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# Olympic Games and Historical Imagination:

Notes From the Faultline of Tradition and Modernity

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In modern historical consciousness the Olympic Games have provided a potent symbol of the very nature of history itself. Through the cultural symbols produced by the Olympics, spectators witness depictions of history as a dialogue about change and continuity bounded by the concepts of tradition and modernity.<sup>1</sup> Modern audiences behold rituals purporting to relate to the ancient Greek Olympics, symbolizing historical continuity and implying trans-historical universality between present and past. At the very same time they see athletes marching under national flags compete for patriotic glory, representing a change between ancient and modern historical realities and exemplifying the uniqueness of the contemporary cosmos. The Olympian quest for records clashes with the claims of the modern Olympian ideal—that taking part matters more than winning.<sup>2</sup> Through such processes modern cultures make both their sports and their histories.<sup>3</sup> In particular, the twentieth-century United States has used and continues to use the Olympics as a “highway” to make histories exploring the complex notions of tradition and modernity.<sup>4</sup>

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, societies have been confronted with sweeping global changes engendered by agricultural, industrial, urban, and demographic revolutions. Beset by these transformations many of the world’s cultures have hoped to use highways between tradition and modernity to select the best features of each social pattern. Modern societies seem to want the economic abundance and dynamic power produced by modernization while at the same time they hope to maintain the communal solidarity and comfortable familiarity of more traditional patterns of life. Highways through the old and new, in politics, economics, social relations, art, or any other form of human endeavor, are supposed to merge tradition and modernity. First trains, and then automobiles, spurred the development of

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suburbs in which the old and especially Anglo-American dream of a pastoral home in a sylvan park connected to a job in an urban-industrial place.<sup>5</sup> Modern construction techniques created urban parks preserving the pastoral green spaces of tradition amidst the urban steel landscapes of modernity.<sup>6</sup>

As transportation and architectural technologies construct roads that link tradition and modernity, so does sport. The Uruguayan historian and essayist Eduardo Galeano explains that the invention of modern association football by the English linked ancient traditions of ball games with an emerging global popular culture through “the Esperanto of the ball.”<sup>7</sup> Tradition and modernity thus meet in the twentieth century’s global soccer culture.<sup>8</sup> Modern societies use sports and recreations to manufacture highways connecting tradition and modernity. The sporting spectacle of the Olympic Games, which by the end of the twentieth century has arguably become the world’s most popular, inhabits such an historical context and illustrates both the promises and perils of projects to merge modern and traditional societies. Indeed, historical conceptions of tradition and modernity have everything to do with the Olympic Games—at least those Games that began in Athens in 1896 and have continued through the twentieth century. The contemporary Olympic spectacle confronts spectators with dramatic images of tradition and modernity.<sup>9</sup> Olympic spectacles reveal the dialectical shackles that bind tradition and modernity together as the fundamental blueprint for modern historical interpretation. A contemporary example highlights the dialectic. At the 1994 Centennial Olympic Congress of the International Olympic Committee held in Paris, a “recurring theme” among Third World delegates was their vision of athletes as the last remaining exemplars of traditional communal values in rapidly decaying societies.<sup>10</sup>

Basic definitions of tradition and modernity illuminate the conjunction. Tradition and modernity serve as the fundamental archetypes into which historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and other cultural critics have been dividing societies since the mid-nineteenth century when Ferdinand Tönnies established the model; and Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Max Weber, Louis Henry Morgan, and a myriad of other thinkers elaborated on the basic paradigm.<sup>11</sup> Modern cultures are dynamic, heterogeneous, mobile, complex, progressive, urban, industrial, etc. Traditional societies are static, homogenous, rooted, simple, conservative, rural, agrarian, etc. Although practically any student at a modern university can chart these archetypes, the important thing about them is that they do not exist as separate and discrete entities. They are conjoined so tightly that one cannot imagine one “type” without the other. They are symbiotic in the truest sense of the word. If one died, the other would inevitably perish quickly thereafter. It is through this dialectical connection between tradition and modernity that for at least the last two centuries people have sought to make sense of their histories. The speed at which people travel from one to another, the acids that corrode the old and the alloys which create the new, are bounded by ideas of tradition and modernity.<sup>12</sup>

Historians use the archetypes of tradition and modernity to organize narratives, chart directions, explain continuities, mark conflicts, and predict futures. Without the imagined yardstick of tradition, modernity becomes unmeasurable, and perhaps, meaningless. Since at least the end of the Enlightenment, the paradigms of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* have formed the paradoxical poles of historic consciousness.

In this definition, oddly enough, tradition is not a particularly old concept. In fact, it does not predate modernity. It only came into existence when people felt compelled to explain the difference between their modern world and worlds they imagined had existed in the past.

From such a perspective the ancient Olympics belong not to the world of tradition but to the alien universe of antiquity.<sup>13</sup> The ancient Greeks and their athletic festivals are as far removed from modern experiences as the ball games of ancient MesoAmericans or the lost sporting traditions of pre-literate hunters and gatherers. The Greeks did not practice traditional Olympics. They played very different games.<sup>14</sup>

The modern Olympics, as the Games begun in 1896 are labeled, came into existence in the dialectical cosmos bounded by conceptions of tradition and modernity. As Baron Pierre de Coubertin and the other founders originally planned, the Olympic Games have used traditional and modern means to achieve traditional and modern goals. Coubertin wanted to forge a modern France animated by the values of tradition. He proposed a modern patriotism for France which owed allegiance to traditional aristocratic models of honor and duty. He believed modern Anglo-American sports and games would produce traditional community values for a modernizing nation. He imagined the Olympics creating a modern international army of cosmopolitan athletes united by traditional chivalric honor. He was a stalwart member of the late nineteenth-century French Right, a loyalist to the army and the Church; yet he did not want France to devolve toward the *ancien regime* but instead to progress toward a republican future invigorated by industrial progress and urban power.<sup>15</sup> Like the progressives described in James T. Kloppenberg's trans-Atlantic study of turn-of-the-century Western political culture, *Uncertain victory*, Coubertin sought a *via media*, a middle way, between the templates of modern and traditional cultures. Symbiosis, not division, was the goal of Coubertin's unlikely compatriots in the struggle to find middle ground in modern times, including Max Weber in Germany, Leon Bourgeois in France, Leonard Hobhouse in Great Britain, and John Dewey in the United States.<sup>16</sup>

Coubertin's peculiar semi-progressive philosophy of the middle way led him to propose the Olympics as a site for constructing common ground between the various "isms" of modernity and the communal fealty of the traditional cosmos. From that vantage point he proposed the Olympic Games as "a sort of athletic starting-point for the twentieth century"--a place to begin building the middle passage between the polar constants of modernity and tradition. Coubertin believed Olympism could seamlessly merge tradition and modernism. Rotating the Olympic spectacles between "capitals of the world" rather than constructing a permanent site in Greece became one of the crucial mechanisms for insuring that the Olympics did not fall prey to stale nostalgia for bygone days. "We have not been drawn into the error of constructing a cardboard Stadium to reproduce Pericles, with the hill of Montmartre in the background to replace the Acropolis," Coubertin promised, noting that such an approach would have proved "ridiculous and paltry."<sup>17</sup>

Coubertin's history of the ancient Greek Olympics inaccurately equated the civilizations of antiquity with "tradition" in order to connect them to modernity. The Baron shared this habit of historical falsification with the vast majority of turn-of-the-century European and North American thinkers who conceived of the

classical Greeks as the archetypes of tradition in the modern dialectic rather than understanding them as cultures alien to modern historical consciousness.<sup>18</sup> More important to Coubertin than historical accuracy was the relation between the ideal forms--tradition and modernity. That was, perhaps, even more true for American thinkers who found in sport in general and in the Olympic Games in particular a place to pave a *via media*.<sup>19</sup>

Compared to American thinkers who imagined athletic and social utopias manufactured from the best features of tradition and modernity, Coubertin was a rank amateur. No other nation in the turn-of-the-century world matched the United States in the number or quality of ruminations on how sport could harmonize the communal strengths of traditional cultures with the power of modern urban-industrial structures. American thinkers had literally invented a new political philosophy in which athletics became the *via media*--the cultural highway--which was supposed to connect the best of modern and traditional political and social values.

American thinkers from the dawn of the twentieth century to its dusk have insisted that sport can merge the best of features of traditional culture--community solidarity, the work ethic, devotion to duty, the sentiments of personal connection--with the best features of modern culture--efficiency, productivity, individual liberty, egalitarianism, corporate power.<sup>20</sup> They have connected sport to the emerging technological systems rationalizing modern society and shrinking time and space, and to the dream of a restoration of the imagined balance, order, harmony and community of their histories of the traditional American republic. With the twenty-first century on the horizon, Americans are energetically building "retro" baseball parks to reclaim the halcyon days of the national pastime. These technological marvels are wrapped in a seductive nostalgia that evokes, if not exactly the way things were, then at least the way many Americans wished things had been.<sup>21</sup>

Ideas about sport, while firmly embedded in nostalgia for an imagined past, also play innovative roles in programs designed to reform the modern world.<sup>22</sup> For at least a century American Olympic boosters have created a mythology which asserts that athletics have been since ancient Greek times related to public virtue.<sup>23</sup> American political thought mandates a virtuous citizenry as the cornerstone of republican government, especially since sovereignty ultimately resides with the people. American proponents of sport declare that athletic people are moral people. They insist that athletic nations are virtuous nations. Such claims might have struck the founding fathers, living in an eighteenth-century universe, as odd. After all, Thomas Jefferson wrote that God had made the "breasts" of farmers, not athletes, the repositories for "substantial and genuine virtue."<sup>24</sup> Modern Americans have "America's athletic missionaries," as an early twentieth-century journalist labeled United States Olympians, instead of farmers. "America's athletic missionaries" are scientifically-trained daughters and sons of the republic who can run the rest of the globe ragged.<sup>25</sup>

Yet "America's athletic missionaries" are never regarded, at least by the American media, as completely mechanical creatures. They are not robots programmed for athletic conquest. Such epithets are reserved for the bad guys in American Olympic stories--militaristic Germans, ideologically rigid Russians, joyless Finnish runners, mechanical Norwegian skiers.<sup>26</sup> Many American thinkers clearly understand sport as a social technology. They do not, however, want to employ it to build a sterile, artifi-

cial civilization that would bring joy only to technocrats. When, in 1910, the philosopher William James penned "The Moral Equivalent of War," the fundamental American gospel depicting sport as the reconciler of tradition and modernity, he recoiled from technocratic visions of a future in which technology would replace all human muscle and transmute *Homo sapiens* into a species of beings with gigantic cranial domes whose sole exertion of energy would be "floods of learned and ingenious talk." James revealed that his flesh crept at such a vision. "Fie on such a cattleyard of a planet," cursed James, dismissing plans for the domestication of human nature. Instead he counseled a quest for moral equivalents of war, human-inspired technologies which merged traditional and modern values and guaranteed progress." James wanted less talk and more action. "America's athletic missionaries" have generally obliged.

