

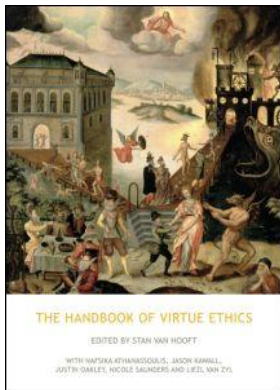
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Sporting virtue and its development

Michael McNamee

SPORT AS A MODERN MORALITY PLAY

In Medieval Europe, the Roman Catholic Church was the dominant social and political institution as well as the seat of higher learning. The vast majority of the populace, however, were illiterate and so the possibility of their following or even understanding its principal ceremony, Holy Mass, conducted in Latin was unthinkable. One fairly widespread way of reducing the mysteriousness of religious morality was the enactment of morality plays. Around this time, travelling circuses not only brought entertainment to the masses, but typically included in their show a morality play where good and evil were played out on a stage and where what was at stake was the very soul of the principal character: everyman. In such a way, the dramatic mode brought the expectations of good conduct – and the wages of sin – into sharp and simple relief. Though crudely analogous, it is my contention that sports, among other things, now fulfil this role or function on a global scale. In a world where the enlightenment myth of shared morality is assaulted by anthropologists, cultural commentators and philosophers alike, sports offer a cognitively simple canvas of good and evil writ large in the everyday contexts of the arena, the court, the field and, of course, the back pages of our newspapers and the screens of our televisions. Just as the moralizing point of the medieval plays was not dramatically dense, one does not need complex cognitive or moral vocabularies to understand cheating and courage, or fair and foul play, in the varied forms of sport. Sports thus offer a valuable vehicle for ethical development in the light of the clash of moral cultures that the present world throws up (McNamee 2008). In this chapter I shall review briefly the idea that both virtues and vices may be developed and ramified in and through the practices of sports, and consider some paradigm examples of virtuous and vicious sport.

SPORTS AS MORAL LABORATORIES

Sports have sometimes been referred to, rather aptly, as moral laboratories (Parry 1986; McFee 2004). This conception does not presuppose that sports are a universal morality as sports lovers sometimes maintain, merely that they are social sites rich in opportunities for ethical development. This sounds like a noble but nostalgic belief. But what does it mean? As is well known, Aristotle predicates his ethical writings on the idea of living well (eudaimonia: flourishing) in terms of practical wisdom supported by the well-disposed and relatively settled set of character traits that are typically called “virtues”. After him, as is equally well known, St Thomas Aquinas developed his specifically theological account of the virtues, the confluence of which largely forms our understanding of Christian virtues and which helped to shape what was later dubbed “muscular Christianity” as an ethico-sporting ideal.

The literature of the time, and subsequent historical writings (e.g. Holt 1984), have focused on the idea of good character; of being the right sort of person. The old saw that to sow a character is to reap a destiny is an ancient belief but it played an enormously significant role in the development of the British Empire. British public schools (i.e. fee-paying private ones) were the breeding grounds for the recruitment of the officer classes of the military. Calling upon the spiritual support of Christianity, the leadership, example and good character of officers were thought to give both purpose and poise to their military and political conquests. The spirit of the times is captured in the quotation, widely attributed to Lord Wellington, that the Battle of Waterloo (against Napoleon’s armies) was won on the playing fields of Eton, Britain’s most exclusive public school. The idea is canonized in the poem “Vitaī Lampada (‘They pass on the torch of life’)” by Sir Henry Newbolt where the poet suggests how the character of the soldier, having been forged in the learning of cricket, will ensure that his conduct at war will be upright and unwavering: that he will strive his best to “play up, play up, and play the game”. Of course, critics of such a view are legion. Yet their criticisms (militaristic, feminist, psychological) have not entirely dismantled the belief that sports can be character building where good character is thought to be some desirable combination of virtues and the absence of vices. In order to tease out what sense remains to the idea after such critical scrutiny some remarks on the nature of sports is necessary.

