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# Eros and Sport: A Humanist's Perspective

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PAUL THE SILENTIARY, A SIXTH-CENTURY BYZANTINE POET, began one of his amatory epigrams thus: “The law? Eros recognizes none, fierce fighter that he is.”<sup>1</sup> This ancient recognition that the erotic drive is fundamentally unruly and may intrude anywhere can be illustrated by the following modern story. A lady of my acquaintance once confided that she liked to run on the Hart House track at the University of Toronto because that was where one of my colleagues—who is also a serious runner—trained. She found that, if she timed her workout to coincide with his, contemplating his “tight little buns” (her term) alleviated the boredom of running laps. I tell this brief anecdote to remind us of a few basic facts. Firstly, the professor in question was in all likelihood not intentionally exhibiting his erotic masculinity. That particular track offers no provision for spectators, and it was mostly frequented by high-level male runners—marathoners and the like; if anything, the masculinity being exhibited was purely athletic. On the other hand, the lady’s appreciation of that special portion of my colleague’s anatomy seems not to have been motivated by its biomechanical action, at least as it related to running. Her reaction was frankly erotic, and yet I do not believe she was indulging in a process of “objectification,” in the way she might have done with some anonymous hunk in a tank top and shorts. The scholar/runner was someone she knew personally, though not well, and who was not, for her, the focus of any sexual interest outside the confines of the gymnasium. In

<sup>†</sup>In drafting this paper the author benefited from correspondence with Professor Thomas Scanlon. Dr. Laura Willett contributed to the selection and preparation of the illustrations. The author is grateful to both for their assistance.

other words, what would have been a perfectly inconsequential encounter had it occurred in a purely social context became erotically charged when it occurred within the context of athletics and sport.

Why should this be? In the first instance, the basic situation would lend itself to thoughts of mutual sexual desire: active, muscular people of all genders in a state of semi-nudity and promiscuous proximity, performing physical exercises that emphasized certain anatomical features to the observer but that were for the performer so mind-numbingly repetitive that they encouraged her or his thoughts to wander off in fanciful directions. Of course, the erotic dimension of these encounters seems to have been purely subjective and individual. The colleague, perhaps absorbed by thoughts of a meeting he had to chair or the book he was working on, was probably unaware of the fact that his active posterior was eliciting semi-lascivious glances. On the other hand, my only informant in this case certainly seemed oblivious to the fact that she might have been producing an analogous effect on him. Who but the scholar/runner can tell us whether or not he was reciprocating the lady's contemplation of his buns every time he passed her? In short, eros is in the eye and mind of the beholder, it may—or may not—be mutual, but it is certainly not just a matter of spectators ogling athletes. The athletes themselves can feel erotic arousal at the sight of their competitors even in the midst of participation, even if that arousal is not heightened by actual physical contact.

My point here, of course, is to question how we are to react to this anecdote and to its hypothetical ramifications. Are we to blame the lady, as early Christian moralists would do, by assuming that her only reason for going running was to obtain some sort of lubricious gratification, whatever the ostensible justifications she advanced for her activity? Are we to emulate modern feminist moralizers and judge her severely for perverting the true nature of sport by eroticising it and for displacing her sexual appetites from a legitimate object of desire to the body of an unwitting fellow athlete? Or might we take another tack, and congratulate her for being a free spirit and for enriching the athletic experience by welcoming to it an erotic dimension that was fostered by the circumstances, that procured additional satisfaction for her, that would have no aftermath, and that caused no harm to anyone else? If sport is a pleasure, must we limit that pleasure only to the physiological and psychological benefits that the activity itself was intended to produce and neglect any inadvertent side effects that were not sought but that might accrue?

