

---

# Deconstructing Sport History: The Postmodern Challenge

*by Murray G. Phillips*

SCHOOL OF HUMAN MOVEMENT STUDIES  
THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

The crisis in the historical profession today is both conceptual and political, both methodological and practical. To the crises of the decline of great narrative history for the popular audience, the multiculturalist challenge to Eurocentric history, and the loss of faith in grand themes of progress and liberation that provided moral and political guidance through history's lessons, must be added the crisis created by the implications of literary and rhetorical theory for the very practice of history itself.<sup>1</sup>

One of the defining features of sport history, besides the obvious pursuit of sport in a historical framework, is the lack of interest, writing, and critical engagement in issues like those raised in the opening citation of this article. A series of contributions in sport history have detailed the growth, areas of interests, and trends of this relatively new field of history, but precious little is written about the fundamental tenets that govern the production of knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Steve Pope contends: "Most people I know come away from the annual North American Society for Sport History with warm supportive experiences and memories."<sup>3</sup> Pope is alluding to the absence of sessions that directly challenge historical practices, beliefs, and ideas that underpin the production of sport history. There may be a structural reason for this situation, as three leading historians have argued: "Professional historians have been so successfully socialised by demands to publish that we have little time or inclination to participate in general debates about the meaning of our work."<sup>4</sup> While this may well be a valid explanation of the current situation, it does not justify the trend by sport historians to avoid questions about the meaning of their work. Mark Poster makes precisely this point: "What hides behind this argument is the disciplinary rule against self-reflection, the injunction to produce works that add to the font of knowledge rather than question its worth."<sup>5</sup>

In fact, the largest window into underlying assumptions that generate the work of sport historians has not been books or articles entertaining philosophical questions about

historical processes, but polemics between antagonistic historians and sociologists of sport. The essence of the sociological critique, which has a long lineage,<sup>6</sup> is summed up by Horne, Tomlinson, and Whannel when they argue that “history without adequate conceptualisation or theorisation can be little more than a form of antiquarianism—an important retrieval of the past, but decontextualised, an academic and anodyne version of the heritage industry.”<sup>7</sup> In the defence mounted by historians to similar critiques, we gain an understanding of some of the underlying principles of the history of sport. Historians have retorted that sociology of sport is hampered by a number of chronic problems. Sociologists are accused of using specialist and inaccessible language,<sup>8</sup> in contrast to many historians who avoid technical jargon and present their work in a “non-rhetorical, commonsense, communication model of historical writing.”<sup>9</sup> Sociologists are derided for emphasising theory in ways that empirical evidence is selectively used to fit the theory,<sup>10</sup> which agitates those historians who promote forms of empiricism which “let the facts speak for themselves.”<sup>11</sup> Finally, sociological theory is perceived by historians as incapable of coping with the diversity and complexities of the past. Twenty years ago Gerry Glassford argued that sport history “is an area of research which has so many parameters that it will forever refuse to be squeezed into a theoretical mould.”<sup>12</sup> The leading contemporary sport historian, Richard Holt, does not appear to be so dismissive; he advocates eclecticism by suggesting social theory should be used where it fits the evidence and discarded where it does not.<sup>13</sup> The interesting—and disappointing—feature of these interchanges with the questions raised by social theorists is that it has not sparked a thorough and expansive evaluation of the methodological, epistemological, and ontological dimensions of the historical process.

In this sense, sport history is lagging well behind “mainstream” history and other areas of sport studies. One just has to look at articles in *Past and Present*, *American Historical Review*, and *History and Theory*, or a growing library of books, to see that the epistemological status of history and the use of evidence, theory, and narrative are contested, vibrant, and fundamental issues. Similarly, postmodernism has been entwined with recent sport sociology and pedagogy.<sup>14</sup> Yet, as several authors attest,<sup>15</sup> sport history is almost devoid of extended and rigorous debate about these topics. For example, Booth and Jutel compiled the work of a group of international scholars who evaluated “The End of Sports History.”<sup>16</sup> Few of these authors, however, engaged any of the mainstream historiographical debates initiated by postmodernism. Pope’s book *The New American Sport History* is an excellent edited collection of some of the best writing in the field. The focus of this book questions the dominant modernisation of sport paradigm and, relying on Steve Hardy’s emphasis on “long residuals,” supports an understanding of sport by looking at continuities in sporting cultures over time rather than the discontinuity promoted in the modernisation thesis.<sup>17</sup> This is a very important debate about paradigms of conceptualising sport in culture, but the book did not essentially set out to question the production of knowledge in sport history. To a limited degree, Pope has investigated new forms of sport history in his special edition of the *Journal of Sport History*.<sup>18</sup> Despite these welcome efforts, there remains a large void in the field that this article will attempt to fill by specifically delving into contentious methodological, epistemological, and ontological issues. The overall goal is to encourage sport historians to engage with the wider and contemporary re-evaluation of the historical process. In doing so, this article aims to help acquaint

postgraduates and sport historians with debates that are crucial to the work of any historian, whether they are dealing with art, architecture, music, or sport. It is an attempt to question the worth of sport history, as Poster stressed, rather than merely adding to the font of knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

## I

There is little doubt that sport history initially made great strides, to use an appropriate athletic metaphor, in establishing academic credibility.<sup>20</sup> From a fledgling field in the early 1970s there grew several refereed national and international journals, academic associations in many countries, a growing number of sport history books, and an established curriculum in many academic institutions.<sup>21</sup> From these early prosperous days, however, sport history has plummeted in a “downward spiral.”<sup>22</sup> Faced with the emergence, growth, and domination of sport science, and the ascendancy of quantitative, over qualitative, forms of knowledge in physical education, human movement, and kinesiology departments, sport history has been marginalised. While the glory days may have passed, Douglas Booth argues that sport history can be resuscitated by building intellectual relationships with physical education as well as sport science, and by instilling students with the belief in their part “as actors in the processes of intellectual and social change.”<sup>23</sup> Sport history can begin to reclaim credibility and status by not only addressing the issues mentioned above, but by engaging in contemporary debates concerning the broader field of history.

