

Introduction

“Please Read Me”. Just imagine: reading, writing and researching about the lived experience in sport - what if...

Clive Palmer

This publication originates from an undergraduate module at the University of Central Lancashire called *The Sporting Image*. The module’s cohort comprised in the main of third year students reading for Sports Journalism and some for Sports Studies degrees. The focus of the module being upon iconic features in sport; characters, events, artefacts and images etc. which can be discussed critically from an aesthetic and cultural point of view.

This is the second publication from the module following “*The Sporting Image, Sports Poetry and Creative Writing*” (Palmer, 2009) which was supported by a [sports] poetry writing workshop. Many of the poems transpired to be auto-biographical in nature, or biographical of other’s experiences in sport as well as there being a clear aesthetic design to that kind of writing and importantly, its performance. The storytelling theme of the poems began to merge into longer narratives of the lived experience, see Adamson (2009: 51-53), Randall (2009: 56), Wilson (2009: 75-79) and Hall (2009a: 80-88) which has an increasing relevance to research in socio-cultural aspects of sport. There were over 65 poems included in the book and admittedly some were better than others. To this end, a valuable aspect of our teaching was about some aesthetic criteria for this genre of writing, thereby allowing students to make informed judgements about the quality of their own and other’s work - in this case poetry (2009). The same message about making reasoned, informed aesthetic judgments of quality in the short story was true for the *What If?* project for the 2010 cohort. Sparkes (2009: 304), on the topic of “representational forms and the issue of quality”, urges similarly for the importance of equipping the author/reader with some aesthetic knowledge for reasoning about how good or otherwise a stylised personal narrative or realist tale might be. Pedagogically the poetry endeavour seemed to be not only well justified but extremely valuable for student learning which positively challenged their intellectual and writing skills for later life – and therefore was worth repeating in some way.

As a development on from the poetry book, the longer research-narrative concept gave staff the idea that students might compose short stories which could become re-interpretations about an aspect of sport to demonstrate their creative writing skills. The learning of such writing skills, even at an introductory level, would be demanding and educationally worthwhile in their own right. Additionally the stories would have to be founded upon extensive background research to be plausible and hopefully, as third year students they would have the research bit honed to perfection. The idea being that for an imaginative story to be told, the ending re-written or the new thread to be plausible, the research would have to be all the more thorough, which could only be a good thing by any educator's standards. And so, *What If?* was born, or rather, it was carved!

Having formulated the idea my next step was to track down a professional novelist who would be willing to lead a writing workshop for creative short stories in the subject of Sport, alien to him as it turned out, with 50 completely novice but eager third year students... all with a view to publication - easy! After a short but critical search, critical for me that is, I was very lucky and fortunate to meet Philip Caveney, a professional novelist working on secondment in Higher Education who ran a fantastic workshop for us. This workshop became the foundation for the *What If?* publication. From that point on, ideas for chapters, potential collaborations and invited 'cameo' stories snowballed to flesh out the current table of contents.

Overview of contents

Following the acknowledgements there is a succinct but informative Foreword from Philip Caveney; conciseness being part of his criterion for quality in literature. Philip was UCLAN's Royal Literary Fellow in-residence and his brief account provides an interesting insight to his perception of the task, and of me probably, for making this unusual request of his skills, time and energy.

Introduction

The idea behind the phrase "Please Read Me" in the title, as well as being an obvious request to the reader, is adapted from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* when Alice was faced with a bottle which said "Drink Me" on its label (Carroll, 1865: 29). She drank the contents of the bottle and embarked upon a wonderful adventure as the book's title suggests. It is my interest in the storytelling aspect that I mean to emphasize and draw parallels with our efforts in the *What If?* publication.

But it is also to point out that Carroll's (1865) story has a philosophical subtext and that similarly, all the stories in *What If?* have a biographical or ethnographic subtext of research writing. Carroll (1865) seems to have achieved this philosophical dimension by confronting Alice with dilemmas and decisions along her journey. 'What ought she do?' when given a choice, mulling over a few options and envisaging the what ifs... The scenarios which Carroll places Alice in may play-out some ethical, moral and aesthetic scenarios for those who wish to pick up on them. Correspondingly, many of the *What If?* stories leave 'paper trails' of thought or possibilities for broader consideration should the curious student, researcher or philosopher wish to follow their 'scent'.

The use of the imagination and storytelling to facilitate the teaching of more complex theory may be a powerful mode of educating which appeals to us as mentoring co-authors working in Higher Education. On this educative note the name "Lewis Carroll" was a pseudonym of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson who was a Don at Christ Church College in Oxford where he taught all his working life from 1849 to 1881 (born 1832; died 1898). A contrasting publication in this vein of imagination/theory/storytelling may be Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World* (1996) which is more of a philosophy text 'up front' with a story loosely wrapped around it. Gaarder (1996) intends to teach us philosophy from the outset, albeit as may be comprehended through the eyes of an enquiring child. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* seemingly did not set out to teach such things and nor really did *What If?* However, the avenues of thought are there to be explored.

Mini-autobiographies: mentors and education

As part of *What If?*'s general introduction - before the stories commence, the mentoring co-authors have been invited to tell their own stories about;

- their conceptions of the task,
- the challenges presented for them about mentoring undergraduate writing,
- and to tell something of their educational journey in life.

These mini-autobiographies are offered to help establish a context for how the chapters may have been interpreted. The idea being that their take on a student's creative account may be imbued with their life history, their view of the world, and that it might be interesting to see what that was like, even if we are only permitted a selective snippet. For example, Ray Physick is a published football and boxing historian which will inevitably have had some influence upon his work with Ashley Walker in a chapter entitled *West*

Ham vs Millwall – a football tragedy (Chpt. 23). A more appropriate marriage between pugilism, football and research one could not imagine for these two London-based rivals in football, their respective ‘supporters’ being noted for having worked out their differences with their fists in the past. This insight to the mentoring co-author’s knowledge and experience may be seen very rarely in other texts and *What If?* could be all the more unusual for it. It is fair to say that a student’s blue-print of life history may have been just as influential for him or her when conceiving of their story - which would be an interesting avenue of research to follow at a later date. Consequently, the section of mini-auto-biographies, which I had originally called the Learning and Teaching Mini-Chapters for want of a better phrase, creates a rich ‘educational tapestry’ indicating the breadth and depth of expertise which has been supportively brought to bear upon the ‘raw material’ to present the finished chapters. For the curious there is more pedagogical discussion on the issues of mentoring by co-authors (second named) under the section *Mentoring and collaboration – who’s learning from whom?* below. What is worthy of note at this point, however, were the reports from mentors that their learning curve on this task was perhaps as steep and challenging as it may have been for the students to write the stories in the first place, but for different reasons. In many cases, deep critical reflection about the quality of product elicited from our educative efforts in Higher Education generally were provoked, whilst others found the opportunity to write in this style liberating, demanding and enjoyable – but rarely ‘easy’. Personal interpretations of situations and events would shape the final chapters; “it all depends on your perspective” as they say and “what you see depends on where you stand”. To begin to shed some light upon how the mentors might have seen things, the Notes on Contributors may be an interesting place to start to explore the unique and distinctive stock of experience shared with students to make the best of their work.

