

**Proceedings of the
SPORT LITERATURE ASSOCIATION
39th Annual Conference
Virtual Edition
*Compiled by Charmayne Mulligan***



**June 15-18, 2022
Host: Jamie Dopp
Program Chair: Angie Abdou**

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

Welcome

Host: Jamie Dopp

President: Kasey Simons

Housekeeping and Zoom: Jamie Dopp

Session One: Disruptions - Panel Chair: Angie Abdou

Disrupting the Dominant Gaze: Claudia Rankine's Portraits of Serena Williams

Dr. Emily Ruth Rutter, Ball State University, United States, errutter@bsu.edu

Widely considered the greatest women's tennis player of all time, Serena Williams is also a consistent victim of "misogynoir" (or the twinned forces of racism and sexism). As the award-winning writer Claudia Rankine notes in "The Meaning of Serena Williams" (2015), "Imagine that you're the player John McEnroe recently described as 'the greatest player, I think, that ever lived.' Imagine that, despite all this, there were so many bad calls against you, you were given as one reason video replay needed to be used on the courts. Imagine that you have to contend with critiques of your body that perpetuate racist notions that black women are hypermasculine and unattractive." Similarly invoking Williams in her acclaimed poetry collections *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014) and *Just Us: An American Conversation* (2020), as well as the one-act play *The White Card* (2019), Rankine utilizes the creative landscape to facilitate this (re)imagining. In the proposed paper, I draw on theorist Tina Camp's conceptualization of a Black gaze in order to examine Rankine's subversive portraits of Williams. Inverting the hegemonic gaze trained on Williams in the white-dominated world of tennis, Rankine sheds needed light on the ideologies and structures that perpetuate misogynoir, especially the fetishization and objectification that it entails. At the same time, I argue that Rankine enjoins readers (and

theatergoers) to consider our own roles in dismantling white hegemony, both within and without the sporting arena.

Unheralded: The Shadow Canon of Interwar Boxing Literature

Josh Sopiartz, Governors State University, United States, jsopiartz@govst.edu

Boxing films, often adapted from earlier works of literature, reached peak popularity after the Second World War and remain popular today. The contemporary popular culture consumer—who may or may not be a fight fan—frequently engages with the sport via popular films like *Million Dollar Baby*, *The Fighter*, *Cinderella Man*, *Southpaw*, the films of the Creed franchise, and many others. This popularity obscures the fact that, for much of the twentieth century, North American authors produced an expansive shadow canon of boxing literature. This paper examines the flourish of “unheralded” interwar (1919-1939) boxing literature produced in North America, but not adapted for the screen, during the noir boom of the long 1950s. While many of the adapted stories, poems, comic strips, and novels produced during the interwar era emphasize notions of white supremacy in the ring and in the culture more generally—as represented in the trope of the suffering white championship prizefighter—a significant number of other works and their themes and subjects persist outside of our contemporary view. These works tend to feature more diverse casts—some even feature main characters who are people of color—as they emphasize the systemic inequities and distant promises that compel young men to risk their lives eking out a living through participation in bloodsport in the first place. These works more thoroughly expose the corrupt underbelly of twentieth-century boxing in ways the film adaptations intended, but often could not due to the era’s cultural mores, Hollywood norms, or legislative acts prohibiting the kind of graphic language, sex, sexism, racism, and violence present in the literature.

Skateboarding in Place: Creating and Reclaiming Namescapes Through 'Skatescapes'

Kim Shortreed, University of Victoria, Canada, kss@uvic.ca

This exploration paper considers the sport/art/activity of skateboarding as it intertwines with spatial experiences and identities. I try to understand what skateboarders, and Indigenous skateboarders especially, can teach us about alternative ways to understand space, place, and identity. I posit that skateboarding encourages spatial comprehension and landscape-use in particular ways, what I think of as a “skatescape”: a landscape as seen through skateboarders’ eyes. Through a skateboarding media and art lens, I reflect on some ways in which skateboarding influences narratives of place and belonging. I then consider these personal narratives and attempt to broaden the definition of a skatescape, and in so doing speculate on how we create, share, and navigate our unique and personal spatial languages. Finally, I reveal that appreciating Indigenous skatescapes has illuminated a blind spot in my settler psyche—that up until recently, I had not acknowledged fully that each and every spot I skated, then and now, was and is Indigenous land.

