gangsters, destroying his ambition to become a violinist.

Post-war boxing was extremely popular, with fights almost nightly on TV. The sport became a staple of *film noir*, characterized by pessimism and fatalism, involving mobsters with scenes

depicting dark city streets, taverns, and night clubs. One of the best boxing films was *Body and Soul* (1947), a fictionalized account of the life of three-time world champion Barney Ross, one of the greatest Jewish fighters of all time. The film starred Jack Garfield, a former amateur boxer. The film's title, *Body and Soul* reflected the mob's complete control over star pugilist Charley Davis, who agrees to fix a match, but changes his mind. He is depicted as a victim of the slums and the capitalist system (Schwartz 2004). Two years later Kirk Douglas starred in *Champion*, the story of Midge Kelly who used boxing to get ahead, even if he had to step over loved ones standing in his way. He becomes champion, but in defending his crown he receives a terrible battering. He dies in the locker room, a product of a misspent life.

One of the biggest movies of the early 1950s was *From Here to Eternity* (1953), based on the James Jones novel, that won eight Oscars. Private Prewitt, played by Montgomery Clift, is an experienced boxer, recruited to box for the company team, but refuses, having come to hate the violence of the ring. He gets harassed, imprisoned and goes AWOL. When Prewitt returns to the base at dawn on December 7, he is shot to death by a patrol.

One year later Marlon Brando plays a washed up boxer in *On the Waterfront* who tells his brother "I coulda been a contender instead of a bum, which is what I am." Then in 1956 *The Harder They Fall*, loosely based on the career of former heavyweight champion Primo Carnera, served as a strong condemnation of boxing. The next big boxing movie was *The Great White Hope* (1970), based on an Arthur Sackler Pulitzer Prize winning play about the racism Jack Johnson encountered as a perceived threat to prevailing American norms.

In 1976 Sylvester Stallone's *Rocky* was a personal *tour de force*, which he wrote and starred in. The rags to riches story won Oscars for best picture, best director and best editing. Rocky was an obscure Philadelphia boxer, who by happenstance gets a championship fight, and

following vigorous hard work and preparation, goes the distance against an historically great champion. Three years later, in the first of seven sequels, the myth of the self-made man is realized and Rocky becomes champion.

Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull* (1980), based on Jake LaMotta's autobiography, is the most realistic and artistic boxing movie. Shot in black and white, it is considered one of the greatest films ever made. The fight scenes, featuring Academy Award winner Robert De Niro were outstanding. Scorsese stressed the character of the New York Italian American community, its strict codes of masculinity, the gritty language of the street, and the brutality of boxing.

Football Movies

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Film historian Ronald Bergan (1982:45) identifies three stages of football movies, beginning with the b-grade "rah rah" college movie in 1920s and 1930s. The best was the Marx brothers' *Horse Feathers* (1932), a satire mocking the corrupting influence of sport on the American college campus. The next stage was the inspirational drama in which football symbolizes character building and American civilization like *Knut Rockne: All-American* (1941) which fails to recognize Notre Dame's corrupt athletic program in the 1920s and 1930s. The third stage was comprised of post Vietnam professional football movies. The pro game was by then recognized as the national pastime, but these films, including the comedies *North Dallas Forty* (1976) and *Semi-Tough* (1977) presented highly critical views of professional football, focusing on the game's violence, management's abuse of players, and the widespread use of drugs. There was also the very serious *Black Sunday* (1977) which reminded viewers of the potential danger of sitting in a crowded stadium in the era of international terrorism.

Baseball at the Cinema

Baseball films prior to World War II were largely forgettable comedies. Then in 1942 *The Pride of the Yankees* appeared, and earned 11 Oscar nominations. Gary Cooper stars as Lou Gehrig, an immigrant's son who lived the American Dream until he contracted ALS and had to retire. He tells his fans at Yankee Stadium, "Today, I feel I'm the luckiest man on the face of the earth." A few modest biographies appeared after the war, including *The Babe Ruth Story* (1948), *The Stratton Story* (1949), and *The Jackie Robinson Story* (1950), starring Robinson in the first baseball film about an African American, and the innovative *Fear Strikes Out* (1957), the story of Boston Red Sox outfielder Jimmy Piersall, who suffered a mental breakdown due to parental abuse. There was also a highly successful musical comedy *Damn Yankees* (1958) about a middle-aged real estate agent who sells his soul to the Devil so the hapless Washington Senators can beat the hated Yankees.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, baseball movie became works of art, starting with *Bang the Drum Slowly* (1973), followed in 1976 by *The Bad News Bears*, and *Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings*. *The Bears* was a team of unathletic preteen misfits whose parents hire alcoholic ex-minor league pitcher Morris Buttermaker (Walter Matthau) to coach them. He stresses the American way of play--win at any cost. The club makes it to the championship game, but after their star female pitcher is injured, Buttermilk realizes that winning isn't everything, and put his subs in the game, and they nearly win. The movie teaches that winning is not everything and that one can play the game of life without changing or evading the rules, and even by non conforming.