While the recent fortunes of sport history have suffered, the initial establishment of the subdiscipline as a viable and credible field, as many authors point out, had much to do with its alliance with social history.<sup>24</sup> Richard Holt argues that “sport history partly grew out of a new social history fed by the boom in sociology...”<sup>25</sup> and the titles of a number of prominent books—including *Sport in Britain: A Social History* and *Sport in Australia: A Social History*—attest to the links between sport and social history.<sup>26</sup> But more than being a convenient alliance, as Nancy Struna argues, sport history adopted the social history focal points of analysis which have included social class, gender, ethnicity and race.<sup>27</sup> She contends that “the recent literature in sport history can be read as a primer on social history writ large.”<sup>28</sup>

In British sport history, social class has been the dominant foundation for analysis, with many practitioners, following the lead of E.P. Thompsom, having sought to recover working class sport and leisure.<sup>29</sup> Steve Riess reminds us in his article in the *Journal of Sport History* that the social history attention on class extends well beyond Britain to other Anglo-American domains.<sup>30</sup> As sport history concerns have extended beyond class analysis, a similar body of literature has grown on the historical relationship between sport and women, ethnicity and race.<sup>31</sup> The interest in these topics is testament to the social-history-driven agenda of sport history, a point not missed by Catriona Parratt: “Sport history has thrived as a field that takes its philosophical, theoretical, and methodological cues from social history.”<sup>32</sup>

Ironically, as sport history began to blossom in the 1980s and 1990s, new modes of analysis spurred on by the works of Barthes, Bourdieu, Derrida, Foucault, Geertz, Sahllins and Williams challenged the very essence of social history. These works questioned the

central concept of the “social” and questioned categories of the “social,” particularly those analyses centered on the concept of class.<sup>33</sup> Historical investigations based on social structures and economic interests were supplanted by explanations based on images, symbols, rituals, ceremonies and, most importantly, on language. This shift, as Georg Iggers contends, was “part of an effort to break the determinism inherent in the older socioeconomic approaches and to emphasise the role of cultural factors among which language occupies a key place.”<sup>34</sup> It was precisely this process that Bryan Palmer rallied against in his polemical book *The Descent into Discourse* because poststructuralist theory, in his opinion, rendered social class and class conflict useless in historical analysis.<sup>35</sup> Equally important, the postmodern turn questioned causal explanation particularly when the answers were found in the material world of economics and social relations, and questioned the very possibility of social explanation.<sup>36</sup> The “social” began to lose its explanatory power as the search for meaning grew in importance and competed with the view of history as an experimental science in search of laws.<sup>37</sup> Lynn Hunt, Gareth Stedman Jones, and Joan Scott epitomised the new emphasis on history as an interpretative process focussing on meaning.<sup>38</sup> Except for a few examples, the field of sport history has not mirrored this shift in social history.<sup>39</sup> Alarm bells were not sounded in sport history.

Criticisms of social history, and by default sport history, have focussed on methodological, epistemological, and ontological issues.<sup>40</sup> Empiricism, the guiding methodology of social history in the Anglo-American tradition, has come under fire.<sup>41</sup> Jeffrey Hill has pointed out that sport historians in Britain—and few would argue against extending this scope to many more sport historians—have relied heavily on empiricism. This situation, as Hill argues, is quite understandable since empiricism has been the dominant social history methodology, and that sport history, as a relatively new field, was keen to establish its credentials against the recognised benchmark.<sup>42</sup> Methodological orthodoxy in the form of empiricism was probably an astute political choice. The time might be right, however, to entertain different historical methodologies not only because of the institutional destabilisation of sport history<sup>43</sup> but because empiricism has been seriously questioned by the “cultural turn,” the “linguistic turn,” the “rhetoric turn,” what I will collectively refer to in this article as the “postmodern challenge.”

Empiricism has several defining features. It is an evidence-driven methodology in which primary sources and the intentions of the author are considered to provide an untrammelled access to the past. Detailed, meticulous, and critical examination of the documentary evidence (*Quellenkritik*) is used inductively to develop theories of explanation.<sup>44</sup> Ranke’s dictum to let “the facts speak for themselves” is a guiding template in empiricism.<sup>45</sup> The primacy of evidence has had a long lineage in sport history: “Scholars such as Zeigler, Metcalfe and Redmond stressed the need for high quality, credible evidence and that the road to this type of historical evidence is sign posted with terms such as ‘objectivity,’ ‘subjectivity,’ ‘bias,’ ‘probability,’ ‘plausibility,’ and ‘error.’”<sup>46</sup> Students of sport history are still encouraged “to get their hands very dirty in the archives of sport,”<sup>47</sup> and it is the quality of the evidence presented in their findings that enables the work of sport historians to be assessed, reevaluated, and reconceptualised by their peers.

Within this empiricist methodology, the historian is an objective, impartial observer whose final work is impersonal, transparent, and explicit.<sup>48</sup> In this role, the historian is a

reporter-not an author-who reconstructs the past as it actually happened with substantial claims to accuracy and truthfulness. Empiricist methodology, which can range from hard-line reconstructionists like G.R Elton and Arthur Marwick to moderates like Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, is girded by at least six assumptions. It is taken for granted that the past and the “truth” are accessible through the evidence; that facts precede interpretation; that it is possible to distinguish fact from value; that history and fiction are different; that there is a clear distinction between the historian and the sources; and, finally, that “truth” is not a matter of perspective.<sup>49</sup> Postmodernism, as we shall see shortly, questions all these assumptions.