That title for United States Olympians, "America's athletic missionaries," reveals the combination of traditional and modern themes. For most modern Americans, missionaries are religious figures, belonging to the sacred world of tradition. Athletes are modern types, belonging to the secular modern world. A brief history of "America's athletic missionaries" illuminates how thoroughly the traditional-modern dialectic has shaped American understandings of the Olympic Games.

One seemingly clear example of an American "missionary" effort to impose tradition on modern Olympic spectacles is the effort to prevent competition on the Christian Sabbath at the 1900 Olympic Games in Paris. The story is well known.<sup>28</sup> In this early spectacle, held in conjunction with the Parisian universal exposition celebrating the birth of the modern century, the American entry was not a unified team in the contemporary sense of the term but a collection of collegiate squads and athletic organizations. The American athletic cabal had competed in England at a prestigious track meet in early July and then crossed the channel for the Olympic contests. Learning that the opening of the Paris Games had been scheduled for a Sunday, July 15, athletic officials from various agencies, the Amateur Athletic Union, the American Olympic Committee, and the colleges and clubs, sought an agreement with the French Olympic organizers that Americans would not be required to compete on Sundays. American officials engineered an apparent settlement which moved the starting date to Saturday, July 14.

American traditions, however, soon ran into French traditions. July 14 was Bastille Day, a national holiday in France. The French had no intention of replacing Bastille Day with the new spectacle of the Olympics. The agreement over Sunday competition quickly unraveled, sparking bitter recriminations between French organizers and American officials and an even more bitter internal wrangle on the American team. In fact, support for the Sabbatarian boycott on the United States team was hardly universal. The boycott attempt produced a very strange result. Myer Prinstein, the world's best long jumper at the turn-of-the-century, was banned by Syracuse University from competing on the Christian Sabbath--even though Prinstein was a Jew who celebrated a different Sabbath. When Prinstein challenged the winner, Penn's A.C. Kranzlein, a Christian whose university had allowed him to compete on Sunday, to a jump-off to determine true Olympic superiority, Kranzlein refused. A brawl was averted only by teammates who pulled the squabbling athletes apart. The effort to impose traditional sacred practices--at least the sacred practices of some Christians--appeared to have foundered on the shoals of modern secularism and plu-

ralism. Modernism triumphed and tradition dissolved. Sabbatarian boycotts became a thing of the past.

The story is actually considerably more complex. Most of the American media, in 1900 at least, appear not to have recognized that religious heterogeneity made Sabbatarian boycotts problematic. Instead, led by the leading sporting journalist of the era, Caspar Whitney of *Outing* and *Harper's Weekly*, the press defended the effort to impose sacred culture on secular Olympic spaces through a very modern argument—that American culture needed to be imposed on the globe to destroy ancient tradition and superstition. Indeed, Whitney and his cohorts frequently gave credit for American athletic superiority to a very modern faith in the power of athletic science in the United States. Such paradoxes abound in the history of tradition and modernity at Olympic venues.<sup>29</sup>

In fact, the Sabbatarian crusade to ban secular amusements from American Sundays was itself not so much a long historic tradition as it was a much more recently invented past in the minds of many modern Protestants who had come to believe that their Puritan ancestors never worked on Sundays and spent the entire day in church. Such imagined pasts are difficult to reconcile with the historic record. Add the twist that the American Protestant rejection of the so-called “Continental Sabbath” practiced by Catholics actually marked the Protestants as the “moderns” in the mind of Max Weber and other progressive proponents of the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* school, and the ground between sacred traditionalism and secular modernism becomes even blurrier.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, as Nancy Struna has illuminated in her recent *People of Prowess: Sport, Leisure, and Labor in Early Anglo-America*, the Sabbatarian crusade to control leisure did not get anywhere until it united with the very modern desire to discipline labor. Sabbatarianism represented part of the larger campaign to place work and play in separate compartments under the regulation of modern consciousness.<sup>31</sup> As clocks divided time into discrete units and disenchanting the leisure-based cultures of Western antiquity, so too did proscriptions against playing sports on Sunday mark off labor and leisure in favor of the moderns, changing, as the anti-modern philosopher Josef Pieper lamented, the “very meaning of human existence.”<sup>32</sup>

Sabbatarianism belongs not to the cosmos of ancient and medieval tradition but to the contemporary universe forged by the modern-traditional dialectic. The brilliant cinematic work, *Chariots of Fire*, is part of the modern debate over how to compartmentalize time rather than an atavistic ode to Christian tradition. So, too, are the other Sabbatarian boycotts which continue to intrude sacred concerns on the supposedly secular ground of the modern Olympics. In 1908 at the London Olympics the American hurdler and divinity student Forrest Smithson supposedly ran to victory in world-record time in the 110 meter hurdles with a Bible tucked under his arm as a protest against Sunday competition. A picture of Smithson clearing a hurdle with the Bible in his hand has become a treasured story in modern American Olympic mythology. The photograph, however, was apparently staged since no mention of his unlikely cargo appears in press accounts of the race.<sup>33</sup>

Smithson's intentions, while supposedly representing the intrusion of the old and sacred on the new and secular, were, in fact, very much a part of the modern American design to employ the Olympics to impose certain cultural patterns both in the United States and on the rest of the world. The use of modern Olympic Games and

modern technological media to win culture wars has been a consistent hallmark of American participation in the Olympics. It has become, by the late 1990s and in the modern sense, an American tradition.