SPORTS DEFINED

We understand sports as social practices in which a range of embodied capacities are developed in order to achieve an artificially constructed goal, using only means that are permitted (see variously W. M. Brown 1990; Morgan 1994; McNamee 1995; Suits [1978] 2005). It is often said that they have a gratuitous logic: in the playing of sports we accept the rules, which make the goal harder to achieve, just for the pleasure and satisfaction found in both the task and the achievements offered and secured. Pursuit of the ends of sports both requires and promotes various human (though not uniquely human) capacities of coordination, concentration, effort, flexibility, skill, strength, speed and so on. What is uniquely human about sports, however, is their institutionalized rule-governed nature. The rules give structure and meaning to play, which is otherwise observed throughout

the whole animal kingdom. Though ethnologists might argue that in animal play too we may observe a form of ritualized rule-following that is the genesis of sports (Sansome 1992), it is the formal rules that set sports apart as human practices. To these I now turn.

It is a commonplace to observe that there are both constitutive and regulative rules in sports.¹ The former constitute or define the nature of the activity – the pitcher's mound in baseball may only be so high; the court may be only thus long or wide, the bat made only of certain specified materials, the ball must be pressurized between this degree and that, the playing time may not exceed so many minutes or hours or days, and so on. Essentially, these rules define the activity. They are of little ethical significance in and of themselves. They are arbitrary, though not random. More interesting for present purposes are the regulative rules, which prescribe and proscribe what can be understood as play within that sport. Thus one may not, whilst being said to play the game, take short cuts in a marathon (or use the bus, as the winner of the Boston women's marathon did in 1979), employ weapons in a boxing contest, strike an opponent in soccer, grasp an opponent's helmet in US football, use prohibited doping substances in athletics (and nearly all other sports) and so on. Regulative rules affect conduct directly, and character in indirect ways.

It is well documented that professional cyclists were using doping on an industrial scale during the 1990s.² The widespread use of testosterone (to develop and retain muscular growth), corticosteroids (for pain relief and control of the body's inflammatory responses) and EPO (erythropoietin: a synthetic product that allows for the greater production of haemoglobin enabling the cyclist to transport more oxygen around the body and thus maintain optimal speeds for longer) is not contested but was tolerated by athletes as an occupational necessity if one wanted to be competitive at the elite level. But it was a gross violation of the regulative rules of the sport.

This proper recognition of the place of regulative rules is pregnant with ethical possibilities. It underwrites the view of sports as ethical practices. It also forces us to eschew a reductionist and technicist conception – the view that sports are no more than exercise of technical or tactical prowess where morality (so to speak) goes on holiday.³ Players must, because of the presence of regulative rules, recognize that there is a logical demand for ethical rules within sports. There will always be an implicit ethical expectation that players adhere to the regulative rules. Of course, this raises the problem of how we are to understand conduct that, though illicit, is recognizable as an example of conduct widely practised in the game. This is not, of course, to suggest that sport is and must be ethically admirable. But formalists in the philosophy of sport rightly point out that there is a sense in which players who do not conform to the regulative rules of a given sport are logically not playing the game.⁴ Accepting this point we must recognize the limited nature of the conception of sports as merely technical enterprises.

The nature of the sports contest itself is variously contested. The differences of the characterization themselves can lend ethical flavour. Sport has often been conceptualized as a form of social contract (Fraleigh 1984; Loland 2002; Simon 2004). Sometimes scholars have taken an explicitly Kantian line (e.g. Fraleigh 1984) in order to develop a system of duties that athletes and coaches or team managers are obliged rationally and morally to follow in order to maintain good and right contests. At other times, scholars have drawn on liberal and deontological influences (Loland 2002; Simon 2004) to argue that those who engage voluntarily in social practices such as sport must be committed to certain procedural demands such as equality under the rules, respect for the officials, and fair play.

Simon (2004), in particular, argues that sportspersons contract to each other to share a mutual test to determine athletic excellence. Loland (2002) offers the analogy of a scientific experiment where what is sought is the isolation of a crucial variable: athletic talent. The experiment (i.e. the contest) should be so designed that extraneous variables (funding, sponsorship, luck, scientific support, weather) should not play a determining role, for this would render them a contaminant in the would-be scientific study. Within these approaches, broadly understood as “contractarian”, there is relatively little said of the personal dispositions of the contestants that we might call sporting virtues. Equally, in the only systematic utilitarian monograph on sports in the English language (Tamburrini 2000) little space is given to the virtues. Where they are mentioned they are seen in an executive manner so that, when calculations promote conclusions to the greatest utility, the athlete is justified in acting in accord with the injunction proposed by the virtue. This is, of course, not a substantive virtue-ethical position. Virtue’s role is entirely subsidiary. Tamburrini uses his framework, controversially, to conclude that acts of cheating (such as Maradona’s famous hand-ball goal in the 1986 FIFA world cup) was morally justified in the face of the historical imperialism of Britain over Argentina, and particularly the invasion of the Malvinas (Falkland) islands in the 1980s.

This example aside, the cultivation of sporting excellence is widely seen to require a range of personal characteristics (virtues) that both suffuse athletic attempts to secure victory in sports and also seem to be the basis of the athlete’s self-worth and public admiration. In striving for success in sports individuals come to understand themselves, in some ways, as athletes who are at various stages of learning, improving, maintaining and, perhaps for those lucky and gifted few, perfecting abilities – and, indeed, themselves. As they are initiated into the practice they become better, and come to recognize and embrace objective standards of performance and appreciation; they come to learn “where they stand” in relation to both local and historical standards of excellence. This understanding of sports as social practices draws heavily on Alasdair MacIntyre’s seminal work *After Virtue* (1984)⁵ and has developed a substantial body of literature within the philosophy and ethics of sports, including both articles (Brown 1990; McNamee 1995; Butcher & Schneider 1998) and monographs (Reid 2002; Feezell 2006; Morgan 2006; McNamee 2008; Dombrowski 2009).

SPORTS, PRACTICES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF VIRTUE

Sports talk is littered with reference to the achievement of excellence. Virtues, just like vices, are acquired human qualities. Whether sports initiate the young into ethical ways of living is an empirical question: they may and they may not (McNamee 1992; Meakin 1982; Carr 1998) depending upon how they are taught and coached, and depending also upon their upbringing: what their own parenting or child-rearing practices have been hitherto.

Most discussions in the philosophy and ethics of sports take some kind of Aristotelian approach to understand virtue in sports. Equally, some authors outside of sport have used it as the context through which to illuminate the nature of virtue. Take, for example, the Oxford literary scholar, children’s author and Christian educator, C. S. Lewis, who offers an excellent account of the nature of virtue using sports as the illustrative context:

What you mean by a good player is the man whose eye and muscles and nerves have been so trained by making innumerable good shots that they can now be relied upon ... They have a certain tone or quality which is there even when he is not playing ... In the same way a man who perseveres in doing just actions gets in the end a certain quality of character. Now it is that quality rather than the particular actions that we mean when we talk of virtue. ([1952] 2001: 59)

Like all virtue ethicists, Lewis proposes a dispositional account of virtue. A wine glass is brittle by disposition, so it will smash if I drop it; its nature is to be fragile. Human dispositions are more complex. We say that the courageous person seeks to achieve a valuable end in the face of danger or fear. And to call a person courageous is to say that they are *typically* so; that they are by nature disposed to courageous action in *normal* circumstances. Now, if we are to say that virtues like courage are acquired human qualities, we must say at least a little about how they are acquired. By employing some Aristotelian concepts such as initiation, emulation and habituation we can get an initial grasp of the moral phenomenology of sports.

