SPORT, ART AND CONTINGENCY:

REDESCRIPTIONS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Abstract.. ii.

CHAPTER ONE - Introduction... 1.

CHAPTER TWO - Literature Review... 6.

CHAPTER THREE - Truth and Reality.. 21.

CHAPTER FOUR - Sport and Art... 33.

CHAPTER FIVE - Redescriptions... 67.

CHAPTER SIX - Conclusion.. 88.

Bibliography... 92.

ABSTRACT

In today's highly technical and product-oriented world, sport, like many other things, has become a realm of efficiency, records and statistics. While one can certainly appreciate the breathtaking accuracy, speed and strength of the world's elite athletes, it seems that there may be more that can and should be understood and appreciated about sport. This thesis examines the relationship between sport and art using a "functional" approach. That is, it is shown how sport can be seen to function as art does at certain times and under certain conditions.

Sport is shown to be a "human-made" entity that has no essential nature or pre-determined meaning. As a result, sport can and should be described and redescribed in many different ways. This thesis concludes that redescribing sport in terms of art will have a two-fold effect on sport. Firstly, the current descriptions and perceptions of sport can be challenged and descriptions which depart from the norm will be encouraged. Secondly, there can exist in sport description and reporting the provision to promote the kind of criticism which is usually afforded only to art.

It is the concern of philosophic inquiry to examine these issues in a critical and logically sound manner. To a certain extent the philosophic method combines the logical and critical approach with a more imaginative or projective concern. The philosophic method goes beyond the said and the done, to the possibly said and the possibly done. It examines the possibility of a change in, or an elaboration of, our understanding of our sporting institutions and practices, and ourselves.

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Sport, particularly high performance sport, can be perceived as a cold, technical realm of efficiency, records and statistics. In linking sport, however tentatively, to art, sport may be afforded an attachment to the "soft" and aesthetic notions of art. There has been, however, a certain unwillingness amongst some philosophers of sport to link sport and art too closely and almost an abhorrence to calling sport "art." While the human form in motion, particularly in sport, has long been regarded a worthwhile subject for artistic works, the connection between sport and art, from a philosophic point of view at least, has been a matter of much contention and confusion.

Examination of the question "Is sport art?" has almost invariably begun with an examination of the more fundamental question "What is art?" Attempts have been made to answer this question with what will here be termed a "metaphysical" or "essentialistic" approach. That is, it refers to traditionally accepted instances of art with the view to establishing a set of criteria that will somehow expose the true nature or essence of art. Once a set of criteria has been established all that remains is to apply them directly to sport. The problem with this approach is that arriving at a set of criteria which satisfactorily characterizes the nature of art (or of sport or of anything at all) is not an easy task. It is, perhaps, an impossible task as it rests on the assumption that there is one way that art is, one way that it is to be described.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the relationship between sport and art using a more "functional" approach to art, that is, an approach that concerns itself not with

what sport is, but rather with what it does. An examination of this kind challenges the question "What is art?" and the extension of that question to sport "Is sport art?" as not capable of being satisfactorily answered. In beginning with the notion that no thing has one way that it is "in itself," it can be understood that sport and art are simply two realms which humans perceive and understand in a way not determined by God or by Nature but by descriptions based on society, history, circumstance and need.

It is, however, understandable that humans strive to come to some conception and degree of understanding of the complex world in which they live. The struggle to comprehend, structure and control our world is a tendency we have adopted through many ages. Belief systems are adopted and attitudes and knowledge are constructed within the confines of those systems until such time that the system is deemed no longer useful and a viable alternate system is offered. Rorty offers a way of understanding this process:

> Think of human minds as webs of beliefs and desires, of sentential attitudes - webs which continually reweave themselves so as to accommodate new sentential attitudes. Do not ask where the new beliefs and attitudes come from... just assume that new ones keep popping up, and that some of them put strains on old beliefs and desires....We alleviate [these] by various techniques. For example, we may simply drop an old belief or desire. Or we may create a whole host of new beliefs or desires in order to encapsulate the disturbing intruder....Or we may just unstitch, and thus erase, a whole range of beliefs and desires - we may stop *having* attitudes towards sentences which use a certain word (the word "God," or "phlogiston," for example).(38: p.93)

Our beliefs and attitudes regarding sport are created and shaped by a vast range of historical, social and personal events. It has been the tendency to treat sport as if

encapsulated and separate from ordinary life, a world unto itself, so to speak, where all is familiar and predictable in the sense of its rules, regulations and conventions. Some strive to maintain a wholesome and virtuous image of sport and have resisted change to the last, as evidenced by such examples as amateurism, wearing "whites" at Wimbledon and the continued use of red cricket balls. Yet through continued exposure some changes have been accepted and we have allowed someone's seemingly outlandish vision of sport to be realised (witness the rise of Australian Rules Football night matches and one-day cricket). We soon come to recognise these changes and adapt our conception and understanding of sport to accommodate.

This thesis recognizes the role of redescription as a way of understanding sport and other things in new and unusual ways. It is based upon the notions forwarded by Rorty's pragmatist philosophy, the sort of philosophy which:

> ...works holistically and pragmatically. It says things like... "try to ignore the apparently futile traditional questions by substituting the following new and possibly interesting questions." It does not pretend to have a better candidate for doing the same old things which we did when we spoke in the old way. Rather, it suggests that we might want to stop doing those things and do something else. (37:p.9)

This kind of "shift" is made possible by redescription. As Rorty suggests, "The method is to redescribe lots and lots of things in new ways, until you have created a pattern of linguistic behaviour which will tempt the rising generation to adopt it" (37:p.9). The underlying assumption here is that there is no one "true" or "realistic" way of describing or depicting anything.

Anti-essentialistic in its approach, this thesis endeavours to outline a path by

which sport can be understood as a product of a series of contingencies and, most importantly, as a human-made entity. As such sport will be shown to be open to an infinite number of descriptions, redescriptions and depictions. To be sure, the coupling of sport and art is not novel. Sport is often likened to art in a somewhat metaphorical and colourful way, and sport is frequently the subject of art. Though the title contains both words, it will not be claimed that sport "is" art, nor that it should be. What this thesis aims to do is offer an understanding of sport as being a contingent entity. Being contingent, sport, and our descriptions of it, are subject to review and change. Additionally, this thesis places sport amongst an infinite number of practices that are created by humans and are therefore not subject to the restrictions and confines of any one description or "way of being."

It is hoped that new and exciting descriptions and interpretations of sport will be stimulated once sport is shown to be open to redescriptions in general and redescription in terms of art in particular. Once open to redescription, it is argued that sport may benefit from being described in terms of art, that is, being shown to function as art does at certain times and under certain descriptions.

Chapter Two, essentially a literature review, provides an overview of the principal philosophic discourses concerning sport, art and the aesthetic. Although these issues are discussed in largely essentialistic terms, it is useful to understand the current and historical philosophic discussions in order to more fully appreciate how the notions of this thesis both align with and depart from the literature on this issue.

In Chapter Three the prevailing view that most things in our world have a pre-determined or fixed nature or "truth" about them is challenged. The notions of "truth,"

reality" and "rightness" are examined and an outline is provided as to how each of these will be understood in this thesis, that is, as human constructions rather than as the product of biology or of nature or of God.

Chapter Four presents a more detailed look at the definitions and structures of art and concerns itself particularly with the Goodman's theory of symbol systems. An analogy is drawn here between found object art and certain sporting events. The similarities in the functioning of sport and some arts are also examined. More specifically, the idea that sport can be likened to a "text" and thus open to interpretation similar to literary texts is forwarded and discussed.

Chapter Five examines the place of the media, commentary and commentators in sport and the effect each of these has on our understanding and interpretation of sport. The idea that sporting commentaries can and should be subject to criticism in a way similar to the arts will be discussed. Finally, the importance of redescription in widening and enhancing our understanding of sport will be examined with particular attention to the role of metaphor.

Redescription can be a useful tool in our understanding and conceiving of sport, as redescription provides alternative understandings of sport. This thesis is concerned to provide a sound philosophical basis for the redescription of sport in general and in the redescription of sport in terms of art in particular. Sport described in terms of art, that is, sport described as functioning as an artwork at certain times and under certain conditions, is to be shown to be an interesting alternative to the way we currently describe and conceive of sport.

CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

For the purpose of outlining some of the principal arguments forwarded to support or deny the possibility that sport can be considered art, it seems most appropriate to begin by looking at the work of David Best (3,4). Best advances, in several books and papers, a comprehensive argument against the possibility of sport being, or being considered, art. As many of the papers addressing this issue refer to Best's work, it would be useful to examine each of his claims and those of his critics. In this way the issue of sport being art or not, as seen by sport philosophers to date, can be understood in a cohesive manner.

Before launching into the first of Best's reasons for denying that sport can be considered art, it would be advantageous to outline Best's important distinction between the aesthetic and the artistic. Best considers that one of the central differences between the aesthetic and the artistic is that the aesthetic is a concept referring to something non-functional or non-purposive. He claims that while "...anything can be considered from an aesthetic aspect, some activities and objects are more centrally of aesthetic interest than others" (3:p.101). This distinction, Best claims, is important to the issue of "sport as art" because it is the existence of what Best understands as a "purpose" in sport which immediately sets most sports apart from art.

Art, Best claims, is paradigmatic of something which is primarily of aesthetic interest. In this respect it has no "purpose" outside itself. If we were to view a painting, an object we would typically agree is an artwork, in order to assess its monetary value

we are not considering it aesthetically. This is because the monetary value of the painting can be seen as something external to the painting. Best considers that it is this "non-purposive" aspect of the aesthetic that sets art and sport apart since there are:

> ...many sports, indeed the great majority, which are like [the painting externally valued] in that there is an aim or purpose which can be identified independently of the way in which it is accomplished. That is, the manner of achievement of the primary purpose is of little or no significance as long as it comes within the rules. (3:p.101)

That is, Best sees that most sports, those which he terms "purposive" sports, have an aim, goal or purpose which can be identified apart from the sport itself. On the other hand, "aesthetic" sports are those such as gymnastics and diving and have no such identifiable "end" because the achievement of the "purpose" is unable to be identified apart from the sport. Best elaborates:

> ...whereas not any way of getting over the box or dropping into the water, could count as even a bad vault or dive, any way of sending the ball between the opponent's posts, as long as it is within the rules, does count as a goal, albeit a clumsy or lucky one. (4:p.158)

The "aesthetic" sports, therefore, do have the aesthetic as a central concern while the "purposive" sports involve, at best, an incidental interest in the aesthetic (3:p.104). Best sees the distinction as very clear:

> A purposive sport is one in which, within the rules or conventions there is an indefinite variety of ways of achieving the end which at least largely defines the game. By contrast, an aesthetic sport is one in which the purpose cannot be specified independently of the manner of achieving

> it. (3:p.105)

For Best it makes little sense to say to athletes engaged in an aesthetic sport that it does not matter how they perform the skills provided they achieve the purpose of the sport. This is, Best recognises, because that purpose "...inevitably concerns the manner of performance" (3:p.105). It would, on the other hand, make perfect sense to ask and expect a football team to score goals without regard to how they score them (3:p.105).

In discussing these two "types" of sport, Best goes further and suggests that even in the aesthetic sports there is an externally identifiable end. He gives as an example the "requirements set by each particular movement, and by the particular group of movements, in gymnastics" (3:p.106). Best believes this sets even the "aesthetic" sports apart from art. While the requirements may be seen as a framework for the athlete much like the "form" of a sonnet serves as a framework for the poet, the essential difference lies in the ability of the poet to escape the confines of the framework without detracting from the work. Best notes that:

> The poet may take liberties with the sonnet form without necessarily detracting from the quality of the sonnet, but if the gymnast deviates from the requirements of, for instance, a vault, however gracefully, then that inevitably does detract from the standard of the performance. (3:p.106)

The claim that most sports are activities of a purposive kind, in that they have an "end" identifiable apart from the means of achieving it, can be considered as Best's first argument for denying that sport can be considered art. On Best's view the "purposes" of art and sport are, in most cases, so vastly removed from one another that it seems

unusual, if not incorrect, to speak of the two as similar, let alone the same.

Joseph Kupfer (24, 25) believes that "winning," understood merely as the scoring of "goals," has been both overemphasized and trivialized in sport (25:p.460). As such he differs from Best in his attitude towards goals and winning in sport. " We seem to forget that winning in the game is a goal *imaginatively* set up and accepted expressly for the purpose of playing the game, "as if" it were important" (25:p.460). Kupfer believes that the emphasis we place on winning as "apart" from the game results from the fundamental mistake of understanding scoring and winning as the "purposes" of sport. Kupfer suggests that:

> Because of this misunderstanding, playing the game is viewed as merely the means to the distinct, dominant end of winning. But we are mistaken if we think that winning is "an identifiable aim or purpose which is of far greater importance than the way it is accomplished." (25:p.460)

Kupfer states his position very clearly in an earlier paper entitled: "Purpose and Beauty in Sport." There Kupfer discusses the nature of "purposes" in general and the suggestion that "goals", that is, "scoring" in sport is the purpose of sport. " The purpose of an activity...," Kupfer suggests, "...is the reason or basis for engaging in an activity" (24:p.84). In sport it is not scoring nor winning which bring into being the practice of sport, not even competitive sport. Therefore, Kupfer suggests, scoring or winning cannot be the "purpose" of sport. Rather than being an end identifiable apart from the activity itself (as Best sees it), scoring in sport is a purpose within sport, one which serves, at least in part, to define or differentiate sports. Kupfer notes that:

> Sporting activity is differentiated internally, by what is required to score, by the manner of play whose issue is scoring....scoring a goal must be understood in relation to the structure of the sport: scoring serves to define and articulate overcoming opposition. (24:p.84)

Kupfer also acknowledges the possible confusion of "the score" and "scoring" as one reason why someone may suggest that sport has an independently specifiable end. As Kupfer cautions:

> ...we should not confuse the independent specifiability of the score (which follows from its numerical nature), with the independent specifiability of scoring. The number which represents the scoring plays of the game is merely an abstraction from the way in which opposition is surmounted or frustrated. (24:p.85)

For Kupfer, independent specifiability does not apply to scoring, because as he understands it, scoring is the "how" and "when" of overcoming opposition, which is not specified by the "score" (24:p.85).

The principal difference between Best and Kupfer lies in their understanding of scoring as either an "internal" or an "external" end or goal of sport. Best understands scoring as an external end to sport in that achieving the end of scoring in order to win is the goal of purposive sports. Kupfer, on the other hand, understands scoring as an internal end, serving to make sense of the overcoming of opposition. Scoring, Kupfer believes, is achievable in a certain game only by adhering to the rules and conventions which define the game. "To score," or to achieve some end to a passage of play within a game, is different from "the score" which is a numerical "abstraction" of the overcoming of opposition. Thus, for Kupfer, scoring is not an external goal of sport but

a goal within sport, defined by the game, to be given importance not for itself but as part of the game.

Roberts (35), adopting an approach similar to Kupfer, also takes issue with Best's assertion that the scoring of goals is an external purpose of sport. Roberts believes that Best has based his position unwittingly on a "fundamental equivocation" in the way in which he characterizes "sport" and "art" (35:p.497). Roberts suggests that Best comes to the conclusion that sport has a different kind of "purpose" to art due to the "equivocal" way Best views art and sport in terms of the particularity of emotional responses (35:p.497).