Dual-authored chapters

The dual authored chapters, 27 in all, form the main body of the book and range enormously in the subjects they tackle, the characters portrayed and in historical settings. Consequently there is no particular ordering of these chapters by topic or subject area which might have otherwise appeared false or contrived. Rather they appear pretty much in the order that they were sent to me as editor, so a chronological grouping of sorts does exist being indicated by clusters of chapters by mentoring co-authors.

The title of each chapter and the phrasing of its opening line is designed to give a hint of what adventures might lie within – this being a tactic learned from Philip’s workshop. Within each dual-authored chapter there is a common structure that has been followed for consistency; they are basically in two sections, a Research Preface followed by a Creative Story. The Title leads directly into the Research Preface. The Research Preface is the investigatory element to set the scene for the Creative Story. Mentoring co-authors are always second named in the chapters with the originating authors first named. The order is significant as it distinguishes the pedagogical investment made by each author. The Creative Story brings the chapter to a close... posing for the reader a tantalising “what if?” References appear at the end of the Research Preface which in some cases, for example Chapters 3 and 16, take the form of a guided bibliography where the mentor has developed his research ideas to incorporate some guidance notes in the reference list. This will contain some additional information about the sources which may be considered an active part of the chapter to tell more comprehensively the development of real-life events, highlighting the relevance of occurrences, or the divergence of the imaginative story from those chronicled events.

Some stories have developed from genuine first hand accounts, for example the chapters by Paul Gorst (Chpt. 6) and Elisa Langton (Chpt. 7). Paul Gorst’s story *Gerrard goes to jail* is based upon his own newspaper reports which he made as a student on work-placement during his Sports Journalism degree. He was fortunate enough to be present at Steven Gerrard’s trial in Liverpool Crown Court and then later, to integrate his own reports with others from the media to re-live the development of the case hearings towards a verdict. His creative story starts as the court case closes. By contrast, Elisa Langton’s chapter is a moving account of the lived experience but told through the eyes of another. Her re-telling of her Uncle Kevin’s experiences at Hillsborough on the day of the stadium disaster is fast paced and seeded with potential loss. Gripping stuff. I have enjoyed reading all the chapters and as I write I am acutely aware of the editorial privilege of being the only person to have a full overview of the book – until its publication.

Single authored ‘cameo’ chapters

Finally there are three single authored ‘cameo’ chapters at the end of the book which are auto-biographical in nature. All three are stylised accounts of events in real-life which through the literary skills of their authors permit

a sense of 'gritty reality', closeness and personal insight to their experiences which a purely descriptive report might fail to capture and impart. I am extremely grateful to John Metcalfe and to Paul Hall for sharing their stories with us as each account emphasizes a valuable sense of journeying, of being there and coping with social challenge in a sporting context. We have much to learn from them, and perhaps to question from these tales. They seemingly also have great relevance to us as researchers of experiences in sport, but particularly because in these cases, the authors have used creative writing skills in their reflective accounts. This tactic in writing seems to have some advantages for the reader such as promoting interest in their story, cultivating greater sympathy with the person and developing curiosity about the outcome of events. All of these may be useful strategies for the socio-cultural investigator who wishes to communicate his discoveries to others. In fact John Metcalfe mentioned having as much fun if not more, while composing his tongue-in-cheek reflection as he did during the adventure itself, such may be the motivation to articulate his experiences in an effective and engaging way. Paul Hall, a man ready for an adventure at the drop of a hat, shares in dry comedic fashion his experiences of top-level gymnastics coaching in North Korea. This may be an enviable glimpse in to an otherwise closed world that the rest of the sporting community have been deprived of until now, should they wish to look. I know it was certainly an eye-opener for Paul – read the chapter and it will open your eyes too!

The closing chapter (Chpt. 30) is about my experiences at *Bash Street School* which becomes auto-ethnographic in nature because it is linked to my first account in the following section of this Introduction entitled *Essex boys can't write*. The *Bash Street School* story is a branch line of early experiences in Physical Education which was not explored in *Essex boys can't write*. *Bash Street School* is a richer, more descriptive, and hopefully vivid account of some experiences in education which deliberately says more i.e. has greater detail about a shorter passage of time compared to the longer span of time chronicled in the preceding *Essex boys can't write*. Limitations and opportunities for gaining a fuller picture of the scene at *Bash Street School* are also discussed which may lift the passage towards one of socio-cultural research rather than pure autobiography or creative short story. I have deliberately attempted to stylise the chapter which could be described as comic/tragic/realist bound up with repetition of themes to carry the story along. For example, there are repeated references to pirates and swashbuckling seafaring types and further cross reference in pertinent places to seminal films such as *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938) (in *Essex*

boys can't write) and *A Few Good Men* (1992) (in *Bash Street School*) which may reveal more aspects about my character than if I simply tried to describe my interests.

Sonic engagement: I have also attempted to engage the senses in *Bash Street School*, reflecting upon my corporeal experiences of being on the receiving end of the Whacking Stick (self explanatory). Sparkes (2009b) explores the importance of acknowledging data from the senses (sight, sound, touch, taste and smell) for achieving a more comprehensive understanding of human experience and that this seemingly needs to be established more effectively in “good” qualitative research. As an aside, for an interesting example of storytelling using visual data in qualitative research see Rookwood and Palmer, (2009a) - a story without words - which is complemented by a critical discussion about the application of visual data and its opportunities and limitations in field research, see Rookwood and Palmer (2009b). Now, back to *Bash Street School*: a stylistic feature of repetition was used to create a sonic occurrence with many “WHACKs” appearing in the text. It was the noise of the whack that was significant to me at the time, along with the other sounds and smells which constituted this part of my PE experience. As they say, “pain is temporary!” but the memories seemed to last a lot longer for me. The WHACKings were always dispensed in an echoing corridor accompanied by varying “ouches”, “shouts” and “wails”, or conversely there were the aspirant-manly “whimpers” indicating a non-verbal willingness to “just take it like a man” and a complicit ‘deal’ with the whacker: an “I’ll shut up if you’ll just get on with it so we can get on with the PE lesson”, kind of thing. My PE was really quite a sensual experience! More of a Physical Experience than a Physical Education one might say.

Rice (2003: 8) emphasized the importance of sound in human experience in terms of both knowledge and imagination claiming that “there was an immediate relevance of sonic meaning to ethnographic enquiry”. This was developed further by Bull and Black (2003: 3) who urged for a concept of “deep listening” that could make us rethink the following in our worlds:

The meaning, nature and significance of our social experience; our relation to community; our relational experiences; how we relate to others, ourselves and the spaces and places we inhabit; and our relationship to power.

