Stories in sports commentary: How narrative strategies of sports commentary reframe fun-runners in the Big City Marathon.

Keywords: Performance, narrative, event of text, sports commentary, neoliberalism, capitalist charity, Big City Marathon.

The paper explores sports commentary as an alternative narrative form that provides insight to the contemporary world. The stories of sports commentary articulate how neoliberal ideology is embedded in popular culture. In contrast to Williams' assertion that TV sports maintain a strong sense of independence despite control and commodification by government or commerce (1989) and Kennedy's suggestion that the significance of sport is not tied to ideology (2001), the paper argues that sports commentary, however implicitly, asserts neoliberal authority through the use of specific narrative strategies within sporting broadcasts.

Focusing on commentary of the fun-runner in the Big City Marathon (BCM) the paper uses Fischer-Lichte's notion of performance as event (2008) to examine how sports commentary changes the way an event is received and subsequently perceived. The paper considers the narrative strategies of the sports commentator (Whannel, 1992) as an event of text (Turner, 2009), to articulate a gap between the event and how that event is framed, reframed and enframed (Žižek, 2014) by the commentary. The position of the commentator complicates Fischer-Lichte's autopoietic feedback loop (2008), enacting a degree of sovereignty (Agamben, 1998) over the event. This partial sovereignty allows the commentator to reframe mass participation in the BCM, so that fun-runners are made to perform as neoliberal subjects, contextualised by capitalist charity (Livingstone, 2013), complicit with neoliberal ideology.

Using the BBC's broadcast of the 2017 London Marathon the paper articulates how Booker's overcoming the monster narrative (2004) is used to guarantee the *meaning* of fun-runners. The commentary narratives reframe the fun-runner as part of a charity event, reinforcing neoliberal ideals of the individual, self-improvement and charity as a replacement for the state. As fun-runners in the BCM our 'active' participation is repositioned by the stories of the commentary as an act of interpassivity in that our collective action only serves to maintain the status quo.

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Dr Pete Phillips

Pete is a Senior Lecturer in the Theatre Department at the University of Chichester. His research focuses on the relationship between sport and contemporary performance. Pete's artistic practice is undertaken as part of collaborative live art duo, Search Party. Since 2005, Search Party have created performances for theatre, gallery and public space throughout the UK and Internationally, including ANTIfestival, Kuopio (2008), The NRLA, Glasgow (2008), Nuit Blanche, Amiens (2009), Plateux, Frankfurt (2009), Junction Arts Festival, Tasmania (2011) and Culturgest, Lisbon (2012). Pete has written about performance and sports commentary in Contemporary Theatre Review (2015) and has co-authored a book documenting Search Party's duration semaphore performance, *Save Me* (2011).