That modern tradition is, at this very moment, creating some battles in the culture wars raging around the site for the 2002 Winter Olympics. Salt Lake City, Utah, is the capital of the most unique state in the United States. With at least 70% of the population identifying itself as active members in the Mormon church, Utah is the most religiously homogenous state in the United States--and one of the most ethnically and racially homogenous states as well.<sup>34</sup> Historically, the Olympic Games provides nations and communities with opportunities to showcase their cultures. They also provide nations and communities with opportunities to condemn their own, but mainly other's, cultures.<sup>35</sup>

Anyone who reads the newspaper or watches television news in contemporary Utah understands that fact. The Olympic Games offer a rich storehouse for storytelling, and one that Utah's cultures are finding particularly attractive. The portent of "athletic missionaries" has proven to be a siren call in Utah. Indeed, the missionary impulse in large part explains the desperate pursuit of Olympic status in which Utah's Olympic pioneers have zealously engaged since the 1960s. Many Utahns, particularly the elite who acquired these Games from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), see in the Olympics an opportunity to prove that their "peculiar kingdom" is not really peculiar at all. They declare Utah as resolutely mainstream. The handful who admit that peculiarities still exist claim that such oddities merely add charm and invigorate the state's business climate.<sup>36</sup>

Yet the chance for national and international press coverage of Utah's storytelling efforts is precisely what makes the 2002 Olympics rather dangerous dynamite in the hands of the Chamber of Commerce functionaries, local and state political hacks, and Latter-Day Saint Church leaders who hold the power to shape Utah's Olympic presentations. It is along religious fault lines that divisions will become most evident. In 1926 Utah native Bernard DeVoto, writing from the safety of Cambridge, Massachusetts, lampooned his native state in the typical 1920s high-brow satirical tradition which required of all writers who aspired to national stature that they make fun of their home towns, whether they grew up in Gopher Prairie or Ogden. In DeVoto's amusing and otherwise insightful account in the pages of the *American Mercury*, he declared that "the ancient color of the State is gone. Mormon and Gentile dwell together in amity." Such a startling unifying of ancient hatreds astounds and dismays DeVoto because the religious strife in his opinion had at least made Utah unique. "'We are a peculiar people,' long Zion's boast, becomes the plaintive 'We are no different from other people,'" concludes DeVoto.<sup>37</sup>

In the late 1990s DeVoto, if he were not long deceased, might be heartened that the ancient war has resumed--especially on Utah's playing fields. While intense efforts continue to make sure that the IOC and the international media believe that the dominant local culture is in fact no different from other people, inside the state a different message can be heard. Brigham Young University and the state's media have railed against the NCAA's closing of the so-called BYU exemption that allowed the Mormon university's teams to avoid competition on Sundays.<sup>38</sup> In Provo, home to BYU's campus, political leaders have banned Sunday golf or swimming at city-owned links and pools.<sup>39</sup> The Mayor of Centerville has attempted to shut down base-

ball leagues on "Family Home Evening"--Monday nights that the Mormon church has decreed as times to be spent at home with one's family for all "good" Mormons.<sup>40</sup> We are once again a peculiar people, proclaim elected officials to the affirmation of the religious majority and the dismay of religious and non-religious minorities. 'Shouldn't the Olympic committee be giving Games vs. the Sabbath some serious thought?' jokes Latter-Day humorist Robert Kirby, in a recent edition of the *Salt Lake Tribune*.<sup>41</sup> Neither Provo nor Centerville is located deep in the provincial Utah back country. Both communities are part of the "modern" metropolitan "Wasatch Front," as the greater Salt Lake City area is locally known. These are towns that will host the Salt Lake City Winter Games. That underscores the fact that if Utah's political leaders and the Salt Lake Organizing Committee (SLOC) could figure out how to engineer such a feat without dissolving any pretense of the illusion that they and their brethren are in fact no different from other people, the idea would quickly cease to be the joking matter Kirby portrays it as.

Already, the cry of "Utah values" (which for the religious super-majority means Latter-Day Saint values) has been enlisted in a campaign to attempt to persuade or coerce Olympic megasponsor Anheuser-Busch into pretending it does not actually sell beer.<sup>42</sup> Brigham Young University supports the effort to eradicate beer while at the same time turning down a request for support from a women's rights organization which wants to display tee-shirts made by rape and abuse victims as a part of a national "clothesline" project.<sup>43</sup> One of the state's two major newspapers, the one owned by the Mormon Church, condemns the practice of including a couple of bottles of beer in sample bags provided to the world press corps gathered for an advance scouting trip to the 2002 Olympic site.<sup>44</sup> In the wake of the 1998 Winter Games hysteria, the state's enormously popular governor declared that the campaign to recruit Olympic volunteers should be run in some fashion through the Mormon Church.<sup>45</sup>

As a March 1998 headline in *The Deseret News*, the Mormon church-owned newspaper, noted, the 2002 Winter Games create "A Chance to tell Utah's Story." The headline writer cogently added, "But Which One?"<sup>46</sup> That headline gets to the heart of the matter. Olympic Games, in American history, have always provided chances to tell stories. Those stories usually mix tradition and modernity in interesting ways.