Bull and Black’s (2003) comments above appear to have summed up quite accurately what was occurring for me on the receiving end of that Whacking

Stick over 20 years before their publication. An interesting observation is that I have had the opportunity to read my chapter aloud - to 'perform' it to colleagues during which I smashed my plastic ruler to bits on the desk as a result of re-enacting the noisy WHACKS. At the start of my reading I introduced the concept of the WHACK by saying the word "WHACK" and immediately followed it with a hard, resounding slap on the desk with my ruler. With the association between the word and the noise made I dropped the verbalised "WHACK" and replaced it with the shocking noise and physical action of my right arm poised to whip. My ruler gradually disintegrated like a cartoon swordsman who gets his weapon chopped down until he's left with just a stump in his hand. The sense of loss in my story was palpable for the listeners and this seemed to be embodied by the gradual demise of my ruler. This reading performance appeared to be quite a moving experience for my two colleagues (and for me) who reported a form of deep reflective listening as I read my way through the piece. They were even anticipating the noise as I raised my right arm to thrash my desk once more. I had therefore built into my story an opportunity for sound to be heard, felt and reflected upon. Other than that, *Bash Street School* is merely a story seeking your consideration as it may have some resonance with readers about their own PE experiences. It is hoped that for those students who may aspire to teach PE that this chapter provides some pause for thought in their determined mission to become qualified teachers. I have recounted the tale verbally several times in my lectures over the years to good effect for those who cared to listen and so have taken this opportunity to commit it to paper in the hopes that it might promote a positive effect for teaching Physical Education and Sports Pedagogy.

Upon the theme of engaging the senses, dialogue features prominently in all the chapters and this may pre-dispose them to "live performance" allowing a deeper level of engagement with the experiences portrayed through visual and aural means. For example, the chapter by Robert Bartlett (Chpt 1) about Aron Ralston who cut his arm off in order to survive whilst on a trek would lend itself to reading and acting out in some way, or even Michael Glover's (Chpt 8) account of Mike Tyson having a guardian angel might be interesting forays into verbal oration and visual performance. Such an undertaking would have immediate relevance to our teaching within the Sporting Image module but could also have wider relevance for how research data of the lived experience might be acted out in the form of "ethnodrama" (Saldana, 1999; Barone, 2002; Sparkes, 2002). Ethnodrama is another representational form of telling a story more vividly by physically re-enacting it. According to Sparkes (2002) an ethnodrama evolves when

data gathered in the field are transformed into theatrical scripts and performance pieces. Interestingly such a blurring of boundaries in research and engagement with a new expressive form would necessitate a further set of aesthetic criteria to be employed - theatrical criteria in this case - to make informed judgements of quality about the research undertaken and the performance itself. Could the reporting/portrayal of good research become marred by poor acting skills and vice-versa?

However, in general support of creative writing within research is Tierney (2002: 385) who suggests that qualitative researchers might broaden the narrative strategies they employ so that their texts are “built more in relation to fiction and storytelling, rather than in response to the norms of science and logical empiricism”, and this may extend to reading them out aloud for an audience to contemplate.

Setting the scene:

“What’s this, *What If?* all about then?” said the curious man in the pub,

“Agro”... replied the student.

“CONFLICT and DIALOGUE” were the two key messages we learned from the writing workshop which seemed to free up the student’s imagination to attack their stories with gusto. Philip assured us that conflict plays a central role in the majority of good novel writing which seemed to raise the student’s spirits no end. Mindful of their intended careers, perhaps the opportunity for grinding axes and dishing the dirt in sport was the only spark they needed to ignite their enthusiasm for this task.

“There has to be a sense of loss or injustice to maintain interest and develop a plot towards a good ending”, Philip said.

The antithesis being that a nice story may be just a dull story to tell – why bother with that? Additionally, understanding the role of dialogue was also crucial in that the storyline and events surrounding it could be carried through characterised speech. This would help to move the story on quickly instead of having descriptive passages of “this happened” and then “that happened” etc. A useful and practical point here also for the students was “not to have too many characters in their story”, in order to prevent the dialogue (and the reader) from becoming confused; the reader would not know who was saying what to whom. In the outcome, most of the stories kept to two main characters about whom a plot develops. A few other

writing exercises saw the students marginally equipped as ‘novelists’ and brimming with confidence to re-appraise and re-write any sporting event, personality or occurrence that seemed to be fair game for their inventive imaginations. I must confess that after the workshop I was a little curious as to what might come back in response. All I could do was prepare them the best I could and set them off, like a nervous but optimistic parent setting their child ‘free’ to ride a bike without stabilisers for the first time. It is not without some sense of risk that we can sometimes take action; if the child fell off, failing in his or her task, the child, and probably onlookers, might blame the parent for poor judgement. Might the same fate lay-in-wait for me on the *What If?* project? It quickly transpired that the students had embraced the task with considerable enthusiasm and that an impressive range of sporting cheats, thugs, losers (and a few footballers) would be getting their comeuppances and that some pure-as-the-driven-snow sporting personalities would suddenly have skeletons in the cupboard leading to scandalous expulsion from their worlds. Their responses included pretty much everything else in-between when the “good turned bad” or the ostensibly dubious character “turns good” in the end, replete with tragedies, mysteries, real-life tales and injustices settled, all potentially served up to a media-hungry public - it was a veritable journalist’s heaven.

To set the ball rolling we had an example of a potential *What If?* circumstance which was to ask, What if Jesse Owens had been white? From there the student would be required to research some aspects of Hitler’s attitudes towards black and ethnic minorities, (which is not difficult if you scrape around a bit!!!) and then to construct a story centred upon the athletics events in Berlin in 1936 (eg. Mandell, 1971, *The Nazi Olympics*). There were also some published examples of work which helped to frame our intent for this project which I think were helpful for the students in our pedagogic quest.

In preparation for the module I had read Bernard Cornwell’s graphic novel about the Battle of Agincourt (Cornwell, 2008) when the King’s archers, although hugely outnumbered by the French won the day in an extremely bloody battle in Northern France at a place called Azincourt, a name which he adopted as the title of his book. There are three significant features about Cornwell’s (2008) novel that related to us: first that the book was richly descriptive and used dialogue to lead the story; secondly that the full account is an interpretation of events from an archer’s point of view; and thirdly that there is an extensive body of research included in the volume revealing Cornwell’s underpinning investigation to tell the tale. Perfect,

apart from the fact that it was well over 500 pages long and no student would ever read that much! Whilst it was bulging with conflict it was not about sport (although it was a form of competition) but it served to indicate well what we wanted in the *What If?* project.

Significantly there has already been a book of *What If?* published, now on a second edition which features stories from historians that re-interpret events and suggest new possibilities and outcomes to high profile instances in history (Cowley, 2002). Some gems within Cowley's (2002) volume include; *Pontius Pilate Saves Jesus – Christianity without the crucifixion* (Eire, 2002) and *Enigma Uncracked – the Allies fail to break the German cipher machine* (Kahn, 2002) and many other great stories but nothing on sport (!) and no supporting body of research, however it was a useful piece in the initial jigsaw of guidance that we were piecing together.

