Playing with ethics?: A Foucauldian examination of the construction of ethical subjectivities in Ultimate Frisbee

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Abstract

Links between instrumental rationality and problematic sporting subjectivities are well established (e.g., Beamish & Ritchie, 2006; Donnelly, 1996; Hughes & Coakley, 1991). In recent years, however, critical scholars have taken an increasing interest in how athletes and coaches might find ways of problematizing their involvement in sport and thus discover new ways of understanding their participation (e.g., Denison, 2010; Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2009; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pringle & Hickey, 2010; Shogan, 2007). Markula and Pringle (2006), Pringle and Hickey (2010), and Shogan (2007) have adopted a Foucauldian perspective to examine how those involved in sport and exercise might undertake a process of ethical self-creation.

This interest in the formation of ethical sporting subjectivities resonated closely with my own experiences as an athlete and coach, and, in particular, my experiences within the sport, Ultimate Frisbee (Ultimate). Subsequently, I was drawn to ask the Foucauldian question: "what forms of problematization and practices of self underpin Ultimate players' creation of an ethical self through an aesthetics of existence?" To examine this question I undertook an ethnographic study of Ultimate, comprising two years of fieldwork as a participant-observer, interviews with fourteen Ultimate players and textual analysis of Ultimate media. I specifically sought to analyse my work using Foucauldian theory and the ethical turn within French postmodernism.

I found a heterogeneous process of ethical self-creation to be evident amongst Ultimate players. Of particular importance in this process were players' multiple understandings of Spirit of the Game, which I interpreted as a

postmodern telos, and their ongoing engagement in practices of self, which were "not something invented by the individual himself [sic]. [Rather] they are models he finds in his culture" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 291). However, I found that differences in players' interpretations of these practices of self, in combination with a few players who appeared to reject these practices, meant Ultimate was not free from conflict, disagreement, or controversy. Ultimate, then, was not an ethical utopia; rather, it offered players possibilities to create their selves as ethical subjects. I added complexity to this understanding of ethics by reconsidering Ultimate through the ethics of the Other. Drawing on Derrida's tactics of clôtural reading, aporia and justice, I theorized ethically problematic aspects of Ultimate which had not been revealed within my Foucauldian analysis.

In this thesis I support moves to integrate postmodern ethical perspectives and subjectivities within sociological studies of sport. Such analyses take seriously the ethical perspectives that individuals and groups have and seek to examine how these understandings influence their sense of self. At the same time, however, ethics is revealed to always be partial and incomplete. In this sense, ethics is a performative project without end. The sociology of ethics which I undertake in this thesis offers possibilities not only for understanding questions of how sporting subjectivities are currently created, but also for considering possibilities of how these subjectivities might be formed differently in the future.

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Prologue: Sporting Journeys

Retirement

The evening sun is beating down and the astroturf radiates the heat its concrete base has absorbed throughout the day. The other team is woeful, as you might expect in a business house summer hockey league. Mind you, my team, or rather, my flat mate Diane's team, is woeful too. I play at the back to mop up the swill. I run over to clean up a loose ball; in one smooth motion I have the ball under control, and dribble it slowly back towards my own goal to create time and space for my five team mates up field of me. Thump! One of the men on the other team crashes into my back and I tumble to the ground. Where did he come from? What does he think he's doing? Why hasn't the ref penalized him? As I lie on the turf with water soaking into my shirt and shorts, I watch him gather the ball and score unopposed. Standing up, I turn to the ref who shrugs his shoulders and signals a goal.

Snap. Fuming, I stalk up field for the restart. Ignoring positional play I chase a ball up field and make an ugly swipe for it when it is trapped by an opponent. I miss the ball and collect their stick. The ball dribbles away to another opponent, again I chase and take another wild swipe, again missing ball and striking stick. The referee, only a few metres away, signals play on. In a rage, I turn to the ref and shout "this is stupid, even if you don't know the rules surely you can referee for danger." The referee does nothing. Out of ideas, I turn and walk off the field, too frustrated to trust myself to play anymore. Shaking, I stand on the sideline. Through my indignant anger, tinges of embarrassment start to seep in as I tell the other subs "this is ridiculous, if the referee doesn't control

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dangerous play, someone will get hurt." I spend the rest of the game on the sideline, inept, waiting for my flatmate, Diane to finish, so I can get a ride home.

There is no escape. I thought I got out three years ago. I did, sort of; its three years since I sent myself off the field, after the referee refused to. That was easy in the end. I don't think Diane really wanted me to play anymore, either. Not on her team, at least. But you can't teach PE, or even history with a bit of PE, without coaching a team. So here I am again. Unfortunately, I'm not the coach that I used to be and it feels like no amount of wishing will allow me to turn back the clock to when I coached boys how to *play* a game instead of instructed boys in how to win and ground my teeth when they failed.

What is it that frustrates me so about each missed tackle, each failed shot on goal? I try to hide my anger, but leave each game hoarse from instructions shouted mid-game. I don't want to be this person and I try not to be. At our early morning practices, I'm fine. Before each game, I'm positive. I try to teach them to play full team, full field hockey. I rotate players through positions to develop a wider range of skills. I want them to respect their opponents, to play to the whistle, and accept referees calls. We talk before games about how to deal with the little shoves, the ugly hacks and I am proud at their resilience under provocation. I don't want my team playing the way I ended up playing and for the most part, school boy hockey is played positively. But in the end, I'm frustrated that I'm feeding them into a club system dominated by people who play like I used to play and refereed by people, who when I talk to them about constant infringing being ignored tell me that I'm talking out of a hole in my head. Enough's enough, I decide.

Rediscovery

The dew glistens on the grass as I stand in the end zone with six of my team mates. As per usual Sunday's games are starting late. Hung-over players from every team are still arriving at the fields as we wait for our opponents, DeLorean, to start the first point of the game by throwing the disc to us. I have a curious mixture of fatigue from yesterday's games and last night's party along with the energy and excitement I feel playing tournament Ultimate. "Rachel and Hamish to handle, Darren to set the stack," calls our captain, Harold, from the sideline. The disc, held up slightly by a cool breeze, cuts a slow arc through the air. I jog forward and to my left to catch the disc, then throw a centring pass to Rachel. Her marker hasn't arrived down field yet, so she has an unguarded throw. She finds Darren on the break side, who sends a picture perfect forty metre backhand throw into our offensive end zone. Grant chases the throw down, his sprinter's technique and power making the score look easy despite being tailed all the way by his defender, and best friend, Robert.

After high fiving Grant, Robert shouts out to his team "last on the line" and begins to sprint the length of the field, racing his fifteen other team mates to be one of the first seven players in the far end zone and thus be able play the next point. We assemble around Grant, high fiving each other and deciding which player each of us will guard. Grant tells me to mark 'the old guy'. None of us know him, which is fairly unusual: everyone knows everyone in Ultimate. Karen thinks his name is Frank and tells us he's visiting from Canada. I saw him playing yesterday; he's got strong throws and he runs good lines but he's not fast. I am confident I can shut him down.

We chase the disc down the field and set up our marks. I shut down Frank's first attempt to get free so he turns and sprints up field. He's a few metres ahead of me, but I'm gaining quickly. I hear Sue shout 'Up!', indicating her opponent has thrown the disc. Looking over my right shoulder I realize the disc is almost on top of me. At almost the same instant, Frank, who at 6'1" is substantially bigger than me, knocks into my left shoulder. I stumble; the disc flies past me and into his hands. As he shapes to throw, I call "Foul!" stopping play. He turns, to me and replies, "no way, you didn't even know the disc had been thrown." I respond, "I had position on you, I saw the disc late, but not too late and you could only catch the disc by pushing me off my line." Shaking his head, he calls, "contest," indicating our discussion has resulted in an agreement to disagree, and returns the disc to the previous thrower.

At the end of the point, I sub off for a rest and ask myself if I made a good call. I didn't get pushed all that hard; I would never consider calling foul in a similar collision playing for my elite men's team, but this is a social tournament and so I did not expect to be bumped. Nevertheless, Frank is a bit annoyed with my call. Our skill sets are quite different; I'm small and agile, he's taller and slower with bigger throws. I can make it really hard for him to get the disc because of my speed and I can see that the situation which had just occurred could easily happen again and again as a result of our two skill sets. When I sub back on a point later, I arrange with my team to mark another player to avoid the potential for the conflict to continue.

After the game finishes, both teams share a huddle. Harold thanks DeLorean for the game, and tells us all he hopes the game helped our hangovers as much as it helped his. After our huddle has finished, I look across to the other

fields. The teams one field over are on their hands and knees in a circle, about to play mini-tanks. Bodies pile on top of each other as people attempt to crawl in a direct line to the opposite side of the circle. The chant of "mini-tanks, mini-tanks" is gradually drowned out by shrieks and groans as players pile up in the centre of the circle. Eventually, a couple of players wiggle their way through the melee and through to the other side, then stand up, cheering the remaining "mini-tanks" on.

The next Tuesday evening, a few of us arrive at training early. I'm pleased to be feeling fresh. I've never recovered from a tournament so quickly; my training is really paying off. Our coaches, Brett and Mitchell, arrive and conversation quickly turns to the tournament on the weekend. "Was anyone from our club in the winning team?" they ask, "Who else was on the team? How close was the final?" It was a social tournament, with teams created by drawing names from a hat, but, after years as elite players, their first concern is winning. "Grant, Hamish, Darren and I made the final," Harold tells them, "but we couldn't shut down Top Gun. They had Aaron, Michael, Andrew and Heath. But they won it with their women. Ours just didn't have the speed or throws to match them."

After warming up, we work on drills practicing marking the thrower. As the marker, we're expected to foul the thrower, so they can practice getting used to contact and playing through it or making the right call. Sometimes we're told to do this in our scrimmages at practice, too. I don't mind the drill but I hate fouling people in a game situation. During a water break, Grant and Michael engage in a mock battle pretending to foul each other with fake punches, elbows and karate chops. Eventually Michael calls "foul!" and stops. Simon jokingly admonishes him, "no, you should have called contact instead, then his team wouldn't get to reset."

Two hours later, we're reaching the end of training. All we have left are punishments. We have to do nine sets of a 50 metre sprint, 10 press ups and 10 sit ups. One set for every drop or throw away in our last drill. Fatigue sets in quickly, but I don't mind. It's easier to do these with the team than by myself and I gradually pull away, finishing a close second behind John. Finishing the sit ups, I remain lying on my back in the mud; my lungs burning, eyes watering, and breath steaming. "Think about worlds, boys" calls out Mitchell, "that's what we're working towards." Brett, always the grumpier of our two coaches tells us "that was better tonight, fellas, but still too many turnovers. You've got to get used to players muscling up on you when you have the disc." I drag myself to my feet and walk to my bag.

Sitting in my car under a street light, I jot down notes from the session before driving home. I want to get the notes done and be on my way, but my mind wanders. I think back to the mixed team I used to play for in England. I remember my shock at our best player's suggestion during a time out that maybe, if we felt like it, we could give the thrower a little bump or nudge when we were marking them. I thought he was joking at the time and never considered the possibility that he might be serious. What sort of Ultimate player would do that, I had wondered. Now I practice fouling throwers and 'muscling up' on defence—an ironic term when applied to anyone my size—twice a week. 'How did I get from there to here?' I ask myself. How can it be that I still feel like I am playing with ethics?

Chapter One: Introduction

In this thesis, I undertake a sociological investigation of the possibilities of ethical subjectivities in sport. In other words, I examine individuals' relationships to socio-culturally formed and located discourses about how self and others should be treated. I consider how individuals' concerns for self and others are implicated in the formation of particular relationships with others and understandings of self. I work from the assumption that many athletes already engage in various forms of ethically important thinking and practice, and that such engagement in ethics can be a key source of meaning and identity in their lives. Subsequently, I call such a project a sociology of ethics: it is an investigation of ethics as a constructed, and therefore sociological, phenomenon.

Taking the lifestyle sport, Ultimate Frisbee (Ultimate) [1], as a case study, I develop a theoretical and empirical sociological examination of possibilities associated with the formation of ethical subjectivities. Drawing on theories of the ethical turn within French postmodernism, I seek to develop new ways of thinking sociologically about sport. While my study is the most sustained, explicit examination of the socio-cultural basis of ethics in sport, I draw extensively on scholars who have initiated the study of ethical subjectivities in sport (e.g., Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pringle & Hickey, 2010; Shogan, 2007) and also establish links to scholarship which draws on notions of power, discourse, and narrative to express similar concerns with athletic subjectivities (e.g., Denison, 2010; Denison & Avner, 2011; Denison & Winslade, 2006; Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2009; Sparkes, 1998, 1999).

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[1] While I acknowledge that as the name of a sport, *Ultimate* is not a proper noun, in this thesis I capitalize it in order to distinguish it from its use as an adjective.

In this introductory chapter, I establish the context of my thesis through examining links between sociology, sport, ethics, and postmodern theory. In doing so, I locate my study in relation to empirical problems related to a range of dominant sporting discourses and establish the relevance of my theoretical approach to considering these problems. In addition, I briefly introduce Ultimate Frisbee, outline the structure of my thesis, and, building on my prologue, reflexively consider how my own biography has influenced this thesis.

Questions of ethics abound in sport. Some are reported as relatively simple and straight forward. As an example, a regional New Zealand newspaper ran a series of stories about spectators abusing a rugby touch judge who disallowed a try which, if allowed, would have led to the local provincial team drawing or perhaps even defeating the visiting team (e.g., Hurndell, 2009a, 2009b; "Touchie flak reflects badly on province," 2009, "Was it a Magpies try?," 2009). The narrative was straight forward; the ongoing abuse the touch judge had been subjected to was inappropriate and should be stopped. Moreover, while investigating this story, I found the newspaper had reported on a series of similar incidents in previous years (e.g., Hurndell, 2006; Singh, 2006, 2008). A similarly straightforward media narrative of disapprobation is apparent with regard to the conduct of parents and spectators at youth sports events (e.g., Fahey, 2011; Koubaridis, 2011; Tapaleao, 2011). However, media reports and public commentary on ethical issues within sport often produce a far more complicated picture.

Sometimes, media reports condemn acts of on-field violence or aggression (e.g., "Abusing an injured opponent?," 2011; Austin, 2009; Bills, 2011; "Brawl finishes game early," 2010; Leggat, 2010a, 2011a; Rattue, 2011), while at other

times they register approval of the same or very similar acts (e.g., Alderson, 2011; Loe, 2011; Parore, 2010; Rattue, 2010). In addition to these conflicting points of view, other media commentators suggest that sports feature grey areas, in which it is difficult to pass ethical judgement one way or another (e.g., Leggat, 2010b, 2011b; Longman, 2011; J. Marcus, 2010).

Three aspects of these common, but somewhat inconsistent media narratives are relevant to my thesis. Firstly, the presence of these accounts implies that ethical ways of thinking are one of the ways in which people might understand sport. Secondly, a wide range of behaviours from those involved in sport are problematic; The popular notion that sport builds good character is called into question by these media reports and by a substantial body of literature in the sociology and psychology of sport (e.g., Arthur-Banning, Wells, Baker, & Hegreness, 2009; Coakley, 2007; Donnelly, 1996; Markula & Pringle, 2006; May, 2001; Messner, 1992; L. Sage, Kavussanu, & Duda, 2006; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). Thirdly, these media reports suggest there is little consensus about what might be ethically relevant or irrelevant, and what might be ethically appropriate or inappropriate within sport. Just as gender (e.g., Fitzclarence & Hickey, 2001; Laurendeau & Adams, 2010; Thorpe, 2010; Wheaton, 2004a), ethnic (e.g., Atencio, 2006; Carrington, 2004, 2007; May, 2001; Newman, 2007) and national identities (e.g., Andrews & Ritzer, 2007; Dyreson, 2008; Falcous, 2007; Knight, MacNeill, & Donnelly, 2005) are constructed in multiple, complex, contradictory, and problematic ways in sport, so too, I argue, are ethical identities.

As yet, however, very few studies of sport have explicitly considered ethics as a sociological phenomenon (for significant exceptions see, Markula & Pringle, 2006; May, 2001; Pringle & Hickey, 2010; Shogan, 2007). Nevertheless,

many sociological accounts analyze significant empirical problems within sport, such as violence (e.g., Atkinson & Young, 2008; Messner, 1992; Pringle, 2009), racism (e.g., Andrews, 1998; Carrington, 2004; King, 1993; Newman, 2007), sexism (e.g., L. F. Chase, 2006; Hickey, 2008; Kay & Laberge, 2004; Laurendeau, 2004; Laurendeau & Adams, 2010; Pringle & Hickey, 2010), homophobia (e.g., Gard & Meyenn, 2000; Muir & Seitz, 2004; Pronger, 1999), and win-at-all-costs attitudes (e.g., Coakley, 2004; Donnelly, 1996; Hughes & Coakley, 1991; Ingham, Blissmer, & Davidson, 1999; Ingham, Chase, & Butt, 2002; Maguire, 2004), which, I argue, are both sociological and ethical. My argument, then, is not that ethical analyses should supplant sociological analyses; rather, it is that by reconceptualizing ethics as a sociological phenomena, we are able to develop new insights into well-established problems within sport.

Broadly speaking, ethical and sociological problems are rife in Western sport. My interest is in examining how alternative ways of producing oneself as an athlete might be created. My study, then, draws on Foucauldian understandings of subjectivity and ethics (e.g., Foucault, 1984, 1988a) to examine how athletes might develop ethical ways of playing sport. I wish to be clear: I am not looking for a utopian alternative to dominant ways of playing sport. Rather, I am interested in the possibilities of localized, contextual, and contingent ways of engaging in sport which are based on a greater concern for self and others. In this way, I seek to reveal both the successes and failures of athletes' attempts to construct their selves as ethical subjects.

Ethical questions within sport have predominantly been addressed through moral psychology (e.g., Donahue, Rip, & Vallerand, 2009; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995) or moral philosophy (e.g., McNamee, 2008; Morgan, 2006; Simon, 2004;

Suits, 1988). Shields and Bredemeier (1995) took a moral psychology approach, and, since their early work (e.g., Bredemeier & Shields, 1986a, 1986b), numerous social psychological studies have been conducted into various aspects of ethics in sport (e.g., Arthur-Banning et al., 2009; Bergmann Drewe, 1999; Chantal, Robin, Vernat, & Bernache-Assollant, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006; Donahue et al., 2009; Kavussanu, 2006; Lemyre, Roberts, & Ommundsen, 2002). Broadly speaking, these studies reveal that athletes, and competitive athletes in particular, tend to be more aggressive towards others, less likely to consider others' welfare and less likely to engage in prosocial behaviour than non-athletes. In this way, psychologists have shown the social context of sport to be a site of problematic ways of treating others. These studies, however, have tended to take a reductionist approach, focusing on quantitative analysis of pre-defined concepts of ethics. Such approaches, I argue, are insufficiently flexible for gaining a sociologically-informed account of ethics in sport.

Philosophers of sport have also regularly considered ethics (e.g., Arnold, 1997; Boxill, 2003; Butcher & Schneider, 2001; D'Agostino, 1988; Dixon, 2003; Feezell, 2004; Keating, 1964; Kretchmar, 1998; McNamee, 2008; Morgan, 2006; Suits, 1988). The approaches taken, broadly speaking, have tended to follow trends within mainstream moral and ethical philosophy. In recent years, the focus within sports ethics has moved from approaches which focus on defining morally right actions in a relatively abstract manner, such as formalism and social contract theory, towards virtue ethics, which is more concerned with how individuals act in virtuous–for example, honest, courageous, or just–ways (Pringle & Crocket, forthcoming). These approaches deserve serious consideration for their

applicability to a sociology of ethics. Thus, I examine them in detail in my literature review.

I have briefly described three fields–sports journalism, psychology of sport and philosophy of sport–which take sports ethics seriously. However, I argue, in a postmodern world which is typified by the fragmentation of identity (Maffesoli, 1996) and widespread disillusionment in grand narratives (Lyotard, 1984), that a sociological account of athletes' understandings of ethics as socially and culturally formed offers a particularly productive way in which ethics can be re-theorized.

Sociology of sport has also revealed a range of problematic behaviours associated with dominant discourses in Western sports. Hughes and Coakley (1991) argued that established Western sports teach athletes the sport ethic, which requires athletes to prioritise the game, team and victory above all else. Similarly, Donnelly (1996) argued that a global understanding of Prolympic sport was becoming dominant, which was elitist and exploitative of athletes. A number of similar critiques have been made, particularly within elite sports, of an excessive emphasis on winning and subsequent problems with athletes doping, playing injured, and engaging in a range of behaviours which are dangerous to self and others (Beamish & Ritchie, 2006; Hoberman, 1992, 2005; Maguire, 2004).

More recently, however, a range of more localized critiques have been produced which retain these criticisms while arguing that these problematic outcomes are only one possible outcome of being involved in sport and that other ways of participating could be achieved (Denison, 2010; Denison & Avner, 2011; Douglas, 2009; Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2009; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pringle & Hickey, 2010; Shogan, 1999, 2007). Pringle and Hickey (2010) and Douglas

and Carless (2006, 2009) examine how athletes have achieved less problematic ways of understanding their participation in sport. Denison (2010; Denison & Avner, 2011; Denison & Winslade, 2006), taking a coaching perspective, argues that discourses of sports science can be critically engaged with in order to coach athletes in a more holistic manner. Shogan (2007), Markula and Pringle (2006), Pringle and Hickey (2010), and Pringle and Crocket (forthcoming) all argue that analyses of sport which combine sociology and ethics can be particularly useful for examining how athletes might participate in sport while retaining critical attitudes towards the dominant problems which sociology of sport has revealed. It is this direction, combining sociology and ethics that I wish to take my thesis.

The move towards incorporating ethical perspectives within sociology of sport is not without wider precedent. Rather, it follows an increasing focus on socio-culturally located interpretations of ethics within diverse fields of research, such as sociology (e.g., Bauman, 1993), feminist theorising (e.g., Butler, 1999, 2005; Davies, 2000; Lloyd, 1996, 2005), geography (e.g., Popke, 2003; D. M. Smith, 2000), international relations (e.g., Campbell & Shapiro, 1999), cultural studies (e.g., Zylinska, 2005), literature (e.g., Di Martino, 2011; Harpham, 1999), and anthropology (e.g., Faubion, 2001; Laidlaw, 2002). This ethical renewal is largely associated with the ethical turn of French postmodernism, which challenges the fundamental assumptions of modernist ethics (Ilcan & Gabriel, 2004; Wyschogrod & McKenny, 2003). I am deeply involved in this project as an athlete, coach, and researcher, thus I now consider how my own biography links with this research.

Fragments of My Journeys with Sports and Ethics

From one perspective, this thesis is a continuation of my undergraduate studies in which I undertook a Bachelor of Physical Education, focusing on the sociology and history of sport, and a Bachelor of Arts, focusing on moral and political philosophy. By the end of my degrees, I was frustrated with the limitations of the modernist theories I had been studying in philosophy and inspired by the postmodern social theories I had gained access to through physical education. Pure philosophy, so far as this notion is still credible, holds no interest for me now. My interest in philosophy is in finding new ways of thinking and understanding the world as I subjectively experience it.

This thesis also arises from my own personal struggle between wanting to win, and wanting to retain a sense of ethics while playing. Although I was highly competitive as a youth athlete, I played with a sense of respect for others. In fact, my high school hockey coach dropped me as captain for refusing to shout at junior players on my team when they made mistakes. However, I found it harder and harder to balance my desire to win with my desire to be a decent person while playing. I never deliberately hurt an opponent, but would do whatever I could get away with on the field and, in many respects, treated my team mates as poorly as I treated my opponents.

Somewhat unusually, I developed these behaviours in my years as an undergraduate student when I was learning about sociological problems in sport, studying moral philosophy, and was active in the local environmental movement volunteering at the local recycling centre and organizing stream clean-ups. In this way, my sporting life was in tension with other aspects of my identity. I was not blind to these inconsistencies, but once I was on the field, I found it hard to

control myself. Eventually, I stopped playing competitive hockey. Yet, as I describe in the prologue, after I stopped playing competitively, I found I had the same problems trying to play socially as well.

After retiring from hockey, I remained involved through coaching at the high schools at which I taught. Again, my frustrations about how athletes treated each other grew and grew. I tried to coach in something of a holistic manner: I developed players' abilities to play in a range of positions, facilitated goal and value setting sessions before each season, and engaged with them about their school work. This was all relatively successful. I coached teams whose conduct on and off the field was, for the most part, excellent. I had an ongoing sense of frustration, however, at my own inability to accept my players' mistakes. Moreover, I was frustrated at the way the high school league was run and how other coaches taught their teams to play. Eventually I tired of continually being placed in a division where my team would face either a loss by five or more goals from teams which would never rest their star players, or games filled with elbow jabs, stick hacks and other forms of gamesmanship from teams whose coaches encouraged their athletes to "win ugly." Looking back, I can see the narrative I constructed at the time was one-sided and flawed. I have no intention in this thesis to judge hockey, or any other sport for that matter, as unethical in such abrupt terms.

My ethical journey with/in sport is also marked by my discovery of Ultimate. It was through playing social pick up Ultimate that I began to reshape my athletic self. Although I initially understood Ultimate to simply be ethical in the same sense I had decided hockey was not, I have also significantly revised my understandings of Ultimate and myself as an Ultimate player and an ethical

person. I now feel that any attainment of an ethical identity should be considered a constant struggle, which is fraught with tension and moments of failure as well as moments of success. Indeed, to a large extent, it was this change in understanding which formed a direct catalyst for this project. My readings of Foucault, Derrida and others have caused me to reflect on my conduct as an Ultimate player, to think of my participation differently and to modify the way I play and the ways in which I understand the game. Moreover, in this thesis, Ultimate forms a case study for a sociological analysis of ethics. It is ethics, not Ultimate that is to the fore of this thesis. However, given that Ultimate is an emergent sport which is not well known, I will briefly introduce the sport.

Introducing Ultimate Frisbee

Ultimate is one of a number of alternative or lifestyle sports whose mythological origins in 1960s counter-culture imbues it with a reputation for being an anti-competitive alternative to traditional team sports (Griggs, 2009a, 2009b, 2011; B. Robbins, 2004; A. Thornton, 1998, 2004; see also, Beal, 1995; Booth, 2003, 2004; Midol, 1993; Midol & Broyer, 1995; Rinehart, 2000, 1998a; Rinehart & Sydnor, 2003; Wheaton, 2004b). A number of those credited with the early development of Ultimate were critical of hypercompetitive discourses within American sports (Leonardo & Zagoria, 2005). As an example, Jared Kass, who helped develop the game while teaching at a summer camp, recalls being concerned that his students:

> ... didn't know what to do with themselves. Many of them clearly came
> from highly competitive environments. Some had already developed an
> abrasive, competitive edge.... Getting them involved in a sport seemed like

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a good thing to do. But in my gut I knew the game should not be overly

competitive. (cited in Zagoria, 2005, p. 4)

Finding an alternative to hypercompetitive sports, then, was a major factor in the

development of Ultimate.

However, as Leonardo and Zagoria (2005) reveal, even in Ultimate's early

years, a number of tensions were evident with regard to how players and teams

approached the game, their opponents and emphasized or de-emphasized the

importance of winning. As an example, Irv Kalb, who founded the Rutgers

University team explains: "My view was this is a real sport that can be played real

competitively" (cited in Zagoria, 2005, p. 10). As the game grew in popularity,

regional differences in how rules were interpreted arose and, at the elite level,

some games during the 1980s and 1990s in the United States were interrupted by

fights between opposing players. Ultimate, then, does not have a pure or untainted

ethical origin which might constitute a binary opposite to the unethical aspects of

more dominant Western sports. Instead, Ultimate is an interesting case study

because it is a site of intense debate about what might be considered ethical

athletic conduct.

Two aspects of Ultimate which underpin these debates do differentiate

Ultimate to some degree from most other Western sports. These points of

difference are that Ultimate is self-refereed[2] and incorporates a code of fair play

called *Spirit of the Game* as the first clauses of its rules (World Flying Disc

Association, 2009, see also; Griggs, 2011; Leonardo & Zagoria, 2005; B.

Robbins, 2004; see Appendix A for a copy of the World Flying Disc Association

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[2] However, many elite tournaments in North America offer teams the choice of using observers, who make line calls and, if asked by both players, can offer a final perspective on a disputed play.

rules). Griggs (2011) suggests that Ultimate's success as a self-refereed game within the United Kingdom is largely because players agree about the manner in which the game should be played. This allows the game to flow despite many players having only a rudimentary knowledge of the rules. In his tongue-in-cheek book, *Ultimate: The greatest sport ever invented by man*, American-based writer and Ultimate player, Tony Leonardo (2007) argues "Spirit of the Game is utopian–but it's better than having your entire sport corrupted by dopers, unrepentant cheaters and beat writers" (p. 22). However, I wish to be clear that the meanings players associate with Spirit of the Game and self-refereeing are discursively produced in particular contexts. Neither self-refereeing nor Spirit of the Game has a stable or essential meaning beyond what those playing the game attribute to them. Subsequently, I have focused on the ways in which meanings were produced by my participants.

Players are empowered to make all refereeing calls on the field (World Flying Disc Association, 2009). Most calls stop play immediately. When one team makes a call with regard to the actions of a particular opponent, that opponent has the option of agreeing with the call or contesting the call. Most calls, then, result in a stoppage in play and brief discussion between the players concerned. The rules are structured so that if the call is uncontested, that is, both teams agree that the call is correct, play is restarted in a manner which resembles as closely as possible what would have happened had the foul not occurred. If, however, the teams disagree about the call, it is considered to be "contested," and the disc will be brought back into play with the last player to have had uncontested possession of the disc.

For clarity, I will briefly describe the structure of play. As an example, if a player drops a disc that has been thrown to them and attributes the drop to their marker colliding with them, they may make a foul call. If the defender agrees a foul occurred, the player who dropped the disc will restart play with the disc in the position where they dropped it. If the defender disagrees that a foul occurred, then the call is contested, and the disc will go back to the player who made the previous throw. This is because they were the last person to have had 'uncontested' or undisputed possession of the disc.

As Griggs (2011) explains, Ultimate is a team sport "which marries a number of invasion games, such as American football and netball, into a simple, yet demanding game" (p. 98). Like netball, the game is largely non-contact and players cannot run with the disc, thus they attempt to advance the disc up field by passing the disc amongst their team mates. Goals are scored by catching a thrown disc in an end zone, similar to that of American football. The defending team can win possession either by intercepting a pass, or by pressuring the offense into throwing the disc into the ground or out of bounds.

There is significant variation in the way Ultimate is played from social to elite levels (B. Robbins, 2004). I found elite level Ultimate to be a serious, highly demanding and competitive undertaking, for which players make significant personal and financial sacrifices. Elite players follow similar training routines to other elite athletes: lifting weights, doing sprint training, agility and skill drills. They are required to learn complex strategies; most teams develop play books which players must memorise. At tournaments, elite teams carefully monitor playing time, fluid and food intake, and devote extensive time to warming up and cooling down. In these respects, elite Ultimate has strong similarities to

traditional, competitive team sports insofar as continually improving one's performance and aiming for victory are important goals (cf., Beamish & Ritchie, 2006; Guttmann, 2004; Hughes & Coakley, 1991; Maguire, 2004).

In contrast, social Ultimate tends to be a laissez-faire activity. Levels of commitment, skill and fitness vary significantly. Social Ultimate players often associate themselves with the sport's mythological counter-cultural roots. Subsequently, having fun is emphasized and attempts to pursue tactics intended to maximize chances of winning might be rejected in favour of involving every player, and playing with flair. I found at social tournaments, some players might play drunk, or miss games on Sunday mornings trying to sleep off hangovers. Yet, due to Ultimate's relatively small player numbers, particularly in New Zealand, where I conducted the bulk of my research, the lines between elite and social players can be blurred. In this way, Ultimate might be seen as a hybrid (cf., Shogan, 1999) of both alternative (Midol, 1993; Midol & Broyer, 1995; Rinehart, 1998a, 2000; Rinehart & Sydnor, 2003) and achievement sport (Beamish & Ritchie, 2006; Coakley, 2007; Guttmann, 2004; Maguire, 2004).

Ultimate is played in a variety of formats. The major divisions are: mixed, which requires teams to match each other for gender point by point; women's, in which only women play; and, open, in which anyone can play, but there is no requirement to match for gender. At the elite level, open is only played by men, and the women's and open grades are generally regarded as higher status than mixed grade. Subsequently, open and women's typically attract the top athletes of each gender. In this respect, and with respect to how mixed teams assign marks, Ultimate tends to reinforce binary understandings linking gender and ability to

one's biological sex (A. Thornton, 1998, 2004). In addition to gendered divisions, there are also age-based masters and youth divisions.

Most Ultimate is played as a seven-a-side game on grass pitches with unlimited interchange substitutions allowed after each point. However, team numbers and the playing surface and size are regularly modified. In many countries, indoor Ultimate is relatively popular. Indoor Ultimate is played as a 4-a-side game in New Zealand using a basketball court and a five-a-side game in Europe, using a handball court. Beach Ultimate is also usually played on a smaller pitch as a five-a-side game.

Many Ultimate aficionados consider tournament Ultimate to be the most exciting and enjoyable form of Ultimate. Tournaments take place over a weekend, or, for some elite tournaments, over a full week. These are often intense experiences as players spend large amounts of time together as a team, but also with other teams, not only playing, but also watching other games, attending tournament parties, and driving to and from the tournament location. Tournament Ultimate is closely tied to the development of the game. As an emergent sport with low playing numbers, semi-regular weekend tournaments hold significant importance as they allow players from geographically diverse areas to play each other without having to travel long distances every week.

Previous studies of Ultimate reported on data from non-elite mixed grade Ultimate (e.g., A. Thornton, 1998, 2004), or from a combination of mixed and open Ultimate at a social level (e.g., Griggs, 2009a, 2009b, 2011) and from social through to elite levels (e.g., B. Robbins, 2004). Although all these studies examined some ethical aspects of Ultimate, such as self-refereeing and Spirit of

the Game, none of these studies, on my reading, offered an extended focus on the formation of ethical subjectivities.

B. Robbins (2004) used game theory to analyse the formation of group norms at three levels of Ultimate. B. Robbins' study, then, is based on a specific subject, namely the rational subject who is orientated towards the maximisation of pleasure. In contrast, I do not regard the subjects of my study to be pre-formed, but, instead, consider the ways in which they form their selves as subjects through playing Ultimate. Griggs' (2011) examination of the rules and ethos of Ultimate was also quite different from my approach. Griggs compared Ultimate to modernist ethical theories such as duty-based ethics, or formalism, and social contract theory. Again, Griggs has undertaken his research with a pre-formulated rational subject. I address formalism and social contract theory in my literature review.

My thesis is driven by a concern that in the context of their involvement in sport, many people treat their selves and others in highly problematic ways. Although I do not imagine that a utopian solution exists which might fully resolve these problems, I nevertheless argue that it is important to examine possibilities of less problematic ways of engaging in sport. Retaining a broad sense of ethics as a concern for oneself and for others, in this thesis I examine how Ultimate players understand and engage in ethics.

The Research Process

For clarity, I now briefly describe the structure of my thesis. In chapter two I explain the philosophical assumptions that underpin this research. I begin by positioning my work within two branches of postmodernism. Firstly, Foucauldian theorising: I draw extensively on Foucault's concepts throughout this thesis, so it

is important that I outline my understanding of these concepts. Secondly, I explain the ethical turn, which I also consider to have underwritten my approach throughout my thesis. I then focus on my methodological assumptions, namely my ontological and epistemological beliefs which constitute my interpretivist research paradigm. I discuss how these lead to particular consequences for how I conduct and write my research.

In chapter three, I conduct a critical review of literature. This review is broad in scope; I begin by considering how sporting subjectivities have been theorized within dominant and alternative Western sporting contexts and how sports ethics have been constructed. This leads to an examination of how Foucauldian ethics has been applied within sociology of sport and the anthropology of moralities. I conclude my review of literature by stating my prime research questions. Chapter four outlines my ethnographic research method. I used extended fieldwork as well as purposefully selected in-depth interviews and documentary analysis to investigate my research questions.

In chapters five, six, seven and eight, I discuss my findings from my analysis of ethical subjectivities within Ultimate. I present these findings thematically. Chapter five examines the problematizations and idealized ethical subjectivities which the Ultimate players I studied expressed. Chapters six and seven each examine three practices of self that Ultimate players used in order to embody their idealized ethical subjectivity. Chapter eight challenges the understandings of the first three findings chapters by examining the ethics of the Other. In chapter nine, I draw conclusions from my study and relate these conclusions back to critical issues within sociology of sport, postmodern ethics, and Foucauldian theorizing.

Chapter Two: Research Philosophy

In this chapter, I outline the philosophical assumptions which underpin my thesis. The broad empirical concern for how athletes treat their selves and others in sport has been addressed from a range of philosophical positions including positivist (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995), social constructionist (e.g., Hughes & Coakley, 1991), and critical postmodernist (e.g., Denison, 2010; Douglas & Carless, 2006; Pringle & Hickey, 2010). As a postmodern qualitative researcher, I recognize that my philosophical assumptions are pivotal in how I understand and frame the problem I am examining, namely, the formation of ethical subjectivities in sport. Subsequently, the coherence of my project does not rest simply with the identification of an empirical problem, but also with a consistent and meaningful engagement with the assumptions on which I base my research. In this chapter, then, I make explicit my postmodern research philosophy. I begin by explaining my interpretation of postmodernism and position myself within two strands of this diverse world view; namely, Foucauldian theorizing and the ethical turn. I then define my research paradigm.

Postmodernism

Using Best and Kellner's (1997) terms, I describe myself as a moderate postmodernist. In contrast to the nihilistic rupture with modernity proposed by philosophers such as Debord and Baudrillard, I see the postmodern as "a radicalization of the modern, which intensifies modern phenomena like commodification, massification, technology and the media to a degree that generates genuine discontinuities and novelties from the modern world" (Best & Kellner, 1997, p. 26). In this way, I understand modernity as an interpretation of an historical period which, beginning with the Enlightenment, saw the rise of

processes such as industrialization, secularization and bureaucratization. Such phenomena have not disappeared within postmodernity; rather, they have intensified in ways which exacerbate the fragmentation of lived experience.

Following Bauman (1993), I interpret the development of postmodern worldviews as a product of the instability wrought by modern ways of living:

> It is because modern developments forced men and women into the condition of individuals, who found their lives fragmented, split into many loosely related aims and functions, each to be pursued in a different context and according to different pragmatics–that an "all-comprising" idea promoting a unitary vision of the world was unlikely to ever serve their tasks well and thus capture their imagination. (Bauman, 1993, p. 6)

In this way, the postmodern interpretation of fragmentary identities is produced by, for example, the modern separation of religion from the state, the division between one's working life and home life and inconsistencies between cultural identities and the borders of nation-states. From this perspective, we might interpret postmodernity to be a set of theories arising from fractures within modernity. In this way, then, the postmodern exists alongside, and in tension with, the modern.

Modernity was not simply a set of historical circumstances; it also involved a series of assumptions about reality, knowledge and truth. Modernity, then, involves specific ways of thinking about the world. Postmodernity, to a large extent, consists of a series of attempts to produce new ways of thinking about the world. Following Foucault (2000b), I wish to question certain doctrinal elements

of modernity, while acknowledging and engaging with the attitude of modernity, which Foucault describes as "a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era" (p. 312).

The doctrinal elements of modernity which I contest primarily relate to the separation of power from knowledge, and the belief in an objective truth. Consequently, from a postmodern perspective "culture is no longer perceived as a process toward progress nor as a linear historical trajectory of humans toward some predetermined end" (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, p. 5). With regard to modernist or Enlightenment understandings of objectivity and truth, I assert, following Foucault, (1972, 1977, 1978, 2001), Derrida (2001, 2005, 2008), and more recently, St. Pierre (2011), that, in this particular sense, we never have been modern. Rather, goals of objectivity and uncontested truths have always been illusory; postmodernism, from this point of view, signals the recognition of the futility of these notions.

These postmodern critiques of modernity have much in common with poststructuralist assumptions. Indeed, Foucault's analysis of discourse and Derrida's early delineation of deconstruction offer a clear critique of the structuralism of Saussare and Levi-Strauss (Andrews, 2000). However, as Best and Kellner (1997) argue, much of Foucault's work was a reinterpretation of Nietzsche, whose work is widely regarded as forshadowing the development of postmodern thought. Moreover, the ethical turn, which I will outline in more detail below, is not simply a critique of structuralism, but a questioning of the assumptions of modernist ethics and morality which arose during the Enlightenment. Subsequently, in this thesis, I align my work within postmodernity

rather than poststructuralism as my work fits within postmodernity's broad critique of knowledge, truth, power, order, and morality.

As Best and Kellner (1997) argue, however, such a postmodern position does not necessitate a retreat into nihilism. While we must give up the possibility of a transcendental critique, we can instead seek to offer locally, socio-historically contextualized critique. Following Richardson and St. Pierre (2005), I argue "having a partial, local, and historical knowledge is still knowing" (p. 961). While we must give up the possibility of a future utopia, we can strive for meaningful localized change in the contemporary moment. As Foucault (2000c) argues:

> My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism. I think that the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger. (p. 256)

Whereas modernity created a sense of assurance in the certainty offered by notions of objective knowledge and uncontested truths, I interpret postmodernity to embody a sense of discomfort which continually demands that researchers ask new questions of their selves and their research. My interest in developing more nuanced understandings of ethics is a response to this sense of discomfort.

As Best and Kellner (1997) emphasize, there are multiple strands of postmodernity which should not be regarded as synonymous. I specifically position myself within Foucauldian theory and the ethical turn. In the following

section, I offer my reading of Foucault's key constructs; namely power, knowledge, discourse, truth, subjectivity and ethical self-creation.

Foucauldian framework

I have extensively drawn on Foucault's work to develop this thesis and interpret other literature. Although I have become increasingly open to additional ways of thinking and theorizing (e.g., Bauman, 1993; Critchley, 1992, 1999; Derrida, 2005, 2008; Levinas, 1969, 1998; Wittgenstein, 1997), Foucauldian theorizing is at the heart of this thesis, thus I address his oeuvre in both this section and my literature review. While all of the Foucauldian concepts which I discuss in this section are relevant to my project, Foucault's later understandings of truth, subjectivity, and ethics form the prime philosophical constructs through which I have structured my analysis of ethical subjectivities in sport. Thus, I devote significant attention to these concepts in particular.

Relations of power

Foucault's writing "reconceptualizes the location, modalities and exercise" of power (Rail & Harvey, 1995, p. 168). Foucault offers multiple understandings of power, such as disciplinary power, bio power, and relations of power, as well as linking power to knowledge and discourse (Markula & Pringle, 2006). My specific focus here is on how Foucault understands power as exercised in interpersonal relations. In this sense, Foucault (1977) views power as "a network of relations, constantly in tension, in action, rather than a privilege one might possess; that one should take as its model a perpetual battle rather than a contract regulating a transaction or the conquest of a territory" (p. 26). Power, then is relational and productive; it is something exercised through interactions between individuals and groups. It is not a coercive threat of force from the state, but rather

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a strategy that is played out in the countless interactions between individuals and groups that occur on a daily basis. Given this relational formation of power, L. F. Chase (2006) observes that "power is not static or ever solidified but rather constantly in motion" (p. 235).

People invest power to influence others' behaviour. However, for Foucault (2000d), relations of power always involve the choice to take part by both parties. Thus, L. F. Chase (2006) characterizes power as "a relationship between actors who are free to act and resist" (p. 234). This choice to take part means that although power relations may well be unequal, "they are not univocal; they define innumerable points of confrontation, focuses of instability, each of which has its own risks of conflict, struggles, and of an at least temporary inversion of the power relations" (Foucault, 1977, p. 27). Power relations, then, are inherently unstable as they are an attempt to control the actions of others with no guarantee of success.

Foucault acknowledges that it is possible for highly unequal power relations to become entrenched in which whatever resistance is possible is unlikely to lead to lasting change. However, he calls these situations states of domination to distinguish them from more fluid power relations (Foucault, 2000a). This is a crucial distinction as it reinforces that power, for Foucault, is not fundamentally about domination and that freedom is present wherever power is to be found. Thus, according to Foucault (2000a), the idea of freedom outside of power relations is naively utopian: Liberation from one set of power relations simply leads to the establishment of new power relations.

Foucault's conception of power offers useful insights into Ultimate. Traditional Western sports have a number of well-defined power relations,

particularly those between match officials and athletes, and coaches and athletes. Because Ultimate is self-refereed, there are no match officials, and as an emergent sport there are few coaches; the majority of teams rely on team members to perform any coaching duties. This does not mean that Ultimate is free from power relations; rather it means that, to a certain extent, a different set of power relations operates within Ultimate than within traditional institutionalized sports.

Power within Ultimate does not appear to emanate from a sovereign-like source, such as a referee or coach, whose status within sporting discourses leads them to possess what Foucault (1978) might consider to be a "terminal form" of power. Instead, in Ultimate power is primarily exercised asymmetrically in relations between players. This is most obviously the case for refereeing calls for which players on the pitch have sole responsibility. When a player on the pitch makes a foul call, their opponent can make a number of responses. They might agree, disagree, or even challenge the legitimacy of the call entirely. Each of these responses constitutes an attempt to produce particular social relationships and subjectivities. There is no certainty of outcome, but the power invested will produce particular effects, such as conformity, productivity, or resistance. Thus the focus is on how power "shaped and enabled rather than distorted or inhibited action" (D. P. Johns & Johns, 2000, p. 224). Because power is present in every interaction, Foucault argues that any analysis of the operations of power should focus on a "micro-physics of power" (1977, p. 26). Thus, a Foucauldian analysis of power would begin with an examination of minute, everyday phenomena.

Discourse

Foucault sees discourse, or fields of knowledge, and power not as identical, but certainly as inseparable. He argues:

Power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power

relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor

any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time

power relations. (Foucault, 1977, p. 27)

Any given field of knowledge endorses particular relations of power. In turn,

these relations of power reinforce its correlative field of knowledge as legitimate.

Analysis of discourses reveals they are "neither logical nor linguistic" (Foucault,

2000e, p. 11). Rather, discourses are formed organically with assumption,

prejudice, myth, and habit being concealed by claims of rationality and

objectivity.

The power relations between a coach and an athlete are typically based on

discourses of sports science and pedagogy (Denison, 2010; Shogan, 1999). Sports

science and pedagogy justify the coach-athlete relationship and in turn are

justified by the production of the coach-athlete relationship. Discourse is only

possible when relations of power can be exerted in particular ways. Thus, sports

science did not exist as a discursive field until the playing out of particular power

relations established sport as a practice that should be studied by scientific

methods. Likewise, although flying discs had existed for years, Ultimate did not

exist until 1968 when a particular set of power relations played out that lead to the

creation of a set of rules that constituted Ultimate's discourses as a field of

knowledge and a bodily practice (for the origins of Ultimate see, Leonardo &

Zagoria, 2005). Quite simply, Ultimate was not developed as a field of knowledge

until a group of flying disc enthusiasts agreed to submit themselves to following a series of ideas developed by a few members of that group.

Moreover, power and discourse are not formed in a static manner, rather, "they are 'matrices of transformations'" (Foucault, 1978, p. 99). Thus both power and discourse are part of a "complex and unstable process" (Foucault, 1978, p. 101); at one point a particular discourse might reinforce a relation of power, yet at another point, that field of knowledge might destabilize the same relation of power. An excellent example of this within Ultimate is the working of gender relations within mixed Ultimate. Mixed Ultimate teams must field either three men and four women, or four men and three women for each point. The team starting on offense chooses the gender split ratio for that point and the defence are obliged to match this.

This rule regarding gender has the appearance of endorsing power relations that are relatively equal; neither gender is given a permanent numerical preference, and this could be the basis for games which are gender inclusive, rather than gender exclusive. However, as Thornton (1998) notes, many teams match up players on opposing teams exclusively by gender, without any regard for the possibility of some women being stronger players than some men. Thus discourses of gender in mixed Ultimate at one point support inclusive relations of power between genders, but at another point work to destabilize inclusive relations of power by enforcing segregation by gender within each team. In this way we can see that discourse is linked to the power relations through which mixed Ultimate teams set their line for each point and assign marking roles with regard to the opposing team.

Discourse should be seen as acting in multiple and complex ways (Markula & Pringle, 2006). J. Wright (2003) argues that "it is through discourse that meanings, subjects, and subjectivities are formed" (p. 36). Discourses are a series or set of statements and practices that refer to a particular time, place and phenomenon (Markula & Pringle, 2006). However, discourses are not linear or continuous, for "discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1978, p. 101). While the notions of power and discourse remain fundamental aspects of Foucauldian theory, his later work increasingly focuses on relationships between the subject and truth. Foucault's work on relationships between the subject and truth has received little examination within sociology of sport, thus I now move on to examine the changing ways in which Foucault regards truth.

Truth

Foucault's distinctive tactic throughout his career was to historicize questions of truth (Besley & Peters, 2007). In doing so, he refutes any attempt to attribute knowledge with an ontological status beyond that of an arbitrary human construction. However, within his earlier work Foucault:

> ... treated truth as a product of the regimentation of statements within discourses that had progressed or were in the process of progressing to the stage of a scientific discipline. In this conception, the subject, historicized in relation to social practices, is denied its freedom or effective agency. (Peters, 2003, p. 210)

Simply put, Foucault's early work is criticized for creating theoretical analyses in which subjects were controlled by regimes of truth. Regimes of truth, within Foucault's early work, are "linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it" (Foucault, 1980, p. 133).

While Foucault never refuted this understanding of truth, he changed both his focus of study and his methodology as his career progressed. He summarizes his work as focusing on:

> ...three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects. The first is the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of sciences.... In the second part of my work, I have studied the objectivizing of the subject in what I shall call "dividing practices".... Finally, I have sought to study–it is my current work–the way a human being turns him–or herself into a subject. (Foucault, 1982, p. 208)

Within this third stage of his career, he became interested in a new aspect of truth.

This shift in orientation towards truth occurs in relation to Foucault's admission:

> Perhaps I've insisted too much on the technology of domination and power. I am more interested in the interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination, the history of how an individual acts upon himself, in the technology of self. (Foucault, 1988b, p. 19)

Subsequently, in his later work, Foucault's interest is "not so much on what is true and what is false, but on our relationship to truth" (Foucault, 2000f, p. 327). As Flynn (1985) argues, this shift in thinking retains Foucault's "anti-Platonic stance, historicizing and instrumentalizing a concept [truth] that classic metaphysics held to be timeless and intrinsic" (p. 533).

Thus, within Foucault's later work he talks of truth games, which he understands to be:

> ...a set of rules by which truth is produced.... it is a set of procedures that lead to a certain result, which, on the basis of its principles and rules of procedure, may be considered valid or invalid, winning or losing. (Foucault, 2000a, p. 297)

Just as Foucault links knowledge to power relations, he links games of truth to games of power.

However, by introducing of games of truth, Foucault incorporates a conception of an historically produced and constrained freedom. In contrast, then, to regimes of truth, within "a given game of truth, it is always possible to discover something different or more or less modify this or that rule, and sometimes even the entire game of truth" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 297). Subsequently, Foucault's interest shifted towards how individuals understood the possibilities which were available to them within particular games of truth and how they might critically pursue these possibilities in order to deliberately form their self as a certain type of subject. Whereas Foucault uses the concept of discourse to examine how

certain individuals–such as the insane, the poor, and criminals–were constituted as objects, he uses games of truth to emphasize an understanding of discourse which offers a range of possibilities through which an individual might produce their self as a subject.

The subject

Throughout his work, Foucault retains a strongly anti-essentialist understanding of the subject (Markula & Pringle, 2006). The subject, for Foucault (2000a), "is not a substance. It is a form, and this form is not primarily or always identical to itself" (p. 290). In this way, Foucault emphasizes an understanding of self that is always contextual, performative and contingent. According to Besley and Peters (2007):

> For Foucault there is no such thing as universal necessities when it comes to human nature; indeed, there is no such thing as human nature; nothing that is that we can advance a theory about which is valid for all ages and across all cultures. (p. 5)

Instead, identities are constructed through the workings of specific games of truth and power relations.

This does not mean, however, that an individual's identity is merely a consequence of truth games and power relations. This is because games of truth and power relations do not dominate the subject; rather, they offer the subject multiple possibilities for producing their self. This contingency precisely means the "self is not given to us" (Foucault, 2000c, p. 262). Subsequently, Foucault argues, the self is a form which we can–and should–actively create. It is this

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aspect of Foucault's oeuvre which I specifically seek to engage with to develop an understanding of how Ultimate players might work on their selves as a project of ethical self-creation. This development in Foucault's thinking can be placed within what has been termed the *ethical turn* within French postmodern theorizing (Voloshin, 1998). Foucauldian ethics forms a central part of my thesis, so I now extensively and critically review the theoretical assumptions on which it is based before describing the ethical turn.

Foucault's Ethics

In an interview, Foucault summarizes his academic work as consisting of three central questions:

(1) what are the relations we have to truth through scientific knowledge, to those "truth games" which are so important in civilization and in which we are both subject and object? (2) What are the relationships we have to others through those strange strategies and power relationships? And (3) what are the relationships between truth, power and self? (Martin, 1988, p. 15)

In asking the third question, Foucault (1984, 1988a) turns his focus to ethics. Foucault's ethical theorizing, which examines the ethics of the ancient Greeks, Romans, and early Christians, offers a way of analysing ethics in its specific socio-cultural and historical forms (Faubion, 2001; Laidlaw, 2002).

In the second and third volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1984) develops an ethics based on "the forms and modalities of the relation to self by which the individual constitutes and recognizes himself *qua* subject" (p.

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6). For Rajchman (1986), Foucault proposes "an ethic of who we are said to be, and, what, therefore it is possible for us to become" (p. 166). This focus on historically and discursively created possibilities of building an ethical subjectivity leads Foucault, in something of a contrast to his earlier works, to explicitly locate a notion of freedom within his ethical theorizing (Laidlaw, 2002).

Freedom

Foucault (2000a) outlines his understanding of freedom most clearly in one of his later interviews, arguing "freedom is the ontological condition of ethics. But ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection" (p. 284). However, those who emphasize liberation, according to Foucault, are misguided, as liberation "completely misses the ethical problem of the practice of freedom: how can one practice freedom?" (p. 284). Freedom, then, is both the precondition for, and central question of, ethics. Faubion (2001), commenting on Foucault's linking of freedom and ethics suggests:

> Foucault distills the ethical into that *rapport a soi* or "relation of the self to itself" that manifests itself as the "considered (*reflechie*) practice of freedom," a practice always analytically distinct from the moral principles and codes to which it has reference. (p. 85, emphasis in original)

Ethics, then, is based on critical reflection by a subject about the possible ways of life available to them and practices which arise from this reflection. Similarly, Laidlaw (2002) argues "actively answering the ethical question of how or as what one ought to live is to exercise this self-constituting freedom" (p. 324). Subsequently, ethics cannot be reduced to a set of principles or rules.

The freedom Foucault (2000a) describes is quite different to the Enlightenment conception which understands freedom as a form of liberty from external control. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, freedom, like power, is something that is exercised, rather than possessed. This is because, for Foucault, the key questions of our existence relate to the practices through which we give shape to our lives, and, subsequently, the ways in which we choose to constrain our own freedom to act. Secondly, freedom "takes different forms, in different historical situations" (Laidlaw, 2002, p. 323). Subsequently, the freedom that Foucault envisions "is of a definite, historically produced kind. There is no other kind" (Laidlaw, 2002, p. 323). In his ethical turn, Foucault retains the anti-humanist approach which had been prominent in his earlier work (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Foucauldian ethics, then, do not allow individuals to escape from the workings of discourse or power relations; rather, Foucauldian ethics outline possibilities for reflecting on these and adopting particular strategies within the workings of discourse and power relations.

Technologies of the self

Noting that ethical and moral codes have not changed much over time, Foucault decided "to substitute a history of ethical problematizations based on practices of the self for a history of systems of morality based, hypothetically, on interdictions" (1984, p. 13). This change in focus from codes of behaviour to one's relationship to a code of behaviour suggests that "to be engaged in ethical practice is to become aware of *how* one's actions and behaviours are shaped by standards" (Shogan, 2007, p. 165, emphasis in original). As Rabinow (2000) clarifies, Foucauldian ethics is "a disentangling and re-forming of the (power and thought) relationships within which and from which the self is shaped and takes

shape" (pp. xxxv-xxxvi). To engage in this process, according to Foucault (1984), requires use of technologies of the self.

Examining ancient Greek ethics of sexuality, Foucault (1984) found that Greeks were not interested in behaviours which were explicitly banned but rather how to use one's freedom appropriately: they problematized how to act when one was faced with a range of acceptable choices. Foucault argues the "moral reflection of the Greeks on sexual behaviour did not seek to justify interdictions, but to stylize a freedom–that freedom which the 'free' man exercised in his activity" (1984, p. 97). Thus, Foucault distinguishes between rules of conduct and ways of abiding by rules of conduct: there can be multiple ways of abiding by a set of rules and also multiple reasons for abiding by a set of rules.

For Foucault (2000c), the ethical dilemmas of the ancient Greeks hold similarities to those we moderns face today. He suggests:

> I wonder if our problem nowadays is not, in a way, similar to this one, since most of us no longer believe that ethics is founded on religion, nor do we want a legal system to intervene in our moral, personal, private life. Recent liberation movements suffer from the fact that they cannot find any principle on which to base the elaboration of a new ethics. They need an ethics, but they cannot find any other ethics than an ethics founded on so-called scientific knowledge of what the self is, what desire is, what the unconscious is, and so on. (Foucault, 2000c, pp. 255–256)

Like the ancient Greeks, our ethical lives are wrought with ambiguity; we no longer believe in the possibility of a universal, unambiguous moral code (cf.,

Bauman, 1993). This ambiguity offers individuals opportunities to "actively problematise the codes that govern her actions" in order to actively create their self as an ethical subject (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 140).