Examining the religious conflicts developing around the 2002 Olympics solely in terms of "traditional" Mormons versus the rest of the "modern" world, misses some important components of the story. Mormonism, as religious historians such as Martin Marty have revealed, is a very modern religion.<sup>47</sup> It dates only to the 1820s and its roots are entwined with the processes of modernization in the United States. While nineteenth-century Mormon communalism represents an anti-modern reaction to a changing economic order, the contemporary Mormon church manifests a very modern organizational structure which shares much in common with modern economic corporations.<sup>48</sup> The popular image of a "pioneer Utah" populated exclusively by Latter-Day Saints is very much an "invented tradition." Mormon culture uses images of tradition to chart its own *via media* in modernity. Indeed, contemporary Utah, dominated by self-described "traditionalists," is among the most urban and technological societies in the late-twentieth century world.<sup>49</sup>

In order to win the 2002 Olympics, however, Utah has traded on its place in tra-

ditional American mythology rather than in embracing its urban modern reality. Just as the religious conflicts created by the Olympics are embedded in the traditional and modern symbols that form contemporary historical consciousness, so, too, does the marketing of the Salt Lake City Games create conflicts around the traditional versus modern dialectic. Salt Lake Olympic boosters continue to sell Utah to the world as the heartland of the American West, home of awesome pioneers, stunning vistas, and the frontier spirit.<sup>50</sup> The “welcome to Salt Lake” episode at Nagano’s 1998 Winter Olympic closing ceremonies featured American West landscapes and cowboys twirling lariats. No “Indians” popped into the fandango, however. That fact angered leaders of Native American groups in Utah.<sup>51</sup> Members of Utah tribes helped win the Olympic bid for Salt Lake City by performing songs and dances to celebrate Utah’s diverse heritage for IOC members and providing gifts of Indian beadwork for Olympic potentates.<sup>52</sup>

Those contributions, however, were forgotten by the image-makers who showed Utah to the world at Nagano. In fact, the mayor of Salt Lake City, Dee Dee Corradini, apparently forgot that anyone even lived in Utah before Mormon settlers showed up in the 1840s. Impressed by the antiquity of Japanese history at Nagano, Corradini gushed, “I don’t know what we’re going to do. We only have 150 years of history.” That chronology was news to the descendants of Utah’s indigenous peoples who have been in the Salt Lake basin for at least 12,000 years. Corradini later claimed that her comments had been taken out of context, and that she had simply meant that Salt Lake City was 150 years old.<sup>53</sup>

Yet Corradini’s mistake is all too common, in the United States and especially in Utah. The myth that history began with the arrival of people of European descent represents a rather common historical mistake in popular American history. Too often American history begins with Columbus, ignoring indigenous cultures and civilizations. In Utah’s Mormon culture this Eurocentric blindness takes on a peculiar shade, filtered as it is through the nineteenth-century racism of Joseph Smith’s *Book of Mormon*. The *Book of Mormon* depicts pre-Columbian American history as a war between light-skinned “good guys” of European blood who are a “lost tribe” of Israel (Nephites) and dark-skinned “bad guys” of Native American blood (Lamanites). All of the great architectural monuments of classical American archaeology from the Anazasi cliff-dwellings of southern Utah to the pyramids of Mexico and Peru, are, in the orthodox Mormon view, the products of Western civilization. They were built by the Nephites who brought Western science with them to the “new world.” The Lamanites are pure savages, responsible for nothing civilized, not even the great ceremonial mounds which dot the Mississippi River’s watershed.<sup>54</sup>

Given that “peculiar” version of history and archeology it is perhaps a relief that no “Lamanites” appeared among the cowboy frolic in Nagano. Still, Utah’s original inhabitants have not given up trying to tell some of their stories at the Olympics. Local tribes, including the Goshutes, Utes, Dine (Navajo), Shoshoni, and Pauite, are seeking Native American inclusion in the SLOC’s planning process. Utah’s governor, Salt Lake’s mayor and the SLOC, have rebuffed those requests. However, the SLOC has unveiled a very modern proposal for including Native American cultures in the Salt Lake Games. They plan to open an Olympic “superstore” to sell, among other things, “traditional Indian” crafts. The commerce in Native American heritage is a thriving business in the modern American West. The archeological monuments

of the Anasazi and other cultures attract millions of visitors every year to Utah and surrounding regions. "Authentic" Indian art commands a global market, competing against pastel and neon "howling coyotes" in the world's imagination as symbols of the American Southwest. Utah's economy makes millions of dollars a year on this very modern trading in traditional artifacts--regardless of the archaeological and historical beliefs of Latter-Day culture. Given the marketability of Amerind cultures, it should come as no surprise that while Native Americans still have not found even token representation in Utah's Olympic power structure, the SLOC is interested in literally selling Indian cultures by offering Native American artwork as "official" Olympic trinkets in 2002.<sup>55</sup>

The organizers of the Salt Lake Olympics will not be the first American Olympic boosters to use Native American images to sell the civilization of the United States. The original creators of "America's athletic missionaries," the American press at the beginning of the twentieth century, also employed "Indians" in that fashion. The media assured American readers that Sac and Fox Indian Jim Thorpe's gold medals in Stockholm in 1912 stood as proof that the United States had no racial barriers in athletics--an assertion contradicted by a myriad of social realities, but embraced, nevertheless, by many reporters. Lewis Tewanima was a Hopi Indian from Arizona who was also one of the United States' premier distance runners in the 1908 and 1912 Olympic Games. In 1908 in an archetypical photograph in the *New York Times*, the press made Tewanima a symbol of a supposedly race-blind society as the runner danced a Fourth-of-July jig for his teammates as the United States Olympic team steamed across the Atlantic to the London Olympics. Among turn-of-the-century mainstream media depictions of Native American dancing--from the superstition of "rain dances" to the subversion of Ghost Dancing--Tewanima's sport transformed traditional ritual into a modern rite for American patriotism. The press transformed traditional symbols into vehicles for selling modern visions.<sup>56</sup>

In much the same fashion, the Salt Lake Olympic boosters, the American press, and the IOC will use Native American images to sell a twenty-first century Olympic Games. Lewis Tewanima spent his earliest years on the sacred mesas of the Hopi Nation, mesas that encompass Delicate Arch. A strange inflatable copy of that natural red rock icon appeared prominently in Salt Lake City's commercial to lure the world to the 2002 Winter Games, beamed around the globe to television audiences watching the closing ceremonies from Nagano. The message beckoned the world's spectators to come to Utah to see the modern Olympics and the ancient landscapes.