Two further books of high adventure and daring-do were illustrative for the group. These were Heinrich Harrer's *The White Spider* (1976) which is his account of the first ascent of the north face of the Eiger in 1938 and Bob Langley's (1982) classic *Traverse of the Gods* which is a mountaineering adventure set in World War II that attributes the second ascent of the Eiger in 1945 to a Nazi Mountaineering Force. The titles of both books are taken from the names of pitches of climbing on the north face of the Eiger. Harrer, climber extraordinaire and a German military man, omits this second successful ascent from the back of his book, which has a researched chronology of all the ascents made on the north face since 1935 – perhaps he was biased? This may be because the controversial second ascent was shrouded in mystery, it being a “top-secret military mission”, a behind-enemy-lines scenario which had vital implications for the development of the atomic bomb. The plot thickens! Heinrich Harrer's omission may also be because Harrer at the time was being held by the English in a prisoner of war camp in northern India where upon he escaped his captors and spent the next Seven Years in Tibet (1988). That is, he was never there (!) and perhaps crucially, the Nazi Mountaineering Force were never officially there either. A good picture of storytelling potential was developing for the students now stemming from these books of adventure, escape and survival. *The White Spider* was backed by research and a wealth of life experience, but also complemented by a very convincing novel which was probably backed by even greater research to enhance its plausibility with the original account by Harrer. Bob Langley's (1982) *Traverse of the Gods* is of course riddled with juicy conflict and even softened with a compassionate love story which lulls the reader to believe in the ‘what if’ that he poses. However,

whilst Bob Langley was a seasoned journalist and TV presenter he was not a sports journalist and whilst mountaineering may be “sporty”, it’s not really a Sport that was followed by any of these students. I had a little way to go yet before I was satisfied that I had done all I could to set them off on their journeys.

There were four other hopefully-useful texts to highlight to the students before the full force of their imaginations could be set free to wreak havoc in sport’s literary world. This was to ensure with a reasonable level of confidence that skilfully composed, clearly reasoned and well researched drafts would appear before me six weeks later. Their opportunity to think, write, draft and re-draft was relatively short so my guidance and the students’ preparation could not be left to the last minute. It was not a case of “anything goes” for the *What If?* piece. I also wanted to cement the academic relevance of the task and the standards required in terms of writing for publication, research in socio-cultural contexts and in sports journalism for them.

First, that as Editor of the *Journal of Qualitative Research in Sports Studies* I was very experienced in supporting student writing for publication and suggested that they might read this for appropriate academic presentation of their research preface. I also pointed out that every article within that journal is dual authored in a similar way that their chapters would appear and that many of the articles also come from like-undergraduates. Secondly was an edited book called *Talking Bodies* (Sparkes and Silvenninen, 1999) which contains auto-ethnographies; personal accounts of trials and tribulations in and around sport, which demonstrate a style of writing that students may not have considered in their studies before. Thirdly was a book entitled *Playgrounds of the Gods* (Stafford, 2008), which was referred to in conjunction with *Talking Bodies* (Sparkes and Silvenninen, 1999), to make new sense of the experiences which Stafford (2008) describes. The purpose of this combination was to broaden the students’ horizons about what kinds of discussion and writing style might be possible in *What If?* - particularly if they visited the chapter by Peter Swan for his dry-witted observations of people in changing rooms – all scrotums and towels! (Swan, 1999). The last book was Joan Ryan’s (1996) *Little Girls in Pretty Boxes* discussed below.

The book *Playgrounds of the Gods* by Ian Stafford (2008) featured a personal, real-life account of experiencing many different sports at elite levels. These included football, squash, athletics, rugby union, rowing,

cricket and boxing – at last a recognisable menu of activities that these students could relate to. As a bonus, Ian Stafford is also a seasoned sports journalist which seemed to tick an important box for this discerning group. Unfortunately there is no chapter of supporting research for this book, it was therefore my pedagogical responsibility to point the students towards some. *Playgrounds of the Gods* is an engaging story about a 34 year old sports fanatic who wanted to believe that he was not too old to keep up with elite sportspeople at their own game. Totally preoccupied with his health and fitness and the concept of his former self as a strong, capable and physically literate professional, Stafford seemed to be worried at this juncture in his life that he might not be able to ‘cut it’ anymore as a credible sportsman. His commitment and undertaking seems to have been a case of “it’s now or never”. At 34, a major threshold to middle age as he saw it, he was concerned about his ‘rapid onset’ of aging, physically and socially. For example, he was becoming aware of his body’s ability to store fat reserves whether he wanted them or not and the fact that his nine year-old daughter regarded him as “old” and “past it” frustrated him; he was clearly not ready for the pipe and slippers just yet. He committed himself to a rigorous training regime and commented that, “slowly my weight began to fall and muscles began to appear, like small animals emerging from a long and deep hibernation” (Stafford, 2008: 16). At his stage of life he seemed to appreciate that his body may be stagnating; it was not capable of all it used to accomplish with relative ease and that these challenges might restore something of his former self. However he comes to realise that the injuries and hardship endured might actually now be accelerating the aging process somewhat. But he was happy, he was living his dream and for a while at least he got to experience life as a top sports person. Interestingly, what Stafford (2008: 256) does offer by way of an appendix is an itemised list of persistent injuries sustained from each sport and lived with as he progressed from one to the next, for example,

Rugby: sprained left pectoral muscle; sprained ligaments in left ring finger; new muscle tear in right calf; cut and bruised knees; sore and flaky ears.

Boxing: return of sprained left pectoral muscle; cut nose, mouth and lips; concussion - dizziness nausea and headaches; sprained left thumb; suspected trapped nerve in neck causing subsequent faintness [blackouts].

This list of body-brokenness and fear/acknowledgement of the aging process that Stafford (2008) seems to have locked horns with has been explored in depth by some researchers to shed light upon the experience of “physical alteration” in relation to the social worlds they may inhabit. For

example, Andrew Sparkes' *Fragile body-self* (1999a) and *When I am old I will...* [in press] are two auto-ethnographies about an aging, breaking body in mid-life trying to regain some muscular form, and perhaps credibility, at a local fitness gym. Burdened with memories of his former self, a most capable sportsman, Sparkes analyses his creaking body that now causes deep critical reflection on a social state of affairs that is perceived to reject him – or is at least one he is uncomfortable in and appears not to embrace him. This seems to create a sense of anguish for Sparkes whose 'agile persona' now occupies a body whose inadequacies, as he may see them, are revealed publicly. An aspect of critical interest to Sparkes, albeit frustrating for him, seems to be the divergence between how he perceived himself to 'fit in' to sport socially in the past and how he perceives himself to 'fit in' now – i.e. on the periphery, like a visitor. They are seemingly two different stories – telling almost of completely different lives.

Then there is Denison's (1999a) auto-ethnography which reveals how he as a young man aspired to be an international middle distance runner. He trained hard and revered the giants on the major Athletics stage; even saw himself being there alongside them. But then he describes his sombre personal torment, when he abandoned his dream upon realising that he probably did not have the ability to compete at that level. He had it all planned out in his head and there is almost a sense of bereavement for a life lost - he would have to find something else to do with his existence now. Also, Denison's (1999b) second contribution is a collection of short ethnographies which build up a picture of sporting excellence through the ages, from childhood to parenthood. The child thinks of nothing else but playing rugby for his national side, the New Zealand All Blacks, and discovers that his father did exactly that in the 1970s. The child is curious about his father's lack of encouragement to repeat the honour, whilst his father has been nursing a devastating knee injury since 1972 which forced him to retire from playing the game. This had left him barely able to walk. "Train for a career or play the game" was the question the father faced as a young man. He chose the game forsaking the career which, as things turned out for him, meant drifting from job to job in short term employment for the rest of his life. Following his knee trauma he had to reconstruct his sense of being, find a way of getting along with his injuries and think about what he might advise his son to do if the same situation ever arose. "Train for a career or play the game..." the dilemma is highlighted for us to contemplate.