Foucault (1984) identifies a process through which ancient Greek men formed their selves as ethical subjects. He calls this process the mode of subjectivation. The mode of subjectivation is made up of four components: ethical substance, mode of subjection, ethical work and telos. Faubion (2001) suggests the components constituted "four primary questions" we should ask "of any given ethical project, the answers to all of which must be derived from the discourses and practices of a given sociocultural environment" (p. 90). For Deleuze (1988), subjectivation is the process of creating a subject by "folding" the outside back on itself:

> It is as if the relations of the outside folded back to create a doubling, allow a relation to oneself to emerge, and constitute an inside which is hollowed out and develops its own unique dimension. (p. 100)

In this way, Deleuze emphasizes that the self that forms the focus of the mode of subjectivation is not an insular, pre-existing self; rather it is a self created by folding aspects of discourse and power relations to form an "inside." Thus the ethical self that is created through the mode of subjectivation is far removed from the independent autonomous subject of Cartesian rationality.

The first aspect of the mode of subjectivation is identifying an ethical substance. Foucault describes this as "the way in which the individual has to constitute this or that part of himself [sic] as the prime material of his moral

conduct" (Foucault, 1984, p. 26). To form an aspect of self as one's ethical

substance is to render this aspect of self problematic. In the context of sport and

exercise, Markula and Pringle (2006) suggest "these aspects can be acts, desires or

feelings, but also one's body shape or health that serve as the material that, for

some reason, needs to be problematised" (p. 141). Thus, the ethical substance is

that part of our self that we see as problematic; this aspect of subjectivation does

not, however, explain why we find this aspect of self to be problematic.

Next, the mode of subjection refers to "the way in which the individual

establishes his [sic] relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it

into practice" (Foucault, 1984, p. 27). As Markula and Pringle (2006) suggest,

mode of subjection establishes "why one should engage in ethical work" (p. 141).

This has typically been understood in terms of a normative obligation to follow

rules. However, Faubion (2001) argues:

> ...for any and every such standard that might be at issue, the concept of the
> rule (if not too vague) is too narrow; it at least seems to run the risk of
> excluding other sorts of ethical obligation besides norms, and other sorts
> of ethical directives besides that of obligation. (p. 90)

We should recognize, then, that there are multiple ways in which historical,

cultural and social discourses might lead us to establish a relation to a particular

ethical standard. As an example, marital fidelity as a moral rule was followed by

the ancient Greeks as a way of achieving self-mastery (Foucault, 1984), yet it was

followed by Christians as an act of obedience to an all-knowing God (Foucault,

1988a). It might also be followed for other reasons, such as respect for one's

partner, or, as Markula and Pringle (2006) suggest, to conform to societal laws or scientific reasoning about sexual health.

The third aspect of the mode of subjectivation is ethical work. Ethical work is constituted by the thoughts and actions "that one performs on oneself, not only in order to bring one's conduct into compliance with a given rule, but to attempt to transform oneself into the ethical subject of one's behaviour" (Foucault, 1984, p. 27). Markula and Pringle summarise this as "the means by which an individual changes him/herself in order to become an ethical subject" (p. 141). Ethical work, then, consists of particular practices which will bring an aspect of one's self, behaviour or thought into conformity with the chosen moral code. Moreover, performing ethical work is an act which makes the self the focus of one's own actions.

The fourth aspect of the mode of subjection is telos. For Foucault (1984), any particular example of ethical work contributes "to the establishing of a moral conduct that commits an individual, not only to other actions always in conformity with values and rules, but to a certain mode of being" (p. 28). Foucault (1993) suggests subjects might aspire to "a certain state of perfection, of happiness, of purity, of supernatural power" (p. 203). Drawing on his metaphor of folding, Deleuze (1988) argues, the telos:

> is the fold of the outside itself, the ultimate fold: it is this that constitutes what Blanchot called an "inferiority of expectation" from which the subject, in different ways, hopes for immortality, eternity, salvation, freedom or death or detachment. (p.104)

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The telos, then, represents the idealized ethical status to which one aspires (Prado, 2003).

It is through engaging in the mode of subjectivation that we develop a relationship with ourselves in the context of a particular moral code. For Foucault (1984), the mode of subjectivation:

> ... is not simply "self-awareness" but self-formation as an "ethical subject," a process in which the individual delimits that part of himself [sic] that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal. And this requires him to act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve, and transform himself. (p. 28)

Ethical self-formation, then, is an ongoing task. One cannot simply become ethical; rather it requires a continual project of ethical embodiment.

Practices of self

Although Foucault does not envision the mode of subjectivation as a linear step by step model of ethical decision making, he nevertheless views all four aspects as equally necessary:

> There is no specific moral action that does not refer to a unified moral conduct; no moral conduct that does not call for the forming of oneself as an ethical subject; and no forming of the ethical subject without "modes of subjectification" and an "ascetics" or "practices of the self" that support them. (Foucault, 1984, p. 28)

While the mode of subjectivation is perhaps the most succinct summary of

Foucault's ethics within *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault structures most of his

analysis with regard to practices of self and problematization. He identifies

particular practices of self concerning diet, dreams, household managment, and

relations between adult and adolescent men among the ancient Greeks. Within

each of these practices of self, Foucault identifies problematizations concerning

pleasure and the relation established with one's self.

Foucault (1984), however, has no wish to valorise the specific beliefs or

practices of the ancient Greeks. In his later interviews, he regularly repeats his

distaste for the specific content of Greek sexual ethics, arguing:

> The Greek ethics of pleasure was linked to a virile society, to
>
> dissymmetry, exclusion of the other, an obsession with penetration, and a
>
> kind of threat of being dispossessed of your own energy, and so on. All
>
> that is quite disgusting! (Foucault, 2000a, p. 258)

Instead, Foucault's interest is in the styles of thought–that is, problematization–the

linking of self to specific practices, and the negotiation of actions within

contextually produced freedom in order to produce one's self as a subject. In a

later interview, Foucault (2000a) discusses practices of freedom. I interpret these

different labels–practices of self and practices of freedom–as synonyms and in

this thesis will refer exclusively to practices of self as I prefer the emphasis on

self-creation to the emphasis on freedom. Foucault links practices of self,

problematization and contextually produced freedom, in a broad sense, as being

aimed towards achieving an aesthetics of existence. The identification and examination of particular practices of self through which one forms oneself as an ethical subject will form a specific focus of my investigation. I will specifically address problematization, before considering an aesthetics of existence.

Problematization

Foucault's notion of problematization, which he refers to repeatedly throughout *The Use of Pleasure*, plays a critical role in his ethical theorizing (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Problematization refers to an attempt to re-orientate one's self in relation to a particular situation or scenario in order to reveal the contingencies which have produced that situation. Problematization, then, can be considered as a style of thinking in which:

> Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the emotion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem... for a domain of action, a behaviour, to enter the field of thought, it is necessary for a certain number of factors to have made it uncertain, to have made it lose its familiarity, or to have provoked a certain number of difficulties around it. (Foucault, 2000g, p. 117)

Problematization, then, involves a refusal to accept a situation at face value. More specifically, the mode of subjectivation allows us to problematize how we are created as subjects by the workings of discourse and power and how we might recreate our own subjectivity in new ways.

Foucault (1984, 1988a, see also, 2000c) reveals that many ethical precepts showed little change from the Ancient Greeks, to the Hellenic Romans, through to

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the early Christians. What did change significantly, however, was how members of each group understood their self and rendered certain aspects of their self problematic. Foucault (2000b) suggests that problematization can also be interpreted as an important value of the Enlightenment:

> ...the thread which may connect us with the Enlightenment is not faithfulness to doctrinal elements, but, the permanent reactivation of an attitude–that is, of a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era. (p. 312)

What makes Foucault's notion of problematization radically different to that of the Ancient Greeks or Enlightenment era thinkers, however, is his acceptance that any answers produced by problematization will be contingent. Problematization, then, is a mode of thinking which attempts to reveal the unnecessary and contingent, but does not imagine that any particular contingency can be replaced by anything more necessary than another contingency.

Some aspects of Foucault's sense of problematization, I suggest, remain unclear. Given that Foucault died before completing his *History of Sexuality* series, many scholars, myself included, have turned to his later interviews to attempt to clarify particular aspects of his ethics. As Markula and Pringle (2006) point out, Foucauldian feminists, such as Lloyd (1996, 1997, 2005) have emphasized the importance of critical reflection in order to use Foucauldian ethics as a way of theorizing how people might develop subjectivities which are critical of dominant gender relations. However, there is some uncertainty over just what constitutes problematization or critical reflection.

Problematization seems to be implicit through much of the mode of subjectivation. It seems likely that problematization might be required in order to identify one's ethical substance. Similarly, recognition of one's mode of subjection, which refers to one's relationship to a particular rule or precept, appears to require some degree of problematization. However, it is also possible to imagine someone simply accepting an aspect of their self as problematic because a prevailing discourse has made it so. An example of this might be extrapolated from Pringle's (2009) examination of pleasure and pain in rugby. A rugby player might come to view their fearful self as problematic in the light of a dominant discourse in rugby of playing regardless of fear, pain or injury. Typically, I would expect critical scholars to interpret this as an uncritical response to rugby's disciplinary discourses. However, such an interpretation runs the risk of refusing to accept any form of problematization that does not fit with a researcher's own ethical assumptions and creates a binary opposition between docility and resistance (Laidlaw, 2002).

It is important to acknowledge that problematization, like other aspects of Foucauldian theory, is a heuristic device which researchers use to interpret their data. Subsequently, we should consider problematization in a reflexive manner and be prepared to acknowledge that our participants may engage in problematization in different ways, to different degrees, and, perhaps, in ways which we, critical researchers, are not entirely comfortable with.

As I will discuss in my literature review, within the anthropology of moralities, problematization has typically been considered at the level of discourse and society, whereas within the sociology of sport, problematization has often been recast as critical thought of an individual directed towards a particular

discourse. Personally, I do not wish to put rigid constraints on how Foucauldian ethics should be interpreted, yet neither do I think that an 'anything goes' approach is adequate. Subsequently, I argue that problematization should be carefully and reflexively accounted for using specific examples from research participants. Moreover, problematizations should be linked, where possible, to specific practices of self which might combine to form an aesthetics of existence.

Aesthetics of existence

A third notion with which Foucault seeks to reconstruct ethics is the aesthetics of existence. As will now be clear, Foucault does not envisage an ethics that will lead to the discovery of a true self, nor lead to the creation of a utopian society. Instead he considers that "the individual fulfilled himself [sic] as an ethical subject by shaping a precisely measured conduct that was plainly visible to all and deserving to be long remembered" (Foucault, 1984, p. 91; see also, 2000c; Markula & Pringle, 2006). In a later interview, he clarifies his vision of ethics, suggesting we should engage in an "aesthetics of existence" in which we can "relate the kind of relation one has to oneself to a creative activity" (Foucault, 2000c, p. 262). In another interview, he advocates "let's escape as much as possible from the type of relations that society proposes for us and try to create in the empty space where we are new relational possibilities" (Foucault, 2000h, p. 160). Bennett (1996) argues that Foucault wishes to move away from the ethical and political projects of the twentieth century which had posited a fundamental collective human identity, and–in Russia, China, and other countries–resulted in enormous atrocities.

Foucault (2000c) argues that the process of problematization leads to a commitment to recreating one's self as an ongoing project. He calls this project an

aesthetics of existence. In contemporary society, we are faced with multiple possibilities for how we may form ourselves as subjects. Indeed, given that "we must think that what exists is far from filling all the possible spaces" (Foucault, 2000i, p. 140), we should always be willing to reinvent aspects of ourselves in new ways. In this sense, then, an awareness of the contingency of our own subjectivity calls for us to engage in "a stylization of the relation to oneself" (Huijer, 1999, p. 65). Clarifying Foucault's use of the term, aesthetic, O'Leary (2006) suggests "the ethical practice which is called for by our contemporary situation is aesthetic quite simply by virtue of the fact that it involves, as do all artistic practices, the giving of form" (p. 131). Similarly, Faubion (2001) argues that Foucault's "interest in aesthetics is not an interest in classical standards of beauty, but rather in avant-gardist explorations of the formal limits of signification" (p. 87). An aesthetics of existence, then, is a willingness to creatively and continually give form to the self.

As Bennett (1996) and many others (e.g., Lloyd, 1997; Longford, 2001; Markula & Pringle, 2006) have noted, Foucault's critics have been particularly forceful in rejecting Foucault's intertwining of ethics and aesthetics. Primarily, Bennett (1996) argues, critics have sought to maintain Habermas's tripartite division between science, ethics and aesthetics. For these critics, the combining of the ethical and the aesthetic is interpreted as an assault on reason and rationality, with aesthetics functioning as a mask for violence and inequity. As Markula and Pringle (2006) observe, Foucault's use of Baudelaire's dandy has been held up as a sign of the shallowness of an aesthetically orientated self. Similarly, for Rorty (1989), an emphasis on an aesthetics of self creation signals a private concern which is certain to override and deny a public concern for others. In short, for

Foucault's critics, the introduction of aesthetics is seen as enabling a complacent refusal to consider the welfare of others.

In response, Bennett (1996) argues, an acceptance of an aesthetics of ethics is, in fact, a refusal to ever become complacent. Similarly, Faubion (2001) contends:

> Baudelaire's dandy may function as a reference point for the modern philosophical ethic, but only because the dandy and the modern philosopher both labor under the obligation to stylize–to give form–to themselves. But the philosopher, alas, cannot stop there. He, or she, has a broader and more restless obligation to resist all complacency, to put both the world and the self to continual test. (p. 87)

This is because aesthetics, understood in the Foucauldian sense of avant-garde, requires continual questioning of the self that one is creating. In short, suggests Bennett (1996), criticisms of Foucault's aesthetics of existence have tended to use their own definition of the term, aesthetic, rather than consider how Foucault used the term.

Moreover, as Longford (2001) argues, an aesthetics of existence was not intended to prioritise the self over others; "Foucault endorsed the aesthetics of existence as having the potential to infuse our relations with others with greater care and concern" (p. 571). Longford points out that Foucault interprets the practices of self-mastery which Ancient Greek men performed as implicated directly in their social relations with others. Moreover, Longford continues,

Foucault envisions that a similar connection between care of the self and care for others is possible today:

> Turning to the contemporary practice of care of the self, Foucault was drawn to practices suggesting relationships between the care of the self and care for others similar to those evident in antiquity. Foucault's comments on sexual pleasure oscillate between enthusiasm for the dissociative and desubjectivising effects of certain practices and interest in the production of identities, novel relationships, and affective ties which stem from them. (Longford, 2001, p. 587)

To engage in an aesthetics of existence, then, is to engage in practices which involve relationships with others while accepting responsibility for the contingency of one's own actions.

I suggest, however, that the concepts of telos and aesthetics of existence have not been closely compared. In some respects, these concepts perform very similar theoretical functions; a telos is the idealized ethical form to which one aspires, while an aesthetics of existence refers to actively and creatively giving shape to one's life. I interpret Foucault's use of the notion of an aesthetics of existence to signal a postmodernizing of telos. That is, an aesthetics of existence is an understanding of telos which might be partial, fragmentary, or provisional, rather than universal or ontologically secure. This is particularly important for my project as it allows for a contingent, contextual, or modifiable aesthetics of existence to be aspired to as an alternative to the problematic dominant discourses of Western sport. I explore this possibility further within my findings chapters. It

is important, however, to place Foucauldian ethics within the broader ethical turn of French postmodernism.

The ethical turn

The ethical turn refers to a shift among many postmodern philosophers towards an explicit consideration, and rethinking, of ethics. It is important to recognize that Foucault's interest in ethics arose during an historical era in France in which his contemporaries were also re-considering and radicalizing questions of ethics. Engaging with the ethical turn has helped me to develop new understandings concerning the problems of how athletes treat their selves and others, and also, to consider how ethical subjectivities might be formed within sport. The ethical turn represents an attempt to deal with the problems of modern and postmodern life without recourse to the modernist assumptions of humanism, rationality, normativity, utopia, and reductionism (Bauman, 1993). For Gabriel (2004), the ethical turn within French postmodernism was an attempt to grapple with the human disasters of the twentieth century:

> ...what much of late twentieth-century French thinking shared was a return
> to the Western metaphysical tradition to find out what went wrong–and,
> insofar as a thinker like Heidegger had gone before them, to find out what
> had gone wrong with this German philosopher who had, himself, ended up
> in the camp of National Socialism. (p. 6)

Moreover, Gabriel continues, for French postmodernists, the complicity of the Vichy government with the Nazis forced further ethical reflection: how had

modernity, which had promised so much, allowed such atrocities to happen? The ethical turn, then, is a questioning of responsibility.

Voloshin (1998) interprets the ethical turn somewhat differently:

> It has perhaps been the very success of the skeptical energies of postmodern critique that has generated a counter-movement within postmodern philosophy to establish an ethics compatible with postmodern philosophy's suspicion about positive or universal claims drawn from the standards of reason, nature, and law. (p. 69)

For Voloshin, the ethical turn marks a search for new values, values which might replace those thrown out by earlier postmodern critiques. What might link Voloshin's and Gabriel's (2004), accounts, then, is the centrality of responsibility within the ethical turn.

Popke (2003) interprets this sense of responsibility "as a form of opening to limitless possibility in the absence of hubris" (p. 308). Similarly, Gibbs (2003) argues "an ethics of responsibility begins with relating and responding to what others say and do with an obligation to respond to others. Here ethics becomes social in a constitutive and radical way" (p. 101). Thus the ethical turn recognizes responsibility but does not seek to ground it ontologically. According to Bauman (1993), the ethical turn rejects "the belief in the possibility of a *non-ambivalent, non-aporetic ethical code*" (p. 9, emphasis in original). Instead, ethics is reborn in the form of socially and historically specific questions which can only be answered through a sense of responsibility grounded in a particular context, rather

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an abstract, foundational understanding of right, duty, or good. Ilcan (2004) summarizes:

> This ethical turn or re-turn is premised on an inquiry into the limits within which current forms of knowledges, practices, and modes of subjectivity are constituted. This ethical inquiry does not work to "rule" but, rather, seeks to energize and create, whether politically, culturally, or socially. (p. 27)

The ethical turn, then, does not function on the promise of utopia, but rather, reasserts socio-historico-cultural problems as at the very centre of ethics.

The ethical turn has been widely and productively engaged in by the social sciences and liberal arts. For example international relations (e.g., Campbell & Shapiro, 1999; Gelb & Rosenthal, 2003), geography (Popke, 2003), literature (e.g., Di Martino, 2011; Harpham, 1999) and business- (e.g., Aasland, 2007; Bevan & Corvellec, 2007; Byers & Rhodes, 2007; Campbell Jones, 2007), medical- (e.g., Bishop, 2008; Chambon & Irving, 2003; Clifton-Soderstrom, 2003; Prado, 2003), and bio-ethics (e.g., Coors, 2003; Frank & Jones, 2003; Haimes, 2002) have all developed strands of research drawing on the ethical turn. More significantly, for my project, is the recent emergence of a subfield within anthropology; namely, the anthropology of moralities. Although this field draws on divergent theories, Faubion's (2001) and Laidlaw's (2002) theorizing of a Foucauldian anthropology of ethics were crucial in development of this subfield. What is most significant about the anthropology of ethics is that this field recognizes the importance of ethics in the formation of subjectivities and that to

study ethics is to study culture. Clearly, this focus is of particular relevance to my interest in the production of ethical subjectivities within Ultimate. Consequently, I will consider the anthropology of moralities in my literature review.

Perhaps the greatest effect of the ethical turn is its influence on qualitative inquiry. The influence of the ethical turn developed during the fourth and fifth moments of qualitative inquiry (cf., Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), and saw qualitative researchers begin to openly situate their work as ethically and politically motivated. Denzin (1997), who has been a central theorist within these developments, argues that amongst new paradigm inquirers "there is a constant search for a moral center and an ethics of practice in a world that is always moving" (p. 268). As I situate my paradigmatic assumptions within this field, I now move on to specifically consider my paradigmatic assumptions.

Paradigmatic Assumptions

Paradigmatic assumptions are the fundamental underlying beliefs that researchers choose to base the study on (Sparkes, 1992). I have written my thesis during what Denzin and Lincoln (2005) term the eighth moment of qualitative research. Across the eight moments of qualitative inquiry, researchers have moved in a contested and non-linear manner from paradigmatic beliefs mimicking those of the hard sciences towards paradigmatic beliefs and methodologies focused specifically on what is understood to be unique about qualitative social research. Although some degree of comparison to the scientific paradigm of positivism is inevitable, as a researcher who has entered the academy during the seventh and eighth moments of qualitative research, I recognize that paradigms used by qualitative inquirers–interpretivism, critical theory, and participatory research–are

now established and distinct (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Thus, I focus primarily on the assumptions on which I base my research, rather than a critique of positivism.

Typically, issues of ontology–"questions regarding the nature of existence"–and epistemology– "questions of knowing and the nature of knowledge" (Sparkes, 1992, pp. 12–13)–have been the focus of attempts to understand paradigms. Assumptions concerning the status of knowledge and reality, then, have been considered to be the central elements of each paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). While issues of ontology and epistemology remain central paradigmatic concerns, Guba and Lincoln (2005) argue that axiology, understood as assumptions concerning ethics, aesthetics and religion, should also be considered "a part of the basic foundational philosophical dimensions of paradigm proposal" (p. 200). This change makes explicit that knowledge claims are not merely theory-laden, but also value-laden. This development, I suggest, can be interpreted as part of an ongoing process within qualitative research of identifying and critiquing the ongoing influence of positivistic thinking within research.

Interpretivism

The research paradigm in which I locate this research project is variously described as poststructuralist (Markula & Silk, 2011), constructivist (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011), and interpretivist (Angen, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Although I am content with any of these labels, for clarity, I will use the term, interpretivist, when discussing my paradigmatic assumptions. I hold a relativist ontology, which posits multiple "local and specific constructed and co-constructed realities" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 193), and a subjectivist epistemology which asserts knowledge to be formed by "individual and collective

reconstruction sometimes coalescing around consensus" (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 101).

As an interpretivist, I accept that my research project is a subjective inquiry driven through my own passion and interest in sporting and ethical subjectivities (cf., Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Moreover, I assert that my research is inevitably influenced by my own biography and, subsequently, I have written myself into this thesis (Angrosino & Rosenberg, 2011; Silk, Andrews, & Mason, 2005). Like Sparkes (1992), I believe "'reality' can only be seen through a window of theory, whether implicit or explicit" (p. 26). As J. K. Smith and Hodkinson (2009) suggest, while it is reasonable to accept that a common-sense form of external reality exists, "there is no way to 'get at' that reality as it really is" (p. 34). Subsequently, J. K. Smith and Hodkinson conclude, in line with Sparkes, "there is no theory-free observation/knowledge" (J. K. Smith & Hodkinson, 2009, p. 34). Instead we must accept "that theories and facts are quite *interdependent*" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107, emphasis in original).

Triple crisis

Reviewing the development of qualitatively orientated research, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe the emergence–during the fourth moment of qualitative research–of, "a triple crisis of representation, legitimation, and praxis [which] confronts qualitative researchers" (p. 19). This triple crisis requires that "new paradigm inquirers" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 210) find new standards by which they present and justify their research. Specifically, the crisis of representation was created by the realization that "qualitative researchers can no longer directly capture lived experience" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 19). Here, the adoption of a subjectivist epistemology means that researchers can no longer

claim to be discovering objective knowledge. With the rejection of objective knowledge as the purpose for undertaking research, Kincheloe (1997) argues, the traditional research report is no longer an adequate form for communicating qualitative research findings. As Polkinghorne (1997) explains, "the formats in which research is reported are not neutral and transparent, but reflect particular epistemological commitments" (p. 6).

Seeking to clarify the core of the crisis of representation, Lather (1993) cautioned, "in poststructuralist terms, the 'crisis of representation' is not the end of representation, but the end of pure presence" (p. 675). Here Lather signalled, for poststructuralists, that the crisis of representation questioned the ability of any research report to unproblematically present phenomena from the real world. Any attempt to communicate research is, at best, a re-presentation of a researcher's subjective findings. This re-presentation cannot be assumed to correspond to some notion of an external reality. With the realisation that a conventional report was no guarantee that the findings contained would correspond to reality, new forms of writing and presenting research have been developed in order to account for the inevitable and undeniable presence of the researcher within their own work and also to communicate findings which conventional formats ignored (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Moreover, these forms of representation are closely tied to the second crisis, that of legitimation.

The crisis of legitimation, "asks, How are qualitative studies to be evaluated in the contemporary, poststructural moment?" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, pp. 19–20). The traditional criteria for judging research, that is, scientific notions of validity, are not relevant for new paradigm inquirers. Just as the crisis of representation asked how research could be presented in a manner that might

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recognize the inevitably partial and incomplete nature of research, the crisis of

legitimation asked, if research is always incomplete and partial, how might we

determine good research from poor research?

The combination of these two crises implied a crisis of praxis: what might

researchers actually hope to achieve in these conditions? (Denzin & Lincoln,

2005). There is no lasting solution to these crises within the bounds of

postmodernity. Rather, these are problems which must be acknowledged and

actively engaged with in every piece of qualitative research. What is required,

then, is a reflexive approach to one's role in producing research (Denzin, 1997).

Reflexivity requires the researcher to actively justify the decisions they make

while conducting research (Saukko, 2005). In a sense, reflexivity requires

researchers to wear their hearts on their sleeves and front up to the strengths,

weaknesses and undecidable aspects of their work. Here I note, albeit briefly, the

parallel between reflexivity in qualitative research and responsibility within the

ethical turn in French postmodern philosophy. Both are attempts to deal with

intractable or unsolvable problems.

Judging research quality

Non-foundationalists reject the possibility of a secure epistemological and

ontological foundation for determining research quality (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

As J. K. Smith and Hodkinson (2009) explain, "when it comes to judging the

quality of social and educational research, all we can do is appeal to time and

place contingent lists of characteristics to sort out the good from the not so good"

(p. 35). Legitimacy of research, then, will be dependent on contingent criteria,

which are negotiated within the context of a particular field of research. J. K.

Smith and Hodkinson (2009) clarify, however, that this form of relativism is "not

a relativism of anything goes or where all claims to knowledge are equal to all other claims to knowledge" (p. 35). Thus, while the quality of research can only be judged in temporary terms, this does not mean that qualitative research lacks the rigour of a thorough justification (Steinke, 2004).

Qualitative researchers have developed multiple lists of quality criteria. J. K. Smith and Hodkinson (2005) suggest lists can be useful, provided "the lists [of research legitimacy criteria] that we bring to judgement are open-ended in that we have the capacity to add items to or subtract items from the lists" (p. 922). Lather (1993) proposes four forms of validity: ironic, paralogical, rhizomatic, and voluptuous. In doing so, she seeks to "reframe validity as multiple, partial, endlessly deferred" (Lather, 1993, p. 675). Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) have used as quality criteria; substantive contribution to the field, aesthetic merit in inviting interpretive responses, reflexivity in positioning the author's subjectivity, and impact on the reader either emotionally or intellectually. I find Richardson and St. Pierre's work to be particularly useful and draw on their suggestions extensively in this section.

Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) proposed the metaphor of crystalline validity. The value of this metaphor, according to Richardson and St. Pierre, is:

Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, and arrays casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of repose–not triangulation, but crystallization. (p. 963)

Using the metaphor of viewing through the prism of a crystal, Richardson and St.

Pierre (2005) argue that, "we feel how there is no single truth, and we see how

texts validate themselves. Crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex,

and thoroughly partial understanding of the topic" (p. 963). Using the crystalline

metaphor, then, I propose a number of criteria by which the quality of my thesis

should be judged.

The first criterion by which I propose my research be judged is reflexivity.

Altheide and Johnson (2011) argue reflexivity should be understood as a central

quality criterion for qualitative research:

> There is great diversity of qualitative research, and there is diversity in the
>
> ways to justify or legitimize each of the above approaches [clinical studies,
>
> policy studies, action research, autoethnography and expressive frames].
>
> While these approaches differ, they also share an ethical obligation to
>
> make public their claims, to show the reader, audience, or consumer why
>
> they should be trusted as faithful accounts of some phenomenon. (p. 584)

The way I position myself within my research, and account for the ways in which

I produce and present my findings then, should be important criteria for judging

my thesis.

The second criterion which I propose is substantive contribution to the

field (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). This criterion asks "does this piece

contribute to our *understanding* of social life? Does the writer demonstrate a

deeply grounded (if embedded) social scientific perspective?" (Richardson & St.

Pierre, 2005, p. 964, emphasis in original). The field in which I place this thesis is

sociology of sport. Primarily, I seek to make a substantive theoretical contribution to this field by exploring the possibilities of ethical athletic subjectivities. In this way, I seek to apply the ethical turn to the sociology of sport.

This does, however, pose a particular challenge: as Markula and Silk (2011) point out, "if a qualitative researcher is interested in highlighting a clear theoretical point, a realist writing style is the best way to provide such a logical answer" (p. 192). Although realist tales have been subject to wide critique, Van Maanen (2011) suggests they can be constructed to "provide more room for the often disparate voices of those studied" (p. 160). Thus, I seek to strike a balance between revealing contradictions, complexities, and inconsistencies within my research and writing in a clear, theoretically rigorous manner. In short, my task is to achieve a "deepened, complex and thoroughly partial understanding of the topic" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 963). As Angrosino (2005) suggests, this rests with my ability to produce "a convincing narrative report" (p. 730).

Thus far, I have proposed quality criteria–reflexivity, substantive contribution to the field, and a balanced writing style–for my research which relate to the writing of my thesis. I also propose, however, that the appropriateness of my research methods for undertaking this research should be considered as quality criteria. Although I will describe my research methods in detail in chapter four, for the purposes of outlining my quality criteria, I briefly outline my research methods here. I have approached this project as a bricoleur, which Kincheloe, McLaren and Steinberg (2011) describe as "the process of employing those methodological processes as they are needed in the unfolding context of the research situation" (p. 168). I undertook an ethnographic approach conducting fieldwork in multiple Ultimate sites for a period of two years. I also conducted in-

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depth, semi-structured interviews with a range of Ultimate players and engaged in textual analysis of books, magazines, websites, blogs and DVDs. Throughout the entire research process, I engaged in ongoing and extensive philosophical and theoretical reflection and analysis. As I account for and draw on these aspects of my research methods throughout this thesis, I attempt to demonstrate the appropriateness of these methods for this research project.

To summarise, then, I have proposed four central criteria by which the quality of my research should be judged. Namely, reflexivity, substantive contribution to sociology of sport, balanced writing style, and the appropriateness of my research methods for this project. Rabinow and Marcus (2008), I suggest, tie these criteria together in their assertion that doctoral theses "should be governed by a theorem of reasonable and responsible incompleteness, in which fieldwork self-consciously accomplishes something unfinished" (p. 82).

In this chapter I have examined my research philosophy. I began by positioning myself within postmodernity, and, in particular, within a Foucauldian theoretical framework and the ethical turn. I gave Foucault this emphasis because his theorizing inspired my interest in research and has provided the philosophical theories with which I have done most of my thinking within this project. The ethical turn is also particularly important to my assumptions within this project. Finally, I addressed my paradigmatic assumptions and explained the quality criteria by which I suggest my work should be judged. In the next chapter, I review sociological and philosophical literature which examines issues of subjectivity and ethics within sport.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Introduction

In this review I draw on a wide range of literature to highlight the importance of studying athletes' socio-culturally formed understandings of ethics. I begin by reviewing sociological literature which links a range of substantial problematic athletic performances to dominant Western sports discourses. These critiques–namely, achievement sport, the sport ethic, prolympism, and the performance discourse–identify a range of problems in terms of how athletes treat others and their selves, including cheating, aggression, violence, and playing while injured. When ethics is understood in a broad sense as how individuals concern themselves with how they treat their self and others we can interpret these analyses of Western sport as highlighting significant ethical problems.

Yet, I argue, while this literature identifies problematic performances, as these critiques are currently theorized, they account for problematic aspects of sporting identities in generic terms only. However, an emergent body of research in sport (e.g., Denison, 2010; Douglas & Carless, 2006; Pringle & Hickey, 2010; Shogan, 1999) suggests that more localized accounts reveal that the discourses of Western sport are not monolithic and that a wide range of athletic subjectivities are produced within Western sports. These accounts are still critical of problematic aspects of Western sport, yet reveal that other ways of playing are possible. It is in this direction which I take this thesis.

Similarly, early research suggested that some practices within alternative or lifestyle sports do offer athletic subjectivities which represent critical alternatives to some problematic aspects of Western sporting subjectivities (e.g., Beal, 1995; de Leseleuc, Gleyse, & Marcellini, 2002; Midol, 1993; Midol &

Broyer, 1995; Rinehart, 1998b). However, as this field of research has developed,
two central and enduring themes regarding alternative and lifestyle sports are the
ongoing presence of problems such as sexism, racism, and heterosexism (e.g.,
Beal, 1996; Kay & Laberge, 2004; Kusz, 2003; Laurendeau, 2004; Laurendeau &
Sharara, 2008; Rinehart, 2005; Thorpe, 2008; Waitt & Warren, 2008), and the
rampant commoditization and media cooptation of aspects of many of these sports
(e.g., Beal & Wilson, 2004; C. Palmer, 2004; Rinehart, 1998a, 2003, 2007;
Rinehart & Sydnor, 2003; Wheaton, 2004b). Alternative sports, then, should not
be considered an unproblematic or utopian alternative to longer established
Western sports.

       Nevertheless, the context of particular alternative sports, such as Ultimate,
appears to be quite different to some aspects of mainstream Western sports
because of contingent historical differences such as a lack of institutional history,
and minimal commercialization and mediatisation. As Rinehart (2000) argues, a
number of debates regarding how individuals understand their participation
permeate alternative sports. Subsequently, the current context of alternative
sports, such as Ultimate, offer a productive and localized site in which to study the
construction of athletic subjectivities which might offer involve alternative
possibilities for how athletes treat their selves and others. In this way, I argue
there are grounds for undertaking a socio-culturally specific examination of
ethical athletic subjectivities in Ultimate.

       In this review, I also examine how philosophy of sport has conceptualized
sports ethics. The dominant approaches used are formalism, social contract, and
virtue ethics. While philosophers of sport have gradually moved towards

postmodern conceptions of self, truth and ethics, none of the dominant approaches are appropriate for undertaking a sociological examination of ethics.

Subsequently, I identify a range of research which draws on postmodern sociological and anthropological perspectives to offer localized accounts of how subjectivities are negotiated within a range of socio-culturally formed possibilities. As I described in my research philosophy, from a Foucauldian perspective, this process of actively negotiating the possibilities of one's life is an ethical task. In the final part of this literature review, I build on the theoretical understandings of Foucauldian ethics which I developed in my previous chapter by examining how Foucauldian ethics has been used for empirical studies within anthropology of moralities and sociology of sport. I conclude my review of literature with my key research questions.

Defining the Field: Sociological Explanations of Contemporary Sporting Subjectivities

In this section I review the main sociological analyses of the discourses through which athletes come to understand how they should treat others and their self while playing sport. These analyses examine what sport, and in particular, elite sport, is understood to be within Western societies and, subsequently seek to outline how contemporary Western sports form athletic subjectivities. These analyses, namely, achievement sport, the sport ethic, prolympism, and the performance discourse, are important as they locate problematic athletic subjectivities within a broad socio-cultural understanding of sport.

Achievement sport

Coakley (2007) identifies a number of factors that produce, and are reproduced by, Western sports. Dominant or mainstream Western sports are

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typically traditional, institutionalized, refereed, competitive, and commercialized team games (Coakley, 2007). Further, Guttmann (2004) argues that rationalization, quantification and an obsession with measurement are key features of modern sport, claiming: "the unsurpassed quantified achievement, which is what we mean by a sports record, is a constant challenge to all who hope to surpass it" (p. 5). A focus on achievement through instrumental rationality produces sporting performances that emphasize efficiency over creativity, reliability over flair, and specialization over diversification (cf., Coakley, 2007; Morgan, 2006; Rinehart, 2007).

Most important of all, within achievement sport, is the emphasis on the need for dominance of a team or individual over their opponent. This reading interprets mainstream sport as a zero sum game: there can be only one winner and winning is the primary purpose for taking part. Rinehart (2007) suggests that this reading of sport is pervasive: "most casual observers of North American and Western sport–and many critical analysts of it as well–take as a basic assumption that sport–that is, 'real' sport–always involves *dominance* of one individual, duo, or team over another" (p. 120, emphasis in original). From this perspective, the ends–winning, achieving a record–justify the means. A prime consequence of this, laments Morgan (2006), is that those involved in sport come to understand that "rules should be viewed and treated as egoistic devices, which means we should follow them when it is our own self-interest to do so and to break them when it is not" (p. xii).

It is not only rules that achievement sport manipulates, however. Maguire (2004) argues that "modern achievement sport has reflected and reinforced the medicalization, scientization, and rationalization of human expressiveness" (p.

301; see also Beamish & Ritchie, 2006; Hoberman, 1992, 2005; Shogan, 1999).

As human movement science has become more precise, "the athletic body is no longer worked on in its entirety, but, in a gesture towards the Cartesian body, is dissected into smaller and smaller pieces with each scientific discipline that emerges" (Magdalinski, 2009, p. 2). The discourses of medicalization and scientization reflect the instrumental emphasis on achievement of victory and record within contemporary sport. This instrumental emphasis has been criticized for having a prime role in sports injuries (e.g., Coakley, 2007; Howe, 2001; Roderick, 2006; Sabo, 2004), violence (e.g., Lilleaas, 2007; Messner, 1992), cheating (e.g., Coakley, 2007; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995), and drug use (e.g., Beamish & Ritchie, 2006; Hoberman, 1992, 2005).

Although these problems have been studied in the most depth within highly competitive elite sport, Messner (1992) argues, within the United States of America at least, a win-at-all-costs "ethic is alive not only at the level of televised professional or Olympic-level sport–it has trickled down through the college and high school ranks, and even to Little League baseball and children's hockey" (p. 45). It is interesting to note that studies of fair play and sportspersonship typically focus on youth sports (e.g., Bredemeier & Shields, 1986a; Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2009; Ellis, Henderson, Paisley, Silverberg, & Wells, 2004; L. D. Sage & Kavussanu, 2008). Within adult sport, questions of how opponents should be treated have typically been considered as questions of masculinity (e.g., Messner, 1992), or abstract philosophy (e.g., Boxill, 2003; D'Agostino, 1988; Feezell, 2004; Simon, 2004).

While I am wary of making generalizations between sports and levels of competition, a number of empirical studies suggest that non-elite sport has

problematic aspects that are very similar to those within elite sport (e.g., Liston, Reacher, Smith, & Waddington, 2006; Messner, 1992; Pringle, 2003). Howe (2004) suggests that Stebbins' (1992) concept of the amateur "devotee" is relevant to studying sport. Importantly, a "*devoted* amateur will go to greater lengths to duplicate a professional's attitude than will an individual who *dabbles* in the pastime" (Howe, 2004, pp. 35–36, emphasis in original). Similarly, Lamont-Mills and Christensen (2006) found that although elite athletes valued their athletic identity more strongly than recreational athletes, the influence of sporting identity to recreational athletes' perceptions of self worth was still significant. On a more anecdotal level, I have also found numerous newspaper articles reporting on poor behaviour and a strong emphasis on winning from both players and spectators in non-elite sport at both adult and youth levels (e.g., Fahey, 2011; Hurndell, 2006; Koubaridis, 2011; "Should the winning margin be capped in junior rugby games?," 2011; Tapaleao, 2011).

Studies of rugby and rugby league suggest non-elite athletes are influenced by similar discourses to elite athletes with regard to acceptance of pain, injury and violence (Liston et al., 2006; Pringle, 2003). According to Liston et al. non-elite rugby and rugby league players aspire to hold the same attitudes to pain and injury that they associate with elite athletes despite having comparatively inferior medical support. O'Connor and Brown (2007) reveal that although recreational cyclists tend to spurn organized cycling clubs, they still engaged in ritualized competition during informal group rides. These findings suggest that there are some similarities between the experiences and attitudes of elite and non-elite athletes. Moreover, as I now go on to argue, both the sport ethic (Hughes & Coakley, 1991) and prolympic sport (Donnelly, 1996) consider problems

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associated with excessively competitive behaviour to be rife at most levels of sport.

The sport ethic

One way in which the problematic effects of achievement sport have been critiqued is through Hughes and Coakley's (1991) sport ethic. Hughes and Coakley argue that the level of conformity required of athletes in order to become successful renders them particularly susceptible to problematic behaviours. The problem is one of moderation, or, rather, lack of moderation. Athletes who overconform to the principles of the sport ethic will be unlikely to consider carefully the consequences of their actions on themselves or others.

The sport ethic involves athletes accepting four principles as instructing their participation. Firstly, they must subordinate their interests to those of The Game. Secondly, they must strive for distinction. Thirdly, they must accept risks and play through pain. Fourthly, they must refuse to accept limits in the pursuit of goals: "'true athletes' are obliged to believe in *the attempt to achieve success*" (Coakley, 2004, p. 15, emphasis in original). In a similar manner, Beamish and Ritchie (2006) argue that "the practices constituting sport today are dominated by instrumental rationality, the quest for victory, the pursuit of the linear record, the desire/demand to push human athletic performance to its outer limits" (p. 6). When these discourses are privileged at the expense of other, alternative discourses, a praxis of sport arises that is problematic in a number of ways. In the quest for victory, athletes sacrifice their own well-being, attempt to exploit situations for their own advantage, engage in illicit, illegal, aggressive and violent behaviours, and deliberately lie to or deceive match officials (Coakley, 2007). The problem, as identified by Hughes and Coakley (1991), is that athletes learn that

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they achieve success through adherence to the sport ethic, yet strongly conforming to this ethic alsos produce highly problematic behaviours.

Coakley (2004, 2007; Hughes & Coakley, 1991) suggests that many athletes, both elite and non-elite, display positive deviance towards the sport ethic. Positive deviance occurs when individuals or groups zealously observe a particular set of culturally accepted norms. Their deviance occurs not because they reject cultural norms, but rather, because they take a set of cultural norms further than other groups believe is appropriate. In essence, those athletes that show an unwavering overconformity to the sport ethic are the most likely to be negatively affected and to negatively affect others. Hughes and Coakley (1991) argue "through positive deviance people do harmful things to themselves and perhaps others while motivated by a sense of duty and honor [sic]" (p. 311). Simply put, athletes who oversubscribe to the sport ethic believe their actions are legitimate, while others in society might challenge their actions as inappropriate.

Hughes and Coakley (1991) argue that athletes overconform to the sport ethic primarily to achieve a sought-after identity. Athletes make bodily sacrifices and sacrifices in their wider lives to enable continued membership of a high status group. While winning is the surest way of ensuring ongoing acceptance in this group, just taking part is enough motivation for many athletes to do whatever is required of them. Further, the sport ethic is not limited to elite athletes:

> The athlete knows there are no championships to be won or money to be made, but there is an identity and moral worth to be established and reaffirmed, and a connection to a coach and a group of teammates to be honoured. These are powerful motives. (Hughes & Coakley, 1991, p. 314).

I am somewhat wary, however, of accepting this argument at face value.

Hughes and Coakley's (1991) argument is based on an assumption of normativity. Subsequently, the subject at the centre of Hughes and Coakley's theory is a rather 'thin' universal subject. To a certain extent, such assumptions are necessary in order to offer such a macro-level theory. However, this macro-level understanding of sporting identities and behaviour does not account for the blurring and fragmentation of lives in late and postmodernity (cf., Bauman, 1993; Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991; Maffesoli, 1996). While I suggest I am motivated by similar concerns to Hughes and Coakley, my interest is in how particular individuals make sense of their sporting experiences and how their own understandings of how they should treat their self and others have developed in relation to their sporting experiences. Within my study, then, I re-position the sport ethic as one of a number of disparate discourses that might contribute to the production of athletic identities.

Prolympic sport and the performance discourse

Donnelly (1996) suggests "the evidence that all sport is being drawn into a single dominant sport ideology, and that we are witnessing the emergence of a *global sport* monoculture based on an ideology of prolympism is quite compelling" (p. 30). Donnelly coined the term, prolympism, to refer to the blurring of olympic and professional conceptions of sport in the late 20th century. Significantly, Donnelly argues, "dominant ideologies represent themselves as *the* way of thinking and behaving, rather than *a* way–a choice among numerous alternatives that is, in itself subject to change" (p. 26, emphasis in original).

Donnelly's concern, then, is that within sport, there are minimal opportunities for making sense of one's participation other than through prolympism.

Prolympic sports are ends-focused and increasingly exclusive; that is, prolympic sports are focused on winning and elite competition (Donnelly, 1996). From Donnelly's point of view, prolympic sport ensures that the huge majority of sports participants will be designated as failures for their inability to compete and win at the elite level. As Ingham, Blissmer and Wells Davidson (1999) put it "prolympism has the stark qualities of Social Darwinistic thought. Only the fittest should survive; all the rest are expendable" (p. 251). From an ethical point of view, it would appear that prolympism discourages athletes from questioning how they should treat their team mates and opponents.

Donnelly (1996) suggests that many levels of non-elite sport, particularly at youth level, function as a feeder system for professional and Olympic sport and are thus fraught with many of the problems of elite sport. In all sports, resources are disproportionately allocated to elite performance, sending the message that it is only the elite that matter. Ingham, Chase and Butt (2002) argue:

> Those associated with prolympic sports, as parents, coaches, administrators tend to contour the learning process around one form of discourse–it is the performance discourse.... The performance discourse is one that emphasizes selection, training, thresholds, work loads, progressive overloads, visualization, stress management, ergogenic aids, and so forth. (p. 312)

The performance discourse, Ingham, et al., (2002) continue, should be challenged in favour of an ethic of inclusiveness. While prolympism and the performance discourse provide a useful argument for identifying some ethically problematic aspects of sport, it certainly is not clear that all athletes, elite or non-elite, have their sporting experiences marred by prolympism or the performance discourse. The structural, rigid descriptions of prolympism and the performance discourse offered, by Donnelly (1996), Ingham, et al., (1999), and Ingham, et al., (2002) make, I suggest, for inflexible understandings of contemporary Western sports.

Yet, Douglas and Carless (2006, 2009) rework the performance discourse within a narrative framework. Reconsidering the performance discourse as the performance narrative, Douglas and Carless (2006) examine the narratives, or stories, that seven professional female golf players used to construct meaning within their sporting lives. This approach allows Douglas and Carless to maintain a critical orientation towards the dominant discourses of sport, while prioritising the ways in which their participants understand their own participation in elite sport. According to Douglas and Carless, although the performance narrative was particularly important, three of their participants had, in fact, developed alternative narratives through which they understand their sporting identities. In a related study, Douglas and Carless (2009) examine how two professional female golfers had managed to move beyond the performance narrative as their golf careers came to an end. Such a focus on individuals' understandings and interpretations of the important events in their lives and how these have affected their identity, I suggest, offers a more productive way of critically researching the effects of Western sport on individuals' understandings of self.

Whereas the sport ethic and prolympism offer macro-level analyses of ethics of sport, I am primarily concerned with how individuals negotiate the discourses of competition and ethics within sport. My position has arisen from a concern that macro-level analyses tend to obscure the contested nature of the micro-level operations of power and discourse. Further, macro-level analyses usually imply that macro-level political changes are the only meaningful solution to a problem without considering the possibilities for promoting localized change. Thus, while I seek to build from and extend the criticisms associated with the sport ethic and prolympism, I find these concepts are too restrictive for the purposes of my project. I am interested in how individuals may interpret possibilities for ethical action from their own, inevitably constrained, circumstances. Subsequently, I go now to review the work of Shogan (1999, 2007), Denison (2010; Denison & Avner, 2011; Denison & Winslade, 2006), and Markula and Pringle (2006) who adopt Foucauldian frameworks to analyse the operation of power and discourse in sport at a localized level.

Normalization within sport

Shogan (1999) drew on Foucault's (1978) disciplinary technologies to analyze the production of high-performance athletes. Shogan identified how elite athletes have been produced by the application of disciplinary technologies that control time and space, expose the athlete to the expert gaze of coaches and scientists, and cause the athlete to monitor their technique, training and diet. These technologies are intended to produce disciplined bodies that are normalized by the discourses of high performance sport. The process of normalization identifies those whose bodily comportment and technique falls outside the accepted standard, judging them as inadequate and requiring them to change in

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order to conform to the athletic norm. These technologies are intended to render the athletes docile, that is, trained and ready to conform to the demands of elite sport. As Shogan identified, the elite skills and capabilities of elite athletes are only produced by athletes subjecting themselves to rigorous disciplinary technologies.

Shogan's (1999) use of normalization is quite different to Hughes and Coakley's (1991) reliance on normativity. Shogan analyses the specific technologies through which the concept of a "normal" athlete is produced. Hughes and Coakley assume that society can be understood in normative terms. In other words, Hughes and Coakley posit normativity as a fact of human existence, whereas Shogan treats normalization as a contingent human creation.

Whereas Hoberman (1992, 2005) suggests that athletes are forced into conformity by the pressure to perform, Shogan (1999) argues that multiple and contradictory pressures on athletes will mean that the disciplinary technologies that athletes are subjected to will never fully succeed in completely disciplining athletes. More specifically, Shogan (1999) asserts:

> Sport discipline at the millennium is still relentless in its preparation of skilled athletes, but the diversity and hybridity of athletes make it impossible for modern sport to produce homogenous athletes. Demands from other parts of an athlete's identity do not always coincide with demands from high performance sport, resulting in "necessary failures." The failures open up gaps in which it is possible for athletes to make some decisions about how they will participate in high-performance sport. (p. 74)

The discourses of high-performance sport, Shogan argues, are not the only discourses through which individuals are produced. From this perspective, then, each person will have a "hybrid identity" which contains "gaps that can be exploited when it is necessary to refuse the homogenizing impulses of modern sport" (Shogan, 1999, p. 45). Here Shogan offers a crucial implication for further research; the operation of discourse is not uniform, thus it is important to understand how athletes negotiate the discourses of their participation at the individual, or micro, level. This is a key aspect of my project.

Denison (2010; Denison & Avner, 2011; Denison & Winslade, 2006) also takes a Foucauldian approach in order to problematize the dominant discourses within high performance track and field coaching. Denison argues that discourses within coaching emphasize scientific notions of periodization and planning at the expense of alternative understandings which might facilitate improved athletic performance. As an example, Denison (2010) suggests, "the same discourse that produces the 'truth' that planning athletes' training is a technical practice, marginalises athletes' own knowledge or experiences about how to perform or achieve a peak performance" (p. 472). Denison concludes that encouraging coaches to problematize coaching knowledges might be a productive way of producing change in high performance track and field. Both Denison and Shogan (1999) reveal a strength of Foucauldian theorizing. By revealing athletic and coaching subjectivities to be constructed through the contingencies of particular discourses, possibilities of critique and modification are always already in existence.

In line with other sociological analyses of elite sport (e.g., Beamish & Ritchie, 2006; Donnelly, 1996; Douglas & Carless, 2006; Hughes & Coakley, 1991), Shogan (1999) identifies a range of significant problems associated with sport; namely, "drug-taking, the 'good' foul, violence and cheating.... racism, homophobia, and abuses to interpersonal relationships.... [As well as] health problems and injuries that occur within the prescribed rules of boxing, football, hockey, and gymnastics" (p. 87). Critically, however, she argues that while these issues have all been raised in different forms by sociologists, ethicists tend to focus only on the first four in her list: drug-taking, the 'good' foul, violence and cheating, whereas racism, homophobia, abusive relationships, health problems, and injuries produced within the laws of contact sports are ignored within the work of most sport ethicists.

Here, Shogan (1999) draws on König's (1995) criticism of sport ethicists' focus on doping. Noting the moral hysteria surrounding doping in sport, König (1995) asks, "who takes care of the army of nameless ones, who ruined their bodies for the rest of their lives by using 'normal' technological aids in sports?" (p. 250). Traditional accounts of ethics in sport have focused on obligations of athletes to adhere to rules; other issues have been ignored (Shogan, 1999). Shogan argues: "A new task for sports ethics is to encourage participants to question their involvement in the normalizing technologies of sport discipline" (p. 87). For Shogan, then, prominent sociological problems identified within contemporary sport should be considered as problems which are also of ethical relevance.

I wish to develop this line of scholarship, which seeks to combine ethics and sociology in more depth. However, before reviewing how ethics and sociology might be considered together, I wish to briefly address the sociology of

alternative sports. This field is particularly important for me to consider, as due to its emergence in the counter-culture of the 1960s, its self-refereed format and the role of Spirit of the Game, Ultimate is considered to be an alternative sport (Griggs, 2009b, 2011; B. Robbins, 2004; A. Thornton, 2004). However, I also consider my review of alternative sports literature to be pointing in a similar direction to the research within more traditional Western sports of Shogan (1999, 2007), Denison (2010; Denison & Avner, 2011; Denison & Winslade, 2006), Douglas and Carless (Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2008, 2009), and Pringle (Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pringle & Hickey, 2010).

Alternative Sport Forms

In this section I consider how the growing base of sociological literature on alternative sports can help shape my focus on ethics as a sociological phenomenon. I adopt a relatively loose conception of alternative sports, drawing on the work of Rinehart (1998a, 2000, 2007; Rinehart & Sydnor, 2003), Midol (1993; Midol & Broyer, 1995), and Wheaton (2004b). Broadly speaking, I wish to include sports that were held to "either ideologically or practically provide an alternative to mainstream sport or mainstream sport values" (Rinehart, 2000, p. 506). Alternative sports often: are recently created and rapidly evolving; claim to de-emphasize winning and competition; have an aesthetic orientation; and, are associated with a particular lifestyle (Midol, 1993; Midol & Broyer, 1995; Rinehart, 2000, 2007; Wheaton, 2004b). Sports typically regarded as alternative include outdoor adventure activities such as rock climbing, snowboarding, skydiving and mountain biking, urban activities such as skateboarding, inline skating and parkour, and a select range of team sports such as adventure racing, Ultimate, and korfball.

However, as Rinehart (1998a, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2007) and others (e.g., Anderson, 1999; Beal & Wilson, 2004; Laurendeau, 2004; Laurendeau & Sharara, 2008; A. Thornton, 2004; Thorpe, 2008; Wheaton, 2004a) have shown, the practice of these sports is more complex and problematic than this simplistic portrayal suggests. The two primary critiques made of alternative sports are that they reproduce highly problematic gender relations in a manner similar to more traditional sports (e.g., Beal, 1996; Beal & Wilson, 2004; Evers, 2004; Kay & Laberge, 2004; Laurendeau, 2004; Laurendeau & Sharara, 2008; Rinehart, 2005; Robinson, 2004; Thorpe, 2010; Waitt, 2008; Waitt & Warren, 2008; Wheaton, 2004a) and that many of these sports have become increasingly commoditized and co-opted into traditional Western sporting structures (e.g., Beal & Weidman, 2003; Beal & Wilson, 2004; Crissey, 2004; Heino, 2000; Humphreys, 1997, 2003; Rinehart, 1998a, 2000, 2007; Wheaton, 2004b; Wheaton & Beal, 2003). It is the first of these issues which I wish to examine.

Gender relations in alternative sports

Gender is a prime focus of research within the sociology of alternative sports (e.g., Beal, 1996; Beal & Wilson, 2004; Evers, 2004; Kay & Laberge, 2004; Laurendeau, 2004; Laurendeau & Sharara, 2008; Rinehart, 2005; Robinson, 2004; A. Thornton, 1998, 2004; Thorpe, 2008, 2010; Waitt, 2008; Waitt & Warren, 2008; Wheaton, 2004a). A consistent finding within the sociology of alternative sports is the recreation of dominant forms of gender which valorise male athletic ability (Anderson, 1999) and female sexuality (Rinehart, 2005), while intolerance, such as homophobia, is also common (Waitt, 2008).

As an example, Laurendeau (2004), commenting on songs sung at a particular skydiving meet, or "boogie," argues: "analyses of men's songs reveal

that they constrain the transformative potential of women in skydiving by trivializing, marginalizing, and sexualizing them" (p. 398). The situation Laurendeau analyzes, however, is complex, as the "women's songs resist male hegemony in the sport, laying claim to discursive and physical space," yet their strategy "shores up a particular version of heterosexual femininity that contributes to women's trivialization and sexualization in this setting" (p. 398). This tendency for men to position themselves as more able than women is also common in skateboarding (Beal, 1996), and surfing (Booth, 2004; Waitt, 2008; Waitt & Warren, 2008). However, within climbing (Robinson, 2004), windsurfing (Wheaton, 2004a), and skateboarding (Beal, 1996) elite male participants make exceptions for women who could prove themselves as equals.

A number of studies emphasize the complexities of gender relations within alternative sports, revealing that problematic gender relations are often challenged in myriad ways (e.g., Laurendeau & Sharara, 2008; Thorpe, 2008, 2010; Wheaton, 2004a). Wheaton (2004a) suggests that, in contrast to elite "lads," most male windsurfers she observed displayed what she terms an "ambivalent masculinity" (p. 142) by valuing participation over competition and supporting women taking part in the sport. Thorpe (2008) draws on Foucault to analyse women's strategies of resistance within snowboarding and on Bourdieu (Thorpe, 2010) to analyse men's performances of, and resistance to, dominant and problematic snowboarding masculinities.