Best, notes Roberts, discusses a "general-particular" scale within which emotional responses (both to works of art and to other things) can be placed. Best has noted that:

> Emotions can be seen as forming a spectrum with at one extreme those feelings which are relatively undifferentiated and at the other those which are highly particular. Placing on the spectrum depends on the variety of intensional objects, that is, the possible objects onto which typical behaviour may be directed, and by which each such emotion is identified. (4:p.141)

The feelings, then, at the more general end of the spectrum can be identified in many different and widely varying ways because there would be many objects onto which the emotion could be directed. Best gives as an example of this type of "general" feeling, the fear of people or of reptiles. In the centre of the spectrum the emotions can be directed towards and understood with respect to fewer objects. An example of

feelings at this point on the spectrum might be a fear of aggressive people, or of snakes. The examples show a limited number of objects upon which to direct the feeling. At the most particular end the intensional object of any feeling can be the only object associated with that feeling. Again Best notes that at the "...extreme of the spectrum [the particular end] are those highly particularized feelings each of which can be experienced in only one way" (4:p.141). Examples of such highly particularized feelings or emotions are those such as love or friendship for a particular person or a fear of one person for reasons peculiar to that individual (35:p.497).

Roberts notes that Best places works of art at the most particular end of the spectrum. The example that Best offers is that of the "sadness" of Mozart's 40th symphony which he claims can only be identified by that piece of music. Roberts notes that while Best understands the artistic as evoking responses peculiar to the artwork, he (Best) sees sport's ability to evoke responses in far more general terms (35:p.498).

Roberts goes on to show that when art is viewed in general terms it too has aims or purposes which can be identified apart from the way it is achieved. As Roberts notes:

> ...whether the aim, purpose or meaning of a work of art can be identified independently of the way it is accomplished is not a function of the nature of an artwork itself...but is a function of the way it is described, particularly or generally. (35:p.499)

Having said that Roberts proceeds to argue that the scoring of goals in a sport is not, as Best has claimed, external to the sport but is an internal purpose, that is, one within the sport (35:p.500). Roberts identifies his position on this as similar to that of

Kupfer and this is to say that, "...the common overemphasis on scoring/winning as somehow apart from the game is a result of a mistaken understanding of scoring/winning as *the purpose* of playing" (35:p.500). This position maintains that while sport has purposes within itself, it serves no "external" purpose. This, Roberts suggests, places sport in a category similar to art with respect to "purposes" (35:p.500).

Furthermore, Roberts argues that these "goals" of sport cannot be achieved in any manner apart from in the sport itself. When Best claims that there are many ways to score a goal, even within the sport (3:p.103), Roberts suggests that Best is viewing goals in a somewhat "trivial" way. That is, Best "...refuses, or at least fails to, describe goals in other than exclusively general terms" (35:p.502).

In summary, on the issue of "purposes" or "ends" in sport as a possible reason for denying that sport can be art, Roberts contends that the fundamental differences between sport and art that Best identifies in terms of means-ends identity can be shown to be simply "...the result of an equivocal application of radically different modes of description to sport and art," that is, the use of general versus particular terms. "Once the equivocation is righted," Roberts suggests, "...the differences evaporate" (35:p.505).

Best's second argument to support the view that sport is not "art" relates to what he sees as a distinctive part of any artform, that is, "...its conventions allow for the possibility of the expression of a conception of life-situations" (3:p.115). Thus, Best considers that, "...the arts are characteristically concerned with contemporary moral, social, political and emotional issues" (3:p.115). Best points out that this criteria of

"expression of life-issues" pertains to a medium being an artform rather than to a particular work of art within that medium (3:p.117). Obviously, then, not every work of art need express such a conception of a life-situation; the medium need only allow for the possibility. For example, a certain painting may be abstract and express no conception of a life-issue; nevertheless "painting" is an artform because it is possible for paintings to express a conception of a life-issue.

Sport, Best claims, including the "aesthetic" sports, cannot express a conception of a life-issue within the conventions of the sport. The "...performer does not, as part of the convention of the activity, have the possibility of expressing through his particular medium his view of life situations" (3:p.115). Best claims that, for all instances of sport, the inclusion of a comment on a life-situation, such as issues concerning contemporary moral, social and political problems, will detract from the sport, whereas "...such a possibility is an intrinsic part of the concept of art" (3:p.117). Best believes it to be difficult to imagine a gymnast expressing his or her view of "...war or love in a competitive society, or of any other such issue" (3:p.115).

Reid (30) suggests that Best has proposed a "substantially true" argument with his "life-situation" proposal although he feels it "...has to be guarded when applied to some arts..." and he suggests "pure music" as one example of where a life-issue is not able to be expressed (30:p.167). Furthermore, Reid seems reserved on the issue of aesthetic sports such as gymnastics or figure skating having no ability or allowing no possibility for such expression of life situations. Reid points out that "...gymnastic performances may not be "works of art," but they can include moments of art" (30:p.167).

In a previous paper, Reid suggests that "...the expressive possibilities of art proper are far wider than can be achieved within the rules of competition gymnastics or ice-figure-skating" (29:p.19). While Reid acknowledges that the possibilities are greater in dance and other artforms, he still sees a commonality between some "arts" (a Mozart or Chopin sonata played with mastery for instance) and the "glorious free movements of a figure-skater" (29:p.19).

Spencer Wertz (43) considers that Best is "simply mistaken" when he suggests that the sports performer cannot, within the conventions of the sport, express a view of life-issues (43:p.16). Wertz suggests that when Best puts forward that it would "...be difficult to imagine a gymnast who included in his routine movements which expressed an attitude to war or racial discrimination" (3:p.78), that he (Best) has not tried hard enough to imagine. Wertz cites one example of a former student of his who used a floor exercise routine to praise God and the "abilities of the human body" (43:p.16). Wertz believes that many routines attend to "semantic conventions" in that the movements match the music (43:p.16).

Wertz not only considers that a sport such as gymnastics (and other sports also) is capable of expression but also of representation. Wertz claims that sport abounds with examples (the Bobby Riggs / Billy Jean King "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match and Jesse Owens' medal winning performances at the 1936 "Nazi" Olympics) which he believes would probably be dismissed by Best as being "external to" or "extrinsic to" sport.

Kupfer (25) sees the development of the dramatic in competitive sports as "...a distilled, circumscribed version of reality" (25:p.465). As Kupfer explains:

> The unravelling of events is confined by the form of the game, its rules "shrinking" conflict to manageable proportions.... Because more obvious, almost a caricature of everyday life, the drama of sport indirectly suggests the greater subtleties found in the everyday. (25:p.465)

Kupfer acknowledges that the drama of sport cannot come close to that of the theatre or of real life but he suggests that sport offers things that these cannot.

> Sport can give clear and definite conclusions to dramatic confrontation in a way not possible within the ambiguities of either real or theatrically portrayed life, as if the rules and physical movement of the game supplant the complexities of plot and character. Yet precisely because of this, it can point to the basis for ambiguity and indefinite resolution in our daily dramas. (25:p.465)

Kupfer has likened the happenings in sport to those of the drama or play. The conflicts of our lives, which are never quite so readily resolvable, are made larger-than-life in the sports arena. In this small but important way sport can be likened to the arts, or at the very least, to theatre.

In summary, Best's second claim is to deny that sport allows for an expression of a conception of life situations. This capacity, he believes, is central to the notion of an artform. Both Reid and Kupfer take issue with this claim by stating that although sport is not capable of full expressions of life situations as is art, it nevertheless can include both moments of art (Reid) and a "distilled" version of the drama of life (Kupfer). Wertz challenges Best's position even further by suggesting that sport can and does express conceptions of life issues, giving several examples to support his view.

In a third claim, Best denies that sport has a representational capacity. He believes that art has a central convention which involves the idea of "fictional characters" with which we identify and that these fictional characters are the so-called "imagined objects" to which we respond rather than to the actor who plays the role (3:p.118). Sport, Best considers, has no parallel. The things that happen to the athlete actually happen to the athlete and not to some person playing the part. As such, Best says, "...it would make no sense to say of a serious injury in rugby that it occurred to the full-back and not to the man who was playing the full-back" (3:p.118).

Wertz (43) disagrees with Best by saying that representation, one of the cornerstones of art, is to be found also in sport. Wertz gives several examples of where, he argues, sport represents: gymnastic routines symbolic of eagles, instructional use of letters of the alphabet, for example, visualising parts of a routine by imagining the letter "D", or the letter "S" representing a serving motion for a tennis pupil. Examples such as the capacity of the "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match (as mentioned previously) to represent, Wertz believes Best would dismiss as being extrinsic to the conventions of sport. Wertz's response to this is to challenge Best by asking how it can be that any representations which are expressed within a game and within the conventions of that game can be called extrinsic.

Roberts (34) also argues against Best's understanding of the type and place of representation in sport. Against what Roberts sees as one of Best's weaker arguments against sport being considered art, that is , Best's identification of an "imagined object" in art and not in sport, he uses the example of a sport "fake" to demonstrate that sport can have an imagined object and that this is the same kind of representation that occurs

in art. Put simply, what the athlete does in making a "fake" is to represent an athlete making a pass or shooting a goal. As Roberts puts it, "...the quarterback faking a pass portrays a character, a quarterback passing; the soccer player faking a shot portrays a soccer player shooting and so on" (34:p.92).

Roberts (34) grounds his understanding of sport as representational in the work of Nelson Goodman (16). Roberts believes that in order for the sport fake to be viewed as a representation in the way that Goodman understands the term, it must denote the actions or objects it represents. Roberts believes Goodman opens the door for the sport fake to be considered denotative when he discusses the pantomime. Goodman notes that the "...action of the mime...is not usually among the actions it denotes. He does not climb ladders or wash windows but rather portrays, represents, denotes, ladder-climbings and window-washings by what he does" (16:p.63-4). Roberts takes Goodman's ideas and applies them to the sport fake. Roberts explains, "when faking, [the quarterback] does not throw passes or make hand-offs but rather portrays, represents, denotes, pass-throwing and hand-off making by what he does" (34:p.90).

Roberts admits that while their purposes differ, that is, the mime aims to portray while the quarterback aims to deceive, the behaviour we observe is of the same form. Roberts, in contrast to Best, believes that the relationships between the actor John Smith and the part he plays, say, Othello, between the mime and the window-washings, and between the quarterback and the pass he fakes are all of the same kind (34:p.91).

> Their verbal and /or non-verbal actions (among other things) denote the so-called imagined object (or event). And if their portrayals are successful, it is also true that as viewers our response is to that imagined object or event. John Smith

> doesn't die...; the mime does not wash windows, nor does the quarterback pass. But we respond as though they do, did or are going to, which is short for saying we respond to the imagined object they denote by and through their actions. (34:p.91)

While the presence of fakes as representing movements in sport, Roberts claims, removes the effectiveness of Best's "imagined object" argument, Roberts also acknowledges that sport fakes and feints are severely restricted in what they can represent. As such their presence is not strong enough ground upon which to base a sport-as-art argument (34:p.93).

In summary, Best's third claim is that sport has no representational capacity. In art the "imagined object" or "fictional character" is a central concept. We respond to the character and not to the actor playing the part. Best believes that in sport there is no parallel. Wertz disagrees and cites several examples of sport being representational, such as a gymnastic routine which symbolizes eagles and the instructional use of letters in teaching such sports as swimming and tennis. Roberts argues against Best's understanding of the type and place of representation in sport. Roberts shows how sport can be representational using the example of the sport "fake." In the fake the athlete can be seen to portray a character in much the same way as an actor.

This somewhat cursory exposition of prevailing thought in the area of sport and art by means of a summary of David Best's work and criticisms of that work, leaves one perhaps unsure of where the next step may lead. To be sure there are good arguments to be had from both camps, that is, those supporting and those denying that sport can be considered as art. Nevertheless, there is a certain amount of overlap. Even Best, with his adamant conviction that sport is not art, concedes that some sport may

indeed become art but that in order to do so it must sacrifice many of the properties that characterize "sport" and adopt some that characterize "art." Best writes, "...figure skating, unlike...football, can so easily become an art form" (3:p.122). The critical word here is "become." The idea that "art" and "sport," and indeed many other things, are somehow fixed in reality is often suggested. The problem is that what appears to be a clear case of matching characteristics to an ideal or to a set of criteria is not nearly as simple as it may seem.

The "criteria" of art and, for that matter, of sport are not clear cut. If this were the case, an inquiry such as this would be unwarranted. The inability of philosophers to agree on any set criteria for either art or sport, coupled with the obvious, and sometimes the obscured, inconsistencies of any effort to arrive at even a loose characterization of these, leads to a certain amount of confusion and frustration when one attempts to write in this area.

The realms of art and sport can change rapidly, as does our culture, our interests and our world-views. What was once a sacred object is now art; sculpting junkyard scrap metal and graffiti now become artforms. Perhaps, as will be argued, it is overly optimistic to try to pin down an idea of art, or of sport, which is designed to be everlasting. It might be more profitable to consider the relationship between sport and art in other, less essentialistic and metaphysical ways.

Chapter Three will examine the notions of "truth" and "reality" and challenge the idea that there is an underlying structure or essential nature to most things, including "sport" and "art."

CHAPTER THREE - TRUTH AND REALITY

There seems to be a prevailing view that there is an essential nature to most things and that we can discover or uncover these natures. This view manifests itself in the idea and pursuit of a philosophical quest for truth; a metaphysical search for what lies above or below. This base may be a product of biology or of any number of higher beings or Gods but certainly the search is for a non-human explanation. More specifically, this view manifests itself in a very dominant and dominating structure surrounding the definition and deployment of the terms "art" and "sport."

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the claim that "truth" and "rightness" in the world are functions of structures created by humans in order to understand their world. These structures are dependent upon several factors, for example, culture, politics, religion and history. These factors are dynamic, forever being moulded and remoulded by humans. This view provides an understanding of the way in which "truth" and "rightness" will be treated throughout the thesis, and it sets the basis for a discussion of sport and art in which neither category is viewed in essentialistic terms as having a fixed nature above and beyond the influence of humans.

Throughout recorded history humans have described the world in which they live in a number of different ways. Descriptions provide the framework by which we understand our environment and the complexities of our societies. "The world is flat"; "the world is round"; "the earth revolves around the sun"; "murder is wrong"; all of these have been adopted by humans in one culture or another at different times. Some

are now thought outdated or less useful for our current purposes, while others are more durable, and still others are currently being "invented."

Language and description are sometimes thought to be tools particular to the arts, literature, poetry and journalism and are thought to stand apart from the "truth" that we claim to "find" in such disciplines as physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics. Can we really claim, though, that the "truth" we claim to find in the sciences corresponds to reality, and that the arts and other "less scientific" disciplines have any less claim to truth than do the sciences?

Richard Rorty (37) advances the view that while the world itself exists independently of humans, descriptions of that world do not. Further, he claims that truth is a function of human language and is, therefore, "a" description of the world and not "the" description of the world. Too often, Rorty believes, we accept unquestioningly that "truth" is a matter of uncovering a pattern or structure which exists in the world. We tend to ignore the way we change our "truths" or our systems for dealing with the world. We assume that the structures and understandings of our predecessors were primitive and not nearly as advanced as our own. The problem is, when, if at all, we can find "the" truth?