A number of researchers' investigations about reconstructions of self-identity and self-worth have focused on people with more extreme injuries such as rugby players who, either through their sport or other circumstances became paraplegic (Sparkes and Smith, 1999; Kleiber and Hutchinson, 1999). These accounts reveal some of the challenges for the victims to re-build their identities when they had already established firm ideas about masculinity and what men should be able to do, which typically did not include their new appendage of a wheelchair following spinal cord injury. The studies explore the personal and social journeys of this dramatic physical alteration; the question begged of the victims was not What If? but What Now? The conflict often lay within themselves or against society – or both. (See also Smith, 2008).

[Further interesting academic references to develop this general theme may be to Henning Eichburg's work which could be described broadly as a phenomenology of human movement, energy and societal interaction. This sweeping definition is so general that it is probably inaccurate although some initial probing of Eichburg (2009a; 2009b), whose accounts of "Fitness on the Market" and the "People's Academies and Sport: Towards a Philosophy of Bodily Education" would have great relevance to the literature being discussed above - see references].

Lastly, recommended to the students was the moving biography by Joan Ryan (1996) *Little Girls in Pretty Boxes* which is about female gymnasts and ice skaters in the USA competing for places on their national team to get to the 'big prize'; the Olympics. Ryan, also a sports journalist reporting for the San Francisco Chronicle, conducted nearly 100 interviews with performers, parents, coaches and other support staff. She presents a fairly grim picture of the degrading health of the young elite performers and the actions of the coaches and parents which seemed not only to instigate the situations of abuse but maintain and promote them. A chronic deception of appearance is at work in these stories; the outward display of beauty and health conceals the actually broken and failing bodies which have been sacrificed by their owners for the greater cause – in search of Gold. These tales are disturbing to say the least. Gymnasts of 12-16 years would be training 40-60 hours a week, working through the pain of performing with hairline fractures in their bones, the result of severe long term dieting and other problems associated with malnourishment such as stunted growth. There was also the destructive psychological trauma which accompanies the deception - obsessions with weight and being picked for the team – which get out of control and sometimes lead to extreme rehab or even death. In

Ryan's (1996) eyes, Coach Bela Karolyi was at the root of many of the problems reported to her during her research. Accounts of bullying, verbal abuse, attempted suicide, sexual abuse by coaches and parents and a number of sad and avoidable deaths from bulimia occurred around his direct influence. Karolyi seemed to care only for medal success at the Olympics and would take the quickest route to get there, at whatever cost. There also is one disturbing account of parents who signed over guardianship of their daughter to an ice skating coach, thinking that he would make better decisions for her welfare and progression in life than they could - a kind of formalised abandonment. Needless to say, no creative dramatisation is necessary in this book and there is plenty of conflict to consider.

Literature? Learning? Students? – *What If?*

It was intended that all the works cited above would provide a multi-dimensional mirror for reflecting upon experiences in and around sport. Also that they may provoke a deeper and sometimes more critical (self) reflection for us to learn from about the physical and psychological milestones which may be encountered in our lives. Like looking at our reflections in a hall of distorting mirrors we may become curious about how we appear to others and what others look like to us, such is the strangeness of the new forms. Reflection, reconstruction, re-interpretation and representation are seemingly what all the chapters in *What If?* strive to do in some way. These concepts, which may be at the heart of much socio-cultural research in sport, when combined with an exercise to develop writing skills may be a valuable exercise for budding researchers, or sports journalists, as was the case with *What If?* Some notable chapters from students in *What If?* that tackle the concepts of identity and reconstruction are Alastair Turner's story about Rubin Carter (Chpt. 4) – a boxer 'trapped' in an old body, Richard Wilson's story about Dame Kelly Holmes who faces a drugs scandal (Chpt. 11) and John Kopczyk's story about Rio Ferdinand who similarly finds himself at the root of a drugs scandal (Chpt. 12)... ALLEGEDLY!

My efforts to provide what might loosely be described as a pedagogical literature review was to set students off reasonably well equipped to make their own decisions about how to write about their chosen topic. It was also to combat the inevitable questions from some students,

"Yes, that's all well and good Clive, but I still don't know what you want".

The “I” can often become “we” from protesting individuals for collective unity in being lost – a false sense of security and safety in numbers whilst drifting at sea. My advice to these few students about their predicament was, in so many words, that “the best way out of the darkness may be to make a decision and commit to a course of action”. The beauty of this task was that I had no clear concept of exactly *what* I wanted, only how it should be presented. Some revelled in the freedom whilst others took a little time to find their way. A student stopped me in the corridor one day to say,

“Blimey Clive, I’m knackered, I had to get up at 2am in the morning and start writing for this chapter, it’s all buzzing round in my head, I had to write it before I lost it... it’s great though, no other piece of writing on my degree has got me out of bed like that!”

The students were branching out on a new and vulnerable limb at the end of their degrees but knew they were well supported to venture their ideas. Consequently a high level of enthusiasm about writing and research was demonstrated, the results of which we are able to share in this book. It is fair to say also that the challenges were similar for the mentoring co-authors who were stretched to engage in this kind of writing and each will have his own story to tell about the experience.

Mentoring and collaboration – who’s learning from whom?

All of the mentoring co-authors and the authors of the cameo chapters are researchers in sport of one manifestation or another but are at different stages on their journey through education and life. From a mentoring point of view this presented a very interesting profile of pedagogical expertise that would influence the content of *What If?* However, due to their wide range of experience there is a limit to which general comments might be made, although there were some common experiences which are worthy of note in this introduction. A more detailed overview of where mentors may be on their educational ‘safari’ up to the point at which they met *What If?* being offered in the mentoring co-authors mini-autobiographies.

Mentoring in general

Becoming a second-named mentoring co-author seemed to define a pedagogical investment that was distinct from that of the first-named student author from whom the story originated. It may seem fairly obvious at first glance what help the mentoring co-author might be providing: sorting out spelling, punctuation, re-ordering sentences and generally

tidying up the text. Of course they did that, where it was needed, but a lot more seemed to be going on as reports of progress and then chapters filtered back to me.

The learning curve for the mentors in taking on a mentoring role and working with stylised writing was extremely steep. Similarly the emotional and intellectual challenges presented by the task of mentoring/co-authoring work may not have been too far away from what many of the students reported for writing the stories in the first place. From my perspective, in such instances both the mentors and the students were “in the zone” educationally, – as my old lecturer used to say, “*you’re not learning unless you’ve got brain-ache*”. I had brain-ache for months working on this project, it was very satisfying! Discussions about mentoring often centred on their feelings of frustration and ‘being lost’ with what to do with the story ranging to enjoyment, liberation and freedom experienced from this style of writing. They reported it as being demanding, challenging and thought-provoking at many different levels for them, but most of all an enjoyable and fulfilling task to have attempted. It was clear they had gained a lot from it as mentors – and as writers in some cases.