Laurendeau and Sharara (2008) analyse ways in which women snowboarders and skydivers resist dominant gender relations which cast them in a secondary role to men. These strategies ranged from tactics which avoided, rather than confronted, these problems, through to tactics which actively resisted

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gendered stereotypes. Importantly, Laurendeau and Sharara note there was a significant degree of ambivalence; no single strategy had widespread support from women. I find these studies to be particularly relevant to my project. They reveal complex situations in which athletes have a constrained range of possibilities available to them. As a scholar interested in possibilities for realizing new ways of playing sport, the analysis of a range of possibilities, including strategies of resistance, is particularly important. Alternative sports do not exist as a binary opposite to achievement sport. What is of interest, then, are practices within particular sports that might promote other ways of relating to one's self and to others than those which are currently dominant within Western sporting discourses.

What I am interested in is an examination of how athletes negotiate their participation within the constraints of their cultural context. Individuals and groups are subject to multiple discourses. In addition to the specific discourses of their own sport, alternative athletes will also have been influenced through the media, their education, and, often through their own participation in achievement sport. Individuals are not dupes, yet nor are they free to construct their worlds however they choose: they can only draw on and challenge the discourses that are present within their society (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Thus far, I have focused on sociological analyses of problems with achievement and alternative sports, while maintaining a broad understanding of ethics as concern for how one treats others and oneself. I now turn to consider ethics in more depth through reviewing the field of sports ethics. I will argue from this review in favour of Shogan's (2007) call for a new sports ethics, based on Michel Foucault's (1984, 1988a) technologies of the self.

Sports Ethics

In this subsection, I review the dominant ways in which sports ethics have been theorized. I argue that the dominant theories of sport ethics reify particular notions, such as rules, or 'the good' in a manner which limits the usefulness of these theories for sociological interpretation. Most works in sports ethics fall into one of three broad categories: formalism, also known as deontology; social contract theory; and virtue ethics. I outline each of these categories below. Formalism and social contract theory in particular are long established approaches in modernist Western moral and ethical philosophy. However, virtue ethics, now dominates both sports ethics, and along with other forms of communitarian ethics, also dominates contemporary debates within ethics more broadly (cf., Bauman, 1993). As Pringle and Crocket (forthcoming) argue, the increasing recognition of virtue ethics, which gives some account to socio-historically specific aspects of ethics, suggests a gradual move towards postmodern theorizing within sport philosophy.

Formalism

Rule-based deontological approaches to sports ethics, commonly referred to as formalism, were relatively common in the mid to later half of the twentieth century (e.g., Delattre, 1988; Pearson, 2003; Suits, 1988). Formalist systems define sports in terms of constitutive rules and rules of skill, operating on the assumption that "a particular game... is no more than its rules" (Pearson, 2003, p. 81). Deontologists also typically rely on what Suits (1988) calls the "lusory attitude" (p. 42) under which all participants recognise that they are duty-bound to follow the constitutive rules of the game. Suits states that constitutive rules are those which define how the goal of the game must be achieved. For example, in a

400 metre race, runners must remain in their lane and not cut to an inside lane, nor across the inner field in order achieve the goal of being the first to cross the finish line.

Those who deliberately break the constitutive rules are judged to not be playing the game: "a person may cheat at a game or compete at it, but it is logically impossible for him [sic] to do both" (Delattre, 1988, p. 274). Rather, as Pearson (2003) argues, from a deontological perspective, "a player who deliberately breaks the rules of that game is no longer playing that game" (p. 82). This allows a straightforward justification for disqualifying athletes who take illegal performance enhancing drugs, for example. Thus, as Pringle and Crocket (forthcoming) argue, from a formalist view: "we could conclude–somewhat paradoxically–that Ben Johnson was *not* competing in the final of the men's 100m sprint in Seoul (1988) as he was no longer following the rules of sprinting."

Sport as a form of play

Feezell's (2004) and others (e.g., Burke, 1988; Keating, 1964) conceptualization of sports as a form of play can be seen as a significant subsection to formalism. Drawing on Huizinga, Feezell argues that sport should be seen as a competitive form of play. Huizinga (1988) claims that play is separated from other aspects of our lives and thus play is subject to different norms. In contrast to "normal" life, play is voluntary and free, at least in the modernist sense. We gain nothing from play, except for an enjoyment of the process of playing. Further, Huizinga (1988) argues that play always involves a level of uncertainty and, most importantly, that in play "the rules of a game are absolutely binding and allow no doubt" (p. 5).

Feezell (2004) combines a moderate notion of excellence with the joyful pointlessness central to Huizinga's conception of play to argue that sport is fundamentally the serious pursuit of excellence in a non-serious or trivial activity. Thus we should have an ironic attitude because we are seriously participating in a non-serious activity: despite our deliberate and energetic engagement in training and performing, we are actually playing, and are thus duty bound to follow the rules of play.

My primary concern with Fezell's (2004) work is that it considers play, and by extension, sport, to be free from the operation of power because, by definition, one cannot be coerced into playing. In contrast to this, Foucault (2000a) argues that we cannot escape power relations. Feezell's theorization of sport as a form of play gives sport a visage of innocence that, I suggest, serves to hide the operation of various problematic relations of power related to gender (e.g., Beal, 1996; Laurendeau, 2004; Laurendeau & Adams, 2010; Laurendeau & Sharara, 2008; Messner, 1992; Pringle, 2008; Sparkes & Partington, 2003), and ethnicity (e.g., Carrington, 2004; Kusz, 2003, 2004; Newman, 2007) that are pervasive in many sports. In this way, following König (1995) and Shogan (1999, 2007), we can see how conceiving sport as a form of play fails to account for significant ethical issues.

More broadly, the most comprehensive criticism of formalism is offered by McFee (2004). McFee points out that Suits (1988) begins his formalist argument with the assumption that a "lusory attitude," that is, a willingness to follow all constitutive rules, is a necessary part of sport. In this way, formalists import rule-following as a premise, rather than a conclusion of their argument. Moreover, McFee continues, from a Wittgensteinian perspective (e.g.,

Wittgenstein, 1997), definitions are of no particular use for understanding complex phenomena such as sport. This is because definitions and rules always require interpretation. As Pringle and Crocket (forthcoming) summarize:

> Consequently, rules and definitions by themselves cannot be sufficient in guiding players, coaches, referees, and spectators about how to play sport–ethically or tactically–because rules cannot cover all possible cases nor can rules be applied without interpretation.

We cannot, McFee argues, delineate right from wrong merely by appealing to a set of rules: the particular details of an individual case will always require us to exercise judgement which cannot be fully contained within a set of rules. To continue this line of thinking, a weakness of formalism, from a sociological point of view, is that it presumes athletes should have a uniform understanding of rules and obligations. In contrast, I suggest investigating the ways in which such understandings might converge or diverge would be to ask a sociological question of ethics.

Social contract theory

Another commonly-used approach in sports ethics is social contract theory. According to this theory, we are entitled to assume that athletes have offered tacit agreement as to how they should play the game simply by choosing to take part (Eassom, 1998). In this way both formal and informal expectations are assumed to be agreed to in advance by all players. The strongest advocate of contractarian theory is Simon (2004), who theorizes sports as a mutual quest for excellence. When excellence, rather than victory, is the focus of all competitors, a

challenging but cooperative opposition is preferable to an opponent that is to be exploited and dominated. Notably, Griggs (2011) argued that some form of social contract exists within Ultimate, as in the absence of referees, some form of tacit agreement is necessary for the game to function.

However, as Eassom (1998) argues, social contract theory rests on a metaphor of agreement. That is, it functions on the assumption that we can understand the ethics of sport *as if* all players have a shared tacit agreement about how to play the game. Yet, rarely are metaphors understood to bind us in ethical ways. Moreover, this metaphor removes both sport and ethics from the cultural contexts in which sport is played, and, as with formalism, posits every participant as taking part freely and for identical reasons. Such assumptions are inadequate for framing interpretive sociological inquiry. Of course, some degree of social agreement is necessary for a sport to be recognisable; without a certain level of cooperation, a particular sport would no longer exist (Lehman, 1988). However, this tacit agreement seems weak and highly variable (Eassom, 1998). Most importantly, social contract theory does not address the ways in which people grounded in specific historical and cultural circumstances might understand or relate to a tacit agreement.

Finally, Eassom (1998) observes, philosophers have traditionally regarded rules of sport to be just, or at least deserving of obedience, without paying attention to the processes through which the rules of particular sports have been created and modified. The modification of formal rules has historically been a contentious issue with particular factions trying to gain or maintain political control over a sport, often with the intention of acting as a gatekeeper over who is allowed to play. Clearly, a social contract does not allow us to understand or

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critique the processes through which rules are created and modified. Thus, from a sociological point of view, social contract theory appears to reify an unspoken agreement without considering the sociological context of how these agreements might be formed or understood.

Virtue ethics

Pringle and Crocket (forthcoming) identify "a perceptible swing away from the modernist philosophies of deontological and contractarian theories in favour of virtue ethics (e.g., Carwyn Jones, 2008; McNamee, 1998, 2008; Sheridan, 2003)." Virtue ethicists understand ethics to be concerned with how to live a good life (McNamee, 1998). They argue that formalist and contractarian ethics do not account for the specific contexts in which ethical decisions are made. There will always be situational factors of which hard and fast rules cannot take account (Sheridan, 2003). Instead of attempting to apply rules, virtue ethicists ask themselves, "what will *I* do here in the light of what I conceive myself to be: just, cowardly, arrogant, sensitive, untrustworthy?" (McNamee, 1998, p. 161, emphasis in original). Thus, an ethical act is not seen as an isolated incident, but rather "as part of a narrative that is my life" (McNamee, 1998, p. 161).

Virtue ethics begin with an account of sport as a practice. Practices are complex, socially negotiated phenomena (McNamee, 2008). In other words, practices are social groupings or communities that are concerned with a particular pursuit (Morgan, 2006). Practices are important because through their values, traditions and actions they define internal goods: goals which are relevant or productive only to the pursuit that the particular community is formed around and are subsequently of little or no external value. As Pringle and Crocket (forthcoming) summarize; "any given sport may be thought of as a practice

insofar as it has its own community that defines standards of excellence based on shared knowledge, tradition and intuition."

Internal goods of a practice are valued by all its members. This means that rather than thinking from a first person, egotistical, *I*, people think from the first person, communal, *we* (Morgan, 2006). This is critical for Morgan as it demonstrates a shift in thinking away from "instrumental calculations of self-interest... in favor of non-instrumental considerations of others, which are rooted in public estimates of the good" (p. 71). This means that when faced with a decision about what to do in a particular situation the most important factor is what our community judges to be correct. However, Morgan argues, in contemporary American sport, external goods such as money and fame so far outweigh internal goods that traditional standards of excellence are failing.

It is in challenging situations, such as when internal goods make no clear recommendation, or external goods threaten to outweigh internal goods, that virtue ethicists rely on the concept of the virtues to guide behaviour (McNamee, 2008). Virtues are aspects of character that allow us to live communally:

> Notions such as blame, praise, responsibility, courage, cowardice, vice and so on, are likely to occur in all modern societies by virtue of the sorts of social creatures that humans are and the forms of social organization they construct. (McNamee, 2008, p. 5)

Importantly, virtues are understood to be qualities of someone of good character who will draw on practical wisdom to make context-specific ethical decisions (Morgan, 2007a).

However, Pringle and Crocket (forthcoming) argue "applications of virtue ethics in sport rarely elaborate on what the virtues are beyond a brief list." As an

example, for Shields and Bredemeier (1995), the virtues fundamental to sport are compassion, fairness, sportspersonship, and integrity. In contrast, Lumpkin, Stoll and Beller (1994) suggest justice, honesty, responsibility and beneficence as key virtues. While Sheridan (2003), somewhat simplistically, argues "we prefer the trustworthy to the untrustworthy, the just to the unjust and so on" (p. 174). Yet, as Morgan (2007a) argues, this offers little guidance for "situations in which the virtues clash, and in which, therefore, it is not at all clear which virtues should be acted on and which silenced and rejected" (p. xxxiv). The problem with positioning the virtues in such a fundamental way is that it leaves the concept of the virtues unquestioned.

It is at this point that Morgan (2006) adopts a somewhat different path to virtue ethics. Because much of his theorising of internal and external goods is the same as in virtue ethics and, in most respects, his ethical communities are identical to practices, I have included his work until this point alongside virtue ethics. However, Morgan ultimately opts for another branch of communitarian ethics: namely that of Habermas's ethical communities, which I now differentiate from virtue ethics. The crucial difference here is that Habermas's ethical communities do not have virtues. Instead, all ethical practices are derived from membership within a community that replaces our selfish *I* intentions with communal *we* intentions. This means that there are no ethical principles which have meaning outside of the context of a particular community and, thus, there are no virtues.

Questions remain over the uniformity and boundaries of a practice, whether understood from a virtue ethics (e.g., McNamee, 2008) or communitarian standpoint (e.g., Morgan, 2006). Are all Ultimate players, for example, members

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of the practice of Ultimate, and, if so, does membership of this practice wholly

define their ethical understandings of Ultimate? What about those Ultimate

players, currently a minority, who advocate for referees replacing self-officiated

matches? Is this not a rejection of Ultimate's internal good of self-officiation?

These questions are not easily answered by either virtue ethics or ethical

communities, yet the drawing of boundaries is crucial to each. Bauman (1993)

critiques the use of tightly defined communities in ethics, arguing that "frontiers

of communities are notoriously more difficult to draw in an unambiguous fashion

than are the borders of states" (p. 44). If borders of practices are in fact porous and

flexible, rather than rigid, then this raises questions over the coherency of internal

goods as an applied concept.

This highlights a tendency within accounts, both of virtue ethics' practices

and Morgan's (2006) ethical communities, to gloss over potential internal conflict

and disagreement by emphasizing agreed upon values generated by the traditions

and internal goods specific to the practice. Noting this tendency within

communitarian ethics, Bauman (1993) argues:

> Whenever one descends from the relatively secure realm of the concepts to
>
> the description of any concrete object the concepts are supposed to stand
>
> for–one finds merely a fluid collection of men and women acting at cross-
>
> purposes, fraught with inner controversy and conspicuously short of the
>
> means to arbitrate between conflicting ethical propositions. (p. 44)

The ways in which members of a practice interact, disagree and contest decisions

and priorities carries no guarantees of reaching a decision based on consensus,

internal goods, tradition, nor, indeed, any other ethical principle such as justice or fairness. This suggests, then, that although virtue and communitarian theories of ethics do make a substantive contribution towards a postmodern conception of ethics, there are nevertheless some aspects of everyday life which they struggle to comprehensively deal with.

Nevertheless, I believe that virtue ethics and communitarian ethics offer a valuable alternative to the more strongly modernist sports ethics arising from deontology and social contract theory. Virtue ethics offer a more contextualized approach towards sports ethics. Conceiving of sports as practices offers a socially and historically grounded approach to sports ethics. Nevertheless, I conclude, following Pringle and Crocket (forthcoming), that those involved in sport:

> ...cannot, with impunity, depend upon abstract sets of moral principles, codes of conduct, processes of "rational" disengagement or a belief that there exists a coherent set of virtues that can be relied upon as a moral compass.

Subsequently, I argue, formalist, contractarian, and virtue ethics are all inadequate for undertaking a sociological analysis of ethics.

In light of the strengths identified within virtue ethics, however, it is worth noting Faubion's (2001) suggestion that Foucault's ethical oeuvre might be interpreted as "an anthropological renovation of the Aristotelian enterprise [virtue ethics]" (p.85). While Faubion is clear that Foucault's ethics differed in significant respects from virtue ethics, he argues that Foucault, in fact, offers a more nuanced account of the possibilities for re-thinking ethics within the specific

discourses and power relations of an individual's life. In a similar manner, Markula and Pringle (2006) and Shogan (1999, 2007) advocate for a Foucauldian approach to ethics in sport in order to account for multiple ways in which individual athletes might act ethically within socially, historically, and culturally produced circumstances.

Following Shogan (2007), I see the need to follow a line of questioning that is more explicitly engaged in examining how the ethical turn within postmodernism might affect our understanding of ethics. Shogan (2007) argues that philosophical accounts of ethics, such as those I have reviewed above, are insufficient for gaining a socio-culturally located understanding of ethics in sport. Crucially, she argues that sports ethics should not be limited to issues of rule following, but, rather, that issues such as racism, ableism, sexism, and homophobia should all be regarded as ethical problems in sport. Further, Shogan advocates for interdisciplinary approaches that go beyond rules and rule following to examine ethics as a socially constructed practice. I now consider empirical studies within sociology of sport and anthropology of moralities which have drawn on Foucauldian ethics to undertake this task.

Empirical Studies Drawing on Foucauldian Ethics

Although both anthropology of moralities and sociology of sport have drawn on Foucauldian ethics, there are significant differences between these fields. The two primary differences are the focus of study and presentation of findings. Anthropology of moralities has typically focused on the practices within a particular cultural group (for a significant exception, see Zigon, 2009a, 2009b), whereas Foucauldian scholars within sociology of sport have usually focused on a select group of individuals from a particular sport. In this way, anthropology of

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moralities has tended to emphasize cultural practices at the level of a social group, whereas sociology of sport has tended to focus more on individuals' perspectives. Moreover, anthropology of moralities scholars often write detailed descriptive accounts, with theory only being mentioned in the introduction and conclusion (for significant exceptions, see Laidlaw, 2005; Zigon, 2009a, 2009b).

In contrast, within sociology of sport, in-depth theorization is clear throughout each article. Finally, with the odd exception (e.g., Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pringle & Hickey, 2010), sociological studies drawing on Foucault have not combined ethics and sociology so much as used technologies of self to examine an established sociological issue such as gender or body image. While I have found both sociology of sport and anthropology of moralities to be particularly useful, because of these differences, I will review these bodies of literature separately.

Anthropology of moralities

My reading of the anthropology of moralities has been crucial in my development of an understanding of how to engage in a detailed investigation and discussion of ethics as a socio-cultural practice. The anthropology of moralities offers vivid accounts of ways in which people act upon themselves in order to form their selves as ethical subjects (e.g., Copeman, 2006, 2008; Ladwig, 2009; Mahmood, 2003; Pandian, 2010; J. Robbins, 2004; Zigon, 2009a, 2009b). More specifically, the anthropology of moralities has described in detail the practices of self through which individuals relate to a given moral code.

As examples, Zigon (2006a, 2006b, 2009a, 2009b) takes a life history approach to conduct a phenomenological analysis of the complex moralities of five Muscovites in post-Soviet Russia. Mahmood (2003) examines how Muslim

Egyptian women understand their selves in relation to a piety movement. While Pandian (2010) focuses on how a blind and impoverished Indian man came to critically reflect on his life, making himself the focus on his own ethical thought in relation to dominant understandings of his caste.

In what, I suggest, might be the seminal examination of a contemporary, although not postmodern, telos, Laidlaw (2005) examines how the Jain practice of fasting to death could be understood as a telos or "certain mode of being" (Foucault, 1984, p. 28). Fasting to death is a culturally approved act that some elderly Jain chose to make after a life-long commitment to ascetic self-renunciation. For the Jain, fasting and meditation are practices of self through which individual Jain attempt to remove their self from the physical world, and the *karmic* system. The central problematization made by Jain is that of causing the death of other living creatures. As a result of this problematization, ascetic practices of self are regularly performed throughout a Jain's life in order to minimize the harm caused to other beings.

For the Jain, removing their self from the *karmic* system is necessary that they might achieve "a state of omniscient bliss" (Laidlaw, 2005, p. 182) as a disembodied form of consciousness upon death. In this way, fasting to death represents the final stage of a life which has been defined by regular, ascetic self-renunciation. This differs from other societies which have historically approved of suicide. For example, although the Roman Stoics approved of suicide, this was as an escape from a life intolerable–much like contemporary pro-euthanasia views. In contrast, the Jain view fasting to death as "a positive aspiration which, ideally, shapes the life that leads up to it" (Laidlaw, 2005, p. 186). Significantly, however,

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fasting to death does not form a universal interdiction, but rather is seen as a

positive choice which might be made to end a virtuous and ascetic life.

In this regard, the anthropology of moralities has produced significant

analyses related to Foucault's (2000a) admission:

> ...if I am now interested in how the subject constitutes itself in an active
> fashion through the practices of the self, these practices are not something
> invented by the individual himself [sic]. They are models he finds in his
> culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his
> society, his social group. (p. 291)

Within this context, I argue the work of Laidlaw (2005), Pandian (2010) and

Zigon (2006b, 2007, 2009a, 2009b) stands out for emphasizing complex and

multiple possibilities of acting within the bounds of a moral code.

The anthropology of moralities focuses on practices of self–practices

which Foucault (2000a) suggests already exist within an individual's society–and,

in the strongest accounts, multiple possibilities for forming oneself as an ethical

subject through these practices of self. These are key aspects of Foucauldian

ethics which I will develop in my findings chapters. Moreover, although I have

some theoretical differences with Zigon's (2006b, 2007, 2009a, 2009b)

phenomenological assumptions, his in-depth, localized life history approach to

examining individuals' engagement with ethics is particularly useful. What I

would like to do, however, is consider the way problematization has been

developed within the anthropology of moralities, in comparison to how it has been

developed within sociology of sport. Moreover, I point out that anthropology of

moralities has paid scant attention to an aesthetics of existence. This notion has been briefly considered within sociological studies of sport, however. Thus, I move on to examine Foucauldian ethics within sport.

Foucauldian ethics in the sociology of sport

In this section I critically review the ways in which scholars have applied Foucauldian ethics within sociology of sport. I begin by highlighting a key tension within these studies; the interpretation of problematization. I then go on to specifically review a select group of recent applications of Foucauldian ethics in sport. Markula and Pringle (2006) critique the early attempts to develop Foucauldian ethics in sport as interpreting "technologies of the self as coping strategies" (p. 145). For example, D. P. Johns and Johns (2000) regard dieting strategies by gymnasts as a technology of the self. Similarly, Chapman (1997) argues that because light weight rowers choose from a range of weight loss strategies that they are performing technologies of the self. Markula and Pringle (2006) further suggest that Wesley's (2001) bodybuilders are engaged in an uncritical reaction to Western body norms: building unusual bodies might be a practice of self, yet it is not clearly tied to a process of problematization and, subsequently, does not appear to be part of an aesthetics of existence.

Markula and Pringle's (2006) critique points to a constant tension within Foucauldian ethics. Foucault (1984) describes the four part mode of subjectivation quite clearly and, in work such as Chapman's (1997), it is indeed possible to see how the light weight rowers she studies identify their weight as their ethical substance, how their mode of subjection occurs through their desire to be successful elite athletes, how their ethical work involves particular diet and exercise strategies and their telos is to be an elite light weight rower. Insofar as

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Chapman (1997) describes how these rowers work on themselves in order to create themselves as particular types of subjects, that is, as elite light weight rowers, this appears to be an exemplary example of technologies of the self. However, when Foucault discusses problematization and the aesthetics of existence (e.g., Foucault, 1993, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000g), he seems to propose technologies of the self as a means of critiquing the types of subjectivity proposed by one's society and working on oneself to refuse aspects of these proposed subjectivities.

This theoretical direction interprets problematization as a critical engagement with the discourses and power relations through which one is positioned as a subject. It is this direction in which Markula and Pringle (2006), following the work of Foucauldian feminist theorists (e.g., Butler, 1999; Lloyd, 1996, 1997), sought to develop technologies of the self as an analytic tool within sociology of sport. Nevertheless, as I outlined in my research philosophy, I feel there is a certain degree of ambiguity in notions such as problematization.

How are we to judge whether someone has adequately problematized a given aspect of their self or society? I suspect that the more an individual's view differs from our own, the harder it might be to accept that they have problematized their self adequately. Moreover, as critical sociologists we might, in some circumstances, have a greater range of discursive resources through which we might problematize some aspect of our selves. Or, perhaps more accurately, we might understand academically couched problematizations more readily than those problematizations which might more simply be embodied, or draw on discourses with which we are less familiar. However, I suggest these challenges of interpretation are not unique to Foucault's ethics. Rather, they are

endemic to sociological research. Moreover, our sensitivity to such challenges has been heightened by postmodern sensibilities. Subsequently, I do not seek to dismiss these tensions, but rather to examine these tensions critically within my thesis.

I wish to focus in particular on a group of recent sporting studies drawing on Foucauldian ethics. Markula and Pringle (2006), in their study of mindful fitness, set out to discover critical thought with regards to discourses of exercise, fitness, and body shape in a three part project which involved interviews with mindful fitness instructors and the creator of a mindful fitness programme, and Markula's autoethnographic account of her experiences training as a mindful fitness instructor. Similarly, J. Wright, et al. (2006) search for problematizations about physical activity, health and body shape amongst Australian high school students. A. Jones and Aitchison (2007) reveal a complex combination of technologies of the self and technologies of domination within women's triathlon. Pringle and Hickey (2010) examine the problematization and practices of self through which a select group of men ethically re-created their gendered sporting selves. In a slightly different take, Thorpe (2008) replaces a more common discourse analysis of gendered snowboarding media with an emphasis on the interpretations of women snowboarders with regard to snowboarding media.

A. Jones and Aitchison's (2007) ethnographic study offered a detailed description and analysis of triathlon discourses and how particular female participants understood their engagement in these practices as empowering. In this way, A. Jones and Aitchison's analysis moved between the individual, triathlon, and societal discourses. Thorpe's (2008) ethnographic research reveals the possibilities which female snowboarders could adopt to oppose the sexualisation

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of female boarders were dependent, to some extent, on their position within snowboarding culture. This is important as it reveals that we cannot assume that all participants are equally free.

The most insightful analyses occur when participants clearly articulate specific problematizations, such as Markula's autoethnography of training as a mindful fitness instructor (Markula & Pringle, 2006), Pringle and Hickey's (2010) purposefully selected male athletes and fans, and a solitary interviewee from J. Wright et al.'s (2006) research on Australian youth. These participants in particular were engaged in a process of ethical reflection and action which was insightfully theorized using Foucauldian theory. A number of Pringle and Hickey's interviewees, for example, problematized excessive alcohol consumption and sexualisation of women within sports clubs and took specific actions to find other ways of living their lives while remaining involved in sport. Also important was Markula's (Markula & Pringle, 2006) conceptualization of her work as a mindful fitness instructor as forming an aesthetics of existence through enacting care of the self and care for others.

In contrast, however, J. Wright et al.'s (2006) other participants lacked critical insights, while Markula and Pringle's (2006) interviews with mindful fitness instructors revealed these instructors to be uncritical of dominant discourses of exercise and bodily appearance. In each of these cases, however, the authors acknowledge that it appeared that these participants were not familiar with discourses that might have enabled them to problematize the subject matter, which in both studies, related to fitness and body image. These findings, along with the significant level of ambiguity found by A. Jones and Aitchison, reinforce an

important point, particularly when viewed alongside the anthropology of

moralities.

I wish to re-emphasize the importance of practices of self which Foucault

made clear would be recommended by one's social group. It is also important, as

Thorpe (2008), Zigon (2009a) and Laidlaw (2005) each reveal, that within a social

group, individuals will have a range of possibilities from which they can choose.

Moreover, most people belong to multiple social groups and it is possible that any

of these might propose a relevant practice of self or problematization. One of

Pringle and Hickey's (2010) interviewees, for example, became critical of the

sexualization of women in his rugby club through learning feminist ideas from his

partner. In this way, I suggest that although Foucauldian ethics emphasizes ethical

self-creation, this self is always created in relation to one's society. Subsequently,

identifying practices of self within a social group is an important aspect of

undertaking a Foucauldian analysis of ethics which has been more strongly

articulated in the anthropology of moralities than in sociology of sport.

Ultimately, there appears to still be some ambiguity around the purpose

and application of technologies of the self. Following the work of Foucauldian

feminist Lloyd (e.g., 1996, 1997), Markula and Pringle (2006), J. Wright et al.

(2006), Pringle and Hickey (2010) and Thorpe (2008) have emphasized the need

for problematization to underpin any practice of self. However, Markula and

Pringle (2006), J. Wright et al. (2006), and A. Jones and Aitchison (2007) have all

recognized that there can be difficulties in finding evidence of problematization,

particularly when participants have not had cause to find particular discourses

problematic. Further, even when we are able to critically reflect on an issue,

individuals' positions within various discourses means this does not necessarily

translate into politically transformative action (Thorpe, 2008), nor even personal satisfaction in producing an aesthetically stylized self (J. Wright et al., 2006).

However, I suggest that these studies of Foucauldian ethics in sport do suggest a productive line of research. The identification of problematization as a key aspect of ethical self-creation is, I believe, important. That problematization can be ambiguous and difficult to judge does not detract from the interpretive value of the theory. Our lives as postmodern subjects are fraught with ambiguity and complexity (Bauman, 1993); Foucauldian ethics recognise the ambiguities of people's lives, and allow for us to critically negotiate some aspects of our subjectivity while simultaneously displaying docility in regard to how other discourses may form us as subjects. Foucauldian ethics, as a heuristic device, can facilitate meaningful understandings of how individuals can critically and actively recreate their selves. Notions such as practices of self, problematization and an aesthetics of existence allow us to focus on how individuals negotiate the interplay of different discourses in their lives, and to recognise that the cultural resources available to an individual will be the primary tools used by individuals to create their selves as ethical subjects.

Conclusion

I now draw together the different sections of my literature review to reinforce the relevance and importance of undertaking a sociological analysis of ethics in sport. Sociologists have offered multiple macro-level interpretations of contemporary Western sport, which all revolve around implicitly ethical themes. Dominant Western sports are primarily constructed by the discourses of achievement sport (Coakley, 2007; Guttmann, 2004). Achievement sport has been

problematized, particularly through the rubrics of the sport ethic (Hughes & Coakley, 1991), and prolympic system (Donnelly, 1996; Ingham et al., 2002).

These critiques reveal that the discourses of contemporary sport tend to produce an instrumental rationality which emphasizes aggression, domination, and winning above all else. This means, at an extreme, opponents can be regarded as obstacles in the path of victory, and the physical self can be regarded as a tool to be used until irreparably broken. This critique suggests that within Western sports, the relation one has with self and others can be ethically problematic. These problems are most commonly associated with elite sport (Beamish & Ritchie, 2006; Hoberman, 1992, 2005), yet a number of scholars argue these problems pervade non-elite and youth sport as well (Coakley, 2004; Donnelly, 1996; Hughes & Coakley, 1991; Ingham et al., 1999, 2002; Messner, 1992).

I suggest this macro-level construction of sports is somewhat limiting. While achievement sport, the sport ethic and prolympic sport outline the dominant ways in which sport is constructed in the West, these approaches are somewhat totalizing and do not account for the particular understandings of individual athletes. However, Shogan (1999), Douglas and Carless (2006, 2009) and Denison (2010; Denison & Avner, 2011) have created a bridge between these macro-level critiques and a more nuanced regard for the particular subjectivities of individual athletes. As both Denison (2010) and Shogan argue, elite coaches and athletes might be influenced by alternative discourses which could allow them to question problematic aspects of high performance sport. Following Shogan, I suggest we should develop theories which account for the potential of athletes to perform a partial or total ethical critique of their engagement in sport and to find other ways of playing.

As Markula and Pringle (2006) and Thorpe (2008) point out, these alternative practices might act as practices of self without necessarily changing wider sporting culture. For example, while soccer players are notorious for abusing match officials and attempting to draw fouls against their opponents, many soccer players I have met actively reject this approach even though their opponents and even their team mates may engage in these behaviours. I argue we need to construct more nuanced, localized accounts of sporting participation that allow for multiple performances by athletes whose lives and identities are both fragmented and blurred. Indeed, in this literature review, I have sought to demonstrate that such accounts are increasingly forming a focus of leading sociological research of both mainstream (e.g., Denison, 2010; Denison & Avner, 2011; Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2009; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pringle, 2009; Pringle & Hickey, 2010) and alternative (e.g., Laurendeau & Sharara, 2008; Thorpe, 2008, 2010; Wheaton, 2007) sport.

The performance discourse is productively reinterpreted as the performance narrative by Douglas and Carless (2006, 2009). Similarly, Shogan (1999, 2007) calls for a reconsideration of sports ethics as a socio-culturally informed and sociologically important concept. Although the philosophy of sport has been dominated by the modernist approaches of deontology and social contract theory, the more recent emphasis on virtue ethics indicates a promising move towards postmodern sensibilities and a socio-culturally informed understanding of ethics (see Pringle & Crocket, forthcoming). However, following Faubion (2001), I see Foucault's ethics as offering a more productive focus on the relationships individuals form with themselves with respect to particular moral codes.

Foucauldian ethics (Foucault, 1984, 1988a) offer a theory of ethics with an anti-essentialist interpretation of the individual. The emergent sub-field, anthropology of moralities, has begun to develop Foucauldian accounts of how individuals within particular societies perform ethical work on their selves (e.g., Copeman, 2006; Ecks, 2004; Faubion, 2001; Laidlaw, 2002, 2005; Mahmood, 2003; Pandian, 2010; Zigon, 2007, 2009a). These studies have been particularly successful in showing the importance of practices of self in the formation of ethical subjects. However, the anthropology of moralities has tended to emphasize practices of self at the level of a society or culture with relatively little attention paid to how individuals interpret these practices of self.

Within sport-based sociological analyses of Foucauldian ethics, studies following Markula and Pringle's (2006) re-examination of the purpose of technologies of the self have shown that the construction of an ethical self is an ambiguous and contentious process (e.g., A. Jones & Aitchison, 2007; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Thorpe, 2008; J. Wright et al., 2006). I interpret this as a strength rather than a weakness of the theory. Studies of technologies of the self in sport examine how individuals in particular contexts have problematized gendered identity, body image, health, and fitness and engaged in practices of self in order to create a preferred understanding of self. It is interesting to note, thus far, Markula's (in Markula & Pringle, 2006) autoethnographic experiment as a mindful fitness instructor is the only empirical study drawing on an aesthetics of existence. I suggest that when Foucauldian ethics in sociology of sport is considered alongside the anthropology of moralities, that there is increasing recognition of the relevance and importance of examining how individuals

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construct their selves as ethical subjects with a particular emphasis on practices of self, problematization and an aesthetics of existence.

Aspects of both sociology and philosophy of sport show that sport can be ethically problematic. Dominant discourses of Western sport currently emphasize winning above care of the self or care for others. Further, an instrumentally rational emphasis on winning above-all-else has been associated with aggression, willingness to cheat and violence (Coakley, 2004; Messner, 1992). While multiple forms of alternative sports have been investigated, none of these have been found to offer unproblematic alternatives. Following, Shogan (2007), my interest is not in constructing a system of rules that will define sport ethics, but rather to study possible ways in which athletes could actively (re)construct ethics as a social practice and how athletes might engage in practices of ethical self-formation. Given that this process is complex, nonlinear, and ambiguous, Foucault's ethics offer a productive way forward.

I will now explain my prime research questions: Instrumental rationality has been widely attributed to be a dominant discourse in the formation of problematic sporting subjectivities which might include a cynical disregard for rules, treating opponents as enemies to be dominated, and a lack of care of the self through disregard for one's own injuries and long term health prospects (e.g., Donnelly, 1996; Hughes & Coakley, 1991; Ingham et al., 1999, 2002; Maguire, 2004). However, as Denison (2010) argues in the context of athletics, such problems are not produced by the "essence" of sport; rather, they are historically produced and therefore, are contingent and contestable. Moreover, there has been increasing recognition that individuals have a degree of socio-culturally and historically produced freedom through which they might work to create their self

as an ethical subject (e.g., Faubion, 2001; Laidlaw, 2002; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Shogan, 1999, 2007).

As Shogan (1999, 2007) argues, the possibilities of creating oneself as an ethical athlete are more pronounced when the athletes concerned are "hybrid" athletes; that is, exposed to multiple discourses beyond the narrow, instrumentally rational discourses of dominant, traditional high-performance sports. Based on this review of literature, my research philosophy, and my own experiences playing sport which I described in the prologue and chapter one, I decided to undertake an ethnographic study of the alternative–and hybrid–sport, Ultimate. As an ethnographer, I began my fieldwork with a broad question, with the intention of developing more specific questions as my research developed. My initial question was: In what ways do Ultimate players show a concern, or conversely, a lack of concern, for their self and others in the context of their participation in Ultimate?

I entered the field, then, with an eye for examining the possibilities and problems associated with how Ultimate players might construct their selves as ethical athletes. As my research progressed, I developed four specific questions, based on my emergent findings, which narrowed my research focus and allowed me to develop an in-depth analysis of sociological practices of ethics in Ultimate. These questions, all couched in Foucauldian terms, are: Through which discourses–or games of truth–do Ultimate players understand and negotiate their participation in sport?; How do Ultimate players' experiences shape their understandings of self with specific regard to being an ethical or moral player?; Through what practices of self do Ultimate players seek to produce their athletic selves?; and, What forms of problematization might connect these practices of self

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to Ultimate players' understandings of self, and, possibly, to an aesthetics of existence?

Chapter Four: Method: Ethnographic Inquiry

The research methods I adopted to investigate research questions were based on my moderately postmodern philosophical assumptions and, in particular, my interpretivist research paradigm, which I outlined in chapter two. In order to investigate practices of ethics in the context of Ultimate, I undertook a contemporary ethnography. Contemporary ethnography, in many respects, is a style of research based on bricolage, which "in a contemporary sense, is understood to involve the process of employing those methodological processes as they are needed in the unfolding context of the research situation" (Kincheloe et al., 2011, p. 168). Subsequently, I adopted and moved between methods, primarily fieldwork, interviews and textual analysis, as they were relevant to particular stages of my project. For clarity I will describe my fieldwork, interviews, textual analysis, and data analysis in separate sections. I wish to be clear, however, that this separation is a presentational technique, as "in the end, it is impossible to disentangle *data*, *data collection*, and *data analysis*" (St. Pierre, 2011, p. 622, emphasis in original).

Fieldwork

As Markula and Silk (2011) note, "what characterises ethnography is the researcher's extended stay in the field" (p. 161). Ethnographic fieldwork, then, is research conducted over an extended period of time, with a group or multiple groups, in which the researcher takes part in the groups' activities. My fieldwork consisted of taking part in Ultimate tournaments and team practices as both a player and a researcher over the course of two years. Angrosino (2005) notes observation has long been valued for allowing research in "naturalistic" settings. In line with my subjectivist epistemology and relativist ontology, I undertook

fieldwork in order to gain access to "*local and contingent*" knowledge about practices of ethics in Ultimate (Fox, 2006, p. 357, emphasis in original).

My fieldwork did not take place in a single locale with an "exotic" non-Western culture (G. E. Marcus, 2009). Such a focus on location-specific culture, Gupta and Ferguson (2005) note, is no longer tenable as cultures are now understood to be dynamically formed through interactions across and between locations. Subsequently, my fieldwork examines an issue–the production of ethical subjectivities in Ultimate–rather than a bounded culture. Given that this issue is not based on a particular location, I undertook multi-sited fieldwork (G. E. Marcus, 2005). Following Reddy (2009), I regarded:

> The "field" as an almost random assemblage of sites that come into coherence through the processes of fieldwork itself: the field as deterritorialized and reterritorialized, as it were, by the questions brought to bear on it in the course of research. (p. 90)

In my research, what counted as the "field" was determined by my research focus on the ways in which ethics were constructed and contested within Ultimate. This lead me to construct various sites temporarily occupied by Ultimate players, such sports grounds, stadia, restaurants, and bars, as forming my "field" of research.

I was particularly interested in what Ultimate players understood to be ethically problematic within their participation in Ultimate. Yet, as an interpretivist (Lincoln et al., 2011), I did not expect my participants' views to neatly cohere into an ethical consensus. Following Nacify's (2009) warning, I was aware that my participants might vehemently disagree with each other. Such

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conflicts of opinion, Angrosino (2005) emphasizes, must be accounted for within an ethnographic project as "no one perspective can claim exclusive privilege in the representation" of "ethnographic truth" (p. 731). Subsequently, following Angrosino (2005) and Fox (2006), I did not imagine that my field work would give me access to a singular reality. Instead, I accepted that my fieldwork would reflect a sense of "situatedness, which posits a particular perspective" and "underlines the impossibility of an omnipresent view" (Chung, 2009, p. 62). Moreover, I accepted my findings would inevitably be influenced by my own background as a middle-class, heterosexual, pakeha[3] male and thus my field notes would constitute my particular interpretations of events, rather than a neutral recording (Angrosino, 2005).

My fieldwork took the form of overt participant observation at twelve Ultimate tournaments–nine in New Zealand, two in Australia and one in Europe– as well as regular trainings with an elite open team. I conducted fieldwork at three national tournaments that my local non-elite club attended and four 'hat' tournaments, which players entered as individuals and were placed into teams at random. Further, as I describe below, I also conducted fieldwork as a member of an elite open team at five competitive tournaments, culminating in the 2010 World Club Championships. At these tournaments, the observations I made were of relatively transient groups, together for only a short space of time (usually no longer than a weekend). However, as with many other lifestyle sports, Ultimate had a "subculture of commitment" (Wheaton, 2003, p. 86); a large group of players attended many of these tournaments. Thus, although tournaments were

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[3] Pakeha is the Maori term for New Zealanders of European descent.

transient events, there was substantial overlap of players attending these tournaments.

I took considerable efforts to undertake my fieldwork in an ethical manner. I have included copies of my participant information sheets and permission forms in appendix B. As Hamilton (2009) observes, "what has come to frame the practice of ethics as well as ethical practice is not only itself worthy of anthropological investigation, but also forms a key part of the practice of ethnography" (p. 73). However, the transitory nature and size of the tournaments I conducted research at made gaining informed consent from every tournament attendee unfeasible. My strategy, instead, was to work with tournament directors to publicise my presence as a researcher so that all players would be aware of my project.

Gaining permission to undertake fieldwork at these tournaments was, for the most part, a straight-forward process. As I was already a member of the Ultimate community, I found that people in gate keeping positions were happy to facilitate my research. The key gatekeepers were tournament directors, who I contacted in advance via email prior to request consent to conduct research at their tournament. Although I occasionally had to use a network of contacts to establish communication with a tournament director, every tournament director I approached was happy to facilitate my research. At all tournaments, the tournament director emailed all captains or players with information about my research. I would also attend captains' meetings prior to the start of play where I would explain my research and hand out paper summaries of my research to all captains. Where possible, I would also place descriptions of my research at the tournament director's desk.

I emphasized that players and teams would remain anonymous in my research and that any team or players who were uncomfortable with my research had the option to discuss this with me or the tournament director and to ask either of us that they be excluded from my research. While I fielded multiple questions about my research, at no stage did anyone suggest to me or a tournament director that they found my research problematic or ask to be excluded.

In addition to this, I gained informed consent from my team mates at each tournament. Because my team mates would inevitably be central to many of my observations, I felt it was important that they have the right to choose whether or not to participate in my project. This was a straight-forward process for tournaments which my club had entered. However, at hat tournaments I would only meet my team on the morning the tournament began. As a result, I was always careful to explain my research and give my team time to think through their participation in my project. In every case, I was humbled by the continual willingness of my team mates to take part. I refer to both my fieldwork and interview participants by pseudonym throughout this thesis.

While researching and writing this project, I have felt a strong sense of ethical responsibility for those who have taken part in my research (Derrida, 2008). This ethical responsibility is not limited or absolved by my fieldwork fitting within the guidelines set by my faculty's ethics committee (Ezzy, 2002). Nor is it contained by writing in a manner which preserves the anonymity of my participants. Instead, it is a feeling that drove me to continually reflect on the adequacy of my interpretations in order that I show a responsible and honest engagement with the participants who made my project possible.

Part way through the research process, I was offered an opportunity to extend my fieldwork. I was invited to play for an elite open team based a couple of hours away from where I was living. In this instance, the key gatekeeper was one of three captains of this elite open team which had qualified for the 2010 World Club Championship tournament. In a meeting at the start of the team's campaign, I outlined my project to the team and asked their permission to undertake research while training and playing for this team. After gaining the permission of the players and coaches, I proceeded to train, play and undertake fieldwork with this elite team over the course of twelve months. I took part in, and made observations at, twice weekly team training sessions, and five tournaments. I have included a modified biography of the team members in appendix C.

Before this opportunity arose, I had not considered myself to be an elite player, and after watching a World Ultimate and Guts Championship[4] tournament prior to starting my research, I had concerns at the levels of aggression and physicality within elite Ultimate. However, the opportunity to play and study this team appealed for a number of reasons. Firstly, it offered me the opportunity to add new complexities to my fieldwork through taking part in the team's twice-weekly training sessions. I had decided not to use my twice-weekly pick-up games with my local, non-elite club as part of my project. Within my non-elite club, I was easily the most experienced and skilled member and had a significant role in recruitment and coaching of new players. As a high status "insider," I felt

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[4] Ultimate has two world championships which alternate every two years. The World Ultimate and Guts Championships are formed of national teams (and also feature a separate disc sport called Guts). The World Ultimate Club Championships brings together the best club teams from around the world. Countries are allocated entries for their top ranked clubs relative to their elite playing numbers. As examples, in 2010 the USA was allocated five entries to the open division and New Zealand was allocated one.

that adding the role of active researcher to my multiple roles as recruiter, captain and coach was not an ethical use of my position within the club.

However, I found there were occasions during our pick-up games where highly insightful moments arose which I could not ethically include as part of my research. Like Hamilton (2009), I had the experience of some of my most insightful moments being off-the-record. Joining an elite team, in which I occupied a different position within the team's power-relations, offered me a chance to undertake regular field work in a non-exploitative way. Regular field work with this team, I hoped, might offer me access to ethically insightful moments, albeit in a different context than my non-elite club.

Secondly, I decided that playing elite Ultimate would be a way in which I could "think of myself as a site and instrument of fieldwork" (Naficy, 2009, p. 117). As a spectator at a world championship tournament, it had appeared to me that many elite players had an instrumentally rational approach to playing Ultimate. I recognized, however, that my understanding of elite Ultimate was relatively superficial. Given my openly subjective approach to knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), I hoped that becoming personally involved in elite Ultimate would allow me to develop more complex, deepened understandings of elite Ultimate players' perceptions of ethics and their selves. Moreover, I hoped this opportunity would allow me to gain new understandings of my athletic self. I wondered how playing at the elite level might affect my own understandings of my self as an ethically orientated athlete.

Thirdly, I was both flattered and excited at the prospect of playing elite Ultimate. I looked forward to the athletic and strategic challenges which would be offered to me. I was pleased to have an opportunity to play on a team where I was

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not a leader and could learn from others and focus on improving my own game. Ultimately, this turned out to be something of a bittersweet experience for me as a player: I loved the experience and learnt a huge amount. However, I struggled with injuries throughout this time and at the end of the world club championships I was diagnosed with a serious hip injury. I have had both my hips operated on, and eighteen months after being diagnosed, I am waiting to find out if follow-up surgery and a further period of rehabilitation will be required.

As a researcher, I benefited from the extended period of time I spent with the elite open team as this opened up levels of complexity I had not anticipated at the start of my project. As Crewe and Maruna (2006) argue, "fieldwork allows opportunities for deeper, longer-lasting relationships to emerge, as well as allowing for interactions and observations in a greater variety of situations" (p. 113). In undertaking a dual role as a player-researcher, elite team trainings and all tournaments presented particular challenges as the time committed to team meetings, team meals, warm ups, games, and cool downs made note taking challenging (cf., Gillham, 2008). As an active player, I had 'to adapt methodological procedures and to maintain the balance between epistemological interests and the requirements of the situation' (Luders, 2004, p. 226).

Often, a pertinent conversation might take place mid-training, yet as a playing member of the team, I had to wait until after the training before I could write my observations. At times, I would struggle to remember the details of conversations, after hours of physically taxing drills and scrimmages. As a result of these limitations on my time and energy, I occasionally supplemented my hand-written notes with verbal notes, which I would record digitally, and transcribe after the event. I found this to be a good way of noting information

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quickly when time was short. On more than one occasion at a tournament, I fell asleep while writing field notes late at night, my commitments as a player and team member having both exhausted me and prevented me from writing extensively during the day. At times, like Brownell (2006), the experiences of playing left me in an emotional state which made recording field notes difficult.

I am wary, however, of implying that such challenges prevented me accessing the "truth." As Fox (2006) noted, even within:

> ... epistemologies that problematise the relation between observation and reality in approaches such as interpretive sociology, ethnomethodology and post-structuralism (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).... the desire for the *logos*–truth about the object of study–underpins discussions of research methodology. (p. 354)

As Angrosino (2005) argues, "objective truth about a society or culture cannot be established because there are inevitably going to be conflicting versions of what happened" (p. 731). I acknowledge, then, that although my playing commitments created challenges with regards to recording data, these commitments also presented research opportunities which I would not otherwise have had. It is important then, to focus on the opportunities for knowledge construction that I gained through my fieldwork.

As an Ultimate "insider," I gained access to a wide range of players. Within my elite team, I developed friendly and respectful relationships with the other players. The opportunity to get to know these players better added depth to my interpretations of how they interacted within the team and with other Ultimate

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players. As far as I could tell, other Ultimate players did not feel uncomfortable with my research. At tournaments I was regularly approached by players curious about my project, many of whom congratulated me for undertaking this study. A few players even joked with me on the pitch about how they had to play nicely against me, so they would not look bad in my thesis. Overall, whether people showed interest in my work or not, I never gained the impression that people acted in a guarded manner around me. In order to do justice to the openness with which I was treated, I have attempted to show a plurality of voices in my findings chapters, reflecting the wide range of views which I found, and that consensus was not always present (Angrosino, 2005; Naficy, 2009).

In making and recording observations I was selective about my focus, at times taking a broad focus, at other times narrowing my observation to particular actions (Silk, 2005). As an example, at one tournament I focused on the construction and performance of gender relations. However, what is most important in undertaking this fieldwork was my willingness to be adaptable and flexible as obstacles and possibilities inevitably arose during my research which could not be accounted for under a rigid framework of inquiry (Angrosino, 2005; Luders, 2004). A key example of this was taking up the opportunity to conduct regular fieldwork with an elite team, as this opportunity only emerged after I had started my fieldwork. I now go on to describe my interview methods.

In-depth Interviews

In addition to my field work, I undertook in-depth interviews. Following Fontana and Frey (2005), I used semi-structured, in-depth interviews to make open-ended inquiries of the complex social worlds that Ultimate players (re)create without imposing rigid limits on my inquiry. I adopted a semi-structured interview

format as a deliberate move away from scripted interviews that cast the interviewer as an impartial scientist, drawing out "unadulterated facts" from interviewees, who are considered mere "*vessels of answers*" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, pp. 7–8, emphasis in original). Instead, following Holstein and Gubrium, I understood interviewing as a collaborative meaning-making process, in which I would actively work with the interviewee to reflect on their experiences and identities, in order to produce narratives related to my research interests.

I recognized that while my interview subjects were capable of speaking for themselves, the answers we generated were the product of our interactions in the interview and cannot be assumed to have a one-to-one correspondence to some external reality (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Therefore, I also acknowledged that each of our roles would be partial as "the boundaries between, and respective roles, of interviewer and interviewee have become blurred" (Fontana, 2002, p. 162) Interpretations of my interview data need to reflect that, "the spoken or written word always has a residue of ambiguity" which cannot be eliminated through methodological rigour (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 697).

In my role as interviewer I sought to "judiciously engage the respondent, working interactionally to establish the discursive bases from which the respondent can articulate his or her relevant experiences" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 47). How I framed my introduction, drew on background knowledge, related to, and empathised with my respondents were therefore important factors in the production of data (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). My experience as an Ultimate player, and, for some of my participants, as a fellow elite team member, allowed me to engage in "strict reciprocity" with my

interviewees, on the basis of my ability to share with my participants my "own views, feelings or reflections on the topics being discussed" (Johnson, 2002, p. 109).

I encouraged interviewees to construct their own narrative answers and to contribute their own ideas. Thus, I treated my questions only as guide, acknowledging that each interview would be a different co-construction. In a similar move to Zigon (2009b), I adopted something of a life-history approach beginning each interview with questions inquiring about my participants' sporting life-history. Thus we co-developed narratives beginning with my participants' early sporting experiences, running through to their participation in Ultimate and their present day involvement in sport. My interviewees' understandings of competition and winning, Spirit of the Game, cheating, and "grey areas" formed central themes.

I interviewed fourteen people, including ten from New Zealand, two from England, and two from the United States. I have included modified biographies of my interview participants in Appendix C. My interviewees ranged in Ultimate playing experience from one season to eighteen years. Of these players, seven had played elite Ultimate in multiple countries and a further two had played in multiple countries at a social level. Only five of my interviewees were female; this gender imbalance is, in part, a result of interviewing four key informants from my elite open team. However, it is also a reflection of the gender imbalance within the game. As a rough indication of gender proportions, in the United Kingdom, the open division of the national 'tour' competition features three divisions of open teams, totalling over forty teams, which are almost exclusively men only, while the women's division, which runs simultaneously at a shared location, typically

fields a single division of twelve to sixteen teams. Similarly, at New Zealand Ultimate's nationals, the number of open teams is usually around double the number of women's teams.

My key aim in selecting interviewees was to produce a range of detailed narratives concerning sport, Ultimate and ethics. My aim was "not so much to capture a representative segment of the population as it [was] to continuously solicit and analyze representative horizons of meaning" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 74). To achieve this end, I used a range of methods to select participants. I began, following Warren's (2002) recommendation, by interviewing an acquaintance. My friend, Beth (pseudonym), an expatriate American, had expressed an interest in my research and her background in elite sport seemed likely to offer rich, detailed material. Because Beth was interested in my research, she agreed to help me trial the interview schedule I had developed for my interviews.

I selected a further six interviewees, five of whom were New Zealanders, and one of whom was English, through the snowball method (C. A. B. Warren, 2002) when players approached me during fieldwork. I also directly approached a visiting American player and an ex-teammate from my English club in an attempt to gain diverse perspectives. Finally, I asked four key informants from my elite open team–three players and one coach–to participate in interviews (Crewe & Maruna, 2006; C. A. B. Warren, 2002). In a similar manner to Crewe and Maruna (2006), I found that a life-history approach was particularly insightful when interviewing key informants from my elite team, as this allowed me to "probe beneath public identities" (p. 117). Moreover, following Holstein and Gubrium (1995), I found as I conducted more interviews, I was able to take:

...advantage of the growing stockpile of background knowledge the interviewer collects in prior interviews to pose concrete questions and explore facets of respondents' circumstances that would not otherwise be probed. (p. 46)

In this way, I was able to develop my ability as an interviewer in the co-production of interview narratives that were relevant to my research questions.

Given the Foucauldian lens that I have applied to my research, it was important to recognise the potential for unequal power-relationships within my interviews (Dunne, Pryor, & Yates, 2005). Thus, I attempted to communicate openly and collaboratively with each interviewee. After each interview, I transcribed the interview verbatim, and returned the scripts to the interviewee to check. As a measure to ensure my respondents retained some control over the narratives we co-constructed within our interview conversations, I encouraged them to check their transcripts and make any additions or deletions that they saw fit. While I undertook these actions in an effort to engage collaboratively with my participants, I retained responsibility for interpreting the data we co-produced and writing the findings.

Textual Analysis

Beyond my field work and interviews, I gathered information about Ultimate from any publicly available text I could find. I watched DVDs, such as Ultivillage's recordings of world championships, US national championships and other elite tournaments, and clips on YouTube. I read blogs, particularly those of two retired elite American players, Jim Parinella (e.g., Parinella, 2005), widely

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regarded as the best cutter to have played Ultimate, and Lou Burruss (e.g.,

Burruss, 2010a, 2010b, 2011), who now coaches an elite women's college team. I

read copies of books and magazines, and followed the public email list serve,

Britdisc, the Google group rec.sport.disc, and the internet television programme,

Blockstack TV.

I read and watched these texts paying attention to both the subjects which

were discussed, and also how the texts were structured (Kvale, 2007). I took notes

from DVDs, YouTube clips, and books, saved copies of relevant blog posts into

files such as gender, irony, rules and regulations, and Spirit of the Game. I saved

relevant Britdisc emails by labelling them in my email account. Having worked to

develop this source of data, I used it alongside my fieldwork and interviews to

build a more detailed, thorough understanding of how Ultimate is played in

different parts of the world. Given that there have been relatively few scholarly

articles published on Ultimate (e.g., Griggs, 2009a, 2009b, 2011; B. Robbins,

2004; A. Thornton, 2004), I undertook this textual analysis to immerse myself in

the discourses of Ultimate in order to learn as much as I could about what

Ultimate players talked about, wrote about, debated and celebrated.

I draw on aspects of documentary evidence, such as Leonardo's (2007)

Ultimate: The greatest sport ever invented by man, in my findings chapters.

However, aspects of texts have been difficult to use. As an example, most DVD

footage is edited so that stoppages such as foul calls are largely edited out.

Moreover, the particular details of such calls are often inaudible, so little can be

taken from this footage in terms of how players deal with calls. On the other hand,

many other aspects of how players interact are readily apparent. For example,

levels of physicality and aggression, playing tactics, and some player interactions

such as a defender and attacker high-fiving one another at the completion of a play are often observable. Similarly, I had hoped that rec.sport.disc would be an interesting source of debate on Spirit of the Game and self-refereeing. However, the site was dominated by 'trolls' who would take over any discussion regarding these matters, blindly repeating points in an abusive and inconsiderate manner. Eventually, I decided that while this source might be useful for a later project, that there was little to be gained from reading it for my thesis.

Textual analysis was particularly important in tempering my claims about the universality of Ultimate discourses. Evidence from blogs and DVDs suggests that elite North American Ultimate is very different to Ultimate across the rest of the world, and to non-elite Ultimate in North America. Although I have played against and watched elite North American teams, there are clear differences which I became aware of predominantly through reading North American blogs.