Truth, Rorty claims, is a function of human languages; that is, it is humans and not the world that determine what is true and what is false. The imposition of a language combined with a society's particular needs allows the making of a truth to serve certain purposes. Rorty is careful to make a distinction between the world existing apart from human languages and truth existing apart from human languages:

> To say that the world is out there, that it is not our creation, is to say, with common sense, that most things in space and time are the effects of causes which do not include human mental states. To say that truth is not out there is simply to say that where there are no sentences there is no truth, that sentences are elements of human languages and that human languages are human creations. (37:p.5)

The world does not split itself up into convenient little pieces which then go about concealing themselves from human beings or which are too complex for humans to immediately understand once they are "found."

The idea that there is a "truth" about the world which corresponds to reality that can be "found" or uncovered by human beings is "...a legacy of an age in which the world was seen as the creation of a being who had a language of his own" (37:p.5). Rorty believes that if we continue to hold to the idea of the world as a creation of God then we may start treating truth as if it were capitalized and also a part of God's creation or design (37:p.5).

This understanding of the world as having an existing language or structure that translates as "truth" is facilitated when we look at the relationship between single sentences and their "correspondence" to reality, rather than whole vocabularies. Rorty recognizes that it is easy to slide from the view that the causes of us feeling justified in holding a belief are contained in the world to the view that it is the world itself being an example of truth or to the view that the world itself corresponds to beliefs, thereby making them true.

This view that the world decides between sentences and makes them true is less credible when one's attention is turned to whole vocabularies:

> When we consider examples of alternative language games- the vocabulary of ancient Athenian politics versus Jefferson's, the moral vocabulary of St. Paul versus Freud's, the jargon of Newton versus that of Aristotle, the idiom of Blake versus that of Dryden - it is difficult to think of the world as making one better than another, of the world as deciding between them... for example...the fact that Newton's vocabulary lets us predict the world more easily than Aristotle's does not mean the world speaks Newtonian. (37:pp.5-6)

The world itself is not capable of "speaking," nor is it either "right" or "wrong." It is only once we have adopted a language that the world can cause us to hold beliefs and these beliefs can then be considered in terms of "truth."

The question remains, then, how it is that we "programme" ourselves with a language or vocabulary and which of them do we choose. Rorty suggests that decisions about which languages to use are not arbitrary, nor are they the "...expression of something deep inside us" (37:p.6). In fact, the suggestion Rorty makes is that we do not "decide" to adopt or to change our vocabulary. Rather, we begin to use different words and phrases and gradually lose the need to use the old ones. As Rorty points out:

> Europe did not *decide* to accept the idiom of Romantic poetry, or of socialist politics, or of Galilean mechanics. That sort of shift was no more an act of will than it was the result of an argument. Rather, Europe gradually lost the habit of using certain words and gradually acquired the habit of using others. (37:p.6)

In believing that there is some essence or intrinsic nature to either the world or to the self there is the associated temptation to single out one language as "fitting the world" or as "expressing the real nature of the self." The result is the continued philosophic quest to uncover this vocabulary. But, Rorty claims:

> ...if we could ever become reconciled to the idea that most of reality is indifferent to our descriptions of it and that the human self is created by the use of a vocabulary rather than being adequately or inadequately expressed in a vocabulary, then we should at least have assimilated what was true in the Romantic idea that truth is made rather than found. (37:p.7)

That is, because truth is dependent upon language and language is a human construction then it follows that truth, also, is a human construction.

Nelson Goodman (17) also discusses the contingency of truth. Goodman considers, like Rorty, that truth is something more "constructed" than "discovered." The world, Goodman suggests, can be described under any number of different "frames of reference" but, he asks, "...if I insist that you tell me how it is apart from all frames, what can you say? We are confined to ways of describing whatever is described" (17:p.3).

According to Goodman, correspondence to the world is not a factor when considering truth. This is because truths differ for different "worlds" or frames of reference. Each frame of reference produces a description different to the others. None of these correspond to "the" world. Rather, they all correspond to different world versions. This raises the question of which and whether a version is to be taken as true. Truth may be relevant in the case of descriptions because a "version" is verbal and consists of statements and statements can be "true" or "false" (17:p.18).

The truth of a version, however, is not to be tested by agreement with the world because both the world versions and the descriptions under them vary widely. Goodman's suggestion is that, loosely speaking, "...a version is to be taken to be true

when it offends no unyielding beliefs and none of its own precepts" (17:p.17). In explanation, Goodman forwards that:

> Among beliefs unyielding at a given time may be long-lived reflections of the laws of logic, short-lived reflections of recent observations, and other convictions and prejudices ingrained with varying degrees of firmness. Among precepts, for example, may be choices among alternative frames of reference, weightings and derivational bases. (17:p.17)

But the lines between beliefs and precepts are not sharp, nor are they stable. They not only overlap and are often confused but they alter over time and from pressures arising from a second or third consideration. Given this, the search for an underlying, "deep" truth seems a futile one. Take, for example, this observation of Goodman's:

> The scientist who supposes that he is single-mindedly dedicated to the search for truth deceives himself. He is unconcerned with the trivial truths he could grind out endlessly; and he looks to the multifaceted and irregular results of observations for little more than suggestions of overall structures and significant generalizations. He seeks system, simplicity, scope; and when satisfied on these scores he tailors the truth to fit. (17:p.18)

Truth, says Goodman, is better understood as a servant, a docile and obedient servant, rather than as a "solemn and severe master" (17:p.18).

It is clear that for Goodman that the concept of "real" truth (truth as correspondence to the world) is problematic. In a later work Goodman and Elgin (21) state that any search for truth may inevitably prove fruitless. In accordance with Goodman's earlier work, and closely akin to that of Rorty, Goodman and Elgin argue

that to strive to achieve justified and certain truth by checking hypotheses, descriptions, depictions and perceptions against what they term an inaccessible "external world" is a futile pursuit (21:p.153). As Goodman and Elgin suggest:

> The faults of *truth* are many and grave. Construed as correspondence between discourse and the readymade world beyond discourse, it runs into double trouble: there is no such world independent of description; and correspondence between description and the undescribed is incomprehensible. (21:p.154)

For them, truth is an "excessively *narrow* notion" because it is limited to the verbal, and further, only to verbal statements. Goodman and Elgin look to the concept of "rightness" which in their view has a greater "reach" than truth. Unlike "truth" which Goodman and Elgin see to be limited to verbal statements, "right" and "wrong" apply to symbols of all kinds, both verbal and non-verbal. "Rightness...," claim Goodman and Elgin, "...pertains to all the ways that symbols function" (21:p.156). For example, categories, pictures, diagrams, designs and musical passages may all be seen to be either right or wrong.

Although they claim that in ordinary use "right" and "wrong" do range widely, Goodman and Elgin are particularly concerned with the rightness of symbolic functioning. As they explain:

> A symbol may be right or wrong in what it says, denotes, exemplifies, expresses or refers to...; rightness, unlike truth, is multidimensional. And sometimes, as in the case of right mistakes, what is wrong in one way might be right in another. (21:p.156)

Rightness, say Goodman and Elgin, is more complicated than truth. It depends on many more contingencies, varying with circumstances that do not affect truth. In an example of this, Goodman and Elgin discuss the statement "Snow is white," which, although snow is white, may not be right. "It is wrong, because irrelevant, as an answer to the question how dense granite is, while the statement "Granite weighs one pound per cubic foot" is wrong because false" (21:p.156). What is being noted here is that whether any statement, gesture, picture or action is right or wrong depends on the circumstances and the context of its having been said or done.

How is it that something is right? Goodman and Elgin suggest that there is no one set of rules or criteria to which we can look to determine rightness. In order to determine what counts as rightness within a field or structure, one needs to look at that field, its past, present and projected future. Often the ways of judging are up to the "practitioners" and "theoreticians" who are working in the field, but more generally rightness is a matter of fitting and working. Goodman and Elgin explain that "...the fitting here is not a fitting *onto* - not a correspondence or matching, or mirroring of independent Reality - but a fitting *into* a context or discourse or standing complex..." (21:p.158).

Fitting is tested by working. If the new piece or concept or work is advanced into the standing set at a time when circumstances will allow it to be accepted, then it will fit. This occurs not only because of its ability to fit theoretically, but also by the receptiveness of those working in the field. In other words, that a new piece or theory or work is capable of fitting and working is not a guarantee that the field or society is willing to allow it to fit or work. Firstly, an existing structure or operation has a certain

degree of inertia, a traditional hold on the present which in some way preserves the past. Secondly, the process of fitting and working is by no means passive. It is an active, two-way process of fitting together which inevitably involves adjustment of the existing structure or of the new "part," or of both. As Goodman and Elgin note:

> ...although we said that working tests fitting, the two are more intimately related than that; for the working is also a kind of fitting - fitting into a going operation or process or endeavour. Moreover, even what constitutes fitting and working may undergo change, may itself have to be adjusted in order to fit and work. (21:p.159)

Goodman and Elgin proceed to advance a conception of philosophy that aims for the advancement of understanding rather than of knowledge or truth. That is, rather than looking at cognitive endeavour as the pursuit of knowledge, that by way of observation, derivation and experimentation seeks accurate descriptions of "real" and pre-existing world structures, they believe that we should consider cognitive endeavour as the advancement of understanding. As Goodman and Elgin explain:

> ...taken as the advancement of *understanding* the cognitive endeavour starts to integrate and organize, weed out and supplement, not in order to arrive at the truth about something already made but in order to make something right - to construct something that works cognitively, that fits together and handles new cases, that may implement further inquiry and invention....The test is whether they can be made to fit and work. And what works for a time is not expected to work forever or everywhere....Overall, advancement of the understanding is more like carpentry than computation. (21:p.163)

Under this perspective, each of the arts, the sciences, philosophy and many

other disciplines and structures, as well as our perceptions, can be better understood through significant comparison with the others. This understanding of philosophy is relevant to the understanding of practices such as sport and art. The suggestion is that no discipline or structure is fixed and beyond our control or understanding. Furthermore, the act of comparison between two fields may help us to understand one, or the other, or both better than we did before. Whether the comparison is held as valid or "right" or not depends not upon some correspondence to reality but upon the workability of the relationship and upon the climate in which the comparison is forwarded.

The contingency of truth position, however, is not without its critics. According to Rorty (38), the most persistent of accusations against the pragmatist's view is the charge of relativism. A definition of "relativism," it seems, is quite difficult to agree upon. Rorty suggests that there are three different views which are commonly termed "relativism." One view suggests that every belief is as good as the next, another that the term "true" is an equivocal one which has as many meanings as there are ways of justification. A third view, and the one which pragmatists such as Rorty hold, purports that, "...there is nothing to be said about either truth or rationality apart from descriptions of the familiar procedures of justification which a given society - ours - uses in one or another area of inquiry" (38:p.23). As mentioned, Rorty and other pragmatists hold the third, ethnocentrically based view. They divorce themselves from the first view, which is self-refuting and from the second, which Rorty dismisses as somewhat eccentric.

Rorty is unsure as to why the third view should even be called relativistic. He

argues that he and other pragmatists do not hold a positive theory which says that something is relative to something else. Pragmatists, like Rorty, make a "...purely *negative* point that we should drop the traditional distinction between knowledge and opinion, construed as a distinction between truth as correspondence to reality and truth as a commendatory term for well-adjusted beliefs" (38:pp.23-4). The pragmatist, says Rorty, does not have a theory of truth, much less a relativistic one. As a partisan of solidarity [1] the pragmatist's understanding of the worth of cooperative human inquiry "...has only an ethical base, not an epistemological or metaphysical one" (38:p.24). As the pragmatist does not have any epistemology, it follows that he does not have a relativistic one.

However, there are other problems that arise when a theory denies the existence of a metaphysical base. We have, for a long time, based our beliefs on a foundation, for example, God or Nature. While the foundation may change, the consistent element is that there is a foundation. Goodman and Rorty not only dismiss the need for, but question the very existence of, such a foundation. Of course the idea that we may not have a firm base, and at the very least cannot know what that base is, is uncomfortable, not least to the philosophers, scientists, theologists and researchers in many fields whose lifetime works are built upon the idea of "something" to discover, explain and understand, which is not of human making. It is important, however, that the kind of ideas which this thesis presents do not offend those who have come before, nor does it

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[1] Rorty defines solidarity as the recognition that a community may be given sense and place by not asking about the relation between the practices of the community and something outside that community. This is in contrast to the community which seeks objectivity where the society attaches itself to something which can be described without reference to any human beings. See 38:p.21.

make their works appear a futile pursuit, but just to say that metaphysical notions are no longer as useful as they once were.

Although the search for the underlying nature of art, or of sport, is not something which is not proving fruitful, the suggestion is not to abandon the search completely, but to stop searching for "one" answer. The search, then, becomes a search for what works in certain situations, a changeable, malleable and decidedly useful "truth" rather than a fixed and relatively useless one. Now this may seem a rather frightening development. There is a certain security in believing in a higher power, in a greater force, in a God or in underlying "things-in-themselves." Perhaps this is to what we have become accustomed, or perhaps it is that we are afraid to take upon ourselves the responsibility for our communities and practices. The feeling of insecurity and vulnerability which results from striking a blow at the very basis of our beliefs may be eased somewhat by the anticipation that follows, anticipation in the form of new possibilities, new directions and in the power to take responsibility for the community by the community.

As this thesis adopts a view of philosophy which fits with the notions of truth as outlined above, the task, then, for the remainder of the thesis is not to define art and sport nor to show how the two are similar, if not the same. The task is to accept that neither sport nor art is fixed in a reality beyond our control or understanding. Both sport and art are products of human interest, structuring and language. The aim is to point out that there may be many instances of sport worthy of our understanding in both an artistic and sportive context. That is, there may be some value in sport being considered and described in a way similar to art.

CHAPTER FOUR - SPORT AND ART

To this point two important basic issues have been addressed. Firstly, Chapter Two provided an outline of the philosophical issue of sport, art and the aesthetic as discussed by philosophers of sport, both current and historic. This “set the scene,” so to speak, and allowed, to a certain extent, an understanding of the connection between sport and aesthetics. Secondly, in Chapter Three, the notions of truth, reality and the contingency of language were addressed. It was argued that any notion of truth or reality that does not encompass the contingent nature of language (and of other things such as art and sport) is a deficient one.

The issues and arguments that are to be forwarded in this, and the next, chapter rely heavily upon the philosophical notions outlined thus far. The purposes of this chapter are: to outline Goodman’s theory of symbol systems, including the symbol systems of art; to draw an analogy between the found object art piece and certain sporting events; to consider how this analogy may help us to understand the conventions and possibilities surrounding both the art gallery and the sports arena; and to discuss the possibility that sport is like a “text” which can and should be interpreted and discussed.