The Bingo Long All-Stars depicts a barnstorming African American team in the 1930s, who were underpaid and mistreated by the Negro Leagues, but unable to join MLB because of

their race. At the end of the movie, their young phenom “Esquire” Joe Calloway is recruited and signed by a white scout, indicating there will be a future for outstanding black ballplayers.

From 1984 to 1989, movie fans were treated to four of the greatest sports films of all-time, overcoming Hollywood ‘s lack of confidence in sports movies’ commercial viability (Ansen 1988). Malamud’s *Natural* was finally made into a movie in 1984 with an all-star cast, including Robert Redford as Roy Hobbs. The narrative stays very close to Malamud’s novella until the end when Hobbs rejects a bribe to lose the big game. Though suffering from food poisoning, he hits a massive home run to win the pennant, and returns home with his long lost girl friend. . Several critics were aghast, notably John Simon, who contrasted Malamud's story about the "failure of American innocence" with director Barry Levinson's "fable of success" (Simon 1984), but noted film critic Gene Siskel describes the outcome “an uplifting celebration of the individual (*Chicago Tribune* 1984).

The one major historical baseball movie of this era was John Sayles’ *Eight Men Out* (1988), based heavily on Eliot Asinof’s 1963 book of the same title that examines the fixed World Series of 1919. Sayles was extremely sympathetic to the eight accused players, widely thought to be underpaid compared to their peers, and poorly treated by owner Charles Comiskey. Three players confessed their participation in the fix to the Grand Jury, yet the seven indicted players were all acquitted because the confessions were “misplaced.” The ruling confirmed the conventional belief that American athletes always tried their best. Nonetheless new MLB Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis immediately threw all eight suspected fixers out of baseball.

Sayles imposed his own perspectives on the narrative (Ryan 2010: 115-28). The auteur considers history a complex drama of multiple actors and interests whose representation

involves interpretation and revision, influenced by the dynamics of social power, including the media's to revise public memory. Sayles centered the audience's attention on Joe Jackson and Buck Weaver, whose excellent Series play seemingly indicated their non-participation in the fix, and evidence of how honest working people's contributions are often unrewarded and unrecognized. (Baker 1998: 220).

Bull Durham (1988), rated by *Sports Illustrated* (2003) as the greatest sports movie of all time, was a baseball fable, a comedy and a love story (Ansen 1988). Ron Shelton's brilliant screenplay focuses on lifelong minor leaguer, the highly professional "Crash" Davis (Kevin Costner), sent to the lowly Class A Durham Bulls to teach the gifted rookie pitcher "Nuke" LaLoosh (Tim Robbins) how to make it in "The Show." The third person in the story is Annie Savoy (Susan Sarandon), a baseball groupie devoted to the "Church of Baseball," who annually selects one Bull to be her lover and student. Nuke gets his call up to the majors, while Crash breaks the minor-league record for career home runs and gets released, epitomizing the cruelty of pro sports. Literary scholar Frank Ardolino sees the plot as a story of maturation, celebrating "the joys of uniting innocence and experience (Ardolino 1990:43).

Finally, *Field of Dreams* (1989) is a fantasy-drama adapted from W.P. Kinsella's novel *Shoeless Joe* (1982). Dreamer Ray Kinsella (Costner) is a 35-year old Iowa corn farmer who plows under part of his acreage to build a ball field, having heard a voice tell him "If you build it, he will come." Joe Jackson appears in the field with his teammates. Sox. Ardolino (1990: 44) sees the movie as "a nostalgic and populist retreat into a pristine past brought about by the willingness of the hero to pursue his personal vision of baseball as a religion and as the means of reconciliation with his dead father." The mystical ball field erased memories of a sinful past,

replacing it with a pastoral paradise where miracles occur as fans return to their youth and innocence (Tudor 1997: 169).