Analysis of Data

In accordance with my postmodern research paradigm, I did not draw rigid boundaries between my data collection and data analysis phases; instead, I undertook data analysis throughout my data collection (Ezzy, 2002). I did this through a process Kvale (2007) calls "analysis as theoretical reading" (p. 117). Primarily, I sought to undertake a Foucauldian reading of my data. Given that my interest was in Foucauldian ethics, I focused on how understandings of self, problematizations, and Foucault's (1984) four step mode of subjectivation might be read from my field notes, interview transcripts and documentary evidence. In fact, I began this process of thinking through Foucault prior to starting my formal data collection by writing an analysis of Stevenson's (1997) research into Christian athletes and elite sport using Foucault's mode of subjectivation. With

regard to my interviews, field notes and documentary evidence, I paid attention to how discourses such as Spirit of the Game and rule following formed "meanings, subjects, and subjectivities" within Ultimate (J. Wright, 2003, p. 36).

I experimented with writing with these ideas and, following Ezzy's (2002) advice, tested a series of these ideas across numerous conferences and presentations. In response to feedback from my first conference, and following St. Pierre (2011), I sought to broaden my theoretical understandings of postmodern ethics beyond Foucault. I chose to do this through reading Bauman (1993), Levinas (1969, 1998), Derrida (2001, 2005, 2008) and Critchley (1992, 1996, 1999, 2002) and I regularly returned to Foucault's own writing on ethics (e.g., 1984, 1988a, 1988b, 2000a, 2000c) and numerous secondary texts (e.g., Bennett, 1996; Connolly, 1993; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Thorpe, 2008; J. Wright et al., 2006). In response to these readings and my repeated reflections on my data, I wrote short pieces relating to the ethical turn, how I was trying to study ethics as sociological phenomena, and experimented with autoethnographic and poetic writing, as well as making reflective notes in a series of diaries.

However, like Reddy (2009), I found my ethnographic data to be "incoherent–not without meaning, that is, but disjointed, comprising parts that must be methodologically arranged to be made sense of" (p. 89). I struggled to make sense of the variety of responses I generated in my interviews, of how to combine my field notes, interview transcripts and documentary evidence. I was reluctant to narrow my focus too far, worried that if I pushed something aside as insignificant that I might miss out on an important insight. At the same time, however, I now think my reluctance to narrow my focus made further analysis and writing difficult. Although I could make sense of particular interviews and aspects

of my fieldwork, I struggled to see how I could piece these together into a thesis, even allowing for a sense of "incompleteness" which G. E. Marcus (2009) argues should be present within contemporary ethnographies.

These difficulties of interpretation were exacerbated by various idiosyncratic demands of my ethnographic research: during the twelve month period I spent with my elite team, each week I spent eight hours travelling to and from team trainings and ten to fifteen hours training with the team or by myself. During this time I attended eight tournaments, which included three international trips. For the last six months of this period, I was also working close to fulltime as an adjunct lecturer in order to fund my fieldwork. Subsequently, after the world club championships, I had completed the bulk of my fieldwork and over two thirds of my interviews, yet I was not at a stage where I had a clear understanding of how I might structure my findings.

Post world club championships, I continued my pattern of "hard theoretical reading" (St. Pierre, 2011, p. 621) and reflecting on my data. I regularly discussed ideas with my supervisors, and started to piece together possible thesis structures and chapter outlines. I pursued what I saw to be my key ideas emerging from my fieldwork, particularly from the world club championships with my final four interviewees and found that these ideas were both supported and deepened. I then redeveloped two of these ideas for conference presentations; namely peripheral rituals in Ultimate, and Derrida's ethics of the Other. I later redeveloped these presentations into my final two findings chapters.

Nevertheless, despite settling on a thesis structure and chapter outlines, I did not feel that I had a set of results which I could simply "write up." I still faced

questions of what to include and exclude, what I deemed more or less important, and of how I could frame my analysis in a way that reflected both variety and unity within my data. I moved forward, following Richardson and St. Pierre (2005), by reconceptualising writing as a form of analysis. The more I wrote within a given chapter, the more I found "that much data–*what we think with when we think about a topic*–were identified during analysis and not before" (St. Pierre, 2011, p. 621, emphasis in original). By this I mean, as I wrote a section of work, this thinking and writing lead me to recall what St. Pierre describes as "*memory data*" and to experience, often quite vividly, "*emotional data*" (p. 621, emphasis in original) relating to my interviews and fieldwork.

As I worked with my field notes and interview transcripts, and returned again to Foucault's *The Use of Pleasure*, I realized that in order to examine ethical self-formation, I needed to focus more on practices of self than discourse. These ideas were reinforced through my reading of the anthropology of moralities (e.g., Faubion, 2001; Laidlaw, 2002, 2005; Pandian, 2010; Zigon, 2009b), which I only discovered in my final year of writing, and through discovering Besley and Peters' (2007) and Flynn's (1985) readings of the later Foucault's orientation to truth. Certainly, practices of self were discursively formed, yet this shift in my thinking allowed me to redevelop the structure of my thesis in a more coherent manner. I achieved this shift in thinking through using writing as a form of analysis (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

At times as I wrote, I would return to my transcripts and notes to code certain aspects of interviews and compile those quotes matching a code into groups. Yet, I only did so as part of a process of analysis that revolved around

writing. By not focusing extensively on coding my data, I remained cognisant of
B. Smith and Sparkes' (2009) cautionary note:

> By seeking common themes in stories there is the danger a
> content/thematic analysis misses other possible messages that individual
> stories might hold.... Indeed, core themes can often be underscored at the
> expense of variation, difference, and contradictions, and so lead the
> researcher to under-appreciate the fine-details of talk and the heterogeneity
> of experience. (p. 285)

Subsequently, the creative practice of writing allowed me to fulfil my aim as an
interpretivist researcher by writing complicated accounts which emphasized
variation and difference as well as certain consistent themes (Lincoln et al., 2011).

Admittedly, the structure of my thesis and my style of writing is somewhat
less experimental than much of that advocated by Richardson and St. Pierre
(2005). However, Ezzy (2002) suggests that "the point is not that new modes of
writing should be adopted wholesale; rather, that it is no longer possible to
pretend that the way in which qualitative reports are written can be treated as
straightforward" (p. 152). Although I have drawn, in part, on a realist writing
style, as Van Maanen (2011) observed; "while less obviously and intentionally
experimental, realist tales these days also provide more room for the often
disparate voices of those studied" (p. 160). More specifically, I have sought to
incorporate postmodern sensibilities into my writing through: adopting an active
first person authorial voice, including my own experiences as findings, and
seeking to reveal a sense of "purposeful incompleteness and uncertainty" (Van

Maanen, 2011, p. 170). In this way, I have acknowledged and reflexively worked with the crises of legitimation and representation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) by writing in a manner which reveals "the partial, situational, historical and provisional nature of all knowledge" (Ezzy, 2002, p. 150). Having described my research methods, I now go on to discuss my research findings.

Chapter Five: Discovering Ultimate

Introduction

In this chapter I specifically address my first and second specific research

questions: Through which discourses–or games of truth–do Ultimate players

understand and negotiate their participation in sport?; and, How do Ultimate

players' experiences shape their understandings of self with specific regard to

being an ethical or moral player? To examine these questions, I draw on four of

my interviewees' experiences through a Foucauldian lens to analyse their

experiences of voluntary retirement from competitive sport and their subsequent

re-engagement in sport following their discovery of Ultimate. I argue the

experiences of these four participants, Beth, John, Phillip and Gerald, are

important as both their retirement from sport and discovery of Ultimate formed

processes of ethical self-creation. After examining these participants' early

understandings of Spirit of the Game, I then draw on all my interview

participants' perspectives on Spirit of the Game to argue that Spirit of the Game

forms a postmodern athletic telos, or aesthetics of existence.

In this chapter, I make two important contributions to sociology of sport.

Firstly, I advance a new possibility for understanding sporting retirement as an act

of ethical self-creation. In this way, I argue retirement from sport can be an ethical

response to the problems associated with dominant Western sports discourses.

Secondly, I examine whether Ultimate offers athletes alternative athletic

subjectivities to the problematic subjectivities proposed by dominant Western

sporting discourses. I begin by explaining why I focus on the experiences of four

of my interviewees.

Although the growth of youth Ultimate in high schools is rapidly changing the life stage at which people first encounter the sport in countries such as the United States ("USA Ultimate membership statistics," 2011), United Kingdom ("Ultimate experiencing upswing in school participation," 2010), Australia (field notes) and New Zealand (field notes), most people I talked to, both in formal interviews and informally during my field work, first discovered Ultimate as adults. The significance of this is that through differing levels of involvement in school physical education and youth sport programmes, my participants had developed particular sporting identities, and perspectives on how sport should be played before they discovered Ultimate. I found that my interview participants split into three groups: those who had never played sport outside of physical education classes at school, those who had played other sports before playing Ultimate and continued their involvement in those sports alongside Ultimate, and those who had voluntarily retired from other sports before playing Ultimate.

There are, of course, multiple reasons why people might start playing Ultimate. Unsurprisingly, then, from my fourteen interviewees, I received a range of responses about why people started playing. For example, Regan began playing almost by accident, "while I was going to martial arts, they had Ultimate first, so I started playing Ultimate before doing a martial arts course." In contrast, Mitchell, whose friend's description of the game as highly athletic, suggested the game immediately captivated him: "it had all these things that really interested me; you ran fast, you caught things, you jumped in the air, you made diving blocks to save the game and things like that, so it grabbed my imagination." My fourteen interviewees came from a range of sporting backgrounds. Three had played rugby, five played soccer, two had played netball and, another, hockey. The remaining

three had not played team sports beyond their participation in physical education classes at school.

The experiences of four of my participants, John, Phillip, Gerald, and Beth stood out as quite different to the rest. Each had a background in traditional team sports, but became disillusioned with these sports, and decided to retire from playing these sports between 18 and 24 years of age. These participants offered me vivid descriptions of their experiences of sport before Ultimate, of their experiences that lead to their retirement and their subsequent discovery of Ultimate. For these participants, discovering Ultimate after they had voluntarily retired from another sport seemed to allow them to rediscover a satisfactory athletic identity–an identity which they had been unable to maintain through continued participation in their previous sports. When I undertook a preliminary reading of their transcripts in relation to Foucauldian theory, I soon found it apparent that each of their experiences in retiring from traditional team sports and then discovering Ultimate was part of a process of ethical self-creation (Foucault, 1984).

In this chapter, then, I begin by examining the experiences of Beth, John, Gerald, and Phillip. I theorize their experiences of sporting retirement through the lenses of Foucauldian ethics (Foucault, 1984, 1988a, 2000a, 2000c, 2000g) and sociological and socio-psychological analyses of the effects of athletic retirement on individuals' understandings of self (e.g., Denison, 1997, 1999, 2006; Douglas & Carless, 2009; Kleiber & Brock, 1995; Phoenix & Sparkes, 2007; Sparkes, 1998, 1999; Sparkes & Smith, 2002; Stier, 2007). I then consider the extent to which these four participants came to understand Ultimate as offering a less problematic athletic identity to those offered within their previous sports. At this

point of the chapter, I shift my focus from specific problematizations made by
Beth, John, Phillip and Gerald, to their understandings of Spirit of the Game,
Ultimate's specific version of fair play. I ask whether Spirit of the Game can be
interpreted as forming a postmodern telos or "idealized ethical subject that one
strives to become" (Prado, 2003, p. 204). Finally, I seek to complicate the notion
of Spirit of the Game by drawing more widely on all fourteen of my interviewees'
understandings of Spirit of the Game.

Athletic Retirement

The threatening effects of sporting retirement to an athlete's sense of
identity and understanding of self have been extensively researched, particularly
as they relate to involuntary retirement due to injury or deselection (e.g., Kleiber
& Brock, 1995; McKenna & Thomas, 2007; Sparkes, 1998, 1999; Sparkes &
Smith, 2002) and retirement by highly committed elite athletes (e.g., Denison,
1997; Douglas & Carless, 2009; Stephan, Bilard, Ninot, & Delignieres, 2003;
Stier, 2007). Denison (1997) notes:

> When many of my subject's sports careers ended–often times
> unexpectedly–and they were unable to replace the glory, excitement,
> camaraderie and sense of achievement they experienced on the sporting
> field, they lost their passion and excitement for life. (p. 13)

Similarly Kleiber and Brock (1995) suggest that sport retirement can be
"especially 'problematic' to [the] identity" of ex-athletes (p. 284). Sparkes (1998)
further argues that for athletes retiring from sport, "the loss of cultivated
immediacy when associated with self-expression through physical performance

can be defined as a direct threat to personal fulfilment" (p. 654). Moreover, according to Sparkes and Smith (2002), a retired athlete's understanding of self will be limited by their "narrative resources" (p. 262) and, subsequently they may struggle to find an alternative and satisfactory narrative of self.

According to Athens (1995), athletic retirement is often a long process which happens "progressively over a span of time in a series of stages" (p. 573). Similarly, Steir (2007) suggests that athletic retirement might occur in four phases: "'first doubts', 'seeking and weighing alternatives', 'the turning point' (i.e. the decision to quit) and 'establishing an ex-role identity'" (p. 101). Denzin's (1989) notion of epiphanies may be useful for understanding events that contribute to athletic retirement. According to Denzin (1989), epiphanies "are interactional moments and experiences which leave marks on people's lives" (p. 70). As such, epiphanies "are often moments of crisis" (Denzin, 1989, p. 70) which lead to significant changes in individual's understandings of self. Although the notion of epiphany is related to a change in an individual's understanding of self, Denzin was clear that epiphanies, and stories associated with them, would always be based on "larger group, cultural, ideological, and historical contexts" (p. 73).

Studies of athletic retirement, unsurprisingly, have focused on how this process has affected the identities of the (ex)athletes involved. Subsequently, the way in which identity has been theorized is of particular importance. Many studies adopted a traditional psychological approach (e.g., P. A. Adler & Adler, 1989; Athens, 1995; Stephan et al., 2003; Stier, 2007; Webb, Nasco, Riley, & Headrick, 1998) in which identity was conceived of as a relatively stable category of meaning. While I draw on aspects of these studies, I do not endorse their

understanding of identity. Others, however, have taken a more postmodern approach in which identity was understood in terms of narrative, and as relatively unstable and fragmented (e.g., Collinson & Hockey, 2007; Denison, 1997, 1999, 2006; Douglas & Carless, 2009; McKenna & Thomas, 2007; Sparkes, 1998, 1999; Sparkes & Smith, 2002). These studies, which blurred boundaries between sociological and psychological understandings of identity, fit much more closely with my Foucauldian understanding of subjectivity.

Burr (2003) noted a connection between Foucauldian understandings of self based on discourse and understandings of self based on narrative: "discourses circulating in our culture and constructing our identity also place limitations on the kinds of stories we can tell about our experience" (p. 145). Narratives, then, might be understood as a specific form of discourse. As a form of discourse, narratives are both enabling and constraining. Narrative understandings of self allow individuals a constrained freedom to change the narratives of their lives by using the resources available to them. Similarly, a Foucauldian understanding of self allows for "a definite, historically produced" (Laidlaw, 2002, p. 323) freedom with which individuals can critically adopt practices of self which "he [sic] finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, his social group" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 291). Although "the concept of narrative identity or self can mean different things to different people" (B. Smith & Sparkes, 2008, p. 6), I suggest that narrative understandings of self can be understood as broadly analogous to my Foucauldian understanding of self.

What studies of athletic retirement have not yet systematically considered, however, is the possibility that an athlete may choose to retire as a result of ethically problematizing the subject position which they were expected to embody

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within their sport. Such ethical dilemmas have been noted in studies of sporting masculinities, however. As an example, Pringle (2001, 2003, 2008) has repeatedly touched on the voluntary retirement of males from rugby due to concerns about exposing their selves to injury, pain, and violence. Similarly, Pringle and Hickey (2010) examined ways in which a select group of men re-engaged aspects of their gendered athletic selves after a process of moral problematization. As yet, however, sporting retirement has not been systematically examined for the possibility that it might be part of a process of ethical self-creation. To begin investigating this possibility, I now turn to examine my four participants experiences within traditional team sports.

Truth Games in Traditional Team Sports

I begin by considering the "games of truth" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 296) which my participants experienced in traditional team sports. Foucault (2000a) defined truth games as:

> A set of rules by which truth is produced... it is a set of procedures that lead to a certain result, which, on the basis of its principles, and rules of procedure, may be considered valid or invalid, winning or losing. (p. 297)

In order to succeed in truth games subjects must negotiate their engagement with particular attitudes, thoughts, and behaviours. As an example, truth games in sport not only define what counts as a sporting victory, but also outline some possible attitudes with which victory should be pursued and a range of behaviours which are either accepted or required in the quest for victory.

Games of truth, then, go beyond the formalized rules of a given sport. In this way, truth games within a given sport can be thought of as forming a specific telos, or "certain mode of being" (Foucault, 1984, p. 28), which athletes aspire to live up to when performing specific actions in their sport. It is important to keep in mind here, that Foucault's interest is not the ontology of truth; rather, it is in the relationship a subject forms with truth (Besley & Peters, 2007; Flynn, 1985). Moreover, Foucault (2000a) was clear that within "a given game of truth, it is always possible to discover something different or more or less modify this or that rule" (p. 297).

Although games of truth (Foucault, 2000a) will vary in different contexts, a central game of truth in youth sport for my participants was the prioritization of winning. One of my interviewees, Beth, told me her high school soccer coaches focused "on trying to win, trying to be the ISL, the independent school league champions." Gerald similarly told me he "enjoyed the team aspect and also the competition side, the wanting to win is always quite important," while John bluntly told me, "the purpose is to win." Although Phillip told me "mum and dad were never big pushers of winning," he nevertheless went on to say "with soccer, you tended to take it pretty seriously and if you lost it was fairly disappointing." In this way, winning can be seen as the central truth game in my participants' experiences of youth sport. The dominant truth game experienced by my participants in soccer, rugby, and ice hockey, then, seem typical of contemporary sports' dominant truth game which has been variously been theorized as the sport ethic (Hughes & Coakley, 1991), the performance principle (Ingham et al., 2002), the performance narrative (Douglas & Carless, 2009), the quest for victory

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(Beamish & Ritchie, 2006), and achievement sport (Guttmann, 2004; Maguire, 2004).

The value placed on winning justified a range of attitudes and behaviours, particularly on-field aggression. For John, aggressive play was explicitly encouraged, "it was definitely talked about, it was 'you fucking get in there and sought that out', you know 'you be first to the ball, I don't give a shit how you do it'." Similarly, Phillip told me "the teams I played with at school were always quite physical, we had a coach who was always being physical on the ball and we had some pretty rough, rough kids that, um, weren't going to shy away from any off the ball confrontation or on the ball battles." Yet this aggression was not always explicitly taught, with Beth suggesting that she "never got a strong sense of right and wrong from people that I could remember.... a few, like my own father, who pushed us really hard, and, yeah, I would say tacitly suggested that there should be a bit of elbowing if that needed to be done to win." In this way, aggressive play can be seen as a "rule of procedure" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 297) insofar as it was a legitimate, yet not compulsory, way of achieving the aim of the central sporting game of truth, victory.

My participants differed as to how they interpreted this game of truth. John saw himself as obliged to play aggressively, "it was very much a case of in my mind, I was aligning myself with the soccer culture, and if I didn't do that, I wouldn't actually be a proper soccer player." John accepted, then, to be "a proper soccer player" within soccer's games of truth, he had to play aggressively to maximize his team's chances of winning. He told me, "I would have to get into those verbal and mental games and I wouldn't back down, either." He went onto say, "you go into a game playing by the game rules…. I suppose aggression helps

in that sort of state…. you have to play to the lowest standard that people are playing to, because if you play to a higher standard and they run rings around you, then, they'll be winning." John's reference to "the game rules," I suggest, indicated his understanding that within the truth game of soccer, players were expected to deliberately break many of the formal rules of soccer. John, then, defined his athletic self through a strong adherence to the truth games of soccer, which encouraged aggressive and even illegal play as an acceptable way of striving for victory. In this way, John's sporting telos (Foucault, 1984), was to be a "proper soccer player": one committed to achieving victory through aggression and violence.

John found he was highly successful in this truth game of soccer. He told me that as a centre back, he adopted "an enforcer's perspective," in which he felt entitled to engage in aggressive, physical and illegal play on a "tit for tat" basis. Moreover, he found at high school that he was one of the biggest players on the field. John's willingness to commit to aggressive, highly physical play was also facilitated by his perception that he "was pretty indestructible… so you'd go into challenges and not worry about it." John's physical stature and aggressive style of play meant he was recognized in his region. During his final two years of high school he was first called into his region's representative team and later named captain of his school's 1st XI. As a relatively unproblematic source of success and status, John's youthful participation in soccer's truth games of aggression was a form of pleasure. The pleasure John experienced in playing soccer as a teenager was connected to his aggressive, confrontational play. This linking of pleasure to aggression and contact has similarities to the pleasure Pringle (2009) found players associated with aggression, contact and violence in rugby. In contrast to

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Pringle's rugby players, however, as a teenager, John did not connect this aggressive style of play to personal risk of injury.

My other participants had a more awkward relationship with the truth games of sport which encouraged aggressive and violent play. When discussing physically aggressive play in soccer with Phillip, he recalled that as a teenager, he "didn't really buy into that much." Phillip explained that his parents had brought him up to be non-violent and that he had never enjoyed conflict. Subsequently, he sought to maintain this non-violent identity by avoiding aggressive or violent play while on the field. Unlike John, Phillip was not an elite soccer player. Moreover, he was also heavily involved in music and the arts at high school. I suggest these factors were significant in allowing Phillip to critique and resist aggression as a sporting rule of procedure. In this way, he was able to focus on the central truth of pursuing victory, while downplaying the role of aggression.

Beth, an elite soccer and ice hockey athlete, distinguished between incidental body contact that occurred competing for the ball and deliberately fouling a player to put them off their game. She admitted that deliberate fouls "always upset me very much because that was an intentional act." In this way, Beth accepted incidental forms of contact in soccer as acceptable in the pursuit of victory, but challenged deliberate and illegal acts of aggression intended to put others off their game.

Nevertheless, this dislike of illegal play did not prevent Phillip or Beth from strongly identifying themselves with sport. Phillip told me sports "were a big part of my schooling experience." For Beth, her identity was strongly influenced by her participation in soccer and ice hockey. Throughout high school, and then as an NCAA division one athlete at college, she was "known as the athlete, the

jock," and she told me "I put huge huge huge pressure on myself" to perform well and to win. In this way, both Phillip and Beth were cognisant of the truth games of aggression in soccer, yet they found they could achieve competitive success without being overly aggressive themselves. Although high levels of aggression diminished the pleasure they experienced from soccer, they nevertheless identified strongly as soccer players.

As these athletes progressed through high school, to university and beyond, they each were faced with challenging situations which lead to them problematizing their ongoing participation in the truth games of traditional team sports. As an elite athlete, Beth was heavily committed to her athletic identity. Identifying oneself as an elite athlete has frequently been linked to over-commitment to one's athletic identity, or identity narrowing (P. A. Adler & Adler, 1989; Sparkes, 1998; Webb et al., 1998). Growing up in the United States, Beth was a three-season athlete through high school. This involved six days a week of team trainings and competitions throughout the school year, as well as sports camps during her summer holidays. Sparkes and Smith (2002) suggest that elite athletes are "less likely to explore career, education, and lifestyle options due to their intensive involvement and commitment to sport" (p. 273). Subsequently, I interpret Beth as forgoing opportunities to develop other aspects of her identity in order to almost exclusively pursue her athletic identity.

Beth highly prioritized both her own performance and her team's success. She told me that when she lost a game or played poorly, her behaviour would be so bad that "it was like a dark cloud descended on the family, it was really ridiculous.… it's a silly time of life really, but I took that to an extreme with my sports." Here Beth's elite athletic identity meant she was focused strongly on a

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performance narrative within which, according to Douglas and Carless (2009), "winning, results, and achievements are pre-eminent and link closely to the storyteller's mental well-being, identity and self worth" (p. 215). Beth's identification with a performance narrative, then, restricted the ways in which she could experience satisfaction and success in sport and her life more broadly. Not only did she put herself under pressure to both "perform well and to win," by committing so much time to sport, she sacrificed taking part in other pursuits which may have allowed her new narratives of self. Beth's gloried athletic self (P. A. Adler & Adler, 1989) was a prime source of identity and pleasure for her. Yet, she found it progressively harder to match her gloried athletic self with her preferred spiritual self.

As Beth progressed to playing elite college level sport, she experienced an increase in aggressive behaviour from other players and started to find it more difficult for her own athletic behaviour to meet her own Christian-based ideals:

I had very high standards and very strict guidelines for myself, this was my own internal battle, and it was actually influenced through my, um, some very Christian years that also infused everything in my life about what was ok, what was not ok.

Beth's strong athletic identity and desire to win in soccer and ice hockey meant she was playing at a level where aggression and gamesmanship were not only accepted, but expected. However, these intensified athletic truth games conflicted with the truth games of Christianity with which she also identified. More than anything else, she worried about "about how angry I got during games, not

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necessarily directed at people… I just felt like it needed to be controlled, that anger really shouldn't have such a place in my life." Although she loved sports, she found it increasingly hard to play sports and live in a way consonant with her spiritual values. Here, Beth's concerns can be interpreted as the "first doubts" (Stier, 2007, p. 101) of a protracted retirement from traditional team sports.

From a Foucauldian perspective, Beth's doubts might be interpreted as the beginning of a process of ethical problematization. For Foucault (2000g), ethical action requires problematization: a process through which aspects of oneself are critically analyzed for their role in creating a particular understanding of self. Moreover, problematization involves a refusal to accept a part of one's self as necessary or inevitable. In this way, problematization is a critical part of the active formation of one's self as an ethical subject. Beth's Christian ideals, then, can be seen as a lens through which she could establish her athletic conduct "as an object, and reflect on it as a problem" (Foucault, 2000g, p. 117). Indeed, I suggest that Beth's understanding of Christianity served "to have provoked a certain number of difficulties" (Foucault, 2000g, p. 117) with regard to her athletic self. At this point, Beth's problematization identified her levels of anger on the sports field as an aspect of her "moral conduct" (Foucault, 1984, p. 26) that needed focus. However, she did not undertake any specific ethical work at this point in time. Following P. A. Adler and Adler (1989) and Sparkes (1998) I interpret her continued athletic involvement as an attempt to maintain her gloried athletic self.

Voluntary Sport Retirement

Beth's experience

Despite her doubts, Beth continued to play both soccer and ice hockey as an elite NCAA Division One college athlete. After finishing college, however,

organized team sports stopped. Without a team to play on, she travelled overseas and, for the first time in her life, was no longer recognized as an athlete. While teaching in China, Beth experienced a significant "loss of identity":

> All of a sudden like I go somewhere, literally around the world, people don't know me anymore. My whole life, I've been known as the athlete, the jock… and suddenly you go somewhere where for whatever reason, nobody has any idea. And in fact, I had people all the time laughing at the idea that I might have been an athlete; they couldn't see it looking at me.

As Douglas and Carless (2009) argue, "the process of withdrawal from sport necessarily takes place over a period of time alongside, and in conjunction with, other, potentially significant transitions in the athlete's life" (p. 214). Here Beth's transition from being a college student-athlete to an English teacher in China was a strong influence on her gradual move towards sporting retirement. Following Athens (1995), Beth's time overseas can be interpreted as her experimenting with a new, non-athletic identity.

Although traumatic at the time, Beth believed it was a transition which was important to her development of a more coherent sense of self. Reflecting on her year overseas, she said:

> It was infuriating and it's frightening; suddenly your identity's gone, but it also turned out to probably be the best thing could have happened to me because I'd struggled for all these years, trying to bring together who I

wanted to be with my love of sports. And they were at conflict; they were
at loggerheads because I couldn't bring my emotion under control.

While Beth was able to retrospectively reinterpret these identity struggles with
"greater sophistication" (Sparkes, 1998, p. 660), at the time, she experienced
emotional turmoil from losing her athletic identity. While overseas, Beth had lost
her gloried athletic self and tried to develop a new sense of self. Yet this was
problematic, because as Sparkes suggests "as the distance increases between their
past self (now reconstructed in memory in idealized form) and present identities,
the former valued identities collapse, and new ones are viewed as negative" (p.
658). Although Beth had succeeded in working on ethically problematic parts of
her self, this had come at the expense of sacrificing a treasured part of her
identity; her elite, competitive athletic self. She still valued aspects of this
identity, hence, when she returned to the United States, Beth found that she
wanted to reengage her athletic identity.

Beth spent two years teaching and coaching soccer and ice hockey in an
independent school in New England. Although she continued to problematize her
athletic self, she struggled to find practices which might have allowed her to
recreate herself as an ethical subject:

I was already really in the throes of it then, I had come back and found I
had some tendencies to be my old person as a coach now, and didn't like it
one bit. I'd found I'd moved away from it and didn't like it, but I couldn't
find a new way yet. I couldn't figure out how to do it, I wasn't seeing

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examples around me, I hadn't done enough thinking and self-introspection yet.

Beth's struggle to find an identity she was happy with exemplifies Sparkes and Smith's (2002) observation that, "I cannot transcend my narrative resources in telling a story about myself or in restorying myself if I desired to do so" (p. 262). Although Beth felt discomfort and disenchantment, she had not yet developed the narrative resources to resolve her identity crisis.

This also highlights Foucault's (2000a) point that ethical changes require engagement with specific practices of self. Yet, "these practices are not something invented by the individual himself [sic]. They are models he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, his social group" (p. 291). Arguably, at this stage, Beth had acknowledged her levels of anger and conduct as an athlete as her ethical substance, or "the prime material of his [sic] moral conduct" (Foucault, 1984, p. 26), however, she had not yet discovered a satisfactory set of practices from within her social group which she could take on as her ethical work. After two years of teaching and coaching, Beth returned to university and continued her athletic career, this time by playing coed soccer.

Rejoining an organized team sport led to an event which was the final epiphany (Denzin, 1989) that caused Beth to retire from traditional team sport, "in my first or second game, I angered a man on the opposite team so much, because I was beating him or whatever it was, that he actually head butted me, gave me a concussion." Such an extreme act of violence was not accepted within soccer. Instead, the truth games of soccer only endorsed controlled acts of violence

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committed in pursuit of victory. As John put it, off-the-ball violence "is losing control of your emotions and that, arguably… part of the [truth] game that people go into is not losing control of your own emotions." Nevertheless, for Beth, this incident:

> Was literally the concussion, the knock in the head I needed, um, to realize that I was done with that. I said I was done and I'd never ever, again, play coed soccer, competitive soccer with men, but it was more than that. That was just one sign of the bigger change, I realized I was over all of that, I had no desire to be having this battle with this man, this faceless man on the soccer field anymore.

This incident formed a "traumatizing social experience" (Athens, 1995, p. 573) which caused Beth to finally retire from organized team sports.

I interpret this incident as significant in identifying Beth's competitive athletic self as her ethical substance (Foucault, 2000c). It led directly to her undertaking ethical work–voluntary sport retirement–which she had been reluctantly considering for years. In this way, her ethical work was an ascetic renunciation (Foucault, 1988b) of participation in traditional team sports. Although this work of renunciation was an important act of ethical self-creation, Beth also experienced a subsequent loss of pleasure as a result of retiring from organized team sport. While Beth's retirement from traditional team sports can be seen as a long process formed of multiple transitions (Stephan et al., 2003), Phillip, John, and Gerald's voluntary sporting retirements took place much more quickly, highlighting that "transition from sport is a complex process within

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which a high degree of individual variation exists" (Douglas & Carless, 2009, p. 215).

Phillip, Gerald and John's experiences

Phillip, Gerald and John had quite different transitions into voluntary sport retirement than Beth. As they moved from high school sport to club sport, all three of these men experienced changes in the games of truth within their sports that led them to question their ongoing participation. Gerald's transition was the most abrupt. He joined his university's rugby club in his first week at university. As a new member of the club he was pressured into taking part in a hazing ceremony, which he found to be degrading and offensive. According to Kirby and Wintrup (2002), even a cursory examination of sports teams will reveal that hazing "is a relatively regular occurrence and that an assortment of physical, social, and sexual abuses form a major part of those experiences" (p. 50). Hazing operates as a process of initiation for new members to a group to establish conformity to existing group expectations (Muir & Seitz, 2004).

Gerald was reluctant to talk about this experience in any detail, simply stating "on the initiation day I was asked to do something that I didn't really want to do with the rugby team." Gerald and I had been friends for a number of years before our interview. I suggest that his reluctance, years after the event, to describe what he had been asked to do points to the significance of the hurt and embarrassment that he was subjected to during the hazing ritual. Until the hazing ceremony, Gerald's experiences within rugby had been relatively unproblematic. He saw the game as physically demanding, but, in contrast to his understanding of the truth games of soccer, he did not believe violence and blatant cheating were an

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accepted part of the game; "you have got a code, you've got, like, ethics, which is a lot more than you have in football [soccer]."

After the hazing incident, however, Gerald left the club without having played a game. In this way, the hazing Gerald experienced in his new rugby club, like Beth being head butted, formed a "traumatizing social experience" (Athens, 1995, p. 573), or a moment of crisis which caused Gerald to experience an epiphany (Denzin, 1989), that challenged the feelings of loyalty that he had felt to rugby (cf., McKenna & Thomas, 2007). However, his decision to retire from rugby did not cause an identity crisis of the proportion that Beth experienced. Gerald was fortunate that he was at the start of his university studies; he had already left behind his rugby playing friends from high school and was in the process of establishing a new circle of friends from his course and hall of residence. He told me "my friend, Ali, who was in my course, he played a bit [of Ultimate], he'd played before…. And I kept going [to Ultimate] because of him." In this instance, then, Gerald had adequate narrative resources to begin to successfully forge a new identity (Sparkes, 1998; Sparkes & Smith, 2002). Moreover, we can see that the new practices–of Ultimate–that Gerald became involved in through his friendship with Ali, were recommended to him from within his peer group (Foucault, 2000a).

Phillip and John found that shifting from high school soccer to club soccer involved learning new truth games of aggression and violence. Phillip told me "after finishing high school… I found there were angry English people dominating all levels of soccer in New Zealand." Similarly John told me "I saw the guys that were playing soccer in [name of city] and I didn't like it because they were basically old, big, English guys that liked to hack and hurt and that was

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their game; that was *their* game" (emphasis in original). It is striking how similar their experiences were despite as high school players having had markedly different attitudes towards aggression and violence within soccer. Both Phillip and John quickly became critical of club-level soccer as its truth games required what they interpreted to be excessive aggression, violence, and anger. Following Stier (2007), John and Phillip's self doubts first occurred in relation to their bodies; they no longer felt physically safe playing the game. This concern for the self has been identified by Pringle (2003) as a prime reason why many young men in New Zealand voluntarily retire from rugby union.

It was not only the level of violence that Phillip objected to; rather, he found much of the behaviour of club soccer players to be objectionable. He told me club soccer players were:

> always loud, always playing against the referee, always trying to do things behind the referee's back, always playing to the ref, overly aggressive tackles, and like, no skill involved; just totally taking your legs out and I guess just some of the language used; foul language and swearing at everyone.

For Phillip, aggression, violence and animosity within soccer were no longer parts of the game that he could deemphasize or avoid. Instead, he came to see these as central "rules of procedure" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 297) for the truth games of club soccer.

The transition into club sport lead John and Phillip to problematize their participation in soccer and to re-evaluate what had underpinned their enjoyment

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of high school soccer. Phillip reflected "with school soccer, you're playing age group level and you're playing people of the same age and same sort of wavelength and things." He went on to say, "I had enjoyed the team, team work and team comradeship [sic]; feeling like you are achieving something as a team…. And when you're playing against people that are just angry, it takes away from that. I just didn't enjoy it." Similarly, John reflected, "I was happy to play skilled soccer, I was happy to play against people my own size, against people that weren't trucks that would try and barge you over." John also explained that his own play, although physical, had been highly skilled, "I wouldn't purposefully kick people and I was always a little bit faster than people as well, so I knew that I could get good ball contact." In this way, both Phillip and John came to ethically problematize the expected behaviours of club soccer players.

Phillip, who had problematized aggression in soccer even at high school, quickly lost enjoyment of the game and stopped playing soccer. John's decision to retire from soccer closely matched Douglas and Carless's (2009) suggestion that sporting retirement is often influenced by multiple factors. He realized that although he had thought of himself as indestructible, he had, in fact, played with knee problems for two years. Moreover, to play at club level would have meant exposing himself to a much higher risk of injury. Compounding this, he was starting a challenging programme of study, access to playing fields was difficult from his university dormitory, and finally, he thought the "best I can do is club football… which is a bunch of *those* guys…. So I thought, 'fuck this', gave it up and started drinking."

John, Gerald and Phillip had not committed to their athletic identity as strongly as Beth had. In fact, Phillip left soccer behind with few regrets, "I got to

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the point where I was not enjoying it that much that I didn't find it hard not to play." Whereas Gerald had immediately found a new athletic identity through Ultimate, Phillip and John started to search for alternative identities to replace the athletic identity which they had chosen to give up (Sparkes, 1998).

Discovering Ultimate

In voluntarily retiring from traditional team sports, Beth was faced with an existential dilemma, "I had changed enough, I wanted something different; I still loved sports so much: what was I going to do?" This dilemma that Beth faced was reflective of Foucault's (2000a) point that liberation in itself is insufficient. Beth was 'liberated' insofar as she was not subject to any relations of domination. Giving up organized team sports did not offer Beth an alternative way to live her life so much as it replaced a problematized identity with a void. What she needed were practices of self through which she could mold herself into a new form. Practices of self, for Foucault (2000a), are required "if this people, this society, and these individuals are to be able to define admissible and acceptable forms of existence" (p. 282-283). Moreover, Foucault went on to argue, "what is ethics, if not the practice of freedom, the conscious (*réfléchie*) practice of freedom?" (p. 284).

Fortunately for Beth, she had already begun to participate in outdoor pursuits such as mountain running and rock climbing while she was overseas. These pursuits can be understood as practices of self (Foucault, 2000a) in which Beth was able to redefine her relationship with herself, competition, and others. When performing these activities she felt that "I still got the same endorphin high and I still got the same physical release but it was also starting to match up my physical and spiritual side." These pursuits were ethical practices of self insofar as

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they offered a form of physical activity for Beth which did not involve the aggression or anger she had experienced playing organized team sports. While these pursuits have remained significant to Beth in the years since her voluntary retirement from organized sport, she nevertheless missed many aspects of playing team sports.

A chance mention of this feeling of loss while out dancing led to Beth being introduced to Ultimate. She decided to try playing pickup Ultimate: "I met this amazing group of people, really lovely, some of my best friends still, now and this was ten years ago.… it opened up my world to this really great possibility of sports again, organized team sports." Yet this reengagement in organized sport involved a very different set of truth games than her earlier athletic career. Beth quickly learnt that pickup Ultimate included:

> Whoever shows up; you're always fitting new people in. In fact, as I came to learn, and as I came to embrace fully, that's the point. It became a point for me to get new people every time, every season, every week coming along, which was the complete opposite of what I'd been doing before where the goal was just to have the best, just to have the elite playing the elite.

Inclusivity, then, allowed Beth to reconsider the purpose of her participation in sport. She had found a sport in which aggression and violence were not central rules of procedure.

Instead, Beth found that truth games in Ultimate emphasized playful, light-hearted fun. In the group Beth played with, people:

...were doing silly things. I watched people, you know, they'd be in the end zone ready to catch a pass to make a point and they'd, like Samuel, would jump in the air and try to bounce it off his head before he caught it, and that sort of stuff, and then not get the point[not score the goal]! Like what is this about (laughs)? And slowly, I found myself adjusting to that, getting to the point where, yeah, that's what I'd rather do too, actually. I'd rather bounce it off my head, I'd rather have this new person come out and give them that pass…. I just started to move so far away from where I'd been, to where I could find such pleasure in this new way of approaching sports.

In this way, the truth games of Ultimate–based on inclusivity and fun–offered Beth a set of practices through which she could recreate her athletic self in a less problematic manner.

Like Beth, John, Phillip and Gerald quickly became enamoured by the social emphasis of Ultimate. John, Phillip and Gerald were all introduced to Ultimate by chance, and had broadly similar experiences to Beth. John told me that:

It very quickly became a case of "I really like these people, and so I'll stick around the next year or two"… and after I started, I just got to the point, where I'd say, even if you guys left, I'd still stay because I was just liking it so much.

For Phillip, his new Ultimate friends, "really inspired me to play and [were] so friendly and so willing to teach you how to throw a disc." While Phillip and John joined established university clubs, Gerald played a pivotal role in the creation of his university's Ultimate club:

> It was basically the first year… we started it rolling and it was a group of friends who, we started out and we were very dedicated to making it work and going to tournaments. We were all very close as well. It was a good bond, and it was something that I created or felt like I'd helped to create with others I knew and liked very much.

For all these participants, then, inclusivity was something they recognized as a crucial game of truth within Ultimate.

This allowed them to develop new athletic identities in a sport which had different games of truth to the sports which they had played previously. This allowed them to rediscover an athletic identity that provided a satisfactory narrative of self. Having briefly introduced how Beth, John, Phillip and Gerald found Ultimate to be based on different games of truth than traditional team sports, I now move on to consider whether these new athletic identities can be interpreted as based, at least in part, on the creation of an ethical self through the realization of Spirit of the Game as a telos, or "idealized ethical [athletic] subject one strives to become" (Prado, 2003, p. 204).

Spirit of the Game as Telos

In this section I will consider whether the Ultimate specific version of fair play, Spirit of the Game, can be understood as an athletic telos. I begin by

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outlining my reading of what form a telos might take in a contemporary, secular, postmodern society by considering Foucault's notion of aesthetics of existence. I then examine whether Beth, Phillip, John, and Gerald's early understandings of Spirit of the Game formed an ethical athletic telos. Further, I seek to complicate their early accounts of Spirit of the Game by considering complexities and seemingly contradictory understandings of Spirit of the Game. I do so by expanding beyond the four participants whom I have focused on thus far in this chapter. In doing so, I acknowledge that Ultimate players discover Ultimate and understand Spirit of the Game in diverse ways. The central question that I address in this section, then, is whether, despite a lack of uniformity of understanding and performance, Spirit of the Game can be understood as an athletic telos.

Foucault (1984) does not devote much space to defining his understanding of telos, he simply suggests "an action is not moral in itself, in its singularity; it is also moral in its circumstantial integration and by virtue of the place it occupies in a pattern of conduct" (pp. 27-28). He goes on to clarify:

> A moral action tends towards its own accomplishment; but it also aims beyond the latter, to the establishing of a moral conduct that commits an individual, not only to other actions always in conformity with values and rules, but to a certain mode of being, a mode of being characteristic of the ethical subject. (Foucault, 1984, p. 28)

A telos, then, is an idealized ethical subject position. It is important to point out that Foucault deliberately chose to analyse Ancient Greek and Hellenic Roman practices in order to analyse ethics that did not involve "the search for formal

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structures with universal value" (Foucault, 2000b, p. 315). In this way, a telos is a voluntarily chosen ethical position which a subject attempts to embody in their everyday lives.

Understanding telos in contemporary, secular, postmodern society

For Foucault (1984), engaging with a telos involves a relationship to truth. However, truth, for Foucault (2000a), was simply determined by "free individuals who establish a certain consensus, and who find themselves with a certain network of practices of power and constraining institutions" (p. 297). Whereas an Aristotelian telos was based on an ontologically grounded truth, "Foucault could never share that confidence, nor share the metaphysics by which it was informed" (Faubion, 2001, p. 91). Subsequently, I will draw on Foucault's notion of an aesthetics of existence to introduce postmodern sensibilities to the concept, telos.

Foucault (2000c) suggests "from the idea that the self is not given to us, I think that there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art" (p. 262). As I argued in my research philosophy, Foucault uses the term, art, to indicate the act of creatively giving shape to some part of our self. This act of giving form to our self involves a relationship to truth, yet it does not require an ontologically grounded truth. Rather, we might accept a partial or temporary truth as underpinning the form which we give our lives. Subsequently, to the extent that a telos may be embodied as an aesthetics of existence, I suggest the effects of this embodiment will not so much aim for "a certain state of perfection" or "supernatural power," but, perhaps more modest states "of happiness [or], of purity" (Foucault, 1993, p. 203). By this, I mean that transformation of one's identity and one's engagement in particular power

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relations, rather than metaphysical transformation, should form the aim of a postmodern telos.

Spirit of the Game

As I briefly suggested earlier, Beth, John, Phillip, and Gerald's early experiences of Ultimate were underpinned by a truth game of inclusivity. Thus I will examine whether inclusivity, and another central truth game of Ultimate, namely competitiveness, might be interpreted as forming an aesthetics of existence, namely Spirit of the Game.

Beth and John both began playing casual, pick-up Ultimate, which emphasized inclusivity and contained no formal attempt to develop skills, or even a commitment to turning up regularly. Beth told me that in the pick-up group she joined:

> They'd get new people on the field and they'd insist on throwing them the disc, and if they dropped it, there was one guy, Charlie, he'd go pick it up and give it back to them and go "never saw it", you know, and keep playing kind of thing and it was just that kind of tone being set.

For John, a relaxed attitude to attendance was particularly important. His group played, "on Sundays, or maybe on an afternoon on a Wednesday. But if you didn't turn up so be it. If you were drunk, then even better (laughs)." This laissez-faire attitude, which contrasted strongly with the commitments required by achievement sport (Maguire, 2004; see also Coakley, 2007)–regular attendance at trainings, high levels of fitness and skill development–suited him because, "in my mind I said my focus is uni…. I wanted a bit more freedom, so, um, Frisbee

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offered me that flexibility." Whereas John's commitment to university study and subsequent irregular sporting attendance might have served to exclude him from traditional team sports, this was not a barrier to his inclusion within his Ultimate club.

Both Gerald and Phillip also enjoyed and valued the opportunities for inclusiveness at Ultimate tournaments. Phillip reflected on his team's success in coming together at a tournament:

It was a pretty diverse bunch of players in skills and things. And it would have been easy for people to get excluded and things like that if we hadn't stayed together as a team. So we stayed together in a massive house in [tournament location] and had a great weekend and had cool shirts and um, yeah, that's something that I've always been a big advocate of at all levels, and that's, ah, being, just being as inclusive as possible. I think in Frisbee it's important and one of the biggest things with Frisbee is that it is inclusive, totally.

Phillip's valuing of inclusivity within Ultimate was related to his wider ethico-political belief that society should work to be inclusive.

Similarly, Gerald reflected on how inclusive behaviour of other teams helped shape his understanding of Ultimate:

We managed to drag 20 people to this tournament in [location of tournament]. And we didn't know the rules or anything about stacking, how to play d, and forcing [a specific defensive strategy] went out the

window, um, but no, it was really fun and afterwards we went to the student bar and met all the other teams and socialized and I hadn't really done that with other sports.

He went on to say, "with Ultimate, you've circled up [formed a combined, two-team huddle], you've all talked about how the game went and now we're going to go to the bar and chat, and get to know each other a bit more." In this way the Spirit of the Game was the embodiment of the ideal that there could be a place within Ultimate for everyone who wanted to take part, and that opponents should be seen as friends, rather than enemies. It is interesting to note, however, that Phillip's understanding of inclusivity was primarily related to his particular club, whereas, for Gerald, he learnt about inclusivity as a value between teams, as well as within teams.

I suggest that some of Phillip and Gerald's different understandings may be linked to the countries they play in. In the United Kingdom, where Gerald started playing Ultimate, there are regular tournaments which are well attended and have a strong social emphasis. In contrast, Phillip started playing in New Zealand, where there are far fewer teams, fewer tournaments, and travelling to tournaments often requires flying, which makes tournaments harder to attend. In this way, we might expect Phillip to have spent far longer playing weekly games within his own club before having an opportunity to play in a tournament. Gerald, however, was able to play in a tournament very soon after starting to play and regular tournament attendance became a key way in which he learnt Ultimate's games of truth. While this is only one possible reason for their different

experiences, I suggest it in order to show that truth games in Ultimate are culturally and historically located.

The concept of inclusivity in Ultimate has been critically addressed by Thornton (1998, 2004). Thornton argued that Ultimate discourse produced a rhetoric of inclusivity which was not adequately put into practice. He noted that Ultimate was typically played by white middle class adults. In particular, he argued that mixed Ultimate teams tended to systematically discriminate against their own women, typically only offering them marginal roles. Certainly, I did not find that Ultimate offered a perfect example of inclusivity. However, I do suggest that the examples offered by John, Gerald, Phillip and Beth outlined specific ways in which they experienced Ultimate to be inclusive. Subsequently, the notion of inclusivity came to be an important aspect of how these four came to understand themselves as ethical athletic subjects.

I suggest that these notions of inclusivity were a prime way through which John, Beth, Gerald and Phillip came to understand that, within the truth games of Ultimate, certain behaviours, such as cheating, abusing opponents or team mates, dangerous play, and excluding lesser-skilled players were judged to be excessively competitive. Whereas the truth games they experienced in traditional team sports were focused on winning, and, subsequently, their "rules of procedure" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 297) sanctioned particular forms of aggression, cheating, violence and exclusion, in Ultimate's game of truth, such behaviours were regarded as negative outcomes of overly competitive play. Truth games within Ultimate did allow for competitiveness, but not at the expense of respect for others or a sense of fun.

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Gerald told me how he understood the importance of winning in Ultimate, "every game I go in to, I want to win.... but at the same time, making sure that it's, just, like you're playing to the rules, ah, which you know are integral to the sport, where you call yourself if you foul someone." Similarly, Phillip explained that:

> Winning isn't the be all and end all of it all to me. Sometimes I'm happy to accept that a team is better than us and that we're not going to win, um, and as long as we… play as well as we can as a team, then I'm pretty satisfied.

Beth was very clear that winning was not a priority within her Ultimate career:

> I'm at the point now where I have no desire to win, whether winning is catching a pass or winning a game or a tournament. I have no desire to win by any kind of cheating, by anything that can be construed as cheating; it does not interest me in the least. Um, I never really bought into that hugely anyway, but I was definitely more of the ilk of willing to do what was needed within limits, not ever wanting to hurt anybody, or make anybody cry, but now I'm just like, what's the point, what have you won? You're a better cheater?

Thus, while these players do not unanimously agree on exactly what counts as excessive competitiveness, or what their prime reason for participating is, there is nevertheless a widespread feeling that cynical attempts to achieve victory should be avoided.

To this extent, then, I suggest that particular behaviours in Ultimate, such as inclusivity and a moderation of competitiveness, are not only ethical in themselves; each of these behaviours is also ethical "by virtue of the place it occupies in a pattern of conduct" (Foucault, 1984, p. 28). Inclusivity, then, is part of an ethically stylized form of athletic conduct. In this way, we might interpret Ultimate as having an ethical athletic telos, Spirit of the Game.

A *spirited* Ultimate player is someone who curbs aspects of their competitive behaviour in an effort to avoid some or all of a wide range of perceived negative aspects of competition such as exclusion of others, violence, animosity, and rigid commitments to teams. In other words, Spirit of the Game contains a critique of an instrumentally rational approach to playing sport. Within this conception of Spirit of the Game, I suggest, a prime problematization recommended to Ultimate players was how they formed themselves as respectful subjects in relation to their opponents and the rules of the game.

Indeed, I found that many players and teams regularly talked about wanting to be spirited and about improving their spirit. However, this does not mean that players uniformly aspired to the same standard of behaviour or made identical critiques of excess competitiveness. Instead, I suggest, Spirit of the Game is a rather open or flexible notion that encapsulates a non-permanent and culturally and historically specific range of non-synonymous ideals about how Ultimate should be played. In this sense, then, it offers Ultimate players multiple possibilities for giving form to their athletic selves. Having proposed Spirit of the Game as a postmodern telos, I now seek to further test this proposition by expanding my consideration of Spirit of the Game to include all my interviewees.

Differing understandings of Spirit of the Game

I found that my participants' understandings of Spirit of the Game can be interpreted as encompassing a broad range of meanings which can vary significantly (cf., A. Thornton, 2004). However, I found that notions of inclusivity, enjoyment, and moderation of competitiveness were widely held by my other interviewees. Eric told me:

> When you see someone do something on the field that [did not] place winning the game before some other priority, whether it's not injuring someone on the other team, or whatever the specific case is, I usually consider that as Spirit of the Game.

Making a related point, Regan told me, he played "to hang out with friends and just have fun." Clearly, for Regan, the outcome of the game is secondary to the process of playing. However, there were some relevant and significant differences in how Spirit of the Game was conceptualized by some of my interviewees.

Whereas Beth emphasized inclusivity in an environment of aesthetic playfulness, the notion of having respect for rules and respect for opponents was also widely held. When I asked Phillip how he understood Spirit of the Game, he told me "to me, it's players respecting the rules, other players on the field" and, similarly, Mitchell explained:

> Spirit of the Game to me is upholding the rules, respecting your teammates, respecting your rules, because you've gotta have respect for them and it's gotta be a two way stream. Because they've [opponents

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have] got rights on the field, you've got rights on the field and it's how

you manage those two rights.

When I asked him how important winning was to him, he responded, "Very, but it's not at the be all and end all of rules, and injury and safety." I argue that this shift from inclusivity to respect for rules is indicative of quite different understandings of Spirit of the Game. It is quite possible that Mitchell's understanding of Spirit of the Game is similar to how many other adults understand their participation in other, more traditional sports. It is interesting, however, that aside from links between masculinities, femininities and heavy contact sports (e.g., L. F. Chase, 2006; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Messner, 1992, 1994, 2007; Pringle, 2008, 2009), non-elite adult athletes' understandings of how they approach playing the game do not appear to have been studied.

Beth's understanding of Spirit of the Game was based on finding ways of including new players regardless of their ability, and prioritizing this above finding efficient ways of trying to achieve victory. In this way, although Beth had no inclination whatever to cheat, the rules were not a prime focus for her. In contrast, Mitchell described himself as "fiercely competitive" and explained, "the game is a competitive game: someone's gonna [sic] win and someone's gonna [sic] lose…. It's, sports are about competition and, unfortunately, someone's better than someone else. And to me, it's spirit of competition." Because Mitchell was strongly orientated towards winning, he was more reliant on engaging with a set of rules which would determine legitimate ways of pursuing victory. In this way, Mitchell's understanding of Spirit of the Game might be thought of as the acceptance of limits in the determined pursuit of victory (cf., Hughes & Coakley,

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1991), while Beth's understanding of Spirit of the Game might be conceived as the rejection of winning as a prime purpose for playing Ultimate.

I have chosen to contrast Beth's and Mitchell's understandings of Spirit of the Game because each of them clearly enunciated contrasting positions. However, I found that many players understood Spirit of the Game as a combination of both these positions. For example, Bruce told me that, "I'm a big fan of Spirit of the Game…. I think it's always important in Ultimate that you respect the other team, and you know the rules, and you play fair and play fun." Although here he appeared to emphasize the rules, he went on to talk about Spirit of the Game as, "the tone of the game; it's also having fun with your opposition and getting to know them and having a good time." For Regina, Spirit of the Game allowed for competition without animosity. To illustrate this point, she told me of a game in which her team achieved a big lead, before her opponents rallied and mounted a potentially game changing comeback:

> Instead of, whereas in a lot of sports it gets really quite aggressive, um, in trying to crush the other team–well, that's what I've found anyway, where it can sometimes be like that [in other sports]–there's a lot more respect and balance in Ultimate.

Despite the game becoming closely contested, she felt the players remained respectful of each other and focused on enjoyment and playing well. Subsequently, I suggest that my participants' understandings of Spirit of the Game were complex and multi-faceted. Moreover, many of my participants accepted that Spirit of the Game had no single meaning.

Spirit of the Game as deferred

A number of my participants told me that Spirit of the Game had no fixed meaning. From a Derridean perspective (e.g., Derrida, 2008), we might consider the meaning of Spirit of the Game to be constantly deferred. Phillip told me spirit "means different things to different people, doesn't it?" Similarly, John offered a flexible description of Spirit of the Game that avoided narrow definition:

> Spirit of the Game, that's a really open question. Um… trying to follow the rules as best you can, I suppose… um… I think what constitutes Spirit of the Game also depends on the level of seriousness that you're playing the game. I would give Spirit of the Game, how I would envisage Spirit of the Game playing out inside a game situation itself, would differ depending on what level of intensity it is.

Here John suggested that there are few rigid expectations in Ultimate. His reluctance to offer a narrow definition is consonant, I suggest, with my understanding of how a postmodern telos may be formed. Although John had a distinctive approach to playing the game, he recognized that Spirit of the Game was not reducible to a single, unchanging set of rules. Instead he was aware that multiple people with different perspectives were able to "establish a certain consensus" within Ultimate's "network of practices of power and constraining institutions" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 297) and thus speak multiple truths about Spirit of the Game. He acknowledged that spirited play would be contextual, rather than universal. In this sense, as an aesthetics of existence, Spirit of the Game offered multiple ways of players giving form to their athletic selves.

Reflecting on the multiple ways in which Spirit of the Game could be understood, John went on to suggest that:

> I suppose the best way to define it, would be the outcome at the end. If the team on the other side is smiling and shaking your hand, and want to know you more after that game, then that is the Spirit of the Game. If, at the end of the game, they're all in your face and think you're an absolute write-off, they hate you, hate your guts, then that's definitely not Spirit of the Game. What you've done was not Spirit of the Game, whatever it was.

Interestingly, Anna offered me an almost identical account of Spirit of the Game:

> If the opposite team wants to hang around and discuss the game with you afterwards, and they want to shake your hand and they've got something reflective to comment on the game, then you've achieved Spirit of the Game.

Here John and Anna both acknowledged the importance of the expectations of the rest of the Ultimate community in understanding Spirit of the Game. Moreover, we might interpret such accounts of Spirit of the Game as highlighting that "care of the self is ethical in itself; but it implies complex relationships with others insofar as this *ethos* of freedom is also a way of caring for others" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 287, emphasis in original). Taking up Spirit of the Game as a telos required work on the self through the avoidance of particular behaviours, however, it also involved relationships with others as playing Ultimate, and

valuing Spirit of the Game required acknowledging and interacting with others and taking their points of view seriously.

The players I interviewed offered complex and sophisticated accounts of Spirit of the Game. Contrasting Beth and Mitchell's understandings of Spirit of the Game illustrates that the concept has no singular definition. Beth was quite clear in her rejection of winning in favour other playing priorities while Mitchell was equally clear that his priority was to win within particular limits. Given each of their accounts of Spirit of the Game, we might expect them to play the game quite differently on the field. However, others, such as Bruce, espoused a view which seemed to be a hybrid of these two positions. Subsequently, I do not understand Spirit of the Game to be split into two incommensurable camps. Instead, as a telos, Spirit of the Game involved a broad, interconnected series of critiques of excessive competition. As Phillip, Bruce, John, and Anna demonstrated, my participants interpreted Spirit of the Game as being subject to multiple interpretations and, in particular, as contextually defined. Such understandings are, I suggest, very much what we might expect from a postmodern telos.

Conclusion

I began this chapter by focusing on the process of voluntary sporting retirement by four of my research participants. I argued that their experiences surrounding athletic retirement highlight that, for some people, ethical problematization is relevant to how they form their athletic self. John, Beth, Gerald, and Phillip each retired from traditional team sports as a result of a range of ethical problematizations. Beth had struggled for years to reconcile her broader sense of her ethical self with her athletic self. Foucault (1984) positioned

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technologies of the self as requiring critique of one's own ethics. Beth engaged in this process of self-critique in an elongated and non-linear manner through a series of epiphanies. She was concerned for a long period of time about the athletic self she was creating as a soccer player. However, it was the violence of another player that finally drove her to retire from soccer.

In contrast, both John and Phillip focused their dominant critique on club soccer culture in their respective regions. Although they both discussed with me what they understood to be the differences between club and high school soccer, it was not clear to me how actively John critiqued his own soccer performances for potential ethical problems. However, as both John and Phillip experimented with becoming club soccer players, there was also a degree of self-critique in their refusal of this particular sporting self; an athletic self underpinned by club soccer's games of truth. Further, their decision to not expose their selves to violence on the soccer field may be interpreted as an example of care of the self (Foucault, 1988a).

Gerald retired abruptly as a result of a hazing incident. Of these four participants, Gerald was the only one not to offer a direct critique of the games of truth and on-field conduct expected within the traditional team sport he had played at high school. His unwillingness to discuss the hazing incident and his abrupt departure from the club suggested the incident made him significantly question his involvement in rugby. However, he limited his critique to the specific club and the players who perpetrated the hazing incident. As with John and Phillip, Gerald's decision to retire from rugby can be seen as an example of care of the self (Foucault, 1988a), in his decision to sacrifice his identity as a rugby player in order to care for his own dignity and personal safety.

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For Beth, John, Phillip, and Gerald, Ultimate allowed them to recreate a satisfactory ethical athletic self. Crucial to this was their experience of Ultimate as being based on different games of truth than the traditional team sports they had previously played. Their early experiences of Ultimate as an inclusive sport encouraged their continued participation and were significant in how they came to understand Spirit of the Game as an ideal guiding their own, and others', participation in Ultimate. I argued that Spirit of the Game can be interpreted as an ethical athletic telos as it represents a series of idealized notions about how players should aspire to give form to their selves.

I suggest there are two critical points of reflection which are of broad relevance to sociology of sport regarding my interpretation of sporting retirement as an act of ethical self-creation. The first is that processes of ethical problematization, which I outlined for Beth, Phillip, John, and Gerald, were initiated before my participants had started playing Ultimate. This suggests that ethical problematization might be a cause of sporting retirement which has not yet received adequate scholarly attention. Secondly, Beth's relatively long struggle before retiring from soccer and her subsequent existential crisis suggests that the availability of alternative practices of self are of critical importance to understanding processes of change such as sporting retirement. In this regard, for these participants, the practices of self offered by Ultimate came to provide alternative ways of giving form to their lives.

My finding that Spirit of the Game formed a postmodern telos or aesthetics of existence was also important. Spirit of the Game offered my participants an athletic subjectivity which they found ethically preferable to the instrumental, win-at-all-costs approach which has been linked with achievement

sport. I argued that Spirit of the Game was formed, in part, by a range of critiques of excessively competitive behaviour. However, I qualified this understanding by showing Spirit of the Game to have a plurality of meanings; it may be regarded at times as an embodied ideal and at other times as an ideal which can never fully be achieved, and, finally, it is culturally and historically produced. I then sought to examine some of the complexities of Spirit of the Game; initially I did this by contrasting Beth's and Mitchell's understandings of Spirit of the Game. However, I also showed that other participants understood Spirit of the Game in a manner that combined the positions which Beth and Mitchell espoused. Further, I showed that players accept that Spirit of the Game is understood contextually and, subsequently, they do not expect all players to agree on a single understanding of Spirit of the Game.

I suggest this final point regarding a plurality of interpretations Spirit of the Game is particularly relevant. Such diversity of understanding suggests that Ultimate players take part in a truth game which offers participants significant opportunities "to discover something different or more or less modify this or that rule" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 297). This finding is particularly important as it is a clear point of difference to the critiques of dominant Western sporting discourses made by Hughes and Coakley (1991) and Donnelly (1996). It would be interesting to examine how athletes in other sports experience the demands of the particular truth games they are involved in and how constraining or enabling they find them to be.

I now carry my findings, which suggested that Spirit of the Game might form a postmodern athletic telos based on a series of problematizations of excessive competitiveness and instrumental rationality, forward through the next

two chapters, in order to examine the specific practices of self which, I argue, are connected to this broad understanding of Spirit of the Game. Foucault (1984) insisted that a telos must be underpinned by specific practices through which an individual may actively form their self as a particular type of subject, by adopting these practices as regular routines. So far, I have argued that Spirit of the Game should be understood as a postmodern telos, however, beyond a brief examination of inclusivity, I have not considered what practices an Ultimate player might adopt in order to recreate their self as an ethical, or spirited subject. Over the next two chapters, then, I specifically address practices of self within Ultimate.

Chapter Six: Ascetic Practices of Self in Ultimate

Introduction

In this chapter I analyse three practices of self through which Ultimate

players construct their selves as spirited athletes. In doing so, I directly address

my third and fourth specific research questions: Through what practices of self do

Ultimate players seek to produce their athletic selves?; and, What forms of

problematization might connect these practices of self to Ultimate players'

understandings of self, and, possibly, to an aesthetics of existence? I argue the

practices of self within this chapter form the basis of a spirited self which seeks to

avoid problematic behaviours associated with an instrumentally rational or win-at-

all-costs approach to sport. Within this chapter, then, I seek to examine

alternatives to highly problematic sporting practices, such as violence, aggression,

and cheating which are highlighted in critiques of contemporary achievement

sport such as the sport ethic (Hughes & Coakley, 1991) and prolympic sport

(Donnelly, 1996), as well as by masculinities scholars such as Messner (1992,

2002) and Pringle (2003, 2008, 2009; Markula & Pringle, 2006). As I argued in

my literature review, these critiques suggest that within sport there is a range of

problematic practices which show a lack of concern for self and others. Taking

these concerns seriously, I wish to examine practices of self through which other

ways of playing sport, which show a greater concern for self and others, might be

lived into existence.

I wish to be clear, however, that I am not trying set up a dichotomous

understanding which casts Ultimate as ethical and other sports as unethical. On

the contrary, I imagine that athletes across a wide range of sports might engage in

similar practices of self to those that I describe here. What I find to be unusual,

however, is that sociologists of sport have tended to focus on problems within sport to such an extent that I am not aware of any sociological research which focuses on practices of what might be understood as fair play or sportspersonship amongst elite or non-elite adult athletes. In a similar manner, Pringle (2009) observes, "empirical analyses that focus *specifically* on lived experiences of sporting pleasures are, however, comparatively rare within sociology" (p. 214, emphasis in original). It is my intention in this thesis to demonstrate that critical and interpretive analysis of less problematic aspects of sporting subjectivities can also make an important contribution to the sociology of sport. Thus, I use Ultimate as a case study to critically examine practices within sport that involve greater consideration for others and self.

Foucauldian Practices of Self

In proposing and analyzing practices of self within Ultimate, I draw directly on Foucault's (1984, 1988a, 1988b) work, where he specifically outlined practices of self concerning, among other things, diet, managing one's household, and one's sexual activities. Examined individually, these practices of self may seem insignificant, yet, when outlined and placed in a broader context, these daily regimen formed "a whole art of living" (Foucault, 1984, p. 101). I suggest that there is a similar case to be made for Ultimate players. There are multiple practices of self that many Ultimate players use. Individually, the practices of self that I analyse may appear to be fairly mundane, everyday behaviours. However, I suggest these practices of self are not usually practiced in isolation and, collectively, they are drawn on, reinterpreted and practiced by those Ultimate players who have chosen to construct themselves as spirited or ethical athletes. In other words, the practices of self that I identify in Ultimate are implicitly and

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explicitly recommended and modelled by those within Ultimate communities, and to, varying degrees, by other communities as well.

As I described in my method section, I identified practices of self by drawing on the entirety of my ethnographic research and attempting to think through this research in Foucauldian terms. As I began to think about practices of self, I developed six interrelated categories, three of which I focus on here, namely moderation, tolerance and honesty; the other three practices of self, namely, humour, irony and peripheral rituals, I analyse in my next chapter. When considering problematization, I have drawn more exclusively on conversations I had with my interviewees, certain aspects of my fieldwork where I knew the players involved particularly well and could talk to them about their experiences, reflections on my own playing experiences, and the occasional in-depth blog entry. This is because problematization is a complex concept which is more feasible to analyse with regard to players' thoughts and ideas, rather than their actions alone. While I am confident in the rigour of my findings, I do not discount the possibility that other Ultimate players might have alternative interpretations of the practices I analyze here.

The six practices of self are not practiced universally by all Ultimate players, but, I suggest, they are common enough to be recognizable despite considerable variation in how players engage in these practices. Moreover, there is in fact some overlap between these categories; I have split the practices of self between two chapters largely on the basis of this overlap. In this way, I suggest that these practices of self should not be regarded as fundamental categories of meaning but as tools to aid the analysis of how Ultimate players engage in ethics.

In this chapter I analyse three practices of self–namely moderation, tolerance and honesty–which I understand to be ascetic, that is concerned with control of the self in what might be considered an austere fashion. I begin by contextualizing these practices within my reading of Foucault's ethics. I then go on to describe and analyze these practices of self. In particular, I emphasize the variation within these practices and compare moderation, tolerance and honesty to practices which sociologists of sport have found to be dominant in more established Western team sports. Finally, I seek to reveal instances where these practices of self appear to fail. I now go on to describe and analyze the first practice of self; namely, moderation.

Moderation

Most Ultimate players whom I observed engaged in multiple forms of moderation. Ultimate players repeatedly moderated their behaviour in a number of ways to stay within the rules of the games and to produce a spirit of respect and camaraderie between players and teams. For example, when playing defence, Ultimate players might have ended up in a position where they could not bid on the disc because the player they were marking had managed to position their body between their defender and the flight path of the disc. When this happened, the defender always had to make a decision about whether to moderate their behaviour and, if so, what form this moderation should take. They could allow the attacker to catch the disc uncontested, try to dive past the attacker to play the disc before the attacker could catch it, or they could deliberately commit a foul, thereby preventing the attacker from catching the disc. In these situations, players typically moderated their physical behaviour, avoiding deliberate fouls and often

refraining from bidding on some discs where contact, and in particular, heavy contact seemed likely.

In our interview conversation, Samantha presented herself as though speaking parrhesiastically (Foucault, 2006) to other Ultimate players, taking up a position as a truth teller, exhorting them to enact the practice of self involved in moderation: "you're not always going to get the Frisbee, the point's going to be scored, it's going to happen, there's no need to hurt someone." By speaking in this way in our interview, Samantha positioned herself as accepting the truth that Ultimate players need to moderate their behaviour in order to create themselves as ethical athletes who are concerned for the welfare of others. Again, to emphasize Foucault's interest in truth, the important aspect here is Samantha's *relationship* to truth, how she forms herself as a subject who values the safety of players more highly than making a defensive play. In this way, I interpret Samantha's words as an example that: "to take care of the self is to equip oneself with these truths: this is where ethics is linked to the game of truth" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 285).

The practice of moderation, then, involves consideration of safety, respect for the opponent, respect for the rules regarding contact and fouls, and, as B. Robbins (2004) suggested, respect for a smooth flowing game. I argue these considerations point to the problematization of excess competitiveness, which might otherwise override concerns for safety, respect for opponents and rules, and a desire for a smooth flowing game. In this way, the problematization of excess competitiveness is similar to ancient Greek males' attitudes to sexual conduct, whose "regimen of the *aphrodisia*, with the need to moderate their practice, did not operate on the assumption that sexual acts in themselves and by nature were bad" (Foucault, 1984, p. 117, emphasis in original). I argue that the Ultimate

players I studied did not see competitiveness as a problem provided it did not come to control the conduct of Ultimate players and cause them to engage in dangerous play or deliberate rule infractions. Rather, most Ultimate players I studied sought to moderate their physical selves in a number of ways in order to effect a "stylization and aesthetics of [athletic] existence" (Foucault, 1984, p. 92). In this way, Ultimate players problematized the pleasures of competing and winning and, subsequently, sought to create a spirited athletic self through moderating their physical and verbal behaviour while playing.

Moderation as a practice of self leads to a style of game in which heavy collisions are actively avoided. As an example, Bradley explained:

> I've always felt an obligation to be slightly more aware of the people around me due to the fact that I'm usually heavier than most of the people around.... so I've really taken a bit of a stance for that. I won't do a reckless manoeuvre when I can avoid it, even if it means I lose a point because of it, just because it's not worth hurting someone.

In this way Bradley identified the physicality of his behaviour when bidding for the disc as his ethical substance; it is "the prime material of his [sic] moral conduct" (Foucault, 1984, p. 26). In this way, Bradley can be seen as actively rejecting the fourth principle of the sport ethic (Hughes & Coakley, 1991)–the refusal to accept limits in the pursuit of victory–insofar as he directly limited his own behaviour in a way that potentially reduces his chances of winning in order to avoid collisions with other players.

Further, Bradley's perspective, in which he explained that his size meant he should take special care to avoid contact, is markedly different from the attitude of gridiron linesmen interviewed by Messner (1992) who "felt a strong need to naturalize their capacities for aggression and violence" (p. 65) through reference to their body size. In each of these perspectives, I argue, we can see how practices recommended within a particular sporting culture are taken up by particular individuals as they construct their selves as athletic subjects. My point here, is not to valorise Bradley as an individual, rather it is to highlight the importance of the practices recommended by the truth games of particular sports in the production of athletic identities.

This moderation of physical behaviour can be seen as partially supporting Fraleigh's (1988) rejection of the "good" foul. Whereas some sports, such as basketball, encourage deliberate fouling of players in order to prevent them from scoring, my fieldwork indicates that Ultimate players tend to refrain from illegally and physically taking their marker out of the game when legal defensive tactics fail. For Phillip, tactics such as the good foul reflect a win-at-all-costs approach that is too serious an approach to sport; he told me "I think it is important to get together and remind yourselves that it is just a sport." I suggest this can be interpreted as Phillip's mode of subjection insofar as his understanding of sport as non-serious "establishes his obligation to the rule[s]" (Foucault, 1984, p. 27) of Ultimate. By conceptualizing Ultimate as 'just a sport', Phillip problematized rule breaking and animosity between players.

Within Ultimate, moderation as a practice of self contrasts strongly with practices of violence for which scholars have critiqued dominant Western team sports. As an example, one of Pringle's (2009) rugby playing interviewees

"somewhat dramatically confessed: 'The view in my mind is that each Saturday I go to war.... I'm not the only one, there's a group of us now that liken it to going to war'" (p. 224). Another of Pringle's interviewees explained the expectation of reciprocated violence between opponents, suggesting that while a kick in the head would usually be inappropriate: "if the guy who was on the ball had previously punched him, then maybe a kick in the head would be justified, I'm not sure, certainly a kick in the kidneys" (p. 227). Although, as I explain below, players often struggled to moderate their behaviour when faced with immoderate opponents, initiating or retaliating to violence were avoided through practices of moderation.

Further, below the elite level, skilled players often moderate certain aspects of their play in order to allow a less-skilled opponent a modicum of success. They will ease up when marking the disc to allow a weak thrower easier throwing opportunities, or allow a slower player who executes a cut slowly but with good technique some space to get free from them to receive a pass. Regan told me:

> At social tournaments generally, if it's an A grader marking a B grader or C grader, you generally don't play the best you can, so you don't put the hardest mark on possible and while you're marking them, you're generally giving them pointers on things to do to try to help their game improve. And, yeah, you just try to help them with their playing, even though they're the opposition.

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Similarly, Samantha suggested that, "If you're up by a few points, you know, go a bit easy on the d [defence]. You know, there's nothing better than seeing a new player catch the disc in the end zone 'cause they're just so excited." Outside the context of elite Ultimate, players attempt to moderate their behaviour in order to avoid playing a weaker player out of the game entirely. These examples suggest, then, that the Ultimate players I interviewed engaged in practices of moderation as a result of problematization of excess competitiveness.

I found, however, that practices of moderation in Ultimate varied significantly. The most striking differences were between practices of self in elite and non-elite Ultimate. Simply put, elite Ultimate has markedly higher levels of contact than non-elite Ultimate. Yet, these higher levels of contact do not mean that elite players do not engage in practices of moderation. Elite players operate at a higher level of skill, speed and decision making. In other words, elite-level players trust each other to make finer judgement calls about when and where to throw their bodies in their attempt to play the disc. Regan told me:

> Internationally, there's a lot more contact, but it tends to be fairer contact. And if they think they'll get it, they dive. But they won't do it to injure you like some other people [in other sports] do. It does make the game a lot more physical.

I argue, then, that elite players do problematize excess competitiveness. However, there is no clear line between moderation and excess at the elite level. Higher levels of physicality do mean there are more instances of dangerous play. Yet, as Regan suggested, elite players do not set out to injure other players. In this way,

the intent of players is seen as ethically important. However, I also observed that when collisions between players caused an injury that the other player involved would often show concern for them, either by calling a stoppage in play, or approaching them after the point had finished to check on their wellbeing. In this way, I suggest that intent was the prime axis of ethics, but that the outcome was also seen as important.

However, moderation is not a universal practice within Ultimate. Phillip and I discussed a highly physical elite game in which we had both played. One of our shared memories of this game was one opponent who had consistently and dangerously fouled a team mate of ours, Darren, by diving into his back or legs as Darren was catching the disc. Phillip suggested, "the contact on Darren, that was clearly not appropriate and not part of the game." The wear and tear on Darren's body from this was significant; he had to sit out the next day's game due to pain from the collisions he had been subjected to. This game was particularly fractious, with players on both teams losing their tempers at various times, which required both team captains to regularly mediate discussions between players. This game stood out in my fieldwork for its lack of moderation, although Mitchell told me of a similarly immoderate game which had taken place some years earlier.

Throughout my field work, interviews and documentary analysis I did find other instances of immoderate play, although such instances seem relatively rare and are usually single instances within a game, rather than an ongoing pattern. I should point out, however, that elite North American Ultimate, particularly at the college level, appears to have many more instances of this type of behaviour. I am not sure how large this difference is. While I have played against and watched elite North American club teams and found their style of play to fit within my

current analysis, I have not conducted any fieldwork with college Ultimate teams. My research on North American blogs (e.g., Burruss, 2010a, 2010c, 2010d) suggests the dynamics of the elite college game and subsequently its practices of self appear to be somewhat different to the elite and non-elite Ultimate I encountered in my fieldwork and discussed with my interview participants.

Such examples of immoderate behaviour are not limited to elite Ultimate, either. In contrast to Regan's and Samantha's accounts of how they moderated their own play in order to treat less skilled players inclusively, I observed one player bully less experienced players verbally and physically across a number of tournaments. For example, I saw him physically push new players out of his way, and verbally abuse new players for not understanding the tactics of the game. This player was widely regarded as bully and a cheat by both elite and non-elite players and his immoderate style of play was a fairly common topic of conversation amongst other players. Although many players were willing to condemn him, and hoped he would stop playing, or perhaps be banned from playing, one of my participants, Shelley, told me that the player concerned had come to recognize his failings and was struggling, albeit unsuccessfully, to change his behaviour.

Although I have emphasized the behaviour of one player who stood out for his failure to moderate his actions, I do not wish to suggest he is the only one to do so. However, from my observations and interviews, I found such immoderate behaviour to be uncommon. Moreover, when such behaviour did occur, in many instances it tended to be an irregularity on the part of a player rather than a behaviour that was typical of the way they played the game. In this way, moderation as a practice of self resulted in a markedly different athletic self than

Messner's (1992) "instrumental male" who "views other people as objects to be manipulated and defeated in his quest to achieve his goals" (p. 62).

Because Ultimate has low playing numbers in many countries, I observed that the division between elite and non-elite players and the purpose of particular competitions was often blurred. I found that teams might prepare for, and approach, particular tournaments with quite different perspectives about their purpose in playing the tournament. These differing perspectives can lead to differing expectations about how players should moderate their own behaviour. Mitchell, a New Zealand-based elite player reflected on this:

> I've had people um, you know, look sad, disappointed or even in tears… I remember playing a game down in [name of city] and one of our handlers went down and picked up the disc. And I'm going "put it in and throw it." "Oh but I'm waiting for them to mark up," "put it in and throw it." The rules say you don't have to wait. Now, is that good spirit if I let them mark up? Well, it doesn't say you have to, it's a competitive sport, there's the edge: they're disorganized, we're organized. Now… if it was pick up, if it was social league, if it was a beginner's league, then yes [we should wait]. But this was a nationals competition.… if somebody was in trouble and hurt and there was an issue, then I would say don't put it in, but, it's a turn over: don't wait for them to pick [mark] up…. but, you know, I kind of come away and I think, "am I an ogre, am I bad?".… And, ok, we were always going to win, when I take a step back, but, it was nationals (laughs in exasperation).

Mitchell's example highlights the difficulties of constructing oneself as an ethical athlete. Foucault (1984) argues "given a code of actions, and with regard to a specific type of actions... there are different ways for the acting individual to operate" (p. 26). Both Mitchell's team and his opponents were acting within Ultimate's "code of actions," yet they nevertheless had different priorities for how they wanted this particular match to be played.

The ethical question for Mitchell was not whether or not to obey the rules of the game, but rather what his reasons were for playing and the style with which he wanted to play the game. In this instance, Mitchell decided not to further moderate his approach to the game, yet I suggest that he has clearly reflected upon his mode of subjection, that is, "the way in which he establishes his relation to the rule, and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice" (Foucault, 1984, p. 27). He reflected on what a spirited player should do, and while he identified possible reasons that would cause him to further moderate his behaviour, he decided that those reasons did not apply in this instance. Thus, problematization of excess competition and subsequent practices of moderation do not result in a uniform standard of behaviour, but rather a range of stylizations of "aesthetic [athletic] existence" (Foucault, 1984, p. 92).

It is not so much a case of there being a clear line of what is acceptable contact (although in particular, limited circumstances, this can be clear) so much as there is a constant negotiation of what individuals interpret as requiring moderation. Players, teams, and cultures differ in terms of their understandings of moderation and also their ability to moderate their play as they wish; many players accidentally commit clumsy and even dangerous fouls that other players, who can read the game or execute particular manoeuvres with more skill, are able

to avoid. Moreover, the range of stylizations of "aesthetic [athletic] existence"
(Foucault, 1984, p. 92) can lead to conflict on the field as players' expectations of
what should be moderated can vary significantly. In these situations, the practice
of tolerance, which I address below, is particularly relevant.

In summary, moderation is a practice of self that requires Ultimate players
to restrain their own physical behaviour. I suggest that they do so in order to
embody the telos, Spirit of the Game. An important aspect of practices of
moderation, then is the problematization of excessive competitiveness. I examined
select examples of problematization from Samantha, Phillip, Bradley and
Mitchell. A number of related values are also present in practices of self, such as
following the rules of the game, valuing a free-flowing game, preserving the
safety of self and others, showing respect for opponents, and, below the elite
level, to allow less skilled players to take part in the game.

Yet, as Mitchell's example highlights, there are multiple ways of
understanding one's relationship to the moral code of Ultimate. Although he
problematized his approach to the game and was careful to respect the rules, his
decision to play competitively against weaker opponents suggested that he
engaged in different practices of moderation than Regan and Samantha, both of
whom were more inclined to adopt a more inclusive approach when playing
weaker teams. Moreover, moderation was not uniformly practiced within
Ultimate. Instances where moderation was lacking often formed points of conflict
within games. However, such instances were relatively rare. I argue practices of
moderation can be interpreted as producing an athletic self that prioritizes respect
for rules and opponents and tempers competition with a notion of fun or play:
"understood in this way, moderation could not take the form of an obedience to a

system of laws or a codification of behaviors" (Foucault, 1984, p. 57). Instead, it is one's relationship to the rules of the game, and one's understanding of Spirit of the Game as a telos that is important in how one forms oneself through practices of moderation as an ethical athletic subject.

Tolerance

I also observed Ultimate players engage in practices of self concerning tolerance. For clarity, by tolerance, I am referring to the conscious decision to react calmly, rather than aggressively or angrily to any given situation. There are two prime practices of self which regard tolerance of contact. The first is tolerance for incidental contact. The second is tolerance for being fouled while playing Ultimate. These two practices of tolerance might seem unusual given that Ultimate is a non-contact game; however, I observed that some degree of contact was inevitable at every level of Ultimate and a common feature of elite Ultimate. In a broadly similar manner to B. Robbins (2004), I found that, within fairly flexible limits, players attempted to be tolerant of contact from others in order to promote a free flowing game. Further, I found that discussions concerning when and how bids should be made on the disc and what might be incidental or non-incidental contact were common at all levels of the game.

Many players I observed tried to tolerate incidental contact, that is, any contact that did not affect play. This tolerance was important, because the rules state that contact which does not affect play should not result in a foul call (World Flying Disc Association, 2009). This requires players to give up a possible strategic advantage. For example, a player may have dropped the disc and been contacted at almost the same point in time, yet know that they had lost control of the disc prior to being contacted. In such instances, the rules suggest that a foul

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should not be called because the contact did not affect play. What complicates this is that it may be that the only player in a position to make this judgement is the player who was contacted and dropped the disc.

Mitchell discussed a detailed example of this with me:

There were two catches I went to grab in the up wind goal and I was leaping into the air and both of them bounced out of my hand. But there were defenders on me. It comes down, hits the hard part of your hand, and it goes. And, I was up there amongst defenders, and there were probably three of us, maybe four of us, maybe there was one of my own guys, and John [the opposition captain] said to me in the team thing [combined team huddle at the end of the game], "you know, Pete, there were a couple of opportunities where you didn't call a foul and I've gotta commend you for it"… to me, I didn't see there was a foul there. We're all going to it [the disc]; there was going to be a bit of contact. If someone had slapped me on the hand or something, but we were all piling up together, I wasn't completely pushed out of the way, there wasn't anything serious that made me specifically miss it. To me, I was more angry at myself because I should have dragged it down. For me, to hear that from John at the end of the tournament, I was stoked because obviously… the spirit I played with was respected by my opponents.

Here Mitchell clearly outlined his practice of tolerance for incidental contact by other players.

The example Mitchell offered was from a closely contested world championships bronze medal game. Mitchell's performance in this game, "thus constituted a trial period: a time when his [sic] worth was tested, in the sense that it had to be formed, exercised and measured all at the same time" (Foucault, 1984, p. 206). In other words, how players react in high pressure situations in games is regarded as being of critical importance in how Ultimate players work "to make their [athletic] life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria" (Foucault, 1984, pp. 10–11, emphasis in original). Further, in this example of tolerance, Mitchell suggested that practicing tolerance was a way of becoming a respected Ultimate player. This way of gaining respect from opponents is markedly different to the respect which Messner (1992) found his participants sought to gain through violence and aggression.

I also found that players attempted to show tolerance for fouls by making a number of assumptions. Firstly, they tried to accept that any contact that might have occurred was accidental. In other words, they assumed that that their opponent was trying to bid on the disc, rather than deliberately foul them. When contact did occur, one of the players involved might have been hit from behind. This often meant that the player was not expecting contact and subsequently they may not brace themselves for the contact. Personally, I have had to continually work on myself to tolerate such instances of contact, as I have often been tempted to react angrily to unexpected collisions. While players did occasionally react angrily, for the most part, players tried to be tolerant of contact insofar as they accepted that whether legal or not, contact was accidental, rather than deliberate. As an example, Burruss (2010b) explained that the team he coached agreed at the start of the season that, "we would extend to everyone we played the respect that

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they were spirited and trying to do the right thing" (emphasis in original). In situations where players believe contact has broken the rules, they call foul, however, they do so on the assumption that the foul was not deliberate.

Further, some players also decided to tolerate play that they interpreted as too physical or aggressive. In this way, tolerance was practiced even for contact and fouls that were understood as unacceptable within the game. For example, Regan told me:

> I've always found if the player is aggressive and they fire their team up, everyone fires up with them. And it generally just happens so they become a little more aggressive, so you back off a wee bit and let them have their way. And after a little while they settle down and the game just becomes the same [as it was before].

Here Regan has linked moderating his own behaviour to tolerance of others' behaviour. Rather than responding to overly physical or aggressive play by retaliation or becoming argumentative, instead he moderated his own play further, reducing his opponents' opportunities for physical play, which, he suggested, usually led to his opponents calming down within a few points and the game returning to normal or more appropriate levels of aggression and physicality. Regan's tolerance in these situations contrasts strongly with a rugby player interviewed by Pringle (2009), who explained that when faced with aggression or violence: "I would feel that I needed to retaliate otherwise I would be, you know, would be deemed *dominated*" (p. 227, emphasis in original).

Espousing a similar attitude to Regan, Bradley told me:

There are other circumstances of dangerous play when people forget that its, um, a game, and so do long ridiculous jumps into the zone [when] people are standing there. People have to jump out of the way. They may have caught the disc but in doing so people have to dive away from you to stop you from being hurt. And that's just when I'd say, when I'm picking them up off the ground (laughs), you know, "good catch but you know you've got to watch yourself or you'll just get hurt."

I interpret Bradley's response here as a practice of tolerance. He shaped his behaviour in an effort to prevent inflaming a situation of which he did not approve.

I argue that both Regan and Bradley can be interpreted as having an ethical concern for relations of power and domination between Ultimate players. Regan and Bradley shared an understanding of how they wanted Ultimate to be played and felt that many players were too willing to risk or initiate contact to fit their preferred way of playing. Yet they avoided initiating on-field arguments or personal attacks on the integrity of their opponents. By employing practices of tolerance when faced with players whose conduct they disapproved of, they performed a specific "practice of the self, that will allow us[them] to play these games of power with as little domination as possible" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 298).

Regan and Bradley's examples of tolerance contrast with Mitchell's, as Mitchell felt that high levels of contact or aggression were acceptable and that his task was to refrain from using it as an excuse for poor play on his part, whereas Regan and Bradley did find high levels of contact and aggression inappropriate,

yet nevertheless found tolerance to be the best way of defusing this style of play. Practices of tolerance, then, do not arise through a universal obligation to a specific interdiction (Foucault, 1984). Instead, we see a range of interpretations and enactments of practices of tolerance. For Regan, Bradley and Mitchell, however, their practices of toleration are all based on the problematization of excessive competitiveness. Regan has found that when players adopt more aggressive behaviours in order to increase their chances of winning that tolerating such play, rather than responding angrily or in kind, is the best way to defuse this aggression. For Mitchell, however, toleration of incidental contact is very much a question of how he understands his own athletic self as respectful of the rules, of others, and what he called the "spirit of competition." I will address this in detail in practices of honesty below.

Another aspect of tolerance as a practice of self is acceptance of differing points of view. Although a player may have felt that their recollection of a contested passage of play was correct, they also worked to ensure that they accepted as honest any player who happened to disagree with them about that passage of play. As Mitchell put it "unfortunately, there's gonna [sic] be calls you don't agree with but even if a referee was there, there'd still be calls you didn't agree with. And you've just got to accept it." When a player is involved in a call where there is disagreement, I have observed two main ways in which they might practice tolerance. Firstly, they could accept their opponent's point of view and either withdraw their call, or not contest their opponent's call. As an example, at an elite tournament, the player I was defending called a 'strip' foul on me, claiming I had pulled the disc out of his hand after he had caught it. I was surprised by this call as I had not felt any resistance on the disc when I swiped at

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it. I told him this and asked him to confirm that he had full control of the disc before I touched it. He insisted that he did, so I chose to not contest his strip call. In doing so, I accepted that he was being honest, even though this contradicted my own point of view on the play.

Choosing to not contest this call required a significant degree of tolerance on my part; this meant the disc came into play in my opponent's hands only ten metres from their end zone. Had I contested the call, the disc would have been brought into play with the person who had thrown the disc–forty metres away from the end zone. Put simply, by accepting, rather than contesting my opponents call, I diminished my team's chances of winning by making it more likely that our opponents would score from that possession. However, I had multiple reasons for accepting my opponent's view over my own. I accepted that *if* he was acting honestly, then he would have a better perspective than me on whether a strip had occurred. My own recollection of the play was not particularly strong; all I could recall was briefly contacting a disc that felt like it was still in flight. My opponent had positioned himself between me and the disc, partially obscuring my view of the play. As a result of these factors I decided that even though I disagreed with my opponent, I should accept him as honest in making the call. My own preference is to play against trustworthy and honest opponents and I did not think that my own, more limited perspective on the play was strong enough to justify contesting what I chose to believe was his honestly made call.

Our opponents scored from the uncontested strip call and went on to win the game in sudden-death. Many members of my team were upset and angry that we lost. Darren and Grant in particular felt that we had choked under pressure as we had had two opportunities to score the winning point, but turned the disc over

both times. At no point did I feel that my decision to not contest the strip call was challenged. To the contrary, I discussed this play with some of my team mates and they were far more interested in discussing defensive positioning than offering judgment on my call.

Secondly, a player could choose to contest a call. To draw on my example again, if I had contested the call, the disc would have been returned to the thrower. While this might seem less tolerant than not contesting a call, like Griggs (2011) I found it was relatively common for two players to honestly disagree as to what happened in a particular play. What is important, then, is not defining the truth of the matter, but rather, the manner in which a call is contested. A player's use of both body and verbal language is important in contesting a call in a tolerant way. In contrast, engaging in theatrics, such as spiking hats, or discs, and screaming, yelling, or swearing at an opponent whose call one disagrees with are decidedly intolerant reactions, all of which I observed at times during my research. I draw on an example of intolerant behaviour below, while examining honesty as a practice of self. Tolerance can be particularly challenging, and, I suggest, that tolerance was the practice of self that Ultimate players struggled with more than any other.

That players struggled with tolerance did not mean that it was not widely valued; rather, it was the practice of self that many players found most difficult to perform in the heat of the moment. In Samantha's case, she found that sometimes she overreacted to players who behave argumentatively when making a call:

If you want to discuss it, fine, but you get the people who argue back at

you and if I'm slightly fired up I argue back. Then when I go off court, I'm

like, why did I do that?

Similarly, Bruce told me:

In our league here we have a team who we are quite, quite competitive

with and it is very hard to keep your composure and keep the pushiness

down and respect people's space and respect what's going on in the game.

So, yeah it is something you have to work on and focus on.

Although Bruce and Samantha both accepted the importance of tolerance, they

show that practicing tolerance is not necessarily an easy achievement. In this way,

tolerance as a practice of self demands constant effort in order to form oneself as

the ethical object of one's actions: "the battle to be fought, the victory to be won,

the defeat one risked suffering–these were processes and events that took place

between one and oneself" (Foucault, 1984, p. 67). Moreover, as Markula and

Pringle (2006) suggest, changing the self is not a simple process; it requires

ongoing effort and attention.

I observed that tolerance became increasingly hard to perform as a practice

of self, when opponents were believed to be dishonest or immoderate. To return

my initial example of immoderate behaviour, in which Darren was continually

fouled by his marker, as the game progressed, a growing number of players on

both teams became increasingly intolerant of their opponents. After the game and

the shared team huddle, both teams lined up to high five each other. One of our

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opponents walked down the line, high fiving us, and telling each player, "you suck," "you suck," "you suck." One of our players, Grant erupted yelling angrily at the opponent, and Heath, one of our captains, ran over to restrain Grant, who appeared to be angry enough to start a physical confrontation.

Grant had been involved in a number of calls during the game, but had maintained his composure, that is, he had remained tolerant throughout the game. However, the immoderate behaviour of one opponent at the end of what had been a fairly intolerant game proved too much for him. Again, this is a relatively extreme example of the failure to practice tolerance. Instances such as those recounted by Samantha, in which players get a little testy during a minor argument were more common, and, as Samantha indicated, the loss of one's temper was interpreted usually interpreted as a failure of self.

Tolerance as a practice of self, then, was performed in multiple ways. Players attempted to tolerate contact from other players. This occurred when players could choose to view contact as acceptable, as was the case for Mitchell, or as unacceptable, as was the case for Regan. Further players tolerated and accepted differing points of view from other players when discussing calls. Players sometimes reversed their call on the word of another player and when they did not do so, they often accepted that the other player had made their call in good faith. On other occasions, however, in the heat of the moment players were intolerant. This was readily recognizable, yet in such instances, many, but not all, players recognized their failure to practice tolerance. In this way, tolerance can be seen as "less a universal rule than a subject of debate that permitted a variety of solutions" (Foucault, 1984, p. 199). Moreover, tolerance is a practice of self that is

challenging; it must be performed in tense, demanding situations, rather than simply when it is convenient.

Honesty

The third practice of self that I observed within Ultimate was honesty. This is an aspect of the moral code of Ultimate that is made explicit in Ultimate's rules: "players should be mindful of the fact that they are acting as referees in any arbitration between teams. In such situations, players must... be truthful" (World Flying Disc Association, 2009, p. 2). Of course, as I outlined in the section on tolerance, Ultimate players often accept there will be multiple perspectives on a given situation. Truthfulness and honesty, then, are not so much about establishing the single correct version of events so much as not adapting one's perspective in order to benefit one's own position. Honesty is practiced when making and discussing calls. In many cases players are in a position where they could simply tell mistruths, or omit from telling the truth in order that a call is either not made or that their side benefit from a call.

Players try to remain honest even in tense situations. To return to Mitchell's detailed example of tolerance of physical contact above, Mitchell was not only tolerant, he was also honest in not calling a foul to avoid turning over possession after he dropped the disc. Had Mitchell called a foul–even though he knew the contact had not caused him to drop the disc–his team would have retained possession regardless of whether his opponents contested the foul or not.

Mitchell's example is one of many situations in Ultimate where the person who is regarded to have the best perspective to make an accurate call–for example, whether a player has caught the disc in-bounds or out-of-bounds, or a player has caught a disc before it hit the ground–also stands to directly benefit

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from making that call. In these situations, to act with honesty is to perform an act of ascetic renunciation of the competitive self. Players are relied on to be honest in making calls, rather than to manufacture calls to their own advantage. Linking back to Mitchell's example of tolerance of choosing not to make foul calls when he missed two catches in the end zone, it was the *combination* of honesty and tolerance that the captain of the opposing team congratulated him for at the end of the game.

A further example of honesty comes from an independent Ultimate media company, Pushpass Productions, from the UK who featured a clip on their website from a semi-final of a major tournament (Shardlow, 2008). The clip showed a spectacular diving catch by Pete "Rodders" Wright in the end zone. While his team started to celebrate the point, and forty or so spectators on the sidelines cheered the athletic play, he immediately pulled aside his defender and began a discussion. During the discussion, which was not loud enough to be picked up on the video, heckles could be heard from the crowd, and his team mates intervened to try to start the next point. Both the hecklers and Rodders' team assumed that a legitimate point had been scored and that Rodders' marker had made a poorly judged call, which might result in the point being overturned. The spectators and Rodders' team mates were partly right; before play restarted, Rodders and his marker came to an agreement, and a turnover was called, much to the surprise of the other players and the crowd.

After the link to the somewhat ambiguous, low resolution clip was posted on the open access UK Ultimate mailing list, BritDisc, Rodders decided to clarify his behaviour by emailing a response to BritDisc:

Just to clear it up. I caught it clean. I was in. But, as is clear on the video replay, it pops out of my hand during the hilarious combat role after the catch, and I kind of sweep it up off the ground with the cone. I knew it had popped out (and seemingly I was the only person that knew this) so I took Beavan [his defender] to one side, and told him this, and asked if he had fouled me, and he said no. I believed him. No score! (P. Wright, 2008)

In this way, the freedoms gained by playing a self-refereed game, can "not be conceived without a relation to truth" (Foucault, 1984, p. 89). Moreover, Ultimate players' practices of honesty have elements of the confession (Foucault, 1978). In confessing his thoughts and actions through BritDisc, Rodders "was authenticated by the discourse of truth he was able or obliged to pronounce concerning himself" (Foucault, 1978, p. 58). The truth that Rodders shared was his relationship to the athletic telos of Ultimate, Spirit of the Game.

Honesty was used as a confessional practice of self in other situations as well. I found it was relatively common for players to publicly or privately apologize after a game for plays or calls that they made which they subsequently regretted. A captain of the elite team I played on, Darren, was involved in one such incident. When playing in a tournament, he reacted aggressively to the actions of a player he was defending. The attacker repeatedly ran straight into him when Darren blocked the line the attacker was running. Darren called foul and proceeded to shout at the attacker 'if you do that again, I'll knock your block off'.

The opposing captain intervened with another of our captains and the immediate situation was resolved. While Darren had failed to demonstrate either moderation or tolerance in this incident, he later apologized to the team for losing

his cool. He told us, "I play well when I'm fired up, but I need to find another way of dealing with that situation". Honesty is used in this way by Ultimate players to produce themselves as respectful and trustworthy subjects. Honestly admitting a mistake after the fact does not change the outcome of the call or the point, but does reinforce the way in which Spirit of the Game operates as an idealized ethical self: many players aspire to be spirited, so some will readily admit when they fail to successfully embody Spirit of the Game.

Although Foucault (1978) initially interpreted confession as a technology of domination, he later interpreted it as a central technology of the self within Christianity, and also scientific modernity (Foucault, 1988a, 1988b; see also, Besley & Peters, 2007). I suggest the apology within Ultimate can be interpreted as a confessional technology of the self. In Foucault's (1978) analysis of the confession he argues "one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession" (p. 61). What serves to differentiate Ultimate confessions as a practice of self, rather than a practice of domination, is that in Ultimate, one confesses to one's peers, and, in turn, might receive confessions from one's peers.

This does not mean that Ultimate confessions are not "thoroughly imbued with relations of power" (Foucault, 1978, p. 60), but rather, that the confession is not forced and the receiver of the confession is not an interpreter who becomes "the master of truth" (p. 67). Instead, the apology is an optional technique of self that some Ultimate players chose to perform. As a confessional technology, apologies within Ultimate offer a way in which individual players can achieve self-mastery. From this perspective, I argue that Ultimate players can perform a

confession in order to form their self as an ethical subject in light of specific transgressions they might have committed in a particular match.

At tournaments and in interviews, however, I found it was widely acknowledged that a few players were dishonest. Dealing with such players, who in almost every case were also considered to be intolerant and immoderate, was a particularly challenging task for many of my participants. Ultimate has no sanctions for illegal behaviour; every rule infringement is treated as if it is accidental. When a foul is called, play is reset as closely as possible to what would have happened if the foul had not occurred. There is potential, then, for players to exploit this rule structure to their own advantage. [5] When I discussed this point with Phillip, he told me about two players who he felt were dishonest: "if I think about [name of team], all I think about is [name of player A] and [name of player B] and I hate them. On the field, I hate them." In our ensuing discussion, however, Phillip turned the issue on its head:

> Hamish: That makes sense, but it [hating other players] jars a little bit with how we like to think of ourselves as Ultimate players...
>
> Phillip: Yeah, that's true. Yeah, but in some ways it's like player management and dealing with players like that. I mean if we were bigger about it, we wouldn't let them bother us.

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[5] Some levels of elite Ultimate in the United States have third party observers who are empowered to issue individual and team warnings and penalties for such behaviour. The appropriateness of the observer system is widely debated with some arguing that observers "make better spirit" (e.g., Wiggins, 2010), some arguing for referees and others arguing that the presence of observers will remove responsibility for spirited and honest play from players (for examples of this debate see, Burruss, 2011; Parinella, 2005).

In doing so, he turned the "ethical" dilemma posed by other players' inappropriate behaviour to focus on his own actions and his work to manage the situation positively. This reinforces the way in which practices of self within Ultimate are closely linked to each other.

I found practices of honesty to be of critical importance in Ultimate. Honesty was viewed as underpinning self-officiated play. In order to be regarded as suitable or desirable opponents, it was necessary for players and teams to produce themselves as honest athletic subjects. The prime practice of honesty within Ultimate was in offering an un-modified account of one's perspective on a particular play, particularly when this account placed one's own team at a tactical disadvantage, for example, by sacrificing possession of the disc or giving up territory to the other team. However, the confessional apology was also important. In offering an apology, Ultimate players acknowledged Spirit of the Game was an aspirational ideal that they might have failed to embody in their athletic conduct. However, in apologizing, Ultimate players constructed themselves as subjects striving to reach this aspirational ethical ideal. While some players did not appear to engage in honesty as a practice of self, these players were both notorious and rare.

Thus far, I have examined moderation, tolerance and honesty as practices of self within Ultimate. I have emphasized, in particular, that each of these practices are interpreted and performed in different ways. However, these practices were not all-inclusive. In my field work, I observed particular players who did not appear to perform these practices of self, or, more subtly, only performed these practices intermittently, doing enough that the game was not a complete farce, yet looking for opportunities to be immoderate, intolerant and

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dishonest. From a Foucauldian point of view, such players are not involved in a process of ethical self-creation. However, these players do not prevent other Ultimate players from creating their selves as spirited Ultimate players through practices of moderation, tolerance and honesty.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined ascetic practices of self which differ markedly from those which scholars have critiqued within achievement sport. I do not claim, however, that all achievement sport athletes are equally driven by a win-at-all-costs approach. In this regard, I agree with Messner's (1992) observation:

> It is important to remember that athletes are not "blank slates" onto which the sportsworld imprints its values and priorities. Some athletes do not fully accept the Lombardian ethic. Some, like Mike T., eventually rejected the "winning is everything" ethic and focused on feeling good about themselves for knowing that they worked hard and did their best. (p. 47)

Subsequently, further research might be warranted investigating ways in which athletes in other sports understand and engage in moderation, tolerance and honesty or similar ascetic practices of self in order to create their selves as ethically-orientated athletes. What I argue is clear from this chapter, however, is that my Ultimate-playing research participants engaged in numerous ways in moderation, tolerance and honesty as practices of self which were recommended to them by the Ultimate communities they belonged to, and, through these practices of self, they aimed to become spirited athletes.

I found practices of moderation, tolerance, and honesty to be readily identifiable in particular performances in most Ultimate games I watched or played in. While it is necessary to analyse ethical work and practices of freedom at this detailed, individualized level, I suggest that each of these is only a one part of a broad "pattern of conduct" (Foucault, 1984, p. 28) of those Ultimate players who choose to make Spirit of the Game their athletic telos. Unsurprisingly, then, these practices of self are closely linked. This is because all three practices of self can be interpreted as a range of attempts to avoid negative practices associated with hypercompetitive attitudes on the sports field. In this way, moderation, toleration, and honesty can be understood as ascetic insofar as they involve the voluntary restriction of an individual's pursuit of victory in sport.

I have been clear in this chapter that the presence of ascetic practices of self within Ultimate does not make it a utopian sport, free from disagreement or controversy. Differing interpretations of each of these practices of self from individual to individual and culture to culture mean that games of Ultimate can become fraught and constantly disrupted by contested calls. Not only are these practices of self not uniformly interpreted, not all Ultimate players perform these practices of self. In my field work, I have observed and participated in games at both social and competitive tournaments where these practices of self seemed sorely lacking. Moreover, a number of blogs on North American Ultimate (e.g., Burruss, 2010a; Parinella, 2005) suggest that there are some players, at least, who adopt a win-at-all-costs approach instead of these practices of self.

I am not convinced, however, that these three ascetic practices of self alone offer a satisfactory understanding of the complexities of how Ultimate players embody Spirit of the Game as aesthetics of existence. While practices of

moderation, tolerance and honesty are of critical importance, they offer an austere reading of Ultimate which seems to downplay the pleasures of playing which I found to be central throughout my research. In the next chapter, I examine humour, irony, and peripheral rituals as another interrelated and complimentary set of practices of self that Ultimate players use to form themselves as spirited athletic subjects. In doing so, I seek to test the extent to which the boundaries of Foucauldian ethics can be pushed beyond asceticism.

Chapter Seven: Indulgent Practices of Self: Humour, Irony, and Peripheral Rituals.

Introduction

In this chapter I specifically examine how practices of humour, irony and peripheral rituals are understood by Ultimate players as underpinning their ethical athletic self. As with my previous chapter, I develop answers to my third and fourth specific research questions: Through what practices of self do Ultimate players seek to produce their athletic selves?; and, What forms of problematization might connect these practices of self to Ultimate players' understandings of self, and, possibly, to an aesthetics of existence? This is an important aspect of considering how ethical subjectivities might be formed in sport because such practices have not previously been studied for their ethical potential. While Rinehart (1998b) reveals that irony is common in contemporary postmodern sport, he does not explicitly consider the ethical implications of sporting ironies. Douglas (2009), however, shows how she developed narratives of self based on fun and humour through which she understood her relationship with her father, golf, and her partner. Indeed, Douglas explains she is "shocked by the singular way athletes' lives have been represented in much scientific literature in sport" (p. 179). Within this chapter, then, I examine practices through which Ultimate players seek to define their participation in sport beyond the performance narrative.

The performance of humour and irony–both within the game proper and in indulgent (as opposed to ascetic) off-field peripheral rituals–seemed to me to be particularly significant in how many individuals (re)created themselves as spirited Ultimate players. Indeed I found that many games and tournaments were played

without serious and literal discussions about moderation, tolerance and honesty. (although these three ascetic practices of self were nevertheless still being practiced). Often the mood was set through practices of humour, irony and excess both on and off the field. In this chapter, then, I promote the thesis that practices of humour, irony and excess are important to the constitution of Spirit of the Game as an aesthetics of existence.

In this chapter I develop two specific but interlinked interpretations of Foucault's (1984) aesthetics of existence in relation to humour, irony, and peripheral rituals as practices of self in Ultimate. The first interpretation considers the aesthetics of Ultimate in terms of the feel of the game and the lifestyle that many players associate with it. Specifically, I wish to reflect on Bruce's comment about Spirit of the Game, which I discussed in my fifth chapter. He described Spirit of the Game as "the tone of the game. It's also having fun with your opposition and getting to know them and having a good time." I will argue that the humorous and ironic aesthetics which were rife in Ultimate were a significant way in which many Ultimate players gave form to their athletic selves. In this way, then, I seek to offer a complex account which rejects attempts to analytically separate sociological, aesthetic, and ethical accounts (Bennett, 1996). Drawing on Lather (1993), I envisage this chapter as part of a rhizomatic "journey among intersections, nodes, and regionalizations through a multi-centred complexity" (p. 680). In this way, I seek to examine ethics as an open and multidimensional aspect of athletic subjectivity, rather than narrowly limit ethics to ascetic practices and principles.

Secondly, I will argue that this humorous and ironic aesthetic form which many Ultimate players create for their selves involves a consideration of self and

others in relation to the telos, Spirit of the Game. In doing so, I consider Foucauldian ethics in a novel manner. To date, most applications of Foucauldian ethics have focused on ascetic self-renunciation which, Laidlaw (2002) suggested, should be the prime analytic focus of Foucauldian ethics. While Laidlaw (2002, 2005) and others (e.g., Copeman, 2006, 2008; Faubion, 2001; Mahmood, 2003; Pandian, 2010; J. Robbins, 2004) have used Foucault to analyse "how certain ethical projects can become that very singular thing–a self-denying morality" (Laidlaw, 2002, p. 324), in this chapter I deploy Foucauldian ethics to examine aesthetic practices of self which, within certain limits, embrace and indulge, rather than renounce, affective pleasures. In doing so, these practices of self produce what I term, a self-affirming morality. The self that is affirmed within this morality is a self created in relation to Spirit of the Game.

In order to undertake this analysis, I will draw extensively on Critchley's (2002) work on humour and Hutcheon's (1994) analysis of irony. These theorists, who interpret humour and irony respectively, argue that these forms of communication hold ethical potential. I wish to be clear, however, that I seek to offer a critical analysis of humour and irony within Ultimate: I do not assume humour and irony to be ethical *per se*, but rather seek to examine whether particular practices of humour and irony might have the potential to form ethical practices of self.

Humour

The possibility that humour might be ethical is succinctly argued by Critchley (2002):

Jokes are a play on form, where what is played with are the accepted

practices of a given society. The incongruities of humour both speak out of

a massive congruence between joke structure and social structure, and

speak against those structures by showing that they have no necessity. (p.

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Humour, then, involves highlighting a particular aspect of some part of society

while revealing its contingent nature. Joel Silver, one of the co-creators of

Ultimate, explains "it seemed funny to us, like a 'Naked Gun' movie, to take this

game so seriously" (cited in Zagoria, 2005, p. 7). In this way, we might interpret

the early creators of Ultimate as understanding the game as a humorous play on

the form of accepted Western sporting structures.

In a similar fashion Leonardo (2007), author of the ironically titled,

Ultimate: The Greatest Sport Ever Invented by Man, critically highlights a

number of contingent features of Western sports:

When will Ultimate be in the Olympics?... The answer is that Ultimate is

too good for the Olympics. The Olympics is crowded with

hypercompetitive steroid-driven type-A athletes who would debilitate their

spermatozoa to win a gold medal.... The Olympics is a sellout, desperate

for commercial success and a big payday from television contracts.

Ultimate is better than that. Ultimate is totally righteous. (p. 6, emphasis in

original)

Here Leonardo humorously critiques the excess associated with a hypercompetitive, or win-at-all-costs approach to sport, and the commoditization of Olympic sports as an entertainment product. Although such critiques–which were offered to me by many Ultimate players about both Olympic and commercialized team sports–are arguably unsustainable generalizations, certain aspects of these popular arguments are supported by well established sociological critiques of contemporary Western sport (e.g., Beamish & Ritchie, 2006; Donnelly, 1996; Hoberman, 1992, 2005; Hughes & Coakley, 1991; Ingham et al., 1999; Maguire, 2004). The practice of humour in Ultimate, then, has ethical potential insofar as it offers a critique of problems in dominant Western sports, or even within Ultimate. As Critchley (2002) suggests, this humour might show that such problems are socially, culturally and historically contingent, rather than necessary or inevitable.

The ethical potential of humour is, according to Critchley (2002), that "by producing a consciousness of contingency, humour can change the situation in which we find ourselves, and can even have a *critical* function with respect to society" (p.10, emphasis in original). From this perspective, then, humour can be a form of problematization insofar as it reveals the contingent nature of certain social practices and, in doing so, highlights the possibilities of other ways of being. In this way, practices of humour serve to remind us "that what exists is far from filling all the possible spaces" (Foucault, 2000i, p. 140). It is this form of humour that I interpret as having potential as an ethical practice of self.

Of course, this is only one possible function of humour. Critchley (2002) acknowledges that "most humour... simply seeks to reinforce the consensus and in no way seeks to criticize the established order or change the situation in which we

find ourselves" (p. 11). My task in this chapter, then, is not only to identify instances of humour in Ultimate, but to distinguish the ways in which humour was performed to consider whether Ultimate players' use of humour had ethical potential. I will specifically consider self-mockery and absurdity as forms of humour, before examining irony and peripheral rituals.

Self-mockery

Critchley (2002) suggests self-mockery as an ethical form of humour. He contends that "true humour does not wound a specific victim and always contains self-mockery"[6] (p. 14). Thus while a joke might identify an individual, it should not do so from "sheer malice or jibing but the lashing of vices which are general and not personal" (Critchley, 2002, p. 15). Moreover, Critchley nominates our bodies as a prime example of how we may joke in this way: "the eccentric position of the human being in nature is confirmed by the fact that not only *are* we our bodies, we also *have* our bodies" (p. 42, emphasis in original). While we are never physically removed from our bodies, we can nevertheless subjectively distance ourselves from our bodies.

At times, I saw players engage in duels of joking reversals of one-upmanship, with the 'winner' of the duel being the one who was best able to engage in self-mockery. As an example, on the Sunday of a weekend tournament, I saw an attacker and a defender chasing a disc into the end zone. Although it hung in the air enticingly, neither of them was quite fast enough to catch the disc and it dropped to the ground in front of them. As the two players slowed down, and repositioned themselves for the disc to be brought back into play, the would-

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[6] Following Foucault, I interpret Critchely's use of *true* as indication that Critchley is particularly interested in this type of humour, rather than an attempt to make an ontological claim. In this way, what is important is Critchley's relationship to *true humour*.

be attacker said wistfully, 'I might have caught that disc, yesterday morning'. His defender replied, 'Maybe five years ago, I would have had a chance'. Self-mockery of bodily failure was the central aspect of this humour.

I found such self-mocking interactions to be readily recognisable within Ultimate. While I did not see such performances in every game, they were a feature of many tournaments, and were noticeably more common at social tournaments than elite tournaments. These self-mocking jokes highlighted some of the bodily absurdities of Ultimate: weekend long tournaments in which players' performances become increasingly limited by fatigue, and passionate devotion to a pursuit in which age increasingly limits athletes' ability to perform. As Critchley (2002) suggests, "the body that is object and subject of humour is an *abject* body– estranged, alien, weakening, failing" (p. 51, emphasis in original). Such examples of humour can be interpreted as an ethical practice of self. The victim of the joke is oneself, and the focus of the joke, bodily failure, is invariably something understood to be common to all Ultimate players.

Moreover, as a practice of self, self-mocking jokes can form a way of performing or embodying the athletic telos, Spirit of the Game. There are, of course, no explicit rules requiring Ultimate players to engage in humour. Instead, self-mocking jokes might be one of the "forms and modalities of the relation to self by which the individual constitutes and recognizes himself" as a spirited subject (Foucault, 1984, p. 6). Such jokes, then, offer a way of creating an athletic identity that places deliberate limits on how seriously one might attempt to win and what one is willing to do in order to win. In this way, humour in Ultimate contributes to an "aesthetics of existence" (Foucault, 1984, p. 89) through a "stylization of the relation to oneself" (Huijer, 1999, p. 65).

The pejorative feminization of the abject male body

Bodily failure was also, however, an area in which, at times, I found highly problematic jokes were made. In fact, I found some of the jokes to be offensive to the point that I was reluctant to consider them to be jokes at all. I found a tendency amongst a small number of players, almost all of whom were men, to feminize male players who were injured or in pain. This was done through the highly problematic and hypermasculine "vagina" metaphor–a player limping off the field might be asked if he had "a sore vagina." The implication of this seems clear and is highly problematic: a "real" man would shrug off pain and play on, whereas women were positioned as likely to give in to the first signs of discomfort and in so doing let the team down.

At times, this discourse played out in ways that were ambiguous: At an elite tournament, in the last game of the day, a team mate, Richard, limped off with cramp after diving to catch the disc. A friend of Richard's from the other team asked, "is your vagina sore? Do you need a tampon?" although Richard did not respond, the friend's team mate told the joke teller to "lay off the guy [Richard], he's clearly hurting." Richard being defended in this way shows that the metaphor was not uncontested; however, the player who defended Richard did not seem to find how women were positioned in this discourse to be problematic so much as he found the pejorative positioning of an injured male player to be problematic.

I found the use of this metaphor highly offensive and problematic for how it positioned women as inferior to men. I had encountered this metaphor within a team in which I occupied a senior role prior to starting my research. At that time I directly spoke out against it. However, in this situation, although disgusted, I

remained silent. While I regret not speaking out, my situation at the time was not clear cut. In the previous game, I had suffered a potentially season-ending injury and it was only a month before the world club championships for which we were training. As a result, I was upset, in pain, and non-communicative. If I had said something, it may not have been constructive. I was too upset by my own predicament to challenge this instance of misogyny. This incident reflects how my roles, or selves–as researcher, athlete, and pro-feminist male– were not separate aspects of myself. Rather, each of these aspects of my identity affected the other. In this situation, my concerns for my own injury as an athlete left me in no state to object to the misogynistic comments of Richard's friend.

I was also quite surprised and taken aback by what I heard. Largely this was because use of the metaphor was infrequently used–I have three instances recorded over my two years of research–which meant I did not develop an oppositional strategy towards it. Thus, I recognize that not all instances of humour are ethical. This example of humour does not appear to contribute to an aesthetics of existence as a spirited Ultimate player. To the contrary, it appears to reinforce problematic gendered discourses associated with dominant Western sports (e.g., Hickey, 2008; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Messner, 1992). Some uses of humour, then, were abusive, and not only abusive of the player who the joke might have been directed at. I found these instances to be rare, however. As I argue below, many players avoided certain forms of jokes in order to decrease the risk of conflict with their opponents.

Absurdity

For Critchley (2002), humour is also found in the very absurdity of being human:

There is something essentially ridiculous about a human being behaving like a human being; there is something laughable about me behaving like a little professor of philosophy and you behaving like earnest readers of a book on humour. It is finally absurd, is it not? (p. 59)

I found absurdity to be readily recognized and also actively promoted by many Ultimate players. Importantly, performance and recognition of absurdity is common enough to be thought of as a practice. Absurdity may be recognized in the form of on-field actions, particularly in social games, such as Beth's friend, Samuel, who would try to bounce the disc off his head before catching a point. It may also be performed through dress.

As an example, at a social tournament which my current club attends every year, our teams adopt a fancy dress uniform. One year, my team dressed up as retirees. The women wore long nighties and had rollers in their hair, while the men wore thrift store suits and put grey streaks through their hair. Friends on other teams reported being surprised at how fast we were: our dress was so absurd they underestimated our athletic ability. Such humour, however, was self-mocking; our joke was not directed at retirees, or our opponents (although it is possible that others interpreted the joke this way), but at ourselves and the conventions of sports teams playing in uniforms of sports-specific material. In choosing an absurd uniform for the tournament, we rejected, or at least modified, instrumental rationality as the basis of our participation and enjoyment.

These two examples of absurdity–bouncing the disc off one's head before trying to catch it for a point and dressing as retirees–were practices that sought to

create a self which balanced or modified one's athletic self by including aesthetic

priorities as well as competitive priorities. I discovered that, for many players,

playing in an aesthetically stylized manner–whether communicated through

clothing, playing style or speech–formed a significant playing priority. Bruce told

me one team he had played for adopted the motto, "if it doesn't look good, don't

throw it." Gerald described his attendance at a recent social tournament: "I turned

up to that [tournament] already intoxicated at two in the afternoon, already drunk,

and I was throwing ridiculous discs and enjoying myself." Another term I found

to be common for throwing "ridiculous" discs was *flair*.

Such approaches, I suggest, are deliberately absurd. From the dominant

perspective of Western sports–that is, instrumental rationality (Beamish &

Ritchie, 2006)–flair is absurd. A preference for the spectacular over the reliable

does not increase a team's chances of success. Yet, I found that, below the elite

level, many players, teams and tournaments embraced such tactics. For example,

the United Kingdom based social team, Low Percentage Heroes, have self-

consciously named themselves after this absurdity. At the elite level, flair was not

emphasized as a tactic; however, when spectacular plays were successfully

executed, teams would celebrate these with substitutes rushing onto the field at

the completion of the point.

I argue that these absurdities form ethical practices within Ultimate insofar

as those performing absurdities have placed limits on what they are willing to do

in order to win. More specifically, I see those Ultimate players who deliberately

engage in such absurdities as acting analogously to Baudelaire's "modern man,"

who, through ironically heroizing the present, "is the man [sic] who tries to invent

himself" (Foucault, 2000b, p. 312). These practices, then, which were not

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uniformly practiced, offered a range of possibilities for engaging in an aesthetics of ethical self-stylization (Markula & Pringle, 2006) or an aesthetics of existence consonant with the athletic telos, Spirit of the Game.

Irony

Many of the absurdities I observed in Ultimate were self-consciously and deliberately performed. Like Baudelaire's modern man (Foucault, 2000b), then, the absurdities performed by Ultimate players might also be interpreted as ironic. However, irony, whether intended to be humorous or not, can be particularly challenging to interpret (Hutcheon, 1994; see also, Benwell, 2004). Indeed, the interpretation, attribution and ethical or political possibilities of irony have been a source of recent contentious debate, most notably between Critchley (1996, 1999) and Rorty (1989, 1996), but also amongst media and literature scholars (e.g., Alberti, 2004; Benwell, 2004; Coleman, 2008; Colletta, 2009; Dettmar, 2004; Di Martino, 2011; Fallows, 2008; Groening, 2008; Johnson-Woods, 2007; Koenigsberger, 2004; Ott, 2008; Samuels, 2008). The most relevant analysis of irony, however, for my purposes, is Hutcheon (1994). She analyzes irony as a transideological linguistic device which carries an evaluative edge. I review Rorty's and Critchley's debate on irony before I interpret how Hutcheon's account of irony is relevant to Ultimate.

For Rorty (1989), ironists fail to adopt an explicit public political position, and, as such, irony has no purpose beyond individual pleasure. Somewhat distinctively, Rorty argues that Foucault and Derrida were ironists and, subsequently, that their work has no political potential. Many scholars of postmodern media agree with Rorty's reading of irony, arguing that the ironic humour of programmes such as *The Simpsons* and *South Park* is apolitical and, as

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such, these programmes and their viewers reinforce the political status quo (e.g., Colletta, 2009; Groening, 2008; Samuels, 2008; Shugart, 1999). As Groening (2008) scathingly comments: "for those with whom *South Park*'s brand of parodic social satire resonates, the appeal of the cynical attitude lies in adopting a position of safety and avoiding the tremendous obligations of ideology while acknowledging the ideological" (p. 114). Such interpretations of irony as apolitical, however, are hotly contested.

For Critchley (1996, 1999), the great weakness of Rorty's (1989) argument that irony is apolitical is that his insistence on a definitive and explicit political project is at odds with Rorty's own nominalism. Rorty (1989) accepts that all knowledge is contingent and is admanant that there is no final vocabulary. Nor can we progress "toward an already existing Truth" (Rorty, 1989, p. xvi) as truth, in this sense, does not exist. Despite accepting that language is contingent and thus any situation may always be redescribed in another way, Rorty nevertheless argues that public and private interests are fundamentally irreconcilable. As he puts it, "both are right, but there is no way to make both speak a single language" (Rorty, 1989, p. xv). He suggests, therefore, we should adopt liberal politics in the public arena, and tactics of irony for private, individual projects of self-creation.

Critchley (1996) responds:

It seems strange that the fact that we become ironists in the private realm seems to have few implications for our relations to the public realm.... Does not the public/private distinction of the self into an ironist and liberal

yield an impossible psychological *bi-cameralism*, which would be a recipe

for political cynicism? (p. 25, emphasis in original)

Further, if Rorty accepts that there are no final descriptions or ultimate truths, then he must accept that it will always be possible for irony to be redescribed as politically relevant. For Critchley, then, Rorty's attempt to restrict irony–and ironists, such as Derrida, and here I would also include Foucault–from making a public contribution to political progress is implausible. Subsequently, I regard irony as having ethical and political potential. To clarify irony's potential, I turn now to Hutcheon (1994).

Classical accounts understand irony to be performed when a statement is made by someone who, in fact, means the opposite of that statement (Ott, 2008). In this way, the unsaid undercuts the said and reveals the ironist's true perspective. Hutcheon (1994) argues, however, that many examples of irony are more complicated than a simple unspoken negation of the said. She suggests, instead, that an ironic statement will have a literal meaning, an unsaid meaning, and also a third meaning which plays off both the said and the unsaid. This complicates ironic performance as ironic intent can no longer be guessed at simply by imagining the opposite of any given statement.

Bruce's team motto, "if it doesn't look good, don't throw it," which I analysed above as an example of absurdity, might also be understood as ironic in Hutcheson's (1994) sense. The "unsaid" that accompanies the motto is "keep it simple," or some other phrase emphasizing a conservative playing style that will maximise a team's chances of winning by minimizing risks. Yet the unsaid in this example does not undercut the said; Bruce's team did generally follow the motto.

Instead, the motto signals an ironic attitude towards a competitive or zero-sum approach to playing Ultimate. The irony occurs through prioritizing an aesthetic goal in the context of a game which, like other team sports, produces winners and losers. Such ironies would only be understood, Hutcheon suggests, by those who share membership within a discursive community.

Discursive communities, for Hutcheon (1994), are the basis for interpreting and attributing irony. Based on Foucauldian notions of discourse and power, discursive communities are formed from groups who share a particular language and games of truth. As such, a discursive community does not suppose egalitarianism, but rather:

> ...acknowledges those strangely enabling constraints of discursive contexts and foregrounds the particularities not only of space and time but of class, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual choice–not to mention nationality, religion, age, profession, and all the other micropolitical groupings in which we place ourselves or are placed by our society. (Hutcheon, 1994, p. 88)

Subsequently, Hutcheon suggests, it is not so much that irony is exclusionary, but rather that discursive communities, based on unequal and unstable relations of power, are exclusionary and unequal. Those without access to a discursive community will be unable, or at least unlikely, to understand ironic performances from that community. However, removing irony from a discursive community will not mean that this community ceases to be exclusionary.

As an example, those unfamiliar with opera would likely struggle to comprehend an ironic opera performance. At the same time, however, this lack of

understanding arises from exclusion from the discursive community, rather than from irony *per se*. Notably, Critchley (2002) echoes this notion of contextuality, suggesting that humour "returns us to *locality*, to a specific and circumscribed *ethos*" (p. 68, emphasis in original). Insofar as Ultimate forms a discursive community, then, ironic performances of Ultimate players will be intelligible to many other Ultimate players.

Subsequently, it is the contextual use of irony that is important; it might be used in an exclusionary manner to reinforce an elitist hierarchy, or it might be used in a somewhat more inclusive manner to reinforce "amiable communities" (Booth, cited in Hutcheon, 1994, p. 17). The interpretation of irony, then, will be specific to a discursive community. Hutcheon (1994) elaborated:

In certain discursive communities (certain families, certain professions), there is a positive valuing of irony; in others, there is not. If you are a member of the first, you are more likely to develop an "ear" for irony or a "sense" of irony. (p. 92)

I argue, then, that Ultimate's discursive community, or communities, have a particularly strong affinity for irony, which, broadly speaking, is understood as a way of embodying the telos, Spirit of the Game.

As far as attributing irony goes, I found that, within the discursive community of Ultimate, irony was fairly readily understood. However, there was certainly potential for linguistic or cultural misunderstanding between players from different parts of the world, or even between players from the same region, who, in addition to being members of Ultimate's discursive community, each

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belong to separate and distinctively-different discursive communities. Outside the discursive community of Ultimate, however, the attribution and understanding of Ultimate ironies was, unsurprisingly, more limited. I address this explicitly in a later section on social difference.

Irony, for Hutcheon (1994), carries a sharp evaluative edge. This does not mean that irony is necessarily libratory; irony is deployed by conservatives to critically evaluate liberals and also by liberals to critically evaluate conservatives. Subsequently, irony may be interpreted as either "transgressive" or "insulting," "non-dogmatic" or "evasive," "corrective" or "destructive," "humorous" or "irresponsible" (Hutcheon, 1994, p. 45). What is suggested by Hutcheson's analysis is the *possibility* that irony might be performed and interpreted in ethical ways. Although irony will not always be practiced ethically, within particular circumstances in certain discursive communities it might be used as a form of ethical critique. Subsequently, in order to interpret irony in Ultimate as ethical, I need to analyse specific examples that might reveal an ethical use of irony. I now examine one such possibility from my fieldwork.

Humour and irony can be performed as a way of establishing one's relation to Spirit of the Game. One way this might occur is through use of humour and irony to defuse an aggressive or adversarial situation. As an example, at an elite, invitation-only tournament, one of my team's captains, Darren, reacted angrily when his marker called a stall out on him. Darren, standing in close proximity to his marker shouted at him, "no, no, no, not even close." A player on the sideline identified Darren's foreign accent and called out, 'in [name of country], we just say contest', to the obvious amusement of many other players

both on the field and sideline. The joke defamiliarized Darren's behaviour by making his reaction seem absurd.

Following Hutcheon (1994), the irony of the statement, "in [name of country], we just say contest" can be interpreted from the perspective of Ultimate's discursive community. The literal meaning of the statement was that players from the named country do not react angrily when a call they disagree with is made. The "unsaid" suggested that, in contrast, players from Darren's country were prone to over-reacting when calls were made against them. Following Hutcheon (1994), I argue that the unsaid did not replace or override the said, but rather, it combined with the said to make a third point: let's not take ourselves too seriously.

The irony, as I interpreted it, was not about nationality, but rather about Spirit of the Game and showing at least a modicum of respect for one's opponents. Through his ironic statement, the sideline player established his own relation to Spirit of the Game. Additionally, the ironic deployment of national identity allowed the sideline player to intervene to make the point that Darren's reaction was inappropriate in the cultural context, or ethos, of Ultimate. In this way, the player on the sideline was able to subvert a situation that had potential to change the tenor of the game and remind Darren that all players were expected to treat each other with respect. In this example we can see that care of the self directly implies care of others. As Longford (2001) argues, "Foucault endorsed the aesthetics of existence as having the potential to infuse our relations with others with greater care and concern" (p. 571). The sideline player's use of irony to construct his self as a spirited player also lead to a concern for the conduct of others.

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However, given that ironic performances play on and subvert meaning, alternative readings of these examples of irony are inevitable (Benwell, 2004). The sideline player could, perhaps, be interpreted as attempting to enforce his country's playing standards on Darren, without considering the standards Darren might have been used to. Following Hutcheon (1994), we might interpret the irony as exclusionary. However, given the similarities of Ultimate communities between the two countries involved, I do not give much weight to this possibility.

Alternatively, the sideline player might have been trying to embarrass Darren into withdrawing his call, thus resulting in a turnover and the sideline player's team gaining possession. This is certainly a possibility. More deviously, the sideline player's team may have identified Darren as a target who needed to be worked over, or provoked, and put off his game, and, if so, it might also have been possible that Darren's marker had deliberately made a stall-out call that was "not even close" in order to provoke him. In this case we might interpret the sideline player's irony as destructive, rather than corrective (Hutcheon, 1994). Each of these possibilities suggest that this use of irony might, in fact, have been unethical insofar as the use of irony would fail to show respect for Darren as an opponent and subsequently be an act of self-creation contradictory to the Spirit of the Game.

I cannot dismiss these interpretations completely. At the same time, however, I do not think they are equally as credible as my first interpretation. As someone who has spent years playing Ultimate, and subsequently is thoroughly enmeshed in Ultimate's "shared beliefs, shared culture, and shared assumptions" (Benwell, 2004, p. 13), or discursive community (Hutcheon, 1994), I immediately interpreted the ironic performance as a humorous way of communicating an

ethical point. Even after ongoing reflection, I still feel that I accurately attributed its intended effect as a humorous and ethical subversion of a tense, confrontational situation.

My interview participants interpreted irony in similar ways. John suggested that players who are regarded as spirited by their opponents have significant leeway to be ironic or humorous:

> It's kind of like the underlying intent. It's kind of forgivable if someone goes for a funny hassle but it doesn't come off. But if, for example, the person behind it, is like [name of player who is widely regarded as unspirited] it doesn't matter what he says or how he delivers it.

The implication here is that spirited players can make humorous or ironic comments as other players will know how to interpret their meaning. Anna suggested that in competitive Ultimate you show respect for your opponent "by bringing your competitive game." Yet, even in this context she pointed out "you might have those little moments with your opponent, you might be in a situation where something comes up and you smile, but you play aggressively, like hard." Similarly, when I asked Mitchell about these situations, he suggested "there are always lighter moments on the field where humour may be apparent, but with me it is more to do with a specific incident and will often depend on the spirit the game is played in." John and Mitchell agree, then, that for irony and humour to be spirited, other spirited practices of self, such as moderation, tolerance and honesty, must also be present.

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When I discussed humour and irony with Gerald, he suggested that while humour and irony were rife in Ultimate: "you can't get away with a lot of the things that you get away with once you're out of the Ultimate circle. I've tried (laughs) I've alienated a lot of people (laughs), but I've tried." Gerald's point here is very similar to John's: Ultimate players often interpret humour and irony in positive ways, and such positive interpretations do not tend to be made by those unfamiliar with Ultimate's discursive community.

What this situation of multiple possible interpretations is indicative of is an ethics grounded in postmodernity. It is fundamentally fraught with uncertainty; despite my interpretation of Darren being ironically heckled as ethical, because I accept Rorty's (1989) argument that "anything can be made to look good or bad by being redescribed" (p. 73), I cannot claim my preferred reading as final. Moreover, even if we accept my reading of the situation as ethical, this ethicality is partial and limited. Such attempts at ethical humour exist only within the particular ethos of a discursive community and, even then, may be misinterpreted or disliked. As an example, John suggested that his brother and sister-in-law, as novice Ultimate players saw "the spirit stuff and all the crazy stuff and it might not have gelled with them."

Further, it might be argued that I have been too presumptive in considering Ultimate players to belong to a shared discursive community. Some of the most fractious games my elite team played at the world club championships were against teams for whom English was not their first language. In these situations, our attempts to communicate were constrained by our mutual difficulties understanding each other. This may suggest that we did not belong to a shared discursive community. On the other hand, however, I did see a number of off-field

non-verbal ironic performances being created between players without a shared language. In these situations, it seemed that Ultimate's discursive community could cross some linguistic barriers. Having argued for the possibility that irony might be used ethically in Ultimate, I go on now to examine some further examples of irony from my field work.

Players also deployed humour and irony on the field in less confrontational situations than the situation involving Darren which I analysed above. I found that players interacted ironically when there were stoppages in play. In such situations an attacker and defender would sometimes strike up their own conversation while waiting. I analysed one form these conversations took above, as self-mockery. Another form these conversations took was ironic banter in which players would make jokes about their superiority over their marker. John suggested:

> Ultimate is a game when you can have a lot of standing time with your opponent. That's what gives the opportunity to have that conversation. Cricket also has that opportunity, but the attitude in cricket is completely different; it's more about talking them down.

Here John differentiates ironic banter in Ultimate as a sign of respect between players. He opposes this to cricket, in which he believes conversations between players are intended to put the opposition off their game.

Ironic jokes would occasionally develop into an ongoing pattern of banter that continued throughout a game. As Beth put it, "I love to trash talk with people I like and respect and it's a sign that they like and respect you… I'm just going to be silly with this person. And I actually love that." She then went on to say "I work hard to actually do a lot of that [banter] to actually keep reminding myself

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and the other person that, as they say, this is just a game." Similarly, John suggested that ironic banter with an opponent shows "you can both be their mate, but also waste them to the [end] zone. It's like, yeah, you can have it both ways." Following Foucault, (1984) I suggest that ironic banter, or trash talk, for Beth in particular, formed a vital part of her ethical work, which she understood as being an important way of moderating her athletic conduct. In this way, we can see that this specific example of ethical work (Foucault, 1984), ironic banter, allowed Beth to give form to her athletic self both aesthetically and ethically.

However, many players were wary of the potential for irony to be misinterpreted and thus they limited ironic banter to players whom they knew well in order that they could be satisfied that their banter would be interpreted ironically. For example, Samantha explained:

> It totally depends on how well you know the person..... I think banter
> should remain between people you have a relationship with and an off-
> court friendship with.... Yeah, I try to keep my banter to congratulatory or
> hard luck, if I don't actually know them that well. But if I'm playing
> against a team of friends, or it's a pick up game, anything goes (laughs).

Here Samantha differentiated between ironically engaging in banter with friends, while being more directly friendly and congratulatory towards players she did not know so well in order to reduce the risk of misinterpretation. In each case, however, she can be seen to be addressing her relationship with her opponents as her ethical substance (Foucault, 1984). Samantha's selective use of irony can also be interpreted as going beyond a single act and contributing towards her achieving

"a certain mode of being" (Foucault, 1984, p. 28) as a spirited Ultimate player. It is important to note here that Samantha did not identify a universal rule, but rather adopted specific, contextual approaches to create her self as a spirited player.

I found that humour was also often used by spectators who would ironically heckle one or both of the teams playing. The crowd watching Ultimate at a tournament was almost always formed by other Ultimate players who would know players on the two competing teams. Spectators would interact with teams' substitutes and ironic and (mainly) good natured heckling was common–and even expected–between friends in the crowd and on the field. According to Regan:

> If I'm on the sideline watching the final and I know the people playing, I heckle the hell out of them.... but otherwise I'm generally just going to cheer them on and pick them up and make them play better.

Here Regan echoed Samantha's concern for being sure that heckling would be understood as ironic by those on the field.

I interpret this concern as relating to the ironic nature of heckling in Ultimate; it is not intended, as might be implied by the literal said (cf., Hutcheon, 1994), to put a player off their game; instead, it introduces an aesthetics of humour. In this way, ironic banter and heckling might be seen to make a statement against taking the game too seriously, against taking the joy out of the game, or to break down sporting hierarchies such as those between players and spectators, or, as John suggested, between playing abilities:

If your team is clearly better than the other team you also want to
encourage them, so being friendly is also the encouraging part as well.
Because also with a small community, you don't want to have it so ultra-
competitive that you know you just are really cliquey with your own team,
you can't afford that in such a small community.

Regan's comment: "I think one of the unique things about Ultimate is it's all
about Spirit of the Game" is particularly apt here. I interpret his comment to
indicate that he understands each aspect of the game and lifestyle to revolve
around Spirit of the Game. In this way, ironic banter and heckling form part of
Ultimate's aesthetics of existence: The aesthetic and the ethical are not separate
aspects of Ultimate players' selves.

As an example of heckling, in the final of a social tournament, a close
friend of the captain of the white team stood up in front of the crowd and assigned
a noise for the crowd to make for each player on the field. The captain of the
white team was assigned a buzzer sound (ehhhhhhh), another had a bird call (ka-
caw, ka-caw), and for another player, the crowd would cheer every time he caught
the disc then call out "ohhhh" in a disappointed tone every time he threw the disc.
Within minutes roughly one hundred spectators–all of whom had played in the
tournament– joined in making the sounds and were creating enough noise that as a
player on the pitch, I found communication with my team mates to be difficult.
Moreover, my friends' discussions of the sounds after the game suggested to me
that the pattern of cheers led the crowd away from interpreting the game as a zero-
sum contest between two teams and towards interpreting the game for the

humorous and aesthetic effects generated by the different cheers assigned to players on the field.

At the end of the game, both teams shared a huddle in the middle of the pitch, and at the end of huddle, the captain of the white team lead a cheer for both teams, 'three cheers for us–hoo ray hoo ray hoo ray. Three cheers for the crowd, ehhhhhh'. In this way, Ultimate appears to be very much an ironic pastiche in which divisions between athletes and spectators are blurred (Rinehart, 1998b). Ultimate players expect ironic heckling as part of the game and actively differentiate between heckling, which is intended to be humorous, and taunting, which is intended to insult a player in order to put them off their game. Ironic banter and heckling can be understood as part of an aesthetics of athletic existence through which players can create their self as a spirited subject.

I found that the practice of humour and irony in Ultimate at times extended to naming of teams and tournaments and designs of jerseys. Teams often chose names with humorous and ironic origins. A team from Rotorua, an area of New Zealand with high geothermal activity, called themselves the Steaming Cracks. Both Seattle's Riot and Fire of London chose team names that offered an ironic twist on major events in their cities' histories. Similarly, masters teams such as OLD SAG (One Last Desperate Shot At Glory) and Age against the Machine offered ironic commentaries on aging and winning. In this way, the naming of a team, I suggest, is an option that Ultimate players–or, at least those Ultimate players involved in choosing team's names–might use to signal an ironic attitude within Ultimate.

Many teams put significant effort into designing an ironic or humorous team uniform. Leonardo (2007) explains:

Irony is a classic theme running through many great works of literature and most of the sweetest Ultimate attire. Under Armour compression shorts? Pro-quality Nike TD cleats? They are both ironic when Ultimate players wear them because they are made for other, more legitimate sports. Irony in Ultimate is always *in*. (p. 35, emphasis in original)

At the 2010 World Ultimate Club Championships, the number 1 seeds in the open division, Chain Lightning, had shirts with a lightning bolt striking down onto a map of Europe and landing on the host city, Prague. Similarly, the winners of the mixed division, The Chad Larson Experience, had shirts printed which offered a rough Czech translation of their team name, Cadu Larsen Zkusenosti. Magon, who named themselves after a "mythical" monkey dragon from a YouTube clip, had shirts which featured a stylised Magon, or monkey dragon, destroying Prague. As an act of political parody, CUUP, the Chinese United Ultimate Party chose their name to parody the Chinese communist party and had shirts printed with a sledge hammer wielding Chinese worker on the front.

Many tournaments chose ironic names as well. For example, a women's tournament in Ireland is called, Huck o' the Irish. This pun combines the term for a long throw, a huck, with the well-known phrase, luck o' the Irish. Similarly, 'Ooo Devon (is a place on earth)!' parodies a well known Belinda Carlisle song. Importantly, the way that irony and humour is deployed in naming teams, designing shirts, and naming tournaments points to how widespread, and culturally expected, humour and irony is in Ultimate.

A number of conclusions might be drawn from such ironic team names, team shirts and tournaments. Firstly, at the most basic level, these examples lend weight to my observation that irony and humour are rife within Ultimate. The regular use of irony suggests that Ultimate players are particularly attuned to producing and identifying irony within the context of Ultimate: as Hutcheon (1994) suggested, because Ultimate's discursive community positively values irony, players are likely to "develop an 'ear' for irony" (p. 92).

Secondly, these examples point to a willingness, to varying degrees, amongst many Ultimate players to ironise their participation. Ironic participation offers a way of critiquing aspects of sport from within, of *playing with* accepted sport forms. As Critchley (2002) suggested, this "can change the situation in which we find ourselves, and can even have a *critical* function with respect to society" (p. 10, emphasis in original).

Thirdly, such examples of irony point to "an aesthetics of existence" (Foucault, 1984, p. 89) within Ultimate. Many of Ultimate's ironies specifically ironise an instrumentally rational or excessively competitive approach to sport. Thus, an ironic aesthetics of existence within Ultimate can be interpreted as deliberately limiting what one is prepared to do in order to achieve victory. Ironic performances, then, are one way in which Ultimate players can produce their self as an ethical athlete, in contrast, for example, with those athletes drawn into Hughes and Coakley's (1991) sport ethic. From this perspective, indulgent aesthetic values, such as humour and irony are connected to ascetic values such as moderation, tolerance and honesty. This highlights, I suggest, that my division between ascetic and indulgent practices of self in Ultimate is heuristic: As Ultimate is currently played, these practices are blurred.

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Peripheral Rituals

Following Rinehart (1998b), I found significant blurring between on-field and off-field performances. Rinehart's initial analysis of the blurring of roles, which focuses on spectator sports, argues that postmodern sport is a complex cultural production formed of interactions between spectators, athletes, coaches, media, and other involved parties. Subsequently, Rinehart argues, in the performance of sport, these groups should collectively be considered as "players all." I wish to adapt Rinehart's argument here for the context of Ultimate which, at this point in time, does not have a wide spectator base. My adaptation of Rinehart's thesis is to move from players *all* to players *always*. In short, I examine the extent to which off-field practices, particularly at weekend and week-long tournaments, form "certain aesthetic values and… stylistic criteria" (Foucault, 1984, p. 11) through which players embody Spirit of the Game.

I have already drawn on examples which might suggest there may be blurring between on-field and off-field practices: the interjection of a sideline player to Darren's outburst, and the cheers used by the crowd in the final of a social tournament which I analyzed earlier in this chapter both suggest that on-field and off-field practices may be aimed towards the same telos. Throughout my field work, I was particularly struck by the frequency of off-field practices of humour and irony. In this section, then, I consider the extent to which off-field practices, or peripheral rituals, involving irony and humour might contribute to an aesthetics of ethical self-stylization (cf., Markula & Pringle, 2006) or aesthetics of existence for some Ultimate players.

Peripheral rituals which I found to be important aspects of Ultimate included: watching—and often heckling—other games of Ultimate; combined

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team post-match huddles; individual teams' post-match huddles; post-match 'calls'; team meetings; tournament parties featuring drinking games, dancing, and themed costumes; team meals; sharing accommodation while at tournaments; attending trading nights; driving in cars and vans to and from tournaments; and posting tournament reports and highlights online on team web pages, facebook, and email list serves.

A number of these rituals are closely linked to what many players regard as 'the Ultimate lifestyle' (cf., Wheaton, 2004b): much Ultimate is played in a tournament format, which require teams to travel for weekend or week long tournaments and spend large amounts of time together outside of game situations. Moreover, many of these rituals are hedonistic and, as such, deliberately involve various forms of excess. Yet, this does not preclude these rituals from also being practices of self which might enable some Ultimate players to "make [aspects of] their life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria" (Foucault, 1984, p. 11, emphasis in original).

Tournament parties

Tournament parties were a central feature of every tournament I conducted fieldwork at and were usually well attended. For many players, tournament parties are regarded as an occasion to engage in heavy drinking. While I personally am not a heavy drinker and prefer to avoid hangovers, I point out that players who drink heavily at tournament parties have chosen a specific time, location and social group to drink with (Brain, 2000; Measham, 2004; Szmigin et al., 2008). Thus, drinking at tournament parties might be understood as an act of "calculated hedonism" (Brain, 2000, p. 9, see also; Measham, 2004, p. 319; Szmigin et al.,

2008, p. 361), which forms one of the pleasures of playing tournament Ultimate and is a way of giving form to one's self as an Ultimate-playing subject.

Tournament parties provide opportunities to socialize with players from other teams, to catch up with old friends, and to make new friends. Moreover, in my experience, Ultimate parties strongly contrast with the hazing, aggression and misogyny associated with drinking cultures in many other sports (see for example, Fields, Collins, & Comstock, 2007; Kirby & Wintrup, 2002; Muir & Seitz, 2004; Pringle & Hickey, 2010; Thorpe, 2010). I suggest that significant factors contributing to this contrast with drinking cultures in other sports may be that all the tournament parties which I attended included both men and women–often with a wide range of ages–and, also, that these parties took place mid-tournament; the people attending the party would be one's team mates and the next day's opponents. However, my fieldwork observations suggest that players readily acknowledge that mid-tournament parties impair their performance through the rest of the tournament, which is likely to be why Ultimate world championships now only have two parties over the course of a week, rather than a party each night. It is not that the Ultimate players I studied do not care about winning, rather, it is that they problematize an excessive emphasis on winning above all else. As John put it, "winning feels great, I like winning.... [But] I think you can have your own expectations around winning and losing as well."

One of my interviewees, Regan, told me that at social tournaments, "I do go out and party on the Saturday night, so I'm a bit hung over and a bit slower [on the Sunday]." Indulging in excessive alcohol consumption at tournament parties was, for Regan, consonant with his motivation for playing the game, which was to "hang out with friends and just have fun." The pleasure Regan experiences at

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tournament parties, for him, outweighs any subsequent loss of pleasure at being slower and hung over on the Sunday. Here, Regan might be interpreted as adopting an ethics similar to that which Foucault (2000j) recommended adopting with regard to having sex, "an ethics of pleasure, an intensification of pleasure" (p. 319).

I interpret Regan's decision to indulge at the tournament party as part of his rejection of an instrumental approach to playing Ultimate. While I do not set out to valorize binge drinking, I argue that the decision to drink heavily at tournament parties might, at least in part, be based on the problematization of excessive competitiveness. We could interpret Regan's drinking at the parties of social tournaments as the prioritization of having fun as his prime motivation for playing. In this way, for Regan, drinking at a tournament party offered a way of embodying Spirit of the Game.

Although peripheral rituals might offer practices of the self that allow individuals to recreate themselves as spirited subjects, this only occurs insofar as there is a connection between the self a player creates on the field and the self they create off the field. Phillip told me:

I guess I can't understand why someone can change persona when they walk onto the field. If it's you that's playing the sport, why not be the person that you want to be off the field when you're on it?

He went on to mention a specific player who he found difficult to deal with because, "off the field he's a nice guy, but on the field, he's a complete jerk." For Phillip, peripheral rituals were not only important in themselves, but also to the

extent that participation in these rituals formed a self that was consistent with how one behaved on the field. For Phillip, then, this other player failed to create "himself as an ethical subject" because he was unable to shape "a precisely measured conduct that was plainly visible to all and deserving to be long remembered" (Foucault, 1984, p. 91).

World championship parties offer an interesting insight into this connection between one's on-field and off-field self. World championship events typically run over the course of six days. Recent world championships have had two parties: a mid-week trading night, where players trade Ultimate clothing and paraphernalia with each other, and a Friday night party, which takes place when only the finals are left to be played. In recent tournaments, the finalists have not attended the Friday night party. Phillip told me:

> At worlds it was really easy just to stick with your team. Just because your schedules didn't line up with other people's [schedules] and you were constantly moving around town to get to different events and whatever and so the party and the trading night were really the only opportunity to mingle with, um, people from other countries that have exactly the same passion as you do, so yeah, I think they're a definitely a critical part of the sport.

Along with choosing ironic team names and uniforms, attendance at tournament parties at world championships offered a way for players to participate in a shared ethos despite language barriers which, at times, made on-field communication difficult.

As Phillip suggested, the two social events at worlds offered important opportunities to interact with other players in a less-pressured environment. Lack of fluency in a shared language appeared to be a much smaller issue in these situations. Tournament parties, then, offered individuals a way of actively constructing their selves as spirited Ultimate players. Following Foucault's (2000d) anti-essentialist assumptions, I do not interpret Ultimate parties as serving to humanize opponents, but, rather, I read participation in such peripheral rituals as the active constitution of a self that gives "rise to relationships between individuals, to exchanges and communications, and at times even to institutions" (Foucault, 1988a, p. 45). In this way, we might interpret participation in tournament parties as a form of "care of the self [that] is ethical in itself; but it [also] implies complex relationships with others insofar as this *ethos* of freedom is also a way of caring for others" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 287, emphasis in original).

I found that tournament parties were often highly ironic. The ironic intent was usually first signalled through the theme. One party I attended had a 'Rubik's cube' theme. Party goers arrived with each piece of clothing matching a different colour from a Rubik's cube. The challenge was to swap clothing with other players until all your clothes were of one colour. At the start of the party, many players were rushing around trying to be the first person to 'solve' the Rubik's cube. As the party progressed, even people who had 'solved' their Rubik's cube continued to trade clothing in a bid to look even more ridiculous, or to help other people 'solve' their own Rubik's cube. The engagement with the Rubik's cube theme ironically and satirically commented on competition and conventions of dress and deportment, particularly as this party was in a bar open to the public. The Rubik's cube party might also be considered as an example of self-mockery

(Critchley, 2002). Insofar as there was a joke, the joke was on all of us; there was no specific victim. I return to this example again below, when considering social difference.

Post-match rituals

I observed two important post-match rituals which both teams would share at the end of the game. The first, shared post-match huddles, were common at all levels of Ultimate.[7] The second, post-match calls, or cheers, were somewhat less common, and tended only to be performed at social tournaments: As Leonardo (2007) observed, "self-conscious high-level Club teams say 'good game' in the handshake line and move on" (p. 73). After a game of Ultimate, I found it was common for both teams to share a huddle, alternating player for player so that each person had opponent either side of them. The serious and the ironic are often performed simultaneously in shared huddles. Thus, when one team had more players than the other, the practice of alternating players around a huddle sometimes turned into a race, with players in the bigger team trying to get an opponent on each side. Whether ironic or serious, post-match huddles offered a way of constructing a self that was respectful of one's opponents.

Once the huddle was formed, each captain would give a speech predominantly directed at the other team. There were common themes– the score line didn't reflect how close the game was, best of luck for the rest of the tournament, good spirit, both teams played with great intensity–some captains made a deliberate and ironic effort to include all the common themes, while others prided themselves on saying something different in each huddle. Beginning with the serious, we might return to Mitchell's example of tolerance in the previous

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[7] I have been informed, however, that shared huddles at college level tournaments in North America are uncommon.

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chapter. He was praised by his opponents for his tolerance of contact within the game during the post-match huddle. This praise, for Mitchell, reinforced his understanding of himself as a spirited player.

Phillip expressed a similar sentiment about the importance of huddles:

> There might have been a lot of conflict between the two teams. If it's a tight game you're going to have dodgy calls. It's just a sport. And there's no reason to hold grudges against people. And it's often the only chance you have to make amends with people.

In this way, honesty was performed in a huddle as a practice of self: players occasionally offered a confessional (Foucault, 1978, 1988a) apology to their opponents. Here Phillip recognized that disagreements, conflicts and animosity do occur within Ultimate, yet he does not want such experiences to define his understanding of either his self, or of Ultimate. For Phillip, then, a post-match huddle was a practice which allowed players to put the game that has just been played into context, as "just a sport." Positioning Ultimate in this context allowed Phillip to moderate how seriously or competitively he took the game. In this way we can see how Phillip's care of the self directly implied care for others (cf., Foucault, 1988a).

As Phillip and I continued our conversation, we agreed that this expectation of moderation of seriousness or competitiveness and respect for others could be communicated in multiple ways. I quote our conversation at length:

Hamish: Do you think that happens in different ways though? Like [name of team] had their tin of maple syrup in the centre of the circle and it was just a race to see who would be the first to work out they should just pick it up.… But there are other moments, where it's not just, "hey guys, that was a great game." Things get expressed in different ways.

Phillip: True, that's true, but things like that reinforce the fact that it is just a game. So, it's a good opportunity, you've had, ah, this really intense game, then all of a sudden, "hey guys, it's just a game, have some maple syrup" (laughs).

Hamish: Did you hear about, there was a mixed team. The other team would all have to close their eyes, they'd put on lipstick and then kiss the player they thought should be MVP [most valuable player] (laughs)?

Phillip: Oh, that's genius (laughs), so they'd get covered in kisses.

In these situations, aesthetics, irony, pleasure and ethics are intertwined in a complex manner. Such post-match rituals might be seen as a way in which these Ultimate players turn their lives, or at least a portion of them, into an art form (Foucault, 2000c). Indeed, I suggest that Foucault's (1984, 2000c) notion of an aesthetics of existence was intended to point towards these complex situations in which we simultaneously stylize our self in ethical, aesthetic and pleasurable ways.

Moreover, these examples of post-match huddles highlighted the connections between the relations one has with oneself and with others: Ironic peripheral rituals revealed "the government of the self by oneself in its articulation with relations with others" (Foucault, 2000k, p. 88). By participating in post-

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match huddles, Ultimate players could be seen as ironically playing with accepted sporting forms and highlighting their contingent nature (Critchley, 2002). The nomination of a team's most valuable player is a common sporting practice. Yet, to vote for an opposition MVP through kissing them with lipstick-covered lips undermined the hierarchical and serious tradition underpinning the award. Such humour works "to bring human beings back from what they have become to what they might be" (Critchley, 2002, p. 15). In this way, participation in peripheral rituals such as ironic MVP awards which are awarded using lipstick kisses are a way in which an athlete might re-orientate their self away from an instrumentally rational understanding of sport, back to an understanding more concerned with self and others.

However, post-match huddles do not always function in this way. Some players might join the huddle simply because they are expected to do so, and, somewhat exceptionally, I noticed players occasionally refuse to join a huddle. Interestingly, after my elite team's particularly fractious game, which I discussed in the previous chapter, the opposing captain told us, 'we think Spirit of the Game is like the spirit of battle, of fighting to win'. While his words matched his team's style of play, neither seemed to me to fit within the understandings of Spirit of the Game or practices of self which I have described thus far.

Some speeches by captains failed to be either serious or ironic. Phillip suggested "some huddles are better than others and sometimes it feels like a bit of a formality and captains that talk are just like uninspirational and going through the motions." Similarly I was involved in numerous post-match huddles in open teams where I have felt awkward at captains who justified intense, physical play by the absence of women on the field. While post-match huddles have the

potential to form an ethical practice of self, in no way is this guaranteed. Nevertheless, as Phillip and I discussed, they provide multiple ways of creating an ethical self through establishing relations to Spirit of the Game and to opponents.

I found this style of ironic engagement with social conventions, such as the lipstick MVP, to be relatively common in Ultimate's peripheral rituals. Such ironic performances work to "both speak out of a massive congruence between joke structure and social structure, and speak against those structures by showing that they have no necessity" (Critchley, 2002, p. 10). It was this ongoing ironic engagement with social conventions that holds the potential for peripheral rituals to be a practice of self. Moreover, I keep in mind Foucault's (2000c) suggestion that the "aesthetical and political... were directly linked. Because if I want someone to accept me as a king, I must have a kind of glory which will survive me, and this glory cannot be dissociated from aesthetic value" (pp. 264-265). Ultimate players dressed in theme for a Rubik's cube party, or applying lipstick before voting for an MVP are connecting an ironic aesthetic to a political or ethical orientation towards their participation in Ultimate.

Such ironic performances are both aesthetic and ethical practices of self that allow an athletic identity which differs to one which embodies instrumental rationality to be lived into existence. As an example, the form which the attendees at the Rubik's cube party gave their selves involved an aesthetics of irony which was also ethical insofar as it established a relation between oneself and a telos and also directly implied relations with others. As Foucault (2000k) argues, ethical self creation "is a matter of the formation of the self through techniques of living, not of repression through prohibition and law" (p. 89). Huijer (1999), writing on the aesthetics of existence, asserts "ethics [is] also a matter of pleasure, of taking

risks of danger and the intensity of existence" (p. 73-74). In this sense, we should keep in mind Foucault's (1980) insistence that power:

> ...induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression that power is productive, not repressive. (p. 119)

Given Foucault's understanding of power, we would be remiss, I argue, to expect an ethics to be wholly repressive.

Social Difference

Critchley (2002) points out, however, that culturally-specific humour is often made at the expense of another culture. For the English, he noted, the Irish are fools, and the Scots misers. Moreover, Billig (2005) criticizes Critchley for being peculiarly reticent about critiquing the negative effects of racist humour, which, Billig argues, was most often directed at blacks. Arguably, this type of humour was not the focus of Critchley's work, yet the negative socio-cultural effects of one culture or social group laughing at the supposed differences of another culture or social group is well established (e.g., Billig, 2005; Howitt & Owusu-Bempah, 2005; J. Palmer, 1994; Paton, Powell, & Wagg, 1996; Pickering & Lockyer, 2005). In this section, then, I will consider the ethical limitations of humour and irony which rests on social differences between groups.

I observed humour in Ultimate that highlighted social difference. The prime theme of social difference was based on revealing differences between the values of Ultimate culture and wider Western culture. By highlighting these

differences, Ultimate players emphasized their own perceived distinctiveness from certain aspects of Western culture, and, in particular, from Western sporting culture.

I found that Ultimate players often identified themselves as distinctly different to what they perceived to be mainstream culture. At times, some players would mock certain aspects of mainstream culture or a particular person who displayed attributes of mainstream culture. In a manner similar to Thornton's (1995) club music aficionados, such mockery was used to generate a sense of superiority towards what was perceived to be mainstream. As an example, while playing in an out-of-town tournament, my elite team caught a taxi van from our accommodation to the venue of the tournament party. The route we took went through an area known for having a number of street prostitutes. When one of my team mates commented on the number of women on the street, the taxi driver was quick to advise us to steer clear of the prostitutes who, she informed us, were all drug addicts and "have lots of the AIDS." One of my team mates, Robert, found the taxi driver's description of the prostitutes and, in particular, her phrase, "lots of the AIDS," amusing and he subsequently repeated it regularly–as a supposedly humorous anecdote–when recounting tournament highlights.

While Robert undoubtedly held a more socially liberal attitude towards prostitution than the taxi driver, what he found most amusing was not her social conservatism, but, rather, her idiomatic choice of words in describing prostitutes as having "lots of the AIDS." What he lampooned, then, was the perceived intelligence and education of the driver. Personally, I found this aspect of his humour to be somewhat offensive. Certainly, we are all capable of making humorously idiosyncratic comments, yet to me this joke felt more like

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condescension than anything else. I struggled at the time—and still struggle now—to interpret such humour as a practice of ethical self-creation.

Social differences also lead to complex and ambiguous situations. At times, social difference simultaneously caused inclusion and exclusion which led to complex ethical situations. The Rubik's cube party, which I analysed above as an example of subversive irony which helped to recreate an "amiable community" (Hutcheon, 1994, p. 45) of Ultimate players, took place in a public bar. Almost all of the Ultimate players attending were dressed in theme, and by almost all sartorial standards would have been judged to look ridiculous; we were wearing, quite literally, a random assortment of orange, yellow, green, white, red and blue clothes and accessories. Part way through the night, however, a large group of men, all of whom were members of a rugby team, entered the bar. After standing at the bar ordering drinks and reacting to our costumes by pointing and laughing, they proceeded to push their way onto the dance floor.

The rugby players pushed many of us and a number of male patrons out of the way to establish their own space on the dance floor. This low-level aggression towards those of us in costume, male and female, and many other male bar patrons, which was subtle enough to avoid the interest of the bar's security staff, continued through the night. The rugby players were not physically aggressive to women who were not in costume, however. Many of the rugby players did dance with women who were not part of the Ultimate party, often in a highly sexualized manner. As an outsider to their group, I was not happy with how they treated Ultimate players, or, indeed anyone outside of their group. Indeed, their aggression towards males outside of their group and their hyper-sexualized interaction with women struck me as broadly similar to the drinking behaviours

for which athletes in team sports have been regularly critiqued (e.g., Kirby & Wintrup, 2002; Messner, 1992; Muir & Seitz, 2004) . At the fields on Sunday, the behaviour of the rugby players became an item of parody for many Ultimate players, who mimicked the rugby players' highly sexualized interaction with women, and their willingness to use their bodies to move others out of their way on the dance floor.

This mimicking of the rugby players certainly carried what Hutcheon (1994) would term an evaluative ironic edge. It might be interpreted as an ethical use of humour insofar as it served to highlight what the Ultimate players interpreted as unethical behaviour by the rugby players. The parody was not of the rugby players' intelligence or education, but rather it was a parody of how those rugby players treated people who were not part of their social group. Moreover, the ironic parodying of the rugby players might be seen as an ethical alternative to reacting in kind to the rugby players' subtle physical aggression pushing people out of their way on the dance floor. Yet, this reading is at best, partial.

Through our esoteric and ironic costumes, it seems to me that the Ultimate party-goers were also acting in a somewhat exclusionary manner. It is not simply the case that innocent Ultimate players reacted to boorish rugby players' inappropriate actions by ethically and ironically parodying their behaviour. We treated the group of rugby players as a collective and were willing to judge them as all behaving inappropriately, when this may not have been the case. We were also an exclusionary group; not only did our costumes mark us as different, but as a group of more than one hundred men and women we were easily the largest group at the bar and took up a lot of space. Just as I interpreted the rugby players as uncaring about other groups at the bar, we might also have been seen in this

way by others. I suggest, then, that the situation is ethically complex, particularly when social inclusion and exclusion is considered.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have examined how humour, irony and peripheral rituals might form ethical practices of self. I have shown that humour and irony are central ways through which many people produce their selves as spirited Ultimate players. However, I have also argued that humour and irony can also be used in abusive, non-ethical ways within Ultimate. Similarly, peripheral rituals such as post-match huddles, games and tournament parties also formed specific practices of self through which individuals created themselves as spirited players. From the ethos of Ultimate, then, humour, irony and peripheral rituals can form ethical practices of self. However, those unfamiliar with Ultimate struggled to make sense of the particularities of these practices of self. As a result, these aspects of Ultimate can also work in an exclusionary manner.

This problem of exclusion, however, is not limited to irony, or to Ultimate, but rather it is implicit in the construction of discursive communities. Moreover, Foucault (2000a) addressed this point when he discussed the inevitability of power relations in society:

> I do not think that a society can exist without power relations, if by that one means strategies by which individuals try to direct and control the conduct of others. The problem, then, is not to try to dissolve them in the utopia of completely transparent communication but to acquire the rules of law, the management techniques, and also the morality, the *ethos*, the

practice of the self, that will allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible. (p. 298, emphasis in original)

Insofar as the practices of humour and irony I have analysed in this chapter were ethical, it was ethical for those familiar with the culture of Ultimate. For those not familiar, such practices might appear exclusionary, rather than ethical. Of course, as I argued earlier, the potential for miscommunication and misinterpretation is not limited to ironic forms of communication. These may occur even in carefully planned, sincere and literal communications as well. A critical question in ethics, then, is how one considers the Other. I consider this question in depth in my next chapter.

Thinking beyond Ultimate, I suggest that aesthetics, humour and irony have been relatively underexplored in sociology of sport (for a notable exception, see Rinehart, 1998b). I would be particularly interested in how other lifestyle sports might produce practices of irony or humour. Moreover, given the role of practices of humour and irony in producing ethical athletic subjectivities in Ultimate, I wonder how players within more traditional team sports understand the aesthetics of their involvement and wonder whether a understanding similar to Bruce's team motto: "if it doesn't look good, don't throw it," might contribute to a non-instrumental approach to playing these sports.

Collectively, irony, humour and peripheral rituals form practices of self that are a significant part of how many Ultimate players form themselves as ethical athletic subjects. Humour and irony serve as practices of self that offer Ultimate players an alternative athletic subjectivity to the stereotypical win-at-all-costs approach to sport which has been repeatedly theorized as the dominant

subject position within Western sport (e.g., Beamish & Ritchie, 2006; Douglas & Carless, 2006; Hughes & Coakley, 1991; Ingham et al., 1999, 2002; Maguire, 2004). Nevertheless, ironic performances can be ambiguous and are subject to multiple interpretations. For this reason, many players are careful about using irony with players they do not know well.

However, following Hutcheon (1994), I argue that particular instances of irony can have a preferred or dominant interpretation within a given cultural setting. In this way, I suggest that the preferred interpretation of irony within Ultimate is one of humour and non-seriousness. In other words, irony and humour serve to moderate one's competitive athletic self. In this way, I have suggested a culturally contingent link within Ultimate between ascetic practices of self–moderation, tolerance and honesty–and indulgent practices of self–humour, irony and peripheral rituals.

This suggests, then, that humour, irony and peripheral rituals in Ultimate contribute to Ultimate's "aesthetics of existence" (Foucault, 1984, p. 89). This aesthetics of existence offers a way in which Ultimate players can care for their self. Moreover, these practices of self imply ethical relations with others. As Foucault (2000a) suggested, "the care of the self is ethical in itself; but it implies complex relationships with others insofar as this *ethos* of freedom is also a way of caring for others" (p. 287). In my next chapter, I consider more explicitly the role of the other in ethical self-creation.

Chapter Eight: The Ethics of the Other

Introduction

In this chapter I continue my focus on the formation of ethical

subjectivities in Ultimate while adopting a new theoretical orientation towards

ethics. While I have drawn extensively on Foucault to theorize my thesis, I now

seek to extend and critique my findings thus far through focusing on Derrida's

(e.g., 1993, 2001, 2005, 2008) ethics of the Other. In doing so, I retain my focus

on my prime empirical problem, which I have broadly framed as regarding how

athletes treat their selves and others, while developing a deepened, more complex

account of how Ultimate players might form ethical subjectivities.

In taking this move, I recognize that questions of ethics extend beyond the

oeuvre of any single theorist. Moreover, as Morgan (2007b) argues, we cannot

achieve an objective "view from nowhere" (p. 85) from which we might offer a

final evaluation of the ethics of a situation or the merits of a given theory.

Subsequently, in this chapter I develop a Derridean understanding of ethics in

order to produce new and critical questions of ethical subjectivities within

Ultimate. Further, this chapter puts Derrida's and Foucault's ethics into

conversation which offers a useful way of considering the merits of each theory

for undertaking a sociology of ethics.

I consider this move beyond Foucault to fit with the intent of Foucault's

work, which did not recommend: "faithfulness to doctrinal elements, but [rather],

the permanent reactivation of an attitude–that is, of a philosophical ethos that

could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era" (Foucault, 2000b,

p. 312). Put another way, as a researcher wanting to do justice to Foucault's

oeuvre, I do not want Foucault to be an unchallenged theoretical presence in my

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work. Instead, I want to bring in another frame of analysis, which might encourage new ways of thinking both with and without Foucault. I emphasize though, that Ultimate remains a case study for my exploration of ethical subjectivities in sport. In this way, the ethics of the Other provides an additional lens for examining how ethical athletic subjectivities might be produced within Ultimate. In particular, I re-evaluate three aspects of my research questions. Firstly, I examine links between discourses of Western sport and discourses of Ultimate, showing that Ultimate both transcends and fails to transcend the premises of Western sports. Secondly, I argue that Ultimate players' construction of their selves as ethical athletes can be understood through recognition of the Other. Thirdly, I argue Derridean ethics offers productive tools for considering certain ethical problems in sport anew.

In this chapter, I seek to extend my consideration of ethics as a postmodern phenomenon through considering the work of Levinas (e.g., 1969, 1998), Derrida (e.g., 1993, 2005, 2008) and Critchley (e.g., 1992, 1996, 1999, 2004, 2007). I do so as a bricoleur (cf., Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kincheloe, 2005; Kincheloe et al., 2011) seeking to piece together understandings of ethics using whatever tools might help me in this project. I acknowledge, however, there are certain difficulties in moving from Foucault to Levinas, Critchley, and, in particular, Derrida. Whereas Foucault historicizes questions of ontology and epistemology and, as such, seeks to move beyond Western metaphysics, Derrida acknowledges that although exhausted, the language of metaphysics is all we have to work with. Thus Derrida works within Western metaphysics to highlight its ruptures and inadequacies. Whereas Foucault rejects any attempt to speak in transcendental terms, Derrida regularly uses such language, albeit in a

deconstructive and often ironic manner. Although I accept there are many respects in which their philosophies are incommensurable with Foucault's, I suggest there are good reasons to choose Levinas, Derrida, and Critchley's ethics of the Other.

Firstly, the ethics of the Other retains the anti-foundational assumptions which underpinned my exploration of Foucauldian ethics. To me, a great achievement of Foucault's ethics is the rejection of an unquestioned foundation of ethics in notions of right, duty or good which would lead to the recommendation of specific and unambiguously ethically correct actions (Connolly, 1993; see also, Bennett, 1996; Markula & Pringle, 2006). Instead, Foucault (2000c) argued "everything is dangerous," and, subsequently, "the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger" (p. 256). From my perspective, we are better able to make such ethico-political choices when we have a wider range of theoretical tools to think with.

Secondly, the ethics of the Other engages directly with aspects of ethics which are relegated to a more peripheral role within Foucauldian ethics. Whereas Foucault argues care of the self directly implied care for others, Levinas, Derrida and Critchley, focus explicitly on our ethical relation to an Other. In this way, the horizon of Foucauldian ethics is self-creation, while for Levinas, Derrida, and Critchley the ethical horizon is the response to the demand of an Other. As with Foucauldian ethics, the ethics of the Other fundamentally questions the basis through which modernist ethics has been understood. As Campbell Jones (2003) argues: "Derrida does not begin or end with the key categories of ethics as we have known them, but sets out to reframe ethics and the categories with which ethics has been thought" (p. 225). My aim in this thesis is not to achieve philosophical purity with regard to any single theorist; rather, I wish to engage

with specific theories as heuristic devices in order to sociologically analyse ethics. In order to do so, I begin this chapter by reviewing the central tenets of the ethics of the Other and comparing these to aspects of Foucault's ethical thought, before going on to apply the ethics of the Other to the specific aspects of my research questions which I outlined above.

Recognition of an Other

Levinas and Derrida see the history of Western moral philosophy as "the perennial attempt to *generalize* a rule-for-all" (Roffe, 2004, p. 38). According to Critchley (1992):

> The ontological event that defines and dominates the philosophical
> tradition from Parmenides to Heidegger, for Levinas, consists in
> suppressing or reducing all forms of otherness by transmuting their alterity
> into the Same. Philosophy qua ontology is the reduction of the other to the
> Same, where the other is assimilated like so much food or drink. (pp. 5-6)

In other words, Western philosophy turns the singular Other, via a process of universalization, into a generic other who is assumed to be defined by a set of common qualities which are stable and knowable. The attempt to generalize wholly disregards the status of the Other as different, unique, not-the-same-as-me. The problem here, according to Roffe (2004), is that in "the attempt to universalize" which "characterizes the very first step in any [modernist] philosophical ethics or morality... we destroy the key characteristic of ethics, and become unethical and violent towards ethics itself" (p. 38). I suggest that this

critique of universalization resonates with Foucault's critique of normalization and his attempt in *The History of Sexuality* to develop a non-normative ethics.

Levinas also proposes a non-normative ethics, which, in contrast to Foucault's focus on self-creation, he bases on the recognition of an Other as different to oneself (Cohen, 2001). Recognition of the absolute alterity, or unknowable difference, of the Other is the basis of Levinasian ethics (Critchley, 1992). For Levinas and Derrida, the ethical relation is formed by recognition of an infinite responsibility for a singular Other (Roffe, 2004). Derrida (2008) claims that "every other (in the sense of each other) is wholly other (absolutely other)" (p. 78). In essence, a person recognizes an Other as different, unknowable and as demanding a response.

Bauman (1993) proposes that Titus Oates' decision to sacrifice his own life in Robert Falcon Scott's ill-fated Antarctic expedition is an example of this ethical relation. Weak, sick, and a burden on the expedition, Oates shuffled out of their camp, telling the others: "I'm going outside, I might be quite some time." Oates' decision was not based on defined rules, nor the expectation that he was simply doing what anyone would do. Yet, his sacrifice was the only way in which he could help his fellow adventurers. Oates' actions showed that no limits can be placed on what might be demanded by an ethical relation. However, Oates' actions do not offer a blueprint for others to copy, safe in the knowledge that they are doing the right thing.

Dominant Western sporting discourses, however, can be interpreted as a series of attempts to render all athletes as the Same. As the sport ethic explains, for example, opponents are regarded as an enemy to be defeated (Hughes & Coakley, 1991), while many coaches and sports scientists understand athletes'

bodies as an amalgam of separate physiological and mechanical parts each of which can be analyzed, known, and improved (Magdalinski, 2009; Maguire, 2004). As Denison (2010) argues this leads to the assumption that coaches know best how to prepare their athletes for peak performance and discounts athletes' own embodied knowledge of their own performances. Moreover, as Ingham et al. (1999) argue, athletes are treated as replaceable and interchangeable cogs within a greater sporting system. The critical question, then, is how the ethics of the Other offers ways of understanding how athletes, coaches, and spectators might take part in sport without rendering Others as the Same.

Derridean Ethics

Clôtural reading

The language of philosophy, which, following Plato, Levinas refers to as the 'Said', is logocentric. That is, because written language is static; it shows "a predisposition for dichotomies such as white/black, colonizer/colonized, or human/animal" (Manzo, 1999, pp. 160–161). The Said makes a firm ontological claim to know, whereas ethics, for Levinas, must occur prior to knowing as it is the recognition of alterity, of that which cannot be known. In other words, logocentric language makes claims about what is known, thus when we write about the Other, we claim to know the Other, and deny their alterity by rendering them knowable by a definition we have imposed.

As Critchley (1992) describes it, an ethical language, or the Saying, "is a verbal or non-verbal ethical performance, whose essence cannot be caught in constative propositions. It is a performative *doing* that cannot be reduced to a constative description" (p. 7, emphasis in original). Both Levinas and Derrida adopt writing styles which aim to reveal the Saying by exposing gaps within the

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Said. More specifically, Derridean deconstruction aims to reveal, through careful interpretation, a double or *clôtural* reading of a text:

> That is to say, a reading that interlaces at least two motifs or layers of reading, most often by first repeating what Derrida calls "the dominant interpretation" (*LI* 265/ *LItr* 143) of a text in the guise of a commentary and second, within and through this repetition, leaving the order of commentary and opening a text up to the blind spots or ellipses within the dominant interpretation. (Critchley, 1992, p. 23)

By revealing, through careful analysis, those meanings and ideas which the author has attempted, yet failed, to exclude, "deconstruction may therefore be 'understood' as the desire to keep open a dimension of alterity which can neither be reduced, comprehended, nor, strictly speaking, even *thought* by philosophy" (Critchley, 1992, p. 29, emphasis in original).

Just as Levinas wrote in a manner that attempted to reveal the Saying in the Said, so too does deconstruction seek to reveal a moment of alterity (Critchley, 1992). This can only be done, however, in the language of philosophy. Deconstruction, then, appears bound in a paradox:

> ...of both belonging to a tradition, a language, and a philosophical discourse, while at the same time being incapable of belonging to the latter. This ambiguous situation of belonging and not belonging describes the problem of *closure.* (Critchley, 1992, pp. 29–30, emphasis in original)

Deconstruction works both within *and* reveals the limits of logocentric language. Logocentric language, that is, the language of traditional philosophy, attempts to enclose or encircle all knowledge within the limits of that language. In revealing the limits of logocentric language, deconstruction introduces "insights, interruptions, or alterities" which Critchley (1992) suggested "are moments of *ethical transcendence*" (p. 30, emphasis in original). For Critchley (1999), when Derridean deconstruction is understood through Levinas's understanding of the absolute Other, we can rethink ethics in a radically different way.

Derrida's ethical thought relies on what de Vries (2001) terms "a linguistic chain of non-synonymous substitutions" (p. 174), or as Critchley (1999) suggests, for both Levinas and Derrida, *"a series of paleonymic displacements"* (p. 75, emphasis in original, see also p. 265). In other words, Derrida uses a set of terms that he thinks are relevant due to their 'heritage', that is their historical lineage and usage. Although often closely related, each of these terms highlights and complicates a particular aspect of ethics.

I will outline some of the key concepts of Derrida's ethics of the Other and show how these concepts explain aspects of the ethical subjectivities of the Ultimate players I studied. The central concepts that I will examine are the recognition of an Other, *clôtural* reading, which I outlined above, and decision, responsibility, aporia, and justice, which I will examine below. In doing so, I accept that I am undertaking what is, at best, a partial analysis of the ethics of the Other. Given the depth and complexity of Levinas's and Derrida's writings, this charge, I suspect, is almost wholly unavoidable. However, in this respect, I am guided by G. E. Marcus' suggestion that my doctoral research "should be governed by a theorem of reasonable and responsible incompleteness, in which

fieldwork self-consciously accomplishes something unfinished" (Rabinow & Marcus, 2008, p. 82). Subsequently, I do not claim to uncover or reveal the *truth* of ethics in this chapter. Instead, I aim to write in a manner that Levinas, Derrida, or Critchley would recognize as a responsible engagement with their work.

The decision

Elucidating the concept of undecidability is one of Derrida's major contributions to ethics and to philosophical thought in general (Critchley, 1999). According to Reynolds (2004), Derrida demonstrates that "in all texts there are inevitably points of undecidability that betray any stable meaning that an author might seek to impose upon his or her text" (p. 46). This is a central tenet of deconstruction.

Ethically speaking, undecidability means that any meaningful decision requires a leap of faith, that is, an acceptance that one's knowledge will always be incomplete and that the consequences of one's actions cannot be known in advance (Reynolds, 2004). Derrida (2008) places undecidability at the centre of every genuine decision:

> The knight of faith must not hesitate. He accepts responsibility by heading off toward the absolute request of the other, beyond knowledge. He decides, but his absolute decision is neither guided nor controlled by knowledge. Such, in fact, is the paradoxical condition of every decision: it cannot be deduced from a form of knowledge of which it would simply be the effect, its conclusion or explicitation. (pp. 77-78)

Thus, Derrida argues that ethical action–our response to the call of an Other–cannot be calculated from what we know, but, rather, requires us to make a decision that carries no guarantees.

I cannot be told what it is that I should do. I cannot calculate the right action by considering ends and means, nor should I consider my own costs or benefits: As Derrida (2008) suggests "one must give without counting" (p. 97). My decision, then, must not be constrained. I can only achieve an ethical relation by attending to the Other and the singular situation with which we are faced. Eric's understanding of Spirit of the Game is interesting in this context: he told me spirit is "when you see someone do something on the field that [did not] place winning the game before some other priority, whether it's not injuring someone on the other team, or whatever the specific case is." In Derridean terms, Eric understands Spirit of the Game as a performative refusal to limit one's actions when faced with an ethical demand. In this way, Spirit of the Game means that players can cannot use rules or their desire to win to limit or justify a decision they make in response to call of an Other.

For Derrida, the decision, or undecidability, is linked to responsibility. It is clear at this point that Derridean theorizing differs markedly from that of Foucault's. Whereas Foucault would seek to historicize decisions in the context of particular discourses or games of truth, Derrida engages in a transcendental analysis in which a decision can never simply be a consequence of a certain context. Derrida did, however, link the decision to responsibility.

Responsibility

Derrida (2008) suggested that "the concept of responsibility has, throughout a history that is as consistent as it is continuous, always implied

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involvement in action, doing, a *praxis*, a *decision*, that exceeds simple conscience or simple theoretical understanding" (p. 27, emphasis in original). For Derrida undecidability does not remove the possibility or necessity of action. Instead, Derrida argues that undecidability requires us to take responsibility for our choices and actions. When we are faced with a leap of faith from undecidability to action, we accept *responsibility*. We cannot pass our actions off as inevitable, as rule following, or as what anyone would do, yet nevertheless we must act.

In Derrida's (2008) words, to take responsibility is to "extend behind and beyond any theoretical or thematic determination" (p. 27) in our response to the singular call of an Other. In contrast, if all we do is to follow the diktat of a set of rules, we are not taking responsibility, but rather we are transferring responsibility elsewhere and in so doing, we refrain from acting ethically. Again, although Derrida and Foucault work with different terms, I note a possible similarity here between Derrida's notion of responsibility and Foucault's (2000i) suggestion, "we must think that what exists is far from filling all the possible spaces" (p. 140). For both these philosophers, then, the possibility of creating something new is closely tied to ethics.

As an example of Derridean responsibility, Koro-Ljungberg (2010) argues that "in the context of research, responding to the call from the Other implies theoretically and methodologically unlimited and ongoing movement toward the unknown and beyond one's established knowledge" (p. 605). Here Koro-Ljungberg links undecidability and responsibility to our actions as qualitative researchers. In particular, she argues that attempts to ascertain validity of research through recourse to preset schedules or other objective criteria abrogate our responsibility as researchers and prevent us from making ethical decisions relating

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to the quality of our research. Further, she argues that we cannot neatly separate issues of validity from considerations of how we interact with our co-participants: "for example, when urgently and in situ responding to the Other researchers are faced with the questions of social justice, privilege, and power" (Koro-Ljungberg, 2010, p. 604). From this point of view, research acts are undecidable and so we must view the ethics and validity of our research in terms of responsibility.

Aporia

To continue Derrida's linguistic chain brings us to his use of aporia. According to Campbell Jones (2003), "an aporia is not a contradiction that could, at least in principle, be avoided, rejected or resolved; neither is it a sensation of vagueness. It is a recognition that one is drawn strongly, *demanded*, in two directions" (p. 229, emphasis in original). In *The Gift of Death*, Derrida reflects on Abraham's decision to sacrifice his son, Isaac, at God's command. For Derrida, this situation is fundamentally aporetic. Abraham could not meet his obligations to both God and his son at the same time. Rather, in meeting his obligation to one, he must necessarily betray his obligation to the other. Derrida refuses to offer a single judgement of Abraham, instead arguing that "Abraham is thus at the same time the most moral and the most immoral, the most responsible and the most irresponsible of men" (2008, p. 73). Derrida uses aporia to highlight that our ethical responsibilities are not always compatible, but that nevertheless we still must act.

Ballard (2008) found himself in an aporia when asked about end-of-life care for his grandfather. In that singular moment, faced with making a decision with only possibilities rather than certainties to guide him, Ballard faced two contradictory demands. He could not reduce his grandfather's suffering and

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improve his chances of surviving at the same time. Ballard's autoethnography uses Derrida's ethical theorizing to analyse his experience. I suggest that such experiences are meaningful parts of people's lives; however, such experiences have not been extensively studied within sport. Aporia, decision, and responsibility are all useful tools for thinking about ethics. These concepts allow us to consider localized or specific possibilities for ethical actions in sport. Importantly, aporia, decision, and responsibility allow for ethical thinking in complicated, messy contexts. The final aspect of Derridean ethics is the move from ethics to politics, through which both Levinas and Derrida reconceptualise the notion of justice.

Justice

To enter an ethical relation with an Other is to recognize an infinite responsibility that Other. Insofar as this exists as an asymmetrical, one-to-one relationship in which I am wholly for the Other, there is no question that ethics is achievable. However, there are always other Others who call to me at the same time. For Levinas, negotiating this passage from the Other to the third was the passage from ethics to politics, from infinite responsibility to equality and justice. Justice is underpinned by the realization that as a community we are all equally and uniquely Other (Critchley, 1992). My anarchic obligations to any one Other must be tempered by my realization that there are other Others.

When I act, my ethical obligations to an Other underpin my actions, yet anything I do will not be wholly ethical. There will always be other Others for whom I am not acting (Derrida, 2008). Any actions I take then, will be *political*. In acting, I should aim for justice, yet this notion of justice should always, "be informed by proximity; that is to say, the equality and symmetry of relations

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between citizens must be interrupted by the inequality and asymmetry of the ethical relation" (Critchley, 1992, p. 233). Politically, we must develop rules and principles in order to deal with multiple Others. However, the immediate, face-to-face ethical relation may still call our political rules and principles into question.

For Derrida, the move from ethics to politics is marked by a gap or hiatus (Critchley, 1999). This is because the move is not governed by a determinate method or calculus. Politics, then, requires "that a responsible decision must be taken–here and now, again and again–without any transcendental guarantees, without any ontological foundation, and furthermore that only such a decision might have the honour of being called *just*" (Critchley, 1999, p. 275, emphasis in original). As Critchley goes on to clarify, in this sense, politics "can be thought of *as the art of response to the singular demand of the other*" (p. 276, emphasis in original). In this way, politics is an act of invention for, or on behalf of, the Other. Politics is non-foundational in the sense that it is not based on a determinate subject, nor do its rules have any foundation. However, it is also non-arbitrary; political actions can always be called into question by ethics, or the infinite demand of the wholly Other.

To view the critiques of dominant Western sporting forms through a Derridean lens, we might say that dominant discourses in Western sports produce a form of politics which is not informed by a sense of proximity to the demand of an Other. Simply put, Western sports' instrumentally rational focus on victory renders all Others as the same. However, as Douglas and Carless (2006, 2009) argue, this understanding of Western athletes as dominated by the performance narrative is not inevitable. Moreover, to interpret my thesis in Derridean terms, I am studying politics as well as ethics for I am examining Ultimate players'

understandings of ethics *and* the political actions they take in the presence of multiple Others. I now use these concepts of clôtural reading, decision, responsibility, aporia, and justice to develop a theoretical and empirical analysis of the ethics of the Other in Ultimate.

The Ethics of the Other in Ultimate

A clôtural reading of Ultimate

In my previous findings chapters, I offered a Foucauldian (1984) reading of Spirit of the Game as an ethical athletic telos, which certain athletes aspire to live into an aesthetics of existence through engaging in specific practices of self. In this section I will offer a Derridean interpretation of Ultimate that examines the possibilities of what Critchley (1992) called a double, or *clôtural*, reading. For Critchley (1992), this style of reading would highlight the problem of closure:

> Closure is the double refusal of both remaining within the limits of the tradition and of the possibility of transgressing that limit. At the moment of historical and philosophical closure, deconstructive thinking occurs as the disruption and interruption of the limit that divides the inside from the outside of the tradition. (p. 20)

I will take as the tradition the dominant sociological model of Western sport, which I examined in my literature review as being defined by the prioritization of winning. Drawing on my fieldwork and interviews, I will question whether Ultimate at once transgresses this tradition and yet is also bound by the limits of this tradition.

Transgressing the limits of Western sport

When I was talking to Mitchell, one of the coaches of my elite team, at the end of a weekend training session, he asked me to tell him something about my study. I replied, "I've just been reading about a theory of ethics that is about recognition of other people as different." Mitchell immediately responded to this, telling me that he believed that it was crucial for coaches and captains to recognize and work to include the different people in their team. He continued by suggesting that we had to accept that people were taking part for different reasons. In this way, he proposed that the success of a team would be dependent on the recognition of differences within the team. To me, this appears to strongly contradict Hughes and Coakley's (1991) concept of a sport ethic, which requires individual athletes to conform to team expectations. In Levinas's (1969) terms, the sport ethic renders all team mates as the Same. In contrast, Mitchell refused to do so, arguing that alterity should be acknowledged and accepted.

Whereas Mitchell developed his acceptance of alterity within a team after years of playing Ultimate, for Beth her first experiences of Ultimate proved to be the:

> …complete opposite of what I'd been doing before where the goal was just to have the best, just to have the elite playing the elite. Now, suddenly, you're gonna have some elite players, you're going to have some elite athletes who aren't necessarily elite Ultimate players, which maybe was my situation then. You're gonna have people who aren't either; who can't throw a Frisbee and they're horrible athletes and we both know plenty of them as well. And so, immediately, the ground rules were just completely different.

Here we might see that Beth found Ultimate to transgress the performance discourse of Western sport, "a discourse fundamentally anchored in elitism" (Ingham et al., 2002, p. 312). Within the performance discourse (Ingham et al., 2002), which Douglas and Carless (2006, 2009) have reconceptualised as the performance narrative, winning and the elimination of those who are not elite, is a central aspect of Western sport. As Beth had experienced, within the performance discourse, those who cannot perform at an elite level are excluded, while elite performers are privileged.

Phillip also suggested that Ultimate might transgress the performance discourse. He told me:

> I realized when I started playing Frisbee, is that's what makes the sport so good is that it can be so inclusive. It doesn't matter who you are, you can still enjoy it, get a lot out of it and contribute to a team, just like society. Whereas other sports, hockey, and all other established sports are quite exclusive.

Phillip explained this notion of inclusivity by referring to the dominant style of play in which players match up against one player on the other team: "you can always find someone to match up against and because it's player marking player most of the time you can still get a lot out of the sport."

Similarly, Gerald noted that there were multiple ways in which a player might be able to compete against their opposition: "I can beat my individual man on this match up because I either I'm fast or I can throw better or I can lose him."

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Gerald went on to discuss what he valued about his team mates, claiming a place for Angus in his "dream seven" because "he's still really fun and he brings a great atmosphere on the pitch and will never take those jogging bottoms off–ever [laughs]!" Here Gerald valued Angus' contribution to the team for being a fun person to be around as well as offering a somewhat unusual aesthetic insofar as he always played in long tracksuit pants regardless of the weather. Angus was not solely valued for his potential ability to help Gerald's "dream seven" to win. In this way, we might interpret Beth, Phillip and Gerald as transgressing the boundaries of Western sport insofar as they understood Ultimate to offer opportunities for inclusion of people who might be judged as inadequate by the performance discourse.

In many respects, Beth had most strongly engaged in this transgression of Western sport. When Beth moved cities, she decided to start her own team drawn from students in the English-as-a-second-language (ESOL) class she was teaching:

> I had whoever came or whoever I personally invited and I didn't go and actually invite the people I thought were the best athletes. Um, so I ended up with some people who were horrible athletes, who were never going to get better as athletes and, um, that immediately is a limiting factor, well it's limiting in some senses; it's freeing in others, actually, because it means that you cannot focus on winning; that you have to make something else your focus.

Again, Beth found that Ultimate transgressed the limits of Western sports. She was able to focus on something other than winning.

Beth went on to explain that her new focus:

… with those students became inclusivity in every sense. It became inclusivity in terms of this team of people who are going to play together, um, we'll be an inclusive team: if you're part of this team, then you're part of this team. You don't sit on the bench, you get equal playing time to anyone, I don't care what we're losing by, or winning by, or what the situation is. If you're here, you're putting in the same time, and that's that.

Beth rejected the performance discourse (Ingham et al., 2002) by instituting equal playing time instead of meritocratic playing time. Moreover, in this case, giving all players equal playing time was, in fact, a refusal to regard them as the Same. To treat them as the Same, in this context, would have been to judge them through the performance discourse. Instead, we might say that Beth's policy of equal playing time was politically just insofar as it judged all her players as equally Other.

In these ways, Ultimate does transgress the limitations of Western sports. By developing specific forms of inclusivity and acceptance of difference, Ultimate refuses to render all its participants as knowable, or the Same. From a Derridean perspective, this openness to difference is the ethical promise of Ultimate. Yet, as I have sought to make clear throughout this thesis, such ethical moments exist alongside, and in tension with, more problematic, or ethically troubling, moments.

The impossibility of transgressing the limits of Western sport

For all its transgressions of Western sporting forms, Ultimate is nevertheless structured as a traditional invasion game which finishes with a winner and loser. In fact, like squash, badminton, or tennis, winning in Ultimate is achieved by being the first team to reach a set number of goals.[8] In this way, unlike soccer, rugby, and many other team sports, draws are only possible if a game is cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. Competition and winning, then, is still a major aspect of Ultimate. Mitchell summarized his understanding of this succinctly; "the game is a competitive game: someone's gonna win and someone's gonna lose and someone's gonna catch it and someone's gonna get a d block. It's... about competition and, unfortunately, someone's better than someone else." By retaining a competitive structure, then, Ultimate is still bound by some of the constraints of Western sports.

As passionate as Beth was about the pick up Ultimate she played in college, which I described in chapter five, and the team she later formed as an ESOL teacher, she eventually drifted away from the sport:

> By the time we left [name of city] and moved to [name of city], we didn't like the scene, didn't like that the people we brought along as pick up players had turned into the jerks we didn't like to play with anymore, that yelled at everyone else and made other people feel bad.

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[8] Currently, the WFDF rules set a game to 17(World Flying Disc Association, 2009, p. 4). However, I found this was regularly modified so to fit the requirements of particular tournaments or different formats (e.g. beach, indoors, 5 a side).

The problem for Beth was that the Ultimate players in this community were no longer interested in inclusivity. Beth went on to suggest that such negative developments were:

> Extremely predictable, to be honest. I mean, let's choose another town or city and get them started on Ultimate and give them about three-four years before those people coming through decide "oh, I want to get serious about this game" and then two-three more years and they're actually getting really quite aggravated with the people just coming along, wanting to have fun. I mean it's predictable, you could write the script, really.

During my field work I found similar instances of aggravation between players wanting to play seriously and players wanting to play for fun. I also encountered people who made a deliberate effort to avoid acting in exclusive ways. Nevertheless, exclusion appears to be an ongoing problem.

I tried unsuccessfully to interview an entrepreneur who was attempting to set up a professional Ultimate league in the States. I mentioned this in passing to Kevin, one of the captains of the elite team I played for, while we were warming up at training. He told me he hoped Ultimate would never turn professional as this would change the way the game was played. In short, he thought cheating would become the norm if money was on offer. However, when practicing zone defence, Kevin also instructed us to "bump them, foul them, call travel,[9] whatever; shut their flow down." In this way, he encouraged us to cheat as part of our strategy for

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[9] A travel violation occurs when the player with the disc moves their pivot foot before throwing the disc. While the rule is very similar to basketball's rule about establishing a pivot foot, because Ultimate is self-refereed, there is the possibility for teams to make such calls to upset the opposition's flow.

zone defence. Similarly, when scrimmages at training blew out badly in favour of one team over the other, he encouraged the players on the winning team to savour their success. Simply put, as a captain of an elite team, he reinforced the dominant logic of Western sports. Moreover, every Ultimate tournament that I am aware of is structured to establish a single winning team. Not only this, but the most able individuals are usually recognized through "most valued player" awards.

Teams' strategies, especially at the elite level, usually involved focusing play through the team's most skilled attackers. This affected the positions that people played in on the field, how often they played the disc, and the throws they were allowed to attempt when they had possession of the disc. As an example, the elite team I played for operated on a 'licence' system. If the coaches did not give you a licence, you were not allowed to throw the disc further than twenty metres. We also established defensive and offensive squads within our team and had players tasked as 'line callers', who would name the seven players who were to play each point. There were discrepancies in this; at times, some people played both offence and defence because our team was small, and, in some games, the lines were "opened": our best players were rested and lines were not called. Nevertheless, we adopted these tactics in order to maximise our chances of winning and when we did not use these tactics, it was a strategic decision to rest our strongest players in games which the team captains had decided were unwinnable.

As far as I observed, non-elite teams did not adopt such strict playing structures. However, playing hierarchies still regularly developed: Gerald, a non-elite player, told me "if I'm playing a serious event, I know most people wouldn't admit it but you occasionally have those look offs of the, ah, less-experienced

players when it's you know, really crunch point or crunch matches." To "look off" a player is to not throw that person the disc, despite them being open to receive the pass. As Gerald alluded to by prefacing his admission with "I know most people wouldn't admit it," looking a player off is regarded as unacceptable and yet also relatively common. Moreover, I suggest that 'less-experienced' is probably a euphemism for 'less-skilled'. Looking off a player, then, is a decision intended to maximize a team's chances of winning by deliberately excluding the team's weakest players. In these ways, Ultimate is still bound by the limits of Western sports.

This clôtural reading of Ultimate troubles binary understandings of ethics. It is not the case that Ultimate is wholly ethically different or preferable to achievement sport, nor is it the case that Ultimate is wholly the same as achievement sport. Instead, such evaluations must necessarily be partial, provisional and contextual. There are aspects of Ultimate which can transcend the problems which have been widely documented in Western sports, yet this is never guaranteed. Because Ultimate retains a structure which values winners over non-winners, it also reproduces problematic aspects of Western sports. As a result, it is important to consider particular cases, rather than deal in general types. With this in mind, I now go on to examine specific examples of aporia and justice within Ultimate.

Mitchell's aporia

Mitchell, a vastly experienced Ultimate player, had spent time before our interview thinking through a number of issues that were important to him. In our interview, he identified a central aporia within Ultimate (cf., Derrida, 2008). This aporia concerned appropriate or legitimate levels of contact between players

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attempting to make a play on a thrown disc. Mitchell pointed out that one school

of thought only allows the players to attempt to catch or knock down the disc

provided they don't make contact with other players before, during or after

attempting to play the disc. However, an alternative school of thought was that

provided that players didn't contact an opposing player before knocking down the

disc, if they knocked the disc, then any contact should not be considered a foul.

Mitchell suggested that there was no single correct answer.

The rules are somewhat ambiguous; there is evidence to support both

cases:

> When the disc is in the air, all players must attempt to avoid contact with
> other players, and there is no situation where a player may justify initiating
> contact. "Making a play for the disc" is not a valid excuse for initiating
> contact with other players. (World Flying Disc Association, 2009, p. 7)

While this clause clearly supports the non-contact side of the aporia, the next

clause states:

> Some incidental contact, not affecting the outcome of the play or safety of
> players, may occur as two or more players move towards a single point
> simultaneously. Incidental contact should be minimized but is not
> considered a foul.(World Flying Disc Association, 2009, p. 8)

As McFee (2004) argues, rules cannot clearly account for every possible case and

are always subject to interpretation. For many players, and elite players in

particular, I found that contact occurring after a thrown disc had been played was understood to be incidental. Mitchell described this perspective, "the play's been made, I've got possession, yes I've hit you afterwards, but I have possession, so because it's after the play, you couldn't have made a bid on it because I already have the disc." Because contact does not always endanger other players, exactly what is incidental contact is unclear. Players on the pitch, then can be seen as being pulled in two directions. Crucially, there is no consensus within Ultimate communities over which point of view is correct. This is often a point of contention between teams and players and is negotiated via practices of moderation and tolerance which I described in chapter six.

To quote Mitchell, "there are two schools of thought and I've looked at it… And I can't tell you which one's right. I kind of subscribe to the second one, but then again there could be a dangerous element." I suggest that in this example we can see the identification of an aporia, which presented Mitchell with an undecidable situation. However, Mitchell acknowledged this and nevertheless accepted that he still had to take responsibility and make a decision. His decision, which would, of course, directly affect those he played with and against, was to interpret contact occurring after a disc had been played as incidental. What I suggest is important in this process is that Mitchell accepted that his decision was contingent, rather than universal, and that, subsequently, he had to be responsible for the decision as he could not defer responsibility to another source, such as the rules or a referee.

I suggest that aporia, undecidability and responsibility offer a nuanced way to theorize Mitchell's experience. Mitchell talked about the dual interpretations as both being legitimate–he was drawn in two directions. However,

despite acknowledging undecidability in this aporetic situation, he took responsibility for choosing a way to play, and he thus he acted in a way that we can understand as ethical. What is interesting in this example, however, is that he was discussing a generic case within Ultimate. Subsequently, some might argue that from a Levinasian or Derridean point of view, this example does not contain ethical potential as it does not involve the recognition of responsibility for a singular Other.

I am not convinced by this argument. Instead, I suggest that Mitchell's situation was an example of politics. He was discussing a *decision* he had made in the past and actions he had undertaken as a result of that decision. As Critchley (1999) argued, "for Levinas, as for Derrida and Laclau, the sphere of choice and *decision* is political rather than ethical" (p. 114, my emphasis). What would render this political decision unjust would be a refusal in a singular context to allow this decision to be called into question by a relation of infinite responsibility to an Other. Because Mitchell was describing a generic problem, rather than an specific example, it is not clear whether he would have allowed his political decision to be called into question.

Justice on the field

When I interviewed John, however, he described a specific passage of play in which his political decision about how to treat a specific opponent was called into question. In this section, then, I examine John's account of a specific passage of play in an elite tournament. John's account of the incident arose through our discussion of his style of marking when his opponent has possession of the disc. John told me:

Typically when people call foul on me, they're telling the truth. I mean, I put on a hard mark. And Brett [our coach] actually says put on a hard mark to the point where you're basically fouling them and don't let up, but he says also don't get emotionally involved in it. So I'm happy to be called foul on, and the way that that doesn't erupt is I don't fire back at them. I just accept it.

Normally, John would put on a 'hard mark', a tactic common in elite Ultimate.

A hard mark requires the marker to be as close to the thrower as possible. Although the rules state that markers must maintain at least a disc-width's distance (approximately 270mm) from the thrower, at the elite level players are often closer than this. The proximity of a hard mark is intended to pressure every movement the thrower makes and although a player putting on a hard mark will not deliberately foul the thrower, fouls often occur as being this close to the thrower allows little room for error. Although there are variations in just how 'hard' players put on a hard mark, at the elite level at least, such play is generally considered acceptable.

In a particular game, however, John decided to change the way he was marking a certain player:

In my mind I singled the playmaker out the back, I knew if he had a good game we'd lose. So I wanted to get in his head, so I was marking him and I fouled him a couple of times. And, he got a bit pissed off, I thought, "fuck, that's awesome." I didn't react; I just stayed cool, calm, and [he] reacted. He was like, "fuck, foul."

John's purpose in changing the way he marked his opponent was to increase his own team's chances of winning.

His decision to deliberately foul his opponent was a different style of play to that which John usually used. John's actions were very similar to the aggressive style of play that he recounted enjoying as a young soccer player in chapter five. In this way, he justified his actions in terms of the sport ethic; he prioritized his team and the quest for victory above all else (cf., Hughes & Coakley, 1991). Initially, when he thought he had successfully put his opponent off his game, he was pleased. In Critchley's, Derrida's and Levinas's terms, then, John made a political decision about how to treat a particular opponent, which he sought to justify with reference to competitiveness as the prime reason for playing.

However, John went on to explain that his marker directly called him into question. I quote our conversation at length:

It was like [he said], "this is your time to shine, boy," like he was trying to put it back on me to feel bad about it. I did a little bit, I subbed myself off.
Hamish: So he probably wouldn't have wanted to hang out with you after the game?
John: No, that's right. But I kind of I got to the point of, um, I think I let the game get, in my mind, more competitive, so I kind of upped the level a little bit and I think he was the kind of person that got a bit more rattled by that. So, I hear what you're saying, it's not cognitive dissonance, but it's a fallacy in my logic structure. And in terms of what I think I should be doing versus what I do do. But I did feel bad about it. So, I felt like I took

it a little bit too far, but I felt like I was doing a good thing for the team, so I suppose that's like a conflict in my head, and I did sub myself off and have a good think about it and I did apologize to him and I stopped doing it for the rest of the game. I kind of feel like I had my area, where I was allowed to get up to that level and if I kept on going after someone has erupted at me, if I kept on going and did the same thing, and kept on kept on kept on, that's a pretty stupid thing, that that's beyond Spirit [of the Game]. I suppose I was trying to feel out where I was able to get to before he'd erupt, maybe.

John admitted his actions did not fall within his own ideas from earlier in our conversation of what constituted spirited play. By his own terms, then, he had acted outside Spirit of the Game. What I suggest is significant, however, is that having deliberately fouled his opponent, it was not because of his own sense of violating the Spirit of the Game that he stopped; rather he reacted to the demand of an Other for whom he recognized responsibility. His political decision to deliberately foul his opponent was called into question by the infinite ethical demand of an Other.

John referred to the clash between his desire to help his team win and his desire to play by Spirit of the Game as "a conflict in my head." I suggest this indicates an aporia at the heart of his experience. He was faced with conflicting priorities and was drawn equally in opposite directions. If he were to recognize his team mates as the most important Other, he would continue to foul his opponent in order to help them achieve their goal of winning. However, if he were to

recognize his opponent as the prime Other, he would have to stop deliberately fouling him, and in so doing, reduce his team's chances of winning.

John's initial reaction–to take himself off the field to consider the situation–was based on this aporia. His earlier political decision to foul his opponent had been called into question, yet he could not recognize the Other who was questioning him without then ignoring the other Others; his team mates. John recognized that any decision he made–and he *had* to decide–would be incalculable. In this way, his time off the field considering this aporia might be interpreted in a literal sense as the hiatus marking the gap between ethics and politics.

What is critical, however, is that John's political decision to deliberately foul his opponent was called into question by the Other. That is, his actions– which could never be ethical for they were performed in front of multiple Others– were called into question by the infinite demand of one who was wholly Other. John's response, which was to remove himself from the game, rethink his approach and, subsequently, to stop committing deliberate fouls and to apologize to his opponent, might be seen, then, as the disruption of politics by ethics. That is, ethics, understood as an infinite responsibility for an Other, forced John to call into question his decision to deliberately foul his opponent. Although we might interpret John's actions as examples of practices of self such as moderation and honesty insofar as he modified his physical behaviour and apologized for his actions, what is crucial from a Derridean perspective is that he did so as a response to an Other.

Conclusion

The ethics of the Other offers theoretically insightful analyses of ethical moments in Ultimate. My clôtural reading of Ultimate is important in revealing that in retaining key aspects of Western sporting discourses, Ultimate fails to fully free itself from the problems associated with Western sports. However, the dominant discourses of Western sports do not fully define Ultimate and so, in a limited way, Ultimate can offer an ethical alternative to dominant Western sports discourses. This finding, which reveals limited and partial opportunities for producing radical alternatives to mainstream sports, is similar to much recent literature on gender relations in alternative sports (e.g., Beal, 1996; Laurendeau, 2004; Laurendeau & Sharara, 2008; Robinson, 2004; Thorpe, 2008, 2010; Wheaton, 2004a)

However, it is in the specific examples of Mitchell's aporia and John's experience of justice that the ethics of the Other is most productive. The concept of aporia offers an important way of understanding the possibilities of contradictory ethical demands. Derrida's insight here, which flows through his concepts of decision and responsibility as well, is that we often are in situations where no solution is completely satisfactory yet, nevertheless we must act. What makes our actions ethical in such situations is our willingness to take responsibility. Mitchell could not adopt a position regarding contact with other players which would be accepted by everyone. All he could do was accept responsibility for his decision.

Similarly, justice allows us to understand how John's political decision was called into question by an Other. John's example of justice was most compelling as he recounted changing his political decision as a result of being

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called into question by an Other. Remarkably, when he felt he was achieving his political aim of putting his opponent off his game, John responded justly to the call of this Other. Ultimately, it is this focus on the Other which is the great achievement of Derridean ethics.

The Derridean concepts decision, responsibility, aporia and justice are valuable as they offer a way of theorizing ethical action without predefining rigid conceptions of the 'right' or the 'good'. Derrida focuses on ethically complex and momentous moments, such as Abraham's decision to follow his God's command to sacrifice his son, Isaac. He pays relatively less attention to how we might act on an everyday basis. Certainly, in his conception of politics and justice, there is potential to outline an understanding of how to shape a life in the presence of multiple Others, yet this is not the prime focus of either Levinas' or Derrida's work. In this way, a prime strength of the ethics of the Other–its heuristic value in explaining particularly troubling moments–is also one of its weaknesses.

Further, the decontextualization of self and Other by Levinas, Derrida and Critchley is a tactic which I am not particularly comfortable with. This lack of context and subsequent presence of infinite responsibility is a deliberate attempt to prevent someone from absolving ethical responsibility. To put this in a sporting context, Derrida would deny that excuses such as "I was just following the rules" could ever legitimately explain why someone did not act for an Other. Yet, it seems patently clear that we are never context-free, that our actions for an Other can only be interpreted in a particular context and that if an Other was entirely unknowable, we would have no idea whatsoever as to what our infinite responsibility might be.

At the same time, however, I am aware that Derrida uses this logocentric, context-free language as an ironic metaphor. Infinite responsibility, rethought metaphorically, does not mean doing everything for an Other, it means doing what a particular context requires. In Ultimate, it is common at all levels of the game for opponents to high five each other if, say, a point is scored despite an excellent defensive bid on the final throw. Similarly, opponents often help each other from the ground if there is a stoppage in play. On a mundane level, I interpret these actions as recognition of an Other. Of course, high-fiving someone does not sound like acceptance of an infinite responsibility, yet, in the particular context of the Ultimate games I studied, offering a high five or helping someone back to their feet was ethically appropriate in that moment.

The ethics of the Other highlights what is, perhaps, the greatest weakness of Foucauldian ethics; namely the bracketing of concern for others within a project of ethical self-creation. Although I believe I have convincingly shown in my previous three chapters that Foucauldian ethics takes others seriously, the ethics of the Other also has insightful and productive tools for considering the others within ethics. Subsequently, the comparison I have achieved within this chapter reveals strengths and weaknesses of each approach. In short, neither tells the full story of ethics in Ultimate.

Although I prefer Foucault's materialist and historicist approach to Derrida's ironised logocentrism, I suggest Derrida's notions of decision, responsibility, aporia and justice offer a productive way of thinking ethically. I do not suggest that we can simply add Derrida's ethical theorizing to Foucault's. Rather, we should continue to put these concepts into conversation in order to develop deeper, more nuanced accounts of ethics, while retaining a reflexive sense

of the partiality of our analyses. A continual and ongoing search for ways of

understanding ethical possibilities in sport is an important response to the

problems associated with dominant Western sporting discourses. The appeal of

the ethics of the Other, for me, is that it develops a set of tools which facilitate this

process.

Chapter Nine: Concluding Thoughts

In this concluding chapter, I summarise my findings and discuss their implications with regard to previous literature concerning sociology of sport and Foucauldian theorizing. Simply put, my study provides an interpretive sociological investigation into the formation of ethical subjectivities within Ultimate. The importance of ethics as a topic of study is highlighted by substantial bodies of literature from sociology (e.g., Hughes & Coakley, 1991; Ingham et al., 1999; Markula & Pringle, 2006), psychology (e.g., Arthur-Banning et al., 2009; Kavussanu, Seal, & Phillips, 2006; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995), and journalism (e.g., Hurndell, 2009b; Singh, 2006, 2008; "Touchie flak reflects badly on province," 2009) which reveal problems regarding how those involved in sport treat their selves and others.

From a Foucauldian view, many of these sporting problems revolve around understandings of self in relation to the truth games of sport. This is the prime material of a Foucauldian ethics. Yet, prior to my study, athletes' subjective understandings of ethics had not been examined in depth. However, a small number of critical postmodern studies have established the relevance and importance of examining localized sporting practices which might reveal less problematic ways of engaging in sport (e.g., Denison, 2010; Denison & Avner, 2011; Douglas, 2009; Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2009; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pringle & Crocket, forthcoming; Pringle & Hickey, 2010; Shogan, 2007; Thorpe, 2008, 2010). In this way, focusing on ethics allowed me to gain a new perspective on well-established problems associated with the dominant discourses of Western sports.

My adoption of Foucauldian theorizing was vital in developing a focus on the construction of ethical subjectivities. This allowed me to consider ethics as a sociological practice. In this way, I was able to conceptualize ethics in terms of how people understand and engage in ethics without needing to ontologically ground this in concepts of right, duty, good, or virtue. Instead, I could focus on contextually-bound problematizations and practices.

Subsequently, I began my ethnographic research with a broad interest in how athletes showed concern for self and others in the context of their participation within Ultimate. Once in the field, I developed four specific research questions: Through which discourses–or games of truth–do Ultimate players understand and negotiate their participation in sport?; How do Ultimate players' experiences shape their understandings of self with specific regard to being an ethical or moral player?; Through what practices of self do Ultimate players seek to produce their athletic selves?; and, What forms of problematization might connect these practices of self to Ultimate players' understandings of self, and, possibly, to an aesthetics of existence?

An Overview of Research Findings

I initially addressed my first two research questions by examining the experiences of four of my participants–Beth, Gerald, Phillip, and John. As young adults, each of these participants problematized the truth games of the traditional team sports they played. Subsequently, I theorized their decisions to voluntarily retire from these sports as an act of ethical self-creation. For these participants, their subsequent discovery of Ultimate, and Ultimate's games of truth, formed part of an on-going process of ethical self-creation. Each of these participants

articulated specific ways in which they discovered Ultimate's games of truth to offer them a preferred ethical subjectivity through various forms of inclusivity.

I then went on to examine how Spirit of the Game forms a postmodern telos for many Ultimate players. Drawing on a wide range of my interviewees, I considered the complex ways in which being a spirited athlete formed an idealized ethical subjectivity which is aspired to by many Ultimate players. Spirit of the Game is a rather open or flexible notion that encapsulates a non-permanent, and culturally and historically specific range of non-synonymous ideals about how Ultimate should be played. Spirit of the Game does function as a telos for many Ultimate players, as was strongly reflected amongst my interview participants. This telos, however, is a postmodern telos, or aesthetics of existence; it is seen as provisional and it is widely accepted that no single definition can be adequate.

As a telos, Spirit of the Game offers a critique of instrumental rationality, although the way in which this critique is understood and made differs significantly between players, and between levels of play. There is, however, a risk that such an attempt to summarize Spirit of the Game removes some of the particular meanings which individual players associate with Spirit of the Game. As an example, many of my participants understood Spirit of the Game in a more positive sense as the goal of being an athlete focused on the fun or enjoyment of playing the game or of being an athlete who is respectful of others. In this way the specific interdictions which might be associated with Spirit of the Game are not so important as how particular players understand their selves in relation to Spirit of the Game.

In chapters six and seven, I addressed my third and fourth research questions: Through what practices of self do Ultimate players seek to produce

their athletic selves?; and, What forms of problematization might connect these practices of self to Ultimate players' understandings of self, and, possibly, to an aesthetics of existence? It is only through regular performance of practices of self informed by specific problematizations that ethical-self formation, that is embodiment of a telos or aesthetics of existence, takes place (Foucault, 1984). I identified six key practices of self within Ultimate through which players formed their selves as ethical subjects: moderation, tolerance, honesty, humour, irony, and peripheral rituals. I examined these in two groupings; *ascetic* practices of self, namely, moderation, tolerance and honesty; and *indulgent* practices of self, namely, humour, irony, and peripheral rituals.

Moderation is an ascetic practice of self that primarily involves placing limits on one's physical self. To a certain extent, then, moderation as a practice of self might be seen as a rejection of the "good" foul, that is, an attempt to deliberately commit an infraction in order to break an opponents' rhythm (cf., Fraleigh, 1988). However, moderation is more complex than simply refusing to break the rules of the game, not in the least because some fouls are more acceptable than others. Moderation was also performed to maintain safety of self and others. Moreover, in social games and tournaments, skilled players often moderated their own play in order to allow less-skilled players a chance to be involved in the game. In these instances moderation did not relate to respect for the rules of a game, but rather, respect for self and others.

As an ascetic practice of self, tolerance requires Ultimate players to react in a calm and considered manner to the actions of other players. This primarily relates to tolerance for being contacted by others, but also includes tolerance of differing views of refereeing calls that players make on the field. Broadly

speaking, when contact does not affect play, players try to avoid calling foul, and when contact does affect play, players try to make the call without animosity towards their opponent. Overall, tolerance was a practice of self which involved significant and ongoing struggle for some players as they attempted to embody Spirit of the Game.

Honesty is the final ascetic practice of self I examined. It relates closely to both moderation and tolerance. Honesty does not correlate to an ontological claim of authority, so much as a commitment to not adapt one's account of events in order to gain an advantage. Mitchell's account of deciding not to call a foul after dropping two passes while being contacted is an excellent example of honesty; he could easily have claimed that the contact that occurred caused his drop, however, he did not attribute the drop to the contact, so did not make a call. In this way, honesty is often closely linked to practices of tolerance. Moreover, honesty as a practice of self is crucial to Ultimate's current system of self-officiation.

Moderation, tolerance and honesty are best understood as contextually-based behaviours stemming from select problematizations, rather than as universal interdictions. There was significant variation in the ways in which these practices were interpreted and performed to the extent, at times, that disagreements occurred between players who interpreted these problematizations differently. Moreover, I also observed situations in which practices of moderation, tolerance, or honesty were not at all apparent either from a specific player or team. Overall, however, these practices of self were relatively common, were based on a critique of an instrumentally-rational approach to playing sport and were followed most closely by those players who aspired to the telos, Spirit of the Game.

In my seventh chapter, I analysed what I termed to be indulgent practices of self; humour, irony, and peripheral rituals. These practices of self, in contrast to the ascetic practices of self which I described in chapter six, might variously be described as hedonistic, light-hearted, and excessive. Such practices have not previously been interpreted as ethically important. However, I argued that particular forms of humour, irony, and peripheral rituals are important practices of self within Ultimate's aesthetics of existence (cf., Foucault, 2000c).

Practices of humour included self-mockery and absurdity, which were readily recognizable, especially at social tournaments. I observed that irony was readily interpreted in a positive manner within Ultimate's discursive community. Team names, team uniforms, and tournament names and tournament parties often had ironic themes. Banter between opponents on the field and heckling between spectators and players were usually laden with irony, with the amusement of self and others indicating that one's participation was not understood in terms of an instrumentally rational approach to achieving victory. However, humour and irony also served to highlight the partial nature of ethics. Much of Ultimate's aesthetics of existence requires membership of Ultimate's discursive community and Ultimate players were often oblivious to the ways in which they excluded non-players.

My eighth chapter involved a theoretical shift. I sought to re-consider ethics using the ethics of the Other. Arguing that a Foucauldian approach to ethics must always be willing to search for new ways of thinking, I turned to Levinas, Critchley and Derrida. I specifically considered the recognition of alterity as a basis for ethics, and Derrida's delineation of clôtural reading, decision, responsibility, aporia and justice. I offered a clôtural reading of Ultimate, arguing

that Ultimate both transgresses and is bound by the limits of Western sports. I then drew on aporia and justice to examine two specific examples from my interviews to explore the ethics of the Other.

In this chapter I argued that ethics, or as Levinas, Derrida and Critchley would term it, politics, is always partial and incomplete. The ethics of the Other allows us to encounter the limits of ethics. For example, aporetic situations reveal that we cannot help but betray some of our ethical obligations. Such an analysis gives context to a radically complex, complicated and already compromised ethics and serves to highlight that thinking with ethics is not a utopian mode of thought.

In summary, I argued that Spirit of the Game formed a postmodern telos which underpinned an idealized ethical subject position and recommended a specific aesthetics of existence for many Ultimate players. To achieve this telos, Ultimate players identified certain aspects of their athletic conduct as their ethical substance: simply put, they identified that they needed to focus on how they treated their self and others when involved in Ultimate. Their mode of subjectivation occurred through problematizing their relationships: to the rules of the game; with others; and, towards winning. Of particular importance for my participants was the problematization of an instrumentally rational approach to playing sport. Finally, their ethical work was to perform specific practices of self; namely moderation, tolerance, honesty, humour, irony, and peripheral rituals. This process offered Ultimate players opportunities to create their self as an ethical athletic subject.

At the same time, however, I showed that this process can be challenging and fraught. Players interpreted certain aspects of this process in a multitude of ways, which, at times, could lead to conflict on the field. Moreover, I offered

examples of where these practices of self appeared to break down, or be rejected by a small number of players. In examining the ethics of the Other, I sought to continue this process of complication by highlighting further possibilities for thinking and acting ethically within Ultimate. The ethics of the Other was particularly useful in focusing on the importance of our relations to Others as a basis of ethics. This focus provided an alternative to Foucauldian ethics, which primarily understands ethics as acting on the self. At the same time, however, Foucault's focus on context through discourse, games of truth, and practices of self revealed the ethics of the Other's lack of context to be its greatest weakness. Nevertheless, the ethics of the Other revealed new opportunities and new complexities, particularly through the concepts of aporia and justice, thus suggesting that any view of ethics will be partial and incomplete. This highlights the importance for both Derrida and Foucault of the ongoing ethical task of refusing complacency, and continually searching for solutions which will always be temporary and contextual. In the following section I establish links between my findings and previous literature.

Reflections Building on Previous Literature

Sociology of Sport and athletic subjectivities

Western sports today are dominated by an instrumentally rational orientation which prioritizes pursuit of victory above all else. For Donnelly (1996), this is the basis of a dominant ideology which tends towards "a global sport monoculture" (p. 30). In a similar critique, Coakley (2004) suggests the discourses of power and performance sports teach athletes to adhere to the sport ethic, which emphasizes instrumental rationality and prioritizing the team and victory through a willingness to sacrifice oneself. These critiques of sporting

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subjectivities are important, yet these problematic aspects of athletic subjectivities should not be understood as inevitable. Instead, I suggest these criticisms of dominant athletic subjectivities are an excellent reason to examine how athletes might find other ways of understanding their athletic selves.

My thesis supports Douglas and Carless' (2006, 2009) assertion that although the performance narrative is dominant within Western sports, and elite sport in particular, other narratives can be used by individuals to focus their engagement in sport. My participants understood Spirit of the Game to involve moderation, and, in some cases, an outright rejection of the importance of the final outcome of any given match. Although I did not frame my work in narrative theory, my participants' understandings of Spirit of the Game can be seen as offering alternatives to the performance narrative.

Moreover, my findings give cause for further reflection on Shogan's (1999, 2007) criticism of the tendency for discourses of high performance sport to produce docile, normalized athletes. While Shogan is critical of the normalizing effects of high performance sport, she argues that these effects can be challenged by encouraging athletes to reflect critically on the demands that their sports make of them. Spirit of the Game–and Ultimate's practices of self: moderation, tolerance, honesty, humour, irony, and peripheral rituals–do offer ways for Ultimate players to problematize the demands of playing sport. In this way, my findings offer empirical evidence in support of Shogan's argument that athletes should be encouraged to question the demands made of them as athletes.

This is not to suggest, however, that Ultimate's telos and practices of self can simply be transferred to other sports. While it is not feasible to simply transplant practices from one sporting culture to another, my findings could work

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to inspire change at a localized level, not through providing a blue print, but, rather, through revealing the contingent nature of dominant sporting subjectivities. My findings within Ultimate, then, might be seen in parallel to Denison's (2010) identification of specific opportunities for creating change amongst track and field coaches and athletes through problematizing the practice of periodization. The identification of sport or culture specific possibilities allows for localized change to be achieved.

My thesis, then, contributes to a small but growing field of research (e.g., Denison, 2010; Douglas & Carless, 2006, 2009; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pringle & Crocket, forthcoming; Pringle & Hickey, 2010; Thorpe, 2008, 2010) which focuses on possibilities for the localized and contextually specific production of critically informed subjectivities in sport and exercise. The major contribution of my study to this emerging field is that I have focused specifically on the formation of ethical subjectivities formed through practices of self recommended within a sporting culture. I expand on practices of self in my section on Foucauldian ethics.

Foucauldian ethics

I found Foucauldian theorizing to be a particularly powerful way of understanding ethical subjectivities in Ultimate. One of the distinctive aspects of Foucault's (e.g., 1977, 1984, 2001) work is his ongoing focus on the body. As a critical scholar with an interest in how athletes treat themselves and others, Foucauldian theory allowed me to theorize the ethics of athletic bodies. With regard to this, I found practices of self to be particularly useful. There are three specific aspects of Foucauldian ethics I wish to draw specific theoretical conclusions about: practices of self, aesthetics of existence and problematization.

Practices of self

My emphasis on practices of self is relatively unusual within sociology of sport (cf., A. Jones & Aitchison, 2007; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pringle & Hickey, 2010; Thorpe, 2008; J. Wright et al., 2006). I was drawn to the idea from re-reading *The Use of Pleasure* while trying to decide how to structure my findings. In *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault (1984) explains that he conducts "a history of ethical problematizations based on *practices of the self*" (p. 13, emphasis added). Foucault, then, is interested in practices free Greek men used on their own bodies in order to form their selves as subjects.

My decision to structure my findings with reference to practices of self was reinforced as I read within the anthropology of moralities. This field also focused on accounting for practices which formed ways of life within particular societies (e.g., Mahmood, 2003; J. Robbins, 2004). While I criticized anthropology of moralities for tending to de-emphasize how particular individuals work on their selves, I felt that an account needed to be given which revealed a set of practices recommended within Ultimate communities.

I interpreted practices of self as arising within Ultimate-playing communities. In contrast, most other applications of technologies of the self within sociology of sport search for individuals' problematizations and, subsequently, individual practices of freedom. Foucault (2000a), however, is clear that practices of self "are not something invented by the individual himself [sic]" (p. 291). Instead, he insists that practices of self "are models he [sic] finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, his social group" (Foucault, 2000a, p. 291). My innovation has been to analyse practices of self which are recommended within Ultimate communities, but which

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are interpreted in heterogeneous ways due to the hybridity of Ultimate players. In this way, I sought to combine what I saw as the strongest aspects of Foucauldian ethics from both sociology of sport and anthropology of moralities. I followed a similar tactic for interpreting problematization, which I will address after offering my concluding thoughts regarding the aesthetics of existence.

Aesthetics of existence

Foucault's notion of an aesthetics of existence can be interpreted in two productive ways. Firstly, an aesthetics of existence broadens the scope of ethics. Primarily, I argued this with relation to humour, irony and peripheral rituals. These practices of self were ethically significant and were simultaneously and seamlessly part of the ethical and aesthetic ideals of Ultimate to which many Ultimate players aspired. Tournament parties, ironic banter with opponents and shared post-match huddles all reinforce Huijer's (1999) assertion: "ethics [is] not a solemn matter, something we use in an effort to keep evil under control. Ethics [is] also a matter of pleasure, of taking risks, of danger and the intensity of existence" (pp. 73-74).

Moreover, this fusion of aesthetics and ethics should also be considered in terms of shaping one's life. As Foucault argues, the

> ...aesthetical and political... were directly linked. Because if I want someone to accept me as a king, I must have a kind of glory which will survive me, and this glory cannot be dissociated from aesthetic value. (Foucault, 2000c, pp. 264–265)

The aesthetic selves which Ultimate players create cannot be considered as separate to the ethical selves which they create.

Secondly, an aesthetics of existence should be interpreted as modifying the ontological certainty historically associated with the concept, telos. In other words, Foucault used the aesthetics of existence to explain the form a postmodern telos might take. I found this understanding to be implicit within many previous explications of Foucauldian ethics (e.g., Bennett, 1996; Faubion, 2001; Longford, 2001; Markula & Pringle, 2006) but to not have been stated in so many words. However, in this thesis, it has become clear that this point is important and should be made explicitly: the notion of an aesthetics of existence should be understood as a way of modifying the notion of telos with postmodern sensibilities.

Problematization

As I highlighted in my literature review, the notion of problematization is vexed. This notion is central to Foucault's project and yet difficult to interpret. Within the anthropology of moralities, problematization has typically been understood to relate to the aspects of self that society recommends be problematized. Mahmood (2003) argues this most forcefully, emphasizing that one's culture will decide what should be problematized and that this, rather than one's individual willingness to problematize society's values, is what should be examined. Zigon (2007, 2009a, 2009b), however, interpreted problematization quite differently, arguing that problematization was an individual experience which would result from the multiple discourses to which one was exposed.

Within sociology of sport, problematization has been interpreted, following the work of Foucauldian feminists (e.g., Butler, 1999; Lloyd, 1996, 1997), as a process of critically reflecting on how societal discourses position

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oneself as a subject (e.g., A. Jones & Aitchison, 2007; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Thorpe, 2008; J. Wright et al., 2006). Positioned in this way, sociology of sport typically has demanded a stronger form of problematization than anthropology of moralities.

I found varying degrees of problematization amongst my participants. All of my interview participants problematized an instrumentally rational approach to playing sport and many expressly criticized a win-at-all-costs approach which they viewed as endemic in popular Western team sports. These problematizations of instrumental rationality are recommended by Ultimate's games of truth. Such problematizations offer Ultimate players a way of refusing the way dominant sporting discourses position athletes as subjects. Subsequently, these can be considered a strong form of problematization or critical reflection, as recommended by Markula and Pringle (2006).

For most Ultimate players, however, problematization was not a constant, ongoing process through which all aspects of self or Ultimate were questioned. Following Thornton (1998), I found little evidence that questions of class or ethnicity were problematized by Ultimate players. In terms of barriers to participation in Ultimate, then, cost was rarely considered to be a barrier to participation by the administrators of the game, although I raised this question with them more than once. Similarly, although Ultimate in New Zealand appears to be more ethnically diverse than Thornton (1998) found Canadian Ultimate to be, it is dominated by pakeha[10].

Further, Ultimate tournaments have often appeared to be child-free zones. Occasionally an established player would attend a tournament with a young baby

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[10] Pakeha is the Maori term for New Zealanders of European descent.

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on the sidelines, and in such situations, they usually appeared to be well supported by other players on their team. Yet, no tournaments I attended took steps to facilitate or encourage parents to attend and play. Moreover, at many social tournaments the atmosphere, although jovial, was often not conducive for young families. With regard to these issues, then, relatively few Ultimate players appear to have problematized inclusivity in a wider sense within Ultimate.

Some participants, such as Phillip and Beth, had engaged in extensive problematization not only of sporting discourses, but also of wider ethico-political discourses. For these two participants, an extensive and significant process of problematization was evident as these participants had already linked their understanding of Spirit of the Game to wider political beliefs about inclusivity, multiculturalism, and social democracy. For most of my other participants, however, problematization appeared to be more fragmentary. Gerald, for example, stopped playing rugby after a hazing incident and was highly critically of the behaviour of elite soccer players. Nevertheless, he remains a fan of both sports, regularly attending live matches. The question arises whether or not this seemingly-contradictory behaviour means he has not sufficiently problematized his subjectivities as an athlete or sports fan.

In response to this question I suggest it would be naive to expect all players to actively problematise every aspect of their participation. Problematization is a culturally- and discursively-based practice: the problematization that any one person makes will be based on the discourses available to them. For example, the problematizations I make as participant in Ultimate are based, in part, on the playing experiences I have had in five countries, the players who I have played with and formed friendships with, my

upbringing with a feminist mother and pro-feminist father, my relationship with my partner (who has no interest in sport), and my reading of research, social theory and philosophy as a sociologist of sport. As Foucault (2000g) argued:

> For a domain of action, a behaviour, to enter the field of thought, it is necessary for a certain number of factors to have made it uncertain, to have made it lose its familiarity, or to have provoked a certain number of difficulties around it. (p. 117)

All these aspects of my background, then, have allowed me to problematize aspects of Ultimate.

Most recently, however, a new factor has made Ultimate uncertain in a way I had not previously experienced. My sister, Maryanne, and brother-in-law, Graeme (pseudonyms), started playing Ultimate[11]. They are in their thirties and prior to taking up Ultimate had not played sport for 15-20 years. The presence of two beginners, both of whom I love dearly, helped me problematize aspects of Ultimate in new ways. As an example, their presence helped me problematize an aspect of tolerance; namely, acceptance of non-game ending pain from accidental collisions as an unremarkable part of the game. I had come to accept this as normal through my experiences as an elite player.

While coaching their team, and filling in as a player, I was involved in an accidental collision with Graeme. I reacted by pointing out the collision was accidental and fairly quickly resumed play despite Graeme appearing to be in some discomfort. Reflecting on the inident, I realized that I did not want to be

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[11] I have shown this section of my thesis to Maryanne and Graeme and they have given me their permission to include it. c

someone who was not concerned when his brother-in-law was hurt, that his status as a player should not prevent me from caring about him. Having come to this realization, it made me think that as a spirited player, I should extend that concern beyond my family, to other players as well. All this is not to say that I had been particularly uncaring before, but rather that I was able to think through tolerance, respect and care for others in a new light.

I suggest this example supports Shogan's (1999, 2007) assertion that athletes' hybrid identities offer ways of problematizing the normalizing effects of athletic discourses. It was not simply Spirit of the Game, or another spirited athlete who caused me to problematize this interpretation of tolerance. Rather it was my hybridity as a player, coach, and family member. This brought forward a number of discourses and the combination of these discourses facilitated my thinking after my accidental collision with Graeme.

However, we cannot assume that all Ultimate players have identical experiences of hybridity. Some athletes will have had more experiences, either within sport or another part of their lives, which facilitate their questioning of sporting subjectivities to a greater extent than other athletes. I am decidedly reluctant to insist that only strong forms of problematization result in ethical self-creation. The risk here is that if we accept only strong forms of problematization we may fall into the trap of agency. Within this trap:

> ...only actions contributing towards what the analyst sees as structurally significant count as instances of agency. Put most crudely, we only mark them down as agency when people's choices seem to us to be the right ones. (Laidlaw, 2002, p. 315)

Subsequently, we should be particularly wary of insisting on an exact form of problematization from our research participants before interpreting them as engaged in ethical self creation.

Ethics of the Other

In examining the ethics of the Other, I undertook what is, as far as I am aware, the first empirical examination of Derridean ethics in sport. While reading Levinas, Derrida, and, to a lesser extent, Critchley, was challenging, I found the process to be highly rewarding. Moreover, as St. Pierre (2011) argues: "If we don't read the theoretical and philosophical literature, we have nothing much to think with during analysis except normalized discourses that seldom explain the way things are" (p. 614). Reading this theory gave me new ways of understanding the empirical problems I was investigating, in particular by demanding that I look for multiple readings of a given situation.

Reading Derrida, in particular, requires developing a style of reading which allows space for awareness of Derrida's use of irony and metaphor to remain ever present. As an example, how is one to interpret Derrida's (2008) commentary after his analysis of Abraham's aporia? Abraham's aporia arose when God commanded him to sacrifice his son, Isaac, as a sign of fealty. Having analysed this in detail, arguing that Abraham had faced the greatest ethical challenge possible, Derrida (2008) then suggests "God is the name of the possibility I have of keeping a secret that is visible from the interior but not the exterior" (p. 108). Does this undermine Abraham's aporia? Abraham's aporia is only poignant if we accept at some level that God exists–at least for Abraham, if not for ourselves. Surely, if Derrida wishes us to take aporia seriously, he would

not follow this analysis with such a baldly atheistic statement. Yet, the story of Abraham, like the idea of God, is used metaphorically by Derrida. The value comes from reading and thinking, rather than being brought to an unambiguous conclusion. Through engaging in such processes, I achieved alternative ethical interpretations which offered a deepened, more complex picture of ethical subjectivities within Ultimate.

I found both parallels and differences between Foucauldian and Derridean ethics. Both feature an emphasis on continued questioning, arising from a non-foundational position. Where I felt the ethics of the Other was less readily applicable, was in accounting for "everyday" ethics. On the one hand, this is not surprising; Derrida theorised poignant moments, whereas Foucault examined how free Greek men shaped their selves through regular practices of self over the course of their lives. In this way, Foucault's ethics was particularly well suited to theorizing the "everyday" aspects of ethics within Ultimate as well as more demanding moments, while the ethics of the Other tended to be better suited to theorizing thorny dilemmas rather than regular ethical practice. Putting the ethics of the Other into conversation with Foucauldian ethics was particularly useful for allowing to me to continually ask new questions of how I understood ethics. This ongoing task of asking questions and being open to new interpretations is central to both Foucault's and Derrida's ethics and in thesis, this openness led to important insights which I developed through the notions of aporia and justice.

Final Words

Although I am drawing this thesis to a close, many ethically motivated questions remain to be answered. My thesis has not examined the ethics of gender relations within Ultimate, and I suggest this is a prime area for further research. A

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further question which might be asked is "What contextual factors might lead some Ultimate players to create their selves as ethical subjects in their lives outside of Ultimate?" Such a question does not presume a necessary link between one's athletic and non-athletic self, but rather seeks to examine the contextual factors that might facilitate the establishment of such links for particular individuals. In this regard, it is important to note that the four participants whom I focused on in chapter five all offered ethical critiques of traditional team sports prior to discovering Ultimate.

These questions point to the complex, yet inevitably partial and incomplete analysis I have undertaken. There is more to be said about ethical subjectivities, and, I suspect, this will always be the case. With regard to this suspicion, I am drawn to Wittgenstein's analogy:

> I can only describe my feeling by the metaphor, that, if a man [sic] could write a book on Ethics which was really a book on Ethics, this book would, with an explosion, destroy all the other books in the world. (cited in Critchley, 1992, p. 1)

Given this feeling of impossibility, I am reassured by Richardson and St. Pierre's (2005) observation: "a postmodernist position does allow us to know 'something' without claiming to know everything" (p. 961). Consequently, I argue, that although ethical questions remain, I have answered my four specific research questions. And, my overall argument is not that Ultimate is ethical *per se*, but rather, as it is currently formed, Ultimate encourages certain practices of self based on an aesthetics of existence and specific problematizations which offer

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players possibilities for ethical self-creation. These practices are historically and culturally contingent; there is no transcendental element to these practices. To be clear, I do not interpret the links between these specific practices of self and a game which involves a sports field and a flying disc as having any form of necessity. Rather, these associations should be considered the product of historical chance and accident, rather than the realization of some messianic form of moral sporting destiny.

Similarly, however, this reveals that neither do the problematic, dominant subjectivities of Western sporting discourse have any necessity. Thus, we can critically reflect on how we might form ourselves as ethical subjects–whether as sporting subjects or otherwise–and make this task of ethical self-creation the focus of our own lives. Such a process will be wrought with ambiguity, contradiction, moments of failure and struggle. However, I argue, it is also a particularly promising and productive way forward. This is a project of heterogeneous ethical self-creation; it is formed through an aesthetics of existence which is embodied through practices of self and requires specific problematizations of truth games. This project, however, is not solipsistic; it directly implies relations with, and care for, others. Nor does this project foreclose other ways of thinking. To study such projects is to conduct a sociology of ethics.

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Appendix A: The Rules of Ultimate

WFDF Rules of Ultimate 2009

Official Version effective 2009-03-14
Produced by the WFDF Ultimate Rules Committee

Contents

Introduction

Introduction

Ultimate is a seven-a-side team sport played with a flying disc. It is played on a rectangular field, about half the width of a football field, with an end zone at each end. The object of each team is to score a goal by having a player catch a pass in the end zone that they are attacking. A thrower may not run with the disc, but may pass the disc in any direction to any team-mate. Any time a pass is incomplete, a turnover occurs, and the other team may take the disc to score in the opposite end zone. Games are typically played to 17 goals and last around 100 minutes. Ultimate is self-refereed and non-contact. The Spirit of the Game guides how players referee the game and conduct themselves on the field.

1. Spirit of the Game

   1.1. Ultimate is a non-contact, self-refereed sport. All players are responsible for administering and adhering to the rules. Ultimate relies upon a Spirit of the Game that places the responsibility for fair play on every player.

   1.2. It is trusted that no player will intentionally break the rules; thus there are no harsh penalties for breaches, but rather a method for resuming play in a manner which simulates what would most likely have occurred had there been no breach.

   1.3. Players should be mindful of the fact that they are acting as referees in any arbitration between teams. In such situations, players must:

      1.3.1. know the rules;

      1.3.2. be fair-minded and objective;

      1.3.3. be truthful;

      1.3.4. explain their viewpoint clearly and briefly;

      1.3.5. allow opponents a reasonable chance to speak;

      1.3.6. resolve disputes as quickly as possible; and

      1.3.7. use respectful language.

   1.4. Highly competitive play is encouraged, but should never sacrifice the mutual respect between players, adherence to the agreed-upon rules of the game, or the basic joy of play.

   1.5. The following actions are examples of good spirit:

      1.5.1. informing a team-mate if they have made a wrong or unnecessary call or caused a foul or violation;

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      1.5.2.   retracting a call when you no longer believe the call was necessary;

      1.5.3.   complimenting an opponent for good play or spirit;

      1.5.4.   introducing yourself to your opponent; and

      1.5.5.   reacting calmly towards disagreement or provocation.

1.6. The following actions are clear violations of the spirit of the game and must be avoided by all participants:

      1.6.1.   dangerous play and aggressive behaviour;

      1.6.2.   intentional fouling or other intentional rule violations;

      1.6.3.   taunting or intimidating opposing players;

      1.6.4.   disrespectful celebration after scoring;

      1.6.5.   making calls in retaliation to an opponent's call; and

      1.6.6.   calling for a pass from an opposition player.

1.7. Teams are guardians of the Spirit of the Game, and must:

      1.7.1.   take responsibility for teaching their players the rules and good spirit;

      1.7.2.   discipline players who display poor spirit; and

      1.7.3.   provide constructive feedback to other teams about how to improve their adherence to the Spirit of the Game.

1.8. In the case where a novice player commits an infraction out of ignorance of the rules, experienced players are obliged to explain the infraction.

1.9. An experienced player, who offers advice on rules and guides on-field arbitration, may supervise games involving beginners or younger players.

1.10.   Rules should be interpreted by the players directly involved in the play, or by players who had the best perspective on the play. Non-players, apart from the captain, should refrain from getting involved. However for calls relating to "out-of-bounds" and

"down," players may seek the perspective of non-players to assist them to make the appropriate call.

    1.11.   If players cannot agree what occurred in a play, the disc shall be returned to the last non-disputed thrower.

2. Playing Field

    2.1. The playing field is a rectangle one hundred (100) metres long and thirty-seven (37) metres wide (see Figure 1).

    2.2. The perimeter of the playing field is the perimeter line and consists of two (2) sidelines along the length and two (2) endlines along the width.

    2.3. The perimeter lines are not part of the playing field.

    2.4. The playing field is broken up into a central playing field proper that is sixty-four (64) metres long by thirty-seven (37) metres wide, and two end zones that are eighteen (18) metres deep by thirty-seven (37) metres wide at each end of the playing field proper.

    2.5. The goal lines are the lines that separate the playing field proper from the end zones and are part of the playing field proper.

    2.6. The brick mark is the intersection of two (2) crossed one (1) metre lines in the playing field proper set twenty (20) metres from each goal line, midway between the sidelines.

    2.7. All lines are between seventy-five (75) and one hundred and twenty (120) millimetres wide, and are marked with a non-caustic material.

    2.8. Eight brightly-coloured, flexible objects (such as plastic cones) mark the corners of the playing field proper and the end zones.

    2.9. The immediate surroundings of the playing field shall be kept clear of movable objects. If play is obstructed by non-players or objects within three (3) metres of the perimeter line, any obstructed player or thrower in possession may call "Violation" and the stall count restarts at maximum nine (9).
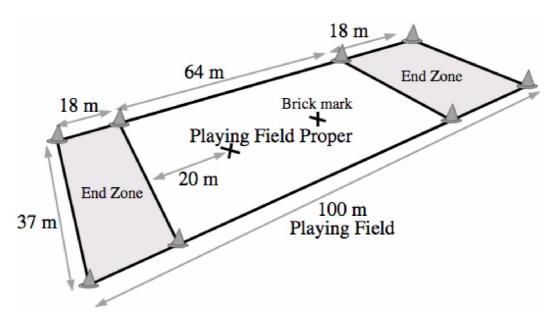
Figure 1

3. Equipment

   3.1. Any flying disc acceptable to both captains may be used.

   3.2. WFDF may maintain a list of approved discs recommended for use.

   3.3. Each player must wear a uniform that distinguishes their team.

   3.4. No player may wear items of clothing or equipment that reasonably could harm the wearer or other players.

4. Point, Goal and Game

   4.1. A game consists of a number of points. Each point ends with the scoring of a goal.

   4.2. A game is finished and won by the first team to score seventeen (17) goals.

   4.3. A game is separated into two (2) periods of play, called halves. Half time occurs when a team first scores nine (9) goals.

   4.4. The first point of each half starts when the half starts.

   4.5. After a goal is scored, and the game has not been won or half time has not been reached:

      4.5.1.   the next point starts immediately; and

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4.5.2. the teams switch the end zone that they are defending; and

4.5.3. the team that scored becomes defence and pulls next.

4.6. A variation of the basic structure may be used to accommodate special competitions, number of players, age of players or available space.

5. Teams

5.1. Each team will put a maximum of seven (7) players and a minimum of five (5) players on the field during each point.

5.2. A team may make (unlimited) substitutions only after a goal is scored and before the next pull, except for injury (Section 19).

5.3. Each team will nominate a captain to represent the team.

6. Starting a Game

6.1. The captains of the two teams fairly determine which team first chooses either:

6.1.1. whether to receive or throw the initial pull; or

6.1.2. which end zone they will defend.

6.2. The other team is given the remaining choice.

6.3. At the start of the second half, these initial selections are switched.

7. The Pull

7.1. At the start of the game, after half-time or after a score, play commences with a throw-off, called a pull.

7.1.1. Teams must prepare for the pull without unreasonable delay.

7.2. The pull consists of a defensive player throwing the disc to begin play, after the offence is ready.

7.3. The offensive team signals their readiness by having at least one player raise a hand above their head.

7.4. Once ready, and until the pull is released, all offensive players must stand with one foot on their defending goal line without changing position relative to one another.

7.5. All defensive players must be entirely inside their defending end zone when the pull is released.

7.6. If a violation of 7.4 or 7.5 is called by the opposing team, the pull will be repeated.

7.7. As soon as the disc is released, all players may move in any direction.

7.8. No player on the defensive team may touch the disc after a pull until a member of the offensive team contacts the disc or the disc contacts the ground.

7.9. If an offensive player, in-bounds or out-of-bounds, touches the disc before it hits the ground, and the offensive team fails to catch it, that is a turnover (a "dropped pull").

7.10.   If the disc initially contacts the playing field and never becomes out-of-bounds, or is caught in-bounds, the thrower establishes the pivot where the disc stops.

7.11.   If the disc initially contacts the playing field and then becomes out-of-bounds without contacting an offensive player, the thrower establishes the pivot at the point on the playing field proper closest to where the disc went out-of-bounds (Section 11.7).

7.12.   If the disc becomes out-of-bounds after touching an offensive player, or an offensive player catches the pull out-of-bounds, the thrower establishes the pivot at the point on the playing field closest to where the disc became out-of-bounds (Section 11.5).

7.13.   If the disc becomes out-of-bounds without first touching the playing field or an offensive player, the thrower may establish the pivot either at the brick mark closest to their defending end zone, or at the spot on the playing field proper closest to where the disc went out-of-bounds (Section 11.7). The brick option must be signalled by the intended thrower before picking up the disc by fully extending one arm above their head.

8. Status of the Disc

    8.1. The disc is dead, and no turnover is possible:

        8.1.1.   After the start of a point, until the pull is released;

        8.1.2.   After the pull or after a turnover when the disc must be carried to the location of the correct pivot point, until a pivot is established; or

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8.1.3.   After a call which stops the play or any other stoppage, until the disc is checked in.

8.2. A disc that is not dead is live.

8.3. The thrower may not transfer possession of a dead disc to another player.

8.4. Any player may attempt to stop a disc from rolling or sliding after it has hit the ground.

8.5. If, in attempting to stop such a disc, a player significantly alters the disc's position, the opposition may call "Violation" and play restarts with a check at the location where the disc was contacted.

8.6. After a turnover, the team that has gained possession of the disc must continue play without delay. The intended thrower must move at walking pace or faster to directly retrieve the disc and establish a pivot.

9. Stall Count

9.1. The marker administers a stall count on the thrower by announcing "Stalling" and then counting from one (1) to ten (10). The interval between the start of each word in the stall count must be at least one (1) second.

9.2. The stall count must be clearly audible to the thrower.

9.3. The marker may only start a stall count when the disc is live.

9.4. The marker may only start and continue a stall count when they are within three (3) metres of the thrower and all defenders are legitimately positioned (Section 18.1).

9.5. If the marker moves more than three (3) metres from the thrower, or a different player becomes the marker, the stall count must be restarted at one (1).

9.6. To restart a stall count "at maximum n," where "n" is a number between one (1) and nine (9), means to announce "stalling" followed by the count at one more than the last number uttered prior to the stoppage, or by "n" if that value is greater than "n."

10. The Check

10.1.   Whenever play stops during a point for a time-out, foul, violation, contested turnover, safety stoppage or injury stoppage, play shall restart as quickly as possible with a check.

10.2.   Except in the case of a time-out:

10.2.1.   All players shall return to the positions they held when the event that caused the stoppage occurred.

10.2.2.   If the disc was in the air when the event that caused the stoppage occurred, and the disc is returned to the thrower to restart play, all players shall return to the positions they held when the disc was released by the thrower.

10.2.3.   All players must remain stationary in that position until the disc is checked in.

10.3.   Any player may briefly extend a stoppage of play to correct faulty equipment, but active play may not be stopped for this purpose.

10.4.   The person checking the disc in must first verify with the nearest opposition player that their team is ready.

10.5.   To restart play:

10.5.1.   if the disc is within reach of a defender, they shall touch the disc and call "Disc In";

10.5.2.   if the disc is not within reach of a defender, the thrower shall touch the disc to the ground and call "Disc In"; or

10.5.3.   if the disc is not within reach of a defender and there is no thrower, the defender nearest to the disc shall call "Disc In."

10.6.   If the thrower attempts a pass before the check, or a violation of 10.2 is called, the pass does not count regardless of whether it is complete or incomplete, and possession reverts back to the thrower.

11. Out-of-Bounds

11.1.   The entire playing field is in-bounds. The perimeter lines are not part of the playing field and are out-of-bounds. All non-players are part of the out-of-bounds area.

11.2.   The out-of-bounds area consists of the area which is not in-bounds and everything in contact with it, except for defensive players, who are always considered "in-bounds" for purposes of making a play on the disc.

11.3. An offensive player who is not out-of-bounds is in-bounds.

11.3.1. An airborne player retains their in-bounds/out-of-bounds status until that player contacts the playing field or the out-of-bounds area.

11.3.2. A thrower in possession of the disc, who contacts the playing field and then touches an out-of-bounds area, is still considered in-bounds.

11.3.2.1. If the thrower leaves the playing field, they must establish the pivot at the spot on the playing field where they crossed the perimeter line (unless 14.2 is in effect).

11.3.3. Contact between players does not confer the state of being in- or out-of-bounds from one to another.

11.4. A disc is in-bounds once it is live, or when play starts or restarts.

11.5. A disc becomes out-of-bounds when it first contacts the out-of-bounds area or contacts an out-of-bounds offensive player. A disc in the possession of an offensive player has the same in/out-of-bounds status as that player. If the disc is simultaneously in the possession of more than one offensive player, one of them being out-of-bounds, the disc is out-of-bounds.

11.6. The disc may fly outside a perimeter line and return to the playing field, and players may go out-of-bounds to make a play on the disc.

11.7. The place where a disc went out-of-bounds is the spot where, prior to contacting an out-of-bounds area or player, the disc was most recently:

11.7.1. partly or wholly over the playing field; or

11.7.2. contacted by in-bounds player.

11.8. To continue play after an out-of-bounds turnover, the thrower establishes the pivot at the spot on the playing field proper nearest to where the disc went out-of-bounds.

11.9. If the disc is out-of-bounds and more than three (3) metres from the pivot point, non-players may retrieve the disc. The thrower must carry the disc the last three (3) metres to the playing field.

12. Receivers and Positioning

12.1.   A player "catches" the disc by demonstrating sustained control of a non-spinning disc.

12.2.   If the player loses control of the disc due to subsequent contact with the ground or a team-mate or a legitimately positioned opposition player, the catch is deemed to have not occurred.

12.3.   The following are turnovers, and no catch is deemed to have occurred:

12.3.1.   an offensive receiver is out-of-bounds when they contact the disc; or

12.3.2.   after catching the disc, an offensive receiver's first contact is out-of-bounds while still in possession of the disc.

12.4.   After a catch, that player becomes the thrower.

12.5.   If offensive and defensive players catch the disc simultaneously, the offence retains possession.

12.6.   A player in an established position is entitled to remain in that position and should not be contacted by an opposing player.

12.7.   When a player is making a play on the disc, an opposing player may not move to intentionally impede that player's movements, unless they are also making a play on the disc.

12.8.   Every player is entitled to occupy any position on the field not occupied by any opposing player, provided that they do not cause contact in taking such a position.

12.9.   When the disc is in the air, all players must attempt to avoid contact with other players, and there is no situation where a player may justify initiating contact. "Making a play for the disc" is not a valid excuse for initiating contact with other players.

12.10. Some incidental contact, not affecting the outcome of the play or safety of players, may occur as two or more players move towards a single point simultaneously. Incidental contact should be minimized but is not considered a foul.

12.11. All players have the right to the space immediately above them. An opponent may not obstruct a player from occupying this space.

12.12. No player may physically assist the movement of another player.

13. Turnovers

13.1. A turnover transfers possession of the disc from one team to the other and occurs when:

13.1.1. the disc contacts the ground while it is not in the possession of an offensive player (a "down");

13.1.2. the disc is handed over from one offensive player to another without ever being completely untouched by both players (a "hand-over");

13.1.3. the thrower intentionally deflects a pass to themselves off another player (a "deflection");

13.1.4. in attempting a pass, the thrower contacts the disc after release prior to the disc being contacted by another player (a "double touch");

13.1.5. a pass is caught by a defensive player (an "interception");

13.1.6. the disc becomes out-of bounds (an "out-of-bounds");

13.1.7. the thrower has not released the disc before the marker first starts to say the word "ten" in the stall count (a "stall-out");

13.1.8. there is an uncontested offensive receiving foul; or

13.1.9. during the pull, the receiving team touches the disc before it contacts the ground, and fails to catch the disc (a "dropped pull").

13.2. If it is unclear whether a turnover occurred, the player(s) with the best perspective quickly makes the call. If either team disagrees they may call "contest" and:
13.2.1. the disc is returned to the thrower; and

13.2.2. any stall count restarts at maximum nine (9).

13.3. If a fast count occurs in such a manner that the offence does not have a reasonable opportunity to call fast count before a stall-out, the play is treated as a contested stall-out (13.2).

13.4. If the thrower contests a stall-out but also attempts a pass, and the pass is incomplete, then the turnover stands and play continues.

13.5. After a turnover, the turnover location is where:

13.5.1. the disc has come to a stop or is picked up by an offensive player; or

13.5.2. the intercepting player stops; or

13.5.3. the thrower was located, in the case of 13.1.2, 13.1.3, 13.1.4, 13.1.7; or

13.5.4. the uncontested offensive receiving foul occurred.

13.6. If the turnover location is in the playing field proper, the thrower must establish the pivot at that point.

13.7. If the turnover location is in the offence's attacking end zone, the thrower must establish the pivot at the nearest point on the goal line.

13.8. If the turnover location is in the offence's defending end zone, the thrower may choose where to establish the pivot:

13.8.1. at the turnover location, by staying at the turnover location or faking a pass; or

13.8.2. at the nearest point on the goal line to the turnover location, by moving from the turnover location.

13.8.3. Immediate movement or failure to move determines where to establish the pivot and cannot be reversed.

13.9. If the turnover location is out-of-bounds, play continues according to Section 11.7.

13.10. If, after a turnover, play has continued unknowingly, play stops and the disc is returned to the turnover location, players resume their positions at the time the turnover occurred and play restarts with a check.

14. Scoring

14.1. A goal is scored if an in-bounds player catches a legal pass and all of their first simultaneous points of contact after catching the disc are entirely within their attacking end zone (note 12.1, 12.2).

14.2. If a player in possession of the disc ends up completely behind the attacking goal line without scoring a goal according to 14.1, the player establishes the pivot at the nearest point of the goal line.

14.3.   The time at which a goal is scored is when, after the disc is caught, contact is first made with the end zone.

15. Calling Fouls, Infractions and Violations

15.1.   A breach of the rules due to non-incidental contact between two or more opposing players is a foul.

15.2.   A breach of the rules regarding a Marking or Travel breach is an infraction. Infractions do not stop play.

15.3.   Every other breach of the rules is a violation.

15.4.   Only the player fouled may claim a foul, by calling "Foul."

15.5.   Any opposing player may claim an infraction, by calling the specific name of the infraction.

15.6.   Any opposing player may claim a violation, by calling the specific name of the violation or "Violation," unless specified otherwise by the particular rule.

15.7.   Calls must be made immediately after the breach occurs.

15.8.   If a player from the team against which the foul, infraction or violation has been called disagrees that it occurred, they may call "Contest."

15.9.   If a player making the "Foul," "Violation" or "Contest" call subsequently determines that their call was unnecessary, they can retract the call, by calling "Retracted." Play restarts with a check.

15.10.   .Stall Counts after a Foul, Violation or Contest resume as follows (unless specified otherwise):

15.10.1.   After a foul or violation by the defence:

if there is no contest the count is reset to one (1);

if it is contested any stall count restarts at maximum six (6).

15.10.2.   After a foul by the offence, whether contested or not, any stall count restarts at maximum nine (9).

15.10.3.   After a violation by the offence:

if there is no contest the stall count restarts at maximum nine (9);

if the violation is contested any stall count restarts at maximum six (6).

15.10.4. After simultaneous offsetting fouls or violations, any stall count restarts at maximum six (6).

15.10.5. For all other contested calls, any stall count restarts at maximum six (6).

16. Continuation after a Foul or Violation Call

16.1. Whenever a foul or violation call is made, play stops immediately and no turn over is possible.

16.1.1. However, if the foul or violation is called:

16.1.1.1. against the thrower and the thrower subsequently attempts a pass, or

16.1.1.2. when the thrower is in the act of throwing, or

16.1.1.3. when the disc is in the air, then play continues until possession has been established.

16.1.2. Once possession has been established:

16.1.2.1. If the team that called the foul or violation gains or retains possession as a result of the pass, play shall continue. Players recognizing this should call "Play on" immediately to indicate that this rule has been invoked.

16.1.2.2. If the team that called the foul or violation does not gain or retain possession as a result of the pass, play shall be stopped.

16.1.2.2.1 If the team that called the foul or violation believes that possession has been affected by the foul or violation, the disc will be returned to the thrower for a check (unless the specific rule says otherwise).

16.1.2.2.2 If the team that called the foul or violation believes that possession has not been affected by the foul or violation, the play stands, they make up any positional disadvantage caused by the foul or violation, and restart play with a check.

17. Fouls

17.1.   Dangerous Play:

17.1.1.   Reckless disregard for the safety of fellow players regardless of whether or when contact occurs is considered dangerous play and is treated as a foul. This rule is not superseded by any other rule.

17.2.   Defensive Receiving (Defender) Fouls:

17.2.1.   A Defensive Receiving Foul occurs when a defender initiates contact with a receiver before, or during, an attempt to catch the disc.

17.2.2.   After a defensive receiving foul:

17.2.2.1.   if in the playing field proper or defending end zone, the receiver gains possession at the point of the infraction;

17.2.2.2.   if in the attacking end zone, the receiver gains possession at the nearest point on the goal line, and the fouling player must mark them there; or

17.2.2.3.   if the foul is contested, the disc is returned to the thrower.

17.3.   Force-out Fouls:

17.3.1.   A Force-out Foul occurs when an airborne receiver catches the disc, and is fouled by a defensive player before landing, and the contact caused the receiver:

17.3.1.1.   to land out-of-bounds instead of in-bounds; or

17.3.1.2.   to land in the playing field proper instead of their attacking end zone.

17.3.2.   If the receiver would have landed in their attacking end zone, it is a goal;

17.3.3.   If the force-out foul is contested, the disc is returned to the thrower if the receiver landed out-of-bounds, otherwise the disc stays with the receiver.

17.4.   Defensive Throwing (Marking) Fouls:

17.4.1.   A Defensive Throwing Foul occurs when:

17.4.1.1.   A defensive player is illegally positioned (Section 18.1), and there is contact with the thrower; or

17.4.1.2. A defensive player initiates contact with the thrower, or a part of their body was moving and contacted the thrower, prior to the release.

17.5. Strip Fouls:

17.5.1. A Strip Foul occurs when a defensive foul causes the receiver or thrower to drop the disc after they have gained possession.

17.5.2. If the reception would have otherwise been a goal, and the foul is uncontested, a goal is awarded.

17.6. Offensive Receiving Fouls:

17.6.1. An Offensive Receiving Foul occurs when a receiver initiates contact with a defensive player before, or during, an attempt to catch the disc.

17.6.2. If the foul is uncontested, the result is a turnover, with the disc at the location where the foul occurred.

17.6.3. If the pass is complete and the foul is contested, the disc returns to the thrower.

17.7. Offensive Throwing (Thrower) Fouls:

17.7.1. An Offensive Throwing Foul occurs when the thrower initiates contact with a defensive player who is in a legal position.

17.7.2. Incidental contact occurring during the thrower's follow through is not sufficient grounds for a foul, but should be avoided.

17.8. Blocking Fouls:

17.8.1. A Blocking Foul occurs when a player takes a position that a moving opponent will be unable to avoid and contact results.

17.9. Indirect Fouls:

17.9.1. An Indirect Foul occurs when there is contact between a receiver and a defensive player that does not directly affect an attempt to catch the disc.

17.9.2. If uncontested the fouled player may make up any positional disadvantage caused by the foul.

17.10. Offsetting Fouls:

17.10.1. If fouls are called by offensive and defensive players on the same play, the disc returns to the thrower.

18. Infractions and Violations

18.1. Marking Infractions:

18.1.1. Marking infractions include the following:

18.1.1.1. "Fast Count"– he marker:

starts the stall count before the disc is live,

does not start the stall count with the word "Stalling,"

counts in less than one second intervals,

does not subtract two (2) seconds from the stall count after the first call of any marking infraction, or

does not start the stall count from the correct number.

18.1.1.2. "Straddle"–a line between a defensive player's feet contains the thrower's pivot point.

18.1.1.3. "Disc Space"–any part of a defensive player is less than one disc diameter away from the torso or pivot of the thrower. However, if this situation is caused solely by movement of the thrower, it is not an infraction.

18.1.1.4. "Wrapping"–a defensive player uses their arms to prevent the thrower from pivoting in any direction.

18.1.1.5. "Double Team"–more than one defensive player is within three (3) metres of the thrower's pivot point and further than three (3) metres away from all other offensive players.

18.1.1.6. "Vision"–a defensive player uses any part of their body to intentionally obstruct the thrower's vision.

18.1.1.7. "Contact"–a defensive player makes contact with the thrower prior to the thrower releasing the disc and not during the throwing motion. However, if this contact is caused solely by movement of the thrower, it is not an infraction.

18.1.2.   A marking infraction may be contested by the defence, in which case play stops.

18.1.3.   On the first call of a marking infraction that is not contested, the marker must subtract two (2) from the stall count and continue.

18.1.4.   The marker may not restart counting until any illegal positioning has been corrected. To do otherwise is a subsequent marking infraction.

18.1.5.   For any subsequent uncontested marking infraction called during the same throwers possession, the marker must reset the count to one (1) and continue.

18.1.6.   If the thrower attempts a pass and a marking infraction is called during the throwing motion or when the disc is in the air, the call has no consequences.

18.2.   "Travel" Infractions:

18.2.1.   The thrower may attempt a pass at any time as long as they are entirely in-bounds or have established an in-bounds pivot.

18.2.2.   An in-bounds player who catches a pass while airborne may attempt a pass prior to contacting the ground.

18.2.3.   After catching the disc, and landing in-bounds, the thrower must reduce speed as quickly as possible, without changing direction, until they have established a pivot point.

18.2.3.1.   The thrower may release the disc while reducing speed as long as they maintain contact with the playing field throughout the throwing motion.

18.2.4.   The thrower may change direction ("pivot") only by establishing a "pivot point," where one part of their body remains in constant contact with a certain spot on the playing field, called the "pivot point."

18.2.5.   A thrower who is lying down or kneeling does not need to establish a pivot.

18.2.5.1.   Once stopped, their centre of mass determines their pivot point, and they should not move away from that point while lying down or kneeling.

18.2.5.2.   If they stand up, they must establish their pivot at that point.

18.2.6.   A travel infraction occurs if:

18.2.6.1.   the thrower establishes the pivot at an incorrect point on the playing field;

18.2.6.2.   the thrower changes direction before establishing a pivot or releasing the disc;

18.2.6.3.   the thrower fails to reduce their speed as quickly as possible;

18.2.6.4.   the thrower fails to keep the established pivot until releasing the disc;

18.2.6.5.   the thrower fails to maintain contact with the playing field throughout the throwing motion; or

18.2.6.6.   a receiver purposefully bobbles, fumbles or delays the disc to themselves in order to move in any direction.

18.2.7.   After an uncontested travel infraction, play does not stop.

18.2.7.1.   The thrower establishes a pivot at the correct spot, as indicated by the player who called the travel. This must occur without delay from either player involved.

18.2.7.2.   Any stall count is paused, and the thrower may not throw the disc, until the pivot is established at the correct spot.

18.2.7.3.   A defensive player should call "Play on" as soon as the pivot has been established.

18.2.7.4.   The marker must say "Stalling" or "Play on" before restarting the stall count.

18.2.8.   If, after a travel infraction but before correcting the pivot, the thrower throws a completed pass, the defensive team may call "Violation." Play stops and the disc is returned to the thrower.

18.2.9.   If, after a travel infraction, the thrower throws an incomplete pass, play shall continue.

18.2.10.   After a contested travel infraction where the thrower has not released the disc, play stops.

18.3.   "Pick" Violations:

18.3.1.   If a defensive player is closely covering an offensive player and they are prevented from moving towards/with that player by another player, that defensive player may call "Pick."

18.3.2.   Once play has stopped, the obstructed player may move to the position they determine they would have otherwise occupied if the obstruction had not occurred. The disc is returned to the thrower (if the disc was thrown) and any stall count restarts at maximum nine (9).

19. Stoppages

19.1.   Injury Stoppage

19.1.1.   An injury stoppage, "Injury," may be called by the injured player, or a team-mate if the injured player is unable to call it immediately, in which case the call is said to have occurred at the time of the injury.

19.1.2.   If any player has an open or bleeding wound, an injury stoppage must be called and that player shall take an immediate injury substitution and may not rejoin the game until the wound is treated and sealed.

19.1.3.   If the injury is not the result of a foul (contested or not), the player must be substituted, otherwise the player may choose to stay.

19.1.4.   If the injured player leaves the field, the opposing team may also choose to substitute one player.

19.1.5.   If the injured player had caught the disc, and the player has dropped the disc due to the injury, that player retains possession of the disc.

19.1.6.   Substitute players due to an injury stoppage take on the full state (position, possession, stall count etc) of the player they are substituting.

19.2.   Technical Stoppage

19.2.1.   Any player who recognises a condition that endangers players may call "technical" to stop play.

19.2.2.   The thrower may call a technical stoppage during play to replace a severely damaged disc.

19.3.   If the disc was in the air when the stoppage was called, play continues until possession of the disc is determined:

19.3.1.   If the injury or safety issue did not affect play, the completion or turnover stands, and play restarts there;

19.3.2.   If the injury or safety issue did affect the play, the disc goes back to the thrower and the count restarts at maximum nine (9).

19.4.   In timed games, the game clock stops during a stoppage.

20. Time-Outs

20.1.   The player calling a time-out must form a "T" with their hands, or with one hand and the disc, and call "time-out" audibly to opposition players.

20.2.   Each team shall have two (2) time-outs per half.

20.3.   A time-out may be taken at any moment within a half.

20.4.   A time-out lasts two (2) minutes.

20.5.   After the start of a point and prior to the ensuing pull, either team captain may call a time-out. The time-out extends the time between the start of the point and subsequent pull by two (2) minutes.

20.6.   During play only the thrower, with an established pivot point, may call a time-out. After such a time-out:

20.6.1.   Substitutions are not allowed, except for injury.

20.6.2.   Play is restarted at the same pivot point.

20.6.3.   The thrower remains the same.

20.6.4.   All other offensive players may then set up at any point on the playing field.

20.6.5.   Once the offensive players have selected positions, defensive players may set up at any point on the playing field.

20.6.6.   The stall count remains the same, unless the marker has been switched.

20.7.   If the thrower attempts to call a time-out when their team has no remaining time-outs, play is stopped. The marker shall add two (2) seconds to the stall count before restarting play with a check. If this results in a stall count of ten (10) or above, this is a

"stall-out" turnover. If there is no current stall count, the defence may initiate a stall count at three (3).

- The End

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Team Participant Information Sheet

Project Title:
Playing with ethics?: A Foucauldian examination of ethical subjectivities in Ultimate Frisbee.

Purpose
This research is being conducted by Hamish Crocket as partial requirement for a PhD.

What is this research project about?
This research project is to investigate how Ultimate players manage spirit of the game and the desire to win. The project will focus on how Ultimate teams and players in New Zealand and the UK have created a culture of balancing competitive play with maintaining the spirit of the game. Much research on modern sports has blamed the win at all costs approach for a range of problems in sport–cheating, violence, abusive behaviour off the pitch, drug abuse, and violence amongst fans. However, relatively little research has been done exploring how people find alternatives to the win-at-all-costs approach.

What research is taking place?
The research being conducted is called participant observation. Hamish will use his work as a tournament director and his interaction with captains as a source of data for his thesis. This is in addition to Hamish playing in the tournament, and taking notes based on his experiences playing and watching games. Hamish might ask you for an informal interview at some point during the tournament. If you wish, you can be excluded from the research. If this is the case, no reference will be made to you in the research notes–everything you say and do will be off-record. If you do wish to take part, you can choose whether or not you wish to be identified in the research.

What will happen to the information collected?
The information collected will be used by the researcher to form part of the data that will be used to write a PhD thesis. It is possible that articles and presentations may also be an outcome of the research. Only the researcher, Hamish Crocket and supervisors, Bob Rinehart and Richard Pringle, will be privy to the participant observation notes. All research material will be kept securely by the University of Waikato for five years. After this point, the participant observation notes will be destroyed. The researcher will keep copies of the notes but will treat them with the strictest confidentiality. No participants who wish to remain anonymous will be named in any publications and every effort will be made to disguise their identity.

Declaration to participants
If you take part in the study, you have the right to:
• Refuse to answer any particular question.

- Ask any further questions about the study that occurs to you during your participation.
- Be given access to a summary of findings from the study when it is concluded.
- Complete anonymity and confidentiality; you will not be identified as a source of information unless you wish to be.

Who's responsible?

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Researcher: Supervisor:
Hamish Crocket   Associate Professor Bob
University of Waikato   Rinehart
hamish.crocket@gmail.com   Department of Sport and
                                                Leisure Studies
                                                University of Waikato
                                                rinehart@waikato.ac.nz

Team Consent Form

Playing with ethics?: A Foucauldian examination of ethical subjectivities in Ultimate Frisbee.

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I understand that I can request a summary of research findings from the research I have been involved in. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality and anonymity set out on the **Participant Information Sheet**.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Participant Information Sheet**.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Additional Consent as Required

I wish to be named/ remain anonymous in any scholarly work arising from this research.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name and contact information:
Hamish Crocket
University of Waikato
hamish.crocket@gmail.com

Supervisor's Name and contact information:
Associate Professor Bob Rinehart
Department of Sport and Leisure Studies
University of Waikato
rinehart@waikato.ac.nz

Tournament Participant Information Sheet

Project Title:
Playing with ethics?: A Foucauldian examination of ethical subjectivities in Ultimate Frisbee

Purpose
This research is being conducted by Hamish Crocket as partial requirement for a PhD.

What is this research project about?
This research project is to investigate how ultimate players manage spirit of the game and the desire to win. The project will focus on how ultimate teams and players in New Zealand and the UK have created a culture of balancing competitive play with maintaining the spirit of the game. Much research on modern sports has blamed the win at all costs approach for a range of problems in sport–cheating, violence, abusive behaviour off the pitch, drug abuse, and violence amongst fans. However, relatively little research has been done exploring how people find alternatives to the win-at-all-costs approach.

What research is taking place?
The research being conducted is called participant observation. The researcher will be playing in the tournament, but also taking notes based on his experiences playing and watching games and talking to other players with his research questions in mind. He may approach you for an informal interview at some stage during the tournament. You do not have take part if you do not want to. If you do take part you can choose whether to be identified or to remain anonymous. If you have any further questions, please talk to me–ask for Hamish from [name of team], and I'll be happy to answer your questions.

What will happen to the information collected?
The information collected will be used by the researcher to form part of the data that will be used to write a PhD thesis. It is possible that articles and presentations may also be an outcome of the research. Only the researcher, Hamish Crocket and supervisors, Bob Rinehart and Richard Pringle, will be privy to the participant observation notes. All research material will be kept securely by the University of Waikato for five years. After this point, the participant observation notes will be destroyed. The researcher will keep copies of the notes but will treat them with the strictest confidentiality. No participants will be named in the publications and every effort will be made to disguise their identity.

Declaration to participants
If you take part in the study, you have the right to:
- Refuse to answer any particular question.
- Ask any further questions about the study that occurs to you during your participation.
- Be given access to a summary of findings from the study when it is concluded.
- Complete anonymity and confidentiality; you will not be identified as a source of information.

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Who's responsible?

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Researcher: Supervisor:
Hamish Crocket   Associate Professor Bob
University of Waikato   Rinehart
hamish.crocket@gmail.com   Department of Sport and
Leisure Studies
University of Waikato
rinehart@waikato.ac.nz

Interview Participant Information Sheet

Project Title
Playing with ethics?: A Foucauldian examination of ethical subjectivities in Ultimate Frisbee.

Purpose
This research is being conducted by Hamish Crocket as partial requirement for a PhD.

What is this research project about?
This research project is to investigate how Ultimate players manage spirit of the game and the desire to win. The project will focus on how Ultimate teams and players in New Zealand and the UK have created a culture of balancing competitive play with maintaining the spirit of the game. Much research on modern sports has blamed the win at all costs approach for a range of problems in sport–cheating, violence, abusive behaviour off the pitch, drug abuse, and violence amongst fans. However, relatively little research has been done exploring how people find alternatives to the win-at-all-costs approach.

What will you have to do and how long will it take?
Participate in an in-depth interview. The interview will take between 1-2 hours and may be conducted in person or by phone. The interview will be recorded. You will be asked to give consent prior to the interview, and may be asked to also give consent at a later stage. Follow-up questions may be asked by phone or email. You will be provided with a written transcript of your interview and given fourteen days to request any changes to the transcript.

What will happen to the information collected?
The information collected will be used by the researcher to form part of the data that will be used to write a PhD thesis. It is possible that articles and presentations may also be an outcome of the research. Only the researcher, Hamish Crocket and supervisors, Bob Rinehart and Richard Pringle, will be privy to the transcripts and recordings. All research material will be kept securely by the University of Waikato for five years. After this point, transcripts will be destroyed and recordings erased. The researcher will keep copies of the transcripts but will treat them with the strictest confidentiality. Participants can choose whether to be named in publications and every effort will be made to disguise the identity of participants who wish to remain anonymous.

Declaration to participants
If you take part in the study, you have the right to:
- Refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study up to fourteen days after your transcript has been returned to you.
- Ask any further questions about the study that occurs to you during your participation.
- Be given access to a summary of findings from the study when it is concluded.
- Complete anonymity and confidentiality; you will not be identified as a source of information.

Further information

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Researcher: Supervisor:
Hamish Crocket   Associate Professor Bob
University of Waikato   Rinehart
hamish.crocket@gmail.com   Department of Sport and
                                    Leisure Studies
                                            University of Waikato
                                            rinehart@waikato.ac.nz

Interview Participant Consent Form

Playing with ethics?: A Foucauldian examination of ethical subjectivities in Ultimate Frisbee.

Consent Form for Participants

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to decline to answer any particular questions in the study, or to withdraw from the study up to fourteen days after my interview transcript has been returned to me. I understand I can withdraw any information I have provided up to fourteen days after my interview transcript has been returned to me. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality and anonymity set out on the **Participant Information Sheet**.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Participant Information Sheet**.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Additional Consent as Required

I wish to be named/ remain anonymous in any scholarly work arising from this research.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name and contact information:
Hamish Crocket
University of Waikato
hamish.crocket@gmail.com

Supervisor's Name and contact information:
Associate Professor Bob Rinehart
Department of Sport and Leisure Studies
University of Waikato
rinehart@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix C: Biography of Participants

I have written biographies of my main participants; my team mates from my elite open team and my interview participants. Where necessary, I have slightly modified the biographies to preserve anonymity of my participants.

Elite Open Team

Mitchell: in his late thirties, was one of our two coaches. A former elite player, he had played multiple World Championships and a season with an elite open US club. Mitchell is an architect, is married to another Ultimate player and has two children. Mitchell reduced his hours of work in order to be an active parent. Mitchell had grown up playing rugby and cricket, and in his early twenties played both rugby and Ultimate, before giving up rugby and focusing on Ultimate.

Brett: in his mid thirties, was our other coach. In many respects, Brett was still an elite player. He trained with us and still plays competitively at national level and, in Masters grade, at international level. Like Mitchell, he had played multiple World Championships and a season with an elite open US club. An economist, Brett is married to another Ultimate player and has three children. Brett had been an elite soccer player, but had given up soccer for Ultimate in his early twenties.

Heath: in his early thirties, was our head captain. He had been playing for nine years at the time of my research, including a season playing competitive college-level Ultimate in the US, and three worlds campaigns. Heath is an engineer. Heath had played numerous team and lifestyle sports including rugby,

hockey, surfing and snowboarding, but in recent years has had little time for sport outside of Ultimate.

Kevin: in his mid-twenties was a co-captain. He had played a central role in creating and organizing the team for our Worlds campaign. Somewhat unusually, Kevin had begun playing Ultimate as a sixteen year old and was playing in his third Worlds tournament. Kevin was training to become a teacher during our campaign and was in a relationship with another Ultimate player.

Darren: in his late twenties, was our third co-captain. Darren was an expatriate American, who had played competitive Ultimate in the US, before immigrating to New Zealand with his wife approximately four years ago. A youth pastor, Darren was heavily involved in developing youth Ultimate in our region. Darren's wife also played Ultimate, and they both played soccer in addition to Ultimate.

Phillip: in his late twenties was playing in his first Worlds campaign. He had played Ultimate for around seven years and saw this as an opportunity to further develop his game. An engineer, Phillip was also a keen musician. Phillip was single at the time of my research. In addition to Ultimate, Phillip was an active disc golf player.

Aaron: in his mid twenties was playing in his first elite Worlds campaign. He had played an earlier Worlds tournament, but not on a competitive team. Also an engineer, Aaron married another elite Ultimate player two months after

Worlds. Aaron was an active disc golf player, and had played little sport prior to taking up Ultimate at university.

Simon: in his early thirties, was playing in his second Worlds campaign. Also an engineer, Simon married another Ultimate player a few months prior to Worlds. Simon was active in other lifestyle sports, particularly mountain biking and disc golf.

John: in his late twenties, was playing in his first Worlds campaign. Before joining the team, he was well known as a spectacular, athletic but non-serious player. During the year, John transformed his game and is now widely seen as both spectacular and reliable on the field. John was married to another Ultimate player. John was self-employed and had played soccer prior to taking up Ultimate.

Daniel: in his early thirties, was playing in his first Worlds campaign. Daniel had been heavily involved in organizing Ultimate in New Zealand for a number of years. Married to an elite player, Daniel was the primary care-giver of their child.

Robert: In his early twenties, Robert was our youngest player. This was his first experience playing elite Ultimate. Although enthusiastic, Robert struggled to commit to team trainings, which others found difficult to accept. Robert was single for most of my fieldwork. Robert worked in a number of temporary jobs during our Worlds campaign.

Richard: in his early twenties, was playing his first Worlds campaign. An expatriate American, he had played elite college-level Ultimate in the States before moving to New Zealand to live with his New Zealand partner, who was also an elite player. Although a university graduate, Richard struggled to find jobs to fit his qualifications and worked a number of temporary jobs during the our twelve month campaign.

Michael: in his late twenties, was playing in his first Worlds campaign. However, he had committed himself to elite Ultimate prior to this tournament and had trialled unsuccessfully for a previous Worlds team. An engineer, Michael was also central to the creation and organization of the team for the Worlds campaign. Like John, Michael transformed his game during our twelve month training period and is now widely regarded as one of the best throwers in the country. Michael was also an active disc golf player. Of Middle Eastern ancestry, Michael lived in multiple countries while growing up, although he now firmly identifies himself as a New Zealander. Michael is in a relationship with a non-Ultimate player, with whom he shares a commitment to a range of ethical causes, such as animal welfare.

Grant: In his mid-twenties, was playing in his second World's campaign. Although serious and passionate on the field, Grant was one of the central figures in team humour off the field. Grant was in a long-distance relationship with another Ultimate player and worked in the fitness industry.

Andrew: in his late twenties, was in his third Worlds campaign. He was a widely respected, but quietly spoken player. He moved overseas for a postdoctoral fellowship way through our campaign. While overseas, he played for another elite club, however, he joined us for Worlds.

Harold: in his mid-twenties, was playing his first Worlds campaign. A Canadian of Chinese ancestry, he had played elite Ultimate in Canada before moving to New Zealand. He returned to Canada part-way through our twelve month campaign, and, like Andrew, joined us for the Worlds tournament. Although a qualified secondary teacher, upon his return to Canada, Harold worked in a bank.

Trevor: in his early twenties, was playing his first Worlds campaign. An American, Trevor had played elite college-level Ultimate in the US before spending a year in New Zealand. Trevor was recruited by Kevin for the team, however, he returned to the US, and only joined us for the Worlds tournament. Trevor had been working as an assistant in special education.

Jay: in his early twenties, was playing his first Worlds campaign. Like Trevor, he had played elite college-level Ultimate in the US before spending a year in New Zealand. Trevor was recruited by Kevin for the team, however, he returned to the US, and only joined us for the Worlds tournament. In the US, Jay played on an elite mixed team. I did not record Jay's occupation; however, John told me he was a professional poker player.

Josh: in his late twenties, had a peripheral involvement with the team. Although he was an experienced elite player, he was something of a maverick; trying to etch out a living as a DJ, and attending trainings irregularly. Continually opposed to the structure our coaches were teaching us and struggling to find work, he ended up taking advantage of his dual citizenship and moving to Europe. He subsequently played on a far weaker European team at Worlds. While his athleticism was missed, most players expressed relief that he had not joined us as he had never attempted to fit into the team's structures and patterns.

Interview Participants

Phillip: Key informant, see elite open team

Mitchell: Key informant, see elite open team

John: Key informant, see elite open team

Heath: Key informant, see elite open team

Beth is an American with a Master's degree in language education. Growing up in New England, she was an elite athlete at high school and a two season elite athlete at college. After going through a protracted retirement from competitive team sports, Beth began playing Ultimate while studying for her Master's degree. She had immigrated to New Zealand approximately 6 years before our interview. I had met Beth several times through a team mate who we were both close friends with. We had also played against each other on numerous occasions and my team had stayed at Beth and her partner's house when playing in a tournament. At the time of our interview Beth was a full time mother. Beth no longer plays Ultimate but has been involved in mountain running for a number of years.

Gerald, in his early twenties, was a club-mate of mine when I lived in the United Kingdom. He grew up playing soccer, rugby and cricket and reported that his father was very disappointed in him when gave these up. He was introduced to Ultimate by a friend in his course at University in his first year of study. When I interviewed him, he was completing his Masters in Archaeology. Gerald still plays social Ultimate.

Bruce, in his late twenties, grew up playing soccer and cricket. He was introduced to Ultimate through his sister's boyfriend, and quickly found he had no time to play other sports. Ten years later, he was firmly established in his city's Ultimate scene, playing on multiple nights each week. Bruce approached me at a tournament and offered to take part in an interview. From this offer, I was also able to interview three of his team mates; namely, his girlfriend, Samantha, Regan and Bradley.

Samantha, in her early thirties, took part through 'snowball' recruitment. She had played netball throughout high school and was an elite ballet dancer before deciding to move on. She was recruited to Ultimate by an old school friend who she bumped into by chance. Samantha was and still is heavily involved in Ultimate in her city of residence.

Regan, in his mid thirties, was another snow-ball recruit I gained through Bruce. Regan started playing as an undergraduate student. He had played ever

since at a variety of levels, although today, he focuses more on social tournaments. Regan works as a builder.

Bradley, in his mid twenties, was my final snow-ball recruit from Bruce. He had played rugby as a teenager, but his career as a front row forward was ended by back injury sustained by a collision with a car. Matt was introduced to Ultimate by a work colleague two years before our interview, and is now an avid player. Matt is currently an undergraduate university student.

Regina, was in her late teens when I interviewed her. She was a member of my former club in the UK and she was a snowball recruit who I interviewed when I visited this club prior to Worlds. A first year university student, Regina had been introduced to Ultimate by her older brother and had started university determined to take the sport up. Prior to playing Ultimate, she had not played sport outside of physical education classes. Evidently a quick learner, Regina had been selected for the Great Britain U19s women's Ultimate team.

Andy, was in his late twenties when I interviewed him. A visiting American, he 'picked up' for my non-elite club's mixed team for a tournament. Andy regarded himself as a competitive but socially orientated player. Prior to playing Ultimate, he had played soccer and basketball, before taking up tennis and skiing in his later adolescent years. An engineer, Andy was in a committed relationship. Andy had recently taken up an administrative role in his region's social Ultimate league.

Shelly, was in her late thirties when I interviewed her. An immensely experienced elite player, she had taken part in eight World Championships and spent the better part of twenty years playing both serious and social tournaments. Shelly had grown up in rural New Zealand and played an extensive range of sports at high school before discovering Ultimate as a university student. Shelly was a teacher and, a few months after playing at the Worlds I conducted research at, married another Ultimate player.