In the early stages of the development of ethically sound character, habit formation is critical. Practice does not make perfect, as parents and grandparents are apt to say. Rather, practice makes permanent, a point observed by Aristotle long before the sports psychologist's remark supplanted the homespun wisdom. He writes: "It makes no small difference then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather *all* the difference" (*NE* II.I 1103b22–5).

Richard Peters put the same point beautifully when he remarked that "the palace of reason is entered through the courtyard of habit" (1966: 314). Now, the end point of secular moral education within a liberal framework is the development of rational autonomy which will entail moral autonomy: the ability to reason one's way to the right course of action free of external influences. Yet it scarcely takes an educator to point out that full rational autonomy is not in the possession of the young, and takes its time to flower in adulthood. It is, therefore, the acquisition of good habits that we are crucially after in general, and in sport in particular.

The pedagogical potential of sport as a moral laboratory rests *precariously* on habituation. I say "precariously" because the habits that are fostered by the sports coach are as good and as bad as the coach him- or herself. Children perceive quickly the dissonance between word and action. "Do as I *say* not as I *do*" is a poor – though not entirely useless – moral dictum often used by parents, educators and coaches. As the Duc de la Rochefoucauld once remarked, hypocrisy is the tribute that vice pays to virtue. The coach with bad habits who exhorts their young athletes towards ethically and technically good performances is to be preferred to the coach who demands his or her players to cheat, foul or be spoilsports. But children fasten upon other habits of the coach: whom they praise or chastise or whom they select or put on the bench. More than this, they focus on adverbial qualities too: how the coach praises or chastises; the language that they use; the manner in which they select and pull players from the field of play, and so on. These habits, sometimes accompanied by deliberate choice, sometimes not, also have an influence on habit formation of youths who have a keen eye on the distribution of reward and punishment. So, for example, long before children can theorize justice they can exclaim with righteous indignation "That's not fair!" at the privileging of a team mate over them for no (or no perceived) good reason.

It is true that youths model their behaviour, language, choices, postures, and so on, on the coach or sports star, emulating them within and beyond the contexts of sports. These processes of emulation (loosely: following role models) and identification (whom do we see ourselves in the light of) are not a fully rational affair. Sport stars have long been held up as role models, and often against their own exhortations. The NBA star Charles Barkley famously starred in a Nike advert where he declared that he was not a role model. It seems being “bad” sells sports kit. Or so the marketers must have thought. As was pointed out by many,⁶ others choose one as a role model. The decision is not made by the professional athlete despite their protestations. Such is the power of sports and their historical trajectory: they provide exemplars of human athletic ideals that are inherently normative. Whether children ought to choose basketball or baseball players, *inter alia*, is another matter. The limits of what the sports stars’ roles are and what precisely they are supposed to be modelling is, however, not at all clear. What is clear is that the beginning of moral education in general, or moral apprenticeship in sport in particular, is necessarily heteronymous. Children are literally at the mercy of those who are entrusted with their care and development in and through sports. And it is certainly the case that when children become serious about their sports, they often spend more time in the company of coaches than they do with their parents. Thus the choice of role models, or of habits, by children and parents is a matter of the first importance.

Though obvious, it is also important to note that this process of initiation occurs over time. There may be Gestalt shifts, where learners make a sporting and moral leap in their progress, but the general picture is slower and less dramatic. The British philosopher of education Ray Elliot offers a beautiful account of the phenomenological character of initiation and personal development within a practice that is richly suggestive for sports:

A child at school finds a subject attractive, takes delight in it, and begins to look forward to the lessons in which it is taught. The subject seems to welcome his [sic] attention, his work pleases his teacher, and he comes to think of himself as “good at” the subject. It becomes “his subject.” During its lessons time passes with a strange swiftness. He believes it to be “better” than other subjects, and is prepared to give up other pleasures because absorption in his subject pleases him still more. Perhaps he develops a passion for it, and begrudges time spent on anything else. In due course it dawns on the student that his enthusiastic interest in his subject is not enough. There are standards which have to be met, and to meet them he has to develop skills and abilities which he did not originally associate with his subject. He also has to do a good deal of work which seems to be commonly like drudgery. Pleasures do not come easily now, but he finds fulfilment in trying to satisfy the demands his subject makes upon him. He has become devoted to its disciplines and feels at times that he has been enlisted in its service. (1974: 136)

This story is very much in keeping with Aristotelian ideas of good living: first we pursue and repeat that which is pleasurable, coming to pursue the honourable only later, after (as it were) we have been enlisted or initiated into a certain virtue-laden conception of the practice as a worthwhile activity. A key point of the ethical development of children as they become youths (in what we might call the intermediate stage between heteronomy and autonomy), when they attempt to explore the limits of their bodies, identity and values, is

the exemplars they choose to emulate. Clearly at this time their character is in transition. In the right circumstances children and youths learn to adopt attitudes less egoistically driven and come to care for, as well as to reason about, others' interests and needs. Here the knowing acceptance of the rules of sport can play an important role in curbing excessive egoism. If games are to be understood in some loosely contractarian way, then the players must fulfil their role as contestants.⁷ Crucially, youth is also a time for the formation of emotional sensibilities that are cognitively grounded. In this stage of development, moral emotions such as regret, shame and guilt as well as pride and loyalty come to be thought of as appropriate or inappropriate responses to situations and acts. Typically, these responses come to form patterns of more or less stable perception, emotion and deliberation. To act virtuously is to act from a settled character that sees and judges things properly.

In formal terms, moral exhortation and instruction will be critical in youth sports. This is why philosophers have stressed that sports can be an important arena for the development of virtue: by providing, in a very public way, occasions for the demonstration of good and evil in cognitively simple contexts. This is why they may aptly be called modern "morality plays". Creating relatively controlled, and sometimes contrived, situations, we can afford opportunities not merely for sporting youths to "try out" moral action, but to think and feel it out too. It is rare, in sports at least, that one does not know the right thing to do.

Nevertheless, as Aristotle remarked, to be virtuous is to feel the right emotions at the right time, to the right degree and in relation to the right objects. If we adopt something like an Aristotelian approach here we can see how the doctrine of the mean (that virtue lies in a medial state between excess and deficiency) can operate in a sports milieu. Referring back to the use of performance-enhancing drugs by professional cyclists during the 1990s, for example, it is widely reported that the "peleton" (the group of professional riders) employed a mafia-style "omerta" – an enforced silence – in order to preserve its cheating secrets. We may understand this norm as a vice: the adoption of an uncritical excess of loyalty on the part of peleton members.

If sports are understood as mere contracts, we can see how situations like the omerta of the professional peleton arise. Where "everyone" is doping there can be no issue of unfairness. Here is one limitation of the model. A contractarian might respond that while there may be fairness here, there is not "play", only its violation. So their model is not without resources to respond to communities of cheats. And the virtue-ethical understanding of sports, its critics will say, is not without its problems. They may note how Aristotle talks of the good and wise *man* and often of the great-souled *man* when he is referring to acts of manly courage and nobility. That form of courage all too easily slips into recklessness in an attempt to display one's machismo, whether in playing when one is injured, engaging in violent acts against the opponent's "hard man" in soccer or "enforcer" in ice hockey, and so on. Such apparent virtues stand in need of detoxification less now than they did in Aristotelian times. The Athenian society of his day was class- and ethnically biased (and he knew this well, being an outsider: a Macedonian) and it is no historical insight to say that it was deeply sexist too.

Nonetheless, his emphasis upon the absolute necessity of habituated action in the moral development of the young is as apt today as it was then. Often, perhaps mostly, we act according to our early habituation and only thereafter according to our reflective appreciation of what good people would do in such situations. Blind rule-following observance is

in a clear sense not the same thing as following a rule wholeheartedly, where one's actions are predicated on a conception and dedication to do the right thing by being the right kind of person. Choice and contextual considerations must be given due attention in the wise selection and prosecution of a shot. Thus, like a schema, youths learn the generalized responses to situations and then must refine them, becoming ever more sensitive or fine-tuned to the particularities of each situation.

This youthful stage of life and moral development is often summed up by the phrase that one has learnt the "that" of moral action. One appreciates that one must act according to the dictates of virtue. In order fully to mature, to reach the final stage of Aristotelian moral development, moral agents must also comprehend the "why". As Bernadette Tobin puts it: "Acquiring the why in ethics will help [those in the intermediate stage] to overcome the gaps, unclarity, and straightforward mistakes in his moral awareness" (1989: 203). But that, of course, is the project of a lifetime, not merely one for youth sport.

A SUGGESTIVE CATALOGUE OF VIRTUES IN SPORT

I cannot offer here a completed scheme or catalogue of the virtues in sports. I shall merely indicate what virtues all athletes ought to cultivate and then to consider some virtues and vices that might attend in a particularly important way to sports.

Any catalogue would have to include such virtues as are likely to have a transhistorical and transcultural reach, such as fairness, honesty, integrity and trustworthiness. Few if any would dispute that these should be included on the list of virtues expected of a great sportsperson (or anyone else for that matter) even though we might neither expect them nor find them in elite sports arenas. However, in elaborating the virtues of, say, an Olympian or a great professional sportsperson, something higher than moral minimalism ought to be aspired to. The persisting ideal of sportspersons as honourable heroes would be sullied were they to take on so callous or cavalier an attitude to the constitutive and regulative rules of sports, the best traditions of those sports, and the standards of honesty and integrity we properly expect of (often excessively paid) professionals.

The expectation that professional athletes be moral exemplars may be a contingently historical one, but it is no less important for that. Even at its roots in ancient Greek athletic struggles or contests (*agon*), we are aware of the myth of champions winning only laurel wreaths. To the contrary, we now know that they were paid handsomely but were expected to behave honourably (see D. C. Young 1984). Nevertheless, there is a rational-ethical demand upon athletes that is not culturally relative. Contestants must pursue their instrumental goals (such as prestige, status, wealth) through sports according to a normative framework. The boxer cannot bring a machete into the ring any more than the sprinter can ride a motorbike.⁸

Moreover, as the contractarians emphasize, contestants agree to fall under the authority of the constitutive and regulative rules, and to oblige themselves to play within them within a system of mutual respect. These agreements must be supported by very general virtues such as honesty, respect, fairness, trust and so on. Equally, sports can be corrupted by those vices that attend egoism and the pursuit of status, for sports, being perfectionist practices, require the classification of contestants into winners and losers. In doing so, they also allow for comparative ranking. I shall therefore focus on a group of important

aretaic considerations around such ranking: envy, hubris, humility and *schadenfreude* (the pleasure felt at another's suffering).

It is often said that sport's focus on competition fosters egoism. Logically speaking, this cannot be true. Even the etymology of the word "competition" tells us that it is a coming together to test the other (Kretchmar 1975). And one can only share a test when one has agreed to cooperate. What is playing sport if not an appeal to suspend all differences of creed or colour in order to strive together for victory? Thus the demonstration of athletic superiority requires co-operation. The seriousness of the competition within and between individuals and teams heightens the stakes.

Understanding our responses to victory and defeat is a critical part of an education in sports. This is not restricted to the formal education one sees in schools but is a lifelong pursuit for those who love sports. Much ink has been spilt in the sport philosophical literature on whether one should run up the score when it is clear that one's opponent or opposing team is clearly beaten (Dixon 1992). One important aspect of this debate concerns the character of the agent or team who strives to humiliate their opponent. It is important to note that sports are public rituals; they are both play and display. One's grace and control are on show just as one's ineptness and anxieties are too. Their public nature renders their participants vulnerable to excessive evaluations of self-mastery or loathing. To have one's self-esteem lowered by a crushing defeat is one thing; to be humiliated by the opponent quite another. A moral quality can attend defeat, especially in conditions where one has shouted one's mouth off about one's own exaggerated prowess and the paltriness of the opposition: hubris begets humiliation. The stories of athletes who have engaged in "trash talking" only to be subsequently humbled are legion. There is something of a morality play here too: it would be a tale such as might be found in Aesop's fables (Skillen 1998). There is a darker side to these morality plays though.

Consider the example of Sugar Ray Leonard, one of the greatest ever boxers, and his *bête noir*, Roberto Duran. In this "play" the clash of boxing styles was reinforced by the mien of the central characters. Leonard was physically beautiful, graceful in his movements, and exceptionally articulate. His opponent was the opposite, but was highly esteemed for his endurance, power and bravery. Prior to their first world title fight, Duran challenged Leonard and mocked him, drawing attention to his appearance and disposition and challenging his heterosexuality. As a technical strategy it was outstandingly effective. An incensed Leonard fought the kind of contest – fuelled with anger – that suited Duran's style. The contest became more of a brawl and it was no surprise that the brawler won. It was a disastrous lesson for Leonard who was beaten by a vastly inferior boxer in technical terms.

In the re-match, however, Leonard exacted his revenge. In the early rounds his technical virtuosity was clearly on display. He was quicker of mind as well as fist and foot. He hit Duran so many times and with the full array of combinations. Duran could not get near enough to land a significant blow. By the middle rounds, Duran was tired and frustrated at his inabilities, and this was compounded by Leonard's public demonstration of his pugilistic excellence and of Duran's limitations. Without verbal assault, Leonard's entire performances exuded élan, an aesthetic dimension of which Duran's own mien was the antithesis. In the eighth round Leonard delivered the *coup de grace*. Leonard simply dropped his hands and exposed his chin (rather like a nineteenth-century circus fighter might do to take good money off drunk or overweening amateurs in the audience) but

so skilful were his evasions Duran could still not land a punch. Then Leonard started to sweep his right arm in great cartwheels like a cartoon character in order to mock Duran, and as his opponent charged towards him Leonard caught him with a sucker punch with his left glove. The crowd hooted with derision. Upon the bell for the end of the round Duran sat on his stool and quit.

The sting in the morality play, however, is this. Before we cheer too loudly at the laying low, the humiliation, of Duran, we should be wary of cheering for Leonard. What vices attend his strategy and its execution? While it is easy to see how Duran got his comeuppance for the disrespect and homophobia of his earlier remarks, what kind of person relishes the *schadenfreude*: the pleasure one feels at the suffering of another? John Portmann (2000) argues that *schadenfreude* is the emotional corollary of justice. Much of the ethical appraisal here depends on the genesis of the emotion. *Schadenfreude* does not visit us like a thief in the night. The feeling is more often a product of our own envy or lack of self-esteem, so that when we see the proud and hubristic laid low, we feel a little better about ourselves. When we have curdled the negative attitudes to our opponents it is clear that we construct their humiliation in a vicious way, whether the vice is of envy, or hatred, or simply a product of our own lack of self-esteem or respect.

We can see then that the quality of our winning and losing is of ethical import. And that import is not a hostage to ideas of justice or fair play or simply of respect, though that notion is at play in the boxing example above. And note also that the humility that is absent as Leonard crowed over Duran renders him vulnerable to subsequent humiliation. We may even think his conduct shameful: failing to achieve widely shared standards of the respect owed to one's opponent. Moreover, we can see how humility in sport, understood as a proper sense of one's own prowess and limitations in the traditions of the sporting practices, becomes our best defence against humiliation. Victory and defeat are not so much imposters, as Rudyard Kipling put it, but need assigning to their proper place. And that proper assignment is often only the fruit of bitter experience. The virtue of humility, *inter alia*, is a response to a problematic of envy and hubris; wanting what others have and the status they hold, and conceiving of oneself excessively superior to others.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

There are several pointers that can be taken from this brief examination of the various virtues and vices displayed in sports. I shall note merely four. First, the virtues are both cause and effect (C. Taylor 1994). Sports both require them and reproduce them: those not enamoured of courage will hardly take to boxing; those who abhor physical pain will not become marathon runners. Second, it would be unreasonable to select a catalogue from the non-instrumental virtues and expect all sportspersons to instantiate all of them. Just as the virtues are functionally various, we must also recognize the enormous variety of sports and the radically different challenges they pose to contestants. Archery, basketball, hockey, judo, sailing, swimming and track and field all share a competitive logic and a certain winning mindset. Among other things, target sports elevate self-control and discipline. So, too, contact sports elevate courage and prudence. Endurance sports cultivate a capacity to withstand suffering and focus on the end goal. Weight-regulated sportspersons like gymnasts and jockeys must possess enormous self-discipline and be capable of

disciplined self-sacrifice. Third, we can expect a much greater prevalence of instrumental virtues in sport because of their instrumental, goal-oriented nature; but even here there will be some context specificity that may lead to alternative interpretations of those virtues. What counts as courage for the boxer is quite different from that required of the tennis player who goes for an ace at match point down. Yet we call both courageous. Finally, while “fair play” may be thought of as virtuous, it is not a virtue. Clearly, there is more to “fair play” than mere fairness. One might recognize the virtues of altruism, generosity and respect present in many of the applications of that concept. Fair play is thus something of a catch-all. But this point betokens another more general one: the ethical dispositions demanded of, and reproduced in, sports are surely not the product of singular virtues but a complex of them that is both open-textured and contextually sensitive.

I have attempted to sketch out some important points when considering the place of virtue and vice in sports drawn loosely on Aristotelian lines. I have not pursued with much rigour the litany of sporting vices that are evidently present in much elite sport today. Much more can and should be said about how sports may corrupt the young and the not so young, the sportsperson and the fan alike. Nor have I attempted to survey the many (and mostly misguided) attempts to empirically measure moral development and demise in and through sports. Instead I have tried to indicate the variety of virtues and vices in sports and how they might be used properly as vehicles of ethical development.

NOTES

1. While the distinction goes back to Kant, the modern locus is usually thought to be John Searle's work in the philosophy of language where the distinction is developed. It should be noted, however, that the constitutive-regulative distinction was explored thoroughly before Searle's work in an essay by Geoffrey Midgley (1959) in a paper given to the Aristotelian Society in the UK (see Loland & McNamee 2000).
2. See the first-hand accounts of former doping cycling stars David Millar (2011) and Tyler Hamilton (2012).
3. This memorable phrase was first coined by Reddiford (1981).
4. The debate of formalism versus an ethos-based understanding of what constitutes the activity in question is not one I can address here. Its chief value is that it accords significance to how sport is actually played, though it is subject to the criticisms of unreflective ethnocentric bias. See instead Morgan (1994) and Loland & McNamee (2002).
5. Within the sports literature it should be noted that other mainstream ethical writings have furnished philosophers with food for thought, notably Pincoffs (1986), Rorty (1988) and Nussbaum (1990b).
6. Russell Gough's (1997) account is possibly the best and most accessible.
7. I say “loosely” here since to understand them in this way begs deep normative questions concerning the individualism that is thought to underwrite the liberal view of sports as opposed to more communitarian ones, where the notion of a contract is understood in a much weaker way. The social practice model, clearly, is less conducive to a liberal individualistic model of sports. The best discussion of this in the literature is W. Morgan (1994).
8. Writing this chapter in 2012, I am mindful of the furore created by Oscar Pistorius's exclusion from the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and his inclusion in the 2012 London Games. The argument was over whether the use of prosthetics offered an unfair advantage or altered the nature of the activity (see Edwards 2007; Burkett *et al* 2011).