Existing alongside empiricist versions of history is the emphasis on writing style and the advocacy of liberal pluralism. In their final products, historians write, as was mentioned in response to the barbs from sport sociology, with accessible language without resorting to the “jargon” found in other fields. Tony Mangan, longtime editor of *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, sums up this position:

Too much writing in the history of sport, as more than one journal editor can bear witness, is clumsy, simplistic, turgid and unclear. It earns brickbats rather than wins esteem. Clarity of exposure, elegance of presentation, subtlety of perspective are worthy ambitions for the post-millennium.<sup>50</sup>

Sport history is also portrayed as a broad church that preaches about class, gender, ethnicity, race, commercialism, regionalism, nationalism, and imperialism; practitioners write from feminist, Marxist, Gramscian, Weberian, and Eliasian perspectives.<sup>51</sup> Yet, it should be noted, not everything goes to pass as history. Sport history is almost devoid of antifoundationalist critiques such as those that advocate postcolonialist, postmodernist, or poststructuralist positions. One prominent exception, which will be discussed further shortly, is Synthia Syndor’s history of synchronised swimming.<sup>52</sup> This article challenges many aspects of traditional history and was published in a special edition of the *Journal of Sport History* dedicated to new insights in the field into the twenty-first century. I doubt whether the *Journal of Sport History*, or any other sport history journal, would have accepted and published this work under the standard criteria used to evaluate historical scholarship. The advocacy of (selective) liberalism pluralism and “common sense” writing styles, as well as the dominant methodological paradigm of empiricism with its emphasis on realist, objectivist, and documentarist perspectives is, as Keith Jenkins asserts, as ideologically loaded and positioned as postmodern versions of history.<sup>53</sup>

## II

The space between hard-line reconstructionists and postmodern approaches have been occupied by several mainstream historians. Most notably, Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, in their widely cited *Telling the Truth about History*, represent a broad position that I assume is shared by many sport historians. They articulate a historical position that rejects linguistic determinism including the postmodern reduction of the social world to language; rejects the cynicism and nihilism they perceive is endemic in postmodern relativism; rejects anti-realist notions of history; rejects the primary focus placed on the role of the narrative in history; rejects the notion of history as a form of fictional literature or that history is a poetic or literary act.<sup>54</sup> In place of these postmodern positions, they argue for the mid-

ground of “qualified objectivity” of “practical realism.”<sup>55</sup> They fully accept the constraints of language in the pursuit of truth but argue that language is sufficiently in touch with past reality not to totally disrupt the historians work. They advocate a form of relativism in which histories are provisional, with none having the last word. They argue truths may not be absolute, yet they are achievable and worth arguing for. They encourage skepticism, yet believe in the reality of the past and a practical knowability of past reality. They acknowledge the role of narrative in history, yet see this as secondary to social, political and epistemological concerns of historians. They recognise the aesthetic or literary choices historians make, yet consider history’s first consideration is not its literary dimension.<sup>56</sup>

A growing proportion of sport historians falls roughly within the “practical realist” position as articulated by Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob.<sup>57</sup> The common feature of their work is their combination of some dimensions of postmodernism with more traditional versions of history. Of course, the positioning of these sources in the “practical realist” camp is my reading of their works and, using only slightly different criteria, these works could also find themselves in the section on postmodern sport history. The criteria for postmodern sport history that I have employed is the appreciation and application of the representational, not referential, nature of narrative in history. Other historians could quite legitimately use different criteria to draw their “line in the sand,” and some of the following examples of sport history thus would be differently positioned.

New dimensions in sport history that move away from the traditional model of social history were noted by Roberta Park in the middle of the 1990s for an increasing attention to the body within historical accounts of health, fitness, exercise, and sport. For Park, poststructuralist critiques have provided a window of opportunity for what she called “special” histories.<sup>58</sup> Susan Brownell’s pioneering work on the sporting body in China,<sup>59</sup> John Bale and Chris Philo’s re-publication in English of Henning Eichberg’s writings on the body,<sup>60</sup> Allen Guttmann’s pursuit of the erotic in sport,<sup>61</sup> and the growing historical interest in the gendered body are testament to a postmodern trend away from the “social” toward the body in sport.<sup>62</sup> Certainly the body occupies a central place in Douglas Booths recently released *Australian Beach Cultures*: “Bodies are the principle means by which beachgoers systematically and publicly display their cultural identities, and, in so doing, they make the beach a cultural site.”<sup>63</sup> Some sport historians-like their sociological counterparts-argue that placing the body at the center of analysis opens avenues of understanding about sport that have not previously been explored.<sup>64</sup>

Richard Holt’s synoptic analysis of sport history points to other approaches. He details the preoccupation of social class and sport, particularly in British sport history, but acknowledges a growing interest in Eric Hobsbawm’s work on “invented traditions” and Benedict Anderson’s construct of “imagined communities.”<sup>65</sup> Certainly Steve Pope’s *Patriotic Games* utilises much of this conceptual ground very effectively in an American sporting context.<sup>66</sup> Similar shifts are signaled by Jeff Hill in analyzing research such as Jarvie and Walker’s *Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation* that focuses on the “role of sport in giving meaning to social identities” and the notion of identity is extended to the work that looks at sport heroes as “texts” who are “read” by using a variety of literary apparatus to expose multiple meanings.<sup>67</sup> Both Hill and Holt recognise a subtle realignment in sport history from causation to meaning.<sup>68</sup> This trend is also evident in the exploration of the

relationship of sport history with memory,<sup>69</sup> nostalgia<sup>70</sup> and sport museums,<sup>71</sup> and the scholarship that focuses “on the social constructions of sports as multilayered, multi-meaning performances.”<sup>72</sup>

Vertinsky’s *The Eternally Wounded Woman* and Cahn’s *Coming on Strong* are recognised by Catriona Parratt as emblematic of a growing body of work that accommodates postmodern tendencies.<sup>73</sup> Heavily influenced by Foucault’s ideas on knowledge and power, Vertinsky’s book examines the discourses created by nineteenth-century medical experts and their impact on women’s physicality in a variety of settings. Cahn discusses the shifting, competing and opposing discourses created around the historical and contemporary dimensions of female participation in the masculine institution of sport. Parratt argues: “Notwithstanding the differences in focus and emphasis placed on material versus cultural forces in these two works, each seems to me to bring off an accommodation between postmodernist and more conventional approaches.”<sup>74</sup> Vertinsky and Cahn, as well as many of the authors cited above, represent a middle ground between the hard line reconstructionists—those historians who believe it is possible to accurately reconstruct the past by employing absolutist notions of objectivity, reality, truth, and utilising empiricist models—and sport historians who employ radical postmodernist approaches.