A Heroic Female Coach in Chinese Movie: Peter Chan's Leap (2020)

Siyao Lin, University of Limoges, France, siyao.lin@etu.unilim.fr

In the historically patriarchal domain of sport (Mennesson, 2005), female athletes have long been locked into certain stereotypes. However, the arts (Meskimmon, 2003), literature (Bauer, 2011) or cinema (Lieberman, 2014) are fields that allow us to rethink

these fixed representations by creating new female images. The Chinese biopic *Leap* (2020), directed by the Hong Kong director Peter Chan, is a suggestive example. It traces the history of the Chinese women's volleyball team over almost half a century, including the heroic journey of Lang Ping, a talented player turned coach. This heroine is not only a liberated woman but is also presented by the filmmaker as a feminist role model for the young volleyball players she coaches. However, can she really be said to challenge - and if so, to what extent - the patriarchal and collectivist traditions that are omnipresent in China's sports scene? By combining a film analysis, a cultural study of sport and a gender study, this paper will aim to present the figure of the sports coach in Chinese cinema which, despite a certain feminist evolution, is still caught by the three cinematographic censorships that Christian Metz talks about: the political, economic and ideological censorships (Metz, 1968). We will first situate the biopic in the current Chinese context in order to understand the image of women and, more specifically the sportswoman, in the arts, literature, cinema and the media; then, a narrative analysis will allow us to identify a heroization of the real-life Lang Ping that testifies to a feminist trend in Chinese cinema; finally, a figurative analysis that parallels reality and fiction will reveal the commercial pursuits and political arrangements that compromise the progressive qualities of this female character.

Session Two: Creative Session I – Panel Chair: Emily Ruth Rutter

The Mighty Oak

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Tim O'Connor is paid to be violent. He plays for the El Paso Storm in the West Texas Hockey League. People call him Oak. He's been an enforcer for longer than his hip or shoulder or back have been able to hold together. He is a broken machine of gristle and rage. And he has been away from home for too long. He's called back to Boston by his mother's death. There he confronts a life he failed to live, a daughter he doesn't know, and a body that is quickly breaking down. Still, he can't conceive of a future without hockey, even as he chews Oxycodone and Adderall to numb his injuries and steady his brain. When a brutal encounter with the police places him in the path of Joan Linney, a haunted public defender, and Kip, a boy with a brave face, Oak and his chance companions roam cold streets from Castle Island to Quincy Point, struggling to believe in a different future.

"Feeds"

Scott Palmieri, Johnson & Wales University, United States, scott.palmieri@jwu.edu

"Hope for the best, but know the worst is coming" was our mantra, although deep down, we knew "the worst" wasn't real suffering. At least, it wasn't the suffering I read about in my English classes: Sylvia Plath's despair, Flannery O'Connor always killing someone, and Shakespeare killing more. The first hour of my first college baseball practice, we started our season of suffering in the form of groundballs. I know it was an hour because Coach was pacing back and forth behind the infielders, updating the minutes, one grounder after another after another.

"Feeds" narrates the first days of a college baseball career, riddled with the stress wrought by a mercurial head coach, his physically and mentally exhausting practices, and the expected homesickness of a first-year student and his teammates navigating their first semester. The small solaces of emerging friendships and conciliatory routines, such as disappointing dinners at the campus cafeteria, lessened the burdens of this new baseball

and academic life for the narrator and roommates, now part of a team that shaped their days and, in the long run, their futures. This creative non-fiction memoir piece captures what it was like to know a college baseball life as a source of suffering and source of comfort for young men who could barely imagine how special these days would be.

Heading North

Holly Wendt, Lebanon Valley College, United States, wendt@lvc.edu

In this reading, I propose to read from *HEADING NORTH*, a novel loosely inspired by the 2011 Lokomotiv Yaroslavl air disaster. In the same week Viktor Melnikov earns his first NHL contract with the San Francisco Pilots, he loses his entire former Russian team—and his clandestine boyfriend Nikolai Stepnov—in a catastrophic plane crash. Grappling with a new league, language, and culture under a grief he cannot share, Viktor presents another challenge for General Manager Liliya Aleyev. Liliya—daughter of the team owner, step-mother to Nikolai, and wife of hockey superstar Kirill Stepnov—wrestles for professional and personal control in her rapidly deteriorating franchise, marriage, and connection to her father. When Kirill asks Viktor to give up his NHL dreams for the rebuilt Russian team and to out himself in the process, Viktor must weigh his career and safety against the potential for a better future. *HEADING NORTH* is a story about public and private grief on the global stage of professional sport and the personal costs and collateral damage inherent in social change.