Before getting to those questions, I must, however, engage the central issue of this forum that has been raised by Allen Guttmann's 1996 book, *The Erotic in Sports*, and the responses it elicited (or failed to)—Thierry Terret's paper from last year's annual conference of the North American Society for Sport History,<sup>2</sup> and Guttmann's further reflections on the subject, which form the first article in this set: the legitimacy and the moral/political correctness of seeing or using sport from an erotic perspective. Guttmann argues that to do so is merely to accept, even rejoice in, the richness of a physical continuum in which sport melds into sex. He sees this continuum as innate to Western civilization, since it was frankly celebrated by the ancient Greeks at a time when the active physical body was an equal partner with the active cerebral mind. And he deplors the fact that though Western society has lived beyond the medieval Christian denial of the legitimate mutual impingement of sex and sport, other orthodoxies still impose on us a state of ambivalence:

we are told that, despite our fundamental impulses, to see sport as sex demeans both the athlete and the spectator, even if the former can see no harm in the equation. Terret, on the other hand, has convincingly shown that the fusion of sport and the erotic in a series of postcards produced results that we can only disavow: women athletes—and thereby women in general—caricatured by semi-naked pin-ups who are manifestly not athletic and whose only apparent interest in sport is to excite the male libido and provoke male condescension.

It is difficult to argue with either scholar. Guttman's book may indeed be partially a catalogue of "historical anecdotes on coitus and sports settings,"<sup>3</sup> but it is a very impressive catalogue. Guttman successfully achieved what few scholars can: rationally ordering and intelligently interpreting a panoply of sources so vast and so varied that it can make the head swim. He enunciates his position so convincingly that you have to willfully subscribe to "prefabricated concepts" in order to deny the validity of his arguments. He is to be congratulated not only for having reduced whole realms of human culture to manageable proportions but also for having waded successfully through a morass of bad and wrong-headed scholarship and having thereby made it possible for the rest of us to avoid reading the kind of books and articles that have created "the sorry state of our profession."

Though only of article-length, Terret's "Sport and Erotica" covers a similarly wide range of cultural issues (within the chronological limits imposed by his subject), is solidly-based and carefully argued, and yet one is left with the nagging feeling that he may be making a mountain out of a mole hill. Did the few semi-erotic postcards that constitute his starting-point have any influence at all on the French mindset? That most French males in the 1920s thought that women should refrain from playing sports—indeed that they should refrain from doing anything except *faire la cuisine* and *faire l'amour*—is hardly news for anyone who has some familiarity with France and French culture. As for dirty postcards, the production and distribution of erotic imagery was a French specialty from at least the late seventeenth century. Thus in William Wycherley's 1675 comedy, *The Country Wife*, the chief male protagonist returns from Paris and forestalls his friends' inevitable questions by announcing that he has brought back to England "not so much as a bawdy picture."<sup>4</sup> Since continued sales of French postcards depended on varying and renewing the images, I am not surprised that in the 1920s, the decade of Suzanne Lenglen, some entrepreneur came up with the idea of using sports as a theme.

Women's incursions into previously all-male domains were similarly mocked in America after the Second World War by showing them, scantily clad, doing men's work in revealing but awkward poses in the girly calendars that hung in barber shops and car-repair garages. But however exploitative the postcards and the calendars were—not of single individuals (the women who posed for the pictures were presumably paid for their work) but of women generally—what remains of them now, beyond their value as witnesses to historical attitudes, is only titillation. The fact that the women pictured are doing "men's work," whether athletic or practical, and doing it badly, no longer has any real resonance and may not have had very much even at the time.

Terret's article ought to have stressed just how vulnerable French men were feeling in the 1920s. There had been a very active and often virulent suffragette movement in France from the 1880s, and it showed no signs of slowing down in the following decades. More



Gil Elvgren, "Girl Wanted," 1952.  
COURTESY BROWN AND BIGELOW,  
AVALANCHE PUBLISHING.

importantly, over 1.3 million mostly young males had been killed between 1914 and 1918, and these premature deaths had left many large gaps in the socio-economic structure. Women were either willing or were obliged to occupy these gaps and to break the mould into which they had previously been cast, to the extent that during the "années folles," longstanding gender distinctions began to break down. Social historian Mary Louise Roberts quotes a prominent journalist who wrote in 1923:

... [T]he war has tangibly changed the social condition of women. Obligated to take care of herself, and often to support her husband, the woman has become emancipated. She has entered new careers: a woman doctor, lawyer, engineer, painter, sculptor or composer is no longer a phenomenon.<sup>5</sup>