In the contemporary global media culture, the road to Salt Lake City intersects with the folk highways Americans have built between their visions of traditional and modern societies. Paradoxically, the ancient red rock shape of Delicate Arch provides both a traditional and a modern signpost at this intersection. It evokes the solid image of tradition for both European and Native American peoples--albeit very different historical traditions. At the very same time Delicate Arch belongs to the "West of the imagination"<sup>57</sup>--the seemingly infinite catalog of images that members of modern societies can access and consume. In Sierra Club calendars or in Edward Abbey's novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, Delicate Arch evokes modern desires to save and protect traditional places.<sup>58</sup> It is not a rock on the plain at Olympia but it has become an Olympic rock. Recognizable exotic landscapes, traditional stereotyped cowboys, modern technological cities, and the complex debates over Sabbatarianism present

spectators with a peculiar combination. In Utah, modernity and tradition set the parameters for the debate over which Olympic story to tell the world. Frames for contemporary historical consciousness continue to be manufactured at Olympic sites.

## Endnotes

1. John MacAloon's work on the modern Olympics as a symbol system influences my view. See his *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1981) and "Olympic Games and the Theory of Spectacle in Modern Societies," in *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, ed. John J. MacAloon (Philadelphia, Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984), 241-280. A case study of tradition and modernity at the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics provided important insights for this work. See Kevin B. Wamsley and Michael K. Heine, "Tradition, Modernity, and the Construction of Civic Identity: The Calgary Olympics," *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 5 (1996): 81-90.
2. Such a clash rests at the heart of Allen Guttman's distinction between "modern" and "traditional" forms of sport in his path breaking *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sport* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).
3. Through the complexities of human social processes people "make," "locate," and "relocate," their sports, as Nancy Struna has illustrated in *People of Prowess: Sport, Leisure and Labor in Early Anglo-America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).
4. Steven Pope, "Negotiating the 'Folk Highway' of the Nation: Sport, Public Culture and American Identity, 1870-1940," *Journal of Social History* 27 (Winter 1993): 327-340.
5. Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); John R. Stilgoe, *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 1820-1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).
6. Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Roy Rozensweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992); Hazel Conway, *People's Parks: The Design and Development of Victorian Parks in Britain* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1991).
7. Eduardo Galeano, *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*, trans. Mark Fried (London: Verso, 1998), 30.
8. William J. Murray, *The World's Game: A History of Soccer* (Urbana: University

of Illinois Press, 1996).

9. The most popular, perhaps, but not the only such movement, as John Hoberman has pointed out in comparing the Olympics to the Esperanto and Scouting movements. John Hoberman, "Toward A Theory of Olympic Internationalism," *Journal of Sport History* 22 (Spring 1995): 1-37. On global spectator culture see Wamsley and Heine, "Tradition, Modernity, and the Construction of Civic Identity." Understanding spectators is crucial to exploring the formation of modern culture as the historian Modris Eksteins has observed: "In modern society . . . the audience for the arts, as for hobbits and heroes, is for the historian an even more important source of evidence for cultural identity than the literary documents, artistic artifacts, or heroes themselves. The history of modern culture ought then to be as much a history of response as of challenge, an account of the reader as of the novel, of the viewer of the film, of the spectator as of the actor." Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), xiv-xv.
10. Christopher Hill, *Olympic Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1996), 257.
11. Bruce Mazlish, *A New Science: The Breakdown of Connections and the Birth of Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Donald N. Levine, *Visions of The Sociological Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Robert A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition* (New York: Basic Books, 1966) and *The Social Philosophers: Community and Conflict in Western Thought* (New York: Crowell, 1973); Doyle Paul Johnson, *Sociological Theory: Classical Founders and Contemporary Perspectives* (New York: Wiley, 1981); Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960).
12. Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932); John Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness: Or The Remembered Past* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968); Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994); Jurgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987); H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought* (New York: Knopf, 1958); Michael Stanford, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998).
13. Especially if one finds any merit in either David Sansone's *Greek Athletics and the Genesis of Sport* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) or, even more radical in its assertions, Julian Jaynes's *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976).
14. In *From Ritual to Record* Allen Guttmann makes this point in a more complex, and a more historical, fashion than either Sansone or Jaynes.

15. MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*; John Lucas, "Coubertin One Hundred Years Ago: His Second American Visit in 1893," *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 2 (1993); and "The Influence of Anglo-American Sport on Pierre de Coubertin--Modern Olympic Games Founder," in *The Modern Olympics*, ed. Peter J. Graham and Horst Ueberhorst (West Point, N.Y.: Leisure, 1976); Sigmund Loland, "Coubertin's Ideology of Olympism from the Perspective of the History of Ideas," *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 4 (1995): 49-78; William J. Morgan, "Cosmopolitanism, Olympism, and Nationalism: A Critical Interpretation of Coubertin's Ideal of International Sporting Life," *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 4 (1995): 79-92; Baron Pierre de Coubertin, "The Meeting of the Olympian Games," *The North American Review* 170 (June 1900): 802-810; and *The Evolution of France Under the Third Republic*, trans. Isabel F. Hapgood (New York: T. Y. Crowell and company, 1897).
16. James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). In fact, Bourgeois apparently lent support to at least one of Coubertin's athletic endeavors. MacAloon, *The Great Symbol*, 198.
17. Coubertin, "The Meeting of the Olympian Games."
18. See, for instance, E.A. Gardner, *Ancient Athens* (New York: Macmillan, 1907); or, Edith Hamilton, *The Greek Way* (New York: Norton, 1942). Donald Kyle makes this point in his article, "E. Norman Gardiner and the Decline of Greek Sport," in *Essays in Sport History and Sport Mythology*, ed. Donald G. Kyle and Gary D. Stark (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1990) 7-44.
19. Mark Dyreson, *Making the American Team: Sport, Culture, and the Olympic Experience* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); S.W. Pope, *Patriotic Games: Sporting Traditions in the American Imagination, 1876-1926* (New York Oxford University Press, 1997).
20. Compare two important essays, one written in 1910, the other in 1995, to see the continuity in American thought about sport and the formation of "social capital." William James, "The Moral Equivalent of War," *McClure's* 35 (August 1910): 463-468; and Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6 (January 1995): 65-78.
21. Dyreson, *Making the American Team*.
22. The vast majority of the American intellectual class was not about to abandon altogether either individualism or many of the familiar axioms of liberal republicanism. Instead, they practiced adaptation and conservation, blending new methods and traditional values in a process which the historian Robert Crunden has identified as "innovative nostalgia," as they marked a path toward a middle ground amidst the flux of change. Robert M. Crunden, *Ministers of Reform: The Progressives' Achievement in American Civilization* (Urbana: University of Illi-

- nois Press, 1984).
23. European Olympic boosters, Coubertin included, made such connections. However, the Americans, especially William Milligan Sloane, the Princeton professor of French history who initially sparked American participation in Coubertin's scheme and who served as the first American delegate to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), mastered the practice. See William Milligan Sloane, "The Greek Olympiads," and "Modern Olympic Games," in *Report of the American Olympic Committee*, 1920 (Greenwich, Conn.: Conde Nast, 1920). Sport has served as an important part of American folklore. It became one of what the historian Eric Hobsbawm has identified as the invented traditions of middle-class historical experience. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
  24. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in David Hollinger and Charles Capper, ed., *The American Intellectual Tradition*, Vol. 1, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 174.
  25. Edward Bayard Moss, *Harper's Weekly* 56 (July 1912): 8-9.
  26. For a history of the development of formulaic American morality tales about the Olympics see, Mark Dyreson, "Scripting the American Olympic Story-Telling Formula: The 1924 Paris Olympic Games and the American Media," *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 5 (1996): 45-80; Mark Dyreson, "America's Athletic Missionaries: The Olympic Games and the Creation of a National Culture, 1896-1936," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1989).
  27. William James, "The Moral Equivalent of War."
  28. In addition, to Dyreson, *Making the American Team*, 64-69; see Allen Guttmann, *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); John Lucas, *The Modern Olympic Games* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1980); and William Oscar Johnson, *All That Glitters Is Not Gold: The Olympic Games* (New York: Putnam's, 1972).
  29. Caspar Whitney, "The Way of the Sportsman," *Outing* 36 (July 1900): 423-424; Caspar Whitney, "The Sportsman's View-Point: Mug Hunters and Disregarded Agreements at Paris Games," *Outing* 36 (August 1900), 566-567; Caspar Whitney, "The Sportsman's View-Point: Broken Faith at the Paris Games," *Outing* 36 (September 1900): 678-679; George Orton, "The Paris Athletic Games," *Outing* 36 (September 1900): 690-692; "Yankee Athletes Barred," *New York Times*, July 16, 1900, p. 5; "Americans Win at Paris," *Chicago Tribune*, July 16, 1900, p. 8; "Seven More Victories," *Chicago Tribune*, July 17, 1900, p. 9.
  30. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1930).
  31. Struna, *People of Prowess*, 29-30.

32. Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture* (New York: New American Library, 1963), 22.
33. Dyreson, *Making the American Team*, 147.
34. Tim B. Heaton, Thomas A. Hirschl and Bruce A. Chadwick, eds., *Utah in the 1990s : A Demographic Perspective* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996).
35. Richard D. Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (New York: Macmillan, 1971); Allen Guttman, *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Mark Dyreson, "Marketing National Identity: The Olympic Games of 1932 and American Culture," *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 4 (1995): 23-48.
36. Katharine Biele, "Losing the Holy Mantle: The Rise and Fall of Tom Welch," *Salt Lake City Weekly*, September 4, 1997; John Harrington, "Utah: A Pretty--Make That Petty--Great State," *Salt Lake City Weekly*, April 3, 1997. For an interesting historical perspective on the continuity of such desires in Mormon culture see Sir Richard Francis Burton, *The City of the Saints, and across the Rocky Mountains to California*, Fawn M. Brodie, ed. (New York: Knopf, 1963; orig. 1862).
37. Bernard DeVoto, "Utah," *American Mercury* 7 (March 1926), 323.
38. "Y. In Trouble If NCAA Allows Sunday Play," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 20, 1998; Patrick Kinahan, "Sunday Play an Old Problem for BYU," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 21, 1998; Kurt Kragtborpe, "NCAA's Decision Tempers BYU's Cougar Classic Victory Celebration," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 23, 1998; Joe Baird, "NCAA to Play on Sunday But Y. Won't," *Salt Lake City Tribune*, April 23, 1998; "Never on Sunday," *Salt Lake City Tribune*, April 24, 1998. Apparently, the NCAA is in the process of reconsidering the policy. Michael C. Lewis, "NCAA Board Changes Mind on BYU Rule," *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 12, 1998.
39. "Golf, Swim on Sunday?," *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 7, 1994; "The Mayor Shanks One in Provo," *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 10, 1994; "No Golf on Sunday?," *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 10, 1994; "Provo Mayor Again Makes Waves By Closing City Pool on Sunday," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 14, 1994; "Into the Drink With This Decision," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 17, 1994; "Non-Mormon clergy in Utah Want Pool Open Sundays," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 27, 1995; Robert Kirby, "Close Pool on Sunday?," *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 28, 1995; Robert Kirby, "Provo Pool Controversy to Make More Waves," *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 30, 1995; Peter Scarlett, "Non-LDS Faiths in Utah County Grow in Small Steps," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 5, 1997; Paul Rolly and JoAnn Jacobson Wells, "Sometimes on Sunday," *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 19, 1997; Phil Miller, "Provo Candidates Awash in Pool Politics," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 4, 1997.
40. Dan Harris, "Mayor Wants to Ban Monday Night Baseball," *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 27, 1998; "Monday Night Baseball," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 1, 1998;