She Scores at the Euros

Gráinne Daly, University College Dublin, Ireland, grainne.daly1@ucdconnect.ie

I wish to make a creative presentation at SLA 2022 and read a memoir piece that focuses on a trip to the Euros (the European soccer championships held every four years). I have completed a piece that outlines my trip to the Euros in Poland in 2012, and am including an excerpt below. I am working on a further piece that explores my trip to the 2016 championships in France. I envision my reading being structured around a condensed version of both to give the effect of a diptyque of sorts that creates an impression of the carnival that is being an Irish soccer fan in big competitions. Excerpt from “She Scores at the Euros”: “In a low-rise hotel amid high-rise blocks on the far outskirts of Gdynia, a good cab ride away from anything worth writing about, we ate dry toast and scrambled egg that was desiccated, and watched shreds of other fans defrag over greasy bacon and foreign looking sausages. There was a waft of last night’s beer in the tiny breakfast room, the plastic legs on the furniture bending to cope with the weight of a big Bohs fan who said he’d been in Sopot all night and hadn’t been to bed, “well not me own,” he added, with a wink and a smoker’s chuckle. Cost me €150 he said, disemboweling a fresh pint. What goes on tour stays on tour and Franner’s name remains bound to secrecy. He chewed the skinny sausages with gusto, a man in need of a feed. He asked Agneska, the wide-eyed waitress who was looking startled at the rapid rate of decline of breakfast stocks on the server-over, to bring him another beer and a pot of Rosy. The beer arrived but there was no sign of the tea and it needn’t have mattered because a couple of Shels fans joined the Bohs up-all-nighter and more beers were ordered and washed down with even more: a pattern that was to follow long after the last of the pale breakfast leftovers had been cleared away and the waxy table covers wiped down with a discoloured J-cloth by Agnezka. More men in green jerseys appeared and tables were pulled together. There was an outbreak of talk seasoned intermittently with song, the whole room joined in. Plans were hatched for later, who’d share a cab with who... Was anyone up for a quick stop off in Sopot or would they leave that till after the game, wink-wink...

Thursday, June 16, 2022

**Session Three: Transcendence, Theatrics, & Transdisciplinarity -
Panel Chair: Joyce Duncan**

Patrick Imbert's The Summit of the Gods (2021): Picturing Sport and Transcendence in Animation Films

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Maxence P. Leconte, Trinity University (Texas), United States, mleconte@trinity.edu

The Summit of the Gods (2021) is a hand-drawn animated film that immerses the viewer in the unsurpassed majesty of Mount Everest while contemplating what compels climbers to brave its dangers in order to conquer its summit. Japanese reporter Fukamachi illustrates this multifaceted journey at the heart of the film. On the one hand, the photojournalist attempts to elucidate whether George Mallory and Andrew Irvine were the first men to reach the top of the Himalayans in 1924, which could change the course of climbing history. On the other hand, the success of Fukamachi's investigation is intimately tied to Habu Jôji's destiny, a former mountaineering champion who had vanished for years before reappearing in Katmandu in possession of what could be Mallory's lost Kodak camera. In this presentation, we will discuss the compound meaning of the film, as intimated in its title, and focus on the notion of sport and transcendence: the expression "Summit of the Gods" concurrently translates the fierce competition between the most gifted climbers on the planet as well as the metaphysical quest for a world beyond the reach of mortals, a place only attainable by pushing oneself past the limits known to humankind. Behind the poignant and at times tragic events affecting Habu Jôji, we discover the significance taken by climbing and its irreplaceable function in the athlete's life, at the same time as we witness the transformation of Fukamachi's pursuit of history and knowledge into a more philosophical journey concerned with the meaning of existence. By discussing the film's formal and narrative qualities, we suggest that sport animation can offer a compelling alternative to conventional sport cinema productions and help us reassess the powerful associations between history, media theory and sport philosophy.

Ted Lasso and Transdisciplinarity

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Answering the spiritual needs of the zeitgeist for many, *Ted Lasso* quickly went from cult hit to a mainstream cultural phenomenon during the pandemic, its two seasons streaming on Apple TV+ dominating 2021 and 2022 small-screen awards as a Comedy Series. The success of the show calls into question a fundamental concern of sport literature: to what degree is it about (the) sport? The Warner Bros. production's fictional AFC Richmond may be the most popular soccer team in the United States since the 1970s heyday of Warner's New York Cosmos. Beyond the initial clichéd premise of a naïve fish-out-of-water Pollyanna as the butt of two-nations-divided-by-a-common-language jokes on American sporting exceptionalism, the association football club setting raises issues of sport management, finance and governance, globalization, player development, tactics and coaching education. Understanding soccer in the show requires a transdisciplinary perspective – an approach Susan J. Bandy suggests may be the future of research in sport literature. The mimetic effect of the messianic manager myth is an ideal case study for

the transdisciplinary hermeneutics that are a “natural outcome of transdisciplinary methodology, revealing soccer’s sacred role in cosmodernity.”