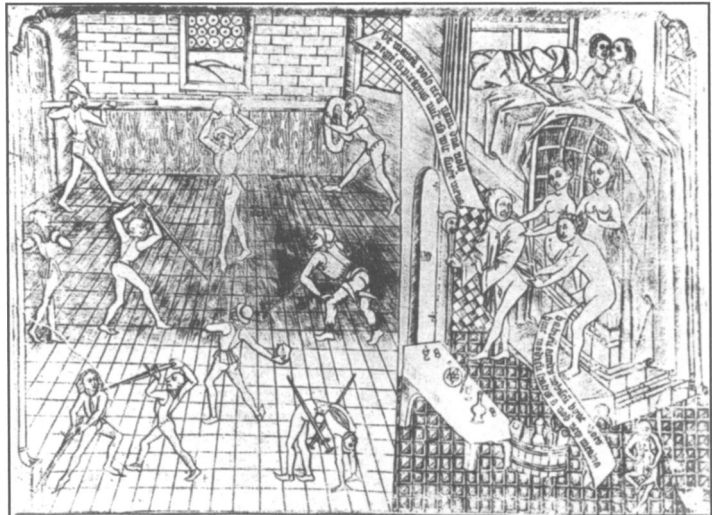
The "erotic postcards of sportswomen" that Terret describes fit into a larger male reaction that was trying to force women back into their traditional roles of mother and homemaker. All that said, his paper is a very scholarly piece of work, very carefully crafted, that illuminates a whole segment of culture from the viewpoint of what first appears to be nothing but an epiphenomenon.

The larger issue is, however, why was this forum created at all? The notion that sport has some connections to erotic and sexual activity seems to me such a self-evident, natural

proposition—and seemed so even before I read *The Erotic in Sports*—that it is curious to find it a subject of debate. Sport has been a longstanding metaphor for sex. A recent report that revealed yet another of John F. Kennedy’s paramours described the late U.S. president as a “sexual athlete.” In the “Lifestyle” section of a Toronto newspaper some years ago, the wife of a couple that had spent a particularly strenuous weekend repairing their marriage used the term “sexual Olympics” to denote the high caliber of their performance. U.S. Southern slang commonly used the term “sporting house” to refer to a brothel, and “scoring” is common slang for successfully achieving seduction.

This connection seemed self-evident to an earlier age as well. A comic sixteenth-century French poem describing the steps in seduction and foreplay does so in terms of the scoring system in tennis; modern Americans of course use the analogy of baseball (“getting to first base”). Shakespeare himself links sport and sex when he has Gloucester say in the opening scene of *King Lear* that there was “good sport” at the conception of his bastard son Edmund.<sup>6</sup> The fact that much of this discourse is merely the ingenious use of commonplaces does not excuse it from infringing the canons of political correctness, but it does reveal two things: that ordinary parlance has long induced us to imagine sex as a sporting encounter and that human beings have long thought that the satisfactions procured by athletics are commensurate with (though not necessarily equal to) those of the god Eros.

The correlation between sport and sex can sometimes be found in pictorial sources as well. Renaissance historian Sydney Anglo reprints a mid fifteenth-century engraving that juxtaposes a fencing school, a bathhouse, and a brothel. He stresses the censorious moral inferences the picture had for contemporaries: the man in the bathhouse is portrayed as a fool; one of the fencers is displaying his bare buttocks, for no apparent reason. The conclusion seems inescapable—fencing (and perhaps all sport) was just as depraved an activity as was fornicating and frequenting promiscuous bathhouses—but we may wish to read the three-part image consecutively as well: after exercise, a bath and then sex.<sup>7</sup>

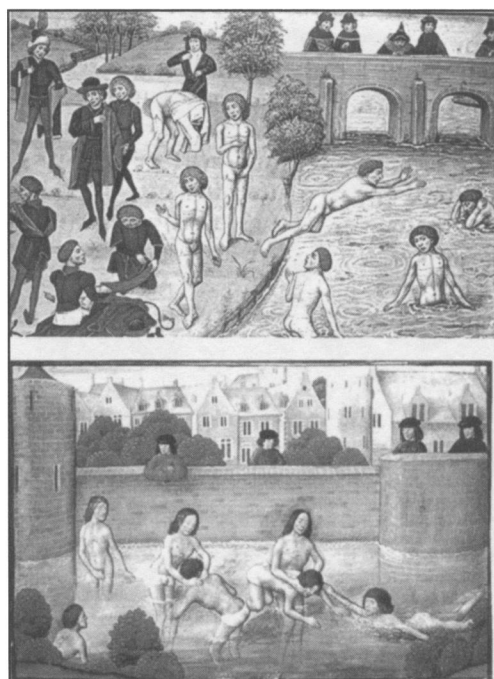


An early Renaissance fighting school, bathhouse, and brothel. R.L. SCOTT COLLECTION, GLASGOW ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM.

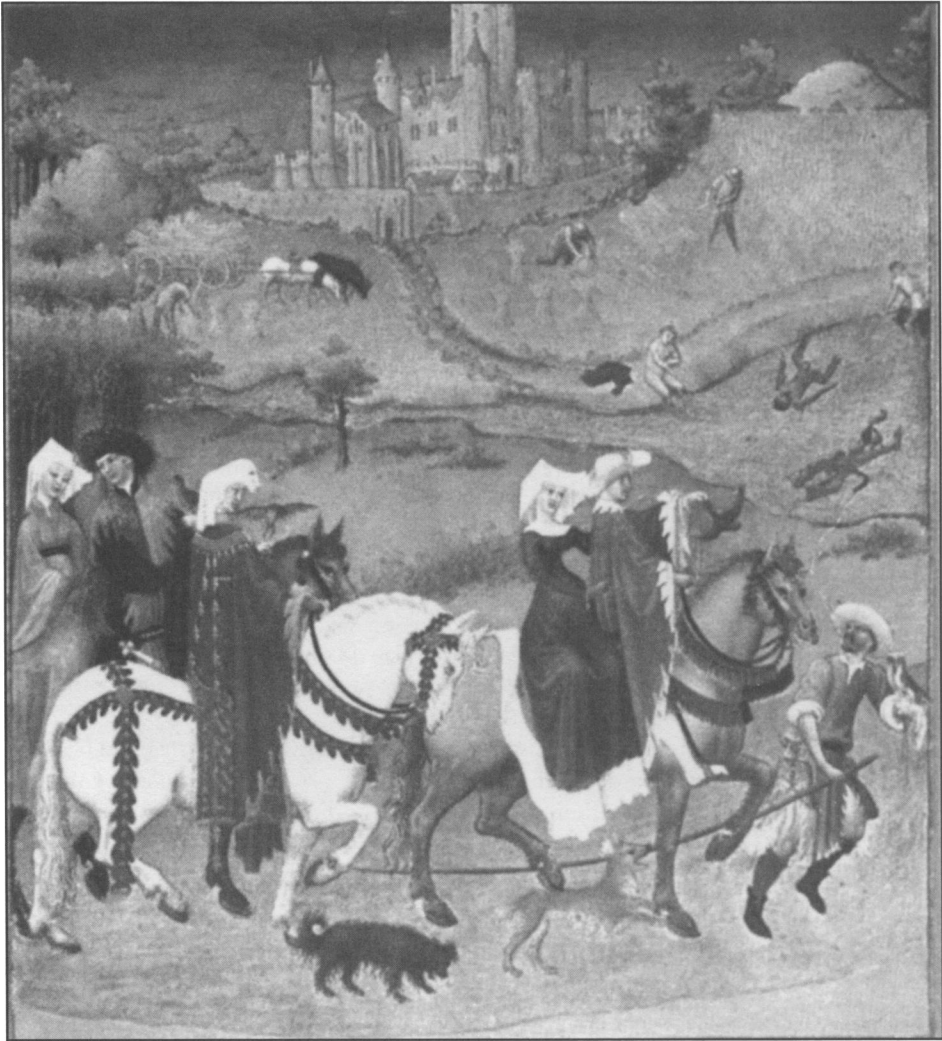


As Guttman has shown, and as other sources confirm, athletes themselves have con- nived in this relation of eros and sport and have even sought to profit from it. Tourneying medieval knights openly demonstrated that they were showing off to win a lady’s favors by wearing her colors. The short tops and very tight leotards that were the common costume for young men in the Renaissance accentuated certain bodily parts and thus became pro- vocative when the wearers were playing strenuous sports. In his very influential *Book of the Courtier* (1528), Castiglione advocates that for an audience that includes women, men should put on a “fine show” (“un bel spettacolo”) by doing horse vaulting or playing ball games. The latter especially facilitates “showing off the disposition of the body, the quick- ness and litheness of every member.”<sup>8</sup> In our own day, professional baseball players send the batboy to obtain the phone numbers of women sitting in the field-level boxes whom they think they have impressed with their play, and the sexual successes of NBA players are legendary, even if we do not believe Wilt Chamberlain. Figure skaters of both sexes, whether pairs or singles, accentuate the erotic in their performances (speed skaters do not, though they are tightly sheathed in all-revealing spandex).<sup>9</sup>

It may, of course, be the spectator that brings eros to the event. The ancient Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus reportedly made skimpily-dressed virgins parade and compete in sports events. Whatever the feelings of these female athletes, the male spectators who watched them were expected to turn their fancies to thoughts of marriage.<sup>10</sup> In another erotic register, two late fifteenth-century French manuscript illuminations show middle-aged men (no women are present) taking a keen and perhaps non-athletic interest in groups of younger men swimming in skin-tight boxers. The sixteenth-century French memorialist



Fifteenth-century swimmers and spectators.  
DÉPARTEMENT DES MANUSCRITS, BIBLIOTHÈQUE  
NATIONALE DE FRANCE.



The Limburg brothers, *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, the month of August. MUSÉE DU CHÂTEAU, CHANTILLY.

Pierre de Brantôme provides a more traditional example. Whenever the handsome Duc de Nemours was playing tennis or football, two very beautiful and very noble ladies of the court tore themselves away from their prayers and ran to watch him. Though Nemours was an accomplished sportsman, the attraction the ladies felt was surely more erotic than athletic and bore witness to the truth of Castiglione's assertion about the advantages that ball games procure for their male players.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, eros may remain absent even when the situation is propitious. An illumination from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (1416) depicts aristocratic ladies on a hawking expedition taking no interest at all in some nearby male peasants swimming naked.



However, it is not enough simply to demonstrate that sports are and always have been erotic or have provoked erotic responses and consequently to invite those disturbed by this fact to become accustomed to it. That there have been negative exploitations of the sexual attractiveness of the athletic body seems equally undeniable, but it is similarly not adequate to ascribe this exploitation to vague entities such as capitalism or dead white men or to assume that it will always lead to rape or other forms of misogynistic violence. Indeed, I do not believe we can solve the problem of non-violent erotic exploitation—most people actually do not seem to mind it—but I think we can solve the conflict that has arisen between the tenants of Guttmann's position and those who, like Terret, adopt the opposing view.

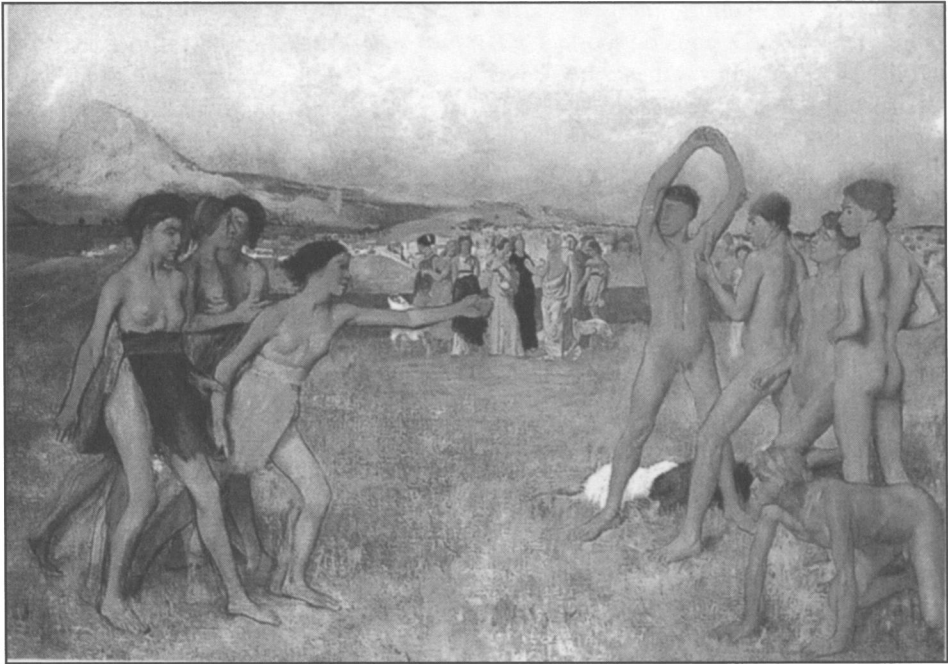
The historical sources for defining the erotic in sports are necessarily written or iconographical, that is to say, they are not actions but, in Aristotle's terms, imitations of actions; not documentary presentations but constructed *re-presentations*. And because they were mostly produced in cultures that were dominated by the ideals of rhetoric and the edifying function of art and literature, they were shaped toward eliciting some sort of reaction on the part of the viewer or reader. They hence cannot be taken as entirely realistic. The historian of ancient sport, H. A. Harris, rightly emphasized that Greek vase paintings are not reliable, incontrovertible evidence of ancient sports techniques:

The Greek vase painter was an artist, faced with the task of ornamenting a panel often oddly shaped and on a curved surface. With him aesthetic considerations always came first. . . . Convention too played a part in these paintings.<sup>12</sup>

What he says about the depiction of athletes on Greek vases is no less true of more modern representation of the same subject.

On the other hand, modern feminist and neo-Marxist criticisms of the bond between sport and the erotic seem to deal primarily with real sport and real athletes and only secondarily with their representation by photographic and cinematic media. Thus, when Guttmann traces the history of body image and the erotic in sport and when Terret writes on French postcards, they are relying on rhetorical and aesthetic documents for their evidence; but when Guttmann outlines the opinions of sport advanced by various orthodoxies and when Terret situates the postcards within the context of real French women athletes, they are dealing with arguments that are based not on pictorial fiction but on a certain perception of reality.

It is fundamentally important to distinguish between unmediated and mediated reality, and hence between erotic arousal at an actual sporting event and erotic arousal occasioned by the pictorial or verbal representation of a sporting event. To gaze erotically at athletes going about their business is to be a peeping tom (or a "voyeur," as current misuse would have it).<sup>13</sup> Thus the lady I mentioned in my opening anecdote was impinging on the privacy of the scholar/runner and exploiting him erotically, even if he had shed most of his clothes in a public place and was exhibiting his body in a semi-nude state. On the other hand, the lady was also being an athlete and her own physical exertions may have induced her to react that way. Plato knew and even approved of the fact that if young people exercised together, they would inevitably be led to have sexual intercourse with one another.<sup>14</sup> Reports that there was an unexpectedly high consumption of condoms in the Salt Lake City athletes' village in 2002 bear out the truth of Plato's observation; as does, in



Edgar Degas, *Young Spartans Exercising*, [before 1917]. NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

another way, the Cole Porter song “My Heart Belongs to Daddy,” in which a lady golfer admits to becoming erotically aroused while playing: “While tearing off/A game of golf/I may make a play for the caddy.”

When it comes to photos of athletes, these either stress the expenditure of effort required to achieve athletic success, or they portray the athlete as an attractive person. In the latter case, since athletes are almost invariably young and in good physical shape, some degree of eroticism seems to be an inevitable concomitant of the image for at least some of the people who see it. An untouched photo must, however, reveal the warts and all, while paintings, artistic photographs, and verbal descriptions are fictions that show only what the painter/photographer/writer wants the viewer to see. If eros is present in Edgar Degas’ *Young Spartans Exercising*, it is because Degas put it there.<sup>15</sup> To that extent, his painting is no more about sport than are Terret’s French postcards—or, extrapolating backwards, than are the numerous depictions of models posing as athletes that we can see on Greek vases. To read any of these as hard evidence of the erotic in sport or of eroticism using sport to nefarious purposes is in my view mistaken; they are rather evidence of public taste and of artistic imagination and creativity catering—or even pandering—to that taste. Guttman tells us that

The athletic male body [in ancient Greece] was unquestionably a cultural ideal. From the visual evidence of our museums, where hundreds of statues and thousands of vases have been preserved, a composite image of that cultural ideal can readily be reconstructed.<sup>16</sup>

But in fact that “cultural ideal” was artistic and erotic, but it was not athletic. In his second-century A.D. book on sports, *On Gymnastics*, Philostratos outlined in some detail the different body types athletes needed to have according to whether they were boxers, wrestlers, runners, or pentathletes.<sup>17</sup> His contemporary, the Stoic philosopher Epictetus, expressed the same idea but grounded it in explicitly aesthetic terms:

What makes a pancratiast beautiful does not make a wrestler good, and more than that makes a runner quite absurd; and the same man who is beautiful for the pentathlon is very ugly for wrestling.<sup>18</sup>

The erotically ideal male athletic physique was as much a figment of the painter’s imagination as are the female figures drawn in modern-day fashion magazines and clothing advertisements.

I am not, however, trying to refute the proposition that sport is and should be erotic. Instead, in order to end on a positive note, I want to return once again to the humanist’s standby, Plato, and to a point I adumbrated in my opening anecdote, that the erotic in sports is as much a matter of athletes becoming mutually aroused within the context of the gymnasium or the playing field as it is of spectators fantasizing about players or players trying to provoke an erotic reaction from spectators. In his book Guttmann quoted the text from Plato’s *Symposium* (217c) in which Alcibiades recounts his failed attempt to seduce Socrates by wrestling with him,<sup>19</sup> and I have already looked here at the passage from the *Republic* (358d), also quoted by Guttmann (p. 24), in which the philosopher takes a eugenicist tack and advocates athletic young heterosexuals moving naturally from the gymnasium to the bed to produce healthy offspring for the state. A final text from Plato serves, however, to situate the erotic in sports on a nobler plane, while still underlining the fact that the fundamental form of arousal occurs between performing athletes and not between active players and passive spectators.

In the middle of the *Symposium* (182a-c) Pausanias, one of the participants in the debate, devotes some fifteen lines to an explanation of the superiority of Athens over the other Greek states and over the Greek-speaking areas that are governed by “barbarians.” This superiority hinges on the way that erotic desire is integrated into the larger scheme of things. In the barbarian states, pederasty is banned outright. The Greek states of Elis, Sparta, and Boeotia go to the other extreme and require it by law. But in Athens the lover must persuade (*peithein*) the object of his desire to respond to his passion (*eros*), not with *anteros*, reciprocal desire, but with *philia*, intense friendship or even love. And the place where physical desire and emotional love meet and turn into strong relationships is in the shared fondness for knowledge and for physical exercise: *philosophia kai philogymnastia* (a linking that reminds us that the gymnasium was as much a place for intellectual formation as it was for physical pursuits). Other Greek states must legislate erotic relations into existence because their older men lack the eloquence of the Athenians (*sophoi legein*) to win over younger men. The barbarians legislate them out of existence because they want to keep their subjects away from anything that elevates the mind to great things (*phronemata megala*).<sup>20</sup>

Like Paul the Silentiary whom I quoted at the top of this essay, Plato begins this passage by connecting *eros*, passion, and *nomos/thesmos*, the rule of law, but he does so in an affirmative rather than a negative sense. For Plato erotic desire can be regulated and con-

trolled through its integration into culture, in the best sense of that word. And when it is, it can be used to produce very desirable results. This he illustrates by an historical anecdote that brings the passage to a close, in which *eros* and *philia* joined together to destroy (*katelusen*) despotic power (*archen*).<sup>21</sup> Between these two poles, which speak implicitly of self-government, we find three of the peaks of the Athenian achievement arrayed in close symbiosis: rhetoric, philosophy, and gymnastics. The erotic dimension of sport is not just in the “bawdy pictures” found on Greek pottery or the animalistic desire to sexually possess an athlete with a perfect body. It is part and parcel of what raises us above the animals and makes us truly human: ruling ourselves, using language effectively, feeling strong emotions for another person, acquiring knowledge for its own sake, and improving our bodies by exercise and sport. In the ideal world that Plato imagined we might create, *eros* does not debase sport but rather elevates it to an equal footing with the disinterested pursuit of wisdom.



<sup>14</sup>*Thesmon Eros ouk oide biemachos.* Paul the Silentiary 292.1 in *Anthologie grecque, anthologie latine*, tome II, livre V, ed. Pierre Waltz (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1960), 128 (translated by author).

<sup>2</sup>Allen Guttmann, *The Erotic in Sports* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Thierry Terret, “Sports and Erotica: Erotic Postcards of Sportswomen during France’s *Années Folles*,” *Journal of Sport History* 29 (2002): 271-287.

<sup>3</sup>The label was applied to the book by Brian Pronger in an article entitled “Outta My Endzone: Sport and the Territorial Anus,” *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 23 (1999): 387. To be truthful I did not find much coitus in *The Erotic in Sports*.

<sup>4</sup>William Wycherley, *The Country Wife* 1.1, ed. James Ogden (London: Black; New York: Norton, 1991), 13. “Feelthy peectures” in the form of postcards were still being hawked rather openly to (mostly American) tourists on the streets around the Paris Opera in the 1940s and 1950s, but the market seems to have dried up when the Anglo-Saxon world lost its sense of shame and modesty concurrently with the 1959 court decision that authorized the publication of the unexpurgated *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*.

<sup>5</sup>Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 179. Although he knew of this book indirectly, Terret might have made more use of it and of Roberts’ more recent *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

<sup>6</sup>*King Lear* 1.1, “Though this knave came something saucily to the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged.”

<sup>7</sup>Sydney Anglo, *The Martial Arts in Renaissance Europe* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 14.

<sup>8</sup>Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* 2.22, trans. Charles S. Singleton (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1959), 39.

<sup>9</sup>Just as this article was going to proof, Olympic gold medallist Jamie Salé posed revealingly for *FHM*, a “young man’s magazine” and was quoted in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* (8 December 2003) as saying “Guys should know that figure skating is sexy.”

<sup>10</sup>Plutarch, *Life of Lyncurgus* 15.1 (I quote Plutarch—and later Plato and Epictetus—according to the paragraphing system that is common to all reliable editions of their texts.)

<sup>11</sup>Pierre de Bourdeilles, seigneur de Brantôme, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. L. Lalanne, 10 vols. (Paris: Renouard, 1868), 4: 165-166.

<sup>12</sup>H. A. Harris, *Greek Athletes and Athletics* (London: Hutchinson, 1964), 29-30.

<sup>13</sup>By definition a “voyeur” is someone who derives pleasure—who can only derive pleasure—from observing surreptitiously or from imagining the sexual congress of other people.

<sup>14</sup>Guttman interprets a euphemistic rendering of *Republic* 358d to mean an “erotically suffused relationship” (*The Erotic in Sports*, 24). Whereas what Plato unmistakably said was that young men and women living, eating, and exercising together would go on from there to sex—“*pros ten allelon mixin.*”

<sup>15</sup>There seems to be some confusion about the title of the painting. According to the National Gallery of Britain’s website ([www.nationalgallery.org.uk](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk)) Degas never displayed the picture or let it out of his studio, hence, presumably, never officially baptized it. The painting came to Britain in 1924, seven years after Degas’ death and seems to have been known as *Young Spartans Exercising* ever since.

<sup>16</sup>Guttman, *The Erotic in Sports*, 17.

<sup>17</sup>Philostratos, *On Gymnastics*, paras. 31-35, in Stephen G. Miller, *Arete, Greek Sports from Ancient Sources*, 2nd ed. expanded (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 21-22, 25-27, 31-32, 39.

<sup>18</sup>Epictetus, *Discourses*, 3.1.5-6, trans. W. A. Oldfather, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1928).

<sup>19</sup>Guttman, *The Erotic in Sports*, 20-21. Curiously enough, H. A. Harris completely misses the erotic dimension implicit in two naked young men wrestling with each other: “[In the ‘palaestra’ or wrestling-school] young men met their comrades and enjoyed a friendly bout of wrestling with them, just as today they would play a set of tennis or a game of squash.” *Sport in Greece and Rome* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972), 21.

<sup>20</sup>I became aware of the importance of this text from reading Thomas Scanlon, *Eros and Greek Athletics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press., 2002) where it is quoted on p. 199.

<sup>21</sup>In 514 B.C. Aristogiton (the *erastes*) and Harmodius (the *philos*) together assassinated Hipparchus, brother of the dictator Hippias.