Mentors first had to come to terms with the responsibility for altering another person’s writing which they may not have done before, particularly for publication. This coupled with any confusion and frustration that they may have felt to make sense of the student’s story, seemed to raise questions for them, such as, “should they get involved at all” or if they do ‘interfere’ would the product be “any good” and implicitly, how might that reflect upon them. Mentors would often send me final drafts of chapters with the qualifying disclaimer of,

“Here you are Clive, for what it’s worth...” or, “Yes I enjoyed that, but I don’t know if it’s any good, you’ll have to have a look”.

On every occasion I did have a look and on every occasion I thought that what they had done with the student’s work was remarkable. The sense of ‘being lost’ seemed to relate to their confusion about how to judge how good the final product was, i.e. ‘good’ in terms of the story itself and ‘good’ in terms of pedagogic mentoring. The academic challenge of mentoring within this style of writing was, in many cases, so new to them that there was no benchmark in their experience for quality. It was very far removed from marking and/or correcting a ‘normal’ essay. So, stemming from my view of mentoring student work, a message to my mentoring colleagues (and readers) is that we stand by our original task to students and our beliefs

that it was a good developmental task for them as final year students on their intended career paths as, predominantly, sports journalists. We stand by the fact that these chapters may be a reflection of our efforts to improve students' work and to share it in the public domain. Having done so, the *What If?* publication can be used to inform our teaching on the Sporting Image module in years to come and perhaps, if judged as suitable, used as reference for learning at other H.E. institutions.

With the pedagogical high ground now firmly seized, a cautionary note about the identity of student writing is required. In all cases these chapters are student's first attempts at planning short stories and integrating creative ideas in text for academic submission (in Sport). Consequently some of the stories may upon initial reflection appear simplistic; for instance, there might have been plots and sub-plots which could have been developed or characters who did other things to 'spice' the story up. I do not see these as shortcomings for the intended audience of *What If?* who are primarily undergraduate students. Rather, I hope they might feel encouraged to develop their literary skills and writing confidence in a similar vein. Underlying this is the concept of access to the text; the stories stem from student work and therefore should be accessible to students. The stories are examples of what a student's work might look like if the 'teacher' helped them to develop it further than the student did or could – that is our role as mentors.

From a teaching point of view the "access issue" seems to be a major advantage of mentored writing in this manner, given that much academic writing is not intended for undergraduate consumption. Academics write primarily for other academics, their arguments often being shared in peer reviewed journals. It is seemingly very difficult for experienced writers or academics to write at a level that is genuinely accessible for the broad spectrum of students who come into Higher Education. A glance through a research methods book or peer-reviewed journal may indicate this. The point being made is that once a writer has moved forward in their experience it is very difficult for them to 'go back' which for novelists and indeed learners may not a problem; personal improvement being their quest; but for teachers/lecturers it seemingly is a problem if they wish to stay in touch with their primary audience. An interesting test of this social development concept may be to ask an adult to paint a picture of, for example, a house or a dog, that a 3 or 4 year old had painted. Even if they were to copy it directly they would likely not get close to its child-like naivety and erratic perspective which we admire so much in children's

painting. It might in fact take a very experienced artist to get close to such a product. This is not to claim that children's painting is high quality art, rather that it is difficult to undo or even ignore formative experiences. All of this seems to indicate that in academia we are moving on constantly as we develop; we teach, write and publish, and therefore we risk leaving behind the students who by dint of coming to university at 18 years old (usually) do not 'move on' with us. The new starters are always at the start line. Also mentors often felt they could do so much more with the story IF it was their own and probably felt a little frustrated that they couldn't do more, feeling inhibited by the student's planning/structure of the original story. Far from being a disadvantage this 'limitation' may in fact be a good thing to preserve the identity of student's work and to hopefully promote access to the text by for active discussions in future teaching.

A spectrum of mentoring experience

The range of mentorship/life experience shared with the students in *What If?* may be as eclectic as the range of stories presented by the students in the first instance. Please refer also to the contributor's notes and personal learning and teaching mini-autobiographies by mentoring co-authors which will shed further light upon personal reflections about their involvement in *What If?* What that section does not provide are the links between the authors in terms of the progressive overview of mentoring for *What If?* which are outlined below.

There are eight mentoring co-authors who have contributed to the book. All but two of the mentors are teaching staff in Higher Education working in the area of Sport Studies, the exceptions being James Kenyon and Chris Hughes who are both students. Chris Hughes mentored his chapter whilst he was an undergraduate on his Sports Coaching degree which established one end of the mentoring spectrum for *What If?* His involvement meant an undergraduate mentoring and publishing a fellow undergraduate's work which is a commendable achievement. Next in line is James Kenyon who is a Masters degree student from Liverpool Hope University. I invited James to the writing workshop having published three articles from him in the *Journal of Qualitative Research in Sport*. James is the only person in *What If?* to have written his own story as a first named author and then to have become a mentor of a UCLAN student. Therefore he has experienced the 'full force' of *What If?* from both 'sides of the fence' and I know he has faced similar challenges echoed by students and other mentors in this creative-writing project. The next phase of the spectrum are Ph.D. students and staff.

Anthony Maher and Ray Physick are both Ph.D. students who also work at UCLAN. Having registered for their studies at roughly the same time they may be at similar stages in their post-grad research journeys. Anthony is a younger researcher than Ray and investigating aspects of Physical Education whilst Ray is exploring the artistic qualities of football-related art. John Metcalfe, author of one of the cameo chapters is also a Ph.D. student working at UCLAN and shares his writing which is in keeping with the context of *What If?* but not particularly with his own research as an exercise physiologist. For him, his chapter represents a distinct departure from the scientific writing he is more accustomed to as a Ph. D. researcher. Lastly, academic staff including myself, Iain Adams, Mitchell Larson and Joel Rookwood establish the opposite end of the spectrum who bring with them a wealth of experience in teaching, researching and publication. Their diversity in socio-cultural research has positively affected not only the content and pedagogical direction of *What If?* but also their teaching and mentoring of students under their supervision. Their interests and investigations span; art and aesthetics in sport, to sports history, to social reconstruction of broken societies using sport as a medium for change. These staff have shared generously their knowledge and wisdom with students and grappled with the challenges of mentoring student work, in some cases for the first time. In all cases the breadth of experience in life, writing, education and applied subject knowledge from co-authoring mentors has added considerably to the richness of the learning spectrum. For the hawk-eyed peruser of contents pages a duplication appears in the list of chapters which is not the mistake it might appear to be at first glance. Emma Jones' chapter *What if Jesse Owens was white?* appears twice after being mentored simultaneously by Iain Adams (Chpt. 21) and Ray Physick (Chpt. 25). Following a conversation with both mentors it was decided to keep both chapters in, deliberately under the same titles, as it seemed to open an interesting discussion about the potential differences in how a story might be interpreted by different people, authors and readers, and by different mentors in this case. No-one is 'on trial' here except perhaps Jesse and Adolf.

A significant reflection from the staff's point of view has been for us to question the value of our requests for 'normal' academic essays as assessment in modules. Whilst these stories did originate as assessment pieces, we envisaged they would have 'life' after submission, not just 'death' upon granting a percentage grade. As an assessment the stories were judged by slightly different criteria according to set levels for passing a module with one clear limitation being of wordage, 2500 words maximum, and the

demonstration of academic research skills etc. The marking process was a convenient time for initial editorial screening which as it turned out was not the most effective means for determining all the content of *What If?*. This said, it did point us in a direction towards some initial chapters for the book, the practical judgement for a mentor being the amount of work that might be required to lift a creative idea towards a finished chapter. Thus it was not always “the best” academic submissions which became book chapters.