Playing for Sports: Sports Plays as a Theatrical Endeavor

Michael Lawrence Franz, Florida State University, United States,
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In *Bob Batchelor’s Basketball in America: From the Playgrounds to Jordan’s Game and Beyond*, he argues in part that sport movies are useful texts that inform us about the nation and its values. These values include the promise that hard work leads to reward, individual achievement on behalf of a team effort, and redemption of a team or individual. Much like in sport films or documentaries, these attitudes and values regarding the nation are omnipresent in a body of dramatic literature called “sports plays.” Borrowing from Eero Laine and Broderick Chow’s use of the term, sports plays are works of theatre that focus on sports centrally in their staging. Sports plays themselves are not new, especially in the U.S. From Clifford Odets’ *Waiting for Lefty* in the early twentieth century to Eric Simonsen’s *Lombardi* in 2010, sports plays have grown to become their own genre of dramatic literature worthy of research and scholarship. However, the study of sports plays in scholarship has yet to catch up. In this essay, I argue that sports plays actually use sports as a tool, both centrally and peripherally, to comment on broader aspects of the nation, particularly race, gender, individualism, and ability. Sports plays hold the potential for practitioners to stage broader social and cultural issues, inviting audiences to think deeply about questions of nation, race, gender, and ability, all through the lens of a popular form of physical culture and entertainment.

Transformation of a Sport Antihero on Screen

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Carnavalesque, vulgar and unattractive, *Iliad*’s Thersites is considered the first antihero in the history of literature. Though a minor character, Homer devoted an elaborate description to this character as it stood in opposition to the work’s general tone and the cultural model of the period. Although equipped with a set of highly undesirable features, Thersites is not a villain. He gave rise to a number of literary and film outcast protagonists who do not fit into an admirable, righteous and flawless portrait of a hero. This article strives to follow through the transformation of sports antiheroes on screen. The material selected for analysis consists of three titles exploring and challenging a sports antihero (or antiheroine) given social and cultural circumstances, common stereotypes about their respective disciplines, gender expectations and the portrayal of athletic failure: a canonic biopic *Raging Bull* (1980) telling a story of a troubled boxer Jake La Motta, Daren Arronofsky’s story of a distorted and decayed image of masculinity, *The Wrestler*, and a recent hit Netflix show *Queen’s Gambit* on a genius chess player Elizabeth Harmon. I argue that the persona of a sports antihero on screen undergoes a thorough change; from flawed and brutal La Motta to troubled, yet intriguing and inspiring, Harmon.

Session Four: Gender and Sexuality in Sport Literature – Panel Chair: Mark Noe

Female Voices in Danish Sport Literature,

Preben Kærsgaard Philipson, Espergærde Gymnasium, Denmark, prephi65@gmail.com

Although sport literature has been written by Danish authors, it has not been widely studied with the exception of some academic studies that have focused principally on male authors and soccer. There have been few studies of female authors' work pertaining to sport literature in Denmark. The earliest literature concerning women's writings in Denmark pertained to gymnastics and its origins from the end of the 19th century, most notably the work of Erna Juhl-Hansen, Jørgine Abildgaard and Helle Gotved. Perhaps more well-known are the writings of Karen Blixen's work on body culture in Africa. More contemporary Danish sport literature that has been written by women exists, and it is the purpose of this paper to analyze some of the works that concern handball, tennis and soccer that have been written by Sørine Gotfredsen, Maria Gerhard and Olga Ravn. In the context of world literature, Lotte Garbers' work concerning modern gender perspectives of women from different cultures living in Saudi Arabia will also be examined. This female literature further elaborates the unique perspectives of the challenges of gender within physical exercise and sports historically as well as modern gender issues related to identity in sports, relationships and family. More specifically, the themes pertain to women's physical exercise in relation to the ties of marriage and family and of independency and equality in general. The authors have different perspectives concerning the purpose of sport as a means of religion, health issues etc. Finally, there has been a tendency of female writers to focus on personal and individual identity, whereas male writers more often include social and collective identity. It is concluded that this research will further contribute to an understanding of gender and sport as well as further expanding research concerning Danish sport literature and offers a more transnational analysis concerning sport literature.

