

issues, such as government funding, sport policy, and effectiveness of the sport system. Canadian Olympians were absolved of responsibility for failure because the explanatory factors for their outcomes fostered sympathy toward the “struggling athletes.” The disappointment narrative in the *Star* was premised on political, rather than moral, causes and fostered determination of more practical identification of problems and solutions.

Knight, MacNeil, and Donnelly weave the disappointment theory intricately into their discussion of the narratives, while still allowing the narrative aspect of the newspaper articles to shine through the paper. The authors have provided a wonderful comparative analysis of the media discourse within Canada and New Zealand surrounding the 2000 Games. This article would be of importance to anyone interested in the contemporary Olympic Games, media analysis and interpretation, and sport as a reflection of nationhood and society.



*Mike McNamee, “Olympism, Eurocentricity, and Transcultural Virtues,”* Journal of the Philosophy of Sport 33, no. 2 (2006), pp. 174-187. Reviewed by Sarah Teetzel.

In this article, Mike McNamee utilizes his extensive background in moral philosophy to apply several philosophical theories, concepts, and ideals to the Olympic Movement. Rather than providing a descriptive account or reconsideration of what Olympism involves and how the notion was conceived of in the past, McNamee focuses on what Olympism should entail from a moral point of view. While Pierre de Coubertin intended the world to embrace Olympism at the universal level, McNamee argues that we must first step back and determine if universal principles exist before we can specify any potential principles for Olympism to celebrate; only then can we move on to analyze critically whether these virtues are in fact universal and transcultural, or if they are primarily Eurocentric in nature.

In order to unpack the notion of Olympism, McNamee asks several challenging questions and cites the views of many influential philosophers on universalism, essentialism, and virtue ethics with respect to the Olympic Movement. The theory and terminology McNamee uses to form his analysis is easy to understand, because of the background information he includes and his addition of relevant and contemporary examples to illustrate each point. Nonetheless, readers with little knowledge of philosophy will find McNamee’s analysis wide-ranging and complex, as he draws on the works of such varied ancient and modern thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martha Nussbaum, Edmund Pincoffs, and Alasdair MacIntyre, among others. From these works, McNamee takes a virtue ethics approach to producing a morally acceptable ac-

count of Olympism based on the virtues and qualities Olympic athletes can reasonably be expected to embody.

In typical philosophical fashion, McNamee asks far more questions than he answers in this article; however, this cannot be considered a serious flaw because the queries he raises are all thought-provoking issues that Olympic scholars would benefit from considering. He challenges the reader to think critically about Olympism and recognize the biases and genetic fallacies associated with most critiques of Olympism. In so doing, McNamee tackles some of the most challenging questions that have been debated among philosophers since the time of the ancient Olympic Games. He questions, for example, whether it is possible to reduce morality to principles; whether virtue ethics can, as Aristotle believed, provide the framework for a universal moral theory; and, if this were the case, what virtues should be celebrated in Olympians and in Olympic sports. Furthermore, McNamee addresses the question of whether the Olympic ideals that form the basis of any discussion of Olympism are transcultural and universal, or if it would be more appropriate to label them Eurocentric and particular. As he points out, "Olympic scholars and administrators blithely talk of 'fundamental universal principles' without realizing that their very existence has (a) been questioned for centuries by Western philosophers and (b) not even been conceived of by Eastern philosophers as a credible ethical posture" (p. 178). McNamee's analysis thus demonstrates the importance of studying Olympism from a philosophical perspective and the need to challenge the International Olympic Committee's claim that Olympism is a philosophy of life that respects universal and fundamental ethical principles.