### III

If Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob represent the middle ground, and some of the previously cited work represents the sport history equivalents, what is the “other,” the position they have accommodated in some fashion or rallied against? The “other” is often designated as the “cultural turn,” the “linguistic turn,” the “rhetoric turn,” or what I have continued to collectively refer to as postmodern history. The sport history example with which I am most familiar is Synthia Syndor’s history of synchronised swimming.<sup>75</sup> Syndor’s work is structured in a modernist fashion, with headings like origins, definition, literature review, scoring, type of meets, and so on; beyond this framework, and building on the work of Walter Benjamin, it is postmodern history. The reader is provided with fragments, snapshots, and montages; there are no explanations, no analysis. Footnotes are used, but not in a traditional way, because they promote a lack of closure to the narratives in the text. As she states: “You can swim in circles, above and below, without having to gulp a linear argument.”<sup>76</sup> I will spend considerable time identifying the key dimensions that underpin a postmodern version of history, like Syndor’s work on synchronised swimming, because I assume many sport historians have not engaged with the debates or, if they have, have not articulated their responses to the critiques presented by postmodernism.

There are roughly three interrelated tenets of postmodern history that I can discern from the literature. Postmodern history emphasizes a clear distinction between the past and history. It also applies the debate about the role of language, deriving primarily from poststructuralism, to historical knowledge. Finally, postmodern history replaces the question “how is history like and unlike science?”<sup>77</sup> with “how is history like or unlike fiction?”<sup>78</sup> applying close scrutiny to the role of narrative coming.

Postmodern historians advocate a radical distinction between the past—what actually occurred—and history—what historians make of the past.<sup>79</sup> At best historians can offer a selection of the past, but they can never recover the past because its content is limitless. At

best historians can offer an interpretation of the past, but they can never recover the past because the past is gone. At best historians can offer versions of the past viewed through the present, but they can never know the real past because they are of the present. Historians also have the potential to know more than was ever possible in the past because they have access to new documents, ideas, and concepts.<sup>80</sup> A pertinent point in this line of reasoning is that the only way to access the past is as a “text.” Postmodern historians do not deny that the past once existed but emphasize “reading” of the residues of the past as they exist in a historicised record or archive, only available through previous interpretations, by historians with their own methodological practices and approaches.<sup>81</sup> “Textuality, then, is the condition operating in *everybody’s* histories; it is impossible to conceive of history that is not textual; textuality as they say, is ‘the only game in town.’”<sup>82</sup> While historians may or may not agree with these propositions, the common practice is to refuse to acknowledge the textuality of history and collapse the past/history compartments in order to “wring historians out of history and presume to get to the reality of the past.”<sup>83</sup> As Munslow argues: “. . . historians unavoidably impose themselves on the past by inventing narratives as they try to explain what the past ‘really meant’, what the source-text ‘really says’, what the author’s intentions ‘really were.’”<sup>84</sup> The fissure between the past and history means that historians have no option other than to be highly interventionist as the past only becomes history through the strategies of explanation of the historian.<sup>85</sup> Historians can not be wrung out of history, nor can textuality be wrung out of history. Neither of these conditions, postmodernists would argue, is debilitating.

Postmodern historians, in addition, have taken seriously the problematic nature of language as originally exposed by structuralism and more recently by poststructuralism. If language does not directly reflect the world, or if language does not reflect an external reality but is a self-contained set of signs with internal coherence only, what does this mean for history? These propositions question the two key assumptions of empiricism: referentiality that advocates a match between reality and its linguistic expression, and representation that relies on language as an appropriate mechanism to represent the past.<sup>86</sup> In terms of evaluating historical evidence, the problems posed by linguistic theories, as with textuality, have prompted postmodern historians to deny that evidence necessarily leads an untrammelled path to a knowable past, but rather it exposes the investigator to a chain of interpretations. Ankersmit makes an analogy between evidence and tiles: empiricists turn tiles over to see what is underneath in order to erroneously uncover the “truth,” while postmodernists use tiles to transfer to other tiles with no pretense of accurately recovering the past. In a similar vein, postmodern historians contend that it is impossible to discover the intentions of the author.<sup>87</sup> Roland Barthes has argued that attempting to reveal the intentions of the author of evidence is a fruitless task, since the author merely represents further texts and ideologies. Barthes’s “unending roundabout of meanings” may be a little disconcerting, yet many postmodernists dispute the empiricist claim that an evaluation of the intention of the author unquestionably enables sense to be made of the evidence.<sup>88</sup>

The linguistic challenges produce another complicating factor. Not only is evidence subject to linguistic concerns, but written texts as the primary vehicle used by historians to communicate to wider audience are under scrutiny. The criticisms raised by post structuralists have helped to stimulate debate about the role of narrative in history. In sport history,

critical reflections on narrative are rare; when they spasmodically appear in the literature, narrative is predominantly perceived as one, optional, form of historiography.<sup>89</sup> Nancy Struna describes this context: “The relatively short life of sport history as a recognizable academic field of inquiry has produced three distinctive historiographical types: description, narration, and analysis.”<sup>90</sup> Built into these historiographical types is a distinct hierarchy. Descriptions address the basic “who” and “what” questions in a one-dimensional fashion; narrative expresses the more complex aspects of change over time; and analysis—the pinnacle of the hierarchy—examines the challenging issues of the “how” and “why” of modern sport.<sup>91</sup> In her more recent synopsis, Struna indicates that the position of narrative in sport history has not changed greatly over the last fifteen years. Although Struna is less hierarchical, she still contends: “the basic types of history, narratives and analyses, both involve description and analysis, although in varying degrees.”<sup>92</sup> Underpinning this distinction is the belief that there are ways other than narrative for communicating history. Narrative, in other words, is not intrinsic to history.