Upon this note on mentoring and pedagogy for *What If?* there were some useful texts which I recommended to mentors and students to help them with creative writing and formulating text. These were Marion Field’s books *Improve your Punctuation and Grammar* (2009a) and *Improve your Written English* (2009b) which are accessible and made plain good sense for relatively novice writers. Marion Field was head of English at a large comprehensive school and was an examiner for GCSE English – reading her books was a bit like going back to school but that was just what I needed in this new and challenging task. Then there was Ritchie Macefield’s (2005) *Secrets of University Success* with great tips for writing clearly and succinctly. Again, very accessible in terms of level and to the eye; all three of these books setting out their text with generous line spacing and font sizing in order not to overload and deter the curious reader. There were also two very good publications which were focused more at students on creative writing courses. These nevertheless, made good reference for planning ideas and developing storylines and could also help social researchers to make connections with creative writing skills and the effective presentation of their data or research idea. The edited volumes were by Harper (2006) *Teaching creative writing* and Singleton and Luckhurst (2000) *The creative writing handbook, techniques for new writers* (see guidance notes in reference list).

The aesthetic of *What If?* - presentation and production

There are some aesthetic features in the design of *What If?* which may, even at the surface, point to the storytelling nature of this book. Upon this premise I have designed the appearance of *What If?* not only to echo vestiges of the cultural act of passing down wisdom through stories but also to reinforce some aspects of what we have learned through this creative writing project, for example, the central role of conflict in novel writing. It has been my aim that the appearance of the book might tell the reader something of its *intent* if not its actual *content* before the stories are read.

Less obvious to the reader will be that I always had a fairly clear idea of what *What If?* might look like as a finished product. This was achieved by working to a known format, a working model, which was Alan Tomlinson's (2007) excellent book *The Sports Studies Reader*. Tomlinson's (2007) book contains 450 pages of abbreviated short essays and pertinent discussions for the Sports Studies student. Accessibility seems to have been a watch-word for Tomlinson (2007) in the 72 chapters he compiled. A generous use of spacing on opening pages to chapters and the use of small capitals in the first line of text are repeated in *What If?* for eye-catching effect. He also opted for a very simple cover design which given the range of topics within his book was seemingly a wise and uncomplicated choice.

Working from the outside in, then, the cover design of *What If?* is also simple and uncomplicated, its contents being too eclectic to be represented pictorially in a reasonable way on the cover. The design on Tomlinson's (2007) book is an attractive swirl of red and black; a basic combination of colours and forms which help to define it from others on the shelf. By contrast Cowley (2002) has attempted a mixed pictorial representation of the contents in his book, *More What If?* which appears confusing and thus helped me to decide that that was not what I wanted for *What If?* The *What If?* publication would be a 400 page tome-like collection of stories which question, pose possibilities and cast doubt. There seemed to be an interesting juxtaposition between assuredness and scepticism which I wanted to emphasize in the aesthetic of the book. Consequently, *What If?* became the book of "solid doubt" – unswervingly confident in our utter scepticism. This is hopefully represented by the cover design concept of the book as a metal ingot; a 'casting' of solid doubt, which features a raised and polished question mark to affirm the questioning intent of the authors.

Within the text a large capital letter is used at the start of each Research Preface and Creative Story. This is an echo from the tradition of storytelling down the ages, when the dressed capital letter was used by the "Scop" in Anglo-Saxon poetry. The Scop (pronounced "shop") would not only read but 'perform' epic accounts of battle, conflict, death and glory for an audience, who may typically have been illiterate. For the story to be recounted effectively, the Scop was aided by the illuminated or dressed capital which was itself surrounded by pictures which acted like a visual auto-cue for the correct ordering of events. This feature in the text of *What If?* seemed to doff a cap appropriately to the traditions of storytelling - not only the reading but also the performing of the stories for others to learn from and question.

The fonts used in type-setting also have their inferences towards conflict and make a contribution to the aesthetic of the book. Many publishers use a mixture of Sans Serif and Times Roman fonts for clarity and spacing effect which is also strived for in *What If?* The title fonts are in “Trebuchet”. The Trebuchet was the most lethal siege weapon of the middle ages (1300-1500s), a massive catapult for firing deadly missiles over the high walls of castles (Biesty, 1994). The Trebuchet was used by the English to attack the French at Harfleur, prior to Agincourt (Cornwell, 2008) under Henry V (1415) firing boulders, burning logs, burning skulls and even dead cows to spread disease amongst the castle’s inhabitants. The font used in the main text is “Georgia” about which there is also no shortage of conflict-inference. Georgia is a country which borders the Black Sea and Azerbaijan; a satellite country to Europe sitting between East and West which has been fought over for hundreds of years on social, political and geographical grounds. Georgia has suffered two bloody civil wars and a military coup and is currently the centre of increasing economic conflict over oil, the lifeblood of the world economy. It is hoped that the idea of using these fonts to deliberately represent conflict will help to reinforce the sense of doubt and ‘what if?’ which might arise from reading these tales. With regards to spacing and layout: depending upon the story, if the reader got a sense that they were ‘racing’ through the pages then that may be facilitated in part by the type-setting. A generous line space is used in the main text with the aim of being easier on the eye to read which might in turn permit ‘space’ to think by not overcrowding the senses – this seems to have been a strategy in the textual layout of the study skills books mentioned above which may be one aspect of their design that makes them appealing for the learner.

In closing I have enjoyed the challenge of editing this volume and it has been a pleasure to mentor students’ initial stories towards final chapters. I am confident that this sentiment is echoed by all the mentors who have contributed to the book and that all authors may have gained something that is positive and worth sharing in our educational arena.

Clive Palmer
Cheshire
2010

References

Adamson, J. (2009) No time like the present (pp. 51-53). In, Palmer, C. (Ed.) *The sporting image: sports poetry and creative writing*. Published by the Centre for Research Informed Teaching, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK.

Barone, T. (2002) From genre blurring to audience blending: reflections on the field emanating from an ethnodrama. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 33, 2, 255-267.

Biesty, S. (1994) *Castle cross-sections*. Dorling Kindersley, London.

Bull, M. and Black, L. (2003) Introduction: Into sound (pp. 1-18). In, Bull, M. and Black, L. (Eds.) *The auditory cultural reader*. Berg Publishers, Oxford.

Carroll, L. (1865) *Alice's adventures in wonderland*. Puffin Books Ltd., London (Republished in 1962: reprinted in 1988).

Cornwell, B. (2008) *Azincourt*. Harper Collins Publishers, London.

Cowley, R. (Ed.) (2002) *More What If? – eminent historians imagine what might have been* (second edition). Pan Books, Pan McMillan, London.

Denison, J. (1999a) Boxed in (pp. 29-36). In, Sparkes, A.C. and Silvennoinen, M. (Eds.) *Talking bodies – men's narratives of the body and sport*. Jyväskylä University Printing House, SoPhi, Finland.