Nelson Goodman (17) offers a view of art which diverges from prevailing art theory. Goodman describes art by way of its symbolic functioning in an attempt to

overcome some of the problems that art theorists face in their attempts to provide essentialistic definitions of art. Goodman suggests that a great part of the problem may be that art theorists are asking the wrong question (17:p.57). Those who look for an answer to the question "What is art?" expecting to uncover a set of characteristics or even components of art seem destined to be thwarted at every turn.

Essentialistic definitions of art abound in the world of art theory (2,7,12). They give us, among others, definitions centring around the aesthetic experience (2), the artworld as an institution and the role of the artist (12) and art as the expression of emotion (7). Such definitions may begin with the artist, the critics, the genres of art, the aesthetic appeal or with the examples of art which each philosopher deems as relevant and useful for their definition.

Some theorists, such as Collingwood (7), use as examples pieces of classical art exclusively and would most probably deny that works such as Duchamp's "Fountain" (a urinal displayed as an artwork) are artworks at all. Others such as Danto (10) look to the artworld itself and to the status of art in an attempt to uncover its nature and to stretch and shape that theory to fit all instances of "art." The problem with essentialistic arguments in general is where exactly to ground one's theory and what to leave out so that it all "fits." Every theory will have its critics. One view may be criticized for not acknowledging the artist while another may be frowned upon for not encompassing enough instances of the "accepted" art of today. That is, some may be judged too narrow, others as too broad, to adequately cover all that is, or might be, art.

It is the view of the present work that the category of art, like many categories, is, to a certain extent, arbitrary. To seek something concrete in a realm where the

demarcation lines are often unclear may lead to a certain amount of frustration, if not confusion. This, Goodman believes, is the result of asking the question "What is art?" He suggests that by changing the question and thereby the approach to the issue as a whole, a more satisfactory understanding may be achieved. Accordingly, Goodman poses the alternate question "When is art?" Consistent with his view that the important issue is not "what art is" but rather "what art does," he suggests that an object can become art while it functions as a symbol in certain ways (17:p.67).

Under Goodman's theory concerning symbolic functioning, an object may symbolize in one or any combination of three different ways. These are outlined briefly below.

Representation

Goodman's understanding of representation is that for something to represent something else it must stand for it or be a symbol for it. Goodman notes that an object need not appreciably resemble the object or event it represents. Although resemblance is often forwarded as necessary for representation, Goodman is quick to point out some of the very obvious faults of that thesis. As Goodman explains:

> An object resembles itself to the maximum degree but rarely represents itself; resemblance, unlike representation, is reflexive. Again unlike representation, resemblance is symmetric: B is as much like A as A is like B, but while a painting may represent the Duke of Wellington, the Duke doesn't represent the painting. (20:p.67)

He concludes that resemblance between two objects in any degree does not ensure, or even suggest, that one is a representation of the other. No degree of resemblance is

either necessary or sufficient since anything may represent anything else. In fact, we often employ everyday objects to represent other objects when the latter are scarce or inaccessible. A common example of this would be when, say, over coffee, someone launches into a detailed account of a recent road accident. Often, given the complexity of such tales, the speaker may employ various objects, salt and pepper shakers, napkin, coffee mugs and sugar bowls to "play" the roles of the various elements of the story. One can imagine the scene as the orator grabs the sugar bowl and proclaims it to be the roundabout in question. The coffee mug stands in for the semi-trailer and the salt shaker, the ill-fated Toyota.[2]

Although in this case a sense of correct size relation has been maintained between the car and the semi-trailer (as it often is), it need not have been. The account would not have been any less effective had the coffee mug been used to represent the Toyota and the salt shaker, the semi-trailer. Anything may be used to represent anything else. The key concept here is denotation. A picture that represents an object, denotes it. Denotation, according to Goodman, is the cornerstone of representation (20:p.68).

Exemplification

"Exemplification is possession plus reference. To have without symbolization is merely to possess, while to symbolize without having is to refer in some other way than by exemplification" (16:p.53). To exemplify, according to Goodman, a thing must operate as a sample of one or more of its properties. That which exemplifies, however, can only stand as a sample of one or more of the properties it actually possesses. This

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[2] A similar example can be found in (15) Elgin, "Sign, Symbol, and System."

page, for example, may be called upon to exemplify flatness, smoothness, whiteness or rectangularity or it might be offered up in answer to the question "What's typed?". Exemplification displays certain properties of an object but only when called upon to do so. That is, this page's properties may lay dormant until "used" as a sample. It is the user that creates the context which allows the object to "switch" from being simply denoted by labels to exemplifying certain of those properties.

An object may be a sample of, that is, exemplify, some of its properties and not others depending on circumstance and need. An object rarely, if ever, exemplifies all of its properties at once. Goodman gives the example of the tailor's swatch, which, while standing as a sample of colour, weave, texture and pattern, does not exemplify other of its properties such as shape or size. As Goodman notes:

> ...a sample is a sample of - or *exemplifies* - only some of its properties, and that the properties to which it bears this relationship of exemplification vary with circumstances and can only be distinguished as those properties that it serves, under given circumstances, as a sample of. (17:p.64-5)

Goodman also recognizes that:

> ...the sampled properties vary widely with context and circumstances. Although the swatch is normally a sample of its texture, etc. but not of its shape or size, if I show it to you in answer to the question "What is an upholsterer's sample?" it then functions not as a sample of the material but as a sample of an upholsterer's sample, so that its size and shape are now among the properties it is a sample of. (17:p.64)

Expression

While exemplification is literal, expression is metaphorical. An object which

refers to properties it metaphorically possesses is said to express those properties rather than to exemplify them. Expression, then, is metaphorical exemplification. Of "sadness" Goodman writes, "What expresses sadness is metaphorically sad. And what is metaphorically sad is actually but not literally sad, i.e. comes under a transferred application of some label coextensive with "sad" (16:p.85). Like exemplification, the properties a painting, or other artwork, can express must be possessed by that painting or artwork, but unlike exemplification the possession of that property is acquired. As Goodman writes, "[the acquired properties] are not the homely features by which the objects and events that serve as symbols are classified literally, but are metaphorical imports. Pictures express sounds or feelings rather than colors" (16:p.86). A painting of a weeping child expresses sadness but cannot exemplify sadness since a painting is not the type of thing which can be literally sad.

Representation, exemplification and expression are part of the greater theory of symbol systems which Goodman uses in his understanding of the theory of art. Not every incident of symbolic functioning is an incident of art. Goodman does explain the types of symbolic functioning that suggests that something is operating as a work of art but this will be addressed later in the chapter.

Goodman's account allows for several of the more recent types of art such as found object, environmental, conceptual and junk "art" being so-called. Providing we don't confuse the question "What is art?" with "What is good art?," an approach to defining art in terms of its symbolic functioning can readily encompass those trends. Among others, Goodman examines the examples of the stone plucked from the driveway and exhibited in an art museum and the digging and filling of a hole in Central

Park (17:p.66). But can all stones in the driveway or all hole-diggings be counted as occurrences of art?

Goodman suggests that neither the stone nor the hole-digging and filling are artworks simply because they are decreed as such by the "artist," nor, in the case of the stone, because it is exhibited in an art museum or gallery. According to Goodman, whether something is or is not an artwork is dependent upon its symbolic functioning and, Goodman suggests, "an object or event may function as an artwork at certain times and under certain circumstances and not at others" (17:p.67). As Goodman notes:

> The stone is normally no work of art while in the driveway, but it may be so when on display in an art museum. In the driveway, it usually performs no symbolic function. In the art museum, it exemplifies certain of its properties- e.g. properties of shape, color, texture.... On the other hand, a Rembrandt painting may cease to function as a work of art when used to replace a broken window or as a blanket. (17:p.67)

The stone, therefore, is not art for what it is, but rather for what it does.

However, not every object or event which symbolizes can be thereby called a work of art. A swatch of material which serves as a sample, exemplifying certain of its properties, does not thereby become an artwork. Similarly, the stone, placed in a museum of geology, although it does function symbolically as a sample of a given period or as a specimen of a certain rock type or composition, is not thereby functioning as a work of art. As Goodman explains, "Things function as works of art only when their symbolic functioning has certain characteristics" (17:p.67). Only objects and events which function symbolically in certain ways can be considered to be

functioning as works of art. Addressing this special kind of symbolic functioning, Goodman "tentatively" ventures five symptoms of the aesthetic as characteristic of this type of symbolic functioning. These are: 1) syntactic density; 2) semantic density; 3) relative repleteness; 4) exemplification and; 5) multiple and complex reference.

To understand the symptoms it is first necessary to understand the basic constitution of symbol schemes. Goodman (16) suggests that any symbol scheme consists of characters which are capable of being combined to form other characters. Goodman describes characters as "certain classes of utterances or inscriptions or marks" and clarifies this by stating that he uses " 'inscription' to include utterances, and 'mark' to include inscriptions; an inscription is any mark - visual, auditory etc. - that belongs to a character" (16:p.131). More generally, it is also important to understand the relationships between and among the terms "scheme," "realm" and "system." Goodman and Elgin explain:

> In describing an object, we apply a label to it. Typically that label belongs to a family of alternatives that collectively sort the objects in a domain. Such a family of alternatives may be called a *scheme*, and the objects it sorts its *realm*. Thus "B-flat" belongs to a scheme that orders the realm of musical tones; and "elephant" to one that orders the realm of animals. A *system* is a scheme applied to a realm. (21:p.7)

With this in mind, a discussion of the symptoms can begin.

An important concept in understanding the symptoms, particularly the first two, is the idea of "density." The items within a dense scheme are so ordered that between every two characters there is another. Such schemes provide for an infinite number of characters and the identification of any single mark as an incident of one character or

another is impossible. This is in contrast with a scheme that is disjoint. In a disjoint scheme differentiation between characters is possible. Goodman writes:

> So long as the differentiation between characters is finite, no matter how minute, the determination of membership of mark in character will depend upon the acuteness of our perceptions and the sensitivity of the instruments we can devise. But if the differentiation is not finite, if there are two characters such that for some mark no even theoretically workable test could determine that the mark does not belong to both characters, then keeping the characters separate is not just practically but theoretically impossible. (16:p.135)

Goodman gives the example of a scheme of straight line marks where marks differing in length by the smallest of margins are said to belong to different characters. No matter how carefully these marks are measured, there will always be two characters which correspond to different rational numbers and measurement will fail to determine that the mark does not belong to them (16:p.140).

Goodman's first two symptoms encompass the notion of density. Syntactic density pertains to the density of the symbols within a scheme while semantic density is concerned with the meanings symbolized by schemes. The English language is semantically, but not syntactically, dense since there are many feelings and notions that defy adequate expression given the symbols available, that is, words and phrases. Whether to use one word over another to describe a given feeling or mood could be a contentious issue. Consider the complexity and frustration that could occur when the possible alternatives are adjectives such as "sad," "despaired," "mournful," "dejected," "depressed," "sorrowful," "melancholic," "gloomy," "despondent," and others, each of which may or may not capture the mood or moment. While the actual differences

between these words may at times seem clear, which of them best describes the feeling or mood may not.

The analog clock and the mercury thermometer both employ syntactically dense schemes and recognize the continuous nature of, and provide symbols for, all time and temperature respectively. The analog clock recognizes all time while the digital clock, no matter to which fraction of a second it goes, does not. The mercury thermometer recognizes every change in temperature, unlike the digital version which recognizes no temperatures between, say, 37.8 and 37.9 degrees.

The third of Goodman's symptoms of the aesthetic is that of relative repleteness which allows distinction between pictures and diagrams. In the case of diagrams, the constitutive aspects are, "...expressly and narrowly restricted. The only relevant features of the diagram are the ordinate and the abscissa of each of the points the centre of the line passes through" (16:p.229). Other aspects, such as the colour and thickness of the line and the absolute size of the diagram do not matter. Yet in the case of the representational picture many more aspects are important. In the picture any change in colour, line thickness or picture size would be relevant to the meaning of the picture. This would not be the case with the diagram as the same information can be derived from it. That is, it can perform its function irrespective of changes to such small and "incidental" factors. Relative repleteness is, then, that factor which counts more rather than fewer, of the aspects of the picture as important.

The fourth of Goodman's symptoms of the aesthetic is exemplification, where a symbol symbolizes by acting as a sample of properties it possesses both literally and metaphorically (17:p.68). Goodman includes exemplification as a symptom because he

believes it is most often the distinguishing feature between literary and non-literary texts. Goodman explains:

> In a literary work what usually counts is not only a story told but also how it is told. Much the same is true of the difference among representational pictures between serviceable illustrations and works of art. Rhyme, rhythm and other patterns exemplified, and feelings and other properties expressed, count for much in most works of art, but for little in scientific or practical discourse, whether verbal or pictorial. (18:p.277)

The fifth and final symptom, multiple and complex reference, is essentially a compilation of the other four. A symbol performs several functions at once, some directly and some indirectly, mediated through other symbols (16:p.68). While scientific discourse and other practical mediations aim at clarity, directness and unambiguous references, works of art commonly employ multiple and complex reference of all sorts "...from ambiguity of denotation to reference through one or more straight or tortuous chains transversing several levels" (18:p.278).

These five symptoms are, Goodman believes, merely clues, and the presence of them either singularly or in combination does not necessarily ensure that the object is functioning as an artwork. Similarly, the absence of these symptoms is not enough to reject the object as not functioning as an artwork. Thus, these symptoms are neither disjunctively necessary nor conjunctively sufficient for an object to be deemed as functioning as an artwork. What these symptoms do, though, is focus attention upon the symbol itself rather than to what it refers. As Goodman notes:

> All five [symptoms] are features that tend to reduce

> transparency, that tend to require concentration upon the symbol to determine what it is and what it refers to. Where exemplification occurs, we have to inhibit our habit of passing at once from the symbol to what is denoted. Repleteness requires attention to comparatively many features of the symbol. Dense systems, where every difference in a feature makes a difference, call for an endless search to find what symbol we have and what it symbolizes. (18:p.278)

Thus, in art we should not simply look through the symbol but should also attend closely to the object or event, its properties, rather than only to the thing or things it denotes.

Having outlined Goodman's theory of art, albeit briefly, the focus now shifts to how it is that sport can function, or can be made to function, as art at certain times. In order to show how this can occur it will be beneficial to examine the phenomenon of "found object" art.

"Found object" art, such as the stone plucked from the driveway of Goodman's example, was not a popular addition to the artworld. To some it seemed to be a case of "exalting" an object by raising it to the status of art. Often scorned for ridiculing the artworld, these "exhibited" brillo-boxes, urinals, pieces of driftwood and stones seemed to be chosen above all other brillo-boxes, urinals, pieces of driftwood and stones to be put on display. Once on display they were able to function symbolically in a way which Goodman believes allows them to function as art.

Being an artwork, particularly in the found object sense, may depend largely upon the conventions of the artworld and, more specifically, of the art gallery. Arthur Danto, discussing Andy Warhol's "Brillo Box," an ordinary brillo-box displayed as an

artwork, writes of both the effect of found object on the artworld and the conventions surrounding the treatment and understanding of what it is to be an artwork. As Danto writes:

> For a dizzy moment we suppose the artworld must be debased by allowing the claim [that "Brillo Box" be an artwork]; that so base and *lumpen* an object should be enhanced by admission to the artworld seems out of the question. But then we recognize that we have confused the artwork - "Brillo Box" - with its vulgar counterpart in commercial reality. The work vindicates its claim to be art by propounding a brash metaphor: the brillo-box-as-work-of-art. And in the end this transfiguration of a commonplace object transforms nothing in the artworld. It only brings to consciousness the structures of art which, to be sure, required a certain historical development before that metaphor was possible. (10:p.208)

In other words, Danto believes that the artworld had to be established long enough and the conventions and structures well-known and accepted before found art such as "Brillo Box" was possible.

Although merely displaying an object in an art museum or gallery is rarely a justification for its being considered an artwork, it is obvious that there are certain conventions operating when we display or exhibit objects as art. One of these conventions is the actual establishments of art museums and galleries, others include framing [paintings and other things], putting on pedestals [sculptures] and, often, the simple act of giving something a title. Recently there has been a shift towards the "deconstruction" of the conventions of art. It is due to those very conventions and, perhaps more importantly, our ability to recognize them as such which allows objects like the stone and the urinal [Duchamp's "Fountain"] to work, that is, to be seen as

able to perform tasks similar to other artworks.

It is neither Goodman's nor this thesis' intention to give a metaphysical definition of art but rather to understand what art does and how it does it. That, according to Goodman, is far more important. While it is noted that certain genres of art, including painting and sculpture, and excluding found art and environmental art, may be understood to "be" artworks, rather than only "function" as such. The important issue for consideration, though, is not what is or is not art, but rather, what is it that art does and can sport, and other things, do it too. Goodman writes:

> The Rembrandt painting remains a work of art, as it remains a painting, while functioning only as a blanket; and the stone from the driveway may not strictly become art by functioning as art.... To say what art does is not to say what art is; but...the former is the matter of primary and peculiar concern. (17:pp.69-70)

The aim now is to show how sport can be understood as able to function as art. Clearly, given the preceding discussion, the answer will be in terms of symbolic functioning and how it is that sport may be placed under circumstances that encourage viewing it as art. That is, sport will be considered in a similar way to that of the stone plucked from the driveway and exhibited in an art gallery.

The stone, whilst in the driveway, is performing no symbolic function. Certainly it has many properties which are potentially of symbolic value. In the driveway the stone is valued for certain properties and not others. For example, its hardness and its roundness as hardness and roundness are desirable for driveway stones, that is, valued along with the other driveway stones, for their ability to keep the driveway free of

water and mud. These are very practical properties and the stone is considered in terms of these practical properties. When taken from the driveway and exhibited in the gallery the stone takes on a new function. In a gallery we feel compelled to look at this "gallerized" stone in ways different to the ways we look when it is in the driveway. Properties such as texture, colour, shape and size become important and the stone is no longer considered only for its utilitarian properties.

Once in the gallery, the stone "exemplifies" some of its properties and functions in a manner radically different to the function it performed in the driveway. In the driveway, attention was given to those properties which made the stone useful in its role as part of the driveway. In the gallery, those properties which were irrelevant in the driveway, that is, those which focus attention on the object, the stone, rather than on its function, become important. The stone in the gallery symbolizes by exemplifying some of its properties, whereas the stone in the driveway symbolizes nothing.

The role of the gallery and the conventions associated with the display of artworks allows the stone entry into this "artistic" realm. It is important to note, however, that the gallery alone may not be enough. The stone may be displayed in the gallery but this does not necessarily ensure that the stone will be viewed in terms of art. For some people the stone may continue to be seen in its driveway mode. Such people may be unfamiliar with the concept of an art gallery or perhaps they are simply unwilling to look at such mundane or "base" an object as a stone in any way other than the utilitarian. For these people something more than just "display in a gallery" may be needed to encourage them to view in other ways.

The stone in the driveway and the stone in the gallery can be considered as

different "things" by virtue of what they do. In the driveway the stone is functioning as part of a collection of stones in order to protect the driveway from water build-up and mud; in the gallery the stone functions symbolically by exemplifying some of its properties and it can be seen to be operating as a work of art.

An analogy can be drawn between the stone, as plucked from the driveway and exhibited as an artwork, and sport, as shifted from the back-yards and "sandlots" to the limelight of the arena and the exposure of television.[3] Sport has come to be "displayed" in a similar fashion to the stone in the gallery, although the way we view sport in the arena is different from the way we are accustomed to viewing in the gallery. Despite this difference, the emergence of the arena as a medium for viewing sport has encouraged a change of emphasis in sport. The very idea of an arena is to encourage viewing, albeit of a particular kind. For example, the arena (and television) seems to accentuate the "spectacle" aspect of sport. In the back-yard or sandlot, sport does not function symbolically. Although sport in the sandlot may have some of its characteristics "valued" by players, passers-by and by the few, if any, spectators, it serves no utilitarian purpose. On the other hand, sport in the sandlot does not inspire the depth of consideration possible (although not realized) by sport in the arena.

Sport, as it exists in the arena and even in the sandlot, is often seen and valued in terms of the perceived "ends" of scoring and winning. Most "value" judgements of sport are based on the efficiency of the movements or skills in achieving those ends. But to say this is not to say that to score or to win is sport's function in the same way as water drainage in the driveway is the stone's function. Sport is a contrived activity; it

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[3] It was Spencer Wertz (42) who originally forwarded the idea that sport may be considered art in terms of it being likened to "Found Object" art ("Objet Trouve").

has no "purpose" such as scoring or winning since these are parts, and merely parts, of what sport is and does. Yet the analogy with the "gallerized" stone remains valid given that a great number of people consider sport's purpose to be "winning." This is particularly true of professional sport. Of sandlot, or non-professional, sport we could say that to achieve fitness or to have fun may be the "functions" of sport but professional athletes are already fit and it is unlikely that they compete simply for fun.

More often than not, our way of understanding sport in the arena, particularly its emphasis on winning, has filtered down to the sandlots. Youngsters and amateurs take their lead from what is offered up to them in the arena or via television. The model of organized, high performance sport has become "the" way of looking at sport. While this may have its merits, there is surely much more to be gained from sport than this (the arena) or even these (the arena and the sandlot) ways of looking.

Sport in the arena is also valued for the spectacle it creates. The selling of sport to advertisers, to corporations and to the media depends largely on the spectacle that sport is and on how that spectacle is marketed. The large sums of money which circulate in and around sport have been made possible by the move from sandlot to sports stadium. The idea of sport as a spectacle could be considered as one of the conventions of the arena. One has come to expect to see the thrills and spills, the aggression, the skill, the tactics and the suspense that good sporting events offer; one expects to be entertained. Both the gallery and the arena operate under a set of conventions. Both display and draw attention to the "things" within them be they Rembrandts or stones or football matches.

While it may be true that several million people may view a sporting event in an

arena (facilitated by the media), the arena does not yet carry with it the broadness of viewing expectation that the gallery does. While sport in the arena may allow and encourage more people to view sport, this viewing may fail to invite, or may even discourage, other perspectives. What is being advanced here is that while sport may be more "noticed" in the arena, it may not be viewed any more diversely than when in the sandlot. Just like those who continue to see the "driveway" stone when it is in the gallery, there is a tendency to perpetuate one type of viewing of sport. Perhaps, though, if we are seeing only one or two aspects of sport we may be missing a great deal of what sport has to offer.

As has already been alluded to, it is the availability of the elite level, spectacular sport via the arena and the media which will potentially allow many descriptions of sport. The particular description in which this thesis is interested is sport described as being able to perform the same function as art. Goodman's symptoms of the aesthetic, as outlined above, act as clues in the identification of an object or event as operating as a work of art. We should remain aware that the symptoms are neither disjunctively necessary nor conjunctively sufficient in the identification of something as an artwork. The case, however, for sport being seen as able to do the things that art does would be considerably weaker were it not for sport's ability to be able to operate as a symbol in at least some of these ways. If sport could be seen to symbolize in the same way as an artwork, it would prove a stronger, though not conclusive, indication that sport is capable of functioning in the same way as an artwork. It would, therefore, also be capable of being discussed and described in terms usually reserved for "proper" artworks. Beginning with exemplification (literal and metaphorical), following with

relative repleteness and finally considering density, both syntactic and semantic, it will be shown that sport is indeed the sort of thing capable of symbolizing in the same ways as art, due in part to these characteristics, these symptoms of the aesthetic, which sport will be shown to possess.

Using the work of Nelson Goodman and applying it to sport, Roberts (33) asks whether sport is capable of expressing (and exemplifying) before delving into what it might be that sport expresses. The former, Roberts believes, is of far greater concern since what sport expresses may change over time and between cultures, while how sport expresses remains the same. Remembering that for Goodman exemplification is loosely defined as "possession plus reference," Roberts looks to sport to see if it, or any part of it, is capable of this. To show that sport is capable of exemplifying, Roberts first argues that sport, like most everything else, is denoted by many predicates. Whether or not sport can exemplify is dependent upon whether or not sport can refer to the labels that denote it. As Roberts writes:

> ...all that seems necessary is that it be the sort of thing capable of being denoted by certain predicates, that is, capable of possessing properties. If an item possesses properties then it is logically possible that it could exemplify those properties. Given the right circumstances any item which is denoted can be used to exemplify that which denotes it. (33:p.48)

Sport, Roberts claims, is the sort of thing which can be exemplificational since it is denoted by predicates, for instance, Roberts suggests, grace, speed, agility, coordination, strength, endurance, efficiency, dedication and excellence, among many others. The possession of properties, however, is not enough. To say that it is

exemplifying a property the object or event must be employed as a sample of that property. Roberts points out that given the right conditions, almost anything can exemplify any of the properties it possesses. But while circumstances may be twisted to allow a thing to exemplify one of its properties, Roberts is keen to go beyond "strained and contrived" service to the more direct or immediate instances of exemplification (33:p.49).

Roberts concentrates his argument on four of what he considers to be characteristics or properties of sport which allow unstrained and non-contrived exemplification by sport. These four characteristics are: 1) sport being "apart from 'ordinary' life"; 2) that it occurs as a performance; 3) that it occurs within the context of a "rich tradition"; and 4) that athletes are often seen as representatives of ourselves.[4] Roberts believes these features of sport encourage us to "delve into symbolism." It is because of these features (though once again neither disjunctively necessary nor conjunctively sufficient) that we can see sport as being referential without being strained or contrived.

For sport to be considered to be relatively replete, more rather than fewer aspects of the movement involved would have to be considered as important. But can it be so said that in sport actions and movements comparatively more aspects <u>are</u> important? Again Roberts (32) has an answer. All sport movements, says Roberts, are relatively replete. He believes this is shown by the fact that many aspects of a movement, for example, the dimensions of direction, angle, length, duration and pattern of movement, are not only important but are constitutive of the movement (32:p.199).

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[4] For a detailed account of how these characteristics operate in sport see Roberts (33:pp.49-52).

In sport any change in the aspects, no matter how subtle, constitutes a change in the action and in its relationship to prior and upcoming actions and to the game as a whole. In the "aesthetic" or "form" sports such as gymnastics and figure skating it is easy to see how many aspects of the movements, even small details, have a direct bearing on the worth of the performance.

Perhaps the most important of Goodman's symptoms of the aesthetic (at least as they pertain to the ensuing argument concerning interpretation) are those of syntactic and semantic density. Dense schemes require interpretation and, in order to show that sport is open to redescription and interpretation, it will be useful if sport can be shown to be a dense scheme. The scheme of sport is both syntactically and semantically dense. If it were not, there could be no controversial calls, that is, ones which could be said to go one way or the other, and from that, no good or poor decisions. There could be no discussion of tactics nor of the meaning of an outcome. Such things as these would be of a fixed nature, plays matched to an exact and theoretically infallible system of calls. Players would be more like the pawns than the chess players, like the actors rather than the scriptwriter.

If sport was semantically disjoint, it would be easily understood and described. We could follow the action and match it to strict and preconceived meanings. Provided we knew the meanings of the symbols we could rapidly and conclusively identify "the" meaning of any particular sport action since there could be no possible way to "misread" a symbol (action) and it would be difficult to dispute the conclusion. Dense schemes lend themselves to interpretation. Often it is as a result of discussion about sport (a rule, a play, the direction in which the sport is heading) arises.

If the scheme was disjoint, there would be no need to discuss whether one action or "mark" belonged to one category or another. If it was disjoint, it would be possible to say categorically that every full twisting Yurchenko vault in gymnastics which scores a 9.8 is identical in form and that these vaults (or indeed, this vault) are able to be distinguished with certainty from those which score, say, a 9.75. This, however, is not the case. These actions are unique, every one different in significant ways despite the closeness, or even exactness, of the scores. The very fact that the judges scores in sports like gymnastics, diving, figure skating and free-style skiing need to be averaged to achieve a final score indicates the interpretation involved in such sports. If the symbols were disjoint, there would be a way to achieve "the" score of any performance rather than settling for an average of close approximations.

It is sport's syntactic and semantic density which is of prime concern as we venture into the final section of this chapter. The idea of interpretation or redescription of sport, made possible by its density, leads us to theories concerning interpretation. Once again the principle "player" in this discussion is Richard Rorty. Rorty (38) explains the "apparent" difference between "hard" objects, such as those with which chemists deal, and "soft" ones, which encompasses the "objects" dealt with by literary critics. This distinction between what Rorty calls "texts" and "lumps" is essentially a difference between things made (texts) and things found (lumps). Rorty explains:

> Think of a paradigmatic text as something puzzling which was said or written by a member of a primitive tribe, or by Aristotle, or by Blake. Non-linguistic artefacts, such as pots, are borderline cases of texts. Think of a lump as something you would bring for analysis to a natural scientist rather than to somebody in the humanities or social sciences - something

> which might turn out to be, say, a piece of gold or the fossilized stomach of a stegosaurus. A wadded-up plastic bag is a borderline case of a lump. (38:p.84-5)

Rorty, as a pragmatist, objects to these distinctions, yet admits to one "prima facie" difference which he believes needs to be accounted for. He notes that:

> ...when chemists say that gold is insoluble in nitric acid, there's an end on it. Yet when critics say that the problem of the *The turn of the screw* or *Hamlet* or whatever, is insoluble with the apparatus of the New, or psycho-analytic, or semiotic criticism, this is just an invitation to the respective critical schools to distill even more powerful brews. (38:p.83)

When asked to suggest why it is that they "feel" this soft/hard difference, the pragmatist says that the difference lies in the institution's rules. That is, there is a difference in the rules of the institution of chemistry and the rules of the institution of literary criticism. Again, Rorty puts this very clearly:

> The only way to get a non-institutional fact would be to find a language for describing an object which was as little ours, and as much the object's own, as the object's causal powers. If one gives up that fantasy, no object will appear softer than any other. Rather, some institutions will appear more internally diverse, more complicated, more quarrelsome about ultimate desiderata than others. (38:p.84)

Rorty's point is that the distinction made between texts and lumps is not useful in all but one case. This "interesting difference" between texts and lumps is that hypotheses about the intentions of the author are able to be formed and defended in the case of texts but not lumps (38:p.87).

Generally, Rorty believes that the perceived "dualism" of texts and lumps is better understood as a continuum or a spectrum. Both texts and lumps require interpretation, according to Rorty. Knowledge of anything is dependent upon our ability to agree upon what we are talking about. Rorty suggests that, "...what we know of both texts and lumps is nothing more than the ways these are related to other texts and lumps mentioned in or presupposed by the propositions which we use to describe them" (38:p.88).

Rorty argues that the need for interpretation and discussion about both texts and lumps is based on the same principle, that is, that the knowledge that each generates is a function of the language we use and the needs we have at any given time. For Rorty, texts and lumps are part of the same continuum, the same "web." As Rorty suggests, "rather than trying to locate sameness, we should dissolve both texts and lumps into nodes within transitory webs of relationships" (38:p.89). What this means for sport is that whether it can be "proven" to be "textual" or "lumpish" is not a product of its essential nature as a text or as a lump respectively. It means that given the web-like structure of the relationship between these, it matters very little where we place sport within that structure. Sport may come to be a text or a lump at different times and under different descriptions.

To better understand the transitory nature of sport in the "text-lump web," it will be useful to examine a table showing the perceived distinction between texts and lumps to show how it may be that sport can "fit" into both sides. The table in question, constructed by Rorty as a tool for commenting upon this perceived dualism, is arranged in five "levels," each referring to a different "meaning" given certain situations or time

frames (38: pp.85-86). For the ease of the following discussion, the table is printed below.

TEXTS	LUMPS
Level I The phonetic or graphic features of an inscription (philology is in point here).	The sensory appearance and spacio-temporal location of a lump (avoidance of perceptual illusion is in point here).
Level II What the author would, under ideal conditions, reply to questions about his inscriptions which are phrased in terms which he can understand right off the bat.	The real essence of the lump which lurks behind its appearances - how Nature or God would describe the lump.
Level III What the author would, under ideal conditions, reply to *our* questions about his inscription - questions he would have to be reeducated to understand (think of a Cambridge-educated primitive, an Aristotle who had assimilated Freud and Marx) but which are easily intelligible to a present-day interpretive community.	The lump as described by that sector of *our* "normal" science which specializes in lumps of that sort (for example, an analysis performed by a chemist, or routine identification performed by a biologist).
Level IV The role of the text in somebody's revolutionary view of the sequence of inscriptions to which the text belongs (including revolutionary suggestions about which sequence that is) - for example, the role of an Aristotle text in Heidegger or a Blake text in Bloom.	The lump as described by a scientific revolutionary, that is, somebody who wants to redo chemistry, or entomology, or whatever, so that the currently "normal" chemical analysis or biological taxonomies are revealed as "mere appearances."
Level V The role of the text in somebody's view of something other than the "kind" to	The place of the lump, or of that *sort* of lump, in somebody's view of something

which the text belongs - for example, its relation to the nature of man, the purpose of my life, the politics of our day, and so forth.

other than the science to which the lump has been assigned (for example, the role of gold in the international economy, in sixteenth-century alchemy, in Alberich's fantasy life, my fantasy life, and so forth, as opposed to its role in chemistry).

Before embarking on a discussion of where and how sport fits into such a scheme, some attention must first be given to the form sport will take in that discussion. The paradigm cases of texts and lumps, the primitive's text and the piece of gold respectively, are necessarily easier to place in the table than is sport. Whether the sporting event will count as a text or a lump will depend upon the way we choose to describe it, that is, from which point of view. While the primitive's written words and the piece of gold are relatively permanent fixations, the sporting event is not. Only in the eyes of fanciful movie directors can people of the present gaze out over old playing fields and "see" the action of past matches.

Sport is not concrete in the same way as literary works and material artefacts. The inscriptions on the tablets, the patterns on the pots and the piece of gold may be preserved for many hundreds of years. In the case of books, the words may be reprinted in order to preserve them.[5] Sport action, as it is uniquely experienced, is not the type of thing which is easily preserved.[6]

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[5] Just as an aside it is interesting to speculate on just what constitutes "the" text, even a paradigmatic text. Is it the original inscription itself, or is it those words in that particular order whether written or spoken? I would be inclined to suggest that it is the latter. The "text" would be the same whether written, recorded on audiotape or memorized and handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation.

[6] The "authenticity" of the actual event seems, however, quite easy to determine. There are often many accounts of any one event and there are always references to the same date and time, general weather and ground conditions, a list of participants names, a videotape or two from various angles and often a complete record of match statistics. From these we can be reasonably sure that an event occurred and the basic details surrounding that event, for example, location, participants, playing conditions and the final result.

There are, however, means of "preserving" actions. For instance there are most probably newspaper or journal accounts in either statistical or prose form. Aside from the written accounts of the action (which are often literary works themselves), the videotape is perhaps one of the most useful ways to "preserve" sport action. However, even videotape captures an incomplete record of any game, though we might not always perceive it as such. Roberts (36) notes that:

> We...know that motion cameras, irrespective of their speed, simply take snapshots very close together and, then, faster than the eye can see, re-present them to give the illusion of motion. We know that much is lost between the snaps and yet perceive what is not there as if it were. (36:p.24)

Additionally, videotape focuses on one selection of the action, from one angle, at any one time.

While we may be tempted to favour one "account" over another by virtue of one being a truer representation of the event, any such conclusion would be less than conclusive. Given the arguments of Rorty (37) and Goodman (17) the most we can do is choose a version which suits our purposes, although any form may be used and each will yield a different result. Let us now return to the table and take as an example a sporting event. In this case the event will be the world record breaking long jump of Bob Beamon at the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games.

At Level I the concern is with identification, perceptual appearance and authenticity. For texts this is simply whatever appears on the page, for example, without attention to the meaning. For lumps the process is much the same. The lump is

rudimentally examined for its appearance and note taken of where and when it was found. At this level there does not seem to be a great deal of difference between identification of text and lump given that similar factors are determined.

For the sporting example, that is, Beamon's long jump, this level would require that the event be determined as having actually occurred. It would involve the scrutiny of various documents such as oral and written reports and the determination that any videotape or film depicts that particular jump and that they have not been tampered with or altered in any way.

At the second level a difference between text and lump emerges. It makes sense to ask the author of a text what he or she meant by his or her inscriptions. Questions such as these about the inscriptions are only answerable when the author is capable of doing so. In the case of lumps one must assume much to make sense at Level II. God or Nature is the suggested "author" of the lump. If one does not accept that God or Nature has some plan, some objective to achieve in creating the lump, then Level II for lumps is at best irrelevant, and at worst misleading.

Obviously the "author" of that world record breaking long jump in 1968 is Bob Beamon. We could ask questions of the author in this case and get Beamon's views on his jump. Indeed in the case of all sporting events we could ask questions of the authors, be they the athletes, or, in some instances, the coaches. Clearly, at this level, the sporting event is more text-like than "lumpish."

At Level III, the event would be scrutinized according to the questions the present day community would ask of the author (in the case of the text) and according to how our present-day "normal" scientists would describe it (in the case of lumps).

Obviously Beamon could be questioned quite easily and without the need for reeducation such as that required by the primitive or Aristotle of Rorty's example. Beamon would, perhaps, only require education to answer the questions of, say, a biomechanist or a physiologist.

When considered as a lump, Beamon's long jump could, at this level, be subjected to a routine biomechanical analysis including determination of the speed and distance of run-up, angle of take-off, flight time and distance travelled, and perhaps an indication of the efficiency of the jump compared to present day ideals. These "ideal" factors might include optimum speed of run-up and take-off angle among others. In the case of other sports, say tennis or baseball, this level could also include the compilation of statistics for the event.

At Level IV, we are concerned with an alternative or revolutionary view of the sequence of inscriptions to which the text belongs, or the lump described by someone who wants to redo whatever scientific branch the lump had previously been analysed under. This may be the case if somebody, say, were to develop alternate biomechanical measuring procedures and formulae and these were employed to determine a revolutionary view of the biomechanical efficiency of Beamon's jump. In a more bizarre example, one might imagine that someone suggests that Beamon's jump was inaccurately measured and that the record was not actually surpassed at all. This suggestion, if taken to be true, would change the history of the long jump and throw into doubt other events which were measured in a similar way.

An example of how Level IV might operate for a sporting event as a text is difficult to formulate. Perhaps a journalist or commentator may be operating at this

level if he or she shifts the emphasis of the jump from a "record breaker" to a measure of its success based on its grace, beauty and style, giving it and other jumps a point score out of 10 and concludes that on his view Beamon's jump would not have won gold but would have come in fifth.

At Level V, the text and the lump are once again closely related. Both are plucked from their own realm and their role in a new realm is examined. For example, the role of Beamon's jump in the phenomenon of "hero-worship" in society, or, perhaps, the role of record breaking events in general in the hierarchy of prestige and wealth in the Western world.

Other sporting events show more clearly the understanding of sport we may have at Level V. Cricket's "Bodyline" series and its role in Anglo-Australian relations[7], the "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match between Bobby Riggs and Billy Jean King and its role in the feminist movement of the 1970's, and the success of African American track star Jesse Owens at the 1936 Olympics and its role in the developing notions of Aryan supremacy in Central Europe all serve as examples of understanding sport in relation to a realm other than its own.

The discussion of sport in terms of its textuality and lumpishness has shown us how, given different constructions, one sporting event may be shown to be like a lump, or a text, or like both. The distinction between texts and lumps, as Rorty has noted is not as clear as it might seem at first. The two are closely related, to the point of being able to be seen as parts of the same spectrum.

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[7] In an effort to subdue the magnificent Australian batsman Donald Bradman in the 1930's Ashes Series, the British bowling tactic was to aim directly at the batsmen, often hitting them. This not only created tension on the field but caused an uproar in Australia and affected relations between the two countries.

With each new perspective, each new examination of an event, the focus changes and the event becomes a little broader, more widely appealing and more complex. All this, however, does not make "knowing" the event more difficult. As has been said, knowledge about anything, according to Rorty, is a function of our ability to agree upon what we are talking about. Communication at any "level" is not dependent upon agreement on the "true" meaning of the text or on the "true" nature of the lump. Rather, it is dependent upon an agreement we make, taking into account the circumstances under which we are discussing the object or event. In simpler terms, it matters very little whether something is a text or a lump because all things may be described or discussed in many ways (38:pp.88-89).

Sport has no particular way that it is and no particular way that it should be. It has no steadfast and inherent "nature." What matters is not that we should have the "right" interpretation but that we should have a "good" or "useful" interpretation for whatever purposes we have. At times it may be useful to talk about sport in terms of biomechanics, in terms of world politics, or in terms of human physiology. The crucial idea here is that all of these, and many more, ways of speaking about sport are relevant to sport provided it is consistent with our interests at that time. We cannot dismiss a description of sport simply because it doesn't fit our preconceived idea of "the nature of sport."

But is there a limit to what we can claim as an interpretation of sport? At what point, if any, is the so-called interpretation not reasonable? Is there such a thing as overinterpretation? Given the prevailing opinion that only literature from the realms of the humanities is capable of being "interpreted" (as opposed to scientific and

mathematical works which are not), the idea that a work may be overinterpreted is to be found in literary theory. Eco (13) believes there is such a thing as overinterpretation and that the mistake of overinterpreting is a direct result of overemphasizing the true but trivial claim that almost anything can be found to have a relationship to almost anything else. As Eco explains:

> *...from a certain point of view everything bears relationships of analogy, contiguity and similarity to everything else.* One may push this to its limits and state that there is a relationship between the adverb "while" and the noun "crocodile" because - at least - they both appeared in the sentence that I have just uttered.[8] (13:p.48)

Eco sees a difference between "sane" and "paranoiac" interpretation and believes that it is when an interpretation is paranoiac, when it digs too deeply into the text, it is an instance of overinterpretation. Paranoiacs, Eco considers, see a secret beneath everything, a hidden meaning which is to be found.

In ordinary life, however, we know how to distinguish between important similarities and those which are simply coincidence. It is this, Eco says, which, in a way, regulates the way we interpret things and events in our everyday lives. A "blatant" case of overinterpretation, according to Eco, is that of sacred texts. "As soon as a text becomes 'sacred' for a certain culture, it becomes subjected to the process of suspicious reading and therefore to what is undoubtedly an excess of interpretation" (13:p.52).

This is not to say, however, that there is one "right" interpretation of a text. In fact, the delight that Eco takes in having others interpret his work serves to show that

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[8] The paper from which this quotation is taken was delivered orally.

he does believe, to some extent, that some interpretations are both possible and desirable. Presumably, though, certain interpretations, those which dig too deeply, or are too paranoiac, are overinterpretations and are, therefore, undesirable.

In response to Eco, Culler (9) argues that overinterpretation is not necessarily undesirable. In fact, he believes that to be interesting interpretation must be extreme, and notes that:

> Many "extreme" interpretations, like many moderate interpretations, will no doubt have little impact because they are judged unpersuasive or redundant or irrelevant or boring,...if they are extreme, they have a better chance...of bringing to light the connections or implications not previously noticed or reflected on than if they strive to remain "sound" or moderate. (9:p.110)

What might be called overinterpretation may in fact be more interesting and illuminating than what was initially intended by the author.

There is a very weak argument, if any, for claiming that a piece of literature or a sporting event or anything at all, has one particular way in which it is, should be, or should be interpreted. More importantly, it is often the most interesting descriptions which stray from the norm. Maybe it's that we have become accustomed to the way or ways we interpret and describe sport and this comfort with the "known" discourages the more obscure versions. Just as so-called overinterpretations of literary works may be more interesting than the accepted interpretations, so too may more outlandish descriptions of sport be more thought-provoking than the ones we have come to expect.

This chapter has introduced and discussed several issues. Firstly, the problem of

defining art in metaphysical terms and Goodman's theory of art based on the symbolic functioning of artworks was outlined. Then a more in-depth look at Goodman's theory of symbol systems was given focussing first on the modes of symbolization and then on the symptoms of the aesthetic as an indication that an object or event may be functioning as an artwork. This was extended, then, to cases of found object art.

The suggestion was then made that sport may be seen to function as art does in the same way as found object art. An important analogy was drawn between the stone plucked from the driveway and exhibited in the art gallery and the sporting event "plucked" from the back-yard or sandlot and "exhibited" in the arena. The symbolic functioning of the stone in the gallery and the sporting event in the arena were shown to be similar in certain important ways. The suggestion was made that they could be even more similar given the possibility of the arena being seen as a gallery in certain other respects.

Further to showing how sport may be considered as functioning as art does, a closer look at the symptoms of the aesthetic as they relate to sport was taken. Particular attention was given to the first two symptoms, syntactic and semantic density. Following this, Rorty's notion of a text/lump web was introduced and sport's place in that web was discussed. Finally, the idea of overinterpretation was examined, both for literary works and then, by extension, for everything else, including sport. This chapter has shown how it is that sport can be seen to function as a work of art under certain circumstances, for example, when likened to "Found Object" art or to a literary work.