In total contrast, postmodernists mandate that narrative is an intrinsic, unavoidable, and crucial feature of all forms of history. It is not optional. Narrativists of this persuasion, including Hayden White, Dominick LaCapra, Keith Jenkins, and Frank Ankersmit, stress the largely misunderstood nature of narrative. Narrative is unavoidable because it is history’s primary cognitive device, and narrative is misunderstood because it cannot guarantee truthfulness or objectivity. Many historians might concede that history is about competing historical narratives, but few will countenance that truthfulness or objectivity is impossible. Impossible, postmodernists argue, due to the imposed and contrived role played by the historian in creating a narrative or story version of the past in conjunction with the array of intermediaries that make the past, in its entirety, inaccessible.

Hayden White is one historian who has examined the role of narrative, and whose work has provided a foundation for many postmodern critiques of history. His *Metahistory* and Clifford Geertz’s *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, both published in 1973, are acknowledged as two seminal books with insights that promoted the “cultural turn” in history and anthropology.<sup>93</sup> White’s position in *Metahistory*, and in his following works, is that history is essentially a literary or poetic enterprise in which all historical texts are framed by deep-seated tropes, and more superficial modes of employment, modes of argument, and modes of ideology. White contends that the past did exist, that traces of the past are available in historicised archives and can be understood chronologically, and that these traces are part of the basis, in discursive form, for a historical account.<sup>94</sup> But the critical point for White, and for other narrativists like Frank Ankersmit, is in the shift from the historical statement to the narrative discourse used by historians. Factual statements like “the Victorian Football League consisted of seven clubs when it was formed in May 1877” or “the first Women’s World Cricket Cup was held in England in 1973” are not disputed, but once narrative discourses are imposed by the historian to determine, for instance, why the Victorian Football League or Women’s World Cricket Cup were established, then the historical imagination is the crucial dynamic. The fictive component is the narrative imposed by the historian and, according to White, is evident in all history: the poetics of history is impossible to escape.<sup>95</sup> Therefore historians can create a range of narratives about the reasons for the establishment of the Victorian Football League or the Women’s World

Cricket Cup that “confer on such material/phenomena entirely different meanings, significances and thus interpretations/readings that are *not* mutually contradictory, *not* mutually exclusive, *not* logically entailed, *not* ever definitive...”<sup>96</sup>

Does this mean, as Cohn Howell contends, that historians are joining the “descent into discourse,”<sup>97</sup> or, as Holt argues, that “we get nothing more than a dazzling kaleidoscope of impressions where anything can be construed to mean anything.”<sup>98</sup> Does anarchic nihilism win out? There will always be competing narratives in history, but nihilism does not triumph because, as White argues, narratives can be “assessed, criticized, and ranked on the basis of their fidelity to the factual record, their comprehensiveness, and the coherence of whatever arguments they may contain.”<sup>99</sup> Anything can not be written about anything. Where this debate about the limits of representation<sup>100</sup> is pertinent to sport historians is that it draws attention to the process of the historical production of knowledge.<sup>101</sup> The limits of representation debate amplify the empiricist denial of the historical imagination, uncovers the masquerade of historians writing themselves out of history, and turns attention to the fictive element in all historical writing, that history, as White contends, is as much invented/imagined as found.<sup>102</sup>

Not surprisingly, White created a furor in the historical profession, and his work has initiated debate about narrative in history. This debate has sparked a creative interplay with narrative form in a new genre of history; a sampling of well-known books might include Natalie Davis’s *The Return of Martin Guerre*, Simon Schama’s *Dead Certainties*, James Goodman’s *Stories of Scottsboro*, and John Demos’s *Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story of Early America*.<sup>103</sup> Sport historians, however, have not taken up the challenge raised by the narrative debate. One exception is Michael Oriard’s *Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle*.<sup>104</sup> Heavily influenced by Clifford Geertz’s work on the Balinese cockfight, Oriard has adapted Geertz’s ideas to read American football as a cultural text. Unlike Geertz, he argues that no single reading can provide an appropriate understanding of American football: “I am proposing, then, that football is indeed a cultural text, that it tells a story, that this story is read differently by different groups and individuals, and that these different interpretations change through time.”<sup>105</sup> Oriard reads football through its secondary texts, the popular press, to look at both football as narrative—the distinctive features of the game that differentiate it from other football codes—and the narratives of football—the contrasting, competing, and conflicting readings of masculinity, violence, immigration, and race. While someone like White might criticize Oriard’s reluctance to acknowledge the narratives he chose or did not choose, the narratives he downplayed or overplayed, sequenced or desequenced, ordered or disordered, his book is a remarkable attempt to critically engage with narrative by exploring football as a cultural text through multiple voices and perspectives. Oriard’s book is pioneering in the context of sport history because it typifies a wider trend, identified by Peter Burke as the inventive use of alternate forms of narrative to portray the past.<sup>106</sup>

The emphasis on narrative, as exemplified in Oriard’s work and more broadly in the contemporary debate, has potentially large implications in sport history. The critical appraisal of narrative as representational not referential not only targets those historians who may see themselves as attempting to reconstruct the past with absolute or nuanced versions of truth, objectivity and reality, but those historians who employ social theory. Cer-

tainly in sport sociology, the unreflective use of social theory has been recently questioned and there is a growing interest in experimentation with different forms of qualitative inquiry. In *Talking Bodies: Men's Narratives of the Body and Sport*, for example, the methodological approach eschews empiricism to include "the subjective experiences of men, their multiple senses of self and shifting identities [and] the relationships they share with their bodies."<sup>107</sup> In essence, works of this type, exemplified by the contributions in a recent volume of the *Sociology of Sport Journal*, are attempting to explicitly write the authors into their work by exploring a range of techniques, more literary than traditionally sociological, including autoethnographies, fictional stories, poetic representations, ethnographic drama, and performance texts.<sup>108</sup> The end result is a range of narrative forms and structures that enable the authors' lived experiences to communicate about their bodies and sport.