Joakim Nilsson, and several other critics take a less benign view of the movie, which they argue was popular for fulfilling needs of “Reaganite entertainment” that stressed the need to dream, recreate the innocence of childhood, and return to a simpler, more conservative time. It is seen as “full of right-wing utopianism, escapism, a wish to rewrite history, a focus on fathers and patriarchy, and magical solutions to historical and political dilemmas.” Nilsson argues it represents the transformation of the idealistic young men and women of the late 1960s into the conservative materialists of the 1980s (Nilsson 2000).

The Lives of Fast Eddie Felson

One of the most intriguing Hollywood sports movies was *The Hustler* (1961). Felson (Paul Newman) is a gifted pool shark, struggling for identity and meaning inside and outside the seedy world of billiard parlors in pursuit of wealth, fame, and fortune. He sought to leap from hustling to defeat champion Minnesota Fats and capture the American Dream. His defeat resulted, not from a lack of skill, but the absence of character. In *The Color of Money* (1986), Felson is back on the circuit, and becomes the target for a new hotshot. This time Felson uses his experience to reach the edge of victory, but then just walks away, having satisfied any need to prove himself (Ebert 2002).

Sport and the British Cinema

The British have not made a lot of sports films, and even fewer cricket films than Bollywood. The most important British sports picture is *Chariots of Fire* (1981), winner of four Oscars, a dramatization of the 1924 Olympic Games, when the Brits were ardently trying to maintain their stature as a track power, and won 34 medals, including nine gold. The film

focuses on outsider Harold Abrahams, a son of wealthy Jewish immigrants who encounters considerable anti-Semitism, and Eric Liddell, a devout son of Scottish missionaries, who sits out his main event, the 100m because a heat was scheduled for the Sabbath. Abrahams wins the 100m and Liddell the 400m. The movie's main point was that British competitors were gentlemen of great honor, who stood up for their principles. Ellis Cashmore argues "the film is most profitably understood as an invigorating sermon for the 1980s (2008: 56)." Unfortunately, the picture is a weak historical source, with at least 30 factual errors ("*Chariots of Fire* Goofs" 1981).

The most recent significant British sports film was the independent hit *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002, that made around \$70 million. The heroine is an 18-year-old Punjabi Sikh living in London, whose parents forbade her from playing soccer because she is a girl and because her father, a star bowler in Kenya, is still bitter that he could not play cricket after moving to England. Jess joins a local women's team, wins a scholarship to an American college, and turns her conservative world upside down. As the *Times of India* explained, the film "is really about the bending of rules, social paradigms and lives – all to finally curl that ball, bending it like Beckham, through the goalpost of ambition." ("*Bend it Like Beckham is Like Curry*" 2002).

Women Sports Heroines

Since sport was long perceived as a male preserve, few films were made with sportswomen as protagonists. Women in early sports films were historically cheer leaders or either girl friends or wives of athletes present primarily as companions and sexual partners who coaches worry might drain their lover's strength.

The first major film with a female athlete was *National Velvet* (1944), the story of the stereotypical 14-year-old, horse-crazy Velvet Brown (Elizabeth Taylor), resident of a small English town. She won a gelding in a raffle, trains him for the Grand National steeplechase, and decides to ride him. Females are barred from participating, but she disguises herself and wins. However, she is discovered to be a girl and gets disqualified.

For years there were few acting roles for women as athletes acting roles. However, there were two beautiful female athletes who starred in Hollywood productions. Norwegian Sonja Henie, winner of three Olympics and ten world championships, starred in 11 motion pictures between 1936 and 1945, often musical comedies in which she often skated. Esther Williams, a world class swimmer in the late 1930s acted in some 30 films between 1942 and 1963, which included a number of aqua-musicals. She was a major star in the late 1940s when she played the owner of a baseball team in the musical *Take Me Out to the Ball Game* (1949), with Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra. She also starred in *Million Dollar Mermaid* (1952), the biography of Australian swimmer Annette Kellerman. That year Katherine Hepburn starred in *Pat and Mike*, playing an independent golfer who knew she could not count on a man to help her career (Daniels 2005: 37).

Thirty years later, Robert Towne broke new ground in *Personal Best* (1982), a highly sympathetic portrayal of elite female athletes from both competitive and emotional perspectives. Torey Skinner (Patrice Donnelly) and Chris Cahill (Muriel Hemingway) are lovers, who live and train together until Chris ends up with a male lover. The film depicts a sporting culture willing to grant women the status of an athlete, but deny them any alternative voice within the system. Christian Messenger applauds the movie “for showing possibilities of women’s athletic competition, while softening the explosive clash of sexualities in sport” (1990: 174).