- “Never on Sunday,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 14, 1998; Edward McDonough, “Utah Mayors are Acting Tyrannically,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 3, 1998.
41. Robert Kirby, “Why Not Close State Roads On the Sabbath,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 16, 1998.
  42. Norma Wagner, “Groups: Ban Beer Sponsors In Olympics,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 25, 1998; Steven Oberbeck, “Come 2002, This Bud’s For Utah,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 11, 1998; Pat Capson Brown, “Ban Ads for Sake of ‘Future Beer Drinkers,’” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 15, 1998; Marci Von Savoye, “BYU Student: Drop Beer as Olympic Sponsor,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 25, 1998; Mike Gorrell, “Groups Talk Olympics, Beer,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 14, 1998; Joan O’Brien, “Utah Booze Fight: Health Crusade or a Holy One?,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 3, 1998.
  43. Paul Rolly & JoAnn Jacobson-Wells, “USU Tickets to Final Four Went Out Door With Bell,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 15, 1998.
  44. Tom Barberi, “Some People Never Learn,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 7, 1997; Joy Baltezare, “‘Thirsty for a Booze Debate?,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 7, 1997.
  45. John Harrington, “The Mormon Games,” *Salt Lake City Weekly*, March 12, 1998.
  46. Lisa Riley Roche, “A Chance to Tell Utah’s Story: But Which One,” *Deseret News*, March 8, 1998.
  47. Martin E. Marty, *Religion and Republic: American Circumstance* (Boston: Beacon, 1987); *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984).
  48. Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).
  49. In 1990, 87% of Utah’s population lived in what the U.S. Census Bureau defines as urban areas, making Utah the sixth *least* rural state in the union. Heaton, Hirschl and Chadwick, eds., *Utah in the 1990s*, 16.
  50. This has been not only an American but also a Canadian tactic for selling the Olympics. Wamsley and Heine, “Tradition, Modernity, and the Construction of Civic Identity.”
  51. More than 24,000 Native Americans live in Utah, including 12,000 along the Wasatch front. Jodi Rave, “Tribes Want to Be In On 2002 Games,” *Salt Lake City Tribune*, April 19, 1998.
  52. *Ibid.* See also, Wamsley and Heine, *op. cit.*, who document similar conflicts between Native American and European American groups at the Calgary Games. Indeed, while reporting that Native Americans wanted a larger role in organizing the Salt Lake City Olympics, the *Salt Lake Tribune* noted that the last time the

Olympics had been held in western North America Indian tribes had to threaten an Olympic boycott in order to be included in a meaningful way in Olympic preparations. The *Tribune* interviewed Sykes Powderface, a leader in Canada's indigenous political movement, the Assembly of First Nations, who recounted how Canadian tribes had forced Calgary Olympic officials to open up the 1988 Winter Games to broader participation by threatening to protest Native American exclusion from most of the Olympic venues. Jodi Rave, "Boycott Threat May Have Secured Role," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 19, 1998.

53. Rave, "Tribes Want to Be In On 2002 Games."
54. *The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi*, trans. Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985; orig. 1830). See Mormon Church sanctioned commentaries on the *Book of Mormon* such as Leland H. Monson, *Ancient America Speaks* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1958) or Pat Bagley, *Norman the Nephite's & Larry the Lamanite's Book of Mormon Time Line* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1995). For a different view see Fawn MacKay Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (New York: Knopf, 1945).
55. Jim Harmson, the SLOC's director of licensing, envisions a special section for Indian crafts at the Olympic "superstore" planned for Salt Lake City. Some Native American leaders encourage these business relationships. Ben Sherman, president of the Western American Indian Chamber of Commerce in Denver, approved of the SLOC's plans to market Indian art. "It would enhance the image of Utah to do so," notes Sherman. "It would make practical business sense." Rave, "Tribes Want to Be In On 2002 Games."
56. Dyreson, *Making the American Team*, 206-207. See also, Mark Dyreson, "'America's Athletic Missionaries': Political Performance, Olympic Spectacle and the Quest for an American National Culture, 1896-1912," *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 1 (1992): 70-91.
57. William H. Goetzmann and William N. Goetzmann, *The West of the Imagination* (New York: Norton, 1986).
58. Edward Abbey, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (New York: Avon, 1976).