This concept of writing academics into their work, rather than out of it as demanded by empiricism, is relevant for all historians. It resonates particularly for those historians who use social theory as guiding methodologies or those who practice historical sociology.<sup>109</sup> The issue is that those who explicitly employ social theory in their historical accounts—whether it is Marxist, neo-Marxist, feminist, Gramscian, or any other theoretical work—cannot avoid narratives. They still tell their stories. These historians, in general, do not acknowledge, as Allan Munslow argues, the problematic nature of narrative as a descriptive device, insisting instead "that narrative carries meaning but remains secondary to their conceptualisations and explanatory social theories."<sup>110</sup> The emphasis on narrative is significant because it moves the debate, mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this article, between historians and sociologists to a different level. If the analyses of narrative by White and Ankersmit have credibility, historians must at least engage with the postmodern appreciation of narrative. These are new, very sharp arrows coming from different directions.

#### IV

The archery metaphor I have used above represents the reactionary and defensive response from many historians. Richard Evan's *In Defence of History*, Bryan Palmer's *Decent into Discourse*, and Keith Windschuttle's *The Killing of History* exemplify the contempt for postmodern excursions into social history.<sup>111</sup> I think this situation is an unfortunate, if understandable, reaction because postmodern history obviously challenges many of the tenets of modernist traditional history. This article may elicit similar negative responses from sport historians as working assumptions have been questioned, critiqued, and rejected in many cases.

This article is intended to encourage sport historians to engage with and react to many of the propositions related to the creation and production of historical knowledge. Sport historians probably have three alternatives. They may choose to maintain a "business as usual" approach by ignoring the critiques of the postmodern turn and failing to acknowledge the problematic nature of objectivity, realism, truth, referentialism, language, narrative, and empiricism. The consequence of this approach may well raise questions over the field's future. Sport historians instead may search for a middle ground along the lines articulated by Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob in *Telling the Truth about History*, asking "is there a way to re-conceive representation, objectivity, the past's relation to the present, and

historical meaning which can acknowledge the insights of the Rhetorical Attitude and even some of its postmodern variants without abandoning history or reducing it to propaganda or mere ideology?"<sup>112</sup> This "practical realist" camp includes a growing band of sport historians, some of whose work has been cited earlier, who have engaged with postmodern critiques, made decisions about the production of historical knowledge, and created new, interesting, and challenging versions of sport history. The third option is to wholeheartedly adopt the key tenets of the postmodern turn. These historians stress approaches which demystify the construction of history, pay attention to the process of production of history, emphasise the working assumptions constituting history, and explicitly state the constituted nature of the historicised past.<sup>113</sup> Sydnor's history of synchronised swimming is an example of postmodern approaches in the sport setting.

I believe that the latter two approaches are the better options, because they ensure that sport historians react to the postmodern challenge and engage with methodological, epistemological, and ontological issues—something that has not been a major concern for the field during its development. The "practical realist" and postmodern positions ensure that sport historians engage with the literary devices at work in all historical pursuits, take some semantic control over their work and, ultimately, point out that the postmodern turn—whether accepted wholeheartedly or only in part—may open up new possibilities for producing sports history. In the political milieu of physical education, human movement, and sport science departments in which sport history's fortunes have recently declined, being involved in some shape or form with contemporary historical debates should contribute to the field's status and credibility as, ironically, the links with social history did two decades ago.

- 
1. Robert F. Berkhofer, *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1995), 25.
  2. Synopses of the subdiscipline of sport history have appeared in a number of sources. See, as examples, Melvin L. Adelman, "Academics and American Athletics: A Decade of Progress," *Journal of Sport History* 10(1): 80-106 (1983); William J. Baker, "The State of British Sport History," *Journal of Sport History* 10(1): 53-66 (1983); Douglas Booth, "Sport History: What Can Be Done?," *Sport, Education and Society* 2(2): 189-204 (1998); Allen Guttman, "Recent Work in European Sport History," *Journal of Sport History* 10(1): 35-52 (1983); Jeffrey Hill, "British Sports History: A Post-Modern Future," *Journal of Sport History* 23(1): 1-19 (1996); Richard Holt, "Sport and History: British and European Traditions," in ed. Lincoln Allison, *Taking Sport Seriously*, (Aachen: Meyer and Meyer, 1998), 7-30; Colin D. Howell, "On Metcalfe, Marx, and Materialism: Reflections on the Writing of Sport History in the Postmodern Age," *Sport History Review* 29(1): 96-102 (1998); Arnd Kruger, "Puzzle Solving: German Sport Historiography of the Eighties," *Journal of Sport History* 17(2): 261-77 (1990); D on Morrow, "Canadian Sport History: A Critical Essay," *Journal of Sport History* 10(1): 67-79 (1983); Roberta J. Park, "Research and Scholarship in the History of Physical Education and Sport: The Current State of Affairs," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 54(2): 93-103 (1983); Catriona M. Parratt, "About Turns: Reflecting on Sport History in the 1990s," *Sport History Review*, 29(1): 4-17 (1998); Steven W. Pope, *Patriotic Games: Sporting Traditions in the American Imagination, 1876-1926* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Steven W. Pope, "Sport History: Into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Journal of Sport History* 25(2): i-x (1998); Steven A. Riess, ed., *Major Problems in American Sport History: Documents and Essays* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997); Nancy L. Struna, "In 'Glorious Dissaray': The Literature of American Sport History," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 56(2): 151-60 (1985); Nancy L. Struna,

- "Sport History," in ed. John D. Massengale and Richard A. Swanson, *The History of Exercise and Sport Science* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1996): 143-80; Nancy L. Struna, "Social History and Sport," in ed. Jay Coakley and E. Dunning, *Handbook of Sport Studies* (London: SAGE, 2000): 187-203; James Walvin, "Sport, Social History and the Historian." *The British Journal of Sports History* 1(1): 5-13 (1984).
3. Pope, "Sport History," iii.
  4. Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History* (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1994), 9.
  5. Mark Poster, *Cultural History and Postmodernity: Disciplinary Readings and Challenges* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 48.
  6. See Eric Dunning, Joseph A. Maguire, and Robert E. Pearton, eds., *The Sports Process: A Comparative and Developmental Approach* (Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1993), 4.
  7. John Horne, Alan Tomlinson, and Garry Whannel, *Understanding Sport: An Introduction to the Sociological and Cultural Analysis of Sport* (London: E & FN Spon, 1999), 77.
  8. Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 357-58.
  9. Keith Jenkins, *On What Is History? From Carr and Elton to Rorty and White* (London: Routledge, 1995), 16.
  10. Tony Mason, *Sport in Britain* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 73-77.
  11. Evaluating historical empiricism is the dominant theme in Beverley Souchgate, *History, What and Why?: Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1996).
  12. Robert Day and Peter Lindsay, eds., *Sport History: Research Methodology* (Calgary: University of Alberta, 1980), 188.
  13. Holt, "Sport and History," 24.
  14. Juan-Miguel Fernandez-Balboa, ed., *Critical Postmodernism in Human Movement, Physical Education, and Sport* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997); Genevieve Rail, ed., *Sport and Postmodern Times* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998).
  15. See Booth, "Sport History;" Hill, "British Sports History;" John Nauright, "The End of Sports History!: From Sports History to Sport Studies," in ed. Douglas Booth and Annemarie Jutel, "Special Issue: The End of Sports History?" *Sporting Traditions* 16(1): 5-13 (1999); Parratt, "About Turns"; Murray G. Phillips, "Navigating Uncharted Waters: The Death of Sports History!" *Sporting Traditions* 16(1): 51-59 (1999).
  16. Booth and Jutel, "The End of Sports History," 3.
  17. Pope, *The New American Sport History*, Introduction.
  18. Steven W. Pope, ed., "Special Issue: The Practice of Sport History," *Journal of Sport History* 25(2): 1 (1998).
  19. Poster, *Cultural History and Postmodernity*, 48.
  20. Struna, "Sport History," provides a comprehensive chronology of the rise of sport history as an academic field.
  21. The most recent cosmopolitan survey of sport history is Struna, "Social History and Sport."
  22. Booth, "Sport History," 189; Booth and Jutel, *Sporting Traditions*, 16(1).
  23. Booth, "Sport History," 201.
  24. See Baker, "The State of British Sport History;" Booth, "Sport History;" Hill, "British Sports History;" Holt, "Sport and History;" Howell, "On Metcalfe, Marx, and Materialism;" Pope, *The New American Sport History*; Riess, *Major Problems in American Sport History*; Struna, "Sport History;" Struna, "Social History and Sport"; Walvin, "Sport, Social History and the Historian."
  25. Holt, "Sport and History" 11-12.
  26. Tony Mason, ed., *Sport in Britain; A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Wray Vamplew and Brian Stoddart, eds., *Sport in Australia: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cam-

- bridge University Press, 1994).
27. Struna, "Social History and Sport," 191-96.
  28. *Ibid.*, 191.
  29. Hill, "British Sports History;" Holt, "Sport and History."
  30. For an excellent analysis of sport and social class literature see Steven A. Riess, "From Pitch to Putt: Sport and Class in Anglo-American Sport," *Journal of Sport History* 21(2): 138-84 (1994).
  31. See Jeffrey T. Sammons, "'Race' and Sport: A Critical, Historical Examination," *Journal of Sport History* 21(3): 203-78 (1994); Patricia A. Vertinsky, "Gender Relations, Women's History and Sport History, A Decade of Changing Enquiry, 1983-1993," *Journal of Sport History* 21(1): 1-24 (1994); Patricia A. Vertinsky and Gwendolyn Captain, "American Culture and Representations of the Black Female's Athletic Ability," *Journal of Sport History* 25(3): 532-61 (1998). For a recent survey of the literature on class, gender, ethnicity, race and sport see Struna, "Social History and Sport," 191-96.
  32. Parratt, "About Turns," 4.
  33. Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, eds., *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), Introduction.
  34. Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1997), 133.
  35. Bryan D. Palmer, *Descent Into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990). For a powerful argument built around Palmer's concerns in the context of sport history see Howell, "On Metcalfe, Marx, and Materialism." For a different reaction to the postmodern challenge from another prominent Marxist scholar, see David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry Into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).
  36. Bonnell and Hunt, *Beyond the Cultural Turn*, 8.
  37. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, 126.
  38. Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1383); Joan W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
  39. For a recent sport history book with an emphasis on interpretation and meaning see Douglas Booth, *Australian Beach Cultures: The History of Sun, Sand and Surf* (London: Cass, 2001).
  40. The leader of this critique is Hayden White, whose work emerged from the early 1970s. White's ideas have been utilized by many postmodern writers, particularly Keith Jenkins, and contested by many other historians, but his work has had no visibility in sport history.
  41. Alun Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (London: Routledge, 1998), 181-82. For a full assessment of empiricism in American historiography see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
  42. Hill, "British Sports History," 14.
  43. Booth, "Sport History."
  44. Very few historians have taken induction to the point where they have produced fully fledged theories, as has been the case in some historical traditions.
  45. Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 101-02.
  46. Day and Lindsay, *Sports History*, 189.
  47. Roy Hay, "Sporting Traditions X: Another Viewpoint," *The Victorian Bulletin of Sport and Culture*, 5: 14 (December 1995).
  48. Novick, *That Noble Dream*.
  49. Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 37-38.

