THERE’S NO CRYING IN BASEBALL

How traditions of sport storytelling ignore the ethical foundation of female athletes
Do differences in ethical underpinnings affect the identity formation of men and women in sport?

“I AM A MOTHER AND A WIFE.”
There’s No Crying In Baseball

- Sport is mythic and justice-based
- Sports storytelling promotes the myth
- Women’s stories follow the male model
- Ignores ethical foundation of women
- Creates dissociation in adolescents
- Unresolved without new myth of sport
A Grail quest with Roy Hobbs as Perceval

Hero must prove himself spiritually and morally prepared to succeed
A Grail quest with Roy Hobbs as Perceval

Hero must prove himself spiritually and morally prepared to succeed

In the book, Hobbs strikes out
In the movie, Hobbs hits a home run
THE GRAIL AS SOCIAL ORDER
Ethical principles of justice:
- Equal rights
- Equal opportunity
- A well-ordered society
- Social cooperation from one generation to next
There's no crying in baseball

- Justice in sport is built out of rules
- Justice in sport is about social order
KOHLBERG ON MORAL DEVELOPMENT

- Stage 4 of moral reasoning: “There is an orientation toward authority, fixed rules and the maintenance of social order. Right behavior consists of doing one’s duty, showing respect for authority, and maintaining the given social order for its own sake.”
WORLDVIEW OF SPORTS

- Following direction is a primary virtue
- Hierarchy – Owner, coach, athlete
- Modern mythical form:
  - The opponent is evil
  - Victory is the only goal
  - Independence leads to failure
  - Athletes must give everything to the game
Identity Progression

- Athlete = man
- Man ends career
- Man becomes coach
- Coach = Guardian of social order
- Coach = man
ETHIC OF CARE

Carol Gilligan: Women find their ethical foundation in relationships
Not in rules and rights

Nel Noddings: People have an ethical duty to offer care to the other.
Natural care: Hearing your child crying in the night and wanting to care for the child

Ethical care: When confronted by someone in need, you must commit to considering care.
GROWTH IN WOMEN’S SPORT

Women take up men’s sport in the form played by men.

“IMPLICITLY ADOPTING THE MALE LIFE AS THE NORM, THEY HAVE TRIED TO FASHION WOMEN OUT OF A MASCULINE CLOTH.”

– Carol Gilligan
Elizabeth Debold

Male children adopt masculine, and reject or distance themselves from feminine.

Female children do not reject what is socially defined as masculine.
Children in traditional male sports are engrossed in a world dedicated to creating male identity.

Debold: Girls enjoy male-oriented activities and become ‘more masculine’ ... until adolescence.
“Realizing cultural equations of ‘masculine’ attributes with success, girls who desire success in a career may find themselves divided against their female embodiment and relationships to create a successful identity.”

--Elizabeth Debold
FEMALE SPORT IDENTITY PROGRESSION

- **Child: Athlete = man / woman**
- Female athlete reaches adolescence
- **Adolescent: Athlete = ?** (Debold: Dissociative crisis)
- **Adult: Coach = Guardian of social order**
- Female athlete must split or reject one identity
MEDIA AND FEMALE ATHLETES

Models:
Woman must better the man (Gracie, Heart Like a Wheel)
Woman wins success, finds tragedy (Million Dollar Baby)
Girl stories (National Velvet, Bend It Like Beckham, Blue Crush) that end before adult choices are contemplated
WOMAN LEAVES SPORT TO BE FEMININE
REMOVE STRUCTURAL BARRIERS
BEHIND THE FACADE
BEHIND THE FACADE
BEHIND THE FACADE
BEHIND THE FACADE
A NEW MYTH OF WOMEN’S SPORT?

- Structural changes aren’t enough
- Athlete = Woman
- Coach = Woman
- Gilligan: Women define their identity through relationships of intimacy and care
- Where is the story of relationships of intimacy and care in sport?
CARING MODEL OF SPORT

- Coach must care for athletes
- Coach must teach athletes to care for others
- Dialogue is more important than rules
- Relationships are more important than social order
- The opponent is respected
- The grail is building what Mayeroff calls “appropriate relationships”
CARE EXISTS IN WOMEN’S SPORT
SPORTS WHERE GOAL IS TO PLEASE

Figure skating
Gymnastics
Dressage
Aerial freestyle skiing
Aerial snowboarding
Diving
Dara Torres
Five Olympics
12 medals
MODEL OF SPORT BASED ON CARE
SUCCESS BASED ON RELATIONSHIPS
COACH = WOMAN