CHAPTER FIVE - REDESCRIPTIONS

You flick on the television and at once the magnificence of the Atlantic Ocean is evident. Three enormous caravels, the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria, come into view. In a flash the image changes. The commentary team is assembled before us in the studio. As the camera centres in on the anchorman, he begins to speak:

> Good evening, folks. Here it's 7 P.M. on the 11th of October 1492, and we're linked to the flagship of the Columbus expedition, which by 7 A.M. tomorrow should put Europe's first thalatanaut on a new land, a new planet, if I may be allowed that metaphor, that Terra Incognita so many astronomers, geographers, cartographers and travelers have dreamed of....As of now, in a joint effort, all our TV networks will be transmitting around the clock, twenty-five hours....Our guest here in the studio is Professor Leonardo da Vinci, the famous scientist and futurologist, who will provide a running commentary, explaining the technical details of this extraordinary venture.
> (14:p.135-6)

The extract above, from Eco's "The Discovery of America," is a comical look at how the media of the later 20th century may have covered the well-known historical event of Columbus' journey and landing in the "New World." A parody suggested by television coverage of the first moon walk, Eco's piece serves here as an introduction to the effect modern media coverage and commentary can have on our perception and understanding of events, sporting or otherwise.

This chapter will examine, from a philosophical point of view, the manner in which images of sport are presented by the media and the effect it can have on the

viewing and understanding of sport. Drawing on several issues raised in previous chapters, sport will be examined in terms of how it can benefit by being described, redescribed, commented upon and critiqued in ways similar to art. Finally, the role of commentators, commentary and the critique of commentary will be considered as possible vehicles to a broader understanding of sport.

With all its creative technologies and uncanny ability to "get in" to bring the public all kinds of events, the news media of today, particularly television, is remarkably powerful. Television has enabled sporting events to be seen and heard by ever growing numbers of people. More importantly, media influence, particularly television, is responsible, at least in part, for the way we view and understand sport.

Sporting events that are shown on television seem to be so similar in both format and content that one may be forgiven for experiencing a sense of "deja vu" when watching. Koppett (23) observes that "almost all the air time devoted to sports in America is play-by-play or the replay of play-by-play" (23:p.122). The camera angles rarely vary beyond that which has been accepted as "normal" for whichever sport we are watching. We see the serve, the toss up, the kick off; the cameras follow the ball; goals and winning shots are replayed at several angles and speeds. The cries of the commentators, "it's in the hole," "a superb shot," "it's a goal," seem all too familiar. Rarely do we witness anything new. It may be exciting and we may be "revved up" by the force of the commentator's voice or by our team's fortunes, but is this all we can, and should, expect?

Lasch believes that,

> Television has enlarged the audience for sports while lowering the level of its understanding; at least this is the operating assumption of sports commentators, who direct at the audience an interminable stream of tutelage in the basics of the game, and of the promoters who reshape one game after another to conform to the tastes of an audience supposedly incapable of grasping their finer points. (26:p.406)

Television offers few variations when televising sport. For the most part those who are responsible for covering sports on television could be said to be working under the assumption that what is presented somehow gets to the "truth" or "reality" of what sport is. For example, Koppett (23), a noted sports journalist, states that, "...radio and television gear their sports operations to play-by-play broadcasts. But play-by-play, strictly speaking, isn't journalism at all. It's better. It's a window to the real thing as it happens" (23: p.121). Networks appear to be restricted by the perceived preferences of television's mass audience and by the need to retain a formula for television sports which has proven financially lucrative. As a result, they seem to accept one style of presentation with almost religious adherence.

Sport as portrayed as "realistic" on television, that is, with predictable camera work and techniques, combined with commentary which concentrates on following the play and the score, with a sprinkling of superlatives, encourages viewers to believe that this is not simply the preferable, but the only, way to view sport. As a result, this "formula" serves to re-affirm this type of coverage as the "truth" of sport for the millions who watch it and perpetuates this as "the" understanding of sport. So how is it that so many different television stations and commentators can cover so many different sports in this "one" way? To more clearly understand how this is possible it may be

beneficial to revisit the analogy of the stone in the gallery.[9]

Imagine that the stone has been placed on a pedestal in the centre of one of the main rooms of the art gallery. The stone has proven to be a popular addition; it draws more attention for its apparent misplacement than for its artistic merits. The curator of the gallery has decided, however, that the stone is not being appreciated to its fullest and in an attempt to remedy this he sets up cameras around the stone. Beside it he puts an "expert," armed with a microphone. The stone's many and varied visual aspects are displayed prominently (on the video screens) and the expert is on hand to give the public a commentary aimed at revealing the stone's various points of interest.

The stone expert is a phenomenal success. The public, it seems, are now more aware of the stone and of what it has to offer as an artwork. The curator, however, believes that the stone has still more to offer. He is concerned that having only one "expert" is not doing the stone justice. His budget is large; he hires five more "experts". Now he has a stone "commentary team". He now has six different views of the stone, six different opinions, six variations: Or does he? The curator begins to notice that the commentators are almost always in agreement about the stone. Having succeeded with the stone, the commentary team is employed to comment upon other exhibits, on painting and sculptures, on urinals and brillo-boxes. However, the descriptions they offer sound remarkably similar, not only to each other but, strangely, to the descriptions of the stone as well. The curator, investigating further, finds that his experts happen to have all studied under the one "master" of stone appreciation. They are, as it were, all

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[9] See above pp.46-50.

"of the same school."

Sports commentators and presenters are not unlike the stone's commentary team in that they seem to be all "of the same school". However, the "master" from which they have learned may not be as readily identifiable as in the case of the stone commentary team. The sports commentators of today have been influenced by what, and who, has gone before them and seem restricted by the way they are used to viewing and describing. That we see and describe in the ways that we have become accustomed to is a widely held view (16, 17, 22, 37). Gombrich (22) denies that we see anything with a so-called "innocent eye," that is, one free from all associations with our previous experiences. "It is our mind that weaves...sensations into perceptions, the elements of our conscious picture of the world that is grounded on experience, on knowledge" (22:p.297). Gombrich (22), in discussing a drawing of the Cathedral of Notre Dame by Merian (c.1635), says that he believes that Merian has been strongly influenced by his previous experiences of churches. Of Merian, Gombrich states:

> As a child of the seventeenth century, the notion of a church is that of a lofty symmetrical building with large, rounded windows, and that is how he designs the Notre Dame. He places the transcept in the centre with four large rounded windows on either side while the actual [cathedral has] seven narrow pointed Gothic windows to the west and six in the choir. (22:p.71)

The point here is that for a number of reasons sport is portrayed and described by the media in a similar way every time it occurs. The media, as powerful as it is, shapes our perceptions of sport and perpetuates one type of viewing. For sport to be able to be viewed and described in many different ways, the media must first understand

how it is that sport "can" be viewed and described in many ways and to do this they must understand that sport, like everything else, need not be restricted by the idea that there is one way that sport "is" or one way that it should be described.

In Chapter Three the notion that "truth" and "reality" are contingent was discussed. It was shown that the idea of anything having a pre-existing nature or way that it is "in itself" is a misconception. It was argued that while "the world is out there," descriptions of it are not (37:p.5). While sport actions are "out there," descriptions and depictions of it are not. Roberts elaborates:

> ... the way sport actions are seen, represented and described is not determined by some preperceptual, presymbolic or prelinguistic reality. The world does not make them or even give them its stamp of approval.... (36:p.28)

However, to many viewers of sport on television the presentation seems somehow "right" and to vary from this would certainly seem abnormal, even unnatural. For example, Birrell and Loy (5) believe that sport on television has given rise to a "linear orientation" to sport which is contrasted here with the viewing of sport as a live event.

> Television has trained America to focus on particular bits of action and ignore, or perhaps never come into meaningful contact with, a live event experience. Perhaps this explains why many disgruntled fans leave a live game complaining that they could have seen it better on television. (5:p.13)

What we understand as "realistic" in a portrayal or description of sport is directly

affected by what we have experienced in the past. Michael Roberts, discussing the use of "jargon" by Australian Rules Football commentators, notes that:

> ...the real power over footy jargon probably lies with the media. Thirty years ago, players were always "selling the dummy", "buttering up" or "in the van". How did we know? Mike Williamson and others kept telling us so. (31:p.9)

As has been stated, that sport on television seems "right" or "realistic" can readily be attributed to the fact that we have become accustomed to viewing sport in a particular way. According to Goodman and Elgin (21), "...rightness is a matter of fitting and working" (21:p.158), and not a matter of truth in and of itself. Goodman characterizes realism as "...relative, determined by the system of representation standard for a given culture or person at a given time. Newer or older or alien systems are counted artificial or unskilled" (16:p.37). Sport as presented to us on television does appear to "fit" and "work" but this cannot be attributed to television supposedly uncovering something about the true nature of sport.

Television does not present reality nor has it uncovered some innate human preference for viewing and describing sport in a particular way. Television serves to "create" the preferred way of viewing and describing sport and reinforces it with every telecast. Birrell and Loy, for example, suggest that, "...the American fan with his increasing mania for statistical information is being fed the diet he requests" (5:p.13). Preferability, according to Roberts, "... is a function of habit and interest. It depends both on what we are used to seeing and what we wish to see" (36:p.27). That we consider one description or depiction of sport as more "realistic" or "right" is,

Roberts argues, "...more a function of what we are familiar with than a function of their true correspondence to reality" (36:p.21).

The belief that sport should be described in a certain way is both a function of having become "familiar" with that way and of believing that sport has a certain nature that commentary should reflect. Novak (28) seems to have developed a preference for radio commentary over television commentary because to him the former seems more "accurate." Novak writes "...one learned to love the basic accuracy and single bare detail that lifted the imagination... One got the basic liturgy, the essential drama" (28:pp.248-9).

Novak's view of sport is that it should remain somewhat pure. He admires a "workmanlike" commentary which allows him to enjoy "undiluted" sport (28:p.250). He believes that using the critical standards of political reporting and business review, as did a commentator like Howard Cosell, is inappropriate for sports commentary and reporting (28:pp.276-9). Novak states that, "It is important to keep sports as insulated as we can from business, entertainment, politics and even gossip" (28:p.262).

Cosell, on the other hand, believed it was time to "tell it like it is" and in this, allowed an "infiltration" of a different style, one akin to political reporting and sociological review. This is, in part, attributable to Cosell's understanding of the place of sport in our lives in general and to his concerns with the supposedly "fringe" aspects of sport in particular. In Cosell's own words, "I am not concerned with the game itself, as am with what I consider the larger matters that are related to the conduct of the business of baseball" (8:p.131). Moreover, he believed that sport was inseparable from the "real" world: "...it must be realized...that sports are not separate and apart from life,

a special "wonderland" where everything is pure and sacred and above criticism" (Cited in 28:p.276).

Put simply, the differences between Novak and Cosell's views on sport reporting is a direct result of their differing views on the nature of sport. Novak argues that sports reporting should be confined to the happenings of the game (whatever that is) and that politics, big business and other things that he deems extraneous to sport should be omitted. Cosell dismisses the "romantic notion" of sport and believes that sport is a part of, and not apart from, ordinary life and as such should be subject to the same forms of criticism as anything else (8:p.131). The construction of sport we adopt (or that which the media encourages) will influence how we respond to different descriptions and reportings of sport. But, then, which is it to be? Of course, given the notions regarding truth and reality discussed thus far, the answer is both or neither. It depends on the situation and needs at the time and with regard to our familiarity with, and therefore our preference for, any one version over another. No one version can be disregarded or discarded because it does not correspond to the "reality" of sport.

One realm that has begun to overcome this tendency to search for "the" truth, or "the" reality is the artworld. The reason that sport has been likened to art, shown to function as art does under certain conditions,[10] is that, as a starting place for opening the realm of sport to redescription and alternate understandings, art seems a good choice. A clear cut understanding of "the way that art is" is not evident in the artworld as it accepts such artworks as "Fountain," "Brillo Box" and the digging and filling of a hole in Central Park. The artworld may, at times,

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[10] See above pp.46-50.

create a preference for a certain style. However, in general, unusual styles and novel ways of portraying and presenting are accepted and even encouraged, much more often, it seems, than in sport.

However, that we have sport in the arena and on television, and that we may have many commentators, is not enough to ensure that we are presented with a variety of descriptions and depictions of sport. To say that sport is art-like at certain times is to both open the realm to the same creativity of description and depiction as art and to engage in a form of redescription. It is also to say that sport can and should be interpreted in as many ways as it is possible to conceive. As in art, imagination and daring, and not reality or truth should provide the boundaries.

However, this is not to say that all versions will, or should, be accepted. Like the artworld, the plethora of possible versions, descriptions and depictions of sport should be carefully scrutinized and criticized. The development of rigorous and insightful criticism of sporting descriptions and sport commentaries is a crucial part of the challenge to the "old" versions of sport, as well as the presenting and accepting of new ones.

The artworld certainly allows great scope for imagination and creativity and this is reflected in the wide range of descriptions and interpretations which are offered up by art critics. The tendency, though, is for the critics to strive for an essentialistic definition of art criticism and there is, predictably, a considerable amount of conjecture on that issue. Smith (39) notes that:

> ...probably no generally acceptable account of criticism
> can be given since there is no consensus on the meaning

> of criticism either with respect to its logic, scope, rationality, distinctiveness of activities, or even general utility in the aesthetic domain. (39:p.51)

However, the aim here is not to debate the merits of definitions but to allow one that will serve to open discussion and description of sport as widely as possible. As expected, perhaps, such a definition comes from Goodman when he says that, "criticism may incorporate discussion not only of historical, biographical, psychological, and sociological factors, but of any properties whatever of the works studied" (17:pp.37-8). There are important reasons to have such an all-encompassing definition of criticism. The more descriptions and interpretations that can be allowed for in the first instance, the more there is to choose from and, indeed, to consider. Even a highly questionable depiction, description or interpretation may generate new thought on the issue and may even, in time and with a change of circumstance or focus, prove insightful and therefore useful as a description.

It is not always, if ever, necessary to attempt to describe an artwork, or indeed a sporting event, in order to allow the reader or listener to "visualise" the piece or event. Such an attempt would be necessarily inadequate given the complexity of both artworks and sporting events (and most everything else as well). Baxandall writes:

> ...[Art historians] are not primarily concerned to evoke the visual character of something never seen by our audience. The work of art we discourse on is to some extent present or available, if only in reproduction or in the memory or even more marginally as a visualisation derived from knowledge of other objects of the same class, and though the form of our language may be informative... its action is likely to be a sort of verbal pointing. (1:p.67)

Likewise, the sports critic should not be primarily concerned with giving the audience a visual image while the sports commentator might be. This is where the distinction between commentators and critics needs to be drawn.

The sports commentator, particularly those in radio, may be concerned with a description of the game which evokes a visual image, particularly those in radio. Commentary in the form of play-by-play descriptions of a game, as heard on both television and radio, is designed to be informative with regard to the passage of play, the players involved and the positions on the field, among other things. It is not necessarily constructed as criticism. This is not to say that sports commentators cannot be involved in criticism when they commentate, it is simply to say that often they are not. Sports commentators are occasionally engaged in criticism during breaks in the play. Play-by-play description doesn't seem necessary at these times (although replays are available) and the commentators seem "freed up", in a sense, to comment on other issues. Morse (27) notes that even during the "dead-time," when no play is occurring, commentary has a set function. Termed "color" commentary by Morse, the commentator at this time "fills in" this empty space with a wider review of the game and its participants. As Morse notes, "The color-man does... possess a hermeneutic function in using instant replay to judge individual performance, evaluating it as well as setting it in statistical and biographical perspective" (27:p.52). While this could be conceived as a form of criticism, the commentators tend to stick to a set "routine" at such times.

By contrast, sports criticism, which may involve both criticism of the game and criticism of the commentaries on the game, is not primarily concerned with play-by-play

descriptions or evoking a visual image. The concern of the sport critic, like the art critic, is to verbally "point" and, it might be added, to verbally "point out." The distinction being drawn here is one between "pointing," that is, drawing attention to certain elements of the game or event, and "pointing out," that is, drawing connections between those elements or issues and "other things," either in that game, in other games, in other sports and even in other realms altogether. The scope for possible connections is as wide as our collective imagination.

The typical pattern for commentary in many sports is "linear." That is, description moves along at the same rate and in the same direction as the play. The most common commentary style, play-by-play description, adheres to the perceived linearity of sports. McLuhan [11] believes that linearity of the media (including sports reporting) is connected to a certain stage in a society's historical development.

McLuhan divides history into three eras; pre-literate, literate and post-literate, based upon the types of media operating in each. The pre-literate society based its "media" on an oral tradition, folklore and intimate communication forms. The literate phase, promoted by the invention of the printing press, had an emphasis on linear styles of communication and, finally, the post-literate phase of recent years stems from the invention of television, computers and other electronic devices.

Although it is McLuhan's view that a society's preferences for the "telling" of sport is dominated by the style of media at the time, the influence of the electronic media of today on sport has not eventuated. It retains a stark adherence to the inherited "linearity" of the literate phase. Birrell and Loy consider that:

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[11] McLuhan's theory is discussed at length by Birrell and Loy (5).

> ...complex advances in technology have... [limited]
> the diffusion effect of television. Instant replay, isolated
> cameras, stop action, slow motion, wide-angle lens,
> and split screen have all transformed the sport spectacle...,
> synthesizing the action through highlighting to enhance
> excitement value. (5:p.11)

Despite the vast array of technologies available, sport on television has remained "linear" and undiffused with a focus on "on ball" play which highlights the "productive" (in achieving a score) and spectacular. It is the synthesizing, narrowing effect of television which promotes linear descriptions to complement the linear portrayals. It is not, however, only through television that sport is seen to have a certain linearity, both temporally and structurally.

Temporally, sport occurs in time and, more specifically, over time. It has a determinable beginning , a middle (passage of play) and an end. For example, a tennis match has a beginning, say the first serve of the match, and proceeds through a pre-determined pattern of games and sets until a winning score is achieved. Similarly, the Australian Rules football match begins with a siren, is played over four quarters of equal "game time" and ends with the final siren.

Structurally, sport can be seen as linear by the sequencing of occurrences in the match or event due to the formal or informal rules of the event. Anomalies aside (kicking after the siren in Australian Rules Football or shooting a goal after the whistle in netball, usually due to a "free" kick or shot being awarded), all sports can be seen to have a certain linearity, be it of actual time, four quarters of ten minutes a piece (netball), or of a sequence of events (10 rounds of dives), or of a sequence of events leading to a set winning position (achieving two or three sets of tennis or crossing the

finish line first in a marathon).

That sport can be seen as linear, temporally or structurally, is of some benefit to reporters and commentators. The game or event can be described in a uniform fashion, from beginning to end, through each quarter or half or through each round. When sport is commentated upon "live" such a structure seems to make sense. Commentary can be "play-by-play" as the game moves forward in time. The game can be likened, here, to a piece of literature which "...in itself is a linear affair led from here to there, or from now to later. A poem or story has a beginning and an end and an authentic sequence in between" (1:p.71). In this sense the game is like a poem or a story; they both progress in time, have a beginning and an end and a sequence of events in between. The "telling" of an event may be reordered in a way other than chronologically once the event is concluded and the event can be reviewed with the benefit of hindsight. The event may be reordered, for example, by grouping important plays or missed opportunities, or by emphasizing critical "turning points." Descriptions of this kind are common as post-game analyses but are often absent from commentary occurring during the game.

The linearity of sports may be promoted by the media and perpetuated by today's sport commentators but what this linearity affords is a kind of criticism usually reserved for literature. Though sport is capable of being conceived of in other ways, it is undeniably useful for commentators to conceive of it in a linear one. The depictions of sport may then follow a set pattern or routine. Commentary can run to a similar pattern, from start to finish, from here to there, from now to later. There is no need to "jump around" from the third quarter to the first, grouping the plays according to other criteria. The criterion of chronology works very well for today's commentators of

sport.

Despite being capable of being understood as linear, sport is unlike the poem or story in that it is not made up of words. The shape of language, according to Baxandall, is dependent upon "...syntagmatic muscle, the fact that words have to be assembled in a linear progression" (1:p.71). The linearity of literature can be contrasted with the non-linearity of visual art. An artwork such as a painting or picture, not being linear, has no obvious description construction. As Goodman notes:

> ...the picture is a timeless tale, without sequence of occurrence and also without sequence of telling; for there is no one mandatory or even preferred order of reading the picture - of translating its spacial relationships into temporal ones. (19:p.333)

Sport, also, can be seen as being like the picture or painting in that it is not a product of language and therefore not confined by the constructions of it. Sport can be seen as a series of actions or as shapes and figures. Sport can be viewed broadly or narrowly. Descriptions can focus on patterns of play of the individual or on the patterns of play of one team or of the entire field. Sport can be understood as "visual" and can be described in ways other than those promoted when it is understood as linear.

Sport, when conceived of as non-linear, poses a small problem for commentators in that it is not so blatantly obvious in which direction the commentary should run. A similar problem occurs for the critics of pictures and other "non-linear" art. The picture is not perceived in any particular order and as Baxandall notes:

> ...though the sequence of our scanning is influenced as to pattern by both general scanning habits and

> particular cues in the picture, it is not comparable in regularity and control with progress through a piece of language...the read text is majestically progressive, the perception of a picture a rapid irregular darting about and around a field. (1:p.72)

It is not often that an understanding of sport as non-linear is adopted by the media. On occasion the half time break may afford a re-telling of certain incidents or plays or may involve a description not based upon the linearity of the game such as a "tactical" description of a certain play. Additionally, sport programs such as "Wide World of Sport" or "Sports Sunday" will show a compilation of "snippets" of one or many sports which are grouped against the "normal" (linear) structure of "live" sports. These short clips of sport may be grouped according to criteria ranging from the beautiful to the aggressive or from action slow and controlled to action fast and volatile. Such sporting collages are often set to music, the action on the screen matching the pace and tempo of the soundtrack.

Images of sport of this kind, however, are in the minority when it comes to sport on television. Additionally, commentary, which is ever-present in sporting telecasts which are arranged linearly, is virtually non-existent during the "collage" pieces. The purpose these unusual arrangements of sport serve at present does not seem to be as an alternative understanding sport as much as it is a humorous or heartfelt "aside" to it. While "play-by-play" is seen as serious, sport "collages" are not.

Sport, like literature, has some temporality to it and like the picture it is constructed not of words but of shapes (1:p.71).Though description and discussion using language is recognised as a problem for "non-linear" art works, sport, by being

able to be conceived of linearly, may be in the advantageous position of being able to be conceived of both linearly and non-linearly. The commentary of the "live," play-by-play telecasts and the re-constructions of sport in terms of other criteria are equally valid descriptions and depictions of sport.

In order to promote more unusual and novel ways of understanding sport, the emphasis on play-by-play telecasts and linear descriptions of sport needs to be both exposed as a "norm" created by the media and challenged as having some attachment to the reality. Sports commentators, though they are in a position to do both of these things, rarely utilize this power. The impetus for a broader view of sport, then, may come from a different source, that being from those who criticize the commentaries. As Roberts notes:

> Much sport action reporting in meeting the demands of realism, is, artistically speaking, weak, foolish, dull, banal and blurred. Criticism will help promote descriptions and depictions that are strong, effective, useful, intriguing and sensitive. (36:p.28)

The cliches and predictable verbiage of commentators which results in one telecast sounding very much like the next, should be subjected to criticism if alternative interests in sport are to be promoted. Additionally, commentators and sports programs which attempt to break away from the pattern (such as "Sports Sunday" and the like with their sport collages) should be acknowledged for their efforts. At the very least, this will draw attention to these unusual depictions and descriptions of sport. Awareness is an important first step.

Unfortunately, much criticism of sports commentary and the media's handling of sport in general, occurs in the pages of sport's social and philosophical books and journals. It could be suggested that these are in places unlikely to be found and read by today's commentators and even less so by the average viewer of sport on television. To be effective, criticism of sport commentary needs to be almost as far-reaching as is the commentary itself. This is important given the notion that the viewer does become accustomed to a certain type of television sport presentation and that it does take time to "recondition" an audience. As a result, television should not immediately expect a positive reaction but should realize that viewers need time to become familiar with a new format or style or description.

One challenge to the "norm" of sports reporting and commentary is by an infiltration of new and sometimes colourful sporting discourse and description that comes via the use of metaphor. Vande Berg and Trujillo suggest that metaphors "...play a basic role in creating, maintaining and shaping sport realities" (41:p.220). Theories abound as to the functioning and meaning behind metaphors (11,6,16,). While Davidson (11) prefers the notion of metaphors as "unfamiliar noises" which at the outset have no meaning, Goodman sees metaphor as more like "teaching an old word new tricks," that is, as a "term with an extension established by habit ...applied elsewhere under the influence of that habit" (16:p.71). Put simply, a metaphor is "...a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance" (40:p.1080).

However they are understood, metaphors serve to draw connections between

different realms and allows the opportunity to conceive of and understand something, in this case sport, in a new way. At some times the resemblance or connection is clear, at others the connection is more subtle. The essential function of the metaphor, though, is to allow such connections. Metaphor can be a useful tool in descriptions of sport, allowing unusual and sometimes startling connections to be drawn and thereby broadening our understanding of sport.

Whether the metaphors we use about sport serve to "liberate" or "constrain" depends upon whether the metaphor is new and exciting or old and tired.

> When...metaphors are read as innovative interpretations...that enhance our understanding or experience of...sport, then sportswriting can be said to liberate readers. However, when repeatedly used metaphors are interpreted by readers as narrow and cliche-ridden, then sportswriting becomes constraining as well. (41:p.220)

As metaphors become "worn in" and begin to sound familiar or even cliched they lose their impact. As Rorty puts it "old metaphors are constantly dying off into literalness" (37:p.16). Once accepted as "literal," metaphors have served their initial purpose of drawing a connection. That connection, now well-known and understood, then needs to be added to. New connections, through fresh metaphors, need to be forwarded to allow continued growth of the understanding of sport.

In criticising sport commentaries, the critic should be concerned to encourage commentaries which depart from the "norm" by redescribing sport by way of new and exciting metaphors and those describing or depicting in unusual ways. As Roberts notes:

> ...the power of redescription lies not only in the production of new ways of seeing and understanding sport action and thus sport, but also in the making of new and different things about them possible and important . (36:p.28)

Additionally, widespread criticism of sport commentaries should encourage the audience to be more aware of what they are watching, hearing and reading about sport. Being aware, and critically so, of what we see and hear and read about sport is, as has been mentioned, a crucial step in allowing for a wider, and indeed richer, understanding of sport.

CHAPTER SIX - CONCLUSION

There is nothing new in linking sport and art. That this link has received little support in philosophic circles, however, is perhaps the result of a tendency to approach the issue metaphysically or essentialistically. This thesis, rather than attempting to show how it can be that sport "is" art, has argued that sport may be seen to function as art does at certain times. By redescribing sport in terms of art and the aesthetic, a greater, or at least alternate, understanding and appreciation of sport might be afforded.

Chapter Two contained a brief exposition of the literature surrounding the issue of sport and aesthetics. Much of it, working within the confines of a perceived "nature" of sport and of art, proved to be less than satisfactory in either claiming or denying that sport is art. This chapter did, however, provide the basic understanding and contrast necessary for embarking on an anti-essentialistic, non-metaphysically based redescription of sport in terms of art and the aesthetic.

The prevailing understanding we have about sport, and most things, is that sport, and what is said about sport, are somehow pre-determined, structured and interminable. In Chapter Three, it was argued that any notions of "truth" or "reality" which do not recognize both the contingency of language and the familiarity of use are unsatisfactory. Moreover, "fixed" truths and pre-determined realities serve to discourage alternate descriptions and thereby restrict the otherwise permitted. It was argued that because humans construct and describe sport to serve their needs and wishes, they are also free to reconstruct and redescribe sport in accordance with

any change to those needs or wishes.

Chapter Four outlined some of the structures currently placed upon art and was particularly concerned with Goodman's theory of symbol systems. An analogy was drawn between found object art and certain sporting events and, further, it was argued that there are several similarities in the functioning of sport and some arts. Sport was then likened to a text, which is then open to the kind of interpretation afforded to literary works.

Chapter Five argued that once accepted as being able to be interpreted like a text, sporting "texts" are then capable of being subjected to the kind of criticism that is seen in art and literature. The place of the media, of commentary and of commentators in reshaping our perceptions of sport was also discussed. It was argued that while immense power is held by the media to redescribe sport in other ways, and in particular in terms of art, this power is rarely utilized. Instead, it was argued, the media has a tendency to adhere to a given formula for sport and does not encourage deviations from that standard.

The ways we choose to describe and portray sport will have a direct influence on how we understand and relate to sport. Sport, like other realms, has been shown to be a human-made, human-described entity. It is not subject to a "type" or pre-determined reality. There is no way that sport "is" or "should be." Sport can and should be described and redescribed. We may combine descriptions, use metaphor and unusual depictions of sport. Some descriptions will be accepted as useful or interesting, others will not. While not all descriptions of sport are equally interesting or useful, it is important that all be seen as "possible" descriptions of sport and not discarded simply

because they do not "fit the norm" by adhering to the formulas set out in the past. The worth of any description is measured by its usefulness in a given situation and by the willingness of many to accept that description.

In describing sport in terms of art and the aesthetic we may come to see something in sport that has previously been overlooked, ignored or deemed unimportant or trivial. Redescription of sport under these terms may have a two-fold effect on sport. Firstly, a different emphasis may emerge to challenge the current play-by-play, statistical and achievement oriented descriptions of sport. By redescribing in terms of art, sport may come to be seen as "softer", more personal and humanistic, it may be more controversial and dramatic, as art often is, and it may be thought-provoking, unusual or bizarre. It may even be boring or foolish or repetitive, but with the provision of criticism it will be so purposely and reflectively. By emphasizing the artistic and aesthetic in sport, it can be shown to have many aspects and can be understood from many perspectives, all of which can claim to be valid descriptions of sport.

Secondly, in accepting that sport is capable of functioning as art does at certain times, it can be also be said that sport should be open to the kind of criticism afforded to art. Criticism of sporting descriptions and depictions, be they commentary, prose or visual, will serve to promote the use of more interesting, more stimulating and more useful descriptions of sport. There is ever the possibility that if the media were critiqued regularly and constructively, more thought and care may be given to the way they describe and portray sport. Additionally, criticism of sport and sporting commentaries may create and awareness of what is being said about sport and of how these

descriptions can shape and influence our understanding of sport. Such an awareness may result in a greater sensitivity to the repetition that is evident in sports reporting at present and may ensure that such practices do not go unchallenged.

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