What's Queer about Queer Hockey Literature? Homonormativity in the Lesbian Hockey Romance Genre; Jamie Ryan, Queens University, Canada, 9jtjr@queensu.ca

LYLE OLSEN AWARD WINNER

The lesbian hockey romance genre offers a generative contact zone between one of the most masculine sports, hockey, and one of the most feminine literary genres, romance, while also imagining what queer love might look like in a notoriously homophobic sporting culture. Both hockey and the romance genre are potent examples of heteronormativity, and so my presentation will focus on whether the lesbian hockey romance genre is homonormative. The lesbian hockey romance genre is most obviously queer in that it focuses on same-sex desire, but is the genre also queer in its politics? Is the lesbian hockey romance genre primarily dictated by the genre tropes of hockey or romance literature? And, moreover, does the lesbian hockey romance genre adopt these genre tropes or queer them to offer an alternative vision of queerness in hockey culture? In other words, does the genre offer any lessons on what hockey or romance literature could be (beyond the strictures of heteronormativity) or do lesbian hockey romance novels confirm the necessity of the standard hockey and romance plots? Drawing from queer theorists like Lisa Duggan, Lee Edelman, and Jack Halberstam, my presentation will explore what is queer about queer women's hockey literature.

The Role of Display Masculinity in Gabe Habash's Stephen Florida

Tommaso Villa, University of Lincoln, United Kingdom, tommasovilla1102@gmail.com

RUNNER-UP, LYLE OLSEN AWARD

I will argue that Gabe Habash uses the character of collegiate wrestler Stephen Florida (the protagonist of his eponymous debut novel) to interrogate different versions of masculinity in contemporary American sports fiction. In particular, I will show that Stephen embodies what Faludi has termed “display masculinity”: this is a theory that highlights contemporary male tendencies for performativity and places fame, recognition, and placing oneself as an object of spectatorship above actual achievements. I will demonstrate that Habash uses Stephen’s display- and goal-driven worldview to emphasise elements of hegemony, coercive entitlement, competitiveness, and independence. These themes are specifically highlighted by the protagonist’s obsessively self-repressing training regimen and asocial behavior, providing a key link between sports and masculinity. Reflecting research connecting athletics with dissociative disorder, the repetitiveness and traumatising action of wrestling in the novel creates a divide between the athlete and everybody else; to underpin this point, I will show that Stephen tries to cast himself as utterly separated from American history, from the community he lives in and from reproduction, while still aspiring to assert his “paternity” on situations and opponents. Finally, I will show that Stephen can be considered a Hyper-Professional Sports Hero, a term that I have coined to signal a shift in the way in which athletes are depicted in contemporary sports literature by stressing the personal consequences of intense training.

Session Five: Sports and Politics – Panel Chair: Jamie Dopp

Trusting the Need for Risk: Art and Motorcycling in The Flamethrowers

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Rachel Kushner’s 2013 novel *The Flamethrowers* has been acclaimed by critics as a complex and layered exploration of New York’s art scene in the 1970s and its roots in the collapse of the Fordist economy and subsequent financial crisis. The narrator Reno’s Moto Valera motorcycle functions as a center in the novel, organizing by its appearance the characters, events, objects, and ideas into an assemblage that is less like a “story arc” than a network (Strombeck). The motorcycle brings into relationship Reno’s working-class family history, her lover Sandro Valera, his implication in post-fordist labour action, and the representations of 70s ideas of community action, sexuality, and artistic commitment. The motorcycle brings together sport and art, suggesting the way that performance whether artistic or sporting is implicated in material realities that are always already defined as political. The novel is bookended by two important scenes in which Reno rides the motorcycle. In the first Reno races her Moto Valera on the famous salt flats in Bonneville Utah, bringing together her love of speed and of drawing in an artistic project that involves her photographing the tracks her tires leave in the dry lakebed. Despite being warned about the dangerous gusts in the third mile of the track, she crashes the bike and crushes its beautiful teal fairing. The second scene occurs months later when Reno takes delivery of the motorcycle in New York, after her betrayal by Sandro and her encounters in Italy with the activists who are striking against his family business. In this second scene, Reno must dodge potholes, winos, and cabs that come to sudden stops, but rides confidently and successfully. In these scenes what links motorcycling and sport performance is the idea of risk, and also the idea of committing to the risk. She has

succeeded in blurring the lines between life and performance, and all of New York becomes “a stage, [her] stage” (297).

Football and Fascism in Spanish Short Stories of the 1960s

Adam Winkle, High Point University, United States, awinkel@highpoint.edu

By the 1960s, hard-line Falangists —members of Spain’s fascist party— had lost much of their political influence within the Franco regime (1939-75). Their cultural influence remained strong, however, through top positions in professional football (soccer) clubs and in the governmental sports agency, the *Delegación Nacional de Educación Física y Deportes*. Likewise, fiction writers, poets, and filmmakers with fascist sympathies recognized the power of soccer as a cultural phenomenon that encapsulated many of the transformations that Spain was undergoing during the second half of the dictatorship. In this presentation, I consider the portrayal of football and its social impact in the short stories of Camilo José Cela, Rafael García Serrano, and Francisco García Pavón. These authors, following a tradition established by the avant-gardist and early Falangist Ernesto Giménez Caballero, expressed themes of gender, consumerism, and national identity, often in contrast to the more traditional world of bullfighting. Though their stories rarely focus on the action on the pitch, these authors use the world of football to question the mass spectatorship that was growing around the game to show how soccer’s function as an “escape valve” conflicts with a nostalgia for a more innocent, though imagined, period in the sport’s and the nation’s history.

Banning Sports Books? That’s Out of Bounds

Charmayne Mulligan, Davenport University, United States, cmulligan@davenport.edu

Identity has always been significant to athletes. Whether amateur or professional, athletes identify themselves by their position, their sport, their teams, and their geographical places. Increasingly, athletes are becoming more comfortable identifying as well with race, ethnicity, and LBGTQIA membership. Sports stories simply cannot be told without these connections, and to do so would be to deny essential qualities of any athlete’s experience. In the current political climate, however, sport literature faces challenges from political groups, some of which present themselves as grassroots organizations but are, instead, highly-organized and funded by national special interest groups. From July 2021 to March 2022, more books have been banned in public schools in the United States than in any other time since these types of statistics were kept. Because sport stories often intersect with race, gender, and sexual identity, increasingly sport literature books are finding themselves within these conversations. Three Young Adult books have been the subject of objections or bans: Ngozi Ukazu’s *Check, Please*, E. K. Johnston’s *Exit, Pursued by a Bear*, and Michael Bennett’s *Things that Make White People Uncomfortable*. This paper outlines the current challenges facing books, especially within public schools, and raises the alarm about the future of sport literature, particularly for Young Adult literature, in the wake of these protests and bans.

DAY THREE

Session Six: Baseball and Football - Panel Chair: Phil Wedge

What's in a Name? Cleveland Indians to Guardians: How a Team's Name Feels to Fans

Ken Moon, Iowa Western Community College, United States, kmoon@iwcc.edu

With the name change of Indians to Guardians, Cleveland baseball fans, similar to Washington Football fans, are now forced due to changing social norms to reacquaint themselves with their long-beloved team. This paper looks at the process Cleveland went through to change the name, and then speculates more broadly at how the mascot name of a team impacts the way a city's fans feel about their team, as well as how Cleveland fans might feel about the new name.

Primal Beings: Representations of the Frontier in Don DeLillo's End Zone

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Focusing on Don DeLillo's *End Zone*, this project presents an alternative reading to what many critics see as DeLillo's meditation on American society's nuclear anxiety in the mid-20th century. It argues that DeLillo is representing the nation's mythic frontier in a modern setting using American football as an interpretative lens to reimagine that space as something primordial and brutal rather than sacred. Drawing on the work of cultural critics such as Richard Slotkin and Donald Pease, this article contends that American violence is not learned from an existential "Other" such as the Native American as is often suggested, but is actually innate. It examines the portrayal of landscape in *End Zone* and suggests that DeLillo continues in the vein of writers such as Willa Cather by presenting the Frontier as a character of its own, one that has the ability to shape the personas of the characters contained within such novels due to its sparse and primal nature. Such an argument is demonstrated by the manner in which the Frontier's allows the transformation in Gary Harkness' from resistant outsider into accepting insider, a process enabled by the brutality of his playing experiences on this New Frontier whereupon Logos College is located.

Baseball and Literature in Venezuela: An Overlooked (Love) Story

Wladimir Márquez Jiménez, Regis University, United States, wmarquez@regis.edu

Baseball (La pelota) is the favorite sport of Venezuelans since the dawn of the twentieth century. Baseball constitutes, in the process of building national identity and the nationalist imaginary, an element of unquestionable metaphorical value. The *juego de pelota* staged the incorporation of Venezuela into liberal modernity, baseball has been also the arena in which allegorical struggles between different social classes, between the regions and the capital, took place; baseball was the space par excellence for the social ascent of the disfavored and marginalized; the baseball stadium was the locus of public recognition and accumulations of what Pierre Bourdieu calls "symbolic capital," that is to say, baseball made possible for the unprivileged to become known, famous, admired, loved. Moreover, in Venezuela, throughout the twentieth century, baseball and democracy go hand in hand. A social phenomenon of this nature, whose richness as a privileged territory of Venezuelan culture is undisputable, has been neglected by scholars and cultural periodicals alike. On that note, for instance, in an article published in one of the most prestigious newspapers in Venezuela, *El Universal*, its author Dulce María Ramos signals that Baseball ---along with oil production--- has been pretty much absent from

Venezuelan literature. However, a more careful look at the history of Venezuelan Literature will reveal that baseball has been a steady presence since the early years of the twentieth century. Authors considered classics have written poems, shorts stories and novels about baseball and its heroes. Andrés Eloy Blanco, Guillermo Meneses, and Rafael Zárrega, just to name a few, offered testimony about the passion Venezuelans feel for the King of Sports. In my paper I will make an inventory of the texts and authors that, throughout almost a century, have gravitated around baseball, taking the opportunity to make comments, as well, on a myriad of social issues.

Session Seven: Virtual Business Meeting Association Announcements

Session Eight: Poetry Session – Panel Chair: Jeremy Larance

Poetry

Mark D. Bennion, Brigham-Young University Idaho, United States, bennionm@byui.edu

Whereas many personal and social events are predictable, an athletic contest and literary work may be two of the last cultural offerings that mirror one another in both mystery and surprise. Fortunately, we cannot always predict the outcome of a game or poem. For several years, said mystery has drawn me to study the marriage of literature and sports. That research has led to teaching a sports literature class for our upper division English majors and writing poems that incorporate sports as metaphorical, paradoxical, and thematic material. Some of these poems have shown up in *Aethlon*, *Dappled Things*, *Windhover*, and other literary journals. It is the pervasive and persistent diction of the athletic world that pushes me to see life's ordinary events (i.e., giving birth, attending school, becoming a parent) in new ways. This session will be a reading of 8-12 of these poems.

Grappling with the Impossible, Skateboard Poems

Kim Shortreed, University of Victoria, Canada, kss@uvic.ca

"We are Seven": A Tale of Two Poems

Richard Harrison, Mount Royal University, Canada, rharrison@mtroyal.ca

Session Nine: Special Panel for Stoney - Panel Chair: Susan Bandy

Dick Crepeau, Don Johnson, Ron Smith, Susan Bandy

DAY FOUR

Saturday, June 18, 2022

Session Ten: Aesthetics in Sport and Sport Lit – Panel Chair: Joyce Duncan

Sports Poetry in Poland – Kazimierz Wierzyński, Krzysztof Zuchora and Other Selected Examples

Michael Mazurkiewicz, Jan Kochanowski University, Poland,

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The research concerning relations between sport and literature has been growing in importance in recent decades. Sport has inspired numerous writers all over the world,

also in Poland. Sports poetry is a very intriguing phenomenon. The aim of the paper is to present some of the most interesting Polish poets, whose literary output shows a deep fascination with sport – Kazimierz Wierzyński, Krzysztof Zuchora and selected others. Sports poetry has had a long tradition in Poland. The most famous representative of this current of Polish literature is undoubtedly Kazimierz Wierzyński. The breakthrough moment in the life and literary output of Wierzyński was the famous volume of poetry, awarded (in the translation into German) with the gold medal in the literature competition during the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam – *Olympic Laurel* (1927). Krzysztof Zuchora is a contemporary poet fascinated with sport, which is seen by him as broadly understood cultural phenomenon, having a great potential of leading to beautiful things. These authors' attitudes to sport and their selected works will be presented and discussed. The examination is largely based on historical sources (poetry volumes, memoirs, press articles) and required familiarizing oneself with numerous publications devoted to the historical presence of sport in literature and sports poetry.

Henry de Montherlant and the Aesthetics of Athleticism

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The Olympic revival by Pierre de Coubertin in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries encouraged the popularization of sporting cultures in France. During the Roaring Twenties (1920-1920s), or *Les Années folles* as they were known, there was an explosion in what came to be known as “popular culture.” By the 1930s, sport—especially with regard to cycling, rugby and soccer—had become a common form of entertainment in France, and naturally, authors began to view it as a source of inspiration for their works. Although at first it was viewed as a simple diversion and therefore not worthy of artistic representation, French writers became some of the first modern authors to use it as inspiration for refined literature. Henry de Montherlant's work was highly representative of this new literary trend, which took place roughly between 1919 and 1930. Montherlant was himself an athlete—he participated in running races and was a member of a soccer team—and in this talk, I will consider the representation of sport and physical culture in his work. In particular, I will perform a close reading of the preface to *Les Olympiques*, in which he defends physical culture as a legitimate subject for serious literature, and explains the significance of sports to him: a means of preparing soldiers for war, an aesthetic style akin to the highest forms of art and literature, and a way of educating the masses. Subsequently, I will show how these ideas about sport, including gender politics, are manifested in the poems and short stories of *Les Olympiques*, the essay, “Mais aimons-nous ce que nous aimons?” and novel, *Le Songe* (1922).

BeatBoxing: How Hip-Hop Changed the Fight Game

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In *BeatBoxing*, I uncover the unique connection between hip-hop and the sweet science, tracing a grassroots cultural movement from its origins in the South Bronx to its explosion across the globe and ultimately into the charged environment of the prize ring. Featuring interviews with champion fighters and music legends, my work explores a world of rap moguls turned fight promoters, boxers turned rappers, and rappers turned boxers. From Mike Tyson to Tupac, from Roy Jones Jr. to J. Prince, my presentation explores how a cultural collision forever altered the relationship between music, race, sports, and politics.

Session Eleven: Final Reflections– Panel Chair: Fred Mason

Angling for Inclusion: Race and Ethnicity in the Sport of Fly Fishing

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When it comes to racial or ethnic diversity, according to the 2019 *Special Report on Fishing*, 11.1% of fly fishers are Hispanic, 8.9% Black, and 4.6% Asian. Based on these numbers, fly fishing is a very white outdoor pursuit. In *Trout Culture: How Fly Fishing Forever Changed the Rocky Mountain West*, Jen Corrine Brown notes that in the nineteenth century “as the American leisure class tried to strengthen [its] claims to whiteness and superiority, they renewed connections to their British angling peers to create a Western angling community,” believing that “sport and whiteness connected Western civilization” (16). Fly fishers, particularly during the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century (though extending into today with various conflicts over Native American and First Nations fishing rights) are not immune from postcolonial critiques and charges of racism or elitism. At times, despite some advancements, it seems like the dividing line on these issues is the same as it was in the nineteenth century: white middle- upper-class people angling the “right” way while lower-class or subsistence fishers are to blame for collapsing populations. While the fly fishing community is firmly committed to the protection of public lands from biodiversity loss and development, the historical reality of public lands in North America is rarely reckoned with in official government narratives or in the conservation activities of these concerned outdoor groups. This presentation argues that fly fishers must grapple with fly fishing’s connections to white supremacy, Indigenous land dispossession, and the decimation of native fish species by the introduction of more aesthetically desired quarry.

Cricket, War, and Imperial Heroism in Sir Henry Newbolt’s “Vitai Lampada”

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Sir Henry Newbolt’s 1892 poem, “Vitai Lampada,” is frequently cited as one of the most influential and memorable poems of the Victorian Era, particularly in relation to imperial heroism. Scholars of the history and literature of sport are especially interested in Newbolt’s use of a public-school cricket field as a parallel to an unnamed battlefield of the British Empire. Most scholarly attention given to this poem has focused on the latter, but in this presentation, I will discuss how critical it is for a reader to understand the rules of cricket to fully appreciate how Newbolt uses the game as a metaphor for war. I will argue that many scholars, especially those unfamiliar with the nuances of cricket, have misinterpreted the famous (infamous) recurring line, “Play up! play up! and play the game!”

Creative Writing, Collaboration and Maximising Conference Connections: A Reflection on the Collaborative Environment of the Sport Literature Association

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Collaboration between creative writing researchers in the academy have drawn increasing scholarly attention. Creative writing, often seen as an isolated endeavour, is also one in which its practitioners actively seek connection and support, share their ideas and gain critical feedback (Batty, 2016). As crucial as collaboration is to network development, community and capacity building, the development and maintenance of collaborative

practices can be as complicated as it is productive (see Philp, Jeffrey and McGowan, 2021). This paper examines complexities of collaboration on research outputs related to the intersections of creative writing, literary analysis and sport. We consider ways creative writing practitioner researchers can develop strategies to navigate collaborative practice through an examination of the authors' developing collaborative projects and collaborative working relationship born out of this very conference. This paper seeks to contribute to notions that collaboration 'be conceptualised, discussed in scholarship, and approached in ways that are as diverse, paradoxical, and fluid as collaborative endeavours are in practice' (See Philp et al., 2021), through its consideration of a series of inter-related creative writing and sports research projects, we share our reflections, successes, challenges and celebrate the rich opportunities and connections the Sport Literature Association can offer its members to further their academic and creative careers.