50. J. A. Mangan, "The End of History Perhaps — But the End of the Beginning for the History of Sport! An Anglo-Saxon Autobiographical Perspective," *Sporting Traditions* 16(1): 64-65 (1999).
51. Struna, "Social History and Sport," 191-96.
52. Synthia Syndor, "A History of Synchronized Swimming," *Journal of Sport History* 25(2): 252-67 (1998).
53. Keith Jenkins, *The Postmodern History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1997), 15-16.
54. Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History* (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1994).
55. Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, 241-70. For a postmodern critique of Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob's positions on qualified objectivity and practical realism see Poster, *Cultural History and Postmodernity*, 47-59.
56. These views are articulated throughout Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*.
57. The positioning of the following sources in this section also reflects a shift by some sport historians from pursuing the focal points of social history to the traditional concerns of cultural history.
58. Roberta J. Park, "A Decade of the Body: Researching and Writing About the History of Health, Fitness, Exercise and Sport, 1983-1993," *Journal of Sport History* 21(1): 59-82 (1994).
59. Susan Brownell, *Training the Body for China: Sports in the Moral Order of the People's Republic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
60. John Bale and Chris Philo, eds., *Body Cultures: Essays on Sport, Space and Identity* (London: Routledge, 1998).
61. Allen Guttman, *The Erotic in Sports* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
62. See Pope, *The New American Sport History*; Struna, "Social History and Sport."
63. Booth, *Australian Beach Cultures*, 9; see also Douglas Booth, "From Bikinis to Boardshorts: Wahines and the Paradoxes of Surfing Culture," *Journal of Sport History* 28(1): 3-22 (2001).
64. Douglas Booth and John Loy, "Sport, Status and Style," *Sport History Review* 30: 1-26 (1998).
65. Holt, "Sport and History," 18.
66. Pope, *Patriotic Games*.
67. Hill, "British Sports History," 16-17; Grant Jarvie and Graham Walker, *Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation: Ninety Minute Patriots?* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1994).
68. Holt, "Sport and History;" Hill, "British Sports History,"
69. See, for example, Stephen Hardy, "Performance, Memory and History: The Making of American Hockey at St. Paul's School, 1860-1915," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 14(1): 97-115 (1997); Murray G. Phillips, "Public Sports History, History and Social Memory: (Re)presenting Swimming in Australia," *Sporting Traditions* 15(1): 93-102 (1998).
70. See, for example, Pope, *Patriotic Games*; John Nauright, "Trying to Reach Home: 'Real' Baseball, Nostalgia and Hegemonic Masculine American Dreams," *Sporting Traditions* 13(2): 91-97 (1997); Charles F. Springwood, *From Cooperstown to Dyrsville: A Geography of Baseball Nostalgia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).
71. See, for example, Bruce Kidd, "The Making of a Hockey Artifact: A Review of the Hockey Hall of Fame," *Journal of Sport History* 23(3): 328-34 (1996); Wray Vamplew, "Facts and Artefacts: Sports Historians and Sports Museums," *Journal of Sport History* 25(2): 268-82 (1998).
72. Struna, "Sport History," 165; J.J. MacAloon, *The Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); D.J. Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality, 1880-1910* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1983).
73. Parratt, "About Turns," 11-13; Susan K. Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport* (New York: Free Press, 1994); Patricia A. Vertinsky, *The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors, and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1990).

74. Parratt, "About Turns," 13.
75. Syndor, "A History of Synchronized Swimming," 252-67.
76. *Ibid.*, 254.
77. Park, "Research and Scholarship in the History of Physical Education and Sport," 95-96.
78. Brian Fay, Philip Pomper, and Richard T. Vann, eds., *History and Theory: Contemporary Readings* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 2.
79. David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
80. Keith Jenkins, *Re-Thinking History* (London: Routledge, 1991), 54;.
81. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).
82. Jenkins, *On What Is History*, 32.
83. Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 61.
84. *Ibid.*, 67.
85. *Ibid.*, 68.
86. Scott, *Gender and Politics in History* is one prominent example of a historian using literary deconstruction to unpack "gender."
87. Munslow; *Deconstructing History*, 62 (citing Ankersmir). This particular debate has been going on in literary theory since the 1920s and reflects an underlying assumption of "postmodern" literary theory.
88. *Ibid.*, 62-63 (citing Barthes).
89. See Park, "Research and Scholarship in the History of Physical Education and Sport," 97-98; Struna, "In 'Glorious Dissarray,'" 151-54.
90. Struna, "In 'Glorious Dissarray,'" 151.
91. *Ibid.*, 151-54.
92. Struna, "Sport History," 170.
93. Bonnell and Hunt, *Beyond the Cultural Turn*, 2.
94. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).
95. The issues raised by White and other narrativists will be developed further in a number of chapters on the epistemological status of sport history in a forthcoming book, Murray G. Phillips, ed., *Deconstructing Sport History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, forthcoming). For similar issues in a sport sociology context see *Sociology of Sport Journal* 17(1) (2000), including several articles that focus on these issues.
96. Keith Jenkins, *Why History? Ethics and Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1999), 116.
97. This phrase from Howell, "On Metcalfe, Marx, and Materialism," 97, is derived from Palmer, *Descent into Discourse*.
98. Holt, "Sport and History," 18.
99. White in Jenkins, *On What Is History*, 193.
100. For an extended discussion of this issue see Saul Friedlander, ed., *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution"* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).
101. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 29.
102. White, *Metahistory*, ix.
103. These books are cited as sources that have used narrative in innovative ways. See Karen Halttunen, "Cultural History and the Challenge of Narrativity," in Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, eds., *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). 165-81.
104. Michael Oriard, *Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle* (Chapel

- Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).
105. *Ibid.*, 17.
  106. Peter Burke, ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).
  107. Andrew C. Sparkes and Martri Silvennoinen, eds., *Talking Bodies* (Jyvaskyla: University of Jyvaskyla, 1999).
  108. Jim Denison and Robert Rinehart, "Introduction: Imagining Sociological Narratives," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 17(1): 14 (2000); Laurel Richardson, "New Writing Practices in Qualitative Research," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 17(1): 5-20 (2000).
  109. Some examples include Richard S. Gruneau, *Class, Sports and Social Development* (Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1999); A.M. Hall, *Feminism and Sporting Bodies: Essays in Theory and Practice* (Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1996); Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sport* (London: Routledge, 1994); John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986); Stephen G. Jones, *Sport, Politics and the Working Class: Organised Labour and Sport in Inter-war Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992); Joseph Maguire, "Common Ground? Links Between Sports History, Sports Geography and the Sociology of Sport," *Sporting Traditions* 12(1): 3-26 (1995); David Rowe and Geoffrey Lawrence, "Beyond National Sport: Sociology, History and Postmodernity," *Sporting Traditions* 12(2): 3-16 (1996).
  110. Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 55.
  111. Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta, 1997); Palmer, *Descent Into Discourse*, Keith Windschuttle, *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists Are Murdering Our Past* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000).
  112. Fay, Pomper, and Vann, *History and Theory*, 6-7.
  113. Jenkins, *The Postmodern History Reader*, 21.