Denison, J. (1999b) Men's selves and sport (pp. 156-162). In, Sparkes, A.C. and Silvennoinen, M. (Eds.) *Talking bodies – men's narratives of the body and sport*. Jyväskylä University Printing House, SoPhi, Finland.

Eichburg, H. (2009a) People's academies and sport: towards a philosophy of bodily education. *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, 3, 2, 139-158.

Eichburg, H. (2009b) Fitness on the market: forget 'the single individual'! *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, 3, 2, 171-192.

Eire, C.M.N. (2002) *Pontius Pilate saves Jesus – Christianity without the crucifixion* (Chpt. 3, pp. 48-68). In, Cowley, R. (Ed.) *More What If? – eminent historians imagine what might have been* (second edition). Pan Books, Pan McMillan, London.

Field, M. (2009a) *Improve your punctuation and grammar*. How To Books Ltd., Oxford.

Field, M. (2009b) *Improve your written English*. How To Books Ltd., Oxford.

Gaarder, J. (1996) *Sophie's World*. Phoenix, London

Hall, P. (2009) *CASUALSKI*, hospitalisation Moscow style (pp. 80-88). In, Palmer, C. (Ed.) *The sporting image: sports poetry and creative writing*. Published by the Centre for Research Informed Teaching, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK.

Harper, G. (Ed.) (2006) *Teaching creative writing*. Continuum, London.

Note: This is an edited book with an interesting selection of chapters which may be particularly relevant to developing writing skills across a range of study areas. For example, in addition to the chapter on Poetry there are chapters on Creative Non-fiction and Research in Creative Writing which would be useful reference for qualitative researchers who are describing "the lived experience".

Harrer, H. (1976) *The white spider*. Granada Publishing Ltd., London.

Harrer, H. (1988) *Seven years in Tibet*. Paladin-Grafton Books, London.

Kahn, D. (2002) *Enigma Uncracked – the Allies fail to break the German cipher machine* (Chpt.18, pp. 305-317). In, Cowley, R. (Ed.) *More What If? – eminent historians imagine what might have been* (second edition). Pan Books, Pan McMillan, London.

Kleiber, D.A. and Hutchinson, S.M. (1999) Heroic masculinity in the recovery from spinal chord injury (pp. 135-155). In, Sparkes, A.C. and Silvennoinen, M. (Eds.) *Talking bodies – men's narratives of the body and sport*. Jyväskylä University Printing House, SoPhi, Finland.

Langley, B. (1982) *Traversal of the Gods*. Sphere Books Limited, London.

Macefield, R. (2005) *Secrets of university success*. Mind Shift International, UK.

Mandell, R.D. (1971) *The Nazi Olympics*. Souvenir Press, London.

Palmer, C. (Ed.) (2009) *The sporting image: sports poetry and creative writing*. Published by the Centre for Research Informed Teaching, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK.

Palmer, C. (2007/8/9) Editor in Chief, Volumes 1,2,3: *Journal of Qualitative Research in Sports Studies*. University of Central Lancashire, UK.

Randall, N. (2009) My dream, my memory (p. 56). In, Palmer, C. (Ed.) *The sporting image: sports poetry and creative writing*. Published by the Centre for Research Informed Teaching, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK.

Rice, T. (2003) Soundselves: an acoustemology of sound and self in the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. *Anthropology Today*, 19, 4, 4-9.

Rookwood, J. and Palmer, C. (2009a). A photo-ethnography, a picture-story-board of experiences at an NGO football project in Liberia (part 1). *Journal of Qualitative Research in Sports Studies*. 3, 1, 161-186.

Rookwood, J. and Palmer, C. (2009b). A photo-ethnography, a picture-story-board of experiences at an NGO football project in Liberia (part 2). *Journal of Qualitative Research in Sports Studies*. 3, 1, 187-210.

Ryan, J. (1996) *Little girls in pretty boxes: the making and breaking of elite gymnasts and figure skaters*. Women's Press Ltd., London.

Note: See also - Wikipedia search for "Little Girls in Pretty Boxes [online]. Available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Girls_in_Pretty_Boxes for a brief overview of the book and informative hyper-links with many of the aspects covered in Ryan's account. (Accessed 26th May 2010).

Saladana, J. (1999) Playwriting with data: ethnographic performance texts. *Youth Theatre Journal*, 13, 60-71.

Singleton, J. and Luckhurst, M. (Eds.) (2000) *The creative writing handbook, techniques for new writers* (second edition). Palgrave, Hampshire, UK.

Note: An edited book with some excellent chapters to stimulate and guide the thoughts of writers. A chapter entitled Words Words Words explores meaning and interpretation of phrasing and provides some useful exercises to become more creative within our written language. The Writing Self focuses upon the experiences of the writer as being central to the writing process and adds useful dimensions to what could become aspects of ethnographic research. Their final chapter on Editing and Rewriting would also be helpful to those who wish to communicate clearly their ideas in a written form.

Smith, B. (2008) Imagining being disabled through playing sport: the body and alterity as limits to imagining others' lives. *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, 2, 2, 142-157.

Sparkes, A.C. and Silvennoinen, M. (Eds.) (1999) *Talking bodies – men's narratives of the body and sport*. Jyväskylä University Printing House, SoPhi, Finland.

Sparkes, A.C. (1999a) The fragile body-self (pp. 51-74). In, Sparkes, A.C. and Silvennoinen, M. (Eds.) *Talking bodies – men's narratives of the body and sport*. Jyväskylä University Printing House, SoPhi, Finland.

Sparkes, A.C. and Smith, B. (1999) Disrupted selves and narrative reconstructions (pp. 76-92). In, Sparkes, A.C. and Silvennoinen, M. (Eds.) *Talking bodies – men's narratives of the body and sport*. Jyväskylä University Printing House, SoPhi, Finland.

Sparkes, A.C. (2002) *Telling tales in sport and physical activity: a qualitative journey*. Human Kinetics Press, Champaign, IL.

Sparkes, A.C. (2009a) Novel ethnographic representations and the dilemmas of judgement. *Ethnography and Education*, 4, 3, 301-319.

Sparkes, A.C. (2009b) Ethnography and the senses, challenges and possibilities. *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*, 1, 1, 21-35.

Sparkes, A.C. [in press] 'When I am old I will...!' In, Humberstone, B. (Ed.) [in press] *Third age and leisure research: principles and practice*. LSA Publication no. 108. Leisure Studies Association, Eastbourne.

Stafford, I. (2008) *Playgrounds of the Gods - A year of sporting fantasy*. Mainstream Publishing, London.

Swan, P. (1999) Three ages of changing (pp. 37-47). In, Sparkes, A.C. and Silvennoinen, M. (Eds.) *Talking bodies – men's narratives of the body and sport*. Jyväskylä University Printing House, SoPhi, Finland.

Tierney, W. (2002) Get real: representing reality. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15, 4, 385-398.

Tomlinson, A. (2007) *The sports studies reader*. Routledge, London.

Wilson, B. (2009) Financial security (pp. 75-79). In, Palmer, C. (Ed.) *The sporting image: sports poetry and creative writing*. Published by the Centre for Research Informed Teaching, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK.