GLOBALIZING SPORT STUDIES

Globalizing Boxing

Kath Woodward

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Globalizing Boxing

Globalizing Sport Studies

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To Steve

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Series Editor's Preface

There is now a considerable amount of expertise nationally and internationally in the social scientific and cultural analysis of sport in relation to the economy, and society more generally. Contemporary research topics, such as sport and social justice, science and technology and sport, global social movements and sport, sports mega-events, sports participation and engagement and the role of sport in social development, suggest that sport and social relations need to be understood in non-Western developing economies, as well as European, North American and other advanced capitalist societies. The current high global visibility of sport makes this an excellent time to launch a major new book series that takes sport seriously, and makes this research accessible to a wide readership.

The series *Globalizing Sport Studies* is thus in line with a massive growth of academic expertise, research output and public interest in sport worldwide. At the same time, it seeks to use the latest developments in technology and the economics of publishing to reflect the most innovative research into sport in society, currently under way in the world. The series is multidisciplinary, although primarily based on the social sciences and cultural studies approaches to sport.

The broad aims of the series are to: *act* as a knowledge hub for social scientific and cultural studies research in sport, including, but not exclusively, anthropological, economic, geographic, historical, political science and sociological studies; *contribute* to the expanding field of research on sport in society in the United Kingdom and internationally by focussing on sport at the regional, national and international levels; *create* a series for both senior and more junior researchers that will become synonymous with cutting-edge research, scholarly opportunities and academic development; *promote* innovative, discipline-based, multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary theoretical and methodological approaches to researching sport in society; *provide* an English-language outlet for high-quality non-English writing on sport in society; *publish* broad overviews, original empirical research studies and classic studies from non-English sources; and thus attempt to *realize* the potential for *globalizing* sport studies through open content licensing with 'Creative Commons'.

In August 2009, following a meeting of the International Olympic Committee executive board in Berlin, it was announced that women's boxing would be included in the Olympic Games for the first time in 2012 when the games were staged in London. This meant that for the first time every sport at the games would have women competing in it, but also marked another key moment in the development of the sport of boxing. This book, *Globalizing Boxing*, has a wider remit than most of the other academic studies that have been written about boxing, many of which are ethnographies of particular boxing gyms, and charts the spread of the sport. Whilst Kath Woodward's book draws upon earlier studies, it is more concerned with how boxing and boxing culture can be understood in the contemporary world and especially with what boxing has to offer a study of social and cultural change. As she notes, the world is changing, but how is boxing implicated in these global transformations? Does the sport contribute to these changes or mainly respond to them? What can a sport as traditional, long-lasting and arguably, primitive, as boxing, contribute to an understanding of the fast pace of change in the contemporary globalized and globalizing world?

Globalizing Boxing offers answers to these questions and many others in chapters that involve consideration of the history of boxing, the mobile lives of boxers, the influence and intersections of social class, gender, ethnicity and 'race' in the global fight game, the physicality of boxing, and the role of the mass media in representing the sport. The book concludes with reflections on women's boxing and the impact that the inclusion of women's boxing in the London Summer Olympic Games in 2012 may have had on women's sport as well as on boxing itself.

John Horne, Preston and Edinburgh, 2013

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1

Introduction: Boxing Going Global

This book presents a critique of the sport of boxing in order to demonstrate the synergies between boxing as a sport and social and cultural forces in the context of globalization. Boxing shows the processes of globalization and the myriad connections between the global and the local and between the personal and the social. This book uses boxing as a vehicle for exploring aspects of social, cultural and political life in order to show how power operates to create inequalities and provide opportunities as part of globalized and globalizing social forces. Boxing is subject to the influences of different sources of power, but boxing, as a particular example of sport in the contemporary world, also contributes to the making of social relations. *Globalizing Boxing* presents a cultural and social critique of the intersecting axes of power which make the culture of boxing. *Globalizing Boxing* has a wider remit than many of the books written about boxing, for example, as ethnographies of particular boxing gyms. This book draws upon the data of such studies but is more concerned with how boxing and boxing culture can be understood in the contemporary world and with what boxing has to offer to a study of social and cultural change.

Boxing takes different forms around the globe, but there are embodied cultures and cultural practices which connect these different types and traditions of boxing and their diverse cultures. Although my main focus is upon what can be called western or traditional boxing, I also recognize how boxing travels and include discussion on Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) and Thai Boxing (Muay Thai) to demonstrate the transforming properties of the embodied practices and culture of boxing in different forms. This book offers some new ways of thinking about boxing within the wider social and cultural terrain and of exploring the dynamics of cultural change to which a sport like boxing contributes as well as responds.

My framing question concerns the relationship between boxing and a transforming world, especially in the context of the fluidities and mobilities of globalization. The world is changing, but how is a sport like boxing implicated in

global transformations? Does the sport contribute to changes or mainly respond to them? What can a sport as traditional, long lasting and, some might say, primitive as boxing contribute to an understanding of the fast pace of change in the contemporary globalized and globalizing world? There is some irony in the contradictory relationship between boxing and globalization; men's boxing is marked by the participation of the migrant people who make up global flows and networks but patriarchal practices and networks of traditional masculinity are firmly embedded in boxing in ways that seem more resistant to social and cultural change than other social and cultural fields, especially outside sport. Boxing is a traditional sport in many ways, which is characterized by endurances and continuities, for example in its legends, body practices and regulations and in its associations with class-based hegemonic masculinity and with racialized, ethnicized social inclusions and exclusions. Boxing is changing, however, and boxing contributes to social and cultural transformations as well as reflecting and reproducing them.

There is something about boxing. Of all sports, it is the one that generates controversy about its very existence and gets the most extreme reactions, especially negative ones. It also provokes enormous excitement and considerable interest. Boxing is distinctive in the field of sport. The phenomenon of one-on-one combat, in which the prime and explicit purpose is to render one's opponent unconscious, seems to be an anomaly in the twenty-first century, a primordial practice and primitive source of entertainment. The more complex and ambiguous other fields of experience and inquiry become in late modernity, the more characterized by excess, polarities and binary logic boxing appears. Even among academic colleagues, who are not inclined to follow the sport, or even any sport and are certainly not fight fans, there is enormous interest when I mention my research in this field. People are fascinated by the endurance of the sport and by its practices, which are such a mix of highly disciplined, enfleshed and combative engagement and the contradictions and the strong feelings boxing provokes.

What makes boxing so contradictory is also what generates its passions and promise. Boxing has capacities to create sensation and intense feelings whether of excitement, enthusiasm, admiration or incredulity, antipathy, horror and disgust. Boxing is itself, in all its many manifestations, created by social and cultural constructions and diverse affects which are emotional and material. The more cultural practices stress the refinement of the body and body projects through which people can shape their own bodies and achieve desirable, perfect outcomes through a range of technologies and interventions (Rose, 1996, Shilling, 2008),

the more boxing reminds us that ultimately bodies are fragile and can be broken as well as beautiful. Kevin Mitchell describes the sport in these terms: 'the fight game is an unkillable beast' (Mitchell, 2001:1). In this striking phrase Mitchell brings together the dangers and fears that boxing inspires and the sport's enduring qualities, thanks to which it still survives. Mitchell's claims also suggest the sport's dark side and its implications of 'dark trade' to quote the title of Donald McRae's book on boxing (McRae, 1996). Most sports, in their histories, have connections to gambling and illegal practices and many such associations persist into the twenty-first century, but boxing has its own historical links, for example to the betting and quasi-corrupt practices of the network of sporting followers known as the Fancy, for whom this source of amusement was their favourite, to paraphrase Pierce Egan, in the eighteenth century (Egan, 1812, 1905, 2011) and into the nineteenth century (Boddy, 2008). More recently the Mafia and the mob have been strongly associated with boxing (Mitchell, 2009). Boxing has the capacity for danger in the ring which is given expression by the practices which are permitted and those which are not. Outside the ring the risks associated with the sport are manifest in its wider culture.

Boxing, in the twenty-first century, is also for many of its adherents and aficionados (most of whom are men but, increasingly, women are participating in the sport too) a way of feeling better about themselves. Boxing also involves taking control and 'looking after yourself', with all the nuances and implications of that phrase. 'Looking after yourself' can entail keeping healthy and fit, and raising self-esteem; it might also involve being able to defend yourself if threatened or attacked and maybe, even pre-empting such attacks through aggressive as well as assertive deportments and dispositions.

The ambiguities and contradictions along with the intense feelings which make up the sport are reflected in the inspiration boxing has provided for a range of cultural texts and artworks. Boxing has generated not only debate but also large numbers of writings, literary texts, artworks and films. These creative works offer a diversity that ranges from William Hazlitt, Norman Mailer and Joyce Carol Oates to Jean-Michel Basquiat and from Gerald Early to Francis Bacon (Chandler et al., 1996). Contemporary visual representations of boxing draw upon the symbolic significance of events, objects and individual protagonists. Particular fights have specific and powerful resonance, impact and affects. Kasia Boddy, in her comprehensive historical account of the culture of boxing, refers to the ways in which these strong feelings can only be invoked and understood by saying 'I was there' (Boddy, 2008:381) or possibly by knowing someone who was and remembering where you were when it happened, which emphasizes

the sharp distinction between 'the thing itself and its mechanical reproduction' (Benjamin, 1970:225). These distinctions are particularly powerful in boxing as Joyce Carol Oates argues: boxing is real and not drama (Oates, 1987).

Such moments matter enormously in sport and have particular resonance in boxing because of the specific enfleshed dimensions of the sport and its legacies of the authenticity of the physical presence of spectators as well as participants in the fight (Oates, 1987). Events of political importance similarly get mixed up with emotive affects such as the death of President Kennedy or that of Diana, the princess of Wales. All fight fans can name the special event of a big fight which achieved iconic status, with the Rumble in the Jungle, in Kinshasa, Zaire, in 1974 between George Foreman and Muhammad Ali; the Fight of the Century in Madison Square Garden in 1971 between Joe Frazier and Muhammad Ali; and the Thrilla in Manila, the third and final fight between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier in Manila in 1975, being among the most famous iconic moments in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Boxing is a field in which different texts and spaces merge in the making of legends. Joe Louis versus Max Schmeling in 1938 also became known as the 'fight of the century' (Erenberg, 2006) and although few people alive can now lay claim to having actually been there, the actuality and significance of the fight have become established and embedded in memory and in legend through its rehearsal on YouTube and especially through its literary forms, for example in Don de Lillo's work *White Noise*, where 'fighters and rock concerts become the makers of history and biographies' (de Lillo, 1986:67).

In his novel *Underworld*, de Lillo describes how sporting events are 'measures of the awesome' using the example of the famous 1951 baseball game when the San Francisco Giants beat the Los Angeles Dodgers. In the novel, Russ Hodges, 'the voice of the Giants', recalls the time when his father took him to see Jack Dempsey fight Jess Willard in Toledo and 'what a thing that was and what a measure of the awesome' (de Lillo, 1997:15–16).

Boxing is a discursive and representational space which extends beyond simplistic binary moralities of condemnation on the one hand and uncritical celebration on the other. The art associated with boxing, itself called the Noble Art, is rarely, if ever, just about boxing. For example, sculpture or painting based upon the body of the boxer may be more concerned with the capacities for achievement and for failure of flesh. So-called boxing films are often about triumph over adversity and the possibilities of resisting oppression by taking boxing as the route out of poverty, rather than being simply about the fight game (Woodward, 2012b). Sometimes these are expressed in the narratives

of popular culture as in the *Rocky* film series. At other times, boxing is the inspiration for more complex artistic expressions, for example in the sculpture of the Terme boxer (Smith, 1991) of the Hellenistic period in the classical times to contemporary works like that of Ben Dearnley (Dearnley, 2012). Boxing has the capacities to inspire and both to attract and to repel, sometimes at the same time, so it is hardly surprising that boxing is powerfully represented in a number of artistic and creative fields.

Boxing is also closely imbricated with the social divisions and social relations which are part of global change and the dynamic of globalization, as well as the endurance of social inequalities. Sport carries the distinction of taste and is thus a key field in which social class is marked and made through investments of capital – notably for the practitioners of boxing, physical capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Boxing is largely the sport of those who have little but their bodies to invest. They may dream of financial rewards but have nothing but their bodies and themselves to bring to the enterprise. The interrelationship between the personal, physical capital invested and the returns of economic and financial capital which global boxing offers shows how the sport is located within the processes of globalization.

Globalizing forces

It is a sport which is distinctive, not only in its practice and traditions but also spatially; boxing belongs to particular locations around the world, for spectators and followers and for boxers. There are different cultures of boxing in different parts of the world and boxing is a good, if sometimes unusual, example of the globalization of sport. This book uses boxing to explore some of the ways in which the social and cultural dimensions of globalization can be understood through sport, rather than seeing sport as another field upon which globalization impacts. The globalization of sport and the elements of what can be seen as global and transnational have a long and uneven history which is instructive, especially in the case of a sport like boxing which generates so many contradictions and ambivalences.

There have been several instances of what might be classified as globalization in human history, especially in periods of imperialism and colonization but contemporary debates, especially those located within the field of sport, focus upon the flows of people, money, technologies and knowledge systems between different places across the globe, which characterize late modernity

(Giddens, 2002). Although it is only relatively recently that the word 'globalization' has been so frequently cited and assumed, the processes it encompasses have a long history. Rail travel, telegraph and telephone were also greeted with comments about the speed of communication and the enhanced promise of technological change for human interactions across political and spatial boundaries (Harvey, 1989, 1996). Globalization in the twentieth century was marked by particular characteristics, notably the scale and extent of migration, technological developments and the speed of communication links.

Globalization is marked by speed and mobilities and the crossing of boundaries, especially those of nation states. Speed of transmission and communication flows occupy a particular place in the media-sport-commerce nexus which characterizes contemporary sport and boxing is no exception, although boxing has its own global specificities, for example in terms of where the sport is most popular and where it lacks a presence. In the genealogies of boxing, especially what is called western boxing, the sport's dominance has shifted from Britain, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to the USA, from the start of the twentieth century. These shifts are reflected and reproduced in twentieth-century media coverage of sport (Horne and Whannel, 2011, Horne et al., 2012, Houlihan, 2008, Sugden and Tomlinson, 2011, 1998). For example, the BBC World Service, from its inception in 1932, covered very little sport in the USA with the exception of boxing (Woodward et al., 2011).

Globalization involves the growing reach and scope of institutions and regulatory bodies, which are not only features of the organization of sport but are also indicative of changing power geometries in global politics, for example from the global north to the global south (Harvey, 2003, Held et al., 1999) or from the west to the east (Turner and Khondler, 2010). The BRIC economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC, 2012, 2013) and the vast expansion of Chinese markets open up new opportunities for sport too. Because of the diverse forms of the sport, boxing is a multi-way conversation between east and west. However global inequalities are classified, the genealogy of globalization as manifest in contemporary social life is marked by post-industrial, sometimes western, highly developed, neoliberal countries on the one hand and those categorized as developing or underdeveloped countries with largely less-sophisticated democratic systems of neoliberal governance, on the other. The intersection of power axes implicated in such classificatory systems is, however, changing very fast in ways which have in some cases been led by sport. One example is the shift in power in cricket from the 'game of empire' firmly located in Britain as a western imperial power to the Indian

Premier League (IPL) in the Indian subcontinent. The globalization of boxing takes different forms. Mobilities operate in different directions. The ethnographic assumptions of western sport are challenged by the movement of forms of boxing associated with different parts of the world into the west and back again. Sport is diasporic, too.

In boxing, there has been movement, for example in the increased popularity of forms of the sport in different places; MMA and Thai boxing have been enthusiastically taken up in the USA and in parts of Europe besides retaining popularity in their places of origin. These mobilities involve the crossing of boundaries of nation states and the adaptation and modification of the sport, as well as a reworking of the body practices of the sport.

The mechanisms through which sport is organized and managed, for example through its transnational and international governing bodies, are also part of the dynamics of globalization. Boxing has a particularly diverse set of regulatory bodies, which include the International Boxing Federation (IBF, 2013), International Boxing Organization (IBO, 2013), World Boxing Association (WBA, 2013), World Boxing Council (WBO, 2013), World Boxing Organization (WBO) and for the amateur sport the Amateur International Boxing Association (AIBA, 2013). This range of organizations makes boxing distinctive because it means that there is a plurality of international bodies which can award titles in the sport. There are more titles in boxing than in most sports. There has also been more plasticity and flexibility in the application of the rules, perhaps because of the range and diversity of regulatory bodies.

Globalization has been particularly characterized by fluidities, movements and flows of information and people, which, from various, often competing perspectives, can be seen as reducing the impact of local specificities (Lemert et al., 2011). Boxing has always been in conversation with migration because it has so often been migrant young men who have taken up boxing as a means of escaping poverty and social exclusion (Berkowitz and Ungar, 2008, Marqusee, 2000, 2005, O'Connor, 2002, Sugden, 1996, Sammons, 1988). However, boxing is also a sport with strong local allegiances and localized ways of being and of participating in the sport (Heiskanen, 2012). Boxing is also a sport with powerful allegiances to tradition and a binary logic, especially in relation to gender, which seem to disrupt the fluidities of contemporary theoretical understandings of the breakdown of boundaries and the fluidity of globalizing forces. Globalization in boxing and the sport's part in globalizing processes are marked by tensions between exploitation and the possibilities of liberation, and between entrenched traditional attitudes and the promise of change.

G/local forces

The overarching focus of studies of globalization has been on the crossing of boundaries and international exchanges and encounters which are facilitated by speed and the annihilation of distance, which could be enabling, offering democratic possibilities and productive efficiencies on the one hand and offering terrifying threats of global warfare and global terrorism on the other. Globalization has been characterized by interconnectedness, whereby global forces impact upon local and regional practices and endeavours (Tomlinson, 1999) so that what has been called deterritorialization (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, Scholte, 1996, 2000) permits activities, which would include those involved in sport, to take place regardless of where the participants are located spatially. Deterritorialization involves a weakening of the ties between culture and place and thus of traditional spatially located affiliations, all of which are massively facilitated by satellite technologies in sports, of course.

The concept of the g/local retains some purchase in demonstrating that one of the boundaries crossed through the forces of globalization, with particular resonance in sport, is that between global, transnational networks and more local and personal, community-based affiliations. This concept draws upon post-colonial studies and theories of diaspora which aim to provide explanations of aspects of migration and the ways in which the local relates to the global through processes of mobility. Local cultures travel and are reinterpreted, especially in the lives and practices, often within literature and the arts, of diasporic peoples (Braidotti, 2002, Pearce, 2012). The concept of the g/local also has particular resonance within sport, where the relationship between personal and collective identifications and practices routinely intersects with globalized forces (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2007, 2009). In many ways the identifications that are made at the local level are inseparable from the forces in play at the transnational, global level. Identifications in sport, especially in boxing, do not operate in a one-way relationship which prioritizes and privileges the global and transnational over the local, but rather incorporates and accommodates more local investments and relationships. The downtown gym retains enormous importance in boxing whether in the legends of the sport as in the 5th Street Gym, Miami (Pacheco, 2010), or in its everyday routines for regular boxers (Wacquant, 1995a, 2004). Local customs and practices in the gym are constitutive of change (Heiskanen, 2012, Woodward, 2006, 2008).

The media-sport-commerce nexus (Cashmore, 2010, Horne, 2006, Houlihan, 2008, Rowe, 2004, Sugden and Tomlinson, 2011, Tomlinson, 2006), which is so

strongly constitutive of the globalizing forces manifest in the field of sport and within the wider social terrain of global politics, operates in particular ways in boxing as well as being typical of sport. This book engages with the specificities of boxing, different practices, different types of boxing and how the sport is and has been experienced, presented and represented across the global arena and at the local sites at which boxing is lived, routinely practised and watched. Boxing culture is made up of stories, representations, legends and traditions in which local boxers make personal, embodied investments, as well as being subject to and part of global, political and economic forces.

Boxing, like much contemporary sport, has been subjected to and is constitutive of processes of globalization, not least in relation to the role the media play in promoting representation of the sport. Whilst theorists of globalization, whether they promote and celebrate its properties or are more sceptical about its outcomes, all emphasize the power of speed and velocity in the communications systems such as those of the media which characterize globalization, in boxing it is neither a simple nor a one-way story. Boxing has generated new ways of using the media as well as responding to its technologies and interventions. The advent of satellite broadcasting has had a significant impact on boxing. Boxing is a sport which has created as well as fulfilled some of the possibilities the satellite and the internet, following television, have developed. Big fights are transmitted through satellite channels like HBO's pay-per-view in the USA and Sky's pay-for-view and subsequently the mechanisms of BoxNation, the first channel devoted entirely to the sport (BoxNation, 2012), for which fans require a subscription to Sky and to BoxNation.

However, the more all-embracing the global transmission of boxing's big moments, albeit moments which are often accompanied by warm-up acts that might be seen as boxing's not so great moments, the more access there is to boxing culture for followers and participants at a more local level. Those who engage in the sport at the local, everyday level through routine practice at the gym, for example, are drawn into its possibilities. For example, the double whammy of two subscriptions to watch fights on the television, one to Sky television and one to the boxing channel, BoxNation, in the UK, may be less democratic, but the more boxing is visible on the public stage, the more the sport is able to endure through the local engagements that make it g/local.

Boxing is an excellent example of the ways in which contemporary sport is g/local. It is part of everyday life, going to the gym, supporting local boxers within kinship groups and a local community and also part of the global economy with worldwide media coverage and celebrity superstars. Boxers at local gyms often cite one of these

superstars as the heroic figure who inspired them to take up the sport: sometimes the hero is more local such as a brother or father (Woodward, 2004, 2006, 2008) and maybe soon there will be more mother and daughter identifications (Woodward, 2008, Woodward and Woodward, 2009).

Boxing also exemplifies particularly well the relationship between representations and symbolic systems and body practices and the materiality of social life. All are part of the assemblages of power which are made, re-produced and circulated through sport within globalized economies. By examining the diversity of boxing routines, representations, sensations, embodied practices and discursive regimes, I seek to embrace the range of what is encompassed by boxing and offer some explanations of why the sport attracts such powerful emotions and feelings of commitment as well as those of censure and disapproval, and how boxing is transforming, adapting as well as enduring in the contemporary world, which is characterized by globalization. Boxing is also part of and a motor for global social transformations.

Boxing occupies a wide social and cultural terrain and has distinctive histories and features, sometimes of inequality, most notably in relation to gender, class, race and ethnicity. There is not just a simple dichotomy between the alternatives of the downtown gym and of the global mega spectacles of big fights with the massive purses on pay-for-view television. There are dilemmas in boxing and the sport's status is contentious in many contemporary societies for a range of complex reasons, not all of which relate to medical and ethical discourses in which anxieties about the sport's embodied, physical dangers are expressed. These dilemmas are lived and experienced at personal, community and local levels, as well as occupying the more public arena of political debate, media exposure and the worldwide operating sphere of international regulatory bodies.

Sex gender and boxing

Boxing, like all sports, is strongly marked by gendered categories. Competitions in almost all sports on the vast majority of occasions are divided into women's and men's competitions. Usually, it is only the women's competition which is so named; the heavyweight champion of the world is male. The World Cup in football is the men's competition. The binary logic of the system permits two bounded categories of sex based upon genetic, anatomical criteria which suggest scientific certainty. More recently, the nomenclature has shifted from

sex to gender, but even so this focus on gender does not allow either for the complexity of the classifications or for the cultural, political, social and ethical divisions in the process of categorization. Most significantly, gender might suggest an overemphasis upon social forces and influences and either a limited understanding of physical, enfleshed capacities or the use of gender to mean sex. The Olympics require gender verification in order to confirm the anatomical sex of participants in an increasingly complex set of procedures which is based on the fear that men might try to pass as women in order to win. In boxing, mixed fights are highly contentious, although they are becoming more popular. Mixed fights demand new regimes of classification and challenge traditional ones, such as those made according to body weight.

Sex is a necessary category to include empirical, enfleshed and anatomical properties and gender has been used to embrace social and cultural capacities and expressions. I argue for the use of sex gender as a conceptualization that can combine these elements and acknowledge the interconnections between bodies and social forces, which, especially in a sport like boxing, are even crucial to an understanding of social divisions and of enfleshed selves (Woodward, 2012a). Flesh and the concept of enfleshed selves permit a focus on the shared characteristics, for example of sex, with less emphasis on the body as individualized as has been understood in the idea of embodiment.

The empirical classification of gender is useful in providing data on the extent of participation of women and men in sport and informs the theoretical framework within which sexual politics and the operation of power in the making of inequalities can be understood. A conceptualization of sex gender, as well as the use of sex and gender to describe the empirical context of boxing, is central to this book in providing a means of making sense of the material enfleshed experience of boxing and of how the sport is represented and what cultural meanings it carries.

Changing times

Boxing is changing, however, in ways generated by the sport itself, such as women's boxing, which was included in the 2012 Olympic Games, and the popularity of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA, 2012), which are also aspects of changing social worlds. Boxing, like other sports, is made up of everyday routines of physical fitness as well as public displays and the heroes, stars and legends and spectacles transmitted across the globe. Boxing heroes have often carried more political

weight than the celebrity stars of other sports, which is well illustrated by Mike Marqusee's discussion of Muhammad Ali in relation to basketball megastar Michael Jordan (Marqusee, 2005). Boxing is also characterized by contradictions and may sit uneasily in the arena of global social changes. *Globalizing Boxing* explores the interconnections between social change and the sport of boxing to provide ways of thinking critically about everyday assumptions and social worlds. Sport, including boxing, does not just reflect social change; sport also creates change and is constitutive of social and cultural transformations as well as continuities.

Boxing is a vehicle for exploring how cultural changes take place through shifting networks and mobilities across time and space. For example, boxing offers an excellent example of shifting popularities and new configurations, whilst holding on to consistencies of traditional, gendered, racialized and ethnicized identifications and economic power geometries. Boxing keeps trying to reinvent itself in contradictory, but engaging ways. As a result, boxing occupies an uncomfortable place in the contemporary world.

A particular focus of this book is the interrelationship between sport and social change in the context of the impact of assemblages of commerce, the media and the regulatory bodies of boxing and athletes who engage in the sport locally and globally. Boxing, like all contemporary global sports, is caught up in the intersection of different axes of power, notably those of commerce and sponsorship and media systems of representation and communication and the synergies between popular culture and global capital investment. Boxing also has its own distinctive features and affiliations. For example, boxing is marked by strong local identifications and attachments within familial, kinship and community networks. These affiliations apply to other sports of course, but more often in the big sports with mass appeal like football, in relation to supporters' rather than practitioner networks. Boxing also has a wide range of governing bodies, which have developed through the particularities of the sport's history.

This book addresses questions of how far and in what ways a sport like boxing can be an instrument for change and how far such a sport can respond to wider social, cultural and economic changes. *Global Boxing* presents a critical discussion of the place of boxing in the contemporary world rather than a comprehensive history of boxing. Boxing also offers a particularly productive and useful site for the understanding of social, cultural, political and economic transformations of the forces of globalization.

The following chapters explore some of the different dimensions of globalization which have been raised in this introductory chapter and the

operation of global and transnational forces that are played out in particular ways in boxing. This book shows how the sport has achieved its current place in the world – one that is diminished from the golden age of 'when we were kings' but which remains nonetheless an important sport and one which retains considerable popularity albeit in diverse forms. Boxing has had several 'golden ages', for example, when heavyweight boxers were well-known figures and popular cultural heroes in the narratives through which boxing histories and cultures are made (Boddy, 2008, Kimball, 2008, McRae, 2005, Mitchell, 2009, Powley, 2011, Sammons, 1988, Sugar, 2006) and there are points of connection between these different areas of greatness (Boddy, 2008). How these golden ages are defined tells us something about the power of boxing to grip the popular imagination and what is particular and special about boxing.

Chapter 2, 'Traditions and Histories: Connections and Disconnections', maps out some of the pivotal moments in boxing history and looks at how boxing as a sport and the specificities of boxing culture have evolved in making and remaking the sport. The chapter picks out some of the big moments in boxing history, including some of those that have been classified as part of a golden age, as well as highlighting the key elements which make boxing distinctive and particular. Boxing involves a specific set of body practices and skills which have a long history, during which there has been increased regulation which has transformed the free-for-all ancient Greek Pankration (which some commentators (Semaan, 2012) suggest is the forerunner of modern MMA), to heavily controlled forms of contemporary professional and amateur boxing with all their attention to carefully prescribed and detailed disciplinary practices and regimes. Modern boxing as practised in the public arena and controlled by regulatory bodies specifies precise body weights of boxers, of the gloves they use, the punches they use and how they are targeted, the timing of rounds, head protection in amateur boxing and health checks including brain scans, to name but a few of the areas of regulations. The idea of golden ages offers a route into understanding the relationship between space and the crossing of spatial as well as temporal boundaries within boxing. These so-called golden ages both create and define themselves within the language of the sport through being so named, but the currency of the golden age is not the only route which boxing has travelled, and the history of the sport demonstrates other aspects of its dialogue with global forces which are manifest in the part played by mobilities and diasporic communities in the development and making of the sport.

Chapter 3, 'Movements and Mobilities', picks out some of the key features of boxing that are explored through the book in relation to the culture of boxing

and its links to migration and diaspora, which establish the sport as one that has particular global dimensions through its association with migrant and mobile peoples and the movement of people from particular groups in and out of boxing. Boxing has the capacities to make it a sport which is particularly relevant to migrating people, especially those with only physical capital to invest. What have been called the mobile lives of transatlantic late modernity (Elliott and Urry, 2010) are lived and experienced in particular ways in boxing, sometimes connecting to the media commerce flows and sometimes being very disconnected from the fluidity of affluent mobilities. Indeed, in boxing such mobilities are more often associated with push factors which compel people to migrate than the pull factors which might be more attractive and draw them to their new home. Boxing mobilities are less often marked by choice and agency than some of the desirable mobilities of the twenty-first century. Boxing has a long history of engagement with migration and the movement of peoples and of providing a route out of poverty and disadvantage for displaced or migrant people, especially young men. Boxing has different histories in different places through which boxing cultures have been reproduced and reconfigured which are not part of a linear narrative in spite of the similarities between some of the stories, for example of the opportunities offered by boxing to enhance self-esteem and self-respect, especially for disadvantaged young men within the frameworks of traditional masculinities.

These stories raise questions about where boxing is most popular, who boxes and where and about how boxing practices and boxing cultures are made and remade in different places. Boxing involves relationships between different kinds of boxing; the evermore popular MMA with its own set of regulatory embodied practices (Penn and Krauss, 2007), which draws upon martial arts and diverse interpretations and translations of boxing across the globe, as well as different forms of MMA such as extreme fighting, Thai boxing and amateur and professional western boxing. Boxing appeals to diasporic people but the sport itself is also mobile and is interpreted and practised differently as it crosses continents.

Chapter 4, 'Cultural Economies of Scale', explores some of the complex relationships between financial incentives to box professionally on the part of the individuals who take up the sport and the economics of the global fight game, with its massive, profit-motivated infrastructure. Social class and its articulations with race, ethnicity and gender underpin much engagement with boxing. This chapter looks at what is g/local about boxing not only for many migrant young men but also as a global business that is dominated by often

exploitative promoters, as well as the relationship between the sport and the media upon which boxing is dependent for its more spectacular promotion. Boxing remains a massively profitable business as well as being a popular, more local means of keeping fit and of feeling good about yourself and maintaining self-esteem for large numbers of people, mostly men, but increasingly women are participating too, for the same reasons as men, for example using boxing as a means of working out in the gym to feel good about their bodies and thus themselves. This chapter looks at the economics of boxing in light of the different experiences of practitioners and followers – where the sport is practised and where it is watched and how boxing is part of the global sport-media nexus. Contemporary fields of globalized sport are marked by the attractions of superstars who are configured in particular ways in boxing, which has its own distinctive narratives of celebrities and especially heroes who bring together the local and the global. Boxing creates possibilities for transgression as well as conformity, inspired by its economic and financial systems as well as its cultural and social capacities. The economics of boxing include a history of illegal and quasi-legal activities and a long tradition of gambling and betting, which is a trend that is accelerating in the contemporary world. Boxing worlds also relate to other aspects of sporting worlds which are framed by quasi-legal and even illegal parameters. Some of the activities of the Fancy in the early nineteenth century persist into the twenty-first: bare-knuckle fighting, dog fighting, gambling, throwing fights and so on.

Chapter 5, 'Boxing Bodies and Everyday Routines', explores some of the more routine and local practices of boxing through focusing on embodied practices and especially the physical qualities of a sport to which bodies are central. This chapter explores different approaches to bodies and embodiment and argues for the idea of enfleshed selves. Enfleshed selves are material but are also regulated by the apparatuses of governance and bureaucratic systems which are features of globalization which pervade sport and thus bring together the actualities of bodies and how they are classified and, importantly, experienced. The phenomenological idea of embodiment has had considerable currency in social studies of boxing, especially because this theoretical approach engages with the lived experience of boxing and immersion in its everyday routines. The ideas of Merleau-Ponty have been particularly productive in exploring some of the puzzles posed by boxing as a sport which cannot be explained solely by structural social forces. Neither, however, are bodies restricted to individualized embodied selves. Flesh and the capacities of the flesh, for achievement and success or for pain, defeat and damage, are shared in the common culture of

boxing in particular ways. The exigencies of economic and social disadvantage may offer an insufficiently persuasive explanation of the attractions of boxing. What is the lived experience of boxing? In the ring, why do boxers keep going even when they are clearly injured? This chapter also looks at the limitations of phenomenological accounts which appear more descriptive than explanatory. Boxing is about routine embodied practices, working out in the gym, as well as competing, but it is also a particularly spectacular sport which has global events that attract huge media coverage as well as the interventions of governance. Boxing has inspired a proliferation of literary, artistic and cinematic texts as well as public interventions in the promotion of social inclusion and cohesion. The next chapter brings boxing bodies and boxing images and culture together.

Chapter 6, 'Inside and Outside the Ring', develops an analysis of the relationship between the embodied practices of boxing, which were addressed in Chapter 5, and the wider social, political and cultural arena as a productive means of explaining the relationship between flesh, bodies and representation which is so significant in the sport. Legends and stories are a powerful part of boxing but are the myths, heroes and legends enough? How are representation and enfleshed practices linked? Boxing is all about bodies but is being there at an actual fight more real than viewing at a distance? Representations include changing media moments which are the subject of global shifts in the media-sport nexus as well as artistic representations of boxing using the example of cinema, which has generated a large number of 'boxing films'. This chapter takes up Chapter 5's discussion of bodies, especially gendered bodies, and focuses upon sensation and the relationship between images and representation promoted by the media and the enfleshed experience of boxing. Does boxing offer a particular take on sensation and sentient experiences of spectatorship? This means that what makes the culture of boxing, especially outside the ring, visible with visual representations and manifestations in the public arena is always in dialogue with its more routine and embodied practices in the gym and local communities. Boxing has attracted and generated a number of literary, artistic and cinematic versions of its intensities, which this chapter explores primarily through the relationship between boxing's enfleshed activities and some of the films which can be classified as boxing films.

Chapter 7, 'Transforming the Fight Game', focuses on the transformations within the sport, for example in relation to how the rules and regulations have been remade and developed. This chapter explores the extent to which regulatory bodies and the mechanisms of governance can facilitate the promotion of diversity and greater equality and whether a sport as marked by

traditional binaries and the persistence of enfleshed masculinities, in particular, can accommodate and even motivate or facilitate change. A particular illustration which demonstrates change is women's boxing and the inclusion of women's boxing in the Olympic Games again in 2012, as well as considering what the women's sport both within the sport itself and outside can contribute to an understanding of the social, cultural and political importance of boxing. Change is uneven and has not followed a linear path into modernity and many transformations have been incremental. The legacy of 2012 so far is culturally significant if limited in quantifiable terms. For example, evidence of women's greater participation and any enduring legacy cannot be measured yet, but, as I argue in this chapter, it is now possible to think that women's competitive boxing is fast moving, skilled, entertaining and attractive to spectators. Such social and cultural transformations are effected through an iterative and relational process. It is not only the case that boxing as a sport has to react to wider social forces, the sport is also implicated in any changes that are taking place. Many changes which involve more everyday popular engagements with boxing have reconfigured what is democratic and egalitarian about the sport. Boxing presents a social and cultural puzzle; what seems to be an aggressive and violent sport appears to be an anomaly in the twenty-first century in postmodern societies. As has been shown throughout the book, not only are bodies central to boxing, but the flesh also presents material limitations. This informs the discussion of change in this chapter. A critical approach based on the conceptualization of sex gender offers a means of making sense of not only the endurances of boxing but also how the sport is transforming in what is always a two-way process of responding to and generating social change.

Chapter 8, 'The Conclusion: G/local Boxing', brings together the arguments for the persistence and endurance of boxing as a sport and as the site of social, economic and cultural practices and the relationship between what is happening in the sport and how this responds to and impacts upon the wider social world in different practices across the globe. Boxing remains a globalized and globalizing sport like most sports in the contemporary world, especially sports which are part of the transnational sport-media-commerce nexus, but it is also a g/local sport that feeds g/local imaginaries, which is why, although it seems to embody an anomalous set of practices in the contemporary world, it persists.

2

Traditions and Histories: Connections and Disconnections

This chapter maps out some of the pivotal moments in boxing history and shows how boxing as a sport and the specificities of boxing culture have evolved. One aim of the chapter is to pick out some of the big moments in boxing history, including some of those that have been classified as part of a golden age as well as highlighting the key elements which make boxing distinctive and particular. The timelines which boxing has followed are uneven and played out in different places. Looking at some of the big moments in the sport, however, is a good way of finding out how sport shapes as well as reflects social relations and transformations and the connections between different times and places.

Boxing involves a specific set of body practices and skills which have a long history. The sport has been marked by increased regulation, which has transformed the apparently free-for-all of ancient Greek Pankration – a form of wrestling or fighting, literally meaning the 'all-power event' – to heavily controlled forms of contemporary professional and amateur boxing with all their attention to carefully prescribed, detailed disciplinary practices and regimes. I mention this early form of boxing not to lay claim to a linear narrative of the culture of boxing but rather because this form of one-on-one largely unrestrained combat continues to inform what is classified as boxing in the twenty-first century and has evidential traces in the genealogy of boxing.

This chapter aims to provide an understanding of boxing through the development of the sport over time. Boxing connects to particular aspects of culture at different historical moments, which has produced the idea of golden ages of boxing. There are also disconnections between the sport and the wider society which play out in different ways. This chapter is not a linear chronological account, but rather a discussion, which highlights what are considered to be significant strands in the making of boxing and boxing culture in order to understand how change takes place and the interrelationship between boxing

and the societies in which it is lived and practiced. Chapter 2 interrogates the idea of golden ages and picks out the importance of fighting; the unregulated Pankration of Ancient Greece and the original Olympic Games, through the English golden age and the cultural implications of the Fancy, including some exploration of the connections and disconnections of women's boxing. The twentieth-century spatial shift to the USA and the golden ages of heavyweights are all part of what makes boxing culture in the present as well as providing the possibilities for change. Resonances of the past persist, but connect in different ways to the present. The apparently unconstrained practices of the ancient world have recently been invoked in the context of MMA and Ultimate Fighting.

Not that even the extremes of Pankration were entirely unregulated; there were limits to which practices were acceptable and unacceptable, with gouging out of the opponent's eyes being off limits and likely to result in 'a flogging from the judge or trainer' (Faulkner, 2012:153). However different the practices, which could loosely be called boxing or fighting at different times, there are distinctive and particular features of the sport which make boxing what it is in the twenty-first century too. Some of the points of connection relate to cultural and ideological rather than enfleshed and embodied practices. Bodies, however, remain central to boxing and the strengths and weaknesses of the flesh intersect with cultural meanings and social practices.

This chapter highlights some of the key moments and major links between flesh and culture in the genealogy of boxing and how boxing fits into the social worlds and the social processes of globalization. By looking at key moments in boxing history it is possible to see how boxing contributes to globalizing trends and is itself globalizing as well as subject to the forces of globalization. Modern boxing, as practised in the public arena and controlled by regulatory bodies, specifies precise body weights of boxers, the gloves they use, which punching and contact techniques are permitted and how they are targeted, the timing of rounds, head protection in amateur boxing and health checks including brain scans to name but a few of the interventions, which have become ever more precise and prescriptive. This seems a long way from prizefighting, although that too persists if not always within the law, but boxing is still one-on-one enfleshed combat, which carries much of the intensity and danger of earlier times. The forms of fighting associated with the ancient Greek world also highlight the extreme polarization of the civilized elevation of art, drama and philosophy, which marked Athenian society on the one hand, and violence, war, pain, hatred and excess, which was often focused upon physical, enfleshed experience, on the other.

These apparently contrasting elements of the culture of the ancient world were deeply embedded in the militarism of a world in which war between city states was routine. Men were expected to fight and the sporting practices of Pankration hardened them for the exigencies of war. Sporting brutality seems hardly surprising in this context, but the routes which boxing and the fight game have taken are haunted by tensions between acceptable and justifiable violence and excesses of illegality and what is legally sanctioned. Boundaries are blurred, but there remain more than evidential traces of the links to militarism and traditional masculinities.

The boundaries between what is seen to be legal and what is not are particularly interesting in the genealogies of boxing, not least because the more intensely and precisely regulated the sport becomes, the more appealing the transgressions of prizefighting, cage fighting and other less-mainstream activities become in some parts of the world and in some places where boxing is practised. Boxing also has particular associations, with militarism and with gendered codes of honour, as well as nefarious, illegal practices, and the borders between morality, legality and cultural acceptability are blurred.

In order to explore what is distinctive about boxing and how it connects to other sports and other cultural and economic practices, networks and systems, it is necessary to look at boxing histories. It is not, however, a simple study of change from the past to the present, but it does mean exploring some of the routes boxing has travelled.

Roots and routes

Sport is a field in which appeals are repeatedly made to authenticity, not least in relation to fandom. 'Real' fans attend every game. 'Real' fight fans go to actual fights rather than watching on television. Similarly true fans know every detail of their team's history, and in boxing they know who won what, how and in which round. Sometimes an element of authenticity can be gained by remembering where you were and what you were doing when the sporting event was taking place, if you did not actually manage to be there (Boddy, 2008). Heroes and heroic legends are made of historic detail. Boxers and boxing do not follow a simple narrative path but are constituted through an iterative and uneven cultural process.

In this respect the distinction between roots and routes is important in a discussion of sport because the field of sport is so often characterized by appeals

to authenticity through memory and the measurement of the bodies that take part and of their sporting achievements (Woodward, 2009, 2012a). As the sociologist and cultural critic Stuart Hall has argued in the context of cultural identities, the matter of who we are is more often about routes than roots (Hall, 1992). Hall developed anthropological ideas such as those of the cultural anthropologist James Clifford (1988), who challenged the idea that identities can be traced back to original authentic roots and that what matters more is the routes that people have travelled than the myths of origin to which they may appeal (Hall, 1992, Gilroy, 1993). Claims to 'true' national or ethnic identity are often made at times of uncertainty, conflict and rapid social change. The problem of belonging, however, is one that does not only apply to the identifications which people make (Woodward, 1997a), especially the identities of diasporic peoples, whose travels so characterized the twentieth century (Berger, 1984) and are such an important element in the history of boxing; boxers so often come from migrant and mobile communities. Boxing is a sport which invites claims to authenticity, evidence of which is most clear in the knockout, which is the main objective of boxing in the ring. Boxing is also a cultural and social embodied practice in which diasporic and migrant people, especially men, have engaged, notably by investing physical capital (Bourdieu, 1984a, Wacquant, 2004).

Routes provide us with the narrative of the journey that has been made, with pivotal points along the way, and contribute to a more dynamic sense of what is involved in taking up identity positions which relate more closely to the conceptualization of identification and belonging as configured through the making of narratives. Narratives are structured around pivotal moments, which create possibilities for identification. For example, in a Foucauldian sense, stories put subject positions 'into discourse' (Foucault, 1981) and make identities available. This is crucial to the promise of change. In order for the culture of boxing to transform the lives not only of individuals but also of collectivities and to make changes in the broader field of social and cultural life, new figures and claims have to be put into discourse so that it becomes possible to think the hitherto unthinkable. Sporting stories often place heroes and pivotal moments into discourse and into what makes the sport what it is. Boxing is full of heroic narratives and great fights (Mitchell, 2009, Powley, 2011 and the glorious listings on boxrec.com, 2013). Such stories are part of the social and cultural dimensions of identities since they are part of the cultural currency of the time.

The problem of roots and belonging also applies to the history of things and of events as well as to people (Clifford, 1997); meanings are made through routes and, Clifford argues, it is the meanings attached to, for example,

diasporic identities or the objects and experiences associated with them which matter. In boxing, for example, objects, equipment and places matter: the gym, the sites of particular fights across the globe and their vicinities – Madison Square Garden and Jacob's Beach (Mitchell, 2009). Consequently, in looking at the history of a sport it can be more useful to explore the routes it has travelled rather than to trace a linear, chronological narrative which seeks to find its roots. There are, however, pivotal points in history which matter more than others and the early evidence of boxing, especially from the classical era, continues to have relevance and importance, not least because of the role of the Olympic Games with their quintessential and symbolic links to ancient Greece and the rediscovery and reconfiguration of classical sporting discourses in the nineteenth century with the establishment of the modern Olympics. Thus, it is useful to re-examine some of the routes boxing has travelled, starting with some of its earlier moments.

The Olympics are also worth particular attention because they are both a routine, recurrent sporting spectacle and the most spectacular of all such mega events. Boxing has played an important role in the Games and the Games have been important in boxing history for a number of reasons. Firstly, great boxers have made their names at the Games, the most notable of whom must be Muhammad Ali, who won gold at the 1960 Rome Olympics (Ali, 2004, Hauser, 1991, Marqusee, 2005). Secondly, the Olympics highlight particularly well the tensions and connections between amateurism and professionalism in sport and most especially boxing. Thirdly, in 2012, the year of the Olympics in London, women boxed in competition for the first time in the games, which signalled some of the promise of disruption and change. The gendered nature of boxing is central to its development and to understanding its popularity and endurance as well as its disruptions (Woodward, 2006). Any shifts in the binary logic of sex in a sport in which they are as entrenched and embedded as they appear to be in boxing are particularly significant and have powerful cultural resonance.

The classical golden age

Boxing dates back a long way, but evidence is relatively sparse, which makes it difficult to make well-supported claims about how extensively the sport was practised or how its practices were understood and evaluated. The lack of evidence also means that what evidence there is carries more significance than it would otherwise warrant. The first evidence of boxing can be found in Mesopotamian

stone reliefs, which are estimated to date from 3000 BCE (Barraclough, 1981). Early archaeological evidence of boxing as a sporting practice has been followed by a succession of 'golden ages', some of which are explored in the next section. One of the earlier periods which holds considerable sway in boxing histories, especially because of its links to the Olympic Games and their reformulation in modern times, is that of ancient Greece due to not only the presence but also the celebration and high-profile nature of the sport. Most histories of boxing make some reference to the sport's classical past and the legacy of ancient times (for example, Boddy, 2008, Mullan, 2010) and into more recent times (Early, 1994, Gorn, 1986, Sammons, 1988). The male dominance of boxing and its powerful connotations and configurations of masculinity have often gone largely unremarked (Woodward, 2006), but some feminist scholars have drawn attention to the gender-specific dimensions of sporting practices in the ancient world (Lefkowitz and Fant, 1982, Spivey, 2004). Women did participate in some sports, including the women's games, and attended gymnasia, but boxing was largely a male pursuit. The sex gender binary was enforced through the visible verification of embodied difference and classification of sex in a social world in which athletes largely performed without clothes.

The emphasis of many accounts of the ancient world (Faulkner, 2012, Spivey, 2004) is often upon the symbolic significance of boxing and the classical notions of honour which are implicated in its practices. Even Pankratiasts and, even more likely, wrestlers in the ancient world would have appeared beautiful in their youth although seasoned combatants, then as now, would have been bruised and battered with, at the very least, broken noses. Boxing in the ancient world, especially in ancient Greek culture, highlighted a classical aesthetic of the good-looking male body, which was underpinned by homoeroticism, which is an aspect of boxing that is often understated, as has been noted in more recent critiques (James, 1996).

Another of the boundaries transgressed in boxing is that between pain and pleasure, which also has erotic connotations and implications, as does the enfleshed actuality of the one-on-one skin contact of the sport. Like all sports, there is also the display of flesh in the form of fit, honed, musculature and beautiful bodies (Woodward, 2006, 2009, 2011). The pleasure inherent in boxers' beautiful bodies is always caught up in the pain of the broken bodies, which are also constitutive of the sport. The pain and possible death that is the inevitable outcome of prizefighting renders it an activity of enormous symbolic importance, especially in patriarchal societies with strong militaristic traditions.

The prizefighting of the ancient world was marked by clearly understood codes of honour. Neil Faulkner describes boxing as *pugmachia* (2012:233), an activity involving repeated pummelling of the head by combatants wearing strips of leather wound around their hands, with fingers left free, again with very few restrictions. Faulkner is drawing on Homer, who describes a fight at the Patroclus's funeral games in the *Iliad* (Homer, 1910), which has also been accorded particular significance by some scholars because of its connotations of honour and respect in relation to the whole community (Hawhee, 2004). Imagery of the boxer is common in classical work such as vase painting and writing. For example, Plato in *Protagoras* and in *Gorgias* mentions boxing as a practice and a particular skill or *techne*, which has a cultural importance which would be widely recognized. Similarly, for the Roman period there are several allusions to boxing, for example in the work of the Roman poet Virgil, writing in the first century BCE, although the Romans did not share the enthusiastic ancient Greek celebration of the beautiful body.

Boxing in the classical world also served as entertainment, which illustrates the reiteration of the ambivalence between aristocratic articulations of honour and the gross mass spectacles of the arena, which nonetheless provided a route to free citizenship for gladiators who excelled. Gladiatorial combat usually involved weapons and animals and was not limited to the one-on-one corporeal combat more strictly classified as boxing. Virgil, who drew upon ancient Greek notions of heroism, describes Aeneas's challenge in the Aeneid, Book 5, 'Now let anyone who has a valorous heart and a quick resource come forward, ready to box with fists gloved in hide'(Virgil, 1956, v:130).

He then goes on to describe the fight between Entellus and Dares in a manner which is quite comprehensible in the contemporary world:

> Each at once took position, alert, on tip-toe with eagerness, undismayed, and with arms raised in the air. Holding their heads high and well out of the reach of blows, they began to spar in interplay of fist with fist, warming to the fight.
>
> (Virgil, 1956, v: 132)

Jackson Knight's translation of Virgil, although lacking some of the hyperbole of contemporary journalism, combines honour with aggression:

> The heroic Entellus, as active and as fearless as ever in spite of his fall, returned to the fight all the fiercer, with a new force kindled by rage. His shame together with his confidence in his own valour, set his strength on fire … There was no pause, no respite. The heroic Entellus battered Dares and sent him spinning.
>
> (Virgil, 1956, v: 133)

Whilst the expression of conflict in the language of heroic endeavour is culturally and historically specific, the equation of defence of one's body with attack on that of another has a very strong hold and informs more recent retelling of boxing legends and the gendered identities that are forged therein. Discourses of honour and pugilistic body practices merge in the culture of boxing. Hand-on-hand combat has continued up to the present, although there have been variations along the way, not the least by the Romans with their gladiatorial competitions, which provided mass entertainment and diversion. Honourable endeavour, whether articulated as aristocratic fighting or as the investment of physical capital by the dispossessed as a means of gaining independence and self-respect (Bourdieu, 1984, Wacquant, 1995a, 2004), is a strand in boxing history which retains strong resonance from its earliest times. Indeed, it is one that is frequently revisited and rehearsed in popular cultural forms at other times – most recently in films such as Stanley Kubrick's 1960 film, based on the novel by Howard Fast, *Spartacus*, or Samuel Bronston's 1964 film *The Fall of the Roman Empire* and, especially, Ridley Scott's 2000 film *Gladiator*, and the somewhat hyperbolic television series such as the US 2010 Starz series *Spartacus* and the British American drama series *Rome*, created by Bruno Heller, John Millus and William J. McDonald, with seasons shown in 2005 and 2007. Popular culture reconstitutes the past through the present by using and reusing elements of the traditions that inform boxing, for example through gladiatorial one-on-one combat and codes of honour and enfleshed masculinity. It is worth noting that, in these popular cultural forms, the version of masculinity which is remade through the lens of enfleshed combat is usually constructed in relation to an oppositional figure of femininity. Femininity is also subject to dualistic thinking and is either embedded in the figure of the whore or the respectable matron (or virginal Madonna).

Classical scholars have debated the significance of fighting but the classical era offers useful illustration of some of the key elements of boxing which have contributed to the sport's enduring popularity and, indeed, to its continued existence into the twenty-first century. This is especially pertinent in relation to the nineteenth-century rediscovery, reinvention and re-articulation of classical ideals in sporting culture at the start of the modern Olympics which were represented through nineteenth-century patriarchal discourses (Woodward, 2012b). Pugilism was very different at the time of the recovery of classicism in the nineteenth century. It is not only western boxing which draws upon these repertoires. For example, Thai boxing has its own rituals and codes, codes of honour and rigidly bounded masculinities. In its development, boxing has travelled different routes

and in and through different places. There is no single source of boxing; it does not have necessarily authentic or even clearly identifiable roots, but there are points of connection and endurances which make looking at the legacy of the ancient world productive in exploring what boxing is about, its inspirations and imaginaries, and why people still do it and follow it with such enthusiasm.

The classical golden age was one of many in the routes boxing has travelled. Another pivotal point in the genealogy of global boxing, which lasted some time, is what has been called the English golden age. Each golden age demonstrates some of the enduring features of boxing.

The Fancy and the English golden age

What could be classified as boxing, or at least as a codified sport with links to the fighting of Pankration of ancient Greece and gladiatorial combat and fights to the death of the Romans, is recorded in England in the seventeenth century (Boddy, 2008). There is little evidence of how the sport might have been practised after it was banned in the Roman Empire in 339AD, but it seems that it was largely not formalized during this period. However, later in seventeenth-century England, bouts were performed in London theatres along with other forms of entertainment (Boddy, 2008) and by the early eighteenth century there was a boom in interest in boxing and the emergence of key figures, like James Figg, the first recognized champion in 1719. Figg was followed by a number of 'English heavyweights, from Jack Broughton and Daniel Mendoza to Tom Cribb, Jem Mace and the last of the great British champions from the bare-knuckle era, Bob Fitzsimmons, in 1899' (Powley, 2011:7). By the time FItzsimmons was fighting, of course, the sport had become regulated. The eighteenth century, however, saw the start of what has often been called the English golden age.

Samuel Pepys records some excitement at the prospect of a fight in his famous diaries in the mid-seventeenth century, but it was not until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that an English golden age became established. In the seventeenth century, boxing had become part of a boisterous rural culture of entertainment, along with cockfighting and bear baiting, which seems far removed from classical aesthetics and codes of honour, but was nonetheless combative and aggressive. In the eighteenth century, boxing moved into the towns and became enmeshed with a whole set of sporting practices and entertainment in an assemblage in which gambling and betting were very definitely classified as sport as part of the entertainment and of the networks

of the Fancy. The activities of the Fancy are part of sport's associations with gambling and with entertainment as well as indicative of how sport can generate relationships and particular versions of masculinity (Woodward, 2006).What the Fancy so well demonstrates is the elisions of the enfleshed practices of sport, the activities that take place in the ring in boxing and those of spectators, followers and, especially, gamblers. The assemblage of the Fancy is made up of a diverse mix of intersecting forces and intensities, which also demonstrates the excitement, risk and danger that brings gambling and embodied practices of sport, especially boxing, together.

Popular fighters like James Figg, Britain's first national champion in 1719 (Gorn, 1986) who also offered to train young gentlemen in the Noble Art, became key figures in the development of this period in the history of boxing. Figg made money from his fairground bouts and then advertised his services to young gentlemen who might benefit from acquiring some of the arts of self-defence (Brailsford, 1988). The Noble Art learned as self-defence was less likely to include performance in the ring, however, although there was something of an alliance between the aristocracy and the migrant agricultural and urban poor, which persists today in field sports, especially shooting and hunting, between white, agricultural labour and landowners. Combat was undertaken by the poor and, often itinerant, dispossessed agricultural workers and some of the minority groups such as those from the Jewish diaspora (Bodner, 2011, Berkowitz and Ungar, 2007) and immigrant Irish people, who nonetheless were offered a route out of poverty and a chance to gain some recognition through the sport (Gorn, 1986), then as now. The culture of boxing, like blood sports in the contemporary world, brought together the poor and marginalized and the aristocratic and well-off in a mix of sporting activities, which included gambling, and generated considerable excitement.

Women were boxing, although largely in less-regulated spaces such as fairground booths, but the mixing of rich and poor, of aristocratic members of the Fancy and poor pugilists, did not apply to any gendered cultural mixing. Gender operates in particular ways in sport and is not only the outcome of regulatory mechanisms of governance, for example in the governing bodies which set separate competitions and rules for women and for men. The risks and enfleshed dangers of boxing applied equally to participating women and to men, who were nonetheless perceived in different ways; different cultural and political forces inhibited women's involvement in the Fancy.

The diversity of practitioners, however, is testament to the capacities which boxing has for promoting diversity and plurality. The middleweight Jewish boxer

Daniel Mendosa created a new style of boxing with sophisticated footwork, mobility and fluidity in jabs and defence work which moved away from the more static style of boxers like Broughton (Ungar, 2007). There are consistencies in the location of fights and the cultural context in which they take place, but there was also development of different and distinctive styles and expressions of corporeal boxing practices.

Powley describes the famous 1860 bare-knuckle fight between the English contestant Tom Sayers and the American J. C. Heenan, which was reputedly the first men's heavyweight championship fight. This fight is significant in its combination of political and cultural forces and is indicative of the disruptive elements in boxing as a sport, which has the capacity to resist attempts at regulation. The fight was technically illegal anyway, but was immensely popular, probably because of its illegal status. It was also well attended, including in the crowd Charles Dickens and William Thackeray. The fight was recorded in a famous but somewhat static engraving which reveals little of the drama and action of the contest. In the 37th round, spectators invaded the ring, but the fighters carried on without a referee until declaring a draw after 42 rounds (Powley, 2011:7).

Sugden points out not only that were there very few rules in operation in the ring in the early eighteenth century, but also that these were dangerous times in the public spaces of the city. His description of boxing at the time does not seem very far removed from the brutalities of the classical period. He suggests that:

> In 1719 there were few rules associated with pugilism. In addition to punching, kicking was tolerated and wrestling holds and throws were permitted, as was the practice of gouging-inserting fingers and thumbs into the opponent's eye sockets. By the end of the century the sport had been taken over by a fraternity whose passions revolved around blood, gore and a wager. While strength, nimbleness of foot and power and speed of punch were attributes in a fighter … being game and having 'bottom' (being lion-hearted, resolute and, above all, long suffering) were considered to be even more important. The more prize fighting developed as a public spectacle and a gambling forum the more organised the sport became.
>
> (Sugden, 1996:15)

The more rule governed the sporting activity, the more scope there was for betting on diverse outcomes (as well as the more possibilities for transgressions of course). Dennis Brailsford (1988) also suggests that without the eighteenth-century love of gambling, boxing, or at least pugilism, would have been unthinkable. Large bets also themselves demanded a system of rules to limit disputes and arbitrate conflicts about winnings outside the ring. This presents another strand

in the routes boxing has travelled along with a reworking of enfleshed heroism to incorporate both daring and unrestrained aggression and long-suffering endurance. Sugden suggests that gambling played an increasingly important role which was integrated into the organization of the sport (Sugden, 1996). Gambling is also part of the English golden age.

Gambling and other nefarious activities on the periphery of legality constitute some of the collusions of masculinity within sport and operate to reinstate a 'manhood formula' (Messner, 2002) which became available to the poor as well as the rich and socially favoured. Such networks through which masculinities are secured persist into the present as part of the collusions of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995). Taking risks and courting danger were, and remain, highly prized components of this version of masculinity. For the spectator it means being able to take the emotional experience of looking with its associated sensations, whereas for the boxer the process is more directly enfleshed. The networks through which these masculinities and their alliances are forged draw in others, including those apparently on the periphery, such as commentators and journalists. It remains part of the networks of masculinity in which any transformations or reformulations might be accommodated.

There are other elements in this alliance. The eighteenth century also saw the advent of sports journalism. Pearce Egan, who has been considered as one of the first sports journalists, wrote most graphically and entertainingly about the subculture of boxing (Reid, 1971) and all its associated activities in his famous collection, *Boxiana*, published in 1812. Egan could be seen as a forerunner of the sports journalists and writers, who, without necessarily taking part themselves as pugilists, seek to be part of the boxing scene and to buy into its culture and its gender identities.

Although pugilism in Britain experienced great popularity in the early nineteenth century, social and economic changes led to new alliances and reconfigured discourses of morality which contributed to its transformation and to the demise of prizefighting. Prizefighting was first outlawed in 1750 and, as gambling became illegal and the sport lost its aristocratic support, it seemed doomed. It had lived for too long 'outside the pale of respectability for there to be now any hope of gradual amendment' (Brailsford, 1988:157). As Sugden notes, bare-knuckle fighting was forced underground in Britain by the 1830s, although it did receive something of a revival in the USA at that time (Sugden, 1996).

Looking back at the earlier period when James Figg achieved fame evokes some nostalgia for a less-regulated period than the later nineteenth century. There is evidence, however, that Figg's training sessions in pugilism for young

gentlemen, like Broughton's later efforts, constitute another strand of boxing in the participation of privileged young men in the corporeal risks and dangers as well as spectators, followers and investors. The training of young gentlemen also invoked classical boxing as part of the rediscovery of classicism and classical culture, but more with reference to the architecture of amphitheatres and honour of cultural codes than unregulated pugilism. This version of a classical renaissance also celebrated British courage set in opposition to foreign effeminacy (Boddy, 2008). It was certainly a period of enormous interest in boxing as an exceedingly violent sport in which there were frequent fatalities in the ring, although this was a violence which reflected that of the world outside the ring (Elias and Dunning, 1986, Gorn, 1986).

Rules and regulations

Boxing was one of the first sports to be organized around a set of principles governing practice, but in effect doing little to reduce the brutality inflicted in the ring (Sugden, 1996). Broughton's rules were introduced in 1843 and governed the practice of prizefighting until the Marquess of Queensberry's rules, with the imposition of the use of gloves, a limited number of three-minute rounds, weight equilibrium and the standardization of refereeing, which were brought in the late nineteenth century. As Brailsford commented on Broughton, in the individualistic language of the Enlightenment, 'no one sport owed more to one man than boxing owed to him' (in Elias and Dunning, 1986:21). Broughton's rules set the agenda for later regulatory developments by stating how seconds and umpires should behave, how rounds should start and finish and how the money should be divided. After 1846, boxers were categorized by size and divided into light, middle and heavyweight divisions. Then as in most subsequent golden ages, heavyweights were the champions, showing again how the sport and its particular practices shape the culture of boxing and gendered identities more widely, especially masculinity.

Again, the extent to which these rules, which remain in place today with few amendments, reduced violence and damage in the ring is strongly disputed (Gorn, 1986, Sugden, 1996). However, Queensberry's rules did contribute to the transformation of boxing, especially to the development of the amateur sport so that professional boxing could grow almost as a legitimized branch of amateur boxing. Amateur boxing has provided the training ground for those who want to turn professional and provides a useful, well-regulated route into

earning a living by boxing, not least through participation in the Olympic Games in modern times. The distinction between amateur and professional boxing presents another technology of regulation. Of course, the status of the amateur professional relationship has different meanings in different parts of the world. In the UK and the USA, amateur boxing represents a pathway to professional competition, for example via local gyms or through participation in the Olympic Games more recently. Professional boxing largely carries higher status in the UK and the USA, and in the gym the rules governing amateur bouts are seen as repressive and constraining of the greater aggression expressed in the professional sport (Woodward, 1997b). However, in Cuba, for example, there is much stronger congruence between amateur status and the honour of representing the country and there are heavy proscriptions against turning professional.

Debates about the regulation of boxing represented in the historical shift from bare-knuckle fighting to amateur and professional boxing demonstrate the ambivalent status of the sport and its occupation of a moral 'low ground', especially as positioned by those who lay claim to the moral high ground. These tensions, apparent in the nineteenth century in what Sugden calls the 'campaign against the popular recreations of the pre-industrial, urban labour pool, of which the crusade against prize fighting was part' (1996:27), re-emerge in different manifestations at different historical moments, but I cite the instance here as illustrative of the moral framework in which debates about boxing, whether men's or women's, are so often set. Prizefighting in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was characterized by more informal than formal regulations, for example through its association with The Fancy. Although boxing is now strictly rule-governed, there is some resonance with its earlier forms of association and the closure around the groups within the boxing community; however, the practices of The Fancy seem more suited to the timescales and routines of pre-industrial life in both its links to rural pursuits and blood sports as well as the entertainments of the fairground booth. Such networks provide support for hegemonic masculinity and for subversions of the regulatory regimes of boxing such as bare-knuckle and prizefighting. Contemporary boxing gyms are often the focus for information about quasi-legal or illegal activities including dog-fighting and bare-knuckle fighting (Beattie, 1996, Mitchell, 2001). The communication technologies have changed, with venues being advertised on the day of the event on the internet instead of by word of mouth in taverns, but the tension rules and breaking them is much the same. These practices are all constitutive of the regimes of masculinity that are

enacted and experienced in boxing. What has come to be taken for granted as the 'common sense' of boxing masculinities might be challenged and reconstructed. Some of the rules, even if they were informal in the English golden age of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, applied most specifically to gender binaries. Women's prizefighting was also an important element in entertainments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Hargreaves, 1996).

Women's boxing in the English golden age

Women's fighting has not been situated quite so firmly within the same discourses of honour, for example as a means of settling disputes, as has men's. Women have tended to be associated with the low life of boxing, with both boxing and wrestling being 'characterized as disreputable and dangerous, and self-contained in working class venues' (Hargreaves, 1994:183). This association with low life is sexualized, drawing on traditional repertoires of the Madonna and the whore, whereby gender and sexuality elide in popular categorizations of women's behaviour, and women fighters were strongly associated with low life in their transgressions of upper-class and bourgeois femininity.

Although women participated in boxing in the form of prizefighting at fairgrounds in the eighteenth century, by the nineteenth there was more of a separation into men's and women's spheres, and women's pugilism was increasingly seen as risible (Dugaw, 1989). Richard Bisset mocked Mary Wollstonecraft's arguments for women's full participation in sport in his 1804 book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, saying that Wollstonecraft longed for the day when women 'would acquire high renown in boxing matches' (quoted in Dugaw, 1989:141). The satire of Bisset's claim lies in the assumptions of gentility among middle- and upper-class women; boxing was not entirely out of the remit of poor women who fought at fairgrounds.

Women's boxing or more accurately prizefighting can be traced back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in competitions that were just as brutal and bloody as those fought by men in bare-knuckle contests of similar ferocity. Bouts were staged in London from the 1720s between working-class women who did manual labour and sought both income and recognition (Hargreaves, 1996). It was not only men who achieved some fame. If a golden age is defined by its celebrities and heroes, then there is some support for this period of the English golden age being a golden age for women boxers. There is evidence of such women prizefighters: The Famous Boxing Woman of Billingsgate, The Fighting

Ass-Driver from Stoke Newington, The Female Boxing Blacksmith, The Market Woman, The Vendor of Sprats, The City Championess, The Hibernian Heroine and, perhaps most famously, Bruising Peg (Park, 1994).

Women's contests, rather like men's, were 'vicious free-for-alls, either topless or in tight-fitting jackets, short petticoats and Holland drawers. They involved punching, feet- and knee-kicking to all parts of the body, mauling scratching and throwing, and usually resulted in serious injuries' (Hargreaves, 1996:125). Perhaps not surprisingly these contests attracted large crowds, with lucrative purses being donated by members of the aristocracy and nobility (Guttmann, 1991). As the fights became more popular, they also attracted large bets. Fights could last for two hours, as Guttmann describes one such bout in 1794, in which the protagonists suffered considerable injuries and extensive bleeding.

In many ways women's boxing was on a par with men's in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was brutal, popular, attracted bets and sometimes an attractive purse, and women's fighting – although less frequent than men's – offered the added value of being more unusual and counter to ideological prescriptions of femininity, especially bourgeois femininity. Women's boxing of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could be seen as being part of a golden age in that, compared to the twentieth century, it was practised. On the whole the label 'golden age' is difficult to apply to the women's sport whatever the extent to which it accords with the body practices, popularity and rewards of men's boxing. Women's boxing is not practised by men and more importantly its practices and ways of being do not accord with any celebration of femininity: they are contrary to cultural norms of femininity largely to the same extent that they accord with masculinity. Cultural expectations and values make it difficult to celebrate the heroes of women's boxing and iconic figures and great fights. They are recorded but not on the scale of men's boxing. The obstacles to the recognition of women engaging in boxing are not just the body practices in which they engage. Women's prizefighting seemed to be every bit as brutal as men's at the time of the English golden age and attracted crowds and betting, even if there were not as many fights. Rather than being read as heroic, however, women's fighting appears to have been understood as freakish and bizarre. Thus it is culture and especially gendered conceptualizations of heroism and success which make it more difficult for women to be part of their own golden age.

Historical evidence (Costa and Guthrie, 1994, Dugaw, 1989, Eskin, 1974, Guttmann, 1991, Hargreaves, 1994, 1996) suggests that women were actively engaged in prizefighting in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but the logic of embodied participation does not necessarily challenge the value and

status that is accorded on the basis of the classification of sex gender. In fact, sex gender includes both the social and cultural construction of sexual difference and the material, enfleshed anatomical actualities of the body.

That men's activity in prizefighting and in the associated networks of the Fancy especially was framed by patriarchal value systems suggests that the men's sport is often meant when the English golden age is cited. As has been noted, however, in the context of the nineteenth-century renaissance of classical times and especially the Olympic ideals, golden ages tend to be constructed and conceptualized retrospectively and women's participation in prizefighting has also been written out of history, in everyday discourses in the twentieth century if less so in the academy, by later cultural forces which re-made and reinstated the inequalities of patriarchy in sport.

However, the evidence cited in this section demonstrates that women were active in the sport in the English golden age and were indeed part of the culture and practice of prizefighting, which is what boxing was at the time, and one of the tasks of contemporary historians, critical commentators and proponents of women's boxing is to note that women's participation in the sport did not start at the Olympic Games in 2012.

A century after this golden age of English boxing, things changed spatially and in terms of women's participation in the sport. There remained significant players but far fewer of them. In the geographical shift in the primary location of boxing to the USA, women's prizefighting remained popular on both sides of the Atlantic. The shift in emphasis at the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century also featured a move from the local champion to national and even international titles. Jennifer Hargreaves cites the claims of Nellie Stewart of Norfolk, Virginia, to having won the first 'Female Championship of the World' (Hargreaves, 1996:127). By the early twentieth century, however, fights were far fewer, following restrictions from the 1880s and the twentieth-century golden ages were even less democratic and equitable in relation to sex gender than in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Men's heavyweight boxing, which had assumed some importance in the eighteenth century, was a legacy that remained into the twentieth century, with the greatest of the golden ages notably that was known as 'When We Were Kings'.

Twentieth-century geographical shifts and golden ages

The genealogy of boxing has frequently been marked by key moments, great champions and epic fights, from what evidence there is of the ancient world

through the eighteenth century and up to the present times. Some of the moments identified as golden ages, however, are so called for different reasons. Those discussed so far in this chapter have particular significance in relation to the making of boxing as a sport and as a social and cultural phenomenon.

The formulation and categorization of golden ages is not only largely undertaken retrospectively, it is also contested, not the least in the twentieth century. The retrospective and often nostalgic creation of a golden age of boxing also involves some mechanisms of recovery and of finding what has been forgotten. In an account of the golden age of boxing skills and embodied practices and competencies, Kelly Richard Nicholson lists boxers from the period between 1890 and 1910 who have in many cases been all but forgotten but for whom he makes a strong case: George 'Kid' Lavigne, Bob Fitzsimmons Barbados Joe Walcott, Joe Gans, 'Terrible' Terry McGovern, Sam Langford and Stanley Ketchel (Nicholson, 2010).

In the twenty-first century, there is more regret expressed for the passing of the great days and golden ages of boxing than assertion of any new golden age. The twentieth century saw significant shifts in the location of boxing and the creation of the most significant of golden ages, at least in terms of the hyperbole with which they were expressed and the extent to which boxing was able to promote a celebration of the sport and its heroes. Notably, key figures became megastars and sports celebrities (Cashmore, 2006) as well as heroes and, as had been the case in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, local heroes. It was in the twentieth century that the very notion of boxing as a global sport took over and the centre of the fight game moved more emphatically to the USA.

It was in the twentieth century that the language of boxing as a metaphor for life was put into discourse (Foucault, 1981). As Barry McGuigan reflects with nostalgia on the twentieth century, as the era of 'legendary fights, great characters and memorable events … Boxing is the story of life, of triumph and disaster, elation and disappointment' (in Powley, 2011:4–5).

By the early twentieth century, the USA was beginning to dominate boxing, especially in the heavyweight category. The relationship between the diverse, multi-ethnic immigrant population of the USA and the opportunities offered by boxing led to an expansion of the sport and to its greater popularity. The twentieth-century boxing story is marked by the emergence of a series of 'champs' who were figures constituted through the capacities of individual boxers, their skills and enfleshed properties, their trainers, promoters and the relationship between the often impoverished, disadvantaged backgrounds of boxers and the mechanisms for the promotion of the sport on the mass media. The body

practices of the sport and its excitement and risks are combined with the biographies of its practitioners, whose life stories featured the marginalization, racialization and poverty that were so often the result of migration and their own crossing of national boundaries. The heroic figures of boxing's golden ages in the twentieth century brought together these different elements, which make boxing stars heroes as well as media celebrities (Marqusee, 2000).

The twentieth century is almost itself a golden age – from Jack Johnson, the first black heavyweight champion of the world, a title he held from 1908 to 1915, and the Frenchman George Carpentier, through the pre-war heydays of the 1920s, the era of the great Jack Dempsey and of Gene Tunney, up to the start of the Second World War in 1939, when politics too featured in boxing to a large extent. The so-called 'Hitler's champion' Max Schmeling was knocked out in the first round of his rematch heavyweight title fight with Joe Louis in the New York Yankee stadium in 1938. The 1950s have been called the 'glory days' of western boxing (Powley, 2011:45) especially in the USA, thanks to the amazing achievements of boxers like Rocky Marciano and Sugar Ray Robinson. The century is dotted with great champions and big moments, but although women continued to engage in boxing throughout this period (Hargreaves, 1996), their names are largely not in boxing's hall of fame until the end of the century. It remains an assumption that women were not boxing. The women's sport was not permitted at the Olympics after a demonstration in 1904, which may, indeed, have contributed to the everyday beliefs that women were not involved at all. A more likely explanation is the lack of visibility of the women's sport. The more media sport sponsorship synergies developed, the more visible the men's fight game became and the less possible it became to think of women participating, except as spectators in the front row, as oppressed wives and girlfriends or anxious mothers of male boxers (Woodward, 2006, 2011).

A key moment which marks a point of transformation and was part of the geographical shift was the 'Gentleman Jim' Corbett fight, against Peter Courtney in East Orange New Jersey in 1894 (Mitchell, 2005). This fight was filmed or perhaps more accurately recorded on film, but this was the start of exploiting the capacities of boxing to cross boundaries between what is real and what is drama. Filming and cinema have been an important component of boxing culture and is part of the relationship between the embodied practices of the sport and its popular and artistic cultural representations (Woodward, 2006, 2011).

There are several big moments in the twentieth century but in this highly selective brief discussion of golden ages, one that stands out is the era of 'When We Were Kings', which was the title of Leon Gast's film of the Ali–Foreman

'Rumble in the Jungle' in Kinshasa in Zaire in 1974. The 1940s and the 1950s might be seen as the golden era of boxing films. Fight films of the post-war period with its 'rampant inflation, unemployment, labour strife, shifting social patterns' (Telotte, 1989:4) were able to deploy the trope of the existential angst of heroic masculinity of the boxer, confronted with economic challenges and those of corrupt forces. However, there are specificities about the 1970s, especially when the boxing stage was occupied by personal rivalries, and heavyweight figures. These were heavyweights in all senses of the word. Great boxing, if often extraordinary, is also exciting and skilful and some great boxers were significant outside the ring as well as inside it.

The 1970s were often characterized by the rivalry between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier and the Thrilla in Manila in 1975, which was their third and arguably greatest fight when Ali retained his heavyweight title (BBC On This Day, 2012), but described the experience as the nearest he had ever come to dying in the ring (Hauser, 1991). The fight is also noted for its violence as well as the controversy over the result, when Frazier tried to prevent his trainer stopping the fight in the 14th round.

The detail of which era constitutes the greatest and similarly which fight was the fight of the century (a title more often accorded to Ali and Frazier's first meeting at Madison Square Garden in 1971 (Hauser, 1991, 2004, Mailer, 1991)) is one that is often discussed by followers of boxing.

Which era deserves the accolade of the golden age of heavyweight boxing especially is hotly debated on boxing fan websites (for example, Heavyweight blog, 2012), but there is considerable consensus about the supremacy of Ali as a hero as well as an incredibly dynamic, creative and skilful boxer and of Dundee as the trainer who helped Ali defeat both Joe Frazier and Henry Cooper, also great boxers of this era. The period was characterized by a wealth of talent among heavyweights and also by the visibility of boxing within popular culture. Boxing news was social and political news and this is probably the one time when it was a boxer who was the most famous man on the planet (Powley, 2011:6). When Joe Frazier, Henry Cooper and Angelo Dundee all died in 2012, most of the obituaries bemoaned the loss of a golden age of boxing which could never be recovered and listed all the other great names of fighters for whom Dundee had been the cornerman (Dundee Obituary, 2012).

My purpose in selecting and briefly reflecting upon this moment in boxing history is to focus on the ways in which boxing as a sport is caught up in social movements and forces and in its cultural, political and economic context and to demonstrate how what can be called golden ages are retrospectively

constituted as well as made in dialogue between past and present to express both aspirations and fears for the future. The 1970s also raise issues about how discursive constructions which accord greater importance and value to one period over another are also embodied and enfleshed. It is possible to have these debates only because of the actual practices and capacities of fighters, trainers and what makes boxing. Golden ages are not just social constructs; they are embodied too.

Conclusion: Looking back and moving on

What makes a golden age may be open to discussion but there is some consensus within boxing culture about the big moments which coalesce to make golden ages, and the purpose of the brief exploration of these possibilities in this chapter has been to pick out some of the distinctive features of boxing through focusing on golden ages and glory days. The past often seems more glorious when viewed through the present and it is largely the present which remakes the past within narratives of great moments, spectacular events and, especially in men's boxing, heroes, usually heavyweight boxers.

There are temporal as well as spatial points of connection in the moments covered in this chapter. The routes boxing has travelled through – Pankration, activities that are nearer wrestling, bare-knuckle fighting and prizefighting – demonstrate that the sport has retained key features: the corporeal engagement of boxing, the singularity of its risks and dangers and the intensities of its one-on-one pugilism. Bodies and flesh are central to boxing in ways that are more heightened than in other sports. The one-on-one contest is a feature which enhances the binaries of boxing between the beautiful body and the broken body, between winning and losing, success and failure in life as well as in the ring, and between women and men.

Another strand which re-emerges in boxing is its links to a particular version of masculinity in which codes of heroic and honourable masculinity are implicated and reworked. Most of the golden ages discussed in this chapter have been formed within patriarchal cultures and, perhaps more importantly, have themselves contributed to what is understood as patriarchy and, in particular, traditional masculinities. This can be enforced through rules and regulations as they were in relation to who was permitted to take part in it in the ancient world, or it might be through more diffuse gendered networks of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) such as the Fancy.

Some of the elements which make up the parameters of the conceptualization of a golden age have been heightened through forces of globalization, especially in relation to the speed and velocity of communications systems and the properties of the mega event which permeates the late modernity period. The past gets reconstituted through the trope of mega events such as the great fights of the age of 'When We Were Kings' in the twentieth century. The 'Rumble in the Jungle' has become more of a transnational event through its reiteration and reconstruction in films. Cultural artefacts have reinstated and even created narratives of heroism, spectacle and sensation and have rehearsed some of the strands which this chapter has demonstrated make boxing what it is. The categories of activity which can loosely be called boxing in the different eras covered in this section all involve unarmed combat between two people; flesh is central to boxing, as is risk, danger and excitement.

The one-on-one pugilistic practices of boxing lend themselves well to heroic narratives which are retold in the annals of the sport and in the twentieth-century cinema played a key role in this. Boxing has particular traditions of providing opportunities for disadvantaged and dispossessed people in different places and at different times, not always in the context of mobility, although migration and the participation of diasporic people have been a significant element in the mix. The stories of individual triumph over poverty, racism and social exclusion that expressed the hopes of a people have become an important strand of what makes boxing and connects the sport to global forces, notably of mobility and migration, although as subsequent chapters demonstrate, in some parts of the globe, boxing traditions are part of local communities and local culture. The participation of coal miners and men working in heavy industry in the Welsh valleys in the twentieth century is a case in point. Boxing brings together the personal and the social in powerful ways, some of which are given expression in its golden ages.

Each golden age demonstrates the capacities of boxing to generate excitement through its particular enfleshed practices. Boxing has particular properties of risk and danger that are linked to the polarized and corporeal combat which the sport involves. Although by the twentieth century the sport was highly regulated, the great moments which make up a golden age always feature some pretty brutal fights. Boxing is routine in much of what actually happens but the sport always carries elements of danger which make it one of the most exhilarating and exciting of all sports. This may also contribute to the strong associations between gambling and boxing. Betting can be corrupt and lead to illegitimate and illegal practices but some of the risks and uncertainties of boxing make it a sport that has always been one which creates the desire to gamble on outcomes.

As the twentieth century progressed, the culture and cult of celebrity became more important and impacted upon boxing as much as other sports. The pressure of fame and visibility and public recognition as well as the financial rewards that increasingly accompany success in sports can present their own problems. Boxing has attracted illegal as well as legitimate interests, notably those of the Mafia in its twentieth-century golden ages (Mitchell, 2009). Also those who have been accorded the visibility of celebrity status have not always been able to cope with some of the more difficult and troubling aspects, as the case of Mike Tyson has shown at the end of the twentieth century: a truly great boxer in his prime on the one hand, and a criminal and a convicted rapist in later life, on the other. It is a complex story. Visibility, however, is always countered by and in conversation with invisibility and the desire to make good and to be recognized through boxing has very often been the desire and hope of those who are otherwise most invisible, especially migrant and diasporic peoples, which is the concern of the next chapter.

3

Movements and Mobilities

This chapter builds on some of the defining features of boxing that emerged from Chapter 2 and moves on to explore the culture of boxing in relation to its links to migration, which establish the sport as one that has particular global dimensions through its association with migrant and mobile peoples and the movement of people from particular groups in and out of boxing. Intensified patterns of migration are linked to diaspora. These links are made both through diaspora as an empirical description of displaced and mobile peoples and as an explanatory concept which provides a means of understanding social relations and changes which are outcomes of as well as catalysts for the creation of diaspora.

This chapter aims to demonstrate how mobilities and the movement of peoples have both impacted upon boxing and how boxing has shaped the understanding of migration, with particular emphasis upon the inequalities and social exclusion that can feature in the lives of displaced, migrant peoples. The chapter starts with a discussion of the contested concept of diaspora in order to demonstrate its relevance to boxing and goes on to explore the intersection of race, racialization and ethnicization with boxing, by looking at the politics of race as played out in the sport and other dimensions of social exclusion, which are negotiated within the sport. Gypsy boxers and the traveller community offer a useful example of the processes through which boxing as a sport travels and the capacities which boxing has to generate different connections. Thai boxing or Muay Thai, as illustrative of the recent popularity of MMA, offers another discussion of the ways in which boxing travels and is redefined and remade through its mobilities as well as its endurances.

Diaspora in all its aspects is most usefully viewed as a relational aspect of globalization, rather than having a causal connection. The relationship between diaspora and globalization is more akin to the correlation between capitalism and Protestantism which the sociologist Max Weber understood as an elective affinity (Weber, 2001[1930]). Diasporas long precede globalization, which is one

counter argument to any causal link between the two (Cohen, 1997). There are, however, particular arguments which support the application of the concept of diaspora to sport, and to boxing in particular, which are linked to the relationship between the distinctive features of globalization in late modernity and the experience and understanding of diaspora. This relationship is materialized in and through the embodied practices of boxing and boxing cultures.

Globalization is characterized by new sorts of social and economic organization, technological change, not least in relation to the speed of contemporary communications systems of knowledge transfer and through transport systems, new modes of production and the syncretization of cultures, each of which has a particular role to play in sport. Sport is also a vehicle for change and development in many of these fields, especially those relating to the media and to technological interventions, especially the development of techno-science in performance enhancement and in extending the capacities of the body as well as crossing boundaries between the human and non-human, such as people and machines (Haraway, 1991). The embodied practices of sport, especially competitive, international sport, generate technological and medical scientific interventions, not least boxing, in which bodies are of central importance.

Boxing has a long history of engagement with migration and in providing a route out of poverty and disadvantage for displaced or migrant people, especially young men (Sammons, 1988, Sugden, 1996). Boxing has different histories in different places through which boxing cultures have been reproduced and reconfigured. There is no single linear narrative of boxing, in spite of the similarities between some of the stories, for example of the opportunities offered by boxing to enhance self-esteem and self-respect for disadvantaged young men and, at some points, young women too.

The different paths which boxing, its culture and its embodied practitioners have taken suggest that boxing can be seen:

> not as a mirror but as a magnifying glass of our society. It is hardly accidental that out of the poor Irish immigration of a people being brutalized by their British overlords, we have a wave of great Irish fighters … As the Irish moved up into the mainstream there was less economic need to use the prize ring as their way out and up. The wave of Jewish boxers followed exactly the same pattern, and so did the Italians. The almost total domination of the ring today by African-Americans and Hispanics speaks directly to the continued economic deprivation and discrimination of large sections of our inner-city communities.
>
> (Budd Schulberg quoted in Bodner, 2011[1997]:xi)

Such stories raise questions about where boxing is most popular; who boxes and where and about the interconnections between boxing and migration and diaspora. Boxing is mobile in the spaces it occupies across the globe, with shifting dominance, currently still in the USA, but increasingly in countries like Germany, Mexico, Panama, the Philippines Puerto Rico, Ukraine, Venezuela, as well as of course Thailand, where it has a long tradition with Muay Thai (Box rec, 2013).

Cultural diaspora

The concept of diaspora has been used to describe and explain the dispersal of people through migration from one homeland, usually classified as their original home, to another location, or possibly more than a single new location and often very far removed from the original homeland. The term, which, in one of its early forms was associated with the movement of Jewish people, first, through expulsion from Israel and later, in the twentieth century most emphatically after the Second World War, to different places scattered across the globe, has been applied both to different peoples who experience exile and movement and to explain the processes and identifications of diasporic peoples in a wide range of different contexts. The twentieth century provided a focus on migration which was driven by the negative forces of political extremism and post-colonial dispersal which has led to interest in theories of diaspora as mechanisms for explaining how cultural identifications are made transnationally and in the context of flux and mobility.

The concept of diaspora has been enormously expanded to encompass all sorts of mobilities and has stressed the fluidity and mobility of diasporic identifications. Diaspora refers to people and the processes through which those people are made, for example as experienced by African Caribbean people (Chamberlain, 1998), who have also experienced more than one set of displacements (Hall, 1990). The approaches to diaspora which were associated with postmodernist conceptualizations, for example within cultural studies in the 1980s and the 1990s (Bhabha, 1994, Hall, 1992, Said, 1978), can be seen as challenging more stabilized, 'classic' understandings of diaspora (Chivallon, 2002), which appeal to roots and original ancestral homelands. Theories and politics of diaspora which were associated with post-colonialism and with postmodernist approaches made connections between hybridity and the changing features of diaspora. For example, Stuart Hall argued that the late twentieth century was marked by two apparently contradictory tendencies: that of globalization, which is characterized by homogenization and assimilation whereby cultures become

unified, and, partly in reaction to these globalizing trends, the assertion of local identifications, often based on national, ethnic and religious belongings (Hall, 1992). Global sport demonstrates these tensions between international competition and the movement of athletes and localized affiliations and identifications. Boxing culture with its individualized figures rather than national or regional teams offers a particular version of these tensions, where the man (*sic*) comes to stand for the nation and for oppressed migrant peoples.

The hybrid version of diaspora might sit uneasily with the strong sense of belonging and even of fixity that have been linked to affiliations in sport, perhaps especially in a sport like boxing which is so firmly based on a sense of community and of belonging. Many of these connections and disruptions and seemingly counter-positions, however, are part of boxing culture. Sport has to some extent been under-researched as a field in which these tensions and ambivalences are lived, rearticulated and generated. It is not only the case that the young men who have taken up boxing have been part of diasporic dispersal, but their make-up as diasporic peoples is marked by the uncertainties that accompany economic insecurity as well as those of national and ethnic identifications.

Although the concept of diaspora may have been diluted by its overuse and excessive emphasis upon heterogeneity and fluidity, it remains useful for exploring and explaining some of the contradictions which boxing generates. As James Clifford has demonstrated, the adjectival use of the term 'diasporic' has the advantage of greater flexibility (1997), which makes it attractive as part of the explanatory framework and as a concept that might be applied to transformations, which are taking place in sport, where different versions of attachment to nation and community are experienced and where sex gender is more explicitly part of the mix. Gender has only recently been addressed in studies of globalization and global sport, especially as part of the explanatory framework through which inequalities can be understood, rather than only as an empirical category. The explicit division of sport along lines of sex gender makes sport particularly important to understanding the forces and flows of diaspora.

Diasporic identifications merge with those of multiculture which may also be useful for exploring the benefits of migration and the remixing of diasporic peoples which marks boxing. Using the idea of multicultural identities provides a shared sense of belonging which is difficult to achieve and may, in fact, be unattainable, for example, because it feeds 'expectations of being together that are impossibly high' (Gilroy, 2005:54). Gilroy also suggests that the concept of identity may invoke notions of fixity that limit its usefulness in the context of global transformation and proposes the idea of 'conviviality' as a more relevant

follow-on from 'multiculturalism', which he claims to have broken down politically, as a means of understanding the 'processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multi-culture an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas and in post-colonial cities elsewhere … that turns attention toward the always unpredictable mechanisms of identification' (Gilroy, 2005:xv). Gilroy's notion of conviviality has considerable resonance, especially in the local affiliations of boxing, for example in the changing, multi-ethnic make-up of the gym with its post-colonial accommodations especially at a local level.

Gilroy's re-conceptualizations of diaspora and diversity reflect recent preference for the more dynamic notion of identification which highlights mobility and contingency rather than fixity. The concept of identity still provides a politics of location (Hall, 1996), which has purchase in the field of combating racism, and offers some recognition of the force of some attachments that invoke belonging. The pull of the boxing gym is due to not only the promise of a career in the sport, but also the security of belonging as part of a community, which is manifest in histories and the personal and public narratives of spatial and temporal belonging that are an integral part of identification in sport, and especially in boxing, with its links to migration and mobility. As Pnina Werbner has argued,

> Post-modernists who attack constructions of 'culture' miss the fact that identities matter deeply and are long term … they are not simply pre-given or inherited: they are formed, made and re-made: they exist in practice dialogically, through collective action and interaction.
>
> (Werbner, 2002:267)

Not only is the local boxing gym a site for the stabilizing of kinship ties and familial connections (Woodward, 2004, 2006, 2008), boxing provides its own version of family (Wacquant, 2004) for diasporic peoples; families in the sense that the boxing gym is a safe place, even for those who might not immediately be seen as belonging to a particular location (Mitchell, 2009).

Boxing provides a site for diasporic peoples to forge new identifications informed by the promise of resistance to social exclusion and marginalization. As Chapter 2 showed, boxing is highly political (Woodward, 2012a, 2012c), especially in relation to the politics of race and equality. Boxing heroes are often those who challenge racism and social injustice, with Muhammad Ali being one of the greatest champions of the golden age of 'When We Were Kings' – sporting and political. Gilroy argues that, although sport is, in a sense, an anti-political terrain, lacking the orientations of 'respectable politics' (2005:112), sporting events follow the pattern of racialized politics and political conflicts are reflected in the rhythms of sporting events.

As Ashley Doane argues, 'racial events constitute the arena in which racial ideologies are presented, challenged and defended – and are re-shaped in the process' (Doane, 2006:260). This remains a contested arena, where dispute is often concentrated upon specific events, many of which receive extensive media coverage. Historically, some of these moments in boxing have been framed by the traditional politics of race – Jack Johnson's first heavyweight victory and Max Schmeling's defeat by Joe Louis. In boxing racialization and the politics of race have often been implicated in the media coverage of transgressive events whether in the ring in some of the more violent moments, such as Mike Tyson biting Evander Holyfield's ear in 1997, or criminal acts outside the ring such as Mike Tyson's conviction for rape in 1992 (O'Connor, 2002). Race, ethnicity, migration, mobilities and diaspora are components in the processes of globalization which have different weights and impact at different times. These related forces also move in and out of popularity within the literature, although boxing, especially, and sport in general, engages less with the complexities and sophistications of some of the concepts associated with postmodernist critiques.

Sport, especially a sport like boxing, may appear to be more concerned with certainties, for example in deciding who has won and who has lost and how it is to be decided, and who is allowed to participate and in which competitions. The binary logic of sport, with its strong divisions into women's and men's competitions and rules and stress on the exact measurement of success (and failure) and its enfleshed practices which include what bodies cannot do as well as what they can, presents challenges to some of the more complex terminology besides sometimes rendering its distance from everyday experience redundant. The experience of racialized and ethnicized classificatory systems in sport – as the history of boxing and of the politics of race demonstrate – indicates the enormous difficulty in establishing scientific categories. Boxing shows the need to recognize the complexities of the field.

Diaspora, with its connotations of moving from one place to another but never actually being fixed in particular cultural spaces, retains useful applications in the genealogy of boxing with its links to migration and movement of peoples. Boxing is populated by diasporic people, but what also matters in the gym and in the ring is the embodied practice of the sport. As Stuart Hall argued:

> Diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return even if it means pushing other people into the sea. This is the old, the imperializing, hegemonizing form of 'ethnicity'. … The diaspora experience I intend here is

> defined not by purity, but by the recognition of necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite difference, by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.
>
> (Hall, 1990:235)

Race and boxing

Boxing has a longstanding relationship with migration and the movement of people around the globe. Not only have different forms of boxing been practised in many parts of the world over a long period of time, but boxing has been the preferred sport, and the route into a new life of self-respect and independence for those who have moved across the boundaries of nations and even continents, whether from choice or, more likely, compelled to migrate because of economic need and political forces.

In many cases, the people involved in these migrations have experienced the hostile forces of racialization and ethnicization and their racial and ethnic categorizations have been push factors in their expulsion from one place and entry into another.

Ben Carrington argues that the figure of the black athlete was put into discourse within the remaking of race on 26 December 1908, when, in a boxing ring in Sydney, Australia, Jack Johnson, the US fighter from Texas, who was the son of slave-born parents, defeated the white Canadian Tommy Burns, to the disbelief of a largely all-white crowd.

> A black man held the title that only the bravest and strongest could lay claim to, the supposed pinnacle of heterosexual manhood, the very definition of a patriarchal identity based upon violence and domination, courage and mastery: heavyweight champion of the world. Race is a productive category capable of explaining social relations and hierarchies, the limits of whiteness, and even the nature of politics and subaltern freedom in the west, would all have to be rethought in the coming years and decades after this fight.
>
> (Carrington, 2010:1)

As Carrington argues, Jack Johnson holds a special place as a champion heavyweight boxer. Johnson's competence and skill as a boxer were so troubling to white racists that he was seen as a sexualized threat to white women. In this

hostile, racist assemblage of the figure of the black athlete, athletic prowess seemed inextricably allied to uncontrolled sexual promiscuity and danger; sexuality and race became entangled in this figure of the black athlete, configured around the binary logic of black and white oppositions.

Johnson fled to Europe but returned to the USA at the end of his career, where he was defeated in the ring by a white Texan, Jess Willard, to the satisfaction of many white fans.

> Whatever the circumstances most white Americans rejoiced in the return of the heavyweight crown to their race. Willard became an instant hero, one who brought renewed confidence to the physical and moral strength of white America.
>
> (Sammons, 1988:44)

Boxing in the USA has at times been particularly characterized by the politics of race and processes of racialization as well as the ethnicization that has played a big part in boxing in the UK at many points in its history. Boxing has strong links to the urban poor and with particular ethnic groups – the Irish, Hispanic people and black people – whose status can be measured by boxing (Michner, 1976). This is a complex mix of class, race, ethnicity, sex, gender and place. Sugden points to the oversimplification of boxing as fighting a way out of the ghetto, but the idea still has some relevance in the twenty-first century in the legacy of boxing. The particular diasporic or ethnic groups may have changed but the articulation with social class, poverty and migration persists.

> By the middle of the nineteenth century, on both sides of the Atlantic, and increasingly in other parts of the world, urban poverty, racial and ethnic discrimination and relative deprivation had been established as the common denomination of prize fighting and subsequent professional boxing.
>
> (Sugden, 1996:24)

Success in the ring in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was clearly situated within racialized discursive regimes, so that individual success elided with racial superiority. Although migrant and racialized young men who had experienced the exclusionary forces of racism and poverty were drawn to boxing for economic and social reasons, US society sought to maintain white supremacy for an extended period well into the twentieth century, by attempting to legislate against mixed-race contests (especially when the black boxer was more likely to win). Latter, racism has operated through more diffuse mechanisms and through the post-colonial accommodations of Gilroy's conviviality (Gilroy, 2005).

Even after boxing had been legalized in the USA, there was a prohibition against fights between black and white boxers, sometimes based on similar arguments which resonate with much later disputes about women and men competing against each other. Prohibition against mixed fights was not abolished until Joe Louis, the first widely recognized African American champion since Jack Johnson, beat the white American James Braddock (Cinderella Man) in 1937 in a comeback fight after his defeat by Max Schmeling, Hitler's champion. Joe Louis and Max Schmeling had two fights, which were construed as key moments in the politics of race, which were also mixed up in the articulation of race, gender, class and global politics, especially as framed by the conflict between the neoliberal USA and fascist Nazi Germany (Erenberg, 2006). Schmeling won their first fight but, when they met for the second time, Louis won by a knockout in the first round. Joe Louis came to embody pride and self-esteem for black boxers and thus for black communities. It demonstrates how the narrative of triumph over tragedy and the route out of the ghetto play out in boxing culture.

Earlier commentaries stressed the dichotomies of democracy versus oppressive right wing regimes which in a way open up the possibilities for the appropriation of the heroic stories of boxers from the margins and the dispossessed by neoliberal regimes. On the one hand Hitler had sought to utilize a re-articulation of athleticism and racialized enfleshed ideals, using a boxing champion, Schmeling, to embody white supremacy through elite, athletic, embodied success. On the other hand, neoliberal regimes like that of the USA began to see the possibilities of promoting their own democratic systems of governance through more socially inclusive, egalitarian participation in sport. When Louis beat Schmeling in New York City in 1938 the USA celebrated the triumph of good over evil (Sammons, 1988) and Louis went on to dominate the heavyweight category. Louis achieved heroic status because of his boxing success and his support for the US war effort. In terms of an agentic project though, the Louis–Schmeling fights are more conventionally described in relation to Hitler's project.

> Schmeling set out to win the heavyweight championship of the world as Hitler goose-stepped through Europe. Each would use the other to achieve his goals and each would come perilously close to succeeding
>
> (Sammons, 1988:107)

Associations with militarism and traditional masculinities are part of the boxing legacy, so it is not surprising that race has been implicated in this mix in particular ways. Links between war and boxing have been last bastions and

mechanisms for the exclusion of women and promotion of masculinity, in a mix in which the politics of race and power coalesced. After the First World War, G. Stanley Hall argued that 'War is, in a sense the last acme of what some now call the manly protest … where male virtues come to the fore, for woman cannot go "over the top" '(Hall, 1920:102). Boxing has been used to 'counter effeminizing tendencies, preparing men for a life of strife' (Gorn, 1986:202). However, the use of black boxing heroes to promote bellicosity and pugilism at a national level has not always been straightforward. Militarism offers a means of integration and acceptance for black male boxers; it also provides another site for the operation of racism and oppression. For successful black boxers, their relationship with war and militarism can also be a site of resistance.

Boxing has also been the site for the expression of political activism and opposition in the politics of race. Ali's story has often been heroic in retrospect rather than in real time and his story incorporates many of the tensions and characteristics of boxing. Boxing might have been encouraged as a set of body practices within the armed forces to promote versions of enfleshed traditional masculinity but, for example, Ali's path to being established as a national hero was a rocky and disrupted one.

Ali's gold medal at the 1960 Olympic Games, followed by his move to professional status and his defeat against the odds of 'bad guy' Sonny Liston in 1964, seemed to situate Ali or Cassius Clay, as he had previously been called, as a national American hero rather in the style of Joe Louis (Hauser, 1991, Lemert, 2003, Remnick, 1998). In previous fights Liston as the 'bad guy', backed by the Mob and the criminal underworld, had defeated 'good guys', like Floyd Paterson. Ali's fight against Sonny Liston became more complicated when Ali, who in contrast to Liston was supported by many legitimate businessmen of Louisville, adopted the Muslim religion, rejected his slave name of Cassius Clay and became Muhammad Ali. Not only did Ali proclaim 'I am the greatest' (Hauser, 1991:78) after beating Liston at the age of 22, he also joined the political movement, the Nation of Islam, and asserted, 'I talk to God every day ... the real God' (Lemert, 2003:73). Ali disrupted the popular dichotomy of 'good' and 'bad' black masculinity in boxing by espousing a radical political movement, strongly supporting civil rights and ultimately refusing the draft to Vietnam in 1967, which led to the punitive loss of his title and to the threat of imprisonment. The politics of race and the fight against inequality play out in complex and disruptive ways in sport, especially boxing, even if the sport is most strongly represented as providing a route into social acceptance through the investment of physical capital for participants and serving a social function of integration.

The ghost of racism always haunts boxing through its networks and systems of governance and promotion. Until Don King's arrival, the promotion of boxing had been dominated by white men. As Ali himself pointed out there might be two black men slogging it out in the ring, but the profits would largely accrue to white promoters and investors and often be viewed and followed by affluent, white people (Ali and Durham, 1975). Also the physical investment is made by the boxers who take the risks, but the capital returns go to a largely white class which has the resource to make capital investments (Wacquant, 2004).

Ali might have moved in and out of the dichotomous positions of 'good guy' and 'bad guy', but Mike Tyson occupied both at the same time. Tyson's circuitous route through different legends, myths and materialities has generated a great deal of comment (Early, 1999, O'Connor, 2002), but is always based on the politics of race. Tyson has had two distinct, if somewhat contradictory, uses for the racialized history of professional boxing. His identification and expropriation of the great white fighters made him a mainstream figure, depoliticizing his masculinity by making him someone who identified with whites and so someone with whom whites could, on some level, identify. 'But as Don King knew… [i]dentifying with black fighters of the past – or more precisely with the street life which produced them – promised to re-politicize Tyson's masculinity and stave off charges of racial inauthenticity. The Public Enemy myth… was Tyson's most convincing role, if only because it fits so neatly into the roles scripted for young and physically powerful black men in the American mind' (Early, 2002:203)

Tyson is a contradictory and fragile as well as successful figure (Jefferson, 1996, 1997). He was and continues to be a hero for many black kids and his criminal convictions, even for rape, are also construed as part of the materialities of his biography and situation (O'Connor, 2002). This troubling combination, however, raises questions about how far it is also possible to celebrate his boxing prowess without excusing his violence and misogyny.

Boxing all too often opens up possibilities for the production and reinstatement of racialized stereotypes and exclusionary classifications of racialized and ethnicized expressions. Boxing and the migrant and marginalized people who box do not always, or even often, occupy visible public spaces though. Not only is it the case that large numbers of those who box never succeed, but some diasporic peoples and some migrant communities receive much less public attention. For example, gypsy and traveller boxers occupy a more marginalized space. Such boxing cultures are distinctive in many ways and although they have synergies with other boxing traditions and practices, they also have cultural and social specificities.

Travelling boxers

There is a long tradition of boxing, or more specifically prizefighting and bare-knuckle fighting, among gypsy and traveller communities which extended into the twentieth century and remains a powerful presence, albeit more local in its representations and social networks than global and transnational in its affiliations and public presence. These local cultural legacies are often reiterated through storytelling and oral traditions through which local heroes are made and boxing legends constituted, within entrepreneurial frameworks which are outside the global sport-media-sponsorship nexus, largely because of the lack of legal status of many of its practices. Boxing, or more specifically bare-knuckle fighting, has played a key role in the perpetuation of gendered social relations and divisions and individualistic, entrepreneurial and transgressive practices within gypsy and traveller cultures. This version of boxing has points of connection with other dimensions of western boxing through its embodied practices, but it retains strong elements of earlier boxing cultures, especially those associated with the boxing booths of the fairgrounds and the operation of boxing outside the parameters of mainstream legal frameworks.

There are, of course, famous figures, notably Bartley Gorman, the Irish traveller and bare-knuckle fighter (Gorman and Walsh, 2003), who was the British champion of what was nonetheless illegal, bare-knuckle fighting, between 1972 and 1992. Gorman was an Irish traveller who moved to Staffordshire in the UK and fought at a variety of unsanctioned sites such as horse fairs, traveller campsites, bars and clubs and even a quarry (Gorman and Walsh, 2003). There are elements of legitimacy in Gorman's life story; he was described as a 'town treasure' at his adopted home town of Uttoxeter in Staffordshire, where he was honoured as a local hero at the town's Millenium monument (BBC. King of the Gypsies, 2012). Shane Meadows produced the film the *King of the Gypsies*, in 1995, as testament to Gorman's achievements and cultural significance and the endurance of the raw qualities of boxing (YouTube Shane Meadows, 2013).

Legend has it that Gorman once even sparred with Muhammad Ali, demonstrating some of the interconnections between different elements in the boxing story and the accommodation of different versions of the embodied practices of boxing and its cultural and social meanings. Prizefighting and bare-knuckle fighting still belong to particular spatial traditions, notably those associated with what could be called western boxing, but as Gorman says in Shane Meadows's film *King of the Gypsies*, 'bare knuckle fighting is violent, relentless in its raw experience of aggression' (YouTube, King of the Gypsies, 2013).

The persistence of these practices, such as bare-knuckle fighting, has also become associated with other activities which are linked to boxing and maybe outshoots of some of the practices that have come to be classified as illegal. All boxing has had links to illegality in various forms even if only by association, but some of the reworking of activities like bare-knuckle fighting, cage fighting and Ultimate Fighting have emerged in reconfigured contemporary forms which sometimes lay claim to earlier, unregulated practices. Some of the interest in martial arts, especially MMA, has brought in other elements of excitement into the sport which have an uneasy relationship with the legal performance and experience of boxing, whether western boxing or martial arts and Thai boxing.

MMA features boxers in a ring or cage where combatants are permitted to inflict pain on their opponent through techniques of punching, kicking, elbowing and kneeing (Spencer, 2011), but, although fighters are trained and there are rules, some proponents of different forms of boxing are critical of the extent of the violence in some of these competitions. Regulatory bodies of martial arts and Thai boxing express anxiety about the free-for-all practices in venues, which could be a sports centre, used to provide space for those who pay £20 to fight and spectators pay the same amount to watch untrained combatants perform in a cage (Moore, 2012). The unregulated practices of cage fighting plug into some of the excitement of boxing but negotiate a difficult path in relation to the discipline and control which are central to boxing as well as its legacy of respect and conformity to rules.

Not only does boxing draw upon migrant communities so that boxers are part of transnational mobility, it also migrates as a set of embodied sporting practices. What could be called western boxing has achieved popularity in different parts of the world and similarly other varieties of boxing and combat sport have travelled from the part of the world where they were most popular, because of their strong cultural and ethnic connections, and have been adopted in other very different places. One such example is what is called in the west, Thai boxing, and in Japan, kick boxing, but in its place of origin, Muay Thai.

Thai boxing: Muay Thai

Boxing takes many different forms, not all of which are actually called boxing. Whether a set of activities can be called boxing is disputed and within traditional western boxing there is a reluctance to include wrestling or martial arts, although increasingly with the growth of interest in martial arts, in many European countries for example, boundaries are becoming blurred.

Thai boxing or Muay Thai shares many of the features of western boxing and draws upon a long tradition with links to militarism and cultural regimes which date back to the middle ages (Muay Thai, 2012). Militarism has more specific points of connection with the sport in Muay Thai, which also has a tradition of using weapons, notably swords, as part of its ritual practices, which have become key symbolic elements of the sport. The literature cites weapons such as swords and pikes being deployed in the early days of Muay Thai, along with elbows, knees, arms and feet in an assemblage of body parts and material equipment, all of which are part of Muay Thai's ritual performances and its legacy (Moore, 2005, Muay Thai, 2012). Weapons are retained as part of the ritual procedures in a sport to which rituals are central. Its particular cultural legacy also makes it a distinctive form of boxing which is evident in the sport's rituals and practices and its particularities in relation to Thai social and cultural traditions.

Muay Thai is also characterized by actions which are not sanctioned in western boxing; more emphasis is given to the use of elbows, arms and feet; kicking is permitted. Thai boxing is included in martial arts as well as being a distinctive set of practices which sets it apart (Moore, 2012). Much of the literature and the internet coverage of the sport focuses upon its complex sets of practices and routines of combat which make up a detailed syllabus for all who seek to participate. The language is similar, at least in translation to that of western boxing with jabs, crosses and upper cuts, but with a far wider range of techniques due to the inclusion of feet, elbows and arms.

Muay Thai is hugely popular in Thailand but, with the expansion of interest in martial arts such as Judo (Judo, 2012), Karate (Karate, 2012) and Taekwondo (Taekwondo, 2012), participation in the sport grew considerably in the late twentieth century and there has been further interest in the twenty-first century. Muay Thai has generated interest in martial arts, especially the development of MMA in an interactive exchange between different sets of boxing practices and culture. Thai boxing has become more popular in Europe, especially in the UK, France and Holland, in Japan where it is called kick boxing, and in the USA, which boasts the oldest and largest organization outside Thailand, founded in 1968. This form of boxing has travelled and undergone some transnational translations as have other forms of boxing and especially boxing culture. Many practitioners and aficionados of Muay Thai report tracing their interest through different martial arts (Moore, 2012). The sport gives enormous emphasis to the interrelationship between wider cultural factors as well as the ideological and spiritual dimensions of the experience and its embodied practices. Many western gyms frame the

values of the gym within broader social and cultural regulatory frameworks (Woodward, 1997b, 2008), but Muay Thai is much more explicit in setting the context of its culture, for example, through elaborate sets of ritual practices which set the context of embodied engagements at the camp, which is the more common name given to the gym (Moore, 2012). Muay Thai rituals are more formalized and less diverse and flexible than those of western boxing gyms at the local level, but nonetheless, the routine practices do vary according to location.

Thai boxing has a powerful presence in popular culture as well as in the routine practices of local venues where practitioners train. Martial arts have provided the central narrative and major trope for many films, such as kung fu and ninja films in the 1980s and the 1990s and huge numbers of Chinese martial arts films, like Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* in 1999. Muay Thai has been a more recent addition, since Jean-Claude Van Damme's *Kickboxer* in 1989 and the more recent *Beautiful Boxer* in 2003 and has generated its own stars like Tony Jaa, star of *The Warrior King*. Popular cultural forms like film are part of the globalized media flows through which sport too is translated into other cultures and crosses national borders. Thai boxing films also manifest elements of western boxing because of the endurance of boxing's links to poverty and disadvantage. In the assemblages of boxing culture, individual heroism and agency mix with the structural constraints of poverty and disadvantage to produce powerful narratives which generate strong feelings of identification and commitment. Thai boxing in Thailand might generate superstars whose fees finance the camp with which they are associated but the sport is still perceived as a route out of poverty and most popular in the poorest parts of Thailand, much of it being concentrated in the north-eastern province of Isan (Moore, 2012).

Thai boxing has achieved some following in the UK, especially at particular locations, which have become centres for the development of Muay Thai according to traditional practices. For example, Manchester in the UK offers illustration of the growth of martial arts, especially Muay Thai. In the UK Muay Thai camps operate more like gyms in western boxing, rather than as locations built around a superstar fighter as they do in Thailand. Western camps have their own authorities like Tony Moore, who is chair of the British Thai Boxing Council (Sitsiam, 2012) in Manchester. He has been taught by some of Thailand's top instructors, including the late Grand Master Samai Messamarn of the Buddhai Swan Institute. Status is accorded through associations with Thailand although each country has its own regulatory body which accords titles and distinctions. For example, Tony Moore was British Light Middleweight Thai

Boxing Champion, British All-Styles Middleweight Champion and Champion of Champions and the first westerner to win an Eastern title and awarded a White Mongkorn, the highest award in Muay Thai.

Boxing, like all sports, generates and reflects hierarchies. The gym is usually controlled by the trainer, who sets the parameters of practice and the rules (Sugden, 1996, Wacquant, 1995a, 1995c, 2004, Woodward, 2006, 2008,). Muay Thai uses procedures and iterative ritual practices to secure relationships and respect (Moore, 2005), which may be part of its attraction as well as creating difficulties for some would-be practitioners in neoliberal western cultures. For example, respect for the teacher is formalized at Muay Thai camps by a show of respect before training commences (Moore, 2012). The sport has shrines to past teachers in an assemblage which is framed by spiritual and even explicitly religious values in a spiritual version of the media-dominated halls of fame of western boxing.

Muay Thai, like western boxing, is classified by amateur and professional practices. In Thai boxing, the amateur sport, which was established in 1989, in which protagonists wear body shields, knee and elbow shields and head protection, is in many ways comparable to other professional amateur distinctive practices in sport where the amateur receives more corporeal protection. Although martial arts are included in the Olympic Games, they carry less status than the traditional professional sports and are associated with the idea of 'play boxing' which is a routine translation of amateur (Moore, 2012) in the sporting language, which distinguishes between the real and the authentic and the trivial and the inauthentic (Oates, 1987, Woodward, 2006). This has particular resonance in boxing where the real is sometimes counterpoised to the dramatic, which can be viewed at a distance and, especially, to the authenticity of the men's sport as opposed to the women's, which might be seen as inferior or even parodic (Oates, 1987). Muay Thai and other forms of martial arts, however, offer possibilities for amateurs and particularly for women, especially in less-orthodox versions of the sport, because of boxing's emphasis upon self-defence. Even if women are barred from the competitive ring in Muay Thai, they can benefit from and enjoy the enfleshed practices which enable the development of competent body techniques through which they can, in the language of *psy-discourse* (Rose, 1996), feel empowered. More substantially, women are able to engage in the routine practices of Muay Thai and feel good about themselves in the same way that many men who spar to keep fit do in western boxing (Sugden, 1996, Woodward, 2006). Muay Thai more formally prioritizes the professional sport as does western boxing, but the body practices of boxing create their own values and culture. Boxing changes culture as well as being changed by social and cultural forces.

The valuing of professional over amateurism is complex in boxing though and whatever the prioritizing of the professional in Thai boxing, this is not the case everywhere nor at all times in the sport as a whole, as the discussion of women's boxing across the globe for the 2012 Olympics in the context of change and transformation in Chapter 7 shows. Amateur status can provide a route in professionalism and in some parts of the world, such as Cuba, the kudos of competing for one's country in amateur competitions rather than as an individual (or for the promoter) carries higher status (Sugden, 1996). The collective identifications of Thai boxing are differently configured but remain embedded in codes of honour which are linked to militarism and masculinity. Although there are variations in the embodied techniques and associated rituals there are points of connection between different types of boxing.

This relatively unequal weighting given to the amateur sport is allied to women's participation in the amateur, but not the professional game. Women have competed as amateurs in Thailand since 1966 but women experience more distinctions than that between amateur and professional in Muay Thai, especially as practised in Thailand where they do not perform in the major stadiums and are not permitted to touch the ring, which is construed as sacred (Moore, 2012). Religious notions of the sacred provide criteria for exclusion and for marking gendered difference in traditional sport. Western versions of kick-boxing have increased in popularity among women which may lead to possibilities of transformation through transnational migration of the sport. As in western boxing, the coexistence of different practices and routines is possible, Muay Thai remains powerfully embedded in networks and cultures of hegemonic masculinity, although differently configured in different parts of the world. The persistence of parallel strands of the sport remains possible and the relationship between amateur and professional and between women and men in boxing raises questions about how far women are interested in doing masculinity or emulating the men's fight game or whether there are distinctive challenges women might offer to the transformations of the sport. By taking up boxing and martial arts, women are initiating change. It is also the particular nature of boxing which makes it attractive to body projects which can enhance self-respect as well as provide techniques and mechanisms for self-defence. In most sports, men are the norm, and women, if they are allowed to participate at all, are invited to attempt a separate form of the sport's embodied techniques, which nonetheless remain subject to the evaluation criteria of the men's game (Hargreaves, 1994).

Kick-boxing is a fast-growing sport among those, including young women, who seek to keep fit by engaging in disciplined sporting routines and for whom

traditional constraints on public display and performance in mega spectacles present no disincentives. The traditions of the sport are sources of attraction as well as appear outdated at points. Although women are taught skills and techniques, they are excluded from its traditions of militarism and the code of honour which linked Muay Thai to the capacity for defending one's country, which in the genealogy of Thai boxing has only been available to men (Moore, 2005). This is unlikely to be a disincentive to women in the UK or Holland or the USA, who perceive the sport as an opportunity to work out and feel good about themselves. The routes the sport has taken in its journeys across continents represent cultural specificities in the place of adoption as well as the endurance of traditional values. Kick-boxing provides opportunities for the enjoyment of achieving success in personal embodied success and in attaining confidence through gaining control and establishing both fitness and self-esteem, which demonstrate the possibilities of flexible translation even with the most traditional of sports. Women who participate in Thai boxing learn the same skills, techniques and body practices as men, as they have been traditionally taught in Thailand. Thus, women are able to participate in and benefit from the capacities which boxing has for generating feelings of well-being, which may seem contradictory for so pugilistic a sport. It is, however, the body practices iteratively developed in the gym or camp and the highly disciplined regimen which create these effects and permit the development of self-esteem and self-respect.

Muay Thai presents particular versions of translation across cultures because of its strong and closely defined social and cultural specificities. The sport is practised widely in the USA, Europe and Japan, more explicitly as a martial art along with other Japanese martial arts. There is some blurring of boundaries between the constraints and formalities of traditional Muay Thai and how these can be accommodated in western societies in the twenty-first century and some debate about the tensions between making the sport accessible and popular whilst retaining its traditional qualities and cultural practices and disciplines.

Conclusion

The temporal and spatial interpretations and translation of boxing across different cultures represent an interesting example of how globalization works and the processes through which local and global forces intersect. The discussion in this chapter demonstrates that mobilities and movement are of people and practices. The embodied practices of boxing offer some endurances and

synergies across time and space so that it is still possible to identify distinctive features of the sport, but even if boxing appears to be embedded in traditional values and enduring qualities, there is some flexibility and movement within the sport as it travels and as those who participate in the sport do so in different parts of the world.

Migration, mobilities and diaspora play out in distinctive ways in boxing. Boxing is a sport with a culture which attracts migrant people and, especially, young men from diasporic communities and which has strong associations with poverty and economic disadvantage. Participation in boxing across the globe has been an iterative process whereby immigrant communities have engaged in the sport and been recruited into its culture and possibilities on arrival in their new home and social processes ensure that the process is repeated with subsequent new arrivals. This has been well illustrated by the Jewish diaspora. For example, in the USA and in the UK, in areas such as the east end of London there were high numbers of Jewish boxers in the early part of the twentieth century, but by the 1950s there were very few (Berkowitz and Ungar, 2007). Traditions and legacies are made and remade by participation in the sport through the intersection of economic and social circumstances, the properties of the sport and its culture.

The interrelationship between boxing and migration is particular to the sport through its associations with poverty and deprivation. As a sport, boxing requires limited equipment and facilities, as anyone who has visited the average downtown gym will know. It requires enormous dedication and courage to succeed, but not complex and expensive equipment. Boxing requires physical capital (Bourdieu, 1984, Wacquant, 1995a, 2004). Economic factors operate powerfully within the boxing culture but they are widely implicated with cultural values and more personal matters of identification.

Boxing is a productive site for the exploration of diaspora and diasporic identifications. This is in some ways surprising because boxing might seem to be one of the most traditional and least fluid and changing of all sports. Its binary logic of sex and gender and seemingly primitive practices and traditional values make it an unlikely candidate for understanding fluid and hybrid conceptualizations of diaspora. Boxing is, however, enmeshed with insecurities and uncertainties. The sport is contentious and its morality is often debated. Boxing is the sport of the poor in spite of intermittent forays of the aristocracy into the ring and more recent celebrations of white-collar boxing, for example among city bankers, modern aristocrats and young professionals.

In the context of the uncertainties, fluidities and insecurities of migration, boxing offers some stability, and boxing cultures have both routines and

disciplines that provide a sense of purpose and of belonging. The legacy of securing self-esteem through embodied disciplines and routines has always been a valued dimension of boxing. Boxing can offer a strong framework for gaining control of who you are through control of the body. Boxing culture is organized around routine practice which distances itself from the free-for-all uncontrolled street fighting. Success is only achievable through developing techniques of control which precede by a long time the apparatuses of contemporary body projects and have cultural and social meanings embedded in a lived experience which transcend the individualized practices and strategies of the health club, which Nikolas Rose included in his concept of 'psy discourses which characterize the inward looking individualism of contemporary societies' (Rose, 1996). The feeling of well-being which boxing of all varieties can invoke is testament to the properties of the sport for transcending some of the boundaries between individualism and collective belongings. Kick-boxing might be part of the body projects movement which coexists with traditional values of Muay Thai, but manifests little engagement with them.

Boxing becomes part of the culture of people within particular groups, and predominantly as categorized by gender. These associations are predominantly linked to masculinity and the expression and articulation of masculinity which achieve some cultural hegemony, which is reinforced through the networks that permeate modern sport. The networks of the Fancy discussed in Chapter 2 are translated in more recent networks of trainers, promoters, journalists, commentators, broadcasters, sponsors and followers who are often excluded from critiques of the body practices of boxing, but which make up the global flows of boxing culture. These networks still constitute boxing communities and are what make the sport attractive to diasporic people and part of diasporic cultures.

What an exploration of boxing in relation to mobilities and migration most powerfully demonstrates is the inextricable links between economic forces and diaspora, whether it is the pull or push aspects of globalization which motivate those who leave their homeland for another. Boxing has a legacy, not only in popular culture and in its myths and legends, of providing a means of attaining self-respect and financial independence through being able to earn money through the sport, but also in its strong spatial connections to impoverished places and poor people whose poverty is often a dimension of their having had to migrate. The fluidities of diaspora are also its uncertainties and insecurities. Boxing and its associated cultures offer the possibilities and promise of belonging

as well as being a set of activities which are strongly linked to diasporic and migrant peoples and the unsettling insecurities of displacement and dislocation.

Boxing itself has migrated across time and space and the sport has transformed in different ways besides retaining its primary qualities and features. All sport has changed through the explosion of regulatory interventions, bureaucratic systems and the forces of the media-sport-sponsorship nexus with all the demands of recruiting sponsorship and the possibilities of satellite broadcasting. Boxing has been particularly subject to regulatory procedures and mechanisms because of the perceived dangers of the sport and these regulatory systems have themselves generated change and resistance. The increased interest in MMA and cage fighting may be a response to the challenge of increased monitoring and control of mainstream boxing as well as part of a movement towards utilizing body practices and body projects to exercise control over the self through the body.

4

Cultural Economies of Scale

This chapter looks at how the culture of boxing and the sport's economy at local and global levels interconnect to produce the cultural economy of boxing. It aims to provide an explanation of the relationship between boxing, its embodied practices and local routine performance and the economic culture which makes it possible and drives the sport along particular trajectories. This chapter starts with the dialogue between the economic demands of globalized sport and the links between the economic context and local practices and investments in the sport. The media are a focus in this chapter because of their powerful involvement in the making of the cultural economy of boxing. The chapter uses examples of the representation of boxing and the making of its celebrities and heroes in shaping its cultural economy as well as the particularities of boxing and its capacities for change, for example through its localized practices and the continuance of amateur boxing. The chapter offers a discussion of some of the capacities boxing has for attracting illegitimate as well as legitimate finance and the complicated intersection of personal and local commitments and the forces of global capital.

The media play a key role in the cultural economy of boxing in shaping what generates interest, profit and resource and in responding to the particular intensities of the sport and its embodied practices. Boxing offers the promise of individual success and reward for practitioners who invest physical capital in the sport. Boxing is also a marketable commodity which inspires event-driven economies in the developing world, as well as in post-industrial, knowledge economies (Nauright, 2004). Boxing, like most contemporary sports, is part of a global and globalized economy. Economic forces operate in particular ways and intersect with other social, political and cultural axes of power in boxing, which as Chapter 2 demonstrated has its own points of connection with the global economy and with economic inequalities which are manifest at the local as well as transnational levels. Boxing is g/local as a route out of social exclusion and the ghetto for many

migrant men in particular and it is also a global big business that is dominated by what are perceived as exploitative mechanisms of promotion and the relationship between boxing and the media upon which it is dependent for its most spectacular and visible promotion. Boxing remains a massively profitable business, as well as being a popular more local means of keeping fit and feeling good (Woodward, 1997b). The major catalyst for involvement in boxing has most frequently been the financial incentive that accompanies the possibilities of raising self-esteem through earning a living as a professional boxer. For many people, mostly men – although women are participating more widely in the twenty-first century – the increase in self-esteem that goes with being physically fit is closely allied to the community of the gym and the possibilities of financial independence and economic citizenship.

This chapter looks at the cultural economics of boxing in the light of some of the routes boxing has travelled and how the fight game is changing. Boxing is still an important part of the global sport-media nexus in addition to being closely imbricated with local economies and more local economic forces and interests. No sport, and certainly not boxing, ever stands 'outside the economic, cultural, political and theoretical conditions in which it takes form and reform; sport and the bodies that stand at its centre are always made and remade with particular histories and places' (Birrell and Cole, 1994:vi). Boxing does, however, have distinctive connections to aspirations of social mobility through pecuniary gain by means of the investment of physical capital for those who engage in its embodied practices.

Boxing is strongly embedded in an assemblage of social, political and cultural forces, in which economic factors play a key role. The connections between boxing and urban poverty have been rehearsed in boxing films and popular legends. In the nexus of economic, class and gender structures and in the politics and lived experience of racialization and ethnicization, the most familiar story is one in which the dominant force which shapes boxing relates to economic deprivation. The escape from the ghetto and the impoverished conditions of boxers are set in sharp contrast to the global commercial systems of sport, with massive returns for investors and promoters and, at an individual level, the huge purses for those boxers who make it in the fight game. Oscar de La Hoya is reputedly boxing's highest earner, having made $610m by 2013. Floyd Merryweather Jr, officially the highest paid sportsman in the world at the time of writing, earned $85m during May 2012 (Coffs Coast, 2013). His fight against Robert Guerrero in May 2013 earned him between $40 and $50m (USA Today, 2013). The figures are huge but the detail is not so precise. It is notoriously difficult to ascertain details of boxing purses, beyond headlines of

the big money. This does imply a distinction which is not always explicit or even acknowledged between economic systems and racialized class structures and the financial structures which also operate within economic systems and are the concern of those bound up in the wider political economy of global capital.

Urban poverty is clearly a crucial factor as are the experiences of displacement and dislocation which accompany migration, as Chapter 3 demonstrated, but this is not the whole story. Clearly there is overlap between the experiences of young men in urban contexts (Hare, 1971), but the specificities of masculinity and how it impacts upon and is affected by social and economic circumstance are largely absent from such accounts. Also as John Sugden points out in his comparative study of boxing in the USA, Northern Ireland and Castro's Cuba, the escape from the ghetto narrative – much-celebrated in cinema and popular culture – can present a limited lens through which to understand the complexities of both the culture of boxing and its connections and disconnections with economic systems and financial circumstances (Sugden, 1996). The gym can also be a cash economy in which financial exchanges pass unrecorded without any auditing processes (Beattie, 1996). As Sugden demonstrates in his own work, the reasons people – mostly young men – get involved in boxing are complex and messy, as well as being difficult to research, because

> Unlike the farm systems of many other professional sports, which tend to be embedded in the school system and a range of other visible and accountable institutions, the world of professional boxing is subterranean, located in pockets of urban poverty and largely unexposed to the public gaze.
>
> (Sugden, 1996:56)

This invisibility of boxing from the public arena of accountability has led researchers to adopt ethnographic and participant observation approaches to accessing and immersing themselves in the research site (Beattie, 1996, Sugden, 1996, Wacquant, 1995a, 1995b, 2004). Wacquant goes as far as to describe his own approach as that of an observing participant given the full extent of his engagement in the Golden Gloves gym in Chicago where he entered the world of amateur boxing by fighting competitively himself (2004). These are not just methodological decisions which reflect and integrate with theoretical perspectives about the nature of knowledge and subjectivity; they are also made in light of the requirements of the field of research.

Boxing does constitute a particular social world (Woodward, 2008). Even within contemporary sport, it is a social world that has particular links to economies and cultures which operate outside the parameters of legality. As

Chapter 5 shows the relationship between boxing as lived and practised and as represented, for example in cultural artefacts and symbolic systems such as film, and is enmeshed in powerful ways and part of the attraction of boxing is the dangers and excitement of the sport inside and outside the gym and the ring, including the quasi-legal and illegal activities which infiltrate boxing. Sugden's point is that simple narratives of the main motivation for engagement in boxing being construed as the desire to escape poverty and ghetto are insufficient and cannot deliver an adequate understanding of how boxing is situated in economic systems.

Global forces: Local imperatives

The economic forces underlying global sport are closely linked to processes of globalization which involve the intersection of economic, financial, cultural, political and social axes of power in which technological change and more local affiliations are implicated. David Rowe expresses these shifts in the language of the local as the 'passage of modernity from village green … to global village … has not only involved the mutation of sport but also profoundly affected the societies and cultures that have housed and received it'(Rowe, 2011:3). In boxing this could be the 5th Street gym or Madison Square Garden on HBO or Sky pay-for-view.

The economics of globalization in sport always has to accommodate the forces and flows of the media and broadcast technologies and the relationship between the embodied practices of sport and their representation and communication. Indeed, the communication of sport has almost become more important than the practice of sport. Umberto Eco, albeit himself not a fan of sport, in fact a very critical opponent, describes sport as merely a spectacle for others and a field in which the talk of sport presents the illusion of interest so that the talker, whom Eco calls a chatterer, thinks that he is himself an athlete and no longer realizes that he is not (Eco [1986] 1990). This offers some indication of how the economics of sport has to be understood through looking at the central part played by the cultural industries, sponsorship and the media.

Globalized economies are marked by massive corporate power which crosses national boundaries through the establishment of transnational organizations which can no longer be controlled by individual nation states and which take all control from local stakeholders. There are contradictions and disruptions to this process but one of the consistent features of the economics of sport, which includes boxing, of course, is the combination of a world media system,

the development of transnational corporations and the foundation of an international sport system which gives the sports business its global character.

The globalization of the economy of sport can be seen to have followed certain stages and undergone transformation through the impact of particular key developments. This is related in a familiar narrative of the initial development of radio, which was overtaken by television, which combined the immediacy of radio with moving images. I can vouch for the immediacy of radio from personal experience. My own introduction to boxing was through radio transmission, when I, as a very small child, crept into my parents' bedroom in the middle of the night to listen to fights live from the Garden with my father. Radio can make sport special and many followers still access their sport through this medium but television was the first opening for massive global investment. Satellite was the next. Far more people watch television and read papers than ever attend, even the most mega of sporting events.

As the modern mass media develop, our relationship with sport has been transformed, as have the investment and growth opportunities for global capital. Advertising, sponsorship, product endorsement and corporate hospitality have been crucial to the transformation and commodification of sport, through the sponsorship of events and of sports stars (Horne and Manzenreiter, 2006, Houlihan, 2008, Tomlinson, 2006, Whannel, 2001). Television's need for sports, which have audience appeal combined with the demands of the advertising industry to find figures with market appeal and dynamic images with positive connotations, has created highly paid sports stars. However, these forces have not always favoured boxing, for a variety of reasons. Boxing is controversial. It is not as popular as it was in the twentieth century up to the 1970s. Boxing's enfleshed practices and traditional masculinities – although they invoke some nostalgia, for example, in some of its heroic figures – do not sit happily in late modernity with more fluid and hybrid gender identities. Boxers have attained cult media celebrity status but the androgyny of some advertising projects does not open up possibilities for the traditional masculinity of boxers. The masculinity displayed and performed in boxing has not settled well with metrosexual figures of masculinity in many other sports. David Beckham's celebrity superstar status embodies a sexualized, attractive sports superstar that is unlikely to be generated by boxing. For women athletes, celebrity status as an athlete is always problematic since the athletic body of male athletes so well aligns with idealized views of masculinity in ways that the athletic female body is much less likely to do with conventional femininity. Women's boxing too has had to negotiate the troubled waters of sexualization and voyeurism as well as the unlikelihood

of accessing prime time spots for any women's sport. Consideration of these factors offers some explanation for the decline in viewing figures, and even the possibility of watching boxing on terrestrial television.

Boxing, however, does attract sponsorship and the sport's mega events retain their attractions translated into a different world economy from the era 'when we were kings'. Boxing is part of the globalized sport's economy and the embodied practices and organization of the sport can be seen to have changed significantly in response to economic transformations, especially the advent of television (Rowe, 2011). Boxing is also distinctive in its appeal and in the paths that the cultural economy of boxing has travelled, including its particular local affiliations and personal engagements for participants.

Boxing celebrities and heroes

Superstars play a big part in the economics of sport, both in generating investment and media revenue and in attracting participants and spectators (Cashmore, 2006, Smart, 2005, Turner, 2004, Whannel, 2001). Increasingly celebrities, even in sport, are manufactured rather than achieved and heroism has become marginalized (Rojek, 2001), but boxing does disrupt these ideas in particular ways. In boxing the status of superstars is distinctive for two reasons. First, boxing probably has more heroes as well as antiheroes than any other sport. The cultural economy of boxing generates antiheroes who move – and are moved – across the boundaries of legality; a boxing celebrity is often not straightforward but is contradictory as in the case of Mike Tyson (O'Connor, 2002). Second, boxing celebrities usually retain contact and connections with the gym with which they have been associated because of the trainer who works there (unless they transfer trainers or managers). The Ferrari is parked outside the run-down boys' club in a rough part of the town because one of the gym's boxers has made it into the superstar bracket (Woodward, 2006). Whatever additional perks and specialist training celebrity status permits and finances, boxers frequently remain loyal to a manager or trainer connected with their original local gym (until they get a better offer). In martial arts, for example in the case of Thai boxing, it could be the teacher/trainer who carries particular status and it is the star pugilist about whom the school is organized and upon whom the gym is dependent, especially in Thailand, although translations of the sport into western contexts like the UK, where there are as yet far fewer superstars, are more local and pluralist (Moore, 2005).

Some gyms assume celebrity status themselves; for example the 5th St Gym Miami as a gym which has a very special place in the genealogy of boxing.

Ferdie Pacheco, the boxing analyst, author, artist and fight doctor who was Muhammad Ali's physician and cornerman for 15 years, has recorded the particular combination of superstar status and everyday connections of the gym. Most famously, it is where the Ali legend was born and the Ali story plays a large part in this account, Pacheco recounts the impact of the global and transnational upon the local of the gym which itself generated affects on the international stage of world boxing. This is evident in Ali's realization, after winning a gold medal in the 1960 Olympics, that his accomplishments did not protect him from the rigidity and brutality of racism. Pacheco offers an account of the ordinary affects (Stewart, 2007) of racism that boxing deals with, as well as its more extreme manifestations, and the camaraderie of the gym and its close networks as part of the strategies for survival. Stories of the gym are situated within their historical social contexts and provide insights into the everyday experiences of life in and around the gym.

Another of the ordinary affects of the gym and of the global economics of boxing is patriarchy, which remains deeply embedded in men's boxing and the networks through which it operates. Gyms also contribute to and are part of economic and social change, which locates the everyday as well as the spectacular experiences and representations of the embodied practices of the sport of boxing, located both spatially and temporally. Boxing is not just situated in the wider social terrain; boxing is constitutive of some of the racialized, gendered social world it inhabits through local networks of kinship groups.

Gyms are part of the process of systems through which celebrities are made, as well as the media-sponsorship-promotion nexus. Gyms are located in local communities which draw upon and attract migrant people and those who have experienced social and economic inequalities, linked to structural forces such as racism, social exclusion and class inequalities. The local nature of the gym is one of the factors through which celebrity is created. As Mike Marquesee argues, in his discussion of the distinctive heroic qualities of Muhammad Ali, when compared to superstar Michael Jordan, the celebrity is out of reach but the hero does things that ordinary people might do (Marquseee, 2005). The promise of more everyday participation in heroism than in celebrity fits boxing's regime of truth because, as Marqusee says, the hero, like Ali, has to represent the possibility of political change and be configured by social and political issues as well as athletic excellence. We 'ordinary people' could never play basketball like Michael Jordan (or box like Ali, of course) but we could engage in the political struggles against racism and social exclusion which are the experience and the situation of most of the communities and networks which create boxers.

Modern boxing: The economics of the fight game

The development of boxing as a part of the global economy in the twentieth century is linked to regulatory practices as well as communication technologies which made the sport attractive to mass audiences for whom there was some leisure time beginning to be available. This is, of course, the case for many of the sports – mainly men's – which have become part of the globalized economy, like football and baseball. Not only is the women's game only very recently acknowledged as legitimate and licensed (not until the end of the twentieth century in most parts of the world), but women's sport in general, rarely if ever, manages to generate the necessary sponsorship or media interest to create the income necessary to expand.

Economic and financial forces operate in boxing and the economy, especially the political cultural economy of boxing, works both in specific ways which relate to boxing and as part of the massive globalized economy of sport which generates opportunities for investment and enormous income, especially through the commercial synergies which global sport affords (Bourdieu, 1984). Boxing is both typical of sport, especially in contemporary globalized economies, where sport is big business, and also particular in its relation to global capital and more localized economies. Boxing, like all sports, is highly commercialized and dependent upon sponsorship. Boxing too is marked by the relationship between amateurs and professionals, with particular histories of movement from the amateur to the professional game, which are not consistent across all sports and have features in boxing that are distinctive in many ways. The economy of boxing is, as is the case with so many sports, highly gendered, especially in the financial investments that are made and the rewards which individual participants can hope to achieve.

The political economy of boxing, specifically western boxing, has been closely tied to the sport's links to gambling as well as to the shared synergies between the development of sport and leisure in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. (Sammons, 1988). Prizefighting is by definition an activity undertaken in pursuit of reward – the prize or purse awarded to the winner. Boxing has never been a cash- or reward-free zone.

By the twentieth century boxing was able to capitalize on commercial developments and the sport began to play a full part in legitimate business. What is, however, particular to boxing is the specific connection between prizefighting and bare-knuckle fighting with the purse which was put up for competitions by wealthy backers who would be able to recover any losses by being able to make successful bets on the outcome of bouts. Boxing has a long history of patronage

with prizes, the form of the purse for the fight being a crucial aspect of the sport and measure of the success or failure of participants: even in the ancient world there were rewards and prize money. Boxing, even more than most sports, demonstrates the multiple meanings of 'sport' as competitive embodied practices linked to play and sport as gambling upon outcomes.

Modern boxing: Pivotal moments

In the development of modern western boxing the famous fight between Gentleman Jim Corbett and Yankee Sullivan in New Orleans in 1892 holds a special place in boxing writing (Gorn, 1986, Sammons, 1988, Sugden, 1996) because the fight so powerfully condenses the different strands of boxing which persist in the cultural economy of boxing into the twenty-first century.

This was the first championship fight according to Queensberry rules, which could be classified as a world championship or event (Nauright, 2004). Queensberry rules of three-minute rounds and gloves made boxing more acceptable to Victorian middle-class audiences than the brutal free-for-all bare-knuckle prizefighting of the nineteenth century. The rules leant respectability and acceptability to boxing for at least bourgeois gentlemen. Not that Queensberry's rules were necessarily safer than Broughton's rules as Gorn points out (Gorn, 1986:205), but Queensberry's rules made boxing more socially acceptable, if not actually genteel.

The more public presence and visibility of boxing, however, meant the further marginalization of women's boxing. The women's sport became even more associated with low life at this stage in a legacy which has been hard to shake off (Hargreaves, 1996). Whilst boxing does offer particular risks and the promise of danger, it also requires some degree of acceptability in order to be more widely accepted and to attract investment and generate more popular appeal. This point at the end of the nineteenth century marked a moment when this became possible for men's boxing. The men's sport also became more socially inclusive and democratic in its representation and its audience participation. Gorn quotes a newspaper coverage from the day of the Corbett Sullivan fight:

> The most intense excitement prevailed throughout the city, the streets were thronged with visitors of all classes, from the millionaire to the baker and the fakir. Politicians, lawyers, merchants and gamblers elbowed each other in all places on comparatively equal terms.
>
> (*New Orleans Times Democrat* quoted in Gorn, 1986:244)

This was boxing under the public gaze and not secretly staged in back streets, at fairs, on barges beyond the scrutiny of the law. Gambling, of course, remained – and endures in the twenty-first century – but it was no longer the only framework in which boxing could be organized. This was also a time when sport became associated with leisure for a wider section of social classes. By the end of the nineteenth century the development of a male industrial working class whose voices could be expressed through trade unions and for example British global, colonial expansion, led to the possibilities of leisure time allied to increased wages: sport became a possibility. Baseball in the USA and football in Britain became popular sports which attracted a following from working-class men who now had some leisure time and the resource to pay for the pleasure.

Boxing remained tainted by its links with gambling and the fixing of fights (Gorn, 1986). As Eliot Gorn argues, 'the corrupt underworld scent always lingered' (Gorn, 1986:242). Whereas earlier in the nineteenth century prizefighting had attracted bets on the outcome and a prize for the winner, as the century progressed fights had increasingly been fixed by fixers who raised the purse and made uneven matches in order to earn more from the fight than had been invested. What the Corbett Sullivan fight offered was the possibility of earning money at the gate rather than providing a vehicle for gambling. This was a big change for boxing. It opened up the possibilities of boxing to a wider constituency and provided a public space for display and the promise of legitimacy with much wider currency which could also generate revenue and provide integration of boxing into the world of global sport. This is not, however, the whole story.

The Mob

Once boxing had achieved some respectability and visibility with increasing numbers of public spectacles, financed through ticket sales and later sponsorship, other aspects of the economics and finance of boxing began to change too: the illegitimate and illegal dimensions of the sport also became more organized, notably through the links between boxing and the Mob in the USA.

In spite of its increasingly elevated status as spectacular entertainment by the 1920s and the 1930s, the legacies of boxing, notably in the USA, remained those of exploitation and corruption. When boxing took over at Madison Square Garden just after the First World War, the Mob also moved in (Mitchell, 2009). The 1920s and the 1930s were undoubtedly one of boxing's golden ages, not least because of the sport's stars, of whom Joe Louis must be one of the greatest

to invigorate boxing, and the public, who craved not only excitement but also entertainment and some relief from the exigencies of the economic privations of the Great Depression. The US public continued to follow and support boxing through the Depression (Rosça, 2012). This era too, however, had its own legacies which had a particularly powerful impact in the decade from 1950, which saw a confluence of great boxers (and more prosaic and brutal fighters), economic forces of investment and generation of large-scale revenue largely outside the legitimate framework of the US economy, and the production of media, literary and artistic, including cinematic, texts all focused upon the spatial confines of the Garden and Jacob's Beach (Mitchell, 2009).

It is not only the often brutal embodied practices of boxing and the legacy of prizefighting which have impacted upon the cultural economy of boxing. The sport, which had been organized around fixers and gambling, attracted and continues to attract a range of illegal practices such as dog fighting and cockfighting (Beattie, 1996). Boxing has the capacities to attract investment and generate income at all levels: from the petty criminal activities which are often organized around local gyms, becoming part of boxing cultures to the organized criminal syndicates of the Mafia. Boxing and its cultures are open to exploitation in diverse ways, some of which are part of wider, institutional and structural forces like those of racism and social exclusion and, in the case of the Mafia, closely connected to the wider political economy of Prohibition, which opened up possibilities for bootleg alcohol and protectionism, which required well-built men to enforce it, along with weapons of course. The entry of organized crime into the boxing world might appear to have been inevitable. The predictability of corruption did not detract from the moral opprobrium which was directed at the activities of the Mafia. What was popularly construed as the disgrace of boxing in America for decades was the acceptance by some politicians that it was inevitable that racketeers and hoodlums would always move in and take over the sport (Butler, 1986:15).

Boxers as individuals were entangled in the political economy, configured around different versions of heroes and anti-heroes. The motivation to box has always been high among ethnic groups who have experienced disadvantage, as Chapter 3 demonstrated, and the promises and possibilities of boxing were particularly attractive to young African American men whose homes were in the ghetto. As Sammons argues, once they left the ghetto, young men might have been freed to aspire to education and even to white collar work, as was the case with Irish, Jewish and Italian young men (Sammons, 1988). The racialization and insistent racism that was experienced by African Americans created a social world

in which boxing still held compelling attractions. Racism and discriminatory ethnicization are thread through the lives of the majority of boxers, but have particularly powerful resonance to African American boxers (Jefferson, 1996, 1997, 1998, O'Connor, 2002) and are linked to the vulnerability of many boxers to criminal networks and the world of criminality (Sugden, 1996).

It is possible to overstate the vulnerability of the boxer and the story is not entirely one of exploitation (Lemert, 2003) although boxing is powerfully underpinned by racism, which Ali expresses so powerfully as evident in the preponderance of white affluent spectators, possibly wearing evening dress, having dinner and watching two black men within the legacy of slavery hitting each other (Ali and Durham, 1975). Although the governance and cultural economy of boxing were dominated by white men as promoters, things did change with the arrival of Don King, although not substantially within the context of the politics of race. Change was incremental and uneven rather than epochal, but the arrival of Don King did offer some shifts in perception which prefigured some later transformations and at least a breakdown of some racialized boundaries. What it most likely demonstrated was that some of the nefarious and corrupt practices of boxing culture were not the prerogative of white men and the cultural economy of the sport was an assemblage of processes and forces which intersect. This mix of elements includes intentionality, but is not driven by it. A situation in which display and spectacle, media money, corruption, racism and challenges to racial oppression and political disputation pervaded, boxing provided the opportunities for a man who had enormous talents both as showman and as an organizer of spectacular events. Don King was the first black promoter of any significance, the first black promoter in fact. King had the advantage of being black and of having had inside experience of some of the corrupt worlds which surrounded boxing. He had reportedly made his first fortune from an illegal betting operation in Cleveland, Ohio, in the 1960s (Sugden, 1996). King was a figure who was made in the tradition of what Wacquant describes as typical of life in the US ghetto, albeit in a flamboyant and distinctive rather than unobtrusive mode. Just as boxers bring the skills and survival strategies of the street to the gym and the ring, so King brought those skills to the promotion of boxing. Hustling is a way of life in the ghetto and the hustler is someone whose

> trade in many instances is unobtrusively inserting itself into social situations, in spinning about him a web of deceitful relations just so that he may derive some more or less extorted profit from them.
>
> (Wacquant, 1994:5)

King has been accused of fraud and of malpractices but he has survived and remains a key player in the fight game and as *Sports Illustrated* has stated, 'King will continue to pull the strings in the fight game, arranging some bouts that shouldn't be made ignoring others that should, always acting in his self-interest. He will continue to play the conflicting roles of promoter, whose profit is optimised by low cost, and manager, whose cut depends on high purse. And he will continue to be the biggest blight on boxing' (McCallum and Kennedy, 1993:25)

Boxers are also vulnerable because, however visible public spectacles were, training has always taken place in downtown backstreet gyms which from the 1920s and the 1930s until the 1960s facilitated the clandestine operations of mobsters, fixing sponsorship and broadcasting, as well as fights and gambling possibilities (Sammons, 1988). Sammons goes so far as to argue that organized crime along with big business and television is what makes boxing (Sammons, 1988). Sammons suggests that it was not until the 1960s that the extent of Mafia and criminal control of boxing was apparent as exposed by the Antitrust and Monopoly Committee of the US Senate. Perhaps ironically, given the visibility and proclaimed transparencies of the contemporary governance of sport, it remains difficult to regulate all the networks which are now part of the global communication internet flows which facilitate gambling and match fixing even more (Jennings, 1996, 2006, Katwala, 2002).

The Mob was able to operate through the exploitation of particular figures, boxing stars like world heavyweight champion Sonny Liston, who, as has been the case for many boxers, had spent most of his youth in reformatories before graduating to the state penitentiary. Liston's size and skills as a boxer attracted the attention of some of the most infamous members of the criminal underworld, Blinky Palermo and Frankie Carbo, who still dominated the sport (Mitchell, 2009, Sammons, 1988). Liston's performances in the ring were hotly debated, both in relation to his defeat against Muhammad Ali (then still called Cassius Clay) in 1964 and in the rematch the following year (Sammons, 1988), where commentators questioned whether Liston could have thrown the fight, first against a weakened Clay who had to be compelled back into the ring after the fifth round by Angelo Dundee, and second, when Liston was knocked out relatively easily in the rematch (Andre and Fleisher, 1993).

Boxing now: A tangled web

The complex interrelationship which might be better expressed as a tangled web, between the enfleshed practices of boxing, the economics of the sport, the

management and regulation of boxers and the promotion of fights and their publicity and the role of boxing in the media, is well illustrated in the case of British heavyweight boxers David Haye and Dereck Chisora. On 8 May 2012, it was announced that these two boxers would be fighting in the summer of that year, on 14 July. This was not a case of an expected comeback for boxer David Haye, who had supposedly, as is the case with so many boxers, retired from the sport; comebacks are common and are part of the culture of competitive boxing. On that occasion, the match generated massive media coverage, framed by the controversy surrounding the decision of Frank Warren, Chisora's manager, to pursue the fight.

The shock value of this match lay in a previous, apparently unplanned (although it is very likely that it was staged) fight, between Haye and Chisora at the press conference following Chisora's defeat by WBC champion Vitali Klitcho in Germany in February 2012. The brawl after the official fight received more media coverage than the fight itself and can be viewed on YouTube (Haye Chisora, YouTube, 2012). This was a bizarre spectacle even for boxing, with a panel including Chisora and his manager Frank Warren seated at a table, being heckled by David Haye from the back of the room. Chisora got up and amidst a stream of taunting the two men came to unseemly blows in a fracas which also injured Haye's manager Adam Booth, resulting in Chisora's arrest by the German police. Haye was reporting on the Klitcho–Chisora fight for a television company, which is not an activity which would usually warrant the presence of a manager. There were only limited attempts to restrain the two men and there was a strong suggestion that the display might not have been entirely spontaneous, in an attempt to reinvigorate the heavyweight class and reinstate some of the excitement of boxing possibly. Vitali Klitcho, who had won the heavyweight championship fight against Chisora on points, looked on somewhat bemusedly as someone who had succeeded on technical, embodied and tactical skill and technique and puzzled at the spectacle which seemed to be a post-match entertainment. It is the cultural economy of boxing and its embodied practices which make this offstage event possible.

This generally unfortunate event does demonstrate how power operates in the cultural economy of boxing in the twenty-first century and the legacy of some continuities with earlier times. Such events provide some insight into the relationship between economic and cultural forces and the centrality of sponsorship and the promotion of boxing in the media. Events are assemblages of the intersection of different forces and demonstrate how these expressions of power operate in distinctive ways, which are also part of wider power geometries. Media presence at boxing events and the presence of boxing in the

media are crucial. Controversy feeds media interest and speculation. Whatever the proscriptions of trainers in local gyms about the avoidance of fighting and the desirability of disciplined boxing, this time, a fight outside the ring created more interest than the boxing match inside the ring.

Chisora was banned by the British Boxing Board of Control, unsurprisingly, and his licence was revoked. What was surprising was his manager Frank Warren's decision to arrange a fight with Haye in the ring in July at a time when Chisora was still without a licence in the twenty-first century; boxing has the capacity to make this possible. It transpired in media interviews with Frank Warren, who was keen to point out that he was Chisora's manager and not his promoter, that Chisora had successfully applied for licence from Luxembourg and was appealing against his loss of licence by the British Boxing Board of Control. Warren revealed an additional dimension of his own involvement as a shareholder in Sky and BoxNation, the agencies putting on the fight in July (BBC Haye Chisora, 2012).

The announcement of a formal fight was predictable and also demonstrates the primacy of the media to modern boxing. This series of events also indicates the blurring of boundaries in the roles of the different stakeholders in boxing. Warren is the manager and has significant interests in the broadcast companies involved in the spectacle of the fight. Individuals play key roles in the networks through which power is exercised in boxing although it is economic systems which shape the practices and performances of different stakeholders inside and outside the ring. There are consistencies in some of the connections and relationships, especially in the boxing-media-finance nexus, harking back to earlier times that precede some of the technological developments which might seem to be transforming the economics of sport.

Boxing also still speaks the language of street fighting and brawling and invokes these discourses at key moments in order to regenerate attention and excitement. Boxing always involves a dialogue between what is acceptable and what is not and between what is seen and what is secret, clandestine, forbidden and thus hidden. These relationships are framed by the risks and dangers and particular excitements of boxing.

Excitement and danger

The exhilaration and excitement of boxing is always a mix of what is permitted and what is not, especially outside the ring, and how external forces and financial incentives might impact upon the embodied activities of boxers in the ring.

Boxing is more closely embedded in illegal activities and corrupt practices than most sports. The economics of boxing is tied up with the sport's legacy of gambling as well as the opportunities it offers for coercion and illegitimate practices that are linked to betting: the Mafia involvement in boxing being a case in point (Butler, 1986, Sammons, 1988, Mitchell, 2009). The conversations between what is legal and what is not involve crossing boundaries and occupying liminal spaces between the two.

Modern boxing offers the excitement which Elias and Dunning claim belonged to pre-modern societies (1986). Boxing seems to generate other less legitimate, if technically legal, but more transgressive, combat sports including Ultimate Fighting (Spencer, 2011, Ultimate Fighting, 2012) and cage fighting (Cage Fighting Warriors, 2012). Ultimate Fighting would appear to challenge Elias's and Dunning's civilization thesis. Boxing harks back to earlier pleasures and dangers which disrupt the relentless march of civilizing forces. These variants of MMA and the recent popularity of particularly violent forms of boxing and fighting seem to challenge the civilizing thesis further and lend more support to the capacities of pugilism for generating excitement through often brutal corporeal contact.

MMA has created new markets and new developments, which are also very lucrative. For example in the USA there has been an increase in the number of gyms, such as LA Boxing, which offers traditional health club activities with the facilities of a boxing gym, which more recently include MMAs (Forbes, MMA, 2012). MMA, with a more limited tradition and set of expectations, also opens up more possibilities for engagement in full combat sport as a diversion or leisure practice, with a more diverse clientele, thus making MMA attractive to sponsors and promoters in the leisure as well as the competitive sport markets. In this context, entrepreneurs are seeking opportunities at the higher end of the market and taking boxing out of its traditional downtown settings. Companies like LA Boxing perceive opportunities for return on their investments that could use a niche market but also an expanding market and interest in boxing and martial arts that has more to do with health and well being than with competing or turning professional for most of those who join the gym.

MMA is one of the fastest growing forms of boxing in the world, which gives the sport some status in the canon of western boxing too. As proponents of MMA have argued (MMA Economy, 2012), some of the recent support for the resurgence of interest in MMA is framed within a debate about economic forces which differs greatly from the discussion of the market opportunities which the sports might offer entrepreneurs and commercial interests. Fans and

followers locate the increased popularity and spread of their sport, in a discourse which is resonant of those deployed in boxing at many points in the twentieth century, notably of economic recession (MMA Economy, 2012). Fans argue that since the global economic recession which began in 2008, MMA and its variants, including Ultimate Fighting, have taken off as boxing did during the Great Depression. Interestingly, MMA has also attracted pay-for-view outlets in the USA in which UFC records have been broken as more fights are staged. In spite of the acknowledged financial hardship of those who practise and follow MMA such as KNUXX (MMA Economy, 2012) their engagement is deemed unsurprising, even if it involves some pay-for-view because of the payout (in the language of MMA, rather than a purse, which purports to distance them from prizefighting) for those who succeed. One admitted superstar, of UFC reputedly earned $215,000 for a fight in Nevada (MMA Economy, 2012), a location which has a special place in the history of western boxing. There are many synergies between different strands in the fight game and illustrations of how MMA with its different spatial genealogies is taken up in western countries and among different ethnic groups and communities. Boxing, however, appears to have more endurances than transformations, although there are both patterns of continuity and disruptions and opportunities for change which are both part of the sport, in all its manifestations, and the wider social and cultural context in which it is practised.

Managing change

Although Joyce Carol Oates argues that boxing is real and the viewing at a distance of the television fan is a sanitized version of the real thing (Oates, 1987), the advent of, first, television and more recently of satellite broadcasting has had a massive impact upon the economics of boxing as with most sport (Woodward, 2012c). In contemporary sport the major source of income is broadcasting. Attendance at fights, even if it reaches capacity, can go nowhere near the income that can be gained from broadcast rights, for boxers and promoters. The boxer's purse is heavily dependent upon past performance, and the strategic management of boxing is structured by income expectations based upon this and how far a fight will generate pay-for-view audiences (Tenorio, 2000).

Boxers no longer top the top ten of highest earners in sport, which may reflect the decline in interest from the former golden ages (Top Ten, 2012). Rankings, however, are relative. Boxing is a multi-million dollar business with typical

heavyweight championship fights in the USA each generating over $100 million. Boxers are still able to earn a significant purse and the sport plays a key role in satellite, if no longer so much in terrestrial broadcasting. As early as in 1959, even though the crowd at the stadium was relatively small when Ingemar Johannson fought Floyd Patterson in the Yankee Stadium, the fight made over $1 million in closed circuit telecasts (Andre and Fleischer, 1993). By the time of Muhammad Ali's comeback against Joe Frazier, promoters made $20 million (Sammons, 1988). The record in the twenty-first century was set in 2007 when Oscar de la Hoya fought Floyd Mayweather at the MGM Garden Arena in Las Vegas Nevada in a superwelter weight contest. Over $120 million revenue was generated. This massive income was created by the coverage of the fight on HBO pay-per-view at a cost of $55 fee to watch on television. This fight was preceded by a massively enhanced build-up to ensure maximum pay-per-view revenues. The resource is, of course, distributed, but this fight is recorded as being particularly relevant for the income generated and is an illustration of the extent to which boxing attracts huge amounts of investment upon which there are still very significant returns.

Western boxing retains the language of prizefighting with its use of 'the purse' to describe income from a fight, although not all the purse is, of course, for the boxers themselves. Broadcast rights and pay-for-view (or pay-per-view as it is called in the USA) revenue are now part of the mainstream of the economy of boxing. Recent estimates of a pay-per-view budget total of $4,700,000 suggest that this would include the live gate at $650,000, the net pay-per-view income (based on 150,000 homes viewing) of $2,800,000 and a sponsorship of $100,000 (other factors would be closed circuit and international sales). The main purses would come to $3,000,000 in this instance (Pay Per View, 2012). Pay-for-view cannot necessarily be predicted accurately, but this breakdown gives an indication of the relative weighting of pay-for-view revenues and the dependency of boxing on this source of income.

Women's boxing still does not attract the investment of pay-for-view satellite stations (WBAN, Peeves, 2012). The purse is much likely to be lower for women's bouts, largely because of the lack of interest and investment by HBO and Sky, although Sky does have a better record on coverage of women's sport than the BBC in the UK (Woodward, 2009). There have been moments, for example, when women, like Leila Ali, Muhammad Ali's daughter, was fighting in the latter part of the twentieth century. She was the first to achieve a $1 million purse, but women's boxing is way behind the men's fight game (Woodward, 2006). However, it is amateur boxing that has made most recent impact.

The reach and scope of satellite have massively increased the profitability of the sport which has now largely left terrestrial television and is most commonly

only accessible by subscription, for example to HBO or to Sky TV and then also to Box Nation. Boxing currently depends on broadcasting revenue for its survival, but in a culture of the sports megastar, boxing also needs heroic figures who can create excitement and who have the skills and passion to generate emotional affects as well as strong commitment. At the time of writing, whilst there are highly competent boxers, notably the Klitcho brothers and particular fights may provoke feeling as well as controversy, there is a paucity of artist and practitioners of the Noble Art which offers some explanation of why the cultural products of boxing increasingly hark back to earlier times, for example, in recent cinema.

Another significant factor in the difficulty which fight fans now have in identifying heroic figures and superstars who are comparable to those of earlier golden ages is the proliferation of titles in boxing. In all the seventeen weight categories, there are now a large number of organizing bodies awarding titles, which means not only a large number of titles but also confusion about chains of command and lines of responsibility in regulating the sport and its practices (Economist, 2012). Professional boxing is no longer able to organize a single undisputed world championship. HBO pay-per-view organizes *Showtime* in the USA and television series like Sky TV's *Prizefighter*, which was started in Britain in 2008 and pitted eight largely unknown fighters against each other in three-minute three-round matches, created considerable interest and captured some of the excitement of the fairground booth. However, on the whole, such approaches are antithetical to the main commercial interests of boxing. But boxing still has mega events and significant stars and a match between boxers like American Floyd Mayweather and Filipino Manny Pacquiao can attract enormous interest and big audiences as well as huge profit. Boxing remains a combination of aspiration and hope for many and the source of massive financial gain for the few.

Exploitation: Good practice and bad practice

Boxing remains beleaguered by questionable business practices and the exploitation of those who box, for example through illegitimate contracts and corrupt rankings, not to mention the confusion of fight fans, especially those who watch television and are very uncertain about how to access the fights they want to see and when they do they have to pay extortionately high subscription fees (Heiskanen, 2012). There have been several investigations into boxing, notably in the USA (Millspaugh, 1994), because of the sport's earlier connections

with the Mafia, for example by the FBI in the 1950s when investigations led to a number of criminal prosecutions on antitrust violations, racketeering and conspiracy charges (Fleischer, 1969). Two bills were introduced in 1961 and 1962 aiming to abolish unfair competition, antitrust scheming and monopolistic practices and establish confidence in the practice and governance of the sport of boxing (Millspaugh, 1994). Following other interventions, the twenty-first century has seen some significant change both in corrupt financial dealings and in the economic and social exploitation of boxers themselves. First, legislation was passed to secure basic health and safety requirements in the ring and for boxers, such as the US Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996, which instated regular medical checks including neurological scanning such as MRI scans and CAT scans to detect brain trauma. Second, the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act of 2000 was inspired by the consensus that the economy of boxing meant that some boxers were spending more time in court than in the ring, a notable case in point being Mike Tyson, whose presences in court were not all because of his own criminal activities. Tyson was a prime example of a boxer who lost enormous amounts of money through mismanagement of his finances because of lack of a satisfactory regulatory framework (Heiskanen, 2012). Much of the problem was identified as relating to over-complicated contracts and the role of promoters in the process of staging fights. This legislation has taken boxing into the mainstream of business finance where the current rules of good practice in business apply and boxers are now part of the process; promoters can no longer enforce one-sided contracts. Subsequent legislation has been brought in to attempt to rectify some of the gaps in both of these laws, regarding safety and financial management, but change is happening.

The recent twenty-first century legislative interventions have exposed the persistence of inequality and exploitation in boxing whilst attempting to remedy them; they have, in particular, demonstrated the points of connection between over-dangerous enfleshed practices of boxing and the wider economic and social context in which the sport is performed and viewed. Violence and exploitation have not, of course, been eliminated, making visible the less-savoury aspects of boxing. Putting these relationships into discourse within the visible public arena, boxing has been taken out of the criminal underworld in some important and meaningful ways such that boxing, with at least a partially transformed set of practices, endures. As the boxing press so frequently reminds us, the cultural economy of boxing keeps reinventing and justifying itself and people keep watching: 'Go ahead and keep ringing the death knell for boxing if you want, but the numbers tell a different story' (The Ring Extra, 2004).

Conclusion

Financial and economic forces have always played a key role in boxing. Historically, the sport reflects economic transformations, notably those of industrialization and post-industrial globalization which have been implicated in the media-sponsorship nexus and the exploitation of the speed, reach and scope of communication technologies. There are, however, specificities in the sport, especially in its localized affiliations. In the early days, the promise offered, for example, by the Corbett–Sullivan fight boxing built on the excitement and risk of boxing upon which stakeholders in the promotion of the sport were able to capitalize. Some of these stakeholders have been outside rather than inside the law as the control of boxing by the Mob has demonstrated. New stakeholders have emerged from earlier associations, media networks, broadcast services, promoters, agents and a new class of megastars, a relatively small number of whom are able to earn massive fees for performance in the ring and from the commercial synergies afforded by product promotion and appearances in popular cultural fields.

Gambling in boxing has largely moved online as it has in most sports and is subject to the same attempts at control and disruptive forces as its offline counterparts, as well as to other contemporary online gambling.

The mix of hero and anti-hero in boxing and its generation of heroes rather than celebrities have meant that boxing has not befitted quite as extensively from such investments and rewards as sports such as Premiership football, baseball, basketball or American football. Boxing carries enormous weight in some parts of the world, including African countries which stage big events and countries such as South Africa, Ghana, Mexico Tanzania, Tunisia, Egypt and Algeria, even if some of the sport's heroes have a more tarnished image in the USA and the UK. Martial arts and Muay Thai, for example, generate income through performance of the sport and commercial sponsorship and advertising revenues. MMA has become more popular for many of the same reasons that boxing became, starting from the earlier decades to well into the twentieth century. No part of the boxing story is straightforward though and even the economics of boxing is both contentious and contradictory; heroes and anti-heroes mingle with exploiter and promoters along with ordinary punters who enjoy the sport, whether as practitioners or as followers.

Boxing offers a blend of financial incentives and the promise of respectable returns for individuals, which have traditionally often been interpreted as a means of gaining self-respect and looking after your family in boxing legends and a site for large-scale financial investment in the global economy.

The intersection of commercial interests, risk, danger and excitement allied to emotive affiliations and the health benefits of sporting activity inflected by the policy potential of harnessing the energies of young men who might otherwise engage in deviant and illegal pugilism on the streets make boxing an enormously productive field of economic investment. The evidence of sponsorship and especially media engagement suggests much more emphasis on the profitability of promotion of the fight game than any altruistic motives, although boxing is periodically harnessed as a means of occupying possibly disaffected young men in a regulated and disciplined activity rather than criminal activity. These aspects of boxing are, however, more likely to be celebrated and promoted in the local gym than in the boardrooms of global communications companies.

This chapter has demonstrated some of the synergies between the personal and the social financial and economic interests of boxing, for example as reiterated and experienced through celebrity and heroic narratives. The two forces of the personal and the social are clearly interdependent, but the massive purse which a major fight can create feeds the desires and dreams of many of those who participate in boxing in spite of the huge discrepancy between those dreams and aspirations and what might be achieved. Greater democratic participation might be more likely at the local level, although there is a complex relationship between the hopes of boxers in local gyms and the possibilities of professional success. The relationship is also very different for women. Although boxing still occupies a very visible global stage, the sport is also routinely practised and has everyday qualities which are more local and less visible as the everyday engagements of boxers demonstrate, especially in the context of the embodied practices which make boxing what it is and which are explored in the next chapter. It is the material embodied practices of this Noble Art in all its more contemporary and recent manifestations which create democratic possibilities, as was demonstrated in 2012 when women boxed competitively for the first time in the London Olympics, which opened up the possibility that boxing could be routine for women as well as men.

5

Boxing Bodies and Everyday Routines

This chapter examines another of the distinctive properties of boxing, namely the primacy of bodies and the flesh in the sport. It explores another aspect of the interconnections between global, transnational aspects of boxing and local practices by looking at embodied everyday practices. My focus is upon understanding boxing bodies and their routines. The enfleshed selves who train in local gyms are regulated by the apparatuses of governance and bureaucratic systems. These governing bodies are features of globalization which pervade sport as it aspires to achieve respectability and legitimacy, but boxing bodies are also living, breathing bodies which are subject to pain and damage. The phenomenological idea of embodiment has had considerable currency in social studies of boxing, especially because this theoretical approach engages with the lived experience of boxing and immersion in its everyday routines. The ideas of Merleau-Ponty have been particularly productive in exploring some of the puzzles posed by boxing, notably why anyone should take up the sport in the first place and subject oneself to pain and injury and to access what boxing means in the everyday lives of boxers.

Boxing is practised round the world in different ways by different people. It may be too simplistic to endeavour to explain the attractions of boxing by the exigencies of economic and social disadvantage. Generalizations about boxing and poverty may be too simplistic. Studies of boxing have contributed to productive ways of thinking about bodies. Boxers keep going in the ring even when they are clearly injured, which poses questions about the relationship between minds and bodies and the possibilities of mind over matter as well as the matter of choice. Boxing is about routine embodied practices and working out in the gym, which are the zones of body techniques (Spencer, 2011) as well as competition whether as an amateur or as a professional. Boxing is also a spectacular sport which has global events that attract huge media coverage as well as the interventions of governance which impact upon and connect to everyday embodied routines.

Boxing bodies

Bodies are central to sport, none more so than boxing, where the ultimate contest is between the bodies of two people on the ring. Boxers are classified by their body weight and fighting out of one's weight category can present additional dangers. The rationale for weight classifications is to avoid the injuries that an unequal fight might involve and to ensure both fair play and an exciting competition. The precision of these categories makes it worth noting how specific they are and the range of different classes (Boxing Weights, 2012). This also demonstrates the specificities of the centrality of bodies to boxing. Flesh is implicated in the one-on-one combat in the ring and in the training sessions and sparring in the gym but it is also weighed, and to participate boxers have to comply with the regulations.[1]

In the culture of boxing, within these classes, heavyweights carry the highest status (Oates, 1987) although there have been golden ages of boxing when other classes like middleweights have been dominant. Some of the best contests have taken place in lower weight class however, as for example in the case of great flyweights like Jimmy Wilde (1910–1923) or more recently Ricardo Lopez (1985–2001). One of the best ever bantamweights was the Brazilian Eder Jofre, whose crouching style won him 72 out of his 78 fights. Panamanian Roberto Duran dominated the lightweight class in the 1970s and Sugar Ray Robinson is called the greatest ever pound-for-pound boxer (Boxing Weights, 2012). Boxers like Sugar Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran and Thomas Hearns all stepped up a class to join Marvellous Marvin Hagler in the middleweight class demonstrating the desire to achieve at a heavier weight. Within boxing, heavyweights can be seen as slow as and less agile than lighter weight fighters, although the incomparable Muhammad Ali, who could float like a butterfly and sting like a bee (Hauser, 1991), challenged any such allegations about the lassitude and cumbersome clinging-on by heavyweights, with his dazzling speed. Other fights, like the memorable occasion when Mike Tyson, in his prime, knocked out Michael Spinks and when he defeated Trevor Berbick, also demonstrate the amazing agility and movement of the heavyweight class.

These are stories told by those inside boxing culture. It remains the case that heavyweights can carry more weight and pack the strongest punches, which has generated the wider discourses of evaluation; heavyweights have come to mean any person who excels or has considerable influence and substance whereas a lightweight is someone who is unimportant. Punching above your weight may be foolish in boxing but suggests achievement that might have been expected in

other fields. It is the corporeal capacities of boxing which generate this culture of valuing the heavyweight, especially when allied to a tradition of traditional masculinity.

Sex gender

Boxers constantly have to meet weight criteria, which may involve restricted diets and limitations of food and fluid before a weigh-in. Sporting bodies are also categorized by gender and serious mixed competitions are less common and often contentious, especially in boxing, although there is public debate on all sides and information about mixed fights are available on the internet (Women's Boxing Archive Network, WBAN, 2012). The categories may be called gender in sport, but distinctions are often made on the grounds of anatomical sex in terms of body size, strength and stamina (Hargreaves, 1994). Gender difference is constituted through the classification of bodies and such ordering is based on social and cultural factors: sex and gender; the material and the social.

Men's boxing retains a high degree of cultural dominance and the genealogy of the sport is strongly configured around its associations with masculinity, which is enmeshed with the corporeal properties of muscle, flesh, weight and height. Oates expresses this powerfully as 'Boxing is for men and is about men, and is men' (1987:72). Her comment is not only an empirical observation about the people who most visibly take part, but also an expression of the powerfully gendered metaphors of the sport. Boxing bodies inform language also because the metaphoric use of heavyweights not only connotes superior status, but also suggests that these gendered attributes draw upon the legacies of hegemonic masculinity.

Women's boxing has a long history and the sport has achieved considerable popularity among women, especially in the USA in recent years along with kickboxing and MMA in Europe and the USA as well as in Japan, Thailand (as Muay Thai) and China. It is men's boxing especially that recreates legends of heroism and constructs the myths of masculinity in which practitioners and followers make attachments and identifications such that enfleshed qualities of men's bodies elide with the cultural attributes of masculinity. Boxing offers a site where sex and gender are central to an understanding of the field, because the sport demonstrates the importance of sex gender as inseparable, rather than seeing sex as biological and gender as cultural. Boxing is not just about men; it is about masculinity and the processes through which attachments are made to particular versions of masculinity. Flesh and culture are part of the mix.

Boxing has a long history of traditional masculinities, although these might have passed unstated and have been taken for granted. In the late twentieth century assumptions about the norms of the male body and its aestheticization were deconstructed and challenged (Connell, 1995, 2002). Men's bodies became more explicitly the subject of the female gaze and the gaze of other men. Boxing is specific and distinctive but it is also part of the wider social landscape. Boxing is a homosocial activity in its networks; the gym or the club permits and enables non-sexual same-sex relations because the gender differentiation of most boxing clubs means that it is male bodies that are interacting in these spaces. Theories of embodiment have been used to explore how men embody prevailing codes of masculinity according to variations of class, race, sexuality and able-bodiedness. As Robert A. Nye notes in his review of literature on masculinity,

> Men are no longer the invisible, unmarked gender, the Archimedean point from which all norms, laws and rights flow; men are themselves the objects of the gaze of women, of other men and of a new critical scholarship that is deeply informed by the feminist insights … and scholarship of pioneers in the study of masculinity.
>
> (Nye, 2005: 1938)

Empirical categories of sex and gender, often based on visible difference, have always been central to sport but there is still more limited awareness of sexual difference among the practitioners of sport, especially those in the privileged position of able bodied white men. Even in boxing, however, there is an emergent acknowledgement that it is not only women who are marked as being gendered. Not only have men's bodies been incorporated into critiques of 'the body' but also the particularities and differences of those bodies have become the subject of a theoretical gaze.

Boxing presents a particularly powerful mix of material embodiment and the limitations and celebrations of the flesh which highlight both the centrality of the binary logic of sex gender and the extremes of corporeality and demand recognition of material enfleshed qualities along with local and cultural capacities. Boxing is also both ordinary and spectacular.

Beautiful bodies: Broken bodies

One of the 'ordinary affects' (Stewart, 2007) of boxing in its routine embodied practices, which is an iterative part of its everyday culture, is injury. Damage can be the routine hand injuries which are the most common form of impairment,

or they might take more dramatic forms. The juxtaposition of the beautiful and the broken body has particular resonance in boxing because of the sport's body practices and indeed the raison d'être of fighting.

Not only is boxing distinctively marked by corporeality, but it also manifests some of the most extreme versions of embodiment through the beautiful body and the broken, damaged body. In boxing, it is particularly difficult to read the body as a text which is solely socially constructed and a site of inscription (Foucault, 1981). The boxer's body demands acknowledgement of physical materiality, and fragility. The beautiful body incorporates not only physical fitness, muscle, skill and good looks, but also a whole set of physical experiences through which this version of embodiment is forged. Muhammad Ali at his peak must be one of the best examples of this beautiful body, but the ill health which has dogged his later years, albeit which he denies to have arisen from his boxing experience, presents another dimension of embodiment. Similarly, Mike Tyson in his prime appeared both invincible and physically perfect whatever his emotional shortcomings (Jefferson, 1996, 1998, Oates, 1987, 2002, O'Connor, 2002). Ill health is one aspect of impairment; damage in the ring or, although less dramatically, even in the gym is another. Beautiful boxing bodies might be said to comply with an ideal that equates physical beauty with health, success and strength, both moral and corporeal, but they are always subverted by the threat of damage and the broken body, as well as being particularly configured in boxing.

The tensions, as well as the interrelationship between beautiful and damaged bodies and the excesses of violence, haunt boxing in complex ways. Fear is not usually expressed directly in the everyday practices of the gym (Heiskanen, 2012, Wacquant, 2004, Woodward, 2006, 2008). Damage ranges from the more personal experiences of minor injuries to public accounts of death in the ring in the global media, such as that of Bradley Stone, and brain damage as in the case of Michael Watson. The year 2005 saw the first death of a woman in the ring when Becky Zerlentes died at the age of 34, after being knocked out in an amateur bout in Washington. Pain and damage through the infliction of physical aggression are intentional and not incidental or accidental in boxing. The main aim of the activity and its embodied practices is to inflict pain on your opponent and avoid it yourself. The artist Sandor Szenassy, whose work includes boxers as subjects and whose patron was the boxing promoter, Frank Warren, is quoted as saying, 'People think we live in a civilised society. Boxing hurts our sensibilities; it reminds us that we don't' (*Independent on Sunday*, 16 July 1995). Boxing hurts our sensibilities because of its enfleshed materiality and public display of hurt bodies, which are implicated in the criminal and corrupt practices which

impinge upon boxing and are another aspect of the links between the embodied practices and the culture of the sport and its social world (Heiskanen, 2012).

Boxing abounds with stories which challenge civilized sensibilities. Oliver McCall suffered what was described as a nervous breakdown in the ring at his WBC heavyweight fight against Lennox Lewis in Las Vegas in 1997. 'At the end of the fourth round, when McCall threw just two punches, he was crying … and needed just 55 seconds of the fifth to see that the man's problems were deep-rooted and mental' (Mossop, 1997:S7). McCall's body refused to respond from round four. This is conceptualized as 'mental failure' but what was evident is that McCall could not fight. This example illustrates the passive rather than the active synthesis of mind and body which is visible in the broken body in the ring in an unusual scenario. McCall became an object of pity and not of desire in what was perceived to be a loss of control of his body, in an unstated acknowledgement of the enfleshed capacities of the mind as well as the body. The infliction of pain may be intentional as opposed to accidental; nonetheless, the will may fail and the capacity to act intentionally may be lost as in this case.

A more familiar incidence of the broken body is the damaged, injured body. For example, in the famous case of the collision between Nigel Benn and Gerald McClellan in February 1995, has been described as Benn's greatest and his worst night (Mitchell, 2001, 2005). For McClellan it was the worst night; a night from which he never recovered. McClellan remained in an induced coma for eleven days after the fight while doctors eased the blood clot on his brain. McClellan, who is looked after by his sister, no longer knows anything about boxing titles or records and is now blind (Mitchell, 2003). Much of the debate has been framed within a moral dilemma about whether the film of the actual fight should be shown, for example on television after the event, but it also raises issues about the materiality of the broken body in boxing which so often constitutes a broken self. Boxing bodies are enfleshed selves where flesh and self are one, but this is not an individualized flesh; the frailty of the flesh is common to all practitioners and is part of the culture of boxing. YouTube has opened up possibilities for the unregulated display of such cruel boxing encounters along with great fights and big moments (Woodward, 2011, YouTube, KO, 2012).

The beautiful body draws upon an aesthetic that has a long history, especially in bringing together notions of physical beauty, fitness and rectitude. Men's bodies have been understood as natural, as well as the norm, their constitution being a biological preserve linked to hormonal balance, but separate and distinct from the rationality of the mind, which, in the mind/body dichotomy, was accorded much higher status and largely coded male. Whatever the higher value

accorded to the mind and rationality over the body and its practices, in boxing it is flesh which is central. Boxing is the sport which, par excellence, creates and reproduces the greater value accorded to 'mind over matter' and the devaluing of physical capital. Boxing celebrates physical capital, but the sport as a field of inquiry generates paradoxes. Bodies are everything, but in the knowledge society of postmodernity, bodies are less highly rated than minds. The polarization of beautiful and damaged bodies is, however, embedded in the genealogy of boxing and in its configuration of masculinities.

Boxing reminds us that flesh presents constraint and limitations as well as possibilities. The body breaks down and is damaged and impaired and is constantly subject to the very material threat of severe damage as well as of routine stress and pain in training. Recognition of this is core to training. Avoidance of being hurt, being able to get out of the way and act defensively are key to the training regimen. The body practices through which such defences operate are implicated in the defensive strategies that are adopted to secure the boundaries of the embodied self and pre-empt damage.

Boxing may appear primordial in its practices but the sport is subject to technological and scientific interventions which can detect damage. Professional boxers undergo regular brain scans which visualize and identify, but do not prevent such impairment. Athletes, whilst having to negotiate the legal constraints of pharmaceutical interventions, combine the natural and the social in the process of becoming cyborgs (Haraway, 1991). Donna Haraway's work, although not concerned with sport, highlights the transformations of bodies made possible through the merging of boundaries between humans and technology. She has not simply deconstructed the divisions between the organic and inorganic, but has problematized the category of being human, which is manifest in sport in attempts to enhance athletic performance and go beyond the boundaries and constraints of the flesh. Technological advances blur the boundaries of the closed human body and open up all sorts of liberatory possibilities (1992). Boxing reminds us of the constraints on these promises.

Women and men and gendered bodies

Boxing bodies are measured by weight but weight categories are not sufficient to keep women and men apart. Boxing demonstrates the cultural and social sex gender binary when body practices and cultural forces are inseparable. For example, the controversy over Ann Wolfe in 2005, having successfully defeated

her female opposition then seeking male opponents, invited strong arguments which open up questions about the categories around which boxing is organized. Debates about women fighting with men in the ring are linked to the performance of masculinity and femininity as well as to the embodied practices of boxing. Women boxers may be seen to be performing masculinity when they fight each other but the matter of how women are implicated in the embodied performance of masculinity is brought into stark relief when they actually fight with men. This presents a problem for the categories of sex and gender, which have been addressed in different ways.

Distinctions have been made between sex and gender. Some second-wave feminists, notably Ann Oakley (1972), usefully argued that sex and gender were frequently elided to women's disadvantage, whereby cultural expectations of what was appropriate or possible for women were attributed to some biological law. The notion that women should be relegated to second-class citizenship, or even no citizenship, because of anatomical difference from men, in particular the possession of a uterus, has a long history. Women have been excluded from activities ranging from sport (Hargreaves, 1994) to membership of the professions and posts in the military, because of their sex, which was claimed to be generative of dire outcomes such as Aristotle's 'wandering womb' or the psychic phenomenon of hysteria. It is apparent that there are difficulties in separating out some of the capacities of the bodies of women and men and in disentangling flesh and culture, sex and gender. More recently the idea of an oppositional distinction between sex and gender has been challenged. Sex too is a cultural construct (Butler, 1993). Donna Haraway also points out that the sex gender dualism cannot accommodate differentiation unless we can ensure that:

> the binary universalizing opposition that spawned the concept of the sex/gender system … implodes into articulated, differentiated, accountable, located and sequential theories of embodiment, where nature is no longer imagined and enacted as a resource to culture and sex to gender.
>
> (1991:148)

Bodies in boxing are not just enacted, they are enfleshed and material. The meaning of sex is strongly mediated by cultural understandings that make it impossible to differentiate between sex and gender. The use of gender permits an acknowledgement of this powerful cultural and social mediation (Price and Shildrick, 1999), but may over-socialize the flesh in ways that dematerialize the boxing body. Boxing, more than any other sport, shows the need to be attentive to material enfleshed qualities and properties as well as those of cultural and social

processes. The use of sex gender retains the materiality and intransigence of flesh with the plasticity, as well as the endurances, of culture (Woodward, 2012a) and acknowledges that flesh can be manipulated and transformed too, through practice, such as training regimes and through the interventions of science and technology.

Boxing raises some interesting questions about sex gender. Binary logic informs boxing culture as well as flesh. It is not chance that Joyce Carol Oates reiterates her analogy between men and boxing and women and childbirth (1987, 2002). Childbirth and prizefighting are both experiences which can involve pain and, as Loic Wacquant argues of boxing, they are situations where the body takes over. In childbirth there is no going back; the body takes over entirely, although contemporary medical practices intervene and provide a merging of nature and culture which parallels sporting interventions, legitimate and not so legitimate. Agency only operates through going with the body, whereas in the ring a boxer can make decisions and can even opt out and stay on the stool. Each is an embodied activity which generates a range of associations which would appear to derive from the embodied experience. For example, the aggression linked to pugilism and the nurturing that is claimed to go with childbirth. The body creates social and cultural affects and social forces affect the body. It is a two-way iterative process.

Boxing is also clearly organized on the basis of the body, for example, in weight categories, the contact of the sport and its bellicose culture and language, all of which are associated with men and masculinity. Boxing is even called 'the Manly Art', not only in historical accounts such as Elliot Gorn's 1986, *The Manly Art. Bare-knuckle prize-fighting in America*, but these are also the words frequently used to refer to the sport in ethnographic research (Wacquant, 2004). Women might participate in the Noble Art, but the Manly Art highlights the exclusionary ethos of the sport and suggests that women who box are joining in as pseudo men, 'doing masculinity' but as pretend men. Of course, childbirth and boxing are very different areas of experience, but each is constitutive of gendered identity and there are useful parallels that can be drawn in relation to the role of the material body in securing, shaping and regulating the ways of being that are available.

The claims which feminists have made about the devaluing of women and women's bodies through a reduction to their biology can be similarly applied to boxing, which mostly carries more cultural, financial and economic status than childbirth, but still manifests the same essentialist associations. The only difference is that what is in operation here is hegemonic masculinity. The reductionism of the associations between body and identity still works in favour of masculinity in sex gender binaries.

The sex–gender divide, however, operates powerfully in the routines and lived experiences of sport. Whilst the presence of women in men's boxing gyms has largely, although not universally, been seen as disruptive (Sugden, 1996, Woodward, 2006), or only peripherally included (Boddy, 2008, Wacquant, 1995 a, b, c, 2004) the women who box have also been construed as threatening. This is changing and recent ethnographic studies suggest progress (for example Heiskanen, 2012). Boxing is not an activity that signifies cultural capital of any magnitude for practitioners. Loic Wacquant says of the men at the gym – which he, like Gerald Early, describes as 'proletariat' – are those who attend, 'to commune in the plebeian cult of virility that is the Manly Art' (2004:14). The language may be somewhat overblown but the sentiments are not. Not all male bodies are assumed to be gender neutral nor do they represent a homogenous group set in superior opposition to the gendered bodies of women.

How does this resolve the question of what is happening when women engage in an activity like boxing that does not conform to expected embodied gendered practices, as is sharply indicated by the controversy arising from women and men fighting together? Sex differences which reside in the body are usually what is invoked as the reason for excluding women from a sport or insisting upon specific regulations for women and men. 'Sexual difference … is never simply a function of material differences which are not in some way marked by discursive practices … The category sex is, from the start normative; it is what Foucault called a "regulatory ideal"' (Butler, 1993:1).

Butler's concept of performativity suggests that bodies are materialized through iterative and citational processes through which what is discursively produced is named (Butler, 1993). Butler explores the regulation of identificatory practices and seeks out the challenge of transgression of binary categories, for example through disidentification with regulatory norms in the parodic performance of drag. Although Butler's examples relate to sexuality as well as sex and gender and there are clearly dangers as well as benefits in applying theoretical approaches across empirical fields, but in relation to women engaging in traditionally masculine sports like boxing, there are comparabilities concerning the transgression of expected embodied norms. In boxing, women might often be seen to be 'doing masculinity' and transgressing the norms. To paraphrase Iris Marian Young, women might be refusing to throw like a girl (Young, 2005) and want to punch like a boy. However, women's boxing is a very different form of transgression from drag and transgender which is the focus of Butler's critique. Women's boxing does invoke reactionary controversy. In the run up to the London 2012 Olympics and even during the games themselves,

the very notion of women boxing competitively was deeply disturbing to many people (Woodward, 2012a). Boxing is not just playful or ironic as cross-dressing or drag might be construed. Boxing is corporeally real.

Butler's Foucauldian approach also has limitations through its over-emphasis on the discursive regulatory regimes through which bodies are produced; such bodies may be somewhat disembodied in the actualities of corporeality. The lived experience of everyday encounters may, however, be far removed from such abstract theoretical approaches (Woodward and Woodward, 2009) which is part of the attraction of phenomenological explanations of the routine experience of boxing.

Lived bodies: Situated bodies as situations

Merleau-Ponty views the body as animate, sensible and sensuous. His phenomenological approach seeks the meaning of experience as it is embodied and lived in context rather than looking for essences so that the subjective and objective merge, emphasizing both the primacy of people's own experience and the routine practices in which the embodied self engages (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). It is not surprising that developments over Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodiment have been most influential in sociological accounts of boxing. Empirical studies of boxing are largely based upon participant observation, at various stages along Raymond Gold's continuum from mostly observation to full participation (Gold, 1958). Most boxing ethnographies owe some debt to Merleau-Ponty, in some cases via Pierre Bourdieu (Wacquant, 1995, 2004). We do not reflect on our bodies, as if we were outside them; we live them (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

Feminist work, such as Young's, in developing an understanding of how the lived body is gendered, has drawn upon Merleau-Ponty to challenge dualistic conceptualizations of the relationship between the mind and the body. Young challenges the universal account of the gender neutral body implied by Merleau-Ponty and claims that the female body is not simply experienced as a direct communication with the active self, but it *is* also experienced as an object. She suggests that there are distinctive manners of comportment and movement that are associated with women (hence 'throwing like a girl' as the title of her work). Young attributes these different modalities, first, to the social spaces in which women learn to comport themselves. In terms of sport this involves constraints of space and learning to act in less assertive and aggressive ways than men, which has particular purchase in boxing, where pugilism appears to demand

aggression. Second, Young suggests women are encouraged to see themselves through the gaze of others, including the male gaze, in order to become more aware of themselves as objects of the scrutiny of others. Like Butler's concept of performativity, routine practices are crucial processes through which bodies and selves are constituted.

Simone de Beauvoir argued that not only are bodies situated, for example through social, economic and cultural forces, but also bodies are themselves situations (de Beauvoir, 1989). The idea of the body as itself a situation provides focus upon the flesh and blood actualities of the bodies which engage in sport, especially a sport like boxing. Thus the human body is ambiguous, subject to natural laws and to the human production of meaning:

> It is not merely as a body, but rather as a body subject to taboos, to laws, that the subject becomes conscious of himself [sic] and attains fulfilment - it is with reference to certain values that he valorizes himself. To repeat once more: physiology cannot ground any values; rather, the facts of biology take on the values that the existent bestows upon them.
>
> (de Beauvoir, 1989:76)

In boxing, these routines are measured, categorized and recorded. Bodies which are represented as marginalized also experience themselves as such and are crucial to an understanding of selfhood and the processes through which people position themselves and are positioned within the social world.

> the body is not a thing, it is a situation … it is the instrument of our grasp upon the world, a limiting factor for projects'.
>
> (de Beauvoir, 1989:66)

This approach provides a way of bringing together the enfleshed, material body, the experiences of embodied selves and the situations, which include representations, practices and policies, which recreate the lived body, which has particular resonance in boxing. Although boxing appears to be the most enfleshed set of sporting practices, its culture is also markedly constituted by its representation, imagery and imaginings; how the sport is understood and experienced include how it is reported, recorded, researched and imagined. Bodies are not 'just' in a situation, nor are they just objects of empirical inquiry; bodies are more than this. De Beauvoir's analysis of the 'lived body' provides a means of enabling:

> a situated way of seeing the subject based on the understanding that the most important location or situation is the roots of the subject in the spatial frame of the body.
>
> (Braidotti, 1994:161)

Bodies are also situated on the margins through structural factors such as economic inequalities, racialization, ethnicization and discrimination on grounds of gender which feature so strongly in boxing. Bodies are also themselves situations through which people experience themselves, both negatively and positively. 'To claim that the body is a situation is not the same as to say that it is placed within some other situation. The body is both a situation and is placed within other situations' (Moi, 1999:65). This usefully brings together the material body in the gym and in the ring, which is reified as gendered along with its practices and dispositions within the social and culture context, notably the performance of masculinity which is traditionally associated with boxing.

Bourdieu, physical capital

The social classification of boxing and its associations make Bourdieu's analysis relevant, especially in addressing the question of whether boxers are in any sense compelled to participate in the sport because their choices are so limited. For example, in Bourdieu's theory of social class and the distinction of taste (Bourdieu, 1984), boxers have only physical capital to invest as in the case with the labouring proletariat. Bourdieu's work offers one approach to addressing these problems which arise from the relationship between social economic structures and embodied selves. Wacquant makes use of the work of Bourdieu in relation to the routine practice of boxing that is the embodied experience of pugilism both in the gym and in the ring in explaining how it is that the boxer takes the punches and continues to deliver them in spite of the distress and pain he is feeling.

Bourdieu's theory of practice permits a strong sense of the role of the body in relation to social structures through his use of habitus and *illusio* which are set within the wider context of fields which extend beyond the outward appearance of the body and locate the agent. Bourdieu's work is relevant for a number of reasons. First, his concept of cultural capital is particularly useful in explaining sport, developed through his notion of taste as the marker of distinction. This is especially pertinent to boxing, with its association with the working-class participant. Cultural capital can be used in exchange, rather financial capital can be deployed as an investment to achieve further returns. It is in a sense metaphorical in that cultural capital is not lost at the point of investment, for example educational achievement is a form of cultural capital which the individual can continue to capitalize upon; it is not lost at the point of being

invested. Similarly, the physical capital which the boxer has can be invested to obtain financial returns and other social and cultural advantages. For Bourdieu, physical capital is largely a distinctly male, working-class form of capital. Whilst the working-class man who is attracted to boxing may have limited access to any other form of capital, he does have a body which he might be able to use to his advantage, even if this is his only capital. Bourdieu's use of capital and his model of class based on the movements of different sorts of capital through social space provide a means of exploring the details of power relations and inequalities, which are reproduced and renegotiated through symbolic struggles. It provides another route into addressing questions of agency and deception in the formation of identity, especially embodied identity. Wacquant develops Bourdieu's definition of capital as accumulated labour in its materialized embodied form, which, when appropriated on a private, i.e. exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, 'enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour' (Bourdieu, 1984:241).

Wacquant goes further and describes boxers as 'entrepreneurs in bodily capital' (1995b:66). This is used most effectively in his ethnographic studies of boxing, where he offers both extensive detail of the techniques which boxers employ in 'preserving and making one's bodily capital fructify' (2004:128) and insider knowledge, as a practitioner himself, of the imbrication of the physical and mental states, where 'the mental becomes part of the physical and vice versa' (2004:95). Bourdieu's approach has shown the importance of the possibility of focusing upon the kind of capital which participants in sport bring to the activity as well as the ways in which they are able to build upon their investment and, in particular, the class inflections of the processes that are involved. Men's bodies which engage in boxing are expressive of masculinity as a form of cultural capital, but not all masculinities provide the same scope for capitalization and they are not all equally weighted assets. The body practices of sport occupy other axes of differentiation. For example, they are clearly racialized and gendered processes too and are played out in different contexts, although the recent more visible participation of women in boxing suggests not the demise of social class but the promise of social mobility which is played out in boxing. Far from being no longer relevant, boxing demonstrates the continued importance of socio-economic class both in shaping life choices for women and men and as a conceptual tool for understanding social change and the endurance of inequalities.

Wacquant uses the concept of *illusio* to address the question of why practitioners actually engage in the work of boxing with its often violent and distressing outcomes as well as the hard work of the routine practice of the

gym. The notion of *illusio* as 'the shared belief in, and collectively manufactured illusion of the value of the games (real) men play – becomes progressively instilled and inscribed in a particular biological individual' (Wacquant, 1995c:173). The pugilistic illusio is 'the *unconscious fit between his (pugilistic habitus and the very field which has produced it'* (1995a:88, italics in the original).

Illusio operates at the level of the unconscious. The main strength of the concept is its role as a means of explaining how gendered identities, in the case of boxing masculinities in Wacquant's work, are experienced and enacted through an embodied self. Wacquant uses the concept of *illusio* to address the question of why practitioners actually engage in the work of boxing with its often violent and distressing outcomes as well as the hard work of the routine practice of the gym. This concept is developed to explain boxing as a set of practices, processes and culture which could apply to all practitioners. It is generated by the sport itself. Wacquant's description of the way in which the subjective state of the boxer is both constituted through and constitutes the objective preconditions of the field is particularly powerful in his earlier work in Chicago (Wacquant, 1995a, 1995b) and in his experience as a competitor himself (2004). Here 'practical belief' is not a state of mind but rather a 'state of body' (Bourdieu, 1990:68).

> The boxers' *desire* to fight flows from a *practical belief* constituted in and by the immediate co-presence of, and mutual understanding between, his (re) socialised lived body and the game … The boxer wilfully perseveres into this potentially self-destructive trade because, in a very real sense, he is inhabited by the game he inhabits. A veteran middleweight who has 'rumbled' on three continents for over a decade and who reported breaking his hands twice and his foot once, persistent problems with his knuckles (because of calcium deposits forming around them) as well as a punctured ear drum and several facial cuts necessitating stitches, reveals his doxic acceptance, made body of the states of pugilism when he fails to find cause for alarm in his string of injuries: 'Sure you do think about it, but then you regroup yourself, start thinkin', you can't, *it's in your blood so much*, you can't, you been doin' it so long, you can't give it up'.
>
> (Wacquant, 1995a:88)

This is what constitutes the everyday practices of the gym and the boxing stories from which women were largely excluded in the twentieth century. Boxing, with its risks, dangers and enfleshed realities, has the capacity to re-form and create new associations and links and raises questions about what happens when women join in. Wacquant's celebration of the bloodied heroism of the boxer in the face of unequivocal risk and danger and the refusal, of the boxer to 'give up', is not only clearly located within a particular temporally and spatially specific

gendered discourse; it illustrates the layers of embodiment embedded in the *habitus*. The field demands body practices, active engagement and training in order to participate, which generates labour. Wacquant's approach suggests that this indicates the role of *illusio* to rationalize the practice.

This brings together his thesis about the unity of dispositions of the habitus from which engagement in sports is generated and the public distinctions accorded to different sports. Bourdieu's account is based on a conceptualization of heroic working-class masculinity which has considerable purchase in media sport narratives. However, his argument about the processes that are involved in taking up and performing these identities of masculinity fails to question what happens when women box and how transformative this might be. The assumptions about hegemonic, and especially traditional, enfleshed masculinity are largely unquestioned in this work, where immersion in the field also involves collusions with the gendered dimensions of its culture (Woodward, 2009).

Yvonne Lafferty and Jim McKay, in their study of the interaction between Australian women and men boxers, draw upon Wacquant's interpretation of *illusio* as 'collective misrecognition' (Wacquant, 2001:10) and 'collective bad faith' (Wacquant, 1995a:86). Wacquant suggests that *illusio* is a means of demonstrating that boxers are not deceived by an exploitative system which compels them to sell their bodies to the pugilistic trade but that they are enmeshed in a powerful belief system which holds onto the honour and nobility of boxing. It is hard to see how women could be similarly implicated since the *doxa* of boxing is one that manifests less cultural tradition of women in kinship groups and social networks having boxing 'in their blood', although individual women may give voice to such commitment. Lafferty and McKay cite a statement by an Australian amateur boxer, Mischa Merz, to support their claim that the concept of *illusio* works for women too (2005:273).

An alternative explanation of Merz's statement that boxing is 'in the blood' is that she is invoking the language of men's boxing in order to be positioned within a discourse which accepts and reinstates the total commitment of the boxer. She is herself buying into the language of boxing and reclaiming some of its heroic subject positions in order to be accepted, but there is also recognition of the properties of boxing itself and its particular body practices and culture. There are different cultural meanings attached to women's engagement in the sport, which suggest that this could be a gendered *illusio* which is specific to the participants in the context of the wider field in which boxing cultures are constituted.

Some of the difficulties arising from these developments of Bourdieu's theories can be identified as, relating to the construction of masculinity which is

assumed and over-deterministic. As Young has demonstrated, power relations, especially those based on gender and racialized differences, are under-theorized in Bourdieu's work (1990) in spite of its focus upon social class. There seems little scope for transformation, especially within the wider arena of social, economic and cultural life within these accounts. However, there are significant advantages in the primacy that is given to everyday experience and detailed accounts of embodied practice, especially in gendering the body. Boxing and its body practices merge with dominant versions of masculinity and, by implication, femininity, which provide explanations of why women have been excluded from boxing culture and often its body practices by public regulatory regimes and why recent participation has not been entirely welcomed or well received. Claims that it is not 'natural' derive from the powerful cultural synergies between boxing practices and masculinity. Although it is not universal, many of the parts of the world where boxing remains popular and has a visible presence, for example through mega events in places such as Mexico, the Philippines, Ghana and Nigeria, are places with traditional patriarchal cultures.

Power relations are implicated in the articulation of gender, race and sexuality. The sporting body and the racialized body have been a particular target of regulation and resistance, especially in boxing, with its long history of attempts to undermine white supremacism, dating back to Jack Johnson's world championship defeat of Jim Jeffries, the 'Great White Hope' and Joe Louis's transformation into a heroic figure for white as well as black fans in the 1930s (Harris, 1998).

Paul Gilroy argues that the racialized body and race as a category are always mediated by technical and social processes. Ontologies of race are not natural and rooted in anatomy but this still creates questions about what is meant by natural and how far the natural is equated with the anatomical body. Gilroy argues that, although it has been useful to employ Foucault's historical explanatory framework, Foucault's own account falls short in failing to accommodate the continued marginalization and devaluing of African bodies (1998). Race too is an object of knowledge, which was inscribed onto the body within discourses of colonialism and science which became intertwined in embodied narratives of nationalism. Gilroy notes the shift from natural science to biology, which is more marked by digital technologies and molecular biology in the contemporary world. Boxing, along with other sports, is characterized not only by bodily risks and the concomitant medical interventions that are thus required, but also by regimes of performance enhancement, within the parameters of the law as well as, sometimes, outside them, which have material consequences for the bodies

involved. New technologies, risk awareness and the creation and regulation of dangers, including those of pharmaceutical interventions, constitute contemporary regulatory practices.

The racialized body has been subject to the techniques of visualization and what Franz Fanon called epidermalization (1967) but also to a whole set of invasions that are constitutive of that whole body and also operate within a framework of scientific and techno-scientific discourses, none more so than in sport where sexuality, gender and 'race' not only articulate together but collide. Sex gender is not only applicable to inequalities and dichotomies about women and men. The concept demonstrates the connections and disruptions between flesh and culture, the natural and the social and shows how the axes of power reproduce inequalities in the mix which makes up boxing culture. Sex gender is strongly weighted in this mix, partly because of the interrelationship between hegemonic and traditional masculinities and particular body practices and the properties of pugilism.

Body practices and practised masculinity

Boxing demands routine practice. Given the centrality of the body in boxing and the vital importance to the boxer of attaining the highest standards of fitness, the major investment made by boxers is in body practices. Body practices present individual and collective ways in which social labour addresses the body (Turner, 1996). The multiple exercise regimes undertaken by the boxer, as by all athletes, are designed to produce gendered bodies. R. W. Connell suggests that such an analysis might imply that the body is a 'field on which social determination runs riot … the body is surface to be imprinted' (1995:50). Connell's work on embodied masculinities, however, offers one of the most useful counter-arguments to the excesses of social constructionism, reinstating the body that lives and breathes (and dies) rather than being a canvas upon which culture inscribes meanings (1995). Connell engages with both material bodies within their economic, social and cultural context as is illustrated by his conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity and with what could be described as the problem of agency, which in phenomenological accounts is often situated within debates about the mind–body split.

Connell's work, unlike other accounts, such as Wacquant's development of phenomenological understandings of embodiment, foregrounds sex gender and focuses upon masculinities. Not only does the body situate us in the present, it

constitutes our identities through the bodily experiences that are 'often central in memories of our own lives' (Connell, 1995:53). Narratives of sport are often closely implicated in the bodily experiences through which they have been produced and whilst the body occupies a central role, it is not a passive part that is played; the body exercises agency in these pivotal moments, bodies generate affects and are affected by social and cultural forces. Boxing has many such stories, one of the most reiterated being that of the *Rumble in the Jungle*.

> Connell's version of social embodiment suggests that:
>
> Bodies have agency and bodies are socially constructed. Biological and social analysis cannot be cut apart from the each other … Bodies are both objects of social practice and agents in social practice
>
> (Connell, 2002:47)

The problem of agency has a special place in boxing, especially given the dominance of determinist arguments about why people engage in the sport. Are they the dupes of a culture which offers aggressive, physically powerful, competent migrant and black masculinities as the only means of attaining recognition? Is it economic factors which drive working-class men to participate in the sport? In what sense do they choose to put their bodies at risk? Connell offers some strategies for dealing with these questions in his discussion of body-reflexive practices.

Body-reflexive practices

Connell poses the concept of material body-reflexive practices as a means of challenging an over-socialized body, with an understanding of the body which nonetheless retains its social dimensions. This concept puts the enfleshed body back into the social, whilst retaining the social in the body, in order to accommodate an understanding of bodies as agentic: bodies that are situated and situations. Thus, the body is both agent and object of practice and it is through these bodily practices that the structures within which bodies are formed and made meaningful and embodied identities are forged, defined and organized. Bodies and enfleshed selves are constitutive and constituted. 'Through body-reflexive practices more than individual lives are formed: a social world is formed' (Connell, 1995:64). Boxing constitutes a social world. The idea of body-reflexive practices permits an understanding of the body as implicated in and addressed by social, temporal processes, without it ceasing to be a material body. Bodies are not matter in the world, individualized as

representing the unique boundary of the self; they are the world and are part of what makes social relations meaningful.

The pugilistic bodily techniques that constitute boxing have been made meaningful and have created a social order aligned with a particular version of masculinity through a set of practices that are more consonant with regimes of truth about masculinity than femininity. Boxing appears to be a limited space, albeit one which includes the most traditional and predictable of the practices associated with masculinity. These practices include those which involve strength, aggression and the ability to inflict pain upon one's fellow combatant and to withstand or preferably avoid pain or damage oneself. However, these activities still operate within the wider social field and relate to other masculinities and other dimensions of masculinity. For example hegemonic masculinity might be associated with heterosexual assertiveness (Connell, 1995), but boxers, like most competitive sportsmen, have been discouraged from engaging in sexual activity in the period before competition. The practice of refraining from sexual activity can be accommodated within hegemonic masculinity through the bodily practice of abstinence along with the explanation that the aggression of the libido is then translated into aggression against the opponent in the ring. The heterosexuality of this masculinity is uncompromised; its force unrestrained and even reconfirmed, just rechannelled. The homoeroticism of boxing is largely denied, or at least passes unstated and unacknowledged, by practitioners, and is the purview of academic critics and cultural commentary (James, 1996, Spencer, 2012). Boxing, however, like other sports, is both coming to terms with homophobia and transforming, now that homophobia has been made explicit as a form of behaviour in sport. The homosocial and democratic space of the gym also has the capacity to transform exclusionary practices into more inclusive and welcoming ones to secure the diversity which has always been a feature of the boxing gym. Boxing is not 'out' in the language of sexual politics, but the gym is both a tolerant and a diverse space in which hierarchies operate according to embodied boxing competence (Woodward, 2011).

The punches directed at the targeted areas of the opponent's body are body practices that are part of the repertoire of the boxer which are situated within a framework both of understandings of masculinity and the regulatory apparatuses of the sport, which, for example, permits hits on the head and upper body but not below the belt. Body practices are so closely implicated with masculinity that women's boxing, howsoever its popularity is increasing, is disruptive. A fight includes the bodies of those in the ring and those of the spectators who perceive some greater authenticity in being physically present, rather than as

television viewers of a disembodied, sanitized event (Oates, 1987), but who are not engaged in the corporeal conflict itself. Spectators, whether at the fight or watching virtually, are nonetheless caught up in the sentient experience of the event (Woodward, 2011).

The corporeal techniques that are practised in the gym and in sparring from the public presentation of boxing in the ring and in its representation constitute embodied meanings about sex gender and sexuality that extend far beyond the ring itself. The physical regime of training with all its privations and routines involves external factors, such as the advice of the trainer, the competitive spirit, including the encouragement to think and act antagonistically towards the opponent, even to the extent of expressing hatred and anger (a common practice at the pre-fight weigh-in). Training techniques also include developing the ability to control pain and to exercise discipline and self-control, not only for boxers as individuals but also as constitutive of masculinity. Pain is a large part of the experience of the boxer, especially in the training regime, largely because of the pressure under which athletes are put when they seek to achieve success in their sport. Body-reflexive practices are not only internal to the individual boxer; they include social relations and institutions such as the regulatory bodies of the sport as well as its whole culture and tradition. Bodies that are damaged and injured and just worn, as well as those that are honed, elite specimens to which all participants aspire, are substantially in play in the practice of sport.

Reflexive body practices mean that, 'with bodies both objects and agents of practice and the practice itself forming the structures within which bodies are appropriated and defined' (Connell, 1995:61). These boxing practices are subject to ambivalences and contradictions and to historical disruption, which has taken a number of forms ranging from incremental shifts in management and regulation to legal, illegal and technological interventions.

Connell proposes a three-fold model of the structure of gender, which can be illustrated by Lafferty and McKay's study of the interactions between women and men in a boxing gym. Connell uses this three-fold model to bring in the interplay between the different elements implicated in body-reflexive practices. First, *power relations* incorporate the structure identified as patriarchy, albeit somewhat simplistically. Sometimes in boxing this is expressed simply, for example in the explicit exaltation of men as 'warriors, thereby "proving" their biological superiority over women' (Lafferty and McKay, 2004:256). Second, Connell uses the structure of production relations which includes the division of labour. In the gym, labour is illustrated by the lack of resources which women boxers are able to access in order to improve their competence and the association of women

with 'soft boxing' and men with the transformation of the body into a weapon (2005:256). Cathexis, or emotional attachment, is Connell's third structure which Lafferty and McKay use to locate the highly sexualized status of women in the sport, especially in the ring as part of the event, as card girls for example. In a mixed gym, they argue, women are presented as sexually tempting to men (2005) which accords with much of the literature on boxing of women being excluded from gyms (Sammons, 1988; Sugden, 1996; Woodward, 1997a, b, 2006).

Change is taking place, albeit at an uneven pace which challenges some of the cultures upon which some of these claims are made. One of the most significant disruptions to the complacency of hegemonic masculinity in recent years has been the inclusion of women's boxing at the 2012 Olympics. There is also more diversity across cultures and the hegemony of traditional masculinity is not performed and experienced in the same ways in all socio-cultural situations. For example Benita Heiskanen found that there was little opposition to women boxers in her interdisciplinary ethnographic study of Latino boxers in Texas, USA (Heiskanen, 2012). In this instance women are permitted to participate but are still subject to the same regimes of marginalization and sexualization. Lafferty and McKay suggest that representation, which relates to the glorification of male boxers, in the gym as well as in the wider world, is an additional structure which informs their analysis. This is a useful way of demonstrating how boxing is a gender regime, especially in showing how sport can accommodate 'difference' while not making any changes to its hyper-masculine structure (Lafferty and McKay, 2005:274). This approach demonstrates the possibility of synthesizing routine body practices, representation and the wider cultural terrain. There is, however, limited interrogation of the power geometries of that wider cultural field in which such meanings are articulated.

Bodies in the gym are the sites of these exclusionary practices of a regime of sex gender. However, the separation of the structures through which the regime is practised as deployed by Lafferty and McKay might be somewhat artificial and underestimate the cultural terrain which informs the body practices of the gym; moreover, this regime allows very little scope for agency. It does raise questions about how women might be able to perform masculinity. If it is not the physical body which prevents wider and more successful participation in the sport, then the continuance of masculine domination has to be attributed to the gender regime and primarily to its cultural and social hold. The wider field brings in other routines and body practices, such as those in which participants in boxing networks engage. The dominance of men over women persists in spite of multiple challenges and points at which it has been disrupted. Recent

changes and developments not only put women as boxers into discourses, for example as medal-winning serious contenders, but also subvert the exclusivity of hegemonic masculinity, because women boxers are skilled, competent players; their participation is not playful or ironic, but real. Boxing is a site at which there have been limited disruptions although boxers occupy the wider social and cultural terrain and, as a traditional sport, widely enmeshed with traditional masculinities and regimes of gender exclusion; as some research has indicated even in boxing gyms there are men who are also performing different masculinities in the rest of their lives (de Garis, 2000).

Conclusion

Routine embodied practices shape and reform the materiality of flesh through the transformation of muscle and skin and in enhancing body mass as well as movement, resilience and stamina, through iterative practices in the gym and in training. These practices and the material bodies that are so constituted also make boxing a social world with distinctive cultures. Boxing cultures are reproduced and made through the body practices of the sport and boxing has its own measurement and evaluation of bodies as well as the specificities of practices and techniques. Boxing has the capacity to resist and challenge cultural norms too. Heteronormativity in sport has also been challenged so that boxing as a competitive sport can be enjoyed by those with the physical, mental and emotional capacities to perform outside the wider constraints of social norms relating to sexuality, ethnicity and race as a thing in itself.

Much of the research that has been undertaken into boxing has focused upon ethnographies of local gyms (Heiskanen, 2012, Lafferty and MacKay, 2005, Spencer, 2012, Wacquant, 1995 a, b, c, 2004, Woodward, 2004) with varying degrees of embodied participation; in Wacquant's case as observing participant (2004). This highlights the primacy of the routine enfleshed activities of boxing as well as the accessibility and attraction of the gym and its grassroots networks for many researchers. This focus does demonstrate the importance of bodies and the extent to which material enfleshed bodies are active in producing the culture of boxing. Bodies resist over-socialization in boxing. It is a field in which the flesh fights back. Over-concentration on the flesh for the researcher, however, can immerse him (thus far it has been mostly male researchers who have so participated) in the dominant culture to the extent that it is not possible to acknowledge the situated body and the location of the researcher in the process (Woodward, 2008).

Methodologically, this has led to the application of phenomenological accounts which start with experience and lived bodies. For example, developments of Merleau-Ponty's ideas about the phenomenology of perception, the centrality of accounts of lived experience and embodiment as a way of overcoming the distinction between mind and body have been very productive. Feminist critiques have usefully put sex and gender into this frame and have demonstrated some of the interconnections between bodies and culture which can usefully explain body practices and how gender becomes practised and performed. A major problem of the enfleshed body and of providing a means of retaining its materiality within largely discursive regimes has been – at least in large part – addressed in accounts of the body as situation as well as situated and subject to social and cultural forces, which corporeality can also shape. Boxing offers particular challenges, especially given its specificities relating to damage and the ultimate frailty of bodies, however well-trained.

The concept of sex gender has been used in this chapter to provide an understanding of the connections between flesh and culture and body practices and social worlds and to transcend the limitations of excessive social constructionism. I have also used the combination of sex gender to indicate how different forces of power intersect and elide in the routine constitution of boxing culture. In sport, women usually form an empirical group of people who take part in competitions that are classified by anatomical sex. The concept of sex gender encompasses the enfleshed as well as the social and cultural dimensions of sexual politics and demonstrates not only that sex and gender are inseparable, but also the mix of bodies, culture and social forces in which bodies are shaped by culture and are also themselves situations. Sex gender has wider explanatory application than the descriptive powers of the empirical field of gendered categorization of women and men. Hegemonic masculinity, whatever its local features, retains global purchase and emerges with some persistence through enfleshed and routine practices, but it is not fixed because hegemonic masculinity is itself a series of processes and assemblages which is changing and fluid. These are complex interrelationships which are also dynamic and the connections between flesh and culture, bodies and social worlds take different forms at different times. The next chapter focuses on a particular aspect of culture and at the links between boxing bodies and symbolic systems and cinematic representations which also combine the local and global.

6

Inside and Outside the Ring

This chapter develops an analysis of the relationship between the embodied practices of boxing which were addressed in Chapter 5 and the wider social, political and cultural arena, as a productive means of explaining the relationship between flesh, bodies and representation which is so significant in boxing. How are representation and enfleshed practices linked? As was argued in Chapter 5, the local boxers who train in the gym within particular communities cite boxing heroes and key figures whose status attracted them to the sport. These issues were raised by Lafferty and MacKay's discussion of women boxers (Lafferty and MacKay, 2004) which suggests questions about how far the connections between embodied practices and representational systems are gendered. How are the relationships between what happens in the gym and in the ring and representational systems constituted? How is boxing as a set of embodied practices represented in cultural forms and in the media? As has already been suggested in this book, boxing, with its expressiveness and intensities, lends itself well to an explanation of sensation as unmediated and immediate.

Representations include media moments which are changing and are the subjects of global shifts in the media-sport nexus as well as artistic representations of boxing using the example of cinema which has generated a large number of what are called boxing films. This chapter uses Chapter 5's discussion of bodies, especially gendered bodies and the media, in relation to economic forces and focuses upon sensation and the relationship between images and representation promoted by the media and the enfleshed experience of boxing. Does boxing offer a particular take on sensation and sentient experiences of spectatorship? Boxing is all about bodies, but is being there at an actual fight more real than viewing at a distance? This means that what makes the culture of boxing, especially outside the ring and boxing's visible representations and manifestations in the public arena, is always in conversation with its more routine practices in the gym and in local communities as well as with its embodied practices.

Visible bodies

Accounts of boxing in the public arena often focus upon the specificities of embodied practices and the centrality of flesh. The following extract is one such account of the particularly enfleshed exchange in one of the most famous fights of the twentieth century.

The Executioner's Song

> So began the third act of the fight … Foreman's head must by now be equal to a piece of vulcanized rubber … Ali taunts him … With twenty seconds left to the round, Ali attacked. By that measure of twenty years of boxing, with the knowledge of all he had learned … he hit Foreman with a right and left, then came off the ropes and hit him with a left and a right … a head-stupefying punch that sent Foreman reeling forward … Ali struck him a combination of punches … three capital rights in a row … a big projectile exactly the size of a fist in a glove drove into the middle of Foreman's mind … the blow Ali saved for a career. Foreman's arms flew out to the side like a man with a parachute jumping out of a plane, … he started to tumble … down came the champion in sections and Ali revolved with him, in a close circle hand primed to hit him one more time.
>
> (Mailer, 1975:199–208)

This is how the writer Norman Mailer describes Muhammad Ali's defeat of the then world heavyweight boxing champion George Foreman in the 'Rumble in the Jungle' in Zaire, in 1974 (Mailer, 1975). This extract demonstrates the coming together of enfleshed activity, pain and corporeal injury and the making of myths and legends. This is not generally thought to be the most brutal fight of all times within boxing, but nonetheless Mailer's description evokes powerful sentiments and captures some of the enfleshed expressions and affects of boxing. In this book, Mailer engages with the intensities of being there somewhat bizarrely by describing himself in the third person first as Norman, then Norm and occasionally as Norman Mailer, which may be a literary device to distance himself from the action and to intensify and enhance the dynamics of the fight. Flesh and feeling are both material and constituted through symbols like words and representations, but how far are sensation and emotion mediated by these representations?

The wider cultural terrain as well as sports reporting invokes the language of boxing: out for the count, a KO, on the ropes, saved by the bell. Even television talent shows invite combat between contestants, such as the 'battle round', one-on-one singing contest between rival contenders in the UK BBC programme, *The Voice*.

A bowler and a batsman in cricket may be described as two heavyweights, but few sports' reporters dwell on the impact of flesh upon flesh in the manner in which it happens in boxing, in the manner which boxing demands. In boxing the techniques of the sport are enfleshed such that these bodily encounters are crucial to the public stories and representations of the sport. The impact of flesh and sensation upon sentient beings calls into question the over-simplification of those stories and the construction of boxing heroes through those narratives.

Great moments such as the 'Rumble in the Jungle' in Zaire which become classified as legendary are made in the spaces between the real and the representational, in the extract from Norman Mailer, evidenced in that interface between documentary and drama. The film drama is a mechanism of representation which has responded to boxing and from which boxing has benefited.

Boxing films

The sport of boxing has a very special place in film history and boxing films represent a long tradition. Boxing has produced more high-class films than any other sport (Berlins, 2008). There have been some 150 films made, starting with some very early recordings of fights, including eight minutes of Gentleman Jim Corbett against Peter Courtney in East Orange, New Jersey, in 1894 (Mitchell, 2005). Boxing was seen to have enormous potential as a spectator sport as early as in the late nineteenth century, which transforming technologies could make more widely available and which could benefit the development of those very technologies. Performance and display are integral to boxing. A Gentleman Jim Corbett fight, the 1897 Fitzsimmons–Corbett fight, in the Nevada desert in the USA, which was the site of technological experiment in a wooden amphitheatre, with peepholes for cameras, was crucial in shaping future links between film, spectacle and fighting. 'Filming of the fight was always integral to its planning' (McKernan, 1998) as was the choice of the location in, of course, the Nevada desert. Boxing's links to illegality, the sport's occupation of the interstices between legal and criminal activities, discussed in Chapter 4, make such sites particularly attractive for big fights, any fights. The legacy of Nevada Territory demonstrates the liminal spaces occupied by boxing in relation to illegal, quasi-legal and semi-legal, immoral practices, as well as the specificities of place in the North American landscape.

One of the most positive celebratory points at which boxing has the capacity to occupy the centre stage is through the spectacle of film. Film offers possibilities

for the enfleshed and the emotive dimensions of sensation through cinematic technologies which integrate heroic narratives with a visual and audible close-up focus on flesh and corporeal movement. Boxing films like Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull* recreate the corporeal contact of the ring, rather than adopting realistic techniques of the documentary, but nonetheless generate the sensation of flesh on flesh. However, although boxing films have a long history, the cinematic depiction of combat in the ring generates a set of aesthetic and ethical relationships which might be antithetical to commercial moviemaking. These contradictions may also account for the ubiquity of moralistic tales of triumph over tragedy, of comeback boxers and the respectability of boxers like Cinderella Man James Braddock who, against the odds, fight for their family, a trope which also informs some of the *Rocky* series. James Braddock's is an actual story of struggle during the Great Depression which became translated into a story of national triumph and redemption embodied in an ageing boxer who acts honourably in a metaphor for the nation, and becomes world champion. Films are part of the wider social and cultural terrain in which these tensions are played out through the points of connection and disconnection between the axes of power of social cultural and economic factors and the materiality of boxing bodies.

These factors also play out in different ways spatially and the genealogy of boxing presents different narratives and trajectories which are specific to place and culture. For example, the martial arts film genre draws upon similar strands of corporeality, in that fights and scenes of combative action are central to the genre as are narratives of good over evil, but the form these tropes take differs greatly according to the particular culture as well as the embodied practices. The action of martial arts with the inclusion of kicking generates a particular kind of action which has been the focus of the genre's publicity with stills of its stars like Bruce Lee captured in action apparently flying through the air, as well as the emphasis of the film upon the movement of the whole body in the fight and in competition.

Martial arts films constitute a significant genre of fight films which could also be classified as action films par excellence. This genre has much in common with what are loosely called boxing films, although there are distinctive features to the martial arts genre, which is marked by the particular attractions of fight action woven around an often thinly constructed plot, but with distinctive narratives. The role of the teacher or trainer plays a particularly strong part in the narrative of martial arts films, reflecting the status of the teacher in the culture of many martial arts. The binary logic of good versus evil and corruption underpins

the storyline which is delivered through stylized action, which is performed through complex and sophisticated computer technologies designed to deliver the dynamic movement and excitement of the genre.

Different martial arts are featured in particular subgenres: Kung fu and ninja in the 1970s and the 1980s. The stars of the films are frequently real martial artists translating the drama of the real into the drama of representation. Thus it is through the embodied persona of the star that the dramatic and the real elide. Such films have achieved cult status with substantial followings across the globe from both television broadcasts and Hollywood films which facilitated wide coverage transnationally and the embrace of a number of national and culturally specific versions of martial arts, such as karate in Japan.

The genre abounds with big names, many of whom have global currency like Bruce Lee, whilst others are more specific to particular parts of the world. Martial arts are travelling however, and film-makers like Tony Jaa of Thailand are fast becoming international names. Whilst there are points of connection between the genres, there are also significant differences which demonstrate the operation of g/local forces across cultures.

Boxing films which feature western boxing are either only tangentially associated with boxing or, even if they do purport to be about boxing, 'are always about so much more, especially, they are about social commentary more or less bound up with issues of masculinity' (Buscombe, 2005:67). Boxing and particularly the archetypical boxer in film have traditionally generated a singular heroic figure of troubled masculinity. Boxing is framed by the ring and transcends the ring through the intensities of triumph, defeat and perseverance. This figure is 'a romantic-modernist representation of existential man in all his bleak grandeur [who] attained definition in Hollywood post World War II, but also in other visual and textual arts' (Mellor, 1996:81). In the twenty-first century, the trope of the heroic triumph over adversity and especially economic disadvantage persists, for example, with *Cinderella Man* in 2005 and in a slightly less romanticized form in *The Fighter* in 2011. Familiar matters of honour, desire for respect and self-esteem combining to reiterate a story of honour is a key strand in the narrative and part of the framing device of many boxing films.

Boxing films are frequently implicated in the representation of violence in the cinematic context. This invokes associations of violence within boxing, which Kevin Mitchell calls the 'glamour of violence' (2001). One of the most highly rated boxing films ever made, Martin Scorsese's 1980 film *Raging Bull*, has scenes of violence that are resonant of the experience of witnessing a fight and of 'being there'. The film is based on the memoir of middleweight boxer Jake

La Motta (La Motta, 1970). La Motta was infamous for his violent behaviour outside the ring as well as inside and the film demonstrates well the sensation of breakdown and collapse in his relationships in his personal as well as his professional life. Scorsese's hallmark themes of violent men in crisis and his 'signature directorial style with flashy, imaginative visual flourishes, long and complex takes and pervasive pop music in the background' (French, 2004:125) lend themselves well to a powerfully intense portrayal of boxing and the elision of anger, corporeal contact and aggression which are in the materiality of boxing, its spectatorship and its films. The intensity of the spectacle invokes anxieties about voyeuristic spectatorship which are integral to the practice as well as the representation of boxing.

Boxing films range from films which explicitly tell a boxing story, for example in the 1940s, such as Robert Rosen's *Body and Soul* (1947), Robert Wise's *The Set-up* (1949) and Mark Robson's *Champion* (1949) to films like David Fincher's *Fight Club* (1999), which are more tangentially concerned with the sport of boxing. Other films like Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994) have a boxing/fight element and can be cited illustratively, but could not be said to be 'about boxing'; even bare-knuckle fighting, although boxing films are never *just* about boxing. The internal conflicts of *Fight Club*, like the Palahniuk novel upon which it is based, are concerned with dislocation and alienation played out in scenes of violent pugilism. *Fight Club* assembles psychic conflict and brings together the discursive regimes of pugilism, especially as enacted outside the law and those of the internal, psychic drama of its main protagonist.

Narratives of perseverance in the face of setbacks, which not only are defeats in the ring but can also be the outcome of corrupt practices outside the ring and impinge upon performance inside it, are central to boxing films and affect and are affected by boxing histories and culture. For example, *The Set-up* (1949) is a classic boxing film, with acclaimed fight scenes, which creates a narrative around the central figure of Charlie who comes from the predictably poor and violent neighbourhood, in this case Lower East Manhattan. After his father is killed in gangster turf wars, Charlie follows a conventional route, within the spatial and temporal context, by turning to boxing to support his widowed mother. Family, however violently family members, notably wives and sexual partners, are treated in boxing films, remains an important, if sometimes sentimentalized, trope. In *The Set-up*, Charlie is enmeshed in corrupt practices, and is ultimately compelled to make a decision, when his promoter attempts to compel him to throw an important fight, a decision framed by moral choices and the possibilities of redemption. Moral choices and the pressures of corruption

abound in these boxing films and redemption is not the only outcome; the wages of sin can be condemnation and damnation. In *The Champion* (1949) the lead character, played by Kirk Douglas, is a ruthless fighter, born in poverty and callously and single-mindedly pursuing fame and fortune, who is ultimately doomed.

The films that might be more narrowly categorized as 'boxing films' have often been biopics, some of the most notable being the Ali movies. Boxing biographies regenerate heroes, largely through chronological life stories, like Michael Mann's *Ali* (2001) and Robert Wise's *Someone up There Likes Me* (1956) about Rocky Graziano, the middle and welterweight Italian American champion boxer, played by Paul Newman. This film, like many other boxing films, elides the real with the fictional and dramatic and challenges distinctions that might be made between what is real and what is dramatic. The film follows Graziano's reckless criminal early life, through prison, followed by another conventional regulatory regime of discipline for deviant masculinity, the army. It is boxing which proves the more effective means of exerting control through techniques of self-regulation (Foucault, 1988) coupled with a secure heterosexual relationship with a devoted girlfriend. Boxing has been firmly entrenched in what Judith Butler calls the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990).

Boxing films focus upon boxing heroes and also focus on pivotal moments in boxing history, such as the *Rumble in the Jungle* (1974), described by Norman Mailer at the beginning of this chapter, which was classified as a documentary film. Its reincarnation in 1996 in Leon Gast's *When We Were Kings* and, in 2000, *One Nation Divisible*, on the Frazier Ali rivalry, again arose from key boxing events.

Boxing occupies the relational space between flesh, conflict and social forces of economic deprivation, racism and the insecurities of migration and mobility that become concentrated on a particular version of masculinity. Thus, boxing and boxing films provide a useful context in which to explore and question the ubiquity and hegemony of the existential angst in western films, especially in relation to masculinity, at a time of change as both 'true' and authentic, but which it has been difficult to regain (Mellor, 1996), especially since the 1940s and the 1950s, in what has been called the heyday of boxing films (Telotte, 1989).

Boxing films may also appear to represent hyperbole and excess. Mitchell, following the claims of the US boxing writer Richard Hoffer, who wrote for *Sports Illustrated*, as well as notably about Mike Tyson (Hoffer, 1998), about the properties of melodrama and hyperbole of boxing, argues that such films are not required to exaggerate; characters such as Don King, Mike Tyson and Jake La Motta are already personalities writ large (Mitchell, 2005). Hyperbole

occupies the in-between relational spaces. This raises further questions about the relationship between what is real and what is artificial and between the actual pugilist and the actor who plays him, or more rarely her. In martial arts films the actor is often a real fighter which creates another relationship between the real of body practices and the drama of the film in which those practices are performed. Boxing films and boxing itself exaggerate in some respects and it is boxing which aspires to magnification as well as the hyperbole of the fight film genre.

The hyperbole which may be demanded by boxing films can also lead to assumptions about what boxing *per se* can deliver, and produce bad films too. Sensation can be interrupted; films can demonstrate alienated sensation too. A bad boxing film can be particularly disappointing because boxing promises so much in relation to expressivity, intensity and emotive narrative such as was evidenced in Ron Howard's 1992 film *Far and Away*, in which the storyline of the migrant who seeks redemption through boxing produced a very lame version of the traditional boxing story, which might be more the outcome of a lack of chemistry between the actors Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise, than the tiredness of the storyline. Boxing films require commitment and imagination if they are to work as they can return to a parody of boxing culture, as seems to have been the case with some of the later *Rocky* series films.

Actors are expected to become caricatures of themselves, just as some actual boxers enact an excessive version of masculinity. Boxing and boxing films especially affect and are affected by the manifestations of excess and the complex relationship between authenticity and deception and between fantasy, aspirations and reality. The exaggerated caricature is mobilized through the charged affect of emotive links which start long before the fight with the taunts and insults that so often mark the weigh-in.

Hyperbole also serves to reinstate gender binaries implicated in the reinstatement of the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990). The overstatement of a particularly aggressive masculinity reconstitutes the exclusion of femininity and the necessary avowal that boxing is for 'real men'. These 'real men' are made through the capacities of boxing to reproduce these corporeal practices in the gym and in the ring as well as embedded in the heroic narratives of boxing films. Women boxers, like Ann Wolfe, have engaged in what Judith Butler calls the performativity of doing masculinity (Butler, 1990, 1993) in a masquerade of performing masculinity, for example by adopting styles of dress and comportment and ways of speaking (Woodward, 2006).

The 'Rumble in the Jungle', in Kinshasa, Zaire, in 1974 has inspired much creative as well as social commentary. The golden age of heavyweights, popularly

described as *When We were Kings*, is also the title of Leon Gast's 1996 film of the fight. Gast's film also demonstrates a strand of the relationship between diverse components of what is authentic or real. For example, the real is constituted as documentary in the *Rumble in the Jungle* film and in journalists' accounts at the time and then reproduced in the creative narratives of writers like Norman Mailer in his account (1975), quoted at the start of this chapter. Critics and commentators seek both to mediate the sensations and affects of boxing and to capture its intensities. Boxing, however viewed, is also unmediated so that sensation is immediate and not interpreted or translated.

Boxing affects and sensations

Boxing lends itself well to the insights of the affective turn (Clough and Halley, 2007, Hardt, 2007). Boxing is both ordinary and spectacular; it is a dialectic of affect and of iconography: the raw and the cooked, to deploy Levi-Strauss's anthropological paradigm. Boxing is an artificial creation that culture cannot resolve (Boddy, 2008:391), but it is itself cultural and constitutive of culture albeit one beset by contradictions and ambivalences, which is also why boxing inspires imaging through art and cinema. Boxing may be raw because it involves a one-on-one combat with one person trying to knock the other unconscious, but there are other ways of exploring the culture of boxing, through the arrangement of people, things and places that make up boxing culture, through which the affects of a boxing event are generated and that event is itself affected by how it is perceived and understood. Boxing has endurances and continuities and it is not a linear narrative; although so many boxing films tell a story, especially one configured around the heroic legend, most crudely in the *Rocky* series. This series of films rehearses the appealing trope of the underdog fighting against the odds, a woman to fight for and a pugnacious trainer; a storyline beloved of traditional masculinity (AOM, 2012).

Boxing's great iconic moments are never entirely absent from the everyday affects of the routine practices of the sport. These stories are part of the delivery systems which make up boxing and intersect with the sport's enfleshed practices (Woodward, 2012a) and the ways in which flesh is implicated at different sites: in the gym, in the ring, on film and in sentient spectatorship.

Although boxing is a sport associated with violence, it is not, however, the sport which tops the league table of injuries (Woodward, 2006). Nonetheless violence is one of the ordinary affects of boxing. Boxers routinely damage their hands in training, and the most likely injury in boxing is damage to the hands.

There are of course more dramatic injuries and even deaths in the ring; Becky Zerlantes was the first woman to die in the ring in modern times in 2005 and it is estimated that over a 1000 boxers have died in the ring in the last 120 years. The horrors of the spectacle are manifest in the fact that some of the more recent tragedies can even be viewed on YouTube (YouTube, 2012). Boxing is also a 'dark continent' (Irigaray, 1991 (not in the context of boxing), Woodward, 2006) and a 'rough trade' (MacRae, 1996).

In the everyday, however, the most common damage is to the hands. These injuries and the broken jaw, rib or nose that might result from a competitive bout are ordinary affects of boxing; as Kathleen Stewart describes the everyday, material intensities of life (2007), which, in the case of boxing involves routine practice in the downtown gyms as well as by the hopeful, aspiring boxers on the support card at public venues. Boxing has all sorts of capacities that are swept up into the new consistency of the event: the aspirations of the dispossessed in the traditional route out of poverty and social exclusion, the spectacle of competition and the enfleshed materiality of a sport, the main purpose of which is to render the opponent unconscious for the entertainment of those who watch and the profit of those who organize fights (Sugden, 1996, McRae, 1996, Lemert, 2003).

Boxing affects include the past which generates consistencies in the making of heroic masculinities in particular in the sport. Sensation is implicated in these intensities in that the boxing event, for example the big fight, is drama, representation and enfleshed. What is spectacular, such as the display of boxing in public arenas, whether live or in film or on television or in other cultural forms, mixes up with what is ordinary and routine. Boxers in the gym routinely attribute their interest in the sport to some heroic figure, whether a family member or more public legend (Woodward, 2004, 2008) which then becomes swept up in the event of the fight (McRae, 1996). Boxers even claim to be thinking about their heroes when competing, which are conventionally retold as stories. The hero, however, is also created through the relationship with the different elements that make up the event, including how the hero is perceived. There is thus collusion within the networks of hegemonic masculinity through which some of boxing's narratives are woven. It is an iterative dialogic process between representations and spectators. In a film however the authenticity of the experience of spectatorship can be achieved through identification with the heroic figure. Even though, for example, Sylvester Stallone is an actor and not a boxer, for the duration of the film (and through repetition and the iterative qualities of the Rocky series) Stallone *is* Rocky.

Events, like a fight or a film, encompass a wide range of materials, and how they are arranged. The arrangement of people, places and things and the affects they generate are understood through sensation, which is central to explanations of affect. A focus on events invokes the relationship between objects, the equipment, the ropes, the gloves, the gum shields, the boots, silk shorts and paraphernalia of the spectacle, perception in the mix of boxers, trainers, cut men, promoters, commentators and spectators. The emotions which bind boxing fans and the glue of boxing culture are based on memory as well as hopes and dreams. These affects are wound up in the 'real time' of the event, for example of the big fight, which condenses memories of past achievements and failures, the intensities of the moment and the aspirations of futurity (Woodward, 2012b).

Different and diverse materials include their pasts, which generate consistencies and duration. Memory, remaking and restating of the past matters enormously in sport, not least in boxing. Although some aspects of the event may seem static, framed in film or photograph, they incorporate movement, between past, present and future, which are caught up in the sensation of the moment. Sensation involves emotional encounters which are enfleshed in the relationship between flesh, muscle, sweat, sound, gloves, ropes and the ring itself. The generation of sensation includes trainers, promoters, referees, boxers and spectators. In boxing, flesh has specific capacities and properties which contribute to sensory processes. Flesh and sentience are also implicated in the processes of constructing and regulating authenticity in the reality of being there (Sobchack, 2004). Response to film bridges the gap between film text and spectator through vision, visibility and embodiment, The whole event of the film, as of the fight, is sensory through the organization of light, movement and matter (Deleuze, 1996) as in art and expressive systems, which boxing is as drama and as an enfleshed event.

Stage drama seeks to recapture the intensities of boxing through different technologies but the interrelationships between actors and performers and spectators and the processes involved are similar. This is evident in the performance of Bryony Lavery's 2010 stage play *Beautiful Burnout* about the three seconds when a boxer drops his guard and the hammer blow which knocks him out is delivered. The play uses movement and movement images and the mobilities of light to create the sensation of the punch and the drama of the play, which is condensed into a limited period of time for the duration of the play which mirrors the duration of the fight.

Boxing films are concerned with the making of heroes through the trope of masculinity. Boxing masculinity is also constituted in relation to femininity

through the inclusion of actual women in the narrative or of recognizably feminine traits and attributes and the status of femininity within the fight film genre. This raises questions about the spaces occupied by femininity in these stories of heroic masculinity. Valerie Walkerdine argues that the narrative is central to embodied experience of the film and of the spectator, however exaggerated the storyline, such as in the late films of the Rocky series (Walkerdine, 1986). Boxing does have the capacity to create alternatives; for example, Leila Ali was made famous through the associations with her heroic father, the legendary Muhammad Ali, as well as through her sporting success; kinship ties are widely enmeshed in the generation of consistencies in boxing. Leila Ali is imbricated in the kinship/family group, caught up in the legend that is her father, but she is also part of a sport in which she demonstrated a high degree of competence; it is troubling in some ways but also celebratory of a strong black woman who has been part of the endurance of boxing's power and is part of its transformations. Film is not far removed from the performance of everyday life. The acceptance of women's boxing as an amateur sport in the Olympics in 2012 means that there are more young hopefuls across the world, even in the powerfully patriarchal Afghanistan, where boxing might be a site of some cultural change, which is explored in more detail in the next chapter. These are largely private spaces, however, and the public arena of film may offer more possibilities for change. As I argue in Chapter 7, however, opportunities for change in the culture of boxing, although progress is mostly incremental, come through public, competitive sport, everyday practice and representations and the visible discourses of the media and cultural forms like film.

Boxers become part of the popular imagination through their place in movies, whether they are actual fighters or fictional ones like Rocky Balboa, a film character albeit reputedly based on the actual boxer, Chuck Wepner. Some boxers might have passed into cultural oblivion, apart from the memories of the boxing cognoscenti, if it had not been for cinematic representation. Were it not for Robert de Niro's Academy Award-winning performance and Martin Scorsese's direction of *Raging Bull*, Jake la Motta might not be still remembered (Tosches, 1997), and if he were his memory would not invoke sophisticated artistic cinematic techniques but probably more technologies of brutish violence. Cinema plays an important role in the reconfiguration of heroes and boxing heroes and villains are always implicated in the social and cultural processes through which they are constituted. It is difficult to disentangle the affects of the mechanisms of cinematic reproduction from the materials and objects, here which make up boxing, which are reproduced. What is real is implicated in both.

A Bloody Canvas: Making a film

I was involved in the process of making a film for the Irish television broadcaster RTÉ in 2010 which provided some insights into the processes through which boxing is represented and how boxing culture is made. *A Bloody Canvas* (RTÉ, 2010), which was designed to bring together the energies and technologies of art and boxing, was directed by Alan Gilsenan and produced by Martin Mahon. This was not an experience of mainstream cinema, but an innovative journey through art and boxing, through the life experience of the artist (and former boxer) Sean Scully. The film presents an idiosyncratic journey into the world of the ring by the internationally renowned abstract painter Sean Scully, who has been fascinated by boxing and boxers since his childhood in post-war East London and has himself practised both boxing and martial arts. Although the film is primarily concerned with the points of connection between art and boxing, it aims to capture the specificities of boxing, its particular capacities and its enduring appeal. This is effected through conversations, often reinstating the conventional patriarchal networks of older men who reconstruct memories of boxing histories, but these forces are disrupted by different interventions, for example through abstract art, less-predictable voices and even eccentric practices. One of the most notable of these eccentricities is probably the Sheffield-based Irish trainer Brendan Ingle's Chaplin-like dance at the end of the film, which transforms into a parody of the British comic duo, Eric Morecombe and Ernie Wise, who always concluded their television comedy show by turning their backs to camera and moving away, each kicking their legs sideways in an absurd, affectionately comic performance. The composition of the film was eclectic and aimed to present an off-centre take on boxing, which probably accounts in part for my role in the film too.

As a woman in a largely male assemblage of practitioners and aficionados, my presence was disruptive. It has always been my experience in the research process as a specifically gendered body that I am situated (Woodward, 2008). The sex gender of the researcher is not always marked in sport, even though whether the researcher is identified as male or female is often crucial both to gaining access to the research site and to the relationship between the researcher and the subjects of research, notably, in sport, through unstated collusions of networks of masculinity (Connell, 1995). Being a woman was more important than whether I had ever boxed or not; if I had boxed I could only have been included as woman boxer and not as part of the networks of hegemonic masculinity that dominates the field. Even the artist Sean Scully had boxed; as

is so often the claim of those who occupy the peripheries of boxing and whose central identity is not categorized as being that of a boxer. I was temporarily part of the network as a fan and as a sympathetic commentator. I was interviewed in the gym where I have carried out some of my work and most of this material was included in the film which moved between different locations and images, for example of artwork which speaks to boxing in different ways, either abstract as in Scully's own work or through an assemblage of narrative, experience and visual images such as the planes of light and dark in the work of Caravaggio or the dramatic homoeroticized sculptures of Robert Mapplethorpe.

The focus of the film was on synergies between art and boxing explored by framing elements of the combination of energies and intensities of each field. The film uses the iconography of the ring as a framed space. As David Chandler argues, each boxing match is a picture (1996:13) with the ring as the frame. This frame however carries the movement of the picture image, making it a series of separate still shots (Deleuze, 1983). Scully also visited the world-famous Petronelli Gym in South Boston where Scully talked to Kevin McBride, the Irishman who beat Tyson in the last fight of his career. The ring is acknowledged as the frame of the event as an iconic frame embodying the endurance of boxing legends in an iconography shared by the gym in cases such as this.

Art plays an important part in the film, at some points with direct links to boxing. The notion of representational art underpins another conversation, located in New York, where Scully interviewed LeRoy Neiman whose reputation as a boxing painter has had considerable influence through the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. Scully is filmed in his own studio in Ireland and then in Rome, where the artist Caravaggio, himself a pugilist and street fighter, lived and worked. Caravaggio's life story of street fighting lends another strand to the mix of fine art and the art of boxing: the Noble Art both of which are imbricated in the film. Scully draws analogies between the artist and the fighter and argues that the fighter like the warrior is always ready to fight (RTÉ, 2010), for example in his paintings of David and Goliath (Caravaggio, 2010). Caravaggio's own violence on the street is used to situate some of the different materialities that intersect; the regulatory mechanisms of boxing and the brutalities inside and outside that framework. Caravaggio's preoccupation with the depiction of enfleshed sensation and the celebration of erotic masculinity, on occasion through cutting and damaging male flesh, invoke the stark contrasts of boxing: the black background, visceral simplicity and flat sculptural moments where miracular moments are made permanent (Caravaggio, 2010). This resonates with Deleuze's argument about

Francis Bacon's paintings, in which he suggests that the essence of painting is experienced as rhythm. 'Rhythms and rhythms alone become characters, become objects. Rhythms are the only characters, the only Figures' (2002: xxxii). Thus Bacon's accomplishment, according to Deleuze, is to show that painting offers a virtual surface for the expression of a logic of sensation that may be the most conducive surface for doing so, at least at the time Bacon was painting.

The crew also visited the Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition in the UK (also in Sheffield at the time) and images of Mapplethorpe's work is presented in contrast to other material but also as unmediated sensation which generates instabilities in much the same ways as boxing can. These images are underpinned by the connections to homoeroticism. Some sensualities are more accepted in the art gallery than in the gym, but the points of connection are visualized as unmediated sensation. There are debates about the homoerotic dimensions of boxing, in film (James, 1996) and in lived experience (Spencer, 2011), but A *Bloody Canvas* put them into discourse through images. The film moves to and fro between boxing myths and iconography through a visit to the grave of Gene Tunney, the world heavyweight legend and champion from 1926 to 1928 who twice defeated Jack Dempsey. The direct engagements with artistic practices are interspersed with frames which include conversations with boxers and trainers, such as with the legendary Irish boxing trainer Brendan Ingle in Sheffield in the UK who provides a discursive mix of the practicalities of the gym and training and claims to the spiritual transcendent qualities of boxing in a surreal display of enthusiasm; another example of the hyperbole which is also an ordinary effect of boxing. Conversations often focus on reflection and the ways in which memory affects and is affected by boxing. For example, Scully is filmed in his apartment and studio in Barcelona, where former World Champion Barry McGuigan joins him to 'look back at the mutual fascination between art and boxing, between what they call the men of art and the men of action' (RTE, 2010). The moments of reconstituting memory and the conversations between the two older men are resonant of the strong boxing tradition of making heroes through the framework of the dialogue between the present and the past which so powerfully generates the endurances of hegemonic masculinity.

Even when a boxing film is overtly about a woman, it is hegemonic masculinity that is largely what dominates the discursive field. More specifically it is patriarchy, the explanatory concept used to explore and understand the dominance of men over women and of older men over younger men. One example is *Million Dollar Baby* (2005), ostensibly the story of a white woman who attempts to follow the more traditionally masculine path of achieving a route out of the trailer park into

financial success through the boxing ring in order to support her wayward and dependent family. Clint Eastwood, the film's director, also stars in the film as her trainer Frankie, alongside Hilary Swank as Maggie the boxer and Morgan Freeman as Eastwood's former sparring partner and friend, Eddie 'Scrap iron' Dupris. Maggie is the vehicle through which the film explores Eastwood's character, Frankie, and the problems and the dilemmas of contemporary masculinity (Woodward, 2006). Frankie's relationship with Scrap, which is deeply imbricated in hegemonic masculinity, takes precedence over Maggie's role as a boxing hero.

The invisibility of women is also part of their absence from the histories and legends that are the delivery systems of boxing culture as well as the empirical enfleshed absence of women from most gyms, until some increase in their presence, for example in Europe and the USA, relatively recently (Heiskanen, 2012). The real of boxing is not entirely separate from its dramas, but part of the assemblage. Boxing traditions are made through the capacities of boxing to recreate ordinary affects of masculinity in kinship ties and routine practices as well as through its cultural representations. This is beginning to change, albeit incrementally, through increased infiltration on women and of men who seek to engage in the sport and its embodied practices but not its traditions of hegemonic masculinity. Women are starting to occupy some of the space traditionally dominated by a particular version of masculinity and change boxing.

My own part in the process of making this film demonstrates the to and fro between inside and outside and the diverse components that make up sensation in relation to the affects of and upon boxing. Drama in the ring and on film, in the above example, are inseparable and are also core to boxing.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored alternative arguments and ways of explaining the relationships between the real and the dramatic and between bodies in boxing and their representations, for example, in films, which of course also have embodied, sentient audiences and viewers. Boxing, in all its myriad forms, has particular capacities to generate affects which range from the spectacular to the routine and has a powerful presence in the field of artistic and cinematic representation. Boxing demonstrates the flows of visceral forces that go beyond discourse and even beyond emotion and beyond conscious knowing, which cross boundaries of the particular field of boxing and its culture and the wider social and cultural terrain.

Pain, flesh and nerves mixed up with agency and vulnerability are central to boxing; it is as much about defeat as success and damage as well as the Noble Art. Indeed destruction is as much an ordinary affect of what happens in the ring as the routine damage to the hands in the gym. Boxing is also what Stallybrass and White called 'the attraction of repulsion' (Stallybrass and White, 1986:140). Although Stallybrass and White were drawing on the historical 'alarming conjuncture of the elites and the vulgar' (Stallybrass and White, 135) in the context of the nineteenth-century bourgeois interest in the slum dwellers as expressed in the novels of Charles Dickens, the expression captures the coming together of disgust, violence and moral narratives, which illustrates well the relationship between boxing and the wider society.

Although binaries such as sex gender differences and winning and losing may have some purchase in regimes of truth in boxing, an opposition between the real versus drama is not one that is sustainable. The interrelationship between inside and outside the ring is dynamic and the boundaries are blurred, but boxing, as practised, is not an isolated field, however traditional some of its values and its specific enfleshed practices. Boxing is both and this is why it has the capacity to generate such affects. These capacities operate through assemblages of power, economic, social, enfleshed, embodied practices, psychic investment to draw in and to exclude and to invoke sensations that are sensate and not always sensational, although boxing can certainly be spectacular and always offers that possibility.

One of the major affects of boxing is its capacity to generate a particular version of hegemonic masculinity which has considerable purchase among the networks largely of men, particularly those who are implicated in its peripheries as well as its core enfleshed engagements, whose participation also affects boxing.

Part of the appeal of boxing is the intensity of the activity for both participants and spectators. Boxing is not only constructed as sensational at some of its mega events, it also creates sensation which is unmediated, intense and direct. Sensation is most powerfully expressed in the distinction between the reality of the enfleshed presence of boxing and the virtual space of viewing at a distance which Joyce Carol Oates characterized as 'drama'. Boxing however has the capacities to generate affects and sensation which operate in diverse spaces through display and through representation, for example, cinematically, and in different art forms. Experiences are constituted through the event in which they take place through the processes and intensities in which people are implicated and that intentionality too is constituted through these processes rather than agency being the starting point of action. Boxing events include the routine enactments and the mega events and spectacles that create sensation in

those caught up in the event and are themselves sensational in the mixture of materialities. *A Bloody Canvas* was implicated in these processes and reflected and refracted those materialities and offers a good example of some of the disparate capacities of boxing in a set of systems and processes that are more complex and multi-directional than conventional narratives of existential heroes or of economic determinism in explaining the endurance of boxing.

This chapter has addressed the issues of the specificities of representational systems as cultural practices and how symbolic and discursive regimes and sport are connected; representations of boxing and boxing are co-constituted.

Boxing films are not only concerned with the construction of heroic figures and legendary narratives of either decent people who seek self-respect and to look after their families or angst-ridden existential heroes. Stories are part of the mix, but not all of it. Representational systems like Mailer's literary accounts of a fight at the start of this chapter and boxing films are part of systems and processes through which boxing culture and practice are made and which link bodies and representations. Sensation works two ways: between the fight and the spectators and between representations and bodies; it presents an alternative to approaches, which suggest that the sensation of spectatorship and viewing is always mediated and specifically that boxing is constructed by its myths and legends. The event is a mixture of different strands and systems of power, but bodies and flesh and representations are essential elements too. The complexity of the assemblage through which boxing culture is made suggests that boxing does have the capacity to produce transformations and the impact upon as well as to be affected by the wider social and cultural terrain. Boxing is not just the remnant of a bygone age and a traditional mix of entrenched attitudes and practices, although it does manifest particularly enduring qualities of sex gender categories, social and economic inequalities and enfleshed practices and qualities. The next chapter picks up on the possibilities and practicalities of change.

7

Transforming the Fight Game

This chapter looks at change and explores the extent to which boxing might contribute to change as well as reflecting and responding to shifts in social relations and cultural worlds beyond the sport. Sport presents a distinctive social world in many respects: one that is marked by competitive embodied practices and an exaggeration of market forces and reward by outcomes, as well as being an integral part of globalized economies and culture. Boxing is also particular within globalized sport through its mix of traditional affiliations, practices, oppressions and resistances as well as its associations with hegemonic masculinity. Although this sport is strongly competitive and based on the success/failure, winning/losing binaries, it has long been a site targeted by systems of governance as a space for the promotion of good citizenship and social inclusion and cohesion through wider participation in its practices. Boxing has a legacy of recruiting disadvantaged and excluded people, especially young men who might otherwise engage in illegitimate and less-acceptable forms of aggression and deviance, which accounts for the periodic resurgence of interest in boxing as a means of containing disaffected young men. Boxing is already actively involved in the promotion of diversity, although as this book has already demonstrated, boxing has also been part of exploitative systems and processes of oppression that are internal to the sport.

This chapter focuses on the transformations within boxing in relation to widening participation, and to the capacities which boxing has to generate other associations and cultures. Boxing and the wider cultural terrain are implicated in debates about the promotion of social inclusion through using sport to engage communities and underrepresented groups of people into wider creative and cultural projects. Both these issues have resonance with and are illustrated by developments in the 2012 Olympics when women were permitted to participate in competitive boxing in the games for the first time The connections between sport and the arts, as a particular dimension of culture, have been incorporated

into the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, which was the most ambitious to date at the Games and extended for a longer period than has been the case with other games in modern times. The Cultural Olympiad offered the promise of cultural diversity and a democratization of the arts in conjunction with a particular sport. For London 2012 there were attempts not only to build the canon of British heritage, for example, through the work of Shakespeare whose plays were performed in a vast range of languages at different venues in 2012 (Shakespeare, 2012), but also to integrate local heroes, such as young sport hopefuls and amateur artists through programmes like the Lloyds TSB Art of Sport project (Woodward, 2012a). This chapter explores some of the possibilities and promises afforded by a sport like boxing, both for change within the sport and for the impact which boxing might have through its connections to and encounters with other social, cultural and political systems.

Change is uneven and has not followed a linear path into late modernity and the twenty-first century and many transformations have been incremental. Social and cultural change involves more everyday popular engagements with boxing which have reconfigured what is democratic and egalitarian about the sport. Boxing presents a social and cultural puzzle; what seems to be an aggressive and violent a sport appears to be an anomaly in the twenty-first century in neoliberal democracies and those which aspire to neoliberalism. One of the routes through which change can be explored and traced is through the governance of sport; boxing has a large number of governing bodies and occupies a very public place in sporting controversies to which the regulating bodies of the sport have responded in various ways in order to effect change. This means looking at what the rules are inside boxing, at who decides and at how decisions are made.

Playing by the rules

Boxing has governing bodies; the British Boxing Board of Control (BBOFC, 2013), the European Boxing Union (EBU, 2013) and Nevadan Athletic Commission (Nevada, 2013). The sport also has sanctioning bodies, which award titles; the WBA (World Boxing Association), WBC (World Boxing Council), IBF (International Boxing Federation) and WBO (World Boxing Organization) each of which, in the tradition of global sport, has a women's section. Women's sport rarely has its own separate governing bodies. Boxing, like most sports, is divided into the amateur and the professional game and the women's and the men's game, with the women's game as a subsection of the men's. Amateur boxing is an Olympic

(and Commonwealth) sport and has its own world championships besides being practised in colleges and clubs and regulated by the Amateur International Boxing Association (AIBA, 2013).

Professional boxing, as the form of the sport that is most popular across the globe, is what is generally construed as boxing within the more public discourses through which ideas and practices of the sport are reproduced. This emphasis on the professional game arises from its emergence from prizefighting dating back to the seventeenth, through to the nineteenth century, but amateur boxing has achieved much higher status in many parts of the world not the least because of the growth of the modern Olympics. Cuba has dominated the Olympics over the last 40 years, having fielded seven of the last ten heavyweight champions. Cuba's boxing culture is distinctive in its emphasis on amateur boxing culture, which illustrates the best of the Olympics and the amateur sport. This spirit is exemplified by the statement of three times Cuban heavyweight champion Teófilo Stevenson, from the medal podium in 1980 that despite having been reputedly offered one million dollars to fight Muhammad Ali professionally, 'What is one million dollars compared to the love of eight million Cubans' (in Goldblatt and Acton, 2011:107). It is, however, the professional game that receives more attention, generates more profit, has the attraction of remuneration for boxers and is more likely to be tainted by criminality and corruption. There have been some instances of questionable practices at the Olympics, although most of these have been around politically questioned or challenged decisions such as the victory of the South Korean boxer Si Hun over the American Roy Jones Jnr on the basis of three times fewer landed punches. Amateur boxing carries less of the weight of wider corrupt financial practices and more debate about decisions and the political context, for example, in relation to the host city and nation of the Olympics.

Hence the IOC (International Olympic Committee) (IOC, 2013) plays a key role in the development of all Olympic sports, including boxing (Boxing IOC, 2012). The games have most powerfully provided a stepping-off point for great boxers who have, like Mohammad Ali, won gold medals and then moved into the professional game. London 2012 offered possibilities for women to embark upon a route into wider public recognition and visibility when women were at last allowed to join in for the first time since the exhibition in 1904 (which was a display and not a medal competition). Amateur boxing offers opportunities and technical possibilities which have wider applications. For example, the point scoring system of amateur boxing lends itself well to measurement technologies such as automated scoring systems which have been

introduced by the Australian Institute for Sport. Time and temporalities are central to sport, as is manifest in particular ways in boxing (Woodward, 2012b).

The amateur sport retains not only popularity, but also some status because of its more local identifications with the nation, in some parts of the world such as states formerly within the Soviet Union and most notably Cuba (History of Cuba, 2013, Sugden, 1996). It was not until 2013 that Cuba ended five decades of commitment to amateur boxing by banning the professional game, when Cuba joined the international semi-pro league (Cuba Boxing, 2013). Nonetheless Cuba remains a model for the celebration of the techniques of amateur boxing. Apart from the Olympics, amateur boxing like most amateur sports remains the poor relation of the professional sport, not only financially for participants but also in relation to global visibility and involvement in the media-sponsorship nexus. The amateur–professional split at the Olympics has, of course, become blurred and these boundaries have been crossed and in many cases they have been all but obliterated (Lenskyj and Wagg, 2012).

Amateur boxing has the advantages of greater protection for participants: three rounds per bout with one-minute breaks, headgear and gloves with a protective strip and low-level belts. Professional boxing, on the other hand, has 12 rounds (reduced from 15, after the death of a boxer in the early 1980s). There are variations, notably in Australia, although professional bouts do not permit headgear, but do allow boxers to suffer considerable damage before the referee intervenes to stop the fight. Some of these consistencies also arise from the risks and dangers of prizefighting and are part of the demand for the governance of the sport to negotiate the tensions between the excitement boxing offers and the reality of its enfleshed risks to those who participate (McIlvanney, 1996).

The organizing bodies and regulatory frameworks of boxing have emerged at key moments in the sport's history through Broughton's rules and Queensberry rules into the growth of ruling bodies and concomitant titles of the twentieth century. The rules for men's boxing have remained fairly constant since the Queensberry rules were instated in 1867. The original 15 rounds may have been reduced to 12, but each still lasts three minutes with a minute in between each round when boxers return to their assigned corners. Boxing rounds have generated another expression which has wide currency, viz. that of 'going the distance'.

The system for judging who wins each round is well established as are the criteria for a knockout. The rules about where punches can be targeted, notably the prohibition in western boxing against hitting below the belt, tripping, holding, pushing, biting or spitting, for example. Similarly, the rules demonstrate

fair play in relation to the specificities of the body: boxers are not allowed to hit the back or kidneys or back of the neck or head, known as a rabbit punch. Such violations are classified as fouls, which can lead to the disqualification of a boxer (Hatmaker, 2004). The regulatory system, although challenged by, for example media accounts which post their own scores, remains the purview of the rules of the sport as agreed by all governing bodies. Rule breaking can be informal and flexible, however, as sports writer Ed Smith, albeit about a different sport (his own being cricket), argues (Smith, 2009). It is not only the rigid framework of the formal rules of governance which apply; in boxing those in the ring, including referees (and those ringside), also exercise their own judgement and this too is hotly disputed, for example in debating whether a fight should have been called before further damage was incurred by a boxer.

Regulatory systems are an important element in the processes through which sport is made visible. Contradictions and debates which take place in the public arena often include challenges to those rules, for example in relation to knockout countdowns, when a fight should be called and even more general issues highlight the wearing of head protection. There are formal and informal rules as well as visible, public shifts that can be subject to criteria of measurement and quantification as well as more everyday practices and marginal, incremental changes in the routine practice of boxing within the local space of the gym. The possibilities of transformation may be largely incremental and small-scale in boxing and even if they have to be sanctioned by the international governing bodies, they are often implemented and inspired by local practices in the gym. Some of the most important changes are taking place in the gym, not least in relation to women's participation.

Everyday in the gym

The routine and ordinary practices of boxing, as lived and experienced in the local gym, are central to boxing culture and to the endurance of the sport in the twenty-first century. Gyms too are changing. In the late twentieth century, although there was variance in the communities served by boxing gyms and ethnic and generational and even social class composition of different gyms, there were very few gyms where women routinely trained (Sammons, 1988, Sugden, 1996, Wacquant, 1995a, 1995c, 2004, Woodward, 2004). For example, Sugden reports that 'While women may be allowed in the arena they are almost never seen inside the boxing gym. Not once in the many months I spent in boxing clubs

in Hartford, Belfast and Havana did I encounter a woman' (Sugden, 1996:193). Wacquant also describes the sexualized aspects of the exclusion of women which is evident in many sports, where sexual abstinence is demanded of male athletes in the period just before a competitive event (Wacquant, 1995a). This phenomenon is a patriarchal taboo which still has strong currency although it might be less simplistically expressed and construed as the need for athletes to focus on the embodied performance of their sport, which in boxing is also coded as aggressive, pugilistic acts.

In the twenty-first century, there is evidence of change, albeit with varying degrees of impact (Boddy, 2008, Lafferty and McKay, Woodward, 2008). Some researchers, however, suggest that women's participation is becoming taken for granted and is rarely now called into question (Heiskanen, 2012). Heiskanen does include social class variances in her sample. The women boxing in the Texas gyms are more likely to be middle-class students or faculty members, whereas the men are more consistently Latino working class. These shifts involve the intersection of global change, such as the development of the women's game and decisions made by governing bodies like the IOC and more routine engagements in training and in the gym and in expressions of interest in boxing at different levels. This is also the case with martial arts which in its translation into different locations across the globe has become popular among different groups of people, including more of a social class and gender mix as well as more diversity of ethnicities. Women, for example middle-class professionals, are attracted to forms of boxing, like kick-boxing, which has recently increased in popularity among women in the west, because of its possibilities for self-defence as well as the fitness regime it affords (Women Kickboxing, 2013). Thai boxing too has achieved some popularity among women (Moore, 2012).

Boxing has always had different temporal identifications because of the sport's strong links to diasporic and migrant people who have moved in and out of boxing as they have experienced social change. The transformations in boxing can be traced to different factors. First, there is the changing social and political terrain in which social inclusion and more democratic policies have been developed and implored in accordance with, albeit uneven but nonetheless more, egalitarian participation in the workplace and in public life, for example through shifts in gender and race equality. Second, these forces that are in play across different fields of social life are in dialogue with the enfleshed practices of boxing, which generates its own transformations and manifests particular relational shifts. For example, the pugilism of the Noble Art and its associations with defensive body practices and the promotion of embodied self-esteem

and self-respect make boxing attractive as training in self-defence. Women, in particular, have taken up martial arts as a means of gaining confidence in self-defence. This is linked to the impact of the women's movement and feminist politics, some of which has entered the discourse of equality politics to challenge the sexualization of women and of women's bodies in sport (Hargreaves, 1996, 1994, Woodward, 2009) as in the wider field of social relations (Levy, 2006, Woodward and Woodward, 2009). Self-defence is also predicated on fear and the risk of attack which are implicated in the practice of masculinity and of patriarchy as political and social forces which underpin inequalities in social relations. Violence against women, whether in the domestic arena or in more public spaces, remains a cultural assumption as well as a routine practice. Women's participation in boxing, even non-competitively, subverts some of the narratives of traditional masculinity, coded as aggressive and physically powerful, which have endured in boxing culture.

Women's engagement in sport, which extends across a wide range of activities, is based on a desire to participate in a set of embodied activities which carry positive and productive meanings rather than being implicated in an exploitative regime in which women are either marginalized or sexualized and objectified (Lenskyj and Wagg, 2012). The body projects of late modernity (Shilling, 2008) have increasingly been translated into sporting projects by women too. Women having greater access to boxing clubs (Heiskanen, 2012) means that boxing and martial arts have been put into discourse and now constitute a possibility for women in ways that hitherto might have been unthinkable.

Local access is central to the possibilities of participating in boxing; the gym and the trainer are where it all starts (*A Bloody Canvas*, 2010, Heiskanen, 2012). Because of boxing's links with local networks which are usually located in impoverished districts, the sport has a head start in the equality stakes, however contradictory the dialogue between exploitation and the promotion of inclusion may be. Boxing already attracts those who are often underrepresented in other fields, notably those of respectable citizenship and more areas of affluent employment. It is, however, only recently that women, as an underrepresented group within the sport, have been offered the possibility of boxing competitively. Thus, gender politics are the locus in which debates about equality are most pertinent in boxing. Whilst self-defence might motivate the desire to participate in boxing in its various forms on the part of women, boxing does not carry the same weightage as a sport which systems of governance can deploy and promote to channel the energies of the disaffected, for women as it does for men. However, the politics and policies of social cohesion offer another means of exploring change.

Promoting diversity in sport

As a distinct field of inquiry and as a globalized phenomenon which invokes strong affiliations, locally, internationally and nationally, sport, including boxing, is attractive to governments for the promotion of social inclusion and cohesion (Wagg, 2004). Equality and difference and the politics of multiculturalism play out in specific ways in sport and boxing has its own distinctions. Sport has often not been acknowledged as political; it has even been suggested that sport and politics do not mix, although few serious commentators or critics would agree, but the links between sport and play, and between boxing, in particular, and bodies and corporeality, mean that sport is not always addressed in wider political debates. Sport is a domain that has enormous social, cultural and economic importance in the contemporary world, which can clearly be mobilized for the purposes of promoting social inclusion and cohesion. Paul Gilroy argues that, although sport is an anti-political terrain, lacking the orientations of 'respectable politics' (Gilroy, 2005:112), sporting events follow the pattern of racialized politics and political conflicts are reflected in the rhythms of sporting events. Sport also generates conflicts and is complicit in the politics of race (Carrington, 2010) and the politics of difference (Woodward, 2009, Woodward and Woodward, 2009). Boxing, however, opposes the trend in many ways. Whilst representing collective endeavour in resisting racialized, ethnicized class oppression, it has been represented as an individualized project. Boxing also incorporates intentionality into the mix.

Sport presents many possibilities for the creation of a more socially inclusive society by offering opportunities for engagement and participation to those on the margins, whether through economic disadvantage and poverty or subjection to the social forces of racism, ethnicization or on grounds of sex, sexuality or disability. There has been an explosion of the promotion of the politics of diversity as part of neoliberal governance which in recent years has increasingly included sport, although sport demonstrates some of the particular dilemmas of diversity, especially in relation to the tension between equality and difference and between policies and outcomes. Practices include governmental and non-governmental initiatives, for example the work of anti-racist organizations; in football, these organizations engage with the relationship between clubs and fans and address the tension between 'outsider' communities, classified as disadvantaged, and the related notion of belonging and 'insiders'.

Such interventions can be seen as creating an assemblage of persons through the mechanisms of governmentality (Rose, 1996, 1999), where cultural diversity provides the framework for new sets of practices and re-conceptualizations.

In sport, this is not so much recognition of multiculturalism, because the promotion of inclusion is in a bounded, mono-cultural field of achievement; sport is highly competitive and the main criterion by which success is measured and decisions made remains outcomes in competition, that is, winning or losing. The *mens sana in corpore sano* – mantra of policymakers and practitioners who promote sport by arguing that healthy minds and good citizenship are strongly linked to the healthy, fit body – plays out in contradictory ways in boxing, especially in contemporary societies. The physical damage which haunts boxing is more troubling in the context of pugilism than in most other sports. The emphasis on corporeality and healthy bodies does offer a more varied set of outcomes than success in competitive sport but in professional sport, there is little scope for positive discrimination or affirmative action in selecting players or choosing champions. Multiculturalism in the western neoliberal states has often failed to acknowledge the heterogeneity of people who are the target of such policies, a critique which has particular resonance in sport. Boxing already attracts the disadvantaged and marginalized, although there are temporal shifts in the participation of different ethnic groups and migrant peoples in the sport. Boxing, like many sports, has long been seen as the route out of the ghetto or poverty and a means of achieving success through the investment of physical capital, especially by young men.

Boxing presents its own line on the promotion of diversity and social cohesion, but one which still has resonance with other strategies and policies in this growing field of the interventions of governance. One of the recurrent tropes in the history of modern boxing is the promotion of boxing as a means of regulating the behaviours of young men who might otherwise turn to less disciplined and less legitimate, if not illegitimate, modes of combat (Wacquant, 2004, Woodward, 2004). Trainers in local gyms frequently reiterate the justification of their devotion to the Noble Art in the opportunities the sport provides for a regulated framework of physical activity in which to expend their energies, raise their own self-esteem and possibly provide an income, if they are able to turn professional (Woodward, 1997b). Boxing, in all its manifestations, provides a particular avenue into the deployment of sport for the promotion of social inclusion and cohesion. MMA offers different possibilities and has also been taken up as an alternative to western boxing (Channon and Matthews, 2013, Hirose, 2010).

Policy interventions to promote social inclusion are concerned to 'mobilize prevailing interpretations of the word "community"' (Wagg, 2004:16). Community is a problematic concept, both within the academy and critical commentary, and

in the spaces and places of lived experience. In the context of diversity policies in sport, those included are seen as belonging to a community because they are in some way 'outside' the mainstream. The notion creates difficulties nonetheless for a number of reasons. First, social change has led to reconstituted allegiances of class and kinship and in the geographical location of communities. Boxing communities, although spatially located, do not have the same configurations as communities in, for example, mass participation sports like football. Second, economic factors have led to the exclusion of some social groups which do not have bounded local communities and are part of the mobilities of migration, especially in boxing. Third, the notion of community has been distorted and undermined because it has been added to all manners of government initiatives to spread the rosy glow of inclusivity and indicate feelings of inclusiveness and the overcoming of social deprivation, whilst doing little if anything to address economic and social inequalities. Community also carries troubling relationships to fans and practitioners, In boxing, the practitioners are from the disadvantaged, marginalized and racialized communities and the spectators are often from the most affluent (Ali and Durham, 1975) and even the mega-rich celebrities who watch fights in audiences that include superstars like Madonna (Woodward, 2006).

Boxing has its own sense of community through the networks of local gyms. The spatial dimension of boxing is crucial to a sense of belonging (Heiskanen, 2012). However, gyms and camps in Muay Thai have traditionally been the site of exclusion on grounds of gender. Although there may be some elision between mixed competitions and the categories of those classified as men and those as women each having their own separate but equally valued competitions, whereby embodied differences are used to justify the exclusion of women from the sport at all, the enfleshed bodies of the participants are crucial to the debate about widening participation.

Boxing presents a material version of the equality and difference debate which has informed feminist discussion (Pateman, 1989, Scott, 1997), for example, in relation to employment law and the specificities of women's needs as mothers. Debate has been focused on the incompatibility and conflict between equality and difference: if you have equality you cannot also allow for difference. There is little potential for the application of equal opportunities policies in terms of equal meaning the same treatment of women and men in sport because of the materialities of corporeal difference. Arguments about equality and difference in the experience of pregnancy and giving birth demand recognition that in order to participate fully in the labour force women have to be treated differently from men. As Joan Scott has argued when 'equality and difference are paired

dichotomously, they structure an impossible choice. If one adopts equality, one is forced to accept the notion of difference is antithetical to it. If one opts for difference, one admits that equality is unattainable' (Scott, 1997:765). It is worth reviewing some of these debates because they provide an important context for the discussion of the promise of transformation which is one of the strands of globalizing boxing.

Whilst feminists have engaged with debates about equality in relation to childbirth and the specificities of women's embodied experiences, they have far less often, if at all, considered the relevance of a sport like boxing. Arguments have been made for the recognition of women's enfleshed capacities and for the visibility of, for example, mother–daughter relationships (Irigaray, 1991), as well as the traditional father–son, patriarchal lineage that so permeate boxing. Sport is a site at which differences and inequalities are maintained and forged and even created. Joyce Carol Oates's statement about the gendered dichotomy between childbirth and boxing(Oates, 1987), rather than reinforcing the opposition, can be used to present fuller support for arguments about the politics of difference (Irigaray, 1991, Woodward and Woodward, 2009) and the power geometries of sex gender.

The problem in boxing, however, is largely not that women want precisely the same treatment as men, especially not if this means mixed fights, although as boxing is classified by weight, it affords the possibility. Upper body weight and strength differences between women and men suggest that overall body weight might not be the only criterion of measurement A consideration of equality and difference in relation to the regulation and promotion of boxing is more concerned with how difference is constituted and why, in the sex gender binary, one side of the relationship is so privileged over the other. Arguments about women's participation in boxing, even within the context of the amateur sport at the Olympics, although often expressed in the language of enfleshed difference and material embodied inequalities, are more often about the privileging of one set of bodies over the other set of bodies so that the men's game is visible and has the potential for much higher financial rewards than the women's within existing systems. A more productive use of debates about equality and difference in this case, is 'not to privilege one term at the expense of the other, but to explore the cost of their maintenance' (Grosz, 1994:32). It is useful to unravel some of the processes through which inequalities are maintained and how a politics of difference might play out in a field in which corporeality is so central. One such area of investigation is recent developments in women's boxing and the inclusion of the sport at the London 2012 Olympics.

Women fight back

In 2009 the IOC agreed to add women's boxing to the list of Olympic sports for the London Games in 2012 (IOC Decision Women, 2012). The IOC approved the inclusion of women's boxing under its systematic review of the sports programme which revealed that, whilst men could compete in 164 events, women could only enter 124. Although it was the recognition of the inequity in the number of events that triggered the IOC decision, the number of events also proved to present something of the challenge to women's inclusion. Some of the opposition was expressed in terms of the loss of events in men's sports, which given the previous privileging of men's events might seem unreasonable, but this discussion was allied to other debates about which sports were and were not to be included. For example, although squash is a popular global sport, it is not part of the Olympics. However arguments are expressed, there is a blurring of rationales in the debate which in boxing was mainly based on a defence of the traditions of male privilege, which are the legacy of the modern games.

Three women's events were staged along with the ten men's Olympic events. Boxing had been the only sport reserved for men at the games and the decision was contentious, sometimes framed by the impossibility of boxing as a civilized practice in the twenty-first century for men or women. Boxing, as a sport, has been subject to medical criticism for a long time. Mostly the debate centred on whether women should engage in a sport, the main purpose of which is to inflict damage on your opponent and, in the professional game, possibility to knock the other person unconscious. The decision was viewed as an incongruous development as if women's boxing was a completely new Olympic sport for women. So invisible has women's boxing been and so hidden from history that few know it has a history that dates back to the eighteenth century in many parts of the world (Hargreaves, 1994). The display of women's boxing at the third modern Olympics in St Louis in 1904 represented a brief and largely unremarked moment in the twentieth-century Games. Its invisibility during much of the twentieth century can partly, if not mostly, be accounted for by an almost complete absence of the women's sport on television, as well as from professional fights with big purses. Women amateurs were not participating in the Olympic Games, during a period when men's boxing can be seen to have reached the height of popularity, especially in the heavyweight division up until the last decade of the twentieth century when it began to decline, but the sport was being practised. The celebrity status of men's boxing and its associations with masculinity in the twentieth

century made any ordinary, everyday participation by women unthinkable, even if women continued to box through the twentieth century.

The history of women's boxing is somewhat different from that of many other sports, which may account for some of the controversies which have surrounded it. These differences largely arise from its associations from the 1720s with prizefighting and fairground performances (Hargreaves, 1996), a legacy which also haunts contemporary debate even if there is generally lack of recognition of the extent of women's participation. In the nineteenth century women's boxing was prohibited in many US states and in Europe and banned in Britain in 1880 which contributes to the negative configuration of the women's sport and its associations with illegality and the marginal activities and the encounters of fairground booths. Up until the mid-twentieth century, there had been exhibitions and bouts on both sides of the Atlantic with popular fighters like 'Battling' Barbara Buttrick, who actually did have a fight screened on television in 1954. At the London Olympics in 2012, Buttrick – at the age of 82 – at last received some public visibility and recognition, which is evidence of the transformations taking place in boxing culture. At the London Games which featured the most ambitious Cultural Olympiad of the modern games, there was an exhibition of women's boxing staged at Buttrick's home city of Hull in the UK, which included images of 'Battling Barbara' (Boxing Cultural Olympiad, 2012). Other such events are discussed later in this chapter. Change may be incremental but it is only through being 'put into discourse' (Foucault, 1981) and made visible and thinkable, however gradually and incrementally, that women's boxing will be part of the wider culture of boxing.

It was not until the 1970s that any US states allowed women to box, permitted new licences and approved bouts with more than four rounds. So, the marginalization of the women's sport continued. The men's sport might still be haunted by, and always in conversation with, corruption and illegality but men's boxing successfully negotiated the transformations of communications and broadcast technological advances in the twentieth century in ways that were never available to the women's game. Illegal practices enhanced the dominant version of masculinity, but could only damage any conceptualization of heroic femininity. Although in 1993, women's amateur boxing was integrated into the rules of the US amateur programme, it was not until 1996 in the USA that women's professional boxing was formally accepted. Christy Martin's bout with Deirdre Gogarty marked the birth of modern professional women's boxing in the USA and it was another two years before Jane Couch won her legal battle on grounds of sex discrimination with the British Board of Control in the UK.

The three types of women's boxing, amateur, professional and unlicensed have been acknowledged, but the media has only recently been at all attentive to the possibilities of the women's sport, although cage fighting has had some visibility if not always for the most legitimate and transparent of reasons. Boxing's regulatory bodies cover women's and men's sport and amateur and professional boxing are two officially sanctioned codes of boxing, regulated by internationally recognized bodies (Woodward, 2009) with responsibility for managing change in boxing (Women Boxing, 2012). In 1994, at its 13th congress in Beijing, the Amateur International Boxing Association stated that amateur boxing was to be divided into men's and women's competitions and accepted new rules for women's boxing, and approved the first European Cup for Women in 1999 and the first World Championships for women in 2001 (AIBA, 2013, AIBA Women, 2012) which opened up the possibilities for the IOC decision for London 2012.

Boxing remains controversial, both for women and for men, and new regulations have been brought in to make the sport safer, although boxing is far from the top of the tables of severe injury risks. According to an Australian survey in 1998 reported by AIBA (AIBA, Women, 2013) boxing came tenth in a league table of sporting injuries with rugby league well ahead, followed by sports such as rugby union, motorcycling, cricket and soccer. Risk of injury however remains a strong element in the arguments about women's boxing. There are attacks on boxing *per se* and there are arguments against women's specific engagement in the sport which draw upon the gendered legacies of boxing and its patriarchal cultures.

Women boxing London 2012: Lead-up and legacy

Amateur boxing is, however, a long way from prizefighting. In the twenty-first century, there is considerable interest in the sport at all levels. Boxing is a highly regulated sport which many women enjoy (Women Boxing, 2012), as a means of keeping fit, as a disciplined regime through which you can gain self-esteem and feel good about your body and as a competitive sport in which you can not only achieve a personal best but also gain pride in representing your country and engaging in global sport, for example at the Olympics. Women have fought for the right to join in and in 2012 they made it to the Olympics, which means that the women's sport is generating its own key players with the potential to become heroic figures within the sport and within the wider cultural terrain. The Olympics presented the promise of the configuration of such figures

within particular locations with national attachments as well as international recognition, such as four times world amateur boxing champion, minimum weight boxer, MC Mary Kom of India (Mary Kom, 2012).

The popularity of women's boxing is apparent not only in the increasing number of women taking part in local gyms but also in engaging in international competition. This enthusiasm was demonstrated at the 7th edition of the AIBA women's World Boxing Championships in Qinhuangdao in May 2012 (Women Boxing, 2012). 343 boxers attended from 77 nations including nations which had not hitherto been represented in women's boxing at this level: Afghanistan, Armenia, Austria, Bolivia, Columbia, DR Congo, Honduras, Jamaica, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Uzbekistan. It is the inclusion of particular nations which has been the source of some of the most voluble and visible media coverage of women's boxing, the most unlikely and hence remarkable nation being Afghanistan, with its tradition of patriarchal culture and most specifically Taliban rule which excluded women for any aspect of public life.

The vast majority of media coverage in the lead up to 2012 focused upon the anomaly of women who had been banned from participating in any sport in a Muslim country where women as a class have experienced powerful forces of exclusion through the patriarchal proscriptions of Taliban rule, taking up boxing as their chosen sport. Although the war-torn nation of Afghanistan does not have a tradition of participation in the Olympics for men or women, it was still surprising that boxer Sadaf Rahimi, the only member of the Afghan team, was only the third woman ever to represent her country. Rahimi, aged 18, who weighed in at 118.8 lbs (54 kg), became well known both within and outside Afghanistan. She was reported as saying that she was proud to fight for women and Afghanistan and that she was inspired by seeing Leila Ali boxing (Afghan Women Boxing Guardian, 2012). This story is one that is resonant of male boxing legends configured within boxing mythologies within the lineage of heroic figures gaining honour and self-respect in circumstances of deprivation and disruption. However, the distinctive factor about Rahimi as a heroic figure, is that although she was avowedly fighting for her country she also gave voice to a feminist politics of difference by saying that she is also fighting for women. Male boxers are usually fighting within the iterative performance of masculinity which is made and remade through their engagement, but this is not a disruptive process. Rather it is one of the reinstatement of conformity and collusion with hegemonic masculinities. By boxing, women like Rahimi were able to make a political statement which upsets the order of things and opens up possibilities of change. Women boxing in such circumstances constitutes a

political intervention and more than an empirical shift in which categories of person are involved in sporting events; it is indicative of change.

The western media was not slow to note the irony of such athletes training at the Ghazi stadium in Kabul where the Taliban regime held public executions (Afghan Women Boxing Guardian, 2012). Another irony is the celebration of resistance through a sport which might appear in other discursive fields to be outdated and primitive in its enfleshed practices. Women's engagement is interpreted in different ways, many of which are translated as resistance to oppression and an example of Afghanistan participating more positively in world affairs (Afghan Women Boxing, 2012).

In London 2012, the final of the women's flyweight boxing was held at the Excel arena in London on 9 August 2012 at 16.15. Team GB's Nicola Adams fought the Chinese champion Ren Cancan. In the semi-finals Adams had already defeated India's MC Mary Com. This was competition of some significance and not without contestation outside rather than inside the ring. However, inside the ring this was a fast-moving competition, fast moving and clean. In round two, Adams landed a great left on Cancan, followed by a right to the temple. Adams looked good and by round three was dancing. The *coup de grace* was a left hook to finish it off (Woodward, 2012b). These are not just my words; they are the kind of language used in commentaries of the fight such as those on the BBC (BBC Medals, 2012, Nicola Adams Stats, 2012).

Adams's gold medal was the culmination of a long journey, for women's boxing as well as for the athlete herself. The build-up to this fight can be traced through a process of conflicting feelings and emotions as well as a circuitous narrative of institutional resistance and negotiation, which had led up to the IOC's decision to include the women's sport in the Olympics.

During the games themselves we heard stories of the life choices of boxers like Katie Taylor and especially Nicola Adams which has opened up new ways of thinking which can inform a cultural legacy. These narratives included the traditional biographical journey not dissimilar to that followed by young men on the margins taking the boxing route out of the ghetto. In the case of Nicola Adams this route was produced within a discourse of the intersection of different inequalities (Guardian Women's Boxing, 2012). Adams had experienced marginalization through her class position and sexuality and as a black woman. Boxing has traditionally been a sport for the investment of physical capital chosen by migrant young men but what is significant about the ways in which women's boxing was put into discourse in 2012 is the inclusion of gendered exclusion and the politics of difference in relation to sex gender and sexuality.

Whether large numbers of young women take up the sport or not, it is now at least on the agenda. Sex gender and sexuality are now more explicitly part of the assemblage of what makes up boxing and its culture.

The debate is ambivalent and contradictory in relation to the political possibilities of women's boxing. On the one hand, it is expressive of challenge and resistance but on the other the field which women have not entered is one which is also deeply patriarchal and traditional in many of its values. Women who are caught up in a sexual politics of intentionality and resistance now meet the restrictions of the governing bodies of international sport which welcomes the new entrants to boxing with suggestion that women should wear skirts in the ring so that viewers will know that they are watching women and not men (BBC AIBA, 2012) Although the decision was rescinded if it ever got further than a few public statements, it demonstrates the culture of sport and the contradictory nature of what can be read as liberatory and what is repressive. Such statements by regulatory bodies, when others have been issued in relation to women's attire in sports like basketball, also suggest that a simple Orientalist binary (Said, 1978) between the progressive west and what is construed as the reactionary east or 'other' is far from convincing. Patriarchy permeates the global culture of sport as it does other fields and social and cultural terrains. The inclusion of the women's event in the games in 2012 is instructive in exploring some of the points of connection and disruption between power axes as well as demonstrating the uneven processes through which change takes place.

Boxing and culture: Culture and boxing

One of the strategies through which social inclusion policies are directed links sport to other cultural activities and target communities which might have more involvement in one area than another or might be excluded from or underrepresented in sport and other cultural fields. The Cultural Olympiad which accompanied London 2012, but which included activities across the UK, is an example of such a set of practices which are informed by widening participation policies.

The inclusion of women's boxing in 2012 triggered the inclusion of cultural practices connected to women's boxing, and to boxing culture more widely, demonstrating the two-way relationship between the enfleshed practices of sport and those of other forms of social and cultural engagement. For example *Girls in the Ring* was a contribution to the Cultural Olympiad which was assembled

by journalist Lee Karen Stow who came from Hull, which is in the part of the UK where flyweight boxer Battling Barbara Buttrick was born. The exhibition featured 20 women boxers including Barbara Buttrick, who started her career in 1948, initially in boxing booths that toured fairs and carnivals and became an early female champion.

The project was avowedly inspired by the inclusion of women's boxing in the 2012 Olympics and the realization by the journalist who compiled the exhibition that boxing was increasing in popularity among women. Stow was surprised that within 12 months of the International Olympic Committee making women's boxing an Olympic sport in 2009, the number of female competitive boxers increased by 25 per cent to 868, according to the British Amateur Boxing Association.

Buttrick had to leave the UK, of course, in order to pursue her career in boxing and at the time of the 2012 games, she was still living in Florida, and remains the president of the Women's International Boxing Federation (WIBF) at the age of 82 (Cultural Olympiad Hull, 2012). *Girls in the Ring* is one example of a cultural project which puts women's boxing into discourse and onto the public agenda with links to place and to central figures, even boxing heroes.

The exhibition was also displayed in the northern English city of Bradford, which has a strong boxing tradition. Bradford is home to the women's boxing academy and has more women boxers than any other British city. Thus the exhibition was linked to boxing events and displays of the embodied practices of boxing by women as well as its cultural representations (Girls in the Ring Bradford, 2012).

The Cultural Olympiad also inspired a series of cultural events associated with the culture of boxing, its specificities and histories, especially as represented in men's boxing. King Pea's *Great Boxing Booth Revival* toured a contemporary version of the old fairground boxing booth to 15 agricultural shows across Cumbria, Northumberland and Durham in the north of England during June 2012. This series of events demonstrates the role of objects and things in generating affects in sport. The booth plays a key role in the history of boxing for both women and men and is a strong element in what made and makes boxing a source of popular entertainment and an opportunity for engagement. The booth is an artwork, containing a boxing ring in which demonstrations are staged including a variety of sports and cultural performances (Cultural Olympiad North East, 2012). This event in the 2012 Cultural Olympiad brought together objects, things, artefacts, boxing bodies, spectators, entertainment and art. Such exhibitions reclaimed the ring – and the booth – for women as well as

men and, to deploy Foucault's terms, put women's boxing 'into discourse' and made it possible to think seriously about women as boxers.

The Cultural Olympiad also included music as one of the art forms used to provide synergies and connections between art and sport. The Cultural Olympiad's music festival for 2012 used jazz with its legacy of race and resistance to re-create the drama behind one of the most historic fights in boxing history. The 1938 rematch in which hard-hitting American legend Joe Louis defended his heavyweight title against former German champion Max Schmeling was the subject of a new musical composition for the Cultural Olympiad. Louis reigned as heavyweight champion for nearly 12 years and was the first black champion since Jack Johnson more than 20 years before.

The Brown Bomber was one of the 20 new 12-minute music pieces from a range of styles which won a competition to be part of the Cultural Olympiad arts programme. This cultural event was inspired by involvement with diversity and social inclusion strategies bringing together heroic boxing legends, racialized struggles, the politics of race and the contemporary politics of diversity through a combination of a jazz composer and pianist Julian Joseph and a more local community group, the Hackney Music Development Trust, to work on the relationship between Louis, The Brown Bomber of the title, and Max Schmeling, 'Hitler's Champion', during the height of the German propaganda campaign when Schmeling had been billed as a supreme being in Germany after beating Louis two years earlier. This piece was one of the 20 selected by a panel chaired by BBC radio three controller and director of the London prom, Roger Wright, from the submissions to a competition for pieces inspired by the dynamism of Olympic and Paralympic sports and the passion of human endeavour. The pieces were performed at official events in the Olympics and on BBC radio three (Cultural Olympiad Joe Louis, 2012).

Another part of the UK which has strong links to boxing was the site of a Cultural Olympiad event which combined art and boxing. Northern Ireland's Cultural Olympiad programme offered the Ulster American Folk Park's Fighting Irishmen project directly involving young people from boxing clubs near Omagh in the interpretation of an exhibition on emigration through the story of the Irish history of boxing as one of the Inspire projects of which there have been 12 to mark the Cultural Olympiad programme (Cultural Olympiad Northern Ireland, 2012). These events, with points of connection between the arts and boxing, demonstrate social and cultural change and an interrelationship between boxing and the arts, rather than boxing simply being the source of inspiration for individualized artistic projects, or even commercial artistic projects like

films. Discourse and enfleshed practices are part of the relational processes through which boxing culture is made, remade and transformed. These events draw upon boxing's capacities for diversity, opportunities and even heroism in a relational and iterative process, whereby change involves transformations in boxing and in its impacts and representations, for example in the translations of boxing into other cultural forms which seek to capture and interpret its expressions and intensities. Some of these cultural events also use the notion of a heroic figure who is constituted through processes of representation and through associations with boxing and especially with its body practices and social and political narratives.

Conclusion

This chapter has suggested some of the mechanisms through which change might be effected and has considered the relationship between the different and diverse elements which make up transformations, however incremental. Progress is incremental and it is unlikely that any transformations will be revolutionary given that the synergies between the social worlds of boxing and other social and cultural fields are always affected by the centrality of market forces and the persistence of inequalities in the wider social terrain.

The regulatory bodies of boxing have played key roles in the transformations of the body practices of the sport, as the historical development of the sport and the increase in apparatuses of health and safety and the protection of boxers and the reduction of risk demonstrate. The development of the amateur sport and the role of boxing in the Olympics have also contributed to the ways in which boxing has changed and progressed in relation to other social and cultural changes as well as conforming to particular trends. These developments have also taken place within the context of the globalization of sport and the growth in boxing's regulatory bodies has also facilitated more title fights and more scope for public visibility, including the amateur game and the Olympics, which has had particular impact on the women's sport.

The discussion in this chapter demonstrates both the promise of sport in general and boxing in particular, however contradictory such aspirations may be in a sport so deeply embedded in traditional values and especially traditional masculinities. Whilst sport has been the target of government interventions to promote good citizenship and social inclusion for example, through policies which have become embedded within neoliberal regimes governance, boxing

can be seen as a particular case. Boxing's affinities with migrant people and those who have experienced poverty, racism and deprivation mean that the sport has long been attractive to those living on the margins. The very disaffected young men whom the government might seek to draw into respectable citizenship as stakeholders within the neoliberal state and contain through boxing are those who are already most likely to be drawn to the sport. These attractions, as Chapter 3 argued, have also meant that boxing has a plasticity and flexibility in the movement of migrant people in and out of the sport. The constituency of boxing's practitioners changes over time. One of the most recent shifts has been the formal recognition of women in the sport. Boxing is globalized through its associations with migration and mobilities as well as its international governing bodies, which include the IOC.

Women are increasingly attracted to the self-defence properties of martial arts across the globe, in particular to the body practices of boxing, either competitively, for example in amateur boxing and the Olympic Games. Some of these changes have been situated within traditional discourses of boxing as narratives of heroic resistance, for example in the case of Afghan women, who had been barred from all sport and, under Taliban rule, experienced severe restrictions in all areas of their lives, choosing to take up so apparently unlikely a sport. This is not, however, entirely consistent with traditional male narratives and can be seen as disruptive through its challenge to the enduring powers of patriarchy and of dominant masculinities. The position of women in boxing is not only a matter of empirical presence or absence; it is also about the meanings and affects of women's participation and the politics of inclusion and exclusion. Women's involvement disrupts the assumptions of hegemonic masculinity and makes that masculinity visible and thus subject to scrutiny and critique. It also made the gender mix ordinary in 2012, when commentators gave up asking questions about whether women should be allowed to box and delivered professional commentary based on the skills, competences and enfleshed practices performed in particular bouts (Woodward, 2012b). The discussion of women in boxing and the transformations of sex gender in this chapter are concerned with material and representational affects which demand explanation; it is about sex and gender, both of which are inextricably connected and provide the explanation of change. This discussion is also demonstrative of the messy business of change and progress and their uneven and irregular paths.

Some of the strategies for the promotion of social inclusion as manifest in the 2012 Cultural Olympiad involved synergies between the arts and sport through bringing together different cultural and sporting practices, elites and

local communities and amateur/early career athletes and artists. Boxing offers particular artistic inspirations and the visibility of boxing, including the arrival of women's boxing, in the games meant that the sport has been changed in many ways and it is transforming regimes of culture. The presence of boxing in the Cultural Olympiad has, for example, local-, regional- and community-based affiliations, which plug into the local, everyday attachments of boxing as well as contribute to the legitimization of a sport that remains contentious. These interventions of the Cultural Olympiad were framed by heroic narratives which rehearsed the relevance and power of the politics of race as well as sexual politics. The Cultural Olympiad, like all interventions of governance within the discursive frame of diversity, always has to negotiate the tensions between promoting a discourse of equality through inclusion and recognizing difference.

There is no simple, linear trajectory of progress and change, but a series of disruptions and realignments which do, however, suggest that new accommodations are emerging, even in boxing and, more importantly, that some recent shifts in the politics of boxing have led to some traditional identifications feeling uncomfortable.

8

Conclusion: G/local Boxing

Globalizing Boxing has demonstrated that however contradictory it may at first appear in the twenty-first century, boxing is a productive site for the exploration of social, economic, political and cultural practices and processes. Boxing provides opportunities as well as being an example of a sport where traditional social divisions persist and inequalities remain. An exploration of the diversity and plurality of forms of boxing across the world also challenges some of its traditional binary logics. Boxing is a globalizing force, besides being subject to globalizing forces.

Boxing is widely enmeshed in the relationship between what is happening in sport and how boxing, in particular, responds to and impacts upon the wider social world in different practices across the globe. Boxing is a g/local sport that feeds g/local imaginaries, which is why, although it seems to embody an anomalous set of practices in the contemporary world, it endures, providing excitement, opportunities for widening participation and cohesion, as well as the dangers of exploitation. Whilst many sports generate controversy about their practices and culture, especially in relation to management and promotion and the payment of superstars, as well as some of their embodied sporting practices, and the possibilities for exploitation that are opened up by excesses of commercialism, few are so contentious as boxing. Boxing is particular for a number of reasons, not least in its whole *raison d'être* of one person inflicting pain and damage on another, with the victor being someone who knocks another person unconscious. Stated as such, this seems to be a stark indictment of boxing, but it is also particular and a reminder that despite a plethora of regulatory interventions, the sport retains some of its primordial qualities and offers some resistance to mechanisms of globalized disciplinary regimes.

Boxing and the g/local

Boxing is typical of the globalization of contemporary sport, for example in its media coverage, its celebration of superstars, staging of mega spectacles, the investment of large-scale finance and links to betting and gambling on a transnational as well as local scale and the performance of hegemonic masculinities. There is a sense in which all sport is g/local, in that there has to be some localized practice before a sport can become global and be performed on a global platform although the interrelationship becomes more complicated as it develops and in relation to changing social and economic contexts (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2007, 2009). Boxing has particular capacities for bringing together local and global forces and communities. However, the sport has very particular localized contexts, for example in urban communities that are often populated by diasporic and migrant people. Boxing offers a particular version of the combination of the spectacular and the ordinary, of commercial forces and personal hopes and dreams of the dispossessed and dislocated, as well as those seeking self-respect and well-being through the investment of physical capital.

Local networks and local communities carry enormous weight in the culture of boxing: the gym, the trainer and other fighters at that gym become family in ways that are distinctive to boxing. Boxing is both typical of a domain characterized by globalization in its forces and mobilities including the speed of global communication systems, the movement of peoples and transnational affiliations and connections and regulatory structures, which characterize global sport in the twenty-first century. Boxing is not only globalizing in its associations with migrant people, the sport itself travels and is translated in different cultural contexts. Spatiality is central to boxing, both through the connections between local gyms and networks and the sport as practised internationally and in the shifts in its popularity across the globe. Some of the intensities and flows which so mark globalization in its contemporary manifestations do not have a singular trajectory but involve two-way exchanges and the specificities of what is local about boxing. Boxing and, in particular, boxers retain their attachments to local communities, spatially and culturally, and to local gyms, even when they attain commercial success on the world stage. Boxing, in all its permutations across the globe, carries distinctive features of local geographical attachments as well as those to peoples and ethnic groups which demonstrate grassroots and localized specificities as well as, in the case of racialized and ethnicized identities, being part of wider structural forces. In boxing, there is often a strong sense of community around the gym and cultural belonging.

Globalizing Boxing has demonstrated some of the intersections of local attachments and globalizing forces, notably those generated by the sport-media-commerce network, but which are played out in distinctive ways in boxing because of the sport's genealogies of cultural, ethnic and class-based attachments. Notions of belonging are also central to boxing, whether through its heroic masculinities and triumph over tragedy or the spatial displacements and dislocations of the migrant and diasporic peoples who are drawn to the sport. The binary logics and legacies of boxing might offer some security in response to the shifts and mobilities of globalizing forces as well as being a rational and pragmatic choice for those whose investments are largely limited to those of physical capital. The mobility of boxing culture is illustrated by the increased popularity of MMA and particular forms of boxing, like Muay Thai.

Boxing rules

Boxing, like all sport in late modernity, is disciplined and regulated by transnational and international bodies. Boxing is more regulated than most in that the sport has a multitude of governing bodies and hence a large number of titles. Boxing, however, can be distinguished from many other sports, in fact, many of those with traditional heritages and legacies, because boxing has so many layers of unwritten rules through its networks of associated activities and illegal and quasi-legal practices; prizefighting and bare-knuckle and cage fighting; as well as a whole range of gambling opportunities, dog fighting and other forms of entertainment that are no longer formally legitimate or publicly visible. Boxing demonstrates some of the less-visible and certainly less-legitimate forces of globalization.

International governing bodies are characteristic of global sport and have developed in order to contain and discipline sporting practice, partly in the interests of participants, especially in a sport like boxing where the rules have been instituted to protect boxers' health and limit the excesses of corporeal combat, for example in the inheritance of prize fighting. Regulatory bodies both target enfleshed bodies but are also constitutive of those boxing bodies. There is not a simple polarization between the bodies that govern boxing and the bodies that take part; enfleshed bodies are material and generate their own impact upon the bodies which regulate them so that material bodies and regulatory bodies are all part of the assemblage of forces which make up boxing, boxing culture and boxing bodies.

Wider forces are implicated in these assemblages too. The rules also govern spectatorship and sponsorship and in boxing this has also meant being attentive to the corruption and illegality which have been so strongly and ubiquitously linked to boxing. Most sports, including the Olympics and football, have been subject to accusations of corruption (Jennings, 1996, 2006), but boxing has particular histories of local affiliations which feed into and coexist with global forces. The expansion of governance in neoliberal states has included regulation of legitimate commercial enterprises as well as providing some safeguards for the protection of the financial interests of boxers as well as their enfleshed bodies. The rules have changed both in response to the activities in the ring and in the gym and in relation to social, economic and cultural forces in the wider social arena. In this sense, boxing is typical of modern sport although some of its disruptions and challenges to regulatory and disciplinary interventions are more specific to the sport.

Rules are made and rules are broken and the civilizing processes of the development of regulatory frameworks for the governance of sport are not part of the even progress towards more civilized, safe practices (Elias, 1978). The more regulated boxing becomes, the more expansion there seems to be in Ultimate Fighting and cage fighting (Spencer, 2011), which may in part be an attempt to capture some of the spontaneity and danger of prizefighting as well as engaging in a more challenging set of body practices which carry the exhilaration of risk and a greater promise of excitement. This is not to say that such forms of boxing and fighting do not still have regulatory bodies and clearly demarcated practices which are acceptable and unacceptable but they do offer more of the excitement of transgression and even for participants the 'attraction of repulsion' (Stallybrass and White, 1986:140) which can also be attributed to spectatorship of boxing (Woodward, 2006).

These aspects of boxing culture are allied to others such as the growth of the amateur sport and women's increased participation. As boxing moves more into the mainstream, whether of established legitimized systems as is the case with amateur boxing and the Olympic Games, or in the mainstream of global economies as part of the globalized sport-media-commerce nexus, Ultimate Fighting and cage fighting may offer more of the negotiation of fear and disgust which prizefighting once offered at fairground booths. Ultimate Fighting also provides more of the carnivalesque in the sense in which Stallybrass and White use the Bakhtinian concept of carnival as a transgression of civilized culture (Stallybrass and White, 1986) with its connections to low culture in the high–low cultural binary, but where these two are inextricably linked and co-constitutive.

Some of the expansion of interest in different forms of boxing is, of course, highly regulated – for example, the ever-growing interest in martial arts, particularly ritualized and subject to strict controls, even if bouts permit more use of body parts in combat, such as feet and elbows.

What is missing in the above analysis of the interest in different forms of boxing, especially those that appear to challenge some of the constraints of regulatory processes and to establish their own, less-formal rules, as in the case of Ultimate Fighting, is the operation of sex gender in boxing and boxing's most powerful links to masculinity, especially traditional enfleshed masculinity and the hegemonic masculinity through which gendered relations and connections which privilege men and masculinity, over women and femininity especially, are forged.

Boxing masculinities

The gendered networks and informal associations of boxing in the twenty-first century still draw on some of the connectivities and attachments of the Fancy which embraces the whole culture of boxing through fans, journalists, followers, promoters, writers, film-makers and artists. It is often through these networks that hegemonic masculinities are forged and reinstated. Some of these points of connection are reconfigured through the strong affinities between gambling and sport and the ways in which social worlds overlap and intersect. Hegemonic masculinity is one of the mechanisms of both social and cultural continuity and is a means of explaining the gender inequalities in sport and in other spheres of social, political and economic life.

The mix of enfleshed practices and economic, political, social and cultural forces makes boxing a productive site for the reiteration and performance of hegemonic masculinities. It is consideration of the combination of these forces which demonstrates how boxing is not simply dominated by men and masculinity because of its embodied practices and focus on corporeal strength and aggressive physicality, but because of its assemblage of forces. All these elements connect in the production of boxing culture, which also manifests more contradictions and ambivalences than other gendered configurations. Whilst the posturing machismo of some heavyweights might appear to endorse a secure and dominant masculinity, such simplifications have been challenged, for example in the vulnerability and insecurity of boxers like Mike Tyson, formerly known as the little fairy boy who became the complete destroyer

(Jefferson, 1998, 1996). The performance of dominant and dominating physical masculinities is also a strategy for dealing with insecurity and anxiety.

The conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) has particular resonance in boxing. Global sport is characterized by networks of actors who are part of the transnational as well as local associations of the media-sport- sponsorship nexus with all its permutations of practitioners, followers, promoters, trainers and commentators, but boxing offers particular connections and disruptions and has legacies that draw upon and reproduce hegemonic masculinity, notably as evidenced by the Fancy. Boxing too speaks a language to which, in the words of the Fancy, insiders are 'flash' (Egan, 2011). The collusions of hegemonic masculinity work through language and social and cultural connections as well as enfleshed practices of bodies categorized as male.

Hegemonic masculinities have persisted in boxing, whatever the extent to which women are able to gain entry into the sport. Change may be incremental, but women's boxing in the 2012 Olympics, as a sport which was taken seriously by fans, journalists and commentators, offered some reconfiguration of boxing culture. Not only is the legacy of 2012 that it is possible to think the unthinkable and accept that women engage in the same enfleshed practices in the sport as men, but the ubiquity of a particular version of masculinity equating pugilism exclusively with male aggression has been challenged. The amateur sport also provides a focus upon the body practices and techniques of the sport. The containment of women's boxing within this framework also reduces the possibilities of the sexualization of the women's game and the voyeuristic readings that can be given to women fighting. The Olympics provide a very public space for display and the games opened up new possibilities for new political stories and new identifications. Women boxers, whether from unlikely locations like Afghanistan or those configured as local heroes like gold medallist Nicola Adams, can reconstruct the heroic narratives and legends of boxing within a sexual politics of difference where it is possible for a woman boxer to celebrate her sport and state that she is fighting for her country, as men traditionally have claimed, *and* for women.

Boxing generates affects as well as responding to and being shaped by social forces, which is well illustrated by the choice of boxing among women in a country like Afghanistan. Without wanting to overstate the significance of this intervention, it does disrupt expectations and the hegemony of masculinities within boxing as well as social and cultural expectations of the role of women in Islamic countries, as well as the role of sport, and focus upon bodies in

Islam. Prejudices may have been fed by the extreme exclusionary practices of the Taliban, but Muslim women choosing boxing says something about boxing culture and practices and about the women and their culture and hopes in a two-way process. Boxing is not simply a reflection of particular legacies of masculinity and narratives of escape from the ghetto; boxing is productive of the nuance of these legacies as well as of change as is manifest in women's participation in the sport. Although stories and legends are certainly not the only expression of boxing or the key factor in shaping boxing culture, legends and heroic narratives provide a particularly influential force within the assemblage of different strands which make up boxing and relate to its body practices and enfleshed materialities.

There is a line in Elia Kazan's film *On the Waterfront* (1954), delivered by Marlon Brando as Terry Molloy, in which he says 'I could have been a contender.' Although *On the Waterfront* is not a boxing film in any way, the statement not only encapsulates the spirit of boxing culture, but also highlights the aspirational attraction of boxing. This is not to say that this version is necessarily lived, but it is dreamt.

Inner worlds and outer worlds

It might seem strange that boxing remains legal, let alone popular, in the twenty-first century given its particular enfleshed practices, but as has been argued in this book, change, albeit incremental rather than epochal, happens at the local as well as the global level and is ordinary and routine as well as extraordinary and spectacular. The investment of practitioners in the Noble Art is partly explicable in terms of the desire for belonging and security and the rational choice to invest physical capital. Spectatorship, however, is more likely to be understood in relation to the risk and promise of the display of enfleshed violence through which the excitement of boxing is constituted.

Boxing provides us with the experience and the non-experience of violence. The sport always has the possibilities of excess and of material enfleshed damage being inflicted. Violence is, to some extent, contained by the frame of the ring and the regulatory practices of the sport so that boxing provides a space for dealing with the fears of excess and the risk of violence, which may also be why there are so many boxing films; it is ritualized and contained.

Sport in late modernity poses problems for understanding the part played by spectatorship and how it operates. Sports' broadcasting depends upon the elision

of the desires and dreams of fans and the capacities of the sport. Boxing can deliver because it so powerfully invokes desires and fears as well as the enfleshed practice of sport being able to generate affects and sensations that feed on as well as create those desires. The sports broadcasting companies seek to plug into those possibilities. Boxing has the properties to make space for the synergies between psychic investments, inner worlds and social, cultural structural forces. Some of these structural forces involve the operation of economic power, which clearly underpins much of the growth of modern sport and of its visibility in the public arena and in discursive regimes of truth which are still loosely based on some understanding of sport as a healthy pursuit; the healthy mind and the healthy body of *mens sana in corpore sano*.

Given the massive investment in the cultural industries and especially in the possibilities of broadcast and communications technologies, sport offers enormous potential for recruiting massive audience figures and for financial competition the commitment of fans and supporters bordering upon exploitation, as the opposition to the takeover of Premier league football clubs against the wishes of fans evidences. In boxing the ghosts of exploitation have centred more on boxers in the legacy of the rule of the Mob and the influence of the Mafiosi. Nonetheless in boxing, too, fans protest at the exorbitant charges for access to satellite technologies demands, which as Chapter 4 suggested, can influence and even determine who fights who and which fights are included in the programme. Many of us will have waited through the night for the big fight, one of the Klitchos–Floyd Mayweather perhaps, while a series of journeymen slog it out without any comment, let alone commentary from those covering the fight on the pay-for-view channel. Contemporary commercialized sport can offer spectacular displays on a scale and of a quality never before imagined, but the apparatuses of commercial sports broadcasting can also limit choice, either through decision making about displays that are determined by profit and not quality of embodied action, or by charging fees that bar many fans from participating.

Boxing has provided routes into understanding some of the ways in which the processes of spectatorship work. The danger of the enfleshed contact of the sport, which elements of boxing culture such as films attempt to capture, also embraces the connections between fantasies and the material objects of desire. There has to be a wider community, a social world which is privy to and participates in these desires in order for them to be commercially viable. The technologies of boxing culture enable and reproduce that culture as well as inspire some of these fantasies.

Bodies enfleshed selves

The centrality of bodies to boxing is undisputed, given its *raisin d'ĕtre* of one-on-one corporeal contact and the aim to inflict physical damage, along with its very basic classifications by body weight. The use of 'bodies' is preferable to 'the body' through the capacity to embrace difference and diversity rather than being restricted to a biological classification, merging biology with embodiment (Howson, 2005, Price and Shildrick, 1999, Richardson and Robinson, 2008, Turner, 1996). The materiality of bodies implies a reductionism and avoidance of the role of emotional affect and of intentionality, which has been taken up by phenomenological accounts which posit embodiment as a means of bringing minds and bodies together. Boxing is particularly sensitive to accusations of reductionism and limited possibilities of agency for its participants which have generated considerable interest in the agency afforded by ideas of embodiment.

Embodiment in the phenomenological sense (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) provides a means of explaining the relationship between the mind and the body, which is particularly apposite to boxing as a sport in which the two are inseparable. In boxing, almost more than in any other sport, mind and body become one through iterative body practices so that the boxer keeps going through habituation (Wacquant, 1995a, 2004). There is an element of agency in the process although embodiment can offer more to describe the inseparability of mind and body than to explain the relationship between the two. The concept of embodiment may explain why boxers keep going even when they are injured, but it says little about why they fight in the first place, and embodiment contributes little to debates about the shared properties and materialities of flesh which are elements in the processes through which boxing cultures are made.

Flesh is a crucial element in boxing as it is what generates its excitement and its contradictions and ambivalences. Flesh cannot fully explain the attraction of boxing but the shared capacities, frailties and strengths of flesh combine with political, cultural and economic forces along with intention, agency and rationality to make the boxing culture. Intention is not synonymous with flesh as it might appear to be with embodiment. I suggest the idea of enfleshed selves as a way of retaining the materiality of flesh and its specificities. Not only is the flesh subject to injury, flesh is also marked by differences, such as those of sex gender. Enfleshed selves are made through the assemblages which bring together different forces; those of economic, political social and cultural power as well as the agency and flesh of individuals. Through events and processes such as those which make up the culture of boxing, it is possible to retain a

focus upon the strengths and weaknesses, promises and limitations of the flesh without reducing everything to bodies and body practices. Enfleshed selves are also made through the values of social and cultural processes, which those selves also shape and affect. One of the big challenges in boxing, and of boxing culture in the twenty-first century, is the inclusion of women who bring themselves and their own ways of being in the world to the sport.

Changing times

Theories of globalization have stressed the speed and ubiquity of change which might seem to contradict much of what has been argued about boxing in this book. Boxing offers a particular take on the interrelationship between continuity and change and between the global and globalizing forces and local and personal affiliations and attachments.

Some of the most enduring dimensions of boxing relate to its relationship with sex gender. Thus, it is appropriate to focus upon this aspect of both change and continuity in exploring the role of boxing in changing times. Masculinities are constructed and experienced through the enfleshed practices of boxing, most of which are much more strongly associated with and emerge from enfleshed masculinity, and conversely femininity. The contemporary social and cultural terrain is changing and traditional gender roles have been challenged so that the essentialism of flesh as a determinant of binary categories of sex is more open to question and interpretation. The empirical presence of women in boxing makes a difference, not only to how boxing is understood and presented but also to the body practices and the materialities of the sport. On the one hand, it opens the possibility of women routinely engaging in these enfleshed pugilistic practices, challenging some of the ways of being in the body, and on the other it changes representations of the sport and its legacies. The discursive regimes through which boxing cultures are made are also transformed. Women's involvement may create new versions of heroic endeavour and they may challenge the hyperbole of such constructions and perform the sport as an everyday set of body practices to maintain health and fitness and as a means of acquiring the necessary skills of self-defence. The structural forces of sex gender, however, make it unlikely that there will be any great challenges to entrenched hegemonic masculinity which is a social and cultural force in which those who have never and will never engage in the Noble Art participate. Boxing culture, along with much of globalized sport, especially, as well as boxing, the big team sports, which receive massive

global media coverage, remains the site at which networks of followers and commentators are deeply embedded in the performance and reinstatement of masculinity, which still largely excludes women and devalues and marginalizes alternative ways of gendered being.

Boxing culture is complex and is not just marked by dichotomized simplifications and crude exaggerations. Boxing is full of ambivalences and contradictions; it is exciting and spectacular as well as routine; it is corrupt and encoded in the language of heroism and legendary courage; it is about poverty, racism and social exclusion and about escape and achievement; it is terrifying and very boring; it is gross and beautiful; it is about psychic and physical investment; it is personal and political; there are fighters and boxers and what is particular in relation to *Globalizing Boxing* is that boxing is local and global, and in many ways and much of the time it is both.

Boxing and boxing culture present an important site for the exploration of social, cultural and political transformations. In providing a means of understanding social change and the endurance of entrenched continuities in social relations and inequalities, boxing signals the possibilities of change, even if the change is incremental. Boxing not only reflects and responds to social processes, it is also generative of social change, whereby however limited the possibilities might be, the persistence of boxing in the twenty-first century becomes less of an anomaly and more of a way of looking at social inequalities and social worlds outside sport as well as inside it. Boxing is also a sport which offers excitement, challenge, displays of courage and enfleshed materialities and a whole set of everyday practices and engagements which might also show how the flesh is fighting back analytically as well as empirically.

Note

Chapter 5

1 Professional male fighters are divided into 17 weight classes, which are Strawweight (up to 105 lbs), Junior Flyweight (105 to 108 lbs), Flyweight (108 to 112 lbs.), Super Flyweight (112 to 115 lbs.), Bantamweight (115 to 118 lbs.), Super Bantamweight (118 to 122 lbs.), Featherweight (122 to 126 lbs.), Super Featherweight (126 to 130 lbs.), Lightweight (130 to 135 lbs.), Super Lightweight (135 to 140 lbs.), Welterweight (140 to 147 lbs.), Super Welterweight (147 to 154 lbs.), Middleweight (154 to 160 lbs.), Super Middleweight (160 to 168 lbs.), Light Heavyweight (168 to 175 lbs.), Cruiserweight (175 to 200 lbs.), and Heavyweight (over 200 lbs.).

Amateur male fighters are divided into 11 weight classes with similar names but different cut-off points. The classes are Light Flyweight (up to 106 lbs.), Flyweight (106 to 112 lbs.), Bantamweight (112 to 119 lbs.), Featherweight (119 to 125 lbs.), Lightweight (125 to 132 lbs.), Light Welterweight (132 to 141 lbs.), Welterweight (141 to 152 lbs.), Middleweight (152 to 165 lbs.), Light Heavyweight (165 to 178 lbs.), Heavyweight (178 to 201 lbs.), and Super Heavyweight (over 201 lbs.).

Professional and amateur women are divided into 13 weight divisions, adjusted to account for the fact that women are generally smaller than men. Women's classes include Pinweight (up to 101 lbs.), Light Flyweight (101 to 106 lbs.), Flyweight (106 to 110 lbs.), Light Bantamweight (110 to 114 lbs.), Bantamweight (114 to 119 lbs.), Featherweight (119 to 125 lbs.), Lightweight (125 to 132 lbs.), Light Welterweight (132 to 138 lbs.), Welterweight (138 to 145 lbs.), Light Middleweight (145 to 154 lbs.), Middleweight (154 to 165 lbs.), Light Heavyweight (165 to 176 lbs.), and Heavyweight (over 189 lbs.).

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