In 1992 Penny Marshall directed the landmark *A League of Their Own*, a fictionalized version of the All American Girls Baseball League (1943-1954), which made around \$90 million in profits, and did a great job educating the public. Women in the war era were considered second class citizens, though many were skilled ballplayers, whose diamond achievements in the AAGBL gained them respect and self-confidence. However, once the war ended, their athletic accomplishments were largely forgotten, and patriarchy resumed. Hollywood has recently moved far from its traditions by following the rise of women boxers, most notably in Clint Eastwood's *Million Dollar Baby* (2004).

In 2017 two non-fiction films appeared, the brilliant *I, Tonya*, and the not so brilliant *Battle of the Sexes*, based on the 1973 Billy Jean King-Bobby Riggs tennis exhibition. *I, Tonya* received rave critical acclaim for its take on figure skater Tonya Harding, a two-time Olympian, who was convicted of conspiracy to hinder prosecution following her associates' physical attack on her prime rival, Nancy Kerrigan. performances.

The Documentary

Documentary films report real events to entertain and inform their audiences. The first sports documentary was a film of the James Corbett-Frank Fitzsimmons heavyweight championship fight in 1897, but the sport genre did not become very popular until the 1990s. The industry did not have a lot of respect for sports documentaries as art or as marketable, especially if the interpretations countered studio executives' viewpoints. The first sports film to win an Oscar for best documentary was *The Horse with the Flying Tail* (1960), followed by *The Man Who Skied Down Everest* (1975). There have been four winners since 1996, including *When We Were Kings* (1996) and *O.J.: Made in America* (2016).

The Olympics have been a major focus for documentarians. The big step forward came with Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia* (1938), based on some fifty hours of footage. The nine hour production was an unabashed pro-Nazi production that began by trying to tie the Ancient Greek Games to Greece. The movie started with athletic statuary that seemed to come to life, followed by the lighting of the Olympic torch at Mt. Olympus, and then its transport north to Berlin, all to make Germany the heir to Ancient Greece. Leni stresses the physical beauty of athletes with considerable employment of slow motion to emphasize the artistry of performances. By then Nazi photography and other art work was rife with depictions of beautiful young Nordic men and women engaged in training and athletics (Kühnst 1996: 324-29). Riefenstahl promoted the film as a fair portrayal that highlighted Jesse Owens accomplishments, but the narrative was heavy weighted towards fascist victories, and the propaganda value promoting Nazi ideology and values is obvious. Other outstanding Olympic documentaries were the *Tokyo Olympiad* (1965) by Kon Ichikawa who focused on the human and emotional side of the competitors and Bud Greenspan who produced nine films covering 1984 to 2010.

The growing influence of documentaries was abetted by their popularity on TV, especially PBS and cable networks HBO and ESPN seeking content to attract viewers and improve their reputation for quality viewing. ESPN took a big step forward with SportsCentury (1999) a major venture into original documentary productions, leading to the creation of ESPN Films in 2008, and "30 for 30" a celebration of ESPN's 30th anniversary, a relatively serious and artistic discursive form that highlighted each auteur's personal perspectives. As of 2016, the series has produced over 150 films.

Music and Sports

Sport historians have not paid much attention to the sensory turn. However, sport has been a subject in virtually every modern genre, from jazz to Broadway, and rock 'n roll to hip hop. The first American sporting song may have been Stephen Foster's "Camptown Races" (1850), played at every Kentucky Derby since the 1920s. Their themes range from men on death row seeking help from a boxing champion to tunes bringing back memories of youthful times like the baseball songs "Glory Days," by Bruce Springsteen (1984), and John Fogarty's "Put Me in Coach," (1985). There have been over 1,000 tunes about baseball, including "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" (1908), sung daily at Wrigley Field since 1982

One of the most culturally significant sport lyrics come from a stanza that concludes Simon and Garfunkel's memorable "Mrs. Robinson," from *The Graduate* (1967), expanded one year later into a Grammy winning hit. The key verse asks "Where have you gone Joe DiMaggio?/Our Nation turns its lonely eyes to you." Paul Simon later explained, "In the 50's and 60's, it was fashionable to refer to baseball as a metaphor for America, and DiMaggio represented the values of that America: excellence and fulfillment of duty. . . combined with a grace that implied a purity of spirit, an off-the-field dignity and a jealously guarded private life" (Simon 1999).

The playing and singing of songs during sporting events is commonplace today to promote a sense of community. American college students often sing the school's fight song during football games, like "The Victors" composed in 1898 for the University of Michigan's football team. They also sing the alma mater, often at half-time.

The first singing of a song at a major league game occurred during the 1903 World Series when Boston fans tried to unnerve the visiting Pittsburgh team. This did not catch on in North America, but has been extremely popular at European soccer games for several decades.

FanChants.com catalogued over 26,000 soccer chants. The singing increases fan support of the home team, while often denigrating the opponent. These simple chants are sung to well-known melodies of popular songs. Manchester United supporters sing “United Take Me Home” to the melody of John Denver’s “Country Roads.” A few nations are also known to employ loud instrumental music for local and international games like the South African vuvuzela or the Brazilian drums (Brill 2014).

Highly politicized nationalistic anthems are rarely played at sporting events, except for the US, where the Star Spangled Banner (1814) is regularly sung at contests starting at the high school level. It only officially became the national anthem in 1931, but during World War I it was performed at the 1918 Boston Red Sox-Chicago Cubs World Series during the seventh inning stretch. Thereafter the song became a regular feature of special baseball occasions like Opening Day, national holidays, and the World Series.

The anthem was played so often after World War II that many commentators thought the experience was devalued and insufficiently respected. The Cubs halted the practice after the war, and only resumed in 1967. During the Vietnam Era, the NFL required players to stand at attention through the performance. The national anthem became a big political issue in 2016 when Colin Kaepernick began to sit during its playing, as a protest against racial injustice and oppression. One year later a broader protest movement developed after president Donald Trump encouraged NFL owners to fire protesting players. No NFL team signed free agent Kaepernick, who filed a grievance blaming them for collusion against him. In 2019 he withdrew the complaint after reaching a confidential settlement with the league.

In the rest of the world, except for Canada, Belgium, and a few other nations, their national anthem is seldom played during sporting events other than national competitions.

Observers denigrate the practice as “too American.” In addition, team sports like soccer are heavily comprised of non-nationals, except for international matches when teams sing the songs then with unusual fervor, reflecting the special moment (Bologna 2018), which one study found, leads to better teamwork. (Slater et al 2018).

Professional basketball has a long historic connection to music, starting in the 1920s when games were often staged at ballrooms, like Chicago’s Hotel Savoy, the original home of the Harlem Globetrotters, where dances followed the ball game.. Another connection, unique to early Black traveling teams, was the employment of improvisation and creativity to the predominant conservative style of play, which scholars attribute to their fascination with jazz. The mode of play was further updated in the 1980s by the rise of hip hop (Caponi-Tabery 2008; George 1992).

Just a couple of professional football teams had bands. The Washington Redskins Marching Band first played in 1938, and the all-volunteer band is still in existence. Baltimore’s “Marching Ravens” also had a band, a custom dating to the Colts of the All American Football League in 1947.

MLB had just one band, the rag tag, fan based Dodgers Sym-phony at Ebbets Field in the 1940s, best known for playing tunes that belittled umpires. Chicago’s Wrigley Field briefly introduced organ music in 1941, but did not resume it until 1967. Elsewhere organists became very popular in the 1950s, playing popular tunes between innings as well as team themes and ditties when relief pitchers walked to the mound. The organ was largely displaced in the mid-1970s by loudly played pre-recorded pop and rock music (Riess 2011).

The strongest connection between bands and American sport was at interscholastic and intercollegiate football and basketball games. They played to support their teams and promote a

shared identity amongst fans. The University of Notre Dame organized the first college band in 1887, marching in military block formation. Then in 1907 the University of Illinois band introduced intricate half-time patterns of marching that included the formation of words and letters, evolving in the 1920s into a complex “Three-In-One” march, comprised of three distinctive marches up and down the field.

Since the 1940s, Historically Black College bands have employed a radically different style for their performances, employing highly syncopated, foot-stomping, and rapid body moving rhythms, originating with rhythm and blues and later moved on to hip hop. By the 1960s, these bands became a bigger show than the game, and through television, became nationally renowned.

Visual Culture

Visual culturists examine photographs, paintings, sculpture, postage stamps, and clothing for insights into sport. Art critic Mike O’Mahony, the leading scholar on sport and visual culture argues in *Olympic Visions* (2012) that such an approach “can provide vital evidence not only of how the [Olympic] games actually looked at various historical moments, but also how the different modes used for the visual representation of the Games impacted upon how they were interpreted and understood, not least by audiences whose only access to the Games was through this form of visual mediation” (9).

Sport Apparel

Clothing worn by athletes and spectators had a broader significance than protection against the elements. Uniforms identify members of a side in team sports, and reflect the demands of a particular sport within the confines of prevailing social standards, such as the

length of tennis dresses. French tennis star Suzanne Lenglen played at Wimbledon in 1920 in a short pleated dress, sleeveless silk blouse, knee length silk stockings, a silk bandeau in place of a hat, and make-up. Prevailing sports styles were a model for sports wear, which emerged as a fashion category in the US in the 1920s. This casual fashion that stressed comfort was commonly worn to sporting events. . High end sporting wear was dominated by Parisian designer Jean Patou, working with Lenglen (Vere 2018: 69; Bates and Warner 2011).

Sporting attire today is more revealing than ever, often to promote performance in aesthetic oriented sports like gymnastics, figure skating, and diving, speed and endurance sports like track, or weight class sports like rowing, but not football or hockey, where participants are heavily padded. Yet in certain sports, particularly volleyball and track and field, women's uniforms are distinctly smaller and tighter than their male peers, presumably for reasons other than performance.

Photographs of the clothing of sports crowds in the inter-war period, especially hats, help historians identify their social class. However this needs to be contextualized because Americans used to wear their best clothing whenever they left the house. Men of all classes, for instance, often wore ties and jackets when they went to the beach, the movies, or a baseball game (Riess 1999).

Alison Goodrum (2015) reminds us about the importance of fashion among elite sports fans. She points out that the racetrack in the inter-war years was a glamorous place for people of wealth to wear the latest comfortable, exciting “and even provocative” fashionable fun styles. Such conspicuous display was for years a part of the social life of the “horsey set.”

In 1977 female runners invented the “jogbra” for athletic support, and it soon accounted for 6.1 percent of the bra market. The garment achieved international fame in 1999 when

Brandy Chastain scored the winning goal for the U.S. in a shootout to win the world championship. She pulled off her shirt to reveal her bra. By then it had become increasingly acceptable for women to wear it as “a stand-alone piece of outerwear.” Women who wore sports bras and bare mid-ribs presented themselves according to Canadian scholar M. Ann Hall as “slim, strong, sinuous, athletic and healthy (Schultz 2014: 158).

Kasia Boddy has written an outstanding study of American tennis star Helen Wills who was the subject of many narrative and visual representations. She analyzed Wills in the context of Henry James's *Daisy Miller* and Charles D. Gibson's “Gibson Girl,” drawn as the epitome of physical attractiveness. Boddy argues that Wills's style of playing, her clothing, and her facial expressions represented a certain type of modern, American femininity, the classic next door Californian girl, adored not by white Americans, but also Mexican artist Diego Rivera, who positioned her in the middle of his 1931 *Allegory of California* (Boddy 2018).

Physical appearance, including body art and hairstyles can be important visual representations, including body art and hairstyles. A prime example was the dramatic change in the present corporeal and hair look among members of the Brazilian women's national soccer team from 1996 to today. In 1996 the squad was overwhelmingly dark-skinned, short haired, working class Afro-Brazilians. Today the squad is predominantly lighter skinned, straight haired, and middle class, conforming to white heterosexual norms (Snyder 2018).

Athletes' hairstyles were not originally significant symbols when coaches pressured them to conform to prevailing styles to demonstrate their obedience. This changed among American men in the 1970s when Afros, long hair, and moustaches were worn to display personal independence. Teenage women athletes have for years worn hair ribbons with school colors to demonstrate their femininity. Schultz argues that women commonly wear a ponytail

as a practical way to deal with longer hair, but also to “en-gender a normative, athletic femininity in the context of U.S. women's sports” (Schultz 2014:8).

The Postage Stamp

Insert 8-2

In 1984 Donald Reid called for historians to study postage stamps for their symbolic value. There have been over 300 hundred of monographs on philately and history, but only a handful on sport including one dissertation (Reid 1984; Herndon 1991). In 1920 Belgium, host of the Olympics, issued two stamps in honor of the Games, and France four years later issued a set of four stamps focusing on Ancient Greek sport. The U.S. produced two stamps in 1932 promoting that year's Winter and Summer Games, followed seven years later by a stamp that commemorated the one hundredth anniversary of baseball. We now know that this tale was a myth, indicating the need for caution in employing philately in history. . The USSR was a huge producer of postage stamps that included Bolshevik heroes, major Revolutionary events, economic projects, and sports, heavily aimed at propaganda. In 1936 Russia printed what was possibly the first non-Olympic postage stamps in the world, which included a female competitor, indicating the government belief in the importance of women's sport (Rowley 2006).

Gary Osmond and Murray G. Phillips recently examined how sport stamps represent the past, a project facilitated by philatelic exhibitions, the new museology, and the employment of semiotic theory that helps one understand the culture, customs and ideology of a particular stamp. This theory emphasizes guided, preferred, or dominant meanings that may result in overlooking individual identities, intentionalities and contextualizes the people involved in

production. They also suggest such approaches as content analysis, deconstruction, and gaze theory (Osmond and Phillips 2012).

They examined cricket stamps depicted on the postage of 30 nations between 1962 and 2006. They focused on a 1979 30 cent Tokelau stamp depicting batsman and wicketkeeper, wearing just a loin cloth, employing a highly animated stance on a sandy field. The authors read the stamp as a sign of national pride, lacking any imperial symbol or evidence of a foreign imposed sport (1055-56).

Fine Art

O'Mahony examination of Soviet sport focused on a time when athletics played a vital role within its social and cultural life through state sponsored programs seeking to create the hard working and patriotic New Soviet Person. *Fizkultura* (physical culture), was well depicted in literature, film, popular songs, stamps, plates, medals, and in parades. Public exhibitions and popular journals were full of paintings, prints, and photographs representing athletes, and sports monuments were erected in public parks and sports facilities (2006).

Install 8-3

O'Mahony notes that Soviet art under Stalin was hardly outstanding, but notable statues were produced by Iosif Chaikov, paintings by social realist Aleksandr Deineka, whose pictures connected sports to militaristic and heroic traits, and photomontages by Alexander Rodchenko, a futurist avant gardist, who used extreme perspectives in his photographs of motorcyclists, divers, and speed skaters, until sent to a labor camp in 1931. Constructivist Bolshevik Gustav Klutss was renowned for his collage posters promoting the *Spartakiade* in 1928, particularly one with the image of a female discus thrower photomontaged against an

image of an attentive Lenin and two columns of marching athletes (O'Mahony 2006; Kühnst: 321- 323).

Russian women athletes were first depicted on sport magazine covers in 1928. Four years later, the government printed posters and postcards promoting women's use of parks for fitness, and in 1935, a poster promoting GTO standards in fitness depicted a woman throwing a hand grenade, and another swimming. Such activities were not mainly promoted for women's health, but to better prepare them for work, national defense, and an alternative activity to such bad habits as going to church (Rowley 2006).

O'Mahony is well-known for his recent study of *Olympic Visions* (2012), an analysis of Olympic art that encompassed paintings, statues, posters, films, and sporting paraphernalia like medals, mascots, and cigarette cards used to promote certain Olympiads, document results, and produce a lasting impression. The Olympics itself awarded medals from 1912 to 1948 for art inspired by sport in architecture, literature, music, painting, and sculpture. Bernard Vere explains that O'Mahony wrote a history of the Games in which "our reception of athletic achievement has been mediated by imagery and the political, social, race and gender messages that those images have carried" (Vere 2013: 451). **Insert 8-4**

The coming of photography made painters less essential in depicting sporting moments prior to the late nineteenth century, but they still brought their own sensibilities to their projects. No one was more important than the American George Bellows, a leader of the Ashcan school, whose "Dempsey v. Firpo" (1924) depicting the shocked expressions of the wealthy ringside crowd in round one when the champion was knocked out of the ring. Bellows also painted less passionate sporting moments among the elite, like *Tennis at Newport* (1919) and *Tennis Tournament* (1920), depicting a world where women wore stylish hats and dresses and

employed colorful parasols to protect themselves from the sun, accompanied by men dressed in white flannel trousers with dark blazers.

Norman Rockwell, the great American illustrator was acclaimed for his numerous paintings of sporting subjects for the *Saturday Evening Post* that captured the mundane, uplifting, and disheartening moments of sport. Allen Guttman identifies *Four Sporting Boys: Baseball* (1951) as his most culturally significant work, depicting boys wearing baggy versions of major league uniforms as they choose up sides. (Guttman: 162).

Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus and many other German artists in the 1920s detested bourgeois sport as unhealthy, egotistical, unhealthy, chauvinistic, and overly concerned with winning. However, they supported sport as a positive force for working class interests, including class consciousness and human dignity. This was reflected in Dadaist Hannah Hoeh's photo collage *Toughening* (1925) that attacked the reactionary German Gymnastics association's rigid examined the contradictions in sport by showing a young woman flow into the hard lines of a soccer player and an airplane (Kühnst: 300, 303).

European artists since World War II were often sports fans and participants, including like Picasso, who drew *Soccer Players* (1961) and Joan Miro, whose abstract *The Skiing Course* (1966) depicts skiers near a steep slope (Kühnst: 337-38). Sporting art was heavily influenced by pop art, which employed images from all elements of popular culture. In 1962 the renowned Andy Warhol, possibly driven by hero worship, produced an ink and oil silk screen titled *Baseball* comprised of 42 shades of Roger Maris at bat. Sixteen years later, his *Athletes* was a synthetic polymer and silk screen of ten portraits of athletes in static poses.

The most prolific producer of sport artwork since the 1960s was Leroy Neiman, whose work is belittled by most critics as unimaginative and minimally abstract (Guttman 2011: 222;

Vogan 2016). On the other hand, Kühnst points out that Neiman's *Stretch Stampede* (1979), produced a tension comparable to Edouard Manet's *Horse Race at Longchamp* (1867) (Kühnst: 368).

Photography

Sport historians have long used journalistic photographs for illustrative purposes, and for at least 40 years as evidence in their scholarship for such matters as crowd composition, riotous behavior, and changes in sportswear and equipment. But they have only recently become aware that photographs may be misleading because of how they were shot or cropped. For example, *Life* magazine's Mark Kaufmann produced an image of Tamara Press winning the 80m hurdles at the 1960 Olympics, that seemed to show her barely ahead of a teammate in second, but she was actually fifth. O'Malony shows how in the 1950s and 1960s, misleading American photographs of Soviet athletes were employed for political purposes during the Cold War.(2006: 30-31, 34).

Certain photographers of sporting images were truly artists, like Ben Shahn, whose *Handball* (1939) was a representation of ,a popular working class urban sport (Guttman: 164), and Robert Mapplethorpe, who photographed body builders Arnold Schwarzenegger and Lisa Lyon. European artists have produced portraits of Formula I idols like Belgian Jacky Ickx that are reminiscent of the armor of medieval knights, while Jean Tinguely's collage, *Panorama Formula I-Circus* showed how racing was entangled in the economics and technology of the automobile business (Kühnst: 353-54, 365-66).

Insert 8-5

There are relatively few sport statues in the inter-war era, mainly bronzes produced by Canadian Dr. R. Tait McKenzie (1867-1938), or in the post-war period, but they have become

very popular since the turn of the century. The most notable are 92 percent male, including the top-rated *The Spirit*, a statue of Michael Jordan in front of Chicago's United Center by Omri Amrany and Julie Rotblatt-Amrany (Bocicault and Danner 2014). Fanny Blankers-Koen has been the subject of several sculptures, perhaps the most of anyone. The first was Han Rehm's "Monument to Fanny Blankers-Koen" (1954) in Rotterdam, depicting her winning an Olympic relay. O'Mahony interprets the statue as honoring her endurance and perseverance, but also honoring the European struggle to survive World War II (2012: 59-60).

insert 8-6

Perhaps the most analyzed statue to date has been "Victory Salute," which commemorates Tommie Smith and John Carlos demonstrating for civil rights on the victory platform in Mexico City. It is located on the campus of their alma mater, San Jose State University. Historian Maureen Smith asserts that the statue was initiated to redress their mistreatment and honors their Olympic triumph and demonstration for civil rights merited. The statue omits silver medalist, Australian Peter Norman, who supported the protest, and later recommended the artist leave him out of the podium, providing space for visitors to stand in solidarity with the civil rights heroes (Smith 2009: 394, 406).

Conclusion

The cultural analysis of sport has opened up for historians new ways of understanding the historic development of sport around the world by opening up new kinds of sources for studying sport, and how to understand them. The post-modern historian is going beyond such primary sources as newspapers, diaries, financial reports, government documents, and is more astutely studying photographs than in the past. They are now studying fiction, music, and art so they may historicize individual works of art as a text reflecting their artist's own viewpoints. Many of the

most outstanding studies are not by sport historians, but humanists from literature and art, who bring their own expertise to the study of sport, without overly relying on cultural theory, a trend that I welcome.

¹ My division of sports heroes will be slightly different employing three groups: natural heroes; individual heroes, and divide team heroes into